



NEWSLETTER

Issue 19 - March 2026

The First Edition of 2026 - Entering Spring

Dear parents, staff and friends of our Trust,

As we come towards the end of a busy and purposeful Spring term, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone across our Trust community for the dedication and care that you show each day to the children and young people in our schools.

I am constantly inspired by the commitment of staff, enthusiasm of pupils and the strong partnership we share with parents. Like all in the education sector, our schools continue to work within a challenging national context. Increasing demands on schools, and wider pressures on resources, are very real. Recent announcements from the Department for Education mark a significant period of national reform of inspection, curriculum, assessment and SEND across the school system. However, what continues to stand out across our Trust, is the spirit of collaboration and commitment to meeting the academic and pastoral needs of individual pupils. By working together and sharing expertise across our family of schools, we are strengthening the support we can offer to every child and every school. Together, we remain focused on providing an excellent Catholic education in which every child is known, valued

and supported to flourish. As Pope Leo reminds us in his recent pastoral address,

“Children and young people need places where they are welcomed, listened to, and helped to hope for the future.”

This message continues to guide the work taking place in our classrooms and communities each day.

We also continue our journey of growth as a Trust. We are working closely with the Diocese and St Joseph's Primary, Sudbury and St Edmund's Primary, Bury St Edmund's as we prepare for them to join us in September. We look forward to welcoming these communities and supporting them as part of our shared mission rooted in faith.

As we approach Easter, the Catholic life in all Trust schools remains exceptionally strong and at the heart of all we seek to achieve. I sincerely hope the coming weeks provide an opportunity for rest and reflection for staff, pupils and families. Thank you, once again, to staff, governors and Directors for their dedication and vocation, to parents for your continued support, and to our pupils for all their efforts.

Christ at the Centre,

Children at the Heart



I wish you and your families a peaceful and blessed Easter and look forward to all that the Summer term will bring.

With every good wish,

Clare Clark
Chief Executive Officer (Interim)



Every Child Achieving and Thriving

In February the Government launched their SEND White Paper, 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving.' Alongside this the Department for Education have produced a really good 'Easy Read' document which summarises the changes suggested and gives timescales of when they will be introduced. I would recommend that parents and staff take a look at it.

[Our plan to help every child do well at school easy read version](#)



The new White Paper talks about services working together to support children and families, better experiences at school for all children, making SEND support better, supporting teachers, schools working together and new and better ways of working.

As Trust Lead SENDCo I have the privileged position of visiting the schools in our Trust regularly and seeing first hand the really good provision that is in place for pupils with SEND in all our schools. Our Catholic ethos, which is integral to all we do, ensures that all children are included and feel that they belong to their school communities. Every school has spent lots of time getting the Universal Offer right which is the classroom provision available to all children as part of Quality First Teaching. This is the first layer of support suggested in the new White Paper and I am delighted to say that we already have this in place.

The White Paper talks about Targeted Support and Targeted Plus Support that some children with SEND will need. Again I am delighted to have observed first hand in our schools targeted support and bespoke individual packages of support for some children already in place.

Our SENDCos and school staff in this Trust have already had lots of training in SEND but this will be further developed and strengthened with government money earmarked for SEND training in mainstream schools.

Under the new SEND framework children with SEND will have Individual Support Plans. Many parents will be familiar with this approach as in our schools currently some children with SEND have a learning plan or passport with termly targets on.

There will still be Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) but these will be obtained in a different way and they will be reviewed at times of transition rather than annually.



There are a number of changes ahead but the SEND system in schools will alter and evolve very gradually. This is a ten-year long programme. Our schools will initially receive more funding for SEND that can be used for resources and staff training. The new SEND system will not be introduced until 2028/2029 and EHCPs will not be changed until at least September 2030. Exciting times lie ahead but the change that you see will be gradual.

It is a real strength and credit to our school leaders, SENDCos and staff that good SEND practice and provision is embedded in the schools across our Trust. This will provide an excellent foundation upon which to build the new SEND government requirements. I am excited to be part of this journey.

There is a SEND Consultation taking place in relation to the proposed changes as a result of the SEND White Paper. Please make sure you respond by 18th May 2026. Thank you.

[SEND reform: putting children and young people first - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/send-reform-putting-children-and-young-people-first)



Caroline Clarke
Trust Lead SENDCo

Safeguarding Update - Mobile Phones

The Department for Education have recently published a consultation on proposed changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Within this, there are some key updates suggested regarding online safety and the use of mobile phones in schools. Please see below for further information about how our schools are responding to these, as well as some helpful guidance and advice on how you can support your child at home.

All OLOW schools are mobile free. We understand that some students, and particularly those in secondary schools, may carry their phone with them to be used to and from school. We operate on the basis that phones must not be seen, heard or used during school hours. Our older primary school children are asked to hand their phone to their teacher, upon arrival, and it is returned at the end of the day. Mobile phones can be a brilliant tool for both communication and information, but it is fundamental that schools and parents/carers are working together to highlight their benefits, raise awareness of the dangers, and educate children on how to be online safely. Here are some of the ways our schools are doing this:

*Christ at the Centre,
Children at the Heart*



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Primary Schools

In all of our primary schools, we use a programme of work, for PSHE, called Ten:Ten - Life to the Full. Ten:Ten resources provides Catholic PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education) and RHE (Relationships and Health Education) programs, including specific content regarding mobile phone usage, digital safety, and well-being.

It begins in EYFS with topics such as 'What is the internet?' and progresses with other themes such as 'Real Life Online' and 'Cyberbullying'. These resources can also be accessed by parents, at home, to support their child's learning.

To enrich our children's understanding and experiences, we take part in annual events such as Online Safety Week, Children's Mental Health Week and Anti-Bullying Week. All of these events include elements of staying safe online and safe and sensible use of mobile phones.

Secondary Schools

Our students have dedicated Computing lessons which includes models around e-safety, viruses, reporting concerns and grooming. As students progress, we look at cybersecurity and the technological world, including developing students' ability to code, send appropriate communications, and develop digital material. This is complimented by our PSHE programme, which covers a wide range of topics. In Key Stage 3, lessons focus on building foundational digital awareness such as protecting personal information, managing your digital footprint, and staying safe when communicating with friends. At Key Stage 4, students also look at the impact the online world has on Mental Health, recognising the signs of coercion and exploitation, as well as understanding harmful ideologies or misinformation. Throughout this, we also look at the many benefits of the technological world, and our Key Stage 5 curriculum highlights this in regards to broader life-preparation such as preparing for university, developing a professional portfolio and navigating the job market.

How you can support at home

Find below links and resources on how you can support with online safety at home.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/children-phones-online-safety>

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls>

<https://ygam.org>

Jenny McGhee Wallace and Aliyah Harries
OLOW Designated Safeguarding Leads

New Sixth Form Building Opens Its Doors

The Trust is delighted to announce the completion of the brand-new Sixth Form building at St Benedict's in Bury St Edmunds, with students now fully moved in and enjoying the upgraded facilities.

The modern extension includes a spacious study room with capacity for 40 students, providing a calm, dedicated space for silent work. Alongside this, a new common room equipped with kitchen facilities offers students a comfortable area to relax, collaborate, and take breaks throughout the day.

Early feedback from students has been overwhelmingly positive, with many appreciating the additional room and dedicated areas designed specifically to support their learning and wellbeing.



Head Teacher Mrs Senior shared her excitement about the expansion, stating: "As a long-standing provider of excellent post-16 education, we are always looking for ways to enhance our sixth form provision. As St Benedict's has continued to grow, we have for some time been planning on developing the resources in school for our sixth form students."

The new building marks an important milestone in the school's commitment to delivering high-quality post-16 education within the OLOW Trust and investing in spaces where young people can thrive.

Richard Stevenson, OLOW Chief Operating Officer

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Children at the Heart*



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St Mary's Primary, Ipswich

Mini Vinnies Visit to St Alban's, Ipswich

On 4 February, our Mini Vinnies team visited St Alban's Catholic High School to meet members of their St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP). The group of 12 pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 were warmly welcomed by the school chaplain and taken to the chapel, where they joined the secondary school students in Mass. During the homily, the children heard about the life of Vincent de Paul and how his example continues to inspire people to show compassion and support for those less fortunate.



After Mass, our Mini Vinnies proudly shared the charitable work they have undertaken so far this year. The SVP students from St Alban's then spoke about their own projects and fundraising initiatives. Our pupils were fascinated to hear about the range of activities the group has been involved in and asked many thoughtful questions. They were particularly impressed to learn about the group's visit to Vatican City to meet Pope Francis.

The visit was a wonderful experience for our Mini Vinnies, who left feeling inspired and excited to continue their own charitable mission.

Sport Update

Our Year 4 and 5 footballers recently took part in the Under 10s 4v4 football event. It was a fantastic day and the children showed great teamwork, enthusiasm and sportsmanship throughout the tournament. A particular highlight for the team was the opportunity to meet a player from the Ipswich Town Women, which was very exciting for everyone involved.



In February, St Mary's netball team played a match against Morland, which ended in a 7-4 loss. Despite the result, the team showed excellent perseverance and determination throughout the game. I was especially proud of the fantastic work and effort shown by our players at centre, who worked incredibly hard to keep the team moving forward.

Well done to all the children who represented the school so positively.

The Oscar Romero Award

St Mark's is proud to have received the Oscar Romero Award at Participator Level, recognising the work our school community has done to live out Catholic Social Teaching in meaningful ways. Inspired by the example of Oscar Romero, this journey has had a profound impact on our Catholic ethos, encouraging children, their parents, governors, and staff to reflect more deeply on what it truly means to live as Christians and to put the values of faith, justice, and compassion into action in our daily lives.



Through prayer, learning, and action, we have reflected on values such as justice, compassion, and standing in solidarity with others. As we prepare ourselves for Easter, our main project has been to begin creating an outdoor Stations of the Cross in our reflection garden, providing a peaceful space where pupils, staff, and visitors can pause for prayer and reflection.

This space will allow our school community to pause, pray, and reflect on the journey of Jesus Christ during Lent, helping us deepen our faith and understanding of what it means to follow Christ in our daily lives.

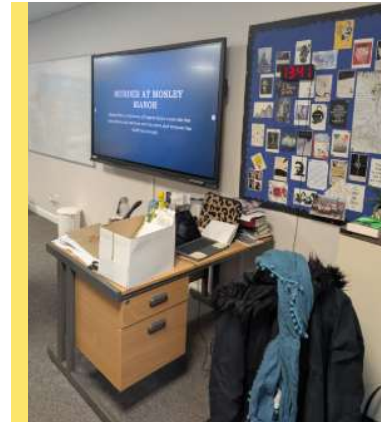




St Pancras Primary, Ipswich

Year 6 Enrichment Activity

Year 6 recently stepped into the world of crime-solving during an exciting enrichment trip to Woodbridge School for a “Murder Mystery with a Twist” workshop. The challenge? To create all the evidence themselves! The children investigated the mysterious death of a prestigious local poet, developing suspects, motives and – to their shock – revealing the culprit to be his housekeeper. Working alongside the English department, pupils wrote with real purpose and creativity, producing witness statements, blog entries, detective notes, interviews and even poetry to build their case.



With fantastic support from dedicated English A-level students, the children made full use of the school’s impressive computer facilities to type and print their carefully crafted evidence. Armed with their finished folders, they returned to present the case to our headteacher, Mr McGill, who now faces the ultimate challenge: can he solve the mystery using only Year 6’s evidence? It was a brilliant afternoon of imagination, collaboration and high-quality writing – and one the children will not soon forget!

Candlemas Liturgy

The GIFT team at St Pancras led a beautiful Candlemas liturgy on Monday 2nd February.

Several parents joined us for the small and intimate service, where each child ‘lit’ a tealight. We gathered around our makeshift altar and prayed for children all around the world. The ceremony was planned and led by the GIFT and included popular hymns, namely ‘This Little Light of Mine.’

We look forward to our next opportunity besides our weekly Celebration Assembly in which to host parents, which will be our Mother Figure Morning ahead of Mother’s Day.



We are Loving and kind,

We Pray and we Play



International Food 'Festival'

To mark the end of their Eastern Europe Geography unit, Years 3 and 4 celebrated with a vibrant International Food "Festival." With at least 16 countries represented across Lower Key Stage 2, it was a wonderful chance to bring their learning to life and honour the rich diversity of our school community.



Families generously prepared traditional dishes from around the world, giving children the chance to try new flavours and learn about different cultures. The hall was filled with delicious aromas, curiosity and plenty of smiles as pupils asked thoughtful questions about ingredients, traditions and family customs.

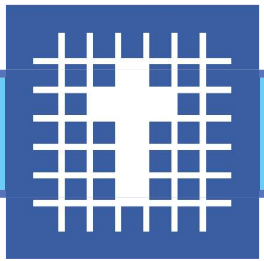
The event became a joyful celebration of food, heritage and togetherness. A huge thank you to all parents and carers whose generosity made the Festival such a memorable experience for everyone.

Timestables Rockstar Day

Years 3 and 4 marked the end of their Eastern Europe Geography unit with an International Food "Festival," celebrating both their learning and the rich diversity of our school community. With at least 16 countries represented, families shared traditional dishes that allowed children to explore new flavours and cultures.



The hall buzzed with curiosity as pupils asked thoughtful questions about ingredients and traditions, turning the event into a warm celebration of food, heritage and togetherness. Thank you to all parents and carers whose generosity made the Festival such a memorable occasion.



Easter Arriving at St Laurence

This term, at St. Laurence Primary school, we have been getting ready for Easter. It has been all about Lent.

Reception have planted their Easter gardens and we look forward to watching them burst into life.

Key Stage one are awaiting a visit from some miniature, therapeutic donkeys. This visit supports and enriches the RED lessons. Our pupils in our SEND bases will also have an encounter with the donkeys.

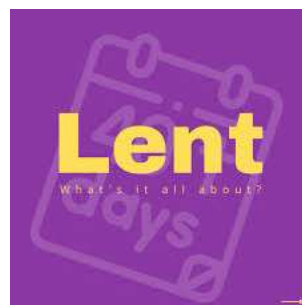


Lower Key Stage two have been busy rehearsing the Passion Play and will perform for their families and the rest of the school, on the last day of this term. It will, as usual, be a very moving experience.

Key Stage two are running the annual Lenten Activities morning. Pupils, in groups, will plan, prepare and run a fun morning of activities for all pupils and the money they raise will be shared with Mary's Meals and CAFOD.



Finally, the whole school will be engaged in a Lenten Crafts morning. The children will craft together, in their house groups with House Captains supporting the younger children. We also have parents supporting this event.



Lent at St Felix

It is now Lent, a special time in the Church's year when we reflect on how we can make positive changes in our lives. In the Gospel of Matthew, we hear how Jesus fasted for forty days and faced temptation and how He resisted!

Although life is very busy, we encourage the children to take time to pause and think about how they can improve the life of others.



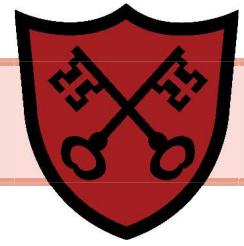
During Lent, our Houses have organised a number of special projects:

- St Catherine's House – Making Easter gardens and cards for older members of our local community and will be delivering them.
- St Peter's House – Raising money for a school in Sudan by painting prayer stones and making prayer book marks and selling them in school and in the parish after Sunday masses.
- St Elizabeth's House – Collecting food for the local food bank and joining with the Mini Vinnies who will contribute their 'Feed me February' food collection.
- St Francis House – Tidying our school grounds and making them more insect friendly by planting bulbs and plants. The House Captains have written letters to 15 local businesses asking for their support.

Tractors and Farming Visit St Felix

We were delighted to be chosen to take part in the Suffolk Agricultural Association Tractors to Schools initiative. We were visited by John Drury from the Thurlow Estate Farms, who spoke to the children about the importance of farming and the processes involved in growing and harvesting crops. The children especially enjoyed climbing inside the tractor and were amazed by the sheer size.





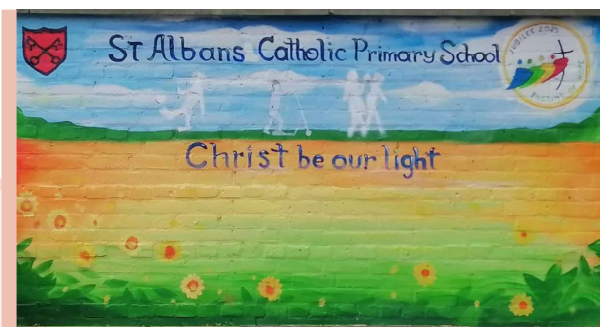
St Alban's Primary, Cambridge

Celebrating Our Catholic Jubilee Mural

After celebrating the Jubilee Year of 2025, we are thrilled to open a vibrant new addition to our school grounds. In our Key Stage One playground area, the Caritas group and School Council decided it would be beneficial, to the St Alban's community, to design a bespoke art mural for the school grounds to specifically to mark this holy milestone in the life of our Church.



The mural serves as a bright, permanent reminder of our shared Catholic faith and the joy of our St Alban's school community. Designed to inspire even our youngest learners, the artwork incorporates the vivid symbols of the Jubilee year, bringing "colour and light" to the heart of the playground. For our school, the project was more than just a renovation; it was an opportunity for our pupils to see their environment come to life, fostering a sense of pride and belonging as they play and grow together. The school's mission statement, 'Christ Be Our Light' is at the forefront of our design for all children, parents and visitors to see.



We are immensely grateful to local Cambridgeshire painter and artist, Bruno Dal-lape, who worked collaboratively with us to help turn this child led vision into a reality for our school. As our St Alban's "Pilgrims of Hope" explore this new space, we hope it sparks our children's imaginations and serves as a lasting memento of this special year for many generations to come. Following the completion of the design, this outdoor space will now enter the next phase as we look to use our Caritas fundraising to erect a statue of Our Lady within the spiritual area to create a 'reflective area' that enables our children to enjoy individual and group prayer and liturgy.

Believe, Achieve, Succeed





St Alban's High School, Ipswich

Oliver Jr. School Production

"Please, sir, I want some more."

Oliver Jr. was absolutely fantastic from start to finish. The cast brought great energy to the stage, delivering their lines with confidence, and the musical numbers were highly professional.



A special mention goes to Nicole S, Poppy A, Noah F, Rafael P, Ruipe R, and Luca V, who truly shone in this performance.

The choreography, directed by Freya, was sharp and engaging. The costumes, organised and designed by Mrs Lewis, were charming, and the entire production felt polished and well rehearsed.

It was clear how much effort everyone contributed. The show was entertaining, lively, and a joy to watch. More importantly, Oliver Jr. showcased the wonderful talents of our students, and we are proud to have students involved in drama, music, artwork, costume design, and behind-the-scenes support.

We are already planning a new musical for February 2027 and hope to see many new faces joining the Creative Performing Arts faculty.

I would like to thank all staff who supported the show, especially Mrs Wright (Head of Creative Performing Arts Faculty) who created an amazing set of props and stage background - Turner the artist would be proud! Mr Silburn and Mrs Robinson, for their dedication to weekly rehearsals and their continued inspiration beyond the curriculum. A school production would not be possible without the commitment of staff, students, and the wider school community.



Learning... Respecting... Caring...



A Taste of University

This month all of Year 12 participated in the University and Apprenticeships Fair in Chelmsford. This was a great opportunity to get our students thinking about post-18 pathways in their first year in the Sixth Form.



Students were excited to see the many opportunities available while engaging directly with representatives from a broad range of post-18 providers. Congratulations also to our Year 13 university applicants who have received offers for universities such as Warwick, Bristol, York, Nottingham and Birmingham, as well as students who have been invited to interview for Medicine and courses at Cambridge.

Destinations and Successes

This month we say goodbye to our international placement students from Brazil and thank them for the fantastic contributions they have made to our school. We were recently visited by Alessandra, one of our international programme alumni, who is also featured on our school website. We wish her the best of luck in her exams back in Italy.

In December we are excited to welcome back our 2025 leavers who achieved so fantastically in their A-Levels for our Certificate Presentation Evening. We are also pleased to have received 100 applications to the Sixth Form so far for 2026 and wish our Year 11s as well as our Year 13s the very best of luck in their PPEs. With RAG Week also taking place in December, we are glad to have some light relief in what has been a busy month in St Alban's Sixth Form.





International Languages Day

On Wednesday 28th January, St Benedict's proudly celebrated International Languages Day, recognising and celebrating the rich cultural diversity within our school community. Students marked the occasion by wearing traditional cultural dress and taking part in a variety of activities, including a bake sale, tutor quiz, and a flags quiz.



Year 8 and 9 students also enjoyed language taster sessions, giving them the opportunity to explore new languages and cultures.

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to the day, with special thanks to the sixth form cake sale team and all those who baked cakes and helped raise funds for EACH (East Anglian Children's Hospice). Your generosity and teamwork helped make the event such a success.

Special recognition goes to the students who delivered foreign language sessions in Hungarian, German, Polish, Russian and Filipino. Their incredible presentations and enthusiasm were an amazing contribution to the day.

Carl Conway, Adam O'Flynn and Jessica Dive year 13

Ara Anacleto and Raf Calumpiano year 12

Natasha Dive year 11

Nadia Kroszkiewicz and Amelia Zabojsz year 10

Franek Saladra and Patrycja Golonka year 9

The day was a powerful reminder that learning a language is more than words – it builds understanding, respect and connection across cultures. As we celebrated together, we were reminded that “it's never too late to learn a language,” and every language learned brings us one step closer to understanding the world and each other.

*I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full*





St Benedict's Sixth Form, Bury St Edmunds

Articulation Win

On Wednesday 25 February, Amy John in Year 13, presented a fantastic, informative and insightful presentation on the Augusta Prima Porta Statue for an audience of six other schools and adjudicators at the Sainsbury Centre's regional Heat in Norwich, as part of the National Gallery's Articulation Prize.



We are all super proud of her, as she won over the panel of judges with her natural flair for public speaking and her command of the subject. Her presentation helped the audience reflect on the importance of art across history, particularly in a digital age of propaganda and façade. She won the heat and is selected as the regional winner for East Anglia competing against others such as Hills Road in Cambridge and Sir Isaac Newton College, Norwich.



This means she will be speaking at the National Gallery on 24th March to compete for the full prize alongside schools from across the country.

Economics Olympiad Challenge

Thursday morning, a group of our Year 12 and Year 13 students took on the Economics Olympiad Challenge, putting their economic knowledge and problem-solving skills to the test. The challenge presented some particularly obscure and demanding questions, requiring students to think carefully, apply theory confidently, and remain resilient under pressure.

The group rose to the occasion, achieving some excellent results overall and demonstrating both strong subject knowledge and resilience.

A special mention goes to Kuba Kluczynski (Year 13), who achieved an outstanding 84%, and Alex Walton (Year 12), who secured a fantastic 76% - both exceptional performances in a highly challenging competition.

Congratulations to all students involved for their commitment, wisdom and ambition. Results like these reflect not only academic ability, but a genuine enthusiasm for economics beyond the classroom.

*I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full*



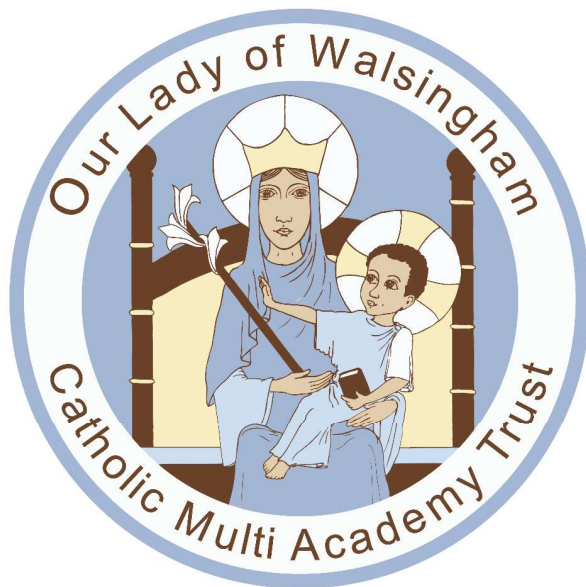
Foundation Governor Recruitment

If you are interested in becoming a school governor or would like to find out more about the fantastic impact that you could make within our Trust schools then please visit the Trust website by scanning the following QR code.



Please share with anyone who is interested in learning more about the positive impact of good governance on pupils' life chances and might be interested in joining one of our school boards.

www.ourladyofwalsingham.co.uk/governorrecruitment



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