

Footprints

Step-by-step together

Your newsletter from the Diocesan Board of Education

September 2021



Paul Dunning
Diocesan Director of Education

Welcome to the new academic year! This edition of Footprints is all about Religious Education, such an important part of children's education. Therefore, I am handing the front page over to Chris Allen who is now our permanent RE Adviser.



Chris Allen
RE Adviser

For many years RE has lurked in the background of school curriculums as other subjects have been regarded as more important due to external measures that

are placed on them. SIAMs never allowed RE to play such a role and expects schools to be able to articulate confidently how RE contributes to their distinctive character as well as inform the Christian vision every school lives by. Ofsted's renewed focus on curriculum in its current schedule places RE back in the game. The recent Ofsted Research Review on Religious Education places the subject once again front and centre. And so it should!

When I see RE taught well and nurtured in a school's curriculum the impact is children who recognise and understand difference and diversity. I witness the awe of curiosity and critical reflection that pupils develop to hold well balanced and informed conversations about the world they live in. The Norfolk Agreed Syllabus promotes this by shining a light on multi-disciplinary RE, ensuring our pupils are encountering learning in RE through theology, philosophy and social human sciences. This brings rigour and challenge to their learning and to the teachers delivering it in our diocesan schools and

academies.

The future of RE relies on schools and academies delivering an RE curriculum that ensures a rich tapestry of religious and non-religious beliefs that showcases concepts and worldviews that are encountered as living and relevant to today's society. RE is a place in our school curriculum that provides a space for open discussion, safe debate, and critical reflection that shapes and challenges one's own personal worldview. This fulfils the Church of England Vision for Education John 10:10 'Living life in all its fullness'. In fact, it goes much further, it contributes to that life by celebrating the richness of diversity, it allows our pupils in Norfolk to see beyond the county's borders and encounter big ideas and big questions that challenge their thinking.

It is a pleasure to be at the forefront on leading some of the exciting changes in RE in our diocese and I hope that this edition of Footprints captures the great work our schools and academies within the diocese are undertaking. Enjoy!

Our School: Our World

Jon Moule

Distinctiveness and Standards Manager

'In the beginning God made the world and it was good.'

As I sat in my office writing this article, I was reminded of these words and I took the opportunity to listen to the majestic birdsong and watch the bees pollinate the flowers. The intrinsic patterns of nature and the beauty of the flowering plants germinating from a tiny seed are all so carefully designed by God.

But our news is often filled with stories on pollution, climate change and the destruction of natural habitats. This to me poses the questions: What is it about creation that you love the most? What hurts you the most about what is happening to our planet? How can we make a difference together?

In our Diocesan Church Schools, pupils are encouraged to be courageous

advocates for change and we were delighted to launch the refreshed publication 'Our School: Our World' as part of a series of initiatives, which has been designed to support all schools in enabling staff and pupils to play their part in realising this commitment to care for the planet. The publication provides teachers with clear background information on Christian teaching about the world and its importance; introduces the ecological beliefs and practices of other religions and world views; lists useful supporting resources across many media and contains suggested ways of engaging with the Christian belief in the importance of caring for the planet through Collective Worship and Religious Education. It also looks at the views of environmentalists such as Greta Thunberg and David Attenborough

The COP26 Summit in November 2021 will bring together parties to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. We are

also encouraging our schools to create a video as part of a competition in the Autumn term to encourage people to be good stewards of God's world.



Amy Futers

Head Teacher

Dereham VA Infant & Nursery

Miss E John

RE Subject Leader

Dereham VA Infant & Nursery

At Dereham Church Infant and Nursery School, we are very fortunate to have such close links with our church. This helps us enormously with our curriculum and giving our children first-hand experiences.

Over the years, we have visited St Nicholas Church, Dereham on numerous occasions for re-enacting a Christian wedding celebration, for our leavers

service, RE week visits and tours. We often visit as the church is only 100 paces from our playground! In our most recent visit, Reverend Paul and Reverend James provided our whole school with a tour. The best people to tell you about the visit are our children:

'I learnt that the roof of the nave is the shape of a boat, like Noah's Ark!

Jacob D, Year 2

'Every stained glass window in the church was telling a story.'

Darcie P, Year 2

In the summer, we were lucky enough

for our Year 2s to have the opportunity to climb the bell tower! Following a year of school closures, lockdowns and restrictions, the children could not have been more delighted to experience this on our own door-step.

'I can now tell my family and friends that I have climbed to the top of the tower.'

Jacob B, Year 2

We highly recommend visiting your local church. They have so much to offer, so much to show and there is so much to learn. All the children at DCINS would like to say a big thank you to everyone at St Nicholas Church for helping us learn.

Paul Henman
Headteacher
Taverham VC Junior

Our school vision of 'Learning for a Fuller Life (John 10:10)' continues to guide us in everything we do at Taverham VC CE Junior School but living life to its fullest has been a challenge for all of us in recent times. However, we have ensured that all our pupils feel connected to the school community by continuing collective worship throughout this year whether in-person or virtually. One crucial aspect of this is our children's involvement in prayer: every child in the school is invited to write their own prayer or reflection related to our half-termly Christian value. These are then shared during our collective worship when classes, year groups and the whole school come

together. Many of these prayers make it on to our 'Prayer Wave' in our reception area. The collection is growing steadily and many of our children love to stop and read the thoughts and feelings of their peers from across the school.

Hope is, especially now, of the utmost importance. At our school, we recognise the need for children to feel hopeful and also for them to have time and space to think and reflect. Over the next few months, an underused part of our school grounds will be transformed into our new Garden of Hope, complete with outdoor classroom, trickle stream, wildflower garden and 'hope path' where messages of hope – written on pebbles by our pupils, staff, governors and local community – will lead people through the garden. We would love to share pictures of our new garden in the future.



Rachel Felton
RE Co-ordinator
Hope Federation (Rudham, Weasenham & Brisley CofE Primary Academies, DNEAT)

At Brisley CofE Primary Academy the RE teaching and learning has undergone some changes over the past year. As a result, the impact on pupils' learning and understanding of RE has grown.

One piece of training which has helped with these changes is the Understanding Christianity course, completed by all teachers, giving a consistent, whole school approach to the teaching of Christianity.

Teachers use the Big Frieze as an effective way to engage pupils in learning. The Big Frieze is used as a starting point for the Big Question,

with pupils completing KWL grids using one of the frieze panels. This has been a powerful resource as pupils are able to make links between the different panels and use prior knowledge to inform new learning. Staff have used a variety of different activities from the suggestions in the different Understanding Christianity

units, this has meant that lessons and learning can be tailored to the pupils' needs and ways of learning.

The Year 3/4 teacher spoke about how the Understanding Christianity course has impacted her teaching and the pupils' learning, "I found the section on how to use a text with the children

particularly helpful as this was an area I felt was hard to teach. I felt a lot more confident in sharing a biblical text with the class, teaching pupils how to become a 'virtuous reader'."

The Understanding Christianity resource and training is extremely valuable and provides teachers with confidence when teaching RE as well as some lovely and inviting activities for children to engage in and positively impact their RE learning.



Use of a poem as a stimulus about the Creation story and the children's art responses.

Laura Davies
Head of School & Red Skippers class
Neatishead VC Primary

I saw a picture of a dolphin with a plastic bag around its neck. It was really sad. As the Red Skippers class (Reception and Year One) we spent time researching and discussing how this could have happened. Our reduce, reuse, and recycle project emerged from reflections on how God created the world and how we want to protect everyone and everything within

it. We investigated how plastic in landfill breaks down into smaller pieces and then washes under the ground into rivers and the sea. We asked our school and the community to collect plastic bottle tops. We received 1000s, including many from a church in Norwich. The Red Skippers thought about the world God made and chose to create a cross surrounded by flowers, butterflies and dragonflies. We remember how Jesus died on the cross to help us so we are teaching other people to look after and respect our world.



Governors and Religious Education



Jill Wakefield
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Is your school a Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled school? Do you know what the difference is when it comes to your SIAMS inspection? For VA schools, Religious Education will be inspected under an additional judgement which explores the effectiveness of religious education. A separate grading is awarded which feeds into the overall grade. Possible outcomes are Excellent, Good, Requires Improvement or Ineffective. For Voluntary Controlled schools, RE will be commented upon (so will contribute to the overall judgement) but it is not formally inspected.

I always find you can learn quite a lot about what you should be doing when you read the inspection reports of schools which have been given the lowest grading. The following is an extract from a SIAMS report for a VA school (not in Norfolk!) which received an overall grading of RI, but a grading of ineffective for the effectiveness of RE:

“Due to staff changes, regular RE teaching has only recently been reintroduced...good practice is not consistent so overall effectiveness of RE is poor. The previous inspection report noted weaknesses in assessment and monitoring and lack of guidance for pupils on how to improve. These weaknesses remain. There is little evidence of differentiation. Marking is not consistent or rigorous. Despite a recently introduced tracking system little assessment has taken place, so gaps in pupil learning and teacher knowledge are not being identified. There is no reliable data for progress or standards. A named governor for RE does visit the school regularly but there are no written monitoring records, so any evidence of impact or areas of concern are not formally reported.”

I hope this doesn't ring any alarm bells for you, but here are some prompts for your governing body to consider:

Invite the RE lead to a governing body meeting and have a conversation about the RE curriculum:

- How is RE teaching differentiated for the most able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How do we know if good progress is being made?
- Are there age related expectations?
- Are those who teach RE confident in handling different religions and beliefs?
- Are there sufficient resources?
- Is the Church of England Statement for Entitlement being met?

- What training and professional development have staff received in RE? What impact has this had?
- Are children at the same level that they would have been in RE without the lockdown?

Visit the school and talk to the pupils in an RE lesson:

- Ask them about their work
- Look at examples of their learning with the children
- Ask them to tell you a bible story and what it means
- Ask them what they like/don't like about RE
- Record your findings on a monitoring form and feed back to the governing board
- How well does the school support all pupils in their spiritual development, enabling all pupils to flourish?
- Does your governing board have a link governor for RE ?
- Do you have an Ethos Committee with RE as a regular agenda item?

The Diocese provides training for governors on RE and SIAMS:

- RE – Complying with statutory Duties: Norfolk Agreed Syllabus, SIAMS and Ofsted
- Introduction to the SIAMS Schedule for Governors

Course bookings can be made via GovernorHub (DoN Governor Support).

Federations

Happisburgh VA Primary & St Mary's (Endowed) VA Primary, Roughton – Lighthouse Federation

Partnerships:

Brooke VC Primary with Hempnall Community Primary

Dickleburgh Primary Academy with Garboldisham Primary Academy, St Benet's

Academy conversions

St Mary's Junior Academy, Long Stratton has joined St Benet's MAT

Welcome

Headteachers starting September:

- Julia Humphrey** – Cringleford VA Primary
- Matt Richards** – Swanton Morley VC Primary
- Tom Snowden** – Pilgrim Federation
- Moira Croskell** – Dickleburgh & Garboldisham Primary Academies, St Benet's (Exec HT)
- Lee Stevens** – Unity Federation (Interim HT)
- Kellie Egleton** – Hopton Primary Academy, DNEAT (Interim HT)
- Sharon Brett** – Cawston Primary Academy, DNEAT (Interim HT)
- Jon Moule** – Scole VC Primary (Interim HT)
- Elaine Glendinning** – Homefield VC Primary (Interim HT)
- Harriet Beckett** – Pulham VC Primary (Interim HT)
- Carolyn Taylor** – Flourish Federation (Interim Exec HT)
- Jessica Woolner** – The Saints Federation (Interim Exec HT)