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Education Department Newsletter

16th March 2026

Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

Lenten Reflection for All Who Serve in Catholic Schools

As we continue our journey through Lent, this season invites us to pause and look again - to notice God's quiet presence in our work, our relationships, and the small daily moments that shape life in our Catholic schools. Lent calls us to see with renewed clarity, to uncover hope where it may feel hidden, and to allow our hearts to be strengthened for the path ahead.

At this point in the term, when the days are full and the demands are many, it can be easy to lose sight of the deeper purpose that guides us. Yet it is precisely in these busy weeks that Lent speaks so powerfully. The Gospel of the man born blind reminds us that Jesus not only restores sight, but helps us understand our journey in a new light. In our schools, that light shines through patience, kindness, teamwork, and the countless acts of care - often unseen - that keep our communities flourishing.

So keep going. Your work matters deeply. Even in weariness, even in challenge, you continue to bring light to young people and to one another.

This week, we also hold in prayer the entire community of St. Julie's Catholic High School following their very sad loss. May God's comfort surround all who mourn, may His peace rest upon the staff, pupils, and families, and may you feel the strength of the wider Catholic education community standing with you.

May the days ahead bring you moments of quiet grace, renewed hope, and the reassurance that God walks with you in every step of this Lenten journey.

Headteacher Cluster Meetings

I look forward to seeing you at the Headteacher cluster meetings:-

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

Ben McMullen
Deputy Director of Education

Catholic Schools Inspectorate

Please note that we have completed our inspections for this term. Inspections will resume after the Easter break.

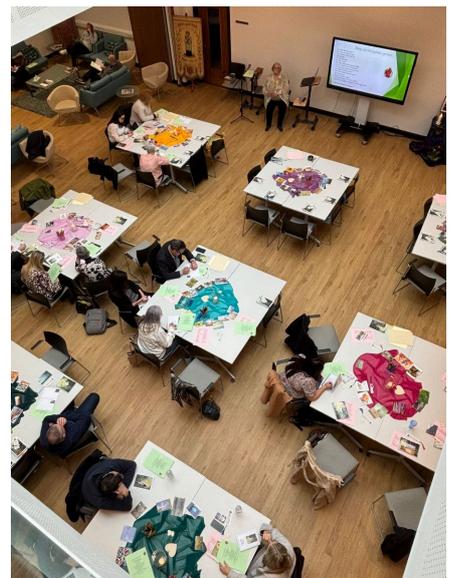
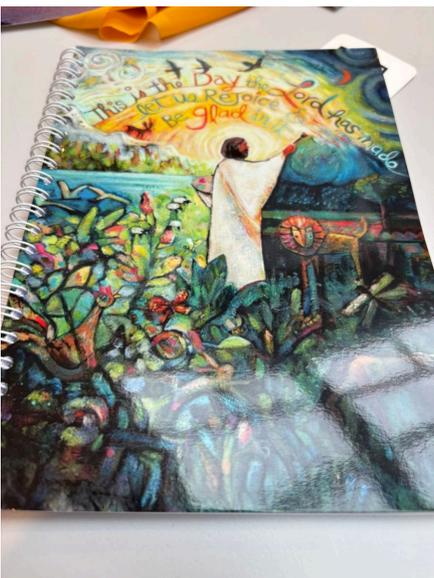
A message for Chaplains

Brother John Patrick from the Taizé Community in France is visiting Liverpool this week and would like to meet our high school chaplains who may be interested in making a connection between their school and the Community. There is a meeting for anyone interested on **Wednesday morning** from **10am to 12pm** at the St Margaret Clitherow Centre. Please email me if you plan to attend b.mcmullen@rcaol.org.uk.

Spirituality Day

Thank you to those of you who joined us for the Headteachers' Spirituality Day last Thursday. The feedback we received was very positive and colleagues really enjoyed the opportunity for stillness and calm on the retreat. Please note that the next Spirituality Day is for senior leaders and bookings are now open:

Wed 6 th May	Spirituality Day for Senior Leaders	9.30am- 3pm	Theodore House, Stonyhurst	All schools and colleges	Book here
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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

Ofsted Training for Governors - Wednesday 22nd April

We are really pleased to announce there will be Ofsted training for governors from 6.30pm - 8.00pm (online) on Wednesday 22nd April, led by Paul Duckworth.

Paul is the Head of School Improvement at DBE Services, a former headteacher, adviser and experienced trainer. He leads a team of school advisers supporting school leaders and governors in 180 schools across the North West.

This session for governors will focus on the new Ofsted framework, and include:

- the new approach to inspection
- key learning from recent inspections
- expectations of governance (governors & trustees) as part of the 'leadership and governance' judgement
- how the Toolkit can support governors in understanding and evidencing school effectiveness
- some practical tips and resources to support schools

Book your place here

[Ofsted Training for Governors 22nd April 2026 \(22-Apr-2026\) · ChurchSuite Events](#)

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



Upcoming meetings

Tue 17 Mar 2026

09:00 - 16:00 **Maths 'Engineering improvement v's improvement through intervention - Finding the balance' with Katie Kaye from Promise Education**

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

[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](#)

13:30 - 16:00 **HoD Music 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

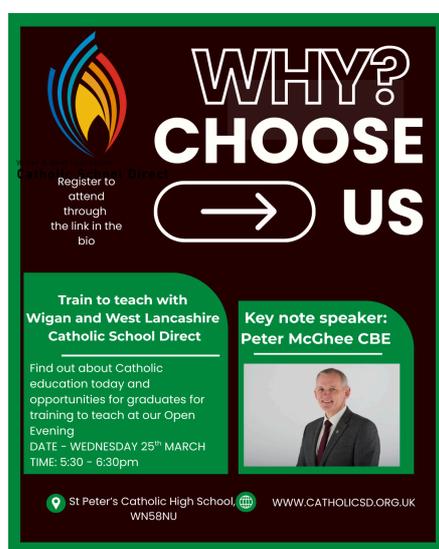
[Please book here](#)

Thu 26 Mar 2026

09:00 - 16:00 **Making a difference for Year 11 outcomes in Science now...and in future years' event with Karen Parker from Holy Family Catholic High School**

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

[Please book here](#)



Would you like to know more about training to teach in a supportive family of Catholic schools?

Peter McGhee CBE will be giving the key note speech at our Open Evening to be held at St Peter's Catholic High School in Orrell (WN5 8NU) on Wednesday 25th March, 5:30-6:30pm.

Peter was Principal at St John Rigby Catholic College from 2010 - 2025 and has an unwavering commitment to high quality, inclusive education which raises aspirations and enables young people to enjoy their learning and to progress towards their goals, whatever their starting points. He will be speaking about teaching in Catholic schools.

This event is supported by Wigan and West Lancashire Catholic School Direct who are a lead partner in Initial Teacher Training with Liverpool John Moores University. We are looking for graduates to start training in September 2026 or beyond in a variety of subjects who would like to find out more about training to teach in a Catholic secondary school. We have partner schools in Wigan, Ashton in Makerfield, Leigh, Chorley, Ormskirk, Skelmersdale, Warrington and Halton who have places for trainee teachers to complete their year-long PGCE course.

Please register to attend our Open Evening on the 25th March to hear Peter speak and to have an opportunity to speak to staff from WWLCSD. We will also be offering the opportunity to attend some school experience open mornings after the event.

[Register to attend the WWLCSD Open Evening with Peter McGhee – Fill in form](#)



Sound! Music Hub CPD Conference 2026
Empowering Educators, Enriching Music Across Liverpool City Region and Warrington

Thursday 16th April 2026
Partnership for Learning Charity Conferencing Centre in Speke, Liverpool
8:30am - 3:00pm

Open to Secondary and Primary colleagues
(Booking close 27th March)

We are thrilled to announce the inaugural Sound! Music Hub CPD Conference, designed to offer hands-on, practical support and professional development for both music specialists and non-specialists from schools across the Liverpool City Region and Warrington.

The conference is presented by Sound! Music Hub in partnership with local Music Service Delivery Partners: Knowsley Music and Performing Arts Service, Resonate (Liverpool) Music Service, Sefton Music Service, St Helens' Music Service and Sound! Halton & Warrington.

The conference will feature a **keynote address by Christopher Stevens, HMI and Music Subject Lead for Ofsted**. Each delegate will also receive an exclusive link that can be shared with school leaders and headteachers, allowing them to watch the keynote remotely and gain valuable insights to support staff in developing and enhancing music education in their schools.

In addition to Christopher, we will host an inspiring keynote from Dr Adam Ockelford, inclusive music education expert and Professor of Music and Director of the Applied Music Research Centre at the University of Roehampton, along with engaging breakout sessions and workshops covering a wide range of topics, including:

- Understanding what high-quality music education looks like in EYFS
- A hands-on DJing workshop to inspire GCSE performance
- Practical strategies and resources for primary non-specialists
- A think tank session with secondary music exam boards

...plus performances and much more!

Attendees will leave the conference inspired and equipped with practical tools and strategies ready to implement in the classroom immediately.

As part of Sound! Music Hub's ongoing commitment to supporting music provision across the Liverpool City Region and Warrington, conference places are fully funded for teachers working in Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Warrington, and Wirral.

To book your place, please fill in the registration form: [Sound! Music Hub CPD Conference Registration](#)
Bookings will close on Friday 27th March, and places are limited.



REMINDER
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, Prescott 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



Funded Training Opportunities for Staff in Liverpool Schools

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

Secondary School Improvement Flyer

Dave Smith and Sandra Martin

Primary School Improvement Team

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](#)

Free inclusive maths CPD for primary schools in Merseyside

We're pleased to share that nasen has secured funding from the [Pilkington Charitable Trust](#) to support primary schools in Merseyside to improve numeracy outcomes for pupils with SEND.

As part of this project, your school is invited to access **free CPD** from nasen. This includes the following recordings which are part of the Inclusive Maths for Primary Settings series:

- Strategies to support learners with SEND
- Approaches to working with learners who have Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- Techniques to support autistic learners with mathematics and problem-solving

You can access the recorded webinars via the Vimeo link below, until 15th May. Please ensure that you fill out the [pre-evaluation link](#) first.

[Access webinars](#)

Once you've watched the recordings, and [completed the evaluation](#), you'll have the opportunity to attend a [live drop-in session](#) with one of our Education Officers (19th May, 4pm until 5pm, on Zoom). This session is designed to give you time to ask questions and reflect on the content.

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.

Last Week

The Key Stage 4 training was well received and covered a morning of GCSE Judaism with Michelle Hayward and two block session on Christianity and on Judaism with Lat Blaylock, all with plenty of resources. The morning for non-specialists focused on the sacraments of anointing the sick, and reconciliation.

Spectrum/Rainbows

We have two requests please:

1. Would existing registered schools please confirm if you are still active.
2. If you would like your school to become a registered centre, please get in touch so that training can be organised. It might be that existing centres would wish for updated training.

CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES CCRS

- Some eager beavers have started to submit assignments that are due in April. Please ensure that the submission formatting details are followed to the letter.
- The final session for this term is Specialist 2 Session 2, as previously notified, and scheduled for tomorrow, 17th March, online from. 6.30pm. Any missed sessions must be undertaken before qualification.
- The quality of online interaction through conversation has become very encouraging. Never be nervous about making your point.
- Keep your online queries and contacts coming, it is a joy to speak!

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 Saints Peter and Paul Catholic High School, Widnes!

Read the full story [here](#)

Good Shepherd Mass 2026



The Music Department, in conjunction with Nugent Care, are delighted to invite you to join the choir at this year's Good Shepherd Mass in the Metropolitan Cathedral on **Thursday 25th June** with the service beginning at 10:30am.

Registration is now open and, as in previous years, there are two options for taking part in the Good Shepherd Mass.

Option A is to attend as part of the Good Shepherd Choir, which is run by the Archdiocese of Liverpool Schools Singing Programme

or

Option B - to attend as a congregational school.
Please see the poster below for more information.

The deadline to sign up for the choir is Friday 24th April
BUT

there may need to be a cut-off for capacity so
[SIGN UP NOW](#) to avoid disappointment.

There are **two** ways in which you can participate:

  <p>Option A: Sign up to be a singing school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in fundraising activity• Sing all parts of the mass setting, plus hymns and motets (KS3/4 choir sing extra item)• Enjoy expert music tuition, in school, from the Schools Singing Programme• Sing in a choir of approximately 900 during the Good Shepherd Mass	  <p>Option B: Sign up to be a congregational school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in fundraising activity• Option to participate as readers, in the offertory, etc.• Photograph with Celebrant• Be part of the congregation of around 2000 pupils
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Click here to [sign up for the choir](#)

Click here to [read full details](#)

Note: there is a further option to attend the Good Shepherd Mass in Leyland on Tues 30th June - although there is no formal choir that day.

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

CatholicVoices C4 Diocese of Liverpool
 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!

Education Department Newsletter W.C. 9/3/2026

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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