



# NCEA Warkworth Primary School

## Autumn 2 Newsletter

### Headteacher's Message

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you had a great half-term, whatever the weather!

Christmas is fast approaching - if you are the sort of person who has already bought all their presents, ordered the turkey, and decided on your decorative theme this year, you have my utmost envy and jealousy. It is not until I write this and start thinking about how soon is too soon to make a 'hall availability' spreadsheet for nativity practice that it really dawns on me how quickly it comes around (and yes, Miss Milne has already sent one out during half-term...!).

It is an honour to work with your children but Christmas takes this to another level. The excitement builds, the sound of carols in the air is so emotional, the countdown to Mrs Dixon's Christmas Dinner begins (still my favourite meal in a school, ever, and I've had my fair share!!), and we are all brought back to our own school days. Those of us lucky enough to be parents and work in a school get to experience it doubly so.

Thank you to so many of you who attended our Harvest Service - please do not forget to add our own 'Christmas Carols and Lessons' to your calendar from Years 1-6 on **Friday 19th December at 2:15pm.**

Following on from Harvest, I should remind you all that our annual collection for Amble Food Bank began this week, ending this coming Wednesday. House points are one incentive for the children (and, yes, staff too...!), but it is such an important cause to us all here. Sadly, we know of multiple families that have needed to access Amble Food Bank and how much of a lifeline this service provides.



Looking backwards for a moment, it was a hugely successful last half-term. Our three new members of staff, Miss Fagan, Mrs Welch and Ms Myllymaki, have settled in even better than expected, adding a variety of skills to our team as well as being all-importantly excellent teachers!

Our 'mini pilgrimages' have begun, giving children new opportunities to reflect spiritually, alongside the local youth ministry team, Ignite, restarting Open the Book and giving Harvest Workshops to Years 4 and 5 to reflect on thankfulness. Forest School is in full flow for most year groups, with more to come, showing the joy of outdoor learning no matter the weather!

Our House Captains have been chosen and our Prefects began their duties this week. The new School Council have petitioned me with playground requests, most of which I have said yes to (!) and our Worship Council have an exciting task to help design new banners that reflect each church season.

Then looking ahead, this half-term does have the Christmas excitement, but the settling in part of a new school year is over and we can continue to push ourselves and the children to be the best they can be, both academically and as a human being. [Our teaching approach](#) of rigorous lessons with high expectations within a loving, nurturing environment is embedded in every classroom, be that turn taking and speaking for our smallest souls, to being braver in every PE lesson, to our oldest children seeing tests not as something to fear but a way of making themselves even better.

Yes, I say it every time, but it truly is a joy to have the job I have and lead the wonderful adults who work tirelessly for your amazing children. Best of all, the children's smiling faces each day (even from our grumpy pre-teens who could not possibly admit they love school really!) make the fact I barely see sunlight anymore worth it.

**Jonathan Booth**  
Headteacher



**Not tossed with the waves, but speaking the truth in love, we will grow.**

*Ephesians 4:14-15*



## Uniform Consultation

Thank you to everyone who completed the uniform consultation. We received 67 responses (out of 149 families in total) which I believe is a strong and representative sample.

97% were against changing the uniform for Nursery to Year 4 to match that of Years 5 and 6. Rather than delay communication to the new year, I wanted to write to you as soon as the consultation closed today just a couple of hours ago. I will therefore be recommending to governors at our end-of-November meeting that we do not proceed with any uniform changes. **The uniform will remain the same.**

I am grateful that, even on a potentially divisive issue (!), most families approached the consultation with understanding and respect, even when they disagreed. Many of you value our high expectations for uniform, with several suggesting phased approaches such as introducing the changes from Year 1 or Year 3.

The main reasons against change related to practicality, particularly the colour of items (admittedly, my own Nursery-attending daughter has white polos which is my job to wash, not my wife's!), and the cost implications for families with existing stock or hand-me-downs. I had underestimated how positive parents were about the Year 5 and 6 uniform being different - rather than being an irritating mid-school change, it came up repeatedly how much parents liked the oldest pupils having something different.

One local school leader said something to me which was echoed by several parents: "You already have one of the smartest uniforms, so why make it smarter?" I take that point. For me, uniform is about more than appearance; it reflects our ethos and our belief in high standards. That said, it's clear from the consultation that our current uniform already communicates that identity well, and further change isn't needed.

Interestingly, most children in Years 1 to 4 supported the proposed change; however, on this matter, parent voice rightly carries more weight than pupil or staff voice!

A few parents drew comparisons with workplaces that are relaxing dress codes. I respectfully disagree with that perspective. Education is more than preparation for employment. Having taught across the age range, from 3-11, in my school career, I consistently wear a jacket and tie because it sets the visual standard I want for our pupils, not because of what may or may not be in fashion by the time they enter the world of work. I'm proud that our school combines whole-child development, Forest School, and wider responsibilities with a formal, academic curriculum and high standards. This consultation was part of testing whether that balance still feels right to families.

Thank you to almost all of you for taking part in the spirit intended, as a genuine consultation, not a foregone conclusion. Only four comments were actively negative or misinterpreted our intentions, although this was still disappointing to read: please do speak to me directly if you remain unhappy about the reasoning behind the proposal.

**There will be no further consultations or proposals to change the uniform.** If your child is in Nursery, it's safe to say that we won't be thinking about any more changes until long after they have left!

Finally, this won't be the only consultation this year. Following inconclusive results on homework in last spring's survey, Mrs Stuart will lead on seeking more detailed feedback on what parents value most in homework - another potentially lively topic! As you can tell, we take parent voice seriously. While you trust us with your children's education and our wider vision, it's vital that your voice is heard clearly on matters that directly affect you, such as uniform and homework.



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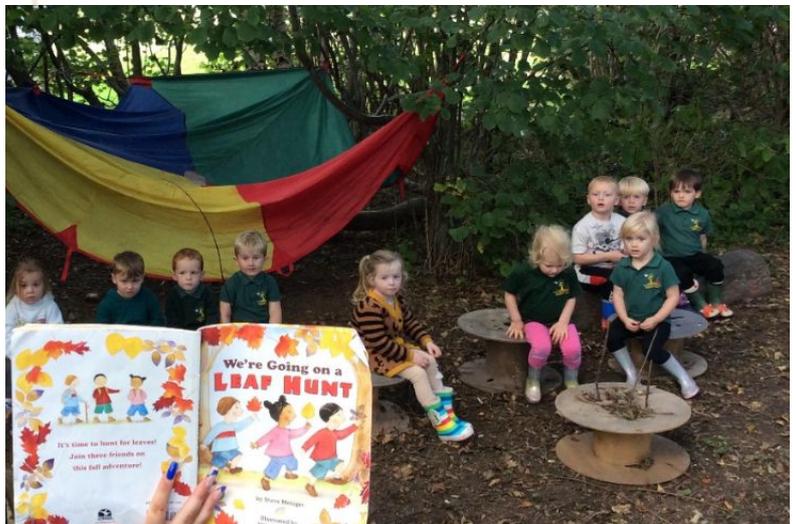


A few highlights of last half-term on this page and the next! **Clockwise from 1 o'clock...** Mrs Welch and the newly elected School Council; Year 6 and Reception Forest School together; Mr Boulton, IT technician, teaches Year 3 how servers work; Years 6 and 4 at Lindisfarne; Open the Book visit school; a Beamish school lesson; Year 1 singing at Harvest on the last day of last half-term at St Lawrence's





Again, **clockwise from 1 o'clock...** Mandarin lessons restart for Years 2 and 3; Nursery have a Forest School book reading; the Book Fair comes to town; Mrs Glanville's Northumberland Fusiliers Band visit us in school; Nursery parent Harvest crafts; Year 2 show off their sewing skills; Rev Helen O'Sullivan answers questions as part of Reception's RE unit; and Nursery try different fruit and vegetables out as part of their Harvest learning.



Ephesians 4:14-15



## Forest School

The Forest School dates for each class in Y1-6 for Autumn 2 are in the calendar at the end. As ever, these dates are subject to change - we do go out in almost all weather conditions but in the event of staff absence etc. we may need to move things around. Early Years will continue with it weekly.

Forest School remains a core part of life at Warkworth. Unusually, the majority of our teachers have completed the full, intensive Forest School training - schools that have it typically use just one trained member of staff. Our bespoke outdoor learning spaces are something special, but what truly sets us apart is the care, skill and purpose with which Forest School is led here.

In many schools, Forest School can feel like an optional add-on because it 'looks good'. At Warkworth, it is never a token gesture, but a meaningful, thoughtfully planned and much-loved part of every child's experience.

## Remembrance



We have begun selling poppies this week for the Royal Legion. We remain immensely proud of our armed forces, both near and far, especially with such a strong local contingent at Boulmer.

The Parish Council asked if we could send a representative from school to lay a wreath - I look forward to seeing Isla, our oldest child with a forces family member, representing the school in Warkworth this coming Sunday. The Act of Remembrance begins at 10am at the Dial Place War Memorial (the south-western corner of the church yard, on the corner by the car park). Everyone is warmly invited.



## Polite Reminder - Mud and Outdoors!

May we gently remind families to not go on the outdoor equipment before or after school, both in the Early Years yard and the main school yard. This is not just for the usual safety issues, although that still counts, but because of the amount of mud this generates, especially bringing the mud inside!

## Prefects and House Captains

Last half-term, our Year 6 prefects were appointed. Prefects support our school community by modelling exemplary behaviour, helping younger pupils, and contributing to a safe, tidy and respectful environment. Their responsibilities include encouraging good manners and sensible conduct in shared spaces such as the hall, corridors, playground and library, assisting staff when needed, guiding pupils who may be unsure of expectations, and promoting kindness, inclusion and responsibility throughout the school.

In addition, three Year 6 pupils were elected by their house teams, one each for Alnwick, Bamburgh and Dunstanburgh, to serve as House Captains. These pupils lead their houses with pride, enthusiasm and commitment. They act as role models, foster teamwork and participation during school events and activities, support and help deliver house assemblies, collect and record house points, and share ideas to support school improvement. Well done to Ewan (Alnwick), Isla (Bamburgh) and Sophie (Dunstanburgh), who you can see below with their new house flags!





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## Charities

We've spoken before about being mindful of the cost of living crisis and the number of different appeals that come families' way. That's why we plan our charitable giving carefully through the year and don't take part in some national events, including next week's Children in Need.

We do this for carefully considered reasons. We choose causes that our children can genuinely understand and feel connected to, both here and further afield, and we also know this season can be especially tough financially. We also plan our year incredibly carefully so that every week is packed with meaningful learning, enrichment and care for the whole child. Speaking honestly and frankly with you, in such a busy and purposeful curriculum, one-off national fundraising days don't tend to add much to what we already do so intentionally and with such depth.

However, we would never want children to miss out on the fun! As such, children are welcome to **wear their own clothes (be that Pudsey-themed or not!) on Friday 14th November. This means there is no requirement to buy the latest CinN t-shirt or Pudsey ears...!** In Worship that day, we will look at charities that do good for our communities, including Children in Need.

## Student Teachers

This term, we're delighted to be welcoming a number of student teachers to Warkworth, from Early Years to Year 6. We're proud that our school has become a partner of choice for universities seeking high-quality placements. Our strong reputation for excellent teaching, clear pedagogy, and a nurturing approach to learning means we're often asked to help train the next generation of teachers.

We see this not only as a compliment to the outstanding practice of our staff, but also as part of our moral mission: to shape the teachers of tomorrow so that every child, wherever they go to school, benefits from the best possible start.

For our children, having a student teacher brings new energy, fun ideas, and an extra friendly face in the classroom. Each student teacher works closely under the supervision of the class teacher, ensuring that your child's learning and progress always come first.



## Kindness Week

Next week, as you'll have seen on Mrs Welch's Dojo posts, we'll be marking National Anti-Bullying Week, with this year's theme of Kindness. We'll kick things off with **Odd Socks Day on Monday**, celebrating all the little bits of individuality and 'oddness' that make us who we are! On Thursday afternoon, we'll hold a special Kindness Assembly, and throughout the week, we'll be talking about kindness in its many forms, and how we can stand up to bullying together.

Thankfully, bullying is very rare here, and when it does happen, it's dealt with swiftly and effectively. That's thanks not just to our systems and the support from you at home, but most of all to the children themselves: their kindness, thoughtfulness, and the excellent behaviour that's taught and nurtured right through school. It will be a lovely week to celebrate what already shines so brightly in our community.



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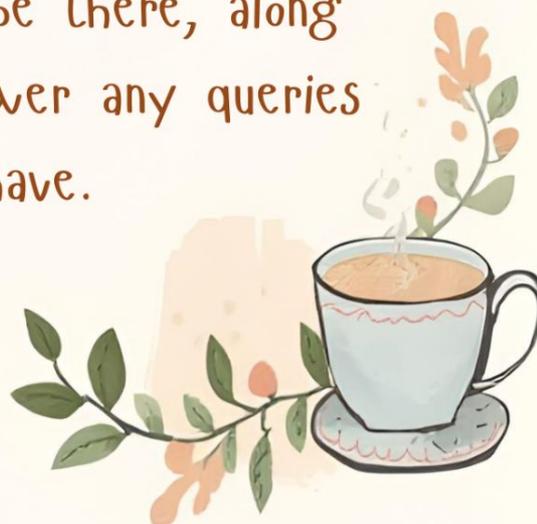
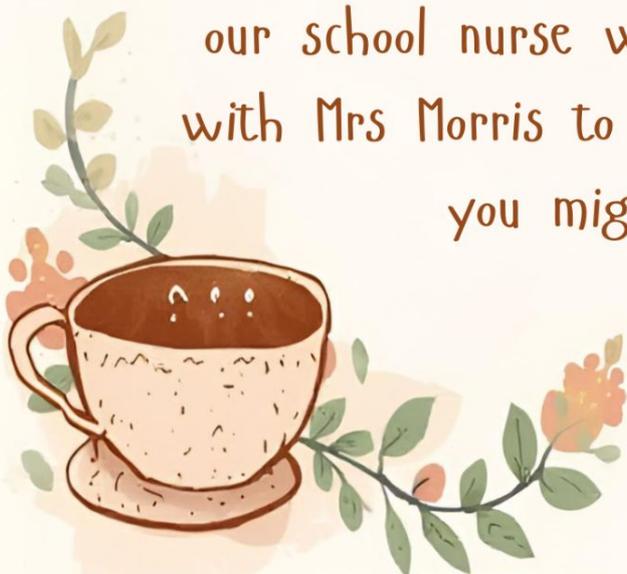
*Invitation for SEND Families*

# Coffee and cake afternoon

On Wednesday 12th November

2:30-3:15 pm

This is an opportunity to meet with other parents of children with SEND and share advice and experiences. Ciara, our school nurse will be there, along with Mrs Morris to answer any queries you might have.





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## Safeguarding

Mr Booth is our school's Designated Safeguarding Leader, with Mrs Gibson, Miss Milne and Miss Fife our Deputy Leaders. If you have concerns about a child, you may contact any one of us. If it is an emergency and a child is in immediate danger, please call the police.

Members of the public can also report concerns to Children's Social Care directly. If you have a concern about a child, please contact one of the following:

- OneCall – 01670 536400
- Northumbria Police – 101 (in an emergency always dial 999)
- NSPCC Helpline – 0808 800 5000

There is also a secure online referral form available for you to explain your concern, if you are a member of the public.



### Operation Encompass

The school is part of Operation Encompass. This is to support families experiencing domestic abuse. A notification is shared with the school to the Designated Safeguarding Leads if police attend a domestic incident where children are related to the adult parties present.

You can also find out more information regarding support that is available for adults and children [here](#) and [here](#).

### Operation Endeavour

This is a joint operation between Northumberland County Council Children's Services, Northumbria Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner to safeguard children and young people who go missing from home or care. Useful information and resources:

- The Children's Society: [www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-wedo/resources/protecting-young-runaways](http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-wedo/resources/protecting-young-runaways)
- Missing People: [www.missingpeople.org.uk](http://www.missingpeople.org.uk) 24 hour confidential helpline: 116 000

## Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility



You can find copies of all school policies [on our website](#) as well as trust-wide policies on the [NCEA website](#).

For ease of reference, I will provide hyperlinks to the following policies if you wish to consult them:

- Attendance Policy [here](#)
- Behaviour Policy [here](#)
- Anti-Bullying Policy [here](#)
- Online Safety Policy [here](#)
- Safeguarding Policy specific to Warkworth [here](#) and the trust-wide Child Protection Policy [here](#)
- Trust complaints policy [here](#)





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<b>Academic Year 2025-2026</b>		
<b>Autumn term</b>		
<b>Sunday 9th November</b>	Remembrance Service	9am Communion @ St Lawrence's 10am at Dial Place
<b>Monday 10th November</b>	Odd Socks Day	Activities related to Anti-Bullying Week in school, with a special assembly on Thursday. See Class Dojo posts.
<b>Monday-Friday 10th-14th November</b>	Kindness Week	
	Nursery Rhyme Week for 2s and Nursery	
<b>Wednesday 12th November</b>	Coffee and Cake Afternoon for Families with SEND	See poster on previous page
	Years 5 and 6 Forest School	
<b>Friday 14th November</b>	Years 3 and 4 Forest School	
<b>Friday 21st November</b>	Years 1 and 2 Forest School	
<b>Wednesday 3rd December</b>	Christmas Fair	
<b>Thursday 4th December</b>	Christmas Dinner Day	
<b>Monday 8th December</b>	Early Years Nativities	Morning & Afternoon
<b>Tuesday 9th December</b>	Years 1 & 2 Nativity	9:15am & 3:20pm
<b>Wednesday 10th December</b>	Y1-6 Panto, Aladdin	During day
<b>Thursday 11th December</b>	Years 5 & 6 Nativity	9:15am & 3:20pm
<b>Friday 12th December</b>	Years 3 & 4 Nativity	9:15am & 3:20pm
	Years 1 and 2 Forest School	
<b>Friday 19th December</b>	Final day	Christmas Service at church



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<b>Spring term</b>		
<b>Tuesday 6th January 2026</b>	Children return to school.	Training day on Monday 5th January 2026.
<b>Friday 13th February 2026</b>	Final day before half-term	
<b>Monday 23rd February 2026</b>	Children return to school	
<b>27th March-19th April 2026</b>	FoW Easter Egg Trail	Details to follow from FoW.
<b>Thursday 2nd April 2026</b>	Final day	Maundy Thursday service at church (Good Friday on 3rd April)
<b>Summer term</b>		
<b>Monday 20th April 2026</b>	Children return to school.	
<b>Thursday 21st May 2026</b>	Sports Day	Weather-permitting! It is earlier in the school year to allow some flexibility in timing.
<b>Friday 22nd May 2026</b>	Final day before half-term	Bank holiday on 4th May
<b>Monday 1st June 2026</b>	Children return to school	
<b>Friday 26th June 2026</b>	School closed	Training day
<b>Wednesday 8th July 2026</b>	Summer Fair	
<b>Friday 17th July 2026</b>	Final day	