



'The Phoenix' - Whitehouse News



'We Rise By Lifting Others'

December 2016

Principal's Scribble...

Dear Parent,

Christmas is a busy but wonderful time. Our children have been involved in their nativity plays, they are looking forward to the P.T.A. disco and the Christmas story has been revisited through assemblies and class work.

On Monday 19th December our Key Stage 2 pupils will present their carol service in the Newtownabbey Mission at 10am. Families and friends are very welcome.

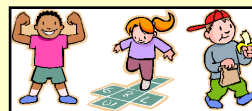
In November we had some really pleasing achievements:

1. Our attendance rate was **97.1%**!
2. The inspection service visited our school to monitor our **Shared Education** work. It was suggested that our work should be used as **a model of good practice for schools across Northern Ireland.**
3. Our Year 5 pupils were invited to make a presentation to the Minister of Education **to showcase our work within P.D.M.U. and share our discipline approach.** Our work was praised as being inspirational and of high quality.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
F. Bailie

Principal

'New Year, New You!'



Our school wellbeing week kicks off on Monday 9th January. The week will cover five key themes:

- Healthy Eating;
- Physical Health;
- Health and Safety;
- Emotional Wellbeing;
- Life and Aspiration.

The school and local organisations are contributing to the week with extensive resources. From physical fun to science experiments, it will be a fantastic week! To make this all happen we are asking for £3 per child to cover a whole range of events.

Return forms by Friday 15 December.

A Fantastic Christmas Gift for your Child



Every parent wants the very best for their child. A great start to their education is essential. Our Nursery Unit and Primary 1 classes offer such an opportunity. Please ensure your completed form is returned to the school office by **11th January, 2017, at 12 noon.** An original birth certificate is required and two documents to verify your address would also be very helpful.

"Learning to Live"

Foundation Nativity



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.

December Update

The inspection service visited the school in November to evaluate our work in Shared Education. In summary, the inspector described **our sense of vision and the resulting innovation as 'mind blowing!'** Our work is likely to be used as a case study of excellent practice across Northern Ireland.

Our P.D.M.U. & Discipline approach was showcased in Parliament Buildings as an example of excellent practice. Our **annual anti-bullying survey was also outstanding in terms of pupils' knowledge and confidence!**

The school has been working with a wide range of community partners to submit a three-year **area based plan to increase the access to social and educational resources** for the wider community. By January we hope to hear that we have successfully gained significant funding that will make a big difference across our whole area.

Talking Points: **Children's Reading**

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 importance of encouraging pupils to **read for pleasure**.

As we approach Christmas many parents are searching for those very special last minute gifts. We all look for that gift that keeps on giving. Providing your child with a book that grips their interest is a great option!

Here is some interesting research about the impact of getting children to read more for pleasure. It really is interesting:

Low levels of literacy cost the UK an estimated **£81 billion a year!**

Incomes are higher in countries with high adult reading ages;

In Northern Ireland the **hourly wage of workers with the highest levels of literacy is 94% higher** than for workers who have the lowest levels of literacy;

Reading for pleasure is a **more powerful factor in life than their background**;

If your child reads at least 30 minutes a day it is likely to **boost reading by one full year**;

16 year-olds who choose to read books for pleasure outside of school are **more likely to secure managerial or professional jobs in later life** (the habit has to start now!)

This Christmas our children need toys but do not forget books! We have a fantastic library in school and in the local area. Families can access thousands of great books free of charge!

As you have extra time family time over Christmas and you prepare to go into 2017 consider some strategies to help your family read more:

Have **regular bedtime stories** (including older pupils too!)

Consider having **family reading times** (read a book together or everyone reads their own book at the same time);

Mums and dads should be **reading role models**;

Have a **weekly library visit**;

Start a **Family Book Club** when everyone talks about the stories they are reading.

Is all of this easy? No, at the start it is hard work and will involve sacrifice. Just like going the gym you have to work really hard to develop better habits. Once you do, however, the results feel and look great. The link between successful readers and adults who reach their life goals is undeniable. This Christmas put improving your family's enjoyment of reading at the top of your list to Santa!



On Monday 28th November 2016 five of our Year 5 pupils had the opportunity to travel to Parliament Buildings to attend a celebration of All Stars. This is a training programme our pupils and staff have engaged in to develop pupils' character development and their resulting behaviour.

This was an amazing privilege as our school was the only primary school in the country to be selected for this event.

Our pupils represented us so impressively! They made a very confident and entertaining 15 minute presentation that captured the essence of the 'All Stars' programme. It included a Power-Point, artwork and a piece drama they had written.

Mrs Robinson and Miss Carson accompanied them and were incredibly proud of how they spoke so clearly in front of a room full of adults, including special MLAs and the Education Minister.

The children were greatly encouraged by all the amazing feedback and congratulations they received. We would like to thank Barnardo's for giving us this wonderful programme of study and a great day out.

Shared Education ETI visit

ETI came to visit our school at the beginning of the month to look at our Shared Education partnership with St James PS.

The inspector highlighted many positives from the project such as:

- The partnership was praised for its innovative and long-term vision for Shared Education;
- The leadership was described as both well paced and not being risk adverse;
- The support of parents and governors was seen as a significant strength;
- The partnership had been praised for 'grasping the nettle' of school improvement by targeting STEM and specifically mathematics as an area of improvement.

ETI were very impressed and extremely positive about the project. The staff in the partnership, have been highly commended for their enthusiasm and passion.

Love for Life

On Wednesday 16th November we welcomed Year 6 and 7 parents to a **'Love for Life'** workshop. This fantastic charity works beside schools as part of their **Relationship and Sexuality Education** curriculum to educate and empower both children and their parents.

The parents met with the team of workers from 'Love for Life' to learn about the work that will be done with their children in January 2017 as part of the 'New Year, New You' week.

The point of this evening was to prepare parents to anticipate and respond to children's questions after the pupils' workshop in school. The greater goal is to facilitate an on-going 'conversation' between children and parents not only in primary school but into post-primary school and beyond.

The parents had a great night and their evaluations were very pleasing.

Diary Dates

13th December - F.S. Nativity @10am

14th December - KS1 Nativity @ 10am

14th December - Pupils' Christmas Dinner Day

15th December - Nursery Nativities: Mrs Spratt 9.30am
Mrs Houston/Alexander - 10.30am

19th December at 10am - Key Stage 2 Carol Service in Newtownabbey Mission.

19th December - P.T.A. Disco (during school). £2 from Nursery to Y.4 (including a snack).
Y.5 to 7 £1 and to bring money for treats (£2 max.) Key Stage 2 pupils have to wear their uniforms for the morning but can bring in some casual clothes for their disco.

20th December - School finishes for the Christmas holiday (no school lunches).

A very special visitor to wish Nursery to Y.4 a Merry Christmas.

This is also a festive non-uniform day e.g. Christmas jumpers or just a little sparkle!

Y.1 to 4 will be dismissed at 12.00 with older siblings.

Y.5 to 7 will be dismissed at 12.15pm.

Nursery pupils can be picked up from 12pm to 12.15pm.
If you have children in K.S.2 only then leave your child in the nursery until 12.10pm.

Thursday 5th January - School begins!

9th - 13th January - 'New Year, New You'.

11th January - Closing date for Nursery and Year 1 application forms at 12 noon sharp.

11th January - Parents' Internet Safety Night at 7pm

19th January - Nursery Getting Ready to Learn session

20th January - Year 6 Trip to W5 and the Giants

1st February at 7pm - Y.6 Parents' Transfer Information Evening. Please plan to attend!

2nd February - Year 4 Planetarium Trip

7th February - Internet Safety Day

7th February - Year 3 Trip to Castle Espie

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)

Mr Harris (Yr. 5-7)

Miss Hasson (Yr. 1 - Yr. 4)

Mrs C Spratt (Nursery)



This was the theme of our prosocial anti-bullying week in November. The week included daily assemblies on the types of bullying and way to stop it. The teachers then reinforced the learning as part of their lessons over the week.

The feedback from the week was fantastic!

'I learned that if you are being bullied to smash the silence' - Year 6 Boy

'I learned you are not responsible when you are getting bullied' - Year 5 Girl

'Bullies want to be powerful so stand up for yourself and tell someone' - Year 7 Girls