



Diocese of Norwich
Education and
Academies Trust

The Nar Valley Federation of Church Academies

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Anne Neary

Web: www.narvalley.dneat.org

6th September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back to school for the Autumn term from our team and we hope that everyone enjoyed some good family time. A very warm welcome to our new families and of course to our lovely new Reception children, most of whom I have managed to meet and start to get to know. We've welcomed some new staff members at each school and as always staff photos for each school will be coming out in next week's newsletter so that you know who everyone is and what class they are teaching in.

Just a reminder that we have very good attendance and punctuality across our three schools on the whole, so please keep this up and remember that the school day begins at 8.40am so please do ensure that your child is on school premises at 8.35am promptly in order to begin learning at 8.40am.

As you know, there are new Government attendance procedures from August 19th, 2024. Please see the attached letter and if there is anything you want support with, do come and see me. Please note that the Government is clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools **must** take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment. This means that whilst we can completely sympathise with the cost of holidays in school holidays, we must do all we can to ensure children attend over 96% of the school year.

So the message is please do not book term time holidays. If you feel that you have to do this, then please do come and see me **BEFORE** you take any further action, such as booking. We can then look at your child's attendance, what is happening for that class and we can minimise the absence or avoid it completely. We really do not want to see any of our families prosecuted or fined any more.

Last year in our school development plan, we were focusing on the following priorities:

- 1) Continue to develop the curriculum in order that it is equally strong throughout every subject
- 2) Effectively implement the NVF Pedagogy so that teaching ensures children build on their knowledge across the curriculum
- 3) Ensure that teaching in the Early Years is strong across the Federation so that children in Nursery and Reception have the best start
- 4) Ensure that the knowledge and next steps of youngest children's basic skills is carefully assessed, taught and tracked

Obviously there are other aims for each of our schools, but these are the learning focused ones.

We were pleased with our progress in these areas; not every bullet point beneath the objectives was fully achieved but overall areas developed well; our Reception and Nursery children achieved very well in relation to the national or their starting points and our children across all three schools consistently demonstrated in

monitoring that they could talk about our curriculum and their knowledge - I learned a lot that I didn't know about all kinds of subjects and areas!

Once this year's School development plan is finalised, based on analysis of the results last year, then I will share this with you in a future newsletter.

Our curriculum is broad and rich, and I am proud that our children experience many different kinds of learning across each school year. We are always keen to strengthen our after school club offer, so if you have a hobby or area of expertise, such as baking, then please do let us know' we'd be very grateful. I am delighted that Mrs Paula Radford, who the Year Five and Six children will know from our Year Four Residentials at Westacre Theatre, and who has been running a drama club at Narborough, is not only continuing at Narborough but extending to Castle Acre. Don't worry Sporle, she will get to you all soon as well! We also have Sports coaches working with our Federation providing a lunchtime club daily and two after school clubs and we will continue to take our children on a trip, or invite in a visitor at least once a term, usually more. We are taking part in West Norfolk Sports, the sporting festivals at the Nicholas Hammond Academy and we continue to work together with Westacre Theatre to provide a range of theatrical opportunities. Westacre theatre work so hard and do need your support; please see the literature attached as to how you can support them to continue to offer such fantastic provision in our local area. We have our Church service for Harvest Festival this half-term and our community marking of Remembrance Day; you are warmly welcomed to both.

Our Friends and PTFA groups will be having their first meeting of the year this half-term and we would love to see some more people involved - as the old adage goes, many hands make light work, so it would be wonderful to have a few more people to support those who work so hard to provide money for each school. If you're interested in joining, please do let us know. Each school is fundraising for particular onsite projects, to improve the outdoor provision for the children, as well as ensuring that we can subsidise the cost of our trips, so that we can continue to provide such a range of trips and residential visits at such good value. Please watch out for dates for these in the newsletter.

You will have noticed our double decker bus has arrived! We will be fundraising for the conversion of this into our library bus soon so please do have a think about how you can be involved. Before conversion, we need to plant some screening foliage and paint the bus green in accordance with the planning permission, so if you can offer donated foliage or paint, or your time to paint, please let us know. We won't be using it until it is converted and safe for the children but are looking forward to it being a library, a place to go and sit in groups and read at lunchtimes and breaktimes, and a place to have visiting authors read stories to us.

Finally, we'll be having our Parent Cafes this half-term, to support you engaging with your children's learning (it is always different from when we went to school!) and also our Parent/Carer questionnaire will come out before our Parents' Forum next half-term. Your views help us shape our schools, so please do send these back.

As always, we look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you so that your children enjoy school and learn well. See you soon, either on the gate or at the various events mentioned above; we also have a community fair in Castle Acre on Sunday 15th September, 2pm-5pm on the village playing field, so we may see you there.

With very best wishes;



Mrs Anne Neary
Executive Headteacher
The Nar Valley Federation of Church Academies
Castle Acre, Narborough and Sporle



Mrs Emma Spaul
Head of School
Castle Acre CE Primary Academy