



Internal Scrutiny Report

2025 - 2026

Lymm High School
January 2026
Sustainability

Juniper

Internal Scrutiny Review

Introduction

This report provides assurance that adequate controls are being operated within the trust, based on the understanding that the information provided during the review is accurate and complete. It should be noted however that recommendations to improve controls, if implemented, cannot guarantee that fraud or misappropriation could not occur.

Recommendations raised in the report issued should be considered by the board of trustees / Audit and Risk Committee to assist them in providing assurance over the suitability of, and compliance with, the systems and operational controls in place.

No fraud was identified or reported to us for the 2025-26 period. It remains the responsibility: of management to manage the control environment to help identify potential fraud and prevent the likelihood of fraud occurring.

The Academy trust handbook specifies “The trust must identify on a risk-basis (with reference to its risk register) the areas it will review each year.”

Providing that the trust has selected a scope of work for financial and non-financial controls and has considered its risk register, this Internal Scrutiny Report demonstrates how the trust meets the Academy trust handbook 2025 internal scrutiny requirements.

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Executive Summary

The school is performing above average in the area of sustainability, with evidence showing that most key practices are in place and operating effectively. Sustainability considerations are embedded across day-to-day operations, and the school demonstrates a clear commitment to responsible resource use and long-term planning. While there remain opportunities to further strengthen and embed best practice, overall performance in this area is strong and reflects a proactive and positive approach. The government strongly recommends the appointment of a sustainability lead for each school and the use of a Climate Action Plan. ' It has been recommended that this is addressed

Context of the School

Lymm High School is a Single Academy Trust School in Cheshire. There are 1,950 pupils aged 11-18. The original building is Grade 2 listed Georgian building with additional twentieth century teaching blocks. The school also has an indoor swimming pool. The school is fortunate to have extensive grounds of 26 acres. This is largely grass sports pitches but also includes an orchard, wildflower area and allotment.

The school completes an annual Streamlined Energy and Carbon Report (SECR). In 2024 the school used 1,866,328 kWh of gas costing c£100k and 770,238 kWh of electricity costing c £190K. Total emissions of 525 tonnes CO₂e were produced at a mean value of 0.27 tonnes per pupil. Benchmarking of these values for UK schools is in its infancy, but in the experience of this reviewer, these values are a little higher than usual. The reason is likely to be the large site and heated indoor pool.

The leadership team of the school take sustainability seriously and are committed to improve the energy efficiency of their estate. The listed building has recently had its windows replaced with double glazing, and most of the modern buildings are double glazed. Approximately 85% of lights are now LED. It is reported that all buildings are satisfactorily insulated.

Current HVAC system comprises of gas central heating and electric split AC heaters. Improved control systems have recently been fitted. The gas boilers are quite new and are more efficient than previous models.

The school has a target of net zero by 2035. This ambitious target requires funding. The school has used E3 Cube to bid for capital funding. This will be used to replace gas central heating with ground source heat pumps.

There is an active eco group of staff and pupils in the school. Their enthusiasm and imagination have ensured that the school has maintained Eco-School status for 4 years.

Despite the school's commitment to a sustainable future, it has not yet nominated a Sustainability Lead or produced a Climate Action Plan (CAP), which is a [key recommendation by the DFE](#) . The over-riding target from this review is to address this situation without delay. The four strands of this review match those suggested by the government. Free help in compiling the CAP is available from [Let's Go Zero](#) and [Climate Ambassadors](#), but this document can be used as a basis.

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Suggested Themes and Areas to Explore. (Based on the Government 4 key pillars of Climate Action Plans)	Strengths	Areas for Development	Key Stakeholders
<p>Adaptation and Resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management of the school estate is in good order. There has been a programme of updating windows, blinds, insulation and HVAC. • Surface water flooding has been an issue in the past, but this situation has been remedied by the fitting of two attenuation tanks in 2019 and 2022. • The school uses local company Wright Landscapes to improve the grounds. • AC is fitted in some rooms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There appears to be some good shade provided by trees for some teaching blocks. The school could examine the possibility of further planting to improve natural shading and cooling. • Most windows have internal blinds. If overheating persists, consider fitting external blinds or brise soleil. • Tarmac playgrounds and carparks next to classrooms can exacerbate summer heating. Consider planting next to school buildings. This could also provide shade for pupils during breaks. • If surface water flooding persists, advice could be sought on producing a ‘boggy area’ or pond accompanied by suitable planting. • Consider extending the provision of AC, but energy-free cooling methods such as shade and natural ventilation should be preferred. • The Government has noted that overheating, flooding and water scarcity are key climate risk factors affecting UK education: Impact of UK climate change risk on the delivery of education - GOV.UK 	<p>COO D of F Grounds staff Eco Group</p>

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<p>Biodiversity and Nature</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been noted that the staff coordinator and pupils have formed a committed and effective Eco-Schools group. This is the 4th year of Eco-schools' status. They effectively communicate their ideas and actions through a large video display, assemblies and newsletter. • The school is fortunate to have extensive well-kept grounds. The Eco-schools group have improved biodiversity by installing bug hotels, litter picks and bird feeding stations. • A tree survey has been completed, and 400 young trees are being delivered in March 26. The Eco-schools group will help to decide planting positions. • No-mow May is planned. This will improve biodiversity. • Research is planned to link bird life to flora and fauna on the school grounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eco Schools and sustainability is visible on the online newsletter, but more prominence could be given to it on the main website. Consider a mission statement and policy. The 'Values and Ethos' section does not mention this important area. • Consider extending no-mow May into the summer. This can allow for improved biodiversity to thrive. • Ensure that the school community understand the reason for no-mow May, rather than thinking it looks untidy! • Consider installing a bog garden or pond to further improve biodiversity. • Contact National Education Nature Park for excellent free help and advice. 	<p>Eco Group School SLT Grounds staff</p>
<p>Climate Education and green Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has an allotment. The staff member responsible for running this is not yet in post. • The allotment will be used by Food Tech and Business Studies for teaching and learning. • Geography and Science have linked with the Eco-schools group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve pupils in up-coming decisions regarding solar and heat pumps. There are excellent learning opportunities for Science, Business Studies and Maths. • Ensure that the Science and Maths departments are aware of the SECR. There are excellent learning opportunities. • Use the excellent free visiting speakers at Climate Ambassadors and Let's Go Zero to share career ideas in sustainability. 	<p>Department Heads Eco Group</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils have met the school-grounds contractor to discuss tree planting, hedges and no-mow May. This will improve their understanding and communication skills. • Pupils from Eco-schools group present their ideas and findings to the governing body, which is excellent preparation for academic and working life after school. • There are links with Warrington Borough Council and their Ranger team. This offers insight into the work of local government and will improve communication skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify local companies that work in sustainability e.g. solar, wind, nuclear, hydro-electric, nature conservation, farming etc 	
<p>Decarbonisation and Net Zero</p>	<p>The school management have shown that they are serious about making progress. They are on track to meet a challenging net zero deadline of 2035, subject to investment. The school is aware that ‘fabric first’ is the key to cutting emissions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy use and carbon emissions are monitored via a KPI dashboard. A central control system for HVAC is now in place. • An annual SECR is produced. • Insulation is in place and will be assessed further before heat pumps are fitted. • Most windows are now double glazed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey and installation of roof solar PV should be a serious consideration to reduce electricity costs and scope 2 emissions. This can also be a valuable learning tool for the pupils in numerous areas of the curriculum. • Conduct energy assessments of school buildings and consider cost benefit of replacing any single glazed windows and non-LED lights. Also consider auto-on/off lights for rooms and corridors. • Replacement of gas boilers is key to net zero and reduced costs, especially if a supply agreement can be negotiated with the solar farm. If the CIF bid is not successful, evaluate and re-submit. 	<p>COO D of F Eco Group.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 85% lights are LED• The pool has a new cover and the effect on energy consumption is being monitored.• A Condition Improvement Fund application is in place for replacement of gas boilers with ground source heat pumps.• A planning application is in place for a solar farm in proximity. There may be some scope for a partnership or supply agreement.• A quote for roof solar panels was sought in 2023 but did not proceed.• There is a ride to work scheme in place for staff• 'Green travel' is encouraged for pupils' journey to/from school.• The school kitchen has a policy of buying locally.	<p>Consider alternative partner companies such as Barker Associates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The central control system for HVAC data is not currently shared or available to many staff. Consider how this data can be made available to interested parties. Energy use and carbon emissions are not a key focus for the Eco group this year, but future years could consider this. Count your carbon and Energy Sparks are excellent ways for pupils to monitor this.• Annual survey of staff and pupil travel. Consider ways to further improve sustainable travel. Consider providing staff EV chargers. These could be made available to the community when school is closed.• Meat and dairy are very carbon intense. Consider ways to reduce these in school meals.	
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RAG	Recommendation		
Adaptation and Resilience			
Low Priority	There appears to be some good shade provided by trees for some teaching blocks. The school could examine the possibility of further planting to improve natural shading and cooling.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	
Low Priority	Most windows have internal blinds. If overheating persists, consider fitting external blinds or brise soleil.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	
Low Priority	Tarmac playgrounds and carparks next to classrooms can exacerbate summer heating. Consider planting next to school buildings. This could also provide shade for pupils during breaks.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	
Low Priority	If surface water flooding persists, advice could be sought on producing a 'boggy area' or pond accompanied by suitable planting. This will also assist with increasing biodiversity.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	
Low Priority	Consider extending the provision of AC, but energy-free cooling methods such as shade and natural ventilation should be preferred.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	

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RAG	Recommendation		
Biodiversity and Nature			
Low Priority	Eco Schools and sustainability is visible on the online newsletter, but more prominence could be given to it on the main website. Consider a mission statement and policy. The 'Values and Ethos' section does not mention this important area.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	
Low Priority	Consider extending no-mow May into the summer. This can allow for improved biodiversity to thrive. Look to ensure that the school community understand the reason for no-mow May, rather than thinking it looks untidy.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	
Climate Education and green Skills			
Low Priority	Involve pupils in up-coming decisions regarding solar and heat pumps. There are excellent learning opportunities for Science, Business Studies and Maths.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	
Low Priority	Ensure that the Science and Maths departments are aware of the SECR. There are excellent learning opportunities.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	
Decarbonisation and Net Zero			

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RAG	Recommendation		
Low Priority	Survey and installation of roof solar PV should be a serious consideration to reduce electricity costs and scope 2 emissions. This can also be a valuable learning tool for the pupils in numerous areas of the curriculum.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	
Low Priority	Conduct energy assessments of school buildings and consider cost benefit of replacing any single glazed windows and non-LED lights. Also consider auto-on/off lights for rooms and corridors.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	
Low Priority	Replacement of gas boilers is key to net zero and reduced costs, especially if a supply agreement can be negotiated with the solar farm. If the CIF bid is not successful, evaluate and re-submit. Consider alternative partner companies such as Barker Associates.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	
Low Priority	The central control system for HVAC data is not currently shared or available to many staff. Consider how this data can be made available to interested parties. Energy use and carbon emissions are not a key focus for the Eco group this year, but future years could consider this. Count your carbon and Energy Sparks are excellent ways for pupils to monitor this.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	
Low Priority	Annual survey of staff and pupil travel. Consider ways to further improve sustainable travel. Consider providing staff EV chargers. These could be made available to the community when school is closed.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	

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RAG	Recommendation		
Low Priority	Meat and dairy are very carbon intense. Consider ways to reduce these in school meals.		
Management Response:		Responsibility / Due Date:	

Notes / Areas for Consideration / Useful Links

The Government has noted that overheating, flooding and water scarcity are key climate risk factors affecting UK education:
[Impact of UK climate change risk on the delivery of education - GOV.UK](#)

Contact [National Education Nature Park](#) for excellent free help and advice.

Use the excellent free visiting speakers at [Climate Ambassadors](#) and [Let's Go Zero](#) to share career ideas in sustainability.

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Key Contacts

Education Review Consultant	Martin Knapp
Juniper Audit Manager	Carly Quick Crockford ACCA
Information Provided by	Simon Marsden

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SECTOR WIDE EMERGING ISSUES

Wellbeing

It has been reported that staff stress levels are high, leading to many staff leaving the education sector altogether. Mitigating the impact of stress in the workforce should be implemented into everyday trust life by use of a wellbeing charter and strategies and structures that are put in place. Juniper can assess the general wellbeing of staff and provide suitable recommendations to help improve staff wellbeing and staff retention. Please contact carly.quickcroford@junipereducation.org should you require any further information.

Cyber Security

Cyber security has continued to be a growing area of concern and risk over the past 18 months, with more people working remotely and an increased frequency of email hacking, phishing and malvertising. The July 2020 [governance update](#) advises that schools should include an assessment of cyber security within their risk registers, and the ESFA have produced further guidance and suggested questions that trustees can ask on the [National Cyber Security Centre website](#).

GDPR

An increasing number of schools are incurring unplanned costs, both direct and indirect, because of the increase in basic, and easily avoidable, data protection incidents and poorly managed school communications. This is combined with the increasing awareness of data subject of their right to bring a claim [on average in the order of £5,000 per claimant], directly against a school, leading to considerable potential risk to a school. Our GDPR associate has created a briefing video which helps you understand the changing risk to your school and employ some basic strategies and resources to help mitigate them and protect your school against unplanned costs. If you would like access to this briefing, please contact carly.quickcroford@junipereducation.org

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Useful Information

ACADEMY TRUST HANDBOOK

The Academy trust handbook 2025 is effective from September 2025. Trustees should ensure that they have read this document and noted any changes to ensure any new requirements are adhered to.

[Academy trust handbook 2025: effective from 1 September 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

INTERNAL SCRUTINY IN ACADEMY TRUSTS

This good practice guide provides guidance for trustees, audit and risk committees, accounting officers, and chief financial officers (CFOs) in academy trusts.

[Internal scrutiny in academy trusts - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Bespoke Reviews

If our portfolio of reviews does not include a particular area of interest or risk identified by the trust board, please contact us to discuss our bespoke review options.

Consulting

Juniper is available to provide consulting services in many areas of running a multi academy trust, from centralisation implementation and restructuring to expansion and attracting schools. Please contact us if you would like more information on our consulting work.

From Payroll to complete HR confidence

Payroll depends on accurate HR data, from contracts and absence to safer recruitment. It drives the biggest cost line in [finance](#), so even small errors can mean compliance risks and unexpected costs.

By joining payroll with [HR](#), schools reduce mistakes, strengthen reporting, and give leaders full confidence and oversight.

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