



Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019

## Acting Headteacher's Comments

Dear Parents and Carers,

With the recent changes to the leadership of the school, I felt it important that we share with all parents our plans for this term and September. I am determined to improve communication between the school and parents and I hope, therefore, that you will find this supplementary newsletter from the school's senior leaders both useful and reassuring.



It is important to me that The Emmbrook is a positive and supportive community. It has been my privilege to meet with a wide range of students during the last three weeks to celebrate their successes and thank them for their participation in the life of the school - and how talented our students are! In passing, I learned that Ethan Stanbridge recently finished within the top 1000 Fortnite players across Europe and that Lola Breadmore is a British national dance champion. I know that there are many more successes within our student body, and I hope to share those stories with you in our end of term celebration newsletter.

At the start of the half-term I joined the PTA to thank them for the work that they do to support the school. They continue to give their time to raise funds for the benefit of our students. I also want to thank the parents who have been supporting Mr Bhambra and Mrs Moorcroft with the Behaviour Working Group, which has been a tremendously productive enterprise. Such support is so vital.

I would like to commend the Senior Leadership Team and support staff, who have all been working so hard to ensure that the school continues to operate effectively. I am very grateful to Mrs Farndon, my PA, for her support over the last three weeks. Mr Bhambra, as Acting Deputy Headteacher has continued to drive improvements in behaviour and it will remain his priority this term and beyond. Mrs Fyfe, as Assistant Headteacher for Teaching and Learning is implementing a new policy to govern the way that our teachers will plan and deliver lessons. Finally, Mr Whitehouse, as Assistant Headteacher for Student Outcomes is implementing new systems for assessing the progress that your children are making and managing department interventions to drive up achievement. Each of them has provided a more detailed update within this newsletter. I have also asked each of the faculty directors to explain what the students are currently studying and how they are developing their areas of the school for September.

My priority this term is to ensure that we are well prepared for the new academic year. I am currently updating the school's development plan, recognising the areas where we have made progress and identifying the aspects that require further improvement. I have briefly met with the School Council and intend to return for a more extensive discussion regarding their priorities shortly. We are fully staffed for September, and next week our induction process for new staff begins. I am confident that we have recruited high calibre colleagues and I am excited for them to join us properly in September.

As always, our Facebook page is the best way to stay up-to-date with news from the school. I am always keen to hear from parents, so please contact me directly should the need arise. I have been pleased to have heard from a number of parents already this half-term. I was particularly touched by the responses I received to my email regarding Mrs Nicol's bereavement; this demonstrates the family spirit that I so love about our school.

Best wishes,



**Nick McSweeney**  
Acting Headteacher

## **Behaviour and Attendance**

The links between good attendance and academic outcomes have been proven by the Department for Education, and so attendance remains a key priority for the school. Our strategy has been evaluated and we agreed a new strategy with the local authority at the start of last term.

Recent changes to the behaviour management policy and protocol have been reviewed. A parent group met on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June, and staff were consulted prior to half-term, with their feedback informing the latest version of the protocols booklet. The parent meeting was attended by the chair of the Governor Student Committee. The changes are being communicated to students via assemblies.

Further changes this term include every single lesson, every period being visited by me, including every on-call being intervened against by me immediately. Expectations around behaviour are very high and we are beginning to see positive change.

A safeguarding audit has been running this year and will conclude this term. This was partly in light of the new framework (KCSIE), but also to ensure that the school remains strong in areas where new guidance has emerged – for example, on-line bullying and peer-on-peer allegations. This piece of work will inform changes to safeguarding protocols next September, which will be shared with staff and students via assemblies.

**Taj Bhambra**  
Acting Deputy Headteacher

## **Teaching and Learning**

As always at this time of the year it is a good opportunity to reflect on what has been successful throughout the year and to consider what changes or improvements are still required to continue making progress. Teaching and Learning will continue to remain a key priority to improve student attainment and to promote a positive culture and ethos within the school.

Last half term each Faculty Director conducted a self-review of their faculty and they have reflected carefully on what aspects of teaching and learning have been particularly successful and what actions they now need to work towards developing further. Each faculty has a clear action plan that they

are working strategically in response to lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil voice. The responses that emerged from pupil voice were often very complimentary and reflect the positive relationships that the school strives to maintain between the staff and the students.

This half term, I am working closely with each Director to support them in their roles to raise standards across each area of the curriculum and to ensure that our provision for our students continues to improve. In response to current developments in education research and in response to the proposed Ofsted framework that will be in place from September, I am also currently working on developing our policy around Teaching and Learning. I am working closely with Mr Marshall, Lead practitioner for T&L and other colleagues to implement a more rigorous framework around teaching, learning and assessment within the school. This new framework will inform the professional development of staff this term and over the next academic year – the results of which should be seen by our students in their classrooms.

Another exciting development around Teaching and Learning has also stemmed from the collaboration with Mr Marshall around the use of developing an on-line Teaching and Learning Community. Currently staff are sharing good practice through twitter feeds, blogs and through a shared resource area. Developments are underway to extend this work to include the students at the beginning of the new academic year; the web site will provide students access to a wide range of subject specific resources from their lessons and also (we hope) will promote independent learning beyond the classroom.

**Lucy Fyfe**

Assistant Headteacher – Teaching and Learning

## **Student Outcomes**

Whilst the end of the academic year might be seen as a chance to tie up loose ends, for someone in my role it is the business end of the year. May through to July sees all year groups sitting end of year or end of qualification exams. Running the public exams (mainly GCSE's and A-levels) for year 11 and 13 is a huge undertaking. My job is to ensure that the experience for the student is as calm and ordered as possible. Students have worked incredibly hard for 2 or even 3 years and the results of these exams could make all the difference for university, college and sixth form applications. Working around the public exams we have all year groups (currently year 10 at time of writing) sitting their end of year exams. I wish all the students all the very best in their exams.

I am currently working to implement a new monitoring system for September. This will allow me to track closely the progress of all students and, crucially, feed the information back to subject areas so that they can target interventions to ensure that all students are able to make progress and excel. Although parents will not see much of a difference, these systems will continue to drive up standards across the school.

**Pete Whitehouse**

Assistant Headteacher – Student Outcomes

## The Faculty of Business & Humanities

In Business and Humanities, we have been continuing our mission to give every student great service. Our recent quality assurance report highlighted many of the positive attributes in the faculty ranging from great relationships between staff and students through to the common mind-set with regards to behaviour management.

We are focussing on improving the feedback we give to students and the feedback that students give to us. Miss Horne and Mr Matthews are working with the school's Teaching and Learning Group to develop the assessment policy and Miss Cairns has been sharing the success she has had with gaining student feedback through the use of iClouds in books.

Another area we are focussing on is the development of our schemes of learning and assessments; this continual improvement and focus on interleaving in both assessments and delivery will engage and develop the pupils' learning. Miss Bundy has recently demonstrated the positive impact of interleaving in her lessons with the use of a starter quiz, testing previous learning.

As our office houses Miss Cairns, Mr Constable, Miss Horne and Mr Baker (all year leaders!) – there is always a real focus on the individual and supporting their pastoral needs. Their advice and understanding has led to some very specific lesson planning to support individual needs. This collective approach is personified by Mr Baylis with his diligent attitude across multiple subjects; through discussion comes constant improvements.

SharePoint has been another key focus over the last few weeks with myself and Mr McGrath building subject pages for Geography and Business/Economics. The help from Mr Marshall (both in person and from his videos) has been incredibly useful and led to some innovative ideas. These sites will be launched soon.

Mr Matthews's displays in H2.1 and Miss Donovan's in H2.2 are incredible and inspiring- these classrooms really engage students with History. Mrs Kisubi's extra-curricular marathon over the last few weeks with several Geography trips have had me reflecting on the opportunities we also give students outside of the classroom and I hope her example leads to more opportunities outside of the classroom for students.

**Craig Johnson**  
Director of Faculty



## The Faculty of Creative and Performing Arts

The Creative & Performing Arts Faculty continue to offer our young people incredible opportunities to develop and enrich their creativity. The Media Department now has a fantastic amount of up-to-date equipment and newly planned resources. We look forward to hearing about the impact of these in our next newsletter. The Drama Department and cast are also working hard on rehearsals for the school production of "She Stoops to Conquer": tickets will be available soon.

The Art department were thrilled to see Yr5 students from a host of primary schools join us for our Art Masterclass. Students were creating paintings of their spirit animals inspired by the Canadian Artist Norval Morrisseau. We were so impressed by the skills of the Yr5 students we intend to offer an Art & Design Masterclass to Yr5 throughout the 2019-20 academic year.

Due to our Faculty's ongoing strong connection with Reading University Institute of Education, new Design teachers spent two weeks with us designing a broad range of exciting resources and projects for staff to deliver next year as we introduce Textiles into the KS3 curriculum. Mrs Field has explored textile processes with batik paintings and patchwork with our KS3 Art Club students. They have also continued to embellish our Yr7 garden by creating colourful bird and bug boxes.



Before the summer, the Art Department will be taking Yr10 to the renowned Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. This is a prestigious annual exhibition showcasing a range of contemporary artwork. Everything students will see represents the art being made today. They will find art in all media, from: painting, printmaking, film and photography to sculpture, architectural works and performance art. It is a great chance for our students to experience a range of artwork in an exciting and vibrant environment and can be used within their portfolio of work.

Our Music Department has an extremely busy time towards the end of term. Mrs Wellman has organised a spectacular amount of events that involve the whole school and wider community. In lessons, KS3 have been discovering global music styles from countries, including China and Jamaica, where they have composed and performed pieces. Our Emmbrook musicians will be performing to Yr6 students at our New Yr7 Induction Day, they will be giving a mini-concert to the Emmbrook Junior School and will perform at the end of year Celebration Evenings. Mrs Wellman will also be introducing open air live music during our Sports Day.

'Global Sounds' the annual Summer Concert, involves a range of diverse themes and titles chosen by our students. This will also include poetry performed in different languages by 15 of our EAL students. This is an invaluable opportunity for us to celebrate the dedication and talent shown by our young musicians. Please join us on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July at 7pm to support our young people, Music Department and School!

**Maxine Simpson**  
Director of Faculty

## The Faculty of English and Languages

As is the case for the whole school, this term has been a very busy one for the English and MFL faculty. Obviously, our main focus has been preparing our Y11 and Y13 students for their exams and a huge number of revision sessions were offered. We were very impressed by the dedication of the many students who made the most of the opportunity to attend these sessions. Some students even came to both English and MFL revision on the same evening!

The MFL speaking exams are always a nervous time for students and teachers alike but we are happy to say that these passed without a hitch. This was largely due to the fact that students had prepared very well under the guidance of an experienced team of teachers. Mrs Fyfe was also very proud of her Y10 class who, with her unfailing support, worked hard to prepare effectively for their early entry English Literature exam.



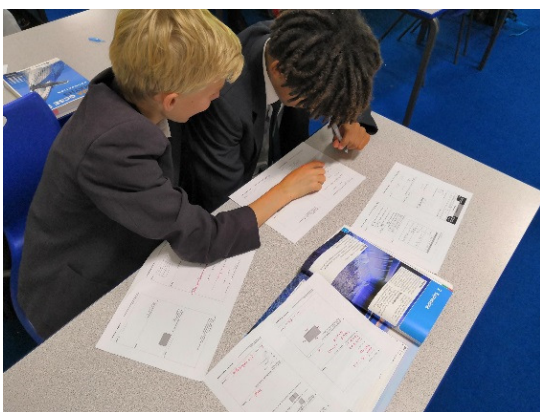
At the end of last half term, we completed our faculty quality assurance review. This was a fantastic chance for teachers to see what was happening in other lessons within the faculty and for us to share good practice. The review confirmed that there are many areas of strength within the faculty. These include high expectations of behaviour and achievement for all, excellent working relationships between students and colleagues, and strong subject knowledge and engagement with pedagogy. The areas identified for development were consistency with setting homework, how students respond to feedback, and making the most of our amazing learning environment. We have many ideas about how to address these so watch this space.

We have a lot to look forward to in what remains of this academic year. Our Y7 students are off to France for a day at the beginning of July and students have the opportunity to participate in the English writing competition. It looks set to be an exciting few weeks!

### Ellie Fry

Director of Faculty

## The Faculty of Maths and Computing



It has been an exciting time in the Maths and Computing Faculty. Year 13 and Year 11 have been working extremely hard, making us proud and have now completed their examinations. We look forward to celebrating their efforts in August. With the public exams out of the way attention in the faculty has now turned to preparation for end of year assessments and mock exams; these will provide the foundation for progress moving forward and every student will be able to assess their strengths and weaknesses allowing them to concentrate on what they can do to make progress.

Away from the pressure of exams, our teachers are evaluating the curriculum and planning developments for September. We have been trialling the teaching of maths using the mastery approach in year 7- we have found this successful and will be looking to continue with this into year 8. Some of the maths classes in years 8 and 9 have also been working on some tricky problems set on the parallel website by renowned mathematician Simon Singh. These take the students beyond school maths and is a great resource for problem solving which fits nicely across both the maths and computing subjects. Finally, we are busy building a new faculty website which will have all the resources students need in one place, making it easier for them to find all the maths and computing resources.

We have also been thinking about the next generation of Emmbrook students and last week welcomed the first group of able year 5 mathematicians, from a local primary school to Emmbrook for a fantastic masterclass delivered by Mr Parry. They were super excited and so were we! It was great to see the passion they already have for maths; we can't wait for the computing one which will take place in July!

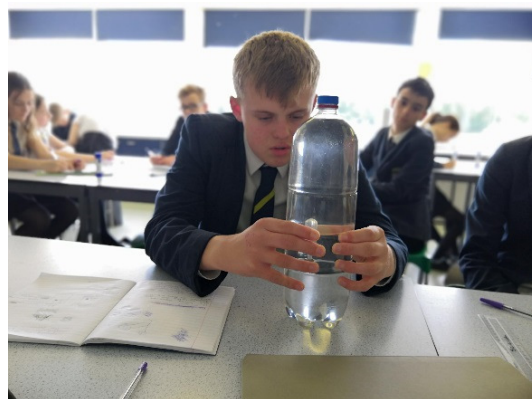
**Lorna Panesar**

Director of Faculty

## **The Faculty of Science and Physical Education**

The Science faculty has been through two tough years with staffing absences owing to illness. Despite this we have avoided any impact on our exam classes and look forward to pleasing results in August. Also, we have continued to offer a wide range of STEM opportunities both in and out of school to all years.

I am looking forward to September: I have decided after over 12 years in my role that it's time to hand over the responsibility and I am delighted that Miss Smith will be Head of Science, with Mr Humber taking over as Director of Science & PE. We say goodbye to Miss Ibanez and Dr Lea, and hello to Mr Curry, an ex-student of mine at the Emmbrook and an experienced teacher, who takes over as Head of Physics.



Following the many changes to the Key Stage 4 curriculum over the years, during this half term we will focus on making improvements to our curriculum for Years 7 & 8 in light of the new demands at GCSE. This offers us exciting opportunities, supported by our amazing technicians, to tailor the experience of our younger students to their needs and interests. Also, we will continue to build on the improvements already made to assessment and feedback during teaching, which has brought considerable improvement to students' learning. Finally, we are looking forward to increased numbers in our A Level classes for September.

In closing, the Science faculty will be renewed and refreshed in September to ensure Emmbrook students achieve their potential in the challenging, exciting and ever-changing world of Science which awaits them!

**Andy Eagle**

Director of Faculty

The curriculum focus for this half term for KS4 PE has now switched to preparing the year 9's and 10's for their upcoming mock exams. The students are focussing on AQA GCSE paper 1 and 2 revision and are starting to look forward to the coursework element - they are currently drafting their first version before they leave for the summer. This should ensure that there is less pressure on the year 10 when they start their final year preparations. The KS3 lessons are now firmly geared towards summer sports (depending on the weather) and we have a number of extra-curricular activities happening such as: rounders, cricket, basketball, tennis and athletics. We have been very impressed by the really positive uptake from the students to these summer sporting activities. The department focus for Teaching & Learning will now be around aligning the sports in the KS3 curriculum to the GCSE and Cambridge National course offered at KS4

Sports day is planned for Friday 19th July and we are excited by the prospect that it will be moving back towards the traditional full day of athletics events. The BBQ, colour run and ice-cream van stall will all be making an appearance for a school community event to remember.

I am very excited to inform you that we will welcome two new PE/Science teachers who will be joining us in September – Mr Ryan Edwards and Miss Deanna Taylor. The new 3G Astro is planned to break ground over the summer holidays and should be ready for first use in November which is eagerly anticipated by everyone involved in the PE department!

**Craig Humber**

Associate Director of Faculty

## **Support Staff**

This term I am working to complete the timetable for September. I have been supporting Mr McSweeney across a range of areas, including health & safety and recruitment. I have also been working with the Site Team to improve the fabric of the school. Mrs Mortimer and Miss Cooper, our Finance Team, have been supporting Mr McSweeney admirably with the financial management of the school and much more. As always, Mrs Rimmer has worked across a range of duties to support.

A wide range of colleagues within the support staff have a vital role directly supporting the students. Our team of teaching and learning assistants have been supporting students with their public exams in addition to their usual work in lessons. Meanwhile, the Pastoral and Base Teams continue to provide one-to-one support for specific students and work hard to ensure the best for all students.

Our Exams Officer, Mrs Evans and her team of invigilators have been working tirelessly to ensure that all public and internal exams are conducted compliantly. They have been supported by Ms Scott, who has been printing up the huge number of exam papers needed for end of year exams and Mr Ward, who has provided technical support for exam requirements and student needs.

Mrs Wood in the Data Office has been supporting Mrs Hodgson prepare for the arrival of our new Year 7 students and at the same time working with Mr Whitehouse to develop our new monitoring system for student progress. Finally, on reception Ms Evans, and our Attendance Officer, Mrs Culcross, continue to provide crucial administrative functions to support staff, students and parents.

**Steph Guinn**

Staffing Manager