



Careers Fair

Mrs Gilpin, Head of Careers

A packed Sports Hall, 78 display stands and over 100 visiting delegates: can anyone guess what we are describing? Of course, it is the Careers Fair, Pathways 2016.

Wednesday 7 September was a focal point in the Careers calendar; it was the day when a large body of local employers and university representatives from across the UK and Ireland gathered under one roof. 'Something for everyone' was our motto and we were therefore very pleased to welcome willing and enthusiastic delegates from a disparate range of both academic and vocational career pathways. From Project Trust (Gap Year opportunities), Evolve Sport USA, the University of Twente and NI Networks, to a range of Scottish universities and universities from Southern Ireland, pupils and parents/guardians had a plethora of choice when it came to researching future career pathways. Representatives from England and Wales, including admissions staff from Cardiff, Durham, Huddersfield, Bath and Oxford and Cambridge were also

on hand to give current information about their institutions. The Army even provided pupils with the opportunity to sample the thrill of the 'real thing' when they donned space-age-like goggles to escape the world of Banbridge Academy. Some of our photographs show pupils enjoying the escapism!

We were particularly pleased to welcome Mr Gareth Hetherington, Associate Director of the University of Ulster Economic Policy Centre, as our keynote speaker. Mr Hetherington is currently involved in a three year research programme entitled the NI Skills Barometer, to identify the future skills needs and gaps in NI. His opening presentation to Year 14 and Year 13 pupils entitled, 'The future of the employment market' gave pupils considerable food for thought and sound advice as to how they can best prepare for the challenges of gaining future employment. This presentation was complemented by an equally thought provoking presentation from Mr Geoff Baillie, Team Leader – Belfast Transaction Services Centre

of Excellence PWC. Mr Baillie took as his focus, 'What skills are employers looking for in new recruits? His incisive and thought provoking insight into employers' perspectives as to what makes a good employee, added another valuable dimension to the guidance offered during the course of the afternoon.

The programme was packed with activity as it also included a full line-up of informative seminars. The Higher Apprenticeship pathway was outlined by representatives from PWC, BDO and Deloitte and alternative pathways were discussed by our neighbours from Belfast Metropolitan and Southern Regional Colleges, whilst QUB and Almac enabled those interested in pharmacy or the pharmaceutical industry to hone their knowledge of these sectors. Others relished the opportunity to learn about applications to engineering, with three representatives from QUB Faculty of Engineering and Physical Science each giving a detailed account of the opportunities in their chosen

engineering speciality. Pupils interested in a career in business and finance were not overlooked, with Glowmetrics, based in Catalyst Inc (formerly the NI Science Park), QUB School of Finance, QUB School of Management, and a representative from EY each taking a slot to outline the opportunities in their area. Pupils aspiring to a career in teaching were treated to the luxury of a very comprehensive presentation from Stranmillis University College, whilst those preferring a more vocational route were brought fully up-to-date with the latest information on how to prepare for an application to the RAF, the Royal Navy or the Army. The need to travel to England, Scotland or Wales, to speak directly to university representatives, was overcome for many as presentations from Stirling, Edinburgh, Strathclyde and Liverpool Hope Universities to name but a few, gave eager careers researchers the chance to have their queries and concerns answered on the spot. Those interested in a career in food or agriculture enjoyed the presentation delivered by CAFRE whilst aspiring nurses, doctors and biomedical

scientists earmarked their place at seminars delivered by QUB and 3fivetwo Training Academy. The University of Ulster also sated the appetite of those interested in Geography and Environmental Science whilst QUB added another dimension by providing guidance for those aspiring to a future in Archaeology and Paleoecology. We were also delighted to have the support of several past pupils at both the stands in the Sports Hall and during the seminar sessions; their contributions, as recent students themselves, added significantly to the success of the afternoon.



We trust that Pathways 2016 did indeed have 'something for everyone' and that those who attended the afternoon both enjoyed and benefited from the experience. We are indebted to each of the delegates who gave of their afternoon to attend the Fair as it was through their generosity that we were able to offer this opportunity to our pupils.

We hope you enjoy the photographs taken at the Fair; we are indebted to Laura Keating, Hollie Thompson and Megan Quail, pupils in Year 14, for taking these.

Stranmillis Essay Writing competition

Congratulations to Leona Moorhead, Year 14, who came joint runner-up in the recent Stranmillis Essay Writing competition. Leona is pictured here having just received her Certificate of commendation from Dr Peter Hamill, Secretary to the Church of Ireland Board of Education in Northern Ireland.

This year's Year 13 Essay Competition question challenged Year 13 pupils to engage with these issues in a 2000 word essay, in response to a quotation from AS Neill, founder of the innovative but controversial Summerhill School.

"Obviously, a school that makes active children sit at desks studying mostly

useless subjects is a bad school. It is a good school only for those who believe in such a school, for those uncreative citizens who want docile, uncreative children who will fit into a civilization whose standard of success is money."
(AS Neill)

The essays were judged in terms of their level of understanding, depth of insight, strength of argument, originality and quality of writing. Leona is to be congratulated on her reflective and insightful essay which addressed these points with great maturity. We wish Leona success in her chosen career in teaching.

