



Diocese of Norwich  
Education and  
Academies Trust

## The Nar Valley Federation of Church Academies

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Anne Neary

Web: [www.narvalleyfederation.co.uk](http://www.narvalleyfederation.co.uk)

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Dear Parents,

Despite having some beautiful, sunny frosty mornings with very little thaw during the daytime, the snow that was promised has not appeared. I am not sure if I am disappointed because I love to play in the snow or grateful because I have slightly dreaded a 60 mile round trip in it. Whichever, I am not sure we are out of the woods yet as one of our parents reminded me there is always wintry weather around the time of the King's Lynn Mart.

We have had another superb week in school. I have visited Rowan Class during a phonics session and was blown away by their 'Fred in your head' reading. They always want to tell me about the learning they are doing and new bits of knowledge they have acquired. Whitebeam have been doing some rather tricky maths but a couple of members were happy to tell me all about it. Whitebeam (and the rest of the school) were also very pleased to welcome Molly back. There were lots of smiles and excitement. Oak Class completed some amazing shared writing together and the vocabulary they used was brilliant.

Please keep an eye on the date sheet for any upcoming dates. This week we have Infant Agility for Years Reception, 1 and 2 on Monday. There are limited places for this so if your child has been chosen to take part, you will have already been notified by the school. There will be more events coming up so if your child hasn't been chosen this time, they will be more opportunities in the future.

### Attendance

We are working hard this year to ensure that we reach the best attendance we can. **96%** is considered strong attendance and 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.

#### Attendance this week/since beginning of the academic year

Oak Class – 93.75% / 92.61%

Whitebeam Class – 99.07% / 94.15%

Rowan Class – 90.13% / 93.74%

Whole School – 93.08% / 93.03%

CONGRATULATIONS WHITEBEAM CLASS THIS WEEK – YOU WERE SO CLOSE TO 100%!

### Parents Consultation

The dates for our Parent Consultation Evenings are Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February (3.30 – 5.30pm) and Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February (3.30 – 7pm). The teachers will be out nearer to half term with time sheets for you to choose a slot.

Please can we remind you that these slots are 10 minutes long and are to chat about your child's learning. If there is anything else you wish to discuss then you will need to make another appointment.

If you have a child with additional needs then we will offer you either a longer time slot on one of our allocated dates or a time in the week before half term. This is to ensure that you have enough time to discuss how they are getting on with their learning and also the provision that is in place for them.

Where you have more than one child in school, we do work really hard to ensure that the appointments are as close together as possible but there is a possibility that there may be a little gap between them. We look forward to being able to share your child's successes and next steps with you.

### **PE Kits**

Please can I remind you that your child needs to have their PE kits in school from Monday to Friday and it needs to include a separate sweatshirt or jumper from their school one. We try and go outside as much as possible, especially the older children, and if they fall over wearing their school one it can become wet or dirty. If your child's kit becomes particularly wet or dirty then we will send it home!

### **Toys In School**

Please can we remind you that children should not be bringing in toys from home into school unless pre-arranged with the teacher or if they are Child of the Day for show and tell. If this is the case, then they will be asked to put it in the teacher's cupboard until they show it at the end of the day. We are noticing an increase in toys coming in and there is the possibility that they will get lost or broken and they do cause a distraction from working. We appreciate your co-operation with this matter.

### **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!

### **Drop off and Pick Up**

Just a polite reminder – please can you make sure you park carefully at drop off and pick up. Our bus driver has had a few occasions where he has not been able to park or turn. In the mornings particularly, please leave the bus bay clear. Thank you in advance for your co-operation with this matter.

### **News from our Classes**

#### **Rowan**

**Mathematician of the Week** – Finn, for his excellent pattern spotting when looking at fact families using part-whole models, well done!

**Reader of the Week** – Toby, for using Fred in his head to read and spell words that include the 'igh' sound, well done!

**Writer of the Week** – Brianna, for her super sentences in morning work this week and for remembering her finger spaces, well done!

**Shining Lights of the Week (Reception)** – Sybil, for using her knowledge from a lesson to support her learning during choosing time, well done!

**Shining Lights of the Week (Year 1)** - Oliver L, for consistently demonstrating our class values this week, well done!

The children in Rowan class have been working incredibly hard in their phonics this week. We have been learning and practising lots of new concepts and sounds and the children have really impressed us with their super learning attitudes so well done to all! In maths, we have been focusing on subtraction and taking away and have been using pictorial representations to support us with this. In PE, we have been continuing with yoga and have learned lots of new poses such as a 'deer', 'snake' and 'butterfly', as well as practising our deep breathing. In art, we have continued to look at the work of Henri Matisse and are discovering 'complimentary colours' and how he used these in his art.

## **Whitebeam**

**Mathematician of the Week** – Holly for always challenging herself in maths.

**Reader of the Week** – Max for his excellent reading of a newspaper report including improvisation!

**Writer of the Week** – Alexander for the presentation of his writing.

**Shining Lights of the Week (Year 2)** - Molly for demonstrating our values of kindness, courage, respect and responsibility.

**Shining Lights of the Week (Year 3)** - Mason F for making super choices this week including good learning behaviours and helping others.

**Children's Worship** - Leo, Pearl, Skyla and Brody

As we come to the end of another busy week in Whitebeam we would like to say a great big Castle Acre welcome to Molly who has joined our class this week. We have been busy learning about the Japanese artist Hokusai in art and what inspired him to create The Great Wave and we have also drawn some fantastic lighthouse scenes with sketching pencils. In English we have been learning about pronouns, alternative noun phrases and revised adjectives as ways to engage the reader and we have looked at different newspaper reports. In maths our focus has been on arrays in multiplication and we have extended our maths vocabulary to include commutative! In PSHE we are exploring our goals and dreams and how we can work together as a team to achieve them and we have demonstrated some great gymnastic moves in PE and put together different sequences in dance. We are looking forward to our visit to the church and will share our highlights from this visit with you next week. Well done Whitebeam.

## **Oak**

**Mathematician of the Week** – Izzy for putting in a huge effort and a brilliant attitude towards the fractions of amounts word problems.

**Reader of the Week** – Pearl, for confidently reading our persuasive writing to the rest of the class and Mrs. Spaul.

**Writer of the Week** – Riley for contributing some excellent ideas in our shared write of the persuasive speech.

**Shining Light of the Week (Year 4)** – Marley, for exceptional effort so far this term and for stretching himself with his writing.

**Shining Light of the Week (Year 5)** – Alex, for always trying the more difficult tasks in class and not being discouraged when he finds them difficult.

**Shining Light of the Week (Year 6)** – Rory, for making a marked improvement in effort and becoming much more conscientious with his learning.

We have had another typically busy week in Oak class. In our maths learning, we are coming to the end of our fractions work. The year 4 and 5 children have been consolidating their understanding of fractions of an amount and the year 5 and 6 children have been revising equivalence in fractions. We have also focused on refining our use of maths vocabulary to help us be more precise in our conversations around maths. In our geography learning this week, we have discussed the structure of the Earth and how fold mountains are formed. Using maps, we identified the tectonic plates that moved to form different mountain ranges across the world. For our writing, we have started to create our own persuasive writing based on the poem 'The Spider and the Fly'. We completed a wonderful shared write together and we were really impressed with how our children contributed to this process. In RE, we have started to learn about Martin Luther when thinking about our enquiry question "why is there so much diversity within Christianity?" In computing we have continued to learn about spreadsheets and this week we revised using formulae and functions as well as learning some formatting techniques. In science we learnt about Sir Isaac Newton and gravity.

## **Message from Executive Headteacher**

### **Safeguarding children**

Since the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in the number of people ringing the NSPCC helpline about a child they are worried about. From April 2021 to March 2022 the NSPCC Helpline spoke 8,347 times with adults, compared to 7,338 in the same period for the previous year. (Source, Andrew Hall Safeguarding

briefing). The NSPCC have launched a 'Listen up, Speak up' campaign to help all of us feel more confident about how to feel more confident about what to watch out for.

The below link is to a very short and accessible online training session about how to help protect children. It is very quick and easy to do and doesn't commit you to anything. If you'd like to, please have a look; it might just help protect a child. Many thanks.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2023/listen-up-speak-up-campaign-provides-training-to-spot-and-report-abuse/>

### **Teacher Strikes**

As you may have heard or seen in the news, one of the teacher unions has voted to strike, and the days that teachers in that union can choose to strike on are 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1<sup>st</sup> March and the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of March. The reasons for this strike are well-documented and this is not the appropriate arena to discuss these; what I can say is that any decision to strike or not to strike will have caused a great deal of anguish and careful thought as all our staff that we have care deeply about our children and their ongoing education.

Striking teachers have a legal right to do so and do not have to inform school leaders whether they are going to do so or not, and also can change their mind. Striking staff can choose to do so on one, two, three or all four of the days. Our teachers are very professional and understanding of the need to plan as much as possible. As a Trust, the position is to keep our schools and classes open where it is safe to do so.

At this point, I can only say that many of our staff are Parents/Carers too and may be affected also by these strikes and are fully aware of your desire to know in advance what is happening for your children and that we will share as much information as we have in as timely a manner as we have it. We will update you as soon as there is any more information.

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  
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