Newsletter

Education Service
ARCHDIOCESE of SOUTHWARK

In this Newsletter:

22nd October 2026

Directors' Message
CES Model Informal Support
Education Winter Readiness
SEND and Inclusion Training
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
NPQ Leading Teaching
DfE RISE Fortnight
WorkNest
Creative Challenge
Advent Travelling Crib
Recruitment
Events & Training
News
Advent Travelling Crib

Reflection

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

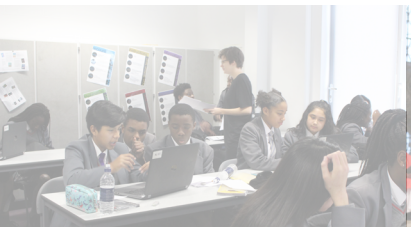
As October ends, I want to thank you for the care, patience and dedication you have brought to the first weeks of the school year. By now, you are getting to know one another a bit more: their strengths, their worries, the friendships they are forming and the encouragement each one needs. Your work makes a lasting difference, often in ways you may not see right away.

October is traditionally a month of devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary. Amid busy school days, may Mary's example of attentive listening help us pause, pray, and place our pupils and colleagues in God's hands.

October is also Black History Month. The 2026 theme, "Honouring Our Communities," invites us to recognise people whose contributions sustain the places where we live and learn, including those whose work is too often overlooked. For schools, this is an opportunity to teach Black history with care and accuracy, to celebrate Black achievement, and to help every child see that their story and their gifts matter. It is also a time to listen, challenge prejudice, and strengthen the welcome we offer every family.

As the half-term break approaches, I hope you will find time to rest. Thank you for all you do, including the quiet acts of kindness that no newsletter can fully capture. May God bless you, your pupils and your school communities throughout October.

With every good wish and prayer.






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

Directors' Message

Dear Colleagues,

The final weeks of any term often bring additional demands, celebrations, inspections, assessments, staffing matters and the countless tasks that accompany the life of a Catholic school. Despite all the demands of the day, I know that the children and students are put at the heart of decisions made. For some schools the end of the half term came last Friday and I hope those colleagues are having a good break. Some of you have this week and the next to go, as the schools across the diocese have half term over a three week period. I take this opportunity to wish Isobel Vasallo all the very best as she leave's St Mary's Beckenham for her next chapter. We thank her for her service with a deep sense of gratitude. In the same breath, we welcome Rachael Shields who takes on the Headship of the school. We wish her many happy years in post. St Francis Xavier Sixth Form also says goodbye this week to Deacon Tony Flavin who has been their chaplain for many years. We wish him all the very best and thank him for his service to our young people.

This term has been marked by many signs of hope and achievement. Across the Diocese, I have witnessed schools embracing opportunities for growth, strengthening their Catholic life, supporting the wellbeing of pupils and staff, and remaining steadfast in their commitment to providing the highest quality education. These successes are a testament to the dedication, professionalism and vocation of our headteacher colleagues.

This week, Notre Dame Secondary School for Girls held the memorial for Sr Anne Marie Niblock. It was a privilege to be in attendance and see the outpouring of love and respect for her leadership and friendship. The celebration brought old friends together in solidarity and was a truly joy filled event.

RISE are looking for London schools to host an event showcasing excellent practice in school. We have so many remarkable strategies ongoing in our schools please do consider making an application to showcase them to our colleagues across the city! For enquiries, please contact: london.riseregionalmailbox@education.gov.uk (please put open fortnight in the title) London RISE Open Education Fortnight: Encore

As the term draws to a close, I encourage you to take time to recognise all that has been. I have been so fortunate to have been invited to a number of start of year Mass celebrations, and visits to schools as have the rest of the team. A highlight was the Beginning of year Mass where Archbishop John reminded us of our call, to know, to love and to serve. There is a real challenge to do just that, but also joy in realising it daily. It is our call in faith to know, to love and serve our schools communities In Christ. Leadership can often focus our attention on what remains to be done rather than what has been achieved, our faith in Christ, in life eternal is our end goal. The formation that we take time to practise and develop put Christ at the centre helps centres us, to put the noise to one side. This half term, I encourage each of you to take the opportunity for genuine rest and renewal. Effective leadership requires both generosity and resilience,



and rest is not a luxury but a necessity. Disconnect (easier said than done!) when possible, spend time with family and friends, nurture your own wellbeing and return refreshed for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in the next half term.

Thank you for your continued partnership, your faith-filled leadership and your unwavering commitment to our shared mission.

I wish you and your school communities a restful and peaceful break.



Colette Doran-Hannon
Diocesan Schools Commissioner
Archdiocese of Southwark

CES Model Informal Support and Capability Policy

The CES have completed union consultation process for the CES Model Informal Support and Capability Policy and finalised the drafting of the model policy.

Please download the policy from the CES website when needed.https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/resources/employment-policiesschools

If you have adopted the amended model appraisal and employee development policy, you should seek to adopt this version of the capability policy as soon as you are able to. If you are not able to do this, you will need to ensure that you have appropriate advice about any interaction between appraisal and capability if you are using an older version of the capability policy.

Education Winter Readiness Webinar

Education winter readiness webinar on Monday 9 November 2026 from 16:00 to 17:30.

This free session, which is for education settings and local authority officials, will include practical advice to help settings prepare for winter, support attendance and protect the wellbeing of children, young people and staff.

Attendees will learn how to mitigate and manage seasonal illness in settings and prepare for severe winter weather, including potential El Niño-related disruption.

To attend the session and receive information about these seasonal resilience risks and the guidance and useful resources available, click here to book.



SEND and Inclusion Training Courses and Materials

The first sets of SEND and inclusion training courses and materials for early years settings, mainstream schools and post-16 settings are now live.

Developed by Ambition Institute, the new in-house training materials are designed to support settings to develop a shared understanding of inclusion and can be adapted for local professional development activities. The materials are intended to support leaders, teachers and support staff, including teaching assistants, to unite around a shared understanding of inclusion and agree approaches that help learners to belong, achieve and thrive.

The first set of materials includes:

- introductory content on SEND reform and inclusive teaching;
- an introduction to the proposed Areas of Development;
- speech, language and communication development materials; and
- facilitator guidance and supporting resources.

Online training package for early years educators
Dingley's Promise Early Years SEND Training: Early Years CPD Training - Dingley's Promise
In House Training materials for schools and post-16 settings

- Schools: SEND and Inclusion Training for Mainstream Schools
- Post-16 settings: SEND and Inclusion Training for Post-16 Settings

This publication marks the first stage of a wider SEND professional development offer. Further in-house materials will be published during this academic year, with new free SEND training for teachers, leaders, teaching assistants and FE support staff planned from autumn 2027.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

This course invites non-Catholic staff in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Southwark to join a bespoke Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) programme, where they are supported within school to be received into the Church. For full details of the programme, click here.

If you are interested in joining our next programme, please contact nicola.adams@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk at The Avila Partnership by **Friday 30th October 2026**.

NPQ Leading Teaching

The Avila Partnership is delighted to be delivering the NPQ in Leading Teaching, a 12-month course for those with responsibilities for leading teaching in a subject, year group, key stage or phase. Limited funded places are still available for those schools with a high proportion of PP50 students. The deadline for applications is Friday, 16th October.

For further information and an application form, click here.



DfE RISE Fortnight



Thursday 5th November 2026
St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust is delighted to invite education professionals to join us for a day of shared practice, collaboration and school improvement.

The day will include:
9.30am–11.30am, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School: Phonics, Oracy and Maths
12pm–12.45pm, St Michael's Catholic College: School Improvement Session with Giles Osborne, Director of School Improvement
1pm–3pm, St Michael's Catholic College: Driving and sustaining above-national attendance

Join us for the full day to visit our schools, meet our team and discover our collaborative approach to school improvement.

To book the full day, please email s.stone@sbcat.co.uk.

Individual RISE sessions can also be booked separately using the existing registration links.
St Joseph's Morning Session. Click here.
St Michael's Afternoon Session. Click here.

The Avila Partnership takes part in London RISE Open Education Fortnight: Encore

Following the success of the initial London RISE Open Education Fortnight in March 2026, The Avila Partnership has been invited to take part again in the November initiative.

Organised in partnership with the DfE, it provides all schools across London and the surrounding areas with the opportunity to learn about strong practice that is making a difference for young people supporting the four national priority areas of Attendance, Inclusion, Best Start in Life, and Attainment.

Two sessions on Attendance: 'Belong, Achieve and Thrive' will be run by The Avila Partnership:
Thursday 5th & 12th November 9.30am-12noon, St Philomena's Catholic High School for Girls, Carshalton
Please click here to book.

A further two sessions on Inclusion will be run by **Ursuline High School, Wimbledon:**
Tuesday 3rd & 10th November, 9am-12noon
Please click here to book.

All sessions are free of charge but it is recommended to book in advance.



WorkNest

AI-Powered Claims & Grievances: What HR Needs to Know
As AI becomes increasingly common in the workplace, it's also finding its way into grievances, employment claims and workplace disputes. From AI-generated legal arguments and inaccurate information to HR teams' own use of AI, there are important questions about how this content should be handled and the implications for employment law, data protection and disclosure.

In this practical session on **29 October at 12.00 pm**, we'll explore what HR teams need to know, the potential pitfalls to look out for, and how to respond when AI becomes part of a workplace dispute.
Register here

Misconduct & Mishaps: Managing Christmas Party Risks
The venue is booked and the invitations are out. But would you know where your organisation stands if an employee's behaviour or a safety incident raised concerns?

Christmas parties and end-of-year celebrations are a chance to thank your team, bring colleagues together and enjoy the festivities. However, moving workplace relationships into a social setting can make the boundaries around behaviour and employer responsibility feel less clear. Does being outside working hours make a difference? Could your organisation be held responsible for an employee's actions? And when should an issue become an HR matter?

Join WorkNest's experts, for a practical webinar on **5 November at 2.00 pm** on common issues that can arise at work-related festive celebrations. **Register here**

Virtual Mock Health & Safety Criminal Trial
Would your organisation's safety arrangements stand up to scrutiny in court?

Risk assessments, training records and safety procedures can tell one story on paper. Following a serious accident, the evidence may reveal another.

Join WorkNest for a FREE virtual mock health and safety criminal trial on **19 November at 2.00 pm** and see how an organisation's decisions, actions and records are examined in court. This interactive online event follows a fictional prosecution involving a contractor seriously injured at work. You'll hear witnesses challenged under cross-examination, examine the evidence and take part in deciding the outcome. Along the way, you'll see how risk assessments, contractor arrangements, communication and record-keeping can come under scrutiny and what your organisation can learn about turning documented safety procedures into effective day-to-day practice.

You won't just learn about legal requirements. You'll experience a real-world trial in action, culminating in a crucial question: did the company take all reasonable steps to prevent this serious accident? **Register here**

Cyber Security Health Check
As a partner member, you can access WorkNest's free Digital Security Health Check. The interactive assessment takes around 10 minutes and looks at six areas of your digital security. You'll receive a report highlighting potential weaknesses and practical actions, plus a free consultation with our experts to discuss what the findings mean for your organisation.

Activate here



Creative Challenge

To support health awareness in schools, the UK Health Security Agency has launched a 2026 e-Bug Creative Challenge, giving Years 10 and 11 pupils a chance to win a £500 voucher for their school, and prizes for themselves, by creating artwork that explains antimicrobial resistance.

The deadline for entries is **Sunday 22 November 2026** and details about the challenge can be found by clicking here.

Advent Travelling Crib



Recruitment

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

Chief Executive Officer, St Oscar Romero Catholic Academy Trust
Closing date: 23rd October 2026

KS2 Full Time Teacher, St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. Chatham
Closing date: 21st November 2026

Head of Year, St Catherine's Catholic School for Girls
Closing date: 2nd November 2026

Temporary Cover Teacher, St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. Bexleyheath
Closing date: 30th November 2026

Year 2 Class Teacher, St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. Bexleyheath
Closing date: 30th November 2026



Events & Training

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

Autumn 2026

Learn More About the Rights Respecting Schools Award and Embedding a Rights-Based Approach in Your School
Tuesday 3rd November 2026. 4-5.30pm. Teams

Directors' Keeping in Touch (KIT)
Wednesday 4th November 2026. 8-8.30am. Teams

Primary RE Leaders Meeting
Tuesday 10th November 2026. 4-5.30pm. Teams

Governors' Gatherings
Thursday 12th November 2026. 4pm-5pm. Teams

New to Leading Religious Education in Secondary Schools
Thursday 12th November 2026. 9.30am-4pm
Cowderoy Room, SE1 6HR

Headteachers' Conference
Thursday 19 and Friday 20th November 2026.
Ashford International Hotel

Moderation Meeting
Monday 23rd November 2026. 2-4.30pm
St Edward's House, BR5 2SR

Secondary RE Leaders' Conference
Tuesday 24th November 2026. 9.30am -4pm
Amigo Hall, SE1 6HR

Advent Reflections
Multiple dates. 8-8.15am. Teams.

New to Catholic Schools
Friday 27th November 2026. 9.30am to 4pm.
St Edward's House, BR5 2SR

Singing from the Same Hymn Sheet: Effective use of Music in School Liturgies
Thursday 26th November 2026. 4-5.30pm. Teams

The Appointment of a New Head or Deputy
Thursday 3rd December 2026 5.3-7pm. Teams

Advent Service
Wednesday 9th December 2026. 2pm
St George's Cathedral, SE1 6HR

News

Eden Club at St Augustine's Catholic Primary School



The Eden Club pupils at St Augustine's Catholic Primary School in Tunbridge Wells, have been helping to care for their school community by litter picking around the entrance to the school.

Continue reading






Archbishop John Wilson celebrates Mass with St Fidelis

On Sunday 4th October, St Fidelis Catholic Primary School was delighted to welcome Archbishop John Wilson to Our Lady of the Angels, Erith to mark the 800th anniversary of the Transitus of St Francis of Assisi.

Continue reading



Advent Travelling Crib



