

Diocesan Education Newsletter

Pentecost 2017

Our vision – Deeply Christian, Serving The Common Good



Welcome to Pentecost edition of our newsletter. Pentecost is celebrated on the Sunday nearest to 50 days after Easter, so time is indeed flying.

Please find inside:

How Easter was marked in our schools

A new feature – From My Perspective - life in a church school

The benefits of reflection space for Secondary pupils

Help with developing spirituality in your school

A message from Director of Education, Jeff Williams

It would be wholly inappropriate not to comment upon the shocking and sad events of recent weeks, given we are committed to actively and gracefully promote tolerance, inclusion and respect as central to the ethos in our schools. I'm sure many of you will have led school worship reflecting on the events that will have troubled our children and young people, and indeed engaged in challenging conversations with them about faith, and why God allows such things to happen. Thank you for those insightful and impactful conversations, and for showing our children and young people that forgiveness and love must triumph through the actions we all take wherever we are placed – but also the Biblical message about justice and righteousness.

The lead-up to the election has generated significant paragraphs in the online and hard copy press about the parties' views on Faith Schools and selection. We will see what emerges from the new government and the policies from the DfE in particular – but I still urge you to challenge anyone who categorises our schools as 'Faith Schools', because they are not. CofE schools and academies are community schools for children of all faiths and none. We celebrate our ethos and Christian distinctiveness, but equally offer a huge contribution to society and communities by being intentionally inclusive and through our very existence, highlight community cohesion and our transformational ability.

As we approach the end of another year – where has the time gone – I hope that your reflections and reviews will bring many smiles and a sense of achievement. The work and witness you give in your varied and many locations is massively appreciated, and will have a lifetime impact on thousands of individuals and families.

We look forward to seeing you at the Year 6 Leavers' Services and indeed the Bishops' Garden Parties. We are producing a special 'Ewe Matter' Newsletter for the end of term, when we hope you will have lots of stories of the decoration of your sheep and plenty of photographs. I have been tipped off that one sheep has its own bespoke sheep pen on wheels and will be brought to a Cathedral via land and sea – can't wait for the photos! If you could send Sue (sue.bowen@portsmouth.anglican.org) your anecdotes and photos, we'd be delighted to feature them in the Ewe Matter edition.

Jeff

Holy Week at our schools

Holy Week was marked in a myriad of ways across our schools. The following stories are just a selection of activities organised to ensure that children in our church schools could investigate and explore the impact of the Easter story.

Being in the middle of a move into a new school building did not deter staff and children at an Isle of Wight school from celebrating Easter. Staff at Oakfield Church of England Primary school are currently piloting the new Understanding Christianity resource and explored the concept of Salvation from the resource pack during Holy Week.

The packing boxes were put aside for a while as children in Reception re-enacted Palm Sunday using songs, musical instruments, palm leaves and a hobby horse! The older children worked together on a carousel of activities, including an Easter labyrinth and Holy Week pass the parcel - each layer containing a picture relating to the Easter story. The children were encouraged to interpret, order and retell each stage of the story.

Children, staff and families at St Lawrence School, Alton, took part in a re-enactment of the events of Holy Week, led by vicar Andrew Micklefield.



The day began with the waving of palm leaves and flags to welcome Jesus.

The Last Supper was staged outside the parish centre where Jesus was joined by twelve pupils who shared bread and 'wine' before leaving for the garden of Gethsemane.

Golgotha was situated near the entrance to the church. Two Year 1 children were overheard saying to each other "This is such a sad story." "Yes, but don't forget there is a happy ending!"



An Easter cross created by children at Romsey Abbey Church of England Primary School.



Children at Bethany Church of England Junior School in Bournemouth investigated the Easter story at their church where staff had arranged stations examining Easter through the five senses.

Children in Year 5 at St James CE Primary School, Emsworth, studied the concept of resurrection during Holy week and the importance of it for Christians. A small group of girls then decided that they would like to represent their image of Jesus in art form. The school is delighted with their painting and intend framing it to hang in our hall. Congratulations to Erin, Chloe, Edie and Mia.



Making room for prayer at Charter Academy



A new prayer room has been created at a Portsmouth academy to give students a place for reflection. The Archdeacon of Portsdown, the Venerable Joanne Grenfell, officially opened the space at Charter Academy in the middle of the city.

The room is designed to be a reflective space where students can ask questions about faith, pray or speak to

someone about issues that are troubling them. The room features a large modern, wooden cross that used to adorn the former St Luke's School, which became Charter Academy in 2009.

Head of Humanities Grace Duffy said: 'The archdeacon also spent time in Year 9 and Year 10 lessons being asked various questions about her faith. The students had a fantastic time.'



The academy is developing its Christian ethos. A mixed group of staff and clergy has been set up to discuss the values that underpin worship and charity work at the academy. A prayer meeting is held for staff and students once a week. School pastors visit the academy during Friday lunchtimes to speak with students and the Reverend Annie McCabe of neighboring St Luke's Church has begun leading a monthly Eucharist service at the academy.

Revision Bags For Students

Exam time can be a stressful and worrying time for students, but pupils at The Bishop of Winchester Academy in Bournemouth are being looked after by Chaplain Jenny Nightingale and her team.

'This is our second year of providing revision gift bags to our Year 11, 12 & 13 students sitting exams this summer. It's a small gift of pen, pencil, post-it notes, highlighter pen, sweets, chocolate and water. Each bag is personalised with the students name and they know that we'll be praying for them over this stressful time,' said Jenny.

Each bag includes the following Bible verse from Philippians 4.6-7: "Don't worry about anything: instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."



On Monday evenings the academy continues to run a successful youth group for Years 7 & 8. Four years ago after offering the Lent Course to teachers, parents and interested adults the group of ten people decided they needed to put what they'd learnt into practical action. The result was a commitment to begin a weekly youth club. Up to 50 students enjoy the group. Over Easter students were asked to invite their family for an informal worship time. This year families enjoyed a trail of smells and tastes: The Last Supper, fried fish on the beach, the olive garden. At each of the stations a passage from the Bible was read as families enjoyed smelling or tasting the relevant part of the story.

Leavers Services

Final details are being made to our Year 6 leavers services. Schools are reminded to bring along their decorated sheep for display. A selection of schools have been approached to talk about their sheep designs as part of the services this year. The music, readings and activities for the services will take the theme of God's love for the lost sheep.

Meanwhile our schools are busy decorating the fibreglass sheep, bought by schools as part of the Ewe Matter project. Sheep are being decorated in a wide variety of ways. At Kimpton Church of England Primary School near Andover, Baaarbara the sheep is being treated to a new jumper after children in Year 6 suggested knitting her a coat.

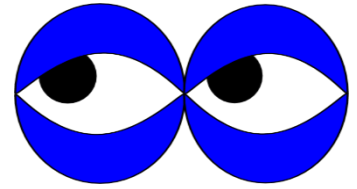
Many of Year 6 have become confident knitters, with some tackling cables and patterns. Weekly knitting club has become a place where the older children can share their skills with others from Key Stage 2.

Baaarbara's techni-coloured coat is coming along nicely... she has a lovely scarf at the moment and a hat is in the making! It has been a great way for the children to learn a new skill and to enable the older children to share these skills. The children are currently considering making pompoms for her legs!

In the next few weeks, Baaarbara will be visiting Kimpton and Thruxton Churches where children hope to recruit some parishioners to help with the knitting mission.



From My Perspective



A look at church schools through the eyes of people in working in the school community.



Tim Clarke,

Headteacher at Cornerstone CE Primary School, Whiteley

Being a headteacher of any school is an immense privilege and pleasure. Having responsibility for and hopefully a positive impact on the lives and futures of so many people (children and adults) is a key part of the role.

Having worked as a teacher and a senior leader in a range of local authority maintained and Church of England schools I am aware of many similarities between different types of school. However in my experience there are also a few key differences.

All schools have a positive and inclusive ethos and a vision for how they want to support their children's academic, personal, social development and spiritual growth. In Church schools this is usually based on clearly defined and strongly shared values across the community. The 'whys' behind our thoughts, actions and interactions are based on values linked to Christian faith and principles. These values are not just displayed on posters around the school, but are lived out on a daily basis by all members of the school community.

At Cornerstone CE Primary in Whiteley we are "building our community on Love, Forgiveness and Hope". These values have been explored and partly chosen by staff, parents, governors and most importantly children. Each term we return to one of our values as a 2-3 week theme and consider why and how it is important to our school community and each individual person.

The children have also (through mixed class Pupil Voice Groups) defined the Cornerstone Rules for behaviour in the school. These are linked to our values, so they have shared clarity about how we live out our values. For example, they know that they show Love by:

- Being kind, friendly and helpful
- Listening carefully to others
- Looking after our classroom and school

For me as headteacher this is the important element of our inclusive and distinctive nature as a Church school. This distinctiveness is rooted in the life and teachings of Jesus, and by encouraging the values to be lived out we aim for the children to grow into mature, responsible, generous, compassionate and moral human beings.

For myself as a headteacher the greatest privilege and pleasure is seeing children (and adults) in our school community and the relationships between them blossom and thrive to enable their personal and spiritual growth.



Margaret Coplestone
Chair of Governors at Ringwood CE Infant School

Being a foundation governor means that I can bring my faith and knowledge of my religion to our school. I wanted my children to have the opportunity of a church school education. After visiting Ringwood CE Infant School I realised I had found a very special place. I was introduced to governorship here through our vicar.

Over the years I have really enjoyed contributing in a very practical way. Working alongside the headteacher, staff and governors, we have developed our Christian values together. Collective worship is now much more exciting and engaging. I love being creative and helping children enjoy learning about Jesus. I have enjoyed training and meeting new people along the way and even developed an amazing link with a school in Kihikihi Uganda. Rather than be apprehensive about new changes, we definitely embrace developments. As a governing body we look at each other's strengths and encourage one another to learn and respond to the needs of the school. We don't expect each other to be specialist in everything. Being open and honest and asking for help has really helped me grow in my role. I enjoy challenging our school, so we can do our best.

Feeling supported by our church and Diocese and having the opportunity to share good practice is very important. I love working as part of a team and knowing I can actually make a difference to children's education in our community. Being a governor is a privilege. This half term we are looking at the Christian value of service. We all have something to offer in God's name.



Matilda Wake, Year 4 pupil at Vernham Dean Gillum's C of E Primary School, Vernham Dean, Andover

My school is a welcoming school and I feel part of a big family. We encourage the Christian Values of Love, Hope and Courage. These are important because they help us to get through life. In our worship time we light a candle for each of our Christian Values and to welcome God. I like it to share my own prayers in worship,

thanking God and asking him for help and support. I can say how I feel and what I think without being worried about saying something wrong.

Love was chosen as a Christian value because it is important to look after each other and support our peers. We can show love by helping each other if something goes wrong or someone is hurt. We can also make sure people are included and we have a buddy bench so people know when we are upset.

Our Christian value of Hope links well to our school learning value of perseverance. When I find something hard I have to have the hope that I can do it right and find the strength to master challenges. My teachers and friends encourage me to not give up and keep trying, learning from my mistakes.

Courage is something we all need. At the moment we are learning about standing up for what is right even if our friends don't agree. Sometimes when we have problems with our friends we have to have courage to carry on and tell them when they are making us sad.

If you would like to contribute to the From My Perspective feature, please email 250 words and a picture to sue.bowen@portsmouth.anglican.org

Growing Together In Prayer – Thy Kingdom Come

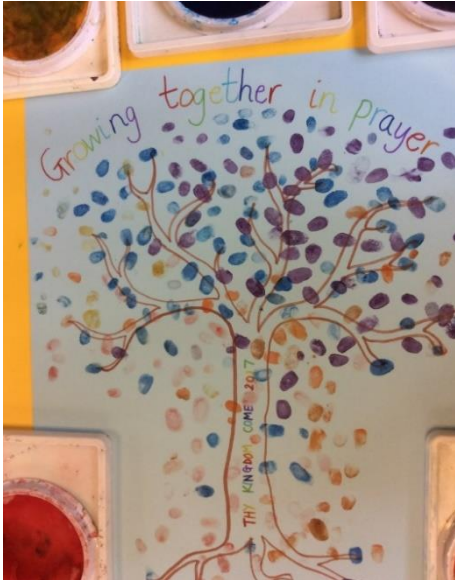
Ascension Day was the start of the 'Thy Kingdom Come' call to prayer from the Archbishops of Canterbury & York which is happening in places all across the world. In St Lawrence Church, Alton, 187 pupils and many teaching staff and adults from St Lawrence CE Primary School, took part in a range of prayer stations.

Organised by Rev. Chris Bradish (Curate) and Fiona Micklefield (Deputy Head teacher), the day was run by clergy and parish volunteers to enable the children to come and pray in a variety of ways.

Children were invited to put their thumbprint onto a tree signifying their part in the day of prayer. Each station represented a part of the Lord's Prayer – children were seen in a tent praying for God's Kingdom to come to our world; to share food and consider 'our daily bread'; watching a clip from Narnia and considering God's forgiveness and how they can forgive others; looking at themselves in a mirror and thinking how they are all made in God's image; helping each other navigate a labyrinth and reflecting that God and the Bible are our compass.



To bring their time in the church to an end, the children gathered to say the Lord's Prayer with the 'St Lawrence actions'. The children were given the opportunity to think about the prayers they had said during their time in church and used a ribbon that was weaved into trellis to signify their prayer; creating a beautiful textile stained glass window – a permanent reminder of Thy Kingdom Come 2017.



Bees warmly welcomed to Havant school

Children at a Havant school have been working hard to turn their school grounds into a haven for pollinating insects.

St Alban's Church Of England Primary is one of 260 'Polli:Nation' schools across the country. The Heritage Lottery Fund is supporting the biodiversity project that supports schools and communities in helping to protect the future of the dwindling pollinating insect population. Staff and children at St Alban's decided that the front of the school was not especially welcoming for either pollinating insects or visitors. With the help of former pupil and landscape architect Emily James, they have designed a new border for the front entrance. This will provide nectar and pollen throughout the year, as well as reflecting the red and blue colours of St Alban's. The children are especially fond of bees and wanted to provide shelter and a nesting habitat.



They generated design ideas for an insect wall and materials collected from the grounds will be used by the children to fill nesting boxes. With the help of the national school grounds

charity, Learning through Landscapes, the children, teachers and volunteers have helped to spread the message of the importance of pollinating insects. Children from Year Six have drawn up a *Pollinator Promise* campaign that encourages parents and the local community to pledge to grow pollinator friendly plants.

The project is in line with the Church of England's Vision for Education which asks for schools to promote 'the common good of the whole human community and the environment.

Developing Children's Spirituality

Once again the diocesan Spirituality course has proven popular among our schools.

Throughout the day long course, which is offered regularly and is frequently over-subscribed, teachers, school leaders and clergy investigate developing spirituality in the school setting. The new evaluation schedule for SIAMs inspections sets out aspirations for the future direction of church light of The Church of England's Vision for Education (2016).

Among these developments is a growing expectation that church schools will place spirituality more centrally at the heart of a church school's ethos.

The course, led by experienced SIAMs inspector Andrew Rickett, gives a framework for spiritual development and offers planning ideas for teachers. The next course is being held on 14th July at Old Alresford Place. Please contact Julie Stirling at the Portsmouth Diocesan Office if you wish to book (02392 899680.)

