



Friday 20th October 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Headteacher's Weekly Update

The big news this week was that we finally received a visit from Ofsted! We were certainly expecting them, given that we were last inspected in 2017, so it was a relief to receive their call on Monday.

The rules prevent me from sharing the outcome with parents until the report is published (which will not happen for a few weeks yet). All I can say is that I felt the inspectors saw the school as I would have hoped and as soon as the report is published, I will write to you all with a copy.

I would like to take a moment to thank the entire school community. It's fair to say that the parent response to the survey was hugely positive, not just in the number of contributions but also in the strength of the contributions. I am also so grateful for the many encouraging emails that I and others received from you during the inspection.

The students too were brilliant. Inspectors referenced how clear it was to them that our students really wanted to show the best of The Emmbrook. Their pride in the school was really very touching.

Finally, I need to thank the staff. If you've never experienced an Ofsted inspection it is hard to exaggerate the intensity of the visit and every single colleague was exceptional! The inspectors were highly professional and I thanked them for that but it is such a demanding couple of days that I am sure the staff were left exhausted! Thankfully we have a week to recover now!

The report will identify our strengths and development areas. It was reassuring to see that the development areas matched our own assessment and strategic planning and I take that as a sign that we're on the right path!

Year 11 Exams

A reminder that Year 11 will face their first round of practice exams the week we return. Year 11 parents will have received more information about this directly. Please support your children to use the half-term to revise but also to recharge. If you need any support then please contact us:

Miss Cairns Head of Year 11 rcairns@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk	Mr Whitehouse Assistant Headteacher responsible for exams pwhitehouse@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk
---	---

As we did last year, we will be giving Year 11 students canteen priority for the next two weeks to support them during a very busy and potentially stressful time.

Senior Chamber Concert

The major downside of the inspection was that it kept me from most of the concert (I was able to sneak in at the back to see the last four acts!). However, I am told that it was a stunning concert and all of the students who performed should be rightly proud.



Parent Election

A reminder that any parents wishing to stand for election to the Local Advisory Board need to have submitted their completed nomination form by 30th October.

Message from the Canteen Provider

I have been asked to share the following message with you from Aspens, the catering company responsible for the canteen and food pod:

You may be aware that the prices in our canteen have remained constant for the whole of last year. Unfortunately, we now need to make an adjustment to cover the rising cost of living. We understand that any increase in expenses can be a concern for families, and we want to assure you that this decision has been made after careful consideration and a thorough review of operating costs. We have taken several factors into account, including rising food costs and the need to ensure that our menu meets the highest standards of nutrition and the necessary regulatory requirements.

On our return from half term, the price for the set school meal deal will remain at £2.40, However, other break and lunch options will be rising. We want to highlight that students are not obligated to choose the meal deal, and that we will always offer alternative options at lower prices.

If you have any concerns, please contact us.

Careers Update

This week's useful careers links have a focus on financing further study:

- The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) [occupational maps](#) show where technical education can lead.
- Information regarding [financial support](#) available for further and higher education.
- The [16-19 Bursary Fund](#) can be offered to particular groups of learners depending on your individual needs.
- [Care to Learn](#) covers the costs of childcare for young parents in education, as long as you are aged under 20 at the start of your course.
- [Dance and Drama Awards](#) help with tuition fees and living costs at a small number of private dance and drama institutions. You must be aged 16-23, and the amount available depends on where you live and study and your household income. Applications should be made directly to the dance and drama school concerned.
- Information about the [Residential Bursary Fund](#) (RBS).

For the staff and students on the Belgium Battlefields trip this weekend, all the best. I'm sure you'll have a great time. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a great half-term! We're looking forward to welcoming all students back on Monday 30th October at 8.20am.

Best wishes,

Nick McSweeney

Headteacher

nmcsweeney@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk