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Archdiocese of Liverpool

Education Department Newsletter

9th November 2026

Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

I hope that you, your staff and your school communities enjoyed a restful and refreshing half term. I know how quickly the pace of school life gathers momentum again, so I hope the break provided a welcome opportunity to pause, enjoy time with family and friends, and recharge for the weeks ahead.

Yesterday's Gospel, Matthew 25:1–13, tells the parable of the ten bridesmaids waiting for the bridegroom. Five are wise and come prepared, bringing enough oil for their lamps, while the others find themselves unprepared. Jesus leaves us with a simple but important reminder: "Keep watch."

It seems a particularly fitting Gospel as we begin a new half term. As headteachers and school staff, you are constantly called upon to be ready: ready to respond to the needs of a child, support a colleague, reassure a family or navigate the unexpected challenges that each school day brings.
Yet perhaps there is another gentle reminder for us in this Gospel. Being ready is not simply about being busy or always having the answers. It is also about making sure we have enough oil in our own lamps.

That oil might represent the things that sustain us: our faith, prayer, relationships, compassion and the sense of purpose that first drew us to our vocation. In the busyness of school life, it can be all too easy to put our own needs to one side. But we cannot continually give to others without finding moments to replenish ourselves.

As we move through November, a month when we particularly remember and pray for those who have died, I hope we can also find time to reflect on those who have shaped our lives, encouraged us in our faith and inspired us in our vocation. We remember them with gratitude and pray that their example continues to guide us in our service to the children and young people entrusted to our care.

Academy Update

As you will know, we recently shared the wonderful news that 14 of our schools have received approval to become academies, an important milestone as they prepare to join Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust and St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust.

This is a significant step forward, but at the heart of it all remains something much more important: our shared Catholic mission and our commitment to working together as one family of schools, supporting one another and providing the very best Catholic education for our children and young people.

I want to express my sincere thanks to the headteachers, governors, staff and trust colleagues who have worked so hard to bring us to this point. I know how much time, thought and commitment has gone into the process, often alongside the many other demands of school life, and I am truly grateful.

We wish all 14 schools every blessing as they take this next step in their journey. I look forward to seeing the opportunities that will grow from this collaboration and the continued strengthening of our Catholic family of schools.

Educate Awards

The Educate Awards take place on Friday, 13 November, and I want to take this opportunity to wish all the nominees the very best of luck.

It is always a joy to see the dedication, creativity and achievements of our schools and staff recognised and celebrated. So much wonderful work takes place in our schools every day, often quietly and without recognition, and these awards provide a lovely opportunity to shine a light on just some of that work.

Congratulations to everyone who has been nominated. You should already be incredibly proud of what you have achieved, and I look forward to seeing many of you there next Friday.

Finally, thank you, as always, for everything you do and for the care, commitment and faith you bring to your school communities each day. I know that the weeks ahead will be busy, but I hope they will also bring moments of joy, encouragement and fulfilment.

And perhaps, as we take the message of Sunday's Gospel into the new half term, we can all remember one simple thing: in caring for others, let us not forget to keep a little oil in our own lamps.

I wish you and your school communities every blessing for the half term ahead.

With every good wish,

Joan

Ben McMullen
Deputy Director of Education

New to Leading Prayer – Secondary

Please can I draw your attention to the forthcoming course which takes place on Monday 16 November from 9.30am to 3pm. This is a new course and is designed for form tutors who perhaps lack confidence or need more support in leading class prayer. Please can you think of the most appropriate people to send and follow the booking link below.

Mon 16 Nov	New to Leading Prayer – Secondary	9.30am – 3pm	LACE	Prayer & Liturgy	Book here

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Education Mass

Our Mass for Headteachers, Senior Leaders and Chairs of Governors takes place on Thursday 26 November at 4pm at St. Mary's Church, Leyland PR25 1PD. It would be lovely to fill the church, so please put the date in your diaries and join us for this celebration with the Archbishop. There will be a short rite of commissioning and presentation to our new headteachers after Holy Communion.

Thurs 26 Nov	Mass for Headteachers, Senior Leaders & Chairs of Governors	4pm	St Mary's Church, Leyland	All Schools and Colleges	Book here

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Christmas Card Competition – last chance!!

There is a short extension to the deadline for the Christmas Card competition. You have until Wednesday 11th November to get your entries to us.

As usual, there are two categories – one for primary schools and one for secondary.

Please send designs to **communications@rcaol.org.uk** by **5pm on Wednesday 11th November** along with the name of student, age, year group, school, and confirmation of parents/carers permission.

There are no limits to how many students can enter from your school, so please encourage as many as possible to take part.

Submissions will be whittled down to a shortlist by our panel of judges.

The shortlist of entries will then be shared on the archdiocesan social media channels and the one from each category with the most comments will be declared the winner.

If you have any questions, please contact our communications team on communications@rcaol.org.uk

Good luck!



Christmas communications - we need your help!

The archdiocesan communications team would like your help with their social media content this Christmas.

As per previous years, we would like to show Christmas through the eyes of our students, so we are asking schools to send in any questions that their pupils may have about Christmas or Advent e.g. what is Advent, why are the candles on the Advent wreath different colours, why do we have midnight Mass etc.

These questions will then be answered by clergy and will be used in a video for our social media channels.

The questions can be in two formats:

- Video of the pupil asking the question (videos can be filmed vertically on a smartphone. Don't worry about editing the clip, we can do that before publication if needed)

or

- Written format

Please send any questions to communications@rcaol.org.uk. The content will be used throughout Advent and we will tag your school into the post.

Please note: All students in videos will need permissions to be featured on archdiocesan channels, could parents of those appearing in the videos please complete the attached consent form.

Calendar for 2026-2027 Autumn Term

Please find attached our Calendar for the Autumn Term.

Calendar 2026-27



School of the month

Congratulations to our school of the month - **Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School in St Helens**! Please read here.

Gill Donohoe & Michael Boland

Published Admission Number

In order for admission authorities to consider a reduction in Published Admission Number (PAN) for admissions for 2028 2029, a period of consultation will need to be arranged. This would be for a six week period and undertaken between 1 October 2026 to 29 January 2027. Prior to this consultation, we would expect admission authorities (Governing Bodies, Local Academy Council/ Trust Boards) to have met to consider proposals and to have this minuted. We would then expect admission authorities to seek approval from the Archbishop (as per Diocesan Protocols) through the Director of Education as his representative.

The normal process of consultation would require admission authorities to consult with a range of interested parties, which would include a narrative to explain the reasons for a reduction. We would, of course be available to support admission authorities in this process.

Please contact either Gill Donohoe or Michael Boland for further advice.
Gill Donohoe g.donohoe@rcaol.org.uk
Michael Boland m.boland@rcaol.org.uk

Admission Policy 2027 2028

The majority of schools across the archdiocese have now consulted and determined the policy for admissions as recommended by the Catholic Education Service and adopted by the Archdiocese of Liverpool. A number of schools, however, have not completed the process and so will be using policies from previous years for admissions in 2027 2028. The opportunity to align with the rest of the archdiocese will be available to these schools for admissions in 2028 2029.

Admission Policy 2028 2029

The consultation period for this process began on 1 October 2026 to 29 January 2027 and we would expect all schools who have not yet completed the consultation successfully to engage. We will be available to support admission authorities in this process and provide specific guidance to ensure that all schools in the Archdiocese of Liverpool have admission policies which reflect current guidance.

Please contact either Gill Donohoe or Michael Boland for further advice.
Gill Donohoe g.donohoe@rcaol.org.uk
Michael Boland m.boland@rcaol.org.uk

Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time if you need any clarification on any aspect of the admissions process.

Ged Preston, Steve Coyle and Vikki Borlase

Secondary School Improvement Team



Upcoming Events (Secondary Schools and Colleges only)

Mon 9 Nov 2026

09:00 – 11:30 **Literacy Leads meeting**

Venue: St Peter's Catholic High School, Howards Lane, Orrell, Wigan WN5 8NU

Please book here

13:30 - 16:00 **HoD Geography Meeting (Teams)**

Please book here

Tue 10 Nov 2026

09:00 - 11:30 **Careers Leads Meeting**

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

Please book here

13:30 - 16:00 **HoD Art and Design Meeting**

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

Please book here

Wed 11 Nov 2026

09:30 – 14:30 **COP31 Student Event with Liverpool World Centre (Fully booked)**

Venue: Liverpool Archdiocese Conference & Event , Croxteth Drive, Liverpool L17 1AA

13:30 - 16:00 **HoD Languages Meeting (Teams)**

Please book here

Thu 12 Nov 2026

14:00 - 17:00 **Headteacher Residential Day 1**

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

Fri 13 Nov 2026

8:45 - 12:30 **Headteacher Residential Day 2**

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

Mon 16 Nov 2026

14:00 - 16:00 **Sociology (Teams)**

Please book here

Tue 17 Nov 2026

09:00 - 11.30 **New to SENDCo (Session 2) for Primary and Secondary colleagues**

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

Please book here

13:00 - 15:30 **SEND Congition and Learning (Primary and Secondary colleagues)**

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

Please book here

13:30 - 16:00 **HoD Drama Meeting**

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

Please book here

15:45 - 17:00 **Aspiring SENDCo (Session 2) for Primary and Secondary colleagues (Teams)**

Please book here

Wed 18 Nov 2026

09:30 – 14:30 **COP31 Student Event with Liverpool World Centre**

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

Please book here

Thu 19 Nov 2026

13:30 - 16:00 **HoD Computer Science (Teams)**

Please book here



Circular Economy Project: Secondary Schools

Liverpool World Centre is partnering with Farm Urban in Liverpool to provide:

- Two classroom workshops (1 hr each), the first with a group or class and Farm Urban, in school, and the second with LWC at school with a group of around 15 students from the first session.
- Then the students undertake a piece of in-school research (agreed in workshop 2)
- Finally they bring their research and ideas to a Citizens Assembly with other secondaries, share what they've found out and prepare action plans etc. (3rd March 2027, venue tbc)

Please note this is free for schools in the Liverpool City Region as funding is available.

The whole idea is to develop a plan to reduce and encourage a more circular approach to one type of waste.

Please book your first workshop this term with Farm Urban by contacting Lydia McPherson at routesandshoots@farmurban.co.uk and copy to neil@liverpoolworldcentre.org

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The PTI: Subject Expertise Certificate

The PTI are offering archdiocesan schools **a 50% discount**, on top of the early bird offer for their Subject Expertise Certificate. This means the entire course will cost **£122.50** (+VAT), or is free for PTI Unlimited schools.

You can access the flyer for more information here

The sessions are running on the dates below at Great Sankey High School:
Day 1 - Saturday 21st November 2026
Day 2 - Saturday 30th January 2027
Day 3 - Saturday 15th May 2027

Subject sessions running are:
English
Biology
Chemistry
French
Geography
History
Maths
Physics
Spanish

You can book your places via their website, using this link.

Use the code **Return50** when booking to unlock the discount.

The topics are different from previous years**,** so anyone who attended last year's course is welcome to attend again and refresh their subject knowledge on these new topics.

If you have a query, please contact Preeya Harte, Programmes Coordinator at preeya.harte@ptieducation.org

If you would like information about The PTI, please contact John Wilkinson at John.Wilkinson@st-edwards.co.uk

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Building Inclusive Practice: A Whole-School Guide to Establishing Inclusion Bases
30 November | Accredited CPD points, with a certificate available afterwards

Through our partnership with Zen Educate, school staff are invited to explore how Inclusion Bases can help children who are finding school difficult to learn, participate and belong. The

webinar looks at bringing together SEND, behaviour, attendance and pastoral support while keeping children connected to learning and their school community.

This supports Zen's commitment to providing professional development opportunities for Archdiocese schools.

This webinar is for both primary and secondary schools. Please share with your teaching and support teams and encourage them to sign up.

Find out more and register

Mental Health Support
for children & young people in Liverpool

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

Best Practice Network

10th November - St Helens

9:15 - 11:30

St Anne's Catholic Primary School, St Helens, WA9 3SP

Booking link

Upcoming CPD Events

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.

10th November - Best Practice Network in St Helens
10th November - Nexus online session
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
6th January - "Floating on a sea of talk..." - Early Years Conference with Ruth Swailes
14th January - Leaders - Monitoring & Evaluating for Foundational Knowledge
19th January - Safeguarding: Quality assurance of the Single Central Record
22nd January - Writing Session with Jo Duckworth of DBE Services
24th February - Inspection Training - Leading Your School Through a Successful Inspection
8th March - Safeguarding: Getting the Basics Right

Anti-Bullying Week 2026

Anti-Bullying Week takes place 16 – 20 November 2026, with this year's theme, 'Break the Silence', encouraging children and adults to speak up, listen and take action against bullying. Schools can access free primary and secondary resources, including materials to help bring the campaign to life.

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.

Our whole November focus is on: All Saints and All Souls - www.godwhospeaks.uk/all-saints-and-all-souls/
How are saints defined? How does the Church honour them? - www.godwhospeaks.uk/origins-of-all-saints-day/
'Those unknown by all but Him' by Cn. Mark Skelton - www.godwhospeaks.uk/poem-all-saints-day/
The journey to the other side is filled with hope. – www.godwhospeaks.uk/the-feasts-of-all-saints-and-all-souls/
Why do we pray for souls? How does this help them? - www.godwhospeaks.uk/all-souls-feast-of-hope/
We believe that life is changed, not ended at death. - www.godwhospeaks.uk/liturgy-all-saints-and-all-souls-days/

Healing Tree Activity
Make a tree with prayer leaves for your loved ones now in heaven - www.godwhospeaks.uk/healing-tree-activity/

Ask/Seek/Knock Poem based on Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9 by Cn. Mark Skelton - www.godwhospeaks.uk/ask-seek-knock-poem/

Remembrance Poem by Cn. Mark Skelton - www.godwhospeaks.uk/remembrance-sunday-

poem/

22nd November: Feast of Christ the King - Coronations and the Bible - www.godwhospeaks.uk/coronations-and-the-bible/

New article in our Scripture & Neuroscience series
Faith comes from Seeing: Vision - www.godwhospeaks.uk/faith-comes-from-seeing-vision/

Get ready for Year B with Mark's Gospel - www.godwhospeaks.uk/st-marks-gospel/

CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES
CCRS

Some timely updates …

Our CCRS sessions begin again this week

Year 1 Tuesday 10 November here LIVE at LACE: This is written with a smile because there always seems to be confusion. Live means in person and we look forward to seeing you.

Year 2 Thursday 12 November ONLINE: Final session of the Church Module.

Year 1 Tuesday 17 November ONLINE: Final session of Hebrew Scriptures

Submission of Journals for Hebrew Scriptures (Year 1) and Church (Year 2): These are due in on 1 December. Please follow the instructions within the writing frame.

Submission of Specialist Journal: This is not due until Summer 2027.

Please ensure that all session notes are saved and easily available for reference when completing your journals.

Contacts
All academic, attendance and progress assistance or issues: Deacon 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



Youth Sunday celebration – Sunday 22nd November

Please encourage your young people to come to this year's YOUTH FEST! (Youth Sunday Celebration). Below is essential information, and also please print out this poster and share around!

WHAT? Youth Sunday Celebration on the theme of Take courage! **I have overcome the world!**

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT? A day for young people (age 11 – 17) to share faith, friendship and worship.

WHERE? LACE Croxteth Drive L17 1AA

WHEN? Sunday 22nd November – starts at 10am finishes after 4pm Mass with Archbishop John (So ends 5pm)

WHO? One Hope Project, Fr Frankie Mulgrew, Fr Mark Beattie, Kate Wilkinson from A Million Minutes, Anna Lilley from Young Christian Workers

WHAT WILL BE HAPPENING?

Workshops COURAGE TO LISTEN, COURAGE TO ACT, COURAGE TO PRAY – all exploring how to get closer to Jesus and how to be a young Catholic in today's world. **Reconciliation** will be available and there will be lots of information about groups that young people can get involved with to make a difference in the world

FREE entry. Bring a packed lunch – there will be a tuckshop to buy drinks and snacks.

HOW IT WORKS...!

You can either:

- **BRING A GROUP WITH YOU** - (Remember the ratio is 1-8 for 11-12 year old and 1-10 for 13-17 year olds.)

- **OR YOU CAN ENCOURAGE THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO SIGN UP INDIVIDUALLY** - (please note that we would much prefer if you came with your young people as we have limited DBS'd volunteers)

Once people have registered we will send their parents a Microsoft form to fill in. This form includes medical information, emergency contact information, photography permission, and other essential information as required by our safeguarding and legal teams.

Sign up using the QR code:-

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

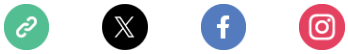
Catholic Pic Newsletter

Missed the last newsletter? Click on the link below to view it!

Education Department Newsletter W.C. 19/10/2026

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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