



Parkside House School

Newsletter Spring 2026

Headteacher's Comment

This half term has been a fantastic reflection of the breadth of opportunities and experiences available at Parkside House School. It has been wonderful to see our pupils engaging in a wide range of activities, from the creativity and enthusiasm shown during World Book Day, to the strong sense of community demonstrated through our Red Nose Day celebrations. Our fundraising efforts this term have also been a real highlight, providing meaningful opportunities to embed Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development, helping pupils to understand the importance of contributing to wider society and supporting others.

Across the curriculum, pupils continue to make meaningful and consistent progress. This is evident in the development of extended writing across all subjects, alongside continued learning in other areas of the curriculum. The children are building confidence, developing independence and taking increasing pride in their work across a broad range of subjects. It is particularly encouraging to see many pupils stepping outside of their comfort zones, overcoming barriers and recognising their own achievements.

We are also proud to have introduced new initiatives this term that are already having a positive impact. Our "DONUT Miss School Café" has been a real highlight, celebrating improved attendance while creating opportunities for pupils to connect, feel valued and experience a genuine sense of belonging. Alongside this, the introduction of Leo, our new therapy dog at Ashington, has further strengthened our pastoral support, providing pupils with a calm and reassuring presence when they need it most.

At Parkside House School, we remain committed to creating an environment where pupils feel safe, supported and inspired to succeed. Thank you to our staff, pupils, and families for your continued contribution to our school community.

— **Belinda Young, Headteacher**

World Book Day 2026

Pupils and staff at Parkside House School enjoyed a fantastic celebration of reading as part of this year's World Book Day. The day marked the exciting finale of a whole week dedicated to sharing the joy of books and encouraging a love of reading across the school.

Throughout the week, pupils took part in a range of fun and creative activities designed to bring stories to life. One of the highlights was a guessing game where pupils tried to match childhood photos of staff with their favourite books. This sparked wonderful

conversations about the stories teachers loved growing up and encouraged pupils to share their own reading memories.

Creativity was also on display as pupils designed their own book tokens for the national competition, while lessons across all subjects incorporated reading in imaginative ways. From exploring stories in English to discovering how reading connects to other areas of learning, the week showed that books can inspire curiosity everywhere.

The celebrations continued on World Book Day itself, when staff arrived dressed as well-known book characters, much to the delight of pupils. Breaktime brought a special book swap event, where pupils could exchange books with friends while enjoying cupcakes together.

To round off the celebrations, a group of pupils visited Seven Stories, the National Centre for Children's Books. During the trip, they had the opportunity to explore the centre and spend their World Book Day book vouchers on new stories to take home and enjoy.

It has been a wonderful week celebrating reading at Parkside House School, reminding everyone that books have the power to inspire imagination, spark conversation and bring people together.



Food Technology

Star Baker for this term goes to one of our pupils who has shown fantastic progress in Food Technology. They have become a very independent learner, often adapting recipes and experimenting with flavours to create some impressive bakes. They have excelled in both practical and theory lessons, demonstrating a strong understanding of techniques such as chopping, rolling, blending and smoothing. They also consistently take pride in their workspace and are a great support during lessons, especially at the start of the week.

AN1 has been busy this term making smoothies. We learn about our "food of the week" every Wednesday, which has included spinach, kale, honey, and oats. AN1 have really embraced making their own smoothies and learning about the vitamins and minerals that help our bodies in many ways. AN1 have overcome fears of textures, environments and flavours which has made Miss Walker enormously proud.

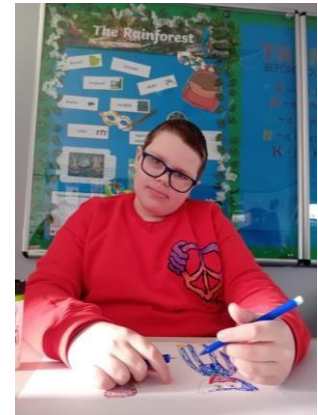
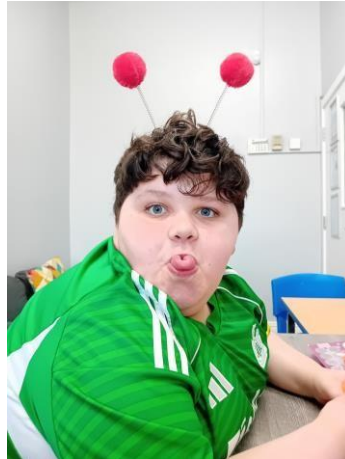


Red



Comic Relief-
Nose Day

Parkside House School was full of laughter, colour and kindness as we came together to celebrate Red Nose Day in support of Comic Relief. Pupils and staff enjoyed a non-school uniform day, with many choosing to wear red or pyjamas, creating a fun and inclusive atmosphere. Throughout the day, pupils took part in a range of engaging Comic Relief-themed activities, supporting the development of key skills through meaningful, real-world learning, alongside a quiz that encouraged teamwork, communication and confidence. It was fantastic to see such a strong sense of community, with smiles all around as everyone joined together for a great cause. Thanks to the generosity of our school community, we are delighted to share that we raised an amazing £115.



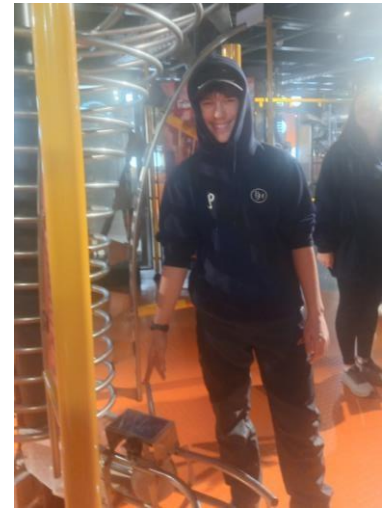
Science

This half term has been highly engaging and productive in science. The primary focus has been on developing pupils' extended writing skills. Most pupils have successfully covered key topics, including the disease and immune system, the digestive system, and the skeletal system. Overall, pupils demonstrated good engagement throughout these lessons. While some pupils experienced challenges with extended writing, they were well supported by both teaching staff and learning support assistants.

In each lesson, pupils were clearly informed of the learning objectives and expected outcomes. To support their wellbeing and maintain engagement, short quiz activities were occasionally incorporated. In addition, pupils participated in hands-on activities, which helped reinforce their understanding of the concepts taught.

This term also included participation in British Science Week, which provided pupils with a range of enriching experiences. Activities included educational visits to the Discovery

Museum and the aquarium. Pupils also took part in a science experiment competition, where winners were recognised and rewarded. Furthermore, some pupils contributed by creating science fact sheets based on real-life applications, and others participated in a science seminar, where they explored future opportunities in science and gained an understanding of its importance in everyday life.



Vocational- Hair and Beauty

Some of our pupils have also been building their portfolios of nail designs. Some created a Valentines display, and others focused on seasonal designs. It is wonderful that some pupils have a natural talent for nail design and all are continuing to develop their skills within their lessons.



Physical Education

This half term, we have introduced golf into the PE curriculum as an individual sport.

One pupil has made exceptional progress, increasing their drive from 120 yards to 238 yards over the course of the half term. Several other pupils have also shown strong development, improving the accuracy, distance and consistency of their shots, demonstrating clear and positive progress.

This term the pupils across both sites have been completing invasion games, health, fitness, and wellbeing. One pupil shared: 'I have gotten so much better at golf and I love playing.'

Our pupils have also been developing their curling techniques this term in preparation for a competition. From steady deliveries to thoughtful discussions on tactics, they have really embraced the challenge. It's been wonderful to see their confidence grow as they learn, practise, and enjoy time together.

Our school football team delivered an outstanding performance at this year's Wanderers tournament, winning every single match. From the very first game, the team showed determination, teamwork, and skill, dominating possession, and creating numerous chances. Each match brought new challenges, but the players remained focused and disciplined, working together both in attack and defence. Overall, it was a fantastic achievement for the school, highlighting not only talent but also hard work, sportsmanship, and team spirit.



Attendance Cafe

This half term, we were delighted to introduce our



“DONUT Miss School Café,” a new attendance initiative that has already been a great success with our pupils. The café celebrates and rewards positive and improving attendance, with selected pupils invited each week to enjoy a special treat from the menu. One pupil is also awarded the “Golden Donut” and can invite a peer to join them, helping to build motivation, confidence, and a sense of connection.

The café has created a positive and inclusive space, where pupils who may not usually spend time together can connect in a relaxed and supportive environment. It has been fantastic to see pupils chatting, laughing, and enjoying each other’s company, with no pressure- just time to feel comfortable, be themselves and experience a genuine sense of belonging. Initiatives like this continue to support our wider work around attendance, wellbeing and building a strong, connected school community.



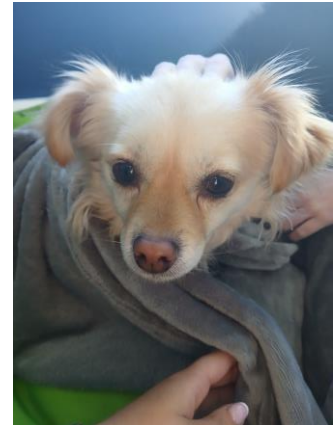


Welcome Leo – Our New Therapy Dog

We are delighted to welcome Leo, our new therapy dog, to Parkside House

School. Leo will be based at our Ashington site, joining Fern who continues to support pupils at Backworth. Leo has already been warmly welcomed by both pupils and staff and

has quickly become a valued part of our school community. He is supporting pupils by providing a calm and reassuring presence, particularly during times when they may be feeling unsettled, overwhelmed, or in need of emotional support.



We are really pleased to have Leo with us and look forward to the positive impact he will continue to have across the school.

Trauma Informed Practice

At Parkside House School, we are committed to continually developing our Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) approach. As a staff team, we work to embed the core principles of TIP into everyday practice, particularly the “3 C’s” — connect, coregulate and co-reflect- ensuring that our approach supports pupils in a calm, safe and inclusive environment. This framework helps guide how we build relationships, respond to individual needs and promote positive outcomes for our learners. We also recognise staff through our weekly “Top TIP Star” award, celebrating those who demonstrate strong trauma-informed practice in their work. This term, awards have been presented to Miss Kingham (twice), Ms Scott, Mr Slee, Mr Manasse, Miss Ratcliff, Miss Armstrong, Mrs Carter and Miss Rickerby. We are proud of the ongoing commitment shown by our staff in supporting pupils each day.



Thank you to our pupils, staff and families for your continued support. Together, we are building a positive, inclusive school community, and we look forward to continuing this momentum into next half term.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back on Monday 20th April.

