

Notes from our parents meeting about transitioning to primary 3rd April 2025

Thank you to everyone who came to our meeting: Joan Montgomery (our Chair of Governors), Mrs Stiansen, Mrs Walton, Miss Adams, Mr Keech from Berwick Middle School (who will be joining us as a new teacher in 2026) and parents of children from Reception to year 4.

1) Uniform

Our uniform is staying more or less the same. There will be still be Lowick and Holy Island uniforms, the main change will be that the word 'First' in the embroidered writing will change to 'Primary' (ie where is currently says either Lowick CE First School or Holy Island CE First School, it will now read Lowick CE Primary School and Holy Island CE Primary School. It will still be absolutely fine to wear first school uniform as we don't want anyone to spend unnecessary money on uniform for such a minor change. Our uniform supplier will be supplying our uniform with the words primary school rather than first school from now on.

As St Mary's school has green and white uniform we have decided to keep our school colours of green and yellow.

We are considering adding hoodies to the uniform. These will be like our jumpers but with a hood. They will be dark green like the uniform colour with the school badge on. This is because we noticed when visiting the middle schools that they had that option and it seemed popular with the children. However, some parents are concerned that these may present a safety risk such as if children pull on the hoods of others whilst wearing them or hiding in them. We will need to discuss this further before making a final decision. Please share any thoughts you have about this with our office email to help us decide on the best way forward.

There were no strong opinions at the meeting about changing the PE t-shirts so we will keep them the same colour (yellow).

We will continue to have a relaxed approach to uniform and accept that sometimes it is more important for your child to be in school and wearing something that meets their sensory needs than to have a battle that morning over uniform. As long as they are wearing things which are safe to be active in, that is acceptable to us. As always, there is no requirement to wear uniform with the school badge so if you prefer to source other options which are green and yellow but with no badge that is also fine with us.

2) Planners / diaries

When I visited another primary school recently, their year 5s and 6s showed me their A5 diaries which they use to organise themselves and put in special dates and homework and so on. The middle schools currently use planners which are similar but can be adapted to schools use with extra pages and writing in your own dates. Parents suggested adding emotional regulation pages. Reading records could continue for younger children but be part of the older children's planners.

3) School equipment

We will continue to provide the equipment children will need but if children in key stage 2 (year 3 upwards) want to bring their own pencil case and equipment then they can as this will help them learn about managing their own things ready for the next stage of schooling.

4) Homework

This is always a bit of tricky one as different parents want different things for their children. There was a range of opinions in the meeting. Parents requested a stronger link to what we are currently working on that week and some children need more repetition and reinforcement than others. Also, as maths methods in school have changed so much in the past few years, parents are finding it hard to support maths homework to keep it consistent for their child. There was a general feeling that online homework could work well, especially as this is how much of the homework at high school is also done.

Therefore, parents asked if we would have some parent workshops to explain our maths methods to them as these have changed so much. It might be nice to do this alongside your child to make it more fun. We will plan this going forwards. In the meantime there are some videos on our website with methods for the '4 operations' (adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing)

https://www.lowickholylislandschools.org.uk/website/maths_videos/456732

On reflection from the meeting, we are thinking we will give parents / children more choice next year for maths to work through a workbook like this year or do online homework instead each week. It would be OK to choose each week which you prefer. We could use online platforms such as Sumdog or Classroom Secrets Kids to enable us to track what the children have done.

We are also planning on starting a homework club in school to support children and their families. It remains our intention that homework should be minimal for primary age children so that they still have valuable family time and play time after a busy day in school. Our most important homework will continue to be reading – children reading to you and adults reading to children where possible too.

5) Travelling to and from school

It was agreed that years 5 and 6 should be allowed to walk to and from school themselves with written permission from parents. Sometimes parents want their children to carry a mobile phone if they are walking by themselves. We agreed mobiles would be collected in and kept in the school office during the day if that were the case.

6) Residential trips

Our current plan is to do a one night residential (like the one we did this year at Ford Castle for year 4 (as year 3 is very small next year it may be a mixed year 3 & 4 one); a two-night adventure camp for year 5s (alternating each year between Scremerston or Holy Island school sites) and a two night trip to a city such as York for year 6s.

7) Class organisation

This remains flexible as always. Next year we will have Reception and years 1 and 2 in class 1 with Miss Adams, Mrs Morgan and Mrs Marshall. We are looking at developing an outdoor area linked to class 1 to enable them to have an even greater learning space

We will have years 3 – 5 in class 2 with Mrs Stiansen, Mrs Walton and Mrs Simpson. Mrs Simpson will take year 5 separately for maths and have the option to split them where needed through the year for other areas of the curriculum. The year after (2026) we will have Mr Keech as our new teacher and we will have 3 classes with a split of years 3 & 4 with Mrs Stiansen and years 5 & 6 with Mr Keech.

8) Leadership for the children

We are keen to ensure there are opportunities for leadership for years 5 & 6 as well as keeping areas of responsibility for year 4s. We talked about sports leaders and wellbeing leaders, worship leaders and possibly reading leaders too.

9) Transition to secondary school

Our vision is to ensure that the children's personal development and academic work with us will give them the confidence and self-esteem to thrive wherever they go after leaving our school. To help with transition into high school we will continue to work with all the other local schools so that our children know plenty of other children in their own year group across a range of schools before they come together into one group at high school. Part of this is the residential planned but also regular meet ups through the years.

As well as that we are encouraging the high school to host days for our children. They already have done STEM day which our year 3 & 4s went to last year and we are hoping that they will expand this to host sporting events, musical events and more STEM including in their science labs for example.

We are also working with other schools on curriculum development and want to liaise with Berwick Academy to ensure we are setting our children up to succeed in key stage 3.

I'm afraid we don't have any more information than you about the new build at the academy at this point, other than they are definitely getting a new building. We will encourage the school organisation team at the county council to keep parents informed as we know you are keen to know more about this.

10) End of year celebration this year

As we don't have leavers this year, parents asked if we were having an end of year celebration. I can confirm that we will be having an end of year assembly / blessing and also a reward trip. We are also thinking of having an art exhibition of children's work in July combined with an open afternoon.

Please get in touch with the school if you have any queries, comments or suggestions as we are keen to work with you all to make our transition to primary a huge success.

Kind regards

Rebecca