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# NORTHUMBERLAND County Council

The Federation of Longhorsley and Whalton Church of England Aided Schools

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19th May 2026

Dear Parents,

Where has this half term gone? Lots of updates to keep you in the loop for Summer 2; which is a very busy half term! Please also read the school newsletter and letter about multiplication tables practice too.

## Year 4 Residential

Firstly, a huge well done to our Year 4 children; the three day residential in Alston was a huge success with lots of new friendships being made with the children from Whalton and Cambo schools, ready for middle school. The Robinwood Staff could not believe how well they all supported each other on the activities, saying they would not have known that they were from three different schools. If you would like to see what they got up to, please visit our Longhorsley X account: <https://x.com/LonghStHelens> . Huge thanks as well to Mrs Birnie, Miss Holmes and Mrs Campbell for coming along; the children were so well supported in each of their three mixed groups which allowed the residential to be such an amazing experience for everyone (as it is pretty full on from 7am until very late!).

## National Assessments

It is that time of year when our children undergo the statutory Year 1 phonic check and the Year 4 multiplication check:

### Year 1

The phonics screening check is taken individually by all children in Year 1. It is a nationally required assessment which takes place in June. It evaluates whether each child can accurately decode words using phonics. Children read 40 words—a mix of real words and "nonsense" (pseudo) words—to their teacher on a one-to-one basis. We don't make a big fuss about it as it is part of their daily teaching, however, I have included the link here to the parents guide to help:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/690cb573dad669f061d46b58/Phonics\\_screening\\_check\\_information\\_for\\_parents.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/690cb573dad669f061d46b58/Phonics_screening_check_information_for_parents.pdf) .

If you would like any further information, please have a chat with Miss Bowen who will also be sending links out to support too.

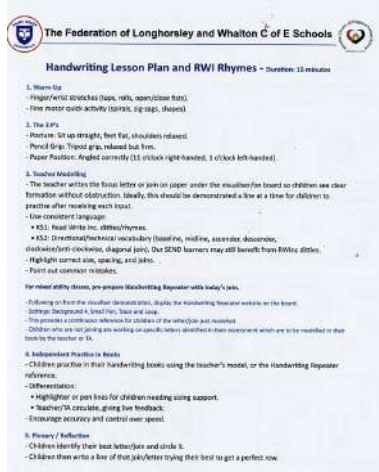
## Year 4 Multiplication Check

The multiplication tables check (MTC) is statutory for all year 4 pupils.

The purpose of the MTC is to determine whether pupils can recall their times tables fluently up to 12, through a set of 25 timed questions, on a laptop. This skill is essential for future success in mathematics, especially before moving on to middle school. Please see a separate letter from Mr Morris about 'Times Tables Rock Stars' which will help to target our children's practice even more and also further down the school from Year 2.

## Ways forward following Ofsted

Following parental feedback on where we are and what next, especially in terms of the support parents can give to teachers and their own children - see below for what we are doing/have done and suggestions on how you can help too - thank you as always!

<u>Focus area for continued improvement/embedding</u>	<u>What we are doing/have done</u>	<u>How can parents help</u>
<p><b><u>Handwriting</u></b></p> 	<p>Prior to Ofsted, we have reviewed our policy in light of the government guidance - summary here: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-writing-framework/writing-framework-summary">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-writing-framework/writing-framework-summary</a></p> <p>Every year group has a 15 minute daily practice session, using the 3 ps - see left hand column</p>	<p>The children are great in their handwriting books - it just needs to be automatic in all subject books.</p> <p>We are going to be running a parent workshop looking at handwriting progression/helpful tips for home - <a href="#">please sign up here</a> if you are interested and when is a good time.</p> <p>We will continue our Star Writer Awards with a focus on presentation and capital letters especially!</p>
<p><b><u>Times Tables</u></b></p>	<p>Additional daily slot to be added to the timetable from Year 2 upwards to practice and recall times tables, including a change of IT programme/game to help children/staff to know which times tables are going well/need more teaching first</p>	<p>Install any app/program which engages your children to work on their times tables so that by Year 4 they are fluent up to 12 times table.</p> <p>Mr Morris's letter talks about 'Times Table Rocks Stars' as it analyses which tables the children are doing well at/need further work on.</p>
<p><b><u>Assessment</u></b></p>	<p>Using different feedback methods consistently, (based on research) to ensure all children are taking part in feeding back instantly to teachers within the lesson, as well as when the teachers talk to them on a 1:1 basis and through</p>	<p>Every half term we send out your children's learning journey as a newsletter (was hard copy, now on our website with link provided). It has all of the subjects and topics for each half term on it. The children need to know this 'sticky knowledge' so any reinforcement/questioning at home would be really helpful.</p>

	<p>marking.</p> <p>Assessment grids have been reviewed as part of our feedback and marking policy and are carried out in the penultimate week of every half term for every subject.</p>	<p>If you could talk to your children about what they are learning in different subjects and then even going and getting library books on these topics would really help to reinforce their learning and curiosity to know more.</p>
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Marble Treats for everyone!

We really hope that your children have come home and told you all about their most recent marble treats (I think we need bigger jars!). Firstly, they had the opportunity to go inside Kielder's blow up planetarium to see the constellations and different planets, which the children loved and shared so much knowledge afterwards. Then on Friday, we had Mr Hare, a very skilled drummer, who worked with all of the children from Nursery to Year 4, exploring the different drums, rhythms and beats - have a look at the photos below - the children were all amazing!



Sports Day

Finally, we are trialling our very first Federation Sports Day at Longhorsley on Thursday 18th June. Reception children and parents from Whatton will join our morning sports activities at 9.15am and then the rest of Whatton will join with us for the afternoon sports activities. Huge thanks in advance to the PTA of both schools who will be serving delicious food and cakes, and a small variety of stalls in their final fundraising efforts of the year towards our sports track around the field. More detailed information will be coming from them, but just to note that although there will be suggested costs, it will be on a donation basis.

Here's to a very happy and fun summer 2 term, with lots of learning too!

Kindest regards,

Mrs N Brannen  
Executive Headteacher