

Dundalk Grammar School – Review of Academic Year 2022-23 presented by the Headmaster at the PTA AGM on Wednesday 4th October 2023.

Academic, cultural and sporting achievement

The Leaving Certificate class of 2022 comprised of 88 students. Students received their results following a full return to the traditional leaving certificate model. 25 students achieved over 500 points, representing 28% of the cohort. This year, our DGS students attained an average score of 435 points. The trend of a strong uptake at higher level continued amongst the 2022 cohort while individual results compare favourably with national averages.

Student Support Team: HM outlined DGS's new Student Support Team led by Mr Alan Norton, and thanked all the staff members who have volunteered to support students in this new initiative.

Annual Award Ceremony: DGS's Annual Awards Ceremony held on Friday 23rd September 2022 with special guest speaker Mr Jonathan Shackleton, cousin of the Antarctic explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton. This event was the first in-person event since September of 2019. HM thanked all those involved in the preparation of the day, especially Mr Ian Moore for collating and organising the awards.

Legally Blonde the Musical: was held the week beginning Monday 3rd October. Over 250 primary, post-primary and special needs schools attended two matinee performance on the Monday and Tuesday followed by three evening performance on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Special thanks to the brilliant cast and their exuberant and highly professional performances as well as to the staff involved, especially Mr Stephen Begley, Ms Hannah Martin, Ms Odharnait O'Reilly, Ms Leona Verdes, Ms Aisling McGuire, and Ms Donna Magee. Thanks was expressed to Richie Dunne and Daniel Fagan, past students, for their huge contribution.

Harvest Services: were held in the school on Wednesday 12th October 2022 with special guest speaker Mr Mike Buchanan who is currently training for the ministry of the Church. Ms Olwen Matthews and the school Chaplain, Mr Ian Moore, organised this important school event.

Friendship Week: beginning 26th September 2022, focused on the theme of *empathy*. Morning assemblies were devoted to highlighting the importance of being caring and open to the needs of others. Ms Helen Christmas coordinated these events.

Graduates Tea: On Wednesday 7th September 2022 staff welcomed back the class of 2022 for their Graduates Tea, where they were presented with medals of achievement. This award is given to students who have achieved H1's in their Leaving Certificate.

TY Mentoring: A new TY mentoring programme initiated by MR Alan Norton and facilitated by Ms Caroline O'Connor of EISHT (Emotional and Mental Health Self-Defence course) began. 24 TYs were trained to act as mentors to our new 1st Year students by supporting their transition from primary to post-primary school.

Maths Week commenced on Monday 17th October. This was organised by the Maths Department led by Mr Stephen Begley. Our budding 1st year mathematicians were mesmerised by Shane Dowdall's presentation when visiting DkIT during Maths week.

Physiology Friday: On Friday November 11th : 1st and 6th Yrs – Mr Mark Cunningham – Professor TCD – (father of a student in 1st Year) invited the school to participate in workshops in the Biomedical Science Department.

First ever 5K Run in aid of the Mark Pollock Trust took place on Wednesday 16th November 2022. Thanks to Mr Gregg, Ms Clements and Mr Shackleton.

Junior School Musical Matilda: was held on Friday 2nd December. This incredibly professional production was a triumph. Thanks to all the Junior School teachers, Ms Ferris, Mr Morgan, Ms Loughran and Ms Lait for preparing the pupils. Also, thanks to the TY events management team and TYs who helped on the day and special thanks to Ms Sarah McCourt who was the musical director.

Christmas Craft Fair: DGS's Christmas Craft Fair returned to full swing on Wednesday 14th December in Fynamore Hall. There were a variety of stalls from bird boxes, handmade soaps, candles etc. HM thanked all those who participated and Dundalk Business community for coming in and judging the day. Thanks to the TY Events team and the business department teachers for their excellent work in preparing the students and planning the day.

Charity at Christmas in DGS: Thanks was expressed to the Student Council for all their effort in raising considerable funds for various charities over the month of December. A total of €3,310 was raised. The Simon Food Appeal was a great success. Charities that benefited included the Simon Community, LSPCA, Focus Ireland, the Alzheimer's Society to name but a few.

DGS Annual Carol Service: was held for the first time in-person on Monday 19th December 2022. DGS Junior School delivered their much-missed nativity play as part of the service. Gratitude was extended to Mr Ian Moore our Chaplain for planning the event and the Music Department for leading our service. Thanks also was expressed to the Junior School Primary teachers for preparing the pupils on the night and especially Ms Sarah McCourt.

Board of Governor retirement: A special award was presented to Dr Laurence Swan, The Chairpersons Award, by Mr Graeme Treadwell at the end of the Carol Service in recognition of Dr Swan's enormous contribution to DGS and his unwavering commitment and service to the school community.

Christmas Jumper Day: On Tuesday 20th December 2022, to finish of the festive season, Ms A McGuire's TY group encouraged students and staff to wear a Christmas jumper to school, this raised €275.

DGS's Annual Grammar Dance: took place on Friday 13th January. This event has been running for sixty-nine years. Over 200 people attended, and a great night was had and celebrated by all in attendance.

John O'Shea founder of GOAL: On Friday 3rd February 2023 the school welcomed Mr John O'Shea the founder of the charity GOAL. Mr O'Shea gave an inspiring talk about his life, his work and the founding of GOAL some forty years ago.

YSI Flag: On Friday 10th February 2023 the school, thanks to the hard work of students in both Junior and Senior cycle, were presented the Young Social Innovators Flag. Projects include composting, a sensory room, fast fashion, animal welfare and the importance of sports. Thank you to Mr Paul Brady and his students.

Ski Trip: Also on Friday the 10th February as the midterm began, approximately 80 students departed for Polsa in Italy. HM thanked tour organisers Stephanie Ledwith and Andrew Keegan. The trip was a great success and our students were behaved impeccably.

London Trip: On Wednesday 22nd February over 60 of our 2nd Yr. students departed in the early hours of the morning to London. This well-established trip is part of the school calendar at this stage and was a great success. The students visited many famous London sites such as the Imperial War Museum, Tate Modern, The Globe Theatre, the Jack the Ripper Tour and the Harry Potter Studio Tour. Thanks to all the staff who supervised on the trip and especially Ms Odharnait O'Reilly who organised the tour.

Dúshlán 2023: On Thursday 23rd February 1 White spent a few days preparing songs and making TikToks for an evening event to promote the speaking of the Irish language in the local area.

Health and Well-being Week: Our annual H&WB run from Monday 27th February to Friday 3rd March. The week began with a PTA talk on *Mental Health Literacy* on Monday evening. Caroline O'Connor also delivered workshops to our students on *Mental Health Resilience*. Garda Catherine Patterson spoke to our 1st Yr. students on Internet and Online Safety. Richie Sadler delivered a thought-provoking discussion on *Relationships and Consent* with 5th Yrs. Brendan Lawlor, past student and current number two disability golfer in the world, gave a talk on *Living the Dream* to 6th Yr. and TY. Other events included a mountain hike, led by Ms Renata Malone, for 6th Yr. student on Wednesday 1st March. There was also a bowling trip for TY to Lisburn as well as charity fundraising and music events. A number of staff went hiking on Saturday morning of the 4th March to round the week off. Thanks to all those involved and especially Mr Alan Norton who coordinated the whole week.

Business Awards: On Thursday 2nd March a number of students were involved in the Student Enterprise Awards in the Marshes Shopping Centre. Three teams competed. Congratulation to Laura McKeivitt in 5th Yr. who was runner up in the **Senior Category** with her business, *Barn With It*, creating products that recycled horse shoes. Meanwhile Jack Ives and James Lavery, both 1st Yr. students, won the Junior Category with their business *Straw-some*. They will now represent Louth in the Student Enterprise Awards National Finals in Croke Park on Friday 5th May. The third team, James Cullen and Tadhg McGuffin were winners in the Enterprise Awards in school in the environmentally sustainable category business awards. Thanks to the business department for entering and preparing the students.

Maths Olympiad: Three students in senior cycle have made it through to the Irish Applied Maths Teacher Association finals after their performance in the Dublin and North Leinster Final, they are Feargal Quinn (6th Yr.) Tom O'Brien (6th Yr.) and Joel Hanlon (5th Yr.) Congratulations to them and their teacher Mr Shane Lynch for supporting and preparing the students for the competition.

The Grammarian: The long-awaited bumper addition of the Grammarian was finally published. This special publication charts the schools' activities and history during the Covid years. HM thanked all those who contributed and especially Ms Laura Gallagher for editing the magazine.

Thomas F Meagher: On Monday 6th March three DGS students and Mr Paul Brady attended the 175th anniversary of the Irish flag. The school was presented with a new tricolour.

Cultural Day: On Wednesday 15th March the student cultural committee were delighted to welcome to their celebration the Indian Ambassador to Ireland, Ambassador Akhilesh Mishra, and his wife, Mrs Reeti Mishra. The Ambassador and his wife embraced the whole celebration and enjoyed the concert in the afternoon. Other guests who attended on the day were:

The Spanish Embassy – Ana Alonso (Education Advisor), The Swiss Embassy – Valerie Swan, Irish Japanese Association – Verity Swan (IJA Member and Rotarian) and Margaret Morley (Rotary Club District Governor and Rotarian), and Irish Austrian Association – Ulrike Schoeller (Vice President). In the afternoon a special concert was arranged by the students where guests experienced a wide range of cultures from tasting food, games and witnessed students dressed in their cultural attire. Thanks to the organising committee, teachers and Mr Brady for guiding the students.

National IAMTA Applied Maths Quiz: A huge congratulations to Tom O’Brien, Joe Hanlon and Feargal Quinn who travelled to Athlone on Saturday 25th March after reaching the national finals. The students came joint fourth overall. Brilliant result. HM thanked Mr Shane Lynch for guiding the students.

DGS Go Purple: DGS students “Go Purple” in conjunction with An Garda Siochana and Women’s Aid Dundalk to raise awareness of domestic violence on Friday 28th April.

YEOTY 2023 Gold Medal Award: On Friday 28th April Corentin Blanchet, Marlene Offerdinger, Fikewa Akeredolu and Jake Fahy were awarded gold medals for their project entries to the Young Economist of the Year Awards (YEOTY) 2023. The Gold Medal is the highest accolade that can be awarded for a project entry.

Junk Kouture: On Thursday 4th May a number of students participated in the Annual Junk Kouture National Finals. Congratulations to our 5th Year student Theo Connolly who was one of the winners and will now compete in the world finals in London in October. Theo also appeared on the Late Late Show on Friday 5th May. Also competing was Ellie Murphy and Grace Dunne. Well done to all involved and especially Ms Hannah Martin and Ms Hannah Morgan who supported the groups over the past year. It was an amazing achievement!

Irish Author visit: On Thursday 4th May DGS welcomed acclaimed Irish author Ogie O Ceilleachair who gave a talk in his latest novel Cupla and his short story Katfish (both part of the JC course).

DGS Green Schools: On Wednesday 3rd May DGS Green School Committee held a Community Clean Up near Tesco and McDonald’s.

Student Enterprise Award (SEA): James Lavery and Jack Ives represented Louth in the SEA National Finals with their product Straw-Some. Thanks to the business department for supporting them and especially Ms Elizabeth McCabe for her guidance with the boys.

Sporting events in DGS 2022-23

Hockey: 1st Year girls got off to a good start for the year with a win against Drogheda Grammar School

Basketball: Our under 19’s and 16’s basketball teams also started their year with emphatic wins against the De La Salle College on Wednesday 28th September.

On Monday 17th October the U19's boys basketball team won their match against Coláiste Oriel (49-40). However, the U16's boys were narrowly beaten 39-40.

Rugby: Boys Senior Rugby team started their Leinster League season with a brilliant win over St Joseph’s in Drogheda on Wednesday 12th October winning 31- 5. HM thanked Mr Alan Norton and Mr Peter Weldon for preparing and training the boys.

1st Year Rugby Blitz: Thursday 27th October Congratulations to our 1st Yr boys rugby team who won this year's 1st year boys Dundalk schools rugby blitz. Special mention to head coach Mr Peter Weldon.

Basketball: Thursday 27th October 2023 Congratulations to our U19's & U16's Boys Basketball teams who had convincing wins today against Beech Hill, Monaghan. Both teams have now progressed to the Semi Finals (U19's) and quarter finals (U16's).

Girls Hockey: Hockey: Wednesday 26th October 2022. It has been a great week for girls hockey. On Monday the under 14 girls started the week off with a win against St Andrews College, Poppy Veale and Courtney Lawlor with the goals.

Soccer: Tuesday 8th November: FAI Schoolboys soccer U19 Div 2 result Dundalk Grammar School 4-2 Colaiste Chu Chulainn. Cuan O'Reilly with a hattrick and Frank Yu with the other goal. This result sees the team win their group and progress to a play off in the next round.

Rugby: Junior School Rugby Team defeated St Mary's in Drogheda on Thursday 5th January 2023 to book a place in the semi-final of the Duff Cup. The team also automatically qualify for the Father Godfrey Cup and play Wilsons Hospital on the 12th January. Well done to their coaches Mr Peter Weldon and Mr Alan Norton.

Basketball: Congratulation to 1st and 2nd Yr. boys basketball team who on Thursday 23rd won their matches against St Aidan's College and the De La Salle.

Badminton: on Tuesday 28th February the u14 boys badminton team represented the school in a closely fought local tournament eventually coming runners-up in the Louth Champions. It should be noted that the 10 boys all won their individual matches.

The u16's Badminton Team also came runners up in their matches in the Louth Finals.

Hockey: On Friday 3rd March the 1st Year girls hockey team defeated St Mary's School in Naas to progress to the knock out stages of the Leinster League.

Senior girls hockey team won their Leinster League pool game on Tuesday 21st February to progress to the semi-final stages.

Rugby: Unfortunately, the Junior Rugby Team narrowly missed out in the next round of the Fr Godfrey Cup in early January.

Girls Rugby: On Wednesday 8th March the girls Junior Rugby team won the Northeast regional finals and now progress to the Leinster finals.

Also on Tuesday 21st February the u16's girls team won the league match against Cavan Royal.

Sports Day: On Wednesday 3rd May DGS held its annual sports day. The weather was bright, and a great day was had by all. Ruth Copas, former student of DGS and Irish international tennis player returned to present the medals. The Junior School sports day was held on the astroturf.

Athletics: Congratulations to Loclairn Harris who won the North Leinster Championships for the boys 200 metres on Monday 8th May and represented the school brilliantly.

DGS Rugby: HM congratulated 1st Year boys who won the final Dundalk rugby blitz finishing off a great year.

Orienteering: Congratulations to James Lavery in 1st Yr. who won the title of Leinster Champion in the Orienteering Championships in Trooperstown, Wicklow. Corentin Blanchet won the Senior Boys title and Feilim Connolly, who also participated, just missing out in a top 3 finish.

Thanks to all those involved in promoting the school, organising events and sporting fixtures as well as supporting students throughout the year.

October 5th, 2023.