



JUNE 2026 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to June's newsletter. We had disappointing weather when we first returned after the half-term break where we had low temperatures and torrential rain almost daily! Fortunately, the warm weather and sunshine have appeared this week, just in time for our annual International Showcase Event! We were lucky, too, that the rain kept away on our Class Photograph day and we were able to have these taken outdoors with a lovely 'greenery' backdrop. This month has also been very busy in school with visits out and visitors in, the Phonics Screener Test for Year 1 pupils and the Multiplication Tables Check for pupils in Year 4. Please do read on to find out what's been happening at Riverside this month as well as an important announcement, relevant reminders and forward dates for July.

Classroom News

Nursery – Nursery have had a fabulous time learning about their country, England, exploring where we live and talking about the different spectacular things that people would see if they were to travel to England, such as the Angel of the North, Stonehenge and Buckingham Palace. A few children quite liked the idea of living in Buckingham Palace when they get older! We made English food such as scones and Victoria sponge. We enjoyed performing our dance, The Grand Old Duke of York and singing a very traditional English Nursery Rhyme 'Twinkl, Twinkl Little Star' to our parents who came in to help us celebrate our International Week.

Reception – Reception have loved learning about pirates! We have pretended to be pirates making hooks out of tinfoil and decorating pirate masks! We have even walked the plank! We have written incredible stories about pirates and we are so proud of their writing! Reception children have been using their phonics knowledge to help write sentences and we have been including capital letters, full stops and finger spaces! We have also been learning about Canada during International Week, asking questions and finding out information about this country.

Year 1 – June has been a busy and exciting month in Year 1, with lots of fun despite the very warm weather! The children have loved reading A Midsummer Night's Dream and acting out different parts of the play in class. They were especially big fans of the characters, Puck and Bottom, and had lots of fun bringing the story to life. We also had a wonderful time learning about South Korea for our International Showcase. The children learned about traditional dress, called hanbok, painted beautiful fans using watercolours, and explored South Korean food by making rice balls and kimchi. They also enjoyed learning about both traditional music and modern K-pop, and worked so hard to learn their dance. I was so proud of their fantastic performance and would like to say a big thank you to all the grown-ups who came to support them and celebrate their hard work.

Year 2 – Year 2 have had a brilliant start to Summer 2. They took part in the Skipping Festival with other schools in the local area. They all showed determination, motivation and resilience. We were very proud of all of their efforts and a big well done to Kieran for winning two gold certificates!! In Maths, they have been statisticians - they have used tally charts, pictograms and simple tables to record data which they then have analysed. We are investigating minibeasts and microhabitats in Science and the children have enjoyed exploring the school grounds looking for and identifying different habitats. For International Week, we have been learning all about Spain! We have learnt

about where Spain is and then made fact files with lots of information. The children can say basic phrases and words in Spanish, which they are excited to showcase when parents come into classrooms next week. They have worked incredibly hard practising and showcasing our Spanish dance, too! They have been working tremendously hard and I am proud of them all!

The Butterflies - The Butterflies have enjoyed reading Handa's Surprise, exploring the African landscape and finding out about Handa. We have enjoyed learning about the African animals and dressing up as them too. We loved exploring the fruit from Handa's basket, cutting and shaping it and of course tasting it. We are looking forward to sharing this with our parents next week at Parents into Classrooms. We thoroughly enjoyed International Week, learning about Brazil, making flags and carnival masks. We were great at our showcase performance and made all of our grown ups very proud.

Year 3 - Year 3 are enjoying their work on Lego League, building models related to archaeological digs and considering what might be found there and what it could tell us about the past. We have nearly finished our builds now and are excited to see the finished products. We loved our preparation for International Week. We found out lots of interesting facts about our country, Sweden, and enjoyed dancing to our music. Making the 'chokladbollar' was also great fun. Our dancing skills were put to the test when we took part in a street dance workshop with a professional. The moves were very challenging, but we had fun trying something new. We especially loved learning the moonwalk. In Science, we have enjoyed learning about the different parts of plants and how they work. We particularly enjoyed the investigation that showed how water is transported through plants.

Year 4 - Year 4 have thoroughly enjoyed learning the story of William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. The children have been fantastic at working together, acting out scenes, and bringing the story to life with their enthusiasm and teamwork. In Maths, we have enjoyed learning about coordinates and have moved on to creating our own bar charts and interpreting data from pictograms. The children have shown great confidence and enthusiasm in their learning. We have also welcomed many visitors into school. The children particularly enjoyed meeting a professional street dancer and having a go at some exciting new moves! Finally, we thoroughly enjoyed the International Showcase. It was wonderful to see everyone performing dances representing different countries. I am so proud of Year 4—they did an amazing job and should be very proud of themselves!

Year 5 - This month, Year Five have immersed themselves in Colombian culture, learning about the Colombian way of life and different aspects of the culture during International Week and in preparation for the International Showcase. During international week, pupils learnt about Colombian geography (making visual maps to demonstrate their understanding) and learning about Colombian food (designing their very own Colombian meals!) Additionally, pupils worked very hard practising their own Colombian dance for the Showcase and this hard work certainly paid off! Pupils have continued their hard work in all areas of the curriculum, including completing their set design models in Art and, in particular, have enjoyed their computing topic where they have been working on manipulating sound digitally.

Year 6 - This month, Year 6 had two days where coaches from Newcastle Eagles came in to do coaching with the children. A squad of eight boys and girls from Year 6 then went on to compete in a tournament at the Vertu Arena where The Eagles play. They represented the school admirably and did well - winning and drawing a few games. Since half term, Year 6 have started attending top-up swimming lessons on Thursdays as well as normal swimming lessons. In Science, they have explored light and how we see things - using mirrors to make periscopes.

Important Announcement - Changes for September, 2026

Due to the funding the school receives from the Government each year, as well as a fall in the local and national birth rate, the Governors of Riverside Primary School have made the difficult decision to reduce the number of classes in Key Stage 2 as from September, 2026 *from four to three*. This means that whilst there will be single year groups from Nursery up to and including Year 3, the remaining year groups (4, 5 and 6) will be combined into two mixed-year classes: Year 4/5 and Year 5/6. To maintain single-year classes for every single year group would stretch our limited budget and is simply not affordable at this current time. Combining year groups into mixed classes helps schools save on staffing costs while managing resources efficiently. Whilst this change may be unsettling for some parents and children, we want to reassure you that we have re-written our long term plan to ensure all Year 5 pupils (current Year 4) receive their curriculum entitlement, despite being in different classes and taught by different teachers. Our school ethos and values remain unchanged.

Full details of staffing for the new academic year will be included in the Annual Report pack sent home on 6th July and the children will also find out who their new teacher for next year will be during an assembly on Monday 29th June.

Frequently Asked Questions about Mixed age classes and split year groups at Riverside

1. Will my child be held back if she/he is placed in a class with the younger year group?

Definitely not! The ways in which teaching and learning are organised in primary schools means that teaching and work is tailored to the needs and current achievement levels of individual pupils. Staff at Riverside are very experienced at planning and delivering work to match the needs of mixed age classes. They provide challenge for the more-able children and support for those needing more help, whichever year group they are currently in. Furthermore, the school plans educational experiences for pupils in all classes in ways which ensure good progression and continuity, whichever year group or class they are in.

2. Are there any benefits to the arrangements?

Children benefit in many ways including the opportunity to become an 'expert' for the younger children and being a positive role model which the younger children often aspire to. Having classes of mixed year groups often nurtures thinking & problem solving skills, vocabulary & social competences. There is often a greater sense of cooperation and opportunities to work with a wider circle of peers.

3. I am concerned that forming a mixed age or split year group class may mean that my child's friendship group is being broken up.

Although care is taken in allocating pupils to classes – their social needs are not ignored – in general terms, it is likely to be good for children to experience classes with different classmates so that their circle of friends can be extended beyond the traditional age boundaries. When new classes are formed, opportunities still exist for pupils to maintain contact with friends who have been allocated to other classes (such as at lunchtimes, playtimes, special activities, trips, school performances). When children transfer to secondary school, new friendship groupings in different subject areas become a fact of life, and this situation is generally welcomed by many children.

4. If a mixed age or split year group class is formed, how are decisions taken about which children should be allocated to which class?

We take a number of influences into consideration and make a professional judgement based on this. Split year groups are considered very carefully, depending on each cohort of children. These include (in no particular order):

- social learning group;
- age of child;
- emotional development;
- readiness to learn;
- stage of learning;
- learning styles;
- additional needs; and
- gender and age (balance of class and year group).

All these factors are taken into consideration by the Senior Leadership Team who makes the decision based on professional judgement of where the child will best flourish in both their personal, social and academic achievements.

Staffing News

Miss Bates, Year 3 teacher, is currently absent from work due to illness. Year 3 is being taught by Miss Wilson. We wish Miss Bates well and hope she feels better soon.

Miss Clay, office Administration Assistant, is currently absent from work due to illness. Currently, we have no temporary replacement for Miss Clay and so Miss Taylor is running the school office singlehandedly! We ask for your understanding at this time and request that you remain patient if the main door buzzer or phone is not answered straight away.

Miss Badminton has visited school recently to show off her new baby boy! Staff and children were delighted to see her and both were looking well!

Miss Cooper will be returning from Maternity Leave on Wednesday 15th July. Where she will be placed for the new academic year will be outlined in the full staffing list provided with the Annual Reports sent home on 6th July. Miss Cooper has already begun regular visits to school and some children have already met her and chatted with her.

Breakfast Bonanza Week

We were delighted to see so many pupils (and some newcomers) to our Breakfast Bonanza Week recently. We put on some extra special food choices and we listened to the views of our children - egggy bread was very popular, as were the egg muffins. Our Breakfast Club (part of the Department for Education's Free Breakfast Club Scheme) has become well known, nationally, for its success, so much so that we had local radio and the Council's Comms Teams visit us on the Friday to interview children and see the club in action. (Hopefully, you will have seen the video on the Council's Facebook page). Our attendance that week averaged at 100 pupils which is equivalent to 70% of the school population! If your child hasn't yet attended Breakfast Club, please encourage them to give it a try.

Lockdown Practice

We held a Lockdown Drill practice this month. This enabled children and staff to become familiar with the noise of the siren (it is different from the lesson change bell and the fire alarm). We practised a partial lockdown where blinds were closed and doors were locked and children were required to sit on the floor but lessons continued. We are required by law to have a lockdown drill every 12 months. It went very smoothly and we were satisfied with how the children behaved during it.

Pump Track Installation and demonstration

Everyone was very excited last Thursday when we had our very own Pump Track installed in school. A pump track is a path which has 'rollers' which are the bumps or small hills in the track. It is a track for bikes and scooters that, when ridden properly, does not require pedaling or pushing, but a "pumping"

action to maintain momentum. After the installation of our bespoke design track (which took the full morning), each class was taught how to use it. This is a very expensive piece of kit, costing £10,000 in total, and we were only able to purchase it for the children of Riverside after we were successful in bidding for funds from the North East Combined Authority. The Pump Track is now in daily use and each class uses it one day a week, on a rota system, for the full day. The children know that helmets MUST be worn - there are no exceptions! The Local Authority heard about our Pump Track and the Participation Team kindly donated 15 fully serviced recycled bikes across all sizes. We have also received a large number of helmets for free (another kind donation) so we are well kitted out for those children who don't have their own bikes or scooters or who don't bring them to school. Please note, the track can only be used by children when there is a member of school staff supervising, therefore parents must ensure children do not use it before 8.50am and after 3.20pm.

Monthly Sportsdesk News

This month, the children at Riverside have taken part in the following sporting and fitness events:

- Year 3 Dodgeball
- Year 2 Skipping Festival
- Year 6 Newcastle Eagles - Basketball coaching
- Year 5 Healthy for Life Festival - The Parks
- Year 6 Hoops for Health tournament - Vertu Arena

Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade (TVLB) Water Safety Roadshow

Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade paid a return visit to us last week, along with their rescue vehicle, 'Billy'. The volunteers reinforced the important message of how to stay safe near water. As 13th and 14th June was the beginning of 'Drowning Prevention Week', the volunteers delivered water safety education to our children, showing them the various flags used on the beach, hazards on the beach and who to and how to call for help. TVLB has a dedicated water safety team who deliver education visits year-round, but Drowning Prevention Week is the perfect time to teach this potentially life-saving topic, just before the summer months when young people are more likely to be outdoors and when drownings are most likely to occur.

International Showcase Event

What a wonderful afternoon we had on Wednesday for our annual International Showcase event - one of the highlights of the year. We were very lucky with the weather in that yes, it was warm and sunny, but not uncomfortably warm - luckily the event wasn't planned for Tuesday! There was a very good turnout and our children felt well supported by all the grown ups who were there to watch them perform. We began with a whole school dance and march, with lots of flag waving, followed by our lovely song which the children sang so beautifully. This was followed by dances performed by all the classes, based on their country of study during International Week last week: Butterflies - Brazil; Reception - Canada; Year 1 - South Korea; Year 2 - Spain; Year 3 - Sweden; Year 4 - Mexico; Year 5 - Colombia; Year 6 - Japan. We hope you enjoyed the entertainment, followed by the food sampling. All in all, it was a very positive 'feel-good' event and the children thoroughly enjoyed it. They all performed exceptionally well, knowing the moves and remembering their places, all whilst carrying props!! We received very positive feedback regarding the seating / viewing arrangements this year and I'm sure we will repeat this next year, too.

Items from home

We would like to remind parents that we do not allow children to bring in items from home. Pupils should not bring their own fidget toys in from home as there are baskets of fidget toys in every classroom, specially selected by the SENCo for the age range and needs of the pupils in each class. The Cabin (for KS2 pupils) and The Lodge (for KS1 pupils) also have an abundance of sensory resources for pupils to use to support regulation.

Kieran Lai, World Champion Street Dancer

Kieran Lai, a world champion Street Dancer, visited the school on Monday of last week! The children thoroughly enjoyed watching him perform in assembly and then learning some impressive moves too. Then all the children took part in class workshops with him throughout the day. Kieran taught them different moves and dance transitions which they then performed to each other.

Homework Awards - Summer 1

Congratulations to our Homework winners for Summer 1. These were:

Reception - Myla; Year 1 - Aria; Year 2 - Madison; Year 3 - Addison; Year 4 - Emelie-Grace; Year 5 - Luna; Year 6 - Wesley

Winners for the Summer 2 award will be presented with a certificate during the end of year assembly on the morning of Thursday 16th July.

Medication

No child should bring medication to school. If your child is unwell, and has been prescribed medication to be taken during the school day, a parent MUST complete a form and the arrangement MUST be agreed by the Headteacher before any medication is administered. All enquiries regarding medicines should be directed to the school office.

School Meal Orders

This is a further reminder to parents to order their child's school meals in advance. This will ensure they get the meal of their choice and won't be disappointed.

Forward dates for Summer 2 (29th June – 17th July)

Monday 29th June	Year 5 'Parents into Classrooms' – 2.50pm
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Tuesday 30th June	Year 1 'Parents into Classrooms' – 2.50pm
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Wednesday 1st July	Year 2 'Parents into Classrooms' – 2.50pm
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Thursday 2nd July	Year 3 'Parents into Classrooms' – 2.50pm
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Monday 6th July	Reception 'Stay and Play' – 2.50pm
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Monday 6th July	Annual Reports to Parents
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Tuesday 7th July	Transition Morning
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Tuesday 7th July	Year 4 'Parents into Classrooms' – 2.50pm
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Wednesday 8th July	KS2 Summer Beach Trip – Tynemouth Longsands
Thursday 9th July	Sports Day – 2.00pm
Friday 10th July	Reception & KS1 Summer Beach Trip – Cullercoats Bay
Wednesday 15th July	Nursery Graduation followed by Garden Party (11.00am)
Wednesday 15th July	Year 6 Leavers’ Assembly for parents (2.00pm – 3.00pm)
Thursday 16th July	Summer Fair – 1.30pm
Thursday 16th July	July’s Newsletter published
Thursday 16th July	School Closes for Summer Break
Friday 17th July	SCHOOL CLOSED FOR STAFF TRAINING