ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL
JUST AND FIRM OF PURPOSE

Supporting every learner to belong, achieve and flourish

SEND PARENT NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 1 Friday 23rd October 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of our first half term, I wanted to take this opportunity to share some of the important developments that have taken place in our SEND provision since September.

It has been a busy and productive start to the academic year, with a significant focus on strengthening our systems, developing staff expertise and ensuring that students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) receive the right support to help them belong, achieve and flourish.

Whilst there is still much work to do, I am pleased to share the progress we have made and our priorities for the coming weeks.

One of our key priorities has been ensuring that staff have the knowledge, skills and confidence to support students with a wide range of additional needs. During this half term, our Teaching Assistants have undertaken training in:

- Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) – understanding how language difficulties can affect learning, communication and participation in the classroom.
- Autism Awareness – Level 1 – developing understanding of autism and strategies to support autistic learners.
- Lexia Reading – using a structured, personalised reading intervention to develop literacy skills.
- Precision Teaching (Reading) – delivering short, focused interventions to improve reading accuracy, fluency and confidence.

Following half term, further Teaching Assistant training is planned which will be followed by additional whole staff training on supporting students with Speech, Language and Communication Needs in the classroom**.** This is an important step in ensuring that effective strategies are embedded consistently across classrooms, rather than support being limited to interventions outside lessons. Our aim is to ensure that every member of staff understands their role in removing barriers to learning, promoting independence and maintaining high expectations for all students.

We have welcomed representatives from all our key external SEND services into school this half term, including: Communication and Autism Team (CAT), Language, Learning and Strategic Support Team (LLSS), Educational Psychology Service (EP), Occupational Therapy (OT) and Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT). Each service has received its caseload for this term, and the process of assessment, identification of need and

specialist advice has begun. This strengthened multi-agency approach is helping us to build a clearer understanding of individual students' needs and identify the most appropriate support and interventions.

We recognise that families are often waiting for assessments, advice or further information. Whilst some processes take time and depend on the availability of external professionals, we are working to ensure that students' needs are identified and supported as effectively as possible.

A significant piece of work this half term has been the review and rewriting of Pupil Passports for all students with SEND across Years 7–11. All Pupil Passports have been brought into a consistent format, providing staff with clearer, more practical information about how best to support individual learners. Importantly, we have placed a much greater emphasis on strengths-based profiling. We want every student's Pupil Passport to reflect not simply the difficulties they may experience, but also their abilities, interests and potential.

Pupil Passports are intended to be live working documents that inform everyday classroom practice. They are not about lowering expectations, but about ensuring that students have the appropriate support and reasonable adjustments to achieve their best.

Unfortunately, the Provision Map platform has been experiencing technical difficulties this week. Please do not worry if you have not yet received your child's updated Pupil Passport or have been unable to open the document. The company is aware of the issue and is working hard to resolve it. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

We have also made significant changes to what was the LRC and is now the Pope Leo Centre, which has been restructured to provide a calm, welcoming and purposeful inclusion environment. The Centre now provides dedicated spaces for targeted interventions, emotional regulation and additional support. Throughout the school day, students access the Centre for a range of structured interventions designed to develop their learning, communication, literacy and emotional wellbeing.

Our Regulation Room provides a supportive environment where students can develop strategies to manage their emotions and prepare to return to learning. The Centre is also an important social space during social time. Students can spend time together playing games, talking with friends and building positive relationships with staff in a safe and welcoming environment.

Our vision is for the Pope Leo Centre to be a place where students feel they belong, where their individual needs are understood and where they are supported to develop confidence, independence and resilience.

Alongside these developments, we have begun establishing more effective systems for identifying needs, coordinating support and working in partnership with families. These include: Student Support Coordinator roles, helping to strengthen the coordination of support for students; closer multi-agency working, enabling

school staff and external professionals to share expertise and plan appropriate provision; SEND parent and carer coffee mornings, providing opportunities to meet staff, speak with specialist professionals, ask questions and share experiences and improved pastoral provision, with a greater emphasis on understanding the needs behind students' difficulties and providing appropriate support.

We know how important communication is to families, particularly when there are concerns about a child's progress, wellbeing or access to learning. Our parent and carer coffee mornings are an important part of building stronger relationships, and we hope to continue developing these opportunities throughout the year. Thank you to all those parents who have already supported these events.

As we move into the second half of the autumn term, our focus will be on building upon the foundations established since September. This will include continuing specialist assessments, developing our intervention pathways, embedding the use of Pupil Passports in classrooms, strengthening communication with families and ensuring that the training staff receive translates into meaningful improvements in students' everyday experiences.

We recognise that developing effective SEND provision is an ongoing process. Not every improvement will be immediately visible, and we know that there will be areas where further work is needed. However, we are committed to making sustained improvements and ensuring that our provision is increasingly consistent, responsive and centred on the needs of our young people.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your patience, understanding and continued partnership during this first half term. We know that parents and carers are the experts on their own children, and your knowledge, experiences and feedback are invaluable in helping us provide the best possible support.

Our shared ambition is simple: every student, whatever their starting point or individual needs, should feel that they belong, are valued and have every opportunity to achieve and flourish. We look forward to continuing to work closely with you over the coming months. Wishing you and your families a restful and enjoyable half-term break.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Grant

Assistant Headteacher, SENCo