



Thursday 20th July 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Headteacher's Weekly Update – End of Year Edition

While it may have only been a 3.5 day week, it has certainly been packed full!

On Monday we had the pleasure of saying a final farewell to Year 11. In the morning they were back on site for the Leavers' Assembly and Miss Horne did a fantastic job putting together a suitable event. I am especially grateful to all the parents who responded to Miss Horne's request for old photos as it created a lovely moment for everyone present! Later that day we attended the Year 11 Prom and the students very much looked the part and it looked like everyone had a great time.

This was followed by Sports Day on Tuesday. In the end the weather was just about perfect (I was somewhat nervous after postponing previously only to have sunny weather arrive) and it seemed to go brilliantly. It's a totally unique day in the school year and I'm sure that the students appreciated the opportunity to do things differently! It was a true community event with sport at the heart.

Finally, Thursday was a special non-uniform day for Year 10 as their chosen house points reward – well done to Year 10 for their achievement!

Teacher Farewells

We have four teachers moving on to new pastures this year:

- Mrs Richards joined us as a classroom teacher in the Music Department in 2021, having been a visiting music teacher before that. I know that Mrs Wellman will greatly miss her teaching partner and she has played a pivotal role in building up the Music Department over the last two years. She is leaving us to take up a post where she will have the opportunity to teach Music to GCSE and A-level and that is a really exciting opportunity.
- Mrs Bennett arrived three years ago as a teacher in the Business & Economics Department. Although she was new to teaching the subject, she quickly demonstrated her aptitude for it and at the end of her first year took up a promoted post as Head of Department. This year has been challenging for Mrs Bennett who has been away for much of the second half of the year and I hope that she continues on the path to a full recovery following her surgery.
- Mr Edwards joined us in 2019 as a Teacher of PE & Science. He quickly established himself as a valued member of both departments; he is well regarded and respected by both students and colleagues. Despite being an excellent science teacher, Mr Edwards' love is PE and so over time he has moved over to being a full PE teacher. He has become the backbone of the department, running more clubs than anyone else! Latterly he took on a promoted post as the Pupil Premium Champion, providing outstanding support to students and parents. Mr Edwards and his wife are embarking on an exciting new venture by moving abroad and I'm sure that they will have a fantastic time.



- Mr Marshall has worked at The Emmbrook twice (with his time broken up by a brief stint at Ranelagh School in Bracknell). Mr Marshall has been a towering figure in the Maths Department throughout his time here, even serving as the Head of Maths at one point. He has been an innovator and introduced many new initiatives. He has been a great supporter of the Sixth Form and, more recently as the Lead Practitioner he has introduced a number of new IT systems to improve communications, assessment and mentoring. This time Mr Marshall leaves us to take up a teaching post in an independent school; it will undoubtedly be an interesting new challenge for him and one that I am sure he will throw himself into with great energy and thought.

Mrs Hodgson's Retirement

After 32 years at The Emmbrook the time has come for Mrs Hodgson to take a well-deserved retirement! Mrs Hodgson joined the school back in 1991 as a Teacher of Modern Foreign Languages (a talented linguist, she is able to teach French, Spanish and German).

For the vast majority of her time with us she has been a pastoral leader, supporting hundreds of young people over the years. Her specialism has been managing the transition from primary to secondary, becoming the permanent Head of Year 7. Mrs Hodgson has always insisted on visiting every student joining us from within the local area each year to ensure the best possible transition.

Over the last few weeks and months since the news has spread, so many former students have been in contact to share the positive impact Mrs Hodgson had on their life. It is a fitting tribute to such a long period of service. We know that she will enjoy her retirement and we hope that she stays in touch!

Student Leadership Appointments

I am delighted to announce the appointment of our new Sixth Form Student Leadership Team for the 2023/24 academic year. I am grateful to all of the candidates who put themselves forward for consideration. Mr Constable and I were spoilt with a field of strong candidates (always a mixed blessing because it makes it very hard to decide!) but we finally agreed on the following appointments:

- Head Students – Mitchell Elliot & Rosa Ketley
- Deputy Head Students – Harry McAvoy, Sophie Oliver & Josh Ritchie
- Student Editor of The Emmbrook Wave – Evie Smith

I'm sure that they will each help improve and develop the school over the next year and I look forward to seeing their successes.

Headteacher's Award

Each term I celebrate a student who has made an exceptional contribution to The Emmbrook and this term's recipient of the Headteacher's Award is Year 9 student Noah Care.

Noah is a positive role model for his peers; he is engaged with his education, has a brilliant behaviour record and embodies our FAIR values. He is a resilient young person with a great outlook and worthy of recognition.



Local Advisors' Awards

Each term the Local Advisors (our governing body) select two members of staff (one from the teaching staff and one from the support staff) to recognise their outstanding contribution to the school. This term's recipients are:

- Support Staff Award – Mr Weeks. In his role as the Exams Officer, he has expertly navigated one of the most complex exams seasons we have ever known. He has done so with care and positivity.
- Teaching Staff Award – Mr Curry. This year he has expanded the range of extra-curricular opportunities to a new high while supporting his colleagues in the Science Department while Miss Smith is away on maternity leave.

Sports Day and House Cup Outcomes

Congratulations go to Saturn for winning Sports Day 2023! It was very close, with the margin of victory being just six points!

The overall House Cup champions are Jupiter! Despite not winning Sports Day, they had such a commanding lead in the overall competition that they end the year in first place! Congratulations to all members of Jupiter House. They will have the honour of being the first house to display their colours on the driveway next year!

PTA Annual General Meeting

The PTA will be holding their AGM on Monday 18th September at 7.30pm at school. Please email them via pta@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk to register your attendance.

Our Year 7 and 12 students begin at 8.20am on Tuesday 5th September. Students in Years 8-11 and 13 will return at 8.20am on Wednesday 6th September.

I hope that you all enjoy a happy and healthy summer and we look forward to seeing the students in September.

Best wishes,

Nick McSweeney

Headteacher

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