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Education Department Newsletter

15th December 2025



Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

Well done to all of you on reaching the end of term. We know how tired you must be, and we want to thank you sincerely for your extraordinary dedication and hard work. Your boundless energy throughout the Christmas productions, fundraising events, and celebrations has ensured that our children and families have truly experienced the joy of the Christmas message and the blessing of celebrating the birth of our Lord.

This is our final newsletter of the year. Our next edition will be shared on
Monday, 12th January 2026.

Wishing all of you reading this a happy and holy Christmas, and every blessing for the New Year. Thank you for all that you continue to give to your schools, your communities, and to Catholic education.

As an Irish Christmas blessing reminds us:

"Go mbeannaí an Nollaig thú agus do mhuintir — may Christmas bless

you and your family."

Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

Ben McMullen
Deputy Director of Education

Invoices

Over the next few days, you will receive an invoice from the archdiocese for the various services that you receive. Over the past few months, we have been reviewing our invoicing arrangements, and we have made some changes which we hope will be easier for you to understand and simplify the payment process.

The main change relates to the Voluntary Contribution which has been renamed as the '**Education Department Service Charge**' and, for the first time, we are making clear to schools what this service provides. Please see the attached document [**Education Department Service Charge**](#).

Your invoice will now also include other services that apply to you such as the Primary or Secondary School Improvement Service, as well as any other services or subscriptions that you currently receive. Our hope is that you will find one invoice much easier to manage. Please note, however, that for VAT reasons, the Archdiocesan Levy will be covered on a separate invoice.

Our review of our financial arrangements with schools will continue next year. The Education Department Service Charge is based on a formula that has existed for at least 15 years, and we will be reviewing this for the next academic year. Please be assured that any increases to charges will be communicated to you well in advance.

If you have any questions, please email aes@rcaol.org.uk

Catholic Headteacher Residential Conference

Please see the attached [flyer](#) for the Catholic Headteacher Conference organised by the North West Catholic Dioceses Training Partnership. The conference takes place at Wrightington Hotel on 29th and 20th January. Led by David Wells, the theme this year will be 'Drawing a map of hope – school leadership in the era of Pope Leo XIV. It promises to be an inspiring and affirming conference.

Thank you

Thank you for your support throughout this busy first term. I am sure you are all ready for the break and I wish you, and all in your community, a very happy and peaceful Christmas break.

Education Department Calendar 2025-26

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

[Calendar 2025-26](#)

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



****New sessions added for Cambridge OCR****

We have arranged online training with OCR on their Active Results portal with two slots on offer as below.

This session provides an introduction to Cambridge OCR's **Active Results** system, designed to help you access and interpret assessment data with ease. You'll learn how to navigate the platform, generate reports, and use insights to support teaching and learning. By the end of the session, you'll feel confident in using Active Results to monitor performance and inform decision-making.

Please note this will not cover individual exam papers or feedback from exam performance.

- Getting Started with Cambridge OCR's Active Results | Tuesday 13 January | 15:30pm | [Register here](#)

- Getting Started with Cambridge OCR's Active Results | Tuesday 20 January | 10:00am | [Register here](#)



December Bulletin

You can access December's Secondary School Improvement bulletin, shared by Steve Coyle [here](#)

This covers updates for:

Safeguarding Leads
Anti-bullying Leads
Behaviour Leads
Attendance Leads
Mental Health and Wellbeing Leads



Physics Partners: What Lights Up Your Love of Physics Competition

Following the success of their inaugural competition, Physics Partners are once again inviting Year 12 students, individually or in teams of up to three, to create a 3-minute video showcasing what inspires their love of physics.

The video could explore anything from tackling Net Zero challenges and uncovering the physics behind gaming, to understanding medical imaging or imagining the future of space exploration.

The top 10 finalist teams will be invited to an overnight visit to King's College, Cambridge for the Prize Event, where they'll present their videos, take part in Q&A sessions, and enjoy inspiring physics talks and activities.

Prizes

- Each finalist team: £600 in Amazon vouchers (£400 for solo entries)
- £500s worth of physics equipment for their school
- The overall winning team will also receive funding to visit CERN!

Eligibility: Year 12 students from state schools and colleges in England

Deadline: 24th February 2026, 11:59 pm

For full details and how to apply,
visit: <https://physicspartners.com/competition/>



Funded Training Opportunities for Staff in Liverpool Schools

[You can access resources and all free training here](#)

Secondary School Improvement Flyer

Ged Preston and Sandra Martin Primary School Improvement Team



IDS and ASP Analysis Training with Oliver McPhail

This is a full-day course for primary leaders to gain an in-depth understanding of the principles and purpose of assessment in schools before completing documentation that will support you in analysing and interpreting the updated Inspection Data Summary Report and ASP/SPS. A secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's historic data will be addressed, ensuring you are inspection ready.

Outcomes:

- Understand the purpose and principles of assessment in the core subjects.
- Confirm what data is needed in schools to track pupil progress and why.
- Become familiar with highly effective assessment tools and methods.
- 'Get the job done' by analysing your own internal data on a template to identify actions and next steps.
- Understand how Ofsted uses the latest and previous external data sources (IDSR).
- 'Get the job done' by analysing your own IDSR onto a template.
- Identify areas of interest, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Be inspection ready by identifying key lines of enquiry.
- Be familiar with how to navigate and make the most of the 'Analyse School Performance' system.
- Interpret and analyse the school performance information in the DfE interactive online tool.
- Make evaluative judgments from the data to update your IDSR summary, school self-evaluation, and development plans; and
- Complete a school performance summary for your school using the materials provided.

Thursday 15th January 2026, 9.30am - 3.30pm, St Margaret Clitherow Centre. [Please book your place here.](#)

Deacon Paul Mannings
Secondary School RE Adviser

p.mannings@rcaol.org.uk

When booking diocesan CPD events please see the calendar and brochure for details and links. Unless otherwise stated most courses take place here at the St Margaret Clitherow Centre, with any exceptions clearly noted.

From Pearson

The board has recently released a new knowledge organiser style resource to support colleagues delivering the Judaism paper for Specification A. This resource is designed to help teachers and students consolidate key concepts and themes effectively. Colleagues can access the resource in the 'Content Support' area of Pearson's Religious Studies website* using the following link:

- <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/religious-studies-a-2016.coursematerials.html#filterQuery=category:Pearson-UK:Category%2FTeaching-and-learning-materials&filterQuery=category:Pearson-UK:Document-Type%2FContent-support>

*Please note that teachers will need to log in to their Edexcel Online accounts to download the resource.

From AQA

We're pleased to let you know that our [new events management system](#) is now live for bookings.

You'll now be able to make more bookings yourself. You can take a look at our helpful resources and FAQs on our website, to help you to get to know the new system:

- [centre administrator – creating and managing course bookings](#)
- [centre user – creating and managing course bookings](#)
- [frequently asked questions](#)

The new system is part of myAQA, so you will not need a separate login, and all your events needs will be in one place. If you do not already have an account, you can [sign up for myAQA](#) on our website. If you're not part of an AQA registered Centre, or you're part of a Unit Award Scheme (UAS Centre), then you'll need a Microsoft or Apple account to login as a Social-ID profile. We've updated our [terms and conditions](#) for booking our events so please take some time to have a look at them before you book. By making a booking this confirms your acceptance of these revised terms and conditions.

If you need any help using the new booking system – please get in touch with us on 0800 197 7162, we're ready and waiting to help.

Support for non-specialists in Religious Education

As the next session is relatively early in January don't forget to send any items you wish to be included.

CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES CCRS

All sessions next term are online, beginning at 6.30pm.

Year 1: The New Testament

Jesus came to fulfil the Law and give us life to the full. This is the focus of Module 2 beginning in January.

Year 2: The Sacraments

The sacraments of the Catholic Church provide us with the currency to live our faith in everyday life. This is the key theme of Module 5 commencing in January.

Both specialist sessions are in March and details will follow.

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

News from around the Archdiocese



Catholic Education Service
Since 1847

PG Certificate in Attachment Trauma & Mental Health Programme Birmingham Newman University

Details of the PG Cert in Attachment Trauma & Mental Health Programme, at Birmingham Newman University, are attached [here](#), 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 etc.

Further information is available from Sandra Scott, School of Education (s.cable@staff.newman.ac.uk tel: 0121 387 4572).

The above photo is of St Gregory's wonderful **Signing Choir** who performed for the SVP at St Gregory's Chorley, and also for Mayfield School in Chorley. Their talent and dedication truly shone during these special events!



St. Thomas of Canterbury Donates Pre-Loved Uniform

The children and families at St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School in St Helens have donated pre-loved uniform to a charity called *Great Minds, Bright Futures*, which helps children in Malawi. The pictures below show the joy and gratitude of those receiving them.

This act reflects the principles of Catholic social teaching, emphasizing our responsibility to care for others and recognise the dignity of every person as part of the global family. By supporting charities such as this, we are not only helping those in need but also teaching the children how to live out Gospel values and live as a disciple of Jesus, showing love, generosity, and compassion in their everyday lives.



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 the last newsletter? Click on the button below to view it!

Education Department Newsletter W.C. 08/12/2025

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



St Margaret Clitherow Centre

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