



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 14th October 2022

Dear Parents,

We have had a lovely week at Castle Acre, with plenty of great learning happening and our first class Cafés of the academic year. Due to my diary commitments, I have only been able to pop into Rowan Class and it was really good to see families enjoying a range of activities on Ancient Egyptians from making 3D pyramids to creating names out of hieroglyphics. I did catch the beginning of Oak Class and was very impressed by the offering of our bumper crop of apples. I hope that some of you were able to try them and found them to be juicy and tasty. We thank all of you who were able to join in with the Café this time. As a working parent myself, I do understand that it can be tricky to move things around to attend every event we hold. We do understand this and will try to move timings around and keep them near to drop off or pick up times. Next half term, we will be holding a whole school café. We are thinking this will have a festive theme (I won't mention the word yet, although I am aware some children are already drawing up their lists!). Some of our Year 3s and 4s took part in a football tournament at TNHA earlier in the week. Once again, the children represented themselves brilliantly and tried their absolute best. I think the highlight may have been the double decker bus though!

Also this week, the children in Years 2-5 have been completing their first formal assessments of the year. They have done this incredibly well, especially Oak Class who completed one after swimming yesterday!

Looking forward to next week, children from Years 3-6 are invited to take part in a Cross Country event at TNHA on Tuesday morning. I remember this was a great event last year and involved lots of stickers! Once again, you will have been notified if your child is invited to take part.

Next week is the final week before half term – it has flown by! In the week immediately following half term, we have Parent Consultations. Please sign up with your child's teacher at the end of the day or contact them via Dojo.

Please see the attached dates sheet for further dates.

Attendance since beginning of term

Oak Class – 94.55%

Whitebeam Class – 96.02%

Rowan Class – 91.46%

CONGRATULATIONS WHITEBEAM CLASS!!

Whole School Attendance – 93.89%

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. We have noticed some holiday requests coming in. Please be aware that we will not be authorising any holidays during term time. It is really important that your child attends school every day and any time missed impacts upon your child's learning.

A real good-news story

We encourage in all of our children the need to be responsible and respectful citizens in society. Whilst we can monitor and recognise this inside of our school gates, it is not so easy outside of them and we rely on being told. So it was absolutely lovely to hear of 4 children from Oak who demonstrated our school values so well at a fair last weekend. A huge thank you to Sammy, Rory, Alex & Joe (past pupil now in Y7). You made one family very happy and I am incredibly proud to have you as members of our school.

Out of school success

Congratulations to Holly and Freya, who took part in a competition to find Pharaohs hidden around Swaffham. They were the winning pair and both received book tokens.

If you do ever see or hear of any of our children going the extra mile outside of school then please do let us know as we are really pleased to acknowledge this.

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.

See below for an exciting competition related to Forest Schools!

Clubs

We are looking to get some more after school clubs up and running with the aim of offering one every day of the week. If you, or someone you know, feel able to offer some time and help run a club then please come and see us. It could be anything – craft, outdoor learning, games – the options are endless!

Meet the SENDCo

We had our first Meet the SENDCo event yesterday. It was really lovely to sit down over a cup of tea and a biscuit and share experiences and ideas. We had a really good discussion about SEN provision in our school and it was lovely to hear the things that we do well. We have many things to be proud of. A few things that we discussed around how we can be even better included:

- helping children to understand different needs and what they might look like, especially hidden disabilities
- making sure that we explain processes, particularly around referrals and engagement of other agencies, really clearly as well as the provision that is in place for children
- ensuring systems are in place so that everyone involved in a child is aware of their story, what helps them and how best to support them
- sharing knowledge throughout the whole school community, creating links between parents and staff
- inviting representatives from outside agencies to some meetings
- creating opportunities for pre-school age children and their families to come in, share experiences and seek advice

I would like to make these half termly events and will be putting together a list of dates for the rest of the year. Please do join us for the next one. You don't have to have a child with additional needs, just be interested or want to know a little bit more. Or just want a cup of tea and a biscuit!

News from our Classes

Rowan

Mathematician of the Week – Ivy F for fantastic explanation of mathematical problems.

Reader of the Week – Etta for beautiful reading of her story book.

Writer of the Week – Oscar for his lovely writing in his morning work.

Shining Lights of the Week - Oliver P for consistently making good choices and being a good role model.

Every week in Rowan class seems to be busier than the last! This week we have been focusing quite heavily on reading as we had our class reading cafe on Tuesday morning. Thank you to anyone who was able to make it, we know that it is difficult to be able to make events during the school day. The children really enjoyed sharing reading activities together. In science this week we have looked at classifying animals into their different groups and have spoken about their physical features too! In geography we have looked at weather patterns in the UK and in PE we continued to learn different ball skills such as controlling the ball when dribbling or rolling it. Only one week left until half term!

Whitebeam

Mathematician of the Week – Alexander for his timed dice addition.

Reader of the Week – Holly for reading and good understanding during comprehension activities.

Writer of the Week – Olivia for writing some lovely prayers to put on our prayer tree and writing some sentences at home to include colours which she had written in Spanish!

Shining Light of the Week – Tyler, Brody and Fletcher for demonstrating our school values when they attended the Football Festival at TNHA.

In Whitebeam Class this week the children have been working very hard on reading, maths, spelling and grammar assessments. The Y3 children had the option on Wednesday to go to the Football Festival and had a great time and represented the school really well. In geography the children were really engaged locating different physical features in Africa and finding Spain in Atlases before starting to learn the colours in Spanish. I wonder how many they can remember. We had a lovely time on Thursday afternoon during our Reading Cafe and had time to reflect on our feelings and self-esteem during our RSHE lessons. Well done Whitebeam.

Oak

Mathematician of the Week – Freya for her diligence in learning her times tables this week.

Reader of the Week – Alexis for her enthusiastic approach to reading both in school and at home.

Writer of the Week - Esther-Rae for the exceptional progress she demonstrated this week with her suspense narrative.

Shining Light of the Week – Ella, due to the care and compassion she shows to other members of the class and how she will always be the first person to try and help anyone who is struggling.

Oak class have enjoyed a very exciting week of learning. We enjoyed another successful swimming lesson at Dereham on Thursday and also a really fun football session at The Nicholas Hammond Academy in Swaffham for our children in Year 4. It was fantastic to see our children working so effectively with the Year 9 sports leaders. We have been completing assessments this week in spelling and maths and all of our children behaved well and gave their best effort. Oak class have made excellent progress with their suspense narrative writing and we look forward to reading the finished pieces. Today in Oak class we have taken part in a fabulous day of themed learning about Europe. We have researched a number of different countries, created artwork and taken part in a food tasting. We have completed "Showcase Suitcases" in teams. We took the opportunity to learn more about what makes great teamwork and we were so impressed at how well each team collaborated to create their masterpieces. We shared the finished suitcases in collective worship and all children were congratulated for their contribution to a fun day of learning with some fantastic results.

Message from Executive Headteacher

Pupil Voice

As you may know, we check in with our children once a half-term to see how they are, how their learning is and how they are feeling in school. Each half-term has a slightly different focus and this half-term we looked at how they felt about coming back to school. We asked the following:

What was **fun** or kept you **happy** during the summer?

What was **not good**? Did anything **worry** or **scare** you, or give you a **funny feeling**?

What did you **enjoy on devices** - phone, tablet, TV....?

What did you **NOT enjoy on devices** - anything bad, scary or worrying?

What are you **looking forward to at school** this term?

Is there **anything worrying** / you are **not looking forward to**?

Do you have at least one adult in school that you can talk to and that you feel comfortable with?

Strengths were that 100% of pupils feel that they have at least one adult in school that they can trust. Concerns or worries about school were unique to individuals and a high proportion answered that they didn't have any concerns.

An area of concern was very much ICT based – many of the children could talk about something on their devices that had worried or scared them over the Summer.

Any individual concerns have been talked through with the children or the class as appropriate by the teacher. The ICT concern is something that the leadership team have considered and decided that we will respond by firstly creating a reference booklet that might provide some information about sites, devices, age limits etc. Secondly, we are exploring the idea of an information evening with a speaker. So we want to hear from you - is this an issue that you'd like support with, what could we do as a school to support you and would you welcome such an evening? Please get in touch via the office with any feedback. Many thanks.

Overall, the feedback was extremely positive and our children are noticeably happy and settled in school. Recent monitoring by Governors and DNEAT noted their enthusiasm for their learning and their super knowledge. Well done children and well done our super staff team for making learning fun. Who wouldn't want to go to school and interview Howard Carter and explore Tutankahmun's tomb?!

Prayer

Dear God,

Please help us to be brave and courageous during tough times.

Amen

Thank you as always for your support and remember our door is always open if you need anything, have a query or even an idea.

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