

Chesil Partnership



CHESIL PARTNERSHIP

Memorandum of understanding



September 2026

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1 Background

1.1 Bincombe Valley Primary School, Conifers Primary School, Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School, Radipole Primary School, Southill Primary School, St George's Primary School and Wyke Regis Primary Federation (Wyke Regis Infant School & Nursery and Wyke Regis Church of England Junior School) have formed this Partnership with a commitment to work together as the seven Dorset maintained schools in Weymouth & Portland.

1.2 It is an equal partnership for the mutual benefit of all schools involved.

1.3 It is a commitment of the schools to work together so that the Governing Bodies, leadership teams and other staff groups will co-operate, collaborate, communicate, develop and challenge.

1.4 The Partnership is characterised by high trust, professional challenge and shared moral purpose.

2 Partnership aims and objectives

2.1 The overarching aim of this Partnership is to demonstrate this commitment to a sustained long-term partnership whilst recognising each organisation's uniqueness and individuality. This will be done in a clear and transparent manner and following key principles of trust, support, supervision (of each other) and confidentiality.

The Partnership is committed to working collaboratively to provide opportunities that will drive change and improvement. By facilitating the sharing of best practice and resources, we aim to enhance the educational experience for our pupils while benefiting our families and the wider community.

All members will accept and embrace their professional responsibility to care for every child and young person within the partnership. They will be open to change, treating all within the Partnership community with dignity and respect at all times.

We encourage a range of activities within the Partnership around our 4 priority areas – teaching, curriculum, leadership, and school improvement – to deliver high impact outcomes for the benefit of pupils and staff.

We will actively seek the highest quality of expertise and the best practice nationally.

The Partnership will value, respect and maintain each school's distinctive ethos and identity.

2.2 Specific objectives are:

- To support one another in sustaining a culture and environment where safeguarding and wellbeing are paramount
- To provide appropriate strategic challenge and support for all stakeholders (Headteachers, Senior Leadership Team, Teaching Staff, Support Staff, Governing Body members)
- Decrease rates of severe absence by clearly identifying individual barriers to attendance and ensuring the voices of our children, young people and families are heard
- To strengthen and enhance school Leadership and Governance through peer support and identified reviews; including but not exclusive of external inspections, Ofsted, LA reviews, SIAMs inspections and SEP visits
- Providing opportunities for closer collaboration between the staff of all schools
- To improve the ability to meet the complex needs of a wide range of children in a consistent manner
- To enable more effective deployment of resources across the seven schools in order to maximise opportunities for children and staff
- To achieve greater economies of scale and leverage, through collaborative procurement of services and goods
- To strengthen links with external parties to support and enhance school improvement, including for example, the Locality Education Challenge Team and School Improvement Partners
- To enhance learning and curriculum opportunities for children of all schools to improve learning outcomes and wellbeing,
- To act in partnership, but as a single advocate, in order to represent the schools with regard to concerns or local/national issues, that impact on the schools
- To provide support in the form of coaching and mentoring to all stakeholders within the Partnership, particularly where staff are new to the school or Partnership.
- To facilitate staff secondments within the Partnership where practical.

3 External Partners

3.1 The Partnership, through their individual autonomy, retain in control of strategic direction, governance and operational oversight from any external partner. Partners are invited by the members to help improve the quality of education and outcomes across the Partnership. This Partnership and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is supported and endorsed by the Local Authority.

3.2 The Local Authority - partner schools recognise the Local Authority's statutory role in relation to maintained schools and value a constructive, transparent relationship. The Local Authority's role in relation to this MOU is to:

- Acknowledge and endorse the Partnership as best practice
- Support collaboration where appropriate (e.g. signposting, facilitation, intelligence sharing)
- Maintain an oversight of standards in line with statutory duties
- Provide the Partnership with an Education Challenge Lead whose role includes:
 - Termly meetings with Leaders in each partner school
 - Attend a termly Partnership meeting
 - Source high-quality continued professional development
 - Broker services from other local authorities or education services (Action Tutoring, Hampshire LA)
 - Facilitate Partnership events and projects.
 - Identify areas of best practice from Research Schools, RISE Teams, Education Endowment Fund etc
 - Liaise with the School Improvement Partner in order to improve Partnership schools.

The ECL will receive direction from the Partnership Heads.

The Local Authority is not:

- A decision-making body within the Partnership.
- Does not direct or manage Partnership activity
- Does not assume responsibility for outcomes arising from the collaboration.

3.3 Each primary school within the Partnership will engage an Ofsted-trained and experienced School Improvement Partner (SIP) who will act as a professional *critical friend* to the Headteacher and senior leadership team.

The School Improvement Partner will undertake a minimum of three planned visits per academic year (at least one per term). Schools will commission further support should they wish to do so. The School Improvement Partner may also be available for support to the Partnership during the inspection process. Through these visits, the School Improvement Partner will:

- Provide independent professional evaluation of the school's effectiveness, with particular regard to leadership, early reading, curriculum intent and implementation, quality of teaching, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Validate and challenge the school's self-evaluation, ensuring judgements are accurate, evidence-based and aligned with the Education Inspection Framework for primary schools.
- Identify strengths, risks and priorities for improvement, with a focus on pupil outcomes, inclusion, and equity for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Support strategic and operational improvement planning, ensuring agreed actions are focused, realistic, measureable and impactful.
- Offer constructive professional challenge and support, strengthening leadership capacity and decision-making.
- Monitor and review progress against agreed actions and previous recommendations.
- Support inspection readiness, ensuring leaders can confidently and accurately articulate curriculum intent, implementation and impact.
- Provide Continued Professional Development (CPD), advice and guidance for staff and other

The School Improvement Partner will work collaboratively with school leaders while maintaining professional independence. The role is advisory and evaluative; accountability for improvement remains with the individual schools and Governing Boards.

3.4 Leaders are encouraged to access professional development opportunities led by leaders in education for example: Wessex Association of Leaders in Education (WALE) and Education Conferences.

3.5 Our Partnership will strive to ensure representation on Local Authority bodies/committees for example: Dorset Education and SEND Board, In Year Fair Access (IYFA), Physical Education, School Sport and Activity Network (PESSPA) and Schools Forum.

4 Partnership activities

4.1 Activities to be delivered by the Partnership are:

- Analysis and scrutiny of each school's annual performance and attendance data
- The Partnership priorities will be reflected in individual School Development Plans (SDP)/Learning Improvement Plans
- Sharing SDPs/LIPs, identifying common strengths and areas for improvement
- Sharing policies and procedures
- Peer review opportunities, with a focus on sharing good practice, improving provision and focussing on development areas
- Establishing a shared annual calendar of Leadership (Headteachers, Deputy Heads, SENCOs) and Governor meetings
- To provide support and mentoring to new members of staff. New members of leadership will be offered regular mentoring/coaching support by a leader from another school
- A shared annual plan of CPD for staff, to equip and develop all professionals engaged in delivering the curriculum with excellent knowledge and skills. Including, but not exclusive of, subject leader's meetings, moderation and Inset days
- The Deputy Head group will be tasked to lead the CPD provision. They will then lead the review and evaluation process also participating in Learning Trios across the Partnership.
- Enable opportunities for staff to collaborate in order to develop and sustain Quality First Teaching across all schools.
- Joint commissioning of external consultants or outside agencies in order to achieve the best provision and outcomes for all pupils in the collaboration
- Collaboration between the finance teams with benchmarking, joint purchasing and discussion of the opportunities for joint contracting of common services to enable better value for money

4.2 Activities will be reviewed termly to ensure that they are being delivered as agreed, and that they are having the intended impact.

The Partnership will set clear priorities linked to the activities, with a focus on raising standards of attainment, improving achievement and outcomes for children and young people, and working with our wider community to improve community cohesion. However,

the overall responsibility for any school's performance continues to lie with the school's own Governing Body and Leadership Team.

5 Monitoring

5.1 All partners commit to ongoing monitoring, with the aim of ensuring accountability and performance against any identified milestones.

5.2 The Headteacher group will co-ordinate the monitoring and organisation of activities, ensure the operational aspects of the Collaboration function effectively and report back to Governing boards as appropriate.

5.3 The Partnership may invite an external partner (ECL-LA or SIP) to participate in the monitoring programme.

6 Data Protection and Confidentiality

6.1 When sharing data between and across the Collaboration, due regard will be given to the need to protect data against unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage. Where necessary, measures will be taken, such as anonymisation of data, to protect the identity of staff, students and each individual school.

6.2 Manual and digital records that are passed between the schools to aid the work of the Collaboration will be managed carefully and, where necessary, with levels of security (eg password protection or secure online systems) that directly reflects the potential harm that could come from data loss or misuse.

6.3 All data shared in such a way will be handled with discretion, integrity and strict confidentiality by the headteachers and governors of each school.

6.4 Any security breaches and leaking of data beyond the schools will be taken very seriously and responded to robustly.

7 Impact evaluation

7.1 Collaboration events and activities will be reviewed and evaluated on an individual and needs led basis

7.2 Any analysis will be presented to Senior Stakeholders (Headteachers and the individual school Governing Body)

8 Designated Partnership leads

8.1 Each Headteacher will lead on the work of the Partnership for one half-term, on rotation, delegating tasks as appropriate and as agreed.

8.2 Each Headteacher will:

- Commit to attending all meetings
- Communicate agendas in a timely way
- Organise minutes to be circulated
- Ensure follow-up actions as agreed
- Feedback on contents and actions within minutes
- Share relevant documents and information (compliant with data protection rules)
- Delegate actions and responsibilities to relevant Senior Leaders
- Report to governors as appropriate

8.3 Each Headteacher will be able to act in the role of 'Nominee' in an Ofsted inspection.

8.4 Each Headteacher/Senior Leader will act as Mentor or Coach for those new to the Partnership.

9 Mentoring

9.1 The Partnership offers a formal mentoring role between partners. A mentor will be nominated for Headteachers and Senior Leaders new to the role or Partnership. A mentor will:

- Induct new leaders to the Partnership
- Offer experience-informed guidance on the aims and objectives of the Partnership.
- Support Headteachers/Senior Leaders in navigating Partnership systems, events and activities
- Provide support in the event of Headteacher absence.

10 Partnership governance and oversight

10.1 Chairs and Vice-Chairs of each Governing Body will commit to attending a termly meeting with the intention of sharing expertise, ideas and problem solving on behalf of the schools, as well as developing a common understanding of the issues and challenges the schools are facing.

10.2 Governing bodies will have an understanding of the priorities for the year across the Partnership and will commit to working with the Education Challenge Lead.

10.3 Governors from each school may convene a 'Partnership Governing Panel', to be used for, but not exclusive to, parental complaints, pupil exclusion, staff disciplinary or Governing Body Reviews.

10.4 Lead Governors from each school will meet regularly to share best practice and use their external networks and professional contacts to fill any identified gaps in the collective skills of the governing body; either in individual schools or across the 'Partnership', through bespoke training.

10.5 Governing bodies will receive Minutes from 'Collaboration Headteacher Meetings' to ensure clarity of feedback on Partnership activities.

11 Financial contributions

11.1 There will be no financial contribution to belong to the Collaboration.

11.2 Joint CPD activities or joint purchase of resources will be made as agreed so that costs can be shared. In these arrangements, one school will be responsible for invoicing and payment and then will invoice the other schools as appropriate.

11.3 The schools will commit to release time for staff as necessary and cover costs within their own budgets.

12 Dispute Resolution

This MOU is intended to strengthen existing relationships between schools and conflicts are not anticipated; however, should the need arise, a neutral facilitator will be appointed by the Partnership to resolve any disputes.

If any partner breaks the terms of this MOU the Collaboration will consult together with the object of remedying that breach, but if they cannot agree any party may terminate this agreement by notice.

13 Mental Health and Wellbeing

13.1 The Partnership are committed to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils, staff, Governors and wider school communities across our family of schools.

13.2 We believe that good mental health and wellbeing are fundamental to effective learning, high-quality teaching, positive relationships and a thriving school culture. Every school within the Partnership plays a vital role in creating an environment where individuals feel safe, valued, supported and able to flourish.

13.3 All Partnership schools are encouraged to:

- Actively promote a culture of care, inclusion and mutual respect.
- Take a proactive, whole-school approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Recognise the importance of prevention, early identification and appropriate support.
- Ensure mental health and wellbeing are embedded within policies, practice and daily routines.
- Provide reasonable and appropriate support and signposting for pupils, staff and families experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Promote positive work–life balance, staff wellbeing and professional support.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers, local services and external agencies where appropriate.

13.4 The Partnership recognises that each school serves a unique community. Schools are therefore encouraged to develop approaches to mental health and wellbeing that reflect their context, while aligning with Partnership values and national guidance.

13.5 By placing wellbeing at the heart of school life, the Partnership aims to support resilient learners, confident staff and compassionate communities where everyone is supported to achieve their best.

14 Disclaimer

14.1 It should be noted that by signing this document or by participating in the Chesil Partnership, the partners are not committing to legally binding obligations. It is intended that the partners remain independent of each other and that their collaboration and use of the term ‘partner’ does not constitute the creation of a legal entity, nor authorise the entry into a commitment for or on behalf of each other.

Signed on behalf of Bincombe Valley Primary

Mr A Gough

Headteacher

Date 1st September 2026

Signed on behalf of Conifers Primary

Mrs S Ellis

Headteacher

Date 1st September 2026

Signed on behalf of Holy Trinity Church of England

Miss A Fordham

Headteacher

Date 1st September 2026

Signed on behalf of Radipole Primary

Mrs K McCann

Headteacher

Date 1st September 2026

Signed on behalf of Southill Primary

Mr M Ryan

Acting-Headteacher

Date 1st September 2026

Signed on behalf of St George's Primary

Mr M Coombs

Headteacher

Date 1st September 2026

Signed on behalf of Wyke Regis Primary Federation

Mr G Spracklen

Headteacher

Date 1st September 2026