



## 'The Phoenix'- Whitehouse News



**"We Rise By Lifting Others"**

May 2018

### *Principal's Scribble...*

Dear Parent,

Our pupils have completed their end of year assessments and teachers are working very hard writing **reports**. These will be sent home on the **14th June**.

Our new **Outdoor Learning Zone** has finally started this month. We hope that **Phase One** will be completed by the end of June. Over the next five years we plan to build a new section each summer.

This month the school also completed its **Silver Eco Award** and gained our **Green Tree School Award** (Bronze Level). I am sure you have noticed all the planting work being done to help our school environment.

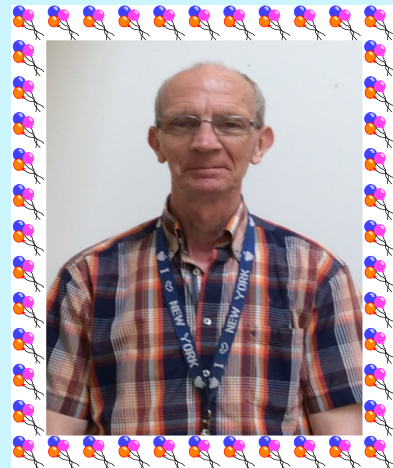
We recently completed a survey on creating **after school care facilities** for our families. The feedback was very positive. The Governors will be meeting soon and will agree on the way ahead over the next year or so.

Finally, this month it was exciting to welcome our 52 new nursery children and 60 Year 1 pupils. **We are very humbled by our community's confidence and support.**

In contrast, our Year 7 pupils received news of their post-primary schools. **Our pupils have been placed in a wide range of grammar and secondary schools.** While they will all soon get new uniforms we hope they will always proudly wear their 'Whitehouse label' with both pride and affection.

Yours sincerely,  
F. Bailie

### *'It's a 10 for Mr. Evans!'*



This June we will say our goodbyes to Mr. Evans, our school caretaker, who is retiring after 16 years of dedication. Mr Evans has been a big part of the Whitehouse family for many years and will be greatly missed by all. We asked him about the highlights of his time at Whitehouse and what his plans are for the future.

#### ***What has been your favourite part of the job?***

The kids, they are brilliant and have always been very respectful towards staff and visitors to the school!

#### ***What will you miss the most?***

I will miss seeing the children everyday and the conversations with parents each morning and afternoon.

#### ***What are your plans for the future?***

I plan to maybe take up work part-time, to spend time with my wife and go on holiday. I will probably play bowls and perhaps go back to ballroom dancing!

### **FAMILY CONNECTIONS - COMMUNITY FUN NIGHTS**

Fun activities for you and your children at Rathcoole and Monkstown! Come along to one or both nights:

Thursday 24th May-Newtownabbey Methodist Mission from 6.30pm to 8pm.

Wednesday 30th May - Abbey Presbyterian Church from 6.30 to 8pm. All children to be accompanied by an adult.

**"Learning to Live"**

## Half Price Book Fair



On the **week beginning the 18th June** we will have a **Scholastic Book Fair**. The great news is that all books are half price!

There will also be books available **priced from as little as 50p**. These small books are ideal for days out or holidays at the beach.

There will be an opportunity to purchase books each morning from **8.45am** and from **2pm to 3.30pm** each afternoon.

The school gets a 10% commission from the sale to purchase new books. **We intend to invest this money in our school library.** In particular, we hope to buy non-fiction books to support pupils' research skills while studying key topics.

There will be a wide selection of books to enthuse readers of all ages. Come along and stock up in time for your summer reading.

Our very successful school library is going to pack up for the summer months. **After the 15th June the library will no longer be open for community use as we stocktake and get ready for 2018/19.** Where does a year go?



## Summer Fair 2018

It is hard to believe that we are getting ready for the Summer Fair again!

Please keep Friday 1st June free and bring the whole family along from 5pm - 7pm. Your family can enjoy our barbeque, have their faces painted, visit a whole range of stalls and have fun on the bouncy castles.

This is a major opportunity to help our very successful P.T.A to raise money for the year ahead.

We hope that the sun will be shining! Please come along and support us.

Please Note!

School ends early to allow for set up. *Years 1 to 4 (with older siblings) at 1pm and Years 5 to 7 at 1.15pm. Nursery pupils can be picked up between 1pm and 1.15pm.*



### Health & Safety Notices

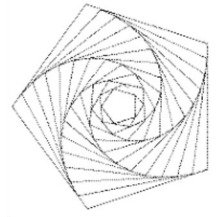
Please read carefully and support these requests:

- **Grape Safety** - Please take care and pre-cut grapes for younger pupils;
- **Dogs on Campus** - There are a number of pupils with genuine dog phobias and allergies. Please do not bring dogs on school grounds. There are also some reports of owners not cleaning up after their dogs. This is totally unacceptable!
- **Parking** - We ask that consideration is shown to residents who reside in Abbey Park. Please use a one way system and exit through the school gates rather than travelling the opposite way as we wish to be as respectful as possible to our nearby residents.

# YEAR 7 NEWS PAGE

This term in year 7 we have been very busy. In maths we have been looking at complex patterns. We have drawn 'Pursuit Curves' and cardioids. We have also investigated Pascal's Triangle. They were really fun!

**Evie & Luis** We have also used Alta maths which is a cool app to help you with your maths, I would rate it a 10 out of 10. **Robbie**



We have been doing AR every day for around 10-15 minutes and we do 15 minutes at home. The real name for AR is Accelerated Reading. Before starting AR I never really enjoyed reading but now I do. My progress has increased as I have now read 409,472 words and 13 books. My points are 58.6 and my target is 106.1. **Imogen**

We have also taken part in a blogging project with St Marys on the Hill. We used Junior News Desk and posted comments on St Mary's Blog about Rainforests and they commented on our work about dragons. **Imogen**

As part of PDMU we visited Radar which stands for Risk Avoidance and Danger Awareness Resource. We learnt how to stay safe on the Internet and how to stay safe on the road. **Evie & Luis**

## Step Back in Time

Our topic is 'Step Back in Time' and we have been learning about the Victorians.

On Friday the 27<sup>th</sup> of April we went to Sentry Hill, the house of Victorian William Fee McKinney and his family. The reason we went to Sentry Hill was to experience the way that richer Victorians lived back in the 1800s. We dressed up as Victorian children to see how they went round their everyday lives. William Fee McKinney loved to collect things, like birds, spears, guns and more. We learnt so much about the Victorians and the way they lived. It was such an amazing honour to be invited to this wonderful place that has been standing for over 100 years and has contributed to a piece of history. **By Holly**



Year 7 went to Sentry Hill to learn about Victorians. We got to dress up like Victorians and we got a tour of The Sentry Hill historic house. We all had an amazing time playing with all the Victorian toys. We also loved playing in the beautiful garden with lots of flowers, trees and plants. Year 7 had a brilliant time and we learnt a lot about the Victorians and how they lived. **Ellie**



## Y7 ICT Mentors

This year I was chosen to be an ICT Mentor. I have really enjoyed learning new skills and helping other pupils and teachers. Recently we have been working with our p4 pupils helping them to add audio files to their PowerPoints. The ICT Mentors have also been taking part in Hive Hackers. Claire from PwC comes to our school every Friday to help us with our coding. Did you know a good coder is a lazy coder? We have been learning about algorithms and programming by drawing patterns and making models. **by Adam Y7R**

## Shared Education STEM Day with St James

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, our school and St James's Primary participated in a STEM day held in our school. We had lots of fun designing and shooting our own rockets, doing forensic science and breaking German codes. We really enjoyed the day with St James's and we would love to see them again! **By Jessica and Harry B**

At our STEM Day we learnt about the different jobs in the RAF like a mechanical engineer, a pilot and navigator. We were surprised about the number of different jobs available. **Thomas F and Ross A**

We learned how to make rockets using a weak acid and fizzy vitamin tablets and a small capsule. We had to fire the rockets in a bucket so it didn't go all over the place. We also learned about Forensic science. This is when you use DNA traces to figure out who committed a crime. Finally we did some code breaking. We had to decipher a message using a cipher wheel.



We had an amazing time socializing with St James' and making friends. St James' are coming back to our school on the 31st of May for another wonderful STEM day and we are excited to see them again. **Hannah and Rhyane**



# Year 7 – LOOK BACK - The Best Thing About Memories is Making Them

## Victorians

In year 7 we are learning about Victorians. When we went to Sentry Hill in April. All of our class learned about William Fee McKinney who was a very rich person and had a very big house that we visited. So we learned about Hannah baker she was about 11 or 12 who had to work for the McKinney family and only got paid £2 a month and had sleep in the attic.

By Rebecca and Amelia



## Year 7 Heads Up Programme

In heads up we learnt about the dangers of drugs and what they can do to your life. We had sessions every Tuesday and we did group work and independent work. At the end of our sessions we did some interactive activities. We got to see what some of the drugs might look like and put on some drink goggles and did some challenges with them. It was fun and we all learnt a lot about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

By Nathan and Megan



## School Football Team

The school football team have competed in a variety of tournaments this year. There was 3 for boys and 2 for girls. The boys have won 1 and so have the girls but the Yr. 6 boys won and the girls won on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2018. **Lewis Mulligan and Glen Mailey**



## Bushmills Residential

During December year 7 had a great time at Bushmills. We did lots of fun activities such as canoeing, archery, high ropes, bowling, forest hiking and many more. We also had outstanding staff members to look after us and give us the opportunity to do these fun activities. We would love to go back and it was very appreciated that they took the time to do this with us.

By Kailey Francey



## STEM DAY

We have both enjoyed STEM sessions this year and thought it was interesting. We did Isak 9, computers, scratch and science and that's just a few. STEM means Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Our favourite session was science because we are good at science. We also enjoyed the Shared STEM day we had in May with St James'. We built rockets, examined finger prints and made code breakers.

By Lewis C and Devon



## Swimming

During the lessons we got used to the water and then we were split up into groups and used different areas and pools. We practised lengths and kept our pace. We completed distance awards and some of us completed our challenge award. We had a few people who were able to swim for the first time! Evaluation- we really enjoyed swimming in year 7 and we hope the year 6 pupils, soon to be year 7, will enjoy it next year too!



## R A D A R Visit

This year all Year 7 pupils went to RADAR. We went to there to learn about different aspects of safety. Our favourite activities were the safety house and the scary alley. The safety house was where we went in and had to find all the dangerous things in the house such as toys on the stairs, chemicals sitting out and suffocation devises. The alley was where we learnt about personal safety online. We thought it was really fun and there were other activities covering personal, fire and anti-social behaviour, but these were our favourite. **By Bethany & Rosey**



## ICT Mentors

We are ICT mentors and we have been involved in lots of different things this year. We have supported classes, promoted internet safety, helped to prepare and submit information for the ICT Excellence Award and took part in workshops called Hive Hackers. This involved us using an app on the computers called Studio Code. On this we had to complete levels to test our ability as coders.

By Reece Cox, Logan Beckett & Charlie Beck

## Memories

One of our favourite memories was our yr.6 trip to W5. We started off in W5, afterwards we went to Pizza Hut for lunch. We then went to the cinema to see Monster Trucks. Finally, we went to the Belfast Giants match where we all cheered and chanted for them.

By Thomas and Alex

## Netball

We think netball is a fun sport and we really enjoy playing it in school. Our coaches name is Mrs Hawkins, she has taken netball for a couple of years now and she is really fun to work with. Our favourite part of netball is playing matches because it is competitive. We have been playing for 4 years now and we still love it. We hope to continue playing in our new schools!  
By Lucie and Anna.

# 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.

## May Update

- The achieving of our **Silver Eco Award** has been a key success of May. Well done to all the Eco Committee and Mrs Weir as well as Miss McIntosh.
- We entertained delegates across Europe as we completed Year 1 of our **Erasmus 'da Vinci 2019' S.T.E.M. Project**. The visitors were really impressed by our school and enjoyed meeting all the pupils. Not only will this project help us enrich our mathematics and S.T.E.M. provision but also help us gain our **International School Award** next year.
- We also received our invitation to attend the **I.C.T. Excellence Award** Ceremony on the 20th June. Our school's use of I.C.T. has already been assessed as one of the best primary schools in the country. At this award we will find out if we have won the overall prize. Whatever the judges' decision we are so proud to have reached the final of a very tough competition.
- This month our school helped to launch **'Thrive'**. Thrive is a partnership of schools and community groups in the area to achieve agreed goals. The key aims of the partnership are to improve across Newtownabbey:

Aspiration

Attainment

Early Intervention

Collaboration.

# Talking Points:

## Holidays & 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 **holidays during term & educational attainment**.

We all know that holiday companies and airlines use the summer months to boost their profits. Teachers more than any other profession suffer from the higher costs when they bring their own families on holidays.

However, we are becoming increasingly concerned as our experience would suggest that many holiday companies seem to have changed the date at which summer process begins. A number of years ago the cheaper flights were still available on the final week of June but not now the summer pricing now seems to begin around the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June. This means more families are taking holidays in early June and even May!

In addition, in England there was a very coordinated campaign by parents against the school fining system for unauthorised absences (usually holidays). Thankfully in Northern Ireland we do not have this system. We have, however, continually asked parents to not take holidays during the school term. A small minority of parents are ignoring this plea. But this campaign suggested that all pupils could have a two-week holiday during term time. This view is very irresponsible. **If thirty pupils in a class all had a two week holiday at different times of the year it would cause chaos and impact all pupils' learning;**

Finally, no month is acceptable for a holiday during the school year, however, **September and May are exceptionally important** times of the year. In September we spend lots of time settling our pupils into their new classes and in May we do our end of year assessments to measure the impact of our work on the pupils' learning. This May we had a number of families taking holidays. This is very hard on the pupils who have to come back to school after being off for a holiday and then do an assessment. **It is like an athlete running in their most important race of the season without warming up.**

The research on the impact of poor attendance is striking. It shows **44%** of pupils with no absence in Key Stage 4 achieve the highest standards in english, maths, science, history/ geography and a language. This drops to **16.4%** for those who miss up to 28 days.

The same pattern is also seen at primary school, where pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in Key Stage 2 are a **quarter less likely to achieve the highest level or above in reading, writing or maths tests** than those with no absence.

"This evidence underlines the fact that **every day really does count and that missing school has a big impact on achieving the subjects that transform young people's lives**. In my experience ensuring proper attendance is vital - and more and more young people and parents are realising that even short breaks can harm their grades." - Patsy Kane (Principal)

We would ask that parents consider term time holidays very seriously. This is especially important if your child is being helped via learning support interventions.

As highlighted above holidays in September and May are extremely difficult for the pupils taken out, the rest of the class and the teachers.

Our parents on the whole are very supportive and sensible. We hope we never have the responsibility to issue fines to parents who take term time holidays. Our hope is that given the information and the research that our parents will make the right decisions.

# Uniform Policy

September 2018

## Key Points to remember:

All uniform items should be clearly **marked with your child's name**.

Footwear - **Children should wear sensible flat black shoes to school (not trainers)**. No platform soles or high heels are allowed.

Children are not to come to school with **unnatural coloured hair and/or outlandish/extreme hairstyles** that cause a distraction to others.

The only jewellery permitted in school on health and safety grounds is a **wristwatch and a medical bracelet**. Watches should be removed and medical bracelets covered with a sweatband to partake in P.E.

**Earrings are strongly discouraged in school**. If parents opt for their child to wear earrings they must only be small studs, either silver or gold.

***Children who are participating in P.E., swimming, sports clubs and /or physical activities must not wear earrings***. On days when these activities are scheduled children must leave their earrings at home. We do not want pupils removing and replacing earrings. This is due to the potential risk of injury, earrings being lost/stolen and the spread of infections. ***Staff will not be responsible for the removal, insertion or storage of earrings.***

***Make-up*** is not to be worn to school by children.

## School Uniform

- Red school sweatshirt with the approved logo
- Dark green polo shirt with the school embroidered badge
- Dark grey trousers or knee length grey skirt
- Black/grey socks (boys)
- White/grey socks or plain grey/black tights (girls)
- Plain flat black shoes

## P.E. Uniform (Year 3 to Year 7 only).

- White round neck t shirt with red embroidered school name
- Dark green shorts
- Black plimsolls
- Hair band/clip to tie back long hair
- P.E. kit should be in a named draw string bag

## Diary Dates

### May

**29th** - New Nursery Pupils Stay and Play

**30th** - Nursery to Year 4 Sports Days.

**31st** - Year 7 S.T.E.M. Day & Eco Big Spring Clean

### June

**1st** - Principal's Pen Challenge Launched Yr. 5 to 7.

- School Summer Fair from 5pm to 7pm. School ends early to allow for set up. *Years 1 to 4 with older siblings at 1pm and Years 5 to 7 at 1.15pm. Nursery pupils can be picked up between 1pm and 1.15pm.*

**4th** - Eco Big School Clean (Day 2).

**5th** - Sports Day for Years 5 to 7 from 10am.

**6th** - New Year 1 pupils to visit their classrooms.

- Shared Education Culture Night 6.30-7.30 p.m.

**7th** - Year 1 Trip to Garden Centre.

**8th** - KS2 Author Bash - Michael Rosen

**11th** - Money Week begins & Year 1 Health Appraisals.

**12th** - Year 6 Belfast High (S.T.E.M. Asian Adventure).

**14th** - Reports Issued & New Year 1 Pupils Visit.

**18th** - Scholastic Half Price Book Fair.

**19th** - I.C.T. Hive Hackers Awards.

- Report Return Day!

**20th** - ICT Excellence Award Reception

**25th** - Year 7 Leavers' Service at 10.30 a.m.

**27th** - Nursery Celebration Event - Details to follow.

**27th** - Year 6 Parent Interviews for pupils considering entering the A.Q.E. Assessment in autumn 2018.

**29th** - Last day of School! Non-Uniform Day (£1)

Early Closure 12pm (Year 1 to 4 + older siblings) and 12:15pm (K.S.2). No lunches will be served today.

The school office will open again on Wednesday 22nd August, 2018.

The first day for pupils to return to school will be on Thursday 30th and Friday 31st August (both days will be early closures at 12pm and 12:15pm). No school lunches will be served on these two days.

The first full day will be on Monday 3rd September.

## Have a wonderful summer!

## 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)

## 'Dressing for Success'

### School Uniform Suppliers 2018/19

Our Uniform Policy was agreed by the school Governors, the Pupils' Council, parents and staff and is displayed on the previous page. We ask everyone to commit to its continued high level of compliance.

There are two uniform suppliers:

**www.ourschooluniform.com** is an online platform that parents can order online or parents can visit the shop in Lisburn.

Telephone number - 02892620394

**G & J Geddis Ltd** is located at 18-22 York Street, Belfast.

Telephone number - 02890 351554

Please note that all suppliers this year have agreed to common standards of quality and shades of garment.

I have also been assured by each supplier of a steady stream of supplies and aftercare.

Finally, if you are entitled to free school meals you will also receive a school uniform grant. Therefore, even if you do not wish to have school lunches apply for free school meals as soon as possible.

We hope to arrange an event in June so parents can buy uniforms in school from the two suppliers. Keep an eye on the banner at the top of the website and the school calendar for the date.