



## 'The Phoenix'- Whitehouse News



**"We Rise By Lifting Others"**

March 2016

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

Dear Parent,

March has simply flown! Key successes were the **'Festival of Words'** week and the build up to our **Easter celebrations**.

We have also been busy evaluating our latest three-year **school development plan**. The feedback has been pleasing. Go to our website and look under the **Parent Zone** tab at the top of the homepage. There is a menu that will pop up and you will see **Parents' Comments**. Our aim is by September 2016 to invite our community to join us as we launch our plan for the next three years.

At present we are **striving to achieve an average attendance of 97%** and another excellent set of end of year results. From April to June we assess pupils and plan for the year ahead. It is essential that we have high levels of attendance in the third term.

Please remember **we all finish on Wednesday 23rd March. It is a non-uniform day (a £1 donation requested) and there are no school lunches**. Years 1 and 2 leave at 12noon, Years 3 and 4 leave at 12.15pm and K.S.2 at 12.30pm. All older siblings leave with their younger brothers or sisters.

Nursery pupils can leave between 12noon and 12.15pm. We suggest that parents with no other pupils in the school collect their child from nursery at 12noon. If you have pupils in the main school collect your child from the nursery between 12.10pm and 12.15pm.

Have a lovely Easter and let us all hope we get some well-deserved good weather!

F. Bailie

Principal

### **Shared Education Residential**

Earlier this month a group of our Year 5 children and staff, along with a group from St James's Primary School, enjoyed a fantastic residential at Corrymeela. Each child was allowed to squeeze one parent into their suitcase for the trip which operated in conjunction with Community Relations In Schools (C.R.I.S.) and the wonderful Corrymeela Community volunteers.

The trip consisted of a wide range of exciting activities allowing both children and adults to explore friendship and identity through community building and story telling. The views of Rathlin Island set a wonderful backdrop for the fun and games ranging from a Pirate Treasure Hunt in the dark to a hugely popular game of 'Chaos'. Whilst many of the activities included both parents and children, the mums and dads spent a few hours each afternoon working with C.R.I.S. whilst the children were entertained by the Corrymeela Community Volunteers who played many games, made many masks and sang many songs.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to all of the staff, volunteers, children and parents who made the trip hugely enjoyable and successful. The relationship between the schools has strengthened as our pupils continue to work together through our Shared Education programme and the parents have already formed plans to meet up again in the future!



**"Learning to Live"**

## 'The Greatest Story'



During the final week of March the school prepared for Easter. The children engaged in a whole range of activities across the curriculum in their own classes.

As a community we also had a series of assemblies to teach children about the Bible's account of the Easter story. It was a great time for the pupils to join together and explore what Easter really means. The three assemblies were:

- ◆ The Table - The last Supper explored;
- ◆ The Cross - Good Friday explained;
- ◆ The Tomb - Easter Sunday celebrated!

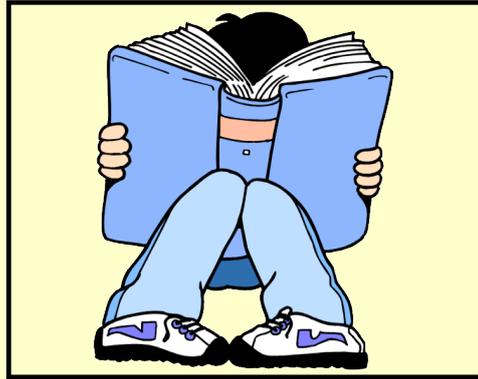
Pupils from our school also visited local churches with our friends from St. James's Primary School.

Our P.T.A. also got involved. The children had to design their own crazy eggs. This involved families decorating eggs in the most creative ways possible. Eggs were made into superheroes, villains and a whole range of wonderful characters. Everyone had a 'smashing' time!

Finally, our P.T.A. also organised an Easter Treasure box Ballot. It is on course to raise over £200 for our school. Well done and thank you for your support.

After all of this activity we all are ready for a nice Easter holiday. School ends on Wednesday 23rd March and begins again on Monday 4th April. We wish all our families a very happy and safe break from school. Let's all hope that the sun shines!

## 'Festival of Words'



On the week beginning the 29th February we held our third Festival of Words. The pupils had a super week!

They enjoyed the visiting poets, the professional illustrator and the poetry recital competition. We would like to congratulate Amelia Kryczka from Yr.3 and Robbie Lindsay from Yr.5 who were cup winners from the poetry recital competition. The older children also really appreciated the opportunity to spend time reading to the younger pupils.

We would like to thank everyone who supported the school Book Fair and helped to raise around £600 for new

## SMILE Night 'Railway Children'

On Wednesday 20th April we are offering a great family night in the school at 7pm. We have invited a theatre company who will stage '**The Railway Children**'. This is a night for parents and primary aged children to come to and have a great time together.

Parents will also have the chance to have a say about the vision for the school for the next 3 years and discuss

# Blueprint 2020

September 2015/16 sees the third 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**

- Introduce 'A Catalyst of Change'. This is a 3 year Shared Education Project which aims to foster outdoor learning, S.T.E.M and community partnership.
- Create a new school development plan for 2016 - 2019.

## **Learning & Teaching**

- Develop the way we teach and learn phonics, spelling and handwriting.
- Continue to enhance pupils' achievements in mathematics.
- Use our iPads, laptops and computers more effectively to support learning.
- In the Nursery encourage better use of our campus to enrich pupils' learning.

## **Ethos**

- Put our 3 year Wellbeing Plan into practice.
- Encourage the work of our School Council as we work towards a Green Flag.

## **March Update**

- The work of our school council was enriched as they made a presentation to the Board of Governors. This was a very enjoyable and worthwhile experience.
- Our Shared Education work took a number of positive steps forward:
  - I. 22 families from St. James's Primary School and Whitehouse Primary attended a combined residential. It was a fantastic opportunity to build up our relationship as a partnership;
  - II. Our new nursery units also started their Forest School project. Pupils and trained parent helpers help promote outdoor learning as well as extending friendships;
  - III. Both schools attended an international Erasmus+ trip to Spain to explore great practice in developing mathematics in Key Stage 2. Both schools have also joined with four other school across Europe to bid for an additional project for the next two years to develop music, drama and explore the development of social skills.

# Y3'S VISIT FROM WORLD OF OWLS



Year 3 have been learning all about birds.

Mike from 'World of Owls' came to teach us more about owls. He brought some friends with him too!

We learned lots of things about owls from Mike. We also had a lot of fun meeting Bowie the Barn Owl and Harley the Eurasian Eagle Owl.

Owls have their ears behind their eyes. What you think are their ears are just lovely feathers. **Bea**

Owls are silent when they fly. **Ellie**

Only Tawny owls say "twit-twoo". The girls say "twit" and the boys say "twoo". **Ella**

Owls don't fly when it is raining. **Amelia**

The biggest owl is The Eurasian eagle Owl. **Leah**

The smallest owl is the Elf Owl. Sara

There are only 13 barn Owls left in Ireland. **Phoebe**

Owls are the only birds who have furry feet. **Matthew**

Owls have different coloured eyes to let you know when they come out.

**Logan**



# Y3'S TRIP TO CASTLE ESPIE

We went to Castle Espie, in Comber, to learn about ducks, geese and swans.

When we were there we learned about feathers, migration, bird watching and how birds feed.



My favourite part was getting to feed the ducks.

We learnt about the different ways ducks get their food. Some skim the water, some dive to the bottom and the others just put their head under

We got to play in the forest park and do a balance challenge. Ethan

We got to visit the gift shop! Katy



# Diary Dates



## MARCH

**23rd - Non-uniform Day - £1 per pupil.**

**23rd - Early Closure for Easter** - no school lunches served today.

**Y.1 and 2 will be dismissed at 12.00 with older siblings.**

**Y.3 and 4 will be dismissed at 12.15pm with older siblings.**

**Year 5 to 7 pupils will be dismissed at 12.30pm.**

**Nursery pupils can be picked up from 12noon to 12.15pm.**

## APRIL

**4th** - School begins after the holidays

**5th** - Y.4 to Mossley Mill 'With a Heart and a Half' - a play to honour the Battle of the Somme.

**7th** - P.T.A. family quiz night at 7pm.

**14th** - Year 5 Shared Education Science night at 7pm 'Potions and Magic Science'

**20th** - S.M.I.L.E. Night - 'Railway Children' 7pm. A night for drama and fun for the whole family.

## MAY

**2nd - 6th** - May Holiday week!

**9th** - School begins

**16th** - Year 1 to 7 assessments begin.

**Aim for 100% attendance in May!**

**19th** - Shared Education Science Fair and Science Show 'Magical Science'

# Pastoral Care Team



Dear Parent,

As you are aware we have a very successful Pastoral Care Team. However, due to a forthcoming maternity and an illness, we have had to reorganise our team. From Monday 4th April our new Pastoral Care Team will be as follows:

**Team Leader:** Mrs R Watson

**Assistant Leader:** Miss C Hasson (Nursery to Year 4)

**Assistant Leader:** Mr G Harris (Year 5 to Year 7)

While our team has changed our commitment to provide great care to our families remains the same.

## Netball Club

What a great year so far! The Netball Club has been as popular as ever with an enthusiastic group of girls from Year 5 to 7 attending. They display great team spirit and readily take on advice given by their coaches Mrs Hawkins and Mrs Clifford.



We are pleased to report that the netball team has already achieved success this year by winning their first three Newtownabbey Primary Schools Netball League matches against Templepatrick, Whiteabbey and Ballyclare. The team also attended Six Mile Leisure Centre for a tournament hosted by Netball NI in conjunction with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. The girls had a super day and were awarded third place overall - only narrowly missing a place in the final. The professional umpires had nothing but praise for the Whitehouse pupils, commenting on how they respectfully and positively listened and interacted with them.

Everyone is looking forward to the second round of league matches hosted in our own school on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April. This will be closely followed by a Newtownabbey Primary School Netball Tournament later in the year.

Keep the hard work and the momentum going girls. We wish you every success this year and in future years as we are already spotting some fantastic upcoming talent in Year 5 and 6 for next year's team :).