

23rd January 2026

Our Weekly Update



Headteacher update

Dear Parents, Carers and Families,

As a staff team, we have been considering how we can involve parents and carers more in their children's learning. We know so many of you like to support your children at home and are keen for ideas about how you can do this.

Later in the newsletter, you will find 'Word of the Week'. This will be updated every week with a word that has been linked to the children's learning for that week. It would be great if you were able to mention that word at the dinner table, or on a car journey, and ask your child what they can tell you about it. This will support the learning from class and also give you more of an idea about concepts your child has been covering at school.

We are also going to be holding an Open Classroom session at the end of the day on Friday 27th February. Classrooms will be open after school for you to visit, and children's books will be available for you to look at and share. More details will be shared closer to the time but we hope you find this a useful opportunity

to find out more about your child's learning.

Over the last couple of weeks, we have seen an increase in children bringing fidget toys into school without prior agreement from their class teacher or Mrs Gardner, our SENDCo. Fidget toys can be useful to help children concentrate if they need them, but if used inappropriately, can be a distraction. If you have concerns about your child's concentration or focus, please contact their class teacher or Mrs Gardner to discuss further. Together, a decision can then be made as to whether a fidget toy is appropriate.

Best wishes for a lovely weekend,

Jonathan Clarke and the SPS Team



Key Dates – updates in blue

Tuesday 10 th February	Safer Internet Day
Tuesday 10 th February	Years 3 and 4 Ancient Egypt Day
Thursday 12 th February	Year 5/6 Ancient Greece online workshop
Friday 13 th February	Year 5/6 Ancient Greece Day
16 th – 20 th February	Half Term
Friday 27 th March	Open Classrooms
Friday 6 th March	World Book Day (details to follow)
Week beginning 9 th March	Science Week
Wednesday 11 th and Thursday 12 th March	Parent/Carer Consultation Meetings
Friday 20 th March	Sport Relief
Tuesday 24 th and Wednesday 25 th March (09:20)	Year 3 and 4 production to parents/carers
Friday 27 th March	Last day of the spring term
Week beginning Monday 11 th May	Year 6 SATs week
Monday 30 th March – Friday 10 th April	Easter break
Tuesday 19 th and Wednesday 20 th May (09:20)	Reception production to parents/carers
Friday 12 th June	Sports Day: KS2 AM and Reception/KS1 PM (timings tbc)



Reception	Village	Children went on a village walk this week and talked about what is in our village and who might work there. Which places have you visited? Was it a village or was it bigger than a village?
Year 1/2	Materials	Children have been exploring the properties of materials in Science. Which experiment did children design and conduct this week? Which materials did they use and what did they test them for?
Year 3/4	Identity	In PSHE, children have been exploring what makes up someone's identity. How are people's identities similar to and different from one another?
Year 5/6	Medusa	Children have written a description of Medusa's lair as part of their learning about Ancient Greece. How would you describe Medusa? What is her lair like?
French	<p>Year 3/4: Find the pairs in this game: Animals matching</p> <p>Year 5/6: Listen to the song again. Can you sing along?: Les parties du corps</p>	

Reminders

- A reminder that snacks sent in for breaktime should be healthy, ideally a piece of fruit or vegetable. This ensures that children get a nutritious snack to fuel them through until lunchtime.
- Thank you very much to all those people who have contacted Mrs Ballester about visiting during Science Week. We are looking forward to a really engaging week for the children!
- Children's PE kits should be in school every day. While the children have set PE days, there are occasions when this changes due to weather or a timetabling need.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI TOYS

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.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

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.

