

# Girls' Hockey

## 1st XI

*Ellie Cousins & Ruby Johnston*

Our season quickly started with a preseason friendly against a well organised Friends' team; after the loss we were motivated to adjust and get back on track for the start of the SuperLeague. With regular training on Thursday afternoon our opening, competitive match against Wallace (in a game with many chances) ended with a 0-0 draw. Even though we didn't win, we came away with positivity as great strength and potential was evident.

As the girls grew in confidence and bonded as a team, they secured 2 wins from 2 matches over Coleraine and Larne, achieving top of their group and allowing them to progress into the quarter final against Strathearn. With an early goal, the BA girls had a strong start but battled hard against a determined Strathearn side to complete the game with another goal, the final score being 2-0. The semifinal of the SuperLeague began with a mental battle against a confident, physical Portadown side. Portadown scored an early goal in the first quarter but Bann continued to fight, communicate and connect passes allowing us to equalise! As Portadown continued to press on the defence line, they eventually got in the lead and further confirmed their win by a last minute goal. A 3-1 scoreline did not reflect the team performance of the BA girls but as their SuperLeague progression had ended, their School Cup preparation began sharply! Due to Bann's strong performance in the SuperLeague, they had a bye until the third round of Belfast Telegraph's Schools' Cup, setting them up to play a local derby against Dromore High School. An early Saturday



morning saw the BA girls more motivated than ever; with a sharp and focused warm up completed, Bann were quick off the mark with an early goal to allow them to settle into the game. After having to fight back a few aggressive counter attacks by Dromore, the BA girls fiercely and clinically upped their game and secured another goal. The game finished 3-1, with many positives to come away with and build on before their quarter final against Ballyclare.

With extra training sessions completed, the hard work was done and finally the day arrived in late January, on home territory! Fans had arrived, ribbons were in and the whistle was blown. The first half saw Bann sit toe to toe

with Ballyclare, at 1-1, finding it extremely hard to play up to their potential against a disruptive Ballyclare side. The girls fought extremely hard throughout the entirety of the game, despite everything going against them. Bann scored to take the lead in the second half, but no matter how hard they tried the BA girls could not get their passes to stick and Ballyclare ended up scoring a last minute equaliser resulting in run ins. Unfortunately, it was not meant to be and the BA girls lost 3-1 on run ins, which saw their competitive hockey come to an end, or so they thought... Due to the girls finishing third in the SuperLeague they got to compete in the Daphne Hall All Ireland tournament in Dublin. The girls had to bounce back from the disappointment of the Cup as they headed down to Dublin in April. The first game was against Crescent Collage, a well drilled team from Munster. It was a hard game as both teams had many chances, but the girls found a way in the last few minutes from a penalty corner goal.

It was a tight turnaround before the next game against Loreto Foxrox from Leinster. The girls started strong with many chances but just couldn't find the net and neither could they, resulting in a 0-0 draw. A great first day for the girls, but more was still to come. After a well-needed good night's sleep the girls were ready for their final group game against Loreto Kilkenny from Leinster South. In the first half the girls had many chances but just couldn't convert. The second half was different however as they scored two goals







beating Loreto 2-0.

The girls had a nervous wait to see if they would play in the first place play off, but the other game ended in a win for Crescent meaning they topped the group and set up a final against local rivals Portadown College. The girls were up for the game and started well, creating chances and also stopping Portadown's chances. At half time it was still 0-0 and a very close watch but in the last few minutes Ban scored a penalty corner. Portadown came straight back trying to find the net but the girls defended well and the final score was 1-0 to Ban.

It was a great game and a good way to end the season for all the girls.





# Girls' Hockey

## 2nd XI

*Eva McAlister*



Firstly, as the season commenced one of our first matches was against Armagh and we knew that this season was going to be one that tested us as a team. Unfortunately, we lost narrowly to Armagh the first time we played them. However, in our final game when we faced Armagh for the second time, we won 2-1. It was great to see an improvement on the scoreboard but more importantly the increase in performance levels as a team, showing just how much we had grown together as the season progressed.

Moreover, a match that stands out specifically to me would have to be the semi-final against Ballyclare High School, which was extremely close, leading us to face run-ins during which Jemima scored the winning run-in and helped to secure our place in the final against Methody. As a team we had cemented both our spirit and structure to face the final confidently.

The final against Methody was a tight game that resulted in run-ins and unluckily we lost. However, winning the Mid-Ulster League



was most definitely a highlight of the season and due to our hard work and dedication, we beat Portadown College, Lurgan Junior High School, The Royal School Dungannon, Dromore High School, and Royal School Armagh. I would like to say a special thank you to Richard as our coach who not only guided, encouraged, and pushed us, but also made this hockey season the most enjoyable one to date.

As a message from the leavers of Banbridge Academy, both Richard and Miss Anderson made leaving BA hockey a hard goodbye. I also would like to thank Sheree and Julie for their consistent support of girls' hockey. The player of the year goes to Maia Crawford and the most improved player goes to Esther Campbell.





# Girls' Hockey



## 3rd XI

The 3rd XI Hockey Team got off to a great start in the season, with four consecutive wins against Wallace High, Armagh Royal, Omagh Academy and Larne Academy. The girls showed real strength in midfield, with Grace Hamilton, Charlotte Best and Mya Jess running everything down and consistently feeding balls through to the forwards. This enabled goals from Allegra Muldrew, Maddison McVeigh, Grace Hamilton, Lucy Thompson and Lucy Friar.

On 21st October, the team met Methody in the first round of the Gibson Cup. Both sides were evenly matched with the Academy snatching a late equaliser in the last two minutes, thanks to Lucy Thompson. Unfortunately, it wasn't to be our day, with the match ending in run-ins and Methody taking the victory 5:3.

More matches followed in November and December, which prepared the team nicely for the Gibson Plate in January. The team headed off to Strabane for the first round and thanks to Cara Purdy's 'golden stick', we secured our place in the next round of the Plate. Cara was on a roll and secured another two goals against Belfast High in February, which set us up nicely for the semi-final against none other than Methody! We had been beaten by them once, and we were not going to repeat the same mistakes again. Thanks to the motivation and enthusiasm displayed by our captain Lucy Friar, the team went out hard from the whistle and Allegra Muldrew secured an early goal in the first quarter. The defenders, along with Ellie Walker in goals, were tested time and time again, but thankfully this was to be the only goal of the match and so a very elated and exhausted squad celebrated their victory and place in the final of the Gibson Plate.

The Gibson Plate Final against Friends' School, Lisburn took place at Stormont Playball on Monday 11th March. The team began strong in midfield with captain Lucy Friar, along with midfielders Lucy Thompson and Eimear Wilson, creating real opportunity for attack. A few promising runs up the wing came from Allegra Muldrew, but unfortunately Banbridge were unable to finish on them. Friends' showed real pace throughout the last two quarters of the match, testing the Academy's defence at every opportunity. Defender Leah Malcomson was



strong time and time again, with Morgane Garrigue-Crawford consistently feeding balls through to the forwards. Unfortunately, the pressure proved too much, with the Academy girls conceding two goals in the final quarter. The girls fought hard throughout the match and should be very proud of their performance. Whilst the team were sad not to get the win, they were content in their determination and effort on the day.

A huge thank you must go to the 3rd XI coach Mr McConnell, whose expertise was paramount to the girls reaching the final. To Julie Sally, we all thank you for your counsel, your motivation and your enthusiasm for girls' hockey within Banbridge Academy. It has been an absolute pleasure working with such a tenacious bunch of girls, who gave 100% effort in every training session and every match throughout the season.





# Girls' Hockey

## 4th XI

The 2023-2024 season was an extraordinary journey for the Girls' 4th XI Hockey Team. Under the dedicated guidance of Richard Glover and the assistance of Miss McCullough, the team demonstrated remarkable growth, resilience, and sportsmanship. The team made the decision early in the season to put the effort into developing their skills as they knew this would have a positive effect on their gameplay.

The girls started off a little shaky at the start of the season, with a few losses and draws on the board, but the confidence was growing and there were bigger things to come.

They had an outstanding run in the 4th XI Cup! It started with a 2-1 win over Grosvenor in December in 'near monsoon conditions'. The next round saw them face Wallace in hurricane winds and come away with a 1-0 win. They went on to beat Ballymena Academy in the semi final on run ins, with Kathy and Lola scoring in match play and Shruti and Amy sealing the deal with their run ins. The final saw them face a very strong Royal School, Armagh side at Playball Stormont. It wasn't meant to be on the day, but the achievement of getting to the final was a testament to their hard work and determination throughout the season.

The unity and camaraderie within the team were evident in every match. The players consistently supported each other, creating



a positive and encouraging environment both on and off the field. Significant improvements were seen in individual skills and overall team strategy. The players' understanding of the game deepened, and their defensive and offensive plays became

more cohesive and effective. The end of the season saw Lola Brown voted as the Players' Player of the Season and Shruti Suresh being awarded the Most Improved Player.

The Girls' 4th XI can reflect on their 23/24

achievements with pride. The experiences and lessons learned will serve as a strong foundation for future successes.





# Girls' Hockey



## U12A

*Ruby Cousins*



The U12 A team was very successful last season. We started off strong with a win against Armagh and continued to play our best and managed to beat Wallace, Larne, Strathearn, Omagh and Lurgan Junior High 2-0. We were also very successful in the Mid Ulster League and had to beat Killicomaine

to come top of the league; we came away with a 1-0 victory. We were the league winners! We competed in the tournament in Methody where we made it to the final, when we played Methody in a tense match. We were victorious and brought the trophy home.

In April we participated in the Oxford Tournament. Along with all the fun and sightseeing, we won the tournament overall-finishing the season triumphantly.

Thank you to all our coaches for making this possible and to our amazing team!



## Girls' Hockey: U12B



The U12B team was coached by Ruby Wilson every Wednesday after school on the top pitch. One of our first matches was on the 17th November against the strong Royal School, Armagh. We won this match significantly with a 5-0 victory, scoring goal after goal, but our defence was still tested and there were still no goals conceded.

We were confident going into the season ahead. The next match was against Wallace; it was a close match, but still came through with a 2-0 win. The next day we had a home game against Strathearn. We were until now unbeaten and were determined to win. Only

1 goal was conceded, but the forwards made some great runs and struggled to get the ball in the back of the net until eventually we made a breakthrough. We came away with a 1-1 draw. We went to training the next week ready to improve and develop not just as individual players but as a team.

Our next match against Dromore High A team. This was a challenging match and we still came through with a 2-1 win. In April we participated in the annual Oxford tournament. We played 6 short matches in 20 degree heat, but we pushed through! We

won every match and we worked really hard to get as many goals as possible. With our 6 out of 6 wins, we won the tournament and left victorious.

When we arrived home we had two more matches. We next played Lurgan Junior High and finally our last game of the season at Tandragee, where we won 3-0! We had lots of wins, a draw and no losses. We finished second in the mid-Ulster League. Thanks to all of our amazing coaches and well done to our amazing team!





# Girls' Hockey

## Year 8: Oxford Trip





# Girls' Hockey



## U13A

*Mollie Tumilty*



This season the U13A team performed very well, winning the Mid-Ulster League. In fact, the team won almost all Saturday morning and mid-week matches throughout the season and remained unbeaten in the 2023-2024 season. Ruby Cousins, Annie Emerson and Emma Rankin (Year 8) proved valuable additions to the U13A team and everyone worked extremely hard on Mondays after

school, to improve their skills and progress as a team, under the guidance of Julie Sally and Mark Barlow.

There were many great performances throughout the year in all areas of the pitch. Two players were selected for the Ulster U15 Talent Development Programme from October to March: Maisie Nicholl and Mollie

Tumilty. Following further assessment, Mollie was selected for the Ulster U16 Development 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 U14's success in the Ulster Superleague and the Ulster Junior Cup.

## U13B

*Mary Sammons*



Firstly we started off with a match against Wallace and throughout the season we continued to play against KJHS, Larne, Omagh and more. We also beat Friends' 2-0 near the end of the season. Throughout the year the team worked really well together and improved a lot. We won most of our matches and although we lost a few, we all still kept trying our hardest each week. The girls on the team worked really well together, which helped us during matches because we communicated and displayed teamwork throughout the season.



# Girls' Hockey

## U14A

*Mollie Tumilty*



The U14As have had an impressive 2023/2024 season consisting of many exciting and nerve-wracking and challenging hockey matches. From the onset, under the excellent coaching of Mark Barlow, Julie Sally and Mrs Leslie the girls gave their all in training and every match they played.

They won both the Mid Ulster league and Mid Ulster Cup

A strong run in the first Junior Superleague Competition came to an end in a tough semi-final encounter with Royal School Armagh. After taking the lead in the opening minutes of the game with a goal from Casey Cousins and dominating the play in the first quarter, Armagh worked their way back into the game, scoring an equaliser at the start of the second half. It was heartbreak when Armagh scored their winner in the final quarter.

However, the squad worked hard to learn from this defeat, focusing on improving their skills to ensure it didn't happen again. Under the guidance of their tireless coaches, they started their Junior Cup campaign with strong wins against Belfast High School,

Omagh, KJHS and Friends', scoring 17 goals and only conceding 1 on our way to the final. The final saw us take on Strathearn for the second time in the year, having beaten them in run-ins in the quarter final of the Superleague. Could we repeat it? The final was a tense affair, with end-to-end action and supporters cheering from the sidelines. Evie Hobson scored the opener and we held this lead until the third quarter, when Strathearn were awarded a flick which they duly scored to equalise. The score remained 1-1 at the final whistle, which meant the Cup was to be decided on run-ins. After four run-ins each the score remained all square and after Caitlin Topping saved Strathearn's fifth run-in, Casey Cousins stepped up and scored her run-in to secure the win, Junior Cup Winner 2024.

As Junior Cup winners we progressed to the All-Ireland Junior Cup Competition, the June Smith, which was held in Thurles. Four matches on one day and no room for errors! After a slow start and ably guided by our fantastic coaches, patched together when needed by our Physio Tom, and cheered on by our enthusiastic band of travelling

supporters, we won all four matches against Connacht's Salerno Secondary School 1-0, Leinster's Muckcross Park College 1-0, South East's Kilkenny College 3-0 and the hosts from Munster, Urseline Secondary School 2-0, to lift the June Smith All-Ireland Junior Cup for 2024. It was a fantastic all-round squad performance scoring 7 goals in the four matches whilst not conceding any.

Our successful season was recently recognised by the ABC Council when we were awarded the Junior School Team of the Year award at their Junior Sports Awards. This was a great way to round off a fantastic season and for the majority of the team, it was their last year in Junior school hockey.

Last year a number of our players were involved with Ulster TDP and U16 teams these include: Hannah Carswell, Abi Cherry, Casey Cousins, Amy Dougan, Katie Leslie, Nancy McCusker, Maisie Nicholl and Caitlin Topping.

**We would like to thank everyone who supported our team this year and I hope you enjoyed the hockey as much as we did.**





# Girls' Hockey



## U14B

*Captain Darcy Walton and Vice-captain Harriett McClelland.*



The U14B hockey team had another successful season coached by Dr Dobson. The team trained every Tuesday after school, which consisted of fitness, improving skills and match play.

We had a strong start to the season playing away to Friends' school, with some tactical attacking work by the forwards. Rebecca McNulty managed to find the back of the net for Banbridge. However, Friends' battled back after the second half and claimed a goal, drawing the game 1-1.

Our second match was against Wallace's A team, however we didn't let that fact deter us and we put up an incredible fight.

Frustratingly Wallace scored in the dying minutes, resulting in a 1-0 loss.

We kept our heads up and played Omagh on the 30th September resulting in a dominating 5-0 win. Goals scored by Rebecca McNulty who got a hat trick, Erin Dempsey and Martha McComb.

The team went on to achieve 11 further wins and played in a Mid-Ulster blitz, where we came out level on points at the top and narrowly missed out on gold medals due to one goal difference. We were proud of our silver medals.

We were delighted to go on to win the Mid

Ulster league. In total we were undefeated in 18 matches and scored 41 goals, with Rebecca getting 16 goals and Erin getting 12.

**Thank you to the team for their dedication and to our coaches and hockey staff throughout the year.**





# Girls' Hockey

## End of Year Dinner



## Summer Party

