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Education Department Newsletter

28th September 2026

Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

I have been reflecting on last Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 21:28-32) and the very human response of the two sons. It reminds us that faith is not about always getting things right, but about being willing to change, to grow and to begin again.

There is also a beautiful message here about forgiveness and acceptance. God meets us as we are, with all our strengths and imperfections, and calls us forward with love. As a family in Christ, we are invited to offer that same patience, compassion and sense of belonging to one another and to the young people in our care.

I want to thank you for the many ways you live this out each day. Through your kindness, encouragement, patience and service, you help create communities where young people feel known, valued and supported.

May we continue to be gentle with ourselves and with one another, remembering that, as a family in Christ, we are called to walk together with forgiveness, acceptance and hope.

With heartfelt thanks for all that you do, and every good wish for the week ahead,

Joan McCarthy

Ben McMullen
Deputy Director of Education

Headteachers' Commissioning Mass - POSTPONED

I apologise but we have had to move this again! We have realised that a number of our schools are on half term when this Mass was due to take place – 22nd October. We are still hopeful of holding an Education Mass for all headteachers, with a commissioning and presentation to our new heads. Please bear with us whilst we try to get a new date. Sorry for any inconvenience caused.

Chaplains' Beginning of Year meeting

I hope that all our chaplains are able to attend our meeting on Tuesday. Please follow the

booking link below:

Beginning of Year meeting	9.30am – 3pm	LACE	Chaplaincy	Book here
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St Oscar Romero Award Scheme

We are holding an online briefing on the Oscar Romero Award scheme on Wednesday 30th September evening. It will be led by Mugeni Sumba, Co-ordinator of the scheme, and Catherine Phillips, Deputy Headteacher at St Teresa's Primary School, Upholland. You will receive a Teams link on Wednesday morning if you have booked on. The link to book is below:

St Oscar Romero Award Briefing	4pm – 5pm	Online – Teams	All Schools and Colleges	Book here
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Catholic Schools Inspectorate

We have an introductory session on CSI for anyone new to role on Thursday 1st October. Numbers are currently low so it may be that there is not much need for this event. If you would like to attend, or know someone for whom it would be suitable, please encourage them to book using the link below:

CSI training for those new to role	9.30am – 12.30pm	LACE	Catholic School Inspectorate	Book here
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Calendar for 2026-2027 Autumn Term

Please find attached our Calendar for the Autumn Term.

Calendar 2026-27

Headteacher Cluster Meetings

Headteacher cluster meetings will take place during week commencing 12th October. Please see dates, times and locations below:-

12th October

- 9:30 – 12:30 at LACE, L17 1AA (Liverpool Schools)
- 13:30 – 16:30 at The Engine Room at Birchwood Park, WA3 6YN (Warrington & Halton Schools)

14th October

- 9:30 – 12:30 at Mercure Haydock Hotel, WA11 9SG (St Helen & Knowsley Schools)
- 13:30 – 16:30 The Edge, WN3 5AB (Wigan & Lancashire Schools)

16th October

- 9:30 – 12:30 at Formby Hall Golf Resort, L37 0AB (Sefton Schools)

Click [here](#) to book your place.

A reminder that you can attend any session you wish, but it is advisable to stick to your cluster area.

Chairs of Governors Termly Meeting

18th June

6.30 pm (online) click [here](#) to book your place

Michael Boland
Education Estates

Annual Assurance Document Schools

The Archdiocese of Liverpool has requested that **all schools** (including academies, joint faith, independent, Religious Order schools and sixth form colleges that sit within the estate of the archdiocese) complete an **annual assurance review**. This has been developed to establish whether schools and academies are meeting their compliance obligations and are ensuring that the site is safe and suitable for learning. This was identified as part of the launch of the Education Estates Strategy at briefings held in June 2025.

Please note that **governors are responsible** (and **Trust Boards** within CMATs) for the maintenance and compliance of schools and should ensure that they have appropriate contracts, processes and procedures in place.

Completing this document will align with the requirements set out within the **Archdiocese of Liverpool Estate Strategy** and associated documents such as the **Archdiocesan Protocols** and the **Occupancy Document**.

The assurance document will be a **Microsoft Form** distributed on an annual basis. The Archdiocese of Liverpool will **arrange visits to schools** to evaluate the responses and to establish whether appropriate processes, procedures and provisions are in place. This will initially be conducted on a random selection basis. The link to the form is:

[Microsoft Form](#)

We would ask that the form is completed and returned by **31 October 2026** as this is the first time of asking. In future, we would expect the form to be submitted by the end of the academic year.

Any schools that do not submit the forms by the due date will be contacted directly by the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

DFC Allocations

We have uploaded the information around current allocations of **Devolved Formula Capital** to the Archdiocese website [here](#). We are also preparing a reconciliation for all schools to indicate

allocations from the current year as well as the previous two years. This is with a clear intention to avoid schools retaining funds for longer than the three year limit. Please consult with area surveyors when considering minor works to have assurance that smaller works may not need their direct involvement.

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.

Please contact Vicky Magill if you need any further help or advice with spending DFC monies
v.magill@rcaol.org.uk

School Based Nurseries Capital Grant – Phase 3 2027 2030

The School Based Nurseries Capital Grant 2027 to 2030 can be used by local authorities to create or expand a school-based nursery in state-funded primary-phase schools, maintained nursery schools and on Best Start Family Hub sites. The projects identified by local authorities could be substantial and factor in multi year funding. They will have the capacity to identify and support projects which they feel would benefit local communities.

Further information on eligibility and guidance for local authorities can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-based-nursery-capital-grant-2027-to-2030>

Please let us know if you have been contacted by local authorities with the intention to develop nursery provision at your school using this funding. It will be important that we have awareness and oversight of any capital works that are proposed.

Ged Preston, Steve Coyle and Vikki Borlase

Secondary School Improvement Team



Upcoming Events

Monday 28 Sept 2026

09:00 – 11:30 **Professional Development and Curriculum Workshop**

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

[Please book here](#)

13:30 – 16:00 **SENDCo Meeting**

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

[Please book here](#)

Tue 29 Sep 2026

09:00 - 11:00 **Exam Officer Meeting**

Venue: Hope Academy, Ashton Rd, Newton-le-Willows WA12 0AQ

[Please book here](#)

13:30 – 16:00 **IT Manager Meeting**

Venue: St John Fisher Catholic High School, Baytree Rd,
Wigan WN6 7RN

[Please book here](#)

Wed 30 Sep 2026

08:00 – 10:00 **Secondary School Improvement Advisory Group meeting (By invitation only)**

Venue: Liverpool Archdiocese Conferences & Events, Croxteth Drive, Liverpool L17 1AA

13:30 – 16:00 **Foundational Knowledge/Nurture Group session**

Venue: Holy Family Catholic High School, Virgin's Ln, Thornton, Liverpool L23 4UL

[Please book here](#)



Event Reminders

**PSHE Leads meeting 7th October,
9.00am until 11.30am at The Wrightington Hotel**

We are delighted that Julie McCann will be joining us once again to share her expertise and provide valuable input on RSE. Steve Coyle will also be providing an update from an inspection perspective, including examples of effective practice observed across schools

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

**Safeguarding Leads Meeting 7th October,
1.30pm until 4.00pm at The Wrightington Hotel**

We are please to advise that we have Lauren & Alicia, our colleagues from CPOMS joining us once again to share their expertise and provide valuable input. We also have a presentation from Mike Toole & Mark Gardner looking at an online version of the Single Central Record

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



Funded Training Opportunities for Staff in Liverpool Schools

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

Secondary School Improvement Flyer

**Ged Preston, Dave Smith,
Sandra Martin and Andrea Gerrard**
Primary School Improvement Team

Autumn term training

Please see below our autumn term training offer. If you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

29th September - [Is Everything OK with Your EYFS?](#)

6th October - [SEF workshop with John Atkinson](#)

7th October - [SEF workshop with John Atkinson](#) (repeated)

7th October - [Write from the start! Early Years Conference with Ruth Swailes](#)

12th November - [Developing High Quality SEND Practice in the Early Years](#)

16th November - [Attendance: for Primary School Leaders and Attendance Leads](#)

17th November - [EY2P Training Events - Autumn Term EYFS Leadership Network Meeting](#)

27th November - [Safeguarding: Quality assurance of the Single Central Record](#)

30th November - [Disadvantaged Students - Ensuring inclusion, securing outcomes](#)

1st December - [EY2P Training Events - Autumn Term HT & DHT Briefing](#)

9th December - [Safeguarding: Getting the Basics Right](#)

11th December - [Analyse Your New IDSR and ASP with Expert Help](#)

Best Practice Network

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.

SEND Training Offer

A reminder that we are again running a Primary and Secondary SEND course with Danielle Moran. Both the New to SENDCo and Aspiring SENDCo are condensed versions of this year's sessions. We also have a new SEND Programme. All dates, details and booking links are below.

New to SENDCo Programme - [Please register here](#)

All sessions will run 9.00am until 11.30am at The Wrightington Hotel on the below dates:

- Module 1 - Thursday 17th September 2026 - completed
 - Module 2 - Tuesday 17th November 2026
 - Module 3 - Wednesday 13th January 2027
 - Module 4 - Thursday 25th February 2027
 - Module 5 - Tuesday 4th May 2027
 - Module 6 - Wednesday 16th June 2027

SEND Programme 2026/27 - [Please register here](#)

All sessions will run 1.00 - 3.30pm at The Wrightington Hotel - Session titles and dates below:

- EYFS - Thursday 17th September 2026 - completed
- Cognition and Learning - Tuesday 17th November 2026
 - SEMH - Wednesday 13th January 2027
- Physical and Sensory - Thursday 25th February 2027
- Communication & Interaction - Tuesday 4th May 2027
- EBSA and School Attendance - Wednesday 16th June 2027

Aspiring SENDCo Programme - [Please register here](#)

All sessions will run 3.45 - 5.00pm via Teams on the below dates:

- Module 1 - Thursday 17th September 2026 - completed
 - Module 2 - Tuesday 17th November 2026
 - Module 3 - Wednesday 13th January 2027
 - Module 4 - Thursday 25th February 2027

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.

The new date for this meeting is 10th November 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](#)

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 Liverpool Archdiocesan Conferences and Events (LACE) or in the adjacent St Margaret Clitherow Centre.

From Thomas Gillingham, National RE Adviser

We are pleased to share The National Conversation: Next Generation, an opportunity for children and young people aged 16 and under to have their say on the country they want to see and how we can live well together.

Schools and youth settings can take part using a free, ready-to-use toolkit, with flexible activities that can be used in lessons, tutor time, school councils, clubs or assemblies.

National Conversation Week takes place from 5 – 9 October, although conversations can be held at any point before the submission deadline. All feedback should be submitted by 23 October 2026

To contribute to the work of the Independent Commission on Community and Cohesion, See links below.

Taking part is simple:

1. Download the toolkit and resources:
www.thenationalconversation.org.uk/young-people/
2. Hold your conversation with children and young people.
3. Submit their feedback by **23 October**:
www.thenationalconversation.org.uk/conversation-feedback-young-people/

Key Stage 4 RED

The advisory panel's draft for Key Stage 4 has been sent to the Bishops' Department for Education and Formation in time for their Autumn meeting. There will be feedback, which will inform ongoing revisions. The content includes a multi-disciplinary approach, inclusive of sacred Scripture, using the same texts across the gospel account and social studies. The examination boards we use have been engaged in the discussion. OCR a key A Level provider has also expressed an interest in progress.

Key Stage 5 Core RE RED

Certain elements from Key Stage 4 will be included to enable continuity. We shall await the

bishops' consideration of KS4 before progressing further. The content will focus upon both the academic and pastoral. The completed content will be advisory rather than compulsory. Meanwhile we carry on with the existing good and better practice in our schools and colleges.

SEND Students

There are increasing numbers who cannot access the RED and GCSE. The diocese is already supporting two schools to create alternative provision. One school has a specific new study plan and would be willing to share the content. This does not affect those schools using accredited Entry Level Study studies pathways. This item will continue to be updated.

CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES CCRS

Year 1

We had an excellent turnout for our first session last week. Make sure you keep the schedule to hand. We meet online, tomorrow Tuesday 29 September at 6.30pm, for the second session. Next week on Tuesday 6 October we meet again in person at LACE for Specialist 1 Session 1. The timing is always 6.30pm.

Year 2

This week we meet in person at LACE on Thursday 1 October for:
Specialist Module 2: Current Developments in Religious Education.

Assignments

Thank you for the submissions from last term, which will be processed and returned in due course.

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 link below to view it!

Education Department Newsletter W.C. 21/9/2026

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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