



24th January 2025

Headteachers update

What a week! I know I say this often but we really have had a good mix this week with exceptional work and then the battering of high winds. Needless to say we continued on and made the best of the tricky situation.



Being part of Pele Trust we believe in the importance of collaboration, particularly when it comes to improvement and being the best we can be; after all, our school vision is Aiming High, Working Together, Achieve Excellence. Therefore on Tuesday and Wednesday this week we took part in a school review. I thoroughly enjoy taking part in these activities because it allows external visitors to come into school and see the amazing work that is going on. The work on the left is a small selection of books from Year 1 - Year 6, fantastic!

I can honestly say that the children and staff were unbelievable and as always I am so incredibly proud of them all. The level of focus, attitude and overall positivity fills the air in Belsay creating the most wonderful learning environment. I would also like to add that it is also down to you, as parents and carers, that this is possible so thank you for your continued support and willingness to engage with school.

Unfortunately, due to the weather, I know a high number of families were unable to get the children to school today. Please rest assured that this is absolutely understandable as your safety is our main concern.

We did end the week with our Hot Chocolate celebrations, a much needed drink in today's wind, so well done to all our winners! However, we will delay our Outstanding Achievement Celebrations until next week once all children are back in school.

I hope you all have a safe weekend and look forward to seeing you Monday. Well done Team Belsay on smashing another awesome week!

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 & Educators Need to Know about MINECRAFT

Minecraft is a beloved classic of modern gaming, still boasting over 160 million players who happily return to it at least once every month. The game has also been used in schools to teach coding, science and other skills, encouraging creativity. Minecraft has plenty to offer, and it's available on almost all video game platforms.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

PUBLIC SERVERS
Joining a public Minecraft server lets children potentially interact with strangers through text chat. Some servers focus on building, while others are dedicated to playing mini-games or competitive modes that pit players against each other. Anyone can join a public server and connecting to one is relatively simple. A public server's IP address is easy to find with search engines and can potentially be used to determine the host's location.

SCARY ELEMENTS
The visual design and gameplay of Minecraft is purposefully child friendly, so there's no mature content in the game. However, some enemies might prove scary for younger players. In the game, certain creatures come out at night and are accompanied by spooky audio – such as zombie moans and skeleton bone rattles – that may be unnerving. There are also enemies called 'creepers' which sneak up silently and explode, which could startle and upset young users.

GRIEFING
Some people in Minecraft delight in purposefully damaging or destroying another player's creations. This is called 'griefing' and is a form of bullying. It intentionally spoils someone else's experience in the game by deleting hours of their work and forcing them to start from scratch. Many public servers treat griefing as a severe offence and frequently ban offenders.

ADDITIONAL PURCHASES
After initially buying the game, players can make optional purchases for cosmetic items and other bonuses. Additionally, Minecraft Realms is an optional online subscription service that lets users run their own private server to play with their friends. Some games consoles also need a separate active subscription – such as PlayStation Plus – to enable online play, so multiplayer Minecraft can quickly become an expensive hobby.

ADDICTIVENESS
Minecraft's gameplay is relatively simple, and seeing the result of hours of resource gathering and building can be extremely gratifying. This can make the game highly addictive. It's easy to lose track of time while playing Minecraft, causing committed young players to forget about other activities like homework or enjoying family time.

Advice for Parents & Educators

RESEARCH CONTENT CREATORS
There are a lot of Minecraft content creators who release helpful videos about the game on YouTube and Twitch. Not all of these, however, are suitable for children. Watching these content creators' channels yourself first is a safe way to find appropriate videos to share with children. This also helps you learn more about the game itself.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT MODE
Selecting 'Creative' or 'Peaceful' mode allows children to play Minecraft without having to contend with enemies. It's also a great way for you to get used to playing the game with them, since the difficulty level is far lower. This allows you to work together on a long-term project, creating something special without the threat of zombies attacking you, or creepers exploding and damaging your build.

HOST A PRIVATE SERVER
The easiest way to find a safe server for children to play on is to make one yourself. Hosting a server prevents strangers from finding it, unless they've been given its address and password. A private server also lets you control who's allowed to enter and – if necessary – ban anyone who shouldn't be there. This is the closest equivalent to parental controls in Minecraft. However, hosting a private server will cost a monthly fee.

ENCOURAGE BREAKS
It's easy for the hours to fly by while a child is playing Minecraft, so remind them to take regular breaks. This is a useful way for them to learn good time management, which they'll benefit from as they get older. It will also teach them to play their favourite games in moderation – limiting addictive behaviour and allowing them to manage their day better.

TALK ABOUT STRANGERS
At some point in their lives, almost everyone will make contact with a stranger online. Talking to children about online safety, therefore, is essential – as is having a plan for dealing with any hostile or difficult people. Ensure that a child knows to never tell a stranger about themselves online, and that they should come to you straight away if they do encounter a problem.



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 96.07%. Our **NEW** target for Whole School Attendance is 97%.

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Willow	100	96.46
Maple	98.51	96.15
Alder	100	96.26
Oak	96.28	95.69

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

I am not quite sure where this week has gone, but another week is completed for Willow class. The children have worked incredibly hard this week and this was noticed by the Pele Trust visitors who have been in school. Willow class blew Mrs Blain's socks off!!

We have continued to focus on the story The Polar Bears Home and the children have been thinking about what we can do to help save the polar bears. We discussed that we could turn off the lights, turn off the taps, recycle and plant a tree. Ideas we can all be a part of which will help the world. It is great to see and hear the children remembering so many key facts about polar bears and becoming more confident to share the facts with others. Over the next few weeks we will be starting to think about ways we can raise money to adopt a polar bear. The cost is £36 and we are aiming to raise as much money as we can towards this. It would be great if you could talk to your child about this and see what ideas they come up with. Please feel free to share your ideas with me on Tapestry.

This week we have been 'making a fuss' about number 7. We have identified the number on a number line, used the part part whole method to make 7 and even wrote the number 7 on paper and in the sand tray. The children are starting to remember the ways to make 7 without always having to count or check using resources. Well done everyone!



Each morning we complete a fine motor activity, this helps us to build up our strength in our fingers and is a vital step on our early writing journey. This week the children have enjoyed making a polar bear house using sugar cubes, creating a polar bear using playdough and matching snow balls to numbers. I have been really impressed with the children during these activities and it has been lovely to see everyone so busy. Please make sure your child is in school before 8.55am to allow them to take part in this during this time. It really helps to make a difference and the children enjoy the hands-on activities.



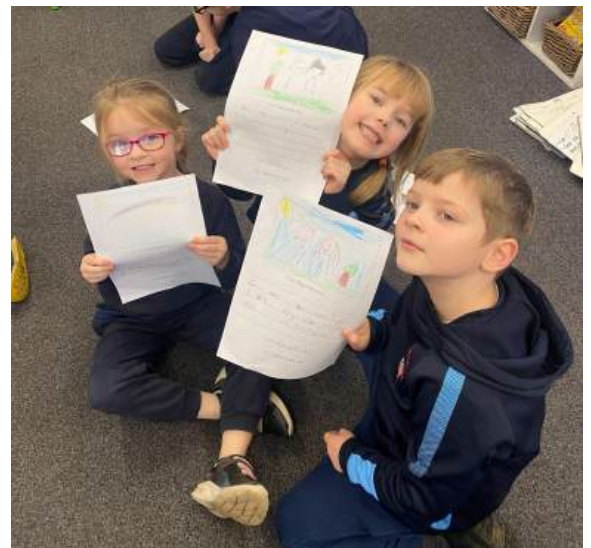
Have a lovely weekend and stay safe.

Miss Houghton



Classroom updates - Maple Class

This week we received wonderful handmade bunting and first letters from our new linking class at Hawthorn Primary School. It was lovely to read about our new friends, learn their names and hear what their interests are. We discussed similarities and differences between ourselves and our linking class and practised our letter writing skills in English to write replies. We worked hard to include questions, exclamations and conjunctions in our writing to express ourselves clearly and make our letters interesting to read. In History we continued our Inventors of the North East topic and learnt all about Cragside house and what makes it special. We discussed the inventions inside William Armstrong's world famous home in Rothbury and compared them to the inventions we have inside our own houses today.



Miss Dixon



Classroom updates - Alder Class

Alder Class has gone Gorilla mad this week. Inspired by our class text *The One and Only Ivan*, we have been creating our own non-chronological report on gorillas. The children have demonstrated great knowledge of the features of a report and also researched some incredible facts. Did you know gorillas share 98% of our DNA and can learn to communicate with sign language? I'm sure the children will be able to share many more of their fascinating facts. We have also spent time in art looking at gorillas and drawing our own, focussing on light and shade to add depth to our drawings.

Year 4 have been introduced to factors and factor pairs in maths, whilst also extending their multiplication skills to multiplying three digit numbers by 1 digit. Year 3 have been developing their fluency in multiplying 2 digit numbers by 1 digit. Castles still had us gripped on Thursday afternoon, where we looked at how castles evolved to protect people during the medieval period. In PSHE, we are looking at teamwork and we had fun seeing if we could pass a hula hoop around the circle without touching it with our hands. The more we communicated with one another, the quicker we got! In Science we continued our forces topic by exploring the properties of materials. We looked at different types of metal, we predicted which would be magnetic and then tested our theories. We had such fun. We talked a little about the planet parade. I wonder how many of us managed to see any planets, Jupiter has been especially bright.

Have a lovely weekend and we'll see you all next week!

Mrs Aynsley and Mrs Rutter





Classroom updates - Oak Class

These children are absolute, bonafide superheroes. Some weeks, I really don't know how they manage to even get through everything, let alone do it to the high standard that they do, with the impeccable attitude that they have. It has been no secret to anybody that we have had some special visitors in school this week and it has been a real pleasure as a teaching professional to share this class and their work with "the powers that be". I couldn't possibly do justice to the curricular coverage that they have achieved this week on one page of A4, but nevertheless, I'll give it a go!

We have completed our Play Script "Big Write" and the children have demonstrated a fantastic knowledge of their features and how to present them. Year 5 are developing good levels of fluency in their bus stop division over a range of strategies as our Year 6s continue the chunky and challenging unit of fractions. The Gods of the Ancient Maya had us absolutely gripped on both Tuesday and Wednesday, freeing up Thursday afternoon for another Science investigation, this week looking at friction. To top it all off, you only have to look below to see the unbelievable standard of artwork the children have been producing with Mr. A. A superb team effort all round.

Keep up the good work at home Team Oak, and I'll see you on Monday!



Mr. McLeod



Dates for your Diary

Date	Time	
10th February	All week	Year 6 mock SATS week
11th February	All day	Safer Internet Day
17th February	1pm	Dance Festival @ Heddon on the Wall
18th February	3:30pm	Dukeshouse Wood residential parent information evening
19th February	3:30pm	SATS Parents information evening (Year 6)
21st February	3.15PM	School closes for half term
3rd March	All day	Teacher training day
4th March	8.45am	School reopens for all children
12th March	All day	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	Dukeshouse residential for Year 3-5
24th-28th March	8.45-8.55am 3.15-3.45pm	Scholastic Book fair
24-28th March	All day	Made in the North East week
27th March	Morning	Willow class trip to a farm
11th April	3.15PM	School closes for half term
28th April	8.45am	School reopens for all children

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



Friday Flyer



Happy Birthday to all those celebrating this week

Thomas (Oak)

Safer Parking around our school

SCHOOL — KEEP — CLEAR

As a driver you have a responsibility to park in a safe and considerate manner.

Park with care and help make the area near and around our school a safer place for everyone.



Friday Flyer

Rocking & Reeling Around the World

It's FREE!

An Afternoon
of
Musical Workshops
Saturday 8th
March

At Chantry Middle School, Morpeth
12.30 to 6.30pm

Whatever instrument you play, or if you like to sing, there is a workshop for you. From traditional reels to rock music, and everything in between, will be taught and then performed to parents.

Come and join in the fun, make new friends and learn new music!

SIGN UP HERE Or Scan

Students **MUST** sign up in advance to attend the workshop



MUSIC PARTNERSHIP NORTH

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Northumberland County Council

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