

## Head Teacher's Report for Governors – December 2023

### Part 2 – Highlights from the Autumn Term 2023

#### *Blacon High School – More Than a School*

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



## Humanities

### Geography

Following a comprehensive review of our curriculum at Key Stage 3 over the previous term, here is an overview of the first term of our new academic year in the Geography department.

#### ***Year 7: Building Geographical Foundations***

In Year 7, students have been actively engaged in enhancing their geographical skills, focusing particularly on mapping and grid references. The foundation laid in these fundamental skills will serve as a solid base for their future studies. As part of their exploration into geographical themes, Year 7 has embarked on a journey into the complexities of global population, laying the groundwork for more in-depth studies in the years to come.

#### ***Year 8: Exploring Water Issues Globally***

Building upon the previous half term's exploration of understanding weather patterns, Year 8 students have delved into a detailed study of how people in different parts of the world are affected by water-related issues. This critical examination provides students with a broader understanding of the global implications of water challenges and their impact on diverse communities.

#### ***Year 9: Advancing in Physical Geography***

Year 9 students have progressed from their study of coasts to a more intricate exploration of glaciated landscapes. This transition allows them to deepen their understanding of physical environments, providing them with insights into the unique characteristics and processes shaping glaciated regions. It has been pleasing to see how students have been able to connect new knowledge to their existing understanding of natural processes from our coasts topic.

#### ***GCSE Level: Year 10 and 11 Focus***

At the GCSE level, both Year 10 and Year 11 students have dedicated time to studying weather and climate. The curriculum incorporated in-depth case studies, with a focus on drought in California and the devastating Typhoon Haiyan in The Philippines. The recent mock exams for Year 11 have marked a crucial milestone in their preparation for the upcoming final exams in the summer term.

Year 11 students are eagerly anticipating the fieldwork element of the GCSE course. In early February, they will journey to Snowdonia, where they will gather physical and human-related geographical data, enhancing their practical understanding of the subject.

#### ***Geography Quiz Competition: A Resounding Success***

On 6<sup>th</sup> December, Mr Green led three Year 9 students – Hayden Griffiths, Billy Rowlands, and Jordan Jones – to an inter-school geography quiz competition hosted at the University of Chester. The students performed admirably, finishing joint 9th out of 18 teams. This experience not only showcased the students' knowledge and skills but also provided them with the unique opportunity to explore a university campus, fostering enthusiasm and a sense of accomplishment.

In conclusion, the first term has been marked by significant progress and achievements within the Geography Department at Blacon High School. We look forward to building upon these successes in the upcoming terms and appreciate the ongoing support of the School Governors.



### **Religious Studies**

Following the new schemes of work students have begun this year by looking at beliefs and Judaism (Year 7), Sikhism and Hinduism (Year 8), and world views and problem of evil (Year 9). Our aim is to give students a curriculum where they can experience many different world views and ideas that can help them to understand the world around them. Year 7 have really got to grips with what it means to hold a belief and have explored how this had an impact on the life of Abraham and Moses. In Year 8 students have examined the importance of equality in Sikhism and have enjoyed looking at how these teachings though 500 years old can and do apply today. Year 9 have been examining how your world view effects the way you behave and the tricky issue of the problem of evil. The students have really stepped up to these topics creating some excellent pieces of work and having some fantastic discussions.

During this term in Religious Studies students were offered the opportunity to take part in interfaith week. This week ran from 12-19<sup>th</sup> November and gave the students an opportunity to celebrate the things that faiths have in common and for them to experience some of the things religious people will do at this time of year.



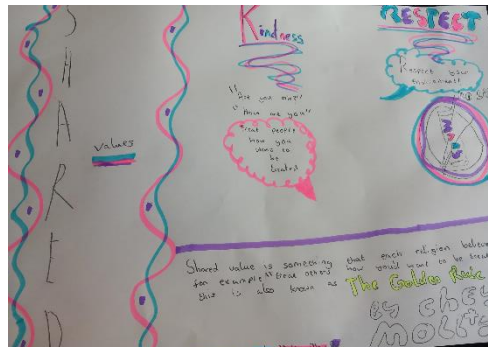
The week started with a focus on Diwali as this was celebrated on the 12<sup>th</sup> November this year. They attended a workshop at lunchtime where they created Diwali lanterns and focused on the importance of this festival for the Hindu community.



Students then looked at the festival of Hanukkah and examined other festivals at this time of year.

Throughout the week students took part in a competition to find a common phrase that all religions see as important earning them a chocolate bar.

The week then finished with a Christingle making session and a look at the golden rule and how we can show this at Blacon. The students got a real flavour of the different religious festivals and ideas.



At Key Stage 4 the subject has continued to grow in number as an option subject and the students are enjoying completing the course. In core religious studies students in year 10 have been examining how the world was created looking at both religious and scientific views and in year 11 students have been examining the controversial issue of abortion. Again the students have approached this well and have had many passionate debates.

Overall we continue to be proud of the students in Religious Studies. The thinking, positivity, and passion for the subject makes it a pleasure to teach.

## PE department

The PE Department is proud of the extensive extra-curricular clubs, enrichment and fixtures delivered throughout the autumn term. We now offer fitness suite and dance lunch time clubs alongside KS3 and KS4 social football clubs at lunch time. The PE department mostly offer after school clubs and since September, students in KS3 and KS4 have the opportunity to attend Netball, Badminton, Fitness, Futsal, Football, Basketball, and Dance clubs, delivered by a range of staff from 3.10pm to 4.10pm. Alongside our clubs, PE deliver a range of sporting opportunities against schools within the District, County and Nationally:



### **Boys Football**

Mr Bradford's team qualified for the last 32 of the ESFA National Small Schools Cup but were soundly beaten by St Bede's College in Manchester. They progressed to Round 2 of the ESFA Cup after beating Ellesmere Port College in Round 1, 6-1 (Josh Crangle x 4, Wiktor Gierczak and Oscar Williams) and Ludlow High School in Round 2, 5-4 on penalties after 4-4 draw (Josh Crangle x 2, Charlie Mackin and Wiktor Gierczak). The team were 4-1 down in the second half but brought it back and were rewarded by Mrs Hudson with bacon sandwiches at a Head's breakfast that Friday. The team then lost 6-2 to Tarporley High School in the Chester Cup (Crangle and Rylee Sharp). The Year 7 Boys 'b' team finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Chester and District 7 a side tournament and the 5 a-side team and 7 a-side team had good tournaments but failed to reach the semis on both occasions.

Year 8 Boys Football team are in Round 3 of the ESFA National Small Schools Cup. They beat Queens Park High School 3-0 in Round 1 and Lakelands Academy 5-1 (Henley x 2, Zak, Mateusz and Bobby Rudd) in Round 2. The Year 8 team lost 4-3 to Knutsford in the ESFA Cup Round 1 with Zak and Bobby Rudd on scoresheet. They lost 2-1 (Ashton Dry) to Helsby High in the Cheshire Cup but have had good friendly wins, 5-2 against Bishops Bluecoat, and 7-1 against Ellesmere Port College. In the 7 a-side Chester tournament, they drew all 4 games 0-0 and missed out on the semi-finals without losing a game!

Year 9 Boys Football team lost 4-2 against Litherland in Round 1 of the ESFA National Small Schools Cup (Rogers x 2) We lost to Upton High and Catholic High in friendlies before losing 6-0 to Neston High School in the Cheshire Cup round 1. We lost all of our games at the 7 a-side tournament but despite no wins for the Year 9 team, they continue to display a good attitude and improving all the time as a team. They will give it everything in the Chester Cup after Christmas.

Year 10 Boys Football team beat St Marys 2-0 in the ESFA National Cup Round 1 and followed this performance up with same score line against St Bede's with Denis and Richard on the scoresheet in Round 2. The team won 2-1 (Richard and Jake) against Heath High in the Cheshire Cup and play Whitby High next round. They took part in the recent Chester and District 7 a-side tournament, making good progress as a team, never conceded a goal and lost the final on penalties, runners up for a talented team.

Mr Cairns' team has qualified for the last 32 of the ESFA National Small Schools Cup. They progressed to Round 3 of the ESFA Cup after beating Oswestry High in Round 1, 7-1 (Keay x 4, Mullen, Jones, and Bride) and Abbey Gate College in Round 2, 6-3 (Keay x3, Mullen, Jones and Cooney). We lost 7-3 to Hilbre High School (Cooney, Garner and Mullen) in a game we were winning 3-2 with 18 minutes remaining. We lost 8-0 to Neston High in the Cheshire Cup but have the Chester Cup v Tarporley to focus on after Christmas. They won one game at the 8 a-side tournament at Kings, but missed out on the semi-finals.

### **Girls Football**

The U13 Girls Football team beat Queens High School 8-0 in Round 1 of the Chester and District Cup, Elsie Jayne Dutton scoring 4. They lost 4-1 against St Peters in the Cheshire Cup, Elsiha Rogers scoring

the goal from a corner! The Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 have had Chester and district 7 a-side tournaments and the U16 team has a Cheshire Cup game, the U14 team have Upton to play in the Chester Cup.

### **Basketball**

The Year 10/11 Boys Basketball team have beaten Queens Park High School 43-19 (Lukasz Paradysz 34 points) but lost a close game to Bishops Bluecoat 70-40 in excellent fixtures. We have to play Catholic High before Christmas. The Year 10/11 team lost 24-39 to Wirral Grammar (Elliot Grain with 3 x 3 pointers) and the Year 7/8 team lost 16-31 against Wirral Grammar with Alfie Scott scoring 10 points. The Year 8/9 boys and Year 7 team have more games after Christmas.

### **Netball**

The Year 9/11 girls' teams have performed well in the Small School League round robin matches against Catholic, Queens Park, Bishops, and Abbey Gate schools. The Year 7 and Year 8 teams lost to Catholic in their first game but beat Queens Park and drew with Abbey Gate College in the SSL with improved performances. Year 7 lost a close friendly match against Upton High School; Year 7/8 and Year 9/10 play against Catholic, Abbey Gate College, Queens Park, and Bishops every 3 weeks in friendlies and mini tournaments coordinated by Mrs Carr to prepare for District tournaments after Christmas. Shout out to Jnae and Layla from Year 8 who help coach Year 7 footwork and movement at practices.

### **Cricket**

Mr Cairns has signed Blacon High School up for Girls Cricket Coaching – Secondary Schools Funded From ECB / Cheshire Cricket Board 2023/24. We have been allocated 40 hours and Jo Herbertson alongside PE staff has delivered 3 weeks of 'Cricket Fitness' to KS3 Girls. Up to Christmas, Jo is delivering a 1 hour Year 7 and 10 Girls Cricket Club after school every Wednesday with the aim of having an U13 girls Blacon team to play an indoor Cricket tournament in 2024!

### **Blacon Sports Village Sports**

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

### **Dance**

Mrs Joynson has excellent numbers to Year 7 and 8 Dance club and is looking to carry out a school performance before and after Christmas. Mrs Joynson has started to teach AQA GCSE Examination Dance to Year 9 on a Monday and Tuesday after school. The students are really engaged with the new course.







## Chester School Sport Partnership

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 35 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 6 and 7 Girls Rugby

On Wednesday 20th and Thursday 21st September we helped Chester Rugby Club run a Girls Rugby Festival for children in years 6 and 7 in conjunction with Sale Sharks Rugby Club.

On the Wednesday morning we had 14 teams from our primary schools who took part in the mini games and a skills session led by three players from the Women's Sale Sharks rugby team. On the Thursday we had 6 teams attend the year 7 event at the rugby club. Many of the girls were new to rugby and enjoyed playing in the mini games and learning new skills from the Sale Sharks. *This was an aspire event.*



### Year 3&4, 5&6 Touch Rugby Festivals

On Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th October we held the touch rugby festivals at Chester Rugby Club. In total we had 410 children attend the event from 22 schools. This was an aspire event.





### **SEND New Age Kurling and Boccia Festival**

On Monday 16th October we held our New Age Kurling and Boccia festival at Ellesmere Port Sports Village.

39 children from 7 schools took part in the fun event where they learned how to play the games. There was no scoring involved and the children just enjoyed themselves with their friends in a relaxed environment. *This was a celebrate event.*

### **Year 5 and 6 Quick Sticks Hockey Competition**

On Thursday 19th October we held our Year 5 and 6 Quick Sticks Hockey competition at Upton High School. Here 15 schools took part in the 4 aside competition. The two winning teams will represent Cheshire at the Cheshire and Warrington county games final. *This was an inspire event.*



### **Year 5&6 Basketball Competition**

On Monday 20th November we held our Year 5&6 basketball competition at Ellesmere Port Sports Village. Sixteen schools and 128 children enjoyed the fast paced action on the basketball courts. The two winning team will represent Cheshire at the Cheshire and Warrington county games final. *This was an inspire event.*

### **SEND Multi Sport Festival**

On Thursday 16th November we held our SEN Multi Sports Festival at Ellesmere Port Sports Village. We had 16 schools attend the event where the children took part in New Age Kurling, Boccia, Table Cricket, Volleyball and Archery. *This was a celebrate event.*



### **Year 1 and 2 Multi Skills Festivals**

On the 6th and 7th November we held our year 1 and 2 multi-skills festivals at Ellesmere Port Sports Village. We had over 450 children come along and try a variety of different skills. This included target throwing, fast feet ladders, stacking cups, chest pass and balancing. *This event was open to all.*



### **Tennis CPD**

We held our Tennis CPD course at Blacon High School on Tuesday 21st November. Eleven staff from a mixture of primary, secondary and special schools attended the training.

LTA Teacher Training is a 2-hour training course for which has been developed by teachers to help you deliver high-quality PE lessons with confidence. From Blacon we had PGCE student Rhys Williams attend and Abbie Bowen who is an ex-pupil and was on work experience.



### **New PE Lead for Primary Schools – CPD**

This session is due to take place at Blacon High School on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December. Here primary PE leads will learn about their role as a PE co-ordinator and cover aspects such as the School Games programme, Primary PE Sports Premium and how we can help them in their role.

### **Koboca Survey**

We have paid for a license for all schools in Chester to access the koboca website where we are encouraging schools to complete the national Pupil Activity & Wellbeing survey. So far 2208 pupils have completed the survey from 6 high schools (including 262 responses from Blacon) and 13 primary schools. Here schools can see detailed reports on who the least active children are, those that want to be sports leaders, and those that do not know what a healthy balanced diet is amongst other questions. Schools can then put interventions in place to help the children who need it the most.

### **School Games Mark**

The School Games Mark is a government led awards scheme launched in 2012 to reward schools for their commitment to the development of competition across their school and into the community.

The verification process was completed during the summer holidays and the following schools were awarded the School Games Mark award last year.

#### **Blacon High School**

Bishop Heber High School

The Queens School

Dorin Park School

Bunbury Aldersey Primary School

Guilden Sutton CofE Primary School

St Theresa's Catholic Primary School

Boughton Heath Academy

Tattenhall Park Primary School

Chester Blue Coat Primary School

Clutton Primary School

Upton Westlea Primary School

Saughall All Saints Primary School

Highfield Community Primary School

Waverton Community Primary School

The Firs School

Belgrave Primary School

Delamere CofE Primary Academy

JH Godwin Primary School

St Clare's Catholic Primary School

Mickle Trafford Village School

Acresfield Academy

Upton Health Primary School

Dee Point Primary School

St Oswalds Primary School

Overleigh St Mary's Primary School

Lache Primary School

Tarvin Primary School

Hoole Primary School

Huntington Primary School

Mill View Primary School

St Martins Academy

Newton Primary School

The window for applications for 2023-2024 will open in the summer term.



## MFL – Modern Foreign Languages

The MFL Department has undergone significant change this academic year. In the summer term, we said goodbye to Carly Thelwell who had taught at Blacon High for over ten years. She has been replaced (FT) by Tamara Davidson. Rachel Thomas has largely moved across to the English Department and Karen Appleby has joined MFL, teaching Spanish.



Last June, Gill Hassall and Carly Thelwell took 36 students (Y9-11) to Spain on a four-day residential visit. Accompanying staff were Ed Colwell and Ade Carr. The trip was a huge success. We flew from Manchester to Alicante (the first time in the air for many of the students) and we stayed in a hotel in Salou, where we visited the beach and local shops a number of times. We spent a full day in Barcelona, visiting the iconic Sagrada Familia cathedral, Las Ramblas, a food market, the Gothic Quarter and the beach. Our step count for the day was in excess of 28,000 (which included a quick visit to Primark for some...!) A second day trip took us to Port Aventura theme Park. The students had a wonderful experience, behaved impeccably and were a great credit to Blacon High School.



We are planning for our next residential to take us to Paris in Autumn 2, 2024. This would be a joint visit with the IT department, visiting Disneyland, where students can take part in digital learning and enjoy the attractions, then sample the Paris Metro, some sights and the Christmas markets. Planning for this visit will begin in the new term.

We celebrated European Day of Languages in school on 26<sup>th</sup> September, with a tutor quiz and a selection of European dishes served by Kelly in the canteen.

Following last year's success, we are hoping to be able to book another French visit, this year, from Onatti Modern Languages Theatre Company.

Curriculum maps and detailed schemes of work are fully in place for the changeover of languages this year. Students currently study: Year 7 French, Year 8 Spanish, Year 9 French, Year 10 Spanish, Year 11 French. In KS3 and in line with Ofsted expectations, we are explicitly teaching grammar and phonics alongside key / high frequency vocabulary.



For both languages, Gill Hassall has mapped grammar and phonics progression across the three years, ensuring appropriate revisiting and embedding of core knowledge and skills. Students are tested on their retention of key vocabulary every fortnight and each half term they complete two interim and one summative assessment, with an equal spread across the four key modalities: listening, speaking, reading and writing (plus grammar), over the course of the year. Results are recorded and RAG'd (Red/Amber/Green) in the departmental trackers and are used to inform planning and intervention. Students' exercise books contain phonics sheets, sentence builder grids for each module of work and individual scores trackers.

Year 8 Module 8.3 and High Frequency Vocabulary					
1	¿Adónde fuiste de vacaciones? <i>Where did you go on holiday?</i>	El año pasado <i>Last year</i> El verano pasado <i>Last summer</i>	fui a <i>I went to</i>	Escocia. Scotland. España. Spain. Francia. France. Gales. Wales. Grecia. Greece. Inglaterra. England. Irlanda. Ireland. Italia. Italy.	¡Qué bien! <i>How great!</i> ¡Qué bonito! <i>How nice!</i> ¡Qué divertido! <i>What fun!</i> ¡Qué guay! <i>How cool!</i> ¡Qué suerte! <i>What luck!</i>
	¿Con quién fuiste? <i>Who did you go with?</i>	No fui de vacaciones. <i>I didn't go on holiday.</i> Fui con <i>I went with</i> Fuimos con <i>We went with</i>	mis amigas/as. <i>my friends.</i> mi clase. <i>my class.</i> mi familia. <i>my family.</i> mis padres. <i>my parents.</i>	en autocar. <i>by coach.</i> en avión. <i>by plane.</i> en barco. <i>by boat/ferry.</i> en coche. <i>by car.</i> en tren. <i>by train.</i>	¡Qué aburrido! <i>How boring!</i> ¡Qué horror! <i>How dreadful!</i> ¡Qué lástima! <i>What a shame!</i> ¡Qué mal! <i>How bad!</i> ¡Qué rollo! <i>How annoying!</i>
	¿Cómo fuiste? <i>How did you get there?</i>	Fui <i>I went</i> Fuimos <i>We went</i>			

Fui <i>I went</i>	2	Fuiste <i>You (singular) went</i>	Fue <i>He/She went</i>	Fuimos <i>We went</i>	Fuisteis <i>You (plural) went</i>	Fueron <i>They went</i>
a Italia <i>to Italy</i>	a Escocia <i>to Scotland</i>	a Grecia <i>to Greece</i>	en autocar. <i>by coach.</i>	en avión. <i>by plane.</i>	en barco. <i>by boat/ferry.</i>	¡Qué bien! <i>How great!</i> ¡Qué guay! <i>How cool!</i> ¡Qué aburrido! <i>How boring!</i> ¡Qué mal! <i>How bad!</i>
Visité <i>I visited</i>	Visitaste <i>You (singular) visited</i>	Visitó <i>He/She visited</i>	Visitamos <i>We visited</i>	Visitasteis <i>You (plural) visited</i>	Visitaron <i>They visited</i>	Mandé <i>I sent</i> Mandaste <i>You (singular) sent</i> Mandó <i>He/She sent</i> Mandamos <i>We sent</i> Mandasteis <i>You (plural) sent</i> Mandaron <i>They sent</i>
Saque <i>I took</i>	Sacaste <i>You (singular) took</i>	Sacó <i>He/She took</i>	Sacamos <i>We took</i>	Sacasteis <i>You (plural) took</i>	Sacaron <i>They took</i>	monumentos. <i>monuments.</i> SMS. <i>texts.</i> fotos. <i>photos.</i>

Example of sentence builder grids for exercise books.

Example of sentence builder grids for exercise books.



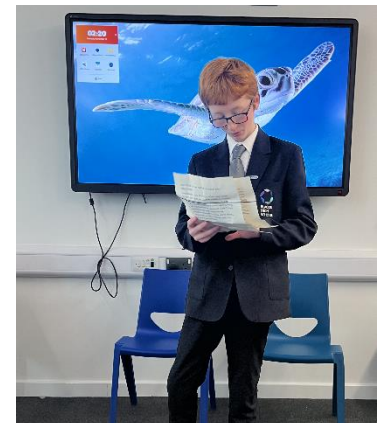
This year, Karen Appleby is continuing the Year 8 Spanish pen-pal link with our Spanish link school in Barcelona.

We continue to celebrate success in the MFL Department through our 'Language Stars'. Each half term, MFL teachers nominate students who have shone in their language studies, parents are informed and our notice board is updated.

### English

Having reviewed our KS3 curriculum, students began the year studying the art of rhetoric, developing their skills in speech giving and debate. Our aim is to ensure all students have the opportunity to communicate their thoughts and viewpoints in a secure and supportive environment, preparing them for their

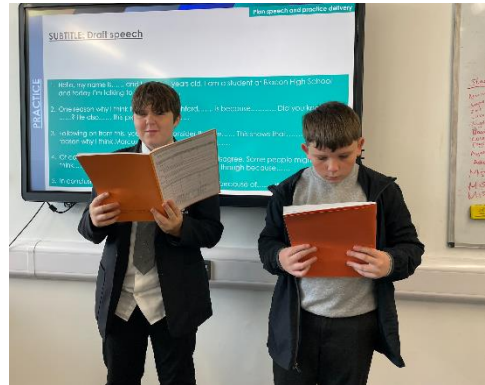
GCSE years and beyond. Year 7 students are currently enjoying developing their understanding of how story telling has evolved over time and we look forward to hearing their retellings of physical and metaphorical journeys they have made in the last year. In addition, Year 8 were tasked with writing a speech about something they were passionate about whilst Year 9 students enjoyed cross curricular learning about Marcus Rashford's work with Fare Share since the pandemic and how he has helped to lead parliamentary change, ensuring society's most vulnerable young people have access to the meals they need and deserve. This study formed the basis for their final assessments, in which they performed their speeches and debates for Mr Haycock and Mrs Carr. It was a real treat for some of the students to be able to question local MP Samantha Dixon about how best to hold your nerve when faced with an audience and what to do if you forget your next point!



In addition to their studies, some KS3 students recently enjoyed a trip out to Cineworld in Liverpool to watch the newest release of the Disney movie Haunted Mansion, as part of the Into Film Festival. This has been a regular trip each November for almost a decade and is looked forward to by staff and students alike.



During the Autumn half term, we were pleased to announce the start of two new clubs – Carnegie Book Club and Debate Club. Carnegie book club meets with Miss Perrett every Tuesday and is open to all students, regardless of their age. Students are currently working through last years' shortlisted books ahead of the new list being announced in February. Most students are on their third book already! Students are building their stamina in reading and becoming more resilient. Main activities including book clubs linked to other schools will begin in the New Year. In addition, and following their study of rhetoric in class, many students became interested in debate and requested a club in which they could practise their skills. Thank you Miss Illingworth for bringing this to life. Whilst Debate club is still getting off the ground, we are hopeful it will be well attended and look forward to entering debate competitions in the future.



In a change to regularly scheduled learning, Literature and Language have been split for the first time at Blacon High School. In Year 10, students are now taught English Language and English Literature separately by different members of staff to ensure we are teaching both skillsets explicitly and exclusively away from the other. This term, students have been immersed in 1960s working class Liverpool with their studies of *Blood Brothers*. This is a tragic tale of fraternal twins, separated at birth, who grow up living polar opposite lifestyles. This study has allowed students to question societal pressures put upon different social groups. We are hoping to invite the cast of the stage production into school very soon to perform in own very own hall. Similarly, our English Language study has allowed us to teach Paper 1 in depth and students have already sat their first in class mock, securing some excellent grades in both reading and narrative writing.

Year 11 students continue to prepare for their English Literature and Language GCSEs and have been demonstrating their skills in regular in class mocks. We have now covered almost all of the course content and January will see us begin a tailored revision programme ahead of the final summer exams.

Media Studies students have made a great start to the new school year. Year 10 have studied representations and audience linked to radio broadcasting and have more recently been studying their close study product for their GCSE – a set text which they need to interrogate in their exam. Similarly, Yr. 11 students have begun a strict revision programme and have been familiarising themselves with their CSPs in readiness for their mocks and final summer exams.

We were pleased with the turn-out for the recent Year 11 Information evening, where students and their families attended to find out more information the upcoming English Literature and Language GCSEs. We are continuing to actively discuss students' upcoming exams with them and identifying and discussing the careers represented by different characters in our texts, as well as finding out which careers English can lead to. Students are currently sitting their mock exams and we are confident that they are going to demonstrate their knowledge.

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

## Maths

I am delighted to provide a detailed account of the educational journey our students have undertaken during the current half term, with a special focus on the impactful "Maths Information Evening" for Year 11. The curriculum has been meticulously designed to not only impart essential mathematical knowledge but also instil critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a deep appreciation for the subject.

### Year 7

In Year 7, our students have engaged in foundational mathematical concepts that serve as the bedrock for future learning:

**Place Value & Ordering Integers & Decimals:** Mastery of place value is foundational to numerical understanding. This knowledge empowers students to confidently manipulate integers and decimals, ensuring a solid understanding of numerical relationships.

**Fraction, Decimal & Percentage Equivalence:** The ability to recognize and manipulate fractions, decimals, and percentages is a crucial skill. Students have learned to see these representations as interchangeable, providing a versatile toolset for real-world problem-solving.

### Year 8

Year 8 students have delved into mathematical abstraction and data representation, developing skills that are vital in an increasingly data-driven world:

**Working in the Cartesian Plane:** Understanding the Cartesian coordinate system not only enhances spatial awareness but also lays the groundwork for advanced mathematical concepts. This skill is fundamental in fields such as physics, engineering, and computer science.

**Representing Data:** In an era of information overload, the ability to represent and interpret data is invaluable. Year 8 students have honed their statistical literacy, enabling them to make informed decisions based on data analysis.

### Year 9

The exploration of three-dimensional shapes and geometric principles in Year 9 serves to deepen students' spatial reasoning and problem-solving abilities:

**Three-Dimensional Shapes:** Beyond the theoretical understanding, the study of three-dimensional shapes provides a tangible link between mathematics and the physical world. This knowledge is foundational in fields such as architecture, engineering, and design.

**Constructions & Congruency:** Engaging in geometric constructions enhances students' problem-solving skills and instils an appreciation for precision. Understanding congruency lays the groundwork for advanced mathematical proofs and logical reasoning.

### Year 10

Year 10 students have encountered more advanced mathematical concepts, expanding their toolkit for real-world problem-solving:

**Representing Solutions of Equations & Inequalities:** The ability to represent and solve equations graphically and algebraically is a powerful skill. This provides a visual and analytical approach to problem-solving, applicable in fields such as economics, physics, and computer science.

**Simultaneous Equations:** Solving systems of equations simultaneously is a crucial skill with applications in diverse fields, including engineering, finance, and optimization problems.

### **Year 11**

The Year 11 curriculum has challenged students with advanced algebraic concepts, emphasizing the practical value of these skills:

**Expanding & Factorising:** Mastery of algebraic manipulation is essential for tackling complex problem-solving scenarios. Students develop the ability to simplify expressions and analyze mathematical relationships, a skill vital in various scientific and engineering disciplines.

**Changing the Subject:** The ability to manipulate formulas is a key aspect of mathematical problem-solving. Changing the subject of a formula empowers students to adapt mathematical models to suit specific scenarios, a crucial skill in applied mathematics.

**Functions:** Introducing the concept of functions is a foundational step towards understanding mathematical modeling. Functions are pervasive in diverse fields, including physics, economics, and computer science.

### **Maths Information Evening for Year 11**

Earlier in the term, our school hosted a "Maths Information Evening" for Year 11 students, which proved to be a resounding success. This event provided a valuable opportunity for parents to meet with their children's teachers and receive up-to-date guidance on revision strategies, along with access to essential resources.

The event was very well attended, with 48% of Year 11 students being represented by at least one parent or carer. This strong turnout reflects the active engagement and support of our parents in their children's education.

Parents received comprehensive guidance on effective revision techniques, tailored to the specific needs of Year 11 students preparing for their upcoming examinations.

Essential revision resources were distributed to parents, ensuring that they have the necessary tools to support their children's academic success.

In conclusion, our students have not only delved into challenging mathematical concepts this half term but have also benefited from a collaborative partnership between teachers, students, and parents during the Maths Information Evening. We are proud of the progress our students have made and remain committed to providing a holistic and impactful education at [Your School Name].

Thank you for your ongoing support.



## Performing Arts

### **ANNIE Jr**

The Drama Club, directed by Mrs Salisbury, have worked tirelessly for 12 months to rehearse and develop a Musical Theatre performance of the highest standard. Mrs Salisbury led a team of staff and students through a rocky, yet creative journey, where resilience was key. The ensemble developed strong relationships built on trust and respect as they learnt Miss Pollard's choreography and were coached vocally by Miss McHale. Weekly rehearsals were held over a number of evenings after school and over countless lunchtimes, directed by Mrs Salisbury and Miss Thompson. Students quickly developed their skills in musical theatre, learning how to sing, dance and act at the same time. Mrs Salisbury's links with Storyhouse enabled a supply of props and costumes, with support also from Miss Ankers and Miss McHale's links with the Delta School of Performing Arts in borrowing the smocks for the orphans, the aprons for the servants and Miss Ankers own personal Dog costume for Sandy. The opportunity to perform at Storyhouse has greatly enhanced the experience for our students and staff, bringing stakeholders into the local arts centre and widening the cultural and social capital of our young people. The cast of Cinderella who were also performing at Storyhouse on the 6<sup>th</sup> December requested that our performance of Annie be streamed into their Green Room and Dressing Rooms. They were deeply impressed by our performance and sent their congratulations to the cast. We had a full house for both performances and received standing ovations.

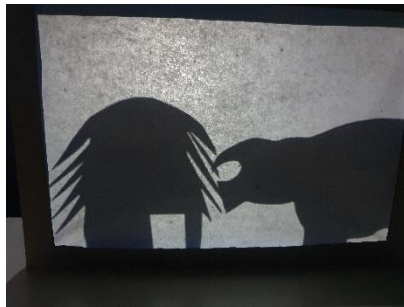
### **SWEDISH STORYTELLING PROJECT**

Five students experienced our highly successful creative practice in the Performing Arts Department and observed high standards of engagement in a range of subjects during their 3 day international placement at our school, which culminated in Swedish Storytelling workshops for students during their Drama lessons, supporting our delivery of SMSC through Drama. The students were part of a group of 45 Swedish students engaging in international creative practice as part of their teacher training programme. This programme is an annual research and training event organised by the RECAP team at the University of Chester which is led by Professor Allan Owens. In addition to completing teaching practice placements in schools in Chester and North Wales, Swedish student trainee teachers engaged in lectures on creative practice from Professor Allen Owens, Dr Sally Bamber and Dr Martin Matthews. Mrs Salisbury was honoured to be invited, as a research fellow and a mentor, to the University at the close of the project to share insights into the power of international pedagogy and the value of creative arts practice. Our guests thoroughly enjoyed their experience at Blacon High School and thanked our staff and students for a warm welcome and great insight into high quality teaching and learning.



### **Year 7: SHADOW PUPPETS**

Year 7 students are introduced to Puppetry as a style of theatre, exploring the art of shadow puppetry. This SOW links with the Year 7 English SOW on storytelling. Mr Sabri enjoyed the hand shadow puppet lesson whilst on a learning walk, creating work of a commendable standard. The photographs show the students telling the story of the Three Little Pigs, experimenting with homemade puppet theatres, stick puppets and torches. The homework project for Year 7 in the Autumn term is to create their own Shadow Puppet Theatre from recyclable objects at home which they will use to tell the story of Beowulf.



### **Year 8 Commedia dell'arte**

This term, Year 8 have studied the exciting Commedia dell'arte style of theatre, culminating in a homework project to create their own Commedia dell'arte masks which they wore for their end of unit assessment. They have enjoyed the slapstick comedy and use of acrobatic movement which are the trademarks of Commedia and have certainly made Mrs Salisbury laugh when they have performed their work.



### **YEAR 10 PRODUCTION OF TWO**

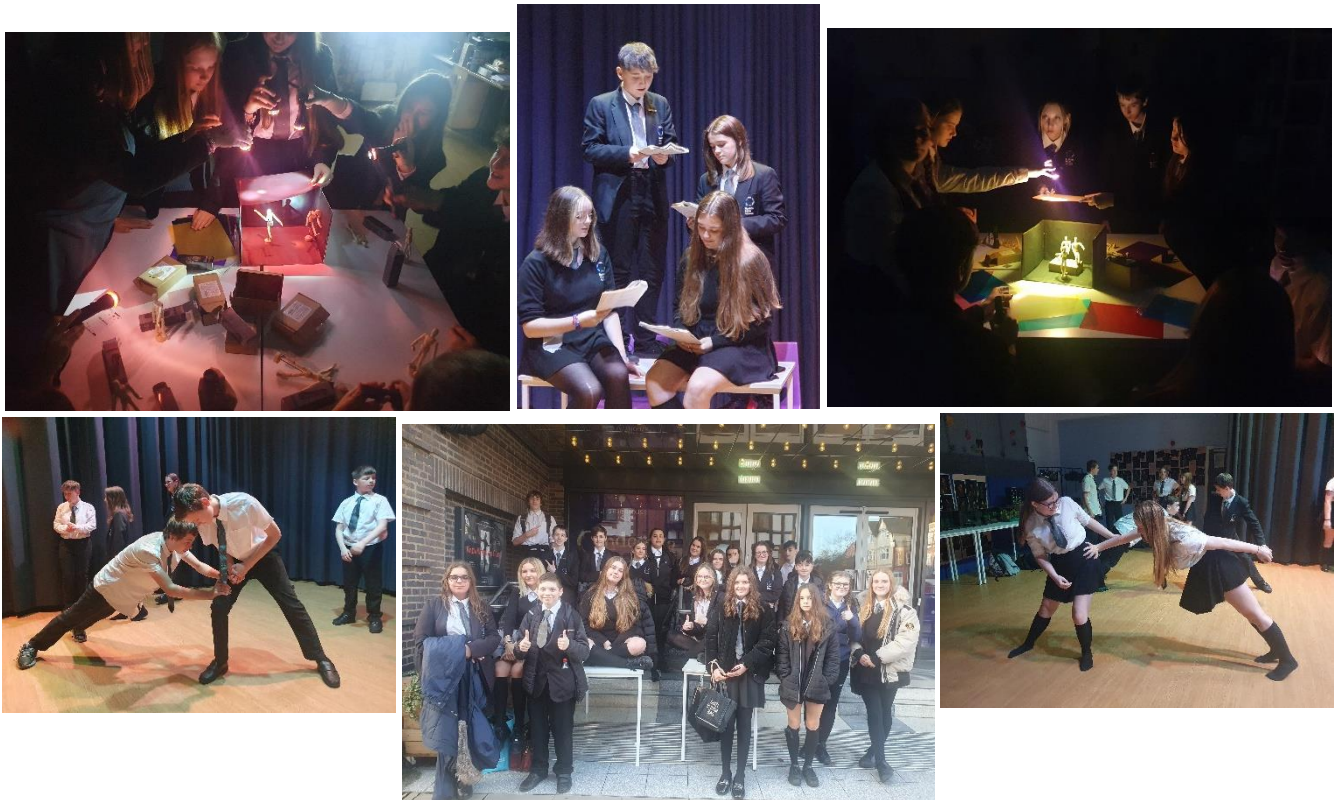
Year 10 have made an outstanding start to the BTEC Tech Award in Performing Arts course, designing for a range of design roles including costume, make-up and set design, and are currently rehearsing for their upcoming production of Two, which will be a Studio performance for family and friends in the Spring term.



### YEAR 11 OTHELLO November 2023

Our talented Year 11 Performing Arts students performed Othello at Storyhouse as part of their BTEC Tech Award study. Mrs Salisbury was immensely proud of the performance, which was presented as a piece of Physical Theatre, bringing Shakespeare's tragic tale of jealousy, relationships and power to life through movement sequences which supported the words of the Bard in telling the story to a responsive and delighted audience.

During their study of Othello students explored lighting design, choreography and performance skills. They engaged in a professional Physical Theatre workshop with one of Frantic Assembly's leading choreographers and reviewed live performances of Gecko's touring production of *The Wedding and Kin*, and Frantic Assembly's *Othello* and *Metamorphosis*. They have recently completed their coursework and are now preparing for their final exam. The exam material will be released in January and work will be completed in timetabled lessons, with the final submission in April 2024.









## Student Leadership

The Student Leadership Team has, already, been involved in a number of key events so far and they continue to represent the school brilliantly, and act as role models to students who are lower down the school.

Since September, they have represented the school at our Open Evening, when prospective students, parents and carers visit us with a view to joining in September 2024. This is such an important event in



the school calendar and our two Head Students gave speeches in the Hall during the presentation to parents and carers at the beginning of the evening. Other members of the Student Leadership Team were involved in tours of the school or took part in the live lessons that our visitors were able to experience.

On another morning, members of the team met with our Co-Chair of

Governors, Nigel Pell Ilderton, and were able to share some valuable, first-hand student voice with him.

The Student Leadership Team can always be relied on to represent everything that is positive about the school our two Deputy Head Students, along with two Student Parliament representatives from Year 9 met with local MP, Sam Dixon, when she visited the school in November.





Also, our two Leaders of the Student Parliament, along with student representatives from Years 7 and 8, continue to lead the BEV Democracy Programme, which has been running for several years with school council representatives from all of our partner primary schools.



Each year, Blacon High School holds a really emotive Remembrance assembly, which is live streamed to the whole school. Once again, student Leaders and representatives from the Student Parliament took leading roles and offered a variety of readings, poems and prayers during the assembly. The link to the assembly is on the school website.

Our association with the Children's Advisory Board and the Children's Commissioner is continuing this year and we have just submitted designs for the

official Children's Advisory Board Christmas card and we are hopeful that one of the images we shared will be chosen.

### CCF Combined Cadet Force

Since the beginning of September we have gained a number of new recruits within the Cadets and have a core group of students committed each week as well as 3 weekends over October and November helping out with poppy selling along with the Remembrance parade in Chester city centre. We have also just planned for 3 weekends away at Fox barracks in January, February and May for the Cadets to learn/renew/fire the L98A2 rifle on the ranges. At the Lord Mayor's remembrance service, Blacon High School laid a wreath at Chester Cathedral following a moving service where our Cadets were present and part of the parade.





## International links

We continue to investigate every opportunity to develop our international profile.

As governors are aware, the school achieved the British Council Intermediate International Award in the summer of 2023. David Stockdale has been invited to an event at the Palace of Westminster in January 2024 when this achievement will be formally acknowledged with the presentation of the certificate. The event, which will be attended by representatives from the British Council and a number of MPs, represents a clear acknowledgement of the work that went into achieving the award.

Work continues apace in this area and it is our intention that the school will progress to the highest level and achieve full British Council International Accreditation by the end of this academic year. To accomplish this, we need to have at least ten international projects running throughout the year but we are confident that we can do it.

November saw us host the English leg of the Bulgarian exchange trip and this gave us an opportunity to share the best of the school, and our local area, in a variety of ways. Our visitors enjoyed a full itinerary for the six days they were here and, as always, our 'Leavers' Dinner' was the culmination of



the trip. It is always a bitter-sweet event as we celebrate our ongoing partnership with the Vasil Levsky High School in Karlovo, and watch as students shed a lot of tears as they say their goodbyes.

Finally, as a result of the ongoing international collaborations that we are involved

with, and more recent interactions with the Chester Civic Team, David Stockdale has been invited to sit on the Cheshire International Links Association (CILA), which meets each quarter. They are aware of the work to raise our international profile that has been going on at Blacon High School and acknowledge that, currently, there is no one who works directly in education who sits on CILA. This is another valuable acknowledgement of the important message that we strive to share with our students and wider community as we learn about cultural diversity, global citizenship, inclusion and acceptance.

### **Whole school events**

We have been able to welcome parents and carers in to school on numerous occasions already this year when we have been able to celebrate the great work that underpins why Blacon High School is the first choice secondary school for so many students, and why, for the fifth year in succession, we are oversubscribed. December will also see the first Rewards Assemblies of the year.

In October, we held our Whole School Celebration Evening, which is one of the well-attended and celebratory events in the calendar, and this year's event was no exception. The evening began with a fantastic ensemble musical performance from some of our talented musicians, followed by a mix of



speeches, thanks, the giving and receiving of awards. Our Guest of Honour this year was The Lord Mayor of Chester, Councillor Sheila Little, who gave a perfectly pitched motivational speech to our assembled audience.

### **Meeting the Duke of Westminster**

On the 9th November, Mrs Hudson attended the opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> Form centre at the Kings School with Annie-Mae Barlow in Year 11. The Duke of Westminster was there to open the building and had the

chance to talk to students from the 5 schools in our Chester Schools Together partnership which is funded by the Westminster Foundation. I was so proud of Annie-Mae who stole the show and was able to express just how much of a difference the opportunities accessed by students from Blacon and beyond, has made. Annie-Mae was complemented by so many guests, including the Chair of Governors at The Kings, Headteachers from the partnership schools and it was visible how moved the Duke of Westminster was, when Annie-Mae spoke. We then had a lovely afternoon tea before returning to school for our Awards evening.



I am incredibly proud of all that our students have achieved in the autumn term.

'Pride is holding your head up when everyone around them has their bowed. Courage is what makes you do it.'

'Don't wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect. There will always be challenges, obstacles and less than perfect conditions. So what? Get started now. With each step you take, you will grow stronger and stronger, more and more skilled, more and more self confident, and more and more successful.'

I wish Governors, parents, students and staff all the best for the Christmas break and thank everyone for their support in helping us to be more than a school for our wonderful community.

**Rachel Hudson - Headteacher**



## DECEMBER EVENTS 2023

<b>MON 4th DEC</b>	<b>BLACON COMMUNITY CAROL SERVICE</b> Everyone is welcome to join the Community Carol Service at Holy Trinity Church, Norris Road, 6pm.
<b>WED 6th DEC</b>	<b>ANNIE PERFORMANCE, STORYHOUSE</b> Whole school musical performance of 'Annie' at The Storyhouse, Garrett Theatre. 2 performances at 5pm and 7pm.
<b>SAT 9th DEC</b>	<b>WINTER FAIR</b> Winter Fair in the school hall, 10am-2pm for craft stalls, second hand sale, tea and cake.
<b>TUES 12th DEC</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE</b> Christmas Bake sale at break time in the diner (cash only).
<b>TUES 12th DEC</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS CONCERT 6-8PM</b> Music, Drama and Dance departments are putting on a festive show. Tickets are £3 adults £2 concessions, available to buy on Parentpay or cash on the door.
<b>WED 13th DEC</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS MOVIE NIGHT 4-6PM</b> All pupils (KS3 and KS4) are invited to join us for a whole school Christmas movie night to watch Home Alone 2. £3 ticket available on parentpay or cash on the door. Refreshments are available to buy (cash only).
<b>THURS 14th DEC</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS SALE BREAK/LUNCH</b> Table top Christmas sale in the Art room, for pupils/staff to buy cheap gifts - donations appreciated (toiletries, games, toys and sweets etc.)
<b>TUES 19th DEC</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS DINNER</b> Our catering team will be providing pupils and staff with a wonderful Christmas dinner at lunch time in the diner.
<b>WED 20th DEC</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS HAMPER RAFFLE</b> We are raffling a fantastic Sleigh Hamper. Including everything a family needs for Christmas. Tickets are £1 a strip and available on Parentpay or in cash/card from reception and Mrs Hayden in school.

DONATIONS FOR THE SALE/HAMPER CAN BE HANDED TO MRS HAYDEN IN THE TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT.

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