

Newsletter



11th March 2026

In this Newsletter:

[RISE Education Fortnight](#)
[The Big Lent Walk](#)
[Zen Educate](#)
[Help shape DfE guidance](#)
[New renewal and refit programme](#)
[Data Protection Complaints](#)
[Godly Play Project](#)
[Anna Freud Institute](#)

[WorkNest](#)
[Primary Religious Education Adviser](#)
[Recruitment](#)
[Events & Training](#)
[St Ursula's School - Events](#)
[News](#)

Director's Message

Dear Colleagues,

During this season of Lent, I am mindful of how we are invited, not only to personal reflection but also a practical re-centring of our shared mission in schools. Lent offers us a clear and timely prompt to pause in the midst of pressures, to refocus on what truly matters and to simplify where we can. Pausing especially in schools is often a luxury, the busy-ness rarely ceases. As leaders, Lent is a chance to consider how we create space for calm in busy environments, how we model patience and kindness in demanding moments, and how we support our staff and pupils in sustaining hope and resilience at school, at work, in homes and communities.

In the busy-ness of this week, I have had the opportunity to meet with the Diocesan Schools Commissioner community from across England and Wales, in Liverpool with Canon Victor.

A number of dioceses have DSCs who are new and it was great to network with those who are in similar positions as well as those who are more experienced. We had a speaker from the DfE who spoke about the impact of the strategy RISE. On the whole, the targeted intervention has been positive across the schools who have had access to the resource that the intervention provides. There were discussions about the future of Catholic education especially in light of the uncertainty of pupil numbers and falling attendance at church. What was undoubted was the commitment across the country that Catholic Education is worth working for and believing in, for the difference it can make to the lives of children and young people is long lasting and significant.

I was delighted to welcome leaders from schools across the diocese to discuss the White Paper. It is clear that while change is welcome, implementation comes at a cost. Many of the principles proposed in the White Paper and the case studies included could have been drawn from our own schools.

PG 1



It means that we are possibly ahead of the game in many ways, and I have no doubt that leaders and governors across Southwark will not rest on their laurels and will strive to further embed and strengthen school offers.

That is not to say that there are challenges contained within the paper. We will have by the next newsletter, the thoughts collated to share with you all. If there is any further input, please forward onto Louise Holden louiseholden@rcaos.org.uk

A number of visits have been made to schools around the diocese by the Education Service Team. Thank you to the schools that have hosted us over the last few weeks. We will continue on our visits and try to visit as many of you as possible. If you get an email requesting a visit, please do respond with a date that is convenient, or even better, contact us first and get a date booked in!

We recognise that schools or Trusts may have been approached by local authorities to use space for SEND provision. For the vast majority of our schools, the Diocese is in effect a landlord as owners of the school building, and so need to support the application. In order to do so in a transparent manner, we have created a form which will allow a business case to be drawn up and presented for decision to the Education Committee. The same form should be used for schools that would like to open a nursery provision. If either of these circumstances arise, please contact your Trust Relationship Officer who will be able to support you complete the form with the detail that is needed for a decision to be made in a timely manner. Please [click here](#) to access the form.

Two schools met the CAT Oversight Panel last month, St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School and Ss Peter and Paul. They have been approved for academy conversion and now start on the journey to join Sancta Familia Catholic Academy Trust.

Further in this newsletter you will see we have advertised a secondment post to support the implementation of Lighting the Path across primary schools in the diocese. If you know of anyone who would be suited to such a post please ask them to get into contact.

As ever, please share your good news and excellence with us, we would love to have regular updates shared on our website. As I said above, I am convinced that our schools could easily be case studies of exceptional and strong practice enhancing provision in every school, and sharing that excellent practice across our schools will make us distinctive as a Diocese. Heads, especially Catholic Heads, are humble creatures, in sharing our distinction we will preserve Catholic Education for decades to come.

Keep us all in your prayers and as ever be assured that you and your community are in ours.

We regret to inform you of the death of Keith Burleton who worked at the Education Commission for many years, leading on Admissions. May Keith rest in peace and rise in glory. We extend our condolences to Keith's family.



Colette Doran-Hannon
Diocesan Schools Commissioner



London RISE Education Fortnight

The London RISE Open Education Fortnight is a collaborative pan-London initiative dedicated to showcasing and sharing exemplary educational practices that are making a positive impact on children's learning and development across all age phases.

Please find details below of schools within the Archdiocese of Southwark hosting visits as part of RISE Fortnight.

[St Philomena's High School for Girls - 12th & 19th March](#)

[St Michael's Catholic College - 9th & 16th March](#)

[Ursuline High School - 10th and 17th March](#)

[St Elphege's Junior School - 11th & 12th March](#)

[St Joseph's Catholic Primary School - 9th & 17th March](#)

Details of all schools participating and their visit dates can be found by following this link: [London RISE Education Fortnight](#)

The Big Lent Walk

So far, Susan has walked 45km! You can track her progress here [Susan Elderfield's fundraising page is fundraising for CAFOD.](#)

On Saturday 7th March, Susan joined St Catherine's, St Columba's, and St Thomas More for their BIG Lent Walk at Danson Park in Bexleyheath. The students showed great enthusiasm throughout the morning and offered a wonderful witness to faith in action. Joe from St Columba's said 'I wasn't expecting this to be so much fun, I'm glad I came'.



Zen Educate

As part of our ongoing partnership with the Archdiocese of Southwark, Zen Educate is delighted to offer all diocesan schools complimentary access to our Single Central Record (SCR) service. Designed with schools in mind, Zen SCR replaces complex spreadsheets with a simple, secure online system that helps staff stay organised, confident, and fully compliant with safeguarding requirements.

With clear dashboards, helpful reminders, and an Ofsted-ready view, schools can easily see what's complete and what needs attention, while keeping all records and documents safely in one place. Zen SCR also automatically adds and removes Zen supply staff for each booking, helping reduce admin and maintain accuracy.

If your school would like to find out more or explore getting started, please contact Louise Holden by email: louiseholden@rcaos.org.uk



Help shape DfE guidance and services for schools

The DfE advise that they are currently developing an online service which will bring DfE tools, guidance and services together in one place, with the aim of helping schools and academy trusts to save time and reduce administration.

In order to design a service that properly meets user needs, they want to understand how DfE information is currently found and used, and accordingly are inviting school business managers, school business professionals, and school and academy trust leaders to complete a short survey. They are keen to hear from those whose role involves funding, finance, compliance, HR, procurement, estates or statutory returns.

The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete and can be accessed via the following [link](#).

Publication of guidance on the new renewal and refit programme

The improve and renew: developing your long-term estates plan guidance is aimed at premises managers, senior leadership teams and anyone involved in the planning and delivering estate improvements, to assist in the development of long-term plans which address condition, suitability, resilience and decarbonisation, across their school and college buildings and estates. It provides a structured, 7 step process, going from understanding the issues, to developing a plan of work for practical improvements, with a central principal that estate improvements should be planned holistically.

Please note that further guidance and case studies are to be published in September 2026.

The guidance can be viewed [here](#).

Data Protection Complaints

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has published guidance on how to deal with data protection complaints, in advance of changes coming into force under the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

By **19 June 2026** organisations have a process for handling data protection complaints, with no exemptions.

The ICO guidance, which provides practical advice to help meet legal obligations, can be accessed via the following [link](#).



Godly Play Project

During the Primary RE Leaders conference held on the 12th February 2026, we mentioned the webinar that Dr Sue Price hosted on Godly Play. In collaboration with the Margaret Beaufort Institute and following extensive interest in the recent RED and Godly Play Project webinar, we can now share a link to the recording of the webinar held on March 3rd. It is accessible [here](#).

The webinar provides details on the background and impact of the project. If you are unfamiliar with the pedagogy of Godly Play, you are advised to watch this recording of a full Godly Play Session first which illustrates the process and dynamic of the Godly Play approach and places the webinar in context. It is accessible [here](#).

This is a great opportunity to familiarise yourselves with Godly Play and, as requested from your feedback, we will be developing training.

FREE training with the Anna Freud Institute on Self Harm

This programme is free to two members of staff from each participating primary or secondary school and includes:

- One free place on [Responding to Students Who Self-Harm training](#). This is a 3-hour training for pastoral and support staff who work directly with young people at risk of, or known to be, self-harming.
- One free place on [Preventing Self-Harm: A Leadership Approach for Schools training](#). This is a 1-day training for school leaders, including headteachers or principals, senior mental health leads, deputy and assistant heads, SENCos, and designated safeguarding leads.
- Three optional termly follow-up reflective sessions available to those who have completed the training above.

Work Nest

Probation Periods | preparing for six-month unfair dismissal protection

Probation periods are often misunderstood — and that's where many employers get caught out.

Used properly, probation isn't a tick-box exercise. It's your defined window to test performance, address concerns early, and make confident decisions before full employment rights take effect. This window is about to shrink. With the qualifying period reducing to six months, the margin for error will be far smaller and the risk of getting it wrong much greater.

Join WorkNest on 12 March at 2.00 pm for this free 60-minute webinar to make sure your probation processes are strong, compliant, and ready before the law changes.

[Register here](#)

Fire Safety in Education | from legal duties to practical protection

Fire incidents in education settings don't just damage buildings – they disrupt learning, create serious safeguarding risks, trigger enforcement action, and can cause long-term reputational harm.



There is a requirement to register in order to watch the videos. All material is presented in the very format shared with inspectors and so will be useful for schools who are preparing for their next inspection under the new framework.

Managing fire safety in schools goes far beyond having a fire risk assessment on file. Inspectors and enforcing authorities increasingly focus on how fire risks are managed in practice, how controls are applied day to day, and whether staff understand what to do in an emergency.

Join WorkNest's Director of Health & Safety Services and former HSE Inspector, Nick Wilson, and Head of Fire Safety, Jeff Watkins, for a free webinar on 19th March at 2.00 pm: Fire Safety in Education | from legal duties to practical protection.

Register [here](#).

Closing the Gaps | Preventing costly H&S failures in your business

Are you confident your business is safe – or are you one incident away from a costly disaster?

For UK businesses, health and safety isn't optional – it's a legal responsibility. Yet many well-run small businesses operate with serious compliance gaps that only come to light after an incident, inspection or claim.

When that happens, the consequences can be severe – substantial fines, director liability, lost productivity, compensation claims, reputational damage and, in some cases, long-term business disruption or closure. For smaller organisations in particular, recovery is not always guaranteed.

This practical, straight-talking webinar on 26 March at 2.00 pm from WorkNest will help you understand where risk typically hides, what the law expects from businesses in 2026, and the steps you should be taking now to protect your people and your organisation – before enforcement action or an avoidable accident creates lasting impact.

Register [here](#).

Primary Religious Education Adviser, Education Service

Secondment – 2 Days per Week

Are you passionate about Religious Education and committed to strengthening the Catholic mission in our primary schools? Do you have the expertise and enthusiasm to support colleagues in delivering high-quality RE that inspires, forms, and deepens understanding for all pupils?

We are seeking to appoint an exceptional Primary Religious Education Adviser on a seconded basis (2 days per week) to support the implementation of the Religious Education Directory (RED) and Lighting the Path across our primary schools.

Further details can be viewed [here](#)



Recruitment

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

Headteacher, Holy Innocents Catholic Primary School

Orpington

Closing date: 16th March 2026

Director of Education (Primary), St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust

Closing date: 26th March 2026

Director of Education (Secondary), St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust

Closing date: 26th March 2026

Director of Education, Sancta Familia Catholic Academy Trust

Closing date: 13th April 2026

Headteacher, St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Tunbridge Wells

Closing date: 20th April 2026

Teacher of Religious Education, Bishop Thomas Grant School

London

Closing date: 16th March 2026

KS2 Class Teacher, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Rotherhithe

Closing date: 17th March 2026

Class Teacher, St Fidelis Catholic Primary School

Erith

Closing date: 27th March 2026

Class Teacher, St Saviour's RC Primary School

Lewisham

Closing date: 26th April 2026

Events & Training

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

Spring 2026

The Way of Beauty: The Evangelising Power of the Arts in Education and Catechesis

Friday 12th March 2026. 10am-4pm

Amigo Hall, SE1 6HR. £25

Induction for New Foundation Directors, Governors and Clerks

Tuesday 17th March 2026. 5.30-7pm

Zoom

New to Catholic Schools

Tuesday 17th March 2026. 9.30am-4pm

Education Service, Orpington, BR5 2SR

Senior Leaders Briefings

Wednesday 25th March 2026. 8-8.30am

Zoom

Aspiring to Governance

Wednesday 25th March 2026. 5.30pm-6.30pm

Zoom

St Oscar Romero Feast Day Mass

Thursday 26th March 2026. 12.30pm

St George's Cathedral

What Should you Expect from your CEO Reports

Thursday 26th March 2026. 5.30-7pm

Zoom



Summer 2026

Marketing Training with AmplifiED Schools Marketing

Wednesday 15th April 2026. 4-5.30pm.
Zoom

Good Shepherd Mass

Tuesday 28th April 2026. 1.45pm
St George's Cathedral, Lambeth Road, SE1 6HR

RE Leaders Briefing

Thursday 30th April 2025. 4-5.30pm
Zoom

Effective Support and Challenge for Governors

Tuesday 21st April 2026. 5.30-7pm
Zoom

Safeguarding for Governors

Thursday 30th April 2026. 5.30-7pm
Zoom

Save the Date!

Deputy Headteachers Conference - 19th May 2026

Celebration of Service Mass - 17th June 2026

Beginning of Year Mass - 25th September 2026

Headteachers Conference - 19th & 20th November 2026

St Ursula's School - Events



St Ursula's School
I AM AN URSULINE: TODAY, TOMORROW, ALWAYS

YEAR 6 VIP GOLDEN TICKET ACTIVITY DAY!

FREE BREAKFAST • LEGO ROBOT COMPETITION • SCIENCE EXPERIMENT • MATHEMATICS TREASURE HUNT • DRAMA GAMES • PRIZES • FREE LUNCH

SATURDAY 28TH FEBRUARY • 9 AM - 2PM

SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

PLEASE NOTE: ALL PARENTS AND CARERS ARE WELCOME TO STAY THROUGHOUT THE DAY, BUT YOU ARE ALSO FREE TO LEAVE THE PREMISES AND RETURN LATER FOR THE AWARDS CELEBRATION.



Year 5 Transition Events

7 Maths Challenge 30th June

Science Fayre 6th July

Key Stage 2 Literature Quiz 8th July

At: St Ursula's Convent School

Contact Miss Groves on: mgroves@stursulas.com
Book your place by Thursday 21st May at the latest!



St Anselm's Catholic Secondary School Hold Art Competition



The students worked incredibly hard to produce homework entries of outstanding quality, demonstrating strong proportions, excellent technique, and thoughtful use of media.

[Continue reading](#)

Mini Vinnies Commissioned at Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School

On Friday 13th February, Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School in Brixton welcomed Sister Macilla and Michelle Ungaro from their parish SVP group to school for a very special occasion — the commissioning ceremony for the Mini Vinnies.



[Continue reading](#)

Sharon Docherty Retires

On 27 February we said farewell to Sharon Docherty as she begins her early retirement. Thank you to everyone who sent messages, made the journey to St Edward's for her celebration tea and made Sharon's last days at the service very memorable. I am sure Sharon won't be a stranger and we keep her in our prayers.

