



# BALLYMENA ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

CARING FOR THE INDIVIDUAL, INSPIRING  
LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT



## WELCOME

Welcome to the second Ballymena Academy Newsletter, a publication designed to share good news and celebrate some of the many successes of our pupils and staff.

In all that we do, our aim is to care for the individual and inspire learning and achievement.

## ECO AWARD WINNER

At the end of another busy year of Young Environmentalist Society (Y.E.S.) activities, led by Mr William Warwick, we were absolutely thrilled when he was named 'Eco Teacher of the Year 2022' for the Mid and East Antrim area. We were particularly delighted that, on the eve of his retirement, he should be recognised in this way at the end of a distinguished career as our Senior Laboratory Technician.

This award recognises William's knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment both to environmental education and local conservation over many years. He championed environmental causes long before they were fashionable and has passed on a love of nature to countless pupils in Ballymena Academy.

The impact he has had on our current pupils is perhaps best expressed in the following poem written by two of our Year 9 Y.E.S. members, Chloe Allenby and Sophie Kerr.

*Mr Warwick passes his knowledge onto pupils and staff  
Which is why we wrote this poem on our school's behalf.*

*He always goes above and beyond,  
He even helped build our own school pond!*

*He has planted so many plants and trees  
This has helped so much wildlife - even the little bees!*

*He teaches us with all his passion,  
We even have the best welly boot fashion.*

*He has shared with us his interest in farming  
And made us all more aware of environmental harming.*

*Over the years at Y.E.S., which comes to almost thirty,  
He has taught us not to be afraid to get our hands dirty.*

*From him, we have learned so much, from birds in Biology  
To making the boxes they live in in Technology.*

*He helped us make sustainable Christmas decorations,  
A perfect eco-friendly form of celebration.*

*His time with us is now at its end  
And this poem is how we commend.*

*All his eco feats and deeds  
Into a greener future, our school he leads.*



## MANDARIN AT BALLYMENA ACADEMY

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum here at Ballymena Academy we provide pupils with opportunities to experience new subjects that they might not have studied previously.

In Year 8 at Ballymena we teach Mandarin, with the subject being led this year by Lily, from the Confucius Institute. We sat down with Lily this week to find out about her hobbies and interests, her home city in China and what her experience of BA has been like so far.

***Hi, Lily. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself including what your school experience was like?***

Hi, everyone. I am Lily. My Chinese name is Zha Lijuan. I am from Anhui Province. There is a very famous river (Yangtze River) running through my hometown - Anqing City. Before I came to NI, I had been teaching Mandarin in Indonesia for about 2 years. My pupils were seniors, almost 16 or 17 years old. It was a happy time there. I still keep in touch with some friends and pupils. Now I am here and I am experiencing another teaching life full of new experiences.

***How did you become involved with the Confucius Institute and make your way to BA?***

My major is a Master of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages. I enjoy teaching and also like to experience the culture of different countries.



The Confucius Institute is like a bridge connecting my dream and reality. When I got the offer, my journey began in Indonesia and has now brought me to Ballymena Academy.

***What have you been doing this year in BA?***

I started here last October. I teach Y8, Y9 and some Y14 pupils Mandarin. I prepared more than 20 topics about greetings, names, nationality, numbers, family, age and so on. After 6 or 7 topics, pupils can do a brief self-introduction such as, "Hello, my name is Lily. I am Chinese. There are 5 people in my family. They are ..." in Mandarin and I show them some traditional Chinese culture, for example Chinese zodiac, panda, Spring Festival, paper cutting and so on.

I also encourage pupils to enter various competitions run by the Confucius Institute. Almost every pupil from Y8 designed the tiger poster to celebrate the traditional Chinese new year, because 2022 is the Year of the Tiger in China.



## ***What do you do to relax at the weekends?***

I enjoy reading and have recently started growing some vegetables. I have made so many friends since coming to Ballymena Academy who have given me lots of opportunities to see NI at the weekends. I have completed some hikes with Mrs Smyth's walking group. I play table tennis with Mr Houston and Mr Munce on Friday afternoon. Mrs Connor has taken me to the theatre to see 2 different musicals and Mrs Douglas, Miss Forsythe and Miss Coulter have taken me on lots of different adventures.

## ***What has impressed you most about the pupils at Ballymena Academy?***

I can still recall my first week in Ballymena Academy. I had lost my way in the big teaching building when a pupil passed by me and said "Do you need a hand Miss?" He pointed me in the right direction, which was so mannerly.

After teaching Mandarin for a week, it seemed that every pupil I met was greeting me "hello" in Mandarin, even those I was not teaching.

I feel so welcome and respected here. Last month was my birthday and some pupils sang the birthday song to me and made birthday cards for me. I was very touched. In my eyes, the pupils are studious, moral, creative and compassionate.

# SUMMER TERM IN PHOTOS

**As the school term comes to an end this week we reflect upon a busy and yet successful summer term from a co-curricular perspective. The 1stXI Cricket team made it to the Semi-Final of the Ulster Schools' Cricket competition, Junior School pupils took part in a 'Jubilee Bake-off' and our Young STEM Ambassadors travelled to Birmingham to the UK Final of the Robotics Challenge. On the Athletics field there were a number of successes at District, Ulster and Irish level. Some pupils were recognised for their contribution to the Co-curricular life of the school at the Sports and P.F Martin Awards Assembly this week.**





# BA FOUNDATION

The BA Foundation has been established to help Ballymena Academy to continue to offer the educational experience that previous generations benefited from and accepted as a given. We know that many former pupils of our school and their parents have fond memories of their time here and we hope our friends and alumni will support our efforts to keep providing an enriched education that is still free for everyone, regardless of background.

We want to reconnect with our past pupils, to enable them to connect with one another, to build the BA community and to promote and sustain the excellence of our school. During 2020 and 2021 we held events in Belfast, London, Edinburgh and Ballymena. Details of upcoming events can be found on on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.



**Save The Date**

BA Foundation London  
Evening Networking Reception

Central London  
Venue - TBC

**13/10/22**





## WAYS TO GIVE...

- Give Your Year initiative
- Team playing kit
- Team warm-up kit
- Pitch-side advertising boards
- Drama/Music programmes
- Work Shadowing

## WAYS TO CONNECT...

- 1** To find out more about the BA Foundation and how you can become involved click [here](#).
- 2** To find out how you or your business could support the school please email [amckay847@ballymenaacademy.org.uk](mailto:amckay847@ballymenaacademy.org.uk)
- 3** You can also keep up to date with upcoming events on our social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



**BA Foundation**  
*Help Us Maintain Excellence*



# PARENTS AND FRIENDS GROUP

## Your School Needs You!

Ballymena Academy Parents and Friends Association (BAPFA) was established in 2019 to enable the whole school community to support Ballymena Academy through effort, expertise and fundraising. A workshop was organised for interested parents in the Autumn term of 2019. There was a fantastic turnout with over 70 enthusiastic parents in attendance.

A central coordinating committee was established in Spring 2020 with an aim of bringing the ideas into actions. However, as we all know, Covid 19 arrived and life as we know it changed radically. Ideas were put on ice as we all coped with our new normal.

BAPFA activity recommenced in the academic year 2021- 2022, with a highly successful Uniform Recycling Sale. Raising funds to enable BAPFA to purchase a defibrillator to be available close to all the Ballymena Academy sporting facilities was an added bonus of this environmentally friendly event. BAPFA have supported many activities within school: offering expertise in careers; supporting welcome events for new and returning parents and pupils; and providing much needed extra pairs of hands at many celebrations and events run by school for the benefit of our young people.

Most recently, BAPFA, in collaboration with the school's Cancer Research Committee, hosted a fantastic evening of fine food and music in March 2022, raising £4000 for school funds and Cancer Research.



**PRE-LOVED SCHOOL  
UNIFORM AND SPORTS  
KIT RECYCLING SALE**

**THURSDAY 30TH JUNE  
ASSEMBLY HALL  
5PM - 9PM**

**BALLYMENA ACADEMY  
PARENTS AND FRIENDS GROUP**

**Proceeds will go towards enhancing the  
provision of literacy resources in school.**

As a group BAPFA are keen to build on these first steps. With this in mind, we plan to hold a meeting in the new school year to bring together all interested parents and friends to enable us to consider our next steps! Watch out on Parentmail and social media for dates. You will all be very warmly welcomed!

Petra Corr  
On Behalf of BAPFA