

Victoria College Belfast

Cranmore Park Belfast BT9 6JA

Tel No:(028) 90661506 Fax No:(028) 90666898



ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS

For the Year 2022 / 2023

VICTORIA COLLEGE BELFAST
CRANMORE PARK BELFAST BT9 6JA
TEL: 028 90661506 FAX: 028 90666898

GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT

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1. Board of Governors

The Board of Victoria College, under its current constitution, comprises 27 Governors. Of these, twelve are Foundation Governors; nine are nominated by the Department of Education; three are Parent Governors elected by parents; and three are Teacher Governors elected by their teaching colleagues. In addition, the Board of Governors is permitted to co-opt up to three further members and the Principal is an *ex officio* member of the Board. The Board's Secretary is Ms Nicola Mawhinney BA.

The members of the Board of Governors who served during the period 2022 – 2023 were as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Expiry of Term of Office</u>
Mrs W Blundell OBE MEng CEng FICE MIStructE (Chairman)	Foundation Governor	N/A
Dr B Callender MB BCh BAO MRCP DFFP (Vice Chairman)	Foundation Governor	N/A
Mrs K Quinn BSc PGCE PQH (Principal)	Ex officio	N/A
Dr J Brown BA PhD PGCE	Teacher Governor	Nov 2025
Ms J Durkin	Dept of Education Nominee	Aug 2023
Mr J D FitzGerald BSc DipArch PGC ARB RIBA	Dept of Education Nominee	Aug 2023
Mr G S Hamilton LLB	Foundation Governor	N/A
Mrs A Harrison BMus QTS Med PGDH	Teacher Governor	Nov 2025
Ms S Hetherington CPFA BA (Hons)	Foundation Governor	N/A
Mrs A Hoskins BA HDip Ed Adv Dip	Dept of Education Nominee	Aug 2023
Mr D Jobling MEng	Parent Governor	Nov 2025
Dr M S Johnston MB BCh BAO	Foundation Governor	N/A
Mr T Johnston BA MBA	Dept of Education Nominee	Aug 2023
Mrs C Lewis Dip Sp Ed	Dept of Education Nominee	Aug 2023
Mrs K A M Martin CEng MIMechE AMIMarEST MSc PGCE	Parent Governor	N/A
Mr C McCrory BSc MAPM	Foundation Governor	N/A
Mr B S McDonald FCA FCCA	Dept of Education Nominee	Aug 2023
Mr P W D Murray BSc	Foundation Governor	N/A
Mr C J Parker LLB LLB, LL.B., B.A., L.Th., BL	Dept of Education Nominee	Aug 2023
Mrs H Parks BA PGCE	Dept of Education Nominee	Aug 2023
Mrs M Pearson BEd	Teacher Governor	Nov 2025
Mrs C Staple LLB	Parent Governor	Nov 2025
Ms M Stirrup	Dept of Education Nominee	Aug 2023
Mr D Toner BSc MRICS	Foundation Governor	N/A
Mrs C Young BA HND	Foundation Governor	N/A

Dame Joan Harbison resigned as Foundation Governor and Dr McDade retired as a Department of Education governor representative with effect from November 2022. Two new Department of Education governor representatives – Mr John D FitzGerald and Ms Jacqueline Durkin - were appointed in November 2022 and February 2023 respectively. The Department of Education governor representatives' term of office expired in August 2023, with these appointments extended until such times as an Education Minister is in place. Mrs Helen Parks and Mrs Carmel Lewis have recently resigned as Department of Education governor representatives with effect from August and September 2023 respectively. Three Foundation Governors and two Department of Education representative vacancies remain to be filled.

Dr M S Johnston and Dr B Callender were the Designated Governor and Deputy Designated Governor, respectively, for Child Protection for 2022-2023.

Victoria College is currently attended by 1072 pupils with 920 pupils in the Secondary Department and 152 pupils in the Preparatory School. The Preparatory School includes a Pre-School department with Day Care available for children from the age of 3 years and operating from 8.00am to 6.00pm. The After Hours facility is in operation from 2.00-6.00 pm.

The College is a leading non-denominational grammar school for girls and it enjoys an outstanding reputation for academic achievement together with an impressive record in many other activities such as music, drama and sport. The Board of Governors is committed to ensuring that every pupil has the opportunity to reach their full potential, developing the skills and qualities which will prepare them for adult life. Whilst striving towards this goal, the health and safety of its pupils and staff is paramount and, as well as the strict adherence to government guidance, this underpins the Board's procedures, protocols and decision-making which direct all areas of College life. The Board of Governors reviews policies and procedures annually to ensure that the learning environment remains safe and secure, allowing pupils to develop and grow in confidence as they pursue their studies and avail of the many opportunities presented to them.

Each pupil benefits from a curriculum which offers breadth and balance and every effort is made to ensure that individual needs of pupils are met. Victoria College is an active member school within the South Belfast Area Learning Community which provides and develops a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils in the schools and colleges in South Belfast and has a keen focus on pastoral provision to support excellence in learning. Twelve member schools are represented including Aquinas Grammar, Wellington Grammar, Rathmore Grammar, Methodist College, Victoria College, Hunterhouse College, Malone College, St Joseph's College, Breda Academy, Glenveagh School and Fleming Fulton School along with Belfast Metropolitan College.

Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy, which, along with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy, are available for parents on the College website (www.victoriacollege.org.uk) or from the school office.

The Board of Governors is grateful to all the dedicated teaching and support staff who are essential in delivering the aims of the College.

The Board is conscious of the continuing unprecedented financial pressures facing the education sector as a whole and the very real challenges facing all schools and is of the view that the current funding situation is simply not sustainable. The amount of grant funding which Victoria College receives decreased during 2022-23, with a mid-term reduction of 0.5% (equivalent to £20k) applied. This, along with increased staff, pensions, energy and inflationary costs, poses a greater challenge for the College to provide the broad curriculum and extra-curricular programme it aspires to. The Board recognises that, as a result of these pressures, there will be difficult and challenging decisions ahead to ensure that the College can live within its means. The Board of Governors continues to make representations to the Department of Education, both directly and through the Governing Bodies Association.

The Board is extremely grateful to our parents whose voluntary contributions to the College enable us to maintain such high quality provision for our pupils. We encourage all parents to make an annual voluntary contribution of £380.00 and we are very proud of and grateful for the continued commitment we receive from our parents. If this contribution is made through the Gift Aid Scheme the College will receive, at no cost to parents, an additional £85.00 by claiming back the basic rate tax paid on each contribution received. This investment by parents provides resources and educational materials beyond the statutory requirements. It helps to ensure we maintain curriculum breadth, appropriate class sizes, provide opportunities to stretch and develop pupils beyond the classroom, access specialist tutors and counsellors, participate in external events and purchase technical equipment and resources.

A summary of the key work of the Board of Governors during the academic year 2022/2023 is outlined below.

Board Business

Six Board meetings were held throughout the year, with three of these including a dedicated Preparatory School meeting. Ad hoc meetings were also arranged as required. The Board meetings' agendas were directed in line with ongoing business, with this supported by the work of the Board's committees.

Governance

The Board was updated on Senior School and Preparatory School matters via reports from the Principal, Head of Corporate Services and the Head of the Preparatory School, with Committee business channelled through these reports. Provision was also in place for ad hoc Board meetings to be arranged as required. The Board was kept advised on directives by the Department and the Education Authority and updated on relevant correspondence received.

School Improvement

Through its Education Committee, the Board was kept advised of proposed strategies to drive through school improvement as a whole.

School Development Plan

The College is committed, through its School Development Plan (SDP), to raising achievement, positive behaviour and engagement, staff and pupil health and well-being and the School Enhancement Project.

Over the course of 2022-2023, school improvement work continued as part of the Whole School Development Plan, with targets set and appropriate action taken forward.

Target 1(a) – Teaching and Learning

Target 1(a) of the SDP was set within the context of both the impact on teaching and learning from the COVID pandemic and the Action, Short of Strike Action by teaching unions. The three areas of focus within Target 1 were Pedagogy, Progress and Pathways, with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) leading each area.

Effective Teaching and Learning had been noted by ETI in 2016, with best practice adopted within the College. Pupil voice feedback indicated that pupils enjoyed excellent learning within class, with some examples of outstanding teaching across the College. Pupil voice also enabled SLT to identify areas of focus to help pupils to continue to have meaningful engagement.

A number of areas of development were identified and developing consistency across teaching and learning was central to ensure effective and differentiated learning. Three strands were adopted to ensure varied and purposeful teaching: (i) embed consistent and agreed learning routines across all subjects; (ii) develop the foundation of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 to ensure pupils are adequately prepared for KS4 study; (iii) deliver a research led CPD programme with a focus on outstanding pedagogy to meet the needs of all learners. Although lesson observation was not possible due to Action Short of Strike Action, staff did observe within departments and, where there was best practice, this was shared. Staff training was organised, including discussion on adaptive teaching. The partnership with Tooled Up Education was a positive step to ensure a consistency of approach. Learn Spark delivered first study workshops for the Year 8 cohort and Middle Leaders participated in Magenta training. The College joined PiXL (Partners in Excellence) a few years ago and in 2022-23 Miss Scott, Head of Mathematics, attended the PiXL conference in London and disseminated suggestions to staff on her return. Steps were taken to enhance learning environments, as well as investment in motivational rewards for departments.

Target 1(b) – Progress and Assessment

Tracking pupil progress continued to be a focus area within the SDP, with interventions having a more narrowed focus on individuals, rather than a blanket approach. A 3-tiered Whole School Intervention process had been introduced during 2021-22, with SLT overseeing a mentoring programme for Year Heads with the impact of initial intervention work on results reviewed. A pilot intervention scheme was trialled, with guidance provided from PiXL on how to implement this. The impact of COVID on pupil learning was recognised and Engage funding money was directed towards numeracy support for Junior School pupils.

Through the Education Committee, the Board was provided with an analysis of mock examinations, including a focus on A*-B grades. Pupils who were two grades or more below their target grade, or below a C grade were targeted as part of the 3 tier intervention process, with oversight at SLT level. The mentoring pilot programme which had been introduced in 2021-22 for those pupils at risk of not attaining 7 A*-C grades at GCSE had been successful and this was used again for 2023 to maximise achievement at C grade or above, with this programme extended to Key Stage 5 level.

A pilot of Professional Predicted Grades (PPG) was operated to run alongside tracking assessments. The use of PPG narrowed the focus on those pupils most in need of intervention, with individual interventions for pupils determined.

The Board was kept up-to-date on examination mitigations from CCEA for GCSE, AS and A-level timetabled examinations for Summer 2023. This advance information was a steer only, with no clarity or exact knowledge of what would be included in the examination papers provided to schools.

Target 1(c) – Pathways and Careers

The modifications which had been made to the curriculum offer were kept under review by SLT and outcomes reported to the Board. Careers provision was introduced at an earlier stage to develop an awareness in pupils from Year 9.

Account had been taken of the pupil cohort and career pathways and Level 2 (KS4) BTEC Travel and Tourism was introduced in 2022-23. AS Level Life and Health Science was also introduced for 2023-24, with this course filling a gap in the market for Science offers and allowing pupils who were unable to study individual science subjects to follow certain career paths, such as Psychology, Nursing, Midwifery and Radiology.

Through the Education and Finance Committees the Board was kept advised on the curriculum offer for 2023-2024, with this being directed by budgetary constraints, staffing and pupil uptake. An overview of pupil numbers and optimum class sizes were also considered, as well as collaborations with local schools within the South Belfast Area Learning Community (SBALC). Through this the College was able to offer Music AS level to external pupils, whilst accessing Spanish AS level through collaborating schools.

The College's extra-curricular programme was reviewed, with Mr Robinson, Senior Teacher, overseeing this. The Board fully supports a broad and varied extra-curricular programme and recognises the benefits and opportunities this provides for pupils to develop the skills and qualities which will prepare them for adult life.

As part of this review, the Board considered a proposal for the establishment of a Royal Air Force Cadet unit as part of an outreach development programme. Through this, pupil members will be able to experience a range of activities, including flying and gliding, training in cyber security, networking and programming, as well as Duke of Edinburgh's Award opportunities and access to qualifications equivalent to BTEC levels 1-3. The College has now received approval to set up a Cadet Unit and it is proposed that this will be open to pupils from Years 11 and above from 2024.

House System

A review of the College's House System was undertaken and considered by the Board through its Education Committee. The House System had not been active for many years and Mr Robinson, Senior Teacher, undertook

a review of this. SLT recognised that a functioning and successful House System could have a very positive impact on pupil experience, encouraging student participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and camaraderie between older and younger students.

The Board agreed that a five house system should be introduced in September 2023, with this aligned to the form class system. This alignment allows students to naturally form a bond and affinity for their form class. The former Houses of Crescent, Howard, Marlborough, Richmond and Wellington were retained and this new system was launched at the start of the 2023-24 academic year. We hope that our pupils will enjoy and see the benefits of being part of this reinvigorated programme.

Review of P.E. Offering

A request for flexible working from within the PE department was considered and approved by the HR Committee and the Board. Following this a review of the P.E. offering within the College was considered by HR, Finance and Education Committees, as a result of which the appointments of a Director of Sport and the position of Temporary Sports Technician were approved. The provision of KS5 PE offer was also considered, with a view to offering BTEC Level 3 Sport. Following a recruitment process the College was delighted to appoint Mrs Hannah Willis as Director of Sport and Mrs Julie Fernando as Sports Technician.

Uniform Review

Through its Education Committee, the Board was kept advised on a uniform review, with this review taking account of the opinions of all sections of the school community, including governors. The key aims for the proposed uniform changes were as follows:

- (i) To explore ways to reduce cost.
- (ii) To find an appropriate alternative to the A-line skirt.
- (iii) To improve compliance with the jewellery policy.

A vast amount of consultation was carried out, with a survey completed by 13 Governors, 32 teachers, 540 parents and 614 pupils and all viewpoints considered. This was an emotive issue and some compromise was reached, whilst also taking account of the importance of the image of the College within the community as well as finding ways to cut overall costs for parents. Changes to the uniform were agreed by the Board, with these to be phased in from 2024. These included an A-line skirt with two inverted pleats (front and back), a new blue PE t-shirt, a blue hoody and the junior school striped summer blouse to be replaced by a plain white blouse. The Board looks forward to seeing the introduction of these new uniform items next academic year.

Safeguarding and Pastoral Care

The Board, through its Safeguarding Team and Education Committee, were regularly kept apprised of Safeguarding and Child Protection issues with a Safeguarding annual report presented in June. The Board was kept advised on the College's introduction of a new recording system for Safeguarding matters. Dr Johnston, Designated Governor for Safeguarding and Dr Callender, Deputy Designated Governor for Safeguarding, were consulted on individual cases, with correct procedures followed. The Board of Governors undertook online training and received online in-house training from Mrs Cromie, Designated Teacher for Safeguarding. Governors were also kept advised of Education Authority training courses, with a number of governors participating in these.

Construction Work – Richmond and Cranmore Campuses

The College received Minor Works approval for work undertaken on the roof of the Armstrong Building during 2022-2023. Further Minor Works approval was given to address health and safety issues in school meals provision and this work was undertaken as part of the summer works programme 2023. In addition to this, successful refurbishment works were carried out within the Business Studies and Music classrooms on the Cranmore campus.

School Enhancement Programme

The Board was kept advised on the progress of the School Enhancement Project. The Head of Corporate Services and Principal liaised with representatives from the Department of Education. The College received

formal approval for major works to be carried out under the School Enhancement Programme and it has been working with the Department of Education on plans for these works so that pupils will be able to enjoy the top quality learning environment they deserve in the years to come. The works will focus on the consolidation of all of the activities of the College on the Cranmore Campus and the subsequent disposal of the Richmond Campus. A business case has been approved by the Department which will see the works progress in four phases with steps to be taken to minimise disruption to pupils' education and to ensure that pupils quickly benefit from the maximum impact of the redevelopment work.

COVID 19 Funding Initiatives

During the year, the Department of Education provided £18k, with this being the last of the support for additional costs arising from the COVID 19 Pandemic.

Inspections

Due to its fee-paying status, the Preparatory School's Pre-School comes under the auspices of Social Services. The Education and Training Inspectorate's 2022-23 inspection processes were running behind due to COVID and no inspection was held during the 2022-23 academic year. This inspection will now be held in November 2023.

General Business

Through the Principal, the Board continued to be kept fully informed and debated at length articles and circulars from the Department, the Education Authority and the Governing Bodies Association. The Board was kept advised of curriculum proposals and changes, pupil and staffing matters and worked to ensure that all aspects of school life were subject to review and had access to support when required.

Committee Business

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed all aspects relating to the College and the individual Committees' Risk Registers. The internal audit of the College for the financial year ending 31 March 2023 was carried out by an independent company in November 2022 and presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee in December 2022. The report concluded that the appropriate level of assurance for the audit was Satisfactory, with this being the highest level which could be achieved. The Audit focus included payroll, financial management, HR management, corporate governance, freedom of information, health and safety, Principal and Vice Principal salary progression and prior year recommendations. The report contained four recommendations, relating to the updating of staff policies, annual review of sub-committees' term of reference, review of the FOI policy and review of Health and Safety Policy. Work to implement these recommendations was being undertaken.

Education Committee

The Committee was informed of curriculum changes and planning for 2023-2024 and reviewed admissions criteria, examination targets and Safeguarding and Child Protection issues. A review of examinations analysis and tracking outcomes was undertaken. The Committee was kept updated on the statutory requirements relating to the curriculum and liaised with the HR Committee as appropriate. Reports were received on School Improvement proposals, the investment in the curriculum and the overarching foci of the College's 3-year School Development Plan, which were staff and pupil health and well-being, raising achievement, positive behaviour and engagement and the School Enhancement Project. The Committee was informed of pupils achievements and advised of staff applications for changes of contracts and professional development which were considered by the HR Committee and thereafter by the Board. Through the Policies Co-ordination Group, the Committee reviewed education-related policies and reported its deliberations to the Board.

Estates Committee

The Committee oversaw the upkeep of the College and maintenance work throughout the year and liaised with the College's Finance Committee, the Department of Education and the Education Authority as required. The Committee also reviewed school development proposals in relation to the School Enhancement Programme and

oversaw school funded Minor Works and maintenance items, with urgent items being addressed. Through the Policies Co-ordination Group, the Committee reviewed Estates-related policies and reported its deliberations to the Board.

Finance Committee

The Committee oversaw the College's financial affairs, planned expenditure, reviewed historical financial performance and undertook a three-year financial review and budget forecast, as well as a review of assets, advising the Board accordingly. The significant financial challenges facing the College was a key issue for the Board with consideration given to its delegated grant funding and budget allocation for 2023/24 and proposed and implemented the cost savings required in order for the College to be able to meet its financial obligations.

The Committee recognised the importance which parental financial support plays in maintaining the high level of teaching, resources and extra-curricular programme made available to pupils. The Finance Committee reviewed fees and charges and considered work proposals for maintenance matters and staff-related contractual matters which had a financial impact. The Board's Remuneration Working Group reported to the Finance Committee in relation to staff salaries. The Committee, through the Policies Co-ordination Group, reviewed Finance-related policies and reported its deliberations to the Board.

HR Committee

In consultation with the Education and Finance Committees, the Committee considered staff applications for changes in working arrangements, including job shares, applications for flexible working, career breaks, voluntary redundancy applications, recruitment processes, staff absences and terminations of employment relating to teaching and non-teaching staff. All decision-making took full regard of appropriate legislation. The Board also appointed an H.R. Consultant to advise on H.R. matters. Through the Policies Co-ordination Group, the Committee reviewed HR-related policies and reported its deliberations to the Board through the Principal and the Head of Corporate Services.

2. Curriculum Offered

A copy of the daily timetable is included as Appendix B

During 2022/2023 pupils had the opportunity to study the following subjects at Key Stage 4:

Art and Design; Biology; Business Studies; Chemistry; Digital Technology; Drama; English Language; English Literature; Food and Nutrition; French; Geography; Health and Social Care; History; Mathematics; Mathematics Further; Modern Language OCNNI; Music; Physical Education; Physics; Religious Studies; Science Single Award; Spanish; Technology and Design; and Travel and Tourism (BTEC First).

During 2022/2023 Sixth Form pupils had the opportunity to study the following subjects at Key Stage 5:

Art and Design; Biology; Business Studies; Chemistry; English Literature; French; Geography; Government and Politics; Health and Social Care (Single Award); Health and Social Care (Double Award); History; Information Technology (Pearson BTEC Level 3); Mathematics; Mathematics (Further); Music (EDUQAS); Nutrition and Food Science; Performing Arts (Pearson BTEC Level 3); Physics; Professional Business Services; Religious Studies; Sociology (AQA); Spanish; Technology and Design; and Travel and Tourism (Pearson BTEC Level 3).

Year 13 pupils received one period of timetabled Careers education per fortnight and could choose to follow an enrichment programme. Pupils were entered by their peripatetic teachers for examinations through the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.

3. Sport and Extra Curricular

Each pupil in Years 8-10 avails of two hours of physical education, while Year 11 and the majority of Year 12 pupils participate in weekly physical education activities. All pupils are encouraged to participate in regular physical activity. Through a balanced and varied programme the P.E. department aims to contribute to pupils' growth, development and general fitness developing an awareness of the importance of exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

The following sporting activities are on offer to all pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 through the curriculum and through the extra-curricular programme.

Athletics	Health Related PE
Badminton	Hockey
Basketball	Netball
Circuit Training	Rounders
Creative Dance	Rugby
Cricket	Swimming (not available in Senior School except for team and GCSE class)
Cross Country	Table Tennis
Dance	Tennis
Equestrian (team only)	Trampolining
Fitness Suite	Volleyball
Football	Yoga
Golf (team only)	
Gymnastics	

Sport

In addition to the above sporting opportunities, pupils were involved and achieved highly in a range of sporting activities.

Athletics

A large number of pupils attended Mary Peters' track for athletics training and a team was selected to attend the South Antrim District Championships at Antrim Forum on 2 May. The participants gained experience and many achieved personal bests. A number of girls qualified for the Ulster Finals at Antrim Forum and competed on Friday 19 and Saturday 20 May. Arielle Davis reached the Ulster Final of Minor Girls' 100m, Claire Allen competed in Junior Girls' High Jump, Lucia Steen was placed 3rd in the Minor Girls' 800m, Rebecca Moore was placed 4th in Minor Girls' 800m and India Steen 4th in Intermediate Girls' javelin. Thea Cunningham was placed 7th in the Ulster Intermediate Girls' 3000m. Isabella O'Dowd, Year 8, was placed first in the Mini Girls' High Jump and became Ulster Champion.

Lucia Steen competed in the Irish Championships on 3 June and was placed an excellent 7th in the 800m in a high class field of young athletes. At the Northern Ireland U14-19 Age Group Club Championships at the Mary Peters' track on 17-18 June, Thea Cunningham achieved a personal best and won the 3000m. Isabella O'Dowd was placed 2nd in the high jump at the same event, while Lucia Steen was placed 2nd in both the 800m and 1500m.

Basketball

Over 40 pupils benefitted from basketball coaching throughout the year and participated in a blitz competition at Lisburn Racquets Club. The Year 8 basketball squad trained on Friday afternoons and played in a blitz at Lisburn Racquets Club, with Rathmore Grammar, OLSPK and Laurelhill Community College also competing in this tournament.

Cross Country

Four cross country teams competed at the Belfast City Council's Championships at Mallusk against 22 other schools. We were delighted by the teams' success, being placed 1st in both the Junior and the Intermediate races and 3rd in the Minor event. Congratulations to Lucia Steen who won the Minor race and to all the girls who were placed in the top 10 - Chloe Young (5th, Juniors), Rebecca Moore (3rd, Intermediate), Thea Cunningham (5th, Intermediate) and Sophie McKnight (6th, Intermediate) - of the 100 finishers.

At the South Antrim District B Championships, the Senior team was placed 1st, the Intermediate team 2nd, the Junior Team 1st, the Minor Team 2nd and the Mini Team 5th. Emma Harrison, Year 14, won the Senior Girls' race, Lucia Steen, Year 9, won the Minor Girls' race and Martha McMurray, Year 8, was placed 2nd in the Mini Girls' race. Chloe Young, Year 10, received an individual bronze medal. Year 10 pupils, Isabella McCleery and Poppy McMurray, also finished in the top ten in the Junior race.

The Minor, Junior, Intermediate and Senior Teams qualified for the Ulster Championships which were held on 8 February. Martha McMurray, Year 8, finished 4th and Emma Harrison, Thea Cunningham and Lucia Steen all qualified for the Irish Championships in their groups. As individuals, Lucia Steen was 26th in the Minor Girls' race and Thea Cunningham was 34th in the Intermediate Girls' race. The Junior team - Chloe Young, Isabella McCleery and Poppy McMurray - competed in the Irish Championships and finished 8th.

In March the College's Cross Country teams competed in the Belfast City Council Spring Cross Country Championships, during which all four teams - Mini, Minor, Junior and Intermediate - won their races. The individual top three positions were Isabella O'Dowd, 1st and Emily Irvine, 3rd for Mini, Lucia Steen, 1st, Victoria Young, 2nd and Maggie Donnelly, 3rd for Minor, Isabella McCleery, 1st, Poppy McMurray, 2nd and Abi McWilliams, 3rd for Junior and Lucia Steen, 1st and Sophie McKnight, 2nd for Intermediates.

The GCSE P.E. candidates also organised an inter-class cross country competition for the Junior School. The Year 8 winners were 8STW and the Year 9 winners were 9ROB.

Dance

Members of the College's Junior Dance Team (Captain - Martha Reynolds Year 10, Vice Captain - Lily Kadlecikova, Year 9) competed at the Northern Ireland Creative Movement and Aerobics Championships (NICMAC) and were placed 1st in the competition on 9 March. There was also success in the Solo and Duet entries, with Year 8 pupils, Felicia Anjorin and Meghan Dunne, receiving silver medals, Martha Reynolds, Year 10, and Charlotte Cruiks, Year 9, receiving bronze medals and Anna Sheeran, Year 9 and Belle Kelly, Year 8, receiving bronze medals.

The Junior team was also placed first at the Ulster Dance Championships and are the Ulster Junior Hip Hop Champions. Belle Kelly, Year 8, was placed 1st in the Minor Lyrical Solo and Anna Sheeran, Year 9 was placed 1st in the Junior Dance Your Style Solo. In the duet competitions, Felicia Anjorin and Meghan Dunne, Year 8, were placed 1st in the Junior Hip Hop Duet and Charlotte Cruiks, Year 9 and Martha Reynolds, Year 10, were placed 2nd in the Junior Lyrical Duet.

In October the College's Dance group which won the NI Championships in 2021-2022 also participated in a trip to the Grand Opera House to watch a performance of 'The Little Mermaid' and thoroughly enjoyed the production.

Equestrian

The College's Junior Equestrian team - Martha McMurray, Susannah Tate, Amelia Irwin and Georgia Shannon, Year 8 and Katie Gordon, Year 9 competed in the six week TRI Inter Schools' Showjumping League and finished in 3rd place overall, whilst winning an impressive three 1st places throughout the duration of the league. This was a very competitive league against twelve other secondary school teams, with only four points between the top three teams at the finish. This was a great achievement for VCB.

Elle West, Year 11, also enjoyed Equestrian success, being placed 1st in the 1m Arena Eventing at the Meadows, 1st in showjumping at Blossomhill Equestrian Centre and 8th overall in the 1.10 Premier Class at the TRI Winter Inter Schools' Jumping League. These results mean that Elle qualified for Pony Club Barrier Spring Festival to be held in Scotland in April.

Jennifer Thursfield, Year 9, was selected for the UK team of the Pony Club International Alliance Virtual Dressage competition. Over 160 competitors from 11 countries participated and Jennifer was one of four riders chosen from the UK for her class and the only one from Northern Ireland. Jennifer finished 3rd in her class and the team won the class overall.

Golf

On 7 October, six pupils - Olivia Chandler, Anna Lindsay, Abbie Poole, Emma Smith, Lucy Hogg and Clodagh Scott - travelled to Rockmount Golf Club to represent the College in the Ulster Regional Final of the Girls' Irish Schools' Senior Golf Championship. Twelve schools were represented and, despite difficult playing conditions, the girls performed brilliantly. Olivia, Anna and Abbie won their section of the team competition, Clodagh won the best overall nett prize and Olivia won the best overall gross prize. The team progressed to represent the school in the Final of the All-Ireland Schools' Senior Gold Championships, which took place on Monday 24 April in Milltown GC. This was a fantastic achievement for the team –Abbie Poole, Olivia Chandler, Anna Lindsay and Charlotte Kidd – and was the first time in well over a decade that a team from VCB had qualified for the All-Ireland Final! Despite a very strong field the VCB team came 4th out of the 9 schools taking part.

On Monday 6th March VCB played in their first matches of the Darren Clarke Schools' Golf League. Both the A and B teams performed brilliantly - the A team winning one match against Our Lady and St Patrick's Knock, with

a tie against Rockport, while the B team won all 3 of their matches against Strathearn, St Catherine's Armagh and St Patrick's, Keady. The 'B' team – Jessica Allen, Lucy Hogg, Georgia McCausland, Isabella McCleery, Bethany McIlhatton, Grace Nelson, Alex Poole, Emily Scanlon, Clodagh Scott and Ava Wilmott - won their group and reached the quarter finals but lost against Banbridge Academy 3-2.

Another budding golfer, Georgia McCausland, Year 9, got a hole in one on the 5th hole of the Edenderry course in Malone Golf Club. You may be wondering what the odds are for such an achievement - apparently 12,500 to 1, for an amateur golfer! Georgia was presented with the following prizes at Malone Golf Club's annual prize giving: the "Jemma Hool Trophy" for the girl with the three top scores through the season and the "Netta Brownlee prize" for the girl who has had her Handicap Index reduced by the most shots through the season.

Hockey

Eleven hockey teams took part in inter-school fixtures throughout the hockey season. In the Senior Schools' Cup the 1st XI drew 2-2 with Royal School Dungannon, but lost on penalty run-ins. In the Senior Shield the team defeated Dalriada School but lost to Larne Grammar in the quarter final. The 2nd XI team reached the McDowell Cup quarter final but lost to Belfast Royal Academy. The U14A XI team lost to Royal School Armagh in the Junior Shield. Four Year 8 teams were fielded and the A and B squads had convincing 3-0 wins against Methodist College.

In March the Year 8 hockey team played in the NI Annual Year 8 tournament at Grosvenor Grammar School. Twenty teams competed and VCB defeated Strathearn, Larne Grammar School, Lagan College and Antrim Grammar School in their section. They defeated Wallace in the semi-final and Ballyclare in the final to win the NI Shield.

Molly Young and Annie Irvine, Year 12, were included in the Ulster 17 Development Squad in preparation for next season and trained with the squad over the summer months. Molly travelled to Wales over the Easter break to represent Ulster hockey and scored two goals against the Welsh team in a very successful trip. Year 11 pupils, India Steen and Chloe Murphy, were selected for the Ulster U15 Hockey squad and played at the interprovincial tournament in May, beating Munster and drawing against Connacht and Leinster.

The 1st XI, 2nd XI and U13A teams enjoyed a wonderful trip to Edinburgh in early March and somehow managed to miss the snowy conditions. The teams played both Edinburgh Academy and Dundee High School with some great results. They also had the opportunity to hear a motivational speech from an ex Scottish and GB player, as well as some time exploring the sights of Edinburgh. Top goal scorers for the tour were Molly Young for the seniors and Darcey Binding for the U13s.

At the end of March, the annual hockey prize night was held in Belfast Boat Club with hockey players of all age groups attending, plus the coaches. This was a great night celebrating the success of the current season. Awards were given to players of the year, players with the best team spirit and most improved players. Martha McMurray got the player for the Year 8 team, who scored the winning goal in the Year 8 school's final. Rose Sundara-Garuda won the top prize of 1st XI player of the year. Sophie Luke, captain of the 1st XI, concluded the night with a heartfelt speech of thanks for the VCB coaching team.

Netball

The netball teams continue to develop their skills in friendly matches and the Minor and Senior teams played in the Belfast A League. Una Reece, Year 11, was selected for the NI U17 Performance Netball team and represented Northern Ireland at the European Netball Challenge which was held in February. Una also competed at the European Netball Championship and was awarded 'Player of the Match' and was nominated for a NI Sports Award. Lucy Ly, Year 12, was also selected for the NI U17 Development Netball Squad and both Una and Lucy represented Northern Ireland in netball and competed in the Isle of Man at the end of April against U17 and U21 representation. The season finished in May with an all day tournament for Year 9 at

Rockport School. All twenty-two schools enjoyed refreshments together afterwards. Una Reece was also selected for the U17 National Performance Squad for Netball.

Rugby

Following interest by pupils, VCB Tag Rugby restarted with training every Wednesday after school. A total squad of 25 pupils left us able to boast two teams in the qualifying tournament held at Valley Leisure Centre in which both teams performed very well with the 1X team remaining undefeated with a few stand out performances from captain Connie Hamilton and Poppy Cunningham who was electric on the wing leaving the tournament as top try scorer. Both Connie and Poppy are currently trialling with Ulster Ladies 7's and 15's.

VCB Rugby qualified for the Schools' Cup tournament, played at MUSA Cookstown in difficult conditions. The girls defeated Assumption, Dalriada, Down High, St Patrick's Dungiven and Down High School as they progressed to the semi-finals of the competition. The girls were narrowly beaten by Ballyclare High School with only minutes remaining. Poppy was yet again the top try scorer. This was a major feat from the girls with the majority of the team being only Year 10 competing against Fifth and Sixth form students.

Swimming

On 29 November the College's swimming teams enjoyed success at the Ulster Swimming Championships 2022. The Senior team - Dulcie Bowden, Sofia Delgado, Jane Kane and Lily McGuire - won gold in the Medley relay and silver in the Freestyle relay and are now current Ulster Champions 2022.

The Junior A team – Amelie Delgado, Isabella Kiliokaitis, Olivia Mooney and Chloe Young - won bronze medals in the Medley Relay. Jessica Allen, Tilly Bracken, Meghan Dunne, Anna Grant, Branagh Hall, Kate Kane and Ava Willmott also participated in the Junior section and gave excellent performances. Over 30 schools competed at this event, so this was an outstanding achievement for our swimmers.

The swimming teams also competed at the Ulster Schools' Swimming Gala at Aurora, Bangor on Saturday 4 February. There were great results across Junior, Intermediate and Senior swimmers with several finals and personal bests. Lily McGuire, Year 14, was narrowly touched out of a gold place finish, to claim silver in the 100 metre freestyle. This result secured Lily selection onto the Ulster team to swim at the Interprovincial Championships 2023.

As part of a joint swimming trip with Coleraine Grammar School, VCB pupils competed at the World School Swimming Championships at the Olympic Pool in London. All girls swam exceptionally well with Lily McGuire, Year 14, taking Gold in the 50 Free and Back and 100 Free and Back. Olivia Mooney, Year 9, also made the finals.

Tennis

The VCB Junior tennis team - Isabella McCleery and Emily Wilson (Year 10) and Ellen Toner and Grace Nelson (Year 9) - defeated Strathearn in the Ulster Junior A Tennis Cup and became Ulster Champions. The team members received their awards on 27 June from the Ulster Tennis president at Belfast Boat Club. The Intermediate Tennis team - Livvy Burrows, Alex McMahon, Sophie Du Boulay and Imogen Magee – reached the final of the Cup, but unfortunately lost to Strathearn A team.

The Senior Tennis Team - Jemma Wilmott, India Steen, Lauren Murphy and Katie Dennison - reached the final of the Senior B Tennis Cup but were beaten by Belfast High School in the finals. The Year 8 tennis team - Rebecca Rowan, Katie McAllister, Charlotte Oliphant and Connie Dunlop – reached the semi-final of the Plate but unfortunately lost to Sullivan Upper. At the end of term, professional coach Sumeet Kapur took a coaching session for Junior School pupils.

A Year 9 singles tournament was played at school in two leagues. The winner for the A league competition was Ellen Toner, with runner up, Grace Nelson. The winner of the B league competition was Katie Shaw, with runner up, Ruby Scoffield.

Individual Performances

A number of individual sporting achievements deserve recognition. In December Ella Cheung, Year 10, competed in badminton at the U15 Irish National Championships winning bronze with her Ulster partners in the Girls' Doubles and Mixed Doubles. At the Ulster U15 Open 2023 in March, Ella won bronze in Singles and silver in Mixed Doubles. Ella was also selected for the Irish Under 15 Badminton team and in April travelled to compete in the 2023 Quadrangular event held in Bangor University Wales.

Marjan Abdelfattah, Year 14, received three gold medals in Archery at the Commonwealth Youth Championships for Europe, held at Lilleshall, England during the summer 2022. Marjan went on to win the N.I. Under 18 Junior Indoor Archery Championships, receiving the highest score out of all the women recurve archers, including the Under 21 level. Marjan now holds the Indoor Under 18 and the Outdoor Under 21 Championship title for Northern Ireland 2022 championships.

In March Marjan and Raine Martin, Year 11, represented Victoria College in the Northern Ireland Archery Schools' Cup held at Campbell College. This competition had an exceptional number of entries from across Northern Ireland with almost seventy archers taking part. Marjan shot well and, being up against some very stiff competition including Compound Archers, she managed an impressive sixth place.

Raine only took up the sport in May 2022 and pulled out an astounding performance to win the Bronze medal in Tier One. She also won the Outstanding Performance Award and gift token. Raine is looking forward to furthering her career in archery and has been invited to join the Archery GB Performance Pathway and National Talent Development Programme alongside her mentor Marjan.

Iona Keating, Year 12, was selected for the County Down Minor Camogie Panel and competed in the Electric Ireland Minor All-Ireland Championships. Iona played in matches against Wicklow, Cavan and Armagh.

Sophie McKnight was selected to represent Scotland in the Scottish U16 Football team and in February participated in a Development Camp in Glasgow. Sophie also participated in an U16 Women's Training camp in Glasgow on 27 March and represented Scotland in the Women's Under 16 Football International Friendlies in Edinburgh in April. Abbie Smith, Year 10, was selected to represent Northern Ireland as part of the U16 football squad to participate in a tournament which took place in Bulgaria from 13-21 March.

Nastia Mahlych, Year 12, participated in the Irish Junior Orienteering Squad's Junior Training weekend from 3-5 March. Nastia is the current Northern Ireland 2023 W16 Score and W16 Night Orienteering Champion and has been selected for the Northern Ireland and Ireland Junior orienteering squad.

Music and Drama

As usual our Drama and Music departments had a very busy year, with the results of their work bringing joy to many.

The Year 14 BTEC Drama class performed a site-specific piece, *Watch Your Step*. The students wrote and developed this murder mystery, using the school grounds as the setting. This outdoor performance was attended by staff and pupils.

On Tuesday 20 December, VCB Drama also presented a Christmas show, *Once Upon a Happy Ending*, featuring pupils from Years 8-11. Around 70 pupils enjoyed appearing to an audience of Year 8-10 pupils during the day and over 250 friends and family members in the evening. During the Spring term the examinations classes also performed their devised work, plays, monologues and duologues which were thoroughly enjoyed by their audiences.

The Arts Council NI developed a play called *Frida in Belfast*, which used Frida Kahlo's life as an inspiration. Rosalina Blaauw, Year 9, was selected to play one of the main characters in the play, portraying the childhood

memories of Frida Kahlo. This play was performed at the Lyric Theatre earlier in the year and was also performed as part of the Mexican Dance Belfast Company at the Mela Festival in August. Rosalina danced on the main stage, celebrating interculturality and demonstrating excellence in performance.

It was lovely to see the Music Department back to offering its full schedule of events during 2022-23. At the annual prizegiving ceremony the ceremony was opened by the senior clarinet group who performed 'Allemande' from Handel's *Water Music*. The Senior Choir performed 'Like a Rainbow' by Bob Chilcott, expertly accompanied by former Head of Music, Audrey Gillian. We had enchanting solo performances from A-level music pupils Kate Donnelly, who performed 'Blue Moon' on clarinet and Caroline McMichael, who performed 'She Used to Be Mine' from the musical, *Waitress*. The Junior Chamber Choir closed the ceremony with the foot-tapping 'Rhythm of Life'.

We were delighted to once again welcome the conductor of the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland, Andrew Nunn, who provided highly entertaining and insightful workshops for both the Senior Chamber Choir and Junior Chamber Choir. The pupils worked on a number of choral skills and found out more information about what is involved in membership of the various choirs in the organisation.

On Thursday 10 November four pupils in the College got the opportunity to take part in an online workshop with concert pianist, Richard Meyrick, as part of the Pianoman organisation. The pupils received valuable feedback on their performances and were delighted to hear Richard perform. Unbelievably, Richard offered all four pupils the opportunity to become Pianoman scholars. These pupils received monthly funded lessons from Veronika Illanskaya, concert pianist, at the College. This is the highest number of scholarships ever offered to any school across the UK, a testament to the talent and hard work of the pupils involved. Many congratulations to Year 9 pupils, Saoirse Rippon and Olivia Yu and Year 11 pupils, Etain Salcido-Duffy and Coleena Chan.

To mark Remembrance Day senior pupils provided music for a special assembly on both Cranmore and Richmond sites. Beautiful piano music was provided from A-level music pupils, Dara Mullan, Year 14 and Lucy Collum, Year 13, as pupils entered the hall. Susan Lowther, Year 13, played *The Last Post* on trumpet at the start of a period of silence during which pupils and staff reflected on the sacrifice so many have made during times of conflict. The assembly was rounded off by a stunning performance of 'A Flower Remembered' by John Rutter by sixth form pupils Sophia Zazzo, Caroline McMichael, Kate Donnelly, Sofia Delgado, Amy Fogarty, Aimee Neill, Evie McGale, Helena Moore, Lucia McLaughlin and Sarah Udoh.

During the Autumn term pupils from RBAI and VCB worked in collaboration on a production of Willie Russell's *Blood Brothers*. Caroline McMichael played the part of Mrs Johnstone, Kate Donnelly played the part of Linda and Olivia Phelan played the part of Mrs Lyons. Many other pupils from Year 10 upwards also made valuable contributions to the chorus section and band and for many it was their first opportunity to take part in a school production because of COVID. The show was a roaring success both nights, with not a dry eye in the house by the end. Congratulations to all the pupils involved and many thanks to the staff at RBAI for their expertise and hard work.

On 15 December we were delighted to once again return to Fisherwick Presbyterian Church for our annual College Carol Service. This was the first year since 2019 that we as a College were able to come together fully to celebrate the Christmas season and all who attended welcomed a return to normality. Over 200 pupils from the Preparatory Department and Senior School worked hard all term to prepare for the service and performed beautifully.

The service began with the College orchestra's rendition of 'A Vaughan-Williams Christmas,' an enjoyable collection of many well known festive melodies. The lights were then dimmed for the traditional rendition of 'Once in Royal David's City' with a stunning solo from Evie McGale, Year 14, followed by a verse from the Senior Chamber Choir. After the first lesson, the Preparatory Choir charmed us with 'Colours of Christmas' by John Rutter. We welcomed Naomi Nixon as the teacher in charge of music in the Preparatory Department to her first

College Carol Service. Mrs Murray's Junior Choir performed 'A Star Shines Bright' with a beautiful flute solo from Beatrice Toogood, Year 14. This was followed by the highly entertaining 'Mary Mary' which had everyone's feet tapping. The Junior Chamber Choir came next. They may be small in number, but the sound they produced was absolutely beautiful. They sang 'The Christmas Star' and 'Great Great Joy.' We were delighted to welcome Mrs Audrey Gillian back to accompany the choirs.

Next it was the Senior pupils turn, led by Mrs Harrison. The Senior Choir, sang a rousing modern version of the traditional hymn 'Veni Veni Emmanuel' by M J Trotta, ably accompanied by Amy McAree and Louise Leonard on percussion. The Senior Chamber Choir then sang another modern version of a well known text 'While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks', composed by Craig Courtney and once again Coleena Chan, Year 11, accompanied on piano beautifully.

The final piece was 'A Christmas Blessing' by Philip Stopford which was sung by the combined choirs. This piece has become a firm favourite at Victoria College and we never want to celebrate Christmas without it. Aimee Neill, Year 14, led the choir with a stunning solo for the first verse, before all the pupils joined in.

Year 10 pupils enjoyed studying a unit on music technology for the first time in the College MAC suite, with pupils studying a range of skills associated with sound production and audio engineering processes. This will allow potential GCSE music pupils to utilize these skills when composing, moving forward. It also gave pupils a unique insight into what is involved in the huge variety of career roles involved in music and sound production.

The major musical event of any academic year is our Spring Concert and for the first time we were delighted to hold it in the prestigious venue of St Anne's Cathedral. The Spring Concert began with a rousing rendition of *Finlandia* by Jean Sibelius from the College Orchestra during which we took full advantage of the beautiful acoustics in St Anne's. This was followed by a spell-binding soul medley from Year 14 pupil, Sarah Udoh. Up next was our Senior Choir, made up of 110 pupils singing a modern version of *Amazing Grace* arranged by Mark Hayes, and the extremely catchy *It Was a Lover and His Lass* by John Rutter. Although our ukulele group has been running for nearly two years now, we were delighted to welcome them to the VCB stage for the first time. Led by our drums and guitar tutor Adam Stewart, the junior school pupils delighted the audience with their version of *Can't Help Falling in Love*. Next up giving the Seniors a run for their money were the Junior and Junior Chamber Choir with a selection of songs including *From a Distance* and *All Things Bright and Beautiful*. Lucia McLaughlin in Year 14 is no stranger to the VCB stage, and there were mixed emotions as she performed for the final time. She sang the well-known aria *O Mio Babbino Caro* by Puccini, completely captivating the audience. *Can't Help Loving That Man* by Jerome Kern is undoubtedly one of the pupils' favourite pieces to sing and the Senior Chamber Choir executed it to perfection. The often heard and always loved *O Danny Boy* was next which was the beginning of a section of Irish music. This was followed by the College's first performance from the new Irish Traditional Group led by Mr Gavin Pollock. Pupils from Years 10 to 14 performed *Will Ye Go Lassie Go* with solos from Mamie Lonergan, Stephanie McMichael, Anna Vallely and Eilidh Hanna. This was followed by a selection of jigs.

The phrase 'and now for something completely different' came to mind at the start of the second half. Members of the Year 12 GCSE music class had been working on a performance of *War Pigs* by Black Sabbath for their practical music exam and we just had to make sure the VCB school community had the chance to hear what they had achieved. We wondered if this style of music had ever been performed at St Anne's cathedral, but when the Dean of Belfast, Stephen Forde, appeared during rehearsals with a smile asking 'do I hear Black Sabbath?', we knew we were on to a winner. This was followed by a debut performance from upcoming Year 9 singer songwriter, Lilianna Calixto, who with the help of her tutor Adam Stewart, performed her own song *Teenage Kid* to rapturous applause.

Songs from stage and screen will always feature heavily when the pupils of VCB are performing. The Junior Chamber Choir took to the stage for the second time to sing *You Will Be Found* from the popular music Dear Evan Hansen, followed by a foot-tapping selection of music from Sister Act. Caroline McMichael gave Mrs

Harrison a run for her money by leading and preparing a performance of *I Wish I May* from *The Witches of Eastwick*, which she prepared as part of her involvements with the SistersIN project. Our guitar pupils were led in their performance of *Get Off* by another of our tutors, Mark Hewitt. The challenging yet hilarious *Duetto Buffo di due Gatti* was performed by Charlotte Cruiks and Ellen Toner in Year 9 and certainly had the audience laughing, which was followed by the completely haunting song *Pretty Funny* sung beautifully by Year 14 pupil and music prefect Aimee Neill. There wasn't a dry eye in the house during the Year 14 pupils' rendition of *Slipping Through My Fingers* as they took to the VCB stage for the final time. The evening was rounded off with a selection of music from the TV programme *Stranger Things* including music by Kate Bush, from *The Never Ending Story* and a medley of 80s tunes. None of us will forget sheer numbers of pupils filling the altar and aisles for this final combined number and the joy they left us feeling that night.

The numbers of pupils in receipt of music tuition at the College continues to grow, as do the many passes, merits and distinctions they achieve in their efforts. Huge thanks should go to our team of peripatetic tutors who work tirelessly to provide outstanding tuition and challenge our pupils to be the best they can be. A number of vocal students who attend tuition with Mrs Heather McCullough at the College enjoyed great success at local Music Festivals. At the Holywood Festival, Hannah Hall was placed 1st in the Under 14 Musical Theatre class with Ellen Toner coming 3rd in the same class. Hannah Hall and Issy Williams-Greer came 2nd in their Duet class and sang '*What is This Feeling?*' from *Wicked* the Musical. Evie McGale, Year 14, was placed 3rd in the 16+ Vocal category, competing against third level music students and winning a prize of £50. At the Belfast Festival, Victoria College pupils - Connie Taylor, Year 9, Hannah Hall, Year 10 and Issy Williams-Greer, Year 10 - took 1st, 2nd and 3rd places respectively in the age 11 to 14 musical theatre category.

One result which must be highlighted is a distinction mark of 140 for Saoirse Rippon in Year 9 in her Grade 7 violin exam. To score such a high mark at an advanced grade for a Year 9 pupil is truly remarkable. Huge congratulations to Saoirse for all her hard work, as well as her tutor Lucy Drennan who she attends at the College.

This term we had two separate groups of pupils performing in the Royal Albert Hall in London. Firstly, three pupils who are members of the James Huish Academy were invited to sing with Alfie Boe at his recent concert there. Rebecca Murray, Year 9, Elizabeth Cruiks, Year 11 and Charlotte Cruiks, Year 9, had the experience of a lifetime getting to see Alfie Boe at work. The girls were so good that he wants them and their peers to join him again on a future date.

Four VCB pupils also travelled to London with the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra at the start of November to perform in the Youth Music Proms at the prestigious venue. The girls - Lucy Wallis, Emma Kane, Aina Jazrul-Azily, Beatrice Toogood, Lucy Collum and Coleena Chan - performed the overture to '*Zampa*' by Toscanini.

A number of our pupils have gained wonderful experience performing for external production companies. During the Christmas break, Lucia McLaughlin, Year 14, treaded the boards in the National Concert Hall in Dublin, playing the role of Liesel in a professional production of *The Sound of Music*. For the second year in a row a VCB girl has been awarded the lead role in an Ulster Operatic Grand Opera House production. After Lucia's success as Maria in *West Side Story*, Caroline McMichael, Year 13, was awarded the part of Eva Duarte (young Eva) in their production of *Evita* which took place in September. Sofia Delgado, Year 13, was also awarded the part of the Mistress in the same production!

Caroline was also awarded the lead role of 'Nancy' in the Grand Opera House's Youth Summer Production; Caroline competed with hundreds of young people from across the province for the role. Kate Donnelly, Year 13, and Sofia Delgado were also in the chorus, as well as Beatrice Toogood, Year 13, who auditioned to play flute in the accompanying orchestra.

Sofia Delgado gave a stunning performance as Eva Peron at the Fusion Theatre Group, Lisburn's production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita*, while Connie Taylor, a Year 9 pupil, was also part of the ensemble. Maddie

Crawford, Year 8, performed in The Mac Theatre with The Shelley Lowry Performing Arts School, playing the role of 'Bette' in the play 'Above All Else.'

Saoirse Rippon, Charlotte Cruiks, Year 9 and Coleena Chan, Year 11 played at an Old Girls' event in the Crescents Arts Centre on Friday 23 June for the class of 1973 for their 50 year reunion.

Art

On Wednesday 7 December the VCB Year 11 Art and Design students visited the RUA Art Exhibition at the Ulster Museum Belfast. On the way into the museum the group was lucky to meet the artist Brian Ballard RUA who was exhibiting his work at the Museum. This was a real treat for our students and staff. As a random act of kindness Brian selected one of our students to receive one of his paintings. Freya Davis is now the proud owner of a Brian Ballard painting.

On 24 May the Art Department celebrated the work of GCSE, AS and A2 students. The exhibition showcased a wide range of skills and techniques. The students who were recipients of the VCB Principal's Award 2023 were Rudi Caddell, Koo Doyle, Alannah Harris, Maimee Meharg, Rebekah Murphy, Olivia Rennicks, and Emily Smyth.

Literacy

Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading and every year all Year 8 pupils receive a free book through the BookBuzz programme to welcome them to VCB. BookBuzz is a scheme run by Book Trust to encourage reading for pleasure and participating schools are sent details of 17 books which pupils can choose from. This is their book to keep as a gift from the College library.

All Year 8 pupils were given details of the 17 books in library class and were invited to choose their favourite; we also received 2 copies of each book to add to our library stock. Books were ordered in September and were received before half-term to great excitement.

Shadowing book awards is always a big part of our school year and begins with shadowing the Royal Society Young People's Book Prize with Junior Book Club. This prize seeks to encourage reading about science and always includes a range of titles, including fiction. We were sent copies of the shortlisted books in September and have spent lunch times reading and discussing the books, presenting opinions and casting the VCB vote to determine our favourite.

Meanwhile, Senior Book Club were excited to receive news that Teri Terry would be our Book Pen Pal – a scheme which matches authors with schools to exchange book recommendations and writing tips. Teri Terry is an author who mainly writes dystopian teen fiction and we were delighted to receive our first post from her during the Autumn term and to spend some time replying with book recommendations and questions about creative writing. We sent her a copy of one of our favourites; *The Girl Who Became a Tree* by Children's Laureate, Joseph Coelho. Teri held a virtual visit with Senior Book Club on 19 June which marked the first event in the tour for her new book, *Scare Me*.

As part of KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards, our Junior Book Club were invited to the shortlist announcement at The Crescent Arts Centre in February. Pupils were very excited to listen to author Sue Divin talk about her books and to have a chat with Sue and illustrator Olivia Hope. We have a close relationship with The Crescent and were given a tour of the building to find out about VCB's history there.

Senior Book Club had a virtual author visit with shortlisted author Sue Divin. Sue's books have resonated with many of the pupils and they really loved listening to Sue talk about her career, writing and books and asked some really interesting and enthusiastic questions.

Each year, Book Club enthusiastically shadows The Yoto Carnegies along with thousands of other young people across the country. These are the ultimate book awards for children and Ms Farrelly was at the ceremony at The

Barbican in London where the winners were announced. The Yoto Carnegie Medal for Writing was won by *The Blue Book of Nebo* by Manon Staffan Ros and made history as the first translated book to win the award. The Yoto Carnegie Medal for illustration was awarded to Jeet Zdung for *Saving Sorya: Chang and the Sun Bear*; the second year in a row that the award was given to a graphic novel. The Shadowers' Choice award for writing went to *I May Betray You* by Ruta Sepetys and the illustration award was won by Joe Todd-Stanton for *The Comet*. Past VCB pupil, Flora Delargy had been shortlisted for the illustration award for her debut book *Rescuing Titanic*. Our shadowers also had a celebration in school to mark the occasion.

We were very pleased that the Northern Ireland Book Award was re-launched this year as it is another shortlist we are excited to discover, especially as the award really focuses on books for Years 8 and 9. The winner was *The Monsters of Rookhaven* by Pdraig Kenny - a fantastic read for ages 9-12 showing that the real monsters aren't always what we expect them to be.

School Trips

A wide range of extra-curricular clubs operated throughout the year. The Scripture Union met each week, having a steady 30-40 students, during which everyone enjoyed the fellowship of students right across the age range in school. The SU weekend took place from 24-26 February, at Greenhill YMCA, Donard Park, Newcastle and was attended by 31 students from Years 8-14 with 3 members of staff. The theme for the weekend was "Beauty within" – recognising the importance of spiritual beauty, a Christlikeness as opposed to the physical focus or false images encouraged today. The senior girls led the activities of the weekend from decoupage craft, team games and a photo challenge in Newcastle. The group enjoyed getting to know each other and encouraging one another in faith.

In September and October, Year 10 and Year 11 pupils attended two-day residential in Carlingford, taking part in kayaking, night walks and other outdoor pursuits.

In October, as part of their first Duke of Edinburgh's Award training, 120 Year 10 pupils spent a day at Tollymore during which the pupils developed their navigation and mapwork skills. In June ninety-seven pupils, mainly from Year 10, successfully completed the expedition section of their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award. This involved two days of walking in the Mourne area and an overnight camp at Shepherd's Lodge in Donard Forest. During the expedition days the pupils put their skills into practice by navigating through their designated routes, putting up tents and cooking a meal on a Trangia stove. The pupils performed really well during their assessed expedition and found the experience extremely beneficial. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a unique opportunity for pupils to build confidence and discover new talents and interests. We are delighted that so many of the girls have participated in this exciting and hugely rewarding programme.

In June a total of 120 Year 8 pupils enjoyed the glorious sunshine in Castlewellan Forest Park for two days for a packed schedule. The activities included paddle boarding, kayaking, orienteering, climbing wall, archery and a mind-boggling maze! The pupils enjoyed the luxury of the Burrendale Hotel, a summer stroll into Newcastle and some crazy games in the conference suite to finish off an exciting day.

Competitions and Other Achievements

Pupils had the opportunity to participate in a range of curriculum-led activities. In October thirty-six Year 13 and Year 14 mathematics pupils took part in the Senior Maths Challenge. One gold certificate, two silver certificates and seven bronze certificates were awarded. Hailing Cai, Year 14, obtained the gold certificate and Amy Fogarty and Anna McPherson from Year 14 obtained the silver certificates. Hailing was also awarded the 'Best in School' certificate and she qualified to take part in the Andrew Jobbings Senior Kangaroo [which is a follow-on round to the Senior Maths Challenge] which she sat in school on 16 November 2022 and was awarded a certificate of merit, which is awarded to the top-scoring 25% of participants.

Forty-four pupils from Year 9 took part in the UKMT Junior Maths Challenge in April 2023. One gold certificate, eight silver certificates and sixteen bronze certificates were awarded. Olivia Yu obtained the gold certificate and was also awarded the 'Best in School' certificate.

A team of Year 9 and Year 10 pupils took part in a locally organised Junior Team Maths Challenge at St Malachy's College in March 2023. Rachel Brown and Olivia Dickinson from Year 10 and Kate Morgan and Olivia Yu from Year 9 formed the team and had an enjoyable day at the challenge, working on and completing the variety of puzzles and problems which had been set.

Saoirse Rippon, Year 9, received the Belfast Scholastic Shield as Lower Secondary Chess Championship for 2023 and was presented her award at the Ulster Chess Union's Children's Chess Awards held at Stormont on 9 June.

In February Year 14 pupils, Evie McGale, Amy Fogarty and Anna McPherson, participated in the Chemistry Olympiad 2023.

Our Home Economics department organised a number of events during the term. In October, the GCSE Food and Nutrition students welcomed the Livestock and Meat Commission to the College to observe a cookery demonstration using Northern Irish Farm Quality Assured Meat.

In November, GCSE Food and Nutrition students, Emily Spence and Niki Beaumont took part in the annual Futurechef competition, cooking a main meal for £5. It was a wonderful experience and judged by local chefs from well known restaurants Coppi and 2 Taps and the Head of Mount Charles at Belfast International airport. The chefs commended Niki and Emily for their fantastic cookery skills and encouraged them to keep cooking.

During December, pupils had the opportunity to take part in an exciting cookery competition. Year 8 and 9 pupils were invited to bake, assemble and decorate a gingerbread structure of choice. The standard of skill displayed in this competition was fantastic and our winners were Year 9 pupils, Eva Kearney and Holly Elwood.

In February, the Food and Nutrition department were delighted to welcome a team from the Royal Navy. The Year 11 Food and Nutrition GCSE students took part in a Ready Steady Cook challenge, working in teams to make Cornish Pasties and Sticky Toffee Pudding. They also had the chance to learn how to do sugar work including spun sugar and sugar cages for presentation. The pupils worked with enthusiasm and presented their dishes for judging after 1 hour 20 minutes. The results were outstanding and the girls also received a talk on food and nutrition as well as career opportunities within the Royal Navy.

4. Careers Education, Advice, Information and Guidance (CEAIG)

The Careers Department organized a wide range of events and activities to support and guide our pupils for further study and future employment. In September Years 11-14 attended a University Roadshow. A Russell Group university webinar took place in October, while a virtual interview workshop for Cambridge and Oxford applicants was held in December. A virtual Scottish Education Universities Exhibition was enjoyed and the College hosted visits by the Modern Scottish Universities, Liverpool John Moore's University, Queen's University Belfast, Queen's University School of Engineering, Ulster University, Northumbria University, Belfast Metropolitan College, CAFRE, Corpus Christi College (Cambridge), PwC, Deloitte, Translink and New Driver. Upper Sixth students had detailed presentations on Student Finance, replying to UCAS Offers and the processes involved in UCAS Confirmation and Clearing.

Pupils attended a Medicine at Queen's event, a Get Into Veterinary Medicine Conference and Health-care Work Experience events. These included Allied Healthcare Mentor 'Insight into Allied Healthcare' conference, Medical Mentoring Programme - *In2MedSchool*, the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's Virtual Medical Work Experience session and NHS's Allied Virtual Work Experience Programme Autumn 2022.

Year 12 pupils attended N.I. Careers' Service interviews, while Years 10 and 12 attended interviews about subject options and we were delighted to welcome parents/guardians to Subject Choice Information events. Careers lessons were utilised to support this process with information, advice and guidance. Pupils in Years 12-14 also signed up for a wide range of online work experience placements through *Speakers for Schools*. QUB, UU and BMC subject specific information events were also availed of in areas such as Engineering, Computing, Social Work and Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Lower Sixth pupils participated in face-to-face work experience in June, with pupils attending Insight or Experience days at PwC, Deloitte, BDO and Pinsent Mason's Inspiration event Belfast, as well as a range of placements with the PSNI and the PwC Summer Work Experience Programme.

We always encourage our pupils to apply for a variety of prestigious and valuable schemes and were delighted that our pupils were successful in the Queen's University Belfast Pathway programme, Sentinus Research Academy programmes, Cambridge University Shadowing programme and the Ulster University Social Mobility Partnership Programme. Those interested in healthcare careers participated in a wide variety of insight events on Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, Speech and Language Therapy, Dietetics and Nutrition, Nursing and Midwifery, Physiotherapy and the Allied Healthcare Professions. Pupils were also made aware of many other opportunities including school leaver programmes and apprenticeships at BMC, PwC, Deloitte, CME, LTSB/NatWest and Artemis Technologies, the Oxford University Oxplore competition, Cambridge Essay programme and the Trinity College Dublin Virtual Information Event for A level applicants.

A number of pupils applied for a range of schemes. Emma Fowler attended an Astrophysics Sentinus Research Academy during summer 2022 and was nominated for a Gold CREST award. Rachel Nieuwenhuyzen, Ispraha Krishali and Clara Wilson applied for the Sentinus Research Project 2023. Ispraha Krishali, Year 13, also successfully completed the Ulster University Academy Award on Canvas and was awarded an Ulster University Academy Scholar award, following her successful completion of her Ulster University Discovery Academy course. Pupils also took advantage of Higher Level Apprenticeship and School Leaver Programmes, such as SRC Higher Level Apprenticeship evenings, PwC and Deloitte Career Insight events and PwC apprenticeship opportunities.

A number of exciting workshops took place throughout the year. BOC Gases visited the College on 25 October to deliver workshops to Year 9 Science pupils. BOC started the session by giving a talk on Engineering careers and explained a little about the company. Pupils then had the opportunity to carry out some liquid nitrogen experiments where they froze and crushed flowers, smashed a banana and made a tough nail out of Blu Tack.

Year 9 pupils also enjoyed a very successful Careers Festival in June. The focus here was on providing an earlier opportunity for pupils to consider future pathways and with that in mind, to help prepare them for GCSE subject choices next year. Representatives from CME, ITV, Inlutech and from the Architecture sector provided pupils with insights into the world of work, focusing on key employability skills and the availability of Higher Level Apprenticeships. Visitors from the University of Ulster School of Design and CAFRE outlined the range of courses on offer, with pupils receiving a presentation by Liz Simpson from the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise CAFRE. Pupils also enjoyed workshops on robotics, IT and employability, as well as one presented by Martin McGinn from the School of Design at Ulster University during which they completed a design task. Ex-Victoria pupil, Tori Watson, entertained the Year 9 pupils as she reflected upon her journey with the BBC and now ITV News. Pupils also participated in a workshop on employability and apprenticeships in the FinTech sector presented by a team from CME Group.

A group of Year 9 pupils were given the opportunity to attend the Farrans Sacyr Women in STEAM event at the Grand Central Belfast Construction site. At the event they completed multiple challenges and activities, including a site tour, setting out and levelling by using engineering equipment, a structural engineering challenge, an engineering railway challenge, a virtual reality experience, a Minecraft design challenge and workshops on pricing builds. They also gained insight into the commercial aspects of running a live project.

Eleven students from Year 13 were delighted to join ten schools from across Northern Ireland in a bespoke female leadership programme, SistersIN. The 8-month programme delivers leadership development training, mentorship from female business leaders and project leadership experience to enable, empower and develop female pupils in Education to become the leaders of tomorrow. The programme has created an ecosystem where schools, businesses and leaders are helping female students unlock the leadership skills needed to succeed in tomorrow's workplace.

The Year 13 SistersIN cohort attended a mentor/mentee Christmas meet on 8 December and engaged with historical politicians and past Presidents as part of the Agreement Twenty Five events at Queen's University Belfast in April. We are continuing this innovative programme in 2023-24.

5. Links with the Community

South Belfast Area Learning Community

Victoria College is an active member school within the South Belfast Area Learning Community which provides and develops a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils in the schools and colleges in South Belfast and has a keen focus on pastoral provision to support excellence in learning. Thirteen member schools are represented including Aquinas Grammar, Wellington Grammar, Rathmore Grammar, Methodist College, Victoria College, Hunterhouse College, Malone College, St Joseph's College, Breda Academy, Glenveagh School and Fleming Fulton School along with Belfast Metropolitan College.

Global Community

For the fourth year running, a team of four Year 10 pupils took part in the annual Francofest competition organised by NICILT. Competition entries once again had to be submitted digitally, with pupils invited to an awards ceremony at QUB on Wednesday 15 March. Pupils then had the opportunity of a campus tour and were shown the facilities on offer at QUB.

Pupils also devised greeting cards in French using the advertising slogan 'smart carte'. The artwork produced on each individual design was fantastic and the pupils worked very hard on mastering the target language required to market and present their products effectively. This year's team members were Aoife O'Donoghue, Ellie Reynolds, Evie Cairns and Sophie Nolan.

Charities/Voluntary Work

Pupils took their philanthropic responsibilities seriously and, under the leadership of our Charity Prefects, pupils undertook a range of fundraising events and volunteered within the Community. The College's chosen charity for 2022/23 was the NI Children's Hospice and a total of £1821 was raised in the run up to Christmas, with this beginning with the Preparatory pupils designing 'Elmer' the elephant and Senior pupils raising funds through candy cane sales, a Christmas Jumper Day and a 'Tuck Shop' at the Christmas show. Some beautiful Christmas hampers were also created and donated to N.I. Children's Hospice, with each form class given the task of decorating an empty A3 box in a Christmas theme of choice. As a school, we filled the boxes with everything from mince pies and jam to Christmas cards and crackers. Year 9 pupils also produced shoeboxes of gifts for Blythswood Care Shoebox Appeal, with their contributions sure to have brought some much needed joy.

To raise awareness of Anti-Bullying Week and to celebrate the uniqueness of every individual, an Odd Socks Day was held in the College on 15 November. Classes also took part in group activities to mark World Mental Health Day, with activities including origami lessons, Wink Murder, a talent show and reading.

Many of our pupils are already making their mark on society. Emily Wilson, Year 12, following her selection for the London Debutante season, was given a special accolade for being the youngest and best fundraiser of this year's Debutantes. Emily had to say a few words on the night of the Ball about her fund-raising experiences and she also received a place on the Junior Committee of the London Season. She attended a meeting in London in December and was selected as one of four debutantes to attend an event at Bulgari as a representative of the London Season. Emily Wilson was appointed Vice Chairman of the Junior Committee of the London Debutante season and was also asked to give a talk to a Women's Institute which was well received.

On 24 November, Senior Prefect, Georgia Hussey, delivered an impactful speech as a guest speaker at a RNIB Event; 'Reversing the Trend; See the Employee, Not the Sight Loss'. This event took place at Belfast City Hall and was featured on UTV. Georgia gave a powerful speech, drawing from her own experiences as a visually impaired young person. Her words resonated with the audiences and other guest speakers, such as Richard Moore, CEO of Children in Crossfire, who commended her aspirations and resilience. Georgia continued to demonstrate her leadership qualities when she called on Northern Ireland's political leaders to give others the same chances she has had by adopting a new national curriculum framework, asking that the Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI) be recognised in the upcoming Special Educational Needs and

Disability transformation programme. Georgia reports that, without the special help she has received through her school life, she would not be in the position she is today, obtaining top grades at A level and progressing to university. It is clear that Georgia is working actively to try to ensure that more children and young people with vision impairments in Northern Ireland will enjoy the same benefits moving forward into the future.

Following an application and interview process, Niamh Mainwaring, Year 12, was selected as the Northern Ireland representative for the Girlguiding UK Amplify Group. Niamh met online to effect change within the Girlguiding UK organization and also attended an 'in person' meeting at Girlguiding HQ in London on 11 November.

Year 11 Health and Social Care pupils, completed their early module and prepared and presented health promotion activities for junior pupils. One GCSE class presented to Year 9 pupils on the benefits of exercise and the second class presented to Year 8 pupils on the dangers of vaping. The Year 11 pupils prepared lots of methods and materials to get their message across including a talk show style group work, power-points, dance activities and kahoot quizzes.

'Baker' Days and School Development Days 2022-2023

The College places a strong emphasis on continuous professional development for all staff and recognises the importance of self evaluation and reflective practice within all departments. In 2022-2023 the school chose to take 5 School Development Days (SDD) for the purposes of school improvement and school/staff development in addition to 5 'Baker' days.

During 2022-2023 the School Development Days and the 'Baker' days were used for:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection training;
- Special Educational Needs;
- Interventions to improve pupil progress;
- Medical training;
- Wellbeing of pupils and staff;
- An analysis of examination results;
- Assessment for Learning;
- Attendance meetings;
- Department planning;
- Continued sharing of good practice;
- School Development Planning;
- Strategic Middle Leaders' meetings with SLT;
- SIMS training;
- ICT training;
- Use of Surface Pros to support teaching and learning;
- Fine Level grading;
- One Note training;
- Establishing agreed learning routines;
- Year 9 Curriculum Review;
- Adaptive teaching strategies.

6. Examination Results and Leavers' Destinations 2022-23

An analysis of results at KS4 and KS5 are detailed in Appendix C of this report. Northern Ireland averages have been suspended for the academic years 2020 to 2023 due to the examination mitigations in place post pandemic. The Board of Governors expresses its appreciation to both staff and students for their hardwork and commitment.

7. Special Educational Needs

The College aims to meet the needs of pupils with a variety of special educational needs with arrangements during the academic year 2022/23 overseen by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Dr Goddard. The College's policy and procedures on Special Educational Needs (SEN) were reviewed during the academic year 2022/23 with a new policy adopted by the Board of Governor's in June 2023. The Special Education Needs/Inclusion Policy was updated to take account of the Special Education Needs and Disability Order 2005 (SENDO), the subsequent supplement to the Code of Practice and the ongoing changes brought about by the SEND Act (NI) 2016. A copy of the policy is available on the School website and from the school on request. A Learning Support Mentor was appointed to the College in March 2022 and in June 2023, following a review of the roles and responsibilities, a new Senior Leadership role was created within the College and Mr Gorman was appointed to lead the College Learning Support Provision. The School Nurse, Ms Harvey is available to assist pupils with medical needs.

In June of the academic year 2022-2023, there were 153 students on the SEN Register, including 26 students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Learning support was offered within class by subject teachers, by our Learning Support Mentor and, where necessary, by external agencies including referral to the Educational Psychology Service and/or the Education Authority's Outreach Service.

Annual reviews for Stage 3 SEN students where carried out with CEIAG support at transition, provided by the EANI Transition Officer, Mrs Livingston, for pupils in Years 10 - 14. Where a particular need is identified, in consultation with parents, an appropriate adjustment to the curriculum of an individual pupil may be considered.

The College has made a number of site adjustments to assist pupils with mobility issues but not all areas of school are accessible (there are a few areas that are not yet accessible). Consideration is given to timetabling arrangements, ensuring that pupils are accommodated in classrooms that are accessible and appropriate to their needs. In 2019 it was announced that the College would benefit from Capital investment through the School Enhancement Project 2, it is envisaged that these capital works will address DDA access across the Cranmore campus.

8. Security

The College recognises the need to provide a secure learning and working environment for pupils and staff. Visitors to the College are required to sign in at Reception and wear a Visitor's badge, if not accompanied by a member of staff. All staff exercise a collective responsibility for the identification of any stranger.

Both Cranmore and Richmond have walls and perimeter fencing to improve security, with the Preparatory school completed fenced off with access through reception. In addition, the main campus has a CCTV network, CCTV cameras are placed to record vehicles entering the grounds and personnel in the vicinity of the buildings. The College operates a Biometric entry system on the external doors to control access to the College.

9. Victoria College Preparatory School

Time flies when you are having fun they say, and that certainly summarises the 2022-2023 Prep School year! It seemed like no time from the start of term in September until we were waving a tearful goodbye to Prep 7 in June. However, during those ten months we had lots of fun, laughter and amazing learning experiences across the year groups.

Reinforcing the classroom teaching, visitors were able to join individual year groups with Nanny from Mount Stewart visiting Prep 2 bringing toys from the Victorian period for them to explore, Prep 5 engaging in an exciting Early Man workshop building fire pits and making axes and Prep 6 turning into Viking warriors worthy of the title 'Fierce Norse Men'. There were also opportunities for classes to enjoy off-site trips: Prep 1 visited Belfast Zoo, Prep 4 went to the Ulster Folk Park and Pre-School enjoyed meeting the new additions to Streamvale Farm! The Prep School was able to participate in many national events such as Anti-Bullying Week, Christmas Jumper Day and World Book Day.

With the guidance and expertise of Mrs Carson-Hair, Pre-School and Prep 7 were able to develop their appreciation of music through projects with the Ulster-Scots Association. Pre-School enjoyed weekly music lesson with Mrs Carson-Hair, listening to the guitar, violin, harp and banjo being played and discovering how to keep time with non-percussion instruments. They learnt many new songs and rhymes with favourites being "You canny kick your granny off the bus" and "Get out the way, Mr Stothers!". Prep 7 pupils joined with Ballycraigy, Oakfield and Eden Primary Schools to visit the Andrew Jackson cottage in Carrickfergus. All schools performed prepared musical items before enjoying a time of shared games and a picnic. The experience was further enhanced by the inclusion of a bagpiper who welcomed them into the cottage grounds with traditional tunes.

Preps 3-7 enjoyed visits from Young Enterprise representatives who helped them gain a better understanding of how businesses support a community and provide vital services, how products can be better marketed, and the important decisions business owners need to consider to ensure they are turning a profit. Prep 6 also had the opportunity to develop their STEM skills through participation in the Lego League with a team going to the SSE Arena to showcase the robots they had developed.

Prep 7 worked hard in producing an amazing performance of 'The Lion King' with all classes supporting them through song and dance items. The Senior Prep Choir participated in the St Anne's Trust Choir of the Year competition, finishing first overall. Thank you to Miss Nixon for her hard work each week leading the musical elements of our curriculum and after school programme. Preps 5-7 celebrated their academic progress at the end of the summer term with our Celebration of Success event and the girls' incredible musical talent was brought to the forefront during the Music Recital evening in May. There were also opportunities to celebrate sports skills with a whole school Sports Day which included the girls' favourite event – the parents' race – plus a new addition, the teachers' race. Who knew we had such competitive staff?

This year also saw the return of our residential trip to York. The Prep 7 class spent three days exploring the historic city: tasting chocolate as they learnt about York's Chocolate Story, touring York Minster cathedral, and exploring the impact of the Vikings on the city. They also helped boost the local economy through shopping trips and enjoyed a day at Flamingoland theme park.

The Prep School welcomed Mr Golder to the staff during Mrs Pearson's maternity leave. He quickly settled into Prep and brought a lot of fun, enthusiasm and new ideas and we wish him every success in his new post in Loughview Integrated Primary School. Sadly we also said goodbye to two wonderful assistants: Ms McGarry and Mrs Green. Both ladies have been so committed to supporting the pupils in Prep and we will really miss them.

Appendix A
VICTORIA COLLEGE BELFAST
SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023

SUMMARY COLLEGE REVENUE ACCOUNT

	2023	2023	2022	2022
	Reported	Reported	Reported	Reported
	£	%	£	%
Income	6,056,455	80.6%	5,905,300	80.7%
Government Grants	1,461,465	19.4%	1,413,304	19.3%
Other Income				
Total	7,517,920	100.0%	7,318,604	100.0%
Expenditure				
Teaching staff	4,233,648	54.2%	4,242,531	57.8%
Auxiliary staff	986,652	12.6%	824,181	11.2%
Ancillary staff	894,769	11.4%	784,342	10.7%
Redundancy staff	-	0.0%	44,256	0.6%
Educational resources	328,030	4.2%	279,809	3.8%
Premises	638,512	8.2%	439,448	6.0%
Administration	167,838	2.1%	196,545	2.7%
Catering	391,864	5.0%	346,835	4.7%
Other	175,813	2.2%	176,557	2.4%
Total	7,817,126	100.0%	7,334,504	100.0%
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	(299,206)	(3.8)%	(15,900)	(0.2)%

SUMMARY COLLEGE BALANCE SHEET

	2023	2022
	Reported	Reported
	£	£
Fixed Assets	9,283,258	8,950,476
Current Assets	2,550,326	3,290,666
Current Liabilities	(1,270,607)	(1,091,434)
	10,562,977	11,149,708
Financed by:		
Creditors due after more than one year	-	5,310
Deferred grant income	6,923,252	7,398,847
Capital and reserves	3,639,725	3,745,551
	10,562,977	11,149,708

Appendix B

School Day

8:40am - 9.10am	Registration and Assemblies
9:10 – 10:00am	Period 1
10:00 -10:50am	Period 2
10:50 – 11:10am	Break
11:10 -12:00pm	Period 3
12:00 – 12:50pm	Period 4
12:50 – 1:30pm	Lunch
1:30 - 2.20pm	Period 5
2:20 – 3:10pm	Period 6

Appendix C:

No. of Yr 12, 13, 14 Leavers 2022/23	Destinations – Leavers to							
	Higher Education	Further Education	Employ- ment	Another School	Job Skills	Modern Apprent- iceship	Unknown	None of other categories
157	93	30	9	21	0	0	2	2

ANNUAL ATTENDANCE RATE (ALL PUPILS)

Total days attended by all pupils on roll as % of total possible days of attendance = 93.3%

GCSE and A-Level Examination Results 2019/20 to 2022/23

Performance Indicator	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
	VCB	NI Grammar School Average	VCB	NI Grammar School Average	VCB	NI Grammar School Average
% achieving 7+ GCSEs at grades A*-C	93.2	Not available	97.0	Not available	97.1	Not available
% achieving 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C	97.7	Not available	98.5	Not available	97.9	Not available
% achieving 3+ A- levels at grades A*-C	89.5	Not available	89.7	Not available	80.9	Not available
% achieving 2+ A- levels at grades A*-E	100	Not available	100	Not available	100	Not available

Year 12 GCSE Results Summary 2022/23

PUBLIC EXAMINATION RESULTS 2022/2023 GCSE LEVEL Subject Performance Analysis (*by cumulative percentages*)

Subject	Entries	A*	A	B	C*	C	D	E	F	U
Art & Design	31	6.5%	38.7%	67.7%	87.1%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Biology	122	15.6%	45.9%	79.5%	95.1%	99.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Business Studies	47	6.4%	40.4%	80.9%	93.6%	97.9%	97.9%	97.9%	100.0%	100.0%
Chemistry	76	15.8%	60.5%	78.9%	97.4%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Design & Technology	21	9.5%	66.7%	95.2%	95.2%	95.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Drama & Theatre	10	40.0%	90.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
English Language	139	12.9%	51.8%	79.1%	97.1%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
English Literature	129	17.8%	46.5%	86.0%	96.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
French	36	30.6%	58.3%	86.1%	97.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
French (OCCNI)	16	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Geography	64	23.4%	62.5%	81.3%	90.6%	95.3%	96.9%	98.4%	100.0%	100.0%
Health & Social Care	48	6.3%	50.0%	93.8%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
History	35	17.1%	40.0%	62.9%	82.9%	94.3%	97.1%	97.1%	100.0%	100.0%
Home Economics	40	2.5%	35.0%	62.5%	92.5%	97.5%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
ICT	19	21.1%	42.1%	68.4%	89.5%	94.7%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mathematics	140	12.1%	61.4%	84.3%	95.7%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mathematics: Further	45	24.4%	66.7%	93.3%	95.6%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Music	11	54.5%	90.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Physics	62	22.6%	48.4%	85.5%	95.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Religious Studies	120	35.0%	70.0%	90.8%	95.0%	99.2%	99.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Science Single Award	6	0.00%	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Spanish	24	29.2%	70.8%	87.5%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Spanish (OCCNI)	6	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sport/PE Studies	15	6.7%	40.0%	60.0%	80.0%	93.3%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Religious Studies (SC)	3	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL	1263.5	17.5%	53.3%	82.7%	95.0%	99.0%	99.5%	99.7%	100.0%	100.0%

Year 14 Results Summary 2022/23

PUBLIC EXAMINATION RESULTS 2022/2023 A2 LEVEL Subject Performance Analysis (by cumulative percentages)

Subject	Entries	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Art	20	5.0%	40.0%	80.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Biology	38	7.9%	26.3%	65.8%	81.6%	89.5%	97.0%	100.0%
Business Studies	25	0.0%	20.0%	48.0%	88.0%	96.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Chemistry	21	28.6%	42.9%	76.2%	90.5%	95.2%	100.0%	100.0%
English Literature	29	13.8%	31.0%	65.5%	96.6%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
French	2	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Further Mathematics	2	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Geography	19	26.3%	73.7%	84.2%	89.5%	94.7%	100.0%	100.0%
Government and Politics	19	15.8%	31.6%	73.7%	94.7%	94.7%	95.0%	100.0%
Health and Social Care	15	13.3%	33.3%	93.3%	93.3%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Health and Social Care (DA)	36	0.0%	27.8%	77.8%	97.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
History	6	0.0%	16.7%	66.7%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mathematics	17	35.3%	64.7%	76.5%	94.1%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Music	5	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	80.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Nutrition and Food	5	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Physics	7	28.6%	57.1%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Religious Studies	4	50.0%	50.0%	75.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sociology	23	8.7%	34.8%	78.3%	95.7%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Spanish	1	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Technology and Design	19	0.0%	15.8%	47.4%	84.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
BTEC ICT	9	44.4%	55.6%	55.6%	77.8%	77.8%	100.0%	100.0%
BTEC Performing Arts	9	0.0%	22.2%	22.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL	331	12.4%	35.0%	68.9%	91.8%	97.0%	99.4%	100.0%