

SCHOOLS FOCUS

Future looks very bright for Ballymakenny past pupils

By ALISON COMYN

Ballymakenny College welcomed back students from the Leaving Cert class of 2022 last week and staff listened with pride at their future plans.

Delighted to be returning, students expressed relief at having received their much anticipated results and CAO offers. Students were appreciative of their time spent in Ballymakenny College and were warmly welcomed back to share their experiences.

The Leaving Certificate process was not without its challenges again this year, as students navigated difficulties left behind by the pandemic and faced another year of adjustments. However, it was clear from students that the Leaving Certificate of 2022 was an overwhelming positive experience, despite the challenges faced.

Ballymakenny College is proud of each student's achievements and recognise the confidence and maturity of its students in pursuing paths

after school which are suited to their particular strengths and interests.

Christopher McAleer is heading to Dublin City University to study Actuarial and Financial Mathematics. His chosen course was the result of pursuing a subject at which he was best.

'I was looking at mainly Math courses because it's always been my best subject in school. I also wanted to go to DCU as it's close'. Speaking about his time in Ballymakenny College Christopher said, 'It was fun', describing the school as experimental and his classroom experiences as engaging. Christopher offered advice to any student seeking to achieve over 600 points 'I think just engage in class and speaking languages as well helps, Irish particularly, it improves so much. It's also general practice, repeated practice'.

Christopher achieved the highest results in his year.

Sophie Murray is happy to be going to Dundalk Institute of Technology to study Midwifery in September. She described

her experience of the Leaving Cert as an unusual one but very positive.

'It was good, it was different than what I expected because I didn't sit my Junior Cert, so it was exhausting, but it was good.'

Whilst recognising it was a challenging experience, she acknowledged that it was worthwhile to sit the exams. Sophie reflected on her time in Ballymakenny overall. She highlighted 'I've learned that getting involved in everything helps your experience so much like being part of the student council and I was a STEM prefect, everything I was involved in it really helped because I got to know so many people.'

Each Leaving Cert group encounters the undeniable pressure and demands to succeed. Yet, a measured approach was taken by students this year. Abbie Shevlin is going to DCU to study primary school teaching.

'It was hard at times, but it was fun, like going to the library to study, all the girls went down to the library after school every



Deputy Principal Mike Lyons, Deputy Principal Eddie Burke, Dorota Rusin, Abbie Shevlin, Christopher McAleer,

day and it was actually great craic.'

Understanding the need for time away from studying is vital to success. When asked if she would do anything differently Abbie responded 'I probably would have managed more time for myself, I think I forgot about that in the first couple of months of sixth year and anytime I had free time I used it for studying and by the time I got to the mocks I was a bit burnt out, so definitely plan your time wisely and make sure that you save time for yourself!'

Cian Branigan is heading to Maynooth to study an arts degree.

'I'm not 100% sure what I want to do but I think the arts degree has enough choice, you

can go into so many different career paths with that.' Through hard work Cian has achieved results which will open many doors. He is confident in pursuing a path which creates a broad range of opportunities. Cian stated that friends' recommendations were the reason behind choosing Maynooth and echoed Abbie's sentiments overall. 'I learned that it's OK to calm, it's OK to not be stressed all the time, I mean education can be fun.'

James Lambe is also moving towards his desired second level choice. James will be attending DKIT to study Health and Physical Activity with the goal of becoming a strength coach or physiotherapist. He had a great sense of pride in

achieving the goal he had been working towards and hopes a sports scholarship in DKIT will be the perfect final touch. A scholarship would entitle him to free gym access at the campus along with additional aid with his sports by having access to strength and conditioning coaches. Financially the college would also subsidise some of the fees.

Dearbhla Deffley is travelling further afield to National University of Ireland Galway to study General Science. She achieved a fantastic Leaving Cert and should be proud of her academic attainment.

'Despite the initial stress due to the uncertainty around the Leaving Cert I think our year got the best outcome possible

Two Greenhills students bound for Trinity after top 625 marks

By ALISON COMYN

There were celebrations recently when two students of Our Lady's College Greenhills received the top marks possible in the Leaving Cert; that of 625 points.

And the celebrations are continuing as Peidi Li (19) and Abo Obhakhan (17) - who both got 6H1s and a H2 - have accepted places on their first choices of course.

'I am so delighted to have gotten my first choice of Biomedical Science in Trinity, and after the first two years, I am specialising in Neuroscience,' explains Abo, who lives on the Termonfeckin Road with her proud parents and family. 'It's a four year course, and I'm hoping to do a Masters in Neuroscience after my course, and I want to carry out research in neurodegenerative diseases and help find cures for conditions like Alzheimers and Dementia.

'I worked so hard throughout the year, and I'm going to stay at home for the moment, but I hope to live in France in my third year and travel then.'

Peidi is no stranger to success either, as she took third place award in the Chemical, Physical & Mathematical Senior Individual section of the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition (BTYSTE) last year for her project 'A Mathematical investigation of regular and semiregular tessellating patterns'.

'I will be studying a double major of Maths and German at Trinity College, and am very happy with getting such good results and my first choice,' said Peidi. 'I did 9 subjects for the Leaving Certificate so it was a lot of hard work but I am looking forward to starting my studies.'

Peidi's dream is to carry out research in the field of Pure Maths.



Greenhills' student Peidi Li achieved the maximum 625 points with six H1s and one H2 on her leaving cert results following her BT Young Scientist achievement last year.



Top Greenhills student Abo Obhakhan got her dream course in Trinity College Dublin.