



**Letchmore Infants' and Nursery School**

## **Governors' Focused Monitoring Visit Day – Autumn Term**

### **Summary Report**

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025**

Members of the school's Governing Board visited for the day on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December to provide oversight and monitor progress on Priority 1 from the School Improvement Plan: *Leadership & Management*.

Governors met with members of the senior leadership team, admin staff, teaching staff, as well as the School Council and a group of parents.

#### **Leadership & Management – key observations and learnings:**

- Governors met with the Leaders of the Science, Arts and Humanities Clusters to discuss progress across the term in their subjects. Unfortunately, due to staff illness, not all Subject Leaders were able to join us. Both the Governors and the Subject Leaders found this a valuable experience and Governors felt this was a really good use of their visit day and would like to see this occur as an annual event. Staff feedback was positive in all three Clusters and all Subject Leaders felt that it was useful to meet in person. We discussed the style of the current Subject Leader Feedback Form and ideas were shared around how we could consider adapting the format to update it.
- **Science Cluster:** In Maths we heard about the trial of TT Rockstars, which is consistent with the approach used at Almond Hill. The Maths Leader, Lisa Nevill, felt it was a very useful tool and there are plans to extend use of it across the school. A question was asked around whether this data could be transferred to Almond Hill at Year 2 transition point and Lisa is going to pursue this idea.  
The Science Lead, Lewis Green, shared plans for a Science Week entitled 'Curiosity, What's Your Question?', which is to be held in March. Lewis also shared information about the Science Newsletter, which is motivating the children and helping to keep parents informed.  
The PE Subject Leader, Becca Pratt, has introduced 'Get Set For PE' across the school as curriculum support for all staff. This is because previously the curriculum was delivered by Premier, but has been brought back in-house. She is pleased with the feedback from staff and monitoring has shown it is successful. Governors asked about resourcing and were pleased to hear that the PE Grant is supporting our school adequately, but Becca is aware of the need to keep resources well stocked in case this Government funding should cease in future. A question was asked about any apparent gender gap and Governors were pleased to hear there is very little difference in KS1 pupils. However, the gap is slightly wider in the EYFS because Writing Skills are included in this data and boys tend to develop these particular fine-motor skills at a later point than girls. Becca also shared details of the annual Activity Survey sent to parents. This has shown that 80% of our pupils take part in at least 30 minutes of physical activity outside of the school day, which is good to hear. Becca continues to plan PE-related events across the school, including a joint activity with Almond Hill and a successful and popular Santa Run.
- **Arts Cluster:** In Design & Technology (D&T), we heard about the 'Making Week' taking place across the school, focused on Holly The Hedgehog preparing to hibernate. The D&T Subject Leader reports that pupils have engaged enthusiastically with this theme. Monitoring has shown that the range of activities in each year group helps

develop D&T skills across the school to ensure good progress.

The English Subject Leader, Janis Thorpe, gave a detailed explanation to Governors of the development of the use of Twinkle Phonics as our new Phonics Scheme. After much research, this approach was chosen as it not only has a fairly reasonable cost, but also clearly matches our whole school philosophy of active learning rather than group work at tables. Following the introduction of this scheme, feedback from Almond Hill Year 3 staff has been extremely positive this term about improved standards in Phonics for their new Year 3 pupils. We explored the reasons behind the gender difference in Writing, which is partly an age-related difference in boys, as identified by the PE Leader. However, the SLT have still made this area a focus for our Letchmore Journey 2025/26, which Governors will monitor at the Spring Visit Day. Janis reported that work scrutiny is already showing a marked improvement since the introduction of this new approach. She also explained the Writing Journey records that show this progress and Governors are keen to have examples of these shared with them at that visit. Janis highlighted the importance of collaborating closely with parents and expressed her gratitude for those who actively contribute, particularly as reading helpers. Continued engagement and recognition of parent support remain key to success.

In Music, we heard about the huge transformation of the curriculum by the Subject Leader Deb Hodgson, through the introduction of The Music Passport. This includes a range of wonderful activities for pupils, which Deb has introduced in order to engage them further in this subject. For example, this will help ensure that our pupils have listened to the work of each of the musicians required by the end of KS2, which should benefit them greatly at Almond Hill. Governors heard about aspects of performing and composing, including a weekly Singing Assembly, Ocarina playing and pupils taking part in the English National Opera challenge to finish a piece of music, which is then performed and recorded for parents to see. Deb has also created a SEN intervention programme to ensure that all children can access and engage with the Music curriculum. A Governor suggested exploring the possibility of surveying the parents in a similar way to PE, to find out how many of our pupils take part in musical activities outside of the school day, as well as helping find musicians who are parents who could hopefully share their skills with the children. Members of the Cluster Group were keen to act on this suggestion.

Details from the Art Subject Leader, Tamsin Vosper, included the intention to expose children to an Artist of The Week and focus upon a different category of creativity each term, including architecture and sculpture. Tamsin also plans to hold an Art Day in the Spring Term, which will give the subject a higher profile across the school.

- **Humanities Cluster:** Governors heard about the wide range of activities taking part across the school in RE to engage the children with understanding Christmas and Festivals of Light in other religions around this time of year. RE Subject Leader, Karen Connolly, is ensuring that our pupils gain a 'World View' in their developing understanding of aspects of collective worship. She is currently updating the Year 2 Curriculum following the updates from SACRE. Karen highlighted that all staff are good at sending children to her to share examples of their work to help with monitoring her subject.

The History Subject Leader, Amanda Donald, shared information about the recent memorial walk with School Council to mark Remembrance Day, as well as the use of an external museum visit for Year 2. These visits are motivating and engaging for pupils, but do have a cost attached. Amanda is keen to provide these opportunities for the children.

The PSHRE Subject Leader, Michaela Benson, explained that there are set lessons in this subject area, but it is also important that it is embedded across the whole school and evident in all that we do. Michaela and Paige monitor any trends found in CPOMS and address any issues as they arise via class discussions as quickly as possible. This swift response is working well.

- **School Council:** Governors met with the new School Council members, who were very proud of their role and pleased to wear the new School Council badges. Lisa helped them to share their latest initiative, writing to parents to ask for help to replace some of the school's reading books and encourage all their friends to take good care of them. Lisa also shared the new annual plan of extra activities for the School Council to undertake each month, drawing on the new Super Kind initiative, which Governors were really impressed with. Governors were also pleased to note that the School Council had met earlier in the term this year to start their roles.
- **Attendance:** We met with members of the Admin Team to discuss attendance. Governors were pleased to hear about the improvement in data due to the proactive work by Elizabeth, Karen and the SLT, which is having a positive impact particularly on persistent absentees. Karen shared the new poster "Play All Day", which addresses

the misperception that young children merely play all day and missing a few days attendance does not really impact their progress. The new poster highlights the importance of attending school every day, to encourage parents to see the value. The introduction of Fixed Penalty Notices has had a slight positive influence on data, but are not deemed to be the driving force for parents. Governors were interested to hear about the issues to be raised with the LA Attendance Officer at the next visit, which will clarify roles and responsibilities of Letchmore SLT and other agencies. Governors are supportive of this initiative and would like to be kept updated on this issue.

- **Sustainability:** We met with the new Sustainability Lead, Lewis Green, who shared his ideas and plans for the coming year. This role is a new Statutory Requirement and will build upon the great work already in place at Letchmore. A formal audit needs to be undertaken to establish the current situation before formal future plans can be established. Our DPO is hoping to help to undertake this audit and then Lewis will draw up our next steps. He is keen to build upon the Global Learning Project he took part in, which included a visit to Nepal, and he shared information with us about that project. Lewis is intending to include a regular update for parents on sustainability in the Science Newsletter and he plans to involve the children in some of the new tasks to raise awareness.
- **Early Years:** Governors met with the EYFS Leader, Janis Thorpe, who explained the changes to the EYFS Framework and the implications for our school, especially in staffing, training and the associated costs. The main actions for our school are connected to Paediatric Training and qualified staff ratios. Janis is mentoring three members of staff to support them in following the experience-based route in obtaining the appropriate level of qualification that is now required. Janis had produced a summary for Governors that we all found very useful and informative.
- **Parent Focus Group:** Governors then met with a group of parents to discuss the recent Parent Questionnaire. Governors had previously studied the responses from all parents but were delighted to have the opportunity to meet with some in person. The feedback from the group was 100% positive, which was pleasing to hear. Parents particularly appreciated the approachability of staff and the level of support they felt came for them and their family, if or when they needed it. These parents particularly like: the atmosphere around the school; being able to drop off their children at the classroom door to see the staff and the environment (although disappointed that one classroom does not have this option); the balance of content in the newsletters; the parent sessions that we offer; and, the presence of SLT Members on the gate each morning – even in the rain! The only negative comment was around the bottleneck at the gates caused at busy drop off and pick up times, especially if parents have a double buggy, which Governors agreed to feedback to the Headteachers.
- **Letchmore Journey:** Finally, Governors took some time to review the progress of Key Priority 1.3 of The Letchmore Journey, which aims to strengthen the role of the Governing Board in our strategic oversight and monitoring of the school. Overall, Governors judged progress to date as ‘amber’, although did feel that today’s face to face meetings with Subject Leaders provided an improved understanding of how subjects are progressing and allowed us to strengthen our relationships with staff. Governors have also been pleased to attend several school events this term and will continue to be a visible presence across the year.

#### **Next steps and actions:**

- Explore the possibility of undertaking a Parent Survey in Music, in a similar way to PE, to find out how many of our pupils take part in musical activities outside of the school day and discover any hidden musical talents among our parent body which could be utilised as teaching tools.
- Create a small working party of Governors, SLT and Subject Leaders to review and update the Subject Leader Feedback Form. We want to ensure staff do not feel they have to keep adding new things, but can focus on ensuring excellence in all subject areas, while maintaining the useful element of data monitoring.
- Consider expanding the use of face-to-face meetings between Governors and other area leads on Governor Visit Days.
- Clarify the situation around the roles and responsibilities of outside agencies connected to attendance monitoring, in order to maintain the current ethos and the high degree of attention on the positive mental health and wellbeing of our staff.