

Principal's Newsletter

October 2023

Dear Parents / Carers,

Welcome to our October Newsletter. September was a very busy month, but we are delighted to report that all our children and staff have made a fantastic start to the school year. From this month, our P1 children will be staying in school for a full day. We are extremely proud of how well they and our nursery children have settled into life in Acorn. Our Little Acorns are already showing signs of growing into Mighty Oaks!

Thank you to all the parents who attended our Curriculum Meetings. These meetings are very informative, and I know the teachers in Acorn welcome the opportunity to speak to parents so they can work with parents and carers to help provide the best support and learning opportunities for each and every child.

This month we have the pleasure of welcoming Ruth Kane, a play therapist, to Acorn. Ruth arrived early in September with bags full of fantastic toys and resources for our children to use. Ruth has kitted out a room in Acorn with all her wonderful goodies. It was lovely to have Ruth with us during our Coffee and Chat afternoon. She shared some simple play ideas with our Nursery, P1 and P2 parents. I have attached these ideas to this Newsletter so that everyone who wishes can have a go at making coloured rice and playdough. Ruth reminded us that ***when we enter children's play, we find the place where their minds, hearts and souls meet.***

We are delighted to report that our Breakfast Club is proving to be very popular. One P2 claimed that the breakfast served is "the nicest breakfast ever. It tastes just like a hotel breakfast!" Thank you, Mrs Campbell and Mrs Wady, for the delicious food and the wonderful service. (The service always comes with a smile!) All children are welcome, so please book in.

I hope the month of October brings lots of good things for all our families. Look out for our Halloween Pumpkin Competition and Disco. Staff will also be in touch to arrange dates and times for our parent/teacher interviews.

Kind Regards,
Jennifer Fuller

Dates for your Diary

Key Events in October

9.10.23	Parent Council Meeting-7pm
10.10.23	P6 library visit (1)
10.10.23	P5 Shared Education Visit to Oakfield
17.10.23	P6 library visit (2)
18.10.23	Harvest Assembly 11:15am (parents welcome)
20.10.23	P1 library visit
24 th , 25 th 26 th	Parent Teacher interviews, school closes for pupils at 12:15pm
26.10.23	Flu Vaccination Day
26.10.23	Halloween Disco 6pm - 8pm
27.10.23	School closes at 12:15pm for Half Term Break

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Principal

Mrs. J. Fuller

Vice Principal, Head of Key Stage 2 and Assessment Co-ordinator

Mrs C. Hamilton

Head of Foundation & Key Stage 1 and Deputy Designated Teacher

Mrs S. McIlmail

I'M WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD IN SCHOOL.



If you are concerned about the welfare of a pupil in school, please speak with Mrs Rolloos (Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Pastoral Lead).

Buddies in Acorn

A very important tradition here in Acorn is our Buddy system. When a child reaches P7 they become a Buddy to a P1 pupil. So far this year our new P7s have shown our P1 pupils how to play, share, use kind words and most importantly have fun. Next week our first group of Lunch Time Buddies will assist the P1 pupils at lunch time. They will help them in the lunch hall when they are eating their lunch and playing with them outside. Our P7 pupils will complete Playgroup Pal training before they take up their positions as Lunch Time Buddies. All staff are very impressed by the hard work and commitment the P7 pupils have shown. This month we would like to give special recognition to Karter McMurtry who is our Buddy of the Month. Karter showed great kindness towards his buddy Ryan on his birthday.



Harvest Assembly

Our Harvest Assembly will take place on Wednesday 18th October at 11:15am. Parents are very welcome to attend. This year we are supporting Carrickfergus Foodbank. Next week we will be asking each class to donate specific items that the food bank have requested. Teachers will post on Seesaw the items that their class will be collecting. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.



Parent/Teacher Interviews

Parent Teacher interviews will take place for children in P2-P7 on 24th, 25th and 26th October. As in previous years, these interviews will be held online via Teachers2Parent.

School will close for all pupils at 12 noon on these days to accommodate the appointments. Children who receive Free School Meal will have their lunch in school before this time.

Ms. Nicholl will be in touch with you shortly to arrange interview times and dates.



Flu Immunisation

The school nurse will be in school to administer the annual Flu Immunisations on Tuesday 24th October. If you have not yet returned your consent form, can you please do so before the end of this week.



Well Done P2 - Keeping running!

Mrs. Keane and our P2 children have set themselves the very impressive target of running a mile. On Friday 6th October P2 are going to put their training to the test and run half a mile. They are running to raise money to buy an extra Tuff Tray for their classroom. To show our support, we are going to ask all children from P3 - P7 to wear their P.E. uniforms to school on Friday 6th October. We would like everyone to make a £1 donation in return. The money that we raise will be shared between P2 and the Peace Players. We would like to donate to the Peace Players to show our thanks for the wonderful sporting opportunities they provide for our children.



Growing Stronger Together

We are delighted to announce the launch of a new and exciting project in Acorn. Using funding provided by the Integrated Education Fund, we have built an allotment area outside Mrs. Hamilton's P5 classroom. Four raised beds have been installed and we have 8 "Mini" greenhouses to add to the area. Pupils from Acorn and Ulidia will work together to produce lots of lovely fruit and vegetables. We hope to grow potatoes, poppies, sunflowers, herbs and much, much more. Mrs. McIlmail will lead the way and hopefully we will be able to sell what we grow in the Summer Term!



Worry Busters Programme

This month we have been fortunate enough to welcome Emma McKinney from the Northern Trust to Acorn. Emma has been running a programme called Worry Busters with our P5, P6 and P7 children. The children have been taught lessons on how the human brain works as well as lots of useful techniques to help us stay positive, calm and relaxed.



Play Ideas

Simple Play Ideas

"Enter into children's play and you will find the place where their minds, hearts and souls meet"
VIRGINIA AXLINE

Coloured rice

White rice, uncooked (the best is the cheaper rice)
Food Colouring

Mix rice with food colouring in a zip lock bag
Store in an airtight bag or box.
Perfect for a game of toy hide and seek.

Simple play dough

3 Tbs Flour
2 Tbs Salt
60ml Warm Water
2tbs Vegetable Baby Oil
Colouring/Fragrance

Mix together all the dry ingredients
Add the food colouring
Slowly add the water until the dough forms
Add more flour or water as needed.

Quick Tip
Fun bubbles: Adding a spoonful of sugar to dish washing liquid and water will allow the bubbles to not burst when landing on a child's hand.

Proudly made by



Reminders:

- Please use our **"Park and Stride,"** facility at Downshire Church. This system helps reduce the amount of traffic around school at drop off and pick up times
- The next Parent Council meeting is on **Monday 9th October at 7pm.** We look forward to welcoming our new members
- School closes for **Half Term Break** on Friday **27th October** at 12 noon. School reopens on **Monday 6th November 2023.**