

# THE ALPHA BETA

The news and information bulletin  
from the A&B Education Service



MARCH 2026

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# Celebrating Archbishop Richard's service to education

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Many thanks to the schools who sent in messages and photos for the book, which ran to fifty-six pages, and was presented to Archbishop Richard during the Trustees meeting at Ladywell in February.



He writes:

Dear brothers and sisters,

May I thank everyone in the school communities of Arundel & Brighton for the wonderful book, marking my time in the Diocese. My many visits to schools, along with such events as the Good Shepherd celebration, the Schools Pilgrimage to the Cathedral and the commitment to the Red Shirt engagement in the Lourdes Pilgrimage have always been real high points for me over these last ten years. In addition, the close working relationship with the Education Service has been a real Blessing.

Be assured of a remembrance in my prayers for you all in the years ahead.

With every Blessing,

+Richard

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## ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER

**The Most Reverend Richard Moth, Bishop of our Diocese from 2015-2026, was installed as the Twelfth Archbishop of Westminster during a Mass of Installation at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday (14 February).**

The Education Service and members of the Diocesan Education Committee and the Academies Partnership Committee were delighted to represent schools and education at this joyful event.

[+R highlighted the importance of service & seeing time as a gift from God. | News](#)



# ELECTION OF DIOCESAN ADMINISTRATOR

In accordance with Canon Law (the laws and regulations that govern the life, organisation and mission of the Catholic Church), the diocesan College of Consultors — Monsignor Tony Barry, Fr Tony Bridson, Canon Jonathan Martin, Canon Kieron O'Brien, Fr David Osborne and Canon David Parmiter — met at The St Philip Howard Centre in Crawley on February 16 to elect a Diocesan Administrator to provide stability and continuity, and to serve and guide the faithful of the Diocese until a new bishop is appointed by the Holy Father.

Speaking on behalf of the College of Consultors, Monsignor Tony Barry said:

"We offer our prayers for Archbishop Richard as he begins his ministry in Westminster. While we await the appointment of a new bishop by Pope Leo XIV, and in accordance with Canon Law, we have today elected Canon Jonathan Martin as our Diocesan Administrator.

"Canon Jonathan has served our diocesan community with generosity and dedication for many years. His experience as a diocesan priest and Vicar General equips him ably to shepherd our parishes, schools and ministries. We ask the faithful to keep him, and all in the Diocese, in their prayers."

While no major decisions can be taken by the Administrator and College of Consultors which would affect the rights of a future bishop, the daily life and mission of the Diocese — its parishes, schools and diocesan offices — will continue steadily and faithfully in their care. Reflecting on his appointment, Canon Jonathan said:

"I accept this new responsibility with humility and trust in the Lord. I am sensible of the great confidence that the College of Consultors has placed in me, and of the responsibility of this new role in the service of the Diocese, in which I have been privileged to serve as a priest for the past thirty years. I look forward to working closely with the College of Consultors, with people across our parishes and schools, and with all those of good will, so that together we may continue to grow as communities of saints and as strong, lively and welcoming schools of discipleship, steadfast in our shared call to mission and commitment to the flourishing of the local Church."

[Canon Jonathan Martin is elected Diocesan Administrator | News](#)



**We now pray for our diocese as we await the appointment of a new Bishop**

**Prayer for the Election of a Bishop**

O God, eternal shepherd,  
who govern your flock with unfailing care,  
grant in your boundless fatherly love  
a pastor for your Church  
who will please you by his holiness  
and to us show watchful care.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen

# CAROL SCANLON RETIREMENT

**Carol has been Head at St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Crowborough since 2020 and before that, worked as Deputy Head at St Joseph's, Redhill.**

She has been an exceptional leader of her school community, giving support and guidance not only to those within the school but also the wider group of schools in East Sussex. She leaves at Easter, with the school having recently received its conditional consent to join Bosco CET, and we wish her well for a happy and well-deserved retirement.

David Neill will be the Acting Head at St Mary's from the summer term.



## CHAPLAINCY

In the fast-paced world of school life, Chaplains and Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators are often the spiritual "shock absorbers", providing a calm presence and a listening ear for students and staff alike. It is so important that those carrying our schools in prayer take time to renew and refresh their faith and fill their own spiritual cup so that they can continue to give generously in love.

Therefore, we are delighted to invite school Chaplains and Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators to a dedicated overnight retreat at **St Columba's House in Woking on 18 - 19 May**. This is a purposeful pause designed to help you in your ministry.

Retreats such as this can often feel like a luxury, but for those of us working in ministry they are more often than not a lifeline to strengthen our own relationship with the One we are entrusted to bring others to.

Spaces on this retreat are limited, so if you are a school Chaplain or a Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator, make sure you sign up quickly to avoid disappointment.

Please click the link below to sign up or contact Chaplaincy Coordinator Theresa McNamara with any queries. **E: [theresa.mcmanara@abdiocese.org.uk](mailto:theresa.mcmanara@abdiocese.org.uk)**  
**[abdiocese.churchsuite.com/events/q1ljwoxw](https://abdiocese.churchsuite.com/events/q1ljwoxw)**

**Theresa McNamara**  
Chaplaincy Coordinator

Arundel and Brighton Diocese  
Education Service

# CHAPLAIN'S RETREAT

*Prophets of a future not our own.*

**18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026**  
St Columba's House - Woking

With opportunities for prayer, worship, Mass and Reconciliation.

Input will be led by Deacon Liam Lynch, a fellow school chaplain from Westminster Diocese.



**REGISTER TODAY**



Sign up in the usual way through the online platform (which you can access using the QR code provided).

The cost of the retreat is £150 all inclusive of meals, input and accommodation.

# Liturgical Resources

## 2026 YEAR OF ST FRANCIS

**The special Jubilee Year of Saint Francis proclaimed by Pope Leo XIV will take place from 10 January 2026 to 10 January 2027, on the occasion of the eighth centenary of the death of Saint Francis of Assisi. The year highlights Francis's message of peace and care for creation.**

The Year of Saint Francis presents itself as a time of favour and grace, offered freely to all. As the Holy Father expresses his hope, may this jubilee awaken anew in hearts "feelings of Christian charity toward one's neighbour and an authentic desire for harmony and peace among peoples."

Eight centuries after his death, Saint Francis still calls the Church—and the world—to conversion. This Jubilee Year invites us not only to honour him, but to walk in his footsteps, rebuilding the Church through lives transformed by the Gospel.

**Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.  
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.**

It is an ideal time to revisit the Canticle of the Sun, the teachings of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* and to focus on the Catholic Social Teaching principle of Care for Creation. We also pray for those schools dedicated to St Francis, St Francis of Assisi, Crawley and St Francis, Caterham and for the Franciscan communities present in our diocese at Littlehampton, Ladywell and Rye.



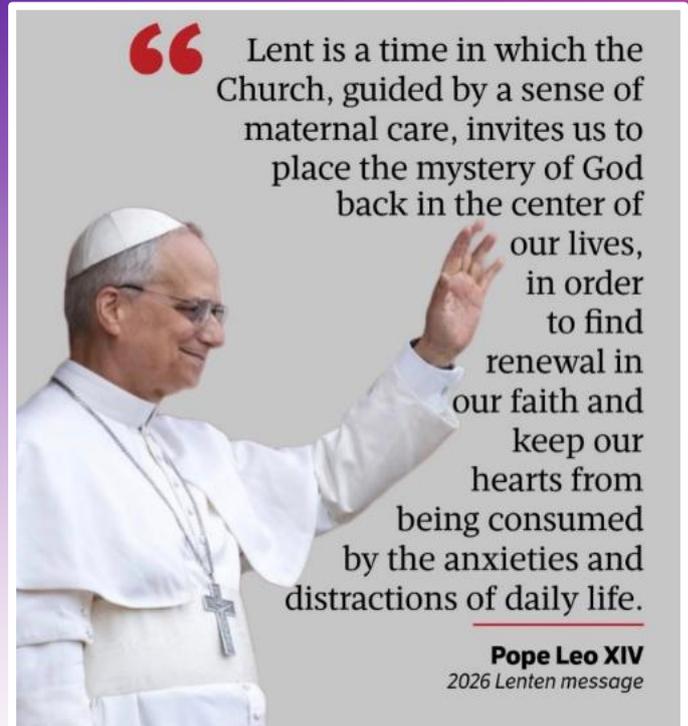
# LENT

The Holy Father Pope Leo XIV has issued his message for Lent 2026 on the theme: "Listening and Fasting: Lent as a Time of Conversion".

[Pope Leo XIV: Lent as a time of conversion - Catholic Bishops' Conference >>>](#)

## POPE LEO'S PRAYER

Heavenly Father,  
In this sacred season that began on Ash Wednesday, we come before You with humble hearts. The ashes remind us that we are dust — fragile, dependent, and in need of Your mercy. Yet they also remind us that dust, when touched by Your grace, becomes holy ground.  
Lord, may this season not remain external.  
Do not allow it to be only a mark on our foreheads or words on our lips.  
Let it penetrate our desires.  
Let it purify our loves.  
Let it reorder our priorities.  
From dust... awaken humility within us.  
From decision... strengthen our will to choose You daily.  
From discipleship... teach us to carry the cross faithfully.  
From life... draw us into deeper communion with You.  
Where our desires have been disordered, realign them.  
Where our love has grown divided, purify it.  
Where our priorities have drifted toward the temporary, redirect us toward the eternal.  
Lord Jesus, as You call us to deny ourselves and follow You, give us the grace to say yes — not only in grand gestures, but in the quiet sacrifices of each day. Let our fasting empty us of pride. Let our prayer anchor us in truth. Let our charity reflect Your heart.  
Holy Spirit, breathe upon our dust once more. Form in us a new heart — steadfast, obedient, and alive with holy desire.  
May this Lent be a true interior conversion.  
May it move us from routine to renewal,  
from surface religion to deep transformation,  
from self-centred living to God-centred life.  
From dust...  
to decision...  
to discipleship...  
to life.  
Lead us, Lord, all the way to Easter joy.  
Amen.







**The Caritas Lent 2026** page offers a curated collection of spiritual resources to support parishes, clergy, and lay leaders throughout the season. Here you will find homily notes for each Sunday of Lent, alongside recommended books and other reflective resources, all designed to help deepen prayer, encourage conversion, and accompany communities on their Lenten journey.

The link to the **social justice calendar** can also be found on this page.

[Lent 2026 - Caritas Social Action Network - CSAN](#)



## **SVP Heart-to-Heart Lent campaign – youth resources available now**

As we enter the season of Lent, the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) is inviting all schools and parishes to take part in our SVP Heart-to-Heart Lent Campaign.

Inspired by Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati's message *Verso l'Alto* (To the Heights), they are encouraging children, young people, and adults to keep climbing towards a life of deeper faith, friendship, and service.

Their Lenten theme centres on Loneliness and Befriending, which lies at the heart of the SVP's mission. Across all ages, they are inviting everyone to connect more deeply with others by stepping away from everyday distractions and taking time for meaningful, attentive conversations.

## **Campaign Resources**

The SVP are offering resources for each age group to use throughout Lent, with the aim of bringing communities together and helping lift people out of loneliness. There will be time to reflect on different encounters in Scripture and to take part in activities that encourage reaching out to others.

- [Mini Vinnie](#) resources (Key stages 1 and 2)
- [Youth SVP](#) resources (Key stages 3, 4 and 5)
- [SVP1833](#) resources (Young Adults)
- [SVP Adult Members](#) resources

If you have any questions about the campaign, or if you are interested in setting up a Young Vincentians' group, please email;

**E:** [youngvincentians@svp.org.uk](mailto:youngvincentians@svp.org.uk)



# THE MARK 10 MISSION

## Weekly Lenten Mission Files

Every week they create resources to help you and your children meet Jesus. Sign up to receive them directly in your inbox:

[The Mark 10 Mission](#)



## THE SPRING EASTER PROJECT



**RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION THAT  
ENGAGES AND  
INSPIRES**

**The Springs Easter Project leads pupils through a series of dance workshops that help them engage with the Easter story.**

Children will learn and create movement in response to the story. There is opportunity for spiritual development and the children will use their imaginations and creativity, growing empathy, self knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.

The workshops can culminate in an informal sharing or performance of the Easter story by the pupils, which can be shown to the school and parents through either a live or filmed presentation.

The project can be anything from one to six days, and can be split into workshops looking at different sections of the Easter story. For example:

- Palm Sunday
- Washing of the feet
- Last supper
- Garden of Gethsemane
- Trial
- Crucifixion
- Rolling away of the stone
- Mary at the Tomb
- Resurrection

The project can be adapted to suit the school.

Many schools choose to use the company one day a week leading up to Easter. Some schools prefer to fit the workshops into an intensive week or another format.

Please call us to discuss the best option for your school.

**To book or for a friendly chat about our work, please call us on 07775 628 442 or email: [touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk](mailto:touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk)**

## ST CLEMENT'S, EWELL VISIT THE NATIONAL ST OSCAR ROMERO SHRINE AT ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL

**As part of our preparations for the Oscar Romero Award, Worship Leaders from St Clement's Catholic Primary School wanted to build on their knowledge of St Oscar Romero, whom they first encountered in Year 4. They were excited to discover that the National St Oscar Romero Shrine is in London, and a visit to St George's Cathedral in Southwark was arranged.**

The visit gave pupils the opportunity to learn more about St Oscar Romero's life and mission and to see his relics, including a fragment of the blood-stained vestment he wore when he was assassinated and his skullcap (zucchetto), displayed within a beautifully decorated Salvadoran-style reliquary cross. Our Head Girl and Head Boy lit a candle on behalf of the school.

Many pupils reflected that they arrived knowing only his name but left with a much deeper understanding of his courage, faith, and commitment to Catholic Social Teaching. They recognised how he stood up for people who were treated unfairly and spoke out for justice. One pupil commented that *"Oscar Romero was a bit like St Clement. He defended those who suffered injustice and stood up for what was right, even though it was dangerous."*

The children reflected that following Jesus means trusting that God will bring good from our actions and serving others with courage and love as true Agents of Change. The visit has inspired the Worship Leaders to share their learning with the whole school, and they are planning on leading an assembly on St Oscar Romero's feast day on March 24.

**Feast of St Oscar Romero**, one of the patron saints of Caritas Internationalis and patron saint of Caritas Social Action Network. Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador, was assassinated while saying Mass on this day in 1980. He was a prophetic voice for justice and human dignity in El Salvador during the years of the military dictatorship. He embodies the preferential option for the poor. For more information and a bank of resources visit:

[www.romerotrust.org.uk](http://www.romerotrust.org.uk) and for the Romero Award Home | [Oscar Romero Award](#)



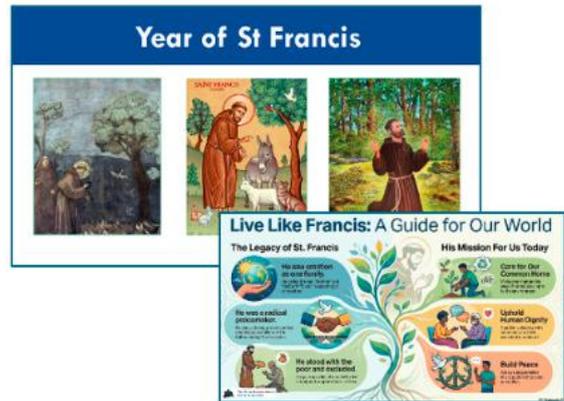
We are delighted to see how many schools in the diocese are now signed up to the Oscar Romero Award and are working towards Participator Level. To support schools, the Oscar Romero Award Trust has created NEW resources for all primary and secondary schools. Find out more below.



**FREE resources for all – THE YEAR OF ST FRANCIS (2026)**

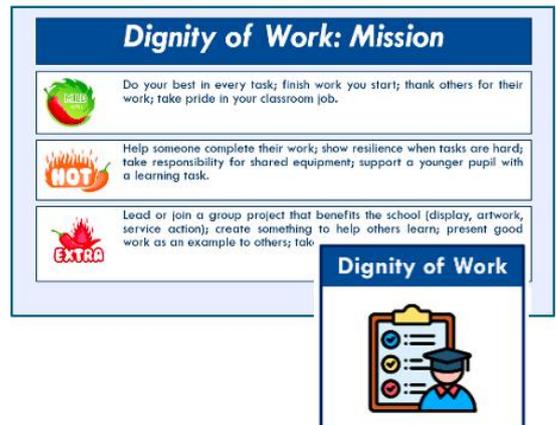
- Amendable Word and PPTs to enhance pupil or teacher-led Celebrations of the Word or RE lessons. These include links to CST and Mission
- A Resource Pack to enhance prayer sessions, prayer environment and spirituality days from EYFS provision to KS4
- Posters
- Videos

See: <https://www.romeroaward.co.uk/resources>



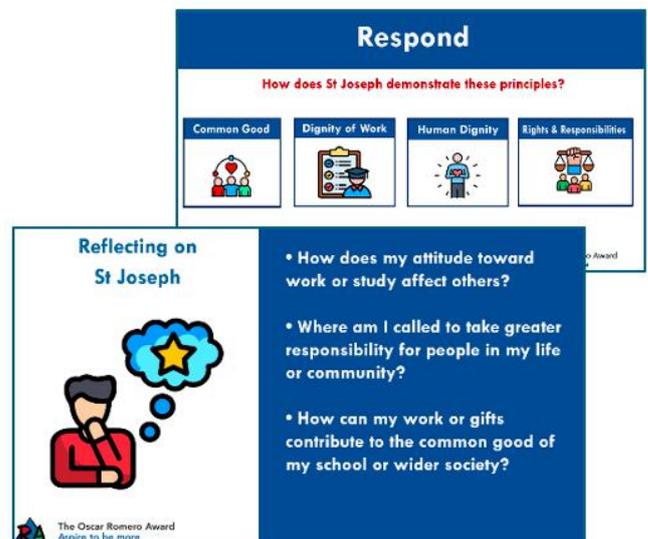
**ACCESS MEMBER RESOURCES – New this half term**

- Amendable Word and PPTs to enhance pupil or teacher-led Celebrations of the Word or RE lessons on the CST principles: Dignity of Work, Rights & Responsibilities and Solidarity. These are based on scripture and prayer and have printable resources for displays as well as ideas to guide pupils' Response and Mission
- Suggested ways in which CST can be built into the curriculum in Maths, Music, Geography, PE and MFL for both KS1 and KS2.



**COMING SOON:**

- Amendable Word and PPTs for **the Feast of St Joseph** and the **Dignity of Work** (for use on his feast days 19 March or 1 May) AND the feast of **St Oscar Romero** (24 March)
- Resources to support other **CST Principles through** Celebrations of the Word or RE
- Mapping documents for other areas of the **primary curriculum**
- A resource pack for **Pentecost** using Art for Visio Divina style prayer



# Postgraduate Certificate in RE

## *Applications for 2026/27 Opening Soon*

Following the success of the course this year, the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton and St Mary's University are delighted to announce the continuation of this professional qualification.

### Who is this course for?

- Secondary school teachers currently teaching RE outside their specialist subject.

### Course Highlights

- The award of a master's-level Postgraduate Certificate from St Mary's University (with optional MA progression).
- Access to M-level writing workshops and the full St Mary's online library.
- Subject knowledge enhancement aligned with next half-term's RED focus.
- Minimal cover impact: one full-day session in September plus six online twilight sessions.
- This year the course fee was £800 per participant, with hopes to keep costs similar for the upcoming year.

### What this year's participants say

*"The course has enlivened my own love of learning... I am already a more reflective practitioner."*

*"The PGCert sessions highlighted key aspects of the RED, helping me create better resources and teach with confidence."*

*"I would recommend it to anyone who is seeking a new challenge in their own academic and intellectual development; the reading and academic writing have been really engaging and a wonderful reminder of the benefits of life-long learning."*

**Online information event: Wednesday 25th March, 3.45–4.15pm. Booking link:**

**[Information event for the Post Graduate Certificate in RE \(25-Mar-2026\) · ChurchSuite Events](#)**.

**[Click here >>>](#)**

# CATHOLIC YOUNG WRITER AWARD 2026



**The theme for 2026 Catholic Young Writer Award is *The Church's Sacrament of Forgiveness: Why We Go to Confession.***

[The Catholic Young Writer Award](#) for Catholic school pupils of secondary school age was launched by The Keys, the Catholic Writers Guild of England and Wales in the 1990s and has been flourishing ever since. It is now sponsored by the [Catholic Union Charitable Trust](#). The winners are invited to the Annual Meeting of the Catholic Union, held each Autumn in London, to receive their prizes from the President, Baroness Hollins.

Joanna Bogle of the Keys, the Catholic Writers Guild of England and Wales says:

“ There has been something of a revival in the Sacrament of Reconciliation – confession of sins and receiving absolution from a priest – in recent years. Young people, in particular, have been discovering a fresh understanding of this Sacrament, and at large gatherings such as World Youth Day, large numbers of priests are available for the thousands who wish to go to confession and receive God's forgiveness. Why we go to confession is a fascinating topic and I am looking forward to hearing the views of students.

Notes to entrants:

- Write an essay that answers this question, Why Do We Go to Confession? Your essay, no more than 1,200 words, should include specific references to Scripture, including Christ giving authority to His Apostles to forgive sins in His name, to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and to relevant Papal documents, including Pope St John Paul's *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (1984).
- The Award is open to all young Catholics (and pupils at Catholic schools) in England and Wales in secondary years 8-11 inclusive. There is a cash prize for the best essay, plus a number of runner-up book prizes.
- Essays should be handwritten if possible.
- Each entrant to attach completed [application form](#) with essay
- Essays to be posted to Young Catholic Writer Award, Church of the Most Precious Blood, 22 Redcross Way, London SE1 1TA
- Deadline for entries **30 June 2026**
- Sponsored by the Catholic Union Charitable Trust.





## YOUNG ARTIST COMPETITION 2026

[The Catholic Union Charitable Trust](#) is delighted to announce the Catholic Young Artist Award. Open to primary school aged children, the theme will be Forgiveness. The Award will be judged by Margaret Mizen, Founder of the [Mizen Foundation](#).

Launched this year, the Catholic Young Artist Award is sponsored by the Catholic Union Charitable Trust. The winner, to be announced before the end of the academic year, will receive a cash prize and runners up will be recognised too.

**Margaret Mizen MBE, Founder of the Mizen Foundation, says:** *"It is an honour to be the judge for the Catholic Young Artist Award. I look forward to seeing all the pictures. Art is a great way to express our emotions and communicate such vitally important messages including those of forgiveness".*

Parents, guardians or teachers of primary school aged children wishing to submit an entry should complete the application form and scan pictures to

**E:** [info@catholicunion.org.uk](mailto:info@catholicunion.org.uk) with the title: *Catholic Young Artist Award* by **22 May 2026**. Please could you indicate the school and/or parish that you belong to as well as first name and school year of the child.

[Catholic Union Young Artist Competition Form 2026](#)

**CATHOLIC UNION YOUNG ARTIST COMPETITION 2026**

THE CATHOLIC UNION 1870

**FORGIVENESS - WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE TO YOU?**

Send your entry to: [info@catholicunion.org.uk](mailto:info@catholicunion.org.uk)

JUDGE: MARGARET MIZEN MBE MIZEN FOUNDATION	DEADLINE: 22 MAY 2026 PRIZES!	OPEN TO: RECEPTION - Y6
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[www.catholicunion.org.uk](http://www.catholicunion.org.uk)

**MIZEN FOUNDATION**



# SCHOOL SINGING PROGRAMME

The School Singing Programme is now in its third full year, and we have nineteen primary schools across parts of West Sussex, Brighton and Hove and Surrey engaged. We are delighted with how it has grown and become embedded in the culture of the schools and parishes who are involved.

The information about the programme can be found here [Schools Singing Programme](#) and here [Schools Singing Programme children join Advent celebrations | News](#)

We now have the opportunity to grow the offer further with the return of Billie Robson from her maternity leave in September 2026.

Billie is available to come to your schools and lead a couple of short sessions for pupils so that they, and you, can find out more about what this programme entails, and she has some availability next half term to undertake these visits.

In addition, the first year of the programme is offered to schools for £1,000 (rather than the usual charge of £2,000) to give you the opportunity to experience the impact of our Choral Directors in developing the liturgical repertoire of our pupils and strengthening links with parishes.

If you would like to have more information, please email **E:** [julie.oldroyd@abdiocese.org.uk](mailto:julie.oldroyd@abdiocese.org.uk)

If you would like to arrange a visit for Billie to come to your school, please email her on **E:** [billie.robson@abdiocese.org.uk](mailto:billie.robson@abdiocese.org.uk)

It was a joy to welcome schools from the Schools Singing Programme in Sussex to Arundel Cathedral for our most recent Choral Day. The afternoon was a great success, with over 110 children coming together to sing with confidence and enthusiasm, filling the Cathedral with energy and sound. Through singing, the children were able to express and deepen their faith, engaging with prayerful music in a way that was joyful, meaningful, and accessible. It was wonderful to see them performing the music they have been working on in their weekly sessions, and to celebrate the strong sense of community and shared faith that singing together can nurture.

## SSP events - Lent, Holy Week and beyond

- Monday 9 March, St Hugh of Lincolns School Choir are participating in the Surrey Primary Music Festival at G-Live, where they will be performing a song by themselves.
- Tuesday 10 March, the SSP School Choir at St Edmunds Godalming have been invited to a joint Choral Festival with St Hilary's Preparatory School.
- SSP year 5 group at St Dunstan's are leading their school Stations of the Cross service on Friday 13 March.
- Friday 13 March – Cottesmore St Mary's Year 5 to sing in their school service.
- Friday 27 March sees the End of Term Mass at St Cuthbert Maynes with the SSP School Choir helping to lead the liturgy.
- Sunday 10 May – Sixth Sunday of Easter: SSP year groups from St John's and St Robert Southwell invited to lead the singing at Mass.
- Sunday 19 May – SSP year groups from St Mary's Bognor to help lead the singing at a youth mass in the parish.

**Fraser Ellson** is walking the entire Camino Frances in April of this year to fundraise for the nine Surrey SSP schools' music budgets. All money raised will go to this cause as he is funding the travel etc personally.

Please support if you can!

<https://gofund.me/00549fe33>



# HOLOCAUST EDUCATIONAL TRUST



**Testimony 360 is a free digital education programme from the Holocaust Educational Trust that combines digital eyewitness testimony with virtual reality, revolutionising access to survivor testimony and providing an invaluable opportunity for students learning about the Holocaust.**

As the Holocaust, the murder of six million Jewish people, moves from living memory into history, we must make sure this seismic event remains present in our national consciousness.

Testimony 360 allows students to ask their own questions of Holocaust survivors via pre-recorded interactive testimonies, and by using virtual reality, they will explore the recordings of historical sites associated with the Holocaust – all without leaving their classroom.

[Holocaust Educational Trust - Testimony360](#)



## Help families in crisis

The Catholic Children's Society's Crisis Fund provides **immediate, emergency grants** to support families who are **facing a crisis** in their lives. We have dedicated Crisis Funds operating in Westminster, Southwark and Arundel and Brighton dioceses.

From house fires to bereavement, job loss to domestic abuse, these **one-off grants** can make a **life-changing difference at a moment of real crisis**.

To qualify the family must be facing exceptional difficulties where **short-term financial support** will have a **meaningful impact**.

## How to apply? Simple. Quick. Effective

Request an application form via email [info@cathchild.org.uk](mailto:info@cathchild.org.uk)

Headteacher completes a simple one page application

CCS responds within 24 hours

Decision is made and funds are transferred directly to the school



Scan to hear more

**"For schools and parishes the process couldn't be simpler... It's a one page document...the fund is there to help you and it can't be easier."**

Mr Chris Andrew, Headteacher,  
Recipient of CCS Southwark Crisis fund

Funded with thanks to the generosity of schools, parishes and individuals.

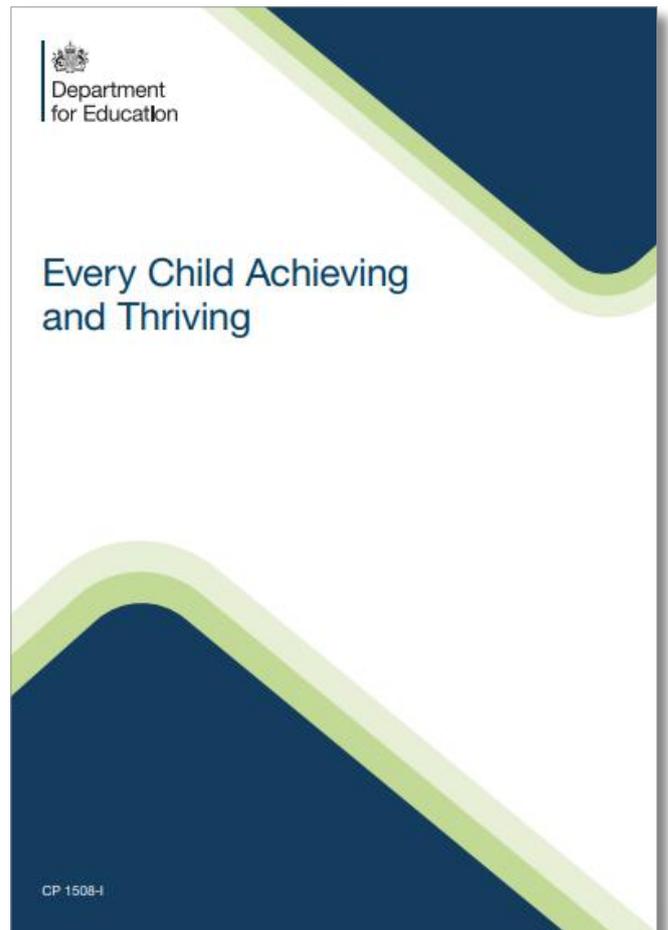
## Every Child Achieving and Thriving (DfE White Paper)

Published on 23 February 2026, the Department for Education's "Every Child Achieving and Thriving" White Paper outlines a ten-year strategy focused on integrating high academic standards with a "mainstream-first" approach to inclusion. Key reforms include a £4 billion investment to restructure SEND support, the requirement for all schools to join multi-academy trusts, and initiatives to halve the disadvantage gap. For more details, [visit GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

The government has set out a long-term plan to ensure every child—particularly those with SEND—achieves strong outcomes and thrives. It focuses on inclusion, early intervention, workforce capacity, and system reform.

In the coming months we will be working with the CES, the DfE, Local Authorities, Bosco and Xavier CETs and schools to understand the implications for our sector and the actions we will need to prioritise.

Colleagues may be interested to read the Case Study from Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Primary School, Crawley which was included in the White Paper.



## Parental complaints

A new guide which aims to help parents work with schools to address complaints in a positive and respectful way has been published by the DfE, the charity Parentkind, and Ofsted. Parents are advised against using social media to air their complaint, and told to avoid behaving aggressively, targeting people, or "building a crowd" around their concern.

We hope that a clear set of ground rules will help to ease the pressure on schools of vexatious and personalised complaints and support the good and productive relationships with parents we all want to see.

You may want to use the guide on your school website. [It is here.](#)

## Mobile Phone use in schools

Updated guidance [What the government's updated guidance on mobile phones means for school inspections – Ofsted: education](#)

Cottesmore St Mary Catholic Primary School in Hove have been nominated by Smartphone Free Childhood as a 'Changemaker School.'

If your school has developed any initiatives which are worth sharing with others, please do let us know.



### 🌟 🌟 CHANGEMAKER SCHOOL 🌟 🌟

**Headteacher Rachel Breen, Cottesmore Primary, Brighton**



Rachel has been a driving force in Brighton's move towards healthier, smartphone-free childhoods.

- First school in Brighton & Hove to urge parents to delay smartphones, backed by clear, consistent communication through school newsletters.
- Helped ignite a city-wide movement by hosting a pivotal SFC Brighton panel event in January this year.
- Worked with SFC Brighton to draft a letter to Year 6 families at primary schools across the city, cosigned by all 10 secondaries in the area, stating that no smartphones would be needed to attend secondary school.
- Presented to Brighton & Hove Council leaders, which resulted in them writing to every family in the region urging them to delay smartphones until 14.
- Introduced a fully smartphone-free policy in September 2025, and supported other heads across the city, creating a genuine domino effect with many primaries following suit.
- Launched Year 6 smartphone-free ambassadors – with 17 pupils applying this year – and brought in local Year 10 student leaders to present to the whole school about the risks around smartphones.

## Teaching Vacancies: A Free, Trusted Recruitment Solution join other providers approved by the CES

### The list of suppliers providing CES approved online application forms is now as follows:

- Eteach
- My New Term
- HFL Education
- Education Jobs Recruitment Hub (Hampshire HR)
- SAMpeople recruit
- Jobs Go Public
- Teaching Vacancies

In today's education landscape, finding the right talent for schools is more important than ever. That's why Teaching Vacancies is proud to have worked with the Catholic Education Service (CES) in order to ensure that the application forms provided are suitable for use in Catholic schools and academy trusts. Teaching Vacancies is the free national job listing service developed by the Department for Education (DfE), now enhanced with a full Applicant Tracking System.

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## Engagement with Your MP

Following the recent Parliamentary reception, which highlighted the importance of the relationships with our elected representatives, [Leaders in Catholic Education meet MPs at the Palace of Westminster | News](#), we are repeating this message which was included in January's edition of Alpha Beta.

The most effective way to let your MP see the excellent work being done in your school is to let them see it first-hand. Inviting your local MP to visit your school is a great way to demonstrate the achievements of Catholic education in England and Wales, and for the MP to become more involved in education within their local constituency. The tool below allows you to search for your local MP and provides a template invitation letter which you can amend.

[How to invite your MP to your school.pdf](#)

## New features

The service now includes:

- **Full Applicant Tracking System:** Manage applications from start to finish, including shortlisting, arranging interviews, and communicating with candidates—all in one place.
- **Updated application form:** Developed in consultation with Catholic schools and education leaders, the new form is intuitive, inclusive, and approved for use by the CES.
- **Improved user experience:** Both schools and applicants benefit from a cleaner, faster interface that makes recruitment more efficient and accessible.

Visit [Teaching Vacancies](#) to get started today.

### Paul Barber, Director of the CES, said:

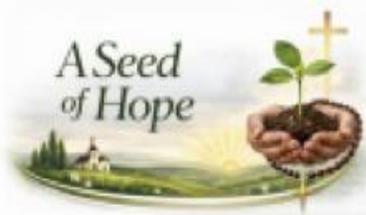
"The CES has been pleased to work with Teaching Vacancies to ensure that its application forms are suitable for use in Catholic schools and academy trusts. It is important that the CES provides support to enable Catholic schools and academy trusts to attract the best candidates. With school budgets stretched, working with a service that is free to use is more important than ever."

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## Please do ensure you follow the Diocesan Protocols on Public Affairs and the Media which clearly state that:

- Governing Boards must follow all Diocesan guidance on media and public affairs.
- Governing Boards must inform the Diocese of all media work, (excluding routine social media posts), in advance of publication.
- **Governing Boards must inform the Diocese ahead of any visit by a local or national politician especially when Schools are visited by a senior member of government or royalty.**
- All public affairs and media work must have regard to the Catholic character of the school, and must not bring the school, the Diocese, or the national reputation of Catholic schools into disrepute.

[September 2025 Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Protocols.pdf](#)



### Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March

Anna Silver - Teaching Authentic Judaism Today

### Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March

Hollie Marriott - Supporting Primary & Secondary SEND and SEMH Learners with the RED

### Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March

Dave Legrand - Assessment and the RED

### Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March

Carol Gregson - Practical AI for the Classroom: CPD for Primary & Secondary



Sign up using the QR code. Sessions begin at 16:30 and last 45 minutes.

EFFINGHAM  
CRANMORE • MANOR HOUSE • ST TERESA'S

# FAITH DISCUSSION EVENING

Wednesday 18 March 6:00pm-8:00pm  
St Teresa's School RH5 6ST

Join us for an evening of thought-provoking discussion, fellowship, and spiritual insight with fantastic visiting speakers:



Fr Toby Lees



Fiorella Nash



Franciscan Friars  
of Renewal.

## Topics to include:

- How to grow Faith in our modern world
- Acedia (the spiritual vice you didn't know you had)
- How AI and how social media is making it worse?
- Does St Francis still have anything to teach us?

**SCAN TO BOOK  
YOUR PLACE**  
OR [CLICK HERE](#)



Donations welcomed on the day going towards:

- Running the event
- Radio Maria
- Franciscan Friars of Renewal

*'Reason always stands in need of being purified by faith'*

Pope Benedict XVI

CRANMORE

MANOR HOUSE

ST TERESA'S

The DfE have published the 'Education Estates Strategy: a decade of national renewal'. A link to the document can be found here: [Education Estates Strategy: a decade of national renewal](#)

The DfE has provided a summary narrative for circulation and we would also draw your attention to the helpful timeline in Annex A of the strategy document. There are a number of areas in the narrative worth highlighting:

## Manage the Estate

- A new digital service *Manage Your Education Estate* will be launched later this month. This is intended to provide easier access to guidance, tools and data and it will be accessed by logging on with a DfE sign-in account.
- The DfE refers to a new requirement for "light touch" self-assessment returns by responsible bodies (which includes dioceses) on whether the School Estates Management Standards are being met, this will be introduced from autumn 2026.
- There is to be a new approach to collection of condition data, and the document refers to two-way data sharing being introduced by 2028.
- The DfE will be working with the sector to develop a decision-making framework to better utilise surplus land and buildings by autumn 2026. We have yet to establish how this will work in a diocesan context.

## Improve and Renew the Estate

- A new programme to replace the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) will be introduced from 2028.
- There will be a new renewal and refit programme, the DfE stated aim in relation to which is to improve condition and increase resilience to climate change. This new programme will be piloted in schools in the East Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber and the Southeast from April 2026, will be expanded from 2027, being national by 2029. New guidance will be published in February 2026 to support schools and colleges in delivering their own renewal projects.
- There is an emphasis in the narrative and the strategy document on adapting the estate to be more inclusive and accessible for children and young people with SEND.

- There will also be support for digital connectivity and climate resilience.

## Build and rebuild

- The School Rebuilding Programme is to be expanded with the addition of a further 250 schools and sixth form colleges by spring 2027. The diocese, working with our Catholic Education Trusts, will look to nominate some of our schools for this programme.
- New design specifications have been published, and I will provide more information when this becomes available.
- Both the narrative document and the strategy document include references to a focus on the provision of school-based nursery places and SEND provision.

The Department for Education has also published a number of additional documents.

- **Design guidance: standardised designs**

This provides standardised designs demonstrating the application of the DfE's employer's requirements, in primary schools, secondary schools and special schools: [Click here >>>](#)

- **Area guidelines for SEND and alternative provision: BB104**

These guidelines include types of spaces, and area range, for buildings and grounds: [Click here >>>](#)

- **Design standards: employer's requirements**

The following documents form part of the DfE's employer's requirements for the construction framework 2025: [Click here >>>](#)

The following documents support the employer's requirements for the construction framework 2025: [Click here >>>](#)

This includes design guidance from 2014 to 2026 relating to acoustics, fire safety, ventilation, thermal comfort and indoor air quality, and area guidance. [Click here >>>](#)

This is a significant area of new policy and additional guidance from the DfE and Ray Williamson will signpost you towards any additional training and information and this will also be picked up in future SBM Forum gatherings.

# KEY ADMISSION DATES

- 28 February 2026** The date by which admission arrangements must be determined.
- 2 March 2026** Deadline by which the Diocese must receive a copy of your determined admission policy and SIF **E: [tamsin.connick@abdiocese.org.uk](mailto:tamsin.connick@abdiocese.org.uk)**
- 15 March 2026** Deadline for admission authorities to send a copy of their full determined admission arrangements to their local authority and publish those arrangements on the school's website.
- 15 May 2026** The deadline for objections to be submitted to the Schools Adjudicator on any admission arrangements.

Schools must also ensure that a full record of consultation and policy determination is kept as part of the admission process for 2027/28.

May we also remind all schools that they should update their websites to remove any reference to consultation and the draft policies now they have been approved. There should also be no arrangements displayed for years prior to 2025/26 as these are no longer relevant.

For assistance with place planning, admissions or any queries please contact Tamsin Connick at the Diocese Education Service **E: [tamsin.connick@abdiocese.org.uk](mailto:tamsin.connick@abdiocese.org.uk)**

## ADMISSION POLICY USE

- Most schools (49/62) have consulted this year to move to the new diocesan models in 2027/28
- Only a small number of schools will be using the Certificate of Catholic Practice (CCP) -these are the schools which are totally oversubscribed with Catholic applications only – possibly 8 schools.

	Primary (51)			Secondary (11)		
	Baptism	Baptism + Ecclesiastical area	Baptism + Ecclesiastical area + CCP	Baptism	Baptism + CCP	Baptism + CCP + Parish
Consulted	38	5	0	4	2	0
Not consulted	6		2	1	4	
	86%	10%	4%	45%	55%	0

*Therefore, if the remaining schools act as expected, 87% of maintained schools will no longer require a priest's signature and only 13% will use a CCP*

# NOTE TO CLERKS

## Briefings

The final online Clerks' Briefings this year is listed below, and sign up is open on the CPD area of our website. It is important for all Clerks of Catholic schools / schools in Trusts attend these meetings. They are an opportunity to address key topics relating to a Catholic specific focus and the role of Clerk to Foundation Governors. They also provide a chance to network and share best practice with other diocesan school and academy clerks.

Clerks' Briefing:

**Tuesday 19 May 26, 10am – 11am**

## Governors' Commissioning Mass

Following Bishop Richard's appointment as Archbishop of Westminster, the Commissioning Mass for Governors and CSI Inspectors which was scheduled to take place on 4 March 2026 has been cancelled. We hope to set a new date for the academic year 2026-2027.

**Please communicate this to all governors, particularly any that had signed up to attend.**

## Online Governor Application Form

Foundation Governor application forms have been online since September.

We will only accept the online version of the application form. Please make sure any potential new Foundation Governors or Foundation Governors wishing to serve a further term apply online.

[www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/governance](http://www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/governance)

## Reminders

### Changes to Governors

All updates / changes to the governing body should be updated on GIAS and communicated to E: [gill.sajnog@abdiocese.org.uk](mailto:gill.sajnog@abdiocese.org.uk) as soon as they are known. This includes all categories of governors, not just Foundation Governors.

### Minutes

Minutes of the Full Governor Board or Local Governing Committee meetings and Headteacher Reports should be sent on a termly basis. This is particularly key for those schools who are in the CSI and OFSTED windows as officers prepare to speak to inspectors. The minutes are also important in helping us to track issues with estates and budgets. Thank you to all those who have already sent minutes for last term. Please urgently submit any outstanding minutes electronically to: E: [gill.sajnog@abdiocese.org.uk](mailto:gill.sajnog@abdiocese.org.uk)

### Parish Priest

Clerks are asked to send copies of the agenda and minutes of meeting to the parish priest and Chairs are to ensure that even if they are not governors, clergy are welcome to attend any meeting, particularly if an agenda item relates to Catholic Life and Mission.

### Anspear

Please ensure that all governors are signed up to the Anspear App and have access to the on-line modules via your school specific code. Gill can send you a copy of your school code if required and the help desk number for Anspear is T: 01223 350555.

### School Email

We ask that all governors are allocated and use a school email address. As a governor, the personal data you send over email must be kept secure. Use of a secure school email address helps you meet UK GDPR requirements. Please discuss this at the next Governor meeting if it is not general practice at your school.



# CES CENSUS 2026

## Thank you!

Thank you to everyone for completing and returning the Catholic Education Service CENSUS.

We have had a **100% return rate** for Arundel & Brighton Diocese.



## UPCOMING COURSES AND EVENTS THIS ACADEMIC YEAR

All courses for this academic year are now available and must be booked online, and the booking calendar has been streamlined to make sign-up easier and more straightforward.

Courses are available at: [www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/catholic-leaders-cpd](http://www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/catholic-leaders-cpd)

If you have any queries regarding any of these courses or tutorials, please do not hesitate to contact us:

**E:** [claire.martin@abdiocese.org.uk](mailto:claire.martin@abdiocese.org.uk)

**T:** 01293 651144

## Please send us your Good News and Education Stories

We are very keen to celebrate Catholic education and publicise the fantastic work of our teachers, support staff and pupils more widely.

We would love to highlight news from schools across the Diocese on our [website here](#) and through the diocesan X and Facebook pages, and through the DES Instagram page (QR Code provided opposite). Please do send details to E: [schools@abdiocese.org.uk](mailto:schools@abdiocese.org.uk)  
We look forward to hearing from you.



[www.abdiocese.org.uk/education](http://www.abdiocese.org.uk/education)

The Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Trust is a Registered Charity No. 252878

# PRIMARY EDUCATION

[www.abdiocese.org.uk](http://www.abdiocese.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 252878

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
<b>Masters in Catholic Leadership, St Mary's University (2 of 3)</b>	2 Mar	4:30pm - 6:30pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6RP	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Primary and Secondary RSE Conference</b>	3 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Year 4 RE Directory Resources (Session 5 of 6)</b>	10 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Year 3 RE Directory Resources (Session 5 of 6)</b>	18 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Primary RE Leads (Day 2 of 2)</b>	24 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	South of England Event Centre, South of England Showground, RH17 6TL	<a href="#">Click here</a>

# RAINBOWS

<b>Resilience and Wellbeing</b>	20 Mar	9am - 12pm	St George's Junior School, Weybridge, KT13 8NL	<a href="#">Click here</a>
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# SECONDARY EDUCATION

[www.abdiocese.org.uk](http://www.abdiocese.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 252878

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
<b>Masters in Catholic Leadership, St Mary's University (2 of 3)</b>	2 Mar	4:30pm - 6:30pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6RP	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Primary and Secondary RSE Conference</b>	3 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Post Graduate Certificate in RE (Session 5 of 7)</b>	18 Mar	3:30pm - 5:30pm	Online	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Secondary Heads of RE (Day 2 of 3)</b>	24 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	South of England Event Centre, South of England Showground, RH17 6TL	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Information event for the Post Graduate Certificate in RE</b>	25 Mar	3:45pm - 4:15pm	Online	<a href="#">Click here</a>

# LEADERSHIP

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
<b>Primary and Secondary RSE Conference</b>	3 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Primary RE Leads (Day 2 of 2)</b>	24 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	South of England Event Centre, South of England Showground, RH17 6TL	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Secondary Heads of RE (Day 2 of 3)</b>	24 Mar	9:30am - 3pm	South of England Event Centre, South of England Showground, RH17 6TL	<a href="#">Click here</a>

## Summer 2026

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
<b>Year 4 RE Directory Resources (Session 6 of 6)</b>	29 Apr	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Year 3 RE Directory Resources (Session 6 of 6)</b>	6 May	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators (Day 2 of 2)</b>	10 Jun	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Good Shepherd Celebration</b>	18 Jun	11:30am - 2pm	Worth Abbey, Paddockhurst Road, Crawley, RH10 4SB	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Masters in Catholic Leadership, St Mary's University (3 of 3)</b>	6 Jul	4:30pm - 6:30pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6RP	<a href="#">Click here</a>

# SECONDARY EDUCATION

[www.abdiocese.org.uk](http://www.abdiocese.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 252878

## Summer 2026

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
<b>Post Graduate Certificate in RE (Session 6 of 7)</b>	20 May	3:30pm - 5:30pm	Online	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators (Day 2 of 2)</b>	10 Jun	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Secondary RSE (Day 2 of 2)</b>	17 Jun	9:30am - 3pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6RP	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Good Shepherd Celebration</b>	18 Jun	11:30am - 2pm	Worth Abbey, Paddockhurst Road, Crawley, RH10 4SB	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Secondary Heads of RE (Day 3 of 3)</b>	30 Jun	9:30am - 3pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex,	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Post Graduate Certificate in RE (Session 6 of 7)</b>	1 Jul	3:30pm - 5:30pm	Online	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Masters in Catholic Leadership, St Mary's University (3 of 3)</b>	6 Jul	4:30pm - 6:30pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6RP	<a href="#">Click here</a>

## CATHOLIC SCHOOL INSPECTIONS (CSI)

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
<b>Preparing for CSI</b>	2 Jun	9:30am - 3pm	Cottesmore Golf Club, Buchan Hill, Crawley RH11 9AT	<a href="#">Click here</a>

# LEADERSHIP

Name	Date	Time	Location	Book now
<b>Secondary Heads of RE (Day 3 of 3)</b>	30 Jun	9:30am - 3pm	The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex,	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>School Leaders' Mass of Thanksgiving</b>	2 Jul	3:30pm - 6:30pm	Arundel Cathedral, London Road, Arundel, BN18 9AY	<a href="#">Click here</a>

# GOVERNORS

<b>Governance: Induction (Module 3 of 3)</b>	13 May	6:30pm - 8pm	Online	<a href="#">Click here</a>
<b>Clerks' Forum (3 of 3)</b>	19 May	10am - 11am	Online	<a href="#">Click here</a>

# CHAPLAINS

<b>Chaplains Retreat</b>	18 - 19 May	12pm - 12pm	Columba's House, Maybury Hill, Woking, GU22 8AB	<a href="#">Click here</a>
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# RAINBOWS

<b>Rainbows Facilitators and Coordinators - sharing best practice</b>	28 Apr	9:30am - 3pm	St George's Junior School, Weybridge, KT13 8NL	<a href="#">Click here</a>
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# SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGERS

<b>School Business Managers' Forum (1 of 3)</b>	10 Jun	10am - 12pm	Online	<a href="#">Click here</a>
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