

Footprints

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Norwich

Your newsletter from the Diocesan Board of Education

January 2026

Caring for All – Safeguarding



Chris Allen
Diocesan Director of Education

"Shine Jesus Shine" is one of my favourite songs sung in church. While it is a prayer for spiritual revival, it also reflects the biblical themes of God's holiness and the work of the Holy Spirit. It reminds us that Jesus' divine light can, and does, transform individuals and nations.

As we enter a new calendar year, themes of renewal and transformation are often at the forefront of our minds. Whether it is getting fit, joining a gym, or finding more time to enjoy life in all its fullness, January is often a time for setting

goals and making promises.

For me, the start of January 2026 brings the new role and challenge of being the Diocesan Director of Education. In this role, I want to bring about revival, renewal, and transformation in our church schools and communities. I want Christ's light to shine through my work. I want everyone connected to our church schools to witness the Christian hope they offer within their communities. Over the coming months, I look forward to sharing my hopes and aspirations for our schools.

John 8:12 reminds us of the spiritual enlightenment, truth, and salvation that Jesus offers: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

In our church schools, we need to share this message with pupils, parents, staff, and communities – reminding them that they are not alone, that we are here to support them, and that through our daily

work and interactions we can reflect the light and love of Christ.

In this edition of *Footprints*, our theme is "Caring for All – Safeguarding." Caring for all goes beyond simply keeping everyone safe or protected. Each school's ethos and vision drive a much broader agenda – whether it's promoting wellbeing, supporting mental health, caring for creation, or looking out for one another. With this in mind, you will notice a new feature in *Footprints* going forward: "Creation Care." This section will highlight schools working with our new Schools Environmental Advisor, Sharon Brett, to champion environmental stewardship.

As we travel through 2026, my hope is that we do this together, side by side, as a church school family. Let us share care for one another and support our distinctively Christian group of schools so that they flourish as one. I look forward to what might lay ahead and invite you all to join me on this exciting journey.

Rebecca Starman

Headteacher

Heartwood Church of England
VC Primary School

Online Safety – The Two Johns

In response to the growing need to support our pupils and families in navigating the online world safely, the school demonstrated its commitment to the holistic development and flourishing of all by investing in a visit from 'The Two Johns' – renowned online safety experts. This initiative reflects our Christian vision to enable all to live life in all its fullness, equipping children with wisdom and discernment to make safe choices online. To widen the impact, we invited surrounding schools to participate for a small donation, enabling a neighbouring Catholic school to send pupils. Throughout the day, The Two Johns delivered age-appropriate sessions to all Key Stage 2 pupils, led a staff training session to enhance professional understanding of online safeguarding, and concluded with an evening workshop for



parents and carers.

In collaboration with local businesses, we hosted a free raffle at the parent workshop, further encouraging attendance and community engagement. The impact was wide-reaching and deeply valued by all stakeholders. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with one pupil commenting, "I liked The Two Johns as they were being honest and they were warning us and they were kind of funny and they taught us some things

that we never knew from YouTube." A parent described the session as "An absolute must-do workshop – even when you think you're on top of it, you're not. The information from last night will shape my parenting from here on in. Just brilliant." The event affirmed our school's role as a hub of community support and education, underpinned by Christian values, with demonstrable impact on the wellbeing and informed choices of children and families alike.



Jemma Dalley

RE and SIAMS Lead

Corton Church of England Primary School
and Nursery

At Corton Church of England Primary School and Nursery, safeguarding is not just a policy, it is a way of life rooted in our ethos of generosity and respect. From the youngest pupils in Nursery to the confident leaders in Year 6, all children are encouraged to care for each other every day, creating a community where everyone feels valued, safe, and able to flourish, living out the fullness of life as described in John 10:10.

One of the most visible examples of this is our playground leaders. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils take on the responsibility of encouraging and leading games and activities outdoors. They ensure that everyone can join in, help resolve disagreements, and guide younger pupils in playing fairly. These playground leaders nurture inclusion, kindness, and confidence, helping others to flourish socially and emotionally while modelling responsibility.

In the classrooms, pupils regularly show care and respect for one another. During weekly PSHE sessions, pupils engage in meaningful discussions, checking in on one another and offering support to anyone who may be feeling unsure or upset. Reception

children often support Nursery children with their zips and fastenings, share toys, and use phrases such as "Can I help you?" or "Would you like to play with me?", helping to build empathy and confidence from the very start of their Corton school journey.

As a staff, it is a joy to observe the regular acts of kindness that help every pupil flourish: a child comforting a friend who misses a sibling, children proudly delivering fruit snacks to their peers; older pupils supporting younger children in lunchtime clubs, pupils volunteering to litter pick around the village. Each thoughtful act contributes to an environment where every child can thrive, and experience life in all its fullness!



Andrew Phoenix
Executive Headteacher
Tacolneston and Morley Federation

How should we deliver our curriculum? What else should our schools be offering to enable all children to thrive, be protected, share concerns, build resilience and prepare for their future?

These are the kinds of questions I frequently ask myself as an Executive Headteacher. Caring for all sits at the heart of our aims as church schools; we seek to build relationships and understand one another with compassion and empathy. Our curriculum needs to provide daily opportunities for this.

If we deliver our curriculum solely in a way that is closed and directed, then the chance for us to get to really know our

children is reduced, and the opportunities for them to speak up and share worries are fewer. Safeguarding is about listening to children, giving them space and time to express themselves and have a voice.

In our Federation, we have three key ways we support this:

Lesson delivery – To deepen learning, we build in opportunities for creative work, drawing, sketching, making notes, thoughts, expressing ideas and views. Teachers engage with children in groups, discussions and debates and so get to know what underpins their thinking and what their life experiences are. Visual work can be particularly revealing – if a child's artwork is especially dark or they sketch scary faces in a maths tessellation, this can open the way for a conversation about deeper worries or negative experiences.

Personal journals – In response to collective worship, every child has 10 minutes each week to reflect, set goals, write or draw personal thoughts or prayers. These can give insights into individuals' perspective, experience and spiritual journey.

Restorative work – When worries or behaviour issues come up, we work with children to think through, talk through, and learn from what has happened. It is often in this supportive time of quiet reflection with an emotionally available adult that concerns or underlying issues come to light.

Church schools, with our emphasis on relationships, with time and reflective spaces, are well placed to support and help our children, keep them safe and set them on a path to a positive and life-affirming future.

Governor and Clerk update



Hannah Monk
Head of Governance
hannah.monk@donesc.org
01603 881741

A culture of safeguarding and flourishing for all

Church school governors and trustees are vital in promoting flourishing for all, ensuring that every pupil and member of the school community is supported to achieve their full potential academically, socially, morally, and spiritually. Their work goes far beyond oversight; it shapes the ethos, culture, and long-term direction of the school in ways that directly influence the care of each individual, made in the

image of God.

Governance is not meetings and minutes; it is the foundation upon which all decisions in our church schools and academies are made. Through effective governance safeguarding is less about ticking boxes or demonstrating compliance, instead, it cultivates a culture where safety, dignity, inclusion, and compassion are woven into the fabric of daily school life. This means ensuring that policies are robust and up to date, and the lived experience of pupils and adults reflects those principles - people feel listened to, concerns are acted upon, and adults consistently model respectful and empowering behaviour.

Governors and trustees promote flourishing by asking constructive, challenging questions often rooted in

the Christian vision: How does our vision ensure that vulnerable pupils truly known and supported? Do staff feel confident and well-trained in identifying concerns? Does the school ethos and environment encourage openness, trust, and positively impact the wellbeing of individuals? When governance values curiosity and reflection, safeguarding becomes a way to value, support, challenge and grow everyone in a school community. Flourishing understood holistically - encompassing spiritual development, emotional wellbeing, character formation, and a sense of belonging.

When church school governors and trustees champion a culture of safeguarding rooted in care rather than compliance, they enable each person in the school community to flourish.



Sharon Brett

Schools Environmental Advisor
sharon.brett@dioceseofnorwich.org

I began my role as Schools Environmental Advisor for the Diocese of Norwich in September 2025, working one day a week to support schools in embedding sustainability into their ethos and curriculum.

Previously, I was Head of School at Cawston Church of England Primary Academy and Sustainability Lead across the Eden Federation. For 18 years at Cawston, I served as Eco Champion, achieving the Green Flag Eco Award multiple times. As a Primary Science Teacher, I fostered strong connections with outdoor learning and nature projects,

collaborating with charities such as the RSPB, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, and the RHS Gardening Scheme. Cawston won a Gold Award for embedding Learning Outside the Classroom into its curriculum.

I also led weekly Collective Worship around Stewardship, often guided by the Eco Team, and supported local churches in working toward their Eco Awards. In 2025, I featured in the Diocese of Norwich's Voices for Creation: Church and School Together video, highlighting the partnership between schools and churches in creation care.

Within the Eden Federation, I designed a three-year rolling programme to align schools with Cawston's eco ethos, embedding sustainability into teaching and culture. More recently, I began working with Vic Morton at Neatishead Church of England Primary School to develop a funded programme enabling church schools to achieve Eco Schools Green Flag status.

We currently have 20 church schools across the Diocese who are part of this

year's cohort, funded to pursue the Eco Schools Green Flag Award. In the Autumn term, each school formed an Eco Team, commissioned on Zoom by Revd. Andrew Whitehead. These teams have carried out Environmental Reviews across 10 key areas: Biodiversity, Energy, School Grounds, Marine, Waste, Litter, Water, Transport, Healthy Living, and Global Participation. Their findings will shape each school's Climate Action Plan and guide three focused actions toward their Green Flag Award.

Looking ahead, we are hosting an Earth Day Conference in 2026 for the 20 schools, rewarding and training Eco Teams while building links with businesses as part of our global participation. I am especially looking forward to celebrating these achievements at Norwich Cathedral in July.

Our vision is clear: to empower children across Norfolk to become champions of sustainability. By blending creativity, strategic thinking, and faith-based values, we are embedding ecological stewardship into the heart of school life.

Welcome

Fiona Greening
RE and Christian Distinctiveness Manager,
Diocese of Norwich

Heather Madsen
Headteacher
The Bishop's Church of England Primary Academy

Farewell

Paul Dunning
Director of Education, Diocese of Norwich

Lorraine Ratcliffe
The Bishop's Church of England Primary Academy

SIAMS congratulations

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

Erpingham Church of England Primary School

Scole Church of England Primary Academy

St Peter's Church of England Primary Academy

North Elmham Church of England Primary Academy

REQM congratulations

Gold

Cringleford CofE VA Primary School and Nursery