

# Friday Flyer

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026

## Headteacher Update

There has been much talk in the press this week about the government's recently released White Paper, 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving'. This is an important moment for inclusion which has long been a driving force for us in our school. The White Paper has adopted the definition of inclusion developed through The Difference's Inclusion for All campaign which we contributed to as a school, along with 60 other organisations:

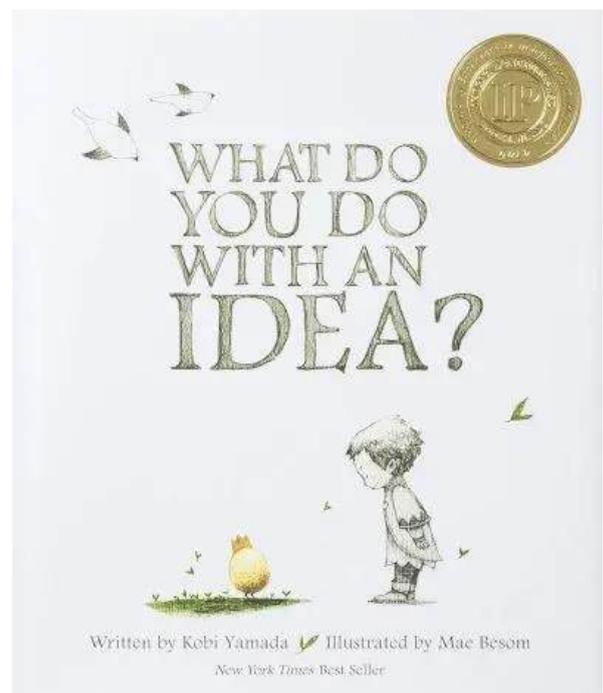
**"Inclusion is all staff supporting the learning, wellbeing and safety needs of all children, so that they belong, achieve and thrive."**

We're proud to have stood behind this call - alongside more than 60 organisations - and delighted to see government respond to the sector's collective voice. We view all aspects of school life through the lens of inclusion and have been recognised as a Flagship school within the Inclusion Quality Mark for several years now so this is a cause very close to our hearts. From learning in the classroom, to clubs, to committees and councils we strive to provide opportunities for all children and a space where everyone feels they belong.

Speaking of opportunities, there aren't many more exciting than those we have lined up for next Thursday! We have combined World Book Day with our work on careers to create our 'Colour your Future' event. In the morning, the children will have the opportunity to visit four workshops to explore careers they may be interested in pursuing in the future, from pharmacist to footballer, lawyer to firefighter there will hopefully be something to interest and inspire everyone. Continuing with the theme of careers, in the afternoon, we are asking the children to 'colour their future', and the book we have chosen to explore across school this year, "What do you do with an Idea?" will help to empower our children to consider how to bring their ideas to reality.

Best wishes,

Claire Johnson





## 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](https://nationalcollege.com).

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators ENCOURAGING OPEN CONVERSATIONS AT HOME

With tricky topics and occasional clashes of opinion, it can be challenging to maintain an environment where children feel able to talk candidly and honestly. However, encouraging such conversations helps to develop trust – making it easier to unpack even sensitive subjects as children get older. Here are our top tips for promoting open conversations at home.

### 1 CREATE A SAFE SPACE

Criticism, blaming or shaming can all prevent children from feeling emotionally safe – while showing affection, positive attention and an interest in what a child has to say builds their sense of security. These formative years are when children's opinions and values begin to take shape, so it's important to provide a non-judgmental environment in which to discuss them – especially if their opinions differ from your own.

### 2 CONSIDER OTHER OUTLETS

Some children may find it easier to talk while they're participating in another activity such as drawing, writing, walking or sport. If it's possible, taking part in these activities together presents you with an opportunity to communicate while doing something side by side. A child may feel less pressure that way and can be more inclined to open up of their own accord.

### 3 NORMALISE CHATS ABOUT FEELINGS

Incorporate mental health and emotional wellbeing into everyday conversations, using age-appropriate language and examples to help children understand their emotions. Ask questions like "How are you feeling today?", "What was the best and worst part of your day?", "If you could start today again, what would you do differently?" and "Is there anything you want to talk about?"

### 4 LISTEN ACTIVELY

When children express themselves, make it obvious that you're listening closely and giving them your full attention. Maintain eye contact and validate their feelings without immediately trying to solve the problem. It's not helpful to dismiss their issues as childish or "teenage angst" – or to assume that they'll simply "get over" whatever they're feeling. Children don't have your life experience; their resilience is still developing as they learn to push through difficulties and handle problems.

### 5 ASK OPEN QUESTIONS

Encourage children to share their thoughts by asking open questions about their feelings and experiences. Closed questions (such as "Did you enjoy school today?") are more likely to elicit a simple "yes" or "no" response. Instead, you could ask things like "Who did you spend time with at break?" or "Who did you sit with at lunchtime?"

### 6 RESPECT THEIR BOUNDARIES

If a child isn't ready to talk to about something yet, respect their boundaries; this reinforces that their feelings are important and worthy of consideration. Ideally, you're aiming to let them know you care without smothering them, so just make it clear that you're there for them whenever they're ready to chat. Gentle, regular check-ins can sometimes be the best form of progress.

### 7 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Model open, honest and healthy communication in front of children and young people. Try to demonstrate kindness when talking about others and yourself, because if children hear adults being overly harsh, critical or judgmental, or see them having unrealistic expectations of themselves, it makes them more likely to adopt and repeat this behaviour themselves as they grow.

### 8 HAVE REGULAR CHECK-INS

Check in with children periodically to discuss how they're feeling and what's going on in their lives. This could be a weekly or monthly conversation, where the child has an opportunity to share whatever's on their mind. For parents and carers, getting away from the house and other distractions might be productive here; you could consider regular trips to a coffee shop or a café, or just a weekly walk.

### 9 PROVIDE RESOURCES

It's often beneficial to let children know about other support that's available to them if they're struggling to talk to you specifically. Encourage them to talk to school counsellors, trusted adults or even a therapist, if necessary – while normalising this route and dispelling the harmful stigma around asking for help. Older children could engage with resources such as Kooth or YoungMinds.

### 10 CELEBRATE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

It's beneficial to praise children for expressing their feelings honestly – emphasising how important it is to talk about their emotions and how proud you are of them for doing so. This can be especially pivotal for boys, who often experience more of a stigma around talking frankly about their feelings and their mental health – a barrier that can be overcome, with enough love and support.

## Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College



**At primary school, children who attend nearly every day in Year 6 (95–100% attendance) have 30% higher odds of reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared to similar pupils who attend 90–95% of the time. Please work with us to help your child’s attendance stay above 95% throughout their time in primary school.**

### Attendance for this week is summarised below

Nursery (Acorn)	98.3%	Year 3 (Pine)	95.8%
Reception (Chestnut)	94.6%	Year 4 (Alder)	98.8%
Reception (Pinecone)	97.9%	Year 4 ( Yew)	96.7%
Year 1 (Holly)	97.5%	Year 5 (Oak)	89.9%
Year 1 (Ash)	94.2%	Year 5 (Beech)	96.7%
Year 2 (Sycamore)	97.9%	Year 6 (Elm)	94.4%
Year 2 (Willow)	94.6%	Year 6 (Birch)	95.3%
Year 3 (Maple )	91.7%	Whole school Cumulative from Sept	95.4%

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.

## Extension to our competition!

# Bellway

You may remember that earlier in the year I shared the news that thanks to a generous donation from **Bellway Homes**, our forest now has a beautiful new wooden shelter. This space has already enhanced our forest school provision but it's missing one thing: a name!

We're inviting you to get creative and help us find a title that captures the spirit of our forest. Whether it's inspired by local wildlife, ancient folklore, or the peace of the trees, we want to hear your ideas!

### Competition Details:

- **How to Enter:** Submit your suggested name via email to [admin@ppschoool.uk](mailto:admin@ppschoool.uk).
- **NEW Deadline:** All entries must be in by **Monday 2nd March**.
- **The Prize:** The winner will have their chosen name displayed on a commemorative plaque, plus a special forest session for their class.

A huge thank you to **Bellway Homes** for investing in our outdoor spaces. We can't wait to see what brilliant names the children come up with!



## This week in Nursery

This week we have read the story Mr Wolf's Pancakes, talking all about being a kind neighbour. We then made our own pancakes which we delivered to our reception neighbours to enjoy for a snack. We are such a kind class.



## This week in Reception

The children have come back to school, raring to go and we have had a wonderful week. We shared the story of Mr Wolf's *Pancakes* and talked about kindness and teamwork. In our colour teams, we worked together to mix the ingredients and cook our own pancakes, taking turns and helping one another. Best of all, we enjoyed eating them - and they were delicious!



Mrs Blyth and Mrs Adamson

## This week in Year 1

Our Year 1 word detectives have had a magical start to the term, diving headfirst into the mysterious world of David Litchfield's *Grandad's Secret Giant*. The classroom has been buzzing with descriptive language as the children master the art of using nouns and adjectives to bring the story to life. We've been particularly impressed by their creative similes - it's not every day you hear a giant described as having "legs as long as drainpipes" or "feet as big as boats". Their writing is truly starting to stand tall, showing just how much their vocabulary is growing.

In our maths lessons, things have been adding up fast as we explore multiples of 10. The children have been working hard to recognise the patterns in numbers, confidently counting and grouping objects all the way up to 50. It's been fantastic to see them making the link between their hands-on resources and these jump-counting numbers. From 10 to 50, our young mathematicians are proving that they have a giant appetite for learning!



Miss Storey, Mrs Kenyon and Mrs Tailford

## This week in Year 2

As scientists this week, we have been learning about dependency and how animals within a food chain are dependent on each other.



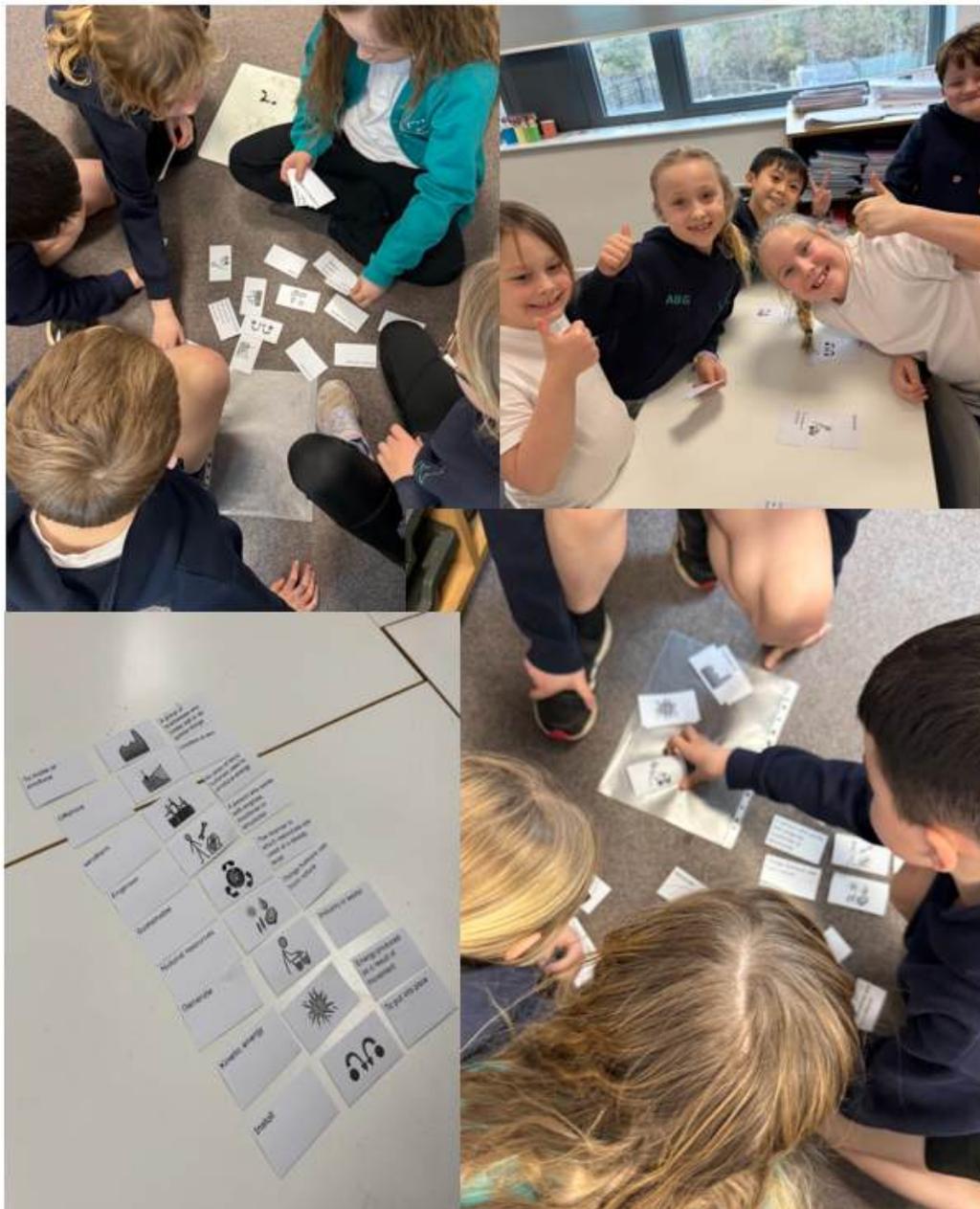
We also had some Golden Ticket winners teaching the class! This gave Mr Massey time for a nice relaxing break.



Mrs Nowosielska and Mr Massey

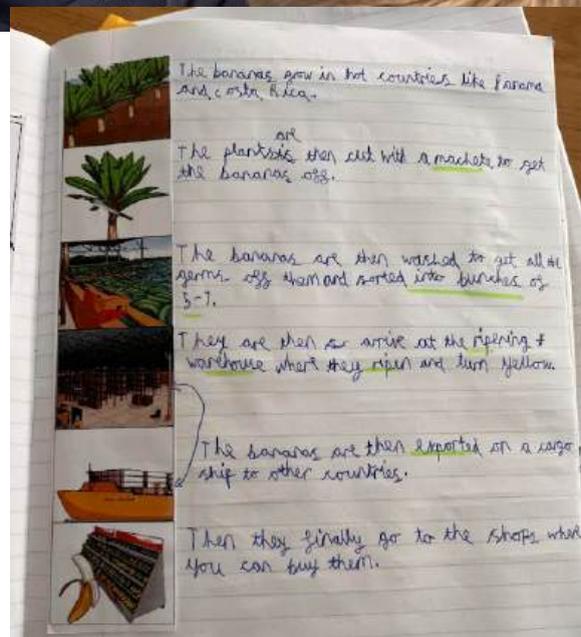
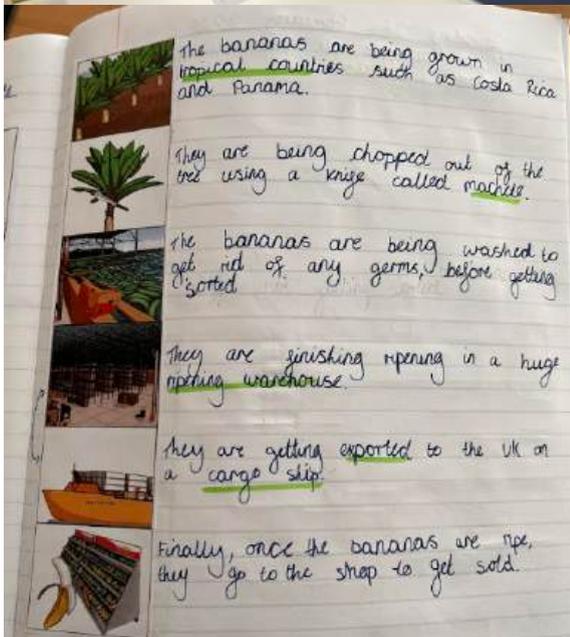
## This week in Year 3

Year 3 has had a fantastic week back following our half term break. We have been focussed and determined which is fantastic to see! We are continuing with our theme “Sustainable Development”, however this half term, a lot of our focus is on looking after the environment, making sustainable choices and renewable energy. To support our work in this area, we familiarised ourselves with some key vocabulary by sorting pictures, words and their definitions. We looked for specific clues in the language used to help make our decision. Hopefully this will mean that in our future lessons, we will feel more confident when we come across this vocabulary.



## This week in Year 4

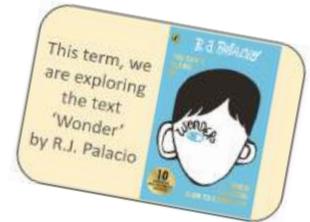
Year 4 have made a strong start to Spring 2 this week! In science, they have been exploring the impact of habitat change on living things. The children have considered how environmental changes can affect plants and animals, and have begun thinking carefully about the responsibility we share in protecting ecosystems around the world. In English, they began an intriguing new unit tracing the journey of a Fairtrade banana from plantation to supermarket shelf. This has already sparked great curiosity, with pupils asking insightful questions and developing their understanding of global trade, Fairtrade and sustainability.



## This Week in Year 5

### Total Eclipse of the Start: The British Empire

This week, Year 5 have officially set sail on their new history topic for this half-term: The British Empire! From the high seas to bustling trade ports, our young historians are beginning to uncover how a small island nation came to govern territories spanning almost every corner of the globe. It's been a week of discovery as we look back at the voyages that changed the world.



One of our first big challenges was investigating the famous claim that "the sun never sets on the British Empire." By mapping out the vast reaches of British rule, stretching from Canada to Australia and everywhere in between, the children discovered the literal meaning behind the phrase. They realised that because the Empire was so geographically widespread, it was indeed always daylight in at least one territory at any given time!



## This week in Year 6

As year 6 continue their science topic on evolution, we have begun to think like evolutionary scientists. We took inspiration from the greatest voice of all in this field, Charles Darwin, and thought about his discovery and how he was guided towards it by observing finches on the Galapagos Islands. Darwin noticed that the finches had different shaped beaks depending on which of the islands they lived on; he surmised that this must be to do with their habitat and diet. We investigated this and made predictions about a range of 'beaks', which we used to eat a range of food. The children had to try and predict how much food could be collected by each beak type and the strengths and weaknesses of each in terms of which food it was most suitable for eating. We will revisit our predictions next week using our data to evaluate them and raise any further questions we may have, just as Darwin himself would have done.



Miss Allan and Mr Orme

## Dates for your diary in 2026



Tuesday 2nd March 2026	EYFS Careers Afternoon
Wednesday 3rd March 2026	EYFS celebrate World Book Day
Thur 5th & Fri 6th March 26	Holly Class Parents Evening - 3.30-6pm
Thursday 5th March 2026	World Book Day and Colour your Future Day
Monday 9th March 2026	North East Education Trust visit for Reception - Minibeasts
Wed 11th March 2026	Shakespeare Performance at Northern Stage. Performance begins at 7pm and ends at 10pm
Wc 16th March 2026	Year 6 Mock SATS Week
Mon 23rd March 2026	Year 6 - France Parents Information Meeting. 4.30pm in school
Mon 30th March 2026	Year 6 Trip - Discovery Museum (Packed lunches needed)
Mon 30th March 2026	Year 5 Trip - Woodhorn Museum (Packed lunch needed)
Tue 31st March 2026	Year 3 Trip - Alnwick Castle (Packed lunch needed)
Weds 1st April 2026	Year 2 Trip - Cragside (Packed lunch needed)
Thurs 2nd April 2026	Year 4 Trip - Locomotion Museum
Thurs 2nd April 2026	Reception Trip - Whitehouse Farm (Packed lunch needed)
Thurs 2nd April 2026	Year 1 Trip - Baltic (Packed lunch needed)
Easter Break 2026	School closed on Good Friday 3rd April 2026
Mon 20th April 2026	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**

## After School Club Needs You!

We would love to take any of these off you:

- Loom Bands
  - Complete Jigsaws
  - Chess Sets
  - Dolls House Furniture
- Beads**  
**Lego & Duplo**  
**Knex**



## Can you help our PTA?

# PONTELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL PTA



Ways you can help...

### EMPLOYER

Are you employed by one of the biggest employers in the North East who offer Grant Match Fundraising? Could they help you help your School? Or will they allow you paid time away from work to help with fundraising events? Chat to your HR department today to see if there's a way to help!



ACCENTURE  
PROCTOR & GAMBLE  
NISSAN  
SAGE  
GREGGS  
BARBOUR  
DELOITTE  
VIRGIN MONEY  
BELLWAY  
NORTHERN POWERGRID  
VERTU  
...AND MANY MORE



### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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**



