

St. Patrick's Academy is dedicated to enabling its students to become people of integrity and discernment who will serve in the world as confident, competent and caring individuals.



A touch of CLASS

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SUMMER 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians

As another term draws to a close, I am pleased to bring to you the Summer edition of our newsletter. While it is impossible to record every success and every activity, I hope these pages will give you a flavour of life in the Academy over the past three months. The hard work and talent of our students and, indeed, of our staff is evident in every aspect of school life and reflects our mission of Achieving Excellence Together.

As a busy and vibrant school our pupils have opportunities to develop intellectually, socially and spiritually and I am pleased to see so many of those opportunities succeed at the highest levels.

Our strategies to broaden curricular experience and to build partnerships with employers and with the universities has paid great dividends to so many of our students and it is pleasing to see, for example, our work with companies such as First Trust, Terex and universities such as QUB, UU and, indeed, Cambridge, bring tangible benefits to so many of our young people.

While we reflect on a very successful term, we also look forward to some highlights in the weeks ahead such as the much talked about Bandtastic concerts on April 29th and 30th, our annual History Trip to USA and our Mandarin students embarking on their first visit to China in July.

The examination season is almost upon us and we wish our students well as they prepare for the challenges that this will bring. Whether it is our Year 8s taking their first examinations in the Academy or our Year 14s taking their final papers, it is our wish that you prepare well and avail of the guidance and support of your teachers. Finally, I would like to wish each of you and your families a very happy Easter and a successful third term.

Fintan Donnelly, Principal

Sailing to new horizons...



Enjoying a punt along the River Cam are the Academy's 'Broadening Horizons' students, who headed for more genteel climes and a spot of academia in ye olde England. The visit to the ancient city of Cambridge, home to one of England's two oldest universities, included a university admissions event at Murray Edwards College, where the students had the opportunity to take part in academic taster sessions. Also, on offer, at the event was an advice session on the university applications process and, notably, some quality guidance on the writing of that most troublesome of documents, the personal statement. The students' cultural itinerary also included a visit to King's College Chapel as well as a fascinating tour of the historic city. The Broadening Horizons programme with Mrs King runs after school three days a week and is open to high-achieving punters from the senior school. Critical thinking, lively debate and plain sailing... **It's all there!**



MAKING THE NEWS... Well done to the Year 8 News Crew who produced the BBC School Report from the Academy. Thanks to all the BBC staff for all their professionalism and expertise. **Nothing but good news!**

The Science of Success



Science teacher, Mr Arthur Carragher, with the winning trio.

Congratulations to Year 10 students, Jane Bennett, Odhran McKeown and Emily Gribbin who clinched the coveted Dr Dorman Perpetual Cup for Science at the Key Stage 3 Science Quiz held in St Patrick's High School, Keady. The Academy team with all the answers outpointed seventeen other schools to claim the top prize at the event which was held to mark National Science Week.

The Best of Irish



Congratulations to all the Year 10 students who received their awards on the occasion of the Irish Presentations in the Academy. Over one hundred and seventy students received their silver Fáinní with others receiving certificates of merit in spoken Irish. Very well done to the eight EAL (English as an Additional Language) students who were given special recognition: Toma Paulauskaite, Natalia Kaptur, Diana Kirilova, Evandro Guterres, Ula Wrocenska, Fatima Carneiro, Letija Lioogyte and Jun Jun Alfante. The Year 14 Irish students were, also, up for award as successful recipients of the Gold Fáinne. Pride of place in the junior school went to the top Key Stage 3 performers Ciara O'Hagan (above right), and Dáire Fitzsimmons (above left), with Sean O'Neill receiving the Gradam na Máthar Beinin for excellence in the Gold Fáinne examination. Guest speaker for the occasion was Academy past pupil Aine Glackin who is currently studying Irish with Drama at Queen's. Many thanks to Áine and to the Academy's dance troupe who performed on the occasion. The Academy dancers also took part in a beautiful liturgy at St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, to mark Catholic Schools Week when they were accompanied on the harp by Head of Music, Mrs Mairéad Duffy. Thanks to Miss McAtasney for all the mentoring and we wish the dancers well over Easter as they head for the World Irish Dancing Championships in Dublin from 12th - 19th April 2014.



School of Performing Arts.

Showing their true colours



More success for the Art department with the work of Rachael McGinty, (GCSE), and Mark Mullan, (AS), forming part of the CCEA True Colours exhibition at the Ulster Museum. This annual showcase of artistic endeavour exhibits the very best of the examination entries from the previous year. Six art students also obtained full marks in their GCSE examination. Success as well for past pupils, Emma McKernan and Aine Swail, whose outstanding work at A2 was chosen for inclusion in the Specialist Crafts Catalogue Competition.

Open for Business



Caoimhe Corr...
top of the class

The Academy School Bank team headed to Riddell Hall in Belfast where they came out tops in the First Trust NI School Bank Competition.

The team gave an excellent presentation and were chosen to go forward to the national

finals in the RDS, Dublin. Well done to Hannah Campbell, Aidan McCallion, Ross Lavery, Kirsty Marshall, Fahad Al Abassi and James Dolan. And there was more success for James as he made it through to the Grand UK Final of the NI Target Jobs National Schools Challenge sponsored by Siemens. The Challenge gives students the chance to benchmark themselves against similar students from across the UK with the emphasis on unique skills valued by employers. The UK Final consisted of a series of exercises designed to highlight communication and decision-making skills as well as team work and creativity. The Young Enterprise Southern Region Awards took place at Titanic, Belfast on 27 March with Year 13 student, Caoimhe Corr, being chosen as Young Entrepreneur of the Future. The talented Sixth-Former will now go forward to the NI final at a Gala Ball in the Belfast City Hall on 14th May where we wish her every success. Well done to Caoimhe and to all the young entrepreneurs in the Academy and to our very own captain of industry, Mr Gerard Donnelly.

Intensive care

Year 13 students had an excellent opportunity to gain an insight into the medical world when they attended an information evening in the Altnagelvin Hospital, Derry. A range of guest speakers outlined the skill-set and the mind-set required to meet the particular challenges of a medical career, with advice from doctors, dentists, surgeons and consultants. The students obtained lots of help and advice for their forthcoming UCAS applications. Careers were also on the agenda when Gemma O'Donnell from Queen's University and Eugene Devlin, from AJ Engineering in Craigavon, spoke to maths and physics students about the career opportunities available in the field of electrical and mechanical engineering. There was further input from QUB when Karen Cairns spoke to maths students about the maths options on offer in the university.

not lost for words



Academy students who recently obtained their Grade 5 Speech and Drama Awards: Jane Bennett, Jade Dynes, Anna Kelly, Ciara Mallon, Michaela O'Hagan, Margaret O'Hagan, Treasa Rice, Ellen-rose Todd, Lucy Webb. **Well done to one and all!**

Year 8 and 9 students are currently taking part in **the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme**, a programme aimed at promoting the joy of reading. The students are tasked with reading eight books from a variety of authors before voting for the one which is awarded **'The Carnegie Book Award'**. Current authors on the reading list include the renowned Anne Fine and Rebecca Stead so it promises to be an exciting few weeks of reading. The Academy group has its own blog page where book reviews can be added and comments and observations exchanged with fellow schools in the UK. All the books are now available on Kindle and Academy students may borrow a Kindle for a period of six to eight weeks. Miss Mullin is the well-read teacher in charge.

No business like snow business



Just fresh from a week of snowy adventure are sixty unusually exhausted Sixth-Formers who spent a week in the glorious Brenta Dolomites of Northern Italy. With over 100km of piste at the Folgaria resort, there were opportunities aplenty for skiers of every level. Planning is already underway by Mr Fahy for next year's trip which is open to the current Year 12 and 13. Not to be outdone were the forty junior students who graced the slopes of Loon Mountain and Waterville in the White Mountains of New Hampshire for their annual skiathon.

The Italian Job



The Comenius Project is nearing conclusion with project leader Mr Paddy McCormick, Mrs Coyle and Miss Donaghy just back from a week in Trapani, Sicily with three island-hopping Academy students. The Italian

adventure ends the current programme of international exchange which included the hugely successful visit to Ireland last autumn by our European partner schools. All the participating students will now vote for the eighth wonder of the world, having had the opportunity to experience and explore a diverse range of European cultures and lifestyles. The Academy's reputation as an international departure lounge will not, however, be diminished as China gets ready to welcome our Mandarin students in July and our history tourists take off for the United States next week. Boston, New York and Washington can all expect a visit as can the city of Salem in Massachusetts. If you really want to be spell-bound, however, the Year 9 trip to Paris in June might just be the ticket.

The Music Department
ST PATRICK'S ACADEMY
 presents
BANDTASTIC
 Tuesday 29th & Wednesday 30th April 2014
 7.00pm in Assembly Hall 1

Engineering Success

It has been an exciting year for engineering in the Academy with a host of schemes and initiatives opening up a range of opportunities for the Sixth Form. Sorting out the pistons from the valves and the gears were members of the Sentinus team, Aaron Loughran, Catriona Coyle, Michael Toal and Maire Kane who undertook an outstanding collaboration with multinational engineering firm Terex. Under the guidance of Mr Gourley and Mrs McLaughlin, the students researched and developed an audio alarm system which could be integrated into the engineering workshop. The project involved extensive independent research as well as a great deal of collaborative teamwork. The management at Terex have given the go-ahead for the installation of the system and the students can look forward to receiving their Gold Crest Awards from the British Science Association for their outstanding STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) project. Many thanks to Terex engineers Mr Robert Graham and Mr Barry Maguire for their mentoring of the project.

Making Charity Count



Thanks to the Academy students who took part in the annual LASCO (Latin American Street Children Organisation), Maths challenge and raised £704 for the charity. Pictured are several of the students, Erin McElduff, Odhran McGeown, Siobhan Keppeler and Keelin McNamara presenting the cheque to Mr Des Boyle and Mr Peter Butcher, (co-founders of the LASCO charity). Thanks to Mr Wray from the Maths department for making every penny count.

The charity effort continues almost daily in the Academy with outstanding amounts being raised across the year groups for a wide range of good causes. The Concern sponsored silence collection raised well over £1800 with the Year 12 activity day bringing in £1400. The generosity of the Year 8 students has been exceptional with the amazing sum of £3540 going to a range of local charities. Thanks to Mrs Lyttle, Head of Year 8, for her untiring efforts in promoting the charity drive. The British Heart Foundation received £360 following a basic first-aid training course with Year 10 and the Zambia fund is now better off to the tune of £10,290. The Year 14 efforts for the Niamh Louise Foundation are still on-going with nearly £1000 raised to date and the traditional Trocaire Lenten appeal will no doubt prove as successful as in previous years. The SVPD Youth Programme is also up and running with eight students giving of their free time to make visitations to the elderly in the community. **All good.**

Heading for the shore



Year 13 Biology students headed for Killowen Outdoor Education Centre and the rocky shore where they explored a range of biodiversity issues. And, also, on the outdoor theme, the RSPB recently organised a workshop focussing on initiatives to conserve the environment and its wildlife. Special thanks to RSPB Education Officer, Karen Shiels, who was on hand to deal with all the tweets.



Academy Students receiving their John Paul II Awards, from Archbishop Eamon Martin, in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh.

It isn't rocket science...or is it?



Well done to the Academy students who finished runners-up in the Northern Ireland Regional final of the UK Aerospace Youth Rocketry Challenge. The project provides students with a realistic experience in designing a flying aerospace vehicle which meets a specified set of mission and performance requirements. The prestigious competition is designed to encourage more young people to consider careers in the aerospace industry and is organised by the aerospace trade association ADS. The Academy team, who were sponsored by the Armagh Planetarium, had to design, build and successfully launch a rocket carrying two hens' eggs. The rocket was required to reach an altitude of 825 feet before returning safely to ground with the eggs within 48-50 seconds. Well done to all the Year 8 team and special thanks to Mr Grew at mission control for the safe landing. **Manned flights coming shortly.**

Accelerated Reader: Parents of Key Stage 3 pupils can log on to Home Connect and view their child's progress. This resource improves the school-to-home connection by allowing parents and children to discuss progress and in turn motivates children and makes their reading practice even more effective. Just follow the link using your AR Username and Password.
<https://ukhosted9.renlearn.co.uk/2235019/HomeConnect/Login.aspx>

The Pioneering Spirit



Pictured at The Academy Pioneer Mass on 26th March, School Chaplain Father Ryan McAleer with guest speaker, Mr Matthew Harte and Mrs Catherine Strain.

Decorate-a-Door



Congratulations to all the Year 9 pupils who took part in the Academy's 'Decorate-a-Door' competition which was run by the English department to celebrate World Book Day on 6th March. The annual event is now established as a great opportunity to promote the enjoyment of every aspect of reading. Coinciding with the occasion was International School Meals Day, so it was fitting that the joint winning entry from 9H catered for a very hungry caterpillar, indeed. The winning students all received signed copies of Colin Bateman's book, *Running with the Reservoir Pups*.

Last Man Standing

It has been a difficult year on the field for the footballers, so all hope now rests with Kirk Cup captain, Ethan Mc Nally, as he prepares for battle with St Columba's, Portaferry.



A taste of Independence



The A level Politics group recently welcomed several guest speakers to the Academy to share their insights on the workings of the political structures in the North. The Director of the Institute for Research in Social Sciences at the University of Ulster, Dr Cathy Gormley-Heenan, explored the effectiveness of the NI Assembly in holding the Executive to account whilst

Lady Sylvia Hermon, the Independent Member of Parliament for North Down, gave an analysis of Unionism and the effectiveness of the House of Commons in holding the Government to account. Thanks to both distinguished visitors for their invaluable contributions.

Year 13 student, Teri O'Neill is pictured making a presentation to Lady Sylvia.

Girl Power



Well done to the Academy team who came runners-up in the QUB Bioscience Olympiad. Pictured are: Niamh Higgins, Catherine Cartmill and Amie O'Neill. Also playing their part were Orlaith Cross and Seanain Cullen Henry.