



## **TYNESIDE SCHOOL EASES FIRST DAY FEARS**

**With the summer holidays fast approaching, Yr 6 pupils from primary schools in South Tyneside will be looking forward to spending more time enjoying the break and less time worrying about their first day at “big school” thanks to an innovative scheme introduced by Mortimer Comprehensive.**

Students at Mortimer Comprehensive use learning platform technology in school to share information between staff and pupils and head teacher Claire Mullane quickly saw the potential to extend this for their new starters.

Claire explains, “Moving to secondary school is a major upheaval for children and we know that it is something that parents worry about too. Helping Yr 6 pupils to become familiar with the school can ease a lot of these fears.”

Pupils from the primary schools are working online with secondary school students on fun learning activities designed to give them a taste of what life will be like when they start at Mortimer in September.

A dedicated area of the learning platform is available for all pupils and their families to access online and includes lots of useful tips to make the first day less scary – like how the lunchtime rota works and how to pay for your meal – all things which might be very different to a typical primary school day.

Even more importantly, the learning platform will allow pupils or their parents to ask questions during the long summer break, even when the school is closed. Claire continues, “It is perfectly normal for concerns or questions to crop up from parents and pupils during the holiday. And while there are often staff in school it can be difficult to get hold of the right person to answer your questions on the phone. Rather than spend the holiday worrying, you can now go online to ask your question and a member of staff will help.”

The scheme builds on initial success that Mortimer experienced last year when a test version of the project was introduced. The hope is that when Autumn term



begins in September, the whole school will benefit from a happier and more confident intake of pupils.

The learning platform that Mortimer uses is provided by Northern Grid for Learning, the body which delivers broadband connectivity to schools in the North East. As Mel Philipson, manager of Northern Grid, explains, Mortimer has been leading the way with use of their learning platform; "Learning platforms offer fresh and exciting ways for schools to share information and can help to involve pupils, parents and the extended community much more in school life. Working collaboratively with feeder primary schools is an excellent way to address the challenge of transition from primary to secondary school. Parents are always keen to support their children through this process and Mortimer is now giving parents even better information and more flexible ways of doing this."

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**About Northern Grid for Learning:**

Northern Grid for Learning is the Regional Broadband Consortium for the North East. Northern Grid supports schools and local authorities to achieve national targets for ICT and promote high standards in schools.

The company works with its local authority partners and undertakes those responsibilities which they feel are more effectively delivered by regional collaboration. It aims to complement and supplement partner LA developments in ICT. Additionally it engages in a range of activities which provide best value, promote best practice and establish the region as a national centre of excellence.

For further information visit Northern Grid's portal at [www.northerngrid.org](http://www.northerngrid.org)

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