



**30th January 2026**

## Headteachers Update

We always like to start on a positive note and this week has given us plenty to celebrate at Belsay Primary School.

We were pleased to welcome Mrs Ward into school again this week. Mrs Ward works with us to help reflect on our practice and identify ways we can continue to improve. This visit had a particular focus on science and it was fantastic to see the depth of enquiry in lessons, the high-quality vocabulary pupils are using and most importantly, the genuine enthusiasm children have for the subject. Science is a real strength of the school. We will continue to build on this, making small refinements along the way so that our children gain even more opportunities to explore, question and discover.

Our Year 5/6 class also enjoyed an exciting theatre visit this week to watch *Weird*, a new, pop-powered musical reimagining *Macbeth* through the eyes of the three witches. The children thoroughly enjoyed the performance and gained a lot from the experience. It links beautifully with their current English work on Julius Caesar, which they will soon be performing on stage in front of an audience of over 200 people. A wonderful opportunity and a great trip to support their learning.

We are currently looking for volunteers to support the school in a number of roles. One key area is lunchtime supervision, helping us ensure all children are safe and well cared for. We are also keen to develop our extracurricular offer. With a small staff team, we rely on the support of volunteers to run clubs and activities. If you have a skill, hobby or interest you could share, we would be incredibly grateful.

A huge thank you to Maria's mum, who kindly ran an after-school sign language club this week. The turnout was fantastic and the children thoroughly enjoyed it. Opportunities like this really do help create memorable experiences for our pupils.

We finished the week with another lovely celebration assembly and our ever-popular hot chocolates, always a great way to end the week together.

We hope you all have a wonderful weekend and we look forward to seeing everyone 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.**

### 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## RECOGNISING & MANAGING STRESS

According to recent studies, over 60% of young people report feeling regularly overwhelmed – with stress impacting their learning, emotional wellbeing and social connections. If left unaddressed, stress can lead to more serious concerns such as anxiety, depression or disengagement. This guide offers ten practical, evidence-based strategies to help children and young people recognise, manage and recover from stress in healthy ways.

- #### 1 SPOT THE SUBTLE SIGNS

Look out for changes in mood, behaviour, or energy levels, such as irritability, withdrawal, sluggishness, or frequent headaches. These may indicate that a child is feeling overwhelmed. By tuning into these cues early and offering a calm, non-judgemental space to talk, adults can help children feel heard and supported before issues escalate.
- #### 2 KEEP CONVERSATIONS FLOWING

Make time for open, informal check-ins – whether it's during car journeys, over dinner, or in quiet classroom moments. Let children know it's okay to talk about what's bothering them. Regular, low-pressure conversations create a safe space where emotions are validated, not dismissed.
- #### 3 MAKE MOVEMENT PART OF THE DAY

Physical activity can dramatically reduce stress hormones while improving mood and focus. Encourage movement through activities children genuinely enjoy – from team sports to dancing around the kitchen. Even light activity like stretching or walking the dog can help us all unwind.
- #### 4 SUPPORT HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS

Poor sleep makes stress harder to manage. Establish a calming evening routine that avoids screens before bedtime and promotes winding down, such as reading, listening to music, or chatting quietly. Good sleep hygiene helps reset mood, enhances concentration, and boosts emotional resilience.
- #### 5 PRACTISE MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness doesn't have to mean long periods of meditation. A few slow breaths before lessons or short belly meditation sessions before bed can make a real difference. These simple habits help children ground themselves, reduce emotional reactivity, and build inner calm over time.
- #### 6 SET DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

Excessive screen time, especially before bed or on social media, is linked with higher stress levels. Set clear expectations for when and where devices can be used and suggest screen-free alternatives like crafts, nature walks, or board games to promote digital balance and reduce overstimulation.
- #### 7 NURTURE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Strong relationships act as a buffer against stress. Whether it's a trusted adult, a sibling, or a good friend, ensure children have people around them they can talk to and spend quality time with. Help them build those bonds through shared activities and meaningful interaction.
- #### 8 PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION

Set realistic goals and praise effort, not just outcomes. When children feel pressured to be perfect, stress naturally follows. Celebrate small wins and help them reframe setbacks as learning opportunities. This helps build confidence and reduces the fear of failure.
- #### 9 TEACH EVERYDAY PROBLEM-SOLVING

Use real-life scenarios to build resilience. Encourage children to identify problems, consider possible solutions, and choose a plan of action. Practising these steps builds a sense of control and reduces the helplessness that often accompanies stress.
- #### 10 BE THE MODEL THEY NEED

Children notice how adults respond to challenges. Model healthy coping strategies such as taking breaks, asking for help, or calmly expressing frustration. By showing how you manage stress constructively, you help normalise these behaviours and encourage children to do the same.



## 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%              | 96.5%             |
| Maple  | 93.3%             | 94.9%             |
| Alder  | 97.6%             | 94.1%             |
| Oak    | 100%              | 97.3%             |

| 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 in Reception, the children have enjoyed reading *Handa's Surprise* and using the story to compare life in Belsay and Africa. They talked thoughtfully about similarities and differences in homes, animals, weather and daily life, developing their understanding of the wider world and showing great curiosity and respect for different environments and cultures. We all agreed that we could do with some warmer weather in Belsay at the moment in comparison to the very wet week we have had!

In Maths we have been exploring ways to make 7, and the children have absolutely loved it. They are now very secure with numbers 6 and 7, helped along by their enthusiasm for the much-loved "6, 7 chant", which has been heard frequently throughout the classroom this week! This playful repetition has really supported their confidence with number recognition and composition.



We have also been reading *The Emperor's Egg*, a powerful story that links closely to our school values of responsibility and collaboration. The children discussed how the penguins work together and take care of one another, making thoughtful connections to how we look after our friends and our learning here at school.

Another busy but productive week in Willow class where everyone continues to work hard. Well done Team Willow! I hope you all have a lovely weekend.

**Miss Houghton**



## Classroom updates - Maple Class

As we approach Week 4 of the term, Maple Class have been working incredibly hard and showing a fantastic attitude to learning. In Maths, our Year 1 children have been developing their understanding of number bonds to 20 and tackling tricky missing number problems. They have been using practical resources such as counters, tens frames and number lines to support their counting, while also focusing carefully on writing digits correctly and understanding place value.

Meanwhile, our Year 2 pupils have been busy exploring money. They have been making different amounts, recognising notes and coins, and solving money problems with growing confidence. The children are beginning to choose suitable methods when adding multiple values together and are becoming much more secure in explaining their thinking.

In RE, Maple Class have started a new topic on Judaism. The children learned that Jewish people believe in one God who looks after everyone and explored the importance of the Star of David as a symbol of faith and identity. In History, we have been learning about Amelia Earhart and discussing why she is such a significant historical figure. The children have shown great curiosity and enthusiasm across all subjects this week — well done, Maple Class!



Miss Dixon



## Classroom updates- Alder class

This week in English, we have been looking at the story of Beowulf and using our senses to create immersive, descriptive settings. We have been thinking carefully about the language we use to help our words create pictures.

In Maths, we have been learning about multiplying by 10 and 100 and developing our understanding of the patterns within numbers. In Science, we have been learning about evaporation and condensation, exploring the different forms of water.

A highlight of the week was completing our Wey Aye Lego Man figures. We have enjoyed designing and painting the figures. Once dried, they will be delivered to a studio and will feature in a week long art exhibition in Newcastle in May. We will be sure to let you know more details about this in due course.

In History, we have started to look at Viking Gods and the different rituals that Vikings followed to honour their Gods. We were interested to learn that many of the Viking Gods gave us our days of the week.

In RE, we have looked at how Hindus beliefs guide their life choices and behaviours. We are continuing to look at healthy lifestyle and choices in PE. This week, we have looked at the different food groups and how to make healthy choices.

It has been another busy but productive week. Have a great weekend Alder Class.

**Mrs Aynsley & Mrs Rutter**





## Classroom updates - Oak Class

This week in English, the children have been planning, drafting and editing their own play scripts. They have been thinking carefully about character, dialogue and stage directions, and it has been great to see how their ideas have developed as they've improved and refined their work.

In Maths, Year 5 have been working on improper fractions and developing their understanding of how these link to mixed numbers. Year 6 have been focusing on formal written methods for long division, showing real perseverance and growing confidence with larger calculations.

In Science, we have been learning about fossils and palaeontology, exploring how fossils are formed and how they provide evidence about how animals lived in the past. The children have shown lots of curiosity and interest, to Mr. P, in how scientists use evidence to build up a picture of prehistoric life.

Drama rehearsals are really gathering momentum now, with pupils growing in confidence as they prepare for their Shakespeare performance. Our trip to see *Weird* at the Theatre Royal was a real highlight of the week and behaviour throughout the afternoon was excellent.

In Art, we have continued our work on the Impressionists, focusing on how artists represented water using colour, movement and brushstrokes. There has been some lovely creative work produced as part of this unit.

Thank you so much to those of you who attended our SATs meeting. It was great to get your questions and feedback. Have a great weekend and we'll see you all on Monday!



Mr McLeod & Mr Pritchard



## Dates for your Diary

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

| Date                   | Time          |   |
|------------------------|---------------|---|
| Thursday 5th February  | 4.00pm        | France Parent Meeting at Darras Hall Primary School |
| 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:**

**Henri (Maple)**





## Upcoming clubs for February half term in the local area



**HAPPY DAYS CLUB**

# HOLIDAY CLUB

@ Darras Hall Primary School, Ponteland

Our holiday club offers a relaxed, friendly environment where children can make new friends, try new activities, and have lots of fun.  
Breakfast and a light snack are provided each day.

**Feb Half Term Monday 16<sup>th</sup> - Friday 20<sup>th</sup>  
8am - 4pm (£30 per day)**

Fun, safe, and OFSTED-registered!  
Peace of mind while your children enjoy exciting activities on school grounds.

For all children from pre-school (3) to Year 6 (11).  
We welcome children from all local schools to join us.

Book now at [happydaysclub.co.uk](http://happydaysclub.co.uk)

[Happy Days Holiday Club -](http://happydaysclub.co.uk)



**\*\*\* Holiday Club at Ponteland Primary School Forest \*\*\***

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
and  
Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2024

9 am - 3 pm  
Reception - Year 6

**£25 per day**

Please visit <https://bookwhen.com/gowildinthewoods> to book.  
Please email any queries to [mel@gowildinthewoods.co.uk](mailto:mel@gowildinthewoods.co.uk)

- Firelighting
- Campfire snack
- S'mores
- Outdoor crafts
- Hammocks
- Stack fires
- Mud kitchens
- Wilding

## Come and join us and Go Wild in the Woods!



Go Wild in the Woods is a Forest School located in Ponteland. We offer holiday clubs, birthday parties, stay and play sessions for under 5's, youth clubs, breakfast and afterschool clubs and more.

All sessions are run by an experienced Forest School Practitioner who is DBS checked and paediatric first aid trained.

Email [mel@gowildinthewoods.co.uk](mailto:mel@gowildinthewoods.co.uk) if you have any queries or require any further information.

[mel@gowildinthewoods.co.uk](mailto:mel@gowildinthewoods.co.uk)



# Friday Flyer

Belsay Daycare and Purple Haze  
Flowers present a

## *Spring Wreath Making Workshop*

on Wednesday 11th March

6.30-8.30pm in the School Hall

£45 per person, £5 deposit  
to be paid when booking.

To book please message Laura  
on 07834828524

Raising funds for Belsay Daycare

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**