



## 'The Phoenix' - Whitehouse News



'We Rise By Lifting Others'

December 2017

### Principal's Scribble...

Dear Parent,

Christmas is a busy but wonderful time. Our children have been involved in their **nativity plays**, they are looking forward to the **P.T.A. disco** and the **Christmas story** is being revisited through assemblies and their work in class.

On **Tuesday 19th December** our **Key Stage 2** pupils will present their carol service in Newtownabbey Mission at 10am. Families and friends are very welcome.

At the end of November we had our **open night** for new nursery and Primary 1 pupils for September 2018. It was a very positive night. Please ensure all application forms are in for **Wednesday 10th January by 12noon.**

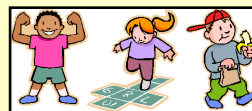
**Well done to our Year 7 pupils who have completed their A.Q.E. examinations.** We are very proud of all their hard work.

As we complete this year and head into 2018 we have much to make us thankful. While there are testing times ahead for all schools, I believe, that **If we work together 2018 can be even better than 2017!**

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

F. Bailie

### 'New Year, New You!'



Our school wellbeing week kicks off on Monday 8th January. The week will cover five key themes:

- Healthy Eating;
- Physical Health;
- Health and Safety;
- Emotional Wellbeing;
- Life and Aspiration.

The school and local organisations are contributing to the week with extensive resources. From physical fun to science experiments, it will be a fantastic week! To make this all happen we are asking for £3 per child to cover a whole range of events. **Return forms by Friday 15th December.**

### A Fantastic Christmas Gift for your Child



**A Nursery or Primary 1 place for September 2018.** Every parent wants the very best for their child. A great start to their education is essential. **Our Nursery Unit and Primary 1 classes offer such an opportunity.** Please ensure your completed application form is returned to the office by **10th Jan, 2018, at 12 noon.** An original birth certificate & proofs of address are requested.

"Learning to Live"

# Foundation Nativity



# Blueprint 2020

September 2017/18 sees the fifth year of our dynamic six year school development strategy. This innovative and far ranging plan will bring our school to the next level in terms of learning and services to our community.

In this section we want to share some of our key strategic goals for the year ahead and then focus in on a few of the key innovations. Over the next year we will regularly report on what has been achieved and the new projects that we develop.

## Strategic Leadership

To share good practice across the school and beyond to enhance staff development and pupils' attainment. This will include the development and coaching of curriculum leaders;

The continued development of Shared Education with St. James's Primary School. In particular, this will allow the schools to promote S.T.E.M. and Forest School learning as well as achieving 'Rights Respecting Schools' status;

To engage with community stakeholders to increase aspirations, attainment, early intervention and collaboration. This will include focused family learning support interventions.

## Ethos

Implement and review a whole school wellbeing strategy;

Achieve the British Council's International School Award by June 2018;

Use the pursuit of the Eco Green Flag, by June 2019, as a means to educate our school community to be more eco friendly.

## Learning and Teaching

90+% of pupils, in both, Literacy and Numeracy will achieve as expected or above;

I.C.T. will more effectively enrich creativity, thinking skills and improve school management;

## December Update

This month, in the midst of all the tinsel and glitter, the School Development Plan was not neglected. Our main area of focus was our **P.D.M.U. Policy and Scheme update**.

The teachers have helped Mrs Clifford (P.D.M.U. Leader) audit our present provision and vision a model for future P.D.M.U. learning across the school. This has resulted in **a new spiral curriculum being developed from Year 1 to Year 7**. On the 5th January staff will use this new document to review and update their half-termly notes for P.D.M.U.

**Family learning** has been another exciting development. We are so proud of the nursery unit's use of the '**Getting Ready to Learn**' project to engage and empower parents in their children's learning. The levels of participation and feedback from participants has been very pleasing.

## Talking Points: **Children's Reading**

Every month we would like to share an educational issue with our families. The need for parents and teachers to be on the 'same page' is so important to help our pupils reach their full potential. My hope is that parents would find this information useful and thought provoking. We are also very keen for parents to respond with their comments to us. Your comments can be sent to Mr Bailie (wbailie552@c2kni.net).

This month we want to discuss the importance of encouraging pupils to **read for pleasure**.

As we approach Christmas many parents are searching for those very special last minute gifts. We all look for that gift that keeps on giving. Providing your child with a book that grips their interest is a great option!

Here is some interesting research about the impact of getting children to read more for pleasure. It really is interesting:

Low levels of literacy cost the UK an estimated **£81 billion a year!**

**Incomes are higher** in countries with high adult reading ages;

In Northern Ireland the **hourly wage of workers with the highest levels of literacy is 94% higher** than for workers who have the lowest levels of literacy;

Reading for pleasure is a **more powerful factor in life than their background**;

If your child reads at least 30 minutes a day it is likely to **boost reading by one full year**;

16 year-olds who choose to read books for pleasure outside of school are **more likely to secure managerial or professional jobs in later life** (the habit has to start now!)

This Christmas our children need toys but do not forget books! We have a fantastic library in school and in the local area. Families can access thousands of great books free of charge!

As you have extra time family time over Christmas and you prepare to go into 2018 consider some strategies to help your family read more:

Have **regular bedtime stories** (including older pupils too!)

Consider having **family reading times** (read a book together or everyone reads their own book at the same time);

Mums and dads should be **reading role models**;

Have a **weekly library visit**;

Start a **Family Book Club** when everyone talks about the stories they are reading.

Is all of this easy? No, at the start it is hard work and will involve sacrifice. Just like going the gym you have to work really hard to develop better habits. Once you do, however, the results feel and look great. The link between successful readers and adults who reach their life goals is undeniable. This Christmas put improving your family's enjoyment of reading at the top of your list to Santa!



## **'Operation BLUE'**

### **Anti-Bullying Week**

In November we held our annual anti-bullying week. This year it was entitled **'Operation BLUE'**. Pupils were put into the role of special agents with the mission to identify and address bullying behaviour.

The aim of the week was to **educate** pupils about the nature and types of bullying behaviour. In addition, we sought to **equip** pupils with a 'toolbox' of skills to assess challenging situations and make good decisions. Finally, we wanted to **empower** our pupils as a community to break the silence and never to tolerate bullying.

Each day during the week pupils came to an assembly to learn about bullying types:

Monday - **Physical Bullying;**

Tuesday - **Emotional Bullying;**

Wednesday - **Social Bullying;**

Thursday - **Cyber Bullying;**

Friday - **Racial and Religious Bullying.**

They were then sent back to class with a 'mission' to build on the morning's learning.

Pupils were also invited to participate in a house competition to design anti-bullying posters for some precious gold coins.

On the Friday they also completed an end of week audit. The feedback was very pleasing:

**92%** agreed that they understood bullying more clearly (**74.2%** strongly agreed).

Here are some of the pupils' comments about what they learned:

**'I learned that bullying is not your fault. We need to break the silence!'**

**'I learned that it doesn't matter where you're from or who you are, we can all be friends. I also learned that if you get bullied you can always tell Julie (school councillor), the teacher, supervisor, Mr Bailie or Miss Watson.'**

## **Year 7 Residential Trip**

Last week Year 7 had a fantastic time on their residential to Bushmills. On the first day they canoed down the River Bann before relaxing later on with board games and a pool tournament.

On their trip they also visited the Giant's Causeway to learn about the Legend of Finn McCool, orienteered at Downhill, visited the Jet Centre and participated in team challenges such as archery and fire lighting.

They had great fun! Visit our school website to follow their journey and see all of the pictures!



## **'New Year, New You 2018'**

### **Parent Events**

**9th Jan - Internet Safety for Parents** by the N.S.P.C.C. 2-3pm. **Please come along!**

**10th Jan - Parents' Active Mental Health Workshop** at 7pm.

### **Love for Life**

On **Thursday 11th January 2018 at 7pm**, we welcome the parents of Year 6 and 7 parents to a **'Love for Life'** workshop. This fantastic charity works beside schools to prepare pupils for puberty. This is an essential workshop for all Year 6 and 7 parents. Please plan to attend.

## Diary Dates

### DECEMBER

**12th** - Foundation Stage Nativity @ 10am

**13th** - Key Stage 1 Nativity @ 10am

**13th** - Pupils' Christmas Dinner.

**18th** - Nursery Nativity at 9.30a.m.

**19th** - K.S.2 Carol Service - Newtownabbey Mission at 10am.

**19th** - P.T.A. Disco during the day. This a non-uniform day (Key Stage 2 pupils dress in their uniform and then change after their carol service into their casual clothes).

**20th - Christmas Holidays begin!** Non-uniform day.  
Early closure 12noon Nursery to Y.4 (with older siblings) then at 12.15pm K.S.2. No lunches.

### JANUARY

**8th** - Term begins and 'New Year, New You' Week.

**9th** - Parent Internet Safety course at 2pm.

**10th** - Closing date for September 2018 Nursery and Year 1 application forms at 12 noon sharp.

**10th** - Parents' Active Mental Health Workshop 7pm.

**11th** - 'Love for Life' Parent Workshop (Year 6 and 7) .

**11th** - Abbey Community College Activity Day (Year 6 and 7).

**12th** - Year 7 Carrick Academy day.

**17th** - Family S.T.E.M. Night at St. James's Primary School.

**25th** - Nursery: G.R.T.L. 'Ages and Stages' Parents' Talk.

**26th** - Year 7 Transfer Interviews.

**27th** - A.Q.E. Result Day.

**29th & 30th** - Year 7 Transfer Interviews.

**31st** - Year 6 Parents' Transfer Information Night @7pm.

### FEBRUARY

**1st** - Y.4 at Armagh Planetarium Trip.

**6th** - Internet Safety Day /Year 3 Trip to Castle Espie

**7th** - Y.5 Family S.T.E.M. Night - 7pm @ Whitehouse.

**9th** - Nursery Interview Day - details to be confirmed.

**12th** - Primary School Interview Day - details to be confirmed.

**14th** - Michael Morpurgo K.S.2 Author Bash Day

**15th & 16th** - Holidays!

## Pastoral Care Team



Pupils' safety and care is our first priority. If you have any concerns we have a team of staff who are trained to support pupils and families. This team focuses on both child protection and wider pastoral support.

**Team Leader:** Mrs R. Watson

Mrs Clifford (Early Years)

Mrs Spratt (Nursery)

## Christmas Dinner



Please remember that our school Christmas dinner will be on  
**Wednesday 13th December 2017.**

### Mains

Roast turkey and stuffing

Chipolata sausage

Carrots and peas

Mashed Potato

Roast Potato

Turkey gravy

### Dessert

Ice cream and Jelly or

Yoghurt

### Price:

**Only £2.60**

**No charge for  
free meals.**