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Education Department Newsletter

18th May 2026

Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth.”

— Acts 1:8

I would like to begin this week by offering my sincere thanks and congratulations to all colleagues in our primary schools who have supported pupils through last week’s SATs. We know this can be a demanding time for both children and staff, and I am deeply grateful for the care, encouragement and reassurance you have provided. Your dedication ensures that our children are not only prepared academically but are also nurtured with confidence and compassion through what can feel a challenging period.

It has also been a great joy to see the many photographs of First Holy Communion celebrations taking place across the archdiocese. These are such special moments in the lives of our children, their families, and our school communities. Thank you to all who have worked so hard to make these celebrations so meaningful and memorable, truly reflecting the faith life of our schools.

We are also very mindful that the examination season is now well underway in our secondary schools and colleges. At this important time, we keep all our young people, along with the staff who are supporting them, in our prayers, asking that they are given calm, focus and confidence in the days ahead.

Next Sunday, we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came

upon the apostles, giving them courage, wisdom, and the gifts they needed to fulfil their mission. As educators, this has a powerful resonance for our own work. We too are called to nurture and guide, to inspire and to give our young people the confidence to grow into the individuals God calls them to be. In all that we do—through our teaching, our care, and our witness—we help to bring those gifts of the Spirit to life in our schools each day.

I wish you all a good week ahead, and as we look towards the half term break, I hope it brings a well-deserved opportunity for rest and renewal.

Ben McMullen
Deputy Director of Education

Advance notice – Mass for Headteachers

Archbishop John will be celebrating a Mass of Commissioning for all headteachers on Thursday 17th September at St Mary's Church, Leyland.

Time to be confirmed.

Please put this date in your diaries.

Catholic Schools Inspections

Inspections resume this week after a two week break for the bank holiday and SATs.

Spirituality Day for RE Leads and Chaplains

Thank you to those who attended last week's Spirituality Day at Theodore House. It was a lovely day and feedback has been very positive about this retreat experience. The final day in the series is on 9th June for RE Leads (primary and secondary) and Chaplains. Please book your place [here](#).

Education Department Calendar 2025-26

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

Calendar 2025-26

Michael Boland
Education Estates

**NET CAPACITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME PHASE 2 : INFORMATION FOR
SCHOOLS**

The DfE has commissioned the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) to carry out Net Capacity Assessments for primary schools in England. This will be carried out through school visits from autumn 2025.

VOA are public sector property experts, with extensive relevant experience and the required specialist skills and capacity to deliver a data collection of this nature. They are also easily able to provide full geographic coverage with property assessors based in more than 30 regional offices. All VOA Property Assessors hold Enhanced DBS status and will provide evidence of this at the start of the site visit.

During the visit, acting as the Data Collection Organisation VOA will use the Net Capacity Assessment (NCA) tool and methodology to calculate the number of children a school can accommodate, based upon the size and use of spaces available. Originally developed in 2001, the NCA tool and methodology have been updated by the DfE to reflect more modern curriculum requirements and to include a wider range of school types. The benefits of accurate, up to date information on pupil capacity for schools and dioceses include:

- Making more efficient use of space
- Use of up-to-date information when planning the curriculum
- Independent verification of capacity for admissions and appeals
- Accurate and up to date information on room size and usage to review compliance with health and safety and building regulations

Please let us know if you are contacted by the Valuation Office Agency and share any reports that they may produce with us.

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



Upcoming meetings

Wed 10 Jun 2026

09:00 – 11:30 **Professional Learning Leads (All Clusters) Meeting**

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

[Please book here](#)

Wed 17 Jun 2026

09:00 - 15:30 **New to SENDCo (Primary and Secondary colleagues) Session 3**

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

15:30 - 17:00 **Aspiring SENDCo Course (Primary and Secondary colleagues) Session 3**

Venue: Via Teams

Thu 18 Jun 2026

09:00 – 16:00 **Safeguarding Leads Conference**

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

[Please book here](#)



Summer Term Conferences - Bookings now open!

Please find below details for our summer conferences

Thu 18 Jun 2026

09:00 – 16:00 **Safeguarding Leads Conference**

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

[Please book here](#)

Phil Threlfall will deliver the keynote during the morning session, and we are pleased to welcome Nicky Noon for the afternoon. In addition, colleagues from CPOMS will deliver a presentation, alongside valuable contributions from colleagues across our schools.

Thu 2 Jul 2026

09:00-16:00 **PSHE Leads Conference**

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

[Please book here](#)

The session will be led by Julie McCann. Her previous session in February was extremely well received, and we are confident that this workshop will provide valuable support as we prepare for the introduction of the revised DfE guidance on RSE in September. In addition, the PSHE Working Party will share a brief update on recent developments and the excellent work they have carried out to support schools.



Geography 2026: Capturing the Zeitgeist Subject Enrichment Residential 9th and 10th July 2026

The PTI Geography Symposium in partnership with the
Royal Geographical Society and Geographical Association
will take place on 9th and 10th July 2026.

PTI's first-ever Geography Symposium is designed to empower and inspire teachers to be advocates for their subject inside and outside of the classroom for a curriculum that is challenging, innovative and enriching. The Symposium will encourage teachers to introduce all learners, regardless of their socio-economic background or academic ability, to challenging and enriching ideas, materials and activities, through curricular, extra-curricular and supra-curricular provision in their schools and colleges.

Through academic talks, workshops and sharing of best practice, the Symposium will celebrate Geography, enrich and develop your knowledge and love of the subject, and motivate teachers to consider how to inspire their learners through engagement, enjoyment and empowerment. In celebrating Geography's interdisciplinarity, this event captures how Geography's cross-curricular core can ignite learners' enthusiasm across a diverse cross-section of subjects at schools and colleges. This Symposium will capture, cultivate and celebrate the zeitgeist.

[Further information can be accessed here](#)

Themes:

Everyday Geographies
Supra-curricular concept capture
Fieldwork

Confirmed guest speakers include:

Dr Olivia Taylor
Professor Iain Stewart MBE
Dr Jonathan Higham
Steve Brace
Dr Rebecca Kitchen
Alan Parkinson
J. Willgoose
Professor Bill McGuire
Dr Charlene Rose

Pricing:

Included in PTI Unlimited membership
The PTI / RGS / GA Members: £319 + VAT
Others: £419 + VAT

Eligibility:

All Geography teachers

Please note that The PTI Geography DDP Day is being incorporated into this Symposium on Friday 10th July. This means members of The PTI Department Development Programme should attend this Symposium rather than a separate DDP even



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

New Training

Strong Foundations – Foundational Knowledge- Teachers & Leaders

5th June 9am–11am, Online

This is a new training session that will be delivered online by Karen Morris from ECM.

[Booking link](#)

Best Practice Network

30th June 9:15–11:30 – St Margaret Clitherow Centre

The Best Practice Network is a collaborative professional learning event designed to bring primary school leaders together to share effective practice, reflect on improvement journeys, and learn from one another in a supportive, non-judgemental environment.

The network prioritises high-quality practice and impact, rather than inspection or compliance, and is underpinned by professional trust, openness and meaningful local collaboration.

Each session showcases schools that are willing to share their improvement journeys honestly, including successes, challenges and key learning.

All presenting schools have recently been inspected under the new Ofsted framework and will be sharing their school improvement journey. Please see the link below for more info and to book your place.

[Booking link](#)

EY2P Summer Term Training Sessions

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

Swales, 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](#)

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.](#)

Deacon Paul Mannings

Secondary School RE Adviser

.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.

For Chaplains and Religious Education Leads

Spirituality Retreat Day 9th June – Theodore House, Stonyhurst. The event starts at 10 am with coffee on arrival from 9.00am. The day ends at 3.30pm. It takes approximately an hour and 10 mins to get there from most areas of the diocese down the M6 hence the later start time. We would ask that you register as soon as possible as we need to know numbers for catering purposes as this is an outside event! If you are interested in travelling and staying over the night before they do offer bed and breakfast please contact the venue direct <https://theodorehouse.com/> and say you are a member of the Archdiocese. A few people have already pre-booked.

The booking link for the full event is in the calendar.

Christian Leadership Formation (CLF)

Stefan Kaminski writes:

I am writing with a special request. We have extended applications for our Christian Leadership Formation programme and I wanted to make sure this is on your radar. I would be incredibly grateful if you would push this out (again) to any sixth form students, or contacts (e.g. teachers) who might know suitable candidates.

CLF is a one-week residential programme at Stonyhurst for Year 12 and Year 13 students. It combines theology, philosophy, media skills, and leadership development with daily liturgies and a strong social element. Students consistently tell us it is the most formative experience of their school years, saying:

"Exploring natural theology gave me the ability to confidently articulate and defend my faith." — Alexy

"Reassurance that there are others my age willing to engage in Catholic practices." — Catherine

"The course inspired me to talk about faith with confidence, kindness and truth." — Qiyi

"I was guided into a depth of theology and philosophy which, as a scientist, I never knew." — Klaud

This summer's courses are:

Year 13 — The Human Ecology: 5–10 July

Year 12 — The Common Good: 10–15 August

Scholarships are available.

- The website is: www.christianleadershipformation.com and a 1-page PDF summary for circulation can be [downloaded here](#).
- I'm happy to answer any questions — just reply or call me on 01254 82732

CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES CCRS

Specialist Sessions

We have decided to resend the complete set of session notes by email, along with the assignment instructions and marking grids. Please be sure to store these carefully.

Webpage

CCRS information is available on our page. Click onto Archdiocese of

Liverpool Education, then Teacher Training, then scroll down to CCRS.

New Candidates for September

Please contact p.crilly@racoal.org.uk

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



Archbishop Encourages Pupils to Consider Cathedral Choristers

Pupils across schools in the Archdiocese are being invited to discover the opportunity of becoming a chorister at the Metropolitan Cathedral Choir, following a message of support from Archbishop John Sherrington.

“I invite young choristers to join the cathedral choir. It's a way of developing your musical gifts, of coming closer to Christ and giving praise with the community.”

— Archbishop John Sherrington

Being a chorister offers children the chance to develop their musical talent in a world-class choral environment, while also taking part in the daily life and worship of the Cathedral community. Choristers receive expert vocal training, perform regularly at services, and become part of a long tradition of sacred music.

Chorister Recruitment Assemblies

Schools can now book a Chorister Recruitment Assembly, where a member of the Cathedral Music Department will visit and introduce pupils to chorister life.

These sessions give pupils a clear picture of what being a chorister involves, including rehearsals, performances, and the benefits of singing in a supportive and high-quality musical setting.

To arrange an assembly, schools can register here:
[Chorister Recruitment Assembly Booking Form](#)

Follow the Archdiocese on WhatsApp

The Archdiocese of Liverpool is now on WhatsApp! Stay connected with the latest news, updates, and events from across the archdiocese and beyond by following our new channel. Simply scan the QR code or use the link below to join us:

<https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Vb8B5Hu2f3EJwDzn72z>

You can also stay in touch through our other social media platforms:

- ◆ Facebook: www.facebook.com/liverpoolarchdiocese
- ◆ Instagram: www.instagram.com/liverpoolarchdiocese
- ◆ TikTok: www.tiktok.com/@liverpoolarchdiocese
- ◆ YouTube: www.youtube.com/@ArchdioceseofLiverpool
- ◆ LinkedIn: <https://uk.linkedin.com/company/liverpoolarchdiocese>

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. 11/5/2026

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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