

TRUST UPDATE

YOUR MONTHLY DIGEST

October 2025

CEO Update

NPQs Reminder:

This is the only opportunity schools will have this academic year to apply for NPQ places. The deadline is 23rd November but early applications are advised as scholarships are limited.

FREE School Visits Support Grant:

There is a tremendous opportunity for a number of schools in Blackpool to benefit from a year's worth of FREE school visits for ALL of their children. The schools that benefitted this year were Highfield, St Johns CE, Devonshire and Mereside. This is an incredible opportunity that is currently only available to Schools in Blackpool and Cornwall.

The second round is open for applications from new schools, again only in Blackpool (and Cornwall). Please follow this link for more details

<https://www.cloreduffield.org.uk/schooltripgrant>. **The deadline is 28 November.**

Reading:

Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson has [announced](#) plans for two new policies aimed at improving literacy. The first – which had already been trailed in the media – is to introduce a mandatory Year 8 reading test. The second is setting an “ambition” for 90% of children to meet the expected standard in the phonics check.

Governance dates from the Diocese:

Annual Conference for Governors: Saturday 29th November: 10:00am to 3:00pm at Lancaster University Chaplaincy Centre

Chairs' briefing: 12th January 2026, 20th April 2026 - 5:30pm to 7:00pm at The Education Centre, Lancaster or Online

New Chair of Governor Training: Wednesday 21st January 2026 - 5:00pm to 7:00pm at The Education Centre, Lancaster

Lancaster Diocese Centenary Mass:

It was lovely to see some of our schools represented at the Centenary Mass in Lancaster Cathedral last Saturday. The Papal Nuncio enjoyed his visit to the Diocese and the photographs reflect the commitment of our clergy in ensuring the Mass was so special. Photos on final page.

English Martyrs Welcome Mass

Thank you to the parishioners of English Martyrs for the warmest of welcomes to the Trust as we celebrated Mass together yesterday. Thank you to all of the central team who attended, headteachers, governors, directors and the Diocese who were all there to support our move to English Martyrs.

It was a very special moment for us as a Trust, to move to our ‘forever home’ and we are excited about the possibilities ahead for us all as we work closely together, parish, schools and Trust, in delivering the Bishop’s vision for his schools.

Gentle reminder: we are hoping that each school in the Trust will donate a cross for our wall to mark the school’s place in our Trust – please come and see our wall as it grows and reflects the individual nature of our schools and the contributions they each make to our family of schools. A photo of the wall of crosses is on the final page.

CEO Update

Staffing updates:

Congratulations to the following staff:

Pete Duffy who has been appointed as Headteacher of Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School, from 1st January.

Bob Wylde who has been appointed as Headteacher of The Willows Catholic Primary School, from 1st January.

Secondment opportunity: Deputy Headteacher secondment opportunity for two terms at St. John Vianney Catholic Primary School. Please contact Clare Evans for more information clare.evans@sjvprimary.co.uk.

Trust update:

There have been some changes to the Directors at the Trust:

Chair of Directors – Sue Ridyard.

Vice Chair of Directors – Chris Massey.

The following Directors have stepped back from their roles and we would like to thank them for their years of dedication and commitment to the Trust and all of its schools:

Paul Hardy, Fr. Andrew Dawson and Sandra Witton.

We also welcome Fr. Nithin to Christ the King and St. Kentigern's parish. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Thank you to all staff for their hard work and commitment during this Autumn half term.

I hope you enjoy the half-term break with your loved ones, and you find some time to rest and recharge.

HR Update

Protect Yourself This Winter: Get Your Flu Vaccination

As flu season approaches, we want to help you stay healthy and well. The flu isn't just "a bad cold"—it can lead to serious illness, time off work, and disruption to your daily life. That's why we're encouraging all employees to consider getting vaccinated against seasonal flu.

Why Get the Flu Vaccine?

Protect Yourself and Others: The flu vaccine reduces your risk of catching and spreading the virus. Even if you do get flu, symptoms are usually milder and shorter.

Stay Productive: Flu-related absences cost UK businesses billions each year. Vaccination helps reduce sick days and keeps teams running smoothly.

It's Safe and Effective: The vaccine cannot give you flu. It's made from inactivated virus and is rigorously tested for safety.

Quick and Convenient: You can get vaccinated at most local pharmacies, GP surgeries, or even supermarkets.

Reimbursement

To support your wellbeing, we will **reimburse up to £15** for the cost of a flu vaccination. Just submit a claim via Edupay with a **valid receipt** and it will be paid at the next available salary payment.

Edupay

Please encourage everyone to make sure they can log into Edupay and that their details are correct - any issues contact HR.

Payroll deadline each month is 15th for all entries and claims to be input and authorised in Edupay.

December will be earlier on 7th to allow salary payments on Friday 19th December.

Why It's Important—and Your Responsibility—to Check Your Payslip

Every payday, your payslip arrives—through the Edupay HR portal. But do you actually check it? If not, you're not alone. Research shows that nearly a quarter of UK workers don't regularly review their payslips. However, overlooking this simple document can have serious consequences for your finances, tax compliance, and employment rights.

What Is a Payslip?

A payslip is a legal document that outlines your earnings, deductions, and net pay. Under the **Employment Rights Act 1996**, all employees and most workers in the UK are entitled to receive a payslip on or before payday. It must include: [\[acas.org.uk\]](https://www.acas.org.uk), [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk)

Gross pay (before deductions)

Net pay (after deductions)

Variable deductions (e.g., tax, National Insurance)

Fixed deductions (e.g., union fees, season ticket loans)

Hours worked, if pay varies by time worked [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk)

Why You Should Check Your Payslip

1. Ensure You're Paid Correctly

Mistakes happen—whether it's missing overtime, incorrect hours, or pension queries. Regularly checking your payslip helps you catch these errors early and avoid underpayment or overpayment that must be repaid.

2. Verify Your Tax Code

Your tax code determines how much income tax you pay. If it's wrong, you could be overpaying or underpaying tax. It's your responsibility to check your tax code and report discrepancies to HMRC.

3. Monitor Deductions

Payslips show deductions for tax, National Insurance, pensions, student loans, and more. Reviewing these ensures that deductions are accurate and lawful.

4. Protect Your Employment Rights

Payslips are key evidence in disputes over pay, hours worked, or minimum wage compliance. They help you assert your rights and resolve issues quickly.

5. Support Financial Planning

Payslips are often required when applying for loans, mortgages, or benefits. Keeping them organised and accurate helps you prove your income and manage your finances effectively.

6. Stay Compliant with HMRC

Payslips are essential for filing accurate tax returns and claiming reliefs. They help you avoid penalties and ensure compliance with UK tax laws.

What to Do If You Spot an Error

If something doesn't look right—whether it's your pay, deductions, or personal details—raise it with your line manager or HR immediately. The sooner it's addressed, the easier it is to correct.

Final Thought

Checking your payslip isn't just good practice—it's your responsibility. It protects your income, ensures compliance, and empowers you to take control of your financial wellbeing.

HR Update

Breast Cancer Awareness Month:

Help to raise awareness in the workplace:

<https://breastcancernow.org/get-involved/breast-cancer-awareness-month>

Anyone can get breast cancer, Touch, Look, Check

World Menopause Day, 18th October 2025: Raising Awareness, Sharing Knowledge

You can find some great resources here:

<https://www.imsociety.org/education/world-menopause-day-2025/>

Key facts about Menopause Awareness Month:

What it is: The month is an opportunity to openly discuss a life stage that is natural but has often been stigmatised. It helps women feel more prepared for the transition by increasing awareness of various physical and psychological symptoms.

Annual themes: The IMS selects a different theme each year to shine a spotlight on specific topics related to menopause.

2025 theme: The focus is on "Lifestyle Medicine," highlighting how daily choices related to food, exercise, sleep, and stress management can impact the menopause experience.

2024 theme: The theme was "Menopause Hormone Therapy," aiming to provide women with information on the benefits and risks of MHT (also known as HRT).

In the workplace: Awareness campaigns often focus on the workplace, where many women experience menopause.

Research shows that a significant number of women have considered leaving their jobs due to a lack of support for their symptoms.

Initiatives encourage managers and employers to learn how to support staff members and implement policies that recognize the benefits of creating a supportive environment.

Finance Update

External audit

This should be completed in the next few weeks. Thanks to all those who assisted in supplying information in a timely manner when called upon.

LGPS

A reminder to support staff paying into the LGPS; Trust employees have access to an AVC Scheme to help save for future retirement. For more information, please contact HR or find further details on BEBCMAT Connect.

Estates Update

Trust Estates Manager (Operational)

Karl Eastwood started work for the Trust on 20th October and a big thank you to all schools for their hospitality in both welcoming and showing him around the sites in the week.

SCA

After half term, schools will receive their paperwork to consider capital bids for SCA this academic year. The timeline for submitting applications will also be provided.

School Improvement

The first half term is at an end. Hasn't it flown by! Our ECTs have already come together this term. Over the year they will be creating a useful booklet on all the things you didn't know you needed to know about teaching.

Led by our new Lead Teachers for Early Years, Writing and Science, our Trust Networks have got off to a fantastic start this half term. All network resources are available on BEBCMAT Connect Portal.

Nikki, our Trust SEND Lead, has already started the ELKLAN training course for several of our schools who are working towards their accreditation.

We are also looking forward to our SEND conference on 5th November. It's a real privilege to welcome back to the Trust Adam Sproston SHMI for SEN. Adam last visited our Trust three years ago when we were just seven schools. It's amazing how we have grown! His presentation will be on the importance of INCLUSION, how we can support our most vulnerable groups of pupils by breaking down those barriers to learning and enabling them to achieve their goal.

In other news, St John Vianney, St Joseph's, St William's, The Willows, St Bernadette's, St Mary's Fleetwood and Holy Family Warton are all working towards becoming Schools of Sanctuary this year. They are being supported by our current Sanctuary awarded schools and I look forward to sharing some of the exciting events that they will be involved in during the coming year.

Have a fantastic half term break!

Policies/BEBCMAT connect

BEBCMAT Connect

Please remind all staff to log onto BEBCMAT Connect: <https://blessed-bamber-document-portal.schudio.com/>
Any problems please contact har@becmat.co.uk.

Updates

Network Dates: <https://blessed-bamber-document-portal.schudio.com/resources/network-dates-25-26>

Policies

Since September, the following policies have been updated on BEBCMAT Connect:

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy | Risk Management Policy |
| Safeguarding Statement | Gifts and Hospitality |
| Neonatal Policy | Health and Safety Policy |
| Capability Policy and supporting documents | Premises Management Policy |
| Appraisal Policies (teaching staff, non-teaching staff, executives) | Educational and Offsite Visits Policy |
| Probation Policy and supporting documents | |
| Safer Recruitment Policy | |

November 11th 4-5pm RESL Cluster at Trust HQ, English Martyrs, Hardhorn – please bring examples of how Catholic Social Teaching influences your curriculum – Cat Sewell will be sharing the practice at St Mary's.

November 19th Red Wednesday – Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)

Established in 2016 ACN's **#RedWednesday** campaign is our opportunity to shine a light on the suffering of millions who are persecuted for their faith.

The actions of the schools in our trust can make a difference to the lives of suffering and persecuted Christian children and families in some of the most dangerous places to practice their faith.

Some of our schools are wearing red and bringing a donation to ACN on Weds 19th Nov. Every gift of donation will be matched, meaning the impact of our trust will be doubled!

Further details: <https://acnuk.org/redwednesday>

November 21st – CAFOD Jubilee Celebration Day

Catholic school communities across the Trust, diocese, country and world have embraced the Jubilee Year with enthusiasm, journeying with 'deep faith, lively hope and active charity'.

This day will be a vibrant celebration of the impact of a Jubilee Year that's been packed full of faith, learning and transformative action. With moments of thanksgiving, reflection and encounter, let's join together to look ahead with renewed HOPE as we live out our trust jubilee pledges to build a better world.

Check the CAFOD website for updates.

<https://cafod.org.uk/jubilee-schools/jubilee-celebration-day>

November 23rd – Feast of Christ the King (National Youth Sunday)

November 29th – Annual Diocesan Governors' Conference 10am – 3pm at Lancaster University Chaplaincy. Please encourage your governors to attend, choice of 9 workshops to attend

November 30th – 1st Sunday of Advent

Reflection

“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” – Matthew 5:16

As we journey through this academic term, we are reminded of the sacred calling we share in Catholic education: to be bearers of light in a world that often longs for hope, truth, and compassion. Each classroom, corridor, and conversation is an opportunity to reflect Christ’s love and to nurture the gifts He has placed in every child.

October is traditionally the month of the Holy Rosary, a time when we are invited to contemplate the life of Christ through the eyes of Mary, our Mother. Her quiet strength, unwavering faith, and deep trust in God’s plan offer a model for us as educators and leaders. In our work—whether in teaching, administration, or support—we are called to mirror that same faithfulness and care.

Let us also remember St. John Paul II, whose feast day is celebrated on October 22nd. He was a champion of youth, education, and the dignity of every human person. His words still echo powerfully: *“Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors to Christ.”* May his legacy inspire us to be courageous in our mission, open-hearted in our service, and joyful in our witness.

As we continue to build a community rooted in Gospel values, may we be united in prayer, strengthened by grace, and committed to forming hearts and minds for a brighter future.

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the gift of Catholic education and for the opportunity to serve in this sacred mission.

Help us to be faithful witnesses of Your love,
shining Your light in every classroom, every meeting, and every moment of our day.

As we reflect on the life of St. John Paul II,
may we be inspired by his courage, his joy, and his unwavering trust in You.

Teach us to open wide the doors to Christ in our schools,
welcoming each child as a reflection of Your divine image.

Through the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church,
grant us wisdom, patience, and compassion.

May our words build up, our actions uplift, and our hearts remain rooted in the Gospel.
Bless our Academy Trust, our staff, our students, and our families.

May we grow together in faith, hope, and love,
always seeking to glorify You in all we do.

Amen

Blessed Edward Bamber – Pray for Us



Photos

Lancaster Diocese Centenary Mass:



English Martyrs Wall of Crosses:

