



Dear Parents,

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

1. At Our Lady Catholic School, 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. The checks will be compulsory this year, 2020. They will be done at some point during the year, most likely within a three-week-long window towards the end of the year.
4. The results of the test are not published publicly, they're not going to end up on a league table and they're nothing to worry about. There's no pass or fail.
The DfE state that the motivation behind the multiplication tables check is purely to allow teachers a chance to identify children who need some more help with their times tables to stop them from falling further behind their peers as they move up to Year 5 (and then Year 6).
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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. The only thing that will stress the children is if we repeatedly refer to the checks in class or at home.
8. You may notice us taking even more initiative when it comes to learning the tables with more options for home learning. If you are practising with your child, remember you're practising for the benefit of their wider maths education, not for them to get a high score on the tests. So please enjoy the opportunity to work with your child and remember to hold back on comments about the checks.
9. Please be supportive of our approach in parent-parent communication channels. It's important that we get behind the checks for the benefit of all our children.

What can you do to help your child in practising their times tables?

We would recommend a number of strategies to support your child in the run-up to and aftermath of the times tables check including:

- Times tables chanting: “6, 12, 18, 24...”;
- Times tables chanting in reverse order: “108, 99, 90, 81...”;
- Using times tables songs, like Schoolhouse Rock’s ‘3 is A Magic Number’;
- Using the app Times Tables Rock Stars;
- Using free online games, like those on Maths Frame;
- Asking your child multiplication calculations out of order, like: “What is 4 x 7? What is 9 x 5? What is 6 x 11?”;
- Using pasta pebbles or other objects to show groups of numbers representing times tables, e.g. four groups of three pasta shells to show $3 \times 4 = 12$.



We have subscribed to Times Tables Rock Stars. TTRS is a fun and challenging programme designed to help students master the times tables!

The programme is designed to be used from Year 1 to Year 6. To be a Times Table Rock Star your child will need to answer any multiplication fact up to 12×12 in less than 3 seconds!

Each pupil in Our Lady Catholic Primary School has their own unique username and password.

So get rocking!