

Causeway Academy

Newsletter - Issue 2

Since Issue one of the Newsletter, much activity has taken place on setting up the new 11-18 controlled integrated post primary school for the Causeway area.

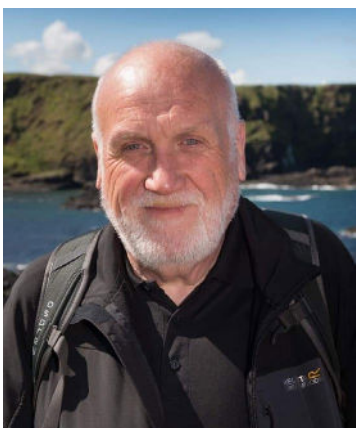
Name chosen for new school

A subcommittee of the Interim Board of Governors had been established to work towards the naming of the new school. This subcommittee engaged with students and staff to generate a list of potential names for the new school.

The Interim Board of Governors chose the name that best reflects the ethos of the new school. The name of the new school is Causeway Academy.

Message from the Chairperson of the Interim Board of Governors

My name is Jim McCartney and I am humbled and delighted to have been nominated as Chairperson of the Interim Board of Governors by my fellow governors. I am supported in the role of Chairperson by two Deputy Chairpersons, Rev Jim McCaughan and Michael Gaston. The Interim Board of Governors are representative of all three schools with a focus and vision for the new school. Their commitment and enthusiasm is endless and with all the members collective years of experience, their drive and determination will ensure a successful new school on 1 September 2026.



Principal Designate

The Interim Board of Governors is delighted to announce the appointment of Ms Ruth Harkness as the new Principal of Causeway Academy, commencing in October 2024.

Currently, Principal of Craigavon Senior High, Ms Harkness has a wealth of experience and notable achievements spanning across two decades. Prior to her current role, Ms Harkness spent 14 years in Neston High School, a large 11-18 co-educational secondary academy based in Cheshire, England.

Ms Harkness's commitment, dedication and exceptional leadership has resulted in positive change and success at Craigavon. During her time there, the school has achieved its highest student outcomes and seen a significant growth in student numbers, and she has led the transition from delivery on two campuses to one all while maintaining a student-centred approach.

At the heart of her leadership lies values that firmly place the student firmly at the centre. She is committed to creating a nurturing and innovative learning environment which meets the needs of all young people. Ms Harkness is committed to fostering an inclusive community where diversity is valued and celebrated.

Ms Harkness will seek to establish a shared vision and foster a collaborative approach among the Staff, Governors & wider community, she actively invites parents, members of the local community, local businesses, and organisations to get involved in shaping the schools' future. Her leadership style is characterised by empathy, transparency and a deep understanding of the challenges faced in education. Her ability to inspire both students and staff is unparalleled, and we are confident that she will continue to build the foundations for the school to thrive.

"I am honoured to lead this new school, bringing three schools in the Causeway area together to create a shared vision and collective ambition valued by all in our community. Our students deserve the best, and I am committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and academically enriching environment. Together, we will create a school where every student feels valued, challenged, and prepared for their exciting futures."



Ms Harkness takes up post in October 2024.



Over the past number of months we have:

- Worked towards securing a single site location for all pupils on 1 September 2026
- Created a collective vision for the new school.
- Taken forward the appointment process for the Principal Designate.
- Planned a communication campaign to raise awareness of our new school.
- Worked with the student council and staff on the name of the school.
- Appointed an Educational Associate who will support the Interim Board of Governors and work alongside the current Principals and new Principal Designate in planning for the new school.

A lot of preparation work has been ongoing with the Interim Board of Governors, working collectively with the Education Authority, supported by the Controlled Schools' Support Council and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education. This work will continue on the implementation of the new school. The Interim Board of Governors will keep you up-to-date at land mark stages.

Over the coming months we will:

Meet the Minister of Education: Representatives of the Interim Board of Governors and Education Authority are meeting with the Minister of Education, Paul Givan, next term. We will set out the vision for the new school of providing an outstanding curriculum offer and opportunities for young people, of all abilities to be educated together in a school which will afford them academic, vocational and technical pathways. We will highlight the uniqueness of our new school and seek, both financial and political support, in ensuring the success of our new school.

Ulster University support: Ulster University continues to work alongside the Interim Board of Governors and the Education Authority in planning for the new school.

Meet Local Political Representatives: The Governors are keeping local MLAs and Political Representatives up to date with progress.

Staff and Pupil Involvement

The Principals of Coleraine College, Dunluce School and North Coast Integrated College have been working with the Interim Board of Governors Ethos Group to plan:

- joint activities for pupils in Years 8 and 9 for the autumn term;
- joint ventures for pupils from a range of year groups to include the use of outdoor activity centres; and
- staff development - a date has been arranged at the end of August 2024 for all of the staff from the three schools to meet in Ulster University and work on a programme for staff and pupils with a focus on integration.

Engagement Commitment

We, the Interim Board of Governors, working with the Education Authority are committed to engagement with staff, pupils and parents/guardians. Over the coming months we will hold events to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the successful implementation of the new school.

Summer Holidays

On behalf of the Interim Board of Governors and the Education Authority I wish all our young people every success in their exams, and for all staff, pupils and parents/guardians a happy summer holiday. There will be further updates early in the new term.