



'The Phoenix' - Whitehouse News



"We Rise By Lifting Others"

January 2016

Principal's Scribble...

Dear Parent,

I want to begin by wishing you all a happy new year. We started 2016 with our fantastic **'New Year, New You'** wellbeing event. During this week our pupils had a super range of activities and stimulating learning opportunities. One of the highlights was the visit of the Belfast Giants. They encouraged our pupils to set high goals for their futures and to work hard to achieve their plans. The need for a healthy lifestyle and diet was also stressed.

I would like to thank all the many parents who returned our **healthy lunchbox consultation**. By February of this year we will issue an updated healthy eating policy for our school. It was pleasing that so many parents were supportive of our efforts.

Please note the arrangements for the **interview week beginning on the 8th February**. It is important that pupils are picked up promptly to allow for interviews to occur as timetabled.

I want to stress again the need for us to keep pupils' attendance high. At present we are striving to maintain a **97% level of attendance**. All the research shows the link between high attendance and achievement.

I am delighted to announce that on the 9th February our **new school website and linked app** will be launched. Please read the article in this edition of the Phoenix to find out more.
Yours sincerely,

EXCITING NEWS!

On the 9th February we are launching our new updated school website. This new platform will make it easier for children and parents to stay informed of what is happening in the school. Visitors to the site will also be able to see lots of recent photographs of pupils participating in many aspects of school life.

Pupils can also check out the 'Pupil Zone' to find out more information about the school council and our extensive range of afterschool clubs on offer.

On an even brighter note, there will be an app available to download, providing you with important information right at your fingertips. You can subscribe to this app by searching for the 'Schools NI' app.

Launching on 9th February at
www.whitehouseps.co.uk



"Learning to Live"

Heart Foundation Day

Tuesday 9th February

It is important that we promote pupils' health and wellbeing. Keeping our hearts healthy is a particularly important issue. In Northern Ireland we have a very real challenge with heart disease.

Our school kitchen staff are doing their part to promote heart health awareness by celebrating Heart Foundation Day.

The following menu will be served to help our pupils consider the need to take care of their hearts.

THEMED MENU

- ♦ **Tomato & Chilli Chicken and Rice**

Or

- ♦ **Tomato & Basil Meatballs and Pasta**

+

Sweet Potato Mash & Heart Shaped Bread

- ♦ **Red Velvet Cake
&
Strawberry Milkshake**

Please remember to send in £2.50 dinner money on Monday 8th February if you would like to order a meal. It really helps the kitchen to have an accurate estimate of numbers for these themed days.

Our hard working P.T.A. is considering raising money to purchase a defibrillator that could

'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 2017'.

As part of promoting pupils' awareness of self and the need to have respect for others we have been investigating the **NSPCC 'PANTS' Campaign**. In school we will be reminding pupils of how to keep themselves safe using key messages on personal space and feeling comfortable. I would commend the PANTS materials to all our parents. Please visit the site for some practical tips - [https://](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/)

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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.

Campus

- Use our website to keep everyone informed about what is happening in school.

January Update:

This month the staff have been working very hard to get our new website ready. Teachers have been trained on how to upload information to the site. Over the next year we really want to expand our uses of the website.

'New Year, New You 2016' was a fantastic success. The level of enthusiasm from the pupils was very obvious. I also want to thank all the families who entered our Belfast Giants' competition that followed up the event.

The nursery department are working hard on developing their link with Forest Schools.

The Literacy Team are refining our very successful Accelerated Reading scheme.

Winter Wonderland in Nursery

In nursery this month we have been learning about winter.



We have been looking at how winter can change our environment. There have been many opportunities to explore how water can freeze to ice and melt again.

We have also been experimenting with craft activities making snowmen, polar bears and penguins. The children have used this month to develop our skills in balancing.



Diary Dates

JANUARY

- **28th** - Y.3 World of Owls visit
- **29th** - Y.7 Author visit Bob Trotter

FEBRUARY

- **3rd** - Y.6 Information Evening at 7pm.
- **4th** - Y.3 Trip to Castle Espie
- **8th to 12th** - Early closures to facilitate parental interviews.

Year 1 & 2 pupils and older sibling @ 1pm.

Year 3 & 4 pupils and older siblings @ 1.15pm.

Years 5 to 7 pupils @ 1.30pm.

- **9th** - British Heart Foundation Day.
There will be a special themed lunch in the canteen.
- **9th** - Launch of the new school website!
- **15th to 19th** - Half-Term Holidays!
- **29th** - 'Festival of Words 2016'
- **29th** - Scholastic Book Fair Week

MARCH

- **23rd - Early Closure for Easter Holidays**

Year 1 & 2 pupils leave at 12pm

Year 3 & 4 pupils leave at 12.15pm

Nursery leave at 12.15pm
Year 5 to 7 leave at 12.30pm



Pastoral Care Team



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

Team Leader: Mrs R Watson (Yr. 5-7)

Mrs H Clifford (Nursery - Yr. 4)

Festival of Words 2016

A Celebration of Literacy and Friendship

On Monday 29th February we will proudly launch our third 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 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 intend to invest all the commission in our new library. In particular, we hope to buy new books for our Year 3 and 4 pupils. This will include a whole range of exciting new novels.

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

Key activities will include:

- ◆ Professional writers, poets and illustrators.
- ◆ Writing, spelling and drama Competitions.

More details coming soon!