

23rd January 2026

Headteachers Update

It has been another really positive and encouraging week at school and it is lovely to be able to share just how well things are going across the school at the moment. There is a real sense of momentum, pride and happiness in everything we are doing and that has certainly been reflected in the week just gone.

Earlier this week, we were delighted to welcome members of our Academy Committee into school as part of a follow-up visit linked to our recent SEND review. As always, it was a pleasure to have them with us. Their visit was extremely positive and it was wonderful to be able to showcase the great work that is happening across the school.

We were also proud to welcome visitors from other schools within our Trust this week who are taking part in a Leadership Programme. They selected Belsay Primary School specifically, out of all the Trust schools, having heard such positive feedback about our school and being particularly interested in the uniqueness of our mixed-age classes. The focus of their visit was to understand how we facilitate mixed-age teaching so successfully and it was a pleasure to share our approaches, practices and classroom experiences with them. This was a real testament to the hard work of our staff and the strong reputation the school continues to build.

A reminder for our Year 6 parents that we will be holding our SATs information evening on Monday 26th. It is hard to believe we are approaching that time of year already. The evening is designed to explain the process clearly, outline what the SATs involve and how we support the children in the lead-up to May. We work hard to ensure there is no unnecessary pressure placed on pupils but it is always helpful for parents to feel informed and reassured.

We also enjoyed another lovely celebration assembly this week, including our hot chocolate celebration. Well done to all those who were nominated and recognised – it is always a pleasure to celebrate the effort, attitudes and achievements of our pupils.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. I hope you all have a wonderful weekend and we look forward to welcoming 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 APPLE IPADS

Tablets remain a staple of children's digital lives – and Apple's iPad is by far the most popular model. According to Ofcom, over half of younger children regularly use a tablet to play games, watch online content or access apps. With their broad functionality, iPads can be helpful tools, but without supervision, they may expose children to risks ranging from inappropriate content to screen overuse.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

COSTLY TO REPAIR

Unlike some child-friendly tablets, the iPad is not built for rough handling. Its slim design and high cost mean that a drop or spill can result in a costly repair. If a child is using the device regularly, it's usually wise and so new protectors are strongly recommended to help prevent accidental damage.

DATA PRIVACY

While Apple is known for strong privacy protections, a recent study found that many iOS apps reveal or children still share personal data. Over 60% of the latest apps send at least one piece of user information to third parties, raising concerns about advertising and analytics being targeted at underage users.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

The App Store and Safari browser provide at times unrestricted access to online material. Children may stumble upon age-inappropriate content, whether through apps, advertisements or online searches. Such recommended content algorithms can surface unsuitable material.

BYPASSING RESTRICTIONS

Siri – Apple's voice assistant – can potentially override restrictions, especially with the newer text-based commands introduced through Apple Intelligence. Without safeguards in place, children may inadvertently bypass inappropriate topics simply by asking questions, bypassing certain filters previously set by adults.

SCREEN ADDICTION

iPads can be highly addictive, and excessive screen time may affect a child's emotional and behavioral development. Signs of overuse might include mood swings, irritability, and difficulty focusing on non-digital activities.

REDUCED ATTENTION & COGNITIVE IMPACT

Prolonged use of tablets has been linked with reduced memory, slower processing speeds and difficulties in concentrating. Research shows that children who spend excessive time gaming or consuming media on tablets may struggle with language development and executive functioning over time.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE FAMILY SHARING

Family Sharing allows you to create a dedicated Apple ID for your child and manage their activity. You can approve purchases, control what content they can access, and set time limits – all done remotely from your own device. It's a simple but powerful way to maintain oversight.

FILTER APPS, WEBSITES & IN-APP PURCHASES

Parental controls in iOS let you block explicit content in Safari, restrict app downloads, and manage in-app purchase permissions. You can also filter websites automatically to prevent access to adult material and disable the installation of certain app types completely.

USE SCREEN TIME FEATURES EFFECTIVELY

Tools like Downtime and App Limits can reduce device overuse. Downtime allows you to block access during key times – such as before bed or during homework – while App Limits sets daily time caps on specific games or apps. Alerts help on kids drift to see when their time is almost up.

PREVENT UNAPPROVED SPENDING

Children can accidentally (or intentionally) make purchases within apps. Activating Ask to Buy under Family Sharing ensures you receive a notification to approve any app or in-app purchase. This stops surprise charges and allows you to discuss purchases together before they're made.



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%	96.28
Maple	88.1%	95.1%
Alder	97.2%	93.9%
Oak	99.2%	97.2%

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

This week, Willow Class enjoyed exploring toys from the past and present. The children were enthusiastic about comparing how toys have changed over time and showed growing confidence when talking about similarities and differences.

We have continued to focus on healthy eating choices, discussing how different foods help our bodies to grow and stay strong. The children are becoming more thoughtful when talking about balanced meals and making sensible choices.



A key focus this week has been our writing. The children have worked hard to form letters carefully, hear sounds in words and share their ideas with increasing independence. Their effort and progress are very encouraging. Our new phonics groups are working well. The children have settled confidently into their groups and are responding positively to the targeted support and challenge, helping them to build strong early reading skills. Thank you to everyone who took advantage of the double book worm points and completed lots of additional reading at home. It really does make a difference.

I hope everyone has a wonderful weekend!

Miss Houghton



Classroom updates - Maple Class

This week in Maple Class, the children have been working hard in English as they planned to innovate the story *Lost and Found* to make it their own. They created writing toolkits filled with interesting verbs, adjectives and suffixes to help make their story writing more exciting and descriptive. The children also planned their own storyboards, using creative ideas to ensure their stories follow a clear story structure from beginning to end.

In Maths, Year 1 pupils have continued developing their place value skills to 20, focusing on comparing numbers, while Year 2 pupils have been learning how to count money in pounds and pence. In History, the children discovered how the first flight changed travel around the world, sparking curiosity and thoughtful discussions about how transport has developed over time.

In Art, the children completed a new artist study on Alma Thomas. They explored how her artwork uses bright, vibrant colours to evoke feelings of joy and excitement, sharing their own responses to her paintings. The class also discussed her distinctive use of dotted painting techniques to create natural landscapes, inspiring the children to think about how colour and pattern can be used to express mood and movement in their own artwork.



Miss Dixon



Classroom updates- Alder class

Another great week in Alder Class. In English, we have been enjoying looking at poetry about Vikings. We imagined a longboat journey across the sea and used onomatopoeia to help us develop an immersive story for our poem. There has been some wonderful creativity shown!

In Maths, we are continuing our multiplication and division topic. Year 3 has been exploring the 4 and 8 times tables (both multiplication and division). Year 4, meanwhile, has been practising multiplying and dividing a number by 1 and itself, as well as multiplying three numbers.

In P.E., we have been enjoying our weekly trips swimming. Our dance unit with Mr Smith is certainly a weekly highlight. We're looking forward to seeing the final piece.

In Science, we have been investigating evaporation and the conditions in which it occurs. In History, we explored Viking settlements and daily life. We compared Viking Life to the life of the Anglo Saxons which we studied before Christmas, leading to wonderful discussions and comparisons around similarities and differences.

In RE, we continued to look at Hinduism and explore the concept of dharma (living life the right way). In PSHE this term, our focus is on healthy living. This week, we explored how eating a balanced diet helps us to feel good. We had positive discussions around the types of food that our bodies need to make us feel tired or unwell.

Have a great weekend Alder Class. We are looking forward to seeing you all next week.

Mrs Aynsley & Mrs Rutter





Classroom updates - Oak Class

It's been another busy and productive week in school, with lots of great learning taking place across the curriculum. In English, children have been working with Mr P to develop their writing by setting up scenes effectively in their books, thinking carefully about atmosphere, detail and how to hook the reader in from the very start. In Maths, Year 5 have been tackling division with remainders, while Year 6 have been building their understanding of long division using concrete resources to really secure the method. Both groups showed great focus and resilience when working through some tricky problems.

In Science, pupils worked in small groups to research and create posters all about natural selection, showing a fantastic level of teamwork and curiosity as they explored how species adapt and survive over time. In RE, Mr Mc led discussions around the importance of Ibadah in Islam, helping children to understand how acts of worship play a central role in faith and daily life. PSHE lessons focused on self-worth and self-image, with thoughtful conversations about valuing ourselves and recognising our own strengths.

Art lessons this week were full of creativity as children experimented with mixing colours and using watercolours to create reflections, producing some really impressive work inspired by light and movement.

Looking ahead, a reminder that there will be a SATs information evening for Year 6 parents on Monday, and we are also very much looking forward to our visit to the Theatre Royal on Thursday to see *Weird*. Thank you, as always, for your continued support — it's been another brilliant week and we hope everyone has a lovely, well-earned weekend.



Mr McLeod & Mr Pritchard



Dates for your Diary

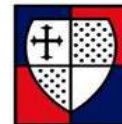
Events could be subject to change and will be communicated if required

Date	Time	
Monday 26th January	3.30pm	Parents SATS Information Session
Thursday 29th January	PM	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	PM	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
Thursday 2nd April	3.15pm	School closes for Easter

Happy Birthday to:

Ella (Maple)
Ella (Maple)

🎈 Wishing both Ella's a fantastic day! 🎂



Details on two local clubs and an upcoming holiday camp in the area - great opportunities for pupils to learn, stay active, and have fun beyond the school day

FREE RUGBY DEVELOPMENT
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
PONTELAND RFC

ALL STARS SPORT

20th FEB 2026

PRIMARY AGES (TAG)
9.30 - 11.30am

SECONDARY AGES
12.00 - 2.00pm

Ponteland RFC, Callerton Lane, NE20 9EG
<https://all-stars-sport.classforkids.io/cms/camps>

[All Stars Sport](#)

MULTI-SKILLS SPORTS CAMP
Darras Hall Primary School

DRF SPORTS COACHING

Darras Hall Primary School
Middle Dr, Ponteland, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE20 9DS.

Monday 16th February - Friday February

10:00am - 15:00pm

Ages 4 - 12 Years old

Packed lunch and water bottle required!

Activities

- Football ✓
- Tag Rugby ✓
- Basketball ✓
- Cricket ✓
- Tennis ✓
- Netball ✓
- Badminton ✓
- Dodgeball ✓
- Hockey ✓
- Table Tennis ✓
- Rounders ✓
- Handball ✓
- And many more!

ABOUT US

At DRF Sports Coaching our goal is to provide children an opportunity to access high quality coaching in a fun and safe space. All coaches will deliver fun and engaging sessions to inspire all children to challenge themselves through sport. Mr Farnell and all of our coaches are DBS checked and have recognised coaching or teaching qualifications.

Dates and Prices

Monday 16th February - Friday February

£80 per week
£20 per day

To sign up, simply contact Mr Farnell via email or scan the QR code on the leaflet - drfsportscoaching@gmail.com

[DRF Sports Coaching](#)



www.empas.co.uk

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