



Letchmore Infants' and Nursery School

Governors' Focused Monitoring Visit Day: Summary Report

Wednesday 2nd July 2025

Members of the school's Governing Board visited for the day on Wednesday 2nd July to provide oversight and monitor progress on Priority 3 from the School Improvement Plan: *Personal, Social and Mental Health of Pupils and Staff*, (linked to Personal Development and Behaviours and Attitudes).

Governors met with members of the senior leadership team, teaching staff, as well as the School Council.

Personal, Social and Mental Health of Staff and Pupils – key observations and learnings:

- Pupils demonstrated school values throughout the day, showing enthusiasm and a high level of engagement with learning. Staff and children were genuinely happy and keen to interact with the Governors.
- We met with The Inclusion Lead, Michaela Benson, and then visited The Hub with her to meet the staff and view the provision. We observed the start of the daily routine for the pupils and were impressed by the level of calm and the active engagement of the pupils. Most were able to maintain sitting for a short period of time – this would not have been possible earlier in the year, showing great progress. Pupils actively joined in with a counting song to develop their understanding of '1 less', pitched appropriately for their level of understanding and using technology to engage them.

Governors talked with staff and observed the children in CIL. There was an impressive range of sensory activities clearly matched to the children's interests both indoors and outside. It was good to see the additional, positive impact of the new member of the team, Alfie Archbold, who consistently uses positive language when supporting children and provides a positive role-model. He was alert to any children who were experiencing dysregulation and offered a nurturing approach when supporting their needs. All the staff clearly know their children very well and aim to provide appropriate, individual provision.

- Governors had the opportunity to examine the Communication Books for both verbal and non-verbal pupils. These showed the level of individual provision for each child according to their needs and the good progress the children have made since joining The Hub, with photos and practical examples of learning taking place, which can be shared with parents.
- We enjoyed a good discussion with Michaela Benson, The Inclusion Lead, who provided an overview of the recent feedback from the parents of the pupils attending The Hub. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with parents acknowledging the impact their time in The Hub has had on their children. All parents feel that their child is safe, supported and understood in The Inclusion Hub. Parents expressed their thanks to the staff for all they do to support their child and acknowledged the positive impact it has had on home life too.
- Governors then had the opportunity to observe the new provision of 'Sensory Circuits' in action. This is a programme designed to help children across the school with sensory integration challenges. The aim is to focus concentration in readiness for the day's learning and to develop children's self-esteem. Jodie Pateman, the Sensory Circuit Lead, works with 38 pupils across the school and she showed a high level of understanding of how to support these vulnerable children with positive encouragement and praise, meaning that each child was actively engaged with the activities, and each was proud of their achievements. This is a new initiative, but the impact is already showing a positive impact on behaviour for the children back in their classrooms and Jodie has lots of ideas of how to develop the provision further next term, including Sensory Circuit Mini Boxes for each Class, but this would involve additional training for TAs.

- Governors had an opportunity to meet the current Year 1 School Councillors with Lisa Nevill and learned that the children have organised and will run a stall at the School Summer Fete on Saturday afternoon. They understood that the purpose of the stall was to raise money for the PTA and were very excited to explain to us how the 'Lucky Lemons' stall would work. They are looking forward to baking lemon cakes and making homemade lemonade to sell on the day. Their enthusiasm shone through.
When speaking about school life, members of the School Council told The Chair of Governors – "School makes me feel cared about", "I have lots of time to draw and read" and "If I need help, I ask my teachers", reflecting the nurturing culture and environment that Letchmore provides.
- During the visit day Governors met with a range of teachers to ascertain their views following a recent Staff Questionnaire regarding workload for teachers and their knowledge of the Directed Hours. All staff who spoke with Governors were confident to raise issues around excessive workload with the Co-Headteachers and felt that their concerns were listened to and anything they were unsure of was explained to them by members of the SLT. They were also pleased to share that they felt that the SLT would then put actions in place to help address any concerns they had raised. An example of this is the additional workload due to the continuing increase of pupils on roll with Special Educational Needs and the additional paperwork and parent consultation meetings resulting from that. Key Stage 1 staff highlighted the immense support and advice they receive from Paige Hewitt in this area and wanted to express their gratitude to her for all that she does for them. Staff felt there had been a positive reaction from the Heads and a new initiative to provide dedicated time for the additional Parent Consultations is being organised as it is felt that this will still be an ongoing concern next year.
Several teachers expressed their appreciation of the flexible approach the SLT take to where PPA time is undertaken as that is a real help to balancing workload and home commitments and supports their mental health and wellbeing.
The SLT are also preparing a more detailed summary for staff around how the 1265 Directed Hours for Teachers are aligned and organised at Letchmore for further clarity and consistency which staff felt they will benefit from.
- Governors took some time to review the draft of the long-term Plan on The Letchmore Journey in preparation for the release of the new version in September 2025. Governors shared ideas of questions to raise at the Full Governing Board meeting to clarify the reasoning behind the next steps identified in the plan. We also discussed ways to enable appropriate support of the school in this area by governors.
- Governors had the wonderful experience of attending the Year 1 End of Year Performance. Joining with parents to watch a truly memorable event, showcasing the amazing confidence, resilience and attributes of the wide range of skills our Year 1 pupils have gained across the year. Governors would like to thank the Year 1 staff for all the hard work that must have gone into producing such an amazing performance.

Recommendations and Next Steps:

- Sustain investment in The Hub, providing the resources to maintain the exceptional level of support for the most vulnerable children throughout the school.
- Encourage the Sensory Circuit Lead to further develop her ideas for the use of this programme across the school and consider the associated resources or training needs.
- Look to develop an annual plan for further opportunities for the School Council's involvement in school events and consider ways to formalise the use of the school council as an ongoing source of pupil opinion and feedback to give them more input into decisions the school makes. Also consider electing Year 1 and 2 councillors a little earlier in the school year, so they can have more time in post.
- Maintain the current ethos and the high degree of attention on the positive mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils.
- Organise a meeting of Governors to ensure their active involvement in The Letchmore Journey 2025-26, prior to sharing with staff in early September.