



Diocese of Norwich
Education and
Academies Trust

The Nar Valley Federation of Church Academies

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Anne Neary

Web: www.narvalleyfederation.co.uk

Friday 30th September 2022

Dear Parents,

Despite the weather being decidedly chillier (although I do still see some shorts), there has been a busy atmosphere in school this week. There has been super learning happening all around the school and we have been preparing enthusiastically for our Harvest Festival, learning words, painting pictures and practising songs. This all culminated in a fantastic service this morning. The children performed amazingly, especially those who had to contend with the drilling and sawing going whilst trying to read. I do think my highlight was Dingle Dangle Scarecrow; the children looked superb in their scarecrow costumes and 10/10 for Miss Watkins who supportively danced out the actions at the front! It was great to see so many families in church and Father Richard commented on how nice it was to have a nearly full church. It was lovely to have coffee served by members of the church and a huge thank you to Rebecca Moore and her team for providing them. We are very fortunate to be part of their community. Don't forget that there is a Harvest Praise service at St James' on Sunday at 10:30am. It is a family service so all are welcome.

Thank you to everyone who made a donation of food. The food will be taken to a drop in centre in Fakenham where they provide meals for those who are struggling for whatever reason.

This afternoon, children in Whitebeam and Oak class were treated to a live music concert streamed via Zoom. They have learned about and listened to the theorbo and guitar.

On Wednesday, we had the Friends of Castle Acre School AGM. Thank you to Libby Firth (our Chair) and to Zoe and Laura too for attending and helping to plan some really exciting events for the rest of the year. Mrs Neary sat with the calendar open so these are now booked in and the events and dates will be released in due course. There are plenty of opportunities for everyone to get involved. Even if it is just for 1 event a year serving teas and coffees, selling raffle tickets, manning a stall for an hour or so or counting/catching ducks then chat to Libby at the gate, drop her an email via the school office or come and find me. It really is a great way to get involved in school life and the children benefit greatly from all the money raised. We are called the Friends, so Grandparents and wider family members are welcome to get involved too. I promise you won't regret it! Their next fundraising event is an Autumn Quiz and Supper on Friday 21st October at Castle Acre Village Hall from, 7pm for 7.30pm start.

Looking forward to next week we have Years 4, 5 and 6 Tag Rugby at TNHA. We can only take 12 children so if your child is taking part then you will have been notified. For those children that didn't get to take part this time, there will be other opportunities throughout the year.

A little further into the future we have our class Reading Cafes. Come and join your child in class, have some refreshments and take part in some reading activities.

Rowan Class – Tuesday 11th October, 9:00 – 10:00am

Whitebeam Class – Thursday 13th October, 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Oak Class - Wednesday 12th October, 9:00 – 10:00am

Please see the attached dates sheet for further dates.

Attendance since beginning of term

Oak Class – 91.69%

Whitebeam Class – 95.86%

Rowan Class – 94.35%

CONGRATULATIONS WHITEBEAM CLASS!!

Whole School Attendance – 93.9%

We are working hard this year to ensure that we reach the best attendance we can. Strong attendance (96% and over) is so important for ensuring that your children learn and achieve well. 95% - considered satisfactory attendance by the Government and Ofsted as well as us - means not missing any more than ten school days over the whole year.

Covid

As you will be aware from the message that went out last night we have Covid in our school. We now have 4 confirmed cases and these are almost all limited to Rowan Class. We do have a lot of common colds going round too but please be extra vigilant if your child displays any of the Covid related symptoms. The guidance currently is that as long as they have no temperature and are feeling well enough to be in school, they can return 3 days after testing positive.

Donations Request to Develop Forest School Area

We are going to be working on developing a forest school area for all children to enjoy. If you have any of the following items to spare, please could you contact the office or Miss George to arrange bringing them in to support with this? It would be very much appreciated! Items needed are:

Log stumps, planks of wood, metal ware for a mud kitchen, ropes, tarpaulin, milk crates, cable reels and other recyclable materials.

Meet the SENDCo

Come and join me for a chat on Thursday 13th October from 9am-10am in the school hall if you have any questions or queries relating to your child and how they are getting on at school. You do not need to have an appointment, just drop in and I will have the kettle on and biscuits ready. Your child does not already need to be identified as having SEN to come along. I look forward to seeing you there.

Emma Spaul, Federation SENDCo. Please contact me at Castle Acre on 01760 755305 if you have any queries.

News from our Classes

Rowan

Mathematician of the Week – Mason H – For excellent counting this week in maths.

Writer of the Week – Toby for working really hard in his letter formation in phonics this week.

Shining Lights of the Week - Finn for showing an immense amount of consideration for other children and volunteering his support. Plus, all of Rowan class for a super performance of our harvest festival, exceptional perseverance, and dedication in performing.

We have had an incredibly busy week in Rowan class! Firstly, we finished going through our 'All About Me' boxes. It was lovely to get to know everyone a little more in the class! We also met our new class member and shown her what an amazing team we are at Castle Acre. As it is the harvest festival this week, we have discussed different types of food and identified which foods are 'healthier' and 'less healthy'. We then used some of the vegetables that we looked at to make a delicious vegetable soup! The children were fantastic at

working together in pairs to chop up the vegetables safely! Finally, we have had our harvest festival performance, which the children have worked very hard on in their practices this week.

Whitebeam

Mathematician of the Week – Brody for a great attitude towards his maths and always willing to answer questions.

Reader of the Week – Jasper for his super reading independently and in front of others.

Shining Light of the Week – Logan for always demonstrating our values.

Good Work Certificate – Max for his independent work.

This week in Whitebeam Class we have continued with our study of Egypt to help us write some extended sentences and we have learnt more about the continent of Africa. Our focus on place value for maths is coming to an end and our focus over the next few weeks will be addition and subtraction which will include problem solving and reasoning challenges! We have been finding out about Henri Matisse and why he changed from painting to creating collages and we all had fun playing fitness bingo in PE.

Oak

Mathematician of the Week – Leo for his fantastic subtraction game that he devised.

Reader of the Week – Sammy for reading so avidly every day in class, at home and for reading so well in church this morning.

Writer of the Week - Elena for her well-structured complaint letter.

Shining Light of the Week – Ella for always being an excellent role model and support to younger children and for always being so helpful around the classroom.

We have had another busy week in Oak Class with lots of fantastic experiences and learning, the highlight of our week being the Harvest Festival service at the Church this morning. The children behaved exceptionally well, and it was lovely to see that all their hard work in rehearsing their prayers and poems paid off with a fantastic contribution from everyone. In maths we have started to look at addition and subtraction and we have been working on our mental strategies to perform calculations. In English we have been looking at formal letters and Mrs Spaul was treated to a long queue of children who were eager to show her the brilliant complaint letters they had written to her. All children are making excellent progress with their confidence and stamina in the water during swimming lessons. On Friday afternoon we were lucky to be treated to a live performance via Zoom from an organisation called Classical Music Rocks where we learned about various musical instruments throughout history, some dating back hundreds of years. Well done to all our children for another busy week of learning.

Message from Executive Headteacher

Parents/Carers' survey

Firstly, a huge thank you to those 35 people who have taken the time to fill in the survey, that's really helpful. It's also brilliant that most people are putting their names as then if there is feedback we need to know more about, we can seek your further input. The survey is very positive which is lovely. There are also some really constructive comments for us to consider, so thank you. The thing that quite a few of you have mentioned, across all three schools is the fact that we are now changing for PE again, and that you all preferred the change made during Covid to coming in and going home in PE kit. We did discuss this as staff teams quite carefully, as from a parent perspective we can totally see why this would be easier. However, we had observed that particularly younger children had lost the skill of independently dressing themselves, which is a requirement of their learning, and had also lost some of the balance and co-ordination required. Getting changed for PE in school is also a key element in terms of safeguarding children and so we felt it was right that it should go back to how it has always been. Once the survey has closed, we'll let you know what actions we've taken in terms of any other feedback given. Thanks again for all the lovely comments and support, and for the constructive feedback.

Ofsted Report

I am delighted to be able to share with you our OFSTED report, which was published last Friday, and details that Sporle is rated as OFSTED 'Good'. The inspectors picked out that Sporle is a happy place of learning and were impressed by the children who consistently uphold the school's values of responsibility, kindness, courage, hope, respect and forgiveness. They were very clear that children achieve well across a range of subjects. They also recognised the good challenge and support offered by both our Governors and the Trust; I want to thank all those people for their support. Our Subject Leaders lead their subject across the Federation and may usually work at different schools, so it really is a testimony to their hard work that they are able to influence not just the learning of children in their own school but in all our schools. I'm very proud of our staff team and our great children and sincerely thank all our Parents/Carers at Sporle who work together in partnership with us.

School Development Plan from last year; our evaluation

Each year, we set ourselves development tasks and then evaluate the success of these.

Last year our overarching priorities were as follows:

Ensure that organisational systems and processes are established following periods of instability eg Covid and changes of leadership so that staff are most effectively supported to ensure strong development and attainment, particularly that of children with SEND and Disadvantages

Continue to develop the curriculum, planning and delivery so that children are enabled to make strong progress and attainment rises in all classes, particularly that of those children with Disadvantages or SEND so that the majority of year groups meet or exceed the national measures.

Ensure that assessment, moderation, and interventions are effectively used so that children make rapid progress and attain in line with or above average and that the attainment of children rises, particularly those with Disadvantages or with SEND

We were pleased with our progress last year, despite all the challenges of the two huge Covid outbreaks and vast amounts of staff and pupil absence across the year. It is also nice to have some validation on our work from OFSTED of course!

This year, we are focusing on embedding that work and improving even further, widening our focus to the children who are strongly able and ensuring that they have even more stretch and challenge.

There are also lots of other things that we want to do this year, such as providing more equipment, games and support at lunchtimes, working on our outdoor areas and our outdoor learning. We also want to embed our Pupil roles -

Academy Councillors, Eco Councillors, Team Captains, Head and Deputy Pupils, Values Ambassadors, Play Leaders, Y6/Reception Buddies and continuing with Children's worship leaders. We want to continue to provide lots of different opportunities for children to visit places, learn from others, such as local farmers, and work with members of the community.

It's going to be a busy and exciting year!

Pupil Voice

We are currently asking our children how they have settled back into school and how their holidays were and whether there was anything that they particularly enjoyed or particularly bothered them.

One thing we have noticed is that many children referencing gaming as something that they enjoyed, but many are mentioning it as something that worried or upset them. Please remember that there are risks with online gaming and consider asking yourself the questions - do I know who my child is gaming with? Can I see who is online with them? Can I hear what is being said to them and what they are saying back? What is the age that my child has to be before playing this game?

There is so much research out there about the impact of these games on children's ability to concentrate, interact with others and understand social norms. Like any tool, gaming can be used well and for positive outcomes but can also lead to huge issues. For example, Fortnite (for which you should be 13 to play); you may find this article interesting: <https://childmind.org/article/parents-guide-dealing-fortnite/>



[A Parent's Guide to Dealing With Fortnite - Child Mind Institute](#)

When people are talking about Fortnite, they are most likely talking about Fortnite: Battle Royale, which is the version of the game where up to 100 players battle to the death, with the winner being the last player standing.

childmind.org

Prayer - from Ella and Maddie

Dear God,

Thank you for giving our farmers courage and strength when faced with challenges in their work so that they can plant, grow and harvest crops that give us food to eat.

Amen

Thank you as always for your support.

Emma Spaul and Anne Neary

Head of School
Castle Acre CE Primary Academy

Executive Head Teacher
The Nar Valley Federation of Church Academies
Castle Acre, Narborough and Sporle

Allergy Aware Schools – Please do not send nuts into Nar Valley Federation Academies