

Friends' School Lisburn



Development Plan 2022– 2025

1. The ethos of the school

Friends' School was founded by the Religious Society of Friends in 1774, and the Ulster Quarterly Meeting appoints ten members to the Board of Governors. The school's aims are in sympathy with the general principles of the Religious Society of Friends, which values individuals as of equal standing before God and encourages the development of a sense of social awareness through service.

Friends' School seeks to provide an environment in which pupils, staff and parents are committed to the idea of excellence within a caring, supportive community. The school's aims are:

- to enable all pupils to develop their academic potential and interests to the fullest extent;
- to provide a broad and balanced curriculum relevant to the needs of our pupils;
- to foster the self-esteem of pupils and staff;
- to encourage the moral and spiritual development of our pupils;
- to establish a partnership between the school, the parents and the local community;
- to prepare pupils for adult life.

The aims and values inform pastoral care at Friends', which emphasises the unique worth of each individual and the importance of respect for others. They also encourage all pupils to challenge themselves academically as they strive to reach their potential.

Links with other Quaker organisations play an important part in the life of the school. The school has close links with Quaker Service in Belfast, and each year contributes to their Christmas appeal. The school also enjoys links with the other Quaker schools in Britain and Ireland. The Principal and Vice-Principals attend the biannual Quaker Heads' Conference and Sixth Form pupils join their counterparts from other schools in the annual Quaker pilgrimage and in a leadership conference held at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham. Over the last eighteen months, the school has also established closer ties with Brummana High School in Lebanon. Fundraising campaigns have been organised, and the Principal visited the school in September 2022 with a view to creating opportunities for pupils from both schools to engage with each other.

2a. A summary of the school's strategies for learning, teaching, assessment and the raising of standards of attainment among all pupils, in particular in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT

The school promotes high standards of achievement for all pupils by ensuring that they are challenged in their learning and encouraged to work to the best of their ability. The School Learning and Teaching and Assessment Policies outline our aims in these areas. The curriculum meets the needs of our intake, and is broad, balanced and academically robust at all levels. School meets the requirements of the Entitlement Framework, as indicated below:

EF 2022-23	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14
Number of subjects offered (General/ Applied)	21 (15/6)	21 (15/6)	23 (15/8)	23 (15/8)

Public examinations were cancelled in 2020 and 2021, with grades awarded to pupils at all levels by centres and resumed in 2022 with some mitigations. Results in 2022 at GCSE, AS and A2 at Friends' were very high compared with previous cohorts and across the majority of subjects compared to Northern Ireland Grammar School averages. However, the Minister of Education has suspended the Summary of Annual Examination Results (SAER) this year, and neither school level examination data for 2021/22 nor Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 benchmarking data to inform target setting will be released this year.

2b. A summary of the strategies for providing for the special, additional or other individual educational needs of pupils

Pupils with additional needs are given the support required to enable them to achieve in line with their ability. Structures are in place throughout school to ensure that those with pastoral needs are helped to overcome barriers to their learning.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) holds the CCET qualification which allows her to assess pupils' reading and comprehension skills. An Assistant SENCo was appointed in May 2021. There are currently 26 pupils on Stage 3 of the Code of Practice, a figure which has risen significantly over the last five years.

Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs learn alongside others and receive individualised support as required. Friends' School meets the requirements of the Special Educational and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. A register of SEN pupils is maintained, and information is disseminated to teachers. Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) are in place for each pupil with a statement of SEN and annual reviews are held. Where appropriate, pupils are supported by suitably qualified Classroom Assistants. The School's Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy is reviewed annually.

A high proportion of our pupils meet the commonly accepted definition of 'mentally gifted', and our aim is to ensure that the level of challenge in the classroom reflects this. As well as external competitions and opportunities for further study, early examination entry is an option for the highest performing pupils. Pupils are encouraged to apply to the most competitive courses at university level.

2c. Strategies to promote the health and wellbeing, child protection, attendance, good behaviour and discipline of pupils

Members of staff encourage open communication and positive relationships in order to promote the health and wellbeing of all pupils, with early intervention where problems arise. Pupils meet daily in Collects, and Extended Collects provide an opportunity for teachers to engage pupils in a range of pastoral activities. The Learning for Life and Work programme at Key Stages 3 and 4, taught by members of staff and by external agencies, promotes pupils' welfare and is evaluated annually by staff and pupils. A School Nurse is on site during school hours and school works closely with two counsellors to ensure that pupils are able to discuss matters of concern with a qualified professional.

There are junior and senior wellbeing groups which meet weekly and each year a wellbeing week is organised around the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing. The school Wellbeing Policy recognises the need to promote wellbeing throughout the school and also to offer specific support to pupils who encounter specific difficulties, including anxiety and depression, self-harm and eating disorders. The school has subscribed to Tooled Up Education, an online bank of research-informed webinars and resources for staff and parents.

Wellbeing is also promoted through a wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities, including sport, music and drama. The school enjoys excellent on-site facilities for music and team games, and pupils are encouraged to participate in our enrichment programme and in Saturday morning fixtures.

Safeguarding procedures are evaluated annually against the ETI audit to ensure compliance with all statutory requirements. Comprehensive arrangements are in place for safeguarding children and every effort is made to create an environment in which pupils feel secure. Pupils are provided with information about which members of staff to contact should the need arise, and this information is displayed on a pastoral noticeboard. A Senior Teacher is Designated Teacher for Safeguarding, with the Vice-Principals acting as Deputy Designated Teachers. The Designated Teacher provides a written Safeguarding Report for each meeting of the Board of Governors. A member of the Board of Governors has specific responsibility for Safeguarding and works alongside the Principal and the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers as required. Information is sent out at the beginning of each academic year to the parents of all children in School. Child Protection training is held in the August Baker Days each year for all members of teaching, non-teaching, coaching and peripatetic staff.

School attendance in 2021-22 was 94.7%, down slightly from previous years as a result of a high level of Covid-19 infections.

The high expectations for pupils' behaviour are reflected in the Positive Behaviour Policy. The Appearance Code is reviewed regularly in consultation with pupils and changes were introduced in 2021-22. Pupils are encouraged to set high standards in personal appearance. The achievements of pupils are recognised and celebrated in assemblies and elsewhere, and there is a strong sense of identification with the school.

The moral and spiritual development of pupils is encouraged throughout school. Morning assembly encourages a sense of community and provides a valuable opportunity for silent reflection. Pupils gain personally from giving service to others in the local and wider community.

The school's Healthy Lifestyle Policy will be revised as part of this development plan, and provision of school meals will be reviewed in accordance with the Government's Nutritional Standards.

2d. Strategies for providing for the Professional Development of Staff

Professional Learning has been identified as a key priority for the 2022-25 SDP. In consultation with colleagues, the Leadership Team identifies needs and provides training in areas including Learning and Teaching and Pastoral Care. There is an emphasis on evidence-informed practice and training is provided both internally and by experts from outside school.

Staff are encouraged to take responsibility for developing their own knowledge and practice through reading and attendance at courses. Over the last five years, working groups have explored strategies

in Learning and Teaching and Pastoral Care and their findings have informed school improvement work. Colleagues have also attended ResearchED conferences in 2019 and 2022.

School has subscribed to the Great Teaching Toolkit, an online platform run by Evidence Based Teaching and in the summer term of 2022, all teachers completed the Foundation module. Two members of the leadership team also completed the Assessment Lead programme and further work will continue throughout the course of this 3-year development plan. School has also subscribed to Tooled Up Education which provides a range of pastoral resources.

During the period of school closures, staff training took place in the use of online platforms including Google Classroom and Google Meet. IT training has continued following the return to school, with an emphasis on using technology to support wider learning goals and assessment. All staff have been issued with individual devices and the school has embarked on a programme of providing Clevertouch boards in every classroom.

The Leadership Team is also involved in a coaching programme run by an external provider.

A Learning Coordinator and Teacher Tutor was appointed in September 2022 and she works with the Leadership Team to develop strategies to improve classroom practice. She also oversees the induction of new staff and the programmes for Beginning Teachers and Early Professional Development.

The Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) process has been disrupted because of the pandemic and action short of strike by the teaching unions. In principle, it is designed to take into account the individual needs of staff, together with the priorities set down in the SDP.

2e. Strategies for managing the attendance and promoting the health and well-being of staff

The attendance of all staff is monitored, and the procedures detailed in guidance issued by the Department of Education are applied.

School actively seeks to promote good working conditions for all staff. Colleagues are made aware of support services available to them, both internally and externally. Staff wellbeing is taken seriously in line with the principles set out in our Wellbeing Policy.

2f. Strategies for promoting links with the parents of pupils at the school and the local community, including other schools, the business community and voluntary and statutory bodies

School enjoys close links with parents. Information evenings were held for parents of pupils in all year groups at the beginning of the Autumn term, which were well attended, and online consultations are held for all year groups. There is frequent communication with parents, including through a monthly newsletter, and they are encouraged to communicate openly with school.

Parents also play an important role in school life by attending functions, events and sports fixtures. They are involved in coaching and many volunteer to help out at mock interviews for our Sixth Formers each November. There is also an active PTA which brings parents together, organises events and raises funds for the school.

School plays an active part in the Lisburn Area Learning Community. The Principal, Vice-Principal (Pastoral) and Head of Careers are involved in meetings and in the organisation of shared events.

The General Studies programme in the Sixth Form includes links with local primary schools and charities. The Charity Committee supports a range of organisations, including Quaker Service.

Sports facilities are used by various local clubs, including South Antrim Hockey Club, who play all home fixtures on the Friends' pitches. School enjoys positive and mutually beneficial relationships with these clubs.

The Old Scholars' Association plays an important part in the life of the school and plans are underway to involve as many of our past pupils as possible in our 250th anniversary celebrations in 2024-25.

Sixth Formers complete work experience placements in a variety of local companies and links with the business community are strengthened through the school's participation in the Young Enterprise programme.

Friends' is currently in its eighth year of a Shared Education Project with St Dominic's Grammar School, and staff and pupils have been able to work collaboratively on a number of curricular and extra-curricular activities. School holds the International School Award and has links with a partner school in Germany, the Remstal-Gymnasium, as well as with other Quaker Schools in Britain, Ireland and Lebanon.

2g. Strategies to promote the effective use of ICT, including its use to support learning and teaching, continuing professional development and school leadership and management

School has four computer suites, which are fully equipped with C2k desktops. There are two Mac Suites, one for Music and one for Moving Image Arts. There is also a recording studio in the Music Department. Wi-Fi provision was refreshed in July 2022 and we now have reliable service in every classroom. Staff all have individual devices and we are currently in the process of equipping each classroom with Clevertouch boards.

Pupils in the Sixth Form are encouraged to bring their own devices into school for use in Private Study, in accordance with our BYOD policy, and charging stations are available in the Common Rooms.

Platforms such as Google Classroom and Microsoft OneNote are used to support learning, and all pupils have access to resources at home.

There is a taught IT programme throughout the school, with an increased focus on programming. Digital Technology is delivered as an option at GCSE, with Software Systems Development offered at A-level.

3a. An assessment of the school's current financial position and the use made of its financial and other resources

Bi-monthly management reports are presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Budgets in the last three years have been affected by the pandemic and school closures in 2019-20 and 2020-21. However, expenditure has been in line with annual budget plans, and has not exceeded income.

The use of resources in the 2021-22 financial year is detailed below:

Income	2021-22
Department of Education Grants	5,730,788
Other income	808,353
Total	6,539,141
Expenditure	
Teaching Staff Costs	4,313,299
Other Staff Costs	1,093,153
Other Operating Costs	643,124
Total	6,049,576

3b. The planned use of the School's Projected resources for the 2022-2025 Development Plan

Budget share remains unpredictable. Even if the Aggregated Schools Budget remains the same in cash terms, with some variation in the school's allocation due to changes in school roll, it is envisaged that there will be significant real-terms cuts because of inflationary pressures, increased utility costs and unresolved pay issues. Indications are that the Grammar School will suffer a substantial deficit within three years. The figures do not include excepted items of expenditure or grant.

Income	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Department of Education Grants	5,018,075	5,143,261	5,155,799
Other income	189,600	191,870	191,870
Total	5,207,675	5,335,131	5,347,669
Expenditure			
Teaching Staff Costs	4,101,322	4,224,362	4,266,605
Other Staff Costs	590,676	602,490	614,539
Other Operating Costs	727,255	824,829	898,456
Total	5,419,253	5,651,680	5,779,600
Reserves c/f	514,013	197,464	-234,467

Capital Account and Campus Development

The Capital Account is in good health with some remaining capacity to service new DFP loans and/or the school's share of the cost of minor works projects. In March 2022, it was announced that the school had been allocated significant capital funding to facilitate a full refurbishment or partial rebuild.

4. An assessment of the extent to which the school has met its key targets in the previous School Development Plan.

The School Development Plan for 2017-2020 was nearing completion when schools were closed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Progress had been made on the three key priorities, which had been identified using the Inspection and Evaluation Framework and which are set out below:

A. Developing Leadership

Heads of Department and Pastoral Leaders took part in a planned programme of leadership development based on Andy Buck's Leadership Matters. The leadership team took part in a coaching programme run by an external provider. As a result of these strategies, leaders developed a clearer focus in their roles and were better equipped to lead the other priorities identified in the SDP.

B. Enhancing Provision

Over the course of the three years, departments worked on strategies including retrieval practice, spaced learning and knowledge organisers, with training provided on staff days. All staff took part in training on the 2014 research paper *What Makes Great Teaching? A Learning and Teaching* working group was set up and explored Daniel Willingham's *Why Don't Students Like School*, feeding back to staff and organising peer lesson observations. A Behaviour working group worked on building relationships and promoting positive behaviour. As a result of these initiatives, research-informed strategies were embedded in classroom practice and there was a sharper focus on behaviour for learning.

C. Improving Outcomes

The strategies outlined above and other initiatives in monitoring attendance and in SEN provision were designed to improve outcomes. Results in public examinations in the first two years of the SDP were strong, with 89% of pupils achieving 3+ A*-C at A-level in 2018 and 87% in 2019. With exams cancelled in 2020, it was not possible to carry out a full evaluation for that year.

Interim SDPs were in place in 2020-21 and 2021-22, and in both cases, the emphasis was in dealing with the demands of the pandemic, the impact of school closures and overseeing a managed return to normality. Work was carried out in the following areas:

A. Staff and Pupil Welfare

There was a continued focus on mental health awareness in staff training, and wellbeing weeks were organised in both years. In November 2021, school subscribed to Tooled Up Education and provided resources for staff, pupils and parents on a range of pastoral issues.

B. Learning and Teaching

Departments continued to work on IT provision, building on what had been done on remote and blended learning during the school closures. There was also a focus on the use of a range of platforms to support learning and assessment strategies. Heads of Department took part in training on assessment organised by CCEA to assist in the awarding of grades to pupils whose exams had been cancelled. Building on the progress made in the 2017-2020 SDP, effective questioning was identified as a priority in developing classroom practice for 2021-22. This was a focus of staff training and departmental plans and this strategy was embedded across all subjects. In June 2022, work was begun on the Great Teaching Toolkit.

C. Leadership and Management

Following new appointments to the leadership team, roles were refined and kept under review. There was a focus on self-evaluation for Middle Leaders with the aim of helping them improve in their areas of responsibility. Following the appointment of a new Bursar in 2020, there was also a focus on running an efficient school business and managing resources to enable school to cope with the demands of Covid-19.

5. An Assessment of the challenges and opportunities facing the school

Friends' continues to be oversubscribed at the point of entry into Year 8. A temporary variation in numbers was granted for September 2022 to allow us to admit a further 11 pupils; a further four were subsequently admitted following a request from DE. With high retention rates into the Sixth Form, the total enrolment for 2022-23 reached an all-time high, with figures as follows:

Year	F	M	Total
8	59	101	160
9	71	76	147
10	79	65	144
11	66	79	145
12	60	82	142
13	67	78	145
14	79	57	136
	481	538	1019

This growth in numbers has meant that we have an additional class in Year 8 and we will need to consider options for longer term growth. With the opportunities arising from the granting of capital funding, we will be able to enhance our buildings and facilities and will need to plan carefully for that.

The leadership team has undergone significant change in the last three years, with new Vice-Principals appointed in 2019 and 2021, and a new Bursar and a new Senior Teacher in 2020. There have also been changes in the staffing team, with five colleagues retiring at the end of 2021-22, including two Heads of Department, and two moving to other schools. This brings opportunities through fresh ideas and the challenge of integrating new teachers and ensuring that they are able to participate fully in our programme of school improvement.

Staff are committed to school and to its pupils. They are also willing to develop their expertise and there is a shared commitment to excellence and a focus on continuing to promote the highest possible standards. This is reflected in an interest in taking a research-informed approach to school improvement through developing classroom practice.

There is a shared determination to preserve the distinctive character and ethos of the school.

The school's 250th anniversary in 2024-25 offers opportunities to reconnect with Old Scholars and involve the school community in events to celebrate the occasion. We also hope to embark on legacy projects which will enhance our school grounds so that they can be used for the benefit of the school community now and in the future.

6. The preparation of the plan

The Development Plan for 2022-2025 has its foundations in work completed over the past five years in sometimes challenging conditions; in feedback from consultations with staff, pupils, parents and governors; and in self-evaluation carried out by the school leadership team.

253 responses were received from parents to an online survey carried out in June 2022. Levels of satisfaction with school were very high, including in pastoral care, safeguarding, and learning and teaching. However, a need for improved communication was identified. In consultations with staff

and governors, there was a focus on our Quaker heritage and on values, and it was decided to use the acronym ASPIRE to encapsulate and communicate our values of Adventure, Sustainability, Peace, Integrity, Respect and Equality.

7. Identification of Areas for Development, informed by School's Self-Evaluation

7a and 7b. Whole School Priorities 2022-2025, and planned outcomes

The priorities in the Development Plan are in keeping with the ethos and values of the school and take account the guidance provided in the ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework. There are four main areas of focus:

- 1. Professional Learning**
- 2. Learning and Teaching**
- 3. Pastoral Care**
- 4. Community**

The Leadership Team, Heads of Department and Year Teachers have in place Action Plans setting down how the work will be taken forward in 2022-23. Progress will be evaluated through interim reviews in January, and through final evaluations in June.

In Priority 1, our aim is to provide a high quality, research-informed programme of professional learning to colleagues at all levels, from beginning teachers to those in leadership positions. This will equip colleagues to continue to improve as classroom practitioners and give them the tools to support pupils pastorally.

In Priority 2, our aim is to put professional learning into practice in the classroom so that lessons are vibrant and highly effective, and pupils develop a deeper love of learning. In the first year, the focus will be on modelling, and we will build on strategies already embedded such as retrieval practice, spaced learning and effective questioning.

In Priority 3, our aim is to ensure that we build relationships with all pupils, look after their wellbeing, and provide targeted support for pupils with additional educational or pastoral needs. Our pastoral curriculum will ensure that pupils are equipped to make informed decisions. By promoting our values and developing restorative practices, we will strengthen a sense of community in school.

In Priority 4, our aim is to strengthen links with the wider school community, including parents and past pupils. Communication will be enhanced through meetings with parents and issuing monthly updates and opportunities will be provided for parents and past pupils to be involved in the wider life of the school.

7c. The actions to be taken to achieve the outcomes identified and the dates for completion

Actions will be set out in individual action plans by members of the Leadership Team, Heads of Department, Heads of Year and Coordinators. Alongside whole-school priorities, development needs will be identified in individual areas.

Monitoring will be carried out through the school's process of self-evaluation which, in each of the three years of the SDP, will include interim evaluations in February and annual evaluations at the end of June. Evaluations will include evidence of the work carried out and an assessment of its

impact. Pupil progress will be monitored through target setting and tracking, and actions to raise attainment are seen as central to the work of the school.

7d. The financial and other resources available to the school to be used in support of the actions identified

The Finance and General Purposes Committee monitors the Budget on a bi-monthly basis and supports the implementation of the SDP. Investment has been made in CPD through the subscription to the Great Teaching Toolkit and Tooled Up Education, and further resources will be made for coaching and to pay for training on staff development days. Individual subject departments will be given funding based on needs identified.

Financial support will be provided for individual members of staff who elect to embark on additional study, in accordance with the Staff Development Policy.

7e. Arrangements for the Board of Governors, in consultation with the Principal, to monitor, review and evaluate progress made against the School Development Plan

The Principal reports to the Board of Governors on the SDP at meetings in September, November, January, May and June. The Education Committee monitors aspects of the plan linked to the curriculum and pupil outcomes, and reviews progress at a meeting in October. Targets are set and reviewed annually after the publication of the results of external school examinations in August. The actions to achieve them are linked to the priorities in the Development Plan and to work undertaken by all members of staff.