

Friday Flyer

Friday 23rd May 2025

Headteacher Update

This half term may have been short but each of the weeks has been jam packed and this week has been no exception! We've managed to squeeze in a multitude of visitors and special assemblies over the last five days to end the half term on a high.

We started the week with an assembly delivered by Nicola from the charity [Type 1 Kidz](#) who educated us about Type 1 diabetes. Previously, we haven't had any children with diabetes in school but over the last 12 months, three of our pupils have been diagnosed with Type 1. One pupil asked if we could support a diabetes charity and so our fundraising committee has added this to their plans for next academic year. Nicola also visited the year groups of our children who have diabetes where she answered the excellent questions the children posed. We now all feel much more confident about how we can support our pupils with diabetes and spot when they need a little extra help. Our next assembly was delivered by our Y5 Active Girls team who ran a thought provoking quiz which challenged stereotypes about sport. Earlier this year, the girls attended training on boosting daily activeness in children, particularly girls, and this half term they have done a fantastic job of setting up and leading various sporting activities on the field and in the MUGA. They have become an important part of our OPAL lunchtime provision and the other children have benefited from their enthusiasm and commitment. In our final assembly of the week, we were treated to an incredible Irish Dancing performance from Hannah and Charlotte who, as well as being pupils here in Y4 and Y6, are also pupils at the Kelly Hendry School of Irish Dance. Along with Merryn in Y3, they danced in the World Championships last month where they placed fourth in both the under 11 and under 13 8-hand ceili! We are so proud!





We've had no fewer than five visitors in school this week, covering a wide range of topics. Eco council held a very interesting meeting with Lucy and William's mum Katie who came to talk to them about carbon offsetting. She explained that it is important to be eco-friendly but also helped them understand that education takes priority, giving the example that we can walk to school but only if we have time. She agreed that going on trips is important so we can justify getting a bus but advised the children to think about what we can do to give back to our environment in return. The Eco Warriors were so passionate and Katie told them: 'you are the people who will make change happen'. What was intended to be a brief session actually lasted much longer as the children had so many questions and took full advantage of having an expert in school. Speaking of experts, Mr Smith brought with him into school golf pro Craig Smith from Close House. Craig trained two teams of Year 3 and 4 children on Wednesday morning before delivering a high level golf lesson to Years 5 and 6 - an amazing experience for all. Earlier in the week, Years 2 and 4 hosted Lindsay from Maths Whizz who praised their effort and progress across the year as they have developed their maths skills - well done to the children who received certificates in assembly this morning for their significant maths progress. Finally, Year 6 has had a focus on hearts this week! Always a highlight in the Year 6 calendar, Hands on Science brought sheep hearts into class to give the children the opportunity to explore how the circulatory system works. As always, this thrilled some and disgusted others! Looking next to the human heart, our very own Mrs Adamson's new husband, Jake, spoke to the Year 6s about his job as a cardiac physiologist. What a week!

I hope everyone has a lovely bank holiday and half term.

Claire Johnson

Safeguarding & wellbeing

Tips for Parents from [Smoothwall](#): Screen time and sleep

Is Screen Time Robbing Your Child of Sleep and Success?



Screens are everywhere these days - from classrooms to bedrooms - and while they can offer educational benefits and entertainment, too much screen exposure may be interfering with one of the most essential needs for growing minds: sleep.

The hidden cost of screen time

We often hear about the physical health concerns tied to too much screen time, but its impact on sleep is just as critical. Poor sleep caused by excessive device use doesn't just result in groggy mornings; it can lead to difficulty concentrating, emotional ups and downs, and behaviour that mirrors conditions like ADHD.

Signs your child might be sleep-deprived

Does any of this sound familiar?

- Lack of focus at school? A tired brain struggles to stay attentive. Your child may seem spaced out, need frequent redirection, or find it hard to follow along in class.
- Struggling with memory or motivation? Poor sleep impairs working memory and executive function, making it hard to follow instructions or stay engaged.
- Restless or constantly moving? Kids who aren't getting enough rest may fidget, pace, or bounce in their seat—not out of hyperactivity, but from sheer exhaustion.
- Forgetful and scattered? Sleep is essential for memory storage. Without it, your child might lose track of homework or forget simple tasks.
- Emotional roller-coasters? Tired kids often have a shorter fuse. They may react dramatically to small problems, have frequent outbursts, or struggle to regulate their emotions.

If these behaviours are showing up regularly, screen-related sleep disruption might be part of the puzzle.

How screens sabotage sleep

There are several ways screens interfere with your child's ability to get quality rest:

- Blue light exposure: Devices emit blue light that suppresses melatonin, the hormone that signals it's time to sleep.
- Stimulating content: Whether it's a fast-paced game or dramatic video, stimulating content keeps the brain active and alert.
- Emotional arousal: Social media and online interactions can trigger intense emotions—excitement, anxiety, or fear of missing out—that make it harder to wind down.
- Sleep displacement: Time spent scrolling or gaming is often time taken directly from sleep.
- Mental associations: Using screens in bed can confuse the brain, linking the bedroom with alertness instead of rest.

Five strategies to support better sleep

Thankfully, small changes can make a big difference. Here's how to help your child reclaim their rest:

1. Introduce a "tech curfew": Turn off devices at least an hour before bedtime to give the brain time to relax and promote melatonin production.
2. Make bedrooms screen-free zones: Keep electronics out of sleep spaces to strengthen the mental link between the bedroom and rest.
3. Stick to a consistent sleep schedule: Going to bed and waking up at the same time daily—even on weekends—helps regulate internal rhythms.
4. Create a soothing wind-down routine: Encourage activities like reading, gentle stretches, or quiet music to cue the body for sleep.
5. Support overall sleep hygiene: Nutritious food, physical activity, and cutting back on sugar or caffeine near bedtime can all support better sleep.

Looking beyond sleep

While reducing screen use and improving sleep habits can go a long way, they're not a silver bullet. If your child continues to face challenges, consider consulting a healthcare professional to explore other potential causes and interventions.

A good night's sleep is more than just rest—it's the foundation for learning, emotional regulation, and overall wellbeing. With mindful screen habits and consistent routines, you can help your child wake up refreshed and ready to shine.





Attendance for this week is summarised below

Nursery (Acorn)	77.6%	Year 3 (Pine)	93.3%
Reception (Chestnut)	94.7%	Year 4 (Alder)	91.6%
Reception (Pinecone)	92.7%	Year 4 (Yew)	97.0%
Year 1 (Holly)	88.3%	Year 5 (Oak)	90.3%
Year 1 (Ash)	84.7%	Year 5 (Beech)	89.0%
Year 2 (Sycamore)	86.0%	Year 6 (Elm)	91.7%
Year 2 (Willow)	96.0%	Year 6 (Birch)	86.7%
Year 3 (Maple)	91.9%	Whole school Cumulative from Sept	95.8%

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](#)

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- A degree (preferably 2:1 or above – a 2:2 is considered)
- GCSEs at grade C/4 or above in English, Maths and Science
- School experience is desirable but not essential – contact us to arrange a visit

Trainee Testimonials:

"This has been a fantastic experience, allowing me to feel equipped and ready to be a primary school teacher."

– M. Thomas

"The support from staff and pupils has been excellent. This is the best way to get into teaching." – A. Cragg



Contact us:

Alistair McCourt
alistair.mccourt@ppschoool.uk
Lynn Blain
l.blain@peletrust.org.uk

Apply Now:

3-7 years course:

<https://www.find-postgraduate-teacher-training.service.gov.uk/course/16S/Q718>

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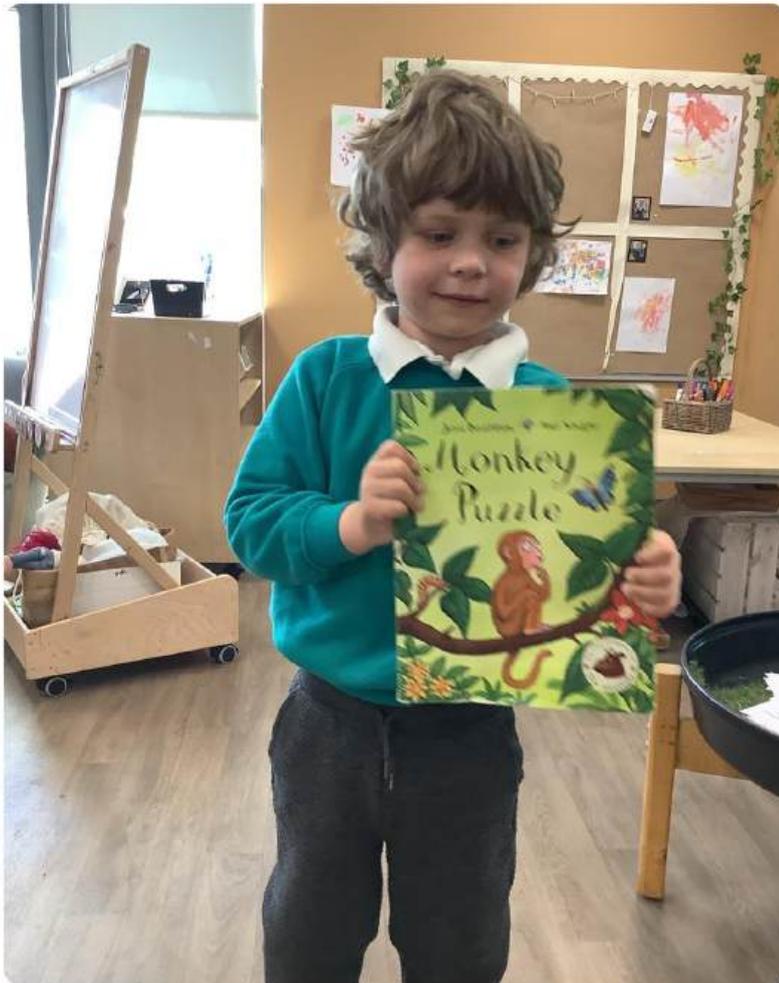
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This week in Nursery

This week we have explored our core text 'Monkey Puzzle'. We practised using sponges to print and create symmetry like on the wings of a butterfly. We used our time language to sequence life cycles and found out, through the book 'The Woolly Bear Caterpillar' that sometimes caterpillars turn into moths! We look forward to seeing if we can spot any butterflies in nursery after the half term break.



This week in Reception

This week we have looked at the third story from our core text, Yummy - The Musicians of Bremen. This has prompted lots of music making and we have explored pitch, tempo and rhythm whilst having lots of fun! We have also all made our own instruments using recycling and we had some amazing creations including whistles, trumpets and electric guitars - Rock on!



This week in Year 1

This week, as part of their Science learning, Year 1 went on a walk around Ponteland to spot the signs of Spring and Summer. Over the year, we have observed seasonal change in our school forest in Winter, Autumn and Spring so we compared our findings to what we already had learnt. The children spotted colourful flowers, fruit and blossom on trees, insects and could hear birds singing! The children also sketched the signs of Spring and Summer they could see using their observational drawing skills.

On our walk, we stopped at the park and enjoyed some time playing which was the perfect end to a busy morning!



This week in Year 2

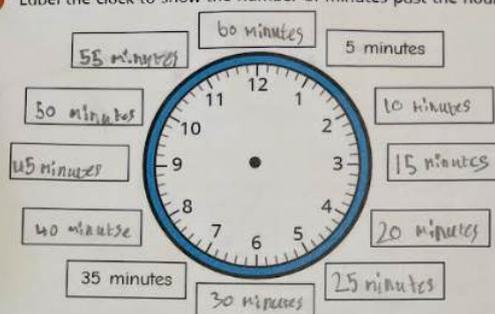
Last week, Year 2 planted cress seeds as part of their Science topic 'Plants'. We wanted to prove that plants need sunlight, water and soil to grow healthily. We planted the cress and removed one thing from each pot. We also had a control pot which still got sunlight, water and soil. This week, we discussed the results, looking at the colour, height and structure of each plant. This helped us to explain what happens to a plant if it doesn't get one of these things.



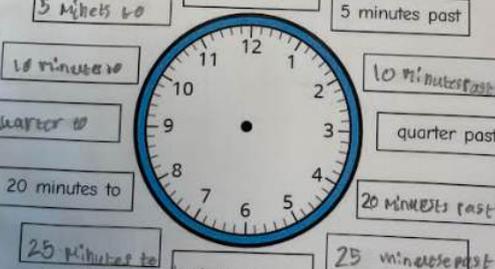
This week in Year 3

This week, Year 3 have had a productive and exciting week in Maths, focusing on learning how to tell the time. We started by labelling a clock to show how many minutes past the hour, counting in 5-minute intervals, which helped us understand the structure of time. We have learned how to tell the time both to the nearest five minutes and even to the exact minute. We explored both 'past the hour' and 'to the hour' times through fun, hands-on activities. It was great to see everyone so engaged and growing in confidence.

1 Label the clock to show the number of minutes past the hour.

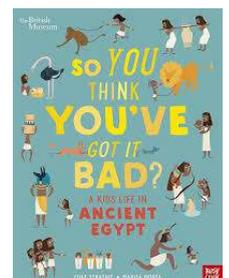


2 Label the clock to show what time would be shown if the minute hand was pointing to each interval.



a) a. 4 minutes past 2
b. 12 minutes past 2
c. 2 minutes past 11
d. 5 minutes past 6

Miss Mears and Miss Choudhury



This week in Year 4

In PSHE, we have been exploring oral health and hygiene and learning how to care for our teeth properly. We have considered the impact of diet on oral health and identified daily habits to keep our teeth and gums healthy. It was a lot of fun trying out the DinoplaQ disclosing tablets to reveal plaque hidden in the nooks and crannies of our teeth - there were a lot of purple smiles around the room!



Miss Davis, Mrs Maccoy and Mrs Bell

This week in Year 5

Before We Write It, We Planet.

As we continue our entertaining core text 'Cosmic' by Frank Cottrell-Boyce, we have been experimenting with a sci-fi theme in our writing. Previously, we have looked at fictional planets such as Pandora from the movie Avatar and researched the variety of flora and fauna that could be found there. This week, we have started to think about our very own sci-fi planets, including what the terrain would be like, which apex predators would lurk there and the type of vegetation we might find on it. We have drafted our plans and are looking forward to writing about them in detail!



Mr McCourt and Mr Tailford

This week in Year 6

As we come towards the end of our science topic about the heart and other vital organs, we began the week by making blood smoothies to look at the main components of our blood and their roles in our circulatory system. Then, on Tuesday, we were lucky to be joined by Lyndsey from Science alive who came in to lead a workshop in which we dissected some lamb hearts. This was great as it gave the children the chance to see in real-life all of the elements of the heart we have learned about and how it functions in the body. There were one or two children who didn't exactly love the experience but it was a brilliant, hands-on opportunity that will set the children up well for science in Key Stage 3 at high school.



Miss Allan and Mr Orme

Dates for your diary in 2025



Wc 26th May 2025	Half Term
2nd June 2025	School resumes
3rd June 2025	Year 6 - Northumberland Zoo Trip (Packed lunches needed)
11th June 2025	Class Photo Day
13th June 2025	Dress Down Day - for donation for childrens / adults fair tombola
20th June 2025	Dress Down Day - for donation for our adults bottle pull
20th June 2025	Summer Fair 3.15pm to 5.00pm
25th June 2025	Year 1 Trip - Gibside Trip (Packed lunches needed)
27th June 2025	Year 2 Trip - Beamish (Packed lunches needed)
23rd - 27th June 2025	Year 6 France Trip
1st July 2025	International Joke Day - £1 per entry winner announced for best joke
9th July 2025	Year 5 Movie night after school
Sat 12th July 2025	Wine & Cheese Tasting. Parents/Carers only. £25 per ticket. St Mary's Church Hall.
18th July 2025	Last School Day. Close at 1.30pm
1st September 2025	Teacher Training Day
2nd September 2025	School Resumes

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 items

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PONTELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL PTA



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TIME

Do you have time available to help plan, organise, set up, clean up and be a volunteer at our many fundraising events throughout the year? We appreciate any available time, even if just for one event. Please contact us on pontelandpta@gmail.com

MONEY

We understand that time is not something everyone has to offer and we are often asked about the ability to make regular or one off cash donations to the PTA as an alternative. Should you wish to do so please reference 'Donation' along with your name to the Ponteland Primary PTA account:
Acc no: 20669059
S.C: 20-59-61



SKILLS

Do you have a skillset that could help the School PTA? Marketing, PR, Graphic design, finance, events planning, social media and so many more skills are valuable to us. This may be offered as your time or as feedback to what you see and experience from the PTA.

"WHEN PARENTS ARE ENGAGED AND TAKE PART IN SCHOOL AFFAIRS, IT CREATES A POSITIVE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS"

Pontelandpta@gmail.com



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

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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**



