

# NORTHUMBERLAND

## COUNTY COUNCIL

Lowick and Holy Island C of E First Schools

• 30 Main Street • Lowick • Berwick-upon-Tweed • TD15 2UA • Tel (01289)388268

Website: <http://www.lowickholylislandschools.org.uk>

Email: [Admin@lowick.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:Admin@lowick.northumberland.sch.uk)

Headteacher – Rebecca Simpson

[rebecca.simpson@lowick.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:rebecca.simpson@lowick.northumberland.sch.uk)

Interim Assistant Headteacher – Duncan Mitchell

[duncan.mitchell@lowick.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:duncan.mitchell@lowick.northumberland.sch.uk)

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Dear Parents and Carers

I am sending a letter in addition to our usual newsletter as we have quite a few things to share with you this week.

First of all, I am delighted to let you know that we have appointed a teacher for the Holy Island school. Her name is Heather Stiansen and she is due to start in September. Hopefully she will be able to join us for a couple of days this term if her current school will release her. She is a very experienced teacher and she impressed us all very much at interview. We think she will be a fantastic asset to our schools.

At our 'Literacy Twilight' the staff discussed how our school approach to spelling was impacting on the children's writing. We have noticed that some children are able to score very well in tests but then forget the spellings when writing in another lesson. We feel that we need to improve how this works across both classes. As a result, after half term, we have updated how we do our spelling homework and how we will consolidate that work in school.

From June, children will be asked to write sentences which include words following specific spelling rules. They will be challenged to find other words which belong to that spelling rule group. We will be carefully tracking their use of these spellings in their written work across the following week and rewarding children who apply their new spellings. It is our hope that this will remove the stress some children feel about spelling tests but still stimulate children who like a bit of competition. We will continue to give the children plenty of time to do their spelling homework so that they can manage their time around out of school activities.

With regard to maths, the school has been accepted onto a 'readiness for mastery' group linked with the Great North Maths Hub. This will help us develop our approach to maths in a way that works well for our children to maximise their progress and confidence. It also means that we will be connecting with maths specialists across the North East to build up our expertise and to share resources and training opportunities.

You will be able to tell from all of the above, that things are changing at our schools. We feel very positive about moving forward and making our schools the best they can be. I would like to thank the staff, governors, parents and families who have been such a marvellous support in my first half term. Together we are a great team and I look forward to seeing what else we can do!

Yours sincerely

*Rebecca Simpson*

