



Shilbottle Primary School

Friday Flyer

16 October 2026

Executive Headteacher Update

As we reach the end of our seventh week this half term, we are heading into week eight, making this the longest half term in our school calendar this year! A huge well done to all our children and staff for their continued hard work throughout what has been a positive and busy start to the year. I am sure everyone is looking forward to a well-deserved break and there is certainly plenty to celebrate as we look back on everything that has been achieved.

It has been a week dominated by Parents' Evenings at Shilbottle, providing a valuable opportunity for parents and carers to meet with staff, discuss how their children are getting on and celebrate the progress they are making. Thank you to everyone who took the time to attend. It is always important that we work together to support our children and I hope you found the conversations helpful and reassuring. Strong partnerships between home and school make such a difference to children's confidence, learning and development.

Preparations are also well underway for our Harvest Festival next week. The children have been practising hard and we are looking forward to welcoming families to St James' Church at 1.30pm to celebrate together. Please remember that children should be collected from the side door following the service. We look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

A huge thank you to Tommy Grieves for pre-ordering Chip Colquhoun's book, *The Bestest Story in the World ... Ever*. He also nominated our school to win a free author visit! Guess what? Tommy won and on Friday we had a very exciting day as we welcomed author Chip into school. Author visits are a fantastic way to bring reading and storytelling to life, spark children's imaginations and encourage a lifelong love of books. I am sure the children will have a brilliant time and it is particularly exciting to know that Chip will be returning later in the year for another visit.

There is also a little Halloween excitement to look forward to, with our Halloween-themed lunch on Tuesday 20 October. These special occasions always add something extra to the school week and I am sure the children will enjoy getting into the seasonal spirit!

We rounded the week off with our usual Hot Chocolate and Outstanding Achievements awards so well done to everyone who was nominated this week.

As we approach the final week before the October break, thank you once again to our staff, children and families for all their continued hard work and support. Have a wonderful weekend and we look forward to another positive week at Shilbottle.

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.**

CREATIVE WAYS TO ENCOURAGE READING

Reading regularly has a life-long impact, yet recent data from the National Literacy Trust shows a decline in reading for pleasure among 8- to 18-year-olds, with just 32.7% enjoying it in 2025. Despite growing distractions, there are practical ways adults can spark a love of reading. This guide offers strategies and resources to help inspire young readers.

- 1 VALUE ALL READING**
When we think about reading, it's very easy to picture a young person reading a fictional novel; however, reading is so much more than this. To help them understand, why not show them how to create a 24-hour reading diary? Jot down all reading and then discuss this with them. By doing this, you can demonstrate the many ways we turn to reading.
- 2 WIDEN THE SELECTION**
Once we know reading can be varied, we need to think about the selection of reading material they can access. Visit a shop selling magazines, the library and a bookshop, and consider the range of material that is available within them. Then consider how you might broaden their reading choices, so all young people have access to a wide and varied selection.
- 3 GIFT A BOOK**
One simple way to encourage reading is to make books feel special. Gifting a book adds value and shows it's something to be treasured. Whether it's as a reward or for a celebration like a birthday, let the young person choose a title or pick one you know they will enjoy. You could also include a personal note inside.
- 4 CONNECT WITH AUTHORS**
Meeting authors can certainly spark an interest in their reading material. This might be through a live event in a school/bookshop or by using the wealth of online material that is now available. Encourage young people to look at ways to connect with authors using free resources such as Authorly and Just Imagine's Children's Authors List.
- 5 BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE**
Access training about reading for pleasure to widen your understanding of this topic and, more importantly, how to develop it. Explore a wide range of free resources that can be found online. The more you know, the better placed you are to inspire a love of reading in others.
- 6 TALK BOOKS**
There are times when we need silence to read and focus on our book; however, we know that reading is a social experience, so we must also factor in discussion time. Reading the same book gives two people a connection and the opportunity to voice their thoughts and questions about it. Why not buy two copies of a book and read it together? Start the connection.
- 7 RECOMMENDATIONS**
As well as talking about the content of books, we can share what we are reading or have read recently. This can often act as a trigger for someone else to explore it. How often have you watched a film or series because someone else has recommended it? It's the same with books. If you know the young person well, you can tailor your recommendations and share why you think they'll enjoy it.
- 8 GO DIGITAL**
With the rise in online digital material, we can easily focus on the negatives; however, it also brings a wealth of opportunities. Resources can add and enhance the reading experience for young people. They can read along with audiobooks, translate, and track their reading goals with resources like Polyline and apps like Goodreads for older children. Augmented reality books also bring books to life and offer a great way for engagement.
- 9 RECONNECT**
There can come a time when a love of reading seems to disappear. It does not mean it's gone forever. It generally means they have lost the connection. How do we get it back? Find the next piece of reading material that sparks their current interests. The National Year of Reading focus of 'Go All In' captures this well as it is their key theme. As children grow and change, so do their interests. A visit to the local library is a great way to support the reconnection.
- 10 LEAD BY EXAMPLE**
Let them see you reading. If you make time to read, you send a strong message to children: reading matters. Share why you enjoy it. Is it to relax, escape the world, learn something new or to be entertained? When children see reading as a normal and valued part of everyday life, they are more likely to adopt it themselves.



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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 97.0%. Our Whole School Target is 96%

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Mrs Blackhall	99.3%	96.6%
Mrs Kelly	91.1%	94.7%
Mr Phillips	98.2%	98.1%

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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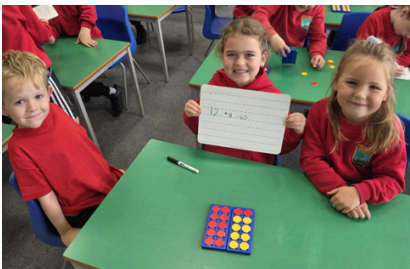
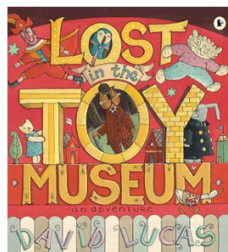
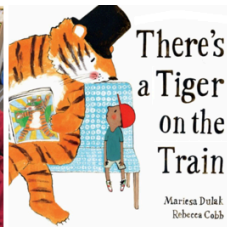
Classroom updates - Bluebell Class

Wrapping up another busy week in class, the children have been working hard across all areas of the curriculum!

In our writing this week, we joined forces and completed 'Drawing Club' as a class. We shared the story *There's a Tiger on the Train* by Mariesa Dulak, a wonderful tale that follows a little boy and his smartphone-absorbed father on a train ride to the seaside. Chaos ensues as all kinds of animals board along the way! For their latest lesson, the children were asked which animal they would like to meet on a train ride of their own. Everyone had unique ideas and were supported in writing the initial sounds matching their chosen animals, leading to lots of enthusiastic "'s' for spiders" and "'c' for cats." Meanwhile, our Year 1 children were introduced to their new text, *Lost in the Toy Museum*. They have been busy learning the characters' names and writing simple sentences about them, taking extra care to use capital letters for proper names.

In maths, Reception children have been consolidating their learning of numbers to 5, wrapping up our latest unit by exploring the composition of 5 (such as 2 and 3, or 1 and 4). They had fun investigating these combinations by arranging 5 soft toys into two hoops in different ways. Moving up, our Key Stage 1 children have transitioned onto addition and doubling concepts.

Across the rest of the curriculum, we have been just as busy! In PSHE, we discussed how respect is a fundamental right and practised different ways we can show respect to others every day. In science, we kicked off a new topic on food chains, and in RE, we learned all about the Harvest Festival and why we celebrate harvest time.



Finally, it was lovely to speak with so many of you at our parents' evenings this week. It was a genuine pleasure to share how wonderfully the children have settled into their new stages of learning. As always, if you ever have any queries or concerns, please feel free to message me via Class Dojo.

Have a lovely weekend, everyone!

Mrs Blackhall



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Classroom updates - Poppy Class

With just one week to go until half term, we have had another busy week in Poppy Class, with lots of hard work and fantastic learning taking place across the curriculum. Thank you so much to everyone who attended this week's parents' meetings. It was lovely to catch up with you and share how well the children are getting on.

In Maths, we have continued working on column addition, focusing on exchanging and the importance of setting out our calculations correctly. We have spent lots of time practising these skills to build our confidence and accuracy. We have also continued practising our times table facts, working hard to improve our speed and rapid recall.



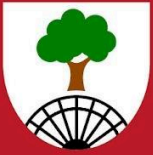
In English, we have written our own diary entries from Magnus's point of view, recalling the events of the battle. The children have produced some fantastic work, using descriptive language to convey Magnus's feelings and actions. We have also finished reading *Anglo-Saxon Boy*, which brought our learning together beautifully and helped us make links with our History work on the Battle of Hastings and William the Conqueror. At the end of the story, Magnus chooses to disappear rather than risk becoming king. We have certainly enjoyed following his adventures, although it has been quite a bloodthirsty read at times!

In PSHE, we have been exploring peer pressure and thinking about how the choices of others can influence our own decisions. We have discussed the importance of making positive choices, having the confidence to say no and knowing when to seek help from a trusted adult. Our Year 2 children have been thinking about when it is important to speak up, when it might be better to stay quiet and how to express their opinions appropriately and respectfully.

In Science, our Year 2 children enjoyed a minibeast hunt around the school grounds. Armed with magnifying glasses, they explored different microhabitats and discovered which tiny creatures they could find. Meanwhile, Years 3 and 4 have been investigating why animals can become endangered and why they may struggle to survive when their habitats change. We have also discussed what humans can do to protect animals and help them survive.

In Art, we have continued exploring patterns and this week looked at Rangoli patterns. The children have enjoyed investigating the shapes, colours and intricate designs used in these patterns and have continued developing their own creative ideas. We have also been practising hard with Mrs Barber for our Harvest Festival next week, and the children are singing beautifully! We are looking forward to sharing their lovely singing with you. We have still been lucky enough to get outside for our PE sessions with Emra and Mr Wilkie, making the most of the good weather while it lasts!

Have a wonderful weekend **Mrs Kelly**



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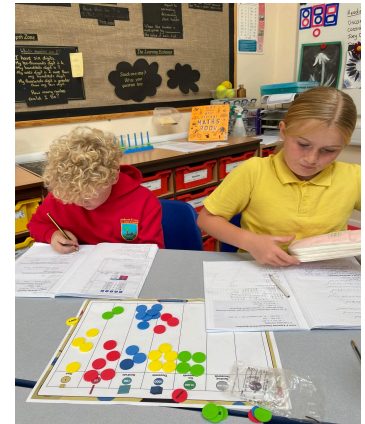
Classroom updates - Clover Class

The buzz in the classroom was clear this week. Parents' evening was complete and no child was grounded (which is always a good indication that things are going well in the Clover Class Lecture Theatre). Mr Phillips reports that all children have settled in, they are doing well and learning the ways of the learning jungle.

The Clover Class International Swim Team returned to the Alnwick Sports Arena this week, fresh from their life-saving skills refresher training last week to show that there are more than just a group of delightful academic children. Mastering backstroke, frontcrawl and breaststroke is an important skill set that will serve the children well through life and the swim team are always enthusiastic and determined in their swimming exploits.

Back in the classroom, the Clover Class writing team completed their biography exploits and wrote a detailed account of the life of Dr. Thomas Barnado and reflected on the important work that he did during the Victorian era that still makes a difference today.

Maths took a slight turn this week and looked to use our place value knowledge to develop mental calculation skills. Rather than doing long, boring written calculations to solve the exchange ridden 10 000 000 subtract 4, 732, we realised it was just easier to subtract one from the minuend and the subtrahend and then just subtract 4, 371 from 9, 999, 999 in our heads. Easy really!



Our journey through the Victorian era came to a close this week as the Clover Class Historian Detectives investigated the British Empire and what made it so successful: Power or Trade. The power of reading to over as the detectives took to reading several historical dossiers to discover the different materials that Britain traded, countries that were colonised and the effect of that colonisation on the indigenous people. It's actually quite interesting!

The Clover Class Art Collective brought their Historical detective skills to the art table by researching different animals that they could draw onto their T-Shirt project. Mrs Slack once again led the art tuition and we all look forward to seeing the final results next week.

Mr Phillips would like to say, as we approach the end of Autumn 1, that he is very proud of all of the Clover Class team as we approach and with everything that has happened in the first half-term, it makes you wonder what on earth we could get up to as we venture into Autumn 2.

 **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)
Wednesday 4th November	10:30	Yr2, 3 & 4 Alnwick Playhouse
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
Elodie - Poppy Class**