

Preston Grange Primary School

Newsletter – May 11th 2026



Thank you for your patience regarding this slightly delayed newsletter. Much of my time recently has been taken up with budget planning and preparations for the forthcoming year.

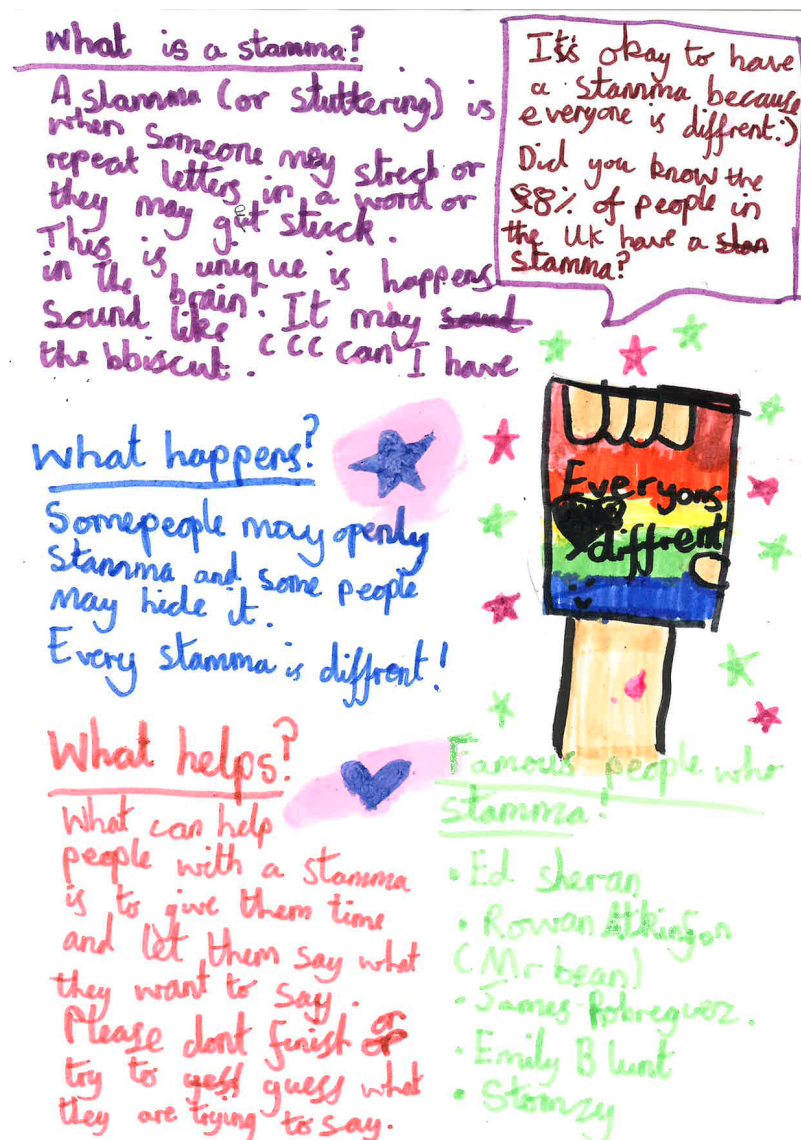
Some lovely news!

We are delighted to share some wonderful news with you. One of our pupils, Ayla in Year 5, has been nominated for a NTLT Star Awards and has been selected as a finalist — a fantastic achievement of which we are incredibly proud.

The NTLT (North Tyneside Learning Trust) Star Awards are held annually to celebrate pupils across the Trust who have demonstrated exceptional qualities and achievements in a range of categories. This year, Ayla has been chosen as a finalist in the Inclusion Award category.

Ayla earned this recognition through the creation of an informative and thoughtful poster designed to educate both children and adults about having a stammer. Her work has had a real impact across our school community; her posters are displayed throughout the school, and she confidently shared her message with all pupils during a whole-school assembly.

Ayla will attend the awards event on 2nd July at The Exchange 1856, where the winners will be announced. We are immensely proud of her achievement already and wish her the very best of luck in the final. Please find a copy of her poster alongside.





School photos

This year, we are pleased to be working with a new photography company for our individual school photographs, and we will also now be offering class photographs. We believe this new partnership will provide a number of exciting benefits for families, including:

- **Same-day viewing and online ordering** via a QR code. Parents will be able to view and order photographs on the same day they are taken simply by scanning a QR code. This makes the process much quicker and more convenient for families.
- **Greater flexibility when purchasing photographs.** Parents will be able to customise their own photo packages rather than choosing from fixed packs, allowing them to select the photographs and products they would most like to purchase. Discounts are also available when multiple photographs are ordered.
- **A wider range of payment options**, including convenient services such as Klarna and Apple Pay.
- **New Year 6 'Picture Play' leavers photographs.** This innovative keepsake combines a traditional school photograph with a video memory, allowing children to share their favourite school moments and future ambitions through a scannable image.
- **Complimentary leavers' gifts** for Year 6 pupils, including items such as free leavers' annuals.
- **Additional complimentary items for school**, which may include professional aerial drone photographs of the school or updated staff display boards.

We are looking forward to introducing this new service and hope families enjoy the improved experience and additional options available. The photography dates currently scheduled are as follows:

- **Year 6 Picture Play 2026** – Tuesday 16th June 2026
- **Individual Portraits 2026** – Wednesday 4th November 2026
- **Class Group Photographs 2027** – Tuesday 9th March 2027



Mental Health Awareness Week

Next week is Mental Health Awareness Week, and this year's theme is "Action" — a powerful reminder that looking after our mental health isn't just about awareness, but about taking positive steps to support ourselves and others. Across the school, all classes will take part in activities and discussions linked to the Place2Be resources, which have been specially designed to help children explore mental health in an age-appropriate and meaningful way.

In their PSHE lessons, pupils will be engaging in activities that encourage them to think about what "action" means in relation to mental health. This will include:

- exploring everyday strategies that help us look after our wellbeing,
- identifying trusted adults and support networks,
- learning how small actions can make a big difference to how we feel,
- and considering how we can support friends and others in positive ways.

The resources also encourage pupils to reflect on how they can take action in their own lives — whether that is through talking about feelings, being kind to others, or using simple techniques to manage stress and worries.

We are looking forward to a thoughtful and empowering week, helping children understand that even small actions can have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.



Social media and communication with families

As a school, we have used Twitter (X) since 2018 to share updates, celebrate achievements, and provide families with a glimpse into daily life in school. Staff regularly post photos, short videos, and whole-school updates in the hope of giving a weekly “snapshot” of learning and activities across the school.

However, we have noticed that engagement from parents and carers on this platform has reduced over time, and we are keen to ensure that our communication methods remain effective, accessible, and well used by families.

We currently use text messaging for important or time-sensitive updates and email for more detailed communication. In addition to this, we are now reviewing our use of X and considering alternative platforms that may better support regular engagement and sharing of school life. One option being explored is the use of a school Instagram account, alongside other possible communication tools.

Our aim remains the same: to provide a consistent and engaging stream of updates each week, helping families to stay closely connected with what is happening in school between monthly newsletters.

Once a final decision has been made, we will of course share this with parents and carers.

Parent appointments Summer term

Parent appointments will take place on Tuesday 30th June. Each appointment will last 10 minutes, with time split where families are separated (5 minutes per parent/carer, where applicable).



Please note that there will be no alternative evenings offered and appointments will not be rearranged. We are unable to offer telephone consultations, as teaching staff are fully committed during the school day and evening appointments are provided as the designated opportunity to discuss your child's progress.

We ask that families make every effort to attend their allocated time, as this is an important opportunity to discuss your child's learning and next steps with their class teacher.



Grow to Eat project

Our Year 2 children have been taking part in a wonderful project called “Grow to Eat” since the start of the Spring term. They have been carefully nurturing vegetables from seed, observing their development over time, and recording their learning through detailed diaries and labelled diagrams. It has been fantastic to see their curiosity, patience, and care as they track each stage of growth.

Last week, the children enjoyed a very special visit to Tamar Court Residential Home, a valued partner we have been working with since last year.

During their visit, they spent a lovely afternoon planting more seeds alongside their older friends, sharing their knowledge and experiences in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.

It is lovely to see some really positive relationships developing between our children and the residents at Tamar Court. These growing friendships are becoming a real highlight of the project, helping to build confidence, empathy, and a strong sense of community for all involved.



School Meals

Our school catering provider has advised that there is still a small number of parents/carers who are not pre-ordering their child's school meal. As a result, there have been instances where children have expected to choose meals on arrival at the serving hatch.



Unfortunately, this cannot continue, as all meals are planned and prepared in advance based on the orders received. It is not possible for kitchen staff to extend portions or accommodate additional choices on the day, as this would place an unfair demand on resources and planning.

It is also essential that meals are pre-ordered in order to help the school and catering team manage costs effectively. If meals are not ordered in advance, this can lead to increased waste and additional expense, which ultimately impacts the cost of school meals for everyone. From this point forward, if a child has not had a meal pre-ordered, they will be provided with a packed lunch from the kitchen rather than a hot meal.

We kindly ask all families to ensure that meal choices are submitted in advance. This is essential so that the kitchen team can cater accurately, minimise waste, and continue to provide high-quality, affordable meals for all children.



Year 6 Residential Visit

Over the past three years, the school has found it increasingly difficult to continue offering the KS2 residential visit due to a growing number of children choosing not to take part.

The residential forms an important part of the KS2 Outdoor and Adventurous Activities element of the PE curriculum and provides a valuable opportunity for children to experience time away from home, develop independence, and build relationships with their peers.

This year, there are 10 children who are not wishing to attend, meaning that only 17 children would be taking part. As a one-form entry primary school, we do not have additional staff available beyond our existing teaching team, which creates a significant challenge in terms of staffing and supervision.

Children who do not attend the residential will continue to access the Outdoor and Adventurous Activity challenges element of the KS2 PE curriculum as part of their wider curriculum learning in school within the Key Stage.

Moving forwards, a residential will be offered to the current Year 4 class when they are in Year 6 in 2028, and to all subsequent Year 6 classes after that. But we would strongly encourage families to support participation in this visit. It is consistently one of the highlights of the school year, and children are often extremely enthusiastic once they see slideshows and hear about previous residential experiences. In practice, children usually settle very quickly and gain a great deal from the experience once they attend. For a residential visit to remain viable in 2028 and beyond, sufficient participation is essential.

Please note that where Year 4 parents choose for their child not to attend Ford Castle this July, children are expected to attend school as normal during the residential period.

Nursery

As of September, we will no longer be offering the additional Friday afternoon session, due to low uptake of places.

Our 30-hour provision will continue to be delivered from Monday to Thursday afternoons. For families who are not eligible for a 30-hour funding code, there will still be the option to purchase additional afternoon sessions on these days.



Parent/Carer Virtual Support Session

Connect MHST invites parents and carers to join their upcoming virtual wellbeing session, designed to provide practical advice, reassurance, and support for families.

 **Wednesday 20th May 2026**  **6:00pm**  **Via Zoom**

This month's focus is Understanding Anxiety and Supporting Your Child. The session will explore how anxiety can present in children and young people, alongside practical strategies to support emotional wellbeing at home, build confidence and resilience, and identify where to access further support if needed. These monthly sessions offer a supportive space for parents and carers to:

- gain advice from wellbeing professionals
- share experiences with other families (if they wish)
- ask questions
- develop strategies to support children's social, emotional and mental health

Sessions take place on the last Wednesday of each month at 6pm. To register and receive the Zoom link, please email: connectmhst@northtyneside.gov.uk

Safeguarding

★Benedict's Law★

We have always provided staff training in the use of AAI devices and anaphylaxis awareness; however, with the introduction of Benedict's Law in September, bringing updated national expectations for all schools across the UK, we will be reviewing and refreshing this training during our whole-staff training day in September. The session will ensure our practice is fully in line with the new guidance and will cover:

- what anaphylaxis is
- common triggers
- recognising and managing an anaphylactic reaction
- practical training using an AAI (adrenaline auto-injector) device

This will ensure all staff remain confident, up to date, and fully prepared to respond appropriately in an emergency.

★ Safety maps ★

As part of our ongoing work on safeguarding, this month children will be creating 'safety maps' to help them identify places within school where they feel safe or less safe. This activity will then be extended to include an aerial view of the local area, allowing children to reflect on their sense of safety beyond the school environment.

This important work helps staff to better understand how safe children feel both in school and within the wider community, ensuring we continue to respond appropriately to their needs and experiences.

★ Operation Encompass ★

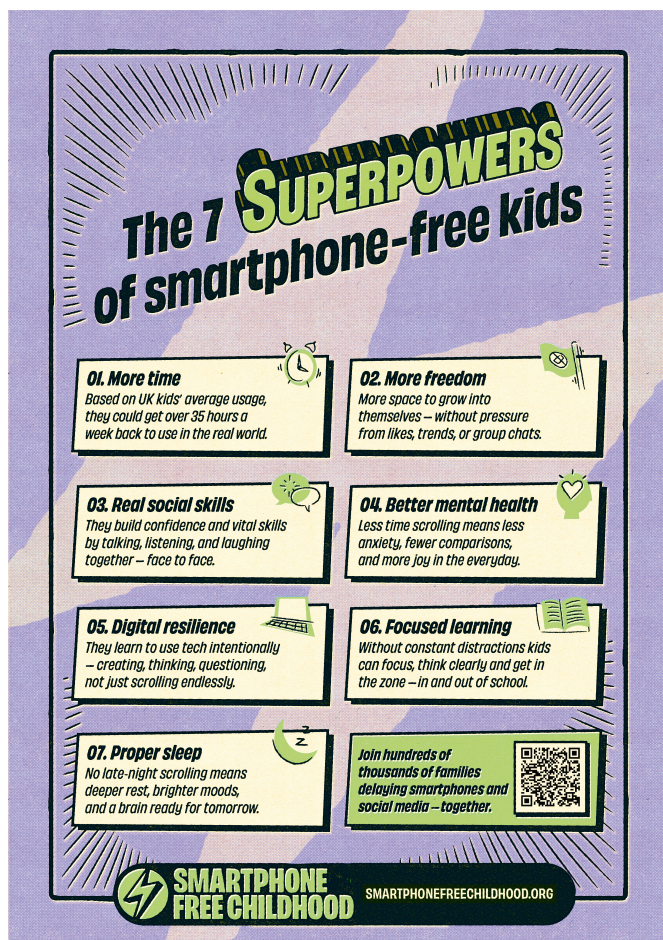
A reminder to all of our families that we are an Operation Encompass school.

Operation Encompass is a national initiative that ensures schools are informed in confidence, when a child has been involved in or exposed to incidents of domestic abuse.

This information is shared securely with a nominated member of staff before the start of the next school day, so that we can provide appropriate, timely support to the child if needed.

Being part of Operation Encompass helps us to ensure that children are supported in school in a sensitive and understanding way, particularly following difficult experiences at home.

If you would like any further information about Operation Encompass, please contact the school office.



Key Stage 2 SATS

Today our Year 6 children have started their Key Stage 2 SATs. We are incredibly proud of them all and know they will approach the week with determination, resilience, and pride in their learning.

We would like to wish them the very best of luck as they complete their assessments. Once SATs are finished, we look forward to celebrating their hard work and beginning to plan the exciting end-of-year activities with them.

17 **Dates for Your Diary**

Mon 11th – Thurs 14th May – Year 6 SATs
Tues 12th May – Mental Health Awareness Week
Tues 12th May – Peter Higgins (Connect MH Team) on yard before school
Wed 13th May – Reception walk to Lidl
Wed 13th May – Ceilidh band (PM)
Fri 15th May (ongoing) – Year 3 swimming (PM)
Sun 17th May – Children's Cancer Run
Mon 19th May – Year 4 Mini Tennis (John Spence Events)
Tues 19th May – Year 4 Mini Tennis (John Spence School)
Wed 20th May – Visitor in assembly: Recycling
Thurs 21st May – Nursery farm visit on-site (AM)

Thurs 21st May - Year 5 rugby at Kingston Park
Fri 22nd May – Year 3 Mini Tennis (John Spence Events)
Fri 22nd May – Break up for May half term
Mon 1st June – Children return to school
Mon 1st June – Reception vision screening
Tues 3rd June – Girls Football Fixtures
Thurs 4th June – Year 6 whole class Thrive
Tues 9th June – Early Years Open Morning (9:30–10:30am)
Tues 9th June – Year 6 Newcastle Building Society Financial Literacy Workshop

Wed 10th June - Angels of the North choir event
Wed 10th June – Year 6 Cyber Security Police Talk
Wed 10th June – Year 1 whole class Thrive
Wed 10th June – Bugs n Stuff visitor in Reception (AM)
Thurs 12th June – Athletics (Year 3 & 4)
Thurs 12th June – Athletics (Year 5 & 6)
Tues 16th June – Year 1 trip to Centre for Life (all day)

Tues 16th June - Year 6 Picture Play (see above)
Tues 16th June – Nursery Stay & Play (1:30–2:30pm)
Wed 17th June – Hoops 4 Health Year 6 tournament @ Vertu Motors Arena (all day)
Thurs 18th June – Year 6 Cricket, Tynemouth Cricket Club
Mon 22nd June – School Diversity Week
Tues 23rd June – Girls Football Fixtures
Wed 24th June – Year 4 whole class Thrive
Thurs 25th June – Year 5 whole class Thrive

Fri 26th June – Teacher Training Day
Tues 30th June – Nursery Stay & Play (1:30–2:30pm)

Tues 30th June - Parent appointments PM

Fri 3rd July – Transition Move-Up Morning (9:00–11:45am)
Tues 7th July – Nursery News Parent Meeting (9:00–10:00am)
Wed 8th – Fri 10th July – Year 4 residential at Ford Castle
Thurs 9th July – Peter Higgins (Connect MH Team) on yard before school

Fri 17th July – Break up for Summer