



## 'The Phoenix'- Whitehouse News



**"We Rise By Lifting Others"**

April 2017

### Principal's Scribble...

Dear Parent,

We are preparing for our **end of year assessments** during May. Please try for 100% attendance . It makes all the difference!

On **Thursday 27th April** I posted the letters to all parents who were successful in gaining a place in **nursery or Primary 1** for September. I wish these families every happiness and success in the years ahead.

On **Saturday 20th May** all our Year 7 pupils will be told of their new post-primary schools. I expect pupils to get into a wide range of secondary and grammar schools. I wish them every success in their new schools.

Our P.T.A. are working very hard in getting ready for our **Summer Fair**. It will be held on **Friday 2nd June from 5pm to 7pm**. Please plan to come along and support all their efforts.

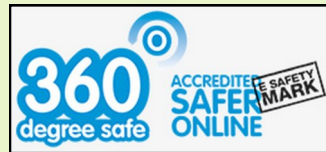
I am extremely proud of our school on achieving the prestigious **360 Degree ICT e-Safety Award**. This is a big step forward in our pastoral care and our I.C.T. provision.

**School budgets are under chronic stress.** Please get involved in petitions and lobbying to protect educational funding. In practical terms, every year many families who are entitled to **free school meals** do not apply. This means **we lose out on thousands of pounds**. See page 2 for details on who is entitled. These are tough times and we need to work together as a community.

Yours sincerely,

F. Bailie

### 360 Degree e-Safety Award



On Thursday 30th March we welcomed three expert judges to our school for the day. They were each very skilled in both ICT safety and teaching. Their remit was to assess our e-safety processes and how we store our data.

They met pupils, parents and staff to test the robustness of our policies and practice.

After a very intense day and what seemed like a long wait, we were told we had achieved the award. We are only the second primary school in Northern Ireland to have achieved this. Everyone was delighted!

### Nut Free Zone



In school we have several children who will have a severe and life threatening reaction if exposed to nuts. We therefore are a nut free school and ask all parents to carefully check that breaks and lunches do not contain any nuts. Thank you for your support.

**"Learning to Live"**

## **Are you losing out on a free school uniform and school dinners?**

Last year we lost around £20,000 of funding because families did not claim the benefits they were entitled to. This year it could be even more!

A pupil is entitled to free school meals and a uniform grant if:

- the parent/guardian is in receipt of Income Support, Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance, or if a pupil claims Income Support in their own name; or,
- the parent/guardian is in receipt of Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit and has an annual taxable income of £16,190 or less; or,
- he/she has a statement of special educational needs and is designated to require a special diet; or
- the parent is in receipt of the Guarantee element of State Pension Credit; or
- he/she is the child of an asylum seeker supported by the Home Office National Asylum Support Service (NASS).

Some people do not apply. Even if you do not want meals you are losing out on £35.75 per child for uniforms.

In addition, the school also loses out on funding. We did a study of one year group and found that eight parents were not claiming free meals. Based on this survey, assuming this is typical of each year group, we are losing around £20,000 per year, which could be used very well in our school.

Please contact our school office or ring the Education Authority Meals and Uniforms office on 0282566 2571 for an application form if you are eligible.

Education cuts are looking to be very serious over the next three years. We need to get every penny of budget available to us. To miss out on over £20,000 of funding will have serious consequences for our school. Please apply!

## **Shared Education Trips**

On Friday 24th March Year 5R/C and half of the Year 5 from St James's Primary School enjoyed a fantastic outdoor activity day at **Woodhall Adventure Centre, Kilrea.**

They were blessed with blue skies and sunshine from the minute they arrived. The children thoroughly enjoyed every minute as they were put through their paces on **climbing walls, high ropes, orienteering** and much, much more.

The children's **team building** and **communication skills** were tested to the limit. It was a fantastic opportunity to **cement friendships and relationships** across the two schools. There were lots of sleepy but happy Year 5 pupils and teachers on the bus home!

## **Family Residential**

From the 29th to 31st March 22 Year 5 families enjoyed a special Shared-Education family residential in Corrymela. Read what the pupils had to say:

We got to Corrymela by bus. When we got there everyone was really friendly. We met all the volunteers and all the families from St. James's. We learned lots of funny songs that made everyone giggle.

On Wednesday, we did mini-olympics. Our favourite activity was when we were blindfolded and had to be led round the forest by our mums and dads. Then the mums and dads had a meeting and the children made a group contract and then went on a scavenger hunt. We went in teams. It helped us get to know the other children. Then we did an art activity with the mums and dads and after that we went on a pirate treasure hunt around the grounds.

On Thursday morning we went to Ballycastle and looked round the shops. Then we all met up at the play park and played some games on the beach. We were super embarrassed by the photographs of our mums and dads doing the dab! After lunch, the children did an activity in the polytunnel and we talked about identity in the arts and crafts room. Then we had a game of rounders. In the evening, we played some party games and we had a camp fire. We sang songs and drank hot chocolate. The kids all watched a movie while the mums and dads talked and talked and talked!

We hope you enjoyed reading about our trip. Please visit the website news section to see our photographs.

by Reid, Jordan, Curtis and Sam

# 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.

## April Update:

On the 30th March we were awarded our **360 Degree e-Safety Award**. This international charter mark is only achieved by schools who have demonstrated the highest levels of practice. We are only the second primary school in Northern Ireland to be awarded this charter mark.

Governors visited the nursery at the end of last term to **observe the use of the campus**. It was great to see that all the work that has been invested over the past two years is now paying off.

On the 29th - 31st March we held our second **shared education residential**. Eleven families from each school headed to Ballycastle for a few days of fun and learning. It was a super experience!

On the last week of term some of the staff from St. James's Primary School and Whitehouse Primary School came together to develop our planning for learning; especially play, This is part of the **Shared Education project**. This work is called **T.P.L.** (Teachers' Professional Learning).

# 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 avoid taking children out of school for family holidays. Pupils' attainment is impacted when they are not in school!

# Talking Points: Play & 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 **play & a successful education**. From Nursery to Year 7 we believe all pupils should engage in 'playful learning'. This can include a wide range of activities from building in a sand tray to designing robots during S.T.E.M. workshops. It can be indoors, outdoors or even in cyberspace. As educators we see the value of play to stimulate and reinforce high quality learning and teaching.

## Is it just play?

As George Bernard Shaw said:

**'We don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing.'**

'A quick look at the ways in which play contributes to developing creativity and problem-solving skills, building knowledge and self-confidence and encouraging innovation and risk-taking, should convince even the most hard-headed cynics that it continues to be integral to intellectual, physical, emotional and social growth throughout childhood.' (S. Brown)

Dr. Stuart Brown is a world-renowned psychiatrist who makes a strong case for the importance of play to brain development, social integration and life success - from birth through to old age.

During the early years, as children's brains grow dramatically and they move rapidly from one developmental stage to the next, play remains central to their growth and development and is the primary means by which they build cognitive skills and begin to make sense of the world.

A recent study undertaken by the Universities of Strathclyde, Stirling and West of Scotland explored this issue when the Scottish Executive was planning to introduce a play-based pedagogy described as 'Active Learning'. This involved incorporating periods of more traditional teacher-led whole-class learning in areas such as phonics and number work with periods of play-based activities in smaller groups. All of the teachers involved in this study believed that this type of active or play-based learning promoted a positive, enthusiastic attitude to learning and encouraged independence and confidence in the children.

A Wellcome Trust report from 2005 recommended that, in order to spark children's enthusiasm and interest in science, there should be wider use of creative and innovative approaches such as role-play, stories and cross-curricular teaching, which would help children link up what they are learning and better understand the relevance of science in their everyday lives.

By following the lead of the child, listening, observing, and questioning when appropriate, we are able to extend the play experience in a positive and non-controlling way and enhance learning.

By providing ample opportunities for play, creating environments that support play both inside and outside the classroom, and playing with our children, we are sending the message that play is an important aspect to our lives. The seeds of creativity and innovation that arise out of early play experiences will continue to grow and thrive if we continue to encourage play, not just when our children are young, but as they move through childhood.

Leigh-Anne Stradeski (CEO of Eureka! National Children's Museum)

*"You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation." - Plato*



# Diary Dates

**SCHOOL DINNER REMINDER:** The menu for school dinners (see parents' section) is on the school website.

The menu is not affected by holidays.

## MAY

**1st - May Day Holiday**

**2nd - School begins!**

**8th to 27th - End of year assessment period.**

We need to assess our pupils to complete end of year reports. Please try and maximise your family's attendance levels.

**17th - Shared Education Fun Afternoon.** We have planned a special day of celebrations to mark the 25 year anniversary of our work with St. James's. We will issue a letter by Friday 4th May with the full details.

**20th - Y.7 parents will receive a letter informing them of their child's new post-primary school.**

**22nd - Money Week** (Numeracy Skills)

**23rd - Y.1 induction** for parents with children beginning school in September at 9.15am.

**25th - Nursery induction** for parents with children beginning school in September at 9.15am.

**31st - Nursery 'Play & Stay' sessions** for pupils and parents beginning nursery in September. Pupils will be given details of the day when they attend the information session on the 25th May.

**26th - Non-Uniform Day.** £1 donation to support the 'Little Princess Trust'. One of our Year 2 pupils is cutting her hair to help another child who has lost her hair due to cancer treatment. There is no early finish today.

**29th to 30th - May Holiday**

**31st - School begins!**

## JUNE

**1st - Sports Day** for Nursery to Y.4 in the morning.

**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 (Years 1 to 4)

Mrs Spratt (Nursery)

## Attendance & Punctuality



It is our aim to keep school attendance levels at 97% or above. With assessments continuing right up to the end of term we ask that you ensure your child attends school every day.

An attendance of 95% is seen as only 'satisfactory' on reports. It is important that we aim for high attendance and punctuality as they have strong links with high achievement.

**If your child has attendance below 90% from aged 4 to 16 they will have missed more than a year of their education!**

Punctuality is crucial. Many children who arrive late are missing valuable learning and teaching time. Make sure your child is in class for 9am so that they do not miss out.