

Wandsworth Federation of Maintained Nursery Schools

Balham and Eastwood Nursery School Governors



Emma Williams: Executive Headteacher

Emma Williams, Executive Headteacher. Originally from Western Australia where I gained my Bachelor of Education, specialising in Early Childhood Education. Passionate about early years and creative, natural, child lead play. I feel very proud to be part of such an amazing nursery team at Balham and Eastwood. Owns a very stubborn but chilled therapy sausage dog called Seamus.



Fiona Coombe: Co-Chair/ LA Governor/ Resources Committee

I have been a school governor at Balham Nursery School for over ten years and was Chair for two years before the Federation.

I live close to the school in Balham and am passionate about helping children get the best start in life through a rich and varied education. I know the value of education, with both parents being the first in their families to go to university, and the benefits that education has brought to my own career.

I trained as a solicitor and have been involved in the human resources sector for 25 years having worked in a variety of businesses from a national trade association to my own consultancy business.



Adam Ockelford: Co-Chair / Co-opted Governor/ Teaching & Learning Committee / LINK Governor Safeguarding (Eastwood)

Adam Ockelford is Professor of Music at the University of Roehampton, working in the School of Education. Adam was a Governor for over 10 years at Eastwood before joining the Governing Body of the new Federation. He has a particular interest in early years, and how music can help young children's development and well-being.



Lina Graham: Co-opted Governor / Teaching & Learning Committee/ LINK Governor (SEND) - Whole Federation

I was co-opted as a Governor at Eastwood Nursery mainly because of my background in teaching children with a whole range of special educational needs. Before I retired, I was an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) and then Assistant Head at Linden Lodge School which is a special school in Wandsworth. Now I am a Trustee of 2 charities for people with special needs and have close links with a school for the visually impaired (blind and partially sighted) and a special needs orphanage in Pakistan. My original teacher training was as a Teacher for Nursery, Infant and SEND; so I feel I will be of some value to the newly formed Federation of Maintained Nursery Schools in Wandsworth; mainly as a Governor for SEND.



Dr. Helen Thouless: Co-opted Governor/ Teaching & Learning Committee

Dr. Helen Thouless is a senior lecturer in primary mathematics education at St Mary's University. She spent over 10 years teaching in schools in England, USA and Tanzania, and has been, amongst other roles, an Early Years teacher, a Mathematics Specialist, an Inclusion teacher and a Special Education teacher. She became involved in Eastwood Nursery through her research on young children's development of pattern understanding. She was a co-opted governor at Eastwood Nursery from 2017-2021 and for the Wandsworth Federation of Maintained Nursery Schools since then.



Lotte Lydon: Co-opted Governor/ Teaching & Learning Committee

Lotte is an experienced Primary and Middle Years Teacher with history specialism and a background in music. She has worked in a number of leading schools in London and the South East and has mentored trainee teachers.

Lotte joined the Governing Body at Balham Nursery School in 2019 as a Parent Governor and became a Co-opted governor when Balham Nursery and Eastwood Federated in Spring 2021.

As both a mother of many young boys and as a teacher, Lotte is passionate about the importance of early years education and the influence this foundation can have on children's long term development; be it emotional or academic. Lotte's entry into the world of education was as a peripatetic music teacher, teaching guitar and trumpet, which led her towards training and qualifying as a teacher in 2010. She is particularly passionate about the importance of creative arts on the curriculum

and pastoral care of pupils and staff alike.



Georgina Odey: Parent Governor/ Resources Committee

I am the mother of two children, one of which, my youngest has been lucky enough to attend Balham Nursery since September 2020. Prior to this, I volunteered at Balham and subsequently gained employment at the setting following the completion of my childcare qualification. My background is in community project management, education, and performing arts and I am passionate about children, education and my local community. I became a parent governor in the hope that my commitment and skills can add value to this wonderful school and make a positive impact on the lives of children and their families.



Maria Begona Pichel Gonzalez: Parent Governor/ Teaching & Learning Committee

I have been working at Eastwood for 5 years and have lived locally in Roehampton for over 13 years. I am an Early Years Practitioner, Forest School Facilitator, Froebel Professional Certificate in Early Childhood and a creative individual. I know the ethos and staff at Eastwood very well. My younger two children also attended Eastwood Nursery School full time. I have lived abroad for long periods of time and learnt other languages: Spanish, Catalan, French, German and knowledge of Dutch and Arabic. I believe in a healthy active lifestyle and to work with the community you live in. I love Art in all forms, play and music, crafts, etc. I have worked in the tourism and social fields with various ages and abilities. I am passionate about education, enjoy my work, family life and friends.



Kitty Dearman: Co-opted Governor/ Resources Committee/ LINK Governor - Safeguarding (Balham)

Kitty Dearman has been a Governor at Balham Nursery and now the Wandsworth Federation of Maintained Nursery Schools since 2016. She has twins at primary school in Wandsworth and a professional background in marketing. Kitty has served on the Teaching, Learning and Special Educational Needs Committee and now sits on the Resources Committee.

Francois Marshall: Co-opted Governor/ Resources Committee/ LINK Governor - Health & Safety (Eastwood)



My first experience of Eastwood was as a parent. Our eldest daughter began at the day nursery in 2008 when the council were in the process of taking over Buffer Bear Nurseries. I can hardly believe that nervous first day (for us more than our daughter) was 13 years ago.

I accepted the role of governor in 2011 when our youngest daughter was nearing the end of her time in the nursery school.

We were eager to choose a nursery whose staff and children reflected the diverse and inclusive nature of our local community. Eastwood certainly fit the bill.

Over the years we encountered so many dedicated and big-hearted members of staff who along with the wonderful opportunities such as Forest school, visiting musicians and fantastic Christmas parties have left our girls with fond memories of their nursery and nursery school days.

In my professional life I work in both the private and public sector providing C-Level leadership to global teams to deliver progressive technology solutions. Despite the fast pace of change within my workplace I firmly believe that some things in life remain constant. The vital and nurturing role of early years learning is one of these.

Melanie Pollett: Parent Governor/ Resources Committee/ LINK Governor - Health & Safety (Balham)



My name is Melanie and I'm a parent of two. One of whom has just finished a wonderful year at Balham Nursery. I am also an experienced primary school teacher and I am very passionate about the importance of Early Years education.



Sally Thomas: Co-opted Governor/ Resources Committee

I've been involved with Eastwood since my daughter first attended their Chestnut Base in 2014. The difference the ASD base and the nursery staff had on our lives is impossible to overstate. My daughter went from a child completely at sea, to a young person able to explore her world with the right tools and support. I will always be grateful to Eastwood and hope to pay something back by being on the governing board and trying to ensure that future intakes enjoy the same benefits she did.

Although my background is in publishing, I currently work for an MP – undertaking parliamentary activities in Westminster. I am also building on from my Psychology Degree by taking a Certificate in Counselling Skills at Morley College.

I am immensely proud to be involved with Wandsworth Federation of Maintained Nursery Schools and feel we must do all we can to protect our children's early years education.