

This newsletter, from the Diocesan Education Team, is sent to Church school Headteachers, foundation governors, chairs of governors and clergy.

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Education newsletter



January 2026

News from the Diocese

Dear colleagues,

I hope that this newsletter finds you well. We aim to provide news and information, to share good news stories from schools and to signpost you to other organisations which you may find helpful.

It was a joy to attend Bishop Joanne's enthronement on Saturday. For more, please see our [website](#). We have sent schools a PowerPoint presentation which you may like to use to explain to pupils the role of a bishop. The powerpoint is also available [here](#).

In other diocesan news, I have recently decided to retire from my role at the end of July- please see our [website](#) for more. That will mark exactly 16 years in this wonderful role. I have loved working for the diocese and supporting schools and will miss lots of things, but especially the people! It is business as usual in the meantime but I did want to allow enough time for the diocese to be able to recruit successfully for the start of the new school year in September. The post is now being advertised. You can see the advert and pack on the diocesan website- <https://www.cofesuffolk.org/about-us/vacancies>

Our plan is for the diocese to recruit to the DDE role before the School Effectiveness Officer role so that the new DDE can be involved in appointing Phil Knowles' replacement, to start in September, too. In the meantime, Heather Hann is supporting schools for one day a week and Victoria (Tor) Bush is working an additional half day a week this term and next. I am grateful to them both.

In the meantime, it has been a joy to lead the Bible course with Revd Laura Mumford for heads and governors. This course has been developed by the Bible Society and provides an introduction to the whole Christian narrative, from Genesis to Revelation.

We are already looking forward to the Big Sing at the cathedral on 23 March. Many thanks to those schools which have already signed up. We also have our annual service at the cathedral on 15 June. Please see below for more details.



For the latest RE and CW newsletter, please click [here](#). Includes links to new resources and five ways to build spiritual development enrichment into your daily routines.



Training programme
Courses for the spring term include:

Leadership/Governance
* Leading a church school
* Monitoring RE (govs)
* Monitoring SIAMS (govs)

RE/CW
* Update on RE Statement
* CW in our church schools
* Spiritual development

For further information, please click [here](#).

To book, or for any queries, please contact [Jacqui Studd](#)

As I write, we are still awaiting the government's White Paper on SEN and school reform.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any help.

With all good wishes from all the team

Jane Sheat

Jane Sheat
Diocesan Director of Education



All admission authorities must determine their admission arrangements, including their PAN, for the 2027/2028 school year by 28 February.

By 15 March, Determined School Admission Arrangements should be emailed to sue.todd@cofesuffolk.org and george.beard@suffolk.gov.uk and must also be published on the school's website. The 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 arrangements must remain on the school's website until the end of the relevant school year.

An admissions padlet which contains lots of admissions advice, resources and information is available on our [website](#).

At the last **Heads' Forum** (Tuesday 20 January 2026), we discussed how to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Daniel Woodrow, Headteacher at St Gregory CEVCP, Sudbury talked about the specialist unit at his school and Heather Hann spoke about inclusion under the renewed Ofsted framework.

Please click [here](#) for Heather's slides and below are the links shared by Daniel:

[Blog On Having A Specialist Unit](#)

[Virtual Tour Of St Gregory's Specialist Unit](#)

[Apple Class Nativity 2025](#)

[Specialist Unit Inclusion Policy](#)

News from Schools



Forums spring and summer terms

For Headteachers

Thu 30 Apr, 1.30pm

For Small Schools

Tue 24 Feb, 4pm

Thu 21 May, 4pm

For Chairs of Governors

Thu 19 Mar, 4pm

Tue 23 Jun, 4pm

The Forums are free, via Zoom. For queries or to book email:

[Jacqui Studd](#)



School Visits - Cathedral

The Learning Hub at the Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds has a dedicated team who work with all schools when they visit. For more, please click [here](#). To contact the Learning Hub please [email](#).



Collective Worship

For ideas for CW planning based on Christian seasons including Lent and Easter, please click [here](#)

RE for pupils with SEND

For resources to help with adapting RE for pupils with SEND, please click [here](#)

Eyke CofE Primary School is the founding school of Morabe Rural Music, a Suffolk-based charity and educational programme dedicated to democratising music education by removing financial and geographical barriers in rural communities. Founded in 2018, it provides instrument loans, Kodaly-based, individual, and group music lessons to children and, for parents, with a focus on enhancing wellbeing and community cohesion. For more, please visit the Eyke CofE Primary School website, by clicking [here](#).

Congratulations!



Congratulations to pupils at **Bentley CEVCP and Copdock CP Schools** who launched a countdown to Christmas by continuing good deeds with a reverse Advent Calendar. Joanne Austin, Headteacher writes: "The children from Bentley and Copdock celebrated Advent in reverse this year, showing thanks for what they have by sharing it with others. Families took a numbered tag from our Christmas trees and donated a Christmas treat on that day to share with the Ipswich Minster Top Up Shop (IMTUS). To share the generous donations by our Advent elves we created an online calendar so everyone could see the children sharing their kindness! We all know kindness and thankfulness are not just for Christmas so children will be returning to IMTUS each month to support volunteers to serve the community."

Congratulations to **Charsfield CofE Primary** which held an annual Reverse Advent collection. The Trust writes: "Pupils and parents generously donated items for the Lighthouse Women's Aid charity to help those in need at Christmas. We invited Jo from the charity to our Collective Worship where we presented her with the donations and she explained that these items would be so useful to the families who come to them for support. This act of generosity reflects our Christian Values of friendship, responsibility and compassion."

Congratulations to **Fressingfield CofE Primary School** for being awarded the East of England regional winners trophy as part of the Fonetti Summer Read-Aloud Challenge. The summer reading challenge encourages children to continue reading for pleasure during the school holidays,

Grove Book: Treasuring the earth

We are pleased to be sending Headteachers and foundation governors recently published booklets from the Grove Book series. This series is designed to offer and promote Christian thinking rooted in practice for all involved in schools and churches. The latest booklet is available to download from the link below:

Treasuring the earth: Inspiring Heads, Hearts and Hands in School Communities for People and Planet

This booklet explores what practical steps schools can take to help nurture our children to care for and treasure the earth we tend to take for granted. Please click [here](#) to download (PDF).



Cathedral service

Our annual service to celebrate the work of church schools will take place on **Monday 15 June 2026** at the Cathedral at 1.30pm. Our theme will be Educating for Dignity and Respect. iSingPOP will lead half-day workshops in schools before the service to teach KS2 pupils the songs. If you would like to take part, please email [Jacqui](#) by Thursday 12 February.

Conference

Our annual church school leaders' conference 2026 will take place at Ip-City in Ipswich on **Thursday 19 November 2026**.

For queries about our events, please contact [Jacqui Studd](#)

helping to support literacy, confidence and a lifelong love of books. Just before Christmas, comedian Tim Vine sent a video to the school encouraging them to enter the competition. For more on this story, please see the EADT [website](#).

Congratulations to **Barnham CEVCP** and its school community who donated generously to the school's Christmas appeal for Chapter 15, supporting the homeless in Thetford. The school writes: "We were so grateful for every single donation and will be passing these on to the charity! You truly have shone with kindness this week."



Congratulations to **Creeting St Mary CofE Primary** and its school community who donated generously to the school's twelve days of Christmas appeal for Stowmarket Food Bank. The school writes: "There are so many families who will be so appreciative of your generosity this Christmas."



Congratulations to **Hopton CofE Primary** which held a vision day led by Diocesan Schools' Adviser, Victoria Bush. Jo Whiting, Headteacher writes: "It was a fabulous whole school event with three workshops: the art display, learning about Psalm 1 which underpins our vision and a STEM workshop looking at roots." Please see examples below of the artwork inspired by Christian artist Hannah Dunnett, bringing together the words and images from Psalm 1.



DRAW NEAR

LIFE-GIVING HABITS FOR LENT

The Church of England's Lent theme for 2026 is **Draw Near: Life-giving habits for Lent**. The Church of England have produced collective worship resources for:

- [Primary Schools](#)
- [KS3 and KS4](#) and
- [a teacher's guide](#).



Archbishops' Young Leaders Award (AYLA)

The AYLA is a fully resourced leadership and character education programme designed to be delivered by teaching staff within the classroom. Available at KS1 through to Post 16. The AYLA has strong links to SMSC, British Values, PSHE, Character Education, Citizenship, RE, and SIAMS. For further information, please click [here](#).

Information Webinars for schools new to the AYLA

If you've not run the **AYLA** before, you can find out more about the programme through free online sessions. For more information and sign up for a session, please click [here](#)

Congratulations to the Friends of **Ixworth CofE Primary** who recently raised over £1k for the school's enrichment fund. A hot chocolate day in December raised £103 and a stall at the village Christmas fair made £985.



Congratulations to pupils at **Moulton CEVCP School** who recently learnt about Holy Communion. Debs Shipp, Headteacher writes: "A few weeks ago, pupils at Moulton CEVC Primary learned about Holy Communion by taking part in a service led by Reverend Chris and Reverend Raúl. We were delighted to welcome members of the church community into school to receive communion alongside staff. The pupils answered questions thoughtfully and behaved beautifully throughout - we were very proud of them."

Congratulations to **Norton CEVCP School** on recent successful fundraising events. The school writes: "One of the school's Christian Values is community and it was displayed in abundance during the autumn term. During these events there was an opportunity to donate to East Anglian Children's Hospice (EACH) and we raised £376 from the carol services, performances and jumper day. We also celebrated Children in Need, raising £238 and an amazing £341.10 for the Royal British Legion through purchasing poppies and other merchandise."



Congratulations to **Stoke by Nayland CofE Primary School** which has a new school banner. The school writes: "We had a wonderful day having our new school banner made and blessed in church.

The children also focused on our values of Love, Compassion, Courage and Truth and created some beautiful collaborative art work." (To follow in next newsletter)

Congratulations to pupils at **Wetheringsett CofE Primary School** who took part in the Christmas Tree Festival at the local church. The school writes: "The theme this year was your interpretation of a tree. The trees were made from recycled materials including newspaper, cereal boxes, milk



Dates of interest

Children's mental health week

3 - 9 February 2026
see Picture News Assembly below

NSPCC Number Day

6 February 2026

National School Governors' Day

12 February 2026

Ash Wednesday

18 February 2026

St David's Day

1 March 2026

World Book Day

5 March 2026

British Science Week

6-15 March 2026

COVID-19 National Day of Reflection

8 March 2026

Commonwealth Day

10 March 2026

Great Big School Clean

13 - 29 March 2026

Mothering Sunday

15 March 2026

Big Walk and Wheel Week

16 - 27 March 2026

St Patrick's Day

17 March 2026

Red Nose Day

20 March 2026

World Poetry Day

21 March 2026

World Water Day

22 March 2026

bottles, wool and string. Not only did the trees show technical skill and creativity, they were also testament to our ECO friendly roots as a school. Of course the Breakfast Club's tree was made from cereal boxes!"



Recent Ofsted outcomes

There are no published report cards for church schools under the new framework yet.

Recent SIAMS inspections

JI= The inspection findings indicate that the school is living up to its foundation as a Church school, and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish.

St Mary's CofE Primary. Woodbridge

Headship resignation:

We offer our thanks and best wishes to Stephany Hunter, Headteacher at Barningham CEVCP who leaves on 31 August 2026.

For the Attention of Headteachers

If you are retiring or resigning as Headteacher, please do let us know. Jane or Sue will attend meetings with your Governors to advise on the headship appointment, alongside the Local Authority. We can be in contact with your Chair of Governors and make sure that we are available for dates for shortlisting and interviews. Many thanks.

News from the Church of England

National RE Statement of Entitlement Update

The RE statement details the expectations for religious education in CofE schools. It has been updated in January and comes into effect for SIAMS purposes from September 2026. For more, please click [here](#).

News from DfE

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education



Springs Dance Company

Easter Project workshops offer a creative and engaging way for pupils to explore the Easter story and bring it to life through movement. For more, please click [here](#). Springs also offer workshops on the following themes:

OUR WORKSHOP THEMES

EASTER
CREATION
THE NATIVITY
A CHRISTMAS STORY: REFUGEE
YOU ARE SPECIAL
THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Headteacher Performance Management Reviews

Heather and Sue are able to help governors to have external advice on their Headteacher's performance management. They can offer support, at £350 per review, to include preparation, the review itself and write-up. If you would like support with a mid-year review as well, this optional extra is available at £150.



Schools: Skills for Dialogue lesson plans, primary schools

Skills for Dialogue aims to distil 20 years of The Faith & Belief Forum's knowledge of

For the revised guidance which will come into force on 1 September 2026, please click [here](#).

Updated guidance on mobile phones in schools
19 January 2026 - for the updated guidance, please click [here](#). Please also see Ofsted blog below for more.

News from Ofsted

Ofsted annual report 2024-2025

Please click [here](#) for the report.

Understanding Ofsted report cards and grades

Ofsted has launched a grading explainer for parents, including a new page and video to clarify the revised inspection grading system- This may be useful to share with parents. For more, please click [here](#).

Ofsted Academy

Provides Ofsted's work to attract, retain, train and develop inspectors and administrative, professional and technical (APT) colleagues. For more, please click [here](#).

Ofsted blog

For the latest from Ofsted, including **What the government's updated guidance on mobile phones means for school inspections**, please click [here](#).

From other organisations



The National Education Nature Park

is a free, fully resourced programme for all schools in England led by the National History Museum with the RHS. It provides resources, support and guidance to embed climate and nature into learning in a way that suits your school setting and learners. For more information, please click [here](#). For the latest news, please click [here](#).



Raise is a 5-11s kids ministry based in Norfolk with a vision to help churches and schools engage with children in a variety of ways. Raise has wide experience in going in to schools and presenting Collective Worship / Assemblies on a number of Christian themes to fit your SEAL, SMSC or Values for Life criteria. They can lead RE Experience days, prayer spaces in schools and RE lessons to help enhance and bring to life Christian themes in syllabuses. For more, please click [here](#).

equipping learners with tools for safe, respectful and meaningful dialogue, perfect for RE/PSHE/RSE primary school teaching. For lesson plans with accompanying films, presentations and worksheets for primary schools, please click [here](#).



Children's Mental Health Week – Live Assembly

Wednesday 11 February, 9.15-9.45am
Join Picture News and special guest, children's author and mental wellbeing advocate, Katie Hopper for a live assembly during Children's Mental Health Week, as they explore why feeling included matters. Katie will share one of her stories live and children can reflect on how their words and actions can help others feel welcome and supported. Suitable for: Children in KS1 and KS2

Full details and registration [here](#)

Celebrating Lunar New Year – Live Assembly (with very special guests!)

Wednesday 25 February, 9.15-9.45am
Join Picture News for a special online event as they explore how the Lunar New Year is celebrated. You'll learn about traditions, stories and symbols, and hear from two children who will be sharing their own experiences of celebrating this special time.

A lovely opportunity for pupils to discover how different cultures welcome a new year with joy, family, and hope!
Suitable for: Children in KS1 and KS2
Full details and registration [here](#)



Care for the Family: support for parents

For more on resources to support parents, please click [here](#).

Reflections on the journey: An evening with Rob Parsons

organised by Care for the Family

Step into the untold stories from Rob's lifetime of overcoming obstacles, letting go of childhood labels and discovering that the past doesn't have to define us. Rob will be speaking at The Space in Norwich on Tues 28 April and Beacon Church, Bury St Edmunds, Wed 29 April. For more and to book, please click [here](#).



FACE Family Advice

Aims to provide parents with a range of **free** specific webinars to support challenges at home with children in a range of different ways. The webinars include an overview of each topic, some understanding of the biology behind the behaviours, and some easy to apply interventions. It aims to empower parents to be able to give support to their own children. They offer:

- Parental Choice and Control: Online sessions are accessible and interactive, held in both the mornings and evenings on a four-weekly rotation. Parents can access recordings for 48 hours after each live event, offering flexibility and giving parents choice about what, when and how interactive they wish to be.
- Targeted Support for Neurodiverse Families: FACE provides support to parents of neurodiverse children without the need for referrals or waiting lists, ensuring timely and direct assistance.
- Empowering Parents in Managing Emotions and Behaviour: FACE equips parents with strategies and confidence to support their children's emotional and behavioural needs, helping families to thrive together.

Schools can subscribe so that parents can access webinars free of charge. For more information, please click [here](#).



The Good Childhood Report 2025

Published by The Children's Society, the latest annual report provides insight into what children and young people say about how their lives are going. In addition to reporting on survey data, a group of 10 Young Advisors shared their insights and gathered the views of a larger number of other children and young people in peer consultations. For the report, please click [here](#)

News from YOUR School

If you have any stories you would like highlighted, please do send us details and we will include in our next newsletter. Please send photos, short articles, web-page references, etc. electronically to [Jacqui](#) and we'll be pleased to include them.

From the Diocesan Education Team

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