

## Head teacher's Report for Governors – March 2023

### Part 1 – Update on Strategic Goals

#### 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.



## Contents

Part 1 - Update on progress towards 2023 Strategic Plan .....	5
1. To raise levels of attainment, standards and progress to outstanding and to close gaps in performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students nationally. ....	5
Profile of Year 11 for Current Cohort compared to last year .....	6
Contextual Data –whole school .....	7
Quality of Education – Curriculum Development Updates.....	8
SEND Overview .....	10
Curriculum+.....	11
Literacy.....	12
National Tutoring Programme (NTP) .....	12
Reading Ages.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Reading Interventions.....	14
Curriculum Staffing .....	15
Assessment Action Group .....	15
Year 9 options .....	16
Progress Evenings .....	18
Progress meetings 2020-21 .....	18
Progress meetings 2021-22 .....	18
Progress Meetings 2022-23 .....	19
Quality Assurance .....	19
2. To develop an inclusive, broad and balanced curriculum that will underpin progress and ensure all students achieve their maximum potential. ....	20
Attendance.....	20
Whole School Attendance .....	20
Overall Absence .....	20
Year Group .....	20
Pupil Premium.....	21
Key aim – To Develop key, personal qualities: aspiration, motivation, confidence, independence, resilience (surveys, personal development). ....	21
Learning Outside the Classroom (LoTC) in the 2022/23 academic year.....	21
Personal Development and Careers 22/23.....	22
LORIC.....	22

3. To develop and sustain the BEV partnership by exploring every opportunity for collaboration and the sharing of good practice. ....	23
4. To ensure the school remains financially viable, meets demand and achieves, or exceeds, progression for students in line with National Average. ....	24
Finance .....	24
School lettings.....	24
5. To ensure successful transitions into Key Stages 3, 4 and 5.....	25
Student Numbers- March 2023 .....	26
In Year Transfers and Leavers .....	26
6. To support staff to the highest standard of professional development including physical and mental health well-being in order to secure high quality learning and teaching.....	27
CPD.....	27
Whole School CPD.....	27
Wednesday Morning Briefings.....	28
Tuesday Training .....	28
National Professional Qualifications for school Leadership .....	29
Initial Teacher Training and ECT.....	30
Learning & Teaching .....	31
Staff Wellbeing.....	31
Staff absence.....	33
Behaviour Data .....	35
Suspensions/ Permanent Exclusion Data.....	35
Step Out Data.....	35
Internal Exclusion Data .....	35
SSA Data .....	36
SIG Group Data .....	36
On Call Data .....	36
Remove Room Data .....	36
Suspensions/ Exclusions.....	37
Step out.....	37
Internal Exclusion.....	37
SSA grades.....	37
SIG data .....	37
On Call and remove data .....	37
CCF Combined Cadet Force.....	41

Part 2 – Highlights from the Spring Term .....	42
Humanities .....	42
Holocaust Memorial Day January 2023 .....	42
Latin club .....	42
Upcoming events .....	42
Curriculum+ .....	43
PE department .....	44
Chester School Sport Partnership .....	48
MFL – Modern Foreign Languages .....	53
Science .....	53
Chester Zoo Sustainability Workshop .....	54
Science Club .....	55
English .....	55
Maths .....	57
Performing Arts .....	58
Student Parliament .....	60
International links .....	61
Music .....	61
Chester Schools Together .....	62
Technology Faculty .....	64

## Part 1 - Update on progress towards 2023 Strategic Plan

1. To raise levels of attainment, standards and progress to outstanding and to close gaps in performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students nationally.

Performance Indicators from Strategic Plan	Results 2019	CAGs 2020	CAGs 2021	Year 11 Targets	Year 11 data Dec 21	Year 11 Exam Results August 22	Year 11 Targets	Year 11 Current latest data Dec 22
	69 students	88 students	113 students	118 students	118 students	118 students	126 students	126 students
KPI – Progress 8 score 0.1	-0.67	-0.09	NA	NA	NA	-0.82	-0.15*	-0.70*
KPI - English and Maths 9 - 4 - 60%	62%	69%	66%	81%	49%	39%	71%	48%
KPI - English and Maths 9 - 5 - 40%	23%	49%	43%	34%	25%	15%	42%	22%
KPI - English 9-4 - 70% and 9 - 5 - 60%	72% / 48%	81% / 60%	80%/53%	90%/62%	90%/52%	58%/38%	87%/61%	66%/37%
KPI - Maths 9-4 - 70% and 9 - 5 - 60%	67% / 28%	75% / 53%	71%/53%	81%/34%	51%/31%	49%/19%	71%/43%	54%/27%
KPI - Progress 8 for English	-0.73	-0.01	NA	NA	NA	-0.77	-0.09*	-0.99*
KPI - Progress 8 for Maths	-0.66	-0.23	NA	NA	NA	-0.91	0.07*	-0.75*
KPI – Student Pupil Premium 0 Progress 8	-0.83	-0.18	NA	NA	NA	-1.00	-0.15*	-0.79*
KPI Open Bucket Progress 8 score 0.2	-0.39	0.22	NA	NA	NA	-0.59	-0.06*	-0.43*
High Ability Progress 8	-1.02 (26 students)	-0.16 (33 stu)*	NA	NA	NA	-0.61 (7 stu)	-0.20* (14 stu)	-1.08* (14 stu)
Middle Ability Progress 8	-0.51 (38 students)	-0.11 (43 stu)*	NA	NA	NA	-1.11 (68 stu)	-0.18* (69 stu)	-0.68* (69 stu)
Lower Ability Progress 8	0.06 (4 students)	0.29 (8 stud)*	NA	NA	NA	-0.38 (42 stu)	-0.08* (38 stu)	-0.58* (38 stu)
KPI - PP Progress 8 matching non disadvantaged nationally for English English Student Premium	-0.90	-0.06	NA	NA	NA	-0.97	-0.03*	-1.01*
KPI - PP Progress 8 matching non disadvantaged nationally for Maths Maths Student Premium	-0.79	-0.43	NA	NA	NA	-1.01	0.09*	-0.87*

\* The Attainment 8 Official Estimates for 2022 used for current Y11 are not the estimates that will be used in the official Progress 8 calculations for this cohort. Therefore any Progress 8 figures produced should be used for internal analyses only and must be treated with great caution. The A8 Provisional Estimates for 2023 will be used by the performance tables for current year 11 available in October. An update on current progress will be available at the end of March 2023.

#### Profile of Year 11 for Current Cohort compared to last year

	Year 11 2022		Current Year 11 2022/23	
	No. of students	% of students	No. of students	% of students
Total	118		127	
Males	64	54	80	63
Females	54	46	47	37
Pupil Premium	61	52	61	48
English as an Additional Language	1	1	7	6
SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	20	17	37	29
Number of In Year Transfers to Year 11	22	19	10	8
Number affected by safeguarding currently	10	8	12	9
High Ability	7	6	14	11
Middle Ability	68	58	69	55
Lower Ability	42	36	40	31
No prior data	1	1	4	3

\* *Number of In Year Transfers to Year 11\* that arrived after normal year 7 admission in September 2018.*

*\*\*no official DfE definition of High Ability, Middle Ability, Low Ability for scaled scores 2020 & 2021 - converted to Key Stage 2 Fine levels*

**\*\* New DfE KS2 Scaled Scores definition published Nov 2021**

The profile of Year 11 is important to understand the context. Pupil premium remains high at 48% of the cohort, a decrease in transfers into the year group from 19% to 8% and significantly, a change in the ability profile of the year with a larger proportion of high ability students (increase of 6% to 11%) and broadly similar for middle and lower.

All of the latest research is showing that the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged has widened further post Covid and these students comprise over half of our cohort.

### Contextual Data –whole school

Year		Total number of students	FSM	Pupil Premium
2019/20	No. of students	618	258	321
	% of students		42%	52%
December 2020	No. of students	672	279	354
	% of students		42%	53%
March 2021	No. of students	669	286	360
	% of students		43%	54%
June 2021	No. of students	664	287	358
	% of students		43%	54%
December 2021	No. of students	683	308	375
	% of students		45%	55%
March 2022	No. of students	682	307	373
	% of students		45%	55%
July 2022	No. of students	568 (Year 11 left)	265	299
	% of students		47%	53%
November 2022	No. of students	719	336	378
	% of students		47%	53%
February 2023	No. of students	718	337	378
	% of students		47%	53%

Covid-19 has had an impact on the number of students' eligible free school meals and a rise in pupil premium students. The table shows the figures for the last two academic years, compared to the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms in 2020/21.

Pupil Premium = (Ever 6 FSM, LAC, Post LAC\* and Service Children)

\*Children who have ceased to be looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because of adoption, a special guardianship order, a child arrangements order or a residence order.

For FSM, we are in the highest quintile (top 20%) of all schools for those on FSM and Ever 6 (students who have been eligible for FSM over the past 6 years). The 2022 IDSR references Blacon at 49% compared to the national average of 27% so we are now more than double the national average.

### Quality of Education – Curriculum Development Updates

Key area	Work undertaken
Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the initial meetings between Mark Cotton, Nick Scoltock and John Lacey, an action plan was developed to help support curriculum development.</li> <li>A 3 year plan was created for the scheduling of work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work on content ongoing</li> <li>Work on pedagogy started</li> <li>Work on assessment started</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Curriculum Maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The work on curriculum maps started in January 2022. Subject areas have used the template provided to sequence work based on the development and consolidation of content &amp; skills.</li> <li>KS3 maps were created in draft for July 2022 and should be reviewed and amended on a termly basis as units are completed.</li> <li>KS4 maps need to be completed in draft format for July 2023.</li> <li>Following recommendations from our SIP, the wording 'composite &amp; component' has been removed from all maps. Subject areas should instead focus on substantive knowledge (content) and disciplinary knowledge (skills). Whilst delivering content learning should include both core &amp; hinterland knowledge, but tasks should on focus on core knowledge.</li> </ul>
Student books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The template for how student work/books should be set out was introduced in September 2022. This has worked well and helped to develop a level of consistency.</li> </ul>
Pedagogical Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The key areas of curriculum development identified with Mark Cotton are 'thinking skills' and 'making connections'.</li> <li>The pedagogical model was shared with staff and this will become the template used for CPD and observations: Connect, Activate, Explain, Practice.</li> <li>The use of the DNA task at the start of lessons was shared and this will become the expected start of each lesson.</li> <li>The pedagogical focus was shared with staff identify key characteristics of lessons that support learning: Clarity, Knowledge construct, Visual representation, Talk.</li> <li>Further work has been shared with staff on the need to make connections over a range of time periods: Short, Medium, Long</li> </ul>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LAI and COR are working on the assessment course and are developing a whole school assessment policy.</li> </ul>
Focused Subject Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new FSR model has been created with is includes lesson drop in's, Head of Department voice, staff voice and student voice with a summary report for each curriculum area. These will be externally verified by our SIP in the summer term when she conducts further reviews with middle leaders, SLT and staff.</li> </ul>





**BLACON**  
HIGH SCHOOL

ASPIRE BELIEVE ACHIEVE

Work samples, lesson drop ins and Full Subject Reviews show that:

- Presentation rules and DNA (Do Now Activities) are embedded in lessons
- Curriculum leaders and subject staff have a deeper understanding of curriculum development and sequencing
- Key subject knowledge and skills are being identified
- There is greater consistency in the delivery of learning across groups
- Staff are developing their pedagogy to support the delivery of the curriculum

### **Launch of New Website**

Following an extensive piece of work, we have launched our new website this term with our updated branding. The website is modern, professional and provides a clear overview of the school, our vision and ethos, with key information for parents. [www.blaconhighschool.net](http://www.blaconhighschool.net)

## SEND Overview

We currently have 193 students with SEND which is 28% of the school population, almost double the national average at 15.9%. As a school, we are in the highest quintile (top 20%) of all schools for the number of SEND students. IDSR 2021 reports 20.6% of students with SEND support compared to the national average of 11.5% and for students with an EHCP, Blacon is at 3.3% compared to the national average of 2%. We also have the highest number of students with an EHCP and with top up funding across all of the schools in Cheshire West and Chester.

Overview of SEND numbers and applications for funding as follows;

Year Group	Social & Emotional	Cognition & learning	Physical &/or sensory	SLCN	Top Up Funding	EHCP
7	17	15	1	3	3	6
<b>Funding Applications Submitted for Yr7:</b> 1 EHCP transfer from special school						
8	21	19	3	7	1	10
<b>Funding Applications Submitted for Yr8:</b> 1 EHCP waiting to go to second panel. I almost ready to be submitted						
9	15	19	3	4	2	9
<b>Funding Applications Submitted for Y9:</b> 2 EHCPs awarded. 1 is currently in draft and the other in draft but out to Wirral for consultation; 1 EHCP almost ready to submit; 1 just had an assessment and waiting to go to second panel						
10	12	13	1	4	-	9
<b>Funding Applications Submitted for Yr10:</b> 2 almost ready to submit						
11	14	12	2	8	-	5
<b>Funding Applications Submitted for Yr11:</b> 1 EHCP just been finalised						
<b>Total</b>	79	78	10	<b>26</b>	6	<b>39</b>

We continue to promote SEND across the school and a weekly briefing dedicated to SEND is being held each Wednesday morning, to provide a regular flow of information to staff, to support this key group in school.

### Curriculum+

The Curriculum+ provision started in September 2023, building upon the success of the previous Orion model. Our key aims within Curriculum+ are;

- ✓ To prevent risk of fixed term suspension and permanent exclusion.
- ✓ To provide new pathways for all students to be successful.
- ✓ To improve attitude to learning.
- ✓ To increase attendance.
- ✓ To drive attainment.
- ✓ To develop new partnerships.
- ✓ To transition students back into mainstream provision.

There are currently 33 students within the Curriculum+ model, with 6 groups ranging from year 8 to year 11. All students access a full curriculum outlined in the statutory national curriculum framework, but also engage in external provision, provided by our partners; Route 5 Pursuits, the Educate Group and the Nail base Academy.

All groups have their own classroom within the new build and all lessons take place there. Each group has an inclusion officer assigned to the group, who offers both in lesson and pastoral support.

Students across the 6 groups have improved their attitude to learning since being placed in the Curriculum+ provision in September. Students receive support from their Inclusion Officer, Curriculum+ Mentors and our newly appointed Reflection Manager.

So far this year 3 students have successfully transitioned back into mainstream. This includes the 3 year 7 students who started in September.

Below is an overview of the vulnerabilities within C+, from year 8-11:

Vulnerability	Pupil premium	FSM	CLA	EAL	SEN	EHCP	CP	Top Up Funding
Count	29	27	4	0	23	5	2	3
Percentage	88%	81%	12%	0%	69%	15%	6%	9%

## Literacy

### National Tutoring Programme (NTP)

We continue to use Action Tutoring for our catch-up programme currently have two programmes running for both, Year 11 and Year 10.

The forty Year 10 and Year 11 students, who are currently attending tutoring for either English or Maths, are all dedicated to the programme and attendance has been very good and all students are engaged fully with their tutors.

Recently, The Westminster Foundation requested to interview our students about how they feel about the programme and this press release should be available soon. It is hopeful that we will see, yet another, positive impact on GCSE outcomes for our core subjects this summer from these students.

In addition to the tutoring company, we also employed three key intervention teachers for all core subjects: English, Maths and Science that have been supporting their departments since September. These interventions include supporting our most vulnerable students in The Sanctuary along with completing 1:1 and small group work during lessons to ensure all students are able to access the curriculum fully.

The catch-up funding has also been used for SEND Specialist teaching which has evolved to identifying key literacy and numeracy gaps across KS3. Ana Kostadinova has been deployed to complete profiles on key students to provide targeted interventions to close the literacy gap further. This has only just started (Spring 2) so data and impact will be reported in the next report.

### Reading across the Curriculum

Karen Appleby continues to lead on reading ages and tracking reading across school. Following the SIP visit, Karen has developed the analysis of reading to enable a closer diagnostic of students' gaps in reading. Along with advice from our SIPs (Kath Harris and Fiona Burke-Jackson), and Karen's research findings about the actual efficacy of reading ages, Karen led the English Team to report on key skills using the NGRT tests, as usual.

As a result, the data now reveals the key are for development: vocabulary or passage comprehension. Despite some students' reading ages evidencing that they are on target or close to their chronological reading age, the isolated data about each skill reveals that there are 'hidden' gaps as some are only just achieving an average grade.

The majority of students require support on some key comprehension skills including: inference skills and commenting on writers' perspectives.








Example of data recorded:

Surname Forename	Sentence Completion	Passage Comprehension	RA Confidence Band	KS2 Reading SS Max MAX of Y6 TA or Y7	
Student 1	3	4	11/11	87	Vocabulary - build up more words (EAL)
Student 2	3	5	12/8	98	Vocabulary - check phonics
Student 3	5	3	11/11	94	Comprehension - basic skills to start and then reassess
Student 4	3	4	11/11	104	Vocabulary - specific situation



The skills required to comprehend can be taught across whole school and when Rachel Thomas (Assistant Headteacher) led on Literacy during 2011-2013, there was a whole school strategy that included visual aids to support the delivery of these skills. Due to the decline in literacy following the pandemic, Karen has recalled these resources and will share these at the next INSET in April to train staff on delivering these strategies to support reading across the curriculum. Karen shared a plan for this strategy at the Middle Leader Forum in February and will monitor closely to measure further impact.

Please see below one of the visual aids to be placed around school and in exercise books:

## **Reading styles**

<b>Predicting</b>		<b>You make informed guesses about the text.</b>
<b>Skimming</b>		<b>You read quickly through the sentences getting a gist of the understanding of the text. Useful when seeking specific information.</b>
<b>Scanning</b>		<b>Your eyes dart around a text searching for a specific word/phrase/number. You search for key words or ideas.</b>
<b>Questioning</b>		<b>You ask questions about a text to clarify your ideas.</b>
<b>Direction</b>		<b>When you have to read back in a text or read forward in order to make connections or clarify your ideas.</b>
<b>Empathising</b>		<b>When you put yourself in someone else's shoes and feel what they feel.</b>
<b>Visualising</b>		<b>You see a picture in your mind to help gain a better impression or understanding of the text.</b>
<b>Inferring</b>		<b>When a point is made that isn't obvious and you read 'between the lines' to find the meaning or thinking about what an image shows.</b>



<b>Summarising</b>		<b>You are aiming to produce a brief outline of the main points of a text.</b>
<b>Paraphrasing</b>		<b>This differs from summarising insofar as you are required to express in your own words the meaning of a text.</b>

### Reading: Carnegie Award Shortlist in Partnership with Chester Schools Together

The new Librarian at King's, Jodie Brooks, has invited us to work with King's and other local schools in Chester to really elevate reading and learning. An initial project that we will take part in is the upcoming Carnegie Award shortlist and how this would be a fantastic vehicle to working collaboratively with Chester Schools Together.

On March 15<sup>th</sup> we will each receive a nomination pack of the Carnegie shortlist. We will share them with a shadowing group within the school (a combination of Years 9 and 10). We will then arrange a meet-up next term, probably at King's and then a celebratory event in June when the winner is announced (the date has yet to be published).

There will be regular updates of this process and how our students broaden their reading with these texts.

### Reading Interventions

<b>1.</b>	<b>Guided Reading in Tutor Time</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three times per week</li> <li>• Each year group has a different text that covers a range of Cultural Capital</li> <li>• Following the reading of the book, there is a bank of resources for each text to explore text further and to enhance Cultural Capital through non-fiction texts and various activities</li> </ul>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Guided Reading in Small Groups – Julie Williams in English</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group for Autumn/Spring – Yr7 (Closing the reading and vocabulary gap)</li> <li>• Those identified have RAs below 8 years old (bottom 20%)</li> <li>• Intervention include guided reading approach to complement tutor GR</li> <li>• 'Two Weeks with the Queen' initially but this has evolved into plays now (range of literature)</li> <li>• Impact – mostly confidence in reading is evident (Kyle Burgess and Adam Toff)</li> <li>• Students are reading out loud to develop fluency</li> <li>• Plays from ELS – they really enjoy and makes them focus as having to look for their part</li> <li>• Not only does it feel like there is an improvement in performance in reading but also that there is a genuine enjoyment of reading: developing RA and reading for pleasure (Aims)</li> <li>• Julie delivers this intervention 4 sessions a week</li> <li>• The first group has five students and will stay as an intervention group until Easter – NGRT to do to confirm progress and change group</li> </ul>



3.	IDL (Indirect Dyslexia Learning) Programme and NGRT (New Group Reading Test) to assess Reading Ages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDL is a programme run in The Sanctuary – IDL is an award-winning programme and is endorsed by the British Dyslexia Association</li> <li>• IDL is delivered each morning before lessons and after school</li> <li>• IDL does report a reading age but it is not in line with the NGRT due to the differences in what is being assessed (IDL focuses on spelling and NGRT focuses on higher-level vocabulary and comprehension)</li> <li>• Yr7 and Yr8 are on IDL and can find it tedious but evidence is clear of progress and forms good habits across literacy levels</li> <li>• TAs in Sanctuary are liaising with Julie Williams to ensure a range of students are receiving interventions</li> <li>• The Sanctuary is using the NGRT RA data to identify those in the bottom 20% of school re: RAs</li> <li>• <b>Aim is to become a 'Dyslexic-Friendly School'</b></li> <li>• Vicki has carefully selected engaging dyslexic-friendly books that are suitable for all levels and ages – she will build on this library</li> <li>• Request for SEND readers to be identified clearly in classes to check individual needs re: reading (CAA is aware and ideas will be generated to share with All Staff)</li> <li>• The Sanctuary is leading bespoke reading intervention with TA's concentrating on comprehension, reading strategies and self-esteem. They do 10 mins of IDL and 10mins of reading intervention</li> </ul>

### Curriculum Staffing

An additional Technology teacher has been appointed to increase capacity and the number of Product Design Option groups to match the increased numbers opting for the subject and to support the large cohort of boys in Year 9, who predominantly opt to do practical subjects within the faculty. External adverts are currently out for teachers in Science (Chemistry and Physics), Maths, English maternity, Head of Humanities and Teaching Assistants. Internal adverts are in place for a KS3 co-ordinator role in Science and English, Head of Maths and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Maths, Head of Geography, RS, and TLR with responsibility for CCF Cadets and TLR with responsibility for Duke of Edinburgh Award/Outdoor Education.

We have successfully appointed a new member of the site team, a Teaching Assistant, maternity cover for History and an Art/Graphics teacher.

### Assessment Action Group

The whole-school work on assessment started on our return after the Christmas holidays, led by John Lacey, Assistant Head and Laura Cockburn, Head of Science. The first full training session on assessment took place on the training day.

The assessment training started with staff considering 'what is Assessment?' This generated discussion and the collation of ideas, which culminated in a summary of what is meant when we talk about assessment. The session then went on to explore the positive impact that assessment has on learning and highlighted the difference between: Assessment for learning; assessment of learning; and assessment as learning.

The four pillars of assessment were then introduced and discussed, these are: purpose, validity, reliability and value. Teaching staff then worked in groups to explore what they thought each of

these terms meant in their interpretation of assessment. Finally, staff started to analyse example assessments that they had brought to the session, to make an initial judgement about their purpose, validity, reliability and value.

### Year 9 options

The options process is now underway. A pre-options process took place before the February half-term where tutors shared the subjects on offer with students and discussed the overviews of the subjects written by subject leaders. Tutors then inputted the initial options from students into a Microsoft Form. These initial choices were then analysed so that subjects were placed in appropriate option blocks to ensure the best possible choices for students. The options booklet can be viewed on the website <https://www.blaconhighschool.net/page/?title=YEAR+9+OPTIONS&pid=127>

A successful Options evening was held on March, 2<sup>nd</sup> with a presentation explaining the process, the options booklet was provided to parents, carers and students and then there was the opportunity to discuss option subjects with the staff responsible for the courses. The presentation can be viewed on the website

[https://www.blaconhighschool.net/\\_site/data/files/users/template/files/70B8C4A0723E8A92FA274EEF5E1DE183.pdf](https://www.blaconhighschool.net/_site/data/files/users/template/files/70B8C4A0723E8A92FA274EEF5E1DE183.pdf)

Students had an options assembly on March, 7<sup>th</sup> to further highlight the importance of the making informed options decisions, followed by the Year 9 Progress Evening on March, 9<sup>th</sup>, when students, parents and carers will be able to have more in depth discussions about the suitability of courses.

The deadline for option choices to be submitted is March, 13<sup>th</sup>. After collation of the final option choices, meetings will take place between members of SLT and each student to discuss the suitability of the subjects chosen.

Construction was considered as an option during the pre-option process, but it was decided to wait until next academic year to offer this in order to allow the new member of staff time to develop, resource and implement this new course for 24/25.

BTEC Small Animal Care will be a new option subject for the 2023/24 academic year. Miss Ankers will teach Small Animal Care and with the support of Mrs Cockburn is planning and resourcing the course.

### Safeguarding Updates

TAFs - Team around the Family								
Year Group	Dec 2020	March 2021	June 2021	Oct/ 2021	Nov 2021	March 2022	May 2022	February 2023
Year 7	2	2	3	1	1	5	5	2
Year 8	7	3	5	2	1	4	5	4
Year 9	7	4	3	7	7	9	8	6
Year 10	3	6	4	3	2	3	3	5
Year 11	5	0	1	4	3	3	2	4
Total	24	15	16	17	14	24	23	21



CIN Child In Need								
Year Group	Dec 2020	March 2021	June 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	March 2022	May 2022	February 2023
Year 7	3	4	3	1	1	2	1	6
Year 8	3	6	4	3	4	1	2	7
Year 9	2	3	2	5	3	2	4	4
Year 10	1	1	0	2	2	2	1	1
Year 11	1	2	3	1	4	2	2	2
Total	10	16	12	12	14	9	10	20

CP – Child Protection								
Year Group	Dec 2020	March 2021	June 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	March 2022	May 2022	February 2023
Year 7	1	1	2	1	1	5	3	3
Year 8	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	3
Year 9	0	0	0	2	2	3	3	2
Year 10	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	2
Year 11	3	2	2	2	2	5	5	1
Total	6	6	8	7	6	15	12	11

CIC/LAC Children in Care / Looked after Children								
Year Group	Dec 2020	March 2021	June 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	March 2022	May 2022	February 2023
Year 7	2	2	3	5	6	5	5	3
Year 8	4	5	5	3	4	4	4	4
Year 9	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	2
Year 10	1	1	1	5	5	5	5	6
Year 11	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	5
Total	13	16	17	19	21	20	20	20

***There are four other students who are open to assessment for social care.***

10% of the school population are linked to safeguarding and these are students who have experienced significant trauma and for whom the challenge to thrive at school is more difficult.

Cheshire Young Carers continue to use our bistro as a Hub to work with local Young Carers. They have invited students as they already have links with families and the sessions take place every fortnight. Cheshire Young carers will lead assemblies to further raise the profile of them and to identify new Young Carers. The safeguarding parent newsletter continues to be shared with parents to support parental engagement and collaborative working to keep students safe.

### Progress Evenings

Following feedback from parents and staff, progress evenings continued to be carried out remotely this year, using a School cloud system to interact with parents, carers and students via a video call. The system was efficient allowing parents to book online and carry out appointments by simply signing in to the site on a phone, tablet or PC. Feedback on the system from both staff and parents has been very positive, however the attendance figures have dropped this academic year, and so the plan is for parents to be invited back into school for face to face meetings next year and to use the School cloud system to book appointments. Parental engagement remains a key priority for the school.

### Progress meetings 2020-21

Year group	Yr7	Yr8	Yr9	Yr10	Yr11
No. parents asking for alternative feedback	7	18	26	16	7
% engagement with progress evening	78%	66%	86%	80%	60%
No. families linked to missed appointments	26	15	11	7	5
% appointments completed	84%	86%	85%	91%	93%

### Progress meetings 2021-22

Year group	Yr7	Yr8	Yr9	Yr10	Yr11
Cohort	141	141	142	129	120
% engagement with progress evening	43%	65%	61%	61%	59%
No. of appointments missed	111	127	104	61	93
No. families linked to missed appointments	10	16	15	10	9
% appointments completed	78%	83%	81%	85%	81%

### Progress Meetings 2022-23

Year group	Yr7	Yr8	Yr9	Yr10	Yr11	Yr11
Date	09/02/23 Online	01/12/22 Online	09/03/23 Online	11/05/23 In person	29/09/22 In person	12/01/23 In person
Cohort	162	152			127	127
No. parents asking for alternative feedback	11	9			1	6
% engagement with progress evening	76%	59%			57%	57%
No. families linked to missed appointments	5	13			5	4
% appointments completed	95%	84%			89%	89%

### Quality Assurance

Following, and in response to, the huge amount of work that staff have been involved with recently in terms of curriculum development and sequencing, the Full Subject Review process was redesigned with a specific focus on key areas of development for the whole school.

The process itself is, by necessity, organic and will evolve in line with response to specific need, whole school developments, and also government/LA directives and amendments to the Ofsted framework.

The process involves a meeting with the Head of Subject, a series of lesson observations (some staff may be seen more than once), a meeting with the department team, and student feedback. Additionally, following observations, SSA grades are analysed to ensure that they represent an accurate reflection of the atmosphere in the lesson. In an attempt to mirror Ofsted practice, observations are not usually for the whole lesson and no lesson plans are required. Staff are not told what lessons will be observed but they are aware of the days that observations are scheduled for.

Once the process is complete, there is an initial feedback meeting with the Head of Subject and then a further meeting with the 'teams' of bigger departments.

The FSR process for 2022 23 is underway. So far, FSRs have been completed in Maths, English, MFL, Humanities and Science. Mr Stockdale has organised the schedule and all members of the senior leadership team are involved, with the remaining subjects due to be completed before Easter.

The outcomes of those FSRs that have already been completed have been, broadly, very positive, and individual reports are available for Governors to view.



2. To develop an inclusive, broad and balanced curriculum that will underpin progress and ensure all students achieve their maximum potential.

KPI Performance Indicator from Strategic Plan	Current Performance up to March 23
KPI Open Bucket Progress 8 score 0.2	<b>-0.43</b>
KPI Attendance up to national average - 95%	<b>86.1% overall</b> <b>80.9% Pupil Premium</b>
KPI 80% sport participation, 100% Learning outside the classroom	<b>Lotc</b> <b>100% Years 7 – 9</b> <b>75% Years 10 – 11</b> <b>51% sport participation</b>

### Attendance

#### Whole School Attendance

Whole School	<b>86.19%</b>

#### Persistent absence

	% of students	No. of students	No. of PP students	% of pp students	No. of students SEN	% of SEN students	No. of CLA students	% of CLA students	No. of students in cohort
<b>Total</b>	<b>39.84</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>71.38</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>35.17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.72</b>	<b>728</b>

#### Overall Absence

Whole School Authorised	<b>6.69%</b>
Whole School Unauthorised	<b>7.12%</b>

#### Year Group

Year 7	<b>91.3%</b>
Year 8	<b>86.5%</b>
Year 9	<b>85.3%</b>
Year 10	<b>83.2%</b>
Year 11	<b>83.1%</b>

### Pupil Premium

<b>PP</b>	<b>80.9%</b>
<b>None PP</b>	<b>92.1%</b>

The national attendance rate across the **academic year to date** was 92.4%. The absence rate was, therefore, 7.6% across all schools.

By school type, the absence rates across the year to date were:

6.2% in state-funded primary schools (4.7% authorised and 1.5% unauthorised)

9.2% in state-funded secondary schools (6.0% authorised and 3.2% unauthorised)

13.6% in state-funded special schools (10.4% authorised and 3.2% unauthorised)

**Key aim – To Develop key, personal qualities: aspiration, motivation, confidence, independence, resilience (surveys, personal development).**

### Learning outside the Classroom (LoTC) in the 2022/23 academic year.

All Year 7 students participated in a series of sustainability workshops within their curriculum time, led by Chester Zoo staff and planned by Miss Ankers. The final workshop involved all Year 7 students visiting Chester Zoo. This project was funded by the Zoo.

All Year 8 students also participated in the series of sustainability workshops led by Chester Zoo staff, but did not attend the Zoo.

The MFL department organised for a performance by the Onatti Drama Company: all Year 8 students and the Year 10 French Option group watched the performance.

### % of students who participated in at least one LoTC activity since the start of the academic year.

Year	Percentage of Pupil Premium who had a Learning Outside the Classroom experience (%)	Percentage of all students who have had a Learning Outside the Classroom experience. (%)
7	100	100
8	100	100
9	65	67
10	60	72
11	85	75

Departments will continue to plan LoTC opportunities of all year groups during the rest of this academic year and all students in years, 7 to 10 will participate in three days of LoTC activities during the final week of term including a day visiting either Liverpool or Manchester.

### Duke of Edinburgh

The Year 11 cohort completed their expedition: their final evidence for the volunteering, skill and physical sections of the award is being uploaded to their eDofE records on the DofE website.

Currently, there are no other groups who have started the award this academic year in years 9 and 10. Sean Blain, left the school at the end of the 2022/23 academic year. An advert has been prepared for the position, to be filled internally, and when a new lead for Outdoor Education/DofE is

appointed the DofE will be launched with Years 9 and 10. This should take place following the Easter holidays.

### **Personal Development and Careers 22/23**

1. Students in Year 7 Food Technology had a visit from Angie Lopez who works for the NHS Foundation Trust at the Countess of Chester. She talked to the students about her not only her role but the wide variety of roles across the NHS. This was done whilst baking lots of cakes with the students for a Valentine's Day cake sale. Staff brought in cakes too and we raised £132 for the Blue Bird Intensive Care Unit.
2. Year 9 Chemistry students had a visit from Dawn Swettenham from Swettenham's Pharmacies in February. They found about her role and career path and what is involved in being a Pharmacist.
3. A group of Year 11 students attended a taster day at QPHS 6<sup>th</sup> Form in January. They chose from a range of Post-16 courses to experience as if they were a student there. The feedback from this was excellent – from both the students and the Head of 6<sup>th</sup> Form. As a result of this visit, the Head of 6<sup>th</sup> Form came into school to hold mock interviews with those Year 11 students to prepare them for Post-16 interviews.
4. A further group of Year 11 students attended a similar taster afternoon in February at Christleton 6<sup>th</sup> Form.
5. Further links have been made with a variety of local employers for visits to school.
6. 95% of students in Year 11 have now had their initial 1:1 Information, Advice and Guidance interview.
7. Year 10 assembly with the NHS around drug use and long term effects. March 2023
8. KS4 performance with a theatre company through Cheshire Police around county lines. March 2023

### **LORIC**

#### **The Blacon Character Award**



Students in KS3 and KS4 continue to engage with the Blacon Character Award, completing statements every 2 weeks on a week 2 in tutor time using resources on Google Classroom. Spring Term 1 focus was Resilience and this half term focus is Independence with year group assemblies delivered by Mr Cairns.

### Spring 1 LORIC data update:

#### Key Stage 3:

Year 7 – out of 161 students, 124 LORIC statements achieved with 1/161 achieving LORIC certificates  
Alfie Scott has Resilience and Creativity certificate

Year 8 – out of 151 students, 97 LORIC statements achieved with 3/151 achieving LORIC certificates  
Jessica Groves has Leadership and Creativity certificate, Leighton Mcloughlin has Leadership and  
Louie Walker has Leadership certificate

Year 9 – out of 148 students, 133 LORIC statements achieved with 46/148 achieving LORIC  
certificates. 16/148 students have achieved all 5 LORIC certificates and the Blacon Character Award.

30/148 students have achieved LORIC certificates! Summer Term 1 is deadline for getting more  
students to evident LORIC skill statements and achieve certificates with 7 students needing 2/25  
statements to achieve the Blacon Character Award for Key Stage 3

#### Key Stage 4:

Year 10 – out of 132 students, 112 LORIC statements achieved with 3/132 achieving LORIC  
certificates. Honey Cuddihy has Organisation, Independence and Creativity certificate. Elliot Grain  
has Creativity certificate and Jason Bakstad has Leadership certificate.

Year 11 – out of 126 students, 114 LORIC statements achieved with 18/126 achieving LORIC  
certificates. Macy Wilkinson, Billy Jamieson, Josh Graham, Kyle Graham, Gioa La Terra Pirre and  
Megan Ortega with 6 students needing 2/25 statements to achieve the Blacon Character Award for  
Key Stage 3

The Blacon Character Awards and LORIC certificates will be awarded to KS3 and KS4 students in the  
summer term assemblies once all data has been collated on SIMS by Mark Maher to feedback on  
engagement and achievement.

### 3. To develop and sustain the BEV partnership by exploring every opportunity for collaboration and the sharing of good practice.

The table below shows the breakdown of applications from the 5 BEV schools.

Primary School	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
The Arches Community Primary School	30	37	40	28	30	22
St Theresa's Catholic Primary School	13	13	13	21	17	19
Dee Point Primary School	56	56	55	47	49	41
Highfield Community Primary School	23	17	13	23	15	20
J H Godwin Primary School	18	19	20	21	14	23
Other	10	8	7	5	17	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>142</b>

**4. To ensure the school remains financially viable, meets demand and achieves, or exceeds, progression for students in line with National Average.**

**Finance**

We are currently anticipating a deficit at the end of the financial year. The main pressure points experienced by school in the spring term that have been the cost of food, our expenditure has almost doubled compared to this time last year, supply due to both long-term sickness and recruitment issues, and the increased costs of supplies and materials. The cost of paper has increased 6 times during this term.

**School lettings**

School continues to be a hub for the community with lettings taking place most nights of the week.

We have had additional bookings this term from:

- The Little Children's Market (18.02.2023)
- Vicars Cross Dynamos (11am-12pm Saturdays)
- Saughall Colts (11am-12pm Saturdays)
- Blacon Skate have had extended sessions for discos
- Volleyball (Wednesday)

5pm-10pm	Monday	Blacon Boxing Chester Wind Band Grosvenor Netball Panthers Basketball Upton JFC Saughall Colts FC
5pm-10pm	Tuesday	Cheshire Roar Basketball Brewers Basketball Saughall Colts FC Upton JFC
5pm-10pm	Wednesday	Blacon Youth FC Saughall Colts FC
5pm-10pm	Thursday	Blacon Skate Volleyball Peter O'Toole Football Saughall Colts FC Upton JFC Colwyn Bay FC



5pm-10pm	Friday	Panthers Netball Blacon Youth FC Saughall Cotls FC Chester Man V Fat Football
9am-11am	Saturday	Upton JFC
12pm-4pm	Sunday	Upton JFC Eclipse Dance Troop

### 5. To ensure successful transitions into Key Stages 3, 4 and 5

- KPI High satisfaction rates of parents, students and partner Primary schools on KS2/3 transition - 90% and above
- KPI - 60% of Year 11 onto Level 3 A Level, Applied & Technical courses
- KPI - 40% of Year 11 onto Level 2 and Foundation courses
- KPI - 0% NEET Not in education and employment

We are once again oversubscribed for September 2023 for the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row, with a PAN of 150 students and we have again had in excess of this number of applicants. A further 14 students have been placed on the waiting list. These students will be able to appeal against the decision and all appeals will need to be made by 29<sup>th</sup> March. In total, a record high 192 students made applications for Blacon High School.

**Number of students living in Blacon, on waiting list, who have not received an offer - 6**

**Number of students attending a Blacon Primary who have not received an offer - 9**

**Number of students from Saughall All Saints who have not received an offer - 3**

**Number of students who live outside Blacon and their current primary school is unknown - 1**

**Percentages of students from Partner Primary Schools moving to Blacon High School for September 2023 as a proportion of the cohort in each Year 6.**

The Arches – 30/34 (88%)

Deepoint – 56/68 (82%)

Highfield – 23/32 (72%)

JH Godwin – 18/28 (64%)

St Theresas – 13/24 (54%)

Admissions Preference	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
First Preference	157	161	137	151	148	134	114	103
Second Preference	22	15	13	12	16	12	10	9
Third Preference	6	10	15	15	18	12	7	6
Late First Preference	5	n/a	3	6	15	13	6	15
Late Second Preference	2	n/a	0	0	2	3	0	1
Late Third Preference	n/a	n/a	0	0	0	2	0	1
Placed By L A	n/a	n/a	0	0	1	1	1	6
<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>141</b>

*Highest number of first and second preferences and highest number of applications received.*

#### Student Numbers- March 2023

Year	Males	Females	Total
Year 7	82	79	161
Year 8	75	75	150
Year 9	90	58	148
Year 10	70	62	132
Year 11	80	47	127
<b>Totals</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>718</b>

#### In Year Transfers and Leavers

In Year leavers – as of 28.02.2023

Year Group	Total Number of student leavers for this academic year to 28.02.2023
Year 7	1
Year 8	4
Year 9	4
Year 10	1
Year 11	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

In Year Starters- as of 28.02.2023

Year Group	Total in year starters for this academic year to 28.02.2023
Year 7	3
Year 8	3
Year 9	3
Year 10	0
Year 11	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

**6. To support staff to the highest standard of professional development including physical and mental health well-being in order to secure high quality learning and teaching.**

**CPD**

**Whole School CPD**

The term started on the 03/01/23 with whole staff training the overview of the day is below:

Time of day	Duration	Session	Delivered by
8.30	30 minutes	Tea and coffee	
9.00 10.00	1 hr	Culture and Ethos	Rachel Hudson
10.00 – 10.30	30 minutes	New day and tutor expectations	Rachel Thomas/Joe Pedder
10.30 – 11.00	30 minutes	New App – Detentions/ punctuality, detention system	Dave Sabri/Ilya Haycock
11.30 – 11.45	15 minutes	Break	
11.45 – 12.45	1 hr	Reflection and planning about the changes and how this will work in department areas.	Heads of Department
12.45 – 1.45	1 hr	On line training on statutory Data protection	Independent
1.45 – 2.30	45 minutes	lunch	
2.30 – 3.30	1 hr	Department time	Heads of Department

The majority of staff followed the plan above and school SIP Kath Harris also worked with the following curriculum leaders on preparation for Ofsted; Lee Cairns (PE), Gemma McHale Music), Laura Cockburn (Science), Laura Sandland – Jones (RS) and Kim Rochelle –Gill (Computer Science). The team of

Teaching Assistants worked in the Sanctuary during the afternoon for department specific training led by the SENCOs.

### Wednesday Morning Briefings

The Wednesday morning SEND briefings have evolved so that one week is a purely SEND focus which may highlight particular students or types of need and the following week there is a Teaching and Learning focus. There is a lot of overlap here and the intention is that these Wednesday morning nuggets will be mutually beneficial to staff in delivering Quality First Teaching. So far this term the following have been delivered:

Wednesday Morning Nuggets		
Date	Content	Delivered by
11/1/23	Safeguarding update	Karen Appleby
18/1/23	EHCPs and TAs	Victoria Davies Rose
25/1/23	Teaching and Learning – intro new role	Adrian Carr
01/02/23	Strike Day	
08/02/23	SEND spotlight on students	Victoria Davies Rose
15/02/23	GCSE pod	Adrian Carr
01/03/23	Autism	Kate Henshall

### Tuesday Training

The Tuesday sessions are hour long CPD sessions that provide an opportunity for a deeper dive into the areas that have been identified to support us in our journey to become more effective. On the 24/01/23 John Lacey, Assistant Head and Laura Cockburn, Head of Science presented a session on Assessment. The assessment training started with staff considering "What is Assessment?" this generated discussion and the collation of ideas, which culminated in a summary of what is meant when we talk about assessment. The session went on to explore the positive impact that assessment has on learning and highlighted the difference between: Assessment **for** learning; assessment **of** learning; and assessment **as** learning.

The four pillars of assessment were introduced and discussed. These are: purpose, validity, reliability and value. Teaching staff then worked in groups to explore what they thought each of these terms meant in their interpretation of assessment. Staff then started to analyse example assessments that they had brought to the session to make an initial judgement about their purpose, validity, reliability and value.

This was followed on the 14/02/23 by a session led by Adrian Carr which linked to the work that has been started by Mark Cotton and Nick Scoltock about the developing Blacon High School Pedagogical model. The work around 'Connect' it is felt has become embedded and so we are now beginning to focus on the next phase of the model the 'Activate/ Explore' part of the lesson. This is all about sparking curiosity to motivate pupils to learn. This CPD looked at developing 'hooks' through the use of compelling sources or questions. This CPD will be followed up by a market place activity where departments can share what they have developed and what has worked well for them

in their subject areas as some of the best CPD is where we give teachers the time and space to share good practice with each other.

**SEND**

## SEND Across Whole School

Since last year, the SEND Team have held whole Staff Briefings every Wednesday morning to share key information around our students and strategies to support our students across all areas in school. These briefings include training and guidance on where to find key information regarding SEND and also provide overviews of how to use this information to enable learning to be successful for all students.

More recently, these briefings include 'spotlight's of our key students to ensure all staff are aware of needs and how best to assist with them.

In addition to these, Learning and Teaching briefings are alternated between SEND mornings, to do the same for all staff regarding the most recent research in pedagogy and to keep everyone updated and moving forwards towards success for all. These briefings will sometimes link up due to the needs of our students and ensuring that all teacher is aware of the need to be a Teacher of SEND.



## National Professional Qualifications for school Leadership

In terms of increasing leadership capacity and supporting staff with appropriate career stage CPD, the following members of staff are in the process of completing NPQs:

- Karen Appleby – NPQH
- Adrian Carr – NPQH
- Dave Sabri - NPQH
- Lauryn Gibson – NPQSL
- Sean Lloyd – NPQLT
- Catrin Kenyon-Owen - NPQSL



- Josh Slade – NPQLT
- Dave Forbes - NPQLT
- Michelle Garner – NPQLT – deferred from 2021

### **Initial Teacher Training**

We continue to host ITTs from a number of Higher Education Institutes including the University of Chester, Manchester Metropolitan University, Edge Hill and Liverpool John Moore's University and Mr Stockdale is in communication with others in the hope of developing meaningful relationships to expand the current offer.

All of the trainees this year are following the PGCE route, although we have supported a number of different routes into teaching in the past, such as Teach First and Schools Direct.

Currently we are hosting two trainees in English and one in History, PE and Music who are being supported by an excellent team of subject mentors and Mr Stockdale, who acts as Professional Mentor. The support that students receive while they are on placement at Blacon High School is fantastic and, universally, they describe a positive experience. In fact, several current members of our teaching staff completed part their initial teacher training at Blacon High School.

This is a quote from our current History trainee, who is on her second placement, during a Professional Mentor Meeting: "I have really enjoyed my introduction into teaching. I was made to feel welcome and have been fully supported by my Subject Mentor and the whole Humanities team. I have been given access to everything that I need to enable me to develop and fulfil my role effectively."

### **Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)**

We currently have six ECTs in school; three in year one and three in year two. They are following an extended, two year induction programme that is designed to supplement the training they received during their PGCE year. They are also supported by a designated training partner, the Cheshire Schools Teaching Hub, and a training provider, Best Practice Network.

All of ECTs are on track and up to date with their online training modules. All are coming up for either their second, or their penultimate reviews, depending on whether they are in year one or year two of the programme. One of our ECTs, who is in her second year, is leaving teaching and starts a new job in April; as such, she will not have fully met all of the standards of the course by the time she leaves. However, the two year programme is portable and is not time-bound, so should she return to teaching at some point in the future, she will only have one term to complete.

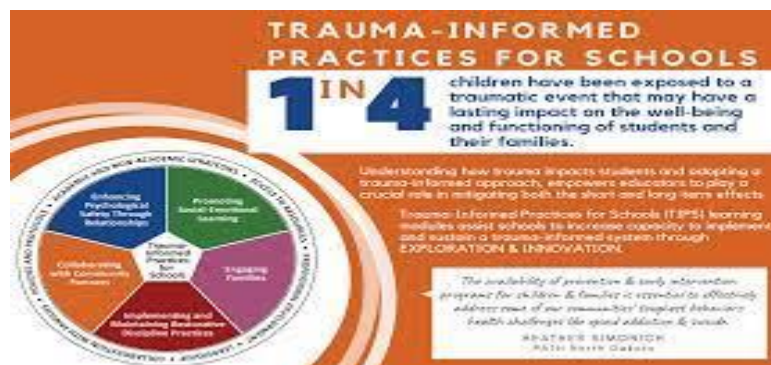
This year, we also have one member of staff in the Science department who is NQT; he is NQT as he was unable to complete his NQT year in his first school due to an extended period of absence. We will complete his NQT year in July. I was able to negotiate a deal with the Cheshire School Teaching

Hub, who are not charging us for the related admin' for this because they are our designated training providers for the ECT programme.

### Learning & Teaching - Research/Pedagogy

Karen Appleby continues to be involved in key research around pedagogy to support the whole school initiative to become a 'Trauma-Informed School' through the Virtual School Project in liaison with The University of Chester.

Karen, Assistant Headteacher and Shelley Macintosh, Family Support Worker, are both working on a project to become Trauma-Informed Practitioners. This is a research-based inquiry into the current climate in schools regarding attachment theory and how to best support all students and staff. Both will complete a 20 credit Masters' Level Standalone Module where they will each present a project that will be completed in school between now and October. Updates on their research and process will be recorded and reported back at each stage.



### Staff Wellbeing

Through our partnership with Chester Schools Together, the Kings School have gifted us access to the Well Being Hub, which is about to be launched to support parents, students and staff. The online resources provide interactive materials to support all aspects of mental health and well-being along with help for parents in the support of children with additional needs. There are only a small number of state schools with access to this resource and it is something that will support all members of our school community.



A second well-being breakfast was held for staff just before half term which was well attended and gave staff a chance to meet together to build the team and these will continue at the end of each half term.

### **The 'BEV' (Blacon Educational Village) - Success through Partnership.**

In many respects, the 'BEV' functions like a MAT without any formal obligation or joint management, rather, it is a voluntary commitment by the leaders of the five primary schools, along with the secondary school, to work collaboratively in order to secure the most positive futures possible for the young people in the community; the relationship is truly unique.

Teachers from Blacon High School deliver Music and PE in the BEV primary schools, which helps to forge vital first links with KS1 and 2 students. Additionally, students from Blacon High School support a number of events in the school calendar. For example, they organise and run the BEV sports day, which is a highlight of the year. This further enhances the relationships between primary and secondary, while developing independence, resilience and leadership skills amongst the high school students.

Blacon High School has one of the most unique and effective transition processes in the secondary education sector. Largely as a result of the fantastically positive and enduring relationship between the schools in the BEV,

### **The Bursary Scheme – Driven by excellence; values every one; transforms lives.**

Blacon High School maintains the highest aspirations for all of its students and is committed to closing the education gap by supporting all of them, regardless of their ability, to secure the best post 16 destinations. For the last nine years, it has been working with the Hope Opportunity Trust, in conjunction with the Springboard Foundation, and has coached almost forty of its more able students through a significant selection process to enable them to study for their A levels in some of the top independent schools in the country on fully funded bursary places. To date, three students have won coveted places at Eton, which is at the head of a long list of other, life-changing destinations including, but not limited to: Fettes; Gordonstoun; Bradfield College; Dulwich College; Merchiston Castle and St Peter's School, York. Almost all of these students have gone on to higher education and our ex-students are now employed in a range of professions including Veterinary Science, Physiotherapy, Accountancy and Chemical Engineering amongst others. For these students, the opportunities that they accessed as a result of achieving places on the bursary scheme were completely life-changing. Their success has had an enormous impact on the community of Blacon who are conscious that its young people can stand shoulder to shoulder with their more affluent peers, and succeed.

This year, five students passed through the extensive selection process and have successfully achieved places on the bursary scheme to study for their A-Levels at top independent schools.

Summer – Gordonstoun



Ryan – Durham School

Emmanuel – Royal School, Wolverhampton

Jack – Glenalmond

Jess – Denstone College

This is the highest number of students we have had in the scheme for some years. Potential students for the September 2024 intake have already been identified and an initial meeting held with parents to outline the eligibility criteria. Those students who wish to go forward, will be supported through the process by Mr Stockdale and then places awarded to students who successfully make it through the selection process, are dependent upon securing appropriate grades in their GCSEs.

We were incredibly proud to be invited to the performance of Les Miserable at The Kings School, with one of Blacon High School's former student, Layla starring in the show. Layla was successful in securing a bursary at the Kings School due to a partnership set up with Blacon. The show was superb and Layla gave a fantastic performance.

### **Staff absence**

The amount spent on supply

2020/21 - £41,439, this was offset by £15,000 insurance claim

2021/22 - £43,918 we have been able to claim £2,228 towards a maternity absence

2022/23 - £157,818 due to high numbers of absence, 3 maternity covers and 3 long term absence

Tutoring for Looked after children - £14,429 offset by income. This will have also been the case for previous years.

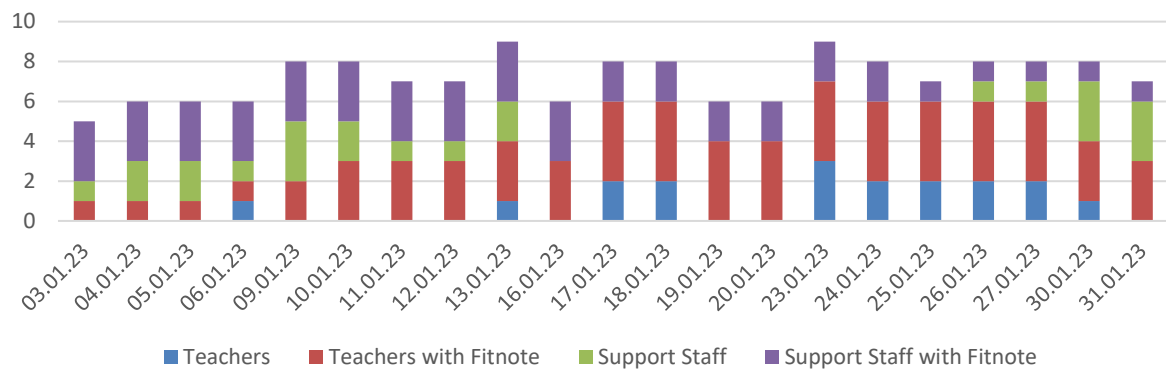
SEN (Including TA's and SEND Specialist teacher maternity cover for 1 term) Supply from April - July - £61,734

Teacher Supply April 22 – February 23 £81,655 - this equates on average to 355 days' supply, 1.86 teachers per day.

**Tables to show staff absence Spring Term 2023**



Graph to show the number of staff absent due to sickness  
from 3rd January 2023 - 3rd March 2023



### Behaviour Data

Exclusions ASP	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	Nav	BHS	Nav
P' exclusions as % of pupil group	0.26	0.13	0	0.15	0.25 =1	0.17	0.71 =3	0.20	0.44 =2	0.2	0.57 =3	0.20	0.16 =1	0.13	0.44 =3	0.10	0.29 =2	
% pupils with susp'					4.33 =17	8.56	6.86 =29	9.40	2.88 =13	10.1	6.84 =36	10.8	5.27 =32	7.43	5.21 =35	8.48	11.1 =76	
% pupils with 1 or more susp'	3.32	3.68	4.46	3.97	2.80 =11	4.31	3.55 =15	4.62	1.33 =6	4.71	4.18 =22	4.93	3.29 =20	3.69	3.42 =23	4.38	7.17 =49	
% pupils with 2 or more FTE	1.79	1.34	2.89	1.51	1.53 =6	1.68	1.42 =6	1.82	0.66 =3	1.91	1.52 =8	2.03	1.15 =7		0.74 =5		2.9 =20	

### Suspensions/ Permanent Exclusion Data

18/19 Au	18/19 Sp	18/19 Su	19/20 Au	19/20 Sp	19/20 Su	20/21 Au	20/21 Sp	20/21 Su	21/22 Au	21/22 Sp	21/22 Su	22/23 Au	22/23 Sp	22/23 Su
17	12 +(2pex)	7 +(1pex)	16	15 +(1pex)		19 +(2pex)	3	13 +(1pex)	18	40	14 +1(pex)	1+11	6+11 +2 (pex)	

### Step Out Data

18/19 Au	18/19 Sp	18/19 Su	19/20 Au	19/20 Sp	19/20 Su	20/21 Au	20/21 Sp	20/21 Su	21/22 Au	21/22 Sp	21/22 Su	22/23 Au	22/23 Sp	22/23 Su
6	1	2	5	1		1	0	0	1	0	3	2	5	

### Internal Exclusion Data

18/19 Au	18/19 Sp	18/19 Su	19/20 Au	19/20 Sp1	19/20 Su	20/21 Au	20/21 Sp	20/21 Su	21/22 Au	21/22 Sp	21/22 Su	22/23 Au	22/23 Sp	22/23 Su
15	15	19	35	22		27	7	14	48	58	36	91+35	64+12	

### SSA Data

18/19 Au	18/19 Sp	18/19 Su	19/20 Au	19/20 Sp1	19/20 Su	20/21 Au	20/21 Sp	20/21 Su	21/22 Au	21/22 Sp	21/22 Su	22/23 Au	22/23 Sp	22/23 Su
97.8%	97%	96.6%	96.9%	96.1%		97.5%	97.3%	96.7%	96.9%	96.3%	95.1%	96.7%	95.6%	
0.55%	0.62%	0.78%	0.82%	1.1%		0.8%	0.9%	0.75%	0.8%	0.9%	0.95%	0.85%	0.89%	

### SIG Group Data

18/19 Au	18/19 Sp	18/19 Su	19/20 Au	19/20 Sp1	19/20 Su	20/21 Au	20/21 Sp	20/21 Su	21/22 Au	21/22 Sp	21/22 Su	22/23 Au	22/23 Sp	22/23 Su
14	33	21	27	30		16	34	30	22	46	45	25	21	

### On Call Data

18/19 Au	18/19 Sp	18/19 Su	19/20 Au	19/20 Sp1	19/20 Su	20/21 Au	20/21 Sp	20/21 Su	21/22 Au	21/22 Sp	21/22 Su	22/23 Au	22/23 Sp	22/23 Su
95	136	129	286	305		257	41	124	297	252	129	389	146	

### Remove Room Data

18/19 Au	18/19 Sp	18/19 Su	19/20 Au	19/20 Sp	19/20 Su	20/21 Au	20/21 Sp	20/21 Su	21/22 Au	21/22 Sp	21/22 Su	22/23 Au	22/23 Sp	22/23 Su
83	104	99	218	193		182	34	98	241	243	127	359	141	



### **Suspensions/ Exclusions**

Suspensions from students have risen compared to the Autumn Term, however are in line to be significantly below the number from Spring term last academic year. Students in Curriculum+ continue to make up the vast majority of exclusions and this is expected due to the nature of the students in the model. Suspensions are dominated by 2 students who are struggling to meet the demands of the already flexible behaviour system in place. We have had to make the difficult decision to permanently exclude 2 students this term, which have been reviewed by Governors.

### **Step out**

5 students have been on step outs in the Spring term so far, 2 students for causing significant damage to school property and using offensive language and behaviour towards staff. 1 student was sent on a Step Out for Persistent Disruptive behaviour and working within the escalation process of the behaviour system. 2 students were on a Step Out for a significant fight that took place on the playground.

### **Internal Exclusion**

Internal exclusions have risen significantly. This is mainly because of the fact we now have a SLT supervision every day of the week. The use of internal isolation has helped to keep suspensions down and to keep students in school. With the addition of a new behaviour reflection manager to lead the Isolation/reflection room, this has meant that SLT can now manage a new daily isolation room for students who are persistently failing to follow school CORE principles and affecting the climate within school (for example being late to lessons). Our newly appointed behaviour reflection manager has now started to support the internal suspensions in school and to ensure the reflective and coaching work is undertaken as part of the learning for students.

### **SSA grades**

Negative SSA grades in class remain low, meaning that conduct is overwhelmingly positive. When students are in lessons, they are engaged with the learning and their teacher. Positive SSA grades have dropped slightly, meaning that there has been a slight increase in Passivity in class. Year 8 remain the year group causing most issues across school, both in and out of lessons. They have had an unsettled year with 3 Progress Leaders due to staffing and long term absence. Adrian Carr has taken on responsibility for this year group.

### **SIG data**

The SIG process in Spring 1 proved to be a success with 64% of the students in the process showing significant improvements with their attitudes to learning in class. This resulted in them moving out of the SIG process. 0 students failed to show any improvements and therefore moved up the process. 34% of students showed improvements (some 50% improvements), but have been kept in the process to ensure this continues. Year 7 now have 4 students who are in the process and year 8 have 5 students now that CAA is acting as PL.

### **On Call and remove data**

There has been a slight reduction in the number of On Calls compared to Autumn term, however these are still high, with a number of On Calls that ultimately result in removals. This has provoked discussion and is something that Mr Sabri will be analysing and planning for moving forward. The

idea behind the system is that On Call should be used as part of the behaviour system and a way to help re-engage the student within lesson, rather than to simply remove them.

### **Parent Feedback**

We take every opportunity to encourage parents to give us feedback using a slightly amended Ofsted Parent Feedback form. The form is amended only in the sense that we have added a section at the start asking parents to identify themselves. This is useful because we can then ensure that negative feedback is responded to and resolved by the most appropriate member of staff.

The pie charts below represent the cumulative feedback from all of the events when we have had parents on site since the start of the academic year (September 2022 – March 2023).

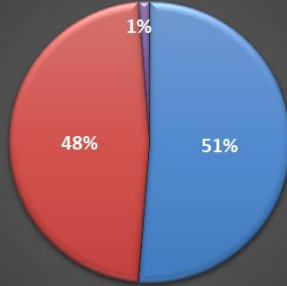
There are predominantly three areas of focus that we are addressing.

Homework continues to appear as one area where 18% of parents feel that their child does not receive enough homework. A new policy for homework is being implemented with a homework timetable. Homework will be set via the new school app (Edulink), which will enable us to monitor both homework setting and completion. With increased parental engagement, it is hoped that this new approach will enhance independence and resilience, and ensure that learning beyond the classroom will become the 'norm' amongst our cohort.

Perhaps the biggest anomaly is the question on bullying, where 18% of those polled don't think that bullying is dealt with effectively. However, when this is investigated, almost all of this number have no first-hand experience of any bullying issues and agree that it is a perception. This in itself is an area that needs further work and the increased visibility on social media, enhanced communication via Parent Pay, and subsequently the school app', the blog and the new website, alongside more face to face events in school will all contribute to changing this perception.

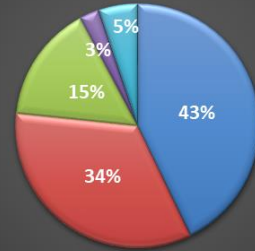
Behaviour and climate for learning is an area in which we have focused this year, with recent work on the culture and ethos undertaken with staff and students. 13% of parents have said they do not think students are well behaved and this is a piece of work linked the new app to support with consistent sanctions for behaviour which contravenes our values and policies.

**My child is taught well at this school?**



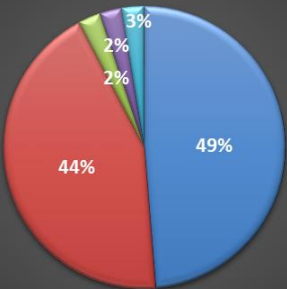
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

**My child receives appropriate homework for their age?**



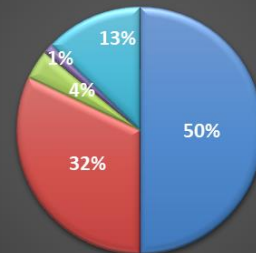
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

**This school is well led and managed?**



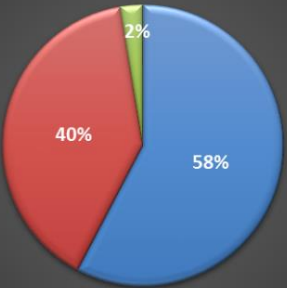
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

**This school responds well to any concerns I raise?**



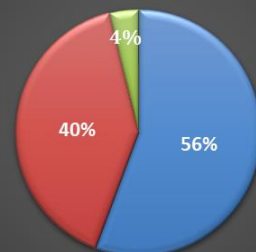
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

**My child feels safe in school?**



Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

**My child is well looked after at this school?**



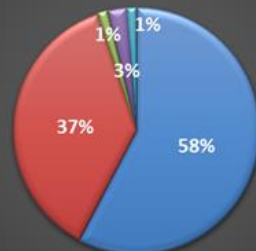
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

**I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress?**



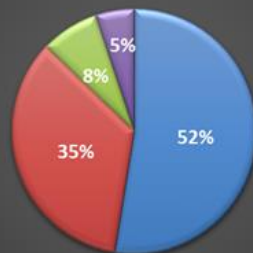
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

**Would you recommend this school to another parent?**



Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

**This school makes sure its pupils are well behaved?**



Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Applicable

**This school deals with bullying effectively?**



Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Applicable

### Edulink App

The new app, which is to become a key form of communication with parents, has now been launched. It is starting to be used effectively within school and we are having a campaign to encourage all parents to download it with a prize draw for each year group when all parents have downloaded it. 61% of parents have downloaded the app in the space of a few weeks so the challenge is to have all parents using this system. The current figures are as follows;

#### Count of Students with at Least One Parent Logged In to Edulink

Year Group	Yes	No
7	114	47
8	88	62
9	91	57
10	76	56
11	68	59
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>281</b>

#### Percentage of Students with at Least One Parent Logged In to Edulink

Year Group	Yes	No
7	71%	29%
8	59%	41%
9	61%	39%
10	58%	42%
11	54%	46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>39%</b>





### CCF Combined Cadet Force

We have recently taken the Cadets on 2 weekends away to staying over at Fox barracks. The Junior Cadets were introduced to the L98A2 rifle and all successfully passed their weapons handling tests, as well as some field craft exercises. The Senior Cadets all updated their weapons handling tests and were introduced to the Small Bore target rifle, and competed against other schools in a shooting competition, in which we finished third. There were also a few promotions within our contingent. The Cadets will now be looking forward to the Annual Summer camp, which will possibly be in Scotland this year. Our thanks to Josh Jones who supports the Cadets each week on a Monday after school.



## Part 2 – Highlights from the Spring Term

### Humanities

#### Holocaust Memorial Day January 2023

14 pupils in Year 8 participated in activities at Chester Cathedral to commemorate this year's event. These events at the Cathedral are a really engaging way to introduce Year 8 pupils to a topic they will be studying in Year 9 in significant depth. Last year pupils listened to the story of Holocaust survivor Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines, but this year we were incredibly lucky to meet Lady Milena in person and ask her questions about her experience. Her father escaped Czechoslovakia the day before the occupation of the country by the Nazis because he was both Jewish, and a supporter of a prominent anti-Nazi author, however he left his wife and children behind. When she was nine years old, Lady Milena and her younger sister Eva were able to leave Prague on a special train, arranged by Nicholas Winton (who saved 669 children in this way). Lady Milena and her sister were cared for by a local family until their mother was able to arrive one year later, having escaped via Norway. The family were thus all reunited. The activities which followed the talk and Q&A session after lunch were designed to complement the knowledge they gained from the presentation, through an exploration of art and poetry. Staff at the Cathedral were, yet again, extremely complimentary about all our pupils and how well they listened, reflected and conducted themselves throughout the day.

### Latin club

The group of 6 pupils from Year 7 and 8 continue to impress Mrs Owens and Mr Lacey with the increasing range of Latin vocabulary they are able to recall. We have been focusing on the daily life of Caecilius and, through his stories, we have been able to recognise just how much of our daily language is Latin in origin. It is really encouraging to see these pupils choosing to attend regular extra-curricular lessons after school on a Friday. They agree it will help them stand out when applying for college and university in the future and recognise it is a challenging subject, but absolutely fascinating.

### Upcoming events

Two Geography field trips, to allow pupils to complete quantitative and qualitative surveys linked to the requirements of the fieldwork element of the GCSE exam in the summer, are provisionally booked for the week after we return from the Easter break. Pupils will benefit from seeing the practical application of data analysis in a real life situation.



## Curriculum+

Curriculum+ students engaging in external provision provided by Roger and the Route Five Pursuits team. The students engage in practical activities working towards their John Muir Award. The group have visited Delamere Forrest, Loggerheads, Moel Famau, Snowdonia, Llandudno and indoor rock climbing.



## **PE department**

PE department is proud of the extensive extra-curricular clubs, enrichment and fixtures delivered throughout the spring term. Since November, students in KS3 and KS4 have the opportunity to attend Volleyball, Climbing, Netball, Badminton, 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:

### **Football**

Year 7 Boys reached the Chester & District Cup Final after an impressive 3-0 win against Upton High School in Quarter Final (Zak Jackson x 2 and Mason Ravenscroft) they beat Catholic High School 4-0 in the semi-final (Mason Ravenscroft, Myles McElmeel, Zak Jackson, Henley Garland) and now play Christleton High School the cup final late March. The team beat Bishops in an 11v11 friendly 1-0 with Henley Garland scoring the winner. Mr Forbes team narrowly missed out on the semi-final by goal difference in the recent 7 aside competition.

Year 8 Boys lost 3-0 to Upton High School in the Chester Cup Quarter Final and 3-2 (Jake Jones, Jake Rogers) against Bishops Heber in a friendly.

Year 9 Boys beat Wade Deacon 3-1 (Chao x 2, Cooney) round 2, Heath School 3-1 (Chaos, Ball and Rigby) in Cheshire Cup round 3 but lost 4-0 to Christleton High School in Cheshire Cup Quarter Final. Year 9 boys beat Upton 3-1 (Denis x 2 and Jake Cooney) in the Chester Cup Quarter Final and play Tarporley in the semi-final March 6<sup>th</sup> with the hope to join year 7 in the cup final.

Year 9 B Boys football team won the 9B tournament final 5-2 against Queens Park high School (Mo, Aidan, Ashton, Lennon and Shay) but also lost 2-0 against Bishops Heber in a friendly with Lucas Shell and Lucas Hughes impressing in defence.

Year 10 Boys beat Bishops Heber 5-1, Charlie Keay scored 3, Reeman Saith and Joe Jones amongst the goals in friendly win.

Year 11 Boys football team lost 2-1 (Tyler Burgess) against Kings Warrington Academy in last 32 of ESFA National Cup. They also lost 11-0 to Christleton High School in the Chester Cup Quarter Final.

Year 9/10 Girls beat Catholic High 2-1 (Kayla Breeze and Mollie O Hanlon) in Round 1 of the Chester & District Cup but lost 4-0 in the Quarter Final against a strong Tarporley High School.

### **Netball**

Year 7 Girls came 4<sup>th</sup> in the u12 Chester & District Plate competition. Against Catholic High, Queens Park and Bishops, the year 8 team won 2 matches and the year 7 team won 1 match. Players of the match for year 8 were Ellie Green and Edie Byrne, year 7 were Lois Marshall and Sofia Dee-Mcquillan. Year 10 played Small School league games against the same schools, winning 1 game with Maya Johnson player of the match.

### **Sports Hall Athletics**

Year 8 Boys and Girls both came 7<sup>th</sup> out of 10 schools at the Chester and District sports hall athletics competition. Year 7 Girls finished 5<sup>th</sup> but Year 7 Boys are our schools 1<sup>st</sup> ever Chester and District year 7 champions and represent Chester in the County games in March.

### **Basketball**

Year 7 Boys are Chester & District Basketball Champions after winning all 4 games against Queens Park, Bishops Bluecoat, Upton High School and Bishops Bluecoat. Alfie Scott and Lucas Mackay star performers in excellent squad effort. The year 7 team also won 35-2 against Catholic High in a friendly thanks to a 20 point haul by Lucas Mackay.

Year 7/8 Boys Basketball team won 20-12 against Bishops Bluecoat, Jamal Lemaitre scoring 8 points and defensively played well.

Year 8/9 Boys came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Chester and District Basketball League. We lost 13-24 to Kings (Tomi Oni scored 8 points) but beat Catholic High 36-16 with Richard Uwalaka scoring 10 points. The team also beat Queens Park High School 10-4 (Tomi Oni scored 8 points).

The year 10/11 Boys Basketball team finished 3<sup>rd</sup> overall after impressive win 44-16 against Catholic High, George Scott sunk 21 points. They also beat Bishops 35-24 with Jake Graves scoring 14 points. We lost 30-28 in an incredibly close game against Kings High School which was our best performance of the season.

### **Volleyball**

Year 11 Boys are Chester and District champions beating Catholic High 6 times with excellent 3 touch volleyball.

### **Table Tennis**

The u13 boys finished runners up in the Chester and district tournament. We won all of our games against Catholic High but narrowly lost out to winners Kings but the year 7's Stanley and Jake displayed excellent attitudes.

### **Badminton**

U14 boys' team came 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Chester and District tournament in doubles matches with Theo Robinson and Lennon Smith impressing. We lost to an impressive Kings and Bishops but won our matches against Upton High School.

### **Dodgeball**

Year 8/9 Boys came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Chester and District tournament, losing out to a well-coordinated Abbey gate team. Roan Emnes and Mason Artell with amazing catches.



### **Climbing**

Mr Carr runs a Key Stage 3 climbing club every Friday evening which is popular with our younger students.

### **Dance**

Year 9 Girls performed there AQA GCSE Dance practical moderation worth 40% of overall grade.

### **Rage Fitness Company**

Year 11 Girls continue to attend the Rage Fitness Wellbeing Youth Provision programme every Thursday period 5 from January to February during Year 11 y band core PE. We transport the students every Thursday to take part in practical mental well- being workshops led by the personal trainers.

### **Blacon Sports Village Sports**

Excellent BEV year 3 and year 4 dodgeball competition refereed by year 10 and 11 leaders. Year 4 winners were JH Godwin and year 3 winners were Highfield Primary. The year 5 & 6 Sports Hall athletics umpired by our year 11 leaders carrying out running, jumping and throwing events. The winners were Highfield. Dee point won the Year 5/6 Aaron Aldom Trophy basketball tournament







## **Chester School Sport Partnership**

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 5 and 6 Sports Hall Athletics Competition (Inspire category event)**

17th and 18<sup>th</sup> January at Ellesmere Port Sports Village. Involving 26 schools and 406 pupils from primary schools across Chester. Saughall Primary School were the overall winners and St Martin's Academy were the small schools winners both going on to represent Chester Schools at the County Finals in March.





### **Year 5 and 6 High 5 Netball Competition (Inspire category event)**

8th February at Blacon High School, involving 16 schools and 140 pupils. We also had 8 BHS leaders who umpired the matches and were highly commended by teachers from other schools. They commented on their confidence and apathy towards to primary school children whilst umpiring the matches. Belgrave primary school were overall winners who will go on to represent Chester Schools at the County Finals in March.



### **Years 3 and 4 Bee Netball Festival (Aspire category event)**

This took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> February at Blacon High School, involving 11 schools and 46 pupils. This event is a festival where pupils rotate around a carousel of skills stations to improve their catching, throwing and movement skills. This event is aimed at children who are not very competitive and do not play for a netball club outside of school.



### **New Age Kurling and Boccia County Finals (Celebrate category event)**

20<sup>th</sup> January and 10<sup>th</sup> February were the county finals for the above events, this competition is for pupils with additional needs. Chester Blue Coat, Tarvin and Dorin Park were our representative schools at this event. All the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the day and it is great to see pupils from all schools and all abilities have the opportunity to take part in a county final and represent their school.



### **Key Steps Gym 3/4 and 5/6 (Inspire and Aspire category events)**

On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February Ellesmere Port Gymnastics Club hosted the Year 3&4 and 5&6 Key Steps Gymnastics competitions. Here the children take part as a team in the Aspire event for those who do not belong to a club. The club gymnastics take part as individuals with the top three going to the county finals. We had 7 school teams taking part involving 40 children. Representing Chester at the Cheshire and Warrington School Games County final we will have children from Mickle Trafford, Mill View and Oldfield Primary Schools.



### **Sports Ambassador Training**

On Wednesday 25th January Chester City Football Club's King George v Sports Hub was the host site for the primary school Sports Ambassador training. Here the children learnt about the role of a Sports Ambassador and what they can do back in their schools.

They were tasked with setting up a School Sport Organising Crew, organising a level 1 intra school competition and also helping with the sports notice board.

We had 36 children from 18 primary schools in attendance.



### **Primary FA Course**

On Tuesday 7th February, we organised the FA Primary Teacher CPD course at Northgate Arena in Chester. We had 22 primary school teachers in attendance from across Chester and Ellesmere Port.

The course provided an introduction to the skills, knowledge and understanding required to plan and deliver high quality KS1 / KS2 Physical Education lessons. The course also demonstrated how the vehicle of football can be utilised to deliver certain aspects of the National Curriculum.





### **County School Games Organisers – Successful Bid.**

As a county group of School Games Organisers we were successful in a bid from Active Cheshire to run an activity day in Warrington for children from the Hong Kong Community. Here the children rotated around a series of sports stations (boxing, badminton, tennis, table tennis, football, golf, climbing) which were run by the local sports clubs. The aim of the session was to help the children to integrate into the community and provide a pathway to local sports clubs.

The session in Warrington was used as a pilot to see whether the model could be replicated across other communities across Cheshire (e.g. people from Ukraine, Afghanistan).

The pilot will be evaluated in April where they may be potential for further applications.



### **Swimming Teacher Qualifications**

We have worked with a local company to offer swimming teacher qualification courses to the schools in our area. We have offered a Support Teacher Course for those who are assisting in swimming lessons and also the Teacher course. The Teacher of School Swimming (Key Stages 1 and 2) is part of the Swim England National Curriculum Training Programme (NCTP). Once completed, the teachers will be equipped to plan and evaluate session plans in line with the national curriculum, and teach school swimming independently.

### **‘Unleash Your Drive’ - Mental health programme at Blacon High School**

Chester SSP have been successful in applying for funding to run a programme at Blacon High School to improve pupil's mental health.

‘Unleash Your Drive’ is a golf-based life skills programme that provides the opportunity for pupils to develop golf skills and life skills through golf. The programme develops mental toughness which is closely linked to character, resilience, grit and perseverance. The unique factor about the Unleash Your Drive programme is that mental toughness levels can be measured at the start of the programme, improved on through a 6–10-week course of lessons, with a measuring / impact report produced at the end. We are looking forward to seeing how this works with a targeted group in the hope of rolling in out across the whole school.

### **Nominated for LTA award - 300 attendees at Chester Racecourse**

Chester SSP have been nominated for an award from the Cheshire LTA (Cheshire Lawn Tennis Association). The awards ceremony is on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March at Chester Racecourse and we will let you know how we get on!

### **MFL – Modern Foreign Languages**

Last half term, we had our first of two visits this year from the highly sought-after, foreign language theatre company, Onatti Productions (Warwick).

The actors cleverly delivered a 50-minute play entirely in French to all Y8 pupils and Y10 GCSE French. The play, 'La Maison Hantée', told the story of two backpackers arriving at a deserted house, where all was not what it seemed! Our students (and non-language staff!), thoroughly enjoyed the comical production and everyone demonstrated great resilience and respect in remaining focused throughout the performance. It was a fantastic and unfamiliar experience for our students.

Engagement was excellent and their feedback has been nothing but positive. We definitely plan to make this an annual LOTC experience!

For now, we are very much looking forward to our second visit from Onatti Productions in June, when they will deliver a production in Spanish to Y7, Y9 and Y11 students.



### **Science**

This half term pupils in year 7 have been studying Cells, substances and mixtures and Forces. Whilst year 8 have been studying forces and pressure, plants and the periodic table. Both these years have been taking part in a sustainability workshop with Chester Zoo and year 7 will be having a final workshop on Fri 17<sup>th</sup> Feb with a LOTC opportunity on a free trip to Chester Zoo.

Year 9 have completing their final Bridging unit of Physics where they have completed practicals on speed of cars and forces acting on parachutes. They will this half term be transitioning onto the AQA

Trilogy Combined Science course. 9x1 have also had a careers talk from a local pharmacist. ANF has also been preparing for offering a new course in Sept 23, BTEC in small animal management.

Year 10 have started studying unit 2s topics including Homeostasis, rates of reaction and forces in action and motion.

Year 11 have been preparing for unit 1 mocks after February half term and recapping required practicals with P6 starting week 2 Mon after school. Form interventions have also started during the 30min form time in the middle of the day. Pupils have been grouped by data and are receiving bespoke intervention sessions delivered by Heads of English, Maths and Science, so 3 sessions a week.

The whole science department have also been preparing for British Science week starting March 10th with a small trip to Chester Zoo with 15 year 9 pupils.

STEM club having been completing practicals and studying the science behind static electricity, making circuits with playdoh, Chromatography (see photos) and investigating resistance and basic engineering.

### **Chester Zoo Sustainability Workshop**

All students in year 7 and 8 had the fantastic opportunity to take part in three workshops with Chester Zoo. These workshops were focused around the very relevant topics of climate change and sustainability. Educational staff from the zoo visited the school during some of their science lessons, providing the students with activities and games to help them think about the impact of humans on the environment, and how we can be sustainable every day. Year 7 have then had the amazing opportunity to visit the zoo fully funded and attended a fourth workshop. All students involved will also be receiving a free family ticket next term, to visit the zoo in their own time and spread the message about sustainability to their families. The students have really enjoyed this experience of learning outside the classroom, and we really look forward to working with Chester Zoo again in the future.





## Science Club

December 2022. Key Stage 3 Science club used chromatography to separate the components used in different ink mixtures. They used their "Snowflake Chromatography" to make Christmas cards, lots of which they sent to their teachers.



## English

Over the last half-term, KS3 English students have been studying our favourite: William Shakespeare. Following on from studying his life, works and society at the time, Yr7 commenced their studies of *The Tempest*, and Yr8 commenced their studies of *Richard III*. Our aim for all students is to have studied a History, Tragedy, and Comedy from The Bard during their time at Blacon High School. Students have enjoyed acting out the key scenes from the plays via a 'Whoosh' and have then gone on to study Shakespeare's language in more depth, analysing the key themes and characters in the plays.

In addition to their studies, KS3 students recently enjoyed celebrating World Book Day. Miss Illingworth planned lessons which focused on Equality and Diversity, and students took a break from their



Shakespeare studies to be immersed into *Wonder* and *Noughts and Crosses*. They also had the opportunity to create their own bookmark – see the images attached.

Year 9 students have been studying *An Inspector Calls*. We are really looking forward to our upcoming trip to Liverpool (thanks to Mrs Gibson-Tipping for arranging this!) to see the sold-out stage adaptation of this eerie drama which makes us question our role within society, and responsibility in the ways in which we treat others.



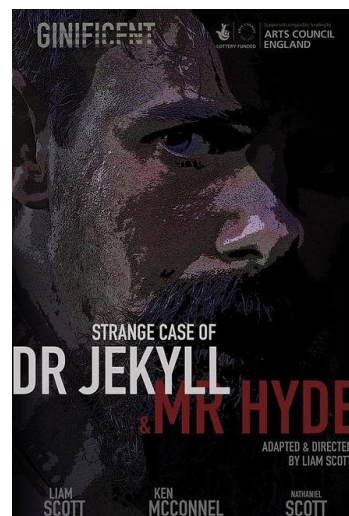
As well as studying *An Inspector Calls*, Year 9 students have been treated to a two week mini Scheme of Work focusing on Media Studies. Students will be selecting their options for GCSE very soon, and in order to ensure that they can make an informed decision, Mr Colwell planned a short unit focusing on Media Representation and superhero films. Students were encouraged to question the different types of characters represented in typical superhero films, and

consider why we don't see many superheroes who are disabled, LGBTQIA+ or from different countries or backgrounds. From this, Year 9 have been able to decide whether Media Studies is the right GCSE option for them.

We were thrilled to see the fantastic turn-out for the recent Year 9 Options Evening where students and their families attended to find out more information about English Literature and Language GCSE, and Media Studies. We are continuing to actively discuss students' options with them, and we look forward to considering how options can impact on future pathways even further in the week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> March. We will be identifying the careers represented by different characters in our texts, as well as finding out which careers English can lead to.

Year 10 students have immersed themselves into Victorian England with their studies of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. This Gothic thriller has kept us guessing until the very end, and allowed students to question the morals and ethics behind science experiments. We have recently purchased a package from a theatre company who have created a film adaptation of Stevenson's shilling shocker, and we are hoping to invite the stars of the film into school very soon to perform in our very own hall.

Year 11 students continue to prepare for their English Literature and Language GCSEs and have been demonstrating their skills in regular 'Monday Mocks'. As well as this, they have been recording their Speaking and Listening presentations. Miss McFetridge is proud to say that the students have chosen to present on some of the most unique and engaging topics ever selected for speaking and listening in the history of Blacon High School. Examples include: links





between Alzheimer's and sport, the impact of upbringing on the actions of serial killers and the role of the Queen in the Aberfan disaster.

Finally, we have once again had students' work published in the Young Writers competition. The competition focus was 'Integer' – students had to combine their knowledge of numbers and English and write a 100 word story which revolved around a number. Miss Perrett was delighted to say that her class had the most published pieces – congratulations!

Overall, the English Department are extremely proud of all students for their continued work towards English Language and Literature; we look forward to developing our students' curriculum and opportunities outside of the classroom even further next half-term.

## **Maths**

### **Year 7**

This half term Year 7 have been looking to build on skills learnt at primary school but with a strong focus on problem solving. They have taken skills on the four operations and applied them to geometry, shape and data questions. Focussing on these number based topics applied to a variety of different areas will give these students strong foundations to build on over the next five years of learning.

### **Year 8**

So far this term Year 8 have been covering Algebra in the form of Brackets, equations and inequalities, sequences and indices. This work builds on the algebra topics covered in the autumn term of year 7. The spiralling curriculum allows students to revisit and build on topics ensuring they are committed to their long term memory.

### **Year 9**

Year 9 have been working on Maths and Money topics, investigating real life maths considerations such as VAT and types of Interest banks offer. This is one of the easiest topics to discuss in real life terms and this year group have been learning lessons on savings, wages and expenses which will support them in their life after Blacon High School.

### **Year 10**

Year 10 have been covering geometry topics including angles and bearings, circles and vectors. Geometry topics make up 12-18% of the GCSE specification so they are crucial topics. During the rest of the Spring term students will look at ratio and fractions, percentage and interest and probability. These topics will be revisited next year before the examinations, the aim now is to provide a solid understanding to build on.

### **Year 11**

Year 11 have been covering a wide range of topics this half term which varies from class to class. At this stage of the year staff are using the scheme of work more loosely as we have completed many

mock exam papers giving staff the data to inform bespoke learning for their groups. We have created intervention groups for our higher tier students aiming to secure grade 5's and our foundation students aiming for grade 5's and 4's during PSHE lessons. Period 6 sessions have been running as they have been all year for students who wish to gain an extra advantage. Year 11 students have also been completing regular "Monday Mocks" which have been invaluable in terms of exam preparation and informing lesson planning moving forward.

We will look to build on the work happening in classrooms with more learning outside the classroom/trips over the rest of the year.

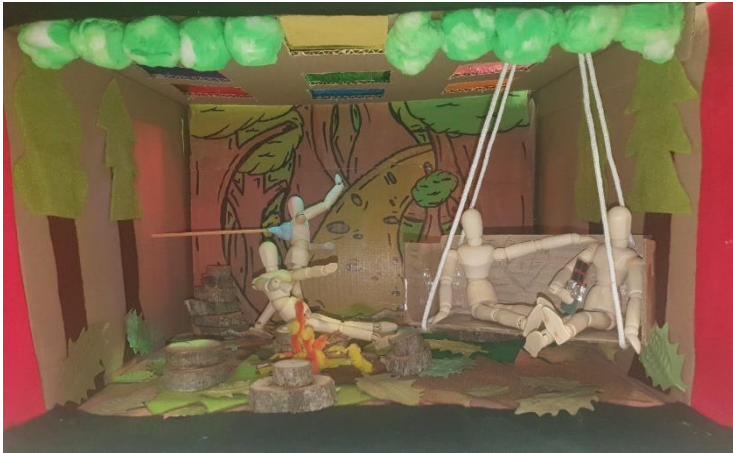
### **Performing Arts**

#### **School Performance - Annie**

Mrs Salisbury is proud to announce that this year's whole school musical will be a production of Annie Jr. Drama Club have been exploring musical theatre skills through weekly workshops, developing characterisation, vocal and movement techniques and rehearsal discipline. Auditions were held in the Studio on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March and the ensemble will rehearse in Drama Club every Monday and in Choir every Wednesday. The performance will take place at Storyhouse in the Garrett Theatre on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July. We are very excited to showcase the talents of our young people.

#### **Year 9 homework project**

Students were set the task of taking on the role of a theatre set designer and creating a set for the play DNA, by Dennis Kelly. The play is set in the woods outside a town. Students were invited to use recyclable materials and natural products in their work. They had explored the role of a set designer, and had looked at a range of designers' work. They designed sets which could be used for different stage configurations, for example end-on, theatre in the round and traverse. Some of the designs were displayed in the Studio at Year 9 Options Evening.





### **Student Parliament**



Mr Stockdale has been liaising with the Children's Commission since the Autumn term, initially, as it offered the opportunity for members of our Student Parliament to join regional and national meetings remotely in order to discuss common issues that affect many teenagers in education.

As a result of this work, we were selected to contribute to a United Nations Conference for the Rights of the Child. This particular conference only happens once every five years and, as mentioned previously in my presentation at the last governors' meeting, three students from the Student Leadership Team were working directly with the Children's Commission and preparing to present at this conference.

Students generated a well-researched presentation on 'Gender Inequality in the Workplace' and considered what practical steps we could employ in educational settings to improve this situation in the future. The three students involved delivered the presentation, remotely, to the UN conference in Geneva, which was attended by representatives of School Councils from the international community; this was something of a coup for our students and for the school. After the presentations from all the international student representatives had been delivered, there was a Q and A session.

Following this experience, the Children's' Commissioner has asked that we feed back the experience to other representatives at the next national meeting.

### International links



Following receipt of an invitation from the Vasil Levsky High School, our twinned school in Karlovo, Bulgaria, STO communicated details of the proposed exchange trip and invited those who may be interested along to an information evening.

The programme was necessarily paused in response to the impact of Covid, and this is the first time that the trip will have gone ahead since June 2019. However, Mr Stockdale has been in continuous contact and has maintained effective links with his colleagues in the Vasil Levsky High School in the interim period. This will be the fourth time that we have engaged in this student exchange.

This initial process has now been completed and seven students are confirmed for the exchange, with a possible eighth waiting to hear; this will depend on whether the school in Karlovo can accommodate an extra student. STO is about to book flights for the trip, which is scheduled to depart on Thursday 22nd June and return on Tuesday 27th.

Yet again, the kind offer to host students from Blacon High School represents a fantastic opportunity and we look forward to enhancing the cultural capital of our students while developing new and, hopefully, long lasting friendships. I look forward to sharing the learning from this year's exchange trip in due course. Our twinned logo has been updated to reflect Blacon High school's new branding.

### Music

We are currently running a new KS4 course, BTEC Tech Award in Music Practice for the first time in Year 10, due to the legacy BTEC First Award removed from league tables, year 11 are the final year to complete the BTEC First Award in music. Year 10 pupils are currently completing Component 1 of the new BTEC Tech Award, where they have to research musical styles and create music products.

They are currently composing outstanding film music scores for a Haunted House extract, using Minimalist music features.

KS3 classes are also enjoying composition projects; Year 8 are currently working on a film music topic, composing scores for moving images. Year 9 are composing conjunct and disjunct leitmotif melodies for a Video/Computer game character.

### **Extra-Curricular**

We have several successful extra-curricular activities and clubs in the music department (new year 7 pupils have joined the existing School Band and Choir) with the addition of new clubs (Flute Choir and Guitar Club - see photos) and the addition of Flute, Piano and Singing peripatetic lessons (joining the Woodwind, Brass, Guitar and Drum lessons already available). The School Choir are working with Drama Club to prepare for the whole school musical Annie, which is due to be performed at The Storyhouse in July, they are sounding fantastic!

### **Primary School Provision**

Miss Mchale and Miss Jones are delivering successful Music Curriculum lessons for KS1 and KS2, at 3 of our 5 feeder Primary schools (Highfield, Deepoint and JH Godwin). Delivering Music curriculum lessons for whole classes using Charanga, and either whole school singing assemblies or leading the school choir.

Throughout Spring 1 at Highfield with Miss Mchale, the year 5 pupils continued with their instrumental tuition; every child playing either a woodwind or brass instrument as an ensemble. Several pupils have asked to continue during their break time for the remainder of the year to continue developing their skills.

Deepoint Choir are performing in the musical, Peter Pan, at The Storyhouse on Friday 24th March. MCE has prepared them for this performance working with MAPA Performing Arts School.

Miss Jones is delivering successful whole school singing assemblies at JH Godwin and curriculum lessons every Friday morning.

Several staff in the primary schools have asked to observe our teaching, to support their own CPD when delivering KS1 and KS2 music lessons.

### **Chester Schools Together**

Miss Mchale is now School Lead for the Chester Schools Together project, a partnership between our school, Bishop's Bluecoat, Chester Catholic High and King's School. MCE has worked with the lead from the other schools to plan a programme of events for the remainder of the year.

In February, Miss Mchale attended an Oxbridge session at Kings with pupils from Year 11. This session was arranged by Kings School, to support year 12 pupils who were planning to apply to Oxford or Cambridge. Year 11 pupils were invited to attend to explore potential opportunities for their future. It was a great session delivered by the head of 6th form at Kings and a member of staff



from Cambridge University. Explaining the application process etc. Our pupils found it inspirational and helpful for their future.

Year 8 Technology Masterclasses are starting on Saturday 4th March, with 5 pupils from year 8 attending workshops at Bishop's Bluecoat school. Pupils will participate in a Scalextric school project that aims to raise awareness of STEM and wider engineering roles. 5 of our year 8 pupils will work with pupils from the other three schools to design and manufacture miniature Scalextric cars using CAD/CAM design principles. Pupils will also engage in graphic design through the customisation of their car and will work with advanced technologies such as 3D printers. During the final workshop, pupils will race their cars.

We are looking to develop the CST partnership further and I will be asking Blacon Staff to complete a google form with proposals for each department, of activities, trips or clubs that they could link with one of our partnership schools. Funding is available from the Westminster Foundation to support these projects.



## Technology Faculty

We have had some really exciting things happening within the Technology Faculty this term! In Graphics our talented Y10 pupils have completed their first controlled assessment project – “Innocent Smoothie inspired fridge magnets”. For this, they have had to explore existing products, experiment with a range of different media and techniques and then edit their work digitally using Photoshop. Their final outcome was a high quality fridge magnet and the results have been incredible. Their work is so professional, and has certainly showcased their skills and creativity.



In Y11 Product Design, pupils have also completed their first project which was focussed around designing and making a Lamp, using inspiration from existing products and designers. They have had the opportunity to research, evaluate, design, model, make and evaluate their final outcomes. We think the outcomes are outstanding, and some of the work could certainly pass for the work of established designers! The pictures show just a few of some brilliant pieces of work.



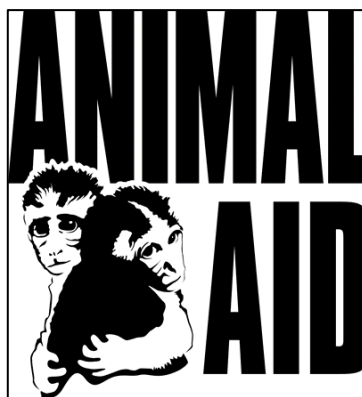
In Art, Y11 have made exceptional progress with their coursework task. This project focussed upon portraiture and the work of Mark Powell and Ant Carver. They have explored different materials, paint, collage, printing techniques and digital processes to produce personal responses. We are delighted with the work they have produced and are really proud to share some examples of their work.

It's amazing to hear the pupils articulate their ideas and the inspiration behind their personal responses.





In KS4 Food, we have explored the factors that influence people's food choices and how this might look in a modern society. We have had some excellent discussion and debate surrounding environmental issues and ethical issues such as animal welfare. We also arranged to have a guest speaker from 'Animal Aid' come in and share their personal reasons for following a Vegan diet, and how adaptations can be made to meet the nutritional requirements of different groups in society. It was really interesting to hear opinions from the guest speaker, and was a really good opportunity for lots of pupils to challenge these opinions in a mature and respectful manner, demonstrating a really broad knowledge of nutrition and environmental considerations. We were really proud of our pupils and found the experience to be really purposeful.



### Extra-Curricular Activities in Technology



This year we have been running an extracurricular project with 'Blacon Beacon' to raise awareness of Loan sharks. They have been working to create resources for a promotional campaign that will be used in the local community to make people aware of the risk of loan sharks and how they can have such a devastating impact on people's lives. Pupils have been given the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills, experimenting with spray paints to produce a background. They also worked with a professional graffiti artist, made stencils and learned how to transfer them effectively on to the backgrounds. The work they have produced is exceptional, and we can't wait to see them featured in the community.



In Food we have been working with The Countess of Chester hospital to raise money for the intensive care unit. Y7 pupils made a range of Valentine's Day themed cakes and conducted a cake sale. They raised £127 which is a superb effort. The pupils were thrilled to be helping out such an important cause and really enjoyed creating high quality cakes to be sold to pupils at break time. We very much look forward to working with the hospital again to help raise much needed funds.

On behalf of the pupils in Technology, I would like to thank the amazing teachers and support staff who have gone over and above to support all of the above achievements. It takes a lot of organisation and time to offer such a broad range of opportunities for our pupils and we are very lucky to have staff that consistently go over and above expectations.



I am incredibly proud of the resilience demonstrated by students and staff each and every day along with a commitment and determination to prepare every young person for success.

***Rachel Hudson - Headteacher***