

Newsletter



18th December 2024

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Reflection from Canon Victor Darlington, Episcopal Vicar for Education

Beloved Friends, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Do you have a favourite Christmas Carol? Mine is Silent Night.

Every year in December, when I go around London, in the coffee shops, in a taxi, in schools, and in our parishes, I hear Silent Night sung. The words of the carol connect me with how God works mysteriously - not in mighty and significant ways, not in the fire and brightness of the day, not in the heavy wind, not in thunderstorms and lightning, but calmly and quietly in the silence and stillness of the night - our saviour was born, it evokes in me till today how God still connects with me and with us in silence – how important it is to withdraw sometimes from the noise and busyness of our world to recognise and hear God speaking to us.

As you come to the end of a busy school year, I recommend this carol to you. There is so much spirituality in that song. It connects me to see how God works in our lives. Silent night was holy, silent, calm and peaceful - the night our saviour was born. In the silence of that same night - the Shepherds heard the message of the angel and went in haste to pay homage to the adorable baby born on that sacred night - whose birthday dispelled the darkness of that silent night and brought light, a new dawn to our world.

The next few days and weeks leading to Christmas, as we know is busy, and with plenty of distractions from an often-secular understanding of Christmas. I encourage you to rediscover the true meaning of Christmas, and to spend some time in silence before Christmas to reconnect with Jesus whose birthday we shall all celebrate on Christmas day.

Thank you for all the excellent work you have done this year. I pray that as we look forward to the Jubilee Year, we as a pilgrimage people of Hope will receive all the graces we need for ourselves and our family.

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I wish you and your family and friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Canon Victor Darlington
Episcopal Vicar for the Southeast Area,
Commissions for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion,
Education and Director of Caritas, Archdiocese of Southwark

Information for schools: Launch of School Food Standards E-learning

This article will be of interest to governors, trustees, and governance professionals.

We have launched a [new online training course](#) about school food in partnership with the National Governance Association. The e-learning is available to everyone and will run as a pilot until 1 April 2025.

The course is designed to provide governors and trustees with the skills and expertise to understand their responsibilities concerning school food, including pupils' access to healthy and nutritious food.

Information for schools: Update to Initial Teacher Training requirements

The requirement for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) mentors to complete 20 hours of training has been removed.

ITT providers will continue to ensure all mentors receive sufficient training to gain good understanding of the ITT [core content framework](#) and the curriculum, so they can effectively support trainee teachers during their school placement.

Schools are still able to claim funding for up to 20 hours of training undertaken by mentors.

Information for schools and local authorities: Update on the wraparound childcare programme

The existing wraparound childcare programme will help lay the foundations for the newly announced breakfast clubs commitment. As such, the [Wraparound childcare guidance for schools](#) still applies.

Local authorities have now received funding so we encourage schools to work with them to make the most of the available support, including working with private, voluntary and independent providers (PVI) where helpful.

More information on breakfast clubs will be shared in due course.

Advent Prayers

As we embark together on the holy Season of Advent, we reflect on a time of preparation, anticipation and hope at the coming of Jesus. We invite all members of our school community to join the Education Service in a time of prayerful reflection - providing a space to prepare our hearts,



homes and schools to receive hope, joy and peace.

Please send this link [ADVENT PRAYER SESSION](#) to all your staff



19th December 2024 8am Do not be afraid to take a chance on **peace**, to teach peace, to live peace

Annual General Meetings for Diocesan SATS and a mini- MAT

The Annual General Meetings for Diocesan SATS and a mini- MAT will be held on the 7th, 8th and 9th of January 2025. Further details can be found here: <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/agm/>

The Well - Learning Platform

To support governors and school leaders, we aim to keep you up to date with relevant information via The Well (learning platform).

Login details have been sent to all governors with a school email address and all school leaders.

If you can think of anything else that would be useful to include or any courses you would like us to offer, please let me know and I will do what I can. Emails can be sent to samgower@rcaos.org.uk.

Admissions Clarification

You may recall that in the last newsletter we gave an update of the diocesan position regarding admissions and the Certificate of Catholic Practice.

We would like to offer further clarification on this matter.

As set out in the newsletter, the Certificate of Catholic Practice should only be on the school's website so as to make those applying aware of the document, as it is part of the admission arrangements. This is a certificate signed and stamped by the priest and should reside with them. This document should not be downloaded from the school's website and taken to the priest for signing.

- Those wishing to apply to a school that have chosen to adopt the CoP, as part of their admission arrangements, will need to collect the certificate from their parish priest or an appropriate representative of the parish.
- This original, signed and stamped certificate, can then be presented to any school where an application is made.
- The school will retain a photocopy and hand back the original.



Work will continue to be undertaken to ensure that all members of the clergy are fully cognisant of the process and their responsibilities. We will be engaging with our priests to ensure that the most effective means are used to ensure that those wishing to apply are able to access the certificate

Upcoming School Grants

[Kellogg's Breakfast Club Grants](#)

£1,000 grant - Priority for schools with over 40% of pupil premium eligibility - No deadline

[Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust](#)

£100 - £100,000 - Project schemes directed towards capital expenditure - No deadline

[Foyle School Library Scheme](#)

Up to £10,000 - Grant to help buy books, e-readers, library software, IT equipment and furniture - No deadline

Action Required: Additional Nursery Places

You will be aware of the government's pledge to create an additional three thousand nursery places. The DfE will, in the coming months, be setting out plans to use surplus capacity in primary schools to create or expand nurseries run from school premises which will include both school-run nurseries and schools partnering with private, voluntary, and independent providers.

The department is working closely with schools, local authorities, and providers to:

- understand what is needed to deliver this
- ensure provision meets the needs of families and schools
- reflect the LA's role in managing childcare sufficiency in funding decisions

Guidance for schools in relation to these proposals will be available in due course but in the meantime, please be aware that schools must have the consent of their diocese or religious order (if relevant) before taking any steps. Matters of provision be it type (nursery, resource sixth form etc) or size are matters for the Education Committee to approve. You must obtain any relevant consents from ourselves or religious order before taking any steps in this regard and that early consultation is paramount.

Invite your MP to Visit your School

The CES have produced a new online template for schools to invite their local Member of Parliament for a visit. A school visit is a great way to demonstrate to an MP the achievements of Catholic education, and for the MP to become more involved in supporting education within their constituency.

The template is available online here: [Invite your MP to visit your school - Catholic Bishops' Conference](#)



Pilgrims of Hope - Info Sheet



PILGRIMS OF HOPE THE JUBILEE YEAR 2025

During Adoration at Gosport, HE Cardinal Vincent Nichols blessed the Jubilee Year that leads to and is a prayer focus for our national celebrations of the great Year of Jubilee 2025.

To help with the Church of England, two diocesan collections are offered to schools, parishes and places of devotion to act as a focal point for the Jubilee along with beautiful prayer cards.

Order your Jubilee pack

Parish Pack
Ruler Banner x 2 designs, 850mm x 2m, printed in full colour, complete with premium base and carry case.
Prayer Cards 500 copies, 100mm x 100mm, printed full colour both sides with 250gsm silk, 4mm to size and pack.
100 Jubilee address included.
Cost: £105

School Pack
Ruler Banner x 2 designs, 850mm x 2m, printed in full colour, complete with premium base and carry case.
Prayer Cards 500 copies, 100mm x 100mm, printed full colour both sides with 250gsm silk, 4mm to size and pack.
100 Jubilee address included.
Cost: £105

Additional prayer cards
Digital Download Pack (personalised)
Personalised digital assets include full resolution of the Ruler Banner x 2 designs and prayer card.
Cost: £65 + VAT

To place your Jubilee Pack order, please email or contact Jump
help@jumpuk.co.uk | 0900 2000

Jump

As part of our commitment, the following is included:
• Copy written prayer of intention (MS)
• 250gsm heavy duty artwork from the new UK printer
• Colour matching proof
• Customisable prayer card (MS, A5 and A6)
• Full resolution of the Jubilee Year 2025 logo

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Please [click here](#) to download a copy of this info sheet

Sharing content from the CES website

It has been brought to our attention that some schools have uploaded to their own websites previously downloaded versions of old resources from the CES website. We would strongly suggest that if a diocese or a school wishes to promote items from any external website (including the CES) that they do so through a link.

We regularly update items on our website and remove other items when they are out of date. By sharing resources through a link rather than a static upload, the accuracy and ownership of the material is more guaranteed. This is particularly important in relation to copyright and intellectual property.

TA to Teacher - broadening access to the BA in Primary Education

We are very pleased to confirm that the new Introduction to Writing course is now enrolling participants. This course is specially designed for teaching assistants who plan to apply for the popular BA course in primary education, providing a chance for those without traditional academic qualifications to show that they can succeed at degree level and get a direct route to the BA programme. The application page is open for registrations at: www.anspear.com/uob-writing

The first Introduction to Writing course starts in January 2025 and takes just 14 weeks. It is designed for those in full-time work and will allow time for candidates to progress to the degree programme starting in July 2025. For details about the course, please see [the brochure](#).

Save the Date!

The Headteachers' Conference 2025 has been booked for 20th and 21st November 2025. Please hold this date in your diary.



Wintershall Advent Crib events at Lambeth Palace Gardens

Several of our schools availed themselves of the opportunity to attend the Wintershall Advent Crib events at Lambeth Palace Gardens.

Wintershall is a trust that arranges for actors to enact bible stories to pupils often involving real farm animals to enhance the biblical feel of the sessions. Wintershall were pleased with the attendance and in some cases provided a bursary to cover the schools costs.



They are now planning the Lenten events so if you want to see if this is something your children would enjoy and want to know about future opportunities to join them, please find their latest newsletter [here](#).

Recruitment

Vacancies can be viewed in full here: <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/recruitment/>

Headteacher, St Aidan's Catholic Primary School

Coulsdon, Croydon

Closing date: 27th January 2025

Events & Training

New to Religious Education Leadership – Day 2

Thursday 9th January 2025. 9.30am-4pm.
Education Service

[Book](#)

CSED Writing

Thursday 16th January 2025. 10am-12pm
Education Service, St Edward's house, St Pauls
Wood Hill, Orpington, BR5 2SR

[Book](#)

Effective School Visits for Governors

Tuesday 14th January 2025. 5.30pm-7pm
Zoom

[Book](#)

Recruitment Process and Selection of Senior Leaders for Governors

Thursday 23rd January 2025. 5.30-7pm.
Zoom

[Book](#)

Diocesan Chaplains Day

Tuesday 4th February 2025. 9.30am-4pm
£40. Amigo hall, Lambeth Road, SE1 6HR.

[Book](#)

Religious Education Conference

Thursday 13th February 2025 & Friday 14th
February 2025. The Kairos Centre, Mount Angelus
Rd, Roehampton, SW15 4JA

[Book](#)



Ofsted Pilot Schools Spring 2025

The CES have asked for Catholic schools to be included in the pilot for the new Ofsted framework. If you are interested please do let us know.

Ofsted will be consulting on their new framework early in the new year. As part of this process, they will be seeking to test the framework through pilot school inspections. We raised with Ofsted the importance of including some Catholic schools in the piloting process, and they have asked us to invite schools volunteer to be included. If you are interested in being part of the pilot please let your Trust Relationship Officer, (Sam, Daniel or Colette) know that you wish to be included. Volunteers are not guaranteed to be included in the pilot process, but it is important that Catholic education is not overlooked by the inspectorate when they are making critical decision about the future of accountability. We appreciate this request is landing at a busy and stressful time of year, but we do need to know as soon as possible so we can share the list of volunteers with Ofsted before the launch of the consultation in mid-January.

Any piloting of the framework would not occur until after the consultation has concluded (which would be in mid-April 2025 if the timescales remain as currently planned). Any involvement in the pilot would not replace an inspection and would have no 'real world' consequences; it would simply be testing out the new framework, on Ofsted's behalf, before publication.

Please communicate your willingness to be involved by the end of the first working week in January (10 January). Earlier responses are welcome, if possible.

Samgower@rcaos.org.uk (SW) danielcoleman@rcaos.org.uk (SE) colettedoranhannon@rcaos.org.uk (Kent and Medway)

Aspiring Leaders

The next set of aspiring leaders' sessions will be starting on 28 January. This is a set of seven sessions, details of dates and content can be found at [Aspiring Leaders](#). This is aimed for anybody new to leadership as we will be developing confidence in leadership activities including action planning, monitoring, leading CPD, using assessment information. The session will be online and afterschool to ensure it is available for those who would benefit from it. Please can I ask leaders to promote this training opportunity and encourage staff to register [here](#).



School Early Years and Childcare provision

As the government moves toward extending the child care provision for parents. We are keen to know which of our schools has a nursery or pre-school provision, either run by a PVI or school staff and which of our schools has before and after school child care arrangements already set up. We would ask that schools complete the form (link below), to give us an overview so that when schools come to Diocesan Property Team for a change in use, we have the overview of the local area provision already in our Catholic school sites.

Should your school not provide these services already please indicate if you signpost families to other providers.

Please complete this form by the 31st January 2025: <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/school-provision/>

News

St Ethelbert's Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2024



Staff, the Year 6 Head Boy, Girl and Deputies at St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School in Ramsgate gave up their time to go out in all weathers after school to raise money for the Poppy Appeal, selling poppies and other poppy items.

[Continue reading.](#)

The Holy Cross School Participates in The Catholic Children Society Gift Appeal



This year, during Advent, The Holy Cross School in New Malden, took part in The Catholic Children's Society Christmas Gift Appeal. The Catholic Children's Society (CCS) supporters donate gifts which they distribute to those most in need. Thousands of local children and families are facing a Christmas without presents, food or basic essentials.

[Continue reading.](#)