

Catch Up

Training wins national recognition

The **Catch Up** programme that helps struggling readers, has reached the final stages of the National Training Awards - the country's number one training award.

"It is given to training programmes that are particularly effective", said **Catch Up** Director Julie Lawes - "and it's good to know the judges were impressed by ours."

"The training has been developed in Thetford schools and is now being taken all over the country and into Wales and Scotland too. But it's the results in Thetford that have led to the national recognition. Another Thetford first."

Thetford successes

Former students of Thetford 6th Form College, who are now well into their first terms of higher education include people studying:

- physics at Oxford University,
- architecture at Oxford Brookes University and
- mechanical engineering at London University.

The Booker - Meanwhile another student who went to Charles Burrell - Jon McGregor - has had his first novel 'If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things' nominated for the Booker Prize. Jon who is 26, went on to study media production at Bradford University and now lives in Nottingham.

Reading wins

Reading partners meet with young pupils once a week to read and share books together. Many take time out from their working week to spend an hour or so in school. Others are older students - like those at Charles Burrell High School - who enjoyed the experience so much last year that they want to do it again now they are sixth formers.

"Everybody gains from being a reading partner" says Julie Westrop, Assistant Director of the Education Action Zone, who organises the training.

"We are looking for more reading partners from businesses and the wider community to work in primary schools. If you would like to know more, please contact me, Julie Westrop, on 01842 760293."

Baxter Healthcare host Irish trip

Twelve top students from Rosemary Musker High School went on an all-expenses-paid visit to Baxter Healthcare's production plant in Ireland.

The factory in Castelbar, Southern Ireland, makes a wide range of medical products. The 12 fourteen and fifteen year olds had an intensive three day trip to see how a multi-national company looks after its workforce and manages its production.

The fact finding tour was partly paid for with the prize money that Baxter Healthcare and the school won in the 2001 EDP Business Award for the best Industry-Education Link. The rest was provided by Baxter Healthcare.

Jane Still from Rosemary Musker said "We were joint winners in 2000 and won the award outright this year. I think the judges were impressed by the number of projects we have set up with Baxter over the last four years. We have regular work placements, business mentors, and visits to the Thetford factory, which is especially helpful for our science pupils. The Baxter Health

Nurse comes in to school to carry out health checks once a year as well. The trip to Ireland is the most ambitious of the schemes and we are very grateful to Baxter for their generosity - both this year and last."



The students went on a guided tour of the factory and spent time work shadowing managers and supervisors. They ended their visit by giving a presentation to some of the Baxter management team about what they had seen, and Katie Baldwin revealed her findings on 'stress in the workplace'.

Jane Still said "It was a wonderful trip that has enabled the students to see a new country and a new working environment. They all came back very enthusiastic about the challenges of being a manager."

Thetford Campus

The Thetford Campus is the umbrella name for all the five centres in Thetford where over 165 can go to discover new skills.

The Thetford Campus

- brings together all the organisations helping to improve training and learning opportunities in the town
- has full information about all courses and opportunities in and around Thetford
- develops new opportunities for learning and training to match the needs of local businesses and local people.

You can use courses at the Campus centres to help answer questions such as

- how much does the earth weigh?
- what's the French for "oo la la"?
- how can I stop my computer crashing or my car rusting?

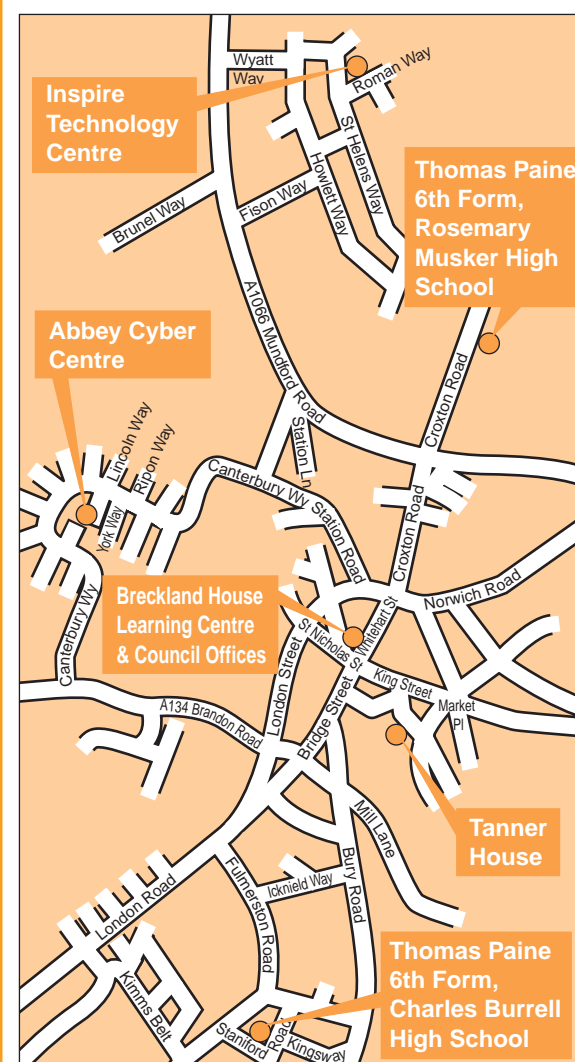


Thetford Campus

You can use the Campus centres to help you get a new qualification.

Thetford Campus is here for you
— when you want it
— where you want it

is your . . . way ahead



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Thetford Education Action Zone
Excellence in education



Education Action Zones

Edition 5 December 2002

making a difference

ACTION ZONE

Gifted and talented

Moving on - making it easy

Children shape museum services

Junk funk - music to recycle by

Thetford student in Booker prize list

Excellence in Education

Prepared to travel and have fun



the only skills needed to be an exhibit tester

And so it was that 11 children from Abbey Farm Junior School became 'Article 31 Children's Consultants'.

Their mission: to test museums in Thetford and Norwich and report back on their 'family friendliness'.

Day 1: Thetford: Ancient House - St Peter's Church - Charles Burrell Steam Museum.
Day 2: Norwich: Castle Museum - Inspire Centre

The consultants had a list of things they were looking for:

- Could they touch the exhibits?
- Were the displays exciting?
- How much of the public spaces could be reached by wheelchair?
- Did they have learning centres?
- Were the refreshments any good?
- How friendly were the staff?
- Was it value for money?

With pad, pen and camera, off they went to test. Their findings make interesting reading:

Thetford museums had:

- friendlier staff
- lots of things for younger children to do - mazes, competitions and dressing up days
- more refreshment places
- areas to display your own collections
- more seating.

Norwich Castle museum had:

- too much art
- empty cabinets
- an entrance price that was too high.

Inspire Centre:

- had things to touch and play with
- felt safe
- had videos too.

The consultants' findings will now be used by museum staff as part of the information they use to make sure improvements to the museum are what their customers want.

Thetford Education Action Zone
Excellence in education

means:

- Better opportunities for all children to achieve more at school
- More support and encouragement for all parents to become involved with their children's education. This makes a real difference - increasing motivation and raising standards
- More organisations and people are involved in education in the town

And it's working !

The Zone was set up in 1999 and will run until 2004 by when it will have brought in up to £7 million in extra funding for schools in the town. Its purpose is to work with schools to raise standards and achievement.

If you would like to know about the Thetford Education Action Zone and what it does, please contact Graham Sigley on 01842 760293 or email education@thetford-eaz.org.uk.

Standards still on the up

Results from last summer show that Thetford children of all ages continue to improve at a faster rate than those in the rest of the country.

In maths 90% of Thetford seven year olds are reaching Level 2 or better. That means our children are doing as well as anywhere in England.

In English, Thetford 11 year olds are now doing 20% better than three years ago - when Charles Clarke, the new Education Secretary, launched

the Education Action Zone. And the children at the town's two High Schools have produced better results over the same time as well.

These successes are down to the children, parents and the schools in our town all working together.

Well done Thetford!

Graham Sigley

Graham Sigley
Director, Thetford Education Action Zone

Thetford Education Action Zone
Excellence in education

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East of England Development Agency



If you would like the information in this newsletter in large print, or in another format, please contact Thetford Education Action Zone 01842 760293

Summer Challenge 2002



Desert Island Frisks

One week to rescue and only the sun, sea and 30 classmates for company. Bad dream or summer holiday?

For 30 children at Norwich Road Primary School, it was the first week of the summer holidays and reality. And - as if survival was not enough - every day they were given a new challenge.

Challenges like building a shelter and searching the internet - luckily they were stranded with a lap-top and good supply of batteries - and building a living brain. And some rescue! Turned out you had to build a rocket first - from components won by doing well in the challenges.

With team spirit, imagination and a lot of string the rocket was a success and the University of the First Age Summer School, sponsored by the New Opportunities Fund, ended happily.

Share is a fun new way to help your child get the most out of school.

Share has short weekly sessions in school. Parents come as often as they can manage. At these sessions parents and children can try out new ideas for things to do together. And then they can try them out at home too.

The sessions are a good chance to meet other mums and dads and to talk to the Share leader.

The Thetford Education Action Zone and Norwich Union SHARE Family Partnership project is taking place in Thetford schools. It is sponsored by Norwich Union. It takes place at:

Abbey Farm Junior, Canterbury Infant, Raleigh Infant, Drake Infant, Redcastle Furze Primary, Admirals' Junior, Queensway Junior, Queensway Infant, Norwich Road Primary schools.

Share forest fun

'Are we nearly there yet?' And luckily - even though the three coach convoy had only just left the school gates - they were.

With excitement higher than a giant redwood, the day out at Thetford Forest for over 130 parents and children was off to a cracking start. A day of nature trails, rope swings, mazes and an adventure playground lay ahead of the group from Share.



"Really great day- we enjoyed the forest."
"I shall go and buy one of those pots (magnifier) to use and come again."
"We haven't been here before, but we will come again- it was good fun."
"Same time next year!"

What was best? Well - all of it really. Parents enjoyed being with their children and watching them finding out about the nature. Some liked finding out about the wildlife for themselves, and everyone felt they had discovered new and different ways to have a great day out, and meet new people.

To join in the next day of Share activities look out for the notices in your child's school or contact

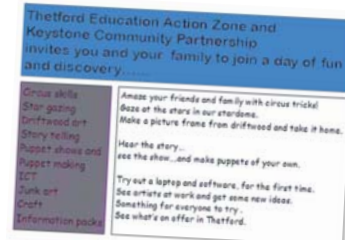
Run run as fast as you can ..

Last term it was song and dance. This time plays brought favourite nursery stories leaping off the page at Norwich Road Primary School's 'What's in a Story?' day.

From making the dough for the Gingerbread Man to acting out the whole story, parents and the youngest children in the school had a ball together at the lively sessions. These were a good way for parents to see something of classroom life and share a school day with their child.

The Creative Learning Days were supported by the Thetford Education Action Zone, the Keystone Community Partnership and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

Share discovery day



The 320 people who enjoyed the Family Fun Discovery Day at the Carnegie Room on Saturday 5th October, enjoyed everything from a planetarium and puppets, to making art from recycled material.

"I have a 4 year old girl and a 10 year old boy and there has been something for both. I have been here 2 hours and

am still finding things to do. Brilliant!"
"I came here with my grandson, as his mum is at work. It has been wonderful."
"When is the next one?"
"Makes a change it's at a weekend..so all the older ones can come."

Share Junk funk - and other ways to play



Making music from dog bowls, flip-flops and wheelbarrows is not just possible - it's brilliant.

Bright Trash - a group of musicians who specialise in recycling everyday objects to make musical instruments - think that almost anything can be used to make music. And that we can all make wonderful sounds.

The parents and children from five Thetford schools who joined the Share Junk Funk day in the summer, agree.

The parents, grandparents and children came from Canterbury Infant, Drake Infant, Queensway Infant, Raleigh Infant and Redcastle Furze Primary. Bright Trash came from Creative Music East.

Moving on

Moving school usually takes a bit of getting used to. That's why the Education Action Zone has come up with new ways to help ease the change.

Graham Sigley said "It's usually only a few weeks before children get used to their new school, but while they are settling in, they are not able to concentrate so well on their school work. So we've helped schools come up with ideas to help bridge the gap."

Drake Infant School and Admirals Junior School have been able to expand their 'getting to know you' programme with help from the EAZ. This year:

- Admirals pupils joined Drake pupils for a maths challenge day and a performance of 'Thumbelina'
- Teachers from Admirals visited Drake classes and
- Drake pupils watched Admirals' production of the Wizard of Oz.



Pupils about to move to a new secondary school have been able to take part in some of these activities:

- Improvised drama with Black Cat Theatre Company, aimed at resolving difficulties children thought they might experience at secondary school
- Maths problem solving days
- A day with a visiting artist or performer working with pupils
- Sessions with performers teaching juggling and circus skills or artists doing clay work and plaster casts
- Visiting Waterworld to join teams, led by high school pupils, to take part in 14 activities including aerobics, skittles and a water race.

What goes on at maths problem solving day?



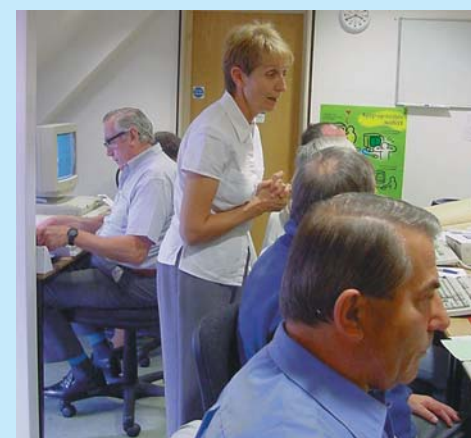
Paul Andrew the EAZ's maths advisor explains "The whole point is to help two schools to get to know each other. We have the events in the children's school. Then we invite some older children to join as 'mentors'. Staff from their 'new' school come along as well.

We split the children into teams of four or five - each with a 'mentor'. Each team gets a set of problems and a bag of equipment.

As the team solves each problem, it is marked and the points are added to the scoreboard. The winning teams get a prize. The whole idea is to encourage teamwork. It's not always won by those who are best at maths - but always by the best team.

The sessions also give teachers from both schools a chance to meet. Children enjoy the activities and the stickers they get at the end which say 'I've been mathematically challenged'.

The new Breckland House Learning Centre in the Council Offices



A new learning centre in the Breckland District Council Offices in St Nicholas Street, offers a new way to learn - as well as keeping traditional ways for some courses.

The new way is totally flexible, learners can learn when they want to and at a speed to suit them. The learners choose either a flexible IT course or one of the 600 Learn Direct courses that are available and book 2 hour sessions to fit in



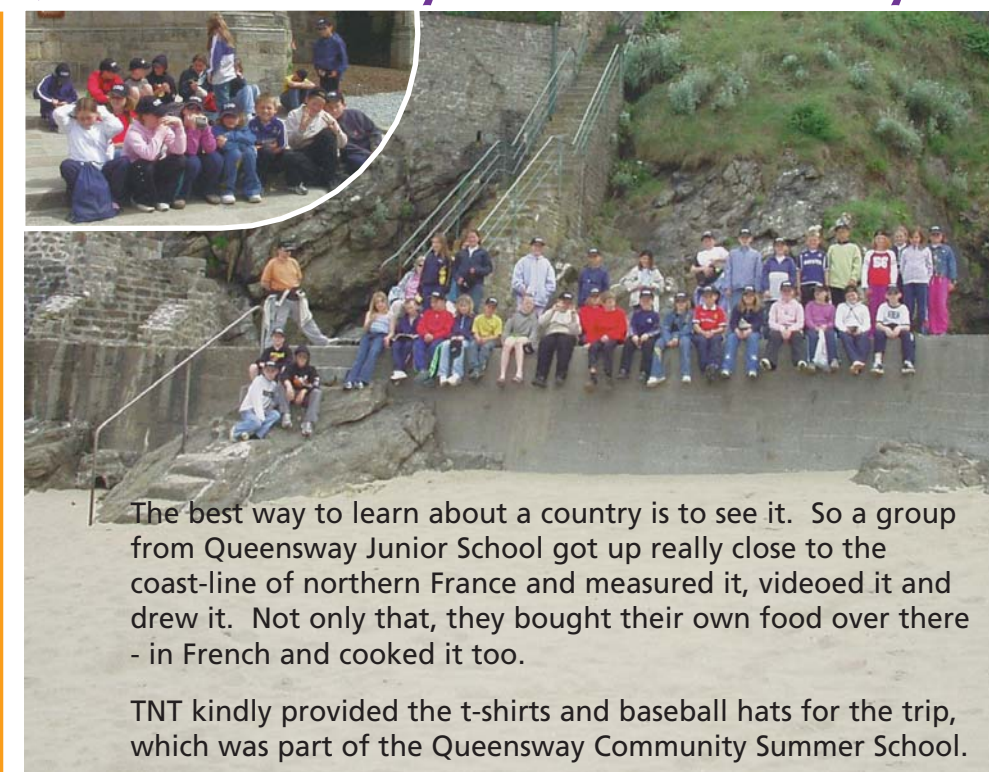
with their life style - it doesn't have to be the same 2 hours each week. It doesn't have to be every week.

The new centre has the latest IT equipment and staff are there to help with this new way of learning.



The centre is open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 9pm, Friday from 9am to 4.30pm and Saturday from 9am to 1pm. Tel 01842 760980 to find out more.

Queensway in Brittany



The best way to learn about a country is to see it. So a group from Queensway Junior School got up really close to the coast-line of northern France and measured it, videoed it and drew it. Not only that, they bought their own food over there - in French and cooked it too.

TNT kindly provided the t-shirts and baseball hats for the trip, which was part of the Queensway Community Summer School.

Dreaming in Thetford



Two weeks of dramatic action this summer left 30 ten and eleven year olds 'exhilarated but exhausted'. Not surprising - they'd taken part in the fourth 'Gifted and Talented' Summer School.

Led by professional actors from the Black Cat Theatre Company, the

students learnt acting and writing skills and enough about Shakespeare to stage their own version of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in front of their friends and families. And that was just in week one. They went on to solve "real life" science and maths problems posed by the play.

Experts on 'The Dream' were thrilled to have achieved so much in a short time. The group is planning a trip to the Globe Theatre and the Science Museum soon.