



Term 1 Partnership Summary Letter – 25th October 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are very pleased to be able to update you on the partnership between Pioneer Federation, Groombridge St.Thomas CE Primary and Nutley CE Primary. It has been a busy and productive term with many benefits being seen for both staff and pupils since Groombridge and Nutley joined the partnership in September and we hope you find our regular partnership newsletters a useful source of additional information.

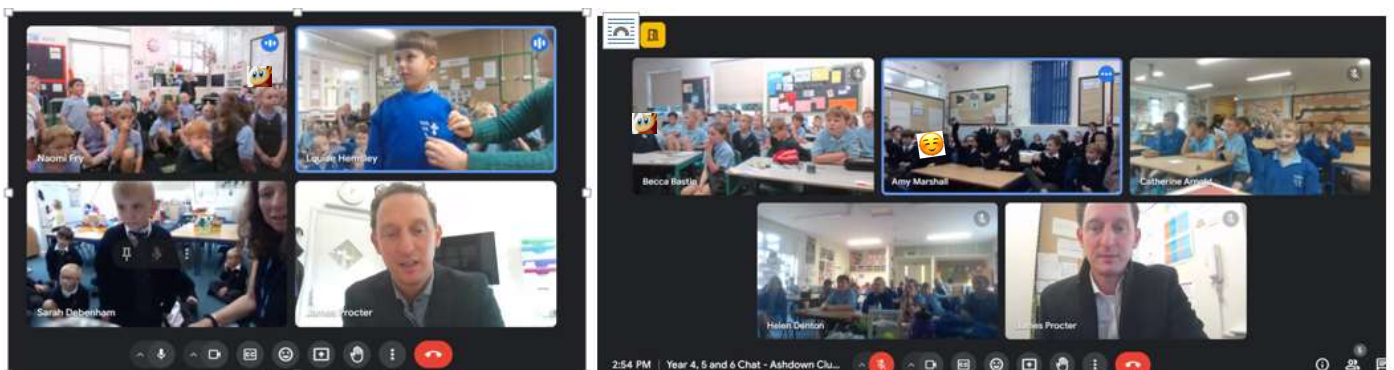
Pioneer Pupil Partnership Council

As well as the benefit pupils will gain from the improved quality of education through staff partnership collaboration, it is also important that our pupils meet up and benefit from the collaboration this year.

Mr Procter met with some year 6 pupils from across the Pioneer Ashdown Cluster (St Mary's, Nutley and Groombridge) to discuss potential pupil links. This group will meet termly and are called the 'Pioneer Pupil Partnership Council'. They came up with a range of collaborative pupil initiatives. These included joint forest school, science stem days & joint sporting events.



Pupils in the other year groups have also had the opportunity to meet virtually and all cohorts met up virtually this term via google-meet. The pupils thought it would be interesting to explore the similarities and differences between the Ashdown cluster schools and discuss further partnership links across this year. See photos below from some of these class google-meets.





Forest School

The Ashdown cluster of schools will also develop joint Forest School sessions termly— utilising the dedicated Forest School area at St Mary's. These sessions will be led by the Pioneer Forest School Lead Abi Sharp. The first classes to meet up for the joint Forest School were the Year 5-6 classes. See photos below. In Term 2, 3-4 classes will meet up and in term 3, 1-2 and then term 4, EYFS. More information about these events will follow closer to the time.



Impact on quality of education

Since the decision was made to work in partnership with each other for the next academic year there has already been some collaboration between the staff of the 6 schools. One of the key objectives from the partnership was to reduce teacher workload and facilitate collaboration between our small local schools. Below are the following staff collaborative aspects that have happened so far since September:

Since

- Joint INSET training in September (Safeguarding and Health & Safety)
- Joint staff meetings – Focus: Science, Maths, Humanities, Writing and Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling
- Joint staff training- moderation of writing and standardisation (Local Authority Education Consultant supporting)
- Nutley and Groombridge teachers now have access to the Pioneer Google-Drive, enabling them to access the mixed aged class planning and resources

- Mrs Vile (Head at Chiddingly) has explored how the Nutley and Groombridge curriculum links with the Pioneer curriculum so that teachers can directly utilise the Pioneer curriculum, planning and resources
- Teachers have joined the termly cohort planning meetings. Teachers will be planning with up to 10 other partnership teachers from the same pupil cohorts- whereby sharing joint planning and capitalising on staff expertise, experience and reducing the workload significantly
- ECTs across the Federation of schools have linked up and supporting each other in their first year of teaching
- Staff have started to visit partnership schools and explore SEND provision and other curriculum aspects like reading systems/schemes. Leaders and teachers plan to implement adaptations to the way that reading and topic books are organised and stored to enable easier access and clarity for staff and pupils
- SENCos from both Groombridge and Nutley have made links with Sian Leahy (SENCo across Pioneer Schools) and Mrs Jane Robinson (Head at St Mary's and Adaptive Curriculum Lead) as part of planning the Federation wide INSET training session in January. Mrs Ruth Ridley has visited SMV to view the 'Regulation Station' room and now plans to develop a similar room at Groombridge.

Mr Procter works at Nutley and Groombridge at least 1 day a week and Mrs Vile (Head at Chiddingly) at each school on alternative weeks.

At Groombridge, Mr Procter has worked with Miss Powell to assist with the design and development of the playground. St Mary's swapped football goals with a mobile kitchen at Groombridge. The Groombridge PTA have generously donated £5000 towards enhancing play facilities that will include an outdoor table tennis table, 4-square tennis game, sheds for a creative zone and a reading/drawing zone. They also plan to develop a dedicated arts room for Art, DT and Music lessons and the development of an indoor refectory/ zones of regulation room. Miss Powell, Mrs Vile and Mr Procter have monitored and compared pupil books from across the schools, looking at similarities and ways that pupil work could be developed even further. Pioneer bursars are now supporting the Groombridge finance team with the management of the school budget. Mrs Abi Sharp, the Pioneer Forest School Lead, plans to start Forest school classes weekly sessions at Groombridge from January. Mrs Briley (Headteacher at East Hoathly) has been working with Miss Powell to share and develop collective worship planning and ideas for recording RE. We are planning to recruit a Caretaker for Groombridge to start after the October half term to ensure the premises are looking their best at all times and Mrs Pett has been working alongside the Pioneer Health & Safety Administrators to manage the safety elements of the school.

At Nutley, Mr Procter has worked with Mrs E Robinson to redesign the layout of the school to ensure that all spaces are used regularly and more freely accessible for pupils. This includes the distribution of the standalone computers into the classrooms, moving the library into the computer area, moving the headteacher office into the upstairs library so that it is in the heart of the school and enable leaders to link more directly with pupils. The present headteacher office will become a planning and preparation room for teachers. Mrs E Robinson, Mrs Vile and Mr Procter have monitored and compared pupil books from across the schools and looked at ways that pupil books can have further consistency of presentation and clarity of learning expectations. Nutley are adopting the Pioneer Learning Environment Policy and Book Policy. Mr Procter is now working with Mrs Robinson on ways to develop the playground and signage at Nutley.

As the partnership developments, more initiatives are planned for next term. These include:

- Pioneer pupils to visit and show some of the playground games played at Pioneer schools - including the popular game of '4-Square'.
- Joint staff music, DT and adaptive curriculum INSET training
- RE and collective worship planning and resources sharing
- Subject leaders at each of the schools link up and start to share best practice in their subject areas
- Develop pupil sporting event initiatives with our PE/Sport Leads
- Continue to develop the meaningful links between the school curriculum
- Look at further ways to share resources across the schools
- Further joint moderation events to calibrate the accuracy and quality of standards

There are Partnership Executive Committee (PEC) Meetings termly to review the impact and effectiveness of the partnership against agreed milestones. The chairs of Governors, other senior Governors and representatives from the Diocese and Local Authority also attend these meetings.

Our Local Authority School Improvement Partners have visited the schools this term and reported back positively about the partnership and the impact on school improvements and the quality of education in the schools.

The partnership impact is a standing item in all full school Governor Meetings from across the schools and the plan is to make a decision in April 2025 about whether the partnership will develop into a formal school federation from September 2025. There will be full stakeholder consultation as part of this process. We value your opinions and feedback about the partnership through parent forums and questionnaire consultations throughout the year, and you can contact us anytime if you have any questions.

We believe that by working in partnership as a group of small schools, we can improve the quality of education for all and our first term of working together has demonstrated the impact that the partnership has had already.

We will continue to keep you updated with partnership developments through these termly newsletters and updates in our school newsletters and on the school websites.

Many thanks for your support.

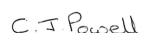
Yours sincerely,



James Procter
Executive Headteacher
Pioneer Federation



Emma Robinson
Headteacher
Nutley CE Primary School



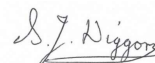
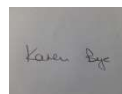
Caroline Powell
Headteacher
Groombridge St.Thomas CE Primary



Alan Brundle
Chair of Governors Pioneer Federation



Birgit Smith
Chair of the Governors- Nutley



Karen Bye & Sue Diggory
Co-Chairs of the Shadow Governing Board - Groombridge St.Thomas