



'The Phoenix'- Whitehouse News



"We Rise By Lifting Others"

March 2017

Principal's Scribble...

Dear Parent,
March has simply flown! A key success was the **'Festival of Words'** week. We enjoyed a great range of activities and learning.

In addition, in two rooms we installed **fantastic interactive screens** (these are the new generation of technology that will replace our interactive whiteboards). They offer better quality displays, greater levels of functionality and a longer life span. My hope is that over the next five years we can install these boards across the whole school. The cost for the two screens was almost £5,000!

Comic Relief was another wonderful day. The pupils had lots of fun and they looked great in their outfits. We will hopefully have raised over £400 for this very worthwhile charity.

At present we are **striving to achieve an attendance rate of 97%**. From April to June we assess our pupils and are expecting another good set of end of year results. It is so essential that we continue to have high levels of attendance in the third term.

Please remember **we all finish on Friday 7th April for the Easter holidays. It is a non-uniform day.** Y.1 to 4 and their older siblings leave at 12pm. K.S.2 pupils all leave at 12.15pm. The nursery pupils can be collected between 12pm 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. No school lunches are served today.

Have a lovely Easter and let us all hope we get some much needed good weather!

Key Stage 2 Nights of Music & Dance



On the evenings of the **21st and 22nd June 2017** we plan to host another K.S. 2 musical spectacular. Please put these dates into your diaries now!

We will be working with the **Uplift Theatre Company**. Every Thursday from the 6th April until mid-June all our Year 5 to 7 classes will have a weekly music and dance lesson. The focus of this fantastic theatre company is to encourage participation and build the confidence of every child. All the Key Stage 2 pupils will be offered a part and **everyone can be a 'star'**.

We last staged this type of production in June 2015. Pupils, parents and staff loved the performances. Not only did everyone have a fantastic time but there was lots of good learning.

Rathcoole & Monkstown Community

Learning Week

27th - 31st March 2017

The local schools, working in partnership with the council, are committed to share the value of learning. Our goal to help our pupils to **aspire, achieve** and realise their **ambitions**.

Plan to visit a community learning festival in Rathcoole Primary School on 30th March at 6pm

'Aspirations, Attainment,
Early Intervention & Collaboration'

"Learning to Live"

'The Easter Story & A Wardrobe'



During the first week of April we will explore the Easter story. Each day the pupils will have a short assembly to explain the events and meaning of this important part of the Christian calendar.

The Year 1 to 4 pupils will go through the Biblical stories in the traditional manner. The Key Stage 2 pupils, however, will be taken on a more 'novel' approach.

The Key Stage 2 children will learn about C.S.Lewis and his story '**The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**'. In this famous novel many elements of the Easter stories can very powerfully be glimpsed. In the majesty of the great lion Aslan we see Christ, the injustice of the 'Stone Table' is very obviously a shadow of the cross and the triumphant breaking of the stone table is the Easter Sunday revelation that Jesus had risen.

In addition to this Year 5 pupils from Whitehouse Primary School, with their friends from St. James's, will visit **Whitehouse Presbyterian Church for Easter workshops on the 3rd and 4th April**. During these workshops pupils will go through a number of interactive stations to explore the Easter story. We are so grateful to the church for their invitation and all the effort that the volunteers put into this event.

On Monday 3rd April a family challenge will be sent home. Pupils will be asked to return an entry for an Easter draw on Friday 7th April. Lucky winners from each Key Stage will receive an Easter Egg!



This term, as part of our celebration of our 25 year friendship with St. James's Primary School, we entered a joint choir in the Peace Proms.

Here are some of the reports from our Year 5 pupils:

I took part in Belfast Peace Proms on 26th February 2017. My classmates and I got to go to the S.S.E. Arena and preformed a number of songs along with many other schools. Every Wednesday before our big performance we went along to St. James's Primary School to practise, practise and practise! When the day came we were all very excited. My favourite song was from the film Annie 'It's a hard knock life'. There was a live orchestra which I thought was brilliant! There was also some amazing solo singers too. We were all doing our best dance moves. It was an excellent day and I am very glad I got to take part.

Madison McK. Y.5

Peace Proms was all to do with schools meeting up and singing. On the day we all got on the bus and went to the S.S.E. Arena. We went in and practised our singing and some people had instruments to play with the songs.

Then came the moment we had been waiting for! There were thousands of people there watching us and listening to our songs. We had the best time. It was the coolest time ever!

I think it was amazing. It was the best day of my life.
By Brooke Y.5

I was so excited that I was going to the S.S.E. Arena to be part of the Peace Proms.

My mum took me to school to meet the other children in my year group. I was there early. I couldn't wait to see more people arriving. We all got on a big bus and head to Belfast with everyone on board.

When we arrived at the arena everyone looked so happy and excited. We were all talking about the Peace Proms and then it was our turn to go to our seats in the arena.

There were lots of other schools and people there. My mum managed to get over to see me before it started. That made me less nervous. Then it was time to start, the orchestra was ready! I think we all did a fantastic job. I loved the two girls who were singing and the lady who played the violin. She was amazing! I am so glad I got to take part in the Peace Proms. It was a great experience and I loved every minute of it!

By Amber Year 5

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.

March Update:

On the 17th March the school had a very productive Exceptional Closure. The primary staff developed their topic planners for the Summer Term. This allows our topics to be linked very creatively with our key literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

The nursery staff were reorganising their resources to allow for a more creative use of their campus. They also have been extending our work in using the indoors and outdoors more effectively to stimulate pupils' learning.

Finally, the ICT Team had another successful month. New equipment has been installed in the classrooms to enhance our learning environment. In addition, we have also been preparing our bid for the 360 Degree ICT Safety Award. We will be assessed very soon and hope that we can be accredited at this very high level.

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.

Barn owls are quiet when they are flapping their wings.

Callum

Some owls are nocturnal, hunting prey at night.

Charlie

Some owls sleep during the day.

Noah

Owls have different coloured eyes. **Corey**

Owls can't fly in the rain.

Oliver

Owls eat worms, mice and sometimes fish.

Erin

Some owls can hunt during the day. **Adam Y**



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.



Most of the birds were at Strangford Lough.
Taylor

We fed the ducks and Castle Espie was really fun!
Robson

We saw Stone-Age houses made of mud and straw.
Megan

We watched some of the birds from the bird hide.
Mitchell

When the food is in the water the ducks put their heads under the water and eat it!
Dewan

We used binoculars to see the birds that were far away.
Sophie



Whitehouse Primary School

Holiday 2017/2018

School begins on **Wednesday 30th August 2017**. On both Wednesday and Thursday of this week school will end at 12pm for Year 1 to 4 classes and 12.15pm for Year 5 to 7 classes. This will allow for the annual pastoral care training of our non-teaching staff.

Friday 1st September will be our first full day of the year.

Pupils will be off on Thursday 28th and Friday 29th September for **staff training days**. School will be closed Monday 30th October until Friday 3rd November 2017 for the **Autumn Holiday**.

School will be closed Thursday 21st December 2017 to Friday 5th January 2018 for the **Christmas Holidays** (this includes two staff training day). School will end on Wednesday 20th December at 12pm for Year 1 to 4 classes and 12.15pm for Year 5 to 7 classes. School opens again on Monday 8th January 2018.

The school will be closed on Thursday 15th and Friday 16th February 2018 for the **Winter Holiday**. School opens again on Monday 19th February 2018.

The school will be closed on Monday 26th March to April 6th 2018 for the **Easter Holidays**. School will end on Friday 23rd March at 12pm for Year 1 to 4 classes and 12.15pm for Year 5 to 7 classes. School opens again on Monday 9th April 2018.

The school will close for two **May Day Holidays**. These will be on Monday 7th and 28th May 2018.

The school year finishes on Friday 29th June 2018 for the **Summer Holidays**. School will end at 12pm for Year 1 to 4 classes and 12.15pm for Year 5 to 7 classes.

We have published these holiday dates well in advance to help parents avoid booking family holidays during term time. Please try not to take children out of school for family holidays. Pupils' attainment is impacted when they are not in school!

Talking Points: Resilience & 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 **Resilience & Education**. If we want our pupils to be successful we need to give them the ability to deal with challenge and even failure. We need our pupils to see that to fail does not make them a failure! Most people in life who have made big successes only did so because they determinedly refused to accept their previous disappointments. Therefore, to be well educated is to also be resilient.

How we give our children feedback can make them more resilient.

How we talk to our children about their work can make a big difference to their attitude and attainment. . Our feedback **should not** be about how clever they are (this can create a **fixed mindset**) but it should be about **how much they try** (this will promote a **growth mindset**).

If we praise a child in term of their intelligence it has the danger of limiting their efforts. On one hand a very clever child may feel they no longer have to strive for success. For a child who is struggling, in contrast, they may feel they are not able to succeed so why try!

How to create a growth mindset via our use of good praise?

- Let children know that we believe they can always improve on their previous best;
- Give a clear message that trying hard and giving your best effort is really valued;
- Praise the process and not just the final product. Recognise first drafts of stories, tackling a difficult word or the selection of a good mental strategy even if the answer was not correct;
- Praise resilience. Make sure you praise a child for overcoming a hard challenge and encourage them for not giving up;
- If a child gets work wrong, encourage them for not giving up but starting again;
- Use words like determined, tough and resilient when praising a child for their efforts.

We want a school of pupils who are resilient and with a growth mindset. As a parent we ask you to work with us on this goal. Use praise intelligently to give your child the resilience they need. Key tips for good praise:

- Be **genuine** (children will only really value praise if it is deserved);
- Be **specific** with your praise. Tell your child why you are pleased with their work;
- Be **proportionate** in your praise. Make sure your comments match the effort that the child has put in;
- Be **in the moment**. Try and praise your child at the time if it is possible. 'Catch them being good!'.

'The moment we believe that success is determined by an ingrained level of ability as opposed to resilience and hard work, we will be brittle in the face of adversity.' - Joshua Waitzkin

'Obstacles, of course, are developmentally necessary: they teach kids strategy, patience, critical thinking, resilience and resourcefulness.'
- Naomi Wolf

Diary Dates

March

27th to 31st - Rathcoole & Monkstown Community Learning Week. On **Thursday 30th March** the council are hosting a special family learning festival in Rathcoole Primary School from 6pm to 8pm. A meal is provided for all the family! Please try and get along.

29th to 31st - Year 5 Shared Education Family Residential.

30th - ICT 360 Degree Safety Assessment Day.

APRIL

3rd to 7th - Easter Week Assemblies exploring 'The Greatest Story'.

3rd to 6th - Year 5 to visit local churches with the pupils from St. James's Primary School to explore the Easter story (Shared Education).

6th - K.S.2 show singing & dance workshop 1.

7th - School ends for the Easter holidays. Non-Uniform Day - No school lunches today. Nursery closes between 12noon & 12.15pm. Y1 - 4 pupils leave at 12pm (with older siblings). K.S.2 pupils leave at 12.15pm

24th - School begins for a new term!

27th - Letters posted to inform parents that their children have been awarded Nursery and Primary 1 places for September 2017.

MAY

1st - May Day Holiday

2nd - School begins!

22nd - Money Week (Numeracy Skills)

29th to 30th - May Holiday

31st - School begins!

JUNE

1st - Sports Day for Nursery to Year 4.

2nd - M&M Theatre company 'Charlotte's Web'

2nd - School closes at 1pm (Year 1 to 4 as well as older siblings) and Key Stage 2 at 1.15pm. The nursery pupils go home from 1pm to 1.15pm.

2nd - School Fair from 5pm-7pm

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)

New Parking Policy & New Fencing/Bollards

The Governors have met with the Education Authority's architects' department to plan a scheme of new fencing and bollards to be installed. This new scheme will achieve the following goals:

- ♦ Prevent parking over or close to crossings;
- ♦ Stop cars parking over grassed areas;
- ♦ Most importantly protect our children!

Schools are facing serious budget cuts. For a school of our size this could mean around **£50,000 per year!**

Therefore, we are working very hard to get the Education Authority to pay for the fencing and bollards. **This will cost close to £10,000.**

If by the end of April we are unable to get help with the funding we intend to proceed from our own budget. **During such difficult times this decision, while frustrating, is unavoidable if we are to keep our children safe.**

As previously explained this could all be prevented if a small minority of parents agreed to obey rules that are designed to keep the traffic flowing, the campus in good condition and most importantly children safe.

Once the new bollards and fencing have been installed the Governors will issue a new Parking Policy.

In the interim, we would appeal to all parents to park responsibly and consider other drivers as well as the safety of children on the school's grounds.