

Newsletter



24th June 2026

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Reflection

Beloved Friends, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we move towards the end of June, I hope that you and your families have been able to enjoy the recent spell of warm and sunny weather. The longer days and brighter skies offer us a welcome opportunity to rest, reflect, and give thanks to God for the many blessings we receive each day.

This is also a significant time for many of our pupils and students. As examination season draws to a close, I would like to offer my congratulations to all those who have completed their GCSEs, A Levels, university examinations, and other assessments. Your hard work, perseverance, and commitment throughout the year are worthy of great commendation.

For those preparing to begin a new chapter in life, whether moving to a new school, embarking upon further study, entering employment, undertaking vocational training, or discerning another path, please be assured of my prayers and best wishes. Times of transition can bring both excitement and uncertainty, yet they also present opportunities for growth, discovery, and new beginnings.

As we celebrate the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul on Sunday, 28th June, we are reminded that both Apostles embarked upon journeys that God had prepared for them. Peter, the fisherman called to become the rock upon which Christ would build His Church, and Paul, the great missionary to the nations, each responded generously to God's invitation despite their fears, weaknesses, and uncertainties. Their lives teach us that God does not call us because we are perfect; rather, He calls us to place our trust in Him and to use the gifts He has given us in service of others.

This is an important message for all within our school communities, particularly for those young people who now stand at the threshold of a new stage in life. Like Saints Peter and Paul, they may

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not yet see the full path that lies ahead, but they can be confident that God walks with them and continues to guide, strengthen, and inspire them. As educators, parents, governors, clergy, and school staff, we are privileged to accompany them on that journey, helping them to grow not only in knowledge and understanding, but also in faith, character, and hope.

May the example of Saints Peter and Paul encourage us all to respond generously to God's call in our own lives, trusting that He will lead us wherever we are needed most.

May God bless you, your families, and your school communities throughout the weeks ahead.

Amen.

Canon Victor Darlington

Archdiocese of Southwark Episcopal Vicar for the Southeast Area; for CARITAS Southwark, Racial & Cultural Inclusion and Justice & Peace, and for Education.

Director's Message

Dear Colleagues

It has been quite a busy few weeks across education. So many schools have enriched the curriculum, with tours, visits and trips for their pupils, never an easy task, but usually rewarding for both staff and pupils.

The Education Service have been busy also, school visits, continuing recruitment drives and the events that have taken place have been remarkable.

We were delighted to host our inaugural ECT celebration event, marking the passing of the first two years in our teachers' professional lives. It was a wonderful event, and I know it was appreciated by those who attended. My thanks goes to Sam Gower who led on this initiative, and her guest speakers, Canon John Diver, Caterina Hughes (St Aidan's Coulsdon) Mark O' Shaughnessy (St Ursula's Greenwich) , Sophie Drury (St Joseph's Gomm Road) and Michael Feeley (Sancta Familia Catholic Academy Trust).

We recognise that attracting and retaining high quality teachers is hard work. We hope that by supporting a pathway through Catholic Education we will help to attract and retain staff in our schools. This starts well before qualification, in our classrooms now we have teachers of the future, when we welcome in the student teacher, we are opening the door to potential and setting them on a path in Catholic Education in Southwark and possibly beyond.

Our Celebration of Service Mass was also a very suitably celebratory event. It was wonderful to see so many of our colleagues in the Cathedral, either wishing those retiring from service well or being one of the retirees collecting their awards. We are very grateful for those who have spent life in service. For those receiving the awards, I know that being surrounded by those who continue in service and those new to service of education in our diocese was very special.

My thanks go to the Secondary Heads who welcomed myself and Canon Victor to the Secondary Head's Retreat, which was led this year by Bishop Gerard Bradley. It was a great opportunity



to share experiences, to pray and to reflect. It demonstrates the power of occasionally stepping back and reminding ourselves that our own formation cannot be taken for granted but planned for, to be of most benefit.

I also had the pleasure of hosting the national DSC conference in Canterbury this month. The highlight was without a doubt the Mass in St Thomas' Canterbury, a beautiful church which was filled with the joyful voices of the choir from St Anselm's Catholic School Canterbury. The 35 strong choir, lifted the hearts of my colleagues from across England and Wales. I was extremely proud of them and the adults that supported them in preparation for and on the evening itself. Many thanks to Jez Rowarth and his team.

And a final note of thanks to Fr Valentine who led the Directors and Governors retreat, held at St Edward's this year. A small but mighty group of us participated in prayer and meditation sessions on Saturday 20th June. We hope that we have more governors in attendance next year, but from small acorns do mighty oaks grow!

As we now count down in the heat, to the final few weeks of term, we prepare to see our students off for the summer or onto their next stage. While we wish colleagues moving on a peace filled few weeks in this transitional period toward their final goodbyes, we keep you all in our prayers. School life is never really 39 weeks a year... it is the 52 weeks squeezed into 39 and then the 13 more weeks on top of that! Take time to step back and take the long view over the next few weeks. Step into the corridors and listen to the voices that fill the hallways, the laughter in the communal areas and the whisper of God's word that tell you what His plans are for you.

Colette Doran-Hannon
Diocesan Schools Commissioner

Headteachers' Conference Competition



Last year we were fortunate to have an original piece of artwork from Max Brown, The John Fisher School, as our focal point for our Headteachers' Conference.

This year the conference theme is "All that I am"

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 focal point at the Headteachers' Conference. An Amazon voucher will be presented to the winner and the original artwork will be turned into a prayer card for the conference delegates.



The artwork will be the focal point for the rest of the year at St Edward's.

Original artwork should be delivered or posted to the Education Service's office by Friday 23rd October. Computer-generated images should be sent as either a JPEG or PDF to clairewilliams@rcaos.org.uk

NPQ and Flourishing Leadership programmes from The Avila Partnership



NPQ Leading Teaching beginning Autumn 2026 with The Avila Partnership

This 12 month course is for teachers and middle leaders who have, or want to have, responsibilities for leading teaching in a subject, year group, key stage or phase.

The course covers themes including:

- Understanding what good teaching practice is and how to implement it
- Supporting colleagues to design a broad and coherent curriculum
- Planning effective lessons and stimulate your pupils' thinking
- Helping colleagues adapt their teaching to different needs
- Contributing to the design of school assessment systems
- Aligning your professional development with wider school improvement priorities

Complete the 'Early Bird' form below a.s.a.p. to reserve your place for this or any other NPQ:

<https://www.nse.org.uk/npq>

We expect courses to begin in November 2026 and funding details to be announced shortly. If your school is not eligible for funding, the course will cost £890 + VAT per participant.

<https://tinyurl.com/AvilaPartnership>

The Avila Partnership is delighted to share details of our NPQ and Flourishing Leadership Programmes designed by the National Society for Education, beginning in November 2026.

The NPQ Leading Teaching is a 12-month course for those with responsibilities for leading teaching in a subject, year group, key stage or phase.

The Flourishing Leadership programmes invite participants to reimagine their roles as stewards of flourishing for all, placing equal emphasis on inner development and the outward impact on school communities.

<https://tinyurl.com/AvilaPartnership>

GCSE Eduqas Religious Studies Route B Examinations

Thank you to all schools, and teachers of RE, who shared their experiences and concerns regarding this year's GCSE Eduqas Religious Studies Route B examinations.

The significant national response highlighted the strength of feeling across the sector and ensured that the experiences of those teaching and supporting students in Religious Education were heard.

Following this feedback, the CES have received a formal response from WJEC outlining the steps they are taking to review the issues raised and ensure learners are treated fairly.



WJEC has:

- Acknowledged the strength and consistency of feedback from schools and the Catholic Education Service (CES) regarding changes to the rubric and layout of some exam-style questions.
- Recognised that communication about these changes “was not communicated to all centres as effectively as it should have been” and expressed regret.
- Confirmed that future qualification changes will follow a formal change management process, including clearer communication and guidance for schools.
- Reassured us that their immediate priority is ensuring no learner is disadvantaged as a result of these changes.

WJEC has also confirmed that:

- Candidate performance will be closely monitored throughout the marking and awarding process.
- Detailed analysis will take place at both question and paper level, using statistical evidence and examiner judgement.
- Particular attention will be given to the question types highlighted through school feedback.
- Where evidence shows that students have been affected, appropriate measures will be taken to ensure fairness for all candidates.
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We welcome WJEC’s recognition of the concerns raised and their commitment to reviewing the impact of these issues through the awarding process. The CES will continue to engage with WJEC and keep schools informed of any further developments.

Thank you once again to all schools and teachers who contributed. Your professionalism, expertise, and commitment to supporting students have been central to this process.

There is no Place for Racism - A Pastoral Message on the Dignity of Every Person

Please [click here](#) to view the Pastoral Message from Archbishop John Wilson.

WorkNest

The Big 5: Employment law cases every employer should know in 2026

From whistleblowing and unfair dismissal to discrimination, wages and Early Conciliation, recent Tribunal and Court of Appeal decisions are reshaping employer responsibilities in 2026. Join WorkNest’s Employment Law experts on 24th June at 2.00 pm as they unpack the five cases every employer should know – and what they mean in practice for your organisation.

[Register here](#)

Managing Complex and Tactical Grievance

From tactical complaints raised during disciplinary processes to AI-assisted grievances and escalating discrimination allegations, organisations are facing more complex employee relations challenges than ever before. Join WorkNest’s experts on 2nd July at 2.00 pm as they explore the changing nature of workplace complaints, common employer challenges, and the practical and legal considerations organisations should be aware of when managing difficult grievance situations.

[Register here](#)



Diocesan Chaplaincy Day

Tuesday 30th June 2026. 9.30am-4pm
£25. St Therese, The Friars, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7BY

We look forward to welcoming you to Aylesford for the third Diocesan Formation day for Chaplains, Chaplaincy Coordinators and those responsible for Catholic Life and Mission. This day will focus on the importance of What is Charism and Living the Charism. We welcome Rob Peachy from Mary's Meals to update us on the new developments with the charity. Will Desmond, Director of ASCENT will be speaking on 'Maintainance to Mission' for schools and Deacon Liam Lynch will be speaking on Collaborative Ministry as Chaplains.

Please [click here](#) to book.

Southwark Singing Programme - Kent

The Southwark Singing Programme is the diocesan sacred music programme for schools, operating at primary and secondary level. Diocesan choral directors visit schools each week for 30 weeks of the year running whole-class singing sessions and choirs based on liturgical music, building confidence among pupils and broadening the musical offering in school liturgies. This work is subsidised by the diocese and comes at a low cost to schools.



The programme is expanding into Kent and we would welcome enquiries from schools in West Kent and Medway in particular. Please contact the Diocesan Director of Music, Jonathan Schranz, on singing@rcaos.org.uk for further information or to arrange a trial session.

Rise Theatre-Treasure Within - Autumn Tour 2026

What is Treasure Within?

Treasure Within is a dynamic, all-day experience for primary schools that creatively brings the 7 principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) to life through live theatre, music, classroom activities, and immersive workshops. You can find out more and watch the trailer here!

Dates are already filling quickly, early booking is encouraged. Schools can email admin@risetheatre.co.uk

Costs for the day (based on school size):

£549 – under 125 pupils

£599 – under 325 pupils

£649 – under 450 pupils

£699 – over 450 pupils

Group discounts are available when 3+ schools book together in the same area or within an academy trust.



Archbishop's Appeal 2026 Grant Scheme

The Archbishop's Appeal is a fundraising appeal that takes place across parishes in the Archdiocese of Southwark each year.

Grants of up to £5,000 are available to support innovative projects taking place within the geographical boundaries of the Archdiocese of Southwark and led by parishes, schools, diocesan commissions, or other entities working alongside the Archdiocese, which seek to enhance one or more of the key missionary areas: Youth and Evangelisation or Social Outreach.

Closing date: 1st July 2026

Website: <https://rcaos.org.uk/archbishops-appeal-grant>

Application form: <https://forms.rcaos.org.uk/archbishops-appeal-grant-application/>

Eligibility criteria: <https://rcaos.org.uk/media/xamfcf2r/archbishop-s-appeal-grant-guidelines-and-eligibility.pdf>

Recruitment

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

**Trust Relationship Officer, Education Service
Orpington**

Teachers, St Mary's Catholic Federation

Carshalton

Closing date: 24th June 2026

**School Business Manager, St Thomas More
Catholic Primary School**

Bexley

Closing date: 24th June 2026

**Deputy Headteacher, St Thomas A Becket RC
Primary School**

Abbey Wood

Closing date: 26th June 2026

**Experienced SENDCo, Margaret Roper Catholic
Primary School**

Purley

Closing date: 26th June 2026

**Headteacher, St Anthony's Catholic Primary
School**

Dulwich

Closing date: 30th June 2026

**Premises Manager, St Peter's Catholic Primary
School**

Woolwich

Closing date: 3rd July 2026

**Estates Manager, St Oscar Romero Catholic
Academy Trust**

Closing date: 5th July 2026

Save the Date!

**Headteachers Conference - 19th & 20th
November 2026**



Events & Training

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

Summer 2026

Diocesan Chaplaincy Day

Tuesday 30th June 2026. 9.30am-4pm
£25. The Friars, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7BY

Lighting the Path KS2 Year 5

Monday 6th July 2026. 9.30-11.30am
Teams

Lighting the Path KS2 Year 4

Monday 6th July 2026. 12-2pm
Teams

Drop in Session for Parish Priests

Wednesday 8th July 2026. 2-3pm. Teams

Senior Leaders Briefings

Wednesday 15th July 2026. 8am
Teams

Primary Headteacher's Retreat

Wednesday 15th July 2026. 9.30am-3pm. Kairos Centre

Directors Keeping in Touch (KIT)

Thursday 16th July 2026. 8-8.30am. Teams

Governors Gathering

Thursday 16th July 2026 4-5pm. Teams

Autumn 2026

Beginning of Year Mass

Friday 25th September 2026. 11am.
St George's Cathedral

News

St Matthew Academy Visits St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



Pupils from St Matthew Academy in Blackheath had a wonderful time visiting St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to explore Catholic Social Teaching and its impact within our wider Catholic community.

[Continue reading](#)

St Ethelbert's Engineers!

A team representing Year 5 pupils from St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School & Nursery in Ramsgate, together with their class Teacher Mrs Lawrence, travelled to Canterbury Christ Church University to take part in the celebration event linked to the Primary Engineer Vehicle Programme.

[Continue reading](#)



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**Year 5
Transition
Events**

**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!

