



Parkside House School

Newsletter Summer 2026

May 2026



Head Teacher End Of Half Term Statement



This half term has been another reminder of what makes Parkside House School such a special community. I continue to be incredibly proud of our pupils, who show resilience, kindness and determination every day.

This term brought the added challenge of our ISI inspection. Our pupils represented the school brilliantly, demonstrating maturity, honesty and many of the strengths we celebrate across both sites. I would also like to thank our staff team, families and external professionals for their ongoing support throughout the process.

As this newsletter shows, pupils have enjoyed a wide range of enriching experiences, from educational visits and wellbeing activities to celebrating Mental Health Awareness Week and Autism Acceptance Month. These opportunities help build confidence, independence and positive relationships.

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to welcoming everyone back for an exciting final half term, with our Summer Fayre, Summer Ball and many more opportunities ahead.

Thank you

Belinda Young
Head Teacher



Ice Creams all round!



As a special way to recognise the hard work, effort, and progress shown by pupils and staff throughout the term, SLT organised for an ice cream van to visit both the Backworth and Ashington sites. This provided a shared positive experience for the school community, giving pupils the opportunity to enjoy a sweet treat in a relaxed and enjoyable environment. Moments like these help to build connection, celebrate achievement, and create positive memories across both school sites.





Eggs to Ducks



Parkside pupils had a wonderful opportunity after Easter to experience the life cycle of ducks firsthand by watching live duck eggs hatch in school. This exciting project allowed pupils to observe the journey from egg to duckling, helping them to better understand growth, change, and the life cycle of living things.

Throughout the experience, pupils showed great care and responsibility when handling and looking after the ducklings, always supported closely by staff. They learned the importance of gentle handling, meeting the ducklings' needs, and respecting animal welfare.

Staff supported pupils in safely holding the ducklings and helped create enriching spaces for them, including areas to swim and environments that reflected their natural habitat. This hands-on experience encouraged curiosity, nurturing skills, and a deeper understanding of caring for animals and the natural world.





ISI Inspection



This half term, we welcomed inspectors from the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) into school for a full inspection visit. Following the Easter holidays, we received “the call” on the Monday morning, meaning preparations quickly got underway for three busy days in school.

We were incredibly proud of how our pupils represented the school throughout the inspection. Having unfamiliar adults in the building and visiting lessons for three full days can feel unsettling and disruptive for many of our young people, particularly within an SEMH environment where consistency, routine and trusted relationships are so important.

Despite this, our pupils showed resilience, maturity and kindness throughout. Inspectors spent time visiting lessons, speaking with pupils and staff, and looking closely at school life across both sites. Pupils spoke honestly about their experiences in school and demonstrated many of the values we are so proud of every day.

A huge thank you also goes to our staff team, families and wider professionals for their ongoing support throughout the process. We are extremely proud of our whole school community and look forward to sharing the outcome of the inspection once the final report is published.



Autism Awareness Week

In April, pupils took part in a special SMSC focus for World Autism Acceptance Month, designed to help them move beyond awareness and towards empathy and understanding.

Throughout the week, pupils explored what autism really means, challenged common myths, and discussed fair and inclusive ways to support others. All activities were discussion-based and fully inclusive, with no expectation for pupils to share personal experiences.

What Pupils Took Part In

- **Myth-busting quiz** to build accurate understanding
- **Listening to autistic voices** through a Cat Burns Q&A
- **Empathy scenarios** exploring fairness and moral choices
- **Inclusion pledges** and mini awareness campaigns
- **Reflection and celebration** through posters and displays

Our Approach

Staff used respectful, plain language, focused on everyday actions pupils can take, and offered alternatives to speaking for those with sensory needs.

The week encouraged pupils to think about how they can “show up” for others and helped strengthen our school’s culture of kindness, respect and inclusion.





Mental Health Week



Here at Parkside House School, we proudly recognised the Mental Health Foundations Annual Mental Health Awareness week celebrating their nationwide campaign, 'Take Action' dedicated to raising awareness of mental health, reducing stigma and promoting positive wellbeing for us all.

This year's theme 'Take Action' encourages individuals to take meaningful steps to 'Take Action' for yourself, for someone else and for all of us.

Throughout the week students and staff participated in a range of activities designed to 'start up' and encourage more open conversations about mental health, strengthen connections and promote self-care.

The week began with an introduction to Mental Health Awareness week during tutor time where students were provided with a brief overview of why the week is recognised nationally and its importance, with signposting to the Mental Health Foundations website to further explore resources, information and ideas.

Further activities included completing an action plan set out each day, over three days to consider ideas and strike up conversations, for 'taking action' 1. for yourself, 2. for others and 3. for all of us.

On Wednesday many of the students and staff participated in 'Wear Something Green Day'. 'It was wonderful to see the support and strong sense of unity across the school community'. As an advocate for mental health awareness this made me feel very proud to see many of our students wearing green, even if they were too camera shy to take a photo!

Throughout the week there were a range of resources on offer, as well as wellbeing drop-in sessions, Mental Health awareness sessions in PHSE lessons and many informative and very creative PowerPoints were created by students in media studies.

The week ended with green cake and custard being served for lunch, which I was told students and staff gave it a try!





A Successful Half Term of Enrichment



This half term has been a fantastic celebration of enrichment across our school, with pupils engaging in a wide range of exciting and meaningful experiences both in and out of the classroom.

Our students have enjoyed a variety of educational visits, including trips to St Mary's Lighthouse, Newbiggin Maritime Centre, Tim Lamb Centre and Woodhorn Colliery Museum. These visits have provided valuable opportunities for pupils to explore local history, engage with their community, and experience learning in real-world contexts.

In addition, pupils have taken part in a range of fun and engaging activities such as crazy golf sessions, visits to local shops to purchase craft materials, time at local play parks, and a variety of sports sessions. These experiences not only promote physical wellbeing but also encourage independence, decision-making, and social interaction.

Back in school, pupils have also been using Minecraft Education as a tool to develop teamwork, communication, and emotional regulation. Through collaborative challenges, pupils have learned to plan, problem-solve, and support one another in a creative and engaging environment.



Minecraft Teamwork Challenge
Building Success Through Collaboration and Communication



Minecraft Challenge: The Safe Base

Building teamwork and regulation through shared rescue goals.



Supporting Families All Year Round


The Summer holidays can bring a mix of joy and challenge, with more cherished family time, but less routine.

Clinical Lead Lene Vessey and the team at Hillingdon Grange are helping parents to prepare with their Summer Activity Pack.


The pack includes a range of meaningful activities to suit different abilities, helpful guidance for parents and carers, and visual AAC resources to support communication throughout the holidays. It's a fantastic resource, even including wellbeing tips for parents.

Explore the pack [Here](#)



There are some cool activities to try and printed copies are available, just ask your teacher for a copy.



Creating a Social Story – Tips for Parents



Social Stories help children adapt to new routines, develop life skills and navigate social interactions by providing structure and guidance on what to expect and how to respond in social situations.

- 1. Pick a social situation you would like to support your child to prepare for, e.g. travelling on a bus or plane.**
- 2. Consider what you would like them to learn?**
For example, staying calm, following instructions, being patient.
- 3. Use simple language in the first person.** For example, "I'm going on a trip. I travel on a bus/plane to get to X (destination)".
- 4. Describe what happens** "Before I travel, I pack my bag", "At the station/airport I wait with other people".
- 5. Give reasons why it's important**
"This helps keep me and others safe."
- 6. End with a positive**
"When I travel calmly and follow the rules, I feel proud of myself and enjoy my trip". [Click here for more](#)

Summer Activities



You will need:

- Straws (or uncooked spaghetti)
- Play Dough (can be taste-safe)
- Rigatoni pasta
- Cutting board or hard surface to set the playdough on

Roll 3 colours of playdough into balls and press flat on the cutting board. Stick 3, 4 and 5 straws of the same colour into each bit of flattened playdough. Prepare a small bowl of uncooked rigatoni pasta. Encourage children to thread pasta to each straw/ uncooked spaghetti. [Playdough Recipe](#)



You will need:

- Blue and yellow craft paper
- Pasta (spiral or penne)
- Glue
- Scissors
- Yellow paint
- Ziplock bag

1. Make the pasta yellow
2. Draw and cut out a circle from the yellow craft paper
3. Glue the yellow circle onto the middle of the blue craft paper
4. Glue the pasta around the edge of the yellow circle making it look like sunrays



You will need:

- 8 cups flour, 1 cup vegetable oil, sprinkles, a large plastic tub, ice cream scoop, spoons, bowls or ice cream.

1. Mix flour and vegetable oil together until combined. Put some sprinkles on top of the moon sand. Place cups, spoons and an ice cream scoop inside the tub. You can also make paper cones using brown paper and glue. Have fun and play!



You will need:

- Sponges
- Brown paper
- Paint (can be taste-safe)

1. Create the cone: cut a triangle from brown paper, stamp a grid pattern with paints and glue it onto white paper.
2. Make the scoops: Cut sponge circles, dip them in colourful paint, and stamp them above the cone to form ice cream scoops.

[Taste-Safe Paint Recipe](#)



After School Clubs next term are...



Gym Club @ The Parks on Mondays

Craft Club



Craft Club @ Backworth on Mondays



Dog walking with Basil @ Backworth on Tuesdays

Games Club @ Ashington on Tuesdays



Warhammer Club @ Backworth on Wednesdays

Wellbeing @ Ashington on Wednesdays



D & D @ Backworth on Thursdays

Craft Club



Craft Club @ Ashington on Thursdays



Exciting things are coming...



Friday 12th June is ...

Our first ever Summer Fayre at Backworth.

Friday 10th July is ...

Our first ever Summer Ball at Goals in Gosforth



Monday 1st June is ...

1st day back at school and the photographer will be on site...Say Cheeese!



