



St. Francis

Church of England Primary School

Joy from faith, joy of learning, joy in the journey

Week ending: 16.01.26

'I have told you this so my joy may be in you' John 15:11

Upcoming dates

Wednesday 21st January:

Reception class to visit Cherry Tree Library

Thursday 22nd January:

Messy Church with Pat Rushton after school

Friday 23rd January:

Mrs. Lovick's last day before her maternity leave begins

Monday 26th January:

Mr Crane starts as the new Y3 teacher

Mrs. Foster becomes the (temporary) SENCo

National Story-telling week

Wednesday 4th February:

Y5/6 Boys' football league matches at Witton Park

Tuesday 10th February:

Safer Internet Day

What a busy and productive week we have experienced at our school! I am eager to share several significant developments that highlight our commitment to safety, communication, and community engagement.

On Monday, we underwent a Safeguarding Audit conducted by the Blackburn with Darwen Local Authority. I am pleased to report that the audit identified numerous strengths within our policies and procedures designed to ensure every child remains protected from potential harm. This external validation reinforces our ongoing dedication to creating a secure learning environment.

Wednesday saw our Parents' Meetings, which were exceptionally well-attended. These meetings provided a valuable opportunity to share detailed insights into each child's progress and developmental journey. Engaging directly with parents and carers remains a cornerstone of our educational approach, allowing us to collaborate effectively in supporting our children's learning.

Thursday brought an important community initiative: our Walk to School audit. I extend heartfelt thanks to all participants - parents, governors, Year 5 pupils, and staff - who joined this collaborative effort. Together, we explored our neighbourhood, carefully examining safe parking and walking routes while addressing the ongoing challenges surrounding traffic on Cherry Tree Lane.

The audit's primary objectives were twofold: identifying potential improvements for child safety and developing strategic solutions for traffic management. We are particularly hopeful that the comprehensive report generated from this exercise will contribute to two critical developments: the installation of a much-needed zebra crossing and potential restrictions on school traffic along Cherry Tree Lane during peak arrival and departure times.

These initiatives demonstrate our school's proactive approach to child safety, community involvement, and continuous improvement.



New Parent Governor

Apologies but this information should have been shared in December!

Our new parent governor, voted by yourselves, is Mrs. Belinda Riding. Congratulations to her and thanks to everyone who voted. The governing board are looking forward to meeting her this term.

Best Attendance of the week!

Super attendance for all houses this week – all houses' attendance met the national target of 96% and above!

The percentages were:

Autumn 96.1%, Summer 96.7%, Winter 98.7%; Spring 99%.

Another fantastic percentage for our Spring house team and a second week on the run that they've won!

Reception class award winners



Year 1 award winners



Year 2 award winners



Year 3 award winner



Year 4 award winners



Year 5 award winners



Y6 award winners



Looking Ahead

Important dates for your diary:

- School is closed for February half-term 16th – 20th February;
- World Book Day – Thursday 5th March;
- Tuesday 10th March – our 60th anniversary celebrations;
- Y5 Let's Go Sing at Ice Arena, 18th March;
- Rocksteady Concert – Friday 20th March at 9.15am;
- Y4's Easter Performance – 9.15am Wednesday 25th March. Y4 parents and carers are invited;
- Easter holidays – Monday 30th March – Friday 10th April;
- Week beginning 13th April – Healthy Living Week in school
- Parent/carer drop-ins to classrooms: Wednesday 22nd April, 3.30 – 4.00pm



WOW Walk to School

The badges our children earn each month were all designed by children across the UK. It would be fantastic to see some of our own children's designs made into badges for next year's Walk to School project!

Details for entering the competition will be shared in next week's newsletter!

Save
The Date

WE ARE

60

10TH MARCH

Livesey Saint Francis Church of England Primary School was opened 10th March 1966, making it 60 years old this year! We are planning a celebration to mark our 60th anniversary - details will be sent out a little nearer the time.

But for now, we can share that children will be encouraged to come to school in 1960s fashion that day.

Have you ever considered the dangers for your child using AI such as chatbots? If your child is regularly using social media, then he/she will probably also be using artificial intelligence too. Please do read the poster and consider if there are any additional actions you need to be taking, in order to keep your child safe.

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS

Artificial intelligence – particularly in terms of how it generates natural language – has seen significant development over the last six months, with companies releasing new AI-based software or adding an AI element to existing apps (such as Snapchat, for example). One form of AI to become especially popular has been the ‘AI friend’ or chatbot, as children eagerly experiment with these new-found computer-generated companions. There are now numerous apps available with this ‘virtual friend’ functionality, with the likelihood of it being added to other successful platforms soon.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONTENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI chatbots may not always be able to recognise when content is age inappropriate or harmful and should be filtered out. So there's a possibility that children could be exposed to offensive language or explicit material while conversing with their virtual friend. The companies producing such AI solutions are also unlikely to take responsibility for any content that their algorithms generate.

REDUCED SOCIAL CONTACT

An excessive reliance on chatbots for social interaction could potentially cause a child to begin reducing the amount of face-to-face communication they have, leading to social isolation. If young people become dependent on chatbots to provide companionship, it could very likely hinder the development of their real-life social skills.

LACK OF SENSITIVITY

Chatbot software isn't always sophisticated enough to pick up on subtle emotional cues or recognise signs of distress in children, as most humans would. It might therefore fail to respond appropriately. AI misinterpreting what it's being told or replying insensitively to a young user who's already struggling could potentially impact a child's emotional wellbeing or exacerbate any existing emotional issues.



CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If your child is keen to engage with AI chatbots, encourage them to do so in a safe environment: ideally in a shared space at home, so you can easily keep an eye and ear on their progress. Set up appropriate content filtering measures in advance – and gently remind them that you'll be close by and ready to help with any questions or concerns that may arise.

FIND A BALANCE

Work alongside your child to establish the right balance in terms of how they might use AI-powered chatbots – and when it's appropriate. It's important to make sure that children are still getting plenty of opportunities to learn to solve problems for themselves, as well as building their interpersonal skills through face-to-face conversations with friends, family members and teachers.

CHAT ABOUT CHATBOTS

If your child is already expressing an interest in AI apps, a relaxed, natural chat should help you to discover which ones they're aware of and how they're using them (or are planning to). Discuss these options with your child and perhaps do your own research to ensure you think they're suitable. Once you're totally happy, you could sit with your young one and begin exploring AI chatbots together.

TAKE CONTROL

As with any form of app or game, when it comes to AI chatbots we'd strongly recommend that you consider employing parental controls (either on the device being used or within the software itself) to manage which apps your child can download and use. This is particularly important for younger children, who may be more at risk of being upset or frightened by inappropriate content.

RECOGNISE THE RISKS

It's unlikely that most children will have even considered the potential risks attached to having a virtual companion. So it's probably wise to explain some of the possible hazards and challenges of AI chatbots to your child. In particular, emphasise that AI isn't a real person (however much it might sound like one) and may occasionally tell them something that isn't entirely impartial or accurate.

Meet Our Expert

A Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that we become more aware of the risks around technology, as well as the benefits.



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#WakeUpWednesday