

6th March 2026

Headteachers Update

It is wonderful to see March arrive with a real sense of spring in the air! I hope you have all managed to make the most of the blue skies this week - it has been lovely to see a bit of sunshine at last and feel the days starting to stretch out.

We've had a really positive week in school, with the children full of enthusiasm and throwing themselves straight into their learning. It has been particularly fantastic to see the weather improving; the drier spells have meant we could finally get back out onto the school field. Seeing the children running around and enjoying the open space again has been a real highlight of the week.

This week has also been Careers Week and what a brilliant opportunity it has been for our children. We have welcomed a range of visitors into school to speak to different classes about their professions, experiences and career journeys. It has been inspiring to see the children so engaged and curious, asking thoughtful questions and beginning to think a little more broadly about their futures. A big thank you to Mr McLeod for sorting it all out.

Today we also celebrated World Book Day. Although I wasn't able to join the children this time, I have heard from Miss Houghton just how wonderful it was to see so many pupils coming to school in pyjamas and comfortable clothing, fully embracing the joy of reading.

Our focus this year was on promoting the importance of slowing down and enjoying a book, particularly away from screens. Reading, especially before bedtime, helps to relax the mind, rest the eyes and improve sleep quality. Research consistently shows the positive impact this can have on wellbeing and it is a habit we are keen to encourage both in school and at home.

There is a real buzz of excitement in school as we look ahead to next week's residential. These trips are such a vital part of school life, offering the children a chance to build independence, try new challenges and create memories that last a lifetime. Please do keep an eye on ClassDojo for any last-minute reminders or updates regarding the trip. If you're unsure about anything, don't hesitate to get in touch with the staff attending and we will be happy to answer any questions you have.

We ended the week with our Celebration Assembly and Hot Chocolate again this Friday. Now that we are back into the swing of the new term, it is wonderful to see the children consistently demonstrating our school values. A massive well done to all of our winners this week - it is always the perfect way to head into the weekend.

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 BLUESKY

AGE RESTRICTION 13+
With an age range of 13+ a Google Play rating Mature

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?
While Bluesky has been around since 2019, it's suddenly taken off in a big way thanks to a significant exodus from X (formerly Twitter). Indeed, it looks and behaves a lot like Twitter before Elon Musk bought the platform. Bluesky has been touted in recent months as a safer, more open-minded alternative to X – but like any social media site, it still has its share of risks.

NO PRIVATE ACCOUNTS
While most social networks allow accounts to be private, on the lines of writing, all Bluesky accounts must be public. The development team has indicated this might change in the future, but the app is built on a public-first protocol. If private accounts are ever introduced, it may only be in a limited way – such as through the implementation of group chats.

INTERACTIONS WITH STRANGERS
Every account being public means that anyone can be contacted by anyone else. While users don't have to respond and can easily block people and mute on, it does mean that youngsters are at particular risk of being contacted by accounts, followed by predatory adults or exposed to others with ill intentions. These hazards can be compounded by the fact that Bluesky doesn't require its users to provide their real names.

TROLLING AND BULLYING
While Bluesky currently leads a lot friendlier than it seems to have because, it's lack of private accounts means that there's nothing to stop users from trolling and cyberbullying younger people. While accounts can be blocked and reported, a persistent bully could simply create a new profile, potentially making their victims feel unsafe in continuing to use the app.

DANGEROUS MISINFORMATION
Established news organisations have fact-checking and editing processes, but social networks have no such controls and can often serve as breeding grounds for misinformation and disinformation. Bluesky will possibly be no different once it reaches its public state, and children may not have the critical thinking skills to tell fact from fiction – or to discern an informative, helpful user from a malicious one.

ADULT TARGET AUDIENCE
Bluesky isn't designed with children in mind, and there aren't many parental controls on the platform. In an interview with the BBC, Bluesky's CEO originally said that the app would only allow users aged 18 and above to sign up, but a spokesperson later clarified the age restriction as 13+. This could bring the app into significant contact for an adult audience or it suggests that making the platform more child-friendly might not currently be a priority.

RAPID GROWTH
At the time of writing, Bluesky seems calm in comparison with other social networks where moderation is key and the atmosphere toxic – but that's due at least in part to its smaller community. The app has recently been listed as many as 2 million users per day, and if that continues, there'll be more unpleasant users to handle, and moderators could struggle to maintain the pleasant environment Bluesky is currently known for.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE THE ADULT CONTENT FILTER
Bluesky doesn't have much in the way of general controls, but there are content filters which can hide sexual and graphic imagery. These are enabled by default for underage accounts but can be manually turned on in the 'Moderation' section of the app's settings. The advanced Bluesky Moderator Service lets you restrict content even further, hiding – for example – self-harm content, extremist material, and even nude posts.

LOOK OUT FOR FAKES
Impersonation is a problem on all social networks. While the consequences are usually benign, impudens sometimes attempt to scam or groom children by pretending to be a popular influencer or online personality. Bluesky is unique in that it can be connected to official domains, with users' handles linking to other sites, while this isn't strictly user right now, it could be a reliable way to verify celebrities and public figures in future.

ENCOURAGE BLOCKING AND REPORTING
Another tool that Bluesky uses to ensure a decent experience is making and blocking accounts, the former prevents you from seeing a specific user's content, while the latter stops them from seeing yours. If a child is experiencing trolls or bullies on the platform, encourage them to use this function, while also reporting the offenders to help make the platform a safer place for everyone.

KEEP AN OPEN DIALOGUE
As with all social media platforms, moderation and content filters can only do so much. It's highly likely that a child will eventually face something unhelpful. For that reason, it's important to make sure that young people are aware of the risks and know how to handle the technology. If anything they see on the app makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable,



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%	97%
Maple	88.9%	94.9%
Alder	98.3%	94.2%
Oak	100%	97.7%

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 have had another truly positive and settled week as we move further into Spring 2. The children have continued to show excellent attitudes towards their learning, maintaining that calm and purposeful atmosphere that makes our classroom such a wonderful place to be. It has been a joy to see their confidence grow as they engage with new stories and mathematical concepts.

Our focus story this week has been *The Gruffalo*. The children have been captivated by the deep, dark wood and have been working incredibly hard to master some important "book talk" vocabulary. We have been practicing how to identify the author and the illustrator in our stories, helping the children understand the different roles people play in bringing a book to life. Their ability to spot these names and explain what they do has been fantastic to see.

In maths, our focus number has been number 8. We have spent time exploring the composition of 8, finding different ways to represent it and spotting it in the environment. The children are becoming much more adept at explaining their mathematical thinking, which is a vital part of strengthening their overall number sense as we progress through the term.

It has been a real pleasure to see the children making the most of our outdoor area this week, with the improving weather allowing for some wonderful physical and imaginative play. From testing their strength and coordination while climbing trees to exploring the water wall, the children have been fully engaged in their environment. Our mud kitchen has also been a hive of activity, where our young chefs have been busy "cooking" up delicious treats and developing their communication skills through collaborative role-play.



Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We are looking forward to another busy and productive week ahead, filled with new learning opportunities and continued progress.

Miss Houghton



Classroom updates - Maple Class

This week in Maple Class, our young writers have been busy innovating the story *We're Going on an Egg Hunt* by Martha Mumford. The children used their imaginations to create new versions of the story, introducing different characters, settings, and challenges to overcome. They wrote with fantastic enthusiasm, using interesting vocabulary, varied sentence types, and even adding humour. It was a joy to read their stories, and it was wonderful to see the children so proud of their writing achievements.

In Maths, Year 1 have been exploring tens and ones, becoming increasingly confident at using the hundred square to support their counting and number work. Meanwhile, Year 2 have been learning about division by sharing amounts into groups. The children have been making excellent progress, and it has been fantastic to see Year 2 beginning to write independent division number sentences with growing confidence.

Our Science lessons this week involved a fun class enquiry to find out which material is the most waterproof – Ted needed a new umbrella! The children worked collaboratively to make predictions, carry out tests, record their results, and write conclusions. They also discussed the importance of fair testing in Science, learning how to make investigations accurate and reliable. It was a hands-on week full of curiosity, teamwork, and problem-solving.



Miss Dixon



Classroom updates- Alder class

This week in Alder Class, we have been immersing ourselves in the world of myths and legends. We have developed actions to help us remember the key features of legends. The children have been using their imagination to develop their own myths and legends. This week, we have created our hero, the monster and the setting of our legends. It has been delightful to watch their creativity in action this week.

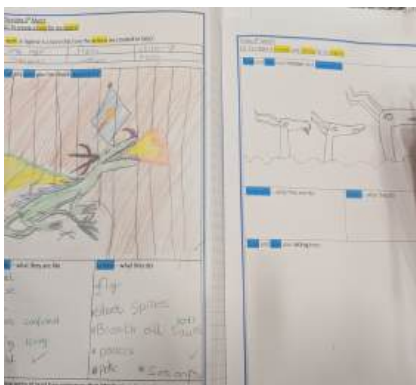
In Maths, we have all become more confident in dividing a 2 digit number by a 1 digit number. The children have explored division using the bus stop method to help them. It has been wonderful to watch the children become more independent in solving these division problems. With their growing confidence, they have also moved into finding remainders! We continue to focus on times tables this half term. All of the children's homework activities this half term will focus on times tables to help increase our fluency with these. The children will also be doing times table practice within school most days.

Our Science lesson this week involved creating our own classification system for animals. The children found information about animals from an existing classification system and then created their own. In RE, we started to look at our new topic for this half term, exploring what happened at Pentecost.

In Geography, we continued to explore what happens when the earth gets angry! Our focus this week was on volcanoes and we were surprised to learn that they can be helpful to an environment, as well as causing harm.

It has been another busy week in Alder Class. Have a great weekend everyone. We look forward to seeing you all next week!

Mrs Aynsley & Mrs Rutter





Classroom updates - Oak Class

It has been another busy and productive week in Oak Class, with the children showing great enthusiasm and commitment across all areas of learning.

Preparations for our Shakespeare performance are well under way. The children have been working incredibly hard to learn their lines and practise delivering them with expression and confidence. It has been wonderful to see their dedication and teamwork as they rehearse together, and the performance is already beginning to take shape. We are looking forward to performing to an audience next Tuesday night!

This week in PSHE we have been learning about International Women's Day. The children explored why this day is celebrated around the world and discussed the importance of recognising the achievements and contributions of women throughout history and in modern society.

We looked at a range of inspirational women who have made a difference in areas such as science, sport, politics and activism. The children shared thoughtful ideas about the qualities that make someone inspirational, including determination, bravery and resilience. We also discussed the importance of fairness, equality and ensuring that everyone has the same opportunities to succeed, regardless of gender.

In English, the class has been working on writing speeches. The children have been learning how to organise their ideas clearly, use persuasive language and present their viewpoints effectively. It has been fantastic to see their creativity and confidence develop through this work.

Finally, a massive thanks to Mr. Pritchard for picking up the reins this week to cover my sickness. We are incredibly lucky to have him. Thank you for your continued support. I hope you all have a lovely weekend.



Mr McLeod & Mr Pritchard



Dates for your Diary

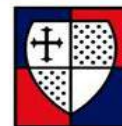
Events could be subject to change and will be communicated if required

Date	Time	
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
Friday 20th March	All day	Comic Relief - Dress Down Day
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:

Tobias (Alder) & Jodie (Alder)

  **Wishing you both a fantastic time celebrating**  



Upcoming Easter holiday clubs

Loved by families across Gosforth, Jesmond and Ponteland

HAPPY DAYS CLUB

EASTER HOLIDAY CLUB

Tuesday 7th to Friday 17th April 2026

Our Holiday Clubs take place over three sites and offer a mix of activities including sports sessions, crafts, team games and Easter-themed fun – something for every energy level.

Darras Hall Primary School
7th – 17th April

ST CHARLES' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
7th – 17th April

RGS
13th – 17th April

For children aged 4-11
Open to all children in the local area

✓ Ofsted registered ✓ Run by qualified childcare staff

Mon-Fri | 8am-4pm | From £28 per day (site dependent)
Breakfast + snack included

Spaces are limited. Book now: happydaysclub.co.uk

DRF Sports Camp at Darras Hall Primary School

Please sign up via the link: [DRF Sports Camp](#)

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch at drfsportscoaching@gmail.com



Friday Flyer

The flyer background features a rustic wooden wall with several colorful spring wreaths made of various flowers like daisies, sunflowers, and purple flowers, along with dried grasses and twigs. The text is centered on the wall.

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