

13th March 2026

Headteachers Update

What a fantastic week it has been in school – quite possibly one of my favourite weeks of the year so far. There has been so much to celebrate and it has been wonderful to see our pupils representing the school so brilliantly.

On Tuesday, Oak Class took part in the Coram Shakespeare Schools Festival at Northern Stage. The children have been working tirelessly with Mr McLeod and Mr Pritchard since January and seeing them bring everything together on stage in front of such a large audience was incredibly special. They were articulate, confident and their stage presence was superb. We are always proud to take an inclusive approach and involve the whole class in this opportunity and it truly brings out the best in every child. A huge well done to all of Year 5 and 6.

This week also saw Years 3–5 head off on their annual residential to Newby Wiske Hall. What an amazing experience it has been for everyone involved. These opportunities play such an important role in children's development and help create lasting memories of their time at school. The children were exemplary throughout the trip – showing fantastic behaviour, teamwork and resilience as they tackled activities such as climbing and abseiling. They were wonderful ambassadors for our school and we could not be prouder. Thank you to the staff who supported the visit and to you as parents and carers for making these opportunities possible.

Looking ahead to next week, Friday will be Comic Relief Day for Comic Relief. Children are invited to wear something red and, if possible, bring a £1 donation to support this fantastic cause.

Due to the residential trip, we didn't hold our Hot Chocolate Celebration Assembly this week but this will return next Friday. We have also introduced a small change to how we celebrate attendance. Alongside recognising the class with the 100% weekly attendance, any pupil who attends school every day, Monday to Friday, will now be entered into a weekly prize draw with prizes given out on Fridays. We will also run a half-termly 100% attendance draw, with all pupils who achieve full attendance this half term entered into a prize draw before the Easter holidays.

Finally, thank you for the continued support you give to our school. Whether it is through academic learning, trips, performances or wider opportunities, your support helps us maintain the strong community and family feel that makes our school such a special place to be.

Have a wonderful weekend and see you all 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 ONLINE SLANG

Slang moves fast – and for many young people, it's not just how they talk, but how they share their identity and feelings. Learning key terms helps adults connect and show understanding, even if the lingo seems baffling at first.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- GENERATIONAL MISCOMMUNICATION**
Words like 'lol' or 'ship' can be misinterpreted by adults, leading to awkward moments or a breakdown in trust. These phrases often carry subtle social messages among young people.
- RAPIDLY SHIFTING MEANINGS**
Slang changes rapidly. A term like 'sue' might sound innocent one week and be repositioned the next. This makes it easy for adults to feel behind and for children to be misread.
- SHIELDING BULLYING OR EXCLUSION**
Inside jokes and trending terms like 'simp' or 'NPC' can be used to mock or exclude others. What looks like harmless fun might actually reinforce social divisions or bullying.

- PERFORMING FOR THE ALGORITHM**
Slang often reflects what's popular on platforms like TikTok. Young users might exaggerate or act out for likes, creating online personas that don't match their real selves.
- CONTENT MODERATION WITH CODED SPEECH**
To avoid content filters, young people sometimes use slang or emojis to talk about serious topics – for example, saying 'wishes' instead of other words to request dental. This makes harmful content harder to spot.
- LONG-TERM DIGITAL FOOTPRINT**
A slang-filled post might seem funny now but could resurface years later during job checks or university applications – possibly out of context, but still meaningful.

Advice for Parents & Educators

KEEP UP, DON'T CATCH UP

Follow youth culture pages or ask your child about new slang. Staying informed shows that you're engaged and open to understanding their world.

FOCUS ON CONNECTION OVER CONTROL

Being someone your child can talk to is more valuable than using strict filters or monitoring apps. Openness builds trust.

ASK, DON'T INTERROGATE

Use open questions to invite conversation. You're not quizzing them – just trying to learn more about their online lives.

ENCOURAGE CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY

Talk about where slang comes from, how it spreads, and how it can impact others. This helps young people use language more thoughtfully.

ONLINE SLANG CHEAT SHEET - The following slang terms are common examples - please be aware this isn't an exhaustive list and both meaning and prevalence can change swiftly.

COMMON SLANG:	POTENTIALLY CONCERNING SLANG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biggie - Independent, self-reliant (often male) mindset; proud outsider status. Often celebrated in motivational memes. skibidi - Nonsense word from the viral 'skibidi toilet' meme; expresses chaos or fun. Usually harmless but pervasive. Clash - The collective audience or group of viewers (e.g. on a livestream). Used when addressing followers directly. Lock in - To focus, commit or get serious (e.g. before gaming or sports). Has the encouragement to concentrate. Cooking - Doing something exceptionally well or gaining momentum. Opposite of 'cooked'. Rizz - Charisma or flirting skill (short for charisma). Can praise social confidence. Aunt or aunt farming - One's perceived 'energy' or 'vibe'; 'farming' means manufacturing stress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Big - An adult consent crawler (e.g. OnlyFans). Indicates exposure to NS- material. Byst or gyatt - Sexualised exclamation about someone's backside. Objectifies appearance. Trololero trololo / bombardino crocodile / tung tung tung sofer - Spornny references to AI-generated images with 'trollol' sounding names. Can be derogatory, demeaning, and harass others. Glazing - Overpraising or excessively flattering a streamer or celebrity. Crash out - To lose control, give up or have a meltdown; sometimes hints at self-harm. Cooked - Tired, exhausted or in serious trouble; sometimes mental health-related. Sensitive - Euphemism for death or suicide; used to avoid content filters. IMP - Used to suggest someone is lacking independent thoughts or is repetitive and predictable.



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	95.7%	97%
Maple	97%	94.8%
Alder	90%	94%
Oak	97.5%	97.8%

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

Another fantastic week in Willow Class! The children have been very busy, and I have loved seeing their creativity and hard work shine through as we prepared for a very special occasion.

We started the week by introducing our new focus story, Mothers and Others. This led to some lovely discussions about all the special people who care for us. The children have been like busy bees in the art area, working hard on their Mother's Day cards and even creating beautiful Mother's Day wreaths. It has been wonderful to see them using their fine motor skills so carefully to make sure everything is just right for Sunday.

While I was away at the Newby Wiske Residential from Wednesday to Friday, I know the children have been having a brilliant time with Mrs Aynsley and Mrs Rutter. I am told one of the highlights of the week has been Forest School. Mrs Aynsley and Mrs Rutter have been so impressed with everyone's writing, particularly as the children practiced their letter formation and worked on their name writing during our morning activities.



I am already looking forward to hearing all about their adventures and seeing all the hard work they have put into their learning this week! I have missed everyone but I know everyone has had a wonderful time.

Have a lovely weekend and I will see everyone on Monday!

Miss Houghton



Classroom updates - Maple Class

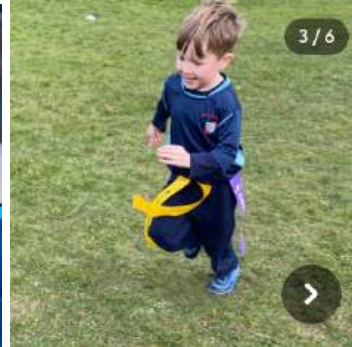
This week, Maple Class has been full of curiosity, creativity and activity! In Geography, we explored how animals adapt to different climates around the world. We looked at a variety of habitats and discussed the special features animals have that help them survive there. The children then used their imagination and knowledge to design their own animals, carefully explaining how their creatures' features would help them live in their chosen habitat.

In Computing, we practised our keyboard skills. The children created text boxes and typed their names, learning how to use the space bar and how to make capital letters.

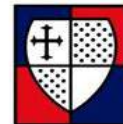
We had a very sporty afternoon on Tuesday, beginning with a Gymnastics session with Mr Smith, followed by an exciting rugby taster session led by Steven from Ponteland RFC. The children showed great enthusiasm and teamwork while trying out new skills.

On Thursday, we joined an online Farming Live workshop where we investigated four curious questions: How do you train a sheepdog? What do all the buttons in a tractor do? When a cow poops, where does it go? and How do farmers care for wildlife on their farms?. The children loved finding out the answers and learning more about life on a farm.

We also spent time this week learning about why we celebrate Mother's Day and made beautiful cards and bouquets for our mums. We talked about why mums are so special and all the reasons we are thankful for them.



Miss Dixon



Newby Wiske updates- Year 3,4 and 5

What a fantastic few days our Year 3–5 children enjoyed at Newby Wiske Hall! Over three days and two nights, the children embraced every opportunity with enthusiasm, courage and a real sense of adventure.

Throughout the residential, the activity programme offered a wonderful range of challenges. From demonstrating focus and precision in archery and fencing, to showing determination on the climbing wall, abseiling tower and zip wire, the children approached each experience with confidence and resilience. The challenge course and problem-solving sessions encouraged them to think carefully, communicate clearly and support one another to achieve success.

Team-building continued during activities such as Balloon Splash and the sensory trail, where cooperation and encouragement were key. It was particularly pleasing to see the children mixing so positively across the year groups, strengthening friendships and building a strong team spirit.

The evenings provided a different kind of excitement. The silent disco was certainly a highlight, filled with laughter and energy, and offered a lovely opportunity for everyone to relax together after busy days outdoors. As always on residential visits, bedtime brought plenty of chatter and excitement. While sleep may have been in short supply, the children were considerate and supportive of one another, showing increasing independence as they organised their belongings and prepared for the next day's adventures.

We have shared a small selection of photographs below; please visit the ClassDojo page to see more moments from our time away.

A huge well done to all of the children for representing our school so positively and embracing each challenge with such maturity. Thank you also to the staff who supported the visit and ensured it ran so smoothly.

We hope everyone has a restful weekend and finds time to rest and recover!

Mr A, Mr Shaw and Miss Houghton

Friday Flyer



We all had so much fun at Newby Wiske!





Classroom updates - Year 6

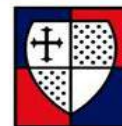
What a week for Oak Class! Our performance of *Julius Caesar* at the Northern Stage was absolutely fantastic and the children were a credit to the school. I was incredibly proud of our Year 6 pupils, who rose brilliantly to the challenge of taking on lead roles, and of our Year 5 children, who made their first appearance on the big stage with great confidence. It is always one of the best days of the year and it was made even more special by performing alongside two schools from outside our trust.

Back in the classroom, while Year 5 were enjoying their time at Newby Wiske, Year 6 have been working really hard on converting fractions, decimals and percentages as part of their preparation for SATs. They have also been producing some brilliant extended writing as we explore and write our own play reviews. It has been lovely to see just how much progress the children are making, and the quality of their work this week has been excellent.

We have also spent some time looking through a range of recent SATs papers, helping the children to become familiar with the types of questions they might encounter and the strategies they can use to tackle them confidently. It has been a really productive few days and we are very much looking forward to welcoming our Year 5 pupils back from Newby Wiske this afternoon and hearing all about their adventures. Have a lovely weekend everyone!



Mr McLeod & Mr Pritchard



Dates for your Diary

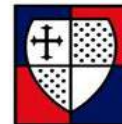
Events could be subject to change and will be communicated if required

Date	Time	
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
Tuesday 31st March	All day	Maple class MITNE trip
Wednesday 1st April	All day	Oak class MITNE trip
Thursday 2nd April	All day	Willow class MITNE trip
Thursday 2nd April	3.15pm	School closes for Easter

Happy Birthday to:

Martha (Oak), Arthur (Alder), Charlie (Oak), Reuben (Willow), Theo (Willow)

🎈🎂 Wishing you all a fantastic time celebrating 🎁🎉



***** EASTER HOLIDAY CLUBS *****
Michelangelo's, Ryton, 10-3pm

**Wednesday 8th, Thursday 9th,
Wednesday 15th & Thursday 16th April**

Order a delicious Italian takeaway to be delivered to the woods! (£35 per day with own food / £40 per day with food)
Suitable for children from Reception age and upwards.

Activities can include campfire and s'mores, fire lighting, mud, sand and water play, outdoor crafts, mud kitchen, tools, hammocks, messy play, hill climbing and free time to explore.



<https://bookwhen.com/forestadventurers>
suzanne@forestadventurers.co.uk
07711461409



Contact us for more information on:

Corporate Events

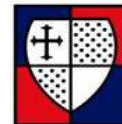
Parent and Preschool Groups

After School Clubs

Birthday Parties

School Trips





Multi Skills Easter Sports Camps with DRF Sports Coaching at Darras Hall Primary School

Week 1: Tuesday 7th April – Friday 10th April
(4 days due to the Bank Holiday)

Week 2: Monday 13th April – Friday 17th April

- **Ages 5–12:** 10:00am – 3:00pm
- **4-year-olds:** 10:00am – 2:00pm

Due to **OFSTED regulations**, 4-year-olds can attend a maximum of **4 hours per day**. They will still join the main camp activities and groups alongside older children.

Week 1

- Ages 5–12: £20 per day or £75 for the week
- Age 4 (10:00–2:00): £15 per day or £60 for the week

Week 2

- Ages 5–12: £20 per day or £90 for the week
- Age 4 (10:00–2:00): £15 per day or £75 for the week

Children will take part in a wide range of sports and activities All sessions are delivered by **DBS-checked, qualified coaches** in a **safe, supportive and energetic environment**.

Please send children with:

- Packed lunch
- Water bottle

To book a place please use the link below:

<https://bookaby.me/drf-sports-coaching/whats-on#venue=c90afa5a>

When booking:

- Select “**Darras Hall Primary School Half Term Camp**” as the location
- Choose the days or full week you would like to book

If your child is **4 years old**, please select the **10:00–14:00 option**.

If you have any questions, please email:

drfsportscoaching@gmail.com

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