



# **Emmbrook Junior School Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023**

**This is the Approved version, for EXTERNAL release.**

**13<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

For further information, contact:

[clerkemj@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:clerkemj@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk)



## Document purpose

This document outlines the strategic direction and priorities for Emmbrook Junior School for the three-year period of September 2020 to September 2023. It is the result of extensive discussion and debate across multiple stakeholders throughout late 2020 and the first half of 2021.

It is revisited annually by the Governors and Senior Leadership Team of the school, with input taken from stakeholders including staff, parents and children from either direct engagement or survey.

Operational activities are not included in this strategic plan but are found in the School Improvement Plan (also known as the School Development Plan). This aligns to the strategy but is focused on operational execution and improvement. The SIP/SDP is a one-year document, whilst the strategy plan looks further ahead.

## Content

Strategy Summary	Elevator pitch summary of our strategy
School Context	An outline of the school dynamics and environment
Motto & Ethos	The essence of the school – our spirit, culture, and the way we do things
Vision	A compelling picture of where we want to be
Mission	What we aim to deliver today
Core Values	Describe those things that we will not compromise on and expect all those connected with the school to adhere, ensuring the development of all rounded individuals
Golden Rules	Outline the behaviours which we encourage children to demonstrate consistently
Houses and Celebration	Recognises the efforts, and achievements of children in their acquisition and deployment of skills, knowledge, and behaviour
Strategic Focus	The areas of focus and working groups being pursued that will enable the school to flourish and move towards its vision



## Strategy summary

At EJS, we put our children at the heart of everything. We do this by:

### Working within our school

- Focusing on breadth and depth of curriculum, embedding diversity and opening minds.
- Balancing academic results with happy and balanced children.
- Driving improvement continuously across our processes and maximising the investments that we make across the school.

### Working with other schools

- Sharing our experience and continually learning from other schools.
- Building fantastic links with the Infant and Senior schools, enabling easy transition.

### Working within our community

- Being easy to communicate with and consistent with our messages.
- Leading on inclusivity and recognising achievement from all sources.
- Seeking incremental funding to allow the school to continue delivering a diverse curriculum.
- Striving to be eco-friendly and minimising our ecological footprint.

## School Context (An outline of the school dynamics and environment)

Emmbrook Junior School is a two-form entry junior school that opened in 1965. The school has always maintained strong links with the community it was created to serve with many of our past pupils now having their own children moving through the school.

Most of our children arrive from Emmbrook Infant School with whom we share a large and attractive site. We work closely with the Infant School to ensure a smooth and successful transition from Key Stage 1 into Key Stage 2. We also work closely with the local secondary schools, including The Emmbrook School, where the many of our children go in Year 7.

Emmbrook Junior School received a “Requirements Improvement” Ofsted outcome in June 2018. The school has responded by strengthening both Governance and the Senior Leadership Team, with many new initiatives introduced to improve standards across the school. Our end of Key Stage 2 results demonstrates the good progress we are making with a year-on-year improvement in the percentage of children reaching age related expectations in reading, writing and maths and the percentage of children reaching the higher standard exceeding both local and national averages in 2019 (when the most recent national assessments took place).

Improving progress in core subjects (with an emphasis on writing and reading) remains a focus for continued school development, whilst continuing to develop the wider curriculum, which is a strong feature of the school.

We provide pupils with opportunities to deepen their understanding through dialogue with teachers and peers. We teach our pupils that they all have a right to be listened to and support them in becoming confident and proficient communicators who develop a wide vocabulary.



We encourage curiosity and promote independence and collaboration through interactive lessons and memorable experiences. Learning is brought to life through our creative, thematic curriculum which is enhanced by trips, visitors, hands-on activities, and outdoor learning experiences.

Learning across the school is well planned so that pupils build on previous learning, can demonstrate their understanding, and learn from mistakes. Good teaching based upon purposeful and accurate assessment underpins the curriculum that moves children's learning on.

When designing our curriculum, our goal was for it to be fully accessed by all children regardless of their starting point or specific learning need.

As well as excellent learning resources in class, our children are also able to enjoy our extensive grounds including playing fields, an adventure playground and a nature area that includes a pond.

Our computing facilities, both in the ICT suite and the classrooms continue to be enhanced with new devices and interactive flat panels, enabling children to build their confidence in the use of ICT across the curriculum. We utilise applications such as Microsoft 365 and Microsoft Teams to support in school provision and give our children remote access to learning tools. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we were one of the few schools in the Borough to be offering live Teams-led interactive teaching.

As children move through the school, we actively encourage them to take ownership of their learning which we believe leads to improved personal and social skills. We expect our children to leave us with the skills and knowledge to make a positive contribution to their community.

Consideration of all the needs of every individual, including those with special educational needs (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, means that all pupils have access to a wide and varied curriculum and appropriate provision within an inclusive classroom environment. Fundamental British Values and Spiritual, Moral and Cultural development are at the heart of our school curriculum and we help pupils understand, accept, and celebrate their differences and uniqueness.

We have a resource-based unit for hearing impaired children (HRB) and these children are fully integrated into school life. The HRB is shared with the Infant School and provides continuity of support across KS 1 and 2.

When possible, we provide many extra-curricular activities of all kinds at lunch time and after school and the school's participation in competitive sport has grown recently, driven by the school's sports coach.

In collaboration with the Infant School, we provide a wrap-around-care service during term-time, enabling a breakfast and after-school service to support our community. During holidays, we also offer a popular joint holiday club on the campus.

We actively seek the opinions of our parents using 'parent view' surveys of our own to inform the school improvement plan. Parents have also played a valued part in a review of the ethos of the school, its vision as well contributing to the person specification for the post of Head Teacher.

The staff are committed to delivering our school's mission and establishing a culture of high expectations where everyone can achieve. In addition, our effective governing body, supportive parent community and most importantly our hardworking and well-behaved children make Emmbrook Junior a school to be proud of, where children are given roots to grow and wings to fly.



## **Motto & Ethos** (The essence of the school – our spirit, culture, and the way we do things)

We provide the educational foundations for our students and help them consolidate their learning to confidently become global citizens that we can be proud of. Our motto is:

***Roots to grow. Wings to fly.***

## **Vision** (A compelling picture of where we want to be)

Our vision is that we will:

- *be the sustainable school of choice for our community.*
- *deliver an outstanding diverse, deep and broad curriculum that reflects the need of our community.*
- *nurture happy and balanced children, who fulfil their academic potential.*

The three strands of our vision guide our strategic direction.

Our school will know when to lead and when to follow. Important threads such as the environment and diversity along with our curriculum will teach ecological responsibility and tolerance which we will be known for. During 2020, EJS was a pioneer in challenging ourselves and the Borough in ensuring our curriculum was diverse and represented all ethnic groups. Thanks, in particular to one of our teachers, we have broadened our own platform, increased our own exposure to recognising inappropriate stereotyping and have been commended by the Local Authority for our work. We have since been a leading example of the Borough's efforts to diversify local schools' knowledge of diversity issues and to continue to find ways to ensure that the school eliminates prejudice. Our academic results are important, but so is the health and happiness of our pupils – this was feedback directly from our community of parents/carers and so forms a pillar upon which we travel.

The vision was built from the results of extensive surveying of the Governor, Staff and Parent/Carer communities towards the end of 2020. From this work, we are confident that the vision echoes the views of our local stakeholders.

## **Mission** (What we aim to deliver today)

*We provide an inclusive, positive environment in which we nurture and empower our children to develop life-long learning skills. This enables them to grow into reflective, successful, and well-rounded individuals in our global community.*

The mission is what we are delivering today and captures the essence of what the school offers. Our curriculum and values consistently underpin our mission and provide the necessary focus for everything that we do. In executing our mission, we are on the journey to deliver our vision.



**Core Values** (Describe those things which we will not compromise on and expect all those connected with the school to adhere, ensuring the development of well-rounded individuals)

The school's core values have been honed over time and are built into the very fabric of EJS schooling. Each receives a specific focus during the year to reinforce its importance and to help children to embrace its meaning and prepare for life in modern Britain.

An extensive exercise across the school in 2020 refined, simplified, and reduced the core values to just five non-negotiable characteristics things that we consistently encourage from our pupils:



By limiting the core values to five, we ensure that we can go deeply into each and explore how they impact our behaviours and thinking across the curriculum and across the setting. Our pupils are encouraged to always demonstrate these values and are frequently rewarded for doing so as highlighted in the 'Houses and Celebrations' section below.

Underpinning these five values, we provide an environment at EJS:

- *that embraces a growth mindset where children love to learn and have the skills they need to learn independently and collaboratively.*
- *that is nurturing, inclusive, welcoming, and safe.*
- *that caters to the intellectual, creative, physical, social, and emotional needs of our pupils.*
- *that enables children to thrive happily, live responsibly, choose ethically and pursue excellence.*
- *where children can think freely, express fearlessly, and thrive independently.*
- *that operates in harmony with our local community and unique outdoor settings.*

**Golden Rules** (Outline the behaviours which we encourage children to demonstrate consistently)

Golden Rules are published across the school and in each classroom. Pupils are encouraged to follow these in pursuit of the five core values. The Golden Rules are:

- *We are kind and helpful to everyone.*
- *We show respect to others and ourselves.*
- *We are honest.*
- *We work hard and always try our best.*
- *We respect our school environment.*
- *We encourage one another.*



**Houses and Celebration** (Recognises the efforts, and achievements of children in their acquisition and deployment of skills, knowledge, and behaviour)

On joining the school, each pupil is put into one of four 'Houses'. These are Redstarts, Golden Eagles, Kingfishers, and Hummingbirds. They are all birds and are linked to our motto supporting the 'Wings to fly' piece. Pupils remain in their allocated House throughout their time in EJS. Teachers and TA's are also members of Houses, giving them the opportunity to motivate and meet children from outside their cohorts.

The Houses allow children to be part of a wider school group beyond their class and year group. It gives a sense of belonging as well as being a useful way to divide the school up vertically for events such as Sports Day. Having 4 House teams also gives the children the opportunity to apply for positions such as House Captain.

The four House Captains are elected by their peers in their House. They are in post for a year and include responsibilities such as monitoring House points, leading part of the celebration assembly, showing around / talking to visitors, encouraging and motivating their house in a pre-sports day house meeting. It is a fabulous way to develop motivational and leadership skills at a young age. Other opportunities are offered to children to contribute with responsibilities including library, register and conducting tours for visitors.

Celebration is a fundamental part of school life at EJS, which is shown publicly in several montages across the school, plus during school assemblies, through the school Twitter account and in the weekly school newsletter. Visitors to the school, including parents/carers, teachers and governors are often found enviously reviewing the many displays of both schoolwork and achievement.

The school formally celebrates the demonstration of the core values – through House Points (which are a quick reward possibly for something small but noteworthy), and 'caught doing the right thing' tokens – these are then used as opportunities to partake in a more substantial and meaningful reward. In addition, the school uses the weekly celebration assembly, where teachers are asked to nominate 2 children who have demonstrated a particular value – each receive a certificate and recognition. The school regularly highlights successes and achievements that have been escalated to the Senior Leadership Team from cross-school competitions, challenges, and events, such as Times Table Rock stars and The Conqueror Challenge. Recognition and celebration can be for team or individual achievements. The school council are the elected pupil body who are consulted on ideas for rewarding and celebrating.

For the annual Sports Day, there is the Sports Cup awarded to the winning House and there will be a new *Governor's House Shield* introduced in 2021, replacing a lost and historic House Cup. Weekly House points accrue over the year and the House with the most points will win the *Governor's House Shield*. This impressive new shield will be engraved with the winning house each year and presented by a member of the School Governors at the end of each academic year.



**Strategic Focus** (The areas of focus and working groups being pursued which will enable the school to flourish and move towards its vision)

The EJS Governors continue to fulfil their obligation to the school, by ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction. The detailed SWOT analysis (**which has been removed in this EJS OFFICIAL RELEASE version**) recognises over 22 distinct areas that the school could focus on, but with varying degrees of effort required and results anticipated. Some of these can be considered as 'Business as Usual' type activities that can be woven into the day-job. Others will require more resource and effort, with some leadership coming from the Governing Body to help the school adapt and adopt new ways of working. We need to distil these key actions down to those areas that will yield maximum impact in both the short and long term – things that will not break our resources and organisation as we pursue them. The aim is not to burden the school with more to do, but to make investments which will release cost, drive income, or improve efficiency.

### Process

To provide oversight and progress of the Strategy, we will create a new Link governor role which is focused on Strategy. This role is being scoped but is expected to work with the SLT and Chairs of Committees to capture the progress being made against the strategic focus areas. In the commercial world, this would be akin to a PMO (Project Management Office) where the objective of the role is to monitor and report, plus offer guidance on making progress. Like all Link Governor roles, this 'Strategy Link Governor' will report progress and findings into the FGB on a regular basis.

Already, the SLT, Chair and Vice Chair meet monthly. This meeting will be extended, and invitations extended to the Chairs of the two committees, plus the Strategy Link Governor, so that progress against initiatives can be discussed and captured.

Responsibility for the definition and execution of each Strategic Focus Area is clearly owned by either an existing committee, or the SLT, as outlined in the next section.

All 22+ areas will be tracked by the *Strategy Link Governor* and reported via a single xls sheet.

### Strategic Focus Opportunity Areas

Many of the items identified in the SWOT relate to actions and areas for the school to address and implement into their Business-As-Usual working processes. Those in the '**Opportunities**' section will require more resources. As such, the Governing Board, and through the existing committees, will establish small, focused groups made up from across the Governors, the school, and potentially external advisors to set in motion a plan to capitalise on the opportunity.

The areas of direct focus are already captured from the Opportunities section of the SWOT and will be report via the single xls report tool. These are:





#	Strategic Initiative	Brief Description
1	Curriculum <sup>1</sup>	A broadening and deepening of the curriculum, supporting work already underway, to ensure the subject leads have education and pedagogy at the heart of the curriculum. This may include how and where lessons are taught and bringing in local outdoor experiences for the children. As a part of this work, we plan to become a Forest School.
2	Community Links	Develop deeper Community, Universities, Senior school, local Primary and Infant links building reciprocal relationships where we can share expertise and work collaboratively for the benefit of the young people we serve.
3	Inclusion Depth <sup>2</sup>	Become a key player in the borough's equality and diversity (including anti-racism) agenda and develop a high-quality bespoke program that supports the teaching and learning of our whole school values.
4	New Funds	Strengthen our finances through innovative fund raising and cost reduction by working with the PTA, the Infant School, WBC, Salix loan programmes, grants and local commerce to complete specific agreed projects.
5	Sustainability	Become carbon neutral and ecologically aware throughout the school. The Borough's target is to be 100% carbon neutral by 2030.

**1** The school is already into its journey of broadening and deepening curriculum areas with Curriculum Subject Leads, and so this underpins that existing work. Significant investigation into the merits and practicality of becoming a Forest School will need to be completed prior to a decision to progress.

**2** The school is committed to its Inclusion responsibilities across all 9 protected groups. We do recognise that we have a unique opportunity to deepen our response to Racial Equity and to assume a leadership position in our thinking and actions across the whole school. Racial Equity will be the first of the protected groups to receive specific attention within the overall banner of Inclusion Depth.

The SLT will consider the 17 recommendations of the Strengths, Weaknesses and Threats from the SWOT and report on progress against them.

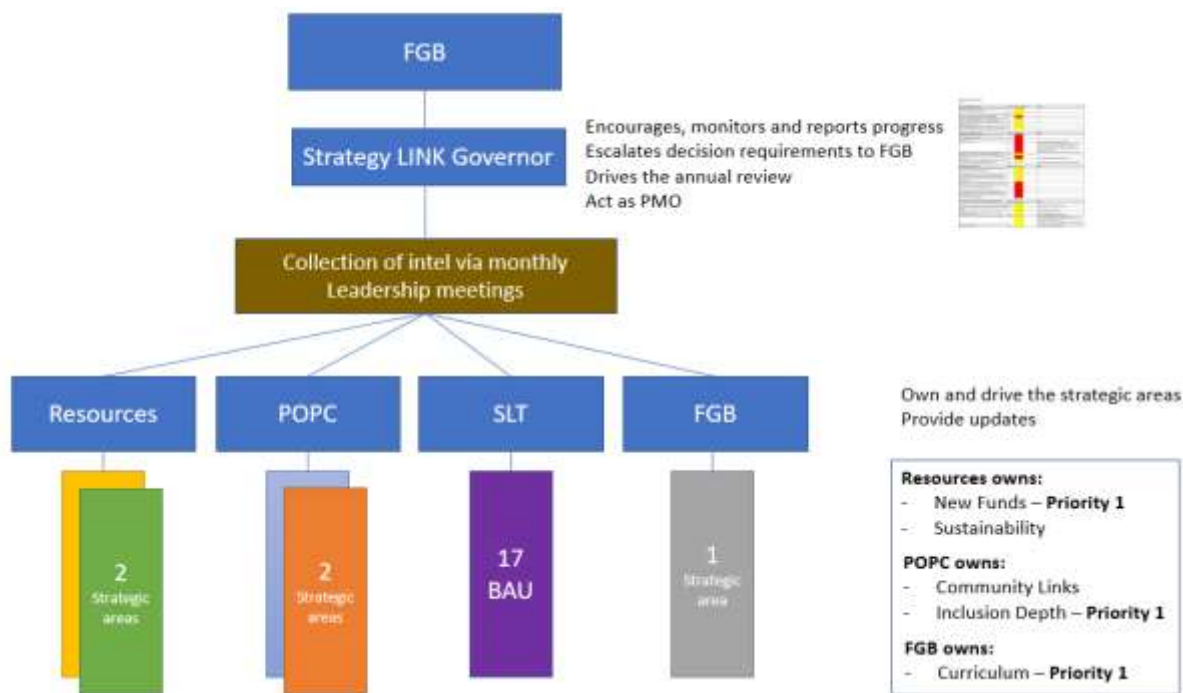
The Chair of Governors will own the overall plan for Curriculum and the associated plan to incorporate outdoor experiences.

The POPC Committee will own 2 areas: Community Links and Inclusion Depth, whilst supporting the Curriculum initiative.

The Resources Committee will own 2 areas: New Funds and Sustainability, whilst supporting the Curriculum initiative.

Each owner will bring in advisors and help as required – consider these teams as the owners of each initiative, and via the monthly Leadership Meetings they will update on the progress being made to the Strategy Link Governor (who maintains the progress xls and further reports on the collective progress of strategy to the FGB).

Pictorially, this is shown below:



It is up to each committee/group to determine the scope, measures of success and completion. The working group will co-opt members as appropriate to build a recommendation of action(s) to the full governing board, which then decides which of these recommendations are implemented.

Strategic Initiatives and their associated working group of members are temporary and exist only as long as the initiative remains adopted by the Governing Board. Each working group is responsible for delivering a focused and clearly defined benefit to the school and/or governance. Working groups report progress directly into the *Strategy Link Governor* where progress is monitored.

At the beginning of a working group, their first task is to determine a ‘Terms of Reference’ document, based on a pre-existing template. This is used to prevent scope creep and to keep the group highly focused on their task. It is the goal of each working group to disband itself as quickly as possible, as this means that their task is complete, and value has been delivered to the school.

**Priority areas**

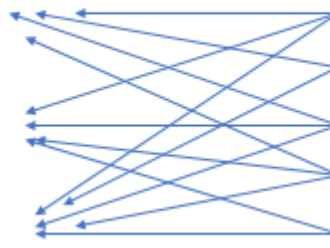
It is unrealistic to focus on all five Strategic Areas at the same time. The School simply does not have the resources. We will therefore prioritise, based on the expected impact and the expected effort to make necessary progress. One aspect of this is to consider how the Five Strategic Areas have a direct line of sight to our three vision statements.

We can see a strong alignment:



**Our vision is that we will:**

- *be the sustainable school of choice for our community.*
- *deliver an outstanding diverse, deep and broad curriculum that reflects the need of our community.*
- *nurture happy and balanced children, who fulfil their academic potential.*



**Our strategic areas are:**

- *New funds*
- *Sustainability*
- *Curriculum*
- *Community Links*
- *Inclusion depth*

Given due consideration, our priority Strategic Areas will be **New Funds** (Resources Committee), **Inclusion Depth** (POPC), and **Curriculum**. Once these have made significant progress, then each committee can determine how and when to accelerate their secondary priority Strategic Areas of Sustainability (Resources) and Community Links (POPC). In delivering against the top priority areas, we anticipate significant gains towards achieving the secondary areas....these things are so interwoven that progress will naturally be made.

On acceptance of this strategic plan, it moves to the owners of the 22 initiatives to begin in-depth analysis, qualification, and planning.

--End--

APPROVED