



21st November 2025

Headteachers update

Good afternoon, everyone! Somehow, we've blinked and completed three full weeks of the half term, which means there are just four weeks to go until we break up for Christmas. Not that I'm counting down... but let's just say the excitement is definitely building!

It's been wonderful welcoming so many parents and carers into school this week for our meetings. Thank you for taking the time to come in, chat with our teachers and celebrate the brilliant learning that's happening every day. We're incredibly proud of the children – their efforts, their resilience and the high standards they continually strive for. I know the meetings are short, but I do hope you found them useful. And remember, ClassDojo is always there if you'd like a quick update or want to check in about anything at all.

Thursday brought something a little extra special – our first snow day of the academic year! And what a day it was. The children were straight into their waterproofs and wellies and the sound of laughter and pure joy echoed across the school grounds as they slid down the hills and played together. It was one of those magical days where childhood shines at its best – memories for life were definitely created.

Alongside all of this, Nativity rehearsals have begun to drift through the corridors. Songs are taking shape, lines are being learned and the excitement is already building. In just a couple of weeks, we can't wait to share the finished performance with you – it's already looking pretty cool!

Also on Thursday afternoon, we were also delighted to have The Dog Log company in school. As many of you know, Arthur is settling beautifully into life at Belsay and the children have been absolutely fantastic with him. To support this, each class spent some time with Nathan and Louisa, learning how to keep both themselves and Arthur safe, comfortable and happy in school. If you've got a dog at home, you may well have had a full demonstration on Thursday evening!

Finally, we held our Hot Chocolate and Celebration Assembly, which is always a highlight. It's such a pleasure to shine a light on the children's achievements and enjoy a well-earned warm drink together – especially in a week like this one.

All in all, it's been a really lovely week at Belsay. I hope you all have a great weekend – fingers crossed the weather is kind, and whatever your plans, enjoy some rest and time together. We look forward to seeing everyone back on Monday.

Mr Shaw



Safeguarding

Belsay Primary School is committed to keeping all children safe. Our staff regularly participate in safeguarding training and are fully aware of how to keep our pupils safe and what signs to look out for. Our pupils know they can share any concerns and we have robust policies and procedures in place which underpin safeguarding. It is our paramount priority to keep all children healthy and safe. Remember our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) in school are **Miss Dixon, Miss Houghton and Mr Shaw.**

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SEARCH ENGINES

Search engines are an integral part of everyday life – with Google alone processing around 100,000 searches every second. Search engines use algorithms to predict which results will be useful to us, though this can expose children to inappropriate content, misinformation and even scams. This guide explains the risks associated with search engines and offers practical advice to help safeguard young users online.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

MANIPULATED SEARCH RESULTS (SEO)
Although search engines have a reputation for accuracy, search engines don't have a perfect record. Instead, they use algorithms that can be gamed via tactics like search engine optimisation (SEO), which is big business. As a result, users may encounter misleading content and low-quality commercial products that appear more credible than they actually are.

MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION
Search engines index billions of web pages – and not all of them are factual or safe. Children might stumble across false information or even deliberate disinformation, especially when searching for trending topics or controversial issues.

ENGINES BEYOND GOOGLE
Even if Google's SafeSearch is enabled, children may use lesser-known search engines that don't have similar protections. Some of these alternatives are less effective at blocking unwanted content – sometimes by design – making it easier for children to encounter harmful or explicit material. Parental controls may also struggle to detect and block these sites.

FUNNY JOKES

ILLEGAL CONTENT CAN SURFACE
Search engines are designed to retrieve content based on keywords – not to judge whether that content is lawful. As a result, even illegal or harmful material can appear in search results. Children might assume that anything found through search engines must be safe, just because they're so widely used. This misunderstanding can lead to accidental exposure to seriously inappropriate content.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT EXPOSURE (CENSORED)
Although parental controls like Google's SafeSearch exist, they aren't foolproof, and search engines may bypass them. Young users may still see inappropriate images or content, especially in image searches, even though they may not be able to click on the results. Some niche search engines lack even basic filtering, posing further risks.

UNRELIABLE AI SUMMARIES (AI Overview)
Some search engines now offer AI-generated summaries at the top of results. While these can be helpful on web page summaries, they're not always accurate. There have been instances where AI summaries have presented false or even dangerous information, reinforcing the need for critical thinking.

AI OVERVIEW

Advice for Parents & Educators

ACTIVATE PARENTAL CONTROLS
While no parental controls tool is perfect, this software can help reduce the likelihood of inappropriate content appearing in search results. Use tools like Google Family Link to set search restrictions and monitor your child's browsing activity.

IDENTIFY AND AVOID ADVERTS
One of the ways search engines generate revenue is by showing adverts to their users. Sponsored search results are labelled, but they're not always easy to spot and can sometimes be misleading. Show your child how to distinguish between paid ads and organic search results – explain why adverts might be misleading or unsafe.

QUESTION AI-GENERATED CONTENT
While AI content is generated quickly and often appears legitimate, teach children that, just because an AI summary is well-presented, it doesn't mean it's accurate. Encourage them to review the sources behind AI summaries and check the information with reputable sites or fact-checkers.

PROMOTE DIGITAL LITERACY
Encourage children to question the motivation behind online content and develop critical thinking, as not all sites can be trusted. Some deliberately misleading users in order to sell products or promote misinformation. Developing a critical mindset is one of the best defences against these tactics.



Attendance

As parents and carers we want to share our attendance figures because it is you who can make the big difference. Our children are entitled to a full and balanced education and at Belsay we feel we provide one of the best experiences possible.

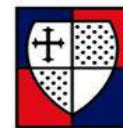
Current Whole School attendance is 95.27% Our **NEW** target for Whole School Attendance is 96%.

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Willow	88.57%	97.44%
Maple	87.69%	96.01%
Alder	74.00%	92.64%
Oak	92.17%	96.76%

Days of school add up to lost learning						
Days in school	190	186	180	175	171	170
Percentage attendance	100%	98%	95%	92%	90%	<90%
	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Caution	Cause for concern	Serious concern

Absence Procedures if your child is ill, please keep them at home until they are well enough to return to school. Please notify us by phone call or email before 9.15am if your child is to be absent, and continue to inform us on a daily basis if they continue to be ill.

We have a continual focus on attendance and punctuality and this is of the utmost importance in your child's education. Please remember that our school gate closes at 8.55am as this is when our lessons begin. Anyone arriving after this time is classed as late and will miss valuable learning opportunities which take place immediately after registration, such as phonics.



Classroom updates - Willow Class

We've had another great week here in Willow class, still full of learning and fun, even if it wasn't quite as busy as last week!

It was lovely seeing everyone at Parents' Evening. I really enjoyed catching up and sharing all the wonderful progress the children have been making in such a short amount of time. Thank you to all the families who took the time to come in.

In maths, we've been focusing on the number 5. The children have explored it in lots of creative ways and have shown fantastic counting skills and growing confidence with their number work.

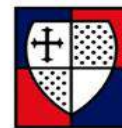
We've also been busy practising for the nativity. The children are doing brilliantly with their songs, and actions, and their excitement is really starting to shine through. They really are superstars!

Even with the cold and rain, we've had a great time outside. The children have embraced the weather with enthusiasm and resilience, making the most of every moment outdoors.



Wishing everyone a warm and restful weekend!

Miss Houghton



Classroom updates - Maple Class

Maple Class had a brilliantly busy week filled with lots of learning, but also lots of fun! In English, the children created their own Autumn poems, using similes, alliteration and onomatopoeia to bring the season to life. They were incredibly proud of their imaginative writing. In Science, we continued exploring seasonal change and learnt how weather is recorded, including temperature and wind direction. After an exciting morning playing in the November snow, the children created their own weather reports and talked about why it's important to wear the right clothing to stay warm outdoors.

We have also been working very hard to prepare for the school nativity, practising our performance and helping to make beautiful Christmas stars to decorate the hall.

To finish our busy week, we took part in a fantastic dog safety training session delivered by The Dog Log. The children learned about the emotions dogs experience and how a dog's body language can help us understand how the animal is feeling. We also talked about safe places to stroke a dog and even had the chance to feed Arthur his lunch!



Miss Dixon



Classroom updates- Alder class

It has been another fantastic week in Alder Class this week.

It was wonderful to see everyone at Parents' Evening and catch up with you to share how well all the children have settled into the school year.

In English, we completed our diary entries, using expanded noun phrases, adverbs, exaggerated sentences and questions to bring our writing to life. We were all really proud of the work we have completed. We have now moved on to our poetry unit which is linked to the work we are doing in Science around matter (solids, liquids and gases).

In Maths, we are finishing off our addition and subtraction unit, looking at inverse operations and how we can check our answers before moving onto multiplication next week.

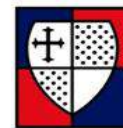
In geography, we have started our unit on settlements and why people live where they do. Please take a look at the video on our class story that highlights what we will be covering as part of the unit! This week, we explored why proximity to transport, water and flat land are all important when choosing to build a new settlement.

On top of all of this, we have been working hard on our Christmas performance, practicing our lines, dances and songs. One of the highlights of the week was our amazing training session with The Dog Log. We learnt about the different emotions a dog might be feeling and how we can read these from their expressions and actions! We also learnt where the best place would be to stroke Arthur and got to feed him a treat!

Well done on a fantastic week Alder Class. We have missed everyone who has been ill this week and we look forward to seeing you back soon!



Mrs Aynsley & Mrs Rutter



Classroom updates - Oak Class

Just another crazy week up here in Oak Class. We've pushed on with our Letters from the Lighthouse writing by learning how to flick between tenses, weave in flashbacks and use sensory language to build atmosphere, all ready for our upcoming monologue big write. The children have shown real maturity in the way they're beginning to control the "voice" of the narrator, and it's been brilliant to see their confidence growing day by day.

In Maths, we tackled some of the trickier parts of multiplication, exploring square numbers, cube numbers and prime numbers with real focus. There were some excellent lightbulb moments as everything began to click, especially in how these ideas link to patterns and relationships across the curriculum.

In Science, we continued our Physics unit by investigating how the eye works and how different lighting conditions affect how our eyes respond. The children really enjoyed exploring how the pupil changes size and why that happens, with lots of great questions and curiosity in the room. Our Geography took us high into the mountains as we learned how different types of mountains form right here in the UK, from fold mountains to volcanic peaks. Oak Class particularly impressed us with how well they could explain tectonic forces in their own words. We also had thoughtful discussions in PSHE about how peer pressure changes as we get older, with the children giving some very sensible, heartfelt ideas about how to make good choices. We enjoyed some brilliant singing with Madame Humes in French, and we've thrown ourselves into our brand-new Christmas performance with typical Oak Class enthusiasm. The hall has been full of music, energy and plenty of smiles. And of course, we even squeezed in some time to get out in the snow in a way that only Belsay children can. Snowballs, sledging and rosy cheeks all round.

Have a great weekend everyone, stay warm, and I'll see you all on Monday.



Mr McLeod



Dates for your Diary

Events could be subject to change and will be communicated if required

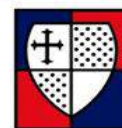
Date	Time	
Monday 24th November	Morning	Reception and Year 6 NHS National Height and Weights checks
Friday 28th November	All day	Non-uniform day - donations for the PTA Christmas Jingle tombola
Friday 5th December	9am	Christmas Nativity Performance
Wednesday 10th December	All day	Non uniform day - bring a bottle for the PTA Christmas Jingle
Friday 12th December	All day	Christmas lunch and jumper day
Monday 15th December	3.15pm	PTA Christmas Jingle
Tuesday 16th December	8:30am	Whole school trip to the Pantomime
Wednesday 17th December	Afternoon	Alder and Oak Christmas party
Thursday 18th December	Afternoon	Pele Trust Christmas Concert at St Mary's Church (for those in choir and band)
Thursday 18th December	Afternoon	Willow and Maple Christmas party
Friday 19th December	1.15pm	School closes for the holidays



Belsay Primary School

Friday Flyer

Belsay School



We kindly remind you that the school car park should not be used between 8:20am - 9:10am and 2:50pm and 3:30pm. During these times, our buses and taxis need clear access to park and manoeuvre safely so that children can board and disembark without risk.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping keep the car park safe.

**Safer Parking
around our school**

SCHOOL — KEEP — CLEAR

As a driver you have a responsibility to park in a safe and considerate manner.
Park with care and help make the area near and around our school a safer place for everyone.

The poster features a central illustration of a school building with a sign that says 'SCHOOL'. In front of the school, a diverse group of people is shown: a person on a bicycle, a person in a wheelchair, a woman with a baby, a family with children, a person with a dog, a person with a stroller, and a person on a scooter. To the right of the school is a triangular warning sign with two children and a rectangular sign below it that says 'School'. A yellow zigzag line runs across the scene with the text 'SCHOOL — KEEP — CLEAR' written in the center. The background is light blue with a sun and clouds. The bottom section of the poster is red and contains two white cars, one on the left and one on the right, with people inside. The text is in white and pink.

Belsay Primary School

Friday Flyer

Belsay School



BELSAY



BABY & TODDLER GROUP

Every Monday (during term time)
in the school hall • 10am - 11am

Come along to a relaxed
and friendly group

EVERYONE WELCOME

£2.50 PER FAMILY

Belsay Primary School

Friday Flyer

Belsay School



Belsay Daycare & Purple Haze Flowers

Wreath Making Workshop

Tuesday 9th December

6:30pm - 8:30pm

£35

Get into the festive spirit with this fun two-hour wreath making session led by Diane James. All materials provided. Takes place in School Hall & refreshments will be available.



Contact Laura on 07834 828524
to book a place (£5 deposit required)

Raising funds for Belsay Daycare