



Shilbottle Primary School

Friday Flyer

23rd January 2026

Headteachers Update

It has been another fantastic and very positive week and I would like to begin by saying a huge well done to all staff and pupils for the hard work, commitment and positivity that we see on a daily basis. There is a real sense of pride and purpose around the school at the moment, and it has been a pleasure to experience that throughout the week.

We began the week with a whole-school assembly focusing on World Religion Day, which took place on Sunday. During the assembly, we explored different religions and linked this carefully to our work around protected characteristics, discussing the importance of respect, understanding and kindness towards everyone. This is a vital part of our ongoing journey as a school and remains something we talk about regularly with the children.

Throughout the week, I have also had the opportunity to spend time in a number of lessons, with a particular focus on maths. It has been fantastic to see the consistency and quality of maths teaching across the school, from our youngest pupils through to our oldest. The strong practice evident in classrooms is a real credit to the teachers and reflects the hard work and dedication that continues behind the scenes. Things are certainly moving in a very positive direction and we are excited about what the rest of the term will bring.

On Friday morning, we welcomed members of our Academy Committee into school. They met with myself and Mr Phillips to discuss the direction of the school, where we are currently and our priorities moving forward. As always, their commitment, passion and determination to ensure Shilbottle continues to thrive was clear and we are very grateful for their ongoing support.

A reminder for our Year 6 parents that we will be holding our SATs information evening next Wednesday evening. It is hard to believe we are approaching that time of year already. The evening is designed to explain the process clearly, outline what the SATs involve and how we support the children in the lead-up to May. We work hard to ensure there is no unnecessary pressure placed on pupils but it is always helpful for parents to feel informed and reassured.

We also finished the week with our Friday celebration assembly and hot chocolate awards. Well done to all of our winners this week – it is always lovely to celebrate the effort, attitude and achievements of our pupils.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. I hope you all have a wonderful weekend and we look forward to welcoming everyone back on Monday.

Mr Shaw



Shilbottle Primary School Friday Flyer

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 APPLE IPADS

Tablets remain a staple of children's digital lives – and Apple's iPad is by far the most popular model. According to Ofcom, over half of younger children regularly use a tablet to play games, watch online content or access apps. With their broad functionality, iPads can be helpful tools, but without supervision, they may expose children to risks ranging from inappropriate content to screen overdose.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- COSTLY TO REPAIR**
Unlike some child-friendly tablets, the iPad is not built for rough handling. Its slim design and high cost mean that a drop or spill can result in costly repairs. If a child is using the device regularly, a sturdy case and screen protector are strongly recommended to help prevent accidental damage.
- DATA PRIVACY**
While Apple is known for strong privacy protections, a recent study found that many iOS apps owned or children still share personal data. Over 40% of the tested apps sent at least one piece of user information to third parties, raising concerns about advertising and analytics being targeted at underage users.
- INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT**
The App Store and Safari browser provide almost unrestricted access to online material. Children may stumble upon age-inappropriate content, whether through apps, advertisements or online searches. Even recommended content algorithms can surface unsuitable material.
- BYPASSING RESTRICTIONS**
Siri – Apple's voice assistant – can potentially override restrictions, especially with the newer text-based commands introduced through Apple Intelligence. Without using words in place, children may find sneaky ways to access inappropriate topics simply by asking a question, bypassing certain filters previously set by adults.
- SCREEN ADDICTION**
There can be highly immersive, and excessive screen time may affect a child's emotional and behavioural development. Signs of overuse might include mood swings, irritability, and difficulty focusing on non-digital activities.
- REDUCED ATTENTION & COGNITIVE IMPACT**
Prolonged use of tablets has been linked with reduced memory, slower processing speeds and difficulties in concentrating. Research shows that children who spend excessive time gaming or consuming media on tablets may struggle with language development and executive functioning over time.

Advice for Parents & Educators

- ENABLE FAMILY SHARING**
Family Sharing allows you to create a dedicated Apple ID for your child and manage their activity. You can approve purchases, control what content they can access, and set time limits – all done remotely from your own device. It's a simple but powerful way to maintain oversight.
- FILTER APPS, WEBSITES & IN-APP PURCHASES**
Parental controls in iOS let you block explicit content in Safari, restrict app downloads, and manage in-app purchase permissions. You can also filter websites automatically to prevent access to adult material and disable the installation of certain app types completely.
- USE SCREEN TIME FEATURES EFFECTIVELY**
Tools like Downtime and App Limits can reduce device overdose. Downtime allows you to block access during key times – such as before bed or during homework – while App Limits sets daily time caps on specific games or apps. Alerts help children and adults alike when their time is almost up.
- PREVENT UNAPPROVED SPENDING**
Children can accidentally (or intentionally) make purchases within apps. Enabling Ask to Buy under Family Sharing ensures you receive a notification to approve any app or in-app purchase. This stops surprise charges and allows you to discuss purchases together before they're made.



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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	97.6%	93.3%
Mrs Kelly	96.2%	95.6%
Mr Phillips	96.7%	94.7%

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've had a week full of variety and balance – quite literally!

Our EYFS children have been exploring mass and capacity. They began the week by weighing different objects and discussing which were the heaviest and lightest. They then moved on to balancing weights using Numicon shapes before ending the week by exploring capacity with a range of containers of different sizes and shapes.

Our Key Stage 1 children have continued their work on addition and subtraction, progressing to adding and subtracting two two-digit numbers.

In English, Years 1 and 2 have written their own instructions entitled *How to Pack a Suitcase for Antarctica*. They have worked incredibly hard through the drafting process, listening carefully to feedback and editing their work to improve it.

Our EYFS children have also been enjoying the story *Dear Zoo*, which has proved very popular. It has been lovely to see their writing about the animals and the containers they arrive in.

Our daily phonics sessions continue, and you may have noticed your child bringing home reading books or ditty sheets with short, decodable sentences. Please encourage them to read with you at home. They are making super progress with sounding out and blending, and we know they will be proud to share their learning with you.



In science, we have continued exploring materials. Reception made 'Oobleck' with Miss Hedley and were fascinated by how it felt and behaved. KS1 children have been investigating how different materials can be changed depending on their properties.

I wish you all a restful weekend when it arrives.

Mrs Blackhall



Shilbottle Primary School Friday Flyer

Classroom updates - Poppy Class

It's incredible how quickly the weeks pass, and we've had yet another full and productive week in Poppy Class. Thank you to those parents who have sent me a message about parent's evening appointments. Just a gentle reminder if you haven't sent a dojo, please message asap so we can allocate appointments.

This week, in Maths, we have been tackling the tricky concept of dividing larger numbers by one-digit numbers. To support our understanding, we used lots of practical equipment and manipulatives, which helped the children visualise the process and build confidence. We have also continued to practise our multiplication facts regularly, recognising how essential they are as a key foundation for many areas of Maths.

In English, we have continued reading *Beowulf*, focusing on the dramatic and gory scenes where Grendel the monster attacks. The children explored how the writer's use of powerful and descriptive language helps to infer danger and create a sense of fear and tension, and next week we will apply these skills by writing our own setting descriptions. In Science, we carried out a hands-on investigation into the properties of rocks, where the children tested and compared samples for hardness, permeability and buoyancy, making predictions and recording their results to develop their scientific enquiry skills. In History, we explored Viking life in greater depth by comparing it with Anglo-Saxon life, identifying similarities and differences in areas such as homes, daily life, farming and jobs. Our swimming session was once again great fun, with the children working extremely hard, followed by an energetic cricket session with Tom, which certainly helped to tire us all out. In Art, we began making our Viking shields, marking the start of an exciting creative project.

To end the week, we spent some time talking together about respect and the importance of ensuring that everyone has the right to learn in a calm, supportive and positive environment, reminding the children how their choices and behaviour can help create a classroom where everyone can succeed.

Looking forward to another busy week next week. Have a lovely weekend.

Mrs Kelly





Shilbottle Primary School Friday Flyer

Classroom Updates - Clover Class

Is it just me, or is Clover Class simply the best? They seem to jam-pack everything they can into their week and just have a really good time along the way. It's been another busy one!

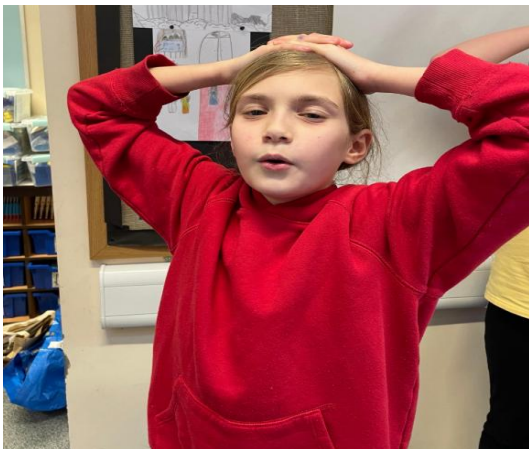
We have continued exploring Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, using the story to inspire some serious writing. We adopted a formal tone to write persuasive letters to a high-status authority (Prince Escalus). To make it authentic, we even wrote them on scrolls! Mr. Phillips said we weren't allowed to use quills (too messy!), so we had to settle for school pens, but they looked fantastic regardless.



Mr. Phillips and Mrs. Slack were so impressed with our progress in Maths that they promised to make pizza to help us understand fractions. *The Reality:* The "pizza" turned out to be bits of paper cut into thirds! Despite the lack of cheese, it really helped us visualize how an improper fraction can be turned into a mixed number.

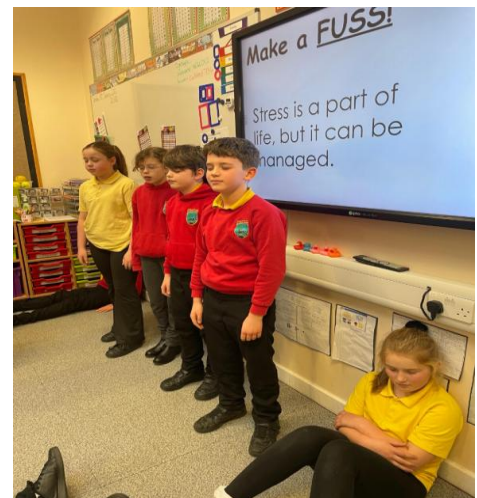
Our favourite "fraction" (Henry VIII) popped into

History this week! We explored how the Tudors strengthened the power of the monarchy by simply taking control of *everything*. When you're not in control, things can be a little stressful and this



week we learned that stress is a normal part of life and practiced techniques to help us manage it (including balloon breaths). In art with Mrs Slack, we continued our monochromatic portraits by focusing on noses. This is

trickier than it seems, especially getting the perspective right. Following our electrical success, we investigated thermal properties by testing materials to see which insulator could keep a beaker of hot water the warmest for the longest. Well done Clover Class.



Mr Phillips



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Dates for your Diary

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

Date	Time	
7/1/2026-11/2/2026		Year 3 & 4 Swimming (every Wednesday)
Wednesday 28th January	15.30	SATs Presentation for Year 6 Parents/Carers
Monday 9th February		Mock SATs Week - Y6
Tuesday 10th February	15.00-17.20	Parents Evening
Wednesday 11th February	15.00-17.20	Parents Evening
Friday 13th February 2026	15.20	School closes for the holidays
Friday 1st May 2026		Shilbottle School 100-Year Celebrations



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