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Education Department Newsletter

20th April 2026

Joan McCarthy
Director of Education



With the Easter season still very much in our hearts, it is a pleasure to welcome everyone back as we begin the new term. All our schools and colleges will have returned by today, Monday 20th April. For those of you who came back last week, I hope you had a positive start to the term. I also hope that you were able to enjoy some time for rest, renewal and reflection, and that the term ahead is both positive and rewarding for you and your school community.

Yesterday's Gospel reading, the story of the Road to Emmaus, offers a powerful reflection as we begin this new term together. It reminds us that Jesus walks alongside us, often in ways we may not immediately recognise - listening to our fears, hopes and questions, and bringing reassurance, understanding and purpose.

This Gospel speaks strongly to the work that takes place in our schools

each day. Through your care, compassion and commitment, Jesus is made present in your classrooms, corridors and playgrounds. In the way you support children, families and colleagues, you accompany others on their own journeys of learning, growth and faith.

As we look ahead to the weeks to come, thank you for all that you do to ensure that our schools remain places of welcome, hope and opportunity. I wish you all a successful and fulfilling term.

We look forward to seeing you at one of the meeting with the Archbishop on Tuesday 28th and Wednesday 29th April. **Please note that you must have booked on in advance**

[Book here.](#)

Ben McMullen Deputy Director of Education

Catholic School Inspections

CSI Inspections resume this week. Please note inspections taking place during week commencing 27th April, will take place on Thursday 30th April and Friday 1st May. As schools receive two days' notice, I will be notifying on Tuesday 28th April. This change is to avoid clashes with the Archbishop's meetings on 28th and 29th April.

Different Ways of Praying

Our final formation event this year for Prayer and Liturgy takes place on **Tuesday 21st and Wednesday 22nd April** at the St. Margaret Clitherow Centre. Please note that this will be a practical day involving art, drama and music. We advise you to wear casual clothing! Please give some thought as to who the most appropriate person is to send from your community.

There is still time for you to book on today! [Book here](#)

Senior Leaders Spirituality Day

Our second Spirituality Day, *Space for Grace*, will take place on Wednesday 6th May at Theodore House, Stonyhurst. Headteachers who were not able to attend last time are very welcome to join us. Please book on as soon as possible using the following link. [Book here.](#)

Holy Communion Badge Winner

Congratulations to Abigail from St Laurence's Catholic Primary School, Kirkby, on designing the winning entry for the Holy Communion

Badge Competition. The winning badge was chosen by Archbishop Sherrington from over 300 entries. Well done Abigail!

Education Department Calendar 2025-26

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

Calendar 2025-26

Gill Donohoe & Michael Boland

School Buildings /Education Estates Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) 2026

Please note the following from guidance provided by DfE: [click here](#)

We will calculate Devolved Formula Capital using the same methodology as in previous years. Every eligible school gets a fixed sum, and a variable amount based on pupil numbers. Pupil numbers come from the 2025 spring school census, or the 2024 to 2025 ILR for post-16 institutions.

With DFC, all schools can decide individually how to use the capital funding. DFC is capital funding intended for schools to address their own priorities, such as improvements to buildings and other facilities, including ICT, capital repairs/refurbishment and minor works or contributing to a larger capital project to improve condition.

The archdiocese receives the allocations and holds these for schools. **The allocations are made in June each year.** Use of DFC should be for leaders and governors to agree priorities and the support of area surveyors, either through direct involvement or professional advice should be sought. We advise that there is a maximum of **three years** to hold these funds and would encourage all schools to review what they currently have available and look to invest this in maintaining the fabric of the school building. **Vicky Magill** is available to provide advice and support to schools around DFC.

We would remind schools that we are aware of a substantial amount of DFC remaining unspent across the estate whilst at the same time we face considerable pressure on VASCA funding to support pressing capital projects.

Admissions

We are grateful to governors and school leaders for their support and

involvement in the consultation around Admission Policies for 2027/28. The policies should have been determined by the full governing body before **28th February 2026**; determined policies added to school website by **15th March 2026**. In addition to the determined admission arrangements being on the school website by 15th March 2026, they also should have been sent to their local authority and to the archdiocese.

We are asking for **formal confirmation** of this through an online form so that we can work with the schools who may need further support to ensure the updated policies are in place for 2028/29.

We are providing further training around Social, Medical and Pastoral applications and how to consider them in the light of the updated policies in the autumn term.

It should also be noted that there should currently be three years of admission arrangements on school websites – 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28. An audit of websites is currently being undertaken and schools where this is not the case, will be contacted for assurance that they have been updated.

We are also aware that some schools have still not consulted and moved over to the new policies. This would leave them in a very vulnerable position if an appeal was made. A training session on admissions in general will also be offered in the early autumn term.

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](#).

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



Upcoming meetings

Tue 5 May 2026

08:30-09:30 **Environmental Network Group Meeting**

Via Teams

[Please book here](#)

Thu 7 May 2026

15:30 – 17:00 **Physics Partners Programme (Space) Final Session**

Online meeting

[Please book here](#)



Spring Workshops Blossom!

Our Spring Workshops across the term proved to be more popular than ever before. We were delighted that attendance at our annual programme was up on previous years. However, the biggest success was the attendance at our bespoke events, which ran in response to analysis of feedback and discussion with Headteachers. Overall attendance at Secondary School improvement events was up by over 35%. A brilliant term and we thank all of our schools for their support and commitment to supporting our family of schools.

The variety of events was really pleasing. The events included Dance and Drama Workshops to support and inspire Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils, maths workshops to ensure that the last 6 weeks of school targeted the key topics that would make a difference to pupils' outcomes whilst the impending changes in PSHE were supported with the creation of an Archdiocesan working party.

We want to thank all of the schools that have supported the programme of

events, including the delivery of CPD, sharing best practice, hosting events and highlighting excellent practice from outside providers that we were able to share across the Archdiocese. The team is looking forward to more training and the sharing of best practice over the coming months and enjoying the privilege of working with our schools so as to improve outcomes for our pupils.



**STEM: Engage Teacher Conference 8th - 19th June 2026
(Open to Primary and Secondary colleagues)**

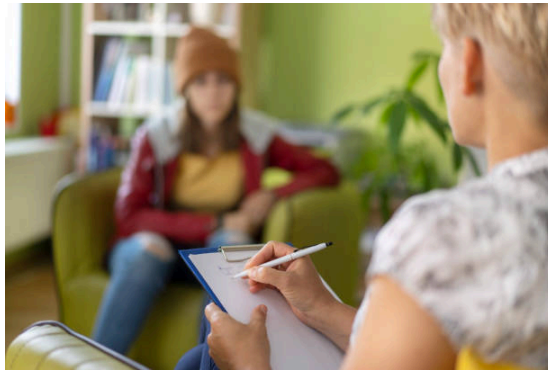
This year's [Engage Teacher Conference](#) is taking place online 8-19 June, and you can [book your tickets now!](#)

There are a lots of fantastic sessions including: options to hear from free STEM resources providers; learn about funding opportunities; see teachers discuss their tips for ensuring lessons are accessible; get insights into the new DfE Enrichment Framework; and much more.

A session you won't want to miss is with our keynote speaker [Mr P MBE, AKA Lee Parkinson](#), a primary teacher, influencer and co-founder of Teachmate.

Members of the [Engage Teacher Network](#) can attend all sessions for free. If you're not a member yet but think you might eligible, join now to get your promo code for free attendance.

If you're not eligible to join the network, use the code '**EarlyBirdETC26**' before **4 May** to book sessions for only £3 each!



Booking reminder: 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**. 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

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

Disadvantaged Students - Ensuring inclusion, securing outcomes - POSTPONED

Tuesday 5th May 2026 | 9:30am-3:30pm | St Margaret Clitherow Centre

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we have had to postpone this training.
The session will now take place in the Autumn term.

We will be contacting all delegates who signed up with further information
in due course.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

[Booking link](#)



The Big School Workout: Live with Joe Wicks for Mental Health Week

Thursday 14th May, 2.15-2.45pm (the afternoon post SATS)

Join Joe Wicks live from a Picture News school as he leads a high-energy workout for children to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Week. Schools across the country will be taking part together, discovering how moving our bodies can boost our mood, build resilience, and support our mental wellbeing. All you need to do is join the live session and get your pupils ready to move!

Suitable for: All children in KS1 and KS2

[Register here](#)

EY2P Summer Term Training Sessions

Summer Term EYFS Leadership Network Meeting

Tuesday, 19-May-2026

1:00pm - 4:00pm

[Booking link](#)

Connecting with Nature - The Growing Curriculum

Wednesday, 20-May-2026

1:00pm - 4:00pm

[Booking link](#)

Summer Term Headteacher & Deputy Headteacher Briefing

Tuesday, 16-Jun-2026

1:00pm - 3:00pm

[Booking link](#)

Early Years Conference for Senior Leaders

Thursday 21st May 2026 | 9:30am–3:30pm | St Margaret Clitherow Centre

Senior leaders are invited to a full-day Early Years conference led by Ruth Swailes, focusing on child development, current research and practical strategies to support high-quality EYFS practice. Drawing on extensive classroom, leadership and advisory experience, Ruth will share ideas that can be applied immediately while keeping children firmly at the heart of provision.

[Booking link](#)

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.

[Booking link.](#)

2026 Engage Teacher Conference

This year’s [Engage Teacher Conference](#) is taking place online 8-19 June, and you can [book your tickets](#) 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.

25th April: Resources for the Feast of St Mark the Evangelist -

www.godwhospeaks.uk/st-marks-gospel/

How to Read the Bible: 10 Tips for Enjoying Scripture -

www.godwhospeaks.uk/how-to-read-the-bible/

Psalms Project from the Spirituality Committee - *as attached.*

With my thanks and prayers.

GCSE Judaism: Tuesday 21st April, 3.45-4.45pm

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)

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CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

CCRS

Tuesday 21st April is the first session of Christian Morality for **Year 2**. It is live at St Margaret Clitherow Centre from 6.30pm.

Thursday 30th April is the first session of Person of Jesus for **Year 1**. This too is live at St Margaret Clitherow Centre from 6.30pm.

Assignments for the Spring modules (New Testament and Sacraments) are due in by the above dates please.

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

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. 23/3/2026

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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