


Footprints

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Norwich

Your newsletter from the Diocesan Board of Education

April 2025



Paul Dunning
Diocesan Director of Education

You may have wondered how schools get to feature in *Footprints*. This happens in three ways. We keep track of when each school is featured and try to give every school a chance to contribute over a period of time (if we were purely mathematical that would be once every five years). Secondly, when we identify

a theme, we may be aware of a school doing some great work in that area and approach them. Finally, we are always open to schools coming to us keen to share an exciting story or good practice.

For this edition we used the first method as we know every school in our Diocesan family would have a good story to share when asked to celebrate their staff team. It may be a cliché that staff are our most important asset, but it is absolutely true!

One theme that comes out of the stories in the following pages is that of going the extra mile. I witness this every time I visit one of our schools, whether that be supporting a school disco, running an extracurricular club, getting

out a paintbrush to decorate and much more. Thank you, particularly in these challenging financial times.

This also chimes with one of the Bible passages the central education teams at Easton and East Tuddenham have identified as being important for their work. Matthew 5:41-42 says *'If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.'*

Being prepared to serve one another in this way enables children and adults to flourish - a clear demonstration of the Church of England vision for education in action. It is a privilege to be involved in such a wonderful family of schools.



Vicki Long
Headteacher
Necton Church of England Primary School

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

"Absolutely fantastic!" "A dream-team!" "So special, I've never known anything like it." – Different descriptions from current team members reflecting their perspectives of what it is like to be a

part of #TeamNecton. I truly feel blessed every day to be working with such wonderful people. I am humbled when I hear colleagues talk of the joy they get by being part of this team.

We have tough times, daily. Just like every other school does. We laugh daily, sometimes cry, often sigh. Our team ethic is resolute no matter how shaky we might feel at times – everyone digs in and does what needs to be done. Having reflected on how this happens, I always come back to one common denominator: our shared vision and our shared values – these are what help us succeed: Respect everyone. Have a good attitude. Be peaceful. Our values, inspired

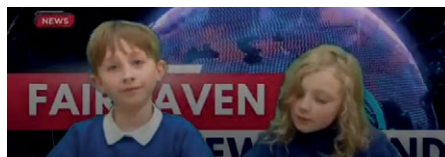
by the Beatitudes, lived out by everyone.

We serve our community together. Our prioritisation of 'positive relationships' is at the heart of our school culture. No matter how hard this may be, we know this is vital to truly and reverently live out our school vision, 'belong, believe, thrive, achieve. Rooted in Christ, we learn, grow and flourish.' We come together and are united by this conviction. We achieve great things for our community because we are a team: united in vision, living shared values, and growing together as one to serve the common good. Just as the mustard seed did, in the parable upon which our school vision is honed.

Stephanie Lake
Headteacher
Fairhaven Church of England
VA Primary School

I joined Fairhaven Primary as a class teacher in 2006, so this is my nineteenth year working at the school. One of the reasons I have never considered moving schools is because of the wonderful people I work alongside. Some have been here as long as I have, others even a little longer, and of course, we have newer members of staff who have brought fresh ideas and enthusiasm to our school. Together we make up a solid team. It would be difficult to single anyone out for special recognition, as everyone here – Midday Supervisors, Teachers, our Cleaner, our Caretaker, office staff, and Teaching Assistants – plays a crucial role in the smooth and effective running of the school.

So what binds us together and what does a team need to thrive? Well, everything our pupils also need: mutual respect, praise, support, empathy, friendship and fun. We all know that schools are busy places, but we try hard to



be available for each other. It is important to take a few moments in the day to check in with each other, notice when someone is not their usual self and act upon this. Reminding people to actually sit in the staff room and take a break with colleagues during the day is important. I love it when I walk into the staff room and hear chatter, laughter and everyday conversations. It is at the heart of our staff wellbeing approach. Teamwork is all about collaborating and sharing the load; together, we can make everything feel a bit lighter and more manageable!

Our fantastic Fairhaven staff are committed to providing a wide range of enrichment activities and events for our pupils. Whether it's singing, sport, art, science or history, our team goes above and beyond to provide engaging experiences. For example, Mrs Seaman leads a Nature Ninja's lunchtime club; recently, the group has dissected owl pellets. Mrs Plane, our Wraparound



Manager, helps the children to produce a weekly Fairhaven Newsround video, which features news, weather updates, sports news and a very popular segment called "Get to Know Your Teacher."

Ultimately, it's about seeing the bigger picture and having a shared understanding of our vision which is to nurture the gifts God gives to us and encourage our pupils to explore their interests, find their talents, flourish and live life to the full.



St Mary's Church of England Junior Academy

Dedicated Staff at St Mary's Church of England Junior Academy

Laura Richardson

Headteacher

St Mary's Church of England Junior Academy

At St Mary's Church of England Junior Academy, the school's success is driven by the passion and dedication of its staff, each playing a vital role in shaping the educational journey of the students. The leadership team, alongside the teaching and support staff, work collaboratively to foster a learning environment where every child can thrive and 'Soar on Wings like eagles.'

At the helm of the school is Miss Richardson, Headteacher and Mr Carlyle, the Improvement Director who play a crucial role in driving the academy's progress and ensuring all children receive excellent educational standards through high quality CPD. Supporting them is Miss Dekeyzer, the

Senior Teacher, who 'team teaches' with staff to ensure consistency and our commitment to outstanding teaching across the school. Mrs Dale, the Pastoral and Safeguarding Lead, develops our SEMH programme and ensures the wellbeing and safeguarding of all students, creating a nurturing environment alongside Mr Leek and Miss Maher. Mrs Ketley, the SENDCo, is dedicated to supporting children with special educational needs, ensuring they receive the help and resources they need to succeed.

The Academy Business Support team, led by Miss Chase, handles the administrative backbone of the school, while Mrs Drake, the Reception Office Manager, ensures the school runs smoothly ensuring everyone and everything is organised, and Mr Critchell, the Site Manager, maintains smooth operations behind the scenes.

In the classroom, passionate educators guide students through their academic journey. In Year 3, Miss Harris teaches Firecrests, while Miss Womack leads Skylarks. Year 4's Woodpeckers are under the guidance of Mr Oxbury. In Years 5 and 6, Miss Dekeyzer, Mr Conquest and Mr Morris, whilst Mr Power supports children in the Personalised Learning Classroom. Support is provided by a skilled team of Teaching Assistants, including Miss Maher, Miss Anderson, Mrs Elvin, Miss Whiting, Miss Norton, and Mrs Partridge who go above and beyond to support the children's academic and social, emotional and mental health.

Together, this exceptional team of educators, leaders, and support staff at St Mary's Junior Academy make a lasting impact on every student, creating a school environment where learning, growth, and wellbeing are at the forefront of everything they do.

**Win
£1,000
for your
school
nature
project!**



Could your school garden, nature lessons or eco-scheme win the Bishop of Norwich Environment Prize for Schools?



This spring the Bishop of Norwich is launching an award scheme for Church of England primary schools in the Diocese – with a £1,000 prize for the winning school.

Bishop Graham is looking for projects focused on children and the environment. It could be a wildlife area or vegetable garden, a scheme to help children engage with the natural world or ideas which reduce waste or boost recycling.

The judges are particularly interested in hearing how children are involved in devising and running the project – which can be either already thriving or perhaps something pupils are looking to launch.

The prize money, to be spent on the winning project, might buy trees or tools for an outside area, binoculars and identification charts for wildlife-watching, or something to get a great scheme underway.

Enter by scanning the QR code or head to www.DofN.org/envprize
Please submit your application by Monday 2 June.

Governance Update



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Building Strong Relationships Between Governors and School Staff

Every year, I meet with new Headteachers in the Diocese to discuss "Working with Your Governing Body." One of the key topics – one I could easily spend my entire session on – is the relationship between governors and school staff.

When done right, this relationship is mutually beneficial. School staff gain a valuable sounding board, essential checks and balances, and the challenge they need to be effective practitioners – helping them reach and inspire the young people in their care. At the same time, governors become an integral, respected part of the school community, feeling valued and involved.

After 10 years in school and academy governance, I've found that when this relationship falters, it's almost always due to the best of intentions.

Striking the Right Balance

It's easy for governors to unintentionally become too operational

or overly involved, which can leave school staff feeling micromanaged or scrutinised. On the other hand, if governors are too distant, staff may feel that they simply attend meetings without truly understanding the school or its daily challenges.

Thankfully, most governors I've worked with don't fall into either extreme. And in my experience, proactive communication and clarity help safeguard this crucial relationship.

Three Key Steps to Strengthen the Governor-Staff Relationship

1. Plan School Visits Thoughtfully

Always prearrange school visits well in advance at a mutually agreed time and with a clear focus. Governors are there to support, not inspect, so it's essential that staff – especially Early Career Teachers and new team members who might not have had much experience with governors before – understand the visit's purpose, duration, and scope.

2. Know Your Role and Responsibilities

Be clear on your responsibilities by reviewing your Scheme of Delegation (for academies) and Terms of Reference (for all schools). This ensures that both staff and governors have aligned

expectations, allowing governors to act with confidence. Clarity also prevents unnecessary duplication of efforts.

3. Help Staff Understand the Role of Governors

Headteachers and governors should work together to ensure all staff—not just senior leadership—understand the role of local governance. Could the Chair and a few governors attend a staff meeting to introduce themselves and explain what they do? A simple "hello" and a brief overview can go a long way in building relationships.

Keeping It Simple

Good relationships between governors and staff may require effort, but at its core, it's about balance – offering both support and challenge in equal measure. Keep it clear, keep it constructive, and keep communication open.

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." – Proverbs 27:17 (NIV)

This verse highlights the value of mutual support and constructive challenge in relationships. Just as iron sharpens iron, governors and school staff can help each other grow and thrive when they work together with respect and purpose.

Welcome

New DSSO
Rachael Greenhalgh

Farewell

DSSO
Christina Galletly

SIAMS congratulations

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

Fleggburgh Church of England VC Primary School

Horsford Church of England VA Primary School

Little Plumstead Church of England Primary Academy

Gooderstone Church of England Primary Academy

Contact us

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