
NORTHUMBERLAND County Council

The Federation of Longhorsley and Whalton Church of England Aided Schools

Longhorsley St Helen's
C of E Aided First School
Drummonds Close
Longhorsley
MORPETH
Northumberland
NE65 8UT



Whalton C of E Aided
Primary School
Whalton
MORPETH
Northumberland
NE61 3XH

Tel 01670 788316

Fax 01670 788031

email: longhorsleyadmin@fedlongwhaltschools.uk
www.longhorsley-st-helens.northumberland.sch.uk

Mrs Nichola Brannen
Executive Headteacher

Tel 01670 775216

email: whaltonadmin@fedlongwhaltschools.uk
www.whalton.northumberland.sch.uk

6th January 2025

Dear Parents

Happy New Year!

Welcome back to the Spring term and 2025! I hope that you all had a great festive break and would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you on behalf of all of the staff for your kind and generous gifts at Christmas (and well wishes), there really is no need as we all do it for your children, and love doing it, but it is greatly appreciated and never expected.

Church Inspection

As you know, we had the Church Inspector, Mr Taggart visit us on 9th December and have received the final report to share with you. Please do have a read. There are no gradings now but we are delighted that Longhorsley St. Helen's Church of England VA First School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. A couple of headlines from the report to give you a taste are:

-a school that is inclusive, nurturing and caring
-a culture of togetherness and achievement
- Pupils experience learning that empowers them to be the best that they can be from the earliest point
- The school and federation vision and associated values are central to the harmonious environment that exists at Longhorsley St. Helen's
- Leaders enable staff from the two schools to work collaboratively to share expertise, nurture pupils and inspire academic aspiration

I would like to thank the whole school team, Governors, Reverend Elaine and our federation team who really make it possible to live out our school vision and core values together - it really is a special place to work.

Thank you to all of you who completed our questionnaire so thoughtfully before the inspection and to the parents who spoke with the inspector too - we are really thrilled with the report - we hope you are too.

New Year Lunches

We would like to invite one parent per family to come along and dine with your Year 1 & Year 2 child next Wednesday. Mrs Lamb is doing her fabulous chicken Korma (vegetarian option too) with brownie and cream afterwards! We hope you enjoy the meal and creating memories with your child. Please complete this [google form](#) so we know how many meals to make.

New Starters

We look forward to welcoming our new Nursery children into school this week and look forward to getting to know you better in the coming months.

PE this half term

PE kits are needed every Wednesday and Friday this term and please note that we now have swimming on Wednesdays (and back to our earlier swimming slot so the children will be back in plenty of time now too for the end of the school day). Liz Naylor - a Gymnastics coach from Wansbeck Gymnastics Club will be teaching the children this half term for gymnastics every Friday as part of their PE Curriculum. Children continue to have their Commando Joe Missions too so lots of active sports and team building going on throughout the week as well through the RESPECT curriculum.

After School Clubs

We are really pleased to offer an additional after school club this half term - confirmation is being sent out today for the multi-skills club starting after school tomorrow night. Please note that we have two spaces remaining, please contact the office if you would like one for your child. We continue to offer the ever popular Dance and Great Oaks Forest School too, although these are full this term.

Y4 Robinwood Residential

We have again arranged for children in Year 4 to attend the fabulous Robinwood Activity Centre at Barhaugh Hall, Alston for three days and two nights in May (12th to 14th) with the Year 4 children from Whalton and Cambo. The children will have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities over the three days and make new friends ready for Middle School.

Although we subsidise through our Sports Premium Grant, there will be a cost involved, however, until we have the number of children likely to attend we are unable to advise the amount, (last year the cost was £200). Payments can be

made in four monthly instalments prior to the visit through your child's School Gateway account.

Please can you complete the following [google form](#) to indicate whether you would like your child to attend the visit. Further information about Robinwood is available on their website [here](#).

Attendance

Many thanks for keeping us informed of absences related to illness or emergency appointments. We continue to follow our Attendance Policy and any unexplained absences will be followed up by the Office on the morning of the absence, so we know the whereabouts of your children to ensure that they are safe. There is still the 48 hour rule if your child has had a sickness bug.

With respect to leave of absence requests, unfortunately, unless exceptional, they are all deemed unauthorised. Again, we are so thankful for your honesty but need to ensure that we are fulfilling our statutory duty of emphasising the need for your children to be in school - every day counts for their learning and every day is planned for carefully by staff. Work will not be provided for in-term holidays and missing continuous days will lead to gaps in your child's learning. Please look out for and use training days to get cheaper deals or long weekends which don't impact on your child's education. Many thanks for your continued support with this. We will be sending you an update of your child's current attendance from last term next week as we review both attendance and the current attendance policy with the new government guidance. We aim for 96% attendance.

The Education Welfare Officer visits us termly to monitor our attendance and if we feel that we need to support anyone to improve attendance, we will be in touch. There are a series of model letters that we will need to send out too if your child hits a trigger point. Please understand that these are what we are being asked to do, but we also know that we have great relationships with yourselves, so please do not be put off by the wording of some of these!

Teaching and Learning

Newsletters outlining the term's topic and curriculum for each class will be sent home this week, so that you know what your child will be learning.

Although our next formal Pupil Progress Update Meetings for parents will be held next half term, please remember that you can make appointments to see your child's teacher at any point in the year to discuss your child's progress or if you have any questions.

Reception Places

Please remember to apply for your child's Reception place for this September by the deadline of 15th January. Even if you are currently attending our Nursery, you still need to apply formally.

The application process for a reception school place in Northumberland is handled by the Northumberland County Council. The key dates for the 2025 intake are:

November 1, 2024: The online application portal opens.

January 15, 2025: The closing date for applications.

April 16, 2025: National Offer Day - you will find out which school your child has been offered a place at.

Further details are on our website under admissions.

<https://www.longhorsley-st-helens.northumberland.sch.uk/admissions/>

The online portal can be found directly here: [Citizen Portal - Sign in](#)

For new Nursery parents, please note, unfortunately a place in our Nursery does not automatically give you a place for our Reception, so please remember to apply when the time comes for your child entering Reception.

Finally, many thanks for your continued support in all areas of school life. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any queries or questions. Here's to a fabulous 2025!

Kindest regards,

Mrs Brannen
Executive Headteacher