



NCEA Warkworth Primary School

Autumn 1 Newsletter

Headteacher's Message

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you had a wonderful summer break with your families, with the weather (mostly!) being truly glorious.

What a joy it is to welcome the children back. A new term always brings excitement and anticipation - and perhaps a little relief for parents as familiar routines resume - but the strongest impression has been the children's quiet confidence and sense of purpose. They have returned ready to learn, setting exactly the tone we hope for in the term ahead.

May I express a particularly warm welcome to our new families, with a number of children starting across school, as well as of course our new Early Years parents. It is an honour and privilege to have your children in our care and we hope that you have a fantastic start to term in our school family.

We begin this academic year from a position of real strength. On the next page, you will see even stronger results than last year, with our Year 6 outcomes placing Warkworth within the top 1% of primary schools nationally. They reflect the hard work of our children, the expertise of our staff and the consistently high expectations that run through school life.

These outcomes give us confidence, but never complacency. High standards must be renewed each year through excellent teaching, careful assessment and close attention to every child. Our focus is on sustaining this success, responding quickly when pupils need support or greater challenge, and developing secure knowledge and genuine confidence.

One of our principal priorities this year will be further improving our oracy offer: children's ability to express their ideas clearly, listen carefully and use talk to improve their thinking.

It is not just about speaking in front of a class; it includes explaining, questioning, reasoning and building on others' contributions. Strong oracy supports learning in every subject and builds confidence.

We will also continue developing the '[Warkworth Way](#)', our shared understanding of excellent teaching. We are creating short subject guides so that families can readily understand what children learn, how we teach it and how their knowledge develops over time. Our full curriculum remains available on the school website; these guides will make the essentials clear at a glance.

Alongside these priorities will be smaller but purposeful refinements, including greater use of outdoor learning in Science and further honing our Art curriculum. This careful attention to detail is how an already strong curriculum becomes even better.

In Collective Worship, the story of Job will help us explore setbacks, resilience and what we do when life does not go as planned. The focus will be on coping with disappointment, finding strength and supporting others - universal themes that complement our work on mental and emotional wellbeing.

Our ambition is simple: to provide an academically exceptional and personally enriching education that helps every child become knowledgeable, capable, curious and resilient.

Thank you for the trust you place in us and for the encouragement you give both your children and the school. Our partnership with families is a significant part of what makes Warkworth so successful, and we never take it for granted.

It remains an enormous privilege to lead this school. I am exceptionally proud of what our children and staff achieve and excited about all that lies ahead.

Jonathan Booth
Headteacher



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

Ephesians 4:14-15



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Statutory Test Results

Results provide only one view of a school, but they are an important measure of the difference that excellent teaching and high expectations can make. Following exceptionally strong outcomes last year, this year's results show that this success is being sustained.

Across successive years and statutory assessments, our pupils continue to achieve at an exceptionally high level. This consistent record has established Warkworth as a local leader in academic outcomes and demonstrates how our positive impact builds over time: the longer children are with us, the stronger their achievement becomes.

Our ambition extends to every child. High expectations do not mean expecting identical outcomes; they mean recognising individual progress, providing precisely tailored support and helping every pupil achieve more than they thought possible.

Testing	Warkworth	National Average
Year 1 Phonics Screen	91%	80%
Year 2 Phonics Screen	96%	90%
Year 4 Times Table Check	89% 20+	69% 20+
Year 6 Reading	95%	75%
Year 6 Writing	95%	73%
Year 6 Maths	95%	75%
Y6 Reading Greater Depth	76%	31%
Y6 Writing Greater Depth	52%	13%
Y6 Maths Greater Depth	52%	27%
Year 6 RWM Combined	95%	63%

Warkworth School on the Map!

It has been wonderful to see Warkworth's influence stretch beyond our school gates. Our results have led to opportunities to support teaching elsewhere locally, while universities, NHS services and local authority teams want to trial new approaches with us because of the reputation the school has built for excellent teaching and a strong wellbeing offer.

Over the past few months, the Department for Education have sent up civil servants from London to explore why the Early Years outcomes across the Coquet area are significantly lower than they should be; Warkworth was the only school that held strong EYFS results. Colleagues from the local authority and DfE wanted to understand why our outcomes were different: excellent staff, a carefully constructed curriculum, high expectations and knowing our children exceptionally well was the answer.

Perhaps the clearest example came on the evening after the final day of term, when I stood in front of 1,300 new teachers in Newcastle to speak about Warkworth's mission and what they might take into their own careers. I am usually happy speaking to a room full of people, but 1,300 is a rather different matter! I was certainly nervous, but enormously proud that our small school is being noticed locally and, in some educational circles, nationally.

That recognition is lovely, but it also carries responsibility. Most families have chosen Warkworth over schools closer to home. We never take that trust for granted. Being a leader does not mean believing we have all the answers; it means sharing what works, learning from others and remaining open to scrutiny. If families are travelling further and placing that confidence in us, we must remain at the top of our game every day.





Strong Minds and Full Lives

Homework and Spelling

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, we have been trialling several systems ahead of launching our new homework approach for Years 1-6. Full details will come through ClassDojo before its proper launch on Thursday 10th September. Homework will remain optional in Years 1-4: it is there to support learning, not create additional headaches at home. In Years 5 and 6, homework will be compulsory as part of gradually preparing children for secondary school. We will also hold prize draws for children who return their homework, and they are welcome to suggest prizes themselves - within reason!

We are also introducing a more consistent approach to spelling. Standards in spelling are already strong, but practice has not always been consistent between year groups. Short, focused sessions of five minutes each day will establish a clear approach across school and help children build their knowledge securely as they progress. Importantly, this will all happen in class rather than adding another task to families' already busy lives.

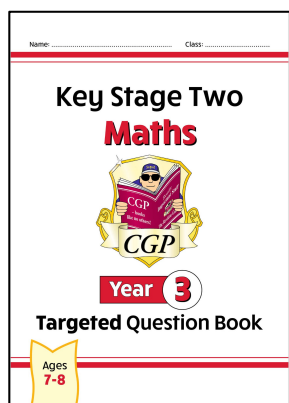
As ever, the most valuable academic activity at home is reading with your child. Our job is to ensure that children work hard while they are at school, not to outsource that work to families or make evenings and weekends feel like a chore. We want our children to work hard, but also to play hard, rest properly and enjoy time with their families.

We take children's mental and emotional wellbeing extremely seriously here at Warkworth, but our approach is broader than lessons carrying a 'mental health' label. Not every difficult emotion needs a clinical label; children also need help to recognise and manage ordinary disappointment, frustration and worry. They need words for their feelings and trusted adults to speak to, alongside perspective, purpose, self-discipline and time simply to be children.

This work runs through school life. In Worship and PSHE, children consider bigger questions and learn about relationships, emotions and setbacks. Oracy helps them put thoughts into words, listen carefully and disagree well. Forest School, outdoor learning and mini-pilgrimages give them time to notice natural beauty, experience stillness and find calm beyond a screen. Stories, prayer and reflection create space for gratitude, hope and belonging. This is not a programme delivered once a year; it is part of our daily culture.

Our approach draws on modern understanding of children's wellbeing and older wisdom, including the Stoic principle of focusing on what lies within our control and long-established practices of stillness, rhythm and reflection. Resilience does not mean bottling up feelings or simply 'getting on with it'. It means understanding emotions, responding thoughtfully, accepting support and finding the strength to move forward.

When specialist help is needed, we act promptly with families and appropriate professionals. This work was recently praised by the Primary Mental Health Team, so you do not just have to take my word for it! Our aim is for every child to leave Warkworth not only knowledgeable, but also thoughtful, articulate and emotionally intelligent - secure in who they are and ready for life.



LOVE



PEACE



COURAGE

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the truth in love, we will grow.

Ephesians 4:14-15



Attendance

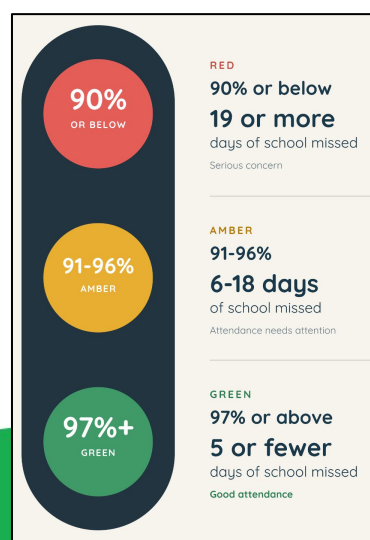
Attendance at Warkworth is strong and we do not take that for granted. It reflects children who enjoy being at school and families who make the daily effort to get them here every day and on time. Thank you! That effort is about more than academic progress. When children miss school, they also miss friendships, routines, shared experiences and the everyday moments that help them feel secure and that they belong.

We operate staggered drop-off times to help families with the morning rush, as well as our free Breakfast Club for R-Y6 at 8:10am. **Our 2s start at 8:30am**, and our **Nursery at 9am** (with a staggered start up to 9am meaning children are welcome earlier).

Children from R-Y6 must be in their classroom by 8.45am. Those arriving between 8.45am and 9am receive a late mark. The register closes at 9am, so arrival after this time is recorded as an unauthorised absence. The afternoon register is taken at 1pm.

We know that mornings do not always go to plan. When a child arrives late, we do everything we can to welcome them quietly and avoid embarrassment. Even so, children are often very conscious of entering a classroom when learning is already underway. Repeated lateness can leave them feeling unsettled and, over time, affect how positively they feel about coming to school.

National regulations determine how lateness and absence must be recorded. We apply them fairly and consistently, but our concern is the whole child, not simply compliance. Please contact the school office to report an absence or if you need advice or support.

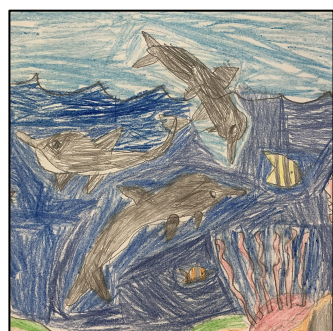


Warkworth Show 2026

The Warkworth Show is one of those traditions that helps make village life so special, and we are proud that every child at our school plays a part. Pupils across Warkworth created entries for several different categories, bringing together creativity, practical skill and a healthy dose of competitive spirit.

It was wonderful to see so much of the children's work displayed alongside entries from the wider community and even better to see so many certificates and prizes carrying Warkworth names! Winning is always exciting, but what matters most is that every child contributes confidently to an event belonging to the whole village.

Congratulations to everyone who entered, especially our many prize-winners, and thank you to those who keep this wonderful tradition thriving.



Harvest Festival

I cannot believe that it is time for Harvest Festival again! For Years 1-6, we will host a Harvest event on Friday 16th October in the afternoon at St Lawrence's with details to follow. For Early Years, Wednesday 21st October at 2pm there will be a parents craft and songs event in school.

There will of course be our usual drive for Amble Food Bank coming up too, so watch this space...!



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Clubs

Our popular lunchtime school clubs programme will begin in a few weeks for Years 1 to 6. Please pay attention to messages from Mrs Gibson so that children can be booked in. From some old favourites to some new ones, there will be something for everyone, including dance, badminton, trivia, extra Forest School, and even more!

Some clubs will have limits on numbers - if these are oversubscribed, we will do rotas so that every child can get a chance. For instance, our Forest School club will need to be 10 children maximum per session, and is just for Years 1 & 2 this term, but older year groups will get their turn in later terms!

As a school, we have a very wide personal development programme built into the curriculum, but we love the opportunity for children to opt in to doing something they love and having their horizons widened even further. We deliberately choose lunchtimes because we know so many of our children have jam-packed weeks with multiple outside of school clubs.



Parents' Evenings and Open Classes

We will hold Parents' Evenings during the week commencing Monday 19th October, the final week before half-term. These will focus on how your child has settled into their new class. There will also be open classrooms over the coming weeks, giving families a chance to see school in action. Last year's sessions were so well attended that we are delighted to bring them back. Details will follow on Dojo.



A shout out to a film...

This is not something I would normally include in a newsletter, but I wanted to recommend Toy Story 5 to families. My daughter is now old enough for the cinema and, after paying the exorbitant price for some popcorn, it is rather nice to enjoy a couple of hours of air-conditioned peace! As such, cinema trips became a useful way of filling some of our summer days.

I was slightly reluctant to return to Buzz, Woody and co - I still think the second film was probably the peak but that probably gives away my age - however, I thought its handling of friendship, peer pressure, technology taking over from imaginative play and the perils of group chats was excellent. Parts of it felt remarkably close to my experiences in teaching, seeing what social media problems can cause: small disagreements becoming magnified, children worrying about exclusion and the pressure to follow what everyone else is doing.

It also made me reflect on the balance I want to strike as a father. Technology is part of my daughter's world and will undoubtedly help her learn, communicate and build friendships. However, I also want to protect the space for real conversation, imaginative play, boredom and simply being present with other people. (On the next page, I talk more about safeguarding and technology more widely.)

Ultimately, the film presents technology as something that can support friendship without being allowed to dominate it. It offers plenty of caveats but does so warmly, thoughtfully and without ever feeling as though it is preaching. It is perhaps worth a watch if, like me, you have been roped into a Disney+ subscription when it comes on there soon...



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Safeguarding Updates

Keeping children safe
is everyone's
responsibility



Clear, Calm and Consistent

At the start of a new year, I felt it would be worth explaining how safeguarding works in principle at school.

Safeguarding information should be clear enough to be genuinely useful, rather than included simply because schools are expected to include it. That is why the following page changes very little from one newsletter to the next. It contains the names of our safeguarding leads, links to our main policies and information about how to contact us. This repetition is deliberate: if you are ever worried about a child, you should not have to search through an old newsletter to find out what to do.

One of the most important messages we give children is that they can speak to an adult in school and will be heard and taken seriously. If a child shares something that worries us, the member of staff will listen calmly, record what has been said and pass it promptly to one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads. Staff cannot promise to keep something secret, but we explain that information is shared only with those who need it to help keep the child safe.

The safeguarding lead will then consider the concern carefully and decide what should happen next. In most circumstances, this includes speaking openly with parents. The exception would be where doing so could place a child at greater risk although this is exceedingly rare. Sometimes a child simply needs reassurance or pastoral support; sometimes we seek advice from another professional; occasionally a formal referral is necessary. Not every worry becomes a child protection case, but every concern is treated seriously. Small details can become important when placed alongside other information.

This process is not designed to shut families out. Parents are essential partners in resolving concerns, and we aim to be clear about what we are doing, why we are doing it and what will happen next.



Online Safety: principles, not panic

Online safety appears regularly because technology changes so quickly. I do not believe it is the school's role to dictate each family's arrangements, but that does not mean we have no professional view. Our advice is clear: primary-aged children do not need smartphones or independently managed social-media accounts. Children cannot manage a standard WhatsApp account until they are 13, and many major platforms use the same minimum age.

Warkworth is not anti-technology. We teach an ambitious Computing curriculum and use digital tools when they genuinely improve learning or create worthwhile opportunities. However, we do not introduce technology simply because it is new or because schools are expected to 'move with the times'. Books, discussion, practical experiences and handwriting often remain the strongest tools. Technology should serve our broad educational ambitions, not drive them.

Our online-safety teaching therefore focuses on lasting habits rather than particular apps. Children learn to step away when something feels wrong, never forward harmful content, use blocking and reporting tools, and tell a trusted adult early. Most importantly, asking for help should never make a child feel that they are the one in trouble.

Online problems rarely remain online. A disagreement on WhatsApp or within a game can damage friendships and cause considerable distress in school. Messages sent impulsively can be copied, forwarded and, in serious cases, become a matter for external agencies.

Families ultimately decide what access children have at home. We are not here to police family devices, but we will be honest about our concerns and may respond when online behaviour affects pupils' safety, wellbeing, relationships or learning. If something begins to spill into school, please tell us early. We would always rather know.



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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.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-wedo/resources/protecting-young-runaways
- Missing People: www.missingpeople.org.uk 24 hour confidential helpline: 116 000



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

Particular policies you may wish to read and are most relevant to parents include:

- Parent Code of Conduct (School)
- Attendance Policy (School)
- Behaviour Policy (School)
- Anti-Bullying Policy (School)
- Online Safety Policy (School)
- Safeguarding Policy, both the school's and the trust-wide Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy (Trust)



In every force. In every school. For every child.



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Meeting with the headteacher: I continue to be available most Thursday mornings for in person or over the phone conversations. However, you are always welcome to phone the office or email the school if you would like a chat about anything we can help you with, from something within school to wider support for your family.

Autumn Term 2026	
Wednesday 2nd September	Children return to school (Training Day on 1st September)
Wednesday 7th October	Individual class photographs
W/C Monday 19th October	Parents' Evening this week
Friday 16th October 2026	Years 1-6 Harvest Festival at church
Wednesday 21st October	Early Years Family Autumn Crafts at 2pm in school
Friday 23rd October	Final day of Autumn 1
Monday 2nd November	Children return to school for Autumn 2.
Monday 7th December	EYFS Nativity
Tuesday 8th December	Years 3 & 4 Nativity
Wednesday 9th December	Years 1 to 6 Pantomime @ Blyth Phoenix Theatre
Thursday 10th December	Years 1 & 2 Nativity
Friday 11th December	Years 5 & 6 Nativity
Friday 18th December	Final day of Autumn 2 Years 1-6 Christmas Service at church - dismiss from church



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Spring Term 2027	
Tuesday 5th January	Children return to school (Training Day on Monday 4th)
Weds 6th-Friday 8th January	Year 5 Residential
Weds 27th-Friday 29th January	Year 6 Residential
Friday 12th February	Last day of Spring 1 - half-term
Monday 22nd February	Return to school - Spring 2
Weds 10th-Friday 12th March	Year 4 Residential
Friday 19th March	Easter Music Showcase
Thursday 25th March	Last day of Spring 2 Maundy Thursday Service at church, R-Y6 - dismiss from church

Summer Term 2027	
Monday 12th April	Children return to school
Monday 3rd May	Bank Holiday
W/C Monday 10th May	Year 6 SATs Week
Friday 28th May	Last day of Summer 1 - half-term
Monday 7th June	Return to school - Summer 1
W/C Monday 7th June	Year 4 Multiplication Times Table Check
W/C Monday 14th June	Year 1 Phonics Check Year 2 SATs (over two weeks)
Friday 25th June	Teacher training day - school closed
Friday 16th July	Last day of Summer 2