



21st February 2025

Headteachers update

We have done it! My goodness, this has been an incredibly long half term and I know we are all ready for this short holiday. Well done to all of our children for being amazing and completing such an incredible amount of hard work this half term, it's now time to recharge the batteries and relax.



On Thursday, some of our children joined Mrs Aynsley at Sunderland University to take part in the Primary Engineers Celebration Event. As part of STEM, both Maple and Alder Class have had fun taking part in their engineering projects where they were making moving vehicles, so it was wonderful to receive this invite and for some of the children to see a real event at a University. They took their completed vehicles to the event and had to test and demonstrate their STEM skills against a number of other schools from across the region. The children met with real life engineers and had to talk about their participation in the project, what they thought they had done well with their vehicles and what they would do to improve on their models to make them even more impressive (if that is possible!).

One date for the diary is our Spring Parents Information evening which will be held on Monday 24th and Tuesday 25th March. It has been great this week to welcome a number of parents into school for our Ford Castle meeting and our SATs Information Evening. Each year, after I present these, I can start to feel myself getting more excited as we have lots of fun coming up!

After half term we have a lot going on in our first week back so please make sure you have checked the diary dates below. Monday will be a Teacher Training Day and school will reopen on Tuesday 4th March. On Thursday the 6th March, it is our annual World Book Day. You will have all received the letter about this but please can I politely remind you about paying your donation online but also to complete the waiver that was sent out, to allow your child to take part in the Colour Run.

To round off the half term we have had our Hot Chocolate and Celebration Assembly, which once again highlighted to me the outstanding level of work we are seeing throughout Belsay. Well done to everyone nominated this week.

On behalf of the staff, we hope you have a wonderful half term and have some exciting things planned. See you all on Tuesday 5th March ready to go again!

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**.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

GOOGLE CHROMEBOOK

Google Chromebooks were first introduced in 2011 as a budget-friendly alternative to Windows laptops. They have a cloud-based desktop operating system created by Google that performs internet-based tasks simply and quickly. Although primarily optimised for Google apps – such as Gmail and Google Drive – newer devices also support Android apps and offer a range of parental controls via the Google Family Link tool. Nonetheless, whilst these tools are comprehensive, there are some limitations which means there are a number of risks trusted adults should be aware of.

SETTING UP

SET UP FAMILY LINK

To do this, first install the "Google Family Link" app onto your smartphone to set up an account for your child. If you're setting up a new account, it's important you follow the setup process and sign in with your parent account, as this has access to special privileges. Once this is done, you can add your child's account to the Chromebook.

DISABLE GUEST MODE

If "Guest mode" or the ability to add new users is available, your child may be able to bypass the Chromebook's parental controls. To disable this, sign into the Chromebook with your parent account, head to "Settings > Manage other people" and turn on "restrict sign-in to the following users" – from there, you'll be able to turn off the "guest browsing" feature.

SET UP PARENTAL CONTROLS

In your child's account, head to "Settings > People > Parental controls" set up" to begin the process. This will confirm the child's account you want to enable parental controls for and will list the devices that can be protected. You'll then be asked to enter the email and password, before being prompted to ask your child to confirm the supervision via their password.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ONLINE, ALL THE TIME

As "internet-first" devices, Google Chromebooks are reliant on a Wi-Fi connection, with only limited support for offline tasks. This means your child has access to the internet at all times, with an enduring risk of being exposed to online harm, particularly as Family Link is only able to block most inappropriate content. Even if your child isn't searching for inappropriate websites and information, there's always the chance that they might see something that could upset them.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Like most technology, laptops are addictive in nature, and you might find your child spending too long staring at their Chromebook – particularly given its support for Android apps, such as games and social media platforms. This could lead to irritability, mood swings and a loss of interest in more important tasks.

BWARE OF MALWARE

Although Google's Chrome OS features a number of built-in security measures, that doesn't fully eliminate the risk of malware, which can be downloaded onto the machine via phishing emails or from downloading malware-laced content. This should be a particular concern if your child is taking their laptop into school, as the malware could find itself entering the school's network and infecting other pupils' laptops.

Advice for Parents & Carers

There are a number of safety features that you can enable to keep your child safe while using Google Chromebook:

- 1 Disable guest mode and control who can sign into your child's Chromebook
- 2 Restrict or block access to apps from the Chrome Web Store and the Google Play Store
- 3 Disable Incognito Mode so you can always track what sites your child has been on.
- 4 Manage the websites your children can visit on Chrome
- 5 Limit your child's ability to grant permissions to websites
- 6 Check Family Link to ensure the Chrome browser default is set to block sexually explicit and violent sites from being shown to children
- 7 Set bedtimes, screen-time limits, and lock devices when not in use



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 96.02% Our **NEW** target for Whole School Attendance is 97%.

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Willow	100%	96.04%
Maple	90.34%	95.80%
Alder	92.59%	96.19%
Oak	95.56%	96.06%

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.



Friday Flyer

Classroom updates - Willow Class

What a week! This has been one of the busiest yet in Willow class (I'm sure I've said that before). We have had a bit of everything this week from half term assessments to an epic cake sale! Mr Shaw came into the classroom on Monday as we were making our cakes for the cake sale and he was so impressed with everyone showing the school value of collaboration. Whether it was to tidy up, to add chocolate chips to the cakes or even helping to eat the chocolate chips. Everyone was busy and made sure they contributed one way or another.

We were all very excited on Wednesday morning when we came into school. We had transformed into Polar bears and it was great to see everyone dressed up and embracing the theme. Then on to the main event which was the long anticipated cake sale. The event was a huge success and it was great to see the youngest children in school being so responsible and taking ownership of an event they had been such a big part of. I am pleased to say that the final amount raised was £73.85. This is such a fantastic achievement. It will go a long way in helping the polar bears and we are very grateful for all of the support. We will be organising adopting a polar bear after the half term break.

I wasn't in school on Tuesday however when I came back in on Wednesday I was greeted by some amazing art work that the children have been working on over the last few weeks. Miss Dixon has been helping the children to create a mixed media polar bear scene using a range of different skills. She has been so impressed with how hard the children have been working and also their amazing listening skills. I am lucky enough to see and hear wonderful things from the children everyday when I work with them but it always makes me feel very proud when I hear comments from other teachers about just how brilliant the children are. Well done Team Willow!



It is hard to believe that we are now at the halfway point of the academic year. I feel we have covered so much in such a short amount of time and I am looking forward to seeing what the next half of the year has in store for us. For now I hope everyone has a wonderful half term and finds time to be with their family. Have a lovely half term!

Miss Houghton



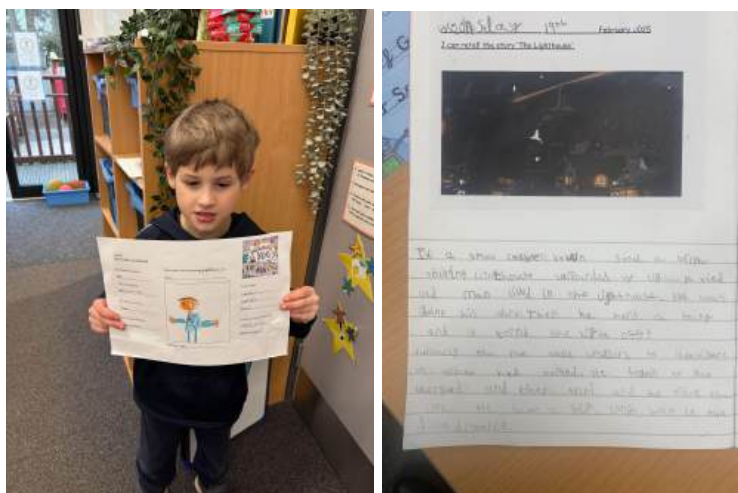
Classroom updates - Maple Class

This week, Maple class have been busy developing their writing skills in English. We started by learning how to write clear and precise instructions on how to brush our teeth. The children carefully structured their work using chronological steps and bossy verbs to make sure their instructions were easy to follow. They also focused on gold-standard presentation, taking great pride in their handwriting and layout. Later in the week, we had a fantastic creative writing session, where the children retold the story of *The Lighthouse*, inspired by a visual stimulus. We were incredibly impressed by their use of descriptive language and ambitious vocabulary. The children loved reading their stories aloud to each other, building their confidence as writers and storytellers.

In PSHE, we explored the theme of identity by creating personal identity maps, inspired by the book *Incredible You*. Each child thought about what makes them unique, from their hobbies and talents to their families and special qualities. These identity maps will be shared with our penpals at Hawthorn Primary, helping us to connect with another school and celebrate the wonderful things that make us all different. The children were excited to express themselves through words and pictures, and we are sure their penpals will love learning all about them!

It has been a wonderful week of learning, creativity, and self-expression in our class. The children have shown great enthusiasm and effort in all their activities, and we are incredibly proud of their achievements. Well done, everyone!

Thank you for all of your hard work Maple Class, have a lovely half term!



Miss Dixon and Miss Oliver

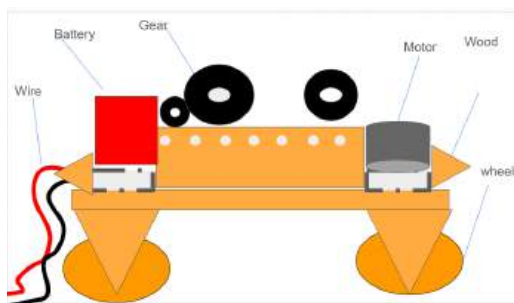


Classroom updates - Alder Class

We've had another great week in Alder Class this week! We have been busy enhancing our story writing skills in English, writing our own jungle adventure story with animal characters. We followed a clear structure incorporating lots of descriptive writing and even some direct speech between characters. There has been some wonderfully ambitious vocabulary and some exciting adventure stories written. I wonder if they can retell them to you at home.

It has been non-stop in our engineering project this week, working on our locomotives for the Primary Engineers event on Thursday. Some of us were able to visit Sunderland with Mrs Aynsley and enjoyed sharing our work with other schools and celebrating our successes! We have continued to look at forces in Science this week, looking at magnetic fields and what happens when different magnetic poles are pushed together. In history, we have continued to look at medieval castles and the people who live in them - there were some fantastic jobs but others that we didn't really fancy taking on! On top of all that, we have been chicken monitors this week, taking care of the chickens every day. After all our hard work, we have enjoyed finishing reading *The One and Only Ivan*, as well as enjoying the movie with some snacks!

Have a wonderful half term holiday everyone - you deserve it. We look forward to seeing you all in March for another exciting half term.



Mrs Aynsley and Mrs Rutter



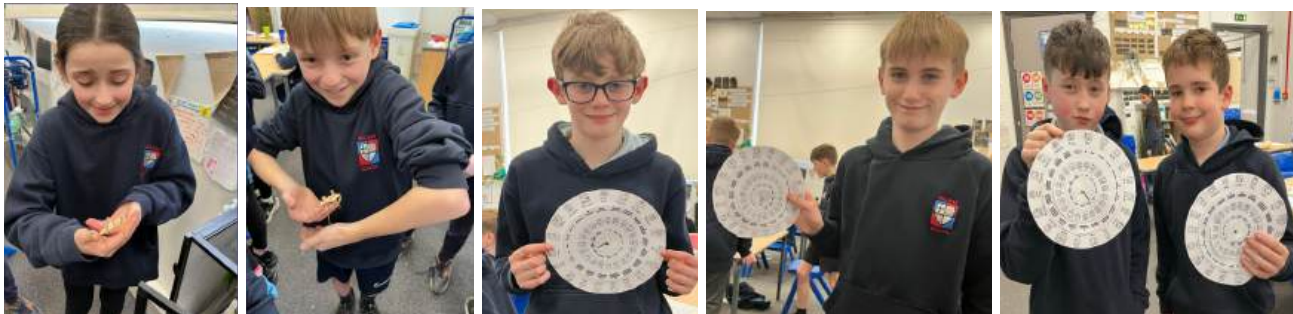
Classroom updates - Oak Class

A busy few days of finishing off many things in Oak Class, this week. From Diary Entry Big Writes (amazing, by the way) to making, understanding and constructing Mayan Calendars, it has been a five day period that leads us into a well earned half term break with a real sense of achievement.

Thank you so much for your attendance and queries at both of our after school meetings this week also. Without your support, this half term would have been considerably harder!

Keep up the good work over half term but please make sure that you all get some rest. It is going to be another busy one with many trips, performances and other exciting events next half term too.

Have an amazing week Team Oak and I will see you on the 4th!



Mr. McLeod



Friday Flyer

Dates for your Diary

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

Date	Time	
3rd March	All day	Teacher training day
4th March	8.45am	School reopens for all children
6th March	All day	World Book Day and Holi Festival Colour Run
7th March	All day	Willow and Maple Class trip to Belsay Hall and Gardens
12th March	All day	Oak Class Shakespeare performance @ Northern Stage
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 Lilidorei
11th April	3.15PM	School closes for half term
28th April	8.45am	School reopens for all children

Belsay Primary School

Friday Flyer

Belsay School



Happy Birthday to all those celebrating this week

Laurie (Maple)

William (Maple)



Friday Flyer

NATIONAL
YOUTH CHOIR

SING!

North East



Join us for SING! 2025, which includes three workshops throughout the year led by our friendly team of vocal leaders from National Youth Choir. Young singers will learn exciting new songs, make new friends and develop their musical skills.

What you need to know

- Open to all young singers in Years 5 to 8 at a state school or homeschooled in the North East
- Free for all taking part with flexible support for travel costs
- No prior preparation is needed - just bring your enthusiasm!
- Young singers will have the opportunity to take part in a supported audition for the National Youth Choir at the end of the year

Dates for your diary

Spring Weekend

Saturday 1 & Sunday 2 March, 10am-4pm
Newcastle Sixth Form College

Summer Vocal Day

Sunday 15 June, 10am-4pm
Newcastle University

Autumn Workshop Day

Sunday 12 October, 10am-4pm
Newcastle University

Sign up now

Register for events and sign up to our mailing list



www.nationalyouthchoir.org.uk