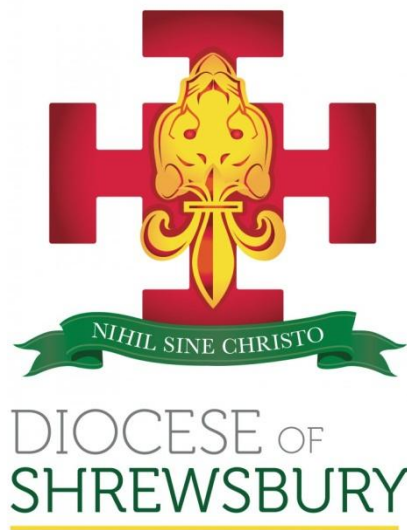
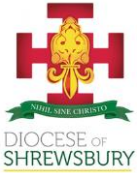


Diocese of Shrewsbury
Department of Education



NEWSLETTER

Summer Term 2025 No.1



DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2025 No 1

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Pope Francis

REQUIESCAT IN PACE



Prayer for Francis

O God, faithful rewarder of souls,
grant that your departed servant Pope Francis,
whom you made successor of Peter
and shepherd of your Church,
may happily enjoy for ever in your presence in heaven
the mysteries of your grace and compassion,
which he faithfully ministered on earth.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleagues

We return to our school communities with the joy and blessings of the Easter season, but also with a deep sadness following the death of our Holy Father Pope Francis.

On announcing the death of Pope Francis Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Camerlengo of the Apostolic Chamber, shared that Francis taught us to live the values of the Gospel with fidelity, courage, and universal love, especially in favour of the poorest and most marginalized. Similarly, Cardinal Nichols has stated that Francis has been loved and heeded as one deeply committed to our human family - he expressed himself as much in gestures as in words. Not grand epic gestures, but deeply personal ones: hugging a man with a face disfigured by disease, kissing the feet of warring leaders in a search for peace, embracing a woman victim of human trafficking and slavery. His message was clear and consistent: only with a radical commitment to the dignity of every person will we fashion a worthy society.

Bishop Mark wrote to all parish communities this last weekend and his Pastoral letter is included below:

My dear brothers and sisters,

On this Sunday of Divine Mercy, we commend the soul of Pope Francis into the arms of God's mercy. Anyone who met Pope Francis during his twelve years as our Holy Father will have heard him make an insistent plea: "Please, pray for me!" I had always prayed for the Pope, yet Pope Francis impressed on me with those urgent words the need to always pray for the man called to be Peter's Successor. In the hour of death, it is always our first duty of charity to pray for the souls of our loved ones departed. This Sunday we must pray for the soul of the man who became Pope Francis for us.

Today we share many memories of Pope Francis. We might think of the Year of Mercy he called in 2015 which saw many return to sacramental confession. We might picture in 2020 a deserted Saint Peter's Square at the height of the global pandemic, when Pope Francis stood alone holding the Blessed Sacrament in blessing to the world. We might recall his last (Encyclical) Letter to the Church urging the renewal of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It may be less well remembered that on every apostolic journey Pope Francis went first and returned to the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome. It is in this ancient church dedicated to the Holy Mother of God, that his mortal remains have been laid to rest as an abiding testimony to his love and devotion to Our Lady.

Some of us were with Pope Francis in 2019 when he declared John Henry Newman as England's newest Saint. Newman had reflected on the long continuity of the Office of Saint Peter across the centuries, declaring that Christ's Church remained as unchangeable as Jesus Christ her founder, for as in the Apostles' time "It taught the truth, so it does now; as then it had the sacraments of

grace, so has it now ...” and just as it had a visible head at the beginning, so it must now have such a head.

And Newman asked: “Who is that visible head now? Who is now the vicar of Christ? Who now has the keys of the kingdom of heaven, as Saint Peter had then? If a successor of Saint Peter there must be, who is that successor?” Newman insisted there could only be one conclusion: “It is he who sits in Saint Peter’s chair: it is the Bishop of Rome ... in the continuous line of the Bishops of Rome, or Popes as they are called, one after another, down to this day”.

As Pope Francis, the 265th Successor of the Apostle Peter, now goes with all our prayers, we must pray for the Cardinals entrusted with the responsibility of choosing a new Pope. This task is undertaken not with Hollywood intrigue, but in an atmosphere of prayer and recollection, which reminds each Cardinal of the final account he must give to Our Lord. In our lifetimes, we have been blessed with remarkable men chosen to be our Pope, some numbered among the greatest Saints. They were men gifted with great minds and pastoral hearts, communicating the Gospel and the Catholic faith to all humanity with unfailing concern for souls. Yet, each man was also conscious of his weakness and limitations and asked the help of our prayers in this awesome calling. Today we must pray for the man soon to be chosen as the next successor of Peter. May he fulfil his mission to confirm us in faith and be a true shepherd for the entire flock of the Lord entrusted to his care.

United with you in this prayer,

+ Mark

Bishop of Shrewsbury

At this time of great sorrow, we give thanks for Pope Francis’ ministry and witness to the world through his faith, compassion, mercy and tireless work for peace and reconciliation.

The website of the Bishops’ Conference have produced [information](#) and [resources](#) that you may find helpful in responding to the death of Pope Francis with your own school communities.

With every good wish and blessing for the term ahead.

Richard

2. PILGRIMS OF HOPE - THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

For information	
For action	✓



a) PILGRIMAGE OF THE JUBILEE ICONS OF THE VISITATION TO DIOCESAN SCHOOLS

The Visitation is the inspiration for one of the windows in the Cathedral in Shrewsbury. Created by eminent stained-glass artist, Margaret Rope, the window depicts the young



Mary, who travels ‘with haste’ after she is visited by the angel Gabriel, to meet her cousin, Elizabeth. It is this depiction of the Visitation by Margaret Rope that Bishop Mark has chosen for schools to mark this Jubilee Year, Pilgrims of Hope. This icon will journey from school to school as a beautiful symbol of hope for us as a Diocesan family of schools to meditate upon.

Images of this icon will travel to all Diocesan Schools having been first blessed by Bishop Mark during the Mass of the Sacred Chrism at St Anothony’s, Wythenshawe, before the Easter Triduum. A time of prayer will mark the reception of the icon within school led by the previous hosts.

Full instructions including dates for individual schools and the practicalities of this venture will be given in an electronic booklet circulated to schools later this week and a paper copy will travel with the icon and accompanying resources.

Our Lady, Help of Christians, the primary patron of our Diocese, comes ‘with haste’ to help us in our time of need, just as she came to the aid of her cousin, Elizabeth, in hers. Devotion to Our Lady, Help of Christians, underscores her position as one who can intercede on our behalf, for just as she interceded at the wedding at Cana, prompting Jesus' first miracle, Mary continues to intercede for her children, the Church, bringing our needs and petitions to her Son. As the icons make their pilgrimage around the Diocese, we can ask for Our Lady’s continued intercession for the Church, for those in our school communities and for the world.

The booklet being shared later this week will contain the celebration of the word to be shared with each school receiving the icon, to be led by the school who journeys with it to them. It also contains further suggestions for prayer, reflection and activities whilst the icon is visiting your school and offers scripts that could be used or adapted to lead Visio Divina and Lectio Divina with the school community.

b) THE YEAR OF JUBILEE – QUILTED BANNER OF HOPE

The Department of Education would like to make a patchwork banner with the logo/badge from every school uniform in our Diocese to commemorate this Year of Jubilee. The banner will be simple English-style handsewn paper piece quilting.

For this quilted banner to be realised, we would like each school to make their own patch first. Click [here](#) for full instructions and details of how to submit your patch.

Please share the patches as soon as possible but not later than July 18th so they can be sewn together gradually. If anyone would like to get involved in the big sew together then please get in touch: jackie.walker@dioceseofshrewsbry.org

The aim is to have the quilted banner finished for the close of the Year of Jubilee.

c) THE YEAR OF JUBILEE – CREATIVE COMPETITION FOR SCHOOLS

As previously detailed, the Department of Education is launching an exciting opportunity for our Diocesan schools to share their thoughts on what it means to be a Pilgrim of Hope.

What does it mean to me to be a Pilgrim of Hope?

Individuals, groups, schools are invited to respond to the question above in a creative way, for example, through art, creative writing, music or song. As school communities are celebrating this Jubilee Year and engaging with the theme chosen by Pope Francis, we know there will be many opportunities for our children and young people to explore this question in depth.

Schools may wish to hold a competition internally and then share the top three entries with the Department of Education. The deadline for entries is **Friday 26th September**.

Alternatively, schools may wish to enter the competition as a school, or as key stages. In these circumstances there is no need to hold a competition internally. Entries can be sent directly by the deadline.

NB: All entries must be submitted digitally (e.g. if the entry is a piece of art, please take a picture of it/scan it and send the digital image). Please send all entries to education@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

Winners of this competition will be announced at the close of the Year of Jubilee in November.

d) THE YEAR OF JUBILEE - SCHOOLS' PLEDGE FOR THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

In June or July all Catholic schools are invited to make a Jubilee Pledge to live out Catholic Social Teaching.

A better world needs all of us, and the Pledge will be a whole school, long term commitment to building a fairer world.

Download the Pledge Guide to help you write your Jubilee Pledge and plan your Pledge Day. <https://cafod.org.uk/jubilee-schools/jubilee-pledge>

Coming soon! CAFOD, with CSAN and CYMFed will be displaying school Pledges on an interactive map! *'When you make your pledge in the summer, tell us about it and we will send you a certificate.'*

3. APPOINTMENT AND CHANGES OF HEADTEACHER

For information	✓
For action	

Jo Langstaff has been appointed as Principal of Aquinas College in Stockport and will take up post at the start of the 2025 Autumn Term. We will keep Jo and all our Headteachers in our prayers as they continue in their vocation as Catholic Leaders.

4. DIOCESAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT UPDATE

For information	✓
For action	✓

Questionnaire

We are keen to hear the views and observations of colleagues on the essential service areas provided by the Shrewsbury Diocese Education Department to inform our future work in supporting schools and colleges.

We have therefore composed a questionnaire for completion by governors, directors, senior leaders, RE leads and school Chaplains. We are inviting colleagues to take a few moments to offer their observations and comments on current diocesan provision and areas for future consideration across eleven key areas. *There is no need to complete each and every section* and we would encourage colleagues to complete those sections that align to their current role and responsibilities.

Please find the link to the questionnaire below which will remain open until Friday 23rd May:

[Diocesan Education Department Questionnaire 2025.](#)

Staffing

As no appointment was made to the post of Deputy Director of Schools before the Easter break, the Diocese is now exploring alternative interim arrangements for next academic year. We will update colleagues when arrangements are confirmed.

5. CES CENSUS DIGEST 2024 – ENGLAND

For information	✓
For action	

The CES have published the Digest of the 2024 Census Data for Schools and Colleges in England. Their data remains the most accurate and reliable depiction of England's 2,074 Catholic schools and colleges. Key findings include:

- 817,784 pupils are educated in English Catholic schools and academies.
- Catholic schools and academies make up 10% of the state-funded sector.
- 57.2% of pupils at state-funded Catholic schools and academies are Catholic.
- 47.2% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds; the national average is 38.7%.
- Catholic schools educate 51.5% more pupils from the most deprived backgrounds than the state sector.
- 47,312 staff members are employed, 47.5% of whom are Catholic.
- 24.6% of staff members are from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared to a 16.2% national average.

[Census Digest England 2024](#)

[Census Key Facts](#)

The census remains a vital tool for the CES when championing our schools and colleges to parents, pupils, government partners and other stakeholders. It is this data that forms, in part, the data from CSI that is shared with inspectors and schools prior to inspection.

6. 'TO LOVE YOU MORE DEARLY':

PRAYER AND LITURGY DIRECTORY UPDATE

For information	✓
For action	✓

CPDF continues this term focussing on celebrations of the word and engagement/participation in the school community. The virtual session on celebrations of the word will be led by Greg Finn from Mark 10 Mission. Greg is an inspiring speaker and an authentic witness to the love of Jesus.

A reminder that the following CPDF sessions are planned for this term ahead:

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 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](#)

7. RESERVING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IN SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

For information	
For action	✓

Thank you to those schools who have been able to complete the short survey highlighted in our last newsletter. Before we provide new guidance to schools regarding Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament we **would ask that schools who have not already done so, take a moment to complete the very brief questionnaire via the link below:**
[Does your school currently reserve the Blessed Sacrament?](#)

8. FOUNDATION GOVERNOR RENEWALS

For information	✓
For action	✓

Our usual processes for Foundation Governor renewals are now underway with appropriate communications being issued to governors, headteachers and Chairs over the coming weeks.

Should there be any queries with regards to foundation governor renewals then please contact Julie English via governance@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

9. CHAIRS & VICE CHAIRS FORUM

For information	✓
For action	

Thank you to colleagues who were able to join us for another useful meeting at St Wilfrid's before the Easter break. Details of our final meeting are given below and as always, booking is available via the [Diocesan Website](#).

Summer Term	26 th June 2024 6.30 – 8.00pm	St Peter's Catholic Primary School, St Peter's Way, Noctorum, Prenton, Wirral. CH43 9QR
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10. OFSTED CONSULTATION & SUMMER BRIEFING

For information	
For action	✓

A reminder that Ofsted are currently holding a period of consultation regarding the new inspection proposals which is open until 28th April 2025. You can access the consultation [here](#).

Colleagues are also reminded that Rachel Goodwin HMI, will deliver a virtual briefing to Headteachers in the summer term which will enable her to provide further details on the new inspection framework going forward and respond to the questions and views you have shared.

The briefing will take place virtually on **Tuesday 17th June 2025 from 9.30am to 11am**. To book your place at this briefing please follow the [link here](#).

11. CPDF 2025-26

For information	✓
For action	✓

Thank you to those Headteachers who have taken up the invitation through DAPH and DASH to join us for a short review of this year's offer on Tuesday 6th May at 9.30am. Please email Julie English at julie.english@dioceseofshrewsbury.org if you would like to attend and a link for the meeting will be sent to you.

12. DATES FOR THE DIARY

For information	✓
For action	

Please note that our **Annual Mass of Thanksgiving** for this academic year takes place at **St John Henry Newman Catholic Church Warrington** on **Tuesday 8th July at 4.30pm**. All colleagues are invited to join us as we thank God for all that this year has given us. Please complete the following form if you are able to join us:

[Annual Mass of Thanksgiving Booking Form](#)

Our **Secondary Schools Mass** will take place at **St Columba's, Chester**, on **Friday 4th July**. Detailed information will be sent to our secondary schools via DASH in due course.

Our **Annual Governors Conference** for 2025-26 Academic Year is confirmed for Saturday 8th November 2025 at Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College.

Our **Annual Day of Renewal** for 2025-26 is confirmed for Friday 28th November 2025 at the Park Royal Hotel, Warrington.

13. SCHOOLS' NEWS

For information	✓
For action	

We would very much like to promote the positive work that schools do and do have a page on our website dedicated to this. If schools have news stories and pictures, if they forward the details to Maggie via Malgorzata.Kowalska@dioceseofshrewsbury.org we can put them on our website.

14. VAT RELIEF ON FUEL BILLS

For information	✓
For action	

We have been informed that a number of schools may well be paying VAT at 20% on their fuel bills. IFM (Inter-Diocesan Fuel Management Ltd) through [Churchmarketplace](#) have asked us to highlight this issue and circulate the information below. Further details can also be found [here](#) on the HMRC website.

Guidance: VAT relief for charities

Extra notes for VA schools

Taken from <https://www.gov.uk/vat-charities/what-qualifies-for-relief>

Extra notes for Academies

What qualifies for VAT relief?

Charities pay VAT on all standard-rated goods and services they buy from VAT-registered businesses. They pay VAT at a reduced rate (5%) or the 'zero rate' on some goods and services.

What qualifies for the reduced rate?

Your charity pays 5% VAT on fuel and power if they're for:

- residential accommodation (eg a children's home or care home for the elderly)
- charitable non-business activities (i.e. you do not make a charge for your activities eg free day care for the disabled)
- small-scale use (up to 1,000 kilowatt hours of electricity a month or a delivery of 2,300 litres of gas oil)

If less than 60% of the fuel and power is for something that qualifies, you'll pay the reduced rate of VAT on the qualifying part and the standard rate (20%) on the rest.

Qualifying fuel and power includes gases, electricity, oils and solid fuels (eg coal). It does not include vehicle fuel.

How to claim VAT relief

To get VAT relief you must give your supplier:

- evidence that you're a charity
- a written declaration or 'certificate' confirming that you're eligible for the relief.

Evidence of charitable status

This can be either your:

- Charity Commission registration number
- letter of recognition from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Scottish and Northern Irish charities must provide their letter of recognition from HMRC.

How to get a refund

When you contact your supplier with the evidence that you have charitable status, and have completed their VAT declaration form, you can also backdate any claim for up to four years, meaning you'll get a partial refund on any extra VAT you've paid on your energy bills during that time. If you have changed energy supplier during those four years, you will need to contact each supplier.

15. SENIOR AND RESERVED POST APPOINTMENTS

For information	
For action	✓

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 updated 2024 *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.

If schools are wishing to extend any temporary arrangements beyond existing timescales agreed with the Diocese, then please contact us at the earliest opportunity.

Please ensure that the Diocese is contacted prior to any recruitment process commencing.

The following documents are available on our website:

- [The Bishops' Memorandum on the appointment of staff In Catholic schools \(2024\)](#)
- [Appointing a new Headteacher – Guidance for Governors & Directors](#)
- [Appointing a new Deputy Headteacher - Guidance for Headteachers & Governors](#)
- [Appointing a new Head of Religious Education - Guidance for Headteachers & Governors](#)

16.KEY DATES THIS TERM

For information	✓
For action	

* School Leadership	30/04/2025	6pm-7.30pm	Induction for New Foundation Governors
Primary RE	01/05/2025	9.30am-3.30pm	RE Leads Meeting with Lat Blaylock
* School Leadership	01/05/2025	2pm-3.30pm	Induction for New Foundation Governors
Chaplaincy	1-02/05/2025	4pm arrivals 10am-3pm	COAST Retreat
* Denominational Inspections	02/05/2025	9.30am-12pm	School support under the CSI Framework
School Leadership	07/05/2025	2.30pm-4pm	Termly Headteacher Briefings

School Leadership	08/05/2025	2.30pm-4pm	Termly Headteacher Briefings
Primary RE	12/05/2025	3.30pm-5pm	Vine and Branches Y1 preparation for Dialogue & Encounter
Primary RE	13/05/2025	3.30pm-5pm	Vine and Branches Y2 preparation for Dialogue & Encounter
*School Leadership	13/05/2025	6pm-7.30pm	Termly Briefing for Governing Bodies
* School Leadership	14/05/2025	2pm-3.30pm	Termly Briefing for Governing Bodies
* School Leadership	15/05/2025	6pm-7.30pm	Termly Briefing for Governing Bodies
School Leadership	16/05/2025	9.30am-12.30pm	New Headteachers' Induction Programme
Primary RE	19/05/2025	3.30pm-5pm	Vine and Branches Y3 preparation for Dialogue & Encounter
School Leadership	19/05/2025	9.30am-11am and 1.30pm-3pm	Primary Deputy & Assistant Headteacher Forum
Primary RE	20/05/2025	3.30pm-5pm	Vine and Branches Y4 preparation for Dialogue & Encounter
* Prayer and Liturgy	21/05/2025	3.30pm-5pm	Prayer and Liturgy Directory 5 - Celebration of the Word
Primary RE	23/05/2025	9.30am-3pm	EYFS To the ends of the Earth and Dialogue & Encounter

*These events are open to and appropriate for governors to attend.

To book please follow the link to [BOOK A CPDF COURSE](#)