



BALLYMENA ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

CARING FOR THE INDIVIDUAL, INSPIRING
LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT



WELCOME

Welcome to the Ballymena Academy Newsletter, a publication designed to share good news and celebrate some of the many successes of our pupils and staff. In this term's edition, we share some of our highlights of the summer term, and update you on the work of the BA Foundation.

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

FUN DAYS 2023

After a busy school year, pupils in Years 8-11 enjoyed a 'Fun Day' on the plateau on Monday and Tuesday afternoon. Facilitated by the PE Department, pupils spent time at a number of different zones, including a Sports Zone with football, touch rugby, volleyball and tennis and a Fun Zone with inflatables, sack race, welly throw and tug of war! For those with an interest in gaming and craft we had Godmodex buses and Lily, our Mandarin teacher, led pupils in the design and making of bracelets. Sweet treats were also available for purchase from the Flossy Treats pop up shop.

Thanks to all the members of staff who supervised and led the activities. To all of our pupils, parents and guardians, thank you for making this year another special one at Ballymena Academy.

STEM CLUB MEMBERS EXCEL IN BIRMINGHAM

On Thursday 22nd June, Ashton, Callum and Niall, accompanied by Miss Heron and Miss Wylie, flew to Birmingham on a very early flight to showcase their ARK project.

A special thanks to QUB school of Electronics and Electrical Engineering Professor Karen Rafferty and Gerry Rafferty for all their help and support with the final print.

Finally a massive congratulations to the team on winning the Siemens 'SMART TECHNOLOGIES ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD'.



Mrs McCann, Head of German, has been teaching German to pupils at Camphill Primary School this year. Our Modern Language departments have been promoting the importance of learning languages and Mrs McCann was delighted when the opportunity arose to visit Camphill on Monday afternoons.

She has been working with pupils from Primary 5, 6 and 7 to introduce new sounds, phrases and a little bit of German culture in a fun and interactive way. Along with the help of two little puppets, Felix the Frog and Franzi the Duck, and the accompanying videos from the Goethe Institute, the children have been learning through song, roleplays and games and can even continue the lessons online at home.

Mrs Karen McMaster, Principal of Camphill PS has been delighted with the pupils' response to the German lessons stating, "This is a fantastic outreach programme to encourage the uptake of languages in the future."

Our own Year 8 pupils at Ballymena Academy have been enjoying a carousel of lessons in German, French and Spanish this year and have the advantage of being able to try each language for a term. All language students have taken part in various activities throughout the year, which highlight the benefits of being able to communicate on the world stage.



Our pupils participated in the European Day of Languages in September, cultural events with food tasting opportunities from the different countries throughout the year, German Club events, quizzes, online exchange meetings, the German Spelling Bee competition, in which Luke McClelland represented Ballymena Academy in the final, and a poster competition during Languages Week in February, in which Hannah McFarland won 1st prize! We also hosted a German teacher on an exchange programme for two weeks who involved herself with many departments across the school.

There have been recent reports in the media highlighting the increase in demand for foreign language skills by employers. Yet according to a study of modern language learning in schools carried out by the British Council, almost half of Northern Ireland primary schools offer no foreign language lessons to pupils. Previous funding from the Department of Education for a modern language programme in primary schools was cut in 2015. It is crucial to equip our young people with the necessary skills for a truly global workplace.



In England, there will be a roll out of the Department of Education's £14.9m language programme over the next three years and the Government specifically recognises German as a strategically important language to the UK. We hope to see similar support for languages in Northern Ireland soon. Meanwhile Frau McCann, Felix und Franzi look forward to the warm welcome at Camphill PS each week!

SUMMER TERM IN PHOTOS

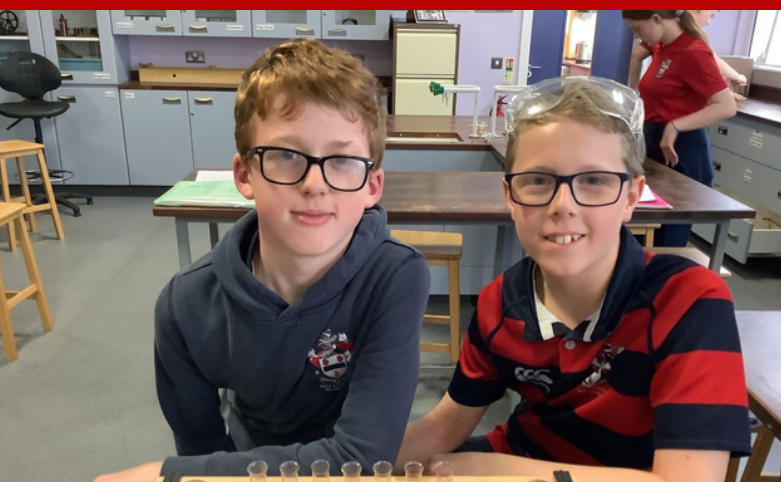
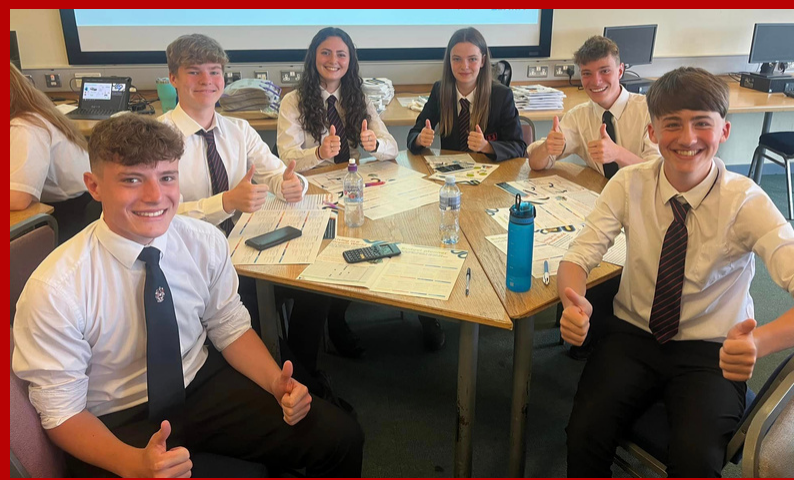
As the school term comes to an end this week we reflect upon a busy, successful summer term from a co-curricular perspective. The cricket season was packed with fixtures across the year groups. We were delighted to launch girls cricket and football this term which saw our junior girls playing a number of fixtures against other schools.

On the athletics field there were a number of successes at District and Ulster 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.

Finally, last week our 'A' and 'B' Golf teams finished 1st and 3rd respectively in the U15 NEEBSA Finals at Rathmore Golf Club. Well done everyone!



SUMMER TERM IN PHOTOS



VISIT TO KILWAUGHTER MINERALS

On Tuesday 6th June some of our Year 11 students had the opportunity to visit Kilwaughter Minerals. The pupils tried their hands at some rendering, enjoyed a tour of the quarry and made some tea light holders, before enjoying a lovely lunch and watching how controlled explosions happen in a quarry. The tour was organised through the Manufacturing Task Force as part of the engagement activities of Science Summer School, a STEAM Initiative that will be returning to the Borough for the second time in January 2024.

A huge thank you to Christine from Mid & East Antrim Council and everyone at Kilwaughter Minerals who made this trip possible and made us feel so welcome.



BA FOUNDATION

The BA Foundation has been established to help Ballymena Academy 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.

During 2020, 2021 and 2022 we have held a series of alumni networking events in Ballymena, Edinburgh, Belfast and London. These events have grown in popularity and have helped us expand our contact lists and network by almost 400%. We want to broaden that further and would encourage any alumni to re-engage with the school, either via our school's LinkedIn page or via our Marketing and Alumni Manager, Alistair McKay.

Our most recent event was an enormously successful Gala Dinner in Galgorm Resort & Spa at which former Ireland rugby captain, Rory Best, was the main guest. It was an excellent night, thoroughly enjoyed by the 250 attendees and contributing enormously to our networking and fundraising goals.

We would warmly welcome new alumni to our growing network and encourage you to help us build our network by recommending it to others as well as supporting our future events.



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
- 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