



# Victoria College Belfast Summer Newsletter June 2015

June 2015

Dear Parent

We have once again come to the end of what has been an eventful year. The public examinations are nearly over and I would like to wish every success to all our girls.

Following on from last year when the College won the Investors in People Bronze Award and the Inclusion Quality Mark, we were delighted when this year the College retained its Green Flag status. This



highly prestigious award has to be renewed every two years and a very successful Eco committee ensured this success. The girls also had an all-Ireland success when they were shortlisted from three hundred schools for the Eco-UNESCO Environ-



mentalist awards. We were delighted when the College was

awarded 'The Best Kept Large School' in Belfast; this is the



College's tenth success and its third in the last four years. Congratulations to everyone in the College for this whole school award, particularly the Estates team and the pupil Eco team.

In addition to the many charity and fundraising activities which our pupils undertake throughout the year, our pupils also are involved in community activities through the College's Voluntary Services Group. As part of the Health and Social Care curriculum, Year 13 pupils have been involved in an inter-generational project with older people in residential care from North Belfast and during the year assisted in a tea dance and hosted a lunch, during



which our pupils provided the entertainment.

Year 11 Health and Social Care pupils embarked on two Intergenerational projects, the first with the residents in Kerrington Court, Marlborough Park, who have completed a digital age project and are hoping to produce a wall hanging for both settings. The wall hanging will be titled 'When Kerri met Vicki' and is reflective of the interests of both age groups. The second project is with Ballyowen Residential Care and Day Centre and will help older people play Boccia and provide opportunities for interaction with the residents who have dementia.

Pupils have continued to attend many events and have taken part in numerous competitions since Christmas. The team of Year 9 pupils who were awarded Champions of Champions at the First LEGO League regional tournament, participated in the U.K. and Ireland final in Loughborough in February. A team of Year 10 pupils were runners up in the Step N Zones Northern Ireland Final competition which was held at Invest N.I. as part of the Global Entrepreneurship Week. The Young Enterprise team had a successful year and won the Young Enterprise regional final. The girls were then invited to the N.I. Finals black tie



event where Cool FM DJ Pete Snodden presented the evening.

In June Year 10 pupils visited the Thales Engineering site in East Belfast and discovered the wealth



and range of career opportunities available for young people interested in STEM careers.

French, Spanish and German students attended theatre performances in their respective language and over 100 pupils from Years 8 and 9 participated in the European Studies Programme. The girls enjoyed working with schools in Greece, Denmark, Republic of Ireland and Serbia and learning about other cultures and lifestyles. A number of pupils were awarded European Studies Certificates.



In February our Year 8 and 9 pupils welcomed Niall De Búrca, one of Ireland's finest traditional storytellers. Top performing GCSE and A-level Art students from the College had their artwork chosen for exhibition at the True Colours Exhibition in the Ulster Museum and staff and pupils' Art work was exhibited in Maryville Tea Rooms. The Game of Thrones photographer, Helen Sloan, visited the College to discuss her work in the Television

and Film Industry. In April the College's Product Design students visited the Creativity Hub to take part in a Creativity Masterclass.



The Spring Concert in March, the highlight of the Music Department's year, was held in the BT Studio at the Waterfront Hall and opened with the combined Junior and Senior choirs and the College orchestra performing Philip Stopford's "Gloria". There followed outstanding performances from the individual ensembles and both Junior and Senior pupils.

In May the Junior Choir joined together with the choir from Assumption Grammar School, Ballynahinch to sing at a fund-raising concert for Habitat for Humanity in Armagh Cathedral in which the chief guests were the well-known trio The Priests. Instrumental and vocal tuition is provided by peripatetic staff to more than 100 pupils and the success rate at external examination level continues to be very high. Girls are also encouraged to participate in local music festivals and many of our girls have achieved recent success.



Some of our pupils took advantage of school trips during the Spring and Summer terms. In April nearly 100 pupils and staff travelled to Bormio in Northern Italy for the annual ski trip and excellent skiing conditions

enabled everyone to advance their skills.



Two groups, totaling seventy-six Year 8 pupils and eight members of staff, have just returned from trips to London during which their itinerary included a Thames River Cruise, a visit and presentation at the Bank of England, the Natural History Museum and a West End show, "Charlie and Chocolate Factory".



Over 100 intrepid Year 10 pupils braved the unseasonal June weather to finish their Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award training and then went on to complete their expeditions last week.



Our sports teams continued to enjoy success throughout the Spring and Summer terms. The 1<sup>st</sup> XI hockey team reached the semi-final of the Ulster Schools' Plate and the Year 8 team won the N.I. Schools' Tournament. The 1<sup>st</sup> XI went on tour to Gibraltar and the U14A hockey team went on tour to Glasgow. A

prize evening for extra-curricular hockey was also enjoyed at Cooke Rugby Club, during which coaches presented prizes to members of their hockey teams. An enjoyable Coaches vs. Pupil Leavers' hockey match was played in April and although the pupil leavers performed well, in the face of the competitive streak from the staff team only one outcome was possible - we will keep the final score a secret!



The College's Cross Country teams won the South Antrim District and the Ulster Championships and the College was crowned Best Ulster Girls' School in Cross Country for the second consecutive year. The Athletics teams enjoyed success at



the South Antrim and the Ulster Championships and four pupils qualified for the All Ireland Championships.



The Year 8 Netball team won the Division 2 Belfast League and Cup.

In Gaelic Football the Year 8 team played in blitz competitions and the U14 team played in the Ulster Schools' league. The U12 Camogie team won the Aileen Lawlor Shield and played in the Year 8 Schools' Championships. The Year 9 pupils participated in the U14 Camogie Blitz and four pupils travelled to Áras an Uachtaráin in Dublin to be presented with their All-Ireland Féile winning medals by President Michael D Higgins.



Year 8 pupils enjoyed individual success at the Ulster Schools' Swimming Championships and the Relay team were placed 4<sup>th</sup>.



The Senior Swimming team won gold medals in the Freestyle and Medley relays at the Ulster Secondary Schools' Gala and the Senior Team also won the overall trophy at the Ulster Grammar Schools' Championships. The Senior tennis team reached the semi-finals of the Ulster Senior Tennis Cup and the Junior team reached the quarter final of the Junior Tennis Cup. The Junior Squash team was placed first in the Ulster Novice Squash Cup and the Senior Rugby team reached the final of the Schools' Cup.



In March a group of 80 students and staff took part in Runamuck, Ireland's largest 'fun and run' cross country event which was held in Co Kildare. All the VCB team completed the course and it was such a success that we are hoping to enter another team in 2016.



We are very proud of all of our pupils' achievements, big or small, and there were countless individual performances throughout the year in a wide range of activities which have been recognised in school in Form Announcements and at Assembly.

Unfortunately at this time of year we must say farewell to members of staff and we wish Mr Ian McCaugherty, Temporary Teacher of Science and Miss Suzanne Coates, Temporary Teacher of Art & Design well and hope that they will maintain their links with the College in the future. We look forward to welcoming Mrs Karen Goddard, Head of Art & Design, Miss Roisin Mullholland, Temporary Teacher of Home Economics and Mrs Catherine Flanagan, Classroom Assistant.

Victoria College Belfast is very proud to announce the launch of an exciting and immersive Virtual Experience. The new feature aims to provide an online experience to

prospective students, parents and indeed past pupils who are interested in VCB but unable to visit. The Virtual Experience is a perfect way for people to develop their understanding of what life at the College is like, even if they have never been here before. Users can now experience the excellent facilities on offer, all without leaving the comfort of their home. The tour offers something different to the information already provided on our website, making it possible for people to not only see what the campuses look like, but to understand what it's like to go to school here. The goal of the tour is to communicate to visitors what the VCB experience is all about in a way that is fun and engaging. The Virtual Experience can be accessed via the school website – [www.victoriacollege.org.uk](http://www.victoriacollege.org.uk). A Parental Pastoral Portal is also now available through the College's website. This includes information of the College's pastoral structure, policies, safe guarding, counselling and help and advice for parents.

The College has developed a database of past pupils on our school website and I would like to take this opportunity to invite Year 14 pupils who are leaving Victoria College this year to go on-line and add their details. Please also feel free to invite any other past pupils you may come into contact with to do the same.

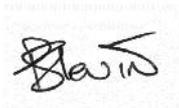
The College's term dates for 2015-2016 have been distributed with school reports and are also available on the College's website. **The first day of term for each of the year groups and details of the starting dates and times for your daughter(s) are listed within the "Notes" section of the 2015/2016 term dates. Please note that school is closed for Bank Holiday on Monday 31 August and normal classes will resume on Tuesday 1 September.** A number of Staff Training days have been arranged for next year and these are as follows: Monday 2 November (Whole School), Friday 8 January (Whole School), Thursday 17 March (Whole School) and Friday 13 May (Years 8-14 Only). A Staff Training day for the Preparatory School will be held on Monday 30 May (Preparatory pupils only) so Preparatory pupils do not attend on this day.

May I please remind you that make-up and nail varnish are not permitted and only the following jewellery may be worn with school uniform: a watch, one plain ring, one pair of studs or small keeper earrings (one in each ear lobe). Studs, rings, retainers and jewellery associated with body piercing are not part of school culture and will not be tolerated. Any hair accessories worn with uniform must be in school colours. Any bright, dyed hair colour or extreme hairstyle, hair braids or hair extensions are not permitted. Uniform will be strictly monitored at the start of the school year and girls not conforming may be sent home. Please note that shoes should be plain, flat, black leather, should be sturdy and may be either laced or strapped. Skirts should be of an appropriate length, worn to the knee. College staff reserve the right to request, at any time, that a new skirt be purchased.

As you are aware we do permit the girls to bring mobile phones into school as long as they remain switched off during school hours (8.30 am – 3.10 pm). Parents are asked to note that any pupil found using her mobile phone during these hours will have her phone confiscated and a parent or another nominated adult will be contacted to collect the phone at the end of the next working day (minimum of 24 hours from time of confiscation). If the phone is confiscated on a Friday then the phone cannot be collected until Monday. Furthermore, in view of Child Protection issues, **no pupil is permitted to take photographs or videos in school without prior permission from a member of staff.** We would appreciate your help and co-operation in the above matters. Please note that the up-to-date copy of the College's Behaviour for Learning and Child Protection Policies are available on the school website.

I very much hope that you and your family have an enjoyable and relaxing summer holiday.

Yours sincerely



P Slevin (Ms)  
Headmistress