

Friends' School Lisburn



Development Plan 2025-2028

1. The ethos of the school

Friends' School was founded by the Religious Society of Friends in 1774 and celebrated its 250th anniversary in 2024-25. As the only Quaker school in Northern Ireland, it has a distinctive character which is valued by governors, staff and the wider school community. The Quaker ethos remains central to the school's identity, informing its values and the day-to-day life of the school.

The school adopted a new Scheme of Management in January 2025. Eight trustees are appointed to the Board of Governors by Ulster Quarterly Meeting (Quakers) and they are joined by six departmental appointments, two parent governors, two teacher governors, and the Principal. Quaker business practices are observed at meetings and there is a clear commitment to ensuring the Quaker identity is preserved and remains fit for purpose in a changing environment.

In preparing for the new plan, the school leadership wanted to create an inclusive vision statement that would capture our aspiration for staff and pupils to work together in a community of learners with shared values. Following consultation with staff and governors, the following statement was agreed:

Guided by our Quaker values, we all aspire to develop personally, intellectually, and in service to others.

As well as reflecting our Quaker heritage and highlighting academic excellence, the vision statement has a focus on outward-looking personal development and interdependence.

Over the course of the 2022-25 School Development Plan, the acronym ASPIRE was used to highlight the school's values, which are drawn from Quaker writings and testimonies. These values of Adventure, Sustainability, Peace, Integrity, Respect and Equality are supported by staff, pupils and parents and are widely understood (see Figure 1). To ensure that they are fully embedded across the school, they will continue to be highlighted and modelled over the course of the next SDP.

Figure 1: ASPIRE values, responses to parent consultations, June 2025



Our vision statement and values are also embodied through our links with other Quaker organisations. The school has a long-standing association with Quaker Service in Belfast, and pupils contribute to their annual Christmas appeal. Connections with the other Quaker schools in Britain and Ireland are also strong. The Principal and Vice-Principals attend the biannual Quaker Heads' Conference, and Sixth Form pupils join their counterparts from other schools on an annual pilgrimage where they learn about George Fox, the founder of the Quaker movement, and the work of Friends over the centuries. A Peace Conference, held at Friends' in 2025 as part of the school's anniversary celebrations, allowed pupils from schools in Northern Ireland and

from the other Quaker schools to work together and articulate their vision of what peace means for young people in today’s world.

Visitors to school also comment on how they observe the Quaker ethos in practice. Simon Uttley, who carried out an independent report on behalf of Quaker schools in April 2025, noted the positive way in which pupils responded to the daily silence and how their teachers modelled the school values. In addition, in an accreditation report issued in September 2025, assessors from the Heads’ Conference (HMC) noted that ‘the Quaker traditions that sit at the heart of the school inform the school community in a very positive way’.

Summary evaluation: There is strong evidence that pupils, staff, parents and governors have a shared commitment to the school’s values and ethos, which create the conditions in which the school community can flourish. This will give us the confidence to build on what has been achieved as these values continue to shape academic and pastoral provision, as well as the wider life of the school.

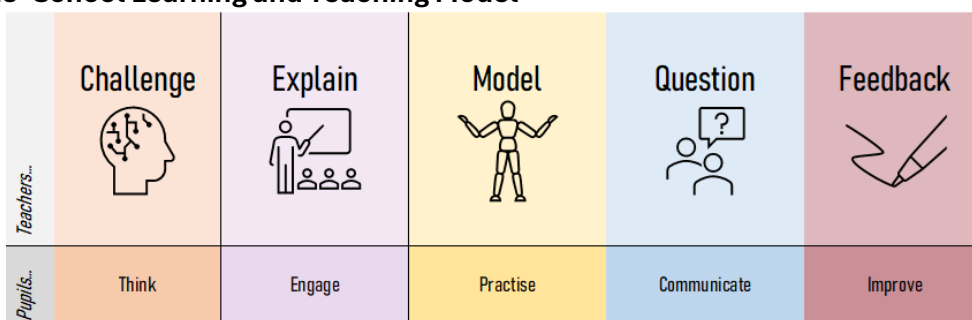
2a. A summary of the school’s strategies for learning, teaching, assessment and the raising of standards of attainment among all pupils

As articulated in the school’s vision statement, Friends’ School aims to encourage intellectual curiosity and a love of learning. 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 strong emphasis on Learning and Teaching is outlined in the school’s Learning and Teaching and Assessment policies.

A key area of focus over the last two cycles of School Development Planning has been to create and implement a framework to enhance the quality of teaching and learning at Friends’, and to embed a culture of ongoing professional development to support this strategy.

Following ongoing work with teaching colleagues, a Friends’ School Learning and Teaching Model has been adopted (see Figure 2 below). It summarises evidence-informed strategies which we believe should be integral to the classroom practice of all teachers, and which encourage deep learning by pupils. The Model is focused on Challenge (to promote hard thinking), Explain (to increase engagement), Model (to encourage deliberate practice), Question (to develop communication) and Feedback (to facilitate improvement).

Figure 2: Friends’ School Learning and Teaching Model



As indicated in Figure 3 below, the school delivers a robust, broad and balanced curriculum consistent with the needs of our intake and the requirements of the Entitlement Framework.

Figure 3: Subject offer at GCSE and A-level

Entitlement Framework 2023-25	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14
Number of subjects offered (General/ Applied)	23 (15/8)	23 (15/8)	23 (15/8)	23 (15/8)

Results at GCSE and A-level at Friends’ over the last three years have been consistently strong, as can be seen from Figures 4 and 5 below. 2019 statistics are shown for comparison purposes as outcomes across the system in Northern Ireland only returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2024. Based on GCSE and A-level results from 2024, the school was awarded the Sunday Times Parent Power NI School of the Year for Academic

Excellence for 2025, and results are consistently above Northern Ireland Grammar School averages in most subjects.

Figure 4: Summary of GCSE results from 2019, 2023, 2024 and 2025

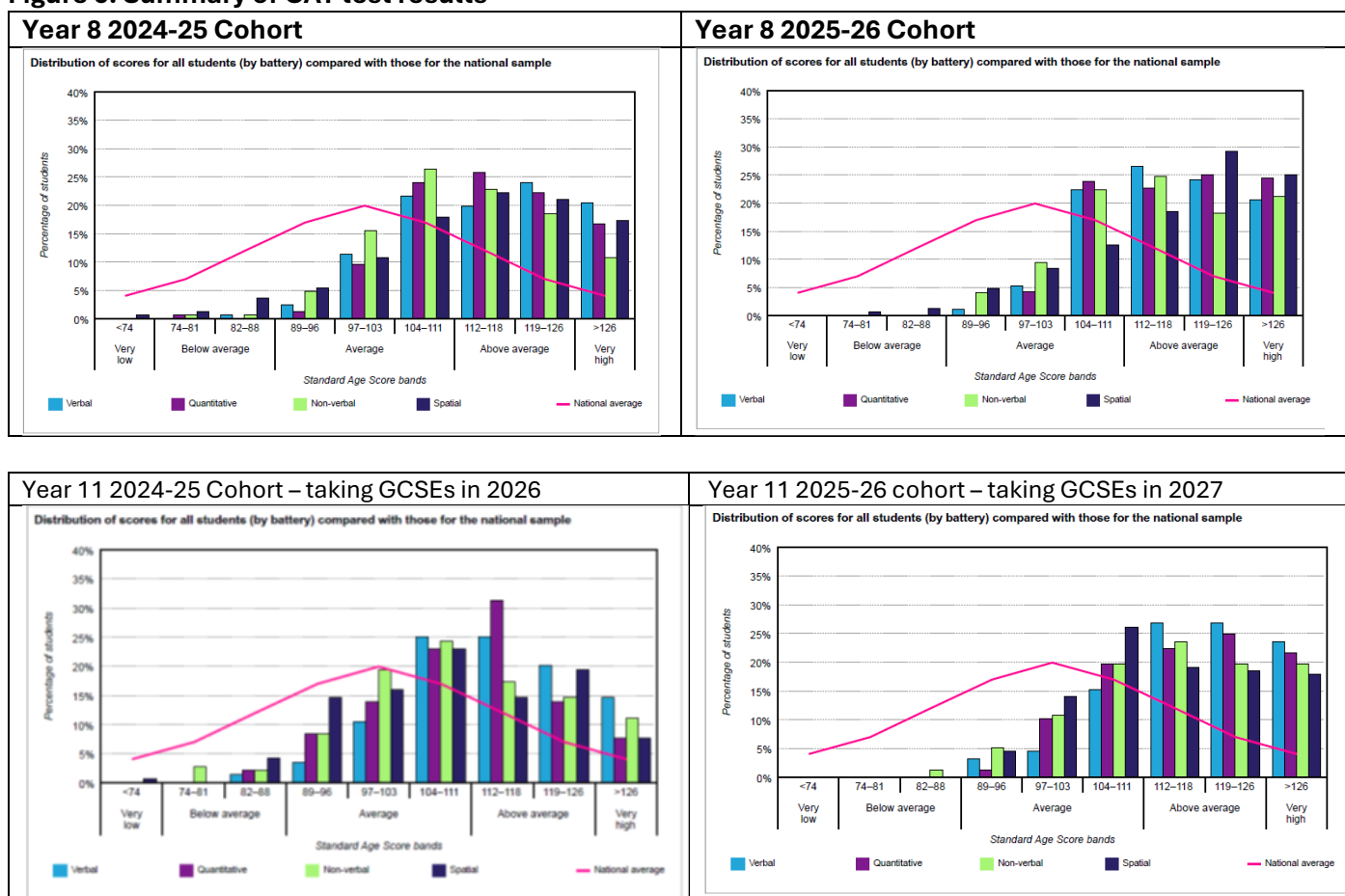
	2019	2023	2024	2025
A* %	27	38	34	38
A*/A %	66	77	76	78
A*-B %	85	92	91	90
A*-C %	93	99	99	99
7+ A*-C inc Eng/ Ma	97	99	99	99

Figure 5: Summary of A-level results from 2019, 2023, 2024 and 2025

	2019	2023	2024	2025
A* %	18	23	21	23
A*/A %	47	64	52	56
A*-B %	78	87	85	79
A*-C %	93	96	96	94
3+ A*-B	62	80	71	67
3+ A*-C	88	92	91	89

Results from entrance tests and CAT tests taken by pupils in Year 8 and Year 11 indicate high levels of ability across the school population (see Figure 6 below). Our aim is to ensure that the level of challenge in the classroom reflects this and that pupils achieve in line with their ability. Results in Figure 6 also indicate a divergence from the norm in the cohort which will sit GCSEs in 2026. In response to pupil needs, adaptations have been made to the curriculum, including a reduced subject pathway for some and the introduction of GCSE Drama and Agriculture.

Figure 6: Summary of CAT test results



Pupils are also encouraged to enter competitions and apply to the most competitive courses at university level, and early examination entry is an option for some, including those who take the GCSE Further Maths course.

Summary evaluation: Lesson observations carried out over the course of the last SDP through the PRSD programme, by the Principal, and by external visitors, provide strong evidence that the strategies outlined in the Learning and Teaching Model are being implemented throughout the school, and embedded in everyday practice in some areas.

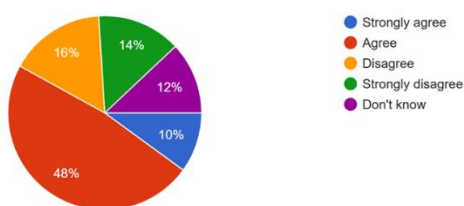
Pupils demonstrate high levels of ability at the point of entry and continue to perform well at all Key Stages. GCSE results have been very strong and above predicted outcomes, and this is something we wish to maintain. There will be a focus on the 2026 cohort, which has a different profile from other year groups, to ensure that they achieve in line with their ability and that they are able to choose appropriate post-16 courses. Despite very good results at A-level, there will also be a focus on increasing the A*-B profile in some subjects, as identified through self-evaluation and whole-school analysis of results.

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

The school places an emphasis on teaching practices which meet the needs of all learners, including those with additional needs. Teachers are encouraged to be inclusive and responsive in lessons, and to adapt their teaching to ensure that the strategies they use are inclusive and equip all pupils to achieve their goals. Although the majority of parents feel that school provides good support, a need has been identified for further work in this area (see Figure 7 below) and this will be incorporated into planning for the next 3-year cycle.

Figure 7: Support for children with additional needs, parent survey, June 2025

My child has additional needs, and school gives them the support they need to succeed.
50 responses



Specific support is provided for pupils with additional needs by a trained Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) and Assistant SENCo. There are currently 40 pupils on Stage 3 of the Code of Practice, a figure which has risen from 26 at the start of the 2022-2025 SDP. In accordance with the requirements of the Special Educational and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, a register of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is maintained, and information disseminated to teachers.

All pupils are given the opportunity to access the full curriculum, and Individual Education Plans are drawn up to support those with statements of SEN. These are monitored and evaluated by the SENCo and Assistant SENCo, in consultation with parents and members of staff, and shared with all those involved in each pupil's education.

Pupils participate in decisions regarding their provision, including at the annual review of their statement. Once a picture of need has been established, reasonable adjustments are made in classroom practice and assessments to take account of additional needs.

Where this is indicated on their statements, pupils are supported by suitably qualified Classroom Assistants or have access to dedicated learning support. The School's Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy is reviewed annually.

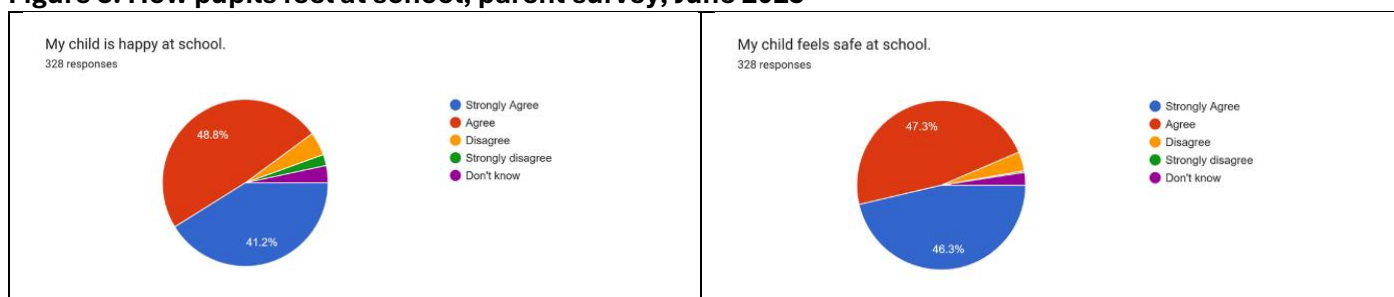
The SENCo holds the CCET qualification which allows her to assess pupils' reading and comprehension skills. She is supported by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in the processing and organising of Access Arrangements.

Summary evaluation: Pupils with additional needs are well integrated in school and there is an inclusive and supportive environment which allows them to learn alongside their peers. This is led effectively by an experienced SENCo, and pupils receive dedicated one-to-one assistance where required. Further work will be done on Adaptive Teaching to ensure that all teachers are using the most effective strategies and are responsive to the needs of the young people in their classes, so that all pupils are equipped to achieve their potential. Over the next three years, school will also have to meet the ongoing challenge of ensuring that effective provision is made for the rising numbers of pupils across the system with additional needs.

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

Teachers encourage open communication and prioritise positive relationships, allowing them to promote the health and wellbeing of all pupils, and to facilitate timely intervention where problems arise. Comprehensive arrangements are in place for safeguarding, and every effort is made to create an environment in which pupils feel secure. Pupils are provided with information about who to contact should the need arise, and this information is displayed on a pastoral noticeboard in the foyer at the front of school. As indicated in Figure 8, most pupils feel happy and safe at school.

Figure 8: How pupils feel at school, parent survey, June 2025



A Senior Teacher is Designated Teacher (DT) for Safeguarding, with the Vice-Principals acting as Deputy Designated Teachers (DDTs). The Designated Teacher meets weekly with the Principal and 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 there are open lines of communication with the Designated Teacher. Safeguarding procedures are evaluated annually against the ETI audit to ensure compliance with all statutory requirements.

Arrangements are in place to ensure the delivery of the preventative curriculum in a fast-evolving environment. This is overseen by the DT and the Vice-Principal (Pastoral) and involves external agencies and the taught pastoral curriculum. Over the last three years, the school has partnered with Tooled Up Education an organisation which provides evidence-informed resources for staff and parents. Webinars and in-person engagement sessions have also been held in school and have been well attended.

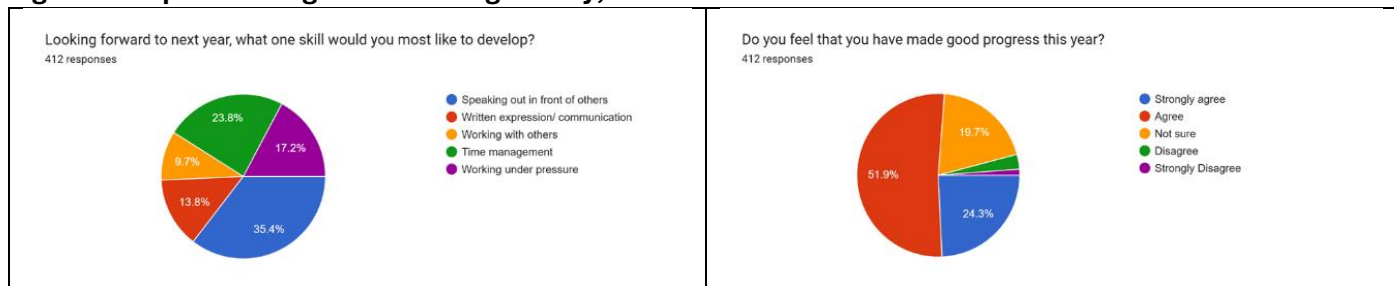
Information is sent out at the beginning of each academic year to the parents of all children in school, with updates and reminders included in the monthly newsletter. Safeguarding training is held in the August Baker Days each year for all members of teaching, non-teaching, coaching, and peripatetic staff.

Two counsellors from external agencies are in school two days per week to ensure that pupils can discuss matters of concern with a qualified professional. A School Nurse is on site during school hours to provide for ongoing and acute medical needs.

Pupils meet daily in tutor groups ('Collects'), and twice weekly 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.

Learner participation is encouraged through the School Council, which meets monthly and is made up of two pupils from each Collect. The views of the council are brought to leadership team and help inform decision-making. Pupil voice is also used to evaluate and inform classroom practice at a departmental and whole-school level (see Figure 9 below).

Figure 9: Pupil Learning and Teaching Survey, June 2025



Pupil wellbeing is promoted in the pastoral curriculum, in assemblies, and through a wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities, including sport, music and drama. To mark the 250th anniversary, two legacy projects were opened on the school grounds with the aim of promoting pupils’ mental and physical wellbeing: the Legacy Trail, which stretches for 1500m around the perimeter of the grounds, and the 1774 Pavilion, an outdoor recreational and performance space for the creative arts.

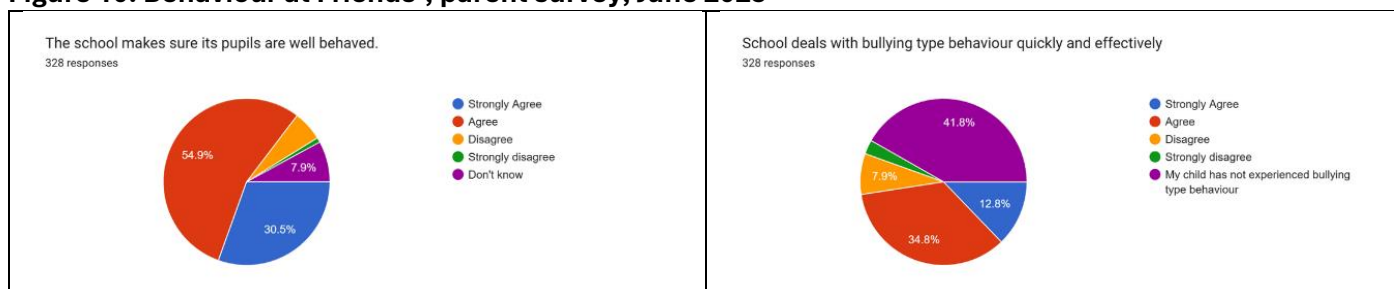
The school enjoys excellent on-site facilities for music and team games, and pupils are encouraged to participate in our enrichment programme and in Saturday morning fixtures.

There is a Sixth Form Wellbeing Committee which meets weekly and organises a wellbeing week each February, based on Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing. The Wellbeing Policy recognises the need to promote pupil welfare throughout the school and to offer tailored support to those who encounter specific difficulties, including anxiety and depression, self-harm and eating disorders.

School attendance in 2024-25 was 95.9%. The school works closely with external agencies to support pupils who for health or other reasons are unable to attend school.

High expectations for pupils are reflected in the Positive Behaviour Policy. A Behaviour Code, based on the value of Respect, is displayed in classrooms and pupils are explicitly taught routines to ensure that expectations are clear and that there is a consistent approach across the school. There are high satisfaction rates with the school’s management of behaviour and bullying, as can be seen from Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Behaviour at Friends’, parent survey, June 2025



The Appearance Code is reviewed regularly in consultation with pupils and parents, with further revisions to take place in response to the proposed legislation on school uniforms.

There is a strong sense of identification with the school, and the achievements of pupils are recognised and celebrated in assemblies, on social media platforms, and through the monthly school newsletter.

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.

Over the last two years, provision of school meals in the Dining Hall was reviewed in accordance with the Government’s Nutritional Standards and the school leadership has been working with caterers to ensure that there is a consistent offering of healthy, well-balanced meals at lunchtime.

Summary evaluation: As indicated in surveys with staff and pupils, pastoral care continues to be a strength in school. Ongoing work on positive behaviour will ensure greater consistency and high expectations for

everyone. We will also seek to develop provision through the preventative curriculum, ensuring that pupils are able to learn in a respectful environment which values others, and which gives them the confidence to recognise and challenge harmful behaviour and to navigate the challenges they face outside school, including online.

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

In consultation with colleagues, the Leadership Team identifies needs and provides training in areas including Learning and Teaching and Pastoral Care. Over the course of the last two cycles, the school has taken an evidence-informed approach to Professional Learning, and this continues to be a core element of the 2025-28 School Development Plan. Strategies designed to enhance classroom practice, including Retrieval Practice, Effective Questioning and Modelling, will continue to be prioritised and embedded across all subjects.

Training is provided both internally and by experts from outside school, and Learning and Teaching is a key focus on each of the Baker Days and Staff Development Days.

A Learning and Teaching Coordinator works with the Leadership Team to develop strategy, overseeing a pedagogy-focused working group and producing a half-termly newsletter for colleagues with links to relevant articles and blogs. She also oversees the induction of new staff and the programmes for Beginning Teachers and Early Professional Development.

School has subscribed to the CPD Academy, an online platform run by InnerDrive. This year, all teachers will complete at least one module on the online course and will receive in-person training during a dedicated Staff Development Day. At the beginning of the 2025-26 academic year, through the TransformED programme, the school hosted a Science of Learning conference which was attended by colleagues from Friends' and from other schools across the Lisburn Area Learning Community. Seminars were delivered by a range of experts from Northern Ireland and England, and included topics such as Challenge, Improving Writing, AI, and Classroom Management.

Although there is a clear focus on Learning and Teaching, there is also an emphasis on training in key aspects of pastoral care and the preventative curriculum. CPD has taken place on Positive Behaviour and, in response to pupil need, on equipping staff to deal with anxiety and stress-related behaviours in young people. As a subscriber to Tooled Up Education, school has access to a range of pastoral resources for staff and parents, and has worked with external providers to develop our understanding of how to encourage positive behaviours and attitudes and confront wider societal issues such as misogyny.

Staff are encouraged to take responsibility for developing their own knowledge and practice through reading and attendance at courses. Over the course of the last SDP, three members of staff achieved a certificate in evidence-informed practice through the Chartered College of Teaching. The school is supporting two colleagues who are working towards a Master's in Education, and we currently have three colleagues completing the Senior Leadership Pathways course through the Education Authority, with one enrolled on the STEPS into Leadership programme.

The Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) process is designed to meet the individual needs of staff and to provide opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of the priorities set down in the SDP. Colleagues are also encouraged to take part in peer-to-peer observations to enable them to discuss and develop classroom practice.

Summary evaluation: Good progress has been made in Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) over the course of the last two School Development Plans, despite the challenges of the Covid pandemic and action short of strike. Teachers have had access to high-quality training from leading experts, and there is an appetite for developing classroom practice and expertise in pastoral care. Heads of Department and pastoral leaders engage well with whole-school priorities and over the course of the next SDP, more focused self-evaluation will equip them to continue to develop their everyday practice. The TransformED programme, the association with the CPD Academy/ Inner Drive, and access to dedicated funding will also allow us to develop our TPL strategy.

2e. Strategies for managing the attendance and promoting the health and wellbeing 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. A team of Health Champions organises events and offers guidance, and school proactively seeks to support staff, including by offering the annual flu vaccine free of charge.

A survey carried out by TUE in June 2025 indicated that although some aspects of their work caused stress, wellbeing amongst teaching and support staff was positive:

The majority ... scored above average on the wellbeing measure, indicating a higher-than-average positive wellbeing score across staff at Friends'. This was further supported by qualitative feedback: "School is an excellent support for staff and pupils and advocating for their mental health and allows staff to feel part of a school and wider community".

Summary evaluation: Staff attendance is very good, and teaching and non-teaching colleagues report high levels of wellbeing. Staff are also invested in school and are willing to give time to support pupils in extra-curricular activities and our enrichment programme. This creates a sense of community which will provide the foundation for further development in the next SDP.

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. Well-attended information evenings are held for all year groups at the beginning of the Autumn term, with online parent consultations allowing teachers to provide dedicated feedback on pupil progress. There is frequent communication with parents, including through a monthly newsletter, and they are encouraged to contact school when issues arise.

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 at mock interviews for our Sixth Formers each November. The PTA brings parents together, organises events, and helps raise funds for the school.

School plays an active role in the Lisburn Area Learning Community (LALC). The Principal, Vice-Principal (Pastoral), SENCo and Head of Careers are involved in meetings and in the organisation of shared events. In August 2025, Friends' hosted a Science of Learning Conference, with delegates in attendance from across the LALC.

The Enrichment programme in the Sixth Form includes leadership and personal development courses facilitated by outside providers, as well as links with local primary schools and charities. The Charity Committee supports a range of organisations, including Quaker Service, and last year, a day of service was organised in March, with all pupils taking part in initiatives across the community.

School enjoys positive and mutually beneficial relationships with local clubs who use the pitches and the Sports Hall, including Lisburn Cricket Club, the Northern Cricket Union, and South Antrim Hockey Club, who play all home fixtures on the Friends' pitches.

The Old Scholars' Association plays an important part in the life of the school, and the 250th anniversary allowed us to reconnect with past pupils, many of whom continue to support the school in a variety of ways.

Sixth Formers complete work experience placements in 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 11th year of a Shared Education Project with St Dominic's Grammar School, and staff and pupils have been able to work collaboratively on curricular and extra-curricular activities, including Politics in Action and a Year 10 trip to Corrymeela. There has been increased collaboration between the school

leadership teams, including in Learning and Teaching. Teachers from both schools delivered workshops at Science of Learning conferences held at Friends' and St Dominic's. School has long-standing links with the Remstal-Gymnasium in Germany, as well as with other Quaker Schools in Britain and Ireland.

Summary evaluation: The school's links with the community are strong and pupils benefit from partnerships with other organisations. There is potential for further collaboration both in the LALC and through the Shared Education partnership, and opportunities to build on the good work done during the last SDP to develop links with alumni. We will also seek further parental engagement, including through initiatives to support the extra-curricular life of the school.

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 there is now reliable service in every classroom. Staff all have Surface Pros and every classroom is equipped with a Clevertouch board. Platforms such as Google Classroom and Microsoft OneNote are used to support learning, and all pupils have access to resources at home. There has also been training in emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, with a focus on how best to use it in an educational setting.

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. Pupils are taught about online safety and how to navigate the digital world. School is a mobile phone-free environment and in 2025-26, school is taking part in a pilot scheme run by DE, which includes a research project with King's College, London. Pupils in the Sixth Form are encouraged to bring their own devices into school for use in Private Study, and charging stations are available in the Common Rooms.

Summary evaluation: The school has sound infrastructure for delivery of IT, although there will be challenges with ageing equipment, including staff devices. The NAACE self-evaluation framework has allowed us to identify areas for development in whole-school IT, and the Director of IT is working with Heads of Department to audit current practice and develop a framework which would allow all pupils to reach an agreed standard by the end of Key Stages. We will continue to monitor evidence about the use of mobile phones and to develop our strategies to ensure that we can develop key skills while maintaining learning environment which is free from distraction, and which is not over-reliant on devices.

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. Expenditure has been in line with annual budget plans and has not exceeded income.

The use of resources in the 2024-25 financial year, excluding the Preparatory Department, is detailed in Figure 11 below.

Figure 11: Summary of income and Expenditure in 2024-25

Income	2024-25
Department of Education Grants	7,124,735*
Other income	275,247
Total	7,399,982
Expenditure	
Teaching Staff Costs	4,870,566
Other Staff Costs	1,187,194
Other Operating Costs	1,233,617
Total	7,291,376

*includes in-year funding for pay increases and excepted items, including SEN funding

3b. The planned use of the School's Projected resources for the 2025-2028 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 and increased utility costs. As can be seen from Figure 12 below, indications are that the Grammar School will suffer a substantial deficit within three years.

With temporary variations in the last four years, the school population has increased from 998 to 1093. This has allowed us to widen opportunity, enhance provision and operate more efficiently. While the FTE in teaching staff has risen from 60 to 63.7 and the PTR has risen from 16.6 to 17.2. We are currently in the process of submitting a Development Proposal to make this arrangement permanent.

The figures include one extra teaching FTE per year and are based on the current AWPU figures. They do not include excepted items of expenditure or grant.

Figure 12: Projected Resources for the 2025-2028 SDP

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Income			
Department of Education Grants	6,855,144*	6,790,576	6,958,335
Other income	200,000	200,000	200,000
Total	7,055,144	6,990,576	7,158,335
Expenditure			
Teaching Staff Costs	5,142,922	5,423,519	5,715,340
Other Staff Costs	800,000	816,000	832,320
Other Operating Costs	1,061,340	1,157,000	1,261,000
Total	7,004,262	7,396,519	7,808,660
Reserves c/f	805,006	399,063	-251,262

Capital Account and Campus Development

The Capital Account is in good health with some remaining capacity to service new DFP loans and the cost of minor works. In March 2022, it was announced that the school had been allocated significant capital funding to facilitate a full refurbishment or partial rebuild although this has been paused by the Department of Education.

Summary evaluation: While the school is in a healthy position at present, the financial situation across the education sector remains challenging. By taking a prudent approach, the school has been able to widen opportunity, enhance provision and to develop facilities and this gives us a good foundation on which to build as we enter the next 3-year cycle.

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 2022-25 focused on four key priorities, which had been identified using the Inspection and Evaluation Framework, as set out below:

Priority 1: Professional Learning

In the first year of the SDP, school subscribed to the Great Teaching Toolkit and all staff completed the introductory module and a unit on Structuring, to tie in with the learning and teaching priorities. This was supplemented by internal training. However, following a review and because of restrictions imposed by action short of strike, the school did not continue with the GTT and focused on internal expertise, informed by educational research. A working group was set up and a TPL newsletter and library were established.

In Year 1, IT training was organised for all staff on use of Surface Pros and Clevertouch boards, which are now used effectively and routinely throughout school. In Years 2 and 3, there was a focus on Artificial Intelligence, which included training from external sources.

Pastoral staff engaged with training through Tooled Up Education and there was internal training on strategies including Meet and Greet and approaches to controversial issues, including misogyny.

Summary evaluation: The aims of this priority were met, despite the challenges faced through action short of strike, and good progress was made in all aspects of TPL. Colleagues have learned new skills in IT.

Priority 2: Learning and Teaching

Key priorities for the first two years were Modelling and Effective Questioning. In Year 3, these were incorporated into a new FSL Learning and Teaching Model and subject departments were given the opportunity to develop and embed good practice. Although PRSD did not take place in the first two years because of action short of strike, the Principal carried out a series of lesson observations in the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years and in the majority of cases, there was evidence that the key strategies had been implemented effectively.

In response to pupil need, two new GCSE courses (Agriculture and Drama) were introduced in September 2024.

Throughout the course of the 3-year plan, results in public examinations were very strong. Outcomes at GCSE and A-level returned to pre-pandemic standards in 2024, and results at Friends' remained well above 2019 standards in both 2024 and 2025.

Summary evaluation: The aims of this priority were met. Good progress was made on classroom strategies and the FSL L&T Model is being implemented effectively across the school. Curriculum provision is appropriate and outcomes remain strong.

Priority 3: Pastoral Care

Work was carried out at the beginning of the SDP on ethos and values, and the acronym ASPIRE (Adventure, Sustainability, Peace, Integrity, Respect and Equality) was used to embed them across school, particularly through assemblies and pastoral time. In the interests of pupil wellbeing, internal assessments were moved to before Christmas and this has been well received. The Collect (pastoral) curriculum was revised and school subscribed to Tooled Up Education, which provided resources for staff. TUE also held meetings for parents which were well attended. The structure of the school council was revised to allow for wider representation from across all classes and pupils were consulted on issues such as uniform, school meals and mobile phones. In CEIAG, school subscribed to the Unifrog platform, which has facilitated university applications and helped inform pupils and parents. In Year 2, provision for work-based learning for Y13 was reviewed and enhanced.

Summary evaluation: The aims of this priority were met. The ASPIRE values are well understood and platforms such as Unifrog and TUE have enhanced provision.

Priority 4: Community

Communication with parents was enhanced through the introduction of information evenings in the autumn term. Subject departments created curriculum maps which were shared with parents at the start of the year and a monthly newsletter was launched to provide updates on the wider life of the school.

In Year 2, a Director of Development and Engagement was appointed to oversee outreach to the wider school community, including alumni and to assist with arrangements for the school's 250th anniversary year. The 250th anniversary also allowed for links to be established with LCCC, who collaborated with the school on a tree-planting project, and with the Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum on an exhibition about the school. In Year 3, a Peace Conference was held in school for pupils from Friends' and other schools and pupils participated in a day of service in the community.

Ongoing pressures on admissions led to temporary variations in numbers in each of the three years of the SDP, resulting in an additional class in Year 8. As a result, governors agreed to submit a development proposal as a longer-term solution to growth in the school population.

Summary evaluation: The aims of this priority were met. Communication with parents has been improved and a successful 250th anniversary year allowed the school to build relationships with the wider community. Progress has been made with the development proposal.

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

Friends' continues to be oversubscribed at the point of entry into Year 8. Temporary variations have been granted in each of the last four years and retention into the Sixth Form remains very high. As a result, the school has seen year-on-year growth in pupil numbers, as can be seen in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13: Friends' School Admissions and Enrolment in the last four years

<i>Year</i>	<i>Admissions No</i>	<i>Temporary Variation</i>	<i>All Preferences</i>	<i>1st Preference</i>	<i>Total Admissions</i>	<i>Total Enrolment</i>
2022	155	(15)	308	226	161	1019
2023	165	(25)	293	243	169	1039
2024	165	(25)	284	236	168	1057
2025	166	(26)	334	271	175	1093

This growth in numbers has meant that we have an additional class in Year 8 and the school is in the process of submitting a development proposal for a permanent increase in admissions numbers from 140 to 165, with an incremental increase in enrolment numbers from 970 to 1140. This would allow us to widen opportunity for young people in our catchment area. It would also increase flexibility for the school, optimise class sizes and realise economies of scale. However, it also brings with it challenges relating to recruitment of teaching staff, an increased administrative burden, and pressures on accommodation.

In March 2022, it was announced that Friends' School had been successful in its application for Major Capital Works, which would provide for a complete or partial rebuild to meet the school's future accommodation requirements. However, as this has now been paused, interim solutions to meet the needs of the current population will have to be found, which will include repurposing existing spaces and limited temporary accommodation.

The school leadership team has remained stable over the course of the 2022-25 SDP and has a shared vision for the school. It has a balance of skills and expertise which will allow it to continue to develop over the course of the next SDP.

There was a relatively high turnover in staff over the course of the last SDP, largely because of retirements. New staff have also been recruited to meet the demands of a growing school population, with the FTE in teaching staff rising from 60 to 63.7. The PTR has also risen from 16.6 to 17.2, indicating an increased efficiency in overall operations and allowing scope for further appointments.

Recruitment in this period has been successful, with subject specialists appointed in all areas. Staff are committed to school and to its pupils, willing to develop their expertise and have a shared commitment to continuing to promote the highest possible standards. This is reflected in an interest in 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 offered opportunities to celebrate the school's history and its roots in Quaker practice. It also allowed us to bring the wider school community together by enabling us to reconnect with Old Scholars and involving the wider school community in events.

Summary evaluation: The school is in a strong situation and is experiencing a period of growth. The success of the 250th anniversary has also raised the school's profile and enhanced its reputation, meaning that it remains a popular choice in the Lisburn area and enjoys the support of the parent body. The leadership team is relatively experienced and committed to a shared vision based on the school's values and its commitment to high quality Learning and Teaching. Despite external pressures and challenges, we have opportunities to explore how best to develop our curricular offer and enhance provision, including through our enrichment programme.

6. The preparation of the plan

The Development Plan for 2025-2028 has its foundations in work completed over the course of the last two SDPs; in feedback from consultations with staff, pupils, parents and governors; and in self-evaluation carried out by the school leadership team.

The leadership team began planning in January 2025, identifying key areas for development, with a focus on learning and teaching, outcomes and priorities in pastoral care. This was informed by guidance produced by the Education and Training Inspectorate, including the nine contributory areas and the five high-level questions. A visit was also arranged with the District Inspector, Susan O'Boyle, who carried out joint lesson observations and held discussions with members of staff.

Lesson observations carried out across subject areas in the 2024-25 school year indicated that strategies outlined in the Learning and Teaching model had been implemented successfully in most subjects, with further consolidation required in some areas. An analysis of results highlighted strengths in many areas, with scope for improvement in some subjects at A*-B in A-level. There was agreement that we should build on the good work carried out on the ASPIRE values, our approach to behaviour management, and initial work on the preventative curriculum.

Draft plans were shared with governors at meetings in March and May, with opportunities for members of the board to provide feedback. Governors were in support of the proposals for school improvement.

Consultations were carried out in June 2025. Wellbeing surveys were conducted with staff and pupils by Tooled Up Education, who provided us with summary reports. There were 59 respondents to the staff survey, and 597 respondents to the pupil survey. Responses indicated high levels of wellbeing, with areas for consideration including how we take a consistent approach to behaviour management and how we help pupils balance the demands of schoolwork and life outside school. A Learning and Teaching survey was also carried out, with 412 responses received. This provided affirmation of current strategies and some areas for development which correlated with what had been learned from lesson observations.

328 responses (up from 253 in 2022) were received from parents to an online survey carried out in June 2025. Levels of satisfaction with school were very high, including in pastoral care, safeguarding, and learning and teaching.

Staff Development Days in the summer term provided an opportunity to prepare the ground for the new SDP and this also informed planning for the August Baker Days, which included an education conference covering the main areas of focus.

Summary evaluation: Evidence from lesson observations, consultations and self-evaluation has affirmed the school's focus on high-quality classroom practice and excellent pastoral care, with high levels of satisfaction reported by pupils, parents and staff. Areas for development have been identified which will allow us to build on what has been achieved to date and continue to drive school improvement through learning and teaching.

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

7a and 7b. Whole School Priorities 2025-2028, and planned outcomes

The priorities in the Development Plan are in keeping with the ethos and values of the school and have regard to the guidance provided in the ETI's Contributory Areas and High-Level Questions. There are three main areas of focus:

1. Curriculum, Learning and Teaching
2. Pastoral Care, Wellbeing and Inclusion
3. Community

Each priority is underpinned by Staff Professional Learning and Learner Participation and Engagement.

The Leadership Team, Heads of Department and Year Teachers have in place Action Plans setting down how the work will be taken forward in 2025-26. Progress will be evaluated through interim reviews in February, and through final evaluations in June.

In Priority 1, our vision is to provide a high-quality learning environment for all pupils which develops knowledge, skills and values, provides rich opportunities and leads to high-quality outcomes.

In Priority 2, our vision 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.

In Priority 3, our vision is to develop meaningful collaborative links within and beyond our school community, including with parents, past pupils, and other schools.

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. These will include reference to the high-level questions set out by the ETI.

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 subscription to Tooled Up Education through the Department's TransformED funding, which has been allocated to ongoing TPL and was used to pay for a Science of Learning Conference in August 2025. 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, with the SDP the first item on the agenda. 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.