

## Head Teachers' Bulletin – 10<sup>th</sup> January

### Upcoming Events

- 14<sup>th</sup> Jan Writing Fundamentals Y5/6 9.15am @ St Catherine's
- 21<sup>st</sup> Jan Senior Leaders' Development day @Pastoral Centre
- 28<sup>th</sup> Jan Heads' Forum 8am-12pm @ Pastoral Centre
- 28<sup>th</sup> Jan Governors Monitoring Catholic Life and Religious Education 6.30pm
- 31<sup>st</sup> Jan Science Subject Immersion @ St John Fisher
- ~~4<sup>th</sup> Feb~~ MFL immersion day → rescheduled to 14<sup>th</sup> March

### Actions from this bulletin

**Heads Check in form** – Head Teachers please take 5 mins to complete the check in form at this link

**HR Service Briefing Feedback** – Please share questions and feedback on the form at this link

**24<sup>th</sup> Feb INSET Day** – Please complete the form to request bookings for the SEND training on 24<sup>th</sup> Please also indicate any training you are running that day that could be made available to other schools.

**Senior Leaders' Day** – Please pass these links on to relevant colleagues to let us know if they are coming to the Senior Leaders' Day on Tue 21<sup>st</sup> Jan.

Form for Senior Leaders

Form for members of the SEND network who are invited to the afternoon

**School Improvement visit 2** – Please book dates here

Actions from previous bulletin

**Writing Moderation** – If you haven't completed the form to let us know who is coming from your school, please do so as soon as possible at this link

### New Updates (since last bulletin)

Welcome back & check in

I hope the first week back has gone well and that you've been able to navigate the snow and ice.

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At the beginning of the new year and new term, I have put together a really quick 'check in' MS Form for Heads (link below and in the actions). This is designed to be a quick 'pulse check' about how things look to you in your role at the start of the term. If it takes more than 5 mins to fill in, you are writing too much!

The check in is known as a 'love & nuts' exercise as it simply asks what you love about your job right now and what is 'driving you nuts'. As well as hopefully being a bit cathartic, the feedback will form a helpful context to our Heads' Forum later this month.

### 24<sup>th</sup> February INSET Day & SEND Training

The majority of schools in the St Clare family will have an INSET day on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February.

We are running SEND training on that day

- SEND and the Role of the TA - this is a 2-part course (24<sup>th</sup> February am and 24<sup>th</sup> March pm) led by Fusion. This is for primary and secondary TAs.
- ADHD training by Headstuff ADHD Therapy. This is predominantly for SENCOs, but open to TAs and teachers subject to space in the afternoon. There is a link to a form in the 'actions' section above where you can request places on this training.

On the same form, please let us know if you have an INSET that day and are running training that could be made available to colleagues from other schools (E.g. First Aid, Safeguarding, etc). We will then share this with all schools and can support with coordination of booking.

### HR Briefing

Thanks to everyone who was able to attend the briefing on the development of the HR service. We have included with this bulletin a copy of the presentation, a link to a recording of the presentation and a link to the feedback form.

Please take a few minutes to add any questions or other feedback on the form. Please also pass the link to the form onto Business Managers or any other colleague in school who may have questions or feedback to share. We will come back with answers to questions at the Heads' Forum (if not before) and we will use your feedback to inform the priorities for development this year.

### Senior Leaders' Development Day

The Senior Leader Session on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> will be a full day. Jonathan Lear will lead a session on Curriculum and Immersion days in the morning; the key questions the Trust is focusing on in our Immersion days and what an ambitious curriculum might look like. Nick Whittaker is leading the afternoon session 'Exploring a Balanced System and a robust Graduated Response.' The SEND network group have been invited to join Nick's session at 1.30pm.

This is a day for Deputies and other senior leaders. To help planning of logistics, please do ask colleagues in school to let us know if they are coming via the relevant form (link in this bulletin). Anita will also email

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senior leaders and members of the SEND network directly with a reminder about the day and a request to complete the form.

### Maths Hub opportunities

Within the Trust we are building on and benefitting from a wealth of experience through the South Yorkshire Maths Hub. This is through schools actively engaging with the DFE funded professional development opportunities that the Maths Hub provides.

Within our Trust, we have colleagues who deliver professional development for the Maths Hub across South Yorkshire. Aside from Vicki John Lewis who is the Maths Hub Lead, Tom McInerney (Holy Rood) and Lysie Tuplin (Sacred Heart) are both nationally trained Teaching for Mastery Specialists for the primary phase and Joe Quarterman (Notre Dame) is currently taking part in national training to become a Mastery Specialist for the secondary phase. Edith Pearce (Holy Rood) is a Work Group Lead.

Opportunities to train as a Mastery Specialist or Work Group Lead are open to all colleagues across South Yorkshire on the understanding that they will support and develop other schools within the region. The training is funded, and further information about the next round of recruitment can be found in the attached posters. We expect a high level of interest – there will therefore be an application and interview process.

If you have any further questions around this, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Vicki. [vjohnlewis@symathshub.org.uk](mailto:vjohnlewis@symathshub.org.uk)

### Writing Moderation

A reminder that we will have our writing moderation days later this term. These are scheduled as follows:

F2/Y1/Y2 - Thus 13<sup>th</sup> February

Y3/Y4 – Thus 27<sup>th</sup> February

Y5/Y6 – Thus 13<sup>th</sup> March

This year we will host all the moderation days at the Pastoral Centre. All events will run from 2.30 – 4.00pm. Jonathan Lear will be running the first two days, and this will be part of the writing fundamentals development. Claire Round will run the Y5/Y6 event.

Thanks to everyone who has already completed the quick form (link below and in the actions) to indicate who you expect to send to moderation this year. If you haven't done so, please do get on and respond this week. This will help us to plan logistics.

### School Improvement Visit 2

John and Fiona will be booking the second of the two school improvement visits with each school.

The purpose of the visit is to:

1. Better know and understand your school.

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2. Ensure that the Trust is in a better position to identify any emerging areas in order to inform plans for 2025/26 Trust activity.
3. Better understand the impact of collaborative work and coordinated Trust activity on the School.
4. Provide support with monitoring and evaluating progress against the School Improvement Priorities.

During the visit we will want to:

- Review the current school improvement documentation – in particular asking you to reflect on those areas where you are most confident of the impact of school improvement work, and also those areas where you might have least evidence of impact
- See the current version of your SEF (in whatever state it is currently in)

Depending on the timing of the visit, you may also find it helpful to build in an activity whereby we can support you (or a colleague) in supporting with the evaluation of the impact of a particular piece of school improvement work.

Visits should last approximately 2 hours – and need to be booked in between Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb and Weds 16<sup>th</sup> April. Please select a meeting date at [this link](#). There should be enough options to enable everyone to pick a time that suits. Morning visits will default to 9.30-11.30 unless a different time works better for you, and afternoon 1.30-3.30 (again, unless a slightly different time works better).

### IT – Cyber Security Awareness Training

Following a recent reminder we have seen a considerable uptake in the number of staff who have completed the NCSC Cyber Security Awareness Training, however we do still have a number of schools where the completion rate is still quite low. We will discuss this area of training with SBMs and equivalent staff during the next fortnightly SBM meeting, and will ask schools to access the online training log to review the completion rate and send out reminders accordingly.

### IT – Procurement Activity

Just a reminder that should you wish to procure any IT equipment e.g. laptops, desktops, screens, whiteboard etc please discuss your requirements in advance with Phil Woodcock (Shared Services IT). St Clare have a standard specification requirement for virtually all IT equipment which aligns with various performance and cyber security requirements, as such we need to ensure that any proposed IT procurement is aligned to these standards. In addition, we can also review pricing and look to consolidate procurement volumes which may secure greater discounts where appropriate.

### HR/Payroll System and MIS Integration

Following on from previous updates, we have now commenced the build-phase for our new HR/Payroll System. This phase is largely focused on developing the overall core structure of the HR/Payroll system for which we have already sourced a significant volume of data. However, upon reviewing this data we have identified a significant number of omissions and differences in how data has been managed across schools within St Clare. Therefore, in the next few weeks we will contact schools (Headteachers/SBMs) to validate and/or provide missing data based on schedules we have already provided, these requests will come directly from the Shared Service Payroll Team, who will be able to support and answer any questions you may have.

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In addition, we are also now considering how data recorded in our MIS and HR/Payroll system will integrate. One such area of focus relates to sickness absence data. Having sourced data from schools' MIS systems we have identified that there are significant inconsistencies in the categorisation of sickness absence reasons. In order to maximise the value of data which our systems can provide, we need to harmonise our categorisation of sickness absence reasons across our HR/Payroll and MIS systems and therefore we have developed a schedule (attached with the bulletin) which we believe provides the correct level of detail for us to analyse sickness absence reasons, identify trends, and target support.

We would be grateful for your feedback/comments on the enclosed schedule. Once the schedule is finalised it will be incorporated into the new HR/Payroll system, you will also be expected to implement this schedule into your respective MIS system effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

Please forward your feedback/comments on the enclosed schedule to Adnan Bashir by 20<sup>th</sup> January.

[abashir@stclarecma.org.uk](mailto:abashir@stclarecma.org.uk)

### Items from previous bulletin for reference

#### Writing Fundamentals: Building a shared understanding of the fundamental aspects of writing

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025: 9.15am – 12pm @ St Catherine's Catholic Primary School  
Year 5 & 6 Development Session: Y5 and Y6 teachers, literacy leads, Key stage leads

Following the sessions with KS1 colleagues last academic year, and Y3/4 colleagues in October, we have created a new Trust assessment framework for writing. The Y1 and Y2 assessment framework has been in place since September 2024 and will be used for moderation across the Trust in this academic year. The Y3/4 framework is now with schools and will be used from September 2025 (with some schools choosing to adopt sooner). The next stage of the writing project is to work with Y5 and Y6 colleagues to share the work done so far and to refine the assessment framework for Y5.

Please note – if you are a literacy lead and attended the KS1 or Y3/Y4 sessions, it is not vital that you attend as it will follow the same format. (If you do want to be involved however, you'll be more than welcome!)

Please book places here.

#### Headteacher Report and School Improvement Priority Documentation deadline Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January

A reminder that the updated School Improvement Priority documents and Headteacher Reports (reporting on the autumn term) need to be completed by Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January. The guidance notes shared by John are attached to this bulletin. Please remember to ask Anita if you want any other colleagues to have logins to MATPad.

Any questions at all please let John know.

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### Subject Immersion Days

We have our science subject immersion day coming up on Fri 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. **Please note that the MFL immersion day has been rescheduled to Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March.**

We will be making contact shortly with all schools who are hosting immersion days for the rest of the academic year to book in planning meetings to prepare for those days. Please look out for contact and thank you in advance for working with colleagues to make these days a real success.

### Monitoring the Catholic Life, RE and Collective Worship as a Governor

You will have seen in the Diocesan RE Newsletter (attached with this bulletin for convenience) that there will be a training session for governors on a new toolkit to help monitoring of Catholic Life, RE and Collective Worship. The session will be at the Pastoral Centre, 6.30-7.30pm on Tue 28<sup>th</sup> January.

This toolkit has been developed by a group of chairs from our local academy committees, working with Alan Dewhurst. The toolkit materials have been shared with chairs via governor hub, but this training session is designed to help governors make good use of them. Please encourage governors to attend the session, especially if you have a governor (or more than one) with a particular link to RE and Catholic Life.

We will promote the session via our Chairs' network as well, but we want to make sure that we don't miss anyone who would be helped by the session, so your support is much appreciated. We can facilitate remote joining for at least part of the session if there are governors who would like to attend, but can't get there in person, though in person is ideal as it gives better opportunity for networking and discussion.

I also highlight the other Diocesan events featured in the newsletter, to make sure that opportunities are not missed:

- Monday 27 January: Catholic formation day for Early Career Teachers. 9.30am-3.30pm
- Tuesday 4 February: RE Coordinators' Day. 9.30am-3.30pm
- Wednesday 26 March: Prayer and Liturgy Conference. 9.30am-3.30pm: New York Stadium, Rotherham.

I particularly urge you to book onto and promote the Prayer and Liturgy Conference on 26 March.

### Aspiring Leaders Programme

The St Clare CMAT Aspiring Leaders programme is designed to help senior leaders prepare for Catholic headship by focusing on both leadership skills and mission-driven values. Over six sessions led by experts, participants will engage in reflective learning, address real-world challenges, and complete a school improvement project aligned with Trust priorities. Mentoring and support for headship applications are also provided.

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We have previously shared a flyer for this programme — please share it with Catholic teachers who may be interested if you haven't already done so. Please do ask for another copy of the flyer if this helps.