



Head of RE

Candidate Information September 2026

A message from the Headteacher

September 2026

Dear Colleague

Thank you for taking the time to consider the opportunity to become Head of Religious Education at Cardinal Newman Catholic High School.

Just over six months ago, I found myself in a position very similar to yours. I was interested in the role of headteacher at Cardinal Newman, but naturally wanted to find out as much as I could before making such an important decision. Like many prospective candidates, I looked at the information available publicly, read inspection reports, considered performance data and tried to build as accurate a picture as possible of the school I hoped to lead. If you are considering applying for this role, I suspect you may be doing exactly the same thing.

The information that is readily available presents what I would describe as a somewhat mixed picture. Our most recent Ofsted inspection judged the school to be Good in all areas, which is something of which we are proud. However, that inspection took place in 2022 and we expect to be inspected again under the new framework this academic year. Likewise, our most recent Diocesan inspection resulted in Outstanding judgements in two of the three areas inspected, but again this was in 2022 and we are due a further inspection during the year ahead.

You may also notice that our website is looking a little tired. I would completely agree. It is in need of a significant refresh, both in appearance and content, and I can assure you that this is firmly on our improvement agenda this year.

When you look at our published outcomes, you will see that results have fluctuated considerably over the last three years. Consequently, it is difficult to identify a clear trend and, quite rightly, I fully accept that outcomes have not been as strong as they should have been. However, there is important context behind those figures.

The prior attainment of students joining Cardinal Newman is typically lower than that of students entering many other secondary schools across Warrington. Over the last two years, with league tables being calculated primarily using attainment measures alone, this has placed us at a significant disadvantage when comparisons have been made between schools.

This is not presented as an excuse, nor is it something from which we shy away. We are ambitious for our students and absolutely committed to raising standards further. However, I believe prospective candidates deserve to understand the full picture when considering whether our school is right for them.

Encouragingly, our 2026 Key Stage 4 outcomes showed a significant improvement and represented the strongest set of headline results we have achieved for four years. Provisional outcomes indicate an Attainment 8 score of 44.2, with 41.3% of students achieving Grade 5+ in English and Mathematics, and 62.9% achieving Grade 4+ in English and Mathematics. Results in GCSE RE also saw a big improvement with pass rates as follows: 9-7 29%, 9-5 57%, 9-4 72%. These outcomes reflect the hard work of our students and staff and demonstrate that the school and department is moving in the right direction.

A message from the Headteacher

I am also particularly interested to see the return of progress measures in 2027. Whilst no single accountability measure can ever tell the whole story, I believe that progress data will provide a much fairer reflection of the work taking place in our school and will help present Cardinal Newman in a significantly stronger light than attainment measures alone.

Having said all of that, I also want you to know this.

Since spending considerable time in the school during my preparation period, and having now led the school since the start of September, I can say with complete confidence that Cardinal Newman is a wonderful Catholic school and community. The students are a delight – confident, mature, and proud of their school. They are also keen for us to continue to improve as a community. The prayer life of the school is a particular strength and I have been particularly impressed with the respect that students show during our daily worship and weekly Celebration of the Word.

The other thing that struck me was the commitment and loyalty of the staff. Staff turnover is remarkably low. The average length of service is approaching ten years and, this September, only one new teacher joined our teaching staff. In a profession where retention is increasingly challenging, I believe that statistic speaks volumes. One of the very first things I did before taking up post was conduct a survey of all staff. I asked two simple questions:

What do you love about working at Cardinal Newman?

What do we need to improve?

The responses were reassuring, honest and incredibly informative. Staff overwhelmingly spoke about the strength of our Catholic ethos, the relationships they enjoy with colleagues, the sense of community that exists throughout the school and the privilege of working with our young people. They also identified an area requiring attention. A very small minority of students were having a disproportionate impact on the climate for learning, and this feedback was not ignored.

Over recent months we have acted decisively, raising expectations, strengthening systems and improving consistency. As a result, we are already seeing a significant improvement in behaviour, culture and the overall climate throughout the school. Staff and visitors have commented on the calm, welcoming atmosphere they experience, and we are determined to build on this momentum.

A message from the Headteacher

The vacancy for Head of RE is a real opportunity for a someone to make their mark. I have already encouraged all of our middle leaders to see themselves as the headteacher of their area. I believe strongly in distributed leadership and in empowering talented people to lead confidently. I am not looking for someone who simply maintains systems and processes. I am looking for someone who wants to shape them.

You may not yet have extensive leadership experience and, if that is the case, please do not let that put you off applying. Experience helps, but so do character, mindset, ambition and potential. We have substantial expertise within the school and a leadership team that is committed to nurturing and supporting colleagues as they develop professionally. If you have the right qualities and a desire to learn, we will invest in you. So, what are we looking for?

Someone with energy and enthusiasm. Someone committed to securing the very best outcomes for our students and supporting the staff within the RE department. Someone brave enough to embrace change, take measured risks and challenge established thinking when necessary. Someone who can bring people with them on that journey. Someone committed to their own professional development and passionate about developing others. Someone who values structure, clarity, attention to detail and effective communication. Most importantly, someone who believes every young person deserves an exceptional education and who wants to be part of a Catholic community that shares our mission statement that we all come to school to 'have life, and have it to the full'.

Above all, I would encourage you to come and visit us. Recruitment packs, websites and performance tables can only ever tell part of the story. If you are interested in the role, I will happily clear my diary to make time for you. I want you to have the opportunity to meet me, meet colleagues, speak to students and walk around the school during a normal working day. Only then will you truly appreciate what Cardinal Newman feels like day-to-day. I believe that what you will find is a school with strong values, wonderful young people, dedicated staff, improving outcomes and an exciting future ahead.

I very much look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely



Simon Atkin Headteacher

Governors seek the following appointment for **January 2027:** Head of RE (**Full Time, Permanent, MPS/UPS+ TLR 1B**)

We require an inspirational and committed Head of RE to lead this core department. This is a fantastic opportunity for a highly motivated professional to join this highly successful team.

The RE Department is at the centre of the life of our school, and Religious Education is one of our most popular subjects. Our students thrive on the high-quality teaching and strong curriculum delivered by this team. In 2026, our GCSE RE pass rates were as follows: 9-7 29%, 9-5 57%, 9-4 72%. The ideal candidate to lead this department will be an excellent classroom practitioner with a love of their subject and high expectations of their students. They will be an excellent communicator who can inspire young people, and their strong interpersonal skills will enable them to work collaboratively as part of a highly effective team. This role will also provide excellent professional development for the successful candidate and will suit a practitioner who is committed to enhancing their own development as a leader. They will be committed to supporting the ethos and wider life of our school.

You should have experience of teaching RE to all abilities across Key Stage 3 and 4 for at least 3 years, with a strong understanding of the requirements of the GCSE specification. In addition, you should demonstrate a clear understanding of the Religious Education Directory and its application at Key Stage 3, ensuring a rich and coherent curriculum that supports student progress. Experience and understanding of how to enhance student attainment and develop other professionals are key, alongside a willingness to play a significant role with the Senior Leadership Team in shaping and promoting the vision for the Catholic Life of our school. Applicants must be a practising Catholic.

Closing date: Monday 5 October 2026 at 12pm

Interviews: Friday 16 October 2026

Please note a current CES application form and a Model Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 form must be completed for this post. Applications can be emailed to Mrs Michele Walker mwa@cardinal-newman.co.uk

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Post is subject to an Enhanced DBS Disclosure and online searches.

About the Department

The RE Department is a successful, forward-thinking department who strive to inspire our students to consider their faith, grapple with 'big questions,' and reflect on their role in the world. The Department is at the core of our school curriculum and GCSE results are continually improving. Our students frequently identify RE as one of their favourite subjects. We aim to provide consistently outstanding teaching and learning which is academically rigorous across both key stages. The department consists of four specialist RE teachers, including a second in Department, and we are now looking for a new leader for this vital team, as a result of the promotion of the current postholder to Senior Leadership. We look forward to being joined by a visionary leader to build on the continuing success and popularity of this high-profile subject at Cardinal Newman.

Within our classrooms, our department follows the RED at Key Stage 3, and EDUQAS Route B GCSE at Key Stage 4. Outside of the classroom, our department provides many opportunities for our students to consolidate their learning, and further foster a love of RE. We offer a variety of enrichment experiences, including supporting the Chaplaincy team with the retreats programme, and hosting high profile speakers and enrichment philosophy clubs for KS4 learners. We look forward to welcoming you as part of our team.



Head of RE (Full Time, Permanent, MPS/UPS TLR 1B)

Job Description

Purpose:

Ensure an outstanding experience of RE and Catholic Education which is engaging and suitable for all pupils.

Lead the development and implementation of an appropriate and inspiring RE curriculum.

Be accountable for student development and progress within your subject, maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogical developments.

School Ethos and Culture

- Act as a role model.
- Lead a programme of enrichment within your subject area which will make a significant contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school.
- Undertake the role of form tutor, supporting the development of the students in your group.

Curriculum

- Develop a clear curriculum intent and vision for your subject, engaging fully with national developments.
- Ensure the effective implementation of the RE curriculum by your department team, leading the development of resources, policies, assessments and pedagogical approaches.
- Prepare students effectively for national qualifications and exams.

Teaching and Learning

- Set high expectations across the department which inspire, motivate and challenge students.
- Quality assure the provision within your department through our Meeting Learning Needs cycle.

Progress

- Use information effectively to support, target and develop students within your own groups and across the department.
- Track student achievement and progress regularly transforming information into action.

Personal Development and Professional Attributes

- Actively engage with the school's CPD and training offer.
- Promote teamwork amongst the department, and motivate staff to engage with your vision for the department.
- Establish development priorities for your department and your team, and support team members effectively in their development.
- Regularly review your own practice, participating in the school's appraisal cycle.
- Treat everyone in our community fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect.
- Maintain a positive school culture and profile.

Other specific duties

- All teaching staff are expected to meet the relevant Professional Standards of Teachers.
- All teachers will engage with pre-school, break and after school supervision as assigned.
- All staff members will promote and safeguard the welfare of students.

Person Specification

Head of Department

Faith Commitment

		Essential	Desirable	Source
1.	Practising Catholic	E		A/I/R
2.	Involvement in parish community		D	A/I/R
3.	A commitment to working with the Diocesan Education Team to support Religious Education within the school	E		A/I/R

Qualifications

		Essential	Desirable	Source
4.	Qualified teacher status	E		A/CC
5.	Degree level qualification	E		A/CC
6.	Degree level in Religious Studies or Theology		D	A/CC
7.	CCRS/CTC or commitment to obtaining the certificate		D	A/CC/I

Person Specification

Head of Department

	Essential	Desirable	Evidence
Qualifications 1. Relevant degree or equivalent 2. Teaching qualification 3. Enhanced DBS	✓ ✓ ✓		Application Form Application Form Application Form
Experience 1. Experience of teaching across the age and ability range within a successful RE department. 2. Proven track record of securing good student progress and attainment. 3. Experience of working with a tutor group 4. Experience of working with colleagues to ensure students' individual needs are met. 5. Experience of using a range of teaching and learning styles to ensure students learn effectively. 6. Experience of innovation and developing practice 7. Experience of working with colleagues to help them develop good practice.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	Application Form/ Letter/Interview Letter/Interview Letter/Interview Letter/Interview Letter/Interview Letter/Interview/References
Interpersonal 1. Ability to work co-operatively with a wide range of staff and Lead a team effectively. 2. Ability to relate positively to students, and show a fundamental commitment to them and their development. 3. Ability to work in partnership with Governors, Partner schools, parents and the community. 4. Enthusiasm for subject area and ability to communicate this 5. Sense of humour. 6. Commitment to continuing to develop professionally 7. Willingness to contribute to the school's programme of extra-curricular activities. 8. Willingness to support and contribute to school's Catholic Ethos.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓	Letter/References/Interview Letter/References/Interview Letter/Interview Letter/Interview Letter/Interview Interview Letter/Interview Letter/Interview
Knowledge/ skills 1. Clear expectations on pupil behaviour and discipline. 2. Excellent subject knowledge and awareness of national curriculum subject requirements. 3. Outstanding classroom practitioner. 4. Understanding of the characteristics of outstanding teaching and effective learning. 5. Ability to secure effective behaviour for learning. 6. Share our commitment to the personal development of our students. 7. Willingness to contribute to the curricular enrichment programme of the school	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		Letter/References/Interview Letter/References/Interview Letter/Interview Letter/References/Interview Letter/Interview Letter/Interview Letter/Interview
Safeguarding 1. Commitment to the highest standards of child protection	✓		Letter/References/Interview

Guidance for Applicants in Securing a Faith Reference

You will be applying for a position in one of our Catholic schools which is reserved for a practising Catholic.

This means that the person specification will state that is essential that you meet this criterion, and you must be able to evidence this with a positive faith reference from the priest(s) of the parish(es) where you attend the Sunday Eucharist and receive the sacraments. It is also vital that this reference is **current**, and that the priest's knowledge of your practice is not historical. **Priests will be asked to confirm a minimum of 12 months continuous practice.** A period of 12 months practice will also be required for those recently received into the Church

It is vital that the priest can verify your attendance at Sunday Mass and is not simply the priest linked to the school that you currently work in. The Governing Body will be seeking to appoint a practising Catholic who joins in the parish celebration of the Sunday Mass and receives the sacraments regularly as well as living in accordance with the teachings of the Church

At a time when priests are increasingly assuming responsibility for larger pastoral areas, it is becoming increasingly common for priests not to know parishioners as well as they might have in the past. In the light of this we offer the following advice when seeking faith references **prior to making an application.**

1. Speak to the priest before completing your application and ask if he agrees to your including him as a referee. (Do not simply email or leave a message on the parish answer phone)
2. Provide him with an outline of
 - your involvement in parish life e.g., Eucharistic minister, reader, etc (it may be that currently you are not heavily involved in parish life due to other commitments)
 - your present post – school, areas of responsibility
 - the post to which you are applying – name of school, post, etc
3. **If you worship in more than one parish, then in order to satisfy weekly attendance of Mass you may need to specify more than one referee.**

By following the above advice, you are able to prepare the priest for the reference request and so ensure it will be completed as fully as possible.

Invitation to interview

If you are shortlisted, and receive an invitation to interview, then the governors will have made the assumption that your practice will be evidenced prior to interview by a supportive priest's reference. We therefore advise that on receiving notification of an interview you contact the priest again to check that he has received the reference request and he is still able to support your application. If the governors are not in receipt of a positive faith reference *prior to interview*, then they will deem that you have not met one the essential criterion and will have to withdraw the invitation to interview. If there are circumstances that may prevent the priest replying within the given time frame (holidays, illness etc.) then please inform the relevant Diocesan officer as soon as this is known.

The extra curricular
life of our school is
flourishing with
a wide **variety**
of **enrichment**
opportunities



Michele Walker
Headteacher's PA
01925 635556

Cardinal Newman Catholic High School
Bridgewater Avenue, Latchford, Warrington, WA4 1RX

Email: mwa@cardinal-newman.co.uk

Web: www.cardinal-newman.org.uk