

Footprints

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Norwich

Your newsletter from the Diocesan Board of Education

July 2026

Vision



Chris Allen
Diocesan Director of Education

Living out a clear and compelling vision is central to the effectiveness and distinctiveness of a Church school.

The Church of England's Vision for Education (2016) calls schools to be "deeply Christian, serving the common good," with the promise of "life in all its fullness" (John 10:10) at its heart. This vision is not simply a statement

of intent but a lived reality, rooted in theology and expressed through daily practice. It is shaped by four key strands – wisdom, hope, community and dignity – which together articulate a holistic understanding of education that nurtures the spiritual, moral, intellectual and social development of every child.

For Church schools, this means ensuring that the vision is more than words on a page; it must drive decision-making, shape relationships and influence the curriculum and wider life of the school. Living out the vision requires intentional leadership, a shared sense of purpose and a commitment to enabling all to flourish as individuals made in the image of God.

The Diocese of Norwich Education Strategy 2024–2030 builds on this

foundation, expressing a bold ambition for all schools to be places of aspiration, achievement and hope. It emphasises high educational standards alongside a deeply rooted Christian ethos, where every child is supported to grow into their full potential. Within our diocesan family, schools are called to work collaboratively, fostering inclusive communities where wellbeing, belonging and excellence are held together.

Together, these frameworks challenge schools to continually reflect on how their vision is embodied in practice – ensuring that it is visible, transformative and life-giving for pupils, staff and the wider community. In this edition of Footprints, we witness this being lived out in our church schools. I hope you enjoy the read.

Heather Madsen

Headteacher

The Bishop's Church of England Primary Academy

Growing together – Our Journey of Inclusion

At The Bishop's, we believe every child is uniquely created, deeply valued, and full of potential. Inclusion is not simply a policy or programme; it is part of who we are as a school community and an expression of our Christian values in action.

Over recent months, we have strengthened a culture where every child feels welcomed, understood, supported, and able to flourish. We know children learn best when they feel safe, respected, and celebrated for who they are, which is why inclusion remains central to everything we do.

Our vision is simple: no child should feel left behind. Whether a child needs support with learning, communication, emotional wellbeing, confidence, friendships, or physical needs, we strive to ensure they are fully included in school life. Every child deserves to Belong, Achieve, Thrive — and it is our responsibility to make this possible.

Warm, trusting relationships sit at the heart of our approach. We place great value on knowing our children well and understanding their strengths, challenges, interests, and backgrounds. By listening carefully and building strong connections, staff help children feel safe, confident, and ready to learn.

As part of this journey, we have revisited our ethos and values to ensure they reflect a community rooted in compassion, dignity, respect, and care. Our diverse school community, including many Eastern European families and a high proportion of pupil premium children, highlights the



importance of creating opportunities for every child to succeed.

We recognise that some children find aspects of education challenging and are committed to responding with understanding and flexibility. Through adaptive teaching, targeted interventions, nurture support, and consistent routines, we work to remove barriers to learning and help every child experience success. Our developing Nurture Room provides a valuable space where children can regulate emotions, reflect, discuss worries, and return to learning feeling supported.

Our practical approaches include early identification of needs, small-group interventions, emotional check-ins, visual timetables, trusted adults, sensory resources, and close work with outside agencies. We celebrate progress in all its forms, including resilience, confidence, kindness, attendance, and personal growth.

Clear and consistent behaviour systems help children feel secure and included. We focus on enabling pupils to learn, reflect, repair relationships, and grow together. Staff training, the use of Zones of Regulation, and resources for children with additional needs support our aim of creating classrooms where every child can succeed.

Strong partnerships with families are essential to an inclusive school community. Through open communication, meetings,

workshops, coffee mornings, and conversations at the school gate, we build trusting relationships with parents and carers. By working together, we are better able to understand and support each child's needs at school and at home.

Inclusion is also about celebrating diversity and promoting kindness, empathy, and respect. Through collective worship, PSHE, and everyday interactions, pupils learn to appreciate differences and care for one another. Our Worship Committee has supported this through initiatives such as British Sign Language learning during Deaf Awareness Week and exploring how influence can be used positively to help others and strengthen communities.

We are proud of the progress we have made while recognising that inclusion is an ongoing journey. We continue to reflect, listen, and improve so that every member of our community feels seen, heard, and valued.

As a church school community, we are reminded of the words from 1 Corinthians 12:12: "For just as each of us has one body with many members... so it is with Christ." Every child brings something special to our school family, and together we are stronger.

We are grateful for the support, prayers, and encouragement of our wider church community as we continue building a school where every child can belong, achieve, and thrive.

Victoria Morton

Sustainability Lead

Neatishead Church of England Primary School

"They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint." (Isaiah 40:31)

This Bible verse provides a clear theological framework for our work in Creation Care. It reminds us that environmental stewardship is not an optional addition to school life, but an expression of faith, resilience and hope.

Our vision of "soaring on wings" underpins both academic aspiration and respect for God's world. Environmental responsibility is intentionally embedded

across our curriculum, collective worship and pupil leadership structures. Sustainability is not treated as a standalone initiative; it is woven through our ethos and long-term development priorities.

Over the past two years, pupils have led a range of initiatives that have strengthened our environmental impact within school and beyond. We have achieved Distinction level in the Eco Schools Green Flag Award, sent representatives to Mini-COP 25, won the 2025 Sustainability Competition hosted by East Coast College, received an Eco Advocate Award from Anglian Water, and taken part in a national campaign with Plastic Surfers Against Sewage. Pupils have also organised community litter picks and

fundraising in support of WWF.

Most recently, we were proud to win the Mini-COP 26 "Your School Reimagined" competition at the Norwich Science Festival, with one pupil-led sustainability proposal now being developed in partnership with RWE.

Through these opportunities, pupils are given genuine agency. They engage with real-world environmental challenges, develop advocacy skills and influence sustainable practices within their families and community.

Aligned with diocesan priorities and the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon commitment, we continue to nurture faithful stewardship – enabling our pupils to flourish as informed and hopeful custodians of God's creation.

Maria Grimmer

Headteacher

St Nicholas Priory Church of England VA
Primary School and Nursery

At St Nicholas Priory, it is our ambition to ensure that all children feel a strong sense of belonging through warm, trusting relationships and by explicitly sharing that they are part of four different but interconnected family groups: their own family, their school family, their Christian family, and their community family. The creation of this wrap-around care provides our children with love, hope, opportunity and enhanced resources. It also enables us to actively promote our fundamental value of service through 'welcoming all' adults and children alike, recognising that whilst everyone is unique, everyone can contribute and achieve.

Our journey towards becoming a more inclusive setting has not always been straightforward. Faced with an escalation of challenges in 2019, we created our first inclusive provision (The Pod), recognising that many of the children in our Reception unit needed a different kind of learning experience if their needs were to be fully



met. Governors were highly supportive, and a sports cupboard was converted into a space for high needs children, eight in total.

The creation of our first provision was a pivotal moment for the school as it grounded us in the benefits and belief of seeking creative solutions to meet a diverse range of needs. It also sparked an interest and the motivation to see what else we might be able to provide in a mainstream setting, conveying a very strong message to our community that all children, whatever their needs, were truly welcome at our school.

We deliberately decided not to pursue an SRB route so that we could look at the bespoke needs of each child in the Pod

(now a cohort of 30) to see if integration into mainstream classrooms through our bespoke outreach programme was possible, which, for many children, it has been. We also recognised, as we embarked on this journey, that we needed to upskill our own practice, recruit from the special sector and create external links enabling us to audit and develop the provision. Since then, we have created a learning and cognition provision (The Snug) and an SEMH provision in our Dissenters. Having multiple provisions on site has facilitated a fluidity of approach with appropriately pitched ambitious expectations for each pupil group, as we are determined that all our children will succeed.

Rob Connelly

Headteacher

Harleston Sancroft Academy

A Vision of Fullness Without Exception

At Harleston Sancroft Academy, we often reflect on the profound promise found in John 10:10: Jesus' desire for us all to experience "life in all its fullness". In our school community, we recognise that true inclusion and high ambition are inextricably linked and one cannot truly exist without the other. We believe that a community is only truly thriving when every single member is empowered to flourish, with no ceilings placed on their God-given potential.

Transforming the Margins

In the Gospels, we see that Jesus did not just visit the "margins". He made them the centre of his work. We mirror this through our Enhanced Specialist Provisions (ESPs). Our Dove Provision (Primary Phase) and the A Team (Secondary Phase) are not "add-ons" to our curriculum; they, along with relationships, represent the cornerstones of our success. By providing bespoke, expert support, we ensure the margins of our community become places of remarkable transformations. For us, inclusion isn't a safety net, it is a launchpad.

Flourishing Futures

This year, I have been immensely proud to see our vision lived out through our new Flourishing Futures initiative. Embodying our commitment to 'fullness' of experience, our students have engaged in a diverse journey of discovery: navigating the corridors of power at Parliament, the creativity of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, and the challenges of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Some of our children are preparing to set sail for five days along the Thames Estuary, building vital resilience skills as part of our academic mission. This term our students will walk the historic courts of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, opening doors to prestigious academic pathways that our students know belong to them.

A Journey Shared

None of this happens in isolation. Our deep engagement with local businesses who provide both their time, expertise, and vital sponsorship ensures that our students are connected to the world beyond our gates. Whether a student is moving through our Post-16 pathways or celebrating at our Awards Ceremony, they do so as part of a school that refuses to separate care from high expectations.

At Harleston Sancroft Academy, we don't just "manage" inclusion; we plan for it deliberately and with intention. We celebrate it as the very heart of our academic vision. We are one community, moving together toward a future where every child can truly flourish.



2026/27 Training

The Supporting Schools and Academies booklet will be shared with schools soon.

Three copies will be posted to schools for distribution between Headteachers, RE Leaders and Chairs of Governors. A PDF copy will be emailed to Headteachers when available as well as uploaded to the Diocese of Norwich website. The booklet will include the links to the events' relevant Eventbrite booking pages.



We would like to draw your attention to some key dates:



Headteachers Conference

Friday 12 March 2027
Norwich Cathedral

The Diocese of Education team is delighted that Nicky Perfect BEM will be the guest speaker for the conference.

With 31 years' experience as police officer and over a decade's experience as an international hostage and crisis negotiator, Nicky is an internationally renowned expert trainer, specialising in communication, negotiation and influencing skills. Nicky is the author of *Crisis: True Stories of My Life as a Hostage Negotiator*.



Headteacher Retreat

Friday 4 December
Wymondham Abbey

Held early in the Advent season, this retreat day at Wymondham Abbey offers Headteachers a meaningful opportunity to pause and prepare, both personally and spiritually, in the lead-up to Christmas.

Set within the inspiring surroundings of the Abbey, the day provides a peaceful space to step away from the demands of school life and reconnect with purpose through gentle theological reflection, quiet time, and shared conversation.



Headteacher Retreat

Friday 11 June 2027
Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham

Our second retreat day in Walsingham provides a unique opportunity for spiritual renewal in a place of deep significance and tranquillity.

Headteachers will be invited into a rhythm of reflection, prayer, and meaningful activity, creating space to pause, re-centre, and return to their role with renewed clarity and encouragement.

SIAMS congratulations

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

Corton Church of England VA Primary School
Swaffham Church of England Primary Academy
Drayton Church of England VC Junior School

Get in touch

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