



Whitehead

Primary School
& Nursery Unit

'LEARNING AND GROWING TOGETHER'

Annual Report to Parents 2023 / 2024

Members of the Board of Governors

Key Role	Name	Representing	End of Term of Office
Chair	Mrs Denise Harvey	Transferor Representative	June 2024
Vice Chair	Mrs Olive Crooks	Transferor Representative	June 2024
	Mr Jeffrey Glenn	Transferor Representative	June 2024
	Mrs Heather Craig	Transferor Representative	June 2024
	Mrs Fiona Taylor	Parents' Representative	June 2024
	Mrs Alison Howlette	Parents' Representative	June 2024
	Mrs Sarah Chowne	Education Authority Representative	June 2024
	Mrs Victoria Tilson	Education Authority Representative	June 2024
	Mr Graeme Baird	Teachers' Representative	June 2024
Secretary	Mr Jim Loughins	Principal (non-voting member)	

Finance

Income	
Initial Budget	£1,255,636
Additional Allocations	£91,075
2022/23 carry over	£137,500
Total Budget	£1,484,211
Expenditure	
Teaching Staff	£973,114
Non-teaching staff	£269,974
Non-staff costs	£115,115
Gross Expenditure	£1,358,203
Less Income (from other sources)	£0
Net Expenditure	£1,358,203
Surplus 2023/24	£126,008

Bequests

Balance as of 31-03-24, £195.71. The bequest is used to replenish Sports Day medals on a tri-annual basis.

Primary School & Nursery Unit Current Accounts

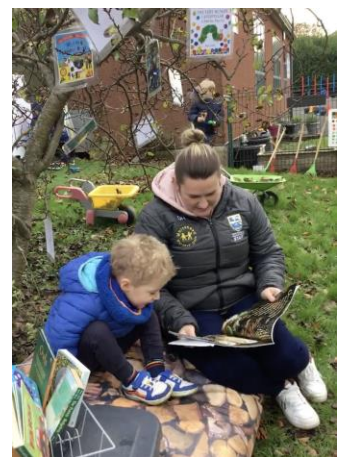
The current accounts for both the Nursery Unit & Primary School were duly audited by Mr M Crooks and approved by the Board of Governors.

Curricular and Extra-Curricular Opportunities

Nursery

In Nursery, we undertook work relating to supporting children presenting with challenging behaviour, especially considering possible causes of emotional dysregulation. We gained a deeper understanding of the process of developing a supported Calm Plan based on nurture principles and trauma informed practice. As we continue to embed our training in our day-to-day practice, there is ongoing evidence of the children's increased awareness of and articulation of their emotions, as well as using strategies suggested by staff in a more timely and independent way.

Being acutely aware of the need for every child to develop effective communication skills to access learning across all areas. An accredited programme undertaken by the Nursery teacher the previous year provided the basis of our training, which supported a more in-depth knowledge of how speech, language and communication skills are acquired. Consequently, there has been a more unified approach across the team in how existing and new strategies can be integrated into everyday practice. The training has given staff the tools to more skilfully assess children's understanding of language and to adapt our level of expressive language (questions, comments etc) accordingly.



Primary School - Art

The staff worked together to update the art curriculum, led by Miss McClay. With a focus on the development of the core art skills in 3D construction, malleable materials, printmaking, textiles, drawing and painting, the staff created a whole school progression grid. They then worked in year groups to implement these skills into their planning notes, choosing pieces of artwork that best support these skills and connect to their topics where possible. Doing this has ensured that art lessons have an age appropriate skills focus with an element of explicit teaching of these skills in order to support children and help them to develop artistically. The skills progress appropriately as the children make their way through WPS turning them into little artists.

Primary School - Numeracy

Systematic support of underachievers was continued through the 'Numeracy Boost' classes. Pupils were identified through PTM data and teacher judgement to participate in fun, active and targeted lessons to reinforce concepts and develop confidence within numeracy. After attending Numeracy Boost and through pupil questionnaire, it was revealed that pupils benefited from small groups, felt happier and more confident, could ask for help without feeling worried and discovered new ways to work out answers. Encouragingly a Y6 child commented: 'Numeracy Boost makes me happy!'

Staff were also given the opportunity to identify, plan and prepare a series of three engaging numeracy lessons. Foundation Stage staff explored problem solving strategies and resources and incorporated new ideas/lessons into their notes. KS1 and KS2 staff pursued a professional development opportunity based on Numeracy Progress Tests (PTM) to identify an area that required development. Teachers were then able to plan and integrate Bruner's Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract approach, and Sharma's 6 levels of knowing into their new lessons, in order to ensure a greater understanding for the children.

Y6 Residential



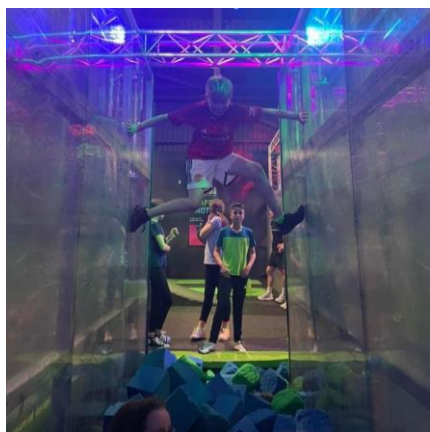
From Monday 4th March – Wednesday 6th March 2024, 56 Year 6 children and 5 members of staff from Whitehead Primary School enjoyed an action packed few days at Delamont Outdoor Education Centre on the shores of Strangford Lough. Children participated in a range of daytime activities including wall climbing, powerboating, archery, orienteering, an adventure walk in the beautiful Tollymore Forest, which was a real trip highlight. The children had the opportunity to explore the rivers, tunnels and waterfalls – conquering all sorts of fears whilst having lots of fun. The evening activities included a nightline, orienteering, team games, campfire and s'more making. This was our second year at Delamont, and we found the facilities suitable for our group, proving yet again that Delamont is an ideal destination for our Y6 outdoor residential. We are planning to return in February 2025. (Mrs K Knipe – Y6 Residential Co-ordinator)



Y7 Residential

May 2024 saw our return to Manchester for the second year running, this time with 64 pupils and 5 staff. We travelled as foot passengers from Larne Ferry Terminal, met our coach in Cairnryan and set off through Scotland to our first stop, Dalscone Farm, in Dumfries. After this well-earned break to stretch our legs, have some lunch, feed the alpacas and do some dry slope snow tubing, we continued on towards Manchester. The Premier Inn (Trafford Centre) was our home for the next three nights and served as a fantastic base for all our activities, with excellent food. Our activities included bowling, crazy golf, watersports at Sale, a tour of the Etihad stadium, Total Ninja and a day at Alton Towers. We were really pleased with how the trip

went, the pupils had an absolute blast, and hope to repeat the same next year. (Mr G Baird – Y7 Residential Co-ordinator)



Extra-Curricular Activities

A wide variety of extra-curricular activities as outlined below were offered throughout the year.

Teachers & Classroom Assistants offered	Outside Coaches offered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Football 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jujitsu
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hockey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Irish Dancing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Netball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basketball
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cross Country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gymnastics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Badminton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cricket
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Art Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coding Club
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drama & Music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rugby
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lego Club

The school entered teams in competitive leagues for U10 & U11 football, hockey and netball. The U11 football team won the East Antrim Football League and the Carrickfergus Rangers Cup. The Netball team won the East Antrim and Newtownabbey Netball League going on to represent the district in the NI Finals. The rugby and cricket teams competed in tournaments for Mid & East Antrim Primary schools.



Music & Drama

Music and drama got off to a flying start in September 2023 with the return of weekly music lessons, school choir rehearsals and after school singing and drama clubs. Very quickly, rehearsals began for our Nursery – Year 3 Nativities and the annual carol service. These were fantastic performances which included solo singing, instrumentals, beautiful choral pieces and brilliant acting, showcasing some amazing talent. With Christmas just around the corner, pupils from Year 6 and 7 had the opportunity to spread festive cheer in the community by visiting a group from Radius Housing and singing for them. Year 7 pupils also paid a visit to one of the local nursing homes and were delighted to hear some of the folk there singing along to our carols. In December, auditions and rehearsals began for our first school show since COVID. The children and staff worked extremely hard to put on three highly anticipated performances of Matilda! From lead roles, to dancers, singers, stagehands, sound and lighting crew, props teams and many other parts, it really was a huge team effort. Everyone had an absolute blast throughout the rehearsals and performances, and we can't wait for 'School Show 2026'. The big question is, what musical have we chosen?



Culture & Diversity

The focus for Diversity Day this year was Australia. Pupils enjoyed participating in many activities including making Fairy Bread in the Australian Café and the rugby and cricket challenges. Holly Leckie hosted the Museum table, her contributions and personal insights greatly enhancing the pupil experience. (Mrs L Murphy – PDMU Curriculum Leader).



Pupil Voice

The Pupil Voice has had another successful year! Elections took place in September with two pupils being voted in from each class. Pupils have contributed to our monthly meetings in a confident and considered manner, often producing interesting debate! The representatives were interested in the issue of mental health and healthy minds. Following much thought they decided to create 'Mindfulness Monday' the idea being that each class would engage in a mindfulness activity each Monday. The charity voted in for this year was Cancer Research UK, with the Pupil Voice deciding to host a 'Movie and Munch' day. £466.50 was raised. (Mrs L Murphy – PDMU Curriculum Leader).

Eco-School



In September 2023, Year 4-7 children planned, presented and voted for their Eco Committee. The Committee quickly performed an Environmental Review and agreed that "Healthy Living" should be our area of focus for the year. They focused on three targets; to lead an assembly around healthy living, do a healthy tuck shop in school and tend to the vegetable patch. The committee met monthly to work towards these targets. During the third term, the children successfully prepared and executed the healthy tuck shop making an impressive £500 for Eco School funds! With their proceeds, they plan to enhance the vegetable patch to allow for more scope on what can be planted. Throughout the year we also had a gardening club. This was made up of a group of people from the community that helped care for areas around the school grounds that the children use frequently. Ideas were put forward by the Eco Committee and by staff members as to which areas most needed care and Mrs Hagan liaised with the group. In the previous academic year, we explored the idea of Forest Schools and planned for outdoor cross curricular lessons. From September 2023, the staff were able to put this into practice, using the outdoor classroom, playgrounds and the orchard to teach many lessons. Whilst the Year 5s made fresh Egyptian flatbreads on the fire pit, the nursery children used their homegrown crops to make vegetable soup! Our Year 1s didn't miss out on the outdoor action either, and planted lots of new trees to expand our orchard further. To finish off the year a low ropes course was installed at the orchard to provide further scope for lessons and enjoyment in the outdoors!



Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs

All KS1 and KS2 pupils completed CAT4, PTE and PTM tests in March 2023. Our Senior Leadership Team met with teachers from each year group to analyse the data and identify any children that required targeted support through boost groups in literacy, numeracy or potential referral to psychology in the new school year. Once the children in need of intervention were identified, we sought parental permission so we could begin boost groups from the beginning of September.

During 2023/24, we had 44 children on our SEN register. 13 of these children have a Statement of Special Educational needs and work alongside an Additional Adult Assistant.

Through the 2023/24 academic year, we provided direct intervention/support to individual pupils through:

- Catch-up Literacy Program with Mrs Grier/Ms Maguire – 28 children. The effectiveness of this withdrawal support was evident in the end of year assessments completed by the children in May 2023 (PTE, PTM, CAT4 along with tests done by literacy and numeracy support teachers). Those children who haven't progressed as we expected them to, will continue to be monitored and supported as necessary.
- Numeracy and literacy boost groups ran throughout the year on a Monday and Tuesday afternoon with class teachers.
- Year 3 children – Reading Together was carried out by some of our classroom assistants, to support the development of reading skills. These children were tested at the end of P2, then again at Christmas and Easter of P3. All of the children on the scheme this year, met their target by Easter and were able to be signed off.

Our School Community

Collaboration and Shared Education (CASE)

During the academic year 2023-2024, funding for CASE unfortunately came to an end. It was agreed between the four partnership schools (Olderfleet, St MacNissi's, Moyle and Whitehead) that we would continue to communicate digitally. In WPS, this involved a Year 5 and Year 6 class.

In Year 5, Miss Dunlop's class communicated with another school through video sessions and by sending Christmas cards. The children in Mrs Knipe's Year 6 class played live Mathletics against their partner schools. They also sent Christmas cards and communicated online.

Another year of Mathletics funding benefitted the whole school (this was from the previous year's funding of CASE money), developing children's numeracy and ICT skills from Year 1 to 7.

Mrs Kidd, the CASE coordinator maintained regular contact with the partnership schools' coordinators. In May 2024, she had the opportunity to meet with the link officer, Jason Arbuckle, and the other three coordinators. This took place at Moyle Primary School and they discussed the future for shared education between the schools. It was agreed we would like to continue as a four-school partnership if future funding was to be approved.

In October 2024, Mrs Kidd and Mr Loughins attended a conference, alongside the other three partnership schools. They were introduced to the ASPIRE project (Advancing Shared Partnerships through Inclusive

Relationships in Education). In November 2024, an application was made for ASPIRE funding. If funding is approved a new ASPIRE program will begin in January 2025. Further details will follow once funding has been approved. S Kidd (Shared Education Coordinator)

Intergenerational Project

Throughout the course of the months of November - April our Year 6 and Year 7 children had the opportunity to participate in an Intergenerational Project organised by Radius Housing Association. The group of elderly participants met weekly in Whitehead Methodist Church halls to socialise with each other. Our children had the opportunity to meet with the participants, play board games, make some Christmas crafts and enjoy art activities kindly organised by the staff members Carly and Deborah. The children were well looked after and finished the sessions with juice and snacks. The children had great fun and it was lovely to see them engage with the participants and share stories and laughter, with both groups learning a lot from each other. Some of the participants visited the school to watch the Matilda performance in March. We have retained our contact links with Radius Housing in the hope that we will have further opportunities to participate with our local older generation.

Educational Visits

We value our local community and as such undertake several local educational visits to include:

- Whitehead Library
- Foster's Greengrocers
- Whitehead Fire Station
- Seashore at Whitehead (Study of Living Things)
- Whitehead Town (House Study)
- Gobbins Path

In addition, the children had opportunity to visit:

- Clandeboye Estate (Forest School)
- Streamvale Open Farm
- Ark Open Farm
- Folk Museum at Cultra
- W5
- The Courtyard Theatre (Christmas Pantomime)
- The Ulster Museum

Links with Pre-school and Post Primary Schools

Mrs McConnell visits any local playgroups whose children will be coming to Nursery. Mrs Kidd & Mrs Parkes visit the local playgroups and the Nursery to meet with staff and children who will be enrolling in Whitehead Primary. Link teachers from local post primary schools are invited to visit school and speak to the Year 7 pupils and teachers to assist continuity of learning opportunities.

Parents and the School

A very special partnership exists between parents and the nursery and primary school. Many of our parents come into school on a regular basis as parent helpers. This creates a sure and effective foundation upon which positive learning and positive behaviour can be built. The Board looks forward to ensuring that this bond is further strengthened and built upon in the future.

Parental Meetings

The following meetings took place to inform parents about children's progress, the curriculum and future plans. Attendance at the meetings was excellent.

- PTA AGM and Child Protection Training for all parents who wish to assist in school or accompany children on a school trip.
- Induction evenings for Nursery & Y1 parents.
- Curriculum Evenings in September for Y2 – Y7 to outline the key areas of learning and how parents can best support their children.
- Parent / Teacher consultations in October, February & May (for those children with an PLP).
- Information evenings in preparation for the Y6 residential to Delamont and the Y7 residential to Manchester.
- Information evenings to inform & support Y6 parents as children prepare for the Transfer Test and Y7 parents as they complete the Transfer to Post Primary Application Form.

Parent Teacher Association

In August 2023, the PTA committee held their first meeting of the academic year to review the previous year's activities and plan for the incumbent year. We had 5 meetings during the 2023/2024 academic year, on average around 13 members attended each meeting. We also had a social event for the committee members in June, for which we went for a meal to Whitehead Golf Club.

Over the course of the 2023/24 academic year, the PTA organised a Halloween Disco, a Christmas fun day, a Bake Sale, a Coffee Morning, a Squishmallow raffle & Guess the Sweets in the Jar, an Easter Treasure Hunt and a Sponsored Colour Run. All of the events took place during school hours.



Across all of these events, a total of just over £8,700 was raised. Financially, the most successful event was the Sponsored Colour Run, which brought in sponsorship of over £4,900. We were also able to claim Gift Aid on some of this amount, which brought in an additional sum of over £350. The Bake Sale and Coffee morning was also a very successful event. We asked pupils to bring in donations of buns, biscuits, cakes - whatever they wanted to bake (or buy). We were overwhelmed with generous donations. The teacher representatives on the PTA divided the donations, allocating some for the pupils bake sale and the remainder for the coffee morning. The bake sale took place throughout the day in the gym hall, and was manned by P6 pupils and a PTA member. The coffee morning took place in the Assembly Hall between 9 and 11:30 - PTA members served tea, coffee and buns. It was lovely to welcome family and friends into the school and it was also an opportunity for PTA members to get to know each other a little better. The event raised over £1100.

In August the committee allocated £20,000 of PTA funds to support the pupils. Planning is ongoing as to how to best spend this money. Raising funds for the school is the main purpose of the PTA, but I feel it is important to balance that with creating a programme of fun, engaging and memorable events for the pupils. With the support of the brilliant committee members and teacher representatives, I am looking forward to the events we have started to plan for the pupils in 24/25. (Kathryn Anderson PTA Chair)



Security of Staff, Pupils and Premises

Child Protection

- The School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, containing all relevant guidelines and procedures, was strictly adhered to during the year. (Copies of this policy, which is reviewed annually in August, can be downloaded from the school website or obtained from the office.)
- Mr Loughins (Designated Teacher) conducted training for all members of staff (including playground supervisors, canteen staff, cleaners, caretaker & secretary), members of the Board of Governors and all parents wishing to be involved in school life on a voluntary basis.

Security & Safety

- All electrical appliances in use in the school were given their annual safety check by an electrical contractor holding the essential public liability insurance.
- The PSNI, DOE, DFI Roads and the EA-NER Safety Officer worked in liaison with the Board of Governors to ensure safe parking for parents and safe crossing for children at the school.

In Conclusion

The Board of Governors would like to record our thanks to everyone who plays a role within the school.

- Mr Brown and his team who work tirelessly to maintain high standards of cleanliness.
- Mrs Lowry who manages the office in a friendly, welcoming and very efficient manner. The Governors would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her dedicated service over the last 17 years, wishing her every happiness in her retirement.
- Mrs Campbell and the canteen team for providing healthy and nutritious lunches.
- Our crossing patrol person & playground supervisors who ensure the safety of our children on the way to and from school and in the playground.
- Classroom and Nursery assistants without whom our job would be very difficult.
- The teaching staff who work extremely hard to ensure that all children achieve their full potential.