



BALLYMAHON VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Our School



Hello Everyone,

My name is Mick O'Rourke and I am in the fortunate position to be Principal here at Ballymahon Vocational School. I have the pleasure of working with a staff that go beyond the call of duty to ensure that our students feel welcome within our school and that every opportunity is given to them to fulfil their potential, academically and socially. Our students are supported by dedicated teachers, an excellent Pastoral Care Team, Home School Liaison, School Guidance and Year Head structure.

The wide range of subject expertise and extra-curricular activities available to our students is integral to our success. Our school motto of "Where the individual matters" has been evident from the first day that I stepped into the school. Our school community work together on a strong foundation of mutual respect and as a result we progress together to the benefit of all. The voice of our student body is extremely important to us through our Student Council, Student Mentor Programme and Digital Leaders Programme amongst other programmes and they have continuous input into our areas of development and investment as well as policy implementation.

I hope you take the opportunity to visit our website which is undergoing some refurbishment to watch our video and to take a virtual tour of our school.



At Ballymahon Vocational School we have a proven record of academic achievement. We set high standards and ambitious goals in order to provide a top grade education where students receive a holistic education. As Principal I am proud to be part of a dedicated management, who along with our very professional teaching staff work hard to ensure students experience success and inspire them to move through this phase of their educational journey.

Ballymahon Vocational School is an innovative, progressive school fully committed to preparing our students for the demands of the 21st Century. Our school is co-educational and multi-denominational and provides an appropriate education for all students regardless of race, creed or ability. We offer the traditional Junior and Leaving Certificate programmes, Transition Year (TYP), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and Special Needs Support. We are also particularly proud of our Pastoral Care structures which ensure that students are cared for and nurtured in a kind, supportive environment.

Ballymahon Vocational School has served the community for over 60 years with many of its past pupils achieving both national and international success.

Facilities

Our school currently have the following extensive facilities available to us:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| 2. Science lab's | 1 ICT/Coding |
| 2. Woodwork rooms | 1.DCG/Graphics |
| 2. Metalwork rooms | 1. Music |
| 1. Machine & Prep | 1. Canteen |
| 1. Sports hall | 1. Library |
| 1. Home economics | 1. Polytunnel |
| 18. Gen Classrooms. | |

NEWS 2023

New ASTRO/MUGA

Approved for

- 4 General classrooms,
- 4 Special Education classrooms,
- 2 science labs & Science Prep rooms
- 1 Art room & art storage Ancillary Rooms and Ancillary storage



Sneak Preview- New 5 a-side @BVS



Our School



The Student Council comprises of three representatives from each year group, one from each class group. These representatives meet on a monthly basis to voice the opinions of the student body on matters relating to them. These include the development and review of policies, changes to school facilities, engagement with the wider community, fundraising and involvement in student focus groups such as curricular enhancement.

School Meals

The school meals programme operates a daily Breakfast Club and Lunch Club for our students who wish to avail of it. There is a wide variety of hot meals provided free of charge to students. Our catering company serves the meals in our assembly hall which has suitable seating facilities for our students.



Home School Community Liaison Coordinator

The Home School Community Liaison Coordinator promotes partnership and active co-operation between home, school and community. Our Home School Community Liaison Co-Ordinator encourages and supports on-going communication between the school and the home. A range of support programmes are made available to parents throughout the school year.



Guidance & Counselling

The Guidance Programme is designed to help students make informed, personal, educational and career decisions and also to help students develop the skills necessary to achieve personal and career goals. Students have timetabled guidance classes. The Guidance Counsellor, Ms. Corkery offers students individual support in coping with personal issues, academic concerns and subject/career choices.

Pastoral Care

We pride ourselves on being a school where the students' voice is heard. At the heart of the school is our distinctive motto 'Where the Individual Matters', which is shown through the excellent relationships which exist between staff and students. A shared vision for the school is held by staff, students and parents, which has created a strong and caring community. With the aid of a committed pastoral care programme we promote well-being for all members of our school community and this is delivered within a caring and safe environment. Our expert pastoral care team ensures that students who are experiencing difficulties, be they academic, emotional or social, are cared for in a sensitive and productive manner.

Book Rental Scheme

All text books are provided under a book rental scheme, with books being distributed at the beginning of each school year for a standard fee. Hugely advantageous to parents, this scheme provides a valuable service within the school community, one which has a large take up level amongst families and is largely beneficial to all.



Extra Curricular Activities



Sports

We encourage sport in the school primarily for physical activity which is recognised as a component of good health. However, there are also other benefits to students such as instilling competitiveness, fair play and teamwork. Students participate in a range of sporting activities including Gaelic, Rugby, Basketball, Badminton, Table Tennis, Pool, Girls Active, Athletics and Equestrian. The school participates and has had considerable success in sporting competitions on a regional and national level.



School Trips

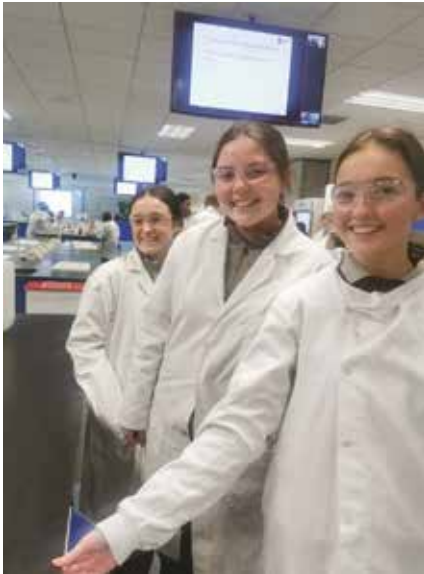
The school has organised a number of very successful European trips. First and Second Year students have an annual trip to Achill Outdoor Education Centre for activities such as surfing, coasteering and kayaking.



Gaisce

We offer the Gaisce (President's) Award Scheme, designed to challenge young people and encourage participation in a wide range of positive activities. In addition to the fantastic learning opportunities available, the receipt of a Gaisce Award provides a standard of personal achievement and success and will sit perfectly on any Curriculum Vitae.

Co-Curricular Activities



Young Scientist

The Science Department offers each student the opportunity to participate in the prestigious BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition. Students are involved in researching, compiling data and presenting information. These are all essential skills. It also helps to build confidence in presenting as students learn how to articulate their ideas before speaking to a panel of judges.



School Performances

We are privileged in our school to have a very strong tradition of Pantomime and Performance Arts incorporating music, dance and theatre. This is an important facet of education as Performing Arts is now an integral part of the new Junior Certificate Curriculum. It also promotes student's self-esteem, confidence and social skills. Our most recent performance, Cinderella demonstrated our whole school inclusive approach, where staff and students with the support of our parents and the local community produced a magnificent showcase of our wide and varied talents within the school.



Erasmus+ Programme

Our school has been selected for funding by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Programme. Our innovative project proposes a mutual intercultural and language exchange between ourselves and five other schools from France, Belgium, Spain, Denmark and Bulgaria. Each school will showcase their country's legendary mythical stories. With an innovative project steeped in European literacy, heritage, foreign language and European culture, we just can't wait for our learning journey to begin where our students will host others and in turn travel to their respective countries.



Curriculum



Art, Sra H Endersbach
Junior CYCLE

We offer a wide and varied curriculum in Ballymahon Vocational School. A strong focus on our student Wellbeing has been established. Our students receive 400 hours of Wellbeing related tuition throughout their Junior Cycle programme in subjects such as Physical Education, Social Personal and Health Education, Civic Social and Political Education, Guidance and Social Health. Wellbeing continues through the Senior Cycle in the school also. Making decisions around subject choices can be a difficult one for students. To help our students in their decision making, all first year students complete a Taster Programme in their first year in school.

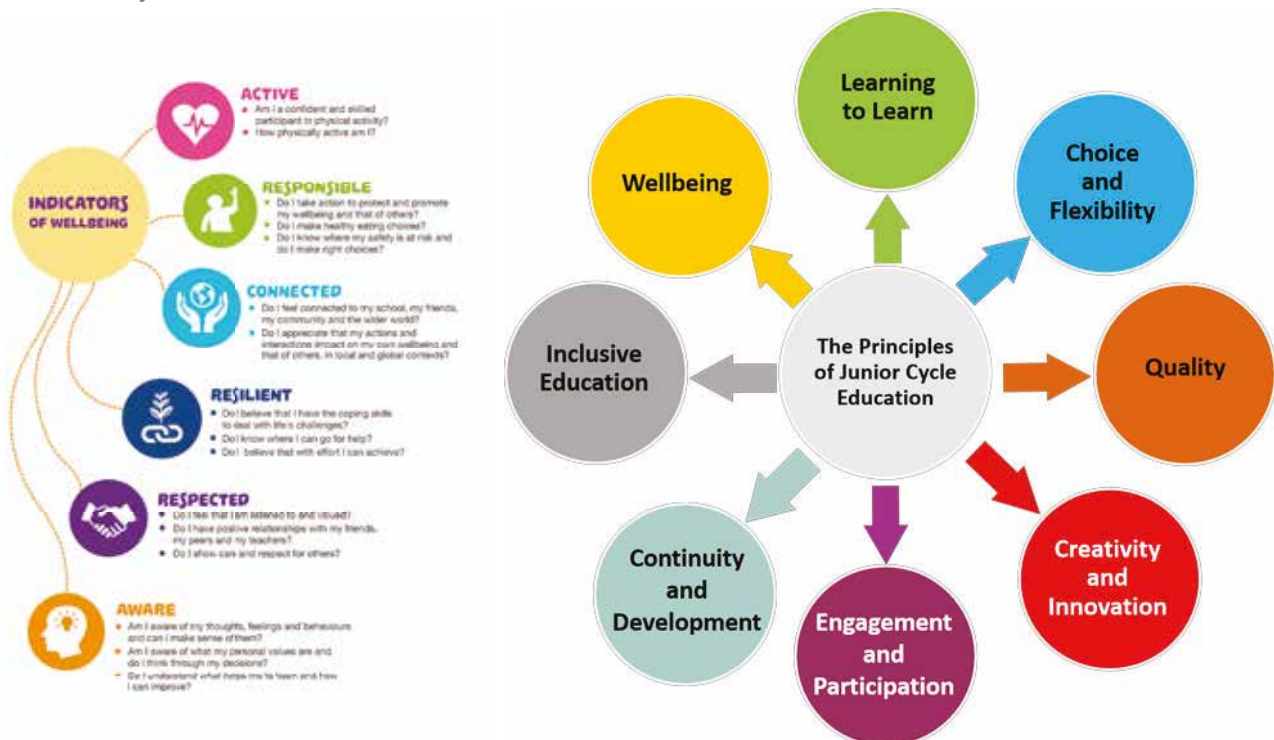


Our Junior Cycle subjects



English	Mathematics	Irish	History	Geography
Science	CSPE	SPHE	Engineering	Wellbeing
PE	Spanish	French	Music	Visual Art
Business Studies	Graphics	Wood Technology	Information Technology	Home Economics

Students study our core subjects of English, Maths, Irish, History, Geography, Science, CSPE, SPHE, and PE throughout the three years of their Junior Cycle. They sample all other subjects and select three of them to continue with for assessment over the course of the three years concluding with terminal exams in third year.



Curriculum

Our Senior Cycle

Senior Cycle in Ballymahon Vocational School can be of two or three years duration, depending on participation in Transition Year. Subject choice for Leaving Certificate is based on student aspirations, career choices and entry requirements for the Universities and the Institutes of Technology. Advice on subject choice is provided through group and individual guidance lessons or meetings with our Guidance Department. Students generally study seven subjects for the Leaving Certificate examination.

The school also offers the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The LCVP programme is designed to enhance the vocational dimension of the Leaving Certificate. It emphasises enterprise education and preparation for working life incorporating work experience.



English	Mathematics	Irish	French	Spanish
History	Geography	LCVP	Accounting	DCG
Chemistry	Physics	Biology	Music	Art
Construction Studies	Agricultural Science	Home Economics	Engineering	Business
LC Physical Education		Computer Science		



Leaving Certificate Applied

- A Different Way

Remember doing LCA:

- ✓ gives you a qualification
- ✓ develops your skills
- ✓ broadens your horizons
- ✓ builds your confidence
- ✓ opens doors to your future career



Transition Year

Transition Year was introduced in September 2014. This one year programme is designed to act as a bridge between the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate. It offers students the opportunity to mature and develop into young adults. It also provides students with many learning opportunities in preparation for further and higher education and for the world of work. Students have a full and varied curriculum including sampling Leaving Certificate subjects combined with a very wide range of extra-curricular activities.



COMPUTER SCIENCE

We are delighted to say that BVS are in the process of introducing Computer Science as a new Leaving Certificate subject. Computer science is the study of computing and algorithmic processes. Leaving Certificate Computer Science includes how programming and computational thinking can be applied to the solution of problems, and how computing technology impacts the world around us. The specification is constructed into 3 strands, whose learning outcomes are interwoven. The 3 strands are:

- Practices and principles
- Core concepts
- Computer science in practice

The role of programming in computer science is like that of practical work in the other subjects—it provides motivation, and a context within which ideas are brought to life. Students learn programming by solving problems through computational thinking processes and through practical applications such as applied learning tasks.

The Leaving Certificate Computer Science specification is designed for all students. It applies to many aspects of students' lives and is therefore relevant to a wide range of student interests

Our School



"Student learning was very effective when both the theoretical concepts and the practical skill content were combined in a manner that engaged students. Students associated lesson content to their local environment outside of school. This integrated holistic approach is very good practice".

Department of Education & Skills, Subject Inspection in Metalwork and Engineering:

"Teacher-student rapport was very positive and classroom management was excellent with students both on task and motivated in all lessons observed...The classrooms were print-rich and vibrant, with various relevant materials prominently displayed".

Department of Education & Skills, Subject Inspection in French



Our People



Aishling O'Reilly completed my Leaving Certificate in Ballymahon Vocational School in 2019. I went on to study English and Music in Maynooth University and was awarded the Eoin Rock Memorial Prize for First Place in the BA Music Degree Examination this year. I have now started my Professional Master of Education at Maynooth University and I am delighted to be back in BVS to carry out my teaching placement. Ballymahon Vocational School always endorsed the arts and encouraged me to perform at all their events and ceremonies during my time in the school, playing the fiddle and singing, as well as taking part in their Christmas pantomimes. Students at BVS are always encouraged to pursue their passions and let their talents flourish!

Conor Farrell. I completed my Leaving Certificate in Ballymahon Vocational School in 2015. I am currently working as an electrician with Fusion Electrical. I have very fond memories of my time in BVS. The knowledge and skills I developed in subjects like Engineering and Design really helped me when I started my apprenticeship. I was also lucky enough to get to play many different sports during my time in the school. The highlight of which would have to be winning the All Ireland Football title in 2015.



Dr. James Walsh I began my educational journey in BVS in 2011. I completed my Leaving Certificate in 2016 and went on to study Medicine in Trinity College Dublin. I graduated from Trinity in 2021 and I am currently working as a Senior House Officer/Junior Doctor in Obstetrics & Gynaecology as part of the RCSI Hospital group. In particular the science department in BVS really inspired me to pursue a career in science as they provided a fun, lively and interactive learning environment. The Business Studies department in BVS also equipped me with the knowledge and ability to deal with finance, taxes and a basic understanding in consumer law – all of which are an integral part of my work and personal life. I have always reminisced on my time in BVS and I am grateful to have been a student in a friendly, caring environment.

All Ireland Basketball



Senior Under19 All-Ireland

Basketball Champions 2022

Student Centred Learning

At Ballymahon Vocational School - motto Where the Individual Matters our Special Educational Needs (SEN) team is at the heart of our Pastoral Care System. Our Special Needs Team has a caring and supportive role in the school where students and parents can get advice and supports about a range of issues, including exam supports (RACE).

The Special Educational Needs Team is on hand to meet with students and parents in a confidential environment where they can be cared for and supported throughout their time in the school.

Here at BVS we endeavour to pursue academic excellence while acknowledging the diversity of our student body, and nurture the values of inclusion and care within the school.

The SEN team give care and support to students learning to cope with the many aspects of growing up and school life and with their individual circumstances.

The SEN team works with HSCL, Year Heads, Learning Support Teachers, Subject Teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal. They also have regular contact with parents guardians (NEPS) psychologists, Counsellors and the Department of Education

Our ASD or Lissoy Class is a recent and most welcome addition to our SEN provision. This class is in response to a need in the community. We aim to provide students enrolled in this class with an additional layer of support as they navigate post primary education

Ms. Murray and Ms. Tully have been working with ASIAM for the last few years. Ballymahon Vocational School is part of a national pilot scheme for Autism Friendly Schools. BVS has been running cross school initiatives under this scheme since 2018

The Team

Ms Sinead Hanly SENCO and SEN for 5th & TY

Ms Anne Tully (RACE) SEN for 1st & 6th yr

Ms Anne Burke SEN for 2nd & 3rd yr

Ms Shauna Murray Lissoy Class

Mr Emmett Arrigan Learning Support & EAL

Mr Enda Farrell Learning Support Numeracy



Our School

Astroturf/ MUGA

The addition of the new astroturf pitch in Ballymahon Vocational School has brought our students' experience to the next level. An all-weather surface for outdoor games, physical education class and extra-curricular sports offers our students opportunity to maximise their activity levels while getting some fresh air.

You'll hear plenty of laughs and competitive roars every lunch time



Our People



Staff of Ballymahon Vocational School September 2023

Community is at the heart of our school ethos here at Ballymahon Vocational School. As a school community we are very proud with our links with the local community. Over the years, we have created strong partnerships with Bridgeways, Ballymahon Day Care Centre, Thomond Lodge Nursing Home and the Tidy Towns Association. The school organises a number of fundraising events each year in aid of worthy local charities. These events raise awareness and empathy amongst the school community for those in need. BVS students have raised funds for Longford-Westmeath Hospice, St. Vincent De Paul, Darkness Into Light, etc. Our community work allows us to deliver a holistic approach to education at BVS.



Green Schools

Green Schools is an international environmental education programme, offering students an opportunity to examine environmental issues and apply methods to make a difference in the day-to-day running of their school. The Green Schools Programme has been running at Ballymahon Vocational School for many years. Green-Schools' mission is to protect planet Earth – our shared home to which we all belong – and we want everyone involved! Equity, diversity and social justice are fundamental to our values – so whoever you are, we can't wait to have YOU involved!



Academic Progression

Academic Progress reports are sent out after house exams at 3 interval during the academic year. Monitoring our students' academic performance is done through a structured system of continuous assessments.

Reporting is followed up with Parent/Teacher meetings to allow Parents/Guardians discussion time with teachers to discuss items of concern.



Ballymahon Vocational School is among a number of schools nationwide that has been granted DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunities in Schools) status. DEIS is the Department of Education's initiative to respond to educational disadvantage. The DEIS programme focuses on targeting additional resources to those schools included in the programme to ensure every child has an equal opportunity to achieve their potential. The schools benefit from increased funding, enhanced guidance provision, access to the school completion programme, plus the addition of a home-school community liaison teacher and School Completion Project Worker


JCSP

At Ballymahon Vocational School, we are proud facilitators of the Junior Cycle School Programme (JCSP). This is a separate programme and accreditation, that complements and supports the traditional Junior Cycle programme in our school. At the core of the programme, is the belief that every student is capable of success. The JCSP provides a framework for the three years of the Junior Cycle, within which students can measure and reflect on their own progress through an annual process called profiling. In addition, the JCSP supports student engagement in learning by promoting active methodologies and differentiation. Students have access to initiatives and activities through the programme that further enriches their learning and their experience of education. In the 2022/23 academic year, some of these initiatives included drama workshops, French food tasting and yoga.





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