



**LONGSTONE  
SCHOOL**



**Board of Governors  
Report to Parents  
2023 / 2024**

**Understand, Respect, Nurture, Educate**

## **WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

I have much pleasure in presenting to you the 2023 - 2024 Report of the Board of Governors of Longstone School. It has by any standard been an exceptionally productive and also challenging year. Yet despite many changes and challenges the focus of the Board, Principal and Staff has been the educational and pastoral welfare of the pupils.

The Board of Governors has this year been focused on both the educational attainment of the pupils whilst at the same time developing the future potential of the school as an example of best practice in the education of children and young people with additional needs. To this end much time has been spent on liaising with Education Authority Officers and Staff, on the continuing planning for the new building extension to the school. In addition, the development of the Longstone Early Years Centre at the Grahamsbridge Road site has progressed rapidly with further extensions currently being planned for. The Board's work in this area could not have been made possible without the support of the EA and Departmental officials as well as the enthusiasm and commitment of the school's Principal, Mr Skarmoutsos, and his senior management team.

Each year inevitably brings change in terms of personnel and this year has seen change at all levels throughout the school. In particular I would wish to pay tribute to the school's former Vice Principal Mr John McIlmoyle who retired in June 2023 after 40 years at Longstone. The Board was delighted to appoint Mr Jerome Starrs as the new Vice Principal and we look forward to working with him in his new role within the school. Due to the increasing number of pupils being admitted to the school, work has also been undertaken to secure a second Vice Principal who should be in post at the start of the new academic year.

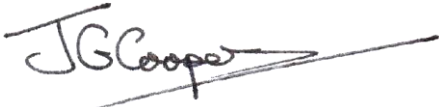
The transfer of the school's Behaviour Unit to another site came about through detailed planning and consultation. The loss of such highly skilled staff from the Longstone site has been felt. This change has however afforded the school the opportunity of developing its long-held aspiration of opening a sixth form facility. Much planning has taken place over the last year with the expectation of the facility opening early in the new academic term.

Within the Board of Governors itself, I have great pleasure in welcoming two new Governors: Mr Conrad Kirkwood and Mrs Hilary Strain. I would also like to thank Mr Alan Newall who stepped down as Board Chairperson last spring.

As you look through and read this report, I have no doubt that you will be impressed by the achievements of our pupils in many spheres. These achievements are made possible by the commitment of an enthusiastic and professional staff. As a Board we are most fortunate in having such a highly skilled and motivated staff whose professionalism and care enhance every learning experience of all our pupils. These achievements are enhanced further by the close working relationship developed

between staff, and you the Parents. Our focus collectively is the development and education of the children and young people who make up the Longstone family.

In closing, I thank you, the Parents, for your continued support and participation in the education of your children. Thanks also to the staff and in particular our Principal for the outstanding work that has been achieved this year. Finally, a word of thanks to my fellow Governors for their commitment and many long additional hours spent over the last year ensuring that so many of these developments could take place.



J G Cooper

J G Cooper OBE  
Chairperson of the Board of Governors



# Welcome from The Principal

## Rights of the Child Article 28

“You have the right to a good quality education.”



Dear Parent/Guardian

Welcome to our 2023/24 Board of Governors Report. The purpose of this report is to give you an insight into all the curricular and extra-curricular activities that took place in Longstone last year, as well as to inform you of any changes in relation to issues such as staffing, enrolment, and building.

The 23/24 Academic year was a highly successful one for all our pupils and we were delighted with the numerous activities and achievements. It was also a year of big developments for the school with the opening of our Early Years Centre in Grahamsbridge Road, the appointment of Mr Starrs as Vice Principal, and the development of a 6<sup>th</sup> Form proposal. Our pupil numbers are increasing rapidly year on year and as a school we are always doing our best to meet the placement demands of our area.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our staff for their hard work during the 23/24 school year. Their eagerness to provide the best possible learning experiences during times of big changes for the school, is what is driving our organisation forward.

Yours sincerely,

*Ioannis Skarmoutsos*

*[Principal & Secretary to the Board of Governors]*

## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS REPORT TO PARENTS 2023/24**

The main purpose of this report is to keep our parents informed of the continued work and development of our school. This involves commenting on the many varied and diverse areas of school life that contribute to Longstone School. The Board of Governors hope that you will find this report both informative and interesting.

### **2023/24 PUPIL NUMBERS**

Nursery	19
Primary Department	90
Secondary Department	115
Learning Support Outreach	12

### **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

The members of the Board of Governors are as follows:

#### **EA South Eastern Region Representatives:**

Mr G Cooper (Chairperson)  
Dr J. Betts (Vice Chair)  
Mr A. Newell

#### **Parent Representatives:**

Mrs J Jordan  
Mr S McCauley

#### **Teacher Representative:**

Mrs H. Strain

#### **DENI Representative:**

Mr Conrad Kirkwood

## **STAFFING:**

There were a lot of significant changes relating to our staffing during the 23/24 Academic Term.

Mr Starrs was appointed as Vice Principal in December 2023. Mr Starrs also took the role Safeguarding and Child Protection, Designated Teacher.

We also welcomed Ms Kathryn Ard as our new Yr2 teacher, as she was offered a permanent contract following a four-year service starting in the Behaviour Unit and then our Key Stage 1 Department.

In June 2024 interviews took place for 6 Classroom Assistant positions in the school. Following the recruitment process, we would like to congratulate and welcome the following candidates appointed at the end of June: Coulter Abbie, Wilson Karen, Clark Tara, Maze Julie, Johnston Julie, and Cole Jennifer.

This year saw the retirement of Mrs Mandy Cromie (Art Teacher) and Bertha Freel (KS1 Classroom Assistant):

### *Mrs. Cromie*

After many years of service to our school, our Art teacher Mrs. Cromie took the decision to retire in June 24. Mrs. Cromie has always been a dedicated teacher and has shown genuine care for her students and tremendous passion for the subject of Art. She is responsible for many pupil qualifications and achievements, and we will really miss her. On behalf of everyone in Longstone I would like to wish Mrs. Cromie a happy retirement and congratulate her on a wonderful career.

Mr. Skarmoutsos

### *Mrs. Freel*

Mrs. Bertha Freel, who is a Classroom Assistant in Key Stage one, and has been in our school for the last 9 years also retired this summer. Mrs. Freel's work ethos and happy and positive attitude to everything she does, has helped our children flourish and progress over the years. Thank you Mrs. Freel!

Mr Skarmoutsos

Congratulations to our Executive Officer, Mrs Laura McConnell on the birth of baby Charlie, and our Classroom Assistant Ms Jennifer Blyberg on the Birth of Baby Erin.

## **PASTORAL CARE:**

*Article 19: You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.*

Longstone School is a Rights Respecting School. This is the foundation that underpins the pastoral ethos from our Nursery through to Year 13. This year our School Council, with consultation from parents, helped review and update the school Anti-bullying policy.



As part of the development of our Safeguarding for our young people, we have formed links with Family Support Hubs to assist families in need.

Pupil achievements are celebrated through assemblies and the many displays in school. Our pupils and staff continue to support a range of charities including, UNICEF, Flourish and MND.



**Mr. Starrs**

## **Longstone Early Years Centre (Grahamsbridge Road)**

2023/24 was an extremely important year for the expansion of our provision with the opening of the first Nursery class in our new Early Years Centre at the Grahamsbridge Road site. Our new Nursery started operating on the 11th of March 2023 in Grahamsbridge Road. It has been long wait for our families and I would like to thank them for their patience. The resources in our new nursery class are outstanding with spacious Sensory, Hygiene and Sensory Circuits rooms available. This is a site that will be developed over the next few years to host more Primary classes.





## **School Refurbishment / Sensory rooms**

Our main Longstone building received a much-needed refurbishment with floors being replaced, walls painted but most importantly with the addition of two Sensory rooms! A fantastic addition to our school and a great resource that will help us meet the needs of our pupils more effectively. Our main Hygiene/ Changing area was also rebuilt for additional functionality. New interactive whiteboard panels were also added in every class!



Although all this work was quite disruptive, our children coped very well overall, and I would like to express my gratitude to our staff for showing great flexibility. We are sure that when parents visit the school, they will notice how well the building is starting to look internally, and how improved the learning environment is for our pupils.

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE / KEY STAGE ONE

### Book Fair

*Article 29 Education should develop your Talents & Abilities*



We are thrilled to announce the outstanding success of our recent school book fair! Thanks to the incredible support and generosity of our school community, we spent an impressive **£1,276.25** on books. As a result, we received **£700 worth of free books** for our school, which will greatly enrich our class libraries.

This achievement would not have been possible without the enthusiastic participation and contributions from our wonderful parents. Your dedication to fostering a love of reading in our students is truly inspiring.

Thank you for your unwavering support and for making this event a remarkable success. Together, we are nurturing a lifelong love of learning and reading in our children.

**R. McCune**

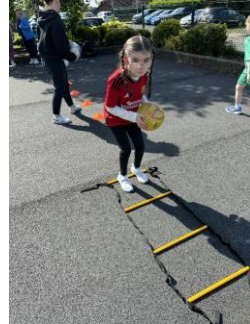
### Soccer Aid 2024

June 2024 saw us continue to support UNICEF and advocate for the rights of children across the world by taking part in The Soccer Aid for UNICEF Academy. Pupils from our Early Years right up to Year 7, donned the football shirts of their favourite teams and took part in our Soccer Aid Obstacle course. They dribbled, passed, scored goals galore and raised a massive £1700.





Children need to be healthy, safe, and nourished so they can play, learn, and get the best start in life. But for millions of children around the world, conflict and disasters destroy their safe spaces to play. UNICEF works with trusted organisations, communities, and families to create and protect safe spaces – the money raised will protect play for every child, so they strengthen and grow, with the power to dream.



On behalf of these children a huge thank you to everyone who participated.

**A Cowan**

### **Outdoor Learning:**

Outdoor Learning has enjoyed another year of fun and development at Longstone. With great excitement, we were granted funding for training in Forest Schools from Lisburn and Castlereagh Borough Council.

In February, a teacher from each key stage, from Nursery to Key Stage 2, began their training under the mentorship of The Northern Ireland Forest Schools Association. Pupils have enjoyed taking their outdoor learning in a new direction broadening our approach and focussing on developing pupil wellness, resilience, and self-esteem.

In May, this year we enjoyed planning and celebrating our first year of ‘Outdoor Fest.’ In the week from 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> May pupils from Nursery through to Year 7 accessed collaboratively planned activities each day, focussing on the theme of spring. Pupils enjoyed a wide range of activities from making s’mores in the forest area, to butterfly feeders, sensory barefoot walks and stick bubble wands.



In June, as part of Wellbeing Week (funded by Lisburn and Castlereagh Borough Council), we enjoyed hosting pupils from Tor Bank for a Wellbeing Day. We had so

much fun playing Hide and Seek in the Forest area, enjoying a sensory texture treasure hunt, creating beautiful flower planters, and enjoying a picnic.

**Mrs A Wilson**

## **KEY STAGE 2 SNAPSHOT**

This year the children enjoyed a variety of activities both inside and outside school. We had our Mathemagician club each month, where we honed our numeracy skills and encouraged each other to shine.

Walks along the Greenway to note the changing seasons, an Epic Viking Battle, Forest School learning, s'mores by the fire, train trips, sensory visits, and Soccer Days were just some of our highlights. We all participated in a celebration of 100 Days of School, enjoyed the "Spooky Classroom" event and watched the School Draughts Championship with some of our children becoming very competitive!

We also took part in the Big Garden Birdwatch with Karen Shiels from the RSPB. The children love to visit our bird feeding area designed by Mr Melin.

"The Greatest Showman" at Christmas was a highlight of the year with all our children taking part in the whole school production.

We continue to delight in the many successes of our children and as a department we celebrate all their achievements and highlights.

Thank you,

**Gillian Cummings**  
**Head of KS2**



## **KEY STAGE 3**

### **English Qualifications (ELQ)**

Entry Level Qualification (ELQ) in English was awarded to our pupils in August 2024. Through studying Entry Level English our pupils had the opportunity to;

- engage with techniques and features in still image media.
- engage with poetry and respond creatively or personally.
- engage with drama and respond appropriately.
- explore moving image media genres and respond creatively.
- engage with a range of prose texts, be able to offer opinions and respond in writing to them; and
- communicate personal information and gather information on a topic of interest.

Navigating our pupils through blended learning, all pupils completed six units. Our results were fantastic.

- 64% awarded at level 3.
- 24% awarded at level 2.
- 12% awarded at level 1.

Well done to all our pupils, wishing them the very best as they move to their next stage.

**M O'Connell & C McCracken**

### **Technology Department**

Understanding the potential impact of technology is critical to the world around us. Technology is not naturally good or bad. Instead, its effects are complex, hard to estimate accurately, and likely to have different values for different people at different times.

Technology and Design is concerned primarily with the design and manufacture of high quality technological products. Every design is influenced by outside factors such as consumer demand, the state of the market, customer expectations and consumer laws.

Studying Technology and Design provides opportunities to tackle and resolve design and technological problems to meet human needs within a range of contexts, such as home, school, leisure, community, business and industry. We are searching for better ways to do things, inventing solutions and taking risks. (CCEA, 2019).

These qualifications obtained in Year 12 aim to prepare our pupils for further study, work, and adult life.

They are competency based, emphasising learning by doing. This helps learners develop the transferable skills needed in a changing and dynamic working environment. Pupils also gain subject knowledge and independent living skills.

Cross-curricular links were forged with Mrs Strain, HE and TD (year 9, Mother's Day trays), planters (Mr Harrison and Mr Fenn, Year 10 employability lessons) and Mr Guthrie (science, year 8) through material differences.

The technology department acknowledges and appreciates the kind donations from local suppliers.

1. Carryduff Building Supplies
2. Carryduff Sawmills
3. Carryduff Tyres
4. Carryduff Autos
5. Gilnahirk Tyres
6. Ecoparts (Nutts Corner)

August 2024 results delivered qualifications in Entry Level Occupational Studies technology, where six technology units were selected that,

- Facilitates learning in a practical situation.
- Motivates learners.
- Develops employability skills.
- Prepares learners for work and adult life; and
- Provides progression to higher learning.

These units included painting and decorating, car mechanics, plumbing and joinery skills.

100% of pupils entered passed at level 3 – a terrific result for our pupils.

**M O'Connell**

## Home Economics

### **UFU schools' competition - success for Longstone Special School pupil.**

The Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU) in partnership with Bank of Ireland Open Farm Weekend and competition sponsor Asda, are delighted to announce that Cody Brennan, Longstone Special School was awarded runner up in the special school category.



UFU president William Irvine said, “Congratulations to Cody who was awarded runner up in the special school category in this year’s schools’ competition. Cody’s attention to detail on the ‘supporting local produce in Northern Ireland’ harvest template was excellent. Congratulations also to Toby Graham who was awarded highly commended.

“I would like to thank everyone who entered the 2024 schools’ competition. Once again, we were blown away with the volume and standard of entries this year in the schools’ competition, receiving 7,381 entries – the highest number to date. The effort and time that pupils, teachers, parents, and guardians put into the competition was evident as all the entries were of the highest standard and I would like to thank Longstone Special School for contributing to this.

**Mrs Strain.**

## Numeracy



This has been an exciting year in developing outdoor play for numeracy. New resources and storage have been purchased, to provide a range of activities which will help engage pupils in developing numeracy skills within a sensory rich and stimulating environment.

Doddlemaths continues to be an effective resource, engaging pupils and developing valuable numeracy skills through the use of ICT. This has been introduced within KS2 and it is hoped it will be developed further to accommodate progression and learning support within Key Stage 3.

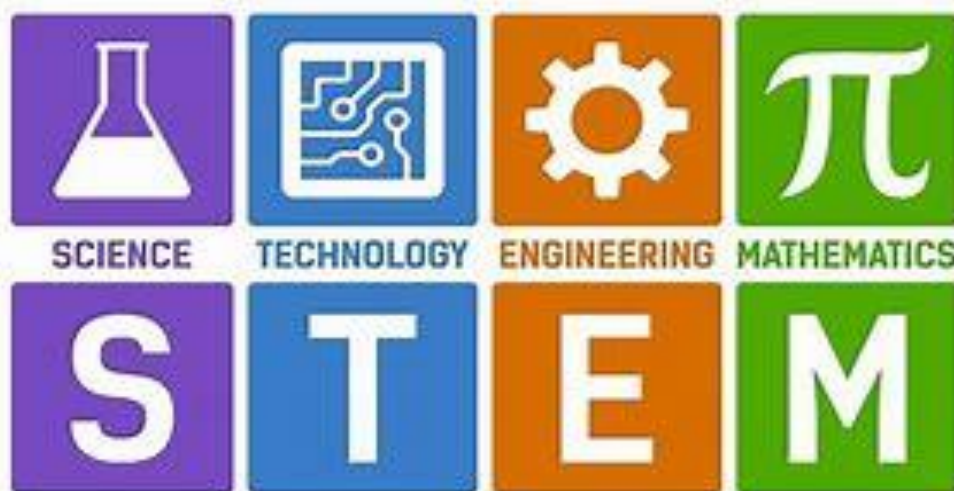
Pupils enjoyed a fun day of football in December, to celebrate the World Cup. As part of a Numeracy initiative, pupils formed teams and took part in key stage tournaments, representing different countries from the World Cup. Everyone enjoyed taking part and supporting their teams, who played their matches in a large inflatable foosball arena. Pupils also worked together to try and get the highest score as a class, using a large inflatable dart board and target practice. A huge well done to everyone who took part and the different winners from each key stage!



**Mr P Johnston**



## Technology – STEM Week



STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

STEM week was celebrated in Longstone School during November 2023 to encourage an interest in these fields for our children across the whole school.

The main goal of STEM week is to encourage children and young adults and to demonstrate to them the importance of science and how it fits into many other common ideas. Children can be introduced to and excited about science during STEM week.

STEM subjects typically fall within the EYFS's "World Around Us" study area. Getting children interested in the world around them is the main goal. The intention is to aid children in comprehending the major concepts and ideas that most of our young adults take for granted in KS 3 and 4.

With real-world issues and solutions, it is the perfect blended learning setting.

Through STEM education in the Early Years to KS4 children can be shown how scientific methods can be intertwined within daily life and given the tools to explore them.

STEM is significant because it fosters an enthusiasm for invention and promotes critical thinking abilities. Beyond the obvious benefits of studying STEM subjects—it promotes problem-solving and inquisitive learning, which are essential for success in a wide range of activities and fields.

"STEM education" refers to both the teaching of STEM to students in the classroom and to all of us learning more and becoming more knowledgeable about the significance of STEM.

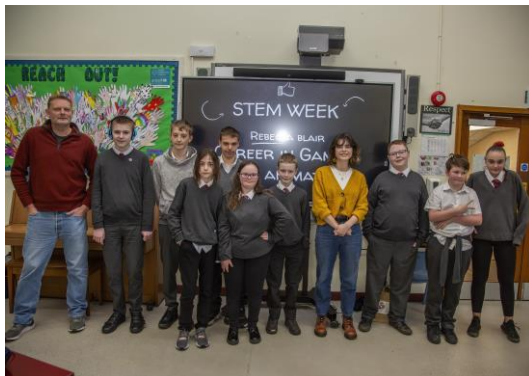
To enhance our children knowledge and learning in STEM subjects, we must educate ourselves on what STEM is and what it means for their future. This is what stem is all about. The widespread belief that job creation, economic growth, and international competitiveness all depend on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education.

The Advantages of STEM Education for Students. STEM education offers special advantages to our children. Among them are;

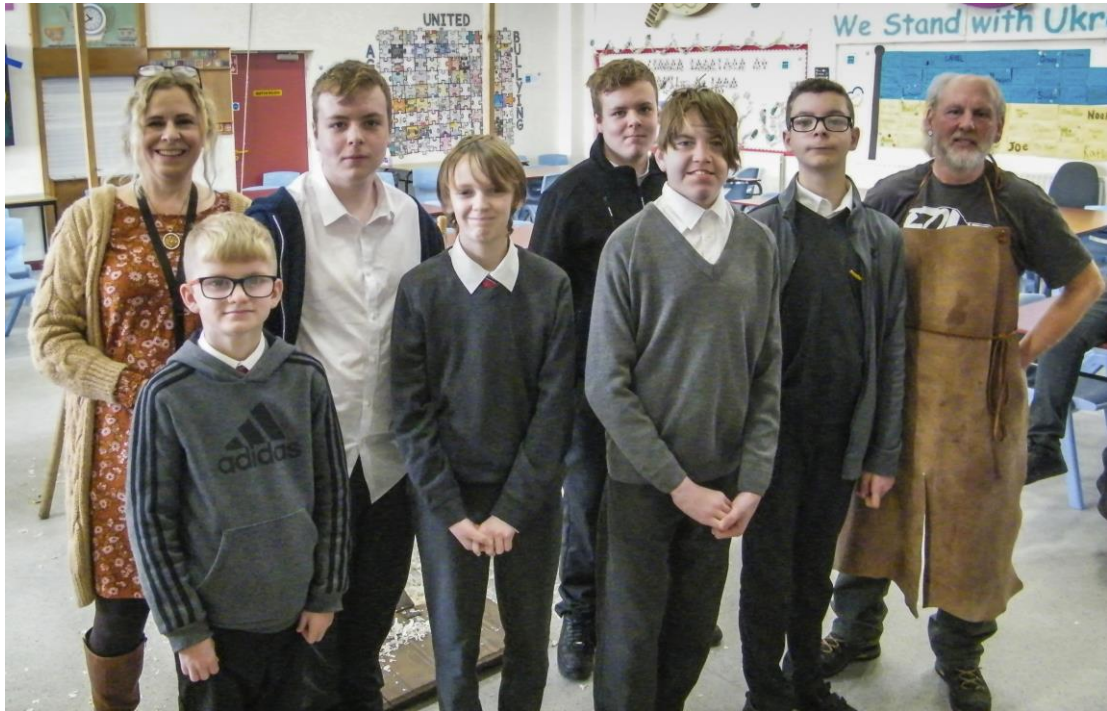
1. **Excitement & Motivation:** One of STEM's most significant advantages is that it focuses on real-world problem solving, which makes it interesting and relevant for our students. STEM can be just what is required for a teacher to igniting students' interest in learning.
2. **Universally Applicable abilities:** Developing abilities that students may utilise in other subjects and beyond is another fantastic aspect of STEM education. Creativity, critical analysis, problem-solving, computer literacy, teamwork, and independent thought are among the listed abilities. Students that acquire these abilities will be successful in life as well as in school, across all subject areas. This lends credence to the claim that STEM education is crucial for young children.
3. **More Possibilities:** The information and abilities acquired by pupils via STEM education also provide them with more options in the labour market. Employers' lists of "soft skills" nearly exactly align with the competencies that students acquire through STEM education. These abilities include leadership, flexibility, creative problem-solving, time management, and a growth mindset.

Longstone School welcomed 25 STEM companies to give real-life, hands-on demonstration and practicals to all our pupils. This was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

### Mr M O'Connell







## **Stormont Visitors to Technology**

Minister for Education of Northern Ireland, Mr Paul Givan took time out of his busy schedule and dropped by our school with his team. Kane Pollock (Y12) presented Mr Givan with lamp for his Stormont office, manufactured by our pupils.



MLA Mrs Joanne Bunting & Kellie Armstrong made a visit to Technology & Design. Mrs Bunting and Mrs Armstrong purchased lamps to decorate their office as well!

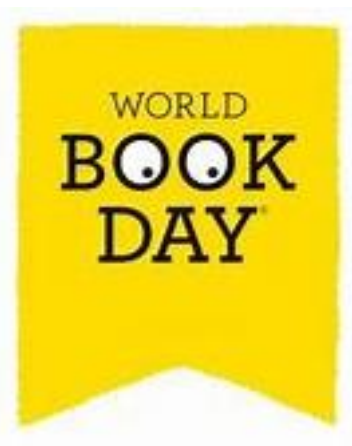


**Mr M O'Connell**

## **World Book Day**

KS3 celebrated World Book Day with a full day of events by dressing up as your favourite book character and listening to audio books. The Book Fair came to visit in April.

**World Book Day** was created to celebrate books and reading. The focus is on encouraging children and young people to read for pleasure. The aim is for children to be able to get together and share a love of reading.



## **Belfast Giants**

A representative from the Belfast Giants visited year 9 in Home Economics to deliver the Healthy Eating and Lifestyles Programme. Pupils gained an insight into choosing healthy foods and drinks and the benefits of taking part in regular physical activity/sports.



## **Mrs Strain**

### **Cinemagic**

KS3 animation pupils thoroughly enjoyed the movie experience "Migration" at The Strand Cinema Belfast in March, as part of their animation lessons. Cinemagic presented the pupils own animation projects on 'The Big Screen' with popcorn and treats!



Thanks to Laura and Nigel for all their dedicated time over the six weeks of pupil development.



## Delamont Outdoor Learning Centre



Year 8 took part in Outdoor Learning opportunities at Delamont Outdoor Learning Centre as part of their school curriculum in September 2023.

Pupils and staff thoroughly enjoyed the activities provided by Delamont OLC. Archery was an exciting opportunity for our pupils to participate in, requiring focus, strength and determination.

Wall climbing and abseiling; designed to challenge our pupils and test their climbing skills whilst having fun! Beginning with an easy climbing route, pupils built their confidence and climbing skills then moved up to the more challenging routes.

A fun filled day with thanks to Delamont instructors (Kieran & Joanne) who made sure everyone went home exhausted!



**Mr M O'Connell Mr J Bell**

### **KS3 Points - AWARD**

Pupils who achieve points each term are rewarded at the end of term with a Carousel of activities.

They involve joining the year class together and splitting into smaller groups and having different workstations around the room. Each group starts at one of these workstations with an activity, and after a given amount of time, all groups move round to the next activity. Over the lesson, every student has completed several different activities, and in the process, they have practiced the required skill a lot.

Year 8, 9 and 10 staff award our pupils with an opportunity to celebrate their success over the term.

### **Year 6 Educational Visit to Carrickfergus Castle**

Carrickfergus Castle is a Norman castle in Northern Ireland, situated in the town of Carrickfergus in County Antrim, on the northern shore of Belfast Lough. Unlike many other castles of this era, Carrickfergus Castle sits in excellent condition. In fact, despite being besieged in turn by the Scots, Irish, English and French, and playing an important military role until 1928, it is one of the best-preserved medieval structures in Ireland and the only preserved castle of its age open to the public.



Viewing the new Irish Oak ceiling and taking the spiral staircase, making sure we missed the ‘trip’ step we all had a fun day that included dressing up in traditional battle costumes!



**Mr M O’Connell & Mr J Bell**



## **Year 9 at The Balmoral Show**

This year was the first visit to Northern Ireland's largest agricultural show for year 9 pupils and staff. We spent the full school day exploring the many informational stands and exhibits promoting our local produce. We watched livestock shows and judging, sampled food products, saw farm machinery, and enjoyed the glorious weather while watching the entertainment provided. Everyone had a great day!



**Mrs H Strain & Mr P Johnston**

## **Easter Bonnet Competition**

Thanks to Longstone School PSA who provided funds as each KS3 was tasked to design their own Easter Bonnet! This brought an array of design and creativity to KS3, with lots of healthy competition.

Mr Skarmoutsos and Mr Starrs judged the Easter Bonnet independently with the winning class receiving their own chocolate treats!

Happy Easter from KS3.



## **Dundonald Nursery**

Year 8 and 9 pupils designed and manufactured their own Mother Days planter gift.



Thanks to Andrew McCully, Dundonald Nursery who provided all our plants at no cost to our pupils. Thanks too to a Year 8 parent who donated a 'Mother's Day Card' for each KS3 pupil.

## Gideons

Longstone was delighted to welcome Mr Alan Carson and Mr Gerald Thompson from 'Good News for Everyone, (Gideons).



**GIDEONS**  
INTERNATIONAL



Alan and Gerald welcomed our Year 8 pupils, year 7 and year 9 pupils who joined our assembly. Mr Johnston concluded our assembly with a prayer encouraging all pupils and staff to reflect on the stories within the Bible.

## **Mr M O'Connell.**

## Fitness Freddy

Spring started on March 1<sup>st</sup> when Fitness Freddy got KS3 moving to the beat! An amazing morning where everyone enjoyed the energetic start to the day!



## Safer Borrowing Box Project

The Safer Borrowing Project- Year 8 & Stranmillis College University joined forces with Mr O'Connell and Mr Bell!



**STRANMILLIS** | 100  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

*Shaping education since 1922*



Year 8 pupils enhanced their skills by participating and developing confidence, skills and competence in financial literacy in Longstone, focusing on safer borrowing and Money Matters Programme. Thanks for this new initiative provided through Stranmillis University College and Mrs Laverne Knox.

**Mr M O'Connell & Mr J Bell**

## National Museums NI

The Ulster Folk Museum puts the past in dialogue with the present to inspire and shape the future. Discover how reconnecting with the past can help us grow and thrive in the world today.



### **A living laboratory**

The Urban Nature Project is developing new scientific tools and skills urgently needed to monitor, understand and protect urban nature.

Our gardens are a hub for urban nature identification and field survey skills. Urban Nature projects are piloting a range of technologies for monitoring change in urban environments, including **eDNA** and acoustic monitoring, where an array of recorders will listen to the gardens, pond, soil and even inside the trees.

Urban Nature programme is happening with our Year 8, partnering with Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

Nature in the UK is under threat, and we all have a part to play in the solution. We need your students to track and monitor the nature closest to home, become the local experts, help us observe and collect new data, and take action through science to make a real difference.

In January 2024 I was interviewed by project manager Mr Nigel Cook (National Museums Northern Ireland) for MuseumNext online conference.



This provided an overview to why our pupils were involved in the project and more importantly what our Year 8 have gained from the experience; Inclusion, partnership, life outdoors and a love of Urban Nature.

I have been invited to Leeds to present to the National Museums UK in Term 1 2024. This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase our pupils and school.

**Mr M O'Connell**

## Hillsborough Castle Scarecrow Parade

Hillsborough Castle and Gardens welcomed Year 8 for a spooktacular Halloween in October with daring explorers who were invited to join us for a thrilling family trail, inspired by the Grimm fairy tales.

“The moonlight will illuminate your path as our characters from these classic fairy tales come to life before your very eyes, as if you've stepped right into the pages of the captivating stories.”

Hillsborough Castle’s Scarecrow Parade started in September in Longstone. Year 8 were invited to participate making two scarecrows, Batman and Wonderwoman! Thanks to Sue, Linda and David from Museum NI, Year 8 had a fantastic time making the larger-than-life characters in the TD department.

Sue commented, *‘I have to say in all honesty that Longstone was fantastic! Everyone was so wonderful and enthusiastic, we felt very well looked after! ‘*

The Walled Garden was overrun with an array of fictional characters, what stories did we uncover as we toured the Palace Gardens in October. We all thoroughly enjoyed viewing our scarecrows and the gathering of scarecrows made by other local schools and community groups.



On Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October Year 8 travelled to see their Scarecrows in the Walled Garden at Hillsborough Castle.

This was a fantastic day of celebration. In a field of approx. 30 scarecrows, it made for great viewing seeing Batman and Wonderwoman and all the other schools and community groups achievements. We walked through the scenic grounds of Hillsborough Walled Garden to the Halloween themed garden, where the pupils were able to try some freshly grown apples and raspberries!



**Mr M O'Connell & Mr J Bell**

## Young Enterprise Northern Ireland



Year 10 in conjunction with Mr Harrison, Mr Fenn and our Young Enterprise Northern Ireland Representative (Ruth) embarked on learning real-life talents in practical business experience and key skills, as well as understanding of how these skills can be applied to everyday life and help our pupils succeed in the world of work.

The programme included 7 Steps which takes students through running a business. The 'business' can be extremely simple, like pocket money type toys, stationary or conceptual. Each step is split into 9 x 30-minute sessions with a PowerPoint to match in class. The notes on the PowerPoint and the matching facilitators guide takes you through each session with a digital homework element to it. In TD pupils had the opportunity to manufacture their product and 'bring it to life.'

Our pupils made all the decisions about their enterprise, from deciding the company name and product, to creating a business plan and managing the finances.

Our students created and promoted their innovative product at local Trade Fairs throughout Northern Ireland and came together at our 'Big Market' in December 2023 at St Georges Market, Belfast.

Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the day, meeting and greeting potential customers, practising their sales pitch and enjoying the whole experience- the order book is now full with customers such as Kellie Armstrong, MLA!





**Mr I Harrison, Mr M Fenn & Mr M O'Connell**

## **KEY STAGE 4**

### **Home Economics-Occupational Studies**

Year 12 pupils have successfully completed their 2-year course and results can be viewed below. All pupils completed a portfolio of evidence for units of work in Patisserie and Baking and Contemporary Cuisine which included demonstrating their knowledge in the key areas of Hygiene and Safety; Environmental Issues; Careers in Catering; Practical Cookery skills and an ability to self-evaluate their skills development throughout the school year.

Level 2 Merit (grade B GCSE)	Level 2 Pass (grade C GCSE)	Level 1 qualification
43% of pupils	47% of pupils	10% pupils

Pupils worked extremely hard each week and learned new skills, techniques, and an ability to safely use kitchen equipment as well as focusing on how to present and garnish their cookery.

**Mrs Strain**

### **Maths**

*Article 28: Every child has the right to an education.*

Pupils worked very hard this year with many achieving their targeted level.

Essential Skills exam pupils worked on practice papers and mock interviews, getting ready for their final written and oral exams. All pupils coped extremely well on the day of the exams.

As it was my first year teaching Entry Level Maths Qualification, the teaching resources needed were reviewed and updated to make the course more accessible for the pupils.

ELQ coursework pupils were working on position and movement, handling data, number, and money. It was a very busy year with lots of changes throughout and the pupils handled this extremely well.

The results of both ELQ and OCN were fantastic displaying a true reflection of the work that had been done. Congratulations to the pupils of 2023/2024.



Here is a table displaying the overall outcome of results.

#### ELQ Coursework

Level	1	2	3
	2	1	1

#### Essential Skills Exam

Level	1	2	3
	6	7	3

### **Mrs C. McCracken**

#### **Science**

Last year the pupils in KS3 & KS4 studied Science in accordance with the Northern Ireland curriculum covering all aspects of Science within the three major disciplines of Chemistry, Physics and Biology. The focus of Science at Longstone is to promote the skills required to be a valuable member of a team and to become an economic contributor in society.

The topics studied encourage the pupils to think scientifically, covering the five skills areas: Self-management, Being Creative, Managing information, Working with others, Thinking skills, Problem solving and Decision making.

The course is designed to cater for the three learning styles of auditory, visual and kinaesthetic. There are also opportunities to use the Cross curricular skills of Communication, Using Maths and Using ICT.

Within the course the following Key Elements are covered: Personal understanding, Mutual understanding, Personal health, Moral character, Spiritual awareness, Citizenship, Cultural understanding, Media awareness, Ethical awareness, Employability, Economic awareness, and Sustainable development.

The KS3 course is designed to prepare the pupils for the Entry Level Qualification in Science which is studied over two years in years 11 and 12.

Entry Level One	Entry Level Two	Entry Level Three
4	2	11

Pupils in 10B took part in the Science Enthuse Programme where they attended Science days out in association with other schools in the Enthuse Local Learning Area Community. This was very successful especially the Armagh Planetarium Roadshow and Rocket Building Day at Dundonald High.

Pupils have continued to engage through Google Classroom. completing weekly quizzes for homework. The success of the Science course and the hard work of the pupils is evidenced in the KS4 results that the pupils achieved last year.

**Mr E. S. Guthrie**

### **RSE: (Relationship and Sexuality Education)**

All pupils now study RSE in accordance with the Northern Ireland curriculum covering all aspects of RSE.

At KS4 RSE is delivered through Learning for Life and Work - Personal Development with a focus on health and well-being, and the development of positive and healthy relationships.

As part of the Entry level Life Skills course, pupils study: Different types of relationships, Physical aspects of puberty and sexual relationships, and how to seek advice on sex and relationships.

Resources including booklets, activities and PowerPoints were updated taking into account pupils needs and the three target levels. This enables pupils to access the course at the level appropriate to their abilities.

Pupils also revisit many of the areas covered by this course as part of activities, assemblies, and other subjects throughout the school such as Science and Home Economics.

Year 12 pupils achieved the following levels:

Entry Level One	Entry Level Two	Entry Level Three
3	7	9

At KS3 pupils study RSE as part of the Learning for Life and Work - Personal Development, with Science and Home Economics also contributing. A series of resources for years 8, 9 and 10 were developed and piloted in 2023 and were modified where necessary for the 2023-24 academic year. This has been highly successful. Support is now being provided to other schools on RSE resource development.

At KS1 and 2 pupils study Personal Development and Mutual Understanding which covers elements of RSE at an appropriate level.

Pupils staff and parents took part in RSE research with Queens University Belfast. The outcomes and feedback were presented in October 2023. This is now being used to guide future developments. Work with Queens is ongoing and early next year pupils will take part in development of RSE animations for worldwide distribution.

**Mr E. S. Guthrie**

## Occupational Studies

### *Article 29 Education should develop your Talents & Abilities*

This year in Occupational Studies, our pupils in both Year 11 and Year 12 completed the unit, 'Planning a Leisure Event' with each of the classes choosing different sports and leisure events for our pupils to take part in from junior school to senior school.

In 12B, the pupils did a scavenger hunt, in 12A they organised a disco, in 11A they ran a movie day and in 11B the pupils did a puppet show. In these events our pupils sorted food and drink for the customers and learnt how to manage money, created a safe environment for their customers and made sure that they had a good time through excellent planning and organisation of the events. The pupils had meetings and assigned jobs to different team members, they followed an action plan to make sure that all tasks were completed within deadline.

Well done to all our Key Stage 4 pupils with the success of their leisure events!

### Occupational Studies Level 1 / Level 2 Results 2023 – 2024

Level 1 Pass	Level 1 Merit	Level Distinction	1	Level 2 Pass	Level Merit	2
2	1	8		1	1	



**Mr S Ferguson**

## Entry Level Occupational Studies

*Article 29 You have the right to develop your talents & abilities.*



For our Entry Level Occupational Studies qualification pupils completed up to 12 short practical modules that were developed and based around their interests and abilities, which they were able to complete over a course of two years in KS4. Our pupils created cards, made gifts for families, grew a bulb into a plant and grew food from seed. The pupils also practiced using a range of office equipment, they learnt how to create word documents and practised their typing skills. The pupils enjoying taking part in the practical aspects of the work and they all performed well in the tasks this year.

Entry Level 1	Entry Level 2	Entry Level 3
4	0	1

**Mr S Ferguson**

## Belfast Metropolitan College

*Article 29 You have the right to develop your talents and abilities.*



Well done to our Yr.12 pupils who have successfully completed a link course in Belfast Metropolitan College! Visiting Castlereagh Campus every Tuesday helps prepare our young people for leaving school. They get to experience College life, learn how courses are structured and understand what College Tutor expectations are in a FE setting. The pupils really enjoyed their time in BMC and this experience has helped them make informed decisions about their future.

## **Life Skills**

### *Article 29 Education should develop your Talents & Abilities*

This year in Life Skills at Longstone, our pupils helped to develop their independent living skills to help prepare them for adult life.

Our year 12 pupils completed the following units.

- Home Management
- Personal Safety
- Leisure for Pleasure
- Travelling in my Community
- Using Shopping Facilities
- Healthy Active Lifestyle
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Community Project



The pupils enjoyed the qualification and learnt valuable skills they can use in the future.

Entry Level 1	Entry Level 2	Entry Level 3
3	10	6

## **Mr S Ferguson**

### **Rights Respecting School Award**

#### *Article 12 You have the Right to an Opinion*

Our School Council had another busy and productive year working on Rights Respecting School projects. Some of their achievements included:

- School Council Election Day.
- Running a competition for a Thank You card.
- World Children's Day Takeover where Council Members took over adult roles in the school for a day.
- Helping Mr Skarmoutsos make decisions about the Minor Works Programme including paint and floor colours.
- Designing the new Yr.13 uniform.
- Talking to visitors including Politacans about why having a Yr.13 is important to them.
- Completing MENCAP Guardians of the Internet Project to stay safe online.
- World Wildlife Day Fundraiser.



- Winning the Grand Choice Award.



The School Council also ran a mascot competition. They asked classes to create a character that could make rights more accessible for Junior School pupils. Mr Johnston's class worked together and submitted their entry "Larrie the Lion" who was voted to become Longstone's official mascot.



## Prince's Trust Achieve Award

### *Article 29 Education should develop your Talents & Abilities*



At Longstone, the Prince's Trust Achieve Award has significantly contributed to the development of our Key Stage 4 pupils' core skills. Through various modules in Year 11, our pupils have enhanced their teamwork abilities.

Yr. 11 pupils successfully organised and ran their own enterprise fair, featuring a variety of stalls including a spin-the-wheel challenge, a donut stall, an ice cream stand and a tombola stand. These activities were

met with great success and the pupils raised £257 to put towards their Yr 12 reward trip.

Additionally, our pupils have gained valuable knowledge in developing CV skills and understanding different types of employment contracts they may encounter after leaving Longstone.

In Year 12, pupils have further developed these skills as they completed a Career Planning unit including a mock interview, a Work Experience Placement and work with Barclays Life Skills, to support their understanding of how to manage money effectively.

These modules have equipped our pupils with essential skills such as teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and self-management.

Congratulations to all our pupils for completing the Prince's Trust Achieve Award.

Entry Level 3	Level 1
12	3

## Year 10 Community Project

*Article 29 Education should develop your Talents & Abilities*



Our Year 10 pupils have completed a Community Project. One of our classes decided to do a litter pick, where we cleaned up our 'Adopt a Spot' location along Millars Rd. All our pupils took part in the class and really enjoyed cleaning up the area around our school.

In the other class we decided that we would do a coffee morning for a nearby assisted living home. Our pupils independently helped to sort tea and coffee for our visitors while giving them bacon butties. After serving our pupils sat with our visitors and talked with them, making them feel welcome and at home in our school.

Our community project is a module that is supported by the Prince's Trust Achieve Award programme, which our pupils will continue to take part in, as they move into Key Stage 4 next year.

Well done to all our year 10 pupils!

**Mr S Ferguson**



## Work Experience

*Article 29 You have the right to develop your talents and abilities.*



20 Year 12 pupils completed a highly successful Work Experience Week in October 2023. Pupils chose to complete placements in a range of occupational areas which included Vehicle Maintenance, Retail, Catering and Sport/Leisure. Feedback from employers was very positive and the pupils really enjoyed being out in the world of work.

**Mrs S Plunkett**

## Careers Coffee Morning

*Article 17 Access to Information*



Pupils in Years 10 to 12, along with their parents or guardians, had the opportunity to engage with representatives from various colleges, training providers, and other organisations during our annual Careers Coffee Morning. This event provided valuable careers advice and guidance, assisting students and their families in making informed

decisions about their future. Additionally, attendees received essential tips to aid in their transition from Longstone School.

**Mrs S.Plunkett**

### **KS4 Celebration Day**

#### *Article 29 Develop Talents and Abilities*

The accomplishments of our KS4 students were honoured during our Prize Day celebration. Parents/guardians and staff observed with pride as our pupils were presented with trophies, shields, and cups. This was succeeded by a heartfelt video montage showcasing the experiences of our Year 12 students at Longstone.



This year holds particular significance for us, as we will be welcoming 14 students back for our first ever Yr. 13 class. We extend our best wishes to the departing pupils for their future.

**Mrs S Plunkett**



**Young Enterprise Northern Ireland** recognises that the world in which our young people will live and work is ever-changing and we continually develop our programme offering to ensure that they acquire the skills they will need to become enterprising, creative, and commercially aware.



These skills are the very foundations of our future economy, and the Northern Ireland Executive has acknowledged the value of enterprise education as part of its economic strategy through the implementation of the revised curriculum.

Thanks to our local YENI Area Manager, Freddie Harris who keep us updated on YENI activities.

Year 12 submitted their project in April 2024 to the Team Programme competition. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful but we know we made it difficult for the judges to decide- Well done Year 12.

**Mr M O'Connell.**

### **Year 13**

*Article 28 You have the right to an Education.*

We are delighted to announce that we will be expanding our provision next academic year to include a Yr 13 class of 14 pupils starting in September 2024. This year Mrs Plunkett put together a development proposal which was submitted to the Education Authority in December 2023. In Yr.13 pupils will be completing a life skills programme of study which includes:

- OCN Personal Success & Well-Being certificate (Level 1 / Entry Level).
- OCN Customer Service Award (Level 1).
- OCR Life & Living Skills Certificate (Entry Level).
- Barista Training / Food & Hygiene Certificate and Work Experience supported by Orchardville.
- Opportunity to complete Duke of Edinburgh Award (Bronze/Silver).
- MENCAP HEROES+ Personal Development Programme.

**Mrs S Plunkett**

## The London Magazine Poetry Competition



Year 12 took part in the *London Magazine Poetry Competition* in March 2024. The *London Magazine* is the UK's oldest literary magazine, proud to have published some of the biggest names in poetry including Mary Jean Chan, T. S. Eliot, Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath, and Philip Larkin.

We were excited to announce the launch of our Poetry Prize 2024.

Established to encourage emerging literary talent, the award provides an opportunity for publication and recognition, as well as rewarding imagination, originality, and creativity. *The London Magazine* is taking submissions for previously unpublished poems, no longer than 40 lines. With no criteria as to theme, form, or style but we are looking for fresh and diverse new work.

Congratulations to all those Y12 who took part and although we were not successful, we were delighted to be a part of the experience.

**Mr M O'Connell**

## KS4 School Formal

*Article 31 Right to Rest & Play*



KS4 pupils and staff celebrated an unforgettable evening at the Clondeboye Lodge Hotel, adorned in their finest attire. The pupils made a grand entrance, arriving in limousines to a soft drinks reception which was followed by a fabulous three course dinner and then disco. The formal served as a true celebration of all their accomplishments over the past two years, a brilliant time was had by all.

**Mrs S Plunkett**

## Longstone's Community Health & Well-Being Week

### *Article 24 Right to Good Health*



### Connect – Nature Activity

16 Pupils from Longstone and Tor Bank benefitted from a fantastic workshop organised by Mrs Wilson. Pupils went on a sensory treasure hunt in our forest schools area, they made bubble wands, butterfly feeders and homes for snails. Pupils finished up by planting some colourful flowers in pots as a take home gift. The pupils made new friends and learnt how to respect and protect our environment.



### Take Notice – Arts & Crafts Activity

20 pupils from Longstone School and residents from Towell House came together to make beautiful flower lanterns and enjoy an afternoon tea for the theme of taking notice. The pupils and older adults spent time getting to know each other and they learnt new crafting skills.



### Keep Learning – Mindfulness Workshop

15 staff members from Longstone School participated in a Mindfulness Workshop where they learnt new ways to relax and look after their mental health. This included a guided meditation and a sound bath experience.



## **Be Active – Sports Games Workshop**

12 pupils from Longstone and Our Lady's & St Patrick's College worked together to play team games and challenges. The pupils tackled the viral Bin Challenge, played football rounders and the cross-bar challenge. This was a successful new partnership and Longstone School have been invited to Our Lady's & St Patrick's next term to do some cooking together.



## **Anti-Bullying Week**

*Article 19 You have the right to be Safe.*

The theme for Anti-Bullying Week in the 23/24 Academic term was “Make a Noise about Bullying”. The School Council led an assembly which explained what bullying is, how to identify different types of bullying, and what you should do if you or someone you know is being bullied. Everyone wore their odd socks to school to show it is OK to be different and stand out.

The School Council participated in an online session with other schools, facilitated by the Anti-Bullying Alliance. They created their own piece of music with lyrics encouraging everyone to speak up if they see bullying.

Stuart Leatham, a music specialist ran music lessons with KS2/KS3/KS4 pupils where everyone had lots of fun using different instruments and their voices to make a noise about bullying.

We reviewed our Anti-Bullying policies and parents/guardians had an opportunity to share their views through a consultation and the School Council updated the Child Friendly Anti-Bullying policy.



**Mrs S Plunkett**

## KS4 Soccer Aid

*Article 29 Education should develop your Talents & Abilities*



In Senior School this year, we ran a Soccer Aid Tournament that included children from Year 8, all the way through to Year 12. We sorted the children into mixed teams and gave them a country from around the world and raised money for UNICEF.

Our pupils really enjoyed the day, while understanding the importance of raising money for an incredibly good cause. Although it was a soccer event some pupils also helped to give out hot dogs and drinks to all the pupils and staff that were watching the event from the school. All the classes lined up to watch the football in the playground at the back of the school and had a very good day out.

Well done to all our pupils for taking part in the event and raising so much money for UNICEF.



**Mr S Ferguson**

## **Christmas Production “The Greatest Showman”**

### *Article 29 Education should develop your Talents & Abilities*

“Ladies and Gents, this is the moment you have waited for...” 2023-24 saw the return of the Longstone School Play back to its pre-COVID form.

This year’s production had audience members singing along with the popular songs from The Greatest Showman. It was such a pleasure to see our pupils shine on the stage, showcasing their talent to the pride (and a few tears) of their parents. Mr Melin thanked the entire staff and school body for their commitment and hard work for the production which did not go unnoticed by some very special visitors.

MLA Joanne Bunting was “blown away by the overwhelming talent” she saw on display and wrote a letter to the school thanking Longstone for providing her with the “highlight of (her) Christmas season.”

The Greatest Show was also recognised by the Lisburn and Castlereagh Arts Advisory Committee and brought home a 1<sup>st</sup> place trophy for Drama at the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Schools’ Arts Competition! Several members from the cast were well pleased to attend the awards ceremony at the Island Hall in Lisburn.

As always, we would like to thank the Board of Governors for their support of the school play.

**Mr J Melin.**





### **Duke of Edinburgh Award:**

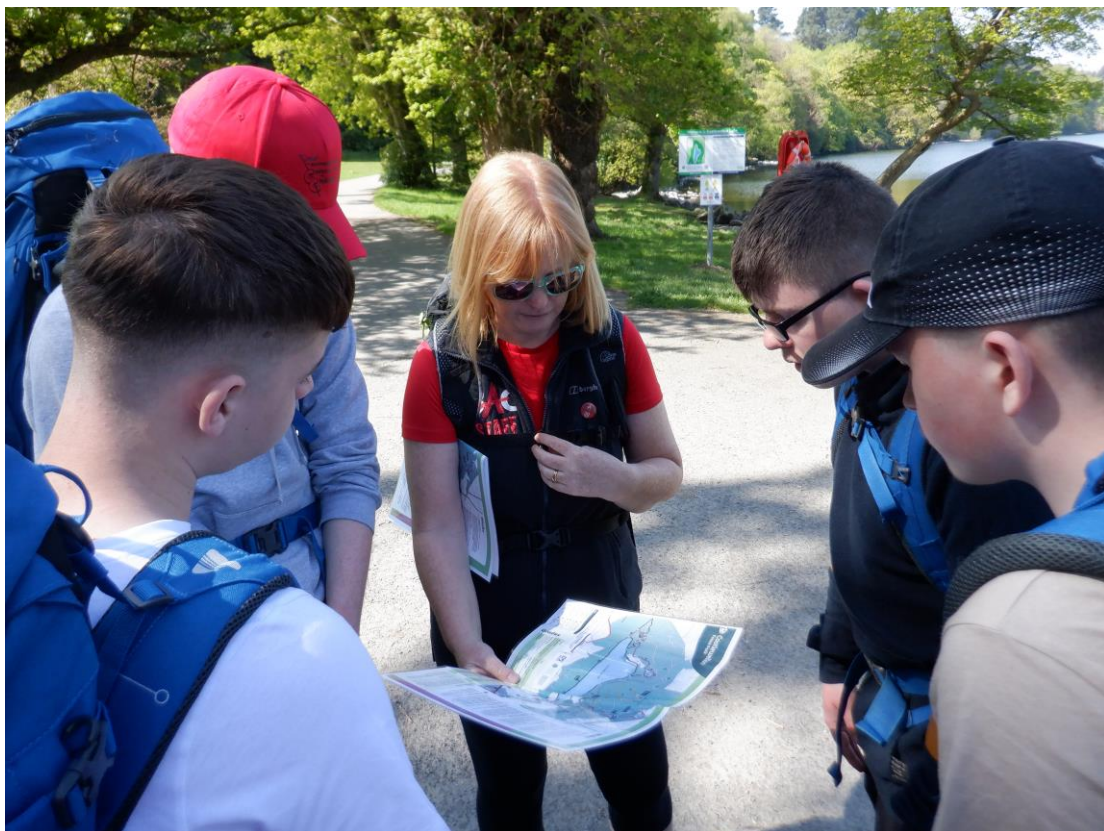
This year we had five pupils completing their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award.

With help from Nicola and the Belfast Activity Centre we enjoyed day walks to the Belfast Hills, Delamont, Castlewellan and Tollymore.

There was training in navigation, camp craft, first aid and cooking.  
The final expedition took place in the Mourne Mountains.

Congratulations to all the pupils who achieved their Bronze Award.  
Mason, Kane, Gabriel, Jason, and Matthew.

### **J Starrs**



## **FINANCE:**

Our Article 60 budget allocation for 2023/24 was £180,025. This is the funding that we receive from DENI via the Education Authority to finance the running costs of the school which includes utilities, resources for staff and pupils, transport, furniture, and fittings.

Our school bank account had an opening balance of £299.29 and a closing balance of £10,871.59. This account is used to provide resources for our pupils throughout the year.

## **SCHOOL SECURITY:**

The school maintains a safe and secure learning environment for our pupils and staff. Fire drills are conducted once a term and the system is regularly monitored and maintained. CCTV & Sign in System continue to be in place.

## **ACCESS:**

During the 23/24 academic term we added controlled access the main entrance of the school, the exit to the internal KS1 playground and the Fire exit in the Year 5 Class. All classrooms in the main body of the school, mobile classrooms, gym, and dinner hall are accessible for wheelchairs.

## **ATTENDANCE:**

The annual average attendance for 2023/24 was: 79.62% (Attended) 10.28 (Authorised Absence) and 10.11(Unauthorised Absence)

## **SCHOOL LEAVERS:**

This year we had 12 school leavers who were placed on a variety of Training Programmes and Further Education courses. 12 students are continuing in Longstone in our first ever Yr13 class.

