

Friday Flyer

Friday 21st March 2025

Headteacher Update

What a special week we have had! 17th to 23rd March marks Neurodiversity Celebration Week which is a worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences. Impressively, Neurodiversity Celebration Week was founded in 2018 by Sienna Castellon, an autistic teenager with ADHD, dyslexia and dyspraxia, as her experience had been that people often focus on the challenges of neurological diversity. She wanted to change that narrative and create a balanced view which also focuses on the talents and strengths of those who are neurodivergent. This is very much in keeping with our view in school and is aligned with how we teach the children about neurodiversity, both through the curriculum and also by acknowledging and celebrating the different types of brains the children have. Of course, this year, our Kaleidoscope project plays a significant role in developing this understanding as the aim of the project is to celebrate the uniqueness of our children and help them to understand and value their differences, while promoting mental health and wellbeing and developing greater understanding of both the neurotypical and neurodiverse brain.



Kaleidoscope

USING OUR DIFFERENCES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Miss Dinning arranged for Shelley Farnham from [Complex Connexions](#) to deliver workshops from Early Years to Year 6 across the week, looking at the children's own unique brains and how we all process things slightly differently – and sharing the words Dyslexic, Dyscalculic, ADHD and Autistic with the older year groups. She has taught the children about how information comes into the brain, gets processed - by the amygdala (guard dog) and cortex (wise owl) - and then how action is taken by our body in response. I've shared her child-friendly explanation of the workings of the brain below in case you want to explore this further with your child:

 **Our guard dog (amygdala) that lets our body know whether it feels safe or unsafe**

 **Our wise owl (cortex) that helps us to think and make choices**

 **Our ANTs - automatic negative thoughts - they creep in when our guard dog is barking and our wise owl flies away** 🙄

Shelley led our assembly this morning and taught us about the two sides of our brains - the left and right hemispheres - and how they communicate to create our own individual skills and strengths. She also shared some regulation techniques to send calm signals to the brain and help the two sides of our brains to communicate which can help us to regulate. As children come into assembly each week, I often like to practise strategies with them which they can draw on to self-regulate when needed so I will certainly be adding Shelley's techniques to our repertoire! One such technique is drawing a circle in the air with one hand while simultaneously drawing a triangle with the other - I challenge you to try it; it's every bit as hard as it sounds!

Shelley's messages about our uniqueness couldn't have had any better physical representation than in the children wearing clothes today that they feel are an expression of their identity. Thank you to all of our families for having the conversations required to help your children select the perfect outfit to express themselves. From footballers, to cheerleaders, to wearing fancy jewellery to styling dresses back to front, the children have certainly shown their creativity and uniqueness.

There has been such a buzz of excitement today as the children have attended workshops which align with their interests. Whether baking or den building, drawing or dancing, jewellery making or music making, the children (and staff) have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to express themselves and celebrate their own unique skills, strengths and talents. This has most definitely been my favourite day of the year so far as I have spent it with the children in my workshops, storytelling and story creating and I have ended the day utterly inspired by the amazing children we have.

Instead of sharing a published guide with you in our safeguarding and wellbeing section below as I usually do, I have instead shared a poster created by one of the children to explain neurodiversity as, quite simply, I don't think there's anything official out there that could do a better job - she has hit the nail on the head!

Today has been all about expressing ourselves through our skills and interests and Miss Mears has used her talent as a photographer to capture the day in photos - I'm looking forward to see.

Finally, I would like to express enormous thanks to Mrs Frame who is leading the Kaleidoscope project across Pele Trust and whose vision and creativity are unparalleled. This week has been so inspirational and a true celebration of our children.

Best wishes,
Claire Johnson





Attendance for this week is summarised below

Nursery (Acorn)	92.2%	Year 3 (Pine)	95.7%
Reception (Chestnut)	95.7%	Year 4 (Alder)	95.2%
Reception (Pinecone)	97.7%	Year 4 (Yew)	99.3%
Year 1 (Holly)	95.7%	Year 5 (Oak)	92.3%
Year 1 (Ash)	97.3%	Year 5 (Beech)	96.6%
Year 2 (Sycamore)	93.7%	Year 6 (Elm)	99.7%
Year 2 (Willow)	98.7%	Year 6 (Birch)	98.3%
Year 3 (Maple)	98.7%	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?

At KS2, pupils who attended school nearly every day in Year 6 (with an attendance rate of 95-100%) were 1.3 times more likely to achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared to pupils who only attended 90-95% of the time. **This means missing just 10 days of year 6 reduced the likelihood of reaching the expected standard by around 25%.** Pupils who attended nearly every day were 1.8 times more likely to achieve the standard than persistently absent pupils who only attend 85-90% of the time (relating to 4 -6 weeks more time in school).
DfE report: [Link between attendance and attainment, March 2025](#)

Safeguarding & wellbeing

BE KIND
Be bright

ADHD and by Heidi Autism

I know it's hard to have ADHD and Autism but with good friends you are able to get past it faster. People with Autism are very honest, that can be good and bad sometimes we say things we don't mean and we need space but after that we feel better. Sometimes we see things that you don't see with us and we get scared.

With ADHD you are often great at talking you want to explore and find it hard to sit still and we might day dream a lot. We struggle with listening and sitting still but we need good friends to help us.

One thing I have learnt is to be honest to your friend and they can help if you are someone with a friend that has ADHD or Autism or both this is what you can do to help us:

- Be kind (don't bully people because their different)
- if we need space please give us space please
- understand us
- don't laugh at us
- help us please
- be honest!
- care for us
- Be a good friend
- play with us
- give us space and we will be back

If you have ADHD or Autism you might feel a bit lonely but with good friends time will fly by and we do get lonely from time to time and it helps if you ask us if we want to play with you but sometimes we need space and too many people might scare us so if we walk away don't be angry at us we are just going into a quiet space but we will be back.

Now you know what you can do please help us and be kind to us don't bully us and help us.

Remember! Be proud of your differences.

4 Alder
Thank you




A visit from Naomi Barley, Author

We were so fortunate to receive a visit from the Author, Naomi Barley this morning. Linking beautifully to Neurodiversity celebration week, Naomi has written a book called *The Zig Zags* which celebrates all of our differences. Naomi came into Reception to share her story and we really enjoyed drawing and making the characters.

If you would like a signed copy of the book, please contact Naomi at www.naomibarleyauthor.co.uk or on instagram @naomibarleyauthor



This week in Nursery

As part of Neurodiversity week nursery have enjoyed having one of our parents visit us to talk to us about how our brains are all different. We practised using different items to help us concentrate before using clay to make our own brains.



This week in Year 1

This week we have been celebrating Neurodiversity Week, and learning about what makes our brains unique and special. We had a fantastic and insightful session with Shelley Farnham where she taught the children about 2 very different but equally special parts of our brains - the wise owl and the guard dog. The children discussed what they thought each part was needed for and how they kept our bodies safe.

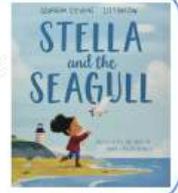
We have also had a very successful Kaleidoscope morning with all of our Year 1 children taking part in some fantastic workshops such as baking, lego building, painting in the woods and musical theatre. Throughout the week we have been checking in with our feelings, as always, and recognising how we can be kind and understanding towards others who may find certain things tricky. As part of our Rainbow Challenges the children have been practising their oracy skills and asking others what they might find tricky, discussing their own strengths, and sharing their favourite mindful activities.



This week in Year 2

As part of Neurodiversity week, we learned about how our brains work. We learned how one part of our brain acts like a wise old owl, and another part behaves more like a guard dog. At times, our guard dog can be on full alert, barking and scaring our wise owl away. We learned some strategies to help settle the guard dog and bring the owl back. In maths, we started discovering how we can measure mass. In art, we used ink to turn discarded plastic into a masterpiece. In literacy, we collaborated to read with dramatic effect.

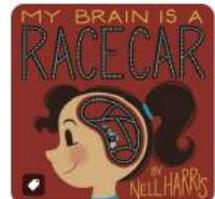
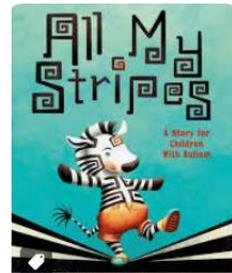
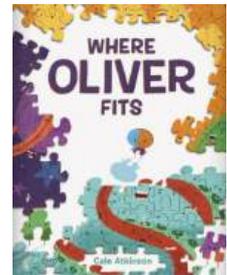
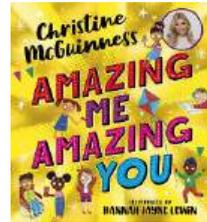
Our focus text this week has been Stella and the Seagull.



Miss Briggs and Mr Massey

This week in Year 3

This week in Year 3, we have been celebrating Neurodiversity week. It has been such a special week where we have embraced the things that make us different. In PSHE, we used a conversation spinner to share our interests, likes, dislikes and strengths and it was so reassuring to know that we didn't all share the same ideas and enjoyed reading the book 'Amazing Me, Amazing You'. Across the week we have also read some other really lovely books. With Shelley Farnham, we were able to consider how our brain works to process information and how our thought process and nervous system can change when we feel worried. We identified some of the things that can make us feel worried and found strategies to help us regulate ourselves to feel calmer.



Miss Mears and Miss Choudhury



This week in Year 4

To mark Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Year 4 designed some lovely, colourful posters to inform other children in school about the strengths neurodiverse individuals have, such as creativity, empathy, problem solving, imagination and determination. We enjoyed our session with Mrs Farnham from Complex Connexions, who taught us more about the different areas of the brain and the 'animals' who reside in them, such as the wise owl in our prefrontal cortex and the guard dog in our amygdala. She also gave us some brilliant strategies to use when we feel worried or overwhelmed.

Later in the week, two worlds collided for Mrs Maccoy as her These Girls Can Run Great Park Run Leader Nicola, came to talk to the children about a joint venture with TGCR-Great Park and Down Syndrome Swimming Great Britain (DSS-GB). DSS-GB is a volunteer-led charity which enables children, young adults and adults with T21 or Mosaic Down syndrome to reach their potential as elite swimmers, by giving them the opportunity to compete at national and international level. Ellen Stephenson, who is part of the DSS-GB team, talked to the children about her incredible achievements, showed us a selection of her medals and trophies, and answered some questions posed by the children.

Below, you will find a link to donate to DSS-GB, who work tirelessly to influence and advocate to improve the visibility and recognition of these incredible athletes; and support them to represent Great Britain at international competitions.

https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/dss-gb-manchestermarathon?utm_medium=CA&utm_source=WA

Miss Davis, Mrs Maccoy and Mrs Bell



PIC-COLLAGE

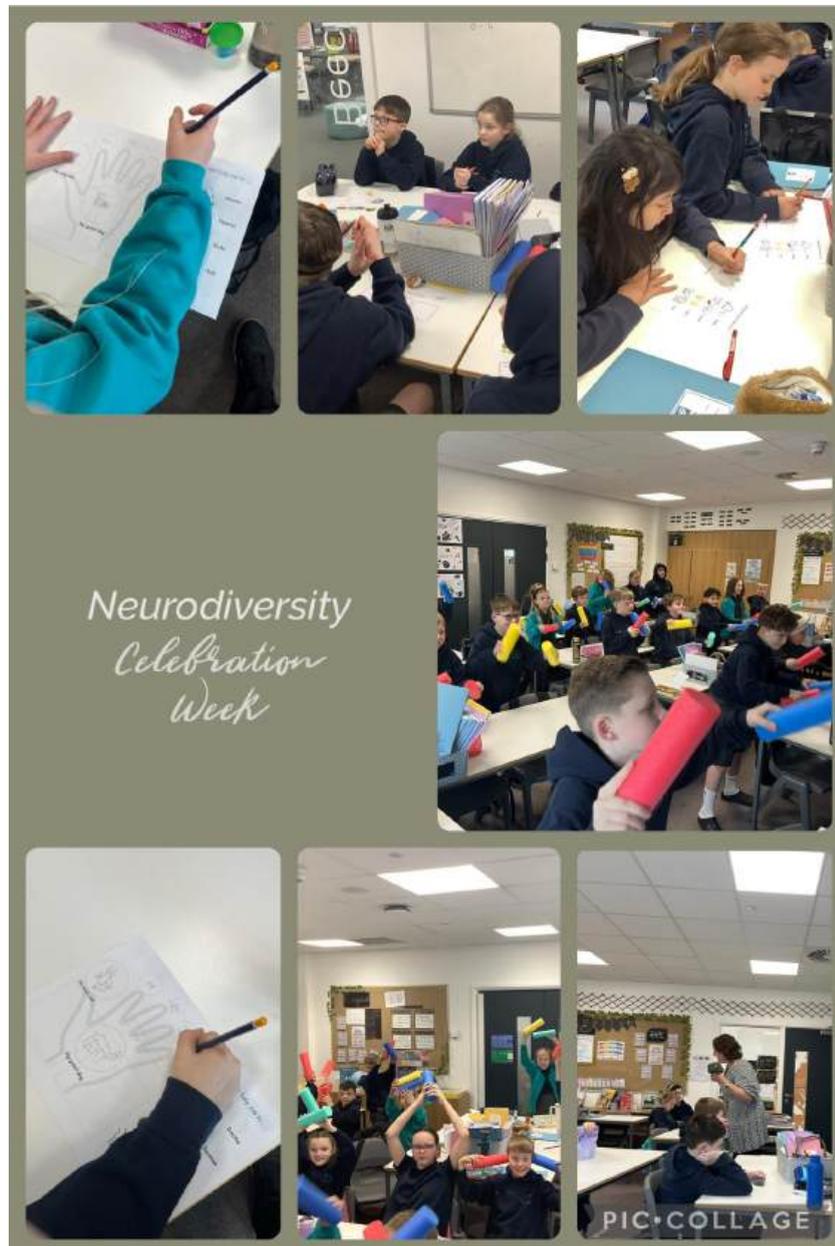
This week in Year 5

Celebrating our Differences...

This week, we have been participating in Neurodiversity Celebration Week, and the theme of celebrating our unique strengths and differences.

Our week commenced with a visit from Shelley Farnham, who shared insights into how our brains differ and introduced the concepts of a wise owl and a guard dog. These elements can assist us but may also lead us to fight, flight, or freeze. We explored ways to celebrate our diverse brains.

Later in the week, we learned about various differences in our brains and created posters to honour these differences. The week culminated in us wearing outfits that reflected our personalities while taking part in our Kaleidoscope activity afternoon.



This week in Year 6

We are incredibly proud of our Year 6 children who have approached mock week with such maturity, determination and resilience. As well as working hard to demonstrate all that they have learned over the course of Key Stage 2, we have made sure there have been lots of opportunities for fun. Dodgeball, researching ocean landmarks, making Easter cards for our Greek partner school and what seems to have been the most popular part of the week...toast! Our week ended today with our Neurodiversity session with the wonderful Mrs Farnham, who helped us understand how our brains work. It is safe to say they have all earned a rest this weekend!



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	De-escalation and dysregulation training for parents
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

Shop items: till, fruit and veg baskets etc
Metal pots and pans Children's Gardening Tools

- Dressing up item

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 followings 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

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- 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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GROUPON



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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!

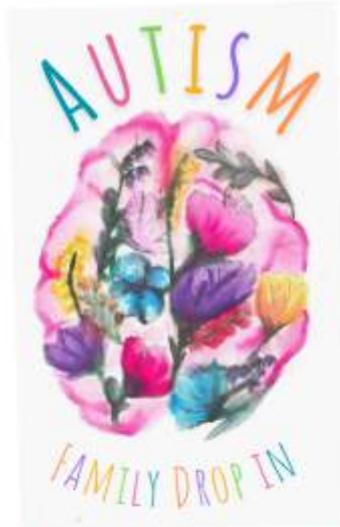
Voluntary contributions to the PTA welcomed.

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)