



SHARPS COPSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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SCPN Yr 4 Multiplication Tables Checks

Dear Parents and Carers,

You may have heard announcements about the Multiplication Tables Check coming in for year 4 children this fortnight. Here's what you may want to know:

1. We love maths. It's an awesome subject to learn and to teach.
2. Maths is a big subject and we appreciate there's more to it than times tables and there's more to times tables than learning them off by heart. However, a lot of the rich, interesting maths is all about the multiplicative relationships and these are hard to fully grasp without fluent recall of the tables. For that reason, learning the tables is fundamental – they are a key facilitator to the maths that sits on top. We've always believed that.
3. We're already in a good place with learning the tables and the expectations are in line with the National Curriculum so it's business as usual for us.
4. The checks became compulsory in 2022.
5. They will be done most likely within a two-week-long window starting 3rd June 2024.
6. The results of the test are not published publicly, they're not going to end up on a league table and they're not to worry about. There's no pass or fail, there's just a score out of 25 marks. They're not to be used to compare children, they're for *us* to reflect on so that we make the most of our provision. We're actually looking forward to seeing how well we do.
7. The checks consist of 25 questions. The questions will only be multiplication and they will go up to 12×12. There's nothing novel about the questions and they don't require problem solving so there's nothing to trip them up.
8. The checks are all about remembering the multiplication facts. That doesn't mean we'll forget all about the concepts, patterns, structures and relationships in multiplication. We're going to be learning those too, partly because they go hand in hand with excellent recall.
9. There are concerns shared in the public domain that this is "yet another test". The government has been careful to call it a "check" and that's important. It signals their intention to keep it low-stakes and we should remember that the data could prove useful to us.
10. Given that the questions are relatively simple, age appropriate and the length of the check, which is carried out on a computer, is no more than 2½ minutes, we don't think the checks are onerous.
11. Tests in themselves don't cause anxiety. It's the perceived cost of not doing well. For that reason, we will actively downplay the checks with the pupils.
12. As far as they're concerned, when it comes to the day itself, they're going to have the computers or tablets out so it will just seem like the teachers have chosen to do something slightly different today.
13. Little and often is an excellent mantra. We suggest 10 minutes practice a day, 4-5 days a week. Remember, for the children it is a fun computer game and they often do not realise all the learning taking place.

If you have a question or want to offer your thoughts on any of the above, please bring them to your child's teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Elsen
Headteacher
& The Year 3/4 Team

