

Weekly Communication: 22th January 2026



www.carlisdioocese.org.uk/education

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Reflection: Thanks for all the lovely messages and offers of support. 2026 continues to be a tricky year so far, dealing with or helping (where we can) with so many complex and distressing issues in our family of schools.

Today, just for once, we took our own advice and made the trip down to London for the FlourishED National Society annual conference. It was a lovely opportunity to say a fond farewell to Revd Canon Nigel Genders OBE, Chief Executive of the National Society (in the same church Joshua Watson founded the National Society back in 1811) as he steps down from his role after more than a decade of service.

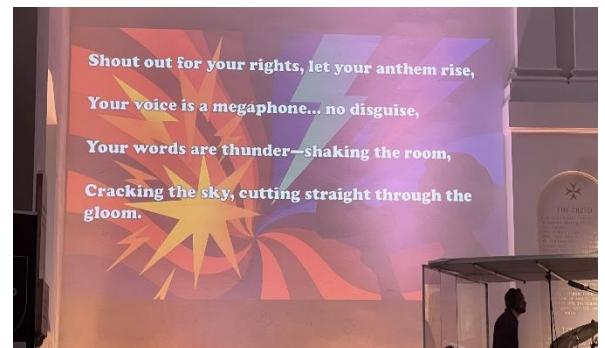
A recurring theme of the day was that 'we are more united than we are divided'. We know that many of you are facing heightened division in your communities. Please do get in touch if there's something we could do to help.



We appreciated hearing Secretary of State, Bridget Phillipson, champion Church of England schools. She recognised and thanked us for our work to establish an entitlement to education for all, not just something to be bought by the privileged. She acknowledged that the Church of England 'got there first' and the state followed.

We were lucky enough to have input from an amazing range of young peoples' voices. Cups are filled up and we'll be back ready to fill yours on Monday!

#more united than divided



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:

ruth.houston@carlislediocese.org.uk
maggie.cole@carlislediocese.org.uk
bjones@stmarys-kl.cumbria.sch.uk



You are very welcome to join us to:

hear from
Pam Lawson
on the importance of music in connecting communities.

Discussion question...
'Where have you seen music have a positive impact in your school community?'

Please come prepared to show/talk about this and share your experiences.

Network

Support

Advice

Share ideas & resources

Q&A

Headteachers, senior leaders, RE leads & teachers

please join Laura Watson

Monday 2nd February

4:00pm – 5:00pm

Online

[Book here](#)
or via the events schedule

Receive updates on national and regional news & initiatives



Spring Distinctiveness Network Meeting RE, Collective Worship and more...

Follow Daily

Care Deeply

Speak Boldly

Tread Gently

Governor Peer Support Network delivered by Victoria Burnside, Ofsted Senior HMI

Victoria will:

- Share an overview of the new Ofsted framework, specifically tailored for governors;
- Provide some feedback from schools inspected under the new framework; and
- Give you an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

Any governors are welcome!

Join us online on 4th

March at 5:30pm

BOOK HERE



Follow Daily

Care Deeply

Speak Boldly

Tread Gently

Big Schools' Birdwatch 2026



Big Schools' Birdwatch is back for 2026! Join thousands of other schools to find out which birds visit your school grounds. Together, we can make it count.

Sign up (it's free!) and you'll get all the information, links and downloadable resources you'll need for running your Big Schools' Birdwatch. This year, all resources are available digitally, which provides thousands more teachers with a range of quality materials to use with their pupils.

- [Register and download our resources straight away.](#)

Online Safety and Safer Internet Day



[Safer Internet Day 2026 – Live Lesson](#)

Join us on **Tuesday 10 February 2026** at 11am for a Safer Internet Day Live Lesson where your class will need to think like responsible AI designers as we work together to design a safe and reliable chatbot.



Use [Online Safety and Safer Internet Day](#) as an opportunity to share factsheets, staff briefings and eLearning with staff. If you are a member of The Key they have a range of

resources that can be found [here](#)

Children's Mental Health Week – Live Assembly

Wednesday 11th February, 9.15–9.45am

Join Picture News and special guest, children's author and mental wellbeing advocate, Katie Hopper for a live assembly during Children's Mental Health Week, as we explore why feeling included matters. Katie will share one of her stories live and children can reflect on how their words and actions can help others feel welcome and supported.
Suitable for: Children in KS1 and KS2



[Register here](#)

Celebrating Lunar New Year – Live Assembly (with very special guests!)

Wednesday 25th February, 9.15–9.45am

Join us for a special online event as we explore how the Lunar New Year is celebrated. We'll learn about traditions, stories and symbols, and hear from two children who will be sharing their own experiences of celebrating this special time.

A lovely opportunity for pupils to discover how different cultures welcome a new year with joy, family, and hope!

Suitable for: Children in KS1 and KS2

[Register here](#)

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@carlislediocese.org.uk



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Victoria will:

- Share an overview of the new Ofsted framework, specifically tailored for governors;
- Provide some feedback from schools inspected under the new framework; and
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Any governors are welcome!

Join us online on 4th
March at 5:30pm

[BOOK HERE](#)



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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School Advisers

All DBE Officers and School Advisers hold Enhanced DBS Certificates



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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](#)

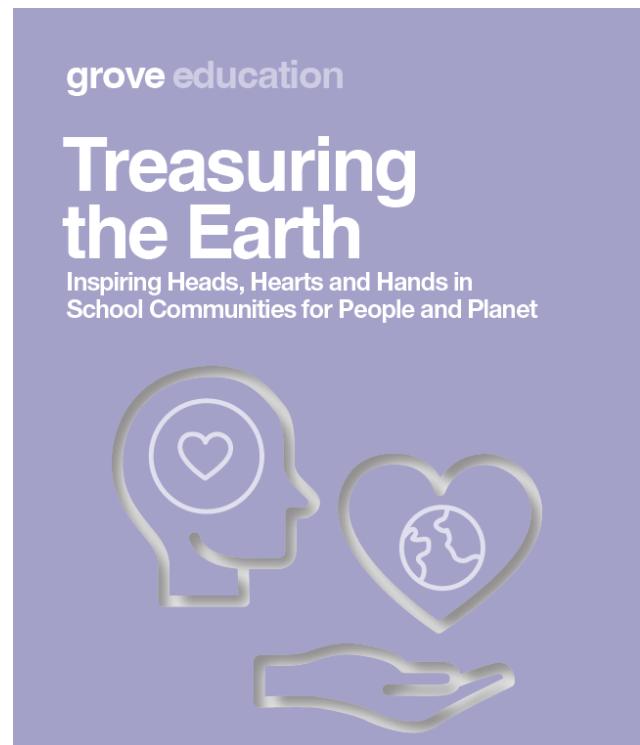


Cumbrian SACRE newsletter

You should have received a copy of the Cumbrian SACRE newsletter however we are attaching a copy to this email as well.

New Grove Book

Attached to this email you will find a PDF copy of this Grove books.



Faith in the North are delighted to invite you to an online webinar showcasing a brand-new collection of free resources designed to support your school's work around the themes of Pilgrimage and the Northern Saints. Developed by the team at Faith in the North alongside a range of partners, these materials offer fresh, creative ways to enrich learning and collective worship.

The webinar will run twice, with identical content in each session. Please choose the date that suits you best:

- Tuesday 3rd February at 4pm

- Wednesday 4th February at 4pm

[Sign up here for free](#)

Learning Hub Applications 2026



Growing Faith Foundation

Church of England

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 £10,000 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@carlislediocese.org.uk

[Apply Now](#)

Governors



GOVERNORS FOR SCHOOLS



Open the Book - Regional Training and Development Officer

We are looking for an **Open the Book - Regional Training and Development Officer (Mid and North England)** to join the OTB Team

The aim of Open the Book is to equip people to share Bible stories with children in an accessible and enjoyable way for those of all faiths and none.

We are looking for a skilled communicator, with knowledge of and empathy with the churches in your region and proven experience of both delivering training and building excellent working relationships.

 If you know of anyone in your **network or at your church** who would love to work for us, please can you direct them to our website to apply

 For more information you can view the vacancy here: [Open the Book – Regional Training and Development Officer \(Mid & North England\)](#)

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.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....



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



GOVERNORS FOR SCHOOLS

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

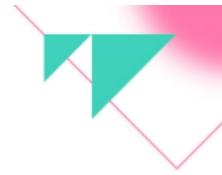
Download the full report: <https://bit.ly/43cYK30>

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

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.
