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Education Department Newsletter

23rd March 2026

Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

“Easter is the feast of hope... Darkness and death do not have the last word.” — Pope Francis



As we approach the end of this very short term, the well-deserved Easter break is now in sight. I want to extend my sincere thanks to all of you who attended the Headteacher, Chairs of Governors and School Business Managers' session last week. It was wonderful to catch up with so many of you, and I hope you found the session both helpful and worthwhile. Thank you also to those who took the time to complete the evaluation forms - your feedback is greatly appreciated.

As I said during the meetings, I do hope you will be able to find some time over the Easter period to rest, recharge, and enjoy a slower pace.

Thank you for the care, dedication and leadership you continue to show, and for bringing the message of the Easter story to the young people entrusted to you.

Easter Prayer

Loving God,
As we enter this sacred season, we thank You for the hope and renewal that
Easter brings.

Bless our schools, our staff, and the young people in our care.
Grant us rest where we are weary, peace where we feel stretched, and joy in the
work we do each day.

May the message of resurrection inspire us to lead with compassion, courage,
and faith.

Amen

Ben McMullen Deputy Director of Education

Chaplains' meeting with Brother Jean Patrick from the Taizé Community

Our chaplains were invited to meet with Brother Jean Patrick from the Taizé Community to learn more about what a week in Taizé offers for young people.

The community provides a unique opportunity for students to immerse themselves in prayer, worship, music and moments of deep silence as well as living as a community and helping. The meeting was both inspiring and thought-provoking, giving us a valuable insight into how transformative a Taizé experience can be for young people. It has opened up exciting possibilities as we begin to explore the idea of establishing an annual trip for our school communities. This is the link to the site for more information.

[Taizé Community](#)



Towards 2027 – Review of the National Framework for the Inspection of Catholic Schools

Please find attached a letter from the Chief Inspector to schools inviting contributions to the review of the National Framework for the Inspection of

Catholic Schools, with any changes to be implemented from September 2027.

This consultation seeks the views of those involved in the life and mission of Catholic education, including school leaders, staff, governors, clergy, and parents. It focuses on the process, substance, and outcomes of inspection, while confirming that the fact, purpose, and areas of inspection are not under review.

I would be grateful if you could circulate the [attached letter](#) widely within your communities, particularly with parents, governors and parish clergy.

The consultation survey can be accessed here:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=SSQzRY2fT0OpJmB_Xy63KLfjEZ6a7UxMnONEDY6s8p5UNEtRRUNCVTdKQTVUMzFXR0tITk1ENFINNy4u

The deadline for responses is **1st May 2026**.

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

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](#)



Final booking reminder!

Making a difference for Year 11 outcomes in Science now...and in future years' event with Karen Parker from Holy Family Catholic High School on 26th March 2026

We have organised a session for Science Heads of Department and your SLT line manager if appropriate (2 places available per school) to attend a 'Making a difference for Year 11 outcomes in Science now...and in future years' event with Karen Parker from Holy Family Catholic High School.

This will take place 9.00am until 4.00pm (lunch included) on Thursday 26th March 2026 at The Wrightington Hotel, Moss Ln, Wrightington, Wigan WN6 9PB.

[Please use this link to confirm attendance or to send apologies](#)



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 closes 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.



Suicide Prevention Training: Limited free places

Tuesday 28th and Wednesday 29th April

[Please use this link to secure a place](#)

St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic High School in Wigan have been offered access to fully funded CPD-accredited Suicide Prevention training through The Mary O'Gara Foundation, delivered in partnership with PAPYRUS.

The 3.5-hour SPEAK (Suicide Prevention: Explore, Ask and Keep Safe) is designed to build confidence in recognising when a young person may be struggling and how to respond safely and appropriately.

They have booked 2 separate training sessions on Tuesday 28th April and Wednesday 29th April; both sessions running 9.00am until 12:30pm. They are hosting both sessions in school and can offer **24 free places in each session** to colleagues from other schools. Colleagues from the same school could come on different days to overcome issues with cover if that would help with releasing staff. Each member of staff would only need to attend one training session.

Suicide Prevention is due to be a statutory aspect of each school's curriculum offer from September 2026 so this training is quite timely for any schools who are not yet ready to meet this requirement.

If you have any queries, please contact Gillian Morris, Deputy Headteacher directly at gmorris@arrowsmith.wigan.sch.uk



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, 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



Funded Training Opportunities for Staff in Liverpool Schools

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

Secondary School Improvement Flyer

Dave Smith, Sandra Martin and Andrea Gerrard

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](#)

Canva Learning Labs – Coming to Our Region

Canva Education (free for all primary and secondary schools) is running a series of *Learning Lab* events across the UK, including Liverpool. These sessions showcase how Canva can support teaching, creativity and productivity in the classroom.

Schools can join workshops on Canva AI, Canva Code, new features, and take away ready-to-use resources.

If your school is interested, you can sign up here:

[UK Canva Learning Labs](#)

Rescheduled Training Session: Securing Strong Progression for Pupils

The session "Securing Strong Progression for Pupils: Using Assessment Effectively in and Beyond Lessons" has now been rescheduled to **Thursday 18th June, 9:30am–12:30pm** at the St Margaret Clitherow Centre. This 3-hour course, led by Karen Morris (ECM), is designed for senior, middle and subject leaders looking to strengthen whole-school approaches to assessment. The session explores effective in-lesson and beyond-lesson strategies, examples of good practice, and what 'strong progress' looks like across Years 1–6. Delegates will leave with practical tools and a clear action plan to support improved outcomes back in school.

Sign up link: [Securing Strong Progression for Pupils: Using Assessment Effectively in and Beyond Lessons \(18-Jun-2026\) · ChurchSuite Events](#)



The Common Good Schools KS2 Programme

The deadline for Catholic Schools to apply for the Common Good Schools KS2 programme is **Monday 23rd March**.

How to Apply

If you would like to apply for the Common Good Schools KS2 programme, please [click here](#) for the application form. Details of application deadlines and what is included in the programme are provided below.

Application Deadlines

- **Cohort 1** (Catholic Schools) - **Monday 23rd March** (induction training: summer term 2026, programme commences: autumn term 2026)
- **Cohort 2** (Church of England, Methodist and Catholic schools) - **Monday 1st June** (induction training: autumn term 2026, programme commences: spring term 2027)

What is included in the programme?

- Induction Training
- Individual staff login to suite of digital resources - lessons, assemblies, community engagement
- Support via CPD and check-in sessions
- Certificate of partnership

Please do not hesitate to get in touch should you have further questions with Jo Stow, Common Good Schools Project Leader, jo@commongoodschools.co.uk.

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.

RED Assessment Tool Kit

Those who attended our Key Stage 3 training had a preview of the draft tool kit prepared by advisers nationally. It has been further enriched and will shortly be released to schools as a second draft for consultation. The aim is for a 'light-launch' of the final product in mid-May. Its use in schools will be entirely optional. The plan, beginning next term, is to visit our secondary schools individually to see the range of assessment processes already undertaken. There is so much initiative being shared.

Key Stages 4 & 5

From last year two new staff joined the CES to work in developing the RED to include both key stages, the latter for core Religious Education. Significant progress is being made, and they look forward to meeting with all dioceses.

Year 9

Has any subject leader a particular plan for inducting new students into Year 9 Religious Education? Numbers have increased significantly in one diocese and together advisers would welcome your experienced assistance. Please get in touch if you can help.

GCSE Judaism: Tuesday 21st April, 3.45-4.45

This is Anna Silver's monthly Q and A 'Any questions' zoom session to support teachers in their teaching of Judaism. It's free and informative and no question is a silly one!

Zoom link:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82876672045?
pwd=kTnWIRJ7a15v8aRec8cbHPwGx36qgp.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82876672045?pwd=kTnWIRJ7a15v8aRec8cbHPwGx36qgp.1)

CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES CCRS

- All of our sessions have now concluded for this term. Keep an eye on the brochure for dates next term.
- Assignments completed this term are due for submission on the date of your first session next term .
- Dates for the next academic year will be published soon after Easter to help with your planning.
- Don't forget that our webpage (Archdiocesan Education, Teacher Training, CCRS) contains all current information.

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

Help us shape youth ministry for the future

We want all young people to flourish and to know that they are cherished by God and are a vital part of the Church. So, as an Archdiocese, we are committed to explore how we can best accompany young people. Your voice is crucial.

What will happen: You will meet others and have your chance to share your experiences and ideas about how the Church might best respond to the needs of young people today. All feedback will be carefully listened to as part of a diocesan wide process planning youth ministry for the years ahead.

Who's invited: We want to hear from adults, young adults and 11-18 year olds. Please join us. (Under 18s must be accompanied by an adult.)

Come to **ONE** of our open meetings.

MONDAY 20TH APRIL 7 - 9.30pm St Joseph's Crow Orchard Rd,
Wrightington, Wigan WN6 9PA

TUESDAY 21ST APRIL 7 - 9.30pm St Monica's Fernhill Road, Bootle,
Merseyside, L20 9GA

The process is being facilitated by Danny Curtin, who worked in youth ministry

and youth work in the Church for many years.
For more information, contact Sarah McGeehan on s.mcgeehan@rcaol.org.uk or
07415099048

**Help us shape
youth ministry
for the future**

*We're reviewing youth ministry across our
archdiocese, and we need **your ideas** to help us
be a Church where young people flourish.*



Join one of our open meetings:
(Under-18s must be accompanied by an adult)

Monday 20 April	Tuesday 21 April
7–9:30pm	7–9:30pm
St Joseph's, Crow Orchard Rd, Wigan WN6 9PA	St Monica's, Fernhill Rd, Bootle, L20 9GA

For more info, contact **Sarah McGeehan**
s.mcgeehan@rcaol.org.uk | 07415 099048



2026 SPIRITUS ROME

International Formation Program Leading Evangelisation in Catholic Education

Dates: Fri 25th Sept (6.30pm) to Mon 28th Sept (1pm), 2026.

Location: ACU Rome Campus

Program Overview

An International Formation Program that equips participants in the mission of the Church in the Catholic School will be offered in 2026 in Rome and Assisi. The Spiritus Program began in 2019 in the UK as an international formation experience. It went online in 2021 with leaders from England, Scotland, and Ireland. In 2022, it returned in person at Worth Abbey and Edinburgh. The 2023 edition was held at Worth School, with leaders from Australia, the UK, and Ireland, while the Australian cohort continued in Rome and Assisi. In 2024, the Program was based in Rome, and in 2025, Spiritus UK was hosted in England.

Each year has deepened the Spiritus legacy, enriching leaders through shared wisdom, culture, and faith.

The Spiritus Program is designed to draw together an international learning community. An Australian cohort of leaders will attend the Program and continue with further study at the ACU Rome Campus.

The International Program is designed for Catholic school leaders and teachers, including Religious Education teachers. It is also intended for Church leaders, youth ministers, family parish educators or others who work in Church organisations with Catholic schools.

Please see the attached [flyer](#) for further details.



Are you prepared for the April 2026 water price increases?

The UK water market is set for significant pricing changes - and schools that act early will be best placed to reduce the impact.

Join us on **Friday 27th March at 10:00am** for a focused 30-minute webinar in collaboration with our official suppliers **Wodr** and **Business Stream**, where we'll break down exactly what's happening in the water market, why prices are increasing, and what practical steps your school can take now to protect budgets.

Tailored to Catholic schools, this session will help you understand what's changing, and what it means for your budget.

What we'll cover:

- How to mitigate the impact of April 2026 price increases
- An introduction to the Wodr Water Framework and how it supports schools
- Sustainability and social value in the water market
- Testimonials from framework customers already seeing the benefits

With rising operational costs already putting pressure on school budgets, this is an essential conversation for bursars, finance leads, and decision-makers.

Friday 27th March

10:00am - 10:30am

Online - Free to attend

Secure your place today and ensure your school isn't caught out by rising water costs.

[Register now](#)

Our aim is simple: to give Catholic schools clarity, confidence, and a clear route forward ahead of April 2026.

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. 16/3/2026

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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