

Head Teacher’s Report for Governors – Spring 2025

Part 2 – Highlights from the Spring Term

Blacon High School – More Than a School

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

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

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

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

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

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



Head teacher’s Report to Governors – Spring Term Highlights

This report provides an overview of the key successes and highlights from the spring term, showing how much has been achieved in spite of the disruption caused by the cyberattack in January. We continue to be proud of the resilience shown by all within the Blacon community.

Bursary Scheme and Student Leadership

The bursary scheme continues to offer life-changing opportunities for students, with two securing bursary funded places at top independent schools for September 2025. The selection process for 2026 is well underway, with five students progressing to the application phase.

The Year 11 Student Leadership Team has been actively gathering student feedback on exam preparation, ensuring students feel supported. The Year 10 Student Leadership Team is leading the BEV Democracy Project, engaging in discussions on global issues. Additionally, students have taken initiative to maintain the school library, with potential funding from ‘Chester Schools Together’ to enhance the space.



International Links

The school received the British Council International Schools Award – Accreditation, a prestigious recognition achieved by only 55 schools nationally.

To further expand international opportunities, a bid has been submitted for £40,000 from the Turing Scheme to fund an expedition to Tanzania in 2026. If successful, this will allow students to engage in global learning experiences and develop valuable skills.

For the second year in a row, Mr Stockdale attended a celebration at the Palace of Westminster in January to receive the British Council International Schools Award Accreditation, which is the highest level of the award after achieving the Intermediate Level in 2023/24. Mr Stockdale was joined at the ceremony by the MP for Cheshire West and Chester – Sam Dixon. We have achieved accreditation level, we hold this for three years and subsequent applications will be for re-accreditation, to reflect the school’s ongoing commitment to international work.



Reading and Literacy

Changes to the school day have impacted reading sessions in the first half of the spring term and to address this, a new extended reading session has been introduced on Fridays to increase engagement. Year 10 students, in particular, face challenges with vocabulary,

affecting their ability to access GCSE materials. Focused interventions are being implemented to improve literacy levels across all year groups.

English Department

The English Department has been active in promoting literacy and engagement with literature. Ten students from Years 9 and 10 took part in the Carnegie Shadow Judges event at the King's School, enriching their understanding of literary criticism. World Book Day celebrations included school-wide reading activities, cross-curricular links with Art and Performing Arts, and book tokens for all students. Furthermore, a well-attended Year 11 Information Evening provided essential exam preparation support for students and parents.

Sports and PE

The school continues to offer a diverse range of sports clubs, including volleyball, netball, football and basketball. Notable achievements include the Year 9/8 boys winning the Chester and District Basketball Cup with an unbeaten record and the Year 11 boys reaching the semi-finals of the Chester and District Cup after a remarkable comeback. The Year 7 girls' football team were runners-up in the 5-a-side district competition. Success has also been seen in district volleyball and netball tournaments. Additionally, climbing, cricket, dance and enrichment trips have been successfully introduced, broadening student participation in physical activity.

Chester School Sport Partnership

As part of our commitment to promoting physical education beyond our own students, the school hosted events for 34 primary and special schools through the Chester School Sport Partnership. Tiered competitions were organised to ensure inclusivity in school sports, allowing students of all abilities to participate. Major events, such as the 'Biggest Ever Girls' Football Session' in partnership with Chester City FC, were successfully delivered. The school also facilitated county finals across multiple sports, engaging a high number of students.

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

Competitions

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

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

Year 5&6 Sportshall Athletics Competition

On Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th January 385 pupils from 21 schools took part in the Year 5&6 Sportshall Athletics events at Ellesmere Port Sports Village. Here teams of twenty children took part in a variety of track and field events.

This was a pathway event for the Cheshire and Warrington Inspire Games.

This was an INSPIRE event.



Year 3&4, 5&6 Netball

On Wednesday 12th and Thursday 13th February we held the year 3&4 High 5 Netball festival and the year 5&6 7-side netball at Blacon High School.

The year 3&4 festival was the chance for children to learn how to play netball in friendly non-competitive games. Some of the children had not played netball before, so it was a fantastic opportunity for them to learn the sport.

The year 5&6 netball competition was the first time that we have played 7 aside for this age group. This was a pathway event for the Cheshire and Warrington Inspire Games.

In total we had 211 participants from 27 school teams taking part in the event, which is outstanding.

We had amazing leaders from Blacon High School and The Queens School who umpired the matches.

This was an INSPIRE event.



Girls Biggest Ever Football Session

On Thursday 6th March 13 primary schools attended the 'Biggest Ever Football Session'. This is a national event which aims to encourage more girls to get involved in football. This could be through playing, organising, leading or refereeing. The event was in partnership with Chester City Football Club and took place at Chester City Stadium. The girls completed a series of skill

based stations followed by some small sided games. They were all also lucky enough to get a tour of the stadium changing rooms and took part in a questions and answers session. The event was a huge success and all the girls received a free ticket to watch Chester City play at the weekend.



County Finals

Most of March is taken up with the following county finals:

- Friday 7th March – Primary and Secondary Boccia in Warrington.
- Monday 10th March– U12 & U14 girls Football in Warrington.
- Wednesday 12th March - Year 5&6 Hockey at Alderley Edge.
- Thursday 13th March - Year 5&6 Netball at Macclesfield.
- Friday 14th March – U16 girls Football in Warrington.
- Monday 17th March – Primary and Secondary Sportshall Athletics in Ellesmere Port.
- Wednesday 19th March – Year 3&4, 5&6 Gymnastics at Moss Farm.
- Thursday 20th March – Year 5&6 Basketball in Rudheath
- Friday 21st March – Primary and Secondary New Age Kurling in Warrington.

Educational Visits and Enrichment

A range of educational visits took place this term to enrich students' learning experiences. A successful Geography residential trip to Dorset provided hands-on learning in physical geography, allowing students to explore coastal processes first hand.

From Tuesday 19th-Friday 21st March, Mr Green and Mrs. Prime took a group of 13 students from years 9 and 10 to stay at Portland Outdoor Centre in Dorset. The aim of the visit was to combine outdoor adventure with physical geography study, and the result was an absolutely fantastic and memorable experience for all involved.

On day 1 students arrived at around 2pm after a long drive and set out to do some coastal abseiling and rock climbing. The students were incredibly brave, abseiling down a sheer rock face with the waves directly underneath them.



Day 2 consisted of more of a geography focus as students visited the world famous landmarks of Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door. Students discussed and saw first-hand the natural processes involved in creating these amazing landforms and also analysed the human impact of these sights being busy tourist attractions. Some of the students even enjoyed paddling in the sea at Lulworth Cove.

Day 3 started with coasteering, which involved exploring the rocky coastline from the sea. The students loved this activity, particularly jumping from the rocky ledges into the water and swimming through the sea caves. In the afternoon we had a change of scenery as we went to explore the seaside town of Weymouth to look more in depth at the impacts of tourism on the area.

Day 4 started with kayaking and paddle boarding in Portland harbour. The students loved trying these new activities and enjoyed the various games that the instructors played with them, which inevitably led to them all jumping/falling into the water! After this activity, students said their farewells to the amazing staff and set off back home to Blacon, arriving back on Friday evening. Both Mr Green and Mrs Prime are immensely proud of all of the students for all of their efforts and conduct all week. They all pushed themselves out of their comfort zones, tried new things, experienced new places and all made memories that will last for years to come.





Students in Year 10 have been learning how to approach and handle animals safely, developing confidence and essential handling skills. Meanwhile, Year 11 have recently completed their second piece of graded coursework, focusing on preparing accommodation to meet the needs of different animal species. Throughout the course, students have regular opportunities to handle and help care for our school guinea pigs, gaining valuable hands-on experience in animal care.



A key highlight of this term was the Big Maths event, organised in collaboration with the Liverpool Outreach Team. This event welcomed Year 6 students from our local BEV schools (Dee Point, Highfield, St. Theresa's, JH



Godwin, and The Arches) to participate in problem-solving activities run by our Year 9 students.

This initiative was highly successful for multiple reasons:

- Strengthening Primary School Links: Maintaining strong relationships with local primary schools is essential for ensuring a smooth transition to secondary education. This event provided a fantastic opportunity to engage with our future students, making them feel welcome and excited about mathematics at Blacon High School.
- Leadership Development for Year 9 Students: Our Year 9 students demonstrated excellent leadership skills by running the activities, helping



younger pupils engage with problem-solving challenges in a supportive and encouraging environment. Their confidence and ability to explain mathematical concepts were evident, reinforcing their own understanding and enhancing their communication skills.

- Success and Impact: The event was extremely well-received by both the Year 6 participants and their teachers. Feedback indicated that the students enjoyed



the hands-on approach to learning, and it was inspiring to see our Year 9 students acting as role models.

Additionally, we have continued our partnership with Action Tutoring, who have been delivering targeted revision support for Year 11 students.

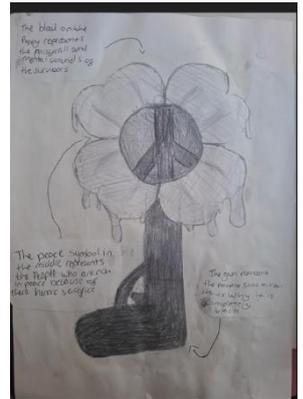
The programme provides one-to-one intervention online, focusing on closing knowledge

gaps and building confidence ahead of their GCSE exams. The tutoring sessions have been tailored to the individual needs of each student, with a focus on key mathematical concepts that require additional reinforcement.

Early feedback from students and staff suggests that the intervention has been beneficial, particularly in improving problem-solving skills and exam technique. We look forward to seeing the impact of this work in the upcoming assessments.

The History Department led fundraising efforts and debate opportunities and welcomed historian Liam Starkey for an insightful talk. Year 11 students attended Christleton Sixth Form for A-Level taster sessions, while various trips, including the King's School Carnegie event and careers visits, further broadened students' academic and career horizons.

This term the History Hot Scholars have been busy once again, raising £70 in a cake sale, to raise money for the WWI Western Front Association competition that students are entering in June, and with this money we will be working with the Technology department to create our designs for WWI remembrance. Ruby Ford Simpson's design is shown here.



Six of our pupils (Three KS3 and three KS4) also participated in live debates with the Rotary Club of Chester and the Chester Speaking Club. This was supposed to be in Chester University during the cyber-attack, so Miss Lidell organised for the judges to come to Blacon so our pupils could still show their great

oracy skills in front of judges. Mrs Hudson also was lucky enough to see our pupils in action and they were superb.

Year 11 visit to Christleton Sixth form

15 of our Year 11 pupils visited Christleton's Sixth form to experience what it is like in A Level History and A Level Politics lessons. Our pupils were engaged and represented us brilliantly.





Visit from Historian Liam Starkey

As part of the drive in History to encourage our pupils to take History into their career, Miss Lidell organised for Liam Starkey from the University of Liverpool to visit the History Hot Scholars. Firstly, students talked about his job as a Historian and the jobs that can be reached with a degree in History. Secondly, he helped with the WWI Western Front project, and shared the story of his great Grandad in World War 1, showing his diary amongst other amazing contemporary sources.

Next week, 30 students in Year 8 are due to visit Quarry Bank

Student Behaviour and Wellbeing

The introduction of a new mobile phone policy has had a positive impact on student focus and behaviour, reducing distractions during lessons. Expectations detentions have helped raise standards and encourage responsibility among students. Upcoming parent evenings and reward assemblies will provide an opportunity to celebrate student progress and achievements, reinforcing a culture of high expectations and success.

Rachel Hudson

Headteacher