



Primary Advantage Federation Newsletter



A message from our Chair of Governors

Dear parents and carers,

The family of eight Primary Advantage Federation schools

Hello again,

I hope your new year has started well, despite the two rounds of snow. Thank you for bringing your children in safely for learning. Thanks also to the head teachers and staff at our schools who worked hard to remain open in very difficult circumstances.

Good attendance for pupils remains a priority across the Federation; its the starting point for great learning.

Another thing that parents can do is help spread the word about the schools. Across the Federation we jointly-reviewed how we communicate with parents, to ensure that they can find all the information they might need in order to decide where to send their child. We think we have a positive, diverse and successful community of learning - and one that should appeal to all families.

It's still very much a 'transition year' for the slightly enlarged Federation, as we continue to work on our governance, structures and processes. We have a complicated arrangement with our governance because some schools are Church schools and some are community schools. However, we know the whole PAF community is enriched by that diversity, so it's worth the extra effort.

We have recently had Ofsted inspections at St Matthias and De Beauvoir, the former very positive, the latter to be published soon. I'm confident we have the people in place across the federation to support all eight schools, and are stronger for being in the group. For example, De Beauvoir has been focusing on writing in key stage 1 and 2 by drawing in expertise across the federation. In a similar vein, our teaching school continues to support and develop all staff, especially newly qualified teachers.

We are setting budgets across the schools currently, and despite a very challenging climate, are maintaining good standards - but it's hard, ongoing work.

You can learn more about the federation governors, and what happens at a Federation level, at <http://www.primaryadvantage.co.uk>, and can email us at governors@primaryadvantage.hackney.sch.uk.

I wish all staff, students and families, and the wider federation community, all the best in the final term.

Louis Coiffait

Chair, Primary Advantage Federation

Spring Newsletter

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter to the local communities of the schools in the Primary Advantage Federation. Our schools have come together to share news of activities and events that have taken place this term.

Sian Davies
Executive Principal

Louis Coiffait
Chair of Governors

Who's Who

St John & St James Primary School

Jenna Clark – Executive Headteacher

Jo Smith – Head of School

Holy Trinity Primary School

Yvonne Barnett – Headteacher

Springfield Primary School

Fiona Judge – Executive Headteacher

St Matthias Primary School

Orlene Badu – Headteacher

St John the Baptist Primary School

Fiona Judge – Executive Headteacher

Lucy Blewett – Headteacher and Head of Teaching Schools

Morningside Primary School

Janet Taylor – Headteacher

Gainsborough Primary School

Jenna Clark – Executive Headteacher

De Beauvoir Primary School

Rebecca Mackenzie – Headteacher

News from our schools and federation activities

Think Positive: Primary Advantage Wellderness Festival Inset Day January 3rd

On January 3 we welcomed over 140 teachers and staff from across our 8 schools to a whole-federation Inset day, held at Hackney Picture House and Morningside School. The 'Wellderness Festival' focused on a very important aspect of education which is often overlooked; the wellbeing of staff and pupils.

We recognise that in schools we all have a front-line role to play promoting and protecting children's mental health and wellbeing. One in five children will experience a mental health difficulty before their 11th birthday, and many adults with lifetime mental health issues can trace their symptoms back to childhood. We want all staff across our schools to be confident and empowered to effectively support children and build their resilience for the future.

As part of the day, we heard about the 'oxygen mask' principle (if you don't put your own oxygen mask on first, then you can't help anyone else) and heard some inspiring and thought provoking key note speeches from The Art of Brilliant and Amnesty International.

In the afternoon teachers could choose from a range of 18 different workshops delivered by a host of local partners, including the benefits of learning outdoors, mindfulness, positive psychology and keeping children safe online.

Our staff left the day feeling positive and inspired, looking forward to bringing a host of new ideas into their classrooms:

"Didn't realise how inspiring the day was until I got home and couldn't stop talking about everything I had learnt!"

"We had a great time meeting such enthusiastic and positive educators at yesterday's terrific Wellderness Festival. Thank you to those who attended our practical outdoor learning workshop and for the lovely feedback on the day." (Facilitators from 'The Garden Classroom')



Roald Dahl Day



On Thursday 1st March, SJSJ joined the rest of the nation as we all celebrated World Book Day. The children showed great spirit and really impressed everybody with their incredible array of costumes; despite the weather's attempts at snowing us all in! You all looked fantastic, thank you for your efforts!



Celebrating Success!

At Holy Trinity Primary School we have been celebrating success, children are having the opportunity to take part in a dining experience like no other. From across the school children are selected for consistently displaying exceptional behaviour and are being rewarded with afternoon tea which is served on Royal Albert fine bone china. The children are given a choice of both savoury and sweet foods and the drinks range from juice to hot chocolate.

One child from Year 6 said "We asked for a rainbow cake and couldn't believe it when the cake was cut into, there was six colours! My friends who didn't get an invite were so jealous"



News from our schools and federation activities



Outdoor Learning

This term Springfield have really thought about how to make the best use of our outdoor space. We are very lucky at



Springfield to have access to what we call 'Our Forest' – not quite a Forest but still a great space full of tall trees and plants that make it feel like a very special place. We are working with an organisation called The Garden Classroom to support us to make use of this resource to enhance our curriculum. During Science Week, classes focused on learning about 'The World of Worms' and used different scientific skills to discover more about these amazing creatures.

Classes spent a lot of time

outside, falling in love with worms and developing a new found respect for these very special creatures who do so much to help our environment. We are planning to further develop learning outdoors over the next year, training our own staff to become qualified Forest School Leaders and maximising opportunities to learn outside.

A two day Art project at our school culminated in the appearance of a giant BFG in our school. This was a collaborative project where each class developed skills in building 3D models. They used chicken wire to construct some very large creatures, including the BFG, who now sits centre stage in our hall.



Mayor's Fund for London

As part of our Positive Social Action project, our School Council went to visit the Houses of Parliament. The children learnt about how important their jobs are for the benefit of the community and the change that they could make. They learnt about the role of government and how all the parties work together to ensure the very best for society. The children were also lucky enough to stand at the lectern that Theresa May herself stands at to make her speeches to the country. This visit helped to solidify their roles as school council members and gave them a vision and passion to continue their roles in the future.



Respect the Zebra

The SJB school council have been working with Hackney Council and Hackney Citizens UK to design a poster, encouraging drivers and cyclists to stop for pedestrians at the zebra crossing on Pitfield Street. The 'Respect the Zebra' campaign has been in the works for months and last week, the poster was unveiled. The school council, along with a Junior Road Safety Officer, stood at the zebra crossing and encouraged road users to allow pedestrians to cross. Well done to the SJB council for their determination in fighting for a safer crossing.

News from our schools and federation activities



British Science Week



At Morningside we have had a fantastic time celebrating British Science Week. We have planned a wide range of exciting experiments, made our own slime and even

set off rockets in the playground! Everyone has joined in. We have had visitors to show us how things work and special assemblies where scientists have come along to tell us about their exciting jobs. Each year group has recorded their work on our school science Blog and there are fabulous pictures of our work on it as well as on our Twitter feed. Please have a look when you have a moment @Morningside_PS



Rights Respecting Award

Gainsborough Primary School has been awarded it's Rights Respecting Schools Silver Award! The award shows the school has the UN convention at the heart of it's policies and strategic planning and that this filters through to the children and their learning. The school was recognised as effectively promoting the values and principles of the Convention. The assessor interviewed the Rights Respecting Ambassadors and visited all of our classes. Children from Nursery to Year 6 were able to talk about rights, fairness and how we need to respect those rights. our next step is to make sure we involve the wider school community in our RRS work and run our own campaigns.

Gainsborough Primary School is about to embark on a huge building project to improve our playground, front entrance and outbuildings. We have received planning permission and now need to get fund raising. We will be looking at other school playgrounds, and offices and gathering views from parents, children and staff to make sure we have an amazing entrance and play space. Watch this space!

De Beauvoir News Report!



De Beauvoir Primary School had a two day Section 5 Ofsted inspection at the end of January. Results can only be shared once we have the final report; parent / carer and staff meetings are ready so that we can communicate outcomes to the school community quickly on publication.

Here are some of the other things that have been happening at school, with a focus on Key Stage 2:

Our Year 3 Choir is performing at the Royal Albert Hall on the 26th March having successfully taken part in the Armonico Consort choir creation scheme. There will be 2,000 children on stage, singing to a professional West End band and accompanied by professional singers.

The local potter Kate Malone, well known for her artwork and for being a judge on 'The Great Pottery Throw Down', visited the school to speak to pupils and will be welcoming Year 4 pupils into her workshops. These visits will involve finding out more about the work of a potter, how form is conceived in her work and the changes that occur to clay during the firing / glazing process. Children will have the opportunity to experiment with clay and to have a small piece of work fired.

Year 5 pupils have been working with a group of architects and a professional photographer on a unit of work about children's views of the urban landscape and the types of outdoor spaces which lend themselves best to play. The main focus of the project has been on the De Beauvoir Estate, which is home to many of our children. The project will culminate with an exhibition of pupils' work, attended by the Mayor of Hackney, at the school on the evening of Thursday 10th May.

Saturday School is running weekly and is attended by most of our Year 6 pupils. We are also running Easter Booster School; uptake for which has been high. We are looking forward to helping Year 6 celebrate their achievements during their Kench Hill residential after the SATs.

Have a lovely Easter Break!

From all the staff, the Governors and Associate Members of Primary Advantage, we want to wish you all a Happy Easter! We hope you all have a lovely break and we will be providing more fantastic stories in the new term!

