



BALLYMENA

ACADEMY

"Ballymena Academy
Cares for the Individual and
Inspires Learning and
Achievement"

INFORMATION BOOKLET
2022

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This Information Booklet should be read in conjunction with the General Prospectus



BALLYMENA ACADEMY

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Voluntary Grammar School (Non-Denominational)

Boys and Girls

Enrolment No. 1200, Admissions No. 176, Age Range: 11 - 18 years

Principal: Mr. S.W. Black, M.Sc., PGCE, PQH (NI)

Chairman of the Board of Governors: Dr. D. Johnston, O.B.E., M.B., M. .Sc., M.Med.Sc., F.R.C.G.P



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE BRONZE



Ballymena Academy is a successful learning community in which young people are well cared for, where they enjoy their education in and out of the classroom and where they secure high quality outcomes in public examinations.

This brief summary cannot hope to capture the range and quality of day-to-day life in this busy and energetic school. Parents and children are encouraged to attend on "Open Nights" and to consult important sources of information, such as the Prospectus, Information Booklets and the website (www.ballymenaacademy.org.uk).

Enabling pupils to achieve high standards of learning and attainment is Ballymena Academy's core purpose. Our caring ethos and extensive co-curricular programme are integral to realising that vision and upholding a well-deserved reputation for excellence. A non-denominational Voluntary Grammar School, Ballymena Academy is proud of its long tradition of drawing pupils from all sections of the geographically and socially diverse community which it serves. That service has been a feature of Ballymena Academy since its establishment in 1828, through its evolution into today's progressive and forward-looking school on its spacious and well-equipped site. Commended in the recent excellent Inspection Report for its planning and self-evaluation, as well as for standards of pupil attainment, the school is committed to continuous improvement and to working with parents and pupils.

Year 8 pupils are helped to adjust to life in their new school with an Induction Programme. Experience shows they settle in quickly and well. Specific support is provided by a team of senior pupils who have been trained as mentors and by staff such as the class tutors, as well as the Head of Year and Pastoral Assistant.

Results in public examinations give one important measure of success. In 2021, 93.3% of Year 14 pupils achieved 3 or more 'A' Level passes with A* - C grades; at GCSE 100% achieved 5 or more passes at A* - C, the figure for 7 or more such passes, including English and Mathematics was 99%. Independent analysis by the A-Level Information Service (ALIS) shows Ballymena Academy pupils achieve better overall results than those obtained elsewhere by pupils of similar ability.

In addition to that outstanding results profile, this school has a long tradition of pupils achieving "top three" places at GCSE and 'A' Level. This means that the pupils are awarded first, second or third highest marks in Northern Ireland.

In co-curricular terms, the school's reputation as a centre of sporting excellence is well-deserved and internationally recognised. Sport is enjoyed alongside such other activities as the musical brilliance of the Spring Concert – held in The Braid Arts Centre. The width and quality of the co-curricular programme is an essential feature of school life. It includes music, drama and an extensive range of other sporting, cultural and recreational pursuits. A wide co-curricular programme enables pupils to develop themselves through participation in a range of sporting, cultural, environmental and community based activities. The school has a unique Physical Recreation Strategy – aimed at promoting exercise and healthy lifestyle choices.

The school provides a broad, balanced and coherent learning programme for all year groups. Provision goes well beyond the statutory requirements of the N.I. Curriculum or the Entitlement Framework; assessment and reporting are in line with best practice; curriculum content, and approaches to teaching and learning, are subject to on-going review, development and alteration as the needs of young people and society change. Choice and flexibility increase in Key Stage 4 and post-16 for Advanced Level studies, prior to entry as an undergraduate to a university or college of the individual's preference.



School Aims : Ballymena Academy

The school aims to provide a caring environment in which pupils can realise their full potential and pursue excellence in all their activities.

MORAL and SPIRITUAL

- To encourage the growth of moral and spiritual awareness so that our pupils may become responsible and tolerant citizens.

PERSONAL

- To develop in our pupils such personal qualities as confidence, respect and independence.

SOCIAL

- To help all pupils to live a fuller and more abundant life through forming relationships and participating in co-curricular activities.
- To enhance the links between the school and the home; and, the school and the community.

INTELLECTUAL

- To ensure that each pupil follows a broad and balanced curriculum which will be responsive to the needs of the individual.
- To provide for each pupil experiences which are enjoyable and challenging using methods and materials appropriate to the subject and level of study.
- To achieve high levels of success in public examinations.

VOCATIONAL

- To develop in our pupils the academic and social skills, concepts and attitudes which will enable them to cope with the demands of life now and in the future.

CULTURAL

- To foster within each pupil a sense of pride in Ballymena Academy.
- To develop an aesthetic appreciation – and an interest in and enthusiasm for creative and artistic endeavour.

REALISATION OF SCHOOL AIMS

Aspects of Curricular and Pastoral provision which help fulfil school aims are:-

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The school aims to develop the personal and social aptitudes of pupils by:-

- providing an induction programme for Year 8 pupils;
- providing a variety of school activities;
- encouraging the study of personal relationships;
- developing positive attitudes and skills relevant to adult and working life;
- adopting an active approach in teaching in order to encourage personal involvement and development in class;
- introducing them to their role within the community.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Through Religious Education the school aims to:-

- help pupils to have an informed understanding of the Christian faith as the main formative religious influence in our culture;
- introduce pupils to the religious diversity of Christian traditions and the major world faiths;
- encourage pupils to reflect on religious, moral and social issues in today's world;
- promote an enquiring, critical and sympathetic approach to the study of religions in the contemporary world;
- promote mutual understanding and respect for the multifarious religious (and non-religious) traditions in our culture.

CAREERS EDUCATION

The provision of Careers Education in Ballymena Academy aims to help pupils to:-

- address the individual needs of each pupil by providing objective careers guidance which will allow them to fulfil their potential;
- develop knowledge and understanding of themselves as individuals - their strengths, personal qualities, interests, abilities, skills, potential, needs, attitudes and values;
- develop knowledge and understanding of the world of work;
- develop skills and personal qualities to manage their career development, including the ability to make informed choices, formulate and implement career plans;
- manage transition from school to adult life; Higher Education, Further Education, Employment, Training.

In support of the above the Careers Department will:-

- provide careers information and encourage pupils to make effective use of it.

STUDY SKILLS

The school aims to enable pupils to learn with efficiency and enjoyment by:-

- fostering an enquiring approach in all areas of the curriculum;
- developing in Years 8 - 14 the general skills of observing, listening, reading, writing and speaking;
- developing in Years 8 - 14 the particular skills required for the management of information from a wide range of sources including books, periodicals, audio-visual material and I.C.T.;
- guiding pupils in the application of these skills for coursework/Controlled Assessment and the preparation for examinations;
- preparing Sixth Form pupils for the study demands of tertiary education.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The school aims to give pupils a broad and balanced appreciation of the range of applications of computing by:-

- developing practical skills and encouraging enjoyment in the use of I.C.T.;
- giving a knowledge of the concepts of information and information processing;
- developing an awareness of the social, political and ethical problems associated with the expanding use of I.C.T.;
- fostering the ability to interpret information from any sources, but particularly from sources involving the new technology.



CULTURAL HERITAGE AND EDUCATION FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

The school aims to enable pupils to develop a sense of fairness and justice by helping them to:-

- develop good interpersonal relationships;
- develop a healthy self-image;
- develop good group/community awareness and relationships;
- broaden their horizons by exploring diverse cultural traditions;
- develop skills in co-operation;
- learn how to handle conflict.

ECONOMIC AWARENESS

The school aims to promote greater economic awareness among all pupils and greater economic literacy among older pupils by:-

- teaching personal money management and financial responsibility;
- fostering a spirit of enterprise by encouraging wider pupil participation in co-curricular activities concerning finance;
- promoting industrial/commercial links;
- promoting greater political and economic awareness of the wider world.

HEALTH EDUCATION

The school aims to make pupils aware of the choices available in the adult world for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. The school has an educational policy on RSE, Substance Abuse, – Food in Schools / Healthy Eating and a Physical Recreation Strategy.



GUIDANCE

The school offers a tutoring system from Years 8 - 14 which aims to:-

- ensure that every pupil is known in depth;
- assist pupils and parents with difficulties (academic or otherwise);
- create an atmosphere in which the pupil can fulfil his/her true potential.

DISCIPLINE

The school aims to sustain a well-ordered environment through:-

- respect for others;
- respect for benevolent authority;
- respect for negotiated formal rules and sanctions;
- provision of school rules for pupils' and parents' consultation.

School Organisation

Ballymena Academy is a Co-educational Voluntary Grammar School. Operating in accordance with the Scheme of Management, the school is administered by a Board of Governors representing the Department of Education, Subscribers of the school, the local Council, the Church, Parents and Teachers.

There are over 80 fully-qualified members of the teaching staff; appropriate support staff are also employed by the Governors.

There is a capital fee, currently £140 per annum, which is set by the Department of Education. In general the school provides books and equipment for use in delivery of the stated curriculum free of charge. A small annual charge is made at the beginning of each year for materials used in Art, Home Economics and Technology where a finished product is retained by the pupil. The Board of Governors has also established a School Fund to which parents contribute.

The wearing of school uniform is compulsory on all occasions during term-time.

Provision of meals and other refreshments

The school operates a cafeteria system in the Dining Hall in which pupils have the opportunity to select from quite an extensive menu. The School uses a cashless system utilising biometric data. This involves using the finger/thumb prints of students to pay for their food and drink quickly by scanning their prints at the point of sale. Pupils can credit money via revaluator machines at designated points in the school.

Food is also available to senior pupils in the Sixth Form Centre at break time and lunch time.

Packed lunches may be brought to school and eaten in the Dining Hall.

The school provides health education for the young people in our care, including detailed information on diet and healthy eating, in order that pupils may learn to make healthy choices.

The School Curriculum

Pupils are prepared for GCSE, GCE 'AS' and 'A' Level examinations. There is also an enrichment programme in the Sixth Form.

Instrumental tuition, for which a number of scholarships are awarded each year, is available to all pupils.

Religious Education is a component part of the Curriculum in each year group in accordance with statutory requirements. Parents may request withdrawal of their child(ren) from Religious Education and/or collective worship on grounds of conscience by writing to the Principal.

Home Preparation

Homework is an essential part of the school curriculum. The school seeks to work in partnership with parents who are encouraged to see that homework is completed with care. Each pupil has a 'learning organiser' in which parents may write comments. The school's homework policy may be discussed with the Principal if it is felt that the time regularly spent on homework is either insufficient or excessive.

Detailed reports on the work and progress of each pupil are sent to the parents or guardians.

Queries regarding the Curriculum

Ballymena Academy regards the partnership between parents and staff as fundamental to children's success. Parents may contact the Principal at any time should they have any concerns in regard to their child's progress at school. In addition, parents are invited to consultation meetings with teachers in every year group. Parents are encouraged to raise and discuss matters of curricular concern with the relevant Head of Department and/or Vice-Principal with responsibility for the curriculum. If the matter cannot be resolved at this stage, then arrangements can be made to meet the Principal. Subsequently, parents may convey their concerns to the Board of Governors if they remain dissatisfied.

Daily Programme

The school operates a 10 period day (10 x 35 minutes) using a two-week timetable. One period per day is allocated to lunch. The school day commences at 8.55 a.m. with registration, followed by assembly or tutor meetings, and finishes at 3.20 p.m.

Complaints (other than those related to Child Protection matters)

Parental concerns should be expressed to the school through appropriate members of the Teaching Staff (e.g. Heads of Year, Senior Staff, Principal etc.) and efforts made to resolve the issues. Only when it has been proven impossible to make such resolution, the formal Complaints Procedure may be initiated. Copies are available, on request, from the Principal's secretary.

Pastoral Support

The school aims to provide a caring environment in which pupils are encouraged to realise their full potential and pursue excellence in all their activities.

There is a pastoral team in each year group comprising a year head, a pastoral adviser and class tutors to assist pupils and their parents with any difficulties, academic or otherwise, which may confront a pupil.

A wider network of pastoral support exists through taught programmes, provision of a school nurse, counsellor, peer and learning mentors, and access to information about relevant external agencies.

Procedures exist for early identification of pupils with special educational needs for whom appropriate provision is arranged in consultation with parents and, where necessary, other support agencies.

Child Protection – Procedure Summary

HOW A PARENT CAN EXPRESS A CONCERN IN THE CONTEXT OF CHILD PROTECTION.

IF

you, as a parent, have a concern
about your child's safety,

you may speak to the Head of Year
Telephone: 028 2565 2782

OR

you may speak
to the designated teacher for child protection,
Mr. R. Ross,
who is also Vice-Principal i/c Pastoral Care

OR

the Deputy designated teacher for child protection,
Dr. C. Donnelly
Telephone: 028 2565 2782

OR

you may speak to the Principal
Telephone 028 2565 2782.

If you are still concerned you may speak to, or write to,
the Chairman of the Board of Governors, c/o Ballymena Academy.

At any time you may talk to a Social Worker
Telephone: 028 2563 5640

OR

The Local Police Care Unit
Telephone: 028 2565 3355

The Curriculum

KEY STAGE 3

ESTABLISHING WORK PATTERNS and LEARNING ROUTINES

At this Key Stage pupils are inquisitive, responsive and enthusiastic. In Ballymena Academy, pupils encounter a stimulating range of teaching methods, class groupings and engaging learning activities across a broad range of Learning Areas.

Pupils quickly develop strong 'learning style' preferences and establish the work patterns and learning routines which will be the basis of academic success. Pupils benefit from our Assessment for Learning programme which identifies what they know and understand as well as what they need to learn and improve on. This helps inculcate the work-ethic and study habits needed to become self-motivated and independent learners. The learning environment is supportive and caring.

Pupils expect to be set purposeful assignments which arise from classroom activities and out-of-school learning such as Geography or History Field Trips. Pupils undertake group and individual research projects and particularly enjoy those making use of e-learning resources.

Key Stage 3 provision reflects the N. Ireland Curriculum Framework. The timetable is managed flexibly so as to ensure that pupils have varied experiences across each learning day and week.

During Years 8, 9, 10 pupils will have carefully planned opportunities to study the listed subjects and to acquire essential skills and personal capabilities such as Communication, Using Mathematics, I.C.T., Managing Information, Thinking Skills, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Being Creative, Self-Management, Working with Others. GCSE subjects are chosen at the end of Key Stage 3.

LEARNING INTENTIONS, TRACKING PUPIL PROGRESS

Pupils should recognise the importance of every lesson. Academic progress is monitored closely and effective use is made of baseline data on entry to the school which allows challenging personalised targets to be set and monitored. Common Assessment Tasks are recorded on an electronic tracking system to ensure pupils are progressing and to target additional learning support.

Pupils are shown how to focus on the learning process as well as outcomes. Information is shared with learners through learning intentions and agreed success criteria. There are opportunities for active learning, peer and self-assessment and self-evaluation.

ALIS and Midyis programmes bench-mark public exam results against a sample of UK schools. Together teachers, pupils and parents devise enabling strategies which strengthen commitment, enhance learning and improve achievement.

Pupil endeavour and success is recognised and celebrated in the classroom and through internal bulletins, school websites and magazine, Assemblies, Achievement Awards, Prize Day, local and regional Media.



The Curriculum 2021/2022

Period allocations shown per fortnight.

(a) YEARS 8 & 9

Area of Learning	Contributory Elements	YEAR 8 Periods	YEAR 9 Periods
Language and Literacy	English and Media Education	12	8
Mathematics and Numeracy	Mathematics including Financial Capability	12	8
The Arts	Art and Design Drama Music	4 2 4	4 2 4
Environment and Society	Geography History	6 6	6 6
Modern Languages	French Spanish	8 0	7 8
Science and Technology	Science Technology and Design	8 4	12 4
Learning for Life and Work	Home Economics Learning for Life and Work	4 4	4 1
Physical Education	Physical Education and Games	8	8
Religious Education	Religious Education	4	4
Additional Studies	Digital Technology	4	4

JUNIOR SCHOOL (KEY STAGE 3) ORGANISATION

KEY STAGE 3	Eng./Maths/ Geog./Hist./Lang./L.L.W./R.E.	Sc./Tech./P.E./Art/Drama/ Music/Digital Technology/H.E.
YEAR 8	6 groups of 28/30 1 group of 22	9 groups of 22 or 23
YEAR 9	6 groups of 29 or 30	8 groups of 22 or 23

JUNIOR SCHOOL (KEY STAGE 3) YEAR 10 CURRICULUM 2021/2022

Period allocations are per fortnight.

Area of Learning	Contributory Elements	YEAR 10 Periods
Language and Literacy	English with Drama and Media Education	12
Mathematics and Numeracy	Mathematics including Financial Capability	11
The Arts	Art and Design Music	3 3
Environment and Society	Geography History	6 6
Modern Languages	French German OR Spanish	6 6
Science and Technology	Science Technology and Design	12 4
Learning for Life and Work	Employability } Local & Global Citizenship } Personal Development }	2
	Home Economics	4
Physical Education	Physical Education and Games	6
Religious Education	Religious Education	4
Additional Studies	Careers Education	1
	Digital Technology	4

* Alternate weeks

JUNIOR SCHOOL (KEY STAGE 3) ORGANISATION

KEY STAGE 3	Eng./Maths/ Geog./Hist./Lang./L.L.W./R.E.	Sc./Tech./P.E./Art/Drama/Music/ Careers/H.E./Digital Technology
YEAR 10	6 groups of 29 or 30	8 groups of 22 or 23

Classes are generally unstreamed throughout Key Stage 3

GCSE SUBJECT CHOICE

9 boxes should be ticked

Name _____

Careers Teacher _____

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

☒ English Language

Et

English Literature

Ms

Media Studies

CHOOSE ONE

EITHER

Fr

French

Gr

German

Sp

Spanish

OR

Os

Occupational Studies

Rs

Religious Studies Full Course

USING MATHEMATICS

☒ Mathematics

CORE AREAS OF STUDY

Careers Education

Learning for Life and Work

RE. & Games

Religious Studies (Short Course)

SCIENCE

CHOOSE ONE

Sg

Single Award

Ds

Double Award

(Tick Double Award Science 2*)

Bi

Biology

Ch

Chemistry

Ph

Physics

Arts / Environment & Society

PREFERABLY AT LEAST ONE FROM THIS BOX

Ar

Art & Design

Ba

Business Studies

Cl

Classical Civilisation

Dr

Drama

Gg

Geography

Hi

History

Mu

Music

Rs

Religious Studies

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Pe

Physical Education

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING & MATHS

Ag

Agriculture & Land Use

Bi

Biology

Ch

Chemistry

Td

Construction

Dt

Digital Technology

Ds

Double Award Science 2*

Fn

Food & Nutrition

Fm

Further Mathematics

Ph

Physics

Ti

Technology & Design

MODERN LANGUAGES

Fr

French

Gr

German

Sp

Spanish

Parental Signature _____

Date _____

June _____

4 SUBJECTS

Feb 21

June 21

NC

MIDDLE SCHOOL (YEARS 11 and 12 – KEY STAGE 4) CURRICULUM AND ORGANISATION – 2021/2022

Subject	Period Allocations per fortnight:-
English Language with English Literature/Media Studies/ Essential Skills (Communication)	17 periods
Physical Education Games	2 periods - Year 11 / 1 periods - Year 12 4 periods
Religious Studies (Short course) / LLW	4 periods
Careers Education	1 period Year 12
Double Award Science	18 periods
Agriculture & Land Use Art & Design Biology Business Studies Chemistry Classical Civilisation Construction Digital Technology Drama Food and Nutrition French Geography	German History Mathematics Further Mathematics Music Occupational Studies Physical Education Physics Religious Studies Science Single Award Spanish Technology and Design
	9 periods

SIXTH FORM PROGRAMME 2021 - 2022

The Year 13 Programme 2021 to 2022 is composed of GCE Advanced Subsidiary ('AS' Levels), Level 3 BTEC courses and a minority time programme. It is designed to provide depth and breadth of study.

Normally pupils will take four subjects and the enrichment programme in Year 13. Pupils will select three of these subjects which they intend to continue with in Year 14 - thus completing three full 'A' level, or equivalent, programmes. The fourth subject will be studied in Year 13 only and taken as an 'AS' level or Certificate. BTEC qualifications are two years in duration. In some cases, pupils may opt to take all four subjects to A2 level, providing they meet the set criteria. Since the purpose of the structure is to provide a course which has breadth and balance, it is recommended that one of the Year 13 subjects should be in a contrasting discipline.

Subjects offered:-

- | | |
|---|--|
| ◆ Agriculture (BTEC) | Geography |
| ◆ Art and Design | German |
| Biology | ◆ Government & Politics |
| ◆ Business Studies | ◆ Health and Social Care |
| Chemistry | ◆ History |
| ◆ Classical Civilisation (Linear qualification) | ◆ Mathematics |
| ◆ Construction (BTEC) | ◆ Media Studies (Linear qualification) |
| Single/Double Award | ◆ Music |
| ◆ Digital Technology | ◆ Nutrition and Food Science |
| ◆ Economics | ◆ Performing Arts |
| ◆ Engineering (BTEC) | ◆ Physical Education |
| English Literature | Physics |
| ◆ Environmental Technology | ◆ Religious Studies |
| French | Spanish |
| Further Mathematics | Technology & Design |
| ◆ Subjects marked in this way may be taken without previous GCSE study. See subject information for entry requirements. | |



The Enrichment Programme - dependent on a pupil's subject combination and time-tabling.

This may consist of:-

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Year 13 | 2 periods per fortnight of Careers Education
4 periods per fortnight of Games
Study Periods |
| Year 14 | 2 periods per fortnight of Careers Education
4 periods per fortnight of Games
Study Periods |

A wide variety of enrichment activities are provided through the Co-curricular programme.

Please note that as far as the Year 13 programme is concerned, very occasionally minor restrictions in choices may occur, given constraints of time-tabling and the viability of classes. However, every effort is made to accommodate individual pupil choices within the framework presented.



(C) Overview of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

Ballymena Academy gives full recognition to the importance of Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance as part of the general personal development of the pupil.

An integrated programme of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance aims to develop knowledge, skills and personal qualities which will enable pupils to manage their career development effectively, to make informed choices at transition points, to formulate and to implement personal career plans.



Pupils in the middle and senior school follow a structured time-tabled programme of Careers Education taught by a team of Careers teachers. Using a variety of strategies and resources pupils are given an opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of themselves, the world in which they live, and the employment and career opportunities that are available so that they can effectively manage transition from school to adult life, further and higher education, employment and training.

Formal careers guidance interviews are an important component of the school's careers programme. All pupils at 'transition points' i.e. Years 10, 12 and 14, have the opportunity to benefit from careers interviews which are conducted in school by their careers teacher, and/or the Department for the Economy (DfE) Careers Adviser. They are impartial, carefully planned and include advice focused on the career needs of individual pupils. Careers teachers and the Careers Adviser are available throughout the year for consultation.

Pupils have ready access to careers information of good quality and breadth (including interactive computer programs and Internet resources) as an integral part of their Careers programme. It is held in a purpose-built careers suite comprising four interview rooms and a well-stocked careers library. All pupils have the opportunity to take advantage of the short term borrowing facility.

The careers programme is enhanced by purposeful links developed with staff from Further and Higher Education, the Department for the Economy (DFE) and employers.

Careers information is supplemented by a careers convention and by visiting speakers from further and higher education, the DfE (Department for the Economy) and occupations which reflect a full range of the career interests of the pupils.

Pupils in Year 13 have the opportunity to spend a period of time work shadowing which informs their decision-making in relation to their general vocational and specific occupational interests.

Throughout the Sixth Form pupils are invited to attend university and college 'Open Events'. This year these take the form of "virtual" open days.

In Year 10 parents can discuss options available for GCSE with a member of the Careers Department at a Parents' Consultation interview. In August, after the publication of GCSE results, Year 12 pupils and their parents are invited to discuss post-GCSE options with a careers teacher. Information events are held for the parents of pupils in Year 11 and Year 13, focusing on transition post-GCSE and post-16 respectively. Other opportunities to communicate with careers teachers and the DfE careers adviser arise during Parents' consultations and the Careers Convention.

Many subjects have the potential to make valuable contributions to each pupil's general vocational development and emerging occupational interests. The cross-curricular components of careers which flow naturally and realistically from the content and methodology of each subject help pupils to appreciate the coherence of their total curriculum.

Personal Career Planning is very much a central part of the school's Careers Education and Guidance Programme. This is a continuing and evolving process - introduced in Year 10 - involving documented self-awareness, decision-making, planning and research pertinent to the pupil's individual needs.

A copy of the school's CEIAG Policy is available on request.

(A) EXAMINATION RESULTS 2021

The school continues to subscribe to the 'A' Level Information System. This service, known as ALIS, is well-established and highly respected and allows the 'A' level results of Ballymena Academy pupils to be evaluated in terms of those obtained by pupils of similar ability across the United Kingdom. In the case of Ballymena Academy, the outcome continues to be positive – pupils did better overall than pupils of similar ability elsewhere, demonstrating the benefit which pupils obtain from attending Ballymena Academy.

The 'A' level outcomes show a pleasing continuation of the trend noted in recent years and reflect the ability and effort of the pupils, the careful work of teachers and the support of parents.

G.C.E. 'A' LEVEL SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF PUPILS IN YEAR 14 - 2021

No. of pupils in Year 14	No. of pupils taking 3+ 'A' Levels (or equivalent)	% achieving 3 or more at A* - C	% achieving 2 or more at A* - E
150	149	93.3	93.3
N.I. G.S. Average (2019-20)		N/A	N/A

G.C.E. 'A' LEVEL PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS
(TREND DATA) 2017/18 – 2019/20

	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	School	N.I. G.S. Average	School	N.I. G.S. Average	School	N.I. G.S. Average
% achieving 3+ 'A' Levels at Grades A* - C	78	78	81	80	95	N/A
% achieving 2+ 'A' Levels at Grades A* - E	100	100	100	100	100	100

- Excludes pupils with statements of special educational needs.
- The 'A' level figures for Northern Ireland include pupils who achieved qualifications deemed by the Department of Education to be equivalent to G.C.E. 'A' Level.
- N.I. Grammar School averages were not published for 2019/2020 and will not be published for 2020/2021.



G.C.E. 'A' LEVEL SUMMARY OF SUBJECT RESULTS OF PUPILS IN YEAR 14 – 2021

'A' LEVEL % Cumulative Grades (2021)								
SUBJECT	No. entered	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
ART & DESIGN	6	33	33	67	100	100	100	100
BIOLOGY	69	23	65	90	97	100	100	100
BUSINESS STUDIES	15	0	40	80	100	100	100	100
CLASSICAL CIVILISATION	8	0	38	63	100	100	100	100
CHEMISTRY	36	25	61	81	100	100	100	100
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY	15	27	40	87	93	100	100	100
ECONOMICS	9	0	67	78	89	100	100	100
ENGLISH LITERATURE	13	38	77	92	100	100	100	100
ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY	9	44	89	89	89	100	100	100
FOOD & NUTRITION	18	17	50	89	100	100	100	100
FRENCH	12	33	50	67	83	100	100	100
GOVERNMENT & POLITICS	8	25	50	75	100	100	100	100
GERMAN	4	25	100	100	100	100	100	100
HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE	29	10	76	100	100	100	100	100
HISTORY	26	35	77	96	100	100	100	100
MATHEMATICS	56	32	61	84	96	98	100	100
MEDIA FILM & TV STUDIES	15	20	60	100	100	100	100	100
MUSIC	2	50	100	100	100	100	100	100
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	12	50	83	100	100	100	100	100
PHYSICS	30	20	70	87	97	100	100	100
RELIGIOUS STUDIES	15	40	87	100	100	100	100	100
SPANISH	4	25	75	75	100	100	100	100
TECHNOLOGY	5	0	40	100	100	100	100	100

Cumulative %				
	No. entered	Distinction*	Distinction	Merit
AGRICULTURE	5	100	100	100
CONSTRUCTION	29	86	97	97
ENGINEERING	5	100	100	100

Top achievers at 'A' Level were as follows:-

Two pupils attained **4 A*** grades – James Craig and Rachel McCartney.

Three pupils attained **4 A*/A** grades – Maria Olteanu, Eve Patterson, Grace Reid.

Ten pupils attained **3 A*** grades – Cameron Bailes, Jonathan Cochrane, Lana Connolly, Amy Cunningham, Rachel Kennedy, Robert Mark, Erin McCurdy, Joshua McIlhagga, Grace Moore, Hannah Reid.

A further 51 pupils obtained a minimum of **3 A*/A** grades – Katie Alexander, Harry Andrews, Brooke Arbuthnot, Linzi Bell, Patrick Browne, James Cahoon, Richard Carson, Ashleigh Church, Jackson Darragh, Toby Davidson, Naomi Dickey, Joshua Drain, Daniel Elliott, Matthew French, Robert Greer, Luke Gregg, Jack Guild, Ailsa Hamill, David Heaney, Oliver Hunt, Sophie Kennedy, Ellen Lacknermeier, Adam Lamont, Kerry Laverty, Leo Law, Jacob Loughridge, Richard Mallon, Joseph Mawhinney, Jonathan McCullough, Beth McIlrath, Kathy McIlveen, Lucy McKane, James McLean, Abbie Millar, Nigel Moore, Zara Mulholland, Lorre Nesbitt, Kaden Patterson, Daniel Pyper, Jason Robinson, Alice Rodgers, James Ross, Rebekah Shipley, Hope Snoddy, William Snowden, Katie Stevenson, Hollie Stirling, Rebekah Strahan, Katherine Stronge, Victoria Turtle, Katelyn Whyte.

G.C.S.E. SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF PUPILS IN YEAR 12 – 2021

No. of pupils in Year 12	No. with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	No. of eligible pupils entered for 7+ GCSEs	% of pupils achieving 7+ GCSEs at A* - C [Incl. English and Maths.]	N.I. Grammar School Average 7+ GCSEs (2019-20) [Incl. English and Maths.]	No. of eligible pupils entered for 5+ GCSEs	% of pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs at A* - C [Incl. English and Maths.]	N.I. Grammar School Average 5+ GCSEs (2019-20) [Incl. English and Maths.]
180	1	180	99	N/A	180	100	N/A

G.C.S.E. PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS (TREND DATA) 2017/18 – 2019/20

	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	School	N.I. Grammar School Average	School	N.I. Grammar School Average	School	N.I. Grammar School Average
% achieving 7+ GCSEs at Grades A* - C (including English and Mathematics)	97	90	97	91	99	N/A
% achieving 5+ GCSEs at Grades A* - C (including English and Mathematics)	98	94	99	94	100	N/A

- Excludes pupils with statements of special educational needs.
- The G.C.S.E. figures for Northern Ireland include pupils who achieved qualifications deemed by the Department of Education to be equivalent to G.C.S.E. level.
- N.I. Grammar School Averages were not published for 2019/2020 and will not be published for 2020/2021.



G.C.S.E. SUMMARY OF SUBJECT RESULTS OF PUPILS IN YEAR 12 – 2021

		Cumulative %						
SUBJECT	No. entered	A*	A	B	C*	C	D	E
AGRICULTURE	17	29	76	100	100	100	100	100
ART AND DESIGN	27	19	44	74	85	96	100	100
BIOLOGY	79	30	76	90	97	100	100	100
BUSINESS STUDIES	33	21	48	79	85	100	100	100
CHEMISTRY	60	38	70	83	95	100	100	100
CONSTRUCTION	38	34	84	100	100	100	100	100
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY	17	29	59	71	76	94	100	100
DRAMA	6	50	67	100	100	100	100	100
ENGLISH LANGUAGE	180	18	53	80	92	100	100	100
ENGLISH LITERATURE	84	35	82	94	96	100	100	100
FOOD & NUTRITION	56	23	50	84	91	100	100	100
FRENCH	92	32	67	90	96	100	100	100
GEOGRAPHY	34	18	53	76	82	100	100	100
GERMAN	36	25	50	67	81	97	100	100
HISTORY	92	30	75	89	97	100	100	100
MATHEMATICS	180	23	71	97	99	100	100	100
MATHEMATICS FURTHER	69	45	79	90	95	97	100	100
MUSIC	19	42	95	100	100	100	100	100
OCCUPATIONAL STUDIES	21	24	86	95	95	100	100	100
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	27	41	74	93	100	100	100	100
PHYSICS	67	43	73	91	100	100	100	100
RELIGIOUS STUDIES (F.C.)	15	80	100	100	100	100	100	100
SPANISH	44	48	69	80	86	100	100	100
TECHNOLOGY	25	12	44	76	88	100	100	100

Cumulative % of pupils entered achieving Grades												
SUBJECT	No. entered	A*A*	A*A	AA	AB	BB	BC*	C*C*	C*C	CC	CD	DD/DE
SCIENCE (D.A.)	96	16	35	61	69	83	91	98	100	100	100	100

Cumulative % of pupils entered achieving Grades							
SUBJECT	No. entered	A* - A equivalent		B equivalent	C* equivalent	C equivalent	E
		9	8/7	6	5	4	2
CLASSICAL CIVILISATION	14	7	57	64	71	100	100
MEDIA FILM & TV STUDIES	96	11	59	83	96	100	100

High Achievers

Fourteen young people achieved **A* grades** in each of their GCSE full courses with **Erin Weir** attaining **10 A* grades** while **Sarah Brown, Nicola Cochrane, Caitlin Graham, Hanna Gunning, Katie Lackermeyer, Zara Love, Katie McCullough, Ellen McDonald, Natalie Mills, Rebekah Neilly, Lauren Ramsey, Sarah Stirling** and **Kate Wylie** all attained **9 A* grades**.

Forty-six pupils achieved a minimum of **9 A*/A grades** in their GCSE full courses – **Jack Berry, Rachel Black, Danni Blair, Jacob Bradley, Rory Campbell, Caron Cooke, Aoibhin Cosgrove, Reece Crawford, Daniel Cruikshank, Harry Davidson, Conor Drain, Ben Fleming, Adam Gardiner, Maisie Gibbs, David Gordon, Naomi Gordon, Amy Gregg, Tom Guild, Isobel Henderson, Jo Henry-McCool, Rebecca Hilditch, Amber Hoey, Maria Iatan, Jack Kelly, Emma Kinney, Oonagh Lamont, Erin Maybin, Katie McBride, Ruth McKibbin, Erin Moore, Kadie Orr, Anna Patterson, Kayla Robinson, Penny Sheridan, Louise Surgenor, Georgia Swann, Caitlin Taylor, Charlotte Thompson, Ella L. Thompson, Kai Treon, Rebecca Wallace, Amy Weir, Emma Whyte, Eve Williamson, Emma Wilson, Niamh Wilson**.

They were closely followed by a further 23 young people with a minimum of **8 A*/A grades** in their GCSE full courses – **William Beverland, Lewis Booth, Caitlyn Brown, Alexander Buchanan, Aimee Burnett, Sarah Byrne, Faye Calderwood, Hugo Eddis, Hannah Jess, Mark Kernohan, Lloyd Logan, Lauren McFetridge, Jan McGarel, Etain McGuckian, Aaron McKillop, Thomas McMaster, Leah Nicholl, Olivia Reid, Harry Ross, Aimee Stevenson, Jemma Stirling, Matthew Wilson, Alexandra Workman**.

Finally, ten pupils obtained a minimum of **7 A*/A grades** in their GCSE full courses – **Joshua Ballantine, Anier Campbell, Georgina Cherry, Emily Church, Rachel Craig, Sophie Craig, Elke Hamilton, Patrick Kerr, Rebekah Robinson, Shannon Warwick**.

DESTINATION OF LEAVERS IN YEARS 12, 13 AND 14 AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Leavers destinations		% of leavers going to					
No. of leavers		HE	FE	Another school	Jobskills/ Training	Employment	Other/ Unknown
Year 12	20	—	60%	15%	15%	—	10%
Year 13	5	—	20%	—	40%	—	40%
Year 14	150	95%	3%	—	1%	1%	—
GRAND TOTAL	175	82%	10%	1%	4%	1%	2%

Attendance

No. of possible attendance sessions	No. of sessions Attended	% Attendance
432,672	424,945	98.2



MUSIC EXAMINATIONS

[Due to circumstances of digital exams and personal entries for examinations because of COVID-19 all results may not be accounted for]

The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) and
Trinity Guildhall Results - Academic year 2020/2021

Alto Saxophone	Grade 2	1 Merit
Bassoon	Grade 5	1 Pass
Cello	Grade 2 Grade 3 Grade 4 Grade 8	1 Merit 1 Merit 1 Merit 1 Distinction
Clarinet	Grade 3 Grade 4 Grade 5	1 Pass 4 Distinction, 2 Merit 3 Merit
Double Bass	Grade 3	1 Distinction
Flute	Grade 1 Grade 2 Grade 3 Grade 4 Grade 5 Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8	1 Distinction, 1 Pass 1 Merit, 1 Pass 1 Distinction, 2 Merit, 1 Pass 3 Merit 1 Merit, 1 Pass 1 Merit, 1 Pass 1 Merit, 1 Pass 2 Distinction
Piano	Grade 1 Grade 2 Grade 3 Grade 4 Grade 5 Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8	2 Merit 1 Distinction 1 Pass 1 Distinction, 1 Merit 1 Distinction, 1 Merit 1 Distinction, 1 Merit, 1 Pass 3 Distinction, 1 Merit 3 Distinction
Singing	Grade 1 Grade 5 Grade 6 Grade 8	2 Distinction, 1 Merit 1 Merit 1 Distinction, 1 Merit 2 Distinction
Viola	Grade 5	1 Pass
Violin	Grade 2 Grade 4 Grade 5 Grade 6 Grade 8	1 Merit, 2 Pass 2 Pass 2 Distinction, 1 Merit 1 Merit 1 Merit
ABRSM Performance Grades Cello	Grade 5	1 Distinction
LCM Academic Year 2020/2021 Acoustic Guitar	Grade 1 Grade 2 Grade 3	1 Distinction 1 Distinction 1 Distinction

ROCK SCHOOL – Academic Year 2020/2021

Acoustic Guitar		Drumkit	
Debut	2 Distinction	Grade 1	4 Merit
Grade 1	1 Distinction	Grade 2	1 Merit
Grade 2	1 Distinction	Grade 3	1 Distinction
Grade 3	1 Distinction	Grade 7	1 Pass
Bass Guitar		Electric Guitar	
Grade 4	1 Merit	Grade 4	1 Merit
Grade 5	1 Distinction	Grade 5	1 Merit

(B) ACTIVITIES

SPORT (GIRLS)

HOCKEY (2020/2021)

Due to COVID-19 there was training only for most teams.

Matches played by:-

1st XI, 2nd XI, U.14A XI, U.13A XI and U.12A/B/C/D XI.

Representative Honours:

Alex Byrne and Katie McCullough – Ulster U.16s



CROSS-COUNTRY CLUB 2020/2021

The Cross-Country Club ran for Years 8 and 9 pupils in October this year. Due to the pandemic and restrictions on mixing, Year 8 pupils met outside after school on Fridays whilst Year 9 pupils met after school on Thursdays. There were excellent numbers attending both days, often up to 60 per day. The Club met until just before Christmas.

Training took the usual form, with the first month being used to introduce pupils to the sport and build up endurance and a little speed. As it was apparent that no school competitions would take place this year, we concentrated on general fitness and simply enjoying running. We combined some speed-work and hill running with endurance training, and this was enjoyed by all in attendance. Although the usual social aspects of our Club were restricted, our pupils were appreciative of simply being able to gather to participate in sport with one another. Hopefully next year will be a return to normal.



SPORT (BOYS)

RUGBY (2020/2021)

1st XV

The 1st XV retained a lot of their personnel from the previous season with the squad bulk being made up of a very strong Year 14 group. There was a lot of hope that Rugby would get up and running, however, this was not the case. The senior squad worked hard in the gym during pre-season and were delighted to get onto the pitch with the anticipation of the resumption of inter-school sport. This was limited to two games against our Belfast rivals, R.B.A.I. at Osborne Park and M.C.B. on the Millar McBride pitch, each of which resulted in a victory. The remainder of the season was limited to running challenges, bursts of pitch and gym sessions before we got into the summer term. At this stage we had hoped to play several teams, but





the boys got one more chance to pull on their school colours with a game against the Ulster Schools' U18s. The match was played at Newforge with no spectators allowed, nevertheless it turned into a great game with both teams trying to play an expansive brand of rugby. The Ballymena Academy team was victorious, a welcome victory which marked the end of school rugby for a very talented group of boys.

Medallion XV

This very strong group of players unfortunately did not get to play in the Ulster Schools' Medallion Shield, a competition in which they would undoubtedly have been ranked among the favourites. In their junior years this group was victorious in the M.C.B. U13 Cup and the R.B.A.I. U14 competition. Thankfully they will have the opportunity to play as a year group in the new Danske Bank Ulster Schools' U16 Competition to be held in October and November 2022.

U14 XV

The U14s worked incredibly hard throughout a period of restricted activity, their end-of-season sessions and early season form shows how well this team has developed. They enjoyed two summer term games against Foyle College and Limavady Grammar School. Unfortunately, they did not get the opportunity to play in The O'Kane Cup Competition.

U13 XV

The U13 squad was limited to training in curriculum time for most of the year but, when the guidelines relaxed, enjoyed an excellent summer term of rugby with two games home and away to Foyle College. The team will be



excited about the resumption of inter-school sport and an opportunity to play in Cup competitions in the years ahead.

YEAR 8

The Year 8 boys started their rugby career at Ballymena Academy during the second week in September. Large numbers of boys attended every Saturday morning, developing skills, making friends and having fun. The early season rugby sessions were restricted to classroom 'bubbles' and for that reason did not permit any inter-school matches. After Easter, and the resumption of contact sports, 70 boys attended training and enjoyed end-of-season games against M.C.B. at A, B, C and D level and subsequently hosted Ballynahinch and Ballymena Club teams at U12 level.

MUSIC

Music Lessons

In September the academic year began under the shadow of the continued global pandemic. Department of Education COVID mitigations and guidelines around Music were particularly hard hitting and restrictive. However, after completing a thorough risk assessment and reorganising the Music Department teaching spaces, private peripatetic lessons in all areas were able to restart. New and re-organised teaching spaces for Wind, Brass and Singing, in a refurbished mobile and Music Room 1, allowed for the 3m distancing stipulated for these lessons. Electric piano keyboards were also sourced for these new spaces. Google Classrooms were set up for all peripatetic tutors and their pupils in order to help administer timetabling and communication. Other mitigations included the purchase of air purifiers for the practice rooms, which do not have external ventilation, PPE and sanitising resources for music tutors and pupils.

Education Authority (EA) Brass lessons resumed in late October, when E.A. guidance became available. The Music Department was in communication with the EA throughout this period, and the ensuing year regarding difficulties around EA provision. The year was also fraught with changing guidelines around singing, wind and brass.

When the second lockdown was implemented, Music Tutors switched to private online 'Zoom' lessons, and many, many pupils went on to achieve online grade and performance qualifications with their respective examining boards (Trinity-Guildhall, ABRSM, Rockschooll and RGT Guitar). Caiolin Olphert (Year 13) and Luke Gregg (Year 14) continued as members of the prestigious Ulster Youth Orchestra, which switched to an on-line format.

The Music Department was highly proactive in lobbying local Councillors, MLAs and MPs and the Education Minister, Peter Weir, when the Department of Education ruled out the resumption of indoor Wind, Brass, Singing lessons and ensembles on return to school in March. This decision was eventually overturned – a welcome turn of events, especially for 'A' Level and GCSE pupils facing the prospect of recording their practical examination evidence outside! However, instrumental ensembles were not to resume until May.

Apart from GCSE and 'A' level practicals, singing lessons inside were reinstated in June, and choral singing was only permitted outside. EA Brass lessons only continued as 'posted' online materials, not live video lessons. This decision was a source of frustration and dismay, communicated to the EA by many schools, including Ballymena Academy.

Ensembles

Despite the difficulties surrounding mitigations, distancing and seating plans for "track and trace", choir and instrumental ensemble rehearsals started up in September for 'bubbled' year groups. Online Google classrooms were created with guide-tracks and PDFs for each group and all parts in each piece.

Many customised arrangements and tracks had to be created. Pupils were able to continue and progress in co-curricular music. Senior Choir, Academy Chorale, Chamber Choir, Junior Wind Band, Junior Strings, Senior String Ensemble and Senior Brass Ensemble all met to rehearse. The fuller Senior Ensembles (Senior Wind Band and Senior Strings) were put on hold as pupils focused on formal assessments. COVID logistics for these rehearsals, which required pupils to have a stand each, were eased by the successful application for an Arts Council grant worth £1,800 to fund a trolley of 20 additional professional Wenger music stands.

The first performance of the year was a special arrangement of the Aaronic Blessing sung and recorded by Chamber Choir for the virtual Prize Giving.

Christmas was not cancelled, and the ensembles mentioned above, along with Year 8 and 9 music classes, created and recorded music for a 'Christmas Online Music Lesson' of interactive performances and music activities, with videos, power-point, worksheets and song-sheets, distributed to all feeder primary schools via Google Drive. Thanks go to Mr. D. Ross for his help in recording the ensembles. This was well received by schools, many of which used it as a Christmas learning activity.



The annual St. Patrick's Carol Service was, of course, impossible, and in its stead an on-line service was recorded and produced as a Facebook Premier live event. As a result, individual Chamber Choir video submissions were combined and separate choral tracks from individual choir members were mixed and edited to video recordings of the choirs filmed outside.

The resulting service was something of a triumph against adversity and a poignant reminder of the true spirit of Christmas in dark days. A new carol 'The Kerry Carol' was specially composed and sung by the Chamber Choir to mark the retirement of Deputy Principal, Mrs. Julie Connor - an unstinting supporter and encourager of Music in the Academy. Miss A. Wilkinson, Mr. B. Thompson, Mrs. E Church, Ms R. Durston and Mr. G. Murray all led rehearsals. Thanks are expressed to Miss A. Wilkinson, Mr. B. Thompson and Mr. M. Christie for their assistance in recording vocal guide tracks. Thanks also to Mr. D. Ross and Mr. J. Owens who mixed audio and video tracks alongside Mrs Church, and former pupil Mr. Brian Adams who filmed and edited the Carol Service production footage alongside Mr. Alan Kirk of ArkMedia.



During the post-Christmas lockdown pupils continued with their music at home in many creative forms, getting involved in online recordings with international choirs and bands, including 'The Bands of Ireland' virtual





performance, part of the International St. Patrick's Festival. Many of these achievements were highlighted during the year on Facebook, with specially edited recordings, including a special virtual 'A' Level ensemble performance for Valentine's Day, and Joshua McIlhagga (who progressed to the heats of BBC School Soloist of the year before it was cancelled) singing 'Bring Him Home'.

Over Easter, all the ensemble and choral Google Classrooms were reloaded with new music and new guide tracks in preparation for an end-of-term Summer Concert. As soon as restrictions on instrumental rehearsals were lifted in May, groups met again (with the exception of choirs which remained limited to outdoor gatherings) under the leadership of their respective staff and peripatetic conductors.

With Senior Pupils again engaged in formal assessments, recordings could only be made in June. Mrs Church mixed the audio tracks from the choirs and Mr. Alan Kirk (ArkMedia), assisted by Ben Montgomery (Year 11) second camera operator, filmed and edited the performances. The resulting Summer Concert, which garnered over 7,500 views on the Ballymena Academy Facebook page, and over 12,000 views on the 'Love Ballymena' Facebook Page, was a tremendous testament to the resilience and creativity of all the pupils and staff involved.

A new venture was undertaken in July as a result of a successful bid to the Department of Education for funding for COVID recovery Summer Schemes. A week-long 'Music and Fun' scheme ran for Academy pupils during the second week of July, incorporating instrumental ensembles, music theatre song and choreography, and fun activities ranging from pond dipping with Mr. W. Warwick, to treasure hunts and rocket building and launching with a compressed air-launcher. Mr. Stuart Beattie, our peripatetic piano and singing tutor, ably undertook the role of scheme co-ordinator with support from Mrs. Church. He, Mr. D. Ross (BA staff) and Mr. C. Aiken (peripatetic tutor and former pupil) all led daily sessions, assisted by recent/past pupils Eve Patterson, Jonathan Cochrane, Bethan McLaughlin and Jack Aiken. Forty-two pupils engaged with real enthusiasm and enjoyment, and excellent feedback was received from both participants and parents.

In closing, thanks must again be made to the Music Department and peripatetic staff mentioned previously, who led ensembles which represented the school in the Summer Concert and throughout the year in such challenging circumstances, and in facilitating music lessons, enabling pupils to achieve online grade qualifications and performance opportunities. Thanks also to all those named above who rose to the technical challenges of creating, recording and editing audio and video, or using and gaining skills in creating new ways of doing things and new opportunities such as the Summer Scheme. It has surely been a season like no other.

Staff and pupils now look hopefully towards the return and rebuilding of musical events within the Academy, which carry such a valuable and valued ethos to all involved in school, and to many in the community.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD SCHEME

The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme in school continues to grow each year with more and more students enrolling.

At Bronze Award level students are required to undertake a period of volunteering in the local community, participate in some form of physical recreation, develop a skill and complete a challenging expedition.

At Gold Award level students are required to complete the same sections as at Bronze level, but for a longer period of time. In addition to these areas, students must also complete a five-day residential programme.

- BRONZE:**
- Jacob Bradley
Adam Douglas
Elke Hamilton
George Kenneway
Mark Kernohan
Lloyd Logan
Sarah Mackenzie
Gary McCready
Sam McDowell

- GOLD:**
- Harry Bill
Harry Fleming
Ben McKane
Alex McLeister
Jessica Quail

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, many pupils have been unable to complete all of their activities at this time. To this end, the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award has brought in “The Certificate of Achievement”. This is a formal recognition, by the DofE of pupils’ dedication to their programmes and everything they have achieved to date in Volunteering, Physical Activity and Skill Development as well as their resilience in coping with ongoing uncertainty.

Pupils who have received this certificate to date are:

- BRONZE:**
- Ellie Bradley
Maddie Carter
Henry Casson
Rayann Edris
Glen Espie
Marian Farquhar
William Francey
Cathy Gilmore
Mark Glenn
Eva Kelly
Alexander Marks
Max McVeigh
Amy Millar
Abi Montgomery
Ellie Paul
Emma Weir

- GOLD:**
- James Craig
Rachel McCartney



BALLYMENA ACADEMY

Games Provision

Aim

In promoting and developing skills, fitness and enthusiastic participation, the school aims to develop excellence in a wide variety of physical activities, including sports and games as well as non-competitive pursuits, with the emphasis on fitness and healthy lifestyles.

Thanks to the commitment, enthusiasm and expertise of the teaching staff, and indeed a number of involved parents and former pupils, the school is able to offer a wide and varied selection of physical activities, in line with the Co-Curricular Physical Recreation Strategy.

As part of the Curriculum throughout the school, physical education and general fitness are encouraged with P.E. and Games allocated at least three periods per week for all pupils in Years 8 – 13.

P.E. and Games develop fitness, overall co-ordination, perception and strategic awareness along with personal and social skills. The interests and needs of pupils are accommodated through a wide range of activities – indoor, outdoor, individual, team, competitive or purely recreational – each offering the opportunity for pupils to fulfil their potential. Although traditionally the major sports in Ballymena Academy have been hockey and rugby, ample opportunity is available to participate in and explore many other activities including Aerobics, Athletics (track and field), Badminton, Basketball, Canoeing, Cheerleading, Circuit Training, Conditioning, Cricket, Cross-Country, Dance, Dodgeball, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Golf, Gymnastics, Handball, Health and Fitness Club, Netball, Soccer, Squash, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis and Zumba.

Pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of loyalty and commitment to the school and those selected to represent the school, whether as individuals or as members of a team, are expected to make themselves available for training and matches, including those played on Saturdays.

On-site facilities

Ballymena Academy's own on-site facilities include two gymnasiums, Minor Hall, three all-weather hockey pitches, two grass football pitches, six rugby pitches, three cricket squares, five tennis courts and three outside netball courts. Three brand new multi-purpose floodlit AstroTurf pitches were opened in 2015.

Off-site facilities

Pupils have opportunities to enhance their games skills not only in school but also at the Seven Towers Leisure Centre, Fitness First, Ballymena Rugby Club, Ballymena Ladies' Hockey Club, Ballymena and Antrim Athletics Club, Ballymena Tennis Club, Ballymena Cricket Club, Ballymena Swimming Club, Churches' League Badminton – depending on their specialism(s).



Sportsmark and Goldmark Awards

The school has been awarded the Sportsmark Award and the Goldmark Award in recognition of its outstanding progress in fulfilling sporting aims and the high level of commitment given to developing sport in partnership with the local community.

Pastoral Care

YEAR 8:

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS for OUR NEW PUPILS

- Year 8 Form Assembly instils a sense of community
- Each Year 8 Tutor Group is assigned two Designated Staff and four Sixth Form Mentors
- Year 8 pupils share a lunch period with Year 9 pupils only
- Personal Health and Social Education programmes are delivered by specialist teachers
- Specific Induction activities ensure inclusion of all and foster friendships

FRIENDLY and CARING SCHOOL

Though Ballymena Academy is a large modern school, it is friendly and caring. If a pupil is anxious or in difficulty someone will help: Peer Mentors, Classroom Teacher, Form Tutor, Pastoral Advisor, the Head of Year, School Nurse, School Counsellor, Pastoral Vice-Principal.

Parents are key pastoral care partners. They are strongly encouraged to contact the school if in any way concerned about their child's well-being: for example, about bullying, or anxiety about the impact of a pupil's workload or other factors outside school which may be affecting their child psychologically or physically.

Pastoral issues are discreetly and sensitively addressed in the context of both school situations and broader health, personal and social circumstances.





All Teachers share in Pastoral Care. They provide a safe environment in which pupils can grow. They set behavioural standards and have clear expectations. They are demanding – but fair.

Our Pastoral Care Programmes exhort pupils:

- to be respectful and considerate
- to show emotional intelligence in their dealings with others
- to demonstrate self-discipline in school and in life

POSITIVE and ENABLING DISCIPLINE

In keeping with our positive ethos and the good relationships which characterise our school, we encourage children and young people to act responsibly and with respect for others.

Rules and regulations are kept to a minimum, clearly stated and published to pupils and parents.

SPECIAL NEEDS and CONCERNS

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS [SENco]

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator ensures that in co-operation with NEELB personnel, the special requirements and learning needs of identified pupils are appropriately addressed. This is done through individualised support programmes devised by classroom teachers, Heads of Subjects, Literacy and Numeracy co-ordinators.

PASTORAL CARE PROGRAMME

- provides induction information for all 'new' pupils
- provides daily support: Class Teachers, Form Tutors, Pastoral Advisors, Heads of Year, Peer Mentors



- fosters self-discipline through Tutor Programmes, Assemblies, Codes of Conduct
- strives to eradicate bullying through education, support and care
- influences attitudes and behaviours through PSHE
- avails of external support – e.g. the Counselling Service in times of difficulty or trauma
- provides an enriching co-curricular programme throughout the year
- facilitates parental contact: Open Nights, Information Evenings, Interviews, Reports
- provides parents with Pastoral Care policies: e.g. Child Protection, anti-Bullying

PASTORAL CARE SYSTEM

- Heads of Year co-ordinate the work of Form Tutors
- Pastoral Advisors liaise with Pastoral, Vice-Principal, Heads of Year and Tutors
- Pastoral Advisors support pupils and link with class teachers and parents
- The Pastoral Vice-Principal meets with Heads of Year, Pastoral Advisors
- The Pastoral Vice-Principal supports and sustains each Pastoral Team
- Designated Staff support on matters of Child Protection
- A school Care Team liaises with outside Agencies
- Staff help pupils to develop their self-management and organisational skills
- A professional Counsellor is available for pupil consultation
- Helplines and Counselling Services contact details are displayed on Advice Boards
- The School Nurse and School First Aid Team respond to health or injury concerns

HEALTH EDUCATION and GENERAL WELL-BEING

Well-informed teachers discuss issues such as Drugs Awareness, RSE, Obesity, Social Networking, Online Gaming and Responsible Driving. Pupils are prepared for the challenges and responsibilities of teenage and adulthood life. A Health Education programme also enables pupils to engage with environmental factors which threaten the quality of life.

ATTENDANCE

Excellent standards of attendance and exceptional exam averages bear out the high correlation between attendance and achieving full academic and personal potential. In partnership with parents, the school encourages full attendance and punctuality.

PUPIL REPRESENTATION

- Pupils' representatives contribute to improvements in teaching and learning, pupil welfare, school meals, co-curricular experiences.
- Pupil Representatives are elected annually.
- Junior, Middle and Senior School Councils channel pupils' views to Heads of Year.
- Pupil opinions are also elicited through questionnaires.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Sixth Form Prefects ...

are elected by pupils and staff. Senior Prefects are appointed after interview. Prefects make significant and valuable contributions to school life-particularly on public occasions such as Open Morning and Open Nights, Prize Day, Parents Consultation Evening, annual Music Concert and School Play. Prefects receive training and are encouraged to be aware of their role as leaders and role-models.

Sixth Form Peer Mentors ...

receive specific training for their important support role with pupils in Junior and Middle School. They make a valuable and active contribution to our caring ethos.

Sixth Form Learning Mentors ...

help to support pupils in areas of their learning in which they need some guidance or may find a significant challenge.

The Sixth Form Committee ...

takes responsibility for the efficient running of the Sixth Form Centre. On a wider front, the contribution of Sixth Formers, as active citizens, to voluntary activities and fund raising is extensive – locally, nationally and internationally.

Co-Curricular Committees ...

offer a range of leadership opportunities to be involved in the planning, organisation and delivery of aspects of our co-curricular programme.



(D) Security Policy

The security of all those who use the school premises and their property, along with that of the premises themselves, is prioritised by the Board of Governors. Stringent efforts are made to ensure that proper security measures are in place and observed while still recognising the need for appropriate access to all users, including visitors. As, and when required, additional measures are recommended to the Senior Leadership Team and thereafter to the Board of Governors.

A security policy has been established by the Board of Governors and copies are available to parents on request.

Remote control barriers are in place on main driveways. A close circuit television system is in operation. There is also camera surveillance of traffic entering the grounds. All visitors are directed to the main school entrance and reception area, where access is monitored and a record of visitors kept. Visitors' badges are issued at the office for visitors accessing any part of the buildings other than the main reception area, Careers Suite and the Principal's office.

An intruder alarm system has been installed in the most vulnerable areas of the school buildings.

In line with Department of Education requirements and in keeping with Child Protection Regulations all members of staff, governors and volunteers are subject to Access NI clearance.



(E) Relationships and Sexuality Education

RSE focuses on the quality of relationships between family members, with an emphasis on stability, respect, caring and support in the home and thus in society. The RSE programme is provided in the broader context of health, personal, social and moral education and is delivered within such subjects as Learning for Life and Work (P.S.H.E.), Science, Religious Education, English, Home Economics and, where appropriate, through our Pastoral Care system.

(F) Anti-Bullying Policy

Pupils', parents' and staff perceptions show that bullying is not a significant feature of Ballymena Academy. The Anti-Bullying Policy recognises that this school must be vigilant and accepts its responsibility to seek to prevent bullying, to support those who are bullied and to enable young people and parents to report bullying in the confidence that their concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively.

Adopting a proactive approach to the issue, Anti-bullying information is regularly conveyed to pupils in a wide variety of ways throughout the year.

The school liaises closely with other schools, statutory agencies and organisations in the community to help in its work to eliminate bullying of all kinds, as part of its overall commitment to Child Protection and to providing a safe and secure learning environment.

(G) School Development Plan

The School Development Plan was revised in line with the "Every School a Good School" policy and the regulations of the Department of Education. The School Development Plan brings together the school's priorities and the key outcomes and targets needed to achieve these. This provides clear guidance for the school and the emphasis is very much on safeguarding the young people, supporting their learning and attainment and making best use of available resources.

Drugs Education Policy : Summary

Ballymena Academy recognises that the care, welfare and protection of all pupils is of paramount importance.

A sustained Drugs Education Programme, delivered through focused Curricular and Cross-Curricular topics and themes, enables pupils to make informed judgements and choices.

Above all, Ballymena Academy seeks to create a supportive and caring school environment through which confident and fulfilled pupils are unlikely to be tempted into drug misuse in wider society.

Aspects of Drugs Education Programme

Curricular materials delivered through Science, Home Economics, Physical Education, Religious Education and English Programmes of Study emphasise how the medicinal application of drugs can enhance the quality of life.

In marked contrast, it is stressed that the abuse of drugs can severely impair health and, indeed, endanger life. Legal implications are also considered.

Pupils' social skills are enhanced so that they may counter and resist those attempting to embroil them in drug-related activities.



Moreover, the school's Drugs Education Co-ordinator ensures that the teaching staff are fully conversant with initiatives and materials emanating from the Police Service, voluntary and statutory agencies.

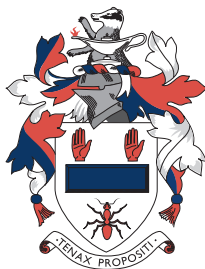
Drugs Education Policy Document

The Drugs Education Co-ordinator will be pleased to explain to parents full details of the school's policies on the management of prescribed medicines in school; procedures related to the safe management of solvents in schools; procedures and personnel pertinent to an emergency drugs-related situation; procedures and sanctions specific to suspected illicit substance misuse; obligations and procedures concerning possession or dealing of drugs on school premises.

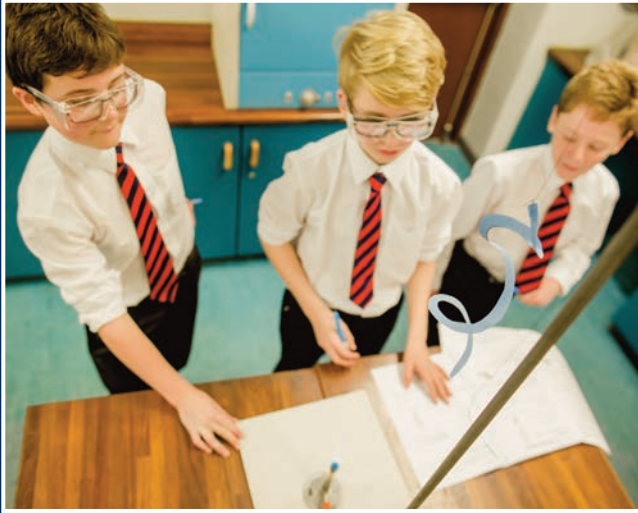
These procedures are included in the overall Drugs Education Policy Document which is available to parents on request.

Inculcating Positive Attitudes and Behaviour

Those parents who wish to consult the main Drugs Education Policy Document will be reassured that Ballymena Academy seeks to inculcate attitudes and reinforce behaviours which will deter drug experimentation and abuse.



A detailed **Prospectus** is available, as are copies of the school regulations and policy documents relating to many aspects of school organisation. These include the School Curriculum, Child Protection, Anti-bullying and S.E.N. and may be obtained from the school office free of charge. A copy of the school regulations and Code of Conduct is made available to each pupil and his/her parents on enrolment.



BALLYMENA ACADEMY

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Voluntary Grammar School
Boys and Girls
Admissions No. 176
Enrolment No. 1200
Age Range: 11 - 18 years

Principal: Mr. S.W. Black, M.Sc., PGCE, PQH (NI)
Chairman of the Board of Governors: Dr. D. Johnston, O.B.E., M.B., M. .Sc., M.Med.Sc., F.R.C.G.P