



7th March 2025

Headteachers update

Firstly, I would like to welcome you all back and I hope that everybody had a lovely half term. After a long 7 weeks last half term, I feel that everyone has come back refreshed and raring to go again which is great to see. I think we have tried to achieve a Guinness World Record this week with how many things we can fit into 4 days of school - what an amazing week!



Monday was a Teacher Training Day and during this day we met up with all of our colleagues across the Trust schools for an afternoon with ASK Psychology. Part of the session looked at the '2 hands model' which is linked to routines and boundaries. The key message coming from the session was how well we as staff know our children. I honestly feel it is safe to say that our staff at Belsay know your children incredibly well and this is why we are able to form such positive trusting relationships where the children can feel safe to take risks.

Thursday was our annual World Book Day and what an absolute cracker! This year's theme was 'The Colour Monster' so tied into this was Literacy and PSHE as colours can represent emotions. To start off British Science Week, Miss Dixon also invited in some little monsters from Northumberland College Zoo. Finally, using the book as a stimulus we wanted to celebrate RE and other religions, so with the Hindu Holi Festival coming up next week, it was a perfect opportunity to learn about this and incorporate one of the biggest Hindu traditions - a Colour Run! It was another Belsay classic and one that I am sure will live long in the memory of our children and staff.



Finally, today has seen all of our Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children visit Belsay Hall and Castle linked to British Science Week. I think it is such an important link to have between the school and Belsay Hall and Castle as it continues to cement the deep rooted history between us.

So that's just week one! We still have more to come in the next few weeks. Thank you so much for all your support to help make these events possible. It really is a big team effort and we are very grateful to be part of an amazing community.

Mr Shaw

Friday Flyer



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 **Mr Shaw and Miss Dixon**.

Top Tips for SETTING BOUNDARIES AROUND GAMING

If your child loves video games, then you'll probably be aware that how long they spend gaming – and what they're actually playing – can occasionally become a source of concern or conflict. The UK's trade body for interactive entertainment, Ukie, has recently launched a campaign to promote safer and more responsible gaming among young people – with parents and carers helping by setting sensible and fair boundaries. Our guide has tips on key areas where you could agree some healthy ground rules for your child's gaming activity.

PROMOTE SAFER GAME CHOICES

Deciding which online games are OK – and which should be avoided – is tricky. Some titles allow children to cooperate or compete with strangers, which creates potential risks. Watching your child play online for a while could provide more insight into a particular game, while the parental controls on most consoles allow you to limit who can chat to your child or send them friend requests. Remind your child of the hazards around strangers online when you discuss this boundary with them.

ENCOURAGE REGULAR BREAKS

Help your child understand the need to take regular breaks, playing in shorter bursts rather than marathon sessions. Bear in mind that some games (such as role-playing games) require time investment from the player, while others (online team games, for example) can't be stopped or paused at a moment's notice. A quick break every hour or so is good practice, and you could suggest some things to do in these breaks, such as having a drink of water or getting some fresh air.

AGREE SPENDING LIMITS

There's no doubt that gaming can be expensive, and younger players often don't realise how much paying for digital items and subscriptions can add up to. Many young gamers love to buy new skins or upgrades for their character, so you could settle on a fixed amount that your child is allowed to spend on in-game items each week or month. This sort of boundary will not only help your child to manage their expectations but will also make you more aware of the price of these items.

DISCUSS AGE RATINGS

Children often ignore the age ratings on games – or are unaware they even exist. If you're happy with your child playing a particular game even though it's rated above their age, then establish that as a boundary: emphasise that you've made an exception, and talk about what age rating means and why they're important. You could add context to this boundary by browsing games' boxes together while shopping, discussing why some games might have earned certain age ratings.

FACTOR IN FRIENDS

If your child is a keen video gamer, the chances are that they'll have other gamers among their social circle, too. When friends visit, do they instantly dash to their console or computer? You could put boundaries in place before their guests arrive by agreeing on a length of gaming time. Bear in mind, though, that they may try to extend this once they're together. Try coming up with activities or challenges for them during screen breaks – if they join in, they earn a little extra time on their game.

ENJOY GAMING TOGETHER

Setting time aside to play video games together can be an enjoyable bonding exercise. Understandably, some young gamers may be less enthusiastic about a parent or carer joining in, but it can be a productive way of encouraging them to share their hobby with you. Setting goals or tasks might be useful: if they love Minecraft, choose something to build together; if Fortnite's their favourite, ask to try out some of the fun game modes, like Prop Hunt, which don't require high skill levels.

TALK ABOUT EMOTIONS

Help your child to monitor their emotions as they play. Discuss what is (and isn't) an acceptable level of competitiveness to show while gaming. Are they allowed to trash talk other players's, for example? Can they notice when they get angry if they lose? Do they think these emotions are healthy? Some games can provoke anger, but others can bring joy, fun and the thrill of overcoming a challenge. Try to steer your child towards games that tend to produce these more positive feelings.

BE PREPARED FOR TROLLS

A frequent problem when gaming online is other players who are deliberately troublesome. Make sure your child knows how to report and block someone who makes their experience a negative one. Between you, decide if or how they should deal with these online trolls. Talk about where your child's boundaries are in terms of what they think is acceptable: what behaviour by other users is merely frustrating, and what crosses the line to become upsetting or abusive.



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 96.12%. Our **NEW** target for Whole School Attendance is 97%.

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Willow	100%	96.19%
Maple	100%	95.91%
Alder	100%	96.29%
Oak	98.86%	96.15%

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 first week back we've had in Willow Class!

We started the week by celebrating Pancake Day. The children loved learning about the tradition, sharing their favourite toppings, and having the chance to make their own pancakes.

Thursday was full of fun! We spent the morning working with different teachers across school to focus on key events. We focused on World Book Day, Science and the Holi festival. We loved taking part in activities linked to the book *The Colour Monster*, seeing the different animals from Kirkley Zoo and having the opportunity to create our own unique artwork. In the afternoon we completed a PSHE activity linked to different emotions and how we can show emotions through our facial expressions. Then the fun really began...

We had a fantastic time taking part in the colour run. The field was filled with laughter and excitement. It was great to see everyone embracing the fun and having such a good time together. We all enjoyed a splash of colour! A big well done to all of Team Willow for showing resilience during such a fun but different school event.



A very special delivery arrived this week, our class caterpillars! The children were so excited to meet our new tiny class members. Over the next few weeks, we will be observing their incredible transformation into butterflies.

Thank you to everyone who uploaded photos to Tapestry from the half term holidays. It looks like everyone had a great time. The fun hasn't stopped this week and the whole half term looks as though it will be packed full of fun! Have a lovely weekend and get ready for next week.

Miss Houghton



Classroom updates - Maple Class

Maple class had an exciting and fun-filled first week back. In English, the children were introduced to their new class text, *Stella and Seagull*. They began by making predictions about the story and discussing the illustrations. The students were curious to know more about the characters and setting, and they asked questions to guide their thinking. The excitement is building as the class looks forward to reading the book on Monday to see if their predictions were correct.

In PSHE, the children have been learning about Shrove Tuesday, the Christian celebration before Lent begins. They explored the traditions surrounding the day and took part in a creative activity where they designed their own pancakes. This activity allowed the children to connect with the cultural significance of Shrove Tuesday whilst also getting creative with their designs, making the celebration both educational and fun.

Thursday was particularly exciting as Northumberland College Zoo launched British Science Week with a special visit to school to teach us about changes and adaptations. The children loved learning about the animals and their habitats. The day was also marked by the celebration of World Book Day, where the entire school participated in a colourful and energetic colour run. We got covered in paint and had lots of fun! This year, the book focus was *The Colour Monster*, which is a story that helps children to understand and express their feelings. Throughout reading the book, the class discussed different emotions and how to manage them, making it a meaningful and engaging way to celebrate the day.

Have a restful weekend everyone!



Miss Dixon and Miss Oliver



Classroom updates - Alder Class



What a colourful way to start the half term. Alder Class had the most wonderful time on Thursday, well done for throwing yourselves into the excitement of the day everyone!



Our new class text is called 'The Lost Bear' by Hannah Gold. This is already gripping our imaginations. It has been lovely reading about our young heroine April, who is setting sail to a remote island in the Arctic Circle. In our English lessons we have been focussing on instructional texts. As the children enjoyed our Technology project so much, we decided to focus this writing task on our locomotives. We used lots of visual aids to help us remember the order of tasks when building our trains. In Maths we continued to learn about length and perimeter. Earlier in the week Year 3 spent time measuring themselves while Year 4 investigated finding the perimeter of various rectilinear shapes.

Science this week saw the end of our Forces topic. On Wednesday we investigated friction. We started by looking at different toys with wheels and making predictions about which would travel the farthest and fastest. We spent some time talking about the importance of giving reasons for our answers and even drawing on evidence. Interestingly the horse travelled the farthest, after a vote we decided to use this toy for our investigation. It was interesting to measure the distance the horse travelled on the various different materials. It travelled the furthest on the smooth wood. The towel created the most friction which caused the horse to travel less than 1m. We discussed the forces acting on the horse and how the type of material affected the amount of friction acting on the wheels.

We all had a fantastic time on World Book Day learning about the festival of Holi and exploring our emotions with The Colour Monster book. The colour run was a fantastic end to the day, full of fun and laughter. Have a lovely weekend everyone. We look forward to seeing you for another fun-filled week next week!

Mrs Aynsley and Mrs Rutter



Friday Flyer

Classroom updates - Oak Class

I am sure that there are some schools and classes across the country who ease themselves back in gently following a half term holiday. Not us though. Shakespeare rehearsals, SATs Clubs, Colour Runs, all amongst the craziness of everyday Belsay life has meant a wild return for Oak Class, but as always, they have flourished and thrived as they always do.

With our Much Ado About Nothing performance only a few days away, we have been hitting rehearsals hard this week and I cannot emphasise enough how grateful I am for all of the hard work that yourselves and your small people have put in at home. We honestly cannot wait for Wednesday! The children are really starting to get a handle on the comedic value of this play and it really shows through their amazing acting.

We produced some brilliant art work for Holi Festival, alongside our younger colleagues as we had a great time splatting paint around, although this was absolutely nothing compared to the assault that I endured as part of the colour run later in the afternoon. I'll send my laundry invoices via Class Dojo this week. But seriously, days like Thursday are the ones they are going to remember for a lifetime and it's an absolute pleasure to be a part of them with your wonderful children.

Just a quiet one next week, team. Only the small matter of a Shakespeare performance in front of 1000 people to worry about. Easy right?

See you on Monday!



Mr. McLeod



Dates for your Diary

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

Date	Time	
12th March	All day	Oak Class Shakespeare performance @ Northern Stage
13th March	11am	Year 1 Come Dine with Me
13th March	4:30pm	Year 6 France residential parents information evening at Darras Hall Primary School
18th March	All day	Red Nose Day (non-uniform £1 donation)
19th-21st March	All day	Ford Castle residential for Year 3-5
24th-28th March	8.45-8.55am 3.15-3.45pm	Scholastic Book fair
24th and 25th March	Afternoon / evening	Parents Evening
24-28th March	All day	Made in the North East week
27th March	Morning	Willow class trip to a farm
27th March	All day	Maple Class trip to Cragside
27th March	All day	Oak Class Trip to The Mining Institute and Victoria Tunnels
28th March	All day	Alder Class trip to Alnwick Castle and Lildorei
3rd April	Afternoon	Willow class parents welcome into school
11th April	3.15PM	School closes for half term
28th April	8.45am	School reopens for all children

Friday Flyer



Happy Birthday to all those celebrating this week

Tobias (Maple)

Jodie (Maple)

Alfie (Oak)