



NEWSLETTER

Issue 8 - December 2022

As we approach the Christmas holidays our thoughts begin to focus on the true meaning and special importance of the Christmas message. In these difficult times it is wonderful to reflect on the joy that the true celebration of the birth of Jesus has for us all. I do pray that you will all gather with family and friends to enjoy the special times that only Christmas can bring.

Pope Francis states that;

"Christmas inaugurates a new age, in which life is not planned, but given; in which one lives not for oneself, on the basis of one's own tastes, but for God, and with God, because from Christmas onwards God is God-with-us, Who lives with us, Who walks with us."

A prayer for Christmas.

Glory to God in the highest!

My precious Lord, Jesus,

I adore You with profound love and rejoice in the celebration of Your birth.

Your love for us is unfathomable,

it is glorious

transforming,

awe-inspiring,

and deeply personal.

***You chose to come and dwell among us,
being born into poverty, rejection and humility.***

Yet Your mother knew whom she bore,

Her heart was filled with the tenderest love

as she adored her Child and her God.

Help me, dear Lord.

to come to love You with the heart of Your mother.

Invite me to adore You with St. Joseph and the poor shepherds.

Reveal to me the glorious power of Your birth

and change my life on account of this perfect gift of Yourself.

I love You, dear Lord Jesus.

Help me to love You with all my heart.

Newborn Savior of the World,

I trust in You.

Mother Mary and St. Joseph,

Pray for me and for all.

Amen.

Flavio Vettese - Chief Executive Officer

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Our New Bishop of East Anglia - Canon Peter Collins



The Diocese of East Anglia has a new Bishop. His name is Canon Peter Collins and he was ordained at a special Mass in the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich on Wednesday 14th December 2022. The Cathedral was full to capacity on this occasion and there were representatives from every Catholic school and every Catholic parish in the Diocese. Also present were the Bishops and Archbishops of England and Wales and, of course, the Cardinal, Archbishop of Westminster, Vincent Nicholls, friends and relatives of Bishop-elect Peter and other invited guests including representatives from East Anglia's other faith communities.

He comes to East Anglia from Wales where he has been a priest in the Archdiocese of Cardiff for many years. Bishop Peter was born in 1958 in the town of Tredegar in south Wales and he has three older sisters. He attended local Catholic schools and then was accepted for training for the priesthood and studied at the Royal English College in Valladolid, Spain. He has also studied at the Augustinian Faculty in Valladolid, the Pontifical University of Comillas in Madrid and the Pontifical University of Salamanca and returned as Vice-Rector of the English College from 1989-1994.

He is therefore a fluent speaker of Spanish. Following service as a parish priest in Chepstow and Caldicot in 2001 he became Dean of the Metropolitan Cathedral in Cardiff and in 2006 was appointed to the Chapter of Canons. He has great experience in education and in safeguarding, serving for ten years as the Chair of the

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Education Commission in the Archdiocese of Cardiff. He therefore knows much about schools and will see education in our Diocese as one of his key priorities. In 2019 he was appointed to the parishes of St Mary of the Angels, Canton and Holy Family, Fairwater adjacent to the Cathedral in Cardiff.

Bishop Peter has become the fifth Bishop of East Anglia. East Anglia is a young Diocese, only created in 1976. Before then it was part of the Diocese of Northampton. It is a Diocese spread over a large geographical area and Bishop Peter will travel to all parts of our Diocese and get to know its towns and cities, its villages and its coastline.

Our new bishop brings a wealth of experience in Wales and in Spain to his new ministry as our shepherd in the Diocese of East Anglia. He has asked for our prayers as he begins his new ministry and we are very much looking forward to welcoming him over the coming weeks and months. We are also most grateful for the service of our retiring Bishop, Bishop Alan, and our prayers and good wishes go with him upon his well-deserved retirement.

Joanna McCall - Chair and Interim Chair of Governors for St Alban's and St Pancras, Ipswich

My name is Joanna McCall and I am currently chair of governors for St Albans Catholic High School in Ipswich and Interim chair of governors for St Pancras Primary School in Ipswich. I have been a governor at St Albans since 2016 and I have been chair since 2019. This year I also became interim chair at St Pancras. As governors we are responsible for the strategic direction of the school, in particular around the school's vision, agreeing school improvement plans, working in partnership with the Head Teacher or Head of School and working with the Trust in order to get the best outcomes for our students. The role of the governors is to ensure everyone in the meeting has a voice and that governors challenge decisions or plans being made as a critical friend.



For a bit of background my three children all went to St Mark's Catholic Primary and St Albans High School; two are now working and one is at University in Nottingham. As a family we go to St Mark's Church in Ipswich and are involved between us in the music, children's liturgy, reading, welcoming and coffee rota. I really enjoy my involvement with the schools and get a lot out of our meetings, importantly for me thought it is my way of giving back and saying thank you for the education my children received and the Catholic life of the schools. The skills I use in my profes-



sional life as a General Manager for a large home care provider in Ipswich, Felixstowe and Woodbridge, fit very well with my role of governor. However we all come from many different walks of life and bring many different skills. We meet in the school twice a term for our full local governing body meetings, we also have some virtual steering committee meetings, some governors get involved in teacher interviews, monitoring visits, we also have some governors who specialise in safeguarding or SEND that support the schools.

I have in my tenure as governor seen changes in Head teachers, two Ofsted inspections and the move into the Our Lady of Walsingham Multi Academy Trust. I have been privileged to have seen how Our Lady of Walsingham Multi Academy Trust has grown and developed since inception. As the academy has grown I have seen great cross working between schools which I feel can only enrich the experience for our students. The ability to share teacher expertise across schools and primary and secondary partnerships can only enhance our offering. I have seen ideas from primary school inform decisions and directions that have influenced secondary schools and vice versa. What makes us really strong as a multi academy trust is our joint vision of Catholic life at the centre of our schools. Every school in the Trust has this ethos at its heart and as a governor making a difference for the future of our Catholic schools is one of the reasons I give freely of my time.

Jerome Ateba - Deputy Headteacher at St Alban's High School, Ipswich

When reflecting on my first term as a deputy headteacher, there are valuable lessons that I have learned, including:

- The importance of leaning and trusting in God
- The importance of getting others involved in decision-making
 - The importance of listening to others
- The importance of being visible and available
- The importance of creating a positive creature



I learned that leadership, whilst being weighty, is a privilege and a God-given responsibility that one should cherish. All these lessons continue to shape my actions on a daily basis and influence my decisions.

I have thoroughly enjoyed and loved my first term at St Alban's. The diversity of our community, along with the strong sense of shared values and community cohesion, have reinforced my belief that the cultural richness of our humanity is a strength to embrace not a risk to fear. Indeed, I am reminded of what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 12:5 "so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another". The potential of our school is huge – like a diamond waiting to be unearthed, so is the potential of our school. I've been enthralled by the pupils' desire to succeed, their genuine sense of kindness and their visible care

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for one other. The staff have proven to be a body of caring, passionate and conscientious people. I feel enormously honoured to serve them. It is my daily commitment to make them feel valued and model the character of Jesus.

There are numerous reasons to celebrate this term:

- We celebrated Black History Month by describing a black person we find inspiring
- We celebrated Harrison Day in memory of a pupil whose soul departed from our world
- We welcome parents and governors in the school for the first time since the pandemic began
- We intensified our drive to secure good outcomes for our pupils so that they are prepared for the next stage in their education
- Through multiple trips, we have provided our pupils with great opportunities to enrich their cultural capital
- We welcomed the new year 7 and a number of new staff.

These are very positive moments that we cherish and can look back with pride. Looking ahead, the year 2023 will be marked by the impact of the prevailing economic climate. Sadly, we are not insulated from that. That said, we trust in God to provide all we need.

I hope that the year ahead will see our vision become more of a reality in our school, one where everyone is valued, equipped and encouraged to fulfil their God-given talents. A school where we grow in faith, character, skills and knowledge. A school where excellence and high expectations are the norm.

As someone once said, "coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress and working together is success."

Let that be true of the year ahead.

Foundation Governor Recruitment

If you are interested in becoming a school governor or would like to find out more about the fantastic impact that you could make within our Trust schools then please visit the Trust website by scanning the following QR code.



Please share with anyone who is interested in learning more about the positive impact of good governance on pupils' life chances and might be interested in joining one of our school boards.

www.ourladyofwalsingham.co.uk/governorrecruitment

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Diocesan Schools Singing Programme - Daniel Justin



Thanks to the generous support from the Hamish Ogston Foundation and under the guidance of the National Schools Singing Programme, we have been able to launch the Diocesan Schools Singing Programme here in East Anglia. This offers curriculum time singing sessions to whole classes, which will eventually feed in to after-school choirs and thereby support music-making at a Parish level. We are looking at this both as an opportunity for expanding school music provision and as a tool for evangelisation.

Since September 2022, St Laurence's Primary School, Cambridge and St Louis Academy, Newmarket have joined the Singing Programme, and have been receiving weekly singing sessions in school. The sessions themselves follow a pattern which incorporates core aspects of the National Curriculum over the course of the year, as well as learning songs about our faith. The schools can decide how they would like to use the time allotted, for example: in St Louis, I am running a school choir at lunchtime, who will have a starring role in the Christmas Carol service in the Church.



It has been great for me to get back in to running singing sessions in schools. Before moving to East Anglia in 2015, I worked for the Diocese of Leeds as the Choral Director for Harrogate as part of their Singing Programme, as well as being Organist at the Cathedral in Leeds. Leeds is a substantially bigger Diocese than East Anglia in terms of population (they have about 95 primary schools, and we have 22!), but working in the schools here has been no less rewarding; I'm really enjoying it. My Tuesdays now go from a chant in Latin to 'Have you ever had a penguin come to tea' – always diverse!

We will be advertising for a Part Time Choral Director in January to assist with expanding the programme further into the Diocese. It certainly is an exciting time for Music in the Diocese of East Anglia!

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Rights Respecting Schools

At St Mary's we are working towards becoming a Rights Respecting School.

The difference that a Rights Respecting School makes goes beyond the school gates, making a positive impact on the whole community.



- Children are healthier and happier
- Children feel safe
- Children have better relationships
- Children become active and involved in school life and the wider world

There are four key areas of impact for children at a Rights Respecting school; well-being, participation, relationships and self-esteem.

Year 4 - Rights Afternoon

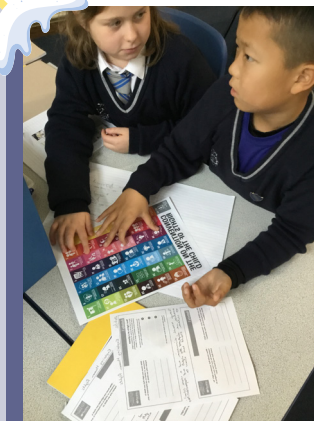
We explored the child friendly version of the UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child

Discussion

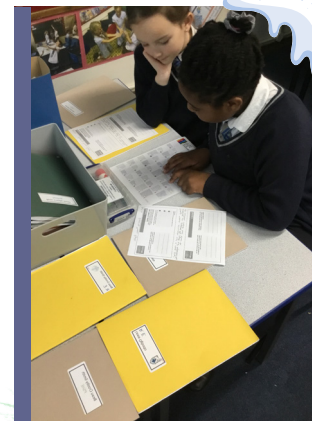


Altruism

Needs



Fairness



Debate



St Pancras Primary, Ipswich

Positive PostBox

It has been a term full of positivity at St Pancras, particularly because of our recent initiative, the 'positive post-box'. As part of the Diana Award, which supports the training of our Anti-bullying ambassadors, the Positive Post Box campaign aims to help stamp out bullying and instil mutual respect from a young age, by encouraging proactive positivity and goodwill gestures. The campaign saw our children writing positive messages and posting them in a special large blue post-box in our school hall to other children and adults in the school. We ran this for two weeks from 9th November to 23rd November which incorporated the dates of National Anti-bullying week. It was a wonderful way of spreading positivity and most days the post-box was overflowing with lovely handwritten notes.

POSITIVE POSTBOX

St Pancras Choir

On Friday 9th December, the newly formed St Pancras choir had their first performance at Stratford Court Residential home, where they sang carols and Christmas songs for the residents. The residents were very impressed with the children's singing and they were treated to biscuits and Christmas crackers after their performance.



The last week of term will include our Key Stage One Nativity and we are finishing the whole term with our Key Stage Two Carol service where Fr Joseph will join us at school for a Christmas blessing. From all of us at St Pancras, we wish you a very happy and holy Christmas.

We are Loving and kind,

We Pray and we Play



Choirs of Angels

St Louis Reception and Key Stage 1 children joined together to perform their Jesus is Born Nativity in the school hall and the Parish Church this year. This was a celebration with families at school and at Our Lady Immaculate and St Etheldreda in Newmarket. One hundred and thirty five angels, shepherds, kings, Mary, Joseph, innkeepers, a flock of sheep, herd of cattle and some chickens processed through the streets from school to church. Mrs. Muscionico, our phase leader for Key Stage 1 and RE lead together with EYFS leader, Mrs. Baldwin worked with staff and parents to put this musical performance together. Deacon James welcomed our families and led us in prayers on behalf of the parish. Our children have been immersed in the wonder of the Christmas Story this year.



St Louis PTA Advent Fair



For the first time in three years, the newly formed St Louis PTA welcomes families and friends to the Advent Fair following on from a successful Summer Fair. The hall and adjoining classrooms were packed with members of the school's supportive community and the children were especially excited to take part. Volunteers cooked and sold food inspired by recipes from around the world, the school choir sang and a parent performed live music. The PTA raised

an astonishing £3166.50 towards some outdoor gym equipment for the school playground. The PTA also arranged for children to design Christmas cards that were available to order through Burwell Print Centre, a social enterprise that trains and supports adults with learning disabilities, providing our families with beautiful cards this year. Finally, a huge raffle was organised that contributed the fund raising. The school staff are so grateful for the large team of volunteers that work tirelessly to support children in our school.



A Bundle of Joy

Wrens Class performed their nativity play, this week. They have all worked so hard and we were all so proud of their brilliant performance. Their singing was lovely and they told the story of Jesus's birth beautifully.

Wrens have also enjoyed getting their classroom ready for Christmas. So far, they have decorated the Christmas tree and made a special Angel Gabriel and Advent candle.



Out in the Community



A group of our Y3/4 children, from Doves class, were honoured to attend the renaming ceremony for a bridge local to our school. They were accompanied by Mr. Jiggins, our Humanities lead.

The bridge has been renamed as the Equiano bridge, to commemorate Olaudah Equiano, a well-known abolitionist.

As the only primary school to attend the ceremony, they were given the opportunity to officially unveil the plaque, along with the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Dr Nik Johnson. We are very proud to have been involved.

The Mini Vinnies have organised a Reverse Advent Calendar, in school, as part of their Faith in Action pledge.



The donations were collected up and sent to the St Laurence Parish SVP group to distribute to families in need. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the calendar.

Isla, from Doves class, designed a Christmas Card for the Mini Vinnies and these have been made up into cards which will be sent to families in the parish and the local care home.



Full of Hope and Joy

It's that magical time of year.

The pupils at St Felix have been taking part in our annual festive events. On Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th December parents, pupils, staff and governors enjoyed the delights of "It's A Baby" and "The Bossy Christmas Fairy" performed by EYFS and KS1 pupils respectively. These were made extra exciting by the ever-changing cast due to pupil illness. One young lady took on the lead role for Key Stage 1 with just a morning's rehearsal – and she was fabulous!

We were joined on Thursday 8th December by Father John, Father George and Father Anthony for our Advent Reconciliation Service. This gave us all the chance to stop and reflect on the impact of too much focus on the secular side of Christmas.

A first for us was decorating a Christmas tree for the Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's Anglican Church. We are the only school offering a faith-based education in Haverhill so we strive to work with all local Christian churches. The festival theme was Christmas carols and we chose Ding Dong Merrily on High. The yellow bells were made by our Time Out Club. Selected members of year 6 are trained as Peer Mentors using Anna Freud resources. These children take it in turns to run a lunchtime club for Key Stage 1 pupils to do crafts and play games to establish trusting relationships across the age range.



After a Christmas Disco on Thursday evening the week finished with Christmas jumpers and Christmas card making workshops. The term comes to a close with Christmas lunch and a Key Stage 2 carol Service in Church.

A Very Merry Christmas from St Felix



Followers of Jesus

Learning Together





BEBRAS Competition

This term, every student in the school studying Computer Science was given the opportunity to take part in an international problem-solving competition. We had a total of 482 students take part and everyone should be extremely proud of themselves for the effort, resilience and amazing teamwork they showed. The results have been released last week and were shown during registration times.

A large number of students also achieved their Gold certificates, meaning they were placed in the top 10% of students in their age category across the UK! These students will have the opportunity to take part in the Oxford Computing Challenge in January, a very prestigious invitation and students should be incredibly proud of their accomplishment.



A huge well done to everyone who took part and we'll run the competition again the same time next year!

Festive Fridays

December saw the first of our festive Fridays where staff and students donned their Christmas jumpers. Each festive Friday we are collecting for a different charity. Our first charity was St Nicholas Hospice in Bury St Edmunds, the hospice is an amazing and supportive place and we know that the charity is dear to many people's hearts.

The year 10 students from 10A held a cake sale where they raised £212. Our overall total for the day was £690.



Welcome to East Anglia's New Bishop

We prayed for Bishop Elect Peter Collins who stepped into the role of Bishop of East Anglia and shepherd of our local Church. We trust God will bless him and bless us through him, May he be filled with wisdom, compassion and resilience as he leads and serves us.

Amen

*I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full*





Parliament Trip

At the end of November, twenty four Year 12 and 13 students assembled for a day trip to London. Our first stop was the Houses of Parliament where we watched an immersive video experience called 'The Story of Parliament'. At the end of the film we were greeted by Bury St Edmunds MP Jo Churchill's parliamentary assistant who apologised for the fact that she couldn't meet us personally (she had business in Downing Street) but gave a very lively and informative talk about his role and held a question and answer session.

The highlight of our visit was when our guide invited a small selection of students to stand at the despatch boxes and hold impromptu debates. The students were thrilled to stand in the exact same places as Rishi Sunak and Keir Starmer; and where Will Blewitt had stood when delivering a speech to the UK Youth Parliament just a couple of weeks before.

Having whetted the appetites of several students for future parliamentary careers, we then crossed Parliament Square for a self-guided tour of the Supreme Court. The students visited all three court rooms and were able to sit in the seats of the justices and even had the opportunity to act out putting one of the group on trial for tax evasion!

After a little more historic sight seeing, the students then enjoyed a bit of free time in the area around Trafalgar Square, freshly adored with the Christmas tree gifted annually by Norway, before being able to spend the best part of two hours in the National Gallery, where they were able to see more works associated with politics such as the Rokeby Venus which was attacked by a Suffragette and Vincent Van Gogh's sunflowers which were the recent victim of a climate protest. It was a fantastic day out and we were exceptionally proud of the way our students conducted themselves and embraced the opportunity to acquire cultural capital.



*I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full*





Celebrating Volunteering at St Alban's

At St Alban's we aim to provide the opportunity for our students to develop their individual talents and build a strong foundation for their future. The school places great importance on its close relationships with voluntary organisations such as CAFOD and L'Arche and many of our past and current staff and students have offered their time and valuable support to these organisations. Giving of our time and skills is a way to show love and compassion to others, and make ourselves better people, with a greater understanding of the world around us.

To celebrate volunteering on Tuesday 13th December St Alban's hosted a Volunteer Marketplace. We had over 15 local and national charities come into our school to showcase the volunteering opportunities on offer. During the day all students visited the event and spoke with our guests.

People volunteer for a wide variety of reasons, especially wanting to help others, but also in giving time and energy, students can also get something back; maybe to build a CV, personal statement or to explore a career. The staff at St Alban's have created a short video to showcase the volunteering they are already involved in (available on our school website) which we hope will spotlight volunteer opportunities that our students can get involved in both now and in the future.



Mental Health Awareness Day

On Wednesday 7th of December, Year 10 students participated in a Mental Health Awareness Day delivered by Student Life. The day consisted of various talks delivered by our guest speakers on topics such as "The Brain and Behaviour" and "Supporting Wellbeing". Students discussed and challenged the stigma that sometimes surrounds mental health issues and the portrayal of mental ill health in the media.

STUDENT *Life*

They also worked through a variety of case studies, gaining valuable insights into different forms of mental ill health. The discussions raised awareness of different aspects of mental health and focussed on the importance of the language that we use. Students also learnt about healthy coping mechanisms and how to signpost the many ways in which young people can get support. Following this, students in year 10 have been invited to become Mental Health Ambassadors for our school. These students will receive further training on promoting positive mental health and how to signpost their peers to different avenues of support.

Learning... Respecting... Caring...



A Festive Update from the Sixth Form Leadership

In the build up to Christmas, the Sixth Form council and leadership team have been busy organising a variety of events this term – particularly the House Captains in Avila and Edmund house running their house charity days to raise money for the school's chosen charities.

The Sixth Form events committee have been running a series of Fancy-Dress Friday events with varying themes each week from formal wear to the first letter of your name, as well as Christmas jumper day to raise money for the Sixth Form fund which helps to fund activities and future events - such as the Year 13 prom in 2023 as well as new facilities within the Sixth Form.

In addition to fundraising, as part of Harrison Day on 23rd November, students across the Sixth Form and St Alban's community helped run stalls at both break and lunchtime. From a blue themed cake stall to guessing the teacher from their baby pictures – to raise money for East Anglian Children's Hospice.

As we draw nearer to the Christmas period, the events committee and other council members have been decorating the Sixth Form with Christmas decorations to give it that extra festive feeling.



Finally, as we're drawing towards the end of term, the Sixth Form has been fortunate enough to have been joined by some international students since the beginning of the new academic year in September. As they're sadly going to be leaving us early in the new year, the events committee is currently in the works of planning a Sixth Form wide trip to Tenpin in the new year as part of a farewell event.

Merry Christmas from all at our Sixth Form

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Merry Christmas

and a

Happy New Year



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