

24th April 2026

Headteachers Update

A very warm welcome back to the Summer Term at Belsay Primary School. This is always one of the most exciting terms of the year and we are looking forward to all that lies ahead. Now we just need to hope for some good weather so we can make the most of our fantastic outdoor spaces alongside the excellent learning taking place in our classrooms.

It is an important academic term for several year groups. Our Year 6 children will soon be preparing for their SATs, Year 4 pupils will complete their Multiplication Tables Check and Year 1 children will take their Phonics Screening Check.

Over the Easter break, we were pleased to complete work on the banking area, removing the dead wood, brambles and logs and re-soiling the space. Grass seed will soon be added and we hope this will develop into a lovely grassy area to further enhance our outdoor environment. We would be very grateful if families could help by keeping children away from this area before and after school.

A huge thank you must also go to some of our parents who generously gave up their time during the holidays to tidy and refresh our garden area. A special shout out to Lisa, Susie, Helen, Florence, Caroline and Joanna for working so hard on the raised beds, removing old plants and planting new trees. We are excited to see what grows in the coming months. As part of Forest School, children will also be spending time there each week to help maintain and develop the space further.

A reminder that the PTA Annual General Meeting will take place on Monday 18th May. Everyone is welcome to attend. Our PTA is an invaluable part of school life, not only providing enjoyable events for the children but also raising funds that allow us to purchase additional resources for school.



This week also saw our fantastic Cricket Day. We began with class photographs in the morning before heading to Belsay Cricket Club in the afternoon. The day was planned to help build excitement ahead of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup, which is now only around 50 days away. We were also thrilled to welcome a very special guest: current England cricket team fast bowler Mark Wood. The children enjoyed a coaching session and Q&A with Mark and it was wonderful to see them learning new skills and being inspired by one of the country's top sports stars.

To round off the week, we held our Celebration Assembly – a brilliant way to end the first week back by recognising the many wonderful achievements of our children. **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 MARVEL RIVALS

Marvel Rivals launched in December 2024 and amassed a player count of nearly 100,000 in mere weeks. This player versus player (PvP) shooter packs in a host of recognizable comic-book characters, pitting two teams of six against each other. Despite the game's cartoonish nature, there are several potential risks for parents and educators to be aware of.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

IN-GAME CHAT
While in-game chat is provided to assist in team coordination and strategy, it is also a platform for inappropriate communication. Children may be exposed to explicit language, sexual content, and threats. Parents and educators should monitor chat activity and encourage children to report any concerning interactions to a trusted adult.

IN-GAME PURCHASES
Marvel Rivals includes in-game purchases for cosmetic items like skins and emotes. Children may be tempted to spend money on these items, especially if they are unaware of the costs. Parents should discuss in-game purchases and ensure children have appropriate permissions and spending limits.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS
The game's multiplayer nature allows for interaction with other players, including those who may be strangers. Children should be advised not to share personal information, such as their name, address, or contact details, and to avoid meeting anyone they meet in-game in person.

FOLLOW ESRB RATINGS
The game is rated 'ESRB Rating: M (Mature) 17+'. This indicates that the game is suitable for ages 17 and older. Parents and educators should ensure that children are aware of the game's rating and understand that it is not intended for younger audiences.

MONITOR OR TURN OFF CHAT
Parents and educators can monitor chat activity through parental control software or by playing the game themselves. Alternatively, they can instruct children to turn off chat in the game's settings to minimize exposure to potentially harmful communication.

VIOLENT CONTENT
Marvel Rivals is a shooter game, which involves combat and violence. While the game's violence is cartoonish and not graphic, it may still be concerning for some children. Parents and educators should discuss the game's content and ensure children understand that the violence is fictional.

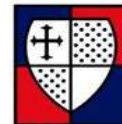
INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT
The game's chat and social features may expose children to inappropriate language, sexual content, or other harmful interactions. Parents and educators should monitor chat activity and encourage children to report any concerning interactions to a trusted adult.

FAMILIAR CHARACTERS
The game features a variety of characters from the Marvel universe, which may be appealing to children. However, it is important to ensure that children understand that these characters are fictional and that the game is not a substitute for real-world experiences.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS & EDUCATORS

FAMILIARISE YOURSELF
The game's inclusion of fan-favorite characters is a key selling point, but it is important for parents and educators to be familiar with the game's content and features. This includes understanding the game's rating, chat features, and in-game purchases.

DISCONNECT PAYMENT OPTIONS
Parents should ensure that their child's payment information is not stored on the game's servers. This can be done by disconnecting payment options and ensuring that the game is not linked to a credit card or other payment method.



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	88.6%	96.5%
Maple	100%	95.3%
Alder	98.4%	94.3%
Oak	95.4%	97.4%

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.

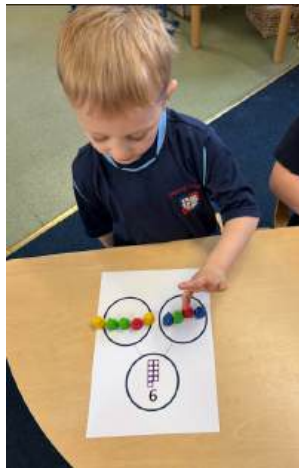
We have a continual focus on attendance and punctuality and this is of the utmost importance in your child's education. Please remember that our school gate closes at 8.55am as this is when our lessons begin. Anyone arriving after this time is classed as late and will miss valuable learning opportunities which take place immediately after registration, such as phonics.



Classroom updates - Willow Class

It has been wonderful to be back together this week and to see everyone settling back into routines so positively. We enjoyed sharing our 'Make a Fuss' story The Very Hungry Caterpillar. The children explored the important roles of the author and illustrator, developing their understanding of how stories are created and brought to life. We have also tried hard to remember the life cycle of a caterpillar. I wonder if you could ask your children about this and see if they can remember.

In maths, our focus has been on the number 9. The children have been practising recognising, forming, and representing this number in a variety of engaging ways. We have used the part, part whole model to find ways to make 9 and then trying hard to remember them.



We have also spent lots of time outdoors, making the most of our newly transformed gardening area during Forest School sessions. The children have thoroughly enjoyed exploring, observing, and learning in this enriching environment. We are excited to see this take shape over the coming weeks and are looking forward to planting different things. We have started to grow sunflower seeds in our class and we have been thinking carefully about where we will plant them once they have grown a little bit more. A big thank you to the gardening helpers who came in over half term and transformed the gardening area. It has made a real difference.

We had a lovely visit to the Belsay cricket pitch, where the children enjoyed exploring the wide open space and learning about the game of cricket. They practised throwing and catching, developed their coordination, and worked together as a team. It was a great opportunity to be active outdoors while experiencing a local community space.

Miss Houghton



Classroom updates - Maple Class

Maple Class have made a fantastic start to the summer term! It has been a wonderful week reconnecting after the holidays and sharing all of the exciting things everyone has been up to. We have also been delighted to welcome Miss Brown, our new school teaching assistant, into our classroom. In English, we began exploring our new class text *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch*. The children made thoughtful predictions before reading and then stepped into the shoes of a lighthouse keeper by writing imaginative diary entries. The story has quickly become a firm favourite in our class library! Continuing our lighthouse theme, we learned about Grace Darling and why she is remembered as a brave historical figure. The children were fascinated to discover that she lived at Longstone Lighthouse in the Farne Islands, and it was wonderful to explore such an important local hero from Northumberland.

In PSHE, we have been focusing on the concept of fairness and what this looks like in everyday life. The children learned that fairness does not always mean everyone getting the same thing, but instead ensuring everyone gets what they need. Through discussions and social stories, they explored a variety of situations, deciding whether they were fair or unfair. A highlight of the week was a lively debate activity, where the children moved around the classroom to share their opinions and confidently explain their reasoning.

To round off a busy and successful week, Maple Class visited Belsay Cricket Club for a special session led by Mark Wood. It was fantastic to see such strong teamwork during fielding, alongside some very impressive batting skills. What a brilliant start to the term!

Miss Dixon





Classroom updates- Alder class

It has been another fantastic week in Alder Class, and we are delighted with how well the children have settled into school after the Easter holidays. In English, we have started our new class text, 'The Day I Fell into a Fairytale' by Ben Miller. We are already completely hooked and can't wait to see exactly where the portal in the supermarket takes us! Meanwhile, in Maths, both year groups are continuing their work on fractions. Our Year 3 children will be coming to the end of this topic this week and will soon be moving on to learning about mass and capacity. As always, it is great if you can spot opportunities to link this to life at home; exploring mass and capacity during baking or cooking is a fantastic way to make these measurements feel real and relevant.

This half term is a particularly important one for times tables, especially for our Year 4 children who have their upcoming checks. They have been working so hard and are doing brilliantly in their practice multiplication sessions, so please do continue to work on these at home whenever you can. We find that a "little and often" approach usually works best to keep those facts fresh.

In Art we are starting a new topic which focuses on the intricate patterns of geometric Islamic art, exploring how symmetry and shapes create such beautiful designs. In Science, we are continuing our work in Biology with a brand-new focus on animals, including humans. Over the coming weeks, we will be looking closely at the specific roles of our different teeth, the importance of dental hygiene, the inner workings of the digestive system, and how energy moves through food chains. In History, we started our new topic of Baghdad in AD900 and learned how to find Baghdad on a map and the importance of building cities around rivers.

Finally, we were very lucky to have a special cricket session on Thursday with the England bowler, Mark Wood. It was wonderful to see how well the children engaged with the session and showcased their teamwork on the field. Thank you for your continued support!

Mrs Aynsley and Mrs Rutter





Classroom updates - Oak class

This week in English we have begun our new class text *Pig Heart Boy* by Malorie Blackman and have started to identify and explore the early features of a balanced argument as we consider the complex issue of xenotransplantation. The children have engaged brilliantly with the themes of the text and are already beginning to think carefully about different viewpoints and how these can be presented clearly.

In Maths Mr McLeod split the class into two groups to ensure learning was closely matched to each year group. Year 5 have been comparing and ordering decimals to three decimal places while Year 6 have been developing their understanding of comparing and ordering fractions, decimals and percentages. There has been some excellent mathematical reasoning on show across both groups.

In Science we have launched our new Biology unit by exploring the circulatory system with a focus on the heart, blood and blood vessels. The children have enjoyed learning about how these parts work together to keep our bodies functioning effectively and have asked some really thoughtful questions.

In History we have been investigating the causes of World War One by looking at the growing tensions across Europe at the time. We explored how alliances, competition between countries and political instability all contributed to the outbreak of war, helping the children to build a clearer picture of how such a significant global conflict began.

We also had an amazing afternoon with England cricket legend Mark Wood who led a fantastic session teaching the children key cricket skills. The energy and enthusiasm throughout the session were brilliant to see and it was a real highlight of the week.

Thank you as always for your continued support and we hope you have a lovely weekend.



Mr McLeod

Friday Flyer



Dates for your Diary

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

Date	Time	
Monday 4th May	All day	School closed for bank holiday
Monday 11th May	All week	SATs week
Wednesday 13th May	TBC	Reception vision screening
Friday 22nd May	3.15pm	School closes for half term
Monday 1st June	8.45am	School opens for Summer 2
Wednesday 17th June-Sunday 21st June		Year 6 France trip
Tuesday 7th July	1pm	Sports Day
Wednesday 15th July	3.15pm	Summer Fair
Friday 17th July	1pm	School closes for the summer holidays



Happy Days Club May Half Term Holiday Club

Running from Tuesday 26th May to Friday 29th May 2026.

Our holiday club offers a fantastic mix of activities, including sports sessions, crafts, team games, and themed fun. There's something to suit every child's energy level!

Location & Dates

Darras Hall Primary School: Tuesday 26th – Friday 29th May

Who can attend?

Open to all children aged 4–11 in the local area.

If your child is in pre-school and aged 3, please email us as our availability is limited.

What we offer

- Ofsted registered provision (you can pay via Tax Free Childcare)
- Experienced and qualified childcare staff
- A safe, fun, and engaging environment

Key Information

- Tuesday to Friday
- 8:00am – 4:00pm
- From £30 per day
- Breakfast and snack included

Spaces are limited and expected to fill quickly, so we encourage you to book early to secure your place.

 Book now: <https://happydaysclub.co.uk>

We look forward to welcoming your children for another fun-filled holiday!



Friday Flyer

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