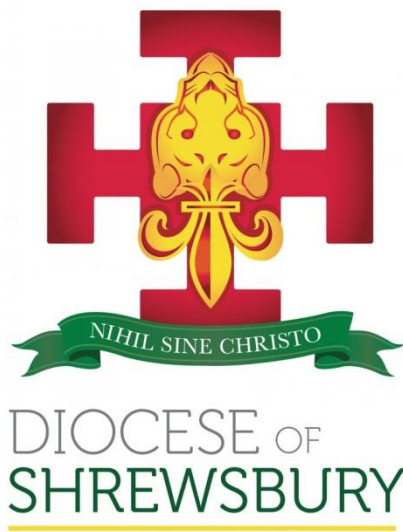


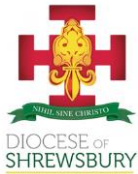
Diocese of Shrewsbury

Department of Education



Newsletter

Autumn Term 2024 No.2



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NEWSLETTER – Autumn Term 2 2024

Dear Colleagues

1. INTRODUCTION

I hope that colleagues had the opportunity to enjoy a restful half term and managed to have some much-needed time with families and friends. As we approach the season of Advent together, I hope we are able to mark the start to our Church's year with a renewed spirit of anticipation, joy and celebration.

As always, thank you to those colleagues who were able to join together to celebrate Mass to mark the start of the 2024-25 academic year, and thank you to the staff and pupils who were able to participate in the veneration of the relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis at St Anthony's in Wythenshawe in September.

2. CHANGES OF HEADTEACHER

We offer thanks to Elaine McGunigall who retired as Headteacher of Our Lady and St Edward's Catholic Primary School at half term this year.

Sarah Murphy has taken up the post of Headteacher at Our Lady and St Edward's Primary School, Birkenhead from 4th November.

Michelle Kewn has been appointed as substantive Headteacher at Our Lady Mother of the Saviour in Runcorn.

Conor Meehan will take up post as Acting Headteacher at St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School, Birkenhead until 31st December 2024.

May we remember these colleagues in our prayers as they take up their new roles.

3. POPE FRANCIS' FOURTH ENCYCLICAL LETTER *DILEXIT NOS* - ON THE HUMAN AND DIVINE LOVE OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

Just as many of you were preparing to finish for the mid-term break, Pope Francis published his fourth encyclical, *Dilexit Nos*. Encyclicals are named for the opening words of the first sentence. In this case, *Dilexit Nos*, is so named as the encyclical begins, "He loved us". This encyclical is for us, the Church, an encyclical letter on the human and divine love of the heart of Jesus Christ. The opening paragraph states:

“He loved us”, Saint Paul says of Christ (cf. Rom 8:37), in order to make us realize that nothing can ever “separate us” from that love (Rom 8:39). Paul could say this with certainty because Jesus himself had told his disciples, “I have loved you” (Jn 15:9, 12). Even now, the Lord says to us, “I have called you friends” (Jn 15:15). His open heart has gone before us and waits for us, unconditionally, asking only to offer us his love and friendship. For “he loved us first” (cf. 1 Jn 4:10). Because of Jesus, “we have come to know and believe in the love that God has for us” (1 Jn 4:16).

In a world in the midst of significant global crises – grappling with conflicts, deep social and economic inequalities, unchecked consumerism, and technologies that pose risks to human dignity, Pope Francis, in this encyclical, seeks to inspire a shift in perspective, encouraging humanity to reconnect with what truly matters – the heart.

The document is part of ongoing celebrations marking the 350th anniversary of the first apparition of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. The celebrations began on 27 December 2023, the anniversary, and are scheduled to end on the feast of the Sacred Heart, 27 June 2025.

Bishop Mark, has welcomed *Dilexit Nos* as a “great gift” saying that, as the Church seeks to grow in communion, participation and mission, “an authentic path of renewal must pass through the Heart of Jesus.” You can read Bishop Mark’s words [here](#) and download the full encyclical [here](#). In addition, CNA (Catholic News Agency) published an article, [‘Dilexit Nos’: wisdom from 20 saints on the Sacred Heart of Jesus’](#) which you may find interesting.

4. SEASON OF REMEMBRANCE

November is a special month dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. The Church commemorates all her faithful children who have departed from this life but have not yet attained the joys of heaven. St. Paul warns us that we must not be ignorant concerning the dead, nor sorrowful, *“even as others who have no hope ... For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven ... and the dead who are in Christ shall rise.”*

The Church has always taught us to pray for those who have gone into eternity - may the month of November be an opportunity to especially remember all those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith. It is a wonderful opportunity to open a book of remembrance in school and offer an Eternal Rest daily for the Church Suffering.

Pope Francis’s intention for the month of November is for anyone who has lost a child. Let us pray that all parents who mourn the loss of a son or daughter find support in their community. May they also receive peace of heart from the Spirit of Consolation. You can find the Pope’s video for the month here [Pope Video - November](#)

5. DAY OF RENEWAL

Our annual day of renewal, prayer and reflection will take place on 6th December at The Park Royal, Warrington.

The day will be led by Fr Roger Dawson SJ, Jesuit priest and clinical psychologist who will explore the spirituality of struggle.

Too often when we think of spirituality we think of candles and calm and long periods for prayer and reflection. The demands of schools and school leadership means that this is almost impossible for those with senior positions. The reality of the spiritual life is that, while it is sometimes calm and peaceful, often it is a real struggle –and staying in the struggle is the challenge.

Fr Roger says, “In the first session I will use the Bible story of Jacob wrestling with the angel. Jacob is a flawed character, but he is visited by God and wrestles with him, staying in the fight even though he is wounded. From this we can see a spirituality involving tenacity and courage, darkness and hope, and confidence that God is at work.

In the second session we will focus on ‘finding your True North’ –to identify your strengths, qualities and virtues that inspire you. Not only do these help you to stay in the struggle, they also give you a sense of direction and help you to be the person –and the leader –that God wants you to be.”

The sessions will be interactive, with time for questions and exercises. The day will conclude with Mass together.

You can book your place [here](#).

6. CARITAS AT CHRISTMAS: APPEAL 2023

Bishop Mark has once again written to schools asking you to consider supporting *Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury* this Advent and Christmas. Fundraising efforts last year have had a real impact on those who have benefited from the support of Caritas since then.

You can access the [letter](#), the Caritas at [Christmas poster](#), [donation form](#) and [fundraising ideas](#) here.

7. NEW DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY

Mr Michael Rooney has taken up the position of Diocesan Property Director of Property from 1st November. Many colleagues will know Michael from his time working for one of the property consultancy firms who work with the Diocese. Richard Crawford will continue to offer support working alongside Mike for the remainder of this term, and Michael can be contacted via Michael.Rooney@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

8. ‘TO LOVE YOU MORE DEARLY: PRAYER AND LITURGY DIRECTORY

Thank you for the ongoing commitment to the implementation of this most important document across our diocesan schools. A reminder that the following CPDF sessions are planned for this term and year ahead.

27/11/2024	1pm-4pm	Prayer and Liturgy Directory 2 - Prayer	Exploring different ways to pray in the Catholic tradition. Practical help and support with classroom and whole school prayer	St Columba's Parish Hall, CH2 1PL
11/02/2025	1pm-4pm	Prayer and Liturgy Directory 3 - Mass-Liturgy and rubric	How do we celebrate the Mass as a school community?	Loreto Education Centre, WA14 4GZ
13/03/2025	3.30pm-5pm	Prayer and Liturgy Directory 4 - Mass - practicalities	How do we plan for the celebration of Holy Mass? What is required?	Virtual
21/05/2025	3.30pm-5pm	Prayer and Liturgy Directory 5 - Celebration of the Word	What is a celebration of the word? What does it look like in class? What does it look like with a larger group? Who can do what?	Virtual
01/07/2025	1pm-4pm	Prayer and Liturgy Directory 6 - Formation, progression and ministry	An opportunity to explore engagement and participation in prayer and liturgy in school, including a focus on ministry. How can we form our school communities in their participation of prayer and liturgy? What does progression look like?	Loreto Education Centre, WA14 4GZ

NB: For the three in-person afternoons, lunch will be provided free of charge from 12.30pm. To book on to the sessions please follow this link [Book CPDF](#)

9. ACADEMY STRATEGY UPDATE

I am currently meeting with the Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of all schools with indicative target dates of 2024-25 and 2025-26 along with the relevant trust CEO to discuss next steps as we look to implement and secure Bishop Mark's vision for education across the Diocese together.

All of the documentation for academisation has been updated for the 2024-25 academic year and can be found on the [diocesan website](#).

10. DIOCESAN PROTOCOLS

I hope that you received communications prior to the half term break detailing the newly approved 2024 Diocesan Protocols for all schools and academies. We ask that these are received, noted and adopted by all governing boards. If there are any questions, then please contact your School Officer in the first instance. Academies will receive additional information from their trust board.

11. UPDATED BISHOPS' MEMORANDUM ON THE APPOINTMENT OF STAFF IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

A copy of the updated Memorandum was provided with the same communication to schools prior to the half term break. Governors, directors, and Catholic school leaders should ensure that they are familiar with the contents of the Memorandum and that all recruitment processes comply with its requirements. Governors, directors and Catholic school leaders should also ensure that their HR advisers and all members of staff involved in recruitment are properly trained and line-managed, and that they are familiar with the contents of the Memorandum.

12. SCHOOL BASED NURSERY CAPITAL GRANT

You will be aware that the DfE have announced that primary schools can now apply for the first phase of funding, with up to £150,000 of £15 million available to support up to 300 new or expanded nurseries to be open from September 2025.

The School-Based Nursery Grant is a one-time grant available for eligible state-funded primary-phase schools. Schools can bid for up to £150,000 of funding to use solely for capital expenditure to convert surplus space within a school building so that it is suitable for nursery provision. To qualify, projects must meet the eligibility criteria which includes securing support from the relevant local authority and obtaining consent from the Diocese as the freehold landowner; consent from the Diocese will be subject to the project meeting the Diocesan policy for nurseries within its schools. Applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the assessment criteria which are listed in the grant guidance. All applications must be submitted online via a DfE sign-in account by 19 December 2024.

Any schools wishing to explore this further should contact Richard Woods at the Diocese in the first instance before taking any further action.

Further details can be accessed here:

- [School-Based Nursery Capital Grant](#)
- [Establishing school-based nursery provision guidance](#)
- [school-based nurseries explainer](#)
- [SBN and wider early years press release](#)

13. ADMISSIONS

THE REQUIREMENT TO CONSULT EVERY 7 YEARS

If your school has not consulted within the last 7 years, then please do so this academic year for your 2026-27 Admissions Policy.

A reminder to all schools that the 2021 Admissions Code includes the requirement that admission authorities **must** consult on their admission arrangements **at least once every 7 years**, even if there have been no changes during that period. We are aware that a number of schools may find themselves within this 'window' this academic year and will need to formally consult for a minimum

of 6 weeks between 1st October and 31st January.

Please can schools ensure that governing boards adhere to this guidance and put in place appropriate internal and external arrangements to comply with this requirement from the Admissions Code. Full details can be found in paras 1.45-1.48 on pages 18 and 19 of the 2021 Admissions Code which can be accessed [here](#).

A reminder that Diocesan guidance regarding admissions was updated in September 2023 with no planned updates for this academic year - full guidance documentation and Model Policies are [available on the website](#).

All communications relating to admissions should be sent to admissions@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

Damian Cunningham will be holding a drop-in session on reviewing and revising admissions policies on **Thursday 14th November at 11am for** headteachers or other relevant school staff. Please register your interest by following the link below:

[Admissions Drop-In](#)

14. CHAIRS & VICE CHAIRS FORUM

A reminder that our first Chairs and Vice Chairs Forum meeting takes place this term with details given below.

Booking is available via the [Diocesan Website](#).

Autumn Term	20 th November 2024 6.30 – 8.00pm	St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School, Well Lane, Alsager. ST7 2PG
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15. STAFF, GOVERNOR AND ADMISSIONS INFORMATION RETURNS

Thank you for returning the information returns for admissions, staff and governor details as requested - this information will greatly assist departmental staff with timely and accurate communications.

16. WHAT SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES MUST OR SHOULD PUBLISH ONLINE

The DfE updated their guidance as to what schools and academies must publish online on 24th October. Please click on the relevant link below for full information:

[Voluntary Aided Schools](#)

[Academies](#)

17. SENIOR APPOINTMENTS

A reminder once again that the Diocesan Department of Education **MUST** be involved in Headship, Deputy Headship, Heads of RE and Chaplain appointments. In addition, if schools and academies are seeking to appoint to posts that have a responsibility for Catholic ethos, then again, the Diocese must be involved.

The *Bishops' Memorandum on the Appointment of Teachers* also extends Diocesan involvement to all **temporary** positions, including Executive Headships and Heads of School. If schools are making **temporary leadership arrangements**, they must also have these approved by the relevant Diocesan officer and have gone through an approved recruitment process.

Please ensure that the Diocese is contacted as soon as a vacancy arises prior to any recruitment process commencing.

18. FAITH REFERENCES

A reminder for all colleagues of the Diocesan definition of a practising Catholic: When requesting a faith reference the priest is asked to confirm that the candidate attends weekly Sunday Mass and lives their life in accordance with the teachings of the Church. The priest will be asked to confirm practice for at least twelve months, and this will also apply to those who have recently been received into the Church. Guidance on obtaining a faith reference can be found using the link below:

[Guidance on obtaining a Faith Reference](#)

19. CPDF

Our Programme of CPDF can be accessed by following the link below:

[CPDF Offer 2024-2025](#)

Please always check [our website](#) in case of any updates.

20. KEY DATES THIS TERM

11/11/2024	9.30am-3.30pm	Primary Curriculum Working Party	St John Henry Newman Parish Centre, Warrington, WA4 1JE
12/11/2024	9.30am-12pm	Secondary Deputy & Assistant Headteacher Forum Catholic Life and Mission	Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, Ellesmere Port CH65 7AQ

14/11/2024	9.30am-3.30pm	ECT Induction Primary - 2nd Year	St Columba's Parish Hall, Plas Newton Lane Chester, CH2 1PL
14/11/2024	9.30am-12.30pm	New Headteachers' Induction Programme	Virtual
15/11/2024	9.30am-12pm	Secondary Deputy & Assistant Headteacher Forum Personal Development, Behaviour & Attitudes	St Mary's Catholic College, Wallasey, CH45 3LN
18/11/2024	1pm-3.30pm	Secondary RSE Lead Meeting	Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, CH65 7AQ
20/11/2024	9.30am-3.30pm	RE Lead Meeting - Primary	Holy Angels Parish Hall, Hale Barns, WA15 0HF
21/11/2024	9.30am-3pm	EYFS Galilee to Jerusalem and Desert to Garden	Holy Angels Parish Hall, Hale Barns, WA15 0HF
25/11/2024	1.30pm-3pm	COAST HUB 2 (Cheshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin)	St Nicholas Catholic High School, Hartford, CW8 1JW
26/11/2024	1.30pm-3pm	COAST HUB 1 (Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Manchester)	All Saints Catholic College, Dukinfield, SK16 5AP
28/11/2024	3.30pm-5pm	Vine and Branches Y1 preparation for Galilee to Jerusalem	Virtual
29/11/2024	1.30pm-3pm	COAST HUB 3 (Warrington, Halton, Wirral)	St Anselm's College, Birkenhead, CH43 1UQ

02/12/2024	9.30am-3.30pm	Christ at the Centre- A Course for Primary Practitioners - Module 2	Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish Centre, 2a Enfield Road, Ellesmere Port, CH65 8BY
03/12/2024	3.30pm-5pm	Vine and Branches Y2 preparation for Galilee to Jerusalem	Virtual
04/12/2024	3.30pm-5pm	Vine and Branches Y3 preparation for Galilee to Jerusalem	Virtual
06/12/2024	9.30am-3.30pm	Day of Renewal	The Park Royal Hotel, Warrington, WA4 4NS
09/12/2024	3.30pm-5pm	Vine and Branches Y4 preparation for Galilee to Jerusalem	Virtual

With every good wish and blessing for the half term ahead,

Richard