



PRIZE DAY SPEECH – 2016

PRIZE DAY ANNUAL REPORT

Ms Fee, Professor Gibson, distinguished guests, parents and pupils of Wellington College. It is an honour and a privilege to deliver the annual report for Wellington College for the academic year 2015-16.

The College has had an exceptionally busy year and there have been many memorable moments that have moved this College from strength to strength.

Wellington is a special place where the pupils' academic development and their welfare are the top of our long list of priorities. In Wellington we get to know our pupils and we are proud of our motto **una discamus** – we learn together. However this year we have developed a new maxim of engage, educate and empower and I will allude to this later in my speech.

During my report today I will refer to the improving College performance in the external examinations as well as the many outstanding achievements beyond the classroom to allow the individual development of all of our young people.

However, although our results are improved and they are a credit to the hard work and perseverance of our young people I feel that staff and parents should also be congratulated. I understand the amount of caring, understanding and persuasion that has happened - the results do not reveal the unseen work, support, dedication and inspiration from the College staff and your parents.

I would like at this point to ask all students present to show their appreciation for the staff and parents for their continued support and to acknowledge that is through their help we continue to succeed.

Our young people should of course be praised for their tremendous results that they achieved in their external examinations. At A level we had a 72% pass rate at A*- C an increase of 6% from previous year. With an increase in the percentage of A*-B grade by 6.5%.

At GCSE level the College also had an increase with 92.4% pass rate at 7 subjects at A*-C. Again there was an increase of 5% in the percentage A*-A grades within the College.

Although it is impossible to personally name all of our pupils with outstanding achievements and you will see many of them cross this stage today. However, I do feel that there are some that need a particular note. At A level (5) Myles Workman; Ross Walmsley, Peter Duffin, Sarah Jackson and Emily Anthony were our top five students in the year group.

At GCSE 13 pupils exceeded the high tariff of 30 points:

Christopher Brown
Caitlin Bryson
Liberty Harris
Aaron Hynds
Beth Jones
Darren McCarroll
Megan McKeown
Lucy Megarry
Sarah Millar
Victoria Millar
Amelia Murray
Nadia Smyth
Kirk Spiers

Again although all of our departments deserve acknowledge and praise for their achievements over the past academic year, there are a few outstanding results that warrant individual inclusion in this report.

Our modern languages department, led by Mrs McDonald continue to produce exceptional results - at GCSE the exceeded the Northern Ireland averages by 20% in both French and Spanish at A*-B and Christopher Browne achieved full marks in Spanish with a remarkable 400/400. At A level the French and Spanish were both 9% above Northern Ireland grammar school average, with Emily Anthony (8) receiving an A* grade at A level in French and Spanish.

The Art Department continues to have 100% at A* - C at GCSE and A level. (8) Three pupils achieved full marks in both their examination and coursework – Lucy Megarry, Josh Robinson and Emma Shanks.

In A level Maths 82% of our pupils achieved an A*, A or B grade. In Further Mathematics A Level 50% of the class received an A* grade at A Level. Special mention must go to Myles Workman who scored an amazing 598 out of 600. We also have high hopes for Nathanael McIlveen who is currently in Year 12 and scored an amazing 400 out of 400 in his GCSE mathematics which he completed in one year.

All of these excellent results have allowed 74% of our young people to move forward to a range of level 4 plus courses at higher and further education institutions in Northern Ireland and mainland UK. This exceeds the Northern Ireland average.

The College also runs a very unique enhancement scheme for its sixth form pupils called Wellington + This allows our young people to engage in leadership opportunities such as running clubs during and after school, leading assemblies, organising charity events and representing the College. This year 7 of our college pupils successfully completed the course to gain their Wellington + certificate, they were

- **Chloe Crossley** - for her leadership as Deputy Head Girl
- **Sarah Cunningham** – for her leadership within Sport
- **Lynsey Ferris** - for her contribution to the local community
- **Christopher Lynn** - for his contribution to the world of Business and Media

- **Mark Shaw** - for his editorial role within Wellington Whisperer
- **Adam Skinner** - for his significant involvement in the Scripture Union
- **Joy Smyth** – for her leadership as Head of House

All of these experiences have enabled them to gain valuable skills such as communication, determination and motivation and we thank Mrs Allen for all of her efforts in guiding these young people through.

This year the College has said goodbye to four of its most esteemed teachers. When I added up the years' service to the College, it amounted to over 100 years' service to the College.

(10)

Firstly Mr Ken Orr, Senior Teacher and teacher of Physics in the College for 27 years . Mr Orr started his connection with the College as an Annadale teacher. Mr Orr has been inspirational in imparting his knowledge of Physics and has inspired many young physicists to reach for the stars and solve the problems of the universe. As a senior teacher Mr Orr often assisted me in solving the mysteries of the school data and I will miss his calm demeanour and logical and rational advice. Ken I wish you well and I hope you have a wonderful retirement.

Mr Scott (12) Head of History in the College started teaching at Annadale Grammar School in 1977. For almost four decades Wesley taught History and politics with a mixture of detailed knowledge and great enthusiasm for his subject Wesley was a beloved member of the staff who regaled us with stories and his presence will be sorely missed as well as his intellectual abilities to solve crosswords and I know that Wesley will also get a mention in Professor Gibson's speech as a former pupil of Mr Scott. Wesley we wish you well in your plans for retirement.

Next to Mrs Stewart, retired as Head of Geography in the College. Mrs Stewart started her career as a fresh faced NQT in Carolan Grammar school in 1989 however in it was in 1994 she first encountered the Annadale boys as they attended Carolan for A level Geography Classes. We will miss Margaret for her

steady approach, true friendship and excellent advice, however we wish her well in her retirement.

Ita Cregan (13), Head of ICT; started with the College in September 1999 when she was employed to teach technology, art and IT. She also proved herself invaluable in her willingness to assist with the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme. Later in her career she became Head of ICT and developed the area of BTEC C media into the College. Ita, we wish you well as you move onto pastures new with ventures with our local universities.

We wish all of these staff well for the future retirements and whatever endeavours they are undertaking and thank them for their professional, dedication and support of all pupils of Wellington College. You will all be missed.

Other teaching staff who bid farewell to the College are Mr Cooper, Miss Brown, Miss Harvey and Miss Leacock we thank you for your service to the College and wish you well in your future careers.

Several of our very valuable support staff left us this and I know that many of their pupils miss their presence: Mr Latimer, Miss Rankin, Miss Bittles and Mrs Arnott

Mr Steven Hoy

And welcome some new staff to our College community:

Mr Bond as Head of History

Miss Mallon to the languages department, Miss Cusack to our geography department and Miss Morrison to our Religious Studies department. Miss Hall returns to our English department and Miss Lovell to our maths department.

Miss Laura Meban who is assisting in the Home Economics department.

Mrs Porte joined as a classroom assistant and Mr Roberts and Mr Briggs have returned to the College.

We also extended our Wellington Community. As Baby Adam arrived to Mrs Cairnduff.

At this point I would like to invite Head Boy James Blanchflower and Head Girl Melissa Johnston to give you their insights into Wellington College

Thank you very much and I am sure you will agree James and Melissa are two outstanding young people who embody the College and all we are striving to achieve, we wish them well for the duties as Head Boy and Head Girl for the incoming year.

You have hopefully received a copy of our College Magazine which outlines all our achievements this year both curricular and extra-curricular. Although our departments are focussed on educating our young people, they do however they supply numerous activities that allows them to develop as individuals and experience a range of skills and attributes.

We will start with the development of the politicians of the future when our Year 13 politics class got an insight into leadership in a visit to Parliament Buildings to take part in a “Let’s talk” forum.

Our English Department took a group of A level students for an audience with Sir Kenneth Brannagh as part of the “Into Film” celebrations for Shakespeare 400th Anniversary.

The Art Department, Caoimhe Brown’s work was displayed in a “True Colours” exhibition as exemplary practice.

The Year 13 geographers braved the rain and the snow as they carried out their AS fieldwork on the River Whitewater.

The Year 10 Biologists encountered better conditions as they set off to Belvoir Forest Park when they worked on a hypothesis to identify plant species and how they adapted to light conditions.

Our ICT department had a magnificent success as they won the W5 Allstate challenge. The theme for this challenge was to build a website to highlight the “sustainability of the ocean”. The Wellington College team of Harvey Duffin, Aaron Burke, Joshua Barrett and Paddy Doyle were named “Allstate Young Software Engineer Team for 2016”. The judges from Allstate commented that the boys’ website was outstanding and was more A level than Key Stage 3.

The Physics Department encountered the Big Bang this year as they travelled to Birmingham NEC for the Big Bang Fair. Andy Munzer and Harvey Duffin displayed their project “Adventures in Back Garden Astronomy”.

The Stem Bus visited the College in May last year to promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics during the day. The pupils used the equipment to solve a murder – a thoroughly enjoyable day was had by all.

International school trips continue to flourish in the College as this year’s Ski-Trip headed to Folgaria in Italy in February and last night the RE department departed to Krakow in Poland. I wish to thank all the staff and pupils who represent our College so well.

The Music Department is busy as usual and we look forward to hearing from them in a few minutes – this year the College Music and Drama Departments presented an amazing performance of Guys and Dolls. The College also has a flourishing Junior Choir, Chamber Choir, Orchestra and Band and I want to thank all the staff and pupils for their morning, break time and lunchtime and after school rehearsals.

Sport has always been fundamental part of Wellington College and it was at last years Prize Day that Chris Brunt was part of the Northern Ireland Euro 2016 Squad but unfortunately had to forfeit his place due to a serious injury. We also had former pupil Iain Lewers representing Great Britain in the Men’s Hockey Team at the Rio Olympics.

However, we had notable successes from our current pupils last year:

In athletics, Holly Brannigan competed at the Irish Schools competition winning a bronze medal and in a new personal best of 40.75 for 300m, she also won a gold medals at the District and Ulster Championships. Holly competed for Northern Ireland this September at the UK School Games for the second

time. At the district championships Jamie Hewitt claimed a silver medal in the 200m, Matthew Lindsay, who threw the javelin an incredible 31m to gain a gold medal and followed it with a silver medal in the shot-put. James Armstrong won a silver medal in the junior boys 200m. Justin Bingham won silver in the Boys' High Jump. Overall the College collected seven medals. Mark Lowry won gold at the Ulster schools multi event Championships earlier in the year.

In swimming, Leigh Higgins, won a gold and silver last year at the Ulster Secondary Schools Swimming Gala in the 100m Breaststroke and 100m Butterfly. She also represented Ulster in Scotland at a home nation's gala.

Sian Armstrong was awarded "Official of the Year" by Northern Ireland Judo Federation for her contribution to the Sport.

Cara Murray gained an Irish Cricket Cap as she represented Ireland at under 17 level.

Emma McMaster was named Captain of Northern Ireland under 17 Women's National Football Team and also had her first senior international call playing in Georgia in the European qualifying campaign. Emma gained her second cap two weeks ago against Italy at full senior international level.

Emma's sister Allison McMaster also played for Northern Ireland at under 19 and has played in the Champions League.

Adam McAleenan is part of the Northern Ireland Under 17 football squad and he has been a regular with them since he gained a place in the Under 15 squad.

Our congratulations also goes to Emma McNamara who was selected to play for the Belfast Team in the Annual Area Board Girls' Hockey tournament.

Our PE department and sports within the College also continues to flourish as we have more than 25 teams from Junior and Senior Hockey, Rugby and netball to badminton, golf, show jumping and dance teams all of which must be commended for their dedication and commitment. Again we have had many successes from our Saturday morning fixtures programme.

This platform today gives me the opportunity to publically thank all the pupils and staff who give their time to enhance the experiences and opportunities within the College.

We would like to offer our thanks to the parents teachers association for all of their efforts over the year to support our students. They continue to provide much needed resources for various departments in the College. We thank them for helping with the organisation and often the catering at our large public event's as well as the running of our famous Junior Discos.

To the newly rebranded Education Authority and their support officer but especially Mr Bill Latimer from the School development Service and his team for their ongoing guidance and advice through this past year. Mr Brendan O'Reilly who keeps the College in a safe condition to allow the pupils to have the best educational experience. We work in partnership with Graham FM and particular Mr Ryan Connor and our very own Sam and Robert who look after all of our requests (sometimes quite last minute) with a cheery demeanour.

Finally I wish to thank the Board of Governors for all of their hard work, support and encouragement for the Staff and pupils in the College. I thank you for the hours of meetings and your willingness to so readily accept your responsibilities. Your efforts may go largely unseen by the wider school community

However, Madame Chairperson, this College is a Team _ Team Wellington and we will work together to educate, engage and empower our pupils to ensure they reach their full potential. Our pupils deserve the best and we want to engage them with their academic studies and extracurricular activities to educate the whole person and therefore ensure that they are empowered to be the best that they can be. We are proud of all of our young people and we believe in them .

Wellington College will continue to provide a first class education for all of our pupils and ensure that they become confident young men and women who are equipped to take their place as leaders in the future.

Madam Chairman I commend to you this report.