



## **Letchmore Infants' and Nursery School**

### **Governors' Focussed Monitoring Visit Day: Summary Report**

**Wednesday 19th July, 2023**

Members of the school's Governing Board visited for the day on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July to provide oversight and monitor progress on Priority 3 from the School Improvement Plan: *Personal, Social and Mental Health of Pupils and Staff*.

Governors met with members of the senior leadership team (SLT), the office team, subject leaders, the team providing the school's nurture provision, as well as attending a School Council Meeting and an assembly run by the Abilities in Me Foundation.

#### **Personal, Social and Mental Health of Pupils and Staff - key observations and learnings:**

- Pupils were seen demonstrating the school values throughout the day, showing mutual kindness, respect and consideration of others.
- There was a happy atmosphere throughout the school – enthusiasm was everywhere!
- We met with some of the inclusion team providing the school's nurture provision and we discussed forthcoming plans to expand the facilities. Children who need extra support currently make use of The Nest, a room dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing space where children can go to talk about their feelings and experiences in a calm environment away from the classroom. There are resources on hand to help children regulate their behaviours, develop their emotional and social skills, and improve their mental health. The new school guinea pig is located in this room, which is an excellent addition that supports the aims of this space. The Nest is also used for a nurture breakfast and nurture lunch, giving children and their families a positive start to the morning in a safe space, and respite support when needed during the day.
- It's clear The Nest is hugely beneficial and has made a positive difference to the wellbeing of many children and their families, so plans are underway to expand the provision by repurposing existing space to provide a Nurture Classroom. This will greatly expand how much nurturing support the school can provide to children and their families. More and more children are needing additional nurture support. Governors were impressed by the passion and determination of the inclusion staff. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to support children's wellbeing across the school. Their drive and commitment demonstrate how much pupil wellbeing and inclusivity is at the heart of the school's ethos.
- We observed an assembly run by the Abilities In Me Foundation, a charitable organisation that provides learning about disabilities, kindness and inclusivity, as well as a picture book series covering these important themes. They met the author and were able to ask questions. The children learned important concepts about including people with disabilities and how everyone has abilities, taught in a fun and age-appropriate way.
- We saw how well classroom resources are being used to foster inclusivity and support cultural topics as part of the PSHRE curriculum.
- Governing Board members with link responsibilities met with subject leaders for English, Maths, PE, RE, Income Generation and Pupil Premium. Separate reports will detail the specific areas covered in these meetings, but in general there is an incredible amount of work going on to deliver the curriculum in these areas and support progress for all children.

- Governors observed a School Council meeting, where elected children gather to discuss their ideas on how to improve the school. They were celebrating their achievement of organising for Letchmore to have a school dog. Pupils described how important School Council was to them individually and to the school, using words like “fun”, “amazing” and “awesome”. They said School Council is important because “It helps people in the school” and “It makes the school better”, “You get to talk about the school and get to know everyone”.
- Leaders are ensuring that all staff view safeguarding as a shared responsibility. Staff reported having a good understanding of the school’s processes for managing safeguarding concerns.
- We met with the whole School Office team and discussed the workload challenges of managing so many demands on their time. The team are usually the first point of contact for the parent community and outside organisations, while also managing a wealth of other responsibilities behind the scenes for the school including school finances, all pupil admissions and registration, health and safety and legal compliance, supporting circa 50 staff members, and lots more. The team reported that the restructure at the start of this academic year is working well and they feel supported by their manager and the leadership team. The Governors witnessed their strong sense of teamwork and collaboration, and it is clear what a crucial role they play in the effectiveness of the school.
- Governors gathered additional in-situ feedback from teaching staff and support staff across the school. Staff said they feel comfortable raising issues with the SLT relating to their health and wellbeing, knowing that they will be listened to and supported. SLT are consistently monitoring and considering impacts on the workload, mental health and wellbeing of staff at the school.
- The Shout Out board in the staff room is encouraging the sharing of positive feedback and recognition between colleagues, helping them to feel appreciated and valued by their peers. The school also marks National Thank a Teacher every year, providing teachers and support staff with a lot of heartfelt messages from parents, carers and pupils, which is hugely appreciated and has a positive impact on staff wellbeing.

#### **Recommendations and Next Steps:**

- Ensure the important work of the inclusion team is given more visibility to the wider parent community. Governors are thoroughly supportive of the expansion of the nurture provision and we look forward to seeing the many benefits we know it will bring to the whole school.
- The National Schools Breakfast programme (morning bagels for the kids) is bringing noticeable wellbeing benefits for the children. Aim to continue those provisions during the next academic year.
- Link Governors to capture more evidence of meetings with subject leads and offer more monitoring support where needed, to help oversee how the subject curriculum is being taught across the school.
- Consider whether more parent volunteers helping out in the school office would be beneficial.
- Long-term building expansion plans are intended to address challenges around planning space and wellbeing space for staff. Work is underway to try to source additional funding to provide extra building space at the school lesson planning and staff wellbeing, thus freeing up rooms in the current building for pastoral support for the children. The Governor who oversees Income Generation will be supporting the school with these aims.
- Continue to work on funding for a full dining room refresh (long-term)
- Continue to investigate a food recycling provision for the school dining room to reduce waste, in line with the school’s Global Citizen mission and Ecology Club goals.

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