

THE ALPHA BETA

The news and information bulletin
from the A&B Education Service



JANUARY 2026

IN THIS ISSUE

Director's Letter	2	Southwark Apologetics Project	12
Archbishop-Elect Richard Moth	3	Liturgical Resources	12
The Gift of a Shepherd	4	Anchored in Hope	13
Diocesan Crest	4	Headteacher Required	14
Welcome	4	Promulgation of Diocesan Directives	14
Forthcoming CPD	5	From the CES	15
Romero Awards News	7	Estates and Finance	17
Columban Missionaries Media Competition	7	Admissions 2027-2028	18
Social Justice Calendar	8	CES Census 2026	18
Cafod News	10	Note to Clerks	19
		CPD Spring and Summer Calendars	21

Director's Letter

Dear Colleagues

2025 saw the Jubilee Year of Hope celebrated and embraced by our schools. It was the year in which we mourned the death of Pope Francis and delighted in the appointment of Pope Leo. In our own diocese too, we are experiencing a time of change with the appointment of Archbishop-Elect Richard Moth to Westminster.

Pope Francis' words in opening the Holy Year reminded us that "Hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that he has given to us" and so the hope we have experienced last year needs to endure and increase this year. Pope Leo XIV said, "The Jubilee is drawing to a close but the hope that this Year has given us does not end: we will remain pilgrims of hope. To hope is to see this world become the world of God."

The Work of Christmas Begins

When the carols have been stilled,
When the star-topped tree is taken down,
When family and friends are gone home,
When we are back to our schedules

The work of Christmas begins:

To welcome the refugee,
To heal a broken planet,
To feed the hungry,
To build bridges of trust, not walls of fear,
To share our gifts,
To seek justice and peace for all people,
To bring Christ's light to the world.

by Michael Dougherty, a variation on Howard Thurman's 'When the Song of the Angels is Stilled'

At the start of a new year, may I wish all of you and your school communities every blessing for 2026.

JULIE

Julie Oldroyd

Director – Education Service



ARCHBISHOP-ELECT RICHARD MOTH

Pope Leo XIV has appointed The Right Reverend Richard Moth as Archbishop of Westminster. Addressing members of our Diocese, Bishop Richard said:

"It has been a real privilege for me to serve you all during these last ten years and I shall be sad to leave the Diocese. May I thank you for all the support, patience and understanding you have shown to me over these years as we have journeyed together.

"I know I can rely on your prayers as I prepare for new responsibilities, and I assure you of my prayers for all that you do in the service of the Church in the Mission that the Lord has entrusted to us all."

Archbishop-Elect Moth will become the 12th Archbishop of Westminster, succeeding Cardinal Vincent Nichols, who has served in the role since 2009. Cardinal Nichols will now become Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Westminster until Archbishop-Elect Moth is Installed at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday, 14 February 2026.

[Pope Leo XIV appoints Bishop Richard Moth as new Archbishop of Westminster | News](#)

Over the last ten years, we in Education have been blessed to have experienced a truly pastoral and committed relationship between our Bishop and his schools. We give thanks for his ministry to us, and we hold him in our prayers as he prepares to take up his new role.

We know that you will want to express your thanks to Bishop Richard for all he has done and so we would like to propose that you email us a message of thanks to him along with any photos of when he has visited your school / Trust and we will compile a book of thanksgiving to present to him at the end of January.

Please send in your messages and photos to E: schools@abdiocese.org.uk by January 23.



THE GIFT OF A SHEPHERD

Following Bishop Richard's appointment as Archbishop-Elect of Westminster, please find below a link to "The Gift of a Shepherd" from the Bishops' Conference Liturgy Office – information and prayers for use at the time of the transfer/retirement/resignation of a Bishop, and in preparation for the appointment and ordination/installation of a successor.

www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Rites/Gift-Shepherd.pdf

Please note the three stages of this process:

1. A time of thanksgiving for Bishop Richard's ministry among us, and for the life of our diocese, following his appointment to Westminster.
2. During the period of consultation and preparation where our diocese is in the care of an Administrator – a time for reflection and discernment, and for calling upon the Holy Spirit to guide the Church.
3. Following the announcement of the new Bishop-elect – a time of prayer for the ministry of the Bishop-elect and for God's blessing on the diocese.



DIOCESAN CREST

Schools/Trusts should now remove the crest used by Bishop Richard from their websites, letterheads etc and use the logo opposite instead.

If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact Laura Maydew-Gale, Head of Communications on:
E: communications@abdiocese.org.uk

This will be sent as a .png to schools/Trusts to use with immediate effect.

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON
EDUCATION SERVICE

WELCOME

We welcome Therese Pullan who takes up post as the new Headteacher of St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Arundel. We send her and the school community every best wish at the start of this new term.

FORTHCOMING CPD

Churchmarketplace Event for School and Trust Staff

21 January 2026
St Dunstons RC Church Hall, Woking

We warmly invite representatives from all Arundel and Brighton schools to attend our free diocesan event for school and trust staff, run in collaboration with Churchmarketplace, exploring the theme of Collaborative Working: Achieving Best Value.

The day will be an excellent opportunity to meet diocesan representatives and Churchmarketplace, and together, learn more about the practical ways in which we can work collaboratively as families of Catholic schools, whether already within an academy trust, soon to convert or as voluntary aided, to drive not only cost savings, but time savings via streamlined administration

Churchmarketplace, established in 2010 and dedicated to delivering procurement excellence to the Catholic Education Sector, will share how they work with schools and trusts up and down the country to achieve cost savings and compliance all while safeguarding our Catholic ethos. We will also hear from a selection of service providers including Winkworth Sherwood, Eteach and Avendra International, who will share best practice and how they can support you in your mission and operations.

Who is the event for?

If you have procurement responsibilities in terms of planning, tendering or decision making, this event is for you. Relevant to all school headteachers, business managers, and those in HR, estates, operations, finance, and IT, we invite you to sign up to secure your place.

How to secure your free place – [please use this link](#)

Lunch and refreshments are provided courtesy of Avendra International, a Churchmarketplace Official Supplier. Please let us know of any dietary requirements.

Prior to the event

To get the most out of the day, please register for Churchmarketplace on their platforms at www.churchmarketplace.org.uk and www.educationbuying.com/cmp

We do hope you can join us on 21 January as we explore the benefits of strategic and collaborative procurement as a Catholic family, and look forward to seeing you then.

Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators Day

Greg Finn from The Mark 10 Mission and The Redeemed is our guest presenter at the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators Day on **4 February** and we are so pleased he will be here to lead us in a day focusing on the Celebration of the Word. This day may also be of interest to Heads and others who regularly lead whole school liturgy.

We collaborate with The Mark 10 Mission so if you follow @abeducationservice on Instagram, you will get all their updates through us.

[Sign up here >>>](#)



THE MARK 10

Mission



Primary School Leaders Conference

We look forward to welcoming all primary leaders to our conference on **12 February 2026** at **Cottesmore Golf Club**.

We have two guest speakers at this event, chosen to help support schools:

Finola Gill is headteacher at Holy Cross Primary School in Plymouth. This school, a member of the CAST Multi-Academy Trust, has a diverse and thriving community and achieved outstanding in their Catholic School Inspection in April 2024. Finola will explain the journey that the school has been on and is still following as there is always more to do. Starting with a firm belief that the children come first, they are striving to ensure that all pupils feel happy and safe and actively promoting independence, confidence and teamwork. This will be a down-to-earth reflection which explains decisions taken alongside dealing with catastrophic premises issues, safeguarding and all that is required in the day to day running of a school.

Simon Jaggard is Headteacher of St Joseph's Specialist Trust in Cranleigh. He is School Improvement Partner for the National Association of Non-Maintained and Independent Special Schools and has provided peer support with Challenge Partners and the National Autistic Society as a moderator for their accreditation. Simon is a facilitator for the National Professional Qualification for SENCOs. He will share his experience and share best practice from his specialist setting which is also beneficial to mainstream settings.

We hope to have every Primary school represented at this event and it is also open to governors and other senior leaders.

Sign up here: [Primary School Leaders' Conference \(12-Feb-2026\) · ChurchSuite Events](#)

RSE Conference

We are delighted to welcome **David Wells** to our RSE Conference on **3 March** who will give the keynote on the 'Theology of Dignity'. We will also be looking at the update from Ten Ten regarding their resources and there will be time spent in phase discussions looking at the key issues which are current in our schools.

[Life to the Full Primary: What's Staying the Same, and What's Developing – Ten Ten Resources](#)

[Life to the Full Secondary: What's Staying the Same, and What's Developing – Ten Ten Resources](#)

[Sign up here: Primary and Secondary RSE Conference \(03-Mar-2026\) · ChurchSuite Events](#)



ROMERO AWARDS NEWS

Many congratulations to three schools who have recently achieved Participator Level of the Romero Award:

St Cuthbert's, Englefield Green
The Marist, West Byfleet
St Robert Southwell, Horsham

The [Oscar Romero Award](#) Participator Level is the first stage for Catholic schools showing commitment to Catholic Social Teaching (CST), meaning they actively promote justice, peace, and human dignity through charitable work, curriculum, and community practices, putting faith into action to help others and the world. Schools achieve this level by demonstrating involvement in initiatives like supporting charities and integrating CST values into daily life, assessed online, before progressing to Developer and Innovator levels.

Find out more on how the Award team can support your school to get started or progress to the next Level by emailing Nina on

E: admin@romeroaward.co.uk

You can also get in touch with Mugeni Sumba, the Coordinator of the Award on:

E: contact@romeroaward.co.uk

STOP PRESS

This Spring Term, the Romero Award Trust are going to share some new and exciting resources, created specifically for schools and available in the resources section on the website for those who have subscribed. Coming this half term, resources will be available on three CST principles: Rights and Responsibilities, Dignity of Work, and Solidarity.

COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES SCHOOLS MEDIA COMPETITION

The Columban Missionaries in Britain are inviting students aged 13–18 to enter the 2026 [Schools Media Competition](#), exploring the theme: "Becoming a refugee is never a choice. But how we respond is."

Columban missionaries internationally have a mission priority of supporting Migrants and Refugees. This echoes Catholic Social Teaching which calls us to 'welcome the stranger'. Pope Leo told diplomats in May 2025: "My own story is that of a citizen, the descendant of immigrants, who in turn chose to emigrate..... All of us, in the course of our lives, can find ourselves healthy or sick, employed or unemployed, living in our native land or in a foreign country, yet our dignity always remains unchanged."

The Columbans are looking for students in Britain (aged 13-18 inclusive, parental permission required) to submit an original piece of writing or an original image on the theme. They invite young people to explore perceptions of people seeking sanctuary in Britain, considering practical examples of welcome and solidarity.

The competition aims to increase young people's compassion and understanding of journeys of

displaced people seeking safety in another country. How can we respect diversity and respond with love to those seeking refuge and safety? Can we be inspired by real-life stories of resilience and hope, Scripture, or Catholic Social Teaching? How can we empathise with the experience of individuals and families being separated from the place they call home.

The competition closes on **14 February 2026** and competition winners will be announced on **9 March**.



SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

From Raymond Friel, CEO of CSAN

[Social Justice Calendar 2025-26 — Raymond Friel](#)

“A good way to integrate Catholic Social Teaching into the life of the school or chaplaincy is to celebrate some of the exemplary witnesses in humanity’s long struggle for peace and justice, the key documents, or global observance days. Schools could make reference to these key dates in liturgies, assemblies, INSET days, fundraising or advocacy campaigns.

This calendar is not exhaustive. It does not feature every feast, or international day, just the ones I think have particular relevance for social justice. You might want to add your own dates from the charism of your school community, or themes of particular resonance for you.

You will also find this calendar in instalments in the *Pastoral Review*, a quarterly periodical which a focus on ministry and leadership in the Church. To find out more, visit: www.thetablet.co.uk/pastoralreview/about

You’ll find all the papal social encyclicals referenced below at the Vatican website: www.vatican.va. If you enter an encyclical name into your search engines this website should come up as an option.”

1 January 2026

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God;

World Day of Peace. An annual celebration by the Catholic Church, dedicated to universal peace, held on 1 January, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Pope Paul VI established it in 1967, being inspired by the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* of Pope John XXIII.

6 January

The solemnity of the Epiphany. In 2026, the Epiphany falls on a Tuesday, an ideal opportunity for the celebration of Mass in school and to reflect on the themes of gift and gratitude. Today also marks the end of the Jubilee Year, so it’s an opportunity to reflect on what’s been done, perhaps on your **Jubilee**

Pledge, and commit to making your pledge a permanent feature of your mission. You can still add you pledge to the Jubilee Pledge Map: cafod.org.uk/jubilee-schools/jubilee-pledge/jubilee-pledge-map

18 January

Peace Sunday follows the international day and is celebrated in England and Wales on the 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, this year on **18 January**. Pax Christi provides resources for parishes and families at: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/>

19 January

Martin Luther King Day, which falls on the third Monday of January, in honour of Dr King’s birthday on 15 January. Martin Luther King was the *de facto* leader of the civil rights movement in mid-20th century America. Inspired by his Christian faith, he was a prophetic witness to justice and nonviolence in the face of systemic racial discrimination. For more information: thekingcenter.org/

18-25 January

Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity. Division between Christians is still sadly the cause of violence and suspicion. We pray this week for unity among the followers of Christ. Visit the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland website for resources: ctbi.org.uk/

27 January

Feast of St Angela Merici, who founded the Company of St Ursula (the Ursulines) in Italy in 1535. At a time when one commentator described schools as “slaughterhouses” due to the extent of the use of corporal punishment, the schools founded by Angela’s religious order forbade all corporal punishment. She urged her sisters to be loving to the students, “Love all your daughters equally and do not show preferences for one more than another because they are all God’s children.” Today there are Ursuline schools all over the world.

27 January

Holocaust Memorial Day. We must never forget the horrors inflicted on the Jewish people by the Nazi regime. We commit ourselves anew to stand against anti-Semitism and racial discrimination in all its insidious forms. For resources and information visit: www.hmd.org.uk/

30 January

The anniversary of the death of **Venerable Mary Ward** in England in 1645. Like St Angela Merici, Mary was dedicated to the education of girls in an age when education was mostly denied to them. Living at a time in England of great danger for Catholics, Mary persevered with her vision and on her return to London in 1637 opened free schools for poor girls. She founded the Congregation of Jesus and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1615, better known as the Loreto Sisters. Like the Ursulines, Mary Ward or Loreto schools can be found today all over the world.

31 January

Feast of St John Bosco. Better known as Don Bosco, a 19th century Italian who dedicated his life to the street children in northern Italy who were suffering from the effects of industrialisation and urbanisation. He founded the Salesians of Don Bosco.

Happy Feast Day to Salesian School and to the Bosco Catholic Education Trust.

1 February

Racial Justice Day (3 Sundays before first Sunday of Lent). For information and resources, check www.cbcew.org.uk/

4 February

International Day of Human Fraternity. In 2020, the United Nations declared 4 February as day to promote and celebrate greater cultural and religious tolerance. For more information visit: www.un.org/en/observances/human-fraternity

8 February

Feast of St Josephine Bakhita (falls on a Sunday in 2026). **International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking.** Almost 50 million people are estimated to be in slavery today, more now than ever before. For more information and resources, visit the website of Bakhita House, a project of Caritas Westminster: www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/bakhita-house.php. For more information on the strategic approach to tackling human trafficking, visit the Santa Marta Group at: santamartagroup.org/

11 February

Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, World Day of the Sick. This day was introduced by Pope John Paul II as a reminder for the Catholic community to pray for the sick and their caregivers. It is an opportunity to raise awareness of health services and the extent to which they are accessible by all.

12 February

Red Hand Day, or the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers. Every year since 2002, this day has raised awareness of the use of child soldiers and urged politicians to commit to ending the use of anybody under the age of eighteen in military organisations. www.redhandday.org/en/

18 February

Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent. During Lent we are called to deepen our relationship with God (prayer), our neighbour (almsgiving) and our common home (fasting). See: Liturgy Office for pastoral notes: www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Info/background1.shtml#Lent

20 February

World Day of Social Justice. In 2007, the United Nations declared that a day to promote and celebrate social justice globally would be held on this day. For details of the theme for the year, visit the UN website: www.un.org/en/observances/social-justice-day

27 February

Lent Fast Day. For more information visit: cafod.org.uk/education/for-teachers/key-dates-for-school-planning

6 March

The World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. More information can be found at: worlddayofprayer.net/index.html#/

22 March

World Water Day. An annual United Nations observance day since 1993 to celebrate water and raise awareness of the two billion people in the world without access to safe water. See UN website for more details: www.unwater.org/our-work/world-water-day

24 March

Feast of St Oscar Romero, one of the patron saints of Caritas Internationalis and patron saint of Caritas Social Action Network. Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador, was assassinated while saying Mass on this day in 1980. He was a prophetic voice for justice and human dignity in El Salvador during the years of the military dictatorship. He embodies the preferential option for the poor. For more information and a bank of resources visit:

www.romerotrue.org.uk and for the Romero Award [Home | Oscar Romero Award](#)

26 March

Anniversary of the publication in 1967 of ***Populorum Progressio*** ("**On the Development of Peoples**") by Pope Paul VI. A good day to re-visit this ground-breaking document in the school or parish and discuss some of its key passages. Why not try paragraph 21 on truly human conditions, or have a look at the radical vision for the common good in paragraph 24? You'll find the text on the Vatican website: www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html

5 April

Easter Sunday the celebration of the Lord's resurrection from the dead. In the Gospel reading from John, Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb on the first day of the week while it was still dark, heralding the new creation, which is made all the clearer when the Risen Lord breathes his Spirit into the disciples in the Upper Room and "a people of missionary disciples is born" (Synod, *Final Document*, #140)



Are you ready for a challenge this Lent? Walk anytime, anywhere for 40 days – raise funds for life-saving water. Step up this Lent to help our neighbours. Sign up today!

[The Big Lent Walk 2026](#)

Keep an eye out for the exciting new resources coming out from CAFOD in 2026 [Education](#) including:

- The Primary National Assembly on February 26
- Lent Calendars
- A new animation on Dilexite, Pope Leo's first Apostolic Exhortation all about God's love for the most vulnerable and marginalised people in our society.

- Primary: A better world needs all of us. Getting to know our global neighbours and exploring CST.
- Secondary: St Oscar Romero: Truth in the media. A 50-minute workshop exploring truth in the media, inspired by the life and writings of St Oscar Romero. Students will construct a reel/news article on mining in El Salvador while assessing common pitfalls that lead to misinformation spreading.

Although the Jubilee is over, the global debt crisis is not. Please continue to learn about the issues of debt justice. Campaigning with CAFOD is a great way to live out your Jubilee pledge.

cafod.org.uk/education/campaign-in-your-school/jubilee-debt-crisis-campaign-for-schools

CAFOD SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

Do you enjoy working with children and young people?

Could you help to inspire and empower children and young people in our Catholic schools and churches to bring alive their sense of global justice?

Could you give an assembly or a workshop in a local school?

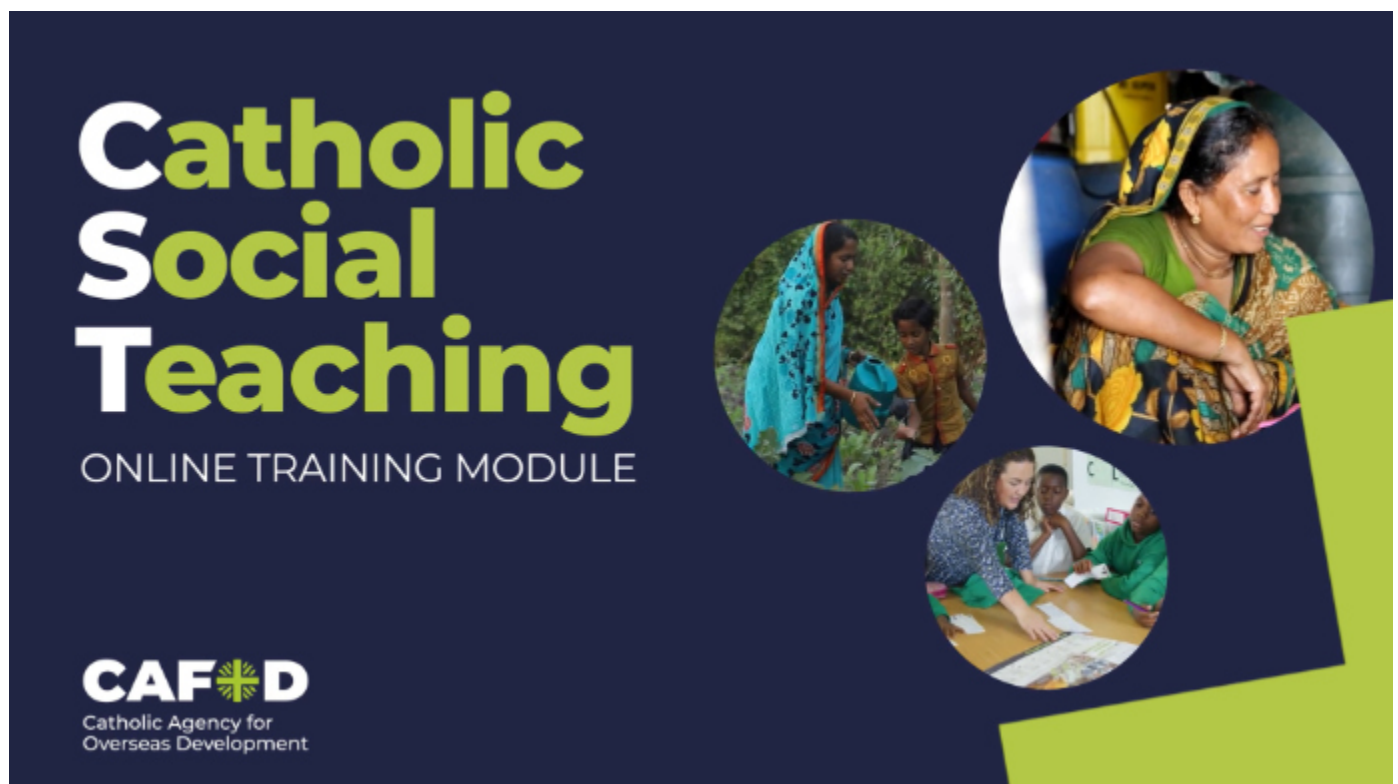
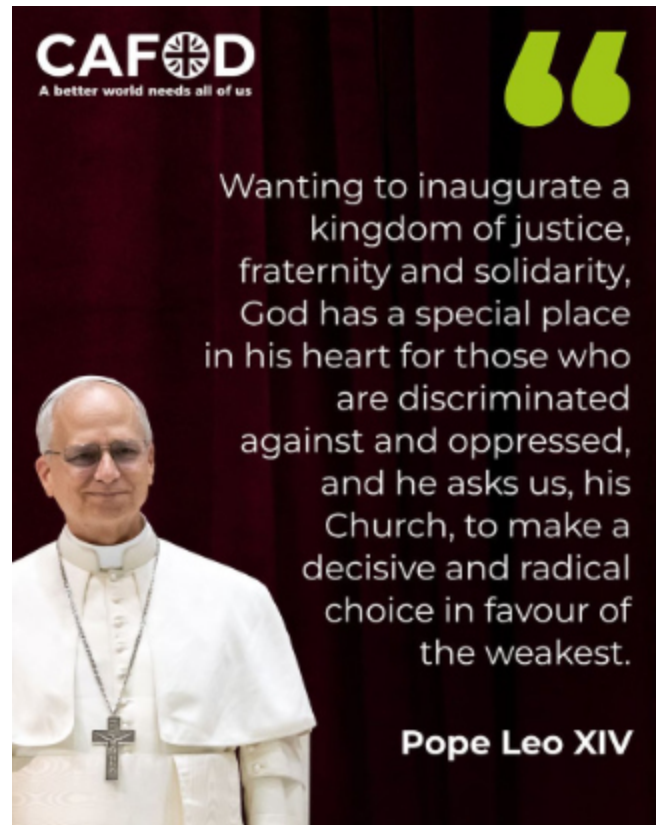
Supported by CAFOD with training and resources, you will discuss issues of global justice, add to parish and school life whilst complementing the work of teachers, priests and catechists.

Please contact the CAFOD A&B office:

Jenny Finlayson

T: 07710 094448

E: arundelandbrighton@cafod.org.uk



[Click here >>>](#)

ARCHBISHOP OF SOUTHWARK LAUNCHES LANDMARK APOLOGETICS PROJECT



As the number of people joining the Catholic Church in England and Wales continues to rise, the Archdiocese of Southwark is launching a landmark apologetics project to provide evidence-based answers to the burning questions of both new and practicing Catholics.

The project, named 'Ambassadors for Christ' is designed to equip the faithful with a deeper understanding of their faith.

While the journey to faith of each person is unique, they often grapple with similar questions and doubts and find themselves searching for answers.

This project aims to not only help people find answers to their burning questions, but also to provide a resource that can be relied upon when teaching about the Catholic faith.

In a statement announcing the launch, Archbishop John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark, said: "As someone who converted to Catholicism as a teenager myself, I know what it is like to search for answers, to thirst for the truth which only the Lord Jesus offers. Every day, people are searching for the same answers I did, thirsting for the truth I found, and it is our job to guide them on the right path."

The project will consist of 52 videos, posted every Monday on YouTube in 2026. Worksheets will also be produced alongside each video to enable parishes, schools, and youth groups to use them as part of their faith formation.

For more information about this project, please see:

[Ambassadors for Christ | Apologetics for Catholics | Archdiocese of Southwark](#)

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

CAFOD, The God Who Speaks, Sycamore, The Wednesday Word, Mark 10 Mission, the Redeemed and Ten:Ten have all produced resources for the liturgical feasts and seasons ahead. Please do access these resources to support your pupils, students, staff and parents through the coming months.

[CAFOD Education](#)

[The God Who Speaks](#)

[Sycamore - What do you believe?](#)

[The Mark 10 Mission](#)

[The Redeemed: Catholic Video Series](#)

[Ten Ten Resources – Changing the world with creative Catholic content](#)

[The Wednesday Word | The Sunday Gospel | Catholic Church](#)

Bidding Prayers: We encourage you to [sign up to the Catholic Union's weekly service](#) providing a selection of thoughtful and topical bidding prayers for Mass each Sunday and which can also be used for weekday Masses.

ANCHORED IN HOPE

The Good Shepherd Celebration 2026

Those of you who were at the School Leaders' Conference in November will have heard Theresa McNamara, Chaplaincy Coordinator, talk about the symbol of the anchor, which was used throughout the year as we celebrated the Jubilee of Hope.

She reminded us how apt a symbol it is. "For those travelling by sea, the anchor is what they cling to when hope is needed. But an anchor, and hope, is not only required during the storms; times we may need to "drop anchor" and rekindle our hope may also be when we are needing rest or to stop ourselves from drifting. As we look forward to the legacy that the Year of Hope may bring about, we pray that we will continue to rely upon the anchor of our faith. We pray too that in our own storms, fatigue and deviations, we will cling to Christ, our hope and anchor, to strengthen us and fill us with His love everlasting."

To serve as a physical reminder of our day together, each school was given an anchor to display and to aid their times of prayer. At our Good Shepherd celebration in the Summer Term, we will invite each school to bring their anchor decorated to represent the individual nature of their community. We would also love to see pictures of these anchors in use so please do send them to us at schools@abdiocese.org.uk once they are up and about in your school.

Anna Flood, Primary RE Adviser invited schools to decorate their anchor in a way that reflects the legacy of faith that they hope to pass onto their pupils through their school's particular mission and charism – perhaps inspired by their patron saint.

Anna shared her own decorated anchor and says "the blue roses represent my own Marian devotion – and in particular how she has taken my own needs and petitions to her Son – and changed my unworthy



offering into fragrant roses before her Son. The cross in the centre represents how any devotion to Mary always leads us to her Son – and how Jesus is the centre of my faith. The Rosary represents how the daily praying of the rosary is the chain that attaches me to the anchor of hope."

Pope Francis told us that hope "is an anchor that one hurls towards the future, it is what lets you pull on the line, reach what you're aiming for and head in the right direction. Hope is also theological: God is there, too."

We look forward to welcoming all schools along with their decorated anchors, representing their 'Legacy of Hope', to **Worth Abbey on June 18 2026.**

SAVE THE DATE

**The next School
Leaders' Conference will be an
overnight on 12-13 November 2026.**

**More details to follow, but
please do save the date.**



HEADTEACHER REQUIRED

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Dorking

The Governing Body of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Dorking is seeking to appoint a strong, dynamic and inspirational Headteacher to further the achievements of this welcoming and caring school.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School provides exciting and meaningful learning with a strong Catholic ethos for the pupils aged 4 to 11. The school benefits from strong partnerships with other local schools and is at the heart of the Catholic community in Dorking. We are seeking an individual who will ensure that all pupils and staff are able to fulfil their potential within a caring and supportive Catholic community.

For further information regarding this vacancy and to submit an application, please visit the eteach website: www.eteach.com/job/headteacher-1526099

PROMULGATION OF THE DIOCESAN DIRECTIVES

The diocesan bishop has the authority to issue directives concerning the general regulation of all Catholic schools in his diocese. This is a specific example of the Bishop's general legislative competence (canons 375 & 391) which is set out in canon 806.

Once promulgated, the directives form part of the canon law which applies to Catholic schools, and have binding force on all Catholic schools, including those which are not in diocesan trusteeship. By virtue of the governing documents of most Catholic schools they will also become binding in civil law.

We have been using a document called 'Bishops Mandate and Expectations'. From September 2026, the CSI will only include compliance with directives in the diocesan part of the compliance check. The September 2025, v4.0 edition of the handbook makes this clear in appendix 7.2 on diocesan compliance. [2. Inspection Handbook, September 2025, v4.0.pdf](#)

Therefore, we will need to formally promulgate directives in time for them to come into force from September 2026 at the latest and further information about promulgation of the diocesan directives will follow this half term.



FROM THE CATHOLIC EDUCATION SERVICE



Engagement with your MP

The most effective way to let your MP see the excellent work being done in your school is to let them see it first-hand. Inviting your local MP to visit your school is a great way to demonstrate the achievements of Catholic education in England and Wales, and for the MP to become more involved in education within their local constituency. The tool below allows you to search for your local MP and provides a template invitation letter which you can amend.

[How to invite your MP to your school.pdf](#)

Please do ensure you follow the Diocesan Protocols on Public Affairs and the Media which clearly state that:

- Governing Boards must follow all Diocesan guidance on media and public affairs.
- Governing Boards must inform the Diocese of all media work, (excluding routine social media posts), in advance of publication.

- **Governing Boards must inform the Diocese ahead of any visit by a local or national politician especially when Schools are visited by a senior member of government or royalty.**
- All public affairs and media work must have regard to the Catholic character of the school, and must not bring the School, the Diocese, or the national reputation of Catholic Schools into disrepute.

[September 2025 Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Protocols.pdf](#)

Along with other Diocesan Schools Commissioners from England and Wales, Arundel and Brighton diocese will be represented by Julie Oldroyd at a Parliamentary reception this term. This will provide an opportunity for further connections to be made with MPs who serve in Sussex and Surrey constituencies.

Ofsted

You may be interested to know that Ofsted have made available a video for parents/carers explaining the new Ofsted inspection report cards which may be of interest for schools to circulate: [Understanding Ofsted report cards and grades - GOV.UK](#)

Governance

The *CES Guidance – Governance of Catholic Schools: Roles and Responsibilities in England & Wales* has been updated and can be found on the CES website via the following link: www.catholiceducation.org.uk/resources/governance-guidebook

Model Academy Trust Governance Handbook

The final version is now with both Trusts, and it will be uploaded to the CES website shortly with the intention that this document comes into use from September 2026.

Neurodiversity and the Catholic Faith

There is a research project into Neurodiversity and our Faith. If you're an adult neurodivergent Catholic or a Caregiver of a neurodivergent Catholic, we want to hear from you. Your experiences will help us to become more inclusive and responsive to your needs. Please complete our short surveys. [The God Who Speaks](#)

Postgraduate Certificate in Attachment Trauma & Mental Health Programme at Birmingham Newman University

Details of the PG Cert in Attachment Trauma & Mental Health Programme, at Birmingham Newman University, are opposite, beginning in January 2026.

Sessions are delivered online, after school. There is a taught session roughly every 6 weeks, with both modules lasting one year, allowing plenty of time between sessions to complete associated reading.

Further information is available from
Sandra Scott - School of Education
E: s.cable@staff.newman.ac.uk
T: 0121 387 4572



About this course...

This Postgraduate Certificate in Attachment, Trauma and Mental Health has two distinct modules. Attendees can study one or both of the following modules:

- "Developing and Embedding Knowledge of Attachment, Trauma and Mental Health in Learning Relationships" (30 credits)
- "Supporting Transformation to Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Practice" (30 credits)

Completion of **both** modules will result in being awarded a **PG Cert in Attachment, Trauma and Mental Health** (60 credits).

Find out more

Birmingham Newman University
Genners Lane, Bartley Green,
Birmingham B32 3NT.
T: 0121 476 1181 www.newman.ac.uk

#LoveNewman
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DfE User Survey

The DfE is developing an online service that aims to bring DfE tools, guidance, and services together in one place. As part of the work on this, user research is taking place to better understand user experience when interacting with the department, and to provide feedback on new designs which will help to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

The target groups are school business managers, school leaders, and trust leaders whose role involves finance, funding, procurement, estates, completing statutory returns, or HR.

What does taking part involve?

- User research sessions will be held between December 2025 to February 2026, at a convenient date and time.
- Users can choose to feedback either by completing a survey or via an online session.

[Fill in this form](#) to register interest in taking part, and please pass this request on to anyone who may be interested. Contact:

E: dfc.connectuserresearch@education.gov.uk
for more information.

Reporting Fraud

We have been requested by the DfE to assist them in promoting the Counter Fraud team's alerts and news service. The service is being provided to help recipients to stay informed about emerging fraud risks, prevention tips and important updates.

The option to sign up is near the bottom of the page.

[Report fraud or financial irregularity to DfE - GOV.UK.](#)

School Business Managers

The School Business Managers Forum is an invaluable way to share experiences and information for the benefit of all schools in the diocese. The next meeting is an online meeting on Wednesday 11 February and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on the day. [Please book your place here.](#)

Health & Safety

Falls when working at height remain the most common kind of workplace fatality.

Ladders and stepladders are not banned under health and safety law. They can be a sensible and practical option for low-risk, short-duration tasks, although they should not automatically be your first choice.

To help you make sure you use the right type of ladder, and that you know how to use it safely, the HSE website has [guidance on safe use of ladders and stepladders at work](#). It includes:

- more detail on competency, and what that means for ladder users and those managing ladder use on site
- safety advice for using telescopic ladders
- practical tips for using combination and multi-purpose ladders
- good practice for securing ladders

For more information and guidance visit the [working at height website](#).

Occupation of School premises

The Diocesan Education Service requires that every governing body and trust board review the [Occupation of School Premises](#) document (and [advisory notes](#)) at the beginning of the academic year and record in the minutes that it has done so. This should have happened last term, if you haven't yet done so, please prioritise for your first meeting of this term.

VASCA Bids

The VASCA Panel met on 26 November as planned and was confronted with some very difficult decisions. We are attempting to provide as much funding as possible for one particular school faced with a catastrophic building condition situation. A

provisional ranking of all VASCA bids has been determined based on safeguarding, health and safety, and critical building condition issues. Following this I have requested additional information about all the funds that schools are currently holding, to ensure that we are scrupulously fair in assigning funding. This information has arrived too late to finalise the rankings and therefore schools will not be informed of the outcome until later in January.

DfE Guidance

The Department for Education has recently issued some new and updated guidance relating to school buildings which you should be aware of:

- [guidance on how to select and appoint structural engineers \(new guidance\)](#)
- [guidance to assist in the management of older buildings](#) (updated to include additional information about construction types that are common in older school buildings)
- [school-rebuilding-programme](#) - updated to include details of the next nomination round.
- In relation to the school rebuilding programme, the government has committed to identifying a further 250 schools in addition to the 518 already selected.
- The nominations window will open in early 2026 although a specific date has yet to be announced. Please read the guidance, identify potential rebuild projects, talk to Ray Williamson E: ray.williamson@abdiocese.org.uk at the earliest opportunity and start to gather any necessary evidence so that you are ready to submit your nominations when the window opens.

Help and Support for School Business Leaders

SBL Support Hub offers all school business leaders free initial peer-led operational help for operational and wellbeing issues.

SBL Support Hub is a peer-led service offering fast, practical operational and wellbeing solutions. Please look at their website for more information: [#SBLSupportHub - Home](#).

Ray Williamson, Estates Officer
E: SchoolBuildings@abdiocese.org.uk

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2027-2028

Please note that all schools are required by law to formally set their 2027-2028 admission arrangements by **28 February 2026** at the latest, even when the arrangements remain the same.

Admission policies (and the SIF) must be approved by governors and approval recorded in the minutes of the LGB meeting where the admission policy is formally determined.

Schools that have consulted on admission arrangements must ensure that once the consultation has ended, responses are discussed by governors and this is also recorded in the LGB minutes along with the determination of the policy.

You must send your determined version and SIF to the DES for a final check

E: tamsin.connick@abdiocese.org.uk

Bosco/Xavier schools will also need to submit the final determined policy to their CET for approval.

Schools are then required to post the determined 2027/28 policy and SIF on their website and also submit a copy to the relevant Local Authority by **15 March 2026** at the latest.

Our advice is to keep good records of all consultation activity, including copies of any letters, emails, posters, social media or local media articles, a screenshot of your webpage, and the responses. Remember that your website might be updated and you could lose your evidence if you don't record it! If someone lodges an objection with the Adjudicator, the Adjudicator will request evidence to prove that your consultation met the statutory requirements.

Please contact **Tamsin Connick**, Education Officer Admissions & Place Planning, if you have any questions.

E: tamsin.connick@abdiocese.org.uk

CES CENSUS 2026

The CES Census is a survey of Catholic schools in England and Wales. It provides essential information on Catholic education from national to diocesan level, underpinning policy decisions at both local and national levels and enabling the CES to be proactive in promoting Catholic education.

The CES census 2026 will start on **15 January 2026**. Schools should complete and submit their returns during the support period which runs from the start date until **11 February 2026**.

You should have received a letter last term at the beginning of December.

For several years now the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton have had a 100% return rate, and we aim to replicate this again in 2026.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Gill Sajnog E: gill.sajnog@abdiocese.org.uk



NOTE TO CLERKS

Briefings

The online clerk's briefings remaining this year are listed below, and sign up is open on the CPD area of our [website](#). It is important for all Clerks of Catholic schools to attend these meetings. They are an opportunity to address key topics relating to a Catholic specific focus and the role of Clerk to Foundation Governors. They also provide a chance to network and share best practice with other diocesan school and academy clerks.

Dates for the Academic year Clerk's Briefings:

- Wednesday 25 February 2026, 10am – 11am
- Tuesday 19 May 2026, 10am – 11am

Governors' Commissioning Mass

Following Bishop Richard's appointment as Archbishop-Elect of Westminster, the Commissioning Mass for Governors and CSI Inspectors which was scheduled to take place on 4th March 2026 has been cancelled. We hope to set a new date for the academic year 2026-2027.

Please communicate this to all governors, particularly any that had signed up to attend.

Online Governor Application Form.

Foundation Governor application forms have been online since September.

www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/governance

Whilst we have accepted the old version of the application form during the transition period, going forward please use the online version of the form and ensure all prospective foundation governors are directed to the link on our website.

Reminders

Changes to Governors

All updates / changes to the governing body should be updated on GIAS and communicated to E: gill.sajnog@abdiocese.org.uk as soon as they are known. This includes all categories of governors, not just Foundation Governors.

Minutes

Minutes of the Full Governor Board and Headteacher reports should be sent on a termly basis. This is particularly key for those schools who are in the CSI and OFSTED windows as officers prepare to speak to inspectors. The minutes are also important in helping us to track issues with estates and budgets. Thank you to all those who have already sent minutes for last term. Please urgently submit any outstanding minutes electronically to E: gill.sajnog@abdiocese.org.uk

Parish Priest

Clerks are asked to send copies of the agenda and minutes of meeting to the parish priest and Chairs are to ensure that even if they are not governors, clergy are welcome to attend any meeting, particularly if items on the agenda relate to Catholic Life and Mission.

Anspear

Please ensure that all governors are signed up to the Anspear App and have access to the on-line modules via your school specific code. Gill can send you a copy of your school code if required and the help desk number for Anspear is T: 01223 350555.

School Email

We put this reminder in every Alpha Beta, to ask that all governors are allocated and use a school email address. As a governor, the personal data you send over email must be kept secure. Use of a secure school email address helps you meet UK GDPR requirements. Please discuss this at the next Governor meeting if it is not general practice at your school or if you have not yet been assigned a school email address.





UPCOMING COURSES AND EVENTS THIS ACADEMIC YEAR

All courses for this academic year are now available and must be booked online, and the booking calendar has been streamlined to make sign-up easier and more straightforward.

Courses are available at: www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/catholic-leaders-cpd

If you have any queries regarding any of these courses or tutorials, please do not hesitate to contact us:

E: claire.martin@abdiocese.org.uk

T: 01293 651144

Please send us your Good News and Education Stories

We are very keen to celebrate Catholic education and publicise the fantastic work of our teachers, support staff and pupils more widely.

We would love to highlight news from schools across the Diocese on our [website here](#) and through the diocesan X and Facebook pages, and through the DES Instagram page (QR Code provided opposite). Please do send details to E: schools@abdiocese.org.uk
We look forward to hearing from you.



www.abdiocese.org.uk/education

The Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Trust is a Registered Charity No. 252878

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
Exploring the Vocation to Teaching	13 Jan	5:30pm - 6:30pm	Online	Click here
Year 4 RE Directory Resources (Session 4 of 6)	20 Jan	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Churchmarketplace Event for school and trust staff	21 Jan	9.30am - 2.30pm	St Dunstan's Church Hall, Shaftesbury Road, Woking GU22 7DT	Click here
Year 3 RE Directory Resources (Session 4 of 6)	28 Jan	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators (Day 1 of 2)	4 Feb	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Primary School Leaders' Conference	12 Feb	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Thinking of teaching in a Catholic School	24 Feb	4pm - 5pm	Online	Click here
Masters in Catholic Leadership, St Mary's University (2 of 3)	2 Mar	4:30pm - 6:30pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6RP	Click here
Primary and Secondary RSE Conference	3 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Year 4 RE Directory Resources (Session 5 of 6)	10 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Year 3 RE Directory Resources (Session 5 of 6)	18 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Primary RE Leads (Day 2 of 2)	24 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	South of England Event Centre, South of England Showground, RH17 6TL	Click here

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
Exploring the Vocation to Teaching	13 Jan	5:30pm - 6:30pm	Online	Click here
Churchmarketplace Event for school and trust staff	21 Jan	9.30am - 2.30pm	St Dunstan's Church Hall, Shaftesbury Road, Woking GU22 7DT	Click here
Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators (Day 1 of 2)	4 Feb	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Information Event for Career Advisors in schools and trusts	10 Feb	10am - 11am	Online	Click here
Post Graduate Certificate in RE (Session 4 of 7)	11 Feb	3:30pm - 5:30pm	Online	Click here
Thinking of teaching in a Catholic School	24 Feb	4pm - 5pm	Online	Click here
Masters in Catholic Leadership, St Mary's University (2 of 3)	2 Mar	4:30pm - 6:30pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6RP	Click here
Primary and Secondary RSE Conference	3 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Post Graduate Certificate in RE (Session 5 of 7)	18 Mar	3:30pm - 5:30pm	Online	Click here
Secondary Heads of RE (Day 2 of 3)	24 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	South of England Event Centre, South of England Showground, RH17 6TL	Click here

CATHOLIC SCHOOL INSPECTIONS (CSI)

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
Governance: Preparation for CSI	12 Jan	6:30pm - 7:30pm	Online	Click here

LEADERSHIP

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
Churchmarketplace Event for school and trust staff	21 Jan	9.30am - 2.30pm	St Dunstan's Church Hall, Shaftesbury Road, Woking GU22 7DT	Click here
Primary School Leaders' Conference	12 Feb	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Primary and Secondary RSE Conference	3 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Primary RE Leads (Day 2 of 2)	24 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	South of England Event Centre, South of England Showground, RH17 6TL	Click here
Secondary Heads of RE (Day 2 of 3)	24 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	South of England Event Centre, South of England Showground, RH17 6TL	Click here

GOVERNORS

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
Governance: Preparation for CSI	12 Jan	6:30pm - 7:30pm	Online	Click here
Governance: Induction (Module 2 of 3)	10 Feb	6:30pm - 7:30pm	Online	Click here
Clerks' Forum (2 of 3)	25 Feb	10am - 11am	Online	Click here

CHAPLAINS

Surrey Chaplains Meeting	23 Jan	10am - 1pm	St John the Baptist School Elmbridge Lane, Kingfield, Woking Surrey, GU22 9AL	Click here
Sussex Chaplains Meeting	29 Jan	10am - 1pm	St Paul's Catholic College Jane Murray Way, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 8GA	Click here

RAINBOWS

Rainbows Facilitators' Training	27 Jan	10am - 2:30pm	St Wilfrid's Catholic School, St Wilfrid's Way, Old Horsham Rd, Crawley RH11 8PG	Click here
Resilience and Wellbeing	20 Mar	9am - 12pm	St George's Junior School, Weybridge, KT13 8NL	Click here

SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGERS

Churchmarketplace Event for school and trust staff	21 Jan	9.30am - 2.30pm	St Dunstan's Church Hall, Shaftesbury Road, Woking GU22 7DT	Click here
School Business Managers' Forum (2 of 3)	11 Feb	10am - 12pm	Online	Click here

Summer 2026

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
Year 4 RE Directory Resources (Session 6 of 6)	29 Apr	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Year 3 RE Directory Resources (Session 6 of 6)	6 May	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators (Day 2 of 2)	10 Jun	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Good Shepherd Celebration	18 Jun	11:30am - 2pm	Worth Abbey, Paddockhurst Road, Crawley, RH10 4SB	Click here
Masters in Catholic Leadership, St Mary's University (3 of 3)	6 Jul	4:30pm - 6:30pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6RP	Click here

SECONDARY EDUCATION

www.abdiocese.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 252878

Summer 2026

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
Post Graduate Certificate in RE (Session 6 of 7)	20 May	3:30pm - 5:30pm	Online	Click here
Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators (Day 2 of 2)	10 Jun	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here
Secondary RSE (Day 2 of 2)	17 Jun	9:30am - 3pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6RP	Click here
Good Shepherd Celebration	18 Jun	11:30am - 2pm	Worth Abbey, Paddockhurst Road, Crawley, RH10 4SB	Click here
Secondary Heads of RE (Day 3 of 3)	30 Jun	9:30am - 3pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex,	Click here
Post Graduate Certificate in RE (Session 6 of 7)	1 Jul	3:30pm - 5:30pm	Online	Click here
Masters in Catholic Leadership, St Mary's University (3 of 3)	6 Jul	4:30pm - 6:30pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6RP	Click here

CATHOLIC SCHOOL INSPECTIONS (CSI)

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
Preparing for CSI	2 Jun	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	Click here

LEADERSHIP

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
Secondary Heads of RE (Day 3 of 3)	30 Jun	9:30am - 3pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex,	Click here
School Leaders' Mass of Thanksgiving	2 Jul	3:30pm - 6:30pm	Arundel Cathedral, London Road, Arundel, BN18 9AY	Click here

GOVERNORS

Governance: Induction (Module 3 of 3)	13 May	6:30pm - 8pm	Online	Click here
Clerks' Forum (3 of 3)	19 May	10am - 11am	Online	Click here

CHAPLAINS

Chaplains Retreat	18 - 19 May	12pm - 12pm	Columba's House, Maybury Hill, Woking, GU22 8AB	Click here
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RAINBOWS

Rainbows Facilitators and Coordinators - sharing best practice	28 Apr	9:30am - 3pm	St George's Junior School, Weybridge, KT13 8NL	Click here
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SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGERS

School Business Managers' Forum (1 of 3)	10 Jun	10am - 12pm	Online	Click here
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