



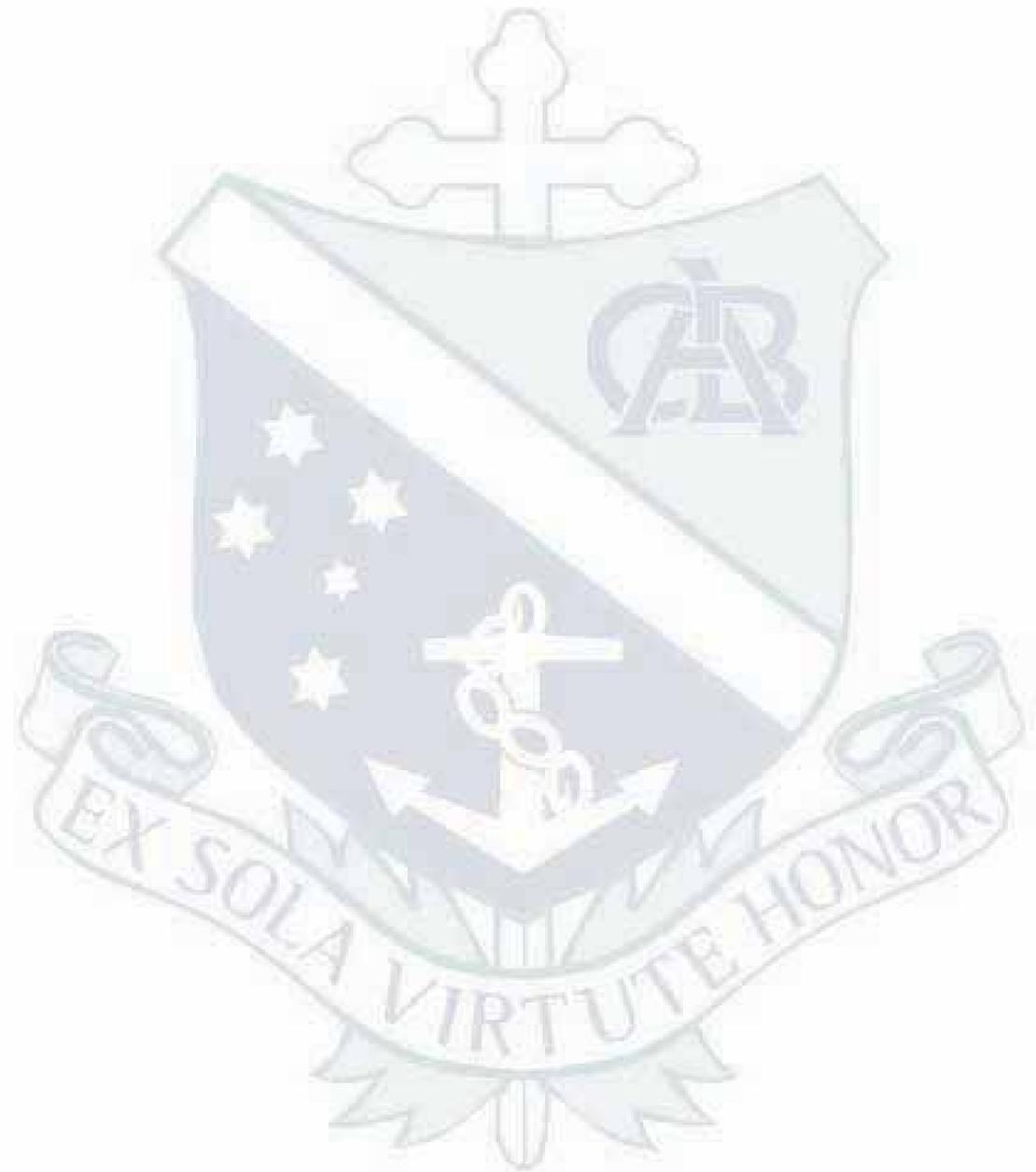
Assumption
Grammar School
Ballynahinch

Fully Alive

PROSPECTUS



Specialist School For Music
With Physical Education



Assumption Grammar School

PROSPECTUS

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Principal's Address

A very warm welcome to Assumption Grammar School. We recognise that choosing the right school for your daughter is crucial; we are very proud of our staff and students and hope that this prospectus gives you a flavour of the educational experience on offer in this, one of the finest Catholic schools for girls in Ireland.

Since 1933, generations of students, staff and parents have been proud to be a part of this vibrant, caring and highly successful school. With a beautiful new building and state of the art facilities we offer the advantages of a seamless education from Year 8 to Year 14.

Here we accept girls with wide-ranging talents and abilities and take great pride in our cultural diversity, welcoming students of all faiths and cultures. Assumption is a Specialist School for Music and Physical Education and is renowned for its quality learning and teaching. An inspired curriculum, coupled with a technology rich, purpose built school, has resulted in our long history of outstanding achievement across the three curriculum strands:

- STEM
- Humanities
- Creative Arts

An extensive extra-curricular programme enriches and extends the curriculum, allowing each student to explore and develop her personal talents and interests. Wide ranging opportunities for leadership enable students to develop the skills, knowledge and qualities needed to be our leaders of the future.

We are proud of our "Fully Alive" ethos which is embedded in every aspect of school life. It is our firm belief that students thrive and achieve academic and personal success when they feel happy and safe. Whilst we expect all students to strive for academic excellence, we also highly value students' personal development and their contribution to our school, local and international community. Students leave Assumption Grammar as mature, articulate and well-rounded young people, confident in their ability to succeed and make a significant contribution to the wider world. This is a result of over eighty years of dedication from our Trustees, the Missionary Sisters of the Assumption. Our 'Fully Alive' ethos, underpinned by gospel values, keeps faith and moral development at the centre of everything we do.

Assumption Girls: Inspirational Women

We believe every girl is inspirational in her own way and, as such, we value each individual and work to foster her self-confidence and success. We strongly believe that our true purpose is to give individual care and attention to our students. You will meet, as you explore this Centre of Excellence, highly qualified, talented and dedicated teachers who work respectfully and thoughtfully with our 'Assumption Girls' and their parents, to ensure we can meet the ever-changing needs of our students as they develop to become 'Inspirational Women'. You will encounter, too, the student voice: confident and articulate young ladies who will provide you with real-life experiences, reassurance of positive outcomes that can never be encapsulated in a glossy brochure.

There is certainly something exceptionally special about Assumption Grammar School and I am delighted to welcome you and your daughter into the heart of this unique community.

Peter Dobbins
Principal



Our History

Assumption Grammar School has the rare distinction of having been founded from South Africa, the country where the Missionary Sisters of the Assumption were the pioneer religious Sisters since their arrival there from France in 1849.

Early in 1849, a young Belgian Sister of the Assumption, Sister Marie Gertrude de Henningsen, was so moved by the description given by an Irish Bishop, Aidan Devereux, of conditions in his Vicariate in South Africa, that she enthusiastically agreed to lead a small band of sisters to the mission in the Eastern Province of the Cape of Good Hope. A little community of Sisters, later to become known as the Missionary Sisters of the Assumption, was established in Grahamstown in December 1849 and they opened their first school on 12 January 1850.

Eighty three years later, in 1933, the Assumption Convent High School was founded in Ballynahinch, due to the foresight and imagination of a local woman, Mother Baptist McKenny, Superior of the Congregation. Having grown up in the townland of Ballymacarn, outside Ballynahinch, she later joined the missionary congregation, which had a strong tradition of education.

Mother Baptist realised the need for her congregation to have a base in Europe as a focus for vocations and a channel for funds for the missions. Very aware too, of the need for Catholic secondary education for girls in the area, she returned to her native Co Down and founded an Assumption convent and school in Ballynahinch. Daygirls and boarders were enrolled and on 8th September 1933 Assumption Convent High School opened its doors to the first 28 pupils. The Sisters were welcomed by the local community, though they met opposition from some quarters. Stories told about the early days were indeed colourful.

From the outset the school achieved success in public examinations, sport and music, as the early records testify. The school also nurtured the vocations of many future missionaries for generations.

The school grew and prospered and in 1937 received approval by the Ministry of Education. Pupil numbers continued to increase, the curriculum expanded and a series of extensions to the building became necessary. These included the 1960s block of language classrooms and library. Soon an upper storey was added consisting wholly of science laboratories and in 1964 a school canteen was built. The school had entered an era of unprecedented luxury!

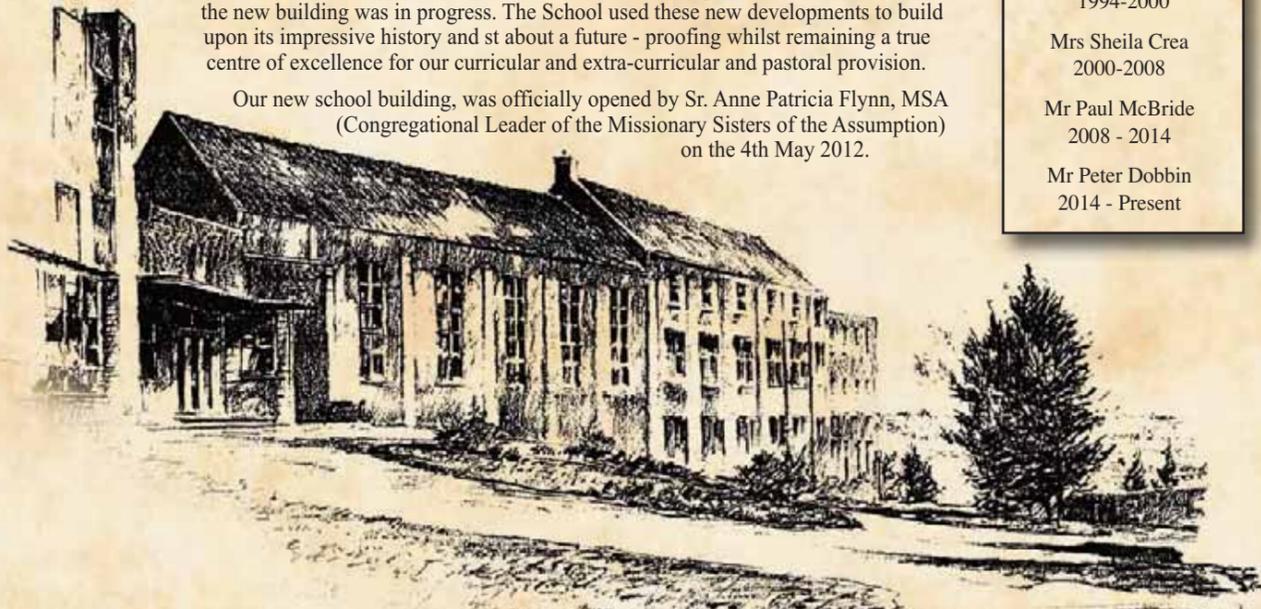
While the school buildings were improved, the old convent, Eden House, deteriorated and was finally demolished, making way for a new convent building which included the beautiful chapel opened in 1971. This soon became a focal point in the life of the school.

Further major developments and additions included the staff room and music block built in the 1970s, and the gym hall, careers suite, library, classrooms and sixth form common room completed in the 1986. The 1990s brought ICT and Technology into the curriculum and new facilities were required. Dormitories which had instantly been turned into classrooms with the closing of the boarding department in 1983, were transformed into fine computer suites. A new Technology suite was built and opened in 1994.

As numbers continued to rise throughout the decades, pressure on space had necessitated the provision of additional classrooms, and over the years a virtual colony of temporary buildings had sprung up. As a result of a feasibility study undertaken by the Department of Education, approval was given for a major new building development. A design team was appointed in 1996, planning approval was granted in November 1999 and site works began at the end of June 2004.

In 2009, Assumption Grammar School became the first and only post-primary school in Northern Ireland to become a Specialist School for Music with Physical Education. This was a very important time in our history as the new building was in progress. The School used these new developments to build upon its impressive history and set about a future - proofing whilst remaining a true centre of excellence for our curricular and extra-curricular and pastoral provision.

Our new school building, was officially opened by Sr. Anne Patricia Flynn, MSA (Congregational Leader of the Missionary Sisters of the Assumption) on the 4th May 2012.



Principals

- Sister Joachim Baker
1933-1940
- Sister Pauline Mawson
1940-1960
- Sister Jarlath McKenna
1960-1983
- Sister Eileen Bogues
1983-1994
- Sister Maureen Carville
1994-2000
- Mrs Sheila Crea
2000-2008
- Mr Paul McBride
2008 - 2014
- Mr Peter Dobbins
2014 - Present

The Assumption Ethos, Badge and Motto

ETHOS

Our aim is to ensure that Assumption is a centre of true learning, providing a holistic education which nurtures body, mind and spirit. In the words of our vision statement "Fully Alive", it draws inspiration from the Gospel values on which it is founded. It is a place where staff and pupils share the same values, ideals, beliefs and dreams and where they work in close harmony for the good of each other and of society.

The Assumption crest which is worn by all pupils is symbolic of the ethos of the school.



SYMBOLS

The Cross:

Symbol of the love of God, which is above everything, in everything, and holding everything together.

The Anchor

Symbol of steadfastness, of hope and security.

The Southern Cross (the five stars):

Symbol of God's guidance and direction in our lives.

MOTTO

Assumption schools share the motto

"Ex Sola Virtute Honor"

(From Virtue alone comes Honour).

The Latin word 'virtus' stood for one of the prized qualities of the good Roman; it included the qualities of strength, loyalty and self-discipline.

Today we would say it means caring: caring about the realities of the spirit, caring about other people, caring about the meaning of human life, about the earth and all that is on it, and above all, caring about its Creator.

This is the only kind of 'honour' in which the Assumption school is really interested: that which is based on Christian principles and values and will last long after academic knowledge has faded.

“To Develop the Whole person Through a Christian Education”

AIMS



To give our pupils an understanding and appreciation of our Catholic Faith which will assist them to live out the Christian calling in their daily lives. We also aim at encouraging understanding, respect and appreciation of the religious beliefs of others.



To stimulate in pupils a creative and appreciative response to the arts.



To develop in our pupils the skills necessary to function as independent adults.



To nurture a sense of self-worth, dignity and confidence in each individual.



To provide pupils with activities from which they can develop self-discipline and a healthy life-style.



To develop an awareness of one's responsibility for the environment.



To stimulate the growth of pupils into caring, competent and responsible citizens.



To provide each pupil with the necessary framework for a suitable career path.



To challenge, guide and lead each pupil to develop her full potential.

What Our New Year 8 Pupils say...

"I felt at home here very quickly. I made lots of new friends and the teachers made me feel so welcome. It's amazing to finally be an Assumption girl."



"I was nervous on my first day, but there was no need to be. It feels like I've always been here. There are so many opportunities to learn new things and have fun. I love it already."



Pastoral Care & Structure

The pastoral care of our pupils is of paramount importance. It permeates every aspect of the school's life. Every member of staff shares responsibility for the moral, social and spiritual development of pupils as well as for their academic profiles. That pupils are treated as unique individuals is apparent in the good relationships and mutual respect between pupils and staff and in the close working relationships we have with parents.

Concern for the welfare of each pupil underpins the positive atmosphere of classrooms, the high quality of teaching and learning and the assessment and monitoring of pupils' work. The pastoral care of pupils is supported by a well-planned PSHE Programme, by an independent Counselling Service and by the specific pastoral structure of the school. The school is divided into 3 sections – Junior, Middle and Senior. Leading each section is a Senior Teacher who has overall responsibility for the pastoral and academic welfare of pupils under his/her care. They are supported by their Year Heads who lead a team of five Form Teachers. Year Heads and Form Teachers are central to the personal and social development of each girl, providing advice, support and guidance when required. Final year students are assigned as prefects, a system which mirrors the management structure of the school. They help make pupils feel welcome and at ease and, in turn, these young adults develop a sense of leadership and responsibility.



Special Educational Needs

We remain committed to the tradition of ensuring that all pupils with special educational needs have full access to the National Curriculum. Support is provided both within the ordinary classroom setting and, if required, in conjunction with external agencies to suit individual needs.

In addition, where pupils have special educational needs, the school liaises closely with the Education and Library Board and ensures that the needs of the particular pupils are addressed and that provision is made for on-going support in their studies. The SENCO works with other members of staff to create and maintain an environment that promotes and secures effective learning and high standards of achievement. Supportive working relationships with parents and close involvement with pupils in all aspects of their learning help us to deliver the best opportunities and prepare pupils for life after school.

The Maths and English Departments provide additional numeracy and literacy support outside the regular school timetable for pupils with particular difficulties. The Ballynahinch Learning Community also provides additional support, allowing the school to devote further resources to support pupils with SEN.

The school has a member of staff who is qualified in diagnostic training, assisting the SENCO to evaluate how pupils are progressing during their academic career.

Fully Alive



Fully Alive in School Life

Positive Behaviour

Assumption Grammar School strives to establish a positive ethos and to promote self-discipline and personal responsibility. Discipline is firm but not based on regimentation or fear of punishment. The school is committed to creating an environment which is friendly, orderly and conducive to learning within which each pupil feels valued and encouraged to contribute positively to her own personal development and to the life of the school. Our School Council gives a voice to the student population and an opportunity for pupils to discuss pertinent issues with staff and to influence decision making. A Positive Reward Scheme, which incorporates our House System, instils a healthy competition between the pupils.

Parent/Teacher Relationships

Recognising the importance of close communication between school and home, we take every opportunity to establish and maintain good relationships with parents. In addition to parent/teacher meetings held annually, parents are welcome to come to the school to discuss their concerns with staff in a spirit of trust and mutual confidence. Furthermore, parents can keep abreast of general school news and all our policies and procedures on our school website at www.assumptiongrammar.org.uk.

School reports are sent to parents yearly, after the mid-year and end of year examinations. Interim reports are sent to parents of pupils whose progress or attitude to work is causing concern. According to the admissions criteria for Assumption Grammar School, the Board of Governors "wishes to accept pupils whose parents are in agreement with the philosophy and aims of the school". We expect, therefore, that parents will continue to give support and loyalty and ensure adherence to the school Code of Conduct which has been drawn up in the best interests of the school. The success of our school is due to committed staff, supportive parents and motivated pupils. The continued support of the parents will ensure that the efforts of staff on behalf of our pupils will enable them to derive maximum benefit from their time spent here. Each pupil is provided with an 'Information for Students & Parents Booklet' which gives details of relevant school policy. Parents are requested to study this booklet with their daughters. This will familiarise them with school organisation, as well as the general expectations of positive behaviour.

Homework

The school considers homework to be an essential part of education. It consolidates learning, and helps the pupil develop study skills and self discipline. The 'Information for Students & Parents Booklet' specifies the recommended time allocation for homework.

Uniform

Details of uniform are included in the 'Information for Students & Parents Booklet' and appended. The school uniform identifies the girls as pupils of Assumption Grammar School. While wearing it they represent their school, its values and traditions. Pupils are therefore encouraged to wear their uniform with dignity and pride.

Careers Education and Guidance

The importance of Careers Education and Guidance is fully acknowledged within the school curriculum. Careers Education is embedded in the teaching of every curriculum subject. The Careers Department aims to provide all students with the



"...an environment that is friendly, ordered and conducive to learning"

information and support necessary to help them make informed decisions about their future career choices. Careers education is delivered through the Education for Employability Programme in Years 8-10 and in Years 11 and 12. Dedicated Careers classes form an integral part of the Sixth Form Leadership programme and continue in Year 14 with increasing emphasis on preparation for transition. Within the careers programme, emphasis is placed on the development of personal awareness and on the acquisition of skills needed to make sound educational and career choices. Guidance is provided by specialist teachers and outside agencies who give pupils opportunities to discuss their aptitudes and interests and obtain advice on possible career paths. Pupils are encouraged to undertake extensive personal research of their chosen occupational areas, using available computer packages and relevant literature.

The school organises a number of events to complement the taught careers programme. In conjunction with Young Enterprise, a number of one day programmes are delivered to all pupils in Years 8 -10. These programmes are based on the principle of learning by doing. Students are encouraged to work together to run their own companies. Volunteers from business are brought into the classroom to work with teachers and pupils. The school also organises information evenings for pupils and hosts a biennial Careers Convention where pupils and their parents can meet with representatives from a wide range of professions and industry. Our senior pupils are offered the opportunity to explore and develop their knowledge of Higher Education and the world of work. All Year 13 pupils participate in one week's work experience. Year 14 pupils avail of the opportunities to attend the annual Open Days in the local Universities and take part in a Mock Interview evening with experienced interviewers who assess and discuss their individual performances. The school also takes part in the Cambridge Shadowing Scheme and has links with Pembroke and Corpus Christi Colleges where pupils spend a number of days shadowing students and assimilate the atmosphere of student life in these notable seats of learning.



"I feel honoured to be part of the Student Council and to represent other pupils in the school. We have an important job putting forward the student voice."

Student Council Representative



“ The Common Room is a great place to go and relax with friends and have a cup of tea. I like to come here to have a break from the hustle and bustle of a busy day ”

Year 14 student

Fully Alive in Sixth Form



Year 13 Enrichment students with their Mandarin teacher

Assumption Grammar School welcomes applications from girls interested in Post 16. Pupils who choose Assumption Grammar will have the opportunity to achieve the self confidence, social awareness, skills and qualifications which will prepare them for third level education and the world beyond. Our Post 16 students are respected as individuals, encouraged to make their own decisions and to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. They will enjoy a unique learning environment that is designed to engage, inspire and challenge pupils and will benefit from excellent facilities, including a Sixth Form Study and Common Room. As well as availing of excellent academic support, they will be cared for by our pastoral team, to enable them to maximise their potential.

They will find 29 subjects being offered at Post 16 level. The wide range of subjects provides a balance between the academic and applied. The applied area includes Business, ICT and Health and Social Care. A-Level study is accompanied by an array of enrichment activities. Pupils can choose between First-Aid, ASPIRE Leadership training, Survival Cooking, Leisure Studies, Young Enterprise and a Certificate in Personal Effectiveness (COPE – worth 70 UCAS points), whilst studying AS/A2 subjects.

Assumption Grammar School has a reputation for excellent Post 16 results. We aim to provide the best possible teaching and the strongest possible support and guidance in a caring school community.

Fully Alive in the Curriculum



The school curriculum fosters the ethos of “Fully Alive”. Through the planning and implementation of the curriculum, each student is encouraged to reach her potential and nurture her own particular talents and abilities. Teaching is organised through academic areas led by Heads of Department. The school’s consistently excellent academic results reflect the high standards of teaching. Schemes of work which comply with current statutory regulations are also designed to ensure a breadth and depth of knowledge, a zest for learning and the development of skills and values necessary for life. There is a culture of self evaluation within all departments which ensures that they remain open to changes in education and responsive to the individual needs of pupils. Our new building allows both curricular and extra- curricular learning to take place in a twenty-first century environment in which students benefit from excellent facilities and emerging technologies. The school holds Specialist Status in Music with PE. The core aim of our school is “To develop the whole person through a Christian Education” and as a specialist school we have been able to foster our ethos, maintain our exceptional academic standards and share our excellence in all areas.

Transition from Primary School

We aim to make the transition from Primary School as smooth as possible by familiarising the students with the school and their classes in June. Induction Day involves the girls meeting their Form Teachers and prefects who play a vital role in ensuring the girls settle in quickly. There is an effective Pastoral System which supports the pupils in their first few months, helping them cope with the many new experiences including bus routes and dining in the Windmill Restaurant. Year 8 pupils adapt quickly to the new environment, enjoying the challenge of a variety of subjects and teachers.

Key Stage 3

At this stage, we aim to foster an early interest in a wide range of subjects and begin the process of preparing the girls for the challenges of a modern world. All pupils are given an introduction to ICT and the school Virtual Learning Environment. The creative and expressive areas of Music, Drama, Art and PE form a significant part of the curriculum. The pastoral dimension includes Relationships and Sexuality Education, Education for Employability and Local and Global Citizenship. At KS3 we offer 3 modern languages.

The cross-curricular skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT are developed across the curriculum. Our curriculum is designed to develop each of our pupils as: individuals; contributors to society; and contributors to the economy and the environment. Each Area of Learning (AoL) will develop the necessary skills and capabilities which allow the 3 main curricular objectives to be met (See Appendix: “Curriculum Details”).

Key Stage 4

In their final year of Key Stage 3, pupils choose an individual package of subjects which enables them to develop their particular strengths and opens to them a wide range of career options. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the requirements of the Entitlement Framework and

allows pupils to reach their full potential. Assessment at the end of Key Stage 4 is through GCSE examinations. An increasing number of Key Stage 4 students are taking 11 or 12 GCSEs by availing of early morning Fast Track classes in Music and Technology. Statistics is also available as an after school option. GCSE Latin can be completed at the end of Year 11, enabling pupils to study an extra GCSE in Year 12. We also offer Music GCSE to local post primary schools. All pupils take non-examination courses in Relationships and Sexuality Education, Citizenship, Education for Employability and Physical Education. (See Appendix: “Curriculum Details”).

Sixth Form

Girls enter Sixth Form after successful completion of GCSE. An extensive range of 29 subjects (including both general and applied) is available and pupils choose 3 or 4 of these to AS and A2 level. The Sixth Form curriculum is designed to give students maximum academic opportunities in subject choice and careers options. While there is a strong emphasis on the academic side of the student’s life, we also aim to develop the skills and personal competencies necessary for the

AREAS OF LEARNING (AoL)

- **The Arts**
 - Art & Design
 - Drama Music
- **Language and Literacy**
 - English
- **Mathematics and Numeracy**
 - Mathematics
- **Modern Languages**
 - French
 - Irish
 - Spanish
- **Environment & Society**
 - History
 - Geography
- **Science & Technology**
 - Science
 - Technology & Design
- **Learning for Life & Work**
 - Home Economics
 - Relationships & Sexuality Education
 - Personal Development
 - Local & Global Citizenship Education
 - Education for Employability
- **Physical Education**
 - Physical Education
- **Religious Education**
 - Religious Education
- **Additional Subjects**
 - ICT

All Year 8 girls receive chorale singing modules. Pupils also have a Library Class, taken by our School Librarian.

vocational/applied dimension. Over and above these, we look for the emergence of a mature, well balanced and happy individual.

Pupils are encouraged to maintain breadth of interests through the curriculum Enrichment Programme which we offer. This includes a range of courses: Survival Cookery ; First Aid; Leadership Training (ASPIRE); Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (COPE) and Leisure Activities which include Aerobics, Bowling, Ice Skating, Horse Riding, Swimming and Fitness Training. (See Appendix: “Curriculum Details” for subjects available).

Pupils are prepared for entry into universities and colleges of further education. Over 90% proceed to higher education. A number of Sixth Form pupils are accepted for Oxbridge Universities. The school has an excellent academic record of pupil success in examinations and in additional competitions.

In addition to GCSE and A Levels, pupils are prepared for various other external qualifications such as Associated Board Examinations of the Royal Schools of Music and accredited courses in Personal Effectiveness. A summary of last year’s results is appended to this prospectus.

*“ There is so much to learn in Science.
I particularly enjoy the practical experiments
and hope to pursue this subject in Senior School. ”*

GCSE Chemistry student



*“ The opportunities to develop ICT skills
at Assumption are endless. Not only am
I studying it for GCSE, but we use it
in all our subjects. ”*

Year 12 student



“I really love practical subjects. In Technology we have the chance to make things and to use exciting new tools.”

Year 9 student



“Home Economics is one of my favourite subjects. Learning to cook is fun and I enjoy learning about health and consumer issues.”

Year 10 student

Fully Alive in creative expression

The Creative and Expressive Area of Study helps to facilitate the learning experiences embedded in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Moreover, it plays an invaluable part in stimulating the creative thinking and imagination of young learners, as well as their skills and all-round development. There is commitment to this important dimension of children's learning at Assumption Grammar School through Art, Music, PE and Drama.

Art

All junior pupils follow a varied art course and Art is a popular choice for GCSE, AS and A2 level. Post GCSE courses are enhanced for many by the study of History and Appreciation of Art which is also available to students with no practical artistic skills. Interest in specialised skills is developed at this stage, e.g. ceramics, textiles, pottery, painting and drawing technique. The school has an active Art Historical Society that regularly presents talks on the work of major Art practitioners. Trips are frequently arranged to galleries and students also benefit from visits by practising artists, designers and sculptors. The Art Department also joins with the Drama and Music Departments to help produce school musicals and plays. Art students frequently paint the backdrops for local primary school productions. You only need to walk around our corridors to witness the superb art pieces produced by our own pupils.

Music

In the Junior School students follow a varied curriculum which develops listening, composing and performing skills. As a Specialist School for Music with PE, the subject is a popular choice for students at GCSE, AS and A2 level and prepares pupils for a wide choice of careers. Tuition is available for a full range of orchestral instruments as well as piano and traditional instruments. Pupils are entered for practical and theory exams through the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and for various festivals. Extra-curricular activities include Senior and Training orchestras, Senior, Junior and Chamber choirs, Jazz, Traditional and Barbershop groups as well as numerous other ensembles which girls may join as they reach the required standards. Each year the Music Department undertakes a full and challenging programme of concerts and recitals as well as taking advantage of many other performing opportunities including open days, liturgical functions and other events. Singers and musicians regularly appear at community and charitable events and have performed on television and radio. Musical productions are also staged in conjunction with the Drama Department.

Physical Education and Leisure

Sport plays a major role in the life of Assumption Grammar School both as an integral part of the curriculum and as an extra-curricular activity. Presently our facilities include a Sports Hall accommodating 4 badminton courts, an international size netball and basketball court, a modern fitness suite and dance studio. Our outdoor facilities also include a camogie/gaelic pitch, a 3rd generation floodlit pitch and 2 full sized netball courts/tennis courts.

Activities offered at KS3 are: dance, gymnastics, netball, camogie, gaelic, swimming, athletics, cross-country, health related PE, minor games and tennis. Activities offered at KS4 are: badminton, volley ball, dance, and health-related PE which includes the use of the fitness suite.

The Year 13 pupils have the opportunity to participate in Leisure Studies as part of the Enrichment Programme. One of the aims of this module is to give the pupils the opportunity to experience a range of activities in which they can participate outside of school and after they leave school.

Physical Education is also offered at GCSE and A-level. Our results to date have been outstanding.



"Seven Deadly Sins" created for AS Art.



AS level Art



Tuition is available for a full range of orchestral instruments.



Our fully equipped fitness suite.



"Matilda", Ulster Hall.

Drama

Drama plays an integral part in the life of the school as part of the junior English curriculum, at GCSE and A level and as an extra-curricular activity. Pupils grow in confidence and ability through drama workshops and they enjoy the opportunity to develop and experience a range of theatrical and performance skills. These include acting, stage management, set and costume design and proficiency in technical areas such as lighting and sound.

Our facilities include a state of the art Drama Suite which boasts a cyclorama to display scenic backdrops, a Strand lighting board to create mood and atmosphere and high quality audio equipment. The Drama Suite is fitted with tiered seating, giving students the opportunity to perform in a proper auditorium which has the additional benefit of enhancing the theatrical experience for members of the audience. The many theatre trips organised by the Department cultivates in our students an appreciation of drama as an art form and often inspires them to pursue a career in performing arts. The Drama Department regularly hosts performances from touring professional theatre companies and Theatre in Education groups, giving students the opportunity to work with directors and actors to develop their skills. Students are also encouraged to participate in a wide variety of

dramatic projects with external agencies and have won many competitions. These include BBC Blast One To Watch, BBC Lights, Camera, Action, Equality Commission's International Women's Day, Spring Chickens International Theatre and Shakespeare for Schools, to name but a few. Drama is regularly exploited as a means for students to explore and examine the world in which they live and to make a positive contribution to their community. Some of our students have won prizes for their appointments as Cultural Ambassadors for their work in bringing drama to the local community. Other students have received recognition for their roles in a SPIRAL outreach project in which drama was used as a medium through which they could reflect on our collective responsibility as citizens of the world.

Practical examination pieces, project showcase events and performances in the Junior Drama Festival all offer parents the opportunity to witness for themselves the wealth of dramatic talent within the school. A particular highlight was the recent dramatisation of 'The Pied Piper' at the Ulster Hall. School productions such as 'The Sound of Music' are always a sell out. The shows continue to be huge successes and wonderful celebrations of the talent we have in the school.

“ PE is my favourite subject. I am studying it for GCSE and hope to continue on to A-Level. I have been given the opportunity to try new sports and to improve my health and fitness at Assumption. ”

Year 11 student



“ I love playing Gaelic. Assumption has given me the opportunity to play as part of a great team and to make new friends in other year groups. ”

Year 10 student



“ I have been given the opportunity to develop my talents. I love Art and have been guided through new techniques to enhance my abilities. ”

Year 14 student

Fully Alive in Extra-Curricular



The Science Club

Science Club

The Science Club, which meets after school one day a week, provides pupils in Years 8-10 with the opportunity to further develop their skills in and experience of Science. The girls, supervised by two teachers and three Science Prefects, carry out dissections and practical investigations. They even grow their own fruit and vegetables which are used in the Windmill Restaurant to make healthy meals. The girls enter a wide range of competitions and take part annually in the Salters' Festival of Chemistry competition which is held in Queen's University, Belfast. This gives the members a chance to work in a real laboratory with pupils from other schools. There are outings to recycling plants and a visit to the BT Young Scientist exhibition in Dublin. At present, the Science Club is actively involved in the eco-schools project, working towards renewing our green flag status.

Technology Club

The Technology Club is an after school club that offers pupils the opportunity to design and make products such as personalised key rings, clocks, T-lights, trinket boxes, as well as learning how to use the laser cutter to create their own designs.

Public Speaking

There are significant opportunities for students to develop valuable skills in debating and public speaking across all the key stages. Public speaking and Debating have been enjoyable, challenging and successful extra-curricular activities in our school, for many years. The pupils enjoy entering a variety of competitions throughout the year including The Soroptimist International and The Irish Federation of University Women Graduates Competition.

Spanish Club

The Spanish Department organise an after school club on Mondays for Year 9 and 10 pupils. The Spanish Assistant aims to improve the girls' use of the Spanish language, pronunciation, spoken Spanish and cultural understanding in a fun and creative way. The types of activities organised are Spanish games, songs, competitions, sampling Spanish food, Spanish and Latin-American culture and ICT projects.

French Club

For pupils in Years 8-10 who want to improve their understanding of the French language and culture, there is the weekly lunchtime meeting of "le Club de Français". Our French Assistant shares her unique experience of her native language and culture through photos, presentations, music, games, songs and conversation.

Irish Society

The Irish Department have a range of extra-curricular activities that pupils may become involved in including the Assumption Irish Society who meet at various times throughout the year. Annual trips to the Gaeltacht are organised by the Department.



Irish Society Quiz

Music

Senior Orchestra

This comprises around 60 girls who have reached Grade 4-8 on their instruments. They rehearse for an hour each Tuesday afternoon playing pieces from the standard classical repertoire and lighter music. They usually perform in school at Christmas and at the Annual Concert in one of the Belfast concert halls.

Senior Choir

This award-winning choir consists of around 60 singers from Years 11-14. Meeting on a Thursday afternoon they cover a wide range of religious and secular repertoire including art music and arrangements of popular material. They perform several times each year culminating in the Annual Concert during the second term.

Junior Choir

This award-winning choir comprises 70 singers from Years 8-10. They rehearse on a Wednesday afternoon and perform a wide range of light music. They perform several times during the year including at the Junior Concert in June.

Chamber Choir

This is a smaller choir drawn mainly from senior students who take vocal training as a core musical activity. They meet on Monday afternoons to rehearse a range of religious material and art songs, performing several times during the Christmas period and at the Annual Concert at the end of the Easter term.

Senior & Junior Chamber Ensembles

The school has both a Senior and Junior 'String Ensemble'. These groups meet weekly before school to develop string playing and concentrate on repertoire for this instrumental discipline. They perform at the Annual Concert and the Junior Concert and quartets drawn from these groups have many opportunities to play at functions to the local and extended community.

Junior Wind Ensemble

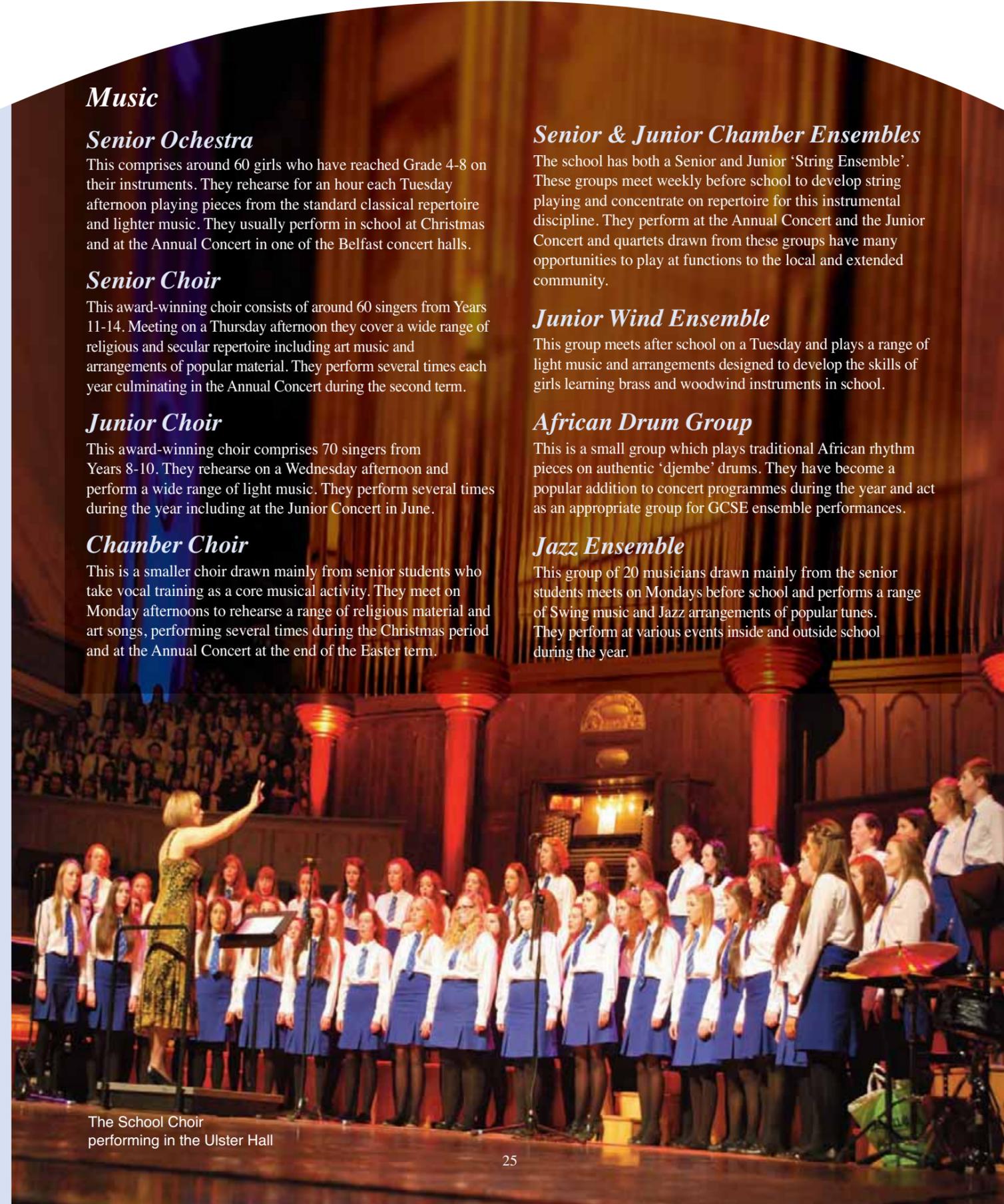
This group meets after school on a Tuesday and plays a range of light music and arrangements designed to develop the skills of girls learning brass and woodwind instruments in school.

African Drum Group

This is a small group which plays traditional African rhythm pieces on authentic 'djembe' drums. They have become a popular addition to concert programmes during the year and act as an appropriate group for GCSE ensemble performances.

Jazz Ensemble

This group of 20 musicians drawn mainly from the senior students meets on Mondays before school and performs a range of Swing music and Jazz arrangements of popular tunes. They perform at various events inside and outside school during the year.



The School Choir performing in the Ulster Hall



Barbershop Group

This is a group of eight elite singers who perform regularly throughout the year at music festivals, school events and in the community.

Senior and Junior Traditional Groups

These ensembles are made up from those students studying traditional instruments and rehearse on a Friday, playing a wide range of Irish music. They perform at the main school concerts and several other events during the year including a 'Traditional' night in school.

Politics Society

The Politics Society is for students in the Senior School. A team of pupils participate in a number of initiatives, for example, the British Council's European Youth Parliament at Stormont.

The Junior Book Club

The Junior Book Club meets weekly at Monday lunchtime in the Library from 1.10-1.40pm. All junior pupils are free to attend. Pupils discuss all kinds of books, newly published fiction and nonfiction, good reads, classical fiction, humorous and entertaining books. The girls are encouraged to recommend books that they have enjoyed. We are involved in reviewing the titles for the Northern Ireland Children's Book Award each year and posting reviews on their website. The Book Club is very popular and well attended.



Physical Education

Netball Club

The Netball club for pupils in Years 9 to 14 caters for approximately 70 pupils. Training sessions are held from Monday to Thursdays after school and at lunch times. The teams are entered into the East Down League, the SE Area League, the NI League and NI Cup.

Netball Training for the Year 8 pupils begins after Halloween at lunchtimes. The pupils train after school during the second term to work towards the East Down Tournament which is held in the third term.

Cross-Country and Athletics

Four cross-country teams are entered into the annual District Cross-County Championships. Training for this competition takes place during the first term. In the third term pupils prepare for and take part in the District Athletics Championships.

Swimming

The school provides pupils with the opportunity to enter into swimming competitions during the year.

Fitness Suite

This is available to GCSE PE students and those in Years 13 and 14.

Camogie

Our camogie players train on a Tuesday and Wednesday after school. There are 4 Camogie teams, and they are entered into the Down and Ulster Leagues.

Gaelic Football

Gaelic football is offered to pupils from Year 8 to 14. Training is on every Monday and Thursday and the teams play in the Ulster Championship.



Camogie All-stars 2014

Ski Trip

The ski trip is offered to pupils in Years 8 to 11 and approximately 40 to 50 girls travel to various destinations throughout Europe and the USA.



“Assumption has allowed me to explore my love of music.”

Year 10 student

Fully Alive in the World...



Assumption pupils volunteering in Malawi and India

Our School has forged special links with two fundraising organisations. Pupils and teachers take part in voluntary trips to various different countries with Habitat for Humanity to help them achieve their vision - to create a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live through the elimination of housing poverty and homelessness. They travel to India as part of the Saphara Project. Saphara is a non-profit, non-denominational Christian organisation which welcomes young people from all backgrounds, races and religions. Our girls team up with pupils from other schools and work in India with disadvantaged children through Irish-linked charities.

Since being awarded Specialist Status in 2009 Assumption has forged links with local primary and post-primary schools in curricular and extra-curricular areas. Primary school children are invited to taster days, the annual Drama Festival, Anti-Bullying Week Workshops, concerts, sports activities and other events. Sports facilities and resources are available to local primary and post-primary schools. We also offer Fast Track Music GCSE to post primaries with excellent results.



At Post 16, Assumption offers a variety of subjects to Sixth Form boys and girls from post-primary schools within the Area Learning Community. Currently they avail of History, Psychology, Art History, Mathematics, Music, Physics, Home Economics, Journalism, Sociology, Politics and Health and Social Care. Our pupils are actively involved in projects such as the Literacy Link with St. Patrick's Primary School and work experience in the local crèche, primary schools and residential care homes.

Our links with the academic community are strong, with our current involvement in 'Project 500' and 'Information Literacy' at QUB and the bi-annual visits to Cambridge University. We have forged links with the PSNI who provide workshops on e-safety and cyber bullying. Our Learning to Live Together Programme with our partner school Regent House has strengthened our relationships in the SEELB community. We won the SEELB Outstanding Achievement Award 2013 for Services to the Community.

Links with the global community are vital in promoting leadership and raising cultural awareness in our pupils. Our partner school in China offers opportunities for curriculum development and learning. As part of continuing professional development our staff have visited India, China and New Orleans to explore education and learning in the global community.

...and in our Community



Commonwealth Games Baton 2014

Christmas Charities

Fully Alive Full of success



Fully Alive in Spiritual Education

In Assumption Grammar School we aim to nurture and develop the faith which has been handed on at home and through the community of the church. Our primary objective is to lead our students to a deeper and more active and personal faith. Our aim is to help them relate their faith to everyday life through a Christian vision of the world.

A comprehensive programme of Religious Education has been developed to meet the needs of our pupils. Throughout their faith journey, they are introduced by their teachers to Christian revelation. They are led to an understanding of the world and God's creation, of the sacredness of life, of their uniqueness and dignity, of their vocation in Christ and of how to fulfil that vocation. They are assisted in expressing

their faith and nourishing it through daily assemblies, the celebration of Mass on various occasions throughout the year, Eucharistic Adoration, prayer and Scripture groups in Advent and Lent and on annual retreat for each year group.

A Parents' Prayer Group which supports the prayer and spiritual life of the school meets on a monthly basis. The school places Christ at its centre, creating an environment where individuals are valued and their dignity respected.

It seeks to promote an atmosphere of love, respect for others, compassion and forgiveness. It also endeavours to create in our students an awareness, sensitivity and respect for people with different beliefs and cultures.

Our school Oratory is designed as an oasis of peace and calm for our students and staff.

The Pioneer Society



"The Glory of God is Man Fully Alive"

St Irenaeus



The Assumption Window

This beautiful stained glass window is the focal point of our new oratory. It was inspired by a painting done by the foundress of the Missionary Sisters of the Assumption, Sr Marie Gertrude de Henningsen, affectionately known as "Notre Mère" (1822 - 1904).

In August 1858, Sr Gertrude was struck down with a severe attack of pleurisy and all hope was given up by the doctors. She received the Last Sacraments. Sr Gertrude wrote, 'It was during this illness that I saw Our Lady, as she is represented, or nearly so, in the pictures of Notre Dame de Boulogne. I thought I was drowning, felt the rush of waters in my ears and heard the waves dashing over me, when I perceived her, on the boat with the child on one arm and the other stretched out to save me. From that moment I felt sure I should recover'. From that day Sr Gertrude did recover. In her later years she drew a charcoal picture depicting her vision.

“I really enjoy going to the Oratory. It is so peaceful and tranquil and a place away from the hustle and bustle of school. I love to go there to reflect and give thanks.”

Year 9 student



“The selection of books in the Library is fantastic. I like to use the Library to get books that I will enjoy at the weekend as well as books to help me to do my homework. There are also Kindles which I like to take out on loan.”

Year 8 student



Fully Alive in School Trips





Assumption Grammar School Ballynahinch

General Information

Classification

Assumption Grammar School is a voluntary grammar day school for girls, accountable to its Trustees, Board of Governors and to the Department of Education.

Postal Address

Assumption Grammar School
24 Belfast Road
Ballynahinch, Co. Down, BT24 8EA

Telephone Numbers

General Office - 028 9756 2250
Fax No. - 028 9756 5341

Web Address

www.assumptiongrammar.org.uk

Chairman of Board of Governors

Very Rev. Canon G McCrory P.P.

School Day

Pupils commence at 9.00a.m.
and end at 3.20p.m.
Senior Lunch Break 12.40p.m. - 1.10p.m.
Junior Lunch Break 1.10p.m. - 1.40p.m.

Email

admin@assumption.ballynahinch.ni.sch.uk



www.facebook.com/assumptionlive



[@assumptionlive](https://twitter.com/assumptionlive)

Extra-Curricular Activities

8.00a.m. - 9.00a.m. on appointed days
3.30p.m. - 4.45p.m. on appointed days

Enrolment - 843

This information is correct at the time of publication.
Any changes will be brought to the attention of parents.



Assumption Grammar School Ballynahinch



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