



CARRICKFERGUS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2025-2028

PART 1

A Statement and Evaluation of the Ethos of the School

The unrelenting mission of this school is to ensure the highest quality learning and teaching experiences for our students, culminating in outstanding standards and outcomes. We endeavour to ensure that these experiences are delivered in a mutually caring, respectful and happy school environment.

Feedback from staff, students and parents indicates that there is a desire for great levels of opportunity for our pupils, and this is welcomed. Therefore the school environment we seek to foster should also include the highest levels of opportunity for all our students inside and outside the classroom, thus emphasising the importance of an all-rounded education.

School Motto: Praestantia in Omnia (Striving for Excellence in Everything)

Our Mission Statement

Carrickfergus Grammar School is a traditional Grammar School. We aim to offer our students a world-class education, with the highest of aspirations and expectations for all. Our mission is to ensure that our young people prosper academically, thus enabling the potential for entrance to Higher Education and also helping to facilitate success and happiness in future careers.

Every young person attending this school will have equal access to opportunity both inside and outside the classroom. Opportunities which stretch and challenge our

students will allow them to achieve the highest level of academic, intellectual, personal, physical and social development of which they are capable.

The school seeks to promote a disciplined, well-ordered, caring and supportive environment, where staff and students can work and learn in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The notion of 'warm-strict' is encouraged and emphasised.

Our Values: Knowledge, Opportunity and Respect

We use synonyms to teach these values in our language at CGS. Much of the language to describe our three key values overlaps, and this helps to emphasise how such synthesis and synergy can lead to success. This shared language runs through the school and is interwoven in our policies, practice, day-to-day conversations and teaching.

KNOWLEDGE

Understanding; Achievement; Learning; Ambition; Aspiration; Progress; Powerful; Opportunity; Mastery; Curiosity; Practice; Commitment; Initiative; Resilience; Industry; Humility; Success.

OPPORTUNITY

Gratitude; Wellbeing; Appreciation; Humility; Acknowledgement; Empathy; Fairness; Personal Responsibility; Initiative; Participation; Conscience; Compassion; Morality; Ambition; Aspiration.

RESPECT

Tolerance; Empathy; Care; Consideration; Positivity; Participation; Routines; Habits; Humility; Trying your Best; Commitment; Motivation; Diligence.

How do we enact our Mission and Values at CGS?

Below is a list of the many processes and practices at Carrickfergus Grammar School which help to create a sense of belonging and therefore a shared, moral mission.

- Alumni
- Assemblies
- Behaviour
- Celebratory events
- Competitive events
- Concerts and festivals
- Corridor Displays
- CPD
- Curriculum and curriculum intent
- Equipment
- Knowledge Organisers
- Mini Whiteboards
- Reading
- Student leadership
- The Merit and Demerit System
- The school environment
- The school song
- Tutor Time
- Uniform

Core Question 1

What is the school's vision and what informs it?

AMBITION

We describe ourselves as a thoroughly ambitious selective school. Our aim is to offer students a world-class education, seeking inspiration regionally, nationally and internationally and basing developments on world-renowned research.

Our purpose is to provide an educational environment suited to all students, promoting a disciplined, well-ordered, caring, and supportive environment where each student is encouraged to achieve their potential academically, intellectually, personally, physically, and socially.

Our vision encourages holistic development by focusing not only on academic achievement through exposure to high-quality teaching by highly-qualified subject specialist, but also on personal and social growth.

A parental survey (March 2025 – 219 responses) indicates a high level of agreement (91.8%) with the statement that "there is a clear vision for school development".

A teaching staff survey (March 2025 – 46 responses) shows an even stronger agreement (97.8%) that the leadership team provides "clear and realistic direction based on a knowledge of, and vision for, the school". These internal perspectives suggest that the school's vision is articulated and understood by key stakeholders.

Carrickfergus Grammar School articulates its ethos and vision around three core pillars: **Knowledge, Opportunity, and Respect**. These values are not merely abstract principles but are actively pursued and underpin all aspects of school life, from

academic standards and teaching practices to extra-curricular provision and the school environment itself.

KNOWLEDGE

The value of Knowledge at Carrickfergus Grammar School is intrinsically linked to our commitment to providing a world-class education and achieving high academic standards. It is defined as the School's approach to learning and teaching, focusing on the standards and outcomes pupils achieve. The fundamental aim is to offer access to the highest quality learning and teaching opportunities, enabling pupils to attain grades and qualifications that will give them an edge in later life and serve as a passport for future success and happiness.

This pursuit of Knowledge is driven by several key factors:

Research-Based Evidence: The school's learning and teaching model is reinforced by robust research-based evidence into high-quality practices. The school's developments are based on world-renowned research, and its commitment to research has been evidenced through hosting ResearchED Belfast in September 2024. Teaching staff survey responses indicate that developments at the school are increasingly research-driven, with 95.6% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. CGS actively brings in external expertise, having hosted leading educationalists and being featured in a case study book on retrieval strategies by leading educationalist Kate Jones. Notably, the school appointed Mr Mark Roberts as Northern Ireland's first Director of Research, reflecting a clear vision to pursue the highest standards and become a regional and national centre of excellence for learning and teaching and educational research.

High Aspiration and Expectation: The school's approach is designed to expose pupils to high aspiration and high expectation. The School believes that children rise

or fall according to the expectations set for them, and setting the bar high encourages pupils to aspire. Parental survey data shows strong agreement that the school sets high academic standards and expectations (99.6% SA/A) and nurtures academic ambition and aspiration (88.5% SA/A). Teaching staff also overwhelmingly agree the school sets high standards (100% SA/A) and promotes academic values (100% SA/A).

Knowledge-Rich Curriculum and Pedagogy: CGS employs a knowledge-rich curriculum approach, particularly at Key Stage 3, to embed core knowledge in long-term memory and provide foundations for success in assessments and examinations. This aligns with international educational research highlighted in the TransformED NI strategy, which emphasises the importance of disciplinary and powerful knowledge as a prerequisite for advanced learning, critical thinking, and equitable opportunities. The school ensures that core knowledge is built upon cumulatively, strategically, and deliberately throughout a pupil's seven years to facilitate progression from novice to expert.

Effective Teaching Principles: The school has identified six key principles that shape consistency in learning and teaching: stretch and challenge for all, effective questioning and oracy, effective modelling, scaffolding, independent practice, and robust assessment and feedback. Strategies employed in the classroom to embed powerful knowledge include regular retrieval and quizzing, effective questioning, the modelling of excellence, and opportunities for practice. Teaching staff survey data supports this, with 95.7% agreeing that a strong focus on core knowledge at Key Stage 3 will build foundations for success.

Assessment and Feedback: Assessment and reporting are seen as key elements in measuring pupil progress and planning for improvement. The school uses a combination of formative, summative, and standardised assessments to provide tailored feedback, identifying targets for progress. Parental survey data indicates

high levels of agreement that children are aware of their current progress (91.3% SA/A) and what they need to do to improve (87.4% SA/A), and that they receive regular feedback (87.7% SA/A). Teaching staff also report levels of agreement that pupils act on feedback to improve their work (73.9% SA/A).

Standards and Outcomes: The results attained in public examinations are seen as a testament to the school's approach. The school was named in the Sunday Times as one of the top 15 schools in Northern Ireland for GCSE and A Level results in December, ranking 11th for A Levels and 13th overall. It also ranked 76th among UK state selective schools. In December 2024, the school was named as one of the top 100 state selective schools in the UK, 11th in Northern Ireland for 'A' Level Results and 13th overall. In 2024, every single girl achieved 7 or more A*-C passes at GCSE level. Also in 2024, boys outperformed girls by 0.3%, with 98.4% of boys achieving 5 or more passes at A*-C including English and Mathematics. In 2023, a third of the year group attained 9 or more A*-A GCSE grades at GCSE. In 2025, the school was ranked 53rd state school in the UK in the Sunday Times Parent Power League Tables for A Level results.

OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity, the second pillar, stems from the School's belief in the potential of its pupils and its commitment to helping them achieve their potential, regardless of background. The school aims to ensure that every pupil feels a sense of aspiration, possibility, and opportunity from the moment they join until they leave.

The focus on Opportunity is driven by:

Social Mobility: A core aim is to teach every student in a manner that expedites opportunities for the greatest possible social mobility, including access to all Higher Education pathways and Higher Apprenticeship pathways at age 18. This aligns

with the broader educational goal of increasing equity and ensuring disadvantaged children have the opportunity to reach their potential. It aligns with the School's knowledge-rich curriculum, which aims to eradicate the so-called 'Matthew Effect', ensuring all children share the same core, powerful knowledge in long-term memory. Year 8 students visit a local University to envision future possibilities, and initiatives like the SistersIn Programme link senior female pupils with senior business leaders, providing exposure to high-profile industries. "No labels, no limits" is a key mantra of the School.

Broad Curriculum: CGS aims to offer a wide and varied range of subjects, providing pupils with core knowledge and skills for later life and career pursuits. Parental survey data supports this, with 92.7% agreeing their child has the chance to study a wide range of subjects. This is complemented by formalised, timetabled Personal Development, Citizenship and Careers lessons at various key junctures in a child's educational journey.

Subject-Specific Opportunity: The School provides opportunities at a subject-specific level to broaden pupils' horizons and facilitate competition at a regional and national level. Examples include participation in academic competitions like Science Olympiads and debating cups, and subject-specific trips.

Extra-Curricular Provision: Recognising that a well-rounded education involves opportunities outside the classroom, CGS offers a broad range of extra-curricular activities and clubs. These activities are seen as crucial for developing character, building resilience, fostering friendships and bonding, and developing leadership and creative skills. The variety of options aims to ensure there is a place for everybody. Parental surveys indicate high satisfaction with the range of extra-curricular opportunities (80% SA/A).

Personal Development and Enrichment: Beyond academics and clubs, the School emphasises personal development. Year 14 pupils undertake enrichment activities, including partnering with local primary schools, which helps develop skills and provides leadership opportunities. The School aims to provide an educational environment that supports students' development across academic, intellectual, personal, physical, and social domains.

Careers Education: While parental survey data on Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) is more nuanced, this area is highlighted as important by ETI and the TransformED NI strategy. Teaching staff survey responses show 69.6% agreement that the school equips pupils with relevant information and guidance for informed choices in personal development, careers, and otherwise.

RESPECT

Respect, the third pillar, focuses on fostering a positive and supportive environment built on mutual respect and strong relationships. This value is integral to creating a safe and stimulating learning environment where all can prosper.

The emphasis on Respect is driven by:

Pastoral Care: The school places great emphasis on providing appropriate pastoral care for all pupils. Knowing learners well, listening to them, and supporting their personal development within positive relationships that foster trust and support are valued practices. Parents agree that the staff know their child as an individual, including their interests and strengths (89.6% SA/A).

Behavioural Standards: While fostering a caring environment, CGS insists upon very high standards of behaviour, including principles like "Respect always". The School works in partnership with parents to ensure a well-disciplined environment.

Positive Relationships and Community: CGS views itself as a "big family," where individuals care for and look out for each other. Students and staff interact with mutual respect. Students highlight the sense of safety and community, positive relationships between pupils and staff, and the friendly atmosphere.

Safe and Supportive Environment: The school provides a disciplined, well-ordered, caring, and supportive environment where learning is not hindered by interruption. The high quality of pastoral care has been recognised as a strength by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Parental surveys show high levels of agreement that children feel safe at school (92.2% SA/A) and that discipline is good (85.4% SA/A). Teaching staff also strongly agree that children behave well (100% SA/A) and are respectful (100% SA/A).

Wellbeing linked to Gratitude: Respect extends to valuing individuals and promoting wellbeing. The school emphasises gratitude extensively, encouraging pupils to thank others for their support and guidance, which is linked to enhancing wellbeing.

Positive Reinforcement and Recognition: The Positive Note System is a key initiative fostering respect by acknowledging and encouraging outstanding values and positive behaviours, making pupils feel valued. This includes recognizing responsible behaviour, gratitude, good manners, leadership, academic effort, and contributions to school life. Parental survey data shows high agreement that children enjoy receiving Positive Notes and feel valued (78.6% SA/A). Teaching staff agree that the system helps children feel valued (76% SA/A).

In summary, the values of Knowledge, Opportunity, and Respect are deeply embedded in the fabric of Carrickfergus Grammar School.

Knowledge is pursued through a research-informed, high-expectation academic pathway focused on achieving strong outcomes.

Opportunity is fostered through a multi-layered approach encompassing academic enrichment, a broad curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and a focus on social mobility. The School fosters healthy competition as a key aspect of life.

Respect is cultivated through a caring and supportive community, positive relationships, gratitude, behavioural standards, and systems that recognise and value positive contributions and wellbeing.

These interconnected values collectively drive the school's vision to provide a world-class education and develop well-rounded individuals.



Core Question 2

How is the school setting about achieving its vision, within its own context?

Carrickfergus Grammar School's vision of Knowledge, Opportunity and Respect is not merely a slogan but a lived reality, translated into policy, practice and culture across every domain of school life. Within its own context as a selective grammar school serving a diverse intake of approximately 800 pupils, the School pursues the highest of standards by aligning impactful evidence-based approaches to learning and teaching, curriculum design, professional learning, pastoral care and infrastructure investment. The School Development Plan (2025–2028) aims to provide a strategic framework, while annual action plans ensure delivery. Evidence from pupil, parent and staff surveys in 2025 confirms that stakeholders perceive the vision as both clear and well-articulated: 91.8% of parents affirm a clear vision for development, 97.8% of staff confirm leadership provides clear and realistic direction, and pupils report increases in satisfaction with enrichment and wellbeing opportunities.

KNOWLEDGE – *Curriculum, Teaching and Academic Standards*

Knowledge is the foundation of the School's strategy. Since 2022, a knowledge-rich curriculum has been embedded at Key Stage 3, placing disciplinary knowledge and powerful concepts into long-term memory. This aligns with international best practice and the TransformED NI strategy. Our approach highlights six principles shaping consistency in teaching: stretch and challenge for all, effective questioning, modelling of excellence, scaffolding, independent practice, and robust assessment and feedback. These also reflect our belief in the impact of explicit, direct instruction, and align with Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction. These are reinforced daily through lesson planning and professional learning action plans. Assessment is

rigorous, combining formative and summative approaches with regression analysis, diagnostic testing and benchmarked data. Parents affirm the impact: 91.3% say their child is aware of current progress and 87.4% know what to do to improve. Results evidence the effectiveness: in 2025, 100% of pupils achieved 5+ GCSEs including English and Maths, and 90% achieved 3+ A Levels at A*-C. Twenty-one A Level subjects and twenty-two GCSE subjects exceeded Northern Ireland grammar averages. The School is ranked highly in Northern Ireland for results, and was named in the Sunday Times top 100 UK state selective schools in 2024 and 2025. Parental comments underline the perceived impact: 'I greatly admire the school in how they teach my children to revise and retain knowledge – it is very effective and we have seen great results in exam performance as a consequence.'

OPPORTUNITY – *Curriculum Breadth, Enrichment and Careers*

Opportunity is achieved by ensuring breadth of curriculum, rich enrichment programmes, and pathways to higher education and employment. At Key Stage 3, all pupils experience a wide range of subjects including sciences, languages, arts, and technologies. At GCSE and A Level, choice expands further to include subjects such as Business Studies, Accounting, Environmental Technology, Sociology, Health and Social Care and Media Studies – the latter being taught through the Learning Community. Parent surveys show 92.7% agreement that children can study a wide range of subjects. Extra-curricular opportunities are extensive, spanning over 40 clubs and societies – from music ensembles and choirs to rugby, hockey, debating, STEM, animal house, and Duke of Edinburgh. Eighty percent of parents confirm that their child has access to clubs of interest. Student reflections in the prospectus reinforce this: the Head Girl credits CGS with providing her 'ample opportunity to bond with peers, lead new initiatives, and balance academic challenge with personal growth.' Social mobility is central: Key Stage 3 pupils visit universities to envision future study, while initiatives like SistersIN link senior girls to business leaders. Careers guidance is being strengthened and remains a key area of development.

Employer engagement, enhanced work experience, and alumni networks have been introduced to ensure every pupil has routes into Higher Education or apprenticeships.

RESPECT – *Pastoral Care, Behaviour and Wellbeing*

Respect underpins the school culture. ETI recognised pastoral provision as a strength, and in 2025 surveys, 92.2% of parents reported their child feels safe at school, while 85.4% affirmed discipline is good or very good. Staff unanimously agree that pupils behave well (100%) and are respectful (100%). Pastoral strategies include a strong tutor system, seven Heads of Year, and the Senior Teacher for Pastoral Care. The re-established House System creates vertical identity and leadership opportunities. Initiatives such as 'Feel Good Friday' and resilience-focused tutor time promote wellbeing. The school has been recognised as a Level 3 Take 5 school.

The Positive Note system continues to encourage values of gratitude, effort, and leadership. Parents (78.6%) and staff (89.2%) affirm its effectiveness. One parent wrote: 'As parents we could not rate CGS more highly – both our sons have thrived in a caring and supportive environment where every child is valued.' Another noted: 'My daughter struggled with wellbeing this year and the school excelled in putting her mental health ahead of pure academic results.' Such testimonies confirm that wellbeing is embedded as central to the School's approach.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING – *Staff Development and Research Culture*

Professional learning is a cornerstone of achieving the vision. The appointment of Northern Ireland's first Director of Research, Mr Mark Roberts, places CGS at the forefront of evidence-informed practice. Staff surveys (97.9%) affirm professional learning is prioritised, with 95.6% confirming that developments are increasingly research-driven. The School subscribes to the InnerDrive CPD Academy, offering

flexible, high-quality modules. Lesson study pilots are in the planning in order to develop a culture of open-door collaboration.

National and international visits (to Michaela in London and high-performing schools in the Netherlands) demonstrate ambition to benchmark practice against the best globally. The Professional Learning Action Plan (2025) sets out clear targets: sustained focus on retrieval and oracy, extended CPD with experts such as Bradley Busch, and integration of AI in pedagogy and administration. Parent surveys reflect the benefit: 93.6% believe their child is stretched and challenged in learning, while teaching staff unanimously affirm that the School sets high standards and promotes academic values (100%). This culture ensures that staff development directly translates into classroom impact.

INFRASTRUCTURE – *Facilities to Match Ambition*

Infrastructure investment underpins delivery of the vision. A £5m capital programme is underway to build a new Sports Complex and Sixth Form Centre, expand canteen capacity, and refurbish existing facilities. The Infrastructure Action Plan also prioritises ICT upgrades, signage improvements, refurbishment of the Assembly Hall, and expansion of SEN spaces. The school has recently refurbished ICT rooms with 50 new computers. Accessibility routes and facilities are being reviewed, ensuring inclusivity. Additional car parking space is being developed to accommodate growth. These developments ensure that the physical environment matches the ethos of ambition and respect, and that the School remains a modern, future-focused institution.

Carrickfergus Grammar School sets about achieving its vision of Knowledge, Opportunity and Respect through a holistic, integrated strategy. Curriculum design, professional learning, pastoral structures and infrastructure investment all interlock

to create a culture where high standards and wellbeing coexist. Evidence from surveys confirms parental, staff and pupil endorsement of the approach, while comments provide testimony to the tangible difference made in daily school life. As one parent concluded: 'The promotion of hard work and aspiration in a supportive and nurturing environment is tangible at Carrickfergus Grammar School.' The School's development planning ensures that this vision is not static but dynamic – a continuing process of reflection, ambition and achievement, firmly rooted in its own context.

Core Question 3

How does the school monitor how well it and its learners are doing and how responsive is it to overcoming challenges and barriers?

At Carrickfergus Grammar School, the principles of Knowledge, Opportunity and Respect underpin every aspect of monitoring, evaluation, and improvement. These values shape how the school assesses progress, how it responds to challenges, and how it ensures that all learners thrive academically, socially, and personally.

KNOWLEDGE: Tracking Progress with Precision

The school's commitment to powerful knowledge is reflected in its knowledge-rich curriculum and robust systems of monitoring and assessment. Assessment combines formative, summative, and standardised measures to ensure that progress is visible and that interventions are timely. Parents report clear improvements in this area, with 87.7% agreeing in 2025 that their child receives regular feedback on their work, a rise of over 15% since 2022. Similarly, over 91% of parents agree that their child is aware of their progress and what they need to do to improve.

This data-driven approach is reinforced through regression analyses at Key Stage 3, departmental exam reviews, and benchmarking against NI Grammar averages.

Ambitious whole-school targets – such as embedding 100% of pupils achieving 7+ GCSEs at A-C* and raising GCSE A*-A grades to above 75% of the entire grade profile – are monitored annually through detailed departmental plans and Principal/HoD review meetings. Pupils from underperforming groups are identified quickly, with study skills interventions, retrieval practice coaching, and peer mentoring ensuring barriers to progress are actively reduced.

Knowledge is also monitored at a teaching level: staff CPD focuses on retrieval practice, questioning, and knowledge organisers, and is supported by the Director of Research, ensuring classroom approaches remain firmly evidence-informed. Parental survey data confirms widespread support for this philosophy, with 88.1% agreeing with the school's knowledge-rich approach.

OPPORTUNITY: Monitoring Access and Participation

The school recognises that opportunity is not only about attainment but also about the breadth of experience offered to pupils. Monitoring therefore extends beyond exams to extra-curricular participation, leadership roles, and wider enrichment. With over 40 clubs ranging from sports and music to STEM and debating, provision is broad, and parent responses show growing satisfaction, with 80% agreeing their child's interests are well met by extra-curricular activities, up 6.4% since 2022.

Opportunities are also shaped by the school's ambitious infrastructure programme. Plans for a new sports complex, sixth form centre, SEN spaces and wellbeing areas are underpinned by systematic monitoring through monthly SEP Programme meetings with governors and the EA. This ensures that physical barriers to learning and participation are actively addressed.

Monitoring also extends to Careers and CEIAG provision. The school has identified this as an area for further development, ensuring opportunities are not just plentiful but also aligned with pupils' futures.

RESPECT: Listening, Responding, and Supporting

Respect is at the heart of how the school evaluates itself and responds to barriers.

High behavioural standards are embedded through the ASPIRE framework, Positive Notes, and Achievement Assemblies. Monitoring of behaviour, attendance, and pupil engagement is systematic, and over 87% of parents now agree that “children behave well at Carrickfergus Grammar,” up 9.1% in three years.

Pastoral monitoring ensures that learners feel safe and supported. Parental responses confirm this, with 92.2% stating their child feels safe at school, and 89.6% agreeing that staff know their child as an individual. The effective pastoral system, from Heads of Year to the school counsellor, ensures that individual needs are tracked and met, with regular review of Personal Education Plans and SEN provision.

Respect is also reflected in the school’s responsiveness to parental and pupil voice. The 2025 parental survey gathered 219 responses, with high satisfaction in areas such as high academic expectations (99.6%) and clear school leadership (91.7%). Where challenges are identified – such as facilities (73.6%) or careers provision – the school acts: its Key Area infrastructure plan includes investment in ICT, canteen facilities, and SEN provision, while strategic approaches to careers guidance is under review.

Carrickfergus Grammar’s monitoring systems are multi-layered, data-informed, and values-driven. Through Knowledge, the school ensures rigorous academic tracking and evidence-informed teaching. Through Opportunity, it ensures access to a wide range of academic, sporting, and cultural experiences, supported by strategic infrastructure planning. Through Respect, it maintains a culture of safety, discipline, and responsiveness to pupil and parental voice.

Parental feedback evidences strong confidence in these systems, with over 88% of parents recommending the school to others. The school is not complacent: areas requiring attention are identified transparently, and strategies – from targeted academic interventions to large-scale capital projects – are put in place.

Carrickfergus Grammar monitors both pupil and school performance with rigour and responds to barriers with determination, ensuring every learner is equipped to thrive with the mantra “no labels, no limits”.

Core Question 4:

How does the school define, celebrate and embed success for all learners?

KNOWLEDGE

Carrickfergus Grammar School defines success first and foremost through the cultivation of powerful knowledge. Success is viewed not as a momentary performance but as the cumulative outcome of knowledge securely embedded in long-term memory. The school’s evidence-informed approach—anchored in Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction and the cognitive science pillars of knowledge, memory and assessment—ensures that success is attainable for all learners, regardless of starting point.

Success is embedded through:

- High expectations grounded in research-informed pedagogy.
- Consistent use of retrieval practice, interleaving and spaced learning to maximise retention.
- Modelling, guided practice and carefully calibrated scaffolding to ensure pupils experience “optimal levels of success” in lessons—challenging enough to promote growth, but supported enough to prevent cognitive overload.

- Knowledge-rich curriculum design which specifies the core powerful knowledge all pupils will master, ensuring equity and preventing the widening of knowledge gaps.

The school celebrates success through transparent assessment systems which highlight progress, celebrate high performance and benchmark against Grammar School averages. Pupils understand what success looks like because success criteria, models of excellence and high-quality feedback are central to classroom practice. The school defines success not only in absolute outcomes but also in the fidelity with which knowledge is acquired, remembered and applied.

OPPORTUNITY

Success is also defined through opportunity—breadth of experience, engagement, aspiration and social mobility. The school believes that “no labels, no limits” is central to its mission. Success is therefore not limited to academic attainment but includes participation, leadership, and exposure to enriching experiences.

Success is embedded and celebrated through:

- A broad and varied curriculum that allows pupils to pursue interests and build strengths.
- A rich extra-curricular programme of over 40 clubs and societies, enabling pupils to flourish beyond the classroom.
- Opportunities for leadership, from the House System to prefect roles to SistersIN, student council and peer mentoring programmes.
- University links, specialist programmes and pathways that build aspiration and widen horizons.

- Systems of targeted intervention, mentoring and study skills development to ensure that barriers to opportunity are removed and pupils are supported to aspire and achieve.

The school defines success as each learner leaving with pathways open, choices available and confidence enhanced—hallmarks of a school committed to the greatest possible social mobility.

RESPECT

Success is defined through the culture of Respect that permeates the school. Success for all learners is not only academic or aspirational; it is relational. The school nurtures a climate where pupils feel known, valued and supported, and where positive behaviour and strong relationships enable learning to thrive.

Success is embedded and celebrated through:

- A warm-strict environment with a Christian ethos, where expectations are high but relationships are caring and consistent.
- A pastoral system that recognises success in effort, character, resilience and citizenship.
- The Positive Note system, reinforcing gratitude, leadership, kindness, perseverance and academic commitment.
- A preventative curriculum focused on wellbeing, safeguarding and positive decision-making.
- A community ethos where respect for others, for learning and for oneself is regarded as a foundation of successful personal development.

In this context, success is not merely an outcome; it is a lived daily experience shaped by respectful habits, positive attitudes and strong moral foundations.

Carrickfergus Grammar School defines, celebrates and embeds success through a coherent and interlocking framework: the pursuit of powerful Knowledge, the expansion of Opportunity and the cultivation of Respect. In doing so, the school ensures that success is not reserved for the few, but accessible to every learner who attends.

Core Question 5:

How is the school creating the right conditions for the growth and development of a community of learning?

KNOWLEDGE

Carrickfergus Grammar School is deliberately cultivating the conditions necessary for a thriving community of learning by embedding a shared, research-informed understanding of what effective learning looks like. Central to this is the school's use of cognitive science and Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, which underpin the consistent pedagogical approaches used across subjects. The school ensures that pupils, staff and parents understand the importance of powerful knowledge—knowledge that is carefully sequenced, explicitly taught and retrieved regularly to secure long-term memory.

Through whole-school professional learning, the development of Knowledge Organisers, rigorous assessment procedures and a knowledge-rich curriculum, the school has created a culture in which the transmission, mastery and celebration of knowledge are collective priorities. Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge continues to be strengthened through departmental development time, the Teacher CPD Academy, lesson study pilots and national/international research links, ensuring that powerful knowledge is not the responsibility of individuals but the shared intellectual project of a learning community.

OPPORTUNITY

A true community of learning flourishes only when all pupils and staff have the opportunity to participate fully in the academic and wider life of the school. The school creates these conditions through structures that promote collaboration, aspiration and meaningful engagement.

Opportunities include:

- A broad curriculum and enriched pathways at post-16, enabling learners to pursue subjects aligned with interests and future ambitions.
- Extensive extra-curricular provision and leadership roles that develop confidence and build social capital.
- A revitalised House System designed to cultivate healthy competition, teamwork and inter-year collaboration.
- Peer tutoring, mentoring programmes and study-support structures ensuring pupils learn from one another.
- Partnerships with universities, employers and external organisations that widen horizons and build a culture of aspiration.

For staff, opportunities for collaboration are sustained through Friday Professional Hour, joint departmental planning, access to high-quality CPD and engagement with national networks such as InnerDrive's Cognitive Science Network and ResearchED. These activities ensure that professional dialogue, reflection and growth are embedded in the life of the school, laying foundations for a genuine community of educators engaged in continuous improvement.

RESPECT

Respect forms the relational foundation upon which a true community of learning is built. Carrickfergus Grammar School promotes a culture in which pupils and staff feel safe, valued and known. The warm-strict ethos, high behavioural standards and the ASPIRE framework ensure that classrooms are calm, purposeful environments in which learning is respected, protected and prioritised.

Pastoral structures—including Form Tutors, Heads of Year, the school counsellor and the SEN team—ensure pupils' voices are heard, barriers to engagement are removed and respectful relationships underpin academic and personal development. The Positive Note system explicitly celebrates behaviours that enrich a learning community: gratitude, helpfulness, leadership, resilience, engagement and kindness.

Respect also extends to the professional culture of the school. Staff wellbeing is supported through meaningful professional learning, clear communication, recognition of effort and collaborative decision-making. The school's commitment to equity and inclusion—including support for pupils with additional educational needs, literacy/numeracy interventions and work to reduce financial barriers—ensures that every member of the community feels valued and able to contribute.

Through the interconnected pillars of Knowledge, Opportunity and Respect, Carrickfergus Grammar School is deliberately shaping the conditions of a dynamic, aspirational and cohesive community of learning—one in which all members grow together, contribute together, and succeed together.

PART 2

A summary and evaluation, including through the use of performance and other data, of the school's strategies.

- a) learning, teaching, assessment, and promoting the raising of standards of attainment among all pupils, in particular in communication, using mathematics and using Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)

'A' Level Context

The tables below outline the indicators of standards and outcomes for Carrickfergus Grammar School 'A' Level pupils from 2023-2025. The results are compared against the 2019 (pre-COVID) data, excluding the COVID years from 2020-2022.

Grammar – 'A' Level

	<u>CGS 2019</u>	<u>CGS 2020-2022</u>	<u>CGS 2023</u>	<u>CGS 2024</u>	<u>CGS 2025</u>	<u>NI Grammar 2024</u>
<u>3 or more A*-C</u>	75.6%	n/a	79.2%	86.5%	90%	79.9%

CGS by Gender – 'A' Level

	<u>CGS 2019</u>		<u>CGS 2020- 2022</u>	<u>CGS 2023</u>		<u>CGS 2024</u>		<u>CGS 2025</u>	
<u>3 or more A*- C</u>	Boys 62.5%	Girls 89.5%	n/a	Boys 79.1%	Girls 79.3%	Boys 77.4%	Girls 92.3%	Boys 87.5%	Girls 91.5%

'A' LEVEL EXAMINATION RESULTS 2025
CUMULATIVE A2 GRADE OVERVIEW by PERCENTAGE

	A*	A*-A	A*-B	A*-C	A*-D	A*-E
Accounting	0	33	83	83	100	100
Art & Design	38	63	100	100	100	100
Biology	11	37	70	100	100	100
Business Studies	14	43	71	100	100	100
Chemistry	8	46	77	92	100	100
Digital Technology	50	50	100	100	100	100
English Literature	22	39	72	94	100	100
Environmental Technology	0	50	50	100	100	100
French	33	33	100	100	100	100
Further Mathematics	67	67	100	100	100	100
Geography	13	63	88	100	100	100
Government and Politics	0	33	67	100	100	100
Health and Social Care	0	46	92	100	100	100
History	0	44	89	100	100	100
Mathematics	22	57	87	96	100	100
Music	0	100	100	100	100	100
Nutrition and Food	0	22	33	89	89	100
Physical Education	18	55	91	100	100	100
Physics	7	50	71	86	93	100
Religious Studies	9	32	95	95	100	100
Spanish	8	31	69	92	100	100
Technology	33	83	92	100	100	100

A2 COMPARISON AGAINST NORTHERN IRELAND GRAMMAR AVERAGES
2025

	CGS A*-C %	NI A*-C %	CGS A*-B%	NI A*-B%
Accounting	83.3	-	83.3	-
Art & Design	100	96.5	100	78
Biology	100	90.3	70.4	70.3
Business Studies	100	90.4	71.4	68.4
Chemistry	92.3	90.9	76.9	74.9
Digital Technology	100	79	100	49.7
English Literature	94.4	96.8	72.2	74.8
Environmental Technology	100	87.7	50	60.6
French	100	93.6	100	77.1
Further Mathematics	100	98.3	100	90.8
Geography	100	90.8	87.5	68.1
Government and Politics	100	93.7	66.7	72.5
Health and Social Care	100	96.6	92.3	77.8
History	100	92	88.9	72
Mathematics	95.7	91.7	87	76.8
Music	100	86	100	64.3
Nutrition and Food	88.9	91.8	33.3	65
Physical Education	100	94.8	90.9	69.5
Physics	85.7	83	71.4	63.4
Religious Studies	95.5	93.5	95.5	71.6
Spanish	92.3	96.6	69.2	77.5
Technology	100	89.1	91.7	62.3

AS LEVEL EXAMINATION RESULTS 2025

AS COMPARISON AGAINST NORTHERN IRELAND GRAMMAR AVERAGES 2025

	CGS A-C %	NI A-C %	CGS A-B%	NI A-B%
Biology	87.5	81.5	70.8	60.8
Business Studies	55.6	86.1	44.4	62.9
Chemistry	100	82.2	91.7	64.7
Digital Technology	77	72.6	92	44.1
English Literature	100	97.1	64.3	71.8
Environmental Technology	83.3	72.6	50	44.9
Further Mathematics	80	95.7	80	88
Geography	30	79	30	56.9
Government and Politics	88.9	81.8	66.7	59.6
Health and Social Care	100	94.4	100	72.9
History	76.9	80.1	46.2	54.4
Life and Health Science	100	77.2	100	40.1
Mathematics	79.1	87.3	70.8	72.7
Music	100	89.1	0	63.2
Nutrition and Food	50	80.8	33.3	57.5
Physical Education	44	83.6	78	57
Physics	82.6	79.3	60.9	60
Religious Studies	100	91.4	94.4	67.6
Spanish	100	90.9	100	66.6
Technology	90.9	88.7	90.9	64.3

GCSE Context

The tables below and overleaf outline the indicators of standards and outcomes for Carrickfergus Grammar School GCSE pupils from 2023-2025. The results are compared against the 2019 (pre-COVID) data, excluding the COVID years from 2020-2022.

Grammar - GCSE

	<u>CGS 2019</u>	<u>CGS 2020- 2022</u>	<u>CGS 2023</u>	<u>CGS 2024</u>	<u>CGS 2025</u>	<u>Northern Ireland Grammar 2024</u>
<u>5 or more A*-C at GCSE</u>	91.07%		100%	99.1%	100%	96.6%
<u>5 or more A*-C at GCSE inc. English and Maths</u>	91.07%	N/A	100%	98.2%	100%	94.2%
<u>7 or more A*-C at GCSE inc. English and Maths</u>	79.46%		98.29%	96.5%	98.1%	90.5%

CGS by Gender - GCSE

	<u>CGS 2019</u>		<u>CGS 2020</u> <u>- 2022</u>	<u>CGS 2023</u>		<u>CGS 2024</u>		<u>CGS 2025</u>	
<u>5 or more A*-C at GCSE</u>	Boys 89.39%	Girls 93.48%	n/a	Boys 100%	Girls 100%	Boys 98.4%	Girls 100%	Boys 100%	Girls 100%
<u>5 or more A*-C at GCSE inc. English and Maths</u>	Boys 89.39%	Girls 93.48%		Boys 100%	Girls 100%	Boys 98.4%	Girls 100%	Boys 100%	Girls 100%
<u>7 or more A*-C at GCSE</u>	Boys 74.24%	Girls 86.96%		Boys 98.25%	Girls 98.33%	Boys 95.1%	Girls 100%	Boys 96%	Girls 100%
<u>7 or more A*-C at GCSE inc. English and Maths</u>	Boys 74.24%	Girls 86.96%		Boys 98.25%	Girls 98.33%	Boys 95.1%	Girls 100%	Boys 96%	Girls 100%

GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS 2025

GCSE CUMULATIVE GRADE OVERVIEW by PERCENTAGE

	A*	A*-A	A*-B	A*-C	A*-D	A*-E
Art & Design	0	22.2	55.6	94.4	100	100
Biology	4.8	44	73.8	98.8	100	100
Business Studies	0	50	75	92.9	100	100
Chemistry	11.5	47.5	77	100	100	100
Child Development	6.3	65.6	84.4	96.9	100	100
Digital Technology	38.5	61.5	92.3	100	100	100
English Language	19.1	71.8	90.9	100	100	100
English Literature	20	60.9	81.8	99.1	100	100
French	30.4	56.5	91.3	100	100	100
Further Mathematics	21.6	60.8	86.3	96.1	100	100
Geography	5.3	26.3	57.9	84.2	100	100
German	50	100	100	100	100	100
History	12.8	51.3	84.6	100	100	100
Mathematics	17.3	58.2	98.2	100	100	100
Music	42.9	85.7	92.9	100	100	100
Nutrition and Food	0	31.6	78.9	100	100	100
Physical Education	10.5	42.1	63.2	100	100	100
Physics	8.6	53.4	87.9	100	100	100
Religious Studies	14.7	54.1	73.4	90.8	96.3	98.2
Spanish	17.4	64	82.6	100	100	100
Technology	8.3	36.1	50	80.6	94.4	97.2

**GCSE COMPARISON AGAINST NORTHERN IRELAND GRAMMAR
AVERAGES 2025 ***

	CGS A*-C %	NI A*-C %	CGS A*-B%	NI A*-B%
Art & Design	94.4	92.8	55.6	67.1
Biology	98.8	97.9	73.8	79.4
Business Studies	92.9	88.1	75	61.4
Chemistry	100	97.4	77	79.9
Child Development	96.9	95.2	84.4	69.9
Digital Technology	100	91	92.3	70.2
English Language	100	96.9	90.9	74.8
English Literature	99.1	96.7	81.8	78
French	100	89.4	91.3	61.2
Further Mathematics	96.1	93.7	86.3	84.9
Geography	84.2	93.4	57.9	72.7
German	100	90.9	100	61.6
History	100	93.7	84.6	72.8
Mathematics	100	94.7	98.2	79.3
Music	100	95.1	92.9	80.3
Food and Nutrition	100	93.5	78.9	69.4
Physical Education	100	91.9	63.2	65.4
Physics	100	98.2	87.9	84.5
Religious Education FULL	90.8	89.7	73.4	68.6
Spanish	100	94.7	82.6	66.7
Technology	80.6	92.5	50	68.4

Carrickfergus Grammar School's 2025 examination results further strengthened the school's position as one of the top-performing selective schools in Northern Ireland. At A Level, 90% of pupils achieved three or more A*-C grades, representing a 4% increase on the previous year and setting a new benchmark for the school's academic performance. These results placed the school well above Northern Ireland grammar school averages and continued a sustained upward trajectory in senior school attainment.

Performance at the highest grade bands was hugely encouraging. Over 81% of all A Level grades were A*-B, demonstrating strong subject mastery and the potential impact of the school's evidence-informed learning and teaching model. In addition, 42.5% of the cohort achieved at least two A*/A grades, reinforcing the school's reputation for academic excellence and its capacity to stretch the most able learners to the highest levels of achievement.

GCSE outcomes in 2025 reflected similarly exceptional standards. Every girl achieved 7 or more GCSEs at A*-C including English and Mathematics, while the whole cohort produced a GCSE profile characterised by strength, consistency and continued improvement. Notably, 56% of all GCSE grades were A*/A, representing an increase of over four percentage points on the previous year and signalling the consolidation of sharply rising outcomes across all subject areas.

A particularly striking feature of the 2025 results was the performance of English Language and Mathematics, both of which significantly outperformed Northern Ireland Grammar School averages. English Language results in particular were 19.6% above NI Grammar averages at A*-B at GCSE, while Mathematics exceeded Grammar School averages by over 14 percentage points at A*-B, reflecting the school's sustained emphasis on powerful knowledge, subject expertise and rigorous assessment practice. These outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of the school's approach in core subjects that matter for progression

The 2025 results show a school that is not only sustaining excellence but continually raising its standards. The combination of high 'A' Level attainment, strong GCSE outcomes, encouraging English and Mathematics performance, and a narrow gap between boys' and girls' results reflects a learning culture defined by ambition, precision and opportunity for all. The 2025 results represent another landmark year in which Carrickfergus Grammar School has set new academic precedents and strengthened its position as one of Northern Ireland's highest-performing schools.

Key Stage 3 Context

In line with statutory requirements, the school continued to target and track progress in Key Stage 3 assessments in recent years, but stored much more credence in its own internal use of objective standardised assessments and consequent regression analysis in order to ascertain progress.

The school used standardised assessments such as PTE 11 / 12 / 13 / 14 and PTM 11 / 12 / 13 / 14 as well as CATs in order to make viable and accurate judgements on a pupil's progress based on so-called 'data dashboards', complemented by in-house regression analysis of internal examination scores.

Internal Exam Standardisation and Regression Analysis

Carrickfergus Grammar School uses a highly sophisticated, school-devised tracking system in order to measure the progress of each pupil after each set of internal exams.

As a result of a move to standardised scores for all subjects in Key Stage 3 examinations, the school is able to allocate the child a mean 'Exam Standardised Score' which can be compared with their 'CATS' standardised mean score. Typically, at Carrickfergus Grammar School, there is very strong correlation between the Exams Standardised Score and the CATS score, meaning that pupils on the whole are performing in line with potential. The Standard Deviation for Year 8 cohorts in CAT Assessments is identified, and used in comparison with the Exam Standardized Score to identify significant over – or underperformance.

A regression analysis is then undertaken with the standardised scores. This method aims to put all pupils on an equal footing by comparing them against their own potential and ranking them accordingly with a residual score. To be specific, it compares their CATS mean scores with their exam standardised score and works out the regression residual. Pupils with a residual of +1 are the pupils who are

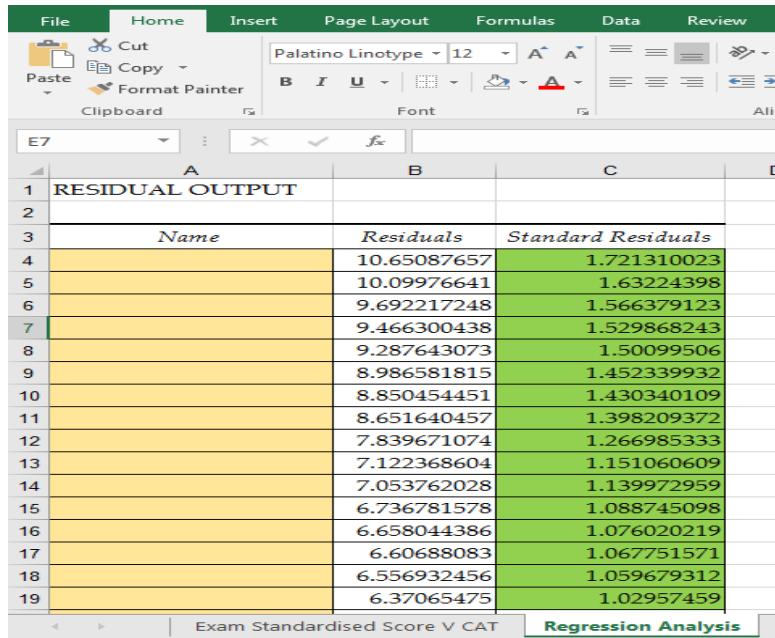
progressing exceptionally well, and potentially 'overperforming'. The pupils with a negative score of -1 or less are those whose performance has not been good enough – and are potentially 'underperforming'.

Example Standardised Score V CATS Standardised Score spreadsheet:

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following structure:

	Surname	Forename	English	French	Geography	History	Maths	Science	Average	CATS	Exam Std. Score							
1																		
2			12	-2.27	30	-2.03	55	-0.63	44	-1.61	44	-1.28	75	0.10	-1.2857	100	88	
3			37	-1.12	56	-0.76	60	-0.33	54	-1.00	61	-0.35	70	-0.28	-0.6394	95	95	
4			72	0.49	67	-0.22	81	0.91	61	-0.57	85	0.96	84	0.78	0.39262	111	106	
5			27	-1.58	77	0.27	72	0.38	76	0.35	62	-0.30	87	1.01	0.02261	97	102	
6			50	-0.52	64	-0.37	43	-1.34	53	-1.06	42	-1.39	57	-1.26	-0.9904	82	91	
7			44	-0.80	98	1.29	89	1.39	93	1.40	85	0.96	94	1.54	0.96347	104	113	
8			90	1.31	90	0.90	63	-0.15	88	1.09	72	0.25	72	-0.13	0.54569	105	108	
9			66	0.21	82	0.51	53	-0.74	66	-0.26	90	1.23	72	-0.13	0.13744	101	104	
10			84	1.04	92	1.00	81	0.91	81	0.66	82	0.80	79	0.41	0.80187	108	111	
11			69	0.35	69	-0.13	54	-0.69	72	0.11	70	0.14	81	0.56	0.05722	97	103	
12			47	-0.66	44	-1.35	35	-1.81	56	-0.87	46	-1.17	57	-1.26	-1.1881	90	89	
13			66	0.21	76	0.22	58	-0.45	85	0.90	45	-1.23	82	0.63	0.04839	103	103	

Example Regression Analysis:



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet titled 'Regression Analysis'. The table is titled 'RESIDUAL OUTPUT' and has three columns: 'Name', 'Residuals', and 'Standard Residuals'. The data rows are numbered 4 through 19. The 'Residuals' column contains numerical values, and the 'Standard Residuals' column contains values with three decimal places. The 'Standard Residuals' column for rows 4 through 19 is highlighted in green. The Excel ribbon at the top shows the 'Home' tab is selected. The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Exam Standardised Score V CAT' and 'Regression Analysis'.

	A	B	C	D
1	RESIDUAL OUTPUT			
3	Name	Residuals	Standard Residuals	
4		10.65087657	1.721310023	
5		10.09976641	1.63224398	
6		9.692217248	1.566379123	
7		9.466300438	1.529868243	
8		9.287643073	1.50099506	
9		8.986581815	1.452339932	
10		8.850454451	1.430340109	
11		8.651640457	1.398209372	
12		7.839671074	1.266985333	
13		7.122368604	1.151060609	
14		7.053762028	1.139972959	
15		6.736781578	1.088745098	
16		6.658044386	1.076020219	
17		6.60688083	1.067751571	
18		6.556932456	1.059679312	
19		6.37065475	1.02957459	

Whilst male and female pupils tend to perform similarly at Key Stages 4 and 5, the school has identified that there is a greater proportion of male pupils underperforming in Years 8-10. Various interventions have been introduced to address this:

- meeting with parents and the Principal;
- a new 'Study Skills Club';
- Homework Club (linked to SEN provision);
- Peer Tutoring.

The school has continued to focus sharply on learning and teaching approaches in the classroom as well as the fusion of its academic and pastoral structures, thus affording all pupils the best opportunities to develop and succeed. This will be identified in the new Development Plan through a specific target in this regard.

(b) providing for the special, additional or other individual educational needs of pupils;

It is the view of Carrickfergus Grammar School that each child in the school is unique. Every effort is made to help pupils enjoy and partake in the learning process, to achieve success, to develop confidence and to encourage the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

As per our Mission Statement, the school will seek to promote a caring, supportive environment within a well-ordered school community where staff and pupils can work in an atmosphere of mutual respect so that each and every pupil should achieve the highest level of intellectual, personal, physical and social development of which he or she is capable.

It is also the aim of the school to enter into partnership(s) of mutual benefit with parents regarding the development and behaviour of their children.

The building of pupils' self-esteem through school experiences should create an awareness of civic responsibilities encouraging them in turn to make a positive contribution to society on completion of their secondary education.

The SENCO, Mrs Withers, works closely with all her colleagues, in particular the Learning Support Assistants, Form Teachers, Heads of Year and the Senior Leadership Team. In recent years, Mrs Withers has joined the Senior Leadership Team. In recent years, a Senior Pastoral Team has been formed which meets fortnightly, consisting of the Principal, Vice-Principal, Head of Pastoral Care and SENCo.

The SENCo:

- oversees the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy;
- liaises with and advises fellow teachers, and co-ordinates the work of Learning Support Assistants;

- co-ordinates provision for each child with identified special or additional needs;
- maintains the school's SEN/medical register and oversees the records on all pupils with Special Educational Needs, including PLPs;
- liaises with parents of these named pupils;
- contributes to In-Service Training of staff and liaises with SEN Advisory Staff;
- liaises with external agencies including psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, peripatetic staff and exam boards;
- co-ordinates assessment procedures and access arrangements, and disseminates testing and record keeping of named pupils;
- reviews procedures in Personal Education Plans with parents and external agencies where necessary;
- arranges for implementation of examination arrangements and / or concession / consideration where appropriate.

Efficient lines of communication between staff exist through staff briefings, staff meetings, pro-formas illustrating concerns, results of Reading Age, Comprehension Age and Mathematical Testing.

Many SEN pupils avail of additional learning and mentoring support both during the timetabled day and after school.

The admission arrangements for those pupils with Special Needs but without a statement are the same as those for all pupils.

Pupils with a statement are placed by the Education Authority who make effort to comply with parent and pupil preference in accordance with admission procedures, but who also take on board the views of school.

The school's arrangements for identifying pupils with SEN have regard to procedures recommended in the Code of Practice and follow the new 3- Stage Model. Assessment of pupils' learning needs takes into account:

- information from Primary School, Key Stage 2 Assessments and parents;
- baseline tests in our own School.

Pupils may move either way between the stages, remain at a particular stage or show sufficient improvement to be removed from the SEN register.

Throughout the stages, pupils are monitored and reviewed according to the nature of the concerns and targets are set within their PLP. Cross-reference and links are made to the Positive Reinforcement Policy and Pastoral Care Policy, especially with regard to behaviour. Every effort is made to ensure that PLPs and associated targets reflect the interests, needs and personality of the child in question

CATS tests continue to be used for the purposes of benchmarking pupils' literacy and numeracy ability alongside PTE, PTM, NGRT and NGST tests, predicting GCSE results and analysing value-added and subject residuals at GCSE level.

The school also places importance on NGRT tests for the purposes, in particular, of identifying access arrangements for examinations.

(c) promoting the health and well-being, child protection, attendance, good behaviour and discipline of pupils;

Staff at all levels continue to ensure that Carrickfergus Grammar School makes a strong contribution to promoting healthy lifestyles.

The staff are committed to the development of the whole person and believe that personal and social achievement enhances academic achievement. The pastoral dimension supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development during adolescence, and a carefully structured curricular programme also helps prepare them for adult life.

Carrickfergus Grammar School accepts fully the principles in the statement below:

'As well as their statutory responsibilities in relation to pupils' learning, Schools have a pastoral responsibility towards their pupils and should recognise that the children and young people in their charge have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. In particular, Schools are expected to do whatever is reasonable, in all circumstances of the case, to safeguard or promote pupil safety and wellbeing'. (Pastoral Care in Schools – DENI 1999).

In December 2016 the ETI reported that

"The provision for care and support of the pupils is very good. A particular strength of the provision is the extensive extra-curricular programme, which provides the pupils with numerous opportunities in sport, music, technology and beyond, to improve their competence and to compete in their areas of interest. The pupil voice is valued, and regular pupil surveys and evaluations inform improvements in aspects of school life, for example, in the taught pastoral curriculum."

All stakeholders are kept informed of the School's Child Protection procedures and are supplied with regular updates. Child Protection training for teaching and non-teaching staff takes place on an annual basis. Parents receive a pamphlet on Child Protection procedures, and relevant posters displaying the picture of the designated Child Protection Officer and deputy designated Officers are displayed around School.

All new Year 8 parents sign for a copy of the school's Child Protection Policy. The Principal and Designated Child Protection Officer meet fortnightly. Recently, a new School Safeguarding Team has been introduced consisting of the Principal, Designated Governor for Child Protection, Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection. This group meets every 6-8 weeks. The School attends Case Conferences when necessary and continues to build up extensive leads with external agencies.

Parents and the broader public also have access to a Board of Governors' Report which details the curricular and extra-curricular achievements of the School, amongst other statutory notifications. Parents are given regular reports on the progress of their child which include:

- two progress reports (December and June);
- Parent - Teacher consultations;
- meetings with members of the pastoral team as and when appropriate or requested.

The clarification and reinforcement of behaviour management structures remains a focus through the consolidation of line management structures.

Pupils and parents have access to the School Behaviour Management Policies.

The School's Attendance Policy was amended in 2025.

(d) providing for the professional development of staff;

Staff professional development (professional learning) at Carrickfergus Grammar School has undergone significant transformation in recent years, establishing the school as a sector-leading environment for evidence-informed practice. The development of staff expertise, the embedding of robust pedagogical principles and the cultivation of a research-driven culture are now central drivers of school improvement. This review draws on evidence from Key Area 1 of the School Development Plan, the 2023 Development Plan, the school prospectus and prize-giving speeches, and outlines the strengths and emerging areas of ongoing development.

1. A Research-Engaged, Evidence-Informed Culture

Carrickfergus Grammar School has become recognised locally and nationally as a hub for evidence-informed practice, driven by a clear strategy to place research at

the heart of professional learning. The appointment of Northern Ireland's first **Director of Research**, Mr Mark Roberts, reinforced a commitment to embedding cognitive science, explicit instruction and high-impact pedagogies across all classrooms.

A defining feature of this research culture was the school's hosting of **Northern Ireland's first ever ResearchED conference** in September 2024—**ResearchED Belfast**. This event brought hundreds of teachers, academics and international speakers to Carrickfergus Grammar School, placing the school at the centre of professional dialogue across the region. It signalled not only the school's leadership but also its capacity to convene and elevate educational practice across Northern Ireland.

Outward-Facing Professional Learning: Staff Visits Overseas

A further hallmark of the school's outward-facing approach is its investment in sending staff to observe world-class educational practice internationally. Staff have visited:

- **The Michaela School**, London
- **High-performing school networks in the Netherlands**
- **Schools forming part of the UK's leading research hubs**

These overseas visits are designed to benchmark classroom practice against the very best internationally and to bring this expertise back to Carrickfergus. As stated in the School Development Plan, staff will continue to travel to the Netherlands and the top-performing school in England as part of the next development cycle, ensuring that professional learning remains cutting-edge and globally informed.

This combination of hosting major educational conferences and sending staff internationally places Carrickfergus Grammar School among the most outward-looking and research-engaged schools in Northern Ireland.

2. Clear Pedagogical Frameworks Driving Classroom Practice

Professional learning is anchored in a coherent pedagogical framework aligned with **Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction**. Staff training continues to focus on six core principles:

- Stretch and Challenge
- Effective Questioning and Oracy
- Modelling
- Scaffolding
- Deliberate Practice
- Robust Assessment and Feedback

Rather than adopting a cycle of short-lived initiatives, CPD at CGS has “lingered long” on these approaches. Staff have undertaken deep study and repeated refinement of retrieval practice, scaffolding, explicit teaching and oracy for learning. Revisiting these approaches year after year has led to high levels of consistency across departments and visible impact on pupil outcomes.

3. Structured, High-Quality CPD Provision

Staff professional development is structured, deliberate and protected.

Friday Professional Hour (FPH)

A fortnightly ring-fenced period ensures regular, sustained professional learning.

InnerDrive Teacher CPD Academy

Staff are given access to high-quality online modules focusing on cognitive load, retrieval practice, oracy, metacognition and behavioural routines.

Subject-Specific Deep Knowledge Development

Departments are supported through subscriptions to platforms such as Massolit or Seneca Premium to foster high-level subject expertise and support the ambition of increasing A*/A grades.

4. Alignment with Curriculum Reform and Knowledge-Rich Teaching

Professional development is closely aligned with the development of the knowledge-rich Key Stage 3 curriculum, a major strategic initiative at the school. Staff have been trained extensively in:

- identifying powerful disciplinary knowledge
- designing and refining Knowledge Organisers
- embedding self-quizzing and retrieval
- teaching study skills grounded in cognitive science
- ensuring continuity of learning across KS2 → KS3 transitions

This alignment ensures that professional learning directly supports curriculum intent and examination outcomes.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of Professional Learning

Professional development is systematically evaluated through:

- Departmental Development Plans
- SLT/HoD review meetings
- CPD audits
- Staff feedback mechanisms
- alignment of CPD targets with exam analysis and regression data

The school's approach is highly responsive: where underperformance is identified in subjects or year groups, staff development priorities are adjusted accordingly.

6. Staff Wellbeing and Professional Culture

A positive professional environment is maintained through initiatives such as:

- Golden Ticket Days
- Flexible Working
- Reading-from-home days
- Investment in staff devices and digital tools

The aim is to ensure that staff feel valued, supported and motivated to engage in the extensive professional learning programme.

7. Impact of Professional Development

The impact of professional learning is evident across the school:

Exceptional Outcomes

Record-breaking performances at both GCSE and A Level reflect the strengthened quality of classroom practice.

Reduction of Gender Gaps

The narrowing—and in some areas reversing—of performance gaps between boys and girls is attributed to highly consistent, well-informed teaching.

National Recognition

The school has been recognised in the Sunday Times Top 100 Selective Schools list and named **Families First School of the Year**, with quality of teaching repeatedly cited as a key factor.

Pupil Study Habits and Independence

Integrated CPD on cognitive science has improved pupils' study behaviours, memory retention and readiness for examination success.

Carrickfergus Grammar School's approach to professional learning is strategic, research-led and ambitious. The school:

- hosts national conferences,
- participates in international school visits,
- invests in a comprehensive and protected CPD structure,
- builds staff expertise deeply rather than superficially, and
- aligns professional learning tightly with curriculum, assessment and school improvement goals.

This approach ensures that professional development is not a peripheral activity but a central pillar of the school's drive to achieve exceptional outcomes for pupils.

(f) promoting links with the parents of pupils at the school and with the local community, including other schools, the business community, and voluntary and statutory bodies;

Carrickfergus Grammar School (CGS) places a strong strategic focus on building, sustaining and enhancing partnerships with parents, the wider community, other educational institutions, employers, and voluntary/statutory agencies. Evidence from the School Development Plan (SDP), parental, pupil and staff surveys, and wider documentation demonstrates that these links are purposeful, effective, and central to the school's ethos of Knowledge, Opportunity and Respect. The School has developed and appointed a dedicated Student Enrichment Co-ordinator who further supports this outreach work."

1. Links with Parents

The school's partnership with parents is an ongoing area of developmental strength. The Parental Survey (March 2025) demonstrates high confidence in the school's leadership, communication and pastoral systems:

- **91.7% of parents agree the school is well led and managed**
- **89.6% agree that staff know their child as an individual, including interests and strengths**
- **92.2% report their child feels safe**
- **87.7% say children behave well**

Parents also feel meaningfully engaged in their children's learning. The outgoing School Development Plan outlined a broad, well-established range of communication methods, including:

- Parent-Teacher consultations
- Information evenings
- Study skills sessions

- Newsletters and letters
- Text messages
- School website updates
- SchoolCloud systems for reporting
- The Parents Association (PTA)

The school values the ‘parent-school’ partnership as a “three-way process – school, home and child”, recognising parents’ lifelong commitment to their children’s educational development and the value they place on strong school-home links.

Overall, parents indicate that they feel respected, informed and included, and that their partnership with the school is constructive and valued.

The school has identified a need to partner more with specific parents on the development of good study skills and independent study habits for pupils at home.

2. Links with the Local Community

CGS’s engagement with the local community is wide-ranging and strongly embedded. The SDP states that the school “enjoys strong links with other schools and the local community at all levels (business / voluntary / statutory bodies)”, and this is reinforced by external recognition: the school was praised as a “cornerstone school in the community” when awarded Families First School of the Year (Northern Region) in 2024.

Key elements of community engagement include:

- **Civic and cultural links**, such as sports fixtures, musical events, and community programmes.
- **Community access to school facilities**, with the Infrastructure Action Plan outlining strategies for increased community use of sports and leisure spaces, including advertising of facilities and rental packages to strengthen local partnerships.
- **Partnerships with churches, charities and local groups**, supporting wellbeing, mentoring and community service activities.

- **Collaboration with Mid & East Antrim Borough Council**, highlighted during periods where the school innovatively utilised community facilities to support pupils.
- **SistersIN – a flagship leadership and mentoring programme connecting CGS girls with women leaders from the local and regional community.** Through SistersIN, pupils engage with mentors from business, public service and industry, building confidence, raising aspiration and strengthening the school's outward-facing impact. SistersIN is a key element of opportunity-building for pupils and a major link to the community and business sector.

These partnerships position CGS as an influential, collaborative and outward-looking institution that contributes meaningfully to community life while enhancing pupils' personal and leadership development.

3. Links with Other Schools

CGS has a long-standing commitment to collaboration with other educational institutions, contributing to shared curriculum provision, transition, and professional learning:

- **Carrickfergus Learning Community**, through which subjects such as Media Studies are delivered collaboratively across schools, widening curriculum choice for pupils.
- **Primary school partnerships**, strengthened through:
 - Year 14 Enrichment placements in local primary schools
 - P6 taster days
 - Shared professional development
 - robust literacy and numeracy transition at KS2–KS3
- **ResearchED Belfast**, hosted by CGS, bringing national and international educators to the school as part of its role as a hub for evidence-based practice.

- **Staff visits within and beyond Northern Ireland**, including schools in England and the Netherlands, to share practice and benchmark high performance.

Teaching staff strongly support this outward-facing approach, with 82.6% agreeing that building links with other schools is right and necessary. These partnerships broaden opportunity for pupils and facilitate sector-leading professional learning for staff.

4. Links with the Business Community

The school has developed strong, purposeful connections with employers and business leaders, central to its CEIAG vision:

- **Young Enterprise**, offering entrepreneurship and work-related skills.
- **SistersIN**, which not only connects senior girls with professional female mentors but places the school in direct partnership with leading organisations across Northern Ireland.
- **Enhanced work experience and stronger alumni networks**, ensuring pupils gain real-world insight into future pathways.
- **Employer engagement and labour market alignment**, with careers planning informed by local, national and international employment trends.
- **Strategic community partnerships** seen during Covid-19, including collaboration with Mid & East Antrim Council.

The school's increasing connections with business leaders and professional organisations help to raise aspiration, support social mobility, and strengthen real-world learning experiences.

5. Links with Voluntary and Statutory Bodies

The school demonstrates strong partnerships with a wide range of agencies supporting safeguarding, wellbeing, careers guidance, STEM education and civic participation. These include:

- **Department of Education (DE) and Education Authority (EA)**
- **Northern Health and Social Care Trust**
- **CCEA, ETI, ASCL, NAHT**
- **Sentinus** and **W5**, supporting STEM enrichment
- **Made for More**, supporting wellbeing and mentoring
- **Northern Ireland Careers Service**, contributing to CEIAG
- **Army Cadet Force NI**, supporting extra-curricular and leadership development

Additionally, ongoing capital development requires structured engagement with EA and DENI, with the Infrastructure Action Plan mandating regular meetings and reporting structures.

Such partnerships ensure CGS remains aligned with best practice, statutory requirements and external expertise.

CGS demonstrates a highly effective, outward-facing and ambitious approach to partnership-building. Evidence shows:

- Parents feel valued, well-informed and strongly supportive of the school's direction.
- The local community sees CGS as a cornerstone institution with meaningful civic impact.
- Other schools benefit from CGS's collaborative and research-led culture.
- Business and industry partners, including SistersIN, broaden aspiration and strengthen pathways into careers.
- Voluntary and statutory organisations support wellbeing, safeguarding and curricular enhancement.

These extensive, strategic and continually developing links significantly enrich pupils' experiences, strengthen personal development opportunities, and elevate the school's position as a leading institution in Northern Ireland.

(g) promoting the effective use of ICT, including its use to support learning and teaching, continuing professional development and school leadership and management.

Two Senior Teacher oversee the deployment of ICT and its use for learning, teaching and assessment purposes.

School teaching staff have become competent in the use of Google Classroom, and this has became an established instrument for the promotion of independent learning and the dissemination of course and other information during COVID-19.

The School's Acceptable Use Policy is updated on an annual basis and a BYOD policy is now in place for Sixth Form.

Staff have undertaken in-house training on the use of SIMS (including the recording of Behaviour and Achievement points).

The Key Stage 3 Scheme of Work has been aligned to the National Framework and includes coding, programming and AI ethics. This reflects the school's growing desire to incorporate labour market skill needs and awareness of the ethics of emerging technologies as early as possible into the curriculum.

PART 3

An assessment of –

- a) the school's current financial position and the use made of its financial and other resources; and**
- b) the planned use of the school's projected resources during the period covered by the plan in support of actions to bring about improvement in standards.**

The school has managed its budget well in spite of a lack of appropriate funding from centralised government and a centralised formula for the allocation of budgets which is not fit-for-purpose.

The school's in-year deficit is the result predominantly of a very settled, experienced and expert teaching staff which has led in recent years to a very low turnover of staff. As a result of this, school pays well above the average teaching salary costs for Northern Ireland on an annual basis, and only receives 10% back through the Teacher Salary Protection formula. The school has encouraged the Department of Education to review this unfair formula.

The school is prudent in its management of resources, and robust approaches to financial control. The school has submitted a three-year financial projection to the Department of Education which reflects the challenges faced by all schools due to the current cost of living crisis and rising costs.

PART 4

An assessment of the extent to which the school has met its key targets, or the progress that has been made towards these key targets in any school development plan which a school development plan supersedes or revises.

PERFORMANCE AGAINST SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN TARGETS 2022-2025

<i>School Development Plan Targets 2025</i>	<i>Actual 2023</i>	<i>Actual 2024</i>	<i>Actual 2025</i>
<i>By 2025, to maintain over 90% of pupils attaining 3 or more 'A' Level passes or equivalent at A*-C.</i>	79.2%	86.5%	90%
<i>By 2025, to maintain the gap between boys and girls achieving 3 or more passes or equivalent at A*-C at under 10%.</i>	Gap = 0.2%	Gap = 14.9%	Gap = 4%
<i>By 2025, over 90% of pupils will attain 3 or more AS Level passes or equivalent at A*-C.</i>	69.7%	77%	70%
<i>By 2025, to maintain over 96% of pupils attaining 7 or more A*-C passes at A*-C, including English and Maths.</i>	98.29%	96.5%	98.1%
<i>By 2025, to maintain the gap between boys and girls achieving 7 or more passes at A*-C including English and Maths at under 7%.</i>	Gap = 0.07%	Gap = 3.2%	Gap = 4%
<i>By 2025, to maintain over 98% of pupils attaining 5 or more passes at GCSE including English and Maths.</i>	100%	99.1%	100%
<i>By 2025, to maintain over 75% of pupils attaining 7 or more passes at A*-B including English and Maths.</i>	73.9%	68.14	73.9%
<i>By 2025, to maintain the A*-A Profile at GCSE at over 50%</i>		51.9%	56.4%

Standards and Outcomes

A Level and GCSE

Between 2023 and 2025, Carrickfergus Grammar School has sustained and further strengthened a strong pattern of academic performance at both GCSE and A Level. The school's outcomes over this period reflect not only high standards but also a clear upward trajectory in the attainment of top grades, with performance significantly exceeding Northern Ireland grammar school averages across a wide range of subjects.

At GCSE, the school has maintained the benchmark established in 2022, continuing to push towards a profile in which 100% of pupils achieve seven or more GCSE passes at A*-C, including English and Mathematics. Performance in key subjects has been particularly notable. In 2024, English results were 19.6% above the Northern Ireland Grammar School average at A*-B, whilst in 2025 Mathematics exceeded the same benchmark by 18.9%. The 2025 outcomes further cement this upward trend: almost three-quarters of pupils attained seven or more A*-B grades including English and Mathematics, and 56% of all GCSE grades awarded were A*/A across the school – an increase of more than four percentage points from the previous year. Forty-five pupils achieved seven or more A*-A grades, and every girl in the cohort achieved 7+ A*-C passes including English and Mathematics. Importantly, the performance of boys strengthened significantly during this period, narrowing and, in some areas, surpassing female performance, marking a notable shift in gender patterns traditionally observed at GCSE. In 2025, 18 subjects at A Level were above Northern Ireland Grammar School averages at A*-C, whilst at GCSE 19 subjects surpassed Grammar School averages at A*-C.

At A Level, the school has demonstrated sustained excellence and year-on-year improvement. In 2024, over 76% of all grades were at A*-B, with seventeen subjects

performing above Northern Ireland Grammar School averages at A*-C. This strong platform was exceeded again in 2025, when the school recorded its highest-ever A Level outcomes. 90% of the cohort achieved three or more A*-C grades, and 81% of all grades awarded were A*-B. The proportion of pupils achieving at least two A*/A grades rose to 42.5%, equating to thirty-four students. This period also saw individual cases of exceptional achievement, exemplifying the effectiveness of the school's targeted academic support at post-16.

These outcomes collectively underline a three-year period characterised by strong academic performance, rising attainment, and increasing levels of excellence across curriculum areas. They also testify to the impact of the school's research-informed approach to teaching and learning, robust assessment systems, aspirational culture, and sustained investment in professional development. The school's entry into the Times and Sunday Times Parent Power Top 100 in 2025 as one of the top 80 state schools in the United Kingdom (53rd for A Level results) further validates this success externally. Overall, outcomes from 2023 to 2025 position Carrickfergus Grammar School as a high-performing and continuously improving institution, with pupils across all groups achieving at a level that opens pathways to the full range of post-16 and post-18 opportunities.

Key Stage 3

The school wishes to break the cycle of the same pupils appearing in red after each regression analysis. Specific targets in the new School Development Plan will address this.

Whilst male and female pupils tend to perform similarly at Key Stages 4 and 5, the school has identified that there is a greater proportion of male pupils underperforming in Years 8-10. Various interventions have been introduced to address this:

- meeting with parents and the Principal;

- a new 'Study Skills Club';
- Homework Club (linked to SEN provision);
- Peer Tutoring.

The school has continued to focus sharply on learning and teaching approaches in the classroom as well as the fusion of its academic and pastoral structures, thus affording all pupils the best opportunities to develop and succeed. This will be identified in the new Development Plan through a specific target in this regard.

Curriculum

The overarching principle of curriculum intent at Carrickfergus Grammar School is as follows: *We offer a broad and balanced curriculum with a strong academic core at GCSE and with differentiated pathways at post-16 level.*

Whilst the core profile of a pupil studying GCSEs at this school will be very academic, there remains adequate scope for choice, allowing for a good balance between theory and practical, general and applied.

The Curriculum at this school meets the requirements of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

KEY STAGE 3

English	Mathematics	Religious Studies	PE / Games
Biology	Chemistry	Physics	History
Geography	French	Spanish	Home Economics
Art and Design	Technology	Music	Drama (Year 9)
Digital Technology	Personal Development	LLW	Careers

KEY STAGE 4 (GCSE)

English Language	English Literature	Mathematics	Further Mathematics
Religious Studies	PE / Games	PE (GCSE)	Art and Design
Biology	Chemistry	Physics	Business Studies
Digital Technology	Drama	History	Geography
French	Spanish	German	Child Development
Careers	Music	Technology	Home Economics

KEY STAGE 5 (A Level)

English Literature	Mathematics	Further Mathematics	Religious Studies
PE (A Level)	Accounting	Biology	Chemistry
Physics	Art and Design	Business Studies	History
Government and Politics	Geography	Travel and Tourism*	French
Spanish	German	Health and Social Care	Music
Photography	Technology	Digital Technology	Nutrition and Food Science
Media Studies*	Sociology	Sport and Sports Coaching Development *	Environmental Technology
Life and Health Sciences	Performing Arts *	Games	Careers

*On offer through the Carrickfergus Learning Community.

Current Context

In 2021, school increased the curriculum time for the core subjects of English, Maths and Religious Studies at either Key Stages 3 or 4 or both. This was partly to help address potential COVID-related gaps in knowledge.

In 2022, Science became a compulsory subject again at GCSE.

In 2022, English Literature became a compulsory subject for all students.

All students study a Full Course in GCSE Religious Studies.

Health and Social Care has become a popular subject at 'A' Level.

Environmental Technology and Life and Health Sciences starting to embed at 'A' Level.

Sociology introduced as an 'A' Level option in 2024

The curriculum offered at Carrickfergus Grammar School in the next School Development Plan 2025-2028 will continue to remain broad and balanced, meeting the needs, aspirations and interests of its pupils. It must also continue to reflect emerging labour market trends as well as emerging employability patterns in a constantly changing economic environment. The school will seek to attain a good balance between an identical core academic GCSE profile for each child and pupil choice at GCSE level, allowing for personalised pathways.

Learning and Teaching

At Carrickfergus Grammar School we aim to offer a world-class education. It is the purpose of this school to provide an educational environment suited to all of the students entrusted to its care, with the highest of aspirations and expectations for all. The school will seek to promote a disciplined, well-ordered, caring and supportive environment, where staff and students can work and learn in an atmosphere of mutual respect and without fear of interruption or learning being hindered, so that

each and every student achieves the highest level of academic, intellectual, personal, physical and social development of which he or she is capable.

Effective learning and teaching, which is central to the life of the school, depends, among other things, on outstanding teacher subject knowledge, excellent subject-specific and general pedagogy, high-quality relationships both inside and outside the classroom and high quality communication between students, staff, parents and others in the development of a secure, stimulating learning environment in which all can prosper.

The key driver behind learning and teaching development at this school will be **aspiration**. No matter what their background, needs, interests or supposed academic potential, every child will be taught in a manner which will expedite opportunities for the greatest possible social mobility – including access to Higher Education, should they wish.

The school is increasingly recognised as a centre of excellence for its evidence-based approach to learning and teaching. In 2021, it became the first school in Northern Ireland to appoint a Director of Research, with a clear remit to seek out the best in relation to learning and teaching.

In 2020, a case study of the school's approach to learning and teaching was outlined in Kate Jones' book on Retrieval Practice.

Also in 2020, Carrickfergus Grammar School became the first school in Northern Ireland to go into partnership with the Teachers' Development Trust in London, an organisation with significant experience in continuing professional development for teachers.

In 2022, the school was accepted as one of the twelve founding members of InnerDrive's inaugural research hub. Alongside a select number of UK schools, the school led the way on evidence-based research.

In 2024 the School hosted Northern Ireland's first ever ResearchED conference, bringing together teachers and renowned educationalists from across the globe. Entitled ResearchED Belfast, the event culminated in a compendium of educational articles which was distributed to all schools in Northern Ireland by the Department of Education.

In recent years, the school has revised its Learning and Teaching Policy based on its evidence-based approach, on staff professional knowledge and understanding as well as a thorough awareness of current research-based evidence into high-quality learning and teaching Carrickfergus Grammar School has identified six key principles which shape and embody its pursuit of consistency in learning and teaching in the classroom. These six principles are:

- Stretch and Challenge for ALL students;
- Effective Questioning and Oracy;
- Effective Modelling;
- Scaffolding;
- Independent Practice;
- Robust Assessment and Feedback.

These principles, linked to Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, will remain the foundation of the school's approach to learning and teaching moving forwards. Despite many achievements as regards learning and teaching in the past 3 years, Carrickfergus Grammar School will not be resting on its laurels. Far from it. The school firmly believes that it is time to raise the bar yet again as regards learning and teaching, and to break glass ceilings.

The school's approach to learning and teaching in the new Development Plan for 2025– 2028 will be framed around two concepts which firmly build upon the six principles outlined above and the school's knowledge-rich journey:

1: Explicit Instruction: Ensuring core, powerful knowledge is accessed by all, especially novices.

2: Retrieval Practice Ensuring automaticity of powerful knowledge and the application of that knowledge.

A stronger knowledge base is needed for new GCSE and 'A' Level examinations, which include increased testing of knowledge and its application;

The transmission of high-quality knowledge is one of the most effective and expedient ways of closing the 'learning gap' between children who come from different cultural backgrounds;

Knowledge comprehension lays the foundation for the journey from surface to deep learning, from novice to expert;

The embedding of knowledge into long-term memory will allow pupils to grapple with deeper and more abstract concepts;

Real learning is when the 'mental map' in long-term memory is changed through the embedding of new knowledge and the interplay between existing knowledge and new knowledge;

As 'memory is the residue of thought', we should be planning each lesson in terms of what our pupils are thinking about.

Assessment

In recent years, the school has reviewed and revamped its Assessment Policy.

The overarching principle of assessment intent at Carrickfergus Grammar School is as follows:

It is the view of this school that assessment is most robust when formative, summative and standardised assessments are integrated to form a coherent, dynamic, robust and reliable

system to measure student progress, enhancing student ownership of learning and self-improvement in the process.

It is the view of Carrickfergus Grammar School that effective learning and teaching, robust assessment systems and curriculum design are inextricably linked.

When school gets the balance between standardised, formative and summative assessment right, we are maximising opportunities for pupil success.

Standardised Assessment = assessments with a standardised score range typically between 60 and 140 such as Progress Test in English (PTE), Progress Test in Maths (PTM) and Cognitive Ability (CAT) Tests. These are often used for the purposes of benchmarking. Each year between Years 8-11, and in Year 13, our pupils sit such tests for the purposes of benchmarking and tracking. In recent years, exam results have also been standardised to assist parents and pupils in comparing more effectively their performance and progress across subjects.

Formative Assessment = low-stakes assessment in the classroom, using retrieval practice techniques which may include use of mini-whiteboards, quizzes at the start of lessons and marks from frequent homework.

Feedback from formative assessments will aim not just to outline deficiencies, but also to clarify what needs to be done to improve future learning. Feedback may take the form of a written comment on classwork or homework books, tests or quizzes, but may often take other guises, including:

- whole-class oral feedback by the teacher on strengths and areas for improvement;
- whole-class critique by the teacher using a visualiser;
- instant teacher feedback following the use of mini whiteboards;

- teacher intervention when checking individual student work in class;
- online multiple-choice questions with instant feedback (such as the www.ixl.com system for English and Maths);
- the use of modelling techniques to benchmark brilliance and to address misconception;
- exam percentages or grades reported with a rubric.

Summative Assessment = end-of-term or end-of-year tests / exams, as an example.

Carrickfergus Grammar School will continue to negotiate, define and refine its own shared understanding of effective assessment through professional development undertaken in the 2022-2025 School Development Plan. In particular, the school will focus on formative assessment techniques, predominantly retrieval practice, distributed practice (spacing) and interleaved practice leading to the embedding of knowledge in long-term memory.

Assessment plays a vital role not just in measuring progress, but also in the process of transferring knowledge into long-term memory; through self-testing, formative assessment and other measures. In this way, testing does not just measure pupils' understanding; it helps develop understanding.

Frequent retrieval practice is an important factor in ensuring knowledge embeds into long-term memory.

Repeated low-stakes formative testing, when coupled with more summative assessment structures, and when spaced and interleaved with the intention of responsive teaching, can strengthen long-term memory.

Low-stakes formative testing can take numerous forms, including recaps at the start of class, weekly 'quizzes' and online computer-adaptive assessments.

The above rationale and overarching principles are heavily predicated on outstanding, well-researched and evidenced cognitive science, and include the research of educationalists such as Peps McCrea, David Didau, Daisy Christodoulou, Tom Bennett, Tom Sherrington and others.

In line with its ground-breaking work in learning and teaching and professional development, Carrickfergus Grammar School has developed a dynamic and unique professional development structure.

Professional Development

In September 2019, Carrickfergus Grammar School became the first school in Northern Ireland to partner with the Teacher Development Trust in the UK, which offers schools the opportunity to undertake a comprehensive audit of CPD needs. The school was certified with the Bronze Award at that stage, with feedback highlighting strengths such as the level of trust between staff, the positive relationships and the promising start made by the school in relation to research.

Since September 2019, developments in this area have been prominent, leading to the school being recognised as an emerging centre of excellence in relation to evidence-based research.

- In 2020, the school was documented as a case study on retrieval practice by prominent educationalist Kate Jones;
- In 2020, the school appointed the first-ever Director of Research in a school in Northern Ireland;
- Teachers have visited schools of interest to view good / best practice, including Skegness Grammar School, the Duston School, Durrington High and the Michaela School. In 2025. Four teachers also visited schools in the Netherlands which form part of the High Performing Schools Programme;

- In 2022, the school was named as the first school in Northern Ireland to join a prestigious network of eleven similar schools across the UK focused on how effective research can best translate into classroom practice;
- In 2024, Carrickfergus Grammar School hosted Northern Ireland's first ever ResearchED conference.

The above network, which launched in September 2022, was founded by InnerDrive, a renowned educational organisation that has worked with schools and teachers around the world, helping them apply research in a practical, meaningful and useful way in the classroom.

Through visits to other network schools, as well as a series of workshops and seminars led by world-class experts, Carrickfergus Grammar School is in a position to share expertise with schools across the UK. In addition, we hope to offer support to schools in Northern Ireland who are looking to develop their understanding of evidence-informed teaching and learning.

Leadership

The school introduced an extended Senior Leadership Team in 2023. This was partly as a result of feedback from staff that promotional opportunities were thin. This group, which meets fortnightly, is responsible for the strategic direction of the school and for the targets outlined in the School Development Plan.

- A Senior Teacher for Learning and Teaching was appointed in 2023;
- A Key Stage 3 Co-ordinator was appointed in 2023;
- A Student Enrichment Co-ordinator was appointed in 2023;
- A Pupil Progress Manager was appointed in 2023;
- A new Head of Religious Studies was appointed in 2025.

Much of the priorities for leadership in the School Development Plan 2025 – 2028 will be to ensure the ambitious vision outlined in Part 7 is met. In the next years we will look at:

- Meeting the ambitious targets for standards and outcomes set out in Part 7 of this document;
- Driving forward and embedding the school's clear beliefs and convictions in relation to high-quality learning and teaching, with a focus on knowledge, memory and assessment;
- Offering the highest-quality professional development to all staff, including opportunities to refresh advanced subject-specialist knowledge;
- Enhancing and broadening curricular provision at Key Stage 5;
- Developing strong and robust links with Higher Education representatives, including greater exposure to Oxbridge and Russell Group;
- Offering opportunities for secondment to the Senior Leadership Team;
- Reviewing and enhancing the school's CEIAG provision;
- The construction of a new Sports Centre including fitness suite and new halls, Home Economics Suite, Music Suite and Sixth Form facilities;
- The development of new Music facilities;
- The renovation of the Grainger Centre into a school library;
- Laying the foundations, figuratively, for a potential New Build for Carrickfergus Grammar School;
- Continuing to embed an ambitious and aspirational behaviour management system, with a clear focus on positive reinforcement;

- Strengthening the fusion between the academic and pastoral elements of school life through, amongst other things, a review of the pupil mentoring system;
- Developing the Honours System for exceptional representation at a regional, national or international level;
- Developing the House System to ensure opportunity for all in the spirit of healthy competition;
- Developing student leadership opportunities;
- Establishing greater curricular links with partner Primary Schools.

Care and Welfare

The high quality of Carrickfergus Grammar School's pastoral care provision has been recognised as a strength by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the school places great emphasis on the provision of appropriate pastoral care for all pupils.

We foster a warm and happy school environment, and the size of the school allows for a real family ethos.

Mrs Kane is the Senior Teacher in charge of Pastoral Care at the school, ably assisted by 7 Heads of Year and 28 Form Teachers.

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Mrs Kane, whilst the Deputy Designated Teacher is Mr Gorman. The Principal, Mr Maxwell, is also a member of the safeguarding team alongside the Designated Governor for Child Protection, Mrs Cubitt.

A Senior Pastoral meeting also takes place every fortnight.

A pastoral system has been designed to build up the students' confidence, enabling them to thrive academically, to understand themselves as individuals and to develop sound relationships with other students and staff at the school.

The pastoral care system places great emphasis on the moral and social welfare and development of each of our students, as well as their intellectual, physical and cultural needs. Our staff work collaboratively to meet the needs and aspirations of each student. The pastoral care team provides informed and sensitive guidance to support students in their personal development and in times of personal, family or social difficulty. Some students may at certain times benefit from the opportunity to work through any difficulties with a trained counsellor and this service is available through school.

Our experienced Learning Support Co-ordinators work to ensure that the pathway for children identified with additional educational needs is tailored appropriately, whilst maintaining the highest of aspirations and expectations. Individual Education Plans / Personal Education Plans are in place for relevant students, with reasonable adjustments where necessary.

PART 5

An assessment of the challenges and opportunities facing the School

Challenges

- Ongoing budgetary deficits
- Curricular and assessment reform
- Enhancing opportunity for our pupils and staff
- Effective deployment of staff reflecting a broad and balanced curriculum
- Striking an effective balance between meeting staff development needs and loss of teaching and learning time
- Maintenance of buildings and environment
- Demographics in the local area
- Deepening our understanding of transition from primary to secondary level at a subject level
- Further developing pupils' understanding of effective study habits and metacognition
- High-quality, effective scaffolding within the classroom
- Continuing to develop the processes for the monitoring and tracking of pupil attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4 in order to maximise pupil potential
- Strengthening communication links between all stakeholders
- Exploring and implementing strategies to promote health and wellbeing of pupils and staff
- Ensuring effective CEIAG provision and preparation in a difficult economic environment
- Cyber safety and AI ethics
- Maintaining and improving pupil attendance, including EBSNA (emotional-based school non-attendance)

- Developing and enhancing community links, including with local Primary Schools
- Providing extra support for pupils with additional learning needs
- Ensuring pupils continue to achieve in line with and above relevant DENI benchmarking data

Opportunities

- Maximum engagement with learning and teaching authorities to develop curricular expertise in school
- Continued engagement with Innerdrive
- Seat at top table of curricular reform
- Continued focus on a small number of pedagogical aspects with impact: retrieval practice, cognitive load, Rosenshine's Principles, metacognition, knowledge-rich, self-quizzing, spacing, interleaving
- The embedding of the knowledge-rich curriculum at Key Stage 3
- Effective fusion of academic and pastoral strands of school life
- Greater application of data, including regression analysis
- New approaches to Peer Tutoring and Peer Mentoring
- Continued interaction between Board of Governors and Staff
- Development of SIMS
- Actively sourcing funding from other areas
- Applying for funding for the development of school infrastructure
- Construction of new buildings such as the Sports Complex, Home Economics suite and Music suite
- Community hiring of School facilities, including the 2G astro pitch and new Sports Centre
- Refurbishment and painting of all first floor corridors in the main school building

- Effective deployment of new hardware including Surface Pros
- Broadening pupil choice and opportunity
- Extension of Year 14 enrichment into Year 13
- Year 13 Work Experience
- Re-launch of Duke of Edinburgh Scheme
- Broadening of pupil clubs and activities
- Re-calibration of Honours System
- Development of the School's House System;
- Opportunities to reinforce cyber safety message and AI ethics with parents, pupils and staff, including Dr Weston seminars
- Opportunity to build upon the School's good reputation in the community

PART 6

The arrangements made by the Board of Governors to consult and take into account the views of pupils, parents, staff and other persons or bodies in the preparation of the Plan:

Relevant stakeholders were consulted in the preparation of the Plan. Parents and pupils at each Key Stage completed voluntary questionnaires. Non-teaching and teaching staff, as well as Governors, were given a presentation on the SDP. Consultation data and feedback were collated. The school used Google Forms in order to create questionnaires which were closely aligned to the context and emerging vision for the school. The school used ETI's 'Empowering Improvement' (Inspection Self-Evaluation Framework) in order to word survey questions against quality indicators.

Part 7

The identification of the areas for development which shall be informed by the School's self-evaluation include:

7(A) The School's Key priorities for the period 2025-2028

Key Area 1: Learning and Teaching, including Professional Learning

Key Area 2: Curriculum and Assessment

Key Area 3: Pastoral Care, Wellbeing and Safeguarding

Key Area 4: Infrastructure

7(B): The planned outcomes including planned outcomes in learning, teaching and raising standards of attainment including targets for raising standards of attainment in Communication, Using Mathematics and ICT

See Action Plans 2025-2028

7(C): The actions to be taken to achieve outcomes identified in 7(B):

See Action Plans 2025-2028

7(D): The financial and other resources needed to meet planned outcomes identified in 7(B):

See Action Plans 2025-2028

7(E): The arrangements for the Board of Governors, in consultation with the Principal, to monitor, review and evaluate progress made against the SDP 2025-2028:

See Action Plans 2025-2028



KEY AREA 1: LEARNING and TEACHING, including PROFESSIONAL LEARNING of STAFF

CONTEXT:

Learning and teaching plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of education we provide and in helping us reach the high standards we strive towards.

Our central mission remains: to deliver the best possible learning and teaching experiences so that every student can thrive academically and grow as individuals. As with the previous School Development Plan, we are committed to using an evidence-informed approach, grounded in cognitive science.

Significant progress has been made over the last 3 years. We introduced six key principles to strengthen learning and teaching:

- Stretch and Challenge for all;
- Effective Questioning and Oracy;
- Modelling;
- Scaffolding;
- Deliberate Practice;
- Strong Assessment and Feedback.

The strategy was based around three core ideas: Knowledge, Memory, and Assessment. These principles reflect our belief in the impact of explicit, direct instruction, and align with Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction.

Collaborations with InnerDrive, hosting the inaugural ResearchED Belfast and being recognised by the Department of Education as a centre for excellent practice have positioned us as a key hub for evidence-informed practice in NI. Our progress gives us an impressive base to build on as we continue to consolidate, refine and develop our approach to learning and teaching.

3-YEAR AIMS

1. CGS will set ambitious targets for the **standards and outcomes of pupils** in public examinations.
 - School will maintain the number of pupils receiving 3 or more A2 Level qualifications at A*-C at over 90%.
 - School will embed the number of pupils receiving 3 or more AS Level qualifications at A*-C at over 80%.
 - School will maintain the proportion of A*-B grades at A2 level to over 80%.
 - School will embed the number of pupils receiving 7 or more GCSE Level qualifications including English and Mathematics at A*-C at 100%.
 - School will embed the number of pupils receiving 7 or more GCSE Level qualifications including English and Mathematics at A*-B at over 85%.
 - School will improve the proportion of A*-A grades at GCSE to over 70%.
2. CGS will **revisit the key components of effective explicit teaching**, making sure that skilful explanations, modelling and scaffolding pave the way for impactful whole class and independent practice.
3. CGS will continue to 'dig deep' and 'linger long' with key aspects of its approach – revisiting powerful pedagogies such as retrieval practice in a sustained manner. CGS will continue to **refine the use of retrieval practice** in lessons, ensuring that teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to consolidate knowledge in long-term memory throughout lessons.
4. CGS will **enhance pupil's 'oracy for learning'** in the classroom, by refining teachers' use of effective questioning and other strategies that encourage greater participation and develop pupils' confidence when speaking.
5. CGS will **evaluate the effectiveness and impact of Knowledge Organisers** at Key Stage 3, auditing existing organisers to make sure that they are compiled in the best way to enable pupils to acquire essential powerful knowledge in each subject.
6. CGS will **continue to boost the motivation and study skills of underperforming pupils**, as identified through robust assessment regression analyses, exam outcomes and other data. In particular, CGS will put in place monitoring procedures to ensure that underperforming pupils are using retrieval, interleaving and spacing techniques effectively.
7. CGS will **further develop teachers' pedagogical content knowledge to increase the number of A/A* grades achieved by pupils across subjects at both KS4 and KS5**, cementing its position as a high-performing academic grammar school.

8. CGS will prioritise opportunities to help staff deepen subject-specific knowledge, as well as opportunities for developing a 'collective understanding' by teams and departments within school of pedagogies best suited to teaching content knowledge.
9. CGS will robustly ring-fence '**Friday Professional Hour**' for the purpose of professional learning.
10. CGS will think creatively about **effective models for professional learning** which meet the needs of the School and its teaching staff. School will dedicate and devote appropriate time for these models.
11. CGS will continue to subscribe to **InnerDrive's Teacher CPD Academy** in order to offer teaching staff access to 'bite-size' chunks of learning on pedagogy linked to the School's needs but which also open up a suite of CPD opportunities based on the interests of staff.
12. CGS will continue to **audit staff** to maintain an up-to-date register of both CPD completed and desired CPD. Governors will continue to consider how the interests of staff in relation to CPD are being facilitated and catered for, allowing for professional growth and greater personal responsibility for CPD.

Year 1 Targets	Actions to meet Target	Owners	Timescale	Evaluation Evidence
<p>School will push for the 3-year standards and outcomes targets identified above.</p>	<p>The drive to improve results is inextricably linked to the targets and actions outlined in Section 7 of the SDP, all of which apply in the context of raising standards and outcomes in public examinations.</p> <p>A revised analysis of exam outcomes to be completed at whole-school and departmental level by end of September 2025, including a comparison of performance against Northern Ireland Grammar School averages. Other data to be utilised as appropriate, including SIMS value-added residuals / YELLIS and ALIS value-added / FFT data / CCEA analytics.</p> <p>Value-Added to be determined by end of September 2025 based on enhanced YELLIS / ALIS / CATS predictors (75th percentile).</p> <p>Departmental Development Plans to identify any issues arising from exams analysis by mid-October 2025, with targets and actions for improvement.</p> <p>HoD meetings with Principal and Vice Principal by end of October 2025 to discuss context of standards and outcomes at a departmental level, and areas for improvement.</p>	<p>JM / FM SLT Governors HoDs All staff</p>	<p>By August 2026</p>	<p>Departmental Evaluations Minutes from curriculum meetings Standards and Outcomes document Departmental Development Plans Peer Tutoring Surveys</p>

	<p>Parent-Teacher consultations for Years 12 and 14 by September 2025.</p> <p>Formal tracking in mock examinations to identify gaps and weaknesses by January 2026.</p> <p>Rigorous post-results services process to ensure relevant pupils are re-calling scripts by October 2025.</p> <p>Effective study skills promotion and intervention by October 2025 (see below).</p> <p>Peer Tutoring for identified Year 11 pupils between January and April 2026.</p>			
Staff will receive CPD on the key components of effective explicit teaching, including refining retrieval practice and developing oracy for learning.	CPD session on explicit teaching and making most of retrieval opportunities to be delivered by MR during August SDD	MR, FM, JM SLT	Aug 2025	CPD feedback evaluation
	School to procure Fairlamb and Ball book on Scaffolding for all staff.	MR, JM	By Nov 2025	Dept meeting feedback Lesson study
Provide staff access to online portals with academic research for the development of subject-specific knowledge and expertise, and for the further pursuit of extended resources, linked to the pursuit of A*/A grades at A Level and GCSE	Decide upon annual subscription for teaching staff to appropriate subject-specific portals, such as Massolit, Seneca Premium, Uplift etc by October 2025.	MR, FM, JM SLT	Oct 2025	Procurement of subscription
	Allocate time for exploration of portal by January 2026.	MR, FM, JM SLT	Jan 2026	Staff surveys Minutes of meetings

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) for subjects will become a central part of dept meetings, further enhancing teachers' knowledge of effective explicit teaching in their subject.	Specific departmental meetings will be ring-fenced for PCK development	MR, FM, JM HoDs SLT	Aug 2025 onwards	Minutes of meetings Evaluation of CPD
Staff will complete online Oracy for Learning module from the CPD Academy, applying relevant effective practice to their subject area.	Complete Oracy modules during staff CPD session.	MR, FM, JM E-SLT	Sept 2025	Course completion certificates
	Follow-up departmental discussions on how best to apply to subject-specific pedagogy.		Oct 2025	Dept meeting feedback
	CGS-specific examples of effective practice to be shared during SDD		January 2026	Lesson study
	Application of effective practice to showcase during lesson study		Feb-June 2026	
Staff will revisit Knowledge Organisers and make necessary amendments, aiming for concision and utility.	Recap session on effective use of KOs delivered by PI on 26 th May 2025	FM, JM, PI E-SLT	May 2025	KO files on shared drive
	Updated KOs to be submitted by 9 th June 2025		June 2025	Updated KOs
	Checking quality of KOs to be undertaken by FM, JM and PI		June 2025	
	New KO booklets to be ready for start of academic year		Aug 2025	
	Follow-up departmental discussions on how best to apply to subject-specific pedagogy.		May 2026	
	CGS-specific examples of effective practice to be shared during SDD		June 2026	
	Review of Years 8-10 Knowledge Organisers		June 2026	
Pupils from underperforming groups will be monitored to ensure that study skills are	Study skills/Homework/Peer mentoring/Coursework catch-up sessions to take place after school	MR, FM, JM, KW, PI	Aug 2025 onwards	
	Study skills recap sessions for pupils in key year		Aug 2025	

embedded and most effective learning techniques are being applied in school and at home.	groups to be delivered by MR	SLT	onwards	
	Parent/child study skills sessions to be promoted online or in-person		Oct 2025	
	Areas for development will be identified by HoDs and access to specialist support, both within depts and externally will be identified		Aug 2025 onwards	
	Subject reading lists for pupils to be compiled and distributed		Jan 2026	
School will apply for funding of £5,000 from TransformED ring-fenced funding.	School to audit staff to determine desired CPD opportunities linked to subject-specific knowledge and pedagogy.	MR, FM, JM E-SLT	by September 2025	CPD Audit Application SLT Minutes Course feedback
	School to consider criteria for funding and write an application to secure funding for a one-day in-house 'buffet' of CPD sessions linked to CPD priorities.		by January 2026	
	School to secure 'expert' speakers to support delivery of CPD sessions above.		by March 2026	
	School to host CPD event.		by June 2026	
School will apply for funding of £24,000 annually from TransformED TPL fund funding.	School to complete TPL Template online by September 2025.	MR, JM, FM	By September 2025	TPL Template completion
School will provide ring-fenced time for staff to advance further on the Teacher CPD Academy, undertaking modules linked to school priorities.	School to subscribe to CPD Academy until June 2026. Reduced price to be negotiated.	MR, FM, JM E-SLT	by August 2025	Course feedback SLT Minutes
	Staff to undertake 'Smorgasbord' suite of activities on CPD Academy linked to retrieval practice and oracy – including extended reading and 'Teach Like a		by August 2025	

	<p>Champion' (TLAC) resources.</p> <p>Friday 16th January 2026 to be set aside for further staff use of Teacher CPD Academy.</p> <p>Bradley Busch to undertake further CPD with staff.</p>			
			by January 2026	
			by June 2026	
School will pilot Research Lesson Study as a means of building a more 'open-door', collaborative approach to professional learning.	<p>Logistics of operating RLS to be agreed.</p> <p>Rationale to be shared with staff.</p> <p>Running of RLS Pilot</p> <p>Evaluation and Discussion Document on Way Forward written.</p>	MR, FM, JM E-SLT	<p>by September 2025</p> <p>by November 2025</p> <p>by May 2026</p> <p>by June 2026</p>	<p>SLT Minutes</p> <p>RLS Groups</p> <p>RLS Conclusion Report</p> <p>Way Forward Document</p>
School will invest in video technology for the development of 'in-house' video libraries linked to pedagogical content knowledge	School to invest in robotic video technology for classroom use.	MR, SLT	By December 2025	Procurement and trialling of video technology
Visits overseas for staff to see best practice elsewhere.	<p>Staff to visit Michaela School, Wembley.</p> <p>Staff to explore High Performing Schools initiative in the Netherlands</p> <p>Staff to liaise with Michael Chiles – Longdendale High School</p>	MR, FM, JM SLT	<p>by October 2025</p> <p>by February 2026</p> <p>by June 2026</p>	Reports from Visits

<p>School will instigate an AI Steering Group to determine the best approach to professional learning for an increasingly prominent aspect of school life.</p>	<p>AI Group to meet for first time with the following remit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring how AI may facilitate administrative aspects of roles within school; • exploring how certain AI may facilitate and enhance aspects of lesson planning; • exploring how certain AI can enhance aspects of pedagogy which is central to our ethos, such as giving feedback and retrieval; • exploring how to avoid the use of AI by pupils in a manner which detracts from purposeful learning and meaningful assessment of learning. 	<p>by August 2025</p>	<p>SLT Minutes AI Steering Group Minutes Course feedback</p>
	<p>AI Steering Group session with Bradley Busch to discuss outworkings of initial meeting</p>	<p>by November 2025</p>	
	<p>Steering Group Members to explore AI linked to various bullets above</p>	<p>by February 2026</p>	
	<p>CPD session on AI delivered to staff</p>	<p>by June 2026</p>	



KEY AREA 2: CURRICULUM and ASSESSMENT

(incorporating actions derived from the 'Collaborative Networks', 'Digital Skills' and 'Environment, Society and Economy' Contributory Areas of 'Empowering Improvement')

3-Year Aims

Curriculum for all (including assessment for and of learning)

- To provide a curriculum which allows for the greatest possible social mobility of learners and which enables the holistic development of learners.
- To embrace the TransformED agenda and deepen further the school's knowledge-rich curriculum.
- To encourage aspiration via the curriculum, recognising, celebrating and rewarding learner progress and achievement.
- To develop a curriculum at post-16 level which meets to an even greater extent the needs, interests and aspirations of all pupils.
- To commit to developing assessment aligned to the curriculum which is planned, timely, appropriately challenging and responsive to learners' needs. To employ ongoing tracking of pupil attainment, leading to appropriate support.
- To develop effective transmission of information on pupils between teachers at key junctures, including KS3-KS4 juncture.
- To facilitate pupil choice with information and guidance which is targeted, current and individualised, thus providing appropriate pathways for success.
- To monitor the progress of girls in STEM-related subjects.
- To develop partnerships (be that with other schools, educational providers, professional organisations, training providers, NGOs, charities etc) which may contribute to and aid the school's goals for learners.
- In line with the school focus on 'Opportunity', to provide even broader learning experiences beyond the classroom ensuring positive outcomes for learners.

CEIAG

- To ensure a consistent, whole-school approach to the meeting of CEIAG / careers quality indicators, with reference to ETI's 'Empowering Improvement' agenda, the Gatsby Indicators and any future NI-based careers criteria, ensuring that aspiration and ambition lie at the heart of the ethos and approach of Carrickfergus Grammar School.
- To develop an expert team of CEIAG teachers in school.
- To review assistive technologies for the purposes of careers.
- To ensure impactful CEIAG, including work-related learning, supporting individuals in the development of knowledge, skills and aptitudes enabling effective career planning and progression.

Digital Skills

- In the context of the new NI curriculum, to enhance pupils' Digital Skills for learning with a greater focus on coding skills.
- To map Digital Technology provision to national frameworks.
- To build a module on AI ethics into the KS3 Digital Technology Curriculum.

Literacy

- To strengthen the use of data to inform current intervention processes, INCLUDING PTE / PTM.
- To strengthen and refine our intervention strategies for KS3 literacy support by regularly reviewing their structure, delivery, and impact to ensure they effectively support pupils in need of additional support.
- To keep abreast of DE review of Literacy strategy.
- To prioritise opportunities to help staff deepen knowledge of literacy, disciplinary literacy and effective classroom support.
- To provide opportunities for teams and departments to conduct a 'Literacy Audit' to consider the key literacy knowledge and skills required to excel in their subject(s).
- To continue to embed a 'reading culture' at CGS through the Tutor Reading Scheme and beyond, and to promote Literacy throughout the wider school.
- To avail of more opportunities for training and development in leading Literacy.

- To establish a 'Literacy Community' with local primary and secondary schools to share best practice, resources and further open development opportunities.

Numeracy

- To strengthen the use of data to inform current intervention processes, INCLUDING PTE / PTM.
- **To strengthen and refine intervention strategies for junior mathematics by regularly reviewing their structure, delivery, and impact to ensure they effectively support pupils in need of additional help.**
- To develop high quality online numeracy support materials.
- To promote Numeracy throughout the wider school.
- To review and update teaching and learning materials to embed key numeracy concepts.
- To keep abreast of DE review of numeracy strategy.

Year 1 Targets	Actions to meet Target	Owners	Timescale	Evaluation Evidence
Familiarisation with the new NI curriculum and associated changes to assessment procedures to aid planning for potential system-wide change.	<p>Awareness of DE policy/strategy via participation in DE conferences/seminars related to curriculum and assessment revision.</p> <p>Curriculum planning meetings to ensure curriculum offer meets statutory requirements with appropriate cognisance of local/national/international employment trends/opportunities.</p> <p>Head of Careers input in to planning meetings via presentation to senior staff on employment trends.</p>	JM, FM, KM	As per DE timetable	
Ensuring staff awareness, providing training and planning time for the successful adoption of the new curriculum.	<p>Dissemination of key aspects of curriculum/assessment review and CCEA specification revision via Curriculum Team.</p> <p>Relevant members of subject staff attendance at subject specific training, with appropriate dissemination provided to colleagues at departmental meetings.</p>	JM, FM HODs	As per DE timescale CCEA training days	Agenda/ departmental minutes
Enhance early Curriculum planning with reference to individual cohorts	Regular review of cohorts at KS3 and 4 (initially pupils in Year 10 and 12, moving to	JM, FM, AT, SM, LK,	Initial pupil surveys (Years 10,	Pupils/parents questionnaire survey

<p>- ability, aptitudes, interests and local/national/international employment trends/opportunities.</p>	<p>Years 9 and 11) regarding curriculum offer. Class tutor interviews to include careers interests/subject aspirations with formal feedback for SLT.</p> <p>Year 10 Careers Week subject based presentations/activities and parental interviews.</p>	<p>relevant HOYs/CTs</p>	<p>9, 12 and 11) – October 2025</p> <p>Class tutor interviews – Nov, 2025</p> <p>Careers week (Year 10) – Dec, 2025</p> <p>AS/A2 information sessions – February/March 2026</p>	<p>data</p> <p>Records of class tutor/pupil meetings</p>
<p>Further consider the curriculum pathways and return rates for post 16 study with a view to potentially enhancing the curriculum offer to facilitate subject opportunities for KS5 pupils.</p>	<p>Investigation of pupils' post GCSE decisions as a means of ensuring the curriculum remains responsive to pupils' interests and career aspirations via SLT interviews with post GCSE pupils, in particular those choosing not to return to school for A2 Level study, to establish career plans and investigate factors in decision making.</p> <p>On basis of interview findings, investigate necessity/feasibility of enhancing curriculum offer.</p>	<p>FM,LK,HOYs</p>	<p>August 2025</p>	<p>Interview findings and analysis.</p>
<p>Improving departmental results analysis as a means of highlighting areas for improvement and</p>	<p>Reviewing timescales and procedures surrounding annual results analysis in line with the availability of all sources of data</p>	<p>JM, FM, MR, HODs and departmental</p>	<p>September/October 2025</p>	<p>HOD review meetings with JM, FM.</p> <p>Departmental meeting</p>

departmental strategies to address improvement.	(internal and external from SIMs, CEM, FFT, CCEA Analytics) Provision of Baker Day specifically for analysis and departmental action planning, involving all departmental staff.	teams.		minutes
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Year 1 Targets	Actions to meet Target	Owners	Timescale	Evaluation Evidence
<p>Investigation of the potential uses of AI in school settings, with a view to the development and implementation of an appropriate policy</p>	<p>Formulation of AI development team and survey into existing staff knowledge/usage/concerns about the use of AI.</p> <p>Investigation of existing pupil knowledge/usage of AI</p> <p>Development of school policy on AI – Curriculum team as a vehicle for discussion on acceptable use, including for homework, implications for assessment (internal and external), staff and pupil training</p> <p>Staff training on potential of AI for classroom teaching and provision of meeting/SDD time for resource investigation/generation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integration of digital skills into the curriculum across subjects. ▪ Provide training on using AI in lesson planning, assessment, support for pupils, AI ethics including awareness of data protection and safeguarding policies etc ▪ Provide resources for integrating digital tools into pedagogy. ▪ Provide opportunities for peer mentoring and sharing of good practice amongst staff, 	<p>AI development team</p> <p>University of Ulster</p>	<p>June 2025</p> <p>September 2025</p> <p>August/September 2025</p> <p>SDD/FPH Terms 2 and 3, 2026</p>	<p>Staff survey</p> <p>Pupil survey</p>

	<p>evaluating tools such as adaptive learning platforms, AI tutors or writing/language assistants.</p>			
Developing pupils' digital skills to encompass ethical awareness of the appropriate (and inappropriate) use of Generative AI.	<p>Revision of KS3 ICT schemes to include focus on -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safe and responsible internet use (eSafety). ▪ Basic productivity tools (e.g., word processing, spreadsheets, presentations.) <p>AI awareness and ethics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop lessons on how AI works (e.g. data bias) incorporating consideration of the ethical use of AI in school and in broader society. ▪ Critical thinking including teaching students how to analyse and question data sources, with cognisance of misinformation and algorithmic bias. 	JM, LM	<p>May 2025, review May 2026</p>	Department review, May 2025

Year 1 Targets	Actions to meet Target	Owners	Timescale	Evaluation Evidence
<p>Auditing current provision, planning revision (if required) of the taught Careers/Employability curriculum on the basis of research and internal audit.</p>	<p>On the basis of audit of existing CEIAG programmes, where required/feasible -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ring-fence computer rooms for Careers lessons to ensure meaningful CEIAG and work-related learning is accessible. ▪ Provide opportunities for pupils to develop and apply work-related skills, capabilities and dispositions through the reintroduction of the Business Project, potentially as part of the Enrichment programme with senior pupils. ▪ Continue to subscribe to YE Academy in order to offer pupils access to teacher/pupil-led courses linked to the development of work-related skills, capabilities and dispositions, including a better understanding of potential future careers. ▪ Revamp Careers scheme of work to incorporate a block of lessons, investigating two Career areas per lesson, throughout the first term of Year 10, prior to making subject choices. Year 12 can develop this. ▪ Introduce 'personal finance' into the Careers scheme of work for each year group that has a distinct Careers period. 	<p>SM</p> <p>SM, PB</p>		<p>Audit of pupils, Careers staff, departments and parents.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve interaction with the Careers Service and more use of the resources/service they offer. ▪ Deepen links with the Alumni, encouraging participation of former pupils to inform and inspire current pupils at the school. 			
Development of core knowledge and staff expertise in CEIAG – facilitating staff development,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritise opportunities to enable Careers staff to deepen subject-specific knowledge by attending a range of relevant training courses and events, given the DE focus on improved CEIAG. 			
Contribute to school curriculum planning, providing advice on the basis of current local/national/international employment trends/opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research current local/national/international employment trends as provided by DE/UU Economic Policy Centre publications, advising senior colleagues as regards curriculum provision, in particular at KS4 and 5. 			

Year 1 Targets	Actions to meet Target	Owners	Timescale	Evaluation Evidence
To strengthen the use of data to inform current intervention processes, INCLUDING PTE / PTM.	Pupils for intervention selected using year group dashboards and regression analysis.	EW AT JM	by September 2025	Data dashboards for subsequent results Additional diagnostic tools on IXL?
	Introduction of CCEA standardised adaptive test and data integrated into dashboard.		by June 2026	

Continue to promote Literacy throughout the wider school and start to enhance subject-specific opportunity through competition, and other literacy promotion ventures.	Scholastic Book Fair.	EW	2025/26 TBC	Feedback from key staff and pupils on Scholastic Book Fair Publication of pupils' work
	Submissions to Young Writers and other writing competitions.		25/26	
	Create opportunities for a palpable buzz around reading and literacy in the week of World Book Day.	EW	March 2026	
	Source further opportunities for competition, particularly in Public Speaking.	EW	2025/26	
	Source opportunities for formal debate and competition at a national level.	EW, FMcK	2025/26	
Continue to review, implement and update (where necessary) teaching and learning materials for use within the classroom such as IXL and Classics for All.	IXL tasks to be set once a week for all pupils in KS3. IXL tasks to be well-coordinated and aligned with SPaG areas for each month.	EW, CR, CP, JH, MR, JH, AMac	August 25 and throughout 2025-26	Feedback from key staff and pupils on IXL. Use of IXL analytics.
	Update Classics for All resources to create greater opportunity for stretch and challenge.		April 2026	

<p>Continue to review and strengthen the current intervention procedures for literacy support and the form which it will take, to commence Sept 25.</p>	<p>Liaise with other English staff and MR as to 'best practice' for Literacy Intervention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small group intervention - Develop robust material for pupils to work through. - Investigate 'online options' (such as LEXIA). 	<p>EW</p>	<p>Aug/Sept 2025</p>	<p>Data dashboards for subsequent results Additional diagnostic tools on IXL?</p>
<p>Continue to review and strengthen the Tutor Reading Programme with a particular focus in rolling out the programme to Year 10 pupils.</p>	<p>Pupils in all KS3 year groups to have a robust schedule of TRP.</p> <p>New books needed to further engagement in Year 9 and allow for the introduction of Year 10 classes.</p>	<p>EW</p>	<p>Aug/Sept 2025</p>	<p>Feedback from key staff Feedback from KS5 helpers Feedback from KS3 pupils Data dashboard / SAS scores</p>

Establish connections with 'Literacy Leaders' in the local community	<p>Make connections and network with Literacy Co-ordinators and Literacy leaders in the local community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school staff • Secondary school staff • Carrickfergus Library • EA? 	EW	Throughout 2025/2026	...
Extend opportunities to increase staff knowledge on Literacy and the implementation of successful support and strategies in the classroom	<p>Connect with 'experts' (such as Geraldine Magennis-Clarke, Ryon Leyshon, Martin Ferguson) with the aim of collaborating on whole-staff CPD</p> <p>Secure time for CPD and subsequent departmental discussions</p>	EW, MR, JM, FMcK	By June 2026	Feedback from staff in the form of a staff survey

Year 1 Targets	Actions to meet Target	Owners	Timescale	Evaluation Evidence
Strengthen the use of data to inform current intervention processes, INCLUDING PTE / PTM.	Pupils for intervention selected using year group dashboards	JR AT	by September 2025	Data dashboards for subsequent results
	Introduction of CCEA standardised adaptive test and data integrated into dashboard		by June 2026	

<p>We will continue to update our online resources providing extra material for our pupils with Google Classrooms, video exam 'walk throughs' and video notes for all year groups</p>	<p>Exam walkthroughs for Nov 24 exams in place</p> <p>Maths help Google Classrooms reviewed and updated where necessary</p> <p>Review and update current video notes</p>	JR	<p>by December 2025</p> <p>by August 2025</p>	Pupil feedback
<p>We will continue to promote Numeracy throughout the wider school and start to enhance subject-specific opportunity through competition, and other numeracy promotion ventures.</p>	<p>Intermediate and senior UKMT to continue for all A level and GCSE Further Mathematics pupils</p>	JR, KM, SH, AF, EH.	25/26	UKMT Results
	<p>Introduction of Junior UKMT for all Yr 9 Pupils</p>		NW, AT, EH	April 26
	<p>Senior pupils attend QUB Mathematics competition</p>	JR	Dec 2025	Pupil involvement in P6 Numeracy week
	<p>Continue with World Maths Day event for Yr 8 and Yr 8 assembly.</p>	JR	Apr 2026	Programme for Maths Day Event
	<p>Numeracy to continue to deliver for the duration of P6 week</p>	JR, KM, AF, SH, EH.	Jun 26	
<p>We will continue to review, implement and update (where necessary) teaching and learning materials for use within the classroom (Numeracy Ninjas and retrieval and spaced practice materials)</p>	<p>Numeracy Ninjas will continue 3 times per week for yr 8 pupils</p>	JR, KM, AF, SH, EH.	August 25	
	<p>Update spaced retrieval practice material, following annual review, for use with Junior pupils</p>			
			June 26	

<p>We will continue to review and strengthen the current intervention procedures for junior mathematics and the form which it will take, to commence Sept 25.</p>	<p>Lease with other mathematics staff and MR as to 'best practice' for Numeracy Intervention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-1 with Numco - Senior pupils helpers, during reg/ after school - Develop robust material for pupils to work through. - More thorough training for A level helpers - Investigate 'online options' for numeracy intervention 	<p>JR</p>	<p>Aug/Sept 2025</p>	
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KEY AREA 3: PASTORAL CARE, WELLBEING and SAFEGUARDING

(Including 'Equity, Diversity and Inclusion' and 'Learner Participation' as sub-contributory areas)

3-Year Aims

1. CGS will revamp, embed and develop the school's House System, developing inclusivity and extending opportunity for all pupils.
2. CGS will continue to develop strategies to support pupil wellbeing by further developing the role of the Class Tutor and creating space within the school week to focus on aspects of personal development such as resilience and health and wellbeing.
3. CGS will evaluate effectiveness of the current Preventative Curriculum to ensure that it is informed by feedback from pupils and in-line with the ethos of the school.
4. CGS will have taken steps to address social disadvantage by reducing potential costs of school uniform for pupils.
5. CGS will continue to take steps to reduce barriers to learning by early identification of arising issues which are impacting a pupil's attendance/progress/effort and the implementation of appropriate and timely interventions.
6. CGS will continue to ensure that pastoral support for pupils is of the highest level and ensure provision is in place to allow for regular monitoring of pupils in terms of their attendance, wellbeing, achievements and progress in school thus ensuring a fusion between academic and pastoral strands of school life.
7. CGS will establish a Health and Wellbeing Policy for pupils and staff.
8. CGS will take steps to improve site security.

Year 1 Targets	Actions to meet Target	Owners	Timescale	Evaluation evidence
To establish the CGS House system and take initial steps to embed the system.	Appointment of staff coordinator for house system	JM	June 2025	Internal Trawl remit
	History behind house names to be published	JM	Sept 2025	One-page summary
	Allocation of Form Classes into Houses for 2025-2026	KM	August 2025	SLT Minutes
	Competition to design House logos/crests	PB	Autum 2025	
	Choosing of House captains and Vice-Captains	PB	Sept 2025	SLT Minutes
	Launch of House System with whole school event	PB	Oct 2025	SLT Minutes
	Initial House events 2025-2026	PB	2025-26	SLT Minutes
Leadership will have a clear overview of the Preventative Curriculum (PC)	Audit of all taught subjects to establish what areas of the preventative curriculum are addressed in subject classes and when	SE	April 2026	Audit document
	Review the KS3 PD+ classes	PI	Term 1 2025	Survey responses and audit document
	Establish areas of the PC to be covered in Year Assemblies for each year group and create resources.	LK	August 2025	Audit document
	Map the Preventative Curriculum audit alongside content of Personal Development programme and external 'events'	SE, LK	Autumn 2025	Audit document
	Increase awareness of the content of the PC among pupils and seek feedback on any gaps	SE, LK	April 2026	Survey responses
	To review the Personal Development resources on the InnerDrive CPD Academy	LK, SE, JM	April 2026	InnerDrive Teacher CPD Academy

Establish strategies for monitoring and promoting pupil wellbeing	Establish ring-fenced time for regular pastoral staff meetings where arising issues can be discussed and interventions planned.	JM, FMcK	August 2025	SLT Minutes
	Create clear responsibilities / roles for Class Tutors to help monitor attendance and positive notes	LK	August 2025	SLT Minutes
	To continue to develop the Resilience Programme 'Feel good Friday'.	LK, HOYS		SLT Minutes
	Establish links within new House system to encourage more contact within Senior and Junior School	PB	Term 2 2026	SLT Minutes
	Dedicate small space in the CGS newsletter once a month to 'publicise' work on wellbeing	LK, RMcM		Newsletter
	Wellbeing Group to be established early in school year and asked to develop a focus for the year.	LK		Wellbeing Group minutes
	Creation of a quiet space and resources to help SEN pupils who struggle to come into school in the mornings and adjust to school day and also for pupils with EBSNA.	LK, KW, LSA support	August 2025	SLT Minutes
Creation of a Health and Wellbeing Policy for pupils and staff	To gain official recognition by the Public Health Agency as a Level 3 Take 5 school	LK	June 2025	Policy
	Write a pupil and staff wellbeing policy which sets out the measures in place to promote positive wellbeing for staff and pupils.	LK	Autumn 2025	Policy
	Continued Promotion of Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing among pupils and staff	Lk	Throughout the year	Take 5 Events and communications

Reduction of the cost of school uniform	CGS will instigate a steering group to bring about changes to school uniform policy	LK, JB, NK	Autumn 2025	Uniform steering group documentation and minutes
	Liaise with PA to promote pre-loved uniform	LK	Spring 2026	Uniform steering group documentation and minutes
	Liaise with uniform supplier to see if reductions can be made to cost of blazers.	LK, JM	Autumn 2026	Uniform steering group documentation and minutes
Safeguarding	Review of site security in light of ongoing construction work in school	PMK, JM	February 2026	Costings overview document
	Establishment of regular School Child Protection and Safeguarding Group (CPSG) meetings involving Principal, Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers and Designated Governor	JM, LK, RG, LC	December 2025	CPSG Minutes



Key Area 4: Infrastructure Action Plan

3-Year Aims

- Commencement of construction of Sports Complex and Sixth Form Centre
- Delivery of new infrastructure for Home Economics, Child Development and Health and Social Care
- Delivery of new facilities for Music
- Enhanced and extended canteen facilities, including rejuvenation of link corridor between main building and canteen
- Introduction of cashless canteen
- Second synthetic pitch on-site
- Painting of Lecture Theatre Corridor, Assembly Hall and upstairs Art corridor as well as individual classrooms and labs
- Review pathways and accessibility routes throughout school for disabled visitors and pupils, including to rugby pitches
- Introduce SEN space to meet needs of SEN pupils
- Development of 'wellbeing' areas outside and greater playground space
- Increase staff/visitor car parking spaces
- Review Grounds Maintenance and Cleaning Services contracts
- Rejuvenation of Science furniture
- Refreshment of ICT infrastructure in Rooms 10, 11 and 25
- Retile the front of school
- New signage at lower entrance on North Road and re-painting of galvanized fencing
- Generate more revenue from the hire of school facilities

Year 1 Targets

Year 1 Targets	Actions to meet Target	Owners	Timescale	Evaluation Evidence
Re-instatement of monthly meetings for SEP Programme	Re-establish monthly SEP Programme meetings with EA.	JM, KM, Governors, PE Department	By Oct 2025	Meeting agendas, minutes, follow-up actions
Final sign-off on approved SEP building for business case	Monthly SEP meetings	JM, KM, Governors, PE Department	By Dec 2025	Meeting agendas, minutes, follow-up actions
Plan regular meetings with EA / DENI regarding the school estate	Organise regular engagement meetings	JM, KM, Governors	By Nov 2025	Meeting minutes; action plans
Discuss Music provision at meetings with EA and DENI	November meeting to include discussion on Music provision	JM, KM	By Nov 2025	Meeting minutes
	Unavoidable Minor Works application to be made for renovation of Music facilities	EC, JM	January 2026	Unavoidable Minor Works application
Painting and refurbishing of Assembly Hall and upstairs Art corridor	Schedule refurbishment work and complete painting.	JM, MM, KM	By June 2026	Completion certificates; Visual inspection
Re-tiling of seated area at the front of school	Enhance the tiling at front of school	JM, MM, KM, PMK	By January 2026	Work completion sign-off; Photographic evidence
Refreshment of ICT infrastructure in Rooms 10, 11 and 25	Install new ICT hardware and upgrade cabling/networking.	MB, PMK	By September 2025	Inventory records; Staff/student feedback

Provision of new link corridor between main building and canteen	Urgent application to be made to Education Authority	SLT, JM, KM, PMK	by June 2026	Completion certificates; Contractor reports
New signage at lower entrance on North Road	Install signage, paint galvanised fencing, cut back trees.	JM, KM, PMK	By Jan 2026	Photographic evidence; Contractor invoices
Repairs and painting to outside of school building	Repair missing signage letters, paint handrails at front of school, shutters, and mobiles.	JM, KM, MM	By Jan 2026	Inspection reports; Photographic evidence
Generate more revenue from the hire of school facilities, including greater use of synthetic pitch and charging of Cadet Association	Develop community links, advertise facilities, create rental packages.	JM, PMK	By Oct 2025	Revenue reports; Booking records
Review Grounds Maintenance and Cleaning Services contracts		JM, KM, PMK		
Introduce tuck shop to assist with payments for infrastructure development	Set up account with O'Reilly's. Clearing of space at Languages Corridor hatch. Agreement on supervision of same.	JM, PMK, Senior Prefects	By Nov 2025	Monthly accounting statements.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AfL	Assessment for Learning
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ALIS	'A' Level Information System
AQE	Association for Quality Education
ASCL	Association of School and College Leaders
BoG	Board of Governors
BYOD	'Bring Your Own Device'
C2K	Classroom 2000
CASS	Central Advisor Support Services
CATS	Cognitive Ability Tests
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
CEIAG	Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
CLC	Carrickfergus Learning Community

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSSC	Controlled Schools' Support Council
DENI	Department of Education Northern Ireland
DDP	Departmental Development Plan
EA	Education Authority
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EF	Entitlement Framework
ESAGS	Every School a Good School
ETI	Education Training Inspectorate
FSM	Free School Meals
GTCNI	General Teaching Council of Northern Ireland
HoD	Head of Department
INSET	In-Service Training
LLW	Learning for Life and Work
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
MEA COUNCIL	Mid and East Antrim Council

MER	Monitor, Evaluate, Review
NAHT	National Association of Headteachers
NGRT	National Group Reading Test
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PLP	Personal Learning Plan
PRSD	Performance Review and Staff Development
PTE	Progress Test in English
PTM	Progress Test in Mathematics
QCA	Qualification and Curriculum Authority
QUB	Queen's University Belfast
RLS	Research Lesson Study
SEAG	Schools' Entrance Assessment Group
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SIMS	Schools Information Management System

SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SPT	Senior Pastoral Team
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
T&L	Teaching and Learning
TDT	Teacher Development Trust
TPL	Teacher Professional Learning
TTI	Together Towards Improvement
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UU	University of Ulster
YEP	Young Enterprise Programme



