

Head Teacher's Report for Governors – December 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.



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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	Results 2022	Results 2023	CWAC Results 2023	National Results 2023	Y11 Targets	Y11 Predictions June 2023
	69 students	88 students	113 students	118 students	126 students			128 students	128 students
KPI – Progress 8 score 0.1	-0.67	-0.09	NA	-0.83	-0.64	-0.06	-0.03	0	-0.38
Attainment 8	41.07	47.04	43.77	36.13	35.13	45.66	46.19	47.51	39.81
KPI - English and Maths 9 - 4 - 60%	62%	69%	66%	40%	37%	65%	65%	65%	45%
KPI - English and Maths 9 - 5 - 40%	23%	49%	43%	15%	21%	44%	45%	45%	23%
KPI - English 9-4 - 70% and 9 -5 - 60%	72% / 48%	81% / 60%	80% / 53%	58% / 38%	53% / 30%	74% / 60%	75% / 60%	75% / 60%	65% / 42%
KPI - Maths 9-4 - 70% and 9 -5 - 60%	67% / 28%	75% / 53%	71% / 53%	49% / 19%	41% / 29%	71% / 50%	70% / 51%	70% / 51%	54% / 28%
KPI - Progress 8 for English	-0.73	-0.01	NA	-0.77	-0.91	NA	NA	0	-0.49
KPI - Progress 8 for Maths	-0.66	-0.23	NA	-0.91	-0.64	NA	NA	0	-0.52
KPI – Pupil Premium Progress 8	-0.83	-0.18	NA	-1.00	-0.83	NA	NA	0	-0.57
KPI Open Bucket Progress 8 score 0.2	-0.39	0.22	NA	-0.59	-0.17	NA	NA	0	-0.14
High Ability Progress 8	-1.02 (26 stu)	-0.16 (33 stud)*	NA	-0.61 (7 stu)	-0.98 (14 stu)	NA	0.02	0 (16 stu)	-0.71
Middle Ability Progress 8	-0.51 (38 stu)	-0.11 (43 stu)*	NA	-1.11 (68 stu)	-0.64 (69 stu)	NA	-0.01	0 (78 stu)	-0.44
Lower Ability Progress 8	0.06 (4 stu)	0.29 (8 stu)*	NA	-0.38 (42 stu)	-0.51 (38 stu)	NA	-0.13	0 (27 stu)	0.01
KPI - PP Progress 8 matching non disadvantaged nationally for English PP	-0.90	-0.06	NA	-0.97	-1.14	NA	NA	0	-0.72
KPI - PP Progress 8 matching non disadvantaged nationally for Maths PP	-0.79	-0.43	NA	-1.01	-0.80	NA	NA	0	-0.65

The final column shows the current predictions from staff based on data from June 2023. Year 11 have finished their mock examinations this week and staff are entering results and updated predictions based on progress this term, by the 15th December. A further update of the current picture for Year 11 will be made available for Governors to review in January 2024. Targets are in line with national data for key measures from 2023.

Profile of Year 11 for Current Cohort compared to last year

	Previous Year 11 2022/23		Current Year 11 2023/24	
	No. of students	% of students	No. of students	% of students
Total	128		132	
Males	80	63	70	53
Females	47	37	62	47
Pupil Premium	61	48	74	56
English as an Additional Language	7	6	10	8
SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	37	29	29	22
Number of In Year Transfers to Year 11	10	8	14	11
Number affected by safeguarding currently	13	10	12	9
High Ability	14	11	16	12
Middle Ability	69	55	80	61
Lower Ability	40	31	28	21
No prior data	4	4	8	6

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

The profile of Year 11 is important to understand the context. Pupil premium remains high at 56% of the cohort with an increase in transfers into the year group from 8% to 11%.

Higher ability have remained at similar levels, with an increase in middle and decrease in lower ability. Nationally, 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

		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%
June 2023	No. of students	718	335	356
	% of students		47%	50%
December 2023	No. of students	732	343	370
	% of students		47%	51%

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 2023 IDSR references Blacon at 49% compared to the national average of 27% so we are now well above the national average.

Quality of Education – Curriculum Development Updates

Key area	Work undertaken
Line management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nick Scoltock, Deputy Headteacher, has line management responsibility for all curriculum areas from September 2023, providing greater consistency in approach and continuity in message. This work is providing an overview of work undertaken in subject areas, the systems and procedures used and the challenges faced.
Appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Headteacher has set appraisal targets for all middle leaders aligned to the whole school priorities and all relating to quality of education. These have been cascaded down to departmental staff. Objective 1 – To lead, implement, monitor, and review quality first teaching in <subject> and plan intervention strategies to tackle gaps in learning and student underperformance so that all students, including SEND and disadvantaged close the gap to national averages. Objective 2 – Leaders, staff, and students articulate clearly the vision of the curriculum and subjects with clear identification of knowledge, shown in effective sequencing. Ensure consistent classroom routines for effective learning and teaching with clear links to precise knowledge, and an explicit progression in knowledge and skills is evident in curriculum design and teaching. Objective 3 – Further embed effective use of assessment to help students use knowledge fluently, to check understanding, inform teaching, and understand gaps across all subjects to support attainment and progress. Objective 2, linked to implementation and the precise knowledge needed across subjects, was already built into the school's improvement plan and objectives for appraisal prior to the Ofsted inspection in November. This has been identified as an area for development in the recent inspection.
Exam review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exam review meetings took place between each curriculum leader along with the Head and Deputy, to analyse the summer exam results. This provided a context around the outcomes and identified clear next steps in planning to support improvements in 2023-24, built into departmental improvement plans.
Curriculum maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum visions for each subject area are on the school website. Curriculum plans for a 3 year KS3 and 2 year KS4 are now available in all subject areas. Schemes of work have been developed in each subject area to add detail to the curriculum maps. The majority of middle leaders can vocalise clearly and with confidence the sequencing and progression of learning in their subject. In the team meetings, Ofsted said that there is a clear and consistent approach to curriculum design across subjects in school with careful thought as to what should be learnt and when.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work has been undertaken across both key stages to standardise the assessment being used. All students in a subject area are tested using the same format to provide consistency in results. This will support data analysis, the planning of interventions and consistency of approach for learning and teaching.

Yr11 mock exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 11 mock exams took place between 4th - 11th December with students sitting assessments in the following subjects: English, Maths, Science, Geography, History, French, RE, Business, Sport, Child Development, and Computer Science. Access arrangements were in place to support students with SEND and outcomes will be analysed to inform and support group changes and interventions in the spring term.
Vocational submissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Headteacher has worked with Heads of Department in vocational subjects on the tracking of coursework marks. Minimum marks have been identified and units split into component parts to support intervention. Work has been quality assured and submission windows changed to support and improve outcomes, maximising success.
Teaching & learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge organisers are being developed to support students to be clear on the key knowledge they need but need to become embedded consistently across all subjects. The DNA activity is present at the start of most lessons to support knowledge retrieval. Where teachers use appropriate resources and use routine assessment for learning strategies, learning is of a high quality and further work needs to be undertaken to ensure this is consistent across school. John Lacey, Assistant Head, has responsibility for learning and teaching from September 2023 to link with the work he is leading on assessment. Learning walks were carried out by Kath Harris, School Improvement Partner, as part of subject developmental reviews in October 2023 and she was accompanied by John Lacey to support him in this work. These identified areas of good practice but also inconsistencies in planning, resources, and delivery, which form planned CPD this year (Reference Subject Developmental Review Kath Harris October 2023).

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 clearly identified
- There is greater consistency in the delivery of learning across groups
- Staff are developing their pedagogy to support the delivery of the curriculum.

SEND Overview

We currently have 189 students with SEND, which is 27% of the school population, and 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 2023 reports 22% of students with SEND support compared to the national average of 11.5%, and for students with an EHCP, Blacon is at 5% 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.

44 EHCPs with 4 just being agreed and we are awaiting draft so there will soon be 48.

6 students have top up funding.

Total number of funded students is 50 (soon to be 54).

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	21	15	5	8	3	8
Funding Applications Submitted for Year 7: 3 have just been awarded (included in the 8) and 1 has just been awarded in draft (will take us to 9 EHCP's)						
8	17	15	1	3	0	6
Funding Applications Submitted for Year 8: 2 EHCPs which we awaiting the draft for (not included in the 6 – we will be at 8 EHCP's). In addition, 1 has not been accepted, and we will be resubmitting again in the new year						
9	21	16	3	7	2	12
Funding Applications Submitted for Year 9: 1 just been awarded (included in the numbers) , 1 was refused, but they awarded top up funding for 1 year instead						
10	12	19	3	4	1	9
Funding Applications Submitted for Year 10: 1 was refused, and we will hopefully be resubmitting						
11	11	13	1	4	-	9
Funding Applications Submitted for Year 11:						
Total	82	78	13	26	6	44

We continue to promote SEND across the school and a weekly briefing dedicated to SEND is held each Wednesday morning, to provide a regular flow of information to staff, to support this key group in school and to ensure that SEND remains the golden thread running through our curriculum.

Platform for Life counselling sessions – 23 students have been offered sessions (some have declined this intervention once it started), accessed (could have been shorted term access), or are accessing support since September 2023. We currently offer 14 sessions per week of counselling support.

Multiple Vulnerabilities

This year 21% of the whole school have 5 or more vulnerabilities, which means that one fifth of our school have experienced significant trauma as evidenced in five or more of the categories listed above and are effectively in crisis. This puts these young people at a significant disadvantage in being able to access their learning. The current whole school percentage of students with 3+ vulnerabilities is 39%.

Breakdown by year of students with 5 or more multiple vulnerabilities:

Year	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2019-2020	11%	16%	11%	15%	15%
2020-2021	15%	22%	18%	12%	25%
2021-2022	21%	20%	29%	21%	18%
2022-2023	14%	26%	20%	29%	24%
2023-2024	5%	14%	26%	20%	29%

The table shows how the vulnerabilities of each year group have increased (highlighted colours show the continuation of each group of students from last academic year to this). A notable increase in attendance issues can also be observed on the Multiple Vulnerabilities document – between 71 and 76% of students in every year group (except Year 7) has less than 95% attendance, or have had attendance below 95% previously. It is worth noting that the figures above only reflect the known vulnerabilities of the students, the real figures will be higher and for Year 7, this data reflects the issues which are known to us and again, the real figure is likely to be much higher. This will be updated throughout the year as we get to know our students and families in greater depth.

ASDAN

Students are motivated by the opportunity to research and study topics that are of interest to themselves, creating a more bespoke curriculum for them. In particular, the Uniformed Public Services, Hair and Beauty and Expressive Arts courses have proven popular, and are enhancing the engagement of those students. Students can earn 6 credits per course, which could be combined with other courses to earn higher qualifications, which is something we may consider offering in future. Many of our vulnerable Year 11 students have achieved ASDAN certificates this year, recognising their hard work and efforts in vocational learning.

Curriculum+

Curriculum+ students engage weekly in external provision provided by Roger and the Route Five Pursuits team. The students engage in practical activities working towards their John Muir Award and most recently towards the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award. Over the last year the groups have visited Newborough Warren, Delamere Forrest, Loggerheads, Moel Famau, Snowdonia, Llandudno, Rhos on Sea, and indoor rock climbing. The students love their time learning outside the classroom and this has had a positive impact on their physical, mental health and well-being alongside the development of cultural capital.



National Tutoring Programme (NTP)

Since Year 11 completed their GCSEs, we have started a new programme for Year 10, which includes 10 students being tutored for English and 10 for Maths. The attendance has been high and these students have continued with this programme in Year 11 this term. In addition, we have

a Year 7 Programme that can be run, should we have enough interest, which will be promoted in September with both students and parents/carers.

Our SEND Specialist Teacher, Ana Kostadinova, has been completing profiles on students' literacy levels and organising key interventions to raise levels in both reading and literacy skills. English teachers have seen progress within lessons following these interventions. Additionally, Ana has sourced a programme called Flash Academy where EAL (English as an Additional Language) and SEND students will be able to develop more quickly to be able to make good progress in all areas of school life.

This programme:

- Could be used both for EAL and SEN children
- Has a placement test, i.e. it will allow the students to progress from the point they are at. We have a few EAL learners who appear at different levels and it will not be useful for them to be taught together. It has been trialled with two EAL students (low and high level) and both have responded well
- Provides a tracking progress tool
- Two out of four components do not require teachers' input, enabling learners to work independently
- Provides access to subject specific topics and lessons for KS3-KS4
- Allows students to have access to from home to support home learning

Reading across the Curriculum

- Whole school CPD: Reciprocal Reading Strategies (2021-2022) x 3 sessions
- Whole School CPD: sharing best practice of delivering reading in subject areas (2021-2022) x 1 session
- Whole School CPD: Comprehension Strategies (2022-2023) x 1 session
- Phonics Training – Assistant SENDCo (HEK) and SEND Specialist Teacher (KOA) (July 2023) x 2 days
- KS4 Targeted interventions – every morning with key students below reading age ahead of summer exams – supported by PGCE Trainees
- IDL interventions in The Sanctuary – led by (KS3 SENDCo) and TAs every morning with changes every 6 weeks to support all students in the bottom 20% of each year group
- 1:1 and small groups for guided reading led TAs – every morning in tutor
- Guided Reading in tutors x 3 sessions per week

Reading Ages have been assessed and used as a basis for interventions for many years, however work has been undertaken to analyse the reading in greater depth, to enable a closer diagnostic of students' gaps in reading. This was following recent research findings about the actual efficacy of reading ages and how a reading age alone does not identify underlain reasons for why a student's Reading age is so low.

As a result, the data now reveals the key areas for development are vocabulary and 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. For example, student' reading ages may show that they are reaching chronological age but there are still underlying skill gaps in comprehension, which is our area of focus now. The majority of students require support on some key comprehension skills including: inference skills and commenting on writers' perspectives.

Reading comprehension skills are key for all learning. Not only are there key interventions for both KS3 and KS4, where there is one-to-one guided reading sessions and group guided reading sessions, a whole school strategy is in place with visual aids to support the delivery of these skills.

This is supported by training for all staff to enable them to feel confident in teaching reading skills in their lessons. The CPD is informed by current evidence-based research regarding raising reading ages to impact positively on attainment across school along with some specialised CPD for those delivering interventions to those significantly below their reading ages which will include work on phonics, KS3 version of Read, Write, Inc.

Reading interventions in our school include the following:

- Guided Reading (Whole Class)
- Guided Reading in small groups
- IDL (Indirect Dyslexia Learning) Programme
- NGRT (New Group Reading Test) – to assess Reading Ages and Gaps in skills
- KS4 Reading Interventions (1:1)
- External Tutoring (NTP – Action Tutoring)
- Phonics through IDL and other programmes
- Key vocabulary reviews across each subject area

Guided reading which takes place during tutor time, continues using two books per year group that cover a range of cultural capital topics such as:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Home life | • Migrant students negotiating life in UK |
| • Appreciating what you have | • Afghanistan culture |
| • Courage | • Childhood innocence, freedom and friendship |
| • Stereotypes and dealing with anxieties | • Racism |
| • Well-being | • Sexual relationships |
| • OCD-related anxieties | |
| • Community Culture | |

Impact of Reading Interventions

An example of the impact made since the start of our focus on reading in 2019 can be seen with our current Year 11 leavers' cohort. A more targeted focus on wider reading through D.E.a.R (Drop Everything and Read) had started in 2019, which was stalled due to Covid. Following this, Guided

Reading was introduced and from thereon, we have completed several CPD sessions on Reading across the Curriculum and trained staff on the use of other reading strategies such as, Reciprocal Reading.

The research paper from Ofsted on supporting struggling readers in school:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/now-the-whole-school-is-reading-supporting-struggling-readers-in-secondary-school/now-the-whole-school-is-reading-supporting-struggling-readers-in-secondary-school> from October 2022, identified the importance for schools of monitoring and assessing reading not just in Key Stage 3 but also Key Stage 4. The data below shows the steady improvement of reading ages over the last four years for the current Year 11 as an impact of the reading strategies implemented, with an increase from 36% to 62% who are now at their chronological reading age. Nationally, Literacy Trust have said that 75% of Year 11 school leavers are at their chronological reading age. We are therefore 13% away from the national with progress being made and noting that a high number of students on entry are below for reading scores.

Year 11 – Leavers of 2023	
End of Year 8	36%
End of Year 9	38%
End of Year 10	54%
Mid-Year 11	62%

This data reflects the number of students who have a Reading Age that is in line with their chronological age.

Reading Interventions

1.	Guided Reading in Tutor Time
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three times per week • Each year group has a different text that covers a range of Cultural Capital • 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
2.	Guided Reading in Small Groups – Julie Williams in English
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group for Autumn/Spring – Year 7 (Closing the reading and vocabulary gap) • Those identified have Reading Ages below 8 years old (bottom 20%) • Intervention include guided reading approach to complement tutor GR • ‘Two Weeks with the Queen’ initially but this has evolved into plays now (range of literature) • Impact – mostly confidence in reading is evident • Students are reading out loud to develop fluency • Plays from ELS – they really enjoy and makes them focus as having to look for their part • Not only is there an improvement in reading performance but also there is a genuine enjoyment of reading: developing Reading ages and reading for pleasure (Aims) • Julie Williams delivers this intervention 4 sessions a week

3.	IDL (Indirect Dyslexia Learning) Programme and NGRT (New Group Reading Test) to assess Reading Ages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDL is a programme run in The Sanctuary – IDL is an award-winning programme and is endorsed by the British Dyslexia Association • IDL is delivered each morning before lessons and after school • 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) • Year 7 and Year 8 are on IDL and can find it tedious but evidence is clear of progress and forms good habits across literacy levels • TAs in Sanctuary are liaising with Julie Williams to ensure a range of students are receiving interventions • The Sanctuary is using the NGRT RA data to identify those in the bottom 20% of school re: RAs • Aim is to become a ‘Dyslexic-Friendly School’ • Request for SEND readers to be identified clearly in classes to check individual needs re: reading

Staffing

Catrin Kenyon Owen, SENDco, is moving onto a promotion at Christmas.

Chantelle Lambert, Teaching Assistant, is finishing at Christmas.

Kate Henshall has been appointed as SENDco from January 2024.

Paula Peters has been appointed as Assistant SENDco from January 2024.

We have just appointed 5 Teaching Assistants to start in January 2024 for one term initially, to meet the needs of students with EHCPs and funding in school:

Leah Davies

Amanda Deponeo

Faye Stanford

Silvane Weatherley

Louise Wilcocks

Four of the five new Teaching Assistants have spent time in school for a familiarisation week, to complete training, shadow staff in classes, to start to get to know students and the team, be familiar with key policies, undertake safeguarding training, and access CPD on the role of the TA in school. This induction process is a new system we have introduced to ensure that staff feel well prepared to meet the demands of the role in school.

Assessment

Work on the development of whole-school assessment started in January, 2023 and there have been two training days: the first focusing on the Purpose, Validity, Reliability and Value of assessments, the importance of matching assessments with the correct sequencing knowledge in the curriculum. The

second started to look at the effective use of multiple choice questions to assess key knowledge and to support home learning and improving the routine of learning outside school.

Meetings have taken place with key Middle Leaders to discuss the further development of summative assessments and the policy has been updated and implemented.

Safeguarding

Following Ofsted, safeguarding was deemed to be effective in school with some advice given on ensuring all CPOMS' entries are written in a factual manner. This was an expected outcome due to the strengths and vast experience of the team.

Statistical data is as follows:

TAF				
Year Group	March 2023	May 2023	July 2023	December 2023
Year 7	5	5	4	3
Year 8	4	5	4	3
Year 9	9	8	7	4
Year 10	3	3	2	4
Year 11	3	2	2	4
Total	24	23	19	18

CIN – Child in Need				
Year Group	March 2023	May 2023	July 2023	December 2023
Year 7	2	1	2	0
Year 8	1	2	2	0
Year 9	2	4	4	4
Year 10	2	1	2	1
Year 11	2	2	2	1
Total	9	10	12	6

CP – Child Protection				
Year Group	March 2023	May 2023	July 2023	December 2023
Year 7	5	3	4	0
Year 8	1	1	0	4
Year 9	3	3	3	4
Year 10	1	0	0	0
Year 11	5	5	5	0
Total	15	12	12	8

CIC/LAC Children in Care / Looked after Children				
Year Group	March 2023	May 2023	July 2023	December 2023
Year 7	5	5	5	2
Year 8	4	4	4	5
Year 9	5	5	6	4
Year 10	5	5	5	3
Year 11	1	1	1	7
Total	20	20	21	21

There are three other students (one in Year 7 and two in Year 9 who are Open to Assessment).

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.

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 December 23
KPI Open Bucket Progress 8 score 0.2	-0.43
KPI Attendance up to national average - 95%	87.1% overall 81.6% Pupil Premium
KPI 80% sport participation, 100% Learning outside the classroom	Lotc 100% Years 7 – 9 75% Years 10 – 11 51% sport participation

Attendance

Whole School Attendance

Group	Percentage
Whole School	87.15%

10 Point Attendance Strategy 2023/2024

Introduction

The 10 Point Attendance strategy was launched in September 2023 with the aim to aligning the whole school attendance strategy with national guidance and research surrounding improving attendance within schools (Appendix 1).

Attendance Key Aims

- ✓ To increase attendance
- ✓ To build relationships and support; students, parents and carers
- ✓ To change the culture within attendance
- ✓ To develop new partnerships
- ✓ To encourage students back into full time education

Overview Attendance context

As we know, it is important to recognise the context of the area in relation to the socio economic factors that play a key part in the attendance of our students. The recent UK census has stated that Blacon North and Blacon South are the most deprived areas of the district and many of our students live within these postcodes. Since Covid, the culture of attendance has shifted within this community and we have experienced high rates of poor mental health in students and parents. This has also been recognised nationally in the rise of poor mental health and anxiety in young people.

Within this community we have experienced a lack of engagement with key families and breaking down these barriers has been a key focus in supporting our young people. We have also experienced a rise in illness and often these illnesses spread between siblings in those houses where deprivation is high. We have noticed a crisis within families not being able to meet the basic needs of children by heating properties and feeding children. Despite these key socio economic factors we as a school complete regular welfare checks of these families to ensure that all safeguarding measures are met.

Below is an overview of the vulnerabilities within Blacon High School (734):

Vulnerability	PUPIL PREMIUM	FSM	LAC	SEND Inc EHCP	EHCP
Count	371	344	19	152 (197)	45
Percentage	51%	47%	3%	27%	6%

Attendance and National Data

Attendance

2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	Current
93.16%	93.15%	86.09%	86.25%	85.99%	87.15% 28/11/2023
0.00%	-0.01%	-7.06%	+0.16%	-0.26%	+1.16%

National Data

The table below represents full academic year 2022-23 and current position. We are still below national but the data is showing green shoots of improvements in all measures, compared to last year.

Data Type	Overall Absence	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Persistent Absence
2022-23 National	7.50%	5.00%	2.50%	22.30%
2022-23 Blacon	16.21%	8.80%	7.41%	52.93%
Current Position	12.85% -3.36%	6.68% -2.12%	6.00% -1.41%	37.87% -15.06

10 Point Attendance Strategy

1. Weekly Attendance Reward Voucher

To reward good and improved attendance through; 'attendance rewards' to year 11, through incentivising improved attendance. The top 10 students with the most improved attendance that week, who have had no lates, have a full week in school, and are in the assembly will be entered into the draw with a chance to win a £10 gift voucher. The draw takes place every Friday in the Year 11 Assembly, further promoting good attendance weekly. Students will also be rewarded for 100% attendance in the term at the rewards assembly where students receive a certificate.

Who: GAM / RAJ / HAL

Impact

Year 11 attendance last year was 82.4% overall and this year it is currently at 85.5% which means there is currently a 3.1% improvement in Year 11's attendance. We know there are further improvements to be made but early signs are showing impact.

2. Attendance Minibus

To support vulnerable students getting into school we offer a minibus collection. The minibus collects students from home each day and take into school. The site team drive the bus and the chaperone staffing are on a rota using pastoral mentors.

Who: WRS / PM / Site Team / RAJ

Impact of minibus

Name	Reg	SEN	PP	Now	2022/23	Impact
[REDACTED]	9Sanctuary	Y	Y	8.93	23.6	-14.67
[REDACTED]	10Sanctuar	Y	Y	72.32	91.26	-18.94
[REDACTED]	9Turquoise	N	Y	0	20.51	-20.51
[REDACTED]	9Grey	N	Y	83.93	69.1	14.83
[REDACTED]	11Royal	Y (EHCP)	Y	92.86	87.78	5.08
[REDACTED]	7 Jet	Y	Y	77.19	85.2	-8.01
[REDACTED]	9Turquoise	N	Y	0.89	15.17	-14.28
[REDACTED]	10Turquoise	N	Y	70.54	36.52	34.02
[REDACTED]	9 Cur Plus	Y (EHCP)	Y	75.89	61.73	14.16
[REDACTED]	10 Gold	N	Y	55.36	23.6	31.76
[REDACTED]	10Turquois	N	Y	14.29	13.48	0.81
11 students						2.204545

- Overall impact = 2.2%
- 11 students access the school minibus. Out of those 11 students, 54.5% have improved their attendance, with the average improvement being 16.77%
- Out of the 11 students, 5 are SEN (45.5%). Out of those 5, 2 have improved their attendance, with the average improvement being 9.6%
- Out of the 11 students, 100% are PP
- The minibus also raises the profile of attendance across the school and the wider community

3. Pastoral Mentor Mentoring Programme

The Pastoral Mentors meet with identified students on a weekly basis and mentor students who require support. Students complete a mentoring booklet, with their mentor, which is designed to build confidence, resilience and skills. Booklet found here: [A:\Documents\Mentoring\Mentoring Programme\Mentoring Pack New Branding.pptx](#)

Database found here: [Mentoring Database.xlsx](#)

Who: Learning Mentors

4. Progress Leader and Attendance Team

Progress Leaders meet once a fortnight with Attendance Lead / Officer to discuss student attendance, to identify and discuss key students for intervention and reward. These students are also discussed at the Inclusion meetings held with attendance and the pastoral team.

Who: WRS / PL / RAJ / HAD

5. Weekly Tutor Attendance

Tutors weekly attendance is monitored and shared with tutors and promoted via posters within tutor rooms. Tutors discuss the group's attendance and update the poster during period 1 on Friday. Most improved attendance from Year 7-11 have a reward during period 1 each Friday.

Who: RAJ / Tutor Team

Impact

Raising the profile of attendance across the school.

6. Attendance Intervention Tracker

This tracks and monitors all students' attendance to enable the identification of appropriate interventions to support the students and families with improving attendance. This ensures that all students are monitored through systematic daily/weekly and half termly analysis. Safeguarding and wellbeing checks are a key focus on disengaged families. The tracker includes; termly and weekly attendance on one sheet, an impact of intervention column to monitor the impact on attendance following an intervention and a summary page to be built similar to the previous attendance tracker.

Who: WRS / RAJ / HAD

7. SAM Learning

SAM Learning has been introduced to all students to support home learning and to assist in short term absence. SAM Learning is an A.I. driven personalised learning tool that helps reduce teacher workload and improves results, verified by Education Endowment Foundation and Fischer Family Trust Independent Research. School has invested in this for all students but it has been introduced as a priority for students currently out of school to reengage them in learning and support a return to school.

Who: HAI

8. Attendance Pathway

Following a range of CPD sessions from the local authority, other local schools and DfE webinars, a clear attendance pathway has been introduced this term to improve whole school attendance and combat unauthorised absence. The aim is to make attendance 'everyone's responsibility' to ensure that all students are supported with the right intervention.

Who: WRS

9. Advertisement around school

Weekly attendance posters have been displayed in each tutor classroom to highlight the importance of good attendance for students to see, this is also discussed with tutors each week. Our Attendance Officer generates weekly year group attendance graphs shared via email and displayed on the screens in school.

10. External Providers and Partnerships

To engage with external providers to support our students, examples include; Inspiring Your Future, Stride, Educate, and Ancora House. We hope to build and develop new partnerships with other providers to support our students and to engage our hardest to reach families.

Absence ASP 2022/23						
Breakdown	No. of enrolments in the school	Sessions missed due to absence				
		Persistent absentees - absent for 10% or more sessions				
		School Absence Rate %	National %	No. of enrolments that are persistent absentees	School %	National %
All pupils	699	14.1	9.0	321	45.9	27.7
Male	386	14.2	8.6	182	47.2	26.3
Female	313	14.1	9.4	139	44.4	29.2
Ever 6 FSM	349	18.9	13.2	211	60.5	43.6
Non-Ever 6 FSM	346	9.4	7.4	109	31.5	21.4
SEN EHCP	29	24.4	13.7	17	58.6	38.8
SEN support	149	19.7	12.7	79	53.0	39.5
No SEN	518	11.9	8.3	223	43.1	25.3
English first language	662	14.5	9.4	310	46.8	28.9
English additional language	37	7.5	7.1	11	29.7	22.1
Pupil Premium	374	19.2	-	288	39.3	-
Non-Pupil Premium	359	8.6	-	-	-	-

Absence 2023/24						
Breakdown	No. of enrolments in the school	Sessions missed due to absence				
		Persistent absentees - absent for 10% or more sessions				
		School Absence Rate %	National %	No. of enrolments that are persistent absentees	School %	National %
All pupils	734	12.9	9.0	284	39.2	27.7
Male	403	12.7	8.6	-	-	26.3
Female	331	13.0	9.4	-	-	29.2
FSM	354	18.4	13.2	-	-	43.6
Non FSM	396	7.9	7.4	-	-	21.4
SEN EHCP	45	26.5	13.7	-	-	38.8
SEN support	152	15.8	12.7	92	32.4	39.5
No SEN	402	10.7	8.3	-	-	25.3
English first language	695	13.4	9.4	-	-	28.9
English additional language	54	5.4	7.1	-	-	22.1
Pupil Premium	380	18.0	-	195	68.7	-
Non-Pupil Premium	370	7.7	-	-	-	-

All of the attendance strategies are informed by the latest research and guidance from a range of sources.

- Raising the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Education Conferences UK: https://www.educationconferencesuk.co.uk/news/2023-8-30/raising-the-attendance-of-disadvantaged-pupils?utm_source=email&utm_medium=article&utm_campaign=Matt+Bromley
- School Attendance in England. House of Commons Library: [Research\House of Commons - Attendance.pdf](#)
- Listening to, and learning from, parents in the attendance crisis. Dr Sally Burtonshaw & Ed Dorrell. [Research\Listening to and learning from parents in the attendance crisis September 2023.pdf](#)
- Being in school matters: Your guide to tackling low attendance. Thrive. [Research\Thrive Attendance Guide.pdf](#)
- [Working together to improve attendance. Department for Education. September 2022.](#)
- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health is affecting attendance. Department for Education. February 2023.](#)
- [School Attendance Guidance and Pathways to statutory legal intervention. Cheshire West and Chester. September 2023.](#)
- [DFE Webinars](#)

Learning outside the Classroom (LoTC) in the 2023/4 academic year

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

LoTC/ Capital – Participation rates – Autumn Term 2023

All Students

	No. of Students	% of students with at least one experience	% of students with at least two experiences	% of students with at least three experiences	% of students with at least four experiences
Year 7	150	100	50	2.7	0
Year 8	161	93.6	93.6	92.5	74.6
Year 9	147	65.3	63.6	60.3	45.2
Year 10	143	78.3	64.0	42.9	26.5
Year 11	132	95.4	75.5	60.0	41.3
All	733	84.4	68.9	53.1	38.7

PUPIL PREMIUM	No. of PP Students	% of PP students with at least one experience	No. of PP Students	% of PP students with at least two experiences	No. of PP Students	% of PP students with at least three experiences	No. of PP Students	% of PP students with at least four experiences
Year 7	70	100	29	41.4	1	1.4	0	0
Year 8	61	100	161	100	160	99.4	129	80.1
Year 9	89	100	89	100	82	92.1	54	60.7
Year 10	79	84.0	77	81.9	52	55.3	25	26.6
Year 11	71	94.7	53	70.7	40	53.3	29	38.7
All	370	96.1	409	83.6	335	68.5	237	48.5

Over 50% of Year 7 students have attended their outdoor education day in Delamere Forest, as part of the curriculum. The students visit the forest in small groups of no more than 10 students and enjoy a range of outdoor activities. The programme will resume in March when the weather and temperature starts to improve again.

Students attend a range of lunchtime clubs including: History Hot Scholars, Chess Club, Dungeons and Dragons, Science and Eco club, Revision Club, Debate Club, Choir, Drama Club, Social Club and Film Club. Student lists for the lunchtime clubs are now being added to the EduLink App, which will allow the analysis of attendance.

Duke of Edinburgh

The Year 11 group (21 students) are currently completing the volunteering, skill and physical sections of their Duke of Edinburgh Award. The assessment expedition will take place following their

examinations in June. The original date at the start of October had to be cancelled because of adverse weather conditions. Graeme Edwards (regional DofE Coordinator) came into school and supported staff and students to log on to the eDofE website and start to upload evidence.

The external funding secured allowed the purchase of expedition equipment. We are now a DofE centre and with support from Roger Rayner, plan and run our own expeditions: this brings the cost of an expedition for students down from £90 to £15.

On Thursday 15th December, the Duke of Edinburgh will be launched with current Year 10 students during an assembly with a communication also sent out to parents. To register interest, students will need to sign up to a Google Classroom by the end of the first week after the Christmas break. Funding has been secured for free registration for up to 43 students.

Enrichment week in the summer of 2023 included a day when Years 7 and 9 visited museums, galleries, gardens, places of worship and football stadia in Manchester, and Years 8 and 10 visited a similar range of venues in Liverpool as a culture capital day. All students accessed this at no cost due to a successful bid secured by Laura Rose and had an incredible day out.

Every student visited two cultural venues, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, which further increased the percentage of our students who have benefited from a Learning Outside the Classroom activity this academic year.

The Bronze Duke of Edinburgh was launched with Year 10 at the start of Summer Term 2 and 32 students have signed up. The school is now a Duke of Edinburgh Centre awarding centre. Funding was secured for 40 free places with an additional grant of £4500 to purchase equipment required for expeditions.

Frankie Ankers was appointed as Learning outside the Classroom Coordinator and will become the DofE Lead at Blacon High School. John Lacey will be the Award Verifier for the school. Both teachers will complete the required training course.

Students are completing their training expedition on the Anglesey Coastal Path, on July, 13th and 14th and will complete the assessment expedition in September, 2023.

Personal Development and Careers

Year 10 took part in a Careers Fair for all schools in CWAC on the 19th October at the Chester campus of CCSW. Students were able to visit and talk to over 50 Post – 16 providers, apprenticeship and training providers and employers.

Year 9 students have been through a selection process for one of 10 places on the Airbus Industrial Cadets programme. This is an amazing link made by Danny Hughes to partner Blacon High School up

with Airbus. The programme involves these students visiting Airbus and taking part in a variety of STEAM based projects.

Students in Year 11 have been attending assemblies from a range of our local post-16 providers. So far, we have hosted CCSW, Queen's Park High 6th Form, LLS Sports, The Steven Gerrard Academy, and Christleton 6th Form.

Students in Year 11 are also busy applying for and attending interviews for Post-16 courses and our Careers advisors at school are working hard to see all students for their 1:1 Careers pathway interviews.

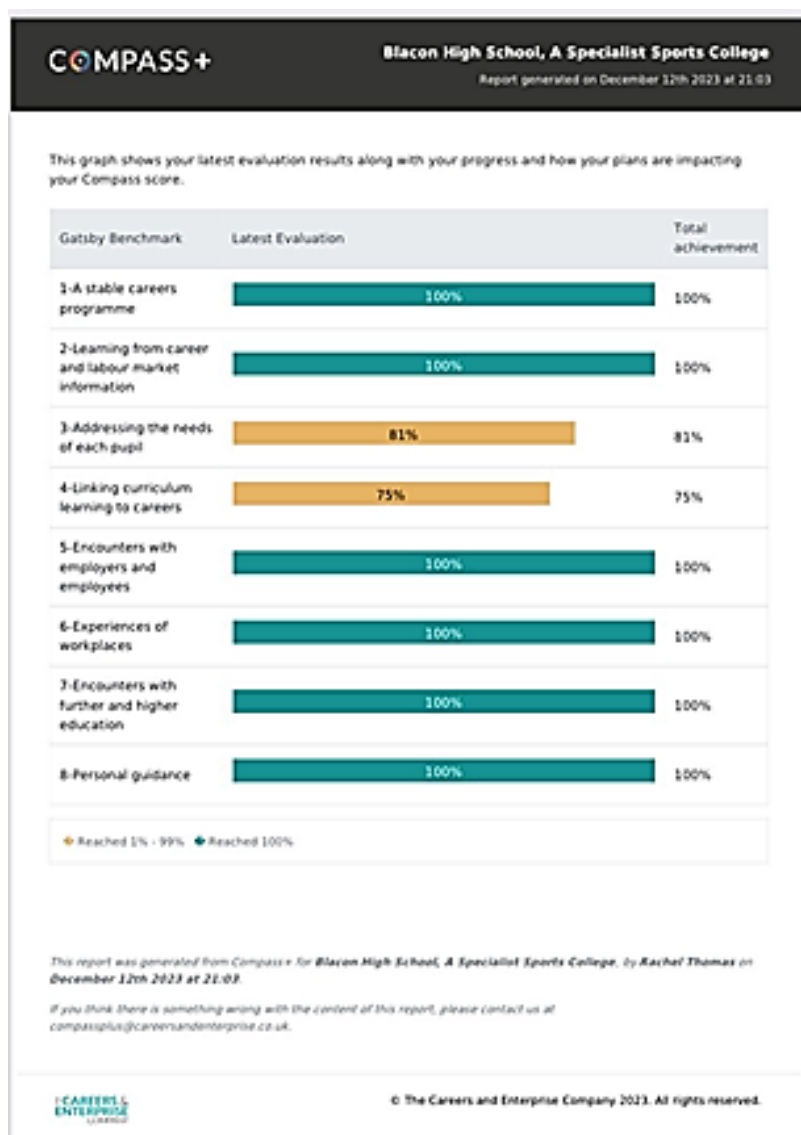
All students in every year group attended the CCSW Road Safety assemblies in September.

Year 9 students have been taking part in weekly consent sessions through Drama and a local Women's' Charity, CSASS. This forms part of our PSHE programme.

Year 9 students all took part in an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion workshop on Friday 20th October. This was through an external provider.

Students in Years 7/8 and 10 took part in the INEOS Go Humans workshop. This was based around resilience, self-esteem and confidence and we have received great feedback from this from students.

Our latest analysis on Compass in conjunction with The Pledge shows that we are achieving 100% on 6 of the Gatsby benchmarks and will be at 100% for 7 out of the 8 for the first time by the end of this academic year due to the link that has been made with AirBus. Gatsby Benchmark 4 remains the key area which is linked to work experience and this is being planned for Year 10 to take place in summer 2024.



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. Further analysis will be completed in March 24 on applications for September 24.

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
Total	150	150	148	149	142	142

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

Finance

The School has been allocated an SRMA as a result of our historic deficit, (Schools Resource Management Advisor) who met with the Head, Business Manager and Chairs of Governors on Thursday 30th November to gain an understanding of the school context and the financial challenges that we face. This was the beginning of the process, and a report will be written and sent to school at the beginning of January; a copy will then be sent to both the LA and the DfE for consideration.

An updated financial position was presented at the finance meeting held on the 15th November 2023 forecasting as follows for the next 3 years;

- £410,155 for 2023/24

- £154,391 for 2024/25

£67,583 for 2025/26

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
- Chester School Boys Football
- Eclipse Dance competition
- Cheshire Phoenix Basketball
- Children's birthday parties
- Rake and Pikel FC

5pm-10pm	Monday	Blacon Boxing Chester Wind Band Amie Garrett Netball Panthers Basketball Upton JFC Saughall Colts FC Robbie Joinson Vast Impact Football
5pm-10pm	Tuesday	Cheshire Roar Basketball Brewers Basketball Saughall Colts FC Upton JFC
5pm-10pm	Wednesday	Blacon Youth FC Saughall Colts FC Panthers Netball Panthers Social Netball

		Brewers Basketball
5pm-10pm	Thursday	Blacon Skate CWAC Volleyball Peter O'Toole Football Saughall Colts FC Upton JFC Colwyn Bay FC
5pm-10pm	Friday	Panthers Netball Chester School Boys (Dave Sabri) Chester School Girls (Claire Smedley)
9am-11am	Saturday	Upton JFC Blacon Youth Saughall Colts
12pm-4pm	Sunday	Upton JFC Waverton JFC

Letting total for 2022 Sept-Nov - £15,215

Letting Total for 2023 Sept-Nov - £20,822.50

The majority of income from lettings is secured during the football season from November to March. We have increased the lettings per hour, by no more than £5 and we have 100+ additional bookings this year compared to last year.

Additional income - from staff tuck shop, refreshments in the evenings and weekends for the lettings and the winter fair.

November - £843.60

December - £819.40 (so far)

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

From the initial applications, we are oversubscribed by a small proportion at this point but are aware that there may still be late applications. The total number of students within Blacon has fallen this year and so we were expecting a slight drop. Further figures will be available after 1st March where we will confirm the % moving to Blacon High School as a proportion of each Year 6 cohort in the 5 partner Primary schools.

Admissions Preference	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
First Preference	116	157	161	137	151	148	134	114	103
Second Preference	17	22	15	13	12	16	12	10	9
Third Preference	13	6	10	15	15	18	12	7	6
Late First Preference	6	5	n/a	3	6	15	13	6	15
Late Second Preference	1	2	n/a	0	0	2	3	0	1
Late Third Preference	0	n/a	n/a	0	0	0	2	0	1
Placed By L A	0	n/a	n/a	0	0	1	1	1	6
Total Applications	153	192	186	168	184	200	177	138	141

Student Numbers- December 2023

Year	Males	Females	Total
Year 7	89	61	150
Year 8	82	77	159
Year 9	75	72	147
Year 10	86	57	143
Year 11	70	62	132
Totals	402	329	731

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

A detailed research based overview of effective teaching, learning and assessment identifying the aspects of an ideal learning sequence was shared with staff. During a twilight INSET staff completed a RAG rating of the statements, requiring them to reflect on their current strengths and points for development. From the RAG rated statements teachers identified three points for development and three strengths. Teachers then uploaded the document to BlueSky as a baseline for their teaching and learning. The overview is based on the framework for teaching and learning that includes the phases: connect, activate, explore, explain, practice and reflect from our Blacon pedagogical model.

Every two weeks a Teaching, Learning and Assessment briefing focuses on areas from the overview, these have included: an overview of the 10 non-negotiable points for Teaching, Learning and Assessment; the effective use of multiple-choice questions; hinge questioning; the importance of student books in identifying the sequencing of knowledge and the introduction of an updated book audit process.

Kath Harris with John Lacey carried out an eight day review of Teaching, Learning and Assessment including 80 lesson observations (approximately 20 minutes in length), 13 meetings with subject leaders, and a review of over 100 student books. Reference Kath Harris SIP Subject Developmental Review Report – October 2023. This has been used as a dynamic self-evaluation of practice and enabled leaders to respond swiftly to areas of variability and development and has also provided an external validation of our work.

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. These have covered key themes and priorities including Assessment, Home Learning, making connections and providing creative hooks to engage students, all linked to our pedagogical model on learning and teaching.

The work linked to 'Connect' has become embedded as evidenced by the subject reviews and so we are now working 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 and was 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.

ITT – Initial Teacher Training

Blacon High School continues to offer a number of ITT placements. The school enjoys long-standing links with a number of institutes including: The University of Chester, Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool John Moores University, Manchester Metropolitan University and Edge Hill University. Additionally, other ITT providers are keen to place trainees with us.

This term we have hosted trainees in Computer Science, English, Geography and PE, and we have agreed a number of placement offers for the Spring term Of 2024.

A fantastic team of Subject Mentors across a range of subject areas continues to offer top quality support and guidance, while David Stockdale acts as Professional Mentor. Acting as a subject mentor to a trainee is a great opportunity for aspirational staff and is often the first additional responsibility they adopt to illustrate their own commitment and potential if they are thinking of career progression. Offering ITT placements also generates a regular stream of income during the course of the year.

BLACON

HIGH SCHOOL

ASPIRE BELIEVE ACHIEVE



In recent years, several members of middle and senior leadership have taken the opportunity to develop by completing one of the NPQ leadership qualifications. These qualifications are nationally recognised and have real career capital. There are a number of options for aspiring middle leaders such as: Leading Teaching, Leading Teacher Development, Leading Behaviour and Culture, and Leading Literacy. There is also the NPQ SL, for aspiring senior leaders, and the NPQH, for aspiring head teachers.

- Dave Forbes – NPQLBC – due to complete March 2024
- Karen Appleby – NPQH – due to complete March 2024
- Lauryn Gibson – NPQSL – due to complete April 2024
- Catrin Kenyon-Owen – NPQSL – due to complete April 2024
- Josh Slade – NPQSL – due to complete October 2024
- Michelle Garner – NPQLT – deferred from 2021 – due to recommence 2024
- Dave Sabri – NPQH – commenced Spring 2023
- Laura Sandland Jones – NPQLTD – commenced October 2023
- April Roberts – NPQLBC – commenced October 2023
- Alex Downie – NPQLBC – Commenced October 2023

We have been able to access this training at no cost and, as a result, we now have a number of staff with leadership qualifications across a range of disciplines. This is fantastic news, not only in terms of securing appropriate expertise and creativity within the team, but also in terms of future-proofing the school and succession planning.

ITT – Initial Teacher Training

Blacon High School continues to be a busy hub for initial teacher training (ITT). David Stockdale leads on this and the school currently enjoys long-standing links with a number of institutes including: The University of Chester, Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool John Moore's University, Manchester Metropolitan University, and Edge Hill University. Additionally, other ITT providers are keen to place trainees with us.

In recent years, we have developed a fantastic team of Subject Mentors across a range of subject areas, while David Stockdale acts as Professional Mentor. Acting as a subject mentor to a trainee is a great opportunity for aspirational staff and is often the first additional responsibility they adopt to illustrate their own commitment and potential if they are thinking of career progression.

In addition to ITT placements, we also offer shorter, work-based learning (WBL) placements that can last anything from a few days to a few weeks. Both ITT and WBL placements attract a payment and, cumulatively, this amounts to a not insignificant amount over the course of the year.

Appraisal

The appraisal process for all staff continues to be monitored on BlueSky. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, have three objectives that are set in the first half term of each academic year. Objectives are agreed between individual staff members and their line managers. Objectives are linked directly to individual staff roles and responsibilities, and whole school priorities.

New staff, including ECTs, also have three objectives, although their final objective is usually linked to successful completion of all of the elements of the ECT responsibilities. Similarly, the third appraisal objective for those staff who have embarked on NPQ leadership courses is linked to making appropriate progress towards successful completion of their courses.

Progress towards achieving objectives is monitored via regular line-management meetings, and also at mid-year reviews, which usually happen at the end of the Spring 1 half term. The end of year appraisal review has been completed this term, informed by attainment data from the summer. BlueSky is a user-friendly platform that enables effective monitoring of performance management and those who have responsibility for line management. All objectives have been set for teachers and support staff linked to quality of education and priorities from the school improvement plan and they have been quality assured to ensure they are effective in contributing to the cycle of improvement within school.

Early Career Teachers (ECTs)

Currently, the school has eight early career teachers (ECTs) as detailed below.

<u>ECT</u>	<u>Stage</u>	<u>Completion</u>	<u>Mentor</u>
Sara Perrett	2 nd Year	July 2024	Lauryn Gibson-Tipping
David Harvey	2 nd Year	July 2024	Rhiannon Price
Sarah Hughes	2 nd Year	July 2024	Pete Evans
Adam Grice	2 nd Year	July 2024	Sam Kennedy
Jan Hancock	2 nd Year	Dec 2023	Lauryn Gibson-Tipping
Leyla Acar	1 st Year	July 2025	Laura Sandland-Jones
Anna Butler	1 st Year	July 2025	Gemma McHale
Harrison Kendall	1 st Year	July 2025	Katie Illingworth

We have five second-year ECTs, one who will complete in December 2023, and four who will complete in July.

First year ECTs have a 90% timetable and second years fulfil 95% of an FT timetable; this is to ensure that they are supported fully into the profession. Additionally, ECTs are supported by a mentor via timetabled sessions where everything from online assessment, learning and teaching and dealing with the ever-increasing work load is discussed, usually over a cup of tea; mentors do not need to be from within an ECT's subject specialism.

It is testament to this extended team that all of our ECTs are making appropriate progress towards successful completion of their probationary period.

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.



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 was launched this term. This is an online resource for staff, students and parent/carers and is a source of support designed by experts to meet the social, emotional and educational needs of young people. 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.

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, which 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. This year, key groups across the BEV continue to meet to include Computing leads to focus on safety online, SEND, attendance and the Business Managers.

The Bursary Scheme – Hope Opportunity Trust

The Hope Opportunity Trust bursary scheme continues to offer a valuable alternative route for a number of our eligible students. Students who meet the criteria follow an exhaustive selection process and, those who are successful, are offered places to study for their A levels at one of the country's top independent schools.

In 2023/24, a further six students have been successful in reaching the end of the selection process and, so far, two of them have received firm offers for September 2024 after visiting their prospective schools for further testing. However, as always, ultimately their places are dependent on them achieving the necessary grades in their GCSEs. This year, the 'Concord College' in Shrewsbury is a new addition to the list of schools who are part of the scheme and one of our students has secured a place there. With fees of £53,400 per term, it is more expensive than Eton and has the fourth highest fees of all independent schools nationally; a bit of a coup for him, and us!

This year's cohort brings the total of Blacon High School students who have successfully won bursary places since the inception of the programme to 48. The selection process for 2024/25 will begin in January.

Staff absence

The amount spent on supply can be seen below:

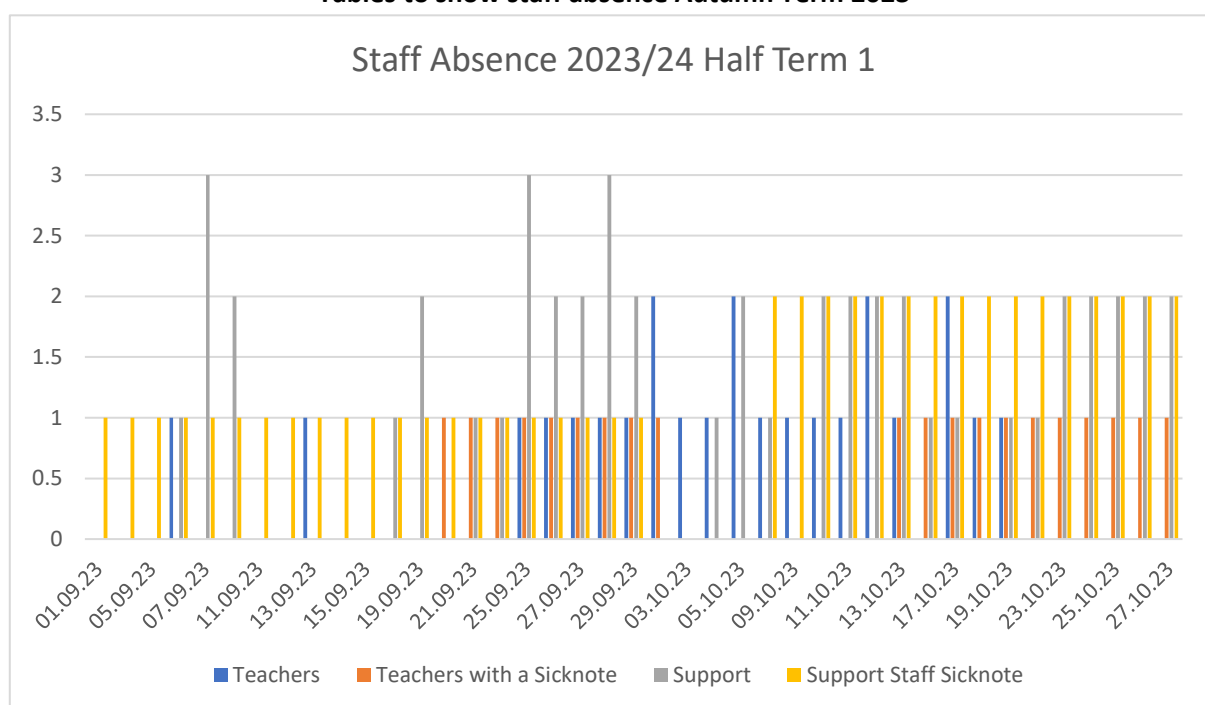
2020/21 - £41,439, this was offset by £15,000 insurance claim

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

2023/24 - £108,638 due to 3 long terms absences, some of this will be covered by insurance including phased returns, £3,240 external provision for a Looked after student out of area, and the buy-out from supply for an MFL teacher and Educate who have been used to support the curriculum + offer.

Tables to show staff absence Autumn Term 2023



When comparing Autumn Term 1 2023 to Autumn Term 1 for 2022, the figures are lower, however for Autumn Term 2, there has been an increase in absence which can be attributed to; some cases of covid, pregnancy, three operations and appointments related to long term medical conditions.

In the IDSR for 2023, the following information shows that staff absence levels and levels of sickness are below national and there is nothing to highlight in terms of staff turnover.

Staffing

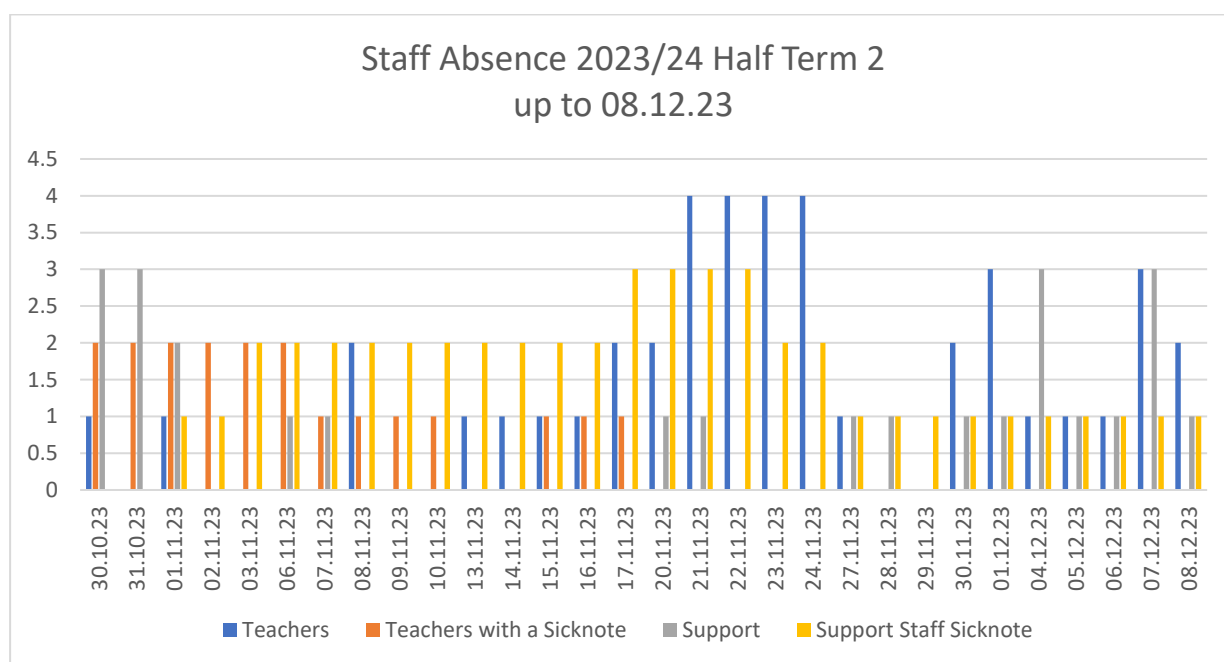
The proportion of education support staff relative to teaching staff was in the lowest 20% in 2022 and 2021.

There is nothing to highlight for per pupil spending on staff related areas compared to similar schools in 2021/22.

The percentage of teachers with at least one period of sickness absence was **significantly below national** in: 2021/22.

There is nothing to highlight for days lost to teacher absence (4 days) in 2021/22.

At the time of the November 2022 census, there were no full-time vacant teacher posts in the school. There is nothing to highlight for staff turnover in 2021, 2020 or 2019.



Behaviour Data
Data at end of 27/11/23

Highlighted yellow = Curriculum+ students

Exclusions ASP	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	BHS	Nav	BHS	Nav	BHS	Nav	BHS	Nav	BHS	Nav	BHS	Nav	BHS	Nav	BHS	Nav	BHS	Nav
P' exclusions as % of pupil group	0.25 =1	0.17	0.71 =3	0.20	0.44 =2	0.2	0.57 =3	0.2	0.16 =1	0.13	0.45 =3	0.1	0.29 =2	0.16	0.56 =4			
% 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	5.51 =37	8.48	12.32 =85	13.96	8.24 =59			
% pupils with 1 or more susp'	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	3.58 =24	4.38	6.89 =49	6.02	4.18 =30			
% pupils with 2 or more susp'	1.53 =6	1.68	1.42 =6	1.82	0.66 =3	1.91	1.52 =8	2.03	1.15 =7		0.75 =5	1.63	3.08 =21	2.62	1.53 =11			

Suspensions/ 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	23/24 Au
17	12 +(2pex)	7 +(1pex)	16	16 +(1pex)		19 +(2pex)	3	16 +(1pex)	18	39 +1(pex)	28 +1(pex)	3+12	14+13 +3 (pex)	12+5 +1 (pex)	26 +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	23/24 (out/ in)
6	1	2	5	1		1	0	0	1	0	3	2	5	9	12 16

Internal Suspension 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	23/24 Au
15	15	19	35	22		27	7	14	48	58	36	91+35	64+12	83+27	134

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	23/24 Au
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%	95.45%	97.09%
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%	0.89%	0.75%

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	23/24 Au
14	33	21	27	30		16	34	30	22	46	45	25	21	24	19

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	23/24 Au
95	136	129	286	305		257	41	124	297	252	129	389	146	213	236

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	23/24 Au
83	104	99	218	193		182	34	98	241	243	127	359	141	206	133

Suspensions / Exclusions

We have issued 3 Permanent exclusions so far this term and 26 Suspensions. Although this number is larger than in previous years, it falls very much in line with neighbouring schools and this significant increase is a LA wide and indeed a national issue. The 3 permanent exclusions have been reviewed by Governors and upheld.

Step Out

12 students have been on Step outs and this continues to be used as an alternative to suspension and is normally for first time offences. We have accepted 16 students from partner schools who have worked in our SLT RR – Remove Room.

Internal Suspensions

We have had significantly more Internal Suspensions than in previous years, but this is planned and appropriate. The isolation room is now staffed by SLT and Progress Leaders and the environment is much more positive and allows learning and teaching to take place where it couldn't last year. Students access work from lessons so that they do not miss out on learning. As a result, we are able to have a much fuller room that still works with real purpose.

SSA grades

Positive SSA grades and engagement in class from students is very positive. Students are ready and keen to learn in class.

SIG data

19 students are currently in the SIG process, but at present, we are unable to report on success rates of these students and will provide an update in the spring.

On Call and remove data

The number of On Call requests is down from previous years and this reflects the increased presence of Progress Leaders and senior staff on learning walks. This is proving to be a preventative measure and allows issues to be picked up before On Call is needed. The number of removes (after On Call) is also down. This has been supported through a reduction in the teaching hours of the newly appointed progress leaders to enable a greater contribution to the calm and purposeful environment in school.

EduLink App

The EduLink app was launched in April 2023 and we now have 94% of all parents using this as the main form of communication between home and school. This has proved to be the most successful initiative in school with parents engaging and regularly accessing key information on attendance, behaviour data, rewards, home learning, reports and letters home. It has enabled greater communication and ease of access for parents to key information to enable us to work together to support our young people to achieve their best. The pastoral team are inviting all remaining parents currently without the app, into school to support so that we have 100% usage.

Rachel Hudson – Headteacher