

NORTHUMBERLAND County Council

The Federation of Longhorsley St Helen's and Whalton Church of England Aided Schools

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Wednesday 17th July 2019

Dear Parents

As we approach the last couple of days of term, I would just like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to you all for your continued support across the Federation; it has been another busy year in both schools, with building work at Longhorsley and the completion of our first year with Year 6 children as a Primary School at Whalton. I have included the collated parent questionnaire results at the end of my newsletter (for both schools) and cannot thank you enough for your feedback as we continually listen and look for ways to improve. We were overwhelmed by your positive, insightful and appreciative comments. Thank you; we really do try to be the very best we can be for your children.

Staffing:

At Longhorsley, we welcomed Mr Chambers this year, who has settled in brilliantly to Team Longhorsley in KS1. However, in terms of staffing for September, we will be saying farewell to both Mrs Dyson at Whalton and Mrs Swordy at Longhorsley; we wish them well in their next adventures and thank them for all of their hard work and commitment; they will be missed.

Next year's staffing will be as follows across the Federation:

Longhorsley	Whalton
Class 1: Miss Thompson/Mrs Casper/Mrs Mayer	Class 1: Mrs Potter
Class 2: Mr Chambers/Mrs O'Brien	Class 2: Mrs Elliott
Class 3: Mrs Campbell	Class 3: Miss Anderson
Class 4: Mr Reilly	

Mrs Lishman will continue to support teaching and learning across Longhorsley every Wednesday and Mrs Casper, who is now our Higher Level Teaching Assistant, will be working across the Federation, including Whalton for three days a week with Miss McAlindon continuing to support across Whalton.



PTA:

In terms of support for the schools, we could not have asked for any greater dedication than our current PTA members. Across both schools, the PTA work tirelessly to raise not only the funds for the things that schools cannot always afford in this current educational climate, but to provide the catering/refreshments at all school events, creative ideas made to sell, making and baking, production of presents/gifts at all the seasonal times of the year - none of this would be possible without the generosity of these people, so a huge thank you to everyone involved, with a special mention and thanks to Mr Manners and to Mr Waterston at Longhorsley's very impressive and professional first family barbecue, following sports day, and personally to Whalton's PTA: Caroline, Judith and Sally, and all the helpers at Whalton's Summer Fair, which also had a very professional BBQ too!

Please continue to support our PTA and their events in any way that you can as it really does benefit your children directly; plus *the more the merrier in terms of helpers* and then the work gets shared out!

Our Broad Curriculum:

Enrichment wise, we have had successful sports days at both schools this term, the weather was especially ordered! The Y4 residential to Robinwood, Y5 to Dukeswood House and Y6 French trips all went smoothly again this year and were very much enjoyed by all. The Longhorsley and Whalton Cups were brilliant; friendly competition at it's best - great thanks to the staff and coaches who made these so successful at both schools. We have just found out that both schools have been awarded the **gold** school games mark too; well done to all children and staff, especially Mrs Campbell - what an achievement!

The musicality of our children was especially showcased in our Year 3 and 4 Ukulele Concert at Longhorsley and the Music concert at Whalton in the Village Hall. Individual performances by our talented children were stunning too. Huge thanks to all of our specialist music staff, who come in to work with the children to get them not only to a high standard in their field of music, but more importantly to enjoy music, and also to the staff who organised all of these events too.

New Classes:

In terms of getting ready for September, all children have visited their new teacher and classrooms (if applicable) and you have had the opportunity to meet and hear from their new teachers. Thank you so much for your feedback following your children's reports; I am so very proud of their achievements.

For the Leavers at both schools, the very best of luck in your new schools; please do not forget us and let us know how you are getting on.

School Uniform - Longhorsley:

Many thanks to those parents who have shared comments already with regard to the review of our school uniform and our current supplier. As there have been some mixed views over the uniform change; a more formal consultation will take place next term with respect to the trial of ties and blazers. By October, we will make an informed decision on whether we go ahead with the trial of ties and blazers.

In the meantime, we would really like to support the local supplier 'North Embroidery and Print' (previously of Pinny Princess and a local family beef farm) who is visiting school tomorrow to drop off samples of our newly designed school jumpers and cardigans, if anyone would like to have a look and give us their thoughts at the end of the school day in the hall, that would be greatly appreciated.

Just to clarify that the school sweatshirts/sweat cardies are still our current school uniform and can all be worn until September 2020 and even then could become part of the PE uniform, so they are fully recycled, especially if you have a number of siblings!

If we are happy with the new school jumpers and cardigans, these will be available to order in the first week back after the summer (with a three day turn around and local pick up) if you would like to buy or need new school uniform. Please do not hesitate to continue to talk to us if you ever are experiencing financial difficulties.

Parent Questionnaires:

Thank you so much to everyone who completed our annual Ofsted Parents' questionnaire. Please see below for the collated results from both schools. As always, we do listen to your comments and try to make any possible changes as a result. All feedback is very much appreciated and will help us to continue to improve outcomes for our children even further. Any suggested ways forward/ questions will be reflected upon ready for the Autumn term. Any 'don't know' answers usually mean that it has not been applicable to you - i.e. you have had no concerns to raise or your child has not experienced any bullying, for example: *'bullying - unable to comment as not aware or experienced any issues with bullying in school - this is surely a good thing!'*

Longhorsley Parent Questionnaire Results June 2019		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
1	My child is happy at this school.	32	5		
2	My child feels safe at this school.	34	3		
3	My child makes good progress at this school.	30	7		
4	My child is well looked after at this school.	31	6		
5	My child is taught well at this school.	31	6		
6	My child receives appropriate homework for their age.	28	8	1	
7	This school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.	30	7		
8	This school deals effectively with bullying.	14	7		16
9	This school is well led and managed.	28	9		
10	This school responds well to any concerns I raise.	26	9		1
11	I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress.	26	11		
12	There is a good range of activities that my child finds interesting and enjoyable.	32	5		
13	Would you recommend this school to another parent? very positive comments from most of these - see below)	31 (6 no direct answer given, although			

Do you have any other suggestions or comments?

- The school has a lovely family feel to it and our child always looks forward to going
- Longhorsley provides a safe and fun environment for children to learn
- I know he is well cared for, supported in his learning and exposed to wonderful core values that he will carry throughout his life
- Friendly, caring, well organised with good standard of education
- Strong, dynamic leadership, with excellence in teaching
- Wide range of educational opportunities
- The school facilitates children to reach their full potential, regardless of their academic level
- School rules are enforced fairly, creating an atmosphere of safety and belonging
- Children are happy and making excellent progress
- Brilliant, nurturing environment in which children flourish
- A beautiful sense of community and cohesiveness
- We feel very lucky that our child goes to this school
- I am delighted with my child's continuous improvement academically and the friendships she has made
- In my opinion, this school instills moral and ethical values which enable the children to negotiate dilemmas and conflicts with open mindedness, empathy and kindness....apologies for the lack of negative feedback
- Thank you to all of the team working together to deliver a first class education
- Thank you for all your hard work!!!
- Fantastic school; we are lucky to have you all

Suggestions:

- Even more after school clubs? my child has enjoyed these a lot
- It would be good if after school clubs ran longer than one term (appreciate not always possible) or to cover when no playgroup
- The school gateway account is obviously a work in progress, however, I am still unclear of what I owe!
- What about netball...and a parents netball team to raise money for the school
- I would like to see more around emotional well-being; encouraging regular reflection on feelings to address and school based anxieties as early as possible
- Only concerns are lack of uniforms available (takes ages to order/deliver)

Whalton Parent Questionnaire Results June 2019

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
1	My child is happy at this school.	24	1		
2	My child feels safe at this school.	22	3		
3	My child makes good progress at this school.	24	1		
4	My child is well looked after at this school.	23	2		
5	My child is taught well at this school.	23	2		
6	My child receives appropriate homework for their age.	19	6		
7	This school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.	15	9		1
8	This school deals effectively with bullying.	12	6		7
9	This school is well led and managed.	19	6		
10	This school responds well to any concerns I raise.	18	7		
11	I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress.	18	7		
12	There is a good range of activities that my child finds interesting and enjoyable.	21	4		
13	Would you recommend this school to another parent? although very positive comments - see below)	14 (6 no direct answer given,			

Do you have any other suggestions or comments?

- small class sizes and excellent progress made in first year at school
- strong sense of community in school. Children look after each other
- caring, warm and safe
- They get some many different enrichment opportunities visiting authors, stem week scientists, appropriate educational visits and a wide range of music. Thank you to everyone who works with my child. He loves coming to school.
- The school lets children develop to their strengths rather than a fixed mould. The school keeps to a regular timetable e.g. spellings and homework so it is easier to manage.
- Whalton is a lovely school with fantastic staff that teach the children with patience and kindness to help them be the best they can be
- Definitely recommend. The learning journey at Whalton is second to none. The children are very fortunate to have excellent teachers, who make learning fun, in a nurturing environment and always encourage them to be 'the best they can be'. We like the focus on

- reading, writing and maths and appreciating the outdoors whether it be through sport or 'just being outside'. The school is very well managed at all levels and home to school communication is excellent
- Absolutely! The staff are fantastic, always giving 110%. Both the teaching and pastoral care are second to none. I would highly recommend the school to anyone. Thank you for doing such an amazing job!
- Yes without a doubt. I would recommend this school to another parent
- Yes, I have. You know the children well
- My child is very happy at school and I am amazed at what he is learning every week.
- Smaller class size which aids in targeting individual training needs within the lessons. Encourages parental interaction - reading, trips, family services, half term services etc.
- Yes. Great school!
- Yes, small school and every child known personally to all staff. Staff are very helpful and approachable and always available.
- Yes, nurturing, good communication with parents, small classes
- Yes, I would strongly recommend this school. I am so pleased I chose this school for my daughter. Teachers and staff go above and beyond
- Definitely! Small, personal and friendly. Children mixing with all ages of pupils. Excellent tuition by positive, enthusiastic staff.

Suggestions:

- none identified

And finally...

As this is my final newsletter for this academic year, I would also like to formally thank all of the staff for their hard work and commitment and always going the extra mile and to the Governing Body who have been tremendous in their support and challenge for both schools. Also great thanks to Reverend Frances Dower, Reverend Fiona Sample and Pam Walker, Associate Lay Minister, for all of their support in services, popping in to school and general pastoral support and guidance for children, parents and staff.

Just to remind you that school will re-open at 8.55am on Tuesday 3rd September for children at Walton but not until *Wednesday 4th September for Longhorsley children* due to the Morpeth Partnership having two training days this year.

Have a great summer when it comes and enjoy your wonderful children; they are all very special. We still have our 'End of Year' Service to come at both schools: 9.15am at St Helen's Church and 2:00pm at Saint Mary Magdalene's Church, bring your tissues (Y4 and Y6 parents!) and I look forward to seeing you all there - it is open to all parents of all year groups.

Kind regards

Mrs Brannen
Executive Headteacher