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# NORTHUMBERLAND County Council

The Federation of Longhorsley & Whalton Church of England Aided Schools



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8<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Dear Parents

A great big welcome back! I hope that you have all had a wonderful summer with your children. It was a delight to see how beautifully settled the children were in their new classes on Tuesday morning, and how smart they all look - thank you!

It has been another summer full of activity here at Longhorsley with lots of painting and improvements externally, and freshening up on the inside. I truly believe that high expectations and standards begin with the environment and hope that you all agree that over the last two and half years, many improvements have re-shaped and updated the school so that your children have the highest quality environment possible for them to enjoy and learn in. Thanks to Nick Gale and his team, who cut down the hedges and trees, and Mrs Martin, our caretaker who has scrubbed it clean, our adventure playground looks just as good as it did two years ago - all ready to be enjoyed this term. Please remember that the adventure playground is for use in school time only when every year group has an allocated day and is supervised by staff. Thanks to Mrs Lishman for sorting and clearing the allotment area too - very much appreciated; our grounds have been well looked after!

### External Paint job!

Thanks to Andy and his great team at FM4U, the outside of our school has been transformed. The team worked tirelessly to sand, fill and paint the whole exterior of our school as well as replacing two rotten windows; we hope you agree that it has really smartened it up and made it more weather proof for future years.

### KS2 Classroom

Mrs Rusby's class has been completely stripped and re-decorated, including a beautiful new carpet, safety flooring to the wet area and new doors to her cupboard too. Clearing, sorting and putting back was a mammoth task - so thank you to Mrs Rusby who was on an absolute mission - it really has made a difference. As always, Mrs Martin ensures everything is cleaned up afterwards and the whole school is spic and span for the new academic year - thank you!

The whole staff have all worked hard to ensure that each classroom and room was ready and waiting for the children so I would just like to say an extra big thank you to them all; the kitchen is spotless, thanks to Mrs Lamb and Mrs McEwan, who has been working incredibly hard at getting the



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office sorted as well as getting everything ready for the new term and generally making sure that everything has run smoothly.

### **Staffing**

A reminder of this year's class organisation:

Nursery/Reception - as Mrs Green currently remains on long term sickness absence, Mr Smith will continue teaching in our Early Years' Unit with Mrs Mayer until further notice.

Y1: Miss Thompson - Miss Clayton

Y2: Mrs Campbell - Miss Clayton

KS2: Mrs Rusby - Mrs O'Brien

Mrs Campbell is also our Assistant Headteacher and is responsible for the daily management of the school and to help you with any queries you may have in the mornings or after school, especially about any specific concerns about your child's learning or their well-being.

### **Teaching and Learning**

You will all have received your child's class newsletter this week which gives an overview of our topics for this term. Further planning information is available on our website under 'curriculum'. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to see your child's class teacher.

### **Diary Dates and Attendance**

Our diary dates give you the whole academic years' events. I know that you have found this extremely useful so that you can plan ahead. Our next training day is the Friday before half term, so this would be an ideal opportunity for a nice long weekend or slightly longer week at a cheaper price! As you are aware, no absence for holidays can be authorised during term time unless they are for exceptional reasons, so if you could please utilise opportunities such as these to help support your child's attendance, that would really help to improve our whole school attendance record. As I stated at the end of last term, nearly 40% of parents requested leave of absence within term time last year with 127 days in total lost - we seriously need to reduce the number of days that our children miss school as we know what impact it has on their learning. We work extremely hard to give your children the best education, but they need to be in school so please support us with this. From now on, applications will include a discussion with myself about your child's current attendance. The Education Welfare Officer will also be visiting school in the next couple of weeks.

### **Federation Update**

We are now federated with Whalton C of E Primary School. For those familiar with television programmes such as DIY SOS and 60 minute makeover, that pretty much sums up the last three weeks of the summer holidays with all the building work and decorating finally coming altogether for the completion of our new extension and redecoration of the entire school on Tuesday evening. We welcomed our Year 5 children back on Wednesday and were very proud of all of our children at Whalton in their new uniforms consisting of blazers and ties - how smart they look! Federation days will still be arranged on a termly basis so all of the children here will get to visit to meet their federation friends and see the changes for themselves at the same time.

I look forward to catching up properly with as many of you as possible over the next few weeks. Look out for our Harvest Service and Family Lunch and get booked in - it's a lovely opportunity to have lunch with your child and experience our school meals for yourself. Please also remember that I can always be contacted whether I am here or at Whalton. Here's to a great term.

Kind regards

Mrs Brannen