

**BALLYMENA ACADEMY**

**SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**2023 - 2026**

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| **Preface** |
| This School Development Plan (SDP) details the priorities of Ballymena Academy for the period 2023 - 2026. These priorities have been identified after an analysis of a range of information and consultation with parents, pupils, staff and the Board of Governors of the school, as well as educational and community partners. |
| **Introduction** |
| Building upon traditions established over almost two centuries, Ballymena Academy remains committed to the pursuit of excellence in a learning community which is welcoming, caring and inspiring. The school has a reputation for academic achievement and is renowned for its extensive co-curricular programme which forms a very important part of our school ethos.  Good schools, like all successful organisations, reflect carefully and regularly on their practice and on the progress made towards the achievement of their goals and the realisation of their vision. There is embedded in their culture a process of rigorous self-evaluation and review, combined with a commitment to continuous improvement and we, in Ballymena Academy, embrace that culture. In the Kirkland Rowell survey report, Parents rated the school’s commitment to self-evaluation as ‘outstanding.’We are committed to ensuring that we live up to our Mission Statement, “Ballymena Academy Cares for the Individual and Inspires Learning and Achievement”.  This School Development Plan recognises key strengths, identifies areas where improvement and development are needed and contains agreed Action Plans to improve the standard of education provided to our pupils.  There are many challenges facing our education system and schools today, not least in addressing the legacy issues emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic. Curricular changes and developments in area-based planning have been prevalent in recent years but undoubtedly the current climate of financial restraint and continued Union action in schools imposes serious limits on what can be achieved. In spite of these constraints, this School Development Plan charts a path which will help us to move forward to address key priorities with the aim that our young people continue to be cared for, inspired to learn and achieve and are provided with skills and values which will support them for the rest of their lives. |

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| **A statement and evaluation of the ethos of the school.** | | |
| Ballymena Academy is a co-educational, interdenominational Voluntary Grammar School with the motto **Tenax Propositi** (‘steadfast of purpose’) . That core purpose has been interpreted in the mission statement as: **Ballymena Academy Cares for the Individual and Inspires Learning and Achievement,** and these key features of the ethos are manifested as commitment to :  Caring: the caring ethos is evident in the positive (excellent) relationships and togetherness which exist within the school community, a community which values integrity, honesty and respect. It underpins the effort and commitment to the wellbeing, safety and security of pupils and staff and to supportive pastoral care structures. The school encourages and enables participation in organisations, campaigns and causes which improve the lives of others and promote respect for others.  The individual: each member of the school community is valued and respected as an individual and is required to show respect to others, to the authority and property of the school, and to the surrounding environment.  Inspiring: Pupils’ relationships with teachers and with the school itself are key to inspiring pupils. This is underpinned by well-qualified, enthusiastic and professional teaching staff and the team of dedicated support staff delivering a high-quality service to facilitate high-quality learning and teaching. High expectations are held for one and all.  Learning: is broadly viewed and includes all aspects of the extensive educational service and the range of opportunities which are provided by this school, in and out of the classroom, during and beyond the school day. The curriculum is kept under review and the young people are prepared as life-long learners, for higher education and for adult and working life, in order to enable them to make a positive contribution to their community and the world beyond.  Achievement: in keeping with the broad perspective, the school seeks to motivate and enable young people to achieve excellenceacross all activities in which they are involved; this includes public examinations and embraces all aspects of the extensive co-curricular programme. Such opportunity develops confidence and enables pupils to set high standards, shape personal goals and pursue individual interests in a manner which broadens horizons and enables them to fulfil their potential.  A close-up of words  Description automatically generated  Staff, pupils, parents and members of the wider school community  have been involved in agreeing a set of core values that will be  modelled in all aspects of school life.  The school is oversubscribed and enjoys wide support from the local  community for events such as concerts and drama productions; as  well as large-scale uptake for activities offered to local primary school children. Significant outreach work has been done with local primary schools to support KS2/KS3 transition and to introduce Ballymena Academy to newcomer families.  Ballymena Academy is proactive within the broader community, offering facilities to local clubs and organisations and engaging in outreach work with primary schools and collaboration ventures with other post-primary schools.  Staff support for the school is very high as shown in survey evidence and ongoing staff involvement in large numbers across a range of co-curricular activities.  The values and ethos of the school are expressed publicly at assemblies and other occasions such as Prize Day , welcome and information events for parents etc. Pupils are encouraged to value and support one another and to participate in school life with a high percentage being involved in co-curricular activities.  There is a very strong Pastoral care system where pupils are valued as individuals, supported and guided. A preventative approach is evident in key areas such as mental health & well-being and digital/online safety. Among the strengths of the pastoral provision are the very supportive and inclusive ethos; the learning experiences provided for the pupils beyond the classroom to develop their personal and social skills; and the effective communication of pastoral policies and information to parents.  The daily classroom experience encourages the stretch and challenge of all pupils regardless of background or ability. Pupils achieve very high levels of success at GCSE and A-Level examinations and there is a culture of high expectations.  There is a broad consensus that the current aims and ethos statement represents the School and its traditions, character and values. In a Kirkland Rowell Survey of 2022 parents rated the image of the school in the local community as ‘outstanding’. | **Evidence** | |
| Kirkland Rowell Survey 2022  Examination outcomes over the past five years exceed N.I. Grammar School averages at GCSE and ‘A’ Level and other comparative data analysis, such as ‘A’ level Information Service (ALIS) residuals, is positive.  High levels of success and participation rates are evident in the Co-Curricular Programme as outlined in the Annual Report to Parents and the Principal’s monthly report to the Board of Governors  Retention rates are well above those of other similar schools. | |
| **2 (a) A summary and evaluation, including through the use of performance and other data, of the school’s strategies for learning, teaching, assessment and raising standards of attainment among all pupils, in particular in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using Information and Communications Technologies (ICT).** | | |
| Improving the quality of Learning and Teaching and raising standards throughout the school have been prioritised in a significant number of ways over the last number of years. School Improvement Day (SID) and Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) processes are used to identify, share and promote best practice in the areas chosen for development, such as, in recent years:-   * on-line teaching and learning, * boys’ engagement and attainment, * classroom management strategies * marking and feedback * celebrating pupils’ work * enhancing links with the local community.   Standards of attainment are high with results for 2019-2023 being among the best ever recorded in the Academy’s history and well in excess of NI Grammar School averages. In the Kirkland Rowell survey (KR) 2022, parents rated the school’s standards attained against national academic criteria as ‘outstanding’ . In the most recent ETI inspection report 2018 it was noted that ‘The senior leadership team articulates a clear, strategic vision for improvement in: learning and teaching; care, welfare and support within the school community; and, the standards attained by the pupils.’  In order to promote the raising of standards of attainment the school has developed processes of data presentation, analysis, target setting, action planning and review at whole school and departmental level. Departmental results over three years, Performance Analysis 15 (PA15) residuals, Transfer Test Results and Northern Ireland Grammar School Averages are used in order to make this process meaningful.Data analysis as part of the process of self- evaluation is rigorous - governors, parents and pupils have indicated a high level of confidence in the school’s self-evaluation procedures. Data analysis and self-evaluation has worked effectively in identifying strengths and areas for further development at whole school and departmental level. Action plans arising from the priorities in the School Development Plan and data analysis place emphasis on further improving standards. Each Head of Department (HOD) completes a review cycle meeting annually with the Principal to discuss departmental data, agree action points and targets. Departmental Action plans are developed with teaching and learning as a key focus, discussed with, approved and monitored by the Curriculum Vice-Principal . Departmental Minutes are shared monthly with the Curriculum VP, who meets termly with individual Heads of Department as part of the review process. Schemes of Work and teaching and learning resources are regularly updated in light of new action plans and revised specifications. Schemes are subject to departmental annual end-of-year review.  In relation to the use of performance and other data the school has focused on further developing  tracking procedures, including the review of common assessment tasks, to facilitate progress reports being issued 3 times per year for pupils in years 12 -14 and twice for pupils in year 11( affected by Action Short of Strike- ASOS).  Each department tracks pupil attainment and has procedures for flagging concerns to the Head of Department who oversees the implementation of agreed learning support strategies**.** A wide range of learning support strategies have been implemented across departments. Strategies have been agreed and formalised within departments. Teachers use varied forms of assessment and feedback to monitor pupil progress and identify areas for further improvement. Planned developments in this area were impeded by ASOS – see action plan 2022-2023. In the Kirkland Rowell report 2022 Pupils rated the school as ‘outstanding’ in terms of supporting and encouraging them to do their best and make progress.  An Assessment, Recording, Reporting Committee (ARRC) meets regularly. A comprehensive range of strategies in relation to Assessment, Recording and Reporting has been developed and refined to promote effective learning – these include further developing electronic reporting, tracking and progress updates, refinement of common assessment tasks, assessment of/ for learning.  The school has focused on developing its approaches to monitoring and evaluation. A Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group, comprising representatives from various departments, has been formed in order to develop approaches**.** Work to date in this area has shown some progress:- Principles and procedures have been established which promote the identification, sharing and promotion of best practice focusing on:- observation of classroom practice; sampling of pupils’ work; surveying pupils’ views. Plans to have all departments involved in two of the above by June 2018 have been affected by action short of strike. It is the school’s intention to continue its work in this area, embracing practice outlined in Education Training Inspectorate’s (ETI) ‘Empowering Improvement – Stepping Forward Together’ once industrial action has ended.  Teaching and support staff work continually to create and maintain a supportive and motivating atmosphere for learning, holding realistically high expectations for all pupils. Routine classroom practices involve a balance of teaching approaches including whole class, group, paired and individual activities with AFL strategies embedded**.** In the 2022 Kirkland Rowell Report , parents rated the quality of teaching as ‘Very Good’ and pupils rated it as ‘Outstanding’. The school policy on Learning and Teaching has been formalised in Stage 0 of the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, which is shared with staff and reviewed annually**.** The content of Stage 0 defines learning and teaching best practice effectively. A survey of parents and pupils indicated that there is a very high level of confidence in the quality of learning and teaching. Excellent outcomes in terms of results confirms the quality of learning and teaching. Whilst the policy is effective in defining practice, it needs to be structured in a way which facilitates benchmarking in order to flag specific strengths and areas for further focus.  In March 2020, the lockdown situation evolving in response to COVID 19 resulted in a wholesale shift to the use of Google Classroom as a mechanism for the delivery of learning and teaching programmes. Marking and feedback took place . It remains a priority for the school to upskill pupils, teachers and parents in the area of electronic learning, teaching, assessment, marking, giving feedback.  Whole school training sessions include focus on sharing practice and further enhancing the quality of learning and teaching as do PRSD objectives which also focus on elements of learning and teaching practice.  The established Learning Support Team (LST) ensures effective intervention and support are in place to meet the additional educational and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning.  Literacy and Numeracy Action Plans are reviewed annually, and present strategies designed to raise standards in Communication and Using Mathematics.GCSE results in English Language and Mathematics have been maintained above NI Grammar School averages % A\*-C and A\*-B. Pupils have benefited from meeting with Numeracy and Literacy mentors. Additional strategies for further enhancing standards will be implemented in Literacy and Numeracy.  Curriculum provision is detailed in the school’s Curriculum Policy. The school has a clear, coherent plan for the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4, which guides the work of the teachers and staff. The school has made progress towards broadening the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. At present, the school is offering 32 GCSE courses and at KS5 29 subjects are on offer. More than the requisite 1/3rd are vocational.  Parents and pupils indicate very high levels of satisfaction with the curriculum offered. In the Kirkland Rowell Report Parents rated the quality of curriculum, choice of subjects as ‘outstanding’  The school was successful in its application to become a BTEC and Essential skills accredited centre. A recent review took place of access to the study of languages in the junior school and adjustments were made to provide access , through a carousel structure, for all pupils to French , German and Spanish in year 8. Initial work was then carried out on revision of the Personal Development (PD) element of Learning for Life and Work (LLW) at KS3 and has subsequently been implemented across Years 8-10. This included extensive revision of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) material in line with Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) RSE Hub guidance. Topics requiring additional attention at KS3 will be integrated into subjects or tutor programme. The current focus of the group will now move to tutor group programmes and KS4 Learning for Life and Work (LLW) provision.  A separate working group has met and devised a system for celebrating engagement, success and progress utilizing SIMS Behaviour Management. The implementation of this has been paused due to ongoing industrial action.  The curriculum plan, the organisation of classes and timetables for each academic year, are created based upon the relevant cohort’s preferences. All pupils have equal access to the full range of the curriculum. Specific arrangements are made on an individual student basis for special educational needs are coordinated in the best interests of the pupils. The curriculum plan is delivered efficiently, giving appropriate time and emphasis to each curricular area.  The school identified the need to enhance pupils’ digital skills competence. progress has been made in this area by introducing new courses:- a discrete programme of Digital Literacy, Computer Science, and Information Technology has been developed and implemented for pupils in Years 8 – 10 ; within GCSE Digital Technology, a unit in Programming is now offered as an alternative to Multimedia.  A high priority is given to Careers Education Information and Guidance (CEIAG) to enable pupils to make informed choices about their learning programme, understand its relevance and, as a result, inspire learning and achievement The school is the one of very few schools in the UK to be awarded the Prospects Quality Award in CEIAG at Gold standard and to have successfully completed the reaccreditation process . | SID Agendas & Resources  PRSD documentation  Results Data booklet : GCSE, AS , A2  Record of review & target setting meetings HOD/Principal  Record of review meetings Head of Department (HOD) / Curriculum Vice-Principal (VP)  Annual Report to Parents  Teaching and Learning Policy  Departmental Development Plans  Departmental Schemes of Work  Minutes of Departmental Meetings  KR survey results summaries  Learning Support Team interventions and minutes of related meetings.  Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Minutes  Reports to the Education Committee of the Board of Governors  Schools Information Management System (SIMS) Lesson Monitor and Assessment Manager  Careers Education, Information and Guidance (CEIAG) Prospects Assessment Report  Curriculum Policy  Learning and Teaching Policy  Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy  Monitoring and Evaluation Principles and Procedures  Literacy policy & Action Plan  Numeracy Policy & Action Plan  Guidance and training materials on digital learning platforms  Feedback from ETI Inspection 2018 | |
| Future Actions   * Evaluate and review Assessment , Recording and Reporting Policy * Review Teaching and Learning Policy. To further develop, share and promote best practice in relation to teaching and learning (including strategies in relation to dealing with underachievers and the Gifted and Talented. * Further developing effective use of data to shape classroom practice and for the purpose of developing intervention strategies and student support. * Relaunch of Monitoring, Evaluation and Review (MER) subgroup & review of current and planned MER processes including peer observations, reflective practice and departmental self-evaluation audits. * Review ICT provision including policies , courses, schemes, access, training and accreditation. * Continue to reduce intra and inter subject variation in the quality of learning, teaching, assessment and achievement. * Review the curriculum, including CEIAG, and adapt to reflect the needs, interests and career aspirations of learners. | | |
| **2 (b) A summary and evaluation of the school’s strategies for providing for the special, additional or other individual educational needs of pupils** | | |
| There are currently **62** pupils on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register, including 10 pupils with a statement of educational need (supported by 7 Learning/Behaviour Support Assistants)  Meeting the needs of all our pupils (including those with special, additional or other individual needs) is an integral part of the caring ethos of the school. The school provides effective support for pupils with special educational needs under the direction of the Deputy-Principal (DP) , the SENCo (Learning Support Coordinator) and Assistant SENCo.  The SENCo meets weekly with the DP and bi-weekly with Assistant SENCo to discuss related development matters  The SENCo takes the lead in the coordination of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) . IEPs/PLPs are reviewed twice each year, supported by feedback from staff and in conjunction with the pupil and their parent to best meet their individual needs – showing specific strategies within subject areas.  In recent years there has been a focus on developing structures to address SEN issues (including implementation of SEND Act). To this end an Assistant SENCo was appointed to help manage SEN caseload and development of SEN provision. The SEN policy provides clear guidelines for roles and responsibilities and the SEN handbook/Google Drive area offers opportunity for staff to access relevant SEN information relating to specific pupil needs.  The SENCo liaises regularly with external agencies such as the Education Authority’s (EA) Educational Psychology Services, the Family and Child Consultation Service, the Autism Support Disorder (ASD) Support Service and the EA services for those with visual or hearing impairment. The Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy emphasises the needs of individual pupils. On an annual basis, staff are trained in updating their skills in the teaching of pupils with Special Needs.  The SEN department promotes a co-ordinated approach to raising standards of achievement amongst pupils with SEN status . The Special Education Needs Co-ordinator is a member of the Learning Support Team. The Special Educational Needs department provides leadership in identifying and addressing the educational needs of individual and through the co-ordination, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of tailored support programmes.  The SENCo and Assistant SENCo are given additional non-teaching time within their timetable. The SENCo meets weekly with the DP and bi-weekly with Assistant SENCo to discuss related development matters. Time is given towards SEN whole staff training within the Staff Development Days programme.  SENCo time is protected at points in the year to support testing of pupils and associated development of appropriate IEPs/PLPs.  Transition from primary school to Ballymena Academy is seen as a key part of their successful integration and ongoing educational journey, and to this end, there is close liaison prior to entry. Staff are informed of pupils with SEN issues and receive relevant whole school training to ensure best support for the young people.  LSAs are used to support pupils during internal and external exam periods.  There has been an increase in referrals and testing of pupils has led to a more comprehensive identification and provision for pupils with specific needs.  EA advice to reduce number of pupils IEPs/PLPs has been implemented, where possible. A reduced SEN list and new Intervention register have been established. Statemented pupils have been moved to PLPs on SIMS and initial awareness raising has been provided for all staff on function of PLPs  In the Kirkland Rowell Report , parents rated the teaching of pupils with special needs as ‘Very Good’ . | **Evidence** | |
| SEN Policy  SEN Register  SEN digital handbook  Annual ( In-service Education and Training ) INSET calendar  Correspondence from SENCo and LST to parents, teaching staff  KR Parent Survey  Records of additional support  PLPI / IEP reviews  Departmental minutes  HOY minutes  Training resources provided by EA  Differentiation in lesson planning  external examination results of Statemented pupils,  Students Needing Support Register,  notes from individual pupil review meetings,  Transition Plans for statemented pupils.  Training record for Learning Support Staff  Feedback from ETI Inspection Survey | |
| **Future Actions**   * A review of the overall SEN policy, Access Arrangements policy, wellbeing space and ongoing roll out of PLPs and associated training. * To incorporate action planning into SEN department | | |
| **2 (c) A summary of the school’s strategies in promoting health and wellbeing, child protection, attendance, good behaviour and discipline of pupils** | | |
| The provision for pastoral care of pupils is engrained in the mission statement, ethos and structures of the school, and good practices are evidenced through all pastoral areas, being highly rated in recent Kirkland Rowell (22/23) surveys e.g. school discipline, truancy control, community spirit, happiness of the child, caring teachers, co-curricular activities and clubs, pastoral care, celebrating and rewarding achievement, looking after pupils well, teaching pupils with SEN and settling pupils in.  The school also invests heavily in its pastoral provision through; i) appointed staff , who access ongoing relevant Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and meet regularly to ensure strong lines of communication supporting pupil needs, ii) organised programmes (e.g. Tutor groups, assemblies, external guests, special events), and iii) provision of additional support structures such as a School Nurse, First Aiders, Care Team, Mentors, counselling service and Occupational Therapist. Learning organisers, noticeboards and the school website allow pupils to access information to help them make positive health and wellbeing choices e.g. iMatters  Positive and caring relationships between pupils and staff (KR Pupil Survey 22/23 - 80%) help to maintain positive behaviour choices by pupils. This is supported by clear practices and procedures towards prevention, support and intervention (‘Positive Behaviour Procedures’ Stages). School regulations are easily accessible for pupils through learning organisers, and the emphasis in Tutor and Year assembly programmes focuses on helping and educating pupils to understand school requirements, as well as enabling positive choices to be made both in school and in wider life issues towards personal health and wellbeing these form part of the overall Preventative Curriculum.  The P.F. Martin achievement awards, use of certificates (e.g. 100% attendance), Prize Day, assembly announcements, departmental systems, noticeboards, school magazine, website, Facebook and Twitter, all provide opportunity to celebrate and reward pupil achievements. Pupils are both consulted, and their views heard, through Student Councils. An additional rewards process has been developed to be implemented post -industrial action.    All staff have responsibility for the Pastoral Care of pupils throughout the day, with training provided and also tutor responsibility given. The Pastoral support extends through extensive use of senior pupils, through Peer Leadership, to help other pupils and support the positive environment of the school, whether as Prefects (80), Year specific Peer Mentors (76), Learning Mentors, Pupil Self-Management Mentors, Health Team, Co-Curricular Team, Environment Team, Anti-Bullying Team or Events Team. Each Leadership area is supported by staff who oversee, give training and leadership opportunities, cascading benefits to all.    Heads of Year (HOY) provide a vital support role for the pupils in each year group. This is evidenced particularly through monitoring of academic progress at key times e.g. post -examinations, specific monitoring of pupils finding greater challenges with their studies, intervention on attendance or behaviour, close liaison with parents, delivery of vital messages through assemblies and tutor programmes, liaison with staff in school, providing information for outside bodies e.g. Social Services, or weekly meetings with VP to discuss pupil matters. Pastoral Advisors support the HoY through work with individual pupils in their Learning Support, supporting interventions to reduce attendance concerns or simply providing a listening ear or shoulder to cry on for pupils facing significant life challenges. The variety of support and care aspects employed from Entrance Assessments through to the Year 8 Induction Programme, ensure a positive commencement to the new school, and lay sure foundations for future years, demonstrating the Caring ethos from even before Day 1. Recent Engage funding also provided additional supports: one-to-one academic help, Occupational Therapy (OT) services and after school library support.  Safeguarding and Child Protection are paramount within the school with Designated and Deputy Designated teachers in place, supported by a Board of Governors’ representative. An extensive programme of training supports this culture amongst all staff, volunteers and Board of Governors. Keep safe messages are delivered in a variety of mediums to pupils e.g. Internet Safety presentations, Love for Life talks, Mood matters. Anti-bullying week features prominently in the school calendar with associated activities such as anti-bullying workshops or assemblies taken by the anti-bullying team. Incidents are dealt with in accordance with the anti-bullying policy and recorded on SIMS, however preventative approaches are supported through assemblies, tutor programmes, advice in Learning Organisers, displays and access to mentors.    Attendance rates are consistently above N.I Grammar School averages (97%). Positive choices by pupils to attend, close work with parents, timely interventions with pupils presenting concerns e.g. work with Pastoral Adviser, close monitoring of figures using SIMS data with detailed follow up approaches, monthly EWO meetings and celebration of excellent attendance, all go to maintain the high figure. Lateness to school is closely monitored by Pastoral Advisors (PAs ) and HoYs, with discussion of individual attendance concerns presented at weekly meetings, monthly Head of Year committee, monthly Education Welfare Officer (EWO) meeting or with the Care Team.    The 5-Steps to Wellbeing accreditation indicates that this approach has been embedded in the school culture. Pupil health and wellbeing is additionally supported through curricular messages delivered in Learning for Life and Work (LLW) and other subject areas, and a very extensive co-curricular programme where enjoyment, skill enhancement and the development of positive lifelong habits are all supported. Concussion education is now embedded in the school for pupils, staff, volunteers and parents. Concussion protocols are seen as good practice by other organisations.  Given the many challenges and impacts of COVID on pupils, their learning, motivation, engagement and attainment, the school has prioritised the development of a three- year strategic plan in order to address key issues and further develop practice which will have a positive impact on pupil engagement, in order to maximise engagement, academic standards and behaviour, particularly that of boys.  In relation to this there has been ongoing review of Preventative Curriculum provision for pupils through taught LLW and pastoral programmes. The review undertaken to included updated CCEA guidance on RSE at KS3. A working group met to audit provision, identifying areas of strength, areas for development and new areas to be included. Follow-up actions were undertaken even though positive feedback on KR surveys regarding Personal, Social Health Education (Parents 73%, Pupils 74%)  Development of rewards system for subjects to enhance celebration of pupil success and help promote positive behaviour and motivation. Working party met and devised a system for celebration of engagement, success and progress through School Information Management System - Behaviour Management.  Reaccreditation of Take 5 school status. Application submitted, assessment and reaccreditation resulting in :-   * the development of a wellbeing garden and other outside areas developed. * Ongoing wellbeing messages delivered. * Increased use of counsellor and OT. * Summer Games on the Green. * Use of external agencies for wellbeing talks. * Period poverty scheme * wakeup to wellbeing breakfast * vaping and anti-bullying assemblies * continued planning and use of agencies * related activities and messages in school calendar   in the most recent ETI inspection report 2018 , it was noted that ‘ a high priority is given to the school’s co-curricular strategy; most of the pupils take part in the sporting, cultural, social and academic activities provided outside timetabled lessons. A particular strength of this strategy is the well-conceived programme for physical recreation, through which the vision ‘everyone choosing regular participation in physical activity to support learning and life-long well-being’ is being realised.  Engage initiatives : Implementation of targeted interventions and supports. One to one support for underachieving pupils, after school library provision, time for Literacy Numeracy Coordinators, timetabled learning support.  All relevant Safeguarding staff and Governors have completed training with all other stakeholders informed and procedures in place  Implementation of Operation Encompass. Designated Teacher and DDT which has involved weekly meetings to ensure effective implementation through planning and review. | Kirkland Rowell Surveys 2022  Minutes of review meetings between Pastoral DP, LLW Coordinator, Health Education Co-ordinator and senior teachers.  Audit documents from subject areas and pastoral programmes  Revised LLW (PSHE) scheme of work and material at KS3  Minutes of meetings and rewards system devised. Implementation paused due to ongoing industrial action.  Attendance figures  Positive Behaviour policy.  Target setting for individual pupils  Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy  Drugs Policy  Anti-Bullying Policy Referral summaries for Counsellor  Pastoral Care Policies - Child Protection, Safeguarding  CPD staff records  School assembly and Tutor Group Programme overviews  HOY minutes  Board of Governor Minutes  SIMS  Reaccreditation of Take 5 school status. Application | |
| **Future Actions**   * continue to motivate students, in order to maximise engagement, academic standards and behaviour. * Review and develop use of SIMS Behaviour Management to include sanctions and rewards. * Review RSE policy and implementation , ensuring compliance with current legislation * Update Audit of Child Protection (CP) areas against ETI check list. * Ongoing review and development of Preventive Curriculum KS4 and KS5. Review of Tutor programmes across all year groups, including online safety. * Trauma Informed School status, building on Take 5 status. * Assess and enhance provision for the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of pupils , as part of the Being Well Doing Well programme. | | |
| **2 (d) A summary and evaluation, including through the use of performance and other data, of the school’s strategies for providing for the professional development of Staff.** | | |
| The primacy role of the teacher in the classroom and the prioritising of high-quality teaching and learning are the focus of all professional development provided by the school.  The lack of structured CPD from Education Authority (EA) or other state bodies has been countered by internal provision, staff are able to avail of a range of appropriate professional development activities, both inside and outside school. Each Staff Development Day is planned and organised by SLT in line with the School Development Plan and with guidance provided by Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI). INSET days for Staff are well-received and viewed as effective by Staff. The focus has been to develop internal CPD opportunities which draw upon the experience of staff. This has been seen at staff day sessions led and delivered by Ballymena Academy staff for Ballymena Academy staff. Areas covered in recent years include: online learning, monitoring and evaluation, SEN issues, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) , teaching, learning and behaviour management strategies .A broad range of staff have been involved in delivering these sessions. The positive response of staff to various CPD initiatives, both internal and external, has established a culture of colleagues sharing best practice and supporting one another. Sustaining this approach to share best practice will be important. The growth in staff participation in delivering CPD for their colleagues is a strength and will remain at the centre of CPD provision.  In addition, external providers are utilised on occasion. Individual staff have engaged with leadership courses provided through Regional Training Unit Northern Ireland (RTUNI) and Headmasters’ and Head Mistresses’ Conference (HMC) . External organisations have been brought into school to train staff on issues such as: Child Protection; SEN; mental health first aid; using defibrillators , learning and teaching etc.  Professional development needs of Staff are identified through PRSD, discussions at management meetings, outcomes of surveys, outcomes of annual data analysis and Communication Group feedback. In the 2022 Kirkland Rowell survey , staff rated the delivery of PRSD as ‘ Outstanding’.  Courses suitable and available to Staff, from other providers, are forwarded as appropriate.  CPD records are updated annually and forwarded to the SLT member responsible for Staff development.  Staff are given opportunities to share in the leadership of the school through promoted posts, membership of committees and working groups and leadership support posts. Teaching staff are offered opportunities to develop their expertise in leadership and management through initiatives such as fixed-term membership of SLT and the opportunity to lead or be involved in new initiatives .  An effective and well-received induction programme is provided for new members of staff by the Teacher Tutor and there will be a continuing focus on how to develop this further in the new SDP. Observations and classroom projects are assessed, and one-to-one meetings used to provide guidance and to enable reflection. External courses from EA are also utilised in the process.  The school maintains close links with the teacher training institutions through its contribution to the PGCE programme. PGCE student placements are encouraged within the school and such students speak positively of their experience within Ballymena Academy.  All new members of Staff receive appropriate induction training.  Training provided by Exam bodies, especially Council for Curriculum Education and Assessment (CCEA) , are utilised fully by HODs and other Dept members to ensure they are aware of the latest exam requirements. Attendance at CCEA agreement trials and new specification support events has been encouraged and taken up by staff. Many staff undertake roles within Examination Boards to enhance professional development,  Staff pursuing individual professional development qualifications are generally supported where requested. | | Performance data  CPD Records  SID Schedules and Feedback summaries  PRSD documentation  Records of working groups and committees  KR Staff Survey results summary  Beginning Teacher (BT) /Early Professional Development (EPD) induction materials and individual teacher records  Agreement Trial attendance records |
| **Future Actions**   * Staff well-being remains a major focus and responding to personal aims and career goals are a key part of the support offered. * Further develop action planning processes for Teaching Allowance postholders. * Mentoring of new Heads of Department – including use of audit in order to establish priorities for development * Further develop staff development processes, focusing on mentoring, reflective practice and sharing best practice.   . | | |
| **2 (e) A summary and evaluation, including, through the use of performance and other data, of the school’s strategies for managing the attendance and promoting the health and well-being of Staff.** | | |
| Ballymena Academy is fully committed to managing the attendance and promoting the health and wellbeing of all staff. The attendance policy is set out in the staff handbook and is as described by TNC 2008/2. The Principal conducts back to work interviews for staff and absences are reported to the Board of Governors. Planned absences are reported to the Cover Strategy Manager and a highly sympathetic and supportive approach aims to accommodate family and personal commitments during the school day. with Governors committed to supporting staff beyond TNC requirements in many areas.  There are high levels of attendance and punctuality within the school staff. The staff attendance figures regularly exceed the NI staff attendance average; the number of absence days being considerably lower than across other NI schools. (2 days B.A., 5 days NIGS average). The Vice-principal reviews staff attendance procedures annually and ensures staff are aware of their professional responsibility in respect to attendance. The Principal reports to the governors on staff attendance issue  Staff are consulted over school holidays and all staff have an opportunity to meet with a member of SLT, termly in communication groups to share views and concerns.  The promotion of staff health and well-being is prioritised within the school. A Health and Well-Being Working Group has been established. An externally sourced, independent confidential counselling service is available to all staff. The school works effectively with appropriate outside agencies to support the care and welfare of staff. The school’s commitment to its staff was recognised by an Investors in People accreditation in 2017.  The Principal, Deputy Principals and Vice- Principal are available to staff, on an “open door” basis. Members of staff are encouraged to discuss any issues of concern with their line managers, SLT or via Communication groups. In the Kirkland Rowell 2022 survey report , staff rated the overall effectiveness of leadership and management as ‘Very Good’ .  The school supports and encourages the work of Ballymena Academy Staff Association (BASA) in its organisation of staff events.  The School Nurse provides a “drop-in centre” for advice and treatment for staff.  Healthy eating is promoted through the school Dining Hall and staff are provided with lunch.  Fitness sessions are made available to staff ‘free of charge’.  Relationships are characterised by mutual respect, openness and trust. The Staff Room enjoys a strong collegiate atmosphere and colleagues are very supportive of one another. There is an element of social interaction and fun at annual events such as the Christmas Dinner , Staff end of year BBQ or one-off activities and celebrations. | | Staff Welfare Guidance  Attendance at Work Policies (teaching and non-teaching),  Teaching staff monthly absence statistics, notes from back to work interviews.  Health and Wellbeing Group – minutes and summary of activities  Investors in People (IIP) Report 2017  KR survey 2022  Communication group minutes |
| **Future Actions**   * To continue to develop and implement staff well-being strategies. * IIP Health and Wellbeing Reaccreditation or similar external accreditation | | |
| **2 (f) A summary and evaluation, including through the use of performance and other data, of the school’s strategies for promoting links with parents of pupils at the school and the local community, including other schools, the business community and voluntary and statutory bodies.** | | |
| The School works effectively with parents to support the education of their children. Parents value the work of the school. The School maintains links with parents through various publications, events and website information - including Parents’ Information Booklets, Subject Choice Booklets, School Policy Information, a termly Principal’s letter, Parent Mail, Parents’ Information and Consultation Evenings and through less formal opportunities. Three Parent Representatives are members of the Board of Governors and play an active part in its various Committees. The parents are provided with information about their children’s progress and achievements and about the school’s Curriculum. Steps are taken to involve pupils actively in relevant aspects of school life.  In the 2022 Kirkland Rowell report, 87% of parents stated that the school provided regular and effective communications about school life and rated written reports and quality of feedback on pupils’ work as ‘outstanding’ .  Parents are informed of their child’s progress through annual reports, tracking progress updates & annual parents’ meetings and this communication has been further encouraged through Sims Parent App. School events and Parents’ Consultations for all year groups and information evenings for parents of pupils in year 8, 11 and 13 are well attended. Social media is also used to good effect to inform parents and the local community of important events and to celebrate pupils’ achievements. Parents also have the opportunity to attend Subject Choice Guidance interviews with their children in Years 10 and 12. During the past school year, the Principal has written to parents at least once per month – a total of 12 parental letters have been issued via ParentMail, in addition to almost 200 further information emails which have been sent to groups of parents. **100%** of families are able to receive the emails.  The views of the parents are sought systemically and are taken into account when the school reviews its provision and School Development Plan. Through biennial Kirkland Rowell surveys, the school elicits opinion from parents on all aspects of its work.  An electronic newsletter for parents, pupils and staff was issued in March 2022, June 2022 and December 2022, and the school magazine ‘The Braid’ was issued electronically in June 2023.  The “Parents & Friends of Ballymena Academy” group now consists of 25 active members. Involvement has included a Pre-loved Uniform and Sports Kit recycling sale (June and August), Sporty Saturdays for Year 8 parents (September), AQE Transfer (November/December), Primary School Concert and School Carol Service (December), Year 8 Hockey Tournament (December), Open Events (January), Sponsors Breakfast (February), Saphara fundraiser (March), Leukaemia and Lymphoma fundraiser (April) and P6 Taster Days (June).  Members of SLT continue to be available to address parental concerns, whether these are expressed in person, by telephone or via the school email account  The School has established positive links with other schools as part of Ballymena Learning Together . The School uses its involvement in programmes, such as the Literacy and Numeracy programme, to strengthen links with local Primary Schools. Members of the Senior Leadership Team carry out annual visits to local Primary Schools to meet with the Principal and prospective pupils. Pupils from local Primary Schools are invited to musical productions and “Taster Days”. its programme of engagement with feeder Primary Schools. In June 2023, more than 640 pupils attended the taster events, over 3 days, from 25 different primary schools. The format of the school’s Open Events was restructured for this year. this was hugely successful with approximately 600 families attending. The school provided Mandarin weekly enrichment classes in Broughshane Primary School and were attended by all P6 pupils across the school year. A total of 9 Primary Schools attended the Primary Schools Christmas Concert in December 2022. The Ballymena Primary Schools Girls’ Hockey Tournament was held at Ballymena Academy in June 2023, with 15 schools participating. Ulster Hockey ran a Primary School Tournament in February 2023 with 5 schools attending, then another in March 2023 that 10 schools attended. The Primary Schools’ Football Tournament took place on 22nd June. 9 boys teams and 9 girls teams will take part.  The School links with a wide range of voluntary and statutory bodies and with the business community, for example in the areas of work experience, ‘mock’ interviews and STEM activities. The School seeks opportunities to improve links with local Sports Clubs and to support charities within the community, both financially and through the Millennium Volunteers’ Programme.  The Board of Governors includes representatives from the business community and from the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.  Pupils are involved with the local community through cultural, charitable, musical and recreational activities.  Through the hire of its facilities, the school has enhanced its relationship with local and provincial Sports Clubs.  3 e-newsletters are published per year, and sent to the past pupils. These are also sent to all parents and pupils and posted on the school social media.  A Ballymena Academy “LinkedIn” profile was established in 2019 and this is now the school fundraiser’s main method of communication with alumni. All BA Foundation events are organised primarily through LinkedIn and it is also used for direct communication with some of the school’s sponsors.  Alumni Networking events were held during the year.  In 2022-23, PPA ran a series of social events which were well attended.  The Careers Department, through its well-established Year 13 Work Related Learning Programme, has established a network of contacts in the local business community and with other relevant agencies. In addition, Young Enterprise visits the school each year to work with our KS3 pupils. We have also hosted work experience opportunities for graduates.  There is also a well-established sixth form charities committee which organises and hosts a range of events each year to raise money for the pupils’ chosen causes. | | KR survey 2022  Website  School magazine and news letters  Information booklets and leaflets  Principal’s letters  Social Media postings  Pupil Reports and progress updates  SIMS Parent App  Parents interview schedules  Work shadowing policy  Use of premises policy & documentation  Record of events – school calendar  The Careers Dept Diary |
| Future Developments   * Review Communication and Marketing strategy including development of past pupil network. * To investigate how to engage parents further in the school community ( including enhancement of parental engagement to support learning and further development of the Parents and Friends Group). * Further develop links with other schools and businesses, nationally and internationally. * Enhance links with community through use of premises. * Review governance and fund-raising structures. | |  |
| **Promoting the effective use of ICT, including its use to support learning and teaching, continuing professional development and school leadership and management .** | | |
| Ballymena Academy continues to operate an efficient C2K infrastructure, effectively maintained by the school’s network manager. This encompasses seven dedicated ICT rooms with a further facility currently close to completion :- the library, rooms 33, 90, 93 , 93a , SFC classroom , technology. There is supervised computer access for pupils before morning registration, during morning beaks and lunch times, and after school.  Furthermore, the school boasts a Mac suite within the Music department and an additional laptop trolley to increase flexibility in computer use. In addition to timetabled classes, departments can avail of the booking functionality, enriching lessons and schemes of work through the use of ICT. The school has 2 separate, filtered Wi-Fi networks; C2K MERU and Classnet (Apple Express Network). The Wi-Fi network has been utilised by the majority of senior students, facilitating more independent learning. All pupils have a google classroom account and have access to online resources in each of their subjects. Every member of staff has been supplied with an ipad for use both on and offsite.  SIMS is used to assist with fundamental areas of school management including attendance, behaviour, staff cover, timetabling, data management, and assessment and reporting. With the introduction of the SIMS Parent app, parental communication has improved. We operate a paperless system in regard to all our assessment reports which are now generated and distributed through the app. The school has also successfully implemented a biometric cashless catering system.  Each classroom has a PC/laptop , digital projector and Apple Tv. Departments have a resource base equipped with a computer and access to a printer. In addition, departments are allocated laptops.  The school provides a range of training and development opportunities for both Staff and Pupils on the effective use of ICT. Staff have received e-learning training on INSET Days demonstrating the educational use of iPads and associated Apps, Fronter, Google Classroom and One Drive. Staff continue to develop their ICT skills as an aid to student learning in the classroom and at home. Departments have created a range of electronic resources across a range of Virtual Learning Environments and as a result, pupils have access to learning and lesson resources online.  . | | ICT facilities in the school  Subject courses uploaded to google classroom  Digital training resources for staff  INSET Day programmes   External C2K courses on SIMS modules   Internal Training on SIMS modules  PRSD documentation.  CPD records   Role and work of ICT Technician  Role and work of the ICT co-ordinator  Dissemination of good practice/PRSD  KS3 reports  Department Minutes  Pupil Work |
| Future Developments   * Review ICT provision including policies , courses, schemes, access, training and accreditation. * Embed E-Safety in all aspects of School life. * Identify a suitable ICT quality mark and work towards submitting an application | | |
| **3. School Finances and other Resources.**  **(a) An assessment of the school’s current financial position and the use made of its financial and other resources:-**  The school is independently audited with the most recent report in 2023, giving substantial assurance that our systems safeguard and protect public funds. An annual budget is prepared each year in the context of a 3-year Financial Plan taking into account spending decisions and patterns, changes to salary costs and inflation. ( see attached Appendix 1) Financial reports aimed at tracking spending, are made at regular intervals throughout the year to the Audit, Finance and General Purposes Committee and the full Board of Governors. The resources at the disposal of the school are managed properly and effectively , with appropriate arrangements in place for financial management.  The school uses its funds to:-   * -  deliver the Curriculum * -  deliver Pastoral Care * -  provide suitable accommodation * -  implement the School Development Plan * -  meet staff costs * -  communicate with parents * -  provide Continuous Professional Development for Staff * -  provide a comprehensive co-curricular programme (including implementation of the Co-Curricular Physical Recreation Strategy)   In recent years the school has , as part of a strategy to address imminent financial challenges, accrued a considerable surplus as a result of increased income (DENI and fund-raising), reduced expenditure in some areas (e.g. co-curricular provision) due to COVID -19 and prudent management of resources.  Pro-active measures have been made to reduce current costing including :-   * A reduction in the Teaching Staff complement, from 76.1 in 2016/17 to 72.6 in 2019/20 ( although this was increased subsequently to 74.8 in 2022/23 to take account of increased pupil numbers) * Reductions amongst non-teaching staff through restructure * Change of energy suppliers   In addition to the budget share allocation the school has benefitted from an increase in income from other recurrent grants and other sources, including parental contributions, school fund-raising and sponsorship.  In relation to capital expenditure, the school seeks to enhance its facilities with the completion of Minor works programmes and a planned refurbishment programme ( including the transformation of the Board Room into an ICT Suite.)  Despite the planned accrual of a surplus, the school will face considerable financial pressure for the duration of the 3-year plan ( 2023-2026). The Common funding Formula (CFF) allocation , even with significant additional income raised through sponsorship, marketing, parental contributions and donations, will be insufficient to meet the ever-increasing costs. The pressures being experiences by all post- primary schools are aggravated by the high staffing costs associated with experiences staff and the inefficiencies of managing an aged school building, with associated additional heating and maintenance costs in order to maintain high levels of provision and staffing, without an increase in the CFF allocation , the school’s surplus will be required to meet he the projected deficits over the next three years.  **b) An assessment of the planned use of the school’s projected resources during the period covered by the Plan in support of actions to bring about improvement in standards.**  In straitened financial times it is imperative that all resources available to the school continue to be deployed efficiently and effectively and that value for money is given. To that end, the school will:-  -  maintain the accommodation to the highest standards  -  seek to improve the accommodation, where possible  -  audit curriculum delivery and structures, identifying savings where appropriate  -  ensure careful stewardship of all resources  -  explore provision of enhanced facilities in partnership with DENI  -  develop strategies to increase revenue other than the delegated budget share  Planned expenditure for the period covered by the Plan in support of actions to bring about improvements in standards is shown in the Action Plan but will continue to be reviewed in the light of budgetary constraints. Areas where funding will provide best value for money and have the most impact on our young people have been identified and prioritised. | | |
| **4. An assessment of the extent to which the school has met its key targets, or the progress that has been made towards these key targets in any School Development Plan which is being superseded or revised.**  **Student Attainment in Public Examinations 2021 to 2023**   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **‘A’ Level Outcomes 2021-2023** | | **2020 – 2021**  **(Centre Determined Grades)** | | **2021 – 2022** | | **2033 - 2023** | | | **% 3+ A\* - C grades** | | **93** | | **88** | | **86** | | | **% 2+ A\* - E grades** | | **100** | | **100** | | **100** | | | **% of all grades A\* and A** | | **67** | | **61** | | **53** | | | **% of all grades A\* - C** | | **96** | | **96** | | **94** | | | **FSM % 3+ A\* - C grades** | | **90** | | **100** | | **100** | | |  | | **\* less than 5 pupils** | |  | |  | | | **GCSE Outcomes 2021 - 2023** | **2020 – 2021**  **(Centre Determined Grades)** | | **2021 – 2022** | | **2033 - 2023** | | | **% 7+ A\*- B grades**  **(including English and Mathematics)** | **75** | | **71** | | **67** | | | **% 7+ A\* - C grades**  **(including English and Mathematics)** | **99** | | **97** | | **96** | | | **% 7+ A\* - C grades** | **99** | | **96** | | **97** | | | **% 5+ A\* - C grades**  **(including English and Mathematics)** | **100** | | **98** | | **98** | | | **% 5+ A\* - C grades** | **100** | | **98** | | **99** | | | **% of all grades A\* and A** | **67** | | **59** | | **56** | | | **% of all grades A\* - B** | **87** | | **83** | | **80** | | | **FSM % 7+ A\* - C**  **(including English and Mathematics)** | **100** | | **93** | | **100** | | | **FSM % 5+ A\* - C grades**  **(including English and Mathematics)** | **100** | | **100** | | **100** | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | | | **Child Centred Provision (Pastoral Care)**   * To support physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of pupils (in the context of Covid-19). * To develop approaches to address SEN issues (including implementation of SEND Act). * To motivate students, and boys in particular, so as to maximise engagement, academic standards and behaviour. * To review LfLW and Tutor Group provision, ensuring compliance with current legislation and relevance to the needs of pupils. * To develop, share and promote good practice among all staff, inside and outside the classroom. | The school’s status as a ‘Take 5 school’ was reaccredited, recognizing the ongoing work in the area of providing for pupil and staff wellbeing. The extensive co-curricular programme has now been re-established post-COVID. Additional initiatives to support pupil wellbeing were implemented . A significant safeguarding development focus centred around the implementation of Operation Encompass.  EA advice to reduce the number of pupils on IEPs/PLPs if educational provision for these pupils can be fully met within the classroom has been implemented. An intervention register was established . SEN files migrated to Google Drive, for ease of access. All pupils with statements have been moved to PLPs. The appointment of an assistant SENCo .  Targeted supports and interventions implemented to help underachieving pupils A separate working group met and devised a system for celebrating engagement, success and progress utilizing SIMS Behaviour Management. The implementation of this has been paused due to ongoing industrial action.  A working group was established, and extensive audit was carried out to establish provision and identify potential gaps in provision across all year groups. Initial work was then carried out on revision of the PSHE element of LLW at KS3 and has subsequently been implemented across Years 8-10. The current focus of the group will now move to tutor group programmes and KS4 LLW provision.  Regular input on staff training days in matters relating to Pastoral Care, Child Protection, Safeguarding , SEN etc | | **High Quality Teaching and Learning**   * To promote high standards of literacy and numeracy. * To review the quality of curricular provision to meet needs and interests of pupils in a changing society. * To further develop the use of Google Classroom as a teaching tool. * To further develop, share and promote good classroom practice through monitoring and evaluation, including peer observation. * To evaluate and review Assessment and Reporting practice and procedures. * To continue to enhance Careers Provision and infuse it across the school. | Standards remain high. Interventions and support were targeted, and strategies implemented with pupils on a one to one or small group basis according to their needs .  Ongoing curriculum monitoring and review. Introduction of a language carousel structure in Year 8. Vocational courses extended – introduction of Agriculture at GCSE , Occupational Studies and Essential Skills. In Sixth Form BTEC courses now included Agriculture and Double Award Construction.  All departments provide a wide range of resources on Google Classroom . Training was provided for staff pupils and parents.  A revised tracking procedure was introduced with Progress Reports to be issued 3 times per year for Years 12-14 and twice for Year 11. Although currently suspended due to action short of strike by Unions , a review of the process was carried out by Heads of Department and Heads of Year. Revising our current approach for the re-introduction of Progress Reports remains a priority.  Progression on this area was significantly restricted by the impact of ASOS action. Development focused on individual departments reviewing the CATs used in Years 11-14 in light of the introduction of Progress Reports and Tracking Tasks. The introduction of ‘data dates’ required some departments to adapt the content and timing of existing CATS, and, in some cases, create new assessment material. There were also adaptions made to the structure of Junior School Reports to incorporate the revised delivery of languages in Year 8, alongside a review of departmental comment banks for all year groups.  Prospects Quality Award – reaccreditation successfully completed, and Gold Standard re-awarded . Unifrog has been introduced. | | **Effective Leadership**   * To continue to raise the standards of pupil attainment. * To develop leadership capacity and provide training learning opportunities through our staff development programme. * To continue to develop and implement staff well-being strategies (in the context of Covid-19). * To seek to achieve optimum use of resources in order to provide a high-quality educational experience. * To engage with DENI re. the Major Works and Minor Works programmes. * To develop our self-evaluation processes. | Standards of attainment are high and well in excess of NI Grammar School averages.  A number of staff have progressed to promoted posts, membership of committees and working groups and leadership support posts. Teaching staff offered opportunities to develop their expertise in leadership and management through fixed-term membership of SLT and the opportunity to lead or be involved in new initiatives. Staff development was planned and structured throughout the year according to priorities in action plans.  Communication groups and Kirkland Rowell survey used as mechanisms to evaluate staff wellbeing. Union action impacted on the ability to run staff well-being activities on staff development days. Actions taken to address issues raised by staff. Cover minimised for staff. The Health and Wellbeing group is proactive.  Work ongoing in conversion of Board room to ICT room and plans have been drawn up for refurbishment of Sixth Form Centre Recreation Floor. Ongoing discussion re potential capital development project.  Work complete on roof replacement of three- storey block. No progress on project to enhance security and access points, project to replace library roof has moved to Tender phase. Application being re-considered in respect of toilet provision.  Rigorous data analysis continues to be honed and used to inform development. Kirkland Rowell surveys were completed by parents, pupils and staff in November 2022 and results have been analysed and used to inform the new school development plan. A comprehensive framework of self-evaluation has been developed but implementation has been halted due to union action. Two members of the Middle Management team completed the ETI programme and reported back their professional learning. The format of Departmental Action Plans was adapted in light of this information. | | **A School connected to its local community**   * To implement Communication and Marketing Strategy (including development of the past pupils’ network/school website and social media). * To investigate how to engage parents further in the school community, including enhancement of parental engagement to support learning. * To maintain and develop links with other schools and businesses. * To explore opportunities for use of premises to enhance links with community. | Two past pupil databases have been created . 3 e-newsletters are published per year, and these sent to the past pupils. Alumni Networking events were held during the year. PPA and Alumni events continue to be promoted in school via the Facebook channels.  Regular communication with parents through a variety of media. Development of an electronic newsletter for parents, pupils and staff was issued in March 2022, June 2022 and December 2022, and the school magazine ‘The Braid’ was issued electronically in June 2023.Tracking Reports were produced in October and December for Years 11 to 14. Staff industrial action prevented the March Tracking Reports from being completed. All reports are now sent to parents using SIMS Parent. ‘Parent Evening Manager’ was also used to organise parent Interviews. Development of a “Parents & Friends of Ballymena Academy” group .  The format of the school’s Open Event was restructured for this year. This includes a series of videos and department specific material to showcase the school. Taster events ran over 3 days, from 25 different primary schools. Mandarin enrichment classes were held each Friday afternoon in Broughshane Primary School and were attended by all P6 pupils across the school year. An increased number of businesses are supporting the school in various ways.  School premises are used by an ever-increasing number of groups and organisations.  Hosted the Ballymena Chamber of Commerce. | | | |
| **5. An assessment of the challenges and opportunities facing the school.**  The school has a reputation as a high-achieving academic institution with an emphasis on Pastoral Care and a wide-ranging co-curricular programme. Maintaining high standards in the face of reduced funding remains a fundamental and pervasive challenge. The measures which the school has already taken to reduce costs have led to a reduction in staffing and there is no guarantee that further cuts will not be necessary. Such further cuts may have a consequent effect on the educational service provided to pupils of this school.  The principal challenges and opportunities deriving from such a context are shown below.  **Challenges**   * The impact of industrial action * Building upon existing standards while operating with a substantially reduced budget and fewer teachers. * Addressing issues of pupil and staff health and well-being * Improving and maintaining our school facilities * Improving the quality of Learning and Teaching * Providing appropriate staff development * Maintaining an extensive co-curricular provision. * Addressing the ‘COVID gap’ – with wider ability range of pupils * The impact of AI on teaching and learning * Impact of ‘the cost of living crisis’   **Opportunities**   * Review of Ballymena Academy Curriculum structure * Enhance students’ experiences through provision of new subjects * Development of deeper relationships with other schools and the wider community * Potential refurbishment of school building * Creation of Staff Health and Well-Being group * Creation of Parents and Friends Group * Culture of sharing practice and reflective practice * Excellent opportunities in and out of the classroom * Professional, committed staff * Strong co-curricular programme   During this time, the focused effort will be to:-   * Build upon and improve the added value which this school gives to its pupils. * Sustain its high standards and its caring ethos at a time of change and uncertainty. * Develop a Curriculum which best suits the needs and abilities of our pupils whilst meeting statutory responsibilities. * Improve all aspects of the educational service provided for young people, including the buildings. * Secure Ballymena Academy’s reputation as a high-achieving school. | | |
| **6. The arrangements made by the Board of Governors to consult and take account of the views of pupils, parents, staff and other persons or bodies in the preparation of the plan.**  In preparing the School Development Plan, the Board of Governors requires that consultation takes place with all stakeholders of which one major element is the Kirkland Rowell Survey (2022) of parents, pupils and staff. The School Development Plan reflects and synthesises issues for development which have been raised not only through that survey but also by Governors; School Councils; Head of Department Committee; Head of Year Committee; Assessment Recording and Reporting Committee; Curriculum Development Advisory Committee; Staff Working Groups and Staff Communication Groups. It also reflects some concerns raised by individuals.  The School Development Plan also take consideration of the Department of Education’s key policies for schooling including:-   * Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement * Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework – a policy for self-evaluation * Target Setting and Benchmarking * Statutory Curriculum and Assessment arrangements * Entitlement Framework * Literacy and Numeracy Strategy * The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion * Child Protection and Pastoral Care (including Health and Well Being) * Professional Development of the School Work Force   The content and the identified priorities of the School Development Plan have emerged from a robust self-evaluation process which includes other independent and school-generated surveys of various school audiences and by data analysis, including ‘value added measures’ as well as comparison of examination outcomes against N.I. Grammar School norms in subject specific and whole-school terms. The information gathered in the process is a substantive component of the evidence through which the SDP evolves year on year and on the basis of which new plans are formulated. | | |
| **7. (a) Identification of the areas for development which shall be informed by the school’s self-evaluation, including the school’s key priorities for the period of the Plan, based on the Department’s priorities for education.** | | |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Child Centred Provision (Pastoral Care) | | * + - * To motivate students, in order to maximise engagement, academic standards and behaviour. Review and development of use of SIMS Behaviour Management to include sanctions and rewards. * To review the overall SEN policy, Access Arrangements policy, wellbeing space and ongoing roll out of PLPs and associated training. * To review RSE policy and implementation , ensuring compliance with current legislation. * Ongoing review and development of Preventive Curriculum KS4 and KS5. Review of Tutor programmes across all year groups. * To assess and enhance provision for the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of pupils - as part of the Being Well Doing Well programme. | | High Quality Teaching and Learning | | * To evaluate and review Assessment and Reporting policies and practice. * To review the curriculum, including CEIAG, and adapt to reflect the needs, interests and career aspirations of learners. * To review Teaching and Learning Policy. * To further develop, share and promote best practice in relation to teaching and learning (including strategies in relation to dealing with underachievers and the gifted and talented). * To review ICT provision including policies, courses, schemes, access, training and accreditation. | | Effective Leadership | | * To continue to raise the standards of pupil attainment, focusing on addressing intra and inter subject variation. * To continue to develop and implement staff well-being strategies. * To further develop self-evaluation and sharing best practice processes. * To further develop staff development processes, focusing on mentoring and reflective practice. * To seek to achieve optimum use of resources and facilities in order to provide a high-quality educational experience. | | A School connected to its local community | * To review our governance and fund-raising structures. * To review our Communication and Marketing Strategy (including development of the past pupil network). * To investigate how to engage parents further in the school community (including enhancement of parental engagement to support learning and further development of the Parents and Friends Group). * To enhance links with the community through the use of premises. * To further develop links with other schools and businesses (nationally and internationally). | | | |
| * 1. **planned outcomes, including planned outcomes in learning, teaching and raising standards of attainment, which, in the case of schools other than nursery and special schools, must include targets for raising standards of attainment in communication, using mathematics and using ICT;**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Key School Performance Indicators – Annual GCE and GCSE Examination Results** | | | | | | | | | | |  | | **2018-2019**  **( % )** | **2019-2020**  **(CAGs)**  **( % )** | **2020-2021**  **(CDGs)**  **( % )** | **2021-2022**  **( % )** | **2022-2023**  **( % )** | **B.A.**  **Five-year average**  **2019-2023**  **( % )** | **N.I. Grammar School Average**  **2018-2019**  **( % )** | **Target**  **2023-2024** | | **3+ GCE ‘A’ Level Grades A\* - C** | | **81** | **94** | **93** | **88** | **86** | **88** | **80** | **83** | | **2+ GCE ‘A’ Level Grades A\* - E** | | **100** | **100** | **99** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | | **5+ GCSE Grades A\* - C** | | **99** | **100** | **100** | **99** | **99** | **99** | **96** | **100** | | **5+ GCSE Grades A\* - C**  **(including English and Mathematics)** | | **99** | **100** | **100** | **99** | **98** | **99** | **94** | **100** | | **7+ GCSE Grades A\* - C**  **(including English and Mathematics)** | | **97** | **99** | **99** | **97** | **96** | **98** | **90** | **97** | | **7+ GCSE Grades A\* - B**  **(including English and Mathematics)** | | **74** | **79** | **76** | **71** | **67** | **73** | **\*** | **70** | |  | **Due to industrial action, Key Stage 3 assessment data is not available.**  **Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs) used in 2019/2020 and Centre Determined Grades (CDGs) used in 2020/2021.** | | | | | | | | |   **7. (c) – (d) The actions to be taken to achieve outcomes in 7 (a) and 7 (b) are found in Action Plans ( Appendix 2)** | | |
| (e**) the arrangements for the Board of Governors, in consultation with the principal, to monitor, review and evaluate progress made against the school development plan**.  The Principal , Deputy and Vice- Principals will give regular reports to the Board of Governors at the full Board meeting and subcommittees concerning the implementation and progress of the activities involved in the School Development Plan and other activities within the school. Board of Governors’ meetings are held monthly, other than in July and December; the Agenda is presented as a ‘Rolling Agenda’ with opportunities to report on, e.g. standards, finance, and to question progress.  Detailed statistical data is provided annually on examination results.  Meetings of the properly constituted Committees of the Board are held as required to consider relevant matters.  The Audit, Finance & General Purposes committee meets regularly; sets annual budget, considers budgetary updates and audit reports and makes recommendations to the full Board.  The SLT and staff work closely together throughout the year to deliver the SDP. Regular meetings, such as Heads of Dept, Pastoral Team, , subject Departments feature SDP items on their agendas routinely and there is a sense of common purpose in delivering such through a process of professional dialogue and reflection.  School Council agendas reflect both pupil-matters and relevant items from the SDP.  The SDP and Action Plans are subject to ongoing review and a comprehensive annual review. | | |