

# SUMMER NEWSLETTER

## 2026



Sports day at killbogget park

@Blackrocketss



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Front Cover Created by Elvie Smyth (1<sup>st</sup> Year)



## Principal's Welcome

This summer newsletter brilliantly captures the amazing year we have had here at Blackrock ETSS. The ETSS Olympics, the Model United Nations, basketball, soccer, Gaelic, Scifest, Gaelbhratach, the TY Barcelona trip, and the Talent Show are just some of the wonderful events that our students have taken part in this year.

Well done to all of the students who took part in these events and all of the different co-curricular and extra-curricular events that took place in the 25/26 school year. Participating and engaging in the club programme at Blackrock is an excellent way for students to learn new skills, make friends and have fun, and we strongly encourage everyone to get involved in at least one or two clubs.

Of course, the club programme at Blackrock ETSS would not be possible without the goodwill and generosity of our colleagues who coordinate and organise all of the wonderful activities that feature in this newsletter. We have a dedicated and committed staff here at Blackrock ETSS and I would like to thank all my colleagues for their dedication to the students' education inside and outside the classroom throughout the course of this school year.

Thank you too to our parent body, Parent Association, Board of Management, and Student Council. The support of these stakeholders is invaluable in helping us to advance the school's development and we appreciate all of the time and support that our stakeholders have given to the school community in the 25/26 school year.

I'd like to wish the very best of luck to our Junior Cycle exam candidates. We believe in you and we are proud of you. Believe in yourselves. You will do great. Best of luck everyone.

Thank you to Sheila and her student journalists for putting together this excellent publication. We hope you enjoy reading these reports as we look back on another memorable year at Blackrock ETSS.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

Donal Evoy

Principal



## Student Voice

### Model United Nations

*By Sanvi Vellore (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)*



On the 24th of April, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend WICKMUN (Wicklow Model United Nations), where I stood for the Delegation of Latvia within the Environment and Ecology committee. There were 22 schools in attendance, representing 39 countries, with around 6 or 7 people in each delegation. We debated three critical issues during this weekend of intense negotiation: the removal of space debris, promoting green energy in conflict zones, and addressing water pollution in the Rostov-on-Don region.

Latvia's primary focus was drafting a resolution to address the growing problem of space debris. While the first draft was considered too brief by some members of the committee, it opened the door for a great collaborative effort. Through several rounds of debate and amendments, the committee worked together to strengthen the document. A significant milestone for me was gaining the support of the delegate of India, who eventually voted to pass the resolution with me.

A lighter moment between the debating sessions was a debate on pollution in Rostov-on-Don, which led to an incredibly memorable standoff between the delegates of Russia and India over a biannual monitoring meeting location. Russia's insistence on choosing Geneva, Switzerland for neutrality versus India's demand for a meeting in Moscow for relevancy became a recurring joke that lightened the atmosphere of the debates.



Unfortunately, near the end of the debating sessions, when the final vote was called for Latvia's resolution, it failed to pass by a thin margin of just two or three votes.

Attending this event helped me improve my debating skills and diplomacy, and I look forward to attending the MUN again as a senior delegate.

### Student Council

*by Tom Homan (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)*

This year, I was on the student council for 2026. The student council is made up of four representatives from each year. I got involved with the student council as I wanted to have input in the decision making for some aspects in our school. I must say that I've found it to be very enjoyable.

In the beginning of the year, some representatives of the council met to discuss student wellbeing ideas. Some of the ideas that we thought would be beneficial to all students included: to have a talk on healthy eating, to have themed events at Christmas and Easter as well as to devise digital wellbeing tips for students.

The lunch subcommittee of the student council is currently working on getting microwaves and similar facilities for students. These will be great additions to the school and will be helpful to students who like to eat a hot lunch.

The student council is continuing to help and plan events for the student body. We thank Eoghan for all his work with the student council.

## **The Cara Mentorship Programme: 1<sup>st</sup> Year Experience**

**By Alina Jankiewicz and Ava Waters (1st Year)**

We were first introduced to our 5<sup>th</sup> year Cara leaders at the start of the school year. Each Cara had 4-5 students in their group.

At our first meeting, we talked about the differences between 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year in school. It was a lovely ice breaking experience where we could chat freely with an older student in school.

Our Cara's gave us great advice and organising tips to help us on our way. They took us to our locker and showed us how best to organise them. They showed us zip lock pockets that we could use for each subject. These are large, zipped bags into which we can organise our books and copies for a subject. It means that same subject resources are together.

In our further meetings, we played lots of fun games that taught us inclusivity, fitness, minding ourselves and the importance of kindness.

One meeting that stood out to us the most, was when we carved pumpkins around Halloween.

At our last Cara meeting, we were brought out to Tully Park and had a wonderful time playing football and rounders. After we finished, we got treated to pepperoni and cheese pizza from Dominoes. It was a lovely way to end the year together.

We would like to thank all the 5th year Caras for organising lots of activities for us!





## Themed Weeks

### Chess Week: 1<sup>st</sup> Year View

*By Felix Jozefiak (1<sup>st</sup> Year)*

The tournament in our school during Chess Week was held under the Swiss format. This means nobody gets eliminated and everyone has 6 games.



You get 1 point for a win, 0.5 points for a draw and 0 points for a loss. The tournament was made for the entire school meaning 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th years competed together.

We used digital clocks on our iPads for timekeeping. We had 5 minutes each and per move we got 5 seconds added to our time. Thomas was the host of the tournament. This tournament was on for 4 days, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. After our official games we were allowed to watch and play other people which is good because you get to learn more about chess and openings. We could also play teachers after our official matches.

There were 41 participants in the tournament, it was crowded but it was great to meet new people and make friends.

I played four matches, and I think I won 3 of them. Unfortunately, I lost one to my best friend because I panicked and made a number of blunders.

Andrew Martynenko was the winner of the tournament. Chinmay Pawar was the runner up who lost to Andrew. I believe that everyone who

participated enjoyed the tournament, and I think the school should do this again next year. So, if you did not participate this time, you might want to participate in the next chess tournament.

### Chess Week: 3<sup>rd</sup> Year View

*By Sanvi Vellore (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)*

This year's chess tournament for Blackrock ETSS was an extremely rewarding experience. As a beginner myself, the tournament was very welcoming to all players of all skill levels. I enjoyed playing against several people from different year groups, analysing, and appreciating each other's unique playing styles. I found the atmosphere of each game to be competitive, yet friendly and respectful throughout.



I was pleased to finish the week having won 3 out of the 5 matches. While the victories were a great highlight of my week, the losses proved to be just as valuable. Each game, loss or not, was a great learning opportunity, allowing me to see different strategies and attacks from my opponents while learning to improve my defence positions.

At the end of the tournament, we announced the final standings and winners and held a fun raffle for vouchers.

As part of chess week, there was an opinion writing competition comparing the Bishop and the Knight and which is the better piece. I was delighted to have won the chess writing competition as I was quite pleased with my contribution.

Overall, the tournament was a fun way of getting involved with this year's chess week, and I was incredibly pleased to have been able to interact with a variety of chess players, advanced enthusiasts, and beginners alike. I enjoyed it immensely and I already look forward to taking part in the next tournament.

## **Creative Arts week**

**By Evan O Driscoll (5<sup>th</sup> Year)**

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, it was Creative Arts Week. Each year group participated in a competition for the best artwork. I won the 5<sup>th</sup> year group competition, with my crochet tapestry of a star.

I've been crocheting for over a year, and I really enjoy it. I also enjoy baking, and I bake frequently. I come from a long line of bakers, my grandmother owned a bakery in Cork, who taught my Mum how to bake. My Mum in turn, taught me.

Overall Creative Arts Week is a lovely way to have fun, be creative and to use various creative mediums!



## **Literary Week**

**Emilie Pine (Author)**

**By Nia Bernard Webber (5<sup>th</sup> Year)**

During Literary Week, our 5<sup>th</sup> year group had the opportunity to take part in a workshop with writer Emilie Pine. During the session, she spoke to us about her life, her experiences growing up, and the journey that led her to become a successful writer and academic.

She explained how many of her own personal experiences have influenced her work and gave us a fascinating insight into the process of writing and publishing books. Throughout the workshop, we took part in a variety of creative writing exercises which encouraged us to think more deeply, use our imagination, and express our ideas in different ways.

Emilie also shared valuable advice about creativity, confidence, and the importance of finding your own voice in writing. Everyone found the workshop both enjoyable and inspiring, and it was a great opportunity for us to learn from an accomplished writer in such an interactive and engaging way.

**Andrea Mara (Author)**

**By Alannah O'Neill Byrne (TY)**

On March 5<sup>th</sup> during Literary Week, Andrea Mara came in and talked to us in TY about her writing. She is the author of many books including: "It Should have been You", "All her Fault" and "No One Saw a Thing". Her genre of writing could be best described as crime thrillers. I have read "It Should Have been You" and I really enjoyed it.

Andrea spoke about how she got into writing; she was working for a number of years then she took redundancy. Subsequently, she took up writing. She said that she is inspired by daily life. She loves thinking, creating and writing about daily happenings.

She believes that writing can be picked up by anyone. It is great to hear a writer in person talk about what inspires them and how they became an author. It is also nice to learn about different book genres! I really enjoyed this talk!

## Clara Kumagai (Irish-Japanese-Canadian Author)

*By Eva Mart (1<sup>st</sup> Year)*

On March 9th, Clara Kumagai visited our school for Literary Week. Clara Kumagai is an Irish-Japanese-Canadian known for her award-winning books, “Catfish Rolling” and “Songs for Ghosts”. I can proudly confirm I’ve read both, and they are unlike other books I’ve read before. Her books are not straight fantasy, sci-fi, or even realism. They’re more a satisfying blend, like a smoothie.

Her books showcase an altered reality with touches of identity, myths, belonging, and sense of self like spices on that smoothie. Both her books are different but also alike in ways. Both novels have mixed cultural identity, the protagonists coming from different backgrounds. They focus on grief, memory, and the past. Both main characters are dealing with loss or changes they aren’t ready to let happen yet. The two books have touches of Japan in it, from the earthquakes to the folklore to the biwa.

They’re different in a couple of ways as well. For example, the genre and the myth or the supernatural. In “Catfish Rolling”, the genres are magic realism, myths, and broken time. Meanwhile, “Songs for Ghosts” is a ghost story and a historical mystery. They also have different characters. “Catfish Rolling” stars a Japanese girl missing her mother and exploring time zones, while “Songs for Ghosts” depicts a modern teen boy dealing with a breakup and family changes.

I found her books unique and intriguing to read, and learning about another culture was informative as well as engaging as I usually never study other cultures, much.

During Clara’s visit, she talked about her life, her passions, and her journey as an author and when writing the books. I really loved learning about her background and history. What really surprised me was the fact that “Catfish Rolling” took her about five years to complete. Talk about dedication! Looking at her images of abandoned places was cool, and my favourite part was learning about the Namazu Catfish legend, the focus of “Catfish Rolling”.

I enjoyed meeting her, and I really admire her. The signed postcard she gave me is still on my wall! She really inspired me to write more. It was a great experience to meet her and take a photo with her.

Overall, her visit is not to be forgotten, and I really enjoyed it!

## History Week

*By Ethan Mulhall (1<sup>st</sup> Year)*

History Week 2026 kicked off with everyone making colourful posters and banners to represent all the history movies on Netflix. There were magnificent drawings on them and great writing too! Our amazing Gaelbhrtach committee organised some lunchtime history quizzes for all students to come and join in the fun, and also to win some prizes. At lunchtime during the week a great history movie called ‘1917’ was playing. This was great as lots of people came to watch the movie. The room was packed with people watching it!



Us 1st years had a trip to Tully Graveyard. It was great to get out and about of the classroom. We learned a lot there about our local history, and we had a fun worksheet to complete. We learnt to do grave rubbing which is when we hold up a sheet of paper to a gravestone to see the old writing from hundreds of years ago, everyone enjoyed that.



A lady called Lynn from Holocaust Education Ireland came in to talk to the 5<sup>th</sup> years about the varying facets



of the Holocaust. She spoke about antisemitism and discrimination. This was good, as all the 5<sup>th</sup> year students were so engaged with everything. They could learn a lot more about this important topic in history, beyond their history book.

We also had a meme caption competition. This was amazing, all the entrants created outstandingly funny memes about history. They took an event from history and made it into a meme and added captions to the images to make it funny.

We also had an essay and portrait competition. Students could pick a period of history and write about it in an essay. The portrait competition was unreal, some of the submissions from students were so good they belong in a museum.

In summary, History Week was so good for all years, 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, endless activities and fun. History Week 2026 was a blast, can't wait till the next one!

## Cyber security

*By Alex Fellner Ring (TY)*

The last week of April, all the TY students attended an insightful talk about careers in cybersecurity, from Katie Rock. Katie works in cyber security with MasterCard. Her background is in engineering; she qualified as a computer engineer from Trinity College Dublin.

She informed us during her time in college she liked computers and problem solving however, she really wanted a career with a consumer facing role. After qualifying, she decided to move into banking. She started with PTSB then moved to Ulster Bank gaining and honing her skills around data protection and in particular, cybersecurity.

This was around the same time that the HSE experienced a cyber-attack. She informed us what that meant for employees of the HSE. This experience at Ulster Bank, gave her firsthand knowledge about how important it was for businesses to protect their data and to protect themselves from cybercrime.

She explained how cybersecurity involves protecting people, businesses, and important information from online threats such as hacking and scams. The talk highlighted how the job requires strong critical thinking, problem-solving skills, the ability to work

well under pressure as well as understanding the mindset of a cyber-criminal.

She gave examples of the various scams that are out there and how you can be locked out of your email and social media platforms very easily, if you click on what might appear to be, a very legitimate link. She said people are more prone to clicking on these links when they are under pressure and she stressed, the importance of taking time before you click a link.

She also spoke about the wide range of career paths within cybersecurity, including areas such as ethical hacking and data protection specifically within banks. She emphasised the growing importance of privacy and online safety in today's world.

The talk from Katie forms part of a learning platform on cybersecurity called CyberPath, which we are participating in. CyberPath is a collaboration between various Industries and South East Technological University (SETU). The platform has engaging short courses or micro modules on cyber security activities. We were able to complete them and learn about the importance of and the career opportunities in cyber security. It was a very engaging and interesting experience for our whole TY year!

## Gaelbhhratach

*By Méadhbh Fahy (Irish and Spanish Teacher)*

This year the Gaelbhhratach organised many different events to promote the use of the Irish language outside of the classroom, we set up our Tae agus Plé club that takes place every Thursday, where students came and did many different activities such as movies, crafts, board games, and more, in Irish.

We also created our balla Gaeilge, where we displayed posters with upcoming events, and many seanfhocails such as our slogan for this year, 'Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam', a country without a language is a country without a soul. During Halloween we organised a trá na gceist for the Irish classes about Irish culture and history.

A highlight of this year was definitely Seachtain na Gaeilge. Throughout the entire week, we had lots of activities and events, such as our 2nd year trip to the IFI cinema to watch Gaeltra. We organised a sausage roll day, through Irish, a seisiún aclaíochta (a fitness session) in the sports hall and we set up a day for everyone to wear green called lá glas.

For history week, we organised an Irish foods banquet with a quiz in Irish about Irish history. This was great for students to learn a little bit about Irish history and culture through Irish.

Finally, throughout the year we had many poster and card making competitions. For Easter and Christmas, we had a seanfhocail poster competition. During Seachtain na Gaeilge we had many wonderful art works featuring seanfhocails such as 'Níl aon tinteán mar do thinteán féin', (there is no home like your own home) and 'Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh siad' (praise the young and they will flourish).



## Scifest

By Ethan Mulhall (1<sup>st</sup> Year)



Scifest was a great day. It was very fun and educational. We got to interact with the primary school kids, some teachers, Donal, Simon and the judges. The judges were great. My group were a bit nervous of the judges until we met them. They were fun, kind and very educational. It was nice to meet them and show our projects off.



I loved Scifest. I did the ionic conductivity of rehydration/energy drinks. I learned a lot and it helped me understand more about the scientific method. I loved presenting my project and experiment as we got to interact with the primary school kids. They were great. They definitely learned a lot, from not just me, but from everyone.

I loved doing everything on that day especially getting judged. I may not have won anything, but I don't care, it was a fun educational day. We worked so, so hard for weeks up to Scifest it was well worth it. Everyone was encouraging, enthusiastic and engaging. It will always be a memory for me from my first year in secondary school. A huge thanks to teachers, classmates and especially the judges for coming in and helping make the experience so good.





## Transition Year

### Sustainability Workshop

*By Saoirse Meyer (TY)*

We had a lady from Trinity College Dublin called Aoife come into our school for 8 weeks to talk to us about sustainability. Every week we covered a different topic. Some of them were fast fashion and its effect on the environment, various kinds of plastic and the harm it causes to marine life, and biodiversity loss.

We did different activities to understand sustainability and understand the difference that even one person can make. In groups we got to design our own fake island which was made to be more sustainable. We drew a diagram of our island showcasing the different food sources that wouldn't harm wildlife or the environment around it. This gave us the opportunity to consider the harmful methods huge corporations use to make produce and products quicker and cheaper, with the sole goal of creating a bigger profit. We also learned about companies working to fight against corporate greed and improve the quality of life for animals.

In one of our classes Aoife highlighted some of the problems within fast fashion and the horrific quality of life for many workers creating clothes for huge brands like: Primark, Shein, and Zara. This made us more aware of how clothes are made. It made us more conscious of how much money is paid to create clothes that are both cheap and fast to make. This encouraged us all to be more conscious consumers and to make for sustainable choices when buying clothes.

For the last day of our workshop, we invited the first years to take part in a workshop. In the workshop they got to play different games related to sustainability. This allowed us to teach the first years some of the things we learned over the 8-week course. We put them into groups of five and had a different activity at each table, they had 3 minutes to complete each activity and then they would switch to the next table.

Getting to teach the first years about sustainability in a simple way made it easier for them to understand. They were having fun and they were also learning at the same time. Teaching younger generations about climate change and sustainability is critical to improve the quality of life for all living things on this planet; humans, plants, animals, and insects, as they are the future leaders and policy makers of our world.



### Netflix show "Wednesday"

*By Luna Kennedy (TY)*



In Transition year, we all had the chance to go out and find various work experiences. In doing this, we were able to get more understanding of what we might want to study in college or what we might like to do in the future.

I was fortunate enough to have a connection in the film industry, so I was allowed a week off school to work on the Netflix show "Wednesday." I learned a lot about the industry in general and how things worked. I particularly learned about props and the use of and the importance of props.

If you want to work in the film industry keep in mind how long the hours are. I had to wake up at 5:30 and be at the studios for 7:00. There are no set breaks, so we had lunch whenever we were in between takes. We were supposed to finish at 6pm but depending on how

long the actors take to get ready or, if there were technical difficulties we could be finishing much later.

Even though the hours are long and there are no set breaks the work is very rewarding. You must work hard and always be ready, just in case the director wants something changed.

What I love most about working in film is how you can see what you did on camera afterwards. There is a record of it. Thousands of people will be able to see what you worked on, and it makes you feel accomplished and proud.

I would recommend this career path for anyone who has a lot of energy and creative ideas. You have to be passionate about films and know what looks good on camera and what doesn't.

### **Architects in Schools Programme**

*By Maya Szyperski (TY)*

Our school participated in the Architects in Schools Programme. This is where an architect works with TY students over a period of 12 weeks. This is a great opportunity to learn not just about the design process but to get to understand how architects think, create and problem solve.

We got an introduction to building sustainability and using sustainable materials. We also got to hear about how building has evolved and changed over the years as we incorporate sustainable concepts.

During the workshop we were given a design brief, which was to create a garden room. We were given the dimensions, guidelines on what we should include and what we should not include. I quite enjoy designing things in general, so this task was easy for me.

My aim was to make this space more inhabitable with comfortable furniture; I saw it as an opportunity to create a tiny house concept. I added a sofa bed with a table, foldable chairs, soft furnishings as well as a sink, a TV and gaming set up. All the time I am looking at it as a comfortable and attractive place to go and meet friends.

I must say overall, designing this idea was very enjoyable as it included drawing and being imaginative, which I find fun to do. Going forward, I am really interested in creating and designing particularly in the area of animation. This opportunity

gave me a first-hand experience of designing a project from start to finish.



### **Legal Ambitions**

*By Jaime McGibney (TY)*

Legal Ambitions is a four-week school programme designed to inform about a career in Law. It does this through releasing prerecorded videos that have been produced by the Law Society on different aspects of Law. A number of us are interested in this career area so we opted to take part in these workshops. We got to hear an overview of how to qualify in a Law degree programme.

We heard about the application of Law in real life and how blameworthiness, sentencing decision, victim rights, due process to investigation (suspect rights) juvenile justice and state power v individual power are taken into consideration by a solicitor.

We heard about the other routes that people can take with a Law degree, besides becoming a solicitor. There are many opportunities such as barrister, journalism, civil service, EU institutions and in house legal teams. We also learnt about roles in NGO's, compliance and academia.

We then had another speaker named Max Barrett and he spoke about "My Life In Law". Max is a high court judge. He writes up judgements at home. He explained to us how his journey began. Max went to college to study medicine and then decided to switch to law because he discovered medicine wasn't the right fit for him. He wanted to find a purpose and ended up switching to law by accident. He loved helping people



and always wanted to end up in a career that involves just that.

Finance was a big obstacle for him to go to college to study law. He was the second person in his family to go to college and he happened to get a scholarship to study in England. He met so many people from different areas of law careers. He explained how it massively changed his life studying law and becoming a judge. At the end of Max's talk, he told us one great sentence, that we are the generation that can change the world and save the world from climate change because, every other generation has failed.

The next speaker spoke about being a criminal defence lawyer. Becoming a criminal defence lawyer involves challenging the law. He explained the free legal aid scheme and that you have the right to have a solicitor. He also informed that you have the right to claim the 5<sup>th</sup> ammendment, that means that you have a right not to answer any questions.

I would really recommend this law workshop to everyone because you were learning something new every few minutes. The speakers were very interesting and passionate about their work. It gave you a really good insight on whether law is really a career you should spend your life doing.



### European Movement Ireland: School Talk

*By Misha Lopatin (TY)*

The talk about the EU from the European Movement Ireland was very informative to me. We were taught the basics of how the EU is structured and what the Parliament, Commission and Council are responsible for. We also learned about its history and founding; that

it originated as a small economic union centred around the trade of coal and steel. This was particularly insightful to me as I thought that it was always a political union as well as an economic one, however, I learned that its founding was purely economic.



We were also shown that there are many opportunities for work in the EU, as consultants with expertise are needed to make informed decisions and translators are required to allow for international communication.

In summary, the EU is a very important part of life in Europe and understanding it is very useful both for the job opportunities it offers and the insight it gives you into how connected all of Europe is.

### European Movement Ireland: Work Experience

*By Cian Power (TY)*

On the week of the 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> February I did work experience with European Movement Ireland. I was delighted, as I am interested in the workings of the EU and in politics at a national and at a European level.

The EMI (European Movement Ireland) is an example of a non-governmental organisation (NGO), which is an independent entity separate from the government, focusing on EU affairs. It receives funding from private as well as public sources.

I learned about the role of EMI, which is to anchor Ireland's place in Europe. It does this by promoting understanding of EU affairs and providing education and information on Ireland's place within Europe. One of the educational programmes it provides is, the Blue Star programme which operates in primary schools. The EMI has developed fun resources for schools focusing on EU history, geography and culture.

I was brought to the Europa Experience on Chatham Street where I learned about how the European parliament works. This was a great experience.

I then attended a conference about the EU presidency. I learned that Cyprus currently holds the presidency of the EU until July 1<sup>st</sup> then, from July 1<sup>st</sup> Ireland will hold it until December 31<sup>st</sup>. The CEO of EMI, some of the staff and I attended this conference. The Cypriot ambassador as well as other EU ambassadors were in attendance. This conference was held at the department of Foreign Affairs on St. Stephens Green. This was an exciting event, as it was interesting to hear their views.

I really enjoyed this work experience, and I learned a great deal.

## STEM TY programme

**By Sheila Hayes (Guidance Counsellor)**

Abbott Pharmaceuticals is operating in Ireland over 80 years. It has 10 sites nationwide and it produces cutting edge medical devices such as diabetes monitors, heart stents and a handheld device that can analyse blood in real time. It also produces baby food as well as pharmaceuticals. Their goal is to improve the lives of 3 billion people per year up to 2030, so that people can live healthier lives for longer.

Being sustainable going forward means planning for the future to ensure that they can continue to develop high end medical products and pharmaceuticals. Planning for the future means having a skilled and trained staff. One of the targeted action steps that Abbott has taken to ensure this, is to develop a TY Internship programme. The specific aim of this programme is:

- To inspire students
- To give information on what Abbott is about
- To develop skills and to enhance existing ones

This TY STEM internship programme is currently operating in several Abbott sites in Ireland: Sligo, Longford as well as Cherrywood. Cherrywood is Abbott's finance and management centre. Blackrock ETSS was fortunate to be able to gain 7 places on its TY Internship programme.

## Abbott TY Internship

**By Theodor Mizera (TY)**

Abbott is a big pharmaceutical corporation with over 115,000 employees in over 160 countries worldwide. The company produces a wide variety of medications used in everyday life by many people, such as nutrition, diagnostics, and medical devices. The TY STEM

Internship programme was a unique opportunity to get an insight into the company and its people.

To apply for the Internship, we had to complete an application form. Seven students from our school were selected to take part in the programme. It took place from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April at the Abbott Laboratories site in Cherrywood Business Park from 9 am to 3 pm each day.

In the two weeks, we had many enjoyable activities that were also engaging and educational. We also had presentations from the employees about their jobs in the company. We were working on projects ourselves as well, which we presented on the final day. It was interesting to work with people from all over the world who shared their stories and experiences with us.

Throughout the programme, we learned a great deal about the company itself, including about its products and operations as well as finance and IT. Since the Cherrywood site is a finance and management centre rather than a production site, we gained valuable insight into those areas. The experience also helped me understand how important teamwork and communication are in an international company environment. Overall, it was an interesting time, and we learned a lot. It was worth taking part and gaining new experience.



*TY Students at Abbott*



## Community Engagement

### Daffodil Day

*By Eva Gallway (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)*

This year our school celebrated Daffodil Day to raise money for the Irish Cancer Society. It was run by a mix of 2nd and 3rd year students, with the help of our teacher Nicole. Everyone was encouraged to wear bright spring colours. There was a face painting station, tea and coffee on sale, as well as a bake sale. It ran all through lunch, with students painting small yellow daffodils on people's cheeks. It was really popular and there was a queue most of the time. I helped at the bake sale, which had loads of treats made by students and teachers. I baked something myself and helped serve. The table stayed busy for the whole lunch break.

There was also a tea, coffee, and an iced-coffee stand, run by student volunteers. It ended up being one of the most popular parts of the event, especially the iced coffee. Daffodil badges were also sold throughout the day and loads of students bought them to show their support. We raised over €800!

Overall, it was a great event to be part of, and it felt good knowing everything we did was helping an important cause.



### Paying it Forward

*By Eoghan Funge (PME student English teacher)*

It has been an absolute pleasure to spend the past year working in Blackrock ETSS as an English PME. My time here has been fundamental to my training, I have genuinely enjoyed every moment spent with both staff and students.

I wish you all the very best in the forthcoming exams, and I sincerely hope our paths cross again in the future.

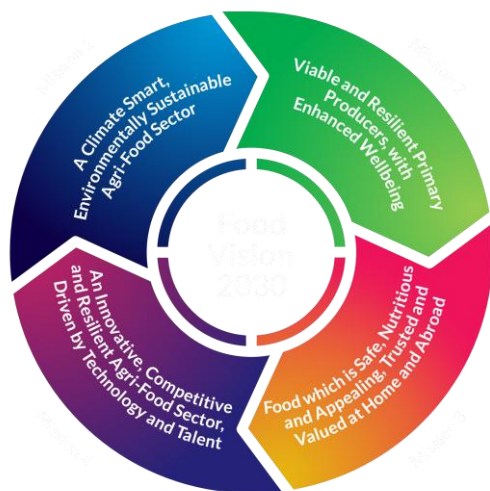


## Career Corner

### Food Vision 2030

*By Hugo Dillon (5<sup>th</sup> Year)*

The aim is to position Ireland as a World Leader in Sustainable Food Systems over the coming decade



In May, we listened to a really interesting presentation from Dr. Zoe McKay from the School of Food and Agricultural Science in UCD.

The School of Food and Agricultural Science houses 14 different degree programmes. From Equine Science, Crop Science, Horticulture, Forestry, Human Nutrition and in particular its new B.Sc. degree programme: Sustainable Food Systems.

The talk focused on some of the biggest challenges currently facing the world, including climate change, food security and public health. Dr. McKay explained how food systems will play a major role in solving these issues in the future.

Dr McKay explained that with the world population expected to reach almost 10 billion by 2050, there will be increasing pressure to produce enough food in a sustainable way. She spoke about how food systems currently contribute to around 30% of global greenhouse gas emissions, showing why sustainability in agriculture and food production has become such an important topic internationally.

The presentation highlighted how Ireland is in a strong position within the global food industry, with agri-food exports worth billions each year and the sector employing over 170,000 people nationwide. Dr

McKay also discussed Ireland's Food Vision 2030 plan, which aims to make Ireland a world leader in sustainable food systems over the next decade.

A major focus of the talk was the Sustainable Food Systems degree itself. This course is in its second year in UCD. The course combines science, sustainability, food production, nutrition, policy, the end consumer and waste management. Thereby giving students a broad understanding of how food impacts both people and the environment.

It is the only programme in Ireland that looks at sustainable food systems, taking into consideration the entire food chain. Modules mentioned included Food and Planet, Climate, Carbon and Soil, Sustainable Food Packaging, Food Poverty and Policy, and Life Cycle Assessment.

Dr McKay explained that the degree is very practical and industry-focused, with opportunities for project work, professional work experience and collaboration with businesses and organisations. Students develop skills in systems thinking, environmental analysis and policy evaluation, which are becoming increasingly valuable in many careers.

The presentation also covered the wide range of career opportunities available to graduates. These include roles such as sustainability managers, environmental analysts, policy advisers, consultants and NGO project officers working in areas connected to food, climate and sustainability.

Overall, the talk gave us a great insight into how important sustainable food systems will be in the future and the importance of addressing various policies to create new solutions.

### Chartered Surveying – A Career in Demand

*Hugo Dillon 5<sup>th</sup> Year*

In the last week of April, we got a presentation from Ellen O Connell from the chartered surveyors of Ireland on surveying and the different opportunities available in the industry. The talk explained that surveying is not just one career, but includes areas such as property surveying, land surveying and construction surveying.

The presentation showed how surveyors are involved in many parts of everyday life, from helping plan major buildings and infrastructure projects to valuing property and creating mapping systems used in apps like Google Maps. It also highlighted the strong demand for surveyors both in Ireland and internationally, with lots of opportunities for travel and career progression.

We learned about the different skills involved in surveying, including maths, geography, business, construction studies and information technology. The speaker also spoke about how to become a chartered surveyor in Ireland.

Overall, the talk gave us a much better understanding of the surveying profession and of all the opportunities that exist.

### **Tim McDowell – Solicitor**

*By Theo Homan (5<sup>th</sup> Year)*

As a part of our Career Guidance course, the 5th years recently had the opportunity to meet and speak with Tim McDowell, a solicitor with Beauchamps. He came in to talk to us during one of our Tuesday Guidance classes.

He spoke to us about areas of law, life as a solicitor, and his path into the legal profession. This was a really interesting talk, containing practical information and advice on how to become a solicitor. He spoke about the law exams and gave us an insight into the skills required and the routine of a solicitor.

As somebody who is interested in pursuing a legal path in college, this was a helpful and interesting opportunity to speak to somebody with extensive experience and knowledge in and about the profession.



## **Apprenticeships**

*by Andrew Martynenko (5<sup>th</sup> Year)*

In April, we had a talk from Fiona Burke who is a senior training advisor at Loughlinstown Training Centre. Loughlinstown Training Centre run many different training courses for people who want to join the labour market and for people who want to upskill. One of the courses that it delivers is the training in electrical apprenticeship.

We learned from Fiona what an apprenticeship means: working under a mentor while you put into practise the skills that you are learning on your course. You are paid while you are learning and training.

There are a wide variety of apprenticeships available, 78 in total, with 30 upcoming in the future. These courses range from the traditional trade apprenticeships in plumbing, electrical and carpentry to engineering, hospitality and ICT. These courses range from level 6 to level 9 (master's level), on the national framework of qualifications.

For the new generation apprenticeships, such as the apprenticeship in Engineering, Lab Technician, IT and Finance, certain Leaving Cert points are required and particular grades in certain subjects are also needed.

Overall, career paths through apprenticeships are very promising and interesting as it provides practical learning and a chance to start earning money while still in-training.



## Sport and Activities

### *Sports Day at Blackrock Educate Together*

**Alannah Sibley (TY)**

Sports Day at our school was one of the most exciting days of the year. Everyone was full of energy and ready to have fun. The weather was great, and the whole school gathered outside for a day with games, races, and activities

There were lots of races during the day. Some students competed in sprint races while others joined relay races. Everyone tried their best, and classmates cheered loudly for each other. The races were very competitive but also really fun.

Another exciting event was musical chairs. The music played while everyone walked around the chairs, and when it stopped, people rushed to sit down as quickly as possible. It was funny watching everyone scramble for a spot and great fun overall.

We also played football games and took part in other activities throughout the day. Many students showed great teamwork and skill. Teachers and students stood around the pitch cheering for their teams.

The biggest event of the day was the teacher versus student football match. Everyone was excited to see who would win. The students tried very hard, but in the end the teachers won the match. Even though the students lost, everyone enjoyed the game and had lots of fun watching it.



Overall, Sports Day was an amazing experience. It brought the whole school together and gave everyone a chance to have fun, stay active, and make great memories.



The ETSS Olympics were held in the National Indoor Athletic Training Centre in Dublin. Our school had more than 40 athletes at this event. Amelia came first in the shot put and a number of other students reached the finals of their events. It was a great day and everyone enjoyed the event.



The East Leinsters took place at Santry on the 28<sup>th</sup> and the 30<sup>th</sup> of April. Our school had 25 participants at this event and Alex in TY and Matilda in 5<sup>th</sup> year got medals for the long jump and for the 100n metres. Everyone is very proud of them and delighted by their achievements.

Overall, these events are fun, and I am very happy that I got to attend them. Events like this really show you how many great athletic people there are in the world, and it is very eye opening to see the sheer number of people who willingly push themselves to the limit at these occasions.

## ETSS Olympics

### Athletics:

*By Karolina Sedlakova (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)*

This year there were two main Athletic Events that our school participated in: The Educate Together Olympics and the East Leinsters, both of which had a record-breaking number of participants this year.

### Athletics and Photography

*By Linda Samauska (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)*

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of February, four students from our school's photography club attended the Educate Together Olympics, which was held at Sports Ireland, Blanchardstown. Around 30 schools took part in the event.

Students from 1st, 2nd and 3rd year competed in eight different events. These included the 100m, 200m, 400m and 800m races, as well as long jump, high jump, shot put and relays. There were lots of great performances throughout the day, and it was great to



see so many students taking part and supporting each other.

One of the highlights for our school was Amelia winning a silver medal, which was a great achievement. Everyone showed great effort during the competitions.

Overall, the Educate Together Olympics was a fun and memorable event, and it was great to see so many schools coming together to compete and enjoy the day.

## Photography

*By Oscar Bell (3rd Year)*

Being at the ETSS Olympics as a photographer and also as a participant in the high jump was quite nice. I was able to both compete and photograph the day as it went by. I have been doing high jump for a while in the sports camp in the National Indoor Arena during the summer time and I enjoy doing it.



Attending the event as a photographer was great. I got to see all the sports and how competitive people are. I had been in a photography club since about 1st year and I always enjoyed it.

Taking photos of the people competing was quite a different experience for me because I normally take photos of scenery. Overall, my experience there was quite surreal competing alongside photographing and I would definitely do it again.

## Basketball

*By Peter Magee (3rd Year)*

Looking back on this year's basketball season, our basketball teams put in a lot of work and represented the school well. We played some tough games, good games and great games during our season. There was a clear improvement in all of the players over the course of the season. Overall, it was a solid year for the team and something the school can be proud of.



Although all of our teams were unfortunately eliminated in the group stages of their competitions, there were still a lot of positives to take from the season. Both the 3rd year team and the U18 team managed to qualify for their respective Shield competitions, where they continued to compete well before narrowly missing out.

Throughout the year our players showed commitment at training and in matches, and the teams continued to improve as the season went on. The effort and attitude shown by everyone involved reflected well on the school and helped make the season enjoyable and competitive from start to finish.

A thank you also goes to the coaches, teachers and players who made this year memorable. While the season may not have ended how we hoped, it was still a valuable and respectable year for our school basketball team.

## Swimming: Leinster Schools Gala

*By Harry Kelly (1st Year)*

On Sunday February 8<sup>th</sup>, Blackrock ETSS took part in the Leinster schools gala in the National Aquatic Centre. This year we had a total of 6 people on the swimming team: Taylor Jay Breen, Aran McCabe, Harry Kelly, Beau McCabe, Tim Kelly, and Ben Kelly.





During the day we accumulated points from people participating in races. Beau McCabe and Tim Kelly achieved around 75 points for their age group in their individual events.

Later there was a relay. The team was Harry, Tim, Aran, and Beau. We won the freestyle relay and came second in the Individual Medley Relay. This got us up to 180 points. When we finished, we found out that we won a trophy for the boys intermediate 15-16 age group.

### **Irish Open Commonwealth Swimming**

*By Beau McCabe (TY)*

The Irish Open Commonwealth qualifying competition was in Bangor from 8th-12th April.



I was with my coach and my team. My team's name is Trojan Swimming Club.

At this competitive level, diet is fundamental to keep you going through the competition. Carbs are the best source of energy for an event like this.

The morning is spent swimming and then you are put into a final for the evening swim. These events occurred:

- On Wednesday we all familiarised ourselves with the pool and the surroundings.
- On Thursday for the 50 metres, I made a final in my age group.
- Friday, I made another final in the 200 breaststroke in the evening.
- Saturday was the 100-metre breaststroke, and I made the final as well.
- On Sunday I made the 200-metre individual medley final also.

These competitions are international events with Americans and people from around the world. I would have raced against these people previously. We always have a good laugh, and we wish each other the best.

Overall, I got three gold medals and one silver. I came 1<sup>st</sup> in my age group under 18s in the 50 metre, 200 metre and the 100 metre breast stroke. I got silver in the 200 individual medley.

### **School Swim Team**

*By Ben Kelly (5<sup>th</sup> Year)*



Our school swimming team recently competed in the Leinster Senior Schools Competition and achieved fantastic results. All of the swimmers showed great determination and teamwork throughout the event, with everyone giving their best in each race. Tim and Beau had an outstanding competition and won several medals for the school, showing the results of their hard work and dedication.

The team also had great success overall and proudly won the trophy for earning the highest number of points at the competition. It was a brilliant achievement for the whole team, and we are very proud of everyone who represented the school so well.

### ***Girl's Football***

***By Abbie Waters (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)***

The girl's junior football team this year brought together both 2nd and 3rd year students, creating a really positive and inclusive environment. It was great to see so many people involved whether they had lots of experience or just starting out. Everyone showed great commitment at training and during games. There was plenty of encouragement and support between teammates.

Overall, it was a very enjoyable experience that helped build teamwork, confidence and friendships. Thanks to Gary and Claire.

### ***Boy's Football***

***By Kareem Elsadig (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)***

The Blackrock ETSS U17 football team had an unforgettable run this year making history by reaching the semi-finals for the first time ever. We didn't have the best start in the group stages, and it took us a while to get going, but as the games went on, the team started to improve and build confidence. By the knockout stages, everyone was fighting for each other and playing some great football.

The quarter-final was definitely the biggest game of the season. After a crazy match which ended 3-3 after extra time, we went into penalties. I scored twice during the game, while Sean also scored from a header after a corner delivery from me. In the penalty shootout, Charlie stepped up with the winning save to send us through to the semi-finals making us win 4-3 on penalties.

Getting to the semi-finals was a huge achievement for the school and the furthest Blackrock ETSS has ever reached.

The semi-final was another close game and could've gone either way. Unfortunately, we lost 4-2 after the other team managed to get a late goal to seal the win, but the team can still be proud of everything we achieved this season.





## Talent Show

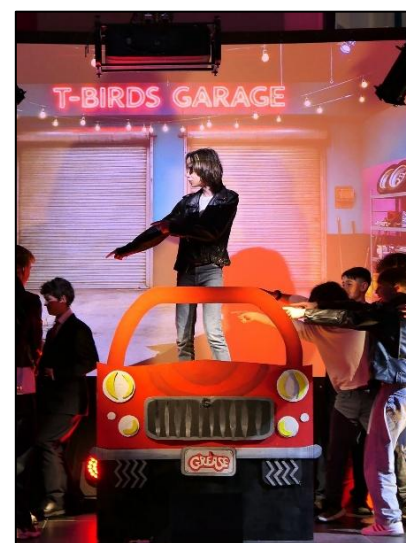


***By Arohi Gajare and Mika Cozma (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)***

This year, our school's fourth ever Talent Show took place. It was so fun! There was a total of 14 acts, including our 2<sup>nd</sup> year artistic performance's mini-musical— Grease! There were many different types of acts like singers, dancers, and super instrumentalists. All these students who took part in the talent show, whether as acts, presenters, or helping backstage put so much time and effort into their jobs to make the whole show come together.

We also want to say a special thank you to Niamh—the woman in charge of this whole show. She put so much of her free time into holding rehearsals, writing scripts, and making sure the whole night went perfectly.

Siana, Mika and I performed the song 'For Good' from Wicked. Siana spent a lot of time learning and perfecting the piano part, and we learnt off our parts as Elphaba and Glinda. We had such a good time being up on that stage. We were also a part of our class's mini-musical, Grease. Our whole year spent a lot of time pre-recording vocals and perfecting dances. We all had the best time working on it and we are so thankful for all the help we got from Niamh and Nicole. We can't wait for next year's Talent Show!!



Back Page Collage Created by Niamh Shortt (Music Teacher)



