

8th May 2026

Headteachers Update

Another wonderful week has flown by at Belsay Primary School and as always, the children have continued to work incredibly hard across all areas of school life. It has been lovely to see so much enthusiasm, positivity and determination in classrooms throughout the week.

One of the real highlights this week has been the return of our sign language session in Year 3/4. We also know that some of our Year 3/4 children have been continuing to develop their learning further through the after-school sign language club. It is fantastic to see this valuable skill being embraced by the children and to watch them finding new ways to communicate, express themselves and ensure that everyone can feel heard and included. Learning sign language is such an important and worthwhile experience and we are very grateful for the opportunities the children are being given.

A lot of this week, particularly for our older children, has focused on SATs preparation alongside developing a strong growth mindset. We know that SATs can feel like a busy and sometimes worrying time for Year 6 children, so we have spent time talking about resilience, confidence and believing in themselves as learners. The children have shown great maturity and determination and we are incredibly proud of how hard they have worked in preparing themselves. By this time next week, SATs will all be finished and can become a distant memory!

We are also really looking forward to getting our beehives back up and running again over the next few weeks. It will be fantastic for the children to head back down and see the bees in full action once again. Alongside this, we are also due to welcome our chickens back onto site. We know the children and staff alike will be very excited to have them back and to get involved once more as we move further into the summer term. These opportunities add so much to school life and are always something the children enjoy immensely.

We also enjoyed another lovely Hot Chocolate and Celebration Assembly this week. Well done to all of our winners, it is always wonderful to celebrate the children's achievements, effort and positive attitudes.

We hope you all have a fantastic weekend and we look forward to welcoming everyone back on Monday.

Mr Shaw



SEND

An organisation of Educational Psychologists called ASK Psychology will be facilitating some parent workshops on different themes over the year ahead at locations across the trust. The first session will be after the May half term and will be hosted in three locations (Swansfield, Ponteland Primary and Heddon) for parents to access from any school. The first session will be delivered by ASK's Occupational Therapists and will cover one of these issues :

- toileting(primary),
- eating and drinking (primary),
- sensory differences and sensory lifestyles (primary and secondary)
- sleep (primary and secondary)
- neuro-affirming play (primary and secondary)

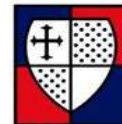
Below is the link to a google form, please could you indicate the session that would be of most interest to you:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSftGNhbfJangcJSTVtX4i4Pls3xPDFcDg-q9YZVn5y2BU5KQg/viewform?usp=publish-editor>

The results of this survey will determine the session to be delivered.

Once the survey results are gathered, we will advertise the parent session which has been chosen and the timings and location of the delivery.





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 WHATSAPP

With more than two billion active users, WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service. Its end-to-end encryption only allows messages to be viewed by the sender and any recipients; not even WhatsApp itself can read them. The UK's Online Safety Bill proposes to end such encryption on private messaging, but for the time being, this controversial feature remains.

AGE RESTRICTION 13+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EVOLVING SCAMS
WhatsApp's popularity makes it a fast-moving hunting ground for scammers. Recent warnings include phishing on the sender's side, requesting a money transfer because of a spurious emergency - plus a scam where fraudsters trigger an infectious message by attempting to log in to your account, then logging in. WhatsApp can't or won't tell you to report the scam back to them, giving them a boost.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS
To start a chat, someone only needs the mobile number of the WhatsApp user they want to message. Therefore, it's a chat that never gives their number out to someone they don't know, that person could then contact them via WhatsApp. It's also possible that the child might be added to a group chat or community (by one of their friends, for example) containing other people they don't know.

FAKE NEWS
WhatsApp's connectivity and ease of use often means to be shared rapidly - whether it's true or not. In combat like spread of misinformation, messages forwarded more than five times on the app now display a "Forwarded many times" label and a double checkmark. This helps users assess the messages they've just received, but it's not an explicit - and might not be entirely - fact-checker.

CHAT LOCK AND SECRET CODES
In 2021, WhatsApp introduced a feature that lets users keep their chats in a separate 'locked chat' folder, accessed beyond their phone's passcode, fingerprint or face ID. There is an additional feature - 'Secret Code' - where users can set unique passwords for 'locked chats' individually. This creates the potential for young people to hide conversations and content they suspect their parents wouldn't approve of.

VIEW ONCE CONTENT
The ability to send images or messages that can only be viewed once has led to some WhatsApp users sharing inappropriate material or abusive texts, knowing that the recipient can't report them later. In use as evidence or screenshots, people used to be able to screenshot this disappearing content - but a recently added WhatsApp feature now blocks this, citing protection of privacy.

VISIBLE LOCATION
WhatsApp's Live Location feature lets users share their current whereabouts, which can be checked by anyone who has access to the location. However, anyone in a user's contacts list or in a mutual group chat can also track their location - just by tapping a contact's profile or a child's home address or intercepts that they make regularly.

Advice for Parents & Educators

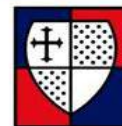
EMPHASISE CAUTION
Encourage children to treat unexpected messages with caution: get them to consider whether it contains the name of a friend or relative would really send them. Make sure they know never to share personal details over WhatsApp, and to be wary of clicking on any links or hashtags. Looking up their contact's location data is further sign of a predator to their WhatsApp account.

ADJUST THE SETTINGS
It's wise to change a child's WhatsApp settings to notify which of their contacts can add them to group chats without needing approval. You can give permission to My Contacts or My Contacts Except... Additionally, if a child wants to use Live Location, emphasize that they should enable this function for only as long as they need and then turn it off.

CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY
Check in with the child about how they're using WhatsApp, making sure they know you only have their safety at heart. If you spot a 'Locked Chat' folder, you might want to talk about the sort of content they've shared in there, what they're looking at, and what they want to keep their friends hidden. Also, if a contact ever logs View Once content, it could be helpful to ask them why.

DISCUSS GROUP CHATS
Make children aware that there could be members of a group that they don't know well and that could cause an uncomfortable situation. Encourage them to leave a group if they receive a message that is uncomfortable or inappropriate. It's OK to leave a group chat if it makes them uncomfortable - or for any reason, in fact.

THINK BEFORE SHARING
Help children understand why it's important to stop and think before posting or forwarding something on WhatsApp. It's easy - and all too common - to forward what a user posts to be shared more widely, even publicly, or social media. Encourage children to consider how an impulsive message or forwarding might damage their reputation or upset a friend who isn't wanting to be in a position.



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	89.3%	96.2%
Maple	97.3%	95.5%
Alder	96.5%	94.5%
Oak	94.3%	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.



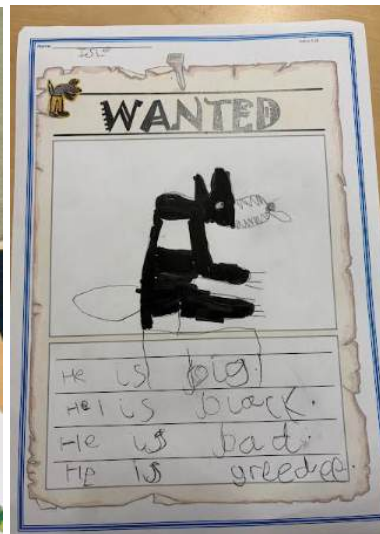
Classroom updates - Willow Class

This week in Reception, we have been very busy with our learning! Our new focus book is The Three Little Pigs. The children have been exploring the story through story maps, helping them to understand the sequence of events. They have also enjoyed retelling the story using a range of props, as well as creating and performing with stick puppets and masks. It has been wonderful to see their confidence grow as storytellers. We also created a wanted poster to help everyone to know what the Big Bad Wolf looks like.

In Maths, we have been learning all about the number 10. The children have been practising recognising, counting, and representing 10 in different ways through practical activities and games.

In PE, the children took part in a cricket session with Mr Smith. They practised basic skills such as throwing, catching and striking the ball, showing great enthusiasm and teamwork.

The children have been using their knowledge of the story to retell The Very Hungry Caterpillar independently, without relying on the book for support. They worked hard to recall the sequence of events, remembering what the caterpillar ate each day and how the story develops. Through discussion, actions and imaginative play, they demonstrated growing confidence in their storytelling, using familiar language and key phrases while beginning to add their own ideas. It has been lovely to see their increasing independence and understanding of the story structure.



Have a wonderful weekend!

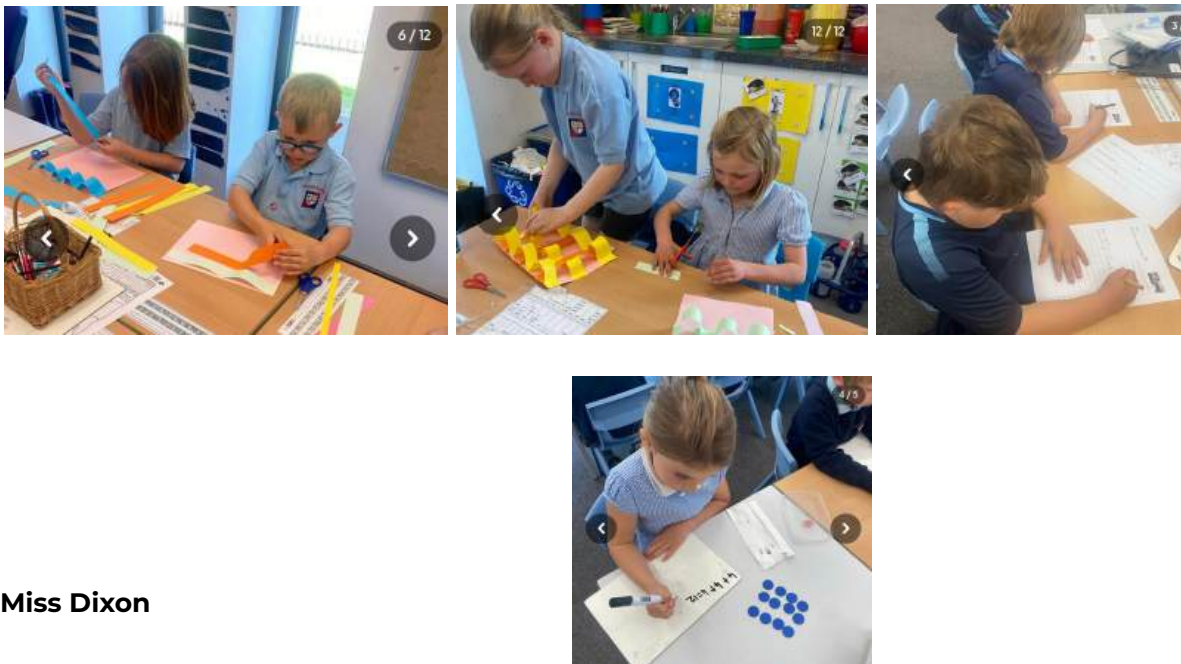
Miss Houghton



Classroom updates - Maple Class

This week, our mixed Year 1 and 2 class have been busy producing some fantastic work across the curriculum. In English, we retold the story of The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch and then independently rewrote the story in our own words. The children worked incredibly hard to include interesting vocabulary from the original text, a variety of punctuation and exciting storytelling phrases. We were very proud to celebrate our finished stories together by reading them aloud as a class. In Maths, Year 1 have been learning to count in steps of 2, 5 and 10. They used counters to make arrays and then wrote repeated addition number sentences to match. Meanwhile, Year 2 have been practising column addition and subtraction, focusing on achieving gold standard presentation in their Maths books to ensure their workings are neat and clear.

In History, we learnt about Grace Darling and discovered how she became famous for helping to save the lives of nine people during a shipwreck rescue. The children showed great empathy and appreciation by writing thoughtful letters of thanks to her for her bravery and heroism. In Art, we continued developing our weaving skills and learnt that weaving is created by repeating an under-and-over pattern. The children showed excellent concentration and perseverance while creating their woven pieces, and we are looking forward to continuing these skills next week.



Miss Dixon



Classroom updates- Alder class

It has been another bustling week in Alder Class! From magical marketing to scientific experiments, the children have been working incredibly hard. A highlight was our sign language lesson, learning the alphabet and new songs this week.

This week, our classroom transformed into an advertising agency. The children designed and published their own persuasive posters for our "Magical Supermarket." I was blown away by the creativity on display—we had some truly "spellbinding" deals! The children used powerful, persuasive language and celebrity quotes to entice customers and create a fantastic end product.

In Maths this week, year 3 continued their work on mass and capacity with a focus on introducing volume for liquids and understanding how to read scales accurately. Year 4 are still in the world of decimals, dividing one and two digit numbers by ten and learning how digits move to include decimal places. We are continuing to practice hard for the multiplication tables check in June. The progress so far is fantastic from everyone. Thank you for all the hard work at home - it is making a huge difference.

To understand the impact of sugar on our dental health, we set up a fascinating experiment. Since egg shells are made of a similar material to our tooth enamel, we placed eggs into various liquids (some very sugary!) to observe the effects. In RE, we explored the story of the Exodus from Egypt and created our own Seder plates. This hands-on activity helped the children learn about the symbolic foods used during Passover and their historical significance. In our PSHE sessions, we looked at the importance of consistent sleep routines ensuring we get enough rest to help our brains grow. We learnt about having time away from screens before bed to help us to wind down and settle. Many of us shared their favourite stories to read before bed - there were some great recommendations.

To support our Year 4s with their upcoming check—and to build vital fluency for our Year 3s—homework this half-term will continue to focus on times table practice. Even 5–10 minutes a day makes a huge difference! Thank you for your continued support with this.



Mrs Aynsley and Mrs Rutter



Classroom updates - Oak class

What a brilliant week we've had in Oak Class. In English, the children published their balanced arguments about xenotransplantation and the standard really was exceptionally high. It has been fantastic to see how confidently the children are now able to structure arguments, balance points of view and use formal language so effectively. The finished pieces looked incredibly professional and the effort the children put into both presentation and content was clear to see.

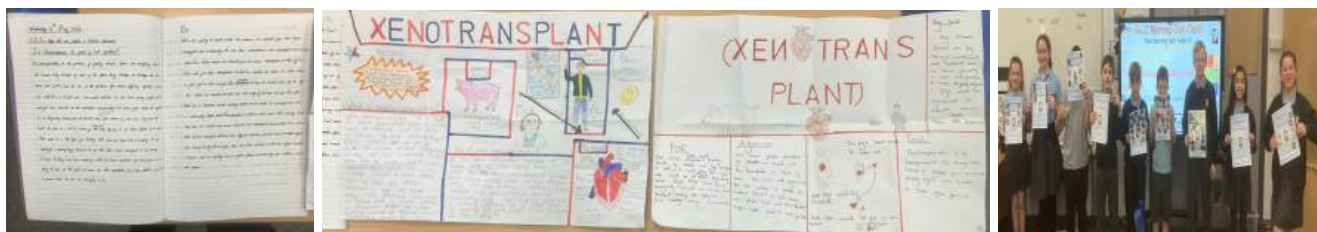
In Maths, both year groups have been working on different aspects of area and perimeter before finishing the week by revisiting the four functions and developing their general arithmetic fluency. The children have shown great resilience when tackling multi-step calculations and have worked hard to explain their reasoning clearly.

In Science, we carried out an enquiry exploring how exercise affects heart rate. The children enjoyed collecting data through practical activities and discussing why our bodies respond differently during exercise. There were some excellent scientific discussions and thoughtful conclusions throughout the lesson.

Our History work focused on the resilience shown by soldiers during WWI. The children considered the challenges soldiers faced on a daily basis and reflected maturely on the bravery, determination and emotional strength needed during wartime.

Year 6 have approached some gentle last-minute SATs practice with a really calm and positive attitude and we are incredibly proud of the maturity they are showing. Meanwhile, Year 5 created some absolutely outstanding xenotransplantation posters which combined detailed scientific knowledge with creative presentation.

To finish the week, this morning, everybody enjoyed a fantastic Forest School session alongside Years 3 and 4. A huge thank you to Mrs. Rutter and Mr. A for organising such an enjoyable afternoon outdoors. Have a lovely weekend everyone!



Mr McLeod

Friday Flyer



Dates for your Diary

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

Date	Time	
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 Birthday to:
Alex (Oak)**

  **Wishing you a fantastic time celebrating**  

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