

MANCHESTER DBE

Celebrations abound!

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2026

As I write this we have just had the Easter weekend with all its joys and sorrows. It was great to reflect on Jesus' final meal with His disciples as part of my church's Sedar meal. The food was good, the fellowship enjoyable and the content inspiring as it focused our minds on how Jesus fulfilled Biblical prophecies as Messiah. Then there was Good Friday. A difficult day for many. How can remembering the day He was crucified be viewed as good? Throughout the day I saw several messages on social media proclaiming 'Friday's here.... But Sunday is coming!' It is this promise of hope in the darkness that is so important. Finally, we had Easter Sunday when we proclaimed 'Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!' The joy this brings is tangible and a delight to celebrate with church fellowships and family.



Amidst these shared festivities I also enjoyed celebrating my sister's birthday, a meal out with old friends, my birthday and my wedding anniversary. It has been a busy few weeks in the Smith household. So much to celebrate, remember and give thanks for. I've found this really comforting, especially given all that's going on in the world at the moment. I have realised that intentionally focusing on family, friends and faith so reassuring when other bigger issues seem overwhelming. They are the things I feel secure in. A verse I return to frequently is

'Now faith is the certainty of things hoped for, a proof of things not seen.'

Hebrews 11:1

Our faith is not based on the everyday, on what may or may not be happening locally, nationally or internationally. It transcends this. It is based on Jesus Christ,

'who is and who was and who is to come...'

Revelations 1:8

As we look to all this final term of the academic year brings may it be filled with celebrations and moments of joy. As a diocese we have so much to look forward to. There's the retiring staff evensong at Manchester Cathedral, the Christian Leadership presentations in partnership with the other Northwest Dioceses, also being held at the Cathedral, as well as the highlight of our year, the Year 6 leavers' services. May you too be able to focus on your school family, your colleagues (who for many of us are our friends), and on your faith. Praying for safety, energy, blessings and joy over each member of your school communities. May you all know the blessings of family, the joy of working with loved colleagues and the security of knowing God is involved in the lives of our school communities each day.

Deborah

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Wednesday 22 April - New Headteacher Induction 5

Tuesday 5 May - [Thanksgiving Evensong](#) for retiring Headteachers & long-serving school staff

Friday 8 - Sunday 10 May - [EQUIP Weekend '26](#)

Tuesday 12 May - [MAT CEO Meeting](#)

Tuesday 19 May - [Heads & Chairs Meeting \(online\)](#)

Thursday 18 June - [Collective Worship Conference](#)

Friday 19 June - [Senior Leadership Retreat](#)

Monday 22 June - New Headteacher Induction 6

W/C: Monday 29 June - Year 6 Leavers Services

Friday 2 October - Annual School Leaders Conference

Tuesday 6 October - New School Leaders Evensong

CHURCH
FOR A
DIFFERENT
WORLD



Prayer for Peace

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace
and loves to bless the peacemakers,
at this time
we particularly pray for
peace in our communities,
peace in our nation,
and peace across the world.

We pray that people may live in safety,
secure in your grace,
through Jesus Christ, who died to bring us
peace.
Amen

DIOCESE SECONDMENTS - SUMMER & AUTUMN TERMS 2026

Recently the National Society advertised secondments for the summer and autumn terms 2026. We are delighted that Deborah Smith, Director of Education in Manchester Diocese has been appointed to work with the national team for 1 day per week, focusing on workforce development/professional learning. Specifically, Deborah will be:

- supporting the development of diocesan partnerships for the delivery of a range of professional development activities including NPQs, ECTE programme, Flourishing Leaders/Teachers and the new DfE Reception and SEND/Inclusion programmes
- contributing to the design and delivery of new training materials with particular reference to the Reception teaching programme

As a DBE we have benefitted greatly in recent years from a close working relationship with colleagues at the National Society and have supported the growth of NPQs & Flourishing Leaders programmes. This secondment will be beneficial to us as we will once again be at the forefront of national developments, which, in turn, will help improve and support the very youngest children in schools.

Other secondments involve DDEs from across the country, including:

- SEND/Inclusion – Penny Roberts (DDE London Diocese)
- School Groupings/Academisation – Charlotte Tudway (DDE Carlisle Diocese), Lee Moscato (DDE Truro Diocese) and Suzanne McDonald (Senior Academy Adviser in Bath & Wells) - sharing the secondment
- AI/Small Schools – Mari Palmer (DDE York Diocese) supported by her Deputy, George Edmond.

We look forward to seeing the progress with these areas and how they can feed into the work in schools across Manchester Diocese.

Welcome Karen Higgins



At the beginning of April, we were pleased to welcome Karen Higgins to the diocese in her role as Diocesan Secretary and Chief Executive Officer of the Diocesan Board of Finance. Taking up her new role, Karen said:

"I am absolutely delighted to be here and to be joining the diocese when there is so much encouraging work already underway. I'm really looking forward to getting out to deanery events over the coming weeks and meeting people there. I am wholly committed to the diocese's inspiring vision, to supporting those who serve here, and to listening, learning, and working together as a diocesan family in bringing people to faith."



EARLY BIRD APPLICATIONS OPEN NOW

Secure a place on one of our NPQ programmes or register your interest in the new Reception Teaching course.

Launching Autumn 2026.

 National Society
for Education
Church of England & Church in Wales



The NPQ [Early Bird form](#) will act as an expression of interest. It's quick & easy to complete and will allow the National Society for Education NPQ team to stay in touch with prospective applicants who are planning to apply as soon as the official DfE registrations open.

FIRST CWQM AWARDED



Special Congratulations go to Headteacher, Judith Rainford and her team at St Andrew's CE Primary, Dearnley, (part of The Watergrove Trust), as they are the very first school to achieve the Collective Worship Quality Mark™. We had a really positive morning at the school and it was clear that the whole community shares a passion for collective worship. An assessment visit may not sound like a pleasant experience, but the leaders and pupils made good use of the opportunity to celebrate the impact Collective Worship is having in their community. Leaders particularly benefitted from some external moderation to confirm their own conclusions and next steps. Well done to all involved!

The CWQM™ is our Diocesan Quality Mark. If you would like to explore the CWQM™ for your school, please visit the diocesan [WEBSITE](#) for the guidance and evaluation documents. For further details please email: cwqm@manchester.anglican.org

flourishing
together through collective worship

The banner features a background of colorful, abstract, cell-like patterns in shades of purple, orange, and yellow. The word 'flourishing' is written in a large, white, serif font, and 'together through collective worship' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP
CONFERENCE 2026

Thursday 18th June from 9am to 3pm



Church of England & Church in Wales

New Collective Worship Resource – St George's Day

The National Society has released a new primary collective worship resource for St George's Day, exploring the question "Who was St George?" and what we can learn from his courage, faith and willingness to stand up for what is right.

In response to school feedback, the resource now also includes dedicated EYFS and KS1 materials, making it easier to support inclusive, age-appropriate worship across all phases. Designed to be invitational, inclusive and inspiring, the resource helps pupils reflect on bravery, fairness and respect for different beliefs, with thoughtful links to tackling faith-based bullying and promoting freedom of religion and belief. It includes clear background information, engaging slides, reflective questions and a linked Bible passage (Ephesians 6:10–18 – The Armour of God), all easily adaptable to your school context.

Further high-quality collective worship resources from The National Society can be found [HERE](#)

ANNUAL SCHOOL LEADERS CONFERENCE

Friday 2 October 2026 at The Monastery Manchester, Gorton

This year's annual conference will be titled 'The Character of Leadership'

'And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skilful hands he led them.'

Psalm 78:72

This year our annual school leaders conference will focus on "what is the character of a Christian leader?". We will look at how this impacts the everyday as well as our vision for leadership. Responding to your feedback from last year's conference, there will be workshops to engage with, stalls to peruse alongside inspiring speakers.

We already have some exciting speakers lined up with more to come. Our keynote will be delivered by [Professor Tom Harrison](#) from The Jubilee Centre, University of Birmingham.

'The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues is a unique centre for the examination of how character and virtues impact upon society. The Centre offers world-class research on the importance of developing good character and virtues and the benefits this brings to individuals and society. The Centre is a leading informant and partner of academics, policy makers, and practitioners from around the world.'

We will be opening bookings over the next few weeks and want to encourage you to book early.

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND SUPPORT STAFF RESEARCH

New diversity and equality resources have been published by the workforce subgroup of the [Improving Education Together \(IET\) Board](#), of which the NSE is a member. These include a clear [overview of key workplace equality legislation](#), practical examples and signposting to further support.

The resources also feature case studies developed with school and college leaders on supporting women's health and wellbeing, including endometriosis, menstrual health, pregnancy, returning from maternity leave and menopause.

School case studies:

- [Proactive menopause support for staff wellbeing and retention](#)
- [Developing a family-friendly culture](#)
- [Co-creating menopause support to foster wellbeing and retention](#)

Further education (FE) case studies:

- [Leading the way in menopause support](#)
- [Advancing support for endometriosis and menstrual wellbeing](#)

The Department for Education has also published new research into support staff roles:

- [The role and experience of support staff in schools – GOV.UK](#)

Based on a national survey of support staff and interviews with school leaders, the research provides an updated picture of the workforce, including:

- roles and responsibilities
- job satisfaction
- pay, workload and working conditions (including flexible working)
- working with pupils with SEND
- training and career progression opportunities

CHILDRENS OFFICER

Beyond - building confidence for the next chapter

As we support our Year 6 children through the transition into secondary school, Beyond offers a wonderfully accessible resource for both schools and churches.

"Train a child when they are young and when they are old they will not depart from it"

Proverbs 22:6

Its aim is to help children grow in confidence, resilience and self-awareness as they prepare for this important next step.

The resource includes easy-to-use sessions:

- **Foundations** and **Building** give children space to reflect on the spiritual principles they've developed throughout primary school, while encouraging them to build on these as they get ready for a new chapter.
- **Hopeful, Brave, and Kind** focuses on emotional well-being, helping children navigate the changes ahead. It works well in both school settings and church children's or youth groups, providing a joined-up way to support young minds.
- **Big Step Forwards** draws on the honest insights of Year 7 pupils, offering practical guidance and reassurance to help Year 6s feel more prepared for the move.

A thoughtful leavers' service plan is also included, giving children a meaningful way to mark this milestone.

We'd love to encourage schools, churches and leaders to use Beyond this year, helping children step forward feeling grounded, hopeful and supported.

More details [HERE](#)

Leaver's Services 2026

Our Year 6 Leavers' Services, taking place from 29 June to 2 July 2026, are now fully booked, and we're delighted to be welcoming more than 6,000 children and staff.

These gatherings are always such a joy — full of energy, singing, laughter and a real sense of celebration as we mark this important moment in the children's lives. They give us the chance to pause, say thank you for all that's been, and help everyone feel ready and encouraged as they take the next steps into secondary school.

This year's theme is drawn from John 10:10, exploring what it means to experience "life in all its fullness". We'll be reflecting on how each child can grow, flourish and embrace the opportunities ahead. We're really looking forward to sharing these uplifting services with you all.



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

NPQ Update

Once again, our NPQ programmes have been oversubscribed. Since November 2023, we have enrolled over 450 participants on NPQs. This academic year we were asked to run the national online NPQ SL (Senior Leadership) in addition to the face to face course, and again the numbers have been staggering with 60 participants enrolled. We are delighted that these courses continue to be popular across Manchester and the neighbouring dioceses and that our partnership with the National Society remains strong.

We will hopefully hear about the course allocation for 26/27 before the summer break. All Headteachers will be contacted as soon as this information is available to us, to enable you to plan staff CPD for the next academic year.

Early Years Course

The government are currently writing a new course for teachers working in Early Years. As yet the details have not been fully released. The National Society (Church of England) are bidding to deliver this course and so when more details are known Headteachers will be contacted directly.

Christian Leadership 2026 / 27

For over 15 years, the five north west dioceses have worked together to deliver the Christian Leadership programme. A growing number of our Headteachers and senior leaders have completed the programme and always talk positively about the impact on themselves personally but also for the schools they lead. The programme aims to give the participants time and space to reflect on the Christian distinctiveness of their school, the school vision and spirituality, but also what it means to lead a church school. Each year there are only seven places available for each diocese. The programme takes a full academic year to complete and culminates in a celebration event in one of the five cathedrals. The programme commitment is two days in the Autumn term, a two day residential in January, a day in March and one in May. The programme costs £800 + VAT. If you are interested in the programme for yourself, or one of your staff, please contact Louise Morley for more information and details of how to apply.

LOUISE MORLEY

flourishing LEADERS flourishing?

Senior Leadership Team
retreat
Friday 19 June 2026

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Manchester

BOARD OF EDUCATION

CAPITAL BUILDINGS OFFICER

SCA Bids

We are currently reviewing all 2026 SCA bids submitted. Successful bids will be announced in May 2026, once the final allocation amount from the Department for Education (DfE) is confirmed. Please be aware that some preparatory or information-gathering work related to the bids may be carried out in the meantime to strengthen the submissions.

CIF Bids & Diocesan Approval

The deadline for CIF bids for the 2026 cycle has passed and notification of successful bids was due to be announced in Spring 2026. Please can we take this opportunity to remind all multi-academy trusts (MATs) that they should seek permission from the MDBE for all capital projects over £50k regardless of the funding source.

DFC Allocations

We are expecting to receive the VA schools annual DFC allocation by the end of May. We will be able to issue balance updates from the beginning of June, which will reflect this year's allocation and any DFC allocated to 2026 SCA projects.

LEONA BROOKSHAW

Leaders Like Us Cohort 5

Applications are now open for Cohort 5

Are you a UKME/GMH teacher?

Do you want to upskill to become a Headteacher?

The Leaders Like Us Programme is an 18-month learning journey that supports middle and senior leaders from UKME/GMH (UK minoritised ethnic/global majority heritage) into senior leadership (including headship) roles within the next five years through our bespoke multifaceted programme.



PLEASE SCAN THE QR
CODE TO COMPLETE
OUR PARTICIPANT
APPLICATION FORM



Leaders Like Us Cohort 5

Applications are now open for Cohort 5

Are you an experienced Senior Leader or Headteacher passionate about leadership?

Do you enjoy mentoring and coaching?

Mentors are essential for the ongoing support and development of our LLU participants. LLU participants are assigned a mentor for the duration of the programme. Mentors (if able) provide the opportunity for their mentees to shadow them, providing a close-up experience of headship. Mentors will be provided with training to fulfil this role. We welcome applications from experienced school leaders of all heritages.



PLEASE SCAN THE QR
CODE TO COMPLETE
OUR MENTOR
APPLICATION FORM



EARLY YEARS OFFICER

We're going on an Easter Hunt!



EYFS and Key Stage 1 pupils at Godfrey Ermen CE Primary School enjoyed a fun and interactive Easter activity that brought the Easter story to life.

Inspired by a well-loved story rhythm, "We're Going on an Easter Hunt!" invited the children to help Wiggle the Bible Book Worm find his lost Easter eggs. As they searched together, joining in with the Easter Hunt chant along the way, excitement and adventure filled the room.

Each egg revealed a new part of the Easter story, shared through interactive storytelling with actions and repetition. This helped pupils explore Holy Week and Easter Sunday in a way that was engaging, age-appropriate and full of energy, centred on the message of hope, love and new life.

Deanery Toddler Hubs - a positive start

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND | **CHURCH FOR A DIFFERENT WORLD**
Diocese of Manchester

toddler HUBS
A space to connect, to share and to be encouraged.

7.30pm to 9pm

TUESDAY 9th JUNE 2026 - MANCHESTER SOUTH & STRETFORD
THURSDAY 11th JUNE 2026 - MANCHESTER NORTH & EAST
TUESDAY 16th JUNE 2026 - OLDHAM & ASHTON
THURSDAY 25th JUNE 2026 - ROCHDALE DEANERY
TUESDAY 30th JUNE 2026 - BOLTON DEANERY
TUESDAY 7th JULY 2026 - BURY & ROSSENDALE
THURSDAY 16th JULY 2026 - SALFORD & LEIGH



This Spring term also saw the launch of the Deanery Toddler Leaders Hubs – a warm, supportive and prayerful network for those working with children under five.

The hubs offer space for leaders to connect, share ideas, learn together and encourage one another. Through reflection, prayer and conversation, leaders are supported to grow confident, joyful and sustainable toddler ministries while strengthening links across the deaneries.

Summer term dates are now available, and we would love to welcome anyone involved in toddler ministry to join this growing network.

The venues will be confirmed as soon as possible.

JO HASLAM

GROWING YOUNGER

Many of you will have heard the news that we were successful in receiving a significant bid from the Church Commissioners at the beginning of the year which is enabling us to expand our ministry to children and young people across the diocese. The Growing Younger element to the bid enables us to increase the resource on the ground through the new Encounter Teams and enhance our training offer through the Equip training programme.

We are currently appointing into various roles into these new teams, and because of that recruitment process so far, there have been some changes in both Education and our satellite teams:

Susie Mapledoram has been appointed as Director of Children and Young People, overseeing the rolling out of the Growing Younger element to the bid.

Rick Otto has been appointed as Equip Project Manager, overseeing the delivery of the Equip Team. He will remain the Diocesan Children's Officer.

Sandra Morris has been appointed as Encounter Archdeaconry Lead for Salford Archdeaconry, overseeing a team of 4 workers supporting youth and children's ministry in schools and parishes across this part of the diocese.

Alison Adlum has been appointed as Encounter Archdeaconry Lead for Bolton Archdeaconry, overseeing the work across both Bolton and Bury & Rossendale Deaneries, through the work of Places Project and ManDio Growing Faith



Lets Build Something

EQUIP is our diocesan framework designed to support and strengthen everyone involved in ministry with children, young people and families. It's for clergy, children's and youth leaders, volunteers — anyone who wants to grow in confidence and feel better resourced in the work they're already doing.

EQUIP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER



EQUIP brings together a mix of conferences, local hubs, online drop-ins, specialist sessions and structured training pathways, offering practical tools, helpful ideas and space to reflect.

Whatever your starting point — brand new or long-experienced — EQUIP gives you opportunities to learn alongside others, ask questions and discover approaches that really work in your context. It also helps churches and schools build sustainable teams and develop a shared vision for nurturing faith and wellbeing in younger generations. Our hope is simple: that everyone who plays a part in this ministry feels supported, encouraged and equipped, and that every child and young person across our diocese is given the chance to grow, belong and thrive.

Further information can be found [HERE](#), on social media and through the training calendar.

MANDIO GROWING FAITH TEAM

Ken Peden | Manchester North and East Deanery

Over the past few weeks, I've been really thankful for the chance to share in Experience Easter across four different churches. It's been lovely to see the same sessions come to life in slightly different ways. A special highlight was St John's, Heaton Mersey – after previously running the event in the school building, it was wonderful to welcome three schools into the church itself this year, and to see how well everything went.

I've also been incredibly thankful for the group of young people who meet for Youth Sacred Space at the Church of the Resurrection in Beswick. They come so faithfully, have plenty of fun, and are wonderfully themselves. It's a real joy to see them taking their first steps on a Christian faith journey – all starting from different places, but happily travelling together.

Another big thankyou moment has been the growing opportunities to be involved in Collective Worship in a range of schools. It's been great to both support others as they lead and to step in and lead worship myself.

I'm excited about the vision to create a new, afterschool space for young people to explore faith at All Saints, Newton Heath. Play, Praise, Pizza will be launching in mid-April, and I can't wait to see it get underway.

With spring finally arriving, I'm also looking forward to the Eco Group at the Church of the Apostles getting back outdoors. It'll be great to spend time working alongside them again as they reconnect with creation.

Finally, I'm really looking forward to continuing to build the Brick Church fresh expression at St Matthew with St Mary, Crumpsall. With God's help, it's exciting to watch the group grow and flourish, and to learn together what worship can look like in new and creative ways.

Laura Tebay | Oldham and Ashton Deanery

Spring always feels like a time of new beginnings, and there are lots of encouraging signs of growth across the Deanery. I'm especially thankful for opportunities to connect with racial and social justice work, helping children and young people explore what it means to follow Jesus by acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly.

Leading Easter workshops and times of worship has also been a real joy. The children's curiosity continues to inspire me – including one memorable question from a Year 2 pupil at St Hugh's CE Primary School: "Does God have parents?"

I'm also grateful for the way God continues to move across Oldham and Ashton Deanery, working within each unique context and shaping things for the future.

Looking ahead to the coming months, I'm looking forward to supporting Shades in Mission Community 3, gathering CYP volunteers for another time of prayer, gratitude and connection, and building new relationships with schools and churches as we approach Pentecost and support Year 6 pupils preparing to move to high school.

Loretta Leung | Rochdale Deanery

We've been really thankful for the restart of the Hope Community Rochdale Youth Group and Messy Church, made possible with the arrival of our newly appointed Lead Sectional Youth & Children's Worker. It's been encouraging to see these activities coming back to life and building momentum again.

We've also been grateful for Experience Easter-style activities happening across the deanery. It's been wonderful to see churches engaging creatively and sharing the Easter story in ways that really connect.

Another encouraging moment has been the continued growth of the Family Service at St Thomas' Church, Newhey. It's lovely to see more families finding their place there and feeling welcome.

We're excited that St Thomas's CE Primary School, Newhey, will be taking part in the Spirited Arts 2026 competition – we can't wait to see what the children create.

After Easter, the benefice of Milnrow & Newhey will be hosting its second Forest Church. It's a great opportunity to worship together in a different setting and enjoy time outdoors.

And finally, we're looking forward to supporting St Andrew's CE Primary School & Nursery as they work towards achieving the Diocese Planet Savers Award – a fantastic step in caring for creation.



Sandra Morris | Salford and Leigh Deanery

I've been really grateful for the new opportunities that have opened up recently. We've seen new after-school worship activities begin in two schools, a brand-new school worship group starting up, and two new family worship activities in churches – one of these in partnership with a school. It's been encouraging to see doors opening and faith being explored in new spaces.

I'm really looking forward to welcoming a new team, which will help strengthen and develop the work with schools and churches across Salford & Leigh.

I'm also excited to see relationships continue to grow and flourish in the schools and churches I've only recently begun working with. It's been a joy to start building those connections, and I'm hopeful about what lies ahead.

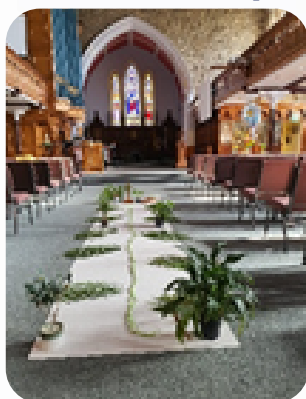
Amelia Brummitt | Bury and Rossendale Deanery

The spring term has been full of positive moments across the Deanery of Bury & Rossendale. I've loved being part of Experience Easter at St Mary's, Rawtenstall, where children from local schools got stuck into creative activities with the help of a brilliant volunteer team.

It's also been great spending time at Forest Church days at Christ Church Ainsworth School, exploring Epiphany and Easter together. Despite needing to be indoors, thanks to the wonderful British weather, the children's enthusiasm and thoughtful reflections really stood out.

I've also enjoyed supporting Re:Generation in Rossendale, an ecumenical youth group where we explored wellbeing and worship with young people, taking time to reflect and share ideas together. Looking ahead to the summer term, I'm excited about Amidst, taking place on Saturday 11 July for youth groups and leaders across the Archdeaconry of Bolton, and about sharing the EMERGE resource following last year's joyful celebrations with schools and churches.

I'm really looking forward to continuing to build relationships with schools and strengthening links between church and school communities.



For more information about Amidst please follow this [LINK](#) and if you are ready to book your places please use this [LINK](#)

Welcome Sarah

We are delighted to welcome Sarah Bayliss to the ManDio Growing Faith Team as the new Deanery Enabler for Manchester South and Stretford Deanery. Sarah comes to us with a breadth of experience in children and youth ministry, having recently worked in developing resources for children's work. Sarah is no stranger to the team as she worked for MDGF for a short period of time as an administrator a couple of years ago, so we are delighted to welcome her back into the team. Sarah is excited to continue to build relationships with parishes and schools across the deanery in the coming months and arrived just in time to celebrate the licensing of the new Area Dean for Manchester South and Stretford.



PLACES PROJECT TEAM

Children & Families Team

This spring has been full of encouragement and celebration. One real highlight was attending Hand in Hand – the National Children and Family Ministry Conference. We had an amazing time, came away feeling inspired, and picked up so many helpful ideas. The teaching sessions were brilliant, but we were especially struck by new ways of thinking about how we reach and support families. If you're curious, do take a look at their website and maybe we'll see you there next year!

We are also celebrating the launch of a brand new Spirit Blazers' group at St Matthew's CE Primary School in Little Lever. This group is all about creating space for children and young people to be heard, with their ideas and responses genuinely listened to.

They're currently exploring the story of the Road to Emmaus and thinking together about how we can encounter Jesus today, which has been exciting to see unfold. Finally, we're incredibly thankful for all the opportunities we've had to work alongside parishes to share the Easter message. From Wiggle Worship celebrations and Easter workshops in schools, to Easter Experiences in churches and another Easter Eggs-ploration family event at Bolton Parish Church, it's been a busy season—and truly an egg-cellent one!



There's a lot ahead to be excited about; we're really looking forward to partnering with Rev'd Hannah and Rev'd Michaela to launch a new Family Worship at Bolton Parish Church School. We can't wait to see families engaging in worship together and growing in faith as a community.

We are also excited to welcome new members to the team. With them will come fresh ideas, new energy, and opportunities to develop our ministry further, in partnership with churches & schools — watch this space!

As always, the summer term is a particularly special time for us as we support children, young people, and families through key moments of transition. Our Lift Off programme works with children in Early Years as they start school or move up into new classes, while Beyond supports Year 6 pupils as they prepare for secondary school. These are precious opportunities for churches to walk alongside families, reassuring them that God is with them through change and asking the big question together: "What's next?"—as children and young people explore how they can continue to be active disciples of Jesus.

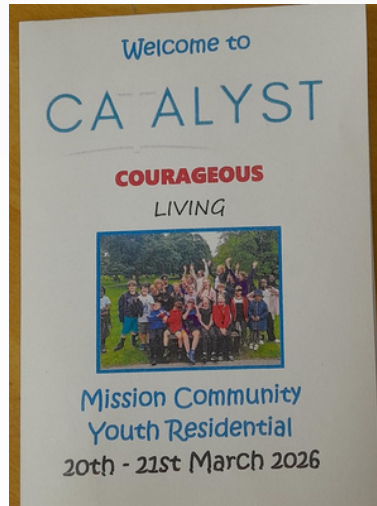
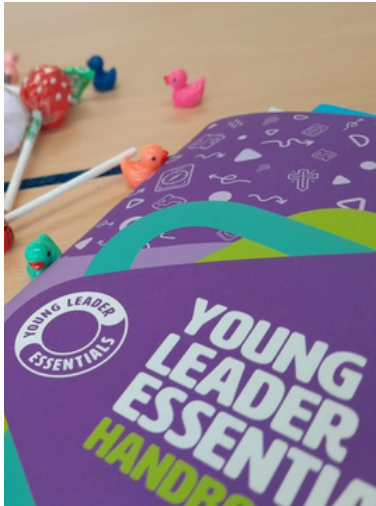
Youth Team

Catalyst 26 marked the fourth year of the Bolton West Mission Community youth residential, welcoming 29 young people from five local youth groups for a weekend of fun, laughter and shared activities. This year's theme, "Courageous Living," invited everyone to explore what it truly means to live by faith in today's world. Through talks, discussions, and creative sessions, the young people engaged with big questions about identity, purpose, and the everyday choices that shape a life of faith.

Spirit Blazers continues to engage Year 7 students across Bishop Fraser MAT secondary schools. Students have been working through the Youthscape Young Leaders Essentials course, developing leadership skills rooted in Christian values and inspired by the example of Jesus.

Later this summer, Spirit Blazers students will visit Year 6 pupils in their primary schools to support transition to secondary education, sharing experiences and offering reassurance as part of their leadership development.

In addition, SPARKS in Action has been introduced in several parishes. This four-week programme helps young people explore vocation, identify strengths, and plan action projects designed to create positive change, with outcomes to be shared in a celebration event in June.



SHADES TEAM

Encouraging Signs

Across our schools and churches, it's been really encouraging to see a growing commitment to children and young people. Together, we're creating spaces where faith, identity, racial justice and belonging can be explored and nurtured.

Our training for schools and churches continues to be warmly received, opening doors for deeper partnership and giving staff confidence as they journey with us in this important work.

It's also exciting to see new Shades Ambassador groups beginning to form. Leaders are growing in confidence and skill, and it's inspiring to watch young people step into leadership and deepen their Christian faith.

Next term, we are really looking forward to continuing to develop resources that help schools and churches talk about race with confidence – including the new Shades Resource Book, support materials for Ambassador group leaders, and our growing Shades social media platforms.

We're also excited to keep building strong community connections through the Shades Hubs, with the next Bolton hub taking place on 5 May at Harwood Methodist Church. These gatherings are a great opportunity to learn together, share experiences and encourage one another.

Working with the theme "Talking about Race with Confidence", we are looking forward to creating more spaces for open, positive conversations, and to working closely alongside the Manchester team and the Racial Justice Unit as this work continues to grow.

NI-COLA SCOTT

NEWS FROM SCHOOLS

Easter Experience & Bags of Kindness

Upper Key Stage 2 children from St Paul's CE Primary, Constable Lee were delighted to be invited for a special visit to St Mary's Church, focused on the Stations of the Cross. The experience was both reflective & enriching and made possible by the dedication & creativity of the church volunteers. The children took part in a range of engaging activities as they moved around the church, including moments of reflection, discussion and prayer.

The children shared communion, wrote their own heartfelt prayers and fully embraced the spiritual significance of the occasion.

Afterwards, many of the children talked about how meaningful and memorable the experience had been. The school staff were incredibly proud of the children's impeccable behaviour and the way they represented their school.



Recently the school prepared and shared "Bags of Kindness" with members of our local community. Each bag was carefully put together with useful items and little treats to brighten someone's day.

When they were handed out in Rawtenstall they were met with smiles and gratitude—it was a truly heartwarming experience for everyone involved. Not only did this initiative support people in the local community, but it also helped the children learn the importance of compassion, generosity, and looking after others.

Tesco Fruit & Veg Ambassadors

Pupils at St George's CE Primary, Charlestown are enjoying a healthy boost through the Tesco Fruit and Veg for Schools programme. Each day, Fruit and Veg Ambassadors help choose, prepare and share fresh produce with their classmates, encouraging healthier habits and a calm start to learning.

"I feel more confident because I'm an ambassador," says Tyler, one of the pupils involved. "I concentrate better and I like trying new fruit."

The scheme, now supporting over 500 schools across the UK, has been shown to improve behaviour, concentration and attitudes to healthy eating, with more than 10 million portions of fruit and vegetables distributed this school year. Staff report calmer afternoons and more focused learning, while children enjoy taking responsibility and learning about food preparation.

Local families are benefitting too. Surplus fruit and vegetables are shared at the end of the week, helping parents reduce food costs and discover new foods their children enjoy at home. Many parents say their children are asking for healthier snacks and showing greater focus with homework. Schools can learn more about the programme, eligibility and resources here:

- [Tesco Fruit & Veg for Schools Hub](#)
- [Tesco PLC – Fruit & Veg for Schools Programme](#)



Change Makers

During the year, pupils at St Paul's CE Primary, Crompton Street have shown what it means to be courageous advocates! As part of their Courageous Advocacy project, Mrs Nowland and the Ethos Council led an inspiring, whole-school campaign to promote positive mental health, as part of supporting their chosen charity, Mind in Salford. The EYFS and KS1 children shared their fantastic ideas by drawing pictures and writing letters to the Headteacher, suggesting ways to develop the school's Peace Garden and outdoor spaces. They highlighted the importance of staying active to support "a healthy body,

healthy mind" and suggested new play equipment to help everyone enjoy outdoor play even more. Meanwhile, KS2 pupils took their advocacy further by writing to their local MP, Yasmin Qureshi, calling for local parks to be made safer, cleaner, and more accessible. They explained how tidy, welcoming parks would encourage more children to play outside while also protecting local wildlife. The children were thrilled when Yasmin Qureshi visited school to meet them and hear their ideas first-hand. She was so impressed by their passion, confidence, and persuasive arguments that she wrote to Salford City Mayor, Paul Dennett, on their behalf.

Year 5 pupils also created a powerful video highlighting the importance of caring for local parks via social media. In response, Paul Dennett asked the children to design anti-litter posters - and these have now been commissioned and are proudly displayed in parks around Walkden & Salford. The children are absolutely delighted to see their voices making a real difference in the community! Back in school, the impact continued. Following the letters from EYFS and KS1 pupils, the Ethos Council and Wellbeing Council were given a budget to purchase new playground equipment for children across the school to enjoy. All staff are incredibly proud of their pupils for showing that no one is too small to make a big difference!



Easter Week Celebrations

Easter Week at St Hugh's CE Primary, Holts was a vibrant blend of story, art, and discovery! Throughout the week, pupils engaged in a variety of cross-curricular activities that intertwined the religious narrative of Easter with literacy, visual mapping and sensory experiences. Each day was dedicated to exploring different aspects of the Easter story, allowing students to develop essential skills such as comprehension, sequencing, and visual literacy.

The week began by retelling the Easter story, using picture books, with the children creating story maps to illustrate key events, fostering their understanding of the narrative structure. Yr 6 visited the church for 'Experience Easter' and explored key moments in the Easter Story. Yr 3 & 4 children performed an Easter Story service to parents.

Early Years - Yr 4 pupils embarked on a sensory trail inspired by The Garden, The Curtain, The Cross with MDGF Enabler Laura Tebay, which allowed them to follow the story through touch and sight. Throughout the week children were introduced to global versions of the cross, showcasing various cultural interpretations, enriching

students' understanding of Christian traditions worldwide.

The week ended with the annual 'Easter Eggstravaganza' celebration in the hall with an Easter hat parade, egg decorating event and the children made an 'Empty Tomb' biscuit.

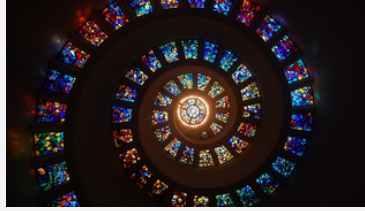
It was a truly memorable lead-up to the holidays, leaving everyone with a renewed sense of hope and community.

Training Calendar

CHAIR OF GOVERNORS



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP



EARLY YEARS



HEADTEACHERS



RE LEADS



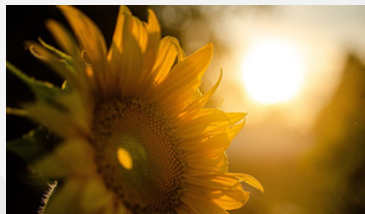
SECONDARY SCHOOLS



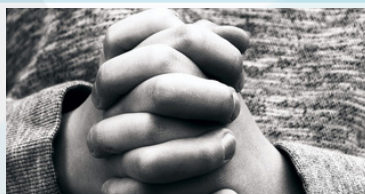
YOUTH & CHILDRENS WORKERS



WELLBEING



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