

Review

Banbridge Academy 2022/23



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Editorial

Mrs G. Gough

The 2022-2023 school year marked a welcome return to events that had not been enjoyed since pre-pandemic times, including Prize Day, Open Night and The Spring Concert. It was refreshing once again to publicly celebrate pupil achievement; liaise in person with prospective primary school pupils and enjoy the musical talents of our pupils.

Sporting successes were in abundance with an 'All Ireland School Hockey Champions' title for the Boys' 1st XI; a similarly historic season for the 1st XV Rugby Team (who were crowned winners of the 'Schools' Bowl') and a 'Junior Cup Winners' title for the U14 Girls' Hockey Team, to name but a few. Other equally impressive accolades were achieved both inside and outside of the classroom, with commitment and teamwork rewarded in a vast array of activities. Pupils embarked on their travels around the globe to destinations such as: Geneva, Dijon, Oxford, Austria and Berlin to sightsee, have fun and make memories that will remain with them long after they leave school.

As editor, the growing range of activities and opportunities available to our pupils never ceases to surprise me and it's rewarding to both collate and record these for you, the reader, to enjoy. I extend my thanks to the staff and pupils who have contributed to this edition of the School Review, with a special mention to Miss McCullough for her photography skills. I am also grateful to the many local businesses who continue to support our school through choosing to advertise with us; without such involvement, the magazine could not exist. To you the reader, as a pupil, parent, staff member or friend of the school, I hope you enjoy the 2022-2023 edition of the School Review.

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Staff Lists 23/24

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History	Mrs G Johnston, BA, PGCE
Home Economics	Mrs L Dow, BA, DIS, PGCE
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Science	Mr D Stewart, BSc, PGD, PGCE
Spanish	Miss K Poots, BA, PGCE
Technology	Mr G Winter, BEd

YEAR HEADS

	Year
Mr M Cordner / Dr R Dobson	14
Miss J Cosgrove / Mrs J Neill	13
Mr J Erskine / Mrs J McCullagh	12
Mr C Walker / Mr C Beacom	11
Dr C Lorimer / Miss S Anderson	10
Miss A McClelland / Mrs P McKenzie	9
Mr M Miskelly / Miss K Jess	8

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Foreign Language Assistants

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Headmaster's Report 2022/23

Mr Chairman, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of County Down, Mr Gawn Rowan-Hamilton, members of the Board of Governors, our former Principal Mr Pollock, partner Primary School Principals, colleagues, parents, ladies and gentlemen and, most importantly, our prize winners, welcome to Prize Day – it is a privilege to present my ninth Annual Report in Banbridge Academy.

I think we can all agree it is great to be able to gather as a school community in this beautiful building. A special thanks to Rev Anna Williams and the Select Vestry of Holy Trinity for the warmth of their welcome.

Mr Livingstone will outline later the important role our Guest of Honour has across the Co Down community, however, if I could ask everyone to give an appropriate Academy welcome to His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of County Down, Mr Rowan-Hamilton.

applause

Prize Day is a happy and joyful occasion when we celebrate success, however, since the last time we met many in our school community have faced health, financial and personal challenges, we remember them in our prayers.

Anyone who knows the Academy well understands the vital role the support staff play in maintaining our special ethos. I thank the office, the technical and support staff and record my gratitude to our Financial Administrator - Mrs Neill, my PA - Mrs McCurdy for all their

friendship and support. **We continue to remain true to the Academy's central aim - for everyone to be happy at school, known personally and cared for individually. Our special ethos is due to the quality of relationships across our community,** and I thank The Academy Association and their Chair, Mrs Audrey Wilson-Reid, for their unstinting support and dedication to the school.

Today I will only be able to provide a brief outline of the academic year. However, I record my thanks to Mrs Gough and her team for compiling a wonderful record of the School Year in our School Magazine, which will be available later in the year on our website. I also encourage you to visit the school website and follow us on Twitter or X, whichever you prefer, to keep up to date with the success of our students.

At the end of the year, we said farewell to Mrs Karen Curran who retired from the Geography Department and Mrs Sally Johnston who retired from the role of my PA. They have both given years of outstanding service to the Academy and we wish them a long and happy retirement. On a personal note, I will

Headmaster's Report 2022/23

certainly miss Sally's friendship, wisdom and as we say in these parts 'craic'. We also wish Mr Andrew McAuley well in his new career path, as Youth Director with the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland.

We welcomed several permanent appointments at the start of term – Miss Amy Galashan (Biology & Science), Mr Johnny Reaney and Mr James McConnell (Geography), Mr Keith McGuinness (Head of Computing & Digital Technology), Miss Abigail Burgess (Spanish & French) and Miss Mary Wright (Senior Clerical Officer). We welcome them to the Academy and trust they enjoy working in our happy community.

Our students excelled in their public examinations, performing significantly better than the NI Grammar School Average. An outstanding 90% of pupils achieving 3 grades A*-C and almost 60% of all entries were A*/A grades. Out of the 169 pupils who entered these examinations 69 obtained a minimum of 3 A*/A grades or better, with 21 pupils achieving at least 3 A* grades and 41 pupils obtaining at least 2 A* grades. Two students progressed

to Oxbridge, Lara Crothers – Natural Sciences, Murray Edwards College, Cambridge and Pushti Patel – Medicine, Worcester College, Oxford.

AS Level results were equally impressive, with 96.9% of all students achieving at least 3 AS Levels. These results provide an excellent foundation on which to build for A Level success in 2024.

At GCSE the students achieved the best outcomes in the School's history. All of the Year 12 students achieved at least 5 A*-C grades, including English and Mathematics, and 99% of the students achieved at least 7 A*-C grades, including English and Mathematics – truly outstanding results. Almost 70% of all GCSE entries resulted in top grades A*/A and when B grades are included, this figure rises to a phenomenal 91% of all entries.

These are exceptional results and the pupils, parents and teachers of the Academy are to be commended for all of their efforts. **We commend the Class of 2023 for their resilience and maturity, we thank them for the wonderful memories they have created in the**

Academy and wish them every success in the next stage of their educational journey.

The education of our young people involves a partnership and I want to pay tribute to my colleagues in our primary schools who have created the foundation for the success our students enjoy. I pay tribute to the dedication and commitment of the teaching and non-teaching staff of the Academy; their professional approach has undoubtedly underpinned this success. I also highlight the ongoing support provided by our parents and the wider community. I ask the pupils to show a token of appreciation to their parents and my colleagues.

applause

The Academy continues to be at the forefront of Education in Northern Ireland. As part of the Peers in Schools programme we participated in a very informative online session with Lord Hunt and we were delighted to welcome Viscount Brookeborough to speak with our Year 13 and 14 Politics students about the important role of the House of Lords. We continued our partnership



Zach Black - The Campbell Award for GCSE Mathematics, The Wallace Family Prize for Biology
Reuben Robinson - The Singer Family Shield for English Literature
Tom Sneddon - The TGF Cosgrove Physics Cup, The R M McVeigh Perpetual Award for Science
Rebekah Kirkpatrick - The SE Liggett Food and Nutrition Trophy
Rachel Sands - The Abraham Award for Nutrition and Food Science
Shruti Suresh - The K Francey Award for Year 11 Food and Nutrition
Freya Fisher - The Emerson Prize for Chemistry



Becky Walker - The Music Department Shield for Vocal Music
Mieszko Puckowski - The Jayne Friar Prize for Endeavour
Sarah Nesbitt - The Music Cup
Zara Colvin - The Robinson Prize for Outstanding Extra Curricular Achievement in Music
Lucy Grossmann - The T D Robinson Perpetual Cup
Emma Graham - The RAF Trophy for Outdoor Pursuits
Violet Coen - The Prefects' Debating cup

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with the Confucius Institute at Ulster University. Every year the school receives a fully qualified Mandarin teacher who delivers language and cultural classes to Sixth Form and several of our partner primary schools. It was also our privilege to welcome Madame Zhang, Chinese Consul General, to the school to talk with a number of our senior students about culture, trade and diplomatic career opportunities.

I continued my work as a member of the Independent Review Panel of Education, a commitment by the Northern Ireland Executive in New Decade, New Approach. The Panel published our Interim Report, highlighting the 10 key areas which will be comprehensively reviewed in the final Report.

The wider community continues to support the Academy. We thank the James Kane Foundation for awarding the school a grant, which enabled us to offer bespoke support to disadvantaged students. We also received an extremely generous sum of money, a legacy in the Will of Mr Robert Stephens, which will enable us to provide essential support to the extra and co-curricular life of the school.

The Academy's ethos continues to focus on care and concern for others. Many of our Sixth Form students signed up to newly created volunteering activities, including community support, environmental teams, mental health champions, digital leaders and anti-bullying ambassadors. The students and my colleagues were also incredibly generous, donating approximately £10,000 to various charities and providing hundreds of shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child.

We continued to supplement our extensive pastoral curriculum with a range of external speakers and guests, covering many important topics, such as, gambling, alcohol & drugs misuse, online safety and relationship & sexuality education. A range of bespoke 'Skills for Life' development days were also arranged to ensure our students develop the skills to become successful confident young adults who can progress and become contributors to society.

Students continue to participate in the vast array of extra-curricular activities and

House Competitions on offer, as well as travelling on numerous overseas trips. Crozier won the fiercely contested House competition.

Almost 100 students travelled on the annual ski trip to Austria. An extremely successful Physics trip took place to Geneva to visit the United Nations Office, the Red Cross Museum and the world-famous particle accelerator at CERN, the Large Hadron Collider. The History department's biannual trip to Berlin focused on World War II and the Cold War, providing the students with invaluable first-hand learning opportunities.

A multitude of departmental and co-curricular trips and activities also took place. These activities and visits nurtured our students' understanding and provided crucial opportunities to develop key life skills. For example, the Art & Design department visits provided the creative spark that enabled our students to excel - 9 students at GCSE, 4 students at AS and 5 students at A Level obtained full marks in their examinations. A Level Technology student Jack Patterson was runner-up in the senior category of the Sentinus Young Innovators Competition. Following auditions and weeks of rehearsing a group of Sixth Form students participated with considerable prowess in the prestigious Bar Mock Trial competition at the High Court in Belfast.

I thank our Music Department, under the leadership of Mrs Munton and Mrs Qua for the musical items we will enjoy today. We had an amazing 33 offers for the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland. Emma Kirkwood gained a much sought after place in the Ulster Youth Orchestra. Due to their exceptional musicianship, Molly Spiers and Emma were awarded the prestigious Education Authority Association of Friends Bursary.

Deputy Head Girl, Kiera McQuaid was selected as the Holocaust Educational Trust's Regional Ambassador for Northern Ireland. Kiera, as Chair of our Medical Society, arranged a highly successful Medical Conference as part of our new Shared Education partnership with Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School and Our Lady's Grammar School Newry.

We continue to foster an environment of innovation in careers education, embarking on an exciting new

partnership with the innovative platform PeopleHawk. This partnership will ensure our students receive valuable training in relation to the core aspects of recruitment today and indeed in the future, including psychometric testing, video interviewing and elevator pitches. We hosted our hugely successful 'Pathways' Careers Fair, where all Year 10 - 14 students were able to engage with more than 65 universities, colleges and public and private sector employers.

Year 10 pupils once again took up the Young Enterprise '10X Challenge'. Over 40 teams from across the year group tested out their entrepreneurial skills and developed essential life skills, as they established micro-businesses on a £10 investment, competing to see who would be most profitable.

The Engineering Society continued to host many former pupils and other industry experts as they inspired the next generation. Year 10 students attended the 3-day Engineering Experience Summer Residential at Queen's University, Belfast - focusing on space, cyber and electrical engineering. Tom Clarke, Year 14, was selected to attend the highly competitive Nuffield STEM programme and spent 2 weeks on research placement at Queen's University, Belfast.

Due to time, I will only briefly outline **another amazing year of sporting success for the Academy, with many Ulster and Irish titles secured; alongside over 30 students receiving either National or International Caps across 13 different sports.**

In recognition of their talent and achievement at international level, numerous Academy pupils and coaches were shortlisted for the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Junior Sports Awards. Amazingly most of the Awards on the night were awarded to Academy students, teams or coaches. The U14 Girls' Hockey Team won the Junior Team of the Year, the 1st XI Boys' Hockey Team won the Youth School Team of the Year, our Table Tennis coach, Mr Arnold Morgan, won the School Coach of the Year and Emily Reid won the Volunteer Award and Alana Burns-Atkin won the Chairman's Award.

Seven athletes qualified for the Ulster Cross Country Championships, after very impressive performances at the



PLATFORM PARTY - Principal Robin McLoughlin pictured His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of County Down, Mr Gawn Rowan-Hamilton, Banbridge Academy Board of Governors, Deputy Head girl Hannah Kennedy and Deputy Head boy Corey Hamilton.

District Championships. There were no medals at the Ulster Schools' Athletics Championships, however, all the Academy athletes performed exceptionally well, with several personal bests. The future is very bright for our athletes as four longstanding school records were broken during the season.

Laura Comer was selected to represent Ireland at the European Junior Badminton Championships.

Year 12 student, Abbi Harrison, was the youngest member of the Irish Cricket Squad selected for the World Cup in South Africa.

The U15 Boy's Cricket Team reached the semi-final of the U15 Cup and following an epic final the **U12 Boys' Cricket Team lifted the Wesley Ferris Cup to be crowned Ulster Champions.**

We had the largest ever Dance Team entry in the Northern Ireland Dance competition and in the Ulster Dance and Fitness Championships. The Junior Team won silver medals at both competitions. Rachel Pollock and Lauren Wilson won gold medals at both competitions, whilst Abigail Walker and Sienna Heasley were awarded bronze at the NI and silver at the Ulster competitions. Alexandra Duffy won a silver medal at both competitions for her Junior Solo. Violet Coen, Keisha Moulton and Reece Wilson won Gold in the

Intermediate Trio section. Lauren White won gold medals at both competitions, achieving the highest marked Senior Solo. Ruby Bushby and Mia Downey also won gold medals at the NI and Ulster competitions for their Senior Duet.

Year 10 pupils, Emma Stewart and Harry Purdy were selected for the NI Tetrathlon Team and competed at the Royal Windsor Horse Show, after tremendous performances they finished second overall.

Our Golf Team brought home the Darren Clarke Schools' Northern Ireland Golf League Title.

The Boys' 1st XI Hockey Team entered the year as one of the best teams in the history of the Academy. Incredibly there were 15 boys selected for the interprovincial squads and 9 boys for the Irish squad. Having lost the Irish Schools' final on run-ins the previous year the squad demonstrated tremendous resilience and character to **win the Tasmanian Shield on run-ins and be crowned All-Ireland Champions.** However, the final of the McCullough Cup was delayed to the New Year and unfortunately the boys couldn't quite match the quality of hockey they produced earlier in the season and subsequently lost to RBAI on run-ins. Likewise, they lost their Burney Cup Title on run-ins.

The Boys' 2nd XI, under the expertise of Mr Miskelly, had an outstanding undefeated season. **Retaining the Prior Shield and winning the Dowdall Cup - to be crowned double Ulster Champions.** The U13 Team made the final of the Bannister Bowl and the U14 Team made the semi-final of the Ferris Cup and the U15 Team made the semi-final of the Richardson Cup.

Head Girl, Pippa Wilson was selected for Ulster U18 Girls' Hockey Team; Alyssa Somerville and Ruby Johnston for the Ulster U16 Team. The 1st XI Girls' Hockey Team had another tremendous season and made it to the semi-final of the Belfast Telegraph Ulster Schools' Cup. **The U14 Girls' Team defeated Wallace High School in the final of the Ulster Schools' Junior Cup - crowned Ulster Champions for the first time since 2013. For the first time ever the U14 Team represented the province at the June Smith All-Ireland competition.** The girls played exceptionally well but narrowly missed winning the Irish Title and came home with the silver medal. An historic season for the girls and with most of the team stepping up to senior hockey the future looks bright for girls' hockey.

Ellie Scott was selected for the U17 Northern Ireland Football Team.

Grace Wills was selected to Captain the

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U17 NI Netball Squad in the European Championships and several other pupils were selected for the Netball NI Development Squads. The Junior A, Senior A and Senior B netball teams all made it to the NI Shield Finals Day. The Senior B were crowned NI League Champions. Mrs Nicole Beggs was personally recognised as one of the top three school coaches in NI by her nomination as NI School Coach of the Year.

The school rugby club had the most successful season in the history of the school. Noah Haughey, Arturs Jonuss and Fynn Niblock were selected for the Ulster U17 Rugby Development squads. Connor Magee represented Ulster Schools' U18 & Ireland Schools' U18 and is part of the Irish National Elite training squad. Noah Bell was captain of the Ulster Clubs' & Schools' Team, Ryan Hanna was selected for the Ulster Clubs' & Schools' Team and Andrew Jackson for the Ulster U17 Team.

The 1st XV defeated Lurgan College to win the Gary Clarke Memorial Cup. After very impressive performances in the group stages of the Ulster Schools' Cup the team continued to grow in confidence and defeated Friends' School, Lisburn in the final to be crowned Danske Bank Ulster Schools' Bowl champions.

An historic season for the 1st XV, Mr Leslie and his fellow coaches, as the Schools' Bowl is the highest honour an Academy team has ever attained.

The Medallion squad also excelled and after an epic final the team **shared the Ulster Schools' Medallion Trophy with Enniskillen RGS.** Emma Stewart, Year 10 and Fergus Lowry, Year 8, took part in the British Shooting Schools' Championships with Emma being placed 1st in the Intermediate competition while Fergus was placed 2nd in the Junior competition.

The Academy swimming teams had an outstanding season, amazingly 11 pupils met the extremely challenging qualifying times to compete at the Ulster Short Course Swimming Championships. Many swimmers also achieved qualifying times for the Irish Short Course Championships in Dublin. At the Ulster Schools' Cup Championships the team won 9 medals and recorded 24 personal best times. **The Junior Girls lifted the Bethany**

Firth Cup and the Senior Girls won the Nother Senior Schools' Cup, both teams creating their own piece of history by winning Ulster Schools' Titles for the first time in the School's history. At the McCullagh International Open Gala in Ireland the teams had further success, recorded 23 personal bests and winning 5 medals.

Zachary Black, Alana Burns-Atkin, and Tara Kennedy were selected to represent the Ulster Interpro Team. **Alana had a truly outstanding season and was selected for the European Junior Championships and the Commonwealth Youth Games in Trinidad and Tobago.**

Under the expert coaching of Mr Arnold Morgan the U13 Girls' Table Tennis Team won the bronze medal at the Ulster Schools' Championships. The **U15 Girls' Table Tennis Team was crowned Ulster Schools' Champions** and went on to claim the silver medal at the All-Ireland Schools' Championships.

Our tennis teams continued to excel – the Minor Girls' reached the Shield final, the Junior Girls' reached the semi-final of the Junior Cup and the Junior Boys' reached the Junior Cup final, with the Intermediate Boys' reaching the NI final, which still has to played in November!

I feel very humble and proud to lead such a talented group of staff who are highly professional and genuinely caring. Their enthusiasm and devotion to our students is the reason why the Academy is such an excellent school. I thank my Vice Principals, Mrs Evans and Mr McFarland, my Senior Leadership Team, the Heads of Department, the entire Pastoral Team, House staff and all of my colleagues for their enthusiasm, support, dedication and friendship.

I thank Mr Livingstone, our Chairman and the members of the Board of Governors for their support and encouragement. I can testify to the dedication of this group of volunteers, and I thank them for their willingness to accept their onerous responsibilities.

Prize Day is a significant event in the life of the School and the organisation of the day is a tribute to the considerable expertise of Mrs Evans and Mrs Morrison. I take this opportunity to thank them on

behalf of everyone present for all their efforts in arranging such a special day. A special note of thanks to Mr Cromie for reading the prize winner list and to Mr Brown for his expertise in playing the organ today.

In conclusion, we continue to live in very challenging times with political uncertainty and the cost-of living crisis but please be assured that the Academy will continue to meet the needs of the outstanding young men and women entrusted to our care.

Thank you

Mr R S McLoughlin OBE



Year 8 - Class Prize Winners



Year 9 - Class Prize Winners



Year 10 - Class Prize Winners



Year 11 - Class Prize Winners



Year 12 - Class Prize Winners



Year 13 - Class Prize Winners



Boys - Banbridge Academy Association Awards for Achievement at GCSE -9As or more at GCSE



Girls - Banbridge Academy Association Awards for Achievement at GCSE -9As or more at GCSE

Graduates

University of Ulster



David Baxter	2.1 (with distinction)	BSc Business Economics
Mia Dixon	1st (with distinction)	BSc Interactive Media
Alice Gordon	2.1	BSc Psychology
Jack Hamilton	2.2	BSc Business Studies
Stephen Hanna	1st (with distinction)	BSc Finance & Investment Management
Ellen Heenan	1st (with distinction)	BSc Marketing
Ben Hillis	2.1	BDes Game Design
Conor Hodgett	1st	LLB Law
Hannah Hubert	1st	BSc Politics
Hannah Jones	1st	English with Education
Korey Knox	2.1	BA Screen Production
Joshua McAdam	2.1	BA Architecture
Victoria McConnell	1st (with distinction)	BDes Graphic Design & Illustration
Zara McCracken	2.1	BSc Physiotherapy
Jodie Morrow	1st (with distinction)	BDes Graphic Design & Illustration
Nicholas Part	1st (with commendation)	BDes Graphic Design & Illustration
Anna Rutledge	Pass (with commendation)	BA Textile Design & Fashion
Cory Sweeney	2.1 (with distinction)	BEng Mechanical Engineering

Queen's University



Joshua Anderson	1st	BSc Biomedical Science	Frazer Mack	2-1	BA French and Politics
Aisling Ball	PASS	MSc Advanced Pharmacy Practice	Megan Mackay	1st	BSW Social Work
Myles Ban- Murray	2-1	BSc Finance (with Year in Industry)	Cameron Martin	2-1	BEng Computer Science (Inc Professional Experience)
Emma Barlow	2-1	BA English	Edward Mc Ardle	2-1	BSc Professional Nursing (Mental Health Nursing)
Jake Beattie	2-1	BSc Finance (with Year in Industry)	Elizabeth McCann	2-1	LLB Law (with Politics)
Lewis Bingham	2-1	BSc International Business with Spanish	Luke McCordick	2-1	LLB Law
Hazel Black	PASS	MSc Intern Public Policy	Jodi McDade	2-1	BSW Social Work
Chloe Borland	CP	BA History and Sociology	Zoe McDowell	PASS	MB Medicine
Adam Brown	2-1	BSc Accounting	Benjamin Mckibbin	2-1	BSc Marine Biology
Aaron Butler	1st	BSc Biomedical Science	Eve McKinstry	PASS	MA English - Creative Wrt
Ryan Butler O'Neill	PASS	MSc Software Development	Chelsey McNeill	1st	BSc Midwifery Sciences
Philip Campbell	2-1	MEng Mechanical Engineering	Fiona McNeill	1st	MPhys Physics (with Astro-Physics)
Joy Campbell	2-1	BSc Psychology	Rory McNiff	1st	BSc Economics with Finance
Abbie Cochrane	1st	BA English and Linguistics	Holly McSpadden	PASS	Doctor in Clinical Psychology
Mark Coughlin	1st	MEng Struct Engineering with Architecture	Donna Megaw	2-1	BSc Professional Nursing
Luke Crory	1st	MEng Mechanical Engineering	Ellen Megaw	1st	BEd Primary
John Doherty	2-1	BSc Actuarial Science & Risk Management	David Montgomery	1st	BSc Computer Science
Emma Doherty	PASS	MB Medicine	Laura Moore	PASS	MB Medicine
Jack Dorman	2-2	BEng Mechanical Engineering	Emilia Moore	1st	BSc Psychology
Catherine Duffin	1st	MPharm Pharmacy	Kirsty Morton	1st	BSc Midwifery Sciences
Lois Dundas	1st	LLB Law	Reuben Newell	2-1	BA Politics
Harry Farson	1st	BSc Actuarial Science & Risk Management	Chloe Olsen	CMM	MRes Arts and Humanities
Morgan Gilchrist	2-1	BSc Professional Nursing (Adult Nursing)	Emma O'Rourke	2-1	BSc Business Economics
Rebecca Graham	PASS	MB Medicine	Georgiana Parau	PASS	PhD Medicine
Emily Gribben	1st	BA Film Studies & Production	Jordan Poots	1st	BEng Mechanical
Grace Hamilton	2-1	BSc Architecture	Engineering		
Amy Hampton	1st	BSc Biomedical Science	Emma Poots	1st	BMus Music
Emma Harrison	2-1	BA Broadcast Production	Ellie-May Purdy	2-2	BA Criminology
Anna Harvey	2-1	BA Broadcast Production	Caolan Quinn	PASS	MB Medicine
Gemma Hassan	2-1	BA Criminology and Sociology	Diarmid Reay	PASS	Doctor in Clinical Psychology
William Hunter	1st	BEng Software Engineering	Amy Rooney	2-1	BSc Health Physical Activity & Sport
Simone Jackson	1st	BSW Social Work	Emma Sands	1st	BSc Professional Nursing (Adult Nursing)
Shannon Jess	2-1	BSc Professional Nursing (Children and Young People)	John Scott	2-1	BSc Actuarial Science & Risk Management
Emma Johnston	PASS	MB Medicine	Emily Sharpe	1st	BSc Environmental Management
Hannah Jordan	1st	MPharm Pharmacy	Alexandra Shields	1st	BA French
Kerrie Kerr	2-1	BSc Psychology	Ella Simpson	1st	BSc Midwifery Sciences
Anna Kidd	1st	BSc Biomedical Science	Victor Sterling	1st	MEng Mechanical Engineering
Rachel Knox	1st	BSc Zoology with Professional Studies	Rachel Taylor	2-1	BSc Zoology
Benjamin Logan	1st	BEng Software Engineering	Emily Toal	CMM	MA Public History
			Lucy Wan	1st	BSc Psychology
			Rachel Ward	1st	BSc Psychology
			Ellen Whittle	2-1	LLB Law
			Christine Williamson	2-1	BSc Biological Sciences
			Emily Wright	PASS	MB Medicine



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Valete

Mrs Karen Curran

Banbridge Academy 1997 - 2023

Mrs Karen Curran retired this year after 26 years of dedicated service in the Geography Department of Banbridge Academy, having previously worked in Bloomfield Collegiate and Dromore High School.

Karen had a great love for her subject and endeavoured to instil that same love and enthusiasm for Geography in her pupils. She made an enormous contribution to generations of pupils over her time in the Academy.

Over the years, Karen contributed both to the academic and extra-curricular life of the school. As a Form Teacher and Year Head she demonstrated a genuine desire to help our young people perform to their highest potential as well as supporting their holistic needs. She was the acting Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator for a time, using her excellent personable skills and compassionate nature to help those who needed that extra bit of support. Karen also understood the importance of encouraging pupils to embrace the wider life of the school and to that end she coached girls' hockey and was Head of House Girls for many years. She is a very keen sportswoman in her own right, being very involved in a couple of golf clubs and indeed winning many prestigious tournaments.

Karen was extremely well liked by her peers due to the quality of her relationships with teaching and non-teaching colleagues and we will certainly miss her sense of humour and friendly personality around school.

We thank her for her extraordinary commitment to the pupils and the school and wish her a long, healthy and happy retirement.



Valete

Mr Andrew McAuley

Banbridge Academy: 2019 - 2023

Mr Andrew McAuley joined Banbridge Academy on a temporary contract in the Modern Languages department in 2019 and subsequently was appointed to a permanent position in September 2021.

Andrew came to the Academy having had significant experience of spending time in Spain and South America. He was a diligent, accomplished classroom teacher who worked with initiative and creativity. He was a Year 8 Form Teacher who engaged easily with his pupils offering support and guidance as they began life in the Academy. He became a valued member of the team in the Modern Languages department and built up many friendships with other members of the teaching and non-teaching staff in school.

Andrew was a keen footballer and actively contributed to the coaching of the sport across the school, encouraging many of the boys to participate in life outside of the classroom.

We thank Andrew for his service to the Academy and wish him well in his new career with the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland.



Valete

Mrs Sally Johnston

Banbridge Academy 1997 - 2023

Mrs Sally Johnston retired this year after 27 years of dedicated service as the Principal's Personal Assistant in Banbridge Academy. She was appointed as the Administrative and Finance Manager for the school alongside the role as Headmaster's PA. A more accurate description is probably - Sally did everything. It was clear to everyone across our community that she had the lifeblood of the Academy running through her veins. She ensured that all facilities, staffing resources and training were in place for the school to provide the best possible quality of education to the students.

Sally is widely acknowledged across the region as an exceptional role model within the important field of education administration. During her time in the school, she revolutionised the non-teaching and administrative structures to ensure that the focus was on the students fulfilling their ambitions and goals. As a former student herself, she understood the benefit of the academic and extracurricular education on offer in the school. She had an incredible ability to multitask, anticipate needs, manage priorities and handle difficult conversations with grace - all with a smile on her face. Her colleagues and I will miss Sally's sense of humour most of all, alongside her unique ability to lift your spirits even in the most difficult of moments. After a chat with Sally, colleagues always left feeling better.

As she embarks on a well-deserved retirement and more time with her much-loved grandchildren, the Academy community thank her for her friendship over many years. She has been a loyal friend who offered unrelenting support and was always the voice of wisdom and a trusted confidant.

We wish Sally God's richest blessing, and a long, healthy and happy retirement with Harry, Lyn and Steven and her five grandchildren. We wish her a safe journey and some quality family time in Australia this Christmas as she visits Steven and his boys.



Portrait Gallery



Miss Burgess

Keisha Moulton and Reece Wilson

We were so pleased to say “bienvenido” (welcome back) to Miss Burgess as she rejoined the Modern Languages Department this year and we were grateful to her for giving us this opportunity to get to know her a little better.

How have you found Banbridge Academy so far?

I've really enjoyed being back; I feel like I'm back home! The pupils have been really welcoming and the staff have all been very friendly.

What A Levels did you study and what was your favourite?

I studied French, Spanish and Geography and my favourite was Spanish.

What is the best thing about being a teacher?

Being able to see students enjoying your subject and for them to gain that same love as you have for the subject.

What advice would you give your younger self?

I think just to always try your best to not worry about your grades. As long as you've put the effort in and that you know yourself that you've tried your best, you can't do anything more than that.

We heard that you worked abroad in Spain, can you tell us more about that?

I worked as an Au Pair in San Sebastian with a family. I looked after their three children and spent three summers with them (we found this very interesting). I've also been back to visit them a couple of times since then; I see them as my Spanish family! It was a really great opportunity to experience the culture and actually use the language that I was learning in a real life situation.

What is your dream holiday destination?

Germany, because my family lives there so I like to go back home and see them.

Do you have any hidden talents/interests?

I like to crochet and I am a keen gardener.

Where would you see yourself in 10 years time?

(After some contemplation) Hopefully still teaching and enjoying the challenge of learning new things myself.

Finally, if you won the lottery what would you do with the money?

I'm quite a sensible person so I think I would probably give a lot of the money away because to be honest, I don't know what I would do with all that money myself! But I think it would also be quite nice to use some money to travel and see a little bit around the world. I've always wanted to tour South America; it's always been a dream of mine to work with street children there.

Quickfire Questions:

Cats or dogs? Cats.

What is your favourite colour? Orange.

Sweet or savoury? Savoury.

What is your biggest pet peeve? Laziness.

What is your favourite movie? (This was a hard decision) Pride and Prejudice.

We would like to thank Miss Burgess for finding the time to answer our questions and we wish her well in the future during her time at Banbridge Academy.

Portrait Gallery



Miss Galashan

Sarah Hylands and Thalia Reid

After weeks of searching for the elusive newest member of the Science Department, we were finally able to track down Miss Galashan and subject her to our interrogation.

What A Levels did you study and what school did you go to?

I studied Biology, Maths and German at A2, along with Chemistry at AS. I attended Wallace.

Who would play you in a movie of your life?

Ooh, I don't know... let's say someone like Margot Robbie. (*We think this is a great choice!*)

What do you do in your free time?

I do dancing and I also am involved in musical theatre.

What's your favourite year to teach?

I don't know... I love them all; they're all very different so I don't think I could pick one to be honest.

What was your first day at Banbridge Academy like?

I can't even remember when my first day was... what day was it, a Thursday? (*Time sure does fly when you're having fun!*) It was interesting having to move between rooms every lesson, but all the kids were very nice and welcoming.

Who would you have dinner with, dead or alive?

I feel like I should say scientists but... I will have to choose Princess Diana first because I am so interested in if she knew what exactly was going on. Also maybe Marie Curie because I want to know about the research that she was involved in and to inform her about how far we've come with cancer research because of her.

Have you always wanted to be a teacher? If not, what did you want to be before?

I actually wanted to be a Biomedical Scientist and live in Germany, but I speak way too much; I think that I'm way too chatty to work in a lab.

Biggest pet peeve?

Loud eaters; it just really irks me.

Best and worst thing about teaching?

I think the best thing is maybe surprising questions, like when they're actually based on the topic and someone just comes out with such a random question and I love it. Surely

the worst thing is marking. I'm sure the English teachers would agree!

Something you've always wanted to try?

Anything in the world? I would like to do a skydive, jump out of a plane or a bungee jump.

Quickfire Questions:

Tea or coffee? Coffee.

Favourite movie? Sister Act.

Chippy or chinese? Chinese.

Cats or dogs? Dogs.

Favourite Taylor Swift song? 'All too well' - the 10 minute version. (*Great choice!*)

We would like to thank Miss Galashan for taking the time to sit with us and answer our questions; we hope that she continues to enjoy her time here at Banbridge Academy.

Portrait Gallery



Mr McConnell

Rebekah Kirkpatrick and Eve Kelly

We were excited to welcome Mr McConnell as the newest member of the Geography Department and ask him some probing questions.

What school did you go to?
Kilkeel High School.

What made you want to be a Geography teacher?

When I was 16, I decided I wanted to be a teacher, to work with young people and Geography was my favourite subject then and still is.

If you had to teach a different subject, what would it be?

Maths, maybe Physics, no Maths.

If you were not a teacher, what would you be?

Probably a trade like an electrician.

What was your dream childhood job?

It was to be a car mechanic, but then I did some work experience and realised it was not for me!

What A Levels did you do?
Maths, Physics, Geography and PE.

What is at the top of your bucket list?
I would love to have dinner somewhere cool, like the Eiffel Tower.

If you could have dinner with anyone dead or alive, who would it be? Why?
(After much consideration) Sinclair Ferguson; he's a Christian preacher and I would like to chat to him.

Quickfire Questions:

Tea or coffee? Neither.

Favourite movie? 'Lord of the Rings' trilogy.

Death row meal? Christmas dinner with all the trimmings (we definitely agreed with this answer!)

Cats or dogs? Cats (we definitely did not agree with this answer!)

Favourite board game? Settlers of Catan.

Favourite music? Country music, particularly Johnny Cash.

Pet peeves? People eating with their mouths open.

Favourite year to teach? AS (Year 13).

Dream holiday? Fiji.

We would like to thank Mr McConnell for taking the time to allow us to interrogate him and we wish him the best of luck for his future at Banbridge Academy.



Portrait Gallery



Mr McGuinness

Poppie Graham and Chloe Gibson

After countless attempts to find the elusive Mr McGuinness, we resorted to making our friend ambush him after her class to set a time and date. We were not deterred by the early start and despite the time being arranged for 8.30 am, we punctually arrived and began the interview.

What made you want to be a teacher?

(Blows air) I'd probably say that I was inspired by the fact that teaching would give me the opportunity to talk about the things that I actually really like to talk about, whilst knowing that people had to listen to me. (Laughs) It's probably one of the rare times in life that people have to listen to you because they don't really have any other choice. (So true!)

How does the Academy feel so far in comparison to your old school?

It feels very large. I've taught in both the Royal School, Dungannon and Armagh Royal and they are both relatively small compared to Banbridge. The students' temperaments are quite similar, but the pupils in Dungannon are "a bit more country" than here.

What did you study for A Level?

I didn't do A Levels because I went through the Scottish Education System, so I did lots of subjects around the A Level standard. I studied Maths, Computing, Physics, Modern Studies, English, History and possibly something else.

What would surprise students to find out about you?

A lot of stuff probably (laughs) - I'll not disclose too much and then they can be gradually surprised as we go along. The only thing that I'll share now is (something that tends to surprise people) that I like to bake! Generally I like to eat, so I like to bake and then I enjoy eating it even more!

If you got to choose a song that plays when you walk into a room, what would it be and why?

I'm not very musical so I wouldn't have a song - I would have two notes played on the trombone. I don't know what those notes are - I know what they are in my head, but it's more of a very brief fanfare. Just a nice little - "du duu" (going up in pitch) and that's enough.

We've heard that you're from Scotland; are there any Northern Irish phrases you just can't wrap your head around?

I've been living in Northern Ireland for a very long time and my children were born here, so I'm quite used to most Northern Irish phrases by now. There are however a few vowel sounds and a few things people say that I either refuse to say or won't say. So, for example, (turns to Chloe) I'll test you- what's the animal that moos in a field? (Chloe says

C-ou) (Mr McGuinness mimics the sound and laughs) It's a weird sound. It doesn't really exist in the English Language. It's a c-ow and obviously there's lots of other words that Northern Irish people say in a very strange way.

What do you do in your free time?

Just general things; I like hill walking and cycling but I spend most of my time driving because, as I say, I've got two children who are in their teens.

Any hidden talents?

Nothing tremendous - I can fit two Tesco jam doughnuts in my mouth at once without making a mess.

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

Top three fav celebs? Sean Connery, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Billy Connolly.

Barbie or Oppenheimer? Barbie.

Any pet peeves? Grammatical errors.

What three items would you bring to a desert island? Bible, a solar powered cross trainer and solar powered air conditioning unit

Cats or dogs? Dogs.

We would like to give a warm round of applause to Mr McGuinness for taking the time to answer our relentless questions

Portrait Gallery



Mr Reaney

Poppy Henderson, Molly Davison & Katie Vaughan

In our attempts to find the mysterious Geography teacher, we marched through the Mournes hoping to detect his footprints embedded in the treacherous tracks; we scoured the school from top to bottom interrogating passerby teachers who had never heard the name “Mr Reaney” uttered in the school before. We were convinced he wasn’t real until...

What university did you go to?

Queen's, Belfast. I did my Undergraduate and my Masters in Queen's and then my teacher training in Ulster University, Coleraine.

Have you always wanted to be a teacher?

Yes. I think it's the only job that I ever wanted to do.

Who is your favourite year group?

This year I would say, Year 11. Definitely not Year 13. *(We all laughed)*

What did you do this summer?

I got married, I moved house and I got a cat...she's called Martina.

If you could have 3 things on a desert island, what would they be?

So, I would have my mirror, the bible and a cloth that I could filter water through. *(As one does! He says he would spend his days whittling a chess set!)*

How do you feel about the accusations that you and Mr McConnell are twins?

I think he's done very well out of that comparison, and I'm happy for him. *(A*

very humble response!)

If someone said they were “Pulling a Mr Reaney” what would you assume they’re doing?

I asked my upper sixths this and they said, “Teaching Geography” which was the most boring answer ever. I would say, using my wee coffee maker at my desk. *(Poppy has had Mr Reaney for two years at GCSE and never once saw him use a coffee maker!)*

If your life had a soundtrack, who do you think would be the singer?

I wouldn't want a singer; I would want a composer. I'd probably want either Hans Zimmer or John Williams. They can do an audition then I'll decide.

What is something that is underrated and overrated in your opinion?

I think football is massively overrated. Custard Creams are underrated, they are definitely one of the best biscuits and they don't get enough credit.

What teacher's class would you like to enroll in for a day and why?

I'd probably say Mr Cromie's. I would just like to see if it's all true. *(We all assured*

him, whatever he's heard, it's true.) I would like to know what I'm living up to. *(Molly and Poppy stated it was a tough act to follow- No pressure, Mr Reaney!)*

If you were transformed into a cat, how would everyone know it's you?

At home, I would keep going to turn the rugby on with my wee paws. If I was at school, I would be turning the kettle on repeatedly or making a coffee at my desk. I'd be pulling a Mr Reaney as a cat!

Quickfire Questions:

Barbie or Oppenheimer: Oppenheimer *(He hasn't seen Barbie yet!)*

Favourite Taylor Swift Song: Love Story.

Marvel or DC: Marvel. I don't really like either.

Being rich or being happy: Being happy.

We hope Mr Reaney has a bright future ahead at Banbridge Academy, that he'll get around to whittling his chess set without having to be stuck on a desert island, and that he finally manages to watch the Barbie film! Despite us thinking he was an elusive figure, we can confirm, he really does exist! Good luck, Mr Reaney!



Portrait Gallery



French Assistant

Lou Faivre-Orny

After a hectic week of scheduling and rescheduling, we were glad to say “Bonjour” to Lou, the school's French language assistant, who kindly fit us into her busy schedule.

What part of France are you from?

I'm from Lyon, but I grew up in Pontarlier near Switzerland.

If someone was visiting Lyon, where would you recommend going?

In “le vieux Lyon”, which is the “Old Town”, it's really beautiful and there's a big cathedral. There's a rose garden and in the summer it's very beautiful. The whole area of “le vieux Lyon” is really touristic with lots of traditional shops.

What are your future plans?

I just got my degree in English Literature and Linguistics; it was a 3-year course and now I'm taking a gap year to be here. When I go back, I want to study to be a translator, I would like to translate books, poetry and subtitles in films, that sort of thing.

What is your least favourite thing about the English language?

I don't know if I have a least favourite thing, but I would say that I struggle with the variations of accents.

Do you enjoy Northern Ireland?

Honestly, I like it a lot. Originally I wanted to go to Scotland but it wasn't open for applications, so I was a bit disappointed at first. Northern Ireland reminds me of where I grew up because of the greenery

and the large countryside.

What are the biggest culture shocks you have experienced?

I'm used to several brands, whether it's makeup, hair products and clothes, in France that I don't find here, so I have to search to find equivalents. Also in France, I normally get home from school at around 6-8pm, so it's weird being home at 4pm but I do really like it.

How are you finding being a part of Banbridge Academy?

I like it! I was a bit scared at first because of my tattoos and piercings, in case they weren't allowed, but the teachers have been really accommodating. The pupils are focused and ask lots of questions. My friends in the same programme in England are struggling a lot because they aren't receiving as much help from the teachers. So, I'm honestly really happy here.

Would you have preferred to go to school here?

I think I would have liked it, but wearing a uniform would have bothered me, because I'm not used to it in France.

What was your favourite subject, at college?

Probably Literature because I had a great

teacher. We don't have much choice over subjects, in France everyone must study History, Maths, Geography and the Sciences. I also had to study German, but I wanted to do Spanish as I hated German.

Is there any activity that you've always wanted but not been able to?

I wanted to try to crochet, which I managed to do and I'm very happy. I would like to write a book, I have written pieces, but I can't seem to motivate myself to patch things up.

Is there a country you've always wanted to visit?

I'd love to go to Scotland, it's my dream country. I will definitely go at some point this year. I'd also love to go to Finland and Norway, all the nordic countries are really beautiful. Ironically I don't like cold weather, but cold countries look beautiful.

Have you any advice for people language students?

Don't just study it in school, try to watch tv shows in that language and find people in real life to speak the language with. Just try to speak the language as much as possible because if you don't practise enough, you won't understand how the language works. Practice!

Portrait Gallery



Spanish Assistant

Amaia Iglesias Mena

Which part of Spain are you from?

I'm from a city called San Sebastián in the north of Spain.

Why did you to become a teacher?

I think education is the route for every change in society, so I think I can make a change. That's what inspired me to become a teacher.

How are you enjoying Northern Ireland so far?

I like it here, it's nice. It's just the weather, but I'm used to it as in Basque Country we have a lot of rain. I haven't met a lot of people here yet but I'm starting to learn more.

What's your favourite/least favourite thing about living in Northern Ireland?

My least favourite, I would say, is the weather but it's nice when we have sun here - you appreciate it more. I think my favourite thing is the people as everyone is so nice.

What do you miss about back home?

I miss seeing the sea every morning because I live by the sea. I love the sea and going to the beach at night. I miss my friends too and my family.

Who inspired you to continue learning English?

No one in particular, but my willingness to live in other countries and get to know

other cultures is my inspiration. I always dreamed of being able to communicate with a wider range of people in the world.

Where has been your favourite place that you've visited in Northern Ireland?

I haven't visited a lot yet, really just Belfast and Banbridge but I thought the Botanic Gardens were really nice. Especially since when I arrived here, there was a heatwave, so the weather was really lovely.

What did you find most difficult about learning English?

mmm... I think to communicate with people because when you learn a language you learn it in a grammatical way mostly and then once you get put in society, it's a lot harder to hold a conversation naturally.

What are the biggest differences between school here and school in Spain?

The main difference I would say is the uniform. There are some schools in Spain that have a uniform, but it is very uncommon. It was the thing that most shocked me when I got here, especially in the city centre of Belfast where I would see a lot of students in uniform. Also in Spain, we don't get to choose 3 or 4 subjects. Post-16 we have less of a choice

as you really just get to choose between a science root or a literature and arts one. This leads us to a selection of 10 subjects much like you would study over here for GCSE.

Favourite movie (English and Spanish)?

My favourite English movie would have to be "Interstellar"; I like all of the Christopher Nolan films. I wouldn't say I necessarily have a specific favourite Spanish movie, but there's a rising director called Isabel Coixet whose movies have been becoming rather popular lately and I rather enjoy them.

Favourite Tv show?

Peaky Blinders.

Who do you think makes better music: the Spanish or the English?

English music is definitely much wider in variety, so you have more to choose from but historically we do have very good musicians who I feel deserve more recognition.

Dream country to visit?

Thailand- I love the energy there.

Dream Pet?

I'd love to have a dog (specifically a puppy) or a cat because I feel like cats almost live in another dimension so I love interacting with them.

Portrait Gallery



Chinese Assistant

Rui Zuo

Where in China are you from and what's your favourite thing about it?

I'm from the south-west of China, we call it Sichuan province. I'm very proud because Sichuan province is very famous for hotpot, traditional spicy Chinese food - and famous for one animal - the panda! (*Very cute!*) So, many visitors will come to Sichuan to see the real giant panda.

How long have you been in Northern Ireland and how are you finding it?

This is my second year working in Northern Ireland. I came to Northern Ireland last year, and I feel very good living here.

What's your favourite memory in China?

Wow, I have a lot! I think there are many beautiful places to travel in China; China is a very big country, so in different provinces you can see different beautiful scenery. So I would recommend you to go to China to have a look one day, go travelling one day! (*We'd love to visit!*)

What made you want to teach Mandarin?

The reason is because my post-graduate university major was teaching Chinese as a second language. So I had my first internship working in Edinburgh

as a teaching assistant there. After I graduated, I applied for another program working as a Chinese teacher at Ulster University Confucius Institute. That's why I came to Northern Ireland.

What is the biggest culture shock you've experienced in Northern Ireland?

Ah, what should I say? Not really any because it's not my first time coming to this country, so I'd probably be surprised about the local people's accent (*Haha, no surprises.*) because it's not like the English accent - it can sound more like a mix of an American accent which surprised me!

What are the biggest cultural differences in the schools between here and China?

Oh, I'd have to say you are really lucky to be studying in this country because in China the students will undergo a lot of pressure. Your grades and your marks are the only judgement to apply for university, so students are very hard-working in China to get high grades and marks for their future. (*Yikes, that's tough!*)

What are your hobbies and past-times?

My hobbies? I love travelling and I like sports, specifically badminton (*We*

giggle in agreement.) and I also like painting, that's about it.

Quickfire Questions:

Favourite Chinese dish? Hotpot!

Favourite Northern Irish dish? I think here you call it Beef Stew? I love it.

Favourite movie or series? I have a lot, but recently I enjoy watching *The Walking Dead*. (*Olivia loves The Walking Dead too!*) And I also enjoy the *Marvel* films.

Cats or dogs? Dogs!

Favourite school subject? I liked English and PE.

Morning or Night? Night.

If you had to pick one superpower, what would it be? Like in cartoons, if you open a door, you can go to another world or another country. (*Teleportation sounds cool!*)

We would like to thank Rui Zuo for her time and answering our questions. We wish her good luck in her future teaching career. She's done an excellent job encouraging us to visit the giant pandas in her hometown!





Portrait Gallery



Head Girl: Beth Cordner

Jorja McCabe and Hannah Kerr

With only one of us available to interview her, during one fateful study period, she sprung into her seat eager to make sure 'The Harv' (*otherwise known as Mr. Harvey*) got his special mention.

So, how are you finding being Head Girl so far?

It's not an easy task! It's very intense and involves a lot of planning of things like formals and pre-formals, which takes up quite a lot of time. We do however have a great team of deputies, so it's been a lot easier. Despite the planning, it has been such a pleasure to be elected as Head Girl and I really do feel privileged.

What subjects are you studying currently?

I am currently studying quite a random combination of subjects because I was originally going to study Psychology at university, but that plan has since changed. I am currently studying Psychology, History and Health and Social Care.

Who is your favourite teacher?

Now this is quite controversial. I've given this some thought, and I obviously don't want to offend anyone. Mrs Johnston is definitely high up there in my favourite teacher list as well as Mrs Topley-Willis, who taught me for GCSE English, as I loved her class and could talk to her almost as a friend. Then, for non-teaching staff, you've got to love 'The Harv' (*Why he seems to be known as this is beyond us!*)

What type of work experience have you completed?

I've completed work experience in a few different places, including Edenderry

Primary School and Banbridge Nursery School.

So, what would you like to do in the future?

I know what I want to do at University- I want to study History. Though in terms of the distant future, I'm thinking of potentially teaching History. I'm not 100% sure exactly what I want to do, but that's my rough plan at the moment.

Apart from your studies, what else are you involved in inside of school?

I'm in the SU committee, where I'm Prayer Coordinator this year; I'm in Chamber choir and Girls' Choir; I'm a Wellbeing Ambassador; I'm in Eco- skills and Health Promotion. Oh, I've missed something... I'm also a member of 'Team History' and I think that's everything this year.

What's your most embarrassing moment in school?

So... I've had quite a few, but one memorable one was when I was in Year 8 and I decided to play 'bulldogs'. The grass was really dry because it was really sunny, so as my friend ran towards me, I ran out of her way and into the wee hill on the grass outside. I gave myself a half concussion and so I just sat there for a moment with everybody laughing at me! It wasn't until I rolled over that they realised I was crying and they thought that it might be best to take me to the nurse. (*Aw, poor Beth!*)

What's your experience at the Academy been like overall?

Oh I'm going to sound like such a nerd, but it's just my favourite place to be because I met all my best friends and closest friends here. Also, just getting involved in SU has been a huge part of my life that I didn't have before school and I feel like I've grown so much more as a person as well.

Any advice for new students?

For new students, I'd say that Year 8 can be very intimidating as the school is so big. So, I feel like the best advice I could give is to get involved in your classes, but also get out and enjoy trying new things and get involved in as many clubs as you can.

Quickfire Questions:

Dogs or cats? 100% Dogs.

Sweet or salty popcorn? Sweet.

Are you a morning or night person?

I would say morning.

Red or Blue? Blue.

Movie or series? Movie

Netflix or Disney? I love Disney.

Mountains or beach? Beach.

Roses or Lillies? Roses.

We would like to say a massive thank you to Beth, for taking the time to talk to us, and wish her all the best for the rest of this year and her future!

Portrait Gallery



Head Boy: Matthew Stevenson

Mollie Gailey and Nicole McCully

From captaining the boys' 1st XI, to organising this year's formal, our Head Boy Matthew Stevenson is a very busy man. It had taken a long time to finally track him down for a highly anticipated interview. At long last when we finally found a break time that suited all of our schedules, we waited patiently for his arrival. But to our dismay, Matthew had prioritised his daily Centra trip...

What subjects do you study and which one is your favourite?

I study Maths, Chemistry and Physics. I would say that Maths is my favourite because it is all about problem solving and numbers, so there aren't many words involved in it. I can't deal with writing essays!

Tell us a bit about yourself?

I'm still unsure about my future career path, but perhaps something involving computers or maths. I'm still deciding between attending Queen's University, Nottingham or Imperial College in London or pursuing a PWC apprenticeship. Outside of the classroom, I play hockey, more hockey... and a lot of hockey!

What advice would you give to future pupils and our new Year 8?

Get involved in sports, especially hockey! Sports can fill up your weekends, but there are other clubs that you can do during the school day like Chess Club. In terms of school work, I have to say get it done early. Do not leave it until Sunday evening to get it done. Also, in terms of exams there is nothing that I wish I did differently, but make sure you go to sleep. Don't spend all night revising for exams.

What is your favourite memory in school?

I went on a trip to Holland when I was in Year 9 to play hockey and had a wonderful experience.

What qualities do you have that make you a good Head Boy?

I would have to say communication and leadership, both of which I've developed from the hockey that I've played over the years. There are times when my role here requires me to communicate with Mr. McLoughlin. After today, it is definitely not my memory, time-management or organisation - that's for sure! (*Matthew was 30 minutes late for the interview that he had forgotten about.*)

What's your favourite thing about school?

Study periods! Ironically in junior school, English was my favourite. It's probably because I enjoyed my teacher's classes (shoutout to Mrs. Hetherington, previously known to us as Miss McCormick).

What is something that not many people know about you?

I played the saxophone in primary school. I think I got to grade 2.

Do you have any phobias?

Heights.

What would be the last meal you would order if you were on death row?

A big...bit of venison. It tastes way better than steak. Venison and sweet potato chips. (*We agreed this was a very niche choice!*)

If you were stranded on a desert island, what 3 things would you take with you?

A load of food, my dogs, potatoes and chickens. (*We don't think he quite understood the question!*)

Quickfire Questions:

Tea or coffee? Coffee.

Celebrity crush? Ariana Grande.

Dream holiday? Denmark.

Go to McDonald's order? Wrap.

Do you think you would survive a zombie apocalypse - yes or no?

Yes, I would just hit them all with a hockey stick.

We would like to thank Matthew for answering our questions and we wish him well for the future, and we hope that he picks up the saxophone again.



Portrait Gallery



Deputy Head Girl Grace Hill

Katherine Otley

Finally, after many cancellations I managed to track down this Deputy Head Girl for an interview. Even with her extremely busy schedule as such an important member of our school, she soon made *(a very short amount of)* time for me amongst her many other commitments.

What has been the highlight of your time at Banbridge Academy?

I would probably select the day that I found out I'd been chosen to be Deputy Head Girl, as this was also the same day that I discovered that I'd been selected for the Chamber Choir as well. Both were a surprise and definitely a confidence boost.

What is something you would like to warn your Year 8 self about?

(The Deputy Head took her time with this question, even with her supposed tight schedule!) Your friendships will change. Who you start school with may not be who you leave it with, but that's okay for these changes to happen and often it can be a good thing to meet new people who will bring out the best in you and not bring you down. I would also like to tell my Year 8 self that I should not stress about these changes, as everything works out in the end.

What would you like to study next year and why?

I would like to study Psychology as I've always known that I wanted a

career that would allow me to help others. After going through the various different options such as a doctor or teacher, I realised that the area that had affected my friends and I the most was mental health and so I want to become a great influence in that line of work.

What university would you like to study at?

The university I would like to study at would have to be Queen's University, Belfast as I would like to stay close to home, to be near to my family and I also just think that it is a great university.

What did you want to be when you were younger and how different is your path now?

When I was younger, I wanted nothing more than to be a singer! But, I suppose I haven't entirely changed as I'm still a part of different choirs and now take singing lessons. However, career wise, considering I would now like to be a counsellor or behavioural analysis therapist, I think I changed my mind slightly down the road somewhere. *(Grace laughed nervously at this*

statement, which led me to believe that her dream of being a singer still lingers!)

Who is your favourite teacher and why?

I would say that both Miss McCullough and Mrs Topely-Willis are my favourite teachers. *(Don't worry, I didn't make her choose between them.)* They have helped me in a lot of my subjects through GCSE and now A Levels; they have always encouraged me to work to my full potential and have given me the tools to achieve my goals in their subjects, which I am extremely grateful for.

Quickfire questions

Money or Happiness? Happiness.

Summer or Winter? Winter.

Morning or Evening? Evening.

Sweet or Salty? Sweet.

Love or Friendship? Love.

Fancy food or Street food? Street food.

I would like to thank Grace for her time and enthusiasm in our interview, and I wish her well in her future studies and adventures, whether that's as a singer or as a counsellor.

Portrait Gallery



Deputy Head Boy Corey Hamilton

Keisha Moulton and Orla Morris

After weeks of hunting, Keisha finally cornered the school's Deputy Head Boy in sixth form study and sat down with him in one of the many interview rooms.

How are you finding life as Deputy Head Boy and what are your responsibilities?

Good question...it's been alright. We've been organising preformals, but we haven't been too busy so far.

What subjects are you currently studying and what's your favourite?

I'm currently studying Biology, Chemistry and Geography. I'd say Biology is probably my favourite at the moment.

Have you been involved in any extracurricular activities throughout your time in school?

Yes, I've played rugby and have been involved in the school play- this will actually be my second time on stage in one of the school's productions and it really is great craic! I was involved in the Young Enterprise Award Scheme as well.

Who is your favourite teacher and why?

Oh that's a good question. *(After a long and quite thoughtful pause)* Probably Mr Acheson because he has such a great sense of humour.

What is your funniest or most embarrassing memory during school?

It was either in Year 8 or Year 9- I was outside Mr Dempsey's room and I tripped over a pile of bags, causing a huge pile up of people in the corridor!

Do you have any advice for Year 8 pupils?

I would say to get involved in extracurriculars and things you enjoy because it's a great way to make a lot of new friends.

What are your plans for the future?

As of today, I have applied to study medicine in Queen's, Sunderland, Keele and Lincoln. So the plan is to hopefully study at one of these places and eventually become a doctor.

What will you miss most about Banbridge Academy?

Everything I suppose! I really like the school and will miss all of the friends that I have made here.

Where would you like to be in 10 years time?

In ten years time I would like to be a

doctor and making money! *(We can all agree on this!)*

If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?

Superpower... umm. Probably to be able to fly, it would be quite handy wouldn't it? *(Corey ended up changing his mind)* Actually, I think I'd want to time travel as it would be cool to see what everyone was up to 100 years ago.

Quickfire questions

Cats or dogs? Cats- no, dogs! Dogs.

Favourite movie? Interstellar.

Celebrity Crush? Sofia Vergara.

A country you'd like to visit? Australia because my family lived down there and I think it looks pretty cool.

Favourite season? Winter.

We would like to thank Corey for taking time out of his busy schedule to answer our questions and we wish him well in his future studies.



Portrait Gallery



Deputy Head Girl Hannah Kennedy

Alex Maginn, Hana Merjava and Melina Kinkaid

After struggling for weeks to find a time that suited this very busy Deputy Head Girl, a very last-minute decision to carry out the interview left us slightly unprepared. Everything soon fell into place however, as we all sat down and started to chat.

What subjects are you currently studying and why did you choose them?

I am doing Maths, Further Maths, Physics and Technology. As you can tell I am a very mathematical person; I find it easier to work out problems rather than give definitions.

What do you hope to do after you leave Banbridge Academy?

I am hoping to go to Queen's to study Electronic Engineering, which deals with circuits, flow charts and lots of programming.

If you could have dinner with one person dead or alive, who would it be and why?

I think I would have to say Taylor Swift. I just want to know all the gossip, everything that is going on and what the actual meaning to her songs are.

What is your most embarrassing moment during your time at BA?

(Hannah found this a particularly hard question) I do so many embarrassing

things like walking into doors or tripping over chairs. But I think the most embarrassing moment would have to be when I slid across the balcony. My foot went from under me, and I slid backwards and then I just found myself on the floor.

Would you rather have the power to read minds or to be invisible?

Definitely to be invisible because of the amount of chaos I could cause! (Hannah was very quick to answer this question and through giggles, she told us why she chose to be invisible.)

What is your hidden talent?(If you have one!)

I can juggle. I love it! It's just one of those talents that you can whip out at parties and grab three things and juggle. (We liked this answer as she was very proud of her amazing talent!)

If you could be any animal, what would you choose to be and why?

I think I would love to be a cat. It would be wonderful just to sleep anytime at all

and I really do love to sleep!

What is your favourite movie?

I love 'Pride and Prejudice' as it's one of the classics! But then again, I love almost every movie inspired by Jane Austen; although the 2005 Pride and Prejudice is definitely my favourite.

Being the head of ICT for SU, could you tell us about your favourite moment from Scripture Union?

Every year the youth weekends are such an amazing opportunity to go away and spend time with your friends. The SU formal every year is so much craic and the awards are so funny; I always look forward to them!

Quickfire questions

Early bird or Night owl? Night Owl.

Coffee or Tea? Tea.

Dogs or Cats? Cats.

English or Maths? Maths.

Blue or Black pen? Black.

Fruit or Vegetables? Chocolate. (But if I had to make a choice.... fruit!)

Portrait Gallery



Deputy Head Boy Connor Magee

Reece Wakeling, Gordon Porter and Tom Sneddon

It was a quiet afternoon in Banbridge Academy as we prepared to interview a local legend. The doors swung open and in walked a larger-than-life figure, clutching two burgers (no doubt grabbed hastily from the canteen mere moments before). He took a seat as we thanked him for taking time to answer our questions and the interview (finally) commenced!

What subjects are you studying at A Level?

Maths, Physics and Business. (Slightly on the boring side, but could be worse!)

Where do you intend to go after Banbridge Academy?

I'm hoping to go to Queen's. I'm quite interested in studying Civil Engineering (we were all more convinced that Connor was most interested in the prospect of student life!)

What was your favourite year at school?

Probably third year, because of lockdown. It was great to be able to sit at home and complete plenty of work from the comfort of my own surroundings (we all couldn't help but notice a cheeky grin appear as Connor reflected on all of the work he completed during this time.)

What advice would you give to a younger student?

To get involved in more things; it's a

really boring answer but I do believe that it's very sound advice.

What were your favourite extracurricular activities at school?

Obviously, rugby and chess club; I was a big chess man back in my day. (He placed his hands behind his head, leaned back and smiled as he reminisced about simpler times.)

If your house was on fire and you could only save one item, what would it be?

Probably my phone. It's a pretty obvious answer but let's be honest... anybody who wouldn't save their phone would be a bit silly (we couldn't agree more!)

If you could change one thing about school, what would it be?

Easy, I'd get rid of Double Maths, it's an absolute travesty! (Anyone else thinking Connor for Prime Minister?)

Who's been your favourite teacher?

Oh that's a hard one. As I mentioned

earlier, I lost quite a bit of time in school due to lockdown, which cut out a lot of Year 10 and Year 11. If I'd to pick someone, it would probably be Mrs Topping or maybe even one of the rugby coaches- Mr Beacom! There's a lot to like about Mr Beacom and he was my Double Award Science teacher and I thought he was really great!

Quickfire questions:

Coffee or Tea? Tea.

Cats or dogs? Dogs.

Home or away? Home.

Favourite Colour? Green.

Celebrity Crush? Jennifer Aniston.

Three dinner party guests? Obama, Gandhi and Richie McCaw.

And just like that- with a sudden flash of red, he disappeared almost as quickly as he had appeared in the first place. We would like to thank Connor for allowing us the pleasure of interviewing him and to Mrs Gough, for being extremely patient.



Portrait Gallery



Deputy Head Girl
Emily Reid

Cadey-Lee Jess and Grace Kernaghan

After planning around Emily's extremely busy timetable and having to reschedule several times, we finally sat down with the Deputy Head Girl and began our very professional interview.

Are you enjoying your role as Deputy Head in school this year?

Yes! Although, it is a big responsibility as there is a lot of organising to do and a lot of responsibilities but it is great to be able to show leadership qualities to my peers. *(She also couldn't refrain from mentioning the biscuits and coffee with Mr McLoughlin on a Thursday).*

What subjects are you studying, and which is your favourite?

I am studying Chemistry, Biology, History and last year I also studied Politics. My favourite subject *(she finally decided after many minutes of deep thought)* would have to be Chemistry, as the teacher is very nice.

What extracurricular activities are you involved in?

Senior choir, girls' choir, school production, debating, medical society, Bar Mock Trial, and umpiring hockey for the school. I'm a very busy gal!

What are your hobbies outside of school?

I play hockey and umpire hockey for Ulster Hockey. I also take singing and piano lessons as well. I have a part time job and I'm a self-confessed coffee connoisseur!

What is your dream future job?

Next year I would like to study medicine at Uni, so my hope is to become a doctor.

What has been your most embarrassing moment during your time here?

I had literally just got my hair cut and one of my friends squirted strawberry milk all over my head and I had to sit my Year 9 history exam with sticky, disgusting hair. *(Although, a few of her peers shared some slightly more embarrassing stories that Emily wasn't too keen on us disclosing!)*

Quickfire questions!

Who is your favourite member of One Direction?

None of them! I don't like One Direction. *(We were shocked and appalled by this answer!)*

What is your favourite country to visit?

Canada!

Pasta or pizza?

Pizza.

Cycle or run?

Run, definitely not cycle!

Chocolate or vanilla ice-cream?

Honeycomb! *(She was unwilling to choose from the options given).*

We would like to thank Emily for making time for this interview, despite her extremely jam-packed schedule. We wish her the best in her future studying Medicine and hope that nobody squirts strawberry milk over her hair before a uni exam!

Portrait Gallery



Deputy Head Boy
Matthew Spence

Gordon Porter, Reece Wakeling & Tom Sneddon

Despite our difficulty in tracking down Matthew, and fitting an interview into his busy schedule, we were finally able to sit down during one of our lunchtime breaks. Matthew answered all questions with the energy and enthusiasm that we have learned to expect from our Deputy Head Boy.

How have you found life as Deputy Head Boy so far?

Personally, I haven't found it to be too much of a difference from my normal life within school apart from having a bit more responsibility than usual and a lot more meetings to attend; that's about it really!

What subjects are you currently studying for A Level?

I am studying Maths, Physics, and Chemistry. I am hoping to do Electrical and Electronic Engineering at Queen's University, but I'm not one hundred percent sure yet if this is the degree path that I will take.

What activities within school have you been involved in?

I am a member of the 1st XI boys' hockey team; I've been playing hockey since Year 8. I have also been part of the engineering society and BAYS in junior school.

What career path do you wish to pursue after leaving Banbridge Academy?

Probably electrical and electronic engineering but I'm not sure where that will lead me. It's what I'm looking towards at least.

Do you have any hidden talents?

I'm not sure. I think I have a pretty good singing voice when I'm in the shower, but that's about it to be honest *(Matthew answered with a large grin).*

What is something you have always wanted to try, but haven't yet?

I would like to travel to different countries around the world. Probably Australia or Asia, some places like that. I would also love to go skydiving, I think it would be really cool!

What is your most embarrassing moment during your time at Banbridge Academy? (*After some deliberation*)

I think it was probably when I introduced myself as Deputy Head boy to my own year group-especially showing them my photo from when I was in primary one! It's always really nerve-racking having to speak in front

of people and it isn't exactly my forte!

Quickfire Questions:

Tea or coffee: Tea, absolutely. I can't stand the taste of coffee.

Favourite movie: Interstellar.

Favourite song: Candy – Paolo Nutini.

Cats or dogs: Dogs, definitely. I have both, but I prefer my dog.

Favourite teacher: Mrs Hetherington. I had her for English for five years and it was always good craic.

Finally, is there any advice you would give to pupils in junior school?

You should get involved in an extra-curricular activity that you enjoy. If you enjoy something in school, it will make it far more enjoyable than it already is and will also make it less stressful too.

We would like to thank Matthew for taking time out of his busy day to sit down and answer our questions and we wish him luck for his A Levels and in his future after leaving Banbridge Academy. Hopefully someday he will release an album of those songs he sings in the shower!

Pupil Experiences

The 2023 Youth Commonwealth Games

Alana Burns-Atkin



I've been swimming for 9 years now and on reflection, I can honestly say that I never thought I'd get to where I am today! I only attended the swimming trials at Banbridge to support my younger sister, but once I discovered my own love for the water, I worked hard to progress through the club. I was swimming quite well and then Covid hit, which put a stop to training in the pool for a while.

Post Covid and again I didn't know what the future held for me in swimming; nevertheless, I worked hard at my fitness with the view of getting back into the pool and back to competitions. Since then, I have had an eventful few years: I became the Irish Open LC Champion in the 200 Butterfly in 2022 and 2023, while I also became the Ulster SC Champion and Irish SC champion in the 200 fly in 2022.

However, it was my participation in the 100 fly that got me the consideration times for the 2023 summer competitions. But like I always seem to do, I did it the hard way, achieving the time in my third attempt in a Time Trial, where there was only one other swimmer with me. Being selected to represent Northern Ireland and Ireland made me very proud and I was looking forward to my first taste of international competitions.

The European Juniors Swimming Competition was held in Belgrade, Serbia, from the 4th to the 9th of July 2023. Twelve swimmers (including me) were set to compete over the six days of competition. This was my first-time representing Ireland, so I was very excited whilst also quite nervous at the same time. I competed in four individual events

and one team relay event and achieved two personal bests. Serbia seemed like a nice country with very good food, but I didn't get to see too much as we didn't have a lot of down time.

The 2023 Youth Commonwealth Games, held in Trinidad and Tobago, was a multi-sport event held from the 4th to the 11th of August. Team Northern Ireland competed in a range of events such as swimming, cycling, athletics and triathlon. Five other swimmers and myself competed over three days. I achieved one personal best, made two finals, and finished fourth and fifth - just missing a medal twice. I was a bit disappointed, but there were a lot of learning outcomes to take away from this experience that I will build on in future competitions. This was such an amazing experience and my first time being outside of Europe. It was very warm, and we did get the opportunity to spend a day at the beach (to enjoy the Caribbean climate) once the days of competition were over. I made many new friends within Team Northern Ireland and beyond, such as Australia and Bermuda. There were ups and downs, but overall, this was truly a once in a lifetime experience that I will remember forever.



Teachers' Favourite Books

Deborah Elliott & Ruth Herron

We asked a selection of teachers to name their favourite book. Can you use the clues to match the book to the teacher?

A At Swim-Two-Birds Flann O'Brien	B Bounce Matthew Syed	C Hanns and Rudolf Thomas Harding	D Winnie the Pooh A.A. Milne
E Lessons in Chemistry Bonnie Garmus	F The Seven Pillars of Wisdom T. E. Lawrence	G Firefly Summer Maeve Binchy	H 1984 George Orwell

Clues

- A novel about 007 may have been a more obvious favourite read for this teacher.
- This teacher is always ready to 'bounce' a rugby ball- depending on the weather forecast of course!
- An unsurprising favourite for a teacher who's passionate about justice and the past.
- A welcome escape from historical facts to something much sweeter.
- Not the usual lesson taught by this eco-friendly teacher.
- This individual may aptly be regarded as a 'pillar of wisdom' to sixth form.
- When someone is surrounded by so many books, it must be difficult to choose.
- This teacher's height would enable him to 'see all'.

A: Mr Bond B: Mr Reaney C: Miss McClelland D: Mrs Johnston.
E: Mrs Dreading F: Mr Harvey G: Ms McEvoy H: Mr McGuinness

Year 8 Experiences

Lois Clydesdale & Ina Merjava

Can you ever really know what to expect from Year 8 until you experience it for yourself? We chatted to this year's new intake to get an inside scoop on how it has been so far...

Name: Megan Beattie - Maralyn Primary School
What was the biggest (unexpected) change compared to your primary school? The school is even bigger than I'd realised.
Is there any aspect that you find difficult? Trying to find my way to all of the classrooms- though I'm sure that I'll soon get used to everything.
Do you have a favourite teacher? Miss Warnock for Home Economics.
Is there anything that you particularly enjoy taking part in? There's not really one thing in particular that I could mention.

Name: Luke McGrann- Dromore Central
What was the biggest (unexpected) change compared to your primary school? There's definitely much better food served in the canteen.
Is there any aspect that you find difficult? I've found some of my subjects difficult- such as English for example.
Do you have a favourite teacher? I can't really pick just one to be honest.
Is there anything that you particularly enjoy taking part in? I really like going to Dungeons and Dragons Club.

Name: Isaac Henry- Ballydown Primary
What was the biggest (unexpected) change compared to your primary school? The school is so much bigger and we have many more classes.
Is there any aspect that you find difficult? Maths can get quite tricky, as we're learning lots of new topics.
Do you have a favourite teacher? Mr Bond.
Is there anything that you particularly enjoy taking part in? I'm really enjoying my Science class with Dr Bradford.

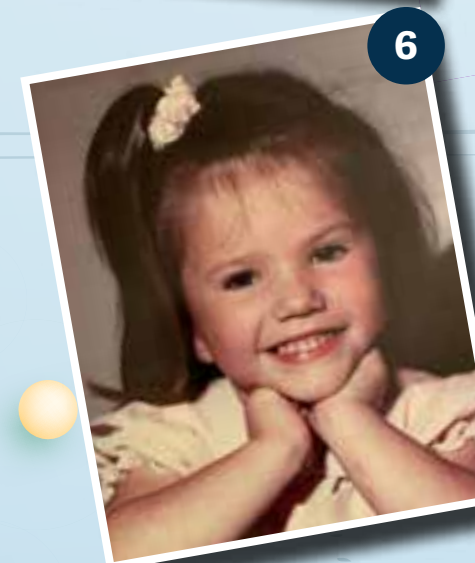
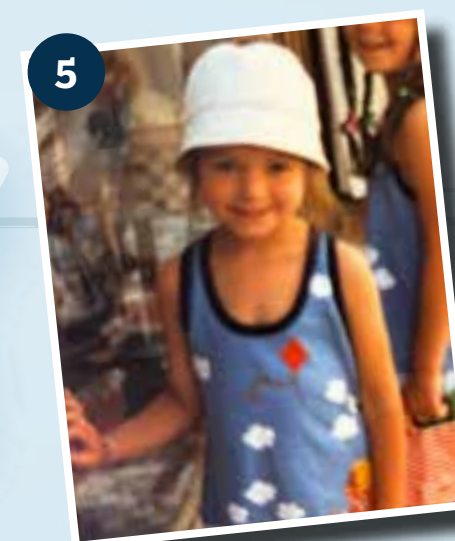
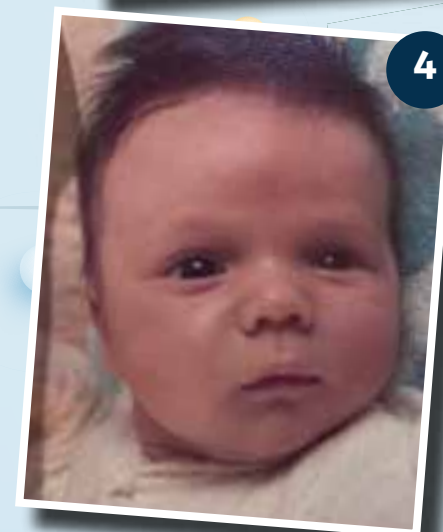
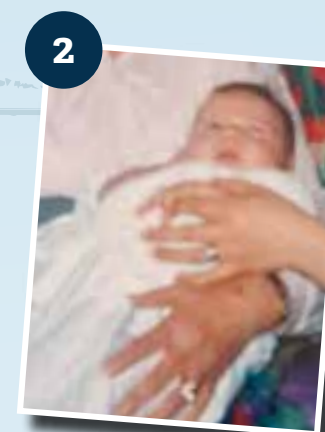
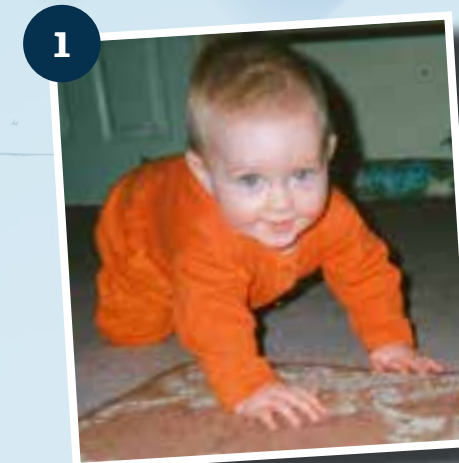
Name: Alexander Bond- Fairhill Primary
What was the biggest (unexpected) change compared to your primary school? Probably that we get a lot more work to complete.
Is there any aspect that you find difficult? No, I feel like I'm settling in really well so far.
Do you have a favourite teacher? Mr Cordner for P.E.
Is there anything that you particularly enjoy taking part in? I love getting involved with sports, as I play hockey so it's been great to have lots of opportunities here.

Name: James McClelland- Bronte Primary
What was the biggest (unexpected) change compared to your primary school? The classes are really fun!
Is there any aspect that you find difficult? No, not really.
Do you have a favourite teacher? English with Mrs Neill, but I'm also really enjoying learning French too.
Is there anything that you particularly enjoy taking part in? I auditioned for the school play, so I'm really enjoying all of the rehearsals for 'The Wizard of Oz'.

Name: Sophia Noble- St. Mary's Primary
What was the biggest (unexpected) change compared to your primary school? I've met so many new people- even just in Year 8!
Do you have a favourite teacher? Mr Patterson as we are learning how to work with Scratch. I also like Miss Greenlee as she makes Drama really fun.
Is there anything that you particularly enjoy taking part in? I love Art and English.
Is there any aspect that you find difficult? No.



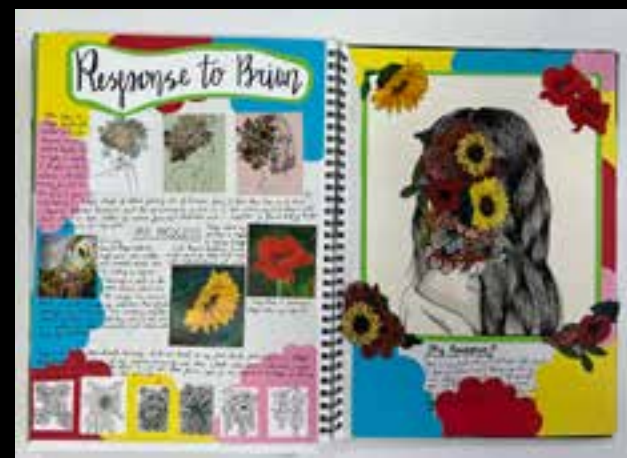
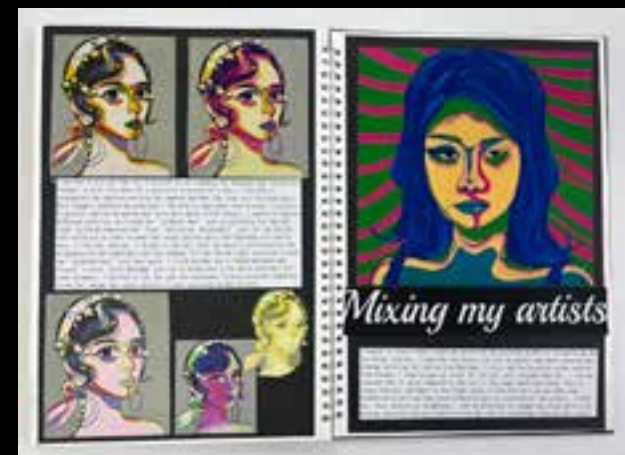
Guess the Teacher



- ANSWERS
1. Miss Gordon
 2. Mr Clarke
 3. Mr Erskine
 4. Mr Miskelly
 5. Mrs Duke
 6. Mrs Topley-Willis
 7. Mrs McCullagh

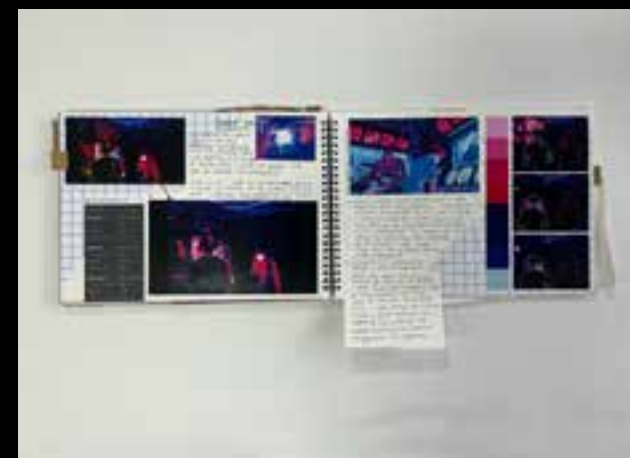
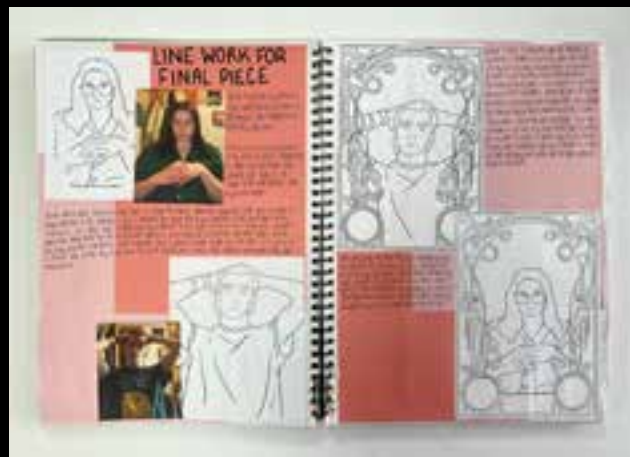
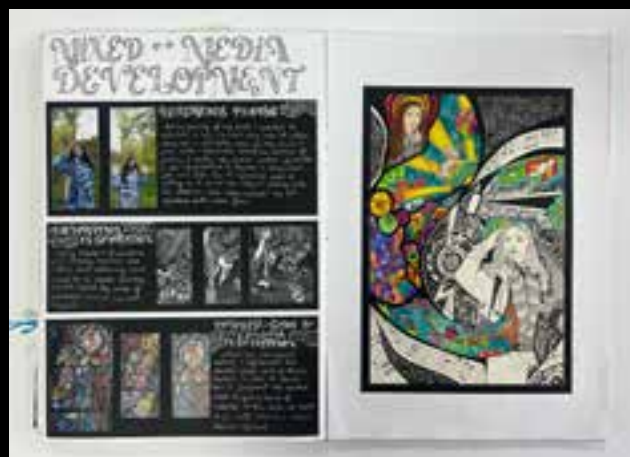
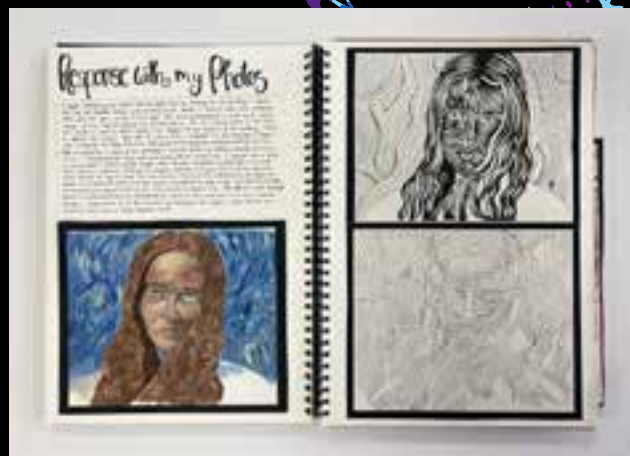


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ART

F.E. McWilliam Visit



Our Year 10 group visit to the F.E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio, once again proved to be an excellent trip with lots of interesting discussions about our world famous local artist F.E. McWilliam. Previously our pupils had researched and studied the work of Banbridge born F.E. McWilliam and were ready to study many of his interesting sculptures first hand to gain a better understanding. We were expertly guided around the gallery by Jason Diamond, who helped pupils investigate the wide range of styles that F.E. McWilliam worked in. Pupils were fortunate to be able to see and feel the work and discuss the many sculptures on display. It was a very valuable trip, enabling our pupils to see how a sculptor develops his ideas and works within the Creative Industry Sector.

Hopefully this may have inspired the next generation of sculptors in Banbridge.



Careers

Careers

Mr S. Bond

The 2022/23 year got off to a great start with the return of the 'Pathways' careers fair to Banbridge Academy. Last hosted in 2018, this major event saw over 60 exhibitors from a range of universities, colleges, employers and other organisations set up camp in the Assembly Hall and Sports Hall. Pupils from Year 10 and above were invited to visit the exhibition, talk with exhibitors, gather an armload of merchandise and hopefully come away equipped with information which would help shape their future careers. The school owes a great debt of gratitude to all who attended, especially to local businesses and members of our area learning community. The event was part of a two-day programme with Methodist College, Belfast and we were delighted to once again work with colleagues there. Look out for the next 'Pathways' in 2024.

September to Christmas is the time of year when we focus our attention on Year 14 pupils and a range of activities took place to help prepare them for their next step. Pupils participated in an interview skills event in October when we were delighted to welcome representatives from companies as diverse as Danske Bank, PwC, Kane Group and Visa to give pupils a sense of what it is like to sit in the hot-seat. In addition, we were very grateful to medical staff and teachers from the wider community for giving up their time to assist in mock interviews for medicine, dentistry and teaching programmes.

Year 13 began their year by thinking about the employability skills outlined in the Department of the Economy's Skills Barometer. Their learning was put to the test when they embarked on work experience in February and had a further opportunity to participate in mock interviews in June. Year 13 pupils also had the opportunity to visit the UCAS Discovery Exhibition at the Eikon Centre, Sprucefield in March. This annual event is always a great chance for young people to interact with representatives from a huge range of universities and get a better understanding of their options.

We continued to work with Young Enterprise this year, drawing on the organisation's excellent range of programmes to support pupils in Year 8, Year 10, Year 12 and Sixth Form. The 10X Challenge is a regular highlight in the calendar, and it was great to see Year 10 flex their entrepreneurial muscles as



they traded handmade jewellery, 'Toxic Toddlers' and Crocs Jibbitz!

In March Banbridge Academy embarked on a very significant project with online careers platform PeopleHawk. PeopleHawk offers pupils the chance to create a profile which is future focused, equipping them with an understanding of psychometric testing, video interviewing and personal development which will stand them in good stead for

the future of work. We look forward to exploring the potential of this powerful tool in years to come.

Once again we must acknowledge that careers education is not a solo endeavour, and pay credit to the medical and engineering societies for promoting careers in those areas. It is a privilege to work together in supporting our young people in making career choices.



Careers Careers Fair



English Year 13 Seamus Heaney Homeplace Trip

Abi Dreading



On a grey, drowsy and cold February morning in 2023, Year 13 English Literature students travelled to Bellaghy to visit the home place of Seamus Heaney. Excited by the prospect of a free lunch and skipping class, we embarked on our journey north into the life of the brilliant poet Seamus Heaney.

After over an hour on the bus, we had already begun to collapse into sleep as the 'cat-wailing' that was supposed to be singing, the constant cracking of knuckles and the loud munching on food provided us with little entertainment. We eagerly awaited our arrival to Heaney's Homeplace.

Upon arrival we were taken into the lecture hall, separated into two groups and our tour of Heaney's life began. Our guide showed us around the interactive exhibit, which included 'the web of words', but our attention was instantly drawn to something that proved to be of much greater interest to many. Something better. One thing mattered more than all the rest. The brilliant Conway Stewart Pen! Our dream of seeing the magnificent pen (despite it not being the one Heaney used) was now within our reach and we were delighted to see the subject of one of

Heaney's most loved poems. The photo taken does not do it justice!

In the main part of the exhibit we were presented with headsets, which allowed us to listen to Heaney's booming voice through the earphones. Different numbers were located throughout the exhibit, which we were able to type into the device and listen to Heaney talking about his life, his family and his poems. After months of studying, analysing and carefully deconstructing Heaney's work, it was incredible to hear his poems being brought to life.

Following the tour, we attended a lecture on two of the poems that were named within our AS specification, 'Had I Not Been Awake' by Seamus Heaney and 'Acquainted With The Night' by Robert Frost. The lecture proved beneficial, aiding our understanding as we continued to prepare for our Unit

One English Literature Module and it provided us with an insight into what university lectures are like. After a slightly questionable lunch, we split up into study groups with university students and other English teachers to discuss our thoughts on the poems.

In no time at all, it was time to begin our journey back to Banbridge. I can safely say that this trip greatly enhanced our understanding and love of the poems written by Seamus Heaney. I would highly recommend anyone studying English Literature or with a general interest in poetry to try and get down to the exhibit, as long as they remember to bring a packed lunch!



Creative Writing

Story Openings 9E

Mrs Hetherington's Year 9 class selected images as inspiration for their creative writing. Their story openings (inspired by these) may be found below...

Damaged Souls

Alexandra Irvine



Abandoned and lonely. Destroyed and demolished. I remember how things used to be... before 'they' came. Lively, joyful, bright and colourful. We were a town just like any other, yet they still chose our little, old, peaceful village. They chose our lives to ruin. Our lives to sabotage. Our lives to shatter into a million pieces.

Let's take it back to the day they arrived. My life was perfect. Everything was going great: good grades; fabulous friends; and I was doing excellent in my extracurricular activities.

Walking into class confidently for the first day - that's when I saw them. Unnaturally beautiful. Tall and slender. Yet there was something about their faces that frightened me; I couldn't quite put my finger on it.

There were seven of them standing all together isolated and extroverted

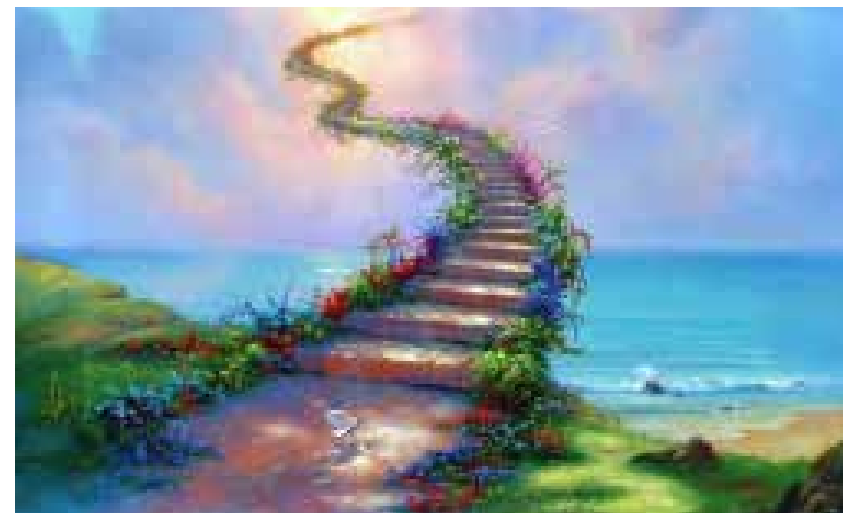
almost as if they were all lone wolves, watching their prey from afar. That's when one of them strode graciously towards me and my gut feeling was telling me something bad was about to happen. My heart raced; beating loudly like a drum. Although nothing happened at that moment my instinct was still telling me I shouldn't be around them.

I watched them every day that fateful week. They were nothing out of the ordinary but they still caught my attention. That's when I saw him out that night...

Approaching his catch... I watched - terrified - my eyes widening in horror as his kill sank to the ground. That was the moment I realised; the world around me was not at all how it seemed. I didn't know what death-defying secret he and his family were hiding... But I was about to find out.

Perfect Home

Adam Gwyn



Running, I looked over my battered, beaten and bruised shoulder; my sins were coming back to get me. There were huge "things" that could crush all 206 bones in your body in one (giant) step, and lots of tiny pea sized ones that would nibble your body from the feet up.

Tired, I thought my legs were going to fall off from how stupidly fast I was running- if they weren't already gnawed off by the little gremlins.

Suddenly, a pain- as sharp as a butcher's knife- jolted into my back and spread slowly and painfully throughout the rest of my body. I was hit. The last words

I thought were, "This is it." Then it all. Went. BLACK.

I woke up somewhere extremely different from the hellscape I had just sprinted through. The molten lavas were replaced by beautiful lakes and waterfalls. The horrific, horrible creatures had been replaced by beautiful plants, flowers and trees. The darkness had been lit.

Looking behind me, I noticed something strange. My back was completely unscathed! Not a single trace of harm could be spotted. Then I saw what was behind my back: a staircase reaching out like an arm; bordered by rows of majestic, mythical plants, which I doubt were from planet earth... If that's where I am...

"Nowhere to go but up... Literally!" I thought to myself, enthusiastically. Little did I realise how deceiving first looks can be; there was a lot more than the perfect home I was hoping for...

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English

The Beast

Edie Scott 9E

Mesmerisingly entranced- yet terrified to the core- this young, clueless new recruit stared on at the Beast that loomed before him. It was like nothing he had ever seen before; nothing his mind could have conjured up; not even from the darkest depths of his 'Fantasiae'- his imagination- could he have conjured up what his eyes were now witnessing.

He had heard tales of these titanic beings; but these were mere stories- myths and legends to warn of the jeopardy and peril of disobedience. The warrior had been forewarned of the raging whirlpool of uncertainty that lay in wait outside of the gates that seemed to restrain every living fibre of his adventure seeking soul.

Now it was his moment to explore. Ever since war had broken out selfishness had laced its ghostly tentacles around each and every leaving soul on 'terra'. He had been taught untruthfully of the crimes of the Beast. They were callous; they were cold-blooded; they were cruel. Now was the oblivious warrior's first look into the eyes of the Beast.

Naively, he expected a menacing outline, eyes set ablaze with a crazed freaky or vengeful fire, terrifying claws to lacerate flesh as though it was butter. Bone-chilling; terror-bringing; fear-instilling monsters... exactly how it had been described in the storybooks. However, what he saw could not have been further from his previous description. The supposedly gargantuan features detailed in the legends had been replaced with a frail figure- scrawny, slight and scraggy.

Suddenly the warrior's eyes darted swiftly to the creature that lay in the

Beast's palm. Benevolently, the Beast's glazed eyes gazed down fondly at the wounded creature he held. It was at that moment, the warrior realised the enormity of this exaggerated misconception of these Beasts. Here stood a creature who for centuries had protected the land, but had failed to withhold the titanium force of greed which had engulfed the humans of earth with their selfishly stupid sense of superiority and a lustful demand for all-knowing power. Peace was what was needed; power was what was wanted.



The Beast that stood- not ten metres away- was the last of his kind. Solemnly, he stood as the hills that enshrouded this once tranquil valley reverberated with the petrifying sound of endless shelling. He was once the kindest creature in the land; however, the endlessly gruelling years of back-breaking battle and arduous attack had crushed his soul back to whatever lesser-evolved humanoid bones it had.

Constant calls and crashes of his called comrades had reduced him to the verge of a nearly heartless being. After all, tears whether shed in public, or private, were of little use in war. Yet, fragments of kindness still remained in his heart.

Tired, the Beast gazed on to the fires of the fight. He knew if nothing were to change he truly was sentenced for a life of endless misery, condemned to a pointless existence, punctuated with undeniably eventual defeat. Dishevelled, the Beast shuddered heavily at the sound of a nearby

gunshot that shattered the air like glass. Shards of shrapnel sent ripples cascading across the water's glossy surface. The battlefield was a boisterous ballroom of bombs, bullets, blasts and bangs.

Tightly, the Beast fluted protectively on to the wounded rabbit that lay limply inches from his comforting grasp- rough palms soothing the innocent creature's wounds, seemingly instantaneously. No shred of mercy was spared by the enemy, just pure blood-thirsty greed- the core of every sin that snaked its grasp around earth.

Guiltily, the warrior-ashamed by the actions of his comrades- crept into the towering trees. He cast a final glance into the Beast's eyes. Here

stood a magnificent being, innocent; a helpless victim to the selfish clothes of trees; a forgotten veteran of peaceful years gone by- simply, misunderstood. For a fleeting moment the pair stood intertwined in solidarity. Both filled with the utmost desire for justice. Suddenly, an almighty 'CRASH' flurried from the air. Then silence... silence... silence...

The Blood Dragon

Isla Bell 9E

The lost, lonesome and long-forgotten city of Arbacu sat asleep in a cradle of darkness. Its cobbled streets were empty; carts lay overturned in the market square. Its grey granite buildings were crumbling to dust and the stench of burning blood filled the air. Not a living thing remained. Well, that's what the search and rescue team thought...

A few days earlier...

I sat by the fire as the sun woke from its peaceful slumber. We had been travelling for three weeks now and there was still no sign of the lost city of Arbacu. *We should be there by now!* I thought, angrily fiddling with the steel spoon.

"Hey kid, bring us the stew already! We're starving!" a voice called across the campsite.

Whipping around, I saw one of the adventurers I was travelling with. His name was Sergeant Bakers- an old army veteran. He absolutely hated my guts and I hated him. When he was only 16, he joined the army in World War II; he's had a wooden leg ever since.

"Alright, alright coming!" I growled back, ladling the stew into bowls. It looked like a goat had eaten a sock and two litres of water and vomited it back up- not to mention it was as lumpy as the hills we'd just walked over. Slowly,

I stood up and walked over to him. Unfortunately, I tripped over a stone and the stew flew through the air and landed on him.

"Why you little..." he began, but then stopped, a grin spreading across the field of the wrinkles that made up his face. "Lads, he's found it! He found the teleporter!"

Suddenly, the space was full of people pushing and shoving, trying to see. I got into a crouch and realised what I'd tripped over- it was a small circular stone embedded with gemstones and jewels. In the centre was a symbol. The symbol. The symbol of the Arabacu. The legend said that if you found this pebble, you would be instantly transported to Arbacu; if you pressed the symbol, which- of course- we all did.

All of a sudden, everything went black and I felt my feet leave the ground and then...

Bang! Snap! Crunch! My right leg was on fire. I'd broken a bone on what seemed to be oddly shaped bits of quartz. No, that wasn't right. I looked closer. My hair stood on end; my skin turned white; I was numb and sprouted all over my flesh. I was lying on a pile of human bones! That's when I heard them. All my comrades were screaming, shrieking and screeching. I heard massive

footsteps; the snapping of bones; the drip-drip-drip of blood; claws clicking on tiles; the sound of bat-like wings and then... silence.

I looked. The bodies of my fallen associates lay there, blood pouring from gashes on their legs, arms, heads and sides. But no sign of the creature that did this. A roar of - what sounded like thunder- echoed through the cathedral I was in, shattering a window. Rain poured in. Just a storm.

I made the mistake. I looked up. There, perched on six of the rafters, was a dragon. A blood dragon. It glided down, eyes glistening like black diamonds, voids in its ruby red head.

"Stay back!" I yelled, my eyes wide with fear.

It landed.

"Sleth ic mar," It said.

I knew what it said somehow. *Sleth ic mar*. You are me. Boom! A flash of scarlet. When I opened my eyes and looked in a puddle, I saw what it meant. I was now a blood dragon!

My name is Lilian Woods and this is my story...



Geography

Murlough Bay: Year 9

Harriett McClelland, Rebecca Mc Anulty and Nicole Maxwell



During October, Year nine pupils embarked on a Geography field trip to Murlough Bay. Prior to this trip, we were learning about coasts and how they change through the action of coastal processes and wave energy.

On arrival, we had to complete three tasks. We began by studying the distance an object travels along the stretch of the beach within a five-minute period. We then counted the number of waves to investigate the type of waves that were present, constructive or destructive, dependent on the wave frequency. Destructive waves dominated the coast of Murlough at that time. The final task was to complete a survey on the size and

shape of the pebbles to see which action is more effective, at the front or at the back of the beach.

Although we had to complete lots of work, it was a very fun day and although it was not raining many of us still managed to get wet. We then had lunch before returning to school. Overall, it was a great day learning outside of the classroom.



Newcastle Trip: Year 10

Ella Moore and Natalie Small



On September 28th 2022, Year 10 pupils travelled to Newcastle in County Down. Throughout the day we carried out a tourism survey and spent time evaluating the tourist facilities.

During our visit, we evaluated many different tourist attractions in the town, which included: the name of the particular attraction, the age group we think it was most suitable for (age groups were: 0-10, 11-18, 19-40, 41-64, 65+ and all), our personal rating of the attraction on a scale 0-5 and finally, a comment which helped to provide our thoughts on each venue. The final section of this task was to sketch and label an attraction that we found and then label our chosen attractions on a map.

Attractions we evaluated included: the promenade, Tropicana, the beach, Coco's, Joyland, Slieve Donard, the play park, Bloody Bridge, the big wheel, the

harbour, Nugelato, the library and the Information Centre.

Our second task of the day was to review the different types of accommodation Newcastle offers. To collect this information we walked down the main street and identified (or guessed) different accommodations we saw. Once we had made our decision we placed the data into a tally chart. Once we had found all we could, we gathered our results and placed them in a pie chart and then determined which types of accommodation were more popular on the main streets.

After we completed the work, we



made our conclusions on what we thought of Newcastle's facilities and accommodation and if the town provides good options for the people who use them.

Once we completed the evaluations, we had the chance to walk around the town to visit different shops and get food. Newcastle is filled with so many different places to visit for all age groups and there really is something for everyone.

The trip was a great chance to visit one of the tourist towns in Northern Ireland and see how that tourism impacts it or how well the town is able to accommodate tourism. It also gave us a day out to enjoy and spend time with friends, while we attempted to complete the assignment given to us. However, for some it was just a chance to get Kentucky Fried Chicken for lunch!



Geography

River Reflections: Year 12

It was an enjoyable field trip because it was very relaxed; we were with our mates and therefore it was quite fun. The actual geographical work was easy and enjoyable to collect, so it wasn't stressful. It was also funny because I fell in the river.

I really enjoyed this trip as it was very warm weather and I was surrounded by friends. It was very fun, which made it more interesting-especially when Rebecca almost fell in the river! The breaks were good as my legs were sore after walking so far. Overall, this trip was very good.

My overall experience was so good as I learnt how to measure velocity while having fun bonding with friends. My favourite memory was one of my friends being in trainers and her having to grab onto me for support, almost tipping us both in the process.

When we walked from site one to two, I fell waist deep into a big hole and my friends Lucy and Kristen had to pull me out; it was ok though as we still got all our data collected in time.

I enjoyed visiting the rocky river because Aimee lost her welly boot and could hardly get out and a few others fell into the river.

In our fieldwork investigation at the



Rocky River we measured river depth, width, velocity, and pebble size. It was a great day out and the weather was also great.

My overall experience was exhilarating, especially when I got into the freezing water to take the time for river velocity. It wasn't too bad though, as I dried quite quickly because it was roasting.

I had so much fun on the Geography field trip. My favourite part was measuring the width because we got to get into the river.

We had such good craic at the Rocky River and collected all our data after people kept falling in the mud and in the river.

I had a fantastic time! The experience of venturing across mountains was unfamiliar to me, yet exhilarating at the same time, and I hope to do it again. I had a blast!

In June 2023 we went to a river in the Mourne mountains. Not only did we find out the river's velocity and depth, but we also fell into many bogs.

Going to the Rocky River I left my wellies at home, so I had to go into the river in my white trainers! Minus the bad start, we not only managed to get the data collected but also had a great time in the process!



Magilligan

The bus journey was long, but the food was great and the banter was even better. Upon arrival at Magilligan, we were ushered into a classroom. It was such a great day out of school! We were instructed on how to collect the data on the sand dunes, collect information on soil pH, light intensity and vegetation type. Our enthusiasm was immense as we stepped into the world of sand. As we continued our journey back, the sunlight faded along with our enthusiasm and all we could think about were our growling stomachs!

Once back at the centre, we settled into

the classroom to begin some laboratory and statistical analysis. As midnight approached, Mr Reaney and Mrs Dreading prepared us for the ultimate competition: water ping pong, jenga and stacking chairs. The competition was fierce but Lauren White was the champion of the chair stacking, whilst the boys towered at jenga. After a short night's sleep, we returned to the classroom in the morning before making our journey home via McDonald's.

I would like to say thanks to Mrs Dreading and Mr Reaney for providing us with an amazing learning experience.



Geography

Introducing the Geography Society in Banbridge Academy



This is a place where pupils can explore Geography beyond what we do in our timetabled classes. Through quizzes, crafts and guest speakers (like Rhea from the Confucius Institute), pupils can gain an appreciation of the world of which they are the future. The Society runs

during breaktime and offers pupils an opportunity to broaden their horizons, challenge themselves and enjoy all things Geography.

Some of the things we enjoyed this past year were...

- Making Earth Christmas Decorations
- Receiving a visit from the Chinese Assistant
- Having a Geoguesser competition

School Record

BIRTHS:

To Rachel and Jonny Clarke, a boy,
Vincent Henry James.

To Naomi and Mario Paolucci, a boy,
Luca Adrian Massimo.

To Kathryn and Jonny Erskine, a
boy, Jack.

To Ruth and Niall Thompson, a
boy, Jude.

MARRIAGES:

Ellen Hall and Aaron Hoy.
Naomi McFarland and Jonny Reaney.



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Government and Politics Review

A. McClelland

The Government and Politics hosted and took part in a number of interesting and educational experiences during the last academic year.

On October 4th Year 13 students attended the COP 27 Simulation Negotiation event in Belfast City Hall, organised by the British Council. The 4 students represented the interests of Bangladesh and the USA and they took part in live discussions with representatives from London and Egypt where strategies to reduce CO2 emissions, to reduce the temperature of the earth and each country's respective action plans were discussed.

In November Year 13 students participated in the Learn with the Lords programme, where we had an online meeting with the Labour peer, Lord Hunt of Kings Heath. We had a very informative afternoon where Lord Hunt answered questions on the role of the House of Lords, his nomination and work as a life peer and the prospects for future reform of the Lords. This was immensely beneficial to our AS studies.

February saw us again work with the Learn with the Lords programme and we welcomed Viscount Brookeborough

to Banbridge Academy. Viscount Brookeborough spoke to Year 13 and 14 pupils studying Government and Politics. Viscount Brookeborough is one of 92 hereditary peers in the House of Lords, he is also a member of the Royal Household as a Personal Lord in Waiting to the Monarch as well as serving as the Lord Lieutenant of Fermanagh, where he also presides over the family ancestral home of Colebrook Estate. Viscount Brookeborough delivered a very interesting presentation on the House of Lords which was both informative and useful to the Politics students present. He then participated in a question and answer session with the students where he was willing to talk about all aspects of his work, including life in the House of Lords, his work as both an hereditary peer and a crossbencher, the reform of the House of Lords and his experience as a Personal Lord in Waiting. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the visit as it gave them a real insight into the House of Lords. They were fascinated by Viscount Brookeborough's stories and anecdotes and the range of people he has met



through his work. We really appreciated Viscount Brookeborough's willingness to give of his time to the students.

The final event of the year was a follow up to the Good Summit event which Politics students attended in Dublin last year. The Rev Harold Good OBE visited to share his experience of peace building in Northern Ireland. We were joined by Politics students from Our Lady's Grammar and the Abbey CBS and the Rev Harold Good told his story of US civil rights, the NI peace process, the decommissioning of IRA and ETA weapons and a lifetime of work facilitating difficult conversations. Pupils availed of the opportunity to ask questions and appreciated the Rev Good's honesty and openness.

These events help to add depth and understanding to the syllabus and they bring the study of Politics to life.

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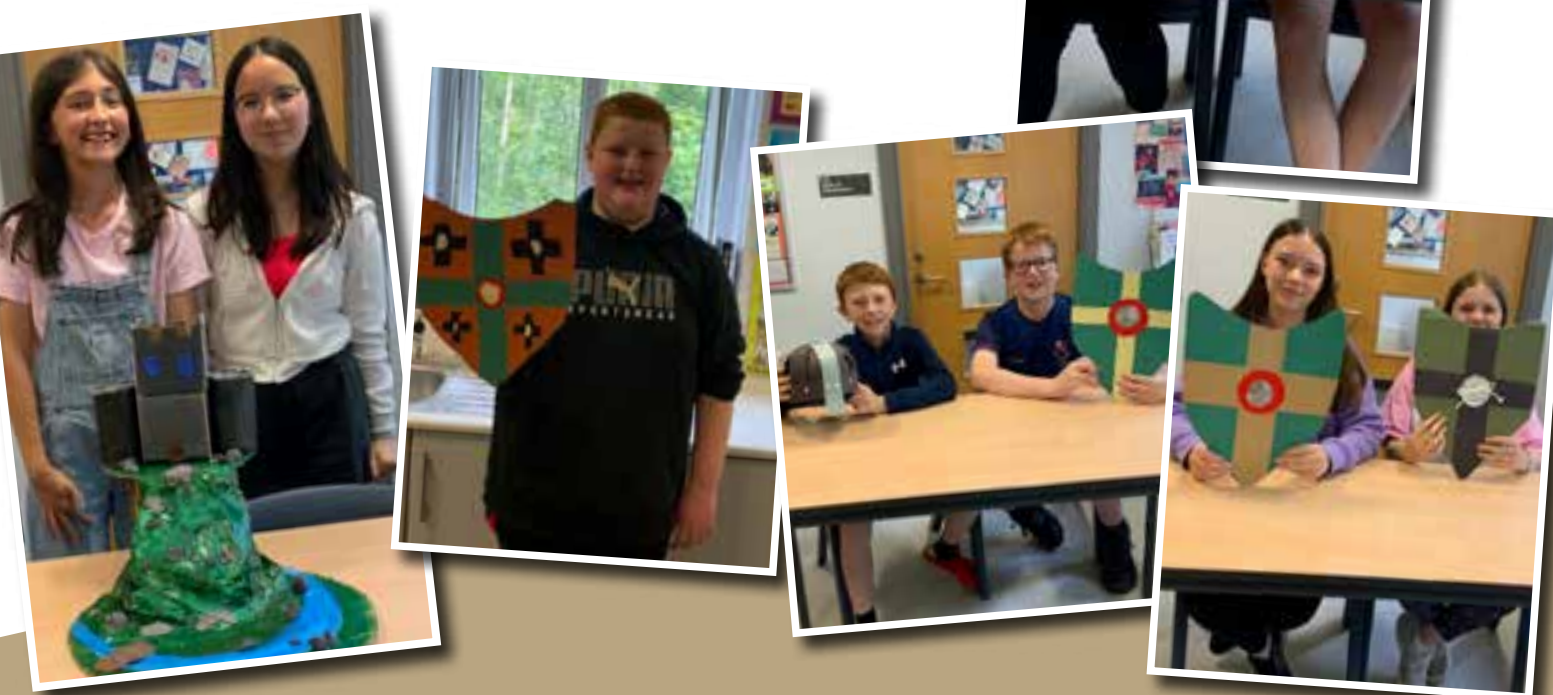
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History

Year 8: End of Term Projects

Year 8 History students made model medieval castles, shields and helmets as part of an end of term project on Life in the Middle Ages.



Year 11 History Trip to Hillsborough Castle: June 2023

Year 11 students enjoyed a trip to Hillsborough Castle where they explored the key role this venue has played in the modern political history of NI. On the tour students learnt about the agreements which have been signed and negotiated here, with a particular focus on the Good Friday Agreement, and explored the spaces where these talks took place. There was also an opportunity to consider the background to the Troubles and the events leading up to 1998, including the Anglo-Irish Agreement, using a range of source material.



Senior History Trip to Berlin: Easter 2023



First stop of the day- Charlottenburg Palace!



An evening spent at the seat of German democracy: the Reichstag.



A moving day at Sachsenhausen as we reflected on the mistakes of the past and the responsibility to ensure they are never repeated.



A tour of Berlin on bikes followed by an evening of competitive bowling on Day 4!



A busy last day visiting the Brandenburg Gate, the Stasi Prison Museum and a final meal together at the Hard Rock Cafe!

History

The Good Summit Event: March 2023

In March, we welcomed History and Politics students from Abbey Grammar School and Our Lady's Grammar School to join for an event organised by Julian Hamilton from The Good Summit. The keynote speaker was the Rev. Harold Good who shared his peace building journey, including his experience of the Civil Rights movement in America. He also discussed his role in the Good Friday Agreement and decommissioning and provided an overview of his interactions with many of NI's politicians over the years.



Parallel Histories Conference: Parliament buildings, Stormont



Parallel Histories' aim is to encourage students to study disputed history by looking at relevant and controversial situations in history which have competing narratives, studying both sides of the argument closely using provided sources and forming coherent arguments to support both sides, ultimately allowing students to form their own judgements. Through partaking in debates, students are challenged to consider multiple interpretations of evidence and different points of view, and this is a skill which is very useful in the study of history, as well as important in healthy democracies.

In September a group of ten Year 13 and Year 14 History students along with Mr Erskine, were invited to take part in a national conference at Stormont to debate controversial topics in History. Schools from across the island of Ireland, England, Scotland and from Europe were in attendance to discuss and debate the lasting legacy of conflict in Northern Ireland and Israel-Palestine.

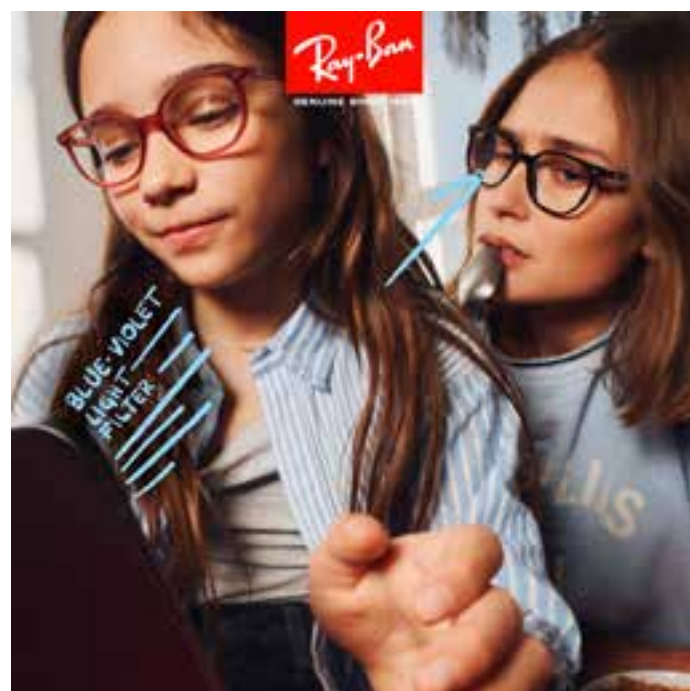
Students displayed a myriad of skills in source analysis, reasoning, understanding bias and interpretation as well as being able to formulate arguments and counter arguments. They were able to competently construct and

deliver debates on controversial topics from multiple perspectives.

Students were guided by teachers and facilitators in the research methods and provided with individual feedback on their oral contributions.

The Banbridge Academy students were given much praise by the facilitators for their ability to think on their feet and adapt a line of questioning accordingly.

Overall, a very valuable day in which students further developed their personal confidence, skills and abilities.



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Modern Languages

French Exchange

Francesca and Alexandra Duffy



It has been four years since the last French Exchange with the Collège St Joseph in Dijon, so when a trip was announced for Year 10 pupils at the start of September, it was with excitement and anticipation that we decided to take part. Even though somewhat daunted by the prospect of having a French pupil living in our homes for one week, then subsequently having to do the same in June, we knew it would be a fantastic opportunity to develop our language skills and learn a lot more about the French culture and lifestyle.

At the start of October we received our French partner's profile and everything was full steam ahead from that point onwards. We made contact via email or text and it was no time at all until the 23rd March, when we met our partners in person for the very first time. On Thursday afternoon, we stood nervously in the Lecture Theatre as Mrs McCullagh introduced us to our partners and we performed the habitual kiss to each cheek or handshake. The Lecture Theatre was full of English and French chatter as we began to get to know everyone, then we left with our partners and helped them settle into what would be their new home for the next week. All of the Banbridge Academy pupils and their families had worked hard to make sure that the French pupils would have a fantastic week, exploring the sites of N.Ireland, tasting some local dishes and most importantly learning as much English as possible whilst living in our

homes. The French pupils had brought lovely gifts for each of their host families and it wasn't long before our parents were taking our pen pals to their hearts and treating them like their own son or daughter for the week.

The following day would see the French pupils heading off on their day trips and visits included: the Titanic Museum and tour of Belfast City, the Giant's Causeway and Carrick-a-Rede and a trip to the Ulster Folk and Transport museum. On Wednesday, the pupils spent a day in school with us, enjoying an Art class with Miss McCullough, cookery lesson with Miss Jess, and they even got to try on the Academy uniform before going on a tour of the school and having lunch in the canteen. On Tuesday evening we all enjoyed a Social evening here in school and at the weekend took our partners to laser tag, the cinema, karting, football matches and much more.



Before we knew it, the week was over and we brought our partners back to school for a 4am departure, knowing that in about 8 weeks time it would be our turn to have a fun-packed week and meet up with our partners again.

We all kept contact with our pen pals whether it was via phone calls, or texts and we sent them many photos from their visit here. It seemed like no time until we were ready to set off to France ourselves. Although the nerves were beginning to kick in, we packed our bags, ready to leave from school at 3am on Friday 23rd June. The morning passed quickly and we landed in Lyon around 10am, before driving three hours to Dijon. We were so excited to see our partners again and they even held a drinks reception for us at school, each of them having prepared some typical French snacks and treats for us.

My pen pal lived in a 3 storey house about a 5 minute drive from school and only a 30 second walk from the local pool. She had two older brothers and they (along with her parents) were so welcoming. That evening I had my first traditional French meal and during the weekend, my host family took me hiking in the Swiss Alps, an experience I will never forget! Indeed, everyone had a fantastic



weekend with their host families, some going to Paris to explore the sites, others visiting the local attractions in Dijon, one pupil even having the chance to attend a baptism.

During the week, the school had organised so many day trips for us. These included a trip to the Citadelle of Besançon, where we had an audio tour of the city and its construction as well as a visit of the zoo. We went to the Cassisium where we sampled cassis syrups and had a guided tour of the factory, the Hospices of Beaune and the Alix BD comic museum.

On the Wednesday evening, the French pupils had organised a party for everyone, similar to the one we had organised, with food, music and dancing. It was great to do something fun with everyone on one of the last nights in France.

On Thursday we spent the morning in



school with our pen pals and played lots of team games related to the European Union and areas such as languages, geography and currencies. Afterwards, we had lunch in the canteen, then in the afternoon went to Dijon city to buy some last minute presents for everyone back home. Dijon is such a beautiful city, lined with cobbled streets, fantastic shops, coffee bars and restaurants and many squares where people like to relax around the fountains, enjoying a cold drink in the sun.

Unfortunately, on Friday morning, we had to say goodbye to our exchange partners after a week of amazing experiences with our host families. Many tears were shed amongst the group, which shows that special memories and indeed friendships were made.

We think that the French Exchange is a unique trip, one which encourages you to step outside of your comfort zone and seek out new experiences whilst making



new friends. It is a fantastic opportunity to improve your spoken French and it certainly is a great stepping stone for those pupils who would like to continue studying French at GCSE level.

À la prochaine fois !



Home Economics

Springboard's Future Chef BakeOff



Springboard's Future Chef BakeOff, is a nationwide culinary initiative which is delivered in over 600 schools nationwide. The main goal of Future Chef BakeOff is to assist young people aged 12-16 to learn the vital life skills of baking, as well as providing invaluable insight into and inspiration for building a career within the hospitality industry.

The Future Chef BakeOff required pupils to demonstrate high level practical skills and produce a savoury shortcrust tart. They also had to provide a recipe, timed schedule, details of their cooking methods, a description of their tart as well as a detailed explanation of why each ingredient had been chosen.

A group of 10 Year 8 pupils worked extremely hard to make their own pastry and come up with their filling.

On Friday 7th October the girls all competed in a school heat, where Lucy Bell placed 1st, Zara Cousins placed 2nd and Scarlett McBride placed 3rd. Lucy Bell, submitted her tart and paperwork to Springboard's future Chef for a National winner to be chosen.

Although all girls did not win on the day they are winners in the eyes of Banbridge Academy, as they displayed great determination, hard work and huge dedication.



Northern Ireland

Future Chef Local Competition

The Future Chef competition challenges students to cook under pressure and develop practical skills through timed cook-offs in school heats, local and regional finals. Imogen Hunter and Aimee Clarke in Year 12 very competently represented Banbridge Academy at the local finals held in Newry Southern

Regional Finals. Both did an amazing job producing an aromatic vegetable curry and a rustic Italian pasta.

Although both girls did not win on the day they are winners in the eyes of Banbridge Academy.



Year 10 New Product Development with Avondale Foods

This year the Year 10 Home Economics pupils participated in a New Product Development assignment in the Summer term with Avondale Foods. Avondale Foods (based in Craigavon) manufacture vegetable accompaniments, side salads, fresh soups, sauces, porridge and noodles for distribution throughout the UK and Ireland. Product development lies at the heart of Avondale Foods' continued success.

The pupils' brief was to create a new and exciting salad. They showed great expertise and imagination in their selection and execution of the chosen salad recipe. Richard Bond, Product

Development Officer along with his team, had the difficult task of selecting the top three recipes. He commented on the creativity and flair the pupils

demonstrated. This was a unique opportunity for pupils to work alongside a local company and gain a greater awareness of the job prospects a food-based company such as Avondale can offer.

Richard presented prizes to the following pupils:

1st – Ruby Archer and Ella Bell
2nd – Matthew Christie and Jack Douglas
3rd – Anna Cowan and Samantha Burns-Atkin





Home Economics

Love your Food Show

In June Our Year 11 Food & Nutrition class visited the Love Your Food Show. The show brought together everything foodie, allowing pupils to sample local food and drink produce, test the latest kitchen gadgets, discover local restaurants and learn from the experts in the kitchen theatre.



QUB Sustainability Talk



Miss Jess' Year 11 Food and Nutrition class had a talk on Sustainability from a Queen's University student studying the Food Science and Nutrition degree. They enjoyed finding out about how we can be more sustainable and coming up with ideas of how we can be more sustainable at home.

Year 12 Practical Assessments

Fantastic skills were on display in the Year 12 practical assessments. 'The Eatwell Guide advises that we eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day' and so pupils were asked to include these within their recipes.



Music

Junior Choir

Mollie Gibson

Junior choir meets every Monday afternoon from 3:20 – 4:15pm for Years 8, 9 and 10. During this time we learn new songs, arrangements and parts for our main events throughout the school year.

The first of these events is the school Carol Service, which is held on the 20th December at Holy Trinity Church, Banbridge. This is a wonderful occasion when our vocal and instrumental musical groups come together to create a seasonal programme just before the Christmas holidays. This year we performed Stopford's "A Christmas Blessing". Earlier in the week, we were also invited to sing for residents at Seapatrack Care Home where we entertained them with a festive carol programme. This was a first for us and it was lovely to see the joy our singing brought to many, who

may not otherwise be able to get along to music concerts.

Another main event in our school calendar is the Spring Concert towards the end of March. This is another time when we celebrate and showcase the musical talent within the life of Banbridge Academy. This year, we had lots of fun preparing the ABBA classic, Dancing Queen. It was great to be part of the large musical family within our school.

Members of the Junior Choir were given

the opportunity to sing as soloists at our 2023 January Open Night. Choir members brought music to many of our school corridors as parents and prospective pupils enjoyed their visit.

Being part of Junior Choir has helped me to meet new people and I've made more friends since attending Junior Choir. I look forward to every Monday afternoon. Mrs Qua always has lots of new challenges for us, but we have fun along the way. We also meet together to practise our parts at various break and lunch times throughout the week. With a current membership of 45, we are always adding to our numbers. You will be made very welcome if you decide to attend.

Band

Sophie McNaulty

My name is Sophie and I am the lead singer and guitarist of the girl band at Banbridge Academy. There are two bands in school: a girl band and a boy band. Thomas McNaulty, Moby Murdock, Scott McShane and Luke Wills are all part of the boy band. Maja Quinn, Charlotte Hampton, Emily Stronach and myself are part of the girl band. This year has been a very good year for both the boy and girl band, as we have had many fantastic opportunities to be seen by the school and the public. Both bands this year have performed at open night, the spring concert and Buskfest, which took place in Banbridge in June.

All of these have been great opportunities to perform, but my personal favourite was Buskfest. I have never enjoyed a band performance as much as that in my life, as I felt so confident and happy to perform in front of the public as the girl band had never had this opportunity before. It was really enjoyable and such a confidence boost for the band, but both bands could never have done it without



Mr Tom McConnell. Mr McConnell set up both bands in 2022 and we have never looked back! Every Friday the boy and girl band take it week about to practise after school and without Mr McConnell's help, we would not sound half as good! He has been so much help and has put so much effort into pushing us to be the best we can, that we would be lost without him! The bands have been such a good experience for all of us and I am so thankful for the opportunities it has given us.



Music School Orchestra

Emma Kirkwood - Orchestra leader 2022-2023, member of Ulster Youth Orchestra, Summer 2023



Banbridge Academy orchestra gives young musicians a chance to experience playing in a group of like-minded individuals and experience a wide range of musical genres such as, pop, classical and more. Pupils join together every Thursday afternoon from 3:30- 4:30 to play a selection of music led by Mrs Qua. During 2022 and 2023, we had the opportunity to play at multiple school events.

The first event at which we had the pleasure of performing was our Prize Giving Ceremony in October. We performed Viva la Vida by Coldplay. This was followed by our Christmas performance of traditional Christmas carols with the brass ensemble and choir. We received more praise after our pop-up orchestra appearance in January 2023 during Banbridge Academy Open Night.

A highlight for the entire orchestra, but especially the Year 14 members, was the Spring Concert. In April the orchestra, along with other musical ensembles, was given the chance to showcase the pieces we had been working on all year. The three pieces performed were Viva la Vida by Coldplay, 'Die Moldau' from 'Ma Vlast' by Smetana, and a specially adapted arrangement of Piazzola's 'Libertango'. In this last performance, myself along with four other Year 14 pupils were able to show off our talent with solos. Caitlyn Colgan and I played the violin, Jacob Porter and Jessica Su played flute and Anna Sharpe played the bassoon. Through the dedication of the Year 14 pupils guiding the orchestra through the dynamic tango, we were able to perform an expressive and lively rendition of the piece.

Throughout my seven years of Banbridge academy, the orchestra has a significant factor in my school life. I always enjoyed coming after school to chat and play with my friends. Due to my involvement with the orchestra I noticed a significant progression with my individual musical ability, as I began to play at a higher level. To anyone considering getting involved with the Music Department of Banbridge Academy, I highly recommend you give orchestra a try!



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Music

Senior and Chamber Choir

Anna Stronge

Here in Banbridge Academy we have a fantastic senior choir of over fifty members, composed of four different sections. We meet on Tuesdays after school where the whole choir practises together, as well as on a break time throughout the week, where each individual section practises their part alone. No matter how high or low of a pitch you can sing, there is a section that is suited to your abilities. During rehearsals throughout the school term, we revise pieces for various school events such as Prize Day and the Spring Concert, which provides us with the opportunity to develop an increased ability in singing and performance skills. The Carol Service is personally my favourite event as the genre of music learnt is beautiful; I enjoy the atmosphere created and I love celebrating Christmas early so practising Christmas songs in October is perfect for me.

I have gained so many valuable experiences from being involved in choir, even for informal events such as when we sang carols, such as Once in Royal David's City, to the residents of Seapark Care Home last December. I really loved the whole event as it was great to serve the community while simultaneously doing something I



enjoyed.

The chamber choir is a smaller amount of select individuals, around twenty-five, who are more serious about singing. The main difference in the chamber choir is that a higher standard of work ethic is expected of each individual, as there is an increased difficulty in the specific pieces we learn. The chamber choir was selected by Mrs Munton based on attendance of rehearsals in senior choir, dedication to learning and also singing capabilities. Most members

of the chamber choir do graded singing, however it is not essential. We rehearse on Mondays after school and on Wednesday breaktimes for various school and also private events. The chamber choir is divided into primarily four groups, which may divide again depending on the particular song. There is a very focused atmosphere, which is reflected in the progress we make on the pieces we learn. I personally prefer chamber choir as I enjoy the stronger work ethos employed and the sense of community created by a smaller group.

Rebecca Walker ALCM

Rebecca Walker, a Year 14 A-Level Music student, has recently been awarded 'Associate of The London College of Music', having successfully completed the ALCM diploma in music theatre performance. The qualification, which is equivalent to a 2nd Year module of undergraduate study, involved a significant commitment in time and effort, with Rebecca having to demonstrate a very high level of performance skills. Rebecca, who worked under the tutelage of top UK vocal coach Ashley Fulton, is continuing to expand her advanced level performance skills, and is now working towards her Licentiate (LLCM) Diploma. Alongside her A Levels, Rebecca hopes to take her Diploma exam in June next year.



Senior Girls

Our Girls' Senior Prefect team this year is solely musical based. The girls share their experiences of the music department and the wider benefits the magical world of music has afforded them

Emily Reid

Deputy Head Girl & Alto 1 Sectional Co-leader

I remember fondly the plethora of opportunities the music department has afforded me over these past 7 years. I joined the Junior Choir in Year 8 unsure and uneasy as to whether music was something for me, however these anxieties were quickly dispelled as I found my second home nestled in the corner of school... the music department. My time in the department has awarded me many opportunities to grow as a musician - more than I could ever have imagined possible; from being a member of Senior Girls' choir, Chamber Choir and receiving a place on the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland. Music has developed me in many ways, from allowing me to grow in confidence to having the ability to perform in front of large audiences and my peers, something I rely on heavily as my role of Deputy Head Girl.

Furthermore, as a member of both Senior Girls' and Chamber Choir it has developed my skills as a team player. If one member of the choir doesn't perform or practise, the whole dynamic of music can shift and so the ability to be in a team based environment musically is so important. I have learned how working collaboratively and consistently as a choir, we can turn a piece of music from a page in front of us into a beautiful blend of voices and sounds. Furthermore, my role of sectional leader alongside Beth has developed me into a leader and further developed my musicality, by working with other members of our sectional to create and develop our sound and achieve a fabulous blend of voice, whilst encouraging other members and helping to create a safe environment where they feel respected.

The Music Department has given me so many opportunities, which pushes me as an individual and a musician each and every time. I am indebted to Mrs Munton who has been an inspiration through her clear and obvious passion for music. Additionally, without the belief, care and support Mrs Munton provides to each

pupil who crosses her path, I do believe I would have a lot less confidence in my musical abilities! I will never forget the memories I've made and the craic I have had with the music department, who are always available to have a chat. I will fondly treasure and look back on these memories in the future.

Grace Hill

Deputy Head Girl & Alto 2 Sectional Co-leader

Throughout my time in school I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the junior choir in my junior years and the girls' senior choir, as well as the chamber choir. Through my involvement in choir I have not only made new friends and progressed my talents musically, but I have been given incredible musical opportunities and leadership opportunities.

Currently, I am a sectional Co-leader for the Alto 2 section of the girls' senior choir. Although daunting initially, this role has taught me many valuable lessons about leadership and it has developed my management skills. To begin, I have learnt how to speak to my peers in an encouraging and motivating manner in order to inspire them and myself to work on the pieces that we have been learning. Moreover, my position of leadership has come with an element of trust and responsibility and has taught me the importance of being reliable and therefore showing up on time and being prepared for the choir session each week. To add, as a leader I am to be a good example to my peers and therefore I try to show those in my sectional and the rest of the choir, my dedication to the choir and passion for music.

Although initially I was concerned about leading my sectional, as I believed I could not help or teach them anything, I have now gained a new confidence and am more assured of my abilities as my fellow Co-leader and I have successfully worked together to assist those in our group whilst creating an enjoyable environment in our sectionals each week. Lastly, I would like to add that having a leadership role in any part of

school is an amazing opportunity and will teach you valuable life lessons and skills that are transferable to working life.

Beth Cordner

Head Girl and Alto 1 Sectional Co-leader

From my first solo as a timid Year 8 to now being a sectional co-leader of the girls' choir, a member of the chamber choir and a member of New Irish Senior Youth Choir, the Music Department has given me the most wonderful opportunities to mature my voice, grow in confidence as a singer, and nurture my role not only a sectional leader, but also as a member of the choir. Being a member of the choir has given me numerous opportunities to grow as a leader, which is invaluable to me now in my role as Head Girl. During my time in senior school, being a sectional co-leader has both encouraged and challenged me, as I have learnt how to effectively co-lead sectionals alongside Emily. As well as this, it has helped me to realise how vital it is to listen to others around you and take constructive criticism, which I have learnt only improves our unity as an Alto 1 group. I am continually pushed and grown in my musical abilities each week, and I will be forever thankful for the skills and memories the Music Department has provided me with which I will treasure in years to come.

Hannah Kennedy

Deputy Head Girl & Alto 2 Sectional Co-leader

Being part of choir and orchestra has taught me so much, from sight reading music and confidence, to working with other people as a team. The music department has become my second family in school, from first year until now. These last two years, I have been helping lead the alto 2 part and it has been quite a challenge to balance the fun and social aspect with learning the parts well and correctly, but it has taught me so much about what it is like to lead a team of my peers. It has taught me a multitude of skills that I will be able to use when I enter the world of work, like how much you need to listen to others and take other people's ideas and thoughts into consideration, but also how much you need to be confidently prepared because if you don't know what you're doing, no one can follow.



Music

National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland success for Banbridge Academy

Banbridge Academy had a superb 33 offers for the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland. The girls participated in auditions in October, resulting in 15 junior pupils along with 18 seniors being offered places across the Junior Choir, Easter Girls' Choir, Training Choir and Senior Choir. This is an outstanding achievement, and a superb experience.

Junior Pupils selected for NYCNI Junior Choir and Easter Girls' Choir

Charlotte Hampton
Lucy Linton
Jemima Harris
Francesca Duffy
Ciara Aiken
Ruby Connolly
Kizzy Gley
Alexandra Duffy
Leona Lin
Grace Lilburn
Alyssa Sommerville
Katie Maginnis
Mya Jess

Junior Pupils Selected for NYCNI Junior Choir

Nicole Fox
Maggie Parton

Senior Pupils selected for NYCNI Training and Easter Girls' Choir

Sarah Liggett
Sophie McNaulty
Jasmine Magowan-Balfour
Grace Monroe
Amelia Kennedy
Shelly Crawford

Senior Pupils Selected for NYCNI Training Choir

Ella Scott
Susannah Redmond
Emily Reid
Rebecca Walker
Charis Walker
Nicole McCully
Olivia de la Torre
Belle Fitsimmons
Jorja McCabe

Senior Pupils selected for NYCNI Senior Choir

Caitlyn Colgan
Catherine Black
Beth Cordner
Sarah Nesbitt
Grace Hill



Junior Pupils Selected pictured with Mrs Tammie Qua (Music teacher), Mrs CLaire Munton (Head of Music) and Mr McLoughlin Principal.



All pupil selected pictured with Mr McLoughlin (Principal), Mrs Claire Munton (Head of Music) and Mrs Tammie Qua (Music teacher)



Senior pupils Selected pictured with CLaire Munton (Head of Music) and Mr McLoughlin Principal

Summer School

Lucy Linton & Kirsten Macauley (Year 11)

A few weeks before school ended last year, we heard about a week-long summer school at Chetham's School of Music. We both decided to apply and were delighted to get offered a place in the orchestra course as a flautist and a cellist.

At the end of July we travelled to Manchester for the summer school at Chetham's. It is the largest specialist music school in the UK and the whole school is devoted to music! This means their facilities include practice rooms, performance spaces, and the Stoller Hall, where we got to perform on the last evening of the course.

The days were very long as there was an extremely busy schedule! Each day started at 7am with a vocal and physical warm up (singing and stretches!) Then we had a full orchestra rehearsal with the conductor Ellie Slorach. We also had instrument rehearsals where each instrument was assigned a tutor so we could focus on the (many!) hard parts of the music. Each afternoon there was social time where we could practise our music or do different activities like sports or crafts. Our evenings usually consisted of more rehearsals, but one night we had a ceilidh! We returned to the Chetham's boarding houses tired every night!

During the week we played a variety of music including Swan Lake, Harry Potter and A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Although we have both achieved Grade 4, we found the music very challenging at the beginning of the week. Luckily with incredible tutors and lots of practice, we learned lots and improved as the week progressed.

The highlight of the week was the concert we held in the Stoller Hall. Our families came to hear us play. It was an incredible experience to be part of such an accomplished orchestra. We also sang two songs which we had rehearsed every morning.

On the whole we had a wonderful time and would love to return some time in the future!

Music Successes



Congratulations to Emma Kirkwood on gaining a place in the Ulster Youth Orchestra. The orchestra was founded in 1993 to provide tuition and opportunities for young musicians in Northern Ireland. It is open to musicians of ages 14 to 23 who are grade 7 standard or above. The orchestra does not meet on a weekly

basis for rehearsals but meets up for a 10-day residential course once a year and additional workshops and concerts throughout the year. Members are given the opportunity to work with acclaimed conductors and orchestral musicians. For Emma, the audition process involved learning several excerpts from



the chosen repertoire beforehand - a Gershwin Piano Concerto and a Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto, as well as two of her own chosen pieces. She then performed these at Queens University Music Department in front of a panel of Ulster Youth Orchestra tutors.

Congratulations also go to some of Mr Richard Wilson's Banbridge Academy guitar pupils who achieved excellent results in their exams. Well done, Lucy Grossmann, Finn McGarry, Holly Rice and Sarah Hylands on your merit and distinctions!

Psychology

Past Pupil Reflections on Psychology

Sionna Micallef

I genuinely feel that my Psychology A Level gave me a solid foundation for my future studies and steered me on my career path. Mrs Duke's teaching style was fantastic and I felt that she brought the literature to life in an engaging way (including topics like research methods- which isn't an easy feat!) Her words of reassurance built my confidence along the way and I'm so grateful to her.

I completed my undergraduate Psychology Degree at Trinity College Dublin, with a view to specialising in Organisational Psychology. I am currently an Employee Experience and Inclusion Specialist in AIB's Chief Technology Office. The highlight of my role is working to improve inclusion and diversity practices, with a particular focus on improving diversity in our talent pipeline. I am also currently working to enhance our learning and development

offering and onboarding supports. Throughout my study of Psychology, I've developed capabilities that are directly transferable to my day-to-day, such as analytical thinking and critical analysis. I feel my academic background has benefited me in my current role.

Throughout my studies, I knew that people-centred roles, with a focus on evidence-based interventions, was a real area of interest for me. I look forward to increasing my use of psychology throughout my career, and plan to explore Masters opportunities in Organisational Psychology and Behavioural Science.

I am also passionate about increasing engagement with women in STEM



and social mobility. I have become a mentor for young girls in socio-economically disadvantaged schools and have been absolutely delighted to introduce them to Psychology as a potential career path

Rebekah Osbourne (Née Nixon)

Psychology has been one of the most influential subjects I've studied. The topic 'Research Methods' gave me a very sound understanding of important aspects of research. We were also taught how to cite research correctly and both of these components were fundamental at university and helped me publish a research paper during my undergraduate degree.

I enjoyed the variety of topics covered, especially some mental health conditions such as depression and OCD. This gave me a greater understanding and appreciation for the causes and treatment of common mental health conditions people can encounter in life. Mrs Duke is a fantastic teacher and will do her best to ensure each student has a thorough understanding of each topic covered. She makes class enjoyable and you will look forward to her classes.

I went on to study Sport and Exercise Medical Sciences with a Professional Training Year at the University of Exeter. I graduated with a First Class Honours Degree in 2021. I did a year of research under the supervision of a world-leading professor in the Physiology Department. He kept me on for my dissertation in my final year and submitted my research to a respected journal to be published. When leaving Banbridge Academy in 2017, I was the Ulster Schools' Cross Country, 1500m and 3000m Champion. I have continued competing and have since achieved a few Senior Northern Ireland titles. I currently hold the Northern Ireland and Ulster 5km and 1500m senior titles. I have been incredibly blessed and hope the best is yet to come, perhaps in the form of further education and international opportunities with my running.



Religious Studies

Synagogue Visit

In June, pupils from Year 9 enjoyed an insightful and interesting visit to the Belfast Synagogue. The RE Department would like to thank Mr Black for speaking to the pupils about Jewish Life, Worship and the History of Judaism in Northern Ireland.



Publishing success for Kiera

Before Christmas, Kiera McQuaid, entered a medical essay competition for "Mentor Magazine" in which she was tasked with writing an essay from the point of view of a doctor. Her chosen title was, 'A virtuous doctor is the best type of doctor. To what extent do you agree?'. Kiera began with research using medical journals and reflected on her Religious Studies A Level work to complete an impressive piece of writing. We are very proud to announce that Kiera's essay won the competition and has been published in an edition of "Mentor Magazine". Mentor Magazine is a national print and online publication dedicated to applying healthcare students. The magazine contains wider reading to inform and inspire aspiring medical, veterinary, and dental students and their university counterparts.

Kiera is pictured with Principal Robin McLoughlin and Head of Religious Studies Warren Brown.



Bioethics Film Evening

In November, AS & A2 RS pupils attended a Bioethics Film Event organised by @stranbelfast and @UnionTCollege. This was an excellent event with a very engaging question and answer session with experts in the fields of Bioethics, Biomedical Science and Medical Law. The experience provided great support for pupils and teachers.



Kiera McQuaid - a Northern Ireland Regional Ambassador for the Holocaust Educational Trust

My journey with the Holocaust Educational Trust began in March 2021, when I had the opportunity to engage with their flagship 'Lessons from Auschwitz Programme' for Sixth Form students through the Religious Studies department. I was keen to participate as I knew other students from the Academy had taken part and found it a worthwhile opportunity. This programme consisted of three live sessions - one on Pre-War Jewish life, another where we heard the testimony of a Holocaust survivor and a final session to reflect on what we had learnt and how we were going to share this.

This part of the programme is called 'Next Steps' project and is a key tenet of the Trust's philosophy on Holocaust Education as it is important to share what you've learnt with your community, as survivors become frailer and less able to share their testimony. This concept is perhaps best illustrated by the words of Elie Wiesel who wrote, "When you listen to a witness, you become a witness."



We were all given a copy of Elie Wiesel's memoir, 'Night' to help us gain insights into survivors' experiences and I later learnt more about his writings at AmCon 2023. Ordinarily, the programme would also include a visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau but due to COVID-19 restrictions, this was unable to take place. However,

the virtual tour which was organised showed us the key sites in the camp like the huts, cattle trailers and the infamous 'Arbeit Macht Frei' gate.

The survivor centred programme, which the Holocaust Educational Trust provides, allowed the educator's

Religious Studies



teaching on pre-war Jewish life to complement and enhance our understanding of the political and social background to survivors, like Eve's story. Eve Kugler was seven years old when Kristallnacht took place, and her story of survival, and that of her family's, is incredible. Her parents survived three concentration camps, and Eve and her older sister were sent to America after living in a series of foster homes. Her younger sister, Lea was hidden first in a Catholic convent and then an isolated farm - they were all reunited in New York in 1946. Eve's advice to get to know others outside of your usual social circle to prevent prejudice has stuck with me since hearing her testimony.

During the final session, we also heard from a Rabbi and took part in a candle lighting ceremony where I also read a poem called 'The Shtetl' written by an anonymous author. Shtetl is a Yiddish word, typically used to denote a small town with a majority Jewish population. Such communities existed across eastern Europe in the pre-war era; all were destroyed in the Holocaust.

For my Next Steps Project, I took a Religious Studies lesson for a group of second year students, focusing on the impact of prejudice and discrimination and antisemitism through history. I also shared Eve Kugler's story with them.

I attended AmCon 2022 online and heard more about contemporary antisemitism and the relevance of the Trust's work today, which I found interesting and engaging. When the opportunity to

apply to be a Regional Ambassador arose, I knew it was the next step up in my journey with the Trust and would enable me to raise awareness of the Holocaust and its contemporary relevance on an even greater scale. I was delighted to be selected as a Regional Ambassador for Northern Ireland in March.

On 22nd March 2023, I attended the first Regional Ambassador training day in London where I met many other young people from across the UK who were also passionate about raising awareness of the Holocaust and its relevance. At this event we heard from a Regional Ambassador alumnus who told us about projects he had organised, gave them some advice for running their own projects and shared stories of the experiences he had had with the Trust.

The most poignant part of the day was hearing from Vera Schaufeld MBE, who came to Britain on the Kindertransport. Her experiences of feeling 'othered' by her teacher before leaving and her difficulties, like an initial language barrier, are just as relevant in our treatment of refugees and other displaced people today. Most importantly, Vera's inspiring story was one of hope and courage, because she went on to be a teacher after leaving school and specialised in teaching other teachers how to help child refugees settle in to school. She emphasised the importance of education for children but said that it wasn't enough to teach young people history, we must teach empathy and understanding. I strongly believe that hearing Vera's testimony will stay with

me forever.

I then attended AmCon 2023 as a Regional Ambassador in person. I met the Chief Rabbi who underlined the importance of Holocaust remembrance, heard from a member of the Second Generation (Michelle Richman, daughter of Zigi Shipper) and heard from many interesting academics such as Philip Spencer who discussed genocide and anti-semitism and Robert Eagle who considered Holocaust literature. I also had the opportunity to take part in workshops around Britain's response to the refugees created by the Holocaust and planning Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations.

This year, the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day is the Fragility of Freedom. This centres around the idea that the freedoms we take for granted each day are simply a few steps from being taken away from us. In terms of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust, the Nazis did not simply send six million Jews to extermination camps to be murdered overnight - Jewish people had their freedoms eroded over years by the Nazis and it's important to recognise that. Another key part of the Holocaust Educational Trust's Programme is the recognition of contemporary relevance of what you learn; my own Next Steps Project focused on the experiences of Uighur Muslims in China. I hope that this year, when commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day, people can focus and reflect on this.



Chemistry

Trip to QUB Pharmacy

Alexandra King



Banbridge Academy Triple Award Science pupils got the chance to visit Queen's University Belfast, School of Pharmacy on June 9th 2023 to learn about how medicines and tablets are developed, tested, and analysed, to make sure they are suitable for sales and consumption.

We were given a taste of the 'QUB' lifestyle when we had a university style lecture to display the daily life of a pharmacy student, while also being presented with some of the career choices available to the future generation of 'medicine makers' to assist them with making the choice of which courses they want to do.

The pupils felt very intelligent when we used our triple award course on 'Chromatography', taught by the wonderful Banbridge Academy Chemistry department, to experiment on medicine solutions to find the mystery solution using polar solvents with polar solutions, giving us insight

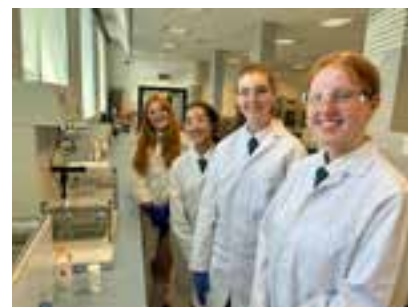
for the topics to come throughout next year's chemistry lessons.

We got to see first-hand how tablets were created, by machine and manually, while also testing them on how they travel and dissolve in our stomachs. The enlightening fact that no medicines or tablets could be distributed unless they are in the 99.9 percentile, gave everyone a sense of ease to ensure that everything is certainly double if not triple checked before it arrives in our hands.

Overall, every pupil enjoyed the very hands-on, informative and interactive day out which showed the many different

sectors there are in the pharmacy field. It was a really eye-opening experience, which showcased the multiple sectors to pharmacy while still displaying how enjoyable it is. It also showed how important chemistry is to the world and how it works.

I guess we might need to remember GCSE chemistry for a while then!



Physics

Geneva Trip



On our first day, we visited the United Nations Offices in Geneva and got a guided tour. The UN is an international organisation made up of 193 countries, which work together to find solutions for current issues such as: human rights, health, climate change and violence. People from different countries meet together in the large conference rooms to discuss these topics to try and come to a shared solution. Each conference room is funded by a different country, from which the room is then inspired – the Qatar conference room is inspired by the country's desert sand dunes and Qatari traditions and culture. There is enough seating for each country's representatives, translators and media personnel. The libraries and offices at the UN are for research by UN staff and members, but can also be used by students and the general public to learn about international communities. The buildings are full of artwork representing different ideas and progress in human rights, created by people from different ages, backgrounds and cultures, from artwork made of nails representing darkness into light, to drawings by children representing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On the morning of the third day of the Geneva trip, we visited the Red Cross Museum, situated beside the United Nations. The museum consisted of three

separate exhibitions, the first being named 'Defending Human Dignity' which showcased excerpts of the 1864 Geneva Convention and a sculpture of Henry Dunant, a co-founder of the Red Cross movement. Also in the exhibition is the 'Chamber of Witnesses', which showcased testimonies from real witnesses who were affected by war. The next exhibition called 'Restoring Family Links' showed how the Red Cross works to help families reunite after wars and natural disasters. The exhibition showcased a memorial tower with portraits of Rwandan children after the country's 1994 genocide and commemorates the missing people of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. It also showcased reproductions of the archives of the International Prisoners of War Agency, founded by the Red Cross, from 1914-1923.

The final exhibition called, 'Reducing Natural Risks' included videos and even an interactive game showing how to prepare for natural disasters and what the Red Cross does in the aftermath of natural disasters. Overall, the Red Cross museum aims at showing how the humanitarian action provided by the Red Cross has helped people of all ethnicities and backgrounds and benefited those affected by various events such as famines, wars, natural disasters, and genocides. The Red Cross

Museum was very informative and not only highlighted the difficulties of humanitarian action, but also highlighted the impact that people can have in helping those to overcome these tragedies.

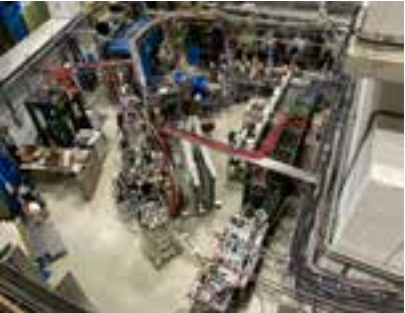
CERN is the European Council for Nuclear Research, home to the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) which is the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator located 100 metres underground and it is 27 kilometres in length, running through both Switzerland and France. The LHC is best known for its discovery of the Higgs boson particle back in 2012. Before we started our tour, we watched a video on the history of CERN. It was officially founded in September 1954 by 12 different European countries. The first place we saw on our tour was the antimatter factory, where we got to take a look at the antiproton decelerator that produces low energy antiprotons by decelerating and cooling a beam of antiprotons until they are travelling at a tenth of the speed of light. They are then subjected to another deceleration ring known as ELENA (Extra Low Energy Antiproton), which reduces their energy again by a factor of 50. The antimatter made is then used in several different experiments that involve studying antimatter and its properties.

Next we saw the CERN Data Centre, which

Geneva Trip continued



has a massive room in it that is filled with computers used to store and send data from the experiments conducted at CERN. In the Data Centre we learnt about how the World Wide Web was invented at CERN back in 1989 by Tim Berners-Lee and how he created the first website, which was about the world wide web project. CERN was my favourite part of the trip as I really enjoyed learning about the history of CERN and about all the experiments they conduct.



During the course of the trip, we nominated individuals for the following awards:	I got a half strike for Mr Stewart Nicole Mrazikova
Keymaster Award Joshua Thompson Jackson Sibbett	Best supporting teacher Mrs Tully Jake Rainer
I can get lost inside Harry Wan	I thought I was a photographer Matthew McAdam
I hate the colour yellow Oliver Lewis	I have got over the formal Peter McGrath
I can pose better than you Caitlin Colgan	I hate shoes Emma Graham
I love my yellow hat Thomas Dean	I am hungry and every watch looks the same Oliver Finlay
Oliver hit me one more time Hannah Kennedy	I almost didn't get on the plane Mr Stewart
I don't know how to bowl Daniel Mackle	



Work Experience at Atkins Global

Aleyah Peniero

When someone says “Work Experience” what comes to mind? Something you can put on your CV? An insight into your future career? A chance to learn something new? Or do you think it’s just like working, but instead of being paid in cash you get paid with experience? Whatever your thoughts on “Work Experience” may be, here’s how my placement at Atkins played out for me. For those of you who have never heard of the company, Atkins Global is a “World-leading design, engineering and project-management consultancy” and I applied for a work experience placement with them in hope of learning more about what engineering at Atkins entails.

Since Atkins is situated in Belfast, Monday June 9th started off with unnecessary worry as I feared the thought of getting lost and being late on the first day. However, Atkins in Belfast is conveniently stationed right in front of the Europa Bus Centre, and to the right of Starbucks. Inside a building called, “The Vantage”, situated on the 5th floor is where the Atkins office can be found. For the first day, I was in fact early and I had the opportunity to get to know the receptionist. While waiting for the other work experience students to arrive, she gave me a general overview of what she does as a receptionist at Atkins and this helped calm a few nerves. When the other work experience students arrived, I was pleasantly surprised to see a few familiar faces. With all of us now present, we were led to a cosy, little, modern meeting room and this is where we mostly stayed for the entirety of our placement: from 9:30am to 3pm, Monday to Friday, that meeting room was ours.

Monday morning consisted of a tour of the building and the rest of the week consisted of multiple sessions that included talks, site visits, and group activities. I will be highlighting what I thought were the most memorable and invaluable sessions.

On Monday we had the “What is Civil

Engineering?” talk by Aoife Campbell, who was also the woman responsible for organising our placements, as well as looking after us during our stay. This was followed up by two more talks from other employees at Atkins. After lunch, we talked about CVs and their importance and we then had to fill in a simple form that mimicked a CV. With their assistance, we wrote down our school subjects, our interests, hobbies, achievements, skills, and qualities and we had to explain how those would contribute to our future choice of career. This activity encouraged us to think and ask questions. Fun fact, Maeve Glover a Senior Consultant at Atkins states that, “Gaming is something you can put down as a hobby or interest, because it displays your team working skills, as well as your communication skills” which I thought was interesting. Again, after that talk, we had another two talks to finish the day. My first impressions of Atkins were a mix of relief that the first day was over, mingled with excitement for what would come the following day.

Tuesday was an eventful day. We had a talk on Electrical Engineering by Declan McLaughlin and he informed us of his work in the Water and Wastewater Industry. He’s currently part of a £123 million project; the project is the upgrade works on Beckton STW. He’s the only electrical engineer at Atkins, so he works with other people from a variety of other locations and because of Atkins’ flexibility, he often just works at home on days he can’t come into the office. It’s not just Atkins that lack electrical engineers, many other companies are struggling to get electrical engineers because of the increasing demand for them. Statistics say that electrical engineers will be in high demand for the next decade. So, for those of you working to become an electrical engineer, keep at it!

We also had an Ecology talk by a very enthusiastic Atkins employee, Annoushka Bayat, who in fact didn’t think she would end up with a career in Ecology. The reason for this was that

she didn’t get the grades she needed for a different course she was planning to do and ended up studying ecology instead. From there, she absolutely fell in love with it. Following that we had a Landscape Architect, Naomh Turbett, talk and give us a tour around Belfast. She showed the variety of projects she worked on in the city and not all of them went according to plan. For example, the metal spikes that you see lined up across the side of the road in front of Belfast City Hall labelled, Titanic, Olympic, Oceanic, Britannic, Laurentic, Celtic, Nomadic and Traffic. Those were originally supposed to oxidise into the same green colour as the roofs of Belfast City Hall. However, that did not happen due to the company responsible for the preparation of the materials messing up. After that we ended that with a new skill, since we spent the 2 hours learning the basics of AutoCAD, by making simple shapes using commands.

Wednesday was the exciting site visit day. However, that was set to be after lunch. So, before lunch we had a “Bridge Engineering Presentation” by Eoghan McManus, followed by a group activity. With the group activity, we basically got to play with magnets. After being split into two groups, my group was challenged with the task of working together and making a structurally sound bridge; using the knowledge we had learnt from the previous talk on bridges, and by following the instructions. Once we finished the bridge, we shook the surface the bridge was stationed on, to test its structural strength. Safe to say it survived the horrendous, 3.0 magnitude earthquake we brought upon it. What came next, was the talk on Geotechnical Engineering by Shane Gribbin, followed by lunch, then the site visit. For the site visit we needed steel capped boots, helmets, and high vis vests, since we were visiting a construction site to learn about the “Belfast Flood Alleviation Scheme”. Lesley Cooper, an apprentice working for Lagan Construction Group (a company working alongside Atkins for this project) gave us some details about

Work Experience at Atkins Global

what they were doing and why. As you may or may not know, Belfast suffered a flooding back in 2008 and Belfast is predicted to experience another flood, so to combat this, this scheme basically allows the construction of walls around The River Lagan to prevent the flood from seriously damaging and ruining the surrounding area.

Thursday was a busy day with 9 different talks. The first talk of the day was "Building Surveying" by Conall McMurray. What followed was not a talk, but another activity. Monica McNally, another employee at Atkins, was supposed to teach us the basics of Civil 3D, however there was a problem with getting them loaded on our computers, so instead of designing a junction on Civil 3D we designed one on AutoCAD and we were able to learn a few more AutoCAD skills. Next was a Social Value talk by Brendan Gallagher, where he explained the planning and reasoning behind the design and location of the new Belfast bus station (that's currently in the works). The location of the new bus station is right behind the Europa, so on your way to and from the new

bus station people are going to be encouraged to interact with the very accessible shops granted to them, since Great Victoria Street is lined with a variety of stores and businesses. The busy morning was followed by an even busier afternoon. After lunch, we had 3 separate talks for engineering: Aerospace, Tunnel, and Nuclear. To end the day, we were supposed to have informative talks on "Apprenticeships" by Omae Al Haj Kadour, "Placements" by Luke Gallagher and "Graduate Schemes" by Anisa McConnell, each talk scheduled to be a maximum of 10 minutes long. However, Omar, the employee giving the apprenticeship talk, started getting really passionate about his talk and ended up talking for the whole 30 minutes. Regardless, getting to hear about apprenticeships, especially from an apprentice, was really worthwhile and informative.

Before I knew it, Friday had arrived and the schedule for that day was pretty laid back and calm. The first session was a talk about "Process Engineering" by Laura Lyttle, followed by another AutoCAD lesson. This time we learnt how to make

a roundabout with the road markings, which you'd think would be easy since it's just a circle with lines, however this task took us two hours. Then to end the day, and what was ultimately the end of my work experience placement, we had a 2 hour talk on "Drainage Engineering" by Ashleigh Leigh. When that last day came to an end, I left feeling more confident and even more sure about my plans for the future.

I found my time at Atkins Global very beneficial and I enjoyed the variety of experiences and knowledge I gained during my time there. You must acknowledge that not all companies you decide to do work experience with will work the same way as how another company may do it. However, I highly suggest taking up work experience whenever you can. If you're interested in engineering, but unsure of the type of engineering you want to get into, Atkins Global is the perfect place to do work experience, as they talk about a VARIETY of other types of engineering and the opportunities open to those.

Engineering Society

The year 2022\23 has been a great year for our engineering society with many new members. This year the E.S. was led by President Adam Wightman along with Vice President Kian Moran and Communications Officer Johnathan Leatham.

The Engineering society has had some very exciting guests, who work in the engineering industry in the past year such as:

Philip Murray from Collins Aerospace
Brian Niblock, from ENE Group
Mr Andrew Hull, a chartered civil engineer,
Matthew Black from Alternative Heat
Meeting and talking to engineers with real experience has given all members a great insight into what a career in the engineering industry is like, not to mention the network our members have gained which has helped many of them

receive work experience and internship opportunities.

Scholars and Professors have also come to share information with us, such as:
Dr Stephen Glover and Dr Beatrice Smyth from the School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering from QUB
Mr Jim McLaughlin from UU school of Engineering

Getting to talk with these professional has given all members a great knowledge of the path to industry and what University entails and what admissions are looking for.

In conclusion, the engineering society is a great resource for its members, who are all ambitious future engineers. Any pupil interested in a career in engineering are more than welcome to join.



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Engineering Experience

On 25th July 2023, a small number of Year 10 students from Banbridge Academy attended the 3 day Engineering Experience Summer Residential at Queen's University Belfast organised by The Smallpiece Trust.

This 3 day programme offered students the opportunity to get hands-on experience with STEM projects focusing on space, cyber and electrical engineering. 50 students from schools all over Northern Ireland participated in the programme and students stayed in the halls of residence throughout the course.

On day one, we were arranged in groups and were provided with a number of activities based on cyber engineering. Firstly, we had to decode a secret message based on levels of difficulty. Then we moved onto more complicated and advanced coding. After we had completed all the challenges, we then got a package that had radio equipment inside but was locked. We had to unlock the bag using all the different techniques we had completed earlier in the session. After unlocking the radio, we were provided with lunch, which we ate in our groups and spent time getting to know the other students. Later that day each group was given a lego robot. We had to code it to move in different directions, move and stop at different colours and manoeuvre around different obstacles. The staff had arranged a programme of activities that evening for us to engage in, and we had dinner and had planned to do sports outside, however the weather had affected these plans so we watched a movie and played some games instead.

On day two we engaged in some tasks based around electrical engineering. Each group had to design and create a radio, using the parts we unlocked the previous day and we had to 'buy' certain materials to create the outside of the radio to make it look attractive. We had to make the radio affordable enough so that people would want to buy it, this



meant that we shouldn't spend too much so that people would buy your product. Firstly, we were required to solder all the parts of our radio onto the circuit board in order to connect them together. Then we needed to measure and cut out the pieces to make the shape of our design and hot glue it all together. After lunch, each group was given an ipad to create an advertisement for our radio. The radio and the advertisement would be presented in a showcase the following day. That evening we had dinner, and due to typical Northern Irish summer weather we didn't get to do sports outside, but spent the evening playing some more games.

At the beginning of day three we had to make sure the radios and advertisements were complete and the final touches were done. Before the showcase began,

a member of the Thales Group came in and talked to us about engineering and the different job opportunities we could explore. Then each group displayed their radio and advertisement as some members of each group walked around seeing all of the different radios we had designed.. Once everybody had seen each radio, we each voted for the best team. The team who had designed the best product were given a prize of a mini bluetooth speaker, and this meant the end of our Engineering experience.

This was a really worthwhile experience as we were able to find out about lots of different careers in engineering as well as getting hands-on experience with lots of different equipment. It was also nice to spend time getting to know pupils from other schools. Overall, a really enjoyable experience.

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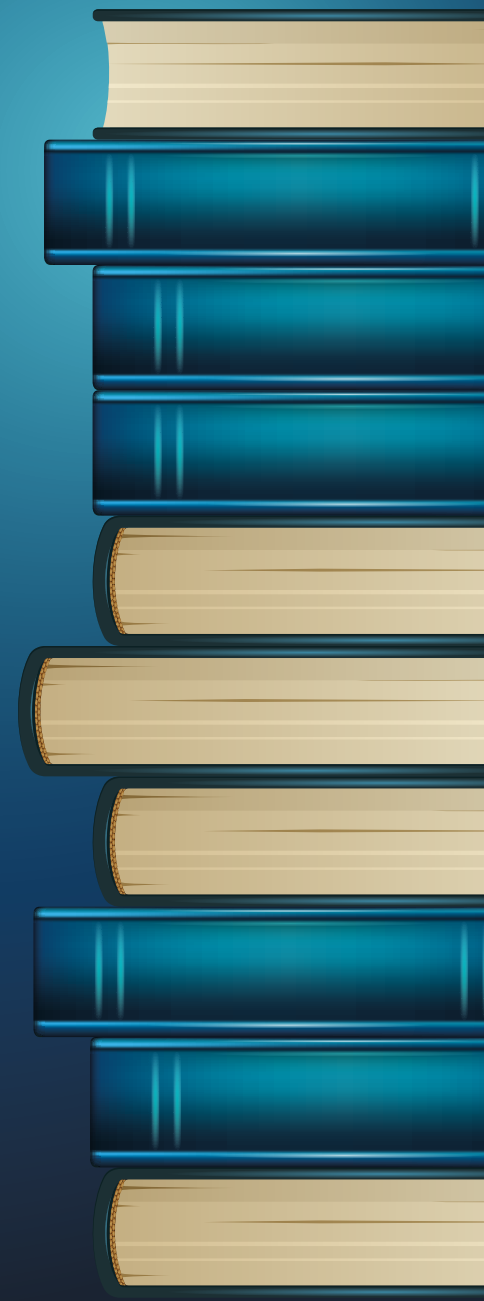
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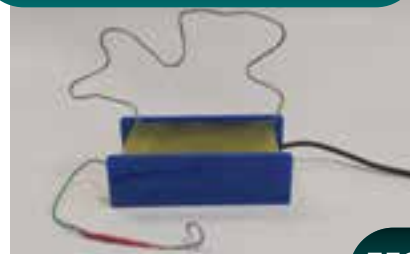


Technology KS3 Projects



Hanger Project

Steady Hand Game



USB Desk Fan

KS4 & 5 Projects



Aleyah Peniero - Year 13 - Foldable grater



Jackson Sibbett - Year 13 - Portable camping stove



Daniel Reid - Year 13 - Pencil sharpener



Hanna Merjava - Year 12 - Sports activity game



Will Egerton - Year 13 - Camping torch

KS4 & 5 Projects



Beth Gillespie - Basket Ball Counter - Year 12



Caelon Lennon - Year 14 - Oil level alert



Freya Fisher - Year 12 - Equestrian sport trainer



Jack Patterson - Year 14 - 3D Printer filament guage



Darragh Knox - Year 13 - Locking knife block



Harry McCready - Year 13 - Torch with adjustable light and whistle



Henry Niblock - Year 12 - Swim Lap Counter

Technology Kane Group Visit



During their visit to the KANE Group our Year 13 Technology and Design students got to observe the use of 3D CAD and Virtual Reality as well as the welding, fabrication and Assembly section.



Collins Aerospace

In June our pupils visited Collins Aerospace in Kilkeel, along with students from Dromore High School and St Patrick's College, they got to experience first-hand how the company manufactures world class aircraft seating products and the processes that are involved in doing so.



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Extra-Curricular Junior Dance Team

Rachel Pollock



When I first joined dance two years ago, I was confused as to what it was about. It was the first year back since the pandemic, so I could not even ask anyone I knew about it. Now I know it was an amazing experience for me, and the rest of my team. Between the practicing and the stress, there is also fun, excitement and joy. I will never forget the success I have achieved as a result of being part of this team. I remember the very first time I got on the stage; I was shaking with nerves. But as soon as I started dancing all my nerves disappeared; like I was part of something. Dancing is an amazing experience. I know that it is not for everyone, but it was for me.

Our amazing teacher Ruth Cobb has choreographed perfect routines for us. She has helped us through the highs and lows of our dance experience. She also has the help of Mrs. Neill and Miss Warnock who have dedicated themselves and drilled us through our dance so many times, to the point where everyone was perfect. In the end, it was all worth it, to walk up and achieve something, to win a medal, to be amazing!

We meet every Friday from 3:30 – 4:30. Our team consists of 35 students, and this is only the number of people who are on the junior team. We accept all dancers of all levels from complete beginners who have never danced before, to those who perform weekly, and we

train them to the best of their ability. Each year we have a specific theme for our dance routine. In my very first year at Dance, we did 'The Schuyler Sisters' from the show 'Hamilton'. Then last year we did 'Inside out'. This year, 2023/2024, we will be doing 'The Little Mermaid'. I am so excited. The costumes are amazing, they are always so exaggerated and colourful. We learn something new from the dance every week, drill it, then go home and practise and then come back again the following Friday.

We have two competitions every year in March. These competitions are NICMAC and Ulster Championships. The good thing about having two competitions is that if you are not successful in one, you



have another one to succeed in. We also have solos and duets performed by our more experienced dancers. These can include several types of dances, for example, jazz or hip hop. Having these competitions and watching other dancers perform gives us something to achieve and something to work towards so we also make ourselves, each other, and our coaches proud. We even have an Awards Dinner to celebrate our success.

Thank you so much to our brilliant coaches Ruth, Mrs Neill and Miss Warnock for their help and dedication towards the team and to Miss Anderson and Miss McCullough for coming to support us on the competition days, applying our face paint and being cheerleaders. I would also like to thank everyone on our team for their hard work because without you all, we would not have the spectacular team we have now.

Senior Dance

Lauren White



As the school year began, we were all anticipating Mrs Neill's announcement for the reformation of the dance team after our previous success, which had attracted many new students who were eager to try out. After one quick audition, full of excitement, we were split into the junior and senior teams and the hard work began!

Rehearsals began promptly with our choreographer Ruth Cobb, who had us working hard right from the beginning. This year, Ruth choreographed a dance inspired by 'The Mask' with our very own, bright green Jim Carey lookalike! It was a dynamic routine, showcasing our dancers' best tricks, and jam packed with incredible technique, while still maintaining the comedy aspect of 'The Mask' that everyone loves. During our Friday rehearsals, we would spend 30 minutes with Ruth and then a further 30 minutes with Miss Anderson who challenged us with some body balance exercises, to improve our fitness and strength, and even offered a morning class for those who were really keen to build up those core muscles! Within a few months, the dance was coming along amazingly, and with the support from our teachers the routine was looking slick.

Finally, after endless rehearsals and dedication from both students and teachers, we were ready to compete at our first competition, NICMAC! After some lastminute practice, we anxiously boarded the bus, kitted out in our dance team quarter zips and headed to Lisburn Leisureplex. Nerves were running high as we prepared to show what we'd worked so hard on, the excitement building up as we got into our fabulous costumes and added some last minute touches to our makeup. The atmosphere

was incredible, the overwhelming feeling of support allowed us to take the stage full of confidence as our teachers cheered us on from the audience. We gave it our all, only to find that while we had been dancing our hearts out, a serious snowstorm had been happening outside, meaning we had to give the awards a miss, as we rushed to get on the bus before we ended up stranded! Despite the disastrous weather, we were thrilled with our performance, and felt an even bigger motivation to continue rehearsing for the next competition.

With our second and final competition quickly approaching, not a single break was taken as we were back in the sports hall to make improvements, and to ensure we were ready to give our best performance yet! Our last competition was The Ulster Dance and Fitness Competition, which was being held in the Queen's PEC. Knowing this was our last chance to show what we could do as a team, we gave it everything we had, and it all paid off hearing the cheers from the audience as we ended our dance. As we all sat together in a big circle for the awards ceremony, surrounded by the other schools whose kindness and good sportsmanship made the atmosphere that much better, we were ecstatic as many of our dances had placed, the shouts of encouragement could be heard from a mile away! It was an incredible way to end the year, and we



were full of pride as we left the venue with our heads held high.

This year, some of the dancers had the opportunity to perform solos, duets and trios. The trio performed by Reece Wilson, Violet Coen and Keisha which was choreographed by Ruth, placed first at both NICMAC and Ulsters winning three Gold Medals for each. Mia Downey and Ruby Bushby performed a thrilling duet, which also placed first at NICMAC and Ulsters adding another two Gold Medals to our haul. Sarah Liggett's incredible lyrical solo also placed first at Ulsters earning yet another Gold Medal and Lauren White's Hip Hop solo placed first at both NICMAC and Ulsters adding an impressive 7th Gold Medal for the Team. Many of our dancers also received colours awards for their successes.

Overall, it was an incredible year for the senior dance team and on behalf of the team, I would like to say a massive thank you to Ruth, our choreographer, for her consistent creative direction and for always pushing us to do our best! I'd also like to thank Mrs Neill for her dedication to the dance team, as without her none of it would be possible. To Miss Warnock for her continued effort and support for our junior team, to Miss Anderson for always encouraging us to build our strength and stamina within dance and finally to Miss McCullough for always attending competitions to cheer us on and get some on-stage pictures that capture our love for performing! Their dedication and hard work are so appreciated as they allow us to do what we love, and support us fully, thus enhancing our school lives. Thank you for always believing in us!



Extra-Curricular Dance Competitions

Mrs J. Neill



Banbridge Academy Dance teams, comprising of 62 pupils from Years 8 to 14 took part in both the NICMAC Dance Competition hosted in Lisburn Leisureplex and The Ulster Dance and Fitness Championships held at Queen's PEC. The Academy entered their largest ever turnout of Junior and Senior Dance teams into these prominent regional competitions. Our Junior Dance team, involving 35 Year 8-10 students, performed an upbeat, complex routine inspired by the Disney Movie 'Inside Out'; the Senior Dance team performed a stylish, energetic routine inspired by 'The Mask'. The teams were competing against schools from across the province including Regent House, Glenlola, Strathearn, Bloomfield Collegiate and the Royal School, Armagh. Both Teams performed well on each of the competition days, with the Junior Dance Team's efforts being rewarded with 2nd place and Silver medals at Ulsters.

In addition to the team events, individual pupils were entered into Junior, Intermediate and Senior Solo, Duet and Trio Dance sections with the school enjoying significant success in both competitions with no less than 6 Ulster Champion Titles in their sections. Year 9 pupils Rachel Pollock and Lauren Wilson won Gold Medals and 1st place at both the NICMAC and Ulsters for their Street Dance Hip Hop Duet, whilst Abigail Walker and Sienna Heasley were awarded Bronze and 3rd place at NICMAC and 2nd place and Silver at

Ulsters. Alexandra Duffy Year 10 was awarded a Silver medal at both for her Junior Solo, whilst Mya McKinney won Gold and 1st place for her performance in the Junior Song and Dance section of Ulsters. Year 12 pupils Violet Coen, Keisha Moulton and Reece Wilson obtained Gold in the Intermediate Trio section for a stylish Jazz inspired routine. Lauren White won 1st place at both NICMAC and ULSTERS in the Senior Street Dance Hip Hop competition, achieving the Highest marked Senior Solo. Ruby Bushby and Mia Downey Year 14 completed the



sweep of awards with 1st place for the Senior Duet at NICMAC and Ulsters.

The squad, expertly choreographed and trained by Mrs Ruth Cobb (herself a former pupil of the Academy) managed by Mrs Jennifer Neill and coached by Miss Rebekah Warnock and Miss Sarah Anderson, have shown great school spirit, their commitment has been steadfast and they have worked really hard to gain credit in their chosen field. An exceptional effort from all involved.



Extra-Curricular Bar Mock Trial

Abi Dreaning



In September 2022, a group of 'legal eagle' sixth form students began to prepare for our auditions for Banbridge Academy's prestigious Bar Mock Trial team. Our audition consisted of an argumentative speech on a current topic, debating the pros and cons in front of our esteemed Judge Miss McClelland, her advisors (Barristers Severina Kelly and Vikki Singer) and her mighty gavel!! They selected the pupils they believed were best able to embrace the roles of barrister, witness, court clerk, usher and jury.

Practices began at lightning speed, and we were given out roles that we had to embody: a bouncer, a policeman and a nosy neighbour among other roles. Once familiar with the cases, our determined barristers (Abigail Noke, Lauren White, Lara Crothers and Mia Downey) took to the task with ease, preparing their speeches and questions for the witnesses (Nicole McCully, Maeve Magowan, Rose Widdis, Emily Reid, Aaron Millen, Aimee Dawson, Moore McLoughlin and Abi Dreaning) and questions that they would put to the witnesses from the other schools. Whilst our court clerk and usher, Kaitlyn Jess and Julia Herron, began to rehearse their actions and lines.

Everything had to be kept to a tight time limit, which was hard for a lot of

us given how much we love to talk, but nevertheless we prevailed. The witnesses were tasked with memorising the answers to the questions they knew (examination in chief) and create answers to questions that the barristers threw at us (cross examination). Practices took place every Wednesday afternoon and these were essential for us to rehearse as a group and to gain feedback. The first case was a case of "possession with intent to distribute" while the second case investigated the law concerning, "assault causing actual bodily harm". Both were complex cases and required dedication from everyone on the team.

In January we set off on our adventure to the great and mysterious... Belfast. The team rallied together and put up a good fight (not literally as that may not have been a good idea in a courtroom). We presented our cases with our heads held high and voices raised. We competed in three rounds of what seemed like an episode of a Netflix courtroom drama before awaiting the results. Round 1 was against Belfast High School and our defendant was found not guilty and the judge described it as "An impressive performance". In Round 2 we were up against Glenlola Collegiate and again we were defending. The judge praised the preparation and presentation of the case. The final round was against



Coleraine Grammar in a contest which the judge described as the closest that he had seen that day. Three rounds successfully navigated!! Despite not getting through to the final, we all had a blast and the experience we gained performing in a real court room in front of real judges was invaluable.

A special thank you goes out to our very helpful real -life Barristers, Severina Kelly and Vikki Singer, who we could not do Bar Mock Trial without. They gave up their time willingly and shared their expertise and advice with us in preparation for the day along with Miss McClelland. Thank you for graciously putting up with our talking, badly baked cookies and general all-around craic.

I would thoroughly recommend getting involved in Bar Mock Trial for the experience, the skills gained and for a greater understanding of the legal system.



Extra-Curricular Charity Report

Mrs J. Leslie



The pupils and staff proved their generosity this academic year by donating £9755.00 to various charities.

The year started with a collection to support the Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke Association. Miss McCullough was part of a group rowing the Bann to help the charity Rowing for Robbie and the school was delighted to donate £500.00 for this worthwhile cause. The Southern Area Hospice and CLAPA also benefited from collections before the half-term break.

Poppies were sold in November to raise money for The Royal British Legion and £932.00 was collected for Concern during a school sponsored silence. Food was also collected by all Form Classes to help with an appeal by Banbridge Storehouse.

Before Christmas each Form Class filled two shoeboxes with gifts and toiletries to be sent around the world to help children less fortunate than themselves. This was coordinated through the charity

Samaritan's Purse. A non – uniform day was held at the end of term with the proceeds helping a touring school from Africa. The staff wore their Christmas jumpers to work collecting £261.00 for Save the Children. The Carol Service in December provided £1200.00 for local organisation J20 Project.

The A2 PE class donated money to BPositive and NI Kidney Research and with help from the weekly charity collections £350 and £150 respectively was donated to these two charities. Children in Crossfire, Down Right Brilliant and NIPANC all received contributions before Easter. The school worked closely this year with Banbridge Rotary Club to support their Easter Hamper Raffle in aid of the Guide Dogs.

The final term saw donations for Simon Community, PIPS and Marie Curie Cancer Care. A final non-uniform day enabled us to donate £1000.00 to local charity Charlene's Project. A special well done to class 10A (Miss McConkey's Form Class) who collected the most money in the weekly collections. As usual a massive thanks to all pupils and staff who

donated so generously throughout the year, recommended charities to support and enabled so many worthwhile organisations to be helped.



Charity Trip: 10A

Natalia Bonk

Last year 9A raised the highest amount for charity in school, securing the charity shield at Prize Day and winning a day out in recognition. In October 2022, they had a splendid day out to Edengrove Presbyterian Church where David McConkey, coordinator of their Youth Ministry, set up a selection of games, including nine-square, go-karting, laser tag and then ended the day with a delicious meal.

Winners of the go-karting, Harry Davidson (1st Place), Luke Doyle (2nd Place), Adam Boggs (3rd Place), went home with the chocolate bar prize, while Harry also won a one-of-a-kind "Duck Trophy", handmade by David.





Extra-Curricular Drama Society

Jorja McCabe



In February, my friends and I were extremely excited about an unanticipated announcement in Form Class: 'Anyone in Years 11-12 interested in joining a drama group, come to a meeting at break today in F69'. I couldn't believe it! This was a dream come true for me. I'd thought about trying to start a drama club before and loved the idea of having a drama group in school, but had no idea how to even approach it. I should probably give a bit of context... I'm what some would call a bit of a 'theatre nut'; I've been in mini shows and musicals with drama groups and just love watching theatre at any time-day or night. So I enthusiastically went to the meeting that fateful morning, and the rest you might say is history.

When we arrived at Miss Greenlee's class we were presented with our challenge- we only had a few weeks to put together an extract of between fifteen and twenty-minutes, taken from a play of our choosing to perform at Portadown Drama Festival. We eagerly accepted

the challenge and agreed to stay behind afterschool on a Wednesday to give it a shot.

When the first Wednesday's rehearsal arrived, we appeared with great enthusiasm, despite feeling physically

exhausted after a tiring game's session. We were given roles from the play, 'Daisy Pulls it Off' by Denise Deegan (which no one had ever heard of before) and started rehearsals. With our English schoolgirl accents and one Russian music teacher we began to see the spark of excitement in one another's eyes as we all knew this was going to be a lot of fun. The roles we were given that day stuck, and the part of Daisy Meredith (the lead) went to Olivia McDowell, Trixie Martin (Daisy's best friend) to Hannah Kerr, Monica Smithers (my character's best friend) to Olivia de la Torre, Clare Beaumont (Head Girl) to Belle Fitzsimmons, Mr Scoblowski (the Russian music teacher) to James Clark and Sybil Berlington (Who you could describe as the villain of this play, the arch nemesis of Daisy and Trixie) being played by myself.

There was a lot to be done in only a matter of weeks and we could see the fear in Miss Greenlee's face as time ticked by and it looked as though we might not have it 'polished' in time. When the festival finally came round, after a few additional extra practices, we were thankfully ready to perform! We got costumes sorted- otherwise known as hunting for dressing gowns at home and in a 'Mary Poppins-like' bag of costumes that had magically appeared; borrowing one of Mr Erskine's infamous bow ties; looking through the mountains of lost and found property to find hockey sticks; borrowing Geography textbooks from Mrs Dreaning and being given a bald cap that had just magically appeared! We learnt our lines, perfected our accents and eagerly made our way to Portadown Town Hall.

The school hired us a mini bus to go, so we were able to bring a couple of friends with us to watch and to provide moral support. The bus journey was so exciting, with nerves and adrenaline rushing through us all- it was both nerve wracking and thrilling at the same time! Over the few weeks of practice, we'd all gotten quite close, so it was really exciting to be able to do this as a group. We got to the venue and were brought straight through to the stage (a proscenium arch stage to be exact- see Miss Greenlee I do know my terms!) and got everything set up. It was time to shine, as they say. So we did!

There weren't many people there, but that didn't matter as we performed and it was actually good! Yes, there were a few slip-ups but that's inevitable with any show and given the extremely short space of time that we'd had to practise, we had all done brilliantly to win a gold medal at the end of the night. We were ecstatic, but slightly sad that this was probably going to be the final time that we performed as a group, or so we thought...

The following week we found out that we'd be doing it again, but this time for the Armagh Drama Festival. I don't know if you know anything about Drama Festivals or not, but it is a pretty big one and so rehearsals resumed again and with our adjudicators sheet from our last performance, we were able to fine tune our play into the best we could achieve with a few more weeks' practice time.

This time our transport seemed to have upgraded and we got into this fancy taxi (which we were totally not convinced was going to kidnap us) with 7 seats, and Miss Greenlee followed in her car behind. After a journey of excited chatting, we arrived and had to wait quite a while for our category. So, not wanting to waste any spare time, we got our costumes on and rehearsed for what was to officially be our last time on stage (yes, we did get some odd looks from some of the other group categories round us, but no one

questioned us... aloud anyway).

Then finally, the time came and we were the first to go on. We got set up, the curtain rose and our show began. It was a really good performance, perhaps one of the best we had achieved, on a much bigger stage this time and in front of a full house! With the bright lights beaming down on me, I felt ecstatic- there's nothing quite like theatre! I've yet to find the right words to describe just how amazing it is, but it is simply fantastic. This experience enabled me to stand with four of my best friends and two newly acquainted ones, and as I took my final bow I knew that this is an opportunity that I will not soon forget! Our main competition was an A Level drama group. Their performance was fantastic, there's no denying it, but they'd had more time and this was the piece they performed for their A Level exam so unsurprisingly they won. We had still placed in second place and had another medal to add to, 'The Bann Players' collection.

We all went home with delighted smiles plastered on our faces and so grateful for the opportunity that Miss Greenlee had provided us with.

I would thoroughly encourage anyone to take on a challenge such as this; it is an amazing opportunity not only to develop your skills, but also to develop and create relationships with old and new friends across your year groups. I loved taking part and I know for a fact that I'm not the only one.

In conclusion, on behalf of our entire group, I want to sincerely thank Mrs Neill for her work behind the scenes and of course to Miss Greenlee, for all the hard work you put into this club. You pushed our abilities and helped us learn how to develop our skills further; I cannot wait to see what you do with this year's group, but we all know there's nothing like the O.G!

Extra-Curricular Senior Debating

Mrs H. Cartmill



Does it matter where the world cup is held? Is it professional to have visible tattoos? Does prison work? How secure is the future of the monarchy and the commonwealth? Celebrities and Climate Change: do they talk the talk but not walk the walk?

These are just some of the questions debated on Tuesday at break in the Drama Studio this year. As always, the newly elected committee put together an ambitious programme striking a balance between pre-planned and spontaneous debates in response to regional, national and world events. Other issues and questions keenly debated include:

- Gary Lineker and his controversial suspension from the BBC.
- Is the Windsor Framework enough to get the Stormont Assembly going again?
- Prince Harry: his tell-all interviews and autobiography.
- Should Shamima Begum have her British citizenship reinstated?

- The small boats crisis.
- Do we remain a nation of animal lovers?
- Are we winning the fight against racism?

Our speakers were from across Years 11 to 14 and their speaking styles ranged from the carefully prepared to the completely spontaneous. What each had in common was genuine conviction and a strong interest in contemporary affairs. No apathy towards politics, ethics, or current affairs in G43 of a Tuesday break time! Congratulations to those girls who took part in two Public Speaking Competitions.



Alana Gracey, Ellie Robinson, Molly Davidson and Violet Coen took part in the Soroptimist Public Speaking Competition with Violet taking third place with her speech entitled: "Worsening Mental Health? Is this the new epidemic?"

Violet and Molly went on to represent the school at the Ulster Women's Unionist Council Edgar Graham Memorial Speaking Competition at Parliament Buildings Stormont.

Looking ahead to next year, we extend a warm welcome to all in Years 11-14. Please look out for the notices of the election of a new committee and the meetings in early September.



Molly Davidson and Violet Coen with Lady Sylvia Hermon in the Senate Chamber at Parliament Buildings Stormont



Extra-Curricular Academy Cadets

Hannah Kerr

In 2016, Banbridge Academy Army Cadets opened its doors for the first time. This was the start of something that would offer the pupils of Banbridge Academy a range of skills and rare opportunities that can't be found anywhere else. In 2022/2023 the Banbridge Academy detachment welcomed 9 new members (little did we know what to expect). Throughout the year they were introduced to completely new and exciting skills offered through the Army Cadets.

Now I know that quite a lot of you (myself included-a few months prior to joining in September 2022) might be wondering, well what exactly is the Army Cadets? The Army Cadets are an organisation set up in 1889. It teaches young people from the age of 12 to 18 a variety of unique skills ranging from how to cook food in fieldcraft, to basic drill. All of these skills can be carried through life and used in many different circumstances. Many of our cadets would recommend joining, so much so that I was able to catch one of our three-star cadets, Daniel Coburn, and ask him his opinion. "I think the best thing about the Banbridge Academy Army Cadets is that it has presented me with opportunities such as attending events and competitions. It provides a lot of fun experiences and teaches useful life skills." Personally, I think I couldn't agree more as every year we are approached with several opportunities for competitions ranging from rugby and football to shooting. These opportunities allow our skills in these activities to grow and become stronger, although some are completely new to us. In each of these competitions there are sometimes further opportunities to go visit or compete in foreign countries.

Throughout 2022/2023 our detachment saw all of our cadets grow in skill and teamwork every week on a Tuesday night in the gym hall. We worked hard on our skills, eagerly preparing for our next weekend where we would be able to pass another skill level. For example, before our exciting adventurous fieldcraft weekend in May 2023, as a detachment we were taught about the food ration packs we would be able to cook all by ourselves and even got to try some of the meal options. Personally, most of

them weren't as bad as we expected. This gave us an opportunity to see how to set up, so we were well prepared for what to expect.

On one particular Tuesday evening before the weekend, the basic cadets were taught the different ways to move. This ranged from walking normally, to moving on our hands and knees doing the monkey run. With every weekly cadet night, the weekend was fast approaching. For a group of us new cadets this would be the first time that we got to experience a weekend of fieldcraft, and you could feel the excitement in the air. When the day finally arrived, we all loaded onto the bus with our bags and off we set. The weekend was everything we had expected, filled with a wide variety of skill lessons in fieldcraft with different instructors from different detachments which allowed us to get to know each other more. This weekend also allowed us all to open up and widen our social circles with plenty of opportunities to meet other fellow cadets with common interests and personalities, while also

creating friendships that will hopefully last for life.

Our detachment here in Banbridge Academy not only welcomed new cadets, but also has welcomed several different visitors and taken part in different events. For example, in November 2022 we were happy to welcome some officers from the PSNI to show our cadets the different equipment used by the police force. Cadets got to try on some protective gear, have a look around and sit in a police vehicle and have a go at seeing how strong the riot shields really were. A few events we took part in include the Remembrance Day parade in Banbridge; Remembrance Day allowed us to remember the lives lost of soldiers as well as the lives of past cadets. We also played a role in our school open night held at the start of the 2023 year, during the open night it meant we could actively engage with primary school students and proudly represent our school detachment and what we do.

The Banbridge Academy Army Cadets are an important part of our school's extracurricular activities and encourages pupils to be themselves as they learn important skills that can be used for life. Joining the cadets is the best decision, as the memories made with the Banbridge Academy Army Cadets aren't just for our time in Banbridge Academy, but they will remain with us for the rest of our lives.





Extra-Curricular

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is composed of 5 sections: Expedition, Physical, Skills, Volunteering and Residential. In school we oversee the Expedition section and participants meet on Friday afternoons to be taught expedition skills such as: camp craft, cooking, first aid, map and compass skills. Pupils are entered directly into Gold level in school.

Practices

M. Miskelly

Our first practice (consisting of 2 days and 1 night) was held in March, on St Patrick's weekend. We started at Spelga Dam car park in wet, cold and misty conditions. All the groups coped well in the cold conditions and made it into camp in good spirits and ready for a hot meal. Day 2 brought the groups over the Brandy pad to finish at Donard Car park. Some of the more adventurous groups followed the Mourne wall from Hare's Gap and over Slieve Commedagh, where there were still traces of snow.

Our second practice was during the last weekend of the Easter break and we enjoyed glorious weather all weekend. Our route started at Gamekeeper's lodge Car park and took us over Carn Mountain before meeting the Trassey track, which then took us to our camp at Tollymore campsite. As we were to return to Tollymore for a second night, we left the tents up and set some more challenging routes for day 2 as the groups had less to carry. After another successful day and a good night's sleep, the group finished

with a walk along the Brandy pad to Bloody Bridge car park. They were all glad to see their parents and have the opportunity to grab an ice cream from a stall at the car park.

The weather was kind to us again for our final practice, as we headed to Carricklittle from our starting point at Gamekeeper's lodge. This route brought the groups over the Dam wall at Ben Crom reservoir giving us some spectacular views. Our second camp was at Meelmore lodge; most groups made their way from Hare's castle to the Brandy pad and then to Meelmore lodge in plenty of time to pick a good spot to camp. We had an interesting night at the camp, making this an experience the groups and I will remember for many years to come. With a weather warning issued for thunderstorms and heavy rain, we decided to cut the last day's walk short. The groups all finished at Hen Car Park following an easy walk along the Mourne way.



Wicklow 2023

For our qualifying expedition we went to Wicklow at the end of June; our first time since 2019. We stayed the first night in Glendalough YH and enjoyed food from a local takeaway that was very happy to receive such a large order. We met each group that evening to look at the routes for the next day and gave the pupils some advice about the route. Spirits were high on the first night; this would be the last time the pupils would have access to a bed, shower and most importantly Wi-Fi, for a while.

Day 1

Following a good night's sleep and filling up at breakfast the pupils were ready for the off. Several of the groups were doing the 'Spinc walk' at Glendalough, which is popular with tourists due to its wonderful views of the Lake. The other groups headed over Scar Mountain, following the Wicklow Way as they spotted lots of wildlife, including Red Kites and the occasional American tourist. Our first camp was at Lough Dan, which was used in the filming of the series 'Vikings'. An encounter with an axe wielding Viking might have been preferred, to an evening battling the midges. After a long day and having to cope with midges, everyone was happy to get into their tents for a well-earned rest.

Day 2

When the staff arrived to see the groups in the morning, they needed a bit of a push to get moving as some were still eating breakfast! When the groups eventually got moving, they were walking in lovely conditions with great visibility. It was quite windy however and those groups on the higher ground felt the full force of the wind. All the groups were headed to a campsite in Laragh, a shorter walk than the previous day. It was another hot afternoon,

but the groups coped well with some taking advantage of the toilets and ice cream available at Glendalough. All groups made the campsite in good time and in good spirits. The campsite was located by a river, where many took the opportunity to cool off by dipping their feet in the river or having a swim.

Day 3

All groups were ready to leave on time and we walked towards Glenmalur Valley, which has a lot of military history. Today was a 'dreich' day to start (as they say in Scotland) and the winds were still strong, but conditions improved later in the day. The route took the groups through the forest and onto the Wicklow way via 'Derrybawn' and 'Mullacor'. Once over the high ground, the groups descended to the Glenmalur Valley floor via the 'Tunnel of Love'. With the 'Tunnel of Love' successfully negotiated, it was a short flat walk to the campsite at Glenmalur YH. This hostel is very basic and remote with no running water or electricity but this didn't deter several pupils from asking the warden for the Wi-Fi password. With Day 3 complete the mood at camp was buoyant and some of the pupils even decided to take a dip in the river to cool down after they had set up camp.

Day 4

The end was almost in sight! It was another great day, but a lot of the route passing through the forest provided some shade from the heat. All the groups were determined to finish early; they managed to arrive at the finish at Glenmalur Lodge in good time and were able to enjoy a cold drink, sausages, chicken nuggets and chips. On the journey up the road to Banbridge, it was very quiet and smelly on the bus and we were all glad to finally arrive back safely.



Extra-Curricular Horticulture Club



The past academic year saw an exceptional blooming of creativity and greenery with our Horticulture Club at Banbridge Academy. Led by a talented group of Year 14 pupils - Rose Widdis, Tom Gordon-Mallory, Jenson Li, and James Dixon - the club embarked on a journey that saw the transformation of school grounds into a haven of vibrant native flora.

One of the club's most notable achievements was the creation of a wildflower meadow using native Irish seeds. The once-empty patch of land blossomed into a tapestry of colours, welcoming pollinators and wildlife alike. The wildflower seeds were sourced from a local company called 'EcoSeeds', which aims to conserve and promote biodiversity by growing and providing local provenance wildflower seeds. The aim of the wildflower project was to help conserve and enhance the local biodiversity of our school grounds by increasing the populations of native wildflower species. We selected a perennial Hi-Colour Mix of seed as these mixes last for a minimum of four years and contain a mix of 70% wildflowers with 30% fine-leaved grasses. They provide colourful, cost-effective solutions for

larger areas and can be used to create semi-permanent wildflower meadows. The mixes were designed following research conducted in conjunction with Greenmount College. We selected the enhanced mix which also includes cottage garden biennials and perennials attractive to insects. It is designed for urban areas and includes naturalised species that are attractive to wildlife.

The Horticulture Club also made good use of the school's greenhouse, turning it into a bustling hub of growth. With meticulous care, they nurtured a diverse range of flowering bedding and edible plants grown from seed. The greenhouse's shelves were lined with trays of promising potential - calendula, snapdragon, lupin, tomato, hollyhock, larkspur, campanula, night-

scented stock, and petunia - each plant representing an exciting journey from seed to full-fledged glory. This hands-on experience offered members the opportunity to learn about germination, growth patterns, and the delicate art of transplanting.

As the new academic year begins, the legacy of the Horticulture Club continues to flourish. The wildflower meadow stands as a testament to the club's commitment to sustainable practices and reminds us that with dedication and a touch of green magic, we can transform the ordinary into the extraordinary and enrich our school's environment.

Here's to another year of growth and blossoming friendships in our horticulture club.



Extra-Curricular Senior Scripture Union



Senior Scripture Union at Banbridge Academy had another busy year. It was hard to pick a highlight, but as usual the SU weekend to Castlewellan and the Formal at Edenmore Golf Club provided plenty of fun and good memories.

SU met weekly in the Lecture theatre on Tuesday break times, our theme for the year being that God is in complete control of the world we live in. Throughout the year we had a number of guest speakers, as well as some discussion based bible studies focusing on the biblical book of 1 Peter. Weekly SU meetings provided pupils with an opportunity to grow in their faith and get to know other like-minded Christians. Throughout the week we also met each morning for 'Spark' in Mr Beacom's room (a longer trek for some) to start each day with prayer based on a thought shared by Charis, usually from a portion of the bible. On Friday mornings F15 became the home to 'Tea and Toast' and we enjoyed a cuppa and invited our

friends for breakfast before the school day began.

The 'back to school' SU BBQ took place in early September and it brought together members of both Junior and Senior SU for games, activities and some food. As always, a competitive spirit throughout the games meant there was only one winner (sorry Mrs Duke).

My favourite event in the SU calendar was the annual SU weekend. On Friday the 7th October we set off for Castlewellan Castle with the anticipation of a sleep deprived weekend and we weren't disappointed (and that was just the teachers). Our Speaker for the weekend was Paddy Hayes who shared with us from the book of Jonah and how God speaks to each one of us, even in the midst of storms in our lives. We also enjoyed a number of seminars presented by members of SU on 'Surviving your lions' den' and 'How to be a Daniel', both focusing on how Christian



young people can live in the face of difficulties and problems.

There are far too many other highlights to go into lots of detail, but notable mentions must go to the SU Social during outreach week and small groups on a weekly basis. We finished the academic year in SU by studying the lives of some Bible characters who went through some situations similar to our own; maybe they were outcasts, or were faced with difficult tasks against overwhelming odds, but that even in these situations, just like in our own lives, God was and is always in control. The words of the book of Job speak really clearly to the purposes of God, "I know that you can do all things and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

Our hope for SU in school next year is that the pupils grow in the knowledge that God is in control of all their lives, and as they put their trust in Him they will know His peace as they try to live for Him.



Extra-Curricular Junior Scripture Union

Faith Anderson and Ciara Aiken



In 2022 and 2023 Junior SU was held in the lecture theatre and drama studio during Thursday breaktime, where we had a lot of fun.

This year our programme included the parables of Jesus and the armour of God. We also enjoyed visits from Crown Jesus Ministries and Dave Sellwood from Teach it Train it.

At the start of the year we had a joint junior and senior barbecue, which meant we could meet new people from throughout the school and compete in a range of challenges. In October our

annual weekend away was back after a two year Covid related break. We went back to Ganaway Activity Centre in Millisle. There were lots of fun activities, such as zip-lining, caving and laser tag in the forest, as well as a walk to the beach. Dave McConkey was our speaker. We also played lots of games and had good craic in the evening (although not much sleep).

In February, a group of Year 8 pupils joined with Scripture Unions from other local schools in a sports night, led by Teach it, Train it, where they heard testimony from local sports stars



including Kyle McCallan and Bethany Barr. We celebrated the end of the year by going to Let's Go Hydro, where everyone had lots of fun and really enjoyed themselves.

Junior SU is a great place to meet other Christians who want to learn more about God and strengthen our relationship with Him. If anyone is curious or would like to find out more, we meet every Thursday break time in the lecture theatre and everyone in Years 8-10 is welcome.

Hope to see you there!



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Extra-Curricular

Ski Trip

Zoe Acheson



February 2023 saw 90 young adventurers head up into the Austrian Alps on a trip of a lifetime - (also known as, the Banbridge Academy 2023 Ski Trip!) It began with an excruciatingly early departure from the school gates at 1:30am. The excitement was almost tangible as we boarded the bus and very quickly reached Dublin Airport to fly to Munich, Germany. The four hour bus journey to Axamer Lizum, Austria, certainly managed to distinguish those who were tired from those who were still running on excitement! Upon arrival at Hotel Olympia, we were sorted into our groups to go and try on our boots and skis, we then had dinner and an early night after a day full of travelling and exhilaration.

It was an early start the following morning, but we were greeted with lovely weather as we ventured out onto the slopes for the first time with the majority of us never having skied before. The advanced group headed up on the gondola to ski down the mountain, while the rest of us attempted to stay upright on our two skis on the green baby slope! That afternoon

we were able to get a taste of home, watching Ireland play in the six nations, followed by a cosy pj movie night.

Another early start with more glorious sunshine preceded a further four hours on the slopes. The beginners had not quite mastered the art of skiing yet! That evening we wrapped up warm and headed out in the dark on a candlelit night walk; this turned out to be more treacherous than expected as we traversed the slippery slopes, but we all arrived back safe and sound and were greeted with hot chocolate and toasted marshmallows round the firepit!

More fun in the sun on the slopes was had the following day too. That night we had cracking karaoke courtesy of Mr 'DJ' Erskine and let's just say, some of the performers were easier to listen to than others! Mrs Duke and her eager backing singers stick out as a memorable performance! The next day was Valentine's Day! For the beginners, our progression on the ski slopes was certainly motivating. We stood in awe

and watched the more advanced skiers zooming down the mountain longing for the day when we could join them up there! The Valentine's gift lucky-dip preceded our disco, which we had all been looking forward to. Mr Erskine had another night on the decks keeping us all on the dance floor till bedtime...

On our second last day of skiing, several of us in the beginner group were lucky enough to get what we were longing for, to have a go at zooming down the red slope! After a few tumbles and bruised egos everybody headed up on the gondola to have our lunch up on the mountaintop, surrounded by the most incredible scenery of snowy peaks that you could ever imagine. That evening we got back into our salopettes and had great fun bum-sledding down the mountain. We then headed back and enjoyed another night drinking hot chocolate with toasted marshmallows and fun round the firepit.

On our last day of skiing, everybody got the opportunity to have a go on the big



slopes! Some of us were certainly more suited to it than others, but everyone had such good fun! That afternoon, we met with our marvellous ski instructors and presented gifts to them to say thank you so much for all their hard work and the fun we had. We had delicious pizzas for dinner, followed by a pretty competitive bingo and quiz night. We all headed off to bed with many mixed emotions, excitement to return home to see our families, but also disappointment that our trip of a lifetime was coming to an end!

Our journey home took a slight detour, meaning we had to fly from Verona, Italy.

The bus ride home to school from Dublin Airport, was used by many as a great opportunity for a quick nap after a full day of travelling. Everyone at home was extremely glad to be greeted with tired but smiling faces and no broken bones! Even once we had returned home, we were all able to relive our experience thanks to the daily twitter uploads, courtesy of Miss McCullough.

So all in all, this trip of a lifetime is something that I would recommend to everyone. A whole week of fun on the slopes and in the hotel too, creating new friendships and memories that will last a lifetime!



Extra-Curricular Wellbeing Ambassadors

Mrs L. Duke



2022-23 was another busy year for the BA Wellbeing Ambassadors, providing daily support for their peers every breaktime in The Quiet Room; leading Anti-Bullying assemblies and attending further training courses, including completing The Link Life Suicide Prevention Training facilitated by the EA Youth Service. Additionally they conducted a piece of action research to establish the current wellbeing needs of the pupils, in order to facilitate the school to provide informed practice to address these needs. They did this by designing an online survey to provide an insight on pupils' perception of their own mental health, their awareness of support services and how they felt school could help them in maintaining good emotional health and wellbeing.

525 pupils from all year groups completed the survey and it was encouraging to see 83% of pupils rated their mental health as a 3 or above on a scale where 1 = 'not great' and 5 = 'amazing'; 83% of pupils rated their confidence in coping with their own mental health between 3-5, where 1 = not very confident and 5 = very confident.

The survey also included the WHO-5, a

Five point self report Wellbeing Index, used by the World Health Organisation to measure current mental wellbeing. This scale had been used in previous Wellbeing Surveys in school, so it was interesting to compare results over the years and note that while scores had dipped during Covid in 2020, they seem to be returning in a positive direction towards pre Covid levels.

As the table indicates, The WHO-5 results indicated that the majority of pupils reported very good well-being, however only 48% of pupils reported waking up feeling fresh and awake. Findings of the report have resulted in Sleep hygiene becoming a focus in the PD programme, Form Class resources, and guidance being placed on the school website

under Pupil Wellbeing.

Key issues that pupils said negatively affected their mental health included: exam stress, homework, schoolwork, friendship issues, home life, and balancing school work with other commitments. The most positive influences on their mental health included: friends, family, home life, extracurricular activities, exercise and sport.

This word cloud illustrates the people and places in school that pupils said helped their mental:



And these were their main suggestions for how school could help improve pupils mental health:

Statement	% of pupils who have felt this way more than half the time in the 2 weeks prior to completing the survey.		
	2017	2020	2022
I have felt cheerful and in good spirits	86%	81%	82%
I have felt calm and relaxed	73%	63%	68%
I have felt active and vigorous	77%	73%	73%
I woke up feeling fresh and rested	44%	45%	48%
My daily life has been filled with things that interest me	85%	79%	84%

In response to some of these points, the effective use of homework is the focus for the Teaching and Learning committee for 2023-24. We have increased awareness about the various ways to access the school counselling services, peer support is available daily, and we continue to engage with numerous outside agencies to provide workshops and assemblies.

70% of pupils reported knowing about outside organisations, where they can get help with mental health issues. The Wellbeing Ambassadors also endeavour to increase this awareness through additional resources for Form Classes, directing pupils to the links on our school website and further advertisement of agencies available throughout the school.



Wellbeing Ambassadors hard at work planning their schedule of support and activities for their peers in the year ahead.

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Extra-Curricular

Banbridge Academy Association

Audrey Wilson-Reid, Chairman BAA



Banbridge Academy Association (BAA) is a group of former pupils and parents supported by the teaching and ancillary staff within school.

BAA's focus is supporting school, being a welcoming face at Open Night and other school activities. We also fundraise to provide some extra financial support, to enable the varied range of extra-curricular activities offered to the pupils. Our biggest aim is to foster the network between school, community and home. It is an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all involved.

Christmas Cards

Thanks are extended to Mrs Evans and the Art Department for supporting this initiative. The year 8 pupils relish the challenge of taking part in this activity, with one entry being selected each year as the school's Christmas Card.

Catering

On several occasions throughout the school year, BAA provides teas and coffees for other parents and visitors to the school. It is our privilege to provide refreshments and, in this way, to help and support e.g. at Open Night and

the Spring Concert. A very enjoyable morning was also held catering at the annual Year 14 leavers' barbecue in May.

Uniform Swap

What began as an end of year 'Swap and Sale' in 2020 has now mushroomed into a tremendously successful regular event. The aim of this initiative is to provide a facility where pre-loved, quality uniform and sports equipment can be swapped for a different size or purchased for a small fee. It is also great to help reduce waste and promote sustainability in the current climate.

The shop has a permanent home in school and opens on a monthly basis. We have extended our hours following feedback from parents and are now open on some Saturday mornings. We were also able to open on Results days in August and it was wonderful to be able support pupils and parents as they prepared for a new school term.



The Association puts a lot of time and effort into organising events and I would call on all to help support and sustain our efforts for the good of all the pupils within the school. Everyone is warmly invited to attend our meetings and will be made most welcome. Even if you can volunteer at any of the events, we would love to see you there. A little help goes a long way.



Extra-Curricular

House Reports

Mr D. Irwin

Crozier House

The year began with the highly competitive Football competition on the front pitches. This took place over 8 days with 8 different groups. Over 300 pupils took part and there were hundreds of spectators – quite an intimidating atmosphere for players and referees! This year Crozier finished 2nd in both the boys' and girls' competitions.

In November we had our Cross-Country competition which was well attended again by competitors and supporters. Unfortunately the Crozier boys finished 4th and the girls finished 3rd. However, special mention should go to Emma Stewart who came 1st in the Year 10 girls' race.

The Christmas House Quiz is always a highlight in the calendar and this year was no different with the 'Teacher Battles' round being particularly enjoyable. Thanks to all the teachers who took part in running races, arm wrestles, keep-ups etc. and to Mrs Qua for impressing us all with her vocal range! Thanks also to Mr Farrell for his tremendous skill in compiling the infamous Music Round and Movie Round. This year our Year 8-10s finished 1st and our Year 11-14s finished joint 3rd.

After the January exams we got back to House Competitions with the Endball competition. Endball is basically outdoor netball on a larger playing area with a 'catcher' at each end. Our Juniors finished in 3rd place and our Seniors finished 4th.

We wanted to have an event for our Year 14s before they left for study leave, so we organised a Tug O' War competition on the front pitches. Despite our best efforts and a lot of grunting we were narrowly beaten by McWilliam in the final.

Before Sports Day we were sitting in 3rd place, but all was not lost as Sports Day has the most points on offer. Our boys



and girls performed incredibly well on the day. The best athletes in each year group for Crozier were Olivia McCracken, Thomas Hamill, Nancy McCusker, Adam Liggett, Emma Stewart, Corey Hylands, Ciara Patton and Adam Ewart. Their efforts gained us 1st place in Sports Day for the girls and joint 1st place for the boys, which propelled us to the TOP of the overall leaderboard!

Many thanks to our House Captains, Lewis Cousins and Rose Widdis, for their help in organising teams and to our House Teachers, Mr Irwin and Mrs Curran. It was very fitting that Mrs Curran got to lift the Griffin House Trophy in her final year at Banbridge Academy. Mrs Curran was a tremendous House Teacher for many years; always encouraging, always fun, and we wish her a very happy and enjoyable retirement.





Extra-Curricular House Reports



Dunbar House

J. & B. Leslie

Dunbar House enjoyed another fantastic year in the annual inter-house competition. Sadly, we would finish in last place this year but we still really enjoyed all the various competitions and events and put up a good fight in them all!

The Football Competitions led off the year and both our boys' and girls' teams finished 3rd. Next up were the cross-country races. Here our boys team excelled to win the competition, while our girls finished 4th. The Christmas quizzes were once again a huge success and we finished joint 3rd in both the boys' and girls' tournaments.

The Endball was next to be played once we got some suitable weather, and our boys finished 2nd and the girls were third. The Year 14 Tug O' War was thoroughly enjoyed as the final event for our leavers. Despite having great 'pulling faces', we were unfortunately 4th!



Sportsday as always finished our year and it was another huge success with our girls excelling to finish in 2nd place and our boys finishing in joint 3rd.

A special mention to our House Captains, Jake Rainer and Carolyn Grossman, for all their work this year to help organise

events and teams.

So another year ends and the pupils of Dunbar once again enjoyed the revitalised House Competitions and we are all looking forward to next year and getting back our crown as House Champions!

Extra-Curricular House Reports

McWilliam House

J Glover and M Miskelly

The sun shone to start off this year's House Competition. The front rugby pitches were the venue for the football games. Once again this proved not to be a competition that favoured the McWilliam boys and girls, as we finished 3rd equal overall along with Dunbar. Our best results must go to the Year 11 and 12s (boys and girls) as they finished 2nd and so did the senior girls. I do have to report though that progress has been made, as we were 3rd on our own last year! Maybe next year we can aim for higher!

Over the last couple of years, the cross country is a competition that we have excelled at and this year was no exception. Both the Year 9 and 10 boys won their year group with excellent running by Owen Dobson, Daniel McKee and Morgan McMullan. The senior boys came 2nd, with Simon Ferris defending his title by winning the year competition. Who will fill those running shoes next year? On the girls' side we were top in three age groups: Year 8, 9 and 13 and 14. Anna McKernan led in the senior race to come away with full points for McWilliam. Daisy Douglas, Chloe Bingham and Casey Cousins all ran superbly to help secure 1st spot in their age groups. The final result of the day, when all scores from each year group were collated, was that we were successful in retaining 1st place in the Cross Country Competition. A huge thanks to all those brave, fit souls who volunteered to run twice around the school grounds.

The end of the winter term would not be the same without the House Quiz. Thanks must as always go to Masters Miskelly, Irwin, and Acheson for their selection of memory searching questions and to Mr Farrell for his skill, time and effort in compiling the film and music rounds. At the end of two days of intense questioning, we came 2nd in the Junior competition and 1st equal in the senior one. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!



With exams finished and analysed, it was back to the pitches for mixed endball – a sort of netball with football goals. Credit must go to the Year 11 and 12 team, as we were placed 1st in this. Our senior teams have the kudos here finishing 2nd whereas the junior teams were 4th.

The final competition for Year 14 is the Tug of War – after a great competition last year in which we were 3rd, we were determined to do one better. After winning our first pull we were to compete against Crozier for the honours and although we were exhausted, sore and hoarse, we still managed it! Another competition win!! All the best to all our Year 14 who leave us for new adventures.

The year rounded off with a sun filled Sports Day. With sunscreen, sunglasses and sun hats in place, plus the creperie and ice cream sellers, it was all go! Could we win the Sports' Day trophy for a third successive year? Time would tell! On the boys' side the Year 9 and

11 boys both won their year groups with superb performances from Owen Dobson and Adrian Logins. The girls were placed 3rd overall, with both Casey and Ellie Cousins and Kizzy Gley having the best personal achievements. After the points were collected, counted and then verified, it was announced that this year we had to hand over the trophy to Crozier. McWilliam came an honourable 2nd, 2 points ahead of Dunbar.

The final assembly was held and the final scores were announced. The winners this year were Crozier- retaining the Griffin House Trophy for another year. Once again we are holding firm in 3rd position behind Waddell.

We would like to thank all our little and not so little lions and lionesses who have volunteered in any of this year's competitions and to those who have come out to support.

See you soon.

Extra-Curricular House Reports

Waddell House Corey Hamilton

The wonderful Waddell ducks have performed exceedingly well in this year's House tournaments, performing superbly across the many activities offered.

The house competitions 'kicked off' with the especially popular, House Football competition. This year Waddell scored an incredible 100 points in both boys' and girls' football, leading by 25 points, starting the year off very promisingly!

The second competition was Cross Country running whereby the boys' team had a disappointing but close third place. However the girls came first in this competition, an incredible performance from the girls highlighting their true 'feat' of fitness. A massive well done!

The seniors exemplified their intelligence in the House Quiz this year, obtaining 87.5 points for the House! True academics and athletes, especially in House Endball, where both juniors and seniors smashed it. The Waddell ducks are both coordinated and clever!



To conclude the year, Waddell scored second overall getting 705 points, just shy of 1st; hopefully next year with the continued cracking effort and amazing participation from the fellow Waddellians we will come first. Well done to everyone who took part and helped

the House get such an amazing score.

Many thanks to Mr. Acheson and Mrs. Dreaning for organizing and coordinating the events. Keep up the great work the mighty ducks.



Rugby

1st XV

B. Leslie

The 2022-23 season will long live in the memory as a historic and successful season for Banbridge Academy 1st XV. The team won the Schools' Bowl, the highest honour we had ever gained and had a hugely successful season as well. The on-pitch pre-season was well attended on the back of a successful first summer program of strength and conditioning held in Banbridge Rugby club's excellent facilities.

Our season began strongly at the Grosvenor Grammar tournament, where we beat the hosts 14-0 and then Rainey Endowed 7-0 but lost out 3-12 to Dromore in the final. The performances here, as much as the results, hinted towards the good season that was to come.

This was followed by a number of friendly games where we tried different combinations of players to see what gelled best. We beat Larne 57-7, Omagh 19-12, lost 5-45 to Enniskillen, beat Lurgan 39-7 and Limavady 20-0 before our first Schools' Cup group game v Dromore High (see later in report). We then beat Regent House 17-12 before our 2nd Cup game v Larne Grammar. This was followed by 3 wins over Friends' School 10-0, Grosvenor Grammar 17-0 and RS Dungannon 31-7 before our final Cup game v Bangor Grammar.

Further friendlies in January, just prior to the Bowl campaign, were a 12-33 loss to Down High and a 24-17 win over RS Dungannon.

Schools' Cup group games

Game 1 v Dromore High:

Unfortunately the team lost 7-19, but it was a fantastic spectacle played in front of a huge crowd of supporters. Dromore went into the tie as heavy favourites as they were the number one seeds in the group, while the Academy were seeded third out of four. The Academy's performance defied this seeming imbalance however and the young team, just 3 Upper 6th boys on the pitch,



more than held their own in a thrilling encounter.

Dromore were first to score with some good phase play resulting in a well-worked score; the extras were added by the kicker. As halftime approached Banbridge piled on the pressure but after a near miss close to the line, Dromore broke away and when Banbridge twice failed to find the safety of touch with clearance kicks, Dromore capitalised and scored again to take a 14-0 lead into halftime.

The 2nd half saw some of the Academy's best rugby with big carries from Ulster Hooker Connor Magee and Ulster back row Ryan Hanna, alongside some



impressive work from 2nd row Noah Bell. This good play led to an outstanding break from centre Luke Charman who burst through the defensive line and then stepped the full-back to score under the posts; Full Back and Captain Ryan Matthews slotted the conversion to bring the score to 7-14. The Academy continued to play well as the game ebbed and flowed both ways, with both teams having chances to increase the score. On 55 minutes it was Dromore who put together an excellent series of phase play and then, as the defence scrambled to cover, they made the midfield break and fed their left wing to score in the corner; the wide-out conversion was missed. As the game drew to a close the Academy continued to try to get within bonus point range but the Dromore defence was resolute and the whistle blew with no change of score.

The game was an epic encounter in many ways; the physicality of both sides was to be commended but the skills levels and work rate from both was also exemplary and the two sets of supporters should also be commended for their loud but sporting support.

Game 2 v Larne Grammar:

Despite a strong start from Larne, the Academy soon kicked into gear and ran out 55-5 winners. The tries came from: Ryan Matthews, Connor Magee, Darragh Knox x 2, Fergus Alway x2, Ryan Hanna, Jacques MacAuley & Noah Bell

Rugby

and captain Ryam Matthews added five conversions.

Game 3 v Bangor Grammar:

The team completed the group stages of this year's Danske Bank Schools' Cup with an impressive 22-0 win. The match began well for the Academy, when after just two minutes a cross-field kick from outhalf Andrew Jackson resulted in a spill from the Bangor winger and centre Daniel Hutchinson pounced on the loose ball to dive over the line for the opening score. Most of the rest of the half was played in the middle of the pitch, with both teams having their moments but neither able to penetrate resolute defence from each side. With just seconds left before half-time, the Academy executed an excellent right-hand move off scrum and winger Noah Myles dived over in the corner for a well worked try. This was converted from wideout by fullback Ryan Matthews, leaving the half-time score 12 - 0 to Banbridge Academy.

The second half began as an evenly contested match with both teams working hard to create opportunities, but neither team were able to capitalise on some good field position. After 20 minutes however, Banbridge Academy executed another nice right-hand scrum move this time moving the width of the pitch and scoring in the corner when flanker Tom King picked up at the base of a ruck and dived over. Just 10 minutes later, with the Academy pressing for the 4th try bonus point, Second Row Noah Bell was the sharpest at a penalty and after a quick tap dived over to secure bonus point and also kill the game as a contest. The Academy were aware that points difference could matter in qualifying out of the group and continued to press for the remaining 10 minutes, but Bangor held firm and there was no further score.

It was a very pleasing display from the Banbridge Academy 1st XV, as away wins are always a rare commodity in the Schools' Cup and a large crowd of travelling supporters thoroughly enjoyed their day out in Bangor.

Schools' Bowl games

Round 1 v Larne Grammar

Our first round tie was a rematch of the Cup group game and it brought about a similar result. Larne were once again very brave and tackled hard all day, but the Academy team had too much power and accuracy and ran out 54-0 winners. The scores came from Jonathan McCrum, Callum Little, Ryan Matthews, Daniel Hutchinson x 2, Elijah Dempsey, Ryan Hanna, Connor Magee and Andrew Jackson with 7 conversions.



Round 2 v Bangor Grammar

This was another replay of a group game, but this match was very different. It was a game where the team never really got going and Bangor were immense throughout. It took a very late score from substitute winger Elijah Dempsey to finally get the Academy ahead and they held on to win, 15-14. Connor Magee had earlier scored our other try and Andrew Jackson was on target with the conversion and a penalty.

Semi-final v Omagh Academy

Banbridge Academy 1st XV have booked their place in the Final of the Danske Bank Schools' Bowl with a hard-fought 37-21 win over Omagh Academy in a pulsating semi-final. Andrew Jackson opened the scoring for the Academy with a penalty after just 3 minutes, but despite further pressure from Banbridge it was Omagh who scored first with a well worked forward based try and successful conversion. This sparked the Academy into life as they responded 5 minutes later when 2nd Row Tom King powered over and Jackson successfully converted. This was followed up 5 minutes later

when Prop Jonathan McCrum drove over the line to score but Jackson was wide with this conversion attempt. Just before halftime however Omagh pressurised the Academy line and, in spite of some great defence from the Academy, they scrambled over the line for the try and again slotted the kick to take the halftime score to 15-14 in favour of Banbridge.

The 2nd half got off to a great start when Scrum-half Harry Wan finished off a brilliant attack from the Academy, but just when it seemed the Banbridge boys would pull away, Omagh mounted a counter attack to score on 50 minutes and when the kick was converted they took a 20-21 lead into the final quarter. But Banbridge had saved their best for last. After a number of strong drives, Hooker Connor Magee powered his way over the line to score and Jackson once again added the extras, then a few minutes later Jackson slotted a long-range penalty to take the game out to 9 points. With time running out Banbridge kicked a penalty into the corner and Prop Jonathan McCrum scored his second of the day from the resulting powerful driving maul to seal the 37-21 victory.

Final v Friends' School

Banbridge Academy 1st XV achieved their own little bit of history on, Wed 8th March by winning the Schools Bowl for the first time. The Academy overcame Friends' School, Lisburn 31-15 to claim the Ulster title on a cold but dry day at a blustery Barban Hill, home of Dromore Rugby Club. A huge crowd, in excess



Rugby

of 1000 people, watched a pulsating game and saw Academy Captain Ryan Matthews hoist the trophy with his team. The Bowl is the top trophy fought for by the 20 schools who did not make it out of the Schools' Cup Group stages.

The final began with the Academy benefitting from a strong wind. They utilised this advantage early on with a good kick to the corner and the Academy lineout functioned well and Prop Jonny McCrum touched down from the resulting driving maul for a 5-0 lead after only 2 minutes. Out half Andrew Jackson was just wide with the conversion. Friends' came into the game after that, but neither team could exert a stranglehold and it wasn't until the 25th minute when Banbridge ran an excellent set piece move of the scrum, that winger Noah Myles powered over in the corner for the score. Jackson slotted this kick to take the score out to 12-0. Friends' followed up with some late 1st half pressure but the Academy defence was resolute and refused to be broken. Friends' eventually settled for a penalty on the stroke of halftime to leave the score 12-3 in the Academy's favour, but with the wind in their faces in the second half it was far from a winning lead.

The Academy came out firing however, and the next 15 minutes were decisive in the tie. After 45 minutes a good phase of attacking play led to 2nd Row Tom King touching down for the important



score for the Academy. Jackson was narrowly wide again. Friends' rallied and moved down field and took advantage of some loose Academy play to score an unconverted try but the Academy boys responded almost immediately, when they powered up-field and produced two brilliant tries in just 3 minutes. First up Prop Thomas Williamson cut a lovely angle to drive over for a score which Jackson converted and then the best score of the game where the Academy moved ball left and right and eventually a sublime one-handed pass from Jackson and a lovely line from Full Back and Captain Ryan Matthews put him in under the posts for the decisive try. Jackson again added the extras to take the score out to 31-8. To Friends' credit they finished the game strongly and got another converted score with just 10 minutes to play but the Academy saw the rest of the game out comfortably and claimed the hard won title of Danske Bank Ulster Schools' Bowl winners.

The Bowl was presented pitchside at the end, on behalf of the Ulster Branch, by Mr Sam Grattan and the large Academy crowd enjoyed the moment. Well done to all involved, a very special day indeed for Banbridge Academy.

Thanks must go to Dromore Rugby Club and Dromore High for the use of their excellent facilities and to their staff for

running the event.

The Forwards

The forward pack was the backbone of the team. Loosehead prop was L6 Johnny McCrum who continues to improve with every game he plays. Jonny is a strong scrummager and good ball carrier, who had an eye for the tryline. At Tighthead prop was Thomas Williamson. Thomas was highly effective over the ball in defence and also improved his ball carrying throughout the season and was awarded the Most Improved Player award at the end of the year. At Hooker was Ulster Schools' player L6 Connor Magee. Connor has an excellent lineout throwing and is an extremely strong carrier and big tackling front row player who played for the Ulster clubs and schools team and trained with the Ulster elite training group. He was awarded Player of the Year at the End of Season dinner. Yr 12 Adam Jones also made a number of appearances at prop. Adam is improving all the time and is developing into a really good ball carrier and technical scrummager. In the second row was Yr 12 player Noah Bell who went from strength to strength as the season progressed. He represented Ulster U17 and pushed his way onto the elite training panel. The other second row was L6 Jack Shaw, who was a fast developing forward who enjoys carrying the ball and always gives 100% on the

Rugby

pitch. In the back row at number eight was Yr 12 Ryan Hanna, who is explosive off the base of the scrum and a very effective ball carrier. At open side Flanker was U6 Tom King who was an excellent lineout forward and strong with ball in hand. Our Blindside flanker was Callum Little, who worked hard around the pitch and was an explosive ball carrier. Flanker Adam Logan forced his way into the team at the end of the season with outstanding performances for both the 2nd XV and 1st XV's and broke into the starting team for the Cup run. Adam is a workhorse flanker who runs and tackles for the full 70 minutes. U6 Henry Knox also played numerous games at flanker and was always industrious and hardworking in both defence and attack.

The Backs

Scrum-half is L6 Fergus Alway. Fergus has a strong pass off both hands and is an excellent decision maker at half back. L6 Harry Wan also played a number of times. Harry is a talented player who is happy playing either 9 or 10 and always does a great job whenever needed. He was awarded the Clubman of the Year award. At Outhalf yr 12 Andrew Jackson slotted seamlessly into the team. He is very effective at running his back line and has an eye for a gap himself, allied with a very strong kicking game. At first Centre was L6 Daniel Hutchinson; Daniel is equally at home at outhalf and is a superb ball player who runs great lines of 10. Outside centre was L6 Luke Charman who is a hard running and big hitting player but also has a subtle side to his ever improving game. On one wing was U6 Noah Myles who possessed incredible pace and strength and was an attacking threat from all areas of the field. On the

other wing was L6 Darragh Knox, whose excellent footwork was always a threat to opposition defence. At fullback was Captain U6 Ryan Matthews. Ryan has an excellent kicking game and was also rock solid under the highball, as well as being very keen to turn defence into attack. He led the team excellently throughout the season and was a first-rate captain. U6 Ronan Quinn would have been a regular starter for the team but unfortunately a bad injury early in the season put him out for the year, but his footwork and defensive capabilities were greatly missed. L6 Jacques Macauley played a number of games at centre or wing and his pace and eye for a gap were always a worry for opposition defences. Yr 12 Elijah Dempsey could also play in wing or centre and he too has pace to burn and came up with some crucial scores as the season progressed.

In addition to those detailed earlier, the following players also represented the 1st XV during the season: James Seifert, Thomas Humphries, Ollie Kelly, Will Kennedy, Corey Hamilton, Benjamin Quigley, Joey Mackrell & Nazie James Mulligan.

The 1st XV playing record was:
Played 21, Won 17, Lost 4
Points for 490, Points against 226

Top points scorers:

	Tries	Penalties	Conversions	Drop Goal	Total Points
Ryan Matthews	8	1	24	-	91
Connor Magee	13	-	-	-	65
Andrew Jackson	-	4	18	-	48
Jonathan McCrum	8	-	-	-	40
Noah Myles	8	-	-	-	40
Ryan Hanna	7	-	-	-	35



Thanks

I would like to take this opportunity to thank a few people for their invaluable help throughout the season.

Firstly, to all our valuable sponsors for their incredible generous contributions to Banbridge Academy rugby:

- Little & Company – Warm-up jackets for the entire senior squad of 45 players
- Wheatfield Decorative Stone – 8 Substitute jackets for the 1st XV
- Mr & Mrs Matthews – Dinner for Senior Squad
- Senior Parental group (Mr Terry Magee, Mr Guy Charman, Mr Ivan Hutchinson) – Match Balls
- Houston's Banbridge (John Houston) – Match Ball
- Banbridge RFC - for free use of Gym facilities all season



Thanks Mr Brian O'Shaughnessy, Mr Robbie Ervine and Mr Charlie Farrell for all their coaching and help with the 1st XV throughout the season, their expertise and enthusiasm are greatly appreciated. Thank you also to Ben Bradshaw and Marcus Graham, our Strength & Conditioning coaches, for their hard work with the pre and in-season programmes for the players. Finally, thanks to the caretakers, and John Kernaghan in particular, for their hard work on Saturday mornings looking after the changing areas and grounds. Without the help of these people we could not have had such a successful and enjoyable season.



Rugby

2nd XV

Mr O'Shaughnessy



The 2022-23 2nd XV season will be remembered for the Cup run that almost secured a quarter final spot against all odds. The season started with an away defeat to Royal School, Armagh (28-7) with centre Elijah Dempsey scoring the first of his 12 tries that would see him finish the season as top try scorer. A narrow home win followed against Omagh Academy (17-14) with the impressive Adam Logan scoring the decisive 2 tries. Enniskillen Royal GS proved too strong (40-12) with full back Josh Thompson scoring 2 excellent tries.

A win against Limavady GS (40-7) and a defeat against Regent House (51-12) followed before the first round of the 2nd XV Cup, which threw up a home tie against Belfast HS. A nail biting 26-21 victory ensured that we were in the draw for the 2nd round with centre Nazie-James Mulligan scoring the match-winning try in the dying seconds. Royal

School, Dungannon were the visitors in round 2 with the home team coming away with another superb 22-12 victory. Out half Harry Wan scored 2 tries with hooker Ben Quigley and full back Joey Mackrell grabbing a try each. With the top schools entering the competition in the 3rd round, it was Ballyclare HS that had home advantage. With easily our best performance of the season, unfortunately we came up just short in an epic battle that saw the lead change hands several times (33-26). Try scorers were James Seifert, Elijah Dempsey (2) and Thomas Humphries. The quarter final of the Plate threw up a home tie against a strong Coleraine GS side. In another titanic tussle we came up just short once again, (33-22) to all but end the season.

The season finished up with a couple of friendly fixtures against Down HS to ensure the whole squad got some

game time. Several of the 2nd XV went on to represent the 1st XV during their victorious Cup campaign, which was just reward for their excellent performances for the 2nd XV. Special mention must go to captain Henry Knox who was the only Year 14 player in the squad who led the team admirably week in, week out.

At the End of Season Awards Dinner, the winners included: Captain - Henry Knox, Player of the Year - Adam Logan, Most Improved Player - Adam Jones, Top Try Scorer - Elijah Dempsey (12)

The squad would like to pay particular thanks to senior coaches Mr Leslie, Charlie Farrell, and Robbie Ervine for all their hard work throughout the season. With virtually the entire senior squad returning next season, except for a small number of Year 14 leavers, and the addition of the victorious Medallion squad, Banbridge Academy senior rugby looks promising.



Rugby

Medallion XV

Mr O'Shaughnessy



The 2022-23 Medallion squad started the season hoping to emulate the class of 2021-22 by winning some silverware. With only nineteen Year 11 players in the squad it was clear that a number of Year 10 players would have to make the step up to help out each week. A number of those players were identified early and eight of them joined the squad for the season, while continuing to represent the U14 XV. The season started slowly with a narrow 17-12 defeat at home to a strong Royal School, Armagh side. This was then followed up by five successive wins on the bounce against Larne GS (35-31), Omagh Academy (14-5), Enniskillen RGS (34-28), Lurgan College (64-0) and Limavady GS (21-14). Local rivals Dromore HS came out on top, 10-3 in our next game, which was followed by two further defeats against Regent House (26-12) and Friends' School Lisburn (29-10).

The Academy team then started their Medallion Shield with a disappointing 13-0 defeat away to Foyle College. The squad had to pick themselves up and knew they had a good chance of success in the Trophy, if they played to their potential. A determined Carrick GS side were first up in Round 1. Tries from Alex Andersson, Miles Mawson, Max

Ireland, Arturs Jonuss and Captain Noah Haughey paved the way for a superb 31-5 win. Next up was a tricky away tie against Dalriada in the Quarter-Final. Having played most of the rugby, the away side had to settle for a 7-7 draw with the points coming from a try from Year 10 out half Sam Leslie and a Noah Haughey conversion. The replay at home was a little less nervy with the home side coming out on top 29-7, with tries from Arturs Jonuss, Warren Hooke, Sam Leslie, Noah Haughey and Miles Mawson. The Semi-Final was against Grosvenor GS at home. Having played each other earlier on in the season, it was the Academy side who came out on top 10-3, so both teams were expecting another tight game. Grosvenor took an early 5-0 lead but were then blown away by a superb all-round performance, 41-5. Tries were scored by Miles Mawson (2), Nathan Young, Matthew Morrison, Arturs Jonuss, Sam Leslie and Alex Andersson.

The final against Enniskillen RGS, played at the superb facilities at RS Armagh, did not disappoint the vast number of supporters from both schools. It was the Academy team who started the stronger. Straight from the kick-off hooker Nathan Young beat a number of would-be tacklers, to take the play deep inside the

ERGS half. Further carries from a number of forwards left an easy job for scrum half Jonny Neill to touch down from a few metres out, leaving the score 5-0 to the Academy. With Enniskillen RGS on the back foot once more, a second score looked inevitable. Superb defending from ERGS left the Academy forwards frustrated and the score remained 5-0. Having weathered the early storm, it was the turn of the Enniskillen side to show their attacking prowess, with their fullback scoring out wide and their impressive inside centre nailing the tricky conversion. The halftime score was 7-5 in favour of ERGS. Both sides knew that the next score would be crucial. Having lost replacement scrumhalf Max Ireland to injury early in the second half, the Academy side had to make further changes which disrupted the flow of the game. The ERGS number 8 then showed his pace out wide to outstrip the cover defence and score in the corner. With the conversion missed, the Academy side trailed 12-5. A superb turnover by replacement winger Adrian Logins, left the Academy team with a line out 5 metres out. Strong carries from Noah Haughey, Caleb Cromie and Fynn Niblock ensured that second row Matthew Morrison had the space for the all-important score. With no



recognised kicker on the pitch, flanker Miles Mawson stepped up to send the conversion straight between the posts from a difficult angle, tying the score 12-12. With little under 10 minutes left to play, both sides looked for that all important score that would seal the victory outright. ERGS had a difficult kick to win it at the death, but the effort drifted wide leaving both sides to share the Trophy.

Having played 17 games and only losing 6, the Medallion squad narrowly missed out on the Team of the Year Award at the rugby end of season dinner. Other winners included: Captain - Noah Haughey, Player of the Year - Fynn Niblock, Most Improved Player - Jonny Neill, Top Try Scorer - Arturs Jonuss (11), Top Points Scorer - Max Ireland (71).

The squad would like to pay particular thanks to coaches Arthur Allen, Charlie Farrell and Jemma Farrell for all their

hard work throughout the season and to Mr Leslie for all his support. A special mention must also go to all the parents who turned up week in, week out to cheer on the team. Four of the squad gained representative honours with various Ulster provincial squads, so we wish Matthew Morrison, Fynn Niblock, Noah Haughey and Arturs Jonuss all the best and congratulate them on their success. Many of this squad will return next year to fight for a place on the 1st XV, with the eight Year 10 players getting their chance in the Medallion squad once again.

We would also like to thank our very kind sponsors JMK Solicitors, through Ms Maurece Hutchinson, who sponsored a full set of playing jerseys for the entire squad. This was a very generous gesture that was greatly appreciated by both the school and the players.

Squad: Alex Andersson, Nathan Young,



Medallion Sponsors JMK Solicitors

Finlay Long, Matthew Morrison, Fynn Niblock, Miles Mawson, Caleb Cromie, Noah Haughey (C), Jonny Neill, Sam Leslie, Jamie Ramsey, Arturs Jonuss, Ethan Houston, Daniel Hampton, Matthew Grimes, Luke Wills, Leo O'Neill, Raz Zachs, Patrick McElroy, Max Ireland, Warren Hooke, Aaron Horwood-Barrett, Adrian Logins, Andrew Robertson, Conor Patton, Syd Moore, Conor Comiskey.



Rugby

U14

Patrick McElroy - U14 Rugby Captain

Throughout the year the U14 rugby team used over 30 players, showing the growing strength and depth in the year group. As Captain of the U14 rugby team it has been a very exciting and progressive year, although we had a rocky start with a loss to The Royal School, Armagh.

We saw improvements in our performance throughout the year, demonstrated by a decisive win against Armagh, a team that had beaten us consecutively for three years but finally we overcame them with a score of 14-0 in the performance of the year. Over the course of the season we played over 20 matches against many different schools and we won our fair share of games playing some really good rugby at times.

Nearing the end of the season we played a tournament at Royal Belfast Academical Institute. We had mixed results as the team was carrying a few injuries. We had a tightly fought loss to Coleraine of 7-8 with a consistent performance throughout the entire tournament from Conor Patton; a win against Armagh of 17-7 and a loss to Sullivan Upper in the quarter final. This tournament showed our determination, perseverance and endurance.

We had another tournament at Armagh Royal with three very close unlucky results, but we surprised Dungannon (having lost twice to them previously in the year) showing our determination and hunger for the win throughout. We also fielded a full B team at this tournament and they enjoyed their three games and played some excellent rugby.

At The End of Season Awards, Ethan Houston won player of the year and Luke Wills won most improved player, both highly deserved awards. Congratulations also to all the boys who were members of the Ulster Regional Development Programme; Leo O'Neill, Patrick McElroy, Syd Moore and Conor Comiskey.

The team would also like to thank our main coach Mr Reaney, who will be missed at Medallion level by the whole team as he has massively improved our team performance. Thank you to our games coaches Mr Leslie, Mr O'Shaughnessy, Jamie, Adam and Joel, a past pupil, who helped out on some Saturdays. All of these rugby coaches came together to improve our overall game.



U14 A XV



U14 B XV

Rugby

U13

Charlie Geoghegan - U13 XV Captain



The U13 squad had a slightly mixed season with some excellent wins and some disappointing losses, but our biggest achievement has been our first full season together and learning and adapting our own skills.

We started our season off with a strong win against Royal School Armagh; they put up a good fight for most part but the outcome was 39-17 to the Academy. We then went on to beat our rivals Dromore 29-5, then Clounagh Junior High School which was a confidence booster as we beat them 40-0 with an outstanding performance from everyone.

Then after our win streak we got invited to the Ballyclare Blitz. In our first game we dropped our heads after one try against Ballyclare in the first match, then we had a break in between to reset ourselves and our next match against

Limavady resulted in a draw with Conor scoring a hatrick. Next we went on to beat Armagh again, with an outstanding performance with Conor McNamee and Dawson Knox both getting hat-tricks. In our next games we had some tough fixtures against very strong sides from Grosvenor, Dungannon and also a very tight game against a skilful Down High squad; then we went on to play Friends' School Lisburn, suffering a 31-17 defeat. The improvement in character throughout the year meant that none of the players ever gave up and we were rewarded with a hard-fought win against Killicomaine, from which we scored an early kick and chase try. In that game Conor scored an amazing four tries. Next, we carried on with a fixture against Omagh wanting a big win, but were outplayed by a strong team, losing 38-5. Even though confidence was down we went on to beat Enniskillen Royal

Grammar School in our next game and played some fantastic rugby. The next match we had was a match against Lurgan Junior High School, which we lost 40-5.

At the end of season awards ceremony Dawson Knox was awarded the Player of the Year trophy and Matthew Macauley was awarded the Most Improved Player award.

I believe and I'm sure the coaches do as well, that for the most part even though we were adapting to playing 15-a-side rugby, we made some major improvements. I'm sure all the rugby players would like to say thank you to all the coaches that helped us throughout the season, in particular Mr Beacom (our head coach) for his huge commitment of time and energy and also Mr Livingstone for all his help and support.



Rugby

U12 A&B



The U12 players had a thoroughly enjoyable first season as Banbridge Academy rugby players. Training numbers were good all season and all the boys put in lots of hard work in the early part of the year to get us all up to 'match' pace and ready to play. With lots of players new to rugby this took a bit longer than usual, but paid off in the end.

The first games of the year were away to Friends' School in Lisburn. Both the A and the B teams played hard and gave their best, but the more experienced Friends' teams won both games. This was followed by an Ulster Rugby 'Gamification' blitz with RS Armagh and Dromore High. In this format points were gained by successful completion of passes and tackles etc. This is an exciting new initiative and added to the fun of the day, as there was lots to cheer. The A team performed well in both matches, while the B team won their group. Two fixtures against RS Dungannon followed this blitz and by now we were starting to find our stride. The A team competed well but just ran out of steam at the end, while the B team lost 12-11 in a pulsating game. Another blitz followed in early December with teams from RS Armagh, Omagh Academy, Enniskillen RGS and Killicomaine JH. Both the A & B teams enjoyed a successful day out scoring lots of tries and winning a few games. A second visit to Friends' School showed

just how far the U12 teams had come this season. The A team lost 6-3, but it was a really tight affair and the B team drew 11-11 to show how much improvement had been made in these squads since November.

In early February the U12 A team played their first ever Saturday fixture with a game against Killicomaine JH at home before the Medallion Shield match. In the end Killicomaine proved too strong but the Academy boys fought to the end and showed great promise. Next the teams played another blitz against teams from Sullivan Upper School and Wallace High School. Both teams performed really well and the A team won one and drew one while the Bs won one and lost one. This was followed by two fixtures against RS Armagh, where the As lost but the Bs had a fine win. The final match of the season saw the As lose 5-4 and the Bs win 9-5

against Dromore High in the Masters' Shield. Unfortunately, the normal end-of-season tournament at Down High had to be cancelled due to bad weather.

The Under 12s thoroughly enjoyed their first season at the End of Season Award ceremony and there were four A team players of the year: Jack Agnew, Zach Watson, Daniel Cairns and Isaac McCrum. The B team players of the year were Gareth Elliott and Jacob Anderson.

All the players would like to thank their coaches Mr Erskine and Mr Baxter for all of their help on Monday afternoons and at matches and Mr O'Shaughnessy and Mr Leslie for helping out at matches and games. The players now look forward to next year when they will play their first full schedule of fixtures; playing every Saturday and a number of mid-week games throughout the season.



Rugby

Award Winners



Players of the Year

Banbridge Academy held their annual Rugby awards ceremony in late March to mark the end of their season and honour the teams and standout players for all seven rugby teams in the school. The awards dinner took place in the Belmont Hotel on Wed 22nd March with 115 players and rugby staff gathering to celebrate the schools' successes.

The special guest for the evening was the Ulster & Ireland player Eric O'Sullivan. Eric is a dynamic ball-carrying Prop who has 100 Ulster Caps and was voted onto the Pro 14 Dream Team for the 2020-21 season. Eric congratulated all of the players on their efforts and encouraged those not fortunate enough to have received an award to keep working hard on their game and keep improving.

Headmaster Mr Robin McLoughlin also spoke to congratulate the players and coaches alike. He commended the players on their hard work throughout the season and congratulated them on another fine year in terms of results and performances. He also commented on the commitment of the coaching staff, namely the school staff of Brian Leslie, Brian O'Shaughnessy, Tim Baxter, Jonny

Erskine, Chris Beacom, Jonathan Reaney & Jamie Macartney. He also thanked the outside coaches who come into school to help coach; Robbie Ervine, Charlie Farrell, Jemma Farrell, Arthur Allen, Brian Livingstone, Joel Good and the Athletic Development coaches of Ben Bradshaw and Marcus Graham. He paid tribute to all their hard work in coaching, refereeing and organisation of teams.

Individually the Academy also had a number of players who represented or trained with Ulster age group squads; Connor Magee Ulster U18 Clubs & Schools, Ryan Hanna Ulster U17 & U18 Clubs & Schools Training Squad, Noah Bell & Andrew Jackson Ulster U17, Matthew Morrison Ulster U17 training squad, Noah Haughey, Arturs Jonuss, Fynn Niblock, Leo O'Neill, Patrick McElroy, Conor Comiskey & Syd Moore Ulster Regional U16 training squad.

The performance of all the teams was commended and with five teams playing each Saturday and two Under 12 teams playing each Friday, the numbers playing the game are certainly on the rise. The two highlights of the season were the fantastic performance of our 1st XV to win

the Schools Bowl for the first time in the school's history and also the Medallion XV winning the Medallion Trophy competition. Two bits of silverware in the trophy cabinet is never a bad year!

A full breakdown of the individual award winners is below:

U12 'A' XV Player of Year:

Jack Agnew
Zach Watson
Daniel Cairns
Isaac McCrum

U12 'B' XV Player of Year:

Gareth Elliott
Jacob Anderson

U13 'A' XV

Captain: Charlie Geoghegan
Player of Year: Dawson Knox
Most Improved: Matthew Macauley

U14 'A' XV

Captain: Patrick McElroy
Player of Year: Ethan Houston
Most Improved: Luke Wills

Medallion XV

Captain: Noah Haughey
Player of Year: Fynn Niblock
Most Improved: Jonathan Neill

2nd XV

Captain: Henry Knox
Player of Year: Adam Logan
Most Improved: Adam Jones

1st XV

Captain: Ryan Matthews
Top Try Scorer: Connor Magee
Overall P.O.Y.: Connor Magee
U6 P.O.Y.: Noah Myles
L6 P.O.Y.: Connor Magee
Yr 12 P.O.Y.: Noah Bell
Most Improved: Thomas Williamson
Clubman: Harry Wan

Team of the year

1st XV – Bowl winners & best playing record



1st XV Med XV Ulster Trophy Winners



Most Improved players and Other Winners



1st XV Med XV Ulster Trophy Winners



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Boys' Hockey

Ulster Schools' McCullough Cup Final



Royal Belfast Academical Institution
2 – 2 Banbridge Academy (RBAI won
penalty shoot-out 5-4)

The boys' hockey 1st XI failed to retain the Ulster Schools' McCullough Cup in the sixtieth edition of the competition when they agonisingly fell to defeat against RBAI after a penalty shoot-out. The Academy boys' route to the final had been incident-free including an impressive 8-0 victory over Bangor Grammar School in the semi-final, so the squad was full of confidence especially as they had already defeated RBAI in both of their previous encounters during the season.

The game started with Banbridge on the front-foot and they took the lead when captain Matthew McKee carried the ball from his own half and fired a reverse stick shot past the Inst goalkeeper. RBAI equalised from a penalty corner drag flick but McKee restored the Academy's advantage when he scored again from the edge of the circle, this time with an open side drive.

RBAI offered little threat from open play,



but their obvious game plan of looking for penalty corners paid dividends when they equalised midway through the second half from a set-piece variation. As the game neared full-time, the Academy attacked at will but the killer final pass failed to materialise and the match ended 2-2, resulting in the lottery of a penalty shootout. Denver Golbey saved two of the RBAI run-ins, with Matthew Stevenson, Tommy Dobson, James Evans and Matthew McKee scoring for the Academy but alas RBAI ran out 5-4 winners to take the cup back to Belfast.

The Academy players, and head coach Simon Jess, were devastated to lose their title but they had little time to feel sorry for themselves as the Ulster Schools' Burney Cup hits off were in less than two weeks.

Squad: Denver Golbey, Connor Part, Matthew Stevenson, Aaron Baxter, Ben Walker, Ben Thompson, Max Nicholson, Tom Hamilton, Tommy Dobson, Matthew McKee (captain), Lukas Moles, Matthew Spence, Ben Farson, Adam McKee, Josh Brownlee, Ben Pollock, James Evans, Jake Rainer.

Boys' Hockey

Banbridge Academy Boys' Bring the Tasmanian Shield Home



The EMTEK sponsored, Banbridge Academy Boys' Hockey 1st XI, travelled to Cork in October to take part in the All Ireland Schoolboy Championship. This prestigious tournament takes part over 3 days, the gruelling competition schedule demands extreme levels of fitness, with the potential for 5 games in just 72 hours. The top 16 teams from the island of Ireland are split into 4 groups, with just the top team from each group qualifying for the semi-finals.

Banbridge Academy's group included Middleton College (Munster), Sullivan Upper (Ulster) and Wesley College (Leinster). The first group game saw them face Middleton College at Middleton's home pitch. Despite vocal home support for Middleton, Banbridge started the game on the front foot, with an energetic press forcing their opposition to make mistakes and give opportunities for the pacy forwards to capitalise. A high defensive line ensured any Middleton threats were dealt with swiftly, often leading to instant counter attacks. In a dominant performance Banbridge won 9-0 (Adam McKee x3, Jake Rainer x2, Joshua Brownlee, Lukas Moles, Matthew McKee, Matthew Stevenson), giving the squad great confidence for the rest of the group games.

On day 2 the Academy played Ulster rivals Sullivan Upper. Sullivan were very

disciplined in their defence, working hard to limit opportunities for the Academy forward line. Patient passing work, combined with strong forward movement ensured the Academy side still put pressure on the Sullivan keeper. Sullivan pushed hard on counter attacks to gain their own chances, with some excellent solo runs, however the Academy defence were always on hand to thwart Sullivan advances. As the game wore on, the Academy's relentless pressure took its toll on a tiring Sullivan defence with the final score ending 7-0 (James Evans, Matthew Stevenson x2, Josh Brownlee, Adam McKee, Tommy Dobson, Jake Rainer).

The group decider saw Banbridge Academy face old rivals Wesley College. Wesley had also beaten Middleton (5-0) and Sullivan (6-1), leaving all to play for in the final match, with little to tell between the two sides group results. From the first whistle it was evident that the Academy had only one thing on their mind, dominating possession, with high tempo play and excellent off the ball work making it extremely difficult for Wesley. This paid off, with the Academy taking an early lead. Wesley showed their quality by rallying to shut off shooting opportunities and advancing up the pitch to create chances of their own. They were rewarded with 3 short corners in quick succession, but the Academy



defence dealt with them well, quickly turning possession into counter attacks and ending the half 3-0. The Academy's relentless pressure soon told and in the second half they dominated a tiring Wesley College. The goal tally quickly rose to 6, stunning a shell-shocked Wesley. With a rallied effort, Wesley gained a consolation goal towards the end of the match making the score 6-1. However the Academy would deal the last blow, when on the final whistle they ensured a decisive short corner made it 7-1 (Ben Pollock, Adam McKee, Matthew Stevenson x2, Matthew McKee x2, Jake Rainer).



After topping the group Banbridge Academy were drawn against another Ulster team in their semi final, Wallace High School, with two Leinster teams making up the other Semi, Kings Hospital and Dublin High School. Wallace were highly organised in their defence, which caused the usual free flowing attacks of Banbridge Academy to stumble. Despite lots of possession Banbridge were rushing their opportunities and getting frustrated by the excellent discipline of the Wallace defensive line. Wallace were also quick to counter, with pace and skill upfront. On a quick attack Wallace caught the Academy defence off guard and finished well to take the lead. The Academy side started to find their game, but struggled to make any meaningful chances, with the ball firing loosely across goal and causing little threat to the Wallace keeper. The final quarter started with Wallace still 1-0 up, however, the Academy had worked hard to get their normal style of play going and chances soon started to build pressure on the Wallace defence. Two quick fire goals saw them swing the advantage in their favour, taking a narrow one goal lead. Wallace rallied hard to try and find the equaliser, but when a late short corner was well saved it was the Academy who secured their place in the final, winning 2-1 (James Evans x2)

Dublin High School won their semi final vs Kings Hospital in another close game, winning 1-0.

The final started with a period of dominance for Banbridge Academy, who were using the channels well and quickly turning possession into advances on goal. A foul in front of the keeper saw a stroke converted to give the Academy a 1-0 lead in the 1st quarter. Dublin High found their feet in the second quarter and began to put pressure on the Academy defence, forcing good tackles to keep them at bay. Following strong

team play, the Banbridge side doubled their lead to make it 2-0. However, Dublin High were not going to step aside and rallied their efforts to dominate the final minutes of the half. This saw them convert a good short corner, opening the game up for an exciting second half. The game flowed from end to end throughout the rest of the match, the Academy failing to make the most of possession, with balls passing the back post without a forward able to capitalise. Whilst the Academy defence were able to prevent open play chances, they fell to another short corner in the final quarter, which brought the game level at 2-2 (James Evans, Matthew Spence). The game continued with chances for both teams, but neither could prevent the deadlock, so shuttle runs were needed to split the teams after full time. It was the Academy who would show the most composure, with goalkeeper Denver Golby forcing two misses from Dublin High School, whilst Tommy Dobson, Adam McKee and James Evans netted their chances. This left it to vice captain, Matthew Stevenson, to win the title for Banbridge Academy. He showed nerves of steel to force the Dublin High goalkeeper to ground before calmly walking the ball around him and into an open net. Jubilant scenes followed with Academy players, staff and supporters rushing the pitch to celebrate being the 2022 All Ireland Champions.

When asked about their title campaign the team captain, Matthew McKee, said, "We had to fight hard to come through 5 matches in 3 days but our squad is very strong and everyone played their part. I and a few others struggled with injuries but the coaching and medical staff kept us going to the end. Winning the Irish Schools' is the dream of any schoolboy hockey player in Ireland and we feel so privileged to have brought the Tasmanian Shield back to the Academy for the sixth time in the competition's

40 year history. I want to thank my teammates, our head coach Mr Jess and manager Mr Walker for making this possible."

Mr Robin McLoughlin OBE, praised the boys for their resilience after losing the All-Ireland Final last year on run-ins to come back and win on run-ins demonstrates the fantastic character of the whole squad. He declared this a tremendous achievement and congratulated Matthew and the entire squad, as well as their Coach (Mr Simon Jess) Manager (Mr Colin Walker) and Assistant Coach (Mr John Clarke).

The coaching staff and players of Banbridge Academy would especially like to thank all parents and supporters who made the long trip to Cork to cheer on the team. To celebrate occasions like this with them makes it even more special.



Boys' Hockey

2nd XI

M. Miskelly

We started the season hoping to go one better than last year, after having won the Prior Shield and losing out in the Dowdall Cup final. We hadn't lost many from the Prior Shield winning team last season and many of our panel were pushing for a spot on the 1st XI squad.

With commitment and hard work at training throughout the season, we progressed through each competition with relative ease until the later stages.

In the Prior Shield we came up against a battling Royal and Prior team, which ended up 2-2 after we took the lead. This led to our first set of run ins in any competition, not having practised any we still managed to go through with Simon Ferris, Josh Cash and Lewis Groves scoring. We then faced a tough game away to Sullivan Upper, winning 2-1 in a game where we had a lot of possession but struggled to finish. This led to a Havelock final against Wallace HS, who had beaten us the previous year in the Dowdall. With demons to banish and buoyed by our new kit, thanks to Leiber Medical, we played some great team hockey and reaped revenge on a good Wallace side. As a result, we retained the Prior Shield for another year.

In the Dowdall Cup our closest game was away to Bangor in the Semi-final. Having dominated the game and possession, our lack of ability to finish resulted in Bangor levelling the scores at 1-1 with 5 minutes left. We failed to score again in full time, leading to the dreaded run ins. Step forward James McCoy in goal who made some great saves to secure our spot in the Final after some very poor run ins. Another Havelock final in the Dowdall cup awaited us against Friends'. A fantastic team performance with a super hat trick from Jake Rainer, led to team Captain Daniel McHugh lifting the Dowdall Cup therefore completing the Double and capping off a fantastic season-one which I will not forget.

I want to pay particular credit to the Year 14 leavers and their contribution



to school hockey throughout the years. I wish them the very best for the future.

- Daniel McHugh - for his commitment and dedication to all aspects of training and Captaincy.
- Lewis Cousins - for his support for Daniel as Vice- Captain, his work ethic and commitment to the team.
- Joshua Moles - the rock at the heart of our defence.
- Thomas Cunningham (TC) - the Tasmanian devil in midfield.
- Adam Trimble - the fan favourite.
- Tom Hamilton - Mr Reliable in defence.
- Ben Farson - the steadying influence in midfield.
- Simon Ferris - always gives 100%, I have never seen anyone cover as much ground.
- Jake Rainer - the pacey player 'Billy Whizz' of the team.
- Conor Doyle - Footballer turned Hockey player.
- Conor Part - for stepping up to play an important role in the Prior Shield final.

There is no doubt of the benefit that being involved in team sport brings to both our physical and mental health. I encourage the guys to continue playing as long as they can and look forward to what next year brings.

CAPTAIN'S REPORT - DANIEL McHUGH
Banbridge Academy 2XI had an

extremely successful 2022-23 season, winning the two available trophies in an unbeaten season. Whilst our squad was largely made up of experienced Year 14 players, younger players such as Mark Hanna and Josh Cash also had impressive seasons. In an effort to retain the Prior Shield, strong performances over tough sides such as Friends' and Sullivan were necessary. The final, at Havelock Park was won 4-1 against Wallace HS, an effort of revenge following the defeat in the same fixture last season. A notable display came from Simon Ferris scoring two of the four goals.

Our Dowdall Cup campaign was a short but sweet one, following a bye in the first round and Regent House conceding the quarter final. We faced Bangor Grammar in the Semi Final in our tightest game of the season finishing 1-1 in regular time, coming away with a 2-1 victory in penalty run-ins. James McCoy Year 12, stepped up and made four impressive saves. In the Dowdall Final we were victorious in defeating Friends' 2XI 4-0 with a stellar hat-trick from Jake Rainer. We finished the season with eleven leavers on the pitch in a great way to conclude our seven year school career. I would like to thank Mr Miskelly for the time and effort he has put in during the past three years, and to thank my teammates for the most enjoyable season of my hockey career with the best group of lads. I wish the team every success next season.

Boys' Hockey

Ulster Schools' Prior Shield Final



Wallace High School 1 – 4 Banbridge Academy

The Boys' Hockey 2nd XI retained the Prior Shield by defeating Lisburn's Wallace High School 2nd XI 4 goals to 1 at Havelock Park. Mark Miskelly's troops were in top form this season, going undefeated thus far. Nevertheless, there were many nerves before hit-off as the squad was decimated - captain Daniel McHugh injured his hamstring in training, defender Caleb Briggs broke a finger, Max Nicholson and Jake Rainer were promoted to the 1st XI and on the morning of the final regular goalkeeper James McCoy withdrew due to illness. Connor Part stepped in to keep goal, with Daniel Reid and Sam Bingham added to the squad.

The Academy side, lining out in their new Leber Medical sponsored playing kit, started the game well with some slick passing but a defensive slip saw a penalty corner awarded to Wallace. The Lisburn side scored from a switched set-

piece to give them the lead at quarter time. However, minutes into the second period Thomas Cunningham burst into the opposition circle and his slash shot was deflected home by Simon Ferris to pull the Academy level. Ollie Small then saw his back post position nearly pay dividends, but the ball just trickled wide. Cunningham and Conor Doyle were now dominating the midfield and after they released Tom Hamilton, his cross flashed across the front of goal just out of the reach of Joshua Cash and Sam Bingham.

The second half saw the Academy boys on the front foot, with only the odd counterattack for the impressive defensive duo of Joshua Moles and Lewis Cousins to easily sweep up. Alfie Norris added a further threat upfront after his introduction and his presence helped Bann win another penalty corner. Noah Lutton subsequently scored with an eloquent reverse stick shot to put the

Academy ahead for the first time. Not to be outdone, Daniel Reid scored with an equally impressive reverse effort from open play to increase the lead and with minutes left on the clock, Adam Trimble's delightful lay-off saw Ferris score his second and put the game to bed as the Academy supporters cheered on the quality of the play.

So for the second consecutive season, Cousins lifted the Prior Shield for the Academy along with the unfortunate McHugh. Mark Miskelly was thrilled with the effort and end-product from his forward line.

Squad: Connor Part, Lewis Cousins, Joshua Moles, Tom Hamilton, Noah Lutton, Adam Trimble, Mark Hanna, Thomas Cunningham, Conor Doyle, Simon Ferris, Joshua Cash, Ollie Small, Alfie Norris, Adam Ireland, Sam Bingham, Daniel Reid.



Boys' Hockey

Ulster Schools' Dowdall Cup Final



Banbridge Academy 2nd XI 4 – 0 Friends' School Lisburn

The current Prior Shield holders faced off against a strong Friends' School Lisburn squad in the final of the Ulster Hockey Dowdall Cup at Havelock Park. After losing this final last season, many of the boys came into the game hungry for revenge. Eleven players in the squad were from Year 14, including captain Daniel McHugh who was returning from injury, so it was all or nothing for the 2nd XI with most of the boys knowing this was their last ever fixture for the school.

The first quarter began with plenty of chances for both teams. Vice Captain Lewis Cousins was to have a busy afternoon dealing with aerial threats from FSL but he cleaned up extremely effectively throughout the game. Banbridge tested the keeper a couple times but failed to be clinical in the circle.

In the second quarter the Academy really started to take control by moving the ball wide with pace, creating plenty of chances. One of these chances resulted in a short corner, which Jake Rainer fired

into the side netting (giving the Friends' goalkeeper no chance) to put Bann 1-0 in front. From the restart Friends' tried to advance the ball quickly but Tom Hamilton incepted and was alert to find Rainer in space and his blistering pace caught the Friends' defence off guard, allowing him to score his second with a chip over the advancing keeper – 2-0 to the Academy at half-time.

By the third quarter Bann were in full control with the centre back partnership of Cousins and Josh Moles dealing with any Friends' attack easily. Some great play from Thomas Cunningham and Conor Doyle resulted in Simon Ferris finding himself with space in the circle to sweep a reverse around the keeper to give Banbridge a three goal advantage.

The fourth quarter saw the introduction of a fan favourite, Adam Trimble, who calmly slotted into the left back role and neatly cleaned up any threats that came his direction. With a few minutes left on the clock, Rainer was still hungry for

his hat-trick and drove from just inside the halfway line at a tired FSL defence before slotting a reverse stick drive into the bottom corner. The game finished with all eleven leavers on the pitch, in what was a great way for the boys to end their school hockey careers after 7 years. Jake Rainer was undoubtedly the man of the match with his hat-trick in a resounding 4-0 victory. With Daniel McHugh and Lewis Cousins lifting the Dowdall Cup it signified the end of an historical unbeaten season for Leber Medical sponsored Banbridge Academy Boys' Hockey 2nd XI and head coach Mr Mark Miskelly.

Squad: James McCoy(GK), Connor Part(GK), Lewis Cousins(VC), Joshua Moles, Noah Luton, Tom Hamilton, Adam Trimble, Thomas Cunningham, Conor Doyle, Ben Farson, Mark Hanna, Simon Ferris, Jake Rainer, Daniel McHugh(C), Ollie Small, Joshua Cash, Adam Ireland, Daniel Reid.

Boys' Hockey

U14

This year the U14s were led by Mr Clarke with coaching from Mr Barlow, Mr Jess and Mr Walker. The team had a rocky start to the season by playing some top teams like Cookstown and R.B.A.I; they had a couple of tight games with Friends' School, Lisburn, Sullivan and Bangor during the friendlies at the start of the season.

They played Friends' in the first round of the Ferris Cup, with a draw to them earlier in the season, they knew that the Cup tie could go either way. With a short corner goal scored by Ross McCombe, they went 1-0 up; they had their best game of the season with Adam Liggett leading the back line and they fought for every ball until eventually the second goal was scored by Matthew Patterson and the tie was over! They progressed to the quarter finals.

With Sullivan the following week, they were away to Hollywood. The team were off to an average start, until they went down 1-0 and the heads dropped. After half-time the score was the same



until they won a short corner and Shaun Ward put it past the post man and into the back of the net. From then the story was different; everyone was lively and fighting for every ball. With a ball from the midfield through the solid defence of Sullivan to Max Murphy, he was taken down through the goal by the goalkeeper and won a stroke. Shaun Ward stepped up calmly to slot it past the keeper.

They next had Cookstown in the semi-finals, with the whole team looking revenge from last year as they had put the team out early in the Bannister Bowl. Ross and Harry Gough had put them

in front within a minute of pass-backs with a bit of skill in the midfield and a ball played through to Harry Gough who slotted it across the keeper's body. Cookstown replied quickly with them getting an equaliser within minutes. The game started to slip away with a couple of quick-fire goals from Cookstown, who went on to win the Ferris Cup later the following week.

The U14s despite a difficult start to the season had performed well in the Ferris Cup and hope to progress as a team into next season and to continue playing their high intensity hockey, that was shown throughout the Cup season

U13

Played: 17, Won: 11, Drew: 4, Lost:

**Player of the Season – Daniel McKee
Most Improved Player – Ben Greer**

With full pitch 11-a-side hockey being a new concept for the Under 13 boys, this season started with a hard fought draw against Cookstown. Little did anyone know that the season would end in exactly the same manner – except that draw would be in the Bannister Bowl final, which Cookstown then stole in a penalty shootout.

After an early season defeat against RBAI, captain Adam Liggett rallied his troops and they completed the season with only one more defeat in normal time, when a depleted team lost at Bangor Grammar School. Superb friendly wins at Grosvenor, Friends', Sullivan and Wallace



set the team up well for their post-Christmas Bannister Bowl Cup campaign.

Goal scoring was never a problem, with Cameron Jones scoring six goals in one match and there were numerous hat-tricks for Jay Nicholson, Harvey McBride, Daniel McKee and Owen Dobson. Defensively few goals were conceded with Isaac Steele winning every duel, and Henry Farrell and Patrick Hart

improving as defenders in every match. The goalkeeping double-act of Oliver Wakeling and Alexander Love spent most of the games watching the play in front of them as they had little action to deal with. Oscar Niblock did the dogged hard work in midfield, ably supported by Year 8 pupils Rory Lawson, Will Megaw and Callum McCombe.

The Bannister Bowl matches started

Boys' Hockey

with a comprehensive win at Kilkeel High School. Owen Dobson scored a wonderful drag flick from a penalty corner and Harvey McBride scored two delightful goals; one a neat deflection past the advancing goalkeeper, and the other was all his own work after he stole the ball from a defender and smashed it past the keeper. Daniel McKee scored two goals, as did Jay Nicholson, with Ben Greer and Callum McCombe also getting on the scoresheet. The quarter final against Wallace High School was a much different affair. A nervy 1-1 draw, after a Harvey McBride equaliser, saw the game being decided in a penalty shootout with Daniel McKee, Harvey McBride and Oscar Niblock all scoring

as Oliver Wakeling saved three Wallace attempts. The semi final win at Methody was another dominant display as Daniel McKee got four goals with Harvey McBride(2), Owen Dobson and Callum McCombe also scoring.

As mentioned earlier, the Bannister Bowl final was against Cookstown High School. They started the game strongly and went two goals in front early on. Daniel McKee got a goal back just before half time to give confidence to the Academy boys and they went on to dominate the second half, but alas could not score enough goals to win. Owen Dobson did scramble in an equaliser but the dreaded penalty shootout did

not prove successful this time for the Academy.

I wish all the players the very best of luck next season in the Ferris Cup and there is no doubt enough talent in this group to be successful for many seasons to come.

Squad: Oliver Wakeling, Alexander Love, Adam Liggett(c), Isaac Steele, Henry Farrell, Patrick Hart, Ally McCann, Daniel McKee, Owen Dobson, Jay Nicholson, Oscar Niblock, Ben Greer, Harvey McBride, Cameron Jones, Callum McCombe, Will Megaw, Rory Lawson, Reuben Murdock.

Year 8 Boys' Hockey



Boys' Hockey

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Boys' Hockey

Hockey Awards Dinner



1st XI Player of the Year: Matthew McKee pictured with Lee Tumilty, Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker and Principal Robin McLoughlin



1st XI Most Improved Player: Jake Rainer pictured with Lee Tumilty, Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker and Principal Robin McLoughlin



Matthew McKee: pictured receiving the Irish Schools' Captains Trophy with Lee Tumilty, Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker and Principal Robin McLoughlin



2nd XI Most Improved Player: James McCoy and **Player of the Year Lewis Cousins** pictured with Lee Tumilty, Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker and Principal Robin McLoughlin



U15 Most Improved Player: Stephen Grattan and **Player of the Year Sam Bingham** pictured with Lee Tumilty and Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker



U14 Most Improved Player: Matthew Patterson and **Player of the Year Ross McCombe** pictured with Lee Tumilty and Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker



U13 Most Improved Player: Ben Greer and **Player of the Year Daniel McKee** pictured with Lee Tumilty and Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker



U12 Most Improved Players: Elijah Miles, James Patterson and Player of the Year: Will Megaw, pictured with Lee Tumilty and Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker



Top Goal Contributor: James Evans pictured with Lee Tumilty, Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker and Principal Robin McLoughlin



Clubman of the Year: Craig Campbell pictured with Lee Tumilty, Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker and Principal Robin McLoughlin

Girls' Hockey

1st XI

Ruby Wilson

Our season started rapidly with a friendly preseason tournament at Wesley College, where we first played together with our new team, full of some new faces and lots of talent.

Back to regular training at Wednesday games and Thursday afternoons, we quickly bonded and became friends and not just teammates. The Super League was right around the corner and nerves were starting to rise as the 1XI pulled a difficult pool group.

Our first match was home against Coleraine Grammar School. Ruby Wilson, as captain of the 1XI led the girls out onto the pitch for our first competitive game of the season. With wins against both Coleraine and Royal School Dungannon, we were full of smiles. Next to play the BA side was the Royal School, Armagh, which is always a hard match. However we held our own and managed to come out of the game with a draw, placing second in our Super League pool. The BA girls were into the Quarter finals of the Super League and waited anxiously to see who we were going to face, while we continued to train with great determination.

Finally Saturday arrived and unfortunately it was not our day against Rainey, as our Super League journey was cut short. However we were proud of how we had played and we knew that it was time to focus on the Schools' Cup. After having an excellent Super League run, we found ourselves a bye straight into the 3rd Round and also won home territory for our first School Cup game, which gave us a huge amount of support against the rough Ballyclare High School side. With fabulous goals from Mya Gray and Pippa Wilson, we booked ourselves a spot in the quarter finals. With extra training sessions to perfect short corners, we were ready for our next game.

Once again we received a home game against Friends' School, this time on a late Tuesday night. Tensions in the



changing room before the match were high, but we settled our minds and played with determination that we belonged in the Schools' Cup Semi Finals. It was a close match with a 1-0 full time score, with Abbi Harrison being the one to find the backboard on a short corner, gaining us a ticket to the Semi Finals where once again we were to face Royal School, Armagh- our local rivals. With supporter buses booked, ribbons in hair and fake tan on (it's a must) the morning eventually arrived when the whole school came to back the Girls' 1XI Hockey at Playball, Stormont.

Unfortunately, the Schools' Cup game didn't go how we had hoped, but we held our heads high and thanked all our supporters and our coaches: Neil Madeley, Mrs Todd, Sam Farson and Julie Sally for all of their commitment in helping us get so far. We enjoyed every moment of school girl hockey this year and have made so many memories and unforgettable experiences.



Pippa Wilson and Mya Gray





Girls' Hockey

2nd XI

Darcey Milligan

What a season it has been! From the start, the enthusiasm of Banbridge Academy Girls' 2XI was shown in every match that was played, with wins over Coleraine, Bloomfield College, Sullivan, Dromore High and Royal School Dungannon. After the appointment of new coach Richard Glover, training proved to be very beneficial- building up fitness (alongside very early Monday morning strength and conditioning!), sharpening basics and rehearsing set pieces. The team proved to have plenty of potential for the upcoming season, as there were experienced players from the previous year as well as new emerging ones.

Starting off the season with a strong 7-0 win against Coleraine Grammar allowed the team to gain confidence in one another, and it was clear from then that everyone played well with each other. After convincingly winning all of the friendly matches that followed and keeping clean sheets from our amazing goalies (Leah Rodgers and Jasmine Magowan-Balfour).

November 24th came faster than we had anticipated- it was our first match in the McDowell Cup against Ballyclare Secondary. Nerves were high that afternoon, but with everyone playing strongly as a team and supporting one another, decisions and passes secured us a 8-0 win (goals from Ciara Patton X2, Ellie cousin X2, Zara McCormick, Maia Crawford, May Campbell and Rebekah Baker). The next match in the McDowell Cup was up next- against one of our toughest opponents yet of the season, Methodist College. With a score of 2-2 at the final whistle, we unfortunately lost in a nail biting run-in decider.



However, we did not let this dampen our spirits as we used this match to target what we needed to focus on in training. The quarter final of the McDowell Shield was up next against Bloomfield. We were determined and felt a lot of pressure during this match. Much to our delight, it resulted in the final score being 8-0. Congratulations to Ciara Patton after scoring a hat-trick, Maia Crawford (scoring two), Rebecca Baker, Rebecca Walker and Ellie Cousins for scoring also.

Travel to Lurgan Junior High for a close semi final in the McDowell Shield against Wallace came next. Blasting my speaker whilst on the bus, singing away and braiding each other's hairs, reflects how close we were as a team and we did not just want to win for ourselves, but for each other. With butterflies in our stomachs, we were ready to give blood, sweat and tears on that pitch. The sun was shining brightly in each team's eyes, and with both teams having strong performances, the final score was 0-0, taking it to extra time. As the format was silver goal, Banbridge had many chances but couldn't get the final touch to edge ahead. Here we were again for another



round of run ins!

Five brave players volunteered to take the run-ins and by the end, both teams were still level and it went to sudden death. Unfortunately we missed and Wallace had won. Although we knew it was the end of our season, we were all very disappointed and some tears were shed, but when we reflected back we were so proud of our performances and for the girls who had put themselves forward for the run-ins both times in the season.

On a personal note I would like to say a big thank you to all the girls for making it truly a season I will never forget. The laughs and stories we shared made our hockey that extra bit special. This was a team of talented and skilled girls, who I'm sure will go on to achieve great things in their hockey careers.

Finally, I would like to say special thanks to Miss Anderson, Miss Sprat, Richard and Julie for their continued encouragement, support and dedication to girls' hockey. Without you all, this season wouldn't have been possible!



Girls' Hockey

3rd XI

R. Dobson

The 3XI kicked the season off with a friendly match against Friends' School Lisburn. Despite most of the girls never having played on a team together before, we put up a good fight. However Friends' fielded a strong well-drilled team and won 2-0. We didn't let the score dampen our spirits but instead used it to target what we needed to focus on in training. The following weekend we were up against Methody and came away with our first win as a team, 2-0.

Shortly after the girls had an away game against Sullivan Upper, which was another friendly and we came away with a 2-0 win. The first goal was scored by Cara Purdy, after being set up beautifully by Abbie McCormick. The girls were then able to win a short corner. The ball was injected to the top of the D where Lucy Thompson played an amazing straight strike, successfully securing our second goal of the match. Player of the match was Eimear Wilson who had some great tackles and was a massive part of ensuring we didn't concede any goals, along with goalkeeper Imogen Hunter.

Our biggest win of the season was against Dromore High on home turf, with us winning 5-0. The first quarter started off strong, with two goals being scored by Lucy Thompson and Cara Purdy. Going into the second quarter spirits were high and the girls were able to win a short corner. The ball was injected to the top of the D, where it was then passed to the back post where Megan McPolin had a lovely deflection and secured a third goal for the team. In the third quarter the attack was strong, however Dromore's defence put up a good fight and didn't allow us to get any goals. In the fourth quarter the girls were starting to get tired but didn't give up and were able to secure two more goals, which were scored by Lucy Thompson and Megan McPolin. After a fantastic game and scoring two goals for the team, Megan McPolin was the player of the match.

Our first round of the Cup followed a few



weeks later against Strabane. After the hour and a half journey to Strabane and quite a few girls feeling travel sick, we were unsure of how the match would go but nonetheless we put up a tough fight. The first and second quarter were very equal between the two teams with each team having roughly the same number of chances at getting a goal, however, no one scored. The score was 0-0 at half time, but the girls came back out showing great determination and at the end of the third quarter Megan McPolin scored. Going into the fourth quarter the score was 1-0 to us and the girls were feeling confident of a win. Strabane had a good few chances at a goal but were unsuccessful and the score remained 1-0 to Banbridge when the final whistle went. April McFarlane was player of the match.

After Christmas, we headed into the



second round of the Cup against Friends' School, Lisburn. We knew that they were a strong team, as we had previously lost to them at the start of the season, however, we went out and gave it our all. There were some great saves and defending from the Banbridge girls with a few chances at a goal, but unfortunately we were unsuccessful and lost 4-0 to a tough team. Regardless of not making it further in the Cup, we all had a fun season together and looked forward to the next season.

A big thank you to Mrs Spratt, Miss Anderson, Mrs Todd, Julie Sally and Richard Glover for their continuous hard work and time spent coaching us throughout the season and to all the girls too, who put in their best efforts in all our matches and every week in training.



Girls' Hockey

4th XI

The 4th XI season started with a lot of enthusiasm and energy as everyone was excited to be back at hockey. Numbers at regular training grew and grew, showing the dedication to learning new skills and teamwork. We started off strong with a great team gaining confidence on the pitch. After honing their skills in friendly matches, the season high came when the team made it to the Semi Final of the 4th XI Cup.

Unfortunately, they were defeated by a strong Armagh side, but they took the positives from it knowing they had grown as a team throughout the season. Morale was still high, and under the guidance of Richard Glover and Miss McCullough, everyone continued as a team, playing friendlies, and putting lots of effort into practice.



Overall, it was a great and fun season for the 4th XI team with an eagerness to continue playing in the season to come.



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Girls' Hockey

U14A

Summary of the Season

- Win against Coleraine 1-0.
- Draw (1-1) against Royal School, Armagh.
- Win (2-1) against Clounagh Junior High School.
- Win against Larne in the second round of the Junior Cup (6-1).
- Win (5-0) against Stratheran.
- Win (2-0) against Friends' School (third round of Cup).
- Win (3-0) against Belfast High in the quarter finals of the Cup.
- Win (2-1) against B.R.A (2 goals from Mollie Tumilty)
- Win against Wallace (1-0) final (1 goal Sophie Tate) 5 nil win against Killcomaine
- Beat rsd 3-2

JSAI

Drew 0-0 with Crescent
2-1 win against Kilkenny
1 nil loss against Salerno
1 nil win against Beaufort
Girls' Hockey: U14a

The girls' u14a team had their first game of the season against Coleraine Grammar School winning 1 nil. Continuing our preparations for the Junior Cup, we played against Armagh and CJHS and came away with 1 tight draw and a 2-1 win. We then had our first Cup game in the second round against Larne Grammar School. The girls all played super, and we achieved a 6-nil win. We then progressed to the third round against Friends'; it was a tight game in the first half, but we broke through in the second half scoring 2 goals to take the victory, which boosted us on to the quarter final.



The squad then travelled to Belfast High School to compete for a place in the semi-final. We started the game strong and with lots of possession, resulting in us leading 2 nil at half time and then scoring another one to make it 3 nil, which allowed us to progress onto the semis. In the preparation match for our semi, the girls came out with a strong 5 nil win against Strathearn.

Next up was the semi-final, where it was a very tight game against a strong B.R.A side, but the girls came through with a 2-nil victory with Mollie Tumilty scoring both goals to secure us a spot in the final. It was finally the day of the Ulster Junior Cup Final, where we faced Wallace in a cracking game. The girls started the game nervously in the first half, but quickly found their feet. After only 5 minutes in the second half, Sophie Tate scored the only goal of the match and the girls held the game out to win the Mid Ulster Junior Cup.

Following our successes in the Ulster Junior Cup the squad travelled down to Dublin to compete in the June Smith,

All Irelands. Our first game was against Crescent College. We started the game well with lots of possession and chances, but we couldn't find the back of the net, meaning the game ended in a 0-0 draw. There was a tight turnaround before our next game against Kilkenny where the girls played superbly to get a 2-1 victory, with goals scored by Katie Leslie and Ruby Johnson.

Our next game was against Salerno, where the girls dominated the game but against the run of play, we conceded a goal and couldn't get one back. The final game of the day was against the host Loreto Beaufort, where the girls picked themselves up from their defeat winning the game 1 nil-with a goal scored by Katie Leslie. Overall the girls placed 2nd bringing an end to a fantastic season!

Games Played: 15
Goals Scored: 34
Goals Conceded: 7
Wins: 12
Draws: 2
Losses: 1



Girls' Hockey

All Ireland Junior Schoolgirl Championship April 2023

Banbridge Academy Girls hockey have had a season to remember with the 1st XI getting into the Schools' Cup Semi Final and other senior teams doing well in their own competitions. The Junior Hockey team were crowned Ulster Junior Schools Champions in March and it qualified them to play the June Smith All Ireland Championships where they met the respective winners of each province to play for the All Ireland Champions title on Thursday 20th April.

Preparation over Easter went well and the girls were prepared and determined to make their mark. Their first game was against Crescent College, Munster. The game was evenly matched however despite the local girls coming through stronger in the 2nd half the game finished nil all. Next up was Kilkenny College, South East. Yet again the Banbridge girls showed a lot of strength

and made sure they made the most of their opportunities in-front of goals and won the match 2-1 putting them at the top of the leaderboard with best goals for. Their third match was against Salerno, Connaught. While legs were starting to get tired, determination and enthusiasm was not. Despite having all the attacking ally and short corners, Salerno counterattacked and grabbed a goal against the run of play. Banbridge Academy threw all that they had to equalise but won no success. This loss meant that they have to depend on other results to go their way to be in the running for 1st position. The last match was against Loreto Beaufort Leinster, the hosts of the tournament. With the disappointment of match 3 behind them the girls found new strength and played some of their best hockey of the tournament and beat the Dublin side 1-0. This result meant the Banbridge side

came away with the silver medals in the All Ireland championship with Crescent College being crowned All Ireland winners. Despite showing off the best hockey that junior hockey had seen and being disappointed not to have come home with the all Ireland title they were still happy to be ending an incredible season on a high.

Their journey was not possible without the support of our sponsors, The Half Way House, Purple Heather, Pepper Dromore Ltd, AJ construction and Select Insurance. Other thanks goes to Donaghies for their relentless help with kit and also to Centra for helping provide refreshments on the day.

With most of the team stepping up into senior hockey next year the future looks bright for Banbridge Academy Girls' Hockey.

Girls' Hockey

U14B

Captain Francesca Duffy

Our U14B hockey team, coached by Dr Dobson, had another great season. Every Tuesday afternoon the team would meet for training, improving our skills and fitness, which led to 5 wins, and only two losses.

This season, the team hit the ground running. In our first match against RSA, there were many moments of dominance and strong attacking play; Martha and Grace securing a 4-0 win with two goals each with the help of our strong midfield players, Zoe and Lola. On a high from such a great start to the season, we came out of our match against Sullivan with a 2-0 win, with more great goals from Emma and Grace, and the lovely

goalkeeping from Ellie meant that we came out with yet another clean sheet against a very strong team!

Disappointingly, our winning streak came to an end when it came to the match against Dromore High's 'A Team'. With many attacking runs and close calls, in the second half Martha managed to get a goal against strong defence, but unfortunately we were unlucky and came away with a 2-1 finish.

On March 29th, ready to play Dromore again, we managed to come away with a great 5-0 win. Allegra's hat-trick, a goal each for Martha and Clíodhna and great goalkeeping and defending, meant that

our team came away with a result that none of us imagined.

At the Girl's Hockey Awards Night held at the Belmont, Martha Malcomson won a very deserved 'Players' Player of The Year' award, and Clíodhna McGrath won 'Most Improved Player' award, again, very well deserved.

Thank you to Dr Dobson, Mr Campbell and Mr Bingham ('Bingy') for helping us in being better players, (the fitness training definitely paid off!) and thank you to all the members of the squad who took part in matches this year, as this season was one to remember.



U13A

Hannah Carswell

This season the U13 A team performed very well, winning the Mid-Ulster League by remaining unbeaten.

They worked extremely hard to improve their skills and progress as a team, under the guidance of Julie Sally, and it paid off! At the start of the year, Molly Tumility and Maisie Nicholl (both Year 8), were added to the squad and fitted

in seamlessly. There were many great performances throughout the year in all areas of the pitch.

Three players were selected for the Ulster U15 Talent Development Programme: Hannah Carswell, Casey Cousins and Katie Leslie, and following further assessment, Katie was selected for the Ulster U16 Development Squad.

Her performances this year have also resulted in her being selected to train with next year's 1st XI squad.

This team are now working hard in their preparation for next year, where they hope to be as successful, and follow in the footsteps of this year's U14s in the Ulster Junior Cup and beyond.





Girls' Hockey

U13B

Harriett McClelland- Captain

The U13b have training every Tuesday afternoon with the excellent coaching of Dr Dobson assisted by Mr Bingham and Mr Campell.

We started the year on the 1st of October by playing the strong Royal School, Armagh. This was an intense match (especially with it being our first of the season) but our defenders played well and didn't let the ball get into the back of the net. With some great attacking work, we got a great goal and came away with a 1-0 victory. This got our team in high spirits and well-motivated for our next match against Sullivan Upper, after which we also came away with a 1-0 victory. Only two days later we played Lurgan, who always have a strong team. While losing 1-0 at half time, we got advice from Dr Dobson that enabled us to score in the 2nd half, resulting in a finishing score of 1-1.

Later that week we travelled just down

the road to our neighbours... Dromore. We worked well as a team and with some great defence, secured another 1-0 win. Our matches stopped for a month until mid-November, which gave us time to develop as a team and work on a few drills that needed attention. Then on the 12th of November the sturdy team Kilkeel came our way and we as a team were unfortunately not determined enough for this match, which meant Kilkeel went away with a 2-0 win.

In the following two matches we beat Strathern 1-0 and Omagh, a dominating 8-0. In return to our Dromore fixture, they got a goal in the last minute of the

game, resulting in an unfortunate 1-0 loss. Our matches of the year finished in a triple win by playing: Markethill, 1-0 win, Banbridge High (win) and Tandragee Junior High- another 8-0 domination. Throughout the year we have made some massive improvements and overall we scored 22 goals and conceded 5. In match terms we got 7 wins, 1 draw and 3 losses.

Thank you to my amazing team and coaches throughout the year.



My experience with U12A hockey

Mollie Tumilty

The U13b have training every Tuesday afternoon with the excellent coaching of Dr Dobson assisted by Mr Bingham and Mr Campell.

We started the year on the 1st of October by playing the strong Royal School, Armagh. This was an intense match (especially with it being our first of the season) but our defenders played well and didn't let the ball get into the back of the net. With some great attacking work, we got a great goal and came away with a 1-0 victory. This got our team in high spirits and well-motivated for our next match against Sullivan Upper, after which we also came away with a 1-0 victory. Only two days later we played Lurgan, who always have a strong team. While losing 1-0 at half time, we got advice from Dr Dobson that enabled us to score in the 2nd half, resulting in a finishing score of 1-1.

Later that week we travelled just down the road to our neighbours... Dromore. We worked well as a team and with some great defence, secured another 1-0 win. Our matches stopped for a month until mid-November, which gave us time to develop as a team and work on a few drills that needed attention. Then on the 12th of November the sturdy team Kilkeel came our way and we as a team were unfortunately not determined enough for this match, which meant Kilkeel went away with a 2-0 win.

In the following two matches we beat Strathern 1-0 and Omagh, a dominating 8-0. In return to our Dromore fixture, they got a goal in the last minute of the game, resulting in an unfortunate 1-0 loss. Our matches of the year finished in a triple win by playing: Markethill, 1-0 win, Banbridge High (win) and Tandragee

Junior High- another 8-0 domination. Throughout the year we have made some massive improvements and overall we scored 22 goals and conceded 5. In match terms we got 7 wins, 1 draw and 3 losses.

Thank you to my amazing team and coaches throughout the year.

U12B

Julie Sally

The Under 12B team was coached by Mr Bingham and what a difficult task he had! He had a squad size of 20 plus for matches, but did extremely well to ensure each and everyone got pitch time whilst also making sure the girls enjoyed their hockey. There was a mix of wins, draws and unfortunately losses but onwards and upwards for next season!

Girls' Hockey

Hockey Awards

Banbridge Academy Girls' Hockey held their Annual Awards meal in the Belmont Hotel on Wednesday the 26th April. The main hall was filled with players and coaches from different teams, all dressed up and ready to celebrate each other's achievements. 1XI coach Neil Madeley was the magnificent MC for the evening, and our principal, Mr. McLoughlin, and Vice Principal Mr. McFarland were in attendance, adding to the celebratory atmosphere.

Following a wonderful meal, the main event of the evening ensued, with players from each team from U12 level, through to our Senior 1st XI recognised and rewarded for their hard work and achievements throughout the year: including 3 representatives at Ulster level, with Pippa Wilson included in the U-18 squad and Alyssa Somerville and Ruby Johnston making the U-16

squad. As the awards were given out it was inspiring to see the faces of all the players light up as they received their individual awards.

Ruby Wilson, our 1st XI captain, addressed the audience on behalf of all players, appreciating the efforts of all the staff and the school management's support for fostering enthusiasm for sports.

The night's theme of recognition extended to Mrs Sally and Mrs Todd when they were presented with special bouquets of flowers for their hard work and dedication to the teams throughout the season.

Mrs Todd took the opportunity to quickly share a review of all the teams' accomplishments throughout the year and thanked all staff for their coaching



contributions.

Overall, the evening was a resounding success, thanks to the collaboration of the school administration and the Belmont House Hotel. Lastly, a special thanks to all the parents and numerous sponsors who continue to support girls' hockey in Banbridge Academy throughout the year.



U12 Prize winners Tilly Tumilty, Scarlett McBride, Edie Scott and Mollie Tumilty pictured with their coaches Peter Bingham, Craig Campbell, Julie Sally, Head of Girls' hockey Gemma Todd and Principal Robin McLoughlin.



U13 Prize winners Abi Cherry, Evie Hobson, Mya Kennedy, and Katie Leslie pictured with their coaches, Craig Campbell, Mark Barlow, Ros Dobson, Peter Bingham, Julie Sally, Head of Girls' hockey Gemma Todd and Principal Robin McLoughlin.



U14 Prize winners Ellie Walker, Ruby Johnston and Martha Malcolmson pictured with their coaches Sam Farson, Craig Campbell, Ros Dobson, Head of Girls' hockey Gemma Todd and Principal Robin McLoughlin.



3rd XI Prize winners Sophia Brown and Carly Fong pictured with their coaches Emma McCullough, Julie Sally, Head of Girls' hockey Gemma Todd and Principal Robin McLoughlin.



2nd XI Prize winners Zara McCormick, Lucy Friar and Ellie Cousins pictured with their coaches Sarah Anderson, Elaine Spratt, Head of Girls' hockey Gemma Todd and Principal Robin McLoughlin.



1st XI Prize winners Charlotte Waugh and Ellen Jack pictured with their coaches Sam Farson, Neil Madeley, Julie Sally, Head of Girls' hockey Gemma Todd and Principal Robin McLoughlin.

Netball

Nicole Beggs (Coach)

This year netball at Banbridge Academy had its best year yet! The girls have shown great enthusiasm and have all worked so hard to finish the season off with fantastic wins or great improvement from their first match.

As you read each report from the team captains, it is evident that each squad had a busy season and came across some tough opponents but they never let this deter their determination at each fixture.

Both Schools' League and Schools' Plate Finals Day were a highlight of the season - with five teams no less in attendance! The Senior B squad came away with the win and they fully deserved winning in extra time.

We are thankful this year for the great support of local sponsors: O'Rourke Motors, McCormick Fleet Solutions, Ballydown Kids' Academy and Perfect Image Beauty.

I would also like to thank Miss Hall and Mrs Adair for their help this year coaching; it is very much appreciated.

We enjoyed a wonderful Awards Night in the Vault in April, where the girls enjoyed great food and chat before moving on to the distribution of awards.

Intermediate Player of the Year
Lucy Megaw (not pictured)

Intermediate Most Improved
Ciara Patton

Senior A Player of the Year
Oliveen O'Rourke

Senior A Most Improved
Selena Cunningham

Senior B Player of the Year
Grace Wills

Senior B Most Improved
Katie Scott



Junior/Minor Awards

We had a fun afternoon with pizza, music and games on a Tuesday afternoon to celebrate the success of the Junior A and B and Minor squads. The girls have shown great attitude and potential throughout their season, coming up against some strong well-developed teams. I am so proud of all the girls and excited to see their talent progress in the coming years.

Congratulations to all this year's award winners:

Minor Player of the Year
Abbie Magill

Minor Most Improved
Maddison Wilson

Junior A Player of the year
Gracie Johnstone

Junior A Most Improved
Tara Kennedy

Junior B Player of the Year
Ellie Walker

Junior B Most Improved
Ruby Archer



Minor winners



Junior A winners



Minor and Junior squads



Netball

George Royal Academy Visit

We had the privilege of welcoming George Royal Academy this year to play a netball match against a mix of our Senior A and B squads.

George Royal Academy is a non-profit private school for the underprivileged students in George, South Africa. The students receive full bursaries providing them with quality education, while also tending to their basic needs including food, transport and clothing. The reality for most students in townships in South Africa is that classrooms are overcrowded and education is poor. GRA believes access to quality education is crucial for uplifting students and giving them opportunities to bring about change.

Their Northern Ireland Netball Tour is a culmination of their academic and sporting time at the school - 2nd March until the 23rd of March in which they played 11 games and had a 100% win record.



Our girls really enjoyed the competitive game and loved watching the style and different skills the GRA girls brought to the court on the day. We enjoyed some fun and food afterwards with everyone.

The tour is funded by local NI businesses, churches and schools.



Netball Fundraiser

This year we had our annual fundraiser to raise money for our netball funds.

We had numerous mixed teams playing in a tournament on a Monday afternoon. It was great fun and the winning team got their hands on the winning trophy kindly donated from Gransha Trophies. Thank you to all that took part.





Netball

Senior 'A'

Oliveen O'Rourke (Captain)

TEAM:

Oliveen O'Rourke (C)
Catherine Black (VC)
Selena Cunningham
Sasha Herron
Lois Ginnif
Ellie Lindsay
Katie Mulligan
Katie Scott
Grace Wills
Megan Williams
Lara Crothers
Brooke Gilliland
Zara Moore

This past year has been a brilliant year for netball in Banbridge Academy! We started the year off with a very successful fundraiser in the form of a mixed netball tournament, which saw students from fifth year upwards taking part after school. There was great fun had by all, with the winning team taking home a trophy kindly supplied by Gransha Engraving. Overall this was a great afternoon, while fundraising for new netball dresses.

Moving into the season we started the Senior Netball NI League very well, winning against St Ronan's with a score of 28-18 at home. For our second round we travelled to St Paul's where after leading for the first half, St Paul's managed to gain the lead again with a final score of 28-23. Moving onto our third round we were hopeful for our last match against a very strong Sacred Heart side, so when we met them at home, we were expecting a very tough match and after a hard fought sixty minutes, Sacred Heart took the win with a score of 26-17. After an unfortunate end to the League, we then put all our focus to the Netball NI Senior Shield Competition.

In our First round of the Shield we met a very strong Belfast High team in Lisburn Racquets, who unfortunately knocked us out of the Shield meaning we progressed to the Semi Final of the Senior Plate. Here we met Rathmore in Lisburn Racquets; the team worked brilliantly together and the score went

in our favour winning- meaning we were heading to Finals Day!

During our finals preparation, we had the pleasure of hosting Sports Academy George during their Northern Ireland Netball Tour. We had a brilliant morning getting to know the girls over lunch and the wonderful work that their school does for the children in George, South Africa. Then we played a very tough match against them in the afternoon, where we unfortunately lost but we were very grateful for the opportunity to play such a brilliant team.



After all our preparations and extra training, we were heading to finals day feeling prepared and kitted out in our new fleeces that had been kindly sponsored by O'Rourke Motors.

In the final we faced Glenola, a very strong team that we have played multiple times throughout the years so we knew the match would be tough and that was seen at half time when they led by 11 points. We did however manage to dominate the third quarter, closing the gap to only 2 points. Unfortunately we didn't manage to close the gap further in the last quarter, with Glenola taking

the win with a score of 32-28. It was a difficult loss to take, especially knowing it was so close, along with it being most of the team's last match for Banbridge Academy after playing for seven years. Through the sport we truly made friends for life and each of us will be forever grateful for the opportunity to play a final representing our school, for our last match with some of our best friends.

To finish the Season off we had our awards night in the Vault, Banbridge and it was brilliant to catch up after the season ended. After our wonderful meal the awards were handed out, with

Oliveen O'Rourke getting Senior Player of the Year and Selena Cunningham getting Most Improved Player. It was a brilliant season and a great way to finish out seven great years at the Academy.

Thank you to all the staff who helped throughout the year, especially Mrs Adair helping with games and Mrs Beggs, Head of Netball, who we would also like to congratulate on being a finalist of NNI schools' coach of the year. She truly deserved it after putting in so much time and effort to ensure the continuous progression of Netball in school.

Netball

Northern Ireland U17 Selection for Grace Wills

I was first introduced to Netball in Primary 7 at Bridge Primary when Sarah Porter, the council Sports Development Officer, brought a taster session into school. I instantly fell in love with the sport and joined Banbridge Netball Club soon after. When I moved to Banbridge Academy I continued developing my skills in games and afterschool. My initial position was in Goal Defence and I was selected for the U13 Southern Area Development Squad. This was my first real taste of competitive netball and I just loved it!

Unfortunately, Covid hit, and lockdown prevented any game time or training and while this was frustrating, I used this time to do some online courses to widen my netball knowledge. I took part in the NetballNI Introduction to coaching and umpiring courses online. When netball play eventually resumed, I tried an attacking position and was delighted to captain Banbridge U16's team into the League finals! My coach Kate Harrup then nominated me for Northern Ireland U17 trials, where I was up against 200 other players and was successful in making the development squad. This was an amazing opportunity to represent my country on an international level.

As a squad, we worked towards trials for the European Championships which were happening in Antrim in February 2023. NetballNI provided Strength and Conditioning coaching at Ulster University and we trained weekly with the national coaches working on game play and tactics. In November 2022 I found out that I had been selected for a Mary Peters' Trust Award to help with European training costs for our squad, this was such an honour. It was a nervous wait however to see which squad members would qualify

to represent Northern Ireland at the European Championships. Finally, the squad was selected and not only was I chosen as Goal Shooter/Attack, but I was also made Team Captain!

The European Championships ran over 4 days in February 2023. It was such an exciting time! We were in the Challenge



On the first day we faced the Republic of Ireland and unfortunately nerves took over and the expectation and scale of the event got to many of us, as the result didn't go in our favour. However, we rallied around and on day 2 we came out hungrier than ever. Our first match on the second day was against Switzerland and we got our first win of the day. Our passes were stronger, more accurate and created more space for better match play. With fewer nerves and the previous match defeat in the back of our minds, we were motivated and pushed hard for our first win. I was even awarded Player of the Match.

The turnaround was quick and we tried to recover quickly to face the Isle of Man that afternoon. We seemed to find our flow and came away with another convincing win! Our streak continued and we finished our tournament with another win against Gibraltar and a silver medal. I had such an amazing experience that week and made so many netball friends along the way. The support I had was amazing and I would do it all over again if I had the chance!

After the Europeans the excitement did not stop, as I was chosen to be an NI ambassador for NetballNI. Following this I went back to club netball and made the decision to transfer to Kingsway Netball Club, where I

made my senior debut for their Premier League 2nds. Upon returning to school netball, Mrs Beggs coached us to win our school senior league and reached two finals for the Schools' Cup, which is such an achievement!

What a year it has been! I really hope that I can continue developing and look forward to trialling for U19/U21s in September again and to see what the future holds.



Netball

Senior 'B' Team



The 2022/2023 season started with matches in the Netball Northern Ireland Schools' League. The girls met Friends' School Lisburn on our home court and walked away with a win, leaving the court with a final score of 30-16. Emily Waddell was player of the match for her tremendous efforts throughout.

We then played Wallace High School and after an intense 4 quarters, we walked away with a win of 32-23 that secured our position in the final of the league. Katie Scott as centre was recognised for her efforts in crucially feeding the ball into the shooters and for her key intercepts. On February 9th 2023, we met Sullivan Upper in the final of the Netball Northern Ireland Schools' League. It was a nail biting match from start to finish. The score tied at 6-6 by the end of the first quarter and then again at 13-13 by half time. Tensions were high and everyone was playing their best. With still nothing separating the score by the end of a tight third quarter which sat at 17-17, everything was still to play for. In the final quarter, we pulled ahead but it finished 21-21 and so was put to extra time. Due to amazing intercepts from our defence and vital teamwork we secured and maintained a lead which meant when the whistle blew, the final score was 25-23. Emotions were high and we knew our determination and the

dedication of our coach had paid off as we picked up gold.

In the Northern Ireland Schools' Shield Competition, we were ready to fight for the Plate. Getting a bye in the first round gave us time to gel as a team, polish off our set plays and be prepared to meet notoriously tough teams. We met Glenlola Collegiate to play for a place in the semi-finals and after an intense 4 quarters, we came out on top and progressed to the next round with excitement but with the knowledge that the job was not yet finished. Our team met Down High School and we walked away with the win which earned us a spot in the NI Netball School Shield Final. This gave us confidence as a team, settled our nerves and reinforced our match play tactics. Heading into Finals Day the tensions were heightened and the reality of what we were playing for kicked in as we made our way to Lisburn Racquets. We were against a very skilful and ruthless Belfast High School side. Despite our explosive passion, consistent fight for interceptions and flowing circle rotation which helped us stay in the game, we walked away with silver medals rather than the Plate.

Overall, the Senior Bs had an outstanding year, bonding as a team, lifting both gold and silver medals and preparing for next

year's season. We have learnt a lot as a team and developed massively, all of which we will put into practice in next year's season.

TEAM

Katie Mulligan (C)
Grace Wills (VC)
Katie Scott
Megan Williams
Lilia McKinney
Taylor Barlow
Eva Hampton
Lois Clydesdale
Eimear Simpson
Emily Waddell

Netball

Intermediate Team

Intermediate netball was tough and hard hitting this season. We had a strong squad of 13 ready for on court action every match. Alex King captained the team with Lassara Magennis being vice captain. We faced challenging schools in the Netball NI schools' league, starting with St Paul's away. Despite an outstanding performance from our defenders, the team finished with an unfortunate loss.

We had lots of matches in the league with a strong home win against St Mary's High winning 30-14. Thanks to super effort from shooters and tight defenders who got the ball up through centre court to keep the scoreboard ticking over.

Our team was in the Netball NI Shield Competition passing through round one via a forfeit from Rathmore getting a



place in round two, which unfortunately finished in a narrow defeat against Lagan College that brought the end to our 2022/23 season. Many thanks to our Coach Mrs Beggs.

Team: Alex King, Lassara Magennis, Jessica McCollough, Anna Atkins, Olivia McDowell, Ellie Cousins, Lucy Megaw, Kristen Ginnif, Arianne Bell, Ciara Patton, Rachel Greer, Lucy Hodgen and Rachel Moore.

Minor Team

Sophie Black - Captain

The 2023 Minor team consisted of 13 players: Sophie Black (Captain), Casey Cousins (Vice Captain), Gwenan Adam, Erin Dempsy, Abbie Magil, Maddison Wilson, Isabel Clyde, Nancy McCusker, Abbey Cherry, Juila Nesbitt, Tara Crawford, Chelsey Joslin and Anna Bell. Considering this was the first year we all played together, we did very well.

Our first match was on November 7th; it was at home against Killicomaine Junior High School. This was an extremely close game and it ended up a draw, with the final score being 10-10. Abbie Magil was awarded player of the match for her amazing effort throughout the court.

The second match we played was against St Mark's High School on November 21st. This time we were able to pull ahead and win with a score of 12-7. Player of the match was awarded to two players, for always being aware of the space that they could go into to safely receive the ball; it was received by Abbie Magil and Casey Cousins.



The next match we played was on December 5th. We played against St Ronan's. We were able to hold our own all the way through until half time, with the score being 5-4. Then St Ronan's decided to step up to take the win in the last couple of seconds.

It was extremely close and none of us knew who would win. The scores were

9-10 to them. We had an outstanding performance from Nancy McCusker who stepped in for Sophie Black as Goalkeeper.

Our final match was against St Mary's on December 15th. All the players were amazing in this match, and it was a great way to end our season. This time there was a clear winner and we were able to get an astonishing 8-0 win.



Netball

Junior 'A' Netball

Tasja Sneddon (Captain)

The Junior As netball team have had a great season this year. We played a total of 10 matches between league, shield and friendlies. In the Northern Ireland school league we won 3/4 matches, playing and beating St Ronan's 18-11, Lurgan Junior high 33-7 and St Paul's 16:6 with our player of the match being Wing Defender Zara Nicholl. Unfortunately we lost narrowly to Our Lady's in our semi final league match but held our own due to the great intercepts of player of the match, Ruby Johnstone as goal keeper. In the Netball Northern Ireland Shield Competition we persevered through Round 1 against St Paul's and round 2 against Ballymena Academy winning 10:9. Unfortunately in the semi finals we played against our Junior B team due to the match ups. We continued to the finals playing against Glenlola Collegiate in a

tight match with only a couple of goals separating us at halftime. However in the final quarter, Glenlola pulled ahead leaving a final score of 14-20, bringing the season to an end. We are very proud of everyone who won awards, especially Gracie Johnstone who won the Player Of The Year and Tara Kennedy winning most improved.

I am glad to have been a part of this squad this year with my teammates; Ruby Johnstone, Gracie Johnstone, Emma Newell, Zara Nicholl, Grace Mussan, Christina Bickerstaff, Tara Kennedy and Lexie Kerr (vice captain).

I am proud of the squad's successes and achievements and hope for the team to do even better next year with the help of our Coach Nicole Beggs.



Junior 'B' Team

Abigail Walker (Captain)

Our Junior B netball team started the year with our team of twelve, working towards the Northern Ireland School League. Our first league match was in November at home against Killicomaine but unfortunately, we lost 8-2. We continued working hard and although we suffered a second defeat against Sacred Heart, we were making progress. Soon after we played St Mark's High and left overjoyed having won 10-6, feeling more like a team and excited to continue to improve. Our final League match was another win against St Mary's. Sadly, we did not make it into the final of the League, however we qualified for the Shield.

In addition to our competition matches we played a friendly match against Dromore High, which was an enjoyable experience.

The next match in the Shield was against Down High and our 9-7 win sent us into

the semi-finals - against our very own 'A team'! While we lost, it was great to see the friendships on the court between both teams working towards the final.

I loved seeing our team coming together this year and to be a part of the experience with my teammates: Mya Jess, Rebekah Mathews, Abigail McConvil, Evie Cowan, Ellie Walker, Caitlin McErean, Izzie Taylor, Ruby Archer, Cliodhna McGrath, Ella Bell and Charlotte Hampton (vice-Captain). We couldn't have achieved what we did without each other match by match, both on the court and supporting from the side.

Congratulations to those who achieved 'Player of the Match' including: Ellie, Ella, Ruby and Cliodhna. We finished the year off with a pizza party and prize giving, with Ellie Walker winning 'Player of the Year' and Ruby Archer winning 'Most Improved'. I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the team this year and



can't wait to see what happens in the year to come. A special thanks must go to our incredible coach Mrs Beggs who has encouraged and supported us week by week.

Netball

U13 & U15 Southern Development Squads



Well done to Maisie Nicholl (Year 8) and Sophie Black (Year 9) who were both selected for the U13 Northern Ireland Southern Development squad. The girls worked hard at training sessions throughout the year and had several matches against the other Northern Ireland Regions.



U15 girls pictured with Mr McLoughlin and coach Nicole Beggs

Netball Experiences: Year 8

The netball team here has given me some great experiences and I have made lots of new friends while playing for them. We've played a few teams like Wallace and Dromore High, which was good fun as the games were just friendlies. I loved playing netball in Year 8! It was really fun; I made a lot of new friends and learnt so many new skills. I played in all of the matches against Rathmore Grammar, Wallace and Dromore. It was so fun to go to different schools and play against them. Our coach Mrs Beggs is really fun and a very good coach, as she is always identifying ways that the team could improve on for next time. I've really enjoyed playing netball and being able to progress throughout the year and I look forward to playing next year as a proper team in the league.

Alexandra Ervine

My name's Lily and I'm in Year 8 and have really enjoyed playing netball this year. Apart from being very fun, it was useful to help me learn skills that I will take on for my next year in netball. I would highly recommend any Year 8 to get involved as it's a great experience, made better by a lovely coach.

Lily Staffor

My experience with netball in Year 8 has been really good. Mrs Beggs is a really lovely coach who always encourages you



Banbridge Academy v Dromore High School Friendly match

to do your best and contribute to netball. You're able to pick netball for games and it's always fun playing mini matches with your friends. There are also two teams that you could be selected for. I was part of the B team and was selected as captain for our first match against Dromore. You get to play in several matches and cheer on your friends whenever you're not on court. Overall Year 8 netball is a really good experience and is worth joining.

Maja Sulkowska

At the start of the year I wanted to play netball, but I wasn't good at it. I decided to go to after school netball to try and get better. Mrs Beggs is a great coach and I soon became very good at the

sport. I was put onto the B team and was captain for one of the matches. I really enjoyed my first year playing netball and I hope that I will continue to get better at it. I hope many other young girls will play netball or at least have a go at it.

Ellen Mussen

I loved playing netball in Year 8! It was really fun as I made a lot of new friends and learnt so many new skills. I played in all of the matches, the one against Rathmore Grammar, Wallace and against Dromore. It was so fun to go to different schools and play against them. Our coach Mrs Beggs is really fun and a very good coach.

Eva McKay

Sport

Golf

In June our Golf Team brought home the Darren Clarke Schools' Golf League. A closely fought day against a very strong Coleraine Grammar School meant the boys took it right to the final holes. A huge thanks to @SBDEVENTSNI for supporting the team.



Cricketers lift the Ulster Schools' Wesley Ferris Cup

The U12 Boys' Cricket team took on Limavady Grammar School in the Final of the Ulster Schools' Wesley Ferris Cup on Friday 23rd June. The Academy team had beaten Belfast High School, The Wallace High School B team and Carrickfergus Grammar to earn their spot in the final.

Captain Thomas Hamill won the toss and put Limavady in to bat. The Limavady openers looked confident at the wicket, but thanks to excellent bowling from Thomas and Jake McKeown Limavady were put under pressure from the initial overs. Excellent line and length focus from the Academy openers lead to early wickets falling. The initial bowling attack was well supported by Naser Syed, Nihal McEvoy and Zach Watson who each took

wickets themselves. A strong bowling and fielding display left the Banbridge Academy team an achievable score that they were confident of making but knew a disciplined approach would be required. Thomas and Zach opened the batting and started well but were weary of the Limavady openers who put on a strong bowling display. An excellent yorker took Zach by surprise and lead to Jake entering the field.

A confident batting partnership from Thomas and Jake quickly brought Banbridge Academy close to the desired target. The winning runs were hit by Thomas when he picked up a leg side ball that was dispatched for 6, securing the win to the delight of his teammates.



Winning Team



Final Teams



Cross Country

District Championships

Banbridge Academy's Cross Country runners had a successful start to the season at the Co Down District championships with 7 runners qualifying for the Ulster Championships. Unfortunately, the races clashed with the Academy's exam week so it was a much smaller entry than usual with just 12 runners able to make it fit with their

exam timetable. The Championships were once again held at Dellamont Country Park in Killyleagh, on a cold and frosty morning on 19th January.

While all the runners acquitted themselves well in difficult conditions, the following seven placed in the top 15 in their race and qualified for the

Ulster Championships on Wednesday 8th February. Mini Girls :Molly Tumilty 5th and Daisy Douglas 7th, Minor Girls: Casey Cousins 5th, Senior Girls: Holly Fisher 11th, Senior Boys: Simon Ferris 7th and Kian Moran 8th and Junior Girls: Emma Stewart 8th.



Ulster Championships

Banbridge Academy had seven qualifying athletes at the Ulster Cross Country Championships on Wednesday 8th February, which were held once again at Mallusk Playing Fields.

Our first race of the day saw Mollie Tumilty and Daisy Douglas run in the Mini girls' race. Both girls excelled in a field of over 130 racers and Mollie finished in 6th place, while Daisy was not

far behind in 29th. This would have been enough for Mollie to qualify for the Irish Championships but unfortunately there is not a race category at her age group. In the Minor girls' race Casey Cousins ran strongly to 23rd place and in the Junior girls' race Emma Stewart was brave in running to 21st place. In the senior races Holly Fisher finished 22nd in the girls' race and Kian Moran was also 22nd in the boys' race. Unfortunately, Simon

Ferris was unable to compete as he had a Hockey final that day.

It was a great effort from all our runners as everyone in the championships, over 100 athletes in most races, had qualified through from their district Championships. Well done to all our runners and we look forward to seeing you all run in the Track and Field Athletics season.

Sport

Equestrian Team

Our Banbridge Academy Equestrian team finished 6th out of 15 teams at the Balmoral Qualifier at Necarne, Enniskillen in March. Well done to Charlotte Betts on Akoroo Bitter Sweet, Emma Irwin on Hans First Lady, Tilly Tumilty on Millbarr Phynix and Harry Purdy on Frozen Secrets.



Track & Field Athletics

B Leslie/G Todd

DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS

Banbridge Academy's athletes enjoyed their first Track & Field outing of the year at the District Athletics Championships held at the Mary Peters' track in Belfast. Day 1 of the event saw the intermediates (Yrs 11 & 12) and the Seniors (Yrs 13 & 14) compete and the Academy sent a 20 strong team to the Championships. We had some great results across a host of different events, but our 5 medallists (and therefore Ulster Qualifiers) were the stand-out performances. Highlight of the day was Ciara Patton, last year's Ulster Champion, who won the Inter High Jump competition with a jump of 1.48m (a school record). Ciara is a very talented athlete who also represented Ulster in the Interprovincial

Championships last year. She backed up this High Jump with an impressive 4th place in the 200m. Kian Moran also had a great day when he ran to a silver medal in the senior 5000m race, while Grace Hamilton also won silver in the Inter girls' 300m, running a school record 46.03s in the process. Also successful were Emma O'Neill in the senior Triple Jump and Matthew Morrison in the Inter Shot Putt. Both produced fine performances and achieved good distances to medal and qualify for the Ulster Championships.

The Mini (Yr 8), Minor (Yr 9) and Junior (Yr 10) Championships took place a week later and here again we had some success. 35 Athletes travelled to the Mary Peters' track and enjoyed a fantastic day

of competition. Highlight of the day was Beth Morrow running to Silver in the Junior Girls' 800m race. Several other athletes finished top 5 in some really tough competitions and enjoyed a great day of athletics.

ULSTER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Banbridge Academy's athletes had a successful day at the Ulster Schools' Athletics Championships on Saturday 20th May at the Antrim Stadium. The best two performances of the day were from Ciara Patton and Emma O'Neill who both placed 5th in their competitions. Emma jumped a new personal best in the senior girls' Triple Jump to place so highly and Ciara also jumped brilliantly in the Intermediate girls' High Jump



competition and narrowly missed the medal places. Both girls have another year in their respective categories so hopefully the future is bright.

On the Friday night before the main championship some of the distance races were held and senior boy Kian Moran ran brilliantly in the 5000m to place 7th in a very competitive field. Kian also has another year in his category.

In the Junior Girls' 800m race, Beth Morrow also ran strongly to finish 8th in a tight finish and Grace Hamilton finished 4th in her heat to narrowly miss out on the final of the 300m Intermediate girls' race.

While there were no medals this year all the Academy athletes performed well in the most prestigious Ulster schools' competition in the athletics season and should be justifiably proud of their efforts.

SPORTSDAY

Once again the sun shone brightly on the always exciting Sportsday with the four houses of Crozier, Dunbar, McWilliam and Waddell entering athletes from Years 8-11. Over 200 pupils took part and those not involved cheered on from the sidelines as all of Years 8-11 enjoyed the spectacle. All the traditional athletics track & field events were included as well as a golf chipping event and the ever-popular Tug O'War competition to finish the day; the Ice cream van and the crepe truck were a big hit too! At the end of the day, when all the scores were added, the winners by the narrowest of margins were Crozier; and worthy winners they were too.

INTERSCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Banbridge Academy athletes enjoyed a wonderful day out at the final event of



the season, the Banbridge District Inter Schools, held at the Mary Peters' Track in Belfast. In a restructuring of the event, it would include athletes from Years 8-10 across 6 different events competing for individual medals and team silverware. The number of schools also expanded to eight this year with teams from: Banbridge Academy, Newbridge Integrated College, Banbridge High School, Dromore High School, Rathfriland High School, St Patrick's College, Newry High School and Kilkeel High School.

Throughout the day the Academy had numerous medallists across the different events and some outstanding individual performances. Of particular note were our girls' teams who won all three of their year group trophies and a special mention must go to our Year 8 relay team who ran a new school record. Overall, the competition was very tight and we finished in a creditable 2nd place just behind Kilkeel High School.

In 2023 several new school records were set. These were as follows:

Ciara Patton		
Year 11 Girls	High Jump	1.48 M

Grace Hamilton		
Year 12 Girls	300M	45.44 secs

Olivia McCracken, Tilly Tumilty, Mollie Tumilty, Masie Nicholl		
Year 8 Girls	4 x 100M	58.3 secs

Kizzy Gley		
Yr 10 Girls	Triple Jump	8.39 M

It was undoubtedly a very successful and enjoyable season for the Banbridge Academy athletes; well done to everyone!



Sport

Swimming

The Academy swimming teams had an outstanding season, amazingly 11 pupils met the extremely challenging qualifying times to compete at the Ulster Short Course Swimming Championships. Many swimmers also achieved qualifying times for the Irish Short Course Championships in Dublin. At the Ulster Schools' Cup Championships the team won 9 medals and recorded 24 personal best times. The Junior Girls lifted the Bethany Firth Cup and the Senior Girls won the Nother Senior Schools' Cup, both teams creating their own piece of history by winning Ulster Schools' Titles for the first time in the School's history. At the McCullagh International Open Gala in Ireland the teams had further success, recording 23 personal bests and winning 5 medals.

Zachary Black, Alana Burns-Atkin, and Tara Kennedy were selected to represent the Ulster Interpro Team. Alana had a truly outstanding season and was selected for the European Junior Championships and the Commonwealth Youth Games in Trinidad and Tobago.



Sport

Adam Green RYANI Youth Championships – Champion!

Mrs Lawther

Adam Green is in his first competitive year of Topper sailing. He has been selected to be part of Royal Yachting Association Performance Pathway for Northern Ireland during the 2023 season.

His achievements so far this season are astounding!

- Topper Travellers 1 (whitehead): 1st overall.
- Topper Travellers 2 (Skerries): 7th overall.
- Southern Area Championships (Wexford): 2nd overall.
- Irish National Championships (Ballyholme): 3rd overall and 2nd overall in the season series.
- World Championships (Cork): 8th overall.
- Topper Travellers 3 (Strangford): 1st overall.

He still has one more Topper Travellers to compete in (Malahide, 1st October) to complete a very busy and hugely successful season for Adam.

As Andrew Baker, Performance Manager at RYA NI quite aptly put it: "Our annual Youth Championships is a major event in the Youth Sailing calendar"

The RYA Northern Ireland Youth Championships have been held since 1989. The event is held annually in the Autumn and is designed to both allow young competitors to compete with the best local sailors and introduce younger competitors to a large, multi-class regatta. Up to 164 competitors have entered the event in recent years. Racing takes place for a number of classes and our very own Adam Green competed in the Topper class. Young sailors can compete for individual class prizes, but also for the overall RYANI Youth Championship titles:

- Youth Champion
- Male Youth Champion
- Female Youth Champion
- Junior Male Champion



- Junior Female Champion
- Northern Ireland Schools Cup
- Northern Ireland Club Trophy

Adam Green was crowned a number of these titles!

- 1st overall in the 4.2 fleet (Topper)
- Overall Junior Male Champion
- Overall Junior Champion.

His goal for next season is to be on the podium in the World Topper Championships which will be held in Murcia, Spain. So watch this space!!



Sport

Boys' Tennis

Our Junior Boys' Tennis Team placed runners up in their Plate match against a very strong Bangor Grammar.

James Nesbitt, Thomas Chapman, Shaun Ward and Adam McGerrigan displayed great effort across all of their matches during the season.



Girls' Tennis

Our Minor Girls' Tennis Team return were runners up in the Shield against Regent House. Emily Nesbitt, Rachel McMurray, Isabella Donnelly and Sarah Martin displayed great effort against a very strong Regent team!



Sport

ABC Awards



Our 1st XI Boys' Hockey Team - Youth School Team of the Year @abcb_council @BAboys hockey



Our U14 Girls' Hockey Team - Junior School Team of the Year @abcb_council

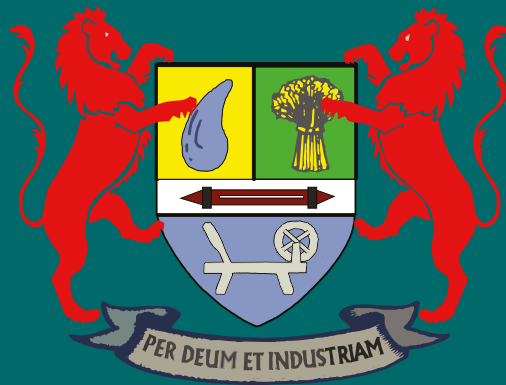


Huge congratulations to Arnold Morgan our Table Tennis Coach - School Coach of the Year @abcb_council

U15 Table Tennis

Well done to the U15 Table Tennis team who came 2nd in their All Ireland finals!





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