



Shilbottle Primary School Friday Flyer

6th March 2026

Headteachers Update

What a week it has been at Shilbottle Primary School!

This week we welcomed colleagues from across the Trust for our Peer Review, led by our CEO, Mr McGrane. It was such a valuable opportunity to pause, reflect and share the journey we are on as a school - I could not be prouder.

Our children were incredible — articulate, thoughtful and genuinely passionate about their learning. They spoke confidently about our curriculum, about what they enjoy and about what it means to be part of our school community. Staff, as always, were dedicated and reflective, showcasing not just what we do, but *why* we do it.

Above all else, I will always say that a school is measured by its culture. The happiness you see as children bounce into school each morning, the smiles, the sense of belonging — that is what truly matters. This week was testament to the hard work of our team and the shared commitment to making Shilbottle such a special place to learn and grow.

We are by no means at the end of our journey — far from it — but it was a real proud moment to see Pele Trust recognise the progress we are making and the direction we are heading. A definite feather in the cap for Team Shilbottle.

And then... What a way to round off the week! Thanks to our amazing PTA, we welcomed Epic Tales into school as part of our World Book Day celebrations. The costumes were fantastic — it was brilliant seeing everyone embrace the spirit of the day, guessing characters and sharing plenty of laughs along the way. The workshops were equally inspiring, encouraging children to think creatively, approach storytelling in new ways and develop their imaginative writing skills. A joyful, purposeful day from start to finish.

Of course, in true Shilbottle style, we still found time for our Hot Chocolates and Celebration Assembly, a huge congratulations to all of our winners this week. You make us proud every single day.

After such a full and fantastic week, I think we've all earned a well-deserved rest. Let's hope the sunshine continues so you can get out and enjoy it and we look forward to welcoming everyone back on Monday morning, ready for another great week ahead.

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 BLUESKY

While Bluesky has been around since 2019, it's suddenly taken off in a big way thanks to a significant exodus from X (formerly Twitter). Indeed, it looks and behaves a lot like Twitter before Elon Musk bought the platform. Bluesky has been touted in recent months as a safer, more open-minded alternative to X – but like any social media site, it still has its share of risks.

AGE RESTRICTION 13+
With an App Store rating of 17+ & Google Play rating mature

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

NO PRIVATE ACCOUNTS
While most social networks allow accounts to be private, at the time of writing, all Bluesky accounts must be public. The development team has indicated this might change in the future, but the app is built on a public-first protocol. If private accounts are ever introduced, it may only be in a limited way – such as through the implementation of group chats.

INTERACTIONS WITH STRANGERS
Every account being public means that anyone can be contacted by anyone else. While users don't have to respond and can easily block people and mute on, it does mean that youngsters are at potential risk of being contacted by strangers, harassed by predatory adults or exposed to others with ill intentions. These hazards can be compounded by the fact that Bluesky doesn't require its users to provide their real name.

TROLLING AND BULLYING
While Bluesky expressly feeds a lot smaller than it seems to have become, its lack of private accounts means that there's nothing to stop users from trolling and cyberbullying younger people. While accounts can be blocked and reported, a persistent bully could simply create a new profile, potentially making their victims feel unsafe in continuing to use the app.

DANGEROUS MISINFORMATION
Established news organisations have fact-checking and editing processes, but social networks have no such controls and can often serve as breeding grounds for misinformation and disinformation. Bluesky will probably be no different once it reaches a certain size, and children may not have the critical thinking skills to tell fact from fiction – or to discern an informative, honest user from a health-hate user.

ADULT TARGET AUDIENCE
Bluesky isn't designed with children in mind, and there aren't many parental controls on the platform. In an interview with the BBC, Bluesky's CEO originally said that the app would only allow users aged 16 and above to sign up, but a spokesperson later clarified its age restriction as 13+. This could bring the app into regulatory focus for an adult audience and suggests that making the platform more child-friendly might not currently be a priority.

RAPID GROWTH
At the time of writing, Bluesky seems to be in competition with other social networks where moderation is key and the atmosphere isn't "let them all at least in part to its smaller community. The app has recently been adding as many as a million users per day, and if that continues, there'll be more engagement issues to handle, and moderators could struggle to maintain the present environment Bluesky is currently known for.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE THE ADULT CONTENT FILTER
Bluesky doesn't have much in the way of parental controls, but there are content filters which can help limit what children see. These are enabled by default for underage accounts but can be manually switched on in the "Moderation" section of the app's settings. The advanced Bluesky Moderation service lets you restrict content even further, hiding – for example – all items around, restricted media, and sensitive posts.

LOOK OUT FOR FAKES
Impersonation is a problem on all social networks. While the consequences are usually benign, impulsive youngsters often go on to harass others by pretending to be a parent, influencer or online personality. Bluesky is unique in that it can be connected to official domains, with users' handles linking to other sites. While this isn't widely used right now, it could be a realistic way to verify identities and point fingers in future.

ENCOURAGE BLOCKING AND REPORTING
Another tool that Bluesky uses to ensure a decent experience is muting and blocking accounts. The former prevents you from seeing a specific user's content, while the latter stops them from seeing yours. If a child is encountering toxic or harmful on the platform, encourage them to use this function, write and reporting the offenders to help make the platform a more place for everyone.

KEEP AN OPEN DIALOGUE
As with all social media platforms, moderation and content filters can only do so much. It's highly likely that a child will eventually face something offensive. For that reason, it's important to make sure that young people are aware of the risks and know how to handle the technology if anything they see on the app makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.



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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 94.4%. Our Whole School Target is 96%

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Mrs Blackhall	96.8%	93.5%
Mrs Kelly	91.8%	94.7%
Mr Phillips	95.4%	95.1%

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



What a busy week it has been in our classroom! From supermarket role play to the professional world of weather broadcasting, the children have shown incredible curiosity and growth.

Our Reception children dived headfirst into the world of 'Supertato' this week. In Drawing Club, they have been busy bringing the veggie characters to life, focusing on detail and using descriptive language to tell us all about their "super" features. The children have also enjoyed imaginary grocery shopping in our recently updated supermarket role play area.

Meanwhile, Years 1 and 2 took to an imaginary "green screen" to write and deliver their own weather reports. We were particularly impressed by those who practiced their professional "broadcaster voices". There was a very measured and calm tone in the room, despite some stormy forecasts!

It's been a week of big numbers and clever strategies. Reception have been master comparers, looking closely at numbers up to 10 to see which are greater and which are fewer.

Years 1 and 2 have been tackling division. They've been exploring the different ways we can break down numbers using both sharing and grouping strategies to solve tricky problems.

In our PSHE sessions, we had some very important conversations about when and how to ask for help. We learned that asking for help is an act of bravery, not a sign that we can't do something. To put this into practice, the children listened carefully to different scenarios and chose whether they were green light, amber light or red light urgencies. This provoked some mature discussion and encouraged our older children to think carefully about their choices. Many children worked hard to memorize their house numbers and street names so that they are prepared to share them in an emergency. It is wonderful to see them becoming so responsible and self-aware.

Well done to everyone for such a fantastic week of learning!

Mrs Blackhall





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Classroom updates - Poppy Class

Another week has flown by and with the sun beginning to shine, it certainly feels like spring has finally arrived! It has been another very busy week in Poppy Class. In Maths, we have started our new unit on fractions, learning about numerators and denominators and beginning to order fractions. The children have approached this new topic with great focus and are starting to build their confidence.

In English, we have continued reading *The Viking Age for Kids* and have been working extremely hard on our research in preparation for writing our own Viking fact files. The children have been gathering information and building a detailed writing toolkit to support them in producing informative and well-structured pieces of work. We have also had lots of children achieve Bookworm milestones this week — a fantastic achievement! Please keep up the excellent reading at home and remember to log it on Boom Reader.

In French, we have been learning how to talk about family members, including extended family such as aunts, uncles and cousins. The children have been practising both speaking and listening skills, working on accurate pronunciation and building simple sentences to describe their own families. We have also revisited key vocabulary and explored how French words can differ depending on gender, helping to deepen their understanding of the language.

It has been another very active week, with PE sessions led by Emra and the NUFC Foundation, alongside our swimming lessons, where confidence and skills continue to improve. Linked to this, in PSHE, we explored the importance of exercise for keeping our hearts and muscles healthy, improving concentration and wellbeing and even helping us to sleep better.

In Art, we finally decorated and finished our Viking brooches, and they have turned out beautifully. We ended the week on a real high with World Book Day. There were some fantastic costumes, and the children enjoyed a day full of activities celebrating reading and the joy that books bring.

Wishing you all a very happy weekend! **Mrs Kelly**





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Classroom updates - Clover Class

What a week! Our latest expedition has been jam-packed with extraordinary opportunities, from horticultural experiments to hosting VIP visitors. Clover Class has been a hive of activity, leaving every guest with nothing but compliments for our Year 5/6 team.

On Tuesday, we welcomed Miss Evelynne Boe and Craig from the Alnwick Gardens. The classroom transformed into a laboratory as Craig showed us how to create paint from red cabbages! We discovered we could change the colours by adding household items like lemon and vinegar—it was truly **A-MAZE-ING**.



We also planted sunflower seeds to attract songbirds and pollinators to our grounds. Miss Boe, a textiles teacher from DCHS, then led us in creating "textile magic" which we hope to see displayed at the Alnwick Gardens very soon!

Mr. McGrane (the CEO of the Pele Trust) and teachers from across the Trust visited on Wednesday and Thursday. They came to observe our learning and chat with the children. The feedback was glowing! Mr. McGrane was incredibly impressed with the children's confidence and enthusiasm, while the visiting teachers raved about the quality of work in our books. Mr. Phillips said we were **ACE** and should be immensely proud of ourselves!

We capped off the week with a brilliant World Book Day. Alongside dressing up as our favourite characters, we took part in a storytelling workshop with professional author **Chip Colquhoun**. The highlight, however, might have been our "Book Character Potatoes"—who knew a spud could look so much like a literary hero?

Oh! And we did some English, Maths, Geography, P.S.H.E, music and P.E.



Clover Chat-ter □ This week was so busy that your children might have a lot to tell you! Here is an "Expedition Debrief" question to get them started:

- *"What was the most important tip the storyteller, Chip, gave you for making a story exciting?"*

Mr Phillips



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Dates for your Diary

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

Date	Time	
25/2/2026–1/04/2026		Year 3 & 4 Swimming (every Wednesday)
13/3/2026		Mother's Day Sale
Thursday 2nd April 2026	15.20	School closes for the Easter holidays
Friday 1st May 2026		Shilbottle School 100-Year Celebrations



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**Happy Birthday to all those celebrating
this week**

**Avery - Bluebell Class
Payton - Bluebell Class**

Erin - Clover Class