



EDGBASTON
HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games: Games for Everyone

In a blog written for [HMC](#), Edgbaston High School Headmistress Clare Macro reflects on how sport brings people together.

The excitement of the Commonwealth Games began at Edgbaston High School (EHS) in the summer of 2021 when, still a year away from the actual event, we staged our Commonwealth Day and were delighted to welcome GB athletes Kelly Sotherton MBE and Tom Parsons to speak to us about the Games and the importance of sport. They very definitely whetted our appetite for the Games.

The tagline for the Commonwealth Games 2022 is 'Games for Everyone' and that sits well with the idea of 'sport for all' that we subscribe to at EHS. It is so important that all people irrespective of background, gender, or anything else can participate in sport, knowing as we do what a positive impact it has on our mental and physical health.

Sport is also a driving factor in bringing communities together and in helping us understand the benefits that co-operation and co-existence can bring to any area. The impact of the Games on the West Midlands area is very clear; it has already brought people together, helped the region grow and has placed the West Midlands on the global stage. Birmingham is an exciting place to live, and I hope that the games will help others see how wonderfully diverse this region is, and showcase Birmingham as a centre for innovation and creativity.

Our pupils and staff have already been involved in the Commonwealth Games and the youngest in our community were very excited to welcome Perry, the mascot for the Games, to EHS. Perry introduced them to the history of the event and the variety of sports that will be on offer, and even taught us how to warm up properly for exercise. In and around Birmingham you will also see the photos of two members of EHS who are part of the People, Place and Sport project, created by artist and photographer Jaskirt Boora. Boora's work explores representation in local sporting communities and since April has shone a light on lesser-known sporting facilities and clubs in the build up to the Games. Abida, a Year 12 student and EHS Netball Captain, and Abi Aston, Deputy Head of the Prep School, both members of the Rowley Regis Grasshoppers Netball Club, feature in Boora's work. The photos are currently displayed in several large-scale outdoor exhibitions including at Sandwell Valley Country Park.

Lifeguarding is an incredibly popular club and team sport at EHS, and a number of our students were invited to serve as lifeguards at the Commonwealth Games 'Prep the Pool' test event in May at the new Sandwell Aquatics Centre. They lifeguarded on different days to cover the weekend, and one of Edgbaston High School's swimming coaches, Mrs Hayward, acted as Duty Manager. The girls experienced what it is like to lifeguard a huge venue, and all the different considerations and pressures that come with that. All our lifeguards are now working shifts at the Commonwealth Games pool, lifeguarding the Main Competition pool, the Diving Pool and the Warm up pool.

Showing that the Commonwealth Games is working in multiple ways to bring communities together, Caitlin, a Year 13 EHS student, helped compose and launch, in conjunction with British Sign Language (BSL), an uplifting community chorus called 'Your Love Lifts Me Up'. The chorus is part of the creativity festival that is surrounding the Commonwealth Games. The song, written by an EHS parent, Andrew Kisumba, was translated for BSL and Caitlin composed the distinctive opening violin piece. There are over 5,000 deaf children in the West Midlands and 32 million worldwide and the aim of the chorus was to empower deaf children by teaching signing through singing across whole communities. The song has been performed all over Birmingham and the music video sees the involvement of over 150 performers from across the world, including Longwill school for the deaf in Birmingham and a children's choir in Uganda, who came together as musicians, singers and signers to celebrate diversity and togetherness.

The Commonwealth Games brings nations and communities together in a wonderful celebration of sport and human performance. Sport is an arena where all of us, regardless of skill level, can make life-long friends, create incredible memories, and strengthen our own communities as well as forging connections with people from all over the world. Sport is a leveller, and the Commonwealth Games, often referred to as the 'Friendly Games', is renowned for inspiring athletes to compete in the spirit of co-operation and friendship, a message all of us involved in education believe in.

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