

CGS NEWS

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2024 Families First School of the Year for the Northern Region



On Thursday evening, pupils from throughout the school joined together to lead a congregation that filled St Nicholas' Parish Church in our Annual Festival of Nine Lessons with Carols. The Junior Girls' Choir, Men's Voices, Shepherd Singers, Voces and the Senior Choir all contributed to the praise offered and readings were brought to us by members across our school community. *Solos were performed by Mateo Moore, Evie Dorrian, Caleb Hazley, Jude Kingston, Ellie-Rose McDowell and Olivia Shields and the music before the service was performed the string quartet. Well done, everyone!*



CGS Carol Service 2025

CARRICKFERGUS GRAMMAR SCHOOL
2024 Families First School of the Year for the Northern Region

OPEN EVENING

Carrickfergus Grammar school is a thriving school community with a warm, positive atmosphere which values the academic promise of each individual child who joins us.

Our Open Evening this year will be held on Thursday 15th January 2026, 6.30pm - 9.00pm.

Principal's talks will take place at 6.30pm and 8.30pm.

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Congratulations to Year 14 student Marc Campbell, who achieved a gold award in this year's Senior Maths Kangaroo. Last year Marc was the first pupil in CGS history to achieve a gold in the UK Mathematics challenge. He repeated that feat again this year and then went on to achieve a gold in the follow up round placing him in the top 1% of the thousands of pupils in the UK taking part. *Well done, Marc!*

Year 8 Rugby Trip

After their matches with Belfast HS and Ballyclare High School, our Year 8s made the trip to the Affidee Stadium to watch Ulster comprehensively defeat French side Racing 92 by 61-7.

For many of the boys, this was their first trip to the home of Ulster Rugby and they were treated to a try-fest with the home team running in nine tries! Huge thanks to @__daltz for meeting up with the boys after the game for photographs and autographs with many of the Ulster players.

Matty is a member of the coaching team at Carrickfergus RFC and we wish him a speedy recovery from his recent injury that forced him out of the match day squad.



Psychology Club underway

Our Year 12 Psychology Club, led by Mrs. Craig, offers students an exciting opportunity to explore the science of mind and behaviour beyond the classroom. Through thought-provoking discussions, interactive activities, and real-world applications, the club helps students develop critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of psychological concepts. Join us every Tuesday lunchtime and be part of a community of curious thinkers! *Whether you're passionate about psychology or simply want to learn more, this is your chance to broaden your knowledge and learn more about the way our mind works.*

**CONNECT,
ENGAGE, GROW**

Your alumni community awaits!



#proud

Are you a former CGS pupil? Join the CGS Alumni Portal Today and Stay Connected!

Scan the QR code to get to the site:



alumni.carrickfergusgrammar.com

Developing a Whole-School Reading Culture

The Tutor Reading Programme
Carrickfergus Grammar School

Emma Wills
English and History Teacher
Literacy Co-ordinator

Literacy Work latest

Congratulations to our very own literacy co-ordinator Mrs Wills from the English Department, who was invited by the Department of Education to close a significant regional literacy symposium yesterday with over 500 attendees. In recent years Carrickfergus Grammar has introduced a unique and highly successful 'tutor reading programme' as part of its knowledge-rich curriculum, based on research and evidence which highlights some significant improvements in reading ages as a result. Our pupils in Years 8-10 read ambitious literary works in registration each week, including *Animal Farm* in Year 8, *The Hobbit* in Year 9 and *Lord of the Flies* in Year 10. Pupils are read to by senior pupils in Sixth Form and / or Form Teachers, and it is proving to be an enjoyable experience.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the school's English Language results at GCSE are currently 16% above Grammar School averages at A*-B. *Well done, Mrs Wills!*

CGS ALUMNI ROLE MODELS



**JAMES
CARSON**

CGS 2008 - 2016

WHERE IS HE NOW?

Barrister at Law, The Bar of Northern Ireland.

PhD Candidate in Disability Law and Policy at the University of Galway.

TIME AT CGS:

FAVOURITE SUBJECT

Government & Politics



MEMORIES

Making many lifelong friends and playing plenty of rugby along the way.

CAREER PATHWAY:

SIXTH FORM CHOICES

History, Government & Politics, Religious Studies, Design & Technology

HIGHER EDUCATION

I read Law with Politics at Queen's University Belfast between 2016-19, before completing my Masters in mental health law in 2020. I am currently studying for my PhD in Disability Law and Policy at the University of Galway.

DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BARRISTER

I love that no two weeks are ever the same through my work as a Barrister. My favourite part about my role is being on my feet in Court, questioning witnesses and making arguments to Judges, where I have to think on my feet and make my client's case. But I also have the opportunity to engage in strategic litigation, where I get to challenge Government policies that impact vulnerable individuals.

PROUDEST CAREER ACHIEVEMENT

Being the first in my family to graduate from University and pursue a career as a Barrister. I am equally proud that I have been internationally recognised for my legal research, as I have been awarded the prestigious Fulbright Memorial and Hardiman Research Scholarships to support my research into Mental Health and Mental Capacity laws in Northern Ireland.

WORDS OF WISDOM

"A ship in harbor is safe, but that's not what ships are built for"

John A. Shedd

Think a career in Law could be for you? Find out more about it here:

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/browse-sector/law>

Our 1XI senior girls kicked the weekend off in style with a superb 3-0 win away to Bloomfield Collegiate at Civil Service. A fast start saw Faith, Scarlett and Olivia produce three brilliant goals in the opening quarter. Although more chances skimmed just wide, the girls stayed dominant from start to finish. Another step forward for the 2XI squad, as they controlled the first half with confident attacking play, including some outstanding circle runs from Kara, while captain Emily was rock solid at the back. Despite a strong performance, Bloomfield took the result. but plenty of positives to take! The 3XI and 4XI girls showed brilliant commitment once again, working hard and improving their skills every time they step on the pitch. Proud of these squads for representing their school with spirit. Next up, a challenging Cup fixture against Rafoe for our U14XI, with the girls slow to settle in difficult weather. A stronger second half showed what they're capable of — just unlucky not to find the net. The U13A squad is such a dedicated and hard-working group! They put on a brilliant display against an 'A' team, sticking to their passing game and showing real improvement. The scoreline didn't reflect the performance — they did the school proud. A fantastic win for the U13B team! Their training focus is paying off, with lovely passages of play and a smart finish from Elsa to secure the victory.



CGS Hockey Latest





Experts visit CGS

This week Carrickfergus Grammar School welcomed international education experts from a range of countries who have been instrumental in educational reform and the raising of standards. The visitors came to CGS to learn more about the sector-leading curriculum reforms at the school in recent years which have led to very significant educational outcomes for our pupils. Attendees included: Baroness Amanda Spielman: former Chief Inspector of Schools in England. Sir Nick Gibb: Minister for Schools under four Prime Ministers. Jennifer Buckingham: Executive Director of the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation in New South Wales, Australia. Machteld Verbruggen: Academic from Antwerp. Hardip Begol: former Director for Assessment, Curriculum, Qualifications and Accountability at the Department of Education. Visitors got to meet with key staff, see lessons and talk with pupils. *Speaking of the visit, Principal Mr Maxwell commented: "Today Carrickfergus Grammar was privileged to welcome some of the world's leading educationalists. They were keen to learn about our journey as a school over the past six years, and what curricular strategies had been put in place to bring about such strong examination results. "As always, our pupils and staff did the school very proud."*



Infrastructure update

More positive change as - in recent months - construction began on a new, state-of-the-art, Home Economics building at the school. The facility will mean that our pupils have access to the most modern, well-equipped resources for practical Home Economics lessons in 2026 and beyond.

Mock Exam 2026 Information

Our January 2026 Senior School Mock exam timetables are now online.
Find them at: <https://www.carrickfergusgrammar.com/exam-timetables>

Year 12 Mock Exam Timetable January 2026

Exams are between Monday 5th and Wednesday 14th January.

Normal classes restart on Thursday 15th January (Week 1 timetable).

Ensure you are seated in the Assembly Hall for 8.45am, 11.05am or 1.15pm as required.

Afternoon exams may finish before 3.25pm so you are permitted to go home then or study in silence.

All written exams take place in the Assembly Hall. For Art and Music practical exams you will be instructed by your individual teacher.

PLAN TO BE IN SCHOOL AT LEAST 15 MINUTES BEFORE THE START OF ANY EXAM

IF YOU ARE IN SCHOOL TO STUDY YOU WILL BE SUPERVISED IN THE EXAM ROOM IN SILENCE WHILST OTHERS ARE SITTING EXAMS

	Mon 5th	Tues 6th	Wed 7th	Thur 8th	Fri 9th	Mon 12th	Tues 13th	Wed 14th
Session 1 starts at 8.45am to 10.45am	RS (1hr 30m)	Spanish Writing (1hr)	History (1hr 15m)	Physics (Unit 2) (1hr 30m)	French writing (1 hr 15 min)	Maths M7 or M8 (1 hr 30m)	Chemistry (1 hr 30m)	Digital Technology (1hr 30m)
Break 10.45am until 11.05am	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
Session 2 11.05am until 12.30pm	Child Development (1 hr 15 m)	Spanish Reading (1 hr)	English Literature 1 (1hr)	Geography 1 (1hr)	French Reading (1 hr)	Geography 2 (48m)	Physics (Unit 3B) (45m)	English Literature 2 (1hr)
Lunch	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
Session 3 starts at 1.15 until end of exam of 3.25pm	Technology (2 hrs)	Further Maths (2hrs)	Business Studies (1 hr 30m)	Food and Nutrition (2 hrs) or Music (1 hr 30m)	Art (2 hrs)	PE (2 hrs)	Drama (1hr 30m)	Biology (1 hr 30m)

You must be in school before the start of your first exam and remain in school until the end of your last exam.

Eg 1 On Thursday 8th, if you study Physics and Food and Nutrition, but not Geography, you must stay and revise quietly in the Assembly Hall during session 2.

Eg 2 On Tuesday 13th, if you study Drama, but not Chemistry or Physics, you do not need to come to school until 1pm.

Please speak to Mr Marshall if there are any problems with the examination timetable.

	English 1 (1hr 30m)						
Lunch							
	Physics Unit 2 (1hr 15m)	Chemistry 1 (1 hr)	Maths 1 (1 hr 30m)	History 1 (45m)	Maths 2 (45m)	Physics Units 1 & 3 (1hr 45m)	Chemistry 2 (1hr)
Session 2 starts at 1.15 to 3.25pm MAX 2HRS	PE (1 hr)	English 1 (1 hr 30m)	Further Maths 1 (1 hr 15m)				

Our Year 12 GCSE Food and Nutrition pupils enjoyed a recent cookery demonstrations from the Livestock and Meat Commission. Arlene taught them about the nutritional benefits of eating red meat, labelling of food products, the importance of looking for the Farm Quality Assurance logo and how to style and present dishes. She then demonstrated how to make crispy chilli beef noodles and lamb chilli con carne. *Each pupil had the opportunity to taste the delicious dishes and were given a recipe book so that they could try out some more of the dishes at home!*



Food & Nutrition News



Dates for your diary

- Monday 15th December 2025** – Made for More week, in school.
- Friday 19th December 2025** – School finishes at 12pm.
- Monday 5th January 2026** – Term 2 begins. Year 12-14 Mock exams