



Life in Junior School

Richmond Lodge

Pupils who come to **Victoria College Belfast** are in a unique situation as they begin their grammar school education on the **Richmond Campus**, which accommodates only the pupils in **Years 8 and 9**.



A genuine feeling of **community spirit** is nurtured as **pupils and staff** work closely together in an atmosphere of **mutual respect**. Welcoming, tolerant and courteous behaviour is **encouraged** and **valued** through a comprehensive Citizenship programme.



Activities

Early in the school year **all Year 8** pupils participate in a day visit to **Cultra** where they are **involved** in various activities to **encourage friendships** to develop across the year group.



An **extensive range** of activities is offered to pupils during the school day as well as after school, ranging from drama and choir, to sports and computer clubs. **All pupils** are **encouraged to participate** fully in the life of the school as Junior school is where new and lasting **relationships** develop.

Activities



The **festival** period is a very special time when pupils and staff come **together** once a fortnight to listen to invited speakers from a variety of avenues of life such as Help the Aged, the NSPCC and Childline.

The **speakers** provide real links with a range of charities and the talks serve to extend the themes of the **Lifeskills programme**.

Pupils also **participate** in a range of **drama activities** and **cultural** events. Sixth Form pupils are Prefects on the Junior Campus, promoting **positive** and **supportive relationships** between the girls as the Prefects carry out their supervisory duties. Pupils are encouraged to participate in **fund raising** events for **charities** such as Childline, the Shoebox Appeal, Christmas Hampers and Action Cancer.

Celebration



The Junior School Council provides a **forum** for class councillors to contribute to **decision-making** on a range of issues affecting the Junior pupils. Opportunities are provided for girls to undertake important **responsibilities** such as librarians, green officers, team captains as well as reading in Assembly. These roles help develop **self confidence** and the ability to work with others.

At the end of the academic year the Junior School '**Celebration of Success**' is an occasion for pupils, staff and parents to **acknowledge** not only academic achievements, but also pupils' **contributions** to all aspects of school life.



House System

In Victoria College the girls are **allocated** to one of **SIX** houses in year 8, these are;

- Crescent (Green)
- Marlborough (Red)
- Richmond (White)
- Pakenham (Purple)
- Howard (Blue)
- Wellington (Yellow)

Each girl will wear a badge of the designated **COLOUR** to indicate which house she is **affiliated** to.

The girls then **participate** in a wide range of **activities** throughout the year such as the Inter-House Swimming Gala, quizzes and Poetry competitions.

The **House** scores are added and House **credits** are awarded for each activity.



House System

All of this information is displayed on the **House Notice Boards**. The girls attend House Meetings where the House **Captains** inform them of forthcoming events and activities.

Aims

Through the **House System** the school seeks to:

- provide **rewards** for pupils for their effort and achievement.
- encourage pupils to **contribute** to activities.
- give pupils opportunities to **take responsibility** for organising House Activities.
- encourage **loyalty** and develop team spirit.
- provide opportunities for pupils to display and develop their **talents**.
- give pupils the **opportunity** to mix with and learn from pupils of different ages.



Art and Design



Art and Design is no longer just drawing and painting, but it is **fun!** It is all about looking, gathering, collecting, experimenting, discussing, thinking and doing. It is about looking at the work of **other artists**, finding out how other designers have **solved problems**, visiting **museums and galleries** and meeting real artists and designers.

These are the kind of things you might be doing in Art and Design classes:

- making **batik cushions** with patterns from nature.
- taking photographs of your friend making **funny faces** and manipulating it through ICT.
- making **clay soap dishes** in the shape of a turtle or duck.
- building a fairy tale castle, as a theatre design, using different materials.
- screen **printing a pattern** on a tie suitable for a musician or gardener.
- **painting** a self-portrait all wrapped up in winter hat and scarf.
- designing a **pattern** on the computer which would be suitable for seasonal cards.
- designing, making and modelling **costumes and jewellery** on the catwalk.

Careers

In Years 8 and 9 pupils study a programme called "Education for Employability"

You will **learn** about:

- working in the local and global **economy** – during your working life you may stay in Northern Ireland or you may choose to work in Europe or further afield.
- career **management** – you need to know how to make the most of opportunities available to you and how to make **important decisions** such as choosing subjects.
- enterprise and entrepreneurship – having **ideas** and making things happen in a classroom, a club or at home. In a business setting it is called **entrepreneurship**.
- skills and qualities for work – in order to be **employable** in the future you need to develop certain skills and abilities to do a job well, such as **decision making** skills and the ability to work as part of a team.



Drama

What will I **learn**?

All Year 8 students study drama through a wide range of **activities** e.g. mime, improvisation, movement/dance drama. The stimulus for those **activities** ranges from poetry, prose, script and music.

What are the **benefits** of studying drama?

Drama:

- helps you **develop** an appreciation of drama as an art form and realise its place in our society.
- **develops** your ability to work as part of a **team**.
- gives you the **opportunity** to mix and make friends.
- gives you the opportunity to understand different points of view, express your own opinions, listen purposefully and develop important language skills.
- develops your **sense of commitment** and your ability to constructively appreciate and appraise your own and other students' work
- **encourages** planning and research.

Drama develops your sensitivity, creativity, communication skills and it is a subject you will **enjoy!**



English



In your English classes in Years 8 and 9 you will have **opportunities** for Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening. You will build on the **skills** you already have, as well as **developing** lots of new ones.

You will be able to **read** a wide variety of texts, including **award-winning** modern fiction, selections from popular pre 20th century stories, poetry and play scripts. In class, the world of the media is explored through newspapers, web pages and the moving image. You can develop your reading and research skills through library classes.

Whether you are an **aspiring** poet, the next J K Rowling or a budding journalist, you will have the chance to **explore a range** of forms and styles of **writing**, including personal and creative writing, functional writing and media based material. You can draft and edit your writing using ICT facilities and **engage** with wider **audiences** through competitions and the school magazine.

Class discussion, drama based activities and **debating** will give you the chance to **express** personal and informed opinions in an articulate and structured way. You will develop your **speaking and listening** skills and might even be selected for the school **debating team**.

Geography



Why is it **important** to study Geography?

Geography can help us to **understand our world**, and hopefully to make it a better place in which to live.

Do I get to **visit** the places I study?

Yes, we do fieldwork in the local area and you will have an exciting opportunity to go on a **European study in Year 10**.

What will I learn about?

- You will **learn** about the earth's natural **features** formed by volcanoes, earthquakes, rivers and the sea. You will study **weather** and **climate** and their effects on us.
- You will study where and how people live, travel and work. We will also find out about **how people live** in different countries, and compare their quality of life.
- You will study **different environments** around us and on a global scale.
- You will find out about human impact on the environment, and learn how you can help **protect and conserve** it for your future.

History

In your History classes in Junior School you will have the **opportunity** to:

- learn about **people** and how they **interact**; their motives and the emotions that can divide or help them to **work together** for a common cause.
- see that the **pursuit** of historical events and people is fun because it is a form of **time travel**.
- learn about countries, societies and **cultures**.
- realise that today's conflicts and alliances have their roots in the past.
- understand how **our world evolved** and develop our understanding of both the **past** and the **present**.

In class you will **engage** in a variety of activities including reading newspapers, making diary entries, posters, diagrams, speeches and **using ICT**.



Home Economics



Home Economics is an **interesting** and creative subject which will provide you with a range of skills and knowledge of topics related to **healthy eating**, home and family life and **independent** living.

In class you will be able to prepare and **COOK** different food items. You will **enjoy** working with other pupils and will be able to take home the finished dish for your family to sample. A booklet is provided so you can plan menus and **practice the recipes** in your free time.

Topics include:

- preparation and **cooking** of food.
- how to use time, energy and money **wisely**.
- **understand** what is in food and how your **body** uses food.
- choice of foods in relation to **healthy eating**.
- the needs of **family** members.
- consumer and ethical issues.



Information Communication Technology

ICT is becoming much more **important** in all aspects of **everyday life**. Throughout your time in Junior School ICT classes will enable you to become familiar with a **range** of computer software, including word processing, spreadsheets, databases, **multimedia** presentations and email.



The provision of computer suites on both Richmond and Cranmore Campuses with **internet access** and a wide range of **curriculum software** allows pupils to develop a wide range of ICT skills. Students also have access to our **Virtual Learning Environment** and a range of online resources which are designed to **encourage** independent work both in school and at home.

Latin



Why do we study Latin?

Latin is interesting and **enjoyable** for its own sake, but we study it because it

- **boosts** our English vocabulary.
- helps us to learn modern languages like French, Italian and Spanish which are **based** on Latin.
- helps us **think** logically.
- opens up the history of Europe.

What is Latin?

Latin is the language spoken by the ancient **Romans** who lived in Italy and created an **Empire** all over Europe about 2000 years ago.

Who studies Latin at Victoria College?

All year 8, 9 and 10 pupils have the opportunity to study Latin. You can study it **throughout the school** at every level. There is even a trip to Italy where you can still see the **Roman ruins!**

Mathematics

Why do I have to study Mathematics?

- Mathematics is **NECESSARY** in life – the mathematics you will learn has a **practical use** and will be with you for the rest of your life.
- At Victoria College we want every girl to know the relevance of mathematics in today's world.
- You will develop your **skills** in numeracy, mental maths and problem solving.



What will I study in Mathematics?

The general **topics** covered are; Number and Algebra, Shape, Space and Measures, Handling Data and **Applying** Mathematics.

How will I be assessed in Mathematics?

Assessments can take the form of classwork, homework, end of unit tests and school examinations.

Modern Languages



Which **languages** can I learn at Victoria College? You will be able to learn **two** languages. In Year 8 you will start with **French**. In Year 9 you will have the **opportunity** to learn German, Italian or Spanish as well.

Why is it important to learn a foreign language?

Not **everyone** speaks English! It is important to be able to speak at least **one other language**. You can learn a lot about other people and how they live when you **learn** their language.

Do I get to **visit** the country?

Yes. Victoria College has received the **International School Award** and we have links with schools in a number of **European** countries. There are **school trips** and exchanges to countries like France, Germany, Italy, Spain and even Russia, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

All Year 8 pupils have the opportunity to visit Paris and go to Disneyland.



Music

First and foremost - music is **fun!**

What music activities will I participate in?

You will have the opportunity to join the Junior **Choir**, Junior Orchestra, concert band and brass group. There are **also** smaller groups such as woodwind **ensembles** and string quartets.

What will I learn?

Music class is made up of listening, composing and performing.

You will learn about **different styles** of music, from early music to jazz, traditional music and world music – in addition to some music theory!

You will work both individually and in small groups at composition tasks and have access to keyboards.

Computers will be used to **reinforce class work**, in the form of music games, and you will be introduced to the music programme 'Sibelius'.

Those playing **orchestral** instruments are **encouraged** to bring them to class, to help in music making activities.



Physical Education

What sports and **activities** will I participate in?

You will **play** hockey and netball in the winter term and you will have **swimming** lessons in the Victoria College swimming pool.

In the spring term you will experience cross-country running, **dance** and gymnastics. In the summer term you will play tennis and rounders. You will have the opportunity to try track and field athletics.



Will I have a chance to join a club or play on a **school team**?

All pupils are **encouraged** to take part in extra-curricular sports activities. There are many clubs and everyone is welcome to attend.

The P E Department **organizes competitions** and special events. There is an annual **swimming gala** and a Sports Day. Many girls play on teams and are **involved** in inter-school matches.

Don't worry if you are inexperienced! All pupils will be taught basic skills and rules. Everyone will get the chance to **develop** and **improve** performance. **Participation** is really important and regular exercise will improve your fitness and health.

Religious Education

I did R.E. in Primary school; will it be the same?

Whilst many of the topics covered in Primary school will be **similar**, we will consider some of them in greater depth.

Do we study any of the Old Testament?

Yes, the key **leaders** of the Jewish nation will be considered such as Abraham and Moses. This is mainly studied in Year 8.

Do we study the life of **JESUS** Christ?

Yes, in Year 10 we concentrate mainly on Jesus' life and work and its **impact** on the world today. This **relates** to our study of the subject at GCSE level.

Do we only look at material from the Bible?

No, you will do a number of character studies on **influential** people down through the history of the Christian Church such as St Patrick, William Wilberforce, Corrie ten Boom and Martin Luther King.

Do we only **consider** the Christian faith?

No, there are opportunities to study the key ideas and **practices** within the Islamic and Jewish faiths in Years 8 and 9.



Science

Science is taught as an **integrated** course in years 8 and 9. In Year 10 the course is delivered as separate sciences taught by subject **specialist teachers**.

A **practical and experimental** approach is used in all lessons and independent **learning** is encouraged through presentations, project work and research.



ICT, application of number and communication skills are developed in **appropriate scientific contexts**.

Throughout, the emphasis is on **enjoyment** of Science and its **application** in everyday life.

Victoria College is a **specialist science school** and there are lots of opportunities to work with science experts.

Technology and Design



What will I do in Technology and Design?

You will be provided with **opportunities** to design and make products, solve design problems, enhance your freehand and computer graphics and **develop your understanding** of how things work.

There are three main projects each **year** in the Junior School, alongside smaller focused design based tasks.

Will I enjoy this subject?

Yes, there are lots of **enjoyable** activities and learning about technology is fun.

Why study Technology and Design?

We live in an **increasingly technological** age, therefore we aim to begin to instil the **knowledge and skills** needed to flourish within it.

Are there many opportunities to do things?

Yes, there are plenty of practical **activities**. Many pupils learn better about how things work through **doing** it.



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