



Kent
Catholic
Schools'
Partnership



'Academies in Christ'
Part of the Archdiocese of Southwark

KENT CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' PARTNERSHIP

NEWSLETTER

Cover art by Bryony, Year 13 student
at St John's Catholic Comprehensive School, Gravesend

IN THIS ISSUE

03

A message from Annemarie,
our Chief Executive

05

A message from Caroline,
our Chair of the Trust Board

07

Our Catholic Life
Including:

- A warm welcome to our two newest schools!
- Jubilee Pilgrimage Update
- Archbishop John Wilson's Advent Reflection
- A Christmas message from Bishop Paul Hendricks
- Trust event updates

15

Winter Showcase:
Design-a-Christmas Card
Competition 2025

28

www.kcsp.org.uk
Introducing our new-look
website

29

Trust event dates for 2025/26

30

Join our Team!



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

As Christmas approaches, we pause to celebrate the wonderful birth of Jesus—our source of hope, peace, joy, and love—and to reflect on the many blessings and achievements of this year. It is through Him that we understand our mission and values, and it is His light that guides our work in providing excellent education for every child in our care.

This year began with our Beginning of the Year Mass (page 11 and pictured below), a beautiful moment of unity and prayer for the year ahead. We were then delighted to welcome leaders of Catholic MATs from across the country to our CMAT 'immersion' Day (page 13) at which we shared out intentional strategic work across the Trust and our formation programme.



Recently we were again inspired at our School Leaders' Annual Conference (page 12 and pictured above, right), at which guest speaker David Wells reminded us to look for the joy in all we do— and to support all to know they belong in our



schools - a message we hope is truly palpable in our school communities as we continue our mission.

Looking forward to 2026, we are excited to host our Literacy Festival for secondary students and our Summer Leaders' Retreat, and we hope these events will bring much joy to all who attend, as well as provide opportunities for creativity, reflection, and renewal.

We are also delighted to showcase the incredible creativity of our pupils in this year's Design-a-Christmas Card Competition, featured on pages 16 - 28. The winning designs appear on our Trust Christmas cards and E-Card. A huge thank you to everyone who took part—the standard of entries was truly outstanding!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE



All of these events, alongside the incredible daily work which takes place in our schools, show the strength of our community and our shared commitment to excellence. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to every member of our Trust family, our school leaders, teachers, support staff, all our volunteers, governance committee members, directors, and our central team, for your dedication, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to our mission.

Thank you also to our pupils, parents, and carers, for your trust and partnership; together, we create vibrant, faith-filled communities where every child can thrive. Your efforts make a profound difference every single day.

Wishing you a joyful Christmas and a New Year filled with hope, love, and blessings.

Annemarie

Annemarie Whittle
CEO

awhittle@kcsp.org.uk

*May the Lord bless you
and keep you,
May he cause his light
to shine upon you
and give you peace.*





A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE TRUST BOARD CAROLINE STOCKMANN

Well, it does not seem long ago that I was writing my first Christmas message as Chair of KCSP! The time has just flown!

Last year I was reflecting on this busy time of year, and how we need to boost our resilience as much as we can. That's probably even more important now, as the world stage continues to be challenging and we rarely hear any messages of hope and cheer. On 30 November I ran a Taizé evening again in our parish, and it really helped me to reflect on those very messages, however. Through music and prayer, I was able to both prepare myself spiritually for the coming of Christ, as well as think about how prepared I am myself (I mean spiritually, as opposed to sorting all the Christmas cards and gifts!). That's a helpful way to think about this Advent time, and maybe even to start to think about resolutions for the New Year...

And on the topic of Christmas cards... Despite the horrendous costs for sending cards overseas, and despite the time it takes to write cards, I do feel strongly that they are an important way of connecting with people and sharing the message of the coming of our

Saviour. I posted almost 100, and wrote a similar number to give by hand, and it's a little ritual I hope I won't be convinced to give up on any time soon. But I note that it is harder and harder to find 'religious' cards, and occasionally I have settled for other cards – but they are always in support of a charity. It was therefore wonderful to see that so many of the designs our pupils and students created for this year's Christmas Card competition (pages 16 – 28) including Melita's beautiful design below, are about the joyful birth of our Saviour! I also have learnt that you need to get your stamps early if you want Christmas ones – and it is nice to see that they are 'religious' ones this year, despite all we complain about with our postal services!



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE TRUST BOARD

CAROLINE STOCKMANN

Do you have any traditions that you come back to each year? I think Catholics tend to like ritual – well, most humans do. And it's interesting when you talk to children when they get older/become adults, as there are things that really stick in their minds as special that you didn't even really notice yourself. Or it might be a particular ornament, or crib figure that brings back fond memories. So, I hope this year you will be creating nice memories for the future, and that you will be able to find some peace and tranquility through this hectic season – to be able to truly reflect on what the Christ-child represents in our lives.



Before I close, I must also say how delighted I was to attend St Gregory's, Tunbridge Wells' carol service on 09 December. It was lovely to hear the young people singing and playing, and it was a special treat to have pupils from St Augustine's Primary in Tunbridge Wells attend and sing, for the first time.

My Christmas prayer to share with you is as follows:

God of Christmas and of every day, giver of all good gifts, we thank you for the many ways you have blessed us. Bless also those we love who are not with us. With gratitude and love, we remember your humble birth into our lives, and we pray for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Make of our hearts a crib in which to place the Christ child. Keep us safe and close to you in the year ahead. For you are our Christmas Lord, now and forever.

Amen

Thank you for being you, and take care and God bless,

Caroline

Caroline Stockmann

Chair of the Trust Board

cstockmann@kcsp.org.uk

KCSP: OUR CATHOLIC LIFE



Our distinctive Catholic ethos is at the very heart of our Trust and family of schools. In this issue, we are delighted to share news of recent events, including the latest schools to join our family, our Beginning of the Year Mass, Annual Trust Conference, and CMAT Immersion Day, Archbishop John Wilson's Advent Reflection for 2025, a special Christmas message from Bishop Paul Hendricks, and also the final update of the Jubilee Candle of Hope's pilgrimage journey to all Catholic schools across Kent and Medway!

A WARM WELCOME TO THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF OUR CATHOLIC FAMILY!

We are thrilled to welcome St Thomas More Catholic Primary School in Chatham and St William of Perth Catholic Primary School in Rochester to our Partnership. Joining us in September, these fantastic schools are now the 31st and 32nd members of our growing family.



To mark the occasion, our CEO Annemarie Whittle and Caroline Stockmann, Chair of the Trust Board, visited both schools to present Headteachers Paula Le Breton (St Thomas More) and James Willis (St William of Perth) with a Trust welcome plaque. During their visits, they enjoyed meeting staff, governance committee members, and pupils while touring the schools.

We look forward to working together, sharing expertise, and learning from one another as we continue to provide exceptional education across our community. A very warm welcome to you both!



UPDATE!

JUBILEE 2025



The Jubilee Candle: Pilgrimage of Hope to all Catholic schools in Kent and Medway has now been completed!

As a key part of the series of events for the Jubilee year, and as featured in our previous newsletters and our Trust website, Archbishop John tasked KCSP CEO, Annemarie Whittle, to visit every Catholic school located within Kent and Medway over the course of 2025, with a special Jubilee Candle of Hope.

When visiting each school, Annemarie, together with Joanne Burford, the Trust's Catholic Life and RE Adviser, joined pupils and staff for a special Mass or celebration of the word.

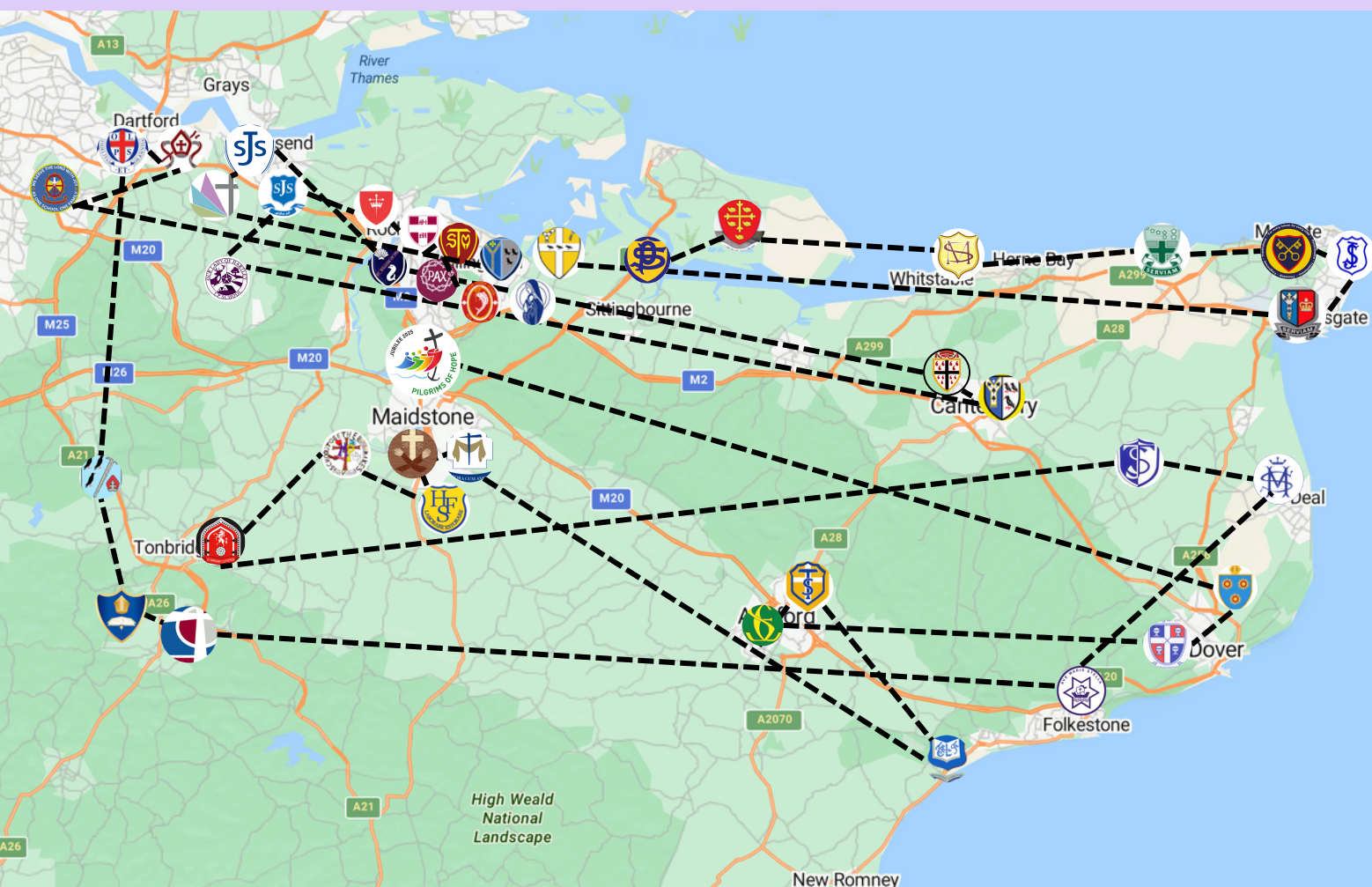
The Candle's journey was completed between January and September 2025; 41 schools were visited, almost 750 miles travelled, and nearly 16,000 pupils and staff involved. It was an incredible pilgrimage and we thank everyone who was able to be a part of it. You can view the candle's full journey on the next page!



The Jubilee Candle: Pilgrimage of Hope to all Catholic schools in Kent and Medway



The journey: 41 schools visited,
750 miles travelled,
16,000 pupils and staff involved



OUR BEGINNING OF THE YEAR MASS

The Trust held its annual Beginning of the Year Mass at Aylesford Priory on Friday 25 September 2025; it was, as always, a wonderful, uplifting morning attended by 32 schools from across the Trust and Kent and Medway.

Canon Victor Darlington, Episcopal Vicar for the South-East Area of the Archdiocese of Southwark, celebrated Mass for us this year, and pupils and colleagues from across our family of Catholic schools took part by reading, signing, and leading prayers,



Our grateful thanks go to the Priory for their generous hospitality, to everyone who supported and contributed to a wonderful day, and to Canon Victor, and all the clergy, for leading us today and all days; for their guidance and for their prayers.



This year's Mass also included a special liturgical dance, brilliantly performed by pupils of English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School in Strood (pictured above).



SCHOOL LEADERS' ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

A Day of Inspiration and Strategic Vision

On 25th November, the Trust proudly hosted its School Leaders' Annual Conference, bringing together 90 delegates from across our community. Attendees included Headteachers, Business Managers, Chairs of Local Governance Committees, Directors, clergy, the central Trust team, and colleagues from the Education Service — a truly collaborative gathering.

The day featured an inspiring keynote address from David Wells, whose thought-provoking insights set the tone for meaningful discussion and reflection. Delegates also engaged deeply with the Trust's Strategic Intent and explored the ambitious vision outlined in Strategy 2030, shaping the future of education within our Trust.

The event was more than a conference — it was an opportunity to connect, share ideas, and reaffirm our shared mission. The atmosphere was uplifting and engaging, leaving participants energized and united as we look ahead to the next chapter of our journey. Watch this space for updates about our Strategy 2030!



KCSP HOSTS CMAT IMMERSION DAY

We were delighted to welcome the CMAT Network to our Head Office near Maidstone, Kent, for a special Immersion Day on Friday 3rd October.

CEO Annemarie Whittle, alongside the Trust team, hosted nearly 40 senior leaders from CMATs and Dioceses across the UK. The day was dedicated to sharing practical strategies, sparking innovation, and encouraging collaborative dialogue — all with the shared goal of enriching the lives of our children and young people.

The day began with a beautiful Mass celebrated by Fr Piotr Kucharski of St Thomas' Parish, Sevenoaks, and Deacon Ian Black of St Francis Parish, Maidstone. Music and singing were provided by the talented students of St Simon Stock School, led by Elizabeth Francis, Subject Leader of Music, and Sile Joyce, School Chaplain.

Throughout the day, attendees participated in a series of engaging workshops, including:

- Topical Talk by The Economist's Educational Foundation, led by Steff Young
- Primary Science with Tom Holloway from The Primary Science Teaching Trust
- A range of KCSP-led sessions covering Formation, SEND, School Improvement, CPD and SCITT, and Governance

It was a truly positive and productive event. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended and contributed to making the day such a success!



ADVENT 2025 REFLECTION



FROM THE METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP OF SOUTHWARK
THE MOST REVEREND JOHN WILSON



This Advent, Archbishop John invites us to reflect on the “astounding truth” that Jesus is Emmanuel: God with us, God beside us, God within us. In his message, he reminds us that this is not poetry but power — Christ entered our humanity so we might share in his divinity.

The Archbishop speaks of the beauty of the Incarnation: God draws near, shares our joys and sorrows, and opens heaven to earth. He calls each of us by name and invites us to walk in his light.

Mary is our guide this season—the Christ she held in her arms is the same Christ who gives himself to us in the Eucharist. Under the appearance of bread and wine, heaven touches earth, and we meet our God face to face.

Archbishop John encourages us to rejoice and adore the mystery of Emmanuel this Advent: Jesus is with us, always.

You can view Archbishop John’s full message by **clicking here** or on the image above.



A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

**WORDS FROM BISHOP PAUL HENDRICKS
AUXILIARY BISHOP FOR THE KENT AREA OF SOUTHWARK**



Dear brothers and sisters,

A few days ago, I was reflecting on the past year, with some colleagues from Churches Together in England. We had been encouraged by something we had heard at a national meeting earlier in the year. Research by the Bible Society, based on surveys between 2018 and 2024, has shown a new interest in the Christian faith and an increasing church attendance – particularly on the part of young adults, especially young men. The report labelled this the ‘Quiet Revival’ – and a noticeable increase has also been observed in our Southwark parishes and noted by our bishops nationally, in the number of people coming forward to join our RCIA groups over the past year or so.

How can we all respond to this very welcome development? What can we do, to ensure that those who are attracted to the Christian faith will find a welcome and an assurance that they have come to the right place?

It seems to me that we can do this best, by recognising with joy the great gift of faith in Jesus, that we can so often take for granted. This season of Advent is a great opportunity. In the readings at Mass, we have been uniting ourselves in spirit, with the longing of those in Old Testament times, for the coming of the Messiah. As Jesus said (Luke 10:23-24), *‘Happy the eyes that see what you see, for I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.’* By deeply appreciating how much the world needed God, *‘When the appointed time came and God sent his Son’* (Galatians 4:4), we can be prompted to renew our faith in Jesus and our commitment to follow him as his faithful disciples.

In this way, we can help to make sure that those who venture into our churches and parish communities will find the welcome and the inspiration that they need, to continue on the journey of faith that they have begun. And we ourselves will be best prepared, to celebrate a joyful and truly blessed Christmas.

With my prayers and best wishes,

Bishop Paul

Design a Christmas Card Competition 2025



This term, the Trust hosted its annual Design-a-Christmas Card Competition, open to pupils of all ages. The winning designs are showcased on the following pages and feature on this year's Trust Christmas cards and E-Card. Each winner has received a special certificate and a book token in recognition of their wonderful creativity!

This year, we're also delighted to share a gallery of all shortlisted entries. The standard was so high, we couldn't keep them to ourselves! A huge thank you to everyone who took part—the quality of the designs was, as always, truly outstanding!

Christmas Cheer

WINNER: KS1



Mariam
St Richard's Primary, Dover

Christmas Cheer

WINNER: LKS2



Lilly
St Benedict's Primary, Lordswood

Christmas Cheer

WINNER: UKS2



Franco
St John's Primary, Gravesend

Christmas Cheer

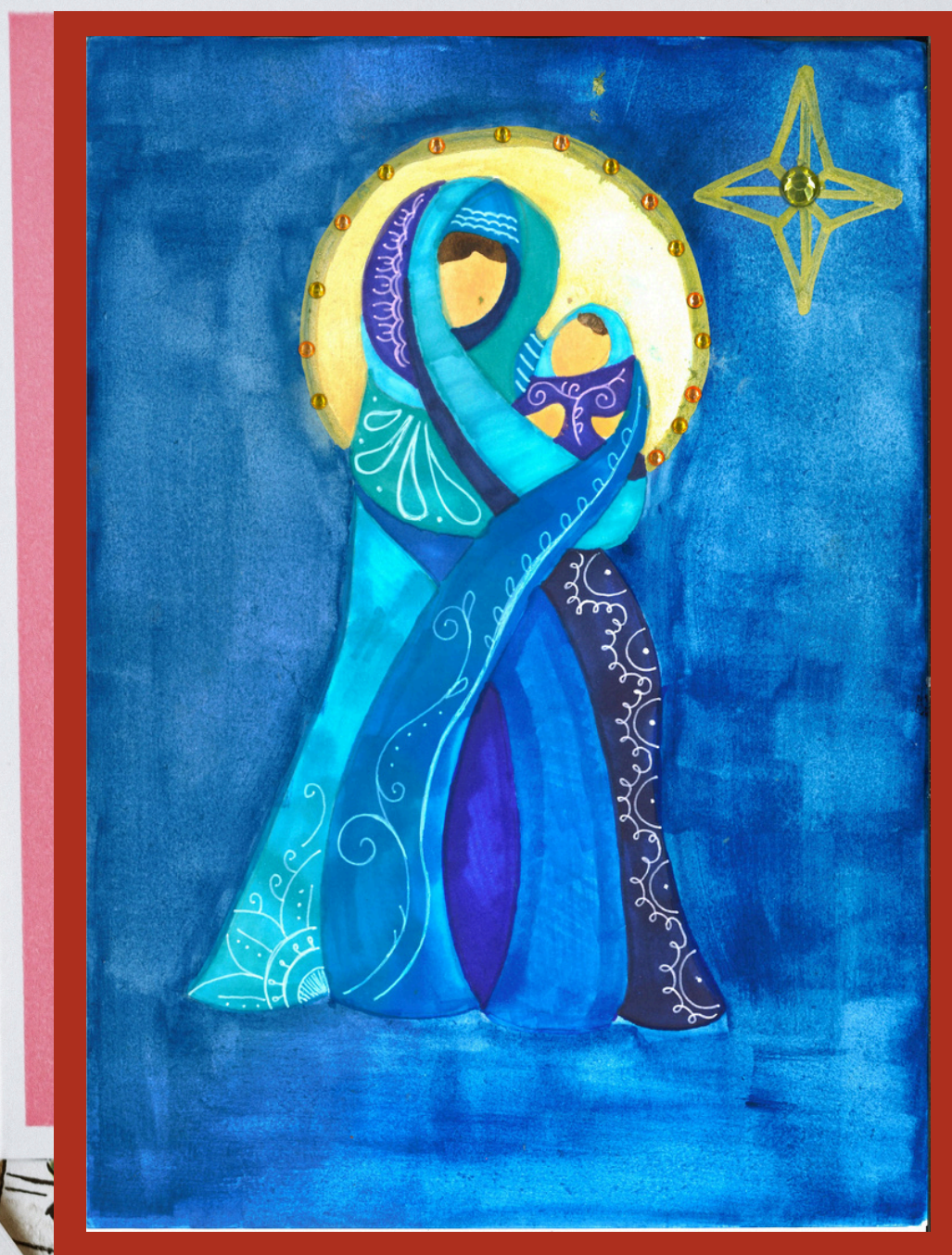
WINNER: KS3



Melita
St Anselm's Secondary, Canterbury

Christmas Cheer

WINNER: KS4/5



Bryony
St John's Secondary, Gravesend

SHORTLISTED ENTRIES



Lily, St Thomas' Primary,
Sevenoaks



Abhipriya, St Simon of England
Primary, Ashford



Aiden, St Richard's
Primary, Dover



Harrison, St
Richard's Primary,
Dover



Cub, St Joseph's Primary,
Broadstairs



Francis, St Augustine's Primary,
Tunbridge Wells



Gabriel, St Joseph's Primary,
Northfleet



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SHORTLISTED ENTRIES



Huey, St Teresa's Primary,
Ashford



Isla, St Augustine's Primary,
Hythe



Marta, St Richard's Primary,
Dover



Aavya, St Bartholomew's
Primary, Swanley



Alice, St Simon of England
Primary, Ashford



Amiya, St Margaret Clitherow
Primary, Tonbridge



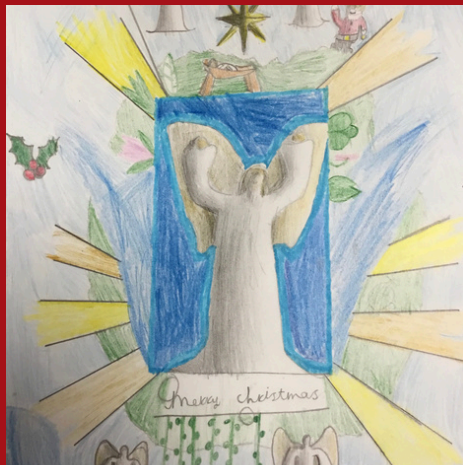
Ashley, St Benedict's
Primary, Lordswood



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CHRISTMAS 2025 | 23

SHORTLISTED ENTRIES



Austin, St John's Primary,
Gravesend



Henry, St Teresa's Primary,
Ashford



Iona, St Richard's
Primary, Dover



Zac, St Michael. Primary,
Chatham



Leanne, St Joseph's Primary,
Aylesham



Orla, St Richard's Primary,
Dover



Victoria, St Richard's Primary,
Dover

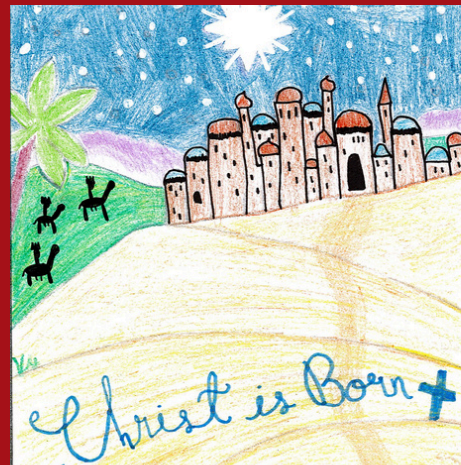


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and Best Wishes
for a Happy New Year

SHORTLISTED ENTRIES



Abonee, St Edward's Primary,
Sheerness



Anaiya, St Joseph's Primary,
Northfleet



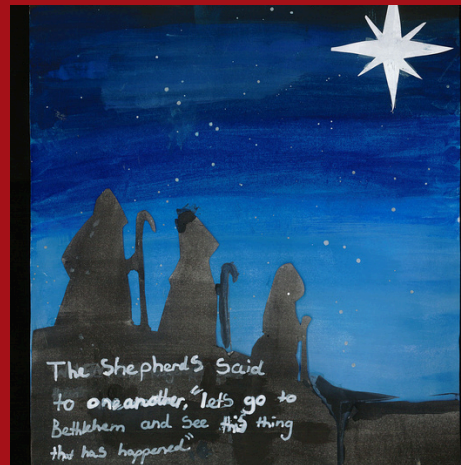
Caleb, St Joseph's Primary,
Broadstairs



Ethan, St Mary's Primary,
Deal



Ella, St Peter's Primary,
Sittingbourne



Ellie, St Mary's Primary,
Deal



Erika, St Bartholomew's
Primary, Swanley

SHORTLISTED ENTRIES



Indi, St Margaret Clitherow
Primary, Tonbridge



Jackson, St Augustine's
Primary, Hythe



James, St Teresa's
Primary, Ashford



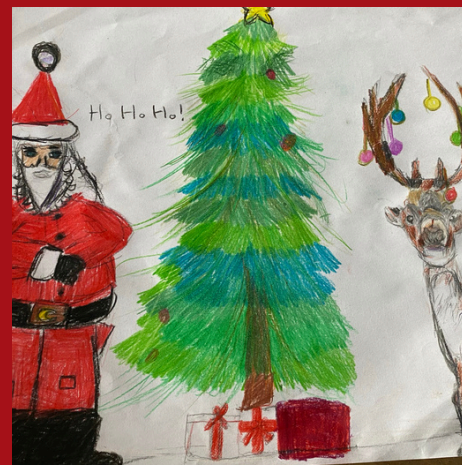
Nellie, St John's Primary,
Gravesend



Jude, St Gregory's Primary,
Margate



Kimmie, St Michael Primary,
Chatham



Max, St Thomas' Primary,
Sevenoaks

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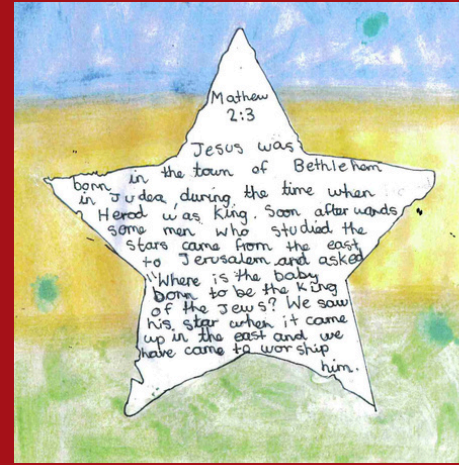
SHORTLISTED ENTRIES



Sienna, St Gregory's Primary,
Margate



Sofia, St Peter's Primary,
Sittingbourne



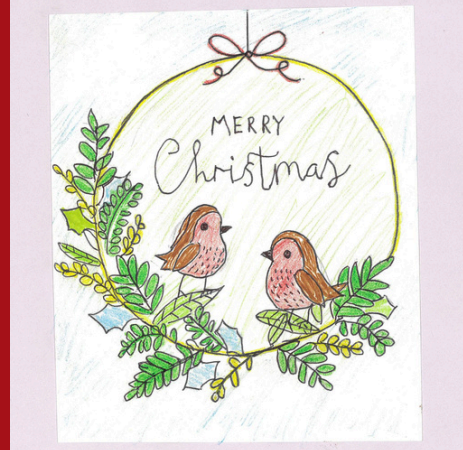
Sonia, St Joseph's Primary,
Aylesham



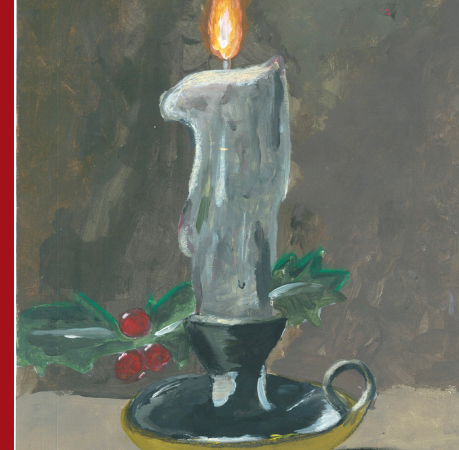
Holly, St Simon Stock
Secondary, Maidstone



Angel, St Gregory's Secondary,
Tunbridge Wells



Ann, Ursuline College,
Westgate on Sea



Evie, St Anselm's Secondary,
Canterbury

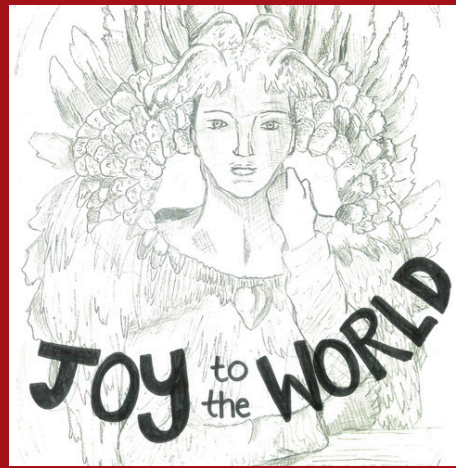
SHORTLISTED ENTRIES



Sophia, St Gregory's Secondary,
Tunbridge Wells



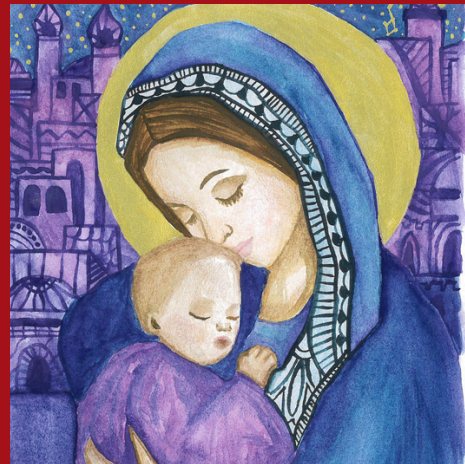
Daria, St John's Secondary,
Gravesend



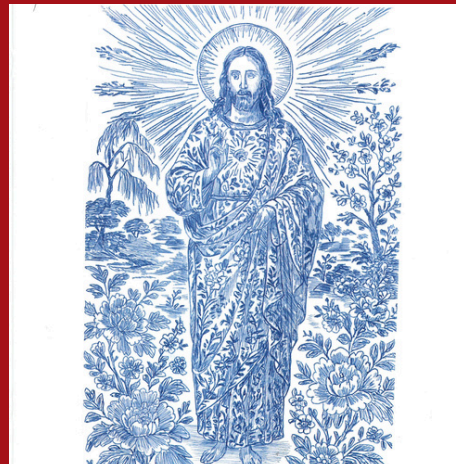
Emma Dawn, St Edmund's
Secondary, Dover



Lara, St Simon Stock Secondary,
Maidstone



Libby, Ursuline College,
Westgate on Sea



Sophia, St Edmund's
Secondary, Dover

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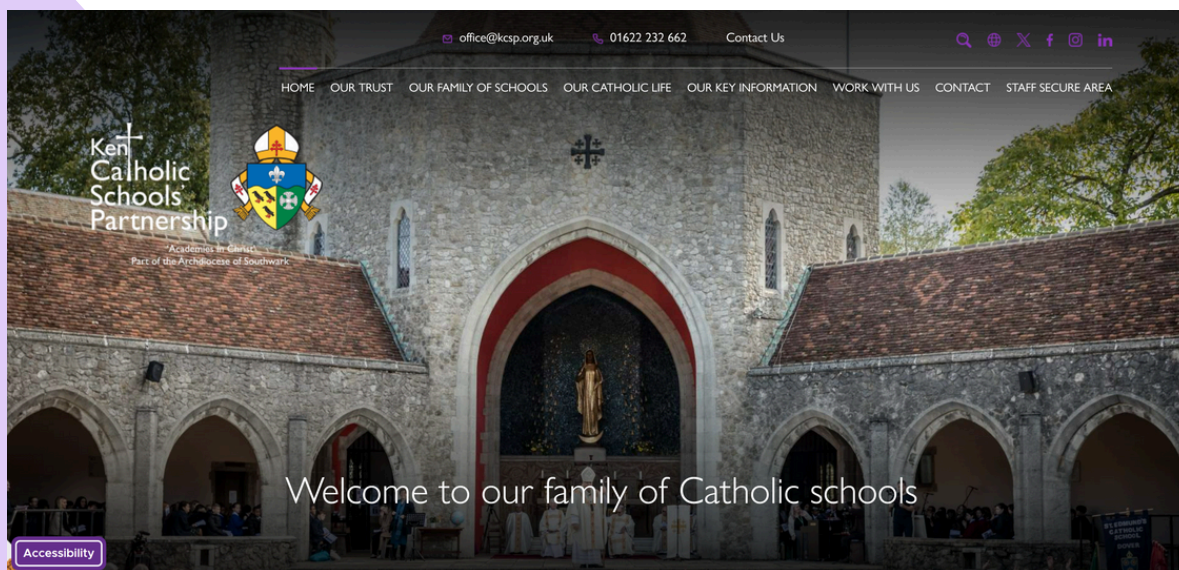


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Christmas Greetings
and Best Wishes
for a Happy
New Year

www.kcsp.org.uk

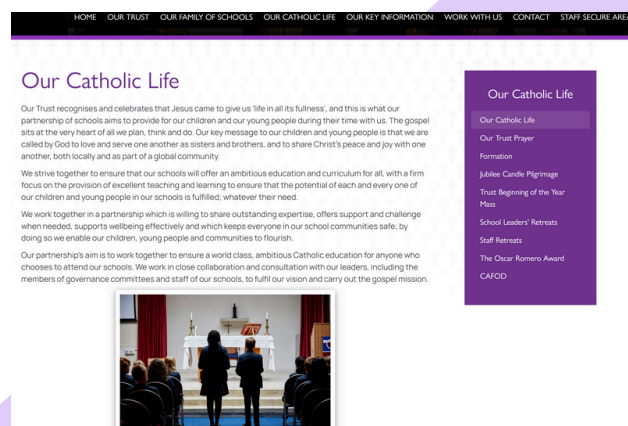
Our Website Has a Brand-New Look!



We're excited to announce the launch of our newly redesigned Trust website! The refreshed design makes it easier to find information, stay connected, and celebrate the great work happening across our schools!

In addition, the majority of our schools' websites will be relaunched between now and the end of the academic year. These updates will reflect our new branding, support marketing efforts, and improve communication with families and communities.

Visit the new Trust website today and explore our updated look:
www.kcsp.org.uk



We'd love to hear your thoughts! Please share your feedback on the new website design and features by emailing us at: **office@kcsp.org.uk**

Trust events 2025/26

**23 February
2026**

Trust Staff Development Day

**18 June
2026**

Secondary schools Literacy Festival





Join our Team!

We are looking for talented and inspirational people to join our Trust.

Please take a look at our website vacancies page for the latest opportunities:

<https://www.kcsp.org.uk/Work/Vacancies/>





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Foundation (Practicing Catholic) Local Governance Committee Members needed!

Use your skills
to shape the
future of the
next generation.

We are committed to
enhancing the diversity of our
Governance to ensure we are
reflective of the communities in
which we serve.

A committee member is
strategic rather than
operational; members are
not involved with the day
to day running of a school

A committee member
supports and challenges
the school's leadership
team to drive school
improvement.

Please contact us to discover more about this exciting opportunity
governance@kcspp.org.uk or use the QR code above.



Agenda for both events:

Arrival from 16:30

Session 1 starting at 17:00

Networking at 18:00

Chair Trust Board and LGC Chair Q&A at 18:15

Session 2 starting 18:30

CSI / Ofsted Q&A 20:00

Finish 20:30

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KCSP GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE 2026

JOIN US

**17 MARCH 2026: ST SIMON STOCK CATHOLIC
SECONDARY SCHOOL, MAIDSTONE, ME16 0JP**

Session 1: CSI Inspections, Catholic Education, and the updated Religious Education Directory (RED) - KCSP

Chair of the Trust Board Q&A

Session 2: Supporting disciplinary panels and the legal requirements - HR Connect

**25 MARCH 2026: ST ANSELM'S CATHOLIC SECONDARY
SCHOOL, CANTERBURY, CT1 3EN**

Session 1: SEND strategy and the changing landscape - KCSP

Chair of the Trust Board Q&A

Session 2: The new Ofsted framework and its implications for governance - NGA

Book your place [here](#) or via the QR code below



Have a wonderful Christmas break, see you all next term!

**The KCSP Easter newsletter will be published on
02 April 2026.**

You can find all our latest newsletters on our Trust website [here](#).

Please visit the [news](#) page on our website to keep up to date with the very latest stories and updates from our schools throughout term time.





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Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership is an exempt charity and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under company registration number 08176019 at registered address: Barham Court, Teston, Kent, ME18 5BZ.