

Footprints

Step by step together

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Norwich

Your newsletter from the Diocesan Board of Education

October 2023

Church and school working together



Paul Dunning
Diocesan Director of Education

Across the Diocese there are numerous examples of schools and their local church working effectively together – four are featured in this edition of Footprints. Why is this an important element as we educate children?

To start to answer this I return to the

document **'Our Hope for a Flourishing Schools System'** published in July by the Church of England. In defining 'flourishing' it draws on biblical sources but also features the Zulu word 'UBUNTU'. This is best translated *'I am because we are'*. It says that *'flourishing is never an individual pursuit, but a collective endeavour, released in relationship and communities that live well together.'* Schools and churches working together can play a part in this as they seek to support the moral, spiritual, cultural, and relational development of pupils, offering a broader, more expansive vision of what education is for.

Our church school family reflects Romans 12:5 which says, *'We are many*

parts of one body, and we all belong to each other'. That is wonderfully exemplified in the article from St Nicholas Priory VA primary where they see both the church space and staff as an integral part of their school team. One body and living out Ubuntu!

On a separate subject I want to say a huge THANK YOU to Dot Lenton, one of our Diocesan School Support Officers. Dot was one of the four original DSSOs when the scheme began over 15 years ago. She has faithfully and effectively supported so many of our Headteachers over the years and we are going to miss her hugely. May God continue to bless Dot in her retirement as she's been a blessing to us!



Pippa Delaine

Assistant Headteacher and SENDCo.
The Beacon Federation

As a Federation, the Beacon schools are at the beginning of our chaplaincy journey as part of the St Benet's MAT chaplaincy project. Over the last few years, both of our local churches have experienced interregnum periods, however there are now Incumbents at both and it is exciting to be building these strong relationships up again.

Working alongside the Revd Simon

Richardson and his team at Garboldisham Church, pupils are having weekly collective worship sessions in school and regular services in church all led by Revd Simon and the Revd Josh Whitnall who has joined this year as Curate. Revd Simon has also been in to work with the pupils on some of their RE topics including one focussed on the Eucharist which concluded with a community communion service. Moving forward there are plans for an increase in school church services, community events and a lunchtime club where pupils can explore their spirituality further.

At Dickleburgh pupils visit church for the main festivals and engage in Open the Book collective worship run by the church team. Merja and Amy from the Integrate Youth for Christ (IYFC) team have been into both schools to share collective worship sessions with our Year 6 classes. On the back of these we have had many pupils from Dickleburgh go on to join the Youth café run by IYFC. We were also very lucky to work alongside Ruth last year who came into Garboldisham school to offer 1:1 wellbeing support to a Year 6 pupil in preparation for their transition to High School.



Susie Bratby

Sports and Community Minister
Grace Church and
Bishop's CE Primary Academy

Grace Church in Thetford meets on Sundays at 4pm in the Arts Centre, part of The Bishop's CE Primary Academy. During the week the building is used for PE lessons, after-school clubs, and small group learning. For part of the Summer, Christmas, and Easter holidays the building is used to provide high-quality sports and games for primary aged children at 'Legacy' the church holiday club. At Legacy part of the Christian faith is explored and young people are trained

in leadership skills as they serve as 'Young Leaders'. This Summer 30-35 children and young leaders came to the Summer Legacy holiday club, where everyone learnt about the armour of God during the 'Half time talks'. On the middle Sunday, we held a 'Celebration Service' at Grace Church, which saw many families from Legacy attend. It was wonderful sharing what the children had already learnt about the armour of God, learning about the next part of the armour, and tucking into a BBQ after the service! Using the same building for Legacy and church has really helped breaking down barriers that people can have when coming to church for the first time.

It is wonderful to have such a strong

link between the school and church that has been strengthened through the Revd Tony Heywood and Sports Ministry. The links have been made through weekly assemblies, Tony being on the board of governors, speaking in classes on Christian topics during RE, sports clubs at lunch and after school and supporting one off events like their summer fayre. Others from the church also get involved with Open the Book and year 6 transition assemblies. This regular presence in the school enables friendships to form with staff and conversations around faith to be had. It is exciting to see what God will do with these links over the next year, remembering that they are wider than the Sports Ministry input.



Maria Grimmer
Headteacher
St Nicholas Priory VA primary

As with many schools, St Nicholas Priory seeks to create a secure nurturing environment and a sense of belonging to a family. We openly discuss with children them being part of their home family, school family and Christian family. Our relationship with Great Yarmouth Minster is instrumental in supporting this vision. We see both the space and the staff as an integral part of our Priory team. Over the course of the last few years there have been many occasions where we have valued the contributions of our colleagues at the Minster who are very present at the school and seek to develop not just a knowledge of the Christian faith but to demonstrate the

values that we all share.

We have an established partnership in our 'Song School' which is held four mornings a week where children come together, have breakfast, and then sing. This group was initially created out of the partnership with the Minster. The children do not audition but come together because they enjoy singing. Hence there is inclusion for all with participation positively promoted. The weekly collective worship recordings from the Minster team are excellent and have enhanced both the offer and the confidence of staff to deliver them. These are then shared with parents on the website.

As a school we are immensely grateful for everything that the Minster team contributes to the wellbeing of children, staff and community at St Nicholas Priory and we have many ideas to develop this relationship further in the future.



Saul Penfold
Inspired Classrooms Project Manager

Inspired Classrooms is an accessible and FREE online toolkit to open up parish churches as 'creative classrooms' – spaces in which pupils can enjoy cross-curricular learning inspired by their fabulous surroundings. Such learning is designed to challenge and overturn the widely held perception that churches are places in which only an RE Syllabus can be delivered. This myth is exploded by providing hugely creative ways in which schools can deliver English, Science, Maths, Humanities, the Arts and PSHE – through active engagement with their local churches.

There are over 30 lessons and challenges for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 – all of which are intended to help pupils develop and nurture a wide range of key skills such of research, teamwork, focus



and creativity. There are also supporting practical resources for church visits which can be used by any church and by any school at any time.

Feedback has been very positive.

From clergy:

'Inspired Classrooms opens the door to the creative use of our amazing buildings as science labs, theatres, art galleries and interactive historic buildings – all within walking distance from so many of our schools. Let's welcome and allow our young people to rediscover that our parish churches are indeed Inspired Classrooms.'

From teachers:

'I think this website will do more to encourage teachers and communities to engage with their churches than anything previously done. Its potential is immense and the facility to upload further planning and resources means it should be a growing bank of useful stuff for years to come!'



'In a few clicks it's possible to access useful and inspiring teaching materials. Information is clearly laid out and supports navigation. It's a fantastic resource.'

And from pupils:

'When our teacher said we were going to the church I thought it would be boring but it hasn't been. It has been great!'

'I was able to think more in the church – I felt more focussed here than I do in our classroom.'

We are currently seeking a part time Lead Teacher to help us deliver Phase Two of Inspired Classrooms – with a focus on churchyards, nature, health and wellbeing. If you are interested and would like to find out more please, contact the Project Manager, Saul Penfold on saul.penfold@btinternet.com

www.inspiredclassrooms.org

Governor focus



Hannah Monk
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With most Local Governance now working to the circle model – one meeting per half term and no committees – it might be easy for those church-school links to get a bit lost among the other business of the meetings. In all our schools however there should be room in governance for maximising church-school links. I recommend making use of the guidance written by Chris Allen, RE Lead for the Diocese of Norwich and SIAMS Inspector on incorporating the SIAMS framework into governance.

www.DofN.org/MAT-Governance
www.DofN.org/VAVC-Governance

The most obvious link between Church and School in governance is probably

getting your local vicar to become a governor.

Where the vicar is keen, use them! They are already a governor so consider asking them to lead on Governor monitoring in preparation for SIAMS using their experience and knowledge as experts in spiritual development. In your governor meetings they can view your decisions and discussions through the lens of the Christian character of your school. And they can help the rest of your governors to understand what a school that is living and breathing its vision and values looks like, to support their monitoring in all areas.

However, vicars have growing workloads, and some are not able to engage as much as you or they would like. For those who lack the time ask them if there is someone in their community, congregation or team who might like to take up the post. Also do reassure them governance is a team endeavour and can be manageable

alongside the pressures of their day job. Don't be put off from asking because the answer has been no in the past either. Things change.

Some vicars positively choose to be involved with the school in other ways such as leading collective worship, chaplaincy, pastoral support and input into RE. Try and build relationships with the governing board, perhaps by governors interacting in these activities or even monitoring them.

For those of you who have a vacancy (interregnum) and are worried about maintaining links with your local church please do ask the Diocese for support and we will try and assist.

Finally, I want to say thank you,

- to the Foundation and Trust Appointed Governors safeguarding the Christian ethos of our schools;
- to the vicars who are governing; and
- to the vicars who are working as much as they are able with our schools.

Welcome

Headteachers starting

Rebekah Woodrow – St Mary Federation, DNEAT

January 2024

Andrew Phoenix – Tacolneston and Morley Federation, St Benet's

Hayley Sonnex – Salhouse, Neatishead and Fleggburgh Federation.

Federations

Sunflower Federation – Brooke VC and Hempnall Community Schools

Acle and Little Plumstead – St Benet's

Farewell

Headteachers leaving

Julie Church – Salhouse, Neatishead and Fleggburgh Federation

DSSOs leaving

Dot Lenton

SIAMS congratulations

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

St Michael's VA Junior, Bowthorpe

All Saints VA primary, Stibbard

Hindringham VC Primary

DNEAT conversions

1 November 2023

Earsham VA Primary – joining the Kingfisher Partnership

Dereham VA Nursery and Infants

St Benet's MAT conversions

1 September 2023

Acle VA primary

Little Plumstead VA Primary