



Careers

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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.



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