



'The Phoenix' - Whitehouse News



"We Rise By Lifting Others"

January 2017

Principal's Scribble...

Dear Parent,

I want to begin by wishing you all a happy new year. We started 2017 with our fantastic '**New Year, New You**' wellbeing event. It was a great week of activities and learning.

I would ask parents to note the arrangements for the **interview week** beginning Monday 13th February (see the letter sent home last week).

Please read the article '**Think before You Park**'. Over the last few years we have tried to persuade drivers to support the parking policy but with only limited success. The Board of Governors are now considering a new approach. Your support would be very much appreciated.

I would also commend the **high attendance levels**. Most classes have an attendance level of over 97%. This is well above the national norm.

The school is also in the process of bidding for an **new Erasmus+ project**. This will see six schools across Europe working together to improve standards in S.T.E.M. and creativity. Our last project was great fun and very exciting. We believe this new project will be even better. If we are successful we will gain a share in nearly one hundred thousand euro over two years.

We are also awaiting the planning permission to be granted for **our new outdoor learning area**. With the generous support of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Council we will see a fantastic new area for all our community. Once the work has started pupils will be given the opportunity to help select a new name for this area.

The beginning of 2017 is very exciting!

Yours sincerely,

F. Bailie



We are a popular school. Our numbers have increased steadily. Therefore, **responsible and safe parking is essential!** Unfortunately, a number of adults are disobeying the rules.

Some concerned parents have made complaints about poor parking in our school.

All parents were invited to a special meeting on the **9th January**. A very helpful group of parents attended and shared their views with the Governors.

On Wednesday **18th January** the Governors **met and drafted a new strategy. It was agreed that this term parents will be consulted and a timeline for its implementation put in place.**

Part of our strategy may include **investing in very expensive parking prevention devices**. We would prefer to spend our budget on pupils' learning. However, we must keep our children safe. We want to appeal to parents to follow our rules:

1. If there is no parking bay do not stay;
2. Do not park on or close to a zebra crossing;
3. No parking on grassed areas .

We do not want to inconvenience adults collecting pupils. The Governors, however, are not prepared to put children's safety at risk.

Please support our policy now.

"Learning to Live"

The Big Freeze in Nursery

In nursery this month we have been learning about winter.



We have been exploring our natural environment and exploring textures. We have also been experimenting with craft activities making snowmen, polar bears and penguins. Our role-play area was transformed into an igloo where we became Artic Explorers!

The children loved listening to the story 'Were going on a Bear Hunt'. We even went on a real life Bear Hunt during Welly Wednesday!



'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 2018'.

As part of promoting pupils' awareness of self and the need to have respect for others we have already completed the **NSPCC 'PANTS' Campaign** in the last term. In school we will be reminding pupils of how to keep themselves safe using key messages on personal space and feeling comfortable.

We would recommend the PANTS materials to all our parents. Please visit the site for some practical tips - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/>

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.

'The Festival of Words' will incorporate the Scholastic Book Fair. There will be a chance 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 Foundation Department.

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

Key activities will include:

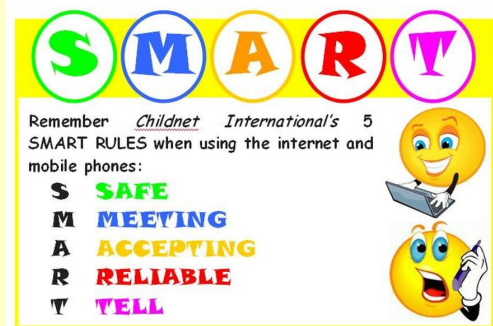
- ◆ Professional writers and illustrators.
- ◆ Writing, spelling and drama Competitions.

More details coming soon!

Internet Safety Day

Tuesday 7th February 2017

How SMART are you?



**Be the Change:
Unite and make a Better Internet**

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;

January Update

The ICT Team had a very productive month. They entered the school for the **prestigious 360 ICT Safety Award**. Judges will be visiting the school in the next term or so to assess our work. If approved this will be a great achievement. They have also spent a few days working with our pupils to **quality assure our pupils' progress in ICT**. The pupils' feedback was extremely positive. Finally, the team have prepared a bid for **a three-year investment of £45,000 in enhancing our pupils' ICT resources**. This was an impressive month's work!

Teachers received **feedback from our curricular leaders on our progress in the teaching of literacy and numeracy**. I want to thank the curricular leaders on their hard work in sampling planners, report writing and providing effective feedback. Our staff, like always, accept praise modestly but were keen to take on ideas to provide the best for our pupils.

Talking Points: Exercise & 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 **Exercise & Education**.

It is recommended that primary children need **at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day**.

New findings from biology research show that regular exercise benefits the brain. Not only can regular exercise improve attention span, memory, and learning, they can also reduce stress.

'Memory retention and learning functions are all about brain cells actually changing, growing, and working better together...Exercise creates the best environment for that process to occur.'

For starters, exercise pumps more blood throughout the body, including to the brain. More blood means more oxygen and, therefore, better-nourished brain tissue.

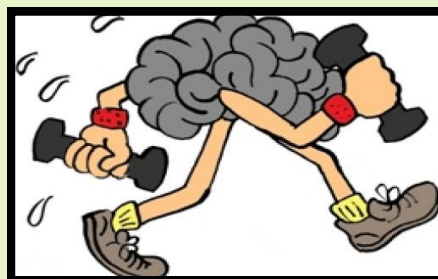
Exercise also spurs the brain to produce more of a special protein (BDNF) which is like a 'Miracle-Grow for the brain.' This powerful protein encourages brain cells to grow, interconnect, and communicate in new ways.

A researcher called Hillman (2007) put 259 primary school pupils through physical routines. He then checked their physical results against their maths and reading test results. The more physical tests they passed, the better they scored on the achievement test. The effects appeared regardless of gender and background. It seems that regardless of race or family income, the fitness of a child's body and mind are tightly linked.

In another study 12 students who needed extra help with numeracy skills were given 30 minutes of extra P.E. minutes each morning. They then joined other students, who had not exercised, in a special numeracy class. Those who had not exercised only made a 3.9% increase. The pupils who had exercised had a 20.4% increase in their results.

The message is clear. Both the school and parents need to provide this type of physical activity. How can you help?

- Encourage more outdoor play at home;
- Help your child to engage in school and community sporting clubs;
- Limit screen activities at home;
- Make sure your child has their P.E. kit in school;
- Walk to and from school;
- Plan regular family physical activities.



If a child is happy and healthy they are more likely to be higher achievers in school. It would be unrealistic to think that exercise will allow all pupils to achieve equally, but it will help all pupils to reach their own personal potential. In summary, if our pupils get ahead they are likely to stay ahead. Therefore, as a family get active and strive for success.

Diary Dates

23rd January - Return deadline for primary department interview appointments

26th January - Year 5 & 6 Family Science Night at St. James's Primary School at 7pm

27th January - Year 7 Transfer Interviews

28th January - A.Q.E. Results Day

30th January - Year 7 Transfer Interviews

31st January - Year 7 Transfer Interviews

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

10th Feb - Nursery Interview Day (Miss Nevin's Class)

13th to 15th February - Primary Interview Week

15th February - Non-Uniform Day (£1)

15th February - Michael Morpurgo K.S.2 Author Day

Thursday 16th - Friday 17th February - Holidays

Monday 20th February - School begins again

Monday 27th February - 'Festival of Words' Week. This will include the Scholastic Book Fair. Details of the week to be distributed after the February holidays).

Tuesday 7th March - The milk notes for the Summer Term will be issued. **Deadline 21st March.**

Friday 24th March - Red Nose Day (£1)

Wednesday 29th to Friday 31st March - Year 5 Shared Education Residential to Ballycastle.

Monday 3rd to Friday 7th April - Easter Week Assemblies exploring 'The Greatest Story Ever Told'.

Friday 7th April - (Non-Uniform Day £1)
Year 1 - 4 pupils leave at 12pm
Year 5 - 7 pupils leave at 12.15pm

Easter Holiday 8th - 23rd April.

School begins on Monday 24th April.

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)

Health & Safety Reminders:

Whitehouse Primary is **private property**.

All non-employees on the campus are **guests of the school**. The governors have the **right to remove the right of access to the campus with reasonable cause***. This could include disobeying school policies or being disrespectful to members of staff (including not complying with reasonable instructions).

Therefore, all individuals on the campus must comply with the school's policies and requests from staff members.

The school's campus policies are consistent with advice from the Education Authority and relevant legislation.

Two key reminders:

Smoking is not permitted on the school grounds;

No dogs are permitted to be walked or carried on the site (except guide dogs).

*This notification should be considered by all parents as a formal notification of their status as visitors and their requirement to comply with all reasonable instructions.