



18 September 2026

Executive Headteacher Update

What a fantastic week we have had at Belsay! It has been lovely to see the children really enjoying themselves in school and with the weather being so kind to us, we have been able to get outside and make the most of the sunshine too. We never quite know how long that will last, so it has been great to see the children enjoying it!

When I have been in school this week, I have really enjoyed walking around the classrooms and seeing how engaged the children are with their learning. The questioning and discussion taking place has been fantastic and we really do have a very articulate group of children who are keen to learn, ask questions and challenge themselves, while also having plenty of fun along the way. Lots of smiles and lots of laughter — exactly what we want to see!

A huge thank you to Natassh from The Lisa Project, who once again joined us in school this week to lead a fantastic sign language performance. It was wonderful to welcome residents from Eothen Care Home into school and they enjoyed singing and signing along with the children. I think it is incredibly important that our children learn different ways of communicating and having a specialist like Natasha come into school and share her expertise is a fantastic opportunity. Thank you so much for your continued support!

We also welcomed Open the Book into school on Thursday for our assembly. It was lovely to see the children getting involved and enjoying some of the stories from the Bible. These assemblies are always a great way to bring our Christian stories to life and give the children the opportunity to participate.

A reminder that next Wednesday we will be holding our SEND Coffee Morning with Mrs Aynsley. If you are able to attend, please come along and enjoy a coffee while having the opportunity to speak with Mrs Aynsley about our SEND provision in school and the fantastic work she does to support all of our children and learners.

Finally, we ended the week with our Celebration Assembly and Hot Chocolate with the Head. As always, a massive well done to all of this week's winners — you were all thoroughly deserving!

Have a wonderful weekend everyone, enjoy the sunshine while it lasts and we will see you all again on Monday, ready for another fantastic week!

Mr Shaw

Next week I am planning to be in school on Monday and Thursday.



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 and Miss Houghton**.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

HELPING NEURODIVERGENT CHILDREN NAVIGATE THE ONLINE WORLD

Neurodivergent people tend to be early adopters of technology, and many influential innovators in this space are neurodivergent themselves. It's therefore likely that a neurodivergent child or young person may be drawn to the online world from an early age. This isn't a concern in itself, but understanding both the benefits and potential risks is essential. Here are ten key considerations to support safe and positive online experiences for neurodivergent children.

- #### 1 TREAT ONLINE LIKE THE REAL WORLD

Your children's online world is a real world without guidance – you'd hold their hand, see a paediatrician, miss a meal, and make sure they're safe. In the same way, a neurodivergent child's first experiences online should be supported by an adult who can guide and explore with and respond to digital behaviour in their own time and place.
- #### 2 MODEL RESPONSIBLE USE

Children learn from what they see. Show children, regardless of neurotype, what responsible internet use looks like. Reflect on your own use of social media and AI. Consider how often you use them and your own responsibilities of these platforms. Talk openly about when and why you use these tools, helping children develop a balanced and informed approach.
- #### 3 KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Current government guidance suggests no less than one hour per day for five- to five-year-olds, screen time can support communication and connection when shared with a adult. However, positive and negative effects of neurodivergent children's online use and language skills. Focus on the type of content they watch, encourage slower-paced and meaningful interaction in their first post-positive, meaningful connection.
- #### 4 CONSIDER AGES AND STAGES

For older children and teenagers, agreed levels and boundaries, screen time can be beneficial, but it should form part of a balanced lifestyle. Neurodivergent children may find it difficult to manage their online world, supporting their social interaction. However, it shouldn't be their only option. Encourage a range of activities, including creative play, physical exercise and opportunities for real-world connections.
- #### 5 KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN

Conversations about online safety should begin early and continue as children grow. However, neurodivergent children may have different ways of getting things wrong or being misunderstood, making some kinds of conversations should feel open and safe rather than a lecture. It's a good idea to have a conversation – such as a series of 'what-if' scenarios – they need to feel able to speak to a trusted adult without fear of judgment or embarrassment.
- #### 6 BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Parents are eager to be on top, but it's important to stay informed about the platforms, games, or apps neurodivergent children use in order to provide practical support. Spend time exploring the apps, games, and more apps and games that potential settings that can be adjusted. Schools and families should work together to identify and share tools, helping neurodivergent children use them safely and effectively up to date with new features or updates.
- #### 7 SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Children and young people often know more about current technology than adults, making it important to help them understand why boundaries. Clear, predictable boundaries should be set, based on trust and consistency. Involving children in discussions that affect them helps them feel heard. This is particularly important for neurodivergent children, who may respond strongly to planned boundaries.
- #### 8 UNDERSTAND AI CONTENT

The internet now includes large amounts of AI-generated content, including images, videos, and stories. These can be difficult to identify. Children should be encouraged to question what they see and check the information using trusted sources. Neurodivergent children may interpret content differently, meaning adult guidance is important in helping them to recognise what's real and what's not.
- #### 9 EXPLAIN AI LIMITATIONS

AI isn't the same as a search engine. It generates responses based on prompts and patterns, not its accuracy depends on how it's used. Sometimes, it produces incorrect or misleading information. It's important to explain that AI isn't perfect and that it's important to check information carefully using reliable and trusted sources.
- #### 10 CLARIFY AI RELATIONSHIPS

AI can feel conversational and personal, but it's not capable of real relationships. It's important to explain that AI isn't a person, it's a tool. Some neurodivergent children may feel a connection with AI chatbots, particularly if they find social interactions challenging. It's important to explain that these are simulated conversations and aren't a substitute for real human relationships.



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 95.4% Our target for Whole School Attendance is 97%

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Willow	95.6%	97.2%
Maple	94.5%	97%
Alder	97.4%	95.4%
Oak	96%	93.8%

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

What a fantastic week we have had in Willow Class! The children have been brilliant and have continued to settle into our routines, learn together and have lots of fun along the way. It has been lovely to see everyone growing in confidence and enjoying their learning.

This week we have been enjoying The Colour Monster and talking about our different feelings and emotions. We have been thinking about how we feel and how our feelings can sometimes change. The children have been fantastic at sharing their ideas and talking about what makes them happy, sad, excited, worried and calm.

We have also been busy exploring patterns. We started by making repeating patterns using two colours and then challenged ourselves to create patterns using three colours. The children have been brilliant at spotting what comes next and explaining their patterns. There has been some fantastic mathematical thinking happening in Willow Class!

We have also been busy planting cress with Miss Cook! The children loved getting their hands involved as they carefully planted their seeds and talked about what plants need to grow. We are now going to be patient and watch our cress over the next few days to see what happens. There was lots of excitement as the children made predictions about how quickly their cress might grow. We can't wait to see our little plants begin to sprout!



It has been another lovely week full of learning, laughter, creativity and lots of smiles. I am so proud of how well the children are doing and how enthusiastically they are joining in with everything we do.

Miss Houghton



Classroom updates - Maple class

This week, Maple Class have been working hard to improve their handwriting. We have been practising careful letter formation, thinking about how we hold our pencils and remembering the correct direction in which letters should be formed. We have been paying particular attention to making sure our letters are the correct size, sit neatly on the line and are correctly orientated in relation to one another. Everyone has been working really hard to develop their handwriting skills and take pride in their presentation!

In Maths, Year 1 have been exploring one more and one less, using practical resources and number representations to help develop their understanding of number. Year 2 have been learning how to write numbers in expanded form, recognising the value of each digit within a two-digit number.

In PSHE, we learnt that families come in all shapes and sizes and that what matters most is the love and care we share with one another. We talked about why our families are special and important to us and celebrated the different families that make up our community. During Forest School, we also got creative outdoors by collecting natural objects such as leaves, sticks and stones and using them to create our own pictures and patterns. It was wonderful to see the children using their imaginations and working together to create beautiful artwork inspired by nature!



Mrs Landreth



Classroom updates- Alder class

It has been another whirlwind of a week in Alder Class! We have had a brilliant week of learning.

In Maths, we have been using Base 10 equipment and place value counters to build 3 and 4 digit numbers and exploring how these can be partitioned into thousands, hundreds, tens and ones. We moved on to partitioning numbers more flexibly.

We have been prehistoric publishers this week as we plan our non-chronological reports. Armed with a treasure trove of facts from their own research, we have all mapped out clear, well-structured plans. We are excited to write our final reports next week.

In Science and History this week we have been detectives! In Science, we closely examined rock samples to classify them as igneous, sedimentary or metamorphic. By observing textures and layers, the children were able to get a real eye for detail. In History, we stepped into the shoes of an archaeologist, analysing replic artefacts from the famous neolithic Skara Brae settlement. By examining bones, tools and photographic evidence from Skara Brae itself, the class correctly deduced that neolithic people were remarkably skilled farmers and fishermen and had started permanent settlements.

We had a wonderful singing and signing assembly with Natasha from the Lisa Project and gave fantastic signed renditions of Zippedee DooDaa and You are My Sunshine. Members of Alder Class also took to the stage during our Open the Book assembly, helping to act out the Creation story with great enthusiasm.

Have a restful weekend everyone. We look forward to seeing you next week.

Mrs Aynsley and Mrs Rutter





Classroom updates - Oak class

This week, the children completed their Diary Entry Big Write, inspired by the first six chapters of *Street Child* by Berlie Doherty. They worked hard to step into Jim Jarvis's shoes, retelling key events while capturing his thoughts, feelings and experiences. We were incredibly impressed by the atmosphere, emotion and historical detail included in their writing.

In Maths, we continued our Place Value unit, focusing on estimating and identifying numbers on number lines, as well as rounding numbers to different degrees of accuracy. Some of the rounding proved rather tricky at first, but the children showed excellent determination and made great progress as the week went on!

Our work on materials continued in Science as we explored a range of separation processes, including evaporation, magnetism, filtration and sieving. The children considered how and why each process works before deciding which method would be most effective for separating different mixtures.

Mrs Rutter delivered a brilliant History lesson on the Industrial Revolution and the enormous changes it brought to Britain. The children explored how developments in factories, coal mining, steam power and transport transformed the way people lived and worked during the Victorian era.

In RE, we explored how different people may understand and describe God in different ways. The children considered a range of beliefs, images and interpretations, sharing their own ideas thoughtfully and respectfully while recognising that people's views can be shaped by their faith and personal experiences.

We also kicked off our exciting new Art unit this week! The children have made a fantastic start and are already bursting with creativity and ideas. Watch this space for some of their wonderful creations over the coming weeks!

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you for all the kind messages and well wishes I have received following my car crash. They have genuinely meant a great deal to me and have been very much appreciated.

Have a wonderful and restful weekend, everyone!



Mr. McLeod



Dates for your Diary

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

Date	Time	
Wednesday 23rd September	9am	SEND coffee morning
Friday 2nd October	AM	Individual and family photos
Friday 16th October	9am	Harvest festival performance
Thursday 22nd October	3.15pm	School closed for half term
Monday 2nd November	All day	Teacher training day
Tuesday 3rd November	8.45am	School reopens to pupils
Friday 20th November	All day	Flu immunisations for all children
Thursday 10th December		Christmas lunch
Friday 11th December	2pm	Christmas Nativity performance
Wednesday 16th December	9am	Christmas Panto at Tyne Theatre
Friday 18th December	1pm	School closes for Christmas holidays
Monday 4th January	8.45am	School reopens to pupils

🎂🥳 Birthdays 🎁🎈

Ottillie (Willow), Emily (Alder), Felicity (Oak), Theo (Willow), Otis (Alder)

Wishing you all a fantastic time celebrating



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