

St Paul's High School, Bessbrook Ardcoil Naomh Pól, An Sruthán



Prospectus

Quality Education for All

Updated for 2018



Principal:

Mr J Burns, BEd, MEd, PQH

Chairperson of Governors:

Mrs E Fearon

St Paul's High School was established in 1966 with the aim of providing its pupils with a Christian education within the Catholic ethos.

The school is a thriving, innovative educational community of over 1500 students of all abilities, from children with learning difficulties in our Learning Support Centre to high calibre academic achievers in our AS, A2 and Applied Post-16 courses.

St Paul's is at the forefront of quality education provision in Northern Ireland. All classrooms are equipped as standard with interactive whiteboards, and students and staff are encouraged to make the fullest use of technology for learning and teaching.

The school is situated on a modern campus in pleasant rural surroundings near Camlough, County Armagh.

Principal's Welcome

It gives me great pleasure to write this introduction to our school prospectus. St Paul's is proud of our position at the very heart of the community of south Armagh, offering the broadest education possible to the children of an area which values our school and what we do for your children. We are lucky that we are served by outstanding primary schools who enjoy an excellent relationship with St Paul's and who work closely with us to ensure that the move from primary to St Paul's is as enjoyable as possible.

St Paul's is a Catholic school and we place great emphasis on our Christian values of truth, integrity, compassion and kindness. All the decisions we make have the best wishes of the pupils of the school at heart. We offer them a strong voice in the running of the school and our educational experiences are broad and diverse, ensuring that each child receives the curriculum which is suited to their own needs.

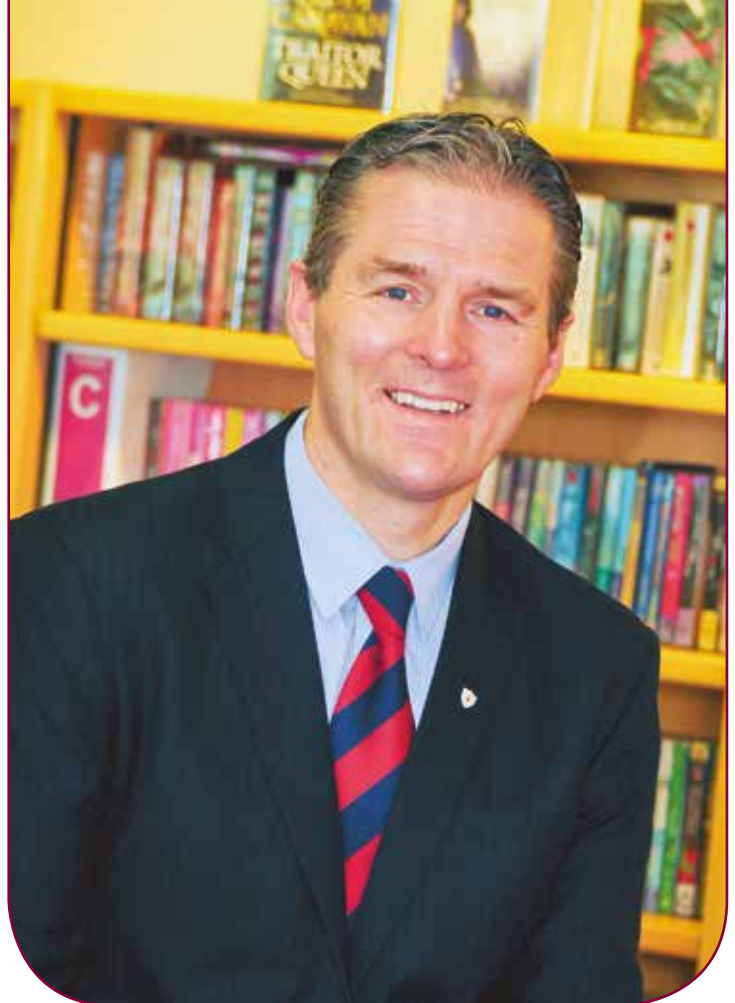
In St Paul's we are committed to the education of the whole child. We will endeavour to inspire our pupils as they move through their complex formative years to ensure they receive the attitudes and values which will turn them into fulfilled members of the workforce, their community and society in general.

In St. Paul's we endeavour to provide a pathway which lasts for seven years because increasingly, our pupils want to remain with us through to the end of their formal schooling and we want to keep them. While we enjoy getting the best out of our high fliers, we also get great satisfaction out of working with our high triers and we are renowned for getting each pupil to work to the very best of their ability.

I hope you enjoy reading the prospectus. While it is a glossy and colourful document, it offers only a snapshot into a school that has many dimensions, offers so much during and after school to our pupils and is a dynamic learning community.

Tá Ardscoil Naomh Pól i gcroílár an phobail. Déanfaimid ár ndícheall í a choinneáil ann.

Mr Jarlath Burns
Principal





Mission Statement

St Paul's High School is a Catholic community committed to providing high quality education in an atmosphere of mutual respect where each individual is valued as an important member of our school family. We value the personal, moral, social and spiritual development of each student, encouraging respect for self and others including the core values of truth, kindness, integrity and compassion.

Our Vision

We aim to provide equality of opportunity to a broad and balanced curriculum suited to the interests and needs of all our students. We endeavour to develop skills and capabilities to help our students grow into healthy, mature and successful adults capable of making informed and responsible choices and having the potential to make a valuable contribution to the world of work and society in general.

Aims of the School

1. To be a community inspired by the Catholic faith, living out the gospel values and reflecting all traditions of our Irish cultural heritage.
2. To enable all students to acquire a sense of purpose and have a good opinion of themselves by giving all access to an academic, vocational, religious, moral, social and physical education, with appropriate provision for pupils with special needs, which celebrates diversity and values inclusivity.
3. To promote professional development through the provision of high quality resources and sharing of good practice within an ethos of shared school leadership.
4. To involve the church, parents, education bodies, industry and the wider community in the work of the school.
5. To foster a spirit of cheerful co-operation and provide a safe, child-centred environment which promotes optimum achievement and self-esteem among staff and students.

School Uniform

GIRLS

Maroon blazer
School tie
White blouse
Trutex grey skirt with insert pleats
Maroon tights*

(* Year 13 and 14 girls may wear grey tights)

BOYS

Maroon blazer
School tie
Grey shirt*
Dark grey or black regulation school trousers

(* Year 13 and 14 boys may wear white shirts)

PE KIT

Regulation jersey, shorts and socks are available from O'Neill's Sports Store, Newry. All items must be clearly labelled. Mouth guards are recommended.





Spiritual Dimension

St Paul's High School is a Catholic school where great emphasis is placed on sacramental celebration.

The recent improvements to our school campus afforded the opportunity to create a new Oratory dedicated to St Paul. We are fortunate to have the services of Father Seamus White as our School Chaplain.

Mass is celebrated before the school day for staff, pupils and the wider community. During Advent and Lent the Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated with each class. The celebration of Mass for parents, students and teachers takes place to welcome Year 8 students and to acknowledge leavers at the end of Years 12 and 14. The end of Key Stage 3 is marked with a celebration of the Eucharist with the Archbishop of Armagh in St Patrick's Cathedral.

Each year group participates in a spiritual retreat and has opportunities for collective worship at the beginning of each lesson and at Morning Assembly.

St Paul's is involved in the Christian Education Movement. This incorporates prayerful reflection and meditation and encourages pupils to interact with other denominations in the Christian family.



Father Seamus White
School Chaplain

Pastoral Care

The main aim of the school's Pastoral Care and Positive Behaviour Policy is to support pupils in their learning and development and to ensure that our pupils are happy in school. Each class has a form teacher who monitors progress and provides support where appropriate. The work of the form teachers is co-ordinated by a Year Head who has overall responsibility for the year group. All teachers share responsibility for Pastoral Care and the school's Merit System is used to promote positive behaviour among pupils.

The Primary School Liaison Teacher visits each P7 class prior to their entry to St Paul's, when pupils' strengths and talents are recorded and special aptitudes of pupils are noted. We have a full-time member of staff who looks after pupils' Health and Well-being, and parents are requested to inform her of any additional medical information pertaining to their child.

St Paul's Pastoral Care policies ensure that all pupils are catered for and supported. Pupils know who to turn to if they have any concerns about school life and each Year 8 class has a Year 13 Mentor who visits the class each day and listens to concerns they may have. All pupil and teacher mentors receive training and are committed to ensuring that Year 8 pupils have an enjoyable and safe experience of school.

Child Protection Procedures

In line with Department of Education Child Protection policy, St Paul's have a duty to refer disclosures of a child protection nature to the appropriate statutory agencies.







The School Curriculum

Key Stage 3

The curriculum for Years 8, 9 and 10 enables each pupil to realise his or her full potential at Key Stage 3. The curriculum caters for each pupil's individual needs by offering an extensive Careers Programme in Year 10.

During Years 8, 9 and 10, pupils will have the opportunity to study the following subjects.

- Art and Design
- Careers
- Drama
- English
- French
- Environment and Society (comprising Geography and History)
- Home Economics
- Information and Communication Technology
- Irish
- Learning for Life & Work
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- Science
- Spanish
- Technology and Design

The School Curriculum

Key Stage 4

The GCSE core subjects are compulsory in Years 11 and 12.

- Religious Studies
- English
- Mathematics
- Double Award Science
- Single Award Science or BTec Science

The following GCSE subjects are offered to pupils in Years 11 and 12.

- Agriculture
- Art and Design
- Business Studies
- Construction
- Drama and Theatre Studies
- English Literature
- French
- Further Mathematics
- Geography
- Health & Social Care
- History
- Home Economics: Food
- Horticulture
- Information and Communication Technology
- Irish
- Learning for Life & Work
- Music
- Physical Education
- Spanish
- Technology and Design

In addition, pupils may study BTec in the courses below:

- BTec Level 1 / Level 2 First Award in Children's Play, Learning & Development
- BTec First Diploma in Sport (Performance & Excellence)

In addition, pupils may study a Certificate in Wellbeing (Level 2)

The courses below are offered in collaboration with Southern Regional College, Newry:

- Creative Media Production
- Engineering
- Travel & Tourism

All students have classes in Careers Education and Physical Education.



Occupational Studies Qualifications at Key Stage 4

The world of work is constantly changing. The Occupational Studies qualifications are designed to give pupils the experience of sampling work related activities in different occupational areas.

Pupils will learn:

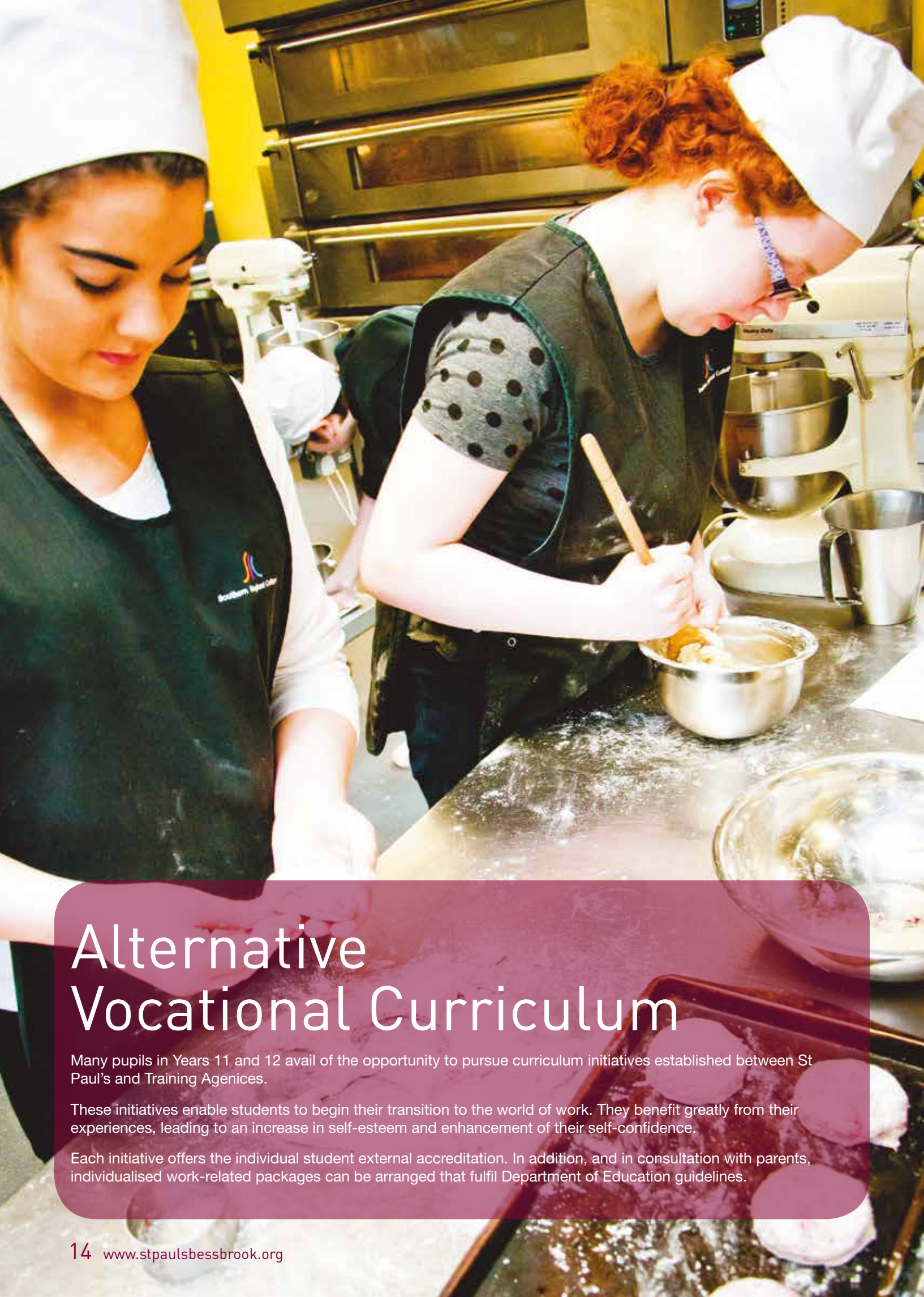
- skills for working life through an enjoyable 'hands-on' approach
- knowledge through practical, work-related activities
- the ability to make better choices in relation to further study, training and employment.

There are six Occupational Studies Qualifications.

- Design and Creativity
- Technology and Innovation
- Construction
- Business and Services
- Environment and Society
- Engineering and Engineering Services

Pupils achieve their results through practical work throughout the course. There are no written examinations in these qualifications.





Alternative Vocational Curriculum

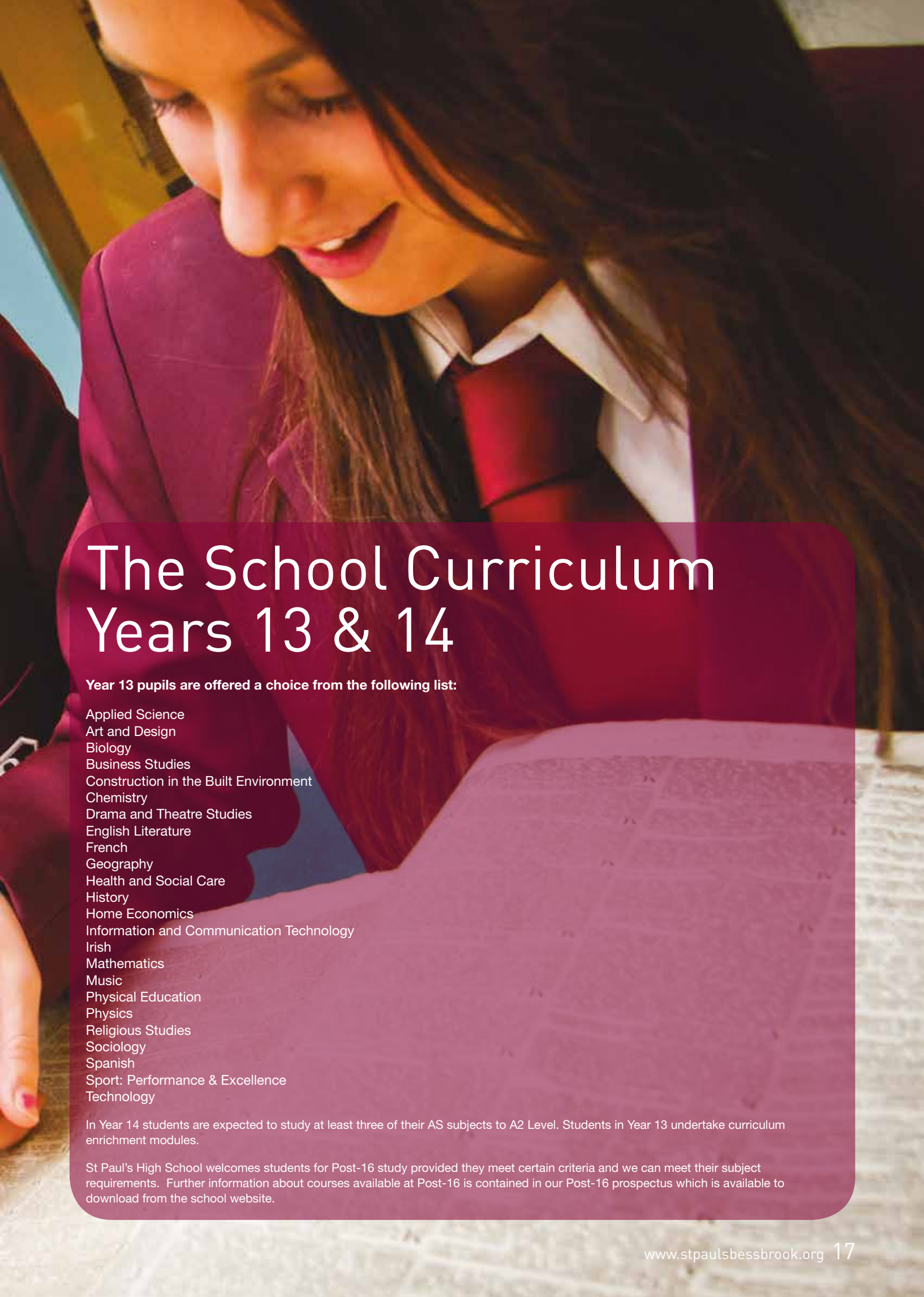
Many pupils in Years 11 and 12 avail of the opportunity to pursue curriculum initiatives established between St Paul's and Training Agencies.

These initiatives enable students to begin their transition to the world of work. They benefit greatly from their experiences, leading to an increase in self-esteem and enhancement of their self-confidence.

Each initiative offers the individual student external accreditation. In addition, and in consultation with parents, individualised work-related packages can be arranged that fulfil Department of Education guidelines.





A young woman with long dark hair, wearing a maroon school blazer over a white shirt and a red tie, is looking down at a book. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a library or study area with bookshelves.

The School Curriculum Years 13 & 14

Year 13 pupils are offered a choice from the following list:

- Applied Science
- Art and Design
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Construction in the Built Environment
- Chemistry
- Drama and Theatre Studies
- English Literature
- French
- Geography
- Health and Social Care
- History
- Home Economics
- Information and Communication Technology
- Irish
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Religious Studies
- Sociology
- Spanish
- Sport: Performance & Excellence
- Technology

In Year 14 students are expected to study at least three of their AS subjects to A2 Level. Students in Year 13 undertake curriculum enrichment modules.

St Paul's High School welcomes students for Post-16 study provided they meet certain criteria and we can meet their subject requirements. Further information about courses available at Post-16 is contained in our Post-16 prospectus which is available to download from the school website.



The Learning Support Centre

The Learning Support Centre delivers the National Curriculum to students with moderate learning difficulties and who hold a statement of Special Educational Needs. Students share the resources, physical and human, that the school has to offer and are integrated with their peers in mainstream, both socially and academically.

There is a holistic approach to the education of each child, which offers opportunities to achieve full potential in a caring, secure environment. Students are entered for public examinations when appropriate. Close links are maintained with other schools in the SELB area and students regularly participate in inter-schools competitions.

There is a comprehensive Leavers' Programme incorporating vocational skills sampling in collaboration with Southern Regional College and employment based work experience. Close links have been established with prospective employers and 'Training for Employment' agencies.



Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

Careers Education and Guidance plays a significant role in the full development of the student.

The aim of the department is to provide information and knowledge of a wide range of career paths and to enhance students' awareness of their achievements, skills, qualities and capabilities.

Career research is a prominent aspect of the careers programme and each student can access information from various computer packages and the Internet.

From Year 10 all students have Careers time set aside in a well equipped, modern careers suite and are taught by qualified staff. This expertise is supplemented by Careers Service NI, university personnel and various experts from the world of work.

Education for Employability is delivered through the Learning for Life & Work programme at St Paul's with the aim of ensuring that all our pupils develop the personal qualities, skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes which will give them a strong foundation for lifelong learning and work.

We are proud to have been recognised with an Employability Status Award by the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

A student with dark hair, wearing a maroon school uniform, is looking down at a piece of paper on a lab bench. The paper features a line graph with a square wave pattern. In the background, there are several pieces of laboratory glassware, including a round-bottom flask containing a red liquid and a graduated cylinder with a red stopper. The scene is set in a science laboratory with a wooden bench.

Science

The Department of Education designated St Paul's High School a Specialist College for Science in September 2008. This prestigious award demonstrates the commitment of St Paul's to excellence and to collaborative working with our partner primary and post-primary schools and to the wider community, which will ultimately enrich the learning experiences and opportunities for all young people in our area.

Specialist Status will allow us to continue to develop educational links with our partner schools to afford pupils opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

It allows for sharing good practice with our schools and through collaboration arrangements will assist in the development of Science for all.

We are proud of our status as a Specialist College and we are confident in offering an educational system, which meets the needs of our children, our society and our economy in the 21st century.

St Paul's High School is a member of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, and iNet - the international schools network.



A young man with short brown hair, wearing a maroon school jacket over a light blue shirt and a dark tie, is looking intently at a laptop screen. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a classroom or computer lab with other students and bright lighting.

ICT

St Paul's High School, Bessbrook was awarded the prestigious BECTA ICT Mark in March 2009.

The award recognised the achievements of St Paul's in embedding ICT throughout the school, and encouraging opportunities for staff and student development.

The school has invested heavily in the provision of ICT, with each teaching area equipped with internet access, digital projector and interactive whiteboard.

The school campus is Wi-Fi enabled and students in Years 13 and 14 can use their own laptop or portable computing device during class or when in private study. The school's innovative Virtual Learning Environment, Oscail 24/7 is used by staff and students to facilitate anytime access to teaching and learning resources.

The teaching of essential ICT skills is embedded in every curricular subject, and ICT is taught discretely in Year 8 (to allow for baselining of student skills, and to facilitate an induction to the school's network), and through a variety of applied and traditional courses at GCSE and A Level. Students can access courses in CiDA (Certificate in Digital Applications), ICT and Applied ICT and ECDL (European Computer Driving License).

The school is equipped with over 600 networked PCs (both desktop and wireless laptops), and St Paul's has developed its own Apple Mac Network, facilitating access to students in creative and expressive subjects, and has innovated with Linux open-source Netbook PCs.

ICT Support is provided by a team of specialised technicians. St Paul's has established links with Queen's University, Belfast and the University of Ulster and the school accommodates placements from students who are interested in pursuing a career in ICT.





Sports

Participation in a wide variety of sporting activities is central to life at St Paul's and students are taught a diverse range of physical skills which can be used in a constructive manner at school and in their communities. Students are taught that frequent physical activity will benefit both their quality of life and general health.

All students in Years 8 – 12 are expected to take part in Physical Education classes. There are also opportunities for the students to take part in extra-curricular activities many of which are sports orientated.

The benefits gained by students through their involvement is immense. The programme of study for students aged 14 – 18 has been supplemented with GCSE Physical Education and Sports Science and the Active Leisure Industry at GCE Level, as well as BTEC Sport: Performance & Excellence.

Students are encouraged to develop their creative and expressive talents through individual activities such as athletics, dance, outdoor pursuits, gymnastics and swimming.

The appreciation of the traditional Irish games of Camogie, Hurling, Handball and Gaelic Football is one of the cornerstones upon which the Physical Education programme is founded. These traditional activities are complemented by activities such as Netball, Basketball and Dance and teams representing the school in these activities have brought local, provincial and national success to St Paul's.

Sports Available to Students in St Paul's

- Athletics
- Badminton
- Basketball
- Bowling *
- Camogie
- Cross Country Running
- Dance
- Gaelic Football
- Girls' Football
- Gymnastics
- Handball
- Horse Riding*
- Hurling
- Netball
- Orienteering*
- Outdoor Pursuits*
- Racquet Ball *
- Soccer
- Soft Ball *
- Squash *
- Swimming *
- Table Tennis
- Tennis
- Unihoc
- Volleyball

* offered off-site



Music

St Paul's High School supports a vibrant and enterprising Music Department, which aims to offer a diverse experience of music to each student. It also enjoys 100% success rate at GCSE, AS and A2 level.

All students have the opportunity to take up a musical instrument and to cater for this we have a large peripatetic staff providing individual and group tuition in voice, strings, woodwind, brass and piano, guitar, percussion and drum kit. Students are prepared for the grade examinations of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in both practical and theory.

The Music department places great emphasis on extra curricular activities and students are encouraged to take part in all of these. We are proud of our Orchestra, Choir, Chamber Choir, Mixed Choir, String Quartets, Traditional Irish Groups, Woodwind Ensembles and many other ad hoc ensembles.

Each year the Music department undertakes a full and challenging programme of competitions and concerts as well as performances at our annual Prizegiving ceremonies, Open Day and liturgical celebrations.

Our musicians also contribute regularly to many community and charity events and have been broadcast on television and radio, both locally and abroad. Musical productions are staged biennially in conjunction with the Drama department.

At present, music facilities include three dedicated Music rooms, five practice rooms, a Music Technology suite and a recording studio. Each practice room contains a piano. Students can use the practice rooms before and after school and during study periods in Sixth Form.







Drama

The Drama department at St Paul's continues to flourish.

Our sell out performances of 'Viva Mexico' (2006), 'Oklahoma' (2008), 'Fiddler on the Roof' (2010), 'Les Misérables' (2012) and 'The King and I' (2014) bear testimony to the talent, enthusiasm and skill of both our staff and pupils.

An after-school Drama club provides budding performers with the opportunity to learn the many different elements of theatre and stage production.

Drama and Theatre Studies is taught discretely at Key Stage 3 and is a GCSE and A Level option.





Extra-curricular Activities

St Paul's has a tradition of taking part in extra-curricular activities providing pupils with opportunities to enhance their self-esteem and to strengthen friendships outside of the school environment.

These activities include residentials to Killowen Outdoor Education Centre and East Coast Education Centre.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

- Abseiling
- Bouldering
- Canoeing
- Field Trips
- Hill Walking
- Orienteering
- Rock Climbing
- Sailing

EDUCATIONAL TRIPS INCLUDE

- Ski-trip to European resorts
- Visits to the theatre
- Outdoor pursuits
- Geography field work
- Trips to historical locations
- Annual Year 8 trip to Pantomime
- Visits to Irish language colleges in the Donegal Gaeltacht
- Trips to England, Scotland and France

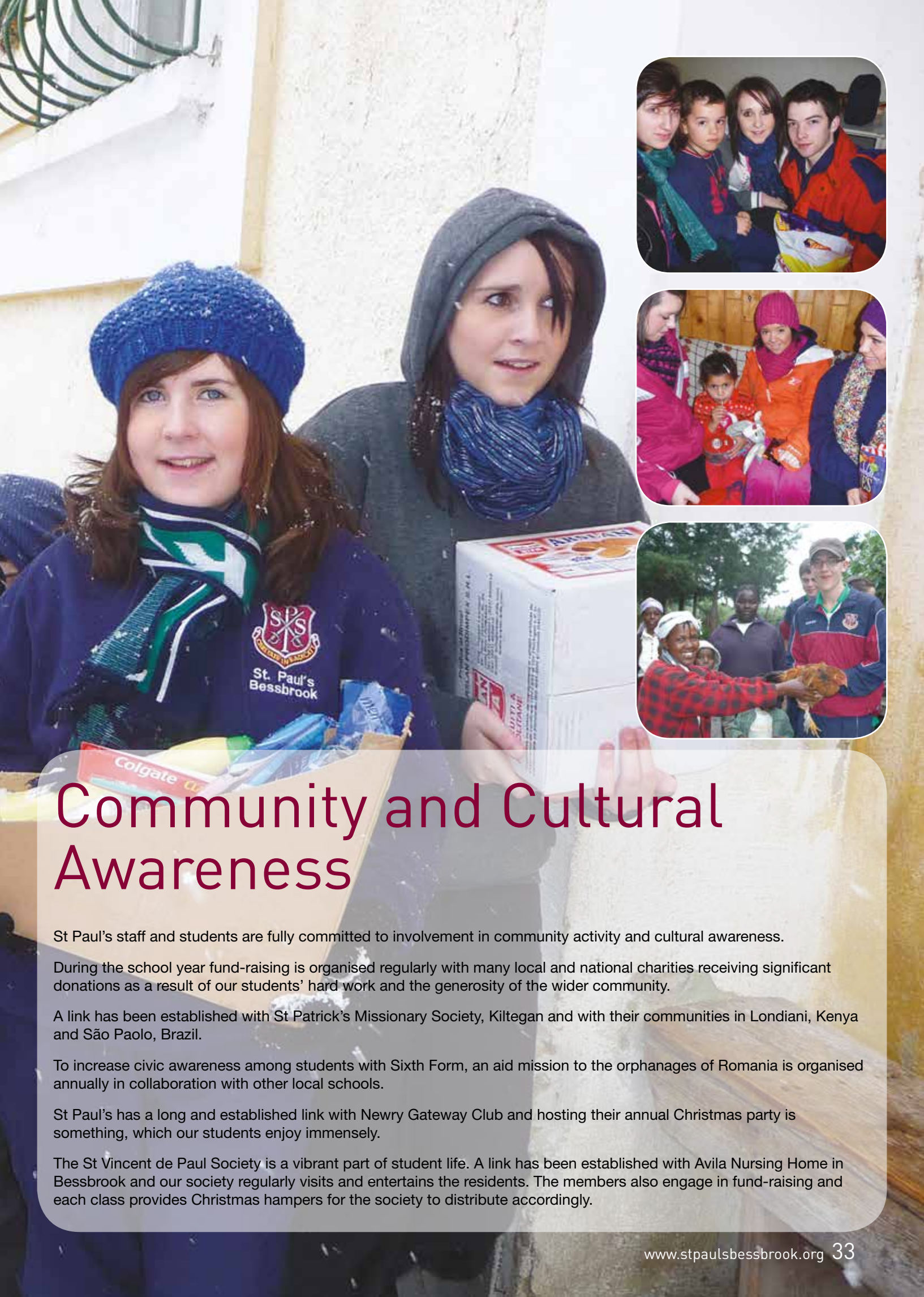
EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Drama
- Concerts
- Dance
- Theatre visits
- Summer courses
- Mummers
- CREST Awards
- Creative writing competitions









Community and Cultural Awareness

St Paul's staff and students are fully committed to involvement in community activity and cultural awareness.

During the school year fund-raising is organised regularly with many local and national charities receiving significant donations as a result of our students' hard work and the generosity of the wider community.

A link has been established with St Patrick's Missionary Society, Kiltegan and with their communities in Londiani, Kenya and São Paulo, Brazil.

To increase civic awareness among students with Sixth Form, an aid mission to the orphanages of Romania is organised annually in collaboration with other local schools.

St Paul's has a long and established link with Newry Gateway Club and hosting their annual Christmas party is something, which our students enjoy immensely.

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a vibrant part of student life. A link has been established with Avila Nursing Home in Bessbrook and our society regularly visits and entertains the residents. The members also engage in fund-raising and each class provides Christmas hampers for the society to distribute accordingly.



For up-to-date information about St Paul's High School, and for news, photos and videos please visit our website

www.stpaulsbessbrook.org

You can find us on Facebook, Twitter, Vimeo and YouTube



facebook.com/stpaulsbessbrook



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youtube.com/stpaulsbessbrook



vimeo.com/stpaulsbessbrook



instagram.com/stpaulsbessbrook



St Paul's High School is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, via our innovative learning platform Oscail 24/7. Students and parents can access learning resources and take part in online lessons by visiting www.oscail247.org



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