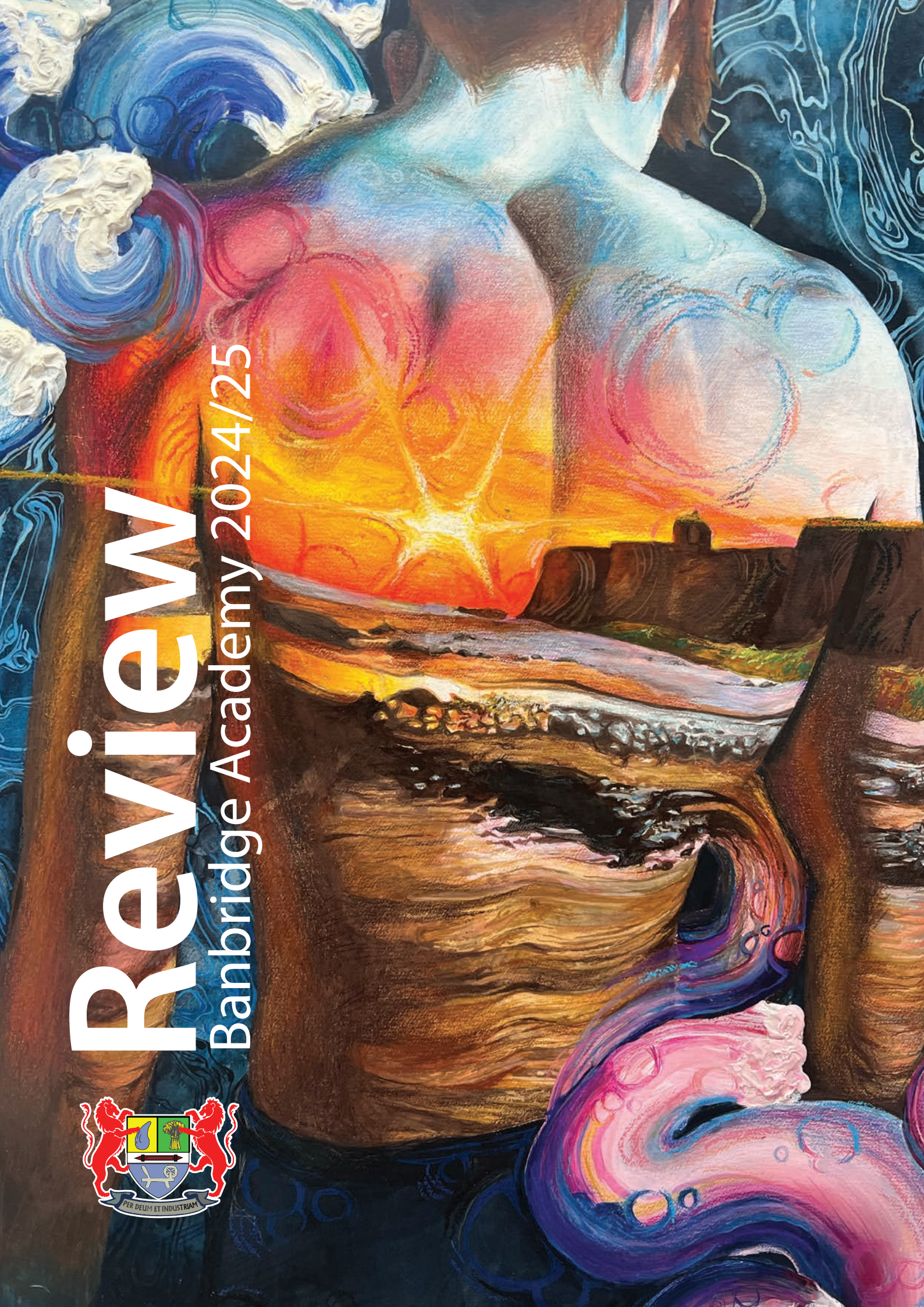


# Review

Banbridge Academy 2024/25





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# Editorial

Mrs G Gough

The 2024–2025 school year was one of remarkable achievement, both inside the classroom and beyond. Our pupils excelled once again in public examinations at GCSE and A Level; a testament to their outstanding work ethic and the unwavering dedication of our staff.

Beyond the classroom, pupils embarked on enriching journeys to Austria, France, Germany, and London—visiting educational landmarks, strengthening friendships and creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Sporting success was equally impressive: the Boys' 1st XI Hockey Team were crowned 'All Ireland Champions' for the seventh time; gold medals were secured in the Ulster Fusion Dance

Competition and numerous achievements were celebrated across rugby, girls' hockey, netball, badminton, swimming and many more.

As editor, it is a privilege once again to document the breadth of accomplishments and experiences that shaped this year. My sincere thanks go to the staff and committee members who contributed to this edition of the School Review. I am also grateful to the many local businesses whose continued support, through advertising, makes this publication possible.

To you the reader, whether pupil, parent, staff member, or friend of the school, I hope you enjoy this celebration of a truly outstanding year.

## Committee List

Christina Bickerstaff  
Natalia Bonk  
Lauren Burns-Atkin  
Emily Castles  
Ellie Curran-Bingham  
Morgane Garrigue-Crawford  
Ellie Crimmins  
Roisin Cumming  
Carly Fong  
Rosa Frazer

Harry Gough  
Clara Almeida Gourley  
Sienna Heasley  
Hannah Johnstone  
Halle Kinkaid  
Amelie Knott  
Danni Liu  
Frankie Lynch  
Lassara Magennis  
Jessica McCullough

Ella Moore  
Sarah Elaine Moore  
Beth Morrow  
Maisie Murphy  
Luke O'Hagan  
Ned Rooney  
Charlie Shields  
Joshua Wilson

**Cover Design: Beth Gillespie**



# Staff List

## Principal

Mr R S McLoughlin OBE, BSc, MEd, PGCE, PQH

## Vice Principals

Mrs H Evans, BSc, MEd, PGCE, PQH, EdD

Mr D McFarland, BEd, MSc, PQH

## Senior Teachers

Mr J Clarke, BA, PGCE

Mr A Hanlon, BSc, PGCE

Mr D Irwin, BSc, PGCE

Mrs H Morrison, BSc, PGCE

Mrs J Neill, BA, MA, PGCE

## Heads of Department

Art	Mrs P McKenzie, BA, PGCE
Biology	Dr Louise Henry, PhD, BSc, PGCE
Careers	Mr S Bond, MA, PGCE
Chemistry	Mrs J Glover, BSc, PGCE
Computing	Mr K McGuinness, BSc, PGCE
Drama	Mrs J Neill, BA, MA, PGCE
Economics	Mr T Dempsey, BSc, PGCE
English	Miss L McConkey, MA, PGCE
French	Mrs C O'Shaughnessy, BA, PGCE
Geography	Mrs D Dreaning, BSc, PGCE
History	Mrs G Johnston, BA, PGCE
Home Economics	Mrs L Dow, BA, DIS, PGCE
Mathematics	Mr C Walker, MSc, PGCE
Music	Mrs C Munton, BMus, PGCE, ATCL, LTCL
Physical Education	Boys - Mr S Jess, MSc, PGCE Girls - Mrs G Todd, BSc, DIS, PGCE
Physics	Mr D Stewart, BSc, PGD, PGCE

Politics	Miss A McClelland, BA, MA, PGCE
Psychology (TD)	Mrs L Duke, BSc, MSc, PGDE, PGCert, ALCM
Religious Studies	Mr W Brown, BEd
Science	Mr D Stewart, BSc, PGD, PGCE
Spanish	Miss A Burgess, BA, PGCE
Technology	Mr G Winter, BEd

## Year Heads

	Year
Mr J Erskine / Mrs J McCullagh	14
TBC / Mr C Beacom	13
Mrs R Hannon / Mr G McGlintock	12
Miss A McClelland / Miss L Forsythe	11
Mr M Cordner / Dr R Dobson	10
Miss J Cosgrove / Mr J Reaney	9
Mr M Miskelly / Miss K Jess	8

## Teaching Staff

Mr T Acheson, BSc, PGCE	Mrs R Hannon, BSc, PGCE	Mrs N Paolucci, BA, PGCE
Mrs H Adair, BA, PGCE	*Mrs V Harrison, BA, PGCE	Mr G Patterson, BA, MA, PGCE
Mr C Beacom, BSc, PGCE	Mrs S Hassard, BEd	Miss K Poots, BA, PGCE
Mrs R Beacom, BSc, PGCE	Mrs J Hetherington, BA, PGCE	Mrs T Qua, BMus (Mus Ed) Hons
Dr L Bradford, PhD, PGCE	Mrs E Hoy, BA, PGCE	Mr J Reaney, MSc, BSc, PGCE
Mrs B Callan-Rushe, BEd, Med	Miss K Jess, BSc, PGCE	Mrs N Reilly, BSc, MSc, PGCE
Ms H Campbell, BA, PGCE	Mr A Keenan, BA, PGCE	Mr G Robinson, BEng, PGCE
Mrs H Cartmill, BA, PGCE	Mrs B Kernaghan, BSc, PGCE	Mrs N Shaw, BSc, PGCE
Mr M Cordner, VR, BA, DIS, PGCE	Mr B Leslie, BEd	Mrs E Spratt, BA, PGCE
Miss J Cosgrove, BSc, PGCE	Mrs J Leslie, BSc, PGCE	Mrs H Stewart, BA, PGCE
Mr W Cromie, BA, PGCE	Mrs K Li, BSc, PGCE	Mr M Thompson, BSc, PGCE
*Mr R Currie, BEd, PGCE	Dr C Lorimer, BSc PhD, PGCE	Mrs R Thompson, BSc, PGCE
Mrs S Dalzell BSc, PGCE	Mr O Magee, BSc, PGCE	Mrs S Todd, BSc, PGCE
Mr S Dawson, MSc, PGCE	Mr R McAdam MEng, PGCE	Mrs L Topley-Willis, BA, PGCE
Mrs J Derby, BA (QTS)	Miss Ellie McAtee, BA, PGCE	Mrs F Topping, BSc, PGCE
Dr R Dobson, BSc, PhD, PGCE	Mr G McClintock, BSc, PGCE	Mrs S Tully, BSc, PGCE
Mr J Erskine, BA, PGCE	Mrs J McCullagh, BA, PGCE	Mrs D Wilkinson, BA, MEd, PGCE
Miss L Forsythe, BA, MA, PGCE	Miss E McCullough, BDes, PGCE	Mr S Wilson, BSc (Chemistry with Education), MEd
Miss A Galashan, BSc, PGCE	Mrs K McDonald, BDes, PGCE	
Mrs G Gough, BA, PGCE	Mr M Miskelly, BEng, PGCE	
Miss J Greenlee, MA, MEd, PGCE	Miss Sarah Moorcroft, BA, PGCE	



## STAFF LIST 24/25

### Auxiliary Staff

Financial Administrator	Miss M Wright	Technology Technician	Mr M McKinney
Principal's PA	Mrs J Stewart	Pupil Welfare Auxiliary	Mrs H Singer
Secretarial Staff	Mrs D McRoberts (Office Manager), Mrs L Tumilty, Mrs L Uprichard, Mrs N Stewart	Classroom Assistants	Mrs N Beggs, Ms G Blakely, Mrs C Bolwell, Mr N Carville, Miss E Cousins, Mrs K Cromie, Mrs S Gibbons, Mr J Girvan, Mrs B Hampton, Mr H Lockhart, Mrs A McGovern, Miss Z Michalska, Mr L Roleston, Mrs A Savage, Mrs N Stronge.
Cover/Examinations	Mr B O'Shaughnessy, Mrs J Sally		
Reprographics Technician	Mrs L Cochrane		
Library Assistant	Ms K McEvoy	Building Supervisors	Mr S Curry, Mr J Kernaghan
Y14 Study Supervisor	Mr A Harvey	Foreign Language Assistants	Sara Gonzalez Arranz
Laboratory Technicians	Miss L Shannon, Miss G McFall		
ICT Technicians	Mr S Gilliland, Mr K Curran	Groundsman	Mr S Savage
HE/Art Technician	Mrs N Hazley	(* denotes temporary)	



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# Headmaster's Report 2024/25



Mr Chairman, Dr Doyle, members of the Board of Governors, Mrs Lockhart MP, The Lord Mayor Alderman Moutray, 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 eleventh 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 the Select Vestry and the Rector of Holy Trinity, the Rev Nixon for the warmth of their welcome.

Mr Mathers will outline later the illustrious career of our Guest of Honour. Suffice to say that Philip is a double-Olympiad and a medallist at Paris 24. It is great to see our former students excelling in many walks of life. I ask everyone to give an appropriate Academy welcome back to our Guest of Honour, former student Dr Philip Doyle.

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 for running the school on a daily basis. I record a special word of thanks to my new PA, one of our parents, Mrs Joanne Stewart, for her personal dedication 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. During the construction of our new 3-year Development Plan we consulted extensively to develop our collective vision for the school – Belong | Aspire | Achieve. 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, in her final year as the School Magazine co-ordinator, and to her team for compiling another wonderful record of the school year in our School Magazine. I also encourage you to visit the school website and follow us on X or Instagram, to keep up to date with the success of our students. Last year, thanks to the work of Miss McCullough, we also developed our first-ever school video.

At the end of the year, we said farewell to Mr Smyth who joined Down High School. We welcomed several permanent appointments at the start of term - Mrs Dalzell (Geography), Mrs McDonald (Art & Design), Mr Thompson (Mathematics), Dr Henry (Head of Biology) and Mr McAdam (Physics). We welcome them to the Academy and trust they enjoy working in our happy community.

As my colleagues and the community have heard me say repeatedly, high-quality outcomes are secured when leadership is distributed effectively across the school. There were several internal promotions: Mr Walker (Head of Mathematics), Mr McClintock (Year Head), Mr Reaney (Temporary Year Head), Mr Thompson (Temporary Year Head), Mr Magee (Teacher in Charge of Boys' Hockey), Miss Greenlee (Teacher in Charge of the School Magazine) and Miss Wright (Financial Administrator). We were delighted when Mrs Sally Johnston, who recently retired as my PA, was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in the King's New Year Honours list. This much-deserved honour recognises Sally's 27 years of dedicated service, during which time she was the heartbeat of the Academy.

2025 will be remembered as a year when our students achieved spectacular outcomes in the public examinations. At A Level almost 90% of all pupils achieved

3 A\* - C grades. Out of the 178 pupils who entered these examinations, 105 achieved a minimum of 3 A\* - B grades or better. 51 pupils obtained 3 A grades or better, with 18 pupils obtaining at least 3 A\* grades – quite incredible outcomes.

AS Level results were impressive, 83.9% of all entries were A - C grades. These results provide an excellent foundation on which to build for A Level success in 2026.

At GCSE the students attained terrific results, 99% of the students achieved at least 7 A\* - C grades, including English and Mathematics - truly amazing results. 72% of all entries resulted in top grades A\*/A and when B grades are included, this figure rises to approximately 90% of all entries.

The pupils, parents and teachers of the Academy are to be thoroughly congratulated. These outstanding results in the public examinations ensure that our young people can continue with their chosen career pathways. We wish the Class of 2025 every success in the next stage of their educational journey.

The education of our young people involves a partnership, and I pay tribute to my colleagues in our primary schools who have created the foundation for the success our students enjoy. I also 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. Likewise, the ongoing support provided by our parents and the wider community is to be praised. I ask the pupils to show a token of appreciation to their parents and my colleagues.

The Academy continues to be at the forefront of Education in Northern Ireland. Many guests visited the school, including the Chief Executive Officer



## HEADMASTER'S REPORT 2024/25



Year 8 Class Prizewinners

of the Education Authority (Mr Richard Pengelly), the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Education (Mr Ronnie Armour) and as part of the Learn with the Lords programme, Baroness O'Loan, who talked to the students about the work of the House of Lords and the appointment of our former student to the House of Lords - Baroness, Lady Cash, whom we believe is the first peer from Banbridge Academy. Under the leadership of Miss McClelland, the Bar Mock Trial Team once again excelled and qualified to represent Northern Ireland at the National Final at the Old Bailey in London. The year was rounded off with a wonderful visit for Sixth Form politics students to the House of Commons.

Continuing in the world of leadership, Reece Green after a successful campaign was elected to represent Upper Bann in the UK Youth Parliament. Ellie Crimmins and Hannah Kerr represented the role of China at the British Council's COP29 Schools' Simulation Event at Belfast City Hall. A group of A Level Politics students & members of the SistersIN Programme attended a symposium on the central role of women in the Northern Ireland Peace process. The students met with a number of the panellists including Hilary Clinton, former First Lady and Chancellor of QUB.

The school has still to be informed of the top places in the public examinations, however, we were delighted to be informed this week that Lucy Farrell achieved the highest mark in Northern Ireland in GCSE Home Economics:

Food and Nutrition winning the British Nutrition Foundation Drummond Education Award.

Lucy Hodgen was awarded the prestigious Arkwright Engineering Scholarship, the most esteemed scholarship of its kind in the UK. Lucy's award is externally funded by the Royal Air Force, and as part of this, she now benefits from mentorship by an RAF engineer. Lucy also won the Sentinus Young Innovators Intermediate Competition, a significant accomplishment given the exceptionally high standard of the entries.

Debating continues to flourish in the school and Sienna Scullion won the Ulster Women's Unionist Council - Edgar Graham LLB BL Memorial Public Speaking Competition, held in the Senate Chamber at Stormont. May I suggest, Sienna demonstrated to our MLAs the debating skill and composure that is needed within the House.

Students across the school continued to learn languages and participated in the French exchange trip. Roisin Cumming, won the esteemed Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators, run by the Queen's College Translation Exchange at the University of Oxford. Roisin's winning entry stood out among nearly 5,000 submissions, impressing judges with her linguistic flair and creative interpretation.

Our mathematicians continue to excel, achieving six Gold Certificates in the UK

Intermediate Maths Challenge and our team secured a superb 2nd place in the Queen's University Maths Competition.

Our students excelled in digital skills, from Year 9 pupils coding arcade games at the Ulster Museum's 'STEAM Studio' to our 'VisionAI' team reaching the final of the PwC App Design Competition.

Our aspiring psychologists gained valuable insights, attending the Clinical Psychology event at Queen's, and we were delighted that Beth Sinton was selected for the Sentinus Summer School, where she analysed real-world data from Ulster University's Millennium Cohort study.

On a day when we celebrate the achievements of our current students, it is also right that we pause to remember those who came before us. I extend a special thanks to Mr Acheson and a team of Sixth Form students. Through their extensive research, we were able to unveil a new World War II remembrance board, ensuring that the Academy alumni who lost their lives in the conflict will not be forgotten.

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.

Our Shared Education Partnership continues to flourish. Our ASPIRE Ambassadors, working with students



## HEADMASTER'S REPORT 2024/25



Year 9 Class Prizewinners - Missing from photo Hannah Smyth

from Abbey Christian Brothers' and Our Lady's Grammar, were welcomed to the Long Gallery at Stormont. This special event, attended by numerous MLAs, celebrated the success of the initiative's first year and the strong, lasting connections built between our three schools.

The Academy's ethos continues to focus on care and concern for others. Students signed up to volunteering activities, including community support, environmental teams, wellbeing champions 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. Of particular note, was a donation to the Mandeville Unit at Craigavon Area Hospital in memory of our much-loved former colleague the late Mrs Julie Robinson. Today we thank Trevor and the Robinson family for donating an annual Prize and a beautiful Rose Bowl, it is very fitting that our former Head Girl, Julie & Trevor's daughter - Ellie Robinson, is the inaugural winner of this A Level Spanish Prize.

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. Students also received crucial training in lifesaving CPR and

Sixth Form participated in an important safe driving campaign. We participated in the Department of Health's, Health & Wellbeing programme - helping students develop healthy growth mind-sets and learn practical tips on looking after their emotional wellbeing. 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 continued to participate in the vast array of extra-curricular activities and House Competitions on offer, including Sports Day, with Crozier winning the fiercely contested House competition.

Almost 100 students travelled on the annual ski trip to Austria and large numbers continue to participate in the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. 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 across the Art, Careers, English, Geography, History, Home Economics, Music, Politics, Religious Studies, Science and Technology departments. These activities and visits nurtured our students understanding and provided crucial opportunities to develop key life skills.

Our Pathways Careers Fair was a huge success, connecting students from Years 10 to 14 with over 80 exhibitors. This diverse group included 50 businesses, from local traders to multi-nationals, and over 30 universities and colleges from across the UK and Ireland. In Year 8, pupils enjoyed the chance to explore their employability skills as they transition from primary school with 'Step Up'. In Junior School the pupils flexed their entrepreneurial muscles with the '10X Challenge'. Year 9 also took part in STEM workshops provided by Sentinus. In Year 12 we used the 'You're Hired' programme to help pupils understand the job market and produce winning CVs.

Numerous Sixth Form students took part in the flagship Young Enterprise company Programme. Establishing three great companies: Revinyl, BeeBundled and Ashwood. In addition, 12 students achieved great success in the Ulster University Assessment in Enterprise.

During the year we enjoyed a wonderful Carol Service and a magnificent Spring Concert. Due to the ever-increasing demand, we have to seek an additional date to accommodate the numbers who wish to attend the annual concert. I thank our Music Department, under the leadership of Mrs Munton and Mrs Qua for the musical items we will enjoy today.

Cassia Moore, achieved exceptional success, winning both the Vocal Category 1st Prize and the overall

## HEADMASTER'S REPORT 2024/25



Year 10 Class Prizewinners

Cordes Prize at the Royal Academy of Music's New Talent Festival. Cassia was also invited to sing with the prestigious Charles Wood Singers, recording for BBC Radio 3 & 4 and Radio Ulster, and performed at the Young Musicians' Prom after winning 3rd place in the NI Young Musician of the Year Competition. Mollie Gibson performed a voice soloist for the New Irish Youth Choir and Rebekah Jackson played the trombone with the New Irish Youth Orchestra. Maggie Parton successfully auditioned for the National Youth Concert Band and her sister Eilida played the principal trumpet with the National Children's concert band in Cambridge. An amazing 48 pupils were offered places in the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland, equating to 66 Choir offers across the Junior, Girls, Training and Senior Choirs.

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 35 students receiving either National or International Caps across a wide range of sports.

We hosted a special Olympic Assembly, in recognition of former students who have gone on to compete at the Olympics. Six former students represented their respective sports at the Olympics in Paris 2024 - apparently the most Olympians from any school in Ireland and possibly the world. Having so many Olympians from this great part of the world is a tremendous accolade for both the school and our entire

community. The full list of Olympians from the Academy is now eight: Susie Berry (Eventing) - Paris 2024, Peter Brown (Hockey) - Paris 2024, our Guest of Honour today - Philip Doyle (Rowing) - Tokyo 2020 & Paris 2024 (Bronze Medal Winner), Eugene Magee (Hockey) - Rio 2016, Kyle Marshall (Hockey) - Paris 2024, Jonny McKee (Hockey) - Paris 2024, Mark Tumilty (Hockey Coach) - Paris 2024 and Russell White (Triathlon) - Tokyo 2020.

59 students received full Colours and 89 received half Colours for their exceptional achievements in school-related disciplines. At the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council (ABC) Awards - following a fantastic sailing season, Adam Green was awarded, for the second consecutive year, the Junior Male of the Year.

Our athletics and cross-country teams had a fantastic year. At the Irish Cross-Country Championships, both Emma Rankin and Emma Stewart achieved 9th place finishes in their respective races. Emma Stewart's talent was further recognised with selection for the Irish U17 team, winning a team gold. Both Emmas were selected to represent Northern Ireland at the Mini London Marathon.

In the NI Archery Schools' Cup, the Team were again crowned overall NI Team Champions and Isaac Smyth won Gold in the U16 Barebow.

The Minor Boys' Badminton Team were crowned Ulster Champions for their

league and went on to represent the school at the All-Ireland finals.

In the world of equestrian, Julianna Nelson won the Premier Individual NI Schools' show jumping competition, Tilley Tumilty was crowned all-Ireland Eventing League Champion. Lily Murphy representing Team Ireland, won the individual and overall British Show Pony Championship. In the demanding four-discipline sport of Tetrathlon, Emma Stewart excelled, winning her class at the Pony Club UK Championships and alongside Harry Purdy securing top 10 finishes at both the Senior Regional Championships in Scotland and the Irish National Championships.

Our multi-award-winning Dance Teams, involving 90 pupils, excelled with their 'Musicals' theme this year. Their dedication paid dividends at the Ulster Fusion Dance Competition, where our Junior, Senior, and Mixed teams, along with our duets and trios, all took home Gold medals - a truly outstanding clean sweep.

Our Boys' Hockey 1st XI Team were crowned All-Ireland Schoolboy Champions for a record-equalling seventh time after a 1-0 victory over Friends' School Lisburn in Dublin. Mr Jess deservedly won the ABC Council Schools' Coach of the Year and Mr Walker (Team Manager) deserves a special mention for his dedication & commitment, as he steps down from his role as master-in-charge of Boys' Hockey. The U14 reached the Ferris Cup



## HEADMASTER'S REPORT 2024/25



Year 11 Subject Prizewinners

Final and yet again there were numerous representative honours - four Ulster U18 Interprovincial Champions: Josh Osbourne, Harry Taylor, Adam McKee, and team captain, Max Nicholson. They were joined representing Ulster U16 Charlie Taylor, Daniel McKee and Owen Dobson and U13 player Teddie McCandless. Charlie, Daniel, Adam and Max all progressed to the Irish squads.

Girls' Hockey players continue to play at the highest level – Ruby Johnston, Sophie Tate and Katie Leslie were selected to represent Ireland and Ruby Cousins and Annie Emerson represented Ulster U13. Charlotte Betts, Katie Leslie, and Sophie Tate at U16 and Alyssa Somerville and Ruby Johnston at U18 represented the winning Ulster Teams at the Inter-pros. The U12, U13A and B teams were crowned Mid-Ulster League Champions and won the Oxford Hockey Tournament. Massive numbers continue to play hockey on a weekly basis, and it was a very strong season across the teams. The Girls 1st XI made it to the semi-final of the Belfast Telegraph Ulster Schools' Cup and the U14 Girls were runners-up in the Stevenson Cup and quarter-finalists in the Junior Cup.

There was significant individual success in football, with Will Megaw's selection for the NI U14 Performance Academy, and Harry Gough's graduation from the Irish FA National Academy and subsequent international goal for the NI U16.

We celebrated the success of our

Senior B Netball team, who won the Netball NI Schools' Senior Shield. Aimee Trainor was selected for the NI U19 squad, Maisie Nicholl and Talia Tamati were selected for the U15 Regional Development Squad.

We again hosted the Best Rugby Tournament with 250 P6 and P7 pupils from 16 local primary schools taking part. The 1st XV Rugby Team had an outstanding season with their new coach, Mr McClintock. After winning their qualification group, they earned the unique opportunity to play their 'final 16' match at Ravenhill. In some of the worst conditions imaginable, the team was defeated by Sullivan Upper. Entering the Subsidiary Shield, they defeated a strong Enniskillen Royal Grammar School in the quarter-final but were narrowly defeated following another great performance in the semi-final against Methodist College Belfast. The Medallion XV battled their way to the final of the Medallion Trophy, just coming up short in their attempt to win a trophy for the fourth year in a row.

There was outstanding individual success. Andrew Jackson represented the Irish U18 Clubs & Schools on their tour to Italy, and Noah Bell was selected for the Irish U18 Schools' training camp. Both Andrew and Noah also played for the Ulster U19 Team. Several Ulster Age Grade representatives: Dawson Knox and Poppy Rogers (U16); Daniel Byrne, Isabella Copeland, Rachel Douglas and Eve Hetherington (U17); and Alana Eadie, Noah Haughey and Fynn Niblock

(U18).

Our swimmers continue to excel at the highest levels, recording many personal bests during the year. At the Ulster Championships, Samantha Burns-Atkin won individual bronze, while our Intermediate Girls' medley and freestyle relay teams both claimed Ulster titles. This success continued at the national level, with Charlie Hamilton competing in the Irish Minor Schools, and our freestyle and medley teams of Sophie Black, Samantha Burns-Atkin, Tara Kennedy, Rebecca Lane and Rose Turley combined to be crowned Irish Senior Schools' Relay Champions. Furthermore, Sophie Black and Samantha Burns-Atkin were also selected for the Ulster development programme.

In table tennis, Curtis Rutten was selected for the Ulster team to play in Scotland, while our U13 Boys' team were crowned Ulster Champions and represented the school at the Irish Championships.

Our Girls' Tennis teams had a strong season, with the Junior Team competing well to reach their Shield Final and the Minor Team securing a shared victory in the Plate.

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

## HEADMASTER'S REPORT 2024/25



Year 12 Subject Prizewinners

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 – they are the reason why the Academy remains one of the best schools in the country.

I thank Mr Mathers, our Chairman and the members of the Board of Governors for their support and encouragement. During the year we moved to a newly reconstituted Board of Governors and it is appropriate today we acknowledge Mr Tom Shields for over 30 years of service

as an Academy Governor. I thank Mr Dennis Livingstone for his leadership and friendship in his role as Chair of the Board of Governors for the past 6 years. We acknowledge Mr Mark Orr KC as a former Chair and also in recognition of the huge honour in his recent appointment as Pro-Chancellor of the prestigious university - Trinity College Dublin.

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, Mrs Morrison and Mrs Neill. 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 Brown for his expertise on playing the organ.

In conclusion, we continue to live in an uncertain fast changing world 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 13 Subject Prizewinners



## HEADMASTER'S REPORT 2024/25



Senior Individual Prizewinners



9C awarded the Action MS Award

## HEADMASTER'S REPORT 2024/25



Girls awarded the BAA Award for Achievement at GCSE for achieving 9As or better at GCSE  
pictured with Principal Robin McLoughlin



Boys awarded the BAA Award for Achievement at GCSE for achieving 9As or better at GCSE  
pictured with Principal Robin McLoughlin



## GRADUATES

# Queen's University



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Jack Baird	1st	MEng Civil Engineering
Katie Baxter	1st	BA English and History
James Bradley	1st	BEng Software Engineering with Placement year
Heynes Brown	Pass	MB Medicine
Samuel Burke	2.1	BEng Software Engineering with Placement year
Jasmin Cairns	2.1	BSW Social Work
Erin Colgan	1st	BSc Mathematics
Deborah Cordner	Distinction	MSc Advanced Professional Practice
Peter Coughlin	Distinction	MB Medicine
Mark Cowan	2.1	MAcc Advanced Accounting with Placement
Leah Crawford	2.1	LLB Law
Jack Delaney	1st	BSc Computer Science
Stephen Dickson	Honours	BDS Dentistry
Arianna Downey	Pass	MB Medicine
James Edgar	2.1	BSc Computer Science
Naomi English	1st	BEng Software Engineering with Digital Technology
Owen Evans	2.1	LLB Law
Nadia Ewart	2.1	BA Criminology and Sociology
Amy Finlay	Pass	PGCE Science
Samuel Fulton	1st	MEng Computer Science
Darren Gibson	Distinction	Certificate in Zero Carbon Engineering
Josh Gibson	2.1	BA English and Spanish
Benjamin Gracey	2.1	BSc Business Economics
Ella Halpenny	1st	BSc Psychology
Anna Harris	2.2	BSc Chemistry
Dylan Harrison	2.1	LLB Law
Elliot Haw	2.1	BEng Software Engineering with Placement year
Sophie Hawthorne	1st	MPharm Pharmacy
Katie Heenan	2.1	BA English and Sociology
Jayne Johnston	Distinction	Certificate in Independent Prescribing
Laura Jordan	1st	BSc Biological Sciences
Annabelle Kelly	1st	LLB Law with French
Jessica Lewis	1st	MPharm Pharmacy
Aoife Magowan	2.1	BA English and History
Sophie Mairs	1st	BSc Psychology
Sarah McCandless	Pass	MB Medicine
Matthew McClimonds	2.2	BEng Mechanical Engineering
Beth McCullough	Pass	MB Medicine
Katie McDonald	2.1	BSc Business Management with Placement year
Evie McKinney	2.1	BA Broadcast Production
Fiona Moffett	Pass	PhD Archaeology and Palaeoecology
Peter Newell	Pass	MB Medicine
Ellen Nicholl	1st	MSci Biochemistry with Professional Studies
Morgan Reid	1st	BSc Pharmaceutical Science
Fraser Rodgers	1st	BSc Finance with Year in Industry
Zoey Rogan	2.1	MSci Mathematics and Computer Science
Martha Rutledge	1st	BEd Primary
Taylor Scott	1st	MPhys Theoretical Physics
Jodie Simmons	2.1	BA Drama and English
Alanna Stafford	2.1	BEng Software Engineering with Placement
Amy Stevenson	1st	BEd Primary
Jonathan Toner	2.2	BSc Geography
Luke Trueman	Distinction	Cert Clinical Education
Naomi Tully	1st	BSc Pharmaceutical Biotechnology
Emily Vong	2.1	BSc Pharmaceutical Sciences
Oliver Welsh	2.1	BA International Relations and Conflict Studies

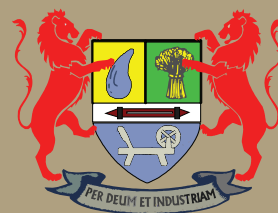
## GRADUATES

# Ulster University



Gabriella Bennett	1st & Distinction	BSc Commerical Advertising & Marketing
Ewan Campbell	2.1 & Distinction	BDes Interact Design
Jemma Clydesdale	2.1	BA Fine Art
Kaylee Doherty	1st & Distinction	BA Textile, Design & Fashion
Lloyd Donaldson	2.2	BSc Business Economics
Eve Elliott	1st	BSc Politics & International Studies
Christian Fee	1st & Distinction	BSC Finance & Investment Management
Jason Ferguson	Pass with Commendation	MEng Mechanical Engineering
Jamie Gibson	2.1	BSc Criminology & Criminal Justice
Halle Gregg	1st & Distinction	BSc International Hospitality
Lewis Groves	1st & Distinction	BSC Finance & Investment Management
Alannah Harshaw	2.1	BSc Dietetics
Nicole Haslem	2.2	BSc Sociology with Crimonology
Maddie Houston	1st	BSc Marketing
Alyson Jess	2.1	BSc Psychology
Leah Jess	2.1	BSc Peronalised Med
Callum Johnston	1st & Distinction	BSc Applied Biomedical Science
Philip Johnston	2.1	MPharm Pharmacy
Dylan Jordan	2.1	BA Architecture
Calum Kermath	1st	BSc Computer Technologies
Josh Magill	2.1	BSc Business Studies
Aoife McNally	2.1	BSc Human Resources Management
Daniel Meehan	1st & Commendation	BSc Computer Technologies
Luke Mooney	2.1	BEng Software Engineering
Matthew Robinson	2.1	BSc Business Studes
Benjamin Russell	2.1	BEng Electronic Engineering
Ellie Scott	1st	BSc Occupational Therapy
Helena Silva Reyes	1st & Distinction	BSc International Hospitality
Emma Simms	2.1	BSc Geography
James Stewart	2.2	BDes Graphic Design
Reuben Toal	2.1	BA Architecture
Lauren Tucker	2.1 & Distinction	BSc Applied Biomedical Science
Gemma Uprichard	2.1 & Distinction	BSc Marketing
Dylan Vaughan	1st	BSc Psychology
Susannah Wilson	1st	BA Architecture

## School Record



### Births

To Bethany and Christopher Kernaghan, a boy, Reuben Christopher.

### Marriages

Sarah Anderson and Philip Todd.

Katherine McDonald and Ryan Buckman.

Rebekah Warnock and Chris Hannon.



# Mrs Anne McCurdy

## Banbridge Academy 2002 – 2025



Mrs Anne McCurdy retired earlier this year after 23 years of dedicated and exceptional service to Banbridge Academy. Anne joined the Academy's Office Team in 2002 and quickly established herself as an indispensable asset, moving through various administrative roles, including finance, before taking up the position of Principal's Personal Assistant. She was a true professional, with an infectious laugh which endeared her to all her teaching and non-teaching colleagues.

Anne's legacy is one of diligence and attention to detail. She had a great work ethic, operating with meticulous precision and always happiest when busy. This commitment ensured the seamless functioning of many areas of life across the school, from

finance to flawlessly maintaining the school's multiple calendars. Anne's administrative mastery alongside her care and concern ensured everyone was always perfectly supported.

Beyond the office, Anne was deeply loyal and served as a trusted confidant. Her colleagues and friends fondly remember her vibrant sense of fun and good humour. The office atmosphere was frequently brightened by her charm, even during moments of pressure which were punctuated by her signature involuntary 'noises'.

It is this warmth and approachability that we miss most. She was affectionately known for her occasional 'Alice' moments - not always immediately getting the joke - but always being the

first to genuinely celebrate it when she did. As Anne embarks on her well-deserved retirement, she has turned her renowned organisational skills towards her family. She is embracing her new and much-loved role as 'nana' to Gianna and has already begun helping Dave, her devoted husband, with the administrative side of his podiatry practice.

The entire Banbridge Academy community thanks Anne McCurdy for her tremendous contribution and her loyal friendship across the years. She leaves behind a legacy of dedicated service and laughter that will not be forgotten. We wish Anne God's richest blessing, and a long, healthy and happy retirement with her family.

*My love  
language is  
Gelato*

***Smooth***

COMING SOON TO BANBRIDGE



@smoothgelato



# Mrs Dalzell

## Geography Department

Natalie Small, Sarah Moore and Ella Moore

*Thankfully no maps or compasses were required to locate the newest member of the Geography Department- Mrs Dalzell. We confidently navigated our way through the Geography corridor, where we were warmly greeted before commencing our questioning.*

### How have you found Banbridge Academy so far?

I've found it very positive; it's much closer to home than my last school, so I have been enjoying the short commute. I think the staff and the pupils are very friendly and welcoming. There is also a really good Geography Department here that I'm excited to be a part of.

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

My favourite subject was obviously Geography - heads and shoulders above the rest! However I also studied History and Chemistry.

### Have you always wanted to be a teacher?

No, I originally wanted to go into pharmacy, however I completed work experience in a chemist during Year 12 and absolutely hated it and I realised then that it really wasn't for me. Then I looked into teaching when I did my A Levels, although ironically it was a profession that I had always thought I wouldn't enter.

### What's your favourite part about teaching?

My favourite part about teaching has to be the pupils, that is the reason I became a teacher - I enjoy working with young people. I also absolutely love seeing people interact with my subject because I personally love Geography. It is great to see people take an interest in travel, world events and what's going on around them- so that is definitely my highlight of teaching.

### What's your favourite place that you've visited and why?

My favourite trip that I've taken was

visiting New York and Niagara Falls, because it's the first trip I brought my son on and it was our first trip as a family of three. I got the opportunity to see Niagara Falls for the first time, which is a fairly iconic waterfall and one that I mention a lot in classes. That is probably the reason why it's my favourite trip, as my son Harry came along with us.

### What would you tell your younger self?

I would tell my younger self not to take myself too seriously. When you're young you will make mistakes and that is absolutely okay, you just need to learn from them and move on.

### What's something you have always wanted to try but never have?

I've never gone skiing. I really wanted to go on the ski trip when I was at school but I never got to go and I still haven't gone, even though my husband is an avid skier. It's difficult when you're a teacher as you don't really get the chance to go unless you go at half term. Maybe someday when my son is a bit older we will all have the opportunity to go together.

### What do you like to do in your spare time?

I don't have a lot of spare time at the moment because my son is one and a half years old so he takes up a lot of my spare time. We like to go on lots of walks and bike rides together and whenever I do get the opportunity, I really love hiking. We have a toddler rucksack, which my son goes into, and we usually go on short hikes as he's still so young. I love the Mourne Mountains because we're only 30 minutes away and we're also really close to the Cooley Peninsula, so there are lots of lovely short and manageable toddler hikes there.

### Quick- fire Questions:

- **Tea or coffee:** Tea.
- **Favourite season:** Autumn.
- **Cats or dogs:** Both.
- **Sweet or savoury:** Savoury.



- **Salt and vinegar or cheese and onion:** Salt and vinegar.
- **Movies or bowling:** Movies.
- **Beach or city:** Beach.

We would like to thank Mrs Dalzell for answering our questions and we hope that she continues to enjoy her time in Banbridge Academy.

# Dr Henry

## Biology Department

Lassara Magennis and Jessica McCullough

*After approaching a few wrong doors in the science corridor, we finally found the correct room and introduced ourselves to the newest member of the Biology Department.*

**What did you study at A Level? Which was your favourite?**

I studied Chemistry, Biology and Physics at A Level and obviously Biology was my favourite! Chemistry was however a close second, as I had an amazing teacher.

**What's the most interesting piece of research you have read or conducted yourself?**

I actually had the opportunity to have some of my own research published when I was doing my PhD. I wrote and published a research paper for the 'Immunity' Journal back in 2009. It was about how the immune response can be switched off using something called RNA silencing.

**Why did you choose to join Banbridge Academy?**

I chose to join the teaching staff of Banbridge Academy because it has an excellent reputation and amazing pupils. I really align with the school's values and ethos and wanted to be part of a school community where pupils are front and centre and encouraged to be the very best they can be.

**How are you finding the responsibility of being Head of Department so far?**

It's definitely a busy job! There are lots of unseen things that need to be done behind the scenes, but the Biology team are amazing and have really helped me to settle into the post.

**Favourite and least favourite of your classes?**

All my classes are wonderful!

**Best experience at the Academy so far?**

Definitely the warm welcome from everyone! It's been great to get to know

both staff and pupils and I look forward to getting to know everyone even better.

**What's the most interesting biological fact you know?**

Did you know there are more bacteria in your gut than there are stars in the Milky Way?!

**What do you think the future of the biological field will look like?**

Biology is going to play a huge role in solving problems like climate change, new emerging diseases and food shortages. I think the students of today will be the ones making amazing discoveries in genetics, medicine and the environment in the years to come.

*We would like to thank Dr Henry and wish her well in her future endeavours in Banbridge Academy.*





# Mr McAdam

## Physics Department

**Lauren Burns-Atkin and Emily Castles**

*After multiple failed attempts to track down the newest member of the Physics Department, Mr McAdam, we finally located him and began our interrogation.*

**What was your first impression of Banbridge Academy?**

That it was really huge, which resulted in it taking me a while to find my way about. My first impressions of the pupils and staff are that everyone is very friendly and welcoming.

**What A Levels did you study and where did you attend?**

I studied Physics, Maths and RE at Lurgan College.

**Have you always wanted to be a teacher?**

I've always had teaching in the back of my mind, although for several years before becoming a teacher, I worked as an engineer. After some time in this career, I realised that teaching is what I really wanted to do; so I took the plunge!

**Are there any interesting facts about you that people would be surprised to know?**

I am not a very interesting person, but I do have double jointed elbows and I also used to have a pet goat.

**What's the most embarrassing thing that has happened to you as a teacher?**

Apart from calling people by the wrong name, which happens quite a lot, I did once fall up the stairs by trying to take three steps at once with a pile of books in my hand. It was quite embarrassing, but at least I didn't fall down the stairs! *(we agree that this would have been much worse and we both realised that this is an embarrassing incident that we too have experienced at some stage!)*

**What three items would you take on a desert island?**

I would take a bible, a deck chair and also a Wilson volleyball. Have you ever seen the film Castaway, with Tom Hanks?

He has a volleyball that he makes into a head and it almost becomes like his friend. I am pretty sure that would be good company on a desert island.

**What advice would you give to your younger self?**

Probably to get involved in everything, particularly in school. Just get involved in as many things as possible that interest you.

**What is your favourite year group?**

It would probably be a toss-up between 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, which are all the year groups I teach. It's quite difficult to pinpoint which one exactly. I wouldn't want to offend anyone.

**What is the best and worst thing about teaching?**

The best thing is the students and the 'craic' that's enjoyed while learning is taking place. No two days are the same, which is definitely quite nice. The worst thing would probably be finding time to do everything, including marking-which is not particularly enjoyable.

**Quick-fire Questions:**

**What's your favourite song?**

Parachute by Chris Stapleton.

**What's your favourite movie?**

Shutter Island.

**Cats or Dogs?** Dogs.

**Pet peeve?** Bad manners.

**Biggest fear?** Rats.

*We would like to thank Mr McAdam for answering our questions and we wish him well in his teaching career in Banbridge Academy- hopefully without any more slips when using the stairs!*



# Mrs McDonald

## Art Department

Clara Almeida Gourley and Hannah Johnstone

*We finally arrived in the colourful realms of the Art Department where we were warmly met by its newest member who eagerly awaited our questions.*

**How has your time at Banbridge Academy been so far?**

My time at BA has been fantastic as everyone has been so welcoming. It's a great wee community and I'm delighted to be here for the foreseeable future and make the most of it!

**What A Levels did you study? Which was your favourite?**

I studied ICT, RE and Health and Social Care. I always regretted my decision not to choose Art, so I went back and studied 3 A Levels as a BTEC diploma in Art and Design. What was my favourite? *(she laughs)* It has to be Art! But ICT really did help me with my graphic design and web design skills and I loved PE too.

**Do you have any hidden talents?**

I can actually play quite a few traditional instruments! I play the tin whistle, the flute, the accordion and the bodhrán.

**What are your top three holiday destinations?**

I would highly recommend the Philippines- it's incredible! It has to be my number one absolute favourite holiday! I would also love to go to Japan as it looks amazing! And thirdly... this is really difficult because there are so many... but I'd also love to go anywhere in Asia. I especially love Vietnam.

**What inspired your passion for art?**

I feel like I was always naturally good at it... It's something I always went to. As a child it always felt easy for me. It's just one of those things where you lose yourself and your sense of time, because you're enjoying yourself so much.

**What is your favourite year group to teach?**

Oooh, this is going to cause a little rift here! I absolutely love teaching all year groups but mostly my Year 13s and 14s

because it's more specialised and it's a more advanced level of teaching art and it's good fun.

**What is your favourite art medium to work with?**

I love the simplicity of just a pencil and paper. I also love experimenting with photoshop and textiles and I would like to improve my painting skills.

**What teacher are you most friendly with?**

*(Laughs)* This is a bit controversial! But I did go to university and also further education with Miss McCullough, so I've known her from before I started working here. Now we're back together again for a third time in Banbridge Academy. I'm very fortunate however to work in a department where everyone is just wonderful.

**Quick-fire Questions:**

**Favourite food:** Mexican food.

**Early bird or night owl:** Night owl.

**Celebrity crush:** My husband!

**Cats or dogs:** Dogs.

**Pet peeve:** Vaping.

**Favourite movie:** Interstellar.

**Zodiac sign:** Capricorn.

**Harry Potter House:** Gryffindor.

**Favourite artist:** Hilma af Klint.

*And with that, our interview came to a close. Thank you Mrs McDonald for your responses to our burning questions. We hope that you continue to enjoy your time in Banbridge Academy.*





# Mr Thompson

## Maths Department

Joshua Wilson

*I found myself in the basement a good three minutes early, so I had to wait for what felt like an eternity before Mr Thompson's last class of the day left B02. It didn't take long to prepare, but he had to get his car fixed afterwards, so we started promptly.*

### Why did you become a Maths teacher?

I was always quite good at Maths at school and I spent a lot of time working with young people, so it just made sense to combine the two. I have no regrets about my decision as I think it's a really good job.

### How are you finding the Academy after your temporary placement here?

Oh, I love the Academy. It's great to establish roots and feel like you're part of a school and try to get involved in as much as possible. The Academy vibe is super; the students are great, teachers are great, the location is great, so I have no issues and I look forward to (hopefully) being here for a long time.

### What do you like about your subject?

What I like about Maths is that a lot of the questions are either right or wrong. There's no ambiguity, or seeing things from different perspectives. It's very easy and clear-cut. I quite like the fact that students who hate Maths can start to appreciate it a bit more and even begin to enjoy it. There's no better feeling than when a student, who doesn't understand Maths, suddenly experiences that 'light switch moment' and understands what they're doing.

### Do you like having your birthday on Christmas Day?

Yes, I do. When I was younger, I used to always get the sofa to hold all of my presents on Christmas morning as I received extra for my birthday. The extra gifts were the main reason why I liked it so much. Now, however, I still think it's great because my family and friends are all off during Christmas so it's nice to spend time with loved ones.

### If you had unlimited money, but could only spend it on one thing, what would you choose to buy with it?

I would buy a cruise ship to go on a tour around the world. Is that allowed?

### What was your funniest memory of the past year in this school?

I'm not too sure. I don't know if it's the funniest, but I know that having to walk around school on crutches for eight weeks was definitely difficult and challenging. I had to get lifts in all sorts of ways and sit in classes in the most awkward positions, wearing shorts and a T-shirt. It's something that I really wouldn't want to repeat.

### What's your favourite quote?

That's a good question... I think it's from 'Rocky'. There's a scene where a coach is speaking to him, and it's: "In life, it ain't about how hard ya hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done!"

### What was your highlight of the summer?

I got engaged over the summer, so I feel like I have to say that. I was in New York as well, but getting engaged is the real highlight.

### Quick-fire Questions:

**Cats or dogs?** Dogs.

**Favourite movie?** The Shawshank Redemption.

**Favourite season?** Summer.

**Tea or coffee?** Tea.

**Pet peeve?** People being late.

**Science or art?** Science.

*And that concluded it. I quickly headed to the Sixth Form Study to type up the interview, knowing that I had finally made part of the school magazine. Thanks, Mr. Thompson, for taking the time to answer my questions (even if that meant slightly postponing fixing your car!)*



# Sara Gonzalez Arranz

## Spanish Assistant

Ellie Crimmins and Roisin Cumming

*After several weeks and failed attempts to schedule our interview, we finally managed to track down Sara and hear from the newest addition to our school's Spanish department!*

**What part of Spain are you from?**

I'm from Zaragoza. It's a city in the North of Spain and it is famous for the Cathedral-Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar.

**Why did you decide to come to Northern Ireland?**

I lived in Galway for around a year and I wanted to come back because I fell in love with the culture (especially the music) and the country as a whole.

**Convince us to visit your hometown in three words.**

Sun, tapas and culture!

**What was your favourite subject in school and why?**

It was English, because I have always been drawn to the culture as well as the language.

**What time period would you visit if you had a time machine?**

The Bridgerton Era (also known as the Regency era!)

**What Spanish food would you most recommend?**

Croquetas (*which Sara had painstakingly tried to explain in a conversation class- it's not easy to follow a recipe in Spanish*) and Tortillas de Patatas (*the perfect blend of Spanish and Irish we think!*)

**Describe your dream holiday.**

Close to the mountains, with a lot of nature to relax in!

**What was the biggest culture shock when you first came to Northern Ireland?**

Definitely the weather; I don't think I'll ever get used to the amount of rain! In Zaragoza it only rains for maybe two weeks of the year.

**Is there anything you couldn't live without?**

My cat Chi; I miss him very much because he's still in Spain with my parents.

**What tips would you give to first years just starting secondary school?**

Enjoy this time because it goes by quickly and don't be afraid to make mistakes- we are all learning.

**Quick-fire Questions :**

**Would you rather be able to see 10 years into the future or 150 years into the future?**

150 years into the future.

**Books or Movies?** Books.

**What is your favorite book?**

Normal People by Sally Rooney (*she's a big fan of Sally Rooney- we love to hear it*).

**Favourite singer or band?** Ed Sheeran.

**What's your favourite song of his?**

Galway Girl- we played it a lot while I lived there!

**Biggest pet peeve?** People making noises when they eat (*we both quickly agreed*).

**If you could learn any new language fluently what would it be?** Italian.

**Early bird or night owl?** Night owl.

**What superpower do you wish you could have?** Teleportation.

**Would you rather fight 100 duck-sized horses or 1 horse-sized duck?**

1 horse-sized duck, less competition than 100 of them!

**Favourite season?** Autumn.

**What's your most irrational fear?**

Spiders (*not irrational at all in our opinion*).

*We would like to thank Sara for sitting down with us and answering our questions- she's definitely convinced us to visit Zaragoza, even just to experience the sunshine (we can only imagine). We hope that she thoroughly enjoys her year here at Banbridge Academy.*





# Ellie Cousins

## Head Girl

Luke O'Hagan and Maisie Murphy

*After two weeks of trying to track down the Head Girl, we eventually managed to find her and squeeze the interview into her busy schedule.*

### How are you finding your new role so far?

I'm really enjoying it at the moment, although it can be quite intense sometimes. It is a great opportunity to be able to help pupils out and it makes my last year a lot more interesting and exciting.

### What subjects are you currently studying?

I'm currently studying Biology, Chemistry and PE.

### Are you involved in any extracurricular activities?

I've been playing hockey since Year 8 and I really value the skills and friendships that I've made throughout school, as a result of my involvement in this. I also completed my expedition for my Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Wicklow in June, which was tough at points but also extremely rewarding - I would do it all over again as there were lots of great memories made too. Being involved in senior SU has allowed me to get to know many like-minded people who I may not have crossed paths with otherwise and be open about my personal faith while encouraging others too.

### Who is your favourite teacher?

My favourite teacher is probably Dr. Lorimer. I had her for GCSE Chemistry; Chemistry is one of my favourite subjects and she really helped me throughout the course. *(I would wholeheartedly agree with this statement!)*

### What is your funniest memory from school?

During Year 12 we played in a hockey tournament in Dublin and staying at

the hotel was really good fun. I have lots of humorous memories of this trip. We ended up winning the entire tournament against Portadown College in the final. It was probably the best we had ever played and an all-round team performance - it was unforgettable!

### Which school year has been your favourite, or the most memorable so far?

Lower sixth - I really enjoyed Year 13 because you are so much more independent and the teachers treat you more like a friend and help you along with the course.

### Quick-fire Questions:

#### Fruit or vegetables?

Fruit.

#### Morning or night?

Morning.

#### Favourite movie?

The Notebook.

#### Cats or dogs?

Dogs.

#### Hot or cold?

Hot.

#### Ketchup or mayonnaise?

Ketchup.

### Lastly, what advice would you give to your Year 8 self?

To get involved in school and make the most of it by throwing yourself into extra-curricular activities. I also feel that it is important to make new friends and not worry about what other people think. *(We think everyone should definitely follow this expert advice!)*

*We would like to thank Ellie for answering our questions and for her words of wisdom.*



# Noah Haughey

## Head Boy

Christina Bickerstaff and Natalia Bonk

### How are you finding life as Head Boy?

It's been good so far. The group of senior prefects that I'm part of all get on well and I'm finding the organisation of events to be interesting, as I've never done anything like that before.

### What events do you organise?

We're currently busy with the organisation of preformals and formals, and will also be involved with open night and the school council as well.

### Were you surprised to discover that you had been appointed to this role?

Yes. There were so many individuals in our year group that I could have imagined being appointed, so it was a role that I never truly imagined myself being nominated for. I am very grateful for the opportunity.

### What's one perk of the role that no one talks about?

I enjoy the teamwork aspect of this role, both with my peers and also with senior leadership staff. Being Head Boy also allows me to voice opinions and promote real change around the school.

### What subjects are you currently studying - which one is the most challenging?

Maths, Chemistry and Physics, and Physics is definitely the most challenging.

### What are your hopes for the future?

I hope to study Chemical Engineering at Queen's University next year.

### Apart from your studies, what else are you involved in?

I have been involved in the Rugby Team throughout school, Senior SU, and the Engineering Society.

### Who is your favourite teacher and why?

I'd have to say Mrs Topping, because she's a good teacher with a good balance of hard work and banter.

### What is your favourite or embarrassing memory during your time here?

I was thinking about this - I think it's the ski trip, when Alex Anderson sat down on the bed and it just snapped in two. That was hilarious!

### Is there any piece of advice that you'd give to Year 8 pupils?

I would say, get a good bunch of friends early and that will make your life a lot easier here at school. Also throw yourself into as many extra curriculars as possible to establish which you like best.

### What are three things you'd bring to a deserted island?

(after some consideration) I think... a lighter, a fishing rod, and... a flare gun.

### Where would you sleep?

I'd make a hammock out of leaves.

### How did you get yourself into crutches?

I tore my ACL and Meniscus over the summer playing rugby.

### What will you miss most about the Academy next year?

I think it will be the friends I've made and how close everyone is - also the routine as this will change too.

### Quick-fire Questions

#### What is your biggest pet peeve?

When people mumble when they're talking; they just need to speak clearly.

#### Celebrity crush?

Jessica Alba.

#### Favourite takeaway?

Chinese.

#### Favourite movie?

Good Will Hunting.

#### Any secret talents?

I play the piano.

*We would like to thank Noah for his answers and wish him well in his role as Head Boy.*





# Zoe Acheson

## Deputy Head Girl

Beth Morrow and Halle Kinkaid

### How are you finding life as Deputy Head so far?

I am loving it! It's been a busy start planning things like the formal, while still trying to settle into our new roles. But what makes it so great is how well the eight of us get on together.

### What subjects are you currently studying, which is toughest?

This year I'm studying Biology, Chemistry, and Maths (*spot the future medical student!*) and I'd say Biology is the toughest, purely because of the essay questions (*I agree with you on that Zoe!*) Maths is my strongest; sit me down with a page of sums and I'm happy!

### Where would you like to see yourself in ten years time?

(*Zoe takes a deep breath as she attempts to sum up the next ten years in a few sentences.*) In ten years time I'd love to see myself having graduated from university with a masters in Medicinal Chemistry and I visualise myself in a lab somewhere doing research on drug development. I would also love to be married and to be living in a big house in the countryside!

### Who is your favourite teacher and why?

Okay so this is an honourable mention to Mrs. Campbell, my GCSE maths teacher who retired a couple of years ago. I'll admit I was a little scared of her at the time (*if you know, you know*) but she was a brilliant teacher, like fabulous, and we all genuinely miss her.

### Do you have a favourite year in the Academy and why?

So far, throughout school, my favourite year has been Year 11, although I'm hopeful that Year 14 will top it! I loved going to new classes and meeting so many new people; that's when I met most of my close friends. Also, the Year 11 ski trip was one of the best weeks of my life!

### Do you have a part time job? If so, do you find it difficult to juggle things?

For the past two years, I have had an 8 week summer job at Clarks, fitting kids with school shoes. I think I would find it hard juggling my school work and extra curriculums as well as a job, so I decided to end it when school started back. I feel this works best for me.

### If you could give a shout out to one person in the whole school, who would it be?

It would have to be Mr Harvey, as he's a legend!

This is also my chance to publicly apologise for all of the times that he's told me to be quiet in study – sorry Mr Harvey.

### Do you have a favourite quote or piece of advice that helped you through your time at school?

It's got to be from the Bible: Jeremiah Chapter 29 v11, "For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

### Quick-fire Questions:

#### Cats or dogs?

I have a fat cat called Muffin, so definitely cats.

#### Summer or winter?

Summer, because I can't stand the cold.

#### Salty or sweet?

Sweet.

#### Night in or night out?

Movie night by the fire.

#### Tea or coffee?

Definitely tea, I hate coffee.

#### Chocolate or vanilla?

It has to be chocolate.

#### Pizza or burger?

Pizza is my favourite food, specifically with festive toppings.

#### Flying powers or super strength?

Flying powers.

#### Rugby or football boys?

Rugby boys.

*We would like to thank Zoe for her enthusiasm and interesting responses!*



# Fynn Niblock

## Deputy Head Boy

Carly Fong and Morgane Garrigue-Crawford

*After re-arranging this interview and following Carly's stern reminder to Fynn in Chemistry, we finally caught up with the busy Deputy Head Boy and began to ask him our pressing questions...*

**How is life as Deputy Head Boy so far?**

Life as Deputy Head Boy is great! You accept more responsibility in school and you have to lead by example. It's also great to be more involved in events such as organising the formal.

**What are you studying and what are your hopes for the future?**

I study Maths, Chemistry and Physics. I hope to study Finance at Queen's next year.

**Apart from your studies, what else are you involved in?**

In school, I am a part of the Senior 1st XV and also the Senior Mixed Dance Team. I am also a Wellbeing Ambassador and a Numeracy Mentor.

**If you could give your Year 8 self advice, what would it be?**

It would be to work hard and do more revision prior to exams. Also, to enjoy school life when there's not as much pressure from external exams.

**What was your summer highlight?**

It would probably be playing for Ulster Rugby U18s against Connacht and coming out with the win. A week in Portstewart with lots of others from our year was definitely up there as a highlight as well *(fist pumps the air and smiles as he fondly reflects on this experience.)*

**Quick-fire Questions:**

**Cats or Dogs?**

Dogs.

**Favourite subject?**

Chemistry, as the people are good craic.

**Favourite Teacher?**

Mrs Leslie, as she's a great teacher and a lovely lady.

**Tea or Coffee?**

Coffee.

**Biggest pet peeve?**

*(Long pause, whilst tapping his chin)* I really don't have any.

**Favourite movie/series?**

Movie: Lord of the Rings: Return of the Kings.

Series: Game of Thrones.



**Favourite song?**

Scar Tissue by Red Hot Chilli Peppers.

*We would like to thank Fynn for taking time to answer our questions and we wish him well in his exams and future plans.*



# Jasmine Magowan-Balfour

## Deputy Head Girl

Amelie Knott, Lassara Magennis and Jessica McCullough

*After managing to corner the Deputy Head Girl in the middle of her busy schedule at breaktime, we swiftly arranged a meeting time. Eagerly wanting to get this 'interrogation' out of the way, she agreed to meet us at lunchtime of the same day. And so we began...*

### What has life been like as Deputy Head so far?

It's been really fun and quite exciting. I feel very responsible walking around the corridors now. It's also been slightly stressful, but I know it will have been very rewarding by the end of the year.

### What was it like coming to the Academy in Year 11?

Slightly scary at the start as it's a very big place (*I'm sure we all remember the excessive map usage*) – much bigger than my previous school – so finding my way about was terrifying! I instantly joined school societies like choir and hockey, so I made friends there that made me feel like I had always been here.

### What's your most embarrassing school memory?

(*A look of horror spread across her face*) So, one time I was collecting flowers from the office for the Spring Concert and the lady in the office told me they looked beautiful, but I thought she told me that I looked beautiful and it was really cringe – I started chatting to her saying, "Oh yeah, I put tan on last night". That was really embarrassing and I still think about that a lot.

### Most memorable moment at school?

I'd say I have two major ones. The Spring Concert in Year 13, where I sang a solo and I loved it; it was really special. Secondly, winning the All-Ireland Schools' Daphne Hall Trophy with my hockey team – that was a crazy time!

### Any advice for pupils in Year 8?

Yes, I would say to join societies and clubs – that's the main one that I would go for. That's how I made friends quickly. That's how you end up making different

friends, not just with the people you spend your class time with; you meet people outside of that which then helps going into Year 13 when you've got different classes. So, yeah, I'd say join as many clubs as you can, find your interests and build on them from there.

### What are your plans for next year?

I want to go and study English and History – I want to teach. I've always wanted to teach; I teach piano and I coach so I would want to go into teaching, but I want to study a subject first because I love English.

### Quick-fire Questions:

**Maths or English?** (*without any hesitation*) English!

**Hot or Cold?** (*After some deliberation*) Cold.

**Chocolate or sweets?** Chocolate.

**Tea or Coffee?** Tea.

**Favourite teacher?** Mrs Munton.

**Favourite extracurricular?** Chamber Choir (*Jasmine sent her apologies to the hockey girls – you did get an honourable mention.*)

*We would like to thank Jasmine for agreeing to be interviewed. We wish her all the best for the remainder of her time as Deputy Head Girl.*



# Reuben Robinson

## Deputy Head Boy

Frankie Lynch, Branden Edens and Jacob Meeke

*Finally, following several communication errors, we were able to catch Reuben at a break time when we were all free. Sitting down in the crowded and noisy Sixth Form Study, we eagerly began our interview.*

### How are you finding life so far as Deputy Head?

It's been busy, but I'm enjoying life as part of a team. At the moment we're organising preformals and the formal; I personally am organising the finances.

### How did you find the selection process of becoming Deputy Head?

It was quite nerve wracking, but I was very proud to be chosen in the end. To be selected by my peers was humbling. *(We personally could not think of a better choice!)*

### What was your childhood dream job?

I wanted to be the goalkeeper for the NI Football Team until I realised how terribly uncoordinated I was. I wanted to do this because I was quite tall. I preferred playing nets rather than being outfield. *(As a fellow former tall keeper, we both laughed at our football inability!)*

### What are your hopes for the future now?

I want to study Theoretical Physics at Queen's University, Belfast and go into research. It's definitely a lot different from football! Physics fascinates me because of the size of the universe and being able to describe it all through Mathematics. Theoretical Physics is the more mathematical side of Physics without the practical aspects. *(A smile grew on Reuben's face as he discussed Physics further, obviously this seems like a great choice for him.)*

### What subjects are you currently studying?

Maths, Further Maths, Chemistry and Physics.

### What subject do you find most challenging in school?

Chemistry because the other ones

are easier; Mathematics comes more naturally to me.

### If you could remove one subject from existence, what would it be and why?

I would remove English. As interesting as Mr Cromie's stories were, I would prefer to sit one hundred Maths exams instead of one English exam! I don't want to talk about how the author has engaged me, when they haven't! *(As an English student I could not be more offended and pointed out that English gives meaning, while Maths only gives numbers. Each to their own I suppose!)*

### Apart from your studies, what else are you involved in?

I am involved in Senior Scripture Union, the Engineering Society and Senior Volleyball.

### What advice would you give to your Year 8 self?

Get involved in all aspects of school life and be kind and encouraging towards others, as cheesy as it may sound. *(It may be cheesy but it is genuinely brilliant advice that we could all take no matter how old we are!)*

### Quick-fire Questions: Cats or dogs?

Dogs.

### Letters or numbers?

Numbers.

### Movie or TV show?

TV show.

### Fiction or Non-Fiction?

Non-fiction.

### Sweets or chocolate?

SWEETS!

### Spanish or French?

Spanish.

*Thank you Reuben for the wonderful interview and, as far as we are concerned, for doing a great job as Deputy Head Boy. We wish you luck in pursuing Theoretical Physics!*





# Shruti Suresh

## Deputy Head Girl

Harry Gough and Sienna Heasley

*After a few reminders about the looming deadline, we finally tracked down our deputy head girl and commenced our questioning...*

**How are you finding life as deputy head so far?**

I'm really loving my role and enjoying all of the responsibility that comes with it.

**Were you surprised that you'd been picked for the role?**

Yes, I really was as there are so many other deserving candidates.

**What subjects are you studying and which do you find most challenging?**

I'm currently studying Biology, Chemistry and Art and I think that Biology is the most challenging, as there's so much content (*as an A level Biology student, Sienna nodded her head profusely in firm agreement*). After completing my A Levels, I would like to study Chemistry at university.

**What extra-curricular activities have you been involved in?**

I'm involved in the Medical Society, Girls' Choir, Hockey and the Mixed Dance Team. I have lots of really good memories from my experiences in these activities and would really encourage people to become involved in as many extra-curricular activities as possible.

**What is your most memorable moment from your time at school?**

There have been so many memorable moments, but if I had to select one then it would be when the Mixed Dance Team won the Dance Competition. It was very rewarding as all of our hard work and practice paid off!

**Who is your favourite teacher?**

(*Without a second of hesitation*) It definitely has to be my form teacher- Miss McCullough!

**If you had one superpower what would it be?**

It would be teleporting (*we agreed that*

*this could prove to be very interesting!*)

**What advice would you give to your Year 8 self?**

To get involved in as much as possible, as it's a great way to meet new people and enjoy new experiences.

**If you could change one rule in school, what would it be?**

(*Another quick response from Shruti*) That would be the 'no jewellery rule'.

**If you could introduce a new subject, what would it be?**

I think that Criminology would be a popular addition as it would be very interesting.

**What advice would you give to those picking their A Level subjects?**

Select subjects that you like as they will lead to a career you really enjoy.

**Quick-fire Questions:**

**Sweets or chocolate?**

Chocolate.

**Tea or coffee?**

Tea.

**Winter or summer?**

Winter.

**Books or TV?**

Books.

**Romcom or horror?**

Horror.

**Salt or sweet popcorn?**

Sweet popcorn.

*We would like to thank Shruti for answering our questions and we hope that she enjoys the remainder of her final year in Banbridge Academy.*



# Charlie Tumilty

## Deputy Head Boy

Morgane Garrigue-Crawford

### In your opinion, what's one of the best perks of being a deputy head boy?

*(After some deliberation and mind-changing)* It's a privilege to be selected as deputy head boy and it's not all about perks, but if I'd to pick one it would be something practical like having a car parking space in the school grounds—even though I currently don't drive and therefore don't have a car to park! *(After further input from Mrs Topley-Willis, Charlie was reminded that having tea and buns with Mr McLoughlin was also a perk and one that had resulted in him arriving slightly late to her English class!)*

### What extra-curricular activities are you involved in?

*(While Charlie's initial response to this question was that he wasn't involved in many extra-curricular activities, we realised, as he proceeded to answer, that this wasn't actually true.)* I played school hockey until this year, I am a literacy mentor, wellbeing ambassador, I'm involved backstage with the school play and I am also involved in Bar Mock Trial.

### What subjects are you studying for A Level and what are your plans for the future?

I study English, Politics and Business Studies but I am still undecided about what exactly I'd like to study in the future. I'm thinking of either Advanced Accountancy with placement or possibly Law. I may also consider taking a gap year and coaching hockey until I am fully decided.

### What's been your favourite subject during your time here?

I really enjoyed PE in junior school, as it was always good fun. Mr Cromie's English classes were also a highlight as we covered such a broad spectrum of both literary and real life situations through the stories that he shared. The man is a legend!

### What's your most embarrassing moment?

I was always leading the supporters'

chants at hockey matches when I was in junior school. I would yell 'Red army!' down the megaphone, encouraging everyone else to join in *(Charlie explained how even thinking about this now made him cringe!)*

### If you could give your Year 8 self any advice, what would it be?

To enjoy the school experience when you can, as it has just flown in so quickly. I actually can't believe that I only have five months left!

### If you could summarise your time in Banbridge Academy in two words, what would they be?

Brilliant craic.

### What has been your most memorable experience here?

There have been many, but if I'd to pick one it would probably be winning the Richardson Cup when I was in Year 10.

### Quick-fire Questions:

#### Favourite song?

There are so many to choose from, but it would probably be something by Bruce Springsteen.

#### Favourite movie/ TV show?

Just Mercy.

#### Career aspirations?

Not too sure at the moment, but potentially accountancy.

#### Cats or dogs?

Dogs.

#### Favourite sport?

This is a tough one, but I'd have to say football.

#### Favourite teacher and why?

I have quite a few, but it's got to be Miss McCullough as she's my form teacher and she has really looked after me from 'day one'.

*Thanks to Charlie for his responses and we hope he enjoys the remainder of his time at Banbridge Academy.*





# Year 8 Interviews

The jump from primary school to 'big school' can often be overwhelming for even the most resilient 11 year old, so we decided to ask some questions to find out Year 8's true opinions on Banbridge Academy so far....

## Mr Leslie's Form Class

### Interview 1:

**Names:** Alana and Georgia.

**Primary School:** Portadown Integrated and Waringstown Primary.

**Favourite teacher:** Miss McCullough and Mrs Hetherington.

**Favourite subject:** PE/Art and English.

**Thoughts on BA:** Very inclusive with a lot of clubs and it's very big!

**Difficulties of 'big school':** Getting lost and accidentally leading people the wrong way!

**Dream job:** No clue (Alana) and a writer (Georgia).

### Interview 2:

**Names:** Karen and Ollie.

**Primary School:** St Mary's and Rowendale Integrated.

**Favourite teacher:** Mrs Hassard and Mr Erskine.

**Favourite subject:** Art and Games.

**Biggest change:** There's more clubs and uniform rules are stricter- can't wear hats anymore.

**Most embarrassing moment:** Nothing yet (Karen) I fell down the hill (Ollie).

**Dream job:** Art teacher and RAF pilot.

## Mrs Li's Form Class

### Interview 3:

**Names:** Annie and Abbie.

**Primary School:** Edenderry and Fairhill.

**Favourite teacher:** Mr Cromie!

**Favourite subject:** HE and Art.

**Biggest change:** Moving around more and having to pack your bag.

**Dream job:** Horse dentist (Annie) not sure yet (Abbie).

### Interview 4:

**Names:** Isabella and Lois.

**Primary School:** Poyntzpass and Bronte.

**Favourite teacher:** Mr Cromie.

**Favourite subject:** Maths and History.

**Thoughts on BA:** Lots of clubs- joined netball and swimming.

**Difficulties:** More homework and more subjects.

**Embarrassing moments:** Did a cartwheel, got caught by a teacher and fell on stairs!

**Dream jobs:** Lawyer (Isabella) and paediatrician (Lois).

### Interview 5:

**Names:** Arabella and Acacia.

**Primary School:** Abercorn and Dromore Central.

**Favourite teacher:** Mr Cromie.

**Favourite subject:** Drama and Geography.

**Biggest change:** Keeping up with everything and the level of work.

**Difficulties:** Getting the bus- it's hard to get a seat.

**Embarrassing moments:** Confused her timetable and showed up to a music lesson at the wrong time (Arabella), bag fell across the aisle on the bus (Acacia).

**Dream job:** Marine biologist and interior designer.

### Interview 6:

**Names:** Lexi and Ben.

**Primary School:** St Francis' and Edenderry.

**Favourite teacher:** Miss Forsythe.

**Favourite subject:** English/Art (Lexi) and Art/French (Ben).

**Thoughts on BA:** Joined clubs- Lexi goes to chess club, Ben goes to wind band and both go to BAYs.

**Difficulties:** Making new friends and remembering to pack bags!

**Embarrassing moments:** fell up the stairs and forgot all his folders (mum had to bring them in!)

**Dream job:** Vet (Lexi) and meteorologist (Ben).

# Two Truths and a Lie

Ever wanted to learn a little more about your teachers or are you confident that you know them well already? Let's see if you can identify which one of their following three statements is a 'Lie'!

**TRUE**

**?**

**FALSE**

## Miss McCullough

1. I've met David Beckham.
2. I've been an extra in a Disney Film.
3. I'm a qualified outdoor instructor.

## Mrs Paolucci

1. I am fluent in three languages.
2. I can rap 'The Real Slim Shady'.
3. I run marathons in my free time.

## Mr Erskine

1. I have solved a Rubik's cube.
2. I have never drunk a cup of tea.
3. I have flown a plane.

## Mrs Duke

1. I was a professional ballet dancer in London.
2. I ran two marathons in Ireland.
3. I was a water skiing instructor in the USA.

## Mrs Hoy

1. I am an Irish title winning horse rider.
2. I am a marathon runner.
3. I have suba dived and planted coral.

## Mrs Spratt

1. My husband Chris is South African.
2. Nelson Mandela, the former president of South Africa, is one of my personal heroes.
3. My cat is called Murray.

## Mr Acheson

1. I have done 2 bungee jumps, one in New Zealand, one in Nepal.
2. I have run 10 marathons.
3. I have climbed Mount Kilimanjaro

## Mrs Topley-Willis

1. My husband proposed to me on a tandem zip line.
2. I had to be evacuated from an island due to a tsunami.
3. I ran 10 miles dressed as an elf.

## Miss Burgess

1. I have lived on two continents.
2. I have dual nationality.
3. I still drive my first car.

## Miss Galashan

1. I have danced with Angela Rippon
2. I can speak German
3. I was a background dancer in a Disney film

Answers: 1 (Lie: 2), 2 (Lie: 3), 3 (Lie: 2), 4 (Lie: 1), 5 (Lie: 1), 6 (Lie: 3), 7 (Lie: 3), 8 (Lie: 3), 9 (Lie: 1), 10 (Lie: 3)



# Whose Room?

Charlie Shields and Ned Rooney

You're in their classrooms everyday, but how much do you actually notice?  
Use the following images and clues to identify the teacher's room!

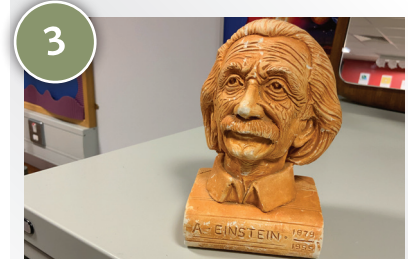
Answers - 1. Mr Clarke, 2. Miss McClelland, 3. Mr Stewart, 4. Miss Forsythe, 5. Mrs Topley-Willis, 6. Mrs Neill, 7. Mrs Dreaming, 8. Miss Burgess, 9. Mrs Leslie, 10. Mr Leslie, 11. Mr Winter, 12. Mrs Hetherington



Although he loves a good Liver bird, perhaps he took this feather from a Lark!



A polite teacher who will always lend a hand, but if you 'bar' the way, she might mock you!



An acclaimed painter of hot pots and thick soups; this teacher's students are often found running up stairs and sprinting down hallways.



A force to be reckoned with; this teacher plays a large role, in a very Little play.



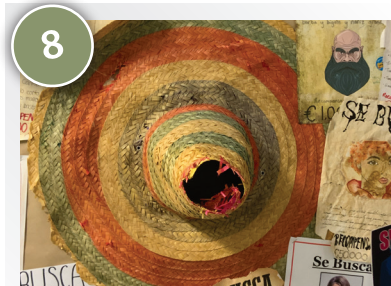
This willful teacher stays on top of her marking by getting all of her teddy bears to help her!



This teacher is so good at explaining Shakespeare, that her colleagues kneel to her!



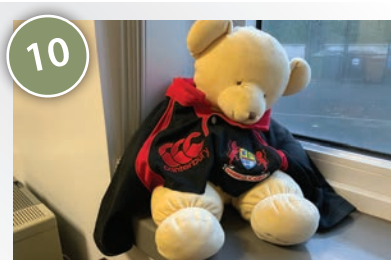
No, you're not dreaming; this teacher will enthusiastically transport you around the globe.



Where 'gracias' and 'adiós' belong, follow the sombrero to the land of Burg-essentials.



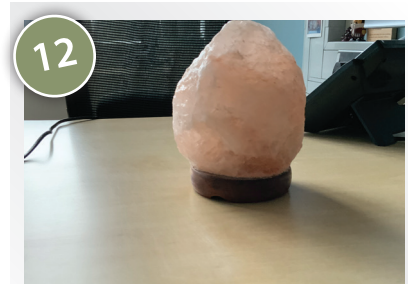
Where right angles meet right passes, look for the one who makes maths 'Les' confusing.



From balance sheets to balance on the pitch, the teddy's top will lead you to the teacher who keeps things 'Les' complicated.



Where gears and gadgets come to life, the bike part will guide you through the chill.



Find the glow that warms the room—inside you'll meet someone who loves both books and paws.

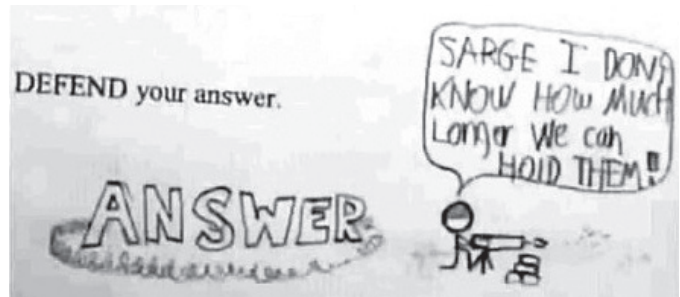


# Questionable Questions and Ridiculous Responses

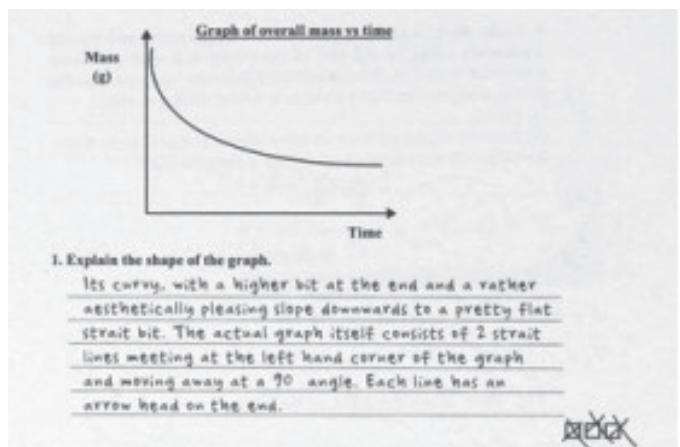
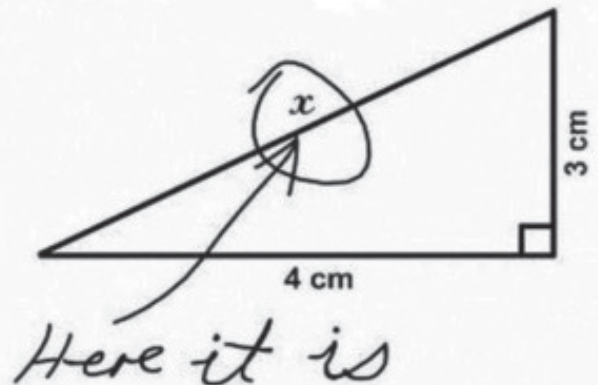
Ned Rooney

From responses that defy logic to answers that make you wonder if the student was auditioning for a comedy panel, enjoy the questionable questions and ridiculous responses listed below. Thankfully, such exam antics are something we hope Banbridge Academy teachers will only ever read about—not witness in their own classrooms!

1. If a car is parked on the side of the road and not moving, what is its speed?
2. A farmer sells  $\frac{1}{7}$  of his chickens plus half a chicken; how many chickens did he start with?
3. A spherical cow of radius 2 m grazes in a circular field; what fraction of the field is shaded?
4. If it takes 1 iPhone to play your favourite song, how long will it take for 2 iPhones to play your favourite song?
5. What ended in 1896?  
1895
6. Write five words you can spell.  
Five  
Words  
You  
Can  
Spell
7. Write an example of risk.  
This.
8. Who was Noah's wife?  
Joan of Arc
9. Who was King Henry the Eighth's second wife?  
Ann Berlin
10. What is a fjord?  
A norwegian car or tractor



3. Find  $x$ .



# Shared Education

Mr J. Clarke

## An Overview: Beginning of Banbridge Academy's Shared Education Journey

*Banbridge Academy has recently embarked on its first-ever Shared Education partnership with Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School and Our Lady's Grammar School. Over the past few years, a number of pupils have been informally involved in collaborative activities between the three schools through various events. However, this year marked the formal launch of the partnership, beginning with an official launch day held at Abbey Christian Brothers' in Newry. Through a dynamic series of workshops and joint activities, students explored pressing social issues at local, national, and global levels. As they learned about each other's school cultures and shared social responsibilities, the experience fostered mutual respect and inclusive learning. The programme not only encouraged meaningful dialogue, but also helped pupils develop essential skills such as teamwork, digital literacy, and public speaking. The year culminated in a Special Celebration Event at Stormont, where the young people showcased their work in front of the Minister of Education, Mr Paul Givan MLA.*

*This initiative is part of the ASPIRE (Advancing Shared Partnerships through Inclusive Relationships in Education) Project—a four-year programme led by the Education Authority in partnership with Léargas, Early Years, the National Childhood Network, and the Fermanagh Trust. ASPIRE is dedicated to promoting inclusive, cross-community education across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.*



## Celebration Event at Stormont - 17/06/25

ASPIRE Shared Education Ambassadors from Banbridge Academy, Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School, and Our Lady's Grammar School were welcomed to the Long Gallery at Stormont for a special celebration event, marking the culmination of the first year of a Shared Education initiative.

Following a welcome from Mrs Diane Dodds MLA, the students from each school outlined the many different strands of their project. The Education Minister, Mr Paul Givan MLA, concluded the event and congratulated the students and the schools on their dedication to the project.

The project brought together over 60 pupils from the three schools in a collaborative effort to explore and address social issues at local, national, and global levels. Through a series of workshops and joint activities, pupils developed key skills such as teamwork, digital literacy, and public speaking, while also learning about each other's school cultures and shared social responsibilities.

Throughout the year, pupils engaged with local charities and community projects, gaining valuable insight into

efforts supporting social justice and inclusion across Northern Ireland. The event featured final presentations from the pupils, who shared their experiences with an audience that included the Minister of Education, local MLAs, charity partners, representatives from the Education Authority, and other community stakeholders.

This celebration marks not only the conclusion of a successful year of collaboration, but also the beginning of lasting connections and continued engagement between the three schools.





# Creative Connections:

## Art Workshop with French Exchange Students



During this year's French exchange programme, Miss McCullough had the pleasure of hosting students from Collège St Joseph in Dijon for a week filled with cultural exchange and creative collaboration. One of the highlights of their visit was an inspiring art workshop held in our own art department.

Together, we explored themes of identity, heritage, and the landscapes that shape our lives—both here in

Northern Ireland and in Burgundy. Using ceramic coasters as canvases, students worked side by side to create collaborative pieces that blended their artistic styles and perspectives.

The workshop was more than just an opportunity to make art—it was a chance to connect, communicate, and understand each other beyond language.





# Year 10 Pupils Visit FE McWilliam Gallery

In October 2024, Year 10 pupils had the opportunity to visit the FE McWilliam Gallery, engaging in a day of artistic exploration and cultural enrichment.

The visit allowed students to experience the work of celebrated local sculptor Frederick Edward McWilliam, whose innovative approach to modern sculpture continues to influence artists across generations. Pupils toured both the permanent collection and current exhibitions, gaining valuable insights into artistic techniques, themes, and historical context.

The trip also included interactive sessions designed to encourage creative thinking and personal responses to the artwork. Pupils were praised for their enthusiasm and thoughtful participation throughout the day.

This visit supported the Art and Design curriculum and helped foster a deeper appreciation for the arts and Northern Ireland's rich cultural heritage.





# GCSE Exhibition





# A Level Exhibition





# Celebrating Past Pupil Talent: Beth Snelling and the Dromore Food Map

Last year, Dromore unveiled a vibrant illustrated map that celebrated the town's rich food and retail scene. At the heart of this creative project was past pupil Beth Snelling. A talented Northern Irish illustrator and graphic designer, Beth brought her unique artistic vision to life in a map that not only guided locals and visitors through Dromore's independent businesses, but also told a deeper story of community and connection.

Beth's design captured the essence of Dromore, featuring beloved landmarks such as the historic Viaduct, Town Hall, and local favourites like Graham's Ice Cream and Calm Coffee. Her work was known for its thoughtful detail and emotional resonance, and this map was no exception. It served as more than a navigational tool—it became a celebration of local identity and pride.

The launch event, held in the town square, was a lively affair filled with music, food, and heartfelt speeches. Beth's contribution was widely praised, with many noting how her map reflected the spirit of collaboration and the importance of supporting local businesses.

Since leaving Banbridge Academy, Beth has gone on to achieve remarkable success in the design world. In 2024, she was named the Winner of the Design Research category at the IDI Ireland Graduate Awards, earned membership in the prestigious International Society of Typographic Designers, and was shortlisted for the Cannes Lions Roger Hatchuel Academy—a global recognition of emerging creative talent. Beth's journey from classroom to creative professional stands as a testament to the power of passion, perseverance, and community support. Her success continues to inspire current pupils and the wider school community.





# A Level Art Students Visit NCAD, National Gallery and IMMA

In November 2024, our A Level Art students travelled to Dublin for a day of artistic inspiration and exploration. The visit included the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) Open Day, as well as trips to the National Gallery of Ireland and the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA).

At NCAD, students gained valuable insight into the wide range of creative courses available, explored studio spaces, and spoke with staff and current students about portfolio development and career opportunities in the arts.

The group then visited the National Gallery, where they viewed an impressive collection of Irish and European art, enriching their understanding of historical and contemporary artistic movements. At IMMA, students engaged with thought-provoking modern installations and exhibitions, sparking discussion and reflection on current trends in visual art.

The trip was a valuable experience for all involved, offering inspiration and guidance as students consider their future pathways in the creative industries.









## MOVING IMAGE ARTS

# Charlie Shields Reached Ulster Regional Finals with Eros Lost

This year, young filmmaker Charlie Shields made waves in the Ulster Regional Finals of the Young Irish Filmmaker of the Year competition with his poignant short film, *Eros Lost*. The film, which delved into themes of love, memory, and identity, impressed judges with its emotional resonance and artistic vision.

Competing among a talented group of emerging filmmakers from across Ulster, Charlie's work stood out for its originality and cinematic style. Although *Eros Lost* did not progress to the national finals, Charlie's achievement in reaching the regional stage was a significant milestone in his creative journey.

Organised by Fresh Film, the competition celebrates Ireland's next generation of filmmakers aged 13–18, offering a platform for young voices to be heard and seen. Charlie's success in the regional finals highlighted his potential and passion for storytelling through film.

While the national spotlight may have eluded *Eros Lost* this time, Charlie Shields' journey is only beginning—and his name is one to watch in the future of Irish cinema.



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# Inspiring Futures at Banbridge Academy

It's been another action-packed year for the Careers Department at Banbridge Academy, with exciting opportunities, inspiring events, and plenty of moments that helped our pupils explore their potential and plan for the future.

We kicked off the year by welcoming our new Year 8 pupils with a dynamic day of skills exploration and entrepreneurship, thanks to the **Young Enterprise Step Up programme**. It was a brilliant way to introduce them to the world of careers and innovation from the very start of their journey at the Academy.

One of the standout highlights of the year was our **Pathways Careers Fair** in September. The event brought together over **30 universities** and **40 employers**, creating a buzzing atmosphere of possibility and ambition. Pupils from Years 10 to 14 had the chance to speak directly with representatives, ask questions, and discover exciting options for their future studies and careers. The afternoon was packed with seminars covering everything from modern apprenticeships to careers in the arts, offering something for everyone. We were also thrilled to welcome pupils from four other local schools, making it a truly collaborative and inspiring event.

Also in September, our sixth formers had the incredible opportunity to

visit **Brasenose College, Oxford**, for the University of Oxford Open Day. This trip gave pupils a real taste of life at one of the world's leading universities and sparked plenty of academic ambition.

October saw the return of our popular **Interview Skills Day** for Year 14. Local employers generously volunteered their time to conduct mock interviews, helping pupils gain confidence and polish their communication skills in a realistic setting.

Spring brought a fresh wave of activity with **National Careers Week**, which focused on the theme of **potential**. Throughout March and April, pupils took part in a range of engaging activities designed to help them reflect on their strengths and aspirations. We also celebrated our fifth year of participating in the **Young Enterprise 10X Challenge**, where pupils showcased their creativity and business acumen with ideas ranging from **hand-crafted pom-pom pets** to **carnival games**.

From entrepreneurship to university visits, mock interviews to career fairs, it's been a year full of inspiration, growth, and exciting possibilities. We can't wait to see what next year brings!





# CAREERS DEPARTMENT







# 'A Streetcar Named Desire' Theatre Trip

Sienna Scullion 14E

Let me set the scene for you: it was the dead of winter, footpaths were frosted over, and students were swaddled in school scarves. Nonetheless, although many animals were in hibernation, our A-Level English Literature cohort was not! Lining the bus stop, we impatiently awaited the arrival of our coach, longing to escape the all-pervading cold. When the bus finally arrived, we packed ourselves inside. After a quick register call, a head-count, and seatbelt checks, we set off on our merry way to Dublin!

As we approached Dublin's canal, there was a crescendo of energy, which culminated in high-pitched shrieks of excitement as we disembarked the coach. Luckily, we were allowed to go shopping for two hours before we watched the play. Giddy with excitement, we took a photo outside

the theatre. "Be back here in two hours," the teachers announced, heralding our shopping spree.

We had a blast! Some of us decided to dip into our savings for shops like Rituals, whereas all we could do was window-shop as we browsed Brown Thomas. Although having whet our appetite for Gucci bags, some of us were starving for food. Luckily, Grafton Street hosts a variety of restaurants, and we were spoiled for choice. However, we had a thirst to watch the play, and so we set forth for the theatre.

As we sat down in the theatre, spirits were at an all time high. With Eavan Gaffney as Blanche DuBois, her execution of the protagonist's character was impeccable. The synergy between the cast during the most emotionally terrorizing moments of the play was

striking. Clearly, their interpretation of the play was effective in eliciting both sympathy and horror amongst the audience - with a quick glance around the room during intervals, you could spot at least three people with their mouths wide open, totally mesmerised. The props, lighting and costumes joined forces, defining the stage as a symbolic medium to convey Tennessee Williams' disdain for American society.

Astounded by the visual poetry we had just bore witness to, we waddled out of the theatre hall, attempting to find our bearings after such an immersive experience. Many of us fell asleep on the late journey home, dreaming of returning to Dublin in the future to watch the play once more.

# Sonnets

10D used William Shakespeare's Sonnet 18, 'Shall I compare thee to a Summer's Day?' as inspiration to write their own sonnets. They chose a subject to explore and used the rhyme scheme and rhythm of a Shakespearean sonnet.

## Shall I compare thee to a rubbish dump?

Shall I compare thee to a rubbish dump?  
Where all kinds of litter are scattered,  
And clothes lie untamed in a messy  
clump,  
Making just walking a tripping hazard.  
Each morning, I try to pick an outfit,  
But it turns into a scavenger hunt.  
With nothing in its correct place to sit,  
I am left searching through a battlefield.  
Ignored are the shouts and screams of  
my mum,  
Commanding me to clean my pigsty up.  
They ring in my ear like a djembe drum,  
But I don't listen like a clueless pup.  
Some say I'm lazy, but cleaning ain't fun,  
And it is my room; I choose how it's run.  
**Sarah Greer (to her bedroom)**

## Shall I compare thee to a box of sweets?

Shall I compare thee to a box of sweets?  
I don't know true joy until you reveal,  
Stacked extremely high and filled with  
sweet treats  
Each chocolate or sweet in a nice seal.  
Like the purple one with a hidden  
crunch!  
Or the coconut éclair, soft and sweet,  
Both are so good, I could eat a whole  
bunch  
Knowing which you'll be each day: no  
mean feat.  
If only this metaphor was all true  
No sweets would be good enough to  
compare  
No sweets can be as brilliant as you  
'Hard to chew a toffee, I wouldn't dare!'  
When I come home I don't know who I'll  
meet,  
These sweets, just like you, make my day  
complete!  
**Emma Rankin (to a friend)**

## Shall I compare thee to a dark black hole?

Shall I compare thee to a dark black hole?  
When I'm near you, all the answers leave  
me!  
You leave me as blind as a pesky mole,  
Suddenly all the answers are blurry.  
When I think I'm done, you're always  
there,  
You turn up just when I want to relax,  
You practically hunt me like a bear,  
As well, you really push me past my max.  
I understand you less than I do space,

To my brain you are further than the  
moon,  
Each night you wait like a desperate  
case,  
Just demanding to be deciphered very  
soon.  
But in reality we still both know,  
I would be best to go, before I blow.  
**Zara Harte (to homework)**

## Shall I compare thee to a thunderous storm?

Shall I compare thee to a thunderous  
storm?  
But far more destructive and far louder.  
Each morning shouting and breaking  
the norm,  
Making the peace dissolve into the air.  
Going round the house with a bossy  
tone,  
Commanding all as if you were a King.  
When there's work to do, your presence  
is unknown.  
Too tired to rise, too lazy for a thing.  
Still, though the noise and chaos never  
cease,  
Your laughter fills the room with sudden  
cheer,  
You may be annoying, but still bring  
peace,  
When silence feels too heavy, cold or  
drear.  
So although you tire me from day to day,  
Without your spark, my joy would fade  
away.

**Dylan Finnegan (to a little brother)**

## Shall I Compare thee to a Cosy Film?

Shall I compare thee to a cosy film,  
Your presence brings a sense of peace  
and ease,  
Where all the troubles gently start to  
dim,  
And worries fade like the wind and the  
breeze.  
As you teach me to be caring and kind,  
You fill my life with laughter, love and  
grace,  
Just like comfort films- always on my  
mind,  
You are my safe and comforting space.  
I go to you for your judgement on  
things,  
Through every act, your love's a guiding  
light,  
For clothes and makeup and jewellery-

like rings,  
Your story's always shining pure and  
bright.  
It is amazing to have a best friend,  
Just like my love for you will never end.  
**Alyssa Curry (to her mum)**

## Shall I compare thee to a cup of tea?

Shall I compare thee to a cup of tea,  
A cup of comfort, strong and always  
there,  
A brew of warm and sweet serenity  
Always against and ignoring despair.  
With every sip, a memory appears  
Of warm happiness shared and lessons  
taught.  
You hide away all sorrows, dry all tears,  
You are like the comfort I've always  
sought.  
Each sip's a memory like a kind word,  
You guide me through darkness into  
light,  
A gentle strength that is always heard,  
Your wisdom covered in kindness, pure  
bright.  
So let me cherish every word with glee,  
My mother- a sweet cup of perfect tea.  
**Tara Colan-O'Leary**

## Shall I compare thee to a crashing storm?

Shall I compare thee to a crashing storm,  
You shame and tease, annoying every  
day.  
You yell and shout and break the quiet  
form,  
You never seem to let me have my way.  
A crashing storm, my brother's endless  
roar,  
No calm or peace can last when you're  
around.  
With noise that rattles walls and breaks  
the floor,  
Annoying like a tempest's angry sound.  
You break my stuff, disrupt my every  
plan,  
You shout and stomp, a thunder in the  
hall.  
No household's safe when you're the  
storming man,  
Like crashing waves that never seem to  
fall.  
My brother's storm, a nonstop crashing  
fight,  
A storm that turns my day into a night.  
**Mya Smith**



# Kennings

A Kenning is a two-word phrase (usually hyphenated) used in poetry to describe a noun without naming it directly. They are traditionally found in Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Mrs Hetherington's 9c class enjoyed working in groups to write their own Kennings.

Can you guess the subject of each poem before its revelation at the end?

Story-Writer  
Fidget-fighter  
Crazy-clicker  
Ink-dispenser  
Creativity-cannon  
Doodle-device  
Fairytale-fantasiser  
Postcard-printer  
Note-signer  
Story-refiner  
I'm a...

**Pen!**

*(Tobi, Eamon, Charlie)*

Joy-bringers  
Energy-givers  
Hunger-stoppers  
One-of-a-kind  
Sadness-soothers  
Soul-warmers  
Sugar-rush-makers  
Taste-infusers  
Easy-snack  
Mood-improvers  
Eye-openers  
I'm...

**Sweets**

*(Lucy Sterritt and Emma Edward)*

A joy-bringer  
A fun-giver  
A supersonic-ride  
A slowcoach-puller  
A strong-hauler  
A school-blues-banisher  
A team-representer  
A lawn-mower  
A hurdle-overcomer  
A hedge-leaper  
An escape-artist  
A great-listener  
A problem-solver  
An adrenaline-pumper  
A good high-jumper  
A food-vacuum  
A Spritely-saviour

A dirt-monster  
A boredom-breaker  
An interest-igniter  
A money-muncher  
A cash back-king  
The perfect friend for  
horsing around  
I suppose that's fitting  
as I'm a...

**HORSE!!!**

*(Lucy and Maisie)*

Ball-kicker  
Team-saver  
Leg-breaker  
Goal-scorer  
Pass-giver  
Ball-saver  
Ball-dribbler  
Tackle-maker  
Header-hitter  
Net-breaker  
Celebration-maker  
Clearance-maker  
Shot-taker  
Finesse-curler  
Record-breaker  
Award-winner  
Ball-smasher  
Motm-taker  
Foul-master  
Power shot-wacker  
Pass-curler  
Healthy-eater  
Referee-shouter  
I'm a...

**FOOTBALL PLAYER**

*(Timothy, Ryan and Aaron)*

Sleep-breaker  
Wet nose-poker  
Energy-soaker  
Toy-hoarder  
Sadness-stealer  
Obsessive treat-eater  
Big hug-mugger  
Big long-walker

Food-stalker  
Wet tongue-hanger  
Zoomie-banger  
House-protector  
Fluff-distributor  
Sleep as stiff as a log  
I am a...

**DOG**

*(Lucy and Valerie)*

A happiness-bringer  
A poo-dropper  
A leftovers-eater  
A hair-shedder  
A postman-attacker  
A sofa-seat-stealer  
An everything-eater  
A fluffy-hugger  
A homework-destroyer  
A window-scratcher  
A cat-attacker  
A squirrel-chaser  
A park-lover  
A mud-lover  
I'm a...

**DOG!**

*(Matthew Todd)*

A joy-bringer  
A ball-fetcher  
A bone-eater  
A cuddle-giver  
A paw-shaker  
A bark-maker  
A tail-wager  
A drool-dispenser  
A toy-destroyer  
A walking-partner  
A trick-master  
A furry-friend  
A man's-best friend  
Put this together, what am I?  
I am a...

**DOG!**

*(Eve)*

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# Year 8: City Models





# Year 9: Trip to Murlough

Emma J. McCormick



Murlough National Nature Reserve is a fragile 6000-year-old sand dune system owned by the National Trust and has been managed as Ireland's first Nature Reserve since 1967. It is an excellent area for walking and bird watching due to its spectacular location at the edge of Dundrum Bay and the Mourne Mountains. The dune fields at Murlough are the best and most extensive example of dune heath within Ireland with over 720 species of butterflies and moths, one of which, the Marsh Fritillary butterfly, is of European importance. The site is internationally important for wintering wildfowl and waders. The reserve is also used to graze cows, which roam freely through the dunes, keeping the gorse and grass at bay.

Murlough was a great beach to visit to complete our coastal study. It's four to five miles of golden sand and shingle, and many would say it's one of the most beautiful beaches in Northern Ireland. The tides, thankfully on the day we

visited, were quite far out but they can come right up to the edge of the dunes during high tide, making the passing from the beach to Newcastle almost impossible if you don't want to get your feet wet. Although many of our year group decided 'paddling' was the best course of action to complete our study.

Murlough is a great example of the coastal topic we were doing in geography at the beginning of Year 9. The stones and shingle on the beach were great examples of the erosion that the sea can do, with larger pebbles found at the back of the beach. You can see where the sea carried away some of the sand from that beach via the Long Shore Drift, which we discovered does occur at Murlough Beach. You can also spot (or sometimes trip over) the remains of the wooden groynes left on the beach that have been eroded away by the water, placed there to prevent Long Shore Drift, but which have been mainly unsuccessful.





# Tourism Trip to Newcastle

Evie Archer

In October 2024, our year group took a bus trip to Newcastle to analyse the tourism attractions it had to offer. We walked down the main road, stopping by shops and tourist attractions such as Mauds, Bonbon and Joyland. We filled out a survey and rated each tourist attraction on a scale of one to five based on a variety of characteristics, including the age group it catered for. We managed to do this despite the poor weather, although we did have to seek shelter from the rain in some of the restaurants. We made a lot of memories with our close friends that will stay with us forever. We were very privileged to be able to go on this school trip and it was a great unforgettable experience for us to take part in.





# Year 11: Rocky River Trip

Emily Rankin

In June 2025, our Year 11 GCSE Geography class embarked on an exciting fieldwork trip to the Rocky River in the Mourne Mountains. Due to the large number of geography students, the four classes were split into two groups, each going on the trip on a different day. Fortunately, both groups experienced excellent weather, so set off with high spirits up the mountain. Both groups started the expedition at the beginning of the school day with wellies on, and suncream in hand. When we arrived, we walked for around 45 minutes on a path (not a cliff face as claimed by some) that runs alongside the river until we reached site one. We then collected pebbles to determine pebble size at each site, as well as getting into the river (much to some people's amusement) to measure river depth and width.

After finishing our measurements at site one, we carefully traversed downstream through the grassland that forms the riverbank and began the chaotic journey to site three (with only a few minor trips and falls and only one lost shoe!) Following this, our group sat down and enjoyed lunch while the sun was at its peak and took this time to take in the scenery surrounding us. Once our food was finished and we were content again, the group descended down the remaining three sites, continuing to take measurements as we went along. After a successful day's work, we plodded back to the bus and headed back to school for a well-earned rest. Overall, the fieldwork trip to the Rocky River proved to be both educational and also very fun, providing learning opportunities that will continue to benefit us. It was definitely one of the highlights of Year 11 for me!





# Magilligan Fieldtrip

Rachel Moore and Anna Russell



In February, the AS geography classes set off on an exciting two-day field trip to the Magilligan Field Centre and the Umbra Sand Dunes at Benone beach. We were accompanied by our brilliant teachers, Mrs Dreading and Mr Reaney, who kept us entertained on the long bus journey up.

When we arrived, we started in the classroom for a pilot study, where we learned how to use the equipment and how to carry out data collection. Then it was off to the sand dunes, where we applied our new skills to investigate soil pH, light intensity, and vegetation types – all key components of our Unit 3 exam. Despite the cold weather, rain and having to wear wellies- our enthusiasm didn't waver.

After a busy day of data collection, we returned to the centre for a famous Magilligan meal – chicken and chips. In the evening, the Boys vs Girls

Competition heated up with games like Uno, Jenga, and Twister-with everyone's competitive side coming out, especially in table tennis! We rounded off the night with more games and plenty of laughs before heading to bed.

The next morning, we returned to the classroom to analyse our data. Although it was the longest geography lesson we'd ever had, Mrs Dreading and Mr Reaney made it engaging (with the help of lots of snacks). After completing our fieldwork booklets, we packed up and began the journey home.

The trip wouldn't have been complete without one final stop, and of course it was at McDonald's as we all deserved a well-earned treat after two days of hard work! It's safe to say that this was a great trip and we won't forget the learning that took place, as well as the laughter that was shared.





# Geography Society

Mr Reaney - Geography Society Coordinator

This year, Banbridge Academy Geography Society has gone from strength to strength, bringing together students from across Years 8-10 to celebrate the wonders of our world.

Our popular quiz sessions tested members' knowledge of world flags, capitals, and country facts. From the trickiest island nations to the most obscure national emblems, students competed in teams for glory and prizes!

We explored the human and physical world through film, with screenings of documentaries and geography-inspired movies. These relaxed afternoons addressed issues like climate change, migration, and global cultures.

Creativity met cartography in our

hands-on craft sessions. Students made topographic models, climate zone maps, and even designed their own countries—complete with flags, languages, and physical features.

One of the year's most exciting additions was our GeoGuess tournaments. Members tested their spatial awareness and detective skills by pinpointing locations around the globe using street view clues. The competitive spirit was high, and the global knowledge even higher! As we wrap up the year, we're already planning new activities for

next term—including themed weeks, guest speakers, and more interactive challenges. The Geography Society continues to be a space where curiosity is celebrated and learning is made fun.

A huge thank you to all our members for their enthusiasm and energy. Whether you joined us for one quiz or every event, you helped make this year a success. Here's to another year of exploring the world—one map, movie, and mystery location at a time!



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# Government and Politics

Over the past academic year, the Politics Department has enjoyed a vibrant and enriching programme of events and activities. With visits to both Stormont and Westminster, meaningful engagement with politicians at local and national levels, and student success in youth politics. Pupils have had opportunities to bring their learning beyond the classroom and into the real-world arena of political life.

A major highlight of the year was the visit of Baroness Nuala O'Loan, as part of the UK Parliament's Learn with the Lords outreach programme. A former Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and a crossbench peer in the House of Lords, Baroness O'Loan brought with her a wealth of experience in public service, justice and oversight. Baroness O'Loan provided a candid and insightful account of her work both in Northern Ireland and at Westminster. She spoke on topics such as the role of the House of Lords, the relevance of the House of Lords in the 21st century and the importance of integrity in public life. Her

visit also included a lively Q&A session, where students raised issues ranging from House of Lords reform to proposed legislation including the Assisted Dying Bill.

The department was also immensely proud to see Reese Green elected as the Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) for Upper Bann. After a competitive selection process and an election across the constituency, Reese was chosen to represent the voices of young people on the national stage. In his role, Reese will attend events and debates, including the UK Youth Parliament's annual sitting





## GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS DEPARTMENT



in the House of Commons, where he will speak on behalf of young people in Northern Ireland. His campaign focused on mental health provision in schools, educational equity, and youth engagement in politics – all issues that resonated with students.

Closer to home, the Year 13 Government and Politics class had the opportunity to visit Stormont, the seat of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The visit included a guided tour of Parliament Buildings, where pupils learned about the architectural and political history of Stormont, followed by a Q and A with local MLAs.

Students were able to ask questions on a range of topics such as education policy, power-sharing, and the role of MLAs in constituency work. These discussions brought classroom theory to life, allowing pupils to see firsthand how regional politics operates within the unique context of Northern Ireland's devolved institutions.

Perhaps the most memorable event of the year was the department's day trip to London, during which pupils received a guided tour of the Palace of Westminster, exploring the House of Commons, the House of Lords, Westminster Hall and Central Lobby. The tour was not only a fantastic opportunity to appreciate the architecture and history of the UK Parliament, but also a valuable educational experience that brought textbook politics to life.

The group enjoyed a series of engaging discussions with political figures. Pupils met with Carla Lockhart MP, MP for Upper Bann, who shared insights into her role at Westminster, her work on committees and the challenges of constituency representation.

Students then met Lord Nigel Dodds, a member of the House of Lords and former MP for North Belfast. He reflected on the differences between serving in the Commons and the Lords, spoke on the role of scrutiny and debate in the legislative process and answered questions on constitutional issues.

The group also had the opportunity to meet Claire Hanna MP for Belfast South. Ms Hanna spoke about issues relating to social justice, cross-community engagement and the impact of UK-wide legislation on Northern Ireland.

We also completed a walking tour of the main London tourist attractions, visited the Imperial War Museum and amassed 37,000 steps!

As the new academic year begins, the Politics Department remains committed to providing students with direct access to political institutions and real-world experiences. These opportunities not only support academic success but also foster the confidence, critical thinking and civic awareness essential to life beyond school.





# Year 9 WWI Recruitment Posters

In the autumn term, Year 9 students stepped into the shoes of wartime propagandists, designing their own World War I recruitment posters as part of their study of WWI. Inspired by original posters from the early 20th century, students explored how imagery and language were used to persuade young men to enlist — and then applied those techniques to their own creations.

From patriotic slogans like, “Your Country Needs YOU” to emotional appeals showing families waiting at home, each poster captured a different aspect of the recruitment message. Some students chose to highlight duty and honour, while others focused on guilt, pride, or camaraderie.

artistic quality of the posters but also by the historical understanding behind them. The students really grasped how propaganda worked and showed how powerful images and words can be — especially in times of war. Well done Year 9!

Teachers were impressed not only by the



# Year 9 Trench Projects

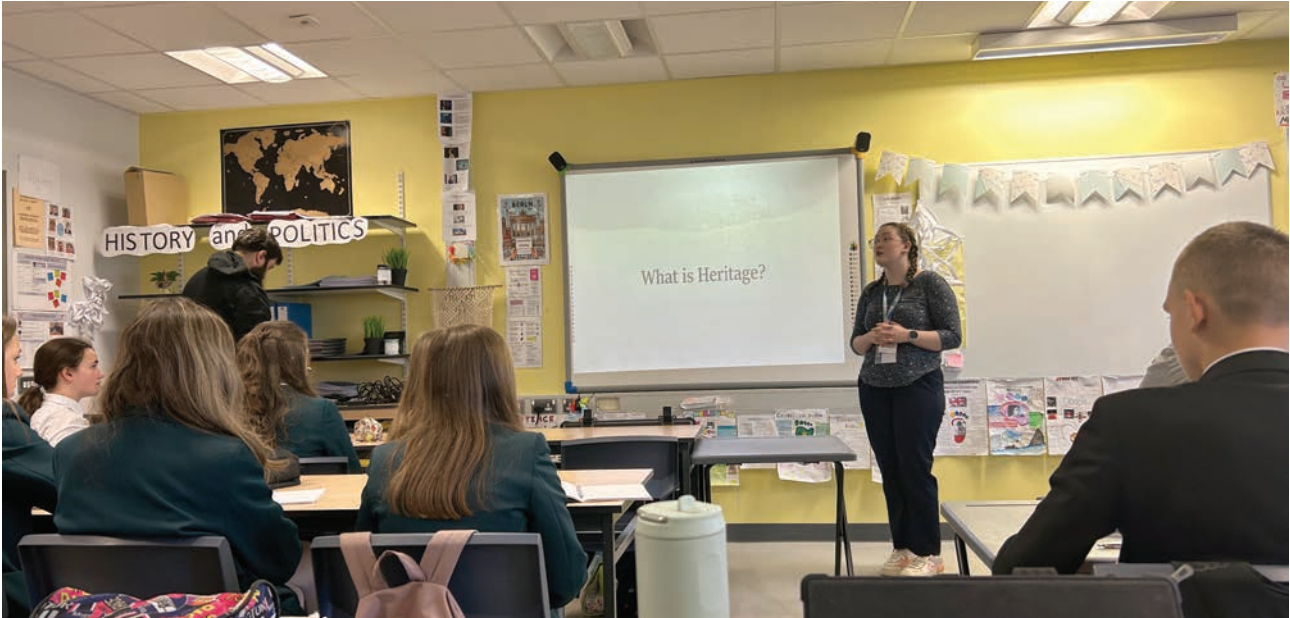
In June, 9H students were challenged to research, design, and build realistic models of WWI trenches, capturing the harsh conditions soldiers faced on the front lines.

Using a mix of cardboard, paper mache, lollipop sticks, paint, and plenty of creativity, each group created trench models complete with duckboards, dugouts, barbed wire, sandbags and even miniature soldiers. The attention to detail was remarkable and beyond the craftsmanship, students demonstrated a strong understanding of the historical context.

The trench projects are now on display in the History corridor, where they've been drawing admiration from staff and students alike. Well done, Year 9H!



# Heritage Places Event



In April, Mrs Hoy's 9B History class took part in a half day workshop taken by Heritage Places, a project ran by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

These workshops ran across schools from the local council area, and involved getting students to think about the term 'Heritage' and what it might mean for different people in different contexts.

The session consisted of three elements:

1. Introduction to Heritage

2. Researching and storyboarding  
3. Shooting and editing of the video clips.

Students transformed archival footage into Social Media style videos, making heritage engaging, relatable, and interactive.

In groups of two, students selected a video clip to discuss in a short video lasting between 45 and 60 seconds. The overarching question of the project

was 'What is Heritage?'

The video clips selected were from the NI Screen's Digital Archive, and students used the technology provided by the Heritage Places, including iPads and audio mics, to re-record these clips into a more modern setting.

The students thoroughly enjoyed working together and engaging with this project, and their final pieces turned out great!





# Senior History Trip: Berlin 2025

Sam Bentley 14A and Drew Frazer 14C

In June 2025, pupils from Years 11 to 13 at Banbridge Academy embarked on an unforgettable trip to Berlin. Over five days and four nights, students explored the rich tapestry of German history—from remnants of the Third Reich to Cold War relics, from the era of unification to the modern day. The trip was both educational and enjoyable... with time for an ice cream (or two)!



## Day 1 – Arrive in Berlin – 23rd June

The adventure began bright and early at school, where we boarded a coach to Dublin Airport. After breezing through security, we took a short flight of around 1 hour and 45 minutes, landing in Berlin at 7:35pm local time.

Our accommodation was the welcoming Aletto Hotel, where rooms were shared among groups of five. With hot showers, comfortable beds, and hearty breakfasts, it was the perfect base for our Berlin explorations. After settling in, we got some well-earned rest ahead of a packed itinerary.

## Day 2 – Reichstag, Bike Tour, DDR Museum – 24th June

We started the day with a train trip from Zoologischer Garten to the Reichstag, Germany's historic parliament building. An audio-guided tour brought its rich history to life—from its construction

in 1884 to its role in modern German democracy.

Next, we hopped on bikes for an 8km tour across Berlin, passing through all four Cold War sectors. We stopped for lunch in the French sector before continuing past landmarks like the Berlin Wall, Neue Synagoge, and the iconic TV Tower in Alexanderplatz.

On our way to the DDR Museum, we passed statues of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels—key figures in communist ideology. The museum itself, located on the banks of the River Spree, offered immersive exhibits including a replica East Berlin flat, a prison cell, a DDR car simulator, and uniforms from the Nationale Volksarmee. It was a vivid insight into life in East Germany.

Dinner was at Vapiano, an Italian restaurant where we enjoyed a variety

of pizzas and pastas—fuel for another exciting day ahead.

## Day 3 – Sachsenhausen & East Side Gallery – 25th June

We ventured outside Berlin to Brandenburg to visit Sachsenhausen, a former concentration camp. The experience was deeply moving and sobering—a stark reminder of the atrocities of the past and the importance of peace and tolerance today. Walking through the grounds, we saw the prisoners' uniforms, work areas, and the places where countless innocent lives were lost. It was a moment of reflection that will stay with us for years to come.

Back in Berlin, we visited the East Side Gallery, an open-air exhibition of murals painted on remnants of the Berlin Wall. Located near the Uber Eats Stadium, the gallery featured works by artists like Kim Prisu and Jim Avignon. The atmosphere





was lively—especially with a Pitbull concert happening nearby!

We ended the day on a lighter note with a trip to an arcade for bowling and pool and some well-earned fun.

#### **Day 4 – Brandenburg Gate, Stasi Prison & Bunkers – 26th June**

Our final full day began with a visit to the Brandenburg Gate, Berlin's answer to the Eiffel Tower or Big Ben, as Mr. Erskine aptly put it. After a quick photo op, we headed to the Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial, a former Nazi prison turned Stasi detention centre. The museum showcased chilling remnants of East Germany's secret police operations—from interrogation rooms to surveillance equipment.

Later, we explored the Alexanderplatz markets, picking up souvenirs and enjoying lunch while listening to buskers—including a Scottish performer named Justin McConville.

In the afternoon, we split into two groups for tours of Cold War and WWII

bunkers. These 90-minute guided tours were incredibly detailed, offering insights into the bunkers' construction, use, and preservation. Though photography was prohibited, the memories will last a lifetime.

We wrapped up the day with a final dinner at Schleusenkrug, just a short walk from our hotel.

#### **Day 5 – Olympics, Zoos & Auf Wiedersehen– 27th June**

Our final day in Berlin began with a fond farewell to the Aletto Hotel, our home for the past four nights. Bags packed and spirits high, we set off for one of Berlin's most iconic landmarks: the Olympiastadion.

Built for the 1936 Olympic Games, the stadium is steeped in history. We learned about legendary athletes like Jesse Owens, whose triumphs challenged Nazi ideology on a global stage. The tour also explored the stadium's Cold War significance and its role in local football culture, offering a fascinating blend of sport and politics. After a quick stop at

the gift shop, we boarded the train for our final excursion in the German capital. Students were given a choice: a shopping trip or a visit to Berlin Zoo. The majority opted for the zoo—and what a choice it was!

Berlin Zoo boasts an incredible variety of animals, from pandas and penguins to lions, kangaroos, elephants, and even capybaras. With roughly 90 minutes to explore, we raced to see as many creatures as possible, including an entire section dedicated to primates and apes. It was a vibrant and joyful experience—one that brought smiles to everyone's faces.

To round off our Berlin adventure, we headed to the world-famous Hard Rock Café for our final meal. With great food and even better company, it was the perfect way to celebrate the end of an unforgettable trip.

From there, we made our way to Berlin-Brandenburg Airport, ready to return to Banbridge Academy in the early hours of 28th June—tired but full of memories!





# Maths Challenge



In December, a small team of talented mathematicians went along to the Queen's University Maths Team Challenge Competition, where over 40 schools participated in rounds of pure maths, logical conundrums, hard sums and many more challenging tasks. Students Kris Ivanov, Drew Copeland, Daniel Cleland and Zach Black worked

together to pull off a few leading rounds before being hindered by the POP TV round!

By the end of the day, Banbridge Academy came joint second with RBAI, just a few points behind the eventual winners: Friends', Lisburn.



The experience has whetted the appetite for more Maths Team Challenges, so Mrs Reilly will be on the hunt for the next elite team to take part next year.

Pictured with Mrs Reilly are Kris Ivanov, Drew Copeland, Daniel Cleland and Zach Black.





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# French Exchange



When the French Exchange trip with the Collège St Joseph in Dijon was announced in early September, we knew straight away that it was an opportunity not to be missed. Twenty-five pupils decided to take part, all buzzing with excitement and a fair bit of nervous energy at the prospect of testing our language skills outside of the classroom and welcoming French pupils into our homes. Despite the nerves, we were all ready to dive in and saw the trip as a chance to experience life from a different perspective and indeed make new friendships.

At the start of October, the excitement really began to build as we received the profiles of our exchange partners. Suddenly, the whole experience felt real. We reached out to them via email or text and it didn't take long at all before we were swapping stories, sharing interests and counting down the days until they arrived at Banbridge Academy.

Fast forward to 28th March and the moment we'd all been waiting for had finally arrived. That Friday afternoon, we sat nervously in the Lecture Theatre as Mrs McCullagh introduced us to our

partners, and just like that, the virtual friendships became a reality. Soon afterwards 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 so 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. 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.

Monday morning would see the French pupils heading off on their day trips and visits included : the Titanic Museum, the Giant's Causeway, Carrick-a-Rede and a trip to the Ulster American Folk Park not to mention a tour of Belfast City Hall and civic reception. 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. That evening we all enjoyed a Social event here at school and at the

weekend took our partners to laser tag, the cinema, karting, football matches and much more.

In the blink of an eye, the week sadly came to an end but we knew that it was more *bientôt* than *au revoir* as in approximately 8 weeks time it would be our turn to have a fun-packed week and meet up with our partners again.

On Friday 13th June we left school at 2am to set off for France. The morning passed quickly and we landed in Lyon around 10am. After a quick stop off for lunch we continued on our way to Dijon. We were delighted to see our partners again and they had organised a drinks reception for us at school, each pupil had even prepared some typical French snacks and treats for us to enjoy.

We all had a fantastic weekend with our host families, some going to Paris to explore the sites, others visiting the local attractions in Dijon and the Burgundy region, others even having the chance to attend a wedding reception and baptism.

Our French hosts had planned an



amazing itinerary packed with unforgettable experiences that gave us a real taste of the Burgundy region's history, culture and charm. One of the most memorable visits was to the Citadelle de Besançon and the Musée de la Résistance where we learned about the Holocaust and the role of the French Resistance during World War II. Another highlight was the visit to the Cassissium – a factory dedicated to cassis, the famous blackcurrant liqueur. We toured the factory, learned about the production process and even got to sample different cassis syrups. Safe to say, we left with a few new favourites! On Thursday we set off with our French partners to explore the breathtaking Abbaie de Fontenay and the Forges de Buffon which gave us a glimpse into France's industrial past.



On Thursday we had an opportunity to observe and participate in a number of lessons at the Collège St Joseph. We all agreed that it was fascinating to see the differences between both education systems.

cobbled streets, fantastic shops, markets and historical buildings. As we said our final goodbyes, some tears were shed which shows that special memories and indeed friendships were made.

Unfortunately, on Friday morning, we had to say goodbye to our exchange partners after a week of amazing experiences with our host families. We have been so fortunate to have spent a week in this beautiful city, lined with

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

À la prochaine fois !





## MODERN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

# Modern Languages Club

Junior Modern Languages Club is open to all pupils in Years 8, 9 and 10 who are interested in learning more about a variety of languages, countries, cultures and traditions. Last year the pupils had the privilege of getting to know our Spanish Language Assistant, Cande, from Argentina. Throughout the year we had the opportunity to learn more about culture in Argentina and one of the highlights was trying different homemade delicacies from her country. Pupils also enjoyed the annual Eiffel Tower building challenge and the celebration of La Chandeleur when pupils got to try authentic crêpes.

Thank-you to all who attended last year, and we look forward to having new members join us as we explore the wonderful world of languages!



# Anthea Bell Translation Competition



As a famous Chinese proverb states: "To learn a language is to have one more window from which to look at the world." Learning another language is an essential skill to have in an ever-changing world and its benefits are limitless. It allows us to become aware of different cultures, develop a greater understanding and appreciation for other people and customs, and provides opportunities to foster skills developed in other aspects of the curriculum. In spite of the decline of languages across Northern Ireland, Banbridge Academy values their importance and is proud to encourage a love for them among pupils.

Anthea Bell OBE (1936–2018) is considered one of the leading literary translators of the 20th and 21st centuries, translating

the works of Freud, the Brothers Grimm and René Goscinny, to name but a few. Throughout her life she received several literary awards and The Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators organised by the Queen's College honours her commitment to encouraging young language-learners.

This year over 22,000 students across the UK participated in the competition with several pupils from different year groups in Banbridge Academy getting involved. The entries were judged by professional literary translators and students at the University of Oxford. Roisin Cumming, Year 13, was awarded National Winner across the UK for her translation into English of a text from the Spanish BBVA Group and we congratulate her on this fantastic achievement.

# Junior Cooks Club

During the last school term, Year 8 and 9 students took part in Cooks Club, where they developed a wide range of practical cooking and presentation skills. Throughout the sessions, they prepared a variety of sweet and savoury

dishes, learning key techniques and gaining confidence in the kitchen. The club encouraged creativity, teamwork, and attention to detail, helping students build valuable life skills while having fun with food.

# Food and Drinks Masterclass Young Enterprise

At the end of the last school term, Young Enterprise visited a group of Year 9 students to explore careers in the food industry. One of the visiting businesses was Blend and Batch, whose manager spoke about the variety of roles involved in running a food business, including

menu planning, product development, and tasting. Students also heard from another local company and learned about the responsibilities within the sector. They then took part in a creative challenge where they designed their own food product by combining two

well-known local brands — for example, Tayto and Dale Farm. As part of the task, they had to develop the product idea, decide on pricing, and create an advertisement to promote it.



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# Queen's

## Queen's Research Project Iodine

The Food and Nutrition department worked with researchers from Queen's University Belfast (QUB) who were interested in secondary school children's understanding of iodine and iodine deficiency-related disorders. The EUthyroid2 study aims to improve low awareness of iodine deficiency and iodine-deficiency disorders (IDD) and highlight the importance of iodine nutrition among adolescents. This is important because the human body needs constant small amounts of iodine for metabolism and brain development, but normal diets in most countries do not contain enough iodine, resulting in iodine deficiency, the world's largest cause of preventable mental impairment.



## QUB School Engagement

This year we had two visitors from Queen's University, both are final year students involved in the School Engagement Programme - Zara Patterson and Anna Nixon.

Zara had a lesson with Year 10 'Nourish to flourish: boosting immunity through food'. The interactive in-person workshop was designed to educate pupils about the importance of adequate and proper nutrition and the positive effect it can have on their immune system.

While Anna Nixon delivered a "Waste Watchers" workshop, teaching Year 10 about Food Waste, its impacts and what they can do about it.

Year 10 really enjoyed hearing from the Queen's students and also got a little careers advice and information about courses available at the School of Biological Sciences.





# GCSE Practical

GCSE Food and Nutrition students showcased their culinary talents in a series of practical assessments focused on the theme of vegetarianism. The kitchen was alive with creativity as pupils produced an impressive array of vibrant, nutritious and beautifully presented dishes. Students demonstrated a wide range of advanced skills, including precision knife work, sauce-making, pastry techniques and effective time management. The results were not only delicious but also a testament to their hard work, innovation, and deep understanding of vegetarian principles.





# Junior Choir

Siofra Darragh, Nicole Fox, Kyla Fox and Lily Stafford



We have been members of the Junior Choir since Year 8. Since then we have made such a bond with other members throughout the school, from Year 8 to Year 12. Not only have we made friends, but we've also improved our vocal abilities and confidence in performing. This would not be possible without Mrs Qua, who has been an incredible teacher and guided us through the many difficult songs we have had to learn. Charlotte Best (Year 12) who has been our pianist for the majority of this year, has done an amazing job accompanying us and keeping us in check.

During our time at the Junior Choir, we have performed at Open Night, the Carol Service, the Spring Concert and Seapatrack Care Home. To prepare for these events, we had rehearsals on Mondays after school and Fridays during break.

This year, we sang "There is Faint Music", a gripping and compelling piece by Dan Forrest, along with some favourite festive hymns including "Silent Night" featuring a solo by both Ella Moore (Year 8) and Jenna Ervine (Year 9) at the school's Carol Service.

At Open Night, we had an open rehearsal so everyone was welcome to come along and see what we do on Mondays and Fridays, as well as getting a taste of our later performance in the Spring Concert.

Our final performance of the year was at the Spring Concert, where we sang two pieces: "Remember Me" from the movie "Coco", with beautiful harmonies and a special solo by Jisni Jiji (Year 10)

and "The Rhythm of Life", an upbeat song with multiple parts and rhythms to represent the joy of spring.

Junior Choir has provided us with many opportunities to excel vocally and socially, as it allows all members of Junior school to interact with each other and form friendships which wouldn't be possible without our twice weekly rehearsals. One of these amazing opportunities is when Andrew Nunn from NYCNI came in and held a workshop. This was very entertaining and educational and allowed us to 'come out of our shells' and audition for an amazing Choir. Several members got in, including Lily Stafford who attended NYCNI last summer. She describes her experience as very helpful at improving her vocal range and encouraging her to be more confident whilst performing. She made many friends from all over Northern Ireland and was able to share her voice with others who had the same interests as she did. They performed many pieces with several solos and Irish dancing, which gave everyone a chance to show off their abilities. In conclusion this was an amazing opportunity and

we're so thankful to Mrs Qua, our choir teacher, and Mrs Munton, the Head of Music, for organising this for us.

We are so incredibly grateful for Mrs Qua and her dedication to Choir; it would not be possible without her enthusiasm and kind, encouraging advice. She made Junior Choir fun and created a happy environment, where we could express ourselves through our love of music. As Year 10s some of our favourite memories include singing Dancing Queen at the Spring Concert in our first year, screaming lines and dancing through the crowd whilst performing Revolting Children in Year 8 and singing an incredible descant at the Carol Service in Year 9. Even auditions were a good time, as we were surrounded by the people we're closest to. We were delighted to go out with a bang performing the Rhythm of Life at our final Spring Concert.

Whilst we are sad to move on, we also can't wait for the future opportunities we know our amazing music department will provide. We highly recommend Junior Choir to any and all members of Junior School. We will definitely miss it!



# Wind Band

Georgina Harkness

Wind Band is the perfect place to fall in love with your instrument while making good friends with the amazing 35 musicians whose musical abilities range from Grade 1 to Grade 8.

The Wind Band rehearses every Thursday morning at 8.30am. This is a great way to wake up or de-stress before the busy day of school that lies ahead. Each morning is exciting because of Mrs Parton's generous guidance and help. If we ever feel like we need any extra practice Mrs Parton is there to give us a hand and it would not be the same low pressure and fun experience if she wasn't.

Mrs Parton never fails to give us music that we love; it's always something fun and perfect for all musicians at any level. In the past year we have had some brilliant songs like, 'Twist and Shout' and 'Footloose' with my personal favourite being, 'Take On Me' as I spent fun nights at home practising and singing along at the top of my lungs.



In the last year, the Wind Band has been around the world and back doing performances such as the Carol Service, Open Night, Spring Concert and the Banbridge Buskfest in Grace Generation Church. As well as that, a number of us rehearsed at lunch time and performed at Banbridge Academy Christmas Fair, Magherally Presbyterian Church Christmas Tree Festival and Waringstown

Christmas Lights lights switch on. All of these were amazing experiences for us to grow both our musical ability and confidence in performing.

Whether you play percussion, brass or woodwind, all are welcome and will be greeted with friendly (slightly sleepy) faces and you will be encouraged by Mrs Parton to take a seat and give it a go!



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# Orchestra

Eva Hampton, (Year 14, Violin), and Charlotte Hampton, (Percussionist, Year 12)

Orchestra is a reflection of the 200+ music lessons which go on inside the Academy, plus lessons taken by instrumentalists outside school. There is a large range of musical skill on show, but many of our 45 members are grade 5 and above. Orchestra is sometimes the only opportunity young instrumentalists get to play in a group. Performance can be a highly satisfying experience, being more than the sum of its parts - the more experienced help the less experienced, and we learn vital music skills of listening, sight reading and communicating as a group, forming relationships across year groups in the process.

This year in the Banbridge Academy Orchestra there were 18 strings, 9 brass, 5 percussion and 14 woodwind instruments in the sections respectively, with instrumentalists from Year 8 to Year 14. The largest group of players were the clarinets who comprise 1/5 of the orchestra! Some recent additions to the orchestral array include Reuben Hill (bass guitar), Lauren Jeffers (double bass), Rory O'Neill (bassoon). Seasoned yet solo instruments which are also part of our orchestra sound include: Maggie Parton (alto saxophone), Eilidh Parton (trumpet) and Samuel Bentley (euphonium). Both Maggie and Eilidh Parton (trumpet) attended residencies in National Youth Orchestras and Youth Bands in the UK throughout the 2024-2025 year. The high level of attendance demonstrates the commitment of our members and how much they enjoy being part of an ensemble.

Orchestra meets on Thursdays for 'a golden hour' after school. Combined



with breaktime sectionals and home practice, new pieces come together quickly, allowing us to prepare and perform several different pieces a year.

The first of our pieces this year was a medley of the music from, 'The Theory of Everything', by Johan Johansson, which won a Golden Globe Award for Best Original Score. It is an intense piece of film music with a wide range of

emotions, including tense passages and also bright airy sections, using piano melodies as anchors. This particular piece was performed at our Prize Giving Ceremony in Holy Trinity Church and Open Night in the School Atrium, where it greeted over 1000 prospective pupils.

Another favourite for the orchestra was the famous, "All you need is love", by the Beatles.

This playful piece was very enjoyable to perform and is a novel but welcome style of music for the orchestra. To enhance the energy of the piece, each section of the orchestra stood up when they played the iconic solo riff, referencing the performance of this song in the 2003 film, "Love Actually".

Our final piece, which featured in our Spring Concert was the famous theme from the movie, "How to train your Dragon" written by John Powell and arranged by Sean O'Loughlin, which recently re-emerged as a screen play,





## MUSIC DEPARTMENT



and has grossed over \$628 million worldwide. The piece is high-paced and intense in sections, proving a different challenge for the whole orchestra, and especially the string section! However this was met with enthusiasm and commitment from the whole orchestra, resulting in an impressive show of skill in the final performance. In quieter sections, our flautists and pizzicato strings came to the fore. Personally, this was my favourite piece because of its dramatic timpani part, which was very enjoyable.

As leader of the orchestra this year I've

enjoyed working with both the youngest and the oldest members, helping us all play together to create one unified sound. I really treasure my memories through the years, moving from 2nd Violins to 1st and then Leader in Year 14. My favourite piece from my time at orchestra has to be this year's, "How to Train Your Dragon" - despite it being challenging for sections, the hard work was worth it as it really came to life for our performance at Spring Concert. I'd like to give the biggest thanks to Mrs Qua and the whole Music Department for making the orchestra run so smoothly and our performances come

together with polish.

We are always sad to lose our senior members in Year 14, and wish them all the best in their futures. We hope that their time in the orchestra has created happy memories and provided them with the inspiration to keep making music. We warmly welcome newer members who want to join us on Thursdays for an exciting way to practise and perform their instrument, while learning from and playing with young musicians in Year 8 through to Year 14.





# Personal Experiences

## Chamber Choir

**Jasmine Magowan-Balfour**

Being a member of the Chamber Choir last school year was amazing. It has truly become one of the most rewarding experiences of my time in school. We performed early in the school year at our Prize Day with the breath-taking piece, 'She's like the swallow', a Canadian folk song. The song channelled a lot of emotion and was beautiful to sing.

As we prepared for the Christmas Carol Service, our amazing conductor Mrs Munton introduced us to the piece, 'Cradle Hymn'. Singing at Christmas is my favourite part of the school year, as it brings so much joy and excitement for the holiday. We further performed at the School's Open Night and then at the end of year extravaganza, The Spring Concert. We sang 'She's like the swallow' again (much more perfected) and then did a complete genre turn around to sing an acapella rendition of, 'I Say a Little Prayer For You' by Aretha Franklin. We even ended up adding in some clapping and dance moves (which may have not been as great and organised as the singing) however, it was so much fun!



Chamber Choir has simply been a joy to be a part of and it is where I have met some of my closest friends, as well as having the experience of singing at a high standard. Mrs Munton has been so dedicated as a conductor to this choir, but also as a mentor and we all have

gained both technical improvements in our voices as well as life experience and a sense of community under her guidance. I am so excited to complete my last year in the Chamber Choir and enjoy the heart-warming final result of weeks of hard work one last time.

## My Music Journey

**Carter Henning**

My name is Carter Henning and I am in Year 12. I've had a keen interest in music from a young age and have had many opportunities in this school to learn and grow as a musician, whether in drums, piano or guitar.

I began to play the drums in Year 8, after being offered free drum lessons by the Music Department. This was an amazing opportunity for me, as drum lessons weren't something I was able to access at the time. It really started my journey of drumming and I'm very grateful, as it is something that I really enjoy.

I began to play piano at the age of 5,

and it has provided me with a really solid foundation in music theory and discipline in practising. Last year I started piano lessons in school, and achieved Grade 5 LCM. This enabled me to take part in the Spring Concert, performing "Hold the line" by Toto with a combined ensemble of the school bands. This is one of my favourite memories in school, and I felt that all the practices really paid off in our final performance.

Last year I was part of the African drumming ensemble led by my drum teacher Mr Gallagher, and I had the opportunity to lead the younger pupils which really helped develop my

communication and teaching skills.

This year I plan to join the orchestra to play percussion. This will be a new challenge for me as I'm usually on the drum kit, but I'm excited to play as part of a larger group.

The Music Department has provided so many opportunities for me to develop my musical skills, practise playing in groups and given me an opportunity to perform. I've really enjoyed getting to know other musicians in school and have had some great experiences over the years.

# Singing at Banbridge Academy



I can proudly say that Banbridge Academy shaped my career as a singer. My name is Cassia Moore and I joined Banbridge Academy in Year 13 in 2023. Very quickly, the Music Department became a home for me as I settled into a new and overwhelming environment.

I grew up surrounded by music with both musical parents and musical older siblings. My mum taught me to read and appreciate music from a very early age. I always loved singing and would practise for hours a day. However, I never believed that I had what it took to make music my profession. Although I didn't realise it at the time, as I entered the Music Department at Banbridge Academy, music began to become something more in my life.

Being part of music at Banbridge Academy is challenging, which is exactly what makes a musician thrive and improve! Alongside studying A-Level Music, I joined the Senior Choir and Chamber Choir (and orchestra) right away. Especially in Chamber Choir, I found that my musicianship was tested by the high expectations and standard of repertoire. The music staff also encouraged me to get involved in as many festivals, competitions, and musical organisations outside of school as I could. Mrs Munton helped

me to step outside of my comfort zone (having me perform my competition programmes at break-time recitals being one of many examples!)

However, it was the overwhelmingly supportive environment of the music community at Banbridge Academy that struck me the most. Mrs Qua gave up so many of her working hours and overtime to accompany my auditions and performances, which enabled me to begin building a name for myself as an emerging performer in Northern Ireland and beyond. From the members of staff and pupils who gave up their break-times or lunch-times to attend my recitals, to my music teachers and friends who came to Armagh to support me in the final of the Charles Wood International Song Competition, I always had a crowd of people who genuinely cared about my passion and wanted me to succeed in the very competitive career of music.

A particular highlight of my music experience at Banbridge Academy was in Year 14 when I was proud to represent Banbridge Academy at the 2025 Northern Ireland Young Musician of the Year Competition. I was thrilled not only to progress to the final, but, expertly accompanied by Mrs Qua once again, to bring home third prize to Banbridge



Academy.

But it doesn't end with school! Since "graduating" the Academy Mrs Munton and Mrs Qua continue to support me and take a keen interest in my career as I take part in various music events, including competing in London at the Royal Academy of Music and performing at a Young Musicians' Prom in Belfast. Music at Banbridge Academy is something truly rewarding. The time and commitment you invest into the musical extra-curricular activities can't compare with the support, mentorship, and community you receive in return. Whether music is your hobby or your future career, the music staff at Banbridge Academy want nothing more than to see you succeed in and enjoy the gift of music. I have so much to thank the Music Department at Banbridge Academy for, because without it, I don't think I would be pursuing my dream!







# New Irish Youth Choir

**Mollie Gibson Year 12**

The New Irish Youth Choir is a Northern Ireland-based, Christian-focused choir for young singers from primary through to the end of secondary school. Each summer, members attend a week-long residential filled with rehearsals, games, Bible teaching, and community building, culminating in a special concert—often held at Wellington Presbyterian Church in Ballymena.

Beyond the summer, the choir also takes part in New Irish Arts events throughout the year, performing at venues such as the Ulster Hall in Belfast during the “Summer Celebration,” Glenmachan Church of God in Belfast for the Youth Orchestra joint concerts, and other churches all over the island of Ireland. A highlight for the Youth Choir are always the amazing “Ireland and Christmas Praise” events held in the Waterfront Hall in Belfast. These are 2 sold out nights full of carols, orchestral pieces and more modern worship songs. Recently New Irish have loved getting to be a part of the Getty’s concerts when they return home from Nashville. These concerts



are held in the SSE Arena in Belfast and are always very fun; it’s always so lovely to see them whenever they’re back home. These varied performances offer young singers the joy of live

worship through music across Northern Ireland’s cherished venues. In Banbridge Academy we are very proud to have a number of pupils in both the youth choir and orchestra.



# Saxophonist

## Maggie Parton

Year 11 student Maggie Parton was successful in gaining a place in the Ulster Youth Orchestra as Principal Saxophone. She took on the haunting solo in Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition and performed in Guildhall, Derry-Londonderry and the Ulster Hall. Throughout the course Maggie also participated in a workshop and performance with the Ulster Youth Jazz Orchestra.

Maggie also attended the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow for a week of intensive musical training with a group of international saxophonists. The course allowed Maggie to attend lessons with some of the UK's best educators, play in chamber ensembles, perform solos and feature in a masterclass with Joe Pacewicz (Royal Scottish National Orchestra).

Earlier in the year Maggie achieved a place in the National Youth Concert Band in England culminating with a performance in Cambridge. On her return home, she attended the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland, Girls' Choir. Maggie was also successful in gaining a place in the National Youth Wind Orchestra, but was unfortunately unable to attend the course due to a clash in dates with the Ulster Youth Orchestra.

Maggie is very grateful to have been given the opportunity to represent Banbridge Academy on a national stage, performing with other young musicians from across the UK and Europe. Maggie has gained invaluable experiences from some of the UK's finest musicians and these experiences have been



made possible due to the musically rich environment Banbridge Academy has provided. Since joining in Year 8, Maggie has performed in a wide range of ensembles in school throughout the year. The inclusive atmosphere created in the orchestra and the Wind Band have been invaluable spaces to learn. These opportunities in school have helped foster a love of music making.





# Exploring the Mind

## A-Level Psychology Students Attend Clinical Psychology Insight Day



On World Mental Health Day, our Year 13 and 14 Psychology students had the unique opportunity to attend an Introduction to Clinical Psychology event hosted by Queen's University Belfast, in collaboration with the British Psychological Society and local Health and Social Care Trusts.

Held in recognition of the importance of mental health awareness and education, the event offered students a fascinating glimpse into the diverse and impactful world of Clinical Psychology. The day featured a series of engaging talks from professionals working across a range of specialist fields, including:

- Clinical Forensic Psychology
- Neuropsychology

- Clinical Health Psychology
- Adult Mental Health
- Intellectual Disability Services

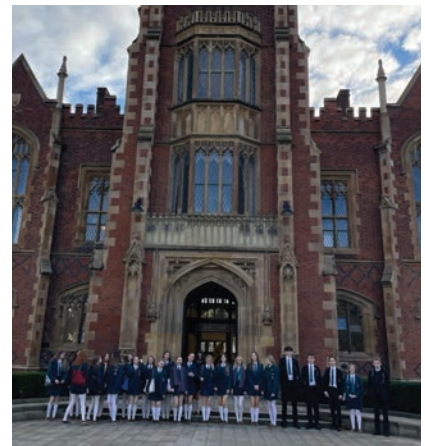
Each speaker shared real-world insights into their roles, the challenges they face, and the rewards of working in their respective areas. Students were particularly inspired by the passion and dedication shown by the professionals, and many left with a deeper appreciation for the complexity and importance of the work of Clinical Psychologists.

In addition to exploring the various career paths within Clinical Psychology, pupils were given an honest and informative overview of the competitive training route required to enter the

profession. From undergraduate studies to doctoral-level training, the journey is rigorous—but for those with determination and compassion, it can be incredibly fulfilling.

The event proved to be a valuable educational experience, sparking curiosity and ambition among our budding psychologists. It not only broadened their understanding of clinical practice but also highlighted the vital role psychology plays in supporting individuals and communities.

We are proud of our students for engaging so enthusiastically and thank Queen's University, the British Psychological Society, and the Health and Social Care Trusts for providing such an enriching opportunity.



# Sentinus Research Academy

**Beth Sinton**

I had the opportunity to take part in the 'Sentinus Research Academy Psychology Project' with Ulster University, whereby I was guided through completing a mini version of their psychology degree throughout its 4 week course.

In week one, I was given material on data analysis and statistics and during

week two I wrote my literature review on childhood adversity and the most common mental illnesses to arise. In weeks three and four I was guided through writing a university-style report and poster entitled, 'A Lasting Impact: A Study Showing The Lasting Effects of Childhood Adversity On Mental Diagnosis'. I was able to find the statistical significance between

these variables and explain the most common adversity indicators and the most common mental disorder predictions.

I would like to thank Ulster University for hosting this project and Sentinus for the guidance throughout the project, as well as my school for highlighting this opportunity.



# Sentinus Day

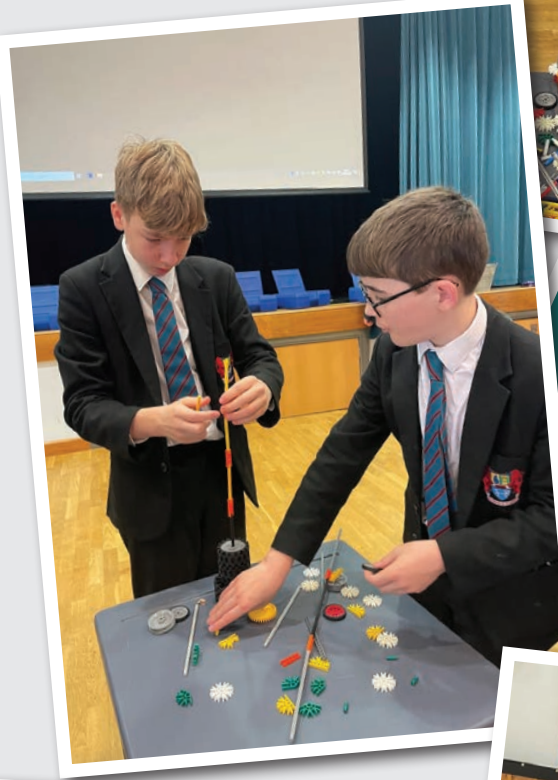
Lucy Skelly, Ellie Harshaw and Valerie Cuba (9C)

Our Year 9 Sentinus Day was an exciting and educational experience. The day began with a fascinating talk from an aspiring astronaut, who explained his journey through studying engineering and his current role designing missiles. His story was truly inspiring and opened our eyes to a career in Space.

In the second session, we took part in a K'nex challenge, where we worked in teams to build cars and towers. We were very competitive!

The final session focused on astronomy. We viewed incredible images of the Milky Way and then used chalk to recreate them, combining science with creativity.

Overall, the day was both fun and informative, and it encouraged many of us to think more seriously about future careers in STEM.





# Almac Trip

Zoe Acheson 14A

In December 2024, a group of Year 13 Chemistry students had the exciting opportunity to visit Almac's Craigavon campus. Upon arrival, we were warmly welcomed by the friendly staff who would be guiding us throughout the day.

We were immediately struck by the size of the operation at Almac, and amazed by their future expansion plans, both in Europe and in the United States.

We began with the necessary health and safety briefing, ensuring we were well-prepared before entering the labs. We were given a short presentation about the processes which occurred at Almac, from the many thousands of initial chemical compounds which can be tested for use as medicinal products, these are quickly narrowed down to only a small number of compounds which are safe for human consumption, yet will still meet the medicinal needs. These few compounds are called the active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) and billions of pounds are invested in each medicine, before it gets to production and dispensing stages.

We then had some guided tours of the laboratories where future medicines were being prepared and tested, before having the opportunity to hear how the API could then be produced in larger quantities for mass production. This allowed us to consider some essential A Level Chemistry topics about sustainability in Chemistry and yields



of products, as well as considering the health and safety consequences of producing such large quantities of potentially volatile chemicals.

The tours also allowed us to see the range of equipment and processes used, from spectroscopy machines to chromatography machines which cost a lot more than we care to think about. We also had the opportunity to meet some past pupils of Banbridge Academy and it was nice to hear about how they have managed to progress their careers since leaving school.

The refreshing thing about meeting people and having the opportunity to ask questions, was that it showed chemistry and the Pharmaceutical industry has relevance for real people and helped us to see how the chemistry we learn in school is a good foundation for a career in the Pharmaceutical Industry.

We also had the opportunity to experience a typical day in the life of an Almac employee, from computer processing of raw data, to application of some of the chemical processes we see in school everyday, to more complicated reactions that caused my brain to hurt.

We also had the opportunity to hear about Almac's Higher Level Apprenticeship programme, which sounded like a great option for anyone considering a career in chemistry without going down the traditional university route. It involves working in Almac, alongside one or two days a week of university study, which leads to the same outcome as a degree in Chemistry, without all the student debt.

Overall, it was a very enjoyable and informative trip, and we enjoyed the opportunity to see how a local company has such a wide ranging variety of processes occurring, all based on the chemistry we study in school.

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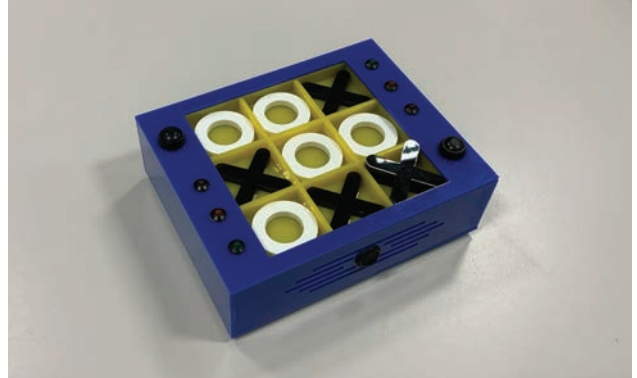




# GCSE TECHNOLOGY



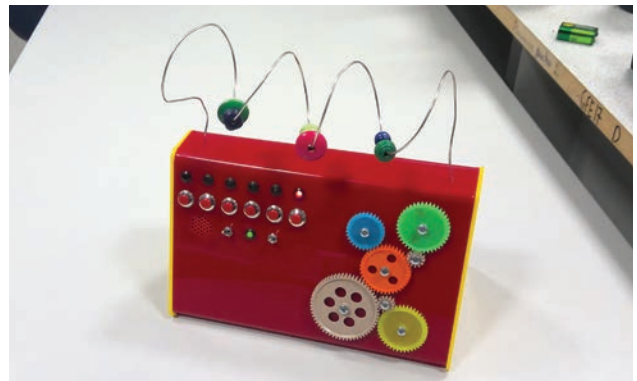
Adam Zembrzuski - Waste Paper Bin sensor



Charlotte Hampton - Electronic Game



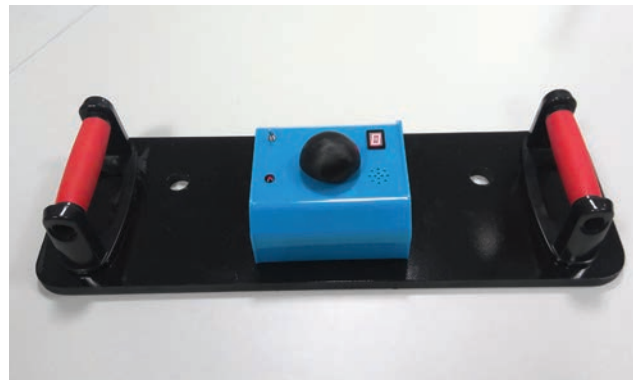
Corey Hylands - Push up sensor



Elijah McKinstry - Memory Game



Molly Bell - Games timer



Matthew Currie - Push up Sensor



Clara Lewis - Memory Challenge Game



Patrick Murray - Reaction Timer

# GCE TECHNOLOGY



Beth Gillespie - Swimming Pool Temperature guage



Caleb Cromie - Dog Lead



James Clarke - Camping Torch



Lucas Rankin - Safety Bollard



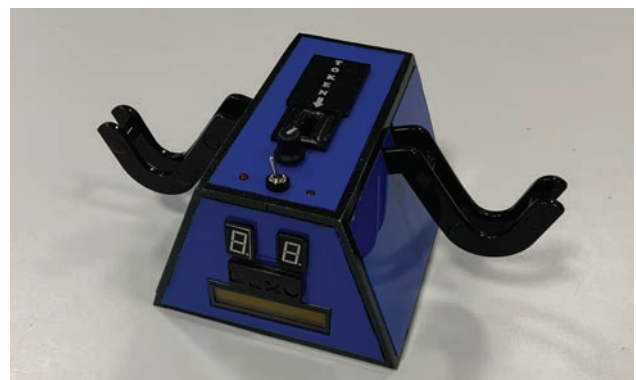
Mark Hannah - Cricket Scorer



Lucy Hodgen - Pencil sharpener



Poppie Graham - Numeracy Game



Ryan Gallagher - Games Console Timer



# Arkwright Scholarship

Lucy Hodgen



On October 23rd, I had the exciting opportunity to attend a welcoming and networking event in Rugby, England, for Arkwright Engineering Scholarship recipients- sponsored by the Royal Air Force (RAF). The event was a fantastic introduction to the Arkwright community and provided valuable insights into the scholarship journey and the benefits the scholarship holds in the future. I heard from a panel of past scholars who shared their experiences and the impact the scholarship had on their careers.

Another panel of RAF personnel offered a closer look at the many pathways and opportunities within the RAF, highlighting the importance of engineering and technical skills in their work. I participated in teamwork challenges alongside other scholars, which helped us develop problem-solving skills and foster new connections within the group. The day wrapped up with a Q&A session where we could ask questions about the RAF, gaining further insight into potential career paths and how the RAF supports innovation in engineering. This event was both inspiring and informative, setting a positive tone for the journey ahead as an Arkwright Scholar.



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# Lucy Hodgen Wins Prestigious Sentinus Young Innovators Competition



We are thrilled to announce that Lucy Hodgen, a Year 13 Technology and Design student, has won the prestigious Sentinus Young Innovators intermediate competition. This remarkable achievement highlights Lucy's dedication and innovative spirit in the field of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

Sentinus Young Innovators is a renowned competition that provides a platform for young people to showcase their projects in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Open to students aged 12-18, the competition encourages participants to develop and present their innovative ideas, competing for various awards across three levels: Junior,

Intermediate and Senior. The event celebrates the creativity and ingenuity of young minds, fostering a passion for STEM subjects.

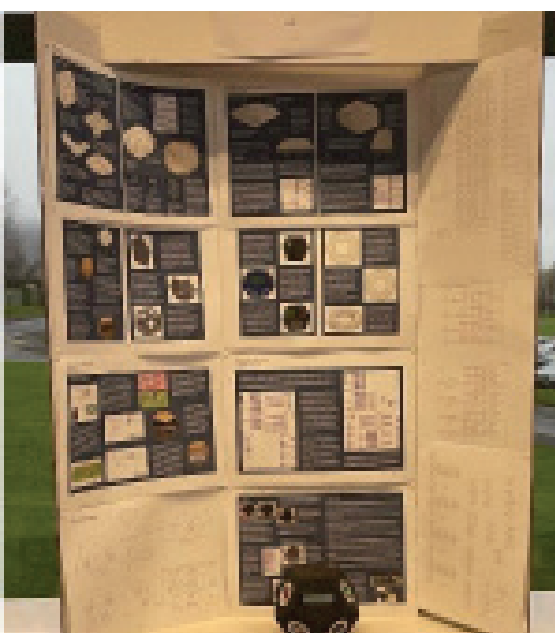
## LUCY'S AWARD-WINNING PROJECT

Lucy's project is an engaging memory-based game designed to test and enhance players' memory skills. The game features four LEDs that light up in a random sequence. Players must observe the sequence and then replicate it using corresponding buttons. As the game progresses, the sequences become faster and more complex, providing an increasingly challenging experience that sharpens the player's memory and concentration.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF STEM EDUCATION

STEM education is crucial for developing critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and fostering innovation. STEM education not only prepares students for high-demand careers but also equips them with the skills necessary to tackle complex global challenges. By engaging in STEM activities, students like Lucy are better prepared to contribute to advancements in technology and innovation, driving progress in various fields.

Congratulations to Lucy for her outstanding achievement and for exemplifying the excellence and creativity that Sentinus Young Innovators aims to inspire.





# World War II Commemoration

## Mr Acheson

A new board commemorating the former pupils of Banbridge Academy who died during World War II has been erected outside the Assembly Hall in the school, which complements the existing stone memorial situated in front of Edenderry House.

The new board provides more information on each of the veterans detailing their early life, their attendance at Banbridge Academy and their military service. It was the result of many hours of dedicated research by former pupils Aaron Millen, Beth Cordner and Deborah Elliott who assisted in making the project possible. Working alongside Mr Acheson, the pupils researched and wrote profiles on each veteran as well as finding photographs and lots of new and previously unknown information along the way.



The war veterans are:

### **CAPTAIN WILLIAM LEDLIE (1894-1940)**

Captain William Ledlie was born on 16 April 1894 and came from Loughbrickland. He attended Banbridge Academy as a teenager and went on to become an apprentice for the engineering department of the Great Northern Railways, Belfast. However, in response to WWI, in 1916 Ledlie joined the Royal Flying Corps where he quickly attained the rank of Captain. Ledlie survived the First World War and returned home. In the inter-war period, he was involved in flying commercial aircraft in England whilst being part of the RAF reserve. However in 1939, Ledlie went back to war where he served bravely, most notably



during the evacuation at Dunkirk in France. On 23 October 1940, he was the co-pilot of the De Havilland DH.95 Hertfordshire, no. R2510 aircraft flying to Belfast. The aircraft was carrying five crew and six passengers and shortly after take-off crashed into houses at Woodland Way, Mill Hill, London. All on board, including Ledlie, perished in the crash and he is buried at Loughbrickland Presbyterian Church. Captain William Ledlie was 46 years old when he died.

### **SERGEANT PILOT JOHN MARTIN (1909-1941)**

Sergeant Pilot John D Martin was born on 25 May 1909 at Kilmacrew House, Magherally, Banbridge and was a nephew of the acclaimed writer Helen Waddell, after whom one of the Banbridge Academy Houses is named. He attended Banbridge Academy and went on to study for a BSc in Forestry Engineering in Edinburgh. In 1941, he joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve and qualified as a pilot. Sergeant Pilot John Martin died on 10 November 1941 as a result of injuries sustained in a road

traffic accident and is buried in Athlone Cemetery, Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. He was 32 years old.

Mrs Margaret (Meg) Martin, Sergeant Pilot John Martin's mother, unveiled the Banbridge Academy war memorial when it was originally commissioned.



### **SERGEANT OBSERVER ROBERT MCCRORY (1918-1942)**

Sergeant Observer Robert Getgood McCrory, known as Bob, was born on 4 November 1918. Robert went to Banbridge Public Elementary School and later to Banbridge Academy, where he was Head Boy. After leaving the Academy, McCrory became a teacher



## EXTRA-CURRICULAR

and took on the role as Principal in St John's School, Kilwarlin, Hillsborough, where he remained until 1941, when he decided to join the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. After completing basic training and specialised aircrew training in Canada, McCrory was posted to 115 Squadron as an Observer, which was based in RAF Marham in Norfolk, England. McCrory was the wireless operator and air gunner of a Wellington bomber when it took off from RAF Marham on 28 July 1942 for an air raid on Hamburg in Germany. Sergeant McCrory was pronounced missing or killed in action on 29 July 1942 after the plane had crashed around Kiel, near Hamburg. He is buried in Kiel War Cemetery in Germany. The inscription on his headstone reads 'faithful unto death'. Sergeant Observer Robert McCrory was 23 years old when he was killed.

### SERGEANT PILOT GEORGE WALSH (1917-1942)

Sergeant Pilot George Henry Walsh was born in Banbridge on 25 July 1917. Walsh was a former pupil of Lancastrian School and Banbridge Academy. He enlisted at the beginning of World War II in the Ulster Searchlight Regiment and during his time in the regiment they were evacuated from Dunkirk in 1940. In January 1941, he transferred to the RAF and, following training in the USA, he was subsequently posted to an aerodrome in England. On 28 December 1942 his Hurricane fighter plane collided with another Hurricane during training over Bristol Hill near Longtown in Cumbria, England and both pilots were killed instantly. Sergeant Pilot George Walsh was 25 years old when he died and is buried in Banbridge Cemetery on the Newry Road. His headstone bears the inscription, "One Of The Few To Whom The Many Owe So Much."

### FLYING OFFICER JOSEPH MCKEE (1910 - 1944)

Flying Officer Joseph McKee was born on 20 December 1910 at Emdale, Ballinaskeagh, Rathfriland. McKee was educated at Banbridge Academy, enrolling in 1921. He enlisted into the RAF Volunteer Reserve on 26 October 1941 and after successfully completing

training in England and Canada he was promoted to Pilot Officer on 16 April 1943. He eventually became a crew member of a Lancaster Mark III bomber and between February and May 1944 took part in operational missions over enemy territory. On the night 23 May 1944, McKee took off from RAF Bardney, Lincolnshire to take part in a bombing mission over Germany and was returning to England, after its completion, when he was intercepted by a Luftwaffe fighter and shot down. Flying Officer Joseph McKee was 33 years old when he died and is buried in Reichswald Forest War Cemetery in Germany, close to the Dutch border.

### SIGNALLER GERARD MCCREANOR (1912-1944)

Signaller Gerard Francis McCreanor was born on 23 July 1912 in Reilly Street, Banbridge. He was educated at Banbridge Roman Catholic School and then Banbridge Academy. Following training in England he was posted to India as a Signaller, where he served with the Brigade Signal Section of the 50th Indian Parachute Brigade. The 50th Brigade saw extensive action during the Battle of Sangshak (in India, near the border with Myanmar) 21 to 26 March 1944. The Brigade suffered extremely heavy casualties, totalling 40 officers and 545 other ranks. The exact circumstances of McCreanor's death remain unknown, but he was killed on the very first day of this battle, aged 31. Signaller Gerard McCreanor left his parents, wife Annie Josephine and three

children to mourn his sad loss. He is buried in Imphal War Cemetery, India and his headstone bears the inscription, "Sacred Heart of Jesus, Have Mercy on his Soul. May he Rest in Peace."

During the summer holidays of 2024, Mr Acheson had the opportunity to visit Flying Officer Joseph McKee's grave in Germany and he laid both a poppy cross and one with the Banbridge Academy crest as a simple tribute from the Banbridge Academy community, both past and present, to recognise the sacrifice of Flying Officer McKee during World War II.

One of the most gratifying parts of the project has been reaching out to the relatives and families of the veterans so that they can see for themselves the new board commemorating the lives of their loved ones. In the photo, Elaine Donnell, grand niece of Captain William Ledlie, and Ronnie and Alan McKee, nephews of Flying Officer Joseph McKee can be seen along

with Mr Acheson at the new WWII board. Also pictured are the war medals of Sergeant Observer Robert McCrory, (l-r) the 1939-1945 Service Medal, the 1939-1945 Star and the 1939-1945 Air Crew Europe Star brought into school by Mrs Katy Kinley.

My thanks goes to everyone who made the project possible, especially to former pupil Tommy McClimmonds and the Principal, Mr Robin McLoughlin for their unwavering support and I hope that the new board will educate both this generation and those in the future of the bravery and sacrifice of our war veterans ensuring we can continue to live in peace and freedom today.





# Junior Dance

Poppy Harris



I'm Poppy Harris, I am in Year 11 and I have participated in the Banbridge Academy Junior Dance Team for the past three years.

When I was in P7 and was considering my next school, a huge factor in choosing Banbridge Academy was that I really wanted to be part of their school dance team. I remember going to the open night and seeing the dance team perform and I instantly knew that I wanted to be a part of it. Since I was little, I have been committed to dance, and the fact that I would be going to a school where I could dance and represent my school at the same time, meant the world to me.

My first year in dance team was so exciting as I had no clue what to expect! I remember trying to encourage some girls in my class to audition with me so I would feel a bit more at ease and luckily they decided to come along! In the end they couldn't fit it into their schedule, but I was determined to attend by myself and this was no problem at all as everyone was so welcoming and I made new friends in no time!

The first dance I participated in was "Inside Out" and I had the best time performing it with my team. This particular dance captured everyone's abilities so well and was extremely fun to do! Our dance

teacher Ruth pushed us, but this then resulted in us dancing our best, which meant we then placed! I was so thrilled to place in our first competition and I couldn't wait for the next.

In second year, the dance was "The Little Mermaid", and I was so lucky to dance the role of Sebastian! The costume was very creative and I would say that this was my favourite dance and our team performed so well in the competition that we placed first at Nicmac! We had all worked so hard and were overjoyed that we came first.

In my last year of junior dance we did "Hairspray" and I thought this dance was so fun, as I love the musical. It was great to be able to dance to it! We all came together as a team and managed to place in all our competitions, we worked so hard and couldn't have done it without our dance teachers helping us along the way.

It is safe to say that I have absolutely loved my time in junior dance and I have made so many memories and friendships that I will keep. We couldn't have done any of this without our dance teachers: Ruth, Mrs Neill, Mrs Hannon and Miss Galashan. They really helped us bond together as a team and I'm already looking forward to the coming years in senior dance.



# Senior Dance Team

Amy Davidson



Dance started back with a bang in the middle of September as we were told by our dance teacher and choreographer (Ruth Reid) that the theme for our brand new and exciting team dance was 'Beetlejuice', which was very fitting as 'Beetlejuice 2' had just released in cinemas that year and was a massive success. Luckily, we didn't have to do a game of charades to guess what the theme was!

We started the year by learning a small section of the dance for everybody to get a feeling of the creepy vibe we had to portray. As the weeks went on Ruth continued to add choreography every Friday after school, along with Miss Galashan 'cleaning' the dance as we went. The Senior Team was preparing for competition as some members had the amazing opportunity to choreograph their own duets and trios to represent the school and showcase their dancing skills and own choreography.

As more of the dance was being set, it was time to start thinking about costumes. We obviously had Reece, who was portraying Beetlejuice in the black and white striped suit and the amazing wig that he definitely loved to wear (not...) and to match the black and white theme, all of the girls were wearing a black leotard with frills on the shoulders, with black and white striped leggings which were bedazzled

by multiple members of the Senior Team with green rhinestones, which definitely took a lot of precision and time. It was completely worth it because on stage it really added to the costumes and got us the Costume Award at NicMac-especially because of how unique it looked. The costumes were topped off with green hair extensions, which we clipped into our space buns, and black lipstick to add to the eerie atmosphere that we were aiming to achieve.

Miss McCullough very kindly helped to create and craft the Beetlejuice door for us to use as a prop in the dance and whenever it was carried onto stage, Reece was hiding behind it, so it really added the element of surprise to both the judges and audience.

Throughout the year we were able to compete in 3 regional competitions: Ulster Fusion Dance Championships, NicMac Championships and 5678 Take it to the Floor. Our first competition was in February with Ulster Fusion Dance Championships; everybody's nerves were at an all time high with so many Friday afternoons and break time rehearsals helping to prepare us for our first performance. We had a few members of our Senior Team competing in duets and trios: Alexandra Duffy and Francesca Duffy (who competed in the Intermediate Anything Goes Duet section) placed an incredible 1st place



with their own twist on the infamous movie, 'The Parent Trap'; Amy Davidson and Alex King also got 1st place in the Senior Lyrical Duet section and to top it off our two captains, Violet Coen and Reece Wilson, along with Keisha Moulton came out with yet another 1st place in the Senior Jazz Trio section!

Our Senior Team also secured a 1st place Ulster Championship title in the Senior Mega Group Section, leaving everybody ecstatic that not only the team's hard work had paid off but the incredible teachers who dedicated their time to making this possible: Ruth Reid, Miss Galashan, Mrs Hannon and Mrs Neill.

Our incredible team was also hugely successful at our next two competitions: I think it's because we made sure to never say Beetlejuice three times in rehearsals, just in case!



# Mixed Dance Team

Shelley Crawford

As well as our outstanding senior dance team, for the past 2 years we have introduced a mixed dance team to our line-up. The mixed dance team includes 6th form pupils with some dancers from the senior dance team, hockey and rugby players and anyone who is interested in picking up a new, fun skill while in school. Our diverse team consisted of 14 couples who practised and perfected their routines every Monday after school and took part in many highly competitive competitions. I have been honoured to be a part of the mixed dance team here in school for two years now and have loved every second of it! Our team takes members from all across school and we come together to become a cohesive group- with even dance team hoodies to show our united team and friendship. I found the best thing about being on the team was meeting new people who have turned into some of my best friends and just overall the high spirit and comradery within the team.

Our routine this year was based on the musical "Dirty Dancing" and we had a combination of songs from the musical throughout our routine even including, "Time of my life". We would meet after school every Monday for an hour and began learning slowly with our fabulous dance coach, Ruth Reid, who taught us how to master extravagant partner lifts, footwork and timing. Once we had picked up the choreography, Ruth cleaned and perfected our routine until it was stage ready. Everyone on the team was committed to weekly rehearsals and even gave up break times during the



week to practise any tricky bits with Miss Galashan.

We knew our first competition was coming up and nerves were starting to kick in, but we debuted our routine at Open Night in January to showcase the routine (in our fresh, new costumes) that we had worked so hard on. After a successful performance we were ready for our first competition of the year, which was a huge success! In total we took part in 3 competitions and came home with 3 first place medals in our section, as well as a judge's special mention award too. We were all so proud of the hard work we put in all year and the dedication each team member showed consistently; it couldn't have been a better season overall.

I want to thank our incredible teachers: Ruth, Mrs Neill, Mrs Hannon, Miss

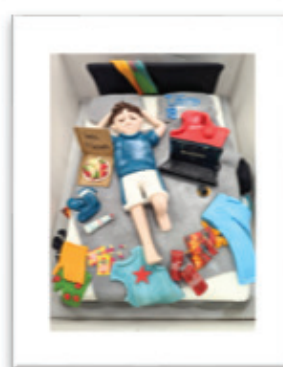
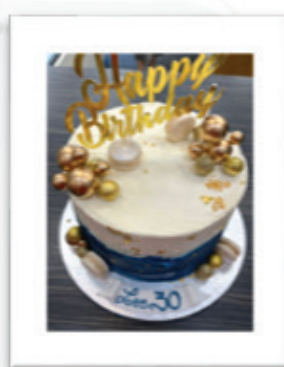
Galashan and Miss McCullough for their constant support and mentoring throughout the year.



# Mixed Dance Team

Jamie McGaw, Year 14

As it was my final year in the school, I was determined to pick up a new skill and involve myself more in school life, making me a newcomer to the team. I had seen how much fun my friends had had in the previous year during the play and their competitions: as a result of this, along with the support of the teachers (especially Mrs Neill) I decided to go to the first meeting. From the very first practice I was hooked. My favourite part was getting to know my teammates from different year groups, which I wouldn't have had the chance to meet if not for joining the team. The practices were always enjoyable, because no matter if we aced a lift first try or took a couple of attempts, we could all have a laugh. The competitions were a good way to show off the skills we had learnt in the previous months and I'm so proud of myself and the team for coming together and in what we accomplished throughout the season.



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# Bar Mock Trial

Banbridge Academy's Bar Mock Trial team once again demonstrated their legal flair and teamwork on a national stage, enjoying a year of outstanding success in the prestigious 'Young Citizens Bar Mock Trial Competition'. After winning their virtual heat in January 2025, the team progressed to the UK National Final, held at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on Saturday 22nd March 2025 - an unforgettable experience for all involved.

This year's journey began with the virtual regional heat in January, in which the Banbridge Academy team competed in three rounds against three English schools, Queen Elizabeth High School, St. Thomas More Catholic School and Stantonbury School, via live video link, presenting two criminal law cases before real barristers and judges. The format demanded not only strong advocacy skills but also the ability to work seamlessly as a team under pressure. The Academy rose to the occasion, with each student demonstrating poise, preparation and professionalism far

beyond their training.

The team's success in the virtual heat meant they were one of just 24 schools from across the UK invited to the National Final in London, an exceptional achievement in a competition that attracts hundreds of entrants annually. Representing Northern Ireland at this level was both an honour and a challenge, but one the students embraced with characteristic enthusiasm and determination.

The trip to London was not all work and no play. To celebrate reaching the final, the team enjoyed a well-earned day exploring some of the capital's most famous sights. A walking tour took them past landmarks such as Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, Horse Guards Parade, and Trafalgar Square, giving students a deeper appreciation of the city's history, politics and architecture.

One of the highlights of the trip was a visit to the Sky Garden — a unique

public space, offering panoramic views of London's skyline. Students took in a 360-degree view of the capital while enjoying a well-deserved break from the courtroom drama. An evening walk on the South Bank set us up for the competition the next day.

Stepping into the Royal Courts of Justice, one of the most iconic legal buildings in the UK, was an experience none of the team will forget. The imposing Gothic architecture, formal courtrooms and historic surroundings gave the day a sense of occasion and authenticity that brought their months of preparation vividly to life. Thinking of the many high profile criminal cases that have been tried inside those courtrooms really gave us a sense of occasion.

Throughout the day, the team took part in three rounds of legal proceedings, performing both prosecution and defence roles in criminal cases. Round 1 was against The Rochester Grammar School. In Round 2 we were pitted against the Boswells School and in



**Bar Mock Trial 2024 – 2025 team :** Noah Bell, Adam Byrne, Olivia De La Torre, Drew Frazer, Katherine Graham, Poppie Graham, Reese Green, Grace Hamilton, Poppy Henderson, Rola Huang, Jasmine Magowan-Balfour, Jorja McCabe, Hannah McLorn, Sienna Scullion.



## EXTRA-CURRICULAR

Round 3 our opponents were Harrogate Grammar School. Each role in the team, from barristers to witnesses to court clerk, was expertly carried out by Banbridge Academy students, who impressed judges and spectators alike with their clarity of argument, attention to legal detail and confident public speaking.

Although the competition was fierce, the team's hard work and resilience shone through, and their performance earned praise from sitting judges and practising barristers, many of whom remarked on the quality of the advocacy and preparation. While the school didn't return with the overall trophy, simply reaching the National Final and performing with such skill on that stage, marks an exceptional accomplishment. We took some comfort from the fact that we had been up against the ultimate winners in Round 2 and even their teachers acknowledged that it had been a closely contested heat.

Much of the success of this year's team can be attributed to their dedication and

the collaborative spirit that developed during weekly Wednesday practices. Under the guidance of 2 barrister mentors, former Banbridge Academy students Vikki Singer and Severina Kelley, students not only developed advocacy and critical thinking skills but also formed strong bonds of teamwork and friendship.

The Bar Mock Trial competition has always been about more than winning — it's about learning how the justice system works, understanding the importance of fairness and reasoned argument and building the confidence to stand up and be heard. The 2025 team exemplified all these values and more.

As they look back on their time in the competition, from the virtual heat in January to the grandeur of the Royal Courts in March, the students can be incredibly proud of what they achieved. They represented Banbridge Academy with integrity, intelligence and passion and gained a valuable first-hand experience of the operation of the legal system in the UK.





# Army Cadet Force

2024-2025 has seen students take part in various activities offering training, leadership opportunities, skills acquisition, field trips, and friendship. Many cadets have gained badges and acquired skills- with many having been promoted into leadership positions. Particular events of note have been:

- Weekend camps at Ballykinlar, learning fieldcraft and shooting;
- Wreath-laying at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Sunday;
- A trip to Normandy;
- Summer camp in England, competing with other cadet battalions from all over the UK;
- Adventure training in the UK and even skiing in the Alps!

Congratulations to our o Patrick Murray, who was awarded Top Cadet in his Platoon at Summer Camp in England.



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## EXTRA-CURRICULAR





# Charity

Mrs J Leslie

The pupils and staff proved their generosity this academic year by donating £7698.00 to various charities.

The year started with a collection to support AWARE NI and Jeans for Genes. The Southern Area Hospice, USPCA and Depaul NI also benefitted from collections before the half-term break.

Poppies were sold in November to raise money for The Royal British Legion and £200.00 was collected for NI Air Ambulance. Some brave teachers "volunteered" to have sponges thrown at them in aid of Children in Need, raising an impressive £400.00.

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, along with the proceeds from the annual carol service, resulting in £2000.00 being donated to the Mandeville Unit at Craigavon Area Hospital. The staff wore their Christmas jumpers to work, collecting £400.00 for Save the Children.

The Salvation Army, Autism NI, NSPCC and RBLI (Great Tommy Sleepout) all benefitted from collections before the Easter break. The final term saw donations for Age NI, Comic Relief,

Simon Community and Cash for Kids. We had a final collection, collecting all our loose change for the NI Air Ambulance. A special well done to Class 8C (Mrs Spratt and Mrs Hassard'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.

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# Senior Debating

Mrs H Cartmill

**“It is better to debate a question without settling it than to settle a question without debating it.” Joseph Joubert**

Has the Woke Movement gone too far? Are weight loss drugs the new normal? Does the paranormal really exist? These are just some of the questions debated at break in the Drama Studio this year. As always, in September, 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 which were keenly debated include:

- Harris or Trump 2024?
- Is Cancel Culture a force for good?
- Does an intelligent Creator exist?
- Why are conspiracy theories on the rise?
- Is N Ireland adequately prepared for extreme weather events like Storm Eowyn?
- The introduction of the Assisted Dying Bill?

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 Senior Debating Club!

Congratulations to Sienna Scullion, who won the Ulster Women's Unionist Council Edgar Graham Memorial Public Speaking Competition held annually in the Senate Chamber at Parliament Buildings Stormont. Sienna fought off stiff competition from across N Ireland to gain the coveted shield, choosing as her topic: The Importance of Learning Languages in the C21st.

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 timetable of meetings in early September.



*Sienna Scullion with the Edgar Graham Memorial Trophy, Mr McLoughlin and Mrs Cartmill.*

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# Duke of Edinburgh's Award

## Expedition Section – Mr Miskelly

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award continues to be a cornerstone of personal development at Banbridge Academy. Comprising five key sections: Expedition, Physical, Skills, Volunteering, and Residential—we proudly oversee the Expedition component through our direct entry Gold programme. Every Friday afternoon, participants gather to hone essential expedition skills including: camp craft, cooking, first aid, and navigation using map and compass. These sessions lay the groundwork for the adventures that follow.

### PRACTICE EXPEDITIONS

#### March – St Patrick's Weekend

Our first practice expedition kicked off under perfect conditions at Spelga Dam.

The water was still as glass, the sky a brilliant blue, and visibility stretched for miles—ideal for putting Friday's navigation lessons into action. That evening, we camped at Tollymore Youth Campsite, where the aroma of sirloin steaks and garlic butter filled the air thanks to Jamie Ramsey's culinary flair. A Banbridge Academy first: steaks cooked to order!

#### April – Postponement and Day Walk

Unfortunately, our second practice was postponed due to wildfires in the Mourne—an increasingly common issue caused by careless behaviour in dry conditions. We quickly pivoted to a day walk before Easter break. Rain returned, much to the delight of the local wildlife and the dismay of our students, though

it did provide a real-world test of their waterproof gear.

#### Final Practice – May

Glorious sunshine accompanied our final three-day practice. Starting at Kilbroney Forest Park, we trekked to the Rocky Mountain Centre, then onward via the Mourne Way to Meelmore Lodge. A Bank Holiday crowd meant some students opted for a café fry-up over campfire cooking. We ended at Bloody Bridge, where many cooled off in the river—a well-earned reward after a warm and demanding journey.

#### QUALIFYING EXPEDITION – WICKLOW 2025

Five groups travelled to Wicklow for their Gold qualifying expedition, beginning



Green Group - Start



Green Group - Finish



Orange Group - Start



Orange Group - Finish



## EXTRA-CURRICULAR



**Purple Group - Start**



**Purple Group - Finish**

with a night at Glendalough Youth Hostel. After a pit stop at Applegreen, we reviewed routes and lightened a few overpacked rucksacks—Fynn and Miles, clearly prepping for rugby season, had packed enough to open a small shop.

### **Day 1 – Glendalough and Lough Dan**

After a hearty breakfast, groups set off on the scenic Spinc Walk or tackled Scarr Mountain via the Wicklow Way. Fynn’s unexpected river tumble didn’t dampen spirits. At Lough Dan, horseflies and midges prompted a wardrobe change, and an impromptu cricket match rounded off the evening.

### **Day 2 – Selfies and Ice Cream**

The morning began with a selfie challenge. Despite overcast skies and

wind, groups powered through Scarr Mountain. Campsite chatter included rumours of ice cream runs, and riverside relaxation was the evening’s highlight. Katherine and April’s Red group took home the selfie crown.

### **Day 3 – Singing Through the Forest**

Onward to Glenmalur Valley via Derrybawn and Mullacor. Spirits soared as the Red group led a chorus of “Tunnel of Love” and other “Dad music” classics. Billy, the Youth Hostel warden, provided firewood for a campfire, and staff brought marshmallows and chocolate—s’mores all round!

### **Day 4 – Final Push**

Sore feet didn’t slow anyone down as the promise of a hot meal at Glenmalur

Lodge spurred the final leg. The bus ride home was quiet (and a bit pungent), but everyone returned safely, tired yet triumphant.

### **THANK YOU**

A huge thank you to Mrs Spratt, Mr McGuinness, Miss McDonald, Mr Baxter, and Sammy for their unwavering support and expertise throughout training and expeditions. We hope this year’s participants carry these memories—and their newfound resilience—with them into future adventures.



**Red Group - Start**



**Red Group - Finish**



**Yellow Group - Start**



**Yellow Group - Finish**



# Engineering Society

The Engineering Society is a group for Years 11 - 14, that meets each week during senior lunch, on Thursdays in F01.

Each week during Engineering Society we had the opportunity to hear from many companies, giving us an understanding of what they do on a daily basis, what it would be like to work for them and what pathways we could take to do so. Alongside this we also had many opportunities to visit, in person, many local engineering companies with connections and opportunities abroad and to hear about work experience opportunities available to us, to assist us in deciding career paths and making connections. Such interactive learning through our trips provides a vital part of our education, as we are encouraged to see how what we are learning in the classroom is used practically each day, in the real world.

We had the pleasure of having many visitors, speaking to us on topics from Higher Level Apprenticeships and local engineering opportunities. Some of our visitors included:

**Peter Kerr**, a representative from Dawson-WAM (specialist civil engineering and piling contractors) who discussed qualifications, career opportunities, apprenticeships and work

experience available within the sector.

**Professor Máire O'Neill** (from the faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, QUB) who discussed the world of cybersecurity.

**Elita Frid**, manager of Education and Industry Engagement, who discussed the variety of career opportunities in the engineering sector here in NI and MEGA Degree Apprenticeships in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering with Ulster University.

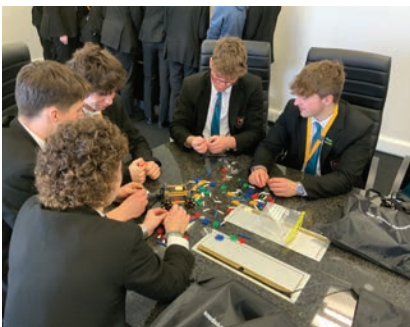
**Sophie Graham**, a past pupil who now works for Almac as an Analytical Chemist, who discussed her own journey through school, university and employment.

Banbridge Academy Engineering Society made many visits to companies such as Collins Aerospace in Kilkeel, Hyster Yale in Craigavon and Walter Watson in Castlewellan. The visit to Collins Aerospace included a tour of their facilities, seeing the production lines for plane seats and how the fabrication of the seats is completed. The visit finished with a small car building competition. At Hyster Yale, we were able to learn about opportunities within the company and tour the site, seeing the testing area and the production line for forklifts, including electric forklifts. On our trip to Walter

Watson, we were given a tour of both the painting and production sites, along with seeing their rebar (reinforcement bar) and crane area as well as being shown plans by civil engineers on the software they use. Such visits provided us with a view of both the design and manufacturing processes that take place within industry.

In conclusion, the Engineering Society has provided invaluable insights for students in Years 11-14 to learn more about the vast world of engineering. Through weekly talks from engineering companies, hands-on visits and a glance into career and academic pathways, we've all gained a clearer picture of the many sectors and opportunities within engineering. These experiences have not only broadened our knowledge, but also helped many of us begin to consider our futures within engineering. The society continues to be a vital part of introducing and educating students about the world of engineering. We look forward to seeing it inspire many more students in the years to come.

A sincere thank you must go out to Mr Stewart as we are grateful for his commitment to the society and for organising such a vast variety of interesting opportunities.





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# Senior Scripture Union

The 2024/25 school year flashed by in no time at all and with it, another year of Banbridge Academy Senior Scripture Union.

This year in Senior SU our theme was “anchored in hope”. We hoped that we could share the hope of Jesus with friends and teachers alike. In a world where we are constantly tossed on the difficult waves of life, Jesus provides an anchor that can hold us secure and allow us to face the challenges we encounter each day.

Senior SU meets each Tuesday breaktime in the Lecture theatre where pupils from Years 11-14 gather together to study God’s word, sing songs of worship and enjoy fellowship with friends. Throughout the year we considered various topics which tied in with our theme. Ideas such as what can we have hope in? How do we keep hoping in the midst of difficult life events and how we can share the hope we have with our friends. In all these studies we remembered the verse from the book of Hebrews chapter 6, “We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.”

In addition to our weekly meetings together, SU has a number of smaller groups that meet each week. In the mornings before school, we gather in the quiet room off the atrium for a time of prayer. From Monday to Thursday, a member of SU shares a short passage

from the Bible followed by a prayer time for each other and the tasks which lie ahead, whether its exams, tests, or how to share their faith with friends, this has been a real blessing and we’ve enjoyed a great sense of community in these times together. On a Friday morning we meet together to enjoy some tea and toast (which has moved location to F75) and enjoy fellowship together before school begins.

Small groups are one of the biggest weekly undertakings and involve lots of different groups meeting together at lunchtimes to think about and discuss passages from the Bible and the encouragement and challenge it can bring to our Christian faith. These happen most days in the week and are open to anyone in Years 11 to 14, and I have found them such a blessing in my time in Banbridge Academy. If you haven’t already - get involved next year!

Senior SU hosted the annual outreach week in November where we organised events which might help to engage other people with conversations about Jesus. We had some interviews with members of SU about how they honour God as they play sports; a social in the Sports Hall (which proved a welcome end to GCSE Science and Maths Modules) and probably the best attended event was a visit from Christian mountain biker Colin Ross, who performed stunts on his custom bike,

including a long distance jump over some volunteer (I think) teachers.

As usual the two big events in the SU calendar are the weekend away, which was hosted at YMCA Greenhill where Joel Middleton came along to share the importance of perseverance in the Christian faith, and the annual formal that is held at Edenmore Golf club. The SU weekend in particular is always a massive highlight and this year was no exception, as the fun we enjoyed and games we played together will live long in our memories. As usual we were really encouraged by what we heard from God’s word from the book of Romans,





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encouraging us to keep our eyes fixed on the final destination (if we belong to Jesus) even when we face difficulties in this life.

These events are a highlight in the SU calendar each year and are always really well attended. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the teachers involved, who gave up so much of their time to make these events possible.

The final event of the year was the SU BBQ which was held in April, just before the Easter holidays. Here we gave thanks for all that had happened in SU throughout the year, and we were reminded of the anchor which holds our souls fast.

If you have any questions about faith, God or even the hope that you have read of here, you would be most welcome at any of our SU meetings in the future.





# JSU Weekend

In October 2024 a group of 50 Year 8 and 9 pupils set off to Lorne Estate to enjoy an action packed weekend of outdoor activities, bible teaching with our speaker David McConkey and fellowship together:

I have a great time going to Junior SU every week because it gives me the opportunity to learn about God with my friends and go on the Junior SU weekend, which is a trip you go on every year with everybody from Junior SU. I loved the weekend last year because I got into a room with my friends and we did some really fun activities like: doing the zipline, going on a walk down at the beach and within the estate and going on a walk around the forest. Although the weekend was very fun we were there for one specific reason: to learn and praise God. Over the two nights we had two sessions of reading the Bible. We also played some games to understand the sermon a lot easier. Usually in the day there would be different games going on and one of them was stuck in the mud and it would be really difficult to win if you were the catcher because there were so many people. I loved the Junior SU weekend trip last year and I can't wait to go on it again this year again.

**Tom Macdonald 8H**



One of the best experiences of the JSU weekend was the zipline over the big lake because it was very high up and once you were off the platform, there was no going back. It was very exciting and very fast and when you were going past the lake you were glad you kept both shoes on.

**Eli McCauley 8H**

## Night of Champions

In January 2025, a group of Year 8 pupils defended the title of Champions against other local schools: Banbridge High School, Dromore High School and New Bridge Integrated. Here's what some of the team said about the evening:

**Faye Lawson 8H:** In JSU we got the opportunity to go to Banbridge High School for a night of challenges and games. We took with us a team of people who went to JSU and came back with gold. Every challenge was different and the tension was rising

as players would do really well in some challenges, but not as well in others. Overall it was a great night and good craic with friends and I highly recommend it if you get the chance.

**Georgia Connolly 8H:** It was a really fun night against other local schools. We did a series of challenges, testing multiple skills like throwing, speed, bowling, frisbee and many more. Depending on how fast and good you were at the challenge, you got points. At the end the points were added up and of course Banbridge Academy

won. We were all so happy and posed for the camera with our medals and a trophy, which we get to keep for the year.





# Ski Trip

Daniel McKee

In February, 100 Year 11 pupils embarked on an adventure of a lifetime to the Austrian mountains. After a 3am wake-up call, students and teachers sleepily clambered onto buses and commenced the journey to Belfast International Airport. The excitement brewed as we split into our groups and made our way through the airport. Everyone thankfully managed to end up on the plane- but not everyone managed to sit in the same seat for the entire flight (sorry Mrs Sally!)

When we stepped off the plane into the cool German breeze, we were ecstatic to say the least. We were then greeted with a double decker bus, which took us to the greatest place on earth- McDonald's. With bellies full and euros already spent, we were ready to make the trip to our resort- Axamer Lizum. As we headed up the mountains, taking in the magnificent scenery, excitement filled the air. We eagerly raced to our rooms, where we hurled our suitcases inside and quickly had a battle for which bed we would sleep in. There was no time for rest as we tried on our helmets, boots and grabbed our skis. We were then greeted with an Austrian dish that we all gratefully tried- with some enjoying it more than others.

After a long day we were all ready for bed as we knew we had an early wake up call for the fun-filled day that lay ahead.

Waking up in the mountains felt surreal and with a few bowls of cereal, rounds of toast and cups of coffee, we were all ready to hit the slopes. We headed to the container to grab our skis and take a walk in our ski boots- some used the word 'excruciating' to describe the shin pain, but after a few days we got the hang of it. We split into our groups (beginner, intermediate and advanced) and parted ways- with the intermediate and advanced groups going straight to the slopes, while the rest of the beginner groups enjoyed the button lift.

After just two hours of lessons, we were already becoming naturals- in spite of the intermediate and advanced groups going up the gondola. After lunch we headed back out and learnt all the basics: stopping, turning and shouting 'PIZZA' if someone was in danger of a collision. After some much needed rest in the afternoon, we had a great night participating in an escape room challenge. We completed trivia

questions, dingbats and brain teasers. With each room battling hard, 307 (my room-not to brag!) emerged victorious and received a bountiful prize of squashies. Finally, we all found our beds and reflected on the great day that had been enjoyed by all.

With some sore muscles the next morning, we got up and got straight to work. The 7.30am wake-up call saw everyone ready to hit the slopes by 9. With the lead of the instructors, we headed to the mountain. While the beginner group remained perfecting their turns, the intermediate and advanced groups had upgraded from blues to reds to the beastly blacks- both these groups continued to develop their skills and even show up some teachers (Mr Barlow). With a thrilling first session a break was very much needed. So to the restaurant we went, to enjoy some chicken nuggets and chips-they were delicious! Then we geared back up and got going. The beginner groups saw progression and the promise of the T-bar grew stronger with each run down the button lift.

After a long day on the slopes and full





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of food from dinner, either from the pizzeria or restaurant, we took part in an extremely competitive table quiz that proved to be a great way to end the day, before we were given a treat of a guitar sing along from Alexander- some vocal abilities were better than others, but we all had a great time.

With the middle of the week fast approaching, everyone's skiing abilities had improved significantly. The advanced and intermediate groups headed for the two-man and four-man lifts, while the beginner groups stayed back and managed to make their way to the T-bar. The view from the top of the slope filled us with both excitement and nerves. We all took a leap of faith and managed to make it down in one piece (just about) with maybe a few falls. No fall was too great, as we had a fun-filled evening ahead of us. Whilst half the year went bowling, the other half embarked on a risky night walk into the woods and even got to go down some of the slopes (on our bums). This was the first time most of us had been down a red slope and it proved to be very exciting. After a walk through the winter wonderland we were greeted with a campfire and hot chocolate. This was a great treat to end a

perfect night.

Another day on the slopes turned out even more challenging than the day before for the beginners. Some ventured up the gondolas to the tip of the mountain, before looking at the colossal way down and grabbing some pictures at the top. The long slope that slithered ahead actually made for an exciting experience to say the least. Whilst scary at the start, the feeling was unbeatable. The other beginner groups looked on with hope that they also would reach the summit before the end of the week. Meanwhile, the advanced groups were able to cruise along choosing any slope they desired to conquer.

Many teachers were also showing off their skills- like Mrs Derby who hadn't skied in 20 years but proved it was just like riding a bike. After an action packed day in the mountains, the year group split up again to swap activities and continue the night walk and bowling. To reach the bowling we towered down the mountain by bus and took in the views of Innsbruck, before jumping into the arcade and getting ready for 10 pin bowls. With a slightly confusing Austrian keyboard, we managed to get

set up and started what turned out to be a very competitive game. With some much needed hydration, the bar allowed us to have a taste of home with cokes and fantas before resuming our intense games. We then had some time to spare and decided to take advantage of the arcade. With our money well spent, we headed back on the bus and got back into bed for some rest before another day on the slopes.

The realisation of only two more days of skiing dampened our spirits- only until we grabbed our skis and headed for the gondolas to take in the unreal view of the mountain sky line. With most of the year advancing to the top of the mountain, the spirits were back on a high. All the beginner groups who had reached the top enjoyed a blissful trip down the blues- only before being overtaken by a speeding pack from the advanced groups. Everyone, even those still brushing up their skills on T-bar, had an awesome day and needed a large dinner to reenergise us for the dancing that awaited us later that night.

When we found out that we would be doing a 'Just Dance' and karaoke night, we were excited to say the least. With





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the competitive teams of boys vs girls, our judges watched intently as they tried to find a deserving winner. After the 'Waka waka', 'Hips don't lie' and 'Timber' dances, the judges had made up their minds. Mrs Todd backed the girls and agreed that they were far more technical than the boys. Mr Barlow decided that (due to the enthusiasm and passion on display) that the boys were the deserving winners, so the last vote of Mrs Derby determined the winner. She agreed that the girls were more technical and also agreed the boys were more passionate but, much to Mrs Todd's disappointment, she announced the boys as winners of the competition. Next up was karaoke, and the atmosphere was electric as many pupils sang their hearts out while their audience joined in to support them.

Our last full day came too quickly and we were both saddened and excited. We were treated to lunch at the top of the mountain with an array of pretzels, lasagne and (of course) chicken nuggets and chips. Due to the foggy weather we were unable to see the view from the dining area, but the fog only added to the atmosphere as almost all 100

pupils embarked on the journey down the mountain. The intermediate and advanced groups soared down their last few black runs. The beginner groups went down the blues at new top speeds- with some even advancing to the red slopes where we got yet another delicious hot chocolate. It was the perfect way to end a perfect week of skiing in the mountains. After bombing it down the rest of the slopes, putting our borrowed gear away and parting with our incredible instructors, we rushed to get ready for the Valentine's Disco. With everyone wearing pink or red, the year group was certainly looking the part. The tradition of buying gifts remained (some buying chocolate from the tuck shop from Maria) and everyone was pleased to receive something this Valentine's Day. Some were more lucky than others and received an additional gift or even a dance at the disco. We completed many challenges in our travel groups and Mrs Todd's group came out on top- an improvement from the previous night. With the night ending, our final sleep was much needed with the early wake up call the next morning.

Another early morning, just like the



first day, saw us all scrambling to fill our suitcases and make sure our rooms were spotless. We all managed to make it on to the buses and catch some sleep before driving through Austria to Italy. When we arrived in Verona, the sun was shining and everyone's spirits were high. Then we headed for security and found ourselves roaming the duty free. Once we had bought our souvenirs and headed to the food court, we were blessed with burgers and chips. We then went to the gate and waited until finally we got the go ahead and hurried to the plane.

Everyone was so excited to touch down in Belfast, but the realisation of our trip coming to an end started to kick in. We waited patiently for our bags and once we were ready, we boarded the final bus of our trip back to Banbridge Academy. Everyone said goodbye to their friends and embraced their family waiting to drive them home (or to McDonald's). Altogether I think everyone can agree that this once in a lifetime trip was unforgettable and we will forever be grateful for the opportunity to experience it!





# Championing Wellbeing: Our Ambassadors Make a Meaningful Impact

**Mrs Duke**

This year, our dedicated team of Wellbeing Ambassadors have made an outstanding contribution to promoting the physical and mental health of pupils across the school. Their energy, compassion and leadership have helped foster a more supportive and inclusive school environment.

One of the standout moments was their leadership during Anti-Bullying Week, where they delivered a series of thought-provoking assemblies that encouraged kindness, empathy and standing up for others. The week was marked by Odd Socks Day on 12th November, a fun and symbolic celebration of individuality and acceptance.

In March, to mark World Sleep Day, the Ambassadors visited Form classes to raise awareness about sleep hygiene, sharing not only in class but online an excellent PowerPoint providing practical advice on how healthy sleep habits can improve wellbeing, focus and emotional resilience.

On World Mental Health Day, during Open Night, and throughout the year, the ambassadors played a vital role in signposting pupils to local agencies and in-school services that offer mental



health support. Their efforts ensured that students knew where to turn for help, creating a culture of openness and care.

A key part of their work was the peer mentoring service they provided during break times in the Quiet Room. This initiative offered pupils a safe and

welcoming space to talk, seek advice, or simply take a moment to recharge—making a real difference in the lives of many.

We were also fortunate to have Liz from the Southern Health and Social Care Trust working with the school this year as an Emotional and Wellbeing Practitioner. Liz played an instrumental role in training and coordinating several of the ambassadors' events, and her expertise and support were invaluable in helping pupils feel heard, supported, and empowered.

We commend our Wellbeing Ambassadors—and Liz—for their incredible work and dedication. Their efforts have helped build a stronger compassionate school community.





# Young Enterprise

For 2024-2025 there were three Young Enterprise Companies:

**Revinyl** – recycling vinyl records to produce decorative bowls.

**BeeBundled** – Bee wax fabric to replace the use of clingfilm and other food packaging.

**Ashwood** – coasters and placemat made from local salvaged wood.

In addition, the following students achieved great success in the University of Ulster Assessment in Enterprise

First Name	Surname	Final Award
Amelie	Knott	Pass with Merit
Andrew	Grattan	Pass
Calum	Nixon	Pass with Merit
Daniel	Thompson	Pass with Merit
Ellie	Crimmins	Pass with Distinction
Emily	Castles	Pass with Distinction
Ewan	Stinton	Pass with Distinction
Jessica	McCullough	Pass with Merit
Lauren	Burns-Atkin	Pass with Merit
Rachel	Greer	Pass with Merit
Roisin	Cumming	Pass with Distinction
Rola	Huang	Pass with Distinction





# SistersIN

Ellie Crimmins



This year, four girls in Year 14 and I had the opportunity to participate in a fantastic new opportunity, led by Mrs Neill, known as SistersIN. This programme matched us with a female mentor in a senior position to help us develop a community or school project to make a real difference. The projects chosen ultimately included coordinating volunteering placements for students within school, categorising and photographing costumes from the school musical for rental, highlighting female contributions to school life through a newsletter and visiting nursing homes.

At our weekly meetings with Mrs Neill, we had the opportunity to set goals and targets to keep ourselves accountable in ensuring the success of our ventures. Our coffee and buns (with a side of business) quickly became one of my favourite parts of the week, presenting me an opportunity to organise myself as well as have fun with my newfound SistersIN friends!

Additionally, we were offered the opportunity to avail of work experience with our mentors, a powerful tool for future success. I partook in virtual work experience with my mentor Clare Neill, a charity manager for SureStart, allowing me to gain a valuable insight into the complicated process of coordinating a hugely expansive organisation to do such good. I had numerous Zoom calls with my mentor to develop my project and get it off the ground, enabling us to really get to know each other and build a lasting relationship.

On the 20th March 2025 we, along with several A-level Politics students, attended a panel discussion at Queen's University Belfast led by Chancellor Hilary Rodham Clinton on the role of women in peace-building. We were delighted to have the opportunity to meet the Chancellor after the panel! We also heard from former Women's Coalition leader Monica McWilliams, as well as SDLP leader Claire Hanna.





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This unique panel was fascinating, and allowed us to see what an extensive role these incredible women played in the peace process which ended the Troubles.

I was also involved in planning the SistersIn Celebration Event, which ultimately had over 1,000 attendees! As a member of the Planning Committee, I played a role in determining the theme, as well as who the keynote speakers would be and ultimately just highlighting the role that each and every woman had played in the running of the programme. This role involved a trip to the ICC Centre in Belfast to meet with a multitude of girls from other schools, an invaluable experience in networking and building connections. The Celebration Event took place on the 7th April and by all accounts it was a roaring success, themed on a Hollywood red carpet, with the First and Deputy First Minister pledging to become mentors for next year's cohort!

From this experience, I was able to make friendships transcending year groups and interact with people I would never otherwise have had the opportunity to. I'd like to thank Mrs Neill profusely for making this possible and wish my SistersIn friends Katie V, Corin, Katie M and Orla the very best of luck at university!





# 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 on supporting the school, being a welcoming presence at Open Night and other school activities. We also fundraise to provide extra financial support, enabling the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered to the pupils. Our main aim is to strengthen the connection 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 the school at events such as Open Night and the Spring Concert. A very enjoyable morning was also spent 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 to 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.





# Crozier

Mr J Erskine

As defending champions of the Sports Day House Competition, Crozier pupils set themselves the ambitious target of participating with purpose in all competitions through the year to win both the Sports Day and overall House Competition.



Led by Mr Erskine and Mrs Todd, along with House Captains Tom Mawhinney and Lilia McKinney, this initial enthusiasm was on display in the highly competitive Football competition on the front pitches. This took place over four days with every year group in Crozier involved in both the boys' and girls' matches. Over 300 pupils took part and there were hundreds of spectators – quite an intimidating atmosphere for players and referees!

This year Crozier finished top in the boys' and second equal in the girls' competitions.

As the misty and foggy days of November dawned, we had our Cross-Country competition, which was well attended again by competitors and supporters. Unfortunately, the Crozier boys finished 4th and were outshone by the girls who finished joint first. Special mention should go to Katie Rankin Year 8, Emma Rankin Year 9 and Emma Stewart Year 11, who all won their respective races on the day.

The Christmas House Quiz is always a highlight in the calendar and this year was no different with new rounds of 'The 12 days of Christmas' and 'The 1% Club' featuring in the particularly enjoyable event for all year groups. We want to give particular thanks to recently retired Mr Farrell, for his tremendous skill in

compiling the infamous Music Round and Movie Round. This year, our Year 8-10s finished third and our Year 11-14s finished second overall.

With a particular global outlook, pupils used the medium of Kahoot to test their international knowledge in a rapid-fire Flags quiz. While not our strongest event, special praise for Reece Wakeling, who helped keep Crozier almost single-handedly in second place.

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 joint top and a strong showing from our mixed Senior team took the overall win.

In their last ever House event, the Year 14 Crozier pupils took to the Tug-of-War arena for one last hurrah, and following a close defeat in the semifinal, they finished strongly with a lot of grunting and heaving to secure a credible third place overall.

Before Sports Day we were sitting in first place overall, but fully aware that the Dunbar Dragons were breathing down our necks. Sports Day has the most points on offer, while also being a standalone competition in its own right. Our boys and girls performed incredibly well on the day. The best athletes in each year group for Crozier were Jamie Richardson and Rebecca Dawson in Year 8, Vytis Prapuolenis and Emma Rankin in Year 9, Thomas Hamill and Mollie Murray in Year 10, and Adam Liggett and Maddison Wilson in Year 11. Their efforts gained us first place in Sports Day for both the girls and the boys, which secured our place at the TOP of the overall leaderboard!

Many thanks to our House Captains, Tom Mawhinney and Lilia McKinney, for their help and enthusiasm in organising teams and to our House Teachers, Mr Erskine and Mrs Todd.

A great year to be in Crozier!





# Dunbar

Dunbar enjoyed another strong year in our House Competitions, finishing 2nd overall after leading the table for a large part of the year. There were 12 different House Competitions this year and some memorable fun days along the way.

The Dunbar highlights for 2024-25 were: strong performances for our Football Teams and our Cross Country Teams in the first two events of the year. Outstanding brain-power in the ever-popular Christmas quizzes and the lunchtime 'flags' quiz. Maximum effort and huge participation numbers in both the Senior and Junior Endball competitions played on glorious sunny lunchtimes on the front pitches. A Senior Tug o' war competition that brought out the competitive animals in all our U6 in their last events. And finally another superb Sports Day with over 100 competitors from Dunbar giving their all for their house.

While victory was not to be this year, it was another very enjoyable year for the Dunbar Dragons, and everyone is already looking forward to renewing competition next year!

The final house standings were as below:

Crozier	890
Dunbar	720
McWilliam	567.5
Waddell	522.5





# McWilliam

J Glover and M Miskelly

A year of grit, growth and great spirit! This year, McWilliam House embraced the spirit of perseverance and teamwork, with a consistent theme of 3rd and 4th place finishes across many events. While the podium top spot often eluded us, our Lions and Lionesses showed heart, determination and pride in every competition.

## Interhouse Football

The year kicked off with the Interhouse Football tournament. Both our boys' and girls' teams gave it their all, but ultimately finished in 4th place. Despite the results, the camaraderie and sportsmanship on display were second to none.

## Cross Country (November)

November brought the Cross Country event, where our boys placed 3rd overall and the girls 4th. There were some standout individual performances worth celebrating:

- Andrew Jackson – 2nd place in the Year 14 boys' race
- Jack Douglas – 1st place in his year group
- Olly Jardine – 3rd place in his year group
- Daisy Douglas – 1st place in Year 10 girls
- Maisie Jane Brown – 3rd place in Year 8 girls

These runners truly embodied the McWilliam spirit!

## House Quiz (December)

As the term drew to a close, the House Quiz tested our mental mettle. The Junior team placed 4th overall, though the Year 10 group clinched 1st place in their category.

The Senior team shone brightly, taking 1st place overall, with Years 11 and 13/14 winning their respective year groups. A fantastic result!

## Name the Flags

Geography wasn't our strongest suit this year, with a 4th place finish in the "Name the Flags" challenge. A learning opportunity for next year!

## End Ball

Both Senior and Junior End Ball teams played with passion and positivity. Despite finishing 3rd, the spirit and teamwork on display were commendable.

## Tug of War

The final showdown for our Year 14s before exam leave was the Tug of War. Unfortunately, we couldn't replicate last year's undefeated streak and were soundly beaten in all pulls. Still, a valiant effort from our leavers!

## Sports Day

The year concluded with a fantastic Sports Day. Under the sun and school spirit:

- Boys' team finished 2nd
  - Girls' team came 3rd
- A strong finish to a year of steady performances.

## Looking Ahead

While 3rd place overall may not have been the dream, it was a true reflection of our year—full of effort, resilience, and pride. We're incredibly proud of every student who competed, supported, and represented McWilliam House with heart.

Thank you to all our Lions and Lionesses—we're already looking forward to roaring even louder next year!





# Waddell

Luke McGerrigan

Following a solid third-place finish last year, Waddell entered the 2024/25 school year with a new sense of determination and high hopes of climbing towards the top of the house leaderboard. Throughout the year, our students gave it their all across a range of sporting events and quizzes. While we faced tough competition, Waddell showed fantastic spirit, effort and resilience in every challenge.

We kicked things off with the Boys' Football, where our team fought hard to secure a strong 75 points and put us firmly in the race from the outset. But it was the girls who really set the tone early on, powering to a 1st place finish in Girls' Football and bagging 100 points—the highest possible! A fantastic team performance and a great early boost for Waddell.

Next came the Cross Country events. The boys showed grit and stamina to bring home 40 points and keep us in the lead while our girls, though giving a strong effort, managed 20 points. These were valuable contributions as we continued our hot start and showed that we were 'the real deal'.

Our focus then shifted from physical endurance to brainpower, with the quizzes. The Junior Quiz brought in 25 points, while our Seniors pushed hard to take 50 points in their round. The Flag Quiz saw Waddell bring in another 15 points—not our strongest event. Hopefully we can bounce back next year, so FIFA players We. Need. You.

Momentum picked up again with the ever-popular Endball events. Although it was a tight contest, both our Junior and Senior teams secured 37.5 points and 35 points respectively. Great energy and teamwork were on display throughout, and our players made the house proud.

The Year 14 Tug-of-war was next—a true test of grit and determination. The Waddell team dug deep and battled fiercely, ending in 3rd place and adding 30 vital points to our total. Perhaps some extra strength training sessions are on the cards for next year!



We rounded off the year with Sports Day, and our athletes gave it everything they had. The girls powered through with a determined showing to collect 40 points, while the boys brought in 40 also, with some impressive performances in the 100m and golf. It was a proud moment to see our students pushing themselves to the limit in the final event of the year despite us not collecting the points we may have desired.

When all was said and done, Waddell finished with a total of 522.5 points. While it wasn't quite enough to take the title, and we landed in 4th place, it was a year full of determination, improvement and plenty of moments to celebrate.

With stronger showings in several events and an excellent performance in girls' football, we have plenty of positives to build on.

A massive thank you goes to every single student who participated and gave their best in each event. Your efforts are what make Waddell the proud and passionate house that it is. And of course, a special thank you to Mr. Acheson and Mrs. Dreaning for their tireless organization and encouragement—none of this would be possible without them.

Let's come back stronger next year and show everyone what Waddell is made of!





# Rugby: 1st XV



The Banbridge Academy 1st XV should be very proud of their season and their Danske Bank Ulster Schools' Cup campaign. It was a tough start to the season with a number of injuries in different positions, but this eventually strengthened the squad with other players getting 1st XV rugby experience, which proved vital as the season progressed. We finished the season winning 12/19 matches, scoring 63 tries and 416 points. The Ulster Schools' Cup groups were drawn and the Banbridge Academy team were drawn away to RS Dungannon, Omagh Academy and at home to Dalriada. In the run up to the first Schools' Cup group match

against RS Dungannon, the team were able to build on their wins against Larne GS and Omagh Academy. Losses against Enniskillen GS and Down HS were disappointing, but they were good preparation for the tough group matches ahead.

RS Dungannon is never an easy place to go to and the stakes for this one were particularly high with it being the first group game and the school where the new coach, Mr McClintock, had coached for the previous 11 years. An early try from captain Ryan Hanna settled the Academy team. RS Dungannon responded with a penalty, but a try from

Noah Bell, converted by Andrew Jackson meant Banbridge were in control with a 3-12 lead at half time. RS Dungannon didn't give up and clawed back an early second half try to close the scoreline to 10-12. Pressure was mounting and the Banbridge team suffered another blow when they were reduced to 14 players and RS Dungannon took the lead for the first time, with an unconverted try to make the score 15-12. It was at this point we saw the true fight from the Banbridge Academy players, as they pulled together to empty the tanks. Strong carries from key players, such as Arturs Jonuss and Noah Bell, got Banbridge on the front foot, which eventually resulted in Miles Mawson touching down for 5 points, sealing the 15-17 win for Banbridge Academy.

A well-earned half-term break meant there were no friendly matches before the next group stage match against Dalriada. Dalriada had recorded some impressive scores up to this point, so the team knew this result would be important in deciding who would make it into the knock-out stages. I don't think the supporters and coaches could take another nail-biting match so soon after the first group game, so it was a relief that the Banbridge side controlled the Dalriada match throughout. It was a mature performance from the team and an insight into what this team was capable of. Tries from Noah Bell and Sam Leslie, with a conversion by Andrew Jackson secured the 12-0 win and one more win up in Omagh would guarantee a spot in the knock-out stages of the Ulster Schools' Cup. Further convincing wins against Grosvenor GS and Belfast HS were recorded before travelling to Omagh Academy just before the Christmas break. Omagh Academy is another school that can prove to be difficult opposition, but the players were confident in their approach and the 3-28 win never looked in doubt. Andrew Jackson converted the tries from Arturs Jonuss, Ethan Houston, Jonny Howard and Ryan Hanna, with Noah Bell recording another Player of the Match performance. This meant qualification to the last 16 of the Ulster Schools' Cup was guaranteed, finishing top of the group.





The draw took place and we were drawn at home against Sullivan Upper, a seeded team with a strong Schools' Cup record. Ulster Rugby chose this fixture for a unique opportunity to play at the Kingspan Stadium. This would mean sacrificing the home draw, but the team all agreed this opportunity was too good to turn down. The excitement continued to build and it was exciting to see so many pupils, family members, friends and teachers purchase tickets to come along and support the Banbridge Academy team. Unfortunately, the weather produced some of the worst conditions imaginable at the home of Ulster Rugby, which made it very difficult for both teams to play the rugby they had planned. However, it didn't drown out the atmosphere and both teams were complimented on their level of skill and the exciting style of rugby played. A couple of missed opportunities by Banbridge Academy allowed Sullivan Upper to keep the score board ticking over in their favour and they secured their place in the quarter final of the Ulster Schools' Cup, which meant we now entered the quarter final of the Ulster Schools' Subsidiary Shield, along with some top seed teams such as, Campbell College and Methodist College.

A home draw against Enniskillen RGS was the next big challenge for the squad, which was not going to be easy after losing 38-14 earlier in the season. This turned out to be an enthralling match with two sides, who desperately wanted to keep their season alive. Noah Haughey squeezed over the line with a well worked try, which was converted by Andrew Jackson. However, Enniskillen managed to control the scoreboard for most of the match with a 7-10 lead. That 'never give up' attitude that we had seen on so many of the big occasions this season was evident again. In the end it was a well-worked combination of phase plays straight off the training field, finished off by Peter Lewis, that sealed the semi-final spot for Banbridge Academy in the last play of the match. Players, coaches and supporters were all ecstatic in their celebrations, with the 14-10 victory. A home draw against MCB was the next big challenge and one that the coaches and players were excited about.

With plenty of home support behind us, the 1st XV took an early 5-0 after a clever cross field kick from Andrew Jackson was



caught by Ethan Houston as he dived over the line. MCB responded with a try at the other end to equalise. Further pressure from the visiting side meant they took a 10-5 lead, but we didn't drop the heads and sustained pressure allowed Miles Mawson over and the conversion from Andrew Jackson gave control back to Banbridge. A break-away try for MCB meant they took control of the lead again. Yet again the team gave everything to close the gap and regain the lead, but unfortunately the try from Noah Haughey, converted by Andrew Jackson, was the final play of the game and MCB sealed their 29-19 win and a place in the final against Campbell College.

It is great to see Banbridge Academy 1st XV continuing to compete with some of the so called 'big rugby schools' and I am excited at the prospects ahead with many of this season's squad returning to play Schools' Cup rugby next season with plenty of experience under their belts.

## 1st XV Squad

Alex Andersson, Calum Little, Adam Jones, Miles Mawson, Jonny Howard, Noah Bell, Noah Haughey, Ryan Hanna (C), Max Ireland, Andrew Jackson, Ethan Houston, Arturs Jonuss, Caleb Cromie, Peter Lewis, Sam Leslie, Luke Wills, William Kennedy, Calum McMurray, Conor Patton, Gordon Porter, Jonny Reid, Matthew Christie, Nazie James Mulligan, Theo Wan, Leo O'Neill (Video).

## Year 14 Leavers

I would like to say a special thank you to our Year 14 leavers, who have been involved in rugby at Banbridge Academy for 7 years now. That has been a big commitment and one I am sure they will always appreciate and remember. We hope you continue to play and enjoy

rugby as you move on to the next stage of your journey.

**Ryan Hanna** was an outstanding Captain this year and he is to be congratulated on the example he has set both on and off the field as Head Boy. Ryan has been involved in the Ulster Rugby age grade programme throughout his time at the school, with his most recent appearances on the Ulster U19 squad.

**Noah Bell** was Vice Captain this season and was a player well respected by his teammates. Noah has represented Ulster Rugby- most recently at Ulster U19 and was part of the Ireland U18 Schools' training camps. Noah has confirmed that he will be part of the Medallion coaching team next season.

**Andrew Jackson** scored 82 points with his kicking this year and led the team attack. Andrew continues to be involved in the Ulster programme with his most recent representation at Ulster U19. It is great to have Andrew signed up to help coach the Medallion squad next season.

**Calum Little** is an exciting player in both attack and defence. His reliable throw into the lineout was a crucial skill required throughout the season to secure set-piece ball. He is to be commended for successfully balancing both MMA and rugby over the last couple of years, while also fulfilling the role of Deputy Head Boy.

**Peter Lewis** was this season's top try scorer with 10 tries to his name, including that unforgettable try to win the Subsidiary Shield quarter final. Peter also balanced two sports, often finishing his rugby on a Saturday morning before heading on to play a football match.

## RUGBY



This is a testament to his abilities and his commitment to his teammates.

**Adam Jones** proved to be an important ball carrier for the team this year, breaking tackles and off-loading the ball to give us momentum on so many occasions. Adam is a true team player, who loves the camaraderie that comes with his sports. It is great to have Adam signed up to help coach the 2nd XV next season.

**Jonny Howard** was a key lineout jumper throughout the season with an excellent understanding of the lineout calls. It became a common sight to see Jonny galloping down the field, making a break in open play, chased by the outside backs.

**Nazie James Mulligan** was a reliable outside back throughout his time at school. With natural speed and agility, he

was dangerous with the ball in hand on the edges.

**Gordon Porter** was the 2nd XV pack leader this year. Gordon was a role model to many of the younger, less experienced 2nd XV players, demonstrating his flawless commitment to the team. He could always be trusted to come off the bench for the 1st XV and put in a solid performance.

**William Kennedy** fought hard for his position on the 1st XV in a competitive front row. William was a strong ball carrier throughout the season and is to be commended for his commitment to all training sessions and matches for both the 1st XV and 2nd XV.

**Jonny Reid** was this season's 2nd XV Captain, a mobile ball carrier who always made an impact in 2nd XV matches, leading by example. Jonny pushed his

way on to the 1st XV squad and offered reliability in a number of positions in the pack.

### Thanks

A huge thank you from myself and the players to this season's sponsors. Without this financial support for playing jerseys, training tops and equipment, it would be very difficult, if not impossible to be able to offer the same opportunities and experience to the pupils at Banbridge Academy

### Sponsors:

- Little & Company
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### Thank you to the senior rugby coaching team:

- Charlie Farrell
- Robbie Ervine
- James Campbell
- Mr Leslie
- Mr O'Shaughnessy
- Daniel Duffin (S&C)

It is a huge commitment throughout the season to ensure that the players are given the best opportunities to develop and fulfil their potential, with the guidance and expertise of the coaches.

Our pitches, training facilities and changing rooms are always kept in pristine condition and this does not go unnoticed. A big thank you to all our caretakers, cleaning staff and groundsmen for your hard work throughout the year.



### TOP POINTS SCORERS

Player	Player Tries	Conversions	Player Points
Andrew Jackson	-	41	82
Peter Lewis	10	4	58
Arturs Jonuss	7	-	35
Miles Mawson	5	4	33
Sam Leslie	6	-	30
Ryan Hanna	6	-	30
Noah Bell	6	-	30
Adam Jones	4	-	20



# Rugby: 2nd XV

Conor Patton and Luke Wills



The 2024/2025 2nd XV season was full of many highs and lows.

The season got off to a rocky start, with their first match being a decisive loss of 54-19 to Portadown College. Thankfully, this did not detour the boys as they followed it up with an impressive 29-5 win over Larne Grammar, with tries coming from forwards Luke Wills and Conor Patton, as well as backs Syd Moore and Theo Wan. Following a number of injuries, both to the 2nd XV and 1st XV, the team went on to compete against a strong lineup of Omagh Academy, Enniskillen RGS and Down High. Given the results of later matches in the season, injuries were a big factor in these results, as players were coming in and out of the squad throughout this period. Although unable to pull their cold streak around, the squad took the fight to RS Dungannon, losing the match narrowly 38-36.

Arguably the highlight of the season came following this match as the 2nd XV drew Limivady Grammar in the 2nd XV Cup. When it looked as though the match would end in disappointment, as Limivady GS had converted a penalty kick to take the lead early on, the lads fought back and, in the last minute of the game, second row Conor Patton got the ball over the line to clinch the 5-3 victory over Limivady GS and secure their place in round 2. Ultimately, the 2nd XV run in the Cup was short, as

they would lose to a strong Ballyclare High School side, which meant they would now enter into the 2nd XV Trophy competition.

The team drew local rivals Dromore High School in the quarter finals and narrowly lost out 33-3. Despite losing, the team more than turned up for the match, with tries from Conor Patton, Luke Wills, Josiah Rogers and captain Jonny Reid giving Dromore a hard fought match, that ultimately came down to last minute try for Dromore. Despite being knocked out of the trophy, the squad were able to end their season on a high note, with the final match being a decisive 35-17 win in a rematch against Down High. This performance truly shows the growth and determination of the team as, despite having nothing to play for, they went and avenged their earlier loss in order to end the season on a positive note.

It was great to see the amount of players being fielded to play in the 2nd XV this season, as well as seeing some of our players being called up to represent the 1st XV in their impressive runs in both the Schools' Cup and the Subsidiary Shield. It's a testament to the hard work of the players to push the 1st XV squad for positions, and likewise to the players in the 3rd XV pushing for positions in the 2nd XV.

At the end of season awards dinner, the

winners included:

**Captain** - Jonny Reid

**Most Improved** - Syd Moore

**Player of the Year** - Luke Wills

The squad would like to give particular thanks to our senior coaches Mr. McClintock, Charlie Farrell, Robbie Ervine, Mr Leslie and Mr O'Shaughnessy for all the hard work they put in throughout the season. With many players coming up from the Medallion Squad, along with a number of players from the squad returning next season, Banbridge Academy senior rugby looks to be as promising as ever.



# Rugby: 3rd XV

For the second year in a row, we were able to field a 3rd XV rugby team. Despite only playing a few games this season, the 3rd XV presented a great opportunity for players to have fun and experience more playing time. The season started out with a friendly fixture against Portadown College. The game finished 17-12 in favour of Banbridge, after a gritty performance with tries from Conor Comiskey, Luke Wills and Matthew Christie. Moving on to the 3rd XV Schools' Cup, the team played Methody 5th XV which finished in a disappointing 45-15 loss- with tries scored by Sam Williamson and Adam Boggs. There was a long break before the next game for the team in the 3rd XV Trophy, with MCB 5th XV drawn to visit Banbridge Academy for a rematch. With doubts before the game if a team could even be fielded for the match the next day and with players playing out of position, the team stepped up and managed a very impressive 47-12 victory over the same team that they had been dismantled by earlier in the year. Tries were scored by Andrew Robertson, Jack Lewis, Sam Williamson, Matthew Christie and a hat-trick of tries for Josiah Rogers. Unfortunately, that would be the last win for the 3rd XV as they would be beaten



by a very strong Ballymena Academy team in the next round of the trophy.

It was great to have a 3rd XV team again this year, which allowed players who were fighting for spots on the 2nd XV to perform and keep getting game time.

At the end of season award ceremony, Matthew Christie was awarded player of the year and Jack Lewis was awarded most improved player.



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## RUGBY

# Rugby: Medallion

## Mr O'Shaughnessy

The Banbridge Academy Medallion XV started the 2024/25 season hoping to achieve a remarkable feat by winning an Ulster Branch Cup for the 4th year in a row, but unfortunately came up just short. Having won the Bowl in 2021/22 and the Trophy back-to-back in 2022/23 and 2023/24, they came agonisingly close once again - only to lose the Trophy final to a determined Belfast HS side.

The season started well with an encouraging 12-12 draw away to Portadown College, which was followed up by an excellent 35-5 home victory against RS Armagh. The squad then struggled to maintain their good start with 5 consecutive defeats against Larne GS (40-24), Omagh Academy (31-14), Enniskillen RGS (14-45), Down HS (14-21) and RS Dungannon (5-34). With the 1st round of the Medallion Shield on the horizon, head coach Jemma Farrell knew that it was crucial to get back to winning ways, and the team duly obliged. Two excellent wins against Dalriada (24-17) and Belfast HS (31-33) got the squad back on track.

The Academy side then unfortunately bowed out of the main Medallion Shield competition, losing 24-8 to a very strong Omagh Academy team. Excellent wins in the Trophy against Portadown College (26-5) and Bangor Academy (36-7) set up a repeat of last year's final against Belfast HS. The final was once again played at Friends' School, Lisburn and it was the Belfast side who came out on top 31-7, in a tighter game than the

scoreline would suggest. The coaching team, led superbly by Jemma Farrell and assisted by Brian O'Shaughnessy and Charlie Farrell, were understandably disappointed but extremely proud of the players and the progress they have made this season. It is hoped that many of the players will now make the step up to senior rugby next season and compete for places in an already competitive senior squad.

The squad would like to pay particular thanks to coaches Jemma Farrell and Charlie Farrell for all their hard work throughout the season. Special thanks to Gareth McClintock for all his help and assistance too.

### End of Season Awards:

**Captain:** Dawson Knox

**Most Improved Player:** Vaughn Hamilton

**Player of the Year:** Daniel Byrne

### Representative Honours with Ulster

**Rugby:** Daniel Byrne, Dawson Knox and Noah Thompson

### Squad:

Ross Niblock, Carter Kenny, Jay Priestley, Rylee Dixon, Jake Martin, Charlie Geoghegan, Noah Thompson, Conor McNamee, James McConville, Daniel Byrne, Patrick Porter, Dawson Knox (C), Emre Baltacioglu, Oscar Niblock, Jesse McCauley, Alex Hutchinson, Vaughn Hamilton, Patrick Hart, James Donald, Hugo Wilson Jiminez, Isaac McCrum (U14), Daniel McClean, Matthew Macauley, Stephen Comiskey, Ethan Harris, James Kerr (U14), Finlay Mathers (U14), Rueben Jones (U14), Zach Watson (U14)

Played	14
Won	5
Draw	1
Lost	8
Points For	266
Points Against	341
Points Difference	-75

	Try	Conversion	Penalty	Total Points
Daniel Byrne	5	26	1	78
Dawson Knox	14	3		76
Conor McNamee	7			35
Charlie Geoghegan	5	1		27
Rylee Dixon	2			10
James McConville	2			10
Emre Baltacioglu	2			10
Patrick Porter	2			10
Jay Priestley	1			5
Stephen Comiskey	1			5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>266</b>





# Rugby: U14

**Zach Watson (Captain)**

We started off the season by travelling to Royal School, Armagh on a Thursday afternoon, where we lost 47-5. The following Saturday we then played Larne GS and Wellington College, where we picked up our first win, beating Wellington 26-0. We went on to win 5 more matches against Dalriada, Lurgan Junior HS, Killicomaine Junior HS, Clounagh and Wallace HS B team. We finished the season by playing in a Sevens tournament hosted by Coleraine GS, where we won 2 matches against Dalriada and Foyle College, losing narrowly to Sullivan US, Coleraine GS and Cambridge House.

## Awards Night

At the awards dinner Finlay Mathers won Player of the Season and Rueben Jones won the Most Improved Player award. Finlay Mathers also trained and played for Ulster Rugby Southern Schools' squad.



## Coaches

Thank you to Mr Reaney, Mr Carville and Mr McClintock for coaching us this season after school on Monday and Thursday

afternoons and also on Saturday mornings. It has been much appreciated by the whole team, who thoroughly enjoyed our rugby this season.



[katriona.com](http://katriona.com)



# Rugby: U13

Mr Leslie

The U13 team had an enjoyable and successful season, their first at 15-a-side rugby, and they showed progression and talent throughout.

Numbers at early season training were very good and when the first game rolled around, against RS Armagh, we were able to put out both A and B teams. The A team had a good first 15-a-side win, with lots of players playing new positions and the boys adapting well to the full size pitch. The B team found the transition a little trickier, but still managed to produce some great attacking rugby.

This was the start of a good run of winning rugby with victories of Wellington College, Larne Grammar, Omagh Academy and Clounagh JHS (and a B Team win over Friends' School) all showing what great attacking rugby this team is capable of playing.

A few injuries meant the next run of games were more tricky. Very narrow losses to Enniskillen RGS, Killicomaine JH, RS Dungannon and Dalriada School showed the boys that there was still much work to be done on the training field before we would be the finished article.

We righted the ship with a run of 6 wins in a row over Belfast High, Friends' School, Grosvenor Grammar, Regent House, RS Dungannon and Dromore High before running into a juggernaut in a very useful Wallace High side. We then had the return fixture v Armagh and unfortunately lost out by a single score. The season was to end on a high, however, at the Grosvenor Grammar tournament. First up we won three of our four group games and qualified for the semi-finals, where we unfortunately lost out to hosts Grosvenor. It was a fantastic tournament and the players really enjoyed the experience.

Our final game of the season was a 29-7 win over Dromore in the Masters Shield, where our first 15 minutes were the very best rugby we had played all season, moving the ball from wing to wing and scoring some brilliant tries.



At the End of Season Awards Dinner the following players won prizes:

**Captain:** Callum Marshall

**Player of the Year:** Harry Major

**Most Improved:** Joshua Ward.

## Our Squadlist:

**Captain:** Callum Marshall, Vice-captains: Olly Jardine and Harry Major, Players: Joshua Barr, Oliver Cairns, Sam McClimmonds, Toby Mathers, Ethan Grimshaw, Jacob Haughey, Jacob Hamill, Sam Campbell, Elliot Wright, Finlay Copeland, Edmund Hilary, Owen Kirkpatrick, Ryan Crimmins, Jacob Hetherington, Alex Bond, Robbie Forsythe, Samuel Nelson, Junior Szczeszek, Eamon O'Duil, Josh Ward, Dillon McGrath, Henry Kirkland and Daniel Dawson.

## Playing record and points scorers

Played 18 (+ 1 Tournament), Won 12, Lost 6, Points for 576, Points against 277.

input into sessions and his overall help with the team throughout the year.

The U13 really did enjoy their season and they have definitely finished the year in a good place ready to start their U14 season next year. Well done to all and I look forward to seeing how you progress over the years ahead.

	Tries	Con	Points
Jacob Hamill	27		135
Olly Jardine	2	50	110
Junior Szczeszek	18		90
Samuel Nelson	11	2	59
Harry Major	11		55
Robbie Forsythe	4	1	22
Jacob Haughey	4		20
Jacob Hetherington	4		20
Josh Ward	3		15
Ethan Grimshaw	2		10
Dillon McGrath	2		10
Finlay Copeland	1		5
Joshua Barr	1		5
Sam McClimmonds	1		5
Edmund Hilary	1		5
Callum Marshall	1		5
Henry Kirkland	1		5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>576</b>

My thanks, and that of the team, must go to our wonderful support coaches Scott Jardine and Brian Livingstone. Both men never missed a training session or match and the team benefited massively from their rugby knowledge and also their passion and enthusiasm. They were truly a vital part of the development and success of this young side. (Thanks also to Scott for carrying the burden of refereeing!) Finally thank you to Head of Rugby Mr McClintock for his valuable



# Rugby: U12

Mr Leslie



The under 12 A and B teams had a very successful first season as Banbridge Academy players, winning the majority of their games and playing some excellent rugby along the way.

The first games of the year were against Friends' School in November, after two months of intense training to get everyone up to speed and ready to play matches. Both games were excellent matches, with the Academy winning both by good margins in the end. All players involved showed enough to suggest that these teams could be very good teams and go from strength to strength this season.

At a multi team blitz against Royal School, Dungannon and Royal School, Armagh, the Academy came out on top winning both matches with Bryce Anderson being awarded player of the tournament as voted by the opposition team coaches. This was followed up by a very competitive match against local rivals Dromore HS, where the boys came out narrowly ahead in a pulsating match of attacking rugby from both teams.

Following a strong start to their year, a much tougher challenge awaited after the break for examinations in early January, where the A and B teams were defeated by very strong Wallace HS teams – although it is worthy of note that only the C team were victorious against their Wallace counterparts. The learning and extra training following this match ensured the boys played much

more as a team in the blitz between Enniskillen Royal Grammar and Royal School Armagh – A strong defensive effort meant that only one try separated them from ERGS followed up by a comprehensive win over RSA on a very heavy pitch.

The final matches of the season were at the annual Down High School tournament. The team qualified from the group stages after defeating Down High School and then followed up with a comprehensive win over Friends' School, Lisburn in the semi-final before finally 'running out of steam' in a closely contested final, where they narrowly lost to a good Regent team in the Bowl Competition.

It was a great first season of rugby for this talented and hard-working group of young men and they now look forward to U13 rugby next season, when they get to play 15-a-side and full pitch.

At the End of Season Awards Dinner trophies were awarded to several players for talent and work rate.

In the A team, the four players of the year were: James Handley, Harry McKinley, Bryce Anderson and Macintyre Thompson.

The B team players of the year were Tom McDonald and Carter McCormick-Knight.

All the players would like to thank their coaches Mr Erskine and Mr Livingstone for all of their help on Monday afternoons and at matches, along with Mr O'Shaughnessy, Mr Carville 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.





# Annual Rugby Awards



Banbridge Academy Rugby Club celebrated the end of the 2024-25 season together at the Belmont House Hotel on Thursday 27th March. It was fantastic to have 130 players across all Year groups and 12 coaches attend the event to celebrate a successful and enjoyable season. The teaching staff and external coaches, who dedicate their time to coaching the pupils, were thanked for their expertise and commitment to developing all players across the different Year groups. Banbridge Academy rugby could not function at the level it does without the financial support and sponsorship from local businesses. Thank you to the following companies for their support in the 2024-25 season:

- Little & Company
- Knockmore Pharmacy
- Toy Master
- IMEX
- JJP Haulage

## Ulster and Ireland Representative Honours:

**Andrew Jackson** - Ulster & Ireland Clubs & Schools U18

**Noah Bell** - Ulster Schools U18

**Ryan Hanna** - Ulster U19

**Noah Haughey** - Ulster Clubs & Schools U18

**Fynn Niblock** - Ulster Schools U17

**Sam Leslie** - Ulster Schools U16

## Regional Development Training Squads:

Noah Thompson, Finlay Mathers, Ross Niblock, Dawson Knox and Daniel Byrne.

## Individual Awards:

## U12 'A' XV

**Player of Year:** James Handley  
Harry McKinley  
Bryce Anderson  
Macintyre Thompson

## U12 'B' XV

**Player of Year:** Tom McDonald  
Carter McCormick  
Knight

## U13 'A' XV

**Captain:** Callum Marshall  
**Player of Year:** Harry Major  
**Most Improved:** Joshua Ward

## U14 'A' XV

**Captain:** Zach Watson  
**Player of Year:** Finlay Mathers  
**Most Improved:** Reuben Jones

## Medallion XV

**Captain:** Dawson Knox  
**Player of Year:** Daniel Byrne  
**Most Improved:** Vaughn Hamilton



**1st XV Top Try Scorer: Peter Lewis**



**U12 Player Award: MacIntyre Thompson**



**Medallion Player of the Year: Daniel Byrne**

## RUGBY



**U13 Player of the Year: Harry Major**



**Team of the Year: U13XV**

### 3rd XV

**Captain:** Henry Niblock  
**Player of Year:** Matthew Christie  
**Most Improved:** Jack Lewis

### 2nd XV

**Captain:** Jonathan Reid  
**Player of Year:** Luke Wills  
**Most Improved:** Syd Moore

### 1st XV

**Captain:** Ryan Hanna  
**Top Try Scorer:** Peter Lewis (10 tries)  
**Overall Player of the Year:** Andrew Jackson  
**Yr 14 Player of the Year:** Andrew Jackson  
**Yr 13 Player of the Year:** Caleb Cromie  
**Yr 12 Player of the Year:** Sam Leslie

**Most Improved:** Conor Patton  
**Clubman:** William Kennedy

### Team of the year U13 XV

A special presentation was made to Mr Brian Leslie to thank him for his 26 years leading rugby in Banbridge Academy, before handing over to Mr Gareth McClintock, who took on the position as Head of Rugby at the start of the 2024-25 season. Banbridge Academy are grateful to Mr Leslie for his commitment over the years, developing and growing rugby within the school. The pupils will continue to benefit from Mr Leslie's expertise as he coaches throughout the different year groups.



**Thank you for your service Mr Leslie**



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# Girls' Hockey: 1st XI



The season commenced with the opportunity to take part in a pre-season tournament hosted by Scoil Mhuire, where the girls secured a series of promising results: 5-0, 1-1, 1-1, 6-0 - allowing them to build a good foundation for the season ahead.

The first Stevenson's Cup fixture came shortly after and was against Ballymena Academy, which was a very evenly matched game against a physical side. Unfortunately in spite of many opportunities, Bann were unable to execute any goals and the final score ended 0-0. The second Stevenson's Cup fixture against Portadown College was an excellent display of determination and talent across the entire team. With a very strong start, putting the opponents under pressure from the very first whistle, many counter attacks were created, yet Bann unfortunately conceded 2 goals in the second half of the game, leading to a disappointing outcome. The potential that had been evident in this game, motivated the team to train hard for the upcoming Stevenson's Cup fixtures- which would be vital to progress further in the competition.

As the girls' confidence grew as a team, their performance undoubtedly improved and this was displayed in their 7-2 win over Regent House, which saw Bann retain possession for the majority of the game and execute many

chances. In addition, the girls defeated Ballyclare High School in their final Stevenson's Cup group fixture, resulting in 2-0 and allowing them to progress to the quarterfinals against Royal School, Armagh.

Within the first minute of the game, RSA made a threatening counter attack and scored. Despite the hard fight of the girls, it was difficult for the girls to settle into Bann's natural style of play. The reigning Schools' Cup winners were extremely clinical in their penalty scores and were fiercely attacking in their press. The end score was 6-1, despite the scoreline and Bann came away with many positives and things to work on for their upcoming Schools' Cup campaign, which looked to be very promising. Due to Bann's strong performance

in previous competitions, they had a bye until the third round of Belfast Telegraph's Schools' Cup.

Preparation started sharply to set the girls up well for their game against Omagh Academy. A home game to kick off their Cup campaign saw the girls motivated, positive and focused in their warm up at Havelock Park. Bann used the first quarter to settle into the game and allow their confidence to grow, as they progressed into the second quarter the girls began to connect passes, creating opportunities to score! The game showed the patience of the team, as they fought against a physical Omagh side and the game ended in a convincing 7-0 win. With their heads held high, Bann progressed into the quarterfinals against Wallace High School, who they had drawn the week before.

Another home fixture meant that Bann had the support and encouragement of their crowds in a competitive and exciting game. With every belief in each other, the girls played their best hockey of the season so far and persevered throughout the entirety of the game, displaying teamwork and dedication. Despite the strong performance of the girls, they were unable to put any past a talented Wallace goalkeeper. The final whistle blew at 0-0, which meant the game progressed to penalty run ins. The pressure of the game escalated, but the mental strength and resilience of Bann's run in takers and goalkeeper, Jasmine Magowan Balfour, saw them win on





## GIRLS' HOCKEY

run ins and allow them to compete for a place in the final of Schools' Cup the following week.

Yet again, Bann faced local rivals Portadown College at Lisnagarvey Hockey Club for this special occasion. Supporters arrived, ribbons were in and the warm up was well underway. Despite having such a young team, the girls were mentally prepared for the occasion and spirits were high. The first quarter saw the ball transferred from one end of the pitch to the other quickly, with both teams having opportunities but none being successful. As the game progressed, Portadown College became more aggressive and had created many threatening attacks from which they succeeded to score. Bann played their hearts out and left everything on the pitch. The girls matched the physicality of an experienced Portadown side, and each player is a credit to themselves and to the team. Unfortunately after a tough match, Portadown managed to put 2 more goals past our defence in the last quarter of the game, ending the game at 3-1.

The season, overall, was a success which saw a young team thrive in both major competitions; the team developed as the season progressed and showcased talent for the seasons ahead!





# Girls' Hockey: 2nd XI

The season began with a tough fixture against a well-drilled Armagh side. Despite a valiant effort from the girls, the game ended in a 4-0 result. While the score was disappointing, it became a valuable learning experience that helped shape the team's focus and resilience.

With the steady guidance of our brilliant coaches, Richard Glover and Miss Anderson, the team began to find its rhythm. Their encouragement, tactical insight, and constant support played a key role in building the team's confidence and skillset.

We had many victorious matches with games like 2-0 over Friends', with wonderful goals from Mya and Lucy; a 5-2 win over Strathearn, with 4 goals

from Ciara and 1 from April; and a 1-0 win over Wallace, with a goal from Kizzy.

This growth was clearly on display in our well-earned 2-0 victory over Regent, a match where the girls played with energy, cohesion, and belief. It was a defining moment that lifted spirits and reminded everyone of what this team is capable of when they play as one.

The highlight of the season came with our exciting McDowell Cup run, where the team fought their way to the quarter-finals in February. Our first Cup match was away to Strabane and we won 6-0- with beautiful goals from Ciara, Kirsty, Martha and Evie! In a closely contested match, we narrowly

lost 2-1 to Reaney Endowed in what was a high-intensity, end-to-end game. Though the result didn't go our way, the performance was full of heart and determination, and one that has stuck out in my mind.

I believe a special shout-out should go out to our young players, who have shown incredible promise throughout the season. With so much talent already on display, there's no doubt that the future of these girls is exceptionally bright.

Thanks to Richard, Miss Anderson and the entire team for your hard work, dedication, and leadership. I wish you the best of luck on the upcoming seasons and the girls' time in school hockey.





# Girls' Hockey: 3rd XI



The 3rd XI came back to training after a long summer break, starting the season off with a string of friendly matches in which there were wins, draws and losses. The 3XI hockey team were excited to be back to training and playing with high hopes for the season ahead.

Unfortunately, in November the first Cup game of the season was played at Havelock Park against Belfast Royal Academy and Banbridge went 1-0 down

due to conceding a short corner within the first half. After regrouping at half time, the team went out with newfound determination to not fall at the first hurdle and with some excellent hockey, the ball found the back of the net to even the score to 1-1, where it remained until the final whistle. Resultantly, the game was dragged to run ins to decide who progressed.

Both goal keepers made some excellent

saves and run-in takers scored some excellent goals, but unfortunately Banbridge succumbed to the pressure first and lost the shootout by one. Positively, the team took this disappointment and used it to fuel their push towards winning the Gibson Plate. They were led by their Co-Captains, Cara Purdy and Lucy Friar, who spurred the remainder of the upper sixth players on to win some silverware in their final year at Banbridge Academy.

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# "The Mighty 4s"



The Banbridge Academy Girls' 4th XI hockey team enjoyed a season full of growth, camaraderie, and competitive spirit during the 2024–2025 school year. The campaign began with back-to-back 1–1 draws, against Wallace on 21st September with Lois on target, and against Strathearn on 28th September, Lois again providing the goal. The team's first victory came on 5th October in a confident 2–0 win over Regent, with Zoe G and Shruti finding the net. Momentum built further on 12th October as Sophia struck the decisive goal in a narrow 1–0 win against Lagan College, followed a week later by a 2–1 victory over Friends, thanks to goals from Rebecca and Maddison.

After a short break, the 4th XI resumed in fine form, overcoming Wellington 2–1 on 30th November with a brace from Sophie. December brought a tough return fixture against Friends', where despite a battling display, the team fell to a narrow 2–1 defeat. The highlight of the new year came on 11th January, when the girls produced a dominant 8–1 win over Down High in the 4th XI Cup, showcasing their attacking strength. The season concluded on 1st March with a thrilling 2–2 draw against BRA, with Sophia and Kathy scoring to secure a share of the spoils.

Across the season, Sophie finished as the team's top goal scorer, underlining her impact in key fixtures. The team's consistency and determination were

further rewarded as they proudly shared the Mid Ulster League title with Royal School Armagh, a fitting achievement to cap off their campaign.

Throughout the season, the squad trained with commitment and displayed resilience, teamwork, and enthusiasm in every game. Their efforts not only brought results on the pitch but also strengthened the squad as a vital platform for developing future talent.

At the End-Of-Season Awards, Sophie Little was named Players' Player of the Year for her outstanding contributions, while Rebecca McNulty received the Most Improved Player award in recognition of her progress. With strong foundations built on friendship, hard work, and determination, the 4th XI look forward to carrying their success and spirit into future seasons.





# Girls' Hockey: 5th XI

This season, due to the extent of senior hockey members wanting to play, there has been an additional team created- the 5th XI. This team had such a fun and enjoyable year and mostly consisted of Year 11 pupils, who really enjoyed still being able to play with many of the same girls that they had played with throughout junior school. Training was on a Thursday after school, under the devoted guidance of Mrs Derby and Miss McCullough.

We started preseason during mid-August and we got off to a winning start in our first two matches, against Armagh Royal and Wallace. Our next match was against Strathearn; this was a tight match (as expected) and ended in a 1-1 draw. We then had three consecutive wins against Regent, Lagan and Friends'. Playing Friends' is always a tough fight, however with our strong back four and our midfield feeding the ball through to



the forwards, we were able to grasp a win! Our final two matches were played against Wallace and Friends' once again, which finished in a draw and then a win.

The 5th XI can reflect positively on our year, using our past experiences and skills to help us progress in our hockey careers both at Banbridge Academy and beyond.

## International & National Representation



### International & National Representatives

Back Row: M Murphy (Ulster Hockey), J Osborne (Ireland Hockey), S Leslie (Ulster Rugby), A Jackson (Ireland Rugby), D Golbey (Ireland Hockey), A McKee (Ireland Hockey), F Niblock (Ulster Rugby), N Bell (Ulster Rugby), R Hanna (Ulster Rugby), N Haughey (Ulster Rugby)  
 Middle Row: Mr R S McLoughlin OBE, A Eadie (Ulster Rugby), A Somerville (Ulster Hockey), T Kennedy (Ulster Swimming), C McGrath (Down Gaelic Football), A Trainor (Northern Ireland Netball), M Nicholson (Ireland Hockey), C Taylor (Ireland Hockey), D McKee (Ireland Hockey), M Nicholl (Engsport Northern Ireland Netball), M Hanna (Northern Cricket Union), C Comiskey (Down Gaelic Football), H Gough (Northern Ireland Football), A Matthews (Ulster Cycling), Mr S Jess  
 Front Row: S Black (Ulster Swimming), S Burns-Atkin (Ulster Swimming), K Leslie (Ireland Hockey), S Tate (Ireland Hockey), R Johnston (Ireland Hockey), A Harrison (Ireland Cricket), E Stewart (Northern Ireland Tetrathlon), W Megaw (Northern Ireland Football), C Rutten (Ulster Table Tennis)



# Girls' Hockey: U14a

The Under 14a team had a fun and exciting season. The girls had many enjoyable matches and training sessions, under the great coaching of Mark Barlow and Julie Sally.

The girls made it to the final of the Stevenson Cup, were joint winners in the Mid Ulster League and made it to the quarter finals of the Ulster Junior Cup.

The girls began their season with a great run in the Stevenson Cup group stages:  
 Ballymena Academy: 7-0 win  
 Killicomaine Junior High School: 3-1 win  
 Regent House: 6-0 win  
 Ballyclare High School: 1-0 win.

These results meant our girls finished first in their group and put them through to the quarterfinals. In the quarterfinal Banbridge Academy came up against a strong Royal School, Armagh side and faced a very competitive game. Banbridge Academy managed to progress to the semis by the slender margin of a 1-0 victory.

Heading into the semi-finals the girls knew it was going to be a tough game against a powerful Victoria College team and that they needed to give it their all. Victoria took the lead, but the Academy team did not give up and equalised with a goal by Maisie Nicholl.

The game ended 1-1 and headed into the dreaded run-ins. The girls kept their cool and went into the run-ins with determination, winning 2-0- with Mollie Tumilty and Ellie Lockhart scoring. However, the hero of the day was undoubtedly Mollie Murray, who was outstanding in nets and saved all of the opposition's run-ins. After several postponements due to the weather, the final of the Stevenson Cup was played on 5th December. The girls were motivated and ready to give it their best. Unfortunately, despite going toe-to-toe with a strong Rainey Endowed side, they could not find the net and a single Rainey goal secured the Cup for them.

Even though the Stevenson Cup final did not go the Academy's way, they did not let their heads drop and were ready to put in a strong fight to retain the Ulster Junior Cup. The Junior Cup journey began with a match against Friends' School, Lisburn-which was closely contested and ended with Banbridge Academy being victorious, by a 1-0 margin. Next the girls faced Glenlola Collegiate and put in an excellent shift

winning 4-0. Killicomaine Junior High School were the quarterfinal opposition. The game was scrappy and finished 1-1, with a goal for Olivia McCracken sending the team through to run-ins. However, a win was not to be- with Killicomaine winning 2-1.

The U14s also played many other games outside of the Stevenson Cup and Junior Cup: they played Friends', Strathearn, Wallace, Kilkeel, Dromore, Armagh, BRA and lastly Lurgan Junior High School.

The team also had many players involved with the Ulster Talent Development Programme, including Ellie Lockhart and Maisie Nicholl. Mollie Tumilty was selected for the Ulster U16 panel for next season. Ruby Cousins and Annie Emerson also represented Ulster U13 in Beeston, in July.

The girls had an amazing season and would like to thank everyone who supported them every step of the way. We hope hockey was as fun for you as it was for all of the girls who played.

## Summary of the season:

Played	Won	Drew	Lost	Goals for	Goal against
26	20	2	4	50	10



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# Girls' Hockey: U14b

Co-Captains Poppy Smyth and Edie Scott

The U14bs had another successful season, coached by Dr. Dobson.

Playing matches together on a Saturday morning, regardless of the weather, was always sure to be a highlight of the week. We began our first match of the season enthusiastic and ready, but unfortunately came away with a 0-0 draw and an unfortunate 1-0 loss. However, we kept our heads up and stayed optimistic and soon won 3-0 against Killicomaine, with Poppy Smyth, Mary Sammons and Rachel McMurray all scoring hard-earned goals.

We put up a strong fight at the Mid-Ulster Blitz in Dungannon, conceding no goals and beating Markethill and Dungannon, which lead us to the final against Newtownhamilton. During the final we ended up having to replay the match after a 0-0 draw. Eventually, Poppy Smyth managed to score a goal in the final minutes to secure the silverware for us.

Throughout the season we continued to train hard every Tuesday, no matter the weather, with a mix of fitness, skills and tactics. We applied our skills to matches where we battled hard and came away with a number of successful wins. Such



as on the 27th of January, where we played our best and proudly came away with a 5-0 win against Tandragee.

Overall we had an amazing season and made so many new friends and memories, as well as learning and improving our hockey skills under Dr Dobson's expert guidance. In total we finished the season with 19 wins, 14 draws and only 5 losses and we were delighted to win the Mid-Ulster Blitz.

Thank you so much to Dr. Dobson for an

unforgettable season and to the rest of the hockey coaches and staff for their dedication throughout the incredible year.





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# Girls' Hockey: U13a

The U13a team have secured many accomplishments over the course of this season. We started off with a match against Friends', with a final score of 0-0. We then lost to Ballymena 0-1, but following that match we trained hard and won against KJHS 2-0, Regent 2-0, Ballyclare 2-0, Wallace and Kilkeel 6-0. The U13a team was also very successful in the Mid-Ulster League, having won all of our matches in the run-up to our final match against Killicomaine Junior High. This was a really big achievement, which would place us as winners of the Mid-Ulster League, if we won the match. To our delight, we were indeed successful and emerged victorious in securing this accolade.

This year, along with all the wins and losses, the team has consistently given their best at training and in matches. We have had so much fun playing hockey this season and look forward to both the



challenges and fun that awaits us in the U14 team.

Thank you to all our coaches who made

this memorable season possible and thank you to all the amazing teammates who brought the fun, laughter and great hockey to training and matches!

# Girls' Hockey: U13b

The U13b hockey team had an outstanding season, showcasing determination, skill and team spirit throughout the year. Competing in the Mid-Ulster League, the team remained unbeaten, with their only draw being a tightly contested 0-0 match against Markethill High School. Despite the pressure that result could have brought, the girls stayed focused and continued to perform brilliantly, ultimately finishing top of the League.

In addition to their League success, the team played numerous friendly matches most weekends, facing strong opposition from across the province. Out of all their matches this season, the team only suffered three narrow defeats—to Strathearn (2-3), Regent Grammar A Team (0-2), and Methodist College (0-1). However, they bounced back strongly, securing victories over schools such as Wallace High School, Belfast Royal Academy, Wellington College, and Ballyclare High School.



Over the course of the season, the team scored a remarkable 33 goals, while only conceding 6—a testament to both their attacking flair and defensive resilience. The team was coached by Ruby Wilson and Emma Cousins. We are all grateful for their commitment to the team and

guidance they have given us.

It's been a fantastic season, and every player gave their all while enjoying every moment on the pitch. We're already looking forward to building on this year's success in the seasons to come!

# Girls' Hockey: U12a - What a Season!

This year has been amazing for our U12a hockey team! We won the Mid Ulster League and went unbeaten all season - and the best part? We didn't let in a single goal! Everyone played so well, and we worked together like a real team.

One of the best memories was our school trip to Oxford. Twenty of us played in a tournament - and guess what? We won that too! It was so much fun and we all had a great time on and off the pitch.

Thank you to all the coaches, parents, and supporters who helped us this year. We couldn't have done it without you!

And most of all - congratulations to all the girls on the team! You've been amazing. The future is looking super bright!



# Girls' Hockey: U12b

The U12b season was brilliant, from our first practice in September to our last game in March, it was full of fun, teamwork, and a lot of running (seriously, so much running!) At the beginning of the season, most of us were still figuring out how to pass straight and not trip over our sticks. But by the end, we were making excellent

passes, scoring goals, and even doing cool team cheers before games.

One of the best parts was the weekend tournament in Oxford. We played four matches in two days, and even though we were super tired, we made it to the semifinals! It was an unforgettable trip that gave us the chance to compete

against top-level teams and grow even closer as a squad.

This year marked the beginning of our school hockey journey. We developed new skills, supported each other and laughed a lot. We cannot wait for next season as this season made us love hockey even more.



# End of Season Awards





# Boys' Hockey: 1st XI

Ben Thompson (Captain)



## Season Review

The 2024-2025 season marked a new chapter for the Boys' 1st XI as a largely fresh group of players stepped into the squad, many making their full 1st XI debuts. Despite some inexperience, we approached the season with incredible determination, starting our preseason in July with intensive training that laid a strong foundation. The hard work paid off immediately, as the team hit the ground running in our early fixtures.

## McCullough Cup Group Stages

Our superb run of form began in the McCullough Cup, where we dominated the group stage, going unbeaten and winning all of our games against Bangor, Campbell, Friends', RBAI, Wallace, Cookstown and Sullivan. This success filled us with confidence heading into the All-Ireland Schoolboys' Championship in Dublin.

## All-Ireland Schools' Championship

In the All-Irelands, we were drawn against Sandford Park (Dublin), Newtown School (Munster champions), and St Andrew's (Dublin). After strong wins against Sandford and Newtown, and a hard-fought 2-2 draw against St Andrew's, we progressed to the semi-finals on goal difference.

Facing Wesley College, the host school and tournament favourites, on their home pitch was a daunting task. Wesley dominated early possession and applied relentless pressure. However, we struck first with a counterattack finished by Adam McKee as he was played one-on-one with the Wesley keeper. In the second half, another breakaway saw Charlie Taylor mirroring our first goal and he slotted home our second. Our back four of Ben Thompson, Max Nicholson, Harry Taylor and Theo Milligan stood resolute, while goalkeeper Denver

Golbey pulled off countless crucial saves. Although Wesley pulled one back, it proved to be a consolation goal.

The final saw us meet local rivals, Friends' School Lisburn. It was a tense battle, with both teams feeling the fatigue of five matches in three days. With fresher legs from rotating all 18 squad members through every game, we earned several short corners but couldn't convert due to some excellent goalkeeping. It was again Adam McKee who found the net in the second half, scoring his seventh of the tournament and securing the win. We were crowned 2024 All-Ireland Schoolboys' Champions, a remarkable achievement for a young and determined squad.

## McCullough Cup Semi-Final

After the All-Irelands, weather disruption hindered our momentum. This proved costly in the McCullough Cup semi-





## BOYS' HOCKEY

final against RBAI at Shaw's Bridge. In a tight and cagey contest, RBAI got the upper hand, winning 2-0, ending our unbeaten streak and our campaign in the competition.

### Burney Cup

Following the Christmas break, we regrouped with renewed focus for the Burney Cup. Some excellent preparation matches against Wallace and RBAI set us up well. After a bye in the first round, we faced Friends' in the quarter-final. Despite having beaten them twice, we knew their quality, but an explosive second quarter saw us net three goals in quick succession. With Josh Osborne and Josh Baird controlling the midfield throughout the game, we held out for a deserved win.

In the semi-final, we faced a well-drilled Campbell College side who set up extremely deep and were tough to break down. Adam McKee scored from a reverse shot, but Campbell equalised via a rare breakaway penalty corner. Despite our dominance and multiple chances, including numerous penalty corners, the match went to a shoot-out. Campbell edged it, bringing a premature end to our Cup run.

### Conclusion

Though the season ended earlier than we had hoped, it was an exceptional year for a team in transition. With over half the squad playing their first full 1st XI season, we reached two semi-finals and achieved the pinnacle of schoolboy hockey by winning the All-Ireland Championship. The spirit, hard work, and togetherness shown by this group of boys was truly special.



A big thank you must go to our coaching team: Mr Jess, Mr Walker, John Clark, Mr Magee, Scott Dale and Daniel Duffin

for their tireless efforts and belief in the squad throughout the year.





# All Ireland Schoolboy Hockey Championships

The Boys' Hockey 1st XI became the All Ireland Schoolboy Champions for a record-qualling seventh time after victory in Dublin. Simon Jess' young squad went into the sixteen-team tournament as underdogs, but they showed that determination and togetherness are fantastic qualities to possess as everyone dug deep and fought for each other throughout the gruelling schedule of five matches in three days.

Firstly, the Emtex and Carbonfit backed Banbridge Academy squad overcame Sandford Park School who were playing in the championships for the first time. Goals from Charlie Taylor, Josh Baird and Adam McKee (twice) secured a comfortable 4-0 win over the Dubliners at Newpark Comprehensive School. The second match was a chance for revenge against Waterford's Newtown School who had knocked the Academy out of last season's tournament. Another two goals from Adam McKee was enough to get the victory at Wesley College and set up a winner-takes-all group decider against St. Andrew's College on their home pitch. In front of a ferocious crowd, the Academy took the lead when McKee scored yet again. Despite a late equaliser from the home side, a draw was enough to take Bann into the semi-finals on goal difference.

An unlucky semi-final draw saw the Academy playing much-fancied Wesley College at Wesley College. With all four sides of the pitch thronged with Wesley pupils and supporters, the Bann lads ignored the noise and played some determined hockey. Yet again, Adam McKee got on the scoresheet before turning provider to release Charlie Taylor, who casually rolled the ball into the bottom corner to give the Academy a two-goal lead. Wesley pulled one goal back with ten minutes to go, but some fantastic goalkeeping from Denver Golbey kept Bann in front to secure an unexpected win.



St. Columba's College hosted the final where the Academy faced Friends' School from Lisburn, the only Ulster side who the Academy were yet to play this season. By this stage of the competition both teams were carrying a lot of sore legs and squad depth proved crucial as Simon Jess continually rolled the substitutes. The Academy played some great passing hockey but despite many chances, the only goal of the game didn't come until the third quarter.

Fittingly it was Adam McKee again who scored when he picked up a loose ball in the circle and smashed it past the Friends' goalkeeper. The final whistle

signalled scenes of elation from the Academy players, coaches, parents and supporters. Captain Ben Thompson lifted the Tasmanian Shield to join a unique group of Academy pupils to have had such an honour.

**Squad:** Denver Golbey, James McCoy, Ben Thompson(c), Max Nicholson, Theo Milligan, Harry Taylor, Michael McHugh, Shaun Ward, Sam Mills, Josh Osborne, Josh Baird, Daniel McKee, Mark Hanna, Adam McKee, Charlie Taylor, Adam Ewart, Max Murphy, Owen Dobson.

**Staff:** Simon Jess, Colin Walker, John Clarke, Tom Murray.





# Boys' Hockey: 2nd XI

**Michael McHugh (Captain)**

Just like the previous season, we came into this one with a very young team-with only two Year 14 students and lots of new young players.

After narrowly missing out on the Dowdall Cup, the year before, we were hoping to bring some silverware home. The first match was in the Prior Shield and we played Sullivan Upper, managing to win comfortably. We then had RBAI in the second group game, where we achieved a narrow 1-0 win. The final group game was away to Grosvenor Grammar, where we won and therefore topped our group.

Our next Prior Shield game was the semi-final against Bangor Grammar, where we came back from 1-0 down to win the game. And then it was onto the final where we played RBAI. It was a tense game, where we defended well but just couldn't put our chances away. The game ended 0-0 and we unfortunately lost the shootout, leaving Banbridge Academy with second place-just missing out on the win.

Over the next couple of months, we had limited matches due to poor weather conditions. In the Dowdall Cup we unfortunately played RBAI for the third time in the season. We went one-nil up early on thanks to a short corner strike from Alfie Norris. Unfortunately, we couldn't hold onto the lead and ended up losing 1-3.

It was another trophyless season for the squad, but looking back on the young team and considering that most of us had never played together as a team before, it is evident that we developed really well. The team was dedicated, hardworking and its potential for the years to come is evident. We all thank Mr Miskelly for his coaching and guidance throughout the season.





# Boys' Hockey: U14

**Rory Lawson (Captain)**

Overall the U14 squad had a really good season. We had more wins than losses, some of which were incredibly important. This was a lot better than last season. With the arrival of a new striker, Joshua Bingham, our season really took off.

We played our best hockey in the Ulster Schools' Ferris Cup. We started really well and defeated Kilkeel High School 2-0 in the first round, after goals from Nihal McAvoy and Joshua Bingham. In the quarter finals we faced Methodist College, who we had beaten a few times in the past, so we felt confident going into this tie and came away with a 4-0 win- which was the result we hoped for. The goals were scored by Joshua, Nihal and Eric Mrazik.

Our best performance of our season was against a great Friends' School Lisburn team in the semi-final. We went into this game as major underdogs, as we hadn't beaten them ever. We fought really hard and Joshua Bingham gave us the lead inside just ten minutes. Just after the start of the second quarter Nihal McEvoy scored our second goal, giving us a comfortable lead. However, shortly before half time Friends' managed to pull one back. We held on throughout the game despite the constant threat from the Friends' front line but unfortunately in the dying seconds Friends' equalised to make it 2-2, which took the game



to the dreaded run-ins- (which in past years we weren't awfully good at). This time, however, was different; after two outstanding saves from James Patterson, and goals from Teddie McCandless and Rory Lawson- we did it! Despite all odds, we made it to the Ferris Cup Final and qualified for the John Warring U14 All Ireland Tournament.

We had a very difficult game in the final against Cookstown High School and unfortunately the result didn't go our way.

The All-Ireland tournament was held at Lisnagarvey Hockey Club and we faced teams from all around Ireland. We played

consistently very well, finishing in joint third place and narrowly missed out on a bronze medal on goal difference. We defeated Bandon Grammar School and Ashton School.

We learnt a lot throughout this year and stuck together as a team through the highs and lows. Thank you to all the players who consistently turned up to training and gave their all in every game. On behalf of the whole U14 team, I'd like to thank Mr Best and Mr Walker for coaching and supporting us throughout the season. Thank you also to Mrs Sally and Mr Magee for their support in the All-Ireland Tournament. Here's to next season!





# Boys' Hockey: U13

**Teddie McCandless (Captain)**

This season was really enjoyable and an encouraging one for the U13 Hockey Team. We had a solid start to the year, with our opening matches against Bangor, Campbell, Sullivan and Wallace. We came away with two wins and two draws, picking up good victories against Bangor and Sullivan. These early games helped us build some momentum and confidence as a team.

Our Bannister Bowl campaign got off to a tough start, as we were drawn against Cookstown High School in the first round. They went on to win the tournament and although we lost to them in a shootout, it gave us a good sense of what we needed to improve. After that, we went into the Bannister Plate and faced Belfast Royal Academy. This time, we played really well as a team and came out with an impressive 7-0 win.

That result sent us through to the final, where we played Campbell College. It was a very competitive and close

game, but unfortunately, we lost 1-0. Even though it was disappointing not to come away with the win, the team showed great effort and determination throughout the match.

Looking back on the season, there's been a lot of progress across the squad. Everyone worked hard, improved their skills and most importantly, enjoyed playing together. It's been a great year for team spirit and development and

we're all looking forward to building on this next season.

Thank you to all the players who consistently turned up to training and gave their all in every game. On behalf of the whole U13 team, I'd like to thank Mr Magee for coaching and supporting us throughout the season and thank you also to Mr Scott Dale and Mr Ben Walker for their help as well.



# Boys' Hockey: U12

**Daniel Sammons**

This season some of us started out new to the sport of hockey, while others had been playing for years at primary school.

At the start of the season we played friendly matches against Edenderry, but our first competitive match was against Wallace High School. We had good matches against them, with one of our teams winning and the other losing.

After that game we played Friends' School, Lisburn. It was tough and we drew all our matches. The teams balanced each other out but the skills on show were great.

After a few more friendly games, we had our trip to Oxford in England. We stayed in a nice hotel and played lots of practice matches against Oxford Hockey Club- winning most of them. The next



day we went to the Bicester Hockey Club tournament, where we played two good group matches and won them, qualifying for the final. We drew 1-1 in the final but sadly we lost the shootout.

When we got back from Oxford, we had our hockey dinner. The awards that were given out were: Most Improved Player

(Caleb Aiken), Player of the Season (Daniel Sammons) and the best Oxford player (Jacob Lindsay).

We would like to thank: Mr Jess, Mr Clarke, Mr Stewart, Mr Walker, Scott, Seb, Ben and Cashy for their help during the season.



# Oxford Trip





# End of Season Awards

Boys' Hockey held their annual Awards Dinner in the Halfway House, with over 100 people celebrating another great year of schoolboy hockey. Head of Hockey, Mr Walker, praised the players for their huge efforts throughout the season and Headmaster Mr McLoughlin thanked the staff and coaches for their dedication to each team. Irish international hockey player and Olympian Johnny McKee presented the awards.

## U12:

**Most Improved Player** – Caleb Aiken  
**Player of the Year** – Danny Sammons

## U13:

**Most Improved Player** – Alfie Moore  
**Player of the Year** – Teddie McCandless

## U14:

**Most Improved Player** – Callan Winters  
**Player of the Year** – Rory Lawson

## U15:

**Most Improved Player** – Jack Martin  
**Player of the Year** – Jay Nicholson

## 2nd XI:

**Most Improved Player** – Matthew Patterson  
**Player of the Year** – Ollie Small

## 1st XI:

**Most Improved Player** – Josh Osborne  
**Player of the Year** – Adam McKee

## Other Awards:

**Oxford Cup** – Jacob Lindsay  
**Clubman of the Year** – Denver Golbey  
**Top Goal Contributor** – Adam McKee.



2025 leavers pictured with Principal Robin McLoughlin, Johnny McKee, Simon Jess and Colin Walker.



Boys' Hockey Awards 1st XI



Boys' Hockey Awards 2nd XI



Boys' Hockey Awards Clubman



Boys' Hockey Awards Goalscorer



Boys' Hockey Awards Oxford Cup

# Netball: Overview

Mrs N Beggs

This year saw another year of league blitzes for all teams and in the new year, the first rounds of Cup and Plate competitions.

We had 7 teams, from Minors to Seniors, with outstanding performances across all sections.

**Minor A** – Winners

**Minor B** – Runners up

**Junior** – 4th Place

**Intermediate A** – Runners up

**Intermediate B** – Runners up

**Senior A** – Runners up

**Senior B** – Winners

In the Cup/Plate and Shield/ Bowl competition, we had remarkable success with Intermediate A, Juniors and Minor B all reaching quarterfinals.

Then our Senior A and Minor A teams reached the semi- finals of the Cup/Plate. And finally the Senior B team won the Senior Shield on Finals day against a strong Hunter House team in Lisburn Racquets, 32-26.

## Year 8 Netball

The Year 8 netball blitz days were days filled with excitement and healthy competition. Teams from various schools (organised by Netball NI) came together, creating a vibrant atmosphere on the courts. The young athletes showcased their skills, demonstrating teamwork and determination. Beyond the games, it was a valuable opportunity for making new friends and building sportsmanship, leaving everyone with fond memories of the day.

Banbridge Academy's netball season was marked by impressive teamwork and dedication. From the beginning, players showed a strong commitment to improving their skills and working together effectively. This collaborative spirit was evident in their strategic plays and seamless coordination on the court. Throughout the season, the team faced various challenges, but their ability to adapt and support each other was key to their success.

The team's achievements this season reflect not only their athletic abilities,



but also their sportsmanship and resilience. Each match was approached with a positive attitude and a determination to perform at their best. The players demonstrated excellent communication and trust, which strengthened their bonds and enhanced their performance.

Overall, Banbridge Academy's netball season was a testament to the power of teamwork, dedication and a positive mindset. The players' commitment to each other and their sport created a supportive and successful environment. Their accomplishments this season will undoubtedly inspire future teams and serve as a reminder of what can be achieved through collaboration and hard work.

## Awards 2024/2025

This year our End of Season Awards Dinner was held in The Banville Hotel, Banbridge.

It was a great night to celebrate the success of our netball season and say farewell to our senior leavers.

Well done to all our award winners!

## Minor A

**Player of the Year** - Anna-Leah Grimes

**Most improved** - Lily-Kate Deering

## Minor B

**Player of the Year** - Lucy Baird

**Most Improved** - Isabella Kane

## Junior A

**Player of the Year** - Eva McKay

**Most Improved** - Poppy Rodgers

## Intermediate A

**Player of the Year** - Lexie Kerr

**Most improved** - Ella Bell

## Intermediate B

**Player of the Year** - Maddison Wilson

**Most Improved** - Julia Hickman

## Senior A

**Player of the Year** - Katie Scott

**Most improved** - Lilia McKinney

## Senior B

**Player of the Year** - Tara Kennedy

**Most Improved** - Samantha Burns  
Atkins.



# Netball Awards



Intermediate A winner



Intermediate B winner



Junior winners



Minor A winner



Minor B winners



Senior A winners



Senior B winners



Senior Leavers



# Netball: Senior A

The Senior Netball team had a very tough and challenging season with many ups and downs. Firstly they had to compete in blitz days and play against strong competitors such as Sacred Heart and Rathmore; they finished 4th in the first blitz.

They then proceeded to play in another blitz day, competing against teams such as Friends' and Belfast High. The girls got to the final stage of this blitz day but unfortunately they lost out on the final by goal difference to Friends', which led to them finishing second place overall. The Senior team then went on to compete in the Senior Cup, in which

they progressed right through to play against a very strong Glenola side. This proved to be their toughest match yet and the girls were pushed to their limits. Unfortunately Glenola came away with the win but the girls knew they had given their all.

That was our final match of school netball; good luck to all of the girls in their future adventures.

**Katie Scott (Captain) Aimee Trainor, Taylor Barlow, Lois Clydesdale, Emily Waddell, Lilia McKinney and Eva Hampton.**



# Netball: Senior B

## Captain Ellie Walker

The Senior B squad had a highly successful season; we started off the year by playing our first League blitz which we came second in, only narrowly losing out 9-10 to Our Lady's, Newry. This meant that we qualified to play in the Senior B division 2 final blitz day, which we ended up winning. We therefore won all of our matches against: Carrickfergus Academy, Down High, Bloomfield and Lagan College.

After the League ended we began playing in the Shield, winning our first game against Mount Lourdes 31-6 and our 2nd against Friends' 30-18. We moved into the semifinal, where we beat Ballymena Academy 17-14 in a close and well-fought game. We ended the season by beating Hunter House 31-26, in the final in Lisburn Racquets on 25th March to become Senior Shield Champions.

The girls worked so hard all year and deserved their success. Hopefully we will be able to keep improving next season.





# Netball: Minor A Team

## Ellen Hanna (Minor A Captain)

This year the Minor A Netball Team had quite a mixed season, as we started out with a blitz day where we lost a few matches and left with having achieved only 1 win. After our 'bump in the road' we persevered and worked harder than ever and all of our hard work paid off, as we won another blitz day- making us hopeful for future matches.

We didn't win the Cup this year, but now that we know how we can improve-we hope to win it next year. Overall I am really proud of the team, as they have been outstanding throughout the year and have been a joy to be around.



# Netball: Minor B

## Maisie Mccracken (Minor B Captain)

This year, Banbridge Academy's Minor B netball team had quite a mixed season. On our first blitz day, we came third, winning one match against Lurgan Junior High but losing against Wallace and Friends'.

Following this blitz day, we were placed in division 3 for the 2nd blitz day in

Queen's Leisure Centre. It was a great day and only losing against eventual winners Sullivan Upper, we had good wins against Rockport, St Mary's College, Derry and St Joseph's, Belfast meaning we finished runners-up.

We went to our first Plate match losing by one goal to Sperrin Integrated,

meaning we were placed into the Bowl Competition. We were up against a strong St Malachy's side and lost by only a few goals.

The team have learnt a lot this year as for many of us, this has been our first experience of netball matches and we have grown as a team.

# Netball: Junior Team

The Junior Netball Team consisted of Eva McKay (captain), Lily Stafford (vice-captain), Evie Archer, Scarlett Carson, Louise Colgan, Lauren McCallister, Maisie Nicholl, Poppy Rogers, Maja Sulkowska, Talia Tamati, Vilte Visockaite and Rachel Whitson.

We started the season with a blitz day on November 13th, hosted by Our Lady's. We played against St. Paul's, Our Lady's and St. Ronan's. We beat St. Paul's and Our Lady's, but lost against St. Ronan's- placing us in division 2.

On 5th December we had our first Cup match; we played against Priory

Integrated and beat them 33-1. This was an amazing result that meant we would be continuing in the Cup.

Then on 17th December we played against Wallace with only 9 players (due to a lot of sickness in our team). But the girls dug deep and we won by 1 goal 15-14. So we were through to the Cup quarter finals.

The blitz day for division 2 was on February 4th and took place at Lisburn Racquets. We played against Aquinas, Wallace and Ballymena Academy. We drew against Aquinas and Wallace, but lost against Ballymena Academy- placing

us 4th overall in division 2.

The Cup quarter final was on February 20th against Dominican. It was a very tight match, going back and forth between who was winning. Going into the last quarter-we were up 2. We managed to maintain the lead up until the last 30 seconds, where some forced errors meant the final score was, 23-20 to Dominican.

Although we had some unfortunate losses this season, we had some excellent wins too. Overall we played better as a team and have improved a lot from last season.

# Boys' Football: U15

## Group Match 1

Banbridge Academy 6-0 Newry High  
Charlie Geoghegan  
Thomas Hamill  
Ally McCann (2)  
Henry Farrell (2)

## Group Match 2

Banbridge High 0-7 Banbridge Academy  
Ollie McRobb  
Will Megaw  
Jamie Watson (2)  
Ethan Harris  
Charlie Geoghegan  
Henry Farrell

## Group Match 3

Banbridge Academy 2-1 Kilkeel High  
Ollie McRobb  
Will Megaw

## Group Match 4

Rathfriland High 4-6 Banbridge Academy  
Ollie McRobb (2)  
Will Megaw (2)  
Thomas Hamill  
Zac Sloan

## Semi – Final

Banbridge Academy 0-2 Rathfriland High

The Under 15 Football team, coached by Mr. Irwin, trained every Wednesday at Havelock, showing great commitment and teamwork throughout the season. We got off to a flying start in the group stage, securing comfortable wins in our first two matches and scoring an impressive 13 goals without conceding. Our third game, against a strong Kilkeel side, was a tougher challenge, but we battled hard and came out on top with a 2-1 victory.

Our final group match was against the tournament favourites, Rathfriland. In what turned out to be a thrilling contest worthy of a final, we played with determination and flair, earning a well-deserved 6-4 win to top the group with a perfect record.

In the semi-finals, we faced Rathfriland once again. It was another closely contested match and although we created several good chances, we were

unable to find the back of the net. Rathfriland took their opportunities and secured a 2-0 win, progressing to the final against Newbridge.

Despite the disappointment of the semi-final result, the team can be proud of a fantastic campaign filled with great performances.

## U15 Football Squad 2024/25

1. Joel Scott
2. Adam McGerrigan
3. Thomas Hamill
4. Charlie Geoghegan
5. Jamie Wilson
6. Jamie Watson
7. Will Megaw
8. Hayden Kerr
9. Ollie McRobb
10. Luke Dawson
11. Billy Morton
12. Henry Farrell
13. Joshua Quin
14. Ally McCann
15. Jake McKeown
16. Ethan Harris
17. Zac Sloan
18. Angus Johnstone.





# Girls' Football

Girls' football was well attended last year, with lots of girls coming along who wanted to give football a go for the first time, or work on their skills and techniques which they have developed outside of school in local clubs. The first match was the U13 Cup that saw our players go to Kilkeel High School. The score was 4-2 to Kilkeel High School, but they played very well as a team, especially in the second half when they grew in confidence and scored 2 goals.

For our senior girls, they were in the U18 Plate Competition, with the first match being played in January at home against Royal School, Dungannon. The BA team played a great match, focusing on passing and communication, which served them well as they won 3-1, a great start to the Plate Competition!

The U18 team made it to the next round of the Plate where unfortunately, they

lost 6-2 to Bloomfield. The girls played very well however as a team, especially in the second half and thoroughly enjoyed the match and experience to play.

This year has seen girls' football grow and flourish and it serves as a great foundation to move forward next year in the upcoming Cup matches and giving the girls great opportunities to play football.





# Girls' Cricket



June 2025 marked a significant milestone for our school, as we entered girls' cricket teams into competitive tournaments for the very first time. This inaugural participation in regional Blitz events was not only historic but also a testament to the enthusiasm, talent and commitment of our pupils and staff.

## **Year 8 Blitz – Friends' School, Lisburn**

The Year 8 team made an impressive debut at the Blitz tournament hosted by Friends' School, Lisburn. Despite challenging weather conditions, the team remained focused and determined, winning every group-stage match. Their unbeaten run reflected a high level of discipline and teamwork. Although they were narrowly defeated in the semi-final, they secured a 4th place overall, an outstanding achievement for a newly formed squad.

## **Year 9 Blitz – Wallace High School**

Later in the month, the Year 9 team competed at Wallace High School, facing strong opposition, including Strathearn and Wallace High. The team demonstrated resilience and competitive spirit throughout the group stages. While they did not progress beyond the initial rounds, their performance was marked by encouraging individual contributions and a growing sense of unity.

The experience gained this year will serve as a valuable stepping stone and we look forward to building upon this success in the coming seasons. Special thanks are due to all staff who supported the teams throughout the season, particularly to their coaches, Mr Best and Mr Lockhart, whose guidance and encouragement were instrumental in making this first year such a success.

## **Year 8 Squad**

Erin Emerson  
Faye Lawson  
Harmony Heslip  
Indie Graham  
Katie Rankin  
Lila Nicholson  
Lottie Davidson  
Rose Cousins  
Maisie Jane Brown

## **Year 9 Squad**

Anabel Emerson  
Annabelle Betts  
Ella Stoddart  
Katie Martin  
Lily Murphy  
Lucy Jennings  
Maggie Suffern  
Nina Alderdice  
Ruby Cousins  
Ruby Moore  
Sadie Mawhinney  
Stella Draffin.



# Athletics

This year's athletics season was a very successful one, helped by the fantastic weather which provided excellent training and competition conditions for all of our athletes.

At the Inter and Senior District School Track and Field Championships, Emma Stewart produced outstanding performances, securing two silver medals in the Inter Girls' 1500m and 3000m races.

Meanwhile, at the Mini, Minor and Junior District School Championships, Harmony

Heslip impressed in the field events, winning bronze in the Mini Girls' High Jump and qualifying for the prestigious Ulster Schools' Championships. Across these Championships, an incredible nine of our athletes finished in the top 10 of their respective events, showcasing the talent and determination within our club.

The highlight of the season came at the Ulster Schools' Championships, where Emma Stewart once again demonstrated her class, winning silver in the 3000m (10.02.28) and bronze in the 1500m (4.42.56). To cap off her success, Emma

also broke two long-standing school records, a remarkable achievement that reflects her hard work and talent. At the Irish School Track and Field Championship at Tullamore, Emma once again excelled by finishing 6th in the 3000m and 7th in the 1500m.

Overall, it has been a season to remember for the Athletics Club, filled with strong performances, new records and plenty of promise for the future. Congratulations to all athletes who represented the school with pride and determination.





# Cross Country

On the 4th February Banbridge Academy Cross country athletes attended the District Schools' Cross Country Championship, held at the Billy Neil Playing Fields. Despite dry weather on the day, overnight rain created a muddy and difficult course. 21 Students from Year 8 to Intermediate level represented the school and demonstrated determination against tough competition from across the district.

Two athletes shone brightly with fantastic 2nd place finishes: Emma Rankin in the Minor Girls' race and Emma Stewart in the Intermediate Girls' competition. Other notable top 20 performances included Jack Douglas (13th, Intermediate Boys), Beth Morrow (14th, Intermediate Girls), and Katie Coffey (18th, Intermediate Girls). These results contributed to a strong team showing, particularly in the Intermediate Girls' category.



The Intermediate Girls' team's combined efforts earned them a well-deserved 3rd place overall, securing their qualification for the Ulster Schools' Jack Douglas and Emma Rankin also secured individual places at the Ulster Schools' Championship.

The Ulster Schools' Championships was held on 19th February at Mallusk Playing Fields in County Antrim. Despite dry conditions, competitors faced challenges from exposed winds and boggy ground underfoot.

Remarkably, Emma Rankin secured an impressive 7th place overall, qualifying for the upcoming Irish Schools' Championship. Her performance stands out among a field of dedicated athletes.

The Academy's Intermediate Team also made their mark again, finishing 4th in the team standings. Emma Stewart led the team with a fantastic 4th place finish individually, earning her spot at the Irish Schools' Cross Country Championship as well. Teammates: Katie Coffey, Beth Morrow, and Hannah Topping contributed to this strong performance. Jack Douglas also showed great determination, finishing in the top 45 against a highly competitive field.

At the Irish Schools' Cross Country Championships, both Emma Stewart and Emma Rankin came 9th overall in their respective age groups. Due to their success, both athletes got selected for the London Mini Marathon with Emma Stewart coming 18th and Emma Rankin



coming in the top 50- just the cherry on the top of an amazing school cross country season for the girls.





# Girls' Tennis

Jenny McQuiston



The Girls' Junior Tennis team is a four-player team for Year 9 and 10 girls who like to play tennis competitively. We meet every Monday after school from 3:30 to 4:30 to practise. This year's tennis team consisted of Emily Nesbitt (Y10), Sarah Martin (Y10), Mia Groves (Y9) and Jenny McQuiston (Y9). We travelled to Portadown for the first matches of the season, where we played Friends', Enniskillen and Killicomaine JHS. We secured wins against both Friends' and Enniskillen, but narrowly missed out on beating Killicomaine. We then played our next matches at Larne tennis club,

where we won all but 1 game which then led us through to the final of the Plate. We played some very tight matches against Rockport at the CIYMS (Belfast) where we drew, but in the end, narrowly missed out on first place after counting the number of sets won by each team leading us to come second overall in the Plate. In conclusion it was a great season for the Girls' Junior Tennis team that was not only filled with tough matches, but also thoroughly enjoyed.

The Girls' Minor Team played against Methodist College, Victoria College and

Killicomaine in their League. Their results saw them being entered into the Shield, where they faced Ballymena Academy and after hard-fought games- they came away Shield Winners

The Intermediate Girls played a straight knockout tournament. They won their first-round matches against Methodist College, winning, 4 to 0. Their next round saw them travel to Strathearn, but unfortunately this was the end of the journey in the competition.





# Table Tennis Triumphs

Banbridge Academy has once again demonstrated its sporting excellence, with its table tennis teams achieving remarkable success throughout the 2024/25 academic year.

The U13 Boys Table Tennis Team made headlines in March 2025 by clinching the Ulster Teams Cup, a prestigious regional title that earned them a place at the Irish Championships. Their victory was a testament to their dedication, teamwork, and the expert guidance of coach Scott Dale, who has been instrumental in nurturing young talent at the Academy. Scott Dale's impact goes far beyond match-day strategy. Every Friday afternoon, he dedicates his time to coaching young players, fostering not only technical skill but also a deep love for the sport. His sessions are known for their energy, encouragement, and attention to individual growth, making them a highlight of the week for many aspiring athletes.

Further recognition came at the 2025 Junior Sports Awards, where Arnold



Morgan, Banbridge Academy's table tennis coach, was nominated for Coach of the Year, highlighting his outstanding contribution to youth sport in the region.

This year's achievements build on the Academy's strong tradition in table

tennis, reinforcing its reputation as a hub for developing skilled and competitive players. With continued support from staff and the wider school community, Banbridge Academy is poised to maintain its winning momentum in the years ahead.





## BADMINTON

# Badminton

Our Minor Boys' Badminton Team (Michael Boggs, Daniel Cairns, Patrick McKeown and Eric Mrazik) attended the Ulster Schools' Badminton finals and came away as Ulster Champions for the Minor League Division 2. They were presented with individual medals and a plaque.



# Archers Shine at Archery NI Schools' Cup

On Saturday 5th April, the Banbridge Academy Archers proudly participated in the Archery NI Schools' Cup.

This year's event was the largest and most competitive to date, featuring over 100 archers from schools across Northern Ireland. Participants ranged from P7 to Year 14 and competed in Barebow, Recurve and Compound categories.

For the second consecutive year, Banbridge Academy claimed the Archery NI Schools' Cup Team Championship in 2025! The winning team members were: Melina Kincaid, Emily Smyth and Isaac Smyth.

Congratulations to Emily Smyth, Isaac Smyth, Tomas Purdy, Irene Ding, Eammon O'Duil, Melina Kinkaid, Daniel Sands, Blake Sands, Joanna Fitzimmons, James Brolly and Elinor Dimitrova- many of whom also achieved individual success alongside the team's overall victory.



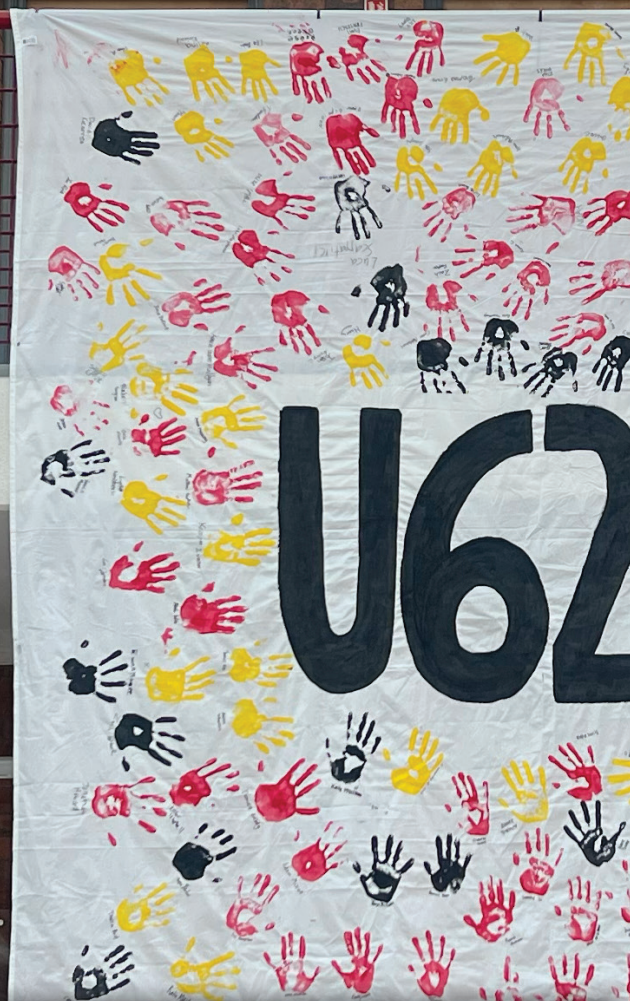


# Swimming



***Irish Schools Relay Champions. The Banbridge Academy team finished first in the Irish Schools Relay (Age 15-16). Pictured are Rose Turley (Year 11), Sophie Black (Year 11), Tara Kennedy (Year 12), Samantha Burns-Atkin (Year 12) and Rebecca Lane (Year 11).***









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