



Shilbottle Primary School Friday Flyer

18 September 2026

Executive Headteacher Update

What a fantastic week we have had at Shilbottle! 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!

This week we were also pleased to welcome Mrs Aynsley, who leads SEND at Belsay, into school to spend some time looking around and offering guidance and support. It is fantastic to be able to draw on the expertise and experience we have across our four schools and use this to support our children and staff. We will hopefully see a little more of Mrs Aynsley over the coming weeks.

On Thursday, we welcomed Stacey into school who worked with our Year 5 and 6 Peer Mentors with an aim of supporting children across the school. It was fantastic to see our older children taking on this responsibility and showing such great leadership and care towards our younger pupils. Opportunities like this are a brilliant way for our children to develop confidence, responsibility and a real sense of community within school.

I have also had a really positive meeting with our fantastic SPPA this week and we are excited to get some dates in the diary for the year ahead — so watch this space! Our SPPA does an amazing amount for the school and we are always looking for more parents and members of our community to get involved. If you have a little bit of free time and could offer your support, we would absolutely love to hear from you. **We need you!** Every bit of help makes a difference.

We finished the week with a fantastic Celebration Assembly and Hot Chocolate with the Head. Once again, we had so many brilliant winners to celebrate and it was a real pleasure to recognise their achievements. A huge well done to everyone who received an award this week.

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



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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.**

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**
You wouldn't allow a child to cross a road without guidance – you'd hold their hand, use a pedestrian crossing, and make sure they behave well. In the same way, a neurodivergent child's first experiences online should be supported by an adult who can guide and explain safe and responsible digital behaviour to them from the outset.
- 2 MODEL RESPONSIBLE USE**
Children learn from what they see. Show all children, regardless of neurotype, what responsible internet use looks like, reflected on your own use of social media and AI. Consider how often you use them, did your own understanding of these platforms, tell you what's safe and why you use these tools, helping all children develop a balanced and informed approach.
- 3 KNOW YOUR LIMITS**
Current government guidance suggests no screens use below the age of five, with a maximum of one hour per day for five- to five-year-olds. Screen time can support conversation and connection when shared with an adult. However, passive watching can affect neurodivergent children's attention and language skills. Focus on the type of content they watch, encouraging slower-paced and meaningful material, rather than fast-paced, overly stimulating content.
- 4 CONSIDER AGES AND STAGES**
For older children and teenagers, agreed limits are important. Screen time can be beneficial, but it should form part of a balanced lifestyle. Neurodivergent children may find online communication easier than real-world conversation, 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**
Discussions about online safety should begin early and continue as children grow. However, neurodivergent children may worry about getting things wrong or being misunderstood, meaning these kinds of conversations should feel open and safe, rather than like a lecture. If a child encounters a problem – such as a scam or inappropriate content – they need to feel able to speak to a trusted adult without fear of judgement or embarrassment.
- 6 BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE**
You don't need to be an expert, but it's important to stay informed about the platforms, games, or apps neurodivergent children use in order to provide practical support. Social media platforms like age limits, and many apps and games offer parental controls to help manage access. Schools and families should work together to understand these tools, helping neurodivergent children use them safely while keeping up to date with new features and changes.
- 7 SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES**
Children and young people often know more about current technology than adults, meaning it's important to recognise that controls may be bypassed. Clear, predictable boundaries should be used, 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 perceived unfairness.
- 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 literally, meaning adult guidance is important in helping them recognise what's real and reliable – and what isn't.
- 9 EXPLAIN AI LIMITATIONS**
AI isn't the same as a search engine. It generates responses based on prompts and patterns, and its accuracy depends on how it's used. Sometimes, it produces incorrect or unrealistic information, known as 'hallucinations'. Both adults and children need to understand this and learn how 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 learns from patterns in user input rather than human understanding. Some neurodivergent children may experience a sense of connection with AI chatbots, perceiving it as a friend. It's important to explain that these are simulated conversations and aren't a substitute for real, human relationships.



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Friday Flyer

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 97.4%. Our Whole School Target is 96%

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Mrs Blackhall	98.9%	97.5%
Mrs Kelly	97.8%	97.3%
Mr Phillips	96.4%	97.5%

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.



Shilbottle Primary School Friday Flyer

Classroom updates - Bluebell Class



We have had another full week in Bluebell Class. In maths, our Reception children have begun to explore different ways of measuring, focusing particularly on comparing various sizes and masses. Building structures of different heights in our outdoor construction area has helped them learn through play, encouraging accurate use of mathematical vocabulary such as *size*, *shorter*, *taller*, *smaller*, *bigger*, and *longer*.

In phonics, we have continued to learn a new initial sound each day. This week, we covered 'i', 'n', 'p', 'g', and 'o'. The children's engagement in these sessions has been excellent, and they have been working hard on forming their letters on paper. In Reception, your children practise writing through an approach called 'Drawing Club'. We share stories, create pictures, and write



'codes' to bring those pictures to life. This week, we shared the story *The Colour Monster*, drew our own monsters, and brought them to life using the letter 'm' (for monster).

While there have been many new structured lessons taking place in Reception, there have also been plenty of opportunities for the children to access our indoor and outdoor play areas.

In Key Stage 1 maths, we have continued to explore numbers to 20. This week, we built physical number lines using number cards and Numicon, which helped the children approach our 'find one more' and 'find one less' lessons with greater confidence.

In Year 1 English, we have continued our exploration of old toys. We discussed adjectives and how they can be used to make our sentences more engaging. We began by using cut-up sentence strips and carefully selecting appropriate vocabulary for our own descriptions. Towards the end of the week, the children started incorporating these adjectives into their independent writing about toys.

On top of all that, our Year 1 children have begun their history topic, 'Old Toys', which connects beautifully to our English unit. We have been investigating the different materials used in both old and modern toys.

Wishing you all a restful and enjoyable weekend.

Mrs Blackhall





Shilbottle Primary School

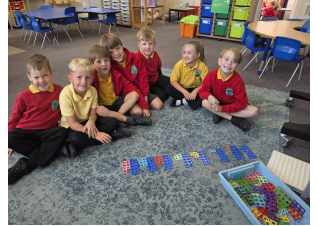
Friday Flyer

Classroom updates - Poppy Class

We have had another very busy week in Poppy Class and we are all starting to find our feet and get used to our new routines. It has been lovely to see the children becoming more settled and confident as the weeks go by.



In Maths, our Year 2 children have been doing lots of practical work using manipulatives to help develop their understanding of number. Our Year 3 and 4 children have been working with numbers up to 10,000, practising partitioning, placing numbers on number lines and estimating where numbers should go. For our Year 3 children, rapid recall of times tables is a new focus this year, so we have been working on building their speed and confidence with their multiplication facts.



In English, we have continued reading our class story, *Anglo-Saxon Boy*, which has been quite bloodthirsty in places! We have done lots of work looking at the features of character descriptions before planning and writing our own descriptions of Magnus. The children have worked hard to choose interesting vocabulary and use evidence from the story to describe his appearance and personality.

We have been finding out more about Anglo-Saxon settlements in History and have explored some of the key features of these settlements and what life may have been like for the people who lived there.

In RE, we have been learning about the Creation story and thinking about what it means to Christians. We have discovered that Christians believe that God created the world and everything in it and that the story teaches Christians about God's power and the importance of caring for his creation.

In Art, we have continued our work on patterns. This week, the children have enjoyed creating monochrome patterns using just black and white. They have experimented with repeating shapes and designs to create some fantastic artwork.

We have really enjoyed our PE lessons with Emra and Mr Wilkie, and luckily the good weather is still holding out! The children have enjoyed getting outside, developing their skills and keeping active.

A huge thank you for all your support from home with reading, homework and spelling. We had some fantastic results in our spelling tests last week, so please keep up the great work!

I hope you all have a restful weekend and I look forward to seeing everyone next week for another busy week in Poppy Class.

Mrs Kelly





Shilbottle Primary School Friday Flyer

Classroom updates - Clover Class

Over the summer, Mr Phillips became a little bit obsessed with the most excellent TV programme, Bondi Rescue. The glamorous life of a lifeguard in the gorgeous Australian sunshine made Mr Phillips ponder his next career move - does he go to Bondi and rescue tourists that have been dragged off the sand bank into one of the many dangerous rips that seem to occur quite often in the Aussie surf, or does he remain in the changeable climate of North Northumberland and support the next generation of Northumberland Coastal Lifeguards develop their water skills? He chose the latter!



After another successful swim meet at the Alnwick Sports Arena, Mr Phillips is glad that he chose to stay. Impressed by the quality of swim stroke, the co-ordination and the togetherness of the Year 5 / 6 swim team, Mr Phillips wondered if it would be worth branching out into the disciple of Synchronised Swimming - early discussions with Zak, Olivia and Stanley show early interest and we may revisit this later in the year.

Away from the poolside, the current Clover Class cohort have been donning their historian hats and investigating how important Northumberland was to powering the Industrial Revolution. The need for coal to power new steam-driven factories across Britain meant coalfields like Shilbottle and locomotive inventions by Killingworth's George Stephenson became incredibly important for the transport of thousands of tonnes of coal every day!

Thursday brought art and this saw the Clover Class Creatives carve the often misinterpreted artform of doodles into their sketch books. Reggie astounded everyone as he drew dinosaurs from memory (he said his grandma had taken photographs) and Gracie inspired others by using previously taught shading techniques into her Emoji doodles to add a simple 3D element to her work.

All in all, it has been an excellent week in Clover Class and Mr Phillips feels he must mention how hard the children are working all ready. With a few tweaks and nudges in the right direction, this group has the potential of producing outstanding work for the rest of the year.

Keep it going Clover Class

 Mr Phillips





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Friday Flyer

Dates for your Diary

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

Date	Time	
Tuesday 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**

**Tommy B - Poppy Class
Jonah - Poppy Class**