



**9th January 2026**

## Headteachers Update

Happy New Year to you all! We hope you enjoyed a wonderful festive period, that Santa was kind to the children and grown-ups alike and that you have all had a positive start to 2026.



It has certainly been an exciting start to the term, with the snow kindly gracing us on Monday and Tuesday. It was fantastic to see the wide variety of sledges arriving at Belsay and, as always, the children making the very most of the opportunity to play out on the field. Seeing their laughter, teamwork and sheer joy in the snow is truly a magnificent sight and one that never fails to put a huge smile on my face.

As we look ahead, we have a really exciting term coming up, with lots of events and learning opportunities planned. We also have our residential trip later in the term, which we know many

children are already beginning to get very excited about! In addition to this we have lots of fun lessons planned and the staff are working tirelessly in the background to make the curriculum as engaging as possible. We really like to Make a Fuss! when planning the lessons so the children can learn more and remember more.

I am also delighted to share some wonderful news as we begin the year. Congratulations to Miss Whitehouse, who gave birth to a gorgeous baby boy, Harry, weighing 8lb 4oz, on 27th December. On behalf of the whole Belsay family, we send our warmest congratulations and cannot wait to meet him when the time is right.



Our Celebration Assembly and Hot Chocolate treats will start again next week but I can honestly say that the children have come back into school in the most wonderful and enthusiastic way which is simply amazing.

Wishing you all a lovely weekend, please wrap up and keep warm!

**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.**

### 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## STAYING SAFE AROUND WATER

Enjoying time in, on, and around water plays a vital role in a young person's overall development, offering a healthy and exhilarating way to have fun. This guide outlines essential safety advice, based on the Royal Life Saving Society UK's Water Safety Code, to help ensure children can enjoy swimming and similar activities safely and responsibly.

- #### 1 STICK TO LIFEGUARDED AREAS

It's never advisable to enter unsupervised bodies of water, especially alone. Instead, it's considered best practice to accompany children to places with lifeguards, as they will be trained to respond swiftly in emergencies and provide first aid when needed.
- #### 2 LEARN SIGNS AND FLAGS

When going to a new environment, it's important to research the local area and make children aware of safety signage before entering the water. If visiting the seaside, make sure children are always supervised by an adult and that they know what different beach flags mean, so they're knowledgeable of where and when they can enter the sea.
- #### 3 STOP AND THINK

Young people should be cautious before entering water, as it's difficult to know what hidden risks could be underneath. Use the Water Safety Code and encourage children to ask themselves questions such as: 'Is the water too deep or too shallow? Are there currents, tides, or underwater objects?' Make sure children know never to enter water from a height, as that can have a real chance of serious injuries.
- #### 4 CONSIDER WATER TEMPERATURE

Even on hot days, water can be deceptively cold. It's vital to advise young people that even more cold water shock, never let children enter water quickly. Instead, ensure that they enter slowly and carefully to allow their bodies to adjust to the temperature as and when it's needed.
- #### 5 INFLATABLE SAFETY

Although inflatables may seem like a fun idea when visiting locations like the beach, they can float further out from shore and into more dangerous water. It's advisable only to use inflatables in spaces like appropriately marked swimming pools, where they're used in more controlled and supervised environments.
- #### 6 SUPERVISION IS KEY

For young children, and particularly those under the age of five, it's important for them to be supervised at home, outside of the pool at all times. It's essential for parents and educators to understand that young children can drown quickly and silently. Therefore, anyone supervising them must maintain constant watch in case they get into difficulty.
- #### 7 DON'T GO TOO FAR

When swimming, especially in open water, it's best to teach children to stay within a safe depth. Show advice with them, such as only entering water up to a standing depth, and in the case of floating lifebuoys, swim parallel to shorelines. This will allow a child to stay in a control and get out of the water easily.
- #### 8 KEEP POOLS AND TUBS DRAINED

For parents of young children, a simple way to protect them at home is to keep outdoor spaces and bathrooms tidy after playtime. This includes removing water from paddling pools after use and turning them over, returning lids to hot tubs and taking toys out of baths, so all water can be fully drained from the tub.
- #### 9 FLOAT AND CALL 999

If a child gets into difficulty in the water, they should try to float on their back, stay calm, and call for help. If a young person has someone who is in trouble, they should dial 999 or 112 immediately, then if out to reassure their friend, encouraging them to float on their back, and letting them know that help is on the way. Children should never enter the water to attempt a rescue or retrieve belongings.
- #### 10 TEACH WATER SAFETY

Beyond swimming lessons, children should be educated in school on water safety. Use RLS UK's essential programmes, Water Smart Primary, which offers free lesson plans and resources on how to be safe on, near and around water by following the Water Safety Code.



## 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 94.94%.** Our **NEW** target for Whole School Attendance is 95%.

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Willow	100%	95.4%
Maple	97.8%	95%
Alder	98.4%	93.2%
Oak	99.2%	96.7%

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

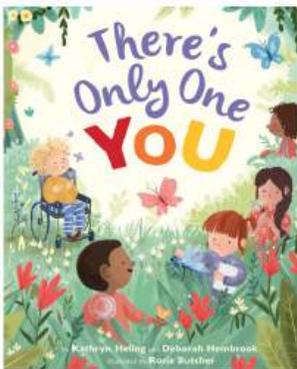
Absence Procedures if your child is ill, please keep them at home until they are well enough to return to school. Please notify us by phone call or email before 9.15am if your child is to be absent, and continue to inform us on a daily basis if they continue to be ill.

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're so happy to see everyone as we step into a brand-new year together. This first week back at school is all about fresh starts, positive energy, and reconnecting as a community. With winter all around us, it's the perfect time to enjoy the season. We have had fun in the snow, trying to build the best snowman, and sharing lots of laughs during a friendly snowball fight.



This week we've been sharing the book *There's Only One You*, which beautifully celebrates how special and unique each person is. The story reminds us that no one else in the world is exactly like you, and that your ideas, talents, and kindness make a real difference. It encourages us to believe in ourselves and to appreciate what makes everyone around us unique too. We have used this book to help us with thinking about what we would like to achieve this year. For some of us it is learning to ride a bike without stabilisers, for others it is to get better at Phonics. It has been lovely to share individual goals and targets together.



As we head into the weekend I hope you all take time to relax, have fun and enjoy being together. Whether you're staying cosy and warm indoors or heading outside for more winter fun. Have a lovely weekend.

**Miss Houghton**



## Classroom updates - Maple Class

What a fantastic start to the New Year! Despite the chilly weather, Maple Class have been as focused and hardworking as ever, diving straight into their new topics of learning. In English, the children began exploring our new class text, *Lost and Found* by Oliver Jeffers. They made predictions about the story from the title and front cover, explored new vocabulary, and even wrote questions as if they were interviewing one of the main characters. The class showed great curiosity and creativity as they engaged with the story.

In Computing, the children had their first lesson of the term, learning what technology is and how it is used to help people complete different tasks. They then explored the classroom to spot technology that contains computers, discovering just how much technology surrounds them every day. It was exciting to see the children making connections between what they use at home and the technology in school.

History lessons were equally exciting as the class learned about the first powered flight and the invention of the Wright Flyer by the Wright brothers. To bring this piece of history to life, Maple Class designed and made their own paper aeroplanes, testing which designs could glide the farthest. They carefully considered what made a successful design and enjoyed learning through hands-on experimentation, showing just how much fun history can be!



Miss Dixon



## Classroom updates- Alder class

What a wonderful start to the New Year we have had in Alder Class this week!

In English, we began our new two week block on writing informal letters. Some of us chose to write a thank you letter to Santa, others to write to a friend in their class. We continued the week by learning some new grammar techniques to improve our writing style. We were very impressed with how well the children learnt the basic structure of a letter. They particularly enjoyed learning about bearded dragons, which are the topic of our letter! This is going to be a fantastic topic.

In Maths this half term, our learning will be focused on multiplication. We focused on some basic times tables this week, as well as learning about grouping and sharing objects in division.

In Art, we finished off our Anglo Saxon prints with some fantastic results, before moving onto our new topic on Tsunamis. In Science, we looked at lots of different household objects to determine whether they were solids, liquids or gases. In History, we began our learning on the Vikings exploring the chronology of their arrival and the first Viking raids that took place on Lindisfarne. The class enjoyed exploring the timeline to find the Vikings and were interested to see that they were in Britain at the same time as the Anglo-Saxons. We predicted that there may be some conflict to learn about in the coming weeks! In PSHE, we are exploring how we can make healthy choices that help our body and minds to thrive. This week, we learnt about the importance of exercise for our body and our mental health.

It's been a fantastic week back! Have a wonderful weekend everyone and look forward to seeing you all next week!



Mrs Aynsley & Mrs Rutter



## Classroom updates - Oak Class

It has been a busy and positive first week back in Oak Class. In English, we have launched our new Shakespeare unit with an introduction to *Julius Caesar*. The children have been working towards writing a newspaper article linked to the events of the play and have already produced strong headlines, sub headlines and an engaging introductory paragraph using the 5Ws. They have also written a clear second paragraph focused on presenting facts accurately and objectively, showing a growing understanding of journalistic style.

In Maths, we are delighted to welcome Mr Pritchard from Ponteland Primary School, who has begun a new division unit with Year 5. Alongside this, Mr McLeod has been revisiting division through practical and concrete approaches, helping pupils secure their understanding as they move towards formal written methods with our Year 6s. In RE, we began exploring how Islam exists as part of British culture and society. The children have been learning about what it means to live out religious beliefs in modern Britain and how faith can influence daily life, values and a sense of belonging. Our PSHE learning this week has focused on the importance of mental health. The children discussed why mental health matters just as much as physical health and explored ways to recognise emotions, manage worries and support themselves and others.

In Science, our new unit on Evolution and Inheritance began with Mr P leading learning about how animals are adapted to their environments. Pupils explored how features and behaviours can help animals survive and were keen to share their own examples and ideas, setting a strong foundation for the unit ahead. In History, we started our learning on the Tudors by looking at how Henry VIII came to change both the monarchy and the church in England. The children learned about the break from the Catholic Church and began to consider how this decision shifted power and had long lasting effects on religion and leadership in Britain.

It has been a great first week back and the children have returned with enthusiasm and a fantastic attitude to learning.



Mr McLeod



## Dates for your Diary

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

Date	Time	
Monday 26th January	3.30pm	Parents SATS Information Session
Thursday 29th January	All day	Year 5/6 attending a performance at the Theatre Royal
Thursday 12th February	3.30pm	Newby Wiske Information evening
Friday 13th February	3.15pm	School closes for half term
Monday 23rd February	All day	School closed for teacher training day
Tuesday 24th February	8.45am	School reopens
Tuesday 10th March	All day	Shakespeare performance at Northern Stage
Wednesday 11th March	All day	Newby Wiske residential
Thursday 12th March	All day	Newby Wiske residential
Friday 13th March	All day	Newby Wiske residential
Monday 23rd March	All week	Scholastic Book Fair in school
Monday 23rd March	Various times	Parents evening
Tuesday 24th March	Various times	Parents evening
Friday 3rd April	3.15pm	School closes for Easter

## Happy Birthday to:

Jack (Alder)  
Lewis (Oak)  
Charlie (Alder)

🎈 Wishing you all a fantastic day! 🎂

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**