

# Newsletter



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10th December 2025

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## Reflection

Beloved Friends, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There is going to be a baby in the Crib. He is coming. He will be here on Christmas Eve, and now we wait. We prepare, we get ready for this baby who is the saviour of the world, the prince of peace, Jesus Christ, our Lord and God.

For the next four weeks, we enter the holy season of Advent, our hearts turn with hope and gratitude toward the newborn Christ in Bethlehem. Amid the flurry of school activities, exams, and preparations, we are invited to pause and rediscover the gentle presence of God who comes to dwell among us, not in grandeur but in simplicity and love. He comes to bring peace to a world that is hurting and in need of healing.

I believe you are now preparing the various nativity scenes in your schools and homes. That familiar nativity scene offers enduring lessons for our school communities. In the humility of Mary and Joseph, the openness of the shepherds, and the generous gifts of the Magi, we are reminded that each of us—students, teachers, and parents—has a role to play in welcoming Christ anew into our hearts and into our schools so that no one feels left behind, or alone.

The four weeks of Advent will lead us gently into the Christmas Season, which begins on that most holy of nights we call Christmas Eve. At the Mass that night, the Priest will approach the crib in the Church and say:

"Hail and blessed be this hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most blessed Virgin Mary, at Midnight in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In this hour, vouch safe, oh God, to hear our

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prayer and grant our desires, that those who come to pray before this image of the most Holy incarnation, may be granted all they need for body and soul, through the merits of our saviour Jesus Christ and of His blessed mother. May this crib and all who pray here be blessed + in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Hearty we approach your crib O Lord, to find the one of whom the prophet spoke, and here behold the mighty God lay helpless on the straw, Oh grant us some of this humility, that we may conquer mightily the reign of sin within us and grant us too the protection of your gentle mother whose tender eyes and loving heart attends your every wish. You who live and reign with the Father, and the holy spirit, God forever and ever. Amen."

Make this prayer your own this Christmas. Make it your inspiration when you walk in your school corridors and classrooms. Make it your strength to help those who are lonely or vulnerable, offering the gift of friendship and compassion, as Christ Himself did. In this prayer, we find an invitation to be present to each other this Christmas. Do not stand afar off; come close. Be present to your families and friends. And for those who will be travelling this Christmas, we wish you a blessed and safe journey, with God's abiding presence, protection, and peace as you travel.

As I remind you each year, take time to rest during the Christmas Holiday, as we look forward to a Happy and Blessed New Year 2026, when it comes.

May this holy season renew our joy, deepen our faith, and inspire us to bear Christ's light to all we meet—wishing our entire Catholic Education community a blessed and peaceful Christmas, filled with hope, joy, love and above all: Peace.

Canon Victor Darlington  
Education and Director of Caritas, Archdiocese of Southwark

## DfE User Survey

The DfE is developing an online service that aims to bring DfE tools, guidance, and services together in one place. As part of the work on this, user research is taking place to better understand user experience when interacting with the department, and to provide feedback on new designs which will help to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

The target groups are school business managers, school leaders, and trust leaders whose role involves finance, funding, procurement, estates, completing statutory returns, or HR.

What does taking part involve?

- User research sessions will be held between December 2025 to February 2026, at a convenient date and time.
- Users can choose to feedback either by completing a survey or via an online session.

[Fill in this form](#) to register interest in taking part, please pass this request on to anyone who may be interested.

Contact [dfc.connectuserresearch@education.gov.uk](mailto:dfc.connectuserresearch@education.gov.uk) for more information.



# Ofsted Annual Report

Ofsted annual report warns against 'profiteering' in children's homes sector.

Annual report sees great work being done by education and care professionals but there are concerns about the rapid growth in children's homes, and outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable children remain poorer than their peers.

View the full report [here](#).

## Zen Educate - January Recruitment Support

A flyer for Zen Educate's January Recruitment Support. The flyer has a light blue background with a blue triangle in the top right and an orange semi-circle in the bottom left. The Zen Educate logo is at the top left. The title 'JANUARY RECRUITMENT SUPPORT' is in large, bold, black letters. Below it, it says 'Official Partner of the Archdiocese of Southwark'. The main heading is 'Do you have vacancies for January?' followed by 'We're here to make your staffing simple, fast and fully supported.' There is a list of benefits, each preceded by a green checkmark. The bottom section is titled 'Stress-Free January Recruitment' and includes contact information for Primary and Secondary Schools.

**zen EDUCATE**

### JANUARY RECRUITMENT SUPPORT

Official Partner of the Archdiocese of Southwark

**Do you have vacancies for January?**  
We're here to make your staffing simple, fast and fully supported.

**Why Choose Us?**

- ✓ **Preferential Partner Rates**  
Fixed and transparent margins — no surprises.
- ✓ **Free Temp-to-Perm**  
Hire great staff permanently without extra fees.
- ✓ **Fully Vetted Staff**  
Vetting accredited and audited by the Department for Education for complete peace of mind.
- ✓ **24/7 Support**  
Your dedicated team is available round the clock whenever you need help.
- ✓ **Single Central Record Software Included**  
Free access to onboarding, compliance and training tools through our SCR platform
- ✓ **SEN & Safeguarding Training**  
Staff benefit from accredited training as part of our partnership.
- ✓ **Easy Job Posting & Supply Dashboard**  
Post vacancies instantly and track your supply usage, spend and performance.
- ✓ **Long-Term & January Recruitment Covered**  
Teachers, TAs, SEN roles and more — ready for immediate or planned starts.

**Stress-Free January Recruitment**

Share your vacancies, and our team will take care of the rest efficiently, safely, and transparently.  
Reach out now to make sure your school is ready for the new term.

**Primary Schools:** [sarah.salisbury@zeneducate.com](mailto:sarah.salisbury@zeneducate.com) 0203 936 0338  
**Secondary Schools:** [helen.mills@zeneducate.com](mailto:helen.mills@zeneducate.com) 0203 695 1662



## Phone System

As technology has moved on so have we! Our telephone system has been upgraded. The contact details for each member of our team can be found on our website by clicking [here](#).

Please note that Education Service colleagues will not be able to answer a call when on school visits or in meetings but will respond to voice mail messages and emails as soon as possible.

## Understanding Ofsted Report Cards and Grading

Ofsted have released some explanatory videos for parents to outline the changes to the vocabulary of inspection. Please share with your parents particularly if you are in an Ofsted window, so as to prepare them for the new language of inspection. [Understanding Ofsted report cards and grades - GOV.UK](#)

## Advent Reflections

Please join us for our weekly online Advent Reflections

Headteachers and all school staff are warmly invited to join us for a brief, weekly online Advent reflection led by representatives from CAFOD, Missio, Million Minutes, and SVP. During this busy season, we invite you to take a 15-minute pause each week to reflect, pray, and gather virtually with colleagues from across the diocese. All reflections, along with additional prayer and liturgy resources from each charity, will be sent out to every school after the event. Please [click here](#) to book.

## Land and Buildings Collection Tool (LBCT) 2025 – UPDATE

The DfE has confirmed that the LBCT 2025 online form is now live, with a deadline for submission of **11.59pm on 16 December 2025**.

The updated guidance can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

## Recruitment

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

### Headteacher, St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Bexley

Closing date: 8th January 2026





## PG Certificate in Attachment Trauma & Mental Health Programme



Birmingham  
Newman  
University

### Attachment, Trauma & Mental Health - PG Cert (online)

#### Why Study this course?

- Interactive teaching and learning
- Networking opportunities
- Assessment opportunities that relate to your practice
- Friendly and supportive staff
- Draws on recent and relevant research



Find out more

Scan the QR code above for further information, alternatively, please contact the academic team at [fed@newman.ac.uk](mailto:fed@newman.ac.uk).

#LoveNewman



## Events & Training

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

### Spring 2026

#### New to RE Leadership – Day 2

Wednesday 7th January 2026. 9.30am-4pm  
Education Service, Orpington, BR5 2SR

### Directors' Training Day

Monday 12th January 2026. 9.30am-4pm  
Education Service, Orpington, BR5 2SR



### Effective School Visits for Governors

Tuesday 13th January 2026. 5.30-7pm.  
Zoom

### Oscar Romero Award Trust Session

Thursday 15th January 2026. 4-5.30pm  
Zoom

### Finance for Governors

Tuesday 20th January 2026. 5.30pm-7pm.  
Zoom

### Directors Keeping in Touch

Tuesday 27th January 2026. 8-8.30am  
Zoom

### Employee Procedures and Hearings; the role of the Governor

Tuesday 27th January 2026. 5.30-7pm  
Zoom

### Handling Complaints for Governors

Thursday 5th February 2026. 5.30-7pm  
Zoom

### Clerk to Governors Forum

Thursday 26th February 2026. 2-3pm  
Zoom

## Save the Date!

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

## News

### Advent Service 2025



Pupils from primary schools across the Archdiocese of Southwark took part in the annual Advent service at St George's Cathedral on Tuesday 9th December 2025.

The beautiful service saw pupils from each school act out the Nativity story [Continue reading](#).

### Mass to Celebrate Christ the King Week

Canon Victor led Mass and celebrated Christ The King Week at Christ the King Sixth Form College.





# Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership



'Academies in Christ'  
of the Archdiocese of Southwark

## KCSP GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE 2026

JOIN US

**17 MARCH 2026: ST SIMON STOCK CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL, MAIDSTONE, ME16 0JP**

**Session 1:** CSI Inspections, Catholic Education, and the updated Religious Education Directory (RED) - KCSP

Chair of the Trust Board Q&A

**Session 2:** Supporting disciplinary panels and the legal requirements - HR Connect

**25 MARCH 2026: ST ANSELM'S CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL, CANTERBURY, CT1 3EN**

**Session 1:** SEND strategy and the changing landscape - KCSP

Chair of the Trust Board Q&A

**Session 2:** The new Ofsted framework and its implications for governance - NGA

Book your place [here](#) or via the QR code



Agenda for both events:

Arrival from 16:30

Session 1 starting at 17:00

Networking at 18:00

Chair Trust Board and LGC Chair Q&A at 18:15

Session 2 starting 18:30

CSI / Ofsted Q&A 20:00

Finish 20:30

