



NEWSLETTER

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025 - 2026

NEWSLETTER 2

3 NOVEMBER 2025

Message from the Director of Education

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to our second newsletter of this academic year. I very much hope that those of you who work within schools enjoyed a relaxing half term break.

The Jubilee for the World of Education was held over the course of last weekend and was entitled, 'Drawing New Maps of Hope'. This event coincided with the 60th anniversary of Gravissimum Educationis, the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Christian Education, promulgated by Pope Paul VI on 28 October 1965. To celebrate this, Pope Leo has published an Apostolic Letter, 'Drawing New Maps of Hope', in which he reflects on the challenges facing Catholic schools today, he writes in the letter published on 28 October 2025, 'The Church celebrates a fruitful educational history but also faces the imperative to update its proposals in light of the signs of the times.' Pope Leo continues, 'We are aware of the difficulties: hyper-digitalisation can fragment attention; the crisis of relationships can wound the psyche; social insecurity and inequalities can extinguish desire, yet, it is precisely here that Catholic education can be a beacon: not a nostalgic refuge but a laboratory of discernment, pedagogical innovation, and prophetic witness.'



In the eight-page document, the pontiff identifies three priorities for the educational community: cultivation of an interior life through space for silence, discernment, and dialogue with one's conscience and with God; formation in a wise use of technology and artificial intelligence that puts the human person first; and education in language that is peace-building, nonviolent, and open to others.

Furthermore, Pope Leo named St John Henry Newman, co-patron of the educational mission of the Church, alongside St Thomas Aquinas who was declared patron of Catholic schools, universities, and academies by Pope Leo XIII in 1880.

During the press conference to present the Jubilee for the World of Education, Cardinal Tolentino de Mendonça, prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, commented, 'these are important, I would say historical days for Catholic education, and it is the desire of the Holy Father to inaugurate a new season that involves educational institutions with a new spirit and new plans, asking them to become true maps of hope in today's world. Education is the new name for peace and places hope on the map of the present and the future.'

Considering this renewed focus, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the work that you do and will do during this next half term to provide the very best education for the children and young people in our Catholic school.

May God bless you all in your ministries.

With every good wish,

Catherine



Catholic School Inspection (CSI)

An updated CSI Inspection Handbook is now available on our website along with other relevant inspection materials that you can download to help you with your monitoring and preparation for inspection.

Please note the following handbook updates:

- The lead inspector will contact the CEO after the notification has been given to the school but before the inspection begins. This discussion with the CEO has two purposes. The first is to inform them that the inspection is taking place. The second is to inform the evidence base in relation to the leadership and governance of the school.
- Any requests for deferral of an inspection should come from the headteacher of the school being inspected, even when a school is part of a Catholic Education Trust.
- Appendix 6.1 is now a deferral and pause policy.

‘Deferral’ refers to the rescheduling of an inspection after a school has been notified of inspection, but before the inspection has begun.

‘Pausing’ means bringing an inspection to a temporary halt, once an inspection has already begun. When an inspection has begun, it must always be completed within ten working days, notwithstanding any pauses that may impact on its duration within that timeframe.

Data Dashboard

Schools who are in the inspection window will be sent a copy of the data dashboard that is held by CSI and given to inspectors prior to the inspection.

If you are in the inspection window, we ask that you update your school's online calendars with any events that may affect your inspection taking place.

We have Catholic School Inspection training for school leaders on **Friday 7 November 9.30am - 3.30pm** at The Durham Centre. This training is especially pertinent for school leaders who are in the inspection window.

If you would like to book please contact:

education@diocesehn.org.uk

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DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

CSI Training for School Leaders

Providing guidance on preparing for the National Framework for Catholic School Inspections.

This session is for headteachers / heads of school, deputy headteachers and RE subject leaders.

Friday 7 November 2025
9.30am - 3.30pm

Refreshments served from 9.00am, Lunch provided
The Durham Centre, Belmont DH1 1TN

Register Now

<https://diocesehncourses.org>

Future training dates for CSI Inspectors:

Spring - Wednesday 14 January 2026, 9.30 - 12.30pm at the Durham Centre, Belmont

Summer - Wednesday 22 April 2026 9.30 - 11.00am online

Catholic Education Leaders & Clergy Conference 2025

The annual Catholic Leaders and Clergy Conference is being held on **Thursday 27 November 2025** at the Ramside Hall Hotel. We are delighted that the conference will include keynote speeches from Professor Bart McGettrick, Emeritus Professor and Dean Emeritus of the Faculty of Education at the University of Glasgow, Leora Cruddas, the Chief Executive Officer of the Confederation of School Trusts and Paul Barber, Director of the Catholic Education Service. There will also be a recommissioning Mass for all school leaders, celebrated by Bishop Stephen Wright.

Thank you to all that have already booked.

We will still be taking bookings up to **Wednesday 5 November**.

Please see the two options below to attend this event:

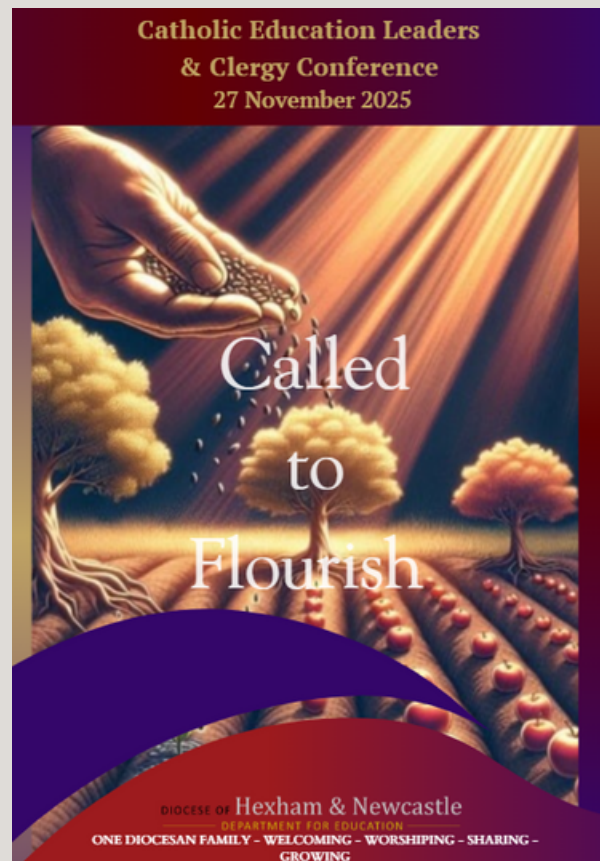
Day Delegate - £100 (includes lunch)

Day Delegate + evening meal - £125

Please use the link below to book:

<https://forms.office.com/e/UW30ZzKJcX?origin=lprLink>

We look forward to seeing you all there.



Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies

The Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies programme for 2025-2026 is underway and has had a great start. This year there has been a change to how modules are delivered with all sessions being held face to face.

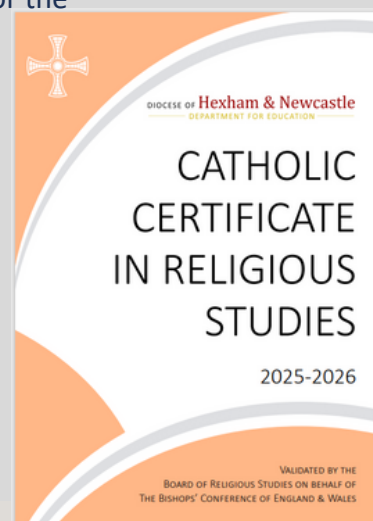
The programme is brilliant in supporting all members of staff with their understanding of the Catholic faith, prayer & liturgy, and education, therefore enhancing the teaching and learning opportunities for the children in our schools. This is specifically relevant with the introduction of the Religious Education Directory where the expectations for teacher subject knowledge have significantly increased. It is also extremely useful for staff who are considering leadership opportunities in Catholic schools or staff in pastoral roles.

Whether it is completing all modules for the full certificate or taking individual modules for further personal development, there is an option to suit all.

We are very grateful to the dedicated and committed tutors who generously give their time to deliver this important and invaluable professional development.

If you have any questions, then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Registration forms are accepted until **April 2026**. Tel 0191 2433313 or email: education@diocesehn.org.uk



Leadership Development Update

We have had a great start to the academic year. Our first headteacher meetings set a strong foundation for collaboration and shared priorities.

We were delighted to welcome our new headteachers to the Copthorne Hotel, where they connected, shared experiences, and explored their vision for the year ahead.

Our new deputy headteachers also joined us at the Copthorne Hotel for a positive and engaging session, focused on building connections and setting the stage for a successful year in leadership.

The Aspiring Deputy Headteachers Programme has now begun, with over 20 delegates ready to take the next step in their leadership journey. We are excited to continue this momentum with the National Catholic Leadership Programme in November, further developing leadership across our schools.

Thank you to everyone who made these milestones possible, we look forward to an amazing year ahead.



Foundation Governor Recruitment Drive

Become a School
GOVERNOR
Become a Foundation Governor,
Shape the future of our Catholic schools

We invite you to consider becoming a foundation governor. This is an opportunity to support Catholic education and serve the Church and Bishop Stephen Wright.

Your role will help to shape young lives, fostering academic excellence, spiritual growth, and moral development. Governors play a vital role in ensuring that our Catholic schools have Christ at the centre where all pupils can achieve their God given potential.

For any queries please contact us:
0191 243 3313
education@diocesehn.org.uk
Scan the QR code

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DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

More than 50 parishioners expressed interest in becoming a foundation governor for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, following a new awareness-raising initiative.

Foundation governor vacancies at schools in our diocese have increased, so to address this the Diocesan Department for Education held a recruitment campaign based around Education Sunday, which took place on 14 September this year.

Rebecca Daglish, the department's governance administrator, shared a brief speech for headteachers, foundation governors, curial and Catholic Education Trust staff members to read out at Mass on Education Sunday.

We would like to thank all of those who helped with our recent drive for new foundation governors and are delighted with the response, and your support played a key role in that success.

Over thirty application packs have now been sent out. A great result.

Fifty sign up after foundation governor recruitment drive

The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle's Department for Education has launched a new campaign.

Published on

3 October 2025



Catholic Education Service
Since 1847



Religious Education Directory

We are pleased to offer whole staff training to all our primary practitioners during the spring term 2026. This training is for all school leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and practitioners who work and support the children in religious education lessons within your school. The training will begin at 4:15pm and end by 6:00pm. We look forward to seeing you all there, however if you have a member of staff who is unable to attend your school's allocated date and venue, please get in touch so we can support them with an alternative date. Thank you to our secondary headteachers for hosting these events for us. Please do encourage your RE departments to attend these events too. We know that they will find this training very useful too.

Date	School
7 Jan 2026	Sacred Heart Catholic High School, Fenham
12 Jan 2026	St Mary's Catholic School, Benton
14 Jan 2026	St Cuthbert's Catholic High School, Newcastle
19 Jan 2026	St Thomas More Catholic High School, North Shields
21 Jan 2026	Cardinal Hume Catholic School, Gateshead
26 Jan 2026	St Thomas More Catholic School, Blaydon
28 Jan 2026	St Robert of Newminster Catholic School & Sixth Form College, Washington
2 Feb 2026	St Paul's Primary School, Alnwick
4 Feb 2026	St Leonard's Catholic School, Durham
9 Feb 2026	St Wilfrid's RC College, South Shields
11 Feb 2026	St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy, Sunderland
16 Feb 2026	St Bede's Catholic School & Byron Sixth Form, Peterlee
18 Feb 2026	St John's Catholic School & Sixth Form College, Bishop Auckland
4 Mar 2026	Our Lady and St Bede Catholic Academy, Stockton
9 Mar 2026	St Michael's Catholic Academy, Billingham
11 Mar 2026	Carmel College, Darlington
16 Mar 2026	St Bede's Catholic School & Sixth Form College, Lanchester
18 Mar 2026	St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy, Bedlington
23 Mar 2026	The English Martyrs' Catholic School & Sixth Form College, Hartlepool
25 Mar 2026	St Joseph's Catholic Academy, Hebburn

Primary RE Conference

This year our annual RE Conference will take place on **Friday 1 May 2026** at The Durham Centre from 9:30am – 3:30am. This will be the official launch of our digital primary Religious Education Directory resource and will give schools access to the materials which will be used from September 2026. During the day you will receive your school's username and password so you can explore the site and become familiar with the materials. We strongly recommend that this is attended by the headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team and the RE subject leader.

Please book your place via

<https://diocesehn.org.uk/education/department-for-education>



Recruitment Advisers Meetings 2025 - 2026

Please note that there are two remaining training sessions scheduled for all recruitment advisers. The dates and venues are as follows.

Spring - Wednesday 14 January 2026, 1pm - 3:30pm at the Durham Centre, Belmont/Online

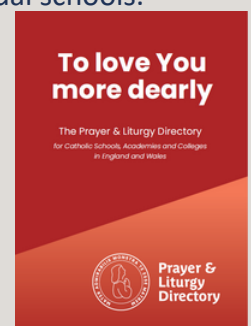
Summer - Wednesday 22 April 2026, 1pm - 3:30pm Online

If you are a Diocesan recruitment adviser please do make a point of attending for invaluable updates.

Prayer and Liturgy Directory

The new Prayer and Liturgy Directory, To Love You more Dearly, is now mandatory in all schools from September 2025. All schools have been provided with a model Prayer and Liturgy Policy to be implemented. The model policy has space for schools to personalise the provision to reflect the practices within their individual schools.

There is also a requirement for schools to have an annual plan of provision (APOP). This is a strategic overview of the prayer and liturgical life of the school over the coming year. We have created this document and are now asking schools to provide feedback. Once this has been completed this document will be given to all schools to use at the beginning of December.



Secondary Education Professional Development

On **Friday 9 January 2026**, we are delighted to be joined by Karen Kilby and six other inspirational Durham University professors, who will be leading a fantastic day of professional and theological development. This is an exceptional offer is for all secondary Heads of RE as well as staff within the RE department. Please do take this opportunity to attend this high quality professional development.

To book places, please use <https://diocesehn.org.uk/education/departement-for-education> or contact the team at Education@diocesehn.org.uk



The poster is for a 'Secondary School RE Day' event. It features a dark red background with a gold cross logo at the top. The text is white and gold. The event is on 9 January 2026 at The Durham Centre, Belmont Industrial Estate, Durham, DH1 1TN, from 09:30-15:30. Below the event details, there is a section titled 'Guest Speakers' with eight circular portraits of speakers and their topics. At the bottom, there are social media icons, the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle logo, and a 'Book:' section with a link.

 **DIocese of Hexham & Newcastle**

Join us at the
Secondary School
RE Day
9 January 2026
The Durham Centre
Belmont Industrial Estate, Durham, DH1 1TN
09:30-15:30

Guest Speakers


Dr Stuart Foyle, 'Religions, Worldviews and Disneyfication: Why Teaching and Learning Through Film is Important'


Prof Karen Kilby, "Creed, tradition and development: reflections on the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea"


Prof Alec Rylie, 'The slave trade and the ethics of climate change'


Prof. Francis Watson, 'The making of the New Testament'


Prof Simon Oliver, 'Creation, gift, and the environmental crisis'


Gareth Rowe, "Climate and Christology: reflecting on the climate crisis through the lens of Jon Sobrino"


Dr William Crozier, "The Quince Made Sweet: Love and Suffering in St. Bonaventure's Tree of Life"

 **Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle**

Book: <https://diocesehn.org.uk/education/departement-for-education/>

RE Subject Leader Days

There will be four primary RE subject leader days this term and we will be joined by John Hardy who will take our leaders through the belief lens of the Religious Education Directory. We will also be joined by Fr Adrian Dixon, who will share practical ways in which the Prayer and Liturgy can be embedded within schools.

The dates and venues are as follow:

Thursday 13 November at The Holiday Inn, Seaton Burn 9:30am-3:30pm

Friday 14 November at The Durham Centre, Belmont 9:30am-3:30pm

Tuesday 18 November at The Durham Centre, Belmont 9:30am-3:30pm

Thursday 20 November at The Holiday Inn, Darlington 9:30am-3:30pm

To book places, please use <https://diocesehn.org.uk/education/departments-for-education> or contact the team at Education@diocesehn.org.uk

Diocesan Schools Singing Programme

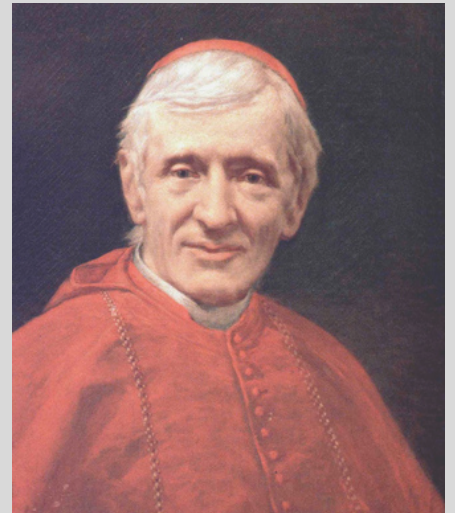
September saw the beginning of an exciting new chapter through the launch of the Diocesan Schools Singing Programme, led by our Diocesan Choral Director, Eimear Hurley.



In this new role, generously funded by the National Schools Singing Programme, Eimear delivers weekly singing sessions for pupils in Years 3 and 4 pupils in 10 schools across the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust. Over 700 children are now engaging in weekly singing sessions which develop their musical skills and allow them to experience the joy of group singing. Eimear is also establishing two new after-school choirs - one for girls and one for boys - formed of children taking part in the schools programme. As they grow and develop, these choirs will sing regularly at Mass at the Cathedral Church of St Mary, Newcastle, enhancing the liturgy through music.

God has created me to do Him some definite service.
He has committed some work to me which He has not committed
to another. I have my mission.
I may never know it in this life,
but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of
connection between persons.
He has not created me for naught.
I shall do good; I shall do His work.
I shall be an angel of peace,
a preacher of truth in my own place,
while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments.

Amen



John Henry Newman