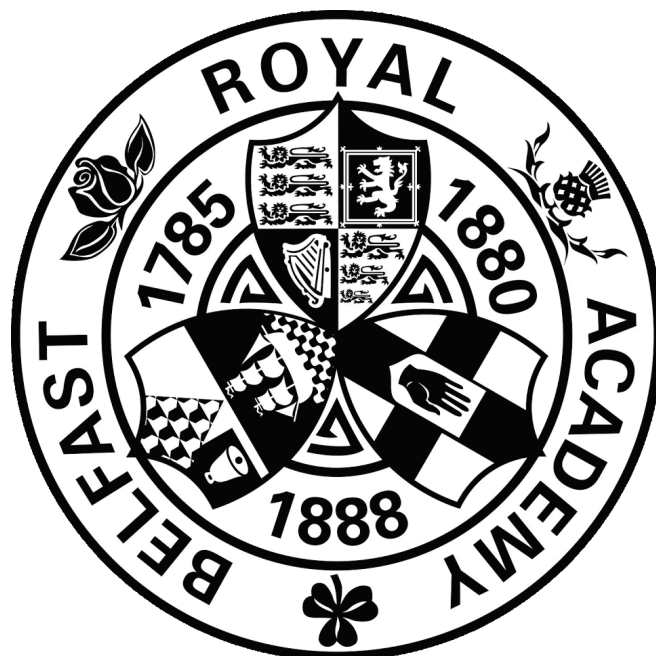


THE ANNUAL REPORT



2023 - 2024

CURRICULUM

Belfast Royal Academy aims to give its pupils a broad, balanced and relevant education. In the Junior School we seek to give equal opportunities to all pupils and the emphasis is on discovery and enjoyment. In these early years, we seek to instill in pupils good study skills and habits which will equip them for GCSE level and beyond. It is the School's aim that the timetable should be constructed to meet the needs of its pupils. To that end, as much freedom of choice as possible is offered to pupils at KS3, GCSE, AS and A2 levels. We endeavour to continually evaluate the curriculum, introducing new subjects that, in our view, serve the needs and aspiration of our pupils.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

2023-24

Pupils in **Key Stage 3** (Forms 1-3) follow a broad common curriculum, developing knowledge and skill across a wide range of subjects.

In **Forms 1 and 2** classes are not streamed. Pupils are divided into seven classes and are taught in this arrangement for non-practical subjects. The practical subjects, Art and Design, Home Economics, Computer Science, Music, Science and Technology and Design, are taught in smaller groups.

At all **Key Stage 3** years, the three Science subjects, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, are taught separately, each for two sixty-five minute periods per fortnight.

In **Form 3** pupils are partially streamed in Mathematics, but all other classes remain mixed. Pupils choose to study three subjects from the following choice of eight: Business Studies, Computer Science, Drama, German, Home Economics, Latin, Spanish and Technology. Each of these option subjects is studied for three periods per fortnight.

At all **Key Stage 3** years, pupils follow a course in Learning for Life and Work which involves the three strands: Personal Development, Citizenship and Employability. In **Form 3** pupils have one dedicated Careers period per fortnight. RSE is delivered in line with statutory guidance and makes use of CCEA resources. Pupils in **Form 1** have one LORIC (Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative and Communication) period per fortnight.

KS3 Subject	Number of Periods (per fortnight)		
	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3
Art	2	1	2
Biology	2	2	2
Business Studies	-	-	3*
Careers	-	-	1
Chemistry	2	2	2
Computer Science	-	-	3*
Drama	-	1	3*
English	5	5	5
French	5	3	3
Geography	3	3	3
German	-	1	3*
History	3	3	3
Home Economics	1	1	3*
IT	1	1	-
Latin	2	2	3*
Learning for Life & Work	2	2	-
LORIC	1	-	-
Mathematics	5	5	6
Music	2	2	2
PE	2	2	2
Physics	2	2	2
RE	2	2	3
Spanish	-	1	3*
Technology	2	3	3*
Total	44	44	44

All pupils have 4 periods of games per fortnight and a tutorial period once a week. *Option subject, 3 periods per fortnight.

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

2023-24

Pupils in **Key Stage 4** (Forms 4 and 5) follow a common core curriculum and then choose from a range of subject options. Pupils take a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 10 subjects at GCSE. Option block subjects are studied for five periods per fortnight. All pupils take GCSEs in English, Mathematics and Religious Education. Approximately 85% of pupils take English Literature and approximately 30% take Further Mathematics.

Most pupils take at least one Science subject at Triple Award standard. A small number of pupils follow a Single Award Science option.

All pupils study at least one modern or classical language chosen from: French, German, Latin and Spanish.

In addition, pupils have three other GCSE choices.

Non-GCSE subjects taken by all pupils are PE and Games (Form 4) and Games (Form 5), and LLW, which includes the three strands: Personal Development, Citizenship and Employability. Pupils in **Form 5** have a dedicated Careers period, and a dedicated Study Skills period. RSE is delivered in line with statutory guidance and makes use of CCEA resources.

The table below gives the full list of the twenty-five subjects *currently* offered at GCSE.

Subject Title (Awarding Body)	Subject Title (Awarding Body)
Art and Design (CCEA)	Further Mathematics (CCEA)
Biology (CCEA)	Geography (CCEA)
Business Studies (CCEA)	German (CCEA)
Chemistry (CCEA)	History (CCEA)
Computer Science (OCR)	Latin (OCR)
Design and Technology (CCEA)	Mathematics (CCEA)
Digital Technology (CCEA)	Music (CCEA)
Drama (CCEA)	Physical Education (CCEA)
Economics (CCEA)	Physics (CCEA)
English Language (CCEA)	Religious Education (AQA)
English Literature (CCEA)	Single Award Science (CCEA)
Food and Nutrition (CCEA)	Spanish (CCEA)
French (CCEA)	

Sixth Form Curriculum

2023-24

All pupils in Lower Sixth study three or four subjects to AS level and most continue with three subjects in Middle Sixth to the full A Level qualification. A number of pupils continue with four subjects to A2 Level. About 15 pupils complete their GCE Mathematics in one year, and a small number of these pupils may complete five A Levels by the end of the Sixth Form. In their Lower Sixth Year, pupils have the option of some enrichment courses including choir, and work experience in local primary schools. In addition, all pupils have a tutorial period once each week which includes elements of Religious Education and UCAS preparation as well as a devoted programme for our Oxbridge candidates. Games are optional for pupils in the Sixth Form. Pupils who do not participate in games have a Study period instead.

The table below gives the full list of the thirty-one subjects *currently* offered at AS and A2.

Subject Title (Awarding Body)

Art and Design (CCEA)

Biology (CCEA)

Business Studies (CCEA)

Chemistry (CCEA)

Computer Science (Pearson)

Digital Technology (CCEA)

Drama and Theatre Studies (AQA)

Economics (WJEC)

English (AQA)

English Literature (CCEA)

French (CCEA)

Further Mathematics (CCEA)

Geography (CCEA)

German (CCEA)

Government and Politics (CCEA)

Health and Social Care (CCEA)

Subject Title (Awarding Body)

History (CCEA)

Latin (OCR)

Life and Health Sciences (CCEA)

Mathematics (CCEA)

Moving Image Arts (CCEA)

Music (CCEA)

Nutrition and Food Science (CCEA)

Physical Education (Pearson)

Physics (CCEA)

Psychology (WJEC)

Religious Studies (CCEA)

Sociology (WJEC)

Software Systems Development (CCEA)

Spanish (CCEA)

Technology and Design (CCEA)

DEPARTMENTS

ART AND DESIGN

Our subject uptake has continued to grow: 19 AS students choose Art and Design for A level whilst the Form 5 class this year continued at 33 pupils.

Our senior pupils were given the opportunity to attend the Royal Ulster Academy of Arts Annual Exhibition in the Ulster Museum. These trips helped enhance their course as they viewed a range of work at the exhibition and were given a detailed tour by Maggie Bowen. Mrs O'Donnell and Laura Atkins had work selected to be shown in the exhibition.

Congratulations to our Art and Design students Holly Hooks and Anna McWilliams whose artwork was selected for the CCEA True Colours Virtual Exhibition. The exhibition showcased the top candidates from Northern Ireland.

This year we have had an Ulster University Fine Art student, Kathleen Malone, complete her 100-hour project within the department. During this time, she taught the pupils in Lower and Middle Sixth the skill of oil painting. She also gave a talk on portfolio development for those intending to apply to Art University courses.

Caitlin Arthurs, a Class of 2019 alumnus, visited the Academy to speak to pupils about Marketing and Graphic Design. Caitlin, who has been in the Marketing industry since she left B.R.A and is graduating Queen's University this year with a Business and IT degree, offered advice, awareness, and guidance to current pupils about the Marketing and Graphic Design career paths. The pupils enjoyed hearing about Caitlin's career and the type of work she is involved in.

Another former pupil, graphic designer Kerry Waugh, completed a short period of work experience with us in the Art and Design Department before making an application to the PGCE course where she was successful in gaining a place. During her time in the department, she shadowed the teachers and gave several talks to students on graphic design and branding.

The Art and Design Department continued with its many highly successful Art Clubs: afterschool Fantasy Art Club, Comic Creators Club, Game Makers Club, Staff Art Club, and Inktober drawing Challenge Month, all run by Art Technician, Laura Atkins, and Senior Art Club run by Art & Design teacher, Mrs Hare.

Students are encouraged to be involved in the art world through competitions and projects outside of the normal school curriculum. Form 4 pupil, Jai Beattie, won 1st place in the Newington Credit Union's Chapter 3 Art Competition.

The North Belfast Area Learning Community Schools' Art Exhibition took place in October hosted by Ulster University. Ten of our own outstanding Art and Design pupils were invited to attend with their family and friends to celebrate their art successes over the last year. It was a wonderful evening, as they were able to view their creative work alongside pupils from several other North Belfast schools in the Belfast School of Art.

The Art department ran a ceramics Christmas snowman workshop in November for Friends of the Academy to help raise much-needed funds.

The Creative Art Society continued this year with past pupil Kim Mawhinney as the patron and our pupil President and Vice President were Grace Rogan and Lucy Lyons respectively.

The Old Girls' Association kindly gifted us three sewing machines for the Art Department – these were both much-needed and highly appreciated as the machines they replaced were old and faulty.

The 2023-24 Annual Art and Design Exhibition took place this year in the Art and Design Department in June. Work was on display from the GCSE and A-Level groups as well as the Junior classes and extracurricular Art Clubs in our dedicated exhibition space and Art classrooms. We also had the Staff Preview Art and Design Exhibition event where school staff viewed the artwork and raised money for Save the Children Fund.

Mrs Patterson and Laura Atkins our Technician hosted P6 children from a local primary school for an art session on pareidolia.

Mrs Patterson and Mrs O'Donnell and Mrs McDevitt attended agreement trials run by CCEA for Art and Design.

The Owl Cover for 2022-23 was designed by Charlie Yates.

We have had several staffing changes this year. Mrs O'Donnell Retired from the Art and Design Department after 26 years at the Academy. Mrs McDevitt joined our department on a full-time bases to teach Art and Moving Image Arts. Mrs Hare went on maternity leave in January and Louise Reid joined the department from January to June before gaining a permanent teaching position at another school.

BIOLOGY

In September, our Lower Sixth cohort undertook a field trip to Tollymore Forest. The students acquired skills in conducting sampling in both deciduous and coniferous forest environments. We were pleasantly surprised by the beautiful sunshine, and we extend our gratitude to Field Studies Ireland for the excellent organisation of this successful day.

From January to August, three groups consisting of three students each participated in a Biological challenge organised by the Biology department of Cambridge University. The questions posed varied widely, ranging from inquiries such as "Why do animals have wheels?" to "Which species in your local area exhibits the most remarkable Biology?" Each group was allotted one month to formulate their answers, and they received scores based on the quality of their responses. They had the flexibility to utilise various presentation formats, including podcasts, PowerPoint presentations, videos or any other method of their choosing, with a maximum duration of five minutes. Ultimately, the groups achieved placements of 14th, 17th and 18th on the final national leaderboard, competing against over 5000 entries and more

than 2000 candidates. This accomplishment is a significant achievement for the students, who successfully balanced this challenge alongside their preparation for AS level examinations.

In May, we celebrated the return of the Big Day of Science, which saw the participation of over 60 primary 6 pupils in the Biology department, where they gained practical experience in a live classroom setting. The students were actively engaged from the moment they arrived, receiving an introduction to the plant cell structure. They had the opportunity to create slides for microscopic examination and to produce biological drawings based on their observations. The Biology staff thoroughly enjoyed the event and eagerly anticipates next year's activities.

The academic year marked the return of the complete curriculum and a reversion to pre-COVID assessment standards in Biology. Initially, the students were sceptical about no advanced information, which led to significant concern and anxiety regarding the upcoming assessments. We implemented a uniform strategy throughout the department to adequately prepare the students for the challenges they would encounter. Consequently, we were elated by the results our students achieved in August 2024. We extend our gratitude to each of our students for their dedication and perseverance, as this year's results are exceptional. We commend our students for their hard work and reliance in successfully navigating the complexities of this academic year.

BUSINESS STUDIES

It has been a difficult year for the Department with a valued member of our team, Ms Adams, leaving due to ill-health. Timetables were rearranged to allow Mr Murphy to take over the role of Subject Leader for Careers and for Mrs McQuiston to take on an additional AS class. Mr Irwin worked with our long-term substitute teacher, Mr Megarry, to check on progress and induction into school life. All departmental members continued to work as UCAS mentors to aid transition to University.

As a department, we continued to provide extra tuition and therapy sessions for pupils within the Study Support system to help with grade improvement. Form 3 continued their information building trip to Subway for a group project and it is our intention in the coming academic term to embed more industry visits for two year groups and then progress the following year to all year groups. Our pupils were given support to find meaningful work placements and feedback was given during class to discuss experiences given and skills developed. Many senior pupils were encouraged to attend numerous visiting speakers arranged by the Careers team.

CHEMISTRY

The Chemistry Department had a 95 % pass rate at A2 level, 91 % at AS level and 98 % at GCSE level.

An excellent total of 8 pupils achieved an A* at A level (21 %) and almost 60 % of the cohort achieved an A* - A grade.

Nearly 70 % of the cohort achieved an A grade at AS level.

An unbelievable total of 42 pupils (almost 35 % of the cohort) achieved an A* at GCSE level.

The results obtained by the Chemistry department were considerably above the NIGSA at all levels.

4 pupils competed in the regional heat of the 'Top of the Bench' Competition, finishing in an excellent third place.

11 M6 pupils were entered for the UK Chemistry Olympiad Competition. A total of 2 gold, 5 silver and 2 bronze certificates were awarded.

COMPUTER SCIENCE/DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Lunch-time code clubs are always very busy. In Monday's Code Club for Forms 1 – 3 in C2, pupils had the opportunity to use a range of hardware and software to learn the basis of coding. Girls' Code Club in J3 on Tuesdays at lunchtime is always popular, where pupils created projects using Microbits, HTML and Python.

DRAMA

7 pupils studied Drama and Theatre at GCE A-Level: 100% obtained grades A-B with an impressive 86% awarded an A grade.

12 pupils studied GCSE Drama: 100% obtained A-C* with 58% obtaining an A grade.

As part of the Shared Education initiative, 15 Academy students teamed up with their counterparts at St Malachy's College, Belfast, to star in their school production of *Bugsy Malone*.

The Drama department was once again selected to be a part of the Schools Affiliation scheme with the Lyric Theatre, Belfast. The aim of the scheme is to develop relationships and strengthen communication with the Lyric. We are delighted that the department has been selected to be a part of the programme for the 2024/25 academic year.

GCSE and A Level students took part in a series of workshops with a number of local theatre companies:

- In October, after attending a performance of *Rhino* at the Lyric Theatre, Sixth Form students took part in a physical theatre workshop with Tinderbox Theatre Company, the producers of the show;
- In December, GCSE Drama students from Forms IV and V attended a stage combat workshop at the Lyric Theatre followed by a backstage tour;
- In January, Lower VI students attended a theatre workshop with Bruiser Theatre Company at the Mac, Belfast. Led by Artistic Director Lisa May, students attended four 90-minute sessions with industry experts which proved invaluable in helping them prepare for their practical examination, as well as showcasing a variety of careers in the Creative Arts industry.

GCSE and A Level students attended a series of live theatre performances including local-produced shows *Rhino*, *Burnt Out*, *Agreement* and *The Pillowman* at the Lyric, and the touring West End production of the award winning *Life of Pi* at the Grand Opera House.

In the Spring term, GCSE Drama students showcased their practical work to a packed-out audience of friends, family and teachers.

LVI Drama student, Lucy Lyons, attended a two-week summer residential in Manchester as part of the National Youth Theatre's Kickstart for Actors course. With over 4000 people auditioning, Lucy was one of only a handful of people selected from Northern Ireland to attend this course where she honed her skills, culminating in a devised performance.

MVI student and budding playwright, Tom Moore, made his directorial debut in the summer with his play *Connections* staged at Ballyearl Courtyard Theatre. Alongside Tom, fellow Academy students Jack Cairns (MVI), Joseph Golden (MVI), Rhys Pollard (MVI) and Ella Kilpatrick (LVI), along with Class of 2023 alumnus Matthew Mullan, helped make up the cast.

Both the Drama and English departments hosted Queen's University Belfast student Rheanna Gilmore on a work placement as part of her Drama degree. Rheanna, who hopes to apply for a PGCE, gained valuable experience as she shadowed KS3, KS4 and KS5 Drama and English classes.

Junior Drama Club continued to be a very successful and popular extra-curricular activity, attracting up to thirty Form 1 and 2 pupils on a Wednesday afternoon.

ECONOMICS

2023-24 was another exciting year to be studying Economics with pupils having the opportunity to analyse and discuss such topics as falling inflation rates and the impact of higher interest rates on the economy.

I have continued to amend my teaching notes on an annual basis to take account of the changes in the economy and where I feel that the layout could be improved to prepare pupils as well as possible for the WJEC examination.

I sent an "Economics Briefing" by email to the parents of Sixth Form pupils on a regular basis to provide details of upcoming class assessments, the range of marks on completed assessments and other information which I thought might be of interest. This was well received by parents.

The best Economics results this year were at AS level where 70% of pupils achieved a grade A or B, compared to the last pre-covid results of 55%. At GCSE, results were broadly in line with expectations, although an outcome of 100% grade C or above was encouraging given the ability and level of motivation of some pupils.

At A2 pupils achieved results which were in line with what they achieved in other subjects of similar difficulty but were a little lower than last year, as there was a larger-than-usual number of pupils with high levels of absenteeism and low levels of motivation.

We finished the M6 year as usual with a Pizza and Hot Dog Evening which most pupils chose to attend.

Just over 40% of A2 pupils have chosen to study Economics or a closely related subject at university in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and England.

ENGLISH

This year, 41 pupils studied English Literature at GCE 'A' Level, while a further 26 opted for GCE 'A' Level English Language. 96% of 'A2' Literature students obtained A*- C while 100% of 'A-Level' Language students achieved A*- C.

208 pupils studied GCSE English Language; 190 pupils also completed GCSE English Literature. 99.5% of Language students obtained A*- C and 100% of English Literature students achieved A*- C.

The Department created a Shared Education Schools' poetry anthology entitled, *Identity*. A pamphlet launch and poetry reading took place at RBAI, where representatives from schools in the NBALC were in attendance. Furthermore, Fíilí Lorcán McCusker's poem, *Ulster Botanic and Ice Cream*, featured in the Irish Times Young Writers' Annual Showcase anthology.

In co-operation with the Library, Accelerated Reader proceeded for Forms I and II. Our pupils managed to read 164,827,598 words and take 2,979 quizzes. We introduced 'Reading Ambassador' badges for pupils managing to read one million words and above. 58 pupils achieved a 'Reading Ambassador' badge in their house colour throughout the academic year.

Other pupil-focused activities included Read-On week as Form I and II pupils, co-ordinated by Ms McBeth and Dr Mort, raised £2,224.16 for the Northern Ireland Cancer Fund for Children, the Library hosting the Scholastic Book Fairs raising £330.20 for library books and 'Habitat for Humanity' visiting the 'ReStore' premises in Lisburn to find out how the business is organised.

Staff development activities included a trip to Seamus Heaney HomePlace with the English Literature students of St Malachy's, Belfast. Colleagues also attended a Shared Education day with St Malachy's, Belfast, as well as hosting a student from QUB, Rheanna Gilmore.

GEOGRAPHY

The Geography Department had another successful year both inside and outside the classroom during 2023-2024. The results for the department were extremely positive and continue to be in line with or slightly above the NIGSA.

We were delighted to have Haydn Dillon Wright accepted to read Geography at Oxford University and Ellie Bell and Mia Sittlington choosing to study the subject at Queen's University Belfast.

Geography continues to be a popular choice at GCSE and A Level with numbers continuing to grow. The current Form 4 cohort has 63 students which is showing demand in that area. This is very pleasing for the department as the subject links to a wide range of university choices and careers including Medicine, Law, Environmental Science and Business.

During the year, the department had two students attend the British Council Mock COP 28 event at Belfast City Hall. Ellie Bell and Haydn Dillon Wright represented Poland and, whilst developing their political skills, secured deals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In October, the CEO of the National Trust, Hilary McGrady, delivered a talk to students on how they can get involved in the Trust, discussing her career pathway as a woman in business. This was well-received by pupils and it is hoped that she will come back to speak to students again.

Also in October, we were able to take our Lower 6th students to the North Coast for a Sand Dune Study. This linked well to their Unit 1 and 3 examinations. The students went to Magilligan Field Centre and were able to take advantage of the expertise of the field centre staff to complete their study. The students visited Magilligan Point and went through the Umbra Sand Dunes, studying the local wildlife, soil pH, temperature, and soil water content. This was a great experience and allowed our students to apply classwork learning to the real-world environment.

Additionally, Form 5 students visited Limavady to for their river study. This involved getting their feet wet in the River Roe whilst studying the changing river characteristics as we moved downstream.

The department led a very successful trip to Naples, Italy, with 40 students embracing the chance to study coasts and volcanic activity around the island of Capri and Mount Vesuvius. This was an excellent opportunity for the students to explore their curriculum in real life and hopefully we can continue trips like these going forward.

The department saw 'Geography Club' start for junior school pupils, involving games, discussions and useless facts on Monday lunchtimes. This is an extremely popular club, with over 40 pupils regularly attending. Additionally, the department has started an Eco Society called the 'Green Goblins', who meet once a fortnight. They will work towards the Green Flag award and ensure BRA becomes a more sustainable school going forward.

The staff continue to work hard to develop resources, materials and revision for students, providing extra support during the week and on Tuesday afternoons to students who require a bit of extra help.

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Politics enjoyed a successful year in 2023-24 with pleasing examination results, extra-curricular activities, trips to Westminster and Stormont, the completion of the first year of the Law and Politics Society with a new group starting in February 2024 and events for junior school students around the General Election.

Although demand for the subject fell from its record high in 2022-23, 14 students completed AS Politics. Results in August covered the full range of student ability in BRA, with Amandine Chesnel scoring full raw marks in AS2 The British Political Process (worth 24% of the full A Level) and only losing 3 raw marks in AS1 The Government and Politics of NI. This has given her a uniform score of 158/160 UMS at AS, the highest score (by 12 UMS) of any BRA student since the beginning of the revised specification in 2016.

At A2, 28 students continued with the subject: the biggest cohort of Politics students during my 11 years at the Academy. While it was disappointing to lose 2 L6 top performers and prize winners (Andrew Ferguson and Jack Gilmour) as they progressed down the STEM route, results held up for the cohort from AS to A2 with 68% being awarded A*-B, compared to 71% A-B at AS last year. It also must be noted that 68% of A*-B grades compared very favourably to the 2019 BRA Politics results of 46% A*-B (and where only 1 student achieved an A grade and there were 0 A* grades), yet CCEA returned to 2019 levels of grade achievement. While I would be thrilled to take all the credit for this, it is perhaps more indicative of the fluctuations of a smaller subject like Politics.

Two students, Cara Campbell and Joshua Harold were awarded an A* grade. Cara scored 100/100 UMS in A22 Political Ideas and Joshua scored 137/140 UMS in A21 Comparative Government of the USA and UK. It is particularly gratifying to note that both these students were deeply committed to extra-curricular activities in school through the orchestra/ensemble groups and rugby respectively. Both Cara and Joshua thoroughly deserved their grades due to the very high standard of their work throughout two years of A Level study and both have gone on to study Politics and Philosophy at university (Glasgow and Warwick).

Politics in Action

Now in its fifth year (even with the pandemic), Politics in Action continues to provide great opportunities for students to engage with politicians and to think more deeply about how politics affects them and society as a whole, alongside students from St. Malachy's College and Dominican College. This year, for the first time since 2020, BRA's 7 places were not filled solely by Politics AS students and I was pleased to afford the opportunity to other L6 students. As ever, our group was ably led and facilitated by Dr David McCann of Ulster University, Slugger O'Toole and BBC NI election pundit, and the discussions and debate focused on Westminster's role in NI, in focus due to the then upcoming General Election. Students were able to visit Stormont (before the return of the Assembly) in October 2023. They heard from outgoing Speaker, Alex Maskey (Sinn Féin) and questioned Phillip Brett MLA (DUP) and Kelly Armstrong MLA (Alliance). In the afterschool sessions, they also got to put questions to Claire Hanna MP (SDLP), Doug Beattie MLA (UUP) and journalist Sam McBride (northern editor for the *Belfast Telegraph*). Their manifesto covered the Legacy Act, infrastructure funding and universal basic income and was presented to Mike Nesbitt MLA (UUP), Sian Mulholland MLA (Alliance) and

Alison Morris (crime and security correspondent for the *Belfast Telegraph*) who all commented on the mature approach taken and sound ideas proposed by the group.

Politics Trips

In January 2024, I organised the bi-annual trip to Westminster and the Supreme Court – the first since January 2020 – for 34 Politics A Level students. I am pleased that so many students wanted to participate and were able to afford such a trip. This is possible because I make all the bookings directly rather than going through a travel company and the Westminster travel subsidy. I was delighted to have Ms McCay on her first Westminster trip and Dr Campbell on his fourth, along with Dr Springer on his third trip and Miss Molly McAuley, the Politics QUB PGCE student (November 2023-February 2024) to accompany the students. I am indebted to the staff for agreeing to come on such a busy two days and make what is always a memorable experience possible for students.

On the first day, we visited the Imperial War Museum, had time for some shopping in Westfield Stratford, met up with former BRA Politics student, Niamh Carroll (class of 2016) now working as a journalist in London, and took in the sights from the top of the 20 Fenchurch Street skyscraper 'Walkie Talkie' building. On the second day, we visited Westminster for a tour and workshop on debating laws, visited the London School of Economics to hear from Dr Andrew Scott about studying at LSE, visited the Supreme Court for a tour and met up with another former BRA Politics student, Faye Kidd (class of 2014), who was very gracious with her time in speaking to students about university and her work at the BBC.

In March 2024, with the return of the Assembly and Executive, L6 students were able to visit an operating Stormont – the first visit such since 2016 because the various suspensions and a global pandemic (but mostly the suspensions). This served as a reminder that the challenges involved in teaching and studying Politics A Level are unlike any other subject, as even one event (even a minor one) can have far-reaching consequences in the political world. It was personally rewarding to have students visit an operational Stormont, sit in the Chamber during an adjournment in proceedings (rather than a suspension), observe scrutiny of the Executive through the Committee for the Executive Office and have them make connections between the theory of the classroom with the practice in reality. During the visit, students met and questioned Nuala McAllister (Alliance) and Phillip Brett (DUP), both north Belfast MLAs with a great interest in BRA.

Law and Politics Society

2023-24 saw the end of the first cycle of the Law and Politics Society, which ended with a trip to the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast to meet alumnus Mr Justice Scofield. Students were accompanied by our Patron, Andrew Palmer BL. During the visit, Law and Politics students also got to meet Lady Justice Siobhan Keegan, the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland. There is no doubt that this was an inspiring visit for many of the students, and one that I hope propels them forward in their law career. Students also had the opportunity to meet with former BRA students, Eve Henderson and Rowan Moore (class of 2021) to ask them about their experiences of studying Politics and Law at Queen's University Belfast. Both Eve and Rowan spoke well about the realities of lectures, seminars, essays and dissertation research

at university, along with some of the other unexpected opportunities that have arisen for them such as work experience and semesters studying abroad. In February 2024, the new President and Vice President were chosen in Mya Pearson and Grace McAllister. They have made a tentative start to their term, leading a session on human rights and civil liberties. In June 2024, 10 students in the Society were fortunate to take part in the oversubscribed UK Supreme Court Debate Day. Students took part in a mock trial debating whether freedom of the press should override an individual's right to privacy, presenting their cases to the student judges. The teams For and Against and the Judges panel was each coached by government lawyers from the Ministry of Defence, the Department for Levelling Up and the Supreme Court in the morning to hone their arguments before moving into the oral arguments. The judges then deliberated and then decided who won the case. Students then had the opportunity to ask questions about the work and careers of the coaches. Overall, it was a very worthwhile experience for students looking to gain more insight into a career in law.

General Election

With Rishi Sunak's announcement of a July election, I was able to promote two events for junior school students while the examination years were on study leave. Around 15 Form 1 students attended a virtual event led by former journalist and 'Spin Doctor' turned podcaster Alastair Campbell, hosted by Waterstones to promote his children's and teens' books *Why Politics Matters* and *Alastair Campbell Talks Politics*. Even though it was a virtual event, it was pleasing to see the engagement of our Form 1 students on the issues discussed.

I also worked with a group of around 8 students from Form 1-4 to organise a House Mock General Election. Students met over a series of break and lunch times to make decisions about how the election would be organised in school. Those wishing to participate were tasked with making election posters highlighting the parties' policies and then were actively involved in running the election itself.

As ever, in mock elections in school, it can be surprising how students vote. It is apparent how persuasive and attractive some parties can make themselves through their social media platforms to younger people. Although it was an event to raise students' awareness of the General election and win some House points, it also served as a reminder to us all about the responsibility in citizenship education, and politics more specifically, in a school as richly diverse as Belfast Royal Academy.

HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Interest in Health and Social Care uptake in September 2023 has maintained a high level, in terms of one class of 20 pupils. However, teacher availability has been impacted due to the introduction of Psychology. It is thought that a second class of Health and Social Care is needed and it is hoped that, moving forward, another teacher will become available to teach Health and Social Care.

In October 2023, all L6 students engaged in a self-organised work placement to assist them in completing their first coursework unit. Many availed of the primary school experience organised and run by Ms Graham whilst others organised their own placements at their former primary school or in different settings. Those students who were unsuccessful in

getting a placement instead interviewed a health professional, although their coursework would have been strengthened if they had been able to secure a placement.

In conjunction with the Home Economics department, a coffee morning was run by pupils for pensioners in the local community. This provides a way for students to develop in relation to the school priorities in terms of the three Cs. Although we had small number in attendance this year, we hope to build on this.

In previous year, the Health and Social department have had links with St Malachy's, but this wasn't utilised this school year. Miss Rebecca Burns, a health professional working with Mental Health, spoke to M6 students in May 2024, supporting an element in their Unit 3 examination.

Subject Leader Mrs McNally has a strong working relationship with the Careers department; from a departmental perspective, this is extremely beneficial. Mrs McNally works closely with the Careers department with regard to organising work placements in October for L6 students whilst Mr Murphy provides guidance and support in relation to charter applications which are excellent placements in the hospital. This has not been able to happen post-COVID but some online careers events have continued.

Targets for Next Academic Year

- A Level - 100% A-C Grades at A2 and A/S Level
- A Level - 10% achieving A*-A grade at A2

HISTORY

Staffing

Mr Ross Graham (one-year temporary) was replaced by Mr Steven Kitchen (full-time permanent) at the start of the academic year. In April, Mrs Robyn Chambers began her maternity leave and has been temporarily replaced by Mr Andrew Cave.

Curriculum

In Form 1 we introduced the history of Belfast Royal Academy to tie in with a special Founders' Day Assembly in September 2023. We re-introduced the Reformation into the Form 1 scheme of work, and for the first time, taught the history of the Crusades. These topics meant the spiritual awareness component of the NI curriculum was met in a meaningful way.

In Form 2 we re-introduced the Voyages of Discovery and Colonisation, which had not been taught in many years. This was a wonderful addition to our scheme of work as pupils explored how History affects personal identity, culture and lifestyle. Pupils were introduced to the concept of different perspectives in History, examined whether exploration and colonisation were a good or bad thing, and questioned the ethical behaviour of the colonisers, a very topical debate with current reactions against historical figures such as Christopher Columbus. This assignment made up 10% of the June report and as part of a pilot scheme to reduce the use of Artificial Intelligence, it was completed in school with pupils only allowed access to one

A4 planning page. The process worked very well and it is one we hope to emulate in the next academic year.

Form 3 again started with the very popular World War One topic and continued with a look at the Home Front and the role of the Suffragettes. Pupils again looked at the ethical debate regarding the Suffragettes' use of violence and how this might have hindered their success in achieving suffrage. This year we re-introduced a robust module on the Partition of Ireland as this is compulsory content at Key Stage 3. It was also a strategic decision in that it teaches the background of the Form 4 module on Northern Ireland, 1965-1998. This will save us much-needed time in Form 4.

Form 4 saw the greatest change as we moved to modular rather than linear examinations. This was a difficult decision to make as the two units in History are not equally weighted (Unit 1 is worth 60% and Unit 2 is worth 40%). We prepared thoroughly for the change by using study leave in the previous year to create new booklets and resources to allow us to complete Unit 1 in the necessary timeframe. While we achieved this, the pace of teaching was fast. In May we invited Helen Park, the CCEA History Subject Specification Officer into school to discuss how we might build on our progress this year. Starting with Unit 2 is a strong option to consider for the 2024-25 Form 4 cohort.

The syllabi for Forms 5-M6 remained unchanged. This was the first year since Covid-19 that there were no mitigations. Pupils and teachers adapted well to the return to complete specifications being taught. New booklets were created for AS1 Germany- notes and past examination questions were created into separate booklets- and for A22, a new examination technique and past questions' booklet was created. These were a great addition to teaching and learning.

We continue to promote literacy within our subject. At Key Stage 3, pupils continue to complete two 10% tasks that contribute to their reports: all three year groups did an oracy task in autumn and a written task in spring. This is a template we would be keen to emulate in successive years. In September 2023 we worked with 'Parallel Histories' to develop confidence using sources and to become more confident when communicating orally. This involved a workshop after school and culminated in a debating day at Stormont as part of Good Relations Week.

A class set of Chromebooks was a great addition to the department. These have been used regularly and effectively at all key stages. Form 1 researched comparisons between the Black Death and Covid-19, Form 2 have created a tourist leaflet on the Spanish Armada and Form 3 have created a WWI rationing menu. The Chromebooks have added great variety to our teaching and learning activities and promoted ICT within the department.

Enrichment

We had a strong desire this year to continue and expand the variety of enrichment activities on offer to our pupils within the department and as a result, pupils across the year groups were offered a range of historical experiences.

At Key Stage 3, all Form 1 pupils visited Carrickfergus Castle in late January to see what life was like in a medieval castle and to learn how it was attacked and defended. This was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Two Form 3 classes took part in the Nerve Centre's project 'Friday's Future'. Pupils received digital skills training and engaged with archive collections to look at and respond to the history of The Good Friday Agreement.

At Key Stage 4, two Form 4 classes participated in the 'Youth Urban Heritage Project' run by Ulster University's School of Architecture and Built Environment. The project involved three one-hour sessions and was designed to study young people's perceptions of, and relationship with, their local built heritage. Belfast Royal Academy was selected as being of particular significance in the story of Belfast's Built Heritage as the oldest school in Belfast and because much of Belfast's notable built heritage owes its existence to notable BRA alumnus, Robert Young. Another Form 4 class took part in a shared education event in April at the QFT in Belfast. This was an excellent CEIAG partnership as pupils were shown how History can be used in town planning, architecture, heritage and many other jobs. Pupils watched episode two of the BBC series 'Once Upon a Time in Northern Ireland', a multi-award winning documentary that covers our GCSE Section B module on 'The Troubles'. Pupils had the opportunity to ask questions from a panel of series' participants to talk to the young people. Ms Barnett, Mr Kitchen and Dr Adair also attended a special screening for teachers of the BBC 'Once Upon a Time' documentary. This was a great opportunity to discuss how the documentary could be used as a potential teaching resource to pupils.

Both L6 and M6 pupils attended a senior assembly taken by Dr Adair to commemorate Holocaust memorial week, where they learnt about more recent genocides in Rwanda and Cambodia. In the same week, a guest speaker from Generation2Generation came into school to speak about her family's experience of the Holocaust. Diana Cook gave a very personal testimony of her mother's experience of discrimination in Nazi Germany and her movement to Britain as a Jewish nurse. She spoke about her appearance on the BBC 'The Repair Shop' to get her mother's German dictionary restored. (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001djnp>). 27 History and Politics pupils travelled to Krakow on 31 January for four days to mark Holocaust Memorial Week. Pupils visit Auschwitz-Birkenau and Schindler's Factory as part of this trip. This was a real highlight of the year.

The History department were delighted to welcome BBC journalists Tara Mills and Declan Harvey into school to speak to our M6 pupils about their award-winning podcast 'The Year '21' as many of their episodes complimented our A22 Partition course and gave the often-unheard narrative from the unnamed contributors to History. (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/p0926q6m?page=1>). In May, Mr Ronnie Hanna, principal examiner for A21 Option 5, gave the pupils a lecture on the American presidency. He provided an excellent overview of the century and reinforced important turning points.

Vision and Visibility

Our Open Nights in January were very successful. The trench made a reappearance and was again accompanied with an opportunity to enlist and suffer the humiliation of being given a white feather if you did not sign up. Prospective pupils and parents alike really enjoyed the opportunity to sample medieval food and drink at our inaugural 'Come Dine With Me.'

We have regularly posted the range of activities and experiences we have offered our pupils on social media.

We had another strong vision for the department this year and I am very proud of our achievements. We worked extremely hard as a team to provide the best experiences for our pupils both inside and outside the History classroom. Testimony to this hard work can again be seen in the fact that we continue to be one of the most popular GCSE subjects with 93 pupils having selected History for GCSE next year.

HOME ECONOMICS

This year saw an increase in the number of practical lessons for pupils in Forms 1-4. Practical lessons started in September with an aim of having at least one practical per fortnight (weekly for F4). This could be seen to not only promote interest in the subject, but to engage learners by applying knowledge they had learned in theory lessons to a practical setting, therefore, incorporating repetition and the spiral curriculum.

Form 5 pupils began their controlled assessment task in September, producing particularly impressive research. Students also excelled in the practical element of the task, their menus were well planned and expertly executed after a lot of practising. Form 5 also had the opportunity to take part in a high-level knife skills masterclass, kindly provided by the canteen staff.

MVI students each completed a research project based on a title of their choosing, along with completing theory content for A2 1: Option B.

Teaching MVI and LVI in composite classes proved challenging.

Results at GCSE and A2 were positive but the AS results were of a lower standard than expected, leading to the decision to set subject entry criteria.

This year also saw collaboration with other departments, for example the Spanish churros practicals, which were a great opportunity for students no longer studying Home Economics to gain some practical food preparation skills whilst improving their Spanish through translating recipes.

Pupils also had many opportunities to take part in some of the extra-curricular Home Economics competitions, including the Christmas Yule log decorating competitions for Form 1, the edible Christmas wreath competition for Form 3, the gingerbread competition for Form 4, the Easter Bake Off and the Canteen Masterchef competition at the end of the year.

There was also an opportunity to reach out into the community with LVI and MVI pupils baking for, and assisting with, the afternoon tea for older residents living in the local community. Younger members of the local community also got a taste of Home Economics at the primary school taster event.

I am very grateful to the four non-specialist members of teaching staff, who helped in the department, teaching Forms 1 and 2, and to Diane Younge, the Biology technician, for going above and beyond the call of duty in keeping the Home Economics department organised.

LIBRARY

The 2023/24 academic year became our most successful on Accelerated Reader since its inception in 2011. 58 pupils became millionaire readers by the end of the year as opposed to 40 pupils the previous year. The Library successfully hosted two Scholastic book fairs throughout the academic year. We earned £951.51 in total at our fairs and earned £330.20 worth of free books for our Library.

The Library also marked and celebrated many important events throughout the academic year. This included:

- National Poetry Day
- Book Week NI
- International Day of Mathematics
- Anti-Bullying Week
- World Book Day

The Library also hosted school reunions at the end of the academic year. It had been another very successful year within our School Library.

MATHEMATICS

It was a good year for the department in terms of results and uptake for UKMT contests. The department continues to provide a high level of support in person and with resources that are prepared for our students.

Benchmarking GCSE 2024						
CCEA	%A*	%A	%B	%C*	%C	%D
B.R.A.	27.1	75.4	98.6	100	100	100
NI Grammar	15.2	55.6	82.4	90.9	95.6	98.1

Benchmarking AS 2024					
CCEA	%A	%B	%C	%D	%E
B.R.A.	65.8	84.9	94.5	100	100
NI Grammar	48.1	72.8	88.0	94.9	98.2

Benchmarking A2 2024						
CCEA	%A*	%A	%B	%C	%D	%E
B.R.A.	32.3	67.7	89.2	100	100	100
NI Grammar	19.3	54.7	79.1	93.8	98.5	99.7

The school representatives continue to perform impressively in competitive, extracurricular Mathematics. The senior UKMT team competitions did not run but the Queen's competition did take place. The senior team of Oscar Hill (M6), Harrison Kirk (M6), Matt McLaughlin (M6) and Oliver Pearce (M6) at the Queen's competition ranked 4th amongst the teams from across NI. The junior team of Fritz Blasco (F3), Nathan Keed (F2), Ryan Pogue (F3) and Ryan Teague (F2) performed well but failed to place.

Individual competitions continued to produce a large number of awards for BRA pupils and success in the further rounds.

At Senior level, pupils achieved: 3 Gold, 10 Silver and 24 Bronze awards. Oscar Hill (M6), Oliver Pearce (M6) and Nathan Rossal (L6) qualified for the next round (the Senior Kangaroo) with Oliver earning a merit certificate.

At Intermediate level, pupils achieved: 2 Gold, 11 Silver and 17 Bronze awards. Keshav Raghuram (F4) qualified for the next round (the Pink Kangaroo) and achieved a merit.

At Junior level, pupils achieved: 4 Gold, 10 Silver and 25 Bronze awards. In addition to earning Gold awards, Ejike Alinonu (F1) and Caleb Cousins (F2) qualified for the next round (the Junior Kangaroo).

MOVING IMAGE ARTS

Interest in Moving Image Arts for uptake in September 2023 was high, and due to this we had to select pupils on the basis of a summer task and test. Due to the highly practical nature of the course, one class of 10 pupils is a manageable amount for this level.

Mrs Patterson and Mrs McDevitt attended several events throughout the year run by CCEA on marking and teaching Moving Image Arts. They also liaised with St Malachy's for the moderation process and marking.

The Moving Image Arts pupils attended MIA showcase in Cineworld in November. They had the opportunity to view films from the top young filmmakers in Northern Ireland along with meeting some of films' actors and directors in person.

We are extremely pleased with the outstanding results gained by the first group of pupils taught Moving Image Arts at BRA. Out of the 9 pupils who finished the course, 7 gained A grades at AS level.

MODERN & CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

The Modern and Classical Languages Department welcomed Eilidh Wallace to the Department who has settled well into the Department and the Academy.

In November, we welcomed Miss Sophie Laughlin from QUB for her SE1 placement. Sophie taught German and French and was an excellent member of the team.

This academic year was a very busy year for school trips. In January, pupils went on the Spanish Exchange; in February, Miss Wallace took a group of A level French pupils to Paris; the Classics and Geography Departments had a successful trip to Sorrento in April; Form 2 pupils were in Paris in June and finally, Lower 6th pupils completed a 190km stage of the Camino de Santiago.

In March, we had the absolute pleasure of hosting student teachers from the Haute École Robert Schuman HERS (Belgium). They observed a variety of lessons and taught some GCSE and A level pupils. It was an excellent opportunity to share pedagogical strategies and for pupils to have an opportunity to practise with native speakers.

In June, Megan Flood (L6) was selected as the Area and UK winner for the Queen's College Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

100% of Form V achieved an A*-B in CCEA GCSE Music, 100% achieved A*-B at AS and 100% achieved A*-A at A2.

Eight pupils (Alex Simon (M6), Harrison Kirk (M6) , Beth Stewart (L6), Katie Horkan (L6), Rachael Anderson (L6), Niall Blaskett (L6), Aidan Murphy (L6) and Thomas Gillam (L6), gained a place in the National Youth Choir of NI and 6 pupils gained a place in the Ulster Youth Orchestra: Alex McQueen (Form V cello), Maria Watters (Form L6 Violin), Jamie Wilson (Form M6 violin), Matthew Rankin (M6 percussion), Hugo Reilly Stewart (M6 violin) and Harrison Kirk (M6 trumpet). These pupils performed with these groups at various concerts throughout the summer months. Jamie Wilson was accepted onto St John's College Cambridge Choral Masterclass at the start of July and very much enjoyed his time there. He was so inspired by the course, that he now wishes to study at St John's Cambridge as a Choral Scholar.

2023/24 was a very busy year for the Music Department with the pupils performing at the School Musical, Carol Service, Prize Day, Open Nights, School functions and the Spring Concert.

Music Extra Curricular

The Senior Orchestra and Chamber Choir performed at Prize Day in the Spires Centre.

The Chamber Choir sang at the 174 Trust's Annual Carol Service in Duncairn Arts Centre. The Carol Service took place in St Anne's Cathedral with performances from the Senior Choir, Chamber Choir, Junior Choir and Senior Orchestra.

The Boys' Choir entertained everyone on the last day of term before the Christmas Holidays with their lively rendition of well-known Christmas carols.

The Big Band, Senior and Junior Trad and various string quartets entertained prospective pupils at the School's annual Open Evenings in January.

The Senior Trad took part in Belfast City Council's St Patrick's Day celebration in Royal Avenue and even appeared on BBC Newsline.

Over 350 pupils participated in the annual Spring Concert in the Ulster Hall. There were performances from the Orchestra, Chamber Choir, Senior Choir, Big Band, Senior Strings, Wind Band, Junior Trad, Senior Trad, Boys' Choir, Junior Choir and Junior Strings. Hugo Reilly Stewart was the M6 soloist and received a standing ovation with his rendition of 'The Lark Ascending' by Vaughan-Williams.

The AS and A2 pupils recorded their own pieces of coursework over a number of after school sessions in school. This greatly aided their understanding of the composition and recording process.

PHYSICS

Riya Raghuram placed first in Northern Ireland and Ryan Ferguson placed third for combined Physics, Chemistry, and Biology marks at A level in the Ulster Scientists' Trust annual awards, formerly known as the Sir Hans Sloane Award (2023 leavers).

A total of 31 GCSE, AS and A2 students participated in the British Physics Olympiad competitions – six gold awards were achieved in total, including a Top Gold for Oscar Hill (M6), who ranked among the top 125 pupils in the UK.

At GCSE level, 100% of students attained a grade A*-C, with 91.2% awarded grade A*-B.

Grade A-C performance at AS level was 11% above the Northern Ireland grammar school average, with 88.2% of students reaching this standard.

At A2 level, 88.5% of pupils attained grades A*-B, and 96.2% achieved grades A*-C, 25.8% and 13% above the Northern Ireland grammar school average, respectively.

PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology uptake in September 2023 was extremely high; it had to be closed as an option in August due to high demand.

In June 2023, Subject Leader Mrs McNally attended a course looking at best practice for Psychology teachers at Queen's University Belfast. This has proved extremely beneficial in building a support network of teachers of Psychology in the area.

Caitlin Harmon, a 3rd year student from Queen's University was in school every Wednesday afternoon to work with a small group of pupils for support with Psychology. While this opportunity was only taken up by 3 students, I hope to continue it next year.

Mrs McNally has a strong working relationship with the Careers department which has proven to be extremely beneficial. There is a Careers notice board for Psychology in J11, keeping students up to date with developments and opportunities in the field of Psychology. One

psychology student worked on a psychology summer project with Sentinus. Julie Smith, a former BRA pupil, spoke to many of the Psychology students and others interested in a career involving Psychology in February 2024.

Targets for next academic year:

- A Level - 100% A-C Grades at A2 and A/S Level
- A Level - 20% achieving A*-A grade at A2

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The teaching staff have updated notes for GCSE / AS /A2. Our switch from the Church History course to Philosophy at AS/A2 was a positive move as the AS/A2 courses saw a significant jump in numbers of students doing RE at A-Level. However, results for the Philosophy module were not as positive than we anticipated and, as a result, we have taken the decision to switch back to the Church History module at AS/A2 level as we think our teaching strengths lie there and there is a greater opportunity of gaining higher grades.

In light of only getting 1 hour per week of Form 4 RE teaching time, we continued to use the space in the KS3 curriculum to teach the first unit of Form 4 GCSE from January of Form 3. We believe this was a very positive decision, and we are in the process of updating the current GCSE notes.

Having completed our second year teaching the new Philosophy unit in place of Mark's gospel at GCSE, we are delighted with the results. We have also updated last year's booklets, making what we believe to be major adjustments that will further benefit our students.

We further developed and updated booklets and embedded the 6 world faiths into the KS3 syllabus for 2023-24, creating a new 'Big Questions' booklet for form 1, a new 'Hinduism' booklet for form 2 and a new 'Islam' booklet for Form 3.

The Religious Studies department continued to use the study support material which assisted the pupils on a week-to-week basis, Google software as a pupil-based assessment tool, and the centralised 'Team Drive' which allows all members of the department access to standardised resources.

SOCIOLOGY

Sociology continues to be a very popular choice at A'Level. Grades remain strong with 72% of pupils achieving A*- B grades and 87% of pupils achieving A* - C grades in the A2 examinations. 84 % of pupils achieved A – C grades in the AS examinations.

TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN

In October, we were delighted to welcome STEM ambassador and former pupil, Peter Gilleece, into school as a STEM ambassador to talk to a selection of F5 and L6 pupils about his journey from school to university to becoming an entrepreneur.

In November and December, Mrs Graydon and Mrs McIlwaine ran a number of events for the GETSET girls in Forms 2 and 3, this year designing and manufacturing Christmas decorations using laser cutters.

In February, L6 Technology pupils attended the Institute of Civil Engineering Apprenticeship Day at W5, where they completed workshops with range of local companies including Translink, Farrans, ARUP and SACYR.

Also in February, 14 L6 pupils went on a site visit to York Street train station to see the range of Technology professions working on a 'live' site. We were invited by Translink and Graham Engineering as they wished to showcase how they are working with local communities to improve the transport infrastructure.

In March, two former pupils; Sofia Ramalha-McCourt and Rory Magill, hosted a talk and Q&A on studying Architecture at Queens and Almac's electrical engineering apprenticeship for pupils in Form 5 and L6 hoping to progress into similar pathways.

In June, a group of 15 Form 3 girls attended the International Women in Engineering Day at W5 where they took part in activities and talks from leading local women in engineering at a showcase of opportunities open to females in a range of engineering professions.

SPORT

Rugby

Rugby enjoyed a successful 2023/24 season.

There were some fantastic performances in the early season with some exciting rugby on display. Much of the early season was geared towards the Schools' Cup group campaign.

The first game was against Rainey Endowed School. In a very close encounter, B.R.A won the game 28-20. Two further group stage wins versus Foyle College and Grosvenor Grammar School meant B.R.A won their group, progressing to the last 16 of the Schools' Cup.

In preparation for their last 16 game, the team had a very successful trip to Edinburgh for a training camp. This was an excellent opportunity to refine many aspects of our game. The highlight of the trip was the opportunity to train at the indoor rugby pitch at the Scottish Institute of Sport (Oriam) - this was a memorable experience training where the Scotland National team do much of their training. The team trained and bonded superbly well and were well-prepared for their last 16 versus top-seeded Ballymena Academy.

The game against Ballymena was a very close game. The game ebbed and flowed with both teams showing some fantastic rugby. Ballymena edged the game with a 17-15 win. B.R.A were very disappointed but had given a performance they were very proud of.

There were some very notable individual successes during the season. Connor McVicker played for Ireland U18 Schools versus Wales U18 Schools. He was then also selected to

participate in an Ireland U18s Camp during the month of August, and was part of the very successful Ulster U18 Schools' team during the summer months, going on to win the Interprovincial title. Jayden Irwin and Adam Hewitt had a very successful summer also with Ulster U18 Clubs, whilst Aaron Caldwell and Ethan Pavlovic had a great summer campaign with Ulster U19s. It was fantastic to see so many players involved in the summer programme with Ulster Rugby, with 6 more players training with the Ulster U16 and U17 group.

Girls' Hockey

Representative Honours

Ulster U16

Leah Callaghan
Leah Carter
Rosa Clarke
Keri Gray
Beth Strong

Ireland U16

Leah Callaghan

4 senior teams and 4 junior teams represented BRA every Saturday in both competitive and friendly fixtures. In addition, a 5th XI played some mid-week friendlies and Saturday matches when possible.

1st XI won their SuperLeague group but lost in the quarter-final – They went out of the Senior Cup at the quarter-final stage but went on to win the Senior Shield.

2nd XI reached the 2nd round of the McDowell Cup (2s Cup competition)

3rd XI reached the Semi-final of the Gibson Cup (3s Cup competition)

4th XI reached the semi-final of their Cup.

U14s won their Superleague group but lost in the quarter-final.

The team reached the second round of the Junior Cup. Reached Semi-final of Junior Plate.

Form 1 Hockey club ran every Thursday and Saturday. The girls played friendly fixtures on Friday afternoons from November – February, as well as some blitz days and the annual Grosvenor tournament to finish their season in March.

Boys' Hockey

The 1st XI boys' hockey team, led by Captain Andrew Ferguson and Vice-Captains Bhuvanesh Venkatesan and Felix Morwood, faced a challenging season marked by growth and resilience. With an overall record of two wins and ten defeats, the highlight was a hard-fought 2-1 victory against Ballycastle High in the McCullough Cup. Although they did not advance to the quarter-finals, this win demonstrated the team's ability to learn and adapt. In the Burney Cup, they began with a promising 3-0 win over Lurgan College before being eliminated by Campbell

College Boys in the second round. Despite facing tough competition in friendlies, these experiences have been vital for their development.

The junior teams also showed promise this season. The Form 1 team, coached by Mr Morrison, participated in various friendly matches, gaining valuable experience. The Form 2 team, under Mr Dorman, entered the Bannister Bowl but faced an early exit in the first round against RBAI. The Form 3 team, coached by Mr Harte, competed in the Ferris Cup and Plate and were eliminated in the first round by Royal and Prior and Regent House respectively. Meanwhile, the Form 4 team, also coached by Mr Harte, participated in the Richardson Cup and experienced a tough loss in the first round to Bangor Grammar. Notably, two players from the junior teams, Callum Weir and Daniel Kerr, were nominated to attend Ulster Hockey trials, highlighting their potential and skill.

Improvements were evident throughout boys' hockey, with training attendance consistently reaching the high 40s across all year groups, showcasing the commitment of our players. Feedback indicated that the increase in matches and consistent training were well-received, thanks to the efforts of all staff involved in boys' hockey at B.R.A. A highlight of the season was the prize lunch, where players celebrated their achievements with medals and enjoyed a pizza lunch, fostering camaraderie and school spirit.

Overall, the season was about building teamwork and resilience, with valuable lessons learned that will strengthen the programme moving forward. The positive experiences and camaraderie developed this year will serve as a solid foundation for future success.

Netball

B.R.A. netball had a successful season overall. Ten teams played competitive matches in the Northern Ireland League Competitions - the format this year included blitz days at the initial stages followed by knockout rounds. The Senior squad reached the Semi-Final of the league and Cup competition, losing both times narrowly to St Dominic's (31-30, 31-32). The Intermediate team also reached their league final, placing as runners up. The numbers of players participating continues to rise. There are a number of non-specialist PE teachers volunteering to coach and support the development of the club. I would like to thank all the players and coaches for their hard work this season.

Representative Honours

U15 Regional Development Squad – Keri Gray, Gwen Clements

U17 Northern Ireland Squad- Erin Gray, Emilia Gordon

Athletics (Girls)

The athletics season began mid-March with an Inter Schools' meet at Mary Peters Track against Methodist College, Wallace and Grosvenor. As always, large numbers of enthusiastic athletes turned out to practise during games, after school and on Saturday mornings at both Roughfort and Mary Peters.

In all, 54 girls represented B.R.A. at the District Championships, with many debutant performances. The girls successfully achieved 5 Gold, 7 Silver and 8 Bronze medals.

There were distinguished performances from the following girls: Leila Jones, Esther Wallace, Maia Smith Wallace, Molly Adams, Keri Gray, Holly Johnston, Niamh Cunningham, Eve Manson, Sophia Morwood, Phoebe Bradley, Wiktoria Januszezwska, Hope Daniels, Emma Campbell, Anouk Bosket and Grace McAllister.

Two Senior girls qualified for the Irish Championships in Tullamore. To reach this level is a superb achievement for our athletes, well done to both Eve Manson (100m) and Grace McAllister (Javelin).

Sports day was held on Monday 17th June at Ballykillaire Track this year, Bangor, with approximately 550 pupils from Forms 1-4 taking part. A very enjoyable day was had by all with Cairns House winning the overall trophy. Well done to all who took part in this event.

Thank you to all staff who helped coach and support our athletes at Athletics this season. Thank you also to Ms Ritchie for all her hard work again this season, especially during the winter months continuing to coach athletics in the Sports Hall. Ms Ritchie's coaching, knowledge and enthusiasm have been invaluable again this year.

District Athletics Results, Mary Peters Track - Tuesday 30th April

Mini Girls

Amy Weir (4th in high jump)

Relay = 4th

Marley Hamill (8th in long jump)

Minor Girls

Leila Jones (3rd in 800m) (4th in 75mH)

Eva Lavery (7th in long jump)

Relay = 7th

Junior Girls

Maia Smith Wallace (2nd in 100m)

Keri Gray (3rd in 200m and 3rd in 75mH)

Esther Lawrence (3rd in 800m)

Holly Johnston (3rd in high jump)

Molly Adams (3rd in long jump)

Niamh Cunningham (1st in shot put)

Junior relay = 2nd

Emilia Gordon (4th in shot)

Molly Adams (5th in triple jump)

Lucy McBride (6th in 75mH)

Olivia McCall (6th in triple jump)

Maja Jones (7th in javelin)

Charlotte Ingram (8th in 1500m)

Inter Girls

Eve Manson (3rd in 200m)
Ines Scott (3rd in 3000m)
Sophia Morwood (2nd in 80mH and 3rd in long jump)
Hope Daniels (2nd in 300mH and 3rd in 80mH)
Phoebe Bradley (1st in javelin)
Wiktoria Januszevska (1st in hammer) (4th in shot)
Inter relay = 2nd
Chloe Craig (4th in 300m) (6th in 800m)
Ema Jones (5th in high jump)
Alex Snoddy (5th in 800m)
Rosa Clarke (5th in 1500m)
Ells Sofia Downey (5th in triple jump) (6th in 100m)
Isabella O'Connor (5th in shot)

Senior Girls

Anouk Bosket (2nd in 100m)
Emma Campbell (2nd in triple jump)
Grace McAllister (1st in javelin)
Senior relay = 1st

Ulster Schools' Athletics Results 2024, Wednesday 15th & Saturday 18th May 2024

Two Senior girls, Grace McAllister and Emma Campbell, qualified for the Irish Schools' Championships in Tullamore on Saturday 1st June.

Minor Girls

Leila Jones (5th in 800m)

Junior Girls

Maia Smith Wallace (6th in 100m Heat)
Keri Gray (5th in 200m Heat and in 6th in 75mH Final)
Esther Lawrence (10th in 800m)
Holly Johnston (7th in high jump)
Molly Adams (10th in long jump)
Niamh Cunningham (12th shot)
Junior relay = 5th

Inter Girls

Hope Daniels (4th in 80mH)
Phoebe Bradley (4th in javelin)
Eve Manson (6th in 200m)
Ines Scott (6th in 300m Heat)
Sophia Morwood (4th in 80mH in Heat and 8th in long jump)
Inter relay = 7th

Senior Girls

Grace McAllister (2nd in javelin) **Qualifies for Irish Schools'**

Emma Campbell (3rd in triple jump) **Qualifies for Irish Schools'**

Anouk Bosket (8th in 100m)

Senior relay = 4th

Girls' Irish Schools' Athletics Championships 2024, Tullamore, Saturday 1st June

The Irish Schools' athletics championships took place on Saturday 1st June at Tullamore. Congratulations to Emma Campbell (Form L6) who was 8th in the triple jump, and Grace McAllister (Form L6) who was 7th in the javelin.

Irish Schools' U17 Interprovincial 2024, Morton Stadium, Saturday 22nd June

Well done to Hope Daniels (Form 5) who was selected for the U17 Ulster Schools' Athletics team. She represented Ulster (hurdles) at the Tailteann Irish Schools' Interprovincial

GOLF

There was mixed success this year for the Golf team. Unfortunately, we didn't win any of the events we entered but were still competitive in a number of competitions.

On a pleasant, but windy November day at Kirkistown Golf Club, our senior golf team consisting of Jack Moffett, Matthew Anderson, Alex French, Alfie Davis and George Patterson-Wilson had a top 10 finish in the **Ulster Schools Scratch Competition**.

Our other Senior tournament, the **Irish Schools Championship**, saw a 'below par' team performance from the boys. The team, consisting of Ben McIlroy, Alfie Davis and George Patterson-Wilson placed outside the 'top 10'. Where there were some good individual performances, sadly, it wasn't enough as others struggled to come to grips with the tricky Spa Golf course.

Our Junior team had similar fortunes in their two competitions. Our team consisting of Jacob Jones and Matthew Anderson finished in the top 10 in the **Ulster Schools Junior competition**, played at Dungannon Golf Course.

Our other Junior event, the **Ulster Schools Scratch Competition**, was over-subscribed and unfortunately we missed out on playing in this.

Going forward, I am filled with much optimism for the future of BRA Golf, thanks to some of our extremely strong Junior golfers, who at different stages have already represented our senior team and are currently all playing off single figure handicaps.

I would like to thank the parents for their support (and lifts) which a great encouragement to me and the boys.

Show Jumping

The show jumping team competed throughout the season every other week at The Meadow Equestrian Centre in Lurgan. They had a very successful season finishing 4th in the league and just missed out on qualifying for Balmoral show in May. The Open Team hope to build on this success for next season.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Learning Support Co-ordinator: Ms Karen Brady

Assistant Learning Support Co-ordinators: Mrs Joanne McNally & Ms Diane Keenan

SEN Governor: Mrs Ann Clements (until March 2024) / Dr Moyna Bill

During 2023-24, a report on Special Educational Needs was delivered to the Education Committee of the Board of Governors each term. A full report, using the EA template, was shared with the Board of Governors for the June 2024 meeting. The school SEN policy was reviewed as part of the Autumn report and is available on the School website.

The Learning Support Department conduct whole school development to support children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). This continues to be particularly important as we move towards staged implementation of the new SEN Framework. We availed of various training opportunities including advice and training from the Autism Advisory Intervention Service, Joint Council for Qualifications and the EA Sensory Service. All members of the LS team are SEN Ambassadors and provide support with the development of resources in conjunction with the Subject leaders.

The support and interest of the Board of Governors is very much appreciated. We are also indebted to the Teaching Staff and Classroom Assistants who show great care, commitment and dedication in order to meet the needs of all our pupils.

STUDENT TEACHERS 2023-2024

The following students were given School Experience and Teaching Practice at the Academy in the academic year 2023/24:

Queen's University

Sophie Laughlin

French and German

Molly McAuley

Government and Politics, Citizenship and LLW

University of Ulster

Kalia Thompson Geography

Edge Hill University

Peter Bingham

Physical Education

Stranmillis University College (International Partnership)

Hannah Lengaver Learning Support

Luisa Lamprecht German

Work Experience 2023-24

The following students were afforded work experience at the Academy in the academic year 2023/24:

Rheanna Gilmore

English and Drama

Hannah Kirkpatrick

Physical Education

Kathleen Malone

Art & Design

Laura Rooney

Learning Support

Kerry Waugh

Art & Design

OTHER EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

CREATIVE WRITING

With the support of Miss Herron, Charlotte Marron won the 13-16 age category in the BBC Two Minute Tales competition. Judge Kelly McCaughrain said Charlotte's story, *Winter's Warmth*, was a "beautiful piece of nature writing...a poignant story about what makes a family a family". Charlotte learned the good news on BBC Ulster, where she was interviewed on the Lynette Fay Show.

Clara Walsh was awarded first place for the Jigsaw Youth Writing Prize. The prize was launched by NI charity, Start360 in memory of Northern Irish Writer, Christi Patterson. Students attended the awards ceremony at QUB's Great Hall on Friday 12th April, an event supported by the Seamus Heaney Centre. Students read their work in front of a packed audience and were congratulated by Judge Stephen Connolly, Outreach Officer at the Seamus Heaney Centre.

Students were placed in the poetry section of the competition as follows:

1st – Clara Walsh

2nd – Charlei Hill

3rd – Niall Blaskett

Zach Gomito, Lois Ramsey and Sparrow O'Sullivan (past pupil) were runners-up.

The department created a shared education schools' poetry anthology entitled, *Identity*. A pamphlet launch and poetry reading took place at RBAI, where representatives from schools in the NBALC were in attendance.

F3 Lorcan McCusker's poem, *Ulster Botanic and Ice Cream*, featured in the Irish Times Young Writers' Annual Showcase anthology.

SCRIPTURE UNION

Junior Scripture Union

Junior Scripture Union was held weekly during Wednesday lunchtime. Throughout the course of the year, we followed SUNI's programme for schools. Pupils also attended the BIG Scripture Union Weekend at Castlewellan Castle and we were delighted to have Phil Hartin speaking to the pupils over the weekend. The SU also organised an end-of-year barbecue at school in June.

Senior Scripture Union

Senior Scripture Union was held weekly during Friday lunchtimes. Throughout the course of the year we looked at what the Bible has to say and how it impacts our daily lives. The highlight of the year was the Senior Scripture Union Weekend which was held in March at Seaview House, Kilkeel. Phillip Condell was the speaker over the weekend.

The Poland Scripture Union Team

The Scripture Union team, consisting of sixteen senior pupils, travelled to Warsaw, Poland in February. The team were involved in helping at a local church for the poor, a bread ministry

and leading a weekend camp for over 100 Polish teenagers who were mainly from four state-run orphanages. The team also visited a Ukrainian refugee camp in Warsaw and were moved by the living conditions of those at the centre. Overall, the trip was a great success and both the Polish people and the B.R.A. pupils had an encouraging and challenging trip.

YOUNG EINSTEIN CLUB

The Young Einstein Club has enjoyed another good year. The Junior pupils approached each experiment with enthusiasm, and it was very rewarding to watch them having fun while completing each task. I feel that these simple experiments, while not particularly academic, have a role to play in encouraging our scientists of the future.

This year we had quite a large L6 Committee, which was very encouraging. They were a great help in the running of the club; setting up before the Junior pupils arrived, tidying up at the end and, of course, chatting to the Juniors and helping them with their experiments. These senior pupils have also benefitted from being involved, developing their communication skills and growing in confidence. They also seemed to enjoy trying out the experiments before the Juniors arrived!

In November we had our annual House Competition. This year we had a Tower Building Challenge and there was great tension as free-standing towers were constructed from paper – with some towers standing longer than others!

Our other experiments this year have included Hovercrafts, Secret Messages, Optical Illusions, Rocket Building and Wiggly Wobbly - Investigating Friction using Jelly.

OTHER MATTERS

CAREERS 2023/24

- MVI pupils received help, advice and guidance with UCAS, CAO and HE applications.
- MVI pupils attended many in-person and virtual Open Days including QUB, UU, Stranmillis, St Mary's, Belfast Met and Northern Regional College.
- A representative from Belfast Metropolitan College came into school and spoke to Form 5 pupils about Further Education pathways and to MVI about Higher Education pathways.
- Aspiring MVI medical, dentistry, veterinary, nursing and midwifery students participated in a 'Virtual Multi Mini Interview simulation event'. These were organised via SchoolCloud.
- Mock interviews were held for all those applying for Teaching.
- Six Alumni Solicitors and Barristers held a 'Careers in Law' event for interested students, via zoom.
- Some pupils received a Conditional Offer from PWC, Deloitte, AIB and Farrans for their Higher Apprenticeships.
- Deloitte, Citi & BT all delivered presentations to the sixth form about Higher-Level Apprenticeships
- All Apprenticeship opportunities, including the Higher-Level Apprenticeships, were advertised to our pupils. Examples included Mercedes-Benz, Stena Line, Belfast Harbour Civil Engineering Apprentice Opportunity, BT, NIE and NI Water.
- Several of our LVI and MVI pupils attended the Chartered Accountancy Open Day at PWC.
- LVI pupils attending many work experience opportunities through Work Inspiration
- A number of LVI pupils took part in numerous programmes organised by Screenworks such as Prosthetics, Costume Design and Special Effects.
- Form V pupils attended an introductory session about the role of the Careers Service NI and each pupil was interviewed by the DEL Careers Adviser. Some interviews were held via zoom, others in person.
- All virtual work experience opportunities were posted on Google classroom and emailed out to parents.
- LVI came back into school for careers guidance for 3 days after they had finished their AS External Examinations. Representatives from UU, QUB & Work Plus all delivered presentations about the year ahead and the importance of UCAS.
- LVI had a presentation delivered by the Careers Team in school on UCAS and Personal Statements.
- During the 3 days, LVI pupils also had the opportunities to get involved in An Assessment Day which involved Alumni past pupils helping with group and individual interviews.

PRIMARY SCHOOL PROGRAMME

During the academic year 2023-24, around 40 Sixth Form pupils participated in the School's long-standing Primary School Experience programme. From the middle of September until Easter, the pupils attended a primary school in north Belfast every Wednesday afternoon to gain experience of working with children while supporting the class teacher. The wide range of activities offered to our pupils included literacy and numeracy support, PE and games classes, music and language lessons and drama productions. We are very appreciative of the support provided to our pupils by our colleagues in the primary sector. Our pupils were

commended by the staff of their host schools for their enthusiasm, willingness to help and good humour, and the pupils themselves thoroughly enjoyed the experience while gaining valuable skills in a professional setting.

SCHOOL AND PUPIL COUNCIL

The School and Pupil Council met regularly throughout the year to discuss issues important to them and their peers, updating the Senior Leadership Team on the thoughts of the student voice. Many important issues were discussed and debated including RSE and extra-curricular provision, lockers, catering and uniform amongst many others. The Pupil Council also held a non-uniform day during wellbeing week raising money for Guide Dogs NI, Dementia NI and the Cancer Fund for Children.

BEN MADIGAN PREPARATORY SCHOOL

The school had a turbulent academic year of 2023 – 2024. In January it was announced that there would be a fee increase and that the school was struggling financially. Staff were informed that this might lead to staff and class restructuring. Due to this news and the uncertainty of the school's future, some parents moved their children to other schools. This trend continued throughout the rest of the year, and our numbers depleted significantly by the end of the academic year.

Despite this, school events continued as normal.

Our Prep 5 and 6 pupils enjoyed a very active three-day residential in Enniskillen at the Share Village during the Summer Term accompanied by Mr Creighton and Miss Harris.

Our Prep 7 pupils, accompanied by Mr Ingram and Mrs Bill, ventured further afield for three days, two nights to Bally Hass Outdoor Centre in Cork. It was quite an adventure from the start as they travelled by train from Belfast to Cork with a change of transport in Dublin.

Our pupils continued to join in ukulele lessons from Prep 4–7 and had blocks of swimming coaching down in B.R.A.

Prep 5 to Prep 7 pupils put on an excellent performance of Shakespeare Rocks in the Summer term where all pupils had a role to play, either on stage or backstage. The Courtyard Theatre was hired for the evening performance. Our Pre-Prep and Prep 1 – 3 dazzled at Christmas in their Nativity performances.

The Choir had an eventful year where they performed at the Carol Service at Whitehouse Presbyterian Church. They joined around 2,500 pupils for the Peace Proms at the SSE Arena and performed in the BRA Spring concert in the Ulster Hall.

Mr McCleery continued as our specialist Games and PE teacher, working two days a week at Ben Madigan. He has organised more sporting opportunities across the year with local schools and prep schools, and this will continue to develop in the next academic year. The pupils from Prep 5 to Prep 7 took part in cross country, rugby, hockey, and a swimming gala.

Sports day was a remarkable success with a good turnout from parents.

Our Prep 7 pupils performed well at AQE with 85% of pupils gaining a place at a grammar school.

Prep 7 enjoyed end-of-school events with a summer BBQ and a big day out.

The pupils took part in charity events across the year, including supporting Macmillan Cancer, Save the Children, Children in Need and Harvest for Store House.

SDA continued to support the school with coffee mornings, preloved uniform sale, school fundraising such as non-uniform days, Halloween disco, Valentine disco and Easter events, and with the P7 end-of-school events.

There were a number of staff departures during the year. Mrs Lawther secured another post in a nursery school, Mrs Bell left her Prep-4 job-share post through voluntary redundancy, Miss Harris left her maternity cover post for a new position at Seaview Primary School, Mrs Henry has accepted a post in another primary school nearer to home and Mr Ingram accepted voluntary redundancy after 28 years' service. Classroom/SEN assistants Mrs Thompson, Miss Crossan and Mrs Kyle also left with the latter two redeployed to the main school. The Principal, Mrs Dallas, left at the end of the academic year to take up a new post at Fettes College, Edinburgh. Mrs Chapman was appointed Head of School for the new academic year.

MEASURES FOR THE SECURITY OF PUPILS, STAFF AND PREMISES

The Board of Governors is committed to ensuring a safe and secure environment for pupils and staff during the school day. Security measures are reviewed periodically and include the following:

- A modern fire detection and alarm system is in operation throughout all the school sites and is tested on a frequent basis. A fire drill is carried out each term.
- A monitored intruder alarm system is in operation at the main school and Preparatory Department sites.
- CCTV cameras are in operation at the main school site, Ben Madigan and Roughfort.
- Buildings are secured by school janitorial staff each evening.
- Staff members are on supervisory duty at break and lunchtimes.
- Safe systems of work are in operation with respect to contractors working on the school site.
- School management consults with the Education Authority and the PSNI Crime Prevention Branch on a regular basis with respect to safety and security measures to be undertaken on the school site.

Insurance

Following advice from representatives of the school's insurance brokers, the Board of Governors is responsible to ensure that adequate insurance cover is held by the school. At present, the school insures against its Legal Liability for injury caused to members of the public, including pupils. To succeed in any action against the school, a claimant must prove that the School has been in breach of its statutory duties or has been negligent.

In some cases, injuries can befall pupils arising out of school activities, particularly in the area of sports and other extra-curricular activities, where there is no such legal liability upon the School to provide insurance cover. **The Board of Governors would therefore strongly advise parents to take out individual Personal Accident policies for their children**, in order that cover may be provided, in the event of a severe injury being sustained by a pupil, where there is no negligence on the part of the School or any other party. Further information for those interested in Personal Accident cover for rugby is available on the IRFU website. Insurance should also be taken out by parents if expensive items of equipment are being brought into school.

Buildings, Estates and Equipment

Cliftonville Road Site

- Replacement of lab chairs in two classrooms
- Replacement of flooring in BC4 and repairs to the flooring in various classrooms in the Bruce building and foyer outside the assembly hall.
- Replacement Glazing unit in middle Bruce Stairwell and replacement of broken panes throughout Bruce and Jackson buildings.
- Security signage installed on the railings and gates on both sides of the road.
- Redecoration of the following areas:
 - Crombie – Front Door, Staff Room and corridor.
 - Jackson – Stairwells, Top Corridor, SS Corridor and Stairwells.

- Dining Hall, Annex and kitchen
- Bruce – Ground floor classrooms
- Louis Lord – Corridors
- Pollin – Main stairwell
- Technology – All woodwork in corridors and classrooms.
- Installation of another CCTV camera at Brookhill Gate entrance.
- Installation of repurposed planters at Darbyshire entrance

Ben Madigan Site

- Relocation of Kindergarten to the main building.

Roughfort Site

- Replacement of netting around Cricket Cage
- New Speed Brush machine purchased for maintenance of new Hockey Pitch Carpet
- Completion and opening of the new hosting/teaching pavilion “The Foundry”.

Health and Safety Work (all sites)

- Fixed wire testing was carried out in relevant buildings throughout the school. This is completed on a rota basis.
- Portable appliance testing was carried out on all school electrical equipment.
- A landlord’s gas check was carried out, as required annually.
- Boiler servicing was carried out.
- Legionella pipe work and water tank cleaning was carried out.
- Legionella Risk Assessment was carried out.
- Fire and Security Alarm Cyclical Maintenance was carried out.

Freedom of Information Scheme

In line with legislative requirements, the School has a policy, detailing information which is accessible to parents on request. Copies of this policy may be obtained from the Bursar’s Office.

GDPR

The School processes and retains records in line with the requirements of the GDPR.

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS

	2023/24	2022/23
Income	£	£
Department of Education Grants	8,264,707	8,267,996
Preparatory Department Fee Income	472,770	480,994
Playgroup & Childminding Fees	134,123	136,659
Miscellaneous Income	195,033	169,992
	<u>9,066,633</u>	<u>9,055,641</u>
Expenditure	£	£
Teaching Staff Costs	6,196,351	6,088,595
Other Staff Costs	1,994,876	1,830,092
Other Operating Costs	1,642,356	1,822,659
	<u>9,833,583</u>	<u>9,741,346</u>
(Deficit) to Reserves	<u>(£766,950)</u>	<u>(£685,705)</u>

	2023/24	2022/23
Other Operating Costs	£	£
Class materials	80,028	100,069
Maintenance	201,212	304,583
Heat, Light & Water	268,286	348,052
Cleaning	254,407	256,420
Insurance, Bank & Audit	208,780	169
Examination Fees	113,850	88,055
Administration	121,965	164,857
Sports, Games & Travel	31,552	45,050
Transport	163,234	150,118
Purchase of Equipment	128,342	100,645
Miscellaneous	70,700	95,314
Total	1,642,356	1,822,659
	2023/24	2022/23
Other Staff Costs	£	£
Administrative Staff	450,223	420,214
Manual Staff	427,339	403,842
Laboratory & Other Assistants	1,117,314	1,006,036
Total Other Staff Costs	1,994,876	1,830,092

The number of full-time equivalent teachers employed by the School during the year was:

	2023/24	2022/23
Secondary Department	85	89
Preparatory Department	10	9
Total teaching staff	95	98

Staff Costs

Teaching Staff Costs	£6,196,351
Administrative Staff	£450,223
Manual Staff	£427,339
Laboratory & Other Assistants	£1,117,314

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Appointed by the Department of Education
(for the period from Jan 2022 – December 2025)

Mr. D. Flood, JP., B.Ed., Pg Cert.
Mrs. E. Tohill, BSc; F.C.A
Mr Brian Monroe, B.Sc (Acct.), M.Acct., F.C.A. (left Sept 2024)
Prof. J. A. I. Montgomery, B.A., D.Phil, PFHEA, MISTD, FRSA

Elected Parent Governors
(For the period February 2022 – January 2026)

Mrs. P. Gillies, BSc, M.B.A, F.C.A.
Mrs. C. Latham, B.Ed., M.Sc., P.Q.H. (N.I.)
Dr. C. O’Kane, BA (Hons), M.B.A (left September 2023)
Mr N. Arnold, B.Ed., P.Q.H.

Elected Teacher Governors
(For the period February 2022 – January 2026)

Ms. K. Barnett B.A., M.A.
Miss. K. Brady B.Sc.
Mr. C. Nash, B.Sc.

Elected Representative Governors
(For the period February 2020 – January 2024)

Mr. K.A. Knox, M.Sc. (left January 2024)
Mr S. Houston B.Sc., MCIAT
Mr. G.R. Simon, F.R.I.C.S.

(For the period February 2023 – January 2024)

Ms. C. Dillon, B.A.

(For the period February 2023 – January 2024)

Mr. N. W. Beggs
Mr. B.W. McCormack, B.Sc. (Econ) F.C.A. (Hon. Treasurer)
Mr. S.B. Orr, LL.B.
Mr. S.J.S. Warke, A.C.I.I., Dip P.F.S., T.E.P.

(For the period Feb 2022 – January 2026)

Mr. M. L. Blake, LL.B., B.L.; Attorney at Law
Mrs. K. L. Burns, B.A
Mrs. A. Clements, B.A. (left March 2024)
Mr. M. Orr, K.C., S.C.M.C.I.H.T., M.C.I.W.E.M.
Dr. K. M. Bill, M.B. Ch. B., F.C.A.I., F.R.C.A., F.F.I.C.M., MA.
Mr. D. Walsh, B.Sc., M.B.A., C.Eng., M.I.M.E.

(For the period Feb 2019 – January 2024)

Mrs. J. Weir, M.B.E., B.Sc., C.Math., M.I.M.A.
(Hon. Secretary)

Principal (Non-voting member)

Mrs. H. Woods, B.Sc., B.Ed., P.Q.H. (N.I.) M.A.

Warden

Mr. D.E. Porter, M.Sc., C.Eng., M.I.C.E.,

Senior Vice-Warden

Mrs. C. Rowan, B.Sc.

Head of Finance & Corporate Services
(Acts as Clerk to the Board of Governors)

Mr. C. McAuley