

[View this email in your browser](#)



Education Department Newsletter

2nd March 2026

Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

Second Sunday of Lent

The Transfiguration reminds us that Jesus reveals His true glory on the mountain, offering His disciples courage for the journey ahead. As leaders, we too are invited to pause, listen to Him, and find renewed clarity and strength for the week's challenge.



Welcome to Dave Smyth who has joined the Primary School Improvement team. He will be in touch with primary Schools in the coming weeks.

Please note the Headteacher cluster meetings are fast approaching and we look forward to seeing you there. Please book your place [here](#).

DATE	TIME	VENUE	LOCAL AUTHORITIES
Monday 16/3/26	9.30-11.30am	St Margaret Clitherow Centre, L17 1AA	Liverpool
Monday 16/3/26	1.30-3.30pm	The Engine Rooms, Warrington WA3 6YN	Warrington & Halton
Wednesday 18/3/26	9.30-11.30am	Mercure Hotel, Haydock WA11 9SG	Knowsley & St Helens
Wednesday 18/3/26	1.30-3.30pm	The Edge, Wigan WN3 5AB	Lancashire & Wigan

Wishing you a happy week ahead. Thank you for your continued dedication to Catholic Education.

Ben McMullen
Deputy Director of Education

Headteachers' Spirituality Day: 'Space for Grace'

This year's Spirituality Day for Headteachers is fast approaching. The day takes place on Thursday 12th March at Theodore House at Stonyhurst College in the Ribble Valley.

As a contrast to our cathedral day last year, we are offering a retreat experience rather than a conference, led

by Sr Sheila McNamara, RSCJ. Sheila is member of the religious order 'Religious of the Sacred Heart' (www.societysacredheart.org) and works in spiritual accompaniment, supervision, and leading days of reflection.

Please note that there are only 80 places available for this day. A limited number of rooms are available for overnight accommodation – please contact Ben for further details.

Thurs 12 th March	Spirituality Day for Headteachers	9.30am- 3.30pm	Theodore House, Stonyhurst	All schools and colleges	Book here
---------------------------------	--------------------------------------	-------------------	-------------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

Prayer and Liturgy

'Come to the Father' – Singing and Music in Prayer and Liturgy

This is the third course in our series this year. Please note that the event runs twice:

Monday 9th March
Wednesday 11th March

The time has extended from 9.30pm to 3pm. We have changed the original date of Thursday 12th March to avoid a clash with the Headteachers' Spirituality Day.

Please book your place [here](#).

Admissions Presenting Officer Training Appeals Training

A reminder that we have two important training events coming up for the Appeals process.

There are two opportunities to attend **Appeals Presenting Officer Training**. These are informative and practical sessions to help you with your presentation.

Tues 10 th March	Admissions Presenting Officer Training	10am- 12.30pm	St Margaret Clitherow Centre	All schools and colleges	Book here
--------------------------------	---	------------------	---------------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

Tues 10 th March	Admissions Presenting Officer Training	6.30pm- 8.30pm	Online – Zoom	All schools and colleges	Book here
--------------------------------	---	-------------------	---------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

We are also running training for Panel Members. This is suitable for new panel members or those who would like a 'refresher training'.

Tues 17 th March	Appeals: Panel Members training	10am- 12.30pm	St Margaret Clitherow Centre	All schools and colleges	Book here
--------------------------------	------------------------------------	------------------	---------------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

Education Department Calendar 2025-26

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

Calendar 2025-26

Gill Donohoe
Governance Officer

ACT [Action Counters Terrorism] Awareness

Two sessions on ACT Awareness for our schools (senior leaders or business managers), have been organised. The session is to consider what 'you' can do to reduce your risk and mitigate against the impact of an attack.

You will be familiar with putting together a plan for your site and will know how to address many of the requirements around safeguarding and safety, but you may not be so familiar with security issues and terrorism.

The advice being shared during this session is intended to be a guide for you to seek to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack at your site, its contents, the people using it and the adjacent public areas.

Link to sign up - [ACT \[Action Counters Terrorism\] Awareness \(02-Mar-2026 and 03-Mar-2026\)](#)

Monday 2nd March 2026 - 10am till 12noon

St Joseph's Parish Hall, Wrightington, WN6 9PA

[To be delivered by Greater Manchester Police]

Tuesday 3rd March 2026 - 10am till 12noon

St Margaret Clitherow Centre, Liverpool, L17 1AA

[To be delivered by Merseyside Police]

The sessions are, 'a facilitated awareness presentation to a general audience, which are designed to raise awareness of the threat from terrorism, and actions which can be taken to protect themselves, and their organisation from, or during an attack'.

It does not matter which session you sign up for as the message is the same from both Greater Manchester and Merseyside Police.

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



Upcoming meetings

Tue 10 Mar 2026

09:00 – 11.30 **HoD Sociology Workshop**

Venue: Carmel College, Prescott Rd, St Helens, WA10 3AG

[Please book here](#)

13:30 - 16:00 **HoD Government & Politics Workshop**

Venue: Carmel College, Prescott Rd, St Helens, WA10 3AG

[Please book here](#)

Wed 11 Mar 2026

14:00 – 16:30 **Physics Partners Programme Session 5 (Magnetism and Electro-Magnetism)**

Venue: St Edmund Arrowsmith CHS, Rookery Ave, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan WN4 9PF

[Please book here](#)

Wed 18 Mar 2026

09:00 – 11:30 **HoD Health & Social Care Workshop**

Venue: The Wrightington Hotel, Moss Ln, Wrightington, Wigan WN6 9PB

[Please use this link](#)

13:30 - 16:00 **HoD Creative i-Media Workshop**

Venue: The Wrightington Hotel, Moss Ln, Wrightington, Wigan WN6 9PB

[Please book here](#)

Thu 19 Mar 2026

09:00 – 11.30 **HoD Computer Science Workshop**

Venue: The Wrightington Hotel, Moss Ln, Wrightington, Wigan WN6 9PB

[Please book here](#)

Wed 25 Mar 2026

09:00 - 11:00 **Numeracy Coordinator meeting**

Venue: St John Fisher Catholic High School

[Please book here](#)



Student Public Speaking Competition 2026 Registration now open!

You can now register your interest for this year's Student Public Speaking Competition [here](#). The confirmation email will contain a link to the topic list and rules.

Please note this form will close on Friday 15th May and we will then contact those who have registered an interest to ask for further details (Student names, topics chosen etc.)

Contestants must be between 11 and 14 years of age on the day of the contest, Years 7, 8 and 9 only (maximum of 2 students from each school)

The list of topics:

1. How will artificial intelligence and technology affect future jobs, and what skills should students focus on?
2. "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." – John F. Kennedy
3. Would a four-day working week make society better?
4. We are drowning in information and starving for wisdom.
5. Mars vs. Earth: Should we spend our money reaching for the stars or saving our own home?
6. Does it matter whether our leaders are honest and trustworthy?
7. Should children under 14 be allowed on social media?
8. Does society only listen to loud voices?

Competition Dates and Venues

Tuesday 30th June 2026 (West Cluster) 10am until 12pm at Archbishop Beck Catholic College, Long Ln, Liverpool L9 7BF

Wednesday 1st July 2026 (Central Cluster) 10am until 12pm at Carmel College, Prescot Rd, St Helens, WA10
3AG

Wednesday 8th July 2024 (East Cluster) 10am until 12pm
at St John Rigby College, Gathurst Rd, Orrell, Wigan WN5 0LJ



**Secondary School Choir Competition
6th March - Final date for submission of round 1**

The Schools Singing Programme would like to invite all secondary schools within the Archdiocese of Liverpool to enter their school choir in the Annual Secondary Schools' Choir Competition.

This year's competition will be judged over two rounds:-

**Round 1: Video Recording of your choir
(submitted by Friday 6th March)**

Round 2: Grand final, hosted in the Crypt Concert Room at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, at which each finalist will perform on their own and as part of a collaborative.
(evening of Thursday 21st May)

Since it's reintroduction, the competition has seen three different winners.

2023 - St Bede's Catholic High School, Ormskirk

2024 - St Edwards College, Liverpool

2025 - St John Bosco Arts College, Liverpool

Will we see a new winner this year? Or can St John Bosco retain the title?

Please follow this link for all of the [detailed information you will need to know](#).

And follow this link to [sign up now!](#)



Funded Training Opportunities for Staff in Liverpool Schools

Secondary School Improvement Flyer

Dave Smith and Sandra Martin

Primary School Improvement Team

Securing Strong Progression for Pupils: Using Assessment Effectively in and Beyond Lessons

12th March 9:30-12:30, St Margaret Clitherow Centre

A 3-hour session for senior, middle and subject leaders to develop a whole school approach to assessment considering how strategies can be used within lessons and beyond the lessons. Leaders will share and consider examples of good practice so that they can develop new systems and approaches or refine existing good practice.

[Securing Strong Progression for Pupils: Using Assessment Effectively in and Beyond Lessons \(12-Mar-2026\) · ChurchSuite Events](#)

Headteacher Quads

We are inviting expressions of interest for our new Headteacher Quads initiative, launching later this year. Each Headteacher will visit the schools within their Quad. The aim is to create small groups of headteachers from different local authorities so they can visit one another's schools, share experiences, explore different contexts, and support each other's leadership journey. Before the visits begin, we will hold a short virtual meeting in the final term of this academic year to introduce each quad, and give time for groups to agree possible dates, focus areas, and what they would like to see or share during their visits. Please complete this short form if you would like to take part. Your responses will help us match schools in the most meaningful way. Thank you for your interest in supporting this new collaborative opportunity across our Archdiocesan family of schools.

EOI form: [Headteacher Quads – Fill in form](#)

Early Years Conference for Practitioners with Ruth Swailes

17th March 9:30-15:30, St Margaret Clitherow Centre

Join us for an inspiring conference designed for Early Years practitioners, bringing together the latest research and real-world practice to explore how we can offer the highest quality education for our youngest children in an ever-changing landscape. Ruth Swailes will share valuable insights into child development, current research findings, and a wealth of practical strategies that delegates can implement immediately.

[Early Years Conference with Ruth Swailes for Practitioners \(17-Mar-2026\) · ChurchSuite Events](#)

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.

ATCRE Online

From the 2nd - 5th March 2026 ATCRE is running an online conference in the evenings from 16:30-17:15. The event is free to all and we have a wide variety of speakers.

For the brochure and link:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?>

[id=VpLzZGAnQUyRqb2D1kpzj2phTpvd9w9Is5CkIpYdAqtUOVYxOU9IIMUKFDNzJPNDJWMUHKRFQ2OS4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=VpLzZGAnQUyRqb2D1kpzj2phTpvd9w9Is5CkIpYdAqtUOVYxOU9IIMUKFDNzJPNDJWMUHKRFQ2OS4u)

Eduqas A Level Support

At our recent meeting of seconds in department there was a request for a support group, to be shared amongst schools. So, if Eduqas is your A Level board, please make contact and we can get this set up.

Just Peace or Just War?

This is the title of an interactive conference to be held at Bellerive FCJ for Sixth Form students on Monday 16th March 1.15 to 2.30pm. See the poster for details.



CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES CCRS

- **Year 1 Specialist 1:** This scheduled session takes place on **Thursday 5th March from 18.30 online**. Remember to allow two hours because this module runs at the rate of one session term. To qualify, all three sessions must be completed. Details and the link will be sent to you early this week.
- **Year 1:** Candidates are already busy completing New Testament assignments. Be sure please to follow presentation requirements carefully by adapting the writing frame used for the first submission. One typical mistake was forgetting to insert the tile at the beginning of the actual assignment and not labelling the submission folder just with your name for example **Gardner NT**. Everything else was very encouraging. The submission date is 30 April.
- **Year 2:** The submission date for Year 2 Sacraments is 21st April.

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



Our school of the month is Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School!

Read the full story [here](#).



Response from the Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools and Colleges (CATSC) to the publication of the White Paper *Every Child Achieving and Thriving*

The Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools and Colleges (CATSC) welcomes the publication of the government's White Paper, *Every Child Achieving and Thriving*, and recognises the urgent need to reform a SEND system that has not consistently served the dignity, needs, and potential of every child and young person. Catholic education is rooted in the belief that every person is created in the image and likeness of God. Catholic Social Teaching calls us to uphold the inherent dignity of each individual, to prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable, and to work for the common good. In this context, we affirm that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are not problems to be managed, but persons to be cherished, accompanied, and enabled to flourish. We particularly welcome the White Paper's emphasis on early identification and intervention, inclusion within mainstream settings where appropriate, and greater coordination between education, health, and care services. These principles resonate strongly with the vision articulated by Pope Leo XIV in *Drawing New Maps of Hope*, which reminds us that education must be a source of hope and accompaniment, especially for those who experience marginalisation or disadvantage. The Holy Father calls educators to create communities where no one is excluded and where each learner's gifts are recognised and nurtured. Catholic schools have long sought to embody this vision through inclusive practice, pastoral care, and a commitment to the flourishing of the whole person. The White Paper's recognition of the importance of a joined-up, child-centred approach reflects an understanding that education must attend not only to academic outcomes, but also to the emotional, spiritual, and relational development of every young person. However, the success of these reforms will depend critically on the provision of sustained and sufficient funding, alongside access to specialist support services. Inclusion cannot be achieved through aspiration alone; it requires investment in skilled staff, appropriate provision, and strong partnerships between schools, families, parishes, and wider services. Without this, there is a risk that the most vulnerable children and their families will continue to experience uncertainty and unmet need. In line with Catholic Social Teaching's principle of subsidiarity, we emphasise the importance of trusting and empowering schools and local communities to respond to the needs of their children, while ensuring national structures provide the necessary support and equity. Equally, the principle of solidarity calls us to ensure that no child or family is left behind. CATSC will engage closely with the consultation process and work alongside Catholic schools, leaders, and partners to ensure that the final reforms truly serve the dignity and flourishing of every child. We stand ready to contribute constructively to shaping a system that reflects not only effectiveness and sustainability, but also compassion, justice, and hope. As *Drawing New Maps of Hope* reminds us, education is an act of hope in the future. This White Paper presents an opportunity to renew that hope, by building a SEND system that recognises the God-given dignity of every child and enables each one to achieve, thrive, and flourish.

John Nish President Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools and Colleges (CATSC)

Forming Catholic Student Leaders: for Yr 12 and Yr 13 Students

The Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst is delighted to announce its 2026 Leadership programme for sixth form students.

Two separate courses are being offered this year: one for Year 12 students on the theme of The Common Good, and one for Year 13 students on the theme of The Human Ecology. Each course will consist of a 6-day residential on the beautiful Stonyhurst estate, complemented by preparatory and debriefing online sessions.

The two courses are standalone, but are intended as part of an eventual sequence of courses that will accompany young people from year 11 through to their early working lives.

There is no financial prerequisite for the programme.

A fantastic opportunity to meet like-minded peers, to learn from Catholic academics, professionals and public figures, to consider their faith and its public impact, to develop skills, personal virtue and their spiritual lives in a close-knit, fun atmosphere.

For more information and to request an application form: www.christianleadershipformation.com

Forming Catholic Student Leaders
CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP FORMATION

Year 12 / Lower Sixth Students
10TH – 15TH AUGUST
The Common Good
Exploring the nature of human dignity, rights and civil law

Year 13 / Upper Sixth Students
5TH – 10TH JULY
The Human Ecology
Exploring social issues around the family, economy and environment

APPLY BY APRIL 30TH

LEARN MORE / APPLY
CHRISTIANLEADERSHIPFORMATION.COM

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 j.ball@rcaol.org.uk

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

Catholic Pic Newsletter

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

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



This email was sent to j.ball@rcaol.org.uk
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Archdiocese of Liverpool · Liverpool Archdiocesan Office · Croxteth Drive · Liverpool, Merseyside L17 1AA · United Kingdom