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Education Department Newsletter

13th July 2026

Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

As we reach the end of another academic year, I am reminded of yesterday's Gospel reading, Matthew 13:1–23, the Parable of the Sower. Jesus reminds us that while we cannot always see the immediate results of our work, faithful sowing matters. Seeds planted with care, patience and hope can, in time, bear an abundant harvest.

Looking back over this year, I see those seeds being sown every day across our schools and colleges. Headteachers, governors, teachers, support staff, chaplains, clergy and volunteers have each played their part in nurturing the faith, learning and wellbeing of the children and young people entrusted to our care.

This has also been an important year for Catholic education across our Archdiocese. In April, Archbishop John set out his vision in *Catholic Schools: A Family in Christ – Our Future Together*, reminding us that while each school has its own identity, we are strongest when we work together in pursuit of our shared mission. I have seen many examples of that collaboration throughout the year—in our schools, at diocesan events and through the willingness of colleagues to support one another.

My sincere thanks go to everyone who serves in our school communities. Your commitment, professionalism and generosity make a real difference to the lives of children and families. I am equally grateful to colleagues in the Education Department for the support they provide to schools, governors and trusts throughout the year.

As the academic year comes to an end, I hope you are able to enjoy a well-

earned summer break with family and friends. Thank you for everything you have contributed this year. I look forward to working with you again in September as we continue our shared mission of Catholic education across the Archdiocese.

With every good wish for the summer.

Joan

Thanksgiving Mass Photos

Thank you to all who attended our recent Mass where we gave thanks and celebrated the long service of our retiring colleagues. It was a lovely occasion and wonderful to join with so many of our governors, leaders and staff.

Below is a selection of some of the photographs taken at the occasion by Sue Mannings.



Ben McMullen
Deputy Director of Education

Chaplains' End of Year Meeting

Our secondary school chaplains came to LACE this week for their end of year meeting. Part of the day was to give thanks for the long service of Martin Malone, Chaplain of St John Rigby Sixth Form College, Orrell. Martin

was one of the first lay chaplains to be appointed in the Archdiocese and is retiring this summer after 28 years of service. We were joined in a Mass of Thanksgiving by a number of former chaplains who joined us to say goodbye to Martin. A huge thank you to Martin and all our chaplains for the hard work they do in our schools and colleges.



Catholic Schools Inspectorate

Thank you for your co-operation and support with CSI this year. Thank you

also to the hard work of our dedicated team of inspectors.

All schools due to be inspected in the next academic year have now been notified. I would like to draw your attention to this training at the beginning of the academic year:

CSI for schools due to be inspected this year

Tues 8th 9.30am – 12.30pm LACE

Calendar for 2026-2027 Autumn Term

Please find attached our Calendar for the Autumn Term. Booking links will be added over the summer holidays. There are still venues to be confirmed – please note that the conference side of the St Margaret Clitherow has reverted to its former acronym of LACE. It now means Liverpool Archdiocesan Conferences and Events.

Calendar 2026-27

Michael Boland

Education Estates

School Capital Programme 2026 2027

The School Capital Programme has been approved by Trustees and is now available on the website [Capital Programme 2026 2027](#) Area surveyors will work with schools identified for support to enable projects to progress. We have tried to ensure a focus on making schools safe, warm and dry as a priority as reflected in our Education Estates Strategy. As you will be aware, we have a limited budget and would like to do much more if we had funds available.

The information provided by schools and surveyors will be kept and used to form the basis for future projects in order to assure schools that the process is both ongoing and transparent.

Ged Preston, Steve Coyle and Vikki Borlase

Secondary School Improvement Team



Student Public Speaking Competitions 2026

Last week students from schools across the Central, East and West Clusters took part in the annual Archdiocese of Liverpool Student Public Speaking Competitions, demonstrating outstanding research, confidence and persuasive speaking skills.

Central Cluster featured students from All Saints Catholic High School, Christ the King Catholic High School, Holy Family Catholic High School, Hope Academy, Maricourt Catholic High School, Sacred Heart Catholic Academy, Saint Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic Academy, St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Academy, St Cuthbert's Catholic High School, St Mary's College and The Salesian Academy of St John Bosco.

East Cluster welcomed students from All Hallows Catholic High School, Holy Cross Catholic High School, Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School, Saints Peter and Paul Catholic High School, St Bede's Catholic High School, St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic High School, Wigan, St Gregory's Catholic High School, St John Fisher Catholic High School, St Mary's Catholic High School, Leyland, and St Peter's Catholic High School.

West Cluster included students from Academy of St Nicholas, Academy of St Francis of Assisi, Archbishop Beck Catholic College, St Francis Xavier's Catholic Academy, St John Bosco Arts College and St Julie's Catholic High School.

The breadth of topics inspired thoughtful debate on some of today's most pressing issues, with students showcasing their ability to research complex issues, develop well-structured arguments and deliver engaging speeches, impressing the judging panel with their confidence and making the standard of competition exceptionally high across all three clusters.

West Cluster Prize Winners on 30th June 2026

1st Place - Archbishop Beck Catholic College, Zachary

2nd Place - Archbishop Beck Catholic College, Ava

3rd Place Academy of St Francis of Assisi, Joanna

Central Cluster Prize Winners on 1st July 2026

1st Place - Hope Academy, Sophie

2nd Place - St Cuthbert's Catholic High School, Cerys

3rd Place - St Mary's College, Hollie

East Cluster Prize Winners on 8th July 2026

1st Place - St Bede's Catholic High School, Reuben

2nd Place - St Peter's Catholic High School, Adelaide

3rd Place - Saints Peter and Paul Catholic High School, Martha

At the Headteachers' Cluster meeting held at The Wrightington Hotel on 3rd July, attendees had the opportunity to experience the winning speeches from West and Central Clusters first-hand. A recording of Zachary's winning speech on '*Does society only listen to loud voices?*' was shared, followed by a live presentation from Sophie on '*Mars vs. Earth: Should we spend our money reaching for the stars or saving our own home?*', allowing colleagues to see the exceptional confidence, skill and passion demonstrated by this year's cluster champions. Both performances received loud applause from those in attendance, who praised the students' ability to communicate complex ideas with clarity, enthusiasm and maturity.

Thank you to our judges for generously giving their time; Deacon Paul Mannings, Michael Boland, Michelle Williams and exam board representatives from Eduqas and Pearson. A special thank you to the teachers for their hard work in preparing and supporting the students and to the students themselves, for having the confidence and courage to put themselves forward.



Eduqas Professional Learning Events: Feedback on Summer 2026 Assessments

Colleagues can use the link below to be notified when the Eduqas free professional learning events programme (Which covers feedback on summer 2026 assessments) is published and open for registration

[Subscribe for updates](#)



COP 31 Mock Student Events 2026 Registration now open!

We are pleased to announce that the archdiocese have again partnered with Liverpool World Centre to run two mock COP 31 events for students.

Each event is for a maximum of 16 schools, each sending a team of 8 students (This is aimed at pupils across KS3/4/5).

The cost of attending is £250 per school (The archdiocese is subsidising this event).

We have split the events based on locations of schools, so please check the links below to find the event your school is invited to attend. If you are unable to attend on the date allocated to your school, please get in touch and we will check capacity at the other event.

[9.30am until 2.30pm on 11th November 2026](#)

at St Margaret Clitherow Centre, Archdiocesan Office, Croxteth Dr.,
Liverpool L17 1AA

9.30am until 2.30pm on 18th November 2026
at Hope Academy, Ashton Rd, Newton-le-Willows WA12 0AQ.



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

Thank you!

As we come to the end of another academic year, we would like to thank all our schools for your continued engagement, partnership, and support. It has been a pleasure working with you throughout the year.

We wish you a relaxing and enjoyable summer break and look forward to working with you again in the new academic year.

With best wishes,

The Primary Schools Improvement Team

Important: Primary School Improvement Subscriptions 2026/27

We are asking schools which subscriptions they would like to continue with for 2026/27.

Please use the form below to let us know your choices. The pricing for each service is included on the form:

National College

School Bus

Seesaw

FFT

SIP Service

Thank you!

If you have any questions, please email primaryimprovement@rcaol.org.uk

[Link](#)

Changes to the Free Version of Seesaw

Starting from 30th June 2026, Seesaw Starter (the free version of Seesaw) will be subject to new usage limits. Please see the information below for full details.

These changes may affect many of our schools that are currently using the free version of the platform.

If you are interested in upgrading to Seesaw Premium, please get in touch with us or contact Seesaw directly for further information on subscription options and pricing.

What's Changing

Feature	Seesaw Starter Previous	Seesaw Starter After June 30, 2026
Active Classes	10	1
Students per Class	100	35
Teachers per Class	2	1
Activities in Library	100	35
Mixed Media Uploads	10 items	5 items

Feedback from Quad Meetings

As you know, we recently launched the QUAD Programme, bringing together schools from different local authorities to visit one another, exchange effective practice, share experiences, and develop new professional connections.

We are delighted that the first meetings have taken place over the last few weeks and have already generated some very positive feedback from participating schools.

Below, you can read some of the comments and reflections we have received so far.

Thank you to all the schools that have taken part and hosted visits. We look forward to the next round of meetings and to welcoming new schools and groups into the programme from September.

Some feedback from participants:

"We have just completed our first quad and it was a great success. All the heads were open and transparent and we gained a lot from the morning, one head actually said, "It was the best CPD he's had!." We have even made a little WhatsApp group between us!"

Nexus Education – Expression of Interest

Nexus Education provide expert support and guidance across key areas of school development, working closely with schools to meet their individual priorities and needs.

We have provisionally scheduled a session for Friday 18th September at 10:00am. If there is sufficient interest (a minimum of 12 schools), Nexus Education will design and deliver the session based on the specific interests and needs of those who sign up.

If you are interested in attending, please register your interest using the link below:

[Sign up link](#)

Best Practice Network

24th September - Sefton

9:15 - 11:30

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Lydiate L31 2LB

[Booking link](#)

8th October - Warrington

9:15 - 11:30

St Paul of the Cross, Milnthorpe Road, Burtonwood, Warrington, WA5 4PN

[Booking link](#)

10th November - St Helens

9:15 - 11:30

St Theresa's CPS, Cannon Street, Sutton Manor, St Helens WA9 4XU

[Booking link](#)

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.

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.

Leaders of Religious Education

Please help us to keep the contacts list up to date by ensuring we have the names and emails of those new to post. There will be a series of induction meetings for new leads beginning next term.

School Visits

Please contact us early so that departmental visits can be arranged.

Temporary Staff

Please encourage staff you may know outside of your school who are seeking temporary religious education posts to make contact, so that we can maintain a bank of staffing possibilities.

CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES CCRS

New Year 1 Candidates

We are doing well and there are still spaces. Please contact both or either of us.

New Year 2

See you in September for the Church module. It is quite an early start in the term so keep your calendar to hand. The first session will be in-person here at the centre on Thursday 10 September at 6.30pm. It is the same place and has now been re-branded as Liverpool Archdiocesan Conferences and Events (LACE).

Former Year 2

Once your assignments are successfully completed and attendance requirements fulfilled, we shall issue digital certificates which you can immediately use for reference. Paper copies will be presented at the next Archdiocesan Mass during the summer term of 2027, when you will be invited to attend with your families. Please stay in touch!

Returning Deferments

People who have put their CCRS on hold and wish to return are always welcome. The CCRS requires completion within five years of original registration so please contact us if you have any queries. We keep efficient records.

Assignment Submissions

All are due by 11 September. Please avoid August postings and queries, thanks.

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

CAFOD - Venezuela Earthquake Appeal

Our thoughts and prayers are with all the people of Venezuela after two devastating earthquakes near Caracas.

CAFOD's trusted Church partners are already providing emergency support, including food, water and shelter, to affected communities. However, the scale of the disaster is immense, with many thousands of people killed, injured or displaced, and significant humanitarian needs expected in the weeks and months ahead.

In response, CAFOD has launched the **Venezuela Earthquake Appeal** alongside the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC).

To support schools wishing to respond, CAFOD have created [primary and secondary PowerPoint assemblies](#), including an age-appropriate explanation of the challenge, prayers to share together, and an opportunity

to take action. Schools can also order a [free emergency fundraising pack](#), which includes a poster, collection box and stickers.

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 link below to view it!

Education Department Newsletter W.C. 6/7/2026

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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