



'The Phoenix' - Whitehouse News



"We Rise By Lifting Others"

February 2017

Principal's Scribble...

Dear Parent,

I want to begin by thanking all the parents who attended the **interviews with teachers** this month. The attendance rates were very high!

We had a brilliant visit from the **Young American Touring Theatre Company**. These young people shared their theatrical skills but also their positive attitude to life and learning. They were fantastic!

In June 2017 our Key Stage 2 pupils will be staging their own show. **The provisional dates for the shows are the 21st and 22nd June.** Please mark these dates in your diary.

In this month's Phoenix I have published our **school holidays for the next school year**. Please keep them safe and use them to plan your family holidays in 2017/2018.

This month many politicians will be asking for your vote. I am very worried by the possible budget for schools in 2017/18. **We are in a sound position but no school is safe!** The Department for Health, very rightly, is being highlighted by the media as an area for focus. Please, however, ask your MLA candidates to also commit to schools' budgets. These are very challenging times!

Finally, we were informed this month by the Education Authority that **our school development plan for 2016/17 to 2018/19 has been assessed as of a high standard**. This is a great vote of confidence for our pupils, staff and parents. I want to thank all our parents who gave us feedback it made our plan real!

Yours sincerely,
F. Bailie

'Festival of Words 2017'

'A Celebration of Literacy and Friendship'

On Monday 27th February we will proudly launch our fourth annual 'Festival of Words'. This week long festival will raise the profile of literacy and encourage children to become enthusiastic about their learning.

Earlier this week a timetable of the week's events were sent home and uploaded to the website. Please take time and read it as a family. This event is a great example of how we bring together super teaching with a really fun set of experiences.

Key activities will include:

- ◆ Listening games and activities;
- ◆ 'Show and Tell' opportunities;
- ◆ Handwriting and poetry competitions;
- ◆ World Book Dressing Up Day.

When we compare our literacy scores to other similar primary schools in Northern Ireland we believe **we are achieving well above the norm**. We strive towards these standards by working hard but also by trying to make literacy fun. Please try to engage in this week with your child.

During the **week** we will also have our annual **Scholastic Book Fair**. There will be an opportunity 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 hope to buy new books for our Year 1 and 2 pupils as well as new topic sets of non-fiction books to promote research skills.



"Learning to Live"

Talking Points: **Sleep & 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 **Sleep & Education**. Children's sleep is often for parents an area of concern. When your child is a baby one of the first questions we are often asked is, 'How does he/she sleep for you?'

Sleep deprivation is a significant factor in lowering pupils' achievement. It is a particular problem in more affluent countries, with sleep experts linking it to the use of **mobile phones** and **computers in bedrooms late at night**. In a recent study in the USA 76% of 9 and 10-year-old pupils were lacking sleep.

Brain Food

'Sleep is a fundamental need for all children. If teachers report such large proportions of children suffering from lack of sleep, it's having a significant impact.'

'If you are unable to concentrate, to attend mentally, you are unable to achieve at your optimal level, because your mind and body are in need of something more basic.'

Sleeping & Tablets

'It isn't only that young people are kept awake by messaging their friends or using the internet. The light from the screen, held close to the face, is physically disruptive to the natural onset of sleep. It's going to tell your brain to stay awake,' says Dr. Fitzpatrick.

'There is a growing interest in the associations between adequate sleep and academic performance," says Professor Dijk.

Practical Suggestions

It is not our role to be a 'Nanny' school. Parents need to make decisions for their own families. We are simply sharing research and our experience. It is your decision how you use this information.

Schools are experiencing more pupils being sleep deprived and it is impacting achievement.

Please consider the following ideas:

Get homework done before tea if possible;

Limit pupils screen time (especially before bedtime);

Have a regular bedtime routine that helps your child 'wind down' naturally;

Set sensible bedtimes and make it a positive parent/child time.

**'Think in the morning. Act in the noon. Eat in the evening.
Sleep in the night.'** - William Blake



Reach For The Stars



Our team of Year 4 NASA engineers blasted off to Armagh Planetarium this month. During our mission we designed and built rockets, of course we had to launch them to check whose was the most aerodynamic! We visited the digital theatre to explore the planets, Earth's moon and the constellations. We looked at pictures taken by the Hubble telescope before a quick game of space football and a visit to mission control.



Our galaxy is called 'The Milky Way'.

Pheobe McTernaghan

Pluto was discovered in 1930 by

Clyde Tombagh. **Dara Kerr**

The Hubble telescope is the size of

a coach. **Bea Seath**

I loved launching our rockets, even though mine didn't go very far.

Shaw Gray

I loved running to find our rocket's landing spot. **Ellie Hinton**

I loved Armaghgeddon the space coaster, but my tummy didn't. **Leah McNevison**

The red spot on Jupiter is a storm and all four rocky planets could fit inside it. **Matthew Weir**

Astronauts train for zero gravity in the vomit comet. **Ella Downey**



Our engineers at work building rockets.



Time to add fuel.



NASA, do you read me?



Mission Control

Blueprint 2020

September 2016/17 sees the fourth 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;

Review and update our P.D.M.U. provision.

February Update:

We held a very successful and effective **Internet Safety Day** on the 7th February. Classes across the school engaged in some really interesting activities. Our Internet Safety Team pupils dressed up as superheroes and brought valuable advice to each class on how to stay 'super' safe online.

The school is in the final stages of submitting a **two year Erasmus+ bid**. This will link six schools across Europe who will collaborate to develop STEM, coding and language skills. It will be a big step in our journey to bid for the **International School Award**.

Key Stage 2 also completed another '**Author Bash**' theme day as they learned about Michael Morpurgo and then had a fun house competition table quiz. This is all part of our goal to improve pupils' love of literacy and increase their attainment in reading.

Whitehouse Primary School

Holiday 2017/2018

School begins on **Wednesday 30th August 2017**. On both Wednesday and Thursday of this week school will end at 12pm for Year 1 to 4 classes and 12.15pm for Year 5 to 7 classes. This will allow for the annual pastoral care training of our non-teaching staff.

Friday 1st September will be our first full day of the year.

Pupils will be off on Thursday 28th to Friday 29th September for **staff training days**. School will be off Monday 30th October until Friday 3rd November 2017 for the **Autumn Holiday**.

School will be off Thursday 21st December 2017 to Friday 5th January 2018 for the **Christmas Holidays** (this includes two staff training day). School will end on Wednesday 20th December at 2pm for Year 1 to 4 classes and 12.15pm for Year 5 to 7 classes. School opens again on Monday 8th January 2018.

The school will be off on Thursday 15th and Friday 16th February 2018 for the **Winter Holiday**. School opens again on Monday 19th February 2018.

The school will be off on Monday 26th March to April 6th 2018 for the **Easter Holidays**. School will end on Friday 23rd March at 12pm for Year 1 to 4 classes and 12.15pm for Year 5 to 7 classes. School opens again on Monday 9th April 2018.

The school will be off for two **May Day Holidays**. These will be on Monday 7th and 28th May 2018.

The school year finishes on Friday 29th June 2018 for the **Summer Holidays**. School will end at 12pm for Year 1 to 4 classes and 12.15pm for Year 5 to 7 classes.

We have published these holiday dates well in advance to help parents avoid booking family holidays during term time. Please try not to take children out of school for family holidays. Pupils' attainment is impacted when they are not in school!

Diary Dates

FEBRUARY

- **26th** - Year 5 Perform at the Peace Proms as part of our Shared Education Project with St. James's P.S.
- **27th** - 'Festival of Words 2017' & Scholastic Book Fair Week.

MARCH

- **1st** - Year 5 Accelerated Reading Celebration Night @ 7pm.
- **2nd** - World Book Dress-Up Day!
- **7th** - Summer Term milk note issued.
- **16th** - 'Nursery Getting Ready to Learn' Workshop at the Mission @9.30am.
- **21st** - Milk order deadline.
- **24th** - Red Nose Day (£1 donation). The School Council will issue details for the day very soon!
- **29th - 31st** - Year 5 Shared Education residential to Ballycastle.

APRIL

- **3rd - 7th** - Easter Week Assemblies exploring '**The Greatest Story**'.
- **3rd & 4th** - Year 5 to visit Whitehouse Presbyterian Church for an Easter Workshop with the pupils from St. James's Primary School (Shared Education).
- **7th** - School ends for the Easter Break. Non-Uniform Day - No school lunches today. Nursery closes between 12noon & 12.15pm. Y1 - 4 pupils leave at 12pm (with older siblings). Year 5 - 7 pupils leave at 12.15pm
- **8th-23rd** - Easter Holidays!
- **24th** - School begins for a new term.

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

Mr Harris (Key Stage 2)

Miss Hasson (Early Years)



Special Easter Celebrations



As a school we take very seriously our responsibility to teach our pupils about key Christian celebrations. This year, starting on Monday 3rd April there will be a week of assemblies to prepare children for Easter. During this week the children will be exploring '**The Greatest Story**'.

These fun and informative assemblies will help our pupils understand the significance of Easter and enjoy the celebrations.

In addition, on the 3rd and 4th April Year 5 children, with their friends from St. James', will be attending **Easter Workshops in Whitehouse Presbyterian**. This year we are celebrating a 25 year friendship with St. James's. At this very special time of the year is good to come together and share our understanding of Easter.

Mr Bailie will also be sending home a family competition on Monday 3rd April. This will be an opportunity for parents to work through the Easter story with their children. As a school we are focused on striving to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all our pupils. We hope this build up to Easter will help reinforce our R.E. curriculum richly.

Get cracking and have a lovely Easter!