

National Science Competition 2009

On March 4th-6th, one of our Year 14 students, Ciara Morgan-Feir was involved in the Big Bang Fair and the UK National Science Competition. Last year a group of four A-level Physics students including Ciara prepared a project studying the feasibility of using renewable energy at Dale Farm's Dunmanbridge plant near Cookstown. During this time, the group worked closely with Gary Shields an engineer from Dale Farm and Dr David McIlveen-Wright an engineer from the University of Ulster at Jordanstown.

Ciara decided to enter the Sentinus project in this competition in November and was selected as one of 35 direct National Science Competition entrants. Everyone displaying a project at the fair was judged for the National Science Competition along with whatever else they were entered for, meaning that there were about 250 entries judged for the title of UK Young Scientist or Technologist of the year. On Wednesday after two rounds of judging and an address from Prince Andrew, three technology finalists and three science finalists were chosen.

“I was delighted to have been picked as it meant a free laptop and a trip to 10 Downing Street for tea with the Minister for Science, Lord Drayson. However, it also meant another gruelling day of judging—imagine “Dragon’s Den” but ten times more intimidating. There were five world-renowned judges and three reporters along with the event organiser sitting in a small room facing one chair in the centre for the finalist. It became clear that the judges had already established that the final projects were of a high standard and that by this stage they were looking for a representative of science in the UK: an ambassador to visit schools and talk about science and technology. Later on, an eight foot tall robot called Titan welcomed us to the award ceremony—likened by host Kate Humble to the Brit’s or BAFTAs of the science year. The National Science Competition awards were given last of over 20 other awards. I placed first runner up in technology in the UK and was awarded a trophy, netbook computer, certificate and a trip to the Shell Eco-Marathon in Germany this year.”

Ciara Mogan-Feir