

Newsletter



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22nd 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 Month of October is also when we celebrate Black History Month as a country. As I mentioned 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.

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.

Safeguarding Alert

The book publisher, Puffin, has issued an alert about books by Andy Cope.

The books in the Spy Dogs, Spy Cats and Spy Pups series include links to additional content.

Unfortunately, the links are no longer owned by the author and if the links are followed, they now contain pornographic content. The books themselves are fine; it is just the additional content which requires caution.

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

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 PG 2



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

Preventing HR Headaches at Your Work Christmas Party

Free webinar | 29 October, 2.00 pm

The festive season is fast approaching, which can only mean one thing: the work Christmas party. But while your focus may be on the venue and catering, employers must also plan for potential HR challenges. In this timely webinar, our experts will share practical tips to help you protect your people and your organisation and prevent HR and legal headaches over the holiday period.

[Register 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

 **BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS**
ADVOCACY | DIVERSITY | COMMUNITY

by Anna Silver,
Education Officer

Monthly informal drop in session
(for monthly dates and zoom links email anna.silver@bod.org.uk)



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.

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

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 by Friday 21st November 2025 Middy.

Themes for the entries can be chosen from:

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



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



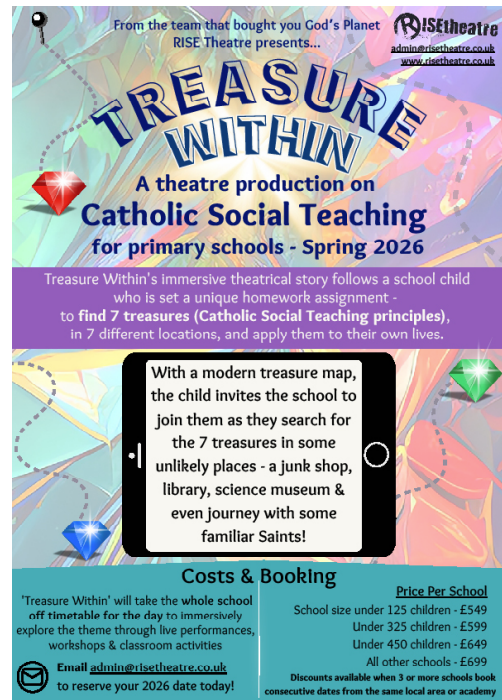
www.wintershall.org.uk Call: 01483 892167

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>





Recruitment

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

Trust Relationship Officer, Education Service
Closing date: 27th October 2025

Headteacher, St Simon of England Catholic Primary School
Ashford
Closing date: 31st October 2025

To advertise any school vacancy with us for free, please email clairewilliams@rcaos.org.uk

Events & Training

All sessions are available to book on our website: www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/et

Autumn 2025

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



Autumn 2025

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

Opening of Prayer Garden at St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School



St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School in Greenwich, blessed their beloved prayer garden. Pupils had an amazing ceremony where Fr Richard blessed our new rosaries as well as the garden.

[Continue reading.](#)

Richard Challoner School Attends Beginning of Year Mass in St George's Cathedral

Richard Challoner School had the privilege of attending the most spiritually rich celebration in St George's Cathedral, Southwark on 24th September 2025, to celebrate the beginning of this new academic year.

[Continue reading.](#)

