

The OWL

Belfast Royal Academy
Christmas 2025



THE OWL TEAM 2025

Editor: Mrs S Graydon

Thanks to: Mrs Dillon, Mr McKenna, Mrs Gouk,
Mrs Hare, Mrs Atkins, Dr O’Kane,
Mrs Holland, Ms Graham

and to
all staff and pupils, past and present,
who contributed articles and photos

Cover designed by Jérôme Chesnel (LVI)



The Belfast Royal Academy was founded in 1785 and is the oldest school in the city. Originally situated near St Anne's Cathedral, in what is now Academy Street, it was transferred to the Cliftonville Road in 1880, when the present building was erected. For more than a century, the School was named Belfast Academy. In 1888, Queen Victoria granted permission for the School to style itself Belfast Royal Academy.

It is a voluntary grammar school and its management is vested in a Board of Governors on which parents and teachers are represented, along with Governors elected by members of the Academy and nominees of the Minister of Education.

Any past pupil who attended B.R.A. for at least three years and who is eighteen or over may, subject to the approval of the Board of Governors, become a member of the Academy upon the payment of a registration fee of £1. Applications should be made to the Head of Finance and Corporate Services at the School.

Past pupils are encouraged to join the Old Boys' and Old Girls' Associations. The cost of membership and contact details are as follows:

OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

School Liaison Officer:	Ms W. Graham
Chairperson:	Ms C. Dillon
Hon. Secretary:	Mrs A. Kane
Hon. Treasurer:	Miss J. Richardson
To join the Association, please email:	BRAoldgirls@outlook.com
Registered Charity Number NIC104739	Annual Membership: £5.00



OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

President:	Mr. Paul Scoffield
Hon. Secretary:	Philip McKenna c/o Belfast Royal Academy, Cliftonville Road, Belfast, BT14 6JL or email: philmac49@gmail.com
Hon. Treasurer:	Nik Simon, c/o Belfast Royal Academy, Cliftonville Road, Belfast, BT14 6JL
Alumni and Membership enquires:	alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net
Annual Dinner enquires	iainknox@cd-group.com
London & Edinburgh Dinner enquires:	doc_malone2004@yahoo.co.uk
Life Membership.....	Old Boys' Committee has suspended membership fees.
Membership (School Leaver)	First year after leaving is free.

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Mrs. P. Lennon, B.Ed.	

ANCILLARY STAFF

Secretary	Mrs. F. Gouk, M.A.
Building Supervisor	Mr. R. Crawford



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Valete

IAN MCGONIGLE



Ian attended Annadale Grammar, studying A-levels in Politics, Geography, and English. Following this he pursued a Bachelor of Education Honours Degree with PE as the main subject, at Stranmillis University College, graduating in 1991.

A talented sportsman, in rugby, he played for Ulster Schools and Queen's University under 20s, though injuries unfortunately led to a three-year break and eventually forced him to stop playing completely after brief spells with Malone, Ards, and Cooke. Ian also displayed great skill off the rugby pitch, he was an accomplished sprinter, and he played league basketball and badminton.

His early career involved leading a team of youth workers in Reading in 1991, before joining the staff of Belfast Royal Academy in 1992 as a teacher of PE and Games, he also taught RE to GCSE level. He rose to the position of Subject Leader for PE, a position he held for 19 years. Ian led by example in his commitment to the extra-curricular life of the school. In his 33 years at

Belfast Royal Academy, he has dedicated his time to working on a Saturday morning and after school to ensure that all pupils had the chance to be part of something greater than themselves. He coached rugby and cricket as his main activities, A notable coaching achievement was being part of the team that led the 1st XV to a Schools' Shield win against Ballyclare High School at Ravenhill.

He also led many medallion sides to the semi-final of the medallion shield. Ian coached every team in school except the 3rd XV, he was equally comfortable coaching at a performance level as he was coaching the basics and fostering a love of the game in junior pupils. Outside of school rugby, as a Level 3 accredited rugby coach, Ian coached at Queen's University and Ards.

Beyond rugby and cricket, he taught swimming and lifesaving, guiding numerous candidates to achieve their full lifesaving awards. Ian also led a variety of school trips across the UK, Romania, America, and South Africa.

Ian was a pioneer of examination PE in B.R.A. He led the introduction of GCSE PE, initially as a Sixth Form option, before it being launched as a traditional two-year course in key stage 4. At Advanced Level he led the introduction of AS and A2 PE before switching to BTEC Sport in more recent years. The Department has had great success in public examinations, and this is due to the very solid foundations laid and leadership displayed by Ian.

As a Subject Leader Ian was keen to encourage the professional development of his colleagues. His encouragement, support and guidance is something that all of us are thankful for and no one was more proud than Ian when the email announcing the promotion of a member of the PE Department was sent to staff.



Ian was very dedicated to his work in the Teaching Union, fighting for teachers' rights, pay and workload. His work extends to over 20 years as a Union Representative, and he's been actively involved with the NI NEU regional committee, and spent two years as an Assistant Team Leader (A.T.L.). He served as Northern Ireland President for the Teachers Union NI for one year and subsequently as Northern Ireland President for the NEU for another year.

I am delighted for Ian as he moves to the next chapter of his life in good health, I wish him well in whatever the future holds.

C.M.C.

GILLIAN MCQUISTON



Gillian McQuiston was appointed as Senior Subject teacher for Business Studies Department by Mr Sillery straight from Stranmillis College in 1992. She was the first appointed Business Studies teacher and began the Department singlehandedly. The Department quickly grew, following the appointment of the much-missed Jillian Adams in 1995, Neil Irwin in 1999 and Stuart Murphy in 2004. In 2000 Gillian was appointed Head of Department as it was then known.

Gillian didn't just lead a team for 33 years; she built it from the ground up. What started as a blank canvas became a thriving, resilient, and high-performing team, thanks to her vision, determination, and sheer force of will. Every system, every relationship, every win in the Business Studies Department can be traced back to the foundations Gillian laid with her own two hands. Through her energy, her high standards, and an incredible ability to rally people around a common goal, Gillian made something out of nothing. It's rare to witness someone not only lead, but create a team - shape its culture, mentor its people, and set it up for lasting success, but that's exactly what Gillian did.

Outside of the Department, Gillian will also be missed by the wider Academy family – and we hope her connection to the school will not end here.

In addition to Gillian's important role as Subject Leader, and colleague on the school staff, her commitment and loyalty to the Academy as wife to a former Head Boy (Jonny) and mother of a Head Girl (Erin) and to a Deputy Head Boy (Matthew), has been unflinching and made her a true Academy Matriarch.

For over three decades, she shaped not just lessons, but lives. As a teacher, she sparked imaginations, lifted up the underdogs, and believed in her students when they didn't believe in themselves. As a colleague, she was the person you could turn to for an brutally honest opinion and advice. She stood by us all during the best times and the worst, often with one hand on her hip and the other waving wildly as she told us exactly what we needed to hear. She was a mentor, a mother hen, a mischief-maker, and a good friend.

What we will miss most about Gillian isn't just the booming voice or the boundless energy. It is the kindness, the compassion, the fierce loyalty, and the way she made each of us feel seen, supported, and part of something special.

It's difficult to imagine the school without Gillian - without her infectious energy, her sharp



insight, and, let's be honest, her uncanny ability to make even Monday mornings feel a little more manageable.

Gillian was more than just someone we work with. She was a constant source of support, wisdom, and laughter.

NADINE NICHOLL



This year, Nadine celebrates 25 years of dedicated service to Belfast Royal Academy. Her influence on pupils, colleagues, and sport within the school community has been profound, and she leaves behind a legacy filled with achievements and unforgettable moments.

Having attended Monkstown Secondary before transferring to B.R.A. for Sixth Form, she went on to study at UUI, completing both a BA Hons degree and a PGCE before she joined B.R.A. in August 2000.

After gaining early experience in schools, Nadine joined the Irish FA at a time when mini soccer was being introduced across the province, becoming the very first woman employed as a full-time coach.

She returned to teaching in 1998 at Wallace High School before moving to B.R.A. in 2000, where

she quickly established herself as an integral part of the PE department.

As a sportswoman, Nadine's achievements are nothing short of extraordinary. She represented Ulster and Ireland at U18, U21, and senior level in hockey, while also representing Northern Ireland in football. At club level with Pegasus, she also won an impressive haul of honours.

N.I.

That same competitive spirit shone through in her coaching at B.R.A., where she set high standards and inspired her pupils to reach their full potential. A particular highlight was the 1st XI Schools Cup win in March 2020.

Colleagues at B.R.A. will fondly remember Nadine's humour, warmth, and sense of fun. Whether it was her quick one-liners on a rainy morning – "You wouldn't put your dog out in that!" – or her ability to keep order in the lively PE office, she brought laughter and energy to every day. Her knack for keeping colleagues supplied with coffee, milk, and plastic forks, all paint a picture of someone who made the workplace brighter.

Over the years, Nadine has shared countless milestones with her colleagues – from engagements and weddings to welcoming babies and celebrating birthdays. She has been a loyal friend, a supportive mentor, and a source of strength.

As Nadine looks forward to her next chapter, with more time for travel and relaxation, the whole school community will miss her greatly. Her dedication, competitive spirit, and humour have left an indelible mark on B.R.A.

On behalf of the PE department, I would like to thank Nadine for her dedication, passion and service to Belfast Royal Academy. We wish you nothing but health, happiness, and new adventures in this exciting next chapter.

Congratulations, on a truly remarkable career and a well-deserved retirement!

J.R.S.



LEARNING SUPPORT STAFF

ROWAN MOORE

Whilst completing her Masters in Criminology and Criminal Justice, Rowan, one of our alumni, joined us in Learning Support Department, offering support and guidance to all pupils. Her knowledge of school life here was a valuable insight for the students she supported. Rowan took up a post in the field associated with her studies and we wish her every success for her future.

ORLAGH MCCOMB

A keen sportswoman with a strong passion for Medicine, Orlagh in her interim year put her skills to good use, mentoring and supporting pupils. Her bubbly and caring nature led her towards a career in adult nursing this year and we know she will make an excellent medic. Good luck Orlagh!

STUART REA

Another of our illustrious alumni spent 2024/25 honing his skills for a future in teaching Religious Studies by providing great support to our young people in his role as a Classroom Assistant. He is currently studying for a PGCE in the above, so watch this space for the future Mr Rea. We wish him well in his teaching career.

GABRIELLA GLINKA

During her time with us, Gabriella gave us her great expertise and efficiency in ICT skills by aiding pupils in their studies and daily life. She was supportive and encouraging to pupils and staff. Her organisational and administration skills led her to a post as a school secretary in Methodist College. We know that they are lucky to have her and wish Gabriella all the best in her new role.

MEGAN INGRAM

Megan moved to Belfast from the United States and spent time supporting our pupils as a member of the Learning Support team. She was a keen sports woman who encouraged pupils to be active and involved in school life. Megan returned home to the US due to a change in family circumstances and we wish her well.

CHERYL COLWELL

Stalwart of the Learning Support department for 13 years, Cheryl retired in June 2025. Her care, gentle nature and devotion to supporting pupils is greatly missed by everyone in B.R.A. A former Art teacher, she helped guide pupils and maintained her Art connections by liaising with the Art department here in school. She was a highly regarded colleague and friend and we hope that she is enjoying more Art and a well-deserved rest. Enjoy your retirement Cheryl!

GEORGIA MCNEILL

Georgia was an integral part of the LS department. In her first year working in BRA she studied a Masters degree in Psychology. She was a determined, well-rounded classroom assistant who enjoyed working with pupils from all backgrounds. She has since moved onto a management position at a house for vulnerable children. We wish her all the best in her endeavours.



BEN MADIGAN



MRS JENNY BILL

Mrs Jenny Bill leaves after 3 years teaching in Ben Madigan. She arrived as Miss Kennedy, got engaged and then married Mark to become Mrs Bill during her time with us.

Her warmth and positivity extended far beyond teaching her own class and the whole school French and Spanish. Her lessons were engaging, her expectations high, and her support unwavering. She used to take the register in Spanish and the pupils in her class relished the challenge of a modern language with her encouragement. In the staff room we appreciated her sense of humour, her wit and her willingness to go the extra mile.

From colour runs, sponsored walks, residential trips, school plays and camping, Mrs Bill always volunteered to do her bit with good grace. Pupils respected her kindness, her encouragement and her ability to make everyone feel supported through her outstanding teaching and learning.

As she embarks on her next chapter, we want to thank Mrs Bill for everything she has contributed to our school. She leaves behind not just memories, but a legacy of excellence and care. Merci!

F.G.

MR JAMES CREIGHTON



Mr James Creighton joined Ben Madigan 3 years ago as the Prep 5 & 6 teacher. From the sports field to the classroom, he brought an infectious energy and a natural likeability that resonated with students and staff alike. His commitment to sport—from rugby to rounders—helped foster teamwork, resilience, and school spirit which the pupils and parents greatly appreciated.

Beyond the curriculum, he was always among the first to volunteer for school trips, both residential and day excursions, school plays and sports' challenges, offering his time generously and reliably. His calm and unflappable nature made him a reassuring presence for both students and colleagues. He was a valuable "wing man" to Mrs Chapman on the residential trip to York. Who could forget his comfortable camper van when the pupils and other staff were under canvas when we had our "big camp out"!

In the staff room, he was engaging, collegial, and consistently supportive—a true team player whose presence enriched our professional environment.

We thank him for his dedication, his enthusiasm, and the many contributions he has made during his time in Ben Madigan. He leaves with our warmest wishes for continued success in all that lies ahead both in education at Fairview Primary School and beyond. Married during the summer to Emily Harris we also wish Mr and Mrs Creighton much happiness.

F.G.



NURSERY STAFF

MERYL BODY, LUCY MITCHELL AND CODY OWENS

We say goodbye to three incredible members of our Ben Madigan nursery team, Meryl, Lucy, and Cody. Their contribution, genuine kindness, and sense of fun will have a lasting impression on the children in their care and the staff who had the pleasure of working alongside them. They had endless patience teaching songs, rhymes and dance and every year putting on the most adorable Nativity play. Out in all weathers in their puddle suits and wellies, the children loved to come to nursery. We thank them and wish them continued success and happiness in all that lies ahead.



LORRAINE JOHNSTON

SCHOOL COOK

F.G. Lorraine Johnston was Ben Madigan school cook for nearly 12 years. Her dedication, warmth, and tasty, homemade cooking made a lasting impression on all of us. Her legendary curry will be talked about for years to come — many pupils left with the recipe! Lorraine knew every child by name, their likes and dislikes, and always found ways to encourage them to try something new. Her Christmas lunch was always a triumph delivered with pride and hard work. Not only did she look after the pupils, but she was also very good to the staff especially those who enjoyed the odd plate of chips! We wish Lorraine all the best in the next chapter of her career.

F.G.



Obituaries



MRS ROSEMARY JEFFRIES (NEE YORKE)

The Academy community remembers the passing of a distinguished former pupil, Rosemary Jeffries (née Yorke), who attended the school during the 1950s. Rosemary's life was a remarkable journey that spanned a successful teaching career and a distinguished 30-year profession in law, demonstrating a lifelong commitment to learning and service.

A gifted linguist, she studied French at Queen's University Belfast followed by a teaching diploma. It was during this period that her passion for languages broadened, as she dedicated herself

to learning Italian, a language and culture that remained a great interest throughout her life. Rosemary embarked on a teaching career and taught French, History and English at Everton Secondary School for Girls in Ardoyne (since closed). Her reference from the Headmistress, Miss Richardson at the time of her leaving in 1971 indicates that she was an exceptional educationist with a genuine interest in young people. Rosemary's teaching career lasted 12 years until her marriage.

During the early years of her marriage and birth of her 4 children, Rosemary completed a law conversion course and qualified as a solicitor. She was employed by a large legal company and became head of litigation and employment. This second career spanned three decades, serving as a testament to her drive and her capacity to excel in demanding professional fields.

In retirement, Rosemary embraced her enduring passions, finding pleasure in playing the piano and continuing her dedication to her Italian studies.

We extend our condolences to Rosemary's widower Peter, her four children and her 6 grandchildren. She leaves behind an inspiring legacy of academic excellence and professional achievement.





Distribution of Prizes

The Annual Distribution of Prizes took place this year on Friday 17th October at The Spire's Centre.

Mr. D.E. Porter (Warden), delivered an engaging speech that focused on the hard work of both the school's pupils and staff.

The guest of honour, Stuart Hawthorne, is the current Minister of Carnmoney Presbyterian Church in Newtownabbey. He has a diverse background spanning education, sports, and theology, which has shaped his path to ministry. He spoke of King Solomon and used his words of wisdom, 'If the axe is dull and the edge unsharpened more strength is needed but the skill will bring success.' Stuart encouraged pupils that hard work pays off and how they can make an impact with their 'axe': their education, opportunities and passions. Pupils were challenged to train their mind to think critically, develop curiosity and to persevere through challenges that they face.

The Senior Orchestra had feet tapping as they performed 'Overture' from Music for the Royal Fireworks Handel (1685-1759). The Chamber Choir sang 'Sing, my Child' by Sarah Quartel (b. 1982) with beautiful harmonies.

We are most grateful to Rev. Professor Patton Taylor for opening the prize-giving ceremony.

THE PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Good afternoon Professor Taylor, Rev Hawthorne, Governors, colleagues, ladies and gentleman and especially, Academy pupils.

It is a privilege to welcome you to this year's Prize Day and to deliver my report on the last academic year. This is an important annual occasion in our calendar where we gather not only to celebrate success, but also to reflect on what our school truly stands for.

This year carries particular weight. We stand in the shadow - and in the light - of 240 years of history. Two hundred and forty years ago, our school began a journey of shaping minds, nurturing hearts, and preparing young people to live with courage, curiosity, and integrity. This afternoon, we pause to honour that history, but also to ask what kind of legacy we, in our generation, will leave behind.

Our guest speaker, Stuart Hawthorne is a product of an Academy education. Whilst a pupil at school, he played 1st XV rugby for three years, including for the historic Schools' Cup win in 1997, he was an Ulster school boy and captained the school team in his M6 year. Legend has it that on one occasion whilst playing for the school, he dislocated his shoulder and was playing on with his arm hanging. The coach poured some water over it, and he carried on playing! You could view that incident as either child abuse or character building, but I am more impressed by the power of the water that must have been holy water. On leaving school, Stuart completed a Geography degree and joined the teaching profession before finding his calling to join the ministry. So, according to folklore, Stuart left a profession where his working day started at 9 a.m., finished at 3 p.m. and where he spent over half the year on holiday to one where he only works one day a week! Fair play Stuart.

Now with 4 children, including one who is at the Academy, Stuart has little time for relaxation but still enjoys watching sport including watching Liverpool FC and Ulster Rugby. It is just as well you are a man with a strong faith, Stuart.

To get the real story, I asked Mr. McCarey—who was a pupil at the same time—for some genuine gossip about our guest. What I got back from Mr. McCarey was quite telling: he assured me Stuart was angelic, very popular with the ladies, and an excellent role model. I suspect that report contained a generous element of historical revisionism and possibly a tinge of jealousy. We are delighted to welcome Stuart back to B.R.A.



this afternoon to distribute the prizes and we look forward to hearing his address later on.

Over the centuries, countless pupils have passed through our corridors, halls and buildings. They were taught the same lessons of perseverance and resilience that we hold dear today.

Some went on to distinguish themselves in public service, in the arts, in science, in business. Others lived quieter lives, but no less important ones — raising families, building communities, giving generously of themselves.

The common thread was never simply achievement, but character. That is what has allowed our school to endure: a commitment to form not just clever minds, but good people.

Jillian Adams had a remarkable gift for seeing beyond assessment data and examination results to recognise the true potential in every pupil. She began her career at the Academy 32 years ago as a teacher of Business Studies and, in time, became the Subject Leader for Careers. Over the decades, she was not only an outstanding teacher but also an inspiring mentor who shaped the lives of countless pupils through both her teaching and her guidance. She took particular pride in supporting those who aspired to pursue careers in health care, encouraging them with wisdom, patience, and compassion.

During her short and unexpected illness, Jillian displayed extraordinary resilience and strength of character - qualities we hope to nurture in our pupils - never once giving way to self-pity. When she passed away on 11 November last year, the outpouring of affection on the School's Facebook page reflected the profound impact she had on her pupils, colleagues, and Governors alike.

While we deeply mourn the loss of a valued colleague and dear friend, we also recognise the immeasurable loss to her family. We pay tribute to her husband Gethin, her sons Bryn and Davyd - both proud Academy alumni - along with her parents and siblings, whose courage and dignity throughout Jillian's illness and after her passing have been an inspiration to us all.

We are humbled that her family has chosen to establish an annual prize in Jillian's name – the Jillian Adams Memorial Prize - and it is an honour

to welcome them here today as we present it for the very first time.

In June, we marked the departure of three long serving members of the teaching staff: Mrs. Gillian McQuiston, Subject Leader of Business Studies; Mr. Ian McGonigle, Subject Leader of PE; and Mrs. Nadine Nicholl, Teacher of PE and Games.

We recognise their service to the school, specifically for their work in both the classroom and through their contributions to extra-curricular activities over their respective tenures.

We extend our best wishes to Gillian, Ian and Nadine as they move on to the next phase of their professional lives.

We also bid farewell to two members of the Ben Madigan staff – Mr James Creighton and Mrs Jenny Bill. We thank them for all that contributed to Ben Madigan during what was a very turbulent time in the School's history and wish them well in their teaching career.

Sport has always been the heartbeat of this institution, teaching us discipline, teamwork, and resilience long before those terms became fashionable. We celebrate not just wins, but the depth of commitment that makes our School special. While we proudly remember winning the Schools' Cup in 1997—and last year's exhilarating near-miss in the semi-finals—our true success lies in the spirit of participation, the number of teams we field, and the calibre of the players our programme produces, including greats like Jack Kyle, Iain Henderson, and Tom Stewart.

Our girls' sport is even more successful than the boys. Since the introduction of co-education, our girls' hockey teams won the Schools' Cup outright 20 times (including the most recent win in 2020), shared it 3 times and were runners up 8 times. Last year's 1st XI team were the winners of the Senior Shield and the 2nd XI team won the McDowell Shield.

We are also immensely proud of our international representatives in gymnastics, triathlon, rugby, netball, hockey and cricket, showcasing the breadth of talent across our fields.

Zac Fox, Form 2, deserves a special mention for winning a gold medal in the Minor Boys Long



Jump at the Irish Schools Championships in June – a remarkable achievement for one so young. In cricket, Alex Armstrong, M6, was selected for the Ireland U19s tour to Zimbabwe in April. He represented the Ulster Schools' side in the 2 day interpro game against the Southern Schools and captained the Ulster Schools side on their tour to Glasgow.

Two departments truly embody the spirit, talent, and sheer joy of our school - the Music and Drama Departments.

Throughout the year, our pupils' voices and instruments have resonated across some of the most prestigious stages our city has to offer: from the Carol Service in St Anne's Cathedral to the grand scale of the Spring Concert in the Ulster Hall. And, of course, the energy and commitment poured into the spectacular production of the school musical, *Legally Blonde*, was simply outstanding.

The Spring Concert this year was a particular highlight and perfectly illustrated the wonderful flexibility and ambition of both our staff and our pupils. Where else could an audience be treated to an eclectic programme that spanned the centuries—from a delicate piece of 15th-century music, to the solemn beauty of Karl Jenkins' Requiem, and then to the pulsating sounds of Avicii and Guns N' Roses?

The summer term brought a change of pace and a burst of electric energy with the highly-anticipated Battle of the Bands. This event, hugely popular with the entire school community, provides a different, thrilling kind of stage for our pupils to collaborate, create, and compete.

In a world increasingly driven by metrics, we must never forget the profound, enriching, and transformative effect of the arts. We are incredibly fortunate to have two departments that deliver such a high calibre of performance while simultaneously fostering genuine passion and teamwork.

Beyond the classroom, our pupils have excelled in numerous prestigious national challenges, demonstrating their intellectual rigour:

- UK Science Olympiads (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics)

- Cambridge Biology Challenge
- UKMT Mathematical Challenges (Senior and Junior)
- All Ireland Linguists Olympiad

Congratulations to all pupils who took part in these challenging events and to the staff for providing these opportunities beyond the curriculum.

The experiences offered beyond the classroom are crucial for developing pupil character, resilience, and enjoyment. This year, our extensive programme of school trips has provided invaluable opportunities for our students.

The annual Ski Trip over Christmas was a tremendous success, challenging pupils both physically and mentally.

Our rigorous curriculum was powerfully enhanced by an impressive array of international and national visits.

Closer to home, we ensured that pupils developed a deeper appreciation for their local context:

- Dublin and Carrickfergus provided vital links to national and regional history.
- The visit to Clifton House was particularly resonant. Like our school, Clifton House has a similarly long history and deep, tangible links to the North Belfast community. Experiencing this local heritage instils a sense of place, gratitude, and civic responsibility.

Every trip, whether international or local, is designed to challenge pupils, foster their sense of belonging, and ultimately provide enjoyment while enriching their academic understanding. Our thanks go to the staff whose careful planning makes these vital character-building opportunities possible.

Over the centuries, the Academy has always adapted to external forces and change. To keep our curriculum dynamic and relevant, we successfully introduced two new Sixth Form subjects which had their final examination in Summer 2025: Psychology and Moving Image Arts.

This strategic move reflects both pupil interest and growing career opportunities.



We thank the staff for the hard work and dedication required to research and implement these courses, ensuring our educational offer is cutting-edge and evolving.

The house system is an integral part of our School ethos and reinforces the sense of belonging through monthly house assemblies, numerous competitions and charitable fundraising initiatives. We are indebted to Mr Dorman for his leadership of the house system and to the staff who lead their houses with zeal and encourage pupils to participate in activities designed to put others before self. After intense pursuit of house points through an amazing 40+ competitions including bake-offs, the Christmas toy appeal, sporting events and of course, the annual Cavehill sponsored walk, the Evans trophy was presented to Cairns House. Mrs Patterson and Mr Rowntree accepted the trophy on behalf of the pupils in a characteristically humble and gracious manner. And if you believe that then you would believe anything particularly as Mr Rowntree had changed into an all-blue outfit to accept the trophy, had written a victory song and inflicted his rendition of this, sung with both gusto and smugness, to his captive audience.

The house system, focus on volunteering activities and other community-led projects such as Habitat for Humanity, raising awareness of mental health issues, contributing to the homework club in Conway Mill and numerous individual fundraising tasks that the pupils undertake on an individual basis reflects the altruistic nature of our pupils. Within the House system we had three charitable competitions:

- The Sponsored Walk and Colour Run raised £6500;
- The Christmas Toy Appeal – resulted in B.R.A. pupils donating 1500 new toys for local families
- The Christmas Dinner Foodbank - We collected enough food to feed 65 families a full Christmas dinner, roughly 350 people

Through various non-uniform days and other events, pupils and staff raised £3500 for Save the Children. Other pupil-focused activities included Read-On week as Form I and II pupils, co-ordinated by Ms. McBeth and Dr. Mort, raised

£1255.56 for the Northern Ireland Cancer Fund for Children.

While academic results are certainly not the sole measure of our school's success, we understand they are the essential currency our pupils need. These results empower our leavers with a range of career options and ensure they are strong candidates in today's highly competitive world.

The exceptional outcomes achieved in this year's public examinations are a testament to a massive team effort that always places our pupils at the centre.

I want to pay tribute to our staff who are not only expert and dedicated teachers but who also provide crucial support through the many difficult and challenging pastoral situations our young people face. The Vice Principals have a wide portfolio of responsibilities which only seems to increase year on year but they provide excellent leadership in these areas, teach their classes and also act as a crucial support network for staff and for me. I would like to thank last year's team of Wynn Graham, Andy Bell and Trevor Hughes for their team approach, endless capacity for hard work and good humour. Congratulations to Mr McCarey on his appointment as Pastoral Vice Principal and we wish him much success and personal fulfilment in this important role.

We also thank all of the support staff - the technicians, administrative, finance and estates teams, and Learning Support assistants—whose dedication in countless ways provides the vital foundation that allows our teaching staff to focus on educating our pupils.

Our pupils embrace their learning journey, working diligently and benefiting from the focused preparation strategies, including being 'brainwashed' – in all senses of the word - in the B.R.A. way to Revise. Their hard work is commendable.

To our parents - we are deeply grateful to you for consistently supporting our policies and reinforcing our high expectations at home. We recognise and value the trust inherent in the responsibility you bestow upon us every day your children come to school.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Board of Governors for their input to the School's strategic direction and management. It is an onerous and



challenging responsibility and Governors give tirelessly of their time to support pupils and staff in financial, educational, recruitment and pastoral decision making. I know that difficult decisions have been taken over recent years and, no doubt, there will be more to come so I would like to publicly thank them, and in particular the Warden Mr Eric Porter, for his commitment to the Academy and for his personal support and guidance on governance issues.

For a large and successful school such as ours to remain sustainable and dynamic, we recognise that we must rely on strong relationships that extend well beyond the school gates. We are deeply committed to fostering these vital networks, both within our local community and across our extensive family of former pupils.

Our collaborative spirit is evident in the successful partnerships we maintain within the North Belfast Area Learning Community. By sharing best practice with neighbouring schools, our staff benefit from professional enrichment, and our pupils gain access to expanded educational opportunities, including cross-school trips and successful youth leadership initiatives.

Crucially, our alumni are an indispensable asset to the Academy. They serve as inspiring role models, providing essential guidance in business and careers, and offering invaluable assistance with fundraising and development. We are profoundly grateful to the Old Boys' Association and the Old Girls' Association for their work in organising events that reinforce this enduring sense of belonging. Thanks to countless former pupils, our Careers Department benefits from regular support, including mock interviews, work placement opportunities, and engaging careers seminars.

Financial and community support is further cemented by two key organisations. The 1785 Foundation, ably chaired by Governor Martin Blake, provides welcome financial security for our pupils, offering both daily breaktime snacks and crucial grants to support individual pupils and teams participating in extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, the Friends of the Academy (FOTA), chaired by Governor Kim Burns, provides an amazing balance of social events that strengthen our school community, vital fundraising activities, and the extremely welcome uniform sale. The palpable

sense of belonging generated through FOTA's efforts directly supports pupils across a wide range of departments and co-curricular pursuits.

Finally, nothing highlights the depth of the Academy family quite like our alumni. We are always so pleased each year to welcome former pupils back to school for their year reunions. This year, the connection felt especially significant when the Robin Reid Trophy was formally presented to the school at the annual Old Boys vs School cricket match, further cementing the legacy and ties between generations of our students.

Our academic programme is strongly underpinned by the Careers Department. They provide timely and appropriate guidance and, crucially, run an individualised UCAS mentoring scheme.

The success of this comprehensive approach is evident in our leavers' next steps. B.R.A. pupils are successful not only in securing places on prestigious courses at top universities but also in winning highly competitive modern apprenticeship placements through rigorous application processes.

Last year's teams of prefects, senior prefects and Head Boy/Head Girl and deputies performed many vital duties that contribute to the smooth running of the school and are very often the public face of the school and role models for the younger pupils. Last year's Big Six – Madhu Pandiaraj, Nathan Rossall, Lucy Chambers, Clara Walsh, Niall Blasket and Ryan Calwell – balanced their academic studies, applications to highly competitive university courses, sporting activities, commitment to musical and drama productions and their duties with aplomb and we are grateful to them for how the year group bonded as a team.

All of the pupils in B.R.A. know that we have concerns about the world of social media. It has immense power for good - to connect, to inform, to inspire. But it also carries a hidden danger: the temptation to measure our worth by the applause of strangers, or to let the constant stream of negativity sap our joy and distort our view of others.

Too easily, we become self-centred in a world that trains us to say: look at me, notice me, like me. But character grows when we turn the camera around and ask instead: How can I notice you? How can I lift you? How can I make your life better?



Our school's task is not simply to make you knowledgeable, but to make you wise. Not just to make you successful, but to make you significant.

And significance does not come from self-promotion. It comes from service.

When you choose encouragement over criticism, when you use your influence to connect rather than divide, when you step forward to serve someone in need without expecting anything in return — you build the kind of character that changes the world.

So as we celebrate 240 years, let us not merely look back with pride. Let us look forward with purpose.

The founders of this School did not know our names — but they built for us. And in the same way, we may not know the names of those who will sit here in 50, 100, 200 years. But we can shape the world they inherit.

To our M6 leavers, I would that ask that you be remembered not for what you accumulate, but for what you give. Not for the noise you make, but for the light you shine on others.

We wish you happiness and much personal and professional fulfilment in the years ahead.

Warden, this concludes my report for the 2024 – 25 academic year.

2024 PRIZE LIST

Form I

Alexander, George R
Ang, Joaquin F P
Beirne, Ella L
Bradley, Alexis M
Campbell, Sylvie F
Chada, Amelie
Cole, George T
Curry, Rachel E
De Souza, Sophia E
Fitzpatrick, Sofia L
Harris, Katie M
Hume, Nicole
Irvine, Harriet E
Joby, Antony G
Jones, Luka
Lee, Timothy A S W
McCarey, Ivy E L
McCrea, Emily E
McIntyre, Hollie B
Nwosu, Ezinne M
Pinto, Reona
Pugsley, Lillie E
Reid, Dylan J
Roberts, Angus J
Sayers, Esme G
Smyth, Rachel C
Stephenson, Lily A
Tamim, Jessica
Wharry, Freya A J
Zhong, Grace Y



HONOURABLE MENTION

Bell, Chloe A	Mercer, Katie V
Crawford, Nina G	Morris, Georgia E
Cropera, Amelia B S	Ostrowski, Kacper J
Dolan, Haydn G	Radtke, Dominik
Krochmalska, Naomi	Robinson, Abigail M L
McAuley, Róisín A	Young, Leo R

FORM II

Adair, Ella K	McKinty, Emilie S M
Alinonu, Ejike C	McNevison, Erin A
Armstrong, Isla A	Molyneaux, Luca Z
Bell, Ava R	Moore, Eabha C A
Brown, Joshua A	Robinson, Matthew
Calvert, Maeve C	Seenan, Emily
Carpenter, Ryan M	Smith, Joseph T
Cox, Charlie F	Stewart, Paige
Crichton, Finn P	Strong, Molly
Cunningham, Grace A	Tohani, Saisha L
Hughes, Emily C	Turner, Grace J
Johnston, Katie L	Watters, James F
Ke, Enoch Y	Weerawardhana, Mocsha A L V
Lyons, Ella M	Welsh, Max A
McKeown, Eilidh J	Xie, Vincy Y

HONOURABLE MENTION

Anyakudo, Chidinma C	Golonka, Zofia A
McCullough, Aaron J F	Smith, Jessica J
Beirne, Charlotte K	Ibrahim, Mohammed E M
McDonnell, Matthew R	Torrens, Lorelai E
Connolly, James R	Mackinson, Evie R
McIlmurray, Eve	White, Grace



FORM III

Chung, Esme	Manson, Ella O
Connolly, Aaron	McCormick, Lily C
Courtney, Joshua W	McDonald, Amie
Dunlop, Chloe O	McKenna-Murray, Niamh L
Fularczyk, Nicola	Moore, Finn J
Gamble, Jessica E	Pandiaraj, Vismithaa Sai
Gao, Joshua S Y	Roberts, Joe D
Gibson, Serena	Rogers, Hope C
Gogacz, Amelia	Rowan, Peter F
Holmes, Mathilda A O	Sanchez, Gabriel A
Hurson, Cian E	Savage, Kristen R
Jones, Leila	Schilling, Christian G
Kelly, Grace A	Sedgwick, William J
Lada, Oliver	Vrabelova, Noelle J
Lockhart, Maggie I E	Warnock, Rachel E I

HONOURABLE MENTION

Bell, Olivia M	O'Hara, Evie
Clulow, Lucy A	Orr, W Tom
Davies, Callum N	Pollock, Lilyrose A
Gillam, Isla M	Press, Jonah R G
Gilmour, Aidan A	Simms, Daniel J
McCarey, Isabella G	Stewart, Willow R V

DEPARTMENTAL PRIZES

Form IV

Aby, Dominic	Digital Technology
Adair, James G	Economics, English Language
Adams, Molly J	English Language, English Literature,
	History, Spanish
Adams,	Mylie Technology
Allen, Marco G	Biology, Chemistry, Physics
Campbell, Elsa J	Art and Design
Chojnacka, Zuzanna	Biology, Chemistry, English Literature,
	Mathematics, Physics



Clements, Gwen I	Business Studies, English Literature, Physical Education
Crainey, Jake P	General Excellence
Crawford, Layla R	Art and Design
Cunningham, Niamh	General Excellence
Curley, Jessica J	Drama
Falls, Zoe M	Science
Goodchild, Rhianna P	Food and Nutrition
Gordon, Emilia K	Geography
Gray, Keri J	Physical Education
Hatton, Ruth J	Business Studies
Hendrix, Gabriel M	Technology
Hudson, Maria P	Mathematics
Hui, Adrian L S	History
Ingram, Charlotte R A	Drama, English Language
Johnston, Holly J	Mathematics, Physical Education
Kaluzniak, Olivia	Food and Nutrition
McCall, Logan	Science
McCune, Isabelle K	Spanish
McCusker, Lorcan X	Music
McFarlane, Amy E	Latin
Millin, Nathan C J	German
Mitchell, Olivia	Business Studies
Mulholland, Melissa R	French, Physics, Religious Studies, Spanish
Petticrew, Ethan B D	Music
Pogue, Ryan M	Biology, Chemistry, English Language, English Literature, French, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Religious Studies
Smyth, Jessica E	Economics, English Language, English Literature, History, Religious Studies
Wilson, Faye J	Art and Design
Wilson, Jenna M	French

HONOURABLE MENTION

Form IV

Adair, James G	English Literature, Religious Studies
Adams, Molly J	Biology, Chemistry
Bacalso, Fritz M	German
Brogan, Shay V	Technology
Bunting, Lucas J	Physical Education



Burns, Daire P J	Business Studies
Campbell, Elsa J	English Language
Campbell, Roise M	Business Studies
Chen, Yan	German
Crainey, Jake P	Chemistry, Economics, Religious Studies
Crawford, Layla R	Spanish
Cunningham, Niamh	English Literature, French, Mathematics, Physics
Curley, Jessica J	Religious Studies
Donaldson, Martha A	Latin
Drake, Eva A	Biology, French
Enriquez, Rosemary O	Spanish
Fletcher, Josh M	Food and Nutrition, Physical Education
Gallagher, Katie L	Science
Graham, Kady J	Economics
Harris, Sophie J	Drama
Ingram, Charlotte R A	English Literature, Spanish
Johnston, Holly J	Chemistry
Lock, Sorcha R	English Language
McCall, Olivia R	French
McCullough, Michael R P	History, Technology
McCusker, Lorcan X	Geography, History
McFerran, Steven J	Physics
McLaughlin, Ben R	Physics
McLean, Harry R C	Economics
Millin, Nathan C J	Geography
Moriarty, Darcey M	Food and Nutrition
Njanina, Jayden M	Music
Murphy, Jared	Latin
O'Kane, Ella H	Drama
O'Kane, Zoe T	Music
Philip, Leo	Biology
Richards, Evan W	Art and Design
Salvatierra, Iyanna	History
Scott, Moss M C	Technology
Smyth, Jessica E	Mathematics
Stevenson, Jack H	Science
Vacchiero, Valentina	Art and Design
Veronica, Oliver D	Physical Education
Vinaik, Aaruni	Digital Technology
Whiteside, Dylan G	Business Studies
Whittle, Lucy	Digital Technology, English Language
Wilson, Jenna M	Chemistry



DEPARTMENTAL PRIZES

Form V

Adam, Ella J	Drama
Altayeb, Mohamed	Digital Technology
Bingham, Nelly C E	Art and Design
Black, Jonah G	Music
Callaghan, Leah	Technology
Clawson, Annie M	Food and Nutrition
Convery, Charlie M	French, Spanish
Crowe, Elizabeth G	Spanish
Curley, Bethany R	Art and Design
Curran, Sophie J	Technology
Dalzell-McGhee, Rebekah A	Computer Science, French, Latin
Derezinski, Antoni	Economics
Downey, Ella Sofia	Physical Education
Duffy, Zara A	General Excellence
Foley, Ethan A	History
Gordon, Jacob T	English Literature, Geography, Mathematics, Music, Physics, General Excellence
Jackson, Finlay	History, Physical Education
Lockhart, Sam J R	Business Studies, General Excellence
Magill, Matilda L	Art and Design, English Language, History, Religious Studies, Science
Maitland, Daniel J	English Literature
Manlan, Robert G	German
Marron, Charlotte E	Drama, English Language, French, German, Mathematics, Religious Studies, General Excellence
McCollam, Cormac M	Physics, Technology
McCullough, Vincent	Further Mathematics, Geography, General Excellence
McIntyre, Harry D	Business Studies
McVeigh, Lucy E	Mathematics
Morrison, Philomena H R	Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, English Language
Murphy, Eleanor E	Biology, English Language, Further Mathematics, History, Religious Studies, Exceptional Performance
O'Brien, Erin S	English Language
O'Connor, Isabella S L	English Literature
O'Reilly, Kacie E	English Literature



Raghuram, Keshav	Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Further Mathematics, Latin, Mathematics, Physics, Religious Studies, Exceptional Performance
Reynolds, Fraser D L X	Geography
Robinson, Nathanael N	Economics
Ross, Holly	Mathematics
Seath, Beatrice L	Drama
Stevenson, Lucy G	English Literature, German
Suresh, Arjun	Chemistry, General Excellence
Toal, Elizabeth R	Chemistry, Computer Science, Latin, General Excellence
Wilkinson, Oliver	Spanish, General Excellence

HONOURABLE MENTION

Form V

Adam, Ella J	English Language, History
Aidaroos, Shimous	General Excellence
Armstrong, Mya	General Excellence
Banasik, Luna	Art and Design, Spanish, General Excellence
Bell, Daniel P	Physical Education
Boyd, Benjamin A	Economics
Bryan, Finn K	General Excellence
Chesnel, Jérôme P G	Art and Design, Food and Nutrition
Clawson, Annie M	Music
Crowe, Elizabeth G	General Excellence
Curley, Bethany R	English Language, Mathematics, General Excellence
Curran, Sophie J	General Excellence
Dalzell-McGhee, Rebekah A	Mathematics, General Excellence
Derezinski, Antoni	General Excellence
Downey, Ella Sofia	Business Studies, General Excellence
Duffy, Zara A	Biology, English Literature, Spanish
Foley, Ethan A	English Literature, General Excellence
Gallagher, Adam J	General Excellence
Gilliland, Reuben J	Digital Technology
Gordon, Jacob T	French
Gray, Lewis C	Technology, General Excellence
Gregg, Finn T	General Excellence
Kirk, Phoebe K	French, German



Knott, Aaron A	Further Mathematics, General Excellence
Kyle, Lucas M	General Excellence
Lane, Timothy J A	Biology, Geography, General Excellence
Laverty, Ciaran M B	Further Mathematics, General Excellence
Leavey, Reuben R	Economics
Liapina, Yeva	Digital Technology
Lockhart, Sam J R	Chemistry, Physics
Magill, Matilda L	English Literature
Maitland, Daniel J	English Language, History, General Excellence
Manson, Eve L	Religious Studies, Technology
Marron, Charlotte E	Art and Design
McAteer, Jack S	Science
McAuley, Keon S	Computer Science, Technology, General Excellence
McCarthy, Roisin M	Latin, Music, General Excellence
McCorry, Phoenix M C	General Excellence
McCullough, Vincent	Business Studies, Computer Science, German, Physics
McDowell, Grace J	Drama, Physical Education
McKeown, Rebecca L	General Excellence
McVeigh, Lucy E	General Excellence
McVeigh, Sophie R	General Excellence
Miskimmin-Young, Austen	German
Moore, Adam B	Further Mathematics, General Excellence
Morrison, Philomena H R	General Excellence
Murphy, Eleanor E	Chemistry, Physics
O'Brien, Erin S	Drama, Religious Studies, General Excellence
O'Connor, Isabella S L	General Excellence
O'Kane, Jack J	General Excellence
O'Kane, Luke	Science
O'Reilly, Kacie E	General Excellence
O'Reilly, Miah E	General Excellence
Pradeep, Rohit	History
Reid, Poppy M	Latin, Spanish
Reynolds, Fraser D L X	General Excellence
Robinson, Nathanael N	General Excellence
Rossal, Nadia E	Geography, General Excellence
Stevenson, Lucy G	General Excellence
Suresh, Arjun	Computer Science
Tate, Eimear I A	General Excellence
Toal, Elizabeth R	Mathematics
Tohani, Ria L	General Excellence
Wilkinson, Oliver	Latin, Religious Studies
Woloszyn, Michal L	General Excellence
Wright, Isaac O	Business Studies, French, General Excellence



DEPARTMENTAL PRIZES

Form LVI

Archer, Zach J	Sport
Bell, Jamie T	General Excellence
Bickerstaff, Ewan D	Geography
Campbell, Maya M	Chemistry
Carter, Aaron J	Business Studies, English Literature, Moving Image Arts
Chen, Sean	Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics
Chowne, Sophia S	Sociology
Clarke, Lewis J M	Government and Politics, Sociology
Clarkson, Leo J	French, Music
Cole, Hannah	Religious Studies
Colvin, Max J	Geography
Coulter, Jake C	Software Systems Development
Dandurand, Ian H	Mathematics
Daniels, Hope C E	Spanish
Fee, Corban G	Business Studies
Feeney, Nathan L	English Language
Gibson, Joshua G S	Technology
Haridy, Ahmed	Spanish
Kearney, Clodagh	English Literature, Psychology
Kirker, Anna	Digital Technology
Kirkpatrick, Rebecca C	Nutrition and Food Science
Kulig, Oliver	Economics, French, History
Lewis, Kate A	German, Mathematics, Physics
McFarland, Matthew L	General Excellence
McKee, Owen M	General Excellence
McKeown, Eve G H	Spanish
McKinney, Olivia K	Business Studies
McLaughlin, Jacob R	Biology
McMullan Avci, Aurora K	Health and Social Care
Moriarty, Aleesha L	Technology
Nethercott, Edward H	Moving Image Arts
O'Hanlon, Patrick J	Economics
O'Kane, Jamie E	Religious Studies
Pollock, Jackson J	Physics
Quinn, Erin L	Biology, Economics
Rankin, Hannah J L	Art and Design, History
Scott, Ines A J	English Literature
Seymour, Mya J	Geography



Skochelyas-Mizerak, Vadym
 Smyth, Lucy K
 Staworzynski, Olivier P
 Strong, Beth S
 Taylor, Finn L
 Teague, Sarah
 Wallace, Malachy P
 Yearsley, Finn L M

Government and Politics
 Chemistry
 Biology
 Health and Social Care
 Technology
 Sport
 History
 Art and Design

HONOURABLE MENTION

Form LVI

Akmađ, Aliyah N
 Baird, Finlay J
 Beacom, Jake
 Bell, Jamie T

General Excellence
 General Excellence
 General Excellence
 Business Studies, Digital Technology,
 Economics

Bickerstaff, Ewan D
 Blayney, Lydia L
 Brobyn, Harriet A
 Brogan, Daithi A R
 Campbell, Maya M
 Carter, Aaron J
 Chen, Sean
 Clarkson, Leo J
 Clements, Jacob J W
 Clements, Ruby I
 Colvin, Max J
 Coulter, Jake C
 Dandurand, Ian H
 Daniels, Hope C E
 Donald, Ellie S
 Donaldson, Rosa J
 Fee, Corban G
 French, T Alex
 Gibson, Joshua G S
 Gilmore, Madison M
 Gonsalves, Liam
 Gray, Erin S
 Haridy, Ahmed
 Hipolito, Samuel
 Houston, Luke J

General Excellence
 Sociology
 Business Studies
 Chemistry, General Excellence
 French, General Excellence
 General Excellence
 General Excellence
 General Excellence
 Technology
 Geography, General Excellence
 General Excellence
 General Excellence
 Chemistry, Geography, General Excellence
 General Excellence
 Government and Politics
 Psychology, General Excellence
 Sociology, General Excellence
 General Excellence
 General Excellence
 Moving Image Arts, Religious Studies
 Physics, General Excellence
 Geography
 General Excellence
 General Excellence
 Sport



Ingram, Zoe H	English Literature
Januszevska, Wiktorja	French, General Excellence
Kearney, Clodagh	General Excellence
King, Anna E	Economics
Kirkpatrick, Rebecca C	Psychology, General Excellence
Kulig, Oliver	General Excellence
Lewis, Kate A	General Excellence
McCollam, Hugo C	General Excellence
McCrea, Toby	History
McCullough, Lauren S	History, General Excellence
McFarland, Matthew L	Chemistry, Religious Studies
McGahan, Flynn	Digital Technology
McKee, Owen M	Mathematics, Spanish
McKeown, Eve G H	English Literature, General Excellence
McLaughlin, Jacob R	Physics, General Excellence
McMaster, Emily R	Technology
McQueen, Alexandra N	Art and Design, Health and Social Care, Music
Moan, Odhran J	Economics
Morrison, James R	Biology, General Excellence
Nethercott, Edward H	Music
O'Carroll, Ella R	Religious Studies
O'Hanlon, Patrick J	General Excellence
O'Kane, Harry D	Economics, Spanish
O'Kane, Jamie E	Government and Politics
Orr, Lucy H	Spanish
Payot, Gail L	Music
Pollock, Jackson J	General Excellence
Pollock, Lucca R	Software Systems Development, General Excellence
Purvis, Euan C	Religious Studies
Quinn, Erin L	Chemistry, General Excellence
Rankin, Hannah J L	General Excellence
Saunders, Zachary	Software Systems Development, General Excellence
Sayers, Tobias J	General Excellence
Scott, Ines AJ	Art and Design, General Excellence
Selfridge, Felicity A B	English Language, English Literature
Skochelyas-Mizerak, Vadym	General Excellence
Sloan, Caitlin J	Sport
Snoddy, Alexandra V	Sport
Smyth, Lucy K	Biology, Mathematics, Physics, General Excellence



Spence, Adam S J	History, General Excellence
Staworzynski, Olivier P	General Excellence
Steele, Robert C	General Excellence
Stevenson, Sam P	Business Studies
Tarr, Julia E	Software Systems Development
Taylor, Finn L	General Excellence
Wallace, Malachy P	French, Mathematics, General Excellence

DEPARTMENTAL PRIZES

Form MVI

Anderson, Rachael A	English Language
Bacon, D Jack	Geography
Bangalan, Denzel T	Technology
Baxter, Mark A	Software Systems Development, General Excellence
Blaskett, Niall I	Drama and Theatre Studies, Music, General Excellence
Chesnel, Amandine A C	Geography, Government and Politics, History, Exceptional Performance
Corr, Sophie E M	General Excellence
Crawford, Lucy A	Religious Studies
Dann, Niamh B	Sport
Davidson, Penny J	Drama and Theatre Studies, Moving Image Arts
Deans, Sophia A	English Literature
Finnegan, Eva E M	Chemistry, Exceptional Performance
Flood, Megan H	Economics, German, History, Moving Image Arts, Exceptional Performance
Gastar, Kian F	General Excellence
Geddis, Katie C	English Literature
Gibson, Mia G J	Exceptional Performance
Gilchrist, Ciara E	General Excellence
Graham, Daniel S	Software Systems Development
Graham, Melissa	Religious Studies
Hui, Moses	General Excellence
Jones, Sydney L E	Business Studies, Digital Technology, Religious Studies, General Excellence
Lane, Jessica S	Exceptional Performance
Lyons, Lucy B	Drama and Theatre Studies
McCarney, Katie E	Biology, Chemistry, Further Mathematics, Mathematics, Exceptional Performance



McIvor, Aoife P	Business Studies, Chemistry, Exceptional Performance
McVicker, Luan	Exceptional Performance
McWilliams, Anna J	Art and Design
Mitchell, Eva	Sociology, Exceptional Performance
Moran, Lucy E	Government and Politics
Muckle, Kacie A	Sociology
Navarro-Mcintosh, Iona L	Art and Design
Nemeth, Benjamin	Mathematics, Physics, Exceptional Performance
O'Dowd, Anna J	Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Spanish, Exceptional Performance
Orr, Mia N	Psychology
Pandiaraj, Madhumitha	General Excellence
Philip, Fiona	Biology, Health and Social Care
Place, Zoe K	Sport
Rossal, Nathan C	Further Mathematics, Physics, Technology, Exceptional Performance
Schilling, Clara	Exceptional Performance
Walsh, Clara E	English Literature, Latin, Spanish
Warnock, Emily S	Geography, History, Exceptional Performance
Watters, Maria R	Spanish
Welsh, Nathan J	Further Mathematics, Physics, Exceptional Performance
Whiteside, Matthew	Business Studies, Economics, Exceptional Performance
Wilson, James T	French, Exceptional Performance

HONOURABLE MENTION

Form MVI

Adair, Luke E	Religious Studies
Anderson, Rachael A	German
Bacon, D Jack	General Excellence
Barsalini, Oisin R	Physics, General Excellence
Beggs, Daniel J	Nutrition and Food Science
Bosket, Anouk	Business Studies, Sport, General Excellence
Boyd, Jolie S	English Literature, Psychology, General Excellence
Cairns, Adam T B	Technology
Chambers, Lucy H	Biology, General Excellence
Connolly, Finn J	History
Corr, Sophie E M	Business Studies, Digital Technology



Dabrowski, Jakub J	General Excellence
Davidson, Penny J	English Language
Duffy, Caolan G	General Excellence
Ferguson, Lucy A	Digital Technology, General Excellence
Finnegan, Eva E M	Physics
Follis, Jacob G	English Literature
Gallagher, Eamonn G	Art and Design
Gastar, Kian F	Software Systems Development
Gibson, Mia G J	Chemistry
Gilchrist, Ciara E	Art and Design, Sociology
Guy, Ben S	Software Systems Development
Hackett, Rachel C	Spanish
Hewitt, Adam D	General Excellence
Horkan, Katie E	Music, General Excellence
Hui, Moses	Further Mathematics, Mathematics
Kerr, Rosa E	French, Psychology, General Excellence
Kilpatrick, Ella E	Drama and Theatre Studies
Lane, Jessica S	Biology
Lyons, Lucy B	Religious Studies
McCall, Jenna R	General Excellence
McGrady, Daniel G	General Excellence
McGuigan, Conor S	Mathematics, General Excellence
McIlroy, Ben A	History
McKenna, Tom A	Economics
McLarnon, Ella G	English Literature
McLean, Sarah J	General Excellence
McVicker, Luan	Economics, History, Physics
McWilliams, Anna J	Geography
Milne, Georgia M	Sociology
Mitchell, Eva	Business Studies, Digital Technology
Murphy, Aidan S	Sport, Spanish
Navarro-Mcintosh, Iona L	General Excellence
Nemeth, Benjamin	Further Mathematics
Nicholson, Ethan J	Technology
O’Gorman, Michael P	Technology
Orr, Mia N	General Excellence
Pandiaraj, Madhumitha	Biology, Chemistry
Perry, Christian D	Government and Politics
Philip, Fiona	General Excellence
Piddington, Zoe	English Language
Rea-Lavery, Sofia L	General Excellence
Reid, Max	Sport
Riddell, Aoife M	Moving Image Arts



Rossal, Nathan C	German, Mathematics
Saji, Diana	Health and Social Care
Saneesh Krishna, Aditi	French
Shore, Freya R	Religious Studies
Srikanth, Samvritha	Art and Design
Toal, Annabelle C	English Language
Walsh, Clara E	General Excellence
Webb, Jack W P	Government and Politics
Whiteside, Matthew	Spanish
Worthington, Isabella K	Health and Social Care
Yates, Charlie H	Moving Image Arts

SPECIAL PRIZES

ANNE BARRON PRIZE (Ben Madigan)	Annabel K Thompson
McCORMICK PRIZE (English)	Christian G Schilling
HAROLD RAINEY MEMORIAL PRIZE	Matilda L Magill (GCSE English)
R. S. J. H. MAGOWAN PRIZE (GCSE Geography)	Fraser D L X Reynolds
EDWARD McCAMLEY PRIZE (GCSE History)	Eleanor E Murphy
MARY A. HYNDMAN PRIZE (GCSE Home Economics)	Annie M Clawson
THE W. L. CLEMENTS MEMORIAL PRIZE (GCSE Music)	Jacob T Gordon
CLYDE PRIZE (GCSE Religious Studies)	Charlotte E Marron
JACKSON PRIZE (GCSE Science)	Keshav Raghuram



TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN AWARD Sponsored by LB Property Developments (GCSE Technology and Design)	Cormac M McCollam
S. S. N. PIERCE MEMORIAL TROPHY (for outstanding endeavour at GCSE)	Joshua N J Steele
FREDERICK WHITE MEMORIAL PRIZE (for the top performance at GCSE)	Eleanor E Murphy Keshav Raghuram
HAROLD HUTCHINSON PRIZE (Advanced Subsidiary Religious Studies)	Hannah Cole
J. C. PICKEN MEMORIAL PRIZE (Art and Design)	Eamonn G Gallagher
AMY DICKSON TROPHY and PRIZE (Art and Design)	Anna J McWilliams
ALLISON HERON PRIZE (Biology)	Fiona Philip
McCLAY PRIZE (Business Studies)	Aoife M McIvor
MERVYN SEMPLE PRIZE (Chemistry)	Anna J O'Dowd
J. N. SHEARMAN MEMORIAL PRIZE (Classics)	Clara E Walsh
SIR SAMUEL FERGUSON PRIZE (English Literature)	Katie C Geddis
THE J. W. and EVELYN DARBYSHIRE AWARD (Geography)	Amandine A C Chesnel
ANTHONY TAYLOR MEMORIAL PRIZE (History)	Megan H Flood
R. J. BRYCE MEMORIAL PRIZE (Irish Studies)	Jolie S Boyd



T. R. COLLIER PRIZE
(Mathematics)

Nathan C Rossal

G. B. TAYLOR MEMORIAL PRIZE
(Mathematics)

Katie E McCarney

R. M. FANNIN MEMORIAL PRIZE
(Music)

James T Wilson

MIDDLETON PRIZE
(Music)

Thomas M Gillam

LEO FORTE PRIZE
(Music)

Maria R Watters

EMMA ALLEN MEMORIAL PRIZE
(Music)

Niall I Blaskett

THE ANNE CAMPBELL CUP
(Nutrition and Food Science)

Daniel J Beggs

KNOX PRIZE
(Physical Education)

Niamh B Dann

McCAUGHEY PRIZE
(Science)

Madhumitha Pandiaraj

N.E. MOORE PRIZE
(Technology)

Nathan C Rossal



WALTER TATE PRIZES

Chemistry	Eva E M Finnegan
Economics	Megan H Flood
Government and Politics	Amandine Chesnel
Physics	Nathan C Rossal
Religious Studies	Lucy Crawford
Sociology	Eva Mitchell

SIR DONALD CURRIE SCHOLARSHIPS (for the top overall performance in the Form)

Form I	Timothy A S W Lee
Form II	Vincy Y Xie
Form III	Maggie I E Lockhart
Form IV	Ryan M Pogue
Form V	Keshav Raghuram

LEAVING SCHOLARSHIPS

SIR PAUL GIRVAN	Emily S Warnock
J. M. CLEMENTS	Katie E McCarney
SIR FRANCIS EVANS	Benjamin Nemeth
WHITEHEAD	Madhumitha Pandiaraj
MAURICE JACKSON	Kian F Gastar
HUGH GIRVAN	Anna J O'Dowd
WALTER TATE	Nathan C Rossal
KNOX	Matthew Whiteside
ANTHONY TAYLOR	Luan McVicker
C. B. and A. M. MURRAY	Sydney L E Jones
McCLEERY	Jessica S Lane
G. B. TAYLOR	Nathan J Welsh
PICKEN	James T Wilson
ARCHIBALD	Niall I Blaskett
BRUCE and PIM PRIZE	Mia G J Gibson
THE BEGGS FAMILY PRIZE	Mark A Baxter
Dr L.H. CAMPBELL PRIZE (Chemistry)	Eva E M Finnegan



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY BURSARY	Emily S Warnock
GLORIA SIDWELL (née KINKEAD) MEMORIAL BURSARY (Art and Design)	Iona L Navarro-McIntosh
J. S. LOUGHRIDGE BURSARY (Geography)	Mya Seymour
W. A. RAW BURSARY (Modern Languages)	James T Wilson
MacDERMOTT TRAVELLING BURSARY (Modern Languages)	Megan H Flood
SHEARMAN TRAVELLING BURSARY (Modern Languages)	Clara E Walsh
THE MONA McCONNELL CARES AWARD (for work in the community)	Dylan B Gallagher
J. J. KANE MEMORIAL PRIZE (for contributions to 'The Owl')	Rosie A Woods
THE MARK LONG POETRY PRIZE	Charlotte E Marron
THE RUAIRI McALEESE MEMORIAL DEBATING PRIZE	Leo J Clarkson Lauren S McCullough
THE ERIC STRAIN MEMORIAL CUP (Duke of Edinburgh Gold Leader)	Adam T O'Brien
TENNANT SALVER (Chair of Sixth Form Centre Committee)	Ryan Calwell Clara E Walsh
TROPHY FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE PERFORMING ARTS (presented by the Old Girls' Association)	Jane H Martin
J. C. PICKEN BAT (for overall contribution to Cricket in School, presented by the Old Boys' Association)	R Alex Armstrong



OWL TROPHY (for outstanding endeavour at Advanced Level, presented by W. H. and J. Gray)	Isabella K Worthington
JILLIAN ADAMS MEMORIAL TROPHY (for an Advanced Level pupil studying a healthcare-related degree and who has made a valuable contribution to the community life of the School)	Jolie S Boyd
N. M. SAVAGE AWARD (for the most impressive combination of academic attainment, prowess in organized games and sense of corporate responsibility)	Nathan C Rossal
ULSTER UNIVERSITY ENDEAVOUR CUP (for outstanding achievement throughout the year)	Anna J O'Dowd
MARTIN PRIZE (Deputy Head Girls)	Lucy H Chambers Clara E Walsh
ANNUAL PRIZE FOR BOYS (Deputy Head Boys)	Niall I Blaskett Ryan Calwell
WALTER TATE AWARD (Head Girl)	Madhumitha Pandiaraj
WHITEHEAD AWARD (Head Boy)	Nathan C Rossal
THE EVANS TROPHY Cairns Captains:	Hope C E Daniels Zachary Saunders



School Societies

JUNIOR SU



Junior SU is held every Wednesday lunchtime in the 6th form study centre and is open to everyone from Forms 1-3. SU is a community open to all students in Belfast Royal Academy that are Christians and non-Christians alike, and it allows for an opportunity for pupils to look into the word of God by reading passages from the Bible, whilst learning about how the Christian faith can be applied in their lives at B.R.A and in their lives outside of school. It also presents an amazing opportunity for junior pupils to make friends through group discussions with peers and fun games that are played every week, which everyone loves.

This year we focused on looking at the “*Parables in the Bible*”, which allowed us to investigate the short stories that Jesus told His disciples, such as the parable of the good shepherd. These stories have such deep meaning, and we talked about how they help us discover God’s love for us but also how we can lead a Christian life in B.R.A.



Olivier Staworzynski (LVI)

SENIOR SU

Senior SU meets every Friday at lunchtime for Form 4-M6. A typical day of Senior SU would include games, discussion groups and a member of the Senior Committee delivering a talk from the Bible. Our themes were Parables and The Fruit of the Spirit. Throughout the year the Senior Committee have various responsibilities, including writing talks and attending Committee meetings. One of the main events is the Big SU Weekend which takes place at the end of September in Castlewellan. Last year we had over 140 pupils attend: with every year group being represented. Other SU events held throughout the year include the Senior SU Weekend in Kilkeel, the Christmas event, the Easter event and the big SU BBQ at Ben Madigan.



During these events we had guest speakers who encouraged us with the Word of God. Some of the Committee also had the opportunity to go to Poland on a mission trip which was a life-changing experience. Being part of the Senior SU committee is such a privilege, and I had a great time serving on Committee.



Our main goal is to share the love of Jesus with everyone, Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins so that we can have eternal life. Therefore, as committee we want as many people to hear this good news as possible. This year, we were blessed with incredible staff members who, without them, SU would not have been as amazing as it was. With special mention to Mr Morrison and Mrs Graydon who are the very core of Scripture Union in Belfast Royal Academy and continue to guide us all with great knowledge and compassion.

Maya Campbell (LVI)

B.R.A. LIBRARY

The Library continues in its mission to provide pupils and staff with opportunities for reading both old favourites and exciting new authors. Librarians are driven by the conviction that reading is good for you, and this is not just wishful thinking. In the podcast series *Just One Thing*, available on BBC Sounds, Dr Michael Mosley summarised current scientific thinking on reading.

It might seem obvious, but reading really is the best way to improve your ability with words, and research suggests that this effect is strongest when you read fiction. Research evidence also shows that reading makes your brain work better, improving brain activity and function, by increasing blood flow across the whole brain and creating new neural pathways. When you read about experiences involving taste, touch, smell, your brain even reacts in some of the same ways as it would if you experienced them in real life.

Readers report benefits to their mental health in feeling calmer and more rested. This seems to be because reading takes our attention away from our own anxieties and focuses it on situations outside ourselves. Fiction in particular helps us to understand the ways other people are both similar to and different from us in their hopes, fears, attitudes and motives. It helps us to feel connected to others but also shows that there are other ways of seeing the world from our own. Some research has suggested that being a reader makes young adults better able to infer what others are thinking or feeling in real life.

To gain the positive benefits of reading you should aim to read regularly: 15-30 minutes of sustained per day is enough to start reaping the rewards. 2026 will be the UK National Year of Reading so watch out for community and media events that will help everyone fall back in love with reading.



Meet and greet with David Walliams

National Poetry Day

The theme of National Poetry Day in October 2024 was 'Counting'. The Library ran a Haiku competition, since this verse-form relies on having particular numbers of syllables in each line. Awards were made to the following writers:

Golden leaves dancing,
Autumn's vibrant farewell show,
Nature's art on trees.

Leaves fall gently down,
Whispers of orange and gold,
Autumn's soft embrace.

Chloe Cosby

'Autumn Colours'
Orange, red and yellow
A warm whirlwind, all around
Falling in my face

Joni Frazer

'Seaside sunset'
A calm beach sunset
Dark blue seas shine so brightly
Such a divine scent

Cristen Masicampo

'Counting'
Counting is not so fun
The endless stairs led nowhere.
I can just go on.

Joseph Smith

'Waterlily'
Floating gracefully
Gently gliding on water
Peaceful way of life.

Paige Stewart

Scholastic Book Fairs

took place in October 2024 and February 2025. Pupils, as always, were keen to browse and buy books and stationery. Popular authors and series included *Tom Gates*, Suzanne Collins, *Five Nights at Freddie's*, and *Percy Jackson* but adventurous readers also branched out to titles such as *Cogheart* by Peter Bunzl, *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, *Check Mates* by Stewart Foster, and *Guts* by Raina Telgemeier.

WORLD BOOK DAY AND READING CHALLENGES

The Library ran a reading challenge over the Christmas Holidays, followed by a Science Reading Challenge from January to March 2025, with certificates and prizes awarded on World Book Day 2025. Suggested titles for Junior readers included *Lunar* by Chris Bradford, *Paradise on Fire* by Jewell Rhodes, *The Clockwork Conspiracy*



by Sam Sedgman, *My Family and Other Animals* by Gerald Durrell, and Joanna Nadin's biography of Alan Turing. Suggested reading for Senior readers included *Why Fish Don't Exist* by Lulu Miller, *Not the End of the World* by Hannah Ritchie, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skoot, and *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, by Oliver Sacks.

Reading Challenge commendations and awards went to pupils who read several titles, gave thoughtful responses to their reading, or were ambitious or tenacious in their reading. Commended pupils were: Ruben Buckley Abby Gault, Amber McIlwaine-Biggins, Noah McTeggart-Hughes, Lili Munsanje and Christian Schilling.

The Library marked World Book Day itself with a Book Swap, where pupils exchanged books they were finished with. Any donations that remained at the end of the book swap were given to charity.

AUTHOR VISIT



B.R.A. took part in the Junior Juries scheme, which encouraged pupils to read and vote for the books shortlisted for the Children's Books Ireland Awards 2025. The organisers generously donated copies of the books to the Library, and also arranged a visit to the School on 25 March by Belfast author Kelly McCaughrain, one of the short-listed authors. Kelly spoke to Form 5 and Lower Sixth pupils about how she developed an idea from the starting point of an issue in the news, through to a novel written in different voices to explore different points of view on a challenging moral dilemma.

Kelly was a really engaging speaker, so much so that the audience immediately took out all the B.R.A. copies of her novels. Kelly kindly donated a copy of her latest book *Little Bang* to the Library. Later in the year, Kelly won the Honour Award for Fiction and the Junior Juries Award for this novel in the Children's Books Ireland Awards.

Kelly also acts as a mentor for Write Club, a programme run by Fighting Words NI for new and aspiring writers aged 13-18. She encouraged B.R.A. pupils to join, and you can find details online.

ACCELERATED READER PROGRAMME

The Library and English Department continued to run the Renaissance Learning Accelerated Reader Programme with Form 1 and 2 pupils. This scheme aims to embed regular reading in the early years of grammar school, by encouraging pupils to read for 15 or more minutes a day. Pupils took online quizzes each time they finished a book, and these allowed us to give awards for the number of words read and for high achievement in quiz answers. Congratulations to the following Form 1 pupils who were given Reading Ambassador Awards for reading over one million words in the academic year 2024-2025: Alexis Bradley, Cara Gong, River Hewitson-Freeman, Isobel Hunter-Jamison, Antony Joby, Roisin McAuley, Amelie Moore, Lili Munsanje, Lulu Munsanje, Yeni Olayera, Angus Roberts, Alexandra Sloan and Freya Wharry.

Congratulations to the following Form 2 pupils who were awarded Golden Book badges for reading one million words or more in Form 2, as well as having read one million words during their time in Form 1: Chidinma Anyakudo, Emily Hughes, Luke McAleer, Emilie McKinty, Alex Mihalache, Eabha Moore, Patrick Rogers, David Vicchi, Joshua Weiniger.

At the end of the School year, Emily Hughes, Alexandra Sloan, David Vicchi and Freya Wharry were awarded book tokens for reading more than 2 million words since September 2025. Freya Wharry was awarded the Reading Champion Badge for the highest number of words read in the academic year 2024-2025.



THANKS

Library staff would like to thank Shay Brogan and Lorcan McCusker for their work as Library Prefects.

We are grateful to the authors Kelly McCaughrain, Anne Madden and Michael Sheahan who generously donated copies of their works to the library.

F.S.D.

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 body. 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 Cancer Research, Lighthouse and the Salvation Army.

School Councillors

Form 1 Stephen Shonibare, Amber McIlwaine- Biggins

Form 2 Tia Ngoshi, Matthew McDonnell

Form 3 Alana O'Flaherty, Presley Herdman

Form 4 Olivia Mitchell, Devaughn Comrie

Form 5 Kelvin Ogunleye, Sophie Curran

LVI Adam Weir, Wiktoria Januszezka

MVI Nathan Rossal, Madhumitha Pandiaraj

C.M.C.

POLITICS SOCIETY

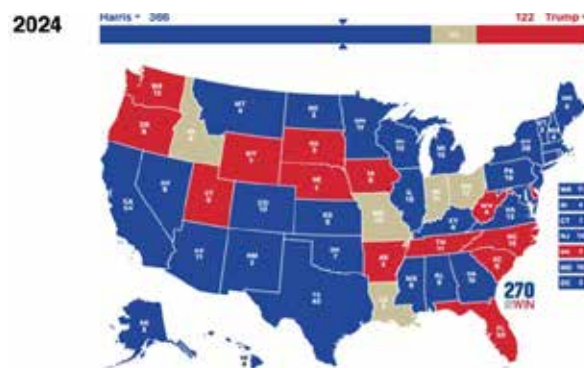
In November 2024, the School took to the polls again the B.R.A. Mock Presidential Election. As in 2016 and 2020, each Tutor Group was given a state to represent and so we were able to follow the Electoral College system that the real presidential election uses; the election is not decided on popular vote.

Voting took place via Google Classroom, with pupils exercising their (mock) democratic right digitally. With just Donald Trump and Kamala Harris on the ballot, pupils could also opt to spoil

their ballot and still help their House win the House competition based on turnout.



The result was a clear win for the Democratic candidate, Kamala Harris winning 366 electoral college votes to Donald Trump's 122, meaning that Donald Trump has never won a B.R.A. Mock Presidential Election. Furthermore, 2024 proved no different to 2016 and 2020, in that Donald Trump is not electorally popular with girls' registration classes; he picked up no electoral college votes where girls were the sole electors. The tutor group/state breakdown was also particularly interesting as it demonstrated, in both 2016 and 2020, that Form V boys are Trump supporters. Despite doing it online, the results information sent out to tutor groups presented the opportunity for discussion on whether the electoral college vote was fair, as Trump received just 12% of the electoral college votes compared to 18% of the popular vote.



In the House competition, which was based on turnout, Pottinger again took the glory with 33% turnout. Currie beat Cairns to second place, with Shaw bringing up the rear. However, it is concerning to note the voter apathy that seems to be becoming a trend as voter turnout has declined by around 10% in each election from 2016 until



2024. However, this event serves to illustrate to students of the responsibility we have as citizens and that decisions are made by those who show up - even in this mock election.

K.S.B.

SENIOR DEBATING SOCIETY

The Senior Debating Society continues to thrive as a platform for critical thinking, public speaking, and respectful discourse. Attendance throughout the year was consistently high, with enthusiastic participation from both debaters and audience members from different year groups.

Our lunchtime debates got off to a strong start with a debate on the merits of the UK decommissioning its nuclear weapons proposed by Leo Clarkson and Jamie O’Kane and opposed by Yasen Abdulkuder and Oisín Burns. Later in the term Leo Clarkson, Lorcan McCusker, Lauren McCoullough and Oliver Kulig debated the motion, “This House believes that the election of Donald Trump as US President would be a disaster”, prompting lively contributions from the House.

We participated once again in the Northern Ireland Schools Debating Competition. In the second round we were drawn against Campbell College and our team Leo Clarkson and Lauren McCoullough were asked to propose the motion, “This House believes that the UK should pay reparations for its former role in slavery and colonialism.” Despite well researched and well presented speeches from our team, and excellent contributions from our supporters, we were defeated by the opposition which went on to win the 2024-25 competition.

The end of our participation in the competition allowed a greater focus on lunchtime debates including a light-hearted motion on the desirability of banning reality television in the UK. Throughout the year the standard of argument and rebuttal was consistently high. Debaters demonstrated thorough research, persuasive delivery, and respectful engagement with opposing views, while open-floor discussions allowed students to voice their opinions and ask questions, enriching the overall experience.

M.P.

BOYS’ CHOIR

In Belfast Royal Academy all pupils are encouraged to invest in and pursue their interests. Whether on the rugby fields at Roughfort, during the intellectual testing of the Maths Challenge or in the grandeur of the Ulster Hall, everyone is pushed to thrive in B.R.A. However, dare I say, the most welcoming, friendly yet musically challenging group, which is suitable for the young men of Chamber Choir as well as for a third year with no singing experience at all, is the Boys’ Choir.

Every Wednesday the members of Boys’ Choir bring a packed lunch to ensure they arrive on time for rehearsal in Mrs McCombe’s room, which is host to a joyous group of young men, eager to sing their hearts out and to follow Mrs McCombe’s teachings.



A very important event for all the members of the Boys’ Choir is the Christmas assembly on the last day of term in December, when we perform jolly renditions of memorable Christmas songs,



such as *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* and *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*, and always ending with *Merry Christmas, Everyone*, on the scenic steps of the Crombie. Our heartwarming renditions of festive Christmas songs are always met with crowd participation. Come rain or shine, often with the expert help of Ms McMullan on piano, the Boys' Choir is always there to end the term in the Christmas spirit.

The Boys' Choir's most anticipated event, for our members and for the audience, is the Spring Concert held in the magnificent Ulster Hall. I can say with certainty that we always leave a smile on the audience's faces. This allows all the members of Boys' Choir to showcase their amazing skills and talent as young singers. Most recently we performed a medley of *Southern Hemisphere Anthems*, including the South African National Anthem with its 5 different languages – Xhosa, Zulu, Sesotho, Afrikaans and English! We then closed our spectacular act with *The Wombling Song!* We were accompanied by the incredible Mr McCabe on the cornet, the amazing Jake Coulter on the drums, the wonderful Gail Payot on percussion and the fantastic Jamie Wilson on the piano. It was truly a spectacle to behold and a hard act to follow but I have no doubt it will be improved upon again!

With a massive choir of 57 boys, it takes firm leadership and expert planning to have us all stage ready by Christmas and for the Spring Concert, especially when singing in a different language! Luckily for us, we have the amazing Mrs McCombe who sacrifices her Wednesday lunchtimes (and I'm sure much more), ensuring the Boys' Choir is in the best shape for our events. It would be impossible without her, not just because no one else would have the patience! With the help of the impressive duo of Mr Dorman and Mr Harte, the Boys' Choir's vocals are lifted to an even higher standard.

The Boys' Choir never fails to lift my spirits on a Wednesday afternoon and is always the highlight of my Spring Concert performances. The sense of belonging in the Boys' Choir is very strong and we always strive to encourage new members to join and to sing out. Under the firm and gentle guidance of Mrs McCombe, the Boys' Choir is always able to rise to the occasion – year in, year out. A very

special thank you goes to Mrs McCombe for her saint-like patience and unwavering dedication to Boys' Choir. I (and other pupils in my year) hope that Boys' Choir will continue as long as B.R.A. is still standing. I strongly encourage all new and existing pupils to join the Boys' Choir. It is a place of camaraderie and friendship for all to enjoy.

Finn McAlorum (LVI)

SAVE THE CHILDREN

This year, the Save the Children committee was excited to get every member of the school community involved in its charity fundraising via several events throughout the school year.



During the festive season at B.R.A., the Christmas jumper day for staff was a fantastic way to raise money for the charity. Teachers and support staff donned their best Christmas jumpers to spread cheer to all members of the B.R.A. community. In addition to this, pupils also had the opportunity to spread the festive spirit through candy cane deliveries. Pupils were able to purchase the treats and have them anonymously delivered to classes by our Christmas Elves.

The annual non-uniform day was also a huge success, allowing everyone the chance to ditch the school uniform for a day in return for a small donation.

The next big charity event of the year was the Great B.R.A. Bake-Off House competition.



Students in every year group put their baking skills to the test, creating an impressive myriad of cakes, traybakes, buns, and much more! After heavy deliberation, the judges selected the winners of the competition who, in return for their great efforts and skill, won crucial house points. The Save the Children committee then sold the delicious baked goods at lunch time with all proceeds going to Save the Children.

As always, the school year ended on a high with the annual Sponsored Walk. This arduous climb was made ever better with the BBQ at the end, provided by the Save the Children committee. Everyone was delighted to tuck into the amazing barbeque prepared carefully by the committee and staff.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of the school community, over £3400 was raised for Save the Children. We would like to extend our immense gratitude to Ms. McMillen, Mrs. McIntyre, and all the amazing staff who have supported the committee all throughout the year. It was due to their help and guidance that all the events this year were made possible. Being part of this committee was a truly wonderful experience, knowing we have raised so much money for such an important cause.

A.M.M.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CHANGEMAKERS PROGRAMME

From the soils of Koinonia Community Farm to a world-changing organisation, *Habitat for Humanity* is a non-profit, global, life-changing, Christian organisation which helps build and furnish homes across the globe. The vital support this life-saving organisation provides is seen in the strengthening of countless communities and making affordable accommodation in the 62 million houses developed, to date. Prior to our introduction to the Changemakers Programme, our team had very limited knowledge of the organisation. The introductory workshop provided us with this overview and inspired us to become more active in volunteering.

The highlight of the Changemakers Programme is undeniably the practical volunteer experience at the Lisburn ReStore. A full-day of volunteering during the November rush to get toys and decorations ready for families and children in need for Christmas was amazing.

We got to work closely with the Habitat crew, developing our skills with their knowledge and expertise: may it have been untangling wreaths, pricing goods, polishing and cleaning donated furniture, cleaning out the wide selection of donated vases or even checking the power supplies on the battery-operated toys, we each had an important role to play. We were welcomed to each job with open arms by the staff and adult volunteers at ReStore Lisburn.

We can't thank the team for their patience, kindness, and the passion they showed in their work. Something we too hope to carry on and share with others in our volunteering efforts in the future.

Once we got back from the splendid day out, we sprang into action planning our fundraising projects. In February, we provided personalised Valentine messages and delivery of Love Hearts throughout the school. In the Spring, we organised a raffle with a chance for pupils from each year group to win an Easter egg.

In total, we helped raise our goal of £1250 and we hope this can make a difference for Habitat for Humanity and that it will inspire others our age to do the same.

We genuinely thank Habitat for Humanity for the worthwhile opportunity and the chance to contribute locally and globally to the charity's efforts. We also wish to express a very special thanks to Mr Spence and Ms McBeth, our coordinators, as without them, none of this would have been possible.

Oisin Murphy (LVI)



YOUNG EINSTEIN CLUB

The Young Einstein Club had another enjoyable year in school. It continues to provide junior school pupils with a relaxed environment where science is, above all, fun.



Their commitment, enthusiasm, and willingness to get involved enriched the club in so many ways.

J.P.C. / J.M.A

DANCE CLUB

We enjoyed getting in a twist with Mobius Strips; we were amazed by the hidden properties of rice, and we had fun making and testing paper planes and helicopters.



B.R.A. Dance Club attended two schools' dance competitions and completely smashed it! Our results are as follows:

NICMAC

Year 11 solos:

Dance – Layla Crawford 3rd place

Creative Movement Lyrical – Yazmin McNamee
2nd place

Year 12 solo:

Dance – Ella Sofia 3rd place



There was great excitement at our annual House Competition which this year took the form of a Science Quiz. It was very closely contested with Cairns claiming the top spot, followed by Pottinger in second place, Currie in third place and Shaw in fourth place. All teams performed well, and valuable House Points were awarded.

A special mention must go to our outgoing sixth form committee for all their help throughout year.

Intermediate pairs:

Commercial – Izzy Simpson and Charlotte Barber
3rd place

Intermediate trios:

Dance – Izzy Simpson, Layla Crawford, Charlotte



Ingram 1st place

Mixed Teams:

Street

Get Up – 1st place

Creative Movement Lyrical

I Have Nothing– 1st place

Mixed Large Teams:

Anything Goes

Project 80's– 3rd place

5678 TAKE IT TO THE FLOOR

Year 11-14 Lyrical

1st – Anna Coyle

4th – Yazmin McNamee

Year 11-14 Jazz

1st Ella Sofia Downey

2nd – Layla Crawford

Year 11-14 Lyrical Duos

4th - Yazmin McNamee and Maya Anderson

Year 11-14 Anything Goes Duos

4th – Eva Bettany and Ruby Johnston

Year 11-14 Anything Goes Duos

2nd – Layla Crawford, Charlotte Ingram, Izzy Simpson

Year 11-14 Commercial Team

1st place – Get Up

Year 11-14 Anything Goes Team

3rd place – Project 80's

Year 11-14 Lyrical Team

2nd place – I Have Nothing



We are so proud of our team and how they performed and conducted themselves at the competition. We are delighted to be working with such talented and passionate pupils. Below is a pupil account of the club last year, written by Isabella Simpson, Form V.

R. Tsang

Dance club 2024/25 was an extremely enjoyable, fun experience for all involved. In September, we held auditions to create a team. From then on, we continued to do technique work and learn new skills. Around November, teams were decided – with the choice of Lyrical, Hip Hop and Anything Goes. Each team practiced on a different day. I went to the Anything Goes classes on a Tuesday, and everyone would agree that Tuesday classes were the highlight of their week. The team were always laughing and having fun. Also, in November we started choreography for our competitions. The training, although tough, was enjoyable and everyone always left with a smile on their faces.



On 6th March, we went to our first competition as a team, called NICMAC. Firstly, I performed my duet with one of my best friends that placed 3rd overall. Then I completed my jazz trio to “It’s Raining Men!” by The Weather Girls and ended up placing 1st. Then finally to end the night, we performed the group dance which was called “Project 80’s”. Everyone had so much fun on stage, and it was amazing to see all our hard work come together and pay off as we danced as a team. The group dance won 3rd place overall in the category along with Hip-Hop and Lyrical placing extremely well in their categories.

Following our extremely successful wins at NICMAC, we went to another dance competition



on the 24th of March. It was called 5678 Take It to the Floor. This dance competition was a perfect opportunity to show how far we had come as a team and the main target of this competition for everyone was just to have fun. All the dances once again ended up placing extremely well and I am proud of every member of the dance team for working so hard and having the confidence to go on stage because it is not easy. No matter how tough this year of dance was, I would not change it for the world as it was an amazing time to be able to go with my friends and forget about everything and be in the moment. I am extremely grateful for all the teachers that took time out of their week to help us improve and grow as dancers.

Isabella Simpson (V)

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

The past school year has been a very successful period for our DofE Award, despite the ongoing challenges of running and taking part in the Award. However, our dedicated team of supervisors facilitated all aspects of the Expedition sections for Bronze, Silver and Gold, and our DofE participants rose to the challenge, progressing their sections and many achieving their respective Awards.



Registration numbers remained high with 242 pupils signing up or continuing to work on Awards.

We achieved a full year of expeditions including Bronze, Silver and Gold across a variety of locations within Northern Ireland. Two years ago, the DofE Team took the decision to relocate the Bronze Expeditions, in which, the Practice/ Training Day was conducted in Castlewella Forest

Park and the Qualifying Expedition was conducted along the Holywood Coastal Path with overnight camping at the Scout Centre, Crawfordsburn Country Park. This was a new and exciting development for our Bronze Expedition Section and was thoroughly enjoyed by participants and staff alike. Therefore, we continued this format for the year 2024-2025 and look forward to continuing this in the 2025-2026 season.



With regards to our staffing, we would like to extend a massive thank you to the small number of volunteers who continue to dedicate their time to enhancing the experiences of our participants. Without our volunteers, this Award would not be possible! Last year, our team assisted a huge 103 participants to successfully complete their relevant expeditions!



We would also like to extend a sincere thank you to Mrs Graydon who has become the DofE Lead within the school. Mrs Graydon has been very



supportive of the Award and has taken to the role exceptionally well. Welcome to the team!

Our participants continue to work towards the additional sections of the Award, including the Volunteering, Skill and Physical sections, to achieve their DofE Award. We are amazed at the broad spectrum of activities that our participants engage with.

Volunteering for community activities have included checking up on neighbours, gardening and tutoring other children, as well as getting involved in litter picking in local neighbourhoods and sports leadership.

Potentially, the most commonly completed section continues to be Physical - with many of our participants tracking their daily walks or runs, whilst hockey, rugby, netball, swimming and cricket continue to be popular activities with hiking, dance, fencing and squash making the list too.

As for Skills, there have seen a range of activities taking place - learning a language, cooking, crochet, playing a musical instrument, singing, vegetable growing, sailing navigation theory, photography, money management, drama and drawing all included in this year's Awards list.

In the last school year we have had 25 Bronze Awards, 16 Silver Awards and 5 Gold Awards successfully completed, which is a fantastic achievement.

The total number of awards gained from 1984 to date are now: 1,606 Bronze; 789 Silver; 499 Gold.

As previously mentioned, we are indebted to the many people who were willing to give of their free time to make possible the huge undertaking of the Expedition section. We sincerely thank the following volunteer supervisors who generously gave their time and assistance whenever possible this school year: -

Matthew Blair

Holly Grant

Dennis McArthur

Maurice Miller

Gary Nelson

Catherine Reed

Shelley Wilson

We would also like to extend a huge thank you to our support staff who assisted in the running of Bronze Expeditions. Their continued dedication in assisting the DofE Team, on a voluntary basis, to run the Bronze Award, our largest participant group, is a great help! Therefore, thank you to the following people: -

Rebecca Burns

Ashley Johnston

Nick Kane

Emma McAllister

Finn Purdy

Guy Reed

Abby Reid

Very special thanks must also go to the following people: Maurice Miller, Shelley Wilson Holly Grant, Matthew Blair and Catherine Reed for their outstanding contribution in overseeing all aspects of the Expedition section; Shelley Wilson and Matthew Blair for Award administration; and Holly Grant, Maurice Miller and Shelley Wilson for assessing numerous Bronze, Silver and Gold Expeditions.

Although the Volunteering, Physical, Skill and Residential Sections are primarily co-ordinated and



supported by the DofE staff, we still have school staff members who run various activities enabling the participants to complete their sections. Thanks must go to Maurice Miller for his help in looking after our finances.

We would like to say a huge thank you to the school office staff who have been fantastic, as always, helping us to collect forms and in distributing important information.

Finally, we would like to extend an enormous thank you to the Bus Drivers in the school, Ian and Catherine. Your dedication to late nights and long Sundays are greatly appreciated by the DofE Team and the participants. Without your assistance with transport, it would be very difficult to run the weekends.

OTHER BUSINESS



Congratulations to Catherine and Guy Reed
We would also like to extend a massive congratulations to Catherine, Expedition Supervisor, and Guy Reed, on their birth of their daughter. We cannot wait to recruit another supervisor into the team!

In conclusion, 2024-25 was a jam-packed year which demonstrated our supervisors dedication and our participants resilience, determination, initiative, drive and commitment to progress through their Awards.

We are incredibly proud of those who are pursuing their Awards and remind them to keep in touch. Finally, pride of place and congratulations must go to the following pupils and past pupils who gained awards during the past year: -

BRONZE AWARD

James Adair (4)

Molly Adams (4)

Mya Armstrong (5)

Noah Braithwaite (4)

Leah Brown (4)

Oisin Burns (4)

Ryan Cleland (5)

Chloë Craig (L6)

Layla Crawford (4)

Niamh Cunningham (4)

Cora Johnston (5)

Maja Jones (4)

Lauren Knocker (4)

Abby Lavery (M6)

Amelia Manley (4)

Olivia McCall (4)

Amie McDonald (4)

Inis McVicker (4)

Erin Quinn (L6)

Keshav Raghuram (5)

Beatrice Seath (5)

Sophia Simon (4)

Autumn Stirling (4)

Ethan Torrens (L6)

Jenna Wilson (4)

SILVER AWARD

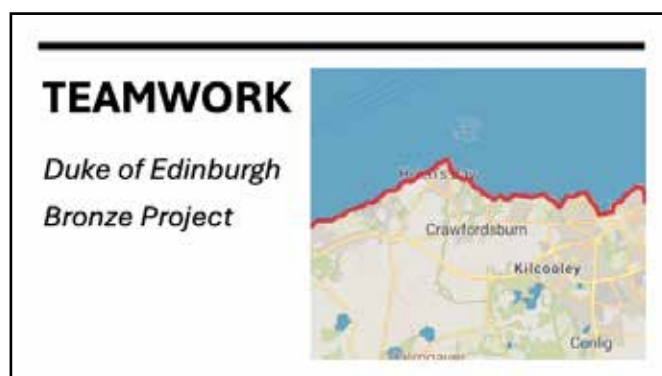
Aaron Caldwell (-)
 Sophia Chowne (L6)
 Nicholas Dillon-Wright (L6)
 Ellie Donald (L6)
 Samuel Johnston (L6)
 Rebecca Kirkpatrick (L6)
 Finn McAlorum (L6)
 RACHAEL MCGRATH (-)
 Harry McIntyre (4)
 Eleanor Murphy (5)
 Erin O'Brien (5)
 Aidan O'Rourke (M6)
 Keshav Raghuram (5)
 Julia Robinson (-)
 Alexander Simon (5)
 Jacob Stewart (L6)

GOLD AWARD

Rebecca Carse (-)
 Laura Lennox (-)
 Leah McCarter (-)
 Oliver Parkes (-)
 Sarah Saunders (-)

Maurice, Shelley, Holly, Matthew & Catherine

PUPIL PROJECTS





Morale

Before boosting morale

- As quiet in the previous slide, it was almost to keep things focused with the group, there are many ways in which we did this, such as:
- Positive words:**
- Along with all the words of encouragement, e.g. "You're really strong!" ready to help to keep our spirits up when we felt a bit down during the trip.
- Distraction techniques:**
- When it was raining, being stuck in waiting whilst waiting, it helped distract us by taking our minds off the bad weather and the long wait.
- Short, planned breaks:**
- When things were going tough, we would agree to stop for a quick snack or water break to refresh the team and our energy without losing progress too much.
- Setting small goals:**
- To take our minds off the bad weather, we set small goals for very long distances, we broke the journey into manageable chunks, "Let's get to the top of that hill!" or "along this road, then we'll take a short break."
- Creating progress:**
- We recognised how the group had achieved everything like reaching a checkpoint and passed each other for a bit of a reward and to make us all feel like we were making progress.
- Looking for examples:**
- Each one of us had a role and a responsibility to the rest of the team and encouraged us to keep going.

After boosting morale

Conclusion

In conclusion, teamwork is essential in DofE because it helps the team overcome the many physical, practical, social, and emotional challenges we face. Whether it's carrying heavy rucksacks, navigating difficult routes, or keeping morale high, success comes from sharing responsibilities, communicating well, and supporting one another. By working together we learnt to problem solve, compromise, and encourage each other, which not only helped us complete the expedition but also built valuable life skills such as resilience, leadership, and cooperation.

Friday Evening: Drinking pushed up and down the go.

Friday Evening: Packing lots of energy snacks.

Friday Evening: Stay up to the end.

Saturday: Water and food break.

Saturday morning: In a park, we were given a bit of a break and a good night's sleep.

Saturday Evening: The group had a good night's sleep and a good night's sleep.

Sunday Morning: Packing up and getting ready for the second leg.

End of the expedition: Everyone was very tired, but we all got something from the trip.

Biggest regret: We were not carrying better snacks, as we were hungry.

The good: I packed lots of snacks, I could see how these were people.

My biggest moment: We were so tired, but we all got something from the trip.





Literary Contributions

City Journey

In the morning light, the bus arrives,
People hop on, ready for their lives.
With sleepy faces and bags in hand
they settle in, as the day is planned.

The train rolls in, a familiar sound,
Passengers chatting, their voices surround.
The rhythm of wheels on the tracks below,
A shared experience as the city flows.

Outside the window, the world goes by,
Buildings and trees, under the sky.
With each new stop, fresh faces appear.
In this daily journey, we're all brought near.

Abby Gault
Form 3



Sam

There is a man named Sam,
Who fishes every day that he can,
He hops on his boat,
Then sails to the coast,
And usually hatches a plan.

He gets out his rod and his bait,
Then prepares the forks and the plates,
But alas,

He gets crass,
As he pulls on the mast,
And returns with no added weight.

Watching this makes me feel sorrow,
So I packed a big fish for tomorrow,
To help with his pain,
That I saw on the train,
Just off the beach of The Burrow.

Christian Schilling
Form 3

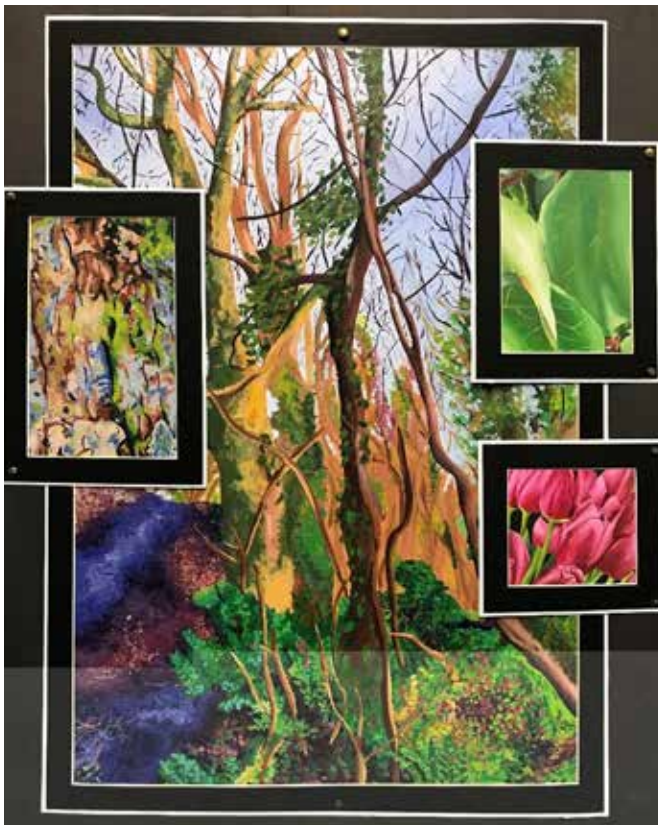




Forever at Peace

I walk down the narrow paths.
The waves are loud like a lion's roar.
I walk down and hear their laughs.
The sand they're on is as soft as clouds,
high up in the sky.
The trains pass every hour,
and all the birds go by.
The trees swish and swash,
and their leaves fall off.
When I walk further up the raggedy cliff,
it all goes silent and stiff.
The breeze hits my face,
the sun covering every space.
I could be here forever in peace,
as everything begins to cease.

***Noelle Vrabelova
Form 3***



The Coldest Breeze

An autumn day, crisp and fresh,
As the lingering summer breeze.
Drifting past as the leaves fall around me.
It stays permanently.

Dwelling through my thoughts,
With the sharp winter air,
And blooming grass in the spring.
It grows like the rot in a tree,
Slowly but definitely,
Enclosing me in a cage,
Too small to breathe words of my own thoughts.
The cold words of the miniscule box I'm trapped in,
Reassuring me the warm breeze will always be there.
It stays permanently.
Not as vividly,
But still as prominently consuming me.
Always somewhere in the back of my mind,
Stealing the cool breeze from me.
Trapping me in this tiny box,
Yet there are still the curdling whispers of the breeze.
The breeze of my cold autumn day,
Drifting past me as fast as the wind.
Scratching my face with the words of the box.
My tiny box,
Surrounded in my cool breeze.

***Lucy Meighan
Form 3***





Carriage Kerfuffle

I once took a train ride to Dublin,
But the carriage where I sat I found trouble in,
Two beefy guys, what a surprise,
One of them holding a pumpkin.

I was alarmed to find they came over,
They said that they were from Dover,
They shoved me about, I started to shout,
They both were as strong as an ogre.

“What is the meaning of this?!”
The men’s eyes were narrow like slits,
One held up the pumpkin, and put it in front,
And said that its name was Chris.

My face was a picture of shock,
Their shoving had ruined my smock,
Why would they push me, let alone touch me,
These hooligans running amok.

The ruffians fled in a scurry,
The train guard chased in a hurry,
This crazy ordeal had ruined my meal,
A shame as it was a good curry.

The men, once caught, turned pale,
And then they started to wail,
They were quite daft, causing a faff,
As Translink guards never fail.

*William Sedgwick
Form 3*



As I Make My Way

The twist of the key,
the clanging of the gate,
as I step out into the street.

A leisurely walk some days,
on others, a rush as birds chirp
and the frosty morning nips my nose.

I turn to my right to see
the pink lights lining the top of the bus.

Bus pass at the ready,
a tap and a beep
as I search for a seat.

As I take in my surroundings,
I hear the laughter of children
and muffled voices, flicking of pages
and the rapid scribbles of pupils
who left homework
to the very last minute.

I turn to my left
and see the steamed windows
due to the cold condensation:
treetops, Belfast castle, Waterworks
and finally, Duncairn gardens.

DING DING DING!
The pitter patter of feet
making their way downstairs.
A hop off the bus,
a stop in the shop,
before a trek
to the school gates.

*Jamie Smith
Form 3*





Echoes of Tomorrow

Once they spoke in steady lines,
Structured words, made old designs.
As now their tones have come to change,
Their language vast, their range so strange.

They call to us from distant years,
The echoes blurred by time and tears.
In languages we've yet to hone,
Whispers shaped, in time they've grown.

Voices rising, clear and bright,
From dawns unseen, yet full of light.
They tell of places yet unspun,
Of stars reborn, and battles won.

Through winds of time, their message flows,
Of seeds we plant, and how they grow.
They speak of bridges still to build,
Of hearts unbound and souls fulfilled.

They no longer fit in frames we knew,
Each word reshaped, each sound anew.
And though their voice is not the same,
Their call still burns, a living flame.
Their voices shift, the patterns break,
But in their loss, new sounds await.
With every word, we come to know,
The booming echo of tomorrow.

Adam T O'Brien
MVI



The House with a Draught

In the house with a draught,
There were notches in the wall.
Going up in steady increments;
Four years, five years,
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

In the house with a draught,
The door frames were short,
but still taller than you.
The ceiling was low, but still higher than you.
The stove blazed in the winter nights.

Outside the house with a draught,
The gate was creaky and weathered.
The sun shone in the early summer mornings.
The weeds grew,
And you'd pull them out,
Dirt under your fingernails.

Outside the house with a draught,
You'd tell when winter was coming
By the flowers starting to shrivel,
And fall to the ground.

In the house with a draught,
You'd pack your boxes up one day.
Take the books off the shelves,
Label each room,
And move.
The door frames were even shorter now,
The ceilings even lower.

In the future, you could look back there
And remember kicking your legs under the duvet.
In the future, you would still live there.
The one spot where the floor would creak;
In the future, it would still be clear.

In the house with a draught,
The notches would stay in the wall.
The weeds would still grow,
And the sun would still shine in the morning.

Charlotte Marron
Form 5



Whispers of Herself

In the stillness of her room, she sits alone,
Eyes cast down; her heart heavy as stone.
The mess of her mind spins fast and loud,
She doesn't believe that she'll ever be found.

Her dreams are unreachable, tangled and far,
Like she's grasping shadows, unknowing of what
they are.

There's a weight on her shoulders, a storm in her
head.

She longs for peace but only feels dread.

But then through the silence, a voice softly stirs.
Not a stranger's, not distant - this voice is hers.
It's older, it's wiser, yet gentle and clear,
It speaks to the girl who is drowning in fear.

"I see you; I know you, I've walked in your shoes,
Through nights full of doubt, through battles you'll
lose.

But listen to me, the strength that you hold,
It's powerful and strong, it will not grow old."

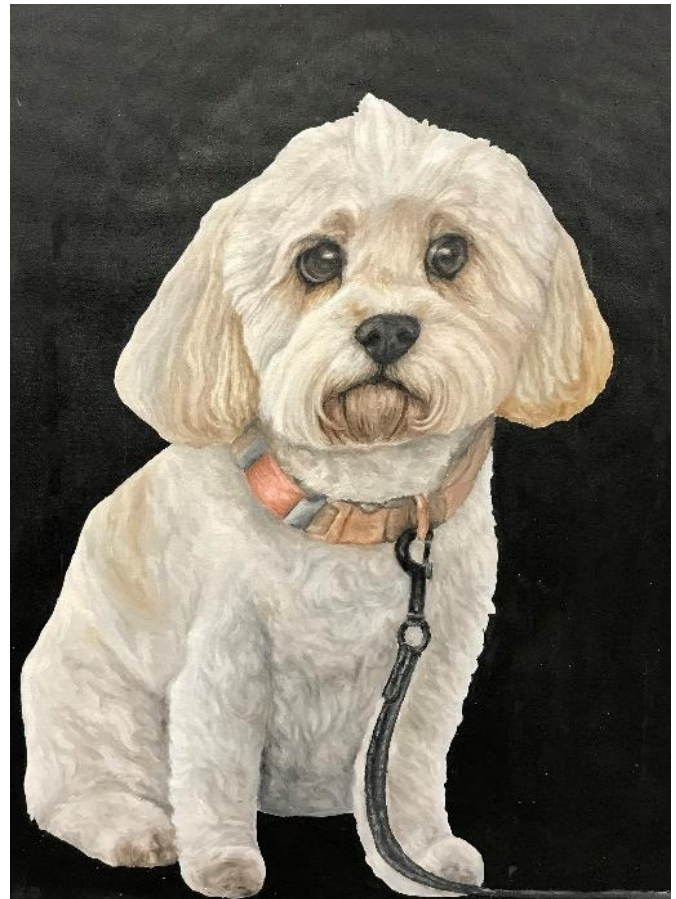
"The hurt that you're feeling won't always remain,
The tears you're shedding will nourish the rain.
You are more than your struggle, more than this
fight,
You are the dawn that is born from the darkest of
night."

She listens, her heart beats a little less fast,
As the future engulfs her, breaking the past.
And though the road ahead still seems unclear,
She's guided by the echo of the voice that she
hears.

"Keep going," it says, "I promise you'll see,
The strength that you've longed for is already in thee.
One day you'll stand tall, in the light of your own,
A woman who once was a girl on her own."

And with that, she rises, chest feeling less tight,
For the voice of the future gives her hope in the
night.

Beatrice Seath
Form 5



Dugree

Was it the heat from the sun or the billowing blaze?
Something in the ashes spelt out 'occupier.'
The squad awaited orders, hiding in the entryways,
Then the commander spoke up: "Civilians. Open
fire."

Several mouths quivered, as if to call it wrong,
All hoping someone would intervene.
But a conflict could last for oh so very long,
And Dugree-granting days were few and far
between.

And so it was quiet as they readied to begin,
Convinced of civilian guilt in some indeterminate
crime.
They readied the guns and marched right on in,
Content to consider maybe speaking up next time.

Because, after all, a day of unspeakable evil might
one day arrive –
So better to follow orders for now, to leave nothing
alive.

Clara Walsh
MVI

Art in School

ART AND DESIGN

Our senior pupils had the opportunity to attend the Royal Ulster Academy of Arts Annual Exhibition at the Ulster Museum. These trips helped enhance their course as they viewed a range of work and were given a detailed tour by Maggie Bowen. The pupils also enjoyed a talk from Alison Lowry, who discussed her glass installation work and the career journey she has taken.

The Art and Design Department continued with its many highly successful Art Clubs: After-school Fantasy Art Club, Comic Creators Club, Game Makers Club, Staff Art Club, and the Inktober drawing challenge month. All of these clubs are run by Art Technician Laura Atkins.



The Art Department and the school were very excited to have been given the opportunity to work with Translink and Seedhead Arts to co-create a Street Art Mural on the themes of connection and belonging. This mural was developed as part of Translink's engagement work with young people in North Belfast in relation to the underpass transformation and the construction of the new, York Street Station, which B.R.A. pupils are the largest daily users of.



A group of 15 pupils from B.R.A. worked with Translink and Seedhead Arts over three workshops to establish an understanding and appreciation for Street Art. During these workshops, the pupils' ideas and information were incorporated with Translink and Seedhead Arts' message into a brief for the artist, Eoin/Emic (Instagram: Emicartist). From this brief, he then developed the design and created the mural on the side of the sixth-form centre during the Easter break.



The North Belfast Area Learning Community Schools' Art Exhibition took place in October, hosted by Ulster University.

Ten of our outstanding Art and Design pupils, along with their family and friends, were invited to celebrate their successes over the last year.



It was a wonderful evening where they were able to view their creative work alongside that of several other North Belfast schools in the Belfast School of Art.



The school was gifted several tabletop easels by former pupil and artist, Francis McCorry. We are hoping to build future links with Francis and have him visit the school for a talk and a workshop, if possible.



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



We also had the Staff Preview Art and Design Exhibition event, where school staff viewed the artwork and raised money for the Save the Children Fund.

L.A.P.

MOVING IMAGE ARTS

This was the second year of Moving Image Arts and the first year of A2 level.

Megan Flood achieved first place in the MIA showcase for her AS-level films. The Moving Image Arts pupils attended the MIA showcase in Cineworld and supported Megan as she received her award.



Two pupils from BRA, Ines Scott and Jai Beattie, were selected to be part of the first children's art exhibition run by Frame of Mind, a gallery on the Ormeau Road.

The Annual Art and Design Exhibition in the Art and Design Department took place this year 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.



The pupils had the opportunity to view films from the top young filmmakers in Northern Ireland and meet some of the films' actors and directors in person.

L.A.P.



ART AND DESIGN CLUBS

The Art and Design Department continues with its many highly successful Art Clubs. Afterschool Fantasy Club, Drawing Challenge Club, Comic Creators Club, Game Makers Club, and Inktober Club all run by Art Technician Laura Atkins.

FANTASY ART CLUB

After-school Fantasy Art club members met each Monday to go on a fantasy adventure to a pirate world. They learned to draw themselves as fantastical characters, created sea creatures and designed magical weapons and pets. They

made tea-stained maps using ink dip pens, filled a pirate log book with ideas and stories about this make-believe world and the monsters that lived





within. They designed and painted their own pirate flags, finally they built 3D ships and set them to sea in a giant water basin before collaborating to discover the Skull Kings treasure by solving visual puzzles through clues and teamwork.

DRAWING CHALLENGE CLUB



Drawing Challenge Club took place each Tuesday lunchtime and students were given a prompt to draw something, then display their drawings at the front of the class and talk about their work. Students voted for their favourites, the best artwork or the most creative and small prizes were given to the winners.

COMIC CREATORS CLUB

Comic Creators Club met every Thursday at lunchtime (Sept-Dec) to discover how to create comic characters, write plots, design comic book covers and plan a comic story. They enjoyed lots of fun challenges such as making mini comics, story blocks and Frankenstein comic games.



GAME MAKERS CLUB

Game Makers Club met every Thursday at lunchtime (Jan-June) and students designed, created, and got to test out their own board games and card games. They learned about what makes a good game, the difference between random dice roll and decision based play, how to balance and create fairness in their games and how to keep creating better iterations of their games to make them work for real play.

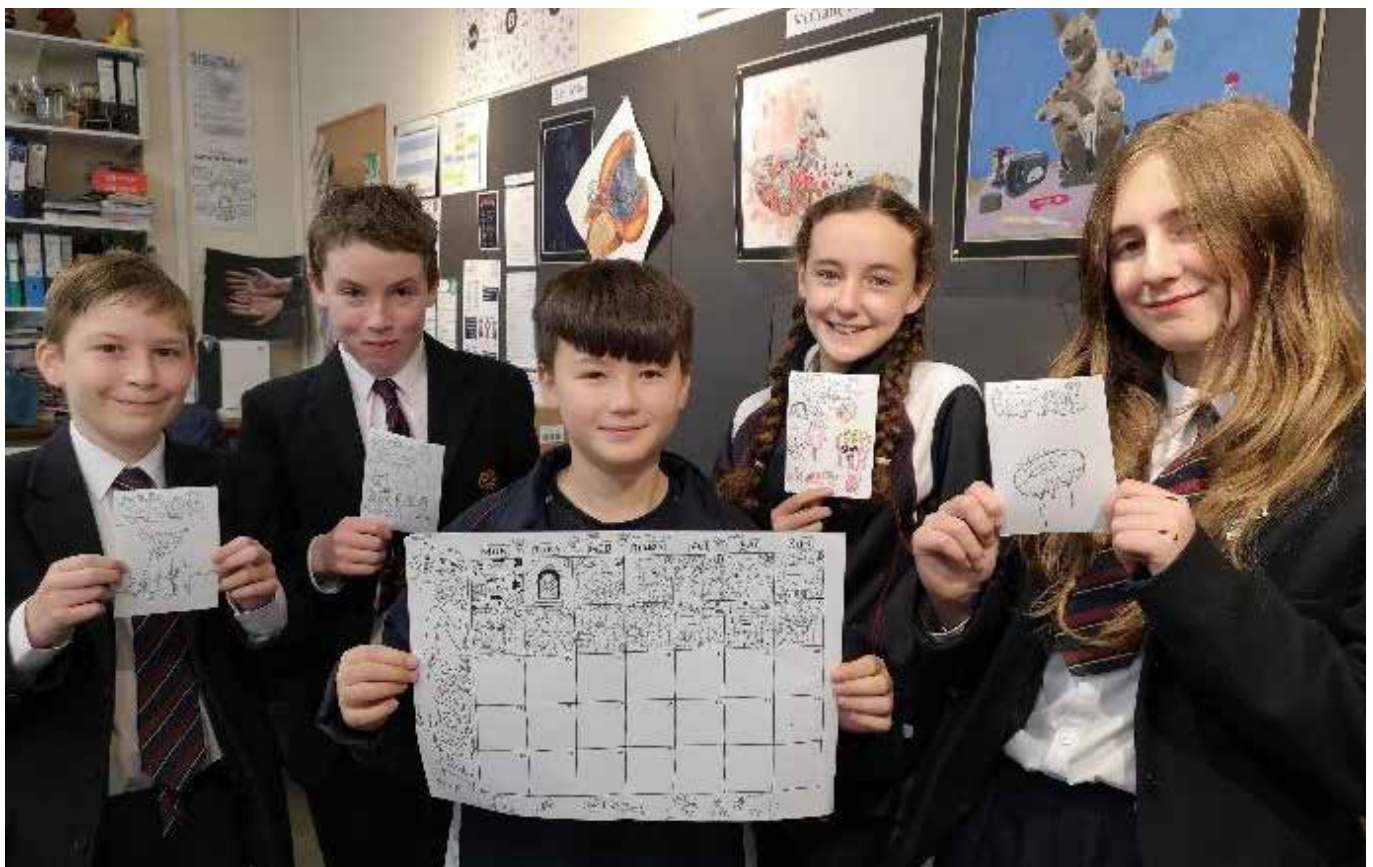


INKTOBER

All pupils were invited to take part in the Inktober Challenge for the ninth year running. Junior students joined together in the Art and Design Department every break-time and senior students met once a week for the entire month of October to draw from the official Inktober prompts list, encourage one another and experiment with various ink media from markers to traditional ink dip pens.

Drawings were displayed daily in the Art and Design Department and Inktober badges were awarded to all those who completed a drawing for all 31 days – over 100 badges were awarded in the end.

L.A.



Music in School

As the final notes of Karl Jenkins' *Requiem* faded into the Ulster Hall this March, it marked not just the end of another spring concert, but the culmination of a remarkable year for the Music Department at Belfast Royal Academy. From festive carols echoing through the grandeur of St Anne's Cathedral to the vibrant energy of junior musicians performing Metallica and Mozart, 2024–2025 has been a year of musical excellence, collaboration, and growth.



The year began with pupils from the Chamber Choir and Senior Trad performing for the HMC service in Belfast Cathedral on 30th September. The pupils enjoyed performing in a massed choir with pupils from the other HMC member schools – Methodist College, Campbell College, RBAI, Royal School Armagh and Bangor Grammar. They sang 3 songs in the service – 'This is the Record of John' by Gibbons, 'A Clare Benediction' by Rutter and 'An Irish Blessing' by Philip Stopford. The Senior Trad musicians were the evening's entertainment for the drinks reception before the HMC Gala Dinner in the Culloden. Everyone appreciated their musicianship and toe-tapping tunes.

The Orchestra and Chamber Choir performed at Prize Day in October. The Orchestra gave an excellent rendition of the Dambuster's March by

Eric Coates and the Chamber Choir performed the Stopford 'An Irish Blessing'. With all the hard work and the favourable acoustics of Spires, the performances turned out to be an enjoyable experience for all involved.



The Annual Carol Service was held on Wednesday, 18th December at Belfast Cathedral. The service was a moving celebration of tradition, community, and musical artistry.

Under the majestic arches of St Anne's, the evening opened with *Once in Royal David's City*, featuring a solo by Kavya Suchak and verses sung by the choir. The congregation joined in heartfelt renditions of *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, *O Come, All Ye Faithful*, and *See Amid the Winter's Snow*, creating a powerful sense of unity. The service was enriched by nine lessons, read by pupils and staff, including Deputy Head Girls Lucy Chambers and Clara Walsh, Deputy Head Boy Niall Blaskett, Head Girl Madhumitha Pandiaraj, and Principal Mrs H. Woods. Each reading was followed by a carol, performed by various ensembles and soloists. Highlights included:

- *Ecce Novum* by Ola Gjeilo, performed by a string quartet featuring Maria Watters, Jamie Wilson, Thomas Gillam, and Alex McQueen.



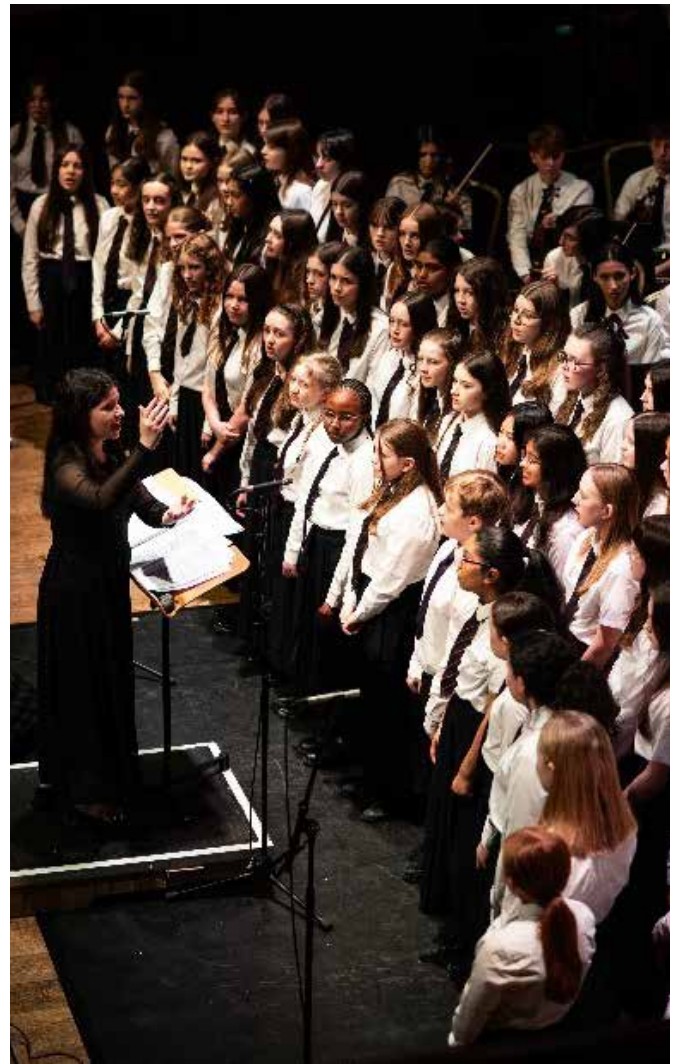
- *Silent Night*, with a solo by Hope Rogers.
- *All Bells in Paradise* by John Rutter.
- *Wexford Carol*, beautifully interpreted by Rebecca McKeown and Jamie Wilson, accompanied by senior traditional musicians.

The service concluded with a blessing and a collection for the Play Specialist Department in the Children's Cancer Unit, reminding all present of the power of music to inspire generosity and compassion.



The musical year reached its crescendo with the Spring Concert in March, a spectacular event that brought together every strand of the Music Department. From orchestras to choirs, traditional groups to big bands, the evening was a celebration of collaboration, creativity, and musical excellence. The Senior Orchestra, conducted by Mr C. Davison, opened with *Gladiator* by Hans Zimmer, setting a cinematic tone. The Requiem Orchestra, led by Ms M. McMullan, later performed Jenkins' *Requiem*, a deeply moving work featuring soloist Katie Horkan in *Pie Jesu*. The orchestra included pupils from all year groups and past pupils, supported by tutors such as Mrs T. Surginor and Mr A. Nesbitt.

The Junior Choir, directed by Mrs. A. McConnell, performed *Loch Lomond* and *For Good* from *Wicked*, while the Senior Choir delivered a powerful rendition of *Wake Me Up* by Avicii, arranged by Ms. McMullan and Ed Nethercott. The Chamber Choir, featuring standout performances of *Abendlied* and *Rytmus*, showcased the school's most advanced vocalists, including Ella Adam, Faith Hillis, and Jamie Wilson.



The Madrigal Group, under Mr. Davison's direction, brought Renaissance charm with *Weep O Mine Eyes* and *Now is the Month of Maying*.



The Big Band, featuring saxophonists Keshav Raghuram, Hope Rogers, and Niamh O'Rourke, thrilled the audience with *Feeling Good* and *Welcome to the Jungle*.



The Wind Band performed *Three Ayres from Gloucester* and *Mambo No. 5*, showcasing the talents of flautists Eve McKeown, Isla Gillam, and trumpeters Ed Nethercott and Emily Warnock.



The Senior Strings performed selections from *Capriol Suite* and *Adagio in G Minor*, with soloist Jamie Wilson.



The Junior Strings delighted with *Themes from Harry Potter* and *Viva La Vida*.



Traditional music was a highlight, with the Junior Trad Group playing *Ryan's Polka*, and the Senior Trad Group, led by Jane Finnegan, performing a medley including *Sean Ryan's Farewell to Whalley Range*, and *The Mason's Apron*.





None of this would be possible without the tireless work of our music staff:

- Ms M. McMullan – Senior Choir, Senior Strings, Big Band, Chamber Choir
- Mr C. Davison – Senior Orchestra, Madrigal Group, Wind Band
- Mrs A. McConnell – Junior Choir, Junior Strings
- Mrs V. McCombe – Boys' Choir
- Jacob Gordon & Callum McAnoy – Junior Traditional Group
- Jane Finnegan – Senior Traditional Group

Special thanks to our accompanists Jamie Wilson and Leo Clarkson, and to our peripatetic tutors who have supported every ensemble and soloist throughout the year.



This year's Spring Concert was more than a performance—it was a legacy. For many Middle Sixth pupils, it marked their last appearance on the B.R.A. stage. Their contributions, leadership, and passion have left an indelible mark on the department.

BATTLE OF THE BANDS LUNCHTIME SHOWDOWN!

On a Tuesday lunchtime just before the Easter holidays, the school was treated to an electrifying musical showcase as students took to the stage for this year's **Battle of the Bands** competition.

The event was a celebration of student creativity, teamwork, and musical talent—and it did not disappoint!



CONGRATULATIONS TO IV!



The eventual winners were **IV**—Gail Payot, Jake Coulter, Katie Horkan, and Jack Dowey—with their high-energy performance of “*Welcome to Paradise*” by Green Day. Their stage presence and musical chemistry won over both the judges and the crowd.





The competition featured a fantastic line-up of bands, each bringing their own style and flair:

- **Teaparty** – Katie, Ria, Charlotte, Josie & Olivia performing “*Seven Nation Army*”
- **Social Situation** – Darragh, Caolan & Thomas performing “*Sweet Child of Mine*”
- **2 ½ Indians** – Keshav, Tim, Jacob, Argen & Michal performing “*Careless Whisper*”
- **Subject to Change** – Niall, Ben G, Ben N & Daniel performing “*Brianstorm*”
- **Fake Plastic Trees** – Owen, Ryley, Ben, Caleb & Lucy performing “*Misery Business*”
- **Undecided** – Marvellous, Bradley, Oscar, Thomas & Daniel performing “*Great Balls of Fire*”



Each band brought something unique to the stage, making the event a true celebration of musical diversity.

JUNIOR RECITAL: A SHOWCASE OF EMERGING TALENT

Fast forward to Thursday 12th June, and the Junior Recital transformed the Darbyshire Assembly Hall into a vibrant stage for young performers.

The programme was a testament to the depth and diversity of musical talent among our junior pupils. From classical to contemporary, the recital featured:

- Presley Herdman, Noah Braithwaite, Owen Chesnel & William Sedgewick performing *Enter Sandman* by Metallica.
- A Wind Ensemble rendition of *Dancing Queen* by ABBA.
- Solo piano performances by Christian Schilling, Nathan Millin, Elianna Lundie, and Eva Kelly, showcasing pieces from Chopin to Sia.
- String duets and quartets, including the Lockhart String Quartet (*Nella Fantasia*) and Johnston String Quartet (*La Rejouissance* by Handel).
- Traditional Irish tunes from the Junior Trad Group, led by Jacob Gordon and Callum McAnoy, featuring *Morrison's Jig*, *Out on the Ocean*, and *Jimmy Duffy's No. 2*.
- Vocal performances such as *Can You Feel the Love Tonight?* by Alana O'Flaherty and Mathilda Holmes, and *Down by the Salley Gardens* by Fiadh McKenna and Alana O'Flaherty.

The recital was made possible by the dedication of our peripatetic tutors, including Mrs Surginor, Ms Cooper, Mrs Bingham, Mr Nesbitt, and others, whose guidance and encouragement have nurtured the next generation of musicians.

As we look ahead to the next academic year, we do so with pride in what has been achieved and excitement for what is to come. The Music Department continues to be a place where talent is nurtured, friendships are formed, and memories are made. Here's to another year of harmony, creativity, and joy.

M.M.M.

Drama in School

LEGALLY BLONDE



This Autumn, the Drama department unleashed a vibrant splash of pink with their ambitious production of 'Legally Blonde: The Musical'. A modern classic that began as a novel, became a blockbuster film, and then a worldwide stage sensation, the show tells the empowering story of Elle Woods, a sorority girl who follows her ex-boyfriend to Harvard Law and discovers her true potential. Tackling this musically and choreographically demanding show was no small feat. After rigorous auditions, a diverse and talented cast of sixty began rehearsals in early September, their collective energy building towards a spectacular mid-November run.

Stepping into the iconic pink shoes of Elle Woods was Lara Morrow (LVI). After her main stage debut in 2022's 'School of Rock', Lara flourished in her first leading role. Present in nearly every scene, she was at every rehearsal for two and a half months, and her unwavering dedication and enthusiasm were the production's anchor. It was a joy to watch her command the stage.

Lara was brilliantly supported by a cast of Academy stage veterans and exciting newcomers. Niall Blaskett (MVI) delivered a heartfelt performance as Emmett, the sensitive law student who sees Elle's potential, while Jane Martin (MVI) won the audience's hearts as the unlucky-in-love salon owner, Paulette. Making a formidable debut, Finn McAlorum (LVI) captured the self-absorbed nature of Elle's ex-boyfriend, Warner.



Rounding out the principal cast was a host of remarkable talents, many making their debuts. Rachael Anderson (MVI) was perfectly ruthless as the villainous Professor Callahan, and Ella Kilpatrick (MVI) shone as the accused fitness tycoon Brooke Wyndham. Phoebe Kirk (V) captured the sharp transformation of Elle's rival, Vivienne, while Penny Davidson (MVI) brought wit and warmth to the role of Enid. Special mention must go to vocal powerhouses Sophie Wilson (V), Ella Adam (V), and Megan Flood (MVI) as Elle's 'Greek Chorus' of sorority sisters, and the scene-stealing Olivier Staworzynski (LVI), who earned huge laughs as the iconic Kyle, the UPS guy.



From the leads to the last member of the ensemble, every performer worked tirelessly to bring this challenging show to life. Their collective talent and commitment were integral to the production's resounding success.



While our cast commanded the stage, the show's vibrant, beating heart was its live band, masterfully led by our Musical Director, Mr Keith Pyper, who impressively took the helm just four weeks before opening night.



The powerhouse rhythm section was anchored by the virtuosic drumming of Jake Coulter (LVI) and

the steady bass lines of Class of 2024 Alumnus, Joe O'Kane. Soaring above them was guitarist Gail Payot (LVI) who unleashed electrifying solos, particularly in numbers like 'Whipped into Shape'. The brass section, featuring trumpet extraordinaires Ed Nethercott (LVI) and Roisin McCarthy (V), injected an infectious, pep-rally energy into the showstopper 'What You Want'. Weaving beautiful melodies throughout were keyboardists Leo Coulter (LVI), Mr Matt Milford, and Mr Robin Cassidy Taylor. A special commendation goes to violinists Jane Finnegan (MVI) and Maria Watters (MVI), alongside flautist Jessie McAuley (MVI).

Joining the production with only three weeks to spare, they performed with seasoned poise, their rendition of the traditional folk song 'Ireland' being a standout moment. The sheer professionalism of each musician added a rich new dimension to the show, and they deserve our most profound thanks and admiration.



Equally pivotal to the show's visual spectacle was the phenomenal choreography by Mrs Thornton. Her creative vision spanned everything from high-energy skipping and traditional Irish dancing to ensemble choreography. Mrs Thornton's inspiring talent for crafting complex routines that appeared seamless on stage was instrumental to the production's success and polish. The show simply would not have been possible without her.



A production of this scale is only possible thanks to the immense talent and dedication of the crew working behind the scenes. From the technical booth, Aaron Carter (LVI) and Lauren McCullough (LVI) were the architects of the show's atmosphere. Under the expert supervision of Mrs McIlwaine, they, and Ella O'Carroll (LVI) dedicated countless hours to designing and executing a spectacular lighting and sound plan that brought a professional polish to every performance.

The visual world of 'Legally Blonde' was masterfully constructed by our set and props teams. Mrs Laura Atkins, assisted by Mrs Patterson, Mrs McDevitt, Jai Beattie (LVI), and Anna Curran (LVI), brought diverse locations to life, from the bustling halls of Harvard to the charming 'Hair Affair' salon. Meanwhile, Dr Springer once again led his props team, skilfully sourcing the many weird and wonderful objects that perfected each scene.

On performance nights, the backstage area was a hub of organised activity. Mrs McNally managed the extensive wardrobe, while Miss Williams led the hair and make-up team. A special tribute must



be paid to Mr McAleer, who not only led the stage crew but did so while in full costume and make-up as Paulette's dog, Rufus—a true testament to the staff's incredible commitment!



With a combined cast and crew of nearly one hundred students, this production was the definition of a team effort. The eight-week rehearsal period presented numerous challenges, but I was consistently humbled by the extraordinary talent, resilience, and commitment shown by everyone involved. The show's success is a direct testament to their hard work. I hope the experience was rewarding and that the memories of 'Legally Blonde' will be cherished for years to come.

S.L.T.





School Games

RUGBY

1ST XV

Senior rugby began in mid-July. This summer period has become an integral part of preparation for senior rugby. This involved training both in the gym and the sports hall to maximise player strength and conditioning for September.



Just before the start of the season, the team played in warm up training games against Coleraine at home and Campbell away. Both games were very beneficial as they allowed the team to gel and get used to playing with each other. These matches showed the quality we had in the team and gave us optimism for the season ahead.

There were some fantastic performances in the early season with some exciting rugby on display, led by Captain Frank Davis. Much of the early season was geared towards the Schools Cup group campaign. Early victories versus Ballyclare High School and Royal School

Armagh gave a great start to the year. We carried this momentum into difficult home matches against Methodist College and Sullivan Upper, where we managed to pick up two impressive wins, due to the teams exciting rugby and the excellent support in the stands. These matches gave the team confidence to be able to go far in the Schools cup.

Next up, a trip to the DUB arena at Queens Sport to take on Wallace High School. A large crowd from both schools filled the stands and around the pitch as they were entertained to a back-and-forth game. However, Wallace ended up coming away with the victory, winning 19-13. The narrow defeat showed that we could compete with the best of the best and we took a lot of learnings from the game. A huge thank you to Queens for hosting the match, a great night and great match. Next up, the start of our Schools Cup Group Stage campaign.

Our first game of the group stage saw us take on Portadown College at Roughfort, where the team played exceptionally well to come away with a 61-7 victory, a real statement win with a number of standout performances. Our next group game was Friends School Lisburn at home again. Similarly to our first game, the team played even better and came up with an outstanding win which meant we had topped the group with one game left. Unfortunately, due to frozen pitches, our final game against Antrim Grammar School was abandoned, however we still topped the group and had put ourselves into the hat for the Round of 16 draw!

Following impressive victories, we would have a tough seven days, as we would play three games, Campbell College at home, Ballymena Academy away mid-week and ending with Regent High School away. We carried our momentum from our Schools Cup games and came away with excellent wins to Campbell (31-15) and Ballymena (5-17). These victories gave us even more confidence and we took this into Regent. Despite a lot of tired bodies, the team managed to come away with a 24-24 draw, which proved the character and resilience of the team to battle hard and to comeback, even when down and out. These impressive displays left us in an extremely good place ahead of our 4-day tour of Valencia in mid-December.

Our warm weather training camp in Valencia was excellent on and off the pitch, the team worked incredibly hard on the pitch in the warm conditions



and had earned activities such as bowling and surfing. During the tour, the draw for the Schools Cup Round of 16 took place, as we learned that we would be facing Methodist College away, this was hugely exciting and there was a massive buzz within the team. To end the tour, we played the CAU rugby team, coming away with a comfortable win. A huge thanks to CAU for letting us use their facilities while on tour, it was much appreciated! The tour was very successful, and many memories were made

Following our tour, we had a festive Christmas fixture at home to RBAI. A massive crowd turned up as the team put on a cracking performance, and we came away with an impressive win in difficult conditions. This would be our last match before our Round of 16 tie. Although, at the start of January, we made the trip up to Dublin during mid-week to take on Blackrock College in a training game. This was a great experience for the team and helped us prepare for the game as we had a great physical session, which was exactly what we needed. A massive thank you to Blackrock College for the use of their facilities and providing us with food after the session!

At last, we had reached the Last 16 game. There was a sense of nervousness but excitement as we made the trip to Pirrie Park. The team had been prepped extremely well and were ready and this showed through our warmup. A poor first half from ourselves meant we were losing 19-15 at half time, but after some incredibly motivating team talks, the team were inspired, as we came back to win 43-26, an excellent try from Captain Frank Davis at the end to top it off. This sealed our place in the Quarter Final, where we drew away to Sullivan Upper. Again, the team were prepped really well for the occasion and massive support from the B.R.A. fans helped the team scrape past Sullivan with the game coming down to the last play, where we won 20-17 in a nervy game, we were nowhere near our best, but we showed incredible fight and resilience to book our place at the Kingspan for the Semi Final, where we would play Wallace High School.

The build up to the Semi Final was truly special, we were joined by Iain Henderson for lunch on the day of the match, where he gave an incredible speech to us which was inspirational. A huge



thanks to Iain for coming in, it meant a lot to the team. We were then greeted with a parade on the way out to the bus by the entire school, an unforgettable moment. Similarly to our game previously to Wallace, it was back and forth.



However, despite our best efforts, Wallace came out on top, narrowly winning 15-28, they would deservedly go on to win the competition.



Our exit was difficult to process but nonetheless, it was an incredible season where many memories were made. A huge thank you to everyone who supported us all year and throughout the Schools Cup, the support had a huge effect on the team!

A massive thank you to the coaches Mr Creighton, Mr McCarey, Mr Douglas, Tom Stewart, Luke Bonnar, our analyst and our physio, Daryl. All the coaches had a huge impact on the team and without them, we would not have been able to be as successful as we were. A huge thank you to our captain Frank Davis, his leadership and energy was unmatched, and we could not have asked for a better captain!

(Luke Houston L6)

2ND XV

Following on from a 2XV cup semi-final the year prior, this year's team had strong expectations, highly motivated new senior rugby players and experienced L6th and M6th players. The team led by captain Charley Maxwell were determined to prove that they could compete with the best schools.

The first game of the season was a pre-season fixture at home to Coleraine grammar resulting

in an impressive 52-5 victory and dominant performances from the new 5th year players. We then made our way to Cambell college where we suffered defeat after an impressive first half display concluding our pre-season matches.

We returned to Roughfort the following week to face local rivals Ballyclare and the team walked away with a hard fought victory. A tough game against Methody was up next and although it ended in a narrow defeat of 19-7 at Roughfort the team did well to take it as a learning curve moving onwards into the season. The 2XV then faced Sullivan upper at home and managed to bounce back and win in impressive fashion to set things straight.

Unfortunately, the form could not continue away from home as we suffered poor defeats to Wallace and Ballymena respectively. However, none the less the team continued to grow and build into the coming matches. A very competitive match at Regent House left us wanting more after a narrow defeat (25-24) left the team stung despite impressive try's from Harrison McMahon, Harry O'Kane, Noah Gregg and Jack Bacon.

With a point to prove the 2XV made their way to Rainey Endowed looking to end their poor form away from home despite a weakened side, they managed to do so in what became an intense and physical match.

Then came the 2XV cup where the squad aimed to go a step further than the year prior and the first team to stand in the way was a determined Coleraine side under the lights at Roughfort. The team proved their quality and skill in a dominant display beating the team 56 points to nil with try's including Harper McCloskey, Elijah Fitzpatrick, Alex Simon, Stuart Knox, and most notably a special hat-trick by M6th pupil Evan Lemon. This was the final fixture prior to our tour to Valencia and set the tone well going away.

After a successful tour and conclusive win for the 2XV against host team CAU Valencia, we drew Cambell College in the quarter final of the Cup away from home. Having lost to Cambell earlier on in the season the team was highly motivated and determined to set things right. Unfortunately, it was not meant to be for the 2XV as they were bested



against a very strong Cambell side, concluding our journey in the cup.

Despite this the 2XV of the 24/25 season showed great heart consisting of talented players, special victories and memories.

(Stuart Knox L6)

MEDALLION RUGBY

The Medallion Rugby squad enjoyed a very successful 24/25 season. They played an eye-catching brand of rugby and recorded some pleasing results throughout the season.

In the period between September and Christmas they boys recorded victories against Coleraine Grammar School, Ballyclare High School, Sullivan, Rainey, Friends' School Lisburn. These pleasing results led to the team being seeded for the Medallion Shield. The draw was a tough one, away to Campbell College.



In the run up to the match the boys enjoyed a training camp in Johnstone House. This was a thoroughly enjoyable trip, and the boys demonstrated an excellent attitude throughout. Despite the tough draw the boys entered the Shield match with much confidence. The first half was a ferocious affair, with both teams playing with an incredible level of intensity. The scoreline of 7-7 meant the match was on a knife edge. Unfortunately, we were left to rue missed opportunities and CCB finished strongly to win 28-7.

The boys entertained Dungannon in the Quarter Final of the plate and were pipped in the last few minutes in an agonising one-point defeat.

Despite these disappointments the boys should remain proud of how they developed over the course of the season. They will add a lot to the Senior Rugby Squad.

We would like to thank our sponsors for generously providing the kit for the boys and to other staff members who helped throughout the year.

P.R.R/C.G.N

1st XI 2024/25

Played	Won	Drew	Lost
22	14	3	5

Captain: Anouk Bosket

Vice-Captain: Zoë Place

Top Goal Scorer: Faith Hillis

Squad: Ella Kilpatrick, Anouk Bosket, Leah Callaghan, Maya Campbell, Rosa Clarke, Hope Daniels, Erin Gray, Keri Gray, Faith Hillis, Grace McDowell, Zoë Place, Beth Strong, Alex Snoddy, Leah Carter, Maja Jones, Sophia Morwood, Leah McNevison, Emily Anderson.

1ST XI CAPTAIN'S REPORT



The 1stXI have had a successful and competitive season this year. We began our preseason in July, and the girls worked hard to prepare for the Stevenson Cup. We faced a tough group featuring Schools' Cup finalists Royal School Armagh, Wallace High School, and Sullivan Upper. The



girls fought hard in each match, but unfortunately, we didn't progress to the quarter-finals, losing out to Wallace on goal difference.

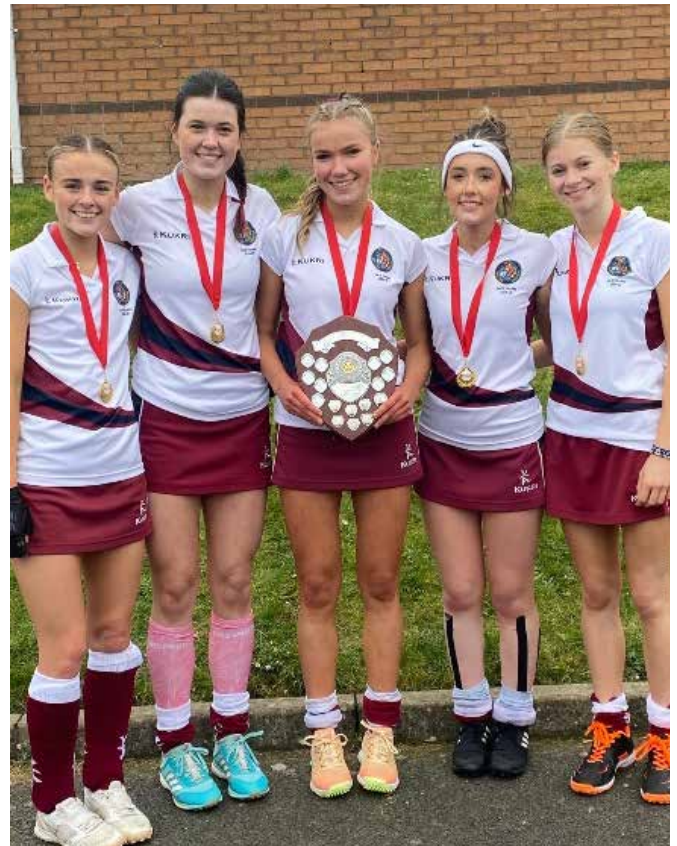
Despite that setback, we turned our focus to preparing for the Schools' Cup and continued to train and perform well in our matches. In the first round, we faced Dungannon—who we met in last season's final. It was a well-fought match, with B.R.A. coming out on top with a 4-0 win thanks to excellent teamwork and passing.

In the second round, we travelled to face Coleraine and delivered another strong performance, securing a 2-0 victory with both goals scored by Maya Campbell. That win took us to the third round, where we once again faced Royal School Armagh. Despite our efforts, we were defeated, bringing our Schools' Cup run to an end.

The team remained in high spirits as we entered the Schools' Shield competition. In the quarterfinals, the girls showcased their skill and teamwork, defeating Ballyclare High School 4-0 with goals from Zoë Place, Erin Gray, Grace McDowell, and Leah Callaghan. We then progressed to the semi-finals, where we played Friends' School Lisburn and earned our place in the final with another 4-goal game. Rosa Clarke scored twice, with Maya Campbell and I each adding one.

This led us to the final, where expectations were high after last year's win. Facing Ballymena, we knew it would be a challenge, but the team was ready. After a goalless first half, the girls dug deep and delivered a fantastic second-half performance, finishing the match 3-1. Alex Snoddy scored the opening goal, followed by two from Faith Hillis.

It was an incredible way to end an exciting season, bringing the Senior Schools' Shield home for the second consecutive year!



This has been a brilliant season for B.R.A. hockey, with the team consistently playing to a high standard. The girls showed great commitment, turning up week after week to both training and gym sessions, it truly paid off. Over the course of the year, we played 22 matches, recording 14 wins, 3 draws, and 5 losses.

Finally, I'd like to give a massive thank you to our coaches Stephen Watt, Miss Brady, and Miss Robinson for their support throughout the season. Without them, we would not have achieved our Schools' Shield win! Special thanks also to our parents, friends, and the whole school community who supported us all year.

Anouk Bosket M6





2nd XI 2024/25

Played	Won	Drew	Lost
20	12	3	5

Captain: Sophie Hollywood

Vice-Captains: Hope Daniels

Top Goal Scorer: Sophia Morwood

Squad: Leah Carter, Sophie Hollywood, Grace McAllister, Maja Jones, Hannah Cole, Hope Daniels, Sophia Morwood, Anna O'Dowd, Maya Campbell Leah McNevison, Eve Manson, Holly Johnston, Hannah Press, Daisy Johnston, Chloë Craig, Emma Campbell, Matilda McAllister.

2ND XI CAPTAIN'S REPORT



This past season was one to remember, I couldn't be prouder of what the 2ndXI have achieved this year. We started the season with a squad that was very young in comparison to previous years, which was a bit scary considering we had never played together; however each player grew as an individual and most importantly as a team.

The hard work and commitment from the team paid off as we went on to win the McDowell Shield, this wasn't an easy win as at the end of the match it was 0-0, which is B.R.A.'s worst nightmare, however there was a sense of relief as Leah Carter was there to defend the goal, so it was an obvious win!

I can't wait to cheer from the sidelines for the 2ndXI next season and watch these girls continue to improve.



Lastly, I would like to give a huge thank you to our coaches Stephen Watt, Miss Brady and Miss Robinson as without their dedication (and brutal training) none of this would have been possible. A huge thank you to all the parents and supporters as this kept us motivated to win the shield!

Sophie Hollywood M6

The season was a testament to the dedication of both the 1stXI and 2ndXI hockey squads, concluding on a very successful and enjoyable note. Players worked tirelessly throughout the



year, making considerable strides in their skills and overall fitness, demonstrating commitment to B.R.A. hockey!

In preparation for the Schools' Cup Competition the 1stXI had an enjoyable trip to Dublin in January to play against St Columba's College. Our sincere thanks to St Columba's for hosting us and for their hospitality.

I was proud to see the 1stXI squad win the Ulster Schools' Shield Competition against Ballymena Academy and the 2ndXI squad win the McDowell Shield competition against Wallace. This was an excellent achievement for the teams to conclude their season.

Thank you to the players for their unwavering dedication and hard work, which has been consistent throughout their time at B.R.A. Good luck and best wishes to our M6 leavers for the future. I also want to express my appreciation to Stephen Watt, Miss Robinson, and Dylan Ramsey for their coaching and umpiring throughout the year.

K.E.B.

3RD XI HOCKEY REPORT

Captain: Jenna McCall

Vice-Captain: Maddie Beggs

Players Player of the Year: Maddie Beggs

Top Goal Scorer: Emma Campbell

Played: 18 Won: 11 Drew: 6 Lost: 1

3rd XI Squad 2024/25: Martha Donaldson, Harriet Brobyn, Maddie Beggs, Julia Robinson, Jessica Smyth, Emilia Gordon, Evie Lewis, Anna Morrow, Erin Colvin, Emma Campbell, Jenna McCall, Charlotte Ingram, Chloe Craig, Ella Sofia Downey, Holly Ross

The 3rd XI enjoyed a fantastic 2024/25 season under the captaincy of Jenna McCall and vice-captain Maddie Beggs, playing 18 matches with only one defeat. The team recorded 11 wins and 6 draws, scoring 28 goals.

Highlights included strong victories over Ballymena (4–0) and Strathearn (5–0), as well as

a memorable cup run, defeating Grosvenor and Banbridge before narrowly losing to Wallace in the quarter-final. A standout final performance saw the girls come from behind to beat Cambridge House 1st XI 3–1.

With strong teamwork, resilience through injuries, and excellent support coaches, umpires, and parents, it was a hugely successful and enjoyable season for the squad.



Special mention also to Mollie Bacon, Kayla Adair, Lucy Whittle and Niamh Cunningham (GK) who on many occasions stepped up from the 4th XI to help out when needed. Thank you for your commitment to both 3s and 4s squads throughout the season. It is very much appreciated, especially sometimes at late notice!

Thank you to Captain Jenna McCall and Vice-Captain Maddie Beggs for their excellent leadership and for organising so many valuable team-building sessions throughout the season. And finally, good luck to the five M6 girls leaving us this season – Jenna, Maddie, Julia, Emma and Anna. You have been a fantastic group to work with over the past four years, and you will be greatly missed next season. We wish you every success for the future and hope you continue to enjoy hockey at university or club level.

J.R.S.



3RDXI CAPTAIN'S REPORT

This season, I had the honour of captaining the 3rd XI, and what a season it was! Our team experienced an incredible journey filled with success, unforgettable moments. Despite some changes from last season, having said goodbye to our captain and goalkeeper Elyse we quickly gelled as a unit combining the experience of the senior players who had returned after last year with the additional of a number of new younger players who were stepping up to senior hockey for the first time. Our positive team dynamic was created, thanks our dedicated coach, Mrs. Shaw, and the numerous team-building activities that were organised including brunches, games nights and team building days.

Looking back now with hindsight, I believe the season was a hugely successful one and we achieved so much together as a team. We lost only once and unfortunately that defeat came at the hands of Wallace HS in the cup quarter final, a close fought contest and a rollercoaster of emotions. It just wasn't meant to be on the day, as one of our star players Ella Sofia sustained a serious injury with Holly already being injured earlier in the season. We wish both well in their recovery and hope they will be fully fit for next season. Despite the setbacks, the team showed real determination and resilience to keep fighting right up to the final whistle.

Our season was filled with standout performances and memorable moments. We won 11 matches, scoring 28 goals and conceding just 5. Our passing game and teamwork was our strength, leading to significant victories like the 4-0 win against Ballymena in our opening game and the 5-0 triumph over Strathearn. Special mention goes to Emma, who scored 5 of our 9 goals in these two matches.



2024/25 Seasons Results		
Fixture	Result	Goal scorers
Ballymena	Won 4-0	Emma Campbell x3, Charlotte Ingram x1
Strathearn	Won 5-0	Emma Campbell x2 Ella Sofia Downey x2
Armagh	Drew 1-1	Grace McAllister
Rainey Endowed	Won 0-1	Holly Ross
Sullivan Upper	Won 0-1	Chloe Craig, Evie Lewis
Grosvenor	Won 3-0	Harriet, Jenna, Emma
Wallace	Drew 0-0	
Methody	Drew 0-0	
Dungannon	Won 1-0	Emma Campbell
Victoria College	Drew 0-0	
Wellington 1s	Drew 1-1	Emma Campbell
Banbridge	Won 1-0	Chloe Craig
Carrick Grammar 2s	Won 2-0	Emma Campbell, Molly Adams
Cambridge House 1s	Won 3-1	Jenna McCall, Maddie Beggs, Macy Beggs

2024/25 Gibson Cup Results		
Fixture	Result	Goal scorers
Grosvenor 1st	Won 4-0	Ella Sofia Downey x2, Holly Ross, Chloe Craig
Banbridge 2nd	Drew 1-1 FT Penalty runs Won 0-2	Holly Ross Runs: Emma, Chloe
Wallace	Lost 0-1 Quarter Final	



One of the most memorable matches for me, was the round of 16 cup tie against Banbridge, which ended in a 1-1 draw, the goal coming from Holly Ross's deflection at the back post. We held our nerve during the penalty runs, with our goalkeeper Martha making crucial saves, saving all 5 of Banbridge's runs

The very final game against a very capable Cambridge House 1st XI, also sticks in my mind as a great example of the attitude and commitment the team showed all year. We started that game poorly and conceded the opening goal early on. It would have been easy for heads to go down and for us to give up, however, everyone worked hard to get us back into the game which we finally won 3-1. It was pleasing to grab a goal myself, after a really well worked short corner routine, with another goal from Vice captain, Maddie and a fantastic way to see out my school hockey career.

I am incredibly proud of our team. The dedication and commitment shown by every player, week in and week out, was truly inspiring. I am grateful to the other senior players on the team who made the job of being captain so much easier and to Mrs. Shaw for her unwavering support and guidance. Another thank you to Samantha McGrath for her consistent presence as our umpire. Thanks must also go to the dedicated support of parents who travelled far and wide to cheer us on from the sidelines, even in the cold and wet.

Thank you for making this season unforgettable. Here's to many more successful seasons ahead!

Jenna McCall

4TH XI HOCKEY REPORT 2024-2025

Co-Captain: Phoebe Bradley

Co-Captain: Ruby Latham

Player of the Year 2024-2025: Lucy Whittley

Top Goal Scorer 2024-25: Cate O'Dowd/Rebecca Pettigrew

Played: 13 Won 5 Drew 4 Lost 4

4th XI Squad 2024/25: Niamh Cunningham, Phoebe Bradley, Mollie Bacon, Lucy Whittley, Olivia McCall, Hollie Hipkins, Ruby Latham, Ellie

Gallagher, Amelie McKeown, Izzy Simpson, Kayla Adair, Cate O'Dowd, Rebecca Pettigrew, Molly Adams, Molly Long, Macy Beggs

The 2024/25 season kicked off in early September with a series of training matches aimed at forming our new squads. We saw a fantastic turnout from players across Form 4 to M6, with enough numbers to comfortably field both 4thXI and 5thXI teams. Unfortunately, not all opposing schools were able to match this depth and field five Senior teams. Nonetheless, training attendance remained consistently high, and significant effort was dedicated to enhancing both skill levels and overall fitness.



The 4th XI enjoyed the 2024/25 season, showing resilience, teamwork, and commitment throughout. With 5 wins, 4 draws and 4 narrow defeats, the squad demonstrated great spirit and determination. A season highlight was the 7-0 Cup victory over Omagh Academy, with goals shared across the team, alongside memorable wins against Larne, Wellington, Ballyclare and Rainey.

The 4thXI again had a successful Cup run this season with this group of girls reaching the Quarter-Finals. We were very unlucky to lose to a very strong Senior squad from Sullivan. This team dedicated a lot of time and effort to prepare for this match. I look forward to building upon this with the 4thXI next season. Please see the Cup results below.



Thank you to our Co-Captains Ruby Latham and Phoebe Bradley who led the team so well, fostering positivity and a strong team bond.

The girls should be very proud of their progress and achievements this year – a brilliant season all round!

Special mention also to Layla Crawford and Autumn Stirling who on many occasions stepped up to play for the 4s. Thank you for your commitment to both squads.

J.R.S

2024/25 Seasons Results		
Fixture	Result	Goal scorers
Ballymena	Drew 0-0	
Strathearn	Drew 1-1	Kayla Adair
Armagh	Drew 1-1	Kayla Adair
Rainey Endowed	Won 1-2	Macy Beggs, Molly Long
Sullivan Upper	Lost 0-1	
Wallace	Lost 2-1	Rebecca Pettigrew
Larne Grammar	Won 2-0	Molly Adams, Macy Beggs
Victoria	Lost 1-0	
Wellington	Won 2-3	Cate O'Dowd, Molly Long, Lucy Whittlely
Ballyclare	Won 1-0	Rebecca Pettigrew
Banbridge	Drew 2-2	Molly Adams x2

2024/25 Seasons Results		
Fixture	Result	Goal scorers
Omagh Academy	1st Won 0-7	Cate O'Dowd x3, Kayla Adair, Rebecca Pettigrew x2, Molly Long
Sullivan	Quarter Final Lost 3-0	

U13A XI

It was an honour to captain the U13A team this year. My personal favourite memory of the season was scoring against Victoria College to win 2-0. A few other favourite memories were the Christmas Dress Up Tournament, as well as the Methody end of season tournament. The bus rides to matches with all of my team mates was another special highlight of the season.

I would like to say a very big thanks to Stephen Watt who trained us throughout the year, and a special thanks to Miss Robinson and Mrs Greer who made this whole experience 10 times more fun. We are really looking forward to being U14s next year!

Ella McAteer

Captain – Ella McAteer

Player of Year – Ella McAteer

Top goal scorer – Olivia Hunter

U13A squad – Francesca Fitzpatrick, Lucy Hesketh, Olivia Hunter, Evie Mackinson, Ella McAteer, Isabella McBurney, Rae McCloskey, Katie McKenna, Emilie McKinty, Erin McNevison, Aoife Snowling, Molly Strong, Eliza-Jane Tomlinson, Lorelai Torrens, Eva Watson.

U13B XI

It was an honour being captain of the U13B hockey team during the year. Our season started off well with a 4-0 win in September against Rainey Endowed and then a 4-1 win against Wallace High School in October. The most memorable match came in November with a 5-0 win against Larne Grammar. It was really inspiring to see how hard everyone had worked developing their skills and how we were all working as a team. With determination and dedication, the team continued to improve and we have all built lasting friendships.

I want to extend a huge thank you to our coaches, Miss Robinson, Miss Gamble, and Mr Watt. The encouragement and support you gave us throughout the season made a significant impact on our development as a team. Thank you to the



whole team, for all the hard work you put in each week during practices and matches. I was very proud to be your captain.

Eve McIlmurray

Captain – Eve McIlmurray

Player of Year – Katie Johnston

Top goal scorer – Francesca Fitzpatrick

U13B squad – Isla Armstrong, Ava Bell, Anna Brown, Eva Burnside, Francesca Fitzpatrick, Gracie Gibson, Lily Gilmour, Catherine Green, Marley Hamill, Ella Jackson, Katie Johnston, Olivia Klocker, Eve McIlmurray, Katie McKee, Eilidh McKeown, Lilah Murphy, Erin Murton, Scarlett Pollock, Rose Stumbras, Kavya Suchak, Lorelai Torrens, Grace Turner, Amy Weir.

The U13 hockey season got underway with a productive block of pre-season training in August, helping both the A and B squads build strong foundations for the months ahead. The U13A team began their fixtures in early September and enjoyed an impressive 2-0 win over Royal School Armagh.

Among the season's highlights was a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Killicomaine Junior High School, and a particularly satisfying 3-0 win against Larne Grammar School, a team they had previously lost to earlier in the year. These results reflected the team's ability to learn, adapt, and grow as the season progressed. The U13B team celebrated several standout wins, including a 4-0 victory over Rainey Endowed, a commanding 5-0 win against Larne Grammar, and a confident 4-1 win over Wallace. These performances were a testament to the team's attacking flair and defensive discipline.

Throughout the year, both teams approached every match with energy and commitment. It was clear that this squad were eager to learn and develop quickly, putting themselves in a strong position for their U14 competitive season. A huge thank you to Stephen Watt for his expertise throughout the season, and thanks also to Mrs Greer and Miss Gamble who played important roles in the development of this U13 squad.

E.P.F.

UNDER 13 AND UNDER 14 BOYS' HOCKEY

UNDER 13'S

The Under 13s started with a rather chastening 5-0 defeat to Methodist College. This was followed up with a comfortable victory by a margin of 7-0 away to the Boys' Model. The goals being shared around with two each for Aidan Mathew and Jake Whitley and one apiece for Ejike Alinonu, Theo Weir and Chukwuweta Okonkwo Ezechia.

A rematch with Methody was our next outing. This time the contest was much closer, reflecting the progress we were making, as a single goal in each half separated the sides as we succumbed to a 2-0 defeat. Had our forwards, particularly Chu-Chu shown a bit more composure in front of goal, having got into some excellent positions the outcome could have been different.

In mid-November we welcomed Regent to the Valley. Regent took a lead in the first half, but we remained competitive throughout and indeed Theo Weir thought he had equalised with a short corner strike, for it to have been ruled out for being too high. Try as we might we could not find an equaliser and Regent edged a 1-0 victory.

In the new year our next match saw Bangor as the visitors to the Valley in the Richardson Cup. Bangor were quicker out of the blocks and a few quick-fire goals put them in control. At 4-0 at half time things looked bleak, but the boys stuck to their task very well and slightly edged the second half but couldn't reduce the arrears as the game finished 4-0.

The U13 then travelled with the 1st XI to Kilkeel as a curtain raiser to the Burney Cup game. In a very competitive contest, we come out on the wrong side of a 3-1 scoreline with Chu-Chu scoring our goal.

Banbridge away in the Richardson Plate was our next contest. Against a very strong Banbridge side we were holding our own in a very tight first half. Banbridge were the better side, but we were frustrating them. At 0-0 with less than 5 minutes to half time we were threatening an upset, but



we inexplicably folded like the proverbial deck of cards to go into half time 4-0 in arrears. We restored some of our fighting spirit in the second half but could do little to limit the damage finishing on the wrong end of a resounding 7-0 scoreline.

This group trained well during the season. There is the core of a good team if they can stick together. In Theo Weir and Jake Whitley there is a strong core and the likes of Chu-Chu and Ejike have pace and power up front. There are several boys who improved a lot during the season, the like of Adam Laverty and Seth Black. I would also like to thank Tim Weir for all his efforts with the group over the course of the year.

UNDER 14'S

The Under 14s did not have as many fixtures as their Form 2 counterparts. Their first outing was a home fixture against Methodist College. A 4-0 scoreline in defeat slightly flattered us. It was a spirited performance, but we were thankful to Alain in goals, who with his unconventional style made a number of good saves to limit the damage. Next up was a trip to East Belfast to take on a Campbell 'B' team. We started the game well but failed to score when we were on top. With just 11 at the game compared to 16 in the hosts squad our players started to tire as the game went on and eventually Campbell ran out 5-0 victors.

Our next outing wasn't until the new year and saw us take on Campbell again, this time the 'A' Team and in the Ferris Cup. With 2 members of the Ulster U16s on the Campbell team we were under pressure from the start. The boys battled to the end, but Campbell ran out convincing 9-0 winners.

Our final match saw us travel to Ballycastle in the Ferris Plate. Again, Alain was excellent in goal and Oscar and Harry were influential in midfield, but neither side were able to break the deadlock. And so, to run-ins. Theo Weir was successful in his attempt, but none of the rest of our players scored. So tied at 1-1 it came down to Ballycastle's final attempt, which Alain just failed to keep out. So, we were denied our first win of the year.

I would like to thank the boys for their efforts. There was a small but committed group who

worked hard at their game. I would also like to thank Tim Weir for all his efforts with the group over the course of the year.

M.H.

NETBALL

B.R.A. Netball had a successful season, with the key highlight being the Senior A team's strong performance in the Northern Ireland Schools' Cup Competition, where they reached the Semi-final before being narrowly defeated by Dominican.

Eight teams played competitive matches in the Northern Ireland League Competitions - the format included blitz days at the initial stages followed by knockout rounds. The Senior squad reached the quarter finals of their league against St Dominic's unfortunately missing out on advancing to the next round.



The Intermediate team reached the Semi-final of the Plate competition finishing runners up to Aquinas. We successfully held several House Competitions, which saw enthusiastic participation from both boys and girls who competed with great spirit and notable talent.

My sincere thanks go to June McKeown, Betty Wilson, Miss C Robinson, Ms K Williams, Mrs J



McNally, and Miss K Matthews. Their amazing dedication to coaching and umpiring has been vital to the development of B.R.A. netball this year. Furthermore, I extend my appreciation to all the players for their continued hard work throughout the season.

Representative Honours

U15 Regional Academy - Jessica Smyth

U17 Northern Ireland Squad - Emilia Gordon, Keri Gray, Ema Jones

U19 Northern Ireland Squad - Erin Gray

U21 Northern Ireland Squad - Emilia Gordon



FORM 1 NETBALL

Form 1 netball group saw excellent attendance and infectious enthusiasm. The players dedicated themselves to improving both their skills and fitness. They gained valuable experience through friendly matches and enjoyed internal House Competitions throughout the year. Given the superb level of participation and the promise shown, we look forward to building significantly upon these foundations next season.

MINOR NETBALL

Minor A Squad: Neamh Callaghan, Grace White, Chidinma Anyakudo, Lucie Thomas, Eabhha

Moore, Isabella Logan, Emily Seenan, Isabella McBurney, Eva Burnside, Yasmin Laughlin, Amy Weir.

Captain: Grace White

Our team played well this season. We weren't just playing as teammates, but as friends. The team spirit and mutual respect we built on and off court made a real difference in our performance. Unfortunately, we lost to a strong team from Grosvenor that resulted in an early exit in the Minor Cup. However, we had good competitive matches against Cookstown, Banbridge, Thornhill and Lagan at our league blitz competition. Each player worked to the best of their ability and made the team excellent. Everyone definitely got better as the season went on and I am sure they will continue to improve for the next season.

Grace White (F2)

Minor B Squad: Yasmin Laughlin, Grace Okojie-Eromesele, Erin McNevison, Chidinma Anyakudo, Eva Burnside, Isabella Logan, Olivia Hunter, Eabhha Moore, Eliza- Jane Tomlinson, Maelin Nicholl

Captain: Isabella Logan



The Minor B season was extremely successful this year. The players showed up every week to training and demonstrated great effort in their play. We improved our teamwork and grew stronger as a team. In our most recent blitz, we played multiple schools and placed 2nd overall. Well done to all the players for their efforts this season, I am looking forward to next season and what it will bring.

Isabella Logan (F2)



JUNIOR NETBALL

Junior A Squad: Lexi Harker Quinn, Vismithaa Sai Pandiaraj, Oliwia Fularczyk, Lilyanna Devine, Leila Jones, Isabella McCarey, Amelia Gogacz, Nicole Oluwaleye, Sophia Redpath, Sophie Maguire, Eva McCullough, Lily Macauley, Nicola Fularczyk.

Captains: Isabella McCarey & Vismithaa Sai Pandiaraj



This past season was a rewarding experience for our Junior Netball squad. Despite having a smaller group of players, the team consistently applied themselves and showed great effort, even when facing challenging games where the results did not go our way. A notable success came at the Lisburn Racquets Blitz, where the team played well and finished in 2nd place. While winning was not our focus, the season allowed us to develop strong relationships and camaraderie that will last beyond the court.

Isabella McCarey & Vismithaa Sai Pandiaraj (F3)

Junior B Squad: Nicole Oluwaleye, Vismithaa Sai Pandiraj, Mathilda Holmes, Oliwia Fularczyk, Sophia Redpath, Nicola Fularczyk, Sophie Maguire, Rachel Warnock, Lilyanna Devine, Olivia McAllister, Eva McCullough, Lily Macauley.

Captain: Nicola Fularczyk

The Junior B Netball team gained valuable experience this season, improving our match play and netball skills. The squad focused on working together as a team throughout the year. A positive moment was securing a win at the blitz hosted on our home court, which provided a lift and

encouraged continued effort in training. We look forward to utilising the progress made this season as we move up to the Intermediate Netball next year.

Nicola Fularczyk (F3)

INTERMEDIATE NETBALL

Intermediate 'A' Squad: Sophie Curran, Beatrice Seath, Amy McFarlane, Kacie O'Reilly, Sophie McVeigh, Lucy McVeigh, Emilia Gordon, Erin O'Brien, Gwen Clements, Keri Gray, Maja Jones, Jessica Smyth, Zara Duffy.

Captain: Emilia Gordon

The Intermediate A Netball team had a successful competitive season, even with a challenging start against Sullivan and Ballymena. Our second blitz day proved more successful, and we had convincing wins against St Pauls Bessbrook and Glenlola. We faced a strong team from Friends in the Cup and lost narrowly after a competitive and enjoyable game. While our run in the Cup competition was halted, the team moved into the Shield and continued to show resilience. A notable achievement was the victory against St. Joseph's in the Plate quarter-final, leading us to a challenging semi-final match against Aquinas. Beyond the competitive results, the squad proved to be a great group of girls, demonstrating excellent commitment and sharing plenty of enjoyable moments both during matches and outside of them. Emilia Gordon (F4)

Intermediate 'B' Squad: Olivia Mitchell, Darcey Moriarty, Deena Hariri, Zoe Falls, Ruby Johnston, Charlotte Barber, Maja Jones, Martha Donaldson, Olivia McCall, Eva McKinney, Grace McDowell, Rosa Clarke.

Captain: Charlotte Barber

The Intermediate B Netball team had a productive season marked by consistent effort and achievement. Our journey began with the first blitz where we competed against Hunterhouse, Bloomfield, and Lagan College. This experience prepared us for the second blitz day, where the team delivered an excellent performance by winning all matches against Wellington, Lisneal College, and St. Joseph's, ultimately securing top place. This success clearly reflected the consistent



commitment and hard work shown by all players during both training sessions and competitive games. Equally important, the season proved valuable for fostering strong team relationships and friendship among all squad members.

Charlotte Barber (F4)



SENIOR NETBALL

Senior 'A' Squad: Anna Falls, Keri Gray, Aditi Saneesh Krishna, Beth Strong, Hope Daniels, Erin Gray, Emilia Gordon, Ava Logan, Maria Mallon, Lucy Smyth, Ema Jones.

Captain: Anna Falls



The Senior A netball team had a successful season this year through competing in several blitz days and participating in competitive matches. Everyone in the team contributed throughout the year and determination was evident during many matches.

Unfortunately, we were defeated by Dominican which meant we could not reach the final round of the Senior Cup competition; however, each player was able to show confidence and motivation throughout this match. I would like to thank all the girls for such a great season and for making Senior netball so enjoyable. A massive thank you to Miss Brady for all the team talks and words of encouragement before and after we took the court to help push the team to be the best they could have been. Another thank you to June and Betty who coached at games and after school netball, we really appreciate all of your hard work. As this was my last netball season at Belfast Royal Academy, I wish all the girls and coaches the best for the upcoming season and have every faith that you all will continue to fight for success and show commitment at training. The team and I are overjoyed with how far we have come over the past few years and I hope you all continue to strive to achieve your goals for next season.

Anna Falls (M6)

Senior 'B' Squad: Megan Morris, Kate Lewis, Aditi Saneesh Krishna, Hope Daniels, Ava Logan, Katie Sloane, Grace McDowell, Isabella O'Connor.

Captain: Ava Logan

This year the Senior B season began with a blitz, we were faced with very tough opponents such as Dominican College, Fortwilliam and Antrim Grammar. However, after narrowly missing out on the win against Antrim Grammar we placed 4th. Although we were upset with the result it was our first time playing as a team and it allowed us to identify what we could improve on. The girls remained resilient by showing up to training and giving their all each week. We were able to improve as a team and felt confident going into our league. Our first league match was against Grosvenor Grammar School. We showed determination and great effort in coming away with the win. We then finished our league with a match against Glenlola Collegiate. In a closely contested game, we gave it everything in a nail-biting finish to win 13-12, placing us first in our league. A big thank you to Miss Brady and June McKeown who dedicated their time to coaching us throughout the season.

Ava Logan (L6)



1ST XI CRICKET

The 2025 Cricket season was not a memorable one for Belfast Royal Academy. A 1st XI, weakened by several 6th Form pupils prioritising rugby commitments and examination pressures received a bye in the 1st round of the Schools Cup. In the 2nd round Campbell 2nds conceded the tie meaning we advanced to the quarter final, where we were forced to play without our captain Alex Armstrong and suffered a chastening defeat to Regent House by 9 wickets.

Our season started with a Wednesday afternoon trip to Lisburn to face Wallace on the last day in April. Wallace won the toss and elected to bat, which didn't appear the best decision when Bradley Coburn caught Ant Spence off Fintan McCarthy in the first over to reduce the hosts to 1-1. When Magee was out caught and bowled to Callum Weir with the score at 25-2 in the 6th over, we looked well placed. However, Robbie McCollam's 37 and 47 not out from James Andrews lifted our hosts to 132-3 in their 20 overs. We lost wickets far too regularly and when Keshav Raghuram was caught by Spence off the bowling of Kumar for 13, following previous dismissals for Murray and Armstrong we were in trouble. Leo Philip and Jerin Shibu staged a mini revival to lift us to 43-4 before a collapse ensued as we ended up all out for 55 and a 77-run defeat.

Our next fixture saw us entertain Ballyclare High School at the Castle Grounds. Batting first we had the worst possible start. It was very nearly a disastrous start for our hosts too. Keshav top edged a flick around the corner and the ball appeared to be landing in safe ground close to the batsmen, but despite a heavy collision between keeper Morrow and bowler Donnelly, the latter held on to remove Raghuram. Shibu with 15 was the only batsmen to make it into double digits and we were thankful to 28 extras to get us to 58.

With such a miserly total we needed to take every opportunity that came our way. So, when Jack Smyth came down the wicket and was deceived by Alex Armstrong only for the stumping opportunity to elude Harry McIntyre any slight hope of a victory was gone. Smyth scored 21 before Bradley Coburn had him caught by Finn McAllorum and in spite of Alex's 2-16 Ballyclare eased themselves to

a 7-wicket victory with nearly 10 overs to spare. Having been unable to field a side the following Saturday against RBAI, we travelled to Lisburn on a dull Saturday morning to face Friends School on a lively match. Alex won the toss and elected to bowl. This didn't seem like a great idea as Friends' openers Mulholland (50 off 41 balls) and Harland (52* off 55 balls) punished some wayward bowling. Armstrong's 4 overs yielded 13 runs, but the other 16 cost 140 as FSL posted a formidable 153-1 off the 20 overs. In response Alex and Keshav got off us to a good start until Keshav offered a catch to Harland off the bowling of Fisher for 11. Shibu (25 off 26 balls) and Armstrong got us close to the total – when Alex retired on 52, we were 131-7 after 18 needing 22 to win off the last 3 overs, with 7 wickets in hand, but Bradley Coburn and Harper McCloskey's best efforts came up just short as we lost by 6 runs needing 8 to win of the last over.

Our next fixture was very much a nadir of recent cricketing history in B.R.A. Forced to play our schools' cup quarter final without our best player due to a clash with an Emerging Knights game (albeit Alex ended up with an injury and would not have been available) we capitulated in a very disappointing fashion. While the bowling of Regent's opening pair of Dines and Parker showed no little skill our poor technique and application offered little resistance as we were skittled out for 22 by the first ball of the 11th over. Callum Weir removed Herron in the second over, but Parker's 18 off 12 balls and ensured the annihilation was completed before the end of the 3rd over as we lost by 9 wickets.

In the annual Old Boys' Game the Old Boys, batting first posted 135-7 in their 25 overs. Scott Sloan's 39 not out being the top score, while Ross Bryans scored an elegant 31. Alex Scott took 3 wickets, including the prized one of his elder brother, and Bradley Coburn grabbed a brace. In reply, Alex Armstrong hit a couple of lovely fours off Ollie Scott but lost the Armstrong battle cleaned up by big brother. Keshav Raghuram played a long overdue innings which showcased his batting talents, scoring 53 not out ably supported by debutant (Mr.) Peak who bludgeoned 3 maximums and four 4s in a quick fire 41. This ensured a doubly rare victory both in this fixture and in the context of the season for the 1st XI.



Individually Alex Armstrong was selected for the Ireland U19s tour to Zimbabwe in April. He represented the Ulster Schools' side in the 2-day interpro game against the Southern Schools. He captained the Ulster Schools side on their tour to Glasgow. We are hopeful he will be selected for the Irish U19 side for the upcoming U19 World Cup.

M.H.

FOOTBALL CLUB

The 2024/25 football season saw the Academy compete in the Grammar School League and Belfast Cup. Despite a challenging campaign, the team demonstrated resilience and flashes of potential throughout the year.



The league competition, which ran from September to April, involved fixtures against seven grammar schools. The team started the campaign in excellent form, drawing 1–1 with Belfast High and securing a comprehensive 4–1 victory over RBAI, coming from 1–0 down at half-time. In both games, the team played attacking football, kept possession well, and was backed by solid defensive displays.

Unfortunately, that early momentum couldn't be maintained, as the team suffered their first defeat of the campaign to Grosvenor Grammar School. Coming from 3–0 down at half-time, the boys closed the gap to 3–2 and then 4–3, only to concede a last-minute goal and lose 5–3. Subsequent losses followed against Methody, Regent, Bangor, and Campbell College.

In the Belfast Cup group stage, the Academy recorded a solid 2–0 win against Trinity College, with goals from Nathan Flattery and Patrick O'Hanlon. This was followed by a loss to eventual winners Rathmore. However, with a second-place finish, we progressed to the last 16. Here, the team faced Regent House in a tightly contested match.

Goals from Nathan Flattery and Odhran Moan gave the team a 2–0 lead at half-time. However, Regent improved significantly in the second half, scoring two unanswered goals and taking the tie to a penalty shootout. With each team scoring their first five spot-kicks, it went to sudden death, with Regent going on to win 6–5. A difficult way to lose, especially after playing so well and leading 2–0 at half-time.



This season marked the final appearances for several key players: captain George Trimble, Samuel Clarke, Nathan Flattery, Joshua Kirk, and Matthew Whiteside. All were great team players and contributed significantly to the squad. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours!

R.B.

BOYS' ATHLETICS

This was another enjoyable season which saw large numbers of pupils regularly attending training and representing the school in competitions. There were many highlights throughout the year but Zac Fox, Form II, deserves special mention for winning the Minor Long Jump at the Irish Schools



Championship. I would like to thank Miss Ritchie for the time and effort she dedicates to athletes in school.

C.M.C.

Yasha Peters 1st Shot Putt
Chris O'Hara 2nd 200m, 3rd Long Jump
4 x 100m relay 1st
Finlay Baird 3rd 800m, 3rd Javelin
Jack Monroe 6th 100m

DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mini Boys - 4th Team Competition

Jaoquin Ang 2nd 100m
Kasper Ostrowski 3rd 100m
4 x 100m 3rd
Eli Hawthorne 5th High Jump
Max McCotter 6th High Jump

Minor Boys - 2nd Team Competition

Zac Fox 1st 100m (District Record), 1st Long Jump (District Record)
Chukwuweta Okonkwo 3rd High Jump
Finn Crichton 4th 800m
Finn Harland 4th 75m Hurdles, 4th Long Jump
4 x 100m Relay 5th

Junior Boys - 5th Team Competition

Jacob Picking 1st 100m
Finn Johnston 1st High Jump
Ollie Truieck 3rd 80m Hurdles, 6th 1500m
Matthew Craig 4th Hammer
Josh Canavan 5th High Jump
Harrison Orr 6th 200m
Dominik Syzanski 6th Triple Jump
Boye Li 6th Hammer
4 x 100m relay 5th

Inter Boys - 1st Team Competition

Jac McNabb 1st 100m, 1st 400m
Evan Tosh 1st 3000m, 1st 1500 Steeple Chase
Josh Fletcher 1st High Jump
Daniel Ogilby 1st Triple Jump
Joseph Donnelly 2nd Triple Jump
Adam Young 3rd High Jump
Brynn Hewitt 3rd Hammer
Nicolas Vitrio 4th Long Jump
Lucas Bunting 5th 200m
Oliver Veronica 6th Shot Putt
Devaughn Comrie 6th Javelin
4 x 100m relay 4th

Senior Boys - 1st Team competition

Lorcan Bell 1st 400m Hurdles
Robbie Tosh 1st 1500m Steeple Chase

ULSTER SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mini Boys

Jaoquin Ang 3rd 100m
Kasper Ostrowski 3rd 100m
4 x 100m Relay 7th

Minor Boys

Zac Fox 1st 100m , 1st Long Jump
Chukwuweta Okonkwo 1st High Jump

Junior

Olly Truieck 7th 80m Hurdles
Finn Johnston 7th High Jump

Inter boys

Daniel Ogilby , 1st Triple Jump
Joseph Donnelly 2nd Triple Jump
Evan Tosh 3rd 1500m SC, 6TH 3000M
Bryn Hewitt 4th Hammer
Josh Fletcher, 10th High Jump
Adam Young, 11Th High Jump

Senior

Yasha Paters 2nd Shot Putt
Chris O'Hara 2nd Long Jump, 5th 200m
4x100m Relay 3rd
Robbie Tosh 4th 300m SC

IRISH SCHOOLS ATHLETICS

Minor

Zac Fox 1st Long Jump, 4th 100m,
Chukwuweta Okonkwo 2nd High Jump

Intermediate

Daniel Ogilby , 6th Triple Jump
Joseph Donnelly 7th Triple Jump

Senior

Chris O'Hara 6th Long Jump



GIRLS ATHLETICS

The athletics season got underway in mid-March with the traditional Inter-Schools' Meet at Mary Peters against Methody, Wallace and Grosvenor. As always, a large number of enthusiastic athletes turned out to train during games periods, after school and on Saturday mornings – splitting time between Roughfort and Mary Peters.

A total of 55 girls proudly represented B.R.A. at the District Championships, many of them competing for the first time. The girls performed brilliantly, securing 3 Gold, 13 Silver and 8 Bronze medals. Standout performances came from: Lucie Thomas, Leila Jones, Esther Lawrence, Amelie McKeown, Maja Jones, Molly Adams, Keri Gray, Niamh Cunningham, Eve Manson, Ema Jones, Phoebe Bradley, Hope Daniels and Emma Campbell.

The Ulster Schools' Championships also held at Mary Peters again this year, saw further impressive performances, with one of our Senior girls qualifying for the Irish Schools' Championships in Tullamore. Congratulations to Phoebe Bradley (javelin), to reach this level is a superb achievement. Unfortunately, Phoebe could not travel to Tullamore due to exam commitments.

Our annual Sports Day took place on Monday 16th June at Mary Peter's Track. Around 530 pupils from Forms 1-4 took part in this fun-filled day. Shaw House claimed the overall trophy-well done to all involved.

Thank you to all staff who helped coach and support our athletes at Athletics this season. A special thanks to Ms Ritchie, whose commitment during the winter months, delivering indoor training in the Sports Hall, has been second to none. Her knowledge, enthusiasm and dedication have been invaluable once again this year.

Below are the key highlights from what has been a memorable and successful 2025 athletics season.

J.R.S

DISTRICT ATHLETICS RESULTS

Mary Peters Track
Thursday 1st May

TOP 3 IN EACH EVENT QUALIFY FOR ULSTER SCHOOLS

Mini Girls

Ivy McCarey - 4th high jump
Emily Calvin - 5th shot
Relay = 2nd

Minor Girls

Lucie Thomas - 3rd in 100m & 3rd long jump
Isabella McBurney - 5th 75mH
Relay = 2nd

Junior Girls

Leila Jones – 1st 1500m & 2nd 75mH
Matilda McAllister – 3rd javelin
Lily Walker – 3rd shot
Olivia McAllister – 4th 75mH
Isabella McCarey – 5th high jump & 5th hammer
Eva Lavery – 5th long jump
Josie Walker – 6th hammer
Relay = 3rd





Intermediate Girls



Esther Lawrence – 1st 300m
Maja Jones – 2nd 300m
Keri Gray – 2nd 80mH & 6th shot
Amelie McKeown – 2nd 300mH & 2nd 1500m
Eve Manson – 2nd 200m & 3rd 100m
Niamh Cunningham – 2nd hammer & 4th shot
Molly Adams – 3rd triple jump & 4th long jump
Sophia Morwood – 4th 800m & 5th long jump
Evie Lewis – 4th discus
Holly Johnston – 5th 80mH & 6th high jump
Olivia McCall – 6th triple jump
Relay = 2nd

Senior Girls

Hope Daniels – 1st 100mH & 4th high jump
Ema Jones – 2nd high jump & 3rd triple jump
Emma Campbell – 2nd triple jump
Phoebe Bradley – 2nd javelin



ULSTER SCHOOLS ATHLETICS RESULTS 2025

Mary Peters Track
Wednesday 14th May

MINOR AND JUNIOR

Minor Girls

Lucie Thomas – 7th long jump, 6th in 100m heat
Relay = 5th in heat (Lucie Thomas, Chidinma Anyakudo, Erin McNevison, Marley Hamill)





Junior Girls

Leila Jones – 4th 1500m & 6th 75mH

Matilda McAllister – 8th javelin

Lily Walker – 5th shot

Relay = 6th in heat (Isabella McCarey, Vismithaa Pandiaraj, Olivia McAllister, Daisy Lewis)



MINI, INTERMEDIATE & SENIOR

Mini Girls

Relay = 6th (Mela McManus, Tilly Sales, Jessica Tamim, Isla Murphy)



ULSTER SCHOOLS ATHLETICS RESULTS 2025

Mary Peters Track
Saturday 17th May



Intermediate Girls

Eve Manson – 4th 100 & 4th 200m

Esther Lawrence – 2nd 300m heat, 4th final

Maja Jones – 3rd 300m heat, 8th final

Keri Gray – 4th 80mH heat

Amelie McKeown – 5th 300mH

Niamh Cunningham – 5th hammer

Molly Adams – 10th triple jump

Relay = 3rd (Eve Manson, Sophia Morwood, Keri Gray, Molly Adams)

Senior Girls

Phoebe Bradley – 2nd javelin Qualified for Irish Schools'

Hope Daniels – 3rd 100mH

Ema Jones – DNC

Emma Campbell – DNC



IRISH SCHOOLS ATHLETICS

**Friday 30th May & Saturday 31st May
Tullamore**

Phoebe Bradley – Senior girls javelin – Did not compete

SPORTS DAY

Monday 16th June
Mary Peter's Track

Sports day was held on Monday 16th June at The Mary Peters Track with approximately 530 pupils from Forms 1-4 taking part. A very enjoyable day was had by all with Shaw House winning the overall trophy. Well done to all that took part in this event.

J.R.S



Trips and Events

SU Poland Team



Extra-curricular clubs and societies have always played a key role in the life of B.R.A. Over the years, I have been a member of Scripture Union and last year I got the opportunity to be part of a team of sixteen pupils, who travelled to Poland, along with Mr Morrison and Mrs Graydon.

Poland is a post-communist country in central Europe. It has a large population and rich heritage and culture. However, as we were to discover it is also a country where many people live in great need, having become home to almost 1 million refugees forced to flee their homes to escape the ongoing Russian / Ukrainian War.

For us as a team, the journey to Poland began months before with a period of fundraising, team building and frequent planning meetings. As we anticipated our trip, and listened to those who had made this journey before us, we became very aware that this would not be a holiday but would

nonetheless give a privileged opportunity to serve others.

We set out from Belfast in the early hours of Wednesday 5th February, travelling by Aircoach to Dublin and then flying on to Warsaw. B.R.A. SU has been building a relationship with an organisation called The Joy Foundation in Poland over a number of years. It was brilliant at the airport to be greeted, not as tourists, but as friends, by Henryk Podsiadly who would be our host for the duration of the visit.



The Joy Foundation is a Christian Charity that provides humanitarian aid to some of the most under-privileged people in Poland. It runs many children's camps and works with a range of international volunteers and partners.

We 'hit the ground running' with a full programme on our first day. En route to the place where we would be staying, Henryk took us to what looked like an anonymous school sports hall. Stepping inside we entered another world, a gathering of Ukrainian refugees, of all ages. It was really moving to think of where these people had come from, the trauma they had experienced, and yet to hear them singing joyful praise to God. There was a deep sense of being welcomed and sent on our way as those gathered sang for us, and

while we did not understand their language, there was a real sense of connection; something that was very special to the whole team.

Arriving at the centre where we would be staying for the next few days, we unpacked and settled in. The young people among whom we would be working were already on site, enjoying their school 'winter break'. Having spent a significant amount of time fundraising for these kids to attend the camp, it was a delight for us to meet them and to look forward to the days ahead.



Thursday morning began with a traditional Polish breakfast that delighted some and had others longing for the school canteen.

There is a line in the Bible where Jesus talks about how he came into the world so that we could live life 'in all its fullness.' This emphasis shaped the content of the camp. As a team we led games, which the kids engaged with, with lots of energy.

Music was a big part of the week, where despite the language challenges, we discovered that good lively actions seem to be universal. At each gathering (we met morning and evening) individual team members also had the opportunity to lead from the front, sharing either something of their story, a favourite Bible verse, or giving a short talk.

It is hard to capture in words how much we each enjoyed these times with the young people and also how much each of us felt we learnt about God's love which crosses all boundaries of language, background and culture.

An eye-opening opportunity came later that day when we accompanied Henryk on his weekly distribution of food to refugee families. The food packages which we gave out were very simple, and yet were received with huge thankfulness from people who clearly had very little. Coming face to face with this kind of real need was a challenging and humbling experience and something that had a big impact on all of us.



Friday gave us the chance to do an extended session of workshops with the children from the camp. These workshops ranged from music, to craft, dance, baking, English classes and even some simple science experiments. One of the great things about being part of a team is that everyone has something to contribute and teachers, pupils, and campers alike all enjoyed the range of activities.

As well as our team, there was a group of Polish leaders involved in running the camp. Evenings gave opportunity to listen and chat with these folks. This gave a real insight into why they were giving of their time to serve in this way, and of some of the particular challenges they face in their day to day lives.

Evenings also gave time for team reflection. We laughed about things, talked about highlights of the day, chatted through how the day had impacted and challenged us, and also created space to pray for each other and for the work in Poland which would go on long after we had returned home.

In many ways our trip to Poland was short and yet there was so much packed in. Visiting a new place, seeing new sights, experiencing a different culture



is always interesting. However, the memory that lives on, is of the people we met.

A few weeks after coming home there was a news item on TV about the ongoing Ukrainian War and the impact it was having on so many people forced to leave their homeland. As I sat and watched the pictures on the TV screen it struck me 'I have met some of those people. I have sat with them and listened to their stories.'

I will always be thankful for the opportunity that B.R.A. gave me to make this trip; a trip which I believe taught us things that we will never forget; lessons which I trust will equip us to serve others wherever life takes us.

Sam Lockhart Form 5

SKI TRIP



I will never forget the excitement of going on the school ski trip. The week spent in Erwald was fantastic from start to finish. I was part of a beginner ski group with an excellent instructor who helped us learn the basic skills, and by the end of the week we were on black slopes (after many falls...) We got to go to different locations throughout the week so we could face new slopes and challenges. We had constant help and encouragement from staff members and other ski instructors to help us along the way. As well as skiing, the other aspects of the trip were equally enjoyable. Mr Murphy and other members of staff arranged great evening activities that we could look forward to during the day like après-ski, ice-skating, a silent disco, movie and game

nights, night walks, sledding down the slopes and watching the fireworks on New Year's Eve (my personal favourite)



I enjoyed every part of this trip and I love that I got to share this experience with my closest friends who I have made many memories with. As a whole the school ski trip is action-packed and unforgettable, and I would love to go on this trip again.

Leah McNevison

NEW YORK TRIP

B.R.A. pupils travel to New York for a dynamic Geography and Politics trip.

Over the half-term break in February 2025, a group of excited Form 5 and M6 pupils traded the familiar streets of Belfast for the bright lights of the 'Big Apple'. As part of an enriching Geography and Politics trip, pupils spent an action-packed few days exploring New York City's most iconic landmarks and gaining valuable insights into its complex urban and political landscape.

On our arrival we were treated to a blanket of fresh snow, which was certainly timely as we made our way to Central Park for some ice skating at the iconic Wollman Rink. Teachers were delighted that no injuries were sustained. We woke early the next day for a trip across the river to one of New Jersey's outlet shopping malls. With armfuls of shopping claimed, we made our way back to the city for some famous Sbarro pizza, a trip to Bryant Park and finally to enjoy the views from the



Empire State Building at night with the whole city laid out before us.



The following day, after our now traditional American breakfast of pancakes, bacon and maple syrup, our first stop was the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.



This was a powerful experience that allowed pupils to learn about the symbol of freedom in the United States and the history of immigration. It is moving to stand in the Great Hall where queues of migrants once stood, with the view of Statue of Liberty out one side of the building and the new world they so desperately wanted to reach on the other. Following lunch around Wall Street, we took the Staten Island Ferry, not only to enjoy stunning views of the skyline, but also to observe the daily commute of thousands of New Yorkers. That evening, we were treated to a basketball game watching the Brooklyn Nets against the Charlotte Hornets. Our new Brooklyn Nets fans were delighted with the win!

Our focus the following day was midtown, with a visit to the Top of Rock at the Rockefeller Center. Those that braved it even recreated the famous 'lunch atop a skyscraper photo' on the Beam or went even higher on the Skylift. Back on terra firma, there was more shopping to be had on nearby Fifth Avenue and at the NBC Store, Nintendo Store and FAO Schwarz. In FAO Schwarz, there seemed to be more interest in the Jellycat displays than the 'Big' piano! Lunch was enjoyed at Times Square and many of the group got their first taste of Raising Cane's. In the afternoon we met our enthusiastic walking tour guide, Mindy, for a entertaining and informative tour of Central Park, Fifth Avenue and Grand Central Station. In the evening, we had some barbecue and got to see Times Square at night and in the snow.



All too quickly, we were into our last day in New York. Now regular New Yorkers we navigated the Subway to the 9/11 Memorial and Museum. Pupils



took time around the memorial looking at some of the names of those who lost their lives on that day, before going to the Museum to learn about it in more detail. It was a poignant visit, even for young people not born at the time.

Following the visit, we made our way past City Hall and across the Brooklyn Bridge, another iconic New York sight. Getting the Subway back to Manhattan, we stopped off at Macy's for even more shopping before being treated to performances from the world-famous singing waiters at Ellen's Stardust Diner. With just one last Subway trip back to our hotel, we were then on our way to the airport to begin our journey home.



The New York trip was an unforgettable experience that perfectly blended educational content with cultural immersion of the City's famous sights and vibrant atmosphere. A huge thanks to the staff who organised and accompanied the trip, making it such a successful and rewarding experience for all involved. The memories from New York will undoubtedly last a lifetime.

K.S.B.

MUNICH TRIP

In January 2025, a group of senior pupils from our school had the incredible opportunity to visit Munich -an unforgettable trip filled with culture, history, and plenty of fun.

One of the highlights was visiting the Allianz Arena, home of FC Bayern München. We went behind the scenes on a stadium tour, exploring

the players' tunnel, the dressing rooms, and even standing pitch-side where world-class footballers showcase their skills. It was an amazing experience to see firsthand the scale and energy of such an iconic stadium.

We also visited Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, where we learned about Sophie Scholl and the White Rose Movement. Standing in the very place where she once studied and courageously stood up for her beliefs was truly inspiring. This visit was particularly insightful for A Level and prospective A Level students, as we study the Sophie Scholl film as part of the AS course.



Another highlight was exploring the Englischer Garten, one of the largest city parks in the world. Even in winter, the park was stunning, and it was fascinating to see people enjoying the outdoors despite the cold. Walking through the park was both refreshing and memorable.

Every evening, we dined at a variety of local restaurants, sampling traditional German dishes. From Spätzle to Brezel, and of course Bratwurst, everything was delicious, and the shared meals gave us the chance to relax, chat, and get to know each other even better.

What I loved most about the trip was experiencing German culture firsthand and having the chance to practice the language. It boosted my confidence in speaking German and offered insights far beyond what we could learn in the classroom.



Overall, this trip was an incredible experience, and I would highly recommend it. It's a wonderful way to create lasting memories, broaden your knowledge, and enjoy an unforgettable adventure.

Lucy Stevenson, Lower Sixth

In January 2025, German students from F4, F5, L6, and M6 had the fantastic opportunity to travel to Munich with the school. We stayed three nights at Jugendherberge München Park and explored the city's incredible sights - or Sehenswürdigkeiten - experiencing both culture and adventure.



On our first day, we visited the Allianz Arena, enjoying a fascinating guided tour and exploring the museum, which showcased the rich history of Munich football. We even got to step inside the players' changing rooms! Later, we explored the town centre on a hop-on, hop-off bus tour, taking in the city from every angle. The day ended with dinner at Augustiner-Keller, a traditional Bavarian restaurant, where many of us tried Käsespätzle for the first time - a real treat!

Day two began with a trip on the U-Bahn to Munich University, where we visited the White Rose exhibit. I learned so much about Sophie Scholl and her fellow students, who bravely opposed the Nazis by distributing leaflets in the very building we were standing in. Afterwards, we took a peaceful walk through the Englischer Garten before heading back to the city centre for some free time. The bakeries were irresistible, especially the Krampfen (donuts), which quickly became a favourite!

On our final day, we visited Viktualienmarkt, completing a fun task that involved asking

vendors about the ingredients in their food - though the rain made it a little more challenging! Before leaving, we stopped at McDonald's for a final treat: the Big Rösti.

Overall, our trip to Munich was full of fun, culture, and unforgettable experiences. I learned so much about German history, traditions, and cuisine - and it's inspired me even more to study German!

Charlotte Marron, Lower Sixth

SORRENTO TRIP

On April 9th at 1 a.m., we all met at school, buzzing with excitement for our drive to Dublin Airport. After collecting our boarding passes and navigating security, we enjoyed our first taste of freedom in the airport - exploring, chatting, and having fun together. By 6:30 a.m., our flight took off for Rome, and it was incredible to share the experience with some of my best friends.



Once we arrived in Rome, we hopped on our coach and headed straight for lunch before exploring the city. My friends and I had our first taste of authentic Italian pizza, and it is safe to say it definitely would not be our last! After lunch, we visited the Colosseum for a guided tour. Seeing it in person was awe-inspiring; its sheer size and history were truly unforgettable. Later, we began the drive along the stunning Italian coastline and countryside to Sorrento, taking in breathtaking views along the way before finally arriving at our hotel for some much-needed rest.

The next morning, we were up early to visit Mount Vesuvius. Climbing the volcano was surprisingly



manageable, and the view from the top was absolutely mind-blowing. It was incredible to think about how active lava once flowed here. From Vesuvius, we headed to Pompeii, which quickly became my favourite part of the trip. The guided tour brought the ruins to life, from the forum to the House of Caecilius, and it was surreal to see the history I had studied in textbooks and Latin lessons in real life. The precision of the ruins offered a vivid glimpse into everyday life in ancient times.



After a long day of walking and exploring, we returned to Sorrento and enjoyed some free time in the town, visiting local shops and indulging in ice cream. On day three, we travelled to Amalfi. The drive along the Amalfi Coast was stunning, and the town itself was full of beautiful architecture, delicious food, and charming shops. After leaving Amalfi, we visited a countryside farm where we made our own pizzas for dinner. Touring the farm, seeing how produce was grown, and watching the in-house mozzarella being made was fascinating. Making my own pizza was amazing - I could customise it exactly how I liked, and it was easily the most delicious pizza I've ever eaten. That evening, we returned to Sorrento for sorbet and souvenir shopping, enjoying the town's warm and welcoming atmosphere.



Our last full day was packed with incredible experiences. We took a boat to the island of Capri, starting with a tour around the island before hopping into a small rowing boat to explore the Blue Grotto. Being inside the cave was surreal - the water seemed to glow a brilliant blue in the darkness. Next, we took a bus up the island and then a chairlift to the very top, offering breathtaking panoramic views as we ascended. On Capri, I bought a Capri bell bracelet, a lucky symbol of the island, which I now treasure as a daily reminder of the trip.

After Capri, we returned to Sorrento and visited a local gelato shop for a gelato and sorbet workshop. Making gelato and sorbet the authentic Italian way was such a fun experience, and it tasted absolutely amazing. I even tried making sorbet at home afterward, though I quickly realised it is hard to match the taste without Italian lemons!

The next day, we reluctantly headed to Naples Airport to fly home. Although we were sad to leave, we had experienced one of the most incredible trips. The Sorrento adventure was unforgettable - even more special than a typical holiday because I got to spend it with my best friends and make memories with people I wouldn't usually interact with at school. I think about those memories every day and would do anything to go back on that amazing trip.

Hope Rogers, Form 4

FORM 1 HISTORY TRIP TO LONDON

Our Form 1 History trip to London in June 2025 proved that, often, the most effective classroom has no walls. The itinerary was a mix of the monumental and the modern. We arrived during the summer's first heat wave, with temperatures over 30 degrees Celsius. But we did not let that deter us from beginning our visit by shopping in Hamley's and the LEGO Store and our visit to the National Portrait Gallery to take in the power of the Tudor portraits, along with more contemporary subjects. In the evening, we enjoyed a spectacular night at the theatre, watching the performance of *Wicked*. The movie production did not take away anything from the stage performance, which one boy on the trip called 'visually stunning'.



Our final day began with facing our fears (and having a few laughs) at the London Dungeons. This interactive experience took us through the history of London by meeting various characters, with some jumps and bumps along the way. We made the short walk across Westminster Bridge to the Houses of Parliament for our tour, where pupils got to stand in the House of Commons chamber, the home of British democracy. By the end of the trip, our pupils had quickly mastered the London Underground, navigating the sprawling system like seasoned commuters.



Over the course of the three days, the Form 1 pupils were truly brilliant; they were curious, polite, and full of energy from the first moment to the last. A huge thank you to all the staff, families, and guides who helped make this incredible and memorable trip run so smoothly.

K.S.B.

FORM 2 PARIS TRIP

On our second day, we took a scenic boat ride on the River Thames to the Tower of London. Here we got to visit the White Tower and gaze in awe at the Crown Jewels. In the afternoon, we visited the Imperial War Museum before taking a walk through the Graffiti Tunnel to see the creativity of the artwork on display. Just before dinner, we had time to soak up the vibrant atmosphere, street performers, and shops of Covent Garden.

I was ecstatic when I found out that I would be going on the Paris trip as I knew how good it would be! When we got there, we went to Sacré Coeur and Montmartre which was incredible and then went to the Eiffel Tower which was even more impressive in person! The Bed and Breakfast hotel we stayed in was great with delicious food and very comfortable rooms.





We also went to the Stade de France, where we got a stadium tour and even got onto the pitch! I really enjoyed the food market tour as well because we got to eat traditional French food and embrace the culture. My favourite part by far was Disneyland as it was so fun and an amazing experience!



Overall, the B.R.A. Paris Trip 2025 was one of the best, most fun and all round amazing few days of my life!

James Watters, Form 2

CAMINO DE SANTIAGO TRIP

This year's Camino de Santiago was truly unforgettable - an adventure that pushed me to my limits at times but was also filled with laughter, awe, and some of the best moments of my life. Before setting off, I had no idea what to expect, but it turned out to be so much more than just a long walk. Each day brought something new and breathtaking: rolling countryside, dramatic mountain views, and charming Spanish towns with cobbled streets, ancient stone churches, and incredibly kind locals. Even on the toughest days, the stunning scenery and the sense of shared purpose made every step worthwhile.



What made the journey truly special, though, were the friendships formed along the way. Hours spent walking, laughing, and encouraging each other created bonds I'll always treasure. I discovered so much about myself - including how to find joy in simplicity and appreciate the little luxuries we often overlook.

I'd recommend the Camino to anyone looking for something life-changing; it's an experience that stays with you long after you've reached the final destination, and I would do it all again in a heartbeat.

Eva Crossan, Middle Sixth

I had no idea what to expect when I decided to take on the Camino de Santiago. The thought of walking 160 kilometres in scorching heat over just a week seemed daunting, and I wasn't sure if I'd even make it to the finish line. But looking back now, it was undoubtedly one of the best experiences of my life.

Exploring rural Spanish towns and cities with my friends was fascinating - we discovered hidden places and sights we never even knew existed. In Ponferrada alone, we managed to visit the local

football stadium, a huge shopping centre, and an incredible 900-year-old castle, all within a few hours. Even the smaller villages we passed through had their own unique charm and plenty to see and do.

The walking itself was tough at times and definitely tested our perseverance, but it also built resilience and gave me a real sense of achievement. I came to enjoy the challenge and the spirit of adventure that came with it.

Overall, I can't recommend the Camino enough. Exploring such beautiful, unexpected parts of Spain with my friends is something I'll never forget- and we've already started planning to go back next year to complete the final stretch!

Patrick O'Hanlon, Middle Sixth

POLITICS TRIPS



In September, nine L6 and M6 pupils attended the one-day conference at QUB, 'Our Voices Matter – Faiths Together for Climate Justice and Peace'. This included an opportunity to engage with South Belfast MP, Claire Hanna, and Green Party deputy leader, Lesley Veronica. They participated in a workshop led by Professor Martin Palmer, theologian, Sinologist, and author in international faith and religion; and John Barry, Professor of Green Political Economy at QUB.

In January 2025, Lower Sixth Politics pupils visited the NI Assembly. It was a timely visit as it coincided with the one-year anniversary of

the return of devolution and pupils were able to witness a hive of activity as journalists and reporters were there to cover the story. We were able to see Member's Statements with topics raised including the power cuts from Storm Éowyn, the funding of the sports pitch at Lisneal College and mental health provision. During the visit, pupils met MLAs Gerry Carroll (People Before Profit Alliance), Nuala McAllister (Alliance) and Phillip Brett (DUP), asking preceptive questions about their role in the Assembly and in committees. After the visit, pupils got to experience the buzz of walking the corridors and seeing press conferences in action.



K.S.B.

POLITICS IN ACTION

We were pleased to be able to join again with Dominican College, Fortwilliam for the North Belfast cluster of Politics in Action. The theme was 'Democracy: Threats and Opportunities'. As a group they focused on two issues. Firstly, in political education, the group wanted: Citizenship to be a relevant subject which has more value in schools; GCSE Politics more widely available across schools; and more access to politicians. The second issue was on integration where pupils highlighted a desire for: more integrated education; more understanding of each other's culture; and more cross-community schemes. As ever, Ulster University's Dr. David McCann facilitated the discussion to ensure their ideas were realistic and achievable and helped produced the report based on their discussions.



The finale took place in Girdwood Community hub, with all the clusters there for a day of hearing from local politicians including the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Micky Murray (Alliance) and the SDLP Leader of the Opposition, Matthew O'Toole. There was a varied program of workshops on issues such as racism, violence against women and girls and votes at 16. Pupils in Form 5 interested in studying Politics were also able to attend to get a taste of what would lie ahead if they picked Politics.

As a Politics in Action school, we were also invited to attend 'Passing the Torch' to hear from Senator George Mitchell, run in conjunction with QUB. It was a privilege to be able to hear him speak and hear his message about the future being built for young people. After the event, Amandine Chesnel, Euan Purvis and Vadym Skochelyas-Mizerak were interviewed by Mark Simpson for BBC Newsline and Radio Ulster. Each gave insightful comment their views on staying in Northern Ireland in the long-term.

K.S.B.

BIOLOGY

The 2024-2025 academic year was an exceptional one for the Biology department. We saw numerous achievements, events and milestones that contributed to an overall enriching experience for both students and staff.

This academic year began with Dr Jenna Shiels welcoming her beautiful baby girl, Mira. During her maternity leave, Carole Macpherson stepped into cover her responsibilities, quickly becoming a valuable asset to the Biology team. We wish Carole every success in her new role in Grosvenor Grammar school.

Our pupils entered two different competitions; firstly, a total of eleven pupils entered the Biology Olympiad, organised and ran by Dr Anderson. The pupils attained a range of commendable results. These included one silver, three bronze and one highly commended. Secondly, four pupils participated in the Cambridge Biology Challenge, a rigorous competition which required candidates to respond to a series of complex questions through a median of their choosing. Our pupils performed

exceptionally well and the team secured 17th place out of 914 teams, an outstanding achievement.

In conjunction with the GCE AS Biology course, candidates are expected to understand elements of fieldwork as part of their studies in the areas of Ecology and Biodiversity. The Biology staff organised for all LVI Biologists to travel to Crawfordsburn Country Park, Country Down, in March to take part in a series of activities specifically designed to help them fully grasp the specification content. This was facilitated by the Biology staff and provided our pupils with an interactive experience. We won't lie the weather really helped this day be a great success!

Not to be left out, in March the A2 Biologists spent the day at W5, where they had an amazing experience attending "DNA in a day", this was completely invaluable for our pupils to get proper live laboratory experience, where they got to study their own DNA sample. All pupils gained helpful knowledge from Shaun the course director who has a real passion for DNA.

In May, the Biology department welcomed a number of local primary school children for 'the Big day of Science', the pupils got to use a microscope to make plant cell slides and learn about the building blocks of life. The primary schools did get in contact with our school to thank us for such a wonderful experience.

We look forward to another successful year in Biology.

D.B.C

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY TOP OF THE BENCH COMPETITION

On the 23rd January, a team of two Form 3 pupils, one Form 4 pupil and one Form 5 pupil competed in the Top of the Bench Northern Ireland Local Section Heat at the David Keir Building, Stranmillis Road, Belfast. The team consisted of Maggie Lockhart, William Sedgwick, Molly Adams and Eleanor Murphy and were up against ten other schools from across the province.



The aim of the competition is to raise awareness and enthusiasm in Chemistry and to make them aware of what Chemistry is like at University. The competition consisted of three sections. The first section involved some simple experiments in the teaching laboratory, based on Sustainability and Electrolysis. The second section was a test paper exercise covering the pupil's knowledge of key fundamentals of KS3 and KS4 topics. The third section was a short quiz of three rounds on general Chemistry questions.



After over two hours of competition the B.R.A. team finished second and I congratulate them on their performance. Hopefully the experience gained was invaluable to the members of the team and they were a credit to the school.

B.M.M.

PHYSICS TRIP TO CERN

In March 2025, 21 pupils from the Academy joined peers from St Malachy's College for an educational visit to CERN in Geneva. The trip offered a unique opportunity to explore the forefront of theoretical physics and to sample the culture of Geneva.



The adventure began with an early 5:15 am meet-up at Belfast International Airport. Upon arrival in Geneva, the group traveled by tram to CERN. There, they were welcomed by Matthew McCullough, a former pupil and now a Senior member of the CERN Theoretical Physics Department.

Matthew delivered an inspiring lecture on dark matter, engaging students with a model they had proposed. It was a remarkable experience to hear from someone who once stood in their shoes and now tackles some of the most complex problems in physics. After the lecture, the group headed to their accommodation in central Geneva. Following a busy day, students enjoyed local food before settling in for an early night.





Day two began with a hearty continental breakfast, preparing students for another visit to CERN. The group received a guided tour of the facility, including the LEIR accelerator and the data centre where particle collision data is stored.

After lunch at the café, students explored the exhibits at the visitors centre and visited the gift shop. The day concluded with a stroll through Geneva and a group dinner at a local pizzeria. Sunday offered a more relaxed pace. Students visited the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, where they viewed a diverse range of exhibits from ancient weaponry to modern art installations. Lunch was enjoyed on the go before participating in a treasure hunt at Parc de La Perle du Lac. The group then made their way to the airport, arriving back in Belfast at 10:30 pm.

The trip to CERN was a fantastic experience for both students and staff. It provided a rare glimpse into the world of cutting-edge science and fostered a deeper appreciation for Physics and international collaboration. The memories made and knowledge gained will undoubtedly inspire students in their future academic pursuits.

R.B.

MATHEMATICS COMPETITIONS

The school representatives continue to perform impressively in competitive, extracurricular Mathematics. The senior U.K.M.T. team competitions did not run (it returns for the 2025/2026 year) but the Queen's competition did take place.



The senior team of Keshav Raghuram (F5), Vincent McCullough (F5), Ian Dandurand (L6), Ben Nemeth (M6) competed at the Queen's competition coming third amongst the teams from across NI.



The junior team of Edjike Alinonu (F2), Jack Martin (F3), Ryan Teague (F3) and Mochsa Weerawardhana (F2) came second in the U.K.M.T. team challenge.

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

At Senior level, pupils achieved: 2 Gold, 13 Silver and 22 Bronze awards. Keshav Raghuram (F5) and Wiktoria Januszevska (L6) qualified for the next round (the Senior Kangaroo) with Keshav earning a merit certificate.

At Intermediate level, pupils achieved: 7 Gold, 9 Silver and 17 Bronze awards. Vincent McCullough and Keshav Raghuram both qualified for the Maclaurin Olympiad and both got merits. Vincent McCullough (F5) had achieved the highest score in Northern Ireland for the Intermediate Olympiad - an incredible achievement.

At Junior level, pupils achieved: 1 Gold, 7 Silver and 19 Bronze awards. In addition to earning Gold awards, Ejike Alinonu (F2) and Timothy Lee (F1) qualified for the next round (the Junior Kangaroo) with Timothy achieving a gold certificate for his participation.

S.C.S.



FOTA SECRETARY'S REPORT 2024/25

The 2024/2025 year was a continued success for FOTA with events and fundraising held throughout the year. We really hope to be able to help build relationships with parents and provide support where needed. As members of FOTA we enjoy getting to know other parents through the events put on during the year and I would encourage anyone interested in joining to contact us via the school office.

Once again, thank you to all members for your continued commitment and dedication to FOTA over this year.

Our first meeting of the year was held in September, with subsequent meetings held in the Heritage Room in the Crombie building each month.

Our AGM was held on 8th October 2024, with the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports for the year being presented.

Officers for the coming year were elected, with the following being confirmed in post:

Chair: Kim Burns

Vice chair: Deborah McAuley

Treasurer: Niamh Knox

Secretary: Alison Monroe

At the AGM we welcomed Catherine Barr, Rachel Lowther, Oby Nwosu, Kimberley Moreland & Stephen Moreland as new committee members. We look forward to getting to know them all as we work together over the coming year. We also would like to thank Carol Jordan and Patricia McKeown for their support as they resign from the committee.

We would like to express our thanks to the following members of the school team without whose support and time throughout the year, it would be much more difficult to run our events;

Amanda Foy in the General Office
Michael Hastings, Catering Manager
The Estates Team

At the end of the school year, we said farewell to Mr Trevor Hughes from the committee. As pastoral Vice Principal, Mr Hughes has been a great support to FOTA throughout his time with us. We wish him well as he steps back from this role for a brief period.

EVENTS

This year we continued with our now traditional annual events. While uniform sales and the Quiz and Ceramics Workshop continue to be well attended, it should be noted that we are struggling with those larger events where we are hoping to foster positive relationships with parents throughout the school. We had planned to hold a Chinese Banquet during the year, with space for 80-100 to attend. Unfortunately, this event had to be cancelled due to poor uptake.

UNIFORM SALES

Our first uniform sale of the academic year was held in November. While smaller than the summer event, it was still well attended raising nearly £800. The main sale was then held in June, raising over £3,500. This timing enables parents of new Form 1 pupils to attend to purchase uniform items before their children start school. Attendance at this event was again exceptional.

New Form 1 parents were also provided with the ability to purchase pre-loved uniform at the Form 1 Welcome event in June with a further £200 raised on that day.

It's important to note that pupils are also able to purchase uniform items from FOTA throughout the year. They do not have to wait for one of the dedicated sales events. If a pupil is in need of an item of uniform, they or their parents should contact the school office who will in turn contact FOTA.

Parents continue to express their gratitude to the school and FOTA for running these events. With continuing pressure on household budgets, the price of school uniforms is coming under increasing scrutiny. Preloved uniform sales have been running at B.R.A. for over 40 years and this is a service we are proud to provide to our parents.



Many thanks to everyone who assisted with the logistics of running these sales. We would also like to thank those parents who donate items of preloved uniform to us. Without these donations, the sales simply could not happen.

FORM 1 PARENTS' BREAKFAST

A breakfast for the parents of new Form 1 pupils for the 2024/25 academic year took place in August 2024. This year we provided a buffet style continental breakfast for the parents of our new pupils. This event was well received by parents, who appreciated the thought and effort to make them welcome as part of the Academy family. It also serves as another opportunity to introduce parents to FOTA and we did have a number of parents who expressed a desire to join.

Again, many thanks to all who assisted with these events.

STAFF APPRECIATION

Following the F1 Parents' Breakfast, we were able to run a similar staff appreciation event. This was a small token to demonstrate our appreciation of everything all staff do to ensure the safe, secure and smooth running of the school. At Christmas, chocolates were given to staff to further demonstrate our thanks.

QUIZ

The annual BRA quiz was held at the end of September with a fantastic turnout and raising around £1,000. With Dr Springer again acting as quiz master, attendees were treated to a wide variety of differing question rounds including yet another show stopping music round. A night of hilarity was guaranteed!

FOTA continue to be in Dr Springer's debt for the time and effort he put in to ensure everyone had such an enjoyable and fun evening. We would also like to thank all those people who donated prizes for the raffle.

CHRISTMAS CRAFT EVENING

The Christmas Ceramics workshop is becoming ever more popular and tickets are extremely sought after. This year, over £700 was raised from the event. Everyone successfully made and decorated a ceramic wreath. There was great anticipation for the unveiling of the final fired results and thankfully everyone survived the kiln. Our thanks go again to Mrs Patterson and Mrs Hare for facilitating this and we are already looking forward to the next one! Particular thanks to Arwa Ali who made and donated a spectacular Christmas Cake which was raffled on the evening!

OPEN NIGHTS

The school Open Nights were held over 2 nights in January. Once again, there was a large turnout of prospective pupils with their parents. FOTA provided refreshments for these evenings and once again ran a Photo Booth, with The Sorting Hat proving a particular hit! Parents are arriving earlier than ever for these evenings and our ability to provide refreshments to them was greatly appreciated.

SCHOOLS' CUP

While FOTA cannot take credit for the Senior Boys impressive run to the Schools' Cup Semi -Finals, we did however seize the opportunity for some further fundraising. The school's creative idea to sell pre-loved rugby shirts to those pupils wishing to attend, but who did not already have a rugby shirt, raised a further £165 for FOTA's funds.

Although the result on the day did not go our way, we would like to congratulate the 1st XV and all the coaches on a superb run.

WELCOME EVENT

FOTA attended the Form 1 Welcome Event in June where information on FOTA was shared with the parents of new pupils and they were provided with the opportunity to purchase items of pre-loved uniform. Thanks to Chris Boyd for his informative talk.



DONATIONS

It is thanks to the events we hold during the year that we are able to continue to donate to clubs, societies and other causes within the school. Without the continued support of parents attending these events, this would not be possible.

MERIT & REWARD SCHEME

FOTA once again donated £1,000 to the Merit & Reward scheme. We are glad to be able to support such a positive reward based activity within the school.

ART DEPARTMENT CAMERA CLUB

A donation of £170 was made to enable the Art Department to purchase 10 camera tripods for the Camera Club.

DANCE TEAM

FOTA donated £900 to the Dance Team in school to support attendance at competitions.

DARTS

A request for funding for darts boards from the Form2 boys Head of Year was approved. The committee authorised £90 to purchase 2 darts boards and darts.

WELL-BEING COURSE

A donation of £500 was approved to support a course entitled Stronger Together – Becoming the Best You Can, On & Off the Pitch to support well being amongst the Form 2 boys Rugby team. At this age, some of the boys can act without thinking of the consequences and the course is proactively addressing this. The content can also be amended to other groups around the school.

WHEELCHAIR

Matron submitted a request for funding to purchase a new wheelchair. The wheelchair in school was not fit for purpose, being too small for the majority of pupils and having no leg support. While recognising that this would only be for ad-hoc use, the committee recognise the importance of being able to support a pupil who may become incapacitated during the school day and approved a donation of £110 to purchase a replacement. Showing that the school fully believes in repurposing items where possible, the old chair has been donated to the Drama Department.

WHITEBOARDS

The Senior Leadership Team requested funding for Whiteboards for the new Form 1 intake. These will be used throughout all classes and as the pupils progress onwards through their school career. Funding of £450 was approved for this purchase.

HISTORICAL FICTION BOOK CLUB

Recognising the importance of reading for all pupils, FOTA approved a request for £390 to purchase books for the Historical Fiction Book Club. This is open to pupils in F1- F3 and meets weekly to discuss a chosen book, with the aim of improving reading levels.



3D PRINTER – TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

A donation of £500 was approved to fund the purchase of a new 3D printer for the Technology Department. With Technology becoming increasingly popular, the committee felt it was important to support the strengthening of resources within the Department.



**This concludes the Secretary's report for
2024/25**

**Alison Monroe
Honorary Secretary**

Ben Madigan Preparatory School

YORK

At the end of May, Prep 6 and Prep 7 pupils enjoyed a 4-day residential trip to York, accompanied by Mr J. Creighton and Mrs. J Chapman.



Highlights included: York Chocolate Story, York Minster, Jorvik Centre, DIG, National Railway Museum, and a City Walls Walk and workshops and evening activities at York YHA led by the hostel's Activity Team.



Pupils averaged 12km walking per day and not one complaint was heard. Staff and children agree that memories made would last a lifetime.



CAMP OUT

Thursday 19th June all the children and staff pitched tents and stayed overnight on our pitch. Thanks to Ciaran McCauley and his scout helpers, the children enjoyed making fires, cooking s'mores and learnt how to hang a hammock. After a late-night game of hide and seek the grounds were

quiet for a few hours until a 5am game of football began. We were treated to a delicious breakfast of bacon butties to start the day by Fiona.



PUMPKIN PATCH

An enjoyable visit to Streamvale Farm to take part in Halloween fun and games.



LITTLE CRITTERS



SPONSORED WALK

All Ben Madigan children and Staff took part in the annual BRA sponsored walk to the top of Cave Hill. We were very proud that even our youngest children made it to the top putting many of the older BRA pupils to shame!



COLOUR RUN

After the long walk to the top of Cave Hill the children still had enough energy to take part in the Colour Run.

Great fun was had by all!





CROSS COUNTRY

Our Prep 7 boys team came 2nd in the North Belfast Regional Heats at Grove Playing fields and qualified for the finals on 19th March at Mullusk. Although they exhibited commendable determination, they were ultimately unsuccessful and did not secure a placement.



PEACE PROMS



On Sunday 9th March, the Prep 6 and 7 pupils, accompanied by me and Mrs Fiona Gouk, took part in the Belfast Peace Proms. Alongside over 2,500 children from schools across Northern Ireland, they performed a lively programme of songs from various genres. Our pupils (and staff) sang and danced with enthusiasm, representing the school with energy and pride. It was a valuable and uplifting experience that promoted musical engagement and community spirit.

CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY





Alumni News

ALUMNI NEWS

In May/June 2025, we were delighted to host a series of Alumni Anniversary Reunions for former pupils from the Classes of 1975, 1985 and 1995, who came back to celebrate their 50th, 40th and 30th anniversaries respectively. In addition, we hosted a special one-off reunion for pupils who had left before 1970 as part of this year's celebrations to mark the 240th anniversary of the school.

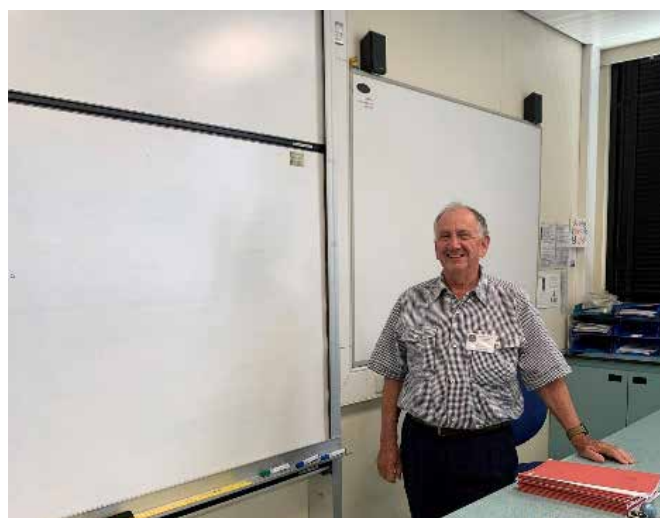
It was a joy to see former classmates back at B.R.A., reconnecting with each other and with former teachers. We were pleased that so many people made the effort to join us at these reunion events, many of whom had not been back since leaving school. We are grateful to everyone who attended, particularly those who had travelled far to attend, with guests arriving from across Europe, the United States, Kenya, New Zealand and Australia.



I would like to thank former Principals, Mr Young and Mr Dickson, whose attendance at the reunions was much appreciated by all the guests. I am grateful, also, to the large number of former teachers who joined us in welcoming our guests back to the school.

Special thanks go to Philip McKenna, Secretary of the Old Boys' Association, for capturing the reunion photographs, John Reilly, whose collection of Duke of Edinburgh Award photo albums helped spark many happy memories and conversations, and Dr Louis Campbell, whose highly entertaining tours of the school were enjoyed by all.

ALUMNI VISITS



We are grateful for the special connection our former pupils and staff members still have with the school and so we were delighted to welcome Michael Easton back to the Cliftonville Road when he attended the special reunion for pre-1970 leavers in June 2025. Michael was a pupil at the school from 1959 to 1965, and a teacher in the Physics Department from 1970 to 1973, when he emigrated to Australia. Now living in Brisbane, Michael is photographed in his old B.R.A. classroom and with Mark McCreight, Technology Technician, who gave Michael a special tour of the department.



ALUMNI NEWS

Two former pupils tread the boards of the Grand Opera House in Belfast in September 2024. Mezzo-soprano Fiona McIlroy (Class of 2016) and Soprano Ella Linton (Class of 2022) performed in Northern Ireland Opera's production of Tchaikovsky's opera Eugene Onégin'.



Congratulations to B.R.A. alumna, Katherine Beggs, who was awarded the MBE in the New Year Honours List. Katy is the Northern Ireland Director of the National Lottery Community Fund; prior to this appointment she was Deputy Director in the Northern Ireland Office, leading their external political and community engagement.



Katy received her award for services to Public and Community Services in Northern Ireland.

In February 2025, Class of 2023 alumna, Katye Louise Richardson, was announced as the winner of the Translink NI and Ulster University Belfast School of Art's public art competition, with her stunning artwork selected to be permanently displayed at York Street Station. Katye expressed her excitement: "I am thrilled to have my work chosen for such an incredible project. It's amazing to know that my art will be displayed at a place that so many people pass through every day".





In March 2025, alumna Amanda Ferguson (née Poole) attended a reception at Buckingham Palace as part of a National Union of Journalists delegation.



Amanda spoke to King Charles about women's voices being represented in a changing media landscape, and the Irish and Welsh Gaelic languages. Amanda received the invitation from King Charles and Queen Camilla in special recognition of her work as a freelance journalist and for her outstanding efforts in regional media.

In August, former pupil Nick Goody was Launch Campaign Manager for the European Space Agency's successful launch of the MetOp-SGA1, part of the operation to deploy next-generation weather satellites that will enhance weather forecasting, climate monitoring and environmental data collection.



240th ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

On 9 September 1785, Rev. Dr. James Crombie placed a prospectus in the Belfast News Letter announcing the foundation of a new school for the town's young people. By January 1786, his vision had become reality: an Academy of four schools – Classical, Mathematical, English and Writing – offering a curriculum that combined *Logick, Experimental Philosophy, Rhetorick, Moral Philosophy* and more. While the subjects may have evolved over the centuries, Dr. Crombie's commitment to intellectual rigour and academic excellence lives on today.

In order to celebrate 240 years of Belfast Royal Academy in 2025, we held a series of events to mark this milestone anniversary.

The first event was **'An Illustrated Talk: 'Belfast Royal Academy – the School and the City'**, which was delivered by former Head of History, author of 'Belfast Royal Academy, The Second Century 1885-1985' and editor of the 225th anniversary book, Mr Eddie McCamley.

Mr McCamley's highly entertaining talk explored how the School's story is deeply connected to the history of Belfast. His engaging lecture highlighted not only our heritage but also the enduring values that continue to shape our community: academic excellence and diversity.



The second event was a **240th Anniversary Law Lecture** delivered by alumnus the Honourable Mr Justice David Scoffield. In his lecture, Sir David reflected on distinguished B.R.A. alumni who have shaped the legal profession and served society at the highest levels — from Sir Hugh Cairns, Lord Chancellor under Benjamin Disraeli, to Sir Donald Murray and Sir Paul Girvan, both Lords Justices of Appeal. He also shared the story of a more notorious former pupil, Peter Scott, remembered for appearing regularly on the other side of the dock as a prolific cat burglar.

Sir David also shared his own journey from classroom to courtroom, offered insights on current trends in the legal profession, and encouraged young people to consider law as a career that is rewarding, intellectually stimulating, and impactful.

We are deeply grateful to Mr Justice Scoffield for taking the time to deliver this inspiring lecture and to engage with pupils from B.R.A as well as staff and pupil representatives from St Malachy's College, Hazelwood Integrated College, Dominican College and Strathearn School who joined us, both before and after the talk.



The final event in our 240th anniversary celebrations was dedicated to celebrating the School's rich sporting legacy, with the Principal and Governors welcoming guests to The Foundry at Roughfort for the **'Celebration of Sport'**.

We are deeply grateful to our Archivist, Peter Lawther, and to Philip McKenna, Secretary of the Old Boys' Association, for their tireless work over recent months. Together, they have carefully catalogued decades of rugby, hockey, cricket, and prefect photographs — creating digital copies to preserve them for generations to come.



This marks the first step in sharing and developing our extensive archive. A new display podium, part-funded by the generous support of the Old Boys' Association, was officially presented to the School by OBA President Paul Scoffield.





1785 FOUNDATION UPDATE

Belfast Royal Academy was founded to provide an exceptional education for young people from all walks of life. Unfortunately, government funding for education remains an issue and presents many challenges for schools, including B.R.A. We therefore must rely on fundraising and voluntary donations to help match government funding in order to make improvements to our facilities, purchase new educational resources and equipment and provide pastoral support to pupils in need.

The 1785 Foundation is one way through which the School demonstrates a strong social purpose and an ethos of caring for pupils from diverse backgrounds. Named after the year the Academy was founded, the 1785 Foundation is the ideal opportunity for alumni to reconnect with the Academy and to share some of the pride and ambition that we have for our pupils.

The Foundation was formed to ensure that all pupils at the school have a rich schooling experience and can enjoy full engagement in art, music, sport and extra-curricular activities, regardless of financial background or family circumstances. Funds from this hugely worthwhile fund contribute to a range of initiatives within school and go towards helping make a significant difference to the lives of current and future pupils by helping to enhance their educational, sporting and cultural experiences and provide equal educational opportunities for all pupils. Over the past year, donations have been used to support pupils in a number of ways, including:

- The provision of fruit and cereal barriers for pupils who arrive to school hungry, ensuring they can access a healthy snack and avoid the detrimental impact that hunger can have on their learning experience and outcomes.
- Providing funding towards the cost of sports kits, trips and instrument tuition, enabling children from disadvantaged backgrounds to access the full range of extra-curricular activities available.
- Funding counselling and support services, thus tackling mental health and wellbeing

issues which have a profound effect upon education.

Members of the 1785 commit themselves to donating small, regular amounts of money, with four different categories of membership available: bronze, silver, gold and platinum. This enables the flexible use of funds to be directed towards wherever the need is greatest, helping Belfast Royal Academy as we work to build a school that is ever more influential, inspiring and accessible for all.

Plan	Total annual contribution	Donations over 5-years inc. Gift Aid
BRONZE £1.78 per month	£21.36	£133.50
SILVER £1.78 per week	£92.56	£587.50
GOLD £17.85 per month	£214.20	£1338.75
PLATINUM £178.50 per quarter	£714.00	£4462.50

Every small, regular donation to the Foundation makes a difference to a pupil's time at the Academy. Thank you to our members of their ongoing support – we are grateful for your generosity which enables us to continue providing the quality educational and extra-curricular experience which you previously benefited from.

We would love to reach 240 members in this, the School's 240th anniversary year, so please visit the Support Us section of our website for further details on how to join.

B.R.A. OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

The **B.R.A. OBA Annual General Meeting** was held on 6th May 2025. The Senior Vice-President, Mr Paul Scofield was elected President.



He thanked his predecessor, Mr Iain Knox for his efforts during 2024-25 year which included hosting the successful three OBA dinners and representing the OBA when invited to the dinners of other schools. Mr Nik Simon was elected Senior Vice-President. The President also thanked Nik Simon (Hon. Treasurer) and James Cole (Hon. Secretary) for all their work during his year as President.



please email the Alumni Office at alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net.

THE B.R.A. FORMER PUPILS' LONDON DINNER

London Dinner Following on from the success of previous London Dinner dinners, 42 Former Pupils attended the 11th annual London Dinner at the RAF Club, Piccadilly on Friday 9th March 2025. The President introduced Claire Daly who gave a very entertaining talk on her memories of school, and some insights into her current role as speech writer for the CEO of Shell UK.

The Principal, Mrs Hilary Woods responded with a very interesting update on the school year. The President's customary closing remarks left plenty of time for an enjoyable evening of socialising.



Belfast Royal Academy FP London Dinner @ the R.A.F. Club (9-Mar-2025)
 Louis Campbell (Organiser/Past President) Iain Knox (President BRA OBA) Claire Daly (Speaker) Hilary Woods (BRA Principal) David Haslett (Organiser/Past President)

The B.R.A. OBA ANNUAL DINNER

The B.R.A. OBA Annual Dinner, held at The Belfast Hilton Hotel, is our major annual function. The dinner was held on the 30th November 2024 and is scheduled for Saturday 29th November 2025 at The Belfast Hilton Hotel.



B.R.A. OBA Annual Dinner - The Belfast Hilton - Saturday 30-Nov-2024
 Kyle McCallan (Speaker) Iain Knox (President BRA OBA) Andrew Patterson (Speaker) Mrs Hilary Woods (BRA Principal)

These are hosted by the current B.R.A. OBA President. Andrew Patterson proposed the toast to B.R.A. and Kyle McCallan, former Irish cricket captain, responded. If you have not previously attended and would like to be kept informed,

Next year's London FP Dinner is scheduled for 13th March, 2026

Edinburgh Dinner. The Edinburgh Dinner was held on Friday 25th April 2025, at the New Club on Princes Street. This is a lovely venue, looking out over Edinburgh Castle. Twenty-eight former pupils attended. The guest speaker was Dr Robin Johnston who reflected on his school days especially Robin Reid's chemistry class, and proposed the toast to B.R.A. Again, the Principal, responded with her customary informative update on the school year.



The monthly lunches attract between 30 and 50 members – mostly retired members of the Association. The attached photo is from a lunch at the Royal Belfast Golf Club. Robin Reid initiated and coordinated these lunches for many years, with the help of a local host in each location. The Old Boys' Association is grateful to Robb Fletcher for stepping in to run this programme for the last few years. If you would like to be copied on these announcements, please email Robb at:
Robb Fletcher <braob.luncheon@gmail.com>

GOLF

Our thanks must go again to David Haslett and Louis Campbell for all the work they have put into the London & Edinburgh dinners over the last eleven years, to ensure these events run smoothly and are lively and enjoyable evenings. Thanks also to the Principal for travelling to both dinners to provide her updates on the school year.

The Association plans to hold two golf outings each year. The first outing was held on 12th June 2025, at the Malone Golf Club. Stewart Beattie won the Picken Cup – please see photo of the presentation by this year's captain, Chris Magee.



MONTHLY LUNCHEON CLUB



The second outing was Captain's Day, held at the Royal Belfast Golf Club on Friday 12th September 2025. 48 old boys and guests enjoyed a very pleasant outing. The photo shows Chris Cooper, who was this year's captain, and won the Ferguson trophy for the best combined score over the two 2025 outings.

It was presented by Ken Knox who won Captain's day. Any former pupil interested in playing in these competitions should contact Ken Knox at ken@cd-group.com. The dates for next year are Thursday 18th June 2026 at Malone GC and Friday 11th September at Royal Belfast GC.



Tom McKibbin's golf career is now a regular feature in our local media

Former Ben Madigan and B.R.A. pupil, **Tom McKibbin** has to be congratulated again on his excellent progress in his professional golf career. As previously reported, he has won his first tournament at the Porsche European Open in Germany (DP World Tour.). In his first 2 majors, (the US Open and The Open) Tom made the cut in both events. At this year's Open at Royal Portrush Tom just missed the cut with scores of 72 & 73. Tom now features regularly in our local media. Tom has joined the Liv Golf Group and has already had great success – both individually and also team successes.

We look forward to Tom enjoying an exciting golfing future! The President has again sent Tom “Well Done” messages from the OBA.



RUGBY NEWS



Our two current rugby internationals, **Iain Henderson** (Ulster Captain) and Tom Stewart have had their seasons disrupted by injuries.



They were joined in the Ulster squad, since last year, by the return of another OB, Matthew Dalton, who had played recent seasons in England and France.



B.R.A. OBA WEBSITE

The B.R.A. OBA website is at: www.braoba.com and provides news and archive documents. Our thanks to Peter Barr for all his updates over the last few years.

FUTURE DATES

London FP Dinner: Friday 13h March, 2026.
Edinburgh FP Dinner TBA April, 2026.
Golf: Picken Cup Thursday 18th June, 2026 at Malone Golf Club.
Golf: Captain's day: Friday 11th September, 2026 at Royal Belfast Golf Club.
Annual Dinner 28th November, 2026 at the Belfast Hilton Hotel.

CONTACTING THE B.R.A. OBA

The Membership fee is currently suspended. New members are always welcome! Please notify the Alumni Office at alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net to register with the Association, or notification of changes to email address, or contact details. Notification of reunions is very welcome.

Please inform the Alumni Office at alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net of any items of news for inclusion in The Owl and the Old Boys' Association website. Any notification of births/ marriages/ deaths or career developments etc will be very welcome and of considerable interest to other Old Boys.

Michael McDowell promotes the Association on Social Media through the Old Boys' Twitter account @TheBRAoldboys.

Thank you.

Philip McKenna,
BRA OBA Hon. Secretary 2025-2026
philmac49@gmail.com

WELCOME TO THE 2024/25 UPDATE FROM THE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION.

Belfast Royal Academy Old Girls' Association is a community of female pupils who previously

attended the School, along with current and past female staff. Our Membership is worldwide, including many local ladies still living in Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK and Ireland.

We are delighted to welcome our new Members and we would like to extend an invitation to all past female pupils, as we continue to grow our Membership and community. Maintaining a link with B.R.A. is very special and we know that our Members have many cherished memories of their time at school.

Our aim is to support pupils of B.R.A. with all aspects of school life. We provide opportunities for our members to network, socialise and help raise funds for the School.

CONNECTING WITH PUPILS

On 17th December 2024 we held our annual Christmas Coffee Morning. This was an opportunity to meet informally with the MVI girls, learn about their plans for university, gap years, and employment. There was of course lots of chat about the upcoming formal and festive plans over the Christmas break.



Before the pupils left for study leave, we met again on the 3 April 2025. This was an opportunity to explain the Old Girls' Association role in helping to support the School financially, through various fundraising events. We also encouraged the girls to keep in touch and that if they need any help or assistance with career advice or general support on leaving school, that we can offer that support as required. It was a pleasure to chat with the Head Girl,



Madhumitha Pandiaraj and her Deputies, Lucy H. Chambers and Clara E. Walsh, along with their peers. We very much look forward to meeting them at future events and wish all MVI leavers all the best for the future and hope that the B.R.A. bond remains strong.

FUNDRAISING

We held our annual Christmas Wreaths sale in December. This was a great success as ever and were very pleased with the quality of the wreaths our new supplier produced. There was lots of festive spirit in the playground on the collection morning. A huge thank you to all who ordered and supported this event to raise funds for the school. May saw the return of the annual hanging basket



and planter sale, which continues to be a great fundraiser. The hanging baskets and planters were once again provided by Dundonald Nurseries. Our thanks go again to all those who placed orders and helped to raise funds for the pupils of B.R.A. The quality of baskets and planters was very high, with many still in bloom as this article is written.

EASYFUNDRAISING

Don't forget we are registered with Easyfundraising! This is an easy way to help us raise funds at no additional cost to you. The Association earns commissions from online purchases made by our Members on a huge variety of shopping sites, including: Amazon, Currys, ASOS, Marks & Spencer amongst hundreds of others.

So when you are next shopping online simply follow these simple steps:

Step 1 - click www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/braoldgirlsassoc/?q=bra&cat=cause-autosuggest

Step 2 - shop as normal.

Step 3 - A donation will be made automatically to The Old Girls' Association based on a percentage of what you spend online, at no extra cost to you!



With funds raised from various sources we were able to provide funding for a book for every Form 1 pupil as part of Book Trust's 'Book Buzz' initiative. The ethos of this organisation is to encourage reading for all.

In September 2024 we continued the joint initiative with Old Boys's Association for new Form 1 pupils. All Form 1 pupils received their school tie complimentary, which both associations jointly funded. This was well received as a great way of welcoming pupils to the B.R.A. family and also creates a sense of belonging to the Academy.

EVENTS

QUIZ

On the 31 January 2025 we held a joint event with the Old Boys' Association. The Academy Club was a full house! The infamous Roly Jamieson was 'Quiz Master' and he had some very challenging rounds lined up, including one linked to B.R.A. and also another where teams had to build their own 'high tower'. Great fun was had by all and we thank Roly for his contribution to the evening.

AFTERNOON TEA



This has always been a popular event and on 22 March 2025 we spent a lovely afternoon at the Dunadry Hotel. The food was incredible and it was the perfect setting to catch up with old friends and get updated on the very positive results for B.R.A., both academic and extra-curricular.

Raffles were held at both events and the committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all that sponsored or donated prizes.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Our AGM was held again via Zoom on the 19th November 2024. The agenda covered fundraising, membership update, accounts and planned events for the forthcoming year.

It was reported that Nikki Johns had resigned as Vice Chairperson. Nikki was thanked for her helping to relaunch the Old Girls' Association and all the many hours and enthusiasm she put in. Claire Caldwell took up the post of Vice Chairperson and Alison Kane was appointed as Hon. Secretary.



The committee is now as follows:

Caroline Dillon
Chairperson



Claire Caldwell
Vice Chairperson



Johanna Richardson
Hon. Treasurer



Alison Kane
Hon. Secretary



STAY CONNECTED

We love hearing from our Members, please get in touch if you have some news to share.

If you would like to register as a Member of the Old Girls' Association and would like to offer your support please go to our new automated registration form at **Old Girls'... | Belfast Royal Academy**

Our annual membership is an optional £5. Members who are previous life members can also subscribe to the annual fee if they wish. All fees contribute to our financial contributions that we pass onto the School.

Get in touch:

email: braoldgirls@outlook.com

twitter: @braoldgirls

Facebook: Old Girls' Association-Belfast Royal Academy



Births, Deaths and Marriages

BIRTHS:

McKENNA: 11th March 2025, to Alan and May, a son, Ciaran Liew, a brother to twins Amelia & Callum and second twins Ethan and Euan.

WILSON: 19th April 2025, to Hannah (nee McKinstry) and Ben, a daughter Eliana Grace.

TICE: 2nd October 2025, to Faye (nee Kidd) and Patrick, a daughter Joni Thomasina

MARRIAGES:

PARKHILL: 6th June 2025, Daniel Parkhill to Melissa Beggs

FITZPATRICK: 4th July 2025, Ross Fitzpatrick and Ellen Robinson

MACAULEY: 9th July 2025, William Macauley and Laura McIntosh

CREIGHTON: 10TH July 2025, James Creighton and Emily Harris

McGONIGLE: 8th August 2025, Shane McGonigle and Kirsty Quinn

DEATHS:

NOEL BEATTIE (left BRA 1959) – died 6th January 2025

H. GEOFFERY HARRISON (left BRA 1968) died 28th February 2025.

TOM MCCAULEY died August 2024

SAM MCCONNELL (left BRA 1951) died 28th November 2024

KEN STANLEY (left BRA 1951) died 27th March 2025)

JORDAN SHAW (at BRA 2006-2013) - died suddenly 24th April 2025

Notes

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PER VIAS SAPIENTIAE