

The Maximilian

A monthly newsletter for governors within the Archdiocese of Southwark

February 2026

Director's Message

I hope that you have had a restful half term and have had a smooth return to school life since Monday. Thank you to everyone who has completed the Education Service Feedback Questionnaire. We have collated the responses and you will see a link to the "You said, We do, We will..." further in the newsletter. We are open to ideas for improvement to the service, please get in touch with your TRO if further ideas come to mind.

The vast majority AGMs of the CATs and SATs have been completed in the last half term, thank you to the Heads and Governor/Director representatives who presented to the Members. We recognise the work that goes into all of our schools and academies. The TROs feedback to our team on the visits they have to schools, these visits are vital in establishing the link between us, for support and challenge in the best of ways. If you have not yet had time to respond to a request for a visit, please contact your TRO to make arrangements.

We have seen an increase in attendance at Governor training which we hope will help them carry out their roles even more successfully. Next Friday, the Education Service team are gathered together to work on the training programme for next year. Our intention is to revitalise the offer, keep what was well attended and redesign or scrap those sessions that were not so useful.

In carrying out their responsibility as Foundation Governors, we want to reach out to as many governors as possible providing training that is relevant and practical. As a result of this, the offer next year will all be linked to the Protocols, in doing so governors with particular responsibilities on the board, will be able to attend relevant to their role and feedback to boards. We hope that this will save their valuable time and make training purposeful for your schools.

We will also be looking at the offer for school leaders, chaplains and religious education leaders, how they are packaged and when they are delivered for maximum benefit. Other members of the wider Diocesan team are keen to offer sessions on their areas of expertise, this will develop over time and will enhance the Diocesan offer as a whole to you.

Thank you to those who have responded about the White Paper discussion. We are holding a meeting this Thursday for leaders to share their thoughts. Once collated, we will publish the thoughts of the group.

As we work through these changes, keep us all in your prayers and be assured that you are always remembered in ours.



Colette Doran-Hannon
Diocesan Schools Commissioner



Inspection of Multi-academy Trusts Confirmed

The government has confirmed that inspections of multi-academy trusts (MATs) are expected to begin as early as 2027, representing a significant development in the accountability framework for academy governance. The change will be enabled through amendments to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, formally bringing academy trusts into the inspection system. We know through our regular conversations with our partner MATS that this is a welcome development and they see it as an opportunity to celebrate all that they do well.

Inspections will be carried out by Ofsted, using a new framework informed by updated trust quality descriptors. Ministers have framed this as part of a wider effort to increase transparency and public confidence, reflecting the growing role trusts play in shaping educational quality, workforce decisions, financial management and pupil wellbeing across groups of schools.

Principles shaping the new approach

While detailed arrangements are still being developed, the government has set out a number of principles to guide implementation. These include ensuring that trusts are not discouraged from supporting schools in difficulty, aligning expectations between Ofsted and the Department for Education, and keeping inspection demands proportionate. There is also a clear emphasis on the need for inspectors to have appropriate expertise in trust leadership and governance.

What inspections are likely to examine

Rather than duplicating school-level inspection, trust inspections will focus on leadership, governance and overall impact. Inspectors are expected to consider how effectively trusts improve standards across their schools, support and develop staff, use resources responsibly, and promote pupil wellbeing and inclusion. Alongside challenge, the framework is intended to recognise trusts that demonstrate strong impact or play a wider role in supporting other schools.

Intervention and improvement

The proposed inspection arrangements sit alongside strengthened intervention powers, enabling more decisive action where trust performance is not meeting expectations — including moving schools into stronger trusts where necessary. At the same time, ministers have indicated that the system should provide clearer ways of identifying and highlighting trusts that are successfully improving outcomes for pupils.

Implications for governors and trustees

Although implementation is still some way off, this announcement confirms the direction of travel. Trust boards should expect increased external scrutiny of how strategic decisions translate into improvement across their schools. For governors and trustees, this reinforces the importance of robust oversight, clear evidence of impact, and a shared understanding of how trust-level governance adds value for pupils and communities.

Admissions to Schools

Allocating places during the admissions process to any school should be determined by a panel of at least 3 governors, not by any one individual on their own.



From April 2026

Family leave and pay

Eligible employees will have a day-one right to paternity leave and unpaid parental leave, removing previous service requirements. The ERA keeps the 26-week qualifying period for statutory paternity pay and allows paternity leave/pay to be taken after shared parental leave/pay.

Statutory sick pay

Statutory sick pay (SSP) will be payable from day one of sickness and the lower earnings limit will be removed, meaning more lower paid workers will qualify for SSP. SSP will be calculated as the lower of the prescribed rate or 80% of weekly earnings.

Redundancy and consultation rules

The maximum "protective award" for failing to properly consult in large scale redundancies will double to up to 180 days' gross pay per affected employee, increasing the cost of non compliance. The thresholds that trigger collective consultation are being updated and will be set in regulations, with consultation on the detail expected in 2026.

Stronger enforcement: the Fair Work Agency

A new enforcement body, the Fair Work Agency, is due to be established. It will consolidate existing enforcement functions and have robust powers to investigate underpayments (such as SSP, holiday pay or national minimum wage), conduct inspections, impose penalties and even bring claims on workers' behalf. The precise timing for full enforcement powers is still to be confirmed.

Whistleblowing: sexual harassment disclosures

Reporting workplace sexual harassment will become a specified form of protected whistleblowing, giving stronger safeguards to those who speak up.

Gender pay gap action plans and menopause support

Employers with more than 250 employees will be encouraged to publish gender pay gap action plans, including detail on how they support workers going through the menopause, on a voluntary basis from April 2026, before becoming mandatory in 2027.

NDA's

Clauses that prevent workers from alleging or disclosing relevant harassment or discrimination (or the employer's response) will be void, subject to limited "excepted agreements" set in regulations.

Statutory trade union recognition and electronic balloting

Unions will face fewer hurdles in taking industrial action, as they will no longer need to show majority support for the bargaining unit, the rule requiring 40% of eligible voters to vote in favour will be removed, and electronic balloting will be introduced.



From October 2026

Fire and rehire

Limits on “fire and rehire” are expected in October 2026 and will make dismissals linked to refusing certain contract changes automatically unfair, except where an employer faces genuine financial difficulty.

Employment Tribunal time limits

Time limits for most Employment Tribunal claims will increase from three to six months (wrongful dismissal claims remain at three months).

Preventing sexual harassment (employer duty) and third party harassment

Employers will be required to take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment of staff, with regulations expected to clarify what “all reasonable steps” entails. Liability can also arise if employers fail to take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment by third parties across all protected characteristics.

Trade union reforms

Employers will need to remind workers (within their written statement of employment terms and at regular intervals) that they have a legal right to join a trade union, even if the employer does not recognise unions. Trade unions will have regulated access to workplaces to meet, represent, recruit and organise members. Protection against dismissal for taking part in industrial action will be strengthened, and new protection will cover detriment short of dismissal. Employers must also consult worker representatives before issuing their first written tips (gratuities) policy.

Looking ahead to 2027

Looking ahead to 2027, further reforms will continue to reshape workplace rights. Earlier protection from unfair dismissal, enhanced rights for zero or low hours workers, and clearer expectations around flexible working are anticipated. Further regulation of umbrella companies is planned, alongside new protections linked to pregnancy, maternity and bereavement. Altogether, the changes point towards a more consistent, transparent and supportive framework for workers.

Courses & Events

Details for our upcoming courses and events for this academic year are available on our website.

<https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/governor-cpd/>

Effective Support and Challenge for Governors

Wednesday 4th March 2026. 5.30-7pm

Zoom

Induction for New Foundation Directors, Governors and Clerks

Tuesday 17th March 2026. 5.30-7pm

Zoom

Directors Training Day

Wednesday 11th March 2026. 1-4pm

Zoom



Aspiring to Governance

Wednesday 25th March 2026. 5.30pm-6.30pm
Zoom

What Should you Expect from your CEO Reports

Thursday 26th March 2026. 5.30-7pm
Zoom



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

Session 2: CSI Panel discussion with the Chair of the Trust Board

Session 3: 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

Session 2: Ofsted Panel discussion with the Chair of the Trust Board

Session 3: The new Ofsted framework and its implications for governance - NGA

Agenda for both events:

- Arrival from 16:30
- 16:50: Opening remarks
- 17:00: Session 1
- 18:00: Networking
- 18:15: Session 2
- 18:30: Session 3
- 20:00: Q&A
- 20:20: Closing remarks
- 20:30: Finish

27 FEBRUARY CLOSING BOOKING


