

OUR LADY'S BOWER

**Information for
prospective
International students**



General Information

DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL:	Girl's 5 day boarding & standard day school
LOCATION:	Athlone which is a medium sized town right in the centre of Ireland.
SIZE:	715 (2015/16)
PRINCIPAL:	Mr. Noel Casey
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WEBSITE:	http://www.ourladybower.com/
AVERAGE CLASS SIZE:	24
ACCOMMODATION:	In the boarding house students live in small dorms that hold a maximum 5-6 students. As day students they live with a carefully chosen local family

School History

Our Lady's Bower is a Voluntary Secondary School situated at Retreat Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. It was established by the sisters of La Sainte Union des Sacre Coeurs in 1884 and is a sister school to L. S. U. in Banagher, Co. Offaly.

As a girls only school, Our Lady's Bower attracts students from across the midlands and beyond as well as from Europe and overseas, so enhancing the school's cosmopolitan hue. The congregation of La Sainte Union was founded in Douai in Northern France in 1826 by Fr. Jean-Baptiste Debrabant, to minister to the spiritual and educational needs of children in the aftermath of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars.

The sisters were always missionary minded, and by 1860, a network of small but highly efficient schools covered the Diocese of Cambrai and had spread across the frontier into Belgium. Some years later a congregation was established in Bath, England.

By 1863, La Sainte Union Sisters had opened a school for girls in Banagher, Co.Offaly.

In May 1884, a small group of Sisters took possession of their newly-built Convent on the esker on the eastern edge of Athlone.

Since the Bower's foundation over 125 years ago it has evolved into today's fully-equipped school, at the forefront of education in the Midlands.

Nowadays, the Sisters of La Sainte Union are involved in development in Tanzania, Cameroon, Haiti, Benin and Argentina. They are active in education, health and social work

Curriculum

Junior Cycle

Our Lady's Bower Subject Options Junior Cycle

Languages:

The modern languages students can learn for Junior Certificate are French and German. The student must choose one but can choose two.

The student will learn how to speak in the language about herself, her family and friends, hobbies, and her school. She will gain:

- the skills of listening to, reading and writing in the language
- the grammar of the language
- information about the countries where people speak the language, and their way of life.

What are the modern languages Junior Certificate exams like?

In each of the two modern languages the student will:

- listen to and answer questions on conversations, news items, etc. in the language
- read and answer questions on texts like advertisements, articles, recipes and celebrity profiles in the language
- write texts like notes, cards and postcards in the language.

Each exam can be taken at Higher or at Ordinary level. When the time comes to decide, the teacher will help you choose the level that suits the student best.

Subject Requirement for 3rd Level ?

It is a requirement for the NUI Colleges and for the Cadets. However, in DCU, UL and the Institutes of Technology you do not need a language if it is not an essential part of the course.

Home Economics:

Home Economics is a subject where the student will learn how to take care of themselves, others, the home and environment. As Home Economics is a very practical subject, a lot of activities will be carried out in school and at home.

What will I learn in Home Economics?

- the body – what is good to eat and how to keep healthy
- food – how it nourishes your body, how to choose it, store it, and how to prepare and cook it
- using money – how to spend it wisely, how to save it, and how you are protected as a consumer
- the home – about design in the home, about safety and hygiene
- design and craft work, child development, textiles – you will carry out a project in one of these areas.

Junior Cycle

Business

The Junior Certificate Business Studies course covers the everyday business of living, contributing to an understanding of the world of business and encouraging a positive attitude to enterprise and developing appropriate skills such as:

- good communication skills such as letter writing and report writing
- how to collect, organise and record financial information for yourself, your family, for clubs you may be a member of and for businesses you may be employed with in the future
- what your rights and responsibilities are as a consumer (someone who buys or uses goods and services – that's you!)
- how to calculate your wages when you start working (including the minimum wage)
- about why our membership of the European Union is so important to our economy.

Technical Graphics

In Technical Graphics the student learn how to represent 3-D objects on paper and on computer. She will also develop problem solving and creative thinking skills through the solution of graphical problems. For example:

- how to produce drawings using drawing equipment, freehand sketches and computers
- how to read and interpret drawings and diagrams
- how graphics relate to the design and manufacture of products.

Technical Graphics helps you to think in a more logical and creative way. The student will be able to communicate information using diagrams and sketches. She will have learned how to present information in a neat and organised fashion. This subject will be of use if the student would like to progress into career areas such as engineering, computer software engineering, architecture and architectural technician.

Art, Craft and Design

In Art, Craft, Design the student will have the opportunity to create images and objects using a variety of tools, materials and special equipment. For example:

- investigate by looking and recording your observations and experiences
- learn a variety of new crafts
- learn to work in 3-D e.g. construction, sculpture or clay work
- learn about the design process and how to use it to create new design objects and images
- learn to make links between your artwork and that of other artists, craft workers, architects and designers from different countries and historical periods.

Transition Year

The transition year programme aims to teach students how to reason, to be creative, to negotiate, and to put plans into action. New subjects are introduced for short modules that can stimulate self-directed learning and build confidence to achieve academic goals in senior cycle.

The core subjects are as follows:

- Religious Education
- English
- Maths
- Irish
- French
- German
- Physical Education
- Art, Craft and Design
- Health Education
- Computer studies
- Communications.

The subjects taught in module form (short courses) have included:

- Development and Geography Studies
- Home Economics
- Legal Studies
- Tourism Studies
- Video Studies
- Architectural Studies
- Science
- Archaeology "Heritage" Studies
- Enterprise
- Personal Development
- Drama
- Music
- Public Speaking and Media Studies
- Introduction to Psychology
- Careers
- Personal Development
- History through Film

Project time is built in to the timetable

Note: As this is a school-based programme, the subjects offered can vary from year to year.

Assessment and Certification

Each student receives a school and a Department of Education certificate upon finishing the year's programme.

School reports, including student self-assessments, are sent home twice a year.

Assessment varies according to the subject taught, but includes detailed records of attendance, participation and completion of specific assignments. This forms a record of the student's efforts in all classes.

Please note: Grades are not used in many of the subject reports in TY



The Senior Cycle

Core Subjects (Mathematics, Irish and English)

Mathematics is a requirement for a great number of jobs and courses. In terms of jobs, employers look for numeracy skills in all areas, including apprenticeships, nursing and the Guards.

Foreign Languages (German or French)

Subject Choices

Students must then choose from the range of subjects offered at Our Lady's Bower, consult senior cycle option link.

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (L.C.V.P.)

- Combination of established Leaving Certificate with two additional Link Modules:

Link Module 1: Preparation for the World of Work

Students research and investigate local employment opportunities, develop job seeking skills, e.g. cover letter, CV, interview techniques etc, gain practical experience of the world of work, interview and work shadow a person in a career that interests them.

Link Module 2: Enterprise Education

Students are involved in organising visits to local business and community enterprises, interview enterprising people, plan and undertake enterprising activities that build self – confidence, creativity, initiative and develop teamwork, communication and computer skills.

Subject Choice Requirements to do LCVP

- A European language (French or German)
- Irish (Exemptions may apply)
- 2 subjects from the Vocational Subject Groupings

Subject Groupings for LCVP at Our Lady's Bower

- Home Economics & Biology
- Home Economics & Art
- Accounting or Business or Economics (any two)
- Physics & Chemistry
- Biology & Chemistry
- Biology & Physics
- Home Economics & Business & Accounting or Economics
- Art & Business or Accounting or Economics
- Music & Business or Accounting or Economic

Additional Educational Needs

Our Lady's Bower welcomes girls with learning difficulties. The school, in accordance with our Admissions Policy, caters for girls with a general learning difficulty. It endeavours to provide for their needs by facilitating their participation in Second Level Education.

The resource classroom is equipped with ten computers with high speed internet access, a trolley with sixteen laptops and an overhead projector.

The school continually seeks to support this specially designed curriculum that incorporates literacy and numeracy skills and personal development. Many students aspire to complete a Junior Cert programme which best suits their ability. Students within the mainstream classes who have been diagnosed with a specific learning difficulty may receive extra tuition in some subject areas.

Co- Curricular Activities

Sport

Our Lady's Bower provides a safe, friendly and supportive environment for all girls to learn and develop their sporting skills, both as a team member and as individuals. Sports offered include:

- Hockey
- Rugby
- Gaelic
- Basketball
- Athletics
- Swimming
- Horse-riding

Music – Orchestra and Choir

Our Lady's Bower has a very strong tradition in music and choirs for over one hundred years. Music plays an integral role in the curriculum at both junior and senior level. The school has always had excellent academic results in music for both the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations.

Arts

Fun activities for students during arts week 2014 included:

- Juggling
- Gregorian Chant
- Drama
- Dance
- Zumba
- Art workshops
- Gymnastics
- Crafts
- Writing workshop
- Lámh signing
- Nutrition
- Media
- Cookery demonstrations

Debating

The Alpha deBeta society was set up in early October 2011 by Kayle Crosson. Our aim is to "Develop the free expression of ideas through debating so that knowledge can be gained and minds changed". The society also hosts forums on different topics concerning leaving certificate students.

Facilities available at Our Lady's Bower

- A canteen offering hot meals daily.
- A Science suite consisting of Physics, Chemistry and Biology laboratories, preparation area and demonstration room.
- Two Home Economics kitchens and a dress design room.
- Two large fully equipped Computer rooms.
- Modern Technical Graphics room, computerized for Solid Works.
- Resource room equipped with 10 student PCs and a trolley with 16 laptops.
- All classrooms equipped with computer, data projector and sound system.
- Smart Interactive Whiteboards.
- Two dedicated Art rooms one of which is equipped with a kiln.
- Music teaching room and music practice rooms.
- Lecture halls.
- Pastoral care facilities including an Oratory, Chaplain's office, Career Guidance office, Year Heads' offices, First aid room.
- Full size gymnasium with a dedicated fitness suite .
- Library with internet research facilities.
- Three mobile laptop stations, each containing 16 laptops for use in the classroom.
- 100mb broadband.
- Administration suite.
- Spacious social area for each year group.
- Three internal courtyards.