FRIDAY FLYER

Friday 6th November 2026

Headteacher Update

Welcome back to all of our children and families. We hope the half term break gave you a chance to enjoy some quality time together. In just four days back, the children have thrown themselves into their new topics with real determination and we have been impressed by their fantastic effort. This festive half term is always one of the most memorable of the year, with plenty of exciting events on the horizon, so please take a look at our Dates for Your Diary page to see what is coming up and the opportunities to join us in school.



With bonfire night upon us, we have been thinking about fire safety this week and reflecting on both the beauty and the risks of fireworks. I am sure many of you will be heading to local displays over the weekend, so do ask your children for their top safety tips. They may even be able to tell you what our SAFE acronym from collective worship stands for.

Several children also told me how they look after others at this time of year, from younger siblings to pets who are not quite such fans of the loud bangs. Some even suggested that quieter fireworks and drone shows could be the way forward. It is lovely to see how much they care about the feelings of those around them.

We also have some very happy news to share from our staff team. Mrs Glendinning, one of our wonderful teaching assistants, is expecting a baby in the new year. We are thrilled for her and her family and I know the whole Richard Coates community will join us in sending our warmest congratulations. We will certainly be making the most of having her with us in the weeks ahead!

Today, the children have been championing their recommended reads once again, with classes giving persuasive presentations on why their chosen book deserves a place on everyone's bookshelf. In an age of screens and technology, it is wonderful to see that the simple pleasure of a good book still means so much to our children. Thank you to all of our families for keeping the magic of storytelling alive at home.

Sticking with the reading theme, the Scholastic Book Fair arrives in school next week. Children will be able to browse the shelves with their class and choose a book to buy if they wish. The fair will also be open to families at the end of the school day on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, so do pop in if you would like to choose a book together. Further details on these arrangements can be found in the parent letter.

This morning we were delighted to welcome Helen from English Heritage, who spoke to the children about the history of one of our local treasures, Belsay Hall. Throughout this year, our children will be taking part in the Unravelled project alongside other Pele Trust schools to celebrate the arts, culminating in a display for families to visit in the summer term. This year's theme centres on Belsay Hall, from its history and architecture to its seasonal flowers and period features. If you are looking for a family day out that doubles as artistic inspiration, we cannot recommend a visit highly enough!

On Wednesday 11th November, we will come together for our Remembrance Day service, taking a few moments to reflect and pay our respects. Our school council are visiting classrooms each day, beginning this week and running through until next Wednesday to provide children with a chance to purchase poppy stickers, pencils, snap bands and more. Please see the letter shared with parents for the full range of items and suggested donations.

Next Friday 13th November, we will be marking Children in Need with spot the difference challenges in class and a dress down day. Children are welcome to come in their own clothes, perhaps with something spotty or yellow in honour of Pudsey, and Pudsey ears are of course very welcome too. We will be collecting donations in class, with a suggested contribution of £1. There is absolutely no need to buy anything special, as whatever you already have at home will be perfect. We are already looking forward to the photos!

Wishing you all a wonderful weekend. If you are heading to a fireworks display, wrap up warm, stay safe and enjoy the evening!

Best wishes,

James Watson- Headteacher

ATTENDANCE

Attendance for this week is summarised below

As we begin a new half term, it's a good moment to think about the habits that help children make the most of every day in school. Regular attendance means children don't miss key steps in their learning. It also helps them feel settled with their friends and confident in their class.

In the final week before half term, our whole school attendance dropped to 91.4%, against a national average of around 95%. Please remember that the last few days before a holiday are just as valuable as any other and the learning missed in that time quickly adds up. Every day in school really does count, right up to the very end of term



With Christmas approaching, the final weeks of this term are packed with performances, parties and lots of learning that we would love every child to be part of. We would ask families to plan any travel after school finishes at 1.30pm on Friday 18th December, as leave in term time can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. If anything is making attendance difficult for your family at the moment, please do get in touch.

SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING

Updates of the Week

Upcoming Parent Sessions - Supporting Children's Wellbeing

A quick reminder that two parent workshops are taking place at Ponteland Primary School next week and Richard Coates families are very welcome at both.

On Tuesday 10th November, Lee Hill from the Local Authority's Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour Support Team will lead a session on dysregulation and de-escalation from 9.15am until 10.15am. Lee will walk through the stages of the behaviour cycle and the strategies that help at each one, with practical ideas for those trickier moments at home. If you would like to attend, please sign up via this Google form.

On Wednesday 11th November at 5pm, the Smartphone Free Childhood parent talk takes place. Whether your child is years away from their first phone or already dropping hints, it is a great chance to hear the latest thinking and talk things through with other families. You can find out more in the parent letter on our school website and sign up to join the session via this link.

Digital Safety Newsletter- November 2026

As the evenings draw in, many children will be spending more time indoors and online. The November edition of the Digital Safety online newsletter has some helpful ideas for finding a healthy balance. It makes the point that what children are doing online matters more than the number of hours, as an evening spent building something creative with friends is very different from an evening of endless scrolling.



With Christmas lists already being written (and probably rewritten several times), there is also a handy checklist for setting up new consoles and games, including managing in game spending, checking who children can chat with and making sense of age ratings. A short piece on AI chatbots is well worth a read too, as some are designed to feel just like a real friend. You can read the full newsletter here.

YEAR GROUP NEWS

Take a look at this week's learning

Nursery

What a fabulous first week back! We were excited to discover some new friends, three baby owls, when we came back to school. Their mummy sent us a letter asking us to look after her babies while she was away. We thought very carefully about where she might be going and decided she is probably looking for food for her babies! We began reading our new core text, 'Owl Babies', and started learning lots of facts about owls.

We also dived into our learning about Bonfire Night and how to stay safe around fireworks and on dark nights. We made our own firework pictures using oil pastels and paint, thinking about how to enjoy the celebrations safely.









Reception

We have been excited to get started with Autumn 2 and have enjoyed settling back into our classroom routines. We have shared some of our 'over and over' texts and listened to poetry linked to Bonfire Night. In our Time Together sessions, we focused on how to keep ourselves and others safe during Bonfire Night celebrations and talked about ways to enjoy the festivities responsibly. We have also enjoyed movement to music activities, developing our gross motor skills through fun physical challenges.

Oak Class have returned confident, focused and eager to learn and we are looking forward to all the magic and exciting experiences this half term has to offer!







YEAR GROUP NEWS

Take a look at this week's learning

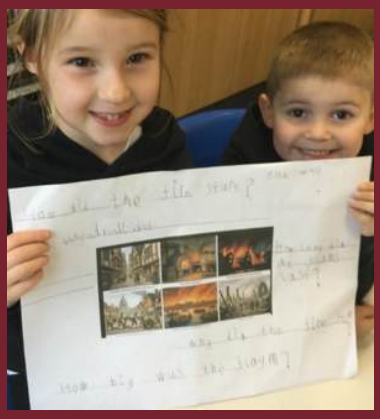
Year 1

Year 1 have had a fantastic first week back exploring our new text, 'The Man on the Moon'. We have made predictions, sequenced events, hot seated the character Bob and written questions for him. In history, we have begun learning about the Great Fire of London. The children were very enthusiastic as they studied images of the fire and made observations from the sources of evidence.

We also enjoyed our time in the school forest, looking for signs of autumn and creating music using natural materials. Birch Class showed great enthusiasm and resilience as they made musical harmonies in the woods.









Year 2

Welcome back! The children have settled back into their learning with great enthusiasm. In English, we launched our new core text, 'The Knight Who Said No!', which the children have thoroughly enjoyed exploring. In maths, everyone has been working hard adding and subtracting numbers up to 100 using a range of hands on apparatus.

We also began two exciting new topics. In science, we identified different materials and discussed their properties, while in history we stepped back in time to learn about monarchs in our new topic on Kings and Queens. Alongside our learning, the children discussed important fire and firework safety rules. A wonderful start to the new term. Well done, Year 2!







YEAR GROUP NEWS

Take a look at this week's learning

Year 3

Year 3 have returned rested and ready for another busy half term. In English, we have started a new poetry unit and by the end of it the children will have written their own poem about autumn. To help them, we have thought about the changes in nature, animals and weather during the season and visited the woods to record what we could see, hear, touch, taste and smell. This will help us when we start writing our poems on Monday.

In worship, we have started our compassion unit. This week's focus was fire safety ahead of Bonfire Night. We thought about how we keep each other safe and what it means to 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Mark 12:31). The children then wrote some excellent pledges about making safe choices around fire, both in school and in the community. Well done!







Year 4

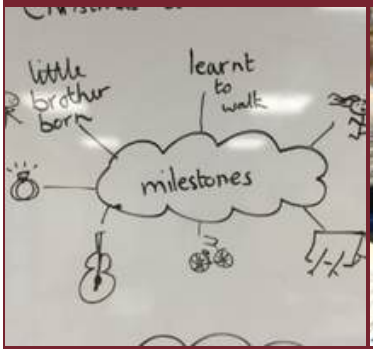
Year 4 have made a great start back. In maths, they have been working hard on column subtraction with exchanges and have really impressed us with how clearly they can explain their working.

In RE, we began our new topic, the 'Journey of Life'. We discussed what a milestone is and used the key vocabulary 'religious' and 'secular' to group them. The children then drew their own life journeys, including their hopes for the future, and it was lovely to see their enthusiasm as they shared their ambitions.

Just before the holidays, the children also took on a new responsibility, listening to and reading with Year 2.











YEAR GROUP NEWS

Take a look at this week's learning

Year 5

Year 5 have made a fantastic start to the second half of the autumn term! In English, the children used their research and writing skills to create brilliant non-chronological reports about Emperor Penguins. In maths, we have finished our unit on multiplication and division, multiplying by 10, 100 and 1,000 and tackling some tricky problems.

In PE, we have started orienteering and outdoor adventurous activities with Mr Smith, building teamwork and problem solving. In geography, our new mapping unit has us exploring Ordnance Survey maps and their symbols. Well done, Year 5!









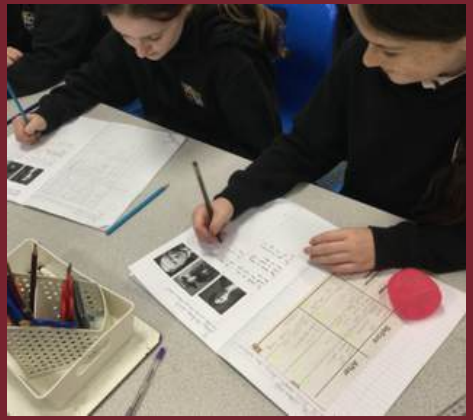
Year 6

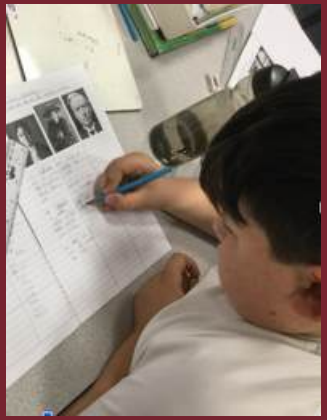
It's been a busy first week back! We have started reading our next novel, the Dickens classic 'A Christmas Carol', analysing how Scrooge is presented and forming our own opinions using evidence from the text. In maths, we have been learning the order of operations using BIDMAS and having great fun solving equations with these rules.

In history, we have continued our Victorian topic, learning about the inequalities faced by Victorian women and how the suffragette movement grew as a result. In PE, we began with some team problem solving games before moving on to orienteering around the school grounds. What a busy four days it's been!









HAPPY Birthday



Happy birthday to the following children, who are celebrating their special day this week. We hope that you all have a wonderful day!

Happy Birthday to:

Elena (Nursery)

Elijah (Reception)

Logan (Reception)

Lucas (Reception)

Ayda (Year 3)

Maisie (Year 5)

Hawwa (Year 6)

Theo (Year 6)

OTHER NEWS

Chloe Crowned British Champion!





A huge congratulations to Chloe in Year 4, who travelled to the Isle of Man for the final two rounds of the British Championship. With a storm battering the island all weekend, the conditions were about as tough as they come, but Chloe stayed calm and won both days. Incredibly, that makes her the 2026 ACU Motorcycle Trials British Champion!

Steering over rocks, mud and steep climbs without putting a foot down is hard enough on a calm day, let alone with the Irish Sea doing its best to join in. We suspect the trophy cabinet at home may need a little extra space this winter! Congratulations on this monumental success, Chloe!

Northumberland SEND Conference

Northumberland Parent Carer Forum is holding its 2026 SEND Conference on Tuesday 10th November, from 9.30am until 2.30pm at County Hall in Morpeth. The day has been designed especially for parents and carers of children with SEND, additional needs and disabilities.

Finding your way around the SEND system can feel overwhelming at times. This is a chance to meet services from across health, education and social care, alongside local support organisations, all under one roof. There will be short talks from services, peer support, legal advice, an information marketplace and some wellbeing activities. You can find out more on the conference flyer on our school website.

Volunteering in School

Our parent helpers and volunteers make a real difference at Richard Coates. Whether it's an extra pair of hands on a class visit, listening to readers or helping at an event, the time you give allows us to offer the children experiences we simply could not manage alone and we are always grateful for it.

From September 2026, the Department for Education updated its safeguarding guidance on volunteers. Anyone who volunteers with children on more than three days in any 30 day period, or overnight on a residential trip, now needs an enhanced DBS check with a barred list check, even when a member of staff is supervising them. For supporting Nursery and Reception classes, DBS checks are mandatory and must be completed before any volunteering can begin.

For most of our year groups, if you help less often, for example on an occasional day visit, you will not normally need this check. For those roles, school will look at individual events and complete a risk assessment to decide what, if any, checks are needed. The process for parent helpers is very straightforward, so please don't let any of this put you off volunteering your time to support our children's learning and experiences..

If you would be happy to volunteer or help on future school trips, please register your interest using this Google form. Where required, DBS checks can take a little while to come through, so letting us know now means everything can be in place well before trips come round. We would love to hear from you!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2026/2027

Date	Event
Week beginning 9th November	Scholastic Book Fair in school
Monday 9th November	Year 5 British Sign Language group visit Grange Lea Care Home.
Tuesday 10th November	EYFS Open Mornings- Sessions for prospective parents with children beginning Nursery and Reception in September 2027- 9.30am Lee Hill Parent Workshop at Ponteland Primary School- 9.15am
Wednesday 11th November	Remembrance Day Service- We invite any parents or family members currently or previously serving parents to take part in our service. Please contact the school office. Pele Trust Smartphone Free Childhood Parent Talk- Ponteland Primary School- 5pm
Thursday 12th November	Seven Stories join EYFS for an outreach story workshop
Friday 13th November	Children in Need fundraising day- Children to wear spots/yellow/pudsey ears and dress down clothes for a charity donation. Children will receive a paper chain slip, which they are invited to decorate at home with a message relating to Anti-Bullying Week. Class chains will be created the following week.
Week beginning Monday 16th November	Anti-Bullying Week
Monday 16th November	Year 5 British Sign Language group visit Grange Lea Care Home
Wednesday 18th November	Ask Psychology parent sessions to support children's wellbeing at Ponteland Primary School- 4pm
Thursday 19th November	EYFS Open Mornings- Sessions for prospective parents with children beginning Nursery and Reception in September 2027- 9.30am
Friday 20th November	Odd socks day to conclude Anti-Bullying Week
Monday 23rd November	Year 5 British Sign Language group visit Grange Lea Care Home
Friday 27th November	Reception and Year 6 Height and Measure Checks

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2026/2027

Monday 30th November	Year 1 visit to Discovery Museum Year 3 and 4 Swimming Team Gala at RGS Newcastle Year 5 British Sign Language group visit Grange Lea Care Home
Wednesday 2nd December	Christmas Lunch Day
Friday 4th December	PTFA Dress Down Day- Children invited to wear non-uniform in exchange for a small donation for the Christmas Fair tombola Children bring in their recommended reads to school to share with the class
Monday 7th December	Key Stage 1 Christmas Performance- 9.15am. Booking letter to follow.
Tuesday 8th December	Lower Key Stage 2 Christmas Performance- 9.15am. Booking letter to follow. Year 6 Virtual Workshop- Emotional regulation
Wednesday 9th December	EYFS Christmas Performance- 9.15am. Booking letter to follow. PTFA Christmas Fair- 3.30pm- 5pm.
Thursday 10th December	Year 4 Virtual Workshop- Emotional regulation Christmas Story Telling Event for EYFS and Key Stage 1- Funded by the PTFA
Friday 11th December	Children invited to wear non-uniform in exchange for a small donation prize to the Christmas Fair Tombola. Prizes to be brought into school today.
Week beginning 14th December	Parents and carers invited into school for a Christmas Crafternoon to complete an arts and crafts project alongside you
Monday 14th December	Pele Trust Christmas Concert
Tuesday 15th December	Year 6 theatre visit to watch 'A Christmas Carol'
Wednesday 16th December	Key Stage 2 Circus Skills Event for Key Stage 2- Funded by the PTFA
Thursday 17th December	Class Christmas Party Afternoons
Friday 18th December	School closes for the Christmas holiday- Children to be collected at 1.30pm