

Diocese of Shrewsbury
Department of Education



NEWSLETTER

Spring Term 2026 No.2



DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION NEWSLETTER SPRING 2026 No 2

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Appointment and changes of Headteacher	5
3. To Love You More Dearly: Prayer and Liturgy Directory Update	5
4. Caritas Lent Appeal	6
5. Changes of Parish Clergy	6
6. Mass of Thanksgiving for the 2025-26 Academic Year	7
7. Admissions	7
8. Foundation Governor Reappointments	7
9. Chairs and Vice Chairs Forum	8
10. Meeting for new Chairs of Governors	8
11. Draft KCSIE Consultation	8
12. DfE Educational Reforms	9
13. RSHE Guidance for September 2026	9
14. Senior Appointments	10
15. Key Dates this Half Term	11

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleagues

As we begin this half term together, we enter into the Lenten season once more, and we welcome Archbishop Richard Moth as the new Archbishop of Westminster.

As always, Lent sees us prepare for the great feast of Easter and provides us with renewed opportunities for reflection and reconciliation as we journey together towards Holy Week and the Easter Triduum. In his [2026 Lenten message](#) Pope Leo reminds us that we undertake a shared journey during Lent, listening to the word of God, the cry of the poor and of the earth, with fasting as a foundation for sincere repentance. I have included some excerpts from Pope Leo's Lenten message below:

This year, I would first like to consider the importance of making room for the word through listening. The willingness to listen is the first way we demonstrate our desire to enter into relationship with someone.

Our God is one who seeks to involve us. Even today he shares with us what is in his heart. Because of this, listening to the word in the liturgy teaches us to listen to the truth of reality. In the midst of the many voices present in our personal lives and in society, Sacred Scripture helps us to recognize and respond to the cry of those who are anguished and suffering. In order to foster this inner openness to listening, we must allow God to teach us how to listen as he does.

If Lent is a time for listening, fasting is a concrete way to prepare ourselves to receive the word of God. Abstaining from food is an ancient ascetic practice that is essential on the path of conversion. Precisely because it involves the body, fasting makes it easier to recognize what we "hunger" for and what we deem necessary for our sustenance.

I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbour. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace.

In [his Homily during the Mass of Installation](#), Archbishop Richard reminded us of our own call to service as witnesses to the Gospel in our role as school leaders:

God's call to us is not a call to power as so often exercised in the world, to achieve dominion over others. Rather it is characterised by self-control, not a self-control 'generated' as it were from within ourselves, but a self-control guided, empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is characterised by love, a love that reflects to all the love that we see in Christ. This is a love that is total-self-giving, self-emptying to the point of the death that we see depicted so clearly in the great rood here, above the Sanctuary.

This is Christ-like Service, that brings Faith, Love and Hope to a world that, in our present age, cries out for Hope. This Service is our Mission as Christ's Church. St. Paul reminds us that we receive the gifts that come to us through the Holy Spirit, often experienced in gentleness and in the silence of prayer. These gifts are experienced in their fullness, fanned into flame, through our living out of the Mission to which we are called.

So too, Bishop Mark in his 2026 [Lenten Pastoral Letter](#) invites us to unite in prayer with all those preparing to be received into the Church this Easter, stating that *the journey of these new converts brings us back to the original purpose of Lent as the time when adults prepared for Baptism. The Church quickly recognised this time was needed by all the baptised as part of their continuing conversion. It is for this reason, that we now keep these 40 Lenten days devoted to greater prayer, self-denial and generosity as we each prepare to renew at Easter the promises of our Baptism, confess our sins and receive the Holy Eucharist with ever renewed faith and love.'*

We wish your staff, governors, pupils and families a faith filled Lenten journey, and the joy of the risen Christ and the Easter season when it arrives.

Richard

2. APPOINTMENT AND CHANGES OF HEADTEACHER

For information	✓
For action	

As we return after the half-term break, we will say goodbye to Chris Fenna, Headteacher of St Paul's in Beechwood as she retires from her many years of service at Easter this year.

We also offer our best wishes to Ann Reeh, Headteacher at St Joseph's in Stockport, who leaves the Shrewsbury Diocese to take up a new post in Salford after the Easter break.

3. 'TO LOVE YOU MORE DEARLY': PRAYER AND LITURGY DIRECTORY UPDATE

For information	✓
For action	✓

It was wonderful to see so many colleagues online at the launch of our most recent set of companion documents to To love You more dearly.

[To Love you more dearly – the Mass](#)

[Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament Guidance for schools and colleges](#)

[Sacred Spaces in schools](#)

It is hoped that that these documents will support leaders, governors and prayer and liturgy coordinators, and be a key reference point when considering sacred spaces in schools and colleges, when planning the celebration of holy Mass and if reserving the Blessed Sacrament.

We will relaunch the companion document, *To love You more dearly* – PRAYER, which explores prayer in our schools and colleges on **12th March at 3.30pm**.

In addition, this term Julia will host our inaugural '**Ask the Expert**' online meeting where colleagues are encouraged to 'drop in' **using the links below to ask our expert**, Canon Chris Matthews, Diocesan Episcopal Vicar for Worship, any questions they may have about prayer and/or liturgy in their context, or any points of clarification needed. These events are open to any colleagues who may have queries about prayer and liturgy in our schools and colleges.

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

12/03/2026	3.30pm	Exemplars and guidance on prayer in schools and colleges	Online launch
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19/03/2026	3.30-4.30pm	Ask the Expert	Zoom link
10/06/2026	3.30-4.30pm	Ask the Expert	Zoom link
24/06/2026	1pm-4pm	How to use music to enhance prayer and liturgy	Loreto Education Centre, Dunham Rd, Altrincham, 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](#)

4. CARITAS SHREWSBURY LENT APPEAL

For information	✓
For action	✓

Caritas wrote to all schools prior to the half-term break with details and ideas for their annual Good Shepherd Appeal.

Once again, we would encourage schools to support our Diocesan charity which works alongside schools, health and social care agencies, and the voluntary sector to support families, children and adults of all ages experiencing mental health challenges, financial hardship, bereavement, and social isolation.

To help schools with their fundraising, a range of resources and ideas are available on the [Caritas Shrewsbury website](#), along with their Impact Report, which highlights the difference your support can make.

5. CHANGES OF PARISH CLERGY

For information	✓
For action	

Following feedback from school leaders, we have discussed with Bishop Mark the request that schools are made aware of any forthcoming changes to Parish Priests. Moving forward, once any changes of Clergy have been shared via the Ad Clerum, we will inform schools within associated parishes of any changes.

6. MASS OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE 2025-26 ACADEMIC YEAR

For information	✓
For action	✓

Please note that our **Annual Mass of Thanksgiving** for this academic year takes place at **Holy Angels Parish Church Wicker Ln, Hale Barns, Altrincham WA15 0HG** on **Thursday 9th July at 4.30pm**. All colleagues are invited to join us as we give thanks to God for all that this year has gifted us.

7. ADMISSIONS

For information	
For action	✓

All schools are asked to submit a copy of their final Admissions Policy for 2027-28 to the Diocese for our records before 15th March 2026 - please email admissions@dioceseofshrewsbury.org. A copy should also be on the school's website by this date.

Governors are reminded that the school's Admission Policy should align with Diocesan model policies for schools and academies which can be found on the Education Department website.

8. FOUNDATION GOVERNOR RENEWALS

For information	✓
For action	

Foundation Governors whose terms of office expire this August will be receiving communication via email, before March 13th 2026, asking them if they wish to continue.

They will be asked to send the completed renewal application form back to the diocese signed by their Parish Priest by the 1st June 2026.

Governors will now only be asked to complete one form when applying to renew their term, with schools required to confirm DBS and Section 128 details before the letter of re-appointment from Bishop Mark can be issued. Further details on this year's renewal process will be sent in a separate communication later this half term.

A reminder that no person is designated as a Foundation Governor, and therefore should not be attending governor meetings, until a letter of appointment from Bishop Mark has been received.

9. CHAIRS & VICE CHAIRS FORUM

For information	✓
For action	

A reminder that our next Chairs and Vice Chairs Forum meeting takes place this term with details given below. Booking is available via the [Diocesan Website](#).

Spring Term	18 th March 2026 6.30 – 8.00pm	St Saviour's Catholic Primary School, Seacombe Drive, Great Sutton. CH66 2BD
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10. MEETING FOR NEW CHAIRS OF GOVERNORS

For information	
For action	✓

In response to feedback from colleagues, a meeting for any new Chairs of Governors will take place at 5pm on the 18th March at St Saviour's Catholic Primary School, Seacombe Drive, Great Sutton. CH66 2BD. This will be an opportunity for an informal conversation and discussion prior to the Chairs and Vice Chairs Forum meeting.

11. DRAFT KCSIE 2026 CONSULTATION

For information	
For action	✓

On 12th February the DfE published draft updates to KCSIE 2026 which is now open to sector consultation.

The [draft document](#) includes long awaited guidance in a new section focusing on children questioning their gender and how schools should consider requests for support with social transitioning (pgs. 65-71). The draft document also includes guidance on toilets and changing rooms (pgs. 33-35) and sports (pgs. 31-32).

The public consultation closes on 22nd April and you can [contribute here](#).

12. DfE EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

For information	✓
For action	✓

On the 23rd February, the government launched its policy document ‘Every Child Achieving and Thriving’ which details reforms to schools and SEND systems in England to ensure that every child can achieve and thrive. You can access the [full document here](#).

This is accompanied by an open consultation entitle ‘*SEND reform: putting children and young people first.*’ The [consultation document can be accessed here](#) and you can contribute to the consultation online via the [link here](#).

On the 9th February the DfE also announced that 90% of Local Authority high needs budgets will be written off centrally, and that the government will cover SEND spending from 2028-29 - you can access the [full article here](#).

For secondary schools and colleges, the DfE is seeking views on proposals regarding key stage 4 academic performance measures and extended RISE support. They are seeking views on:

- improving [Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures](#) through a refreshed Progress 8 curriculum model
- a better way to recognise the progress of pupils with low prior attainment as part of improvements to the wider suite of additional performance measures
- extending targeted RISE support to primary and secondary schools with low achievement

You can share your views and [contribute to the consultation here](#).

13. RSHE GUIDANCE FOR SEPTEMBER 2026

For information	
For action	✓

A reminder to schools that the DfE published [revised guidance on ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education’](#) in July 2025 which schools must implement from 1 September 2026.

Dioceses remain in dialogue with Ten:Ten, who have confirmed that new updated schemes of work will be available to schools just after the Easter break.

We also anticipate an updated template policy from the CES and would therefore advise schools to undertake consultation in the Summer Term, when hopefully these resources will be ready for you to access and use as part of your consultation with stakeholders.

14. SENIOR 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 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](#)
- [Appointing a new Lay Chaplain – Guidance for Headteachers and Governors](#)

15. KEY DATES THIS HALF TERM

For information	✓
For action	

Date	Time	Course Title	Venue
24/02/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	RE Lead Hub Meeting	Christ the King Catholic Primary School, Allport Road, Bromborough, CH62 6AE
26/02/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	RE Lead Hub Meeting	Shrewsbury Cathedral Chapter House, 12 Belmont, Shrewsbury, SY1 1TE
27/02/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	SHORE Hub 3 Meeting (Warrington, Halton, Wirral)	St John Plessington Catholic College, Old Chester Road, Bebington, CH63 7LF
02/03/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	SHORE Hub 2 Meeting (Cheshire, Telford& Wrekin)	St Nicholas Catholic High School, Greenbank Lane, Hartford, CW8 1JW
09/03/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	SHORE Hub 1 Meeting (Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Manchester)	St James' Catholic High School, St James' Way, Cheadle Hulme, SK8 6PZ
09/03/2026	1.30pm-3pm	COAST HUB 3 (Warrington, Halton, Wirral)	Cardinal Newman Catholic High School, Bridgewater Avenue, Latchford, WA4 1RX
10/03/2026	3.30pm-5pm	Vine and Branches Y5 preparation for To the Ends of the Earth	Virtual
11/03/2026	3.30pm-5pm	Vine and Branches Y6 preparation for To the Ends of the Earth	Virtual
12/03/2026	1.30pm-3pm	COAST HUB 2 (Cheshire, Shropshire, Telford& Wrekin)	Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, Capenhurst Lane, Ellesmere Port CH65 7AQ
12/03/2026	3.30pm-5pm	Exemplars and guidance on prayer in school*	Virtual
13/03/2026	1.30pm-3pm	COAST HUB 1 (Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Manchester)	Aquinas College, Nangreave Road, SK2 6TH, Stockport
13/03/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	Christ at the Centre- A Course for Primary Practitioners - Module 4	St Mary's Caritas Centre, 65 Delamere Street, Crewe, CW1 2JX

16/03/2026	9.30am-12pm	Secondary Deputy & Assistant Headteacher Forum Catholic Life and Mission	St Paul's Catholic High School, Firbank Road, Wythenshawe, M23 2YS
16/03/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	Primary Deputy & Assistant Headteacher Forum HUB1 (Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Manchester)	Our Lady and St Christopher Parish Hall, 52 Barrack Hill, Romiley, SK6 3BA
18/03/2026	1pm-3.30pm	Secondary RSE Lead Meeting	St Thomas More Catholic High School, Dane Bank Avenue, Crewe, CW2 8AE
18/03/2026	9.30am-12.30pm	New Headteachers' Induction Programme	St John Henry Newman Parish Centre, Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1JE
18/03/2026	6.30pm-8pm	Chairs and Vice Chairs Forum*	St Saviour's Catholic Primary School, Seacombe Drive, Great Sutton, CH66 2BD
18/03/2026	5.00pm-6pm	Induction for New Chairs of Governors*	St Saviour's Catholic Primary School, Seacombe Drive, Great Sutton, CH66 2BD
19/03/2026	3.30pm-4.30pm	'Ask the Expert' - Support with To love you more dearly (The PLD) - Drop in*	Virtual
19/03/2026	9.30am-12pm	Secondary Deputy & Assistant Headteacher Forum Personal Development, Behaviour & Attitudes	The Catholic High School, Old Wrexham Road, Chester, CH4 7HS
20/03/2026	9.30am-12pm	Mixed-age classes Working Party	St John Henry Newman Parish Centre, Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1JE
20/03/2026	9.30am-12pm	Secondary Deputy & Assistant Headteacher Forum Quality of Education	Cardinal Newman Catholic High School, Bridgewater Avenue, Latchford, WA4 1RX
23/03/2026	9.15am-3.30pm	Primary Deputy & Assistant Headteacher Forum HUB3 (Warrington, Halton, Wirral)	Our Lady of Pity Parish Hall, 24 Mill Lane, Greasby, CH49 3NN

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

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

