



# Banbridge Academy

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# Welcome



*“The pursuit of excellence  
in a caring and supportive  
community.”*

Robin McLoughlin OBE - Headmaster

Within these pages we have tried to capture something of the essence of school life and convey the sense of pride we feel in being part of this learning community.

Banbridge Academy provides an impressive setting for the education of our pupils and whilst we as a school community are rooted in the best traditions, we are also at an exciting stage in our development.

Our central aim is for everyone to be happy at school, known personally and cared for individually. Our emphasis is on nurturing the whole person and to that end, a rich diversity of artistic, dramatic, musical and sporting activities are on offer.

The quality of teaching and learning lies at the heart of every successful school. In Banbridge

Academy, well qualified, enthusiastic and committed staff create a learning environment which is challenging, stimulating and supportive, enabling our students to achieve outstanding academic results. We want our young people to develop an appreciation of learning as an enjoyable, continuous process and leave us equipped with the skills and values that will support them for the rest of their lives.

This brochure can of course only give a glimpse of school life and I invite you to visit the Academy and experience for yourself the warmth and energy of the friendly, caring ethos which exists here.

*Robin McLoughlin*



# Introduction



*The attractive grounds of 40 acres create an impressive setting for the suite of buildings and extensive sporting facilities.*

Banbridge Academy was founded as a private school in 1786 and moved to its present location, Edenderry House, in 1950.

The Academy is a co-educational and non-denominational grammar school which seeks to provide a regulated and happy environment with a pleasant atmosphere in which its pupils and staff can strive to achieve their full academic, personal and professional potential.

The school seeks to provide a wide, stimulating and enjoyable educational experience.

Banbridge Academy has recently been placed in the Top 10 Highest-achieving Northern Ireland Schools in the Sunday Times Schools Guide.



# A Year 8 Perspective



Congratulations on completing your P7 year. Moving to secondary school will be one of the biggest changes of your life, but nowhere will make this change easier than Banbridge Academy. Once you've experienced a few weeks of Academy life you will truly love it. You'll enjoy some of the best moments of your life during your time at the Academy and you will make friendships that will last a lifetime.

Your first day at school will be a Year 8 Induction Day and you will spend the day with your Form Teacher and Form Class. Remember that there are special perks available only to Year 8 pupils. Initially, the Academy will seem enormous when compared with your Primary School. However, we started to

really enjoy the change of routine and soon found it very easy to find our way around the school.

The Academy offers new and exciting subjects and topics. From Bunsen burners to Norman noblemen, Home Economics to ICT, the timetable is packed with fun things to do and learn.

There are so many extra-curricular activities on offer that the problem is deciding which options to choose. There are numerous sports to play and enjoy, as well as helping your House to win the annual House Competition.

The Academy has an excellent pastoral system which means that the staff and senior pupils will look after you and help you in any way that they can. No matter how large or small your concern may seem, there will always be someone there for you, so don't be afraid to ask.

Far from being a large and daunting school, the Academy is a caring community where you will be made very welcome. You will enjoy some great experiences with some great people. We hope that you will feel a part of the Academy as much as we have.

We look forward to seeing you at the Academy next year.

# The School Curriculum



*The Curriculum is varied, stimulating and relevant to the needs of pupils, as they attempt to meet with confidence, the demands of the 21st Century.*

The educational facilities and resources available in Banbridge Academy are modern and impressive; they enable us to provide an excellent standard of education where high quality teaching and learning are prioritised.

Our pupils follow a Key Stage Three Curriculum that has evolved and changed significantly over the last decade. We recognise the value of transferable skills and we share the central principle of the Revised Curriculum which aims to empower pupils and develop young people as individuals, and as contributors to society, the wider economy and the environment. Banbridge Academy is committed to delivering an education which is an enriching and enabling experience.

There is a breadth, balance, relevance and rigour to GCSE and A Level Curriculum provision that will enable our pupils to be stimulated and challenged. We aim to establish a community of learners, in an atmosphere of academic enquiry, who are receptive to new concepts and perspectives. In Banbridge Academy we embrace education and seek to develop pupils who are articulate, reflective and independent learners.





## *Quality teaching and learning are the core values of a successful school.*

Educational activities spread far beyond the confines of the classroom. From experiencing life in World War One trenches in Bayernwald, Flanders, to a field study in the Rocky River; Mourne Mountains, our pupils enjoy broad and varied learning experiences.



Banbridge Academy pupils do not achieve their consistently strong academic results by chance. Lessons are delivered by dedicated, caring and well qualified professionals who enjoy teaching and who are committed to their continued professional development . The relationship between pupils and teachers at Banbridge Academy is positive and mutually enriching.



# Sport



*Both team games and individual sports flourish, nurturing individual ability and promoting teamwork.*

The traditional team sports continue to flourish at Banbridge Academy. Most Saturdays, and throughout a number of province-wide schools' competitions, Academy pupils continue to represent their school with pride and distinction. Former Academy pupils have distinguished themselves playing rugby, hockey and netball at regional, provincial, national and international level.

Recently refurbished rugby pitches provide a superb playing surface where pupils can hone and perfect their skills. Impressive and extensive upgrading of sports facilities enables our pupils to develop and nurture their various sporting abilities and interests.







# Sport



*We want all pupils to enjoy their sport, regardless of their ability, and feel a sense of belonging to the wider school community.*

There is a wide range of other sporting activities on offer at Banbridge Academy alongside the traditional and longstanding team sports. From golf to equestrian pursuits, skiing to squash, swimming to badminton, Academy pupils have represented their school with dedication and success.

The range of sports on offer means that our pupils have the opportunity to enjoy themselves, to try something new and to develop those values and attitudes that sport encapsulates and inspires. Sports tours are popular with pupils and recent Academy tours have experienced and enjoyed the cultural diversity of countries such as South Africa, France and Italy.







# Extra – Curricular Activities



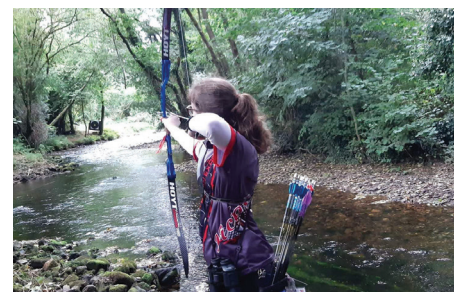
*The variety of challenging and stimulating activities provided is an essential part of the school's inclusive educational philosophy. We are fully committed to the development of the whole person.*



The rich extra-curricular programme is complemented by the school's thriving House System. Pupils represent one of the four Houses, named after significant local figures: Crozier, Dunbar, McWilliam and Waddell. The inter-House events programme is rewarding, enjoyable and diverse, allowing pupils of all ages and ability levels to become actively involved in the wider life of the school.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme continues to be very popular. Senior pupils have enjoyed expeditions to the atmospheric Wast Water in the Lake District and the stunning natural beauty of the Trossachs.

Entrepreneurial flair and business acumen are the central tenets of the school's Young Enterprise which has achieved some notable successes in recent years.





*You will always be encouraged to get involved. So many opportunities for self-discovery exist in the school's rich programme of activities.*

The outstanding quality and variety of The Drama Society's annual theatrical productions contribute significantly to the distinctive ethos of the school. Recent productions have included *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Guys and Dolls*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Greatest Show* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

Music continues to thrive in Banbridge Academy as exemplified by our award-winning Girls' Choir and the quality and popularity of annual musical events, such as the Spring Concert.





# Pastoral Care



*Providing a safe and caring environment which facilitates pupils in reaching their full personal and academic potential is of paramount importance in our school.*

Our pastoral care arrangements are thoughtfully and carefully structured and annually reviewed, in order to ensure that each pupil receives the best level of pastoral care possible. Our aim is to nurture and develop young people who are self-disciplined, responsible and happy, in a regulated and positive environment.

Every pupil is different, every pupil matters; each one deserves our best efforts. A happy pastoral experience and academic success are interdependent, therefore we are unapologetically pupil-centred in our provision. We firmly believe that in a supportive environment, contented and focused pupils will achieve their potential.

In the school community there is a tangible ethos of respect for others, a natural rapport between staff and pupils and a real sense of integration and co-operation among the Year groups. The welfare of all pupils in the Academy community is based on the understanding and practice of shared values.

- Pupils meet their Form Teacher at the beginning of every school day.
- Two Year Heads in each year group co-ordinate the work of the Form Teachers.
- Two Form Prefects are assigned to each Year 8 Form Class.
- Full-time School Nurse offers care, advice and guidance.
- Consultation with pupils through the School Council.
- Regular contact is maintained with parents.
- The school offers an independent Counselling Service with professional counsellors.



# Helping Others



*“I never fail to be amazed at the practical support and generosity of spirit shown by our pupils.”*

R S McLoughlin - Headmaster

Impressive amounts of fund-raising have been achieved by our pupils for a diverse range of worthy causes. During the last ten years pupils have initiated and participated in a variety of small-scale and high profile events which have raised over £170,000 for charitable causes. Some of those organisations which have benefited from the generosity of our pupils include: Radios for zambia, Children in Crossfire, Niger Famine Appeal, Operation Christmas Child, Southern Area Hospice and Love for Life.

The annual BBC Children in Need Appeal often includes an old favourite, “Sponge a Teacher” and some of the teachers have even performed as an Abba tribute band. Local children’s charities benefit from organised curricular initiatives, for example, the Readathon. We support those pupils who travel to regions of the world which have suffered natural disasters or faced humanitarian crises. In the recent past, pupils have visited China, Uganda and Mexico.

Each Wednesday, senior pupils are involved in the Community Care programme where they demonstrate their care for others in a practical way and dedicate some of their free time to those in need of encouragement.

*“The founding members wanted to make a difference to the local community. I have been so impressed by the selflessness of our pupils.”*

R S McLoughlin - Headmaster







# Careers Education



*We want to equip our pupils with skills and resources that will enable them to enter Higher Education or employment with self-assurance, self-confidence and optimism.*

We want to encourage our pupils to be self-motivated and to take responsibility for their own futures through well-informed decision making. With so many career development opportunities available in the workplace, our aim at Banbridge Academy is to inspire and inform our pupils so that they will value lifelong learning. We would like them to be able to contribute effectively to the wide community through responsible and active citizenship.

The Careers Education Programme is extensive and varied. Pupils throughout their time at school have many careers-related educational opportunities open to them. A dedicated and extensively resourced Careers Suite is available within school.

- Work Placements
- Business Insight
- Higher Education Days
- University Open Days
- Training in Interview Skills
- Information Evenings
- Extensive Database
- Interviews with Careers Officers from Outside Agencies
- Study Skills Programme



During their time at the Academy our pupils enjoy a wide spectrum of opportunities. Careers staff and tutors provide advice, guidance and support.

After A-Levels, the vast majority of pupils enter Higher Education to study a wide range of courses at university.

The Queen's University of Belfast and the Ulster University are popular destinations, with many pupils also choosing to study in universities and colleges in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

Academy pupils have a strong record of success in gaining places at both Oxford and Cambridge universities.









# The School Estate



*We want our pupils to reflect with pride on their time spent at Banbridge Academy. Our aim is to continue to develop the Academy as a school that blends the best of modernity with its family ethos and proud heritage.*

Banbridge Academy has entered a new and exciting phase in its long and distinguished history. As a school community we enjoy innovative and dynamic new buildings which have enhanced our impressive school estate. Furthermore, many of our existing school buildings have been extensively refurbished and upgraded. The end result is a highly successful synthesis of innovation with tradition.

The School Estate includes:

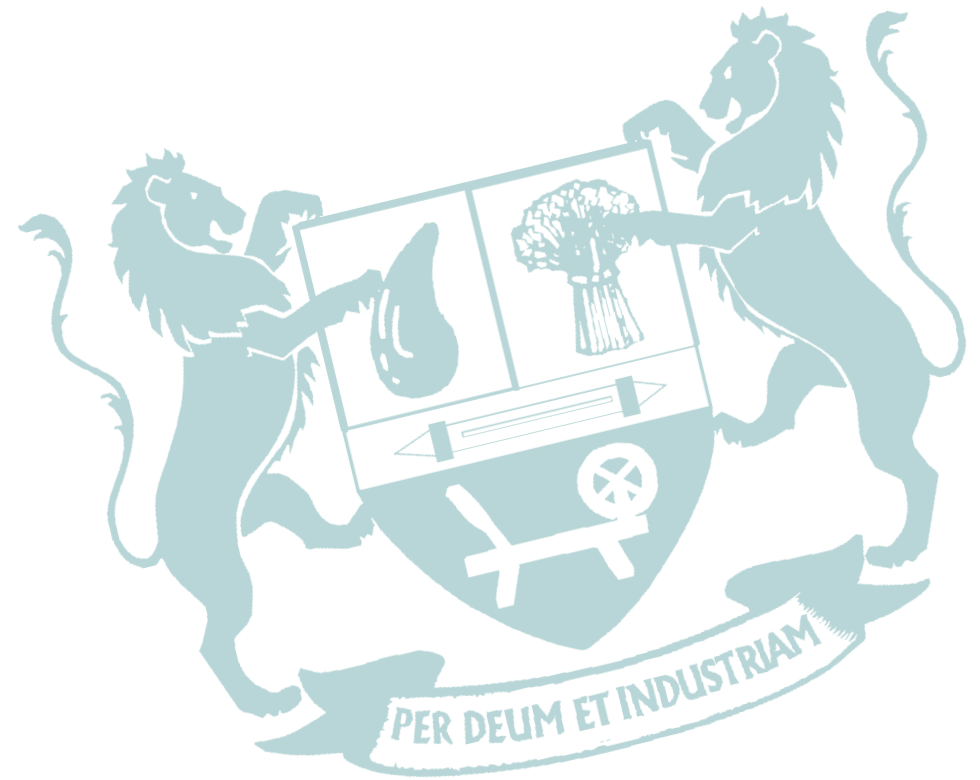
- A new Science & Technology Centre
- An impressive Sports Hall
- Modern Dining facilities
- A Spacious Sixth Form Suite
- Purpose-built Drama & Music Suites
- Extensive ICT facilities
- Refurbished Teaching provision
- Astro-turf Hockey pitch
- Upgraded Rugby pitches
- Five new Tennis courts











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