

Footprints

Step by step together

Your newsletter from the Diocesan Board of Education

April 2022

Churches and schools working together



Paul Dunning
Diocesan Director of Education

We exist in community and relationship, and what a precious gift is the working of church and school together.

Educating for community and living well together is one of the four pillars of the Church of England's national Vision for Education; "the conviction that we are created and sustained by God for living together in families and communities is at the root of our dedication to educating

for life together." Both the school and the church are at the heart of their communities, and you will read in this edition of Footprints how this is being wonderfully lived out.

At the heart of our Diocesan Board of Education implementation plan is that we work with our colleagues in the Children, Youth and Families team to "support churches to engage educationally, pastorally and missionally with their local schools". I am impressed and grateful for the numerous ways that churches, through both clergy and laity, are involved in sharing the love and servant heart of Jesus with their schools. There is a growing interest in the role that chaplaincy can play, and we have a pilot project just started in south Norfolk bringing ordained and lay people together in a team approach around their local schools. More

on that in future editions!

The SIAMS inspection schedule gives an opportunity to celebrate to an external audience the way the church and school work well together. The Strand 1 grade descriptor states "A distinctive feature of the school is that it understands itself as a partner with the local church and diocese community. Leaders are proactive in seeking and maintaining mutually beneficial partnerships with the local church and diocese community." In the stories that follow you will see how this is being worked out creatively in challenging situations such as a pandemic or where there is a gap between appointment of vicars. Thank you to all across our Diocese who embrace the work with children and young people and make a difference in their communities.

Sarah Disney
Executive Head Teacher
The Dove Federation

At the Dove Federation engagement with our local churches has not always been easy due to a lack of clergy in our parish churches.

Despite the challenges that this brings, engagement with our community and local churches remains a priority for us and something that we continue to develop. Since September we have been lucky enough to work with the Reverend Joy Fernando, vicar of the church of the Holy Cross in Caston. Joy has been keen to work with Caston Primary Academy and provide regular opportunities for the children to visit the church, and for her to come into school to lead collective worship and join in with RE lessons. The children at Caston enjoy joining in with her collective worship and taking the lead in this. They particularly enjoyed the opportunity to learn about the items of clothing Joy brought in to school and having an opportunity to wear some of them. Joy was also kind enough to come into the school during Inter faith week to talk to the children about Christianity.

When we visited the church again for the first time since the start of the pandemic in the Autumn term, we had



to remind ourselves that for some of our pupils it was the first time they had entered a church. This was a special moment for both staff and pupils as it demonstrated a new direction in the pandemic. Recently the children have enjoyed attending Caston parish church for harvest festival, Remembrance Day and the Christmas carol service.

Alongside working with our parish churches, we also actively engage with Mat who works for the Fountain of Light church

in Ashill. Mat regularly leads collective worship in both schools. You can always tell when Mat is on site or is zooming in to a classroom to lead collective worship by the giggles drifting down the corridors. Mat's collective worship always makes the children laugh whilst teaching them a valuable Bible story or moral.

As we continue to move out of the pandemic, we are looking forward to continuing our work with the parish churches and the Fountain of Life church.



Sabrina Holmes
Acting Head of School
Sutton CE VC Infant School
The Swallowtail Federation of
Church Schools

At the Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools, we have always had strong links with our local churches and welcomed visitors in on a regular basis.

Over the past two years this has, for obvious reasons, been difficult to sustain. However, we have found that even when we were unable to host our local clergy our pupils still found opportunities to talk

about our churches and the visitors that used to be in school, thus showing the deep links that we have and the respect and care that our pupils have for the churches and their leaders.

Throughout the changes in restrictions, we began developing new ways of being involved with and continuing our church links. We have held collective worship outside, we have shared prayers, we have walked to our churches and held outside Christingle services. As a federation of church schools, it is imperative that our schools and churches work together, that our pupils have the Christian experiences

that our Lord Jesus Christ offers us, that they understand what God gave to us. Even more so now than ever before, our children need to know the love of Christ and of the fellowship of a church. These past two years have been greatly detrimental to children's lives and we, as educators working in schools with a Christian ethos, need to ensure that all our pupils feel the safety and love of God.

Our school vision is "With friendship, trust and kindness, we fly" and the links that we have with our churches help us follow this vision and love each other as Jesus did.

The Revd Mark Capron and The Revd Dave Cossey



Bible bites

Bible bites is a creative engaging online collective worship offered free to schools.

Originally developed during the pandemic to enable the clergy's contribution into Ingoldisthorpe school to continue, it has resulted in 39 themed collective worship sessions which are Bible based, with either an engaging illustration (trick) or a kitchen experiment, with prayer and a question for reflection. The Bible bites episodes seek to bring the Bible to life through a memorable fun experience supporting schools in SMSC, as well as the continuity of the clergy's contact with the school.

Sean Wright, Headteacher at Ingoldisthorpe Church of England Primary School, said: "children got excited as soon as they heard the theme music and really enjoyed seeing the Revd Mark Capron and the Revd Dave Cossey on screen. The Christian messages were embedded in the pupils and staff's minds with the 'tricks' used in Bible bites. The school



vision of 'No matter how far you wander, you will always be welcome' is evident in the visits to school. The children are pleased to see Mark and Dave in person again and welcome members of our Christian family".

Mark said: "It was important to help the school during the pandemic in whatever way we could. The Bible bites enabled a strong continuation of partnering with the school and a flourishing in learning more of God's love and His Son Jesus".

"Dave and myself set about this weekly task, learning as we went, yet also having lots of fun which showed in the videos! Bishop Graham made a guest appearance

performing one of the illusions. A number of other schools in West Norfolk and Lincolnshire use Bible Bites as a resource especially when there isn't any contact by local clergy". The Bible bites are generally 8-14 minutes long and all available on the churches YouTube channel, "Dersingham Online Worship". In addition, the teacher supporting notes prepared for each video provide both confidence and ease to the teachers, offering context to the Bible passage and development questions for staff to use. The supporting notes are available from the benefice church secretary: secretary@stnicholasdersingham.org.uk

The Revd Tori Venmore-Rowland Assistant Curate Saffham and Sporle

"Christ has no body now, but yours... Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world."

St Theresa of Avila

Here in the benefice of Saffham and Sporle we are blessed to have plenty of schools, and Covid restrictions permitting, we work closely with them.

Recently, as part of my ongoing ministerial training, I spent a week at Heartwood CE VC Primary School.

As part of our connection, we often display work from the children in our church. It reminds our congregation of our local area, and the children love to see their art in a public place. So, it only seemed right to commemorate my week with a new project. I asked all the Prayer Warriors, and pupils in Deer and Fox classes, to draw around their hands, and then write or draw inside a prayer for the church.

But then I thought, why not make this a mutual process? I told the children that my



plan was to ask the congregation to do the same with prayers for the school. Although I did warn them that, as grown-ups, they might not have practised their art for a while! The children instantly offered to come and help them if needs be. Next time I shall definitely take them up on this.



Our congregation joined in with very good heart, and we soon had a display of handprints to take back into the school, where the Prayer Warriors allowed me to help put them up.

What a true blessing for us to be able to work together!

Governor focus



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There is something special about churches and schools working together for the benefit of their community.

In many schools the key link between school governance and the parish is an Ethos and Community Committee (or similar). This gives a wonderful opportunity to really take time to delve into your school or federation's vision and Christian distinctiveness and what impact they have on the day-to-day life of the school. It is a place where clergy are particularly invaluable.

We understand that in some cases, it is hard for the local clergy to make

time to be a governor as well as all their other commitments. In which case I say this – don't be put off from asking because this has been the case in the past; things change. If, however they just don't have enough time, then look at alternative ways you can work together. Could clergy be a co-opted member just for the Ethos Committee to bring their advice and expertise to the meetings without the commitment of becoming a full governor? It may be that you have built your Ethos Committee work into your main governing body meetings. That's fine and maybe you invite your clergy member to attend for that section of the meeting if they can't make the whole. Another option might be to coordinate governor monitoring of the vision and ethos with the clergy member so that they can accompany you, bringing their insight to your observations. When monitoring, you're not only looking for what is, but also for what could be better, so their expertise and external view could be really helpful.

It is always worth remembering that any successful relationship is two-way and if you'd like them to attend your meetings and events, popping your

head into theirs can't hurt! Where collective worship is led by the clergy member, do governors regularly attend? Are there other joint working opportunities already in the school that governors could get more involved in? Can governors contribute to the school's input into a parish magazine or newsletter? If pupils are visiting the Church for an event, make sure that the governing body is represented.

Finally, I want to mention SIAMS. Now, just as all learning is not about tests and exams, all governance around school ethos and Christian distinctiveness is not all about SIAMS. Having said that, the governing body can be a huge help to the school or schools by engaging in really good preparation. It was great to see so many of you attend Jon Moule's "Introduction to SIAMS for Governors" in March and I would encourage as many of you as possible to book for the October session via the Governorhub website. Amongst the course materials Jon shared on Governorhub is a list of questions that governors could be asked at a SIAMS inspection. This list is a great resource that you can use as a reflection tool at your meetings.

Welcome

Headteachers starting

Rhiannon Price
The Saints Federation (Interim EHT)

Callum Richards
Forngett and Carleton Rode
Federation (Exec HT)

Harriett Beckett
Pulham (HT)

Farewell & thanks

Sue Sweet
Diocesan School Support Officer
(DSSO)

Headteachers leaving

Jess Woolner
The Saints Federation (Interim EHT)

Charlotte Whyte
Forngett and Carleton Rode
Federation (Interim EHT)

REQM congratulations

Silver Award

St Peter & St Paul (Carbrooke)
Academy DNEAT