

Weekly Communication: 11th December 2025



www.carlislediocese.org.uk/education

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Reflection:

You may recall that in our reflection at the end of November, I shared the words of Charles Wesley's Advent hymn below.

One of the themes Paul Rusby invited us to reflect on was 'our fears'. He encouraged us to name them.

We are very conscious of the (if not fear) anxiety many of you are feeling just now as both local authorities continue to progress with their school sufficiency planning. It's a daunting time to be a school leader as falling roles and serious underfunding make all our jobs more difficult. I am aware that some of you fear for the long-term sustainability of your school. We recognise that it's a difficult time of year anyway, in the penultimate week of an extremely long term with so much to fit in and manage. Worrying about the long term future of your school is the last thing you need right now.



Whilst, sadly, we don't have the power to 'release you from your fears', please remember that we are here to talk to, help with any questions you may have and represent your voice with various stakeholders. Please don't worry alone. Do reach out if a conversation would be helpful.

Hang in there all

Charlotte

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

**Come, Thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.**

NEW THIS WEEK!

Termly Heads and Clergy Breakfast

Come and join us for breakfast, mutual support and encouragement from others in your role in our diocese.

Wednesday 4th February
8am-10am

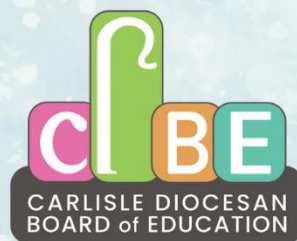
at Beaconside CE Primary School, Penrith

The title of this session will be: **Wonder – a stepping stone to faith** led by **Peter Barfoot**

Book here – £15 per person

Contact for more information:

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bjones@stmarys-kl.cumbria.sch.uk



Are you an RE teacher with questions about Judaism?

Are you an RE teacher with questions about Judaism?

A chance to ask anything you like...

Open to primary and secondary teachers who teach Judaism

Why don't all...
What's the difference between...
I don't understand which...



Tuesday 16th Dec, 3.45-4.45pm

Any question answered



BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF
BRITISH JEWS
ADVOCACY | DEMOCRACY | COMMUNITY


by Anna Silver,
Education Officer

Monthly informal drop in session


(for monthly dates and zoom links email
anna.silver@bod.org.uk)

For Zoom link see attached text

**Online Islam Q&A
for Primary and
Secondary school
RE teachers**



**Altrincham & Hale
Muslim Association**




**ONLINE ISLAM Q&A FOR
PRIMARY & SECONDARY
SCHOOL RE TEACHERS**

in the North-West


ASK ANY QUESTION!

The AHMA Schools Team, with decades of experience working with schools, are here to help you.



Please submit your questions in advance:
1st half: Qs for primary
2nd half: Qs for secondary

**Wednesday 21st Jan
16:00–17:00
Register Now ->**



**For the Renewal of Prayer,
Storytelling & Church Planting**

Faith in the North as an online webinar coming up in the New Year for schools to hear about new resources around the themes of Pilgrimage & the Northern Saints.

These free resources include:

- A set of collective worship resources entitled "Pilgrim Pathways"
- A new resource for school visits to churches giving children an interactive experience as they explore the building.

- A new song from the team at “Songs for Schools” helping children understand the themes of Pilgrimage.
- A newly developed resource from the education advisors “Light from the Past, Hope for the Future” helping children to explore the Northern Saints

The dates are Tuesday 3 February and Wednesday 4 February at 4pm and schools can sign up here [What's On - Faith in the North](#)

Training Schedule

We have a variety of training sessions running each month. Most of the sessions are online and are cost-free if you are part of the partnership agreement.

Want to attend a session but can't? Get in touch and we can arrange for it to be recorded for you.

You can find a copy of the training schedule [here](#). Booking is quick and easy just click the link and follow the on screen steps.

Any queries then please email Anna – anna.lea@carlisle-diocese.org.uk



Governor Zone



Education Office Team

As always, if you have any questions about any of the information contained in this week's communication, need any help or support or want to arrange a visit, don't hesitate to get in touch



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Follow Daily



Care Deeply



Speak Boldly



Tread Gently



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Let's Build Empathy

Sanctuary Foundation is proud to present an exciting new art and poetry competition that invites 7-19 year olds to reflect on what life is like for the 43.3 million children around the world who are displaced. Schools, families or community groups should digitally submit their top 3 pieces in each category.

Students can create either a piece of artwork or a piece of poetry illustrating their empathy with or experience of being separated from the place they call home. These creations will be judged by a fantastic panel of celebrities, refugees, and journalists with the top 30 entries going on display in The British Library during National Refugee Week (Monday 15 – Sunday 21 June 2026). They will also be featured in a special national online assembly, in the press and elsewhere. The prize ceremony will be at the British Library on Monday 15 June 2026.

[Enter the competition here](#)

The competition is open from Wednesday 12 November 2025.

Any student aged 7-19 can enter a single submission.

Closing date is: *Wednesday 15 April 2026* (11.59pm)

Judging will take place following the closing date.

Artwork should be produced on A4-sized paper, in landscape format, as two-dimensional submissions, in any appropriate media.

Poetry should be no longer than 14 lines.

Schools, families or community groups should submit a .jpg image of the artwork or a .pdf file of the poem with the student's name, year group and school/guardian/parent contact details via a

link on the Sanctuary Foundation website. (see below). Each submission should not be larger than 4MB.

For reference, here's a quick summary of the relevant Key Stages in the UK education system:

Key Stage 2: 7–11 years old

Key Stage 3: 12–14 years old

Key Stage 4: 15–16 years old

Key Stage 5: 17–19 years old

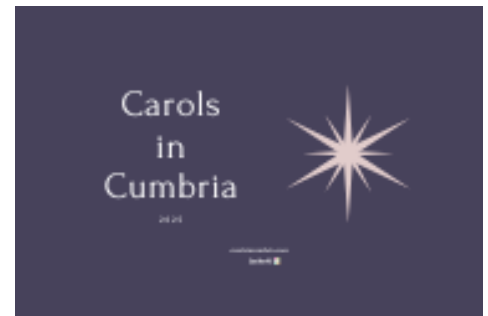
Schools families or community groups should retain physical copies of artwork and poetry submitted for potential display.

Schools, families or community groups will be notified of shortlisted finalists by the middle of May 2026.

More information can be found [here](#)

Looking for some festive carols this Christmas? Visit carolsincumbria.com

The Diocese is currently organising its county-wide directory of Christmas carol services, designed to make it as easy as possible for people across Cumbria to find somewhere local to go.



You can find a map of all the Christmas Carol Services [here](#)

'Joy to the World!'

Advent Calendar 2025 from the Diocese of Guildford



In our Advent calendar for 2025, we will explore how Christians across the world tell this universal story in words and images, with some fun for families to share at the weekends! Across this time, we have used some resources created by Compassion, a Christian child-sponsorship charity, who have created beautifully sensitive and joyfully cultural retellings of the Nativity. We often revisit the same questions exploring how different global contexts might influence how the story is shown: the story is the same, the joy is the same, but the settings are very different. We hope that you enjoy seeing how others celebrate; perhaps you will get some new ideas for your celebrations this year. Feliz Navidad!!

When you click on the door you will find:

- an image of the nativity from countries and cultures across the world
- a video of Christians celebrating Christmas in a variety of countries or cultures
- some wondering questions to think about together

[Primary Advent Calendar 2025](#)

[Secondary Advent Calendar 2025](#)

The Bible



Whatever your view, the Bible cannot be ignored. Pete Barfoot of the Education team invites you to his introduction to handling the Bible with confidence in the life and work of a Church school. The session includes some history, some reflection, lots of discussion topics and information to develop our understanding of the

Bible. School staff and governors will be encouraged to think about the place of the Bible in our church schools.

The booking link for the session is [here](#).

Conversation on 'fair' SEND reform principle with the Schools Minister

Educators are invited to join the Schools Minister and a panel of experts for a live online discussion as part of a series of events focused on SEND reform. This will take place online on 17th December at 6pm.

Early next year, the government will publish the Schools White Paper to unveil plans for improving SEND support, making sure every child and young person can thrive. This will be followed by a period of formal public consultation and engagement.

Before that happens, the Department for Education is listening to the views and experiences of families, educators and experts, to ensure reforms reflect lived experience and practical insights. Join Schools Minister Georgia Gould and a panel of experts for a live online discussion on 17 December at 18:00 – 19:00, as part of a series of events designed to spark the biggest national conversation on SEND in a generation

Free Trees

In response to the climate and biodiversity crises, Westmorland and Furness Council want to help our communities to plant one tree, or one metre of hedgerow equivalent, for every resident. This means planting a quarter of a million trees over a five-year period.

Trees have various benefits for climate, biodiversity and communities, such as:

- absorbing and storing carbon
- providing shade and shelter
- increasing biodiversity and enhancing landscapes
- capturing air pollution and improving air quality
- improving water quality
- reducing soil erosion
- reducing flooding risk

Who can apply

You can apply on behalf of:

- yourself as a resident
- schools
- town and parish councils
- landowners
- community groups

Click [here](#) for more information/ to apply for your free tree



Carols in Cumbria



The website will be updated with services from across the Diocese and go live on December 1st, offering a map function and browsing, so that people can search in different ways to find services on offer. We will include a link in next week's bulletin – watch this space.

Dove Cottage Young Poets

This well-established free group for people aged 13–19 meets fortnightly (term time) on Fridays from 4–6pm on. Participants read, discuss and write

with Cumbrian poet Katie Hale. The group looks at a range of contemporary and historical poems each week and creates their own work in response, with support from Katie and the group.

wordsworth
GRASMERE

young
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Zoom.
poetry

Young writers can also attend and perform at poetry events and meet other young writers with regular visits to Wordsworth Grasmere.

If you live in Cumbria, are aged between 13–19 and would be interested in joining Dove Cottage Young Poets then please get in touch by emailing Zoe McLain at education@wordsworth.org.uk



Praise-along is a free annual [song scheme](#) designed to help primary schools in their provision of collective worship. Registered schools will receive a link to a lyric video each month. All primary schools are welcome to join in!

This month's song is 'Pray for Peace', a prayerful song remembering all who are affected by conflict in our world. It focuses on peace as people 'pop on a poppy' during this important time of reflection and remembrance.

Register free [here](#)

Creative for Climate Justice

Each year we invite your pupils to reflect on the issue of climate justice and to express their responses through art. These pieces of art can then be shared with members of your local

community to highlight the views of children and young people and to provide opportunities for developing courageous advocacy.



This year our focus is on supporting and resourcing pupils to meaningfully share their learning, ideas and engage with the wider community.

To find out more you can register for one of our overview webinars (even if you can't attend, register anyway and we will be in touch!).

To register please contact: [Josh Grear](#), Children and Young People's Project Officer.

The Warm Welcome Campaign

The Warm Welcome Campaign has a searchable map to help people find a warm welcome space near them. The campaign is supporting more than 5,000 organisations that have opened their doors to anyone struggling to heat their home.



key dates in the RE calendar

For schools looking to book an Islam assembly, pupil workshops, parents' Islam awareness sessions and or staff training. We offer both in-person and live virtual visits.

National Inter-Faith Week: 9-16 November 2025

World Religions Day: 19 Jan 2026

Ramadan: 19th February-19 March*

Eid-ul-Fitr: 20th March*

Hajj / Pilgrimage to Mecca: 25-29 May*



Muslim Learner Services

•Assemblies •Workshops •Training



Eid-ul-Adha: 27th May*

*Subject to the sighting of the new crescent moon.

[Enquire about a visit](#)

<https://zfrmz.com/aJbKiqynJIHAK9stSRYO>

[Read our testimonials](#)

<https://muslimlearnerservices.org/testimonials/>

Explore our selection of assemblies, workshops, and training sessions.

[**https://muslimlearnerservices.org/primary-school-visits/**](https://muslimlearnerservices.org/primary-school-visits/)

Learning Hub Applications 2026



Does your school, church, trust or Diocese have an idea which enables young people at the heart of what church and school do together? Find out more about this creative opportunity and apply.

We are delighted to be launching a third application process for our Growing Faith Learning Hubs. The Growing Faith Foundation is seeking to resource a further 14 Learning Hubs across the country starting in January 2026. They will act as strong developmental communities of practice from which schools and church leaders (both regionally and nationally) can learn.

The Learning Hubs will become centres of innovation, where schools/churches are resourced to further embed creative practices that build the strategic partnership between school, church and home. Hubs are creative spaces, with an emphasis on imaginative approaches that champion the voices of children and young people and embed inclusion and hospitality. as we seek to put children, young people and families at the heart of all the mission and ministry of the Church by changing the culture of the Church of England.



In 2026 The Learning Hubs will be funded in two different models:

- an annual grant of £10,00 each year for two years. There will be 10 location places available
- a smaller grant of up to £2500 for 3 months to 1 year projects, where local partnerships want to undertake a smaller piece of work as part of their wider Growing Faith shaped development. There will be 4 location places available in 2026 and 4 in 2027.

Please do consider whether your church/school partnership, whether based in a Diocese, a deanery, a school trust, an individual church or school or other iteration might become a suitable Hub. Read more about the application process in our [guidance document](#).

Please share with anyone who may be interested and submit applications by 31st October 2025

If you have further questions or an informal chat would be of help, please contact mandy.christopher@churchofengland.org

Laura is also very happy to chat with anyone who is interested.
Laura.watson@carlisle-diocese.org.uk

[Apply Now](#)

Free Advent Collective Worship Resource



As we journey towards Christmas this Advent season, we invite your school to join us in *The Joy of Christmas*, a brand-new collective worship resource for Advent 2025 aimed at KS2 and KS3 learners.

For KS1 pupils there is a brand-new version of the book *The Grumpy Owl and the Joy of Christmas*, which tells the story of Jesus' birth through the eyes of an owl who seems determined to miss all the excitement. You can find out more about this here: <https://cofe.io/TheGrumpyOwl/>

At KS2 and KS3 we focus on the central theme of grumpiness into joy, taking time to reflect and celebrate the key characters in the Nativity story, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men.

We'll explore what might have made them grumpy, or find things difficult, and how they found joy in **connection, trusting, sharing, and following**.

Schools can sign up here: www.nsc.org.uk/ayla/advent

National Society for Education – Collective Worship Resources

Earlier in the term we shared the below words and resources from Nigel Genders:

‘Like many people, we’ve been very concerned about the rising tension in some of our communities in the light of the court case about asylum seekers being housed in hotels, and so we have produced some collective worship for primary and secondary schools in the hope that they are a useful resource for schools to speak about loving our neighbour.’

[Curriculum: collective worship – National Society for Education](#)

We have since received the following paragraph commending the resources for collective worship.

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is a joy for me to commend these resources for collective worship. I am well aware that our schools, and school leaders, are already engaged in building healthy communities and countering the drift towards hateful speech. Be assured of my prayers in this vital and timely work. In my own backyard, +Philip Egan (RC Bishop of Portsmouth) and I have been concerned to see the way in which children and young people have been drawn into intimidating protests against asylum seekers and refugees in our city. In this febrile context our network of schools provides safe havens in which children and young people learn to speak well of their neighbours and grow in compassion. Once again, be assured of prayers and support from your colleagues in the National Society.

+Jonathan Frost (Chair of the National Society for Education)

Cumberland's Licence to Grow

Please note this is for
**Cumberland schools
only.**

Westmorland and Furness
council don't currently
have a Right to Grow
initiative but do offer
grants and funding for
community projects.



Right to Grow

Cumberland's Licence to Grow

Cumberland Council is supporting the national Right to Grow campaign by developing a community growing licence which allows communities to use pieces of Council-owned land for food growing.

We are looking for groups across Cumberland who would like to set up food growing projects.

Contact us at:

Foodpartnership@cumberland.gov.uk



Bridging Divides

The British Red Cross is encouraging people to take part in its 'Bridging Divides' programme. At a time when a lot of discussion in society has become polarized, the programme offers a series of short videos over five weeks to help participants talk with others whose views might be very different.



"More and more of us are being pushed to take sides, making it harder to talk to people whose opinions we disagree with. At the British Red Cross, we stand for

neutrality and impartiality, and we want to share how what we've learned over 150 years of conflict diplomacy can be used in your day-to-day. In a world where tensions run high, knowing how to compassionately connect with others is essential to solving the problems we face together." Details can be found [here](#).

Governors



Governance Glossary

Once again, [Independent Governor Support](#) have shared their comprehensive Governance Glossary document with schools and governors. The full document is available as an attachment to this week's Weekly Comms.



Is your school a member of The Key?

The Key are holding a free webinar on **What does the new Ofsted framework mean for your board?**

27th November 4:30pm– 5:30pm



Join **Ofsted** and **GovernorHub** for a **free webinar** to learn more about the 2025 framework and how it impacts governance.

Find out more about the new inspection areas and report cards, what a 'strong standard' for leadership and governance and other strategic areas means in practice, and the new focus on the work of the trust governance professional.

You can sign up [here](#)



School admissions

Please make sure that Governors (especially in VA schools) have had chance to discuss and plan for the next round of school admissions arrangements, details of which can be found [here](#).

Determination

All admission authorities must determine their admission arrangements, including their PAN, every year, even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required by 28 February in the determination year.



Once admission authorities have determined their admission arrangements, they must notify the appropriate bodies and must publish a copy of the determined arrangements on the school's website or their own website (in the case of a local authority) by 15 March in the determination year and continue displaying them for the whole offer year (the school year in which offers for places are made).

Admission authorities must also send a copy of their full, determined arrangements to the local authority as soon as possible before 15 March in the determination year.

Admission authorities for schools designated with a religious character must also send a copy of their

arrangements to the body or person representing their religion or religious denomination.

Consultation

When changes are proposed to admission arrangements, all admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements (including any supplementary information form) that will apply for admission applications the following school year.

Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period.

Consultation must last for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year. Admission authorities must consult with:

- a) parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen;
 - b) other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions;
 - c) all other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools);
 - d) whichever of the governing body and the local authority is not the admission authority;
 - e) any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority;
 - and
 - f) in the case of schools designated with a religious character, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination.
-

For the duration of the consultation period, the admission authority must publish a copy of their full proposed admission arrangements (including the proposed PAN) on the school's website or its own website (in the case of a local authority) together with details of where comments may be sent and the areas on which comments are not sought.

CHECKLIST

1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>

Admission authorities must also send, upon request, a copy of the proposed admission arrangements to any of the persons or bodies listed above inviting comment. Failure to consult effectively may be grounds for subsequent complaints and appeals



Teacher wellbeing

From the charity [Governors for Schools](#): "Education Support's Teacher Wellbeing Index 2025 reveals an education workforce in crisis with staff wellbeing at its lowest level since 2019.

If we want every child to thrive, we must ensure those who teach and support them are thriving too. At a time like this, governors and trustees play a pivotal role – monitoring pressures on staff, asking the right questions

about wellbeing, and helping drive the changes that make school environments healthier and more sustainable.

Download the full report: <https://bit.ly/43cYK30>"

New Ofsted Framework 2025



Ofsted's new approach to school inspection from November 2025

Summary of changes for governing boards

With the new Ofsted framework becoming active in the last week or so, governors may want a quick guide to the recent changes in terms of the content and operation of inspections. Helpfully, the NGA has produced a [document](#) for this.
