



'The Phoenix' - Whitehouse News



"We Rise By Lifting Others"

January 2018

Principal's Scribble...

Dear Parent,

I want to begin by wishing you all a happy new year. We started 2018 with our fantastic **'New Year, New You'** wellbeing event. It was a great week of activities and learning.

I would ask parents to note the arrangements for the **interview week** beginning Monday 12th February. Please refer to letter sent home earlier in January for full details.

On Wednesday 14th February our school canteen have planned a special **Valentine themed lunch**.

School will be closed on **Thursday 15th and Friday 16th** for our half term holiday. Enjoy!

On Monday 19th February we have decided to allocate our final staff training day of the year. This will give pupils another day off and staff valuable time to complete work for an award we are pursuing. Generally, we try and give lots of notice of when we are using these training days. In this case, due to circumstances beyond my control, this was not possible.

I would also commend the **high attendance levels**. Most classes have an attendance level of over 96%. Please do your best as a family to maintain high levels of attendance for the rest of the year.

This month we are finally seeing our **Outdoor Learning Zone** being built at the front of the school. It will provide outdoor classrooms, areas for pupils to grow their own food, some play equipment and in the future so much more. This is being funded via a generous grant from Antrim and Newtownabbey Council. I would like to thank our present mayor **Cllr. Paul Hamill** for his support with this project.

The beginning of 2018 is very exciting!
F. Bailie



As we started a new year we took a big focus on pupils' pastoral care and wellbeing. Here are a few of the initiatives that have marked the beginning of 2018:

- ◆ 'New Year, New You' themed week;
- ◆ 'Love for Life' - Puberty and relationship workshops for Year 6 and 7 pupils. Parents were also invited for some training to support their children;
- ◆ Year 7 P.D.M.U. N.S.P.C.C. lessons on drug education and peer pressure;
- ◆ Internet Safety Day;
- ◆ Pupils' Mental Health Week.

We take our pastoral care responsibilities very seriously. In addition, we see the close link between happiness and pupils' learning.

Congratulations on A.Q.E. Successes!

We would like to congratulate all our Year 7 pupils on their A.Q.E. scores. We are very proud of all the pupils who gave their very best.

The scores were very pleasing. The pupils gained some very high scores. We are very pleased that our pupils will be heading to a whole range of grammar and secondary schools in September 2018.

Pupils will be informed of their new schools on the 19th May.

"Learning to Live"

'New Year, New You'

Our new term at Whitehouse Primary kicked off in style with our wellbeing week. It was packed full of activities for children, staff and parents. Everyone was given opportunities to taste new things and try new experiences.

We are very grateful to Tesco who provided a wonderful selection of fruits, cheeses and breads for each class to try. Many children tried some foods for the first time. The sugar talks also highlighted the need for wise food choices. It is hoped that everyone will now enjoy a more varied and healthy diet.

Our children's health and safety is always paramount. It was great to engage with key people in our community who help to support us in this role.

Pupils during the week were given opportunities to take part in art and craft, adventure events and an indoor Olympic circuit. Everyone had the chance to try something new and have fun.

Needless to say, exciting plans are already in place for 'New Year New You 2019'.

As part of promoting pupils' awareness of self and the need to have respect for others we have already support the **NSPCC 'PANTS' Campaign**. In school we reminded pupils of how to keep themselves safe using key messages on personal space and feeling comfortable.

We would recommend the PANTS materials to all our parents. Please visit the site for some practical tips - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/>

Festival of Words 2018

A Celebration of Literacy and Friendship

On Monday 26th February we will proudly launch our fifth annual 'Festival of Words'. This week long festival will raise the profile of literacy and encourage children to become enthusiastic about their learning.

'The Festival of Words' will incorporate the Scholastic Book Fair. There will be a chance to purchase books each morning from 8.30am and from 2pm to 3.30pm each afternoon. 60% of all sales from the book fair will be donated to our school. We intend to invest all the commission in our fantastic Roald Dahl Library.

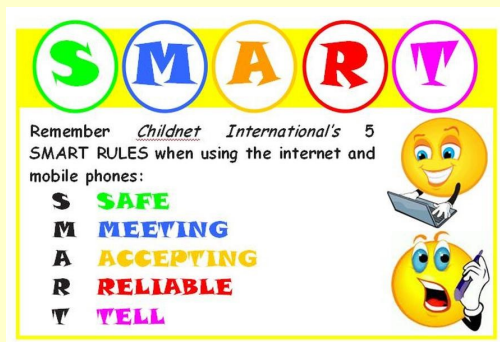
This event is a great example of how we bring together super teaching with a really fun set of experiences.

More details coming soon!

Internet Safety Day

Tuesday 6th February 2017

How SMART are you?



This year, yet again, we celebrated Internet Safety Day. This is a great opportunity to reinforce our SMART rules.

We also sent home a family challenge to encourage parents to discuss the use of the internet with their children. It is also a great chance for parents to review the security setting on all their children's electronic devices. All entries are due in by Friday 9th February. Thanks for your support!

How are we doing?

As a school it is good to ask parents and pupils their opinions. Here is some of the feedback.
I hope you find it as encouraging as we did.

Pupils' Happiness Survey

January 2018

95% of pupils felt safe and secure in school.

92% of pupils felt they were learning really well in school.

Some lovely quotes from the children included:

'The teachers are very nice and helpful'

'I don't know (*how we can improve*) because it is really good and I love school'

And finally, when asked how we could improve one Year 7 pupil simply asked, 'Can we have a Whitehouse High School?'

Anti-Bullying Week 2017

In November we completed our annual Anti-Bullying Week. The week was called 'Operation Blue'. Pupils were given the mission to understand and prevent bullying. The feedback was very pleasing!

- ◆ 93% of pupils stated that they enjoyed their 'mission' during the week;
- ◆ 92% of pupils felt they understood bullying better after the week;
- ◆ 99% of pupils were able to identify bullying effectively.

Some of the pupils' comments were very encouraging too!

'You break the silence and tell someone... If someone is getting bullied tell someone.'

'I learned that bullying is not your fault.'

'I learned that it doesn't matter where you're from or who you are you can always be friends. I also learned that if you are being bullied you can always tell Julie (Time for Me), the teacher, a supervisor, Mrs Watson or Mr Bailie.'

100,000 Hits!

This January our website reached 100,000 hits in less than two years since its launch. We were all very proud.

To assess our communication we issued an e-survey to parents. The feedback was very pleasing:

- ◆ 97% of parents found the information on the site useful;
- ◆ 96.5% found the site user-friendly;
- ◆ 93% felt the site was attractive;
- ◆ 88% of parents also praised the linked app.

Parents were also asked about the potential of using e-payments for paying school donations and payments. The feedback was very interesting.

- ◆ 80% of parents said they would value an e-payment option;

The Governors are keen to pilot an e-payment system in the near future in response to this survey.

Parents were also asked about phasing out most paper notes (apart for those required to be signed). 83.6% of parents said they would prefer e-notes and 8.2% were unsure. We believe this was a great endorsement of a future paperless communication policy.

Here were a few quotes from parents about our communication methods.

'Everything about the **website** is so straight forward and easy to use'.

'The **app** is handy to have, with all the notes and newsletters, also keeps you up to date with the school calendar'.

'**Texting** reminders are great!'

'I think **e-payments** would be fantastic. I rarely have cash as I use my card so it would be much better for me'.

'Everything is **better sent by email or text!**'

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;

January Update

The big focus this month has been the embedding of our **P.D.M.U. new policy and scheme**. Teachers spent a considerable amount of time developing their planners.

This month staff completed another cycle of '**New Year, New You**'. There was a particular focus on helping pupils to support their own mental health. This will be followed up in February with our teachers using '**Children's Mental Health Week**' as a teaching opportunity.

We also had a very useful '**Love for Life**' workshop with parents and the Year 7 pupils to help them understand puberty. They were fantastic workshops! Pupils' feedback was excellent.

At the beginning of January the pupils completed our annual '**Happiness Audit**'. What was very pleasing that the results were even higher than in January 2017. That made us smile!

Talking Points: Exercise & Education

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 link between **Exercise & Education**.

It is recommended that primary children need **at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day**.

New findings from biology research show that regular exercise benefits the brain. Not only can regular exercise improve attention span, memory, and learning, they can also reduce stress.

'Memory retention and learning functions are all about brain cells actually changing, growing, and working better together...Exercise creates the best environment for that process to occur.'

For starters, exercise pumps more blood throughout the body, including to the brain. More blood means more oxygen and, therefore, better-nourished brain tissue.

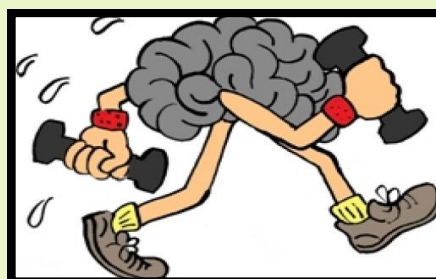
Exercise also spurs the brain to produce more of a special protein (BDNF) which is like a 'Miracle-Grow for the brain.' This powerful protein encourages brain cells to grow, interconnect, and communicate in new ways.

A researcher called Hillman (2007) put 259 primary school pupils through physical routines. He then checked their physical results against their maths and reading test results. The more physical tests they passed, the better they scored on the achievement test. The effects appeared regardless of gender and background. It seems that regardless of race or family income, the fitness of a child's body and mind are tightly linked.

In another study 12 students who needed extra help with numeracy skills were given 30 minutes of extra P.E. minutes each morning. They then joined other students, who had not exercised, in a special numeracy class. Those who had not exercised only made a 3.9% increase. The pupils who had exercised had a 20.4% increase in their results.

The message is clear. Both the school and parents need to provide this type of physical activity. How can you help?

- Encourage more outdoor play at home;
- Help your child to engage in school and community sporting clubs;
- Limit screen activities at home;
- Make sure your child has their P.E. kit in school;
- Walk to and from school;
- Plan regular family physical activities.



If a child is happy and healthy they are more likely to be higher achievers in school. It would be unrealistic to think that exercise will allow all pupils to achieve equally, but it will help all pupils to reach their own personal potential. In summary, if our pupils get ahead they are likely to stay ahead. Therefore, as a family get active and strive for success.

Diary Dates

February

9th - Nursery Interviews

12th - Primary Interviews

14th - Non-Uniform Day (£1) & K.S.2. Michael Morpurgo 'Author Bash'.

15th & 16th - Holidays!

19th - Staff Training Day (Pupils do not attend).

20th - School begins

25th - Year 5 pupils attend the Peace Proms

26th - '**Festival of Words**' - A week of activities promoting reading, writing and drama. Calendar of events to be sent home very soon.

26th - **Scholastic Book Fair Week**. Open from 8.30am and then 2pm to 3.30pm.

March

2nd - **Internet Safety Drama Production**. Year 4 to 7 pupils (1.45pm to 2.45pm).

5th - **Year 5 Early Man History Day**

5th - The milk notes for the Summer Term will be issued. **Deadline 20th March.**

19th to 23rd - Easter Week Assemblies exploring '**The Greatest Story Ever Told**'.

19th & 20th - Year 5 Shared Education Easter Trips to local churches.

20th - Milk Order Deadline for the Summer Term.

23rd - Non-Uniform Day £1. Early closure (no school lunches served today).

Year 1 - 4 pupils leave at 12pm with older siblings.

Year 5 - 7 pupils leave at 12.15pm.

Nursery pupils leave between 12pm and 12.15pm.

Easter Holidays 26th March to 6th April.

School begins on Monday 9th April.

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)

Health & Safety Reminders:

Whitehouse Primary is **private property**.

All non-employees on the campus are **guests of the school**. The Governors have the **right to remove the right of access to the campus with reasonable cause***. This could include disobeying school policies or being disrespectful to members of staff (including not complying with reasonable instructions).

Therefore, all individuals on the campus must comply with the school's policies and requests from staff members.

The school's campus policies are consistent with advice from the Education Authority and relevant legislation.

Two key reminders:

Smoking is not permitted on the school grounds;

No dogs are permitted to be walked or carried on the site (except guide dogs).

*This notification should be considered by all parents as a formal notification of their status as visitors and their requirement to comply with all reasonable instructions.