

Head teacher's Report for Governors – December 2022

Part 2 – Highlights from the Autumn Term

Blacon High School - More than a school

The ethos of our school is one of ambition, excellence and high expectation.

Vision - We want Blacon High School to be a safe and caring place at the heart of our community, where everyone is valued and supported to aspire, believe and achieve beyond their potential.

Core Belief - Our fundamental belief, that everyone can achieve well, lies at the heart of our educational philosophy, irrespective of background or starting point.

Values - Central to our ethos, are three key values; **respect, relationships and resilience**. Respect is a deeply held value which underpins everything we do, leading to high quality relationships that enable young people within our school community to develop the resilience and determination to achieve and excel.

Aim - We believe in the power of education to transform lives and will prepare every young person for success both now and in the future.

Mission - All at Blacon High School aim to inspire students to love and enjoy learning through a thinking curriculum, where they are encouraged to ask questions, to be inquisitive and creative through a range of high quality learning experiences, both within and beyond the classroom.



Part 2 – Highlights from the Autumn Term

Humanities

Latin Club – This year, a new afterschool Latin club on Fridays has been launched. A small group of Year 7 and 8 students have joined together to begin following a course which follows the exploits of a semi-fictional family from Pompeii. This is an accredited Cambridge course, which John Lacey has purchased for students to work through, with a view to sitting an examination in Key Stage 4. This course has been used by many other schools, particularly grammar and private schools, for many years and it is exciting to see our students really engaged. The focus each lesson is on reading and translating a piece of text that details the everyday lives of Caecilius and his family. Students create their own glossaries of keywords and discuss connections to words in the English language they recognise. We are really hopeful the popularity of this subject will grow in future years as pupils are already demonstrating an expanding repertoire of non-domain specific, higher tier words, which will have a great impact on their communication skills going forwards.

<https://www.clc.cambridgescp.com/>

Antarctica Project - The annual Antarctica poster competition winner this year is Olivia Sharp in 7 Grey. Our thanks goes to Ian Roberts in Geography for running this event over the last few years. Olivia will go forward to the finals, where the winning entry will be framed for display in the research station in Rothera, Antarctica. Students really engaged with this task and it is very hard to choose a winner, so our congratulations goes to Olivia.

<https://www.bas.ac.uk/media-post/antarctica-drawing-competition-launches/>



Religious Studies ASDAN – This year we go live with our first ASDAN course within the Humanities faculty. Students in Year 10 and 11, including those in curriculum plus, will complete modules towards as ASDAN qualification. Mrs Sandland Jones, our new RS teacher, has selected modules which will engage students, beginning with Peace and Conflict. Students will gain knowledge and understanding of the reasons countries decide to go to war, how people can promote peace, and when war could be justified. These are thought provoking enquiries and we anticipate students will respond well to the chance to discuss and debate more widely in Key Stage 4.

<https://www.asdan.org.uk/beliefs-and-values-short-course/>

Future projects

- Their Finest Hour. This is a project to create a new national digital archive of artefacts from World War II. To commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in June 2024, Oxford University are inviting community spaces across the UK to host a day of interviews and photographing items brought in by local people. Mrs Owens, Head of Humanities, attended a training session on November 14th designed to guide participants through the process and requirements of running an event. She will then invite local history organisations to support this and host it in school, as there are likely to be many Blacon residents who will have fascinating memories to share.

<https://lwf2.web.ox.ac.uk/home>

- Poulton archaeological dig. On 17th November Mrs Owens met Dr Kevin Cootes of Liverpool University who is one of the archaeologists who discovered a number of Iron Age roundhouses on a site just a few miles from Chester, in the hamlet of Poulton, near Pulford. This is a fascinating site with connections to pre-historic, Roman, Medieval, Early Modern and WWII eras. After his talk, a site visit was discussed for Mrs Owens and another History teacher at Bishops Bluecoat. This will support the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 and longer term provides an exciting opportunity for learning outside the curriculum.

<https://poultonresearchproject.co.uk/home/>

Modern Foreign Languages

The follow-up Developmental Review with Kath Harris, our School Improvement Partner, has confirmed that appropriate adaptations have been made to the Key Stage 3 MFL curriculum maps, which now highlight how grammar underpins progress within and across all units of work. Outcomes for all units of work require students to demonstrate their understanding and growing linguistic autonomy by writing and speaking independently on the respective topics using new and prior knowledge. Listening and reading skills are assessed termly and the four key skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), are routinely assessed during lessons. Current work is underway to include a phonics focus in each unit of work. This will ensure that the curriculum maps fully mirror the MFL pillars of progress (grammar, phonics and vocabulary), as identified by Ofsted.

As a further move towards developing student autonomy and thinking skills, we have introduced a timely and visual departmental system of live-marking using highlighters, alongside existing written

feedback routines. During focused, independent classroom tasks, accurate or exemplary work is highlighted green by the teacher. Orange identifies errors for further consideration and students may be verbally guided, dependent on individual needs and with consideration for appropriate levels of challenge. Staff are finding that the new system is inspiring meaningful and thought-provoking classroom conversations and it is proving very popular with students.

Fais-moi la description de toi-même.

Salut, je m'appelle Oscar, et j'ai ^{quatorze} 14 ans. J'ai les cheveux longs et bouclés. C'était court, jusqu'à récemment. C'est vraiment blonds mais un peu bruns. J'ai les yeux très bleus. Je suis plutôt grand, mais pas loin de la moyenne. J'adore beaucoup mes copains, les langues, et les jeux vidéo. Je suis un peu bavard, même agaçant parfois. Dans ma famille il y a cinq personnes: Mes parents, mes deux frères, et moi! Mon frère cadet, je crois qu'il est intelligent et marrant, mais sensible. Mon autre frère (il a 15 ans), à mon avis, est compréhensif et fidèle. Il est certainement un bon ami pour moi. Ma mère est patiente et très indépendante mais aussi têtue quelque fois. Elle est assez optimiste mais méchante. Mon père n'est pas très indépendant, mais bavarde et sert. Je m'entends bien avec mes frères et parfois mes parents. Je habite à ~~à~~ ^{dans le} Nord-est de l'Angleterre. C'est près de Liverpool et de Manchester. Le temps est souvent froid et ~~pluvieux~~ ^{il peut} mais ~~il peut~~ ^{il peut} faire chaud.

Grammar Rule
In Spanish, the adjective goes after the noun

1. I have a green Snake - Tengo una serpiente verde.
2. I have a Blue Fish - Tengo un pez azul
3. I have a black cat - Tengo un gato negro
I have a orange cat dog - Tengo un perro Naranja ✓
I have a Blanco white mouse - Tengo un ^{Raton} Blanco
I have a Green tortoise - Tengo una tortuga verde ✓ verde
I have a Brown Brown Fish - Tengo un ^{pez} ^{marron} ^{Ros} ^{largo} ^{caballo} ^{caballo}
I don't have a Brown and white Horse - No tengo caballo marron y Blanco
^{an}

Following a change in setting this year, the two X1 and x2 groups are proving very beneficial and will support us in our drive to increase GCSE uptake. Mixed ability groups are more challenging within languages and this is to be reviewed moving forwards.

Carly Thelwell is leading on Learning outside the classroom and MFL are excited to have the following opportunities in place for our students.

Residential visit to Spain

From 3rd to 6th July 2023, the MFL Department will accompany 40 students (Y9-11), to Salou, Spain. Staff participating are Carly Thelwell (Lead), Gill Hassall, Adrian Carr and Ed Colwell. School is providing top-up funding for two Pupil Premium students at a cost of £599.00 per student. The price includes:



- Return flights and transfers to Spain.
- Three nights, half board accommodation.
- One full day in Barcelona (itinerary tbc).
- One full day at PortAventura World (theme park).

Onatti Productions are a touring theatre company who perform inspiring foreign language plays for schools. We have arranged the following performances for all students (Y7-11) of each language and parents have been asked to contribute £2.50 to cover costs.

SPANISH PLAY

Title: **Mi Personalidad** For secondary level (teenagers)

Performance at: **Blacon High**

Address: **Melbourne Road, Blacon, Chester, CH1 5JH**

On Monday 5 June 2023

Play will **START AT: pm ***

Actors will arrive at:

Cost for *this* performance is £410.00 + VAT TOTAL **£492.00**

Actors names: **TBC**

Duration of play is approximately : **50 mins**

Pack up is: **30 mins**

FRENCH PLAY

Title: **La Maison Hantée** For secondary level (teenagers)

Performance at: **Blacon High**

Address: **Melbourne Road, Blacon, Chester, CH1 5JH**

On Wednesday 15 February 2023

Play will **START AT: am ***

Actors will arrive at:

Cost for *this* performance is £410.00 + VAT TOTAL **£492.00**

Actors names: **Clara Majman & Edouard Berchiche**

Duration of play is approximately : **50 mins**

Pack up is: **30 mins**



PE Department

The PE department is proud of the extensive extra-curricular clubs, enrichment and fixtures delivered throughout the autumn term. Due to the KS3/KS4 split lunch, the department offer after school clubs and there is a before school running club on a Tuesday and Wednesday. Since September, students in KS3 and KS4 have the opportunity to attend Netball, Badminton, Cricket, Futsal Football, Basketball and Dance clubs delivered by a range of staff from 3.10pm to 4.10pm. Alongside our clubs, PE deliver a range of sporting opportunities against schools within the District, County and Nationally.

Boys Football

Mr Forbes team has qualified for the last 32 of the ESFA National Small Schools Cup. They progressed to Round 3 of the ESFA Cup after beating Abbeygate College in Round 1 4-0 and Wrekin College in Round 2 7-0. We have an away game in Round 3 against Ludlow C of E School to look forward to before Christmas. In total, they have had 8 matches, 5 friendlies against Ellesmere Port College, Catholic High, Upton High, Queens Park and Bishops. Year 7 Boys finished 3rd in the Chester and District 5 a side tournament during the finals evening, a superb achievement. They squad did fall short of qualifying for the semi-finals in the year 7 A and B 7 a side competition

Year 8 Boys Football team beat Queens Park High School 9-0 in the Chester Cup Round 1 but lost 3-0 to Christleton High School in Round 1 of the Cheshire Cup. The team won 7-3 in Round 1 of the ESFA National Small Schools Cup but lost 4-1 to Mary Webb High School in Round 2 of the competition. Mr Bradford's team narrowly missed out on the semi-final by goal difference in the recent 7 aside competition.

Year 9 Boys Football team are Chester and District 7 a side champions, Mr Sabri is delighted with the resilience and team work shown during the competition. A superb team effort, winning every group stage game, semi-final and final (Heber 2-0) without conceding a goal all tournament. A fantastic achievement. Year 9 Boys Football team reached Round 2 of the ESFA National Cup beating Kings High School but lost against Abbeygate College in the next game. They lost to Neston High School in the ESFA 'B' team cup and have Cheshire cup against Wade Deacon and Chester Cup against Queens Park High School to play before Christmas.

Year 10 Boys Football team beat Everton College 9-1 in the ESFA National Cup but lost 7-3 to Rossall High School in Fleetwood in the next round. The team lost 3-2 to Pensby High in the Cheshire Cup and 3-0 to Christleton in the Chester Cup. They took part in the recent 7 a side tournament, making good progress as a team but missed out on the semi-finals.

Mr Bradford's team has qualified for the last 32 of the ESFA National Small Schools Cup. They progressed to Round 3 of the ESFA Cup after beating Ellesmere Port College in Round 1 2-1 and Kings High School in Round 2 2-1 We have an away game in Round 3 against De La Salle Academy in Liverpool to look forward to before Christmas. They won one games at the 8 aside tournament at Kings but missed out on the semi-finals.

Girls Football

The U16 Girls Football team lost the ESFA Cup and Cheshire Cup games 4-0 against Helsby and Neston High School. They were 4th place in a recent 7 aside tournament. Year 8/9 girls finished 4th at the 7 a side tournament.

The year 7/8 Girls Football team lost to Holy Family Catholic High School in ESFA Cup and lost 6-1 (Miley Tudor) in the Cheshire Cup. We lost 4-2 to Queens Park in a friendly but have Kings High School in Round 1 of the Chester Cup before Christmas. The year 7 girls beat Queens School 3-0 and 4-2 in friendly matches and came 4th in their group at a recent 7 a side competition with a 5 a side competition before Christmas.

Basketball

The year 10/11 Boys Basketball team have beaten Queens Park High School 55-19 (Lukasz Paradysz 16 points) but lost a close game to Upton 55-33 (Jake Graves 14 points) in excellent fixtures. We have to play Kings, Bishops and Catholic High before Christmas. The year 8/9 boys and year 7 team have games after Christmas. The year 8/9 girls' basketball team came 3rd in the Chester and district tournament, making progress every game they played.

Netball

The year 9/10 girls' team have performed well in the SSL round robin matches against Catholic, Queens Park, Bishops and Abbey gate schools. The year 7 team lost to Catholic in their first ever game but have since won in the SSL with improved performances. Year 7/8 and year 9/10 play against Catholic, Abbeygate and Queens Park and Bishops every 3 weeks in friendlies and mini tournaments coordinated by Mrs Carr to prepare for District tournaments after Christmas.

Celtic Football Club

Mr Bradford and Mr Cairns organised an enrichment trip for 9 Year 7 students with Miss McHale to travel to Glasgow to watch Celtic win 6-1 against Hibernian in an SPL match. Mr Bradford has made a link with the Kano foundation who fed our students burger and chips, tickets behind the goal to watch the game and we met 7 1st team players pitch side after the match. It was an excellent experience for our young students.

Cricket

Mr Cairns has signed Blacon High School up for Girls Cricket Coaching - Secondary Schools Funded from ECB/ Cheshire Cricket Board 2022/23. We have been allocated 40 hours and Jo Herbertson alongside PE staff has delivered 3 weeks of 'Cricket Fitness' to KS3 Girls. Up to Christmas, Jo is delivering a 1 hour Year 7 and 8 Girls Cricket club after school every Tuesday with the aim of having an U13 girls Blacon team to play an indoor Cricket tournament in 2023.

Rage Fitness Company

Mrs Carr has signed up Year 11 Girls for the Rage Fitness Wellbeing Youth Provision programme every Thursday period 5 from September to December during Year 11 y band core PE. We transport the students every Thursday to take part in practical workshops by the personal trainers and feedback has been highly positive from students involved.

Blacon Sports Village Sports

BEV Football, Tag Rugby and Basketball tournaments have all been a huge success at Blacon High School with all of our feeder primary schools participating. KS4 leaders have supported Mr Forbes with scoring and refereeing of the successful events with over 50 future sports stars competing in a

friendly environment. Some of our KS3 students have refereed Highfield and Dee Point football matches on our 3G.

For the 2nd year running, we have signed up to the Youth Sports Trust programme 'Active Mind' and identified 5 KS4 leaders to support 15 KS3 students who have struggled with mental health, engagement with PE since the pandemic. The course starts in December with professional skating athlete Jenna Downing to spend a day with our students delivering the programme.

Dance

Mrs Joynson has excellent numbers in Year 7 Dance club and is looking to carry out a school performance before and after Christmas. Mrs Joynson has started to teach AQA GCSE Examination Dance to Year 9 on a Monday and Tuesday after school. The students are really engaged with the new course.





Chester School Sport Partnership - Governor's Report November 2022

School Games Organisers Claire Smedley and Elizabeth Newstead are based at Blacon High School which is the host site of Chester School Sport Partnership and they organise events and initiatives which are part of the Youth Sport Trust School Games Programme, funded through Sport England.

Membership

We have had 37 schools (primary and special) join the Chester School Sport Partnership this year where we deliver programmes which are not part of the national remit.

Competitions

County wide this year, competitions this year have been split into three categories. This is to help to provide opportunities for all children to take part and enjoy sporting events.

1. Celebrate for children who are new to the sport and / or the least active.
2. Aspire for children who are not very competitive but like taking part in sport.
3. Inspire for children who are sporty and competitive.

Year 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 Touch Rugby Festival – Wednesday 12th and Thursday 13th October at Chester Rugby Club, involving 21 school teams and 193 participants.



Year 5 and 6 Quick Sticks Hockey Competition Thursday 20th October at Upton High School. Involving 12 schools and 71 participants.

Inspire category event.



Year 2-9 Boccia and New Age Curling Festival Monday 7th November. Involving 9 schools and 51 participants at Northgate Arena.

Celebrate category event.



Year 4, 5 and 6 Girls Basketball Competition – Thursday 10th November at Ellesmere Port Sports Village. Involving 11 schools and 85 participants. Aspire category event.



Year 2-9 SEN Festival- Tuesday 22nd November at Ellesmere Port Sports Village. This event involved 13 schools and 67 children. The children took part in table cricket, sitting volleyball, archery and new age curling.

Celebrate category.



Year 1 and Year 2 Multi Skills Festival – organised for the beginning of December, this event will look to involve over 1,000 children over the 2 days.

CPD Courses Delivered

Monday 3rd October - Teach Active Course (Teaching English and Maths through physical activity) at Hoole Tennis Club, staff from 6 schools attended.

Thursday 13th October - New PE Lead training at King George V Sports Hub, 13 schools attended.

Playground Leaders – this course has been delivered to Year 5/6 pupils over the term at individual schools. This term we have delivered to 26 schools, giving pupils the confidence to become sports leaders in their schools and deliver activities to their peers.

Performing Arts

Shakespeare Schools Festival 1st and 15th November 2022

Our Year 10 and Year 11 students performed at the Floral Pavilion on Tuesday 1st November and here at school on Tuesday 15th November. This was the second performance this year for our talented Year 11s who performed the tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*, with our Year 10s performing in their first ever public performance of the comedy *Much Ado about Nothing*. Our students were praised by theatre directors, technicians and backstage staff for their high standard of respect and professionalism throughout the Dress and Technical rehearsal and the evening's performance. Both ensembles performed again at school two weeks later to an audience of family, friends, staff and Governors. The work completed through workshops, rehearsals, performances and evaluations form 30% of the grade for the BTEC Tech Award in Performing Arts. Mrs Salisbury is grateful to the staff who gave up their time to accompany her to the theatre for this exciting opportunity, working from 8am through to 11pm to ensure that our students had a wonderfully rewarding experience.





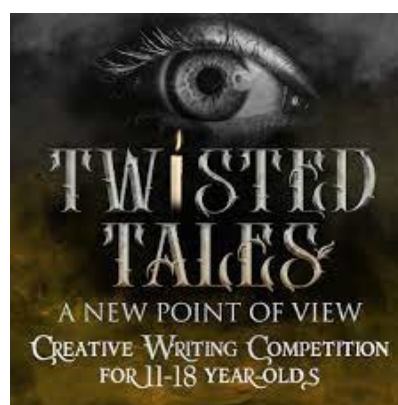
English Department

English Masterclasses – Blacon's Authors!

During the end of the Summer Term in July 2022, Blacon High School held Year 6 Masterclasses across English, Maths, Performing Arts and Technology. A selection of young students attended these classes after school once a week for four weeks.

The English Department's Masterclasses were focused on creative writing, resulting in the students being entered into a national competition with the possibility of being published and winning prizes. It was to our delight to receive notification this week that seven of these students, now in Year 7 at Blacon High School, have had their stories selected to be published, making them authors at a very young age. The following students, as pictured below are: Avamay Johnson, Caitlin Aitken, Arthur Eames, Kayden Hunt, Rae-Kelly McCarthy, Courtney Minshull and Olivia Sharp.

We are incredibly proud of this achievement and will be looking forward to adding a copy of the anthology to our library shelves.

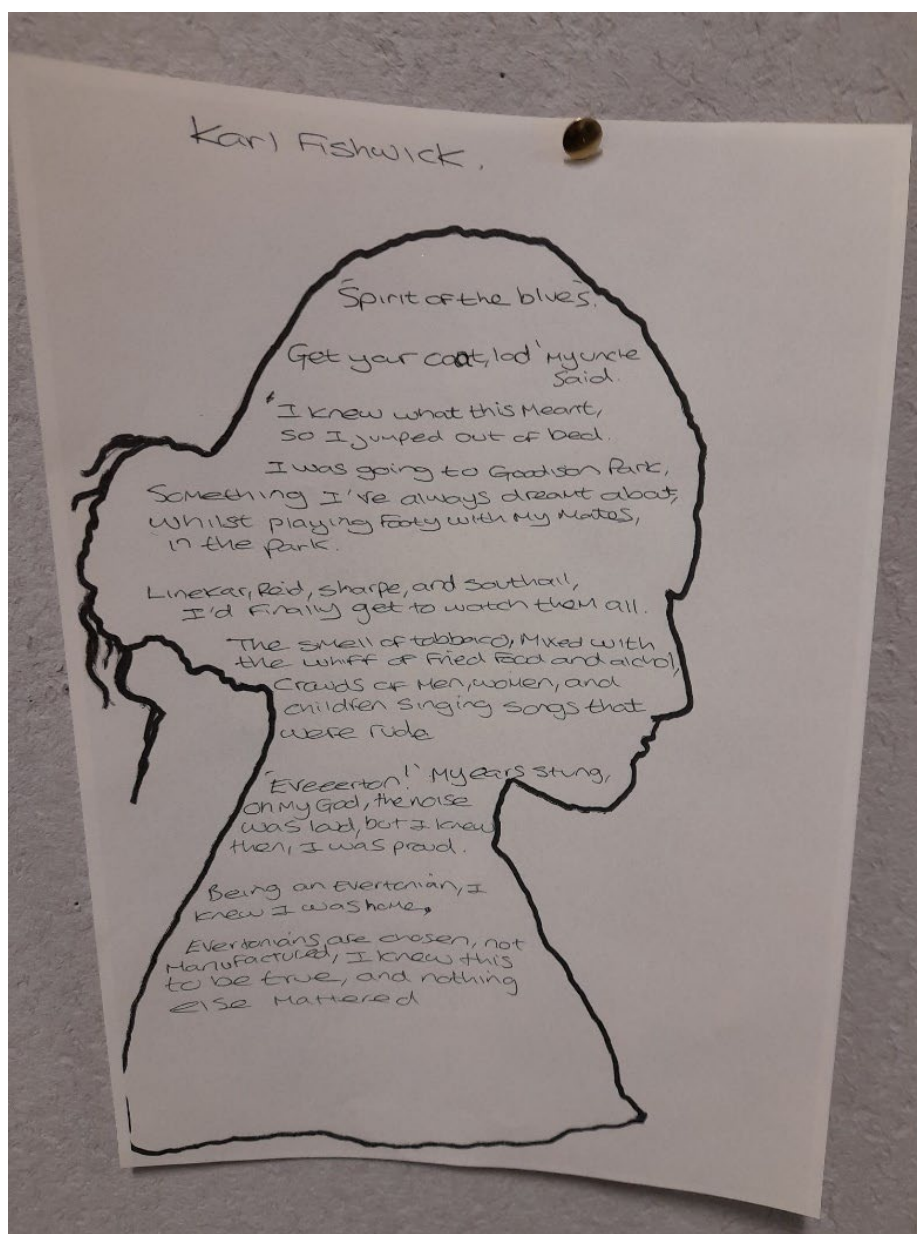


National Poetry Day: 6th October

The English Department celebrated National Poetry Day in October where students used their 19th Century texts as inspiration. We had poems about Mowgli from The Jungle Book in Year 7, Sherlock Holmes in Year 8 and Jane Eyre/Childhood in Year 9. Our KS4 students were also getting to grips with their Poetry Anthologies and developing strategies to be able to recall key points of poems they will need to remember for next summer.

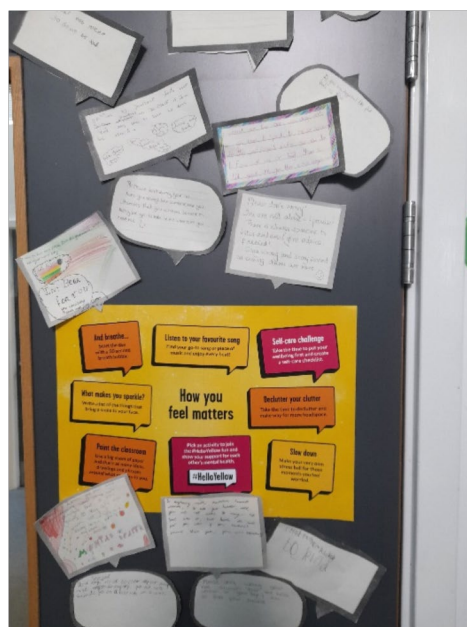
It was great to see so many staff take part in sharing their favourite poem on their classroom doors, too. The English Department organised a competition for students to find teachers' favourite poems and Neive Hughes from Year 8 was the winner! She found them all!

We also had a great childhood poem written by our very own Teaching Assistant, Mr Karl Fishwick whose focus was of course his beloved team, Everton! This was a great inspiration to the boys in Year 9!



World Mental Health Day: 10th October 2022

Mrs Appleby's Year 8 class took part in World Mental Health Day where they discussed one of our school's values: Resilience. They were mature and insightful as to what this meant and many felt comfortable enough to talk about how they don't feel they have a lot of resilience at times. An end activity was to help each to build resilience with a positive message when things are difficult. It was an absolute delight to see their kindness to each other.



Year 7 Trip to The Black Country Living Museum

Mrs Gibson-Tipping, KS3 Coordinator in English, organised a trip to The Black Country Museum in Dudley, where we were transported back to the late 19th Century. This trip was for Year 7 and more than 100 students attended. They were enthralled by the shops and the homes which people used to live in and loved the boat trip underground to see how the miners worked. They were not so happy to be taught by a Victorian Teacher however!

They were an absolute credit to the school: they were polite and asked lots of questions to support the growth of their knowledge about this period of time. We even had two of our students awarded for being excellent boat pushers!



Yr. 7 Inspiration Poetry

Following their visit from Mrs Beyer, who spoke to them about her achievements over the years at the London Marathon, students prepared and delivered their own speeches about their achievements to their class. (Image: Amarri Hallal, discussing football and martial arts)



December Trip for Year 11

Mrs Gibson-Tipping has organised a theatre trip to Bolton's Octagon Theatre on Tuesday 13th December where they will watch A Christmas Carol linked to their literature study. This for our top set in English who are studying a different text to the rest of the cohort and are experiencing this play in different settings. We are hoping that this will not only enhance their knowledge of the novel but also enable them to develop their own personal responses to reach those top grades in the summer 2023 Examination Series.



Young Writers' Competition: Integer

The English Department is running another writing competition before Christmas and this time it is for our mathematicians to use their skills to create a story. The theme is 'Integer' and we look forward to having more publications for our library.

Media Studies

We were extremely lucky to have a visit from the Video Standards Council in school this week. They delivered an engaging presentation on the processes behind the PEGI game rating in the UK, and Ms Adams was the reviewer for many well-known and played platform games including Fortnite. The talk included a breakdown of the process game developers undertake to achieve an age rating for their games or apps. The talk included details of how the VSC review and archive brand new and upcoming games and certify each on several categories, such as violence, horror, fear, or crime, with an age rating. The talk linked directly to the Media Studies GCSE expectations around understanding the Media Industry, but it was also a great way for students to ask questions to a person who has been successful in the industry. Another excellent learning outside the classroom experience at Blacon High school that links to our students' further career paths and aspirations.



Learning outside the Classroom – Overview of the Autumn Term

Years 7 and 8

The majority of students in Years 7 and 8, visited Chester Zoo as part of the whole school trips day, held on the last day of the first half of this term. Eighty four students took part in the activity camp at Aldeford Lake, where they participated in a range of outdoor activities including, kayaking, climbing, bush skills and a night walk. A group of 50 students visited the Black Country Museum on an English visit linked to their current work on a Victorian era in Year 7 English and the Industrial Revolution in History. All students in Years 7 and 8 have participated in Sustainability workshops led by Chester Zoo, with further workshops planned in school in the New Year and then a final workshop to be held at the Zoo. A small group of students have taken part in the BEV Democracy Meeting and the football team travelled to Ludlow to compete in the National Cup.

Year 9

A small group of students have taken part in the Chester Zoo Gardening club. The majority of students went on a trip to Alton Towers for the whole school trips day. A small group of students from Cadets also took part in the Poppy and Remembrance Parade on the 11th November.

Years 10 and 11

The majority of students in Year 10 went to Blackpool Pleasure Beach for the whole school trips day in October and Year 11 went to Alton Towers. Performing Arts classes in both year groups participated in the Shakespeare Schools Festival at the Floral Pavillion in New Brighton and some students from Year 10 also take part in the Chester Zoo Gardening club. Six students in Year 11 are

completing the AQA Higher Project Qualification; taught sessions take place every Tuesday before school and students complete the research and project in their own time, supported by regular meetings with their supervisor.

Inclusion Interventions - Autumn term

Staff work with students each morning to support reading interventions. We are screening for dyslexic tendencies and a couple of students have gone on to have private testing. The results of these have meant that we have put more support in place such as overlays or computers within lessons. Staff are more aware and 1 page profiles are updated. We have students working 1-1 on part time timetables in order to support them coming into school on a more regular basis. We are also offering home visits to 3 students who are school refusers.

Three students have begun their Storyhouse Young Leader's Programme, following on from the success of last year's group of students who all completed the course and enjoyed it. The weekly course provides young people with opportunities to develop employability skills in customer service, teamwork, leadership, and project management, and they work towards the Trinity College Arts Award. Throughout the programme soft skills of confidence, communication, self-esteem and independence are nurtured in a safe and fun manner. At the end of the programme the students project manage, and staff a public performance. Following completion all students have access to the Storyhouse outreach programme for work experience support. We continue to value and develop our strong working relationship with Storyhouse.



The Gardening Club has welcomed approximately 7 new members from the current Year 7 cohort. Before the summer we had our second trip to the Chester Zoo nature reserve to learn further conservation skills such as tracking animals and pond dipping. In July we were invited to attend the Conservation Schools Awards Ceremony, we did not win a prize on this occasion as we are relatively new to the projects, but we were able to network with other school staff and start to plan collaboration activities. We were invited by Alex at the zoo to host a stall at the Chester Zoo nature connections festival on Saturday the 17th of September, two of our gardening club members joined John Lacey, Catrin Kenyon Owen and Stacey Morrison and the Head, to support the occasion and represent the school. We had a great time and the students demonstrated to the public how to

make seed bombs. The gardening club continues to develop and source opportunities for vulnerable students to enhance their wellbeing and grow in confidence.



Chester Zoo - Outreach with KS3 Science

Miss Ankers in Science has organised for students in Key Stage 3 to continue taking part in a number of workshops in November and December, linked to the work Chester Zoo and what they do in the UK and around the world to prevent extinction, including hands-on activities and creative opportunities. The aim of the workshops is to reach students that would benefit from learning about conservation and might not get these kinds of opportunities otherwise. As part of this offer, the students who are involved will receive free family passes to the zoo for 1 year. Curriculum plus and Sanctuary are also participating in this work as the curriculum is aligned to ensure that all students benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum.

International Links



For the first time since 2019, we have been able to host international students and have welcomed three groups since September from two different companies who offer English Language, immersive experiences to students from international schools. We started the year with 27 students from Italy, and have subsequently had two groups from Spain. Initially, they attracted a lot of attention, mostly driven by novelty. However, students at Blacon High School adapted quickly and many volunteered to act as 'buddies' for our guests.

In terms of enrichment, our students made connections with children from a contrasting culture, and overcame language barriers and developed independence. They also took responsibility for ensuring that their 'buddies' were met each morning and accompanied them to each lesson on their timetable. Many of them joined in planned social activities beyond the school day and have maintained contact via social media since our visitors returned home.

Now we have hosted three groups of international students successfully, we expect to develop the relationships further and hope to continue to welcome more foreign students, potentially from further afield. The school will receive £6500 income for hosting these visits.



Here is a note from the blog the Spanish Group Leader maintained during their stay:



Good morning families!

The last day of school at Blacon High School has arrived. It has been an unforgettable experience both for the cultural heritage of the city of Chester and for the treatment of the host families, the great reception and support of the school and its staff (special mention to Mr David Stockdale) and of course, the exquisite treatment of all the UKLC team who took care of every detail of our stay (Mr Gareth, Mr Nelson, Ms Jordan, Ms Laura, Ms Sophie, Mr Jamie) and Fabiana from New Link. Thank you for your quality time!

It has been a different day because although we had cooking classes and a chemistry experiment among others, UKLC prepared a little surprise for us by celebrating a certificate delivery ceremony giving us time to say goodbye to our British friends.

It is a see you soon and not a goodbye. We hope to see you visit or dive in Vigo!

Celebration Evening

It was so nice to greet parents, carers, students and Governors to our Whole School Celebration Evening in October; this is one of the most popular and well attended events in the school calendar.

As teachers, it's fantastic to be able to celebrate students' achievements from the previous year and, as always, a significant number of students from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 were rewarded for both

attainment and contribution in all subject areas; we acknowledge that 'success' means very different things for some students, which is why the awards for contribution are so well received.

Additionally, there were a number of special prizes for successful outgoing students, awarded for a number of reasons. This year, Owen Jones became the first recipient of the new 'Governors Annual Shield,' which, at their request, was awarded to the student who had made the most progress during their time at Blacon High School.

As always, one of the highlights of the evening is the presentation delivered by our guest speaker. This year, we had not one but three ex-students: Elliot Pye – Veterinary Anaesthetist Residency at the Royal School of Veterinary Medicine in Edinburgh, Marcel Aziamale – third year degree student reading Politics at UCL, and Will Luc who just achieved two A* and an A in his A levels at St Peter's, York. All of our guest speakers were beneficiaries of the bursary scheme that we run in conjunction with the Hope Opportunity Trust and are shining examples of what is achievable with hard work and a positive attitude to learning.

The evening opened and closed with superb performances by the school band and choir.



Blacon High School Remembers

On Friday 11th November, two representatives from each year group, placed a cross at the front of school, to mark the sacrifice made by so many in wars and conflicts past and present. Cadets laid a wreath and students across the school held a 2 minutes silence following a remembrance assembly, led by student leaders. Each year, our students do us proud and we thank Governors who were able to attend this event.



Rachel Hudson - Headteacher