

Newsletter



2nd July 2025

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Reflection

Beloved Friends, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This month of July is special to you as all your hard work this academic year comes to an end, and you now look forward to a time for refreshment and a well-deserved rest.

A well-deserved break offers staff and students at our Catholic schools a vital opportunity to rest, recharge, and reconnect—with God, with family, and with themselves. The rhythm of rest is not just a luxury but a spiritual necessity, echoing the biblical call to sabbath. After months of commitment to learning, teaching, and community life, this pause allows minds and hearts to rejuvenate, preparing everyone to return refreshed and inspired for the new academic year. It's in these quiet spaces of summer that growth, reflection, and gratitude often flourish most deeply. I will be taking time to rest and encourage you all to do the same.

As the Episcopal Vicar for Education, I know you have worked hard during this Jubilee Year, the Headteachers, the Staff, our Trusts, the Parents and the children. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated staff, the wonderful children, and the ever-supportive parents of our Catholic schools. Your continued hard work, faith, and commitment over this past school year have been truly inspiring. Together, you've created communities rooted in love, learning, and the Gospel values.

May this summer be a time of well-earned rest, reflection, and renewal for all. I will be praying for you as I know you do for me.

Canon Victor Darlington
Episcopal Vicar for Education



School Place Planning

Last Friday, there was a further meeting of representatives from London borough education teams, unions, DfE and dioceses. The issue of surplus school places remains challenging across all of London and in the south LAs particularly. In general, making reductions to PAN has not resolved the problem and in 10 months time it is expected that there will be significant further school closures in addition to those that have happened to date. This year there are fewer pupils in reception classes than in year 7 so as the changes make their way into high schools it will have an impact there too.

We have emphasized before, the need to ensure it is easy for parents wanting a Catholic education to be able to apply to our schools. The other aspect is for schools to ensure they remain financially viable and to remodel staffing structures in good time to avoid moving into deficits. Working together in families of schools such as in the Catholic Academy Trusts assists with making savings. Several schools have worked closely with their Trust Relationship Officer Sam, Daniel or myself to resolve situations and ensure that LAs are acting reasonably. I can assure you that we do not have conversations about school closures with any LA without involving the headteacher and chair. Any school called to a meeting with their LA to change PAN or look at closure must contact us immediately- provision in Church schools is not a role of governing bodies or LAs it is a decision for the Diocesan trust.

Thank you to those headteachers and chairs for coming forward and seeking help rather than risk an increasing deficit. It is a governing body role to propose a break-even budget in a school or academy. Academy boards must ensure their reserves policy is met when all the budgets are consolidated. We are here to help.

Some boroughs will be issuing financial warning notices as they move into next year. What you cannot do as leadership is hope the problem will go away. The problem is going to be around for at least the next 10 years and local authorities are not in a position to bail out struggling schools as the reduced numbers are impacting on their own finances.

We urge any school experiencing difficulties to contact us and we can give advice and offer support. It may seem daunting to governing bodies to implement staffing reductions but it is probably necessary and our schools are doing it equitably and professionally with the right advice. Any school moving into deficits without an action plan will quickly find that costs escalate making them vulnerable in discussions about future viability. If you do have concerns, please contact Sam, Daniel or Angela for a discussion. Where a solution may be establishing a SEN resource base, again contact us early in the process so we can assist and give approval.

Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool

The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 ("the 2025 Regulations") comes into effect on 16 June 2025 and requires governing bodies of maintained schools to publish on their website a link to the specific page on the Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool, that is dedicated to their school. The purpose of the 2025 Regulations then is to amend the 2008 Regulations, so as to replace "Schools Financial Benchmarking website", with "Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool".

[Find a school, trust or local authority - Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool - GOV.UK](#)



DFE Consultation- School Support Staff Negotiating Body

The DfE launched its consultation on proposals for setting up the SSSNB on 11 June 2025. The consultation can be found by following this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/setting-up-the-school-support-staff-negotiating-body-sssnb>

The consultation closes on 18th July 2025.

The Government intends to give greater recognition to the value and professionalism of the whole school workforce through establishing the SSSNB which is an important part of delivering its Plan to Make Work Pay and Opportunity Mission. The SSSNB will have a remit for pay, terms and conditions, training, and career progression for support staff in all state funded schools in England.

In order to ensure that the SSSNB is set up to reflect the context in schools today, the DfE is consulting on:

- the definition of 'school support staff' for the purposes of SSSNB, this will determine which staff are within the remit of the SSSNB
- whether to include agency workers in the scope of the SSSNB in the future.

They are also gathering evidence on current pay and conditions arrangements for school support staff. It is important that school support staff are encouraged to engage with the consultation. Employers and school leaders are encouraged to respond.

Questions can also be sent to School.SUPPORTSTAFF@education.gov.uk.

Photos from the Jubilee Year

Please send photos from activities from the Jubilee Year of Hope to Claire Williams (claire.williams@rcaos.org.uk) at the Education Service. We would like to take time in the Headteacher Conference to celebrate all the wonderful things going on in our schools.

Support Requested – Global Survey for Catholic Teachers (UMEC-WUCT)

The World Union of Catholic Teachers (UMEC-WUCT) UMEC-WUCT, an international body recognised by the Holy See, is conducting a worldwide survey to understand more about the identity, values, and lived experience of Catholic teachers in all educational settings. The University of Glasgow (a WUCT member) is collaborating with the Pontifical University of Chile and Saint Louis University, Missouri, to analyse the data. The survey has ethical approval and contains no identifiable data.

Key details:

The survey is anonymous and has received full ethical approval.
It takes only 5–10 minutes to complete.
It forms part of the Church's contribution to the Jubilee Year 2025.



Results will be shared at the Jubilee Conference on Education later this year.

Please consider completing the survey and encouraging your colleagues to do the same. Your voice and experience are greatly valued and important.

Survey Link: https://uofg.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7TyF0wIxiV7zJ6m

The survey closes on 4 July 2025.

WorkNest - Resources

Please [click here](#) to view a round-up of essential resources relevant to the education sector to keep you informed this summer term.

Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies

The CCRS is a knowledge-based, internationally recognised qualification that provides participants with an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic faith. It enhances the understanding that education within the Church is a life-long process which leads to greater intimacy with Jesus Christ.

This course presents the basic foundational teachings of the Catholic Church in a manner that is captivating, inspiring, and applicable. The CCRS is designed and intended to support the Archbishop's vision of missionary parishes and schools by cultivating an evangelistic spirit. Participants will be equipped to make an informed and practical contributions to their chosen field of ministry within the Church.

Please visit aec.rcaos.org.uk/ccrs or email ccrs@rcaos.org.uk for further information.

Zen Educate x Southwark Diocese Partnership

Zen Educate are a recruitment platform which works with Catholic partnerships across the country. With the partnership with the Southwark Diocese, we offer exclusive discounted rates as well as no temp to perm fees when taking staff from them.

As well as this we offer training free of charge as well as great opportunities to find staff from across the rest of the UK, Ireland and Australia.

My name is Sam Leggitt, and I have worked with schools and within the Catholic diocese for Zen Educate for the past 15 years.



My upbringing through the Catholic system meant that when I started out in education recruitment I approached my old school first and from that my love of working closely with Catholic schools to make a difference started. I always intend to get to know each school personally and make sure that we understand your ethos so we find the best staff for you.

If you want to know more then please feel free to email me on sam.leggitt@zeneducate.com

PG 4



Wintershall

Wintershall have opened up their bookings for their Advent Travelling Crib at Lambeth Palace from 10th to 14th November 2025. Join the characters of the Nativity on the journey to Bethlehem. Please complete the form and we will confirm your booking via email as soon as possible. Limited availability.

Please use this link to book: <https://forms.gle/81dzMrSeDhcZiP926>

The poster features a background of green foliage with yellow and purple stars. The title 'The Travelling Crib at Lambeth' is written in a large, purple, cursive font, with '10-14 November 2025' below it in the same style. The text 'Join the characters of the Nativity on the journey to Bethlehem, at this very special workshop experience in the gardens of Lambeth Palace. Outdoor Advent themed education workshops suitable for KS1 & KS2' is in a yellow, sans-serif font. Below this, the workshop times are listed: 'Workshop 1 10:00 - 12:00' and 'Workshop 2 12:30-14:30'. To the right, it says 'To find out more and book your place' followed by the email 'schools@wintershall.org.uk'. At the bottom, there are four small images: a man in a red and white robe, a boy feeding a goat, a woman in a blue robe, and a donkey. The website 'www.wintershall.org.uk' and the phone number 'Call: 01483 892167' are at the bottom.

The Travelling Crib at Lambeth
10-14 November 2025

Join the characters of the Nativity on the journey to Bethlehem,
at this very special workshop experience in the gardens of Lambeth Palace.
Outdoor Advent themed education workshops suitable for KS1 & KS2

Workshop 1 10:00 - 12:00
Workshop 2 12:30-14:30

To find out more and book your place
schools@wintershall.org.uk

www.wintershall.org.uk Call: 01483 892167

NPQ places for November 2025 start

The Avila Partnership (the partnership of Ursuline High School, Wimbledon and St Philomena's Catholic High School for Girls, Carshalton) is a provider of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs), run in association with The Church of England and Catholic Education Service. The qualifications are nationally recognised and accredited by the Department for Education.

Although funding for Cohort 9 has yet to be announced, courses are expected to commence in November 2025 with fully funded places likely to be available to teachers and leaders from the 50% of schools with the highest proportion of students who attract pupil premium funding.

If you would like to register your interest in a course, please visit: <https://www.nse.org.uk/npq> or contact Nicola Adams, NPQ Administrator at the Avila Partnership: nicola.adams@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk. Places will be limited so we would advise you to register a.s.a.p.



Deputy and Assistant Headteacher Conference - Reframe your Brain

Wednesday, 9th July 2025. 9.15am – 4pm. £25. St Mary's High Catholic School, Woburn Road, Croydon, CR9 2EE.

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Romans 12:2 (EIV)

This year's Deputy and Assistant Headteacher Conference will be split into two parts. The morning session will begin with Catherine McLoughlin and will give leaders the opportunity to develop greater positivity and resilience in their roles, creating a solution focused attitude to the challenges faced every day. The afternoon session will be led by Dr Nancy Walbank, supporting leaders to develop their understanding of the Religious Education Directory, which is expected to be in place in all schools in September 2026.

Book: <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/deputy-and-assistant-headteacher-conference/>

Recruitment

Vacancies can be viewed in full here: <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/recruitment/>

Trust Relationship Officer, Education Service
Orpington

Headteacher, St Andrew's Catholic Primary School

London

Closing date: 4th July 2025

Class Teacher, Corpus Christi Catholic School

London

Closing date: 4th July 2025

Primary Teachers, St Mary's Catholic Federation

Carshalton

Closing date: 7th July 2025

Headteacher, St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Tunbridge Wells

Closing date: 10th July 2025

Teaching Assistant, Good Shepherd Catholic Primary & Nursery School

Croydon

Closing date: 10th July 2025

Pastoral Lead, Good Shepherd Catholic Primary & Nursery School

Croydon

Closing date: 10th July 2025

SENCO, St Mary's Catholic Federation

Carshalton

Closing date: 11th July 2025

Safeguarding Manager, Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership

Kent

Closing date: 18th July 2025



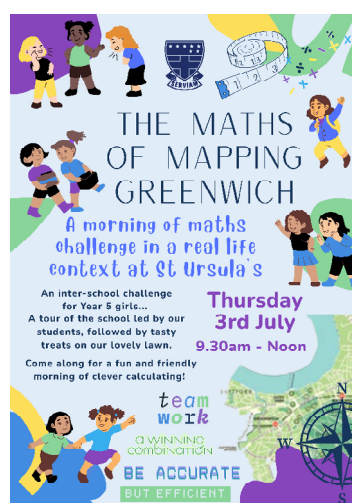
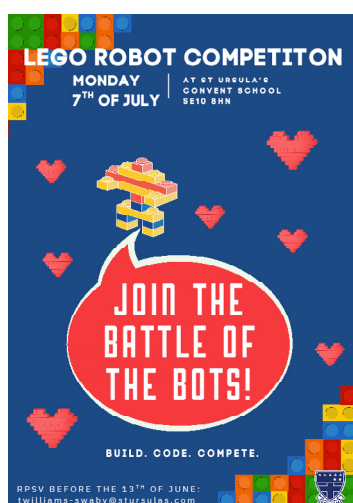
Webinar - Inclusion in Practice: How schools are strengthening SEND support

Tuesday 8th July 2025. 4pm. Free

At the event, the insights and practical examples from a national project on SEND practice will be presented by Dr. Rajbir Hazelwood (Managing Director, ImpactEd Group).

Follow this link to book your places: <https://www2.ambition.org.uk/inclusion-in-practice-webinar>

Events at St Ursula's Covent School



Events & Training

Summer 2025

Foundation Directors of CAT's Training Session: Catholic Social Teaching

Monday 7th July 2025 5.30-7pm.

Zoom

[Book](#)

Deputy and Assistant Headteacher Conference

Wednesday, 9th July 2025. 9.15am – 4pm

£25. St Mary's High Catholic School, Woburn Road, Croydon, CR9 2EE

[Book](#)

Autumn 2025

Beginning of Year Mass 2025

Wednesday 24th September 2025. 11am.

St George's Cathedral, Lambeth Road, SE1 6HR

[Book](#)

Save the Date!

Headteachers' Conference 2025 -Ashford International Hotel - 19th and 20th November 2025



Festival of Hope at Aylesford: A Joyful Celebration of the Jubilee Year



On a beautiful day at Aylesford, we were delighted to welcome over 1,200 people to the Festival of Hope — a truly special celebration as part of the Pilgrims of Hope Jubilee year.

[Continue reading.](#)

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St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School and Nursery Ofsted Inspection

Last month, St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School and Nursery in Ramsgate had their ungraded Section 8 Ofsted inspection. This was long overdue but it finally arrived! The staff are delighted with the report. St Ethelbert's is a very strong GOOD provision for the community and the biggest compliment from the inspector was that he would be 'happy to send his own children to our school'.

[Continue reading.](#)



Chaplaincy Retreat

The Jubilee Year of Hope has provided many opportunities to explore pilgrimage and hope in our diocese, and this was continued through to the Annual Chaplaincy Retreat hosted by Canterbury Cathedral, with Chaplains journeying together across the diocese. Sr Anouska Robinson Biggin led two reflective sessions on 'Finding God in All Things' and guided us through an 'Examen of our Consciousness' whilst providing tools for reflective practice. In the afternoon, Chaplains enjoyed a visit to the Cathedral as part of the day. It ended with a review of the year and an opportunity to thank all the Chaplains for their ministry in schools, and to say farewell to Doreen Cunningham from St Catherine's and Mina Rodrigues from St Thomas More, Purley.

