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Education Department Newsletter



29th September 2025



Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

Thank you sincerely to all the schools that sent representatives to the many training and development events offered by the Education Team. Your engagement helps make our collective work stronger and more consistent across the diocese.

I invite you to take a moment to reflect on the recent statement published by the Presidents of Churches Together in England, in which they speak out

against the co-option of Christian symbols and language to advance messages contrary to the Gospel. In their words:

“The Cross of Christ reveals God’s overwhelming and unconditional love for every single human being.” [Catholic Bishops' Conference](#)

That call reminds us all as leaders to stand firm in a faith that is inclusive, compassionate, and counter-cultural.

We also hold in prayer the group of headteachers going on pilgrimage to Rome this week. May your journey be a time of spiritual renewal, and please remember we pray for you all each day.

Finally, as Friday is **CAFOD Family Fast Day**, I give thanks for all your efforts in supporting this important cause. Let us recall CAFOD’s teaching:

“No one should be beyond the reach of the love and support they need to flourish.” May our schools’ witness and actions continue to extend that love to those in greatest need.

With gratitude and prayerful support,

Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

Ben McMullen
Deputy Director of Education

Headteachers' Pilgrimage to Rome



The Headteachers’ Year of Jubilee Pilgrimage to Rome takes place this week. We will keep you in all in our prayers throughout the pilgrimage.

Lourdes Youth Pilgrimage

Archbishop John has spoken of how he impressed he was with the young people who worked so hard in Lourdes in July. Applications for the 2026 pilgrimage are now open for any young person in Year 10 and above. We would be very grateful if you could promote the pilgrimage in school (assemblies, RE lessons etc.) I have sent the advertising PowerPoint to school chaplains. If any school does not have it, please contact me.

Education Department Calendar 2025-26

Please find attached the latest version of our calendar of events, including

NET Capacity Assessment Programme Phase 2 : Information for Schools

The DfE has commissioned the **Valuation Office Agency** (VOA) to carry out **Net Capacity Assessments** for primary schools in England. This will be carried out through school visits from **autumn 2025**.

VOA are public sector property experts, with extensive relevant experience and the required specialist skills and capacity to deliver a data collection of this nature. They are also easily able to provide full geographic coverage with property assessors based in more than 30 regional offices. **All VOA Property Assessors hold Enhanced DBS status** and will provide evidence of this at the start of the site visit.

During the visit, acting as the data collection organisation, VOA will use the Net Capacity Assessment (NCA) tool and methodology to calculate the number of children a school can accommodate based upon the size and use of spaces available. Originally developed in 2001, the NCA tool and methodology have been updated by the DfE to reflect more modern curriculum requirements and to include a wider range of school types. The benefits of accurate, up to date information on pupil capacity for schools and dioceses include:

- Making more efficient use of space
- Use of up-to-date information when planning the curriculum
- Independent verification of capacity for **admissions and appeals**
- Accurate and up to date information on room size and usage to review compliance with health and safety and building regulations

Please let us know if you are contacted by the Valuation Office Agency and share any reports that they may produce with us.

Admission Policies 2027-28

Policies and supporting documentation are being emailed to all schools and Chairs of Governors this week. For those schools that are **consulting** on an updated policy, there are helpful documents to guide leaders and governors through the process. The period for consultation is **Monday 6th October to Sunday 16th November** (6 weeks). Governors will **need to meet** to consider the policy prior to consultation. We will be asking for confirmation that all actions are completed at the end of the consultation

period. If you would like any further help or advice, please contact Gill Donohoe or Michael Boland at the archdiocese.

Pat Peel, Julie Rourke and Julia Ashton
Primary School RE Advisers

Season of Creation

Mass for the Care of Creation Resources

Archbishop John Sherrington is encouraging parishes across the Archdiocese to celebrate the Mass for the Care of Creation (a formulary of the Mass which has been approved for use in England and Wales from 1st September- 4th October 2025) during this Season of Creation.

You may wish to celebrate this in schools also.

There is support for Masses with Children

<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS/DCM.pdf> as well as resources developed by CAFOD and the Laudato Si' Centre, Salford. Access the resource pack via this link: https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/628e11d969d2a1dbd1bd224e/68b70e552b236d8143fd3578_Care%20for%20Creation%20Liturgy%20Resource%20Pack.docx

CAFOD Autumn fundraising resources

<https://cafod.org.uk/education/education-resources/autumn-resources-for-schools>

<https://cafod.org.uk/education/primary-teaching-resources/primary-school-assemblies/season-of-creation-assembly-for-ks2>



Black History Month – Live Assembly 2025

Friday 3rd October, 9.15-9.45am

Join Katie and special guest, BBC presenter Swarzy, to explore this year's theme, 'Standing Firm in Power and Pride'.

Suitable for: Children in KS1 and KS2

[Register here!](#)

Mission Together



In the Catholic Church, October has long been associated with mission. The month starts with the feast of St Therese of Lisieux (Patron Saint of mission) and draws to a close on World Mission Sunday – a day of solidarity celebrated in Catholic parishes and schools around the world. One easy way you can support this mission is by sharing this newsletter or telling colleagues about our free resources. We'd be very grateful as your recommendations make a big difference. Thank you for being part of Mission Together :)

Mission Month resources:

Our daily calendar, assembly, prayers, and activities aim to support schools as they join global efforts to share the love and message of Christ with everyone, everywhere. [Download here.](#)

Mission Month - sharing God's love with everyone, everywhere ⁺missio

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
First mission week <i>Mission means... to be sent.</i>	Invite someone new to play today. 	Send someone a kind message or draw them a picture to brighten their day. 	Today is the feast of St Thérèse of Lisieux. Discover the little ways by which she shared God's love with others.* 	Mission means to be sent. Jesus sends us out to share His love. How can you fulfil this mission today? 	Say the Mission Together Prayer: <i>May all children in the world, share love, share friendship and live, in the peace of God's love, now and forever. Amen.</i> 	Sit somewhere quiet and thank God for all the good things that happened this week.
Second mission week <i>Jesus sends us out to share His love with the world.</i>	Find out about Mission Together and how it helps us to be mini-missionaries* 	Today is the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Find out how the mission rosary helps us to pray for our global family.* 	If you can, share a little money with Mission Together, to help children in poverty - as St Thérèse did. 	Today is the feast of St John Henry Newman. Find out about his mission to share God's love with all.* 	As a class, say a decade of the Mission Rosary, remembering children from that continent. 	Sit somewhere quiet and say a prayer for all the people who show you God's love.
Third mission week <i>We can share God's love in different ways.</i>	Yesterday was the feast day of St Carlo Acutis. Learn about his mission to share God's love online. 	Make a special effort to be a missionary of God's love with everyone you meet today. 	Say the Lord's Prayer for missionaries who help children in places of conflict. 	Visit the Mission Together Virtual Map and discover how children around the world are being mini-missionaries. 	Listen to the words in Mission Together's <i>Pilgrim Calypso</i> ; think about the special mission that God has set us all.* 	Sit somewhere quiet and thank God for all the good things that happened this week.
World Mission Sunday <i>Our mission to share God's love is eternal.</i>	Yesterday was World Mission Sunday. People everywhere prayed and shared as God's global family, to help those in need. Today, say the <i>Our Father</i> for our global family too. 	Say the Mission Together Peace Prayer for children in the world who live where there is war and conflict.* 	Make it your mission to build peace by saying sorry to someone you've hurt or forgiving someone who has hurt you. 	As a class, say a decade of the Mission Rosary, remembering children from that continent. 	The word <i>mission</i> means sent. Send someone a kind message as a way of sharing God's love with them. 	Sit somewhere quiet and say a prayer for all the people who show you God's love.
Fifth mission week <i>Our mission to share God's love is eternal.</i>	This week, visit an elderly relative. Tell them what you've been doing in your mission to share God's love. 	Look out for ways you can continue your mission to be loving and kind today. 	Say the <i>Our Father</i> for children who don't have enough food to eat. Make it your mission not to waste food today. 	Make it your mission to share your toys or sweets today, as a way of showing God's love for all his children. 	As mission month closes, ask God to help you keep sharing His love with everyone, everywhere. 	Sit somewhere quiet and thank God for all the good things that happened this week.

Asterisks * refer to assemblies, songs, and prayers. Download all free on the mission month page at MissionTogether.org.uk
 Mission Together is the children's branch of Missio, the Pope's charity for world mission. Registered Charity No. 1056651

Little Way Week

Little Way Week focuses on St Thérèse of Lisieux, patron of mission and one-time supporter of Holy Childhood (the original name of Mission Together). Thérèse's idea was simple: to share Christ's love through little acts of kindness. This year Little Way Week takes place from Monday 29th September until Friday 3rd October. [Download prayers, assemblies, worksheets, and daily planner here.](#)

Little Way Week Planner

Below is a quotation from St Thérèse for each day of the week. Let's use her words to inspire our actions.

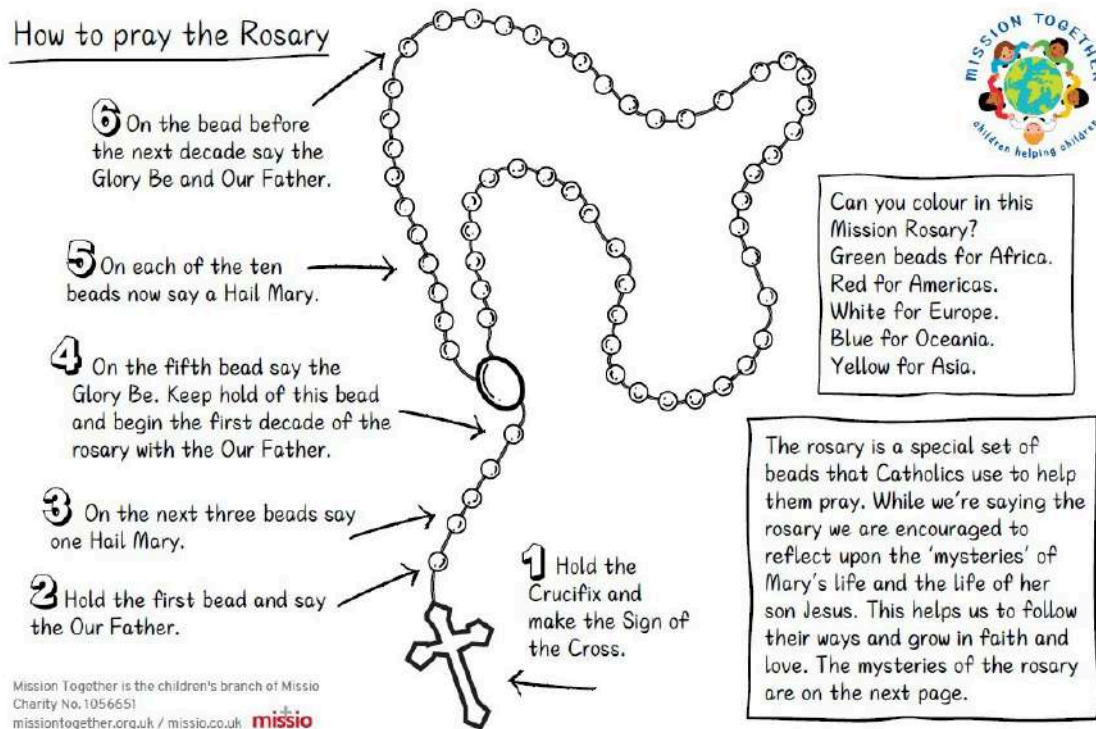


Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
'Kindness is my only guiding star. In its light, I sail a straight route.'	'A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a hopeless soul.'	'I can nourish myself on nothing but truth.'	'In spite of my littleness, I can hope to be a saint.'	'Let us not grow tired of prayer: faith works miracles.'
Kindness <i>Why do you think St Thérèse uses stars to explain her thoughts about kindness?</i> Below, write ways you can practice kindness today.	Caring <i>Why do you think a smile or kind word can make such a difference to others?</i> Below, write ways you can show care today.	Honesty <i>St Thérèse had no time for dishonesty and lies. Why do you think this was so?</i> Below, write ways you can practice honesty today.	Hopeful <i>What does St Thérèse teach us about perseverance and hopefulness?</i> Below, write ways you can share hope with others today.	Faithful <i>St Thérèse prayed every day that the world would share the love of God and Jesus.</i> Below, write ways you can share your faith with others today.



Our Lady and the Rosary

October is also a month dedicated to Our Lady and the Rosary. The Rosary is a form of prayer that helps us to reflect on the life of Mary and Jesus. Our Marian and Rosary resources help children to deepen their appreciation of Mary and learn how she can help us to become missionaries of God's love too. [Download here.](#)



Resources for Autumn term two

Visit our [Feast Day webpage](#) for resources for All Saints (1st November), Holy Souls (2nd November), and Christ the King (23rd November). New and revised resources for [Advent 2025](#) are now also available.



New webpage for Chaplains

To support the work of school chaplains we have created a new page, hosting resources suitable for days of reflection; school liturgies; and daily acts of worship. We'll be adding to this page as the months pass, so please keep revisiting. [View the page here.](#)

As many of you will be aware, Mission Together's aim is two-fold; to support the mission of catholic education and to support life giving children's projects in places of poverty and turmoil. Please continue to stand with us

through your [prayers](#), and when you can through [fundraising](#) and [donations](#). Thank you :)

Deacon Paul Mannings
Secondary School RE Adviser

p.mannings@rcaol.org.uk

When booking diocesan CPD events please see the Education Department Calendar 2025-2026 for details and links.

Church Suite

This is the booking system we use for all events. It is attached to the Education Departmental Calendar now in your schools. The calendar for each week is attached to this newsletter so please be sure to refer to it.

Cluster Meetings

These all take place this week. We shall be in touch with those schools that have kindly offered to be host:

- East: at All Hallows, Penwortham on Wednesday 1st October at 9.30am.
- Central: Wednesday 1st October at Hope Academy, Newton Le Willows at 1.30pm.
- West: Thursday 2nd October at St Margaret Clitherow Centre at 9.30am.

Please send items for the agenda. Feel free to move between cluster meetings if a particular date or time suits you better.

Mission Together

Here is access to the latest e-newsletter

<https://mailchi.mp/missiontogether/autumn-and-advent-8038970>

A selection of the latest resources is now hosted on the Mission Together homepage. The website was revised in the summer to feature more timely resources on the homepage and to ensure compliance to accessibility requirements [Mission Together Home - Mission Together](#)

CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES
CCRS

Calendar of Events

You have a complete CCRS schedule and the whole of the Education Department Calendar is included every week in this newsletter. Please be meticulous about storing dates and times.

Year 1

We are pleased to report that the cohort is now full for this year!

Attendance

Participation in all sessions is essential and the two live events for each module are crucial in adding the personal touch and undertaking any practical work. Also there is nothing to beat a good live discussion!

CCRS Contacts:

All academic, attendance, progress
issues: Dcn Paul Mannings
p.mannings@rcaol.org.uk

Finance, registration and all
contact details renewals: Paul Crilly
p.crilly@rcaol.org.uk

Ged Preston and Joanne Ball
Primary School Improvement Team

Upcoming events:-

Whole School SEND with Kate Taylor

**30th September 2025, 9.30am - 3.30pm at St Margaret Clitherow
Centre [book here](#)**

This course will:
Explore how we approach our provision for all pupils, including those
with **SEND**

National updates
Policy & statutory duty
Ofsted
Curriculum
Assess Plan Do Review
SEND Law
Resources

EY2P - The role of the Teaching Assistant in EYFS
7th October 2025, 1pm - 4pm, Online - Zoom [book here](#)

The course will:

- Recognise the unique and important role of the teaching assistant in the early years.
- Provide key documentation to support an understanding of child development.
 - Share guidance on how to...
 - Support children's social and emotional well-being
 - Promote independence within self-care routines
 - Develop high-quality interactions
 - Facilitate small group adult-led activities
 - Scaffold and extend child-initiated / independent learning
 - 'Target' identified children to narrow the attainment gap
 - Maintain and develop a high-quality and purposeful learning space
- Discuss strategies to work as a team to maximise learning for all children.

Ged Preston, Steve Coyle and Vikki Borlase
Secondary School Improvement Team



Black History Month

Special assemblies are being held on Tuesday 7th October by the Sanctuary Foundation to celebrate Black History Month. They are free to schools.

See here for [secondaries](#).

Upcoming meetings and guest speakers

Several sessions will take place next week for Exams Officers, SENDCo's, Science HoDs, Safeguarding Leads, Geography HoDs, Post 16 Leads and

Language HoDs.

Presentations will take place by SENDSCOPE (SENDCo), Alison Cope speaking on youth violence (Safeguarding) and Careers Connect (Post 16).

Links to book your place at any of our meetings can be found in the

Education Department Calendar 2025-26

at the top of the newsletter



Mock COP 30 Student Events 2025

**Book your place to attend the online preparation session with
Liverpool World Centre on 15th October 2025
(Repeat of session on 24th September)**

We are pleased to announce that Secondary School Improvement have partnered with Liverpool World Centre to run a mock COP 30 events for students. This is for a maximum of 16 schools, each sending a team of 8 students (This is aimed at pupils across KS3/4/5).

The event will cover:

Formal UN Style presentations and negotiations

Workshops and action planning

Q&A with an expert panel

Schools can use the links below to book.

Please check the link to ensure your school is listed for that event.

Schools are allocated to each event by location.

- 9.30am until 2.30pm on **11th November at St Margaret Clitherow Centre**, Croxteth Drive, Liverpool L17 1AA [Please book here](#)

- 9.30am until 2.30pm on **19th November at Hope Academy**, Ashton Rd, Newton-le-Willows WA12 0AQ [Please book here](#)

If you've have any queries please contact Vikki Borlase at v.borlase@rcaolp.co.uk



Primary resources can be accessed here
[Primary School & Youth Setting Pack](#).

Secondary resources can be [accessed here](#)
(These were shared directly with colleagues in early September)

Lesson plans

Assembly plan

Cross-curricular activities

Ideas to help you bring Anti-Bullying Week 2025 to life

Handouts and PowerPoint presentations

Anti-Bullying Week 2025 poem video (<https://youtu.be/7b11rdnQsl0>)



NWCDTP Course Dates 2025-2026

Please contact [Alison Burrowes](#) regarding any of the below listed North West Catholic Dioceses Training Partnership courses running 2025/26

Catholic Middle Leadership Programme

Day 1: Thursday 20th November 2025

Day 2: Residential - Thursday 12th March 2026 (from 4pm) and Friday 13th March 2026 (all day)

Day 3: Thursday 11th June 2026

Catholic Senior Leadership Programme

Day 1: Thursday 13th November 2025

Day 2: Residential - Thursday 26th February 2026 (from 4pm) and Friday 27th February 2026 (all day)

Day 3: Wednesday 10th June 2026

Catholic Headteacher Programme

Day 1: Thursday 16th October 2025

Day 2: Residential - Thursday 29th January 2026 (from 4pm) and Friday 30th January 2026 (all day)

Day 3: Friday 1st May 2026

Locations

All training takes place at:

The Wrightington Hotel, Health Club & Spa
Moss Lane
Wrightington
Wigan
WN6 9PB

Cost: £700

Aspiring to Senior Leadership Programme

This programme is for leaders who are intending to apply for a senior leadership post

Cohort One: Thursday 9th October 4pm – 5pm Online

Wednesday 19th November 9am – 3pm Face to Face

Cohort Two: Thursday 8th January 2026 4pm - 5pm Online

Thursday 15th January 2026 9am – 3pm Face to Face

Location to be confirmed

Cost: £50

Secondary School Improvement

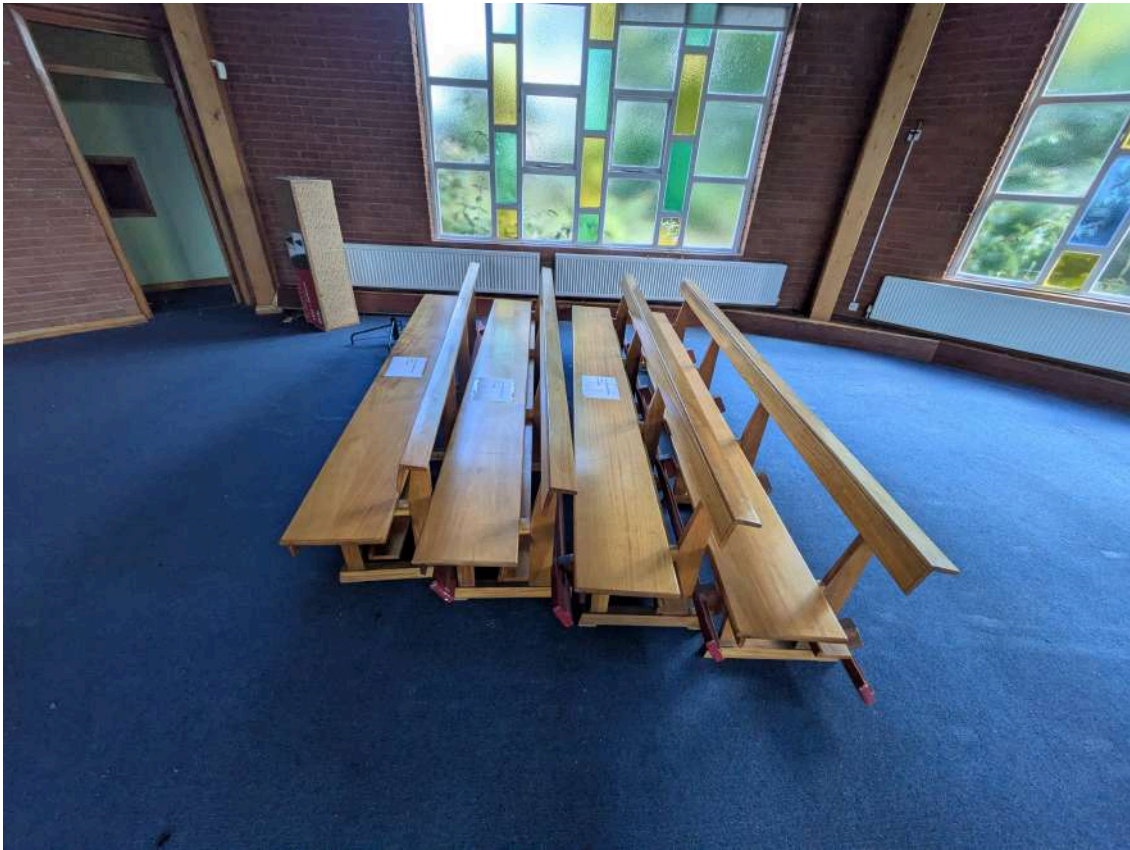
News from Around the Archdiocese

**Items available for collection from St. David's Catholic Church,
Newton-le-Willows (WA12 8EY).**

- Transport and collection costs are to be covered by the schools.
- The collection window will close on **Friday 3rd October**.
- Please note: the parish may require these items to be returned. A temporary goods letter will need to be signed, and all items must be kept in the same condition in which they are received.
- Allocation will be on a first-come, first-served basis.
- To express interest, please email: c.trainor@rcaol.org.uk

Available items (see attached photos):

- 10ft Christmas tree
- 4 pews (approx. 2-4 metres long)



To view current school vacancies, please click on the link below:-

Vacancies

If you would like to add a vacancy or a news article to the newsletter, please email
aes@rcaol.org.uk

Catholic Pic Newsletter

If your school would like a hard copy of the Catholic Pic Newsletter please
contact communications@rcaol.org.uk

Missed last week's newsletter? Click on the button below to view it!

Education Department Newsletter W.C. 22/09/2025

Thank you for taking the time to read the newsletter. Wishing you every blessing for
the week ahead.



St Margaret Clitherow Centre

Liverpool Archdiocesan Office | Croxteth Drive | Liverpool | L17 1AA



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