

The Maximilian

A monthly newsletter for governors within the Archdiocese of Southwark

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Reflection

Beloved Friends, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we continue with this Jubilee Year of Hope, we begin the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday on Wednesday 5 March 2025. Ash Wednesday begins the holy season of Lent, and as Catholics, we are encouraged to attend Mass and to receive Ashes. The imposition of Ashes on our foreheads is a powerful symbol of our repentance and sorrow for our sins. In this Jubilee year, it reminds us of the call to conversation and reconciliation with God and with one another.

Each year, we are reminded that Lent is a sacred season of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving when, in our different ways, we draw closer to Jesus Christ as we seek to transform our lives. During the Lenten Season, you are once again encouraged to make the time to attend the stations of the cross in your schools and local parishes. The Stations speak to us in our everyday lives, especially during this Jubilee Year when we turn our attention to a God who walks with us through the challenges of life.

I am pleased to see that many schools across the Archdiocese have launched their various Jubilee Pilgrimage plans in inspiring ways, especially in establishing a culture of welcome. Many positive reports from children, parents, and families tell me how much your Jubilee school initiatives are rekindling their faith. I am sure, you are all receiving your various Jubilee stamps when you visit the designated Jubilee Churches. I would like to thank you, commend you, and encourage you to keep up the good work.

As we journey through the Holy Season of Lent, let us be reminded of the various feast days that are coming soon: Saint David, the patron saint of Wales, on 1 March; Saint Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland, on 17 March; and Saint Joseph, the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on 19 March. As we celebrate these various saints, let us be inspired by them as we continue to pray for Pope Francis.

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



Sancta Familia Catholic Academy Trust

Congratulations to the following schools who are the founding members of Sancta Familia Catholic Academy Trust;

- Regina Coeli Catholic Primary School
- St Elphege's Infant School
- St Elphege's Junior School
- St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Merton.
- Ursuline High, Wimbledon

Single Academy Trusts SATS

The members of the Archdiocese of Southwark attended the AGMs of most of the schools that are Single Academy Trusts in January 2025. At these meetings the members' vision was shared with the schools and the following schools will be joining these CATS by the end of the summer term of 2025.

Christ the Redeemer Catholic Education Trust

The Holy Cross, New Malden
Richard Challoner Catholic School

St Oscar Romero Academy Trust

Holy Innocents' Catholic Primary School
St James' RC Primary School
St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary Academy
St Philomena's Catholic Primary School
St Vincent's Catholic Primary School
Good Shepherd Catholic Primary & Nursery School, New Addington
Sacred Heart Catholic Secondary School

St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust

St James the Great RC Primary & Nursery School, Thornton Heath
St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School
St Paul's Academy
St Matthew Academy

Sancta Familia Catholic Academy Trust

St Mary's Catholic Junior School, Croydon
St Mary's Catholic Infant School, Croydon
St Aidan's Catholic Primary School
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School, Brixton

Nominate Someone for an Honour

Over 100 Brits who have made outstanding contributions to education, skills and children's social care in the UK were recognised by the King in his New Year Honours. Anyone can nominate an individual for an honour through filling in the online nomination form. There is guidance available on how to write a nomination and nominations can be submitted at any time of the year. Guidance on the nomination process: [Nominate someone for an honour or award: Overview - GOV.UK](#)



Teacher Wellbeing Index

Following the release of its annual Teacher Wellbeing Index, Education Support revealed new insights regarding the impact of pupil and parent behaviour on staff morale and wellbeing. Feedback from over 3,000 education staff revealed:

82% believe challenging behaviour by pupils and students had increased and that this negatively affected their mental health and wellbeing.

70% reported a similar increase in challenging interactions with parents had the same impact
84% said verbal or physical abuse by students has increased, and believe it is because of a lack of provision for students' physical, emotional and mental health needs.

[View the full report](#)

Get Information About Schools (GIAS)

The DfE will be adding the role of governance professional (including clerks) to GIAS. This function has currently been 'soft launched' on the system and new guidance on GIAS will be available shortly to assist with adding the data. While it is not currently a mandatory requirement, the DfE strongly encourage governing boards to add their governance professionals' details onto GIAS. The change aims to ensure that governance professionals receive important information directly and promptly from the Department for Education. Currently, the department rely on schools or chairs to pass on communications, which can sometimes cause delays. By having the clerk/governance professionals' details available via GIAS, the DfE can keep them updated with the department's priorities and provide key information efficiently.

Due to the limitations of the current GIAS system, you can only add individual names rather than any clerking service provider. The DfE plans to share further communications on this change shortly in the department's newsletters.

Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) Report into School Funding

New estimates by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) find that growth in mainstream school funding per pupil in England in 2025–26 (2.8% in cash terms) won't be sufficient to cover the expected increase in school costs (3.6%). Growth in school costs reflects the full effects of the 5.5% rise in teacher pay from September 2024, and the recommended pay offer of 2.8% for September 2025. While pupil numbers are expected to fall by around 2% over the next two years, this is unlikely to allow for a cut in the overall schools budget. Rapid rises in the cost of special educational needs (SEN) provision seem likely to wipe out any opportunities for savings, even if core per-pupil funding is kept constant in real terms.

[Schools and colleges facing another round of belt tightening in this year's spending review | Institute for Fiscal Studies](#)



DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy for Education

The strategy states: 'By 2025, all education settings will have nominated a sustainability lead and put in place a climate action plan'. Sustainability leadership could be a group of people or an individual responsible for the development and implementation of a climate action plan. A climate action plan is a detailed plan to enable your education setting, or trust, to progress or commence sustainability initiatives.

There are many organisations providing courses, products, and services to support an education setting's approach to climate change. There are also many examples of excellent practice when it comes to sustainability and climate change in the education sector, and your individual setting or trust may already have a plan in place. Where this is the case the DfE is not suggesting that you create a new plan.

Support available includes:

Sustainability Support for Education: a digital hub of resources, services and tools to help you identify appropriate action to develop, or build on, your climate action plan, regardless of where you are on your sustainability journey

Climate Ambassador Programme: provides access to volunteer climate ambassadors and regional networks to support the development and delivery of impactful climate action plans

The National Education Nature Park: brings together all the land from across education settings into a vast virtual nature park. Participation in the Nature Park is a great way to add meaningful education, skills and biodiversity action to your plan. The Park provides curriculum-linked resources and practical activities to engage children and young people in nature and the improvement of their local environment

Salix 'the decarbonisation dialogue': the Decarbonisation Dialogue 2025 series is an opportunity to learn about how organisations across the public sector are addressing net zero challenges. Expert speakers will share insights into the opportunities, challenges and lessons learned through energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects completed on organisational estates

Greener Schools Index: The GSI is a free self-assessment tool designed to support all schools, however big or small, and at whatever stage they are on their net zero journey. It helps evaluate your school's progress, strengths and areas for improvement in essential areas such as air quality, biodiversity, catering management, energy, ICT, procurement, waste management and water. Each completed survey generates an individual pdf report of responses that can be shared with Governors and Trustees, or used to inform a Climate Action Plan and help develop the school's sustainability roadmap

Let's go zero: Let's Go Zero is the national campaign uniting teachers, pupils, parents and their schools as they all work together to be zero carbon by 2030. Schools will play a critical role in helping the UK cut carbon emission levels. In fact, they have the power to prevent 625,000 tonnes of CO₂ from entering the atmosphere. Across a single school or academy chain, interventions such as lowering electricity use or boosting the energy-efficiency of buildings have a huge impact



Engaging the Next Generation: It is a research report from the National Association for Environmental Education, on the state of environmental, sustainability and climate education in UK schools, and effective practice in the classroom.

Called to Bear Fruit

Please encourage the older pupils and students in our schools, colleges and academies to share their views within their parishes.

In the Pastoral Letter, that was read at all Sunday Masses on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 January 2025, Archbishop John Wilson announced a consultation as part of the next phase of the renewal process. This consultation offers people a chance to share signs of flourishing in parishes, provide suggestions on challenges, as well as opportunities for collaborative working.

The Archbishop's letter can be read in full by clicking on the link. In the letter, the Archbishop said:

“When I began my ministry as your Archbishop, I said that I did not come to the Archdiocese to manage decline, but to lead with hope. This Jubilee Year of Hope is our chance to open ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to work together towards a revival of Christian life, witness, and mission in our Archdiocese”.

<https://rcaos.org.uk/diocese/archbishop-john-wilson/archbishop-wilson-s-letters/pastoral-letters/pastoral-letter-called-to-bear-fruit-2025/>

There is an accompanying booklet, which can be accessed [here](#).

Courses & Events

Details for our upcoming courses and events for this academic year are available on our website.

<https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/governor-cpd/>

Effective Support and Challenge for Governors

Tuesday 4th March 2025. 5.30pm-7pm

Zoom

[Book](#)

Finance for Governors

Wednesday 12th March 2025. 5.30-7pm

Zoom

[Book](#)

Induction for New Foundation Directors, Governors and Clerks

Wednesday 19th March 2025. 4-5.30pm or

Monday 24th March 2025 5.30-7pm

Zoom

[Book](#)

Clerks to Governors Forum

The dates for the next set of Clerks to Governors Forums are Tuesday 13th May 2025 or Tuesday 20th May 2025. Further details can be viewed here: <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/clerks-to-governors-forum-topics/>



Aspiring to Governance

Please share this with anyone interested in becoming a governor.

Join us for an informative session designed for individuals interested in becoming a Foundation Governor within the Archdiocese. This session will cover:

- An overview of Foundation Governance: Understand the unique role and duties of Foundation Governors in maintaining the ethos and values of our schools.
- Q&A Session: Engage with experienced diocesan representatives to get your questions answered and gain deeper insights.
- This session is ideal for prospective Foundation Governors, as well as anyone interested in the governance of diocesan schools.

Details:

Thursday 27th March 2025. 5.30-6.30pm

Zoom.

Please follow this link to book your space and receive joining details: <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/aspiring-to-governance/>

