



EAST ANGLIA DIOCESE SCHOOLS' NEWS DECEMBER 2019



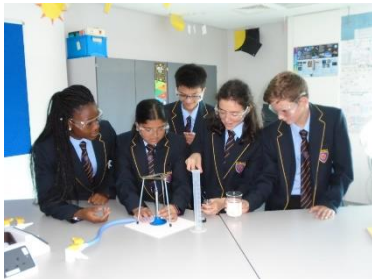
Dear colleagues,

May the Blessings of Christmas be with you today and always.



A picture from Poringland Church

Below we have a focus on St Bede's Inter-church School in Cambridge, from Alistair Day, Headteacher, and Notre Dame Prep., Norwich from Rob Thornton, Headmaster, a few updates, reminders and dates for your Calendars.



A Focus on St Bede's Inter-Church School in Cambridge

It has been a real pleasure to serve as Headteacher at St Bede's Inter-Church School in Cambridge since 2012. It is a very special school community, unique within the county as the only maintained secondary school with a distinctive faith ethos.

St Bede's opened in 1962 as a new Catholic secondary school in purpose-built accommodation on a spacious green field site to the south of the city of Cambridge. The first Head, the late George Kent, believed strongly that schools should provide opportunities to

inspire students beyond the classroom and established a tradition of school trips and participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme that has continued.

By the late 1980s, talks between the Catholic and Anglican Dioceses led to St Bede's becoming an inter-church school and then later to the opening of a new inter-church primary school, our sister school, All Saints' in the market town of March.

In recent years, St Bede's popularity has led to oversubscription, with nearly all students coming from Catholic and Anglican families. With 180 students in six tutor groups within each year, there will be 900 students on roll next September. A new House system introduced last year promotes a strong sense of belonging and collective identity, with each House being led student House Captains to develop their leadership skills. Our Houses, named after the early churches of the New Testament, provide a rich resource for guidance and inspiration in assemblies and tutor group worship.

The strong progress our students have made in recent years is wonderful, confirming St Bede's place among the highest attaining schools in the region. Successive inspections from Ofsted and jointly by both the Catholic and Anglican Dioceses have judged St Bede's Inter-Church School to be outstanding, though we strive for continuous improvement and fight complacency.

Since 2012, St Bede's has operated as a single-academy trust, though we enjoy close working relationships with a range of schools, through different partnerships locally and across both dioceses. There is a growing impetus for schools to formalise their collaborations by forming Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), though we would seek to protect our distinctive inter-church character within any future arrangements. Following a successful application to open a new school in Cambridgeshire under the Department for Education's Free Schools Programme, we are within the pre-opening phase, whereby the Department for Education conducts detailed studies to assess the feasibility of opening a new school. The Department's preferred location for the new school is Soham and families with primary aged children who live in East Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk have been asked whether they would select this new secondary school if it were to have a distinctive faith character.

So, what is it like to work and learn at St Bede's?

As with all schools, it is a busy, dynamic and exciting place to be, with nearly one thousand individuals working closely together in a relatively small space.

What defines St Bede's in comparison to other schools?

The relationships between members of our community are supportive and respectful. Most students talk freely to their teachers and are confident to take an active role in their own learning. There is a culture where challenge is accepted and even welcomed from both staff and from students. It is usual for students to appraise the quality and content of my assemblies and they are seldom wrong! Trust is vital to ensure real progress and we have a long-established ethos of mutual trust, which is very empowering. Teachers trust that their classes will behave and so plan lessons that are fun and challenging for students and in turn, students engage, allowing their teachers to challenge further – a virtuous learning cycle! The senior leadership team challenges each curriculum area by setting very ambitious targets but trusts our teachers to devise their own plans to achieve them. Teachers trust in the support offered and are willing to seek help from the senior team before it is too late. Trust demands humility, forgiveness and generosity, as well as honesty, hope and courage. Trust can be very difficult but is a skill that develops through perseverance and patience. Above all, we should model trust for others to follow – it is unreasonable to expect others to trust us, if we do not first show our trust in them.

It is a pleasure to welcome visitors to St Bede's; we learn so much by seeing our school through other people's eyes. If you would like to know more about our school, please visit www.st-bedes.org.uk and do let me have any feedback to support our improvement.

Alistair Day – Headteacher

RE at Notre Dame Prep Autumn 2019

As a Catholic school, our mission statement is to “endeavour to nurture a love of God through Jesus Christ in all our children”. Notre Dame Prep has an ethos of love and care and embraces children of all faiths and cultures. This is borne out in many ways throughout the school day and, indeed, year. Assemblies are held three times per week; Wednesdays are individual classes’ opportunities to lead the theme which can be to share their learning or to celebrate a particular National day or event in the calendar. Monday and Friday assemblies are of a religious nature, rooted in the teachings of the Bible and opened out to relate to the children’s lives. All assemblies begin with a prayer and end with a hymn.

Religious singing is a huge strength of our school. Led by the Head of Music, Clare Harsley, children are taught on Monday and Tuesday mornings in two separate singing practices according to key stage. During these sessions, in addition to singing secular songs, children enjoy learning a wide selection of hymns to suit the liturgical calendar. Christmas is the culmination of the religious life of the school. Each year, we prepare and perform two musical Nativity plays (for Nursery and Pre-prep and Prep 1 and Prep 2), where the story of Jesus’ birth is brought alive in the hearts and minds of children, staff and parents alike. Meanwhile, the upper school perform carols and readings in our wonderful and truly spiritual Carol Service at St John’s Cathedral, which both celebrates and strengthens the heart of our community’s faith.

This year, the beginning of Advent was celebrated with a vibrant, joyous whole-school assembly led by the Diocesan Youth team, Ignite. To support this teaching, each class teacher has prepared their children for the coming of Our Lord. This year, preparations have begun with Prep 2 sharing their own family traditions of Advent and making wool wreaths, while Prep 3 have made ornaments for their Jesse tree which they are adding each day of Advent; Prep 4 have made a calendar of Advent prayers to be read out by different children each day, while Prep 5 have learned the meaning of each candle of the Advent wreath. Finally, Prep 6 have made a wreath of Advent “promises” for their door.

Other events in the liturgical year are celebrated both in assemblies and lessons. This harvest-time, our assembly highlighted Cafod’s campaign to build wells to provide water to the developing country of Uganda. Children and staff came dressed in bright colours, bringing in donations of money to support Cafod’s cause. Meanwhile, we also collected food for the local community foodbank to enable the school community to support those in need closer to home.

Another charity the school regularly supports through fundraising events is the Christian charity Street Child, which helps to take children in war-torn countries off the streets and provide homes and schools for them. Again, we are nurturing children as global citizens, to not only have understanding and empathy of the plights of others less fortunate than themselves, but to endeavour to bring about change through action.

In the classroom, teachers introduce children to many key bible stories and events, bringing them alive through discussions, debates, drama and story-boards. In Prep 2, the topic of The Creation story stimulated thought-provoking discussions leading to questions such as, “How was He able to do all of this?” and “But how do we know the world was created by God?” Meanwhile, in Prep 4, children re-enact the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles at Pentecost. In all lessons, teachers engage the children, encouraging them to begin with what they know, reflecting both inwards and looking outwards to the wider world of their school and home communities and the wider world.

In Prep 5, children are encouraged to be good stewards of God’s creation, while Prep 6 start with Corinthians 1 at the heart of liturgical teaching to develop their understanding of what

God's love is and the meaning of unconditional love and commitment in a life of service to others. By the time they leave, many children are developing an excellent knowledge and understanding of their own and other world religions.

A particular focal point for celebration is the annual sacrament of First Holy Communion. Here children from Prep 3 and upwards who have prepared through weekly classes for this sacrament, are welcomed to receive the Holy Eucharist amongst family and friends of the school in a wonderful celebration at St John's Cathedral.

Throughout their time in the "family" of Notre Dame Prep, pupils – of all faiths - grow in their knowledge and understanding of God's love and true Christian values.

Rob Thornton, Headmaster



Epiphany Candlelight Mass

Followed by hotdogs, a bonfire and fireworks
For all young people from across the Diocese

5pm – 7pm Sunday 5th January 2020
at The White House, 21 Ugate,
Poringland. NR14 7SH

We are collecting gifts for children who are refugees.
Please bring a wrapped gift, indicating on the outside whether it is for a boy or girl
or either, and the approximate age it is suitable for.

Organised by East Anglia Diocesan Youth Service. Tel: 01508 486236 Email: dys@rcdea.org.uk

Cornerstone Weekly Theme Resources

Inspired by the 'Year of the Word', a new set of ppts based on each Sunday's Gospel reading have been added to the [Cornerstone website](#) .

CAFOD have also published new resources on the Epiphany.

Key dates such as feast days and international days on specific themes have been added to the calendar to help you to plan the year ahead. Please go to website.

New Senior Appointments over the past term

Aidan McGovern – Executive Head, St Martha's, King's Lynn & Sacred Heart, Swaffham

Irene Henden Head of School, Sacred Heart, Swaffham

Hayley Pink Head of School, St Martha's, King's Lynn

If we have missed anyone please accept our apologies.

Dates for your Diary:

CES Census 2020 Timetable

You should have received a letter and FAQ from CES regarding 2020 Census. The start date is on the 16th January in England. Schools and colleges should complete and submit their returns during the support period which runs from the start date until Friday 14th February. If you have not received your letter or have a query please contact Jane Delph at: ssc@rcdea.org.uk.

Primary RE Leaders Days –

Friday 6th March 2020, Conference Centre, Poringland

Friday 12th June 2020, Conference Centre, Poringland

Exec/Headteachers/Heads of School Summer Pilgrimage

Thursday 18th – Saturday 20th June 2020

Deps/Assistant Heads of School Summer Pilgrimage

Thursday 25th – Saturday 27th June 2020

Whole School Mass – Friday 25th September 2020 at SJB Cathedral. This year it will be lead by our Ipswich Schools.

Headteachers/Heads of School Autumn Conference – Friday 9th October 2020,

Conference Centre, Poringland

Deputy/Heads of Sch./Assistant Heads Autumn Conference – Thursday 29th October

2020, Conference Centre, Poringland

Remember, we want to share your news, so please tell us about special things happening in your school or anything we can celebrate or acknowledge together.

Please remember to forward these Newsletters and those sent by the CES to your governors. Send your news to ssc@rcdea.org.uk.

Wishing you all a restful and restorative break and many thanks for all of the hard work and dedication you give.



From: Julie, Flavio, Helen and Jane