



Term 2 Partnership Summary Letter – December 2024

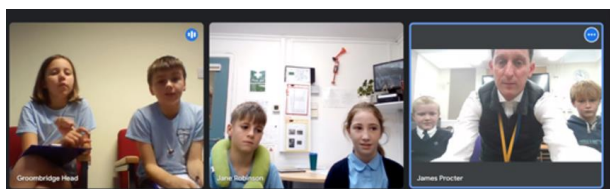
Dear Parents and Carers,

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 another very busy and productive term with many benefits being seen for both pupils and staff 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 schools have had 4 successful inspections in the last 5 months. Park Mead and Chiddingly have both had strong Ofsted inspections this term. The federated/collaborative approaches to curriculum developments came through as a strength. The Ofsted reports can be found on the Pioneer websites. *'Staff have a strong subject knowledge and are confident to teach the curriculum. This has been supported by the work and training across the **federation**.'* *'The school and the **federation** it is part of have worked skilfully together to design an ambitious curriculum.'*

Pioneer Pupil Partnership Council and Cohort Google-Meets

James Procter met with the Partnership Pupil Council again to review Term 1 and discuss other potential T2 pupil links.



The Pupil Council felt that the joint T1 Forest School was successful and they enjoyed making friends with the other schools. They thought that it would be great to have Pioneer four square and table tennis tournaments across the schools in summer terms. Classes across the 3 school cluster will be making Christmas cards and sending them to each other and will share carols/Christmas songs on Google-Meets and present their learning/work from the term.

'It was nice to speak to others online. They are all very friendly.' Tallulah

Forest School

The Ashdown cluster of schools have continued developing joint Forest School sessions this term led by the Pioneer Forest School Lead, Abi Sharp. See photos below of this terms 3-4 classes Forest School session from 28th November. In term 3, 1-2 classes will meet up and then term 4, EYFS. More information about these events will follow closer to the time.



'I enjoyed Forest School with the other schools and getting to speak to other children.' **Charlie** 'Although I got wet and soggy, I enjoyed it because everyone was playing well together.' **Lucia** 'I enjoyed doing clay with the other children.' **Hattie**
 'I liked making new friends' **Isaac** 'I liked having help in the river, normally we don't have as many helpers but this time we had lots more!' **Cece** 'I have enjoyed seeing them on the screen in their classroom and finding out that they learn lots of the same things' **Charlie**
Nutley Pupils: "I love forest school because you can explore the woods. I liked making things with clay, making sparks and toasting marshmallows. I like the pond and seeing the beautiful nature!"

Four Square and Tables Tennis

Mrs Vile and Chiddingly pupils visited Nutley and Groombridge this term to introduce the game of four square. There is now a table tennis table in all the schools. Pioneer four square and table tennis tournaments are planned for the summer term.



'Playing four square with Chiddingly made the rules much clearer.' **Breagha** 'It was fun to play with Chiddingly. They helped us to get better at it.' **Harrison and Max** '4 Square is good fun - lovely to see the children engaging with it. Thank you to the children from Chiddingly for teaching them how to play it.' **Russell Wadey** 'I love 4 square because you only use your hands.' 'I love table tennis because you get to try a long time with the ball'. **Nutley Pupils**

Impact on Quality of Education

Below are the following staff collaborative aspects that have happened so far this term:

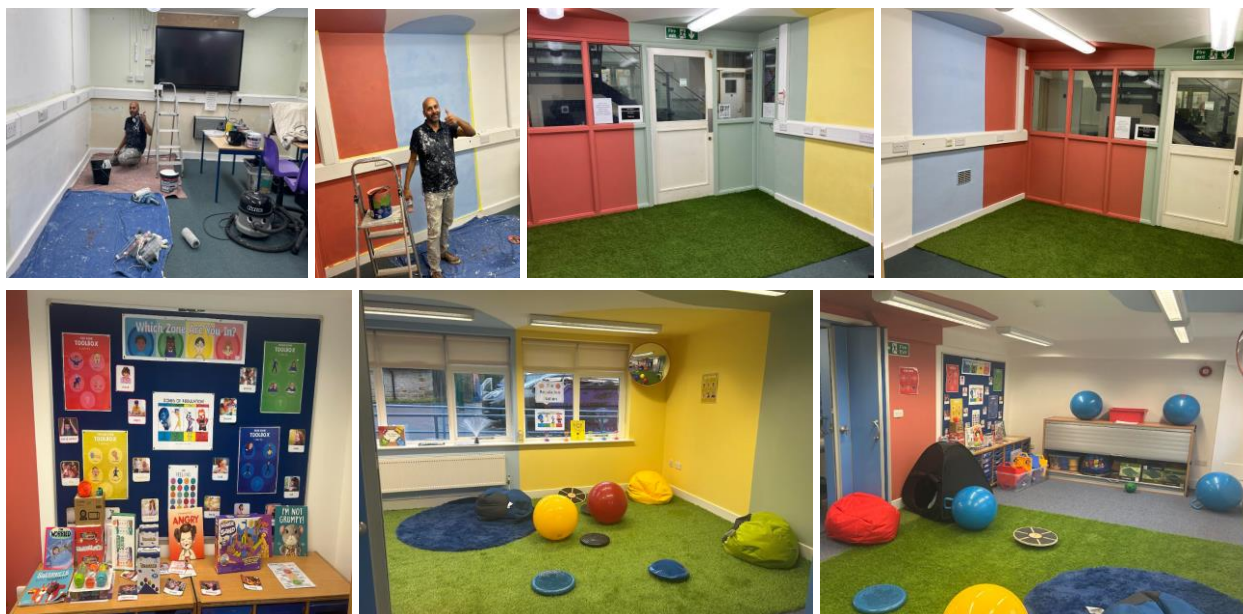
- Leadership Ofsted training from James Procter's Ofsted inspector colleague (Matthew Batchelor).
- Joint staff meetings and training – focusing on reading and phonics and moderation of writing across all subjects.



- Nutley and Groombridge teachers are now planning termly with Pioneer teachers and have visited Pioneer schools to compare learning environments and pupil books.
- Kayleigh Vile (Head at Chiddingly) is working with leaders across the schools to combine the Pioneer, Groombridge and Nutley curriculums so that teachers can directly benefit from the jointly devised combined curriculum, planning and resources. The plan is for the process to have been completed by Easter.
- Nutley and Groombridge are in the process of re-banding reading books to align with the Pioneer banding system and add additional clarity for reading progression.

- Alice Briley (Head at East Hoathly) is working alongside the Groombridge Maths Leaders to review maths provision and share maths application strategies. She will be doing the same at Nutley in January.
- Heidi West (Head at Park Mead and Pioneer MHWB Lead) will be the interim Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead at Nutley from January 2025.
- SENCOs from all 3 schools are linking up regularly to share best practice and resources. All schools will be involved in the 'Partnership in Inclusion in Neurodiversity in Schools' with a focus next term on 'understanding dyslexia and supporting children with learning needs within an adaptive curriculum'.
- Abi Sharp, the Pioneer Forest School Lead, will be starting weekly Forest School sessions at Groombridge from January.
- Emma Waterman (Chiddingly TA and artist) will be designing class name signs for corridor displays at Nutley (mirroring Pioneer schools) and will be visiting Groombridge and Nutley to paint the key vocabulary for the different zone areas in the new regulation rooms.
- At Nutley, Emma Robinson (Head at Nutley) made the decision to utilise Pioneer policy versions for Book and Marking, Learning Environment, Teaching and Learning and Behaviour. The Nutley library is in the process of moving downstairs so pupils can access books with ease. There was a Nutley Community Groundforce on Saturday 8th November to help develop outside premises areas/playground. The Nutley vision and values are in the process of being reviewed to ensure they are clear to all stakeholders. Nutley are currently trialling an English electronic comprehension system called Lexia (used across Pioneer schools) and an online home reading system called Boomreaders (also used across Pioneer schools).
- Nutley pupils have started to attend some Pioneer sporting events e.g. Dodgeball Tournament.
- Park Mead caretaker (Steve Rodrigues) has decorated the new Zones Area at Groombridge and Nutley.

'It has been great to share good practice across the schools, particularly in terms of getting more ideas, for example ideas to further challenge pupils in maths.' **Mrs Denton** *'Being part of a federation has enabled the staff at Groombridge to reflect on their practice and gain reassurance that their teaching and learning aligns with other good schools.'* **Miss Powell** *'As we reflect on the strides made over the last couple of terms, it's clear that progress has been immense in terms of premises development at Nutley. The children working together with all the other pupils in the Federation thus developing their social skills by forming new friendships, and last but not least, staff and leadership working with staff at the other schools thus paving the way for a bright future for our Nutley CE School.'* **Mrs Smith (Nutley Chair of Governors)**



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

- Joint staff music, DT and adaptive curriculum INSET training on the 6th January led by Headteachers.
- Developing a joint Teaching and Learning Policy reflecting the adaptive curriculum strategies utilised across all schools.
- Headteachers will be visiting each other's schools as part of a Pioneer peer to peer leadership initiative.

- Developing the outdoor Early Years area at Nutley alongside Russell Wadey - utilising the Early Years skills from across Pioneer.
- A review of websites and updating to ensure they are all the best they can be - ensuring clarity for any stakeholders viewing the sites – utilising the skills from Andrew Huggett (Pioneer IT Technician and website designer).
- Subject leaders at each of the schools to link up and start to share best practice in their subject areas. To consider how joint shared subject leaders across the cluster of local schools could be developed in the future.
- Developing pupil sporting event initiatives with our PE/Sport Leads.
- Combining of curriculums via a collaborative steering group and continue to develop the meaningful links between the school curriculums.
- Looking at further ways to share resources across the schools.

There will continue to be 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 will also attend these meetings.

The partnership impact is a standing item in all full school Governor Meetings across the schools and the plan is to make a decision in April 2025 about whether the partnership will develop into a formal school partnership 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 second 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 school websites.

James Procter ran the 10 mile Mince Pie Race on Sunday 8th December with Pioneer staff and friends. We now have a **Pioneer Running Club** <https://pioneerfederation.co.uk/pioneer-running-club/> to encourage our communities to keep fit and stay healthy. We plan to run several half marathons a year and also raise funds for the school improvement initiatives at the same time. Russell Wadey (SENCO Nutley) and Helen Denton (Deputy Head at Groombridge) have already shown interest in future races!



Many thanks for your support. **Merry Christmas!**

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



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

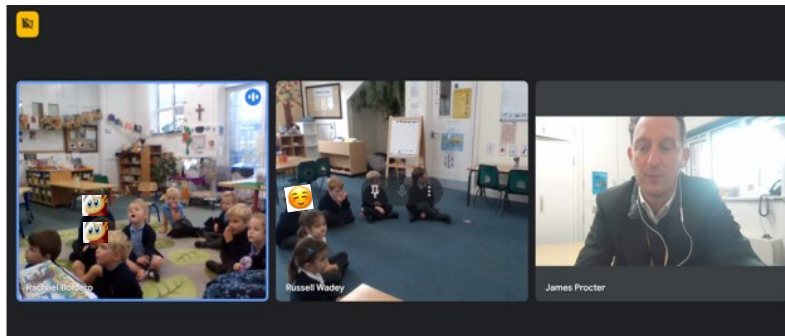
As well as the benefit pupils will gain from the improved quality of education through staff partnership collaboration, it is also important that our pupils meet up and benefit from the collaboration this year.

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:

- 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 JanEmma 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 Emma 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 Emma 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 Emma 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.

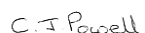
Yours sincerely,




James Procter
Executive Headteacher
Pioneer Federation



Emma Robinson
Headteacher
Nutley CE Primary School



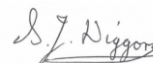
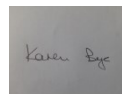
Caroline Powell
Headteacher
Groombridge St.Thomas CE Primary



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



Executive Headteacher: Mr James Procter
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Chair of Governors : Alan Brundle
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Partnership between Pioneer Federation and Groombridge St Thomas CE School

Wednesday 10th July 2024

Dear Pioneer Federation Families,

For some time, governors have been looking to expand our Federation, as we believe that this will give greater security to the future of our schools.

Our Governing Body is very pleased to share the exciting news of our intended partnership working with **Groombridge St Thomas School**, from September 2024. Groombridge St Thomas was investigating several different options, but they confirmed that they were very interested to form a partnership with Pioneer. At a meeting of the Pioneer Governing Board on Tuesday 9th July 2024, the governors agreed to the creation of a partnership agreement and a formal partnership from September 2024, with the idea of Groombridge St Thomas joining the Federation in September 2025. At the same time, it was confirmed that either party could break the agreement at any time prior to the formal expansion of the Federation. During the partnership period, we will be seeking feedback from the whole school community about the development and effectiveness of the partnership. If the collaboration is successful, governors would hope to enter a more formal and permanent federation.

Do visit Groombridge St Thomas website: <https://www.groombridgest-thomas.e-sussex.sch.uk/>

Mr Procter will be working across the 6 schools from September, spending time in each school. Mrs Vile, as Senior Head of School will also be working with Groombridge St Thomas during the partnership period. Miss Powell as headteacher remains in overall charge at Groombridge St Thomas but will work with Pioneer leaders during the partnership period to plan and deliver greater educational opportunities for pupils.

Although the creation of this partnership will have an impact on some of the Senior Leadership Team, it is not anticipated that there will be any immediate impact on the existing staff at Pioneer. Therefore, children are unlikely to notice any change in the immediate future.

Chiddingly, East Hoathly, St Mary's and Park Mead have enjoyed a successful Federation over many years and have collaborated with schools locally and nationally. The advantages have included staff retention, due to more opportunities for professional development, enhanced curriculum experiences and very good Ofsted and outstanding/excellence SIAMS inspections across the schools. The most recent being East Hoathly [Ofsted](#) and [SIAMS](#) June 2024.

Groombridge St Thomas governors share Pioneer's collaborative vision and values, and this is why governors have chosen this partnership for our schools. We will continue to share and develop the strengths of all the schools to increase future school improvement. Groombridge St Thomas is like our schools, graded by Ofsted Inspection as a 'Good' school. (April 2023) and Excellent in SIAMS (February 2020).

As you will know, collaboration of small schools is becoming essential to enable us to support one another in school improvement and begin to look at financial savings in order to remain sustainable in coming years.

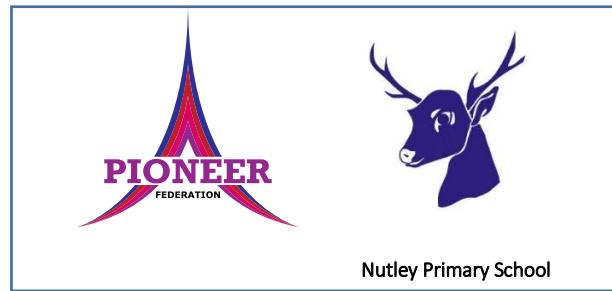
The Governing Body and Pioneer staff team are very much looking forward to working with Groombridge St Thomas and feel sure that parents will recognise and welcome the benefits to our children. We intend to keep parents well informed with everything we are planning and record progress in newsletters and on the website. There is much expertise, energy and enthusiasm across the six schools and we are really looking forward to sharing it.

Please contact Mr Procter or email me if you have any further questions about the Groombridge St Thomas partnership.

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Brundle', written in a cursive style.

Alan Brundle
Chair of Governors, Pioneer Federation



Executive Headteacher: Mr James Procter
Email: office@pioneerfederation.co.uk

Chair of Governors : Alan Brundle
Email : abrundle@pioneerfederation.co.uk

Partnership between Pioneer Federation and Nutley Primary School

Thursday 16th May 2024

Dear Pioneer Federation Families,

For some time, governors have been looking to expand our Federation, as we believe that this will give greater security to the future of our schools.

Our Governing Body is very pleased to share the exciting news of our intended partnership working with Nutley Primary School, from September 2024. Nutley was investigating several different options, but they confirmed that they were very interested to form a partnership with Pioneer. At a meeting of the Pioneer Governing Board on Monday 25th March 2024, the governors agreed to the creation of a partnership agreement and a formal partnership from September 2024, with the idea of Nutley joining the Federation at a date in the future, yet to be agreed. At the same time, it was confirmed that either party could break the agreement at any time prior to the formal expansion of the Federation. During the partnership period, we will be seeking feedback from the whole school community about the development and effectiveness of the partnership. If the collaboration is successful, governors would hope to enter a more formal and permanent federation.

Do visit Nutley website: <https://www.nutleyprimaryschool.org.uk/>

Mr Procter, as Executive Headteacher, will be working across the 5 schools from September, spending a fifth of his time in each school. Mrs Vile, as Senior Head of School will also be supporting at Nutley during the partnership period.

Although the creation of this partnership will have an impact on some of the Senior Leadership Team, it is not anticipated that there will be any immediate impact on the existing staff at Pioneer. Therefore, children are unlikely to notice any change in the immediate future.

Other staffing arrangements for next year will be explained in separate letters early next term.

Chiddingly, East Hoathly, St Mary's and Park Mead have enjoyed a successful Federation over many years and have collaborated with schools locally and nationally. The advantages have included staff retention, due to more opportunities for professional development, enhanced curriculum experiences and very good Ofsted and outstanding SIAMS inspections across the schools.

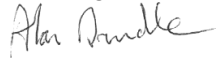
Nutley Governors share Pioneer's collaborative vision and values, and this is why governors have chosen this partnership for our schools. We will continue to share and develop the strengths of all the schools to increase future school improvement. Nutley school is like our schools, graded by Ofsted Inspection as a 'Good' school.

As you will know, collaboration of small schools is becoming essential to enable us to support one another in school improvement and begin to look at financial savings in order to remain sustainable in coming years.

The Governing Body and Pioneer staff team are very much looking forward to working with Nutley and feel sure that parents will recognise and welcome the benefits to our children. We intend to keep parents well informed with everything we are planning and record progress in newsletters and on the website. There is much expertise, energy and enthusiasm across the five schools and we are really looking forward to sharing it.

Please contact Mr Procter or email me, if you have any further questions about the Nutley partnership.

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Brundle', written in a cursive style.

Alan Brundle
Chair of Governors, Pioneer Federation