



REPORT OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Annual Parents Meeting
20th June 2024



For the Academic Year
2022/23

Overview and Context

The previous Annual Parents Meeting was held in March 2023.

Parents were notified in advance of the meeting and the Annual Report will be posted on the College website and parents made aware of its location should they wish to access it.

The following report covers the academic year 2022/23.



BLACKWATER INTEGRATED COLLEGE
(BLACKWATER INTEGRATED COLLEGE LTD)

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS (DIRECTORS)
ON THE 2022/23 COLLEGE YEAR

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Blackwater Integrated College -Teaching Staff 2021/22

Principal Mr S Taylor BA (Hons) PGCE PQH (NI)

Senior Leadership Team

Vice Principal Ms P Gilmore
Pastoral Coordinator Mrs J Millington
Assessment and Reporting Mrs L McVeigh
C2K Coordinator Mr D McAlorum
Bursar Mrs S Telford

SENCO

Mrs K Mallon BA (Hons) PGCE

Art & Design

Miss L Laird BDes (Hons) PGCE

ICT

Mr D McAlorum BSc (Hons) PGCE

English

Mrs E Killen BA (Hons) PGCE
Ms P Gilmore BA (Hons) PGCTEFL PQH (NI)
Mrs Y Taylor BA (Hons) Grad Dip Ed

Geography

Mrs Janet Lockhart BSc (Joint Honours) PGCE

History

Mrs A Ward BA (Hons) PGCE

Home Economics

Mrs H McBrearty BEd (Hons)

Languages

Mrs K Love BA (Hons) PGCE

Learning Support Centre
Mr C McClean BSc (Hons) MSc PGCE
Mrs R Morrison BTh PGCE

Mathematics
Mrs L McVeigh BSc (Hons) PGCE PQH (NI)
Mr J Killen BEd

Music
Mrs E Stott BMus (Hons) PGDip MTh PGCE

Physical Education
Mrs J Millington BSc (Hons) PGCE
Mr M Sunerton BSc (Hons) PGCE

Religious Education
Miss C Wheatley BEd

Science
Mrs A Cockfield BSc (Hons) MEd PGCE
Miss J Conaty BSc (Hons) PGCE

Technology and Design
Mr J Johnson BEd (Hons) PGCE

Board of Governors 2022/23

The Board of Governors is comprised of up to 16 members. The Principal attends all Board meetings and many sub-groups in a non-voting capacity. The Board of Governors meets on a monthly basis.

Some of the College's business is handled by sub-groups, established to address various areas of policy. They meet as often as required and report back to the full Board of Governors. Any recommendations made by the Committees must be ratified by the full Board before they become policy.

Governors also attend meetings of groups which have close links with the school e.g. meetings of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education. All Governors are offered a programme of training to assist them in their role. The Board of Governors and the various constituencies of Foundation Governors, Department of Education Nominees, Parent Governors and Teacher Governors must be balanced in terms of religious tradition.

Mrs A Toman	Chair (DE Representative)
Mrs D McBay	Foundation Governor
Mrs F Lowry	Foundation Parent Governor
Mr M Coburn	Foundation Parent Governor
Mrs A Cockfield	Teacher Representative
Mrs E Killen	Teacher Representative
Awaiting appointment	Department of Education Representative
Awaiting appointment	Department of Education Representative
Awaiting appointment	Department of Education Representative
Mrs A Grimason	Parent Governor
Mrs V Haslett	Parent Governor
Mrs M McKervey	Parent Governor

Foundation Governors

The Scheme of Management provides for the appointment of six Foundation Governors, of which one third should be parents of pupils attending the College; these are Parent Foundation governors. These Governors serve for four years.

Parent Governors

Parent Governors will be elected at the AGM as required.

Teacher Governors

Mrs A Cockfield and Mrs E Killen are currently the teacher governors as nominated by staff.

Department of Education Nominees

Four members are appointed to the Board on the nomination of the Head of the Department of Education to serve four years. We are still waiting on 3 appointments to be made and have returned relevant paperwork to DE.

Additional Information

Mr Stephen Taylor (Principal) was also an ex officio member of the Board of Governors for the 2022/23 Academic year. The Board meets every other month of the academic year from September to June. The Finance and Audit Committee may on occasions meet monthly before full Board meetings. There are two main groups that meet in the Education group and Policy / Staffing group that meet 2/3 times per year or as required. The Committees report to the full Board on their recommendations.

Due to a smaller numbers of Governors in the 2022/23 Year these topics were generally covered as a focus during full Board meetings



College Security.

The College is required to include in the Annual Report measures which have been put into place to safeguard the security of the students and staff within the College site. Blackwater Integrated College recognises the need to provide a secure learning and working environment for students and staff.

Visitors to the College identify themselves at reception and are accompanied around the site by a member of staff. All visitors are logged coming on to the site and leaving the site in accordance with new GDPR regulations. They are also issued with an identifying name badge and lanyard that they must wear at all times. The side gate to the College now remains locked during the school day and is only opened for deliveries by Mrs Thomas with the key remaining in the main office.

All staff members exercise a collective responsibility for the identification of any strangers on site.

Practice fire drills are held at least once a term and this is managed by J Taylor (Buildings supervisor). Furthermore, there is a telephone link to the main office close to every classroom for emergency situations.

Fire safety was significantly upgraded in the College in 2022 with a new fire alarm system installed throughout the College by EA.



Curriculum

The curriculum in Blackwater Integrated College is delivered by subject specialist teachers who regularly update their knowledge and skills through training and sharing of practice.

The College has recently invested in developing e-learning and is now well equipped with every student having access to Chromebooks. These are available for use in lessons, and homework is also set on Google Classroom. All students are trained in how to use this and are developing confidence and competence in the wide range of ICT skills required for the 21st century life and workplaces. Since September 2023 all Year 8,9,10 and 11 students have their own Chromebook and there is a class set to cover Year 12.

Blackwater Integrated College offers an accelerated learning class in each year at Key Stage 3, enabling students to access a tailored curriculum and this has enhanced outcomes for all at Key Stage 4.

As the College has developed and the range of both academic and vocational subjects has expanded at Key Stage 4 there has been a rise in standards: the majority of those following the Vocational Programme now achieve five or more GCSEs or equivalent qualifications. ETI confirmed that “pupils attain good standards in a wide range of vocational subjects”.

Excellent pastoral systems support the students in their learning, and guidance on how to study effectively is delivered in the Personal Development programme and supplemented by enjoyable practical workshops at appropriate times.

Progress is tracked throughout a student's time at the College: targets are shared and students have access to further interventions as required.

In 2022/23 - 88% of Blackwater students achieved 5+ GCSE grades at A*- C and 53% including English and Mathematics. Both of these figures show the curriculum offer at Blackwater is tailored to meet student needs.

In Years 8, 9 and 10 students study the following subjects:

Art & Design, Careers, English, French/Spanish, Geography, History, Home Economics, Information & Communication Technology (ICT), Learning for Life and Work, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Religious Education, Science and Technology & Design.

In Years 11 and 12 the choice of subjects taken at GCSE/BTEC level is:

Art & Design, Contemporary Crafts, CoPE, English, Essential Skills Numeracy and Literacy, French, Geography, Health and Social Care, History, Hospitality, ICT, Learning for Life and Work, Mathematics, Music, Occupational Studies, Physical Education, BTEC Sports Firsts, Prince's Trust Achieve Programme, Religious Education, Spanish, Science (Double Award and Single Award) and Statistics.

Students are also given the option of following a more vocational programme of study which includes GCSEs in Occupational Studies, Art or Contemporary Crafts and recognised OCN qualifications in ICT and Science as well as Essential Skills in Numeracy and Literacy.

Students with Special Educational needs are supported either in mainstream classes or through the Learning Support Centre and teaching assistants work with the SENCo and teaching staff in their duties to assist these children.

Accessibility.

Work was completed in 2022 to improve disabled access through the College. The installation of two wheelchair lifts and automated doors and access ramps to several classrooms means a greater number of classrooms in the College are now accessible to wheelchair users.

There is also access to a disabled toilet that has been built to improve facilities beside the Learning Support Centre. The College does however still present some challenges due to the number of sets of stairs around the site.

Chairs Report

On behalf of the Board of Governors I am pleased to present my seventh report as Chair.

Although the COVID pandemic has receded, the lives of many students continued to be disrupted in during the academic year 2022/23. Almost all the business of the Board of Governors was able to be conducted in face-to-face meetings. This was particularly important for interviews.

There have been some changes to the membership of the Board. I am grateful for the contribution made by M Coburn and V Haslett who resigned during the year. I also welcome N McGrath as a new governor. As I have now completed two terms as a Department of Education governor my designation has shifted to that of Foundation governor. This has not led to any major changes in my role as chair of Blackwater. As stated in previous years we are still waiting for appointments from the Department of Education.

Finances have continued to be challenging and there have been substantial pressures due to inflation. Increased costs such as staffing, energy, insurance have not been matched by increased funding. This was not helped by the lack of a functioning Executive at Stormont.

The Mid Down Development Proposal (MDIC) was approved by the Department of Education early in the academic year 2022/23 and details have recently been circulated to all parents providing an update. I would like to take this opportunity to thank governors and staff who have been involved with both Blackwater and MDIC over the last few years and look forward to their continuing support when MDIC comes to fruition with its first intake in 2026.

Students are at the forefront of everything the College does, and a number of policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated to ensure their wellbeing and return to normal school life.

The Board of Governors appreciates the efforts of everyone involved with Blackwater Integrated College, thanks for all your help and support.

**The report of the Principal of Blackwater integrated College,
Mr S Taylor, on the school year 2022/23 to be delivered
to the AGM of Blackwater Integrated College Ltd
on 20th June 2024**



I am delighted to present this report to the membership of the association detailing the main highlights of the 2022/23 academic year at Blackwater Integrated College.

As with the previous few years it was an uncertain time for our Year 12 students given the stop start nature of their KS4 experience but all coped very well and the grades they achieved were a real credit to their hard work.

External examination results in 2022/23 at GCSE level were excellent in many areas. It is difficult to draw comparisons with previous years given the different circumstances surrounding GCSE grading over the last few years but the year group achieved some excellent results and we wish them every success moving forward.

2023 proved to be a very important year for Integrated Education and also for Blackwater in relation to our development proposal plans in conjunction with Mid Down Integrated College Steering Group. Following the Integrated Education Bill completing its final stage in Assembly in March 2022 and receiving Royal Assent in April 2022 we received approval for our development proposal to form a new 11-19 Post Primary School in October 2023.

This followed many years of lobbying and hard work on behalf of Blackwater IC Board of Governors and a close working relationship with Mid Down Integrated College Steering group. Special thanks also go to Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and Integrated Education Fund (IEF) for their ongoing support throughout the process.

The journey going forward will be an exciting one with challenges along the way but with the help and support of an Interim Board of Governors and consultation with parents and students we are very much looking forward to an exciting future starting in September 2026.

As a school we moved incrementally since the introduction of Chromebooks for students in 2020 to use both in school and at home. Currently Year 8,9, 10 and 11 have their own Chromebook and from September 2024 all students will also have their own device.

This has been very well received by students, parents and staff and has enhanced the ICT levels in the College as well as e-learning across a range of subjects.

The Scholars Programme was in place for its second year and culminated in 11 Year 8 and Year 9 students graduating at Queens University, Belfast in May 2023. This programme is an introduction to the potential of attending University in future years and students attend 6 tutorials then a final dissertation where they are graded according to Degree classifications. It was an extremely popular programme and will run again in 2022/23 opening up new opportunities for our students in their future studies.

The Eco Club was formed in 2022 and was successful in getting a grant of over £10,000 to build a polytunnel in the College and equip the Eco Club with all of the tools to be fully functional. This was installed in June 2022 and the Eco Club have grown from strength to strength and applied for grants for new bins and taken part in various trips for litter picks and beach cleans. The area is used during some lunch times for activities and the first fruits and vegetables have been grown.

Opportunities for students to extend their curriculum as always are very important. After school activities, lunch activities and Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme were all offered in the College to give students the opportunity to avail of a full school experience.

Numeracy and Literacy events and prizes also allowed students to be rewarded for their hard work as well as raising the profile of both areas in the College. This worked through the implementation of Bedrock as a literacy tool and also Dr Frost Maths which both allow students the opportunity to independently work on their Numeracy and Literacy skills. Hot Chocolate Friday also took place to reward students for a range of different areas of school life and it afforded a great opportunity to catch up with students on a Friday to congratulate them on their hard work.



Events at BIC 2023

Rewards at BIC 2022



Prize Winners 2023



From a sporting perspective 2022/23 saw us link up again with Downpatrick Cricket Club. This resulted in regular coaching during PE time for our students and some students took this further outside of school and joined the club and availed of extra coaching in the evenings. This is a link that will hopefully continue this year through an IEF grant with Mr Sunerton leading this.

SIMs parent App continued to be used during the 2022/23 academic year to improve communication with parents. In App form this provides parents with up to date information such as messages, attendance and reports on their child. Uniform Exchange was also introduced to help support parents at a time when the cost of living has increased. We now have a good stock of pre-owned uniform and encourage exchanges at different times through the year. We have also recieved a small grant from IEF to help support families that may need some help with uniforms.

Pastoral care remains a vital area in the College. This involves all of our teaching and non teaching staff and their support provided for our students. This is also complemented by Gary Boyd as a full time Youth Worker to support our students. Gary's role in the College is integral to a wide ranging set of interventions and supports for our students and their families. Defining the ways that Gary supports students is very difficult but his role has become central to our Pastoral system working alongside teaching staff at a time when external support for schools and students has decreased significantly.

Contact has been made with many external agencies who regularly come into the College to support in a range of areas from Integration and Diversity to individual mentoring support. The list on the following page shows the outreach work that happens across the College in connecting with our local community and the breadth of different external agencies that we engage with to ensure our students have access to a wide range of opportunities and support.



BIC involvement in our local community.

Ulster Rugby - Sport and exercise programme

Down GAA - Sport and exercise programme

Downpatrick Cricket Club - Use of facilities, coaching and PE

Killyleagh Football Club - Use of facilities, coaching and PE

EA Youth Service - Student workshops, STRIVE

Downpatrick Leisure Centre - Use of facilities, coaching and PE

Action Mental Health - Workshops and fundraising

Local businesses Partnerships - pupil work experience, hampers for fundraising.

Made for More - Mental Health workshops

Theatre of Witness - Diversity and Inclusion workshops

Shared Education - School partnerships and activities with local schools

Prince's Trust - Charity Organisation, In school qualifications and opportunities for workshops and enterprise activities.

Local parish Clergy - for religious occasions including carol service at Christmas.

Foodbank Collecting and fundraising

Parents Association - Working to fundraise and develop relationships in the local community.

Primary Links - Working with local PS to provide practical classes and workshops.

Cancer focus - Workshops and fundraising

Alternatives Workshops - Support to prevent anti-social and criminal behaviour

Patrician youth centre - After school links and workshops in school

South Eastern Trust EWTS – workshops and provide training for wellbeing ambassador

Newry Mourne and Down - PCSP Workshops and shared ed trips

PSNI - Programmes, workshops and experiences

Fire and rescue service - Safety workshops.



2022/23 saw admissions and enrolment numbers in the College increase. This is obviously very encouraging as we move forward. Our integrated status and all ability ethos has been maintained and earlier this year we were highlighted in the Belfast Telegraph as having one of the most representative balances of students in all Integrated Schools across NI.

We have seen an increase in the numbers of students with a statement of SEN applying to the College and their integration into different forms of provision has been very successful. We have had visits from both the Department of Education and Education Training Inspectorate to look at and discuss our provision as a model of good practice.

We have also seen an increase in the number of students who do not have English as their first language. We have put in place a specialist teacher to support these students and they are coping extremely well and adjusting to their new environments. The nature of our College allows this to happen and new cultures and traditions are embraced and celebrated.

The organisation of college trips started again in 2023 culminating in a first Ski Trip in a number of years in March 2024 to Folgaria, Italy with over 40 students. This has been booked again for next year and there is also a City languages trip to Barcelona planned. Both of these trips give amazing opportunities for our students to have experiences that last a life time.



Admissions for the 2022/23 year group followed the normal process, including an Open night and Open Day specifically for SEN students. Open days, nights and 1-1 visits for many parents also took place and we hope this will again raise the profile of the College in the community. We had an increase in admissions for September 2023 to 65 students which was a significant increase on previous years and hopefully a sign of further growth ahead.

Board of Governor meetings carried on as normal during the 22/23 academic year with monthly meetings. I would like to thank all governors for their support and for their continued dedication to helping the College move forward. Alongside BIC board meetings some of our governors are also members of the Mid Down Integrated College Steering Group (MDIC) and there were many meetings throughout the 2022/23 period culminating in the approval of the development proposal submitted to the Department of Education.

We are still waiting on DE to appoint 3 more governors. This has unfortunately been close to 5 years now we have been waiting and hopefully it will be resolved soon. I would like to thank all of those governors who give voluntarily of their time each month and are very supportive of the College. I would also like to thank Ann Toman as Chair once again for her support over the last year.

I would finally like to take this opportunity to commend our teaching and non-teaching staff for their co-operation throughout the 2021/22 academic year. Staff attendance and morale as always have remained high in the College despite the challenges to our world of education.

Annual Attendance Rate (All pupils)

Total days attended by all pupils as a % of total possible days of attendance was 82.5% for the 2022/23 academic year. The attendance figure was still greatly affected following COVID which still affecting attendance for many families. Poor school attendance has been a well reported issue across many schools in NI and the UK and something we all collectively will continue to address.

Pastoral Care

We place great emphasis on the pastoral care of our students. The basic pastoral unit is the tutor group, which consists of approximately 20 students. A tutor is assigned to each class and usually remains with the group as they move through the College. Tutor groups meet each morning before class for registration and announcements and again in the afternoon. Form Tutors were supported by the Head of Junior School, Mrs Love for Years 8-10 and Head of Senior School, Mr Sunerton for Year 11 and 12 and the Pastoral Coordinator, Mrs Millington.

Form tutors work closely with all staff to monitor each student's academic performance and personal development. Tutor groups also follow a Preventative Curriculum during which students cover a wide range of relevant issues.

Our pastoral system is a caring system that aims to put the children at ease right from the first day, free from worries and concerns, allowing them to feel safe and secure in their environment and to grow in confidence. There is also a major focus on promoting positive behaviour throughout all year groups.

Small class sizes and the relationship with the form tutor allow each child to receive the care and attention they need to ensure they achieve their potential throughout their time in the College.

Family Works Counselling Services continued with students across the different year groups and is a very widely used support by many students. This is co-ordinated by Mrs Millington and the Pastoral team.

Various workshops took place throughout the year to support the ongoing work in the preventative curriculum. These included workshops with Made for More, Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum and PSNI Safer Internet Use. Staff also availed of training in Mental Health Awareness, Child Protection and Anti-Bullying.

Gary Boyd, Youth Worker has been invaluable in providing support to all students as he seeks to build relationships with students and offer 1:1 support to help students with any issues they are experiencing inside and outside school.

Pastoral calls were made to Primary schools and parents prior to the September 2022 intake. This was followed up with a year 8 induction week at the end of August to bring together the year group and allow them to become familiar with their new surroundings. This was facilitated by Gary Boyd, Youth Worker.

The Pastoral log was also completed, and the Child Protection Annual Survey completed and sent to EA. The ETI Safeguarding proforma was completed and presented to the BOG.

Parental consultations took place at various times through the year and returned to face to face meetings. Option Choices for Year 10 were targeted as a key meeting to choose the best pathways with guidance given to both parents and students and again this happened remotely. Parental input as always is crucial at Blackwater to maintain the home school link.

As part of the induction programme for our new intakes the first day of term is always set aside for Year 8 only. This allows the children to settle and form relationships with their teachers and peers; they spend lots of time exploring their new surroundings. The induction process continued through the early weeks at the College within our Personal Development programme and was then reinforced by the Year 8 team building event.



The purpose of induction is to strengthen friendships and build confidence. Year 8 parents also had the opportunity to discuss how their child has settled into the College and to discuss with his or her form tutor any concerns they may have.

Pastoral policies for Anti-Bullying, Positive Behaviour and Child Protection are available on request from the College office.



School Development Planning

The School Development Plan sets out the priorities for the College for the next three years. Our current SDP started in 2019 and ran through to the end of the 2021/22 academic year. Action Plans for each year are managed by members of the Leadership Team across a range of areas and monitored regularly by the Principal. With many areas not being addressed through COVID, DE issued guidance that allowed a one year extension to School Development Plans for schools and this was extended during Action Short of Strike Action. Evaluations have taken place in the Spring of 2024 and a new plan be in place for the 2024/25 academic year.

At Blackwater we are always actively promoting integration among students with Mrs Lockhart taking the lead in this area with organised events and activities after being appointed Integration Co-ordinator. Our religious balance sits at around 35% Catholic 35% Protestant and 30% other which is excellent in an integrated school. This is something we are very proud of and shows how far we have come since our formation in 2008.

Roles and Responsibilities relating to curriculum matters

The Principal reports to the Board of Governors through the Education Committee on all matters related to the curriculum. Subject Coordinator roles allow some Coordinators to be responsible for more than one subject to allow a more collegiate approach:

- The Vice Principal has responsibility for curriculum matters in the College and provides regular reports to the Board of Governors.
- The Subject Co-ordinators work with the Vice Principal to ensure coherence across different areas of the curriculum.
- Subject Coordinators have responsibility for the curriculum in their subject departments.
- Priorities for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are set down in the School Development Plan and in each department's Action Plans.

Complaints Procedure

In the event of a complaint, parents should in the first instance contact the Principal. The Principal will then seek to bring about a resolution of the matter.

If such a resolution does not emerge, parents should write to the Chair of the Board of Governors who will raise the matter at the next meeting of the Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors will convene a meeting on a date not more than 3 weeks after receipt of the complaint. They will discuss the complaint and notify the appellant in writing within 3 days of the decision.

The parent has a further right of appeal if he/she is not satisfied with this decision referring the matter to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) within six months of the final response from the school.



Accounts 2021/2022

Blackwater Integrated College

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
Turnover		
Department of Education grants	2,206,293	2,066,330
Receipts from other sources	<u>5,000</u>	<u>1,192</u>
	2,211,293	2,067,552
Expenditure		
Teaching staff costs	1,349,393	1,218,385
Non-teaching staff costs	488,376	414,661
Other operating costs	<u>440,948</u>	<u>401,954</u>
	2,278,717	2,035,000
Surplus/deficit for the financial year	<u>-67,424</u>	<u>32,522</u>

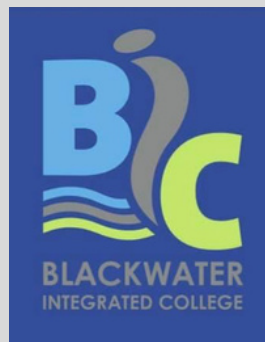
Accounts 2022/23

Blackwater Integrated College

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Turnover		
Department of Education grants	2,548,428	2,206,923
Receipts from other sources	<u>18,065</u>	<u>5,000</u>
	<u>2,566,493</u>	<u>2,211,293</u>
Expenditure		
Teaching staff costs	1,382,584	1,349,393
Non-teaching staff costs	606,987	488,376
Other operating costs	<u>464,173</u>	<u>440,948</u>
	2,453,744	2,278,717
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the financial year	<u>112,749</u>	<u>(67,424)</u>

Annual Parents Meeting
20th June 2024



For the academic year
2022/23