

# Footprints

Step-by-step together

Your newsletter from the Diocesan Board of Education

January 2018



**Paul Dunning**  
Diocesan Director of Education

## New Beginnings

**How do you cope with change or new beginnings? A new year prompts us to reflect on what's happened and gives us the impetus to look to the future.**

This edition of Footprints features a number of new beginnings such as Cawston Primary becoming an academy, a first headship in a church school, pupils joining the planning group for collective worship, starting as a school governor, becoming a DSSO and a challenge to do something different as a governing body. We hope these examples inspire you if you are at a new beginning or considering a change.

All new beginnings require a stepping out or stepping forward, actually making a start. When I was a student and needing to write an essay or assignment, I found that the biggest challenge was starting the assignment. To overcome procrastination and uncertainty I just needed to get something down on the page. Your first attempt won't be perfect but once you've started you can return to it, develop it and hopefully improve it!

Stepping out takes courage and faith however old you are and my experience is that it is worth the risk. Being out of your depth as you learn new things can be

scary but that is the place where we often learn and develop the most.

Many of our schools and academies use the concept of 'The Learning Pit'. This was first published in 2010 by James Nottingham. He reflects on how he would explain to his pupils why more challenge was good for them. One of the key principles is a recognition that we are all fallible. The approach assumes we are all willing to admit, or even draw attention to, our own errors or vulnerabilities. As we collaborate with those we are working or learning with, we find better solutions and emerge from our learning stronger and better equipped – a good practical way to help us through our new beginnings!

Christmas celebrates one immense new beginning – that of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, coming to earth as a vulnerable baby. Like all human beings he had to learn new things – how to walk, how to talk, how to use tools in the carpenters workshop. When he was around thirty years of age he started his formal ministry – another new beginning, and he gathered friends around him to help him. Perhaps the most dramatic new beginning was the one we will celebrate at Easter, possible because Jesus took that step of faith and obedience, to die on a cross.

Our stepping out in faith into new beginnings may not be as dramatic but they are nevertheless extremely meaningful to us. I am reminded of the verses in Proverbs 3 which say: *'Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.'*

I hope and pray that all our new beginnings will be straight paths that lead to blessing.

**Kay Swann**  
**Headteacher, Cawston CofE**  
**Primary Academy (DNEAT)**

Back in 2014 our governors started discussing the national academisation agenda. By 2015 our SIAMS inspection (Good) guided us to 'embed the strategic planning of the foundation governors to ensure sustaining the best outcomes for every child.'

The 'academy conversion' route enables higher performing schools, under no obligation to become academies, to opt into academy status.

Our decision to join DNEAT was based on:

- Trust in the diocesan family: the ethos of nurturing children spiritually, morally, socially, culturally as well as academically
- Collaboration: school links across DNEAT



- School Improvement: robust professional support and challenge.

'Governors have taken a long-term view of the school's future and have been active in negotiating the school's move to become an academy.' Ofsted 2016 (Good) Chair of Governors, Katie Andrews, confirms, 'It was important for us to be able to set our own path for future success.'

Following valuable discussions, community consultation and a DNEAT audit we set our academy route. The Scheme of Delegation confirmed our level of autonomy. There were some 'thorny' land issues to resolve but it was, on the whole, a smooth process.

With new finance and management systems to master our school secretary, Mandy Cameron-Heffer, reflects, 'It has been a steep learning curve but we have had lots of help from DNEAT admin.' In September 2016 we began the school year with academy status. For our official opening we invited the Bishop of Norwich, the Diocesan Director of Education and key staff from DNEAT to join us in raising the academy flag. We celebrated a fresh start, ready to embrace all that DNEAT offers. Our journey with DNEAT continues - to be the best we can be by staying true to our motto of 'Success by Working Together!'



**David Oldham**  
**Headteacher, Drayton CofE VC Junior**

Being just over a year into my first headship of a Church of England school, having previously been head at a community school, it would perhaps be

timely to reflect upon what I've learnt.

I have to say that one of the first things that struck me was the sense of belonging to a family of church schools where support is readily available. This has included CPD sessions, schools sharing their SIAMs SEF (writing that was a new concept for me!), visits to other schools, as well as the regular coffee and a chat with my diocese support officer.

I have also learnt not to get too hung up on whether we call it assembly or collective worship, if we have a display around school that reflects the holy trinity or what colour curtain is on our assembly trolley. I soon

discovered that whilst such rituals have an importance, it is establishing the Christian ethos that should always take priority.

Therefore, for me personally, it has been all about the values. Whilst all schools have a set of values, I wanted ours to be linked to what the Bible tells us. Not only did this make for an enticing entrance display but began to forge the link between what we say and what we do.

In summary, I have thoroughly enjoyed the journey I have been on and not only learnt a lot about what it means to lead a Church of England school but also about my own personal values as well.

**Scole CofE VC Primary School**  
**Collective Worship Group**

In September, Year 6 were asked if they would like to volunteer to be this year's Collective Worship group. Nine children eagerly responded and have met four times this term. This is what they would like to share about their role.

**Why is this group important to us and our school?**

Collective worship is an important part of our day. Being in the Collective Worship group helps us to develop the confidence to speak out and to make Collective Worship as good as it can be. We share our point of view which is important as we may see things differently to adults and we've noticed that the younger children come to talk to us about their ideas.

**What do the Collective Worship group do?**

The last group suggested improvements to our sharing assemblies and their ideas have worked well. This year we have evaluated the 'Open the Book' input and talked about what we like and what works well. We really enjoy it when the whole school joins in with shouting, clapping, actions or reading. The adults had thought they may do less of this but we have asked for more! We thought this was particularly important for the younger children as it meant they could join in the story and probably understand it more.

**Would you recommend being in a Collective Worship group?**

Definitely. Its exciting, interesting and a real responsibility. We have lots of ideas of things we would like to do in the future

including leading our own Collective Worship later this term.



*This cross was made in our Reflection Shed. The children thought about forgiveness and then added their fingerprint to the cross. It is now on permanent display in our hall.*



**Andrew Proctor**  
Parent Governor  
Little Plumstead VA Primary

I became a parent governor in February 2017 at Little Plumstead CofE VA Primary School. I live locally, am married and have a 5 year old son who joined the school a year ago. My life's taking a new path, having been made redundant after 28 years in insurance, so clearly the education system is very alien to me; but life's a roller

coaster and offers opportunities when you least expect them.

Being perfectly honest, I wasn't too sure I had the ability, skills or knowledge to become a school governor when I was approached by the head on behalf of the governing body. After an open conversation about what's involved and the commitment, I sat in on a few committees as a guest, to see whether it's something I could contribute to. Like many things in life, it's worth giving it a go although I was a little apprehensive, having never done anything like this before. I've found it challenging, confusing (especially the terminology), but ultimately very rewarding. I'm lucky being a tiny cog in a big team of talented individuals, who give up their time doing their very best for the school and more

importantly the children.

As a governing group, we all strive to make improvements, allowing children to feel safe, secure and have the freedom to meet their full potential. We're the school's critical friend, being both supportive and challenging working together to make it the best it can be. Recognition is great and this happened in June 2017, when the school was awarded an outstanding SIAMS inspection – testament to everyone's efforts and hard work.

If you're reading this and thinking I'd like to get involved as a school governor, I'm sure your local school/academy would welcome you with open arms. We can all offer something, so go on, you'll be amazed at how much impact you have.



**Laura Sproston**  
Diocesan School Support Officer (DSSO)

As we go through life we experience a whole range of New Beginnings. We have first days at school, college and university and at work. For me each one has been easier because

of friendships from existing friends and the kindness and support of new ones.

As each New Beginning, both professionally and personally, has arrived in my life I have been blessed with relationships and friendships that have helped me to see the New Beginning as an opportunity. Every New Beginning has been a learning experience. I've failed sometimes and succeeded at other times. I have laughed and cried but I've also recognised that I have learnt and grown because of those New Beginnings.

My New Beginning as a DSSO is another phase. There will be good days; on others

I will need advice and support but the important part is that with the Diocese I have for me what is essential; those friends who I know that I can rely on already and others that I am just meeting. New Beginnings offer us that opportunity each time. I like this from the Gospel of John in the New Testament.

'And now dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning. His command is that you walk in love.' (2 John 1: 5-6)



**Kathryn Wright**  
Diocesan RE Adviser

You will be aware that a new SIAMS evaluation schedule will come into place from September 2018. The focus of this new schedule is to ensure that the Christian vision of a school continues to drive school improvement and that the Christian foundation of the school is upheld and celebrated amidst a changing educational climate. The structure of the new schedule reflects the Church of England Vision for Education (2016) with sections on wisdom, knowledge and

skills; character development; community and living well together and dignity and respect. There are three fundamental questions asked throughout the schedule which are:

- What is your Christian vision for the school? (Vision)
- What do you do because of your vision? (Provision)
- How do you know it is working? (Impact)

There will be one overall grade for the school. RE will be inspected in the same way in all schools, except for one question relating to the effectiveness of teaching and learning in VA schools. VA schools and academies will also receive a separate grade for their RE. The section on RE focuses more closely on the implementation of the Statement of Entitlement (2016) and developing pupils' religious literacy.

Schools will also receive a separate grade for collective worship. There are no significant changes in the schedule with regard to collective worship. However, both RE and collective worship will be commented on as part of the overall narrative about the school, there will no longer be separate sections about each of these in the report.

The Diocese is offering a range of opportunities to learn more about the new schedule:

- RE in the new SIAMS: For RE Subject leaders 18th January 4-5.30pm or 23rd April 4-5.30pm
- The New SIAMS Framework: A guide for school leaders 1st February 9.30am-3.30pm

**Kathryn can be contacted by email:**  
[kathryn.wright@dioceseofnorwich.org](mailto:kathryn.wright@dioceseofnorwich.org)  
or call 01954 261457

## Governor & Clerk update



**Louise Reeves**  
Education Support Officer

### New Year, New beginnings. What does this mean to your governing board?

New Year is often a time for new year's resolutions, but these are often broken quickly, even though they may have been made with the best of intentions. This year instead of resolutions, why not see this as a time to maybe have an extra ordinary meeting (over and above the usual committee and full governor meetings) to take time away from the hustle and bustle of normal governance meeting work, to have time to look at the way

you work and operate. This doesn't need to be a long meeting but instead a time for governors to take time to reflect and discuss. Ideas for the meeting could be to:

- Look at your overall skills set. Are there gaps? If so how are you going to fill the gap?
- Are the duties of governance shared or is it just one or two governors who do the majority of the work? How is this working? Can it be better?
- Is your structure robust and working? What are your strengths and weaknesses? How are you going to use those strengths and develop those weaknesses?
- What is the school vision and how is this reflected in the way it works? Where is your evidence? Is it related to the Christian Ethos of the school? Does it permeate everything in school?

■ Are you aware of the new SIAMS framework which will be in place from September 2018? Have staff and governors accessed training on this as the new framework is very different from the old one?

■ What is your long term strategic vision for the school? When was this last reviewed? Is it still relevant? How does this sit alongside the Diocese of Norwich Education strategy? Have your headteacher and chair of governors booked to attend the event at Norwich Cathedral on Wednesday 24th January 2018?

Taking time out for reflection can be beneficial and also the start of something new.

**Louise can be contacted by email: [louise.reeves@dioceseofnorwich.org](mailto:louise.reeves@dioceseofnorwich.org) or call 01603 882344**

## Out to Consultation

Fleggburgh CofE VC Primary and Freethorpe Community Primary schools. Consultation closes 19 January 2018

Archbishop Sancroft CofE VA High School and Harleston CofE VA Primary schools. Consultation closes 2nd February 2018

## Heads starting/leaving:

Thomas Snowdon has been appointed from 01.01.18 to the headteacher position at Swanton Morley CofE VC Primary School

## SIAMS Congratulations

**Congratulations to the following schools that have had their SIAMS inspections this autumn term.**

### Good

St Mary's CofE Junior Academy  
Scole CofE VC Primary  
Carleton Rode CofE VA Primary  
Swaffham CofE Junior Academy  
Drayton CofE VC Junior

## Diocese of Norwich headteacher conference 2018

**We look forward to inviting the headteachers of our church schools and academies to the annual headteacher conference at Norwich Cathedral on Tuesday 24 April 2018 from 09:00 to 16:00.**

Invites will be with you by email shortly. The theme this year is resilience. We welcome the following speakers:

- Mary Myatt who will speak about resilience in children.
- Andy Wolfe from the Church of England Education Office, Foundation for school leadership who will speak about resilience in staff.
- Paul Warwick from Contender Charlie who will speak about courageous leadership inspired by Shakespeare's Macbeth in an imaginative and creative way

■ The Rt Revd Alan Winton, Bishop of Thetford and also a member of the Diocesan Board of Education will be attending and lead us in collective worship.

We look forward to seeing you for what promises to be an interesting and though provoking day,