



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT, EDUCATION COMMITTEE

AGM 4TH NOVEMBER 2025

This brief report has been compiled by Professor John Lydon (Chair) and Dr Caroline Healy (Vice-Chair).

1. FORMATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERS

The formation of leaders continued to be the most discussed topic at the Catholic Union's Education Committee this year and is Director of the Catholic Education Service Dr Paul Barber's top concern for the future. Increasingly there are challenges recruiting practising Catholic headteachers which has raised the question would Headteachers who are not Catholic be permissible in the future and is there a 'red line' to be drawn. There is also a need to continuously form aspiring and current headteachers to be the best possible spiritual leaders of their Catholic community of faith.

2. ACADEMISATION

Catholic schools are continuing to become part of Catholic multi-academy trusts. Current developments are discussed at Catholic Union Education Committee Meetings.

3. RSE

RSE has continued to be included in discussion on the role of CUGB in promoting the education of parents and ultimately education has to take place through the right relationships between parents/grandparents and children. The CUGB has to be sensitive to the advice given through the CES, and in the dioceses across the country. It was noted again that a central factor in the education process was the context of children living in poverty. This is undoubtedly a matter of grave concern to the Church and to Catholic educators.

4. THE GRACE COLLOQUIUM, MONDAY 16TH – WEDNESDAY 18TH JUNE 2025

The Second International Global Researchers Advancing Catholic Education (GRACE) Colloquium took place at St Mary's University, Twickenham (celebrating its 175th year) and was huge successfully with over 175 delegates, organised by myself and Dr Caroline Healy.

Those who participated were researchers and practitioners of Catholic education who were invited to consider the theme of Mission and Identity in Catholic Education in the 21st Century: theory and practice. GRACE is a partnership between scholars in Australian Catholic University; Boston College, United States; Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia; University of Glasgow; Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Republic of Ireland; University of Notre Dame Fremantle, Australia; St Mary's University in Twickenham, London, Edith Cowan University, Australia. Professor Anthony McClaran, Vice-Chancellor of St Mary's was able to warmly welcome the international delegates. There was an opening Mass with celebrant Archbishop John Sherrington, Archbishop of Liverpool, who later provided the first keynote lecture on 'The Complex Ecosystem of a Catholic School'. On the second day, Professor James Arthur, Harvard University, gave another keynote address entitled 'To Fulfil Our Human Promise - The Catholic University and Character Virtue Formation'. The conference closed with a paper by Josephine Shamwana-Lungu on the topic of 'Contemporary Challenges of Blooming the Mission and Identity of Catholic Education in Lusaka Archdiocese, Zambia' and a Mass celebrated by Very Rev. James Gerard Briody, Provincial of the Salesians of Don Bosco of Great Britain. An impressive 64 parallel papers were presented alongside eight roundtables discussions across two days. The themes of the parallel papers were grouped around the five key themes of: Formation and Vocation; Mission and Leadership; Spiritual Development and Religious Education; Practice and Formation and Mission. The recordings of the keynote lectures can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1IZoG7zq-ZuoEeZXNqjITQjIDVxcnk_9