

Head Teachers' Bulletin 24th April - 2026

Upcoming Events

27th April – Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinators Network 1-3pm Pastoral Centre

29th April – Senior Leader Network meeting 3-4pm online

5th May – Heads' Forum

14th May – SCITT Headteacher/ITT Coordinator event 3.30-4pm online

19th May – Good Shepherd / Trust Workshops

Actions from this bulletin

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New Updates (since last bulletin)

As I shared at the Heads' briefing on Monday, over the Easter period Kev Smith took the decision to step down from the board of Directors for personal reasons. Kev has served St Clare as chair from the formation of the Trust and before that, he served our Catholic schools as chair of governors at St Marie's. His commitment, vision and care have been at the heart of the formation and establishment of our Trust and I know colleagues will join me in thanking Kev for all he has given to our schools. Matt Davis, who has served as vice-chair has stepped into the role of Trust chair.

I also shared at the Heads' briefing that Fiona has taken the decision to retire at the end of this academic year, following her retirement from St Catherine's last year. Fiona does not want to make a big deal of this decision and she remains incredibly busy and committed to the work at hand through the summer term. John and Fiona have worked on a plan for managing school improvement work over the autumn term and we will look to add to school improvement capacity from January, but will not go immediately to advert. As we are reviewing the organisational structure of the Trust, it makes sense to take this opportunity to consider what the need will be over the coming years to inform the design of the role or roles that we seek to recruit.

Recruitment

You will have seen the adverts for the three roles I spoke about before the Easter Holiday.

The Trust Safeguarding Lead is a permanent role, open both to colleagues in the Trust and beyond. This is the next step in the development of Trust wide work on Safeguarding and will add further leadership and capacity to the strategic oversight, monitoring and evaluation and support for DSLs in management of complex cases.

The secondments to Trust Lead for Curriculum Excellence and to the Lead Professional roles are all rooted in the work on our Characteristics of Excellence and are designed to add capacity in current areas of school

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improvement work. These roles are open to colleagues in our Trust schools and in our associate schools and will be fixed term secondments until the end of next academic year.

We will circulate updated copies of the advert and job specification which make more clear the time commitment for these roles. The Trust Lead for Curriculum Excellence is a 0.5 FTE role, where the lead professional roles will each be expected to give around 20 days to the Trust work. We have also clarified that the salary for the Trust Lead for Curriculum role will be considered depending on the successful candidate, taking into account their substantive level of responsibility and salary and the level of experience that they bring.

As these are seconded roles, it is essential that anyone who applies does so with the support of their headteacher. I ask heads to consider colleagues in your schools who you believe could do any of these roles well and how this could be supported in your school, thinking in particular about other opportunities it may bring to develop others.

Policy Review

Over the summer we will be consulting with unions on Trust wide leave of absence policy, which will replace the school level policies, following approval by the board. Colleagues in our shared services team have been working on a draft and will be seeking feedback from you before finalising a copy for consultation with unions. Please look out for the draft and respond with your thoughts as soon as possible. Please also share it with any colleagues in school who you think would be able to add a helpful perspective.

We are also conducting our annual review of the Pay, Appraisal and Capability policies over the summer term. The biggest statutory change is the requirement in teachers' pay and conditions to explicitly identify which TLRs are full time and which are part time. Once this is done, TLRs will be paid as defined, whether or not the TLR holder works full time or part time. We are developing the principles that will determine how we make this definition, looking at how this change is being applied nationally. Again, we will be coming out to you to ask for your input into this work. It will be particularly helpful if you can highlight any issues in your school where this change could be helpful or where it may be challenging as this will help to ensure that the principles are grounded in what works in school.

OnlineSCR implementation and Training.

Implementation is on track for 'launch' on 5th May.

All those who you have asked to be set up as users on OnlineSCR should receive their login credentials at the start of the week.

All named users should attend **one** of these two training sessions.

The existing school SCRs have now all been transferred onto OnlineSCR. Following the training, users will be able to access their school SCR on OnlineSCR. This will allow you to address any gaps – there are a small number for almost all schools – ready for the 5th May.

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We have some decisions to make as a Trust about the requirements of checks for different staff types for anyone that we add to the SCRs going forwards (an example of current inconsistent practice is the extent to which social media checks are carried out at recruitment and recorded on the SCR). DSLs are providing feedback on our proposed requirements.

Our final requirements, taking into account DSL feedback will be set up on OnlineSCR by the Bank Holiday weekend and we will share a document with all DSLs that clearly sets these out, along with a rationale for our decisions.

For any queries that emerge as your 'users' are getting to grips with the platform/addressing any gaps, please contact Heather Hazleton in the first instance.

SCITT Headteacher/ITT Coordinator Information Event – 14th May 3.30-4pm online

Advance notice that we have added this event to the calendar in order to:

- Revisit our shared mission and purpose through the SCITT partnership
- Explore the vital role that mentors play within our SCITT partnership and the developmental opportunity that this provides for existing teachers
- Share key dates for the year ahead.

Please keep an eye out for an invitation email.

Good Shepherd Celebration - 19th May

Caritas have now sent out information after Easter about the two Good Shepherd celebration events that are taking place on the 19th and 20th May, and asking for numbers of students and staff attending.

Thank you to everyone who has let us know they will be bringing staff and children to the Good Shepherd event at St Maries on 19th May and the St Clare Trust event in the Victoria Hall afterwards. We have passed these numbers onto Caritas who are organising the Good Shepherd event. You will not need to respond to Caritas' request.

If you are intending to bring staff and children to the Good Shepherd event on the 19th and/or the St Clare event afterwards in the Victoria Hall, but for whatever reason you haven't yet let Anita know, can you please do so as soon as possible and Anita will then liaise with Caritas. The rate-determining factor is space in St Maries - there is now **very limited space**, and Caritas need to manage preferences from schools across the whole diocese. We've had 'first refusal' on places for the 19th May up to this point, but the two events have now been opened up to the whole diocese.

Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators Network 27th April

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The main agenda item is planning for the Good Shepherd Trust activity in the Victoria Hall on 19th May. Our PLCs will be using this time to plan the workshops that the staff attending from their schools will be running with the children who are attending on 19th May. The aim of the Trust activity on the 19th May is that the children return to school with a Pentecost Liturgy that they are able to deliver back in school after the half term break.

At the request of PLCs we will also be sharing practice and thinking about how we can support those of other Faiths within our Annual Plans of Provision.

Senior Leaders Network 29th April 3-4pm

This is the second of two sessions requested by our Senior Leaders where we are providing professional development around aspects of school leadership that they may have had limited exposure to.

Alison Veail will be running an online training session exploring HR issues with them. This builds nicely on the work we have done on coaching and challenging conversations, this time rooting these in policy and procedure.

We are sending a separate reminder to senior leaders, but we would be grateful if you could support their attendance.

Aspiring Leaders Programme

Thank you to all mentors for providing your availability to support with the final presentations for our Aspiring Leaders that are taking place w/b 22nd June. We will be sending the schedule for these out during the next week.

Reminder - Invitation to Primary Schools - Our Lady of Guadalupe Relic – Hallam 2026

Please see information below from Rachel Wood.

In 1531, Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared in Mexico as the Mother of God to a humble peasant named Juan Diego. A miraculous image of her appearance was left on his cloak, which can be seen in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

Following his visit to Mexico in 1979, Saint John Paul II authorised the creation of 220 digital replicas of this original image for worldwide distribution.

One of these is preserved in the Church of the Holy Child and Saint Joseph in Bedford, and on **Friday, 5th of June it is coming to: Mother of God Church, Abbeydale Road.**

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Commencing at 10am with Holy Mass (optional) and Marian consecration prayer, it will be followed at 11am by an age-appropriate presentation of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St Juan Deigo led by the Guardians of the image.

If the one class from each primary schools would like to attend this event, please would they be so kind as to let me know by email rachel.wood33@outlook.com

Items from previous bulletin

Headteacher reports

The School Improvement Priority Document and Headteacher Report templates will be live for data entry from our return on Monday 20th April.

Although there are no significant changes from the last report, please remember that in section 2B which is the evaluation section on Catholic Life, you are reporting on Leadership. ie looking at Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship through the lens of Leadership.

The deadline for completion of both documents is Friday 8th May
Any questions, as always please ask.

SEND Network Meeting

The next meeting is 8th June

New Starters Trust Induction - Tuesday 9th June, 3.00-4.15pm Pastoral Centre

We are piloting a new starters Trust induction session. If it is successful we would be aiming to replicate this on a termly basis for staff who have joined the Trust within the previous term.

The aims of the induction session will be to:

- Help new starters form connections to the wider Trust
- Ensure that new starters understand the why of the Trust
- Ensure that new starters have a good awareness of the distinctive nature of the Trust
- Ensure that new starters know some key basic information about the Trust.

We will be inviting all staff who have started at a Trust school since the Trust INSET day. They will be receiving a direct invitation via their school email after the Easter break, but we wanted to make sure that you are aware of this date.

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We would welcome any feedback on this to inform plans going forward.