

Head's Report for Governors 2nd July 2020 – Update on Covid 19 Part 2



1. Business Critical Decisions

Appointments – We have successfully appointed the following staff, all new appointments due to the growth of the school;

- Teacher of RE - Scarlett (NQT)
- Teacher of Technology - Suzanne Mciver (NQT) in Technology
- Chris Shaw – SEND Teacher
- Facilities Manager – Julie Mounfield
- SENDco – Victoria Rose- Davies and Catrin Kenyon Owen as a job share (3 days per week each)

Appointments still to be made;

- 6 Teaching Assistants
- Admin – Careers/Learning outside the classroom
- Head teacher's PA

Admissions

We have 151 on role for the Year 7 cohort due to join the school in September. There were 5 appeals, which were heard last week and out of these 2 were successful in securing a place. This leaves a waiting list of 14. This is a great achievement for the school and is now the third consecutive year in which the school has been full and oversubscribed. This is testament to the belief in our school within the community, continued improvement and success.

Year 7 Applications for September 2020

Number of on Time Applications received	181
1st preference	154
2nd preference	12
3rd preference	15
Late 1st preference	12
Total	193

Anticipated numbers for September 2020

Year	Student Numbers	Number of Forms of Entry
7	151	6

8	150	6
9	141	6
10	120	5
11	111	5
Total	673	

Anticipated Numbers of students with SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Year	7	8	9	10	11	Total
Students with Education, Health and Care Plans	3	3	3	3	2	14
Students identified as having special needs (SEN Support)	36	33	37	15	21	142
Total	39	36	40	18	23	156

24% of the school's cohort is SEND which is why additional Teaching Assistants are required, to support the increasing needs and growth in numbers.

Year 6 Transition

All students have been given access to their own Google Classroom with transition activities for students to access, in order to support our virtual transition. We have a 360 virtual tour of the school with clips of staff introducing their areas, available for students and parents to view which can be accessed

<http://www.blaconhighschool.net/ourvirtualtour/>

Mrs Donna Tait, Head of Computer Science along with Mrs Kelly Broadbent along with the cleaning and site team, did an incredible job to prepare the school for the recording of the virtual tour to make sure it was painted, cleaned, tidied with high quality displays on the new boards now hung around the school in every room and corridor. The virtual tour will enable students to explore the building in an interactive way, to help them familiarise themselves with the school, ready for September.

Mrs Stephens, Year 7 Progress Leader has arranged for each parent to be given a time for a telephone meeting with each tutor, supported by an online Year 6 Welcome evening presentation with recordings from staff and key information about the school. Transition for the most vulnerable students has been arranged by Mr Adrian Carr and his team and we have been able to arrange for three bubbles to come into school on three occasions at the end of the term.

Partial Reopening of School

It was great to welcome back 78 students out of 111 in Year 10 last week, with assemblies/briefings for each bubble and then a further 2 hours of teaching and contact this week. The careful planning for the return of Year 10 has worked well, with almost all students attending and staff feeding back on how they felt comfortable and safe with the arrangements in place for social distancing, hygiene and enhanced cleaning.

Breakdown of students returning in Year 10

Year 10 Students Attending

	Numbers in cohort	Number of students attending	Percentage of year group	Percentage of cohort
Boys	67	45	40.54	67.16
Girls	44	33	29.73	75.00
Pupil Premium	58	40	36.04	68.97
Vulnerable	15	7	6.31	46.67
High Ability	27	22	19.82	81.48
Middle Ability	70	47	42.34	67.14
Low Ability	7	6	5.41	85.71

**7 students do not have ability bands assigned to them*

Following the assembly on the 23rd June, 4 students have chosen not to return. As they attended the assembly, they have been included in the 'students attending data'.

Students not Attending

	Numbers in cohort	Number of students not attending	Percentage of year group	Percentage of cohort
Boys	67	22	19.82	32.84
Girls	44	11	9.91	25.00
Pupil Premium	58	18	16.22	31.03
Vulnerable	15	8	7.21	53.33
High Ability	27	5	4.50	18.52
Middle Ability	70	23	20.72	32.86
Low Ability	7	1	0.90	14.29

We have been pleased with the number of students wishing to return in Year 10, standing at 70%. Contact has been made by phone by Progress Leaders with all students and parents with reasons for non-attendance, mainly being due to vulnerabilities within the family and some anxiety. All efforts have been made by staff to encourage a return and a well-being survey has been completed by students to help us plan more effectively for September.

Feedback from Staff who worked with Year 10 this week

'I felt very safe and was happy with everything that was put in place and felt it was well-planned.'

'I thought that the measures in place to ensure the safety of staff and students worked well. The students that we had seemed to enjoy their time in school, albeit in different ways. I think they liked seeing each other. On the whole, I think that the students were overwhelmed and anxious about the social distancing measures and the stipulations around non-contact with each other.'

'We both thought the Yr10 session went well. Matt and I were on Bubble 3 and we had 10 students out of the 14, including 2 who did not attend assemblies so that was a nice surprise. They were happy to pick up a pen and do an English-focused activity but they were really engaged with the quiz that the English Department designed that included questions on current affairs, film and music. '

'I thought it went very well. The arrangements were really clear and I felt comfortable yes. The students were quite quiet but that was to be expected. I think they enjoyed the time though I think they enjoyed just being in school setting despite it being different to what they are used to.'

Plans for Years 7 – 9 Returning for Face to Face Contact

Plans for some face to face contact for students in Years 7 to 9 have now been circulated to staff, parents and Governors, using the same model we implemented for the assembly/briefings held for Year 10. Letters and checklists issued to students and parents have been made available for Governors to review. 70% of Year 10 have returned and on average 60% of each year group in Years 7 to 9 are expected to attend next week for half an hour. Students have been invited into school for a 30 minute socially distanced assembly with myself, Progress Leaders and tutors where possible. The purpose of this is to enable us to reconnect with students, to reassure as much as we can about plans for the future and to help students start to make some sense of everything that has taken place over the last few months due to Covid19. The same principle of only having one quarter of the year group in at any one time, has been applied with stringent cleaning measures in place between each assembly and no contact with the critical workers group with alternative timings to the Year 10 face to face contact.

Update on Critical Workers

We have seen an increase in the number of students attending school of critical and key workers. There are currently between 28 and 31 students attending each day with students now experiencing taught lessons supplemented by practical activities to enhance physical and mental health and well-being. Students in this group have been treated to pizza and this week, Mr Sabri arranged for the local ice cream van to visit, which they thoroughly enjoyed. Students are being split into smaller groups and using rooms on the ground floor to support the localised and enhanced cleaning regime in place.

Blacon High School in the News

Radio 4 interview and BBC Article <http://www.blaconhighschool.net/coronavirus-pupils-tense-as-teachers-submit-estimated-grades/>

Swedish research with student and staff interviews to explore views on Brexit - <https://photos.app.goo.gl/wyWzbdwADPxGSvFt5>

Students were interviewed on their views connected to Brexit, their ambitions for the future and feelings around their community. They were a credit to the school and their families, speaking with such confidence and pride.

New Build

6 temporary classrooms have been installed at the rear of the school building. They are of a high standard, spacious with ICT facilities in between each room providing additional space for intervention work. We have also purchased 2 cabins which are being equipped as a work room for staff, to support staff well-being and create additional space for staff to work. This is in response to an aspect of work raised in the staff survey and CPD meetings. We await the commencement of the building work by Pavaways and will keep Governors updated when we know more.

CPD and Training

Almost all staff (teachers and support staff) have now had an individual zoom meeting with myself and Mr Stockdale to discuss professional development needs, training, priorities for September and future ambitions. These meetings have been a superb way of touching base with each member of staff to check on how they are feeling about the current situation and to inform how we can best plan to meet the full range of training needs across the whole workforce. Many staff have been accessing free online training and we are planning to build in a model similar to that used in medicine and law, whereby staff are expected to engage in a certain number of hours of CPD over the year. We plan to supplement whole school training with allocated time throughout the year, given to online training, matched to areas of interest and needs in different roles, which will enable us to deliver a bespoke training programme with the flexibility to support well-being in terms of when staff complete the online training. This has been well received by staff and will help us to deliver high quality training, matched to the needs of staff at different stages of their careers.

All staff have been given access to training on how to use different technologies to deliver audio lessons for all students, in order to supplement the online learning resources available on Google Classroom. Safeguarding protocols have also been updated in order to ensure that staff and students are protected. A team of staff created some recordings of how to create different resources and time has been made available for teams of staff to work together in departments on these activities.

2. Safeguarding and Well-Being

Staff have continued to support our most vulnerable students with weekly contact and emotional support. Vouchers for all students on free school meals have now been posted to cover up to the 1st July and the remaining vouchers to cover the remaining period of July and August have been ordered and will be delivered before the end of term. Additional food parcels continue to be provided through the local community groups in Blacon, supported by the Westminster Foundation.

Staff Well Being Survey in Response to Covid19

A staff survey was undertaken with staff to support and inform our risk assessment. (See full survey results on attached document entitled Staff Well Being Covid19 – June 2020. It is pleasing to see that there were many strengths in the survey in terms of high levels of satisfaction about communication, work load and cleaning measures. The main area of concern identified, was in relation to social distancing. A number of actions have been taken to address staff concerns, to include tape on corridor floors, tape on desks in the diner, students being split into more groups and increased signage around the ground floor along with the screens. There has been a significant improvement in the way this has been managed in school although it is still not without its challenges in relation to the critical workers group. Year 10 and all other year groups have been managed well due to the small numbers and small amount of time in school. Significant challenges remain if this measure is still to be in place in September, even with a 1 metre rule, however we await further guidance from the DfE due out at the end of the week, outlining planning and expectations for September.

3. Home Schooling

Additional paper resources have been provided to students who have found access to online learning, more of a challenge. Audio lessons for every subject in every year group have been added to Google Classroom this half term, to supplement the online learning for students. The aim has been to motivate and engage as many students as possible with audios where students can hear the voices of their teachers. Use of Google Classroom has been variable and engagement has been hard for some. Challenges still remain in place over access to technology but the school has just received significant support in this area with 55 laptops from the local authority through the national scheme to support the most disadvantaged, along with 36 from Storengy through the Local Cheshire and Warrington Business Partnership and an additional donation of £5,000. Our analysis from recent surveys has shown that we have 117 students without access to a laptop and so these donations will help considerably. Please see link to recent article at <https://www.dee1063.com/news/local-news/storengy-pledge-support-to-blacon-high-school-for-gettingstudentsonline/>

Year 11 Exams and Assessment Update

Following a rigorous process of internal standardisation along with a review meeting held Curriculum leads, myself and Mr Scoltock, all grades have now been submitted to the examination boards. As the Head of Centre, I have verified that the process has been secure and rigorous and informed staff that no grades can be discussed with students or parents, until their release in the summer. As was mentioned in the BBC Radio 4 interview, all we can do is hope and trust that the system will enable students to be recognised for their achievements. Ofqual are due to release further information to schools and students later this term about the results for this year.

Communication with Parents

Regular Head teacher updates are posted on the school website and social media to keep parents and students up to date with the latest information. A daily thought for the day is posted on Twitter to provide encouragement to families and students. Tutors are in the process of completing end of year reports for students in Years 7 to 10 along with Record of Achievements for Year 11 which will be released to parents at the end of term, along with a letter from the Head and each Progress Leader. Contact continues to be made by telephone and email once a fortnight, between now and the end of term.

At this stage, we do not know what September will look like. We are planning for a number of options;

- A full return for which we will be ready with the timetable, resources and all staffing in place
- A partial return whereby the timetable splits each year into 2 bands which would be a blended learning model – with students attending school and also learning at home, using technology to support

Until we have the latest guidance and information on social distancing in schools, we are unable to confirm final plans, however, we are ready and very much looking forward to welcoming all of our students back into school.

We have made the decision to close school to critical and key workers at the end of Wednesday 15th July and to have all staff in school for the last 2 days of the summer term, to allow for further preparation for September and any additional training that may be required to support staff in the use of technology for blended and remote learning. It will also provide an opportunity for us to say goodbye to staff who are moving on, one being Mrs Deryl Whiteside who is retiring after 39 years of service to Blacon High School.

We plan to close the school for the first 3 weeks of the summer holidays from the 18th July to the 9th August to provide all staff with a complete break from school. Despite the school being closed since the end of March, many staff have continued to work throughout lockdown, including the site staff, catering team, cleaners and many staff. The last 3 weeks of the summer will provide an opportunity for further planning once batteries have been recharged.

Mrs Rachel Hudson