

Journey with Emmaus CAT...

“Each star has its own brightness...
unity is our prophetic strength...” Pope Leo XIV



Welcome to our newsletter

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Humility ● Faithfulness ● Service

Welcome from our CEO on behalf of our Trust Board of Directors

Peace, Hope, Unity - Drawing New Maps of Hope...

Dear Colleagues

This term we have witnessed the Jubilee for the World of Education, a historic time in Catholic education. In the press conference to introduce this momentous programme Jubilee for the World of Education, we heard from Cardinal Tolentino de Mendonça. He said: "... these are important, I would say historical days for Catholic education, and it is the desire of the Holy Father to inaugurate a new season that involves educational institutions with a new spirit and new plans, asking them to become true maps of hope in today's world. Education is the new name for peace and places hope on the map of the present and the future."

This year also marks sixty years since the Second Vatican Council's Declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* which reaffirmed the vital importance of education in the life of every person as well as the Church:

To mark this anniversary, on 27th October Pope Leo promulgated an Apostolic Letter, encouragingly entitled, *Drawing New Maps of Hope*. Renewing 'the urgency of the mandate' (11.1) of Catholic education, he writes of an 'educational constellation' (8) of Catholic schools and colleges: 'Each "star" has its own brightness, but together they chart a course. Where in the past there was rivalry, today we ask institutions to converge: unity is our most prophetic strength.' (8.1)

We all remain aware of Bishop John's wish and expectation, on behalf of the Diocese of Salford, to have three strong Catholic Academy Trusts by 2030. It is over five years since I started in the role of CSEL/CEO for Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust and since this time, we have experienced significant growth, with over 75% of schools within the Emmaus CAT footprint either already being part of or proactively working with us and taking steps to join.

Building on all the history and heritage that we have received from our forebears in the mission of Catholic education, Emmaus CAT has enabled schools to collaborate across the Greater Manchester area providing great Catholic education, strengthening staff development, and sustainably improving outcomes for pupils

In a small number of areas across the Emmaus CAT footprint, leaders and governors at some schools are yet to engage. This is perhaps because there are some misunderstandings regarding the expectations and responsibilities of foundation governors, who are appointed by the Bishop and are called to support the implementation of his strategic vision for Catholic schools within the Diocese, as outlined in the recently reissued Diocesan Protocols and in the CES Code of Conduct (2024 version). This is also in keeping with Catholic Social Teaching principles by which we are asked to live. Emmaus CAT is for every Catholic school in Manchester, Oldham, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford within the Diocese of Salford and is about mission rather than money.

Catholic communities of hope...



The move to the academisation of Catholic schools is about the future of the Catholic Church, service to society and protecting Catholic education by keeping all our schools safe as part of one Diocesan family. In the spirit of working towards a true constellation of Catholic schools, we continue to communicate with those schools and look forward to better understanding and engagement in the coming year.

Indeed, the landscape has changed considerably since the early days of emerging Diocesan strategies in England. This year we have seen the setting up of the national Catholic Multi Academy Trust Network (CMAT Network), the largest and most important MAT network in the country for Catholic education. Shifting demographics and a range of internal and external pressures now mean that, for long-term sustainability, a Multi-Academy Trust should serve more than 10,000 pupils. At present, Emmaus CAT as a family of schools is already above this number and growing every month. This helps with building a strong Catholic Academy Trust for the Diocese of Salford and only serves to reinforce the Holy Father's statement that 'unity is our most prophetic strength'.

Following a review focused on the future needs of our schools, the Diocesan Trustees have affirmed the commitment to pursue closer partnerships with a new urgency. This will maximise sustainability for all Diocesan schools in the Emmaus CAT footprint, in their aligned mission while still maintaining their local autonomy and vital parish and community connections.

The next phase in our Academy Strategy, beginning now and to be accomplished over the next few years, is our way of rededicating ourselves to this prophetic strength, our mission both for those within our schools as well as for society. The future demands that we learn to collaborate and to grow together, taking opportunities to lift each other up in our shared mission, as well as be bound together by our common purpose and calling. The Catholic educational network has a unique reach. It is a constellation that spans every continent. Drawing new maps of hope will take the work, commitment and determination of all of us serving Catholic education. Mission calls us to 'draw true maps of hope'. For our privileged selves this is across Greater Manchester.

In Pope Leo's words *"Catholic educational constellations are an inspiring image of how tradition and future can intertwine without contradiction: a living tradition that extends towards new forms of presence and service. Drawing new maps of hope: this is the urgency of the mandate."*

In this season of Advent, following the joy of Gaudete Sunday, as a Catholic community we are called to focus even more deeply. This week we hope that we can all 'find the silence through the noise' and make time for prayer and reflection. We await, in anticipation, for the celebration of Christ's birth as we prepare our hearts for the Christmas season.

To our academy school leaders, staff and governors, who are all such positive ambassadors for our collective values, thank you for your continued dedication and leadership in our schools. Your commitment to the formation and education of our pupils and staff is deeply valued, respected and appreciated – with the impact of our shared endeavours being recognised in so many ways.

As Emmaus CAT continues to grow, and each star is added to our constellation we look forward to working with more school communities in 2026 to ensure we collectively provide great Catholic education across Greater Manchester.

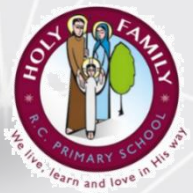
Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support and we wish everyone a happy and holy Christmas season.

Yours faithfully

Daniel Copley

CSEL/CEO Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust on behalf of the Trust Board of Directors

Autumn Term across Emmaus CAT



Holy Family RC Primary School, Oldham

Holy Family are incredibly proud of their Year 5 children who, following a formal application and interview process, have now undertaken their police attestation and begun their duties as Mini Police officers. The Year 6 Mini Police representatives spoke confidently about the positive impact the programme has already had on their confidence and sense of responsibility. They have all enthusiastically embraced their roles by working alongside Greater Manchester Police to prepare Christmas hampers which they will soon be delivering to members of our local community, helping to spread kindness and support to those who may need it most.

WORLD
CATHEDRAL



Holy Rosary RC Primary School, Oldham

Holy Rosary's Faith Team continue to fulfil their mission with dedication and joy. During the month of October, they invited all children to the morning Rosary Club, confidently leading even the youngest children in praying the Rosary.

They also planned and delivered creative prayer stations on the themes of Harvest and Advent, giving the whole school meaningful opportunities for reflective prayer. Parents were warmly welcomed to join these sessions, and it was wonderful to see so many families taking part in prayer together.

Their leadership and commitment shine through in everything they do, helping to nurture a strong, supportive Catholic ethos across the school community.



St Mary's RC Primary School, Failsworth

St. Mary's have attended some exciting trips during the autumn term; Year five children attended *Poetry Together* and had a wonderful time. Key Stage one children visited Middleton Arena to watch the panto, *Aladdin*. It was a lovely start to the festive season. Year three children have now been presented in church, ready to begin their journey towards the sacrament of Holy Communion.



SALFORD
CATHEDRAL



St Patrick's RC Primary School, Oldham

In early December, the children at St. Patrick's experienced an unforgettable African Drumming Day! The air was filled with vibrant rhythms and infectious energy as everyone got the chance to learn the beat of the djembe and other traditional drums. With every thundering drum strike, the students discovered the power of music to connect, express, and celebrate culture. The sound of their hands on the drums echoed through the school, creating a pulse of excitement that kept everyone on their feet, dancing and drumming along! It was a day of creativity, culture, and pure joy!



St Herbert's RC Primary School, Oldham

St. Herbert's are absolutely delighted to share the some of the wonderful things happening in their school community!



At the end of September, St. Herbert's hosted a vibrant and joy-filled Macmillan Coffee Morning. Each class performed a song with an inspirational message, and the hall was overflowing with proud parents and families. The atmosphere was incredible - full of singing, laughter, coffee, cake and generosity. Thanks to the amazing support of their community, they raised an astonishing £1,600! St. Herbert's are deeply grateful to everyone who helped make this event such a heart-warming success.

St. Herbert's Sacramental cohort were recently presented before their parish during their beautiful Presentation Mass, marking an important moment on their faith journey. The school community celebrated with them and asked that you keep these children in your prayers as they continue to grow in faith.

As part of their Jubilee Year celebrations, St. Herbert's were blessed with two wonderful days of internal retreat led by Mary Farmer. These uplifting and faith-filled sessions brought everyone together as a community of pilgrims of hope, strengthening their spirit and reminding them of the joy at the heart of our mission.

Saint John Henry Newman Roman Catholic College, Oldham

In September St. John Henry Newman opened their new school Chapel, which has the capacity of 180 people. This is exciting for the school, as it gives the opportunity to have more intimate Masses, hold Celebration of the Word in form time with form groups and also invite in the community for prayer mornings. Bishop John consecrated this Chapel in an official Mass on Wednesday 10th December.

St. John Henry Newman's Year 10 pupils were incredibly lucky to be offered a trip to France and Belgium on a Battlefield's trip in October 2025. They visited Tyne Cot to remember Oldham soldiers and laid a wreath in their honour. They also explored Ypres, the Somme, Vimy Ridge and Menin Gate Ceremony. They conducted themselves with love, dignity, service and courage throughout and made memories that will last a lifetime and inspire their daily lives.



On Friday 21st November, St. John Henry Newman officially closed the Jubilee Year with CAFOD and the rest of Catholic schools nationally. Their students used the celebration to reflect on the theme of hope, remind themselves of the importance of the Jubilee and how they can continue to be beacons of hope. Year 7 celebrated Mass with Father Callum, who reminded them of the hope they can find in Christ.

A group of St. John Henry Newman's Year 7 pupils took part in an international design competition with Lancashire Cricket Club and Queensland Cricket. They were challenged to create a sustainable and inclusive pavilion and took on this challenge putting Catholic Social Teaching into action. They are delighted to announced that despite being the only all Year 7 team, they came out as the winners of the competition with their hard work and commitment.



St Edward's RC Primary School, Oldham



This term, St. Edward's have been living out their faith through the inspiring work of their Health Champions. During their own time, these dedicated children created posters encouraging families to donate warm clothes for those in need. They thoughtfully placed their posters around the school and, on a rainy morning, went out to the playground to hand leaflets to parents and families as they arrived. The project was a wonderful success! Many families generously donated warm clothing, including hats, scarves, and gloves. The children then collected these items and donated them to two local charities: Our Local Community Wardrobe in Oldham and Project Pearl.



Through their compassionate actions, the children have truly made a difference to those in need, following in the footsteps of Jesus and embodying the message of the Gospel reading from St. Matthew 25:35-40:

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in..."

St Edward's are incredibly proud of their children for putting their faith into action and showing Christ's love in their community.



St John Fisher RC Primary School, Tameside

St John Fisher were delighted to welcome the prison chaplain from (HMP Manchester), to speak with our Year 5 and 6 GIFT and Caritas teams. He gave a talk to the children to explore the theme of compassion and mercy, drawing from the Gospel of St. Matthew 25:42-44, where Jesus teaches that failing to care for those in need - such as the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, or imprisoned - is equivalent to neglecting Him personally:

"For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink... sick and in prison and you did not visit me."

This passage underscores the Church's call to recognise Christ's presence in the marginalised, including those in prison, and to respond with acts of kindness. The children have participated in craft activities that will be sent to prisoners for them to have on Christmas Day.

This visit provided a valuable opportunity for the children to learn about forgiveness, rehabilitation, and the dignity of every person.

The chaplain was very impressed with the maturity of our children and the quality of the questions that they asked. The children then shared their visit with the rest of the school community.



St Anne's RC Primary School, Tameside

Remembrance Art Project

St. Anne's children worked together to create a stunning poppy art installation, displayed in their Peace Garden. It stands as a powerful reminder of the brave men and women who gave their lives for our freedom.

Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi

St. Anne's gathered for a 'Blessing of Our Pets' reflection to mark the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals, remembered for his deep compassion and love for all creatures. The celebration was thoughtfully organised and beautifully led by St. Anne's GIFT Team, who helped bring prayer to life in a meaningful and engaging way. The event was a wonderful opportunity for the school community to come together and celebrate the joy, comfort, and companionship that pets bring into our lives. It was a truly special occasion that created lifelong memories for the children.



St Stephen's RC Primary School, Tameside

St. Stephen's were delighted to welcome Greg from The Mark 10 Mission to their school to lead class Celebrations of the Word. The day began with a wonderful whole-school assembly that set a joyful and prayerful tone. Greg then had a session with each year group throughout the day, helping children to reflect on Scripture and deepen their relationship with Jesus through prayer and worship.

After school, staff took part in an inspiring training session with Greg, exploring ways to develop meaningful Celebrations of the Word in their own classrooms. It was a truly spiritual and uplifting day for the whole school community.



St Christopher's RC Primary School, Tameside



As St. Christopher's journey through Advent, the school community have joined in celebrations to prepare for the coming of Christ. From heartfelt performances to joyful family events, this year's celebrations truly captured the spirit of Christmas.

Children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 brought the story of the Nativity to life with heartfelt performances that captured the true meaning of Christmas. The children performed the Nativity musical, 'Barmy Bethlehem'. Families and parish members joined us to make these performances a true celebration of faith and community.



Each week the Key Stage 2 classes have delivered an assembly on Advent reflecting the themes of hope, peace, joy and love. All the parents/carers and families were invited to join the celebrations. The children led the assemblies with prayers, hymns and dramas from the gospel.



St. Christopher's PTA organised an incredible Christmas fair with many stalls, delicious treats and games that delighted children and adults.

As Advent leads us to Christmas, the whole school community will meet in the church for Christmas Carol Concert where they will give thanks for the blessings of their school family.





St Joseph's RC Primary School, Stockport

Welcome Back Father Damien

St. Joseph's are thrilled to celebrate Fr Damien's return from an absence. His regular visits have quickly nurtured the faith life of the school through celebrating weekly Mass, whole school liturgy and spiritual nourishment. His presence in school has enhanced and supported the children's encounter of Christ in daily life. Welcome back Father Damien and thank you for all you do for St. Joseph's.



St Mary's RC Primary School, Stockport

Catholic Schools Inspection

After a long journey of improvement, St. Mary's were delighted to receive recognition in their Catholic Schools Inspection this term. Both staff and children have worked extremely hard in making great strides at St. Mary's and are very proud of the outcome - recognising their commitment to the Catholic mission of the Church.



St Winifred's RC Primary School, Stockport

In November, St. Winifred's Year 6 children attended a Poetry Together event at Aviva Studios in Manchester. The event was led by Gyles Brandreth. The children and their grandparents attended the event together and had a wonderful day. St Winifred's Year 6 children appeared live on ITV's 'This Morning' where they wished King Charles a happy birthday! St Winifred's are all very proud of their Year 6 children.



St Anne's RC Voluntary Academy, Stockport



St. Anne's were thrilled to have been awarded the Young Carers in Schools Award on the 17th of October 2025, a prestigious award that celebrates their commitment to identifying and supporting young carers in their community.

The award is part of the Young Carers in Schools programme, run by national charities The Children's Society and Carers Trust. The charities help schools across England improve outcomes for young carers by providing clear, practical guidance for teachers, support staff and leaders – ensuring no young carer is left to struggle alone.

To achieve this award, St Anne's demonstrated how the school champions young carers, offering support which makes a real difference. Strong links have been built with local organisations, including Stockport Signpost for Young Carers, to make sure pupils who help care for a family member are recognised, understood and supported, both in school and beyond.

This award shows that staff are alert to the needs of young carers and prepared to offer early help, in line with national guidance. St Anne's will continue working to ensure every young carer feels seen, valued and supported to succeed.



St Anne's welcomed Bishop John to bless their new Prayer Garden.

The St Anne's school community recently gathered for a deeply meaningful occasion of faith, hope and environmental stewardship as Bishop John blessed the school's new Prayer Garden and planted a Ginkgo Biloba sapling from the Hiroshima Green Legacy Project.

Under the inspiring theme 'Transformed by Grace', staff, students, governors and guests came together to celebrate a serene space symbolising renewal, peace and care for creation.

The ceremony began with a warm welcome for Head Pupils Kian and Evie, alongside senior prefects Heidi, Max and Ruby, who reflected on the garden's significance. They described it as 'a symbol of renewal and transformation, where faith, peace and creation meet'.

Fr Mark the Parish Priest led the opening prayer, giving thanks for the new space and asking for God's blessing on all who will use it.

In his reflection, Bishop John connected the scripture of the grain of wheat falling into the earth to bear fruit with the Hiroshima sapling: "It reminds us that destruction and despair are never the end of the story when God's love is present". Bishop John's environment address drew from Laudato Si, emphasising that caring for creation "is our faith in action".

The event concluded with a final blessing from Bishop John and heartfelt thanks from the Head Pupil who expressed the communities gratitude to both Bishop John and Fr Mark "just as this sapling will grow and change with the seasons, we too are invited to grow in kindness, faith, and love for one another".



Our Lady of the Rosary RC Primary School, Trafford

The Eco Team at Our Lady of the Rosary had the privilege of working with Bob from CAFOD, who educated them on COP and the importance of global climate action. Bob supported the pupils as they began developing our school's Climate Action Plan, helping them understand how everyday choices can protect the planet. The team showed real passion and commitment as they explored practical steps to make their school more sustainable.



Our Lady of the Rosary were also delighted to welcome a visiting orangutan in a real-life costume from Teach REX, who taught the children all about the issues facing rainforests, the impact of climate change, and how we can make the world more sustainable. The session was engaging, inspiring, and led to a range of planned writing activities across the school. The children loved the experience and left with a deeper understanding of how their actions can help protect wildlife and the environment.

English Martyrs' RC Primary School, Trafford

Year 4 children from English Martyrs' have created pledges and sent them to Bishop John, committing to sow beauty rather than destruction in response to Pope Francis's mission.



St Antony's Roman Catholic School, Trafford

The Anchor: A Symbol of Hope Across Salford Diocese

The Anchor of Hope has made its journey to St Antony's Roman Catholic School!

Children from St Ann's Primary School have proudly handed over the Anchor to St Antony's.

This meaningful symbol marks the Jubilee Year for the entire Catholic Church. It's a reminder of our faith, resilience, and community spirit.

The anchor serves as a "powerful symbol" of hope, highlighting how we can be held firm and steady by our beliefs, especially during challenging times. Let's celebrate this beautiful journey together!



St Antony's Year 9 geographers showcased their incredible talents at the Wild hearts Sustainable Goals competition held in the Siemens Building in Didsbury!

Students designed and pitched innovative ideas linked to sustainability that they could implement in the community, impressing industry experts along the way. They also explored various career paths related to Geography.

A huge well done to all St Antony's students for representing the school with such pride and enthusiasm! St Antony's are so proud of your achievements!



Over 500 people attended the highly anticipated Christmas Carol Concert at St Antony's on Tuesday 2nd December which was a huge success!

Talented young singers from St Antony's RC School, Our Lady of the Rosary RC Primary School, English Martyrs RC Primary School, St Hugh of Lincoln RC Primary School, and St Monica's RC Primary School put on an enchanting evening that marked the start of the festive season in style!

It also featured a delightful mix of contemporary Christmas songs performed by the talented Audacious Kids. The PTA ran a raffle stall, and 26 lucky winners were thrilled with their Christmas Hampers, vouchers, bottles and gifts which were kindly donated by staff, students and local businesses.

It certainly was a festive evening to remember!



St Kentigern's RC Primary School, Manchester



St. Kentigern's welcomed their school and parish community to support their fundraising activities in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

Children from St. Kentigern's then visited the Macmillan Cancer Unit at Wythenshawe Hospital, along with Mrs Scott and Mrs Muldoon, to present them with a cheque for £320.00, the money raised through the school's cake sale. They received a wonderful email from the hospital after their visit:

'...A massive, big thank you all for raising an amazing £320.00 for Macmillan Cancer Support at your recent Coffee Morning.

The money raised will be of great help with the provision of Macmillan Nurses and other professionals, who support patients and families through their treatment. This would not be possible without your continued support, so again a big thank you to you and the lovely children that made this possible.'



St Francis RC Primary School, Manchester

This term, St. Francis have been blessed to welcome families into school to share in their Wednesday Word – Celebration of the Word sessions. These gatherings have been wonderfully attended, and it has been a true joy to see so many friends and families from the school community joining each week. The excellent turnout reflects the strength of our shared faith and the importance of coming together to celebrate God's Word.



St Edmund's RC Primary School, Manchester



On Tuesday 11th November, St. Edmund's whole school marked Remembrance Day by taking part in the national two-minute silence. Their Head Boy and Head Girl also joined other schools and members of the community at the cenotaph in Newton Heath to remember all of those who gave their life in service. During November, St. Edmund's have been remembering all of those in their families and communities that have died and gone to be with God in heaven. They held a remembrance service was held in school and all our classes have been remembering in prayer stations in their classrooms.

In October, St. Edmund's GIFT Team welcomed five other schools to a shared celebration of the work that each school has been doing in developing children's ministry in their schools. This was a lovely afternoon of collaboration and celebration, as each school shared an activity that they had been doing. The GIFT Team from St. Edmund's took the other children on a creation walk of the school grounds and local area, to celebrate the season of Creation.



St Patrick's RC Primary School, Manchester



In November, St. Patrick's Key Stage One children had an exciting visit to Chester Zoo. The weather was good for an action-packed visit. The children loved seeing the animals and some of them were even brave enough to go into the pitch-black bat cave! The children were excellent ambassadors for St. Patrick's and really enjoyed their day out. Also, this term St. Patrick's have enjoyed trips to the pantomime at Middleton Arena, Eureka! and Aviva Studios, as well as workshops in school about space, the Saxons and the Stone Age.

In October, the children held a non-uniform day for Harvest. Each child was asked to bring an item of food to donate to the Lalley Centre in Collyhurst. Our wonderful families sent in donations that made a great difference to many families who need a little extra help. Well done to their charity prefects who helped to box up and load the van with the many donations!



St Dunstan's RC Primary School, Manchester



In October children and staff at St. Dunstan's had their re-accreditation meeting for their Silver Rights Respecting School Award. The UNICEF Accreditor looked at detailed examples of the work that St. Dunstan's have done over the past year to promote children's rights. Examples of this included care drives, the Big Lent Walk and holding a whole school Day of Peace.

St. Dunstan's were thrilled to hear that they excelled on the day and exceeded the expected standard to re-establish their status as a Silver Rights Respecting School.

The accreditor was extremely impressed with the children she met, describing them as confident and empathetic with an obvious passion to uphold the rights of all children. The report states that "... children clearly feel safe and happy in school because they have a voice and are listened to and this is also understood by staff, parents and carers. ... Curriculum opportunities and Catholic Social Teaching materials support the deeper understanding of Rights and individual dignity. Global justice sits within the curriculum planning and resources".

Everyone at St Dunstan's is incredibly proud of their achievement and are now excited to begin their journey to the Rights Respecting School Gold award.



Mount Carmel RC Primary School, Manchester

During autumn term, Mount Carmel were proud to host a visit from the Department of Education.

Earlier in the term, Mount Carmel also achieved the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Silver Award. This award recognises the commitment of the whole school community in placing children's rights at the heart of their ethos, curriculum, and daily practice Carmel also achieved the.

During November, Mount Carmel has developed a Key Stage 2 Peace Patch, in the school grounds. This special area will be used by children as a place to find peace and quiet, to read and to enjoy a calm space to chat with friends. A reading shed will soon be added! There are also plans for the children to grow some vegetables in the garden later in the year.



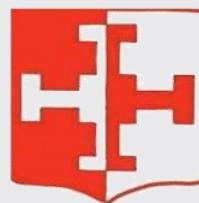
St Chad's RC Primary School, Manchester

This Autumn term has been a wonderfully enriching and joy-filled period for St. Chad's, marked by powerful moments of learning, community, faith and celebration. At the centre of the term stood the whole-school *Pilgrims of Hope Day*, a significant spiritual event inspired by Pope Francis' call to embrace the *Jubilee Year of Hope*. This special day brought together children and staff in a shared journey of reflection, faith and hope for the future. Children took part in a prayer trail, with the GIFT Team, demonstrating impressive maturity and leadership, independently guided classes through a series of themed prayer stations and activities. Each year group explored a unique Scripture-based aspect of hope, tailored to their stage of learning.

For the youngest children, the theme centred on experiencing joy and hope through God's love, with children painting "Hearts of Hope" and singing uplifting songs. Older children reflected on mercy as a doorway to hope and considered how justice, peace and kindness can shape the world around them.

Year 6 children concluded with a focus on mission, creating thoughtful "Pilgrim Pledges."

Across the curriculum, children benefited from an exceptional selection of visits that brought learning to life. Classes explored history at the Imperial War Museum, experienced creativity at Manchester Art Gallery and engaged in reflection and awe at Manchester Cathedral. These trips enriched our curriculum and sparked curiosity, discussion and inspiration among children.



St Margaret Mary's RC Primary School, Manchester

All children from Y1 to Y6 have taken part in an exciting project this half-term, that brought together younger and older generations through the joy of poetry. Classes across the school choose a poem to rehearse, recite and perform along the theme of 'celebration'. Grandparents and other elderly members of our local community were invited into school for an afternoon of tea, cake and performance poetry. The support for the event was amazing, and a wonderful afternoon was enjoyed by all.

St Matthew's RC Primary School, Manchester

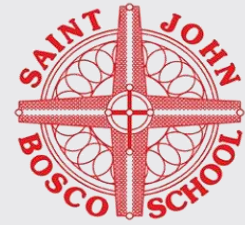
On Wednesday, 26th November, staff joined the Class of 2025 for their GCSE Certificate Presentation Evening.

The evening began with a short presentation, which included the announcement of several specially nominated awards recognising exceptional effort and achievement. After the awards, staff and families enjoyed a hot meal together with their Class of 2025, creating a wonderful opportunity to reconnect and share in their successes.

It was fantastic to see their students and families come together to celebrate this important milestone. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the evening so memorable!



During the autumn term we have welcomed a further school into the Emmaus CAT family of schools



St John Bosco's RC Primary School in Blackley joined Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust on 1 December. The school is a vibrant and welcoming community where faith and learning are at the heart of everything it does, inspiring and nurturing every child.

Rooted in the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Catholic Church, St John Bosco's is committed to providing a high-quality education supported by dedicated and caring staff. The school believes that every child is a unique gift from God and strives to help each pupil grow in wisdom, understanding, and grace.

A safe, inclusive, and supportive environment is central to the school's mission, ensuring that academic excellence, spiritual development, and personal growth go hand in hand. The curriculum is carefully designed to challenge and engage pupils, preparing them not only for academic success but also for a life of service, compassion, and leadership.

Children are encouraged to live out their faith each day, showing respect, kindness, and integrity in all that they do. St John Bosco's also benefits from a strong partnership with parents and the parish community. Together, this spirit of collaboration and shared responsibility supports every child in reaching their full potential.

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Thank you for all that you have done for our pupils and Catholic education across the years...

Gabrielle Eccles

After more than a decade of dedicated service, we extend our warmest thanks and best wishes to Gabrielle Eccles, headteacher of St Dunstan's RC Primary School, as she retires this December.

Since joining the school as headteacher in 2014, Gabrielle has led their school community with compassion, resilience, and unwavering commitment. Throughout her tenure, she has guided St Dunstan's through many challenges, supported families with care and understanding, and provided stability and reassurance to pupils and staff alike. Her leadership has helped the school grow stronger, even through times of change.

We are deeply grateful for everything Gabrielle has brought to St Dunstan's. As she begins her well-earned retirement, we wish her every happiness and success in the next chapter of her life.

From January, the stewardship of St Dunstan's will pass to a new leadership team, who will continue to build on the strong foundations Gabrielle leaves behind.

Thank you and God bless.

Best wishes as you embark on this new journey...



We would like to take this opportunity to pass on our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to colleagues from across Emmaus CAT who have taken the decision to retire at the end of this year.

Jacquie Faulkner

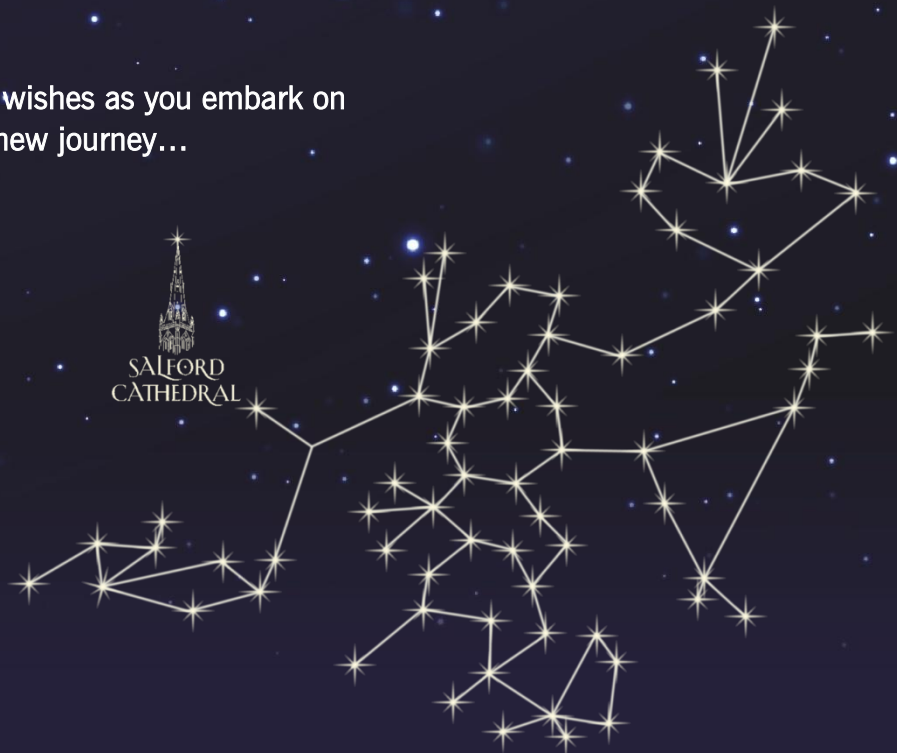
We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Jacqui for her incredible dedication as a Class Teacher and RE Lead at St Mary's RC Primary School, Failsworth. After more than 30 years of committed service to both the school and the parish community, Jacqui will be retiring this December.

Her contribution over the years has been invaluable, and she will be deeply missed by everyone at St Mary's, Failsworth.

Joanne Harty

Joanne will be retiring at the end of term after over 25 years working as a Class Teacher at Holy Rosary RC Primary School.

We thank Joanne for her contribution over the years and she will be missed.



'Where a beautiful soul has been, there is a trail of beautiful memories...'



In loving memory of colleagues and friends that we have lost



Roisin Glean

Roisin Glean, a long-standing and deeply loved member of the St John Bosco school community, passed away on 9th December following a short illness. Roisin worked at the school for 22 years initially in an admin role in the office and then in the last few years as the School Business Manager. Her relationship with the school started before this as a parent as her three children attended St John Bosco RC. She has touched the lives of countless pupils, families, and colleagues through her dedication, warmth, enthusiasm and unwavering support. She will be deeply missed.



Sarah Butel

Sarah was a force to be reckoned with. A strong, straight talking but extremely compassionate and loving lady. Sarah had suffered illness over the past couple of years but did this with privacy, grace and determination for her family and friends. Sarah was loved by every student she came across, especially the often hard-to-reach students, showing her personality and determination to support others. The pastoral team have missed her presence ever since she left Newman, and her legacy there will always continue through the love she left behind. We send all of our love and support to her family, including her husband, daughters and grandchildren, and all of her friends.



Tom Smith

Tom was a light to Newman. He was a fabulous friend, a warm smile, a supportive colleague and the most wonderful teacher. Tom knew when others needed a chat, a moment of his time or a laugh. His classroom warmth, fun and support are missed by all of the students. The students will carry on the determination he had for them, through their determination to achieve great things. He will be deeply missed by all of the Science Team and everyone who spent time with him. We send our constant love to his partner, family and many, many friends. Tom's light will never be forgotten.

'You are gone from sight, but never far, You made us better than we thought we are.'

'Rest easy, dear friend; we won't forget, The greatest mentor we ever met.'

In the Spotlight....

Primary Education News

A Season of Momentum, Innovation, and Partnership for the Emmaus CAT Primary Team

This has been a busy term for the Emmaus Primary Education Team, bringing fresh faces, new initiatives, and developing stronger collaboration across our family of schools.

September marked the arrival of three fantastic additions to the team: Rosie Eustace, Maria Kennedy, and Steph Bushi. Their combined experience has injected new insight and enthusiasm into our work with schools as specialist leaders.

We were also delighted to welcome Madeline Muldoon and Anne Clinton to the Primary Executive Leader team. With each Emmaus Executive Leader now guiding a group of schools, this creates greater alignment, clearer support systems, and deeper strategic cohesion for headteachers and governing bodies.

A heartfelt tribute goes to Pauline Butterfield, whose steadfast leadership in safeguarding - supported by Rebecca Ashworth - has strengthened practice across our schools. As Pauline prepares to retire at the end of term, we celebrate her extraordinary contribution and the legacy of robust safeguarding she leaves behind.

This term also saw the expansion of our professional learning networks. Led with dedication by Jo Lindon, groups in science, writing, and mathematics are now thriving, enriching the expertise and collaboration available to staff. These join our well-established EYFS, Safeguarding and SEND networks, which continue to go from strength to strength.

Our second cohort of Emmaus CAT ITT trainees have begun their training, with excellent support both from in school mentors and the Emmaus tutor team of experts across our schools. We thank schools supporting the recruitment of next year's cohort and the promotion of our training offer.

The Emmaus CAT Central Team also deepened connections with a number of schools this term, offering hands-on support, including during the recent CSI inspections at St Mary's Stockport and St Christopher's. We remain proud to stand alongside schools as trusted partners during pivotal moments.

One standout moment this term has been the EYFS reviews, completed in the majority of our schools. Leaders have engaged wholeheartedly, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, evidence of the drive for continuous improvement at every level.

In December, the termly headteachers' professional network gathered over 29 schools at the Village Hotel in Ashton. The energy and shared commitment in the room showcased the collective strength of our Emmaus community.

As we move into the spring term, mid-year reviews will provide an important moment to pause, reflect, and set ambitious next steps with school leaders. With so much progress already made, the team is energised for what comes next.

Emmaus CAT – Drawing New Maps of Hope...



SEND Network Meeting

November's SEND network meeting was attended by Primary and Secondary school SENCOs and colleagues, including those from most of the schools due to join Emmaus CAT during spring term. The network meetings enable the central team to provide quality CPD, help to create alignment and share strong practice. The November meeting included time for schools to visit their Whole Education *Evaluate My School* action plans, which include personalised feedback from Gary Aubin and the Whole Education team, along with links to training resources. This online tool provides an excellent overview of our current position and is ensuring that all our schools have strategic oversight of their SEND provision, with clarity around how to continue to improve. Lisa Hamer, from Shine Education, delivered high-quality training on identifying and meeting the sensory needs of pupils with SEND. This ongoing CPD is improving provision by developing teacher expertise. Information on Preparation for Adulthood was shared with schools along with good practice curriculum planning from St Mary's, Failsworth. This aspect of provision is an ongoing focus, as part of our strategic plan, with the intent of improving long-term outcomes for our pupils with SEND.

Whole Education Feedback on Emmaus CAT SEND Provision

As part of our subscription to the Whole Education SEND programme, Gary Aubin and the Whole Education SEND team provide feedback on our trust-wide SEND provision, based on the overview of our school evaluations. We were delighted with their feedback highlighting that Emmaus CAT demonstrates a strong and value-led approach to SEND and inclusion and that across our schools, there is clear evidence of strategic intent; SEND leadership is not only visible but increasingly data-informed and embedded in school improvement decisions; actions reflect an understanding that inclusive practice is a shared responsibility across leadership, curriculum and classroom delivery and that SEND leadership is becoming a consistent strength across the CAT.

SEND Conference

The SEND conference was attended by Primary and Secondary SENCOs and headteachers from our existing schools, as well as those due to join Emmaus CAT. SEND leads from Oldham and Tameside local authorities were also in attendance. The keynote speaker was Adam Sproston, Ofsted inclusion lead. Adam has been heavily involved in developing the Revised Framework for Ofsted. He delivered useful information about the framework, which is helping our leaders to shape their understanding of inclusion.

Lynsey Burridge, Virtual School Headteacher for Trafford, delivered an excellent session on looked after pupils and the importance of providing them with carefully planned support.



Finance Team News

Year-End Audit

Autumn term is historically a busy month for finance colleagues across the CAT as we close off our year-end reporting and prepare for our annual external audit. As an exempt charity, Emmaus CAT is listed with Companies House and is therefore subject to an external audit every year. This is to ensure that our published statutory accounts present a true and fair picture of our financial position and have been correctly prepared in line with statutory guidance and the Academy Trust Handbook. This review includes making sure that all relevant policies and processes have been followed by schools across the CAT and that we have upheld the seven principles of public life as custodians of public funds.

Our appointed external auditors are Cooper Parry, and the audit fieldwork was carried out by a team of 5 auditors over a 3-week period in October and November. Given the fact that Emmaus CAT had increased in size by 15 schools during the 2024-25 academic and financial year, the audit this year was busier than ever. However, we are delighted to report that there were no significant adjustments to our published accounts, and we had very few recommendations in our audit findings report. All findings were low risk or advisory. This is the report that is shared with the Department for Education.

The accounts and findings were approved at the Annual General Meeting of Members and Trustees on 10th December 2025 and will now be submitted to the DfE and Companies House. Thank you to all school-based finance staff and the central finance team for their help both during the audit process and in ensuring the financial controls framework is upheld across the year. A special vote of thanks to Cath Thompson (Head of Finance) for her knowledge, professionalism and patience in dealing with the significant amount of audit requests and being pivotal in ensuring such a favourable audit report. We are relieved that this process only happens once a year!

Finance Professional Network Meeting

We were delighted to have time to gather with School Business Managers and finance staff from across the CAT to discuss all things finance related, at the Emmaus CAT Finance Professional Network meeting on 25th November. The focus of the day was phase 3 of the finance strategy. This involved training on compliance updates, including consistent financial reporting, support for schools via business partnering and payroll and a valuable opportunity to gather feedback on the role of our central transactions team. It was lovely to hear such positive feedback about the team and to understand system developments that would benefit our schools.

The day also involved an update from our People and Culture team about CPD and career pathways for our highly valued School Business Managers, Administration and Finance staff. We were pleased to welcome Lee Herridge from ISCBL (Institute of School Business Leaders) who talked to all delegates about various pathways and training available for School Business Leaders, including the new operational excellence framework which links closely to school development plans.

Feedback received from School Business Managers was that the day was really useful in strengthening understanding of systems and processes and to understand the overall strategy; they appreciated having the time outside of school to consider the importance of their role and receive valuable training.



Operations Team News

Estates – Capital Investment

This year there has seen significant capital investment to improve the environment of our schools. From large extension and remodelling projects to refurbished classrooms and external playground works, all these projects make a huge difference to the learning environment for our pupils. Thank you to all our schools that have supported and accommodated these works.

Before



After



Mount Carmel EYFS Refurbishment

Operations Team News

IT Services

There have been some exciting developments across IT, during the autumn term. In September, 16 schools moved to Arbor for MIS, bringing the total number of schools using Arbor to 18. In April 2026, 12 more schools will move to Arbor, which will bring further alignment across the CAT.

Microsoft 365 is being rolled out across schools, 9 schools have now moved to a single central Microsoft tenancy which is enabling stronger collaboration and communication. This will be accelerated in 2026 with many more schools migrating to the Microsoft tenancy.

Over the last year, Emmaus has recruited additional resources within the IT team to ensure there is capacity to support schools across the CAT. The team is supporting schools to transform IT and one school where this has had a major impact is St Francis RC Primary School.

IT Transformation at St Francis RC Primary School... At the start of the Autumn term 2024, St Francis RC Primary School faced a major IT challenge when its previous Managed Service Provider abruptly stopped providing support without any notice. This sudden withdrawal left the school without essential IT services and created significant disruption. The situation was further complicated by several critical issues discovered during the transition to in-house IT support. Much of the school's hardware was outdated and unsupported, creating security and reliability risks. The air conditioning in the server room also failed, causing the on-premises server to overheat and fail completely.

Emmaus CAT IT Services responded immediately to stabilise the environment and implement a modern, future-proof solution. On-premises servers were removed, and the school transitioned to a fully cloud-based infrastructure using Microsoft 365. A complete data cabling project consolidated five cabinets into a single optimised communications cabinet in the server room. The refreshed network now meets the Department for Education's Digital Standards and there is now improved performance and resilience across IT in the school, with fast reliable connectivity.

Safeguarding and compliance were also strengthened. A new backup strategy was introduced to ensure full system recovery capability, replacing the previous inadequate approach. In addition, Emmaus CAT supported the successful onboarding of Arbor as the school's new Management Information System, improving data management and streamlining administrative processes.

This transformation has delivered a secure, scalable, and resilient IT environment aligned with DfE Digital Standards. Pupils now have seamless access to devices and staff benefit from reliable systems. Emmaus IT continues to provide proactive support and monitoring, ensuring technology remains reliable and secure. Moving forward, Emmaus CAT IT will be working closely with the school leadership team to ensure that end user devices are refreshed on a rolling basis, in line with available budget and the DfE's Digital Standards for devices.

Welcome to the Central Team

Why is our central team growing? Emmaus CAT continues to demonstrate to the Department for Education that we have the capacity within our central team to support schools in our footprint. This includes schools in challenging circumstances as well as schools who join Emmaus as part of the Diocesan Growth plan. We are continuing to add new and exciting roles to the central team so that we can continue in our mission of building a strong flourishing Catholic Academy Trust.



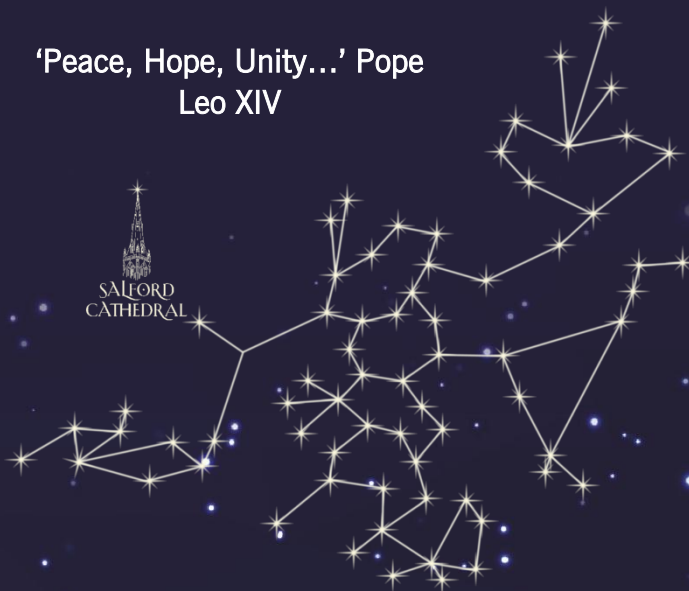
Olivia Stockdale

Performance and Data Manager

Olivia joined Emmaus CAT as Performance and Data Manager in September. She brings extensive experience from local authority roles, including positions with Kent County Council and the MHCLG's Supporting Families Programme. Most recently, she worked as a School Performance Senior Analyst at Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, where she led the production and coordination of data and analysis to support planning, performance monitoring, and service improvement.

Olivia has a strong track record of supporting schools by identifying data needs, advising on complex datasets, and providing technical guidance. Her background gives her excellent data analysis skills and specialist knowledge of education systems, which she now applies in her role at Emmaus CAT.

'Peace, Hope, Unity...' Pope
Leo XIV



Jenny Knights

HR and OD Business Partner

Jenny joined Emmaus CAT as HR & Operational Development Business Partner in September. She is a Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and has over 20 years' experience in HR and organisational development roles within Higher Education, following earlier work with Manchester Children's Hospitals supporting medical staff.

Jenny's role focuses on supporting the delivery of the CAT's People and Culture Strategy. She is looking forward to developing her career within a new educational setting and contributing to the growth of a healthy Catholic organisation where staff feel valued, work collaboratively, and are supported to develop and progress.

Dave Kemp

Head of IT Services

Dave joined Emmaus CAT as Head of IT Services in September and brings over 20 years' experience in IT within the education sector. Previously, he was IT & Data Lead at another multi-academy trust, where he led large-scale IT projects and championed emerging technologies, including AI, to improve efficiency across schools.

Dave brings strong technical, strategic, and leadership skills to his role and is committed to building resilient IT systems that support teaching and learning. He is passionate about developing a skilled, collaborative team to deliver high-quality IT support across the CAT.



Sophie Gardiner

Senior Governance Partner

Sophie joined Emmaus CAT in September as Senior Governance Partner. She is a qualified Academy Governance Professional with over ten years' experience supporting governors across primary, secondary, and sixth-form settings. Previously, she was Senior Clerk for a Local Authority Governor Services team, overseeing recruitment, development, and quality assurance of clerks.

Sophie is a passionate advocate for effective governance and its role in driving school improvement and helping every child reach their full potential.

Maria Kennedy

Specialist Subject Leader (Curriculum and Pedagogy)

Maria joined the Emmaus CAT Central Education Team in September as Specialist Subject Leader for Curriculum & Pedagogy. With over 10 years' experience as a Curriculum Leader and former Head of School in a Catholic Federation, she is passionate about developing inclusive curricula that prepare pupils for the next stage of their education.

Maria focuses on understanding contextual barriers, designing research-informed strategies, and aligning school improvement priorities with classroom practice. She also develops subject leadership structures and supports the ongoing professional development of staff to ensure lasting impact.



Steph Bushi

Specialist Subject Leader (Curriculum and Pedagogy)

Steph joined the Emmaus CAT Central Education Team in September as Specialist Subject Leader for Curriculum & Pedagogy. A highly experienced senior leader, her career includes roles as Teaching and Learning Lead, Deputy Head, and Head of School.

Steph is committed to excellence in education, driving improvements in teaching, curriculum design, and inclusive practice. She supports colleagues in using evidence-informed strategies to raise standards, foster a love of learning, and promote equity, high expectations, and pupil well-being.



Anne Clinton

Executive Leader (Primary) [Secondment]

Anne is currently on secondment with the Emmaus CAT Central Education Team as an Executive Leader. With over 30 years' experience in Catholic primary education in Greater Manchester, she has served as Executive Headteacher of two schools and as a Diocesan Leader of Education in Salford.

Anne is passionate about helping school communities reach their full potential, using collaborative, compassionate leadership to drive sustainable change. She focuses on building strong teams, developing leaders, and fostering a culture of trust, high expectations, and accountability to support both staff and pupils to thrive.



Rosie Eustace

Specialist Subject Leader (Inclusion)

Rosie joined the Emmaus CAT Central Education Team in September as Specialist Subject Leader for Inclusion. With over 18 years' experience in primary education, including 14 years in SEND and supporting Looked After Children, she has also worked in local authority services for Care Experienced Young People.

Rosie focuses on driving sustainable improvements and building capacity in schools to ensure all children thrive.

Madeline Muldoon

Executive Leader (Primary) [Secondment]

Madeline, headteacher of St Kentigern's RC Primary in Fallowfield, Manchester, is currently on secondment with the Emmaus CAT Central Education Team as an Executive Leader. With over 22 years' experience in Catholic education, she focuses on raising standards through evidence-informed practice, staff development, and a strong focus on pupil outcomes. Her collaborative and compassionate leadership fosters positive, nurturing school cultures where staff and pupils thrive.



Jenny Ewart

Senior Finance Business Partner

Jenny began her career in accountancy before spending 10 years in commercial banking. Since 2018, she has worked in the education sector, including with another education trust. At Emmaus CAT, Jenny supports the finance team, managing a portfolio of schools' budgets, forecasts, and accounts, and assists with onboarding new primary schools.

Sarah Beirne

Finance Officer

Sarah, an ACCA-qualified finance professional, has experience in financial services, construction, and bookkeeping. She joined Emmaus CAT in December 2025 as a Finance Officer, bringing her expertise to support the central finance team.



Spring Term Key Term Dates

Tuesday 6th January

Chair of Local Governing Body Professional Network

Thursday 8th January

Transition Development Board

Tuesday 13th January

Designated Safeguarding Leaders Professional Network

Thursday 15th January

Governor Training – Suspensions and Exclusions

Tuesday 20th January

Secondary Attendance Professional Learning Network
Deputy Headteachers Professional Learning Network

Wednesday 21st January

Primary PTI – Writing Professional Learning Network

Thursday 22nd January

Governor Training – Safeguarding and SEND
Primary PTI – Music Professional Learning Network

Tuesday 27th January

HR Training – Appraisal and Capability Policies)

Wednesday 28th January

ECT Professional Learning Network
Safer Recruitment Training

Thursday 29th January

Designated Safeguarding Leaders Professional Network

Tuesday 3rd February

Governor Training – HR
Secondary Behaviour Professional Learning Network
Research Champions Professional Learning Network

Wednesday 4th February

EYFS Professional Network
Primary Maths Professional Learning Network
Aspiring Pastoral Leaders Professional Learning Network

Thursday 5th February

Reading Development Board

Friday 6th February

Emmaus CAT Inset Day

Tuesday 10th February

Primary and Secondary Headteachers Update
Secondary English Professional Learning Network

Wednesday 11th February

Pedagogy Development Board

Tuesday 24th February

Teaching Assistants Professional Learning Network

Wednesday 25th February

Secondary Headteachers Professional Network Meeting
IT Professional Network Meeting
Secondary Behaviour CPD

Thursday 26th February

Secondary Science Professional Learning Network

Tuesday 3rd March

Finance Professional Network Meeting
Secondary EBSA Professional Learning Network

Wednesday 4th March

Primary Headteachers Professional Network Meeting
Aspiring Pastoral Leaders Professional Learning Network

Tuesday 10th March

Primary Science Professional Learning Network

Wednesday 11th March

Primary Writing Professional Learning Network

Thursday 12th March

Secondary Maths Professional Learning Network

Thursday 19th March

Reading Development Board

Tuesday 24th March

Secondary Personal Development Professional Learning Network
ECT Professional Learning Network

Wednesday 25th March

SEND Professional Network Meeting

Thursday 26th March

Pedagogy Development Board

Tuesday 31st March

Primary and Secondary Headteachers Updates

Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust... an educational constellation



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