

Partnership Press

Autumn 1

Partnership Press: Introduction



Across the partnership of **Limpsfield C.E. Infant School & St. Mary's Primary School**, so much happens throughout the busy year that we want to share and celebrate. We have decided that it would be great to be able to share some of this with our parents, carers, governors, churches and wider community through a half-termly update, currently called 'Partnership Press', which we will write and share in the penultimate week of each half term. This is our first edition and we will be working on the presentation and platform, we would welcome your initial feedback!

Reflection from Mr Samuel on First Half Term

As I begin my journey as the new Executive Headteacher across our partnership, I have reflected on a simple yet profound piece of wisdom from James 1:19: ***"Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry."*** It is a verse that has been echoing in my mind — and one that I have come to see as essential guidance for leadership, especially in these early days. Aligned with this, I have adopted a personal mantra for this season: ***Big Eyes, Big Ears, Small Mouth.***



It was nearly a year from my appointment to my official start on 1st September, which allowed me to develop an understanding of many elements of the parentship. However, it is tempting, when stepping into a new role, to speak quickly, to offer solutions, to try and make a strong first impression. I have learned through the range of work I have undertaken in a number of schools that real understanding — and real leadership — begins with listening! So, I am choosing to slow down, to observe carefully, and to truly hear the voices of those who make this partnership what it is: *our pupils, staff, families, governors, churches and wider community*. I have tried to be visible to reassure stakeholders and to meet with as many as possible – *but there are an awful lot of people to meet!* I want to be the kind of leader who listens well; who waits; who asks thoughtful questions; who gives space for others to speak and be heard.

A key word we are thinking about in a wide range of work across both schools is 'Belonging'. We will be considering this in relation to a wide range of our working practices and interactions with children and the wider school community. It formed the focus for a conference I was lucky enough to attend with Miss Cunnington and Mrs Woodward and through a range of very powerful speakers we have been moved to adopt it as a central theme for this year to ensure we consider the importance for all members of our community to feel like they belong to their individual school but also to recognise their important part in our partnership across both schools. To further support this we are engaging with the [Hemisphere Racial Training Program](#) with the Southwark Diocese. This is an initiative aimed at improving racial literacy and helping all members of our community be positive disruptors of inequality and bias. We will share more about this journey as we work through the training.

In a world that is so fast-paced and often transactional, being present and patient is something I have had to work on deliberately. I hope to model across my work with the partnership so if you see me walking the corridors, sitting in classrooms, chatting at the gate — know that I am listening; I am learning; and I am grateful for every story, every insight, and every moment you share.

Working Together with the wider community

'It takes a village to raise a child' - This is a much-used African proverb based on the idea that raising a child is not just the job of the parents. It takes a whole community to raise a child and nurture them into the adults they will become. This image to me shows that wider role of our school partnership and I am very keen to develop is the way our partnership works with other organisations across the Limpsfield and Oxted area to provide the very best provision for the children and families that we serve. Following a very reassuring meeting with Mr Devenney, the Headteacher at Oxted School, I was very pleased to accept an invitation to work with the school on a collaborative project titled ***'Cradle to Career'*** which will encompass other schools and organisations from around the area to give all children the very best start in life. Aligned to this, I have been pleased to meet with many parents who are associated with various clubs and organisations in the area which I hope to make firm connections with to support the wider community.



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The role of Executive Headteacher across our Partnership

In our two-school partnership, the role of the Executive Headteacher is to provide strategic oversight and ensure a shared vision for excellence across both schools, while allowing each school to maintain its identity and individual character. This role is distinct from that of a Headteacher, focusing on long-term development, collaboration, and consistency in standards and values across the partnership. While the Executive Headteacher works across both schools to strengthen leadership and drive improvement, the Deputy Headteachers and senior leaders within each school are the key figures for operational matters and pastoral care. Each school within the partnership has its own highly skilled and knowledgeable leadership team, who are deeply involved in the day-to-day running of their school. These leaders are best placed to support the individual needs of children, staff, and families, with the class teacher should always remain the first point of contact for any concerns or queries. This structure ensures that every child and member of staff benefits from both localised support and the broader strategic guidance of the partnership. Together, this model promotes clarity, trust, and a shared commitment to the wellbeing and success of every child across our schools.

Over the next half term we will be working as a united Senior Leadership Team to establish absolutely clear guidelines on who to contact about any particular element of each school which will really support effective communication and achieve the best for the children in our community.

Introducing Luna – Our Four-Legged Team Member



I am delighted to share how well Luna our new school dog has settled into life across our partnership schools. An affectionate and energetic Spoodle, Luna has quickly become a popular member of the community in both schools being a familiar, comforting presence for children, staff and parents.

From joining in with Forest School sessions to trotting alongside pupils during the Daily Mile, Luna is thriving in her new role. She has attended assemblies, supported wellbeing sessions, and even helped children feel happier coming in to school in the mornings! There is growing evidence to support the positive impact of dogs in schools.

Research highlights how therapy dogs can reduce stress, improve mood, and even enhance concentration in children. Luna's presence has already begun to reflect these benefits in our daily school life.

I am very grateful to the Governors and staff to have agreed to allow Luna to come in to school not just as my pet, but as a valued member of our team, helping to nurture a calm, inclusive and joyful learning environment.

Belonging in photographs...



These two photos capture something special about belonging to our respective school communities. The left-hand photo shows children from Limpsfield walking together down to the church with a whole range of members of our community. There was awe and wonder looking at the beautiful autumnal leaves and plentiful supply of conkers and acorns along the way!

The right photo shows a lovely moment when a Year 6 child took the hand of a much younger member of St. Mary's community and led them back to school after our Harvest Festival Celebration. It really gladdened my heart to see this moment of togetherness that captured the notion of belonging in our school.

**Confidently me - Belonging Together - Challenged to contribute
Achieving together in God's light**