



ST PATRICK'S
ACADEMY
DUNGANNON

THE ACADEMY PROSPECTUS 2024



Achieving Excellence Together

Achieving Excellence Together



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PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME

I am delighted to welcome you to our annual prospectus. Whether you are already part of the Academy community or a prospective student or family member, I hope that you enjoy learning more about everything that happens in and beyond the classrooms here at the Academy.

Dedicated to St Patrick, the Academy has been a beacon for quality Catholic education in Dungannon since 1891. As we continue our work of delivering high quality pastoral care and learning in our impressive school building, we work hard to be a centre of educational excellence for the 21st Century – in short, we strive to be a modern school with traditional values and high expectations.

Our prospectus offers you a window through which you can see into all aspects of Academy life. However, should you wish to visit us in person to experience our ethos, to meet our pupils and staff and to view our first-class facilities, please do not hesitate to make contact. Whether you wish to renew old friendships or to learn more about what we do, you will always be welcome. I look forward to seeing you here at the Academy and to working with you and your family in the pursuit of 'Achieving Excellence Together'.

Colin Holmes
Principal



*We want to be a modern school with
traditional values and high expectations.*

Colin Holmes, Principal



A RICH AND VARIED CURRICULUM

At St Patrick's Academy, we believe that academic excellence is the cornerstone of a successful future. Our curriculum is designed to challenge and inspire students to reach their full potential, with experienced staff that provide the guidance and support necessary to help them succeed.

We want to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their starting points, backgrounds, or individual needs, are afforded the same ambitious curriculum and an equal chance to succeed. Our provision goes beyond the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum whilst, at the same time, maximising opportunities for the greatest number of pupils. We are able to accommodate the choices of the vast majority of pupils. You will be reassured to know that in an era of great change, we maintain a solid grammar school curriculum with a strong emphasis on English, mathematics, the sciences, languages and humanities, but we complement this with one of the widest ranges of new courses available locally. We embrace areas such as: IT, business, media, performing arts, social sciences, health & social care, environmental technology and engineering, so as to equip our young people for the future with the right blend of knowledge, understanding and skills.

Subject options at KS4 are fully flexible, affording pupils the opportunity to take the subjects most suited to their needs and aspirations. This is supported by our extensive careers education

programme which aims to support pupils in recognising their skills and qualities and matching them to the most suitable courses. We spend a lot of time discussing subject choice with all pupils, both at GCSE and A Level. Subject options at post-16 are designed (i) to ensure that the subject requirements of all third level courses are met (ii) to reflect pupil demand and (iii) to provide opportunities for each pupil to develop the skills and attributes needed to contribute fully to society in adult life.

We want to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their starting points, backgrounds, or individual needs, are afforded the same ambitious curriculum and an equal chance to succeed.

Most pupils will complete nine subjects to GCSE level, but there are opportunities for some pupils to take ten or more subjects.

As a grammar school we continue to place a strong emphasis on academic rigour and on preparing our students for quality university courses, yet we equally encourage pupils to consider the new opportunities that are open to them such as apprenticeships and foundation degrees.



KS3

Art & Design
Careers Education
Drama
English
French
Geography
History
Home Economics
ICT
Irish
Mathematics
Music
Physical Education
Personal Development & Citizenship
Religious Education
Science
Technology

GCSE

Art & Design
Business Studies
Careers Education (not examined)
Computer Science
Digital Technology – Multimedia
Engineering and Manufacturing
English Language
English Literature
Food and Nutrition
French
Further Mathematics
Geography
History
Irish
Learning for Life & Work
Mathematics
Media Studies
Music
Physical Education
Physical Education (not examined)
Religious Studies
Science (Single Award)
Science (Double Award)
Spanish
Technology and Design

A Level

Accounting
Art & Design
Biology
Business Studies
Careers Education (not examined)
Chemistry
Digital Technology
Economics*
Engineering (BTEC)*
English Literature
Environmental Technology
French
Further Mathematics
Geography
Health and Social Care
History
Irish
Life & Health Science
Mathematics
Media Studies
Music
Nutrition and Food Science
Physical Education
Physics
Psychology
Religious Studies
Sociology
Software Systems Development
Technology and Design

*Subject available through the ALC

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

The Academy has a long tradition of producing academic excellence and we pride ourselves in maintaining that tradition.

With supportive teaching and innovative approaches, we develop a culture of learning that produces outstanding results year after year. We work hard to raise the standards for and to add value to every child.

We do this by fostering positive working relationships with our pupils, which promotes engagement and pupil-centred learning. We can then have a tangible impact on learning, supporting pupils in identifying and improving upon their strengths and by helping them evaluate their own learning across their seven-year journey.

We work hard to raise the standards for and to add value to every child.

The success of our approach is evident in our pupils' 2023 GCSE performance. Over 96% of our pupils achieved 7+ GCSEs at grades A*-C. Thirteen subjects achieved 100% A*-C including English, with Maths achieving 99% A*-C. Double Award Science also produced excellent results with over 97% of pupils achieving A*A*-CC.

At A Level we continue to have great success with twelve of our subjects achieving 100%

A*-C. We strive to maintain high standards of performance and our pupils continue to produce excellent results year on year. While the rigour of traditional A Level subjects has undoubtedly increased, it is pleasing to see so many of our pupils still performing at a high level and gaining access to the most competitive university courses and apprenticeship degree programs.

While examination results are not everything, we all know that good results greatly improve a young person's life chances, so academic excellence is something that we will not compromise on. Academic success can lead to improved career opportunities, personal growth in areas such as critical thinking, problem solving and increased self-esteem.

We are always responding to changing economic conditions as the skills and qualifications needed for learning and working now are very different from those that were needed a generation ago. We are conscious that the future success of pupils will be enhanced through the development of wider skills in teamwork, communication, decision making and interpersonal relations. We invest in all these areas for our pupils, and it is our hope that any young person coming out of the Academy will have academic achievement but will also have the skills and qualities needed to succeed in life.



Pictured is Mikolaj Baginski who studied five subjects at A Level. He achieved Grade A in four of his A Level subjects; Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Physics and Polish; along with Grade A in Software Systems Development. Mikolaj is planning on studying Computer Science and Mathematics at the University of Edinburgh.*

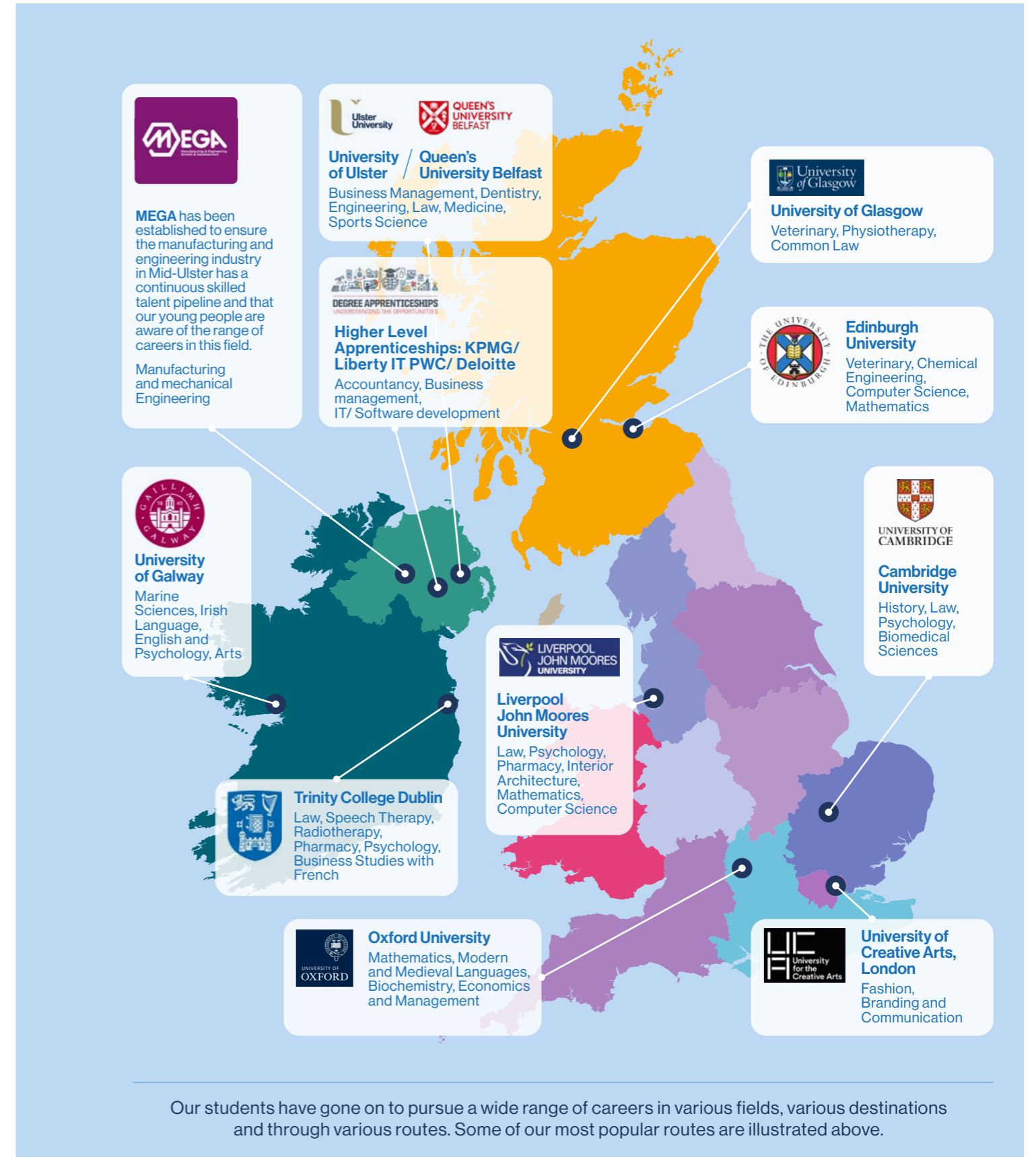
PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

We believe that careers guidance is an essential component of a student's academic journey. Our experienced careers team are trained to identify and address the unique needs of each student. We believe that through our tailored careers programme, we can help students develop the knowledge, skills, qualities, and attitudes which give them a strong foundation for lifelong learning and work in a rapidly changing economic environment.

The Academy has strong links with both universities and local business, offering work-related learning opportunities through industry visits and in-school talks and events. All Year 13 pupils complete work experience, while applications and interview skills play a prominent

role in careers lessons from Year 12 onwards. Our students attend Open Days at Queen's University, Ulster University and St Mary's University College. Students have visits from Cambridge, Liverpool and Scottish universities, as well as various organisations offering HLAs. Pupils gained an insight into the importance of personal statements and advice on UCAT, Multi-mini-interviews and other university interviews.

Our experienced Careers team provide high-quality careers guidance and support which helps students understand the range of options available to them and realise their potential. We believe that every student has the potential to achieve great things, and we are committed to helping them realise their dreams.



PAST PUPIL SUCCESS



Pearce Cullen
Producer,
Figboot Productions

As a pupil of St Patrick's Academy, I benefited from the advice and support of many excellent teachers and was given the opportunity to begin to unearth my personal skills and passions. What I came to realise was that what I enjoyed doing all boiled down to storytelling. At the time of leaving the Academy in 2009, I did not yet know where this would lead, but I knew that I wanted my story to involve doing something creative.

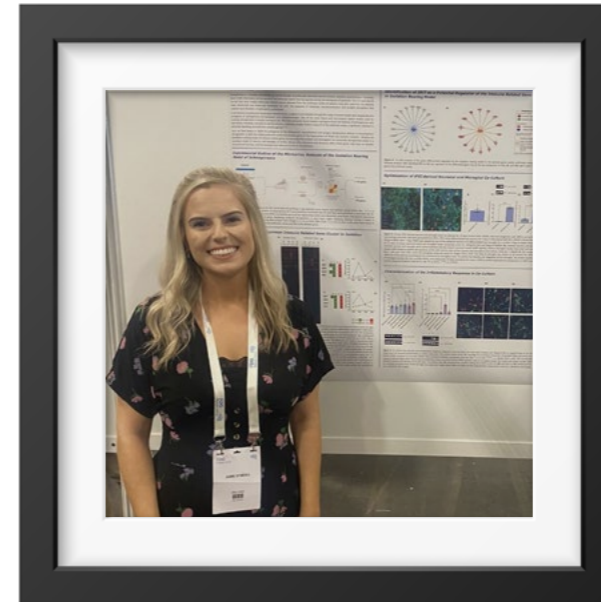
My own A-Levels (English literature, history, religious studies and biology) were, in my mind, linked by that central pillar of storytelling:

history being the story of mankind; religion being the stories that attempt to understand the inexplicable; and, obviously, English literature.

I was always an avid reader and spent many hours in the library reading or writing (mostly poetry). In fact, it was my English teacher, Mrs Lisa O'Neill, who encouraged me to enter the Patrick Kavanagh's School Poetry competition. This early success drove me to study BA English Literature at QUB, then on to MA Screenwriting at the Screen Academy in Edinburgh and, subsequently, to pursue a career in TV/film.

I was a producer of a film called AN IRISH GOODBYE, which won the award for best short at this year's Oscar, BAFTA and IFTA awards.

Fast forward to 2023. To my great amazement and (even now) continued disbelief, I was a producer of a film called AN IRISH GOODBYE, which won the award for best short at this year's Oscar, BAFTA and IFTA awards. My early years in St Patrick's Academy were instrumental in bringing me to this point and I am proud to be counted amongst its alumni.



Amie O'Neill
Research Scientist,
Pfizer Grange Castle Dublin.

I can happily say that over the seven years spent in the Academy, the opportunities I had and the people I met were instrumental in guiding me to discover and develop a passion for a subject that I am very lucky to have turned into a career. Not only that, but nearly 9 years later my friends and I still talk about all the fond memories we have of our time at the Academy, and that is in no small part due to the culture of the school.

For me, although I genuinely enjoyed a lot of subjects, I found choosing my A-levels quite difficult as I was worried about narrowing my

career opportunities going forward when I wasn't entirely sure what I wanted to do with my life. However, I will forever appreciate my chemistry teacher, Miss McElroy, for taking the time to sit down and go through the options with me. This support and guidance helped me to arrive at a decision I felt happy with.

I am now working for Pfizer in Dublin as a Research Scientist and thankfully am still enjoying every minute of it.

I ended up loving Biology at A-level, in particular anything to do with the nervous system. So much so, I went on to study Pharmacology in University College Dublin. I found I really enjoyed the research element of my degree so decided to stay on for further study and recently completed a PhD in Neuropharmacology focusing on Schizophrenia. I am now working for Pfizer in Dublin as a Research Scientist and thankfully am still enjoying every minute of it.

I am incredibly grateful to the Academy for not only shaping my career path but for giving me the time, patience, and guidance to figure out what I wanted to do.



*I really love the uniform. It is so nice and comfortable.
Wearing it really makes you feel like part of our
community here at St Patrick's Academy.*

Hannah Kerr, Primate Dixon Primary School



UNIFORM

The Academy uniform is designed to be practical, smart, comfortable, affordable and easily available.

Wearing the correct uniform shows commitment and pride in being an Academy pupil and is clearly associated with our high standards.

All Students

- School blazer (blazers must be worn, not carried or kept in schoolbags);
- School clip on tie. The tie must also be worn on the journey to and from school;
- Years 8-12 long sleeved blue school blouse/shirt. Short sleeved blue shirt/blouse may be worn September, May and June;
- Years 13 & 14 long sleeved white school blouse/shirt. Short sleeved white shirt/blouse may be worn in September, May and June;
- School V-neck jumper;
- Plain black leather shoes (boots, 'sling-backs', mules, trainers and so on are not permitted). Heel height must not exceed 2.5cm;

Either:

- Navy pleated, knee-length skirt (school regulation only and worn correctly; not modified) with navy tights.
- Plain Navy socks may be worn in September, May and June.

Or

- Plain black trousers (regular-fit, hem should sit neatly on the shoe; skinny trousers are not permitted).

- Trousers should be worn with plain black socks.
- Outdoor Clothing
- If a scarf is worn, only the school scarf is acceptable.
- Outdoor jacket: navy waterproof jacket with the school crest may be worn over, not instead of, the blazer.

PE Uniform:

- School crested football shirt, shorts and socks are essential items of PE uniform.

Hair Styles, Jewellery & Make-up

- Hair should be clean, neat and tidy. Only natural hair colours are permitted. Speedline's, tracks and other partially shaved styles are not permitted.
- Boys must be clean shaven.
- One pair of stud earrings, one in each ear lobe (due to health & safety regulations, no hoops/drop earrings permitted). One chain and one plain ring will be allowed.
- Additional jewellery or hats, scarves, ties, hooded tops should not be worn.
- Years 8 to 10 inclusive: make-up should not be worn.
- Students should not wear false tan, eye make-up, acrylic/gel nails and nail polish.

A full copy of the uniform policy is available on the school website.

Should you have any concerns regarding uniform, please contact Mrs O McVey, Uniform Co-ordinator.

PASTORAL CARE

We believe that pastoral care is an essential component of a student's academic journey. We understand that students who feel safe, supported, and valued are more likely to thrive academically and personally.

Our Year 8 pupils have many wonderful opportunities to establish new friendships usually beginning with events such as the induction session in June for our new students and an information session for both parents and pupils at the end of August. We have introduced an online registration form to enable each child to tell us a little bit about themselves, so that they can be placed in a class with like-minded children with similar interests and hobbies. This should enable pupils to find new and lasting friendships. To support pupils and their parents in their transition, we have created a transition microsite which provides key information and offers parents a help-desk facility.

Our Year 8 pupils have the school to themselves on their first day and our senior prefects are on hand to show them around. At lunchtime all Year 8 students get out five minutes early to give them priority in the dining room and to give them the additional opportunity to explore all the facilities available. For the month of September, they get out of class a few minutes early at home time so that they have a little more time to familiarise themselves with the bus system in place. We always maintain a strong teacher presence around the Academy – in the

corridors, in the playgrounds, on the football pitches and at the bus waiting areas. This keeps good order for everyone and there will always be an adult to ask if your child has a problem.

We place great emphasis in our pastoral programme on the formation and nurturing of friendships and, as a consequence, when we ask our pupils what they liked best about the Academy they placed positive relationships with friends and teachers at the top of the list.

Our pupils find their own space to grow and develop and we work hard at resolving differences if they arise. We also have a Cairdeas (friendship) programme where Year 13 students undertake the responsibility of supporting a Year 8 pupil helping them to settle into their new school. We believe that by creating a happy and supportive environment pupils will learn better and have greater personal achievement.

Early in Year 8 our pupils experience the unique "Find, Follow and Connect on the Yellow Brick Road" programme which helps young people develop perspective and resilience, while building lasting friendships. This programme is followed





PASTORAL CARE

up with additional workshops in year 9, 'Eddie the Eagle' resilience training and in Year 10, Inside the Teenage Brain. These workshops are an important aspect of education that helps students develop the skills and mindset necessary to overcome challenges and setbacks. You will be reassured to know that, should your child need additional support, we provide a very comprehensive counselling service, which goes far beyond that which you will find in most schools. Our counsellor is a trained psychotherapist and Trauma-Informed Counsellor. Our student council also plays an important role in promoting the voice of pupils in a meaningful way, where their views and opinions are considered, and suggestions implemented.

We try to offer pupils a range of health and well-being opportunities such as, a dedicated Wellbeing period on their timetable, E-Safety workshops delivered by experts such as Wayne Denner and Dr Deborah Webster, and training in CPR and use of a defibrillator through the Community of Lifesavers Education Programme.

"I found it very easy to settle into the Academy as the support I received was enormous, there are endless opportunities and I love it here!"

Rhylan Campbell, Laghey Primary



BIGGER AND BETTER

A bigger school means more for everyone;

- More subject options
- More extracurricular opportunities
- More facilities
- More friends
- More specialised staff
- More career opportunities
- More success

"On my first day at the Academy I was very nervous about the amount of new people and the size of the school, and I was afraid of getting lost. I quickly realised there was nothing to worry about as there are lots of signs and the sixth form students and teachers are always happy to help."

Brianna White

Our Lady's Primary School, Tullysaran

"Looking back, joining the academy in Year 13 was daunting at first but I soon realised how welcoming and helpful both the students and staff were. As a result I am able to strive for excellence due to the remarkable quality of teaching and support and I have definitely made lifelong friendships with many of the students from St Patrick's Academy."

Vincent Mc Anerney, Year 14

"As I first walked through the gates of the Academy I was scared. Scared that I wouldn't like the teachers, that I wouldn't make any friends, and that the work would be too hard. It wasn't long before I realised that everyone in the hall that first morning felt the same. This made me feel more at ease and it wasn't long before we all felt more relaxed. Now, my form class is like my family. I am so grateful that I have the opportunity to go to this amazing school, and I wish all of you aspiring students the best of luck."

Caoimhe Hurson

St Patrick's Primary School, Dungannon

"At lunch time I like to play football outside or if you prefer you can go to the sports hall and play ping pong, go to the library, and play boardgames or even go to the ICT suite and play minecraft. Lots of activities for everyone."

Eoin Holland

St Mary's Primary School, Cabragh

"I decided to move to St Patrick's Academy as I was really impressed by the vast range of subject options at A Level. When I joined the school in sixth form I was a little apprehensive, however very quickly I realised I had nothing to worry about as everyone was so friendly. I have really enjoyed choosing from the wide range of after school clubs and the opportunity to make so many new friends. I can honestly say that I have had a great experience so far."

Cara Mc Closkey, Year 13





I love going on the bus now because I get a chance to talk to my friends or listen to music. I even get to go to the shop at the bus stop before the bus comes. I was a little nervous at the start as I never got the bus to school before, but Mr Mulgrew and the teachers are always there to help.

Ryan Mc Williams, St Mary's Primary School, Pomeroy

TRANSPORT

St Patrick's Academy draws its pupils from a wide catchment area. Many pupils, therefore, travel to school each day by bus. Currently pupils travel from as far away as Carrickmore, Pomeroy, Lurgan, Armagh, Cookstown and Moy.

We have a purpose-built bus boarding bays at the rear of the building to accommodate the large numbers of pupils who travel to school via either Translink buses or other private bus companies. The bus bays, 9 in total, all are clearly marked and spread across a large area to lessen the impact of congestion.

The bus platforms will be supervised by teaching staff to ensure all pupils safely and appropriately load their correct bus.

At the end of the school day pupils who avail of Translink, or other buses, should make their way to the supervised indoor waiting area or to the bus platforms awaiting their bus. The bus drivers for a given area always park in their assigned platform number. Pupils are asked to arrive promptly for their buses as the platforms require a quick turnaround.

Mr Mulgrew is the St. Patrick's Academy Bus Co-Ordinator; he will call each bus number and the area in which it will be travelling on a loudspeaker. The bus bays will be supervised by teaching staff to ensure all pupils safely and appropriately board their correct bus. In the unlikely event a pupil misses their bus, and no other bus can accommodate the destination, the pupil will be guided towards reception to contact home and safely wait for a parent or carer.

Mr Mulgrew works closely with Translink and EA Bus Inspectors to ensure the safety of all pupils travelling to and from school. Strong links with the Inspectors allows the school to resolve any issues that may arise during travel, such as behavioural problems or misdemeanours, these are then dealt with promptly and effectively. St. Patrick's Academy has a clear and concise bus policy which all pupils will receive during regular assemblies on road safety

DINING FACILITIES

Our pupils have access to two very modern dining areas in the Academy, the canteen and the mezzanine, serving a wide range of snacks and meals at breakfast, break and lunch.

Ask any pupil and they will tell you that the dining areas are great places to relax and catch up with your friends. In spring and summer pupils also have access to the outdoor quadrangle area, with green space and picnic tables, where they can get some fresh air whilst enjoying their break and lunch.

The canteen is very modern and has a great variety of food. It is so easy to pay using your fingerprint. At break time you can get hot chocolate and biscuits and at lunch time the hot food is delicious.

Brendan Quinn,
St Mary's Primary School, Cabragh

THE MAIN DINING ROOM

Our main dining room offers pupils a wide variety:

Breakfast

Free Bowl of Porridge in the Canteen normally between 8.30am and 8.45am

Break

Scones, breakfast items and crackers. Range of hot drinks, milk, and fruit juices

Lunch

Traditional school dinner counter

Sample menu

- Breaded Chicken served on a bed of mash
- Lasagne served with side salad and garlic bread
- Fish of the day
- Daily vegetarian option

Grab-and-go hot snack counter

Sample menu

- Heated sandwich/ filled Ciabatta
- Filled 'Yellow Door' buttermilk baps
- Quick Box range e.g. Honey Chilli Sausage and Potato Cubes, Chicken Curry Rice, Sweet and Sour Chicken Balls and Rice.

Freshly made Sandwich counter

Sandwiches can be pre-ordered at the electronic kiosk from 8am – 11am and collected at lunch time.

Allergen content provided to help pupils make appropriate choices.





DINING FACILITIES

THE MEZZANINE

In our Mezzanine pupils can enjoy a more relaxed environment where they can enjoy a light snack at break and lunch time.

Breakfast items

for example;

- Chicken and Cheese Rolls
- Ham and Cheese Muffins
- Hot dogs

Quick Box items

for example;

- Chicken Curry Rice
- Lasagne and Garlic bread
- Sweet and Sour Chicken Balls and Rice.

Allergen content provided to help pupils make appropriate choices.

Having a healthy, balanced diet that follows the advice of the 'Eatwell Guide' can improve concentration levels, memory, and information processing. Foods that are rich in fibre keep the body feeling fuller for longer, providing enough energy to focus and stay alert throughout the school day. We take great pride in producing food that is nutritious, delicious, imaginative and attractively presented, with the emphasis being on healthier choices. Pupils who make healthy choices are rewarded with points on their sQuid account and we run a competition each year where the pupils with the most points receive a prize.

Our catering staff are continuously trying to improve their offerings not only with the food they offer but wider environmental issues. This year they have been working particularly hard playing their part for the environment by introducing biodegradable packaging, wooden cutlery and a new 'bring your own cup' initiative. Demonstrating to pupils that they can enjoy their dining experience whilst also contributing positively to environmental concerns.



LEARNING THE ACADEMY WAY

All teachers in St Patrick's Academy are well-resourced and highly trained to create impactful learning opportunities and nurture relationships with all pupils.

Our teachers take the time to get to know each pupil, to understand their needs, and to establish meaningful relationships. They create a safe space where pupils will embrace challenge and can reach their potential. Pupils feel respected and appreciated and therefore are more willing to cooperate and are more motivated to learn. Learning with and from other pupils builds strong communication and social skills along with content knowledge. We seek to develop active learning skills using various approaches such as collaborative work and self-reflection which offers students the opportunity to give feedback on how well they have understood the topics being taught to them. As a result, pupils develop the skills and mindset necessary to take ownership of their own learning in partnership with their peers and teachers.

STEM

At St Patrick's Academy, we will continue to invest in the workforce of the future by raising our young people's skills, aspirations, and knowledge of STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). As the world becomes increasingly dependent on technology, the range of businesses and industries involving science, technology, engineering, and maths has grown significantly. Therefore, in St Patrick's Academy,

'Success through STEM' is a key focus from Key Stage 3 through to Key Stage 5. We aim to develop our pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of STEM-related subjects so that they benefit from the local employment job opportunities and can contribute positively to the economy. The majority of our pupils study at least one STEM subject at A Level, a recognition of the value which STEM has for their future careers.

A portfolio of innovative and exciting programmes and extra-curricular activities are organised to enthuse and engage our students in STEM;

STEM careers events	
ALMAC Student Placements	
KS3 STEM club	
Schools Chemistry Analyst Competition	
Biology Olympiad	
International Chemistry Olympiad	
KS3 Salters Festival of Chemistry	
W5 LEGO Mindstorms	
Sentinus Research Projects	
CREST Awards	
QUB Maths Competition	
UKMT Maths Challenge	
JP Mc Manus Award	
Hans Sloane Awards	

LEARNING THE ACADEMY WAY

Digital Learning

We are honoured to be recognised as a Google for Education Reference School in recognition of our outstanding use of digital technologies to drive positive learning outcomes. We are one of only seven schools in Ireland, who work closely with Google in supporting the use, development, and deployment of future technologies in our school and other schools, globally.

"St. Patrick's Academy, Dungannon is doing exemplary things with Google tools, and we're excited for you to join this select group of Reference Schools"

Google for Education Team UK & Ireland
Nov 2022

We actively use digital tools to enhance teaching and learning across all subject areas and use the Google for Education suite as our main platform. Our school has invested in our ICT infrastructure; all classrooms have interactive touchscreens, and we enjoy reliable and secure Wifi, campus wide. All teachers have their own surface pro and/or iPad which they use to develop creative resources and innovative lessons. Our teaching staff are highly skilled and committed to professional development. Many have achieved Google Certified Educator status and we have our own in-house Google Certified Trainer and Coach to develop bespoke training programmes and continuous professional development. We are committed to providing our pupils with a digitally rich experience, ensuring they develop as lifelong learners who are confident, independent, resilient,

and responsible users of modern technology, fully equipped with the future ready, digital skills vital for success in the modern, digital world.

Peer Mentoring

We have a thriving peer mentoring programme across all Key Stages in Saint Patrick's Academy. From Year 8-12, students are matched with a Year 13 or 14 student who has enjoyed academic success in a particular subject area. The older pupil meets with their mentee each week for a set period and helps develop their understanding in the core subject areas of English, maths, and science. Our research has shown that improvements in these subject areas has a positive effect on mentees' performance right across the curriculum. The older mentor not only supports with academic development, but also role models excellent social and emotional skills. This process requires the mentor to have a high level of interest, empathy, and a genuine desire to help the younger pupil. The mentors receive training to develop their own knowledge and understanding of the role and develop the skills and attributes of a successful mentor. We have found the most powerful benefit from the programme is the enhanced self-confidence enjoyed by both mentee and mentor. Working together to overcome challenges in learning epitomises what the Academy pupil experience is all about.



St Patrick's Academy is a beautiful, modern school, with amazing resources and the most up-to-date technology.

Grace Mc Garrity, St Mary's Primary School, Dunamore

PARENTAL PARTNERSHIPS

When you entrust the Academy with the care and education of your child, we see that as the beginning of a partnership with you in the nurturing and development of your son or daughter until they leave us as young men and women.

For this partnership to work effectively, we provide many opportunities for parents to become closely involved with their children's education and development.

We provide many opportunities for parents to become closely involved with their children's education and development.

- We normally begin with a Parent Information Morning in August of Year 8 where you will get the opportunity to meet with your child's Form Tutor and Year Head and other key members of staff, such as the school counsellor, who will play an important role in ensuring the well-being of your child.
- Our Year 8 school mass can be an important way to bring together students, parents, and teachers in a shared experience of faith and community. For parents, it is a chance to connect child's school community and to support their child's spiritual development.

- We run information events for parents such as, E safety training, delivered by experts such as Wayne Denner and Dr Deborah Webster, offering advice on how parents can take control and help protect their children online.
- We host parent teacher meetings each year to provide you with the opportunity to get a first-hand report on your child's progress and development with each teacher.
- We provide you with progress statements twice each year as well as full written reports once a year and we follow these up with individual meetings where appropriate.
- We believe that helping students make informed decisions about their future is an essential part of our educational mission. That's why we offer a range of careers and advice days throughout the academic year to help pupils and their parents explore different career paths and make good subject choices.
- We have an "open door" policy, and we encourage you to contact us and meet with us should you be concerned about any aspect of your child's progress or development.
- Equally, we do not wait for problems to arise, and we will contact you if we have any concerns about your child's progress or happiness.



We want to work towards developing effective partnerships with parents by promoting open communication channels, encouraging parental involvement in school activities, and providing opportunities for parents to engage with their child's learning.



STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITIES

Our school is one of the largest in Northern Ireland with all the latest specialised facilities.

For example, our science and technology suites are modelled on the latest educational thinking with classroom layouts and equipment. All classrooms are designed around the needs of learners and are equipped to facilitate the most effective teaching and learning approaches. Classrooms are fitted with teaching walls, incorporating the latest digital touchscreen technology, an important element of our programme to allow for more flexible teaching strategies that facilitate different modes of learning. In addition, students have access to our new library, and small groups of students have facilities to run their own collaborative learning groups in the library group room.

For those who are interested in astronomy, we have access to a rather unique facility in the form of the school observatory with a rotating dome and 14-inch telescope. Opportunities to work with the equipment and facilities used by professionals are some of the best ways of inspiring young people to aim high and to develop a clearer sense of possible career paths at an early age. This is why we complement our facilities with extensive input from professionals in the world of work.

We use the same approach in music and media studies, where pupils can work with iPads and Apple Mac suites, experiencing the professional world of music technology and video editing. The new suites for the creative

and expressive elements of the curriculum are extensive and of the highest quality.

Our technology department have thirty designated computers used for computer aided design and manufacturing as well as electronic simulation and programming software. We are delighted to have the very latest equipment including two laser cutters, three 3D printers and three CNC routers for our pupils to use.

Our indoor and outdoor sports facilities are amongst the best in any school in the country.

Our Sports Pavilion is at the centre of our outdoor facilities including:

- Two full-sized Gaelic pitches
- One full-sized soccer pitch,
- Four hard court tennis courts,
- One 3G pitch and one gravel pitch.

Indoor sports facilities include:

- A fully equipped matrix fitness suite,
- One spinning/dance studio,
- A full-sized netball/basketball sports hall, and
- One gymnasium.

These facilities allow our pupils to access a full range of sporting activities on the school site ranging from traditional sports to all health-related activities.



"While I enjoyed every aspect of school life, it is my experiences playing on Academy sports teams that I cherish the most. Fierce opponents at club and county level become closest allies and best friends wearing the Academy jersey. I feel I have left the Academy fully equipped for the next stage of my sporting career- intervarsity competitions and the chance to compete with the best camogie and football players in Ireland. I can't wait!"

Lara Devlin, 2022 All Star recipient



Image courtesy of Cathal McOscar Photography

SPORTING LIFE AT THE ACADEMY

Gaelic Sports

The Academy prides itself on a well-earned reputation in sport. Our sporting pedigree is something we value and celebrate as a school community, and we have a number of experienced and dedicated teachers within our staff that coach and manage teams in a wide variety of sports. In addition, we have a full-time Gaelic coach who will assist and challenge players to achieve their full potential across all our traditional games. We are committed to providing the best sporting opportunities for all our pupils. All our pupils are encouraged to develop their sporting interests and talents and can avail of a number of opportunities on a recreational and/or competitive basis. We encourage pupils to participate in whatever way they can, as it is a great source of enjoyment and an opportunity to build lasting friendships.

Ladies Gaelic Football

Our Year 8 girls are encouraged to represent the school in Ladies Gaelic football. Training commences in early September until Halloween mid-term and resumes in the summer term. 68 of our present Year 8 girls have registered to play and attend weekly training sessions. Two teams have already participated in an Ulster Schools blitz and acquitted themselves well showing great promise in the sport.

Our Senior ladies compete in the topflight whilst it was our U.16 team who took pride of place in 2022 and were unfortunate to get knocked out at

the semi-final stage of the Ulster Championship last year. We have two U.14 teams competing in Ulster schools so there are numerous opportunities to develop your skills in this sport. Following the success of Lana Sheehy and Lára Devlin as 2022 All Stars, we hope to see more awards in the future for our senior ladies.

Camogie

Our Year 8 girls are encouraged to pick up the camán early in their first year and will compete in Ulster schools' competitions in the summer term. Our Camogie teams have a proud record in Ulster competitions at all age groups, but the Senior Camogs made the breakthrough on the National stage in 2019 finishing as runners-up in the All-Ireland Final. Promoted in Ulster, the 2020 senior team went on to win back-to-back Ulster titles and following an All-Ireland semi-final replay, went on to lift the All-Ireland title for the first time in our school history. Our senior success continued in the 2022 season with a fiercely contested Ulster final win to lift the Fr. Davis cup for only the third time in our history. A narrow defeat in the All-Ireland Semi-final brought the curtain down on a highly successful season for our senior camogs. Our U16 and U14 teams took pride of place in the 2021/22 season with both teams winning Ulster titles and competing in the higher divisions this year. Following the 2022 success of Lára Devlin as an All Star we were delighted that Eva Cullen has been recognised in 2023 with a Camogie All Star.

SPORTING LIFE AT THE ACADEMY

"When choosing to come to the Academy, I looked forward most to the school football and I hoped that one day I would represent the school playing in the MacRory Cup. The football is very competitive and there is a real sense of camaraderie. Playing against the best footballers in Ulster has not only improved my football skills but also my ability to be a team player and become a better person."

Fiachra Neilis,
Captain of the MacRory Cup team

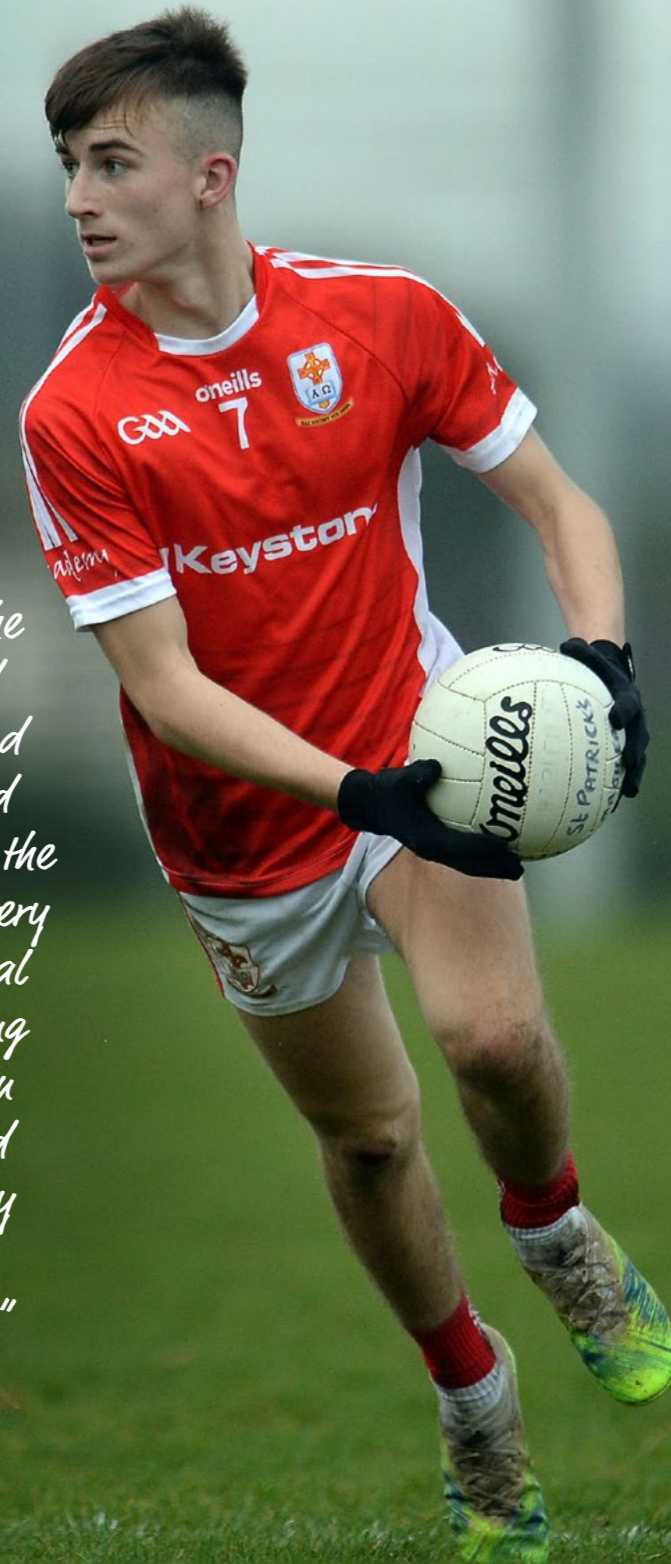


Image courtesy of Oliver McVeigh Photography

Boys Gaelic Football

The MacRory Cup is the blue-ribbon event of Ulster Colleges sporting calendar for boys. We are proud to have a strong record in this competition, achieving success in 1991, 1997, 2004, 2008 & 2009 and finished as runners-up in 1992, 2011 & 2016. In 2023 we reached the semi-final stage losing to Holy Trinity College in an epic contest that was attended by nearly two thousand spectators.

At Year 11 we won the Oisín McGrath Cup with a hard-fought win over Our Lady's Castleblaney and our Year 10 group reached the Corn na nÓg final but unfortunately lost by a point to Omagh CBS. The hard work and commitment displayed by our students has been recognised at Ulster Colleges level in Boys Gaelic football and in total 31 All Star Awards have been awarded to individual players in recognition of their contribution. In 2023, for the first time ever we had three players on the All-Star School's team, Ronan Cassidy, Michael Carty and Theo Lowe.

Every boy coming into Year 8 is encouraged to attend after school GAA coaching from the start of their school year. This year we have 80 Year 8 boys attending after school football. The emphasis at this stage is on fun, participation and enjoyment.

As the boys move through each year, they are entered into a variety of competitions, including:

Year 8:	The Martin O'Farrell Blitz,
Year 9:	D'alton Cup & Brother Ennis Cup
Year 10:	Corn na nÓg & Gerry Brown Cup
Year 11:	Oisín McGrath Cup
Year 12:	Rannafast Cup & Pat King Cup
Year 13 & 14:	MacRory Cup

Hurling

Hurling is also a prominent sport in our school life. Teams play at Ulster Colleges level and over the years several of our students have been recognised with Provincial All-Star awards with Fionn Devlin being a recent recipient in 2020. We are proud to have a number of our past and current pupils playing key roles for their county teams. This year our senior hurlers are making great progress and have recently qualified out of their casement shield group and progress to the quarter-final stage of the competition.

SPORTING LIFE AT THE ACADEMY

Basketball & Netball

One of the most popular sports in the Academy, basketball is offered to boys and girls in all year groups. We have had notable success at provincial and All Ireland level over recent years, with the under 19 girls' basketball team making history on the 25th of February 2020 winning the first ever All-Ireland girls' basketball title for the school. Year 8 basketball begins in the summer term, and they compete in the Vince Halloran memorial tournament against schools from across the North. Many of the boys' and girls' teams competed well in their leagues and we had four pupils recognised for their talent with Basketball Northern Ireland All Star awards.

We are proud to offer a vibrant and inclusive netball programme for all students. It is an exciting team sport that promotes teamwork, sportsmanship and it is a fantastic way to stay active and healthy. Due to the inclusive nature of the club the number of committed players from various age groups and skill levels has increased significantly. We compete in inter school competitions at both local and regional level which allows our students the opportunity to show case their skills and compete against other schools. Our Minor and Junior Netball squads have recently competed in their regional Netball blitzes with great success, and both are now competing in the NI league.

Athletics, Soccer & Golf

Cross Country and Track and Field Athletics is a growing club in the Academy. Athletes in years 8-14 compete in local, district, Ulster and Irish Schools' Championships testing themselves against the best in their age groups. The club is going from strength to strength with more and more athletes qualifying each year for the higher-level competitions and competing alongside top-quality athletes.

The Soccer Club has always been a popular sport of choice for many students over the years. Soccer competitions in schools are important because they promote physical activity, teamwork, sportsmanship, life skills development, mental health and well-being among students. Our Year 8 to 12 boys compete in a number of soccer competitions during the year including the Mid-Ulster Cup and the Northern Ireland Cup. This year, for the first time we have an under 16 and under 14 girls teams competing at schools level.

Our senior and junior gold teams take part in Ulster Golf competitions, testing themselves against the best local golfers in the Irish Schools' Matchplay championship, Ulster Junior Championship and Ulster Scratch Championship. Many of our past pupils have represented Ireland at amateur level, including Jack Madden who was awarded a scholarship to attend Arkansas State University.





Brandenburg Gate - Berlin '23



Canoeing Pursuits with
Duke of Edinburgh



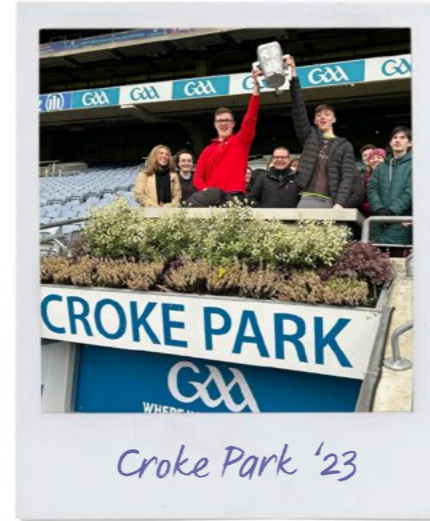
At the Eiffel Tower



Investigations
@ The River Fury



Ski Selfie!



Croke Park '23



Ski Trip '23



Disneyland - Paris '23



Geography Field Trip

EDUCATIONAL ADVENTURES

In St Patrick's Academy there is a world of opportunity awaiting pupils. Every year there is a wide range of trips and educational adventures on offer that cut across all age groups and areas of interest.

Bringing history to life is a key aim of the history department. After a break of three years due to the pandemic, The History Department was once again on its travels. In April 2023, 40 students visited the fabulous cities of Berlin and Krakow, taking in a range of incredibly important historical sites, including the Berlin Wall, the Reichstag, Checkpoint Charlie and, of course, Auschwitz. In October 2024, students from Years 9 - 13 will be travelling to the USA, calling in at the cities of Boston, Washington DC and New York City. We also are planning a joint trip to Germany with history students from the Royal School, Dungannon.

Languages are also well catered for, with frequent sojourns to France and the Gaeltacht regions. Last year, over 70 Year 10 pupils travelled to Paris on our school French trip. As well as getting a taste of French culture, pupils visit Disneyland Paris, Parc Astérix and spend time in such well-known places as the Chateau de Versailles and the Musée d'Orsay. It really is an experience not to be forgotten!

Pupils from Year 8-14 have the opportunity to attend summer colleges in the Donegal Gaeltacht in order to practise their oral Irish and immerse

themselves in the Irish language for one, two or three weeks. Many of our pupils are also involved in teaching or supporting Irish language events in their own GAA clubs or working as cinnirí (leaders) in summer camps or colleges.

Our young geographers also get their maps out on a regular basis taking part field trips. Field trips are an exciting way to practically apply classroom knowledge in a real-world situation. The GCSE field trip to the river Fury is just one way that pupils investigate and explore geography theory in a practical setting.

Each year a select group of students are selected to part-take in the Duke of Edinburgh/ Presidents Award, a challenging award involving mental and physical perseverance. Selected students' plan and train for a five-day canoeing pursuit in which they must navigate their way, prepare their own food and camp to achieve their award. This award allows students to come together and build confidence by meeting new people and learning crucial attributes that will aid them in everyday life as they prepare to leave secondary education.

Our junior and senior ski trip to Europe is always a highlight for many of our pupils. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to experience a thrilling new sport; it also gives them an opportunity to experience new cultures. Whether you are a novice or a veteran, the trip of a lifetime is assured.

ENRICHING THE CURRICULUM

Our extracurricular programme is designed to prepare our pupils for employment, active citizenship, and leadership.

Pupils are encouraged to join at least one club or society while at school. In a large school such as ours, we can cater for a wide range of individual tastes. In addition, the school participates in a wide range of competitions and events. (See below)

Extracurricular Activities
Astronomy Club
Chess/ Games Club
Choir
Coding Club
Debating/Public Speaking/ Mock Trial
Lego Robotics Group (MEGA)
Liturgy Group
Mandarin
Orchestra
Pioneer Club
Quiz teams
Sentinus R & D Engineering
Sports Clubs (see previous section)
St Vincent de Paul Society
Traditional Group
UK Maths Challenge
Young Enterprise

Sixth form opportunities for personal development

On top of the extra-curricular activities listed we also offer our sixth form students a leisure programme and an additional range of extra-curricular activities. Sixth form students are encouraged to set aside some time each week for physical and mental well-being and for community work.

Some of the opportunities on offer are Duke of Edinburgh/Presidents Award, Conservation group, Pope John Paul II Award, Fitness Suite, Spin studio, Table tennis, 1k Academy walk, Couch to 5K, Swimming, Squash, Chess, Mentoring, Volunteering and Lifesavers programme.

Some of our Competitions and events include:

Art Exhibition in Linen green
Abair (Gael-Linn) public speaking, Scrúdú an fháinne, Tráth na gCeist, Feis Dhún Geanainn, Gaeilge 24
European Day of Language, Francofest, Hispanofest
Public speaking competition, Creative writing workshops, Poetry Slam



There are so many places you can meet new friends. I met some at Choir, Traditional group, and Chess club. I promise you that you will find great new friends in the Academy.

Ailbhe Mc Anallen, Our Lady's Primary School, Tull saran.



MUSIC AND DRAMA

The value of music in the Academy lies in its contribution to the enjoyment and enrichment of our pupils' lives.

The high-quality music education we offer enables lifelong participation and enjoyment of music, as well as providing the foundations for those who choose to pursue a career in music. With a choice of instrumental and vocal ensembles, St Patrick's Academy offers students a range of opportunities to develop their talents. The school orchestra, string ensemble, Irish traditional groups and senior and junior choirs foster the musical talents of our pupils and provide entertainment at various school functions. Their talents are also appreciated by the wider community, as we participate in Carol Services, Spring concerts, and many other events and competitions.

The Music Computer Suite provides students with opportunities to be creative and expressive and experience the professional world of music technology with access to iMacs. In preparation for their exam performances, our music students take part in evening recitals and are encouraged to take every opportunity to develop their talents to the full.

With a choice of instrumental and vocal ensembles, St Patrick's Academy offers students a range of opportunities to develop their talents.

"I have already joined the Junior Traditional Group; I really like being a part of this music group because it gives me lots of opportunities to make new friends and have a bit of craic! In Music class we have been introduced to the ukulele and I am really enjoying the opportunity to learn a new instrument."

Eunan Campbell, 8A

MUSIC AND DRAMA

Drama

All Year 8 pupils have one drama class per week. The focus of lessons is on developing physical and vocal skills, working in pairs and groups. Techniques such as improvisation, mime, role-play, hot-seating and freeze-frames are practised; participation and enjoyment of drama is very much the aim in Year 8. Classes take place in the Drama Suite which is fully equipped with blackout curtains, tiered seating, Green Room, lighting and sound. Drama students also get opportunities to attend drama workshops and productions in Belfast and Dublin.

Many of our past Academy Drama pupils have gone on to become professional actors, most notably, Fra Fee. Fra has performed on film, Broadway and in the West End, recently starring in the new Marvel TV series Hawkeye. Past Academy actors have performed in The Lyric Theatre, Belfast (Jack Carberry and Kevin Canavan in Dracula; Harry Lambert in Into the Woods).

St. Patrick's Academy has a wonderful tradition of producing top class dramatic and musical productions, including, Les Miserables, Twelve Angry Men, Juno and the Paycock and School of Rock. Being an active member of the music and drama departments offers opportunities of a lifetime which are not to be missed!

Last year the music and drama department were delighted to open the doors of the Academy to showcase the incredible talent, hard work and enthusiasm our young people have to offer. Our school production of School of Rock – The Musical was sensational and provided experiences and memories that our pupils and staff will never forget.

"I have gained so much from the play. I have gained confidence and the ability to work as part of a team. This once in a lifetime experience has led me to meet new people and develop new friendships."

Annie Tiffney, 12E





LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Participating in leadership roles in school can help students gain valuable experience which will prepare them for their future place in the workforce.

Our senior prefect team are role models for other students and are ambassadors for the school at key events. They assume various leadership roles throughout their time, which develop many skills including communication, teamwork, and resilience. The additional responsibility they undertake enables them to have a proactive role in making valuable contributions to school life.

"I feel privileged to have received my education at St Patrick's Academy. Not only has the school helped me reach my academic potential it has provided me with a plethora of extra-curricular activities. I play on the Gaelic football team; I sing in the choir and play basketball for the school. I have enjoyed every minute of my time at the Academy, and I am honoured to be Head Girl this year. The skills I have developed and the amazing friendships I have made are all thanks to this school. The teachers here have guided me over the years and are always willing to go that extra mile for students when they need help. The memories I have made here are so special and are most definitely ones I will cherish forever."

Maeve Fegan *Head Girl*

"As a student, I am deeply grateful for the cherished memories made, the lifelong friendships formed, and of course the unwavering support received from my dedicated teachers here at the Academy. Not only have my experiences at this school enriched my character, but they have also fuelled my aspirations for a successful future. My time in school has been and will continue to be, a critical chapter in my life story – and it is one that I will never forget. Today, I have the honour of being Head Boy and it is safe to say that I couldn't be prouder."

Adam Rafferty *Head Boy*

"As Head Boy and Head Girl, we extend our warmest welcome to the newest members of our school family. As you embark on this exciting journey, we want you that you are not alone as you will have lots of support from the staff and your peers. We would like to offer you one bit of advice- school days are the best days of your life, appreciate every moment as time goes by so fast! We wish you the best of luck, and may your time here, like ours, be filled with countless moments of learning, laughter, and personal growth."

Maeve Fegan 

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Charitable activities can help develop a sense of citizenship and social responsibility. They teach our young people that they are part of a larger community and through this work pupils can grow up with a healthy sense of compassion and a strong charitable spirit .

Such activities also help to build a strong school ethos and a sense of common purpose among pupils, knowing that they are helping those who are less fortunate. We are grateful for our parents' support and the very fine young people they have raised, who so willingly give their time and efforts for very worthwhile causes.

Our Year 8 pupils were first to get the fundraising underway this year with their fancy dress event for St Vincent de Paul. They raised an incredible £3,500

The Academy has developed long standing relationships with many leading charities such as Trocaire, Concern, Cycle Against Suicide and The Kevin Bell Repatriation Trust. Each year group choose a charity and organise a fundraising event, raising large sums of money through their own ingenuity and hard work. Our Year 8 pupils were first to get the fundraising underway this year with their fancy dress event for St Vincent de Paul. They raised an incredible £3,500 and enjoyed an afternoon of fun. Year

9 pupils reached out to Team Hope, a Christian organisation that works in Africa and Eastern Europe, and contributed 134 shoeboxes, making a real difference to the children who will receive them this Christmas. In the lead up to the holiday period, our Year 11 &12 pupils joined forces to host a glitzy fashion show, working with local fashion retailers to raise vital funds for their chosen charities – Maire Currie and Air Ambulance.

Our sixth form also organise fundraising events throughout the year, however they take their work a step further by working actively within the community. Our Pope John Paul II Award volunteers work both in the parish in roles such as ministers of the Eucharist and word as well as offering their time in community initiatives aimed at helping and setting an example for others. Many students give up their free time and volunteer for local organisations such as, Buddy Bear Trust, Sperrinview Special School, and the Southern Area Hospice. At Christmastime, our students visit a local care home to sing carols and deliver cards to bring much valued Christmas cheer. Through such opportunities our pupils develop a range of social skills such as empathy, compassion, and respect whilst developing a sense of purpose and fulfilment from their involvement. These activities help them understand the needs of their community and the positive role they can play in reaching out to others.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Religious Education

Catholic schools are called to recognise and respect the uniqueness of all individuals, to enable them to reach their full potential and to help create the world as God intends it to be. (John Paul II).

As a Catholic school, our aim is that the pupils in our care are nurtured in 'a lived and living' faith. We endeavour to provide spiritual nourishment which is meaningful and enhancing in the face of ever-increasing materialism and the erosion of traditional values.

Our school prides itself not only on academic success, but also on creating a school ethos with relationships and community at its heart.

The school strives to work in harmony with the Church and with parents to help to create and sustain a vibrant sense of spiritual awareness in our young people. Programmes include promoting active participation in assemblies, collective worship, retreats, fundraising for charity and community work, together with regular visits from our school chaplain. We also offer the Pope John Paul II award which promotes faith in action among pupils.

Our school prides itself not only on academic success, but also on creating a school ethos with relationships and community at its heart. As part of this, we actively encourage all our pupils to get involved in fundraising activities for both local and international charities. Through this work we see our pupils grow as confident and responsible young people with a strong sense of social justice. We are grateful for our parents' support in this work and the very fine young people they are raising in a spirit of charity towards those less fortunate than ourselves.

Central to religious life in the school is our new oratory which was officially blessed and dedicated by Archbishop Eamonn Martin in 2019. This sacred space provides a quiet place for prayer and reflection for pupils amidst the hustle and bustle of school life.

School Prayer

*St Patrick, Patron of our school,
inspire us to bring out the best in everyone.
Encourage us to use our talents to the full.
Help us to respect others as much
as we respect ourselves.
Through your intercession,
Amen.*





My own personal links to the Academy go back over 40 years when I joined the ranks as a pupil of St Patrick's Girls' Academy.

Indeed, my own mother had also been a pupil and later taught at the Academy. I thoroughly enjoyed my school days and made friends for life with pupils and staff.

Life has turned full circle, and I am now experiencing Academy life as a parent, and I am also privileged to be Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

Times have changed since the school first opened in 1891. The buildings have changed, and many generations have benefited from Academy life. We are proud of our new school building and modern facilities. The school has grown and embraced change and provides pupils with a holistic education to play their full part in today's society. The ethos, however, remains the same - 'Achieving excellence together'.

Mrs Fiona O'Hagan *Past pupil, parent and Chairperson of our Board of Governors, 2023.*



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