



Shilbottle Primary School

Friday Flyer

25 September 2026

Executive Headteacher Update

What another fantastic week we have had at Shilbottle! It is hard to believe that we have already reached the end of Week 4 and are now halfway through our first half term. The weeks really are flying by! The lovely September weather has allowed us to make the most of being outside and it has been wonderful to see the children enjoying their learning, playing together and making the most of the fantastic atmosphere we have around school.

Unfortunately, our planned Key Stage 2 golf trip to Goswick Golf Club had to be postponed this week. I know this was disappointing for our children but we are working hard to reschedule this and are also looking at lots of other sporting opportunities alongside our partner schools. Throughout the year, we want our children to have plenty of opportunities to get out of the classroom, represent Shilbottle and take part in both competitive and fun sporting fixtures. There are lots of exciting opportunities ahead!

This week we were delighted to welcome Katherine Renton, a local artist, into school as we continued our work around our Centenary Art Project. It is always wonderful to welcome members of our local community into school and give our children the opportunity to work with and learn from people with different skills and experiences. We are really looking forward to seeing how our artwork develops over the coming months.

It has also been lovely to welcome Mrs Barber back into school this week for our music lessons. We are already starting to hear the sounds of our Autumn Harvest Festival tunes filling the school! Harvest is always such a lovely opportunity for us to come together as a community, reflect on and celebrate the many things we are fortunate to have in our lives.

A very special shout-out this week goes to Gracie, Joey T and Cassius, who showed some fantastic entrepreneurial spirit by giving up their own time at the weekend to run a mocktail and shortbread stall outside the local shops. They managed to raise an incredible £65 for school, which they hope can go towards improving our school grounds. What a brilliant example of initiative, creativity and community spirit! We are incredibly proud of them.

We finished the week with our usual Friday celebration assembly, recognising the fantastic achievements and contributions of our children. A huge well done to all of our award winners — it is always a pleasure to celebrate their successes.

Have a wonderful weekend and enjoy the sunshine while it lasts!

Mr Shaw



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Safeguarding

Shilbottle 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 Phillips, Mrs Blackhall and Mr Shaw.**

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about WHAT'S REAL ONLINE

Children are growing up in a digital world where seeing and hearing no longer mean they can always believe. One major emerging concern is what UNESCO describes as 'synthetic media': AI-generated audio, images or videos, including deepfakes, that can convincingly imitate a person's voice or likeness. As these tools become easier to access, children may encounter manipulated content, cloned voices, and fabricated messages that appear or sound real. Parents and educators therefore need to help them question what they experience online, which can often feel harder when we're experiencing it for the first time, too.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AI-GENERATED CONTENT

Artificial intelligence can now create realistic images, audio, video, and text in a very short time. Online, children may encounter fabricated news clips, AI 'influencers', fake screenshots, or entirely invented events without ever realising they are false. The real challenge is that this content often is polished and convincing. Parents and educators need to help children understand that professional-looking content is not automatically reliable and that all digital material should be questioned before it is trusted or shared.

DEEPIKES LOOK CONVINCING

'Deepfakes' can be AI-altered or created images and videos that appear to show a real person doing or saying something it has never happened. They are sometimes used to spread false information and make someone, or target people through bullying and image-based abuse. Even when others know the content is false, the emotional and reputational impact can still be significant, and, in some cases, potentially life threatening. Deepfakes therefore need to be treated as both a digital literacy and safeguarding concern.

FALSE INFORMATION SPREADS

Misinformation is false or misleading information shared without necessarily intending harm, while disinformation is deliberately created to deceive others. Both types can spread quickly through social media, messaging apps, and video platforms. Their popularity explains why one Shilbottle presentation can result in false claims being true. Children may also be more likely to trust content shared by friends, influencers, or familiar accounts, missing source-checking and verification essential parts of developing their digital literacy.

VOICES CAN BE CLONED

AI tools can copy someone's voice using only a short audio sample. A child may receive a call or voice note that appears to come from a parent, friend, teacher, or trusted adult, but the audio is not genuine. These messages can be used to create panic, request money, obtain information, or pressure a child into secrecy. Hearing a friend or voice is no longer enough to confirm someone's identity, especially when a message is urgent or unusual.

ACCOUNTS MAY BE FAKE

Not every online profile represents the person it claims to be. Fake accounts may impersonate another pupil, a teacher, a family member, or someone connected to the school. They can be used for acts such as bullying, racism, grooming, or manipulation. A convincing photograph, username, or message history does not prove that an account is genuine. Children should be cautious when someone asks for their or someone else's personal information, images, passwords, money, or access to private conversations.

ALGORITHMS INFLUENCE REALITY

Many online platforms, such as social media, are shaped by algorithms that recommend content based on what users view, like, search for, and share. This means children do not see a neutral or balanced version of the world. They may repeatedly encounter similar opinions, misleading claims, or increasingly extreme content. Over time, this repetition can make one's opinion feel more common or a reality than it really is, because the child may never see this opinion opposed or countered.

Advice for Parents & Educators

PAUSE, CHECK, COMPARE

Teach children not to accept content as true simply because it looks professional, sounds confident, or has been widely shared. Encourage them to pause, identify the original source, check the date, and compare the claim with another reliable source. Ask questions such as: Who created this? What evidence is provided? Could anything have been omitted? What is the real motive? Regular, age-appropriate practice helps children develop the critical thinking needed to navigate their online world.

VERIFY ANOTHER WAY

A familiar face, voice, or account is not always enough to confirm someone's identity. If a message is unusual, urgent, or asks for money, personal information, or immediate action, children should verify it through a separate route. They should be encouraged to call the person directly using a known number, speak to them face-to-face, or check with another trusted adult. Families can also agree a private 'code' phrase to help them identify genuine emergency messages from each other. This should be something serious, non-personal, and known only to the family.

KEEP TALKING OPENLY

Create regular, non-judgemental conversations about what children see, hear, and experience online. Make sure you see power or controls where appropriate and understand each other's age needs. Ask children about new platforms, influencers, unusual messages, or content they are unsure about to help open up valuable conversations. Avoid immediately taking the child or removing their device, as this may discourage them from discussing their concerns in the future.

SAVE, REPORT, SUPPORT

When taken as a joke, impersonation, or manipulation targets a child, take it seriously, even if the material is fabricated. Save relevant messages, usernames, links, and screenshots without sharing the content any further. Report it through the platform, follow relevant reporting procedures, and escalate concerns involving threats, grooming, sexual content, coercion, or extortion. Remind children that creating or sharing this content, even as a 'meme' or 'joke', can have serious consequences for them and others, and may be difficult to remove once shared online.



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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 Shilbottle we feel we provide one of the best experiences possible.

Current Whole School attendance is 97.6%. Our Whole School Target is 96%

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Mrs Blackhall	97.9%	97.6%
Mrs Kelly	97.5%	97.3%
Mr Phillips	98.2%	98.0%

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 8.40am as this is when our lessons begin. Anyone arriving after this time is classed as late and will miss valuable learning opportunities, such as phonics, which take place immediately after registration.



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Classroom updates - Bluebell Class



Big news from Bluebell Class! At the end of the summer term, our Reception children were invited to create nature-inspired artwork for a published book. Every child produced brilliant work, and three of our pupils opted to have theirs included in the final print. After waiting patiently, the copies of *Nature Explorers* arrived late last week, including a copy for our classroom library! Massive congratulations to all who took part, and especially to our newly published illustrators!

We've also kicked off the festive season this week by creating Christmas artwork. The children voted on their favorite design to recreate, and the proofs are heading home in their bags or reading folders this evening. If you would like to have your child's design printed on Christmas cards, gifts, or wrapping paper via Cauliflower Cards, please check their folder for ordering details.

Lots of exciting new learning has taken place across the week. On Monday, we enjoyed our first music lesson with Mrs Barber, who will be helping us prepare for our upcoming Harvest Festival performance. The sun also came out just in time for our Newcastle United Football Club PE session, where the children played tag team games in our Multi-Use Games Area. In between our classroom activities, we made the most of the weather by getting outside without coats (temperature permitting)

In Early Years, our maths work has continued to focus on measuring, with a particular emphasis on mass and capacity this week. The children compared different items using balance scales to determine which were heavier or lighter, and explored various containers to discuss what might fit inside. In 'Drawing Club', we have been focusing on the story, *Owl Babies*, practising our writing with "o' for owl." We will continue with this story into next week as we begin exploring seasonal changes. If you spot any interesting natural treasures on your autumn walks, please feel free to send them in with your child. We always love a good leaf in Early Years! 🍂



Meanwhile in Key Stage 1, the children have been learning about number lines in maths, using them to find "one more" and "one less," as well as filling in missing numbers. In English, we have been learning how to use the word "and" to link two ideas together. Continuing with our topic about toys, the children wrote some wonderful descriptive sentences, such as, "The doll is soft and she has long hair."

Have a lovely weekend everyone.

Mrs Blackhall



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Classroom updates - Poppy Class

What a lovely week we have had in Poppy Class. The good weather continues and we have been making the most of it with another busy and productive week of learning. The children continue to settle into our routines and are working incredibly hard.

In Maths, we have been learning to round numbers to the nearest 10, 100 and 1,000, applying our skills to practical problems and explaining our reasoning. We have also continued to practise our times table facts, working on developing both speed and accuracy.

In English, we have written some fantastic character descriptions of Magnus using our writing toolkit plans. The children have worked hard to apply all the new skills they have been learning, and we have also spent time editing and improving our work. These are all new skills for our Year 2 children, who have done a brilliant job. We have now moved on to exploring the features of a diary entry and will be writing from Magnus's point of view. We have also continued reading our story, which has certainly been a little bit gory at times!

Our English learning has linked beautifully with History this week, as we have been learning about some of our local Anglo-Saxon history, focusing on King Oswald of Bamburgh. We have discovered how important Oswald was in the spread of Christianity in the North East and how his faith influenced the people and communities around him.

In Science, we have been learning what a vertebrate is and looking at how vertebrates can be classified into different groups. We even played a guessing game where we had to ask appropriate yes/no questions to work out which animal our partner was thinking of.

In French, we have been practising the names of foods and drinks that we might have at school. Our Year 4 children have impressed us with their excellent recall of the basic French they learnt last year, including answering simple questions confidently. Monday saw the return of Mrs Barber for Music and the children have loved beginning to learn and sing our Harvest Festival songs. We are already sounding fantastic!

Thank you, as always, for your continued support from home. The children are working so hard, and it is lovely to see their confidence growing as they tackle new skills and challenges.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend and we look forward to another productive week in Poppy Class
Mrs Kelly





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Classroom updates - Clover Class



The opportunity to play golf against other North Northumberland schools, at an actual proper golf course, created an excited buzz around Clover Class. However, rumour of an 8 o'clock start for those children who volunteered sent a shiver through several members of the Clover Class Ryder Cup squad. Stories of children being seen doing rain dances in the skate park are unfounded and definitely could not be attributed to the out-of-the-blue rainstorm that we experienced on Wednesday. The consequent cancellation of the golfing event seems to be nothing more than an extraordinary coincidence.

Not to be deterred, Clover Class got on with things and the International Swim Team celebrated another successful swim session, under the watchful eye of Melvyn, at the Alnwick Sports Arena.

This week, we welcomed back Mrs Barber, our most excellent music teacher, and it was wonderful to hear the melodic chords of Harvest songs drifting down the corridors. Angelic harmonies and choral singing of old favourites certainly got the week off to a good start.

Completing our Victorian diary entry, the class took to learning about a character in our book called Barnie. We are now starting to suspect that this character could actually be Dr. Barnado and we are going to look at him more closely as we look to write his biography.



Place Value knowledge is key to understanding maths and we have been flying this week – all the way to 10, 000, 000. Number lines, place value charts and part-whole diagrams have really improved our knowledge of this important aspect of maths.

Whichever TV channel you switch on these days, there seems to be a detective series on. Well, this week we brought our version of CSI to Clover Class by looking for clues about the contrast between rich and poor people in the Victorian era. Discovering important evidence about the lives of Upper-Class children compared to that of Lower-Class children certainly made our 21st Century children realise how fortunate we are that Social Reformers changed the working age limit and number of hours young children could actually work for. All of a sudden, school seems like a good place to be!

 **Mr Phillips**



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Dates for your Diary

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

Date	Time	
Thursday 22nd October	1:30-3:00	Harvest Festival (Confirmed)
Tuesday 8th December	10am show	Whole School - Aladdin Christmas Panto - Tyne Theatre
Wednesday 9th December	Carol Concert	Details to follow
Tuesday 15th December	12:00-1:00	Christmas Dinner
Friday 18th December	1pm	School closes for the Christmas holidays (no after school club)
Thursday 25th February 2027	10:00-12:00	Reception/Y1/Y2/Y3 & Y4 Pupils - visit to Alnwick Playhouse Free Performance: 'Our World - Rainforest Animals'



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**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL THOSE
CELEBRATING THIS WEEK**

**Scarlett - Clover Class
Elsie - Poppy Class**