

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON
EDUCATION SERVICE

THE ST PHILIP HOWARD CENTRE, 4 SOUTHGATE DRIVE
CRAWLEY, WEST SUSSEX, RH10 6RP

7th July 2026

Dear Colleagues,

Since I last wrote, we have gathered for a number of wonderful events. The Good Shepherd celebration saw an array of beautiful 'legacy of hope' anchors on the sanctuary at Worth Abbey and our Mass of Thanksgiving gave us an opportunity to say a heartfelt 'thank you' to those who are retiring or moving on to new adventures, and to wish them every blessing, happiness and success for the next chapter. My thanks go to all who have participated and supported these celebrations in any way.

We always highlight news and events on the website, [Education News Hub](#), and we are now on Facebook, W: [facebook.com/abeducationservice](https://www.facebook.com/abeducationservice), as well as Instagram, W: [instagram.com/abeducationservice](https://www.instagram.com/abeducationservice) so please do keep your good news stories coming!

In addition to our farewells in the last edition of Alpha Beta, two further colleagues who we want to thank and wish all the best to, are Catherine Grace, Head of St Hugh of Lincoln Catholic Primary School in Woking and Rachel Owens, Head at St George's College, Weybridge.

Catherine has done so much to inspire and embed the RED and Prayer & Liturgy Directory whilst at St Hugh's and we wish her well as she retires. Rachel is not leaving us as she is taking on the role of the CEO of the Effingham Schools Trust, which includes St Teresa's and Cranmore, but many thanks to her for her leadership whilst at St George's.

In addition, we have received the wonderful news that we have a new Bishop, Bishop-elect Stephen. Fr Stephen is known to us in the Education Service as he gave us consent to use the beautiful artwork of his mother, Elizabeth Wang, in our 'Day by Day' resources. Many of you will also be familiar with the Sycamore series and his guest appearances for Ten Ten. If you haven't already had the opportunity, do show the video message he recorded to your staff, pupils and students.

[Message to schools from Bishop-elect Stephen Wang, our new Bishop | News](#)

We have been asked by the CES to share this update. Announced by the Secretary of State for Education, a public consultation on the future content of the National Curriculum, including Religious Education, will open in September. The proposals respond to the recommendation of the Curriculum and Assessment Review that Religious Education be included in the National Curriculum through a phased approach to improve access to high-quality provision.

Please find below a statement from Paul Barber, Director of the CES, in response to the announcement, which reflect our sector's response to this significant development and our commitment to ensure autonomy of Catholic schools to select our own RE curriculum.

"We welcome the approach outlined in 'High-Quality Religious Education for Every Child' to both include RE in the national curriculum while preserving long-standing arrangements for church schools which make up a third of the state sector. The CES will of course participate in the forthcoming consultation in support of the inclusion of RE in the national curriculum, to help improve standards of non-denominational RE. RE has long been compulsory in all schools, and in Catholic schools 10% of curriculum time is dedicated to it. This means alongside Catholic Christianity other religions like Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and non-religious world views are given more study time than in most non-denominational schools, contributing to community cohesion."

As we shortly come to the end of term, a reminder that the DES office will remain open 8.30-4.30pm Monday-Friday throughout the summer holidays. The team can be contacted by phone and email so please do not hesitate to get in touch should you need us.

On behalf of each of us at the Education Service, may I thank you for everything that you have done in support of Catholic education over this past academic year.

We wish you a very happy, relaxing and fulfilling summer holiday.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Julie' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Julie Oldroyd