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Education Department Newsletter

27th April 2026

Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

Yesterday, Sunday, we marked Vocations Sunday, a time to reflect on God's call to each of us.

A vocation is not just a role or a job, but a calling to serve using the gifts God has given us. In Catholic education, that calling is lived out every day through your work with children and young people and your commitment to the mission of the Church. Thank you for the dedication, care, and faith you bring to Catholic education – your vocation truly matters.

As Scripture reminds us:

"Each of you has been blessed with one of God's many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others." (1 Peter 4:10)

I am very much looking forward to meeting the Heads and Chairs of all our schools and colleges this week. It is good that we can come together as a Catholic community and listen to Archbishop John as he shares his vision for our Catholic schools.

Ben McMullen
Deputy Director of Education

Catholic School Inspections

Please note inspections taking place this week 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.

Senior Leaders Spirituality Day

Our second Spirituality Day, *Space for Grace*, takes place on 6th May at Theodore House, Stonyhurst. Headteachers who were not able to attend last time are encouraged to attend. The day is a retreat experience focusing on spirituality and the wellbeing of leaders. Sheila McNamara will deliver a thoughtful and inspiring day in a beautiful setting. Please do take advantage of this opportunity to join us.

Different Ways of Praying

Thank you to those of you who attended our final Prayer and Liturgy course of the year on Different ways of praying. The positive feedback we have received has been overwhelming for us. It is lovely for us to know that you have appreciated and valued the emphasis we have put on supporting you with prayer and liturgy this year.

Education Department Calendar 2026-27

We are working at putting together our calendar of events, courses and formation opportunities for the next academic year. If you have any suggestions for what you would like us to provide, then I would love to hear from you. Please contact me at b.mcmullen@rcaol.org.uk

Education Department Calendar 2025-26

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

Calendar 2025-26

**North West Catholic Dioceses
Training Partnership**

"Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch"



A Message to Headteachers

We appreciated the opportunity to speak with you before the Easter break at the Headteacher Cluster Briefings.

The following opportunities are available to any school, and we would be delighted to have further discussions with you if you are interested.

1. Dr John Patterson is offering the 'Slinks Project' which could be part of your Personal Development programme or Catholic Life planning.

Further information about the project is available on www.enrichment.org.uk where a video and lesson plans are available. Dr John offers an assembly which he will deliver to launch the project at your school also.

2. Dr John Patterson also has available a substantial amount of willow for any school that would be interested in incorporating it into their green space or sustainability plans. Please contact him on **JohnPatterson@catholicblindinstitute.org**
3. Alison Burrowes shared the project which provides prescription glasses to children in **Tanzania with Albinism**. An appeal for schools to consider supporting this project was made with the offer of an assembly/work with e.g. Pupil Councils/Mini Vinnies etc with a fundraising option. Please contact Alison on **burrowesa@nwcdtp.org.uk**

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](#)



**The National College CPD and Compliance Management
Refresher Session: Secondary Schools 4.00-4.45pm on
Wednesday 6th May 2026**

This session is for **secondary schools** and will provide a refresher on The National College platform, covering both **CPD** and **Compliance Management** — formerly The School Bus.

The session will cover:

Welcome and session overview

A brief introduction to the purpose of the session and what will be covered

Review of current usage and good practice

An overview of how secondary schools are currently using the platform, including examples of good practice and areas where schools may be able to increase engagement.

CPD membership refresher

A walkthrough of the Professional Development platform, including the breadth of training available for secondary schools across safeguarding, statutory compliance, SEND, curriculum, subject-specific CPD, leadership, pastoral care, governance and role-specific development.

Compliance Management refresher

A demonstration of the Compliance Management module, including access to policy templates, checklists, risk assessments, guidance documents and other editable templates available to schools.

Platform setup, compliance tracking and reporting

An overview of new and existing functionality, including learning plans, user groups, assigning compliance training, monitoring completion and using reporting tools to evidence compliance across school teams.

Questions and discussion

Opportunity for schools to ask questions, discuss local requirements and

clarify how to make best use of the platform.

Colleagues can join this session via the Teams link below:

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join: [https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/335858795480894?
p=eP8fhr7XgivcWquHSG](https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/335858795480894?p=eP8fhr7XgivcWquHSG)

Meeting ID: 335 858 795 480 894

Passcode: j56sb68W



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

The National College CPD and Compliance Management Refresher Sessions

— Primary Schools

5th May 4pm

[Teams link](#)

7th May 4pm

[Teams link](#)

Agenda / Meeting Description:

This session is for Archdiocesan primary schools and will provide a refresher on

The National College platform, covering both CPD and Compliance

Management — formerly The School Bus.

The session will cover:

Welcome and session overview

A brief introduction to the purpose of the session and what will be covered.

Review of current usage and good practice

An overview of how schools across the trust are currently using the platform, including examples of good practice and opportunities to maximise value.

CPD membership refresher

A walkthrough of the Professional Development platform, including the breadth of training available for primary schools across safeguarding, statutory compliance, SEND, curriculum, leadership, pastoral support, governance and role-specific development.

Compliance Management refresher

A demonstration of the Compliance Management module, including access to policy templates, checklists, risk assessments, guidance documents and other editable templates available to schools.

Platform setup, compliance tracking and reporting

An overview of new and existing functionality, including learning plans, user groups, assigning training, monitoring completion and using reporting tools to evidence compliance.

Questions and discussion

Opportunity for schools to ask questions, discuss local requirements and clarify how to make best use of the platform.

Disadvantaged Students - Ensuring inclusion, securing outcomes - POSTPONED

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we have had to postpone this training. to 30th November 2026.

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

We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

[Booking link](#)



True Mastery Teaching and Learning for English

Any school using a true maths mastery approach understands the benefits: deeper understanding for all, taking more time to secure key concepts before moving on, reducing attainment gaps and increasing confidence through small-step learning. *Mastery in Writing* is a pioneering new scheme delivering these benefits in English.

Written by Mike Cain, author of the successful Bloomsbury book *Teaching for Mastery in Writing*, the scheme is being refined through a collaboration with primary schools across the North West. Since September 2024, these schools have been trialling plans and resources in the classroom so that comprehensive unit planning for Years 1, 2 and 3 can be available from September 2026.

A phased introduction enables KS1 teachers to become champions for the programme alongside English Leaders. Early adopters have found this to be crucially important in winning hearts and minds in school. It allows expertise to grow organically so that a support system is firmly in place as the scheme is rolled out into Years 4, 5 and 6.

Visit <http://www.topmarksliteracy.com/> to get a flavour of the impact *Mastery in Writing* is already having. Contact former deputy headteacher and consultant Mike Cain for an informal chat about getting your school involved.

Email: mike@topmarksliteracy.com

Tel: 07905 756308

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.](#)

Child Safety Week Resources - Child Accident Prevention Trust

1st - 7th June 2026

[Child Safety Week 2026](#)

[Display Pack](#)
[Parents' Pack](#)

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.

During this your extra busy season we are, amongst lots of other things, preparing the programme for the next academic year. Whilst current items will remain, we would like to also 'inject' a range of initiatives. Please let us have your ideas.

**CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES
CCRS**

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

Years 1 & 2 this term

We have re-attached them below for your easy reference.

[CCRS Information Dates 25-6](#)

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



Catholic Education Service
Since 1847

Judaism Q and A - May 2026

Anna Silver's monthly Q and A 'Any questions' zoom session to support teachers in their teaching of Judaism will take place on:

Monday 11th May, 2026 3:45-4:45pm

Zoom link:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84379134655?
pwd=Fu6SJUPBx01tcNU7cDbYT4mq7H2Xbg.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84379134655?pwd=Fu6SJUPBx01tcNU7cDbYT4mq7H2Xbg.1)

Meeting ID: 843 7913 4655

Passcode: 278417

It's free and informative!

News from around the Archdiocese



Annunciation Celebration at Our Lady's Bishop Eton Catholic Primary School

Our Lady's Bishop Eton Catholic Primary School has marked the Feast of Our Lady of the Annunciation with a deeply meaningful celebration, centred on the blessing of a newly donated statue of Our Lady and a historic foundation stone dating back to 1912.

The statue, generously gifted by The Sisters of the Cenacle, now holds a prominent place within the school's newly created prayer space, alongside the convent's original foundation stone. The occasion was made particularly significant through a special blessing led by Fr Tim Buckley, with pupils from Year 4 taking an active and reverent role in the liturgy.

The celebration provided an opportunity for the school community to reflect on the Annunciation - a moment of faith, humility, and acceptance of God's will - and to connect these values with their daily lives. The involvement of the children ensured that the event was both prayerful and accessible, deepening their understanding of Mary's importance within the Catholic tradition.

Speaking after the event, Rachel Davidson, Headteacher, expressed heartfelt gratitude for the donation: "We are incredibly thankful for this most generous gift. The statue is not only a beautiful addition to our school but a spiritual gift that will inspire prayer and reflection for many years to come. It now takes pride of place in our newly created prayer space, serving as a daily reminder of Our Lady's example of faith and devotion. We are very grateful to Sr. Kate and her companions for their kindness and generosity in making this possible."

Sr. Kate, of the Sisters of the Cenacle, also reflected on the significance of the donation, sharing: "It gives us comfort to know that it will be going to a place where it is appreciated."

The presence of the 1912 foundation stone further enriches the significance of the space - together, these symbols serve as a powerful testament to the enduring legacy of faith shared between the school and the Sisters of the Cenacle.

The celebration stands as a reminder of the strength of Catholic community and tradition, and the importance of creating spaces where faith can be lived, experienced, and nurtured by future generations.

Cathedral Chorister Applications

Applications are now open for children to audition for the Cathedral Choir at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral.

Choristers receive a high-quality musical education and take part in regular services and special events in one of the country's most iconic cathedrals.

We warmly invite schools to share this opportunity with pupils in Years 2-5 who enjoy singing. Becoming a chorister offers children the chance to develop their musical ability to an exceptional standard, grow in confidence, and be part of a supportive and inspiring community.

Choristers in years 4-6 remain in their current primary school, prior to taking up their place at St Edward's College in Yr 7.

The video below shares some insight into chorister life - please do share this video with your school community.

[Do you know a child in years 2 to 5 who loves to sing?](#)

Mission Together Newsletter

Please find attached the latest Mission Together newsletter [click here](#).

Mission Together is the children's branch of Missio, the Catholic Church's official charity for overseas mission. All money raised for Mission Together supports children's projects in places of poverty and conflict. To find out more visit Missio.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

Education Department Newsletter W.C. 20/4/2026

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



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