

Friday Flyer

Friday 14th March 2025

Headteacher Update

Last week, in my excitement to share our World Book Day activities, I forgot to tell you about our participation in National Careers Week. Mrs Frame has done a sterling job of developing our careers provision in school and creating opportunities for the children to be exposed to and inspired by various careers. She is working with colleagues across Pele Trust on the ambitious goal of supporting every child to voice their ambitions, broaden their aspirations and pursue their dreams. Last week we drew on our database of parents' careers and welcomed a flurry of professions into school to pique the children's interest and raise their aspirations. Each year group adopted Colin the Careers Bear and he will be making his way home with a different child each week to find out about the career of their parent, a family member, friend or neighbour - look out for him making a visit to your home soon!

The highlight of this week for me has to be the incredible performance by some of our Year 5s and 6s in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The cast have been rehearsing for the last four months and their dedication and hard work certainly paid off on Thursday evening when they performed to a sold out audience at Northern Stage. I can't find enough superlatives to describe how impressive their performance was! Not a line was missed, every voice was projected loud and clear throughout the theatre and each actor executed their part with panache. I felt incredibly proud of our pupils and I know that their families in the audience were also bursting with pride. We participate in the Coram Shakespeare Schools Festival every year and what makes the experience even more special is that we perform on the same night as other Pele Trust primary schools, giving the children the opportunity to mix with peers who they will be with in high school. It was so lovely to hear the schools cheering for each other and commenting on the outstanding performances from their peers. Huge thanks to Mrs Maccoy, Miss Mears and Miss Davis who along with the children have poured their hearts and souls into rehearsals and should also feel very proud of what they collectively achieved on Thursday evening. Thank you also to Mr Armstrong who gave his time to provide extra support to our talented cast on the night.





This week also saw a performance of another kind: Mrs Wigham led Key Stage 2 in a bilingual rendition of Louis Armstrong's What a Wonderful World. Our performance will be part of a compilation that includes other schools across the region as part of the North East Festival of Languages. The Festival is a celebration of the diverse languages, cultures and communities in the region and our connections to the world. It was the perfect opportunity for the children to develop their French outside of lessons and I'm sure Madame Humes will be as impressed with the end result as Mrs Wigham was.

Our final performance of the week was for Newcastle United! Miss Smith and Mrs Bell took messages of support from children across school to send to the team; hopefully it brings them luck this weekend!

Best wishes,
Claire Johnson



Attendance for this week is summarised below

Nursery (Acorn)	92.5%	Year 3 (Pine)	99.3%
Reception (Chestnut)	99.0%	Year 4 (Alder)	95.8%
Reception (Pinecone)	100%	Year 4 (Yew)	98.3%
Year 1 (Holly)	98.7%	Year 5 (Oak)	92.3%
Year 1 (Ash)	94.3%	Year 5 (Beech)	98.3%
Year 2 (Sycamore)	91.7%	Year 6 (Elm)	99.0%
Year 2 (Willow)	98.0%	Year 6 (Birch)	98.7%
Year 3 (Maple)	97.1%	Whole school Cumulative from Sept	96.0%

98% - 100%	Excellent Attendance
95% - 97.9%	Good Attendance
92% - 94.9	Caution (below national)
90% - 91.9%	Cause for concern
Below 89.9%	Persistent Absence - 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 8.55am as this is when our lessons begin. Anyone arriving after this time is classed as late and will miss valuable learning opportunities which take place immediately after registration, such as phonics.

What does the Government say about school attendance?

"If children aren't in school, it doesn't matter how effective or well-supported teaching and learning is, we will not see better outcomes for young people. That holds back our society, widens social and economic divides and leaves us all worse off." Catherine McKinnell

Safeguarding & wellbeing

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST READING SKILLS

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditional books remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF TEXT

Before integrating technology, consider the types of text that a child engages with. If they need help on occasion, digital reading pans can assist by scanning and reciting words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practice are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles – such as dyslexia-friendly fonts – are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in Settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

4 INTERACTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

5 VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

6 SUBTITLES AND CLOSED CAPTIONS

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their favourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written words sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them to words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

7 USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

8 VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

10 SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides opportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13-18 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media videos include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowri is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, [Neuroteachers](http://Neuroteachers.com), which offers a library of short, 'how-to' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-academy trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.



The National College

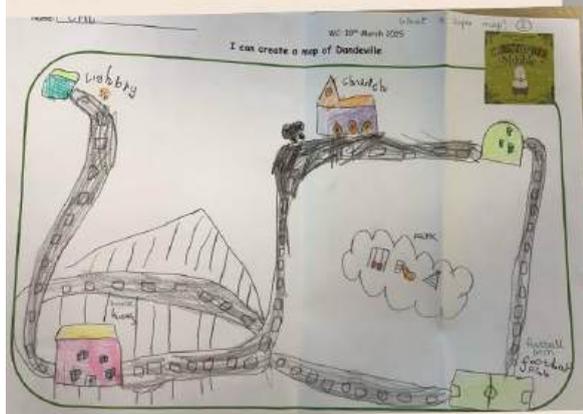
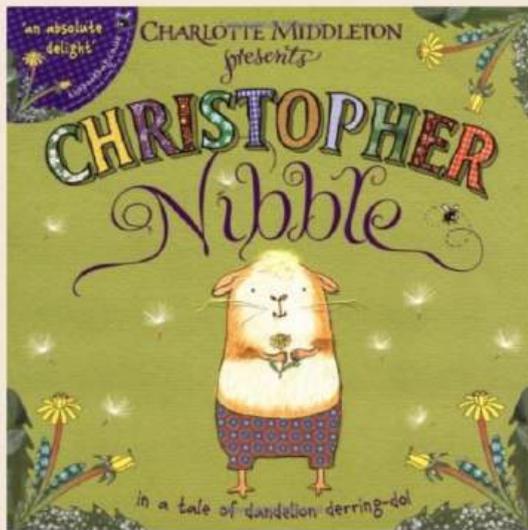
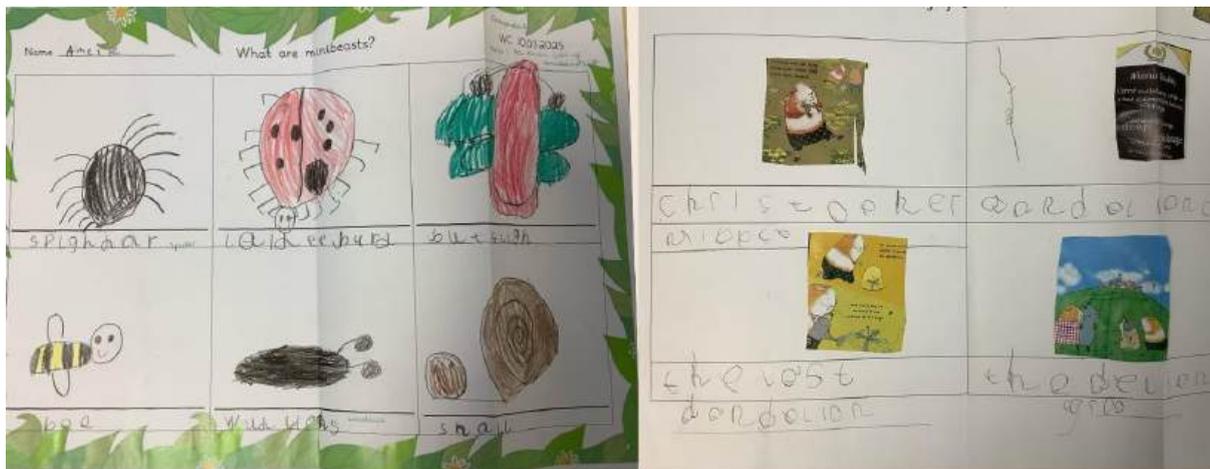
This week in Nursery

Nursery explored their core text, Mr Wolf's Pancakes. We found out that we have neighbours at both home and at school. We decided, unlike the story, to be kind to our neighbours and make pancakes for them. They were delicious!



This week in Reception

We shared our core text, Christopher Nibble as we continued our global theme of sustainable development and started our new topic around minibeasts. We have produced some wonderful writing around the story, created maps of the setting, Dandeville and learnt all about different minibeasts.



Christopher Nibble



Christopher nibble
loves dandelions
and football.



The dandelions
ran out
down in
dandyville.



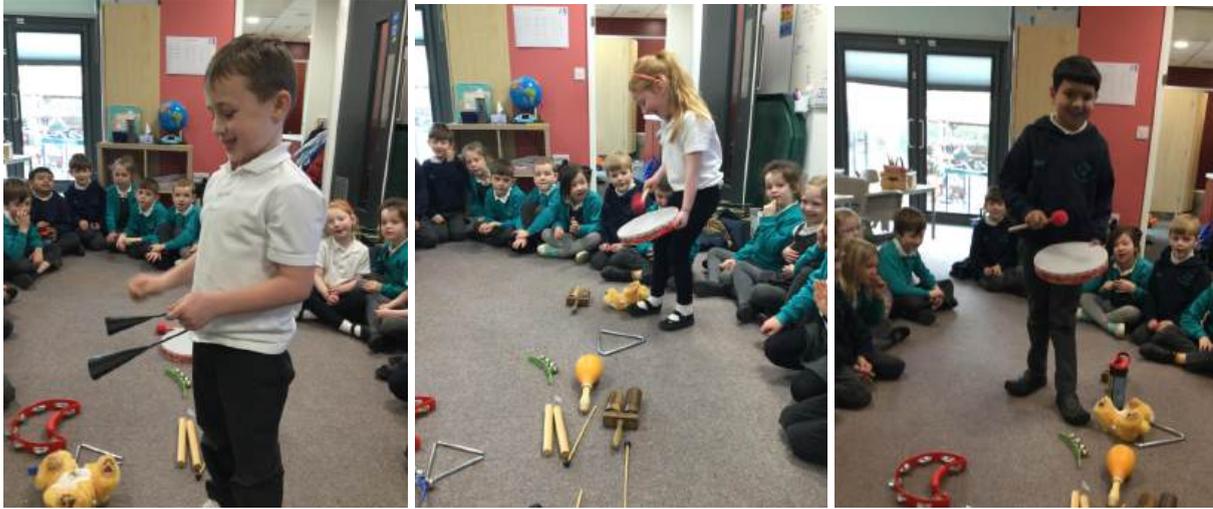
Christopher found
the last dandelion.



Lots of dandelions
grow
in dandyville.

PIC•COLLAGE

This week in Year 1



This week in Year 1, the children enjoyed singing some songs and exploring some percussion instruments. They practised singing in time and in tune. The children learnt the names of some of the instruments too.



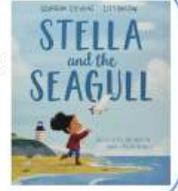
In our forest school session, it started to rain so the children were excited to build a shelter to keep them dry. They chose to use tarpaulins or natural woodland materials to build a den that their whole team could fit into to shelter from the rain. The children showed great teamwork, resilience and effort.

Mrs Rogers and Miss Storey

This week in Year 2

We've enjoyed a creative week in Year 2. In our literacy lessons, we've explored with acrostic and shape poems relating to the beach setting of our current book. In art, we mixed different shades of blue to create a coloured wash.

Our focus text this week has been Stella and the Seagull.



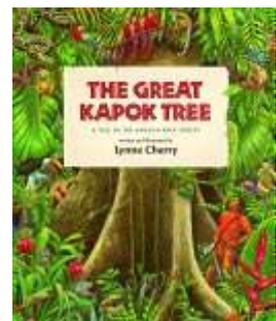
Miss Briggs and Mr Massey

This week in Year 3

This week in Year 3, we had a fantastic time learning about freeze frames! We created our own freeze frames to tell the story of *The Great Kapok Tree*, which has been our core text. We discovered that in a freeze frame, there are no sounds or movements, and everything is still. Instead, we use facial expressions and body language to show the emotions and actions of the characters. It was so much fun acting out different scenes from the story in this way. We can't wait to explore more creative ways to tell stories in the future! (We had a few shy birds who did not want to pose for the pictures this week!) 😊



Miss Mears and Miss Choudhury



This week in Year 4

We had such a treat in our classes on Friday afternoon, Mr Armstrong, our resident Dr Doolittle brought in lots of his creatures for us to learn about. In Science, we are learning about different types of invertebrates and how different species are classified. Mr Armstrong taught us about the creatures natural habitats, needs and personalities. I think we were shocked, thrilled, curious and a little apprehensive in equal measures.



Miss Davis, Mrs Maccoy and Mrs Bell

This week in Year 5

Parlez-vous français?

We started a new topic in our French lessons with Madame Humes. This term, we will learn to pronounce parts of the body, describe characters using this vocabulary, and connect ideas into sentences, all in French.

We began the unit by learning the song Tête, Épaules, Genoux, Pieds.

♪ Tête, Épaules, Genoux, Pied ♪
♪ Tête, Épaules, Genoux, Pied ♪
♪ Les yeux, les oreilles, la bouche et le nez ♪
♪ Tête, Épaules, Genoux, Pied ♪



This week in Year 6

Continuing with our Science topic, Evolution and Inheritance, we have been thinking about Charles Darwin and some of the species he studied that helped him formulate his revolutionary theories. First we looked at Peppered Moths and how their colouring helped them thrive in different habitats on the Galapagos Islands. We then spent time investigating bird beaks and how the Finches Darwin observed on different islands all had different beaks. We looked at how different beak shapes had evolved among Finches depending on their primary food source. The children loved working scientifically to gain a deeper understanding of Natural Selection and Evolution and it also helped them to see that, in nature, nothing is ever by chance and animals and plants adapt and evolve for a reason.



Miss Allan and Mr Orme

Dates for your diary in 2025



Tuesday 25th March 2025	Year Reception Trip - Scotswood Gardens (Packed Lunch Needed)
Friday 4th April 2025	PTA Quiz Night 6.30pm
Monday 7th April 2025	Year 5 - Woodhorn Trip (Packed lunch needed)
Tuesday 8th April 2025	Year 6 Trip - Discovery Museum (Packed lunches needed)
Tuesday 8th April 2025	Year 3 Trip - Alnwick Castle (Packed lunches needed)
Tuesday 8th April 2025	Year 2 Trip - Cragside (Packed lunches needed)
Wednesday 9th April 2025	Year Reception Trip - Whitehouse Farm (Packed lunches needed)
Thursday 10th April 2025	Year 1 Trip - Discovery Museum (Packed lunches needed)
Friday 11th April 2025	Year 4 Trip - Locomotion Museum (Packed lunches needed)
14th April 2025	Easter Break
28th April 2025	School resumes
Monday 5th May 2025	Early May Bank Holiday
12th May - 15th May 2025	KS2 SATS Week
Wc 26th May 2025	Half Term
2nd June 2025	School resumes
23rd - 27th June 2025	Year 6 France Trip
18th July 2025	Last School Day. Close at 1.30pm

Opal Needs You!

The children thoroughly enjoy exploring the different zones of OPAL and it has really enhanced our playtime experience. If you are having a clear out, we would love to take some of your old equipment off your hands. If you have any of the following items, please bring them to the school office after the Christmas break:

- Wellies
- Waterproofs
- Barbies/dolls
- Toy trucks/cars
- Dressing up items
- Shop items: till, fruit and veg baskets etc
- Metal pots and pans Children's Gardening Tools

Upcoming PTA Meetings

Day	Date	Time	Location	Rough Agenda
Tue	25/03/25	17.30	Library	Spring Events Planning details





Ponteland 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.

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads are:



Mrs Johnson (Head Teacher)
Lead DSL



Mrs Wright (Family & Behaviour
Support Adviser) Deputy DSL



Miss Dinning (Deputy Head Teacher)
Deputy DSL

Calling all amazing parents! Join the Ponteland Primary School PTA and make a real difference in your child's education! 🎉

Are you passionate about supporting your child's school and creating a nurturing learning environment? The Ponteland PTA is seeking enthusiastic parents like you to join our incredible team! ✨

By becoming a member of the Parent-Teacher Association, you'll have the opportunity to contribute to your child's school experience in a meaningful way. With your help, we raise essential funds that go beyond the school's budget, allowing us to provide valuable resources and enhance educational opportunities. 📖 ✨

We understand that time is precious, and every contribution matters. Whether you can spare just one hour or offer more of your valuable time, your involvement will make a tremendous impact. From organising fundraisers and social events to collaborating on exciting projects, there's a role for everyone. 💪 🤝
Here are just a few reasons why joining the PTA is a rewarding experience:

- 1** Active involvement: Be an active participant in your child's education journey by collaborating with dedicated teachers, staff, and other passionate parents.
- 2** Making a difference: Together, we can support the school's growth and help provide additional resources that benefit every child's learning experience. In June 2023, the PTA were able to donate a fantastic £10,000 towards the 2 new climbing frames that have been installed in the playground. More recently, we have been able to fund new football kits. And we love to hear new ideas to keep our fundraising activities fresh and interesting for everyone.
- 3** Building connections: Forge new friendships with like-minded parents who share your commitment to education and community.
- 4** Fun and rewarding activities: Get involved in exciting events, from school fairs and fundraisers to special projects that bring joy to the entire school community. We have the following events coming up that you could be involved with:
Providing refreshments at various events, for example, end of year assemblies
Pre-loved uniform (an ongoing initiative to recycle usable uniform to assist with the school's sustainability ethos)
Halloween Disco
- 5** Role modelling: Show your child the importance of giving back and making a positive impact by actively participating in their school life.

Join us today and be part of an amazing community dedicated to empowering our children's futures! Together, we can create an extraordinary learning environment that nurtures growth and inspires success.



To express your interest or learn more about the PTA, please reach out to [✉️ pontelandpta@gmail.com](mailto:pontelandpta@gmail.com) or pass your details to school. We can't wait to welcome you!! #PontelandPTA #ParentPower

Turn your daily shopping into everyday magic for us with easyfundraising

You shop, brands donate to us. It won't cost you any extra!



 easyfundraising

Help us make a difference when you shop.
Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk



- 1 Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk
- 2 Sign up and search for Ponteland Primary School PTA
- 3 Your favourite brands donate between 0.5-15% to us whenever you shop with them, with no charge to you

Shop with 7,500+ brands including:

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PRE-LOVED SCHOOL UNIFORM



Do you have school uniform in good condition that your child no longer wears but could be worn by someone else in the school community?

Please donate your pre-loved, wearable uniform via the donation basket in reception.

Looking for uniform?

All items washed and ready to wear. Please contact pontprimaryuniform@gmail.com to let us know what you're looking for, including sizes!

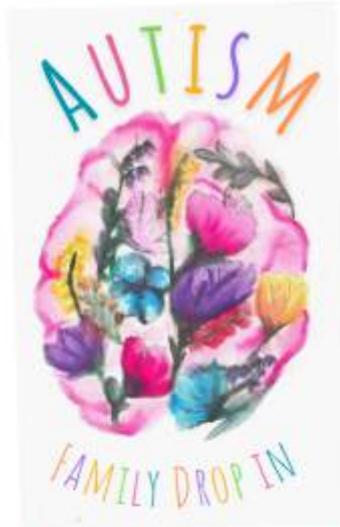
Voluntary contributions to the PTA welcomed.

Money box at reception or bank transfer:

Ponteland Primary School Parent Teacher Association

**20-59-61
20669059**





Do you have a child aged 0-19 years? Come along for a cuppa and chat and to meet other parents. No diagnosis needed!

JOIN US ON:

Tuesday 18th March 2025 1-3pm at Alnwick Family Hub

On St Michaels School Site, Howling Lane, NE66 1DJ

Thursday 3rd April 2025 10am-12 at Berwick Family Hub

Ladywell Place, Tweedmouth, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 2AE

Thursday 20th March 2025 10am-12 at Hexham Family Hub

On Hexham First School Site, Beaufront Avenue, NE46 1JD

Tuesday 11th March 10am-12 at Morpeth Library

Morpeth Sports and Leisure Centre, Gas House Lane, NE61 1SR

Wednesday 2nd April 2025 1-3pm at Ashington Family Hub

Alexandra Road, NE63 9EF

Thursday 10th April 2025 10am-12 at The Community Hub at Cramlington

Forum Way, Manor Walks Shopping Centre, NE23 6YB (Next to Concordia)