

Governor Visit Report – Harlyn Primary School

<i>Name</i>	<i>Glenn Smith</i>
<i>Date of Visit</i>	<i>21 Oct 2025</i>
<i>Focus of Visit</i>	<i>Review of provision, curriculum delivery, and transition arrangements in Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception).</i>
<i>Class Visited</i>	<i>Nursery and RB/RL</i>
<i>Focus of Visit</i> <i>The visit aimed to evaluate the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision, focusing on Nursery, Reception, and cross-phase collaboration. Key areas of interest included:</i> <i>• The implementation and impact of the 30-hour provision in Nursery.</i> <i>• Children's adaptation to routines promoting independence and engagement with the curriculum.</i> <i>• Early attainment levels and interventions in Reception.</i> <i>• Cross-phase collaboration between Nursery and Reception to support transitions.</i> <i>• Strategies for parental engagement and SEND support.</i>	
<i>Summary of the activities</i> <i>Nursery</i> <i>30-Hour Provision Rollout:</i> <i>The transition to the 30-hour provision has been successful, with the Nursery offering 35 hours. However, some children leave at 14:30 to stay within the 30-hour grant. Staffing is sufficient, with 19 staff members, including a trainee teacher, though only two staff are present in the afternoons. During the visit, four staff members were observed, one providing one-to-one support for a child.</i> <i>The current cohort is more socially capable compared to the previous year, The assumption is that we are exiting the apparent COVID implications. However, attainment levels remain below the expected baseline. Parents' evening feedback was positive, with most parents adjusting well to expectations and providing feedback on challenges at home. Some parents of children with SEND are not yet fully engaged, and there is a need to address misconceptions about the Nursery's preschool focus, as some parents expect childcare services (i.e. naptime, which the Nursery is not equipped to provide) rather than a pre-school learning environment.</i> <i>In January, younger children (just turning three) will join under the 30-hour provision, which may increase the need for nappy-changing provision and consideration.</i>	

- *Settling-In and Independence:*
Children were observed engaging in a variety of activities, including easel painting, sand and water play, playdough, Duplo, storytelling, and a Diwali-themed cooking activity. Staff were attentive and quick to provide support, encouraging children to return to independent play.
Children with SEND and younger children are settling in well, though some exhibit lower language skills and significant SEND concerns. Staff are experienced in managing these challenges, despite the frustration of long waiting times (up to two years) for assessments.
- *Curriculum Engagement:*
The current theme is Nursery Rhymes, with a Diwali focus for the week. After half-term, the theme will shift to Colour and Shape, building on counting and vocabulary skills. To enhance speaking confidence, staff are introducing a 'Chatterbox' programme, where children will work in small groups in a quiet environment to pre-learn topics before discussing them in larger groups. This initiative will be reviewed in future visits.
Social skills are improving, and while some children with EAL have limited English vocabulary, they demonstrate strong comprehension in their home languages, which is a positive foundation for learning English.

Reception

- *Early Attainment and COVID Impact:*
The children were observed preparing for Outdoor PE, displaying excitement and enthusiasm. They were engaged and chatty, reflecting improved social skills compared to the previous cohort.
In terms of attainment, there is a noticeable decline compared to pre-COVID cohorts. For example, many children struggled to write their names during the 'First Day Frame' exercise, whereas children a decade ago were writing sentences at this stage. This decline is possibly linked to a cultural shift in pre-school and home learning practices rather than solely the impact of COVID-19. Early interventions, such as small group sessions for numeracy and literacy, are being trialled to address these gaps.
- *Technology Use:*
Children demonstrate strong tablet skills, and the computing plan has been adjusted to delay the introduction of keyboard and mouse skills until later in the year. This approach aims to build on their existing digital proficiency.
The smartboard, which allows only one touchpoint at a time, has been effective in teaching turn-taking, an essential social skill. However, children are frequently reminded not to lean on the board, as this disrupts its functionality.
- *Transition to Formal Learning:*
Children are gradually adapting to the more structured routines of Reception. While they enjoy outdoor activities, they are becoming accustomed to formal

lessons. The removal of classroom barriers has created a fantastic outdoor space, which is used to balance formal and informal learning. Classes are divided into smaller groups on Mondays and Tuesdays for focused numeracy and literacy sessions, while the entire class comes together on Wednesday to Friday.

What I have learned from my visit

- The 30-hour provision in Nursery is running smoothly, but there is a need to address parental misconceptions about the preschool's focus and prepare for the January intake of younger children.*
- Social skills in both Nursery and Reception have improved compared to previous cohorts, but attainment levels, particularly in literacy, remain a concern.*
- Staff are proactive in addressing SEND and language development needs, but long waiting times for assessments remain a significant challenge.*
- The 'Chatterbox' programme in Nursery and the use of technology in Reception are promising initiatives that support communication and social skills.*

Idea for future visits

Nursery

- Monitor the progress of EAL children, particularly their language and communication development.*
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the 'Chatterbox' programme in building confidence and improving communication skills.*
- Assess the impact of the January intake of younger children on staffing, routines, and resources, particularly regarding nappy provision.*

Reception

- Observe the effectiveness of early interventions in improving literacy and numeracy skills.*
- Review the impact of the planned parent workshop on fine motor skills and handwriting.*
- Monitor the progression of social skills and the balance between formal and outdoor learning activities.*

Any other comments

The visit highlighted the strengths of the EYFS provision, including dedicated staff, effective use of resources, and a focus on fostering independence and social skills. The Nursery and Reception teams work collaboratively, ensuring smooth transitions and continuity for children. However, challenges remain in addressing attainment gaps, engaging parents of children with SEND, and managing long assessment waiting times. Overall, the EYFS provision is well-structured and responsive to the needs of

the children, with promising initiatives in place to support their development. Future visits should focus on tracking the progress of these initiatives and addressing emerging challenges.