



**VNET EDUCATION CIC**



**ANNUAL REVIEW 2022**

**VNET Education CIC's mission is to support schools to **improve outcomes for children.****

**Through our unique and vibrant network, we support Schools, Academies and MATs across East Anglia. We facilitate CPD, training, consultancy, events and conferences to support education professionals, for the benefit of children and young people.**

**Across 2022, over **two hundred schools and academies chose to be members of our network and partner with us on their unique improvement journeys.****



## Education Director's Report

Following lockdowns and school closures in 2021, 2022 started with a level of uncertainty due to the continuing COVID-19 situation. Schools experienced their highest levels of absence and sickness in the first term of the year which was compounded by a reduction in guidance from the government. Although schools appeared to be under strain, VNET continued to see schools committed to their improvement journeys and attending CPD and benefiting from our support wherever possible.

The VNET team is proud of its ability to attract the sector's foremost thinkers and practitioners to Norfolk, and we were delighted to be joined throughout the year on projects and conferences by some of the best. Mark Rowland delivered our disadvantaged project, Jonny Uttley and John Tomsett delivered our leadership project. Mark Burns brought 'cathedral building' to Norwich, Sonia Thompson brought her work on Ron Berger's 'Ethic of excellence' and Alex Bedford brought 'Book Study'. We also heard from Rachel McFarlane, inspiring us to the highest possible success rates, from Jamie Pembroke urging better data usage and Christine Counsell to richer curricula.

A highlight of the year for me personally was in July 2022, when VNET partnered once again with Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary to support their 'Day of Welcome' by hosting poets Michael Rosen and Miriam Halaahmy – a particularly poignant welcome, as schools had begun to see the arrival of further refugee children from Ukraine in the months prior. Over 10,000 children were able to share this experience together, live in their classrooms! Primarily, in our role as a community interest company, we meet our core purpose - improving life chances for children and young people - by developing and facilitating a partnership of education stakeholders and professionals who share that same commitment. However, this type of unifying session for the children themselves has a massive direct impact you can really see and feel unfold.

There are several challenges facing schools in our region. Firstly, the relentless focus that is needed on improving key stage two results, especially in light of the impact of the pandemic on year groups currently coming through schools. Secondly, the decisions facing our teacher training institutions to ensure that there is a continued provision of ITT following the DFE re-accreditation process. Finally, the current financial situation in schools is one which cannot be ignored and which we must all work together to overcome.

In the face of these huge challenges, VNET perceives huge opportunity. Together, working in partnership, we have a wealth of knowledge and experience across our community and a commitment to leverage our skills to improve schools and outcomes for children and young people. In 2023, VNET is committed to both targeting bespoke support to the individual needs of our schools and aspiring to the highest standards for all children. My team and I look forward to working with you and seeing the successes we can achieve together.

**Sonia Innes, Education Director**



# 2022 Highlights



**72** Events included in membership

**208** Member schools



Over **300** subject leaders involved in professional communities



## Schools of Sanctuary Event

The event we sponsored and hosted for the Day of Welcome Event 2022 reached over **10,000** children. Both **Michael Rosen** and **Miriam Halahmy** were truly inspiring!



In one Norfolk MAT, over **300** Teaching Assistants signed up to a bespoke skills course



Over **1800** course delegates



# Case Study 1

## Knowing more and remembering more

### Context

Falcon Junior School was due a graded inspection, following a short Section 8 inspection in July 2017. The new headteacher had taken over the headship in 2019 and faced the additional challenge of building issues; the school subsequently had to close and move into temporary units in January 2020. This, coupled with the pandemic, has meant a turbulent few years for the school. Staff and pupils moved back into their original refurbished school in September 2022 and were inspected two months later in November. The school was graded Good in all areas. The headteacher, Edward Savage, was clear that some of the school improvement opportunities offered by VNET were influential in supporting the school to achieve this outcome.

### VNET Support

VNET were able to support in many of areas of development, such as the Curriculum and Disadvantaged Projects in 2021-22, as well as developing a new monitoring policy based on the work by Alex Bedford's Pupil Book Study. Edd also used VNET's session on preparing for the Top-Level phone call and found it extremely helpful to prepare for the inspection in advance. Edd described how these VNET initiatives had supported the school in their development and in terms of talking to Ofsted Inspectors.

*"The Curriculum Project was very helpful as we have used the cognitive science and a stepped approach to knowing more and remembering more. We were able to talk to inspectors about that."*

*The Disadvantaged Project was helpful in terms of more creative ways of supporting children and spending the money effectively. We now have even more bright ideas and are really excited. Also planning for those who don't meet the PP thresholds."*

*The Alex Bedford work around Pupil Book Study was very effective at planning a monitoring and evaluation schedule."*

In 2023 Falcon Junior is continuing to embed the Pupil Book Study model across the school so that every subject leader uses its principles to monitor their subject in terms of pupil progress and to evaluate the curriculum.



# Case Study 3

## Grasping the nettle of curriculum improvement!

### Context

East Harling Primary School and Nursery received a Section 8 Inspection on 5 and 6 October 2021. The school was judged as Good, but the inspector had some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, so the school was advised that its next inspection would be a Section 5. The areas the inspector focused on needing improvement in the report were: development of a reading curriculum beyond phonics and the development of curriculum leaders with specific emphasis on monitoring and planning.

### VNET Support

Over the course of the following twelve months, Amanda Yates, East Harling's headteacher, worked with VNET's bespoke support to develop an ambitious reading curriculum as well as supporting and preparing subject leaders. Amanda also used VNET's session on preparing for the top-level phone call to prepare for the inspection. The school received its follow up graded inspection in November 2022. Inspectors found that the school had fully addressed both areas of concern and the school received a good judgement in every area. Amanda described how the bespoke support from the VNET Team had supported the school:

*"Thanks to all of the work that you have done to support staff here, subject leaders were able to talk confidently about their subjects in the deep dives and in other meetings with the inspectors. The inspection team could see all of the hard work that had gone into refining and developing our curriculum. I love the phrase we had 'grasped the nettle of curriculum improvement' and they could see that our curriculum had high ambition for all. The inspection team were particularly impressed with how we had developed our reading curriculum and the range and scope of texts that our children were reading and could talk about."*

East Harling is currently taking part in VNET's twelve-month longitudinal project "Evaluating the Impact of the Curriculum." Being part of this project means that the school continues to improve the curriculum, optimising learning and outcomes for their pupils.



# Case Study 2

## Year 6/7 VNET/Herts for Learning Fluency Project

In September 2022, five schools joined a Fluency project run in partnership with the Herts for Learning English team.

The project incorporated the strategies of modelled expressive reading, echo reading, repeated re-reading, skilled questioning, challenging text selection and modelling comprehension skills to improve the trajectory of Year 6/7 pupils towards the expected standard in reading at the end of KS2.

The project was designed to run across eight weeks of classroom teaching for which all assets were provided. It also included two live seminars to introduce the project (led by Herts) followed by two twilight sessions, a two-hour in school visit and a final evaluation session all led by VNET.

The outcomes were fantastic, with children really engaged in the programme and building confidence over a short time frame. The GL Yarc tool was used to analyse the impact of fluency strategies on both standardised scores and reading strategies and found that the average change in comprehension was a staggering 3 years and 9 months!



	Baseline Standardised Score	End-point Standardised Score	Baseline Reading Age	End-point Reading Age
Reading Accuracy	88	97	7.9	10.0
Reading Rate	91	97	9.2	10.0
Reading Comprehension	86	118	7.0	11.5
Average Change in Comprehension	3 years and 9 months			

*"The children have loved it!! Pestering me every week for the next session. Also, brilliant how adaptable it is to use with a whole class as well as a small group!"*  
- **Coltishall Primary School**

*"At the end of the project, it was evident that pupils were self-correcting. We also noticed that the children were no longer intimidated by a challenging text."*  
- **Terrington St Clement Community School**



# VNET EDUCATION CIC

## Helping you improve outcomes for pupils

VNET Education CIC is uniquely placed in the local system to support schools to get the best outcomes for children. We want East Anglia to be one of the best places to be educated and we know that by working in partnership we can achieve this. By using the wealth of knowledge and experience across our community and by bringing the experts and the very best CPD to the region, we can help schools to improve outcomes for pupils.

**In 2023/24, our simple commitment is that everything we do will be focussed on helping schools improve outcomes for children.**

**Find out more**

