



Early Years Governor Visit Report

Name of Governor	Joanne Steel
Date of Visit	11 February 2025
Agreed Focus for Visit (linked to SEF, SDP & Key priorities)	Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
Name of Staff	Mrs Su Tones
HUGG shared? (if subject area)	N/A

Staff wellbeing check in

It has been a challenging start to the year. It has been and continues to be quite an intense environment as there is a high level of need within the cohort, coupled with the staffing restructure meaning there is one less adult to support in the classroom.

Mrs Tones said there have been some improvements since January, following the change to the TA structure within Reception Class. However, it is clear that challenges remain.

Next Steps/follow up from previous monitoring

It has been three years since the previous in-depth EYFS visit where no specific actions were identified.

Key Area in SDP: Monitoring Findings from this visit

SDP:

As the EYFS programme sits slightly apart from the rest of the curriculum, there are no specific EYFS goals within the SDP. However, as the start of the children's journey at Holy Trinity, there is a clear emphasis on preparing them for the national curriculum as they move up the school. There is also a focus on helping the children to develop positive attitudes and behaviours.

Monitoring Findings:

The Cohort

There is a lot of need across the cohort particularly in areas of social development, school readiness, behaviour and sharing. This group of children are currently not very cohesive with each other, a situation that needs to be constantly managed by staff. Some of the children find it difficult to follow instructions.

Conversations with the pre-school settings in the summer did not highlight particular needs, but in reality, many of the children were not "school ready" in September 2024. One possible factor for this could be the ratio difference between preschool and school - the children were "ready" when in a 6:1 environment but much less so when the ratio was reduced to 15:1 or 30:1.

Specific needs present within the class include Speech and Language needs, previously looked after children and specific behavioural problems.

Concerns around Reception intake children being "school ready" is a national issue with the majority of teachers in a recent survey reporting that "up to a third of Reception children are not ready for school" when they start in September. Issues identified include overuse of electronic devices (leading to some children not knowing how to turn the page of a book), not being able to undertake basic skills such as putting on their own coats and shoes and not being toilet trained. The impact of this on the classroom is that teachers have to spend more of their time performing the TA role rather than teaching.

This has also been the experience within in our own Reception class this year with Mrs Tones advising that she is spending significantly more of her time undertaking basic care-giving (a role often undertaken by a TA), and less time teaching. The survey results and article imply that this is likely to be an ongoing issue nationwide. In terms of the impact on Holy Trinity, it may be that TA support in the Early Years setting may need to be considered for prioritisation when budgets allow, to ensure that the knock-on effects are not felt



as the cohorts progress up the school. **Action** - consideration of additional or specialist support staff in Early Years when financial situation improves.

Phonics

I was present for a daily phonics session. Mrs. Tones advises that due to the needs of the children, she is currently 6 - 8 weeks behind on where the class would usually be in this area. It is taking the children longer to be secure in each phase, and she does not want to move on to the next phase until the majority of the class are secure in the previous phase. She is therefore concerned that the cohort, as a whole, will not be ready to move on to the National Curriculum in September 2025 and that this will have a knock-on effect as the class moves up through the school. This is likely to be the case as there are not enough support staff to carry out the required number of interventions. Due to specific speech and language challenges within the class, she is having to prioritise NELI (Nuffield Early Language Interventions) over phonics interventions at this time.

We discussed how the school could encourage more at-home reading to support the children. **Action** – Mrs Tones to discuss the possibility of an email or letter to parents with Mrs Griffith (potentially to come from Mrs Griffith or Miss Harding as English lead).

Outdoor equipment

The outdoor space requires some improvements and we discussed a list of priorities which we could perhaps add to the Wish List on the newsletter, which had been successful previously. **Action** - Wish list of priorities to be included in the newsletter.

Requirements include: An elasticated or rolling weatherproof cover for the sandpit so this could be actively used by the children and protected from the weather. (Parents had kindly made wooden covers for this before but these were now rotten and no longer fit for purpose); rebuilding of the stage or fundraising for such; repainting of the train; compost for the gardening area; child sized brooms; Large paint brushes; Dustpan and brush; Tennis balls; Footballs; Chalks; Construction equipment – hats and jackets.

Teaching Assistants

I had a brief conversation with the TA who had recently been moved into support this class. She advised that she was enjoying spending 3 days in Reception. Although it was a more intense environment, she felt it was easier to be placed in one setting rather than splitting her three days amongst three different year groups, and she felt that the consistency was benefitting the children.

Mrs Tones concurred that altering the TA support since Christmas had been beneficial but reiterated that not having a specialist Early Years TA was having an effect on both her and the children, especially given the high level of need.

Actions used to identify findings

Morning spent in Reception class. I was present for free play (including outside play), a phonics session, fine motor skills task, and lunch time; Conversation with Su Tones the class teacher; Read article on school readiness included within a leading education publication; brief conversation with teaching assistant; conversations and interactions with the children.

What outcomes have been identified as a result of my visit

It is clear that EYFS staff are working tirelessly to support the needs of the children, in difficult circumstances. Although progress has been slower than hoped, the children are adapting to life in school and are slowly developing the social and educational skills needed. The majority of the children are happy in school and there are no safety concerns.

It is, however, unlikely that the Early Learning Goals and outcomes will be fully met without additional resources and interventions before July 2025.

The following actions have been agreed:

Action - consideration of additional or specialist support staff in Early Years when financial situation improves.



Action – Mrs Tones to discuss the possibility of an email or letter to parents with Mrs Griffith (potentially to come from Mrs Griffith or Miss Harding as English lead).

Action - Wish list of priorities (volunteer building/maintenance support and items/equipment) to be included in the newsletter.

We have agreed that I will do a follow up visit in July 2025 as the children prepare to move on to year 1.

How I witnessed the vision in action during my visit ('I know there is nothing better for people than to be happy and do good while they live.' Ecclesiastes 3:12)

Children appear happy in the classroom. Adaptations are made where appropriate to ensure all children are included in activities (for example, sign language used for non-verbal pupil, additional support given where needed). Children are gently reminded of school rules when needed.

Obviously, these are the youngest children within the school so are still learning at times to be respectful, kind and safe! Additional adult support would be clearly beneficial to supporting the children as they learn to thrive in the school environment.

Impact of this visit

I am confident that Mrs Tones and the team are working hard and doing all they can to deliver the EYFS goals in challenging circumstances. The Leadership Team and Governors are aware of the challenges facing the cohort and will continue to monitor progress and support required.

I want to thank Mrs Tones for her time and openness during the visit.

Aspects I would like clarified/Questions I have

None.

To be shared with the school staff and school Governing Board.

Signed:

(Governor)

Signed:

(Headteacher/Staff member)