

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



November 2025



News from the Diocese

Dear colleagues,

It has been a joy to visit schools this term, and to see heads and governors at our online forums, our Headteacher wellbeing session on 10 October and at our recent conference on 13 November. I am grateful to Tracey Caffull, Diocesan MAT CEO and Archdeacon Sam who spoke at our wellbeing session. The theme for our annual conference this year was "Leading a church school with joy and hope". A range of speakers provided inspiration and joy! Clare Lamb, Head at All Saints' CEVCP, Lawshall led an excellent session on metacognition. We also had sessions led by Springs Dance, iSingPOP and Kick, all of whom have featured in previous newsletters. It was great to see so many Headteachers and governors. We have already booked Ip-City again for next year's conference – on 19 November 2026.

As I wrote in our last newsletter, Phil Knowles retires at the end of this term. I know you will join me in wishing Phil a very happy retirement. I wanted to let you know about the arrangements which I am putting in place following Phil's retirement at Christmas. I have asked Rachel Cutts to assume responsibility for SIAMS support on a permanent basis and am delighted that Rachel will do so. I plan to advertise in due course for a permanent replacement for Phil to start in September 2026. In the meantime, I am delighted to let you know that Heather Hann, Head of Professional Development in the Diocesan MAT, has kindly agreed to provide support on a part-time basis for approximately one day a week for the spring and summer terms 2026. Having worked closely with Heather in the Diocesan MAT, I know how much schools will

Forums spring and summer terms

Admissions

Thu 8 Jan, 4pm

For Headteachers

Tue 20 Jan, 1.30pm

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](mailto:Jacqui.Studd)



Collective Worship

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

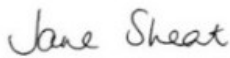
value her expertise and support. Heather is an Ofsted inspector and former Headteacher of a church school and brings a wealth of experience to the role. She will continue to work for the Diocesan MAT whilst also undertaking this Diocesan role.

This newsletter is coming to you a little earlier than sometimes and so it may feel a little early to wish you a happy Christmas. I know how busy the next few weeks will be as we celebrate Advent, nativity plays and Christmas services. In the midst of all the busyness, may I wish you hope and joy at this precious season, when we celebrate Jesus' birth?

God of hope, who brought love into this world,
be the love that dwells between us.
God of hope, who brought peace into this world,
be the peace that dwells between us.
God of hope, who brought joy into this world,
be the joy that dwells between us.
God of hope, the rock we stand upon,
be the centre, the focus of our lives
always, and particularly this Advent time.

On behalf of the whole team, may I wish you all a very joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

With all good wishes from all the team



Jane Sheat
Diocesan Director of Education

News from Schools

Many schools will have celebrated harvest festival this term and we often give thanks for farmers in our rural county.



Barnham CEVCP School chose a theme of harvest of the seas and invited the Fishermen's Mission to talk about fishing. The school writes: "Between services, we loved welcoming families into school to get creative with Harvest of the Seas-themed arts and crafts. We've discovered together where our fish comes from, how it's harvested, and what life is like for fishermen out at sea. We're incredibly proud of our



Training programme

Courses for the spring term include:

Leadership/Governance

- * Being a governor
- * Leading a church school
- * Monitoring for governors
- * RE in our church schools

SIAMS

- * SIAMS: are you ready?

RE/CW

- * CW in our church schools
- * New to Teaching RE
- * Spiritual development

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

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



The Bible course

January-March 2026

Whether you are new to the Bible or have read it for years, this eight part course is designed to help you make sense of it all - from Genesis to Revelation. This course is aimed at Headteachers and governors. Delivered by Jane Sheat, Diocesan Director of Education and the Revd Laura Mumford, Diocesan Growing Younger Enabler. For more, please click [here](#).

This course is free. Deadline for bookings: Monday 15 December 2025

community's generosity — raising £190 for The Fisherman's Mission and donating 190 tins of fish to Thetford Foodbank!"

Congratulations!



Congratulations to **Barningham CEVC School** for achieving the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. The Award recognises the school as an inclusive community where every child is valued, supported and celebrated.

The report said the school ensured pupils access the broadest range of activities and commended its strong Christian vision and deeply-embedded core values of ambition, kindness and giving, which guide every part of school life. Headteacher Stephany Hunter said the primary was 'especially proud' that the assessor described the respectful behaviour, enthusiasm for learning and kindness of their pupils as 'highly laudable', and that 'every student is included in all topics and has equity of participation'. The assessor recommended the school to apply for Centre of Excellence status. Well done! For more about the Inclusive School Award, please click [here](#).



Congratulations to a pupil at **Bedfield CofE Primary School** who created this beautiful poster on spirituality. With thanks to Revd Chrissie Smart for sending.



Congratulations to **Bentley CEVC and Copdock Community Schools** which had such an amazing response to their cereal box challenge for Children in Need. Jo Austin, Executive Headteacher writes: "Collectively across Bentley and Copdock Schools we had 160 boxes of cereal donated by our wonderful families.

All of these will be sent to the Top Up Minster in Ipswich. To highlight the significance of one small contribution and the



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 workshops in schools before the service to teach the children the songs.

If you would like to take part, please let [Jacqui](#) know.

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](#)



School Visits - Cathedral

The Learning Hub at the Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds has a dedicated team who work with all schools when

knock on effect this can have, children set up a domino effect challenge using the cereal boxes. This led to a heart shape of bowls to recognise how an act of kindness can reach many people. With a little bit of Maths magic, children worked out that 160 boxes could fill approximately 2400 bowls of cereal... a real WOW moment seeing the difference they had made." For the video of the domino effect challenge, please click [here](#).

Congratulations to Y5 and Y6 pupils at **Chelmondiston CofE Primary School** who helped clean up the River Orwell. The school writes: "Pupils, as 'custodians of the wider world' had an extremely interesting and productive morning, taking part in a beach clean at Pin Mill. It was good to know that we are having a real impact over time as each year there is less rubbish to remove from the beach." The school also made the [East Anglian Daily Times](#).



Congratulations to **Sir Robert Hitcham CEVAP School, Debenham** which celebrated the official opening of its accessibility adaptations with special guest Jane Sheat, DDE, cutting a ceremonial ribbon alongside Headteacher, Mrs Laura Dumolo. Included in the adaptations, which began in July 2025 and were completed at the beginning of November, are graded pathways, accessible toilets, automatic doors and a specially designed changing place with hoist.

As part of the celebration, addressing the whole school and invited guests, Laura spoke about her pride in Sir Robert Hitcham CEVA Primary School being a place where everyone belongs.



Laura said, "We celebrate that our community is inclusive, not as an afterthought, as a foundation. These changes are about saying, you belong here, exactly as you are."

Congratulations also to pupils at Sir Robert Hitcham who created this display of poppies for Remembrance Sunday.

they visit. For more, please click [here](#). To contact the Learning Hub please [email](#).



Dates of interest

Epiphany

6 January 2026

[Big Schools Bird Watch](#)

6 January - 13 February 2026

Holocaust Memorial Day

27 January 2026
(please see below)

Chinese New Year

17 February 2026

[National Storytelling Week](#)

2- 8 February 2026

Candlemas

2 February 2026

[NSPCC Number Day](#)

6 February 2026

[Children's Mental Health Week](#)

9 - 15 February 2026

[Safer Internet Day](#)

10 February 2026

Valentine's Day

14 February 2026

[Random Acts of Kindness Day](#)

15 - 21 February 2026

Shrove Tuesday

17 February 2026

[World Book Day](#)

5 March 2026

[Red Nose Day](#)

21 March 2026

[World Water Day](#)

22 March 2026

Congratulations to **Debenham High School** which hosted a roadshow led by the St Philip's Centre in Leicester. Leaders from eight different faith communities spoke to pupils about their faith and answered questions. Pupils signed a pledge which reads:



"I, a member of Debenham High School, give my support to efforts to build and strengthen positive and lasting relationships between different faith and belief communities."

Congratulations to **Elveden CofE Primary Academy** which took part in the first pilot of the Spiritual Development Project in 2025.



Working with Victoria Bush, the staff team explored what spiritual development could look like for children and chose a quote by Karl Jung about 'spiritual shoes' to support their strong Christian vision around 'letting your light shine' with a particular focus on meeting the needs of each individual child.

This analogy has led them to have a weekly 'spiritual shoes' Collective Worship session in which a member of the school or wider community, brings in a pair of shoes from a moment in their life. Using these as a springboard, the speaker is invited to talk about a moment in their life where they wore these shoes, and then children pick from a 'powerful questions' jar, to delve deeper into the meaning and impact of this moment on their unique journey.



This analogy has since developed further in their Harvest service, with the children focused on having empathy with those who might need to use the local Food Bank, filling a giant pair of shoes with food donations.



Holocaust Memorial Day is on 27 January 2026, and schools can get involved. There are lots of free resources online to help lead assemblies, activities or lessons with students. Please click [here](#) for the website.



Torch Trust, the Christian Sight Loss charity, is offering a FREE lamb Bible player to all children, aged under 18, in the UK who have visual impairment or blindness. Please do forward on to SENCOs so that they can pass the information on to any families they are in contact with who have children with a visual impairment. For more information, please click [here](#).



The Great Big Live Nativity
Live on YouTube |
Perfect for Primary Schools
Wednesday 10 December
from 9:05am to 9:25am
This Christmas, join thousands of pupils across the UK for a joyful, interactive Great Big Live Nativity — a fun-filled 20-minute assembly celebrating the Christmas story through story, song, and wonder.



Congratulations to **Tattingstone CEVCP** on achieving the School Games Platinum Award for the 2024/25 academic year.

The School Games Mark is a Government-led award scheme, facilitated by the Youth Sport Trust to reward schools for their commitment to the development of competition across their school and into the community. The school writes: "We are delighted to have been recognised for our success. We are extremely proud of our pupils for their dedication to all aspects of school sport." For more about the School Games Award, please click [here](#).



Congratulations to pupils at **Thurston CofE Primary Academy** who once again have created a picture out of harvest donations generously donated by families and the wider community. The school writes: "This is our fifth year of creating a Harvest with the donations, after previous years pictures of a rainbow, tree, tractor and a pumpkin; this year we created a pot of flowers for our Harvest display and our classes did not disappoint with their creativity!"

Our Harvest celebrations continued with our two Harvest services at St Peter's Church, led by our Year 6 Collective Worship leaders supported by Revd Ben Edwards. Classes shared poems, artwork and songs reminding us to be thankful at this Harvest time and always."



Congratulations to pupils at **Worlingworth CofE Primary School** who held a Rainbow Value day looking at perseverance, the second of the school's values. Vicki Gascoyne-Cecil, Headteacher writes: "Our Rainbow Value day started with the children challenging themselves to persevere with a variety of challenges which included:

logic problems, word and number puzzles. They then reviewed the strategies they used to help themselves.

We then divided into jewel groups to think about perseverance with an Advent theme. We know that the period of Advent is a period of 'waiting' for Christmas and the celebration of Jesus' birth. This time involves a lot of patience,

For more information or to book, please click [here](#).



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](#)



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:

which can really test us! Throughout the Christmas story, there are a number of characters that had to persevere. The Wise Men had to travel a long way, following a star, Mary had to travel by donkey to Bethlehem and Shepherds had to trust the Angel's message.

We spent the day making art for our advent trail- really persevering to produce some stunning art work. We learnt about the Bible characters and how they had to persevere, making simple Christmas Tree decorations to remember these challenges. We also made advent challenges, full of affirmations for when preserving can be difficult, include a few advent based challenges!"



Recent Ofsted outcomes

There have been no inspections since the last newsletter. Inspections resumed the week commencing 10 November 2025.

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.

Bedfield CofE Primary
Wilby CofE Primary
Worlingworth CofE Primary

Headship Appointments

Congratulations to:

- Sarah Lankester who has been appointed Headteacher at Crawfords' CofE Primary, Haughley from 1 January 2026.
- Lucy Smith who has been appointed Headteacher at Risby CEVCP from Easter 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.

Headteacher Performance Management Reviews

Sue is able to help governors to have external advice on their Headteacher's performance management. Sue can offer support, at £350 per review, to include preparation, the review itself and write-up. If you would

OUR WORKSHOP THEMES

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



The Archbishop of York's Trust is inviting schools to join in The Joy of Christmas this Advent.

The free collective worship resource for Advent 2025 is aimed at KS2 and KS3 learners and will look at

- * Mary's Story
 - Joy in Connection
- * Mary and Joseph's Story
 - Joy in Trusting
- * The Shepherd's Story
 - Joy in Sharing
- * The Wisemen
 - Joy in Following.

For KS1 pupils there is a brand new version of the book 'The Grumpy Owl' and 'The Joy of Christmas', which tells the story of Jesus' birth through the eyes of an owl who seems determined to miss all the excitement.

To sign up and for more information, please click [here](#).



NATRE's Spirited Arts Competition 2026

Get creative through this cross-curricular competition! Entries can be submitted in (almost!) any art form. For more information, please visit the NATRE [website](#).

like support with a mid-year review as well, this optional extra is available at £150.

Teacher wellbeing

For the Teacher Wellbeing Index 2025 please see:



Education Support is a charity dedicated to supporting and improving the mental health and well-being of all teachers and education staff. For more, please click [here](#).

News from the Church of England

Chief Education Officer to step down after a decade's service

The Revd Canon Nigel Genders will step down as the Church of England's Chief Education Officer and Chief Executive of the National Society for Education in the new year, after more than ten years in the role. For more, please click [here](#).

National FlourishED Conference

Class of 2040: Putting young people at the centre

Thursday 22 January 2026

Saint Church, Hackney, London

Speakers include: Tom Rees, Rachel Gardner, Amjad Ali, Andy Wolfe, Sonia Thompson, Rt Revd Andy Emerton, Bishop of Sherwood, Dawn Haywood, Bridget Phillipson, and Rt Revd Jonathan Frost. For more information, please click [here](#)

SIAMS Inspectors

The Church of England is advertising for more SIAMS inspectors in the east of England. Please click [here](#) for more. The deadline is 12 December.

News from DfE

Curriculum and Assessment Review: final report

The conclusions and recommendations of the independent review of the curriculum, assessment and qualifications system in England. For the report, please click [here](#).

Updated statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms

The statutory guidance contains draft sections to support schools to adhere to the proposed limit on the number of branded items of school uniform and PE kit that schools can require. The government intends to make this a legal requirement from September 2026 through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. The draft statutory guidance will be updated on completion of the Bill's passage through Parliament. Schools will need to take the draft statutory guidance into account when planning uniform requirements for September 2026.

Schools are advised to begin reviewing their uniform policies; making any necessary adjustments; and engaging with suppliers as soon as possible on any changes, to ensure that



4Front Theatre are touring with the show Fisherman's Tail in 2026, as well as their exclusive Year 6 Be Brave! Workshops tour. For bookings made before Christmas, they can offer an additional 5% discount on any bookings between Monday 16 March and Friday 27 March! For more information, click [here](#).



The Good News Bible — Children's Rainbow Edition:

- Helps build understanding, not just reading, with key words lists and a highlighted reading trail
- Two-colour throughout and sixteen full-colour illustrations provide visual engagement
- Meaningful gift for children aged 7–11 years that helps them grow from KS2 to KS3

Free shipping available when you order the Good News Bible – Children's Rainbow Edition before Wednesday 17 December. For more, please click [here](#).

the correct uniform can be available for purchase ahead of the school term in 2026. For the statutory guidance, click [here](#).

News from Ofsted

Ofsted webinars on the new education inspection framework

- * for state-funded primary schools - [click here](#)
- * for state-funded secondary schools - [click here](#)

Our renewed inspection framework: what we've learned from pilots

For the article, please click [here](#)

Ofsted: explore an area - new service

Ofsted has brought together inspection findings and visualised them for each local area in England. For more, click [here](#).

Climate action plans

Sustainability leadership and climate action plans in education

For the guidance, please click [here](#).

Great Barton CofE Primary Academy has lots of good practice. To find out more, please see the school's website- click [here](#)- or contact the Headteacher, Claire Ratley at claire.ratley@greatbarton.suffolk.sch.uk



For help with developing your school's climate action plan, Let's Go Zero offers a template plan and support for schools. You can sign up to find out more [here](#). They also have a named contact who can provide support for individual schools- Nigel Stannett at nigel.stannett@letsgozero.org

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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