



'The Phoenix' - Whitehouse News



"We Rise By Lifting Others"

November 2016

Principal's Scribble...

Dear Parent,
The next few months have many interesting educational opportunities for our pupils. Here are a few of the highlights:

The 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. On 11th November we will be holding two services to remind pupils about the sacrifices made at the Somme.

'Friendship Week' - National Anti-Bullying Week. From the 14th to 18th November we will join in a UK anti-bullying week. Each day pupils will attend a special assembly and then follow up the learning in class with their teachers.

'New Year, New You 2017'. Our annual wellbeing week begins on the 9th January. A special flyer and letter has gone home with this edition of the Phoenix. Please return the slip as soon as possible.

May I remind parents to **park and drive with great care in Abbey Park.** Parking over driveways, not obeying the one way system and being rude to neighbours is not helpful. **Please remember that we must be good neighbours to local residents!**

F. Bailie



This month we are very excited to continue our **Year 5 to 7 STEM Workshops.** Pupils are engaging in learning about robotics, computer coding, kitchen science, engineering as well as gardening/eco science.

This term all our Year 5 and 6 pupils are involved in **joint STEM lessons with children from St. James's Primary School.** By September 2017 all our pupils from Year 5 to 7 will all have the opportunity to enjoy working across the two schools.

Open Night

We would like to remind you about our Open Night on **Wednesday 30th November from 6pm to 8pm.** It is intended for parents who have a child/children starting Nursery or/and Primary 1 in September 2017. You are welcome to bring your child, tour the nursery unit and Primary 1 and 2 classrooms. Please pass this information on to any friends who have children starting school or nursery in September. If you wish to apply on the night please **bring your child's birth certificate and a document showing proof of home address.**

"Learning to Live"

My Survival Story: The Galactic War

Have you ever been in a nightmare situation? No, well I have! It happened a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, well actually it was only couple weeks ago but it was still pretty cool. Hello, my name is Marcus and I am 11 years old and this is my survival story and this is my story of that strange and scary night.

It was a dark spooky Halloween night and I was doing what every other kid my age was doing... trick or treating. I already had a bucket load of candy, but I was being very greedy and thought I could go into a dark alley to get to the house that nobody will ever go to, because legend has it that every Halloween it is where the ghouls and monsters come out to play.

Slowly, I crept into the alley and heard the distant sound of doorbells ringing and dogs howling at the full moon. Next, I saw the street light beginning to flicker then suddenly out of nowhere a ghostly figure emerged from that ghostly house. I stumbled backwards and tripped over a rock and fell into what can only be described as a black hole, as I fell I hit my head and knocked myself out.

When I regained my senses, I immediately smelt burning wood and saw an alien who told me I was in great danger because I was in a war zone. The alien said his name was Charax and that he would look after me. Over time he trained me to fight in the war. I worked so hard that I thought I could take down anyone with my fist, but Charax gave me a special weapon, a purple lightsaber. I was ready to join the fight.

Not long after, I enter into a smokey dark warzone but ran into a problem right away. I realised I wouldn't be fighting humans, but I would be fighting paranormal aliens. I don't know how long I was worrying about this for, but it must have been long, because I was soon captured by these evil aliens who took me to their leader's layer.

Next thing I knew I was tied up in a small room with dim lighting. I struggled for a while to get out but I could only free my hands. I managed to reach my lightsabre and was able to cut myself free. I then enter a room were their evil king was devising his war plan. He suddenly attacked me but using my trusty lightsabre I was able to defeat him after an epic battle.

Upon defeating the evil king his army fell. I saved our galaxy. I was hailed the hero for the good side. Charax brought me back through the black hole where I woke up back in that spooky alley. Was this all a dream which took place when I was knocked out? I don't think so! That is how a travel to another galaxy, defeated an evil empire and survive to tell the tale.

By Reece Cox (P6)

Year 6 Abstract Noun Poetry

Joy
By Grace Weir

*Joy is like a beautiful pink primrose blooming in a flower field.
She smells like a creamy Victoria Sponge just fresh out of the oven.
Joy tastes like chocolate chip cookies.
She sounds like the music that makes me dance.*



Happiness
By Nathan Band

Happiness is the brightest pink of all.
It smells like a salty chippy.
Happiness tastes like a Dairy Milk chocolate bar.
It sounds like my mum singing nursery rhymes.
It feels like a nice silky scarf tied around my neck.
Happiness lives in Premier League football.

Luxury
By Harry Irwin

**Luxury is bright blue.
It smells like the salty ocean and seaweed.
It tastes like ice-cream.
It sounds like the breezy wind hitting the crystal clear ocean.
It feels like the smooth water and soft sand.
Luxury lives in your body.**



Luck
By Ellie Baird



*Luck is a green, shiny emerald in a cave.
She smells like a crunchy apple on an autumn day.
Luck tastes like a mouthful of your favourite cereal.
She feels like a leaf being rubbed against my hand.
Luck lives in hopeful hearts.*

Roald Dahl Day

We had a fantastic day on Friday 28th October as we celebrated Roald Dahl Day.

Each class got to watch or read extracts from his films/books. Y.1-4 made beautiful artwork based on their chosen book and Y.5-7 had their memories put to the test in a KS2 table quiz. Working in mixed year group teams they battled to be Roald Dahl quiz champions!

"If you are going to get anywhere in life you have to read a lot of books."
- Roald Dahl



'Step up for Pudsey' -

Children in Need Day

Friday 18th November

As always we would like to participate in the annual Children in Need campaign. This year our school council have suggested a **'Step Up for Pudsey'** theme.

Pupils are allowed, as a treat, to wear their **trainers to school for the day.**

Pupils in nursery to Year 4 will be taken on a **'Pudsey Safari'** around the school and its grounds.

Key Stage 2 pupils will also do their **'Daily Mile'** challenge in aid of the charity.

We are grateful for parents' generous support of our annual charity campaign in October. Therefore, we are simply asking pupils to bring in a **£1 donation.** If we all help the school could contribute £500!

'New Year, New You'

Mon. 9th - Fri. 13th January 2017



Following on from the success of last year we look forward to bringing in the new year at Whitehouse in style! This will involve an array of activities aimed at encouraging healthy minds and bodies for 2017.

During the week we will offer fun and educational activities from nursery to Year 7. These will include activities to help develop:

- Self-Esteem;
- Respect for Others;
- Ambition and Aspirations;
- Mental & Physical Health;
- Good Decision-Making Skills.

Not only will this be highly educational but it will be lots of fun!

Some local organisations and businesses are supporting this week. The school are also investing funds into the project. We ask that all pupils donate **£3** of a maximum of **£6 for a family.** We would be grateful if this money could be brought in by Monday 28th November.

A booklet has been sent home with this edition of the Phoenix outlining the plans for this January. A permission letter has also been provided.

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.

November Update:

The big focus in October was in developing our **new outdoor learning zone**. We have been working closely with our school council, the Education Authority and Antrim and Newtownabbey Council in getting our plans together. In November we will be **launching a competition amongst the children to name the new area**. By March 2017 we would hope to have Phase 1 completed. This will be a **£30,000** start to a project that will continue for five years. In total we are planning to invest around **£100,000 by June 2020** in a fantastic resource for our pupils and our community.

We also had fantastic news from the **Shared Education Project**. Over the next three years we are to be provided with additional resources to allow for more collaboration across the two schools. It would be our intention to use this investment to **develop curriculum and learning across the schools**. The aim of Shared Education is to build friendships and partnership in our community. There is, however, a clear expectation that the work must also **improve pupils' learning and attainment**. This is a goal that we are enthusiastically pursuing!

Launch of our new School Development Plan



On Wednesday 12th October, **to celebrate the launch of the new school development plan**, over 300 pupils and parents came along to watch a fantastic presentation of **'Beauty & the Beast'**.

The pupils were also given their own child-friendly guide to the next three years. The parents were not left out as they were also presented with a more detailed booklet outlining the school's aspirations for the coming school development cycle.

Some of our school governors, including Mrs Baillie (Chairperson of the Board of Governors), were there to welcome families and thank them for their input into the consultation process that helped shape the school development plan.

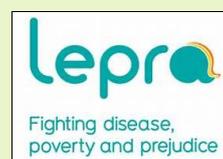
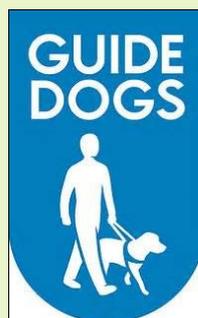
Two of the pupils even dressed up to get into the spirit of the evening's celebrations. Mrs Baillie met with them and personally handed over their booklets.

The evening was a great success. As everyone headed home they had memories of a lovely evening and hopefully, in true Disney fashion, dreams of what is yet to come! As Walt reminded his guests, **'If you can dream it, you can do it.'**

Parents' and pupils' versions of the school development plan are available from the school office upon request.

In addition keep up to date every month on our progress by reading the 'Blueprint 2020' section of our Phoenix Newsletter. Also visit the school website and look under the **Our School/School Development Plan** tabs for a whole range of

A Huge Thank You



I would like to thank all our parents for the generous support for our annual Charity Fitness Day in October.

I am delighted to confirm that we raised over £4,000! This means that we will be able to send money to our three nominated charities.

The remaining money will go to school funds to help support pupils' learning during the year ahead.

'Keep Connected!'

We are working very hard on our new website and by June 2017 we hope to have a whole range of new services. **We are allowing parents to watch the construction process** to see how hard we are working at our communication processes.

If you have a computer or/and smart phone save our website to your favourites:
www.whitehouseps.co.uk

In addition please download the app **Schools NI**. Then go to **Antrim** and select our school.

By having this app you will be able to see our latest news (including photographs), view our calendar and read all recent letters that have gone home.

When we feel the website is approaching completion we will have an official launch of our new Pupil and Parent Zone with a community competition. In the meantime check in and see how we are developing this new service for our families.

Talking Points: Attendance

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 high attendance. This year so far we have a very pleasing level of attendance. At present we have a 98.1% attendance rate.

Here are some facts and research about the link between attendance and achievement:

- 1 A child who is absent **a day of school per week** misses an equivalent of **two years of their school life**;
- 2 Research shows that **missing 10 percent** of the school negatively affects pupils' performance;
- 3 Poor attendance can **influence whether children read proficiently** by the end of Year 5;
- 4 90% of young people with absence rates below **85% fail to achieve five or more good grades of GCSE** and around **one third achieve no GCSEs at all**;
- 5 Poor examination results limit young people's options and **poor attendance suggests to colleges and employers that these students are unreliable**.

As a school we do not apologise for expecting high standards and challenging poor attendance. You can see from the research how important high attendance is for pupils' learning.

As a school we would strive for a 97% end of year attendance level. For each pupil **95% would be considered only satisfactory** (no more than 8 days off per year.)

We need to stress, however, that we accept there are very genuine cases when a child is ill or there are extraordinary circumstances when a child's attendance will be below 95%. **If this is the case then we as a school are very understanding and supportive.**

If your child's attendance falls below 90% you will be contacted and an intervention is likely to be applied. This can involve a tracking process and even the involvement of an Educational Welfare Officer.

A worrying issue is families taking **holidays during term time**. It is unfair on your child, disruptive for other pupils in the class (time taken to help your child/children catch up) and difficult for already very hard working teachers. Please try to avoid these holidays!

Diary Dates

November

- **11th - Battle of the Somme Services**
- **14th to 18th - Friendship Week**
- **18th - 'Step up for Pudsey'** - Children in Need Day - Pupils wear trainers for a day. We ask parents to make a £1 donation.
- **23rd - 'Love for Life'**, supporting your child through puberty, for Y.6&7 parents@ 7pm.
- **29th** - Milk Money notes issued.
- **30th - Open Night** 6-8pm for new nursery and Primary 1 pupils for September 2017.

December

- **13th** - F.S. Nativity @10am
- **14th** - KS1 Nativity @ 10am
- **14th** - Pupils' Christmas Dinner Day
- **15th** - Nursery Nativities (times to be confirmed by nursery staff)
- **19th** - K.S.2 Carol Service in Newtownabbey Mission at 10am.
- **19th** - P.T.A. Disco during the day. This a non-uniform day. KS2 can bring in their own clothes for after their carol service.
- **20th - Christmas Holidays begin!** Non-uniform day (£1 donation). Early closure 12noon Nursery to Y.4 (with older siblings) then at 12.15pm K.S.2. No lunches.

JANUARY

- **Thursday 5th** - New term begins.
- **9th** - 'New Year, New You' Week.

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)

Exploring Our World

In nursery we have been very excited to try out our new wet weather gear. This has kindly been supplied by our parents and we are now able to explore all aspects of outdoor learning in comfort. So far we have enjoyed splashing in puddles, squelching in the mud and exploring our new woodland area. We are excited about our first Shared Education visit as we welcome some Nursery pupils from St James' to share our outdoor campus for a morning.

