



THE WIZARD OF OZ

We were so proud of all the children involved in the Wizard of Oz.

They amazed us with their talent and commitment. It was unfortunate that we had to postpone the show due to the weather but I'm sure you'll agree; it was worth waiting for! We believe the children got so much out of being in such a big production. I want to thank you, our dedicated parents for all your help and support during the preparations. A production like the Wizard of Oz would not have happened without the great team effort of the staff, they gave up so much of their time preparing the children for their roles, organising and planning every detail. I hope you have enjoyed watching the DVD. We definitely HAVE talent in Orchard County!



WINTER WEATHER

As we continue to have very wintry weather, it is important to remember that all children should have a coat, hat, scarf and gloves with them each day as we will continue to maximise outdoor play. Please also refer to our Extreme Weather policy on the website. We will always do everything possible to remain open and any decision to close will always be based on our agreed procedures, taking into consideration the safety of our pupils and staff.



DATES TO REMEMBER

- 6th March - World Book Day (wearing costumes and bring your favourite book)
- 5th-8th March Hope for Youth Ministries
- 7th March - World Maths Day
- 9th March Shared Education Day 1 P5&6
- 13th March Shared Education Day 2 P5&6
- 19th March - school closed St Patrick's Day
- 20th March Shared Education Day 3 P5&6
- 28th March school closes at 12.00
- 29th March -6th April Easter Holidays
- 9th April – Term 3 starts

SENIOR MANAGERS

As you are aware Mrs Davidson and Mrs Neill have been appointed as two Senior Managers within school. Following advice from the Education Authority, the Board of Governors decided to appoint two Senior Managers from within school rather than appointing one Vice Principal. Both Senior Managers have worked in the school for a number of years and have a very good knowledge of the school and community. They are both very committed and dedicated members of staff and I have every confidence that they will always strive to do their best for all the pupils of Orchard County. Either of these two ladies should be your point of contact in my absence.

SCHOOL STARTS AT 8.50AM

Remember school starts at 8.50am. We have noticed an increasing number of pupils arriving at the front door after this time. Pupils should enter by the appropriate door BEFORE 8.50am. This means pupils are organised and ready to start the day and don't miss any important announcements.



We have been using Mathletics now for six weeks and the pupils seem to be enjoying using it in class and at home. Students have access to a full set of curriculum activities, aligned to the primary maths curriculum, backed up by interactive tutorials and print-based materials. A weekly target of 1000 points earns a certificate, building through bronze, silver and gold across the year, promoting long-lasting engagement. Top-scoring students are showcased on the Mathletics global Hall of Fame!

Buying Mathletics directly as a parent for your child would have cost £59 per year but we managed to bulk buy and get it for £6 per pupil for the whole year. Parents are always asking us for ideas and resources to help their children and we are delighted that you have decided to continue with this very valuable resource for your children. It is an excellent resource and we hope you and your child will see an improvement in their understanding of topics being studied in class.

As we have bought into Mathletics for the year, we have been given a free trial of Reading Eggs and Reading Eggpress. The pupils have been enjoying using this too. This trial ends 16th March, so ask your child to let you have a look at it. We will not be taking this on this year but I would very much value your opinion as to whether we look at introducing it next year into school.

WORLD MATHS DAY- 7TH MARCH

World Maths Day 2018 is a free, fun, online competition using Mathletics. Up to 4 million students worldwide will be participating and we are asking that all our pupils get involved that night for homework. There will be a live global 'Hall of Fame' which will display real-time results alongside top scoring students and schools. There will be medals, trophies and certificates for the top student and top school.

NEW WEBSITE

Hopefully by now you have all had a look at our new website. Please explore as there is a lot of useful information for parents and pupils. The school calendar, menus, holiday lists, newsletters, policies, school prospectus and many other items are available for you to view (a password will be sent by text for downloading any school policy). Our school is now listed in the **Schools NI** app, which allows you to view school updates and receive messages via an app your phone or tablet. The app is available on both Apple and Android devices and will give you access to our school news, calendar events and letters. To install the app, open **www.orchardcountyps** on your phone or tablet and click the 'Download App' button that appears at the top of the screen.

You can also get school updates via your email. Please visit the school website and enter your email address to receive regular messages from the school.



Enter your Email Address

Subscribe

www.orchardcountyps.co.uk

PTA

We plan to hold a PTA meeting on **Thursday 22nd March at 7pm**. It would be lovely to see as many parents (mums and dads) coming along to see how we can raise funds for the school.

WORLD BOOK DAY (now being celebrated in school on **Tuesday 6th March**)

We had to change our plans for WBD due to the weather. Reading is something we really value at Orchard County and we try to encourage our pupils to read regularly. We provide the annual school bookfair and the monthly bookclub. There is also an after school P4/5 bookclub running this term. P5 are also involved in the Accelerated Reader programme, this is proving to be very productive. We aim to extend this brilliant programme to other classes next year, if finances allow.

How to Help your Child with Reading

- Reading with your child now can have long-lasting benefits for their future. Reading together for JUST 10 MINUTES a day can make all the difference. It doesn't just have to happen at bedtime – reading and sharing stories can happen anywhere at any time.
- Visit your local bookshop & help your child choose their FREE World Book Day book with their £1 book token.
- Choose a book at your local library to read together – join the library and start a new habit of visiting the library on a regular basis or encourage your child to use the library van that visits school.
- For lots of ideas on how you can make story time fun as well as advice on sharing stories and encouraging a lifelong love of reading, visit www.worldbookday.com. and view the list of the top 100 stories to share.



HOPE FOR YOUTH MINISTRIES WEEK

Colin Tinsley and his Hope for Youth Ministries team will be complete a week-long youth mission here at Orchard County (each day between 9.15 and 10.00) from Monday 5th March. We are really looking forward to some fun with the team.

GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

Please read the attached leaflet on how to support your child's mental health. We are finding more children are becoming anxious at a young age. As parents and teachers we all have a very important role to ensure our children are loved, happy, healthy and feel secure. When this is in place, learning will take place.

P5/6 are going to be taking part in the Helping Hands Prog. in PDMU which focuses on staying safe and promotes self-esteem.

We all need advice and support at different times in our lives. For details of all types of Family Support Services in NI check out the following website: www.familysupportni.gov.uk

HEALTHY KIDZ APP

Nursery to P7 pupils all continue to benefit from Healthy Kidz activities every Monday. The children have been encouraged to download the Healthy Kidz app onto their devices to log their weekly activity. Help your child to do this if they haven't already done so.

FESTIVAL DATES

Mrs Neill (accompanied by Mrs Allen) is working alongside our choir and soloists in preparation for the forthcoming music festival which runs from **Tuesday 17th to Wednesday 25th April**. We await actual class dates and times but our choir and soloists will compete as usual throughout the week so please ensure any appointments are avoided during this period.

SPORT UPDATE- NETBALL, CROSS COUNTRY, FOOTBALL, SWIMMING and RUGBY

We continue to have great sporting successes. Our **netball** team recently played 4 matches at Tandragee Primary, winning 3 out of the 4 and scoring 20+ goals in total. They have a few more matches still to play in the ABC Schools' Netball League before the final on 20th April at Lisburn Racquets Club.

We have also had great **swimming** success. Lucy Taggart and Ryan Johnston represented our school in the Irish Minor Schools Championships. Well done, we are very proud of your successes!



Well done to Hannah Hayes and Ben Walker who qualified for the NI Athletics **Cross Country** finals event and were great ambassadors for our school. Our P7 cross country team cheered them on and they all celebrated with a McDonald's on the way home! A special thanks to Mrs McCluskey for training all the pupils for the competitions, we very much value her expertise.

Our boys' **football** team took part in a recent 5 a side tournament and the girls' and boys' team are looking forward to the IFA Futsal tournament.

Ulster Branch **rugby** development officer William Clint is currently undertaking some (in-school) rugby sessions with P4-7 and will also help to prepare our senior rugby squad for the **RUGBY BLITZ EVENTS**. Those selected will be advised later.

NEW GOVERNOR ADVERT

If you would be interested in becoming a parent representative on our reconstituted Board of Governors, please read the attached leaflet and get in touch.

SHARED EDUCATION

We have now planned our activities for term two and three with St Patricks Primary, Annaghmore (a link is available from our website to theirs, please have a look). The staff have already met and planned some very exciting activities for the P5 and P6 pupils. Our programme this year focuses on the area of coding within ICT and we have been able to purchase some excellent resources and plan a trip to W5. We plan to meet at our school and St Patrick's and we are delighted we have got your support for this project. We hope to continue this partnership and involve more classes next year.

CLOTHING BANK

Just reminding you to continue to use the clothing bank to the left side of the school near the kitchen. You can place your unwanted clothes, curtains, bedding, shoes and bags in the clothing bank. When the company collects these they then forward an amount to us for school funds.

GRIT BOX I am pleased to inform you that after consultation with Mr Jonathan Buckley, a grit box will be delivered for use around the roundabout and paths at the back of the school. This will be for community use and will be replenished when needed. So please do use it when required. Our caretaker is only responsible for gritting within our school grounds, this can take quite a while on an icy morning.

ST PATRICK'S DAY HOLIDAY REMINDER

School will be closed **Monday 19th March**.

EASTER HOLIDAY REMINDER

We will finish for Easter (with a non-uniform day) at 12.00 noon on Wednesday 28th March. The Easter holidays will then run from Thursday 29th March - 6th April. The summer term will commence on Monday 9th April.

