



# CONTENTS

Principal's Address	2
Our History	5
Assumption Ethos, Badge and Motto	6
Pastoral Care and Structure	9
School Life	10
Curriculum Provision	14
Creative Expression	20
Drama	22
Extra-Curricular Provision	25
Music	26
Physical Education	30
Special Educational Needs	32
Global Links	33
Religious Education	34
SistersIN Leadership Programme	36
General Information	40

# 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 students and staff 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 and the 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 ninety years of dedication from our Founders, 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.

Mr Peter Dobbin  
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 12th January 1850.

Eighty three years later, in 1933, the Assumption Convent High School was founded in Ballynahinch, the result of, 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 staffroom and music block built in the 1970s, and the gym hall, careers suite, library, classrooms and sixth form common room completed in 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 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.

# THE ASSUMPTION ETHOS, BADGE AND MOTTO

## 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 Dobbin 2014 – Present



## 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 – strength; loyalty and self-discipline. Today, we would say it means caring – caring about the realities of the spirit, the meaning of human life, other people, the Earth, and above all, caring about its Creator. This is the only type of 'honour' in which the Assumption School is really interested: that which is based on Christian principles and values.

## OUR OVERALL AIM

“To develop the Whole Person through a Christian Education”

We hope you will enjoy a more in depth understanding of our aims as you read through this prospectus.





## PASTORAL CARE AND STRUCTURE



**The pastoral care of our pupils is of paramount importance. It permeates every aspect of school life.**

Every member of staff shares responsibility for the moral, social and spiritual development of pupils as well as for their academic progress. 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 and the wider community.

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 and topical Pastoral Programme, by an independent Counselling Service, by Mental Health initiatives and by the specific pastoral structure of the school.

The school is divided into 3 sections – Junior, Middle and Senior. There is a strong sense of community throughout the school where a culture of mutual respect and tolerance is encouraged. Pupils at all stages benefit from extensive opportunities to support the less-privileged, locally and globally, through which they develop good cultural awareness and leadership skills.

The school promotes healthy eating, emotional well-being and physical activity.

The Vice Principal for Pastoral Care oversees the whole school but is ably assisted by three Assistant Principals who have overall responsibility for the pastoral and academic welfare of pupils in his/her section.

They are also supported by their Year Heads who lead a team of four/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. To support these structures, we have older students mentoring younger students both academically and pastorally.

Our Mental Health Champions, and our Spirit of Assumption Ambassadors, are trained by external agencies where they learn skills to not only assist our students but they themselves develop qualities which they will benefit from as they journey through life. Ensuring our girls leave school equipped with the skills they need to succeed in life is our main priority.

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

# SCHOOL LIFE



## POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

**Assumption Grammar School strives to establish a positive ethos and to promote self-discipline and personal responsibility. Positive Discipline is based on the premise of tolerance and mutual respect.**

The school is committed to creating an environment which is friendly, orderly and conducive to learning where each pupil feels valued and encouraged to contribute positively to her own personal development and to the life of the school. Our School Council, which meets monthly, 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. Pupils are rewarded for areas such as attendance, achievement, charitable endeavours and contribution to school life. The winning House is rewarded with a trip in September to celebrate their achievements.

## 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 contact the school to discuss their concerns with staff in a spirit of trust, respect and mutual confidence.

The School Gateway App also provides a very easy and accessible way for parents to contact the school in relation to absences or appointments. In addition, it enables parents to oversee their children's canteen account as well as allowing them to access School Reports, monitor behaviour and achievement and check the accuracy of personal and medical details.

Furthermore, parents can keep abreast of general school news through our school's social media pages.

Monitoring progress is a key priority in our School Development Plan and ensures we meet the needs of our pupils, enabling all to achieve their potential and to continue raising standards in Assumption. Full written school reports are sent to parents yearly, after the midyear and end of year examinations. Interim statistical reports are also sent to parents to inform them of their daughter's progress.

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 offer 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.

The Student Planner contains all the necessary information regarding uniform, discipline and the expectations of our pupils. We feel it is important that parents study this booklet with their daughters. This will familiarise them with school organisation, as well as the general expectations of positive behaviour which is the key to personal development and success.

## 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 Student Planner specifies the recommended time allocation for homework.





### UNIFORM

Details of uniform are also included in the Student Planner. 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 and in accordance to the rules set out in their planner.

### CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE

The Careers Department aims to provide all students with the information and support necessary to help them make informed decisions about their future career choices. Careers education is delivered through the Learning for Life and Work programme in Years 8-10 and through Careers classes from

Year 12. Careers Education is also embedded in the teaching of every curriculum subject. Dedicated Careers classes form an integral part of the Sixth Form programme. Guidance is provided by teachers and our school Careers Adviser, who give pupils opportunities to discuss their career paths. The curriculum includes a study of the labour market, skills including interview technique, and research into a wide range of career pathways and training programmes.

The school organises a number of events to complement the Careers programme. The highlight of this is the biennial Careers Convention which hosts over one hundred representatives from universities and employers. This event allows our students and parents to ask questions from professionals in various fields.

## SCHOOL LIFE



In conjunction with Young Enterprise, a number of 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, including product development, marketing, sales, and tracking finances.

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 receive presentations by universities and apprenticeship programmes

and are encouraged to participate in one week's work experience. The school facilitates visits by Year 14 students to university Open Days and arranges for students to speak to professionals from the field they are applying to in the annual Interview Evening.

Given the high calibre of our students, Assumption attracts many of the leading universities to come and speak to our pupils about their options, providing them with a good insight into the exciting opportunities that will lie open to them in the future.



# CURRICULUM PROVISION



**Through the planning and implementation of the curriculum, each pupil is encouraged to reach her potential and nurture her own particular talents and abilities.**

The school's consistently excellent academic results reflect the high standards of teaching and learning in Assumption. Teaching is organised through academic areas managed by Heads of Departments. 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. Additionally, we have a Psychology for Learning Centre, offering one-to-one tutorial support for identified pupils. The core aim of our school is, 'To develop the whole person through a Christian Education' and as a specialist school in Music with PE we have been able to foster our 'Fully Alive' 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 pupils 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 Computing, Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams. 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, First Aid and Local and Global Citizenship. In Year 8 we offer 3 modern languages from which pupils choose 2 to follow in Year 9 and 10. The cross-curricular skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT are developed across the curriculum. Schemes of work clearly signpost opportunities for their development, along with thinking skills and personal capabilities.

Our curriculum is designed to develop each of our pupils as:

- individuals;
- contributors to society;
- contributors to the economy and the environment.

Each area of learning will develop the necessary skills and capabilities, which allow the 3 main curricular objectives to be met.

## KEY STAGE 3 AREAS OF LEARNING

- Art & Design
- Music
- Drama (through English)
- English
- Mathematics
- French
- Irish
- Spanish
- History

## KEY STAGE 3 AREAS OF LEARNING

- Geography
- Science
- Technology & Design
- Learning for Life & Work
- Home Economics
- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- Computing
- Library Class





# CURRICULUM PROVISION

## KEY STAGE 4

In their final year of Key Stage 3, pupils choose GCSE subjects allowing for personalised pathways, 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. Pupils are expected to follow 9 GCSE subjects at Key Stage 4.

All pupils study the following GCSE core subjects: English Language and Literature, Religious Studies, Mathematics, at least one Modern Language and at least one Science. Pupils then select further subjects from the Options list below.

Some pupils take additional GCSEs by availing of Fast Track classes in Music and Statistics. Fast Track options are facilitated outside the normal timetable.

We also offer GCSE Music to local post primary schools. All pupils follow non-examination classes for Learning for Life and Work (LLW) and Physical Education.

Last year's results are appended to this prospectus.

## KEY STAGE 4 GCSE SUBJECTS OFFERED

Most pupils study the following subjects at GCSE:

- Mathematics
- English Language
- English Literature
- Religious Studies
- French, Irish or Spanish
- a single Science subject or Double Award Science (equivalent to TWO GCSEs)

Pupils are then required to choose their additional subjects from this Options list:

- Art & Design
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Digital Technology (Multimedia)
- Digital Technology (Programming)
- Drama
- Food & Nutrition
- French
- Further Mathematics
- Geography
- Health & Social Care
- History
- Irish
- Music
- PE
- Physics
- Spanish
- Technology



# CURRICULUM PROVISION



## POST 16/SIXTH FORM

Girls enter Sixth Form after successful completion of GCSE. An extensive range of 27 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 pupils maximum academic opportunities in subject choice and careers options, complying fully with the Entitlement Framework.

While there is a strong emphasis on the academic side of the pupil's life, we also aim to develop the skills and personal competencies necessary for the 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 a breadth of interests through the enrichment opportunities that we provide.

There are a range of activities including: Anti-bullying Ambassadors, Peer Mentoring, the John Paul XI Award, volunteering with the Primary Schools, Young Enterprise and many more!

All Year 13 and 14 pupils follow two compulsory periods of Religious Education and Careers. Pupils are prepared for entry into universities and colleges of Further Education. Over 90% of our leavers 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.

## POST 16 GCE A LEVEL SUBJECTS OFFERED WITHIN ASSUMPTION:

- Art
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Drama & Theatre Studies
- English Literature
- French
- Further Mathematics
- Geography
- Government & Politics
- Health & Social Care
- History
- Irish
- IT (Applied: Cambridge Technicals)
- Life & Health Sciences (Single Award)
- Mathematics
- Moving Image Arts
- Music
- Nutrition & Food Science
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Psychology
- Religious Education
- Sociology
- Spanish
- Technology & Design



# CREATIVE EXPRESSION



## ART

**The Art Department provides pupils with wide ranging opportunities to develop high level practical skills, knowledge and understanding relating to Art and Design.**

We work to ensure that lessons are engaging and relate to contemporary life and careers, often with an emphasis on new technologies and media.

We are fortunate to benefit from an attractive working environment in our modern, purpose-built art suites, kitted with a spacious exhibition area, MAC suite, kiln room and generous storerooms. Large classroom layouts enable pupils to interact effectively and set up attractive displays which, in turn, stimulate further creativity across all age groups in the school.

While examination results are excellent, we see it as our goal to promote individual visual and cultural awareness and confident creativity in each pupil to enhance their personal development. Therefore, our pupils display their art throughout the school, to be enjoyed by their peers, staff, parents and visitors, particularly on special occasions and celebrations. The Department often works together in teams to construct, design or devise props, sets, costumes, programmes and posters for school musicals, concerts, carol services and liturgies throughout the school year.

We increase pupils' enthusiasm and learning by extracurricular activities such as visits to school by local artists and designers who lead practical sessions or give talks or demonstrations. We also submit pupils' work for a wide range of national and community-based competitions and invite school groups from outside to share in art events and sessions too. In addition, we have established a tradition of arranging action packed Art trips to European cities where pupils can enjoy visits to the finest international galleries and immersion in culture.

All these approaches, resources and experiences have been designed to create a happy, creative department which seeks to promote the well-being and aesthetic development of pupils.

## MOVING IMAGE ARTS

Pupils are encouraged to develop their creativity, knowledge and skills in the production of moving image genres. They study a wide range of film and practitioners to deepen critical understanding in all the key areas of film production, including writing, directing, editing, producing and production design. Pupils develop their coursework portfolios, often supporting one another in the realisation of individual targets. The subject demands a lot, pushing young people out of their comfort zones, yet the rewards gained make the journey well worth the effort!

Our fully equipped Mac Suite, digital video cameras, tripods and lighting kits are employed to help students shoot and edit their work. They regularly achieve success in national competitions. For example, in June 2024, one of our A2 students won Best Animation at the Into Film Awards in Leicester Square, London. Every year without fail, our students' work is shortlisted for the CCEA Moving Image Arts Showcase Awards in Cineworld, Odyssey Belfast.

Pupils enjoy attending the afterschool film club. The senior MIA pupils get firsthand experience with cameras and equipment by helping shoot promotional videos for the school. They also take full responsibility for filming the Annual Spring Concert, the School Musical and other important events throughout the year.

The skills learned in this course ensure our pupils excel in any field of work they embark on.



# DRAMA



Drama plays an integral part in the life of Assumption Grammar School.

At Key Stage 3 level, the pupils participate in a biennial festival, for which a wide range of plays of varying genres and styles are showcased, including Shakespeare in Year 10.

This traditional event is reminisced for years to come, as past pupils remember the hubbub of costume changes, set creations, script writing and...trying to remember lines!

There are numerous extra-curricular activities relating to Drama all can engage in, including after-school rehearsals and a junior 'Performance Club' club, which is organised and ran by our Post-16 Theatre Studies pupils. Since 2015, Assumption has staged musicals including 'Oklahoma!', 'Fiddler on the Roof', 'The Wizard of Oz', 'Bugsy Malone', and most recently, 'Into the Woods'.

The productions embrace our Fully Alive ethos of inclusivity, as they pupils from all year- groups take an active role in performing, lighting, sound, backstage or costume.

Drama is also a popular subject choice at both GCSE and A-Level, for which it has a secured a 100% A\* to C pass rate.

Throughout their courses, pupils participate in practical workshops, theatre visits and classes delivered by professionals currently working within the industry, all of which cultivates their appreciation of the subject as an art form.

Subsequently, many A-Level students leave Assumption Grammar to pursue a career in the Performing Arts, which is growing at a rapid rate throughout Northern Ireland!

Through their practical and theoretical study of theatrical practitioners, scripts, rehearsal methods and acting techniques, pupils prepare and perform exciting and thought-provoking examination pieces.

These will often encourage the audience to question societal happenings, rather than be simply entertained by what they see on stage.

Parents, guardians and other family members are invited to watch their daughter's dramatic pieces in Assumption Grammar's State-of-the-Art Drama Suite, which boasts a cyclorama to display scenic backdrops, Strand lighting and sound boards to create atmosphere.





# EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROVISION



**Assumption Grammar School offers a wide range of extracurricular activities which promote the health and well-being of our students.**

Being a specialist school for music and PE, many of these activities centre on sports and the arts. We also have an ever growing provision of clubs before during and after school which allow our girls to develop skills and form friendships outside of the classroom.

And keeping with our 'Fully Alive' motto, we encourage our students to participate fully in the life of the school and offer opportunities to stimulate a lifelong love of the arts and sport. Self-confidence, social responsibility and healthy competition are some of the traits that develop as a result of involvement in extracurricular activities.

It is incumbent of us, as a school, to promote healthy living as well as endorsing a responsibility for the environment. The following list of clubs offer opportunities to allow these skills to flourish:

- MONDAY**  
 Morning Prayer  
 Jazz Band  
 Chamber Choir  
 Netball  
 Camogie  
 History Club

- TUESDAY**  
 Morning Prayer  
 Music Theory  
 Netball  
 Ultimate Frisbee  
 U16 Gaelic  
 Senior Gaelic  
 Science Club

- WEDNESDAY**  
 Morning Prayer  
 Irish Traditional Group  
 Cookery Club  
 Eco-Schools Club

- Rugby  
 Junior Choir  
 Netball

- THURSDAY**  
 Morning Prayer  
 Junior Chamber Ensemble  
 Soccer  
 Netball  
 Maths Club  
 Senior Choir

- FRIDAY**  
 Morning Prayer  
 Senior Chamber Ensemble Jazz Band

**Duke of Edinburgh/Gaisce/Joint Award Initiative**

Offered to students in Year 10, the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award Scheme requires pupils to complete four sections (Skills, Volunteering, Physical and their Expedition). Participating in the award provides the pupils with a range of valuable life skills and an opportunity to discover new interests and talents. Every young person's DofE programme is personal to them.

The Expedition section of the Bronze Award involves the pupils working as part of a team to plan their expedition's aim, choose a route and complete training to make sure they are fully prepared, before spending two days and one night in the Mourne Mountains. To make sure they are fully prepared, the pupils will take part in training sessions which cover first aid, camp craft, map work, navigating and route planning.



# MUSIC



**In the Junior School students follow a varied curriculum which develops listening, composing and performing skills. Tuition is available for a full range of orchestral instruments as well as piano, voice and traditional instruments.**

Pupils are entered for practical and theory examinations through the Trinity College of Music and other examining boards as appropriate as well as for various festivals. Extra-curricular activities include Senior and Junior orchestras, Senior, Junior and Chamber choirs, Jazz, Traditional and Barbershop singing 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. Our ensembles have performed at a wide range of venues including the Royal Albert Hall in London and St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York.

Singers and musicians regularly appear at community and charitable events and have performed on television and radio.

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. Our uptake is high at GCSE and A level, and classes include students from other schools in the Ballynahinch Learning Community.

Students may add Music to their GCSE timetable through the provision of Fast Track early-morning classes if they wish. Results are consistently high and are continually above the NI average.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR GROUPS: SENIOR ORCHESTRA**

This comprises around 50 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 50 singers from Years 11-14. Meeting on a Thursday afternoon, they cover a wide range of religious and secular repertoire including classical music and arrangements of popular material.

They perform several times each year culminating in the Annual Concert in Belfast and in March 2024 visited New York, where they performed in St. Patrick's Cathedral as part of the St. Patrick's Day celebrations.

## **JUNIOR CHOIR**

This award-winning choir comprises 70 singers from Years 8-10. They rehearse on Wednesday afternoons and perform a wide range of light music.

Last year their performances included an invitation to lead worship at the Clonard novena as well as several other opportunities to sing in community events and at our 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 classical songs, performing regularly during the Christmas period and at the Annual Concert at the end of the Easter term.





# MUSIC



## **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.

## **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 and Fridays 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

## **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 Wednesday, playing a wide range of Irish music.

They perform at the main school concerts and several other events during the year including the celebrations around St. Patricks Day.

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION



**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 a basketball court, and a modern fitness suite.

Our outdoor facilities also include a camogie/ gaelic pitch, a 3rd generation floodlit pitch and two 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, volleyball, dance, and health-related PE which includes the use of the fitness suite.

Physical Education is also offered at GCSE and A-level. Our uptake is very high at GCSE level with almost one quarter of the year group opting for this subject. Our results to date have been outstanding. Also at A level the numbers are consistently high with the results being above the NI average.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:**

Pupils at Assumption have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities after school, and/or lunchtimes. Many of our students gain County, Regional and sometimes National recognition in a wide range of sports.

### **CROSS-COUNTRY**

Minor, Junior, Intermediate and Senior Teams are entered at District Cross-Country Championships with the opportunity to qualify and compete at Ulster and Irish Schools championships.

### **NETBALL CLUB**

The Netball Club caters for pupils from Year 8 - 14 with training sessions being held after school and at lunch times from Monday –

Thursday. The school enters teams into the Area Leagues, the NI Leagues and Cup.

### **CAMOGIE**

There are 4 teams in total; the Year 8s, the U14s, the U16s and a Senior Team. All teams are entered into the Down and Ulster Leagues.

### **GAELIC**

Teams will be entered into competitions in four age groups. The U14, U16 and Senior Teams will compete in the Ulster League while the Year 8 teams are entered into a Ulster Blitz competition.

### **SWIMMING**

Minor, Junior, Intermediate and Senior Teams are entered for various Ulster Schools Galas throughout the year.

### **SOCCER**

Soccer is becoming increasingly popular and is offered to Year 8 - Year 12 students. Teams are entered into the annual soccer tournaments organised by the IFA throughout the year.

### **FITNESS SUITE**

This is available to GCSE PE students and those in Years 11, 12, 13 and 14.

### **HORSE RIDING**

The school provides pupils will the opportunity to enter various Show Jumping competitions throughout the year including the TRI Inter-schools Show Jumping League Final and the Balmoral Open Championships.

### **RUGBY**

Teams are divided into three age groups. The U14, U16 and U18s take part in their respective schools' cup competitions. The top teams in Ulster are then invited to compete in the final which takes place in Kingspan stadium.



# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS



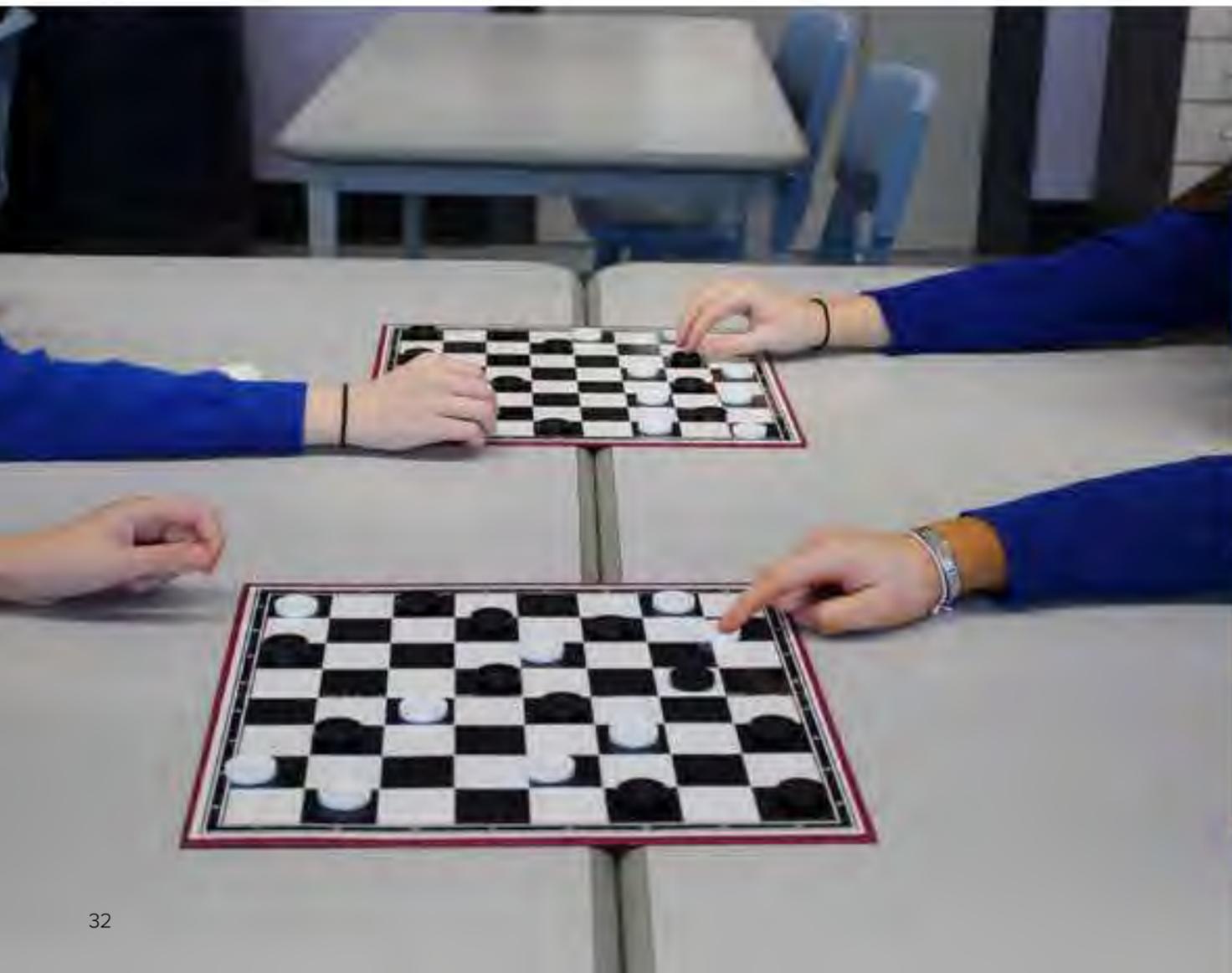
**The School is fully committed to delivering the highest level of support to all pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, ensuring they have full access to the Curriculum and are achieving academically in school.** Provision is both within the classroom setting and, if required, in conjunction with external agencies to suit individual needs.

We liaise closely with the Education Authority to ensure that the needs of the particular pupils are addressed and that provision is made for on-going support in their studies. The Learning Support Coordinator works with other teaching staff, classroom and general assistants 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.

All departments provide additional support material for pupils with particular difficulties. This work is tailored for the individual pupils who attend our Pupil Learning Centre (PLC).

The school has members of staff who are qualified in diagnostic testing, assisting the Learning Support Coordinator to evaluate how pupils are progressing during their academic career.



# GLOBAL LINKS



**Links with the global community are vital in promoting leadership and raising cultural awareness in our pupils.** There are opportunities for global education with annual trips to places such as Germany, France, Spain and the USA.

These partnerships enable our pupils to gain a greater appreciation of cultural diversity and global issues, and a greater awareness of their role in the global community.

Year 13 pupils participate in Saphara 'Be The Change' programme; fundraising for girls' education in India. In this programme Assumption girls team up with pupils from other schools in the County Down area and work to support disadvantaged children.

## OUR COMMUNITY

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 bi-annual Drama Festival, Modern Languages Week, St Patrick's Day festivities, 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 GCSE Music to post primary schools 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.

We have developed intergenerational links in our community; the highlight of which is the annual Christmas Senior Citizens' Party.

The school develops partnerships which are productive in helping to enhance learning experiences and opportunities for personal development. We have forged links with mental health providers who provide workshops on e-safety, cyber bullying, mental health and wellbeing.

Our pupils develop a sense of responsibility by actively fundraising for Trócaire, St Vincent de Paul, Daisy Lodge and Children in Crossfire.

Assumption's commitment to community development has been recognised recognised in the 'Yaftas' (Youth and Future Talent Awards) organised by Newry, Mourne and Down Council where our pupils have won the individual Voice of Young People Award and the Group Community Project.



# RELIGIOUS 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 nurturing it through their participation in Morning Prayer, Morning Assembly, the Rosary Club, the celebration of Mass on various

occasions throughout the year and Eucharistic Adoration.

During Advent and Lent students participate in Penitential Services and each year group enjoys an annual Retreat. In Holy Week, the RE Department organises a twelve hour Vigil in the Oratory which students, staff, parents and members of the wider community are invited to.

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.



# SISTERSIN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME



**Mission: The SistersIN Female Leadership Programme is committed to empowering young women through advancing gender equity, inclusiveness and youth development.** We use a holistic evidence-based approach, offering education and training as well as opportunities to engage in leadership initiatives and build aspiration through exposure so young women can reach their full potential.

SistersIN is a high quality girls' leadership programme that will give pupils the opportunity to prepare to become leaders of the future. SistersIN has been specifically developed to foster leadership skills in girls by working collaboratively with female leaders.

The programme has been developed to include components based on international best practice in developing girls' leadership.

The SistersIN Leadership Programme aims to foster girls' leadership capacity and confidence amongst our incoming Year 13 pupils. The programme consists of three strands:

## **Mentoring and Job Shadowing**

Pupils will be matched with a female business leader as a mentor, who can offer real-life guidance and support about career options

and paths. Mentors will share their own experiences and insights into their profession and industry. Pupils get the opportunity to ask lots of questions and participate in a job shadow day for a look behind the scenes and to experience what it's like to work in that organisation. Mentors will be able to provide support and coaching for the leadership project.

## **Leadership Skills Development**

This is a special training programme designed to prepare pupils for the world of work. The leadership skills training will be taught by one of our teachers with a different subject delivered each week for 10 lessons. Themes include resilience, conflict resolution and communication skills. In addition, SistersIN will partner with external leaders in business to deliver leadership masterclasses.

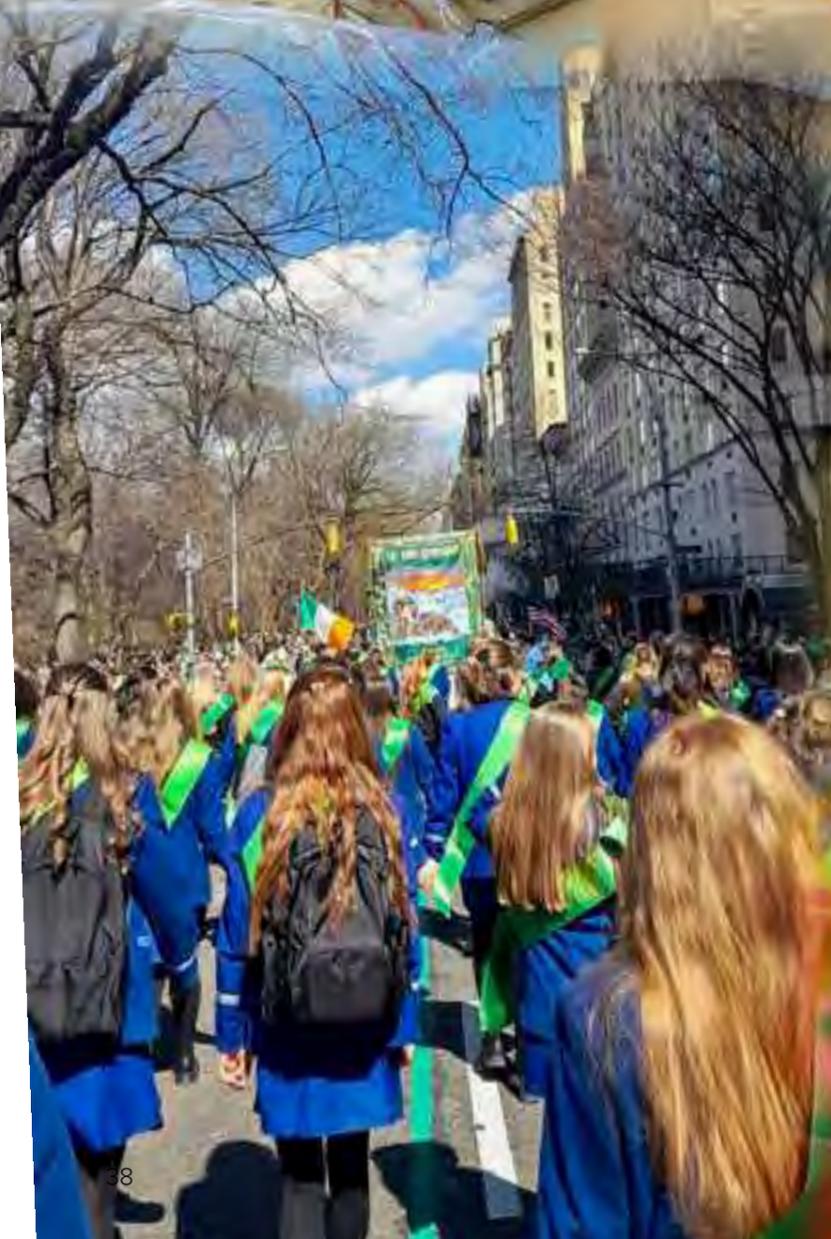
## **Leading a Project**

Pupils will gain real-life leadership experience through leading their own project or initiative at school or in the community. This project can be related to a sports activity, science, music or art club, a donation drive or linked to other initiatives like mental health awareness, literacy and exercise.

Pupils will benefit from mentoring and exposure to female leaders representing a wide range of professions. The programme offers an exciting opportunity for pupils to practise their own leadership skills through leading initiatives. The SistersIN programme aims to enable pupils to build their confidence – one of the key factors deterring girls from pursuing leadership.

Assumption Grammar School, supported by national and global businesses and government sectors, aims to address this gap, empowering its students to become effective leaders and reach their full potential.







## Assumption Grammar School

# GENERAL INFORMATION

### CLASSIFICATION

Assumption Grammar School is a Catholic voluntary grammar school for girls founded in 1933 by the Missionary Sisters of the Assumption. The leadership and management of the school is overseen by the Board of Governors.

### POSTAL ADDRESS

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

### TELEPHONE NUMBER

028 9756 2250

### WEB ADDRESS

[www.assumptiongrammar.org.uk](http://www.assumptiongrammar.org.uk)

### CHAIRPERSON OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Miss M. O'Halloran

### SCHOOL DAY

Pupils commence at 8:55 am and finish at 3:20 pm  
Senior Lunch Break 12:30 pm - 1:05 pm  
Junior Lunch Break 1:05 pm - 1:40 pm

### EMAIL

[admin@assumption.ballynahinch.ni.sch.uk](mailto:admin@assumption.ballynahinch.ni.sch.uk)

### SOCIAL MEDIA

 Assumption Grammar

 @assumptionlive

 assumptiongrammar

### EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

8.00am - 8.55am on appointed days  
3.30pm - 4.45pm on appointed days

### ENROLMENT

910

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