

# Newsletter



8th October 2025

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## Reflection

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We are now well into the autumn season. In my local area, as may be in yours, the leaves have started to change their colours, and the days are getting darker and colder.

The first day of October this year begins with the celebration of our dear Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus. The Second day of the month invited us to join in the celebration of the Holy Guardian Angels and thank them for the many ways they look after us. On the Fourth, we celebrated Saint Francis of Assisi, who reminds us to care for all of God's creation with love and compassion.

So far, you have already spent a month in school and will have many events and activities to do. For us as a Church, October is a time when we honour Our Lady of the Rosary, and we are invited to pray the Rosary during this month.

By the 9th, we will celebrate the feast of Saint John Henry Newman, our First English saint since 1970. Last month, Pope Leo announced that "... on 1st November, during the Jubilee of the World of Education, I will confer the title of Doctor of the Church on Saint John Henry Newman, who contributed decisively to the renewal of theology and to the understanding of the development of Christian doctrine." We give thanks for this great news.

On the 18th, we celebrate Saint Luke the Evangelist, and on the 28th, we celebrate the Feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles of Jesus Christ. In all these feasts, we seek the intercession of our role models and saints as we journey in Faith.

The Month of October is also when we celebrate Black History Month as a country. As I mentioned

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last year, Black History Month has taken on different forms, and societies and communities celebrate it with varying emphases, motivations, and aspirations. For us as Catholics, Black History Month is a time of great joy and thanksgiving to God for all the many blessings He has bestowed upon black people. It recognises the many hardships and sadness that black people have endured through slavery and systemic racism, prejudice, and stereotypes through the centuries to the present day. Finally, it is a time of reflection, fostering inclusion and integration in the spirit of oneness in Christ, where all are welcome in Christ, and acknowledging that there is always space for one more.

Finally, I wish you all a well-deserved rest during your upcoming half-term this month. Whatever your plans are, I wish you many blessings and good wishes. Thank you for all that you do for our schools; God bless you all.

Canon Victor Darlington,  
Episodical Vicar for Education, Archdiocese of Southwark

## Admissions

We know how busy school offices can be and we are grateful for the warm welcome so many of you give to prospective families. **In today's climate of declining rolls, every enquiry really does matter.** First impressions count, and sometimes the smallest gesture - a friendly voice on the phone or a clear answer to a question - can make all the difference when a parent is deciding where to apply. **In London, every child counts.**

From our experience, schools make a strong impression when:

- **Phones are answered promptly** and messages are returned quickly.
- **Answerphones are checked regularly** to ensure families can leave messages.
- **Staff have the right information to hand** to guide families through the process.
- **Every call is acknowledged**, even briefly - it reassures parents that they've been heard.

These small touches help families feel valued and encourage them to apply.

For those of you new to school admissions or with queries or needing a refresher, there is a briefing on Wednesday 15th October 2025 5.30-7pm. Zoom for HTs, governors and staff managing applications. [Click here for more details.](#)

## Potential Postgraduate Certificate in Coaching and Mentoring in a Catholic Context

With Hope University Liverpool, Leeds Trinity University and Newman University, we are exploring the possibility of offering a Post Graduate Certificate in Coaching and Mentoring in a Catholic context for those in leadership, positions in our schools and CMATs.

In order to ascertain whether there is a demand for such a programme we would be very grateful to receive your feedback via the questionnaire which can be accessed [here](#).

[Click here to view details of the forthcoming conference at St Mary's.](#)





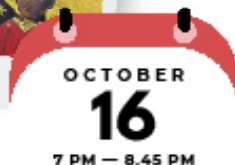
## Free webinar — register now!

We welcome all to join the Archdiocese of Southwark's **Commission for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion** for a timely webinar exploring how cultural and ethnic identities can be celebrated within our parishes.


Held in October (the month dedicated to Our Lady) — this webinar offers a meaningful opportunity to reflect, share and entrust our work to Mary's intercession.


### What to expect:

- ✓ Reflections on the Archdiocese's ongoing story of inclusion, plus real stories from parishes
- ✓ A lively panel discussion with clergy and parish/chaplaincy reps
- ✓ Practical tools and next steps for your parish/ministry



For more information contact:

 [caritassouthwark@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:caritassouthwark@rcaos.org.uk)

 07521 425400

Scan the QR code  
to register for free!



**THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES



## Flourishing Leadership Programmes delivered by Avila Partnership

The Avila Partnership is delighted to share details of an exciting opportunity for school leaders to engage in Flourishing Leadership Programmes designed by the National Society of Education.

The programmes will support headteachers and senior leaders in developing sustainable leadership practices that nurture personal wellbeing, enhance team effectiveness, and foster thriving school communities.

Each programme combines practical strategies, reflective practice, and peer learning, with Avila's expertise ensuring a supportive and empowering environment through the facilitation of face-to-face days and coaching.

Courses are available for Headteachers, Emerging Leaders and Leaders of EDIJ. [Read more](#)

## Work Nest

### From Risk to Reassurance | mastering fire safety standards in your business

From 2025, fire safety rules have tightened, and the stakes for failing to meet them are higher than ever. This free 60-minute session hosted by WorkNest on 9th October at 2pm, they will explain what businesses must do to maintain fire safety standards, outline the risks of non-compliance, and share practical advice on protecting your organisation in the event of a fire – both physically and legally.

[Register here](#)

### Fire Safety Service

As regulations now require all organisations with anyone on-site to have a fire risk assessment and formally record all fire safety arrangements, we've launched a new Fire Safety Service to help your members stay compliant and protected. To access an informative download that covers what our new service includes please [click here](#).

## Questions about Judaism – 23rd October 2025

Following on from the September session which saw a large number of Catholic schools attend, the October Q&A drop in for teachers to ask questions about teaching Judaism is on **Thursday 23rd October from 3:30 to 4:30 pm**.

To join use the details below.

link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83506826246?pwd=P1V7Y00lYyBzzvxfSjcuSPJDnj6gza.1>

Meeting ID: 835 0682 6246

Passcode: 632738

### Are you an RE teacher with questions about Judaism?

A chance to ask anything you like...  
**Open to primary and secondary teachers who teach Judaism**

Why don't all...  
What's the difference between...  
I don't understand which...



**Thurs 23rd October, 3.30-4.30pm**

**Any question answered**



by Anna Silver,  
Education Officer

**Monthly informal drop in session**

(for monthly dates and zoom links email [anna.silver@bod.org.uk](mailto:anna.silver@bod.org.uk))



## Oscar Romero Award Trust - Important Dates

To be able to receive your award for participator, developer and innovator level of the Oscar Romero Award at the Mass in March 2026 please note the dates below for submission of evidence deadlines. These allow enough time for the assessment to take place.

**Participator level 13 February 2026**

**Developer level 9 January 2026**

**Innovator level 9 January 2026**

## Updates to CSI

There have been several updates to the September version of the CSI Handbook. Please ensure that you use the most up to date version of materials for training staff or preparing for CSI. These changes can be found here: [CSI Change Log](#).

The materials can now all be found on the Catholic Education Service website. [Catholic Schools Inspectorate](#).

Training will be across the year for various aspects of CSI. We encourage leads of Religious Education, governors and Senior Leaders to attend training so that the process does not come as any surprise.

Should you have a query, please email [csi@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:csi@rcaos.org.uk)

## Pupil Premium and Recovery Premium Evaluation

This evaluation report explores how schools and academy trusts:

- plan and use pupil premium
- used recovery premium

It also presents the reported impacts of each of these. [Evaluation report](#)

This report examines the relationship between attendance and academic achievement for pupils in state-funded mainstream schools during the 2022 to 2023 academic year at the end of:

- Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 4

The study, which builds on previous research from 2016, uses a regression model to account for various factors that could influence attainment, such as prior performance and pupil characteristics.

It uses recent data to look at how similar pupils with different attendance rates perform, isolating the impact of attendance on the likelihood of achieving successful outcomes at each key stage. [Research report](#)



## Nursery Capital Works

The DfE has announced the launch of phase 2 of the School-based Nurseries programme which will prioritise bids from schools serving some of the most disadvantaged communities. This is a link to the guidance which explains

- the purpose of this grant
- who is eligible to apply
- how to submit an application
- how applications will be assessed and funding awarded

### [Guidance](#)

Should any school (VA or SAT) wish to create or make changes to the buildings of their school, there must be a business case put forward to the Diocesan Education Service prior to application to the DfE. Please send the proposal to; [ecbuildings@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:ecbuildings@rcaos.org.uk) and a member of the Property Team will work with you. If you are a school in a Catholic Academy Trust, the school leaders and the CAT property team will work alongside the Diocesan property team on these plans.

## Headteachers' Conference Artwork Competition



Last year we were fortunate to have an original piece of artwork from Jemima Filbee Y11, St Ursula's, as our focal point for our Headteachers' Conference.

This year the conference is influenced by the following quote from Hans Urs von Balthasar **"What you are is God's gift to you, what you become is your gift to God."**

We are opening up a competition for all artists from Y7- Y13 to provide us with an original work of art, painted, graphic design or alternative media. The piece should be A3 or larger so that it can be displayed on the HTC focal point. An Amazon voucher will be presented to the winner and the original artwork will be turned into a prayer card for the conference delegates.

Original artwork should be delivered or posted to the Education Service's office by Friday 24th October computer-generated images should be sent as either a JPEG or PDF to [clairewilliams@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:clairewilliams@rcaos.org.uk)

## Christmas Card Competition

Our Christmas card competition for Nursery - Y6 pupils is now open!

This year's entries will be used to produce next year's cards.





Please email designs as either a JPEG or PDF to [clairewilliams@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:clairewilliams@rcaos.org.uk) by Friday 21st November 2025 Midday.

Themes for the entries can be chosen from:

- **While Shepherds Watched**
- **We three Kings**
- **Go tell it on the mountains**

## Headteachers' Conference - 19th & 20th November 2025

**'What we are is God's gift to us. What we become is our gift to God'**

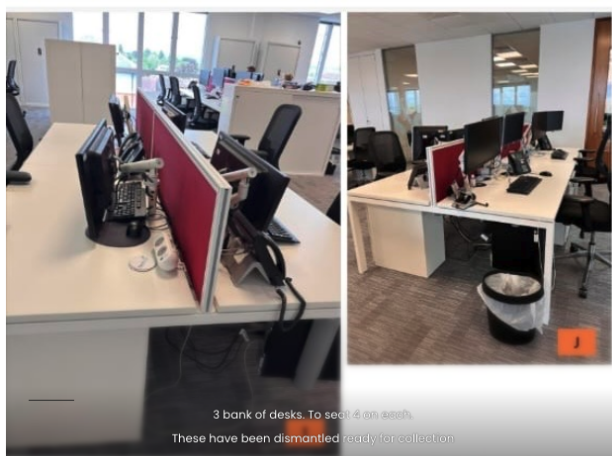
Using AI in schools in an effective and ethical way is a challenge in Catholic schools. AI should not replace our highly trained teachers who do so much more than teach but nurture our young people to be citizens of the future. It needs to support teachers in working better as well as aiding our administrative staff in their work. There are other questions relating to how we guide our young people encountering AI in their own lives. As such AI is not just another IT development but one that requires headteachers in Catholic schools to consider the wider issues and plan strategically for its introduction. The aim of the conference is to understand the current situation within education, find out more about what is expected in the future and help develop strategies for schools to manage this change in an appropriate way.

[Click here](#) to book.

## Free Furniture for Your School

Collaborating with the charity, [Business 2 Schools](#), we are able to offer our schools free furniture donated from businesses. You need to register with Business 2 Schools to be able to either collect from our hub or receive a delivery. [Register here](#).

To view what we have available for collection please [click here](#). This page is updated regularly with our current items.



## Jubilee Pledge

All Catholic schools are invited to make a Jubilee Pledge to live out Catholic Social Teaching. A better world needs all of us, and the Pledge will be a whole school, long-term commitment to building a fairer world.

Add your school to Cafod's online map to show you have made a Jubilee Pledge, and you will receive a certificate to display as a sign of your commitment to building a better world! Click here: <https://cafod.org.uk/jubilee-schools/jubilee-pledge/jubilee-pledge-map>

## Wintershall



**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](mailto:schools@wintershall.org.uk)

[www.wintershall.org.uk](http://www.wintershall.org.uk) Call: 01483 892167

Wintershall have opened up their bookings for their Advent Travelling Crib at Lambeth Palace.

Please complete the form and they will confirm your booking via email as soon as possible. Limited availability.

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

## RISE Theatre



**RISE Theatre**  
[www.risetheatre.co.uk](http://www.risetheatre.co.uk)

**RISE THEATRE'S PASSION PLAY**  
**Bookings now open for Lent 2026**

Suitable for the whole school, our 1 hour original Passion Play depicts the key parts of Christ's Passion & other inspirational Gospel moments.  
 A fast-paced, emotionally impacting & "spine tingling" performance

**Prices from £800 + travel**  
 Up to 2 performances available per day.  
 Discounts available for bookings over multiple days  
 Get in touch to discuss your school's requirements

GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY  
[admin@risetheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@risetheatre.co.uk)  
[www.risetheatre.co.uk](http://www.risetheatre.co.uk)



From the team that brought you God's Planet  
 RISE Theatre presents...

**TREASURE WITHIN**  
 A theatre production on  
**Catholic Social Teaching**  
 for primary schools - Spring 2026

Treasure Within's immersive theatrical story follows a school child who is set a unique homework assignment - to find 7 treasures (Catholic Social Teaching principles), in 7 different locations, and apply them to their own lives.

With a modern treasure map, the child invites the school to join them as they search for the 7 treasures in some unlikely places - a junk shop, library, science museum & even journey with some familiar Saints!

**Costs & Booking**

	Price Per School
School size under 125 children	- £549
Under 325 children	- £599
Under 450 children	- £649
All other schools	- £699

Discounts available when 3 or more schools book consecutive dates from the same local area or academy

'Treasure Within' will take the whole school off timetable for the day to immersively explore the theme through live performances, workshops & classroom activities

Email [admin@risetheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@risetheatre.co.uk) to reserve your 2026 date today!



## Recruitment

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

### **Deputy Headteacher, Coloma Convent Girls' Secondary School & Sixth Form**

Croydon

Closing date: 15th October 2025

### **Headteacher, St Simon of England Catholic Primary School**

Ashford

Closing date: 31st October 2025

### **SENDCO, St Mary's Catholic Federation Carshalton**

Closing date: 20th October 2025

### **Trust Relationship Officer, Education Service**

Closing date: 27th October 2025

To advertise any school vacancy with us for free, please email [clairewilliams@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:clairewilliams@rcaos.org.uk)

## Events & Training

All sessions are available to book on our website: [www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/et](http://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/et)

### **Autumn 2025**

#### **Safeguarding for Governors**

Thursday 9th October 2025 5.30-7pm.

Zoom

#### **Induction for new DHT and AHT**

Monday 13th October 2025. 2-4pm

Education Service, Orpington

#### **New to Leading Religious Education in Primary Schools**

Tuesday 14th October 2025 9.30am-4pm.

Cowderoy Room, Amigo Hall

#### **Admissions for Governors**

Wednesday 15th October 2025 5.30-7pm.

Zoom.

#### **CPD: Music for Liturgy in RC Schools**

Thursday 16th October 2025, 4-5pm (Online)

#### **Racial Justice and Inclusion in Education**

Tuesday 21st October 2025. 3-5pm.

Zoom

#### **Finance for Governors**

Tuesday 11th November 2025. 2-3.30pm. Zoom

#### **Secondary RE Leaders Meeting**

Tuesday 11th November 2025. 9.30am-4pm.

£25. Amigo Hall, Lambeth Road, SE1 6HR

#### **Succession Planning and Recruiting a Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher**

Wednesday 12th November 2025. 4-5.30pm.

Zoom

#### **Lighting the Path – Catch up session**

Thursday 13th November 2025 4pm-6pm.

Zoom

#### **Headteachers Conference 2025**

Wednesday 19th at 9am to Thursday 20th November 2025 at 1.30pm

Ashford International, Simone Weil Avenue, Ashford, TN24 8UX

#### **Jubilee Year – Schools Celebration**

Friday 21st November 2025. 2-3pm

Zoom

#### **New to Catholic Schools**

Tuesday 25th November 2025 9.30am-4pm. St Mary's RC Primary School, Battersea



### **Governors Gatherings**

Tuesday 25th November 2025. 5.30-6.30pm.  
Zoom

### **Parish Priests – Drop in Session**

Tuesday 25th November 2025, 2-3pm  
Zoom

### **Advent Reflections**

Thursday 27th November, 4th, 11th, 18th  
December 2025. 8am to 8.15am. Teams.

### **Advent Service**

Tuesday 9th December 2025. 1.30pm. St  
George's Cathedral

### **Does Your Prayer & Liturgy Meet CSI Expectations**

Wednesday 10th December 2025, 3.30-5pm  
Zoom

## **Save the Date!**

**Introduction to Oscar Romero Award Trust - Thursday 15th January 2026**

**Oscar Romero Award Trust Mass - Thursday 26th March 2026**

## **News**

### **Secretary of State for Education Bridget Phillipson Visits St Anthony's Catholic Primary School in Penge**

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, part of the St Oscar Romero Catholic Academy Trust, was delighted to welcome The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP, Secretary of State for Education and Liam Conlon MP for Beckenham and Penge, for an official visit on 6th October

[Continue reading.](#)



### **Summer Term at St Thomas' Catholic Primary School**



At St Thomas' Catholic Primary School in Canterbury, we sadly said goodbye to our headteacher Lisa D'Agostini who has led our school so wonderfully for the last 14 years.

[Continue reading.](#)

