

Principal's Newsletter

SENIOR LEADERSHIP
TEAM

January 2024

Dear Parents / Carers,

Happy New Year and welcome to the first Newsletter of 2024. I trust you, and your family, had a lovely Christmas break. It was a pleasure to welcome the children back into school this morning.... A few tired faces passed me at the gate!

Our busy school year continues, with many events planned for the next two terms leading us to the Summer. In 2024 we will be celebrating over 30 years of Acorn Integrated Primary and Nursery School. You may have already noticed the wonderful display at the entrance of our school that tells the story of Acorn through pictures and old newspaper articles. In May we will be hosting a variety performance. Children and staff will be working alongside Ryan Moffett, director of We are Uplift Drama School, to put together a musical concert to celebrate the history of Acorn. Some of the very first pupils in Acorn have been in touch to say they would like to share their memories of life in Acorn at the very beginning. If you are a past pupil or parent, we would love to hear your stories and include them in this show. Please get in touch by emailing myself or phoning the school Office. (jfuller051@c2kni.net)

Other events to look out for in 2024 include: a family quiz night in February, an Easter Trail in March, a Colour Run in April, and our Summer Fair in June.

I hope this year your child has lots of opportunities to learn new skills, develop existing talents and have lots of fun along the way! 2024, we can't wait to see what you have in store for us all!

Kind Regards,

Mrs Jennifer Fuller

Principal

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).

Dates for your Diary

Key Events in January

04. 01.24	School open for all children
09.01.24	Admission Portal opens for Nursery /P1 applications
08. 01.24	Clubs begin for all classes
08.01.24	Ditch The Dark Assembly
11. 01.24	P6 swimming lessons resume
12.01.24	Ditch The Dark walk to school and lessons for all classes
26.01.24	School Closed-School Development Day
26.01.24	Admission Portal closes for Nursery/P1 applications
27.01.24	SEAG Results Day
08.02.24	Parent Council- Family Quiz night
12 th -16 th February	Half term week
19 th -21 st March	Parent Teacher Interviews

Buddy update

In our first newsletter of 2024 we would like to give special recognition to Zach Skillen who is our Buddy of the Month. Zach has been an amazing help to our younger children. He has shown great kindness, care and understanding. Thank you, Zach, all our Acorn staff and pupils are extremely proud of you!



Thank you, Parents' Council

One hundred children and ninety adults attended our infamous Supper with Santa in December. This event filled us all with Christmas cheer and everyone was merry and bright! Children visited Santa, drank hot chocolate, and made Christmas crafts while a brass band played. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of Parents' Council who worked so hard to make this event a huge success. Not only were lots of happy memories made, but £887 was also raised. This money will be used to help develop our Outdoor Classroom areas.



Ditch The Dark Day

Ditch The Dark Day will be on Friday the 12th of January. Children will be encouraged to walk, scoot or cycle to school wearing bright, reflective clothing. Beverley Gaston from the Sustrans organisation, will be in school. She will deliver a "Been Safe Be Seen" programme to all pupils in P1-P7. She will discuss sources of light and how our eyes see colour to help pupils understand why we should wear bright clothes in the daytime and reflective items when it is dark.

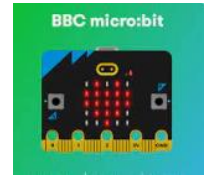


Term Two Clubs

This term clubs will run from **Monday the 8th of January through to Friday the 9th of February**. They will start again after half term on **Monday the 19th of February and finish on Friday the 13th of March**. All clubs will last for one hour. (2pm-3pm or 3pm-4pm) To book into Spanish, yoga, multi-skills, and drama please use our **School Money App**. To book into Minecraft, Clayrazy, Junglenastix, Street Dance or Max Coding please contact the coach directly in the usual manner. The first block of clubs will last for 5 weeks, and the second block will last for 4 weeks.

Micro: Bits

Towards the end of last term Acorn received an early Christmas present- 30 Micro:Bits! Mrs Higgins applied to the BBC Teach Micro:Bits Generation programme and Acorn was awarded 30 Micro: Bits.



Micro:Bits are pocket sized computers which the children can code to do all sort of creative things. Here is a link if you wish to find out more:

<https://microbit.org/get-started/what-is-the-microbit/>

Last term our School Council had the pleasure of working with children from the Model Primary School in Carrickfergus. Pupils programmed Micro:Bits together. This term the children from the Model will visit Acorn and we can continue to explore and learn more about coding.

Admissions

If you wish for your child to attend our Nursery or P1 in September 2024, the application portal opens on **Tuesday 9th January 2024** and closes on **Friday 26th**



January 2024. The links to apply are as follows:
preschooladmissions@eani.org.uk (Nursery)
primaryadmissions@eani.org.uk (Primary One)

If you were unable to attend our Open Day and would like a tour of the school, please contact the school office to arrange an appointment.

Attendance Matters

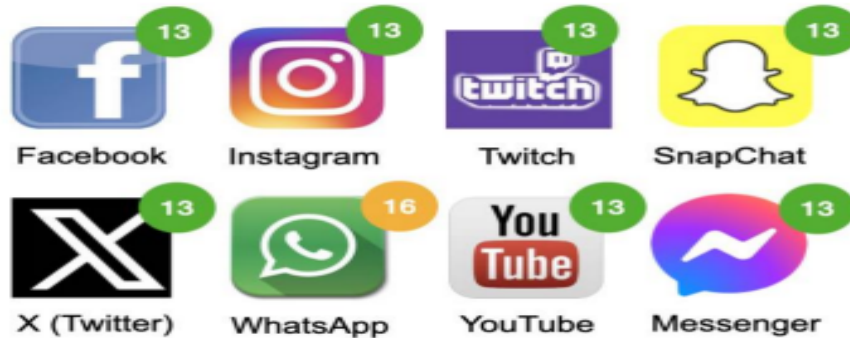
While colds and illness this time of year can make things difficult, attendance at school is vital to ensure that every child reaches their full potential. Every day a child is absent from school a day of learning is lost. The Department of Education's **Miss School=Miss Out leaflet** will be sent to all parents alongside this Newsletter. It contains lots of useful information as to why attendance at school is so important. Did you know if a child attends school 90% of the year they will have still missed 3 weeks and 4 days of learning?



Staying Safe online!

Get to know Age Ratings

Age ratings are in place to help protect your child, so we thought we'd provide you with a little reminder of how important it is to check the age ratings of what your child is accessing online. Here are the age ratings of some of the more popular apps that young people are accessing. **Did you know that WhatsApp has an age rating of 16?**



Whether your child is viewing films, accessing apps, playing games online, using social media or downloading other apps – check the age rating first to see if your child is old enough. In addition, the likes of PEGI include further content descriptors, which will give you an indication of the type of content that your child might view e.g. violence if accessing the app/game etc.

It is important to note that whilst age ratings do allow you to see if something may be appropriate for your child, it is also important to review the content yourself. This will allow you to make an informed decision as to whether it is suitable for your child to access and if it would be beneficial to apply further parental controls.



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
- **Stay and Play** is open for booking! Sessions are £4 if bookings are made a week in advance and £5 if bookings are made during the same week your child is attending
- Apart from Assistance Dogs, our school site is a dog free area