BALLYMENA ACADEMY
EST. 1828

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS

OCTOBER 2026

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mark of excellence

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

(A) EXAMINATION RESULTS 2026

With Examination Boards returning examination outcomes to pre-pandemic standards in 2024, results across N.I. are lower than in 2023. However, at 'A' Level and GCSE, our results have remained high with over half of examinations sat at 'A' Level being A* and A grades and around 60% of examinations sat at GCSE resulting in A* and A grades.

It is noteworthy that there was no academic selection process to determine admissions to the year group which has just completed GCSE.

These pleasing results are a testament to the ability, hard work and resilience of our students, the dedication of our teaching staff and the support of parents.

G.C.E. 'A' LEVEL SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF PUPILS IN YEAR 14 - 2026

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
158	157	91.1	99.4
N.I. G.S. Average (2024/2025)		80.4	99.7

G.C.E. 'A' LEVEL PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS
(2022/23 – 2025/26)

	2022/23		2023/24		2024/25		2025/26	
	School	N.I. G.S. Average	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	86	84	87	80	87	80	91	N/A
achieving 2+ 'A' Levels at Grades A*- E	100	100	100	100	100	100	99	N/A

- 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.

G.C.E. 'A' LEVEL SUMMARY OF SUBJECT RESULTS OF PUPILS IN YEAR 14 - 2026

A LEVEL % Cumulative Grades (2025)							
Subject	No. entered	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Art & Design	7	29	43	100	100	100	100
Biology	54	13	44	72	94	98	100
Business Studies	16	0	13	63	100	100	100
Classical Civilisation	5	0	20	100	100	100	100
Chemistry	29	34	72	86	100	100	100
Computer Science	7	14	43	85	100	100	100
Digital Technology	10	0	20	40	80	100	100
Economics	16	0	44	94	100	100	100
Engineering	11	45	82	82	100	100	100
English Literature	20	10	40	85	100	100	100
Environmental Tech	11	46	82	91	100	100	100
Food and Nutrition	6	0	0	67	67	100	100
French	3	33	100	100	100	100	100
Further Mathematics	5	80	100	100	100	100	100
Government and Politics	20	10	55	85	100	100	100
Health & Social Care	32	0	47	97	100	100	100
History	35	31	51	97	100	100	100
Mathematics	59	19	46	68	93	97	100
Media Film and TV Studies	16	0	25	75	94	100	100
Music	5	0	40	60	100	100	100
Performing Arts	5	0	40	100	100	100	100
Physical Education	7	0	43	71	86	86	86
Physics	30	17	40	73	97	97	97
Religious Studies	18	50	67	94	100	100	100
Spanish	8	13	50	88	100	100	100

		Cumulative %			
	No. entered	Distinction*	Distinction	Merit	Pass
AGRICULTURE	11	73	100	100	100
CONSTRUCTION (Single Award)	10	10	80	90	100
CONSTRUCTION (Double Award)	17	26	88	100	100
ENGINEERING	11	45	82	100	100

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

Ashton Mui attained 4 A* grades while four other pupils attained 4A*/A grades – Lily Allenby, Catherine Macdonald, Philip Thomas and Kirk Wilson.

Another nine pupils attained 3 A* grades – Callum Bailie, Peter Cochrane, Daniel Hickey, Maia Malcolm, Matthew McCullough, Laura McDonnell, Joe McFadden, James Robinson and Taylor Stewart.

A further thirty-three pupils obtained a minimum of 3A*/ A grades – Jessica Alexander, Jacob Casson, Sophie Charleton, Jonathan Christie, Ben Collins, Ollie Collins, Leah Cromie, Michael Darragh, Holly Fisher, Katie Gardiner, Daniel Grimsley, Natasha Hall, Zane Hemphill, Finnola Henry-McCool, Evelyn Kerr, Martha Kirkpatrick, Ella Kyle, Evie McKeown, Annabel Mitchell, Rowan Murray, Lucas Neilly, Riley Parker, Sarah Patton, Hannah Ramsey, Jake Rhodes, Briony Robertson, Natalia Skrobakova, Emma Thompson, Peter Thompson, Denisa Timuc, Rory Wilson, Flo Winning and Glenn Witherspoon.

At 'AS' Level, sixteen pupils achieved 4 A grades – Adam Bingham, Matthew Brown, Annie Cathcart, Katie Currie, Molly Currie, Emma Dempsey, Isabella Gregg, Honor Gribben, Will Hughes, Simon Kennedy, Sophie Kerr, Matthew McFetridge, Farrah Park, Susanna Quigley, Rachel Rainey and Ruairi Sims.

A further twenty-seven pupils attained a minimum of three A grades at 'AS' level – Erin Adair, Chloe Allenby, Archie Ash, Victoria Cherry, Isaac Close, Ruby Forsythe, Aimee Gillan, Emily Gordon, Jamie Gregg, Jamie Humbertson, Hannah Logan, Lewis Maternaghan, Jack McCrickard, Matthew McKean, Simon McMillan, Ruth Millar, Thomas Millar, Siluna Rathgamage, Dylan Ritchie, Noah Scott, Oliver Shaw, James Stewart, Kirsten Taylor, Daniel Thompson, Zac Topping, Annya West and Chloe Wylie.

G.C.S.E. SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF PUPILS IN YEAR 12 – 2026

No. of pupils in Year 12	No. with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	No. of pupils entered for 7+ GCSEs	% of eligible pupils achieving 7+ GCSEs at A* - C (including English and Mathematics)	N.I. Grammar School Average 7+ GCSEs (2024/2025) (including English and Mathematics)	No. of pupils entered for 5+ GCSEs	% of eligible pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs at A* - C (including English and Mathematics)	N.I. Grammar School Average 5+ GCSEs (2024/2025) (including English and Mathematics)
199	3	195	92.3	90.0	195	94.4	94.0

G.C.S.E. PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS (2022/23 – 2025/26)

	2022/23		2023/24		2024/25		2025/26	
	School	N.I. Grammar School Average	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)	96	94	97	91	92	90	92	N/A
achieving 5+ GCSEs at Grades A* - C (including (English and Mathematics)	98	96	97	94	95	94	94	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.

G.C.S.E. SUMMARY OF SUBJECT RESULTS OF ALL PUPILS IN YEAR 12 – 2026 (Cumulative %)

SUBJECT	No.	A*	A	B	C*	C	D	E
Agriculture	31	10	39	58	61	81	100	100
Art & Design	29	17	52	72	76	90	100	100
Biology	67	24	62	81	93	96	100	100
Business Studies	48	8	21	60	77	96	100	100
Chemistry	54	35	69	81	93	100	100	100
Construction	57	26	65	88	95	100	100	100
Digital Technology	47	26	60	87	94	100	100	100
Drama	13	0	46	69	100	100	100	100
English	199	22	57	77	88	97	99	100
English (Ess. Skills)	13	0	0	0	0	100	100	100
English Literature	96	36	80	96	98	100	100	100
Food and Nutrition	46	2	37	59	76	83	100	100
Further Mathematics	67	31	70	85	94	100	100	100
French	48	31	63	69	90	94	100	100
Geography	28	29	57	82	93	96	100	100
German	18	44	72	78	89	100	100	100
History	114	31	72	89	94	97	100	100
Mathematics	197	21	70	86	92	98	100	100
Music	13	15	62	85	85	100	100	100
Occupational Studies	40	18	88	100	100	100	100	100
Physical Education	35	14	40	60	71	100	100	100
Physics	65	26	66	86	97	100	100	100
Religious Studies	34	47	71	85	88	88	100	100
Science Single Award	25		12	32	48	84	100	100
Spanish	47	23	77	87	96	98	100	100
Technology	39	15	26	46	64	77	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 **(DOUBLE AWARD)**	93	18	28	46	58	72	83	88	97	99	100	100

		Cumulative % of pupils entered achieving Grades							
SUBJECT	No. entered	A* - A equivalent			B equivalent	C* equivalent	C equivalent	D	E
		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
CLASSICAL CIVILISATION	15	13	13	27	67	87	93	100	100
MEDIA FILM & TV STUDIES	88	6	14	30	59	82	98	100	100

		Cumulative % of pupils entered achieving Grades							
SUBJECT	No. entered	A* - A equivalent			B equivalent	C* equivalent	C equivalent	D	E
ICT (OCN Level 2 – Pass or Fail)	12	N/A	N/A	N/A	100	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

High Achievers (2026)

Twelve young people achieved A* grades in all nine of their GCSE full courses: -
Philippa Cummings, Georgia Glenn, Joel Graham, Ava Gray, Erin Handy, Ellie Kitson, Ella Lutton, Max Makaveckas, Hannah McFarland, Daniel Russell, Sophia Sakharova and Abi Vance.

Another forty-two pupils achieved a minimum of 9A*/A grades in their GCSE full courses: -
Rosie Alexander, Oliver Beatty, Eva-Lily Beckett, Abigail Brown, Emma Carroll, Eliana Church, Jane Clarke, Evie Crawford, Toby Devine, Oscar Eddis, Jacob Evans, Mollie Gurney, Martha Harrison, Raluca Kazoni, Mia Kearney, Abigail Kelly, Joshua Kelly, Rebecca Kelly, Cleo Keenan Koskiewicz, Charlie King, Holly Kyle, Annabelle Lilburn, Luke McClelland, Anna McCorriston, Millie McCosh, Abigail McIntosh, Alfie McKay, Ross McKendry, Mark Millar, Paul Millar, Hannah Moore, Isabella Moore, Ava Murray, Andreea Musat, Cassady O'Neill, Cindy Paul, Leah Rock, McCauley Shields, Lily Thompson, Nina Tistanova, Grace White and Poppy Wilson.

They were closely followed by a further fourteen young people with a minimum of 8 A*/A grades in their GCSE full courses: -
Danny Baird, Lucy Burns, Ross Coleman, Daniel Colville, Brooke Donnelly, Emily Donnelly, Emily Legg, Daniel McCurdy, Daniel McKeown, James McMurtry, Penny Millar, Sophie Millar, Sam Montgomery and Aggie Weir-Rogers

Finally, the following 11 pupils obtained a minimum of 7 A*/A grades in their GCSE full courses: -
Lucy Bell, Yvie Caldwell, Joel Cruikshank, Katelyn Graham, Ruairi Hamill, Daniel Johnston, Scott McCloskey, Evie Rhodes, Madeline Sheridan, Conor Vercoe-Rogers and Evie Wilkins.

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	Apprenticeship	Employment	Other/ Unknown
Year 12	43	--	51	26	9	2	12
Year 13	5	--	40	-	40	--	20
Year 14	158	90	--	--	3 (2.5)	1 (0.6)	7
GRAND TOTAL	206	69	12	5	5	1	8

Attendance		
No. of possible attendance sessions	No. of sessions Attended	% Attendance
221,080	211,200	95.5

MUSIC EXAMINATIONS

The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) and Trinity Guildhall Results - Academic year 2025/2026

(ABRSM and Trinity Results entered through Ballymena Academy Face to face and online.)

Baritone

Grade 2	1 Merit
Grade 3	1 Merit

Cello

Grade 2	2 Merit
Grade 3	1 Merit
Grade 4	1 Distinction, 3 Merit
Grade 5	1 Pass
Grade 7	1 Merit

Clarinet

Grade 1	1 Distinction
Grade 2	1 Distinction, 1 Merit
Grade 3	4 Distinction
Grade 4	1 Distinction, 1 Merit
Grade 5	2 Distinction, 2 Merit
Grade 6	1 Dist, 1 Merit, 1 Pass
Grade 7	1 Distinction
Grade 8	1 Pass

Flute

Grade 2	4 Distinction, 1 Merit
Grade 3	2 Distinction, 1 Merit
Grade 4	3 Distinction, 1 Merit
Grade 5	1 Merit, 1 Pass
Grade 6	1 Distinction
Grade 8	1 Distinction

Piano

Initial Grade	1 Distinction
Grade 1	1 Distinction, 1 Merit
Grade 2	1 Distinction
Grade 3	1 Distinction, 2 Merit
Grade 4	2 Merit, 1 Pass
Grade 5	2 Merit
Grade 6	3 Merit
Grade 7	1 Merit, 1 Pass

Saxophone

Grade 4	1 Distinction, 1 Merit
Grade 6	1 Merit

Singing

Grade 1	1 Distinction
Grade 2	1 Merit
Grade 3	1 Distinction
Grade 4	1 Merit
Grade 5	1 Distinction, 2 Merit
Grade 7	1 Distinction, 1 Merit

Tenor Horn

Grade 3	1 Pass

Trombone

Grade 2	1 Distinction
Grade 4	1 Distinction

Trumpet

Grade 2	2 Distinction
Grade 3	1 Distinction
Grade 4	1 Distinction
Grade 5	1 Distinction
Grade 8	2 Merit

Viola

Grade 3	1 Pass

Violin

Grade 3	6 Merit, 3 Pass
Grade 4	1 Dist, 5 Merit, 2 Pass
Grade 5	1 Dist, 2 Merit, 2 Pass
Grade 7	1 Pass

ROCK SCHOOL

Acoustic Guitar

Grade 1	2 Merit, Pass
Grade 2	1 Pass

Drumkit

Grade 1	1 Merit
Grade 2	1 Merit
Grade 4	1 Distinction
Grade 5	1 Merit

(B) ACTIVITIES

SPORT (GIRLS)

Hockey:

1st XI	Reached the Semi-Final of the Ulster Schools' Senior Shield Joint winners of the Derry and Antrim League Reached the Quarter-Final of the Stevenson Cup Superleague
2AXI	Reached the Semi-Final of the Ulster Schools' McDowell Shield Played in the Derry and Antrim League
3rd XI	Played in the Ulster Schools' Gibson Cup and Gibson Plate
4th XI	Reached the Quarter-final of the Ulster Schools' 4th XI Cup
U14A XI	Reached the Semi-Final of the Ulster Schools' Junior Cup Reached the Semi-Final of the Stevenson Cup Junior Superleague
U13A XI	Runners-up in the Derry and Antrim League

Other teams with regular fixtures were the 5th XI, U14B XI, U13B XI, U12A/B/C/D XI, U14C XI and U13C XI played some friendly matches.

Congratulations to the following players on their selection for representative squads:

Farrah Park	Ulster U18
Madison Molloy	Ulster U17
Sloane Park	Ulster U16 and U15 Development Squad
Gracie Caldwell	Ulster U15 Development Squad
Penelope Gordon	Ulster U13
Darcy Linford	Ulster U13
Freya Roddy	Ulster U13

Congratulations also to Amelia Gage on her selection to play for North West Storm Academy at the Beeston Tournament.

Netball:

The Minor A and B; Junior A and B; Inter A and B; Senior teams were entered into Netball Northern Ireland League and Cup competitions. Notable performances were as follows:

Minor A team won the NNI Shield
Junior A team were Runners-up in the NNI Shield
Inter A team won the NNI Shield
Senior A team reached the Semi-Final of the NNI Shield

There were nine players selected for the Netball Northern Ireland U15 Future Internationals Academy.

Congratulations to the following players on their selection for representative squads:

Katie Allen	NI U19
Faye Pearson	NI U17
Poppy Wilson	NI U17
Taleen Edris	Ireland U17
Eva-Lilly Beckett	Ireland U17

Cross-country:
Teams took part in the NEBSSA and District Cross-Country Championships with notable performances from Naomi McClelland who placed 2nd in the Year 10 race at NEBSSA's, 2nd in the Junior Girls' race at the District Championships then 3rd place in the subsequent Ulster Championships at Mallusk. This performance earned Naomi selection for the Ireland U15 Team that competed in SIAB Cross-Country International in Bangor, Wales, helping the Irish team place 3rd. Jacob Aiken also qualified for the Ulster Championships in the Junior Boys' race.

Tennis:

The Junior and Inter teams played in their respective Ulster Schools' Cup competitions. The Juniors reached the Final of the Ulster Schools' Junior Shield where they shared the trophy with Methodist College Belfast. The Inters were Runners-up to Strathearn in the Inter Shield.

Football:

The Year 8 and 9 teams played in the FIFA Girls' Football Festival at Ballymena Showgrounds with the Year 8 team undefeated. The Year 8's played in another FIFA festival against teams from across Northern Ireland where they won 4 out of 5 matches. The Year 10 team played in the Coleraine Football Blitz.

Representative honours:

Anna Dunlop	Northern Ireland U15 Team

Swimming:

Aaron Caskey, Joel Gamble, Eva Hanbidge, Shaw Patterson and Alexander Harris made the Finals of the Ulster Schools' Long Course meet. Notable performances came from Emily Reid and Kai Anand. Emily won Bronze in the Junior 100m Individual Medley and qualified for the Irish Schools' Finals. Kai won Bronze and Silver in the 100m Breaststroke and 200m Individual Medley, earning him a place on the Ulster team and helped Ulster secure 2nd place at the Interpro Championships.

SPORT (BOYS)

Year 8 Rugby Report 2025-26

The Year 8 rugby season has been one of the most encouraging and rewarding in recent memory. From the very outset, the enthusiasm and commitment shown by the players set a high standard that carried through the entire year. Regular attendance at training and matches was exceptional, with over 50 pupils consistently involved each week—an outstanding example of both dedication and passion for the game.

Training sessions on Tuesday afternoons and Saturday mornings were very well attended, and the players' willingness to give up their time was matched by their effort and attitude. This commitment laid the foundation for significant development across all squads, both in terms of individual skills and team cohesion.

On the pitch, that hard work translated into some excellent performances against strong opposition. The 'A' squad, in particular, enjoyed a highly successful season. Their achievements included winning the NEBSSA Year 8 Rugby Tournament, as well as the prestigious Andrew Trimble Coleraine Tournament. Along the way, they recorded impressive victories against Campbell College, Methodist College, Blackrock, and Coleraine—demonstrating resilience, teamwork, and a competitive edge that bodes very well for the future.

While the results have been noteworthy, the true success of this group lies in their attitude and collective spirit. They have represented the school with pride and have shown a genuine love for the game.

A special word of thanks must go to the coaching staff, who generously gave their time and expertise throughout the season, and to the parents for their unwavering support from the sidelines and beyond. Their contributions have been invaluable.

Finally, this group of players deserves particular recognition. They are a special bunch—hardworking, respectful, and full of potential. We look forward with great anticipation to watching their continued development on the rugby pitch during their time at Ballymena Academy.

Year 9 Rugby Report 2025-26

The U13 rugby season proved to be a highly rewarding journey, defined by commitment, energy, and consistent development from start to finish. From the very first training sessions, the squad demonstrated a strong work ethic and a willingness to learn, setting a positive tone that carried throughout the entire season. Attendance at training was excellent, and the players' enthusiasm created a competitive yet supportive environment that allowed everyone to grow.

As the season progressed, this dedication began to translate into performances on the pitch. Early fixtures provided valuable learning experiences, and the team showed steady improvement in key areas such as teamwork, communication, and decision-making. Skills developed in training became more evident during matches, with players growing in confidence and understanding of the game. The squad's resilience was particularly notable, as they responded well to challenges and continued to push themselves to improve week by week.

The latter part of the season showcased just how far the team had come. Performances became more consistent, and the players displayed a greater level of composure and cohesion. This progress culminated in an outstanding achievement at the NEBSA tournament, where the team delivered an excellent series of performances to secure overall victory. It was a well-deserved reward for their hard work and commitment.

The season concluded with another strong showing at the Enniskillen tournament, where the team narrowly missed out on a place in the final after a closely contested semi-final. Despite the disappointment, the performance reflected the significant strides made over the season.

Overall, it was a highly successful year, marked not only by results but by the growth, teamwork, and determination shown by every player.

The U13 B rugby team has made outstanding progress throughout the season, showing excellent commitment, teamwork, and determination in both training and matches. One of the highlights of the year was their impressive victories over Belfast Royal Academy, where the team displayed great skill, discipline, and confidence to secure well-deserved wins. Another major success came during the Campbell Tournament, where the squad produced excellent performances against strong opposition and represented the school with pride. Throughout the season, the players improved significantly in their communication, defensive structure, handling skills, and overall understanding of the game. Their positive attitude and willingness to work hard in training played a huge role in the progress they achieved as a team.

Year 10 Rugby Report 2025-26

The 2025/2026 season for the U14 Squad started in early August with a squad of approximately 28 boys. Our first fixture against Ballyclare High School resulted in a 21-0 victory, a very narrow 21-20 defeat to a talented Wallace High School team followed. The subsequent game against RBAI followed resulting in a convincing win for RBAI. Other games before the half-term break included a convincing win against Enniskillen Royal Grammar School and a narrow loss to Methodist College.

The half-term break gave the team a chance to recover from a good start to the season and an opportunity to reflect on the performances in the first part of the season. A fixture against Campbell College was played on the first Saturday after the break with CCB winning 38-0, however there were clear signs of improvement in the team. Games against Larne, Royal School Dungannon and Wallace High School followed with Ballymena winning each game. A game against Rainey Endowed before the Christmas break was a difficult encounter with a number of of the team playing for the Medallion XV or being injured.

After Christmas the squad started preparations for the NEEBSA, RBAI and the O'Kane Tournament which had come at a good time. The squad enjoyed fixtures against Ballyclare High School, Enniskillen Royal Grammar School and Dalriada School the weeks before the competitions commenced.

In the NEEBSA Tournament the U14 XV were awarded 4th place after losing to Coleraine Grammar School narrowly in the semi-final and then losing narrowly to Dalriada School in the 3rd place playoff. The RBAI Tournament proved to be a difficult morning with the team not qualifying for the knockout phase of the tournament.

Attention turned to the U14 SEVENS tournament hosted by Coleraine Grammar School on the 19th March 2026. Ballymena Academy were pooled with Belfast Royal Academy, Sullivan Upper School and Regent House. The team qualified for the Plate competition against Limavady Grammar School and won this game 19-17. In the final the team won against a talented Foyle College team 28-26 to win the U14 7s Plate.

The O'Kane Tournament was the last tournament of the school year. The team were pooled with Cambridge House Grammar School and Belfast Royal Academy. Ballymena Academy won both games well to set up a quarter final against Ballyclare High School with Ballymena Academy winning 7-0 to proceed to the semi-final. A good win against a talented Sullivan Upper team set up a final against Coleraine Grammar School. A brilliant game of rugby was played with Ballymena Academy dominating a lot of the possession but couldn't make it count; Coleraine won the game 7-0.

My thanks must go to the U14 coaching team for their invaluable enthusiasm and expertise during the season. I would also like to thank the boys for their commitment and attitude throughout the season, I know they will adopt this off the pitch, in school and moving into their Medallion year next year. I would also like to thank all the parents and guardians who passionately supported the team throughout the year; I am confident that the team will continue to develop and improve into a successful Medallion XV.

Medallion XV Rugby Report 2025-26

The Medallion rugby team had a very productive season picking up convincing wins against Ballyclare, Cambridge House and Larne early in the season. The squad then enjoyed A and B fixtures away to Clongowes Wood College with the As losing 35-26 and the Bs winning 14-5. In October the squad travelled down to the Johnstown House Estate in Co. Meath for the Junior Rugby Training Camp. This was an excellent trip where the boys got the opportunity to bond as a team and develop their skills. Drawing RBAI in the Medallion Shield 4th Round, the Ballymena men put in a spirited performance but unfortunately lost 31-12 to a strong side. As a result, the boys entered the Medallion Plate competition where convincing wins against Banbridge (24-12) and Ballyclare (28-5) set up an encounter with Campbell College Belfast. Having suffered a heavy loss against the same opponents earlier in the season, the boys put in a valiant performance and fought right to the final whistle, narrowly missing out 24-15 and so finished runners up in the Medallion Plate. The season then concluded on a high with the team finishing runners up at the Ulster Schools' Medallion Sevens. After a perfect group stage, Ballymena faced Campbell College in a competitive Semi-Final. A lovely try from Charlie Stewart proved decisive, helping us secure a narrow 14-10 victory. In the Final against Sullivan Upper, despite at one stage being down three tries, the team showed incredible fight to claw back, eventually falling just short in a narrow 28-21 loss.

U16 Rugby Report 2025-26

The U16s defeated Ballyclare HS 15-5 and Belfast Royal Academy by 38-7 in the group stages of this cup competition. They faced Sullivan Upper in the semi final however they were defeated away by 23-14.

3XV Rugby Report 2025-26

The 2025-26 season for the 3XV was a period defined by resilience, growth, and a commitment to an ambitious, free-flowing style of rugby. From the outset, the squad demonstrated a unique chemistry, with young players quickly adapting to a fast-paced tactical approach that secured several early-season victories. This momentum was tested as the winter break approached with two high-stakes fixtures. Against a formidable MCB side, the team produced an exceptional performance, narrowly losing 26–18 in a match where they were remarkably unlucky not to convert two additional tries. This was followed by a gruelling encounter against the eventual Cup winners, Campbell College. Despite a slow start that saw them trailing 26–0 at half-time, the 3XV showed immense character to dominate the second period, clawing the final score back to a competitive 29–21.

While adverse weather conditions led to a series of cancellations that threatened to dampen the team's spirits, a decisive victory over Armagh revitalized the squad just in time for the 3rd XV Cup. Their opening match against Wallace High School was played with exciting attacking rugby, highlighted by a stunning long-range effort from Alfie McLean and a clinical hat-trick by Dylan Ritchie. This success set the stage for a heated Quarter-Final against Campbell 4th XV at home. In an intense atmosphere, James Wilson's physical presence successfully unsettled the opposition, but a string of late penalties ultimately hampered the team's morale and led to a narrow exit from the tournament. Despite the Quarter-Final heartbreak, the season stands as a testament to a thriving, engaged squad that consistently punched above its weight and played with an entertaining, defiant spirit.

The entire squad should be immensely proud of their performances this season, particularly as it was such a young side; the group all stepped up to the demands of senior rugby with remarkable ease.

2XV Rugby Report 2025-26

The season began with a mixture of emotions that followed results of positive signs but also unfortunate situations to learn from. We started with a disappointing loss away to Ballyclare but bounced back to defeat Wallace in a thrilling encounter in Lisburn that tested the squad's physicality. Following this commanding victory, a dominant performance was displayed against Enniskillen at Eaton Park to strengthen the confidence among the group. However, a tough spell of fixtures including MCB and CCB, produced consecutive losses away from home that acted as a challenge which the team had to overcome and fight back in order to return to winning ways. The team responded excellently to the previous losses putting in convincing effort in a commanding victory over BRA before travelling away to Armagh where we picked up another well-earned win before the beginning of the cup campaign.

The 2XV Cup began with a home round fixture against Sullivan which saw a dream start to the cup run, defeating them convincingly with a 40-0 performance in order to progress to the quarter finals. The next round placed us away to Rainey in a strongly contested game where a resilient second half and a strong defensive display helped BA gain the lead through multiple tries, finishing the game with a 21-10 victory to book our place in the semi-finals. Then in the semi-final, we played MCB and with a chip on our shoulder from the loss earlier in the season, we travelled away from home to compete for a spot in the final. This was a highly competitive match which kept the supporters on edge for a full 70 minutes in an 'arm wrestle' of a game right up to the nail-biting finish, when we scored a try with the last play of the game. This thrilling encounter resulted in an 8-7 win to rightfully earn our place in the final at Roughfort, the first time in many years that a Ballymena 2XV squad has reached the 2XV Cup final. On a wet and windy day, with conditions fit for a storm, we met RBAI but unfortunately faced a heartbreaking 19-3 defeat after a game of grit and determination. Although the campaign ended with defeat in the final the squad showed commendable spirit and commitment to get as far as we did and can look back with pride on the performances throughout the season with pride.

1XV Rugby Report 2025-26

The 1XV rugby team enjoyed a memorable and rewarding season, defined by both resilience and strong camaraderie. The campaign began with an impressive run of performances, securing convincing victories against tough opposition including Wallace , BRA, Enniskillen, Wesley and a narrow defeat to Campbell College. These early successes highlighted the team's attacking strength and defensive organisation, setting a high standard from the outset. However, challenging defeats to Methody and RBAI tested the squad's resilience. Rather than letting these setbacks define the season, the group used them as motivation to improve.

A pivotal moment came during the tour to Edinburgh, where the team had the opportunity to regroup, refine their skills, and strengthen their cohesion both on and off the pitch. This proved crucial as focus shifted towards the Schools' Cup. In the opening round, the team delivered a dominant performance against Portadown College, winning emphatically 62–7. Confidence grew further with a hard fought 22–10 victory away to Sullivan, demonstrating grit and discipline in a challenging environment.

The semi-final, held at the Affidea Stadium, Belfast in front of the entire school, was a standout occasion. The atmosphere was extraordinary, reflecting the pride and support behind the team. Our team led at half-time but the game ended in defeat for B.A. Despite this narrow 22–14 defeat to a very strong RBAI side, the performance showcased the team's determination and quality.

After the loss, the team travelled to the Dub to play in the Ulster Schools' Sevens event. After topping the group stage by defeating Wallace, Dungannon and Dalraida, we faced Ballyclare in the quarter-final, then moved onto a strong Larne team, who had just beaten current holders RBAI. After defeating Larne, the team unfortunately came short losing narrowly to Methody in the final 26-21.

Girls' Rugby Report 2025-26

The girls' rugby programme has experienced a highly successful and encouraging season, marked by significant growth in participation and overall engagement. One of the most notable developments has been the clear increase in the number of girls involved across all year groups. This rise reflects the growing profile of girls' rugby within the school and the inclusive, supportive environment that has been fostered throughout the programme.

Commitment levels from the players have been consistently high, with strong attendance at training sessions and fixtures. The girls have demonstrated excellent energy, enthusiasm, and a willingness to develop their skills, contributing to a positive and driven team culture. This attitude has not only enhanced individual performance but has also strengthened team cohesion and resilience.

A key highlight of the season has been the representation of several players at provincial level, with girls selected to represent Ulster. This is a significant achievement and a testament to both their individual dedication and the quality of coaching and development within the programme. It also provides strong role models for younger players and helps to raise aspirations across the group.

In terms of competitive success, the programme has performed strongly, with teams competing in both of the Ulster Schools' Finals Days. Reaching this stage is a notable accomplishment and reflects the progress made in both skill level and tactical understanding. The experience gained from competing at this level will be invaluable for future development.

Overall, this has been a very positive season for girls' rugby. The combination of increased participation, high commitment, representative honours, and competitive success provides a strong foundation for continued growth and future achievements.

Football Report 2025–2026

It has been another successful and competitive year for football, with all teams representing the school with distinction across a range of competitions.

The Year 9 team delivered an excellent performance at the Mid Antrim Football League Blitz at Ballymena Showgrounds. Victories over St Killian's (4–0), Dunclug (2–0) and Crumlin (1–0), along with a draw against Sperrin (1–1), saw them top their group. They were unfortunate to exit at the semi-final stage, losing on penalties to Slemish College after a 1–1 draw.

Year 10 also enjoyed a strong campaign, finishing runners-up at their Mid Antrim League Blitz. Notable results included wins over Cambridge House (3–0) and Parkhall (3–0), alongside draws with Dunclug and Cullybackey College. The team were narrowly defeated 1–0 by Slemish College in the final.

The Year 11 squad reached the final of the NEBSSA Mid Antrim Cup, recording impressive wins over St Patrick's (2–0), Dunclug (2–0) and Cullybackey (1–0), as well as draws against St Killian's and Slemish College. The final against St Killian's ended 0–0, with the team narrowly losing 5–4 on penalties. They also reached the quarter-final of the Mid Antrim Cup, where they were defeated 3–1 by Sperrin Integrated.

At U16 level, the team competed well and reached the Plate quarter-final, where they were defeated 4–2 by Foyle College.

The U18 team produced several outstanding performances in the Schools' Cup. They defeated Coleraine Grammar 3–1, with goals from James Robinson and Charlie Wilson, along with an own goal. A convincing 9–2 victory over St Conor's followed, with Daniel Smyth (3), Kenzie McFall (2), Ryan Berry (2), Joe McFadden and Matthias Beatty all on the scoresheet. In the third round, they secured an impressive 4–3 win over

Omagh Academy, with Kai Madden scoring twice, James Robinson adding another, and Ryan Berry converting the decisive free kick. Their run came to an end in the last 16 with a 4–1 defeat to Grosvenor Grammar, with James Robinson scoring a notable goal.

Overall, it has been a year marked by strong performances, resilience and teamwork. The commitment shown by all players continues to be a credit to the school.

Athletics Report 2026

The 2026 Athletics season has been a remarkable one for Ballymena Academy, with athletes achieving success at District, NEBSSA and Ulster level, while also securing qualification for the Irish Championships. Throughout the year, pupils demonstrated exceptional commitment, resilience and sporting talent, representing the school with distinction across track and field events.

NEBSSA Athletics Championships

The season began strongly at the NEBSSA Heats held at Antrim Forum, where 85 Ballymena Academy athletes from Years 8–11 competed. The school enjoyed outstanding success, with 49 athletes and all boys' and girls' relay teams qualifying for the NEBSSA Finals. Excellent performances throughout the heats highlighted the depth of talent within the athletics squad and set the tone for a highly successful season ahead.

The highlight of the season came at the NEBSSA Athletics Finals Day at Antrim Track. Ballymena Academy had an outstanding 51 athletes qualify for the finals and produced an exceptional medal haul alongside several major team trophies. The school finished runners-up in both the overall Girls' and Boys' Agnew Shield competitions. Team results included:

- U13 Girls – 3rd Place
- U15 Girls – 3rd Place
- U16 Girls – 1st Place
- U14 Boys – 2nd Place
- U15 Boys – 2nd Place

Relay teams also performed with excellence:

- Year 8 Girls' Relay – 2nd Place
- Year 10 Girls' Relay – 2nd Place
- Year 11 Girls' Relay – 1st Place
- Year 10 Boys' Relay – 3rd Place
- Year 11 Boys' Relay – 2nd Place

There were many outstanding individual performances at the NEBSSA Finals:

- Amelia Gage – Bronze medal, U13 Girls' 100m
- Annabel Mulvany – Gold medal, U16 Girls' Long Jump; Silver medal, 100m; Bronze medal, Triple Jump
- Charlie Stewart – Silver medal, U16 Boys' 100m; Bronze medal, 200m
- Ellen Currie – Bronze medal, U16 Girls' High Jump
- Elliott Boyd – Gold medal, U15 Boys' Javelin
- Emily Hilditch – Gold medal, U16 Girls' 300m; Bronze medals in 800m and Long Jump
- Emma Johnston – Bronze medal, U14 Girls' Discus
- Evie Calwell – Bronze medal, U16 Girls' Discus
- George Casson – Silver medal, U13 Boys' Shot
- Gracie Caldwell – Silver medal, U15 Girls' Discus
- Jacob Aiken – Double Gold medallist, U15 Boys' 200m and 400m
- James Goodrich – Double Gold medallist, U14 Boys' High Jump and Long Jump
- Khriztoffe Bondoc – Bronze medal, U14 Boys' 100m
- Lucy Cumberland – Silver medal, U16 Girls' 200m; Bronze medal, 100m
- Lydia McClelland – Silver medal, U13 Girls' Long Jump
- Matthew Redmond – Silver medal, U16 Boys' 400m

- Megan McCarthy – Bronze medal, U15 Girls' Long Jump
- Naomi McClelland – Gold medal, U15 Girls' 800m; Silver medal, Long Jump
- Oliver Jordan – Silver medal, U15 Boys' High Jump
- Sybil Beckett – Silver medal, U14 Girls' Javelin
- Zac Irwin – Gold medal, U15 Boys' Discus

Two athletes also broke long-standing NEBSSA records during the competition. Naomi McClelland set a new championship record in the U15 Girls 800m, while Annabel Mulvany broke the U16 Girls Long Jump record — a tremendous achievement for both athletes.

District Athletics Championships

At the District Athletics Championships, Ballymena Academy athletes once again impressed, with 25 athletes and four relay teams qualifying for the Ulster Finals at the Mary Peters Track, Belfast. Competitors excelled across sprints, middle-distance races, hurdles, jumps and throwing events, reflecting the strength of athletics throughout every year group in the school.

Ulster Schools' Athletics Championships

Ballymena Academy athletes continued their success at the Ulster Athletics Championships held at the Mary Peters Track, Belfast. Competing against the best athletes from across the province, the school once again achieved excellent results with notable achievements from the following athletes:

- Annabel Mulvany – Ulster Champion, Intermediate Girls' Long Jump
- Naomi McClelland – Ulster Champion, Junior Girls' 800m.
- James Goodrich – Silver medal in the Minor Boys' Long Jump.
- George Casson – Ulster Champion, Mini Boys' Shot
- Dylan Ritchie – Silver medal in the Senior Boys' 110m Hurdles; Bronze medal, Senior Boys 100m
- Emily Hilditch – Bronze medal, Intermediate Girls' 300m Hurdles
- Peter Cochrane – Bronze medal, Senior Boys' Triple Jump

The season concluded with six Ballymena Academy athletes qualifying for the Irish Schools' Athletics Championships at Tullamore Athletics Ground, Co. Offaly:

- Naomi McClelland, James Goodrich, Dylan Ritchie, Annabel Mulvany, Emily Hilditch, Peter Cochrane

Overall, the 2026 athletics season has been one of the most successful in recent years for Ballymena Academy. The dedication shown by athletes at training sessions and competitions has been exceptional, and the school community can take great pride in all that has been achieved. Congratulations to every athlete who represented the school this year, and sincere thanks to the coaches, staff and officials whose support, encouragement and commitment made the season such a success.

Irish Schools' Athletics Championships

Friday 29th and Saturday 30th May marked the end of the schools' athletics calendar with the All-Ireland Schools' Track and Field Championships at Tullamore in County Offlay. A huge congratulations to the following athletes who competed and represented Ballymena Academy with pride.

- Naomi McClelland – 2nd in Ireland in the Junior Girls 800m.
- Dylan Ritchie – 3rd in Ireland in the Senior Boys 100m Hurdles.
- Annabel Mulvany – 3rd in Ireland in the Intermediate Girls Long Jump.
- James Goodrich – 6th in Ireland in the Minor Boys Long Jump.
- Emily Hilditch – 7th in Ireland in the Intermediate Girls 300m Hurdles.
- Peter Cochrane – 7th in Ireland in the Senior Boys Triple Jump.

Golf Report 2025–2026

The following pupils entered the NEBSSA Regional Golf Competiton;

Year 8
Will Connaughty
Max Crawford
Alfie Thompson
Mia McCann

Year 9
Charlie O'Neill
Finlay McCullough
Dan Evans
Rory Higgins
Caleb Scullion
Curtis McKeown
Zach Bolan
Caleb Rainey
Sophie Conaughty
Isaac Gribben

Year 10
Seth Connaughty
Luke Murray
Mason McNeill
Jonah W Rogers

Year 11
Adam McMaster

Mia McCann - Year 8, Sophie Conaughty – Year 9, Caleb Scullion – Year 9 & Charlie O'Neill – Year 9 won the regional competition and competed in the finals day at Ballycastle GC.

Tennis Report 2025–2026

This year we had 3 boys' teams entered in the Ulster Schools' Cup Competition.

Minor Boys - Iacob Iwaisai, Jake Ritchie, Nikolas Tistan, Josh McKinstry and Will Connaughty

Junior Team - James Goodrich, David Millar, Isaac Smyth, Isaac Kernohan

Intermediate Team - Oliver Withers, Seth Knox, Ryan Mui and James Kerr

The Standout performance for the boys was the intermediate team who made it to the semi-finals, losing out to a strong Sullivan Upper A Team.

Personal Tennis Accolades on the Ulster Tour for 2025/2026:
Ryan Mui - County Antrim Junior Tour 100 Championships 2026 BS 100 U16/18 Champion

Oliver Withers - Cavehill TC Junior Tour 100 2026 BS 100 U16 Champion

Ryan Mui and Seth Knox were part of the Ballymena Team who finished 2nd in Division 3 of the Belfast and District Juvenile League.

MUSIC

Music Lessons
In September, the academic year began with over 200 pupils continuing or taking up lessons. Many pupils went on to achieve grade and performance qualifications with their respective examining boards (Trinity College London, ABRSM, Rockschool, and RGT Guitar).

Ensembles
Choir and instrumental ensemble rehearsals commenced in September. Our department teaching staff were each involved in at least four ensembles, ably assisted by Mr. Christie (accompanist). Tutors Ms. Rebekah Durston, Mr. Graham Murray, and Mr. Callum Aiken continued to lead ensembles in their specialist fields.

Prize Day
The Chamber Choir performed a fitting and rousing arrangement of 'Blinded by Your Grace' (by The Kingdom Singers), helping to set the tone for this special occasion.

Christmas
The Chamber Choir once again represented the school by performing on Radio Cracker and at Prospect Nursing Home.

The Primary Schools' Christmas Concert saw well over 400 pupils from local primary schools enjoying seasonal, interactive music performed by Senior Wind and Strings, Jazz Band, Traditional Group, Percussion Ensemble, and Chamber Choir. The concert ran again in the evening for friends, family, and the wider community, raising over £600 in contributions split between the Music Department and Cancer Focus NI, in memory of the late Brass Tutor, Mrs. Beverley Murray.

The Carol Services, held in St. Patrick's Church, saw four choirs comprising over 200 pupils participate in an evocative musical programme, to the delight of both the afternoon and capacity evening congregations. The retiring offerings raised an additional £3,000 for Cancer Focus NI.

Meaningful 'in-school' Carol Services created using live elements from the St. Patrick's Carol Service with added media elements were attended by all year groups.

Open Nights
Open Nights saw strong representation from the Music Department. The Jazz Band performed in the foyer, while a Ukulele Band provided a musical backdrop outside the Dining Hall for the Co-Curricular Fair. Inside the fair, the Music Department hosted a 'cinema experience' screening video performances of choirs and orchestras from the Carol Service and Spring Concert.

Music Festival
The school was commendably represented across a wide range of instrumental classes, resulting in Ballymena Academy being awarded Overall Best Instrumental School. Many thanks to Ms. Rebekah Durston for her extensive preparation with pupils.

Concert Preparations
In the new year, preparations picked up for the Spring Concert at The Braid Arts Centre. Hundreds of pupils involved in Junior and Senior Choir, Chamber Choir, Junior and Senior Wind Bands, Junior and Senior Strings, Senior String Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, Senior Orchestra, and the Male Voice Choir rehearsed after school, before school, during lunchtimes, evenings, and even weekends under the direction of Music Department staff and specialist instrumental tutors. The Traditional Group (led by senior pupils Sophie Charleton and Emma Dempsey) and the Jazz Band (directed by Year 14 pupils Daniel Grimsley and Lily Allenby) rehearsed diligently before school on Wednesday and Friday mornings respectively.

Spring Concert

It was with great excitement that the Spring Concert was presented at The Braid Arts Centre in March. The two sell-out evenings were an emotional and musical highpoint of the year. Audience and participants alike were enthralled with the vibrant performances. From the Senior Orchestra curtain-raisers to the virtuosic vocal displays of the Chamber Choir, the Percussion Ensemble's vibrant rhythms, the soul-stirring Senior Choir presentations, and the rich range of Junior and Senior ensembles in between, all combined to create a meaningful, memorable, high-quality musical experience for all.

P6 Taster Days

In June, a joyful buzz filled the foyer as a Ukulele orchestra played a selection of catchy pop songs for visiting P6 pupils.

Sponsorship

The Music Dept was delighted to receive generous support from The Leighinmohr House Hotel (Mr Adrian Fullan) as the school's first major music sponsor.

DRAMA

It has been another busy and exciting year for the Drama Department, with pupils demonstrating tremendous enthusiasm, creativity and commitment across a range of activities and productions.

Pupils studying Drama and English at Key Stages 4 and 5 enjoyed a theatre trip to the Grand Opera House in Belfast to see *Blood Brothers*. This was a fantastic opportunity for pupils to experience one of their set texts brought to life on stage, deepening their understanding and appreciation of the play while enjoying a memorable theatrical experience.

Our Junior Drama Club has continued to go from strength to strength, attracting another enthusiastic group of young performers. Auditions were held for our P6 Taster Day production of *Ernie's Incredible Illucinations*, and once again, the level of interest was so high that three separate casts were formed, ensuring as many pupils as possible had the opportunity to take part. All three casts delivered wonderful performances for our visiting P6 pupils, showcasing their talent, confidence and hard work. A special Parents' Afternoon was also held, allowing families to enjoy all three performances and celebrate the pupils' achievements.

One of the biggest highlights of the year has undoubtedly been the excitement surrounding our upcoming school musical, *Sister Act*. Auditions took place in March, with well over 120 pupils putting themselves forward for a role. The production team, D. Reynolds, J. Craig and D. Murray, faced the difficult task of selecting the cast from such an impressive pool of talent. Rehearsals began in June, with pupils beginning work on some of the show's larger musical numbers.

Preparations are now well underway for *Sister Act*, which will take to the stage from 4th–6th November. The cast have shown exceptional dedication, energy and enthusiasm throughout rehearsals and excitement is continuing to build as opening night approaches.

It has been another rewarding year for the Drama Department, with pupils embracing every opportunity to perform, develop their confidence and work together creatively. We look forward to bringing *Sister Act* to the stage and celebrating the hard work and talent of everyone involved.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Public Speaking - Junior

Mrs. Rhonda Duffin and Mr. James Turtle were adjudicators at the Annual Queenie McMullan Public Speaking Competition held in April. The Edgar Graham Cup for Junior Public Speaking was won by Emily Small (Year 10). Freya Swann (Year 11) was Highly Commended in the Novice Section.

Public Speaking - Senior

Lisa Rose Toland (Year 13) won the Soroptimist Public Speaking Competition held in October.

Brogan Davis (Year 13), Emma Dempsey (Year 13) and Sophie Cumberland (Year 13) won the Business and Professional Women's Public Speaking competition in November. Emma Dempsey (Year 13) won the Cup for the Best Speaker at the NI Final held in Portadown in February.

Josh Davidson (Year 13) won the Queenie McMullan Cup for the Best Overall Speaker at the competition held in April and Isabella Gregg (Year 13) was Highly Commended. The Linda Hunter Cup for the Best Novice was won by Emma Dempsey (Year 13).

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD SCHEME

The Bronze and Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Awards continue to be well represented by pupils enrolling in Years 10 and 13. Pupils show great determination, perseverance, commitment, teamwork and resilience in completing the Award. The skills, knowledge and experiences will stay with them throughout their lives and the transferable skills learned will serve them in whatever careers they choose. The first list show those pupils who have successfully gained their Awards and the second list shows those whose Award has been completed but is awaiting approval from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

The following pupils have successfully gained their Awards:

BRONZE: Mollie Brown, Matthew Clarke, Daniel Gaston, Fayth Greet, Tom Harris, Zoe Humphreys, Tom McAuley, AJ McAuley, Ben McCrickard, Connor McCurdy, Luciana McKibbin, Adam McMaster, Ben McMaster, Katie McNeilly, Cameron Morrow, Ryan Mui, Jacob Nicholl, Cerys Owens, Ellie Ritchie, Lucy Rock and Harry Stewart

GOLD: Erin McGivern, Callum Cranston, Samuel Hilditch and Danielle Thomson.

The following pupils have completed their Awards but are awaiting final approval from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme:

BRONZE: Chloe Anderson, Frazer Campbell, Ethan Cherry, Cara Drummond, Eva Foster, Isla Glenn, Benjamin hall, Evie Harrison, Charlie Hutchinson, James Kerr, Holly Livingstone, Grace Martin, Ava McCracken, Amelia McDonald, Blair McVeigh, Evie Morrison, Kyle Peden, Benjamin Phiri, Matthew Redmond, Bradley Rock, Sophia Skharova, Ethan Scott, Emily Small, Nina Tistanova and Emma Wall.

GOLD: Tommy Chambers

(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 Google Classrooms, 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'.

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.

(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 is delivered in accordance with statutory requirements. 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) ADDRESSING BULLYING POLICY

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

Adopting a proactive approach to the issue, Addressing 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-type behaviour 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 revised School Development Plan is in line with the "Every School a Good School" policy, the Empowering Improvement ETI framework and other 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.

(H) SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT
for the year ended 31st March, 2026.

REVENUE ACCOUNT		
	£	£
GROSS INCOME		
Department of Education Grant	8,288,953	
Other Income	349,131	8,638,084
EXPENDITURE		
Teaching Staff Costs	6,354,330	
Non-Teaching Staff Costs	1,099,347	
Other Operating Costs	1,402,967	8,856,644
Operating Surplus / (Deficit) for year		**(218,560)**

CAPITAL ACCOUNT		
	£	£
INCOME FOR YEAR		
Capital Fees	171,267	171,267
EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR		
Interest paid	42,624	42,624
Capital Surplus / (Deficit) for year		**128,643**

THE CURRICULUM 2026/2027

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	10	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	5 5	7 7
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 2
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	8 groups of 22 or 23
YEAR 9	6 groups of 28 - 30	8 groups of 22 or 23

JUNIOR SCHOOL (KEY STAGE 3) YEAR 10 CURRICULUM 2026/2027
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 Spanish German	6 6 6
Science and Technology	Science Technology and Design	12 4
Learning for Life and Work	Employability } Local & Global Citizenship } Personal Development } Home Economics	2 4
Physical Education	Physical Education and Games	6
Religious Education	Religious Education	4
Additional Studies	Careers Education Digital Technology	1 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/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 FORM

9 boxes should be ticked ✓

Name: _____ Careers Adviser: _____ 2026-2028

COMPULSORY CORE SUBJECTS

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

☑ English Language [En]

CHOOSE ONE

- ☐ Drama [Dr]
- ☐ English Literature [Et]
- ☐ Media Studies [Ms]
- ☐ Religious Studies [Rs]

USING MATHEMATICS

☑ Mathematics [Ma]

CORE AREAS OF STUDY

- Careers Education
- Learning for Life and Work
- Physical Education
- Games
- Religious Studies

SCIENCE

CHOOSE ONE

- ☐ Single Award [Sg]
- ☐ Double Award [Ds]
  Tick Double Award Science 2
- ☐ Biology [Bi]
- ☐ Chemistry [Ch]
- ☐ Physics [Ph]

CHOOSE FIVE SUBJECTS

MODERN LANGUAGES

Preferably at least ONE from this box

- ☐ French [Fr]
- ☐ German [Gr]
- ☐ Spanish [Sp]

ARTS/ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY

Preferably at least ONE from this box

- ☐ Art & Design [Ar]
- ☐ Business Studies [Bs]
- ☐ Classical Civilisation [Cl]
- ☐ Drama [Dr]
- ☐ English Literature [Et]
- ☐ Geography [Gg]
- ☐ History [Hi]
- ☐ Media Studies [Ms]
- ☐ Music [Mu]
- ☐ Religious Studies [Rs]

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS

- ☐ Agriculture & Land Use [Ag]
- ☐ Biology [Bi]
- ☐ Chemistry [Ch]
- ☐ Construction [Td]
- ☐ Digital Technology [Dt]
- ☐ Double Award Science 2* [Ds]
- ☐ Food & Nutrition [Fn]
- ☐ Further Mathematics [Fm]
- ☐ Health and Social Care [Hs]
- ☐ Physical Education [Pe]
- ☐ Physics [Ph]
- ☐ Technology and Design [Tl]

Reserve Subject_____

Parental Signature [February] _____

Feb 26 [En] [Ma] [ ] [ ] June 26 [En] [Ma] [ ] [ ]

Parental Signature if choices have changed [June 26] _____

Feb 26 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] June 26 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Subject	Period Allocations per fortnight:-
Physical Education Games	2 periods 4 periods
Religious Studies / LLW	3 periods Year 11 / 2 periods Year 12
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 English Language English Literature Food and Nutrition French Geography German Health and Social Care History Mathematics Further Mathematics Media Studies Music Physical Education Physics Religious Studies Science Single Award Spanish Technology and Design	9 periods

The Year 13 Programme 2026 to 2027 is composed of GCE Advanced Subsidiary ('AS' Levels) and Level 3 BTEC/CTEC courses. It is designed to provide depth and breadth of study.

In Year 13, pupils will either take three subjects and the enrichment programme, or four AS subjects. Pupils will normally study three subjects in Year 14 - thus completing three full 'A' level, or equivalent, programmes. BTEC/CTEC qualifications are two years in duration. In some cases, pupils may opt to take 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)
- Applied Science
- Art and Design
- Biology
- Business (CTEC)
- Chemistry
- Classical Civilisation (Linear qualification)
- Computer Science
- Construction (BTEC) Single/Double Award
- Digital Technology
- Economics
- Engineering (BTEC)
- English Literature
- Environmental Technology
- French
- Further Mathematics
- Geography
- German
- Government & Politics
- Health and Social Care
- History
- Mathematics
- Media Studies (Linear qualification)
- Music
- Nutrition and Food Science
- Performing Arts
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- 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	8 periods per fortnight of Enrichment subjects
	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 is 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

SCHEDULE OF HEADS OF YEAR AND TUTORS 2026/2027

YEAR 8

HEAD OF YEAR : Miss E. Forsythe

PASTORAL ADVISER : Mr. A. Blacoe

TUTORS:

8.A	Miss T. Bassett	
	Mrs. V. Walker	
8.B	Mrs. A. Hannawin	
	Miss L. Green	
8.C	Miss G. Allen	
	Mrs. R. Gillis	
8.D	Mrs. R. Allen	
	Miss A. Fry	
8.E	Mrs. L. Doherty	
	Mrs. K. Pedlow	
8.F	Mrs. A. Martinez Linares	
	Mrs. H. MacCorkell	

YEAR 9

HEAD OF YEAR : Miss C. McAllister

PASTORAL ADVISER: Mrs. E. Liggat

TUTORS:

9.A	Mr. B. Thompson	
9.B	Miss L. Clotworthy	
	Mrs. H. MacCorkell	
9.C	Miss R. Hamilton	
	Mr. A. McCrory	
9.D	Miss C. Featherstone	
9.E	Mr. P. Scullion	
9.F	Mrs. D. Murray	

YEAR 10

HEAD OF YEAR : Mr. S. Johnston

PASTORAL ADVISER : Miss K. Wylie

TUTORS:

10.A	Mr. J. Nicholl	
10.B	Miss D. McNeill	
10.C	Mrs. R. Hamill	
	Mrs. R. Johnston	
10.D	Mrs. K. McCann	
	Mr. A. Munce	
10.E	Miss D. Reynolds	
10.F	Mrs. J. Craig	

YEAR 11

HEAD OF YEAR : Mrs. L. Robinson

PASTORAL ADVISER : Miss A. Doyle

TUTORS:

11.A	Mrs. L. Hunter	
11.B	Mr. K. Moore	
11.C	Mr. D. McClelland	
11.D	Miss E. Heron	
11.E	Mr. R. Hayes	
	Mrs. K. Reid	
	Mrs. R. Johnston	
11.F	Mrs. N Kerr	
11.G	Mrs. C. McCullough	
	Mrs. K. Pedlow	

YEAR 12

HEAD OF YEAR : Mr. A. Moore

PASTORAL ADVISER : Mrs. N. Taggart

TUTORS:

12.A	Mr. T. Bell	
12.B	Mrs. A. McCarry	
12.C	Mr. G. Murray	
12.D	Mr. L. Gourley	
12.E	Mr. D. Huston	
12.F	Dr. A. Livingston	
	Mrs. D. Barr	
	Miss A. Wilkinson	
12.G	Mrs. L. Nelson	
	Mrs. J. Adam	

HEAD OF SIXTH FORM: Mr. T. McLeister

YEAR 13

HEAD OF YEAR : Mrs. C. Simpson

PASTORAL & LEARNING SUPPORT :
Mrs. G. Hallam

TUTORS:

13.A	Mr. M. Christie	
	Mr. A. Munce	
	Mrs. E. Stevenson	
13.B	Mr. J. Donnelly	
	Miss L. Ross	
13.C	Mrs. R. Reid	
13.D	Mr. D. Ross	
13.E	Mrs. E. Church	
13.F	Mrs. S. Shaw	
	Miss E. Greer	
	Mrs. R. Matchett	
13.G	Miss R. McVea/Mrs. E. Stevenson	

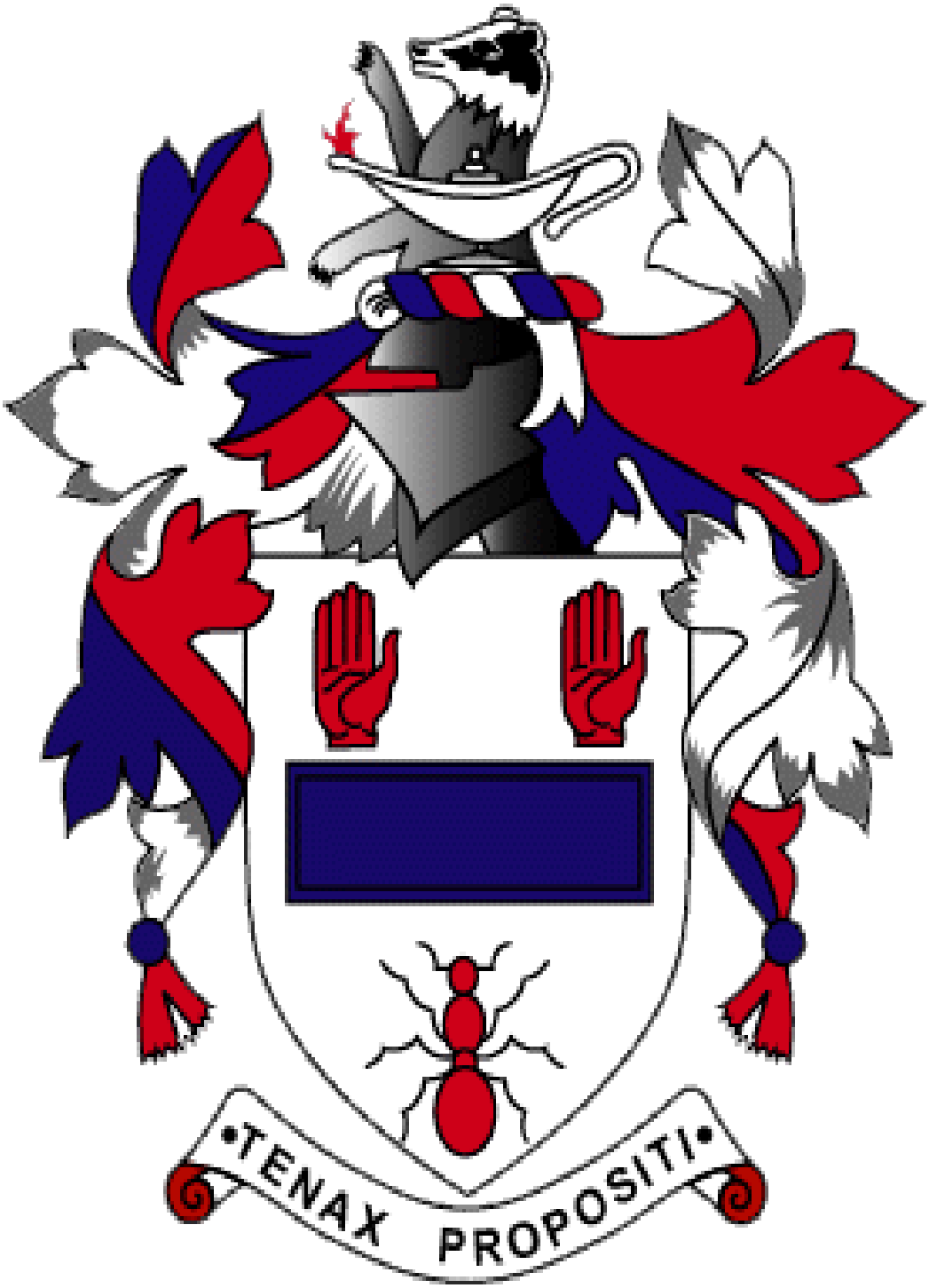
YEAR 14

HEAD OF YEAR : Mrs. C. Oakes

PASTORAL & LEARNING SUPPORT :
Mrs. C. Harris

TUTORS:

14.A	Dr. G. Pyper	
14.B	Mrs. S. Monteith	
	Mrs. K. Reid	
14.C	Mr. P. Reid	
14.D	Mrs. C. McNeilly	
14.E	Mr. W. Kerr	
14.F	Mrs. C. Louw	
14.G	Mr. D Baldwin	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