

Belsay Primary School

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) INFORMATION REPORT

Belsay Primary School — Pele Trust | Academic Year 2026–2027

"Vital for some, valuable for all" — Building an inclusive-by-design school where every child belongs, believes, learns, and achieves.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo):	Mrs Liz Aynsley
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Executive Headteacher:	Mr Craig Shaw
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Head of School:	Miss Demi Houghton
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SEND Representatives, Academy Committee:	Paul Laidler & Jill Fozard
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Statement of Compliance & Legal Framework:

Our practice and the information contained in this report comply fully with the statutory requirements laid out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (July 2014), the Equality Act 2014, the Children and Families Act 2014, the Teachers Standards 2012, and the Northumberland Graduated Response. This report is published annually and reviewed at the end of each academic year to ensure robust, compliant, and supportive practice.

1. Our Vision for Inclusion: 'Vital for Some, Valuable for All'

At Belsay Primary School, inclusion is not simply a statutory obligation or a policy target; it is a living, breathing culture that underpins every educational, social, and operational decision. Serving a unique and wonderful rural cohort of 87 pupils within the Pele Trust, we celebrate our high SEND prevalence (21.8% of our school population) and hold an unwavering commitment to a 'no-glass-ceiling' approach to achievement. We believe that every child is an individual with unique potential, and we refuse to lower our expectations; instead, we relentlessly increase our support to ensure that every learner succeeds.

Our core philosophy, is that high-quality inclusive practice is "vital for some, but valuable for all." Guided by this mantra, our Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Quality First Teaching (QFT) frameworks are excellent. By designing learning experiences that are accessible from the outset, we ensure that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) learn seamlessly in the classroom alongside their peers. This approach fosters an environment where our children grow socially, academically, and personally, preparing them successfully for the next stage of their life.

Our inclusion model is structured around three core, child-centered aims:

- **Develop Independence:** Empowering children to manage their own learning, self-regulation, and practical daily routines, reducing adult dependency.
- **Encourage Resilience:** Fostering perseverance, positive self-talk, and a growth mindset by presenting pupils with high-challenge, beautifully scaffolded tasks.
- **Empower Confidence:** Building high aspirations, emotional security, and a deep sense of belonging across all aspects of school life.

2. Celebrated Progress & Reflections on the 2025-2026 Academic Year

The 2025-2026 academic year has been a period of remarkable, celebrated progress at Belsay Primary School. Our school community has actively evolved, upskilled, and consolidated its systems to meet the needs of our changing cohort, establishing a highly positive, expert-led environment that serves as an outstanding foundation for the 2026-2027 school year.

A. Welcoming New Families & Contextual Growth

Over the last year, Belsay experienced significant growth and welcome diversification, characterised by a high number of in-year admissions of pupils residing outside our traditional catchment area. Our staff and pupils embraced this contextual change as a wonderful opportunity to expand our Belsay family. From day one, we rigorously monitored and assessed the development of all new starters from their individual starting points, ensuring immediate, personalised onboarding and warm social integration.

B. Professional Development & Advanced Staff Training

To meet the unique needs of our larger, more diverse cohort, Belsay invested heavily in advanced, evidence-informed professional development for all staff. Our team underwent training in specialised areas, including:

- **Communication & Interaction:** Comprehensive training in Makaton signing, Gestalt Language Processing (supporting neurodivergent language acquisition), and Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) support.
- **Sensory & Physical Regulation:** Specialist training in designing and delivering Sensory Circuits to provide active, structured physical breaks that help children regulate their sensory needs and refocus for classroom learning.
- **The Graduated Response:** Collaborative training in the Assess, Plan, Do, Review (ADPR) cycle, ensuring that pupil profiles, passports, and interventions are constantly refined with precision.

C. External Professional Partnerships & Quality Assurance

We have been privileged to welcome many external specialists into Belsay over the past year—including Speech and Language Therapists (SALT), Educational Psychologists, local authority SEND advisors, and the High Incidence Needs Team (HINT)—whose expert guidance and clinical advice are always extremely valued.

To ensure this expert advice is translated directly into robust, measurable classroom success, Belsay partnered with Whole School Education and integrated their 'Evaluate My School' tools. This has made our action planning exceptionally robust, responsive, and collaborative, securing high-quality external moderation and precise target-setting across all areas of educational vulnerability.

D. Embedded Systems & Community Engagement

Our specialised SEND systems are fully embedded and deeply understood by all teaching staff and wider stakeholders. Individual SEN Support Plans and the ADPR approach are highly functional, collaborative tools utilised daily in our mixed-age classes to maintain excellent UDL and QFT standards.

Our community engagement has seen the launching of parent Coffee Mornings and strengthened strategic communication channels. These continuing sessions have created warm, transparent, and supportive partnerships, allowing families to participate actively in decision-making alongside the school and the Academy Committee.

E. Celebrating Key Successes: The 'Captains' Approach & Audit Excellence

A standout achievement of the past year has been our bespoke 'Captains' approach. This confidence-building initiative assigns meaningful, positive leadership roles to specific children who find self-regulation, social situations, or academic tasks challenging. Giving these pupils active responsibilities has been an outstanding success, resulting in a dramatic rise in their self-esteem, classroom focus, and positive peer relationships.

We close the year with immense excitement following the comprehensive audits carried out as part of our recent Inclusion Readiness Review. These audits proved that Belsay's team is fully upskilled, our community is highly aligned, and our environments are prepared. We are energised and strategically primed to utilise our Inclusive Mainstream Fund (IMF) allocation to elevate our provision in 2026-2027.

3. Understanding Our School Profile & Cohort Complexity

Belsay Primary School serves a close-knit, unique rural cohort of 87 pupils. Relative to our school's size, we support a high density of pupils with complex, diverse needs. Our data-driven approach ensures that resources, staffing, and specialised training are aligned perfectly with the physical and cognitive realities of our student body.

Belsay SEND Demographics

Cohort Category	Number of Pupils	Percentage of School Cohort
Pupils holding an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)	6	6.9%
Pupils on SEND Support (K)	13	14.9%
Total Pupils on Belsay SEND Register	19	21.8%

Distribution of SEND Pupils by Broad Area of Need (N=19)

Broad Area of Need	Number of Pupils	% of SEND Register	% of School Cohort
Communication and Interaction (C&I)	8	42.1%	9.2%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	6	31.6%	6.9%
Cognition and Learning (C&L)	5	26.3%	5.7%
Sensory and/or Physical Needs	0	0.0%	0.0%

Our data confirms that Communication and Interaction (C&I) remains the most prominent area of need, closely followed by Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Cognition and Learning (C&L). By identifying these clear patterns, Belsay has designed a strategy that prioritises early speech and language screening and robust emotional regulation tools, ensuring resources are deployed proactively.

4. Educational Progress, Attainment, & Intervention Impact

A Celebration of Individual Growth: At Belsay Primary, we celebrate progress in its fullest, most meaningful sense. Our tracking data demonstrates that pupils with additional needs are making good, consistent progress when measured against their own individual starting points and on an encouraging year-on-year basis. We reject the concept of educational limitations; our internal monitoring and evaluation cycles show that both in-class scaffolding and targeted out-of-class interventions are having a significant, highly positive impact on academic progress, personal independence, and overall self-belief.

While raw summative data provides a transparent, honest baseline, it represents a starting point for strategic development rather than a ceiling on what our children can achieve. The following baseline standards from our Summer 2026 assessments outline our targeted priorities for the 2026-2027 academic year:

- **Academic Equity Gap:** Across Reading, Writing, and Maths combined, 11.1% of pupils on the SEND register currently achieve the Expected Standard (EXS+), compared to 72.7% of non-SEND peers (representing an attainment gap of -61.6%).
- **Writing as the Core Focus:** Writing represents our primary core subject focus area. School-wide, 58.9% of pupils achieve the Expected Standard, while 11.1% of pupils with SEND reach EXS+ (with 45.2% Working Towards and 6.8% Working Below). To target this, we are embedding visual scaffolding, writing frames, and assistive writing technologies across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- **Support for Disadvantaged Pupils:** Our small cohort of disadvantaged pupils currently shows 0% Combined RWM attainment (a gap of -61.8% vs non-disadvantaged peers at 61.8%). We are deploying targeted, small-group academic mentoring to accelerate progress.
- **Cognition & Learning Memory Scaffolding:** Our Cognition & Learning cohort currently shows 0% Combined RWM attainment. This data directly guides our school-wide focus on cognitive load reduction, structured working memory prompts, and sensory movement breaks to help children manage multi-step instructions.

5. Attendance, Engagement, & Relational Support

Regular attendance is a vital precursor to learning, belonging, and academic progress. At Belsay, our overall whole-school mean attendance stands at a solid baseline of 95.48%. However, our granular tracking reveals distinct variations across demographic groups, which we address through supportive, family-centered, and relational intervention. We are a small school and work on a case by case approach supporting each individual and their family.

Belsay Attendance Summary by Subgroup (Summer 2026)

Cohort Classification / Need Type	Mean Attendance (%)	Strategic Attendance Status
Cognition and Learning (C&L)	96.84%	Exceeds Whole-School Baseline
Non-SEND Pupils	95.79%	Solid: Target Met
Belsay Whole-School Baseline Mean	95.48%	Core School-Wide Standard
All SEND Pupils Mean	94.56%	Within 1.5% of Baseline
Communication and Interaction (C&I)	93.90%	Monitor & Universal Support
Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	93.60%	PA Risk: Targeted Relational Care

Addressing Attendance Gaps with Care: Our data highlights that pupils with SEMH needs experience the lowest mean attendance (93.60%), with 42.9% of this cohort classified as persistently absent (attendance below 90.0%). Similarly, our small group of disadvantaged pupils experiences an attendance gap, with a mean of 89.74% (a gap of -6.15% vs non-disadvantaged at 95.89%). Our persistent absence rate across the school is 10.7% (8 pupils).

Belsay addresses these barriers through a highly supportive, relational framework rather than a punitive one. We recognise that emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSA) and school-based anxiety are often the root causes of absence. In response, we are implementing several strategic measures:

- **The 'Every Day Counts' Attendance Approach:** This newly developed parent guide actively de-escalates school anxiety. It features helpful 'Myths and Facts,' supportive travel checklists, sensory toolkit ideas, and direct QR links to the Northumberland SEND Local Offer. Rather than enforcing compliance, the booklet works collaboratively with parents to establish warm, sensory-friendly morning routines.
- **Targeted Attendance Support Plans:** For any pupil at risk of persistent absence, we work side-by-side with families to complete a diagnostic Google Form. This joint assessment identifies the specific emotional or environmental triggers behind their hesitation, leading to a bespoke, co-created support plan.

6. The Belsay Graduated Response (ADPR Cycle)

Belsay Primary School operates a rigorous, child-centered Graduated Response aligned with the Northumberland County Council framework. We assess, plan, do, and review our support continuously, ensuring that our teaching practices remain responsive, highly collaborative, and structured across three progressive levels of provision.

Level 1: Quality First Teaching & Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal Design for Learning is excellent at Belsay. Our teachers construct highly inclusive, adaptive learning environments where diverse needs are anticipated and supported naturally.

Level 2: School Support (SEN Support - K)

Where a pupil requires support that is additional to or different from our universal offer, they receive targeted, evidence-based interventions. At Belsay, we have restructured our staff deployment to guarantee that timetabled interventions (such as phonics catch-up, social skills, or motor skills groups) are protected.

Recognising that Communication and Interaction is our largest area of need, we are strategically investing to upskill a staff member to OCN London Level 4 as a Higher Level Communication Practitioner (HLCP) via Elklan. Starting in October 2026, this expert will work collaboratively with the SENDCo to provide Universal and Targeted communication screenings and advise on bespoke scaffolding for our classrooms.

Level 3: High Needs (EHCP / Highly Personalised Support)

For pupils with complex, long-term needs, Belsay provides highly personalised, individual learning plans featuring SMART targets. Our SENDCo and class teachers work in collaboration with external clinical professionals—including the NHS Speech and Language team, Jigsaw speech & language services, CYPS, HINT and Educational Psychologists—to select specialist equipment and tailored strategies.

If highly scaffolded school support does not achieve the desired progress, the school, in full consultation with parents and supporting professionals, will request additional Top-Up funding or an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) from the Local Authority. Belsay currently supports 6 pupils with active EHCPs, demonstrating our capacity to manage high-needs funding responsibly and successfully.

7. Creating Inclusive Environments & Supporting Wellbeing

The physical and social environment plays a fundamental role in a child's ability to self-regulate, focus, and feel safe. In response to our pupil and staff surveys, Belsay has committed to environmental adaptations in 2026-2027:

- **Physical Regulation Spaces:** We have designed comfortable, quiet regulation zones. Classrooms are designed to minimise visual clutter and sensory over-saturation, allowing children to learn in calm, structured environments.
- **Lunch Hall Acoustic Adaptation:** Staff highlighted that several pupils with sensory needs struggle with the elevated noise levels in our shared dining hall. We are actively auditing acoustic treatments and creating staggered or quiet lunchtime dining alternatives to reduce sensory overwhelm.
- **Sensory Playground Circuits:** To address social isolation reported by a small number of Key Stage 2 pupils during unstructured playtimes, we are exploring the installation of active playground sensory equipment and quiet play zones on our field, providing safe, structured alternatives to traditional play.

Empowering Pupil Voice: SEND/Inclusion Ambassadors

We are exceptionally excited about our new pupil leadership initiative. Starting this year, we are appointing two pupil-led SEND/Inclusion Ambassadors in each class. Meeting with the SENDCo half-termly to termly, these ambassadors will actively champion empathy and belonging across our school.

Our ambassadors will help select our school's 'Social Story of the Week' (focusing on themes like friendship, reading body language, and joining in games). They will be involved in assemblies and ongoing discussions about what the pupils need at Belsay. This ensures that pupil voice directly shapes our playground and classroom cultures, empowering children to support one another.

8. Co-Production & Parent Partnerships

At Belsay Primary, we know that parents are a child's first and most important educators. Home and school working in partnership is crucial to educational success. We are committed to authentic co-production from the first stage of concern.

A. Inclusion Forums & Coffee Mornings

Following their successful introduction last year, we are continuing our parent Coffee Mornings as a core school initiative. Alongside these, we are hosting half-termly to termly Inclusion Forums. These collaborative sessions are designed for open, transparent parent dialogue. Our inaugural Autumn Term 1 forum will focus on two major areas of parent co-production:

- **Summer Transition Booklet Feedback:** Gathering direct feedback on our new transition booklets (designed to help SEND pupils prepare for the return to school over summer) to refine our preparation-for-change offer.
- **The 'Every Day Counts' Booklet Review:** Sharing our new attendance resources and discussing the critical impact of term-time holidays on SEND progress in a supportive, collaborative forum.

B. Resolving Survey Concerns: The 'Direct Contact' Protocol

In our parent surveys, several families noted that they appreciate Belsay's approachability but felt that sending sensitive, confidential SEND concerns via the general school office 'felt wrong.' In direct response to this feedback, we have designed and rolled out a brand-new SEND communication protocol.

This protocol provides parents with a direct, confidential contact route to our SENDCo, Mrs Liz Aynsley, via a dedicated email address: liz.aynsley@belsay-school.uk (or a secure direct form). This bypasses the main office administrative loop entirely, ensuring confidentiality, transparency, and trust for all our families.

9. Transition Pathways

Effective transitions are essential for pupils with SEND, who can experience heightened anxiety during periods of change. Belsay Primary School manages all transition points with extreme care and planning. At the end of Key Stage 2, our pupils typically transfer to secondary settings within the Pele Trust, primarily Ponteland High School.

To ensure a seamless, anxiety-free transition, our SENDCo meets directly with the secondary SENDCo and the Year 7 Head of Year to share detailed pupil profiles, effective adaptive strategies, and clinical recommendations. We participate actively in the specialist 'Transition+' program, which provides additional, structured visits, familiarisation photo-books, and early social story preparation.