



Beyond Limits

RBAI **Prospectus 26**



Our Values

Excellence Respect Participation

Our Mission

Our Mission is to offer exceptional learning and enrichment, which enables every boy to flourish academically, physically and socially, and to make a positive contribution to society.



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Principal's Welcome

The Royal Belfast Academical Institution is committed to the well-being of each pupil. Well-being is the development of the "whole person" – intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially. It is our overarching goal "to achieve continuous improvement through a strategy in which all teachers share high expectations of teaching and learning." This is informed by rigorous self-evaluation, the pupil voice and effective use of data, supported by sound governance. Pupils are provided with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to develop the dispositions necessary to take their place in society and the economy.

As Principal, I believe we provide an outstanding and inspirational education for boys, with academic aspiration complemented by pastoral support and, through a wealth of co-curricular opportunities, underpinned by a deep commitment to the needs and enthusiasms of each pupil.

We are a multi-cultural, integrated Grammar School and we welcome your son's application.

Ms Janet Williamson-McCune
MA OXON; NPQH; C.F.

"Pupils develop as fully-rounded, mature individuals through their interactions with the staff and with their peers and, notably, through the extensive co-curricular programme... they are highly motivated and positively disposed toward their learning."

ETI Report



School Life

Curriculum Provision Years 8-14

Key Stage 3

Art & Design	Home Economics
Biology	History
Careers	Latin
Chemistry	LLW
Digital Technology	Mathematics
Divinity	Music
Drama	Personal Development
English	Physical Education
French	Physics
Games	Spanish
Geography	Technology
German	

Key Stage 4

Art & Design	History
Astronomy	Latin
Biology	Learning for Life & Work
Business Studies	Mathematics
Chemistry	Media Studies
Digital Technology	Motor Vehicle Studies
Design & Technology	Music
Engineering	Physical Education (exam)
English Language	Physical Education (non-exam)
English Literature	Religious Studies
French	Science
Further Mathematics	Single Award
Games	Sports Science
Geography	Spanish
German	

Key Stage 5

Art & Design	Further Mathematics
Biology	Games
BTEC Engineering	Geography
BTEC IT	History
BTEC Sport	Latin
Business Studies	Life & Health Science
Chemistry	Computer Science
Digital Technology	Mathematics
Economics	Media Studies
English Literature	Music
Engineering	Physics
French	Politics
Further Mathematics	Sports Science
Games	
Geography	
German	

Pastoral Care

Our pastoral system provides a school family for every boy at RBAI; our induction programme focuses on the building of firm friendships, opportunities to engage in the extensive co-curricular programme and ensuring each pupil feels he is a valued member of the school community.

Mrs Finlay, Year 8 Induction Coordinator

An innovative and comprehensive induction programme engages the boys and parents to support a seamless and enjoyable transition from primary to post primary education. In June, we invite new pupils and parents to meet the Principal, Ms Williamson, form tutors and new class mates.

A highlight of the first term is undoubtedly the opportunity during the residential trip for the boys to try archery, zip lines, canoeing and even caving. Following the residential, there is a coffee afternoon, which is always enjoyed by pupils, parents and teachers.

In addition to the formal induction programme, all boys receive support and guidance from the sixth form mentors.

"Our son was apprehensive at the prospect of moving to 'big school', however within hours of starting at RBAI he felt completely at home."

Mrs Brown, Year 8 Parent



Supporting Your Son

Each boy is known and encouraged to develop as an individual. We are proud of our well-established House system, which has an extremely positive impact on all students in their academic engagement, co-curricular participation and development as confident young men and contributors to society.

Every boy is allocated to one of six Houses (**Dill, Jones, Larmor, Kelvin, Pirrie** and **Stevenson**), supported by a tutor who will remain with their group until Year 13. Each house represents a family structure with which pupils will quickly identify.

The Vice Principal has overall responsibility for pastoral care. In addition there is a School Counsellor available for pupils. RBAI is an inclusive school with pastoral support for SEND pupils placed on the SEND register when there is an identified, substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect on attainment, learning and

progress. Expectations for all our SEND pupils for whom a grammar school curriculum is appropriate, is that with parental support and regular review, they will flourish in a supportive environment.

If a pupil, on entering the school, has an identified need, the SENCO will liaise with the pupil, parents and, as required, external agencies, to determine how the school can best respond to meeting the pupil's individual needs. The pupil's teachers will be advised about the nature of the identified need and advised as to the support required.





Centre Of Innovation/Humanities/ Languages/Performing Arts/Science/Sports

Centre of Innovation for Digital Education with State-of-the-art ICT Facilities, Library and a Careers Suite

Languages

Refurbishment of language facilities, promoting a stimulating teaching and learning environment.

Music

The Music Department is based in a purpose-built suite with ICT, recording and rehearsal facilities supporting individual and group performances.

Science

The Wolfson Foundation has supported the complete refurbishment of all science labs, creating a bespoke multi-purpose science teaching and practical environment.

Sports:

Large gymnasium, sports hall, fitness suite.



Osborne Park:

Rugby pitches and an international cricket square



Bladon Park:

Cricket, Football and Rugby pitches and a second pavillion



Shaw's Bridge:

Hockey Pitch, RBAI Boat House, Fitness Suite

Higher Education

Course of Choice:

81%

University
(42% Russell Group Universities)

5%

Apprenticeships

3%

FE Colleges

3%

Armed Forces/
Services

8%

Gap Year

20%

Business, Management,
Finance and Economics

38%

STEM

10%

Humanities
and Language

8%

Sports
Science/Studies

9%

Medicine, Pharmacy
and Biomedical

10%

Law

5%

Others

Universities

58%

Northern Ireland

33%

England

7%

Scotland

2%

Wales



Roll of Honour

For over 200 years, successive generations of students and alumni have added with distinction to the rich tapestry of school life and the academic success of The Royal Belfast Academical Institution, demonstrating that there is no academic limit.

We commit to helping each boy reach his full potential. In seeking academic achievement, we are also committed to preparing pupils to become responsible and active members of society. We provide each pupil with the knowledge and skills necessary for everyday life and for the working environment. We also stress the importance of good health and physical education whilst always providing the right environment to enable each student to develop as an individual.



GCSE

Student	Grade
Luc Jeannerod	8A*s, 2As & B
Robbie McAreavey	8A*s & 2As
Daire Dunne	8A*s & 2As

A2

Student	Grade	University
Noah Stafford	4A*s:	Engineering, Trinity College Dublin
Yago Azuara-Lois	???	Medicine, Christ Church, University of Oxford
Luke Acheson	3A*s A	Mathematics, St Andrew's
Daniel George	3A*s A	Economics, Bath
Matthew Knox	3A*s A	Maths & Economics, Bath

PE & Games Provision

At RBAI we are very proud of our sporting heritage and tradition. Through our values of 'excellence, respect and participation' we seek to develop every pupil's interest in sport and physical activity, irrespective of age or ability.



Rugby

Year 8 Rugby is a key strength of our induction programme. At RBAI, we aim to foster an enthusiasm for Rugby in an environment where continuous improvement enables players to achieve their highest potential, both individually and collectively.

Highly committed coaches encourage every young player to represent his school on the pitch. Players proudly wear our yellow and black jersey and gain the sense of belonging it provides.

The Schools' Cup, the most prestigious rugby competition in the province, is the highlight of the season. RBAI has reached 59 finals, winning the Cup 34 times and sharing it on 4 occasions. In addition, RBAI has won the Medallion Shield 38 times and shared it twice. Of most recent note are the successes of the 2023-24 1st XV and Medallion Squads who won the Schools' Cup and Medallion Shield respectively, an impressive feat also achieved in 2015, 2016 and 2023. The 2015 Schools' Cup win began a three-year streak which saw the Cup return to College Square East in 2016 and 2017.



Representative records show that more than 360 boys from RBAI have played for Ulster Schools and 49 boys have played for Irish Schools. In addition, 11 boys have played for Ireland Under 19 whilst still at School. A total of 90 boys produced by the School have been capped for Ireland and of the 13 that played for the British and Irish Lions, 2 were captains: Sammy Walker and Robin Thompson.

"Playing rugby at RBAI has proven to consolidate our pupils' confidence, discipline and respect. Moreover, every boy is part of a team which supports him throughout school and beyond."

Jamie Kirk, Director of Rugby



Hockey

Hockey is one of the core sports at RBAI and is associated with a long-standing tradition of success throughout Ulster and Ireland. The 1st XI have won the Irish Schoolboy Championships on seven occasions, which is the joint top number of victories throughout all schools on the island. The 1st XI has emerged victorious in the Burney Cup (the Ulster Schools' Cup) on seventeen occasions and are the current holders of this trophy, whilst the McCullough Cup has also been brought back to College Square East on seventeen occasions, making RBAI the **most successful 1st XI in the country**. The School also has a history of success at U13, U14, U15 and 2nd XI levels, having won the respective Cup competitions on numerous occasions.

A total of 19 former pupils have gone on to represent Ireland and/or Great Britain at Senior International level, with **5 players going on to compete at the Olympic Games**. RBAI Hockey Club currently have 11 pupils playing for Ulster underage teams, with 6 of them also representing Ireland at U16, U18 and U21 level.



Cricket

Cricket thrives at RBAI; we have won the Ulster Schools' Cup a record 13 times in the history of the competition. An excellent example of the Cricket Club's success is the 2024 season when a total of 7 trophies were won. The 1st XI won the Ulster Schools' Cup, with the 2nd XI, Under 14 XI, Under 13 XI and Under 12 XI all winning their respective competitions. The school also won the overall McCullough Cup League title, a competition which involves all school cricket teams, from the Under 12 XI right through to the 1st XI. This trophy has been won by the school a remarkable **10 times in the last 11 years**. The school has ten Cricket teams, ranging from the Under 12 XI through to the 1st XI, 3 cricket squares as well as a 4 bay, fully-enclosed net system.





Football

Football has been a sporting option at RBAI since 1978, when a group of 6th form pupils entered themselves into the Northern Ireland Cup without the knowledge of staff. In recent years the RBAI Football Club has gone from strength to strength, regularly reaching the quarter and semi-finals of cup competitions as well as winning the Northern Ireland Plate in 2020, and the Under 18 Belfast League in 2015 and 2022.

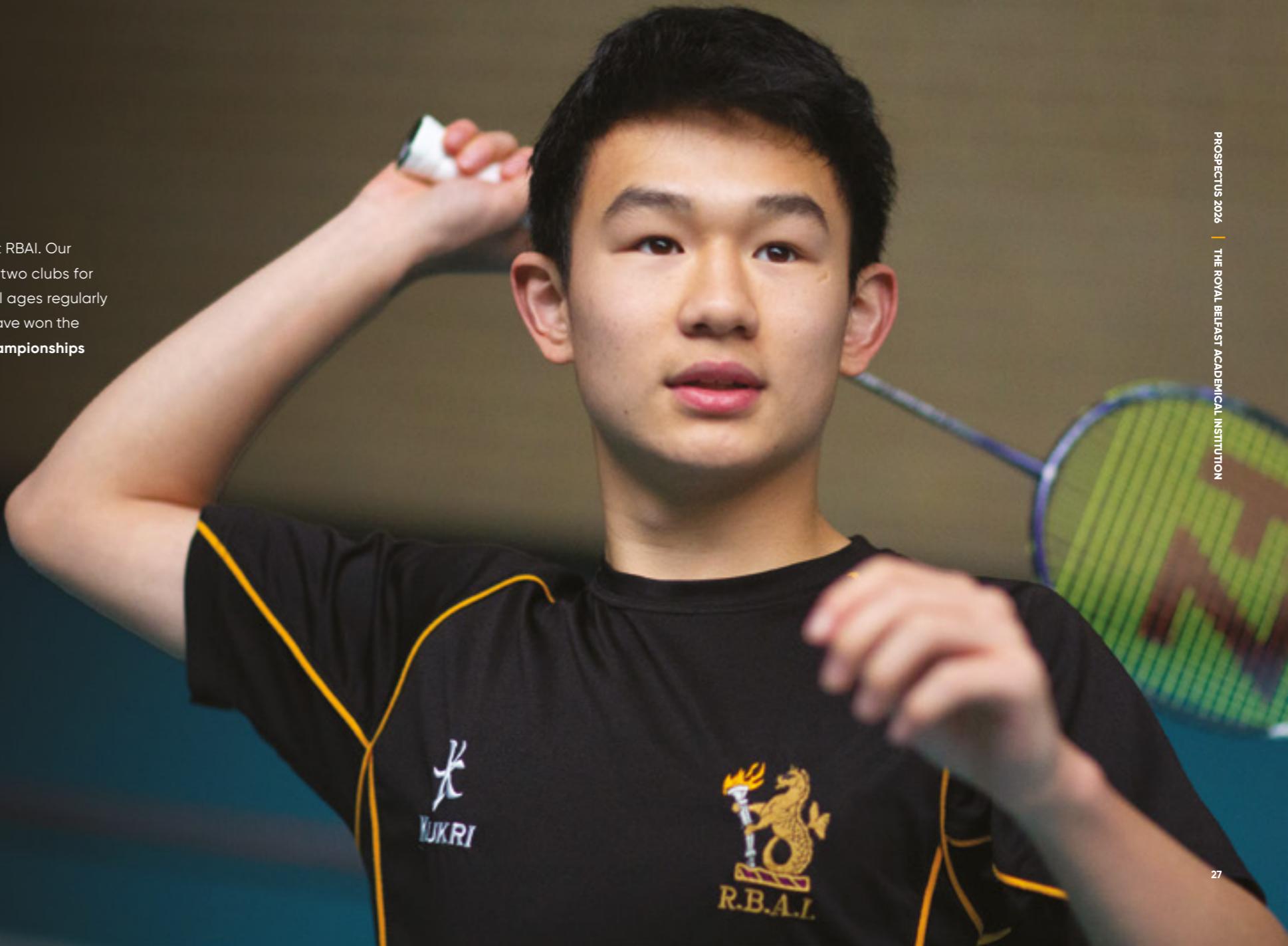
The RBAI Football Club is open to boys in Years 12-14 and we have several boys who represent local academies as well as the School teams.

The Club fields an Under 16 team, a Second XI and an Under 18 1st XI. These squads compete in the Northern Ireland Cup, the Belfast Cup and the U18 Belfast League.



Badminton

Badminton is a thriving racquet sport at RBAI. Our facilities provide four courts. There are two clubs for Junior and Senior pupils and boys of all ages regularly represent the school. The Senior team have won the **Ulster and All Ireland U-19 Division 1 Championships** in 2022 and 2023.





Golf

RBAI golfers compete in a variety of Golf Ireland events at both Senior and Junior levels, including the All-Ireland Ulster Section qualifiers and Ulster Scratch Cup. Our golfers have established RBAI as the premier school for golf having won several Ulster section titles in recent years. In addition, our Year 8 and 9 pupils challenge for the McDowell Cup which is an inclusive team event aimed at encouraging younger players in School.



Rowing

Rowing is an Olympic sport which has been popular at RBAI for almost 100 years. As a sport, it demands physicality, technique, rhythm, coordination, timing and teamwork. Our rowers compete all over Ireland and the UK, and enjoy a very unique view of Belfast. RBAI is one of only 4 schools in Northern Ireland to offer the facilities which allow athletes to compete in such an activity. Training takes place every weekday, along with Saturday mornings, at the School and purpose-built boathouse in Stranmillis, South Belfast. In recent years the Club has had representation at Junior International level, with alumni competing at the Under-23 World Championships and Henley Royal Regatta.



Swimming

RBAI has a long and proud history of swimming. Our on-site swimming pool is currently in the process of redevelopment. Teams compete in various schools' competitions with the highlight of every pupil's school swimming career being the Bath Cup Competition held in The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London. It will come as no surprise that the teams achieving our most recent wins in 2015 and 2017 included our **2024 GB Olympic Gold Medallist Jack McMillan**.

Opportunity and Participation

- | Athletics
- | Art & Design
- | Astronomy
- | Brass Ensemble
- | Chess
- | Choir
- | Christian Union
- | Combined Cadet Force
- | Community Service Group
- | Cricket
- | Cross Country
- | Debating Society
- | Drama
- | Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme
- | Eco Club
- | Expedition Society
- | Film Club
- | Football
- | Golf
- | Hockey
- | Jazz Band
- | Literary Society
- | Mountaineering
- | Orchestra
- | Quiz Club
- | Rowing
- | Rugby
- | Scouts
- | Senior Drama
- | Sound and Lighting Team
- | Swimming
- | Table Tennis
- | Tennis
- | The Library
- | Water Polo
- | War Games Society
- | Young Enterprise

Music

“Music is the tool to express life. At RBAI, pupils can become music makers of the highest calibre – they can create magic through the power of music – it can become the soundtrack of their lives.

Mrs D Harshaw, Head of Music





RBAI is rich in opportunities for young musicians with more than 200 boys involved in musical activities.

The RBAI Orchestra is also a very large group (between 70 and 80 players) and combines junior and senior pupils. All the music is specially arranged by the Director of Music to cater for different abilities, enabling the younger pupils to perform alongside the older and more experienced ones, and to learn from them. In this way, we find that they develop much more quickly as musicians and as people.

There is also an elite group of jazz specialists whose performance has become one of the highlights in our concert programmes, as well as an array of smaller ensembles including a String Group, Clarinet and Saxophone Quartets and a Show Band.

The boys have the opportunity to perform at the Year 8 Concert in October, the Carol Service, the Drama Production, Open Day and at the Annual Spring Showcase Concert.

All boys may have private tuition on **Woodwind, Brass, String and Percussion instruments**, as well as Theory and Vocal lessons.

Performing Arts

There exists at RBAI a long and proud tradition of staging spectacular and innovative productions.

As a member of The Lyric Theatre's schools' affiliation scheme, pupils of RBAI are provided with opportunities to take part in workshops, trips and performances.





Drama

Each year, Junior school pupils collaborate with Hunterhouse College, Belfast for our annual Summer Showcase in Christchurch, 'Shakespeare & Strawberries'. Pupils enjoy the enriching experience of staging and exploring Shakespeare's famous texts. In the winter term, the Drama Department produce a senior school musical with pupils from Victoria College. This is one of the highlights of the School calendar. In addition to this, the House Drama Competition has become a firm favourite with boys competing for points for their house by performing short, published sketches in front of a panel of judges.

The Drama Department's repertoire of material extends from much loved musicals to gritty dramas. Recent productions include **Blood Brothers** by Willy Russell, Shakespearean tragedies **Romeo and Juliet** and **Antony and Cleopatra** and **A Christmas Carol** by Charles Dickens.

Drama is all inclusive and pupils can contribute on stage as actors, as part of our show band or as backstage crew. Over the years, poets, playwrights and presenters have all tread the boards in the Common Hall and in Christ Church.

Well-Being

Dr Martin Seligman is the man behind the PERMA-V model on which key aspects of our Well-Being programme are based.

The PERMA-V framework and its corresponding values underpin our programme of pupil activities on well-being with a key focus on:

Positive emotions Engagement Relationships Meaning Achievement Vitality

Pupils have opportunity to explore well-being topics and activities through:

- The CCEA Curriculum
- CEIAG Provision
- Personal Development Programme
- React Programme in PE and Games
- External Agency Presentations
- Well-Being Days with Made for More NI
- Co-Curricular Activities

Outcomes of the programme for our pupils

- Development of the Whole Person
- Identify with and enjoy coming to school to learn
- Achieve very good academic results
- Mature as learners and acquire wider skills and dispositions
- Demonstrate collective responsibility for work and behaviour
- Build Resilience



We Are Global

**The influence of RBAI and Instonians is felt across the world.
As holders of the International School Award, we encourage
travel and cultural awareness throughout the School.**

This inspires boys with the spirit of adventure while also forming friendships which, for some, are lifelong bonds. During their time at RBAI, boys have the opportunity to travel to a variety of locations throughout the UK, Europe and beyond.

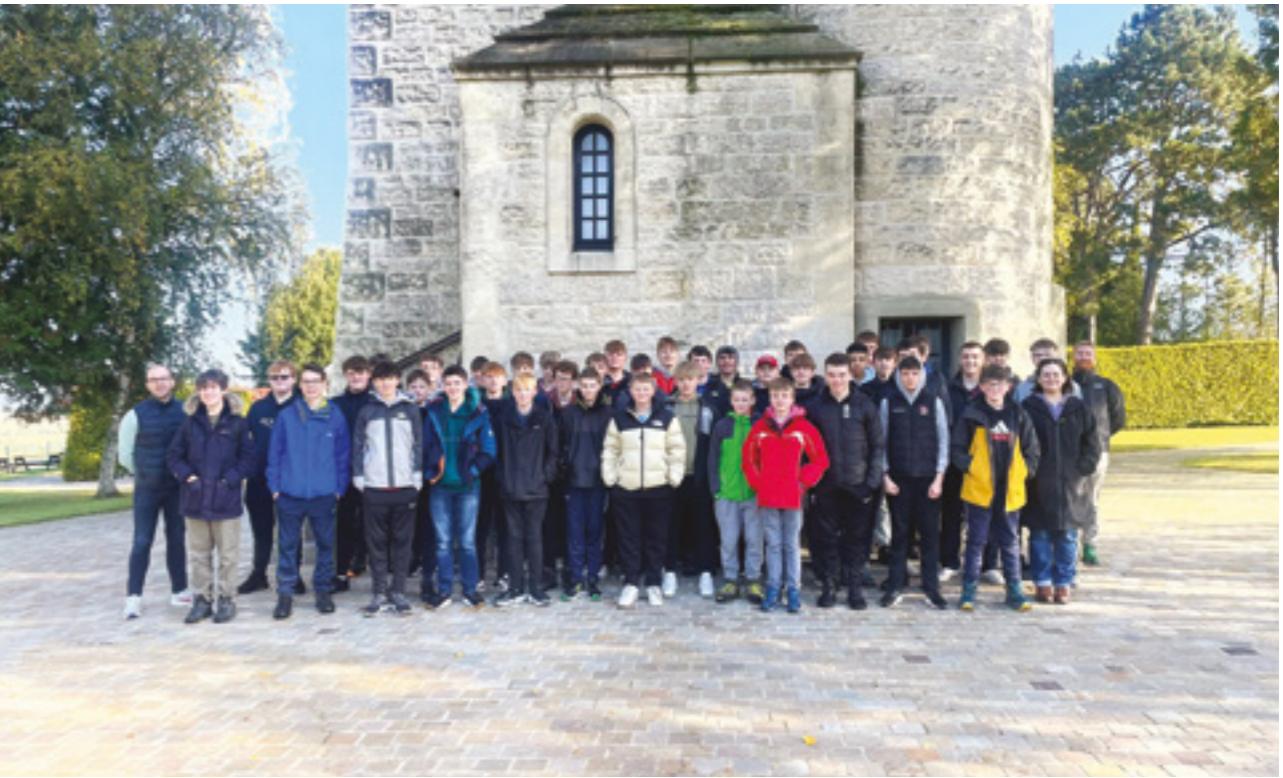


Academic Enrichment

We feel it's vital to contextualise the curriculum and broaden our pupils' horizons through travel. Each year, a variety of academic departments embark upon trips where boys explore different cultures and ideas. In the last year alone the Modern Foreign Languages Department have visited Spain and Germany, the History Department led a trip to the Battlefields while the Geography Department visited Iceland. We believe our boys should have every opportunity to become confident, educated travellers.

Sports Tours

The Rugby, Hockey and Cricket Clubs tour respectively to the Republic of Ireland, the UK, Europe and South Africa. The squads train and play a series of matches in preparation for elite fixtures at home. Not only do the squads benefit from the training and match experience, these trips are integral in cementing team dynamic and affording our sportsmen the opportunity to nurture their talent.



Combined Cadet Force

RBAI has hosted a cadet contingent since the time of the Great War. Both the Army and Royal Air Force sections offer cadets almost unlimited opportunities for travel, both within the United Kingdom and abroad. This has been invaluable in providing boys not only life experience but very real skills necessary for university and job applications. The most important event of the C.C.F. year is the competition for the Annual Challenge Shield in the Military Patrol Competition; RBAI teams have won this prestigious competition on more occasions than any other team in NI and consecutively for the last seventeen years.

“ Cadets are invaluable in providing boys not only life experience but very real skills necessary for university and job applications.

Mr O'Neill; Head of Careers

Scouts

The 74th Belfast Scout Troop was established at RBAI in 1926. Throughout its history the Scouts have travelled to camps, jamborees and on Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions throughout the UK. The Scouts' impact on the life of the School is profound and provides boys with many opportunities to travel.





RBAI Foundation

Pupils entering RBAI immediately become part of the Instonian community, widely regarded as the most active alumni network in the UK.

The RBAI Foundation is the hub for communications with former pupils and the wider Instonian community, supporting the development of the School and adding value to each pupil's experience. Whether through the provision of mentoring, coaching, careers advice or philanthropy, the Instonian community plays an influential role in equipping pupils to excel.

Since becoming the first school in Northern Ireland to establish a professional Development and Alumni Relations Office in 2013, more than £4 million has been raised to upgrade facilities and support pupil development.

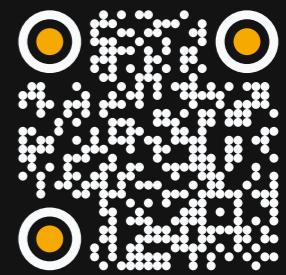
School leavers benefit from accessing a network of more than 7,500 Instonians around the world, with regular reunion events taking place across the UK and internationally.

To find out more about the RBAI Foundation, visit: www.rbaifoundation.org



Scan the QR code to download our
Admissions Criteria & Exam Results

or visit: rbai.org.uk/qr-code





Quaerere Verum | Seek the Truth

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