

Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary

Love - Learn - Believe

Newsletter

Spring issue 3- 23rd January 2026



Headteacher: Mrs Hourihan

Deputy Headteacher: Ms Sulis

Diary Dates

Monday 2nd - 12th February- 6D Swimming lessons

Tuesday 10th February - Parent Consultation Evening - 3:30-6:30pm

Wednesday 11th February - Parent Consultation Evening - 4-7pm

Half Term – Monday 16th February to Friday 20th February 2026

Monday 23rd February - 3B History Museum

Wednesday 25th February - Year 5 SPEC Retreat

Wednesday 4th March - Year 1 Kew Gardens

Thursday 5th March - World Book Day (Dress as a book character)

Monday 9th March - Barnet Dance Festival - Arts Depot

Wednesday 11th March - Whole School Lenten Retreat day

Dear parents / carers,

In our celebration of the word assembly this week we have taken time to reflect more deeply on our school values and how they are rooted in the Gospel, as God calls us to live them out each day. We have been exploring the role of John the Baptist as a witness to Jesus' true identity, revealed at His Baptism. Through this learning, the children are recognising that Jesus is the Son of God and the Lamb of God, and are developing an understanding that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we too can come to know and recognise Jesus in our lives.

We are encouraging the children to be witnesses for Christ in the world through the way they live — showing kindness, respect, honesty, forgiveness, inclusivity and resilience in all that they do. These values (our school values) continue to guide us as we grow together in faith and community.

Our next PTA-organised community event will take place on Friday 13th February. Children are invited to wear red for St Valentine's Day, and pancakes will be on sale after school ahead of Shrove Tuesday, which falls during the February half-term the following week.

Thank you to the 105 parents and carers who responded to the RE survey. The feedback was very positive, with 98% indicating they understand and support our school's Catholic mission, and 97% reporting that their child feels safe and happy at our school. We will share the results in more detail, along with next steps to build on this success.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming parents and carers to Parents' Evening, and we are pleased to let you know that the booking system is now live. We value these opportunities to work in partnership with you and to celebrate your children's progress together.

Wishing you a lovely weekend.

Mrs Hourihan

**Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary School, Great Strand, Colindale,
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On Sunday the gospel is going to be talking about light and how we can share light with others.

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-17



**God of light, shine in our hearts
so that we can share joy and hope
with other people, especially
those who are frightened, sick,
lonely or hungry.
Amen.**

Celebrating Success

STAR OF THE WEEK

DAISIES - Janora
BLUEBELLS -Amarah
1B -Vincenzo
1D -Hannah
2B - Jacob
2D -Joan
3B - Esther
3D -Oscar D
4B - Aubree
4D - Mark
5B - Maria
5D -Maria
6B -Krishelle
6D - Bilal



ATTENDANCE THIS WEEK

DAISIES - 93%
BLUEBELLS -90%
1B -93%
1D -94%
2B -97%
2D - 96%
3B - 97%
3D -98%
4B - 93%
4D -96%
5B - 97%
5D -97%
6B - 98%
6D -97%



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ROYAL AIR FORCE museum

YEAR 5 Visit to the RAF Museum

Year 5 visited the RAF Museum this week and took part in an exciting KS2 Science Show. They learned how aircraft fly by exploring forces such as lift, thrust, drag and weight, and discovered how wings help planes stay in the air.

The children also found out how humans can survive high up in the sky, including how pilots use oxygen, pressurised cabins and special clothing to cope with cold temperatures and low air pressure.



Cosette: " I learnt how aircraft have changed over time and I enjoyed how practical and interactive it was."



Alia: " I enjoyed the vacuum experiment, which showed us what could happen if we didn't have oxygen up in the air. It was fun!

FOOTBALL NEWS

Introducing our Girls' Football Team! ⚽

Training hard since last term, the girls have been building confidence in front of goal and sharpening their attacking play as they prepare for their first tournament in the summer term.



Parent Consultation

Tuesday 10th February - 3:30-6:30pm

Wednesday 11th February - 4:00pm-7:00pm

Please book your consultation if you have not already done so using the individual booking link that has been sent to you. If you have any questions or need support, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



Parents App Connect

Thank you for downloading our new school app! We're thrilled to see that the majority of our school community are already active and using it. If you haven't activated your app yet, please keep an eye on your inbox for your download email.

We use the Parents App to keep you informed about important school updates, events, messages, and reminders.

Please ensure you have downloaded the app and are logged in so you don't miss any key information.

Through the app, you can receive notifications, view letters, and stay up to date with what's happening in school.

If you are having any difficulties accessing the app or need support setting it up, please contact the school office who will be happy to help.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

Please make sure your child brings their school PE kit every week if they have been accepted for Ninja Warriors, Football, Spykids, Tennis, Dance or Archery after-school clubs.

For safety reasons, children will not be able to take part in the session if they do not have the correct PE kit with them.

Thank you for your support.





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Birthday Celebrations

While we love to celebrate each child's special day, we kindly discourage gift bags and food items being brought in. We have a lot of children with allergies so as a community we need to help keep each other safe.

Instead, we encourage children to bring a book to share with the class, which can be added to the class library as a lasting memory of their birthday.

Thank you for your support in keeping celebrations simple, inclusive, and focused on learning!



Keep Your Children Safe This Autumn. BE BRIGHT, BE SEEN

The clocks have gone back resulting in darker evenings and reduced visibility for drivers. We encourage all pupils to stay active and enjoy outdoor activities safely.

Help your child to "Be Bright so they can Be Seen" by wearing bright colours during the day and reflective clothing or accessories after dark. When purchasing a new coat, consider one with reflective strips for added visibility.



Governors' Fund £60 per Pupil Contribution



Each year, our school's Governing Board asks families to contribute to the Governors' Fund, which supports important projects and improvements not covered by our regular school budget.

This year, the suggested contribution remains £60 per pupil.

The fund helps us enhance our school environment and resources — for example, improving playground areas, upgrading IT equipment, and supporting enrichment opportunities for pupils.

We do this via the 'Governors Fund' where we ask parents to contribute. We don't stipulate or mandate this but instead prefer to encourage all families to contribute what they can.

A huge thank you to all the families who have already contributed — your generosity makes a real difference to what we can offer our children.

If you've not yet had the chance to donate and would like to, contributions can be made via Parent Pay.

Attendance

Regular attendance plays a vital role in your child's learning and overall development. Every school day counts!

Unfortunately holidays cannot be authorised during term time and authorised absences can only be granted in exceptional circumstance. Please contact the office if you need to request an exceptional leave of absence. These will be considered on a case by case basis.

FPNs (Fixed penalty notices) can be issued for unauthorised absences and the fine is up to £160 per parent.





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Safeguarding

The wellbeing of our children is of paramount. Should any person (parent or staff) have a concern regarding a child's wellbeing, please inform one of the school safeguarding team:

- **Mrs Sowa - DSL & SENCo**
- **Mrs Hourihan - Headteacher**
- **Ms Sulis - Deputy Headteacher**
- **Ms Smart - Assistant Head**

In cases where school staff have concerns, they have a duty to discuss the issue with Social Services to seek further advice. This is the statutory obligation of all schools.



SAFER SCHOOL STREET

**IN OPERATION
8.15AM – 9.15AM
& 2.45PM – 3.45PM**



**WE REMIND ALL FAMILIES TO USE THE
FREE PARKING AVAILABLE
AT THE RAF MUSEUM**

**WHICH HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE
EXCLUSIVELY FOR BLESSED DOMINIC
PARENTS AND CARERS DURING
DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP TIMES**

Uniform Reminders

We would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of our school uniform expectations.

Please ensure that children come to school wearing their full uniform each day.

- **Trainers should only be worn on PE days and must be plain black or white.**
- **On non-PE days, children should wear black school shoes (not boots).**
- **School socks should be plain grey or white.**
- **School trousers should be grey (leggings are not part of the school uniform).**
- **A school tie should be worn each day.**
- **School coats should be plain blue or black.**
- **Hair below the shoulders should be tied back.**



Uniform is an important part of our identity at Blessed Dominic. As a community, it is important that we all follow these expectations and wear our uniform with pride.

If you are experiencing any difficulties with uniform, please do not hesitate to contact the school—we are always happy to help.

Thank you for your continued support.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI TOYS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

This festive season, the newest toys on the shelves do not just blink or make noise; they listen. Many now come with artificial intelligence (AI), allowing them to talk, learn, and even respond to a child's emotions. These toys can be educational and engaging, but they also collect, store, and process information. This guide explains what that means for families and why it matters.

TOYS THAT LISTEN AND LEARN

When a toy uses AI, it collects data such as voice recordings, interactions, and background sounds. This information is sent to remote servers, where it is analysed to improve responses. Your child's voice becomes training data, which may be stored indefinitely or shared with third parties.

WEAK SECURITY PROTECTIONS

Some AI toys have poor password protection or open network connections. Others may have microphones or cameras that stay on, even when the toy appears to be off. This can lead to recordings being made without your knowledge, including conversations unrelated to play.

ARTIFICIAL VOICES, REAL INFLUENCE

For very young children, an AI companion may become one of the first voices they interact with regularly. How that voice shows humour, empathy, or authority can shape how a child learns to communicate. If the model is artificial, then part of what is learned is artificial as well.

PRESSURE TO KEEP ENGAGING

Some toys reward repeated use or track engagement, encouraging children to interact more. When children compare how their toys perform, it creates pressure to play more often. This increases the amount of data collected and can make learning feel like competition.

MARKETING THROUGH PLAY

Toys that learn a child's preferences may feed that data into future advertising. A toy that knows a child's favourite colour or hobby could help a company design more targeted marketing to that child and their family.

PLAYTIME AS DATA TRAINING

The information collected from children helps train AI systems. Their voice, emotional responses, and behaviour shape how machines "understand" people. Play becomes part of a much larger system that influences how future technologies behave.

Advice for Parents & Educators

START WITH A CONVERSATION

Talk to young people. Explain that some toys learn from what they say and do. Help them understand that even friendly technology should have boundaries, and to ask questions about it. Curiosity is healthy; blind trust is not.

SET LIMITS ON USE

Turn off Wi-Fi or Bluetooth when the toy is not in use. Check for updates regularly, as they can change privacy or safety settings. Treat connected toys like any smart device; they should be monitored, updated, and switched off when not in use.

MODEL DIGITAL AWARENESS

Children learn from adults. If they see you checking privacy settings, reading terms, and talking openly about online safety, they are more likely to do the same. Show them how to question technology in a healthy way.

RESEARCH BEFORE YOU BUY

Look for toys that work offline or store data locally. Check for a free or demo version so you can test how it behaves. Read privacy policies to understand what data is collected, where it goes, and whether it's shared with others.

REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS

Find out where the data is stored and who has access to it. Some companies sell or share data with advertisers. If the toy connects through an app, check what it requests access to and limit those permissions whenever possible.

BALANCE AI WITH REAL PLAY

AI toys can be fun and creative, but they are not a replacement for real human interaction. Encourage time away from technology with activities that foster emotional and social development. Use AI toys to support learning, not define it.

Meet Our Expert

Clara Hawking is Executive Director of Kompass Education. She advises governments, school trusts, and global organisations on AI governance and safeguarding, helping schools and families understand how technology shapes learning, wellbeing, and the digital future of children.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College