



BLACON HIGH SCHOOL SUCCESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Head's Report for Governors – December 2021

Blacon High School

So much more than a school

Together, we will:

AIM - Prepare every young person for success.

VISION - Inspire students to love and enjoy learning.

BELIEF - Ensure that everyone is an achiever.

Values - Respect, Resilience, Relationships

It is through our curriculum that we will achieve our vision of inspiring students to love and enjoy learning for every student, regardless of their background or starting point.

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Covid Update

Since our return in September, we have had a total of 120 cases of Covid within school, within this a total of 8 staff. (4 teachers and 4 support staff) We have been in an outbreak in Years 7 and 8 and are currently at stage 1 measures, as advised by Public Health. Staff and students continue to do twice weekly Lateral Flow tests to help us to identify cases early and to keep everyone safe. The school community have responded so well to the challenges of Covid but it continues to have a significant impact on absence levels for staff, attendance for students and interruptions to learning.

Ofsted

The school was inspected under a Section 5 on the 19th and 20th October and the report is now available. <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50173453>

There is no doubt that we are disappointed with the overall judgement of the inspection. We know there is so much good on which to build but also recognise and accept that there is more to do and we embrace this challenge. We knew that we would have to fight for good in this inspection due to a number of factors. Ofsted only took into account data on outcomes from 2019 and not the last 2 years due to grades being awarded through the CAG (Centre Assessed Grades) process. For a school such as ours, clearly on an improvement journey, this did not help to demonstrate the progress that we had both predicted and expected to make.

Whilst inspectors did talk to me about the impact of Covid, we are still only really understanding the true impact on our families. We know that due to the makeup of our school, we already have a large proportion of students who were behind in their learning and reading and we know that this gap has now widened. It certainly increases the challenge we face, however, we are absolutely committed to providing a curriculum and experiences which enable students to be ready for the future, so that they can be successful and happy.

Whilst Ofsted do not have a preferred curriculum model, it is clear that they do not support a 2 year KS4 and 3 year KS4 due to the potential narrowing of the curriculum in a 2 year KS3. Whilst they accepted many of the changes made to the Year 9 curriculum and acknowledged that we had already identified this in our planning to move to a 3 year KS3 model in 2022, this along with the outcomes from 2019 not being good enough, led them to say that our curriculum is not ambitious enough for students, hence leading to a judgement of Requires Improvement for the quality of education, which is a limiting judgement for the overall inspection.

Even though most aspects of leadership and management, along with safeguarding were good, because the first point under leadership and management is linked to the curriculum, they would only judge this category as RI. Even though the framework suggests that a good judgement can be given if it is clear 'from leaders' actions that they are bringing about the

changes and making amendments in response to the pandemic' this was not accepted. We know that there have been calls from Unions across the education sector to say that inspections should not be continuing at this time, due to the impact of Covid and as we well know, there is still much to manage in this regard. However, this is a point in time and we know that with the changes we plan to make, and with more time, we will continue to improve and make the changes we have already identified and we will be stronger for it. Our energies are very much focused on the improvements we need to make, building on the priorities which had already been identified in our improvement plan, and working together to provide the most ambitious, high quality curriculum and learning experiences to enable students to be ready for the future, to be able to compete side by side with anyone else and to achieve success and happiness in their chosen pathway.

During the inspection, I along with Mr Scoltock were able to attend the team meetings at the end of each day. It was at these times, that inspectors commented so positively about many aspects of the school, and the framework does not allow for all of these comments to be included in the report. However, I have been able to share these with staff and include them here for Governors now.

The inspectors noted how knowledgeable and well qualified our SENDcos are and the way that needs are identified. Personal development came out as very strong with SMSC and PSHE being embedded in schemes of work. In Technology, students were able to articulate what they had to do, and were able to show the resilience to achieve it in a well sequenced and well planned curriculum, with clearly identified knowledge of what they need to know to develop. This now needs to be seen consistently across all subjects in school.

Behaviour during lessons and in corridors was very positive with positive relationships between students and teachers. The behaviour policy is clear and implemented consistently. There is a clear recognition that character education is a key part of the curriculum. One student was able to explain his ambition of becoming a graphic artist and talked about how school was supporting him to do this, demonstrating how careers is also built into the curriculum. All students said they had learnt about respect, consent, sexual harassment and how they had enjoyed assemblies and outside speakers. They talked about knowing the risks online and spoke positively about transition.

The inspectors noted that it was a clear intention from leaders that safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do, with clear referral systems, early help, counselling and investment in support of Family Support Workers and Learning Mentors. They noted how our work with families and students is effective. Staff are consistently secure, from early careers teachers across all staff, on identifying students who may be at risk. The culture is strong and vigilant and we know our families well. Staff feel well supported with workload and well-being. Support staff spoken to during the inspection were enthusiastic, knew their roles, appreciated the safeguarding training in place and spoke positively about working in the school.

Inspectors noted that the Guided Reading implemented in September in tutor time, was already having an impact, it was successful, students wanted to read and were mostly fluent and accurate. The inspector said that plans were in place but there had not been the time to finalise them and the vision was not yet fully realised. We may feel frustrated by this due to the impact of covid on slowing down our improvement journey but we remain absolutely committed to tackling all that has been identified and becoming stronger for it.

In September, I led some work with the whole staff on redefining our vision of who we are, what we stand for and the values which matter most to us. Staff unanimously identified aspiration and relationships as key values and for priorities, respect, relationships and communication featured heavily. In terms of what we stand for, the results reveal a strong belief in the power of education and that we are the way forward to support students, to change lives and improve life chances for the future. From this work, I worked with our senior team recently, to discuss the fundamental question of who we are, why we are here and what we wish to achieve for students. It is clear that this fundamental vision and aim must run through every aspect of our curriculum and we know there is more to do to ensure that all staff, students, parents and Governors are clear on this ambition, understand why we are teaching subjects in the way that we are and our ultimate aim of enabling students to be ready for their next steps in life beyond Blacon. In terms of our Ofsted development points, this is one aspect of the work linked to the vision for the curriculum and each subject within it.

Training with all staff and middle leaders will begin on the 4th January where we will be focusing on the vision and aims for the curriculum, each subject within it and the precise knowledge students need to know and remember in each scheme, along with work on how it is most effectively sequenced. It is then, that our post Ofsted plan will be launched, sharing the vision and key priorities supporting it. We are also using some external support from Mark Cotton, Chief Officer of Teaching and Development at Holy Family Catholic Multi Academy Trust who will be working alongside senior staff, middle leaders and staff to develop our curriculum planning and focus on research linked to component knowledge. 9 key priorities have been identified to feed into the improvement plan and SLT roles and responsibilities are being reshaped to support the key areas for development.

My thanks go to all of the staff at every level within school, students, parents and Governors for their support during and since the inspection. Be assured that we are determined in our commitment and resolve to continue on our journey and we look forward to showing Ofsted all of this in 30 months, when they will return to see all that has been achieved.

Part 1 - Update on progress towards 2023 Strategic Plan

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

Performance Indicators from Strategic Plan	Results 2019	CAGs 2020	CAGs 2021	Year 11 Targets	Year 11 Current data
	69 students	88 students	113 students	118 students	118 students
KPI – Progress 8 score 0.1	-0.67	-0.09	NA	NA	NA
KPI - English and Maths 9 - 4 - 60%	62%	69%	66%	81%	49%
KPI - English and Maths 9 - 5 - 40%	23%	49%	43%	34%	25%
KPI - English 9-4 - 70% and 9 -5 - 60%	72% / 48%	81% / 60%	80%/53%	90%/62%	90%/52%
KPI - Maths 9-4 - 70% and 9 -5 - 60%	67% / 28%	75% / 53%	71%/53%	81%/34%	51%/31%
KPI - Progress 8 for English	-0.73	-0.01	NA	NA	NA
KPI - Progress 8 for Maths	-0.66	-0.23	NA	NA	NA
KPI – Student Premium 0 Progress 8	-0.83	-0.18	NA	NA	NA
KPI Open Bucket Progress 8 score 0.2	-0.39	0.22	NA	NA	NA
High Ability Progress 8	-1.02 (26 students)	-0.16 (33 students)*	NA	NA	NA
Middle Ability Progress 8	-0.51 (38 students)	-0.11 (43 students)*	NA	NA	NA
Lower Ability Progress 8	0.06 (4 students)	0.29 (8 students)*	NA	NA	NA

* no official DfE definition of Higher Ability, Middle Ability, Lower Ability for scaled scores 2020 & 2021 - converted to KS2 Fine levels

KPI - PP Progress 8 matching non disadvantaged nationally for English English Student Premium	-0.90	-0.06	NA	NA	NA
KPI - PP Progress 8 matching non disadvantaged nationally for Maths Maths Student Premium	-0.79	-0.43	NA	NA	NA

Profile of Year 11 for Current Cohort compared to last year

	Year 11 2021		Current Year 11 2021/22	
	No. of students	% of students	No. of students	% of students
Total	113		118	
Males	68	60%	64	54%
Females	45	40%	54	46%
Pupil Premium	56	50%	63	53%
English as an Additional Language	6	5%	1	1%
SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	26	23%	20	17%
Number of In Year Transfers to Year 11	17	15%	22	19%
Number affected by safeguarding currently	10	9%	10	9%
High Ability **	27	24%	7	6%
Middle Ability **	71	63%	69	58%
Lower Ability **	8	7%	41	35%
No prior data	7	6%	1	1%

* Number of In Year Transfers to Year 11* that arrived after normal year 7 admission in September 2015.

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

** New DfE KS2 Scaled Scores definition published Nov 2021

The profile of Year 11 is important to understand the context. There is a higher proportion of pupil premium students this year, a rise from 50% to 53%, an increase in transfers into the year group from 15% to 19% and significantly, a change in the ability profile of the year with a lower proportion of high ability students (decrease of 27% to 7%) and much larger of lower ability. (Increase from 7% to 35%)

All of the latest research is showing that the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged has widened further post Covid and these students comprise over half of our cohort. Covid has impacted significantly on their learning, not just during the two lockdowns but also due to a high number of days lost due to students being sent home to isolate. Whilst some have embraced home learning, we know that many still face barriers to learning independently at home, even with the technology to support remote learning, however, we remain committed to working to achieve the very best for our students.

Contextual Data –whole school

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

	2019/20		December 2020		March 2021		June 2021		December 2021	
	No. of students	% of students								
Total no. of students	618		672		669		664		683	
FSM	258	42%	279	42%	286	43%	287	43%	308	45%
Pupil Premium	321	52%	354	53%	360	54%	358	54%	375	55%

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 2021 IDSR references Blacon at 49% compared to the national average of 27% so we are now more than double the national average.

Blacon's Reading Pledge – Raise Reading Ages, Read for Pleasure, Impact on Outcomes

Reading ages continue to be a main focus for our pupils and interventions have started to target the lowest 20% of those children whose reading ages are more than two years below their chronological age. Interventions include: English TA Guided Reading through group and 1:1 support during tutor; Sanctuary Team leading on an intervention for Orion and Sanctuary Pupils and the whole school approach on Guided Reading during tutor time for a minimum of three times per week.

As a result, we have seen some improvements across year groups already, although we are only just at the start of this journey.

The texts for Guided Reading were carefully selected by the English Department to ensure content was age-appropriate, challenging and included relevant strands of Cultural Capital. Please see below the list of texts currently being read this term;

Year 7
Coraline – novella by Neil Gaiman (2002)
Key themes/messages/Cultural Capital for pupils – home, appreciating what you have and courage; stereotypes and dealing with anxieties

Year 8
Goldfish Boy – novella by Lisa Thompson (2017)
Key themes/messages/Cultural Capital for pupils – well-being, anxieties, particularly OCD-related anxieties

Year 9
Refugee Boy – novel by Benjamin Zephaniah (2001)
Key themes/messages/Cultural Capital for pupils – community culture-wealth and migrant students negotiating life in UK

Year 10
In the Sea There Are Crocodiles – novel by Fabio Geda (2010)
Key themes/messages/Cultural Capital for pupils – Afghanistan culture, childhood innocence, freedom, friendship

Year 11
Noughts and Crosses – novel by Malorie Blackman (2001)
Key themes/messages/Cultural Capital for pupils – racism, sexual relationships

Please see an update on the steady improvement of reading ages across some year groups, which has formed part of Mrs Appleby's NPQSL project.

	Year 7 (Yr8 Sept' 2021)		Year 8 (Yr9 Sept' 2021)		Year 10 (Yr11 Sept' 2021)	
	Below	On/Above	Below	On/Above	Below	On/Above
Sept' 2020	36%	64%	42%	58%	63%	37%
Apr' 2021	34%	66%	43%	57%	45%	55%
Sept' 2021	29%	71%	42%	58%	19%	81%

2020 Report: One in four 15-year-olds have a reading age of 12 or below and struggle to understand questions in their GCSE exams

Based on this statistic, it is great to see the improvement in the current Yr11 cohort and it is hoped that this is good indicator for 2022 outcomes across all subject areas.

We know that reading is the key for students to be successful in the future and in their examinations and so we are promoting reading at home with parents through a postcard campaign this Christmas. Each tutor will send a postcard home to parents with a personal message and a request to support with reading as the best gift of all.



Update on Exams for 2022

The Government have said that students in England will be given advance warning of some exam content next year because of the disruption caused by Covid. New plans also say GCSE and A-level students should sit three sets of mock exams to help decide grades, if exams are cancelled. We have our first set of mock examinations planned for January although the time taken to complete three mocks out of lesson time, coupled with absence due to Covid, all has an impact on the progress of students. There will be more changes to GCSEs - with formulae provided in maths exams, and equations in physics and combined science assessments. In English literature, History and Geography, schools will be advised to focus on a narrower range of content, which will support the situation. Advance warnings about content for both sets of exams will be issued by early February. The DfE has also issued a back-up plan in the "unlikely" event that exams are cancelled, although there is growing pressure for Centre Assessed Grades to be issued for a third year, due to the ongoing impact of Covid and Ofqual have said they will confirm this by February, which still allows a very short amount of time for adapting plans and preparing students in the best way we can.

SEND Overview

We currently have 181 students with SEND which is 27% of the school population, double the national average. As a school, we are in the highest quintile (top 20%) of all schools for the number of SEND students. IDSR 2021 reports 20.6% of students with SEND support compared to the national average of 11.5% and for students with an EHCP, Blacon is at 3.3% compared to the national average of 2%.

Year Group	<i>Social & Emotional</i>	<i>Cognition & learning</i>	<i>Physical &/or sensory</i>	SLCN	Top Up Funding	EHCP	Funding application submitted
Year 7	21	16	4	6	5	8	
Year 8	14	18	3	6	6	6	1 EHCP submitted waiting for assessment
Year 9	15	15	1	4	3	10	1 being written
Year 10	14	13	2	7	2	4	0
Year 11	5	12	0	1	1	3	2 TU applications being written
Totals	72	76	10	24	17	31	

We continue to promote SEND across the school. Staff have been signposted towards the One Page Overview (SEND register), the BHS SEND pathway and the Menu of strategies booklet to help staff support the SEND students in their classes.

Literacy/ Dyslexia focus

Dyslexia is a key focus across the school, alongside our reading strategy, due to the numbers of students who not only have a diagnosis of dyslexia but also for the many who have dyslexic tendencies. A whole school approach to this benefits not only those with dyslexia but all students. An online Dyslexia screener has been purchased and will be used to screen those students we have concerns about. This will then be reported to parents who can then get a private dyslexia assessment. Alongside this there has been a decision to change from white paper to Ivory for the whole school. The use of Ivory paper has been proven to reduce glare and aids concentration helping dyslexic students to navigate and comprehend text and image documents.

One of our Teaching Assistants has been appointed to support Literacy and Dyslexia interventions in school. She will be trained to use the Dyslexia screener and will then run individual/1:2 interventions to support them, running an after-school club for Lexia, an online literacy intervention.

Training has been completed for all SEND TA's so we can roll out a bespoke reading intervention for some of the 20% of readers most behind in their reading, in Year 7 and 8. This is delivered during Tutor time, between 3 and 5 days a week. Each TA has 2 students for 15 minutes planned individual reading and then 15mins of IDL. IDL is an online package that is an award-winning literacy intervention endorsed by the British Dyslexia Association. This intervention will be monitored by the newly appointed literacy TA. It will be assessed before and after the intervention to measure progress over 6 weeks. To support this intervention we have also purchased new high interest but appropriate level reading books to ensure appropriate reading materials are used to raise the self-esteem and confidence among the targeted students. This work all supports our key aim of ensuring that all students leave school as confident readers.

Staffing

We have had 1 new TA start to support the Sanctuary one day a week as well as bottom Year 7 and a student with an EHCP. She has settled in well. We have another TA starting on Monday for a trial period of 12 weeks and an advert has gone out for 3 more TAS to support our funded students. A former parent has also volunteered to support one morning a week from January. 2 EHCP's have been finalised in the last couple of weeks and the team continue to work hard to submit applications for top up funding to enable us to recruit additional Teaching Assistants to support students with additional needs.

Young People's Service

In KS4 we have welcomed our new Young People's Service officer, Lindsey Charnock. Lindsey has already started 1:1 interviews with Year 11 students who have additional needs or who may be at risk of NEET in the future. Lindsey has started working with students to create their own CVs, think about appropriate career options according to the students' interests, and discuss relevant pathways to achieving their goals, such as college, apprenticeship, or other routes such as the NHS employment programmes. This is to support these students with the transition to their next phase of education.

Young Leaders course at Storyhouse

At the end of October, three of our vulnerable students began the Young Leaders course at Storyhouse in Chester, attending once a week every Wednesday from 1-4pm. The nine-month programme is a chance for young people to discover their passion and explore the workings of the different departments at Storyhouse including marketing, producing events, customer service, backstage, fundraising and running activities. Young Leaders will receive mentoring, training and be given practical opportunities to help them develop, create and grow both professionally and personally. The programme is designed for young people who would benefit from a longer-term intervention. It is a small team of young people who will work on numerous projects in Storyhouse alongside many different departments. They will learn more about creative careers and job roles, whilst discovering their passions and sharing their skills. Storyhouse aims to build confidence, raise aspirations, increase teamwork skills and develop transferable job skills. During the course of the programme young people will also work towards gaining a Trinity College London Arts Award qualification.

Alternative pathways

We are currently in the process of compiling a database of alternative education providers who we could potentially work with, in order to support some of our students with the most complex needs. We will be visiting a variety of providers who offer diverse learning experiences, such as construction trade skills, and bicycle repairs and maintenance. It is hoped that we can enhance the learning experiences, attendance and levels of engagement of individual students who may be at risk of exclusion in the future, by providing part time offsite vocational training on a bespoke basis. This is an area of school where further funding will be required to meet the needs of our students.

ELSA training

Two of our support staff, Kyle Hill-Chambers and Jenny Beyer have recently started the ELSA training course provided by CWAC. It is a preventative intervention which aims to build the capacity of schools to support pupils' emotional/social needs from within their own resources. ELSAs are Teaching Assistants or Learning Mentors working within schools who attend five days of specific training from Educational Psychologists (EPs). The five days of training cover topics including raising emotional awareness, Self-esteem, Active Listening and Communication skills, Anger Management, Working with Puppets, Social Skills, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Social Stories, Friendship Skills and Writing Therapeutic Stories. Following initial training, ELSAs are responsible for planning and delivering interventions within their school, which may involve individual or small group intervention. ELSA training is based on psychological principles, meaning that it is relevant to pupils from Reception-Year 13, within both mainstream and specialist provisions. Following initial training, ELSAs are offered half-termly group Supervision with CEPs. Supervision aims to offer ELSAs casework support, discussion of areas not covered in the five days of initial training, information about useful resources, access to peer support and opportunities for shared problem solving.

Sanctuary/Orion

Sanctuary

Two students from The Sanctuary have now made the transition into mainstream classes, one about 90% of lessons and the other student is beginning to start the gradual transition process, starting with a select few subjects.

A year 7 non-attender has begun a reduced timetable into school and has started this transition into The Sanctuary.

Each student receives a 1:1 reading intervention daily. Students have access to IDL at least 3 times a week. Precision teach reading and spelling intervention has just started, this is a precise and systematic teaching method, designed to improve the accuracy and fluency of reading and spelling. This is a 1:1 approach based on an individualised specific need.

Times Table Rockstars, we have just purchased Times Table Rockstars which is a carefully sequenced programme of daily timestables practice. Each week concentrates on a different times table, with a recommended consolidation week for rehearsing the tables that have recently been practised every third week or so. This format has very successfully boosted times tables recall speed. This is a daily intervention in addition to use at home and has been set as homework.

Orion

A small group of students in Year 7, 8 and 9 follow a different, creative pathway within our curriculum. These students have been identified in Primary schools and throughout transition as requiring additional support in accessing the secondary curriculum. The young people in the groups have multiple vulnerabilities and are taught in a base room in our new build by a specialist SEND teacher and subject specialist staff who are timetabled to teach the group; with additional support from Teaching Assistants. For one day each week each Orion group have a day outside the classroom led by specialist outdoor professional. These days focus on wider generic social, emotional management, communication, problem solving and team working skills. Aspects of the statutory curriculum are being planned into this provision to also provide a curriculum focus. The curriculum is aligned to that taught within the main pathway to allow for transition in and out when the students is ready.

An additional Year 8 student has joined 8 Orion this term. This student will access mainstream for identified lessons that she has been shown to be successful in. In Year 9 Orion there is also a new student joining this group, who will follow the full Orion timetable. All students in both Sanctuary and Orion have now been assessed using Boxall profile and have had individualised Social Emotional Learning targets set. These will be reviewed again before February half term.

Developments

During this term we have seen an increase in the number of students accessing the alternative part of Sanctuary. Many of these students are identified in the Safeguarding data and often are in the Sanctuary due to external factors that affect their ability to engage fully with mainstream education. The needs and support required for these students has become more apparent. To manage this rising number we are using some time from the new grade 6 TA role.

Mental health interventions

Platform for Life continues to provide a much needed service within school, and we are continually referring pupils for this support. We are trying to make students more aware of the service across the whole school to encourage pupils to seek support earlier themselves if they feel able to by speaking with school, parents/carers, or to Platform for Life directly by texting their number. In order to promote the service further, we are launching a poster competition in key stage 3. Pupils are designing a poster to advertise Platform for Life and their service. The prize for this will be a gift voucher of different amounts for the top two voted posters, with the winning poster also getting their poster displayed around school.

We have also made multiple referrals for the new service which allows us to have an Educational Mental Health Practitioner support pupils on a short term intervention within school. This is either on a 1:1 level, or through group intervention if this is deemed appropriate, and it is targeted as an early intervention strategy to support pupils from Year 7 through to Year 11. The service is funded through Cheshire and Wirral NHS partnership, and will occur weekly in school and data will be collected to assess the success for each pupil. If there is still more needed, we can refer to other services following this early intervention.

KS3 Pastoral Support

Since September Jenny Beyer who is attached to Year 7 and Year 8 has been incredibly proactive at developing the pastoral support systems at KS3 to provide support and structure for some of our most vulnerable students. She has;

- Started a morning football group. This is for 20 minutes before school. This has proved popular with many students and provides them with a great start to the day. She runs this alongside her running group which was started in September 2020. Most recently the running group completed a London marathon mini school event in which they had to run 2.6 miles over a period of 6 weeks. The students all received a pin badge and certificate. This group has been joined by many of our vulnerable students who benefit from a morning chat.
- Morning check in. 10 vulnerable students come each morning and this gives them the opportunity to make sure that they are OK for the day and sort out any issues or worries that they may have. Often teachers refer students if they feel that they would benefit from the small group experience.
- After school lego club. This was set up due to many students struggling to make friends. This has turned out to be highly successful and has encouraged many friendships to develop.
- Break & lunch time social group. Year 7 and 8's who are considered vulnerable are invited to social group each day. They play a variety of games and arts and crafts. On a Friday as a treat, they go on the computers. The idea of social group is that we are providing a safe space for a number of students who have similar needs.
- A golden ticket reward system. Teachers can nominate students who are doing well. These students will then join Jenny in the canteen on Friday during tutor time to play games whilst enjoying a hot chocolate. This incentive is effective in that it is an instant reward Jenny has found this idea particularly effective for students who may not be rewarded frequently and it may be just what they need as a little recognition to encourage the behaviour that we want to see from them.
- A mentoring scheme has been established with Ilya Haycock. They have paired up 15 year 7's with year 10 or 11. Students are matched carefully and they meet every Thursday during tutor times. This has proved a wonderful experience for our year 7's as they have thrived from the 1:1 experience. We have been using the mental health survey to monitor their progress

- A friendship group for 6 students with autism has been created. During this time they learn about how to be a good friend and use social skills whilst talking to each other and playing games. It gives the students the chance to share how they are feeling as they wouldn't openly do this.

Safeguarding

TAFs - Team around the Family					
Year Group	Dec 2020	March 2021	June 2021	Oct/ 2021	Nov 2021 (pending)
Year 7	2	2	3	1	1 (1)
Year 8	7	3	5	2	1 (3)
Year 9	7	4	3	7	7 (3)
Year 10	3	6	4	3	2 (4)
Year 11	5	0	1	4	3 (1)
Total	24	15	16	17	14 (26)

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

CP – Child Protection					
Year Group	Dec 2020	March 2021	June 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021
Year 7	1	1	2	1	1
Year 8	2	2	2	2	1
Year 9	0	0	0	2	2
Year 10	0	1	2	0	0
Year 11	3	2	2	2	2
Total	6	6	8	7	6

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

10% of the school population are linked to safeguarding, which shows a rise just since October but is still consistent with the school's general pattern of need. These are students who have experienced significant trauma and for whom the challenge to thrive at school is more difficult.

There has also been a sharp increase in TAFs. The data includes 4 pairs of siblings but it still is a large increase. The numbers in red show TAF's which are due to start. The appointment of a new Family Support worker will enable this piece of work to progress more quickly and an advert is currently out. This post will support the team during the maternity leave of one of our Family Support Workers but it is a permanent post needed to support the significant growth in demand for this key team in school.

Cheshire Young Carers are using 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 next term to further raise the profile of them and to identify new Young Carers.

The safeguarding parent newsletter was noted by our Ofsted inspectors as good practice and this will continue each term, highlighting to parents the latest information needed to keep children safe. Safeguarding training on Basic Awareness was delivered face to face to almost all staff at the start of the autumn term and an online training took place for the small number who were unable to attend, on the 25th November. Prevent training linked to radicalisation was delivered by Mr Carr on the 23rd November and a further catch up is planned for January for those unable to attend.

Ofsted noted that from all leaders, there is a clear intention that safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do, with clear referral systems and an investment in support, early help, counselling, Learning Mentors and Family Support Workers to support students. They fed back in the team meetings how much our work with students and families is effective, noting that staff across school, including new Early Career Teachers, are all consistently secure in identifying students who may be at risk. They also noted all of the effective training that had taken place, including violence and sexual harassment, trauma informed practice and a strong culture where staff are vigilant and know the families really well. Safeguarding is highly effective across the school.

Progress Evenings

As a result of COVID restrictions progress evenings were carried out remotely this year, using a Schoolcloud system to interact with parents, carers and students via a video call. The system was efficient allowing parents to book online and carry out appointments by simply signing in to the site on a phone, tablet or PC.

Feedback on the system from both staff and parents has been very positive with good engagement figures across most year groups. Due to the current situation with Covid, we have made the decision to continue with online Parents' Evenings next term and will invite parents in for Information Evenings, coffee mornings and rewards events, particularly in Years 7 and 8 where many parents have not yet been into school, as much as we can, when we are able.

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 2021
KPI Open Bucket Progress 8 score 0.2	Not available
KPI Attendance up to national average - 95%	88.5% overall 85.8% Pupil Premium
KPI 80% sport participation, 100% Learning outside the classroom	(Impacted by Covid Lockdown)

Attendance

Year Group

	Numbers on roll	01.09.20 – 27.11.20	01.09.21 – 26.11.21
Year 7	147	94.8	91.6
Year 8	149	89.3	89.4
Year 9	139	92.8	87.7
Year 10	130	91.3	87.3
Year 11	118	87.4	85.5
Total	683	91.3	88.5

Girls

	Numbers on roll	01.09.20 – 27.11.20	01.09.21 – 26.11.21
Year 7	76	95.1	90.7
Year 8	59	89.8	89.5
Year 9	69	94.9	87.4
Year 10	48	91.6	89.2
Year 11	54	90.0	85.6
Total	306	92.2	88.6

Boys

	Numbers on roll	01.09.20 – 27.11.20	01.09.21 – 26.11.21
Year 7	72	94.6	92.6
Year 8	90	88.8	89.3
Year 9	74	91.5	88.1
Year 10	83	91.0	86.2
Year 11	64	85.7	85.4
Total	383	90.6	88.4

Pupil premium students by year group

	Numbers on roll	01.09.20 – 27.11.20	01.09.21 – 26.11.21
Year 7	91 (79)	92.5	91.0
Year 8	78 (92)	87.2	84.4
Year 9	83 (69)	91.1	85.1
Year 10	65 (67)	88.6	85.0
Year 11	63 (56)	81.2	81.4
Total PP	380 (363)	88.5	85.8
Total Non PP	309 (313)	94.6	91.8

Persistent absence – 01.09.20 – 27.11.20

	% of students	No. of students	No. of PP students	% of pp students	No. of students SEN	% of SEN students	No. of CLA students	% of CLA students	No. of students in cohort
Year 7	17.33	26	22	84.62	13	50.00	0	0.00	150
Year 8	32.89	50	37	74.00	18	36.00	0	0.00	152
Year 9	19.86	28	19	67.86	12	42.86	0	0.00	141
Year 10	24.17	29	23	79.31	5	17.24	0	0.00	120
Year 11	29.20	33	23	69.70	13	39.39	2	6.06	113
Total	24.56	166	124	74.70	61	36.75	2	1.20	676

Persistent absence – 01.09.21 – 26.11.21

	% of students	No. of students	No. of PP students	% of pp students	No. of students SEN	% of SEN students	No. of CLA students	% of CLA students	No. of students in cohort
Year 7	29.05	43	30	69.77	16	37.21	1	2.33	148
Year 8	34.90	52	37	71.15	19	36.54	1	1.92	149
Year 9	41.96	60	44	73.33	22	36.67	1	1.67	143
Year 10	41.22	54	34	62.96	21	38.89	0	0.00	131
Year 11	46.61	55	36	65.45	9	16.36	0	0.00	118
Total	38.32	264	181	68.56	87	32.95	3	1.14	689

- If we assume that any absences due to isolation (X codes) were actually present marks, then the number of PA students reduces to **248 (35.99%)**. This is still high but we have had 75 students who have tested positive for Covid from 01.09.21 – 26.11.21 and had an absence from school as a result. For the whole of the last academic year we had 67 students who had tested positive.

SEND students by year group

	Numbers on roll	01.09.20 – 27.11.20	01.09.21 – 26.11.21
Year 7	41 (35)	92.9	90.8
Year 8	36 (32)	88.8	85.6
Year 9	28 (35)	90.0	80.3
Year 10	32 (16)	85.6	78.4
Year 11	17 (20)	81.4	75.0
Total	154 (138)	88.8	83.3

EHCP students by year group

	Numbers on roll	01.09.20 – 27.11.20	01.09.21 – 26.11.21
Year 7	7 (5)	82.2	94.2
Year 8	6 (5)	60.2	67.7
Year 9	10 (4)	85.5	76.7
Year 10	4 (3)	99.4	84.3
Year 11	3 (6)	75.8	97.0
Total	30 (23)	80.0	82.0

CLA students by year group

	Numbers on roll	01.09.20 – 27.11.20	01.09.21 – 26.11.21
Year 7	4 (2)	99.0	94.8
Year 8	4 (3)	98.3	86.9
Year 9	4 (5)	99.6	95.7
Year 10	5 (1)	100	93.0
Year 11	1 (2)	32.5	94.6
Total	18 (13)	92.3	91.7

FSM students by year group

	Numbers on roll	01.09.20 – 27.11.20	01.09.21 – 26.11.21
Year 7	74 (57)	91.1	90.6
Year 8	61 (75)	87.0	83.0
Year 9	74 (53)	90.2	84.3
Year 10	55 (47)	87.5	84.3
Year 11	50 (49)	80.0	79.1
Total FSM	314 (281)	87.4	84.8
Total for Non FSM	375 (395)	94.1	91.6

EAL students by year group

	Numbers on roll	01.09.20 – 27.11.20	01.09.21 – 26.11.21
Year 7	7 (15)	96.7	92.8
Year 8	13 (10)	96.6	95.0
Year 9	10 (10)	96.0	95.4
Year 10	9 (2)	83.5	87.9
Year 11	1 (6)	97.5	92.7
Total	40 (43)	96.6	93.1

Students coded I & M (illness and medical appointments)

	01.09.20 – 27.11.20		01.09.21 – 26.11.21	
	Number of students	Number of session	Number of students	Number of session
Year 7	77	426	120	948
Year 8	102	925	110	1054
Year 9	81	517	110	1054
Year 10	77	428	101	1194
Year 11	62	627	100	990
Total	399	2923	541	5240

There has been an increase in absences related to illness and medical appointments over the last two years. The main reasons for this is due to the cautions taken around having other illnesses spreading around school. We have been advised that with any illnesses, we needed to wait until a student's temperature had been in the normal range for 48 hours. We are also cautious about having general colds spreading around school and the impact this would have on students needing to be tested and

isolating for their results so students are advised to remain at home until they are symptom free. In terms of colds and mild illnesses, this is not our usual stance, we usually advise that a general cold or mild illness does not warrant any time of school. We have also seen an increase in the number of students getting general colds and illnesses since the national removal of masks in schools and the wider opening of society. This extra precaution taken to ensure the health of students, staff and the wider community has contributed to our attendance figures being lower than previous years.

Students coded X (isolating due to Covid symptoms)

	01.09.20 – 27.11.20		01.09.21 – 26.11.21	
	Number of students	Number of session	Number of students	Number of session
Year 7	148	1666	44	276
Year 8	151	1252	49	334
Year 9	107	1176	48	312
Year 10	77	676	32	179
Year 11	111	1451	44	288
Total	594	6221	217	1389

If we were to assume that the X codes were presents and they didn't have to isolate, our cumulative attendance would be 88.7%. This means that X codes are only affecting our attendance by 0.2%

Authorised and unauthorised absence

	01.09.20 – 27.11.20		01.09.21 -26.11.21	
	Number of sessions	Percentage	Number of sessions	Percentage
Authorised absence	3963	6.3	6328	8.6
Unauthorised absence	1495	2.4	2186	3.0

- The percentage of authorised absences has unsurprisingly risen dramatically again this year. On a positive, our unauthorised absence has not risen as dramatically when compared to last year. Attendance at school is back to being compulsory and this explains the rise in unauthorised absences. However, it is only by 0.6% which shows that we haven't had many additional concerns with students refusing to attend school

Contextual Attendance Data:

- **The overall school attendance so far for this academic year = 88.5%**
- **The overall school attendance for this academic year so far, discounting the school closure and assuming X codes would be presents = 88.7%**
- We have had 84 students who have tested positive for Covid from 01.09.21 – 26.11.21 and had an absence from school as a result. This accounts for 1009 sessions of authorised absence. For the whole of the last academic year we had 67 students who had tested positive.
- Like last year, as the number of days a student needs to isolate for increases, the number of possible sessions decreases. This results in one session accounting for a higher percentage of their overall attendance percentage. As there are some students who have had more periods of isolation than others, most student's possible sessions in school are different to one another and as above, some students may have the same number of absences but end up with different percentages of attendance.

What have we done to improve attendance?

- Every two weeks we identify which persistently absent students can improve their attendance and become above 90%, meaning they will be no longer classed as persistently absent. This list is shared with Progress Leaders and then Tutors so they can have positive encouraging discussions with these students. Those students who are at risk of becoming classed as persistently absent from school are also identified and conversations also take place with those students.
- We have an additional staff member working in attendance to support with home visits and phone calls to improve attendance.
- A presentation that highlights the importance of attending school and the impacts of low attendance on attainment is being displayed on the screens in school.
- We are using the staged intervention process to tackle persistent and/or unauthorised absence. The table on the next page shows the impact of this and how many students are having actions taken.
- Susie Wright, our attendance lead has now returned from maternity leave and we have appointed a new attendance officer who will be taking up the post in January.

Attendance staged intervention breakdown

Current Attendance

* staged intervention shows the students current stage of intervention, not all stages that have been done for each student.

Year 7 Summary			Year 8 Summary			Year 9 Summary			Year 10 Summary			Year 11 Summary			Whole School		
Staged Intervention:			Staged Intervention:														
	Number of students	% of yr group		Number of students	% of yr group		Number of students	% of yr group		Number of students	% of yr group		Number of students	% of year group		Number of students	% of school
FT	0	0.0	FT	0	0.00												
Stage 1	23	15.1	Stage 1	38	23.6	Stage 1	35	22.1	Stage 1	32	20.0	Stage 1	40	28.0	Stage 1	168	24.63
stage 2	2	0.7	stage 2	3	2.0	stage 2	4	2.9	stage 2	6	4.6	stage 2	7	5.9	stage 2	22	3.23
stage 3	2	1.4	stage 3	0	0.0	stage 3	0	0.0	stage 3	1	0.0	stage 3	0	0.0	stage 3	3	0.44
stage 4	0	0.0	stage 4	0	0.0	stage 4	0	0.0	stage 4	1	0.8	stage 4	0	0.0	stage 4	1	0.15
stage 5	0	0.0	stage 5	0	0.00												
stage 6	0	0.0	stage 6	0	0.00												
stage 7	0	0.0	stage 7	0	0.00												
stage 8	0	0.0	stage 8	0	0.00												
HFPN	0	0.0	HFPN	0	0.00												
Total	25	17.1	Total	38	25.7	Total	35	25.0	Total	33	25.4	Total	40	33.9	Total	171	25.07
Impact of Intervention			Impact of Intervention			Impact of Intervention			Impact of Intervention			Impact of Intervention			Impact of Intervention		
	Number of students	% of students		Number of students	% of students		Number of students	% of students		Number of students	% of students		Number of students	% of students		Number of students	% of students
Increased att.	14	56.0	Increased att.	20	52.6	Increased att.	21	60.0	Increased att.	19	57.6	Increased att.	30	75.0	Increased att.	104	60.8
Decreased att.	11	44.0	Decreased att.	18	47.4	Decreased att.	14	40.0	Decreased att.	14	42.4	Decreased att.	10	25.0	Decreased att.	67	39.2

- Overall 171 students have had intervention (25% of the school). Due to covid related absences, medical reasons or external social and economic reasons, it is not always appropriate for intervention to take place.
- Out of these 171 students, 104 (60.8%) of them have improved their attendance since action was taken. This shows that the actions that we are taking are working. There is still a lot of work to do to get attendance to where it was in 2019 but we are getting back on track.
- A total of 555 letters have been sent regarding students attendance, so far this year. For the comparative dates from 2019, 376 letters were sent. This is a significant increase and highlights the amount of work being undertaken to improve attendance across the school.

Curriculum

Staff have been amending plans to support the recovery curriculum, understanding gaps in knowledge and understanding and sequencing learning to support students as they move through the learning programmes. The fundamental principles underpinning our curriculum, can be defined as mind, body and character. Staff in every subject area consider how SMSC, citizenship, British values, LORIC, careers and key themes from PSHE can be built into learning and teaching and reinforced across the curriculum, building key assessments around the examination and criteria to secure effective sequencing of learning.

4 of our 9 key priorities are linked to the curriculum under Quality of Education and can be seen in the 3 year priority document also available.

Key Priority 1 (INTENT)
Plan and implement a 3 year KS3 curriculum to ensure it is suitably broad and ambitious for all students.
Key Priority 2 (INTENT)
Identify clearly the key knowledge for each subject in curriculum maps, schemes of work, learning journeys and lesson plans so that students are clear on the precise knowledge they need to know and remember.
Key Priority 3 (IMPLEMENTATION)
Review assessment ensuring that there is a clear understanding of how to best use assessment to check how well students have learned the intended content and to understand gaps as a result of the pandemic.
Key Priority 4 (IMPLEMENTATION)
Fully embed the whole school reading strategy, building in catch up and targeted support to improve reading ages across the school.

Orion groups

Outdoor Education

The aim, COVID allowing, is that students will be able to take part in their outdoor expeditions as in they did prior to the pandemic.

All Year 7 students have the opportunity to go on an activity camping expedition, with woodland adventure activities on day one and a history focused visit to Beeston Castle and the Cheshire Ice Cream Farm on day 2. The activities are aimed at team building, communication skills, strengthening independence and resilience in unfamiliar contexts.

All Year 8 have the opportunity to participate in a Canoe/Kayak expedition. On the first day, the students navigate to a location, set up camp, cook their food and then take part in team building activities. On the second day the students, alternate between canoes and kayaks on a trip along the Cheshire Canal.

The Year 9 curriculum plan continues to ensure that all students continue to study key aspects of the statutory KS3 curriculum but are also able to opt for their KS4 courses. For example, students continue to study core Computer Science and Religious Studies and have a Cultural Studies lesson, through which they learn about aspects of language and culture from around the world.

Year 10 will have an Expedition to Anglesey for two nights, coasteering, paddle boarding and kayaking, further developing aspects of their character, linked to team building, communication, resilience, confidence and a sense of place in the world.

For the academic year 2021/22, all Year 9 students will continue to study both Geography and History in one of the option blocks for two hours each fortnight. In the summer term of their Year 9 (2022), students will then have a second options process when they will opt for their chosen humanity subject. If, after studying and enjoying Geography and History during year 9, they wish to continue to study both subjects they will have to choose which of their other option subjects to replace with either Geography or History.

This model maintains aspects of the two-year KS3-three-year KS4 model, where students have three options at the end of year 8, however all students continue with History, Geography, RE and Computer Science to ensure full access to the National Curriculum.

From September 2022, we will move to a 3 year KS3 and 2 year KS4, which means that current Year 8 will continue with their KS3 curriculum into Year 9 and will choose options in the spring of Year 9. This will ensure they have access to a broad and balanced curriculum for the full 3 years of KS3, will allow for staff to focus on catch up and the recovery curriculum, alongside a huge focus on learning outside the classroom, to provide meaningful and memorable learning experiences, directly linked to the curriculum in order to build the foundations of key knowledge needed for future success and to make up for the opportunities missed during the pandemic, as well as contributing significantly to their cultural capital.

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

Duke of Edinburgh Award

Starting this year, Duke of Edinburgh has been relaunched with existing groups and work has begun on their Volunteering, Physical Activities and their skill section of the award. Students have been able to fit in volunteering around lockdown restrictions and have managed to get experience in, Charity shops, Officiating sports, assisting with the running of clubs both, within school, and outside of school as well as helping with the initial prep for the Christmas fair which sadly had to be cancelled. The year 11 students however were lucky enough to be able to take part in the expedition section of their award. This was slightly different than normal as they were not able to do the camping section of the expedition however, they experienced all other aspects such as, cooking outside, navigation and a planned walk, teamwork with raft building, shelter building and bush craft as well as canoeing. This was a brilliant experience and all students were a credit to themselves and the school, throwing themselves into all tasks.

The plan, restrictions permitting, is to run the year 10 expedition at the start of June allowing the students to hopefully complete their Bronze award before the end of the school year. Hopefully this

will be able to be a full expedition however with the success of the year 11 expedition this is a good alternative.

As with the Duke of Edinburgh award the outdoor trips are also planned for early June again hopefully with the option to camp but alternatives have been discussed to give them the best opportunity to get the full experiences that previous years have had.

LORIC

The Blacon Character Award



Mr Cairns has been leading on the development of key leadership skills in the Blacon Character Award as part of his NPQSL. The aim is for students to be recognised outside the academic curriculum in their personal development and to be active and successful members of the wider community. Our aim is to ensure students receive high quality enrichment activities and cultural experiences throughout their five years at Blacon. We have created our own BCA pledges, to ensure all students have access to a wider range of learning experiences outside of the classroom. We want our students to see the real value in these life LORIC skills and be recognised for their personal journey not just the academic outcomes.

Every student is challenged to develop Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Independence and Creativity – LORIC skills.

Over each key stage, students will be expected to complete at least 5 elements of a LORIC skill to be awarded with a school certificate. Students who engage and collate statements will be awarded with a BCA captain badge.

A minimum of 25 statements will be achieved at each key stage and the student will be awarded with a prestigious badge/portfolio, to add to their record of achievement and show colleges, employer's examples of their personal qualities and general aptitudes.

The LORIC skills form part of a registration activity once a week and tutors are responsible for recording the accomplishment of each statement. This is recorded on a SIMS mark sheet and achievement of these statements will be celebrated during assemblies, celebration ceremonies led by Progress Leaders. Evidence of each statement is recorded on SIMS by the form tutor and documented in a student progress portfolio by the students. Students across all year groups are now engaged in this award and Mr Cairns will continue to monitor progress on this as part of his NPOS qualification.

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 undertaken in March when we know the places offered.

Primary School	2021	2020	2019	2018
The Arches Community Primary School	40	28	30	22
St Theresa's Catholic Primary School	13	21	17	19
Dee Point Primary School	55	47	49	41
Highfield Community Primary School	13	23	15	20
J H Godwin Primary School	20	21	14	23
Other	7	5	17	17
Total	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.

KPI agreed surplus - A benchmarking exercise has been completed along with a review of the staffing structure, to make comparisons with similar sized schools.

The school now faces a deficit budget for this financial year due to lost income and additional expenditure during Covid. A 3-year recovery plan is in place and the school has been able to make over £200,000 of savings to ensure that the school is in a surplus budget by the end of 2023 whilst still supporting resources for the growth of the school. School has invested £600,000 into the new build, along with the LA contribution to ensure that it will meet demand for student numbers and to support the growth of the school.

The new build was completed ready for our new intake in September and we will be organising an official opening in the new-year. It is a fantastic facility and students along with staff have enjoyed using this as part of our high quality learning environment.

6th Form Feasibility Study

Exploring the feasibility of post 16 provision at Blacon High School remains part of our key strategic plan. After submitting our views on the One City Plan in Chester, the outcomes are due to be launched in December and we look forward to working with the Council and local partners to address this educational inequality in Chester with regards to post 16 education. We will continue to work on our Business Plan and consultation document over the next 30 months so that when we receive Good in our next Ofsted inspection, we will be ready to launch the consultation to implement this study. This time will also enable us to secure funding and develop a 5 year financial plan to support the building as we move to consultation in 2024.

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

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

Highest number of first preference since recorded.

Open Evening – September 2021

Our Open Evening, held on the 22nd September, was a huge success with high satisfaction rates from all and many parents taking the opportunity for further personal tours with Mr Sabri. This hard work has been reflected in our highest numbers of first preferences ever at the school, for admission into September 2022. This was also supported through WOW mornings held with Year 6 early September where students from the 5 BEV schools were able to come in to do some taster lessons, whilst Covid restrictions allowed and it was brilliant to see students so engaged and comfortable in the school environment.

My Child enjoyed the WOW day in school.

84% - Strongly Agree, 8% - Agree

1% - Disagree

7% - Not applicable

The Headteacher's presentation was helpful in understanding the school.

76% - Strongly Agree, 24% - Agree

0% - Disagree

0% - Not applicable

The tour gave me a good insight into the school.

82% - Strongly Agree, 16% - Agree

1% - Disagree

1% - Not applicable

The staff were helpful and friendly.

91% - Strongly Agree, 9% - Agree

0% - Disagree

0% - Not applicable

The students were good ambassadors for the school.

93% - Strongly agree, 7% - Agree

0% - Disagree

0% - Not applicable

The food samples were enjoyable.

82% - Strongly agree, 15% - Agree

0% - Disagree

3% - Not applicable

The booking system was easy to use.

79% - Strongly agree, 20% - Agree

0% - Disagree

1% - Not applicable

Covid safe measures were in place.

68% - Strongly agree, 26% - Agree

0% - Disagree

Student Numbers- December 2021

Year	Males	Females	Total
Year 7	72	75	147
Year 8	89	59	148
Year 9	74	67	141
Year 10	82	47	129
Year 11	64	54	118
Totals	381	302	683

In Year Transfers and Leavers – Autumn 2021

In Year leavers Autumn 2021

Year Group	Number of Students
Year 7	0
Year 8	1
Year 9	3
Year 10	1
Year 11	0
Total	5

In Year leavers 2021/22

Year Group	Number of Students
Year 7	1
Year 8	1
Year 9	2
Year 10	2
Year 11	0
Total	6

Careers

- **Destination Data**

2018 – 2019 - 70 students

KPI - 57% of Year 11 onto A-Levels/ Level 3 Applied and Technical Courses.

KPI - 32% of Year 11 onto Level 2 or 1 Applied and Technical Courses.

KPI - 3% of Year 11 onto Apprenticeships / Employment

KPI - 8% NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training)

2019 – 2020 - 89 students

KPI - 65% of Year 11 onto A-Levels/ Level 3 Applied and Technical Courses.

KPI - 25% of Year 11 onto Level 2 or 1 Applied and Technical Courses.

KPI - 6% of Year 11 onto Apprenticeships / Employment / The Forces

KPI - 4% NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training)

2020 – 2021 – 111 students

KPI - 56% of Year 11 onto A-Levels/ Level 3 Applied and Technical Courses.

KPI - 39% of Year 11 onto Level 2 or 1 Applied and Technical Courses.

KPI - 3% of Year 11 onto Apprenticeships / Employment / The Forces

KPI - 3% other

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.

Learning and Teaching and CPD

To date, there has been a significant amount of relevant CPD delivered this year.

All staff have taken part in an 'Emotion Coaching: Trauma Informed Practice' session, which was a follow up from the one that was delivered in March 2021. In terms of safeguarding, all staff have

also completed training on 'Safeguarding and Child Protection - Basic Awareness', in order to fulfil statutory requirements, and a further session on 'Prevent'.

In terms of 'Learning and Teaching', and developing the Quality of Education, staff engaged in a cross-curricular group session/ market place with a focus on consistency in curriculum mapping. Working with colleagues from other subject areas is always beneficial and promotes lively discussion, which is massively beneficial in identifying and responding to areas for development. Once a post-Ofsted plan has been agreed, we will use this model as we start to work on next steps across the whole school.

As a school that has now effective, developed partnerships with a number of universities, as partners, we have been able to access some specific training free of charge. As a result, the Sanctuary team are currently four weeks in to a six week programme of online sessions delivered by the University of Chester focused on autism, ADHD and other specific learning needs.

In addition, six members of staff have begun NPQ qualifications this year across all levels, three have enrolled on one of the new specialised middle leadership courses, two members on staff have begun work on NPQSL, and one further member of SLT has embarked on the NPQH. Because of the school's context, we were able to access this training via DfE funding and, once again this will strengthen leadership at all levels within the school and underpin effective succession planning. This follows on from one member of staff who has been awarded the NPQH and a further two who have now submitted their final assessments for NPQSL and are awaiting accreditation.

Furthermore, it has been agreed that, once again, the third appraisal objective can be agreed between the member of staff and their line manager. It will require staff to pursue an area of development that is relevant to their role and is linked to the school's strategic goals, but is also an area of interest to the individual. Staff will commit to 12 hours of self-directed, online training in order to fulfil the criteria and achieve this objective. This level of autonomy has proved very successful in recent years and the flexibility in this approach is much appreciated.

Staff Wellbeing

As you will be aware, we have recently had an Ofsted inspection. Despite Ofsted recommendations that schools should not prepare for their visit or perform any in-school QA, in reality, every school in the country does so. It is a massively stressful time for staff who work incredibly hard all year and it is detrimental to their wellbeing when this isn't recognised.

The post-Ofsted message to staff and any post-Ofsted actions and planning have been delivered very carefully, fully acknowledging the ongoing commitment from staff and the work that goes on in school all of the time, in an effort to bolster morale and continue to support staff well-being while responding conscientiously to Ofsted recommendations.

Almost in contrast to Ofsted, once again, the school has had its Investors in People award renewed; the school has achieved this for over ten successive years. The IIP assessor bases the decision largely on responses taken after interviewing a variety of staff representing all levels of the school community. This is something to be celebrated.

The Wellbeing Group has met once this year and, at that time, feedback from those who were in attendance was really positive. The appraisal system continues to support professional wellbeing with the third appraisal objective, which allows a level of autonomy and flexibility over professional development. A new staff survey is due to be circulated before Christmas to gauge post-Ofsted morale and also to maintain the school's public commitment to staff wellbeing.

Parental Engagement

Prior to the impact of Covid, the school had made huge advances with parental engagement. Unfortunately, two lockdowns and no opportunity to have parents on site in the interim period meant that, inevitably, some of this progress was lost. However, virtual communication has been enhanced massively during the last year and a half via the newsfeed on the school website, the 'Blog', which goes out every week, and an increased presence on a number of social media platforms, along with a host of video presentations and virtual events.

Finally, we are now in the position where we can find opportunities to re-engage parents face-to-face. Since September, we have held Rewards Assemblies for both KS3 and KS4, which were well supported, held an incredible Open Evening, which was very well attended by both current and prospective parents, and we have also hosted two Coffee Mornings, for the parents and carers of students in Years 7 and 8 respectively; the plan is to hold a Coffee Morning for each year group in the coming weeks, which will offer further, informal opportunities for face-to-face contact.

All of the events presented us with an opportunity to generate essential parent feedback, which is tracked and monitored. The feedback has been overwhelmingly very positive, but it has also offered the opportunity to deal with any isolated instances of impartial or negative feedback quickly, appropriately and by the most member of staff. This has proved to be a very powerful strategy.

In addition, the Whole-School Celebration Evening, one of the nicest events on the calendar, will take place on 2nd December. Once again, this is an opportunity to invite parents onto the school premises, under a very positive pretext, to celebrate the success of their children. This was a virtual event last year so did not have the same impact as it has in previous years. As a result, we are very much looking forward to seeing the school hall filled with parents and carers, staff, guests and governors.

Staff absence - Autumn Term 2021/22

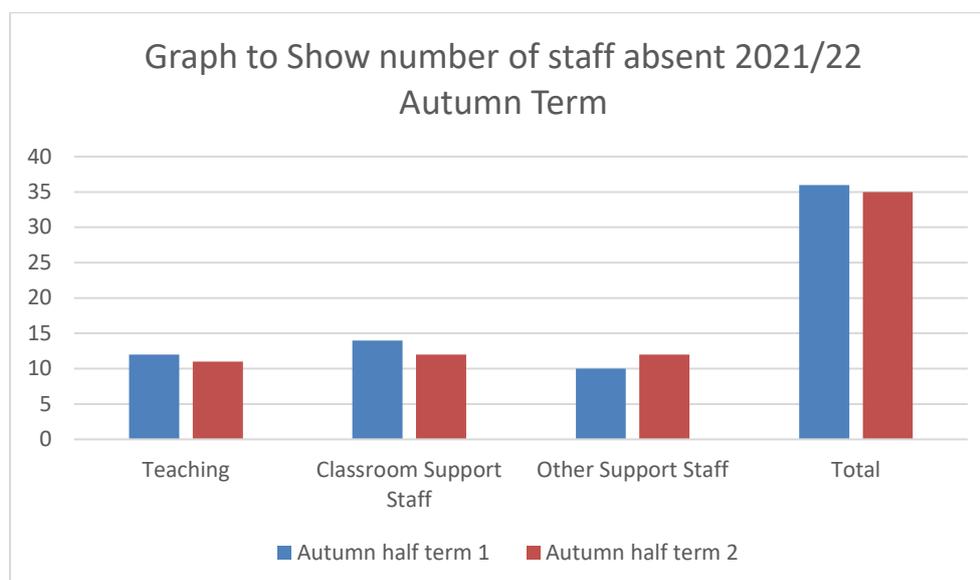
Staff absence has been significantly high this term so far with 501 working days being lost just in the Autumn term, which comes close to the total lost during the whole academic year 20 – 21 at 784. Covid cases amongst staff have been much higher this year, all of which have been double vaccinated but many absences have been linked to covid cases of children, where staff have been unable to ask more elderly family members to support with childcare. The school continues to support staff, for example when we had staff who were waiting for their child to be born and had to self-isolate in the weeks leading up to the birth, in order to be present; staff having to self-isolate prior to operations, some of which have already been cancelled in the past due to the pandemic; pregnant staff with underlying medical conditions or in the third trimester when advice suggested they should work from home, along with some support staff suffering from long term illnesses, not

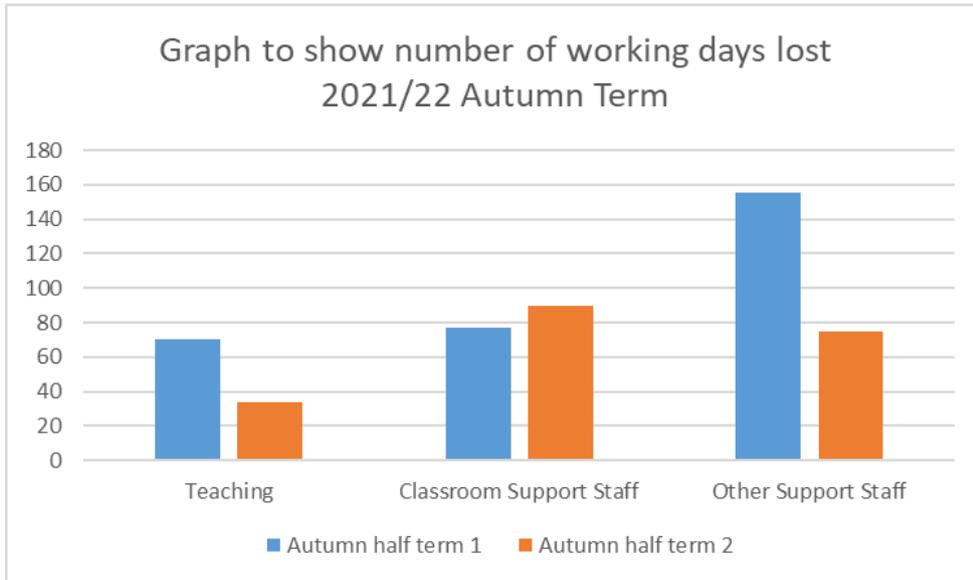
related to school. There is no doubt that staff absence linked to Covid, has had an impact on the day to day delivery of our curriculum and the well-being of staff in school. We are currently exploring whether we may be eligible for some additional funding from the DfE to support the rising costs associated with supply and cover staff.

	Autumn half term 1		Autumn half term 2	
	No. of absences	Working days lost	No. of absences	Working days lost
Teaching	12	70	11	34
Classroom Support Staff	14	77	12	90
Other Support Staff	10	155	12	75
Total	36	302	35	199

Staff absence comparison 2020/21 and 2021/22

	2020/21		2021/22	
	No. of absences	Working days lost	No. of absences	Working days lost
Teaching	75	455	23	104
Classroom Support Staff	18	129	26	167
Other Support Staff	40	200	22	230
Total	133	784	71	501





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%

Vulnerabilities include such things as bereavement, domestic violence in the home, drugs and alcohol misuse, parent in prison, students who are Young Carers, those on free school meals, students at TAF, CIN, CP, those with EHCPs, looked after students and those who are adopted. Data for 2021-22 is currently being updated and will be available to review in January. Based on the volume of work being undertaken by the safeguarding team presently, we predict that these figures will have increased significantly.

Behaviour Data

Exclusions ASP	2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	N av	BHS	Nav
Pexclusions as % of pupil group	0.45	0.12	0.26	0.13	0	0.15	0.25 =1	0.17	0.71 =3	0.20	0.44 =2	0.2	0.57 =3	0.20	0.16 =1	0.13	0.44 =3	
% pupils with FTE							4.33 =17	8.56	6.86 =29	9.40	2.88 =13	10.1	6.84 =36	10.8	5.27 =32	7.43	5.21 =35	
% pupils with 1 or more FT exclusions	11.7	3.86	3.32	3.68	4.46	3.97	2.80 =11	4.31	3.55 =15	4.62	1.33 =6	4.71	4.18 =22	4.93	3.29 =20	3.69	3.42 =23	
% pupils with 2 or more FTE			1.79	1.34	2.89	1.51	1.53 =6	1.68	1.42 =6	1.82	0.66 =3	1.91	1.52 =8	2.03	1.15 =7		0.74 =5	

Fixed/ Permanent Exclusion Data

17/18 Au	17/18 Sp	17/18 Su	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
8	2	3 +(2pex)	17	12 +(2pex)	7 +(1pex)	16	15 +(1pex)		19 +(2pex)	3	13 +(1pex)	18

Step Out 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
6	1	2	5	1		1	0	0	1

Internal Exclusion Data

17/18 Au	17/18 Sp	17/18 Su	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
4	8	7	15	15	19	35	22		27	7	14	47

SSA Data

17/18 Au	17/18 Sp	17/18 Su	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
98.2%	97.78%	97.32%	97.8%	97%	96.6%	96.9%	96.1%		97.5%	97.3%	96.7%	97.6%
0.42%	0.5%	0.45%	0.55%	0.62%	0.78%	0.82%	1.1%		0.8%	0.9%	0.75%	0.8%

SIG Group Data

17/18 Au	17/18 Sp	17/18 Su	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
11	28	19	14	33	21	27	30		16	34	30	22

On Call Data

17/18 Au	17/18 Sp	17/18 Su	18/19 Au	18/19 Sp	18/19 Su	19/20 Au	19/20 Sp1	19/20 Su	19/20 Au	20/21 Sp	20/21 Su	21/22 Au
76	59	62	95	136	129	286	305		257	41	124	280

Remove Room Data

17/18 Au	17/18 Sp	17/18 Su	18/19 Au	18/19 Sp	18/19 Su	19/20 Au	19/20 Sp1	19/20 Su	19/20 Au	20/21 Sp	20/21 Su	21/22 Au
41	40	37	83	104	99	218	193		182	34	98	227

Exclusions

Exclusions remain low and continue to be below National Averages for all key areas other than permanent exclusions. Academic year 20/21 saw 3 students receive permanent exclusions. All 3 students had received significant support throughout their time in school and were all involved in personalised curriculum routes. 1 student had joined Blacon High in yr8 after being at risk of PEX from their previous school. Of all FTEs, 43% came from 4 students. This academic year has seen a reduction in the number of exclusions compared to the previous 3 years (1 student receiving nearly half of these FTE exclusions). Despite the higher number of FTEs in recent years than we would want, we have incredibly positive relationships with the EAT with lead members of the team praising us for the work we do with students around minimising exclusions.

- **21/22**
- All 7 exclusions are PP.
- 4 students are male (3 same student), 3 students female.
- 4 exclusions SEN (3 same student), 3 non SEN
- **20/21**
- 3 Permanent exclusions (boys, 2 SEN, 1 PP)
- 36 FTEs
- 29 male, 7 female
- 29 PP (18 students)
- 18 SEN
- **19/20**
- 1 permanent exclusion
- 31 FTEs
- 22 male, 9 female
- 8 PP (6 students)
- 27 SEN

Step out

Despite being able to use 'step outs' again, there has only been the need to use this with 1 student in school.

Internal Exclusion

There has been a significant increase in the number of internal exclusions this academic year, however the significant push on uniform and piercings at the start of the year has contributed towards this. There has been a significant push across school to raise the standard of uniform as our flexible approach to supporting families with uniform due to COVID led to a temporary dip in the feel and environment around school. The use of Internal Exclusion is more desirable than a fixed term exclusion as it allows us to continue to work with students and use the opportunity to mentor and hold restorative conversations with teachers/ students.

- **21/22**
- 5 year 11, 13 year 9 (1 student on 3 occasions), 7 year 8, 4 year 7.
- 17 PP/ 12 non PP

- 20 Male/ 9 Female
- 6 SEN/ 23 non SEN
- **20/21**
- 8 year 11, 11 year 10, 11 year 9, 11 year 8, 9 year 7
- 30 PP, 18 non PP
- 42 Male/ 6 Female
- 21 SEN/ 27 non SEN

SSA grades

SSA grades have continued to be the heartbeat of our behaviour system in school. Every student is still graded for their A2L in every lesson and the grades they receive feed into our rewards and sanctions processes. Positive A2L and engagement in lessons is higher than last year and negative A2L is lower. We have had a significant push with our approach to rewards and the innovative work on SSA analysis, led by Mr Haycock has meant that we are more informed when selecting students for early intervention and additional support.

SIG data

The Significant Intervention Group is formed from students in each year group who have the worst A2L (Attitudes to Learning) across all of their lessons. Progress leaders identify these students through data analysis and create behaviour plans that are shared with students and parents. Students are placed on report and must report to their PL at the end of every day to monitor their progress. This forms part of our whole school Behaviour and Inclusion Map. If students are unsuccessful with their PL, they escalate up the SIG process to SIG2 where the Progress Leader works alongside Mr Carr to identify if there is an underlying issue leading to their behaviour. This year there are 22 students placed into the first stages of SIG. These students total 45% of all negative SSA grades across school.

On Call data

Gary Stroyd, our behaviour manager is On Call every lesson of every day and this provides consistency to our approach with the collection and potential reintegration of students into lesson when support is called for. The number of On Call requests is lower than this time last year with a greater percentage of students returning to lesson after Mr Stroyd is called to support, evidence of some impact of our pathways to support students with Orion and Sanctuary.

Remove Room data

Remove room data is in line with this time last year.

Mentoring

A 3 tiered mentoring system based on SSA grade analysis, wellbeing score through survey is in place and this is checked for impact at the end of a 6 week intervention.

Student – Student
Tutor – Student
Progress Leader/SLT – Student

Averting Exclusions

Mrs Hudson and Mr Carr have both represented Blacon High School on the working group focused on averting exclusions in conjunction with Social Finance. The report was published at the end of the summer which shares some key findings and insight onto the impact of Covid, particularly on the disadvantaged. The full report 'It's Time to Act – Considering the Impact of Covid-19 on Pupils in School' can be viewed here; [Social Finance](https://www.socialfinance.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/its_time_to_act.pdf)

https://www.socialfinance.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/its_time_to_act.pdf

An independent evaluation of Our Ways of Working took place in December 2020 and the full report is attached for Governors to view to see the impact of this vital work, across all agencies. The evaluation was made up of a partnership wide survey, as well as interviews with practitioners and families that we work with.

The evaluation was completed in June and went to the Children's Trust Executive in July. Some of the key messages;

- Our Way of Working gives professionals a deeper understanding of historic and current traumas experienced by children and families.
- There is emerging evidence that OWOW changes the nature of the therapeutic relationship with children and families.
- OWOW has increased pertinence because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Work will continue with the local authority to incorporate our ways of working and a trauma informed approach to supporting students most at risk of exclusion and Blacon continues to play a key role in this work.

CCF Combined Cadet Force

This year so far has again been a push on recruitment after leavers in summer, interruptions with Covid, which then meant a drop in interest. We now have a steady number of 15-20 Cadets attending each Monday. We are waiting on the Benweld safe to store our air rifles, which the Cadets have been enjoying using. We have also participated in sessions on camo and concealment, cooking ration packs as well as working on drill during our weekly sessions. Josh Jones has just completed the air rifle course so is now able to run the air rifle range along with other staff. A visit is being planned for a weekend away to Fox Barracks in the new-year, which will be something for them to look forward to (Covid dependant).

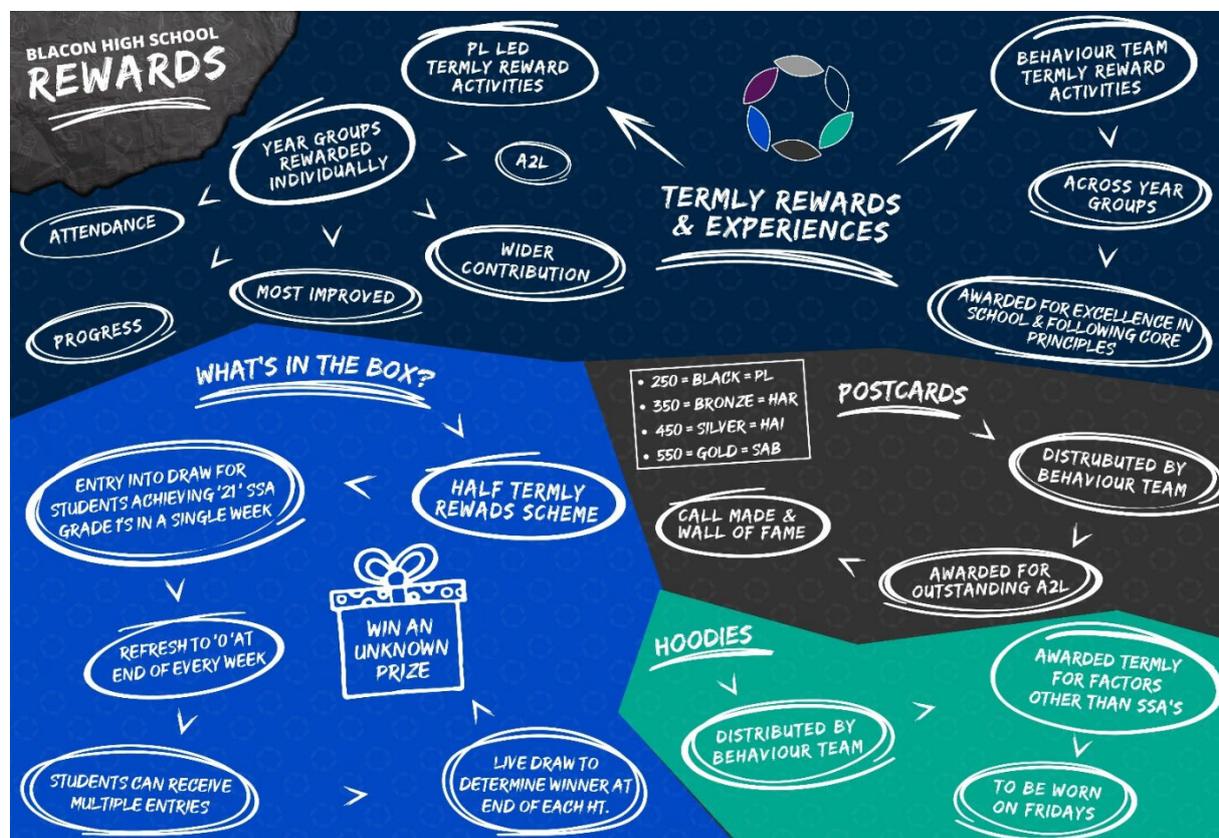


Rewards

A number of new reward initiatives which were launched in September 2020, have now become embedded within our systems in school, all of which are designed to promote and reward outstanding attitude to learning, whilst encouraging students to go above and beyond outside of the classroom either at school or within our community. The following rewards have been launched which are all available on the school website.

- What's in the Box
- SSA Postcards
- Termly Rewards & Experiences
- Wonderwall

Additional rewards being launched this year include Reward Hoodies and increased visits or 'experiences'. Below is the Rewards Map:



What's in the Box

This reward initiative rewards students who across a half term, consistently demonstrate an outstanding attitude to learning in their lessons. At the end of each half term the Top 5 students (with the best SSA average – generated from the Study Skills and Attitudes (SSA) Grade Analysis Database) from each year group, receive a letter home and a golden certificate, see inserted below. These students also go into a live draw with an opportunity to win a substantial prize. The student who has their name picked from the draw, is then given an opportunity to pick between two golden boxes, each containing a prize, the students do not know what prizes are in each box. The student

then has the opportunity to decide whether to stick or twist, either stick with the prize they have seen or go for the unknown prize in the other box.

Below are the winners FROM 20 – 21 and the autumn term this year.

AUT1: Paige G (year 9) won an iPad

AUT2: Maddison S (year 7) won Dre Beats

SPR1: Francesca D-Mc (year 7) won an iPad

SPR2: Maxwell B (year 9) won a FitBit Versa 2



Postcards

Using the SSA Grade Analysis Database, this initiative rewards students who reach SSA milestones across the school year. Once students reach a SSA1 milestone (monitored by the SSA Grade Analysis Database), they are rewarded with reward postcard (see below) and a letter home. The idea is students attempt to collect each postcard throughout the year, which can only be achieved through outstanding attitude to learning in lessons.



Termly Rewards & Experiences

Due to the restrictions imposed by COVID19, we have been unable to offer and run many of the trips we had in mind. Students went to Chester Zoo in December 2020 and further reward events are planned for this year.

Wonderwall

This initiative will aim to recognise outstanding achievement either in lesson or to the wider school community. Each half term we request nominations off subjects and staff for 'wonderful' students, we will photograph the student and add details as to why they were nominated, then they will feature on the 'Wonderwall' (a notice board within school and on the school website) and parents/guardians will receive a letter home. Please see the example below; Maddison S in year 8, who designed the artwork for the school Christmas card last year and has since updated the image to demonstrate how much she has improved and developed already. She won the Technology 'Star of the Term' certificate and a sketchbook from the Faculty. Pictured below is the artwork for the Christmas card.



Reward Assemblies

A Reward Assembly takes place during the last week of each half term. Students are recognised and celebrated within the assembly and parents/carers are invited into school as a surprise for students, to share the achievements of their child. Students receive a nomination from; Subject Leaders, Tutors and Pastoral Leaders, and are presented with a certificate which will detail their achievements.

The following will be rewarded in the assembly:

- Subject Recognition
- Tutor Recognition
- Pastoral Leader Reward
- Top 5 SSA1 Averages (What's in the Box)
- SSA Milestone Postcards
- Wonderwall



Links to rewards on the school website:

<http://www.blaconhighschool.net/whats-in-the-box/>

<http://www.blaconhighschool.net/wonderwall/#1619423023803-4f2d091f-d8d5>

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

<http://www.blaconhighschool.net/rewards-assembly/>

Part 2 – Highlights from the Autumn Term

Humanities - Resource Development:

Emma Owens, Head of Humanities, has been working with local tech firm GLUU (<https://gluu.tech/>) to trial and advise a range of new innovative education resources from Britannica Online and EDU-School. She meets termly via zoom to share strategies and how resources have been differentiated in the classroom. These have also been incorporated into online learning via Google Classroom so that pupils have access to the Britannica encyclopaedia at home, via their phones or tablets etc.

Mrs Owens has secured whole school access to this until August 2022 and shared it with all Middle Leaders so all departments can take advantage of these high quality resources. Furthermore Ian Roberts in Geography continues to study for the Google Educator Certificates in order to stay up to date with developments in Google Classroom.

Humanities also continue to be at the forefront of the adoption of GCSEPOD as a homework resource for KS4 pupils, and a number of pupils have said that this is a useful addition to conventional revision guides.

PE department

PE department has seen a successful return to COVID-19 safe extra-curricular clubs and fixtures in the autumn term. The department offer before school, lunch time and after school clubs. Since September, students in KS3 and KS4 have the opportunity to attend Running, Netball, Badminton, Football, Basketball and Dance clubs delivered by a range of staff. The department are trailing Cross Country event with year 7 on Monday 6th December to add another activity to our extensive PE provision.

Boys Football

Year 7 Boys Football team have played 3 matches up to now. They progressed to Round 2 of the ESFA Cup after beating Queens Park High but lost to Abbey gate College in a close game. They fell short of qualifying for the semi-finals in the year 7 A and B 7 a side competition and in the 5 a side competition.

Year 8 Boys Football team have won 6 games, lost 2 and drew 1 up to now. They have beaten Ridgeway High and Queens Park High in the ESFA Cup and play St Marys in Round 3 to hopefully reach last 16 of the country! They lost 2-1 to Christleton in the Chester cup and the A and B team both lost to Bishops Heber in the Cheshire cup and ESFA B cup respectively. They narrowly missed out on the semi-final by goal difference in the recent 7 a side competition.

Year 9 Boys Football team reached the last 32 of the ESFA Cup with convincing wins against Abbey gate and Oswestry High School in the ESFA Cup but lost 3-1 to current champions St Marys in a close, hard thought match. They also lost to Bridgewater in the Cheshire cup and missed out on the semi-finals in the recent 7 a side tournament.

Year 10 Boys Football team beat Abbey gate in the ESFA and Chester Cup but lost in Round 2 of ESFA Cup against a strong Irlam High School. They took part in the recent 7 a side tournament, making good progress as a team.

Year 11 Boys Football team lost to Helsby High in the Cheshire Cup and Litherland High School in the ESFA Cup in challenging round 1 matches. They won a couple of games in the 8 aside tournament but again like other teams, missed out on the semi-finals.

Girls Football

The U16 Girls Football team have a Cheshire Cup Quarter Final to look forward to after Christmas with excellent wins against Whitby High and Neston High School. They were 3rd place in the 7 aside tournament. Year 8/9 girls and year 7 girls both runners up in the 7 aside tournament, losing on penalty shootouts!

The year 7/8 Girls Football team lost 4-1 to Calderstones High School in ESFA Cup but progressed in the Cheshire Cup to play Christleton after beating Ellesmere Port Catholic High. The year 7 girls beat Queens Park High in a friendly and all year groups have Chester Cup after Christmas to look forward to.

Basketball

The year 10/11 Boys Basketball team have beaten Queens Park High School but lost close games to Upton, Kings and Ellesmere Port Catholic High in excellent fixtures. They have to play Bishops and Catholic High before Christmas. The year 8/9 boys' team lost a close game to Ellesmere Port Catholic High and have more games after Christmas. The year 8/9 girls' basketball team came 3rd in the Chester and district tournament, making progress every game they played.

Netball

The year 9/10 girls' team beat Ridgeway High convincingly and have performed well in the SSL round robin matches against Catholic, Queens Park and Abbey gate schools. The year 7 team lost to Ridgeway in their first ever game but have since won in the SSL with improved performances. Year 7/8 and year 9/10 play against Catholic, Abbeygate and Queens Park every 3 weeks in friendlies and mini tournaments coordinated by Mrs Carr to prepare for District tournaments after Christmas.

Blacon Sports Village Sports

BEV Football, Tag Rugby and Basketball tournaments have all been a huge success at Blacon High School with all of our feeder primary schools participating. KS4 leaders have supported Mr Forbes with scoring and refereeing of the successful events with other 50 future sports stars competing in a friendly environment. Some of our KS3 students have refereed Dee Point football matches on our 3G.

We have signed up to the Youth Sports Trust programme 'Active Mind' and identified 5 KS4 leaders to support 15 KS3 students who have struggled with mental health, engagement with PE since the pandemic. The course starts in January with professional skating athlete Jenna Downing to spend a day with our students delivering the programme.



MFL – Modern Foreign Languages

In MFL this term, we have introduced an updated course, Dynamo, for KS3 French. This dovetails into our existing GCSE scheme and we have bought into the online teaching platform and interactive homework packs. All pupils have their own logins and they complete tasks independently to support and extend class learning.

Since September, we have been teaching at Dee Point (Y6 Spanish - GHA) and Highfield (Y5 French & Y6 Spanish THC). This is going very well and is forging a great knowledge/skills base amongst the students and strong links for transition. Feedback from primary colleagues and pupils is extremely positive.

All KS4 Students have now been provided with their own copies of Pearson Edexcel's updated Revision Guides and the accompanying Revision Workbooks. These are being used primarily for home study and preparation for assessments, but can also be used in class when appropriate.

In KS3, we have introduced short, termly film units. Films are selected to focus on a cultural aspect of the language studied and students will reflect on the differences from and similarities to our own cultures in the form of a structured film review.

Careers / Learning outside the Classroom / Cultural Capital

- 25 students in Year 11 will be attending a QPHS 6th Form Taster Day in January, postponed from December due to Covid
- Careers Guidance Interviews have been taking place with Mrs Thomas. 11 Grey is complete.
- Careers competition for tutor groups based on jobs teachers have done in the past. Prizes for the winning tutor group.
- Hate Crime Workshop through the Cheshire Police took place on 24th November with 25 Year 10 students – student feedback was highly positive on raising awareness of this key issue.
- 6th Form update – information is being sought regarding the leavers of 2020 – 2021 and their destinations. This is to evidence the understanding that many of our students do not sustain their chosen Post -16 destinations and will also support our Business Case for the 6th Form feasibility study, that students will be far more successful if we were able to offer Post – 16 provision.

Science Club

The Science Club has been well attended in the Autumn term, which takes place every Thursday 3-4pm. Students have had the opportunity to engage in a variety of practical activities outside of the curriculum. The students are enthusiastic and really enjoy the hands-on nature of the club.



English

Lit in Colour – New additions to the Library



Lit in Colour

Following a successful submission to win 100 books for the library, our students are able to further develop their reading for pleasure.

The letter we received made us feel so proud to have been one of the lucky winners. Please see below:

Dear applicant,

Thank you for applying to receive our Lit in Colour giveaway of 100 Penguin books by authors of colour for your school. We really appreciate your time and effort to complete the application form, and sincerely wish we could donate to all schools who got in touch. We received over 1600 applications!

After careful deliberation, we are delighted to offer your school 100 Penguin books by authors of colour for your students to enjoy, as well as the 30 copies of Sathnam Sanghera's 'Empireland' and accompanying resource pack.

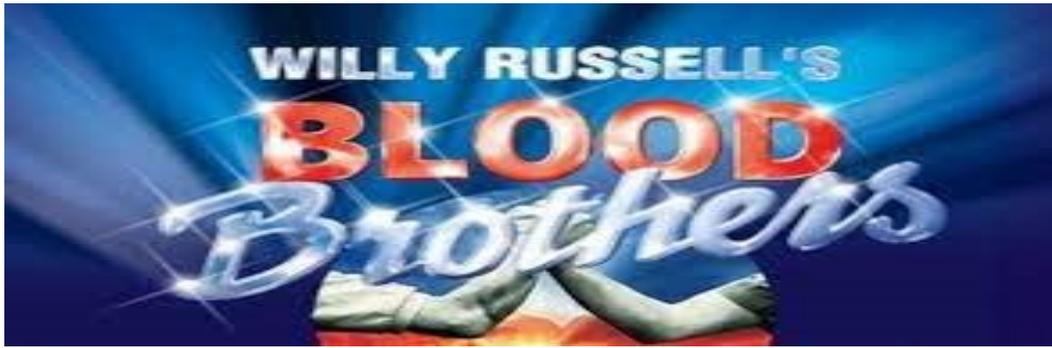
It meant so much to hear about how you will use the books and what it will mean to your students. We genuinely hope this donation will revitalise your school's library and stir inspiration amongst your students.

National Tutoring Programme – Action Tutoring for Years 7 and 11



The new programmes for tutoring started in November with twenty Year 11 students and twenty Year 7 students taking part. Students are divided into two subject areas: ten will work on English Language and ten will work on Mathematics. The tutors are all volunteers and have already established excellent relationships with our students and tutors have commented our students' outstanding behaviour.

Learning outside the classroom



The joy of being able to take our students back to the theatre has been overwhelming especially after the disappointment of having to cancel our visit to The Globe in London in June. However, the English Department were thankful to be able to take a group of KS4 students to The StoryHouse in Chester to see the brilliant musical, Blood Brothers and due to the high demand for tickets, we are running another trip in February 2022 in Manchester, for those who missed out. The students thoroughly enjoyed the evening performance.

Into Film Festival

Lauryn Gibson-Tipping was relieved and over the moon to be able to organise this yearly event where students attend the cinema to see new films. Schools receive a number of free tickets for this event and this is something that we have been able to enjoy for many students over the years, with the exception of 2020, however, this year the students were back there and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.



Student Leadership

The Student Leadership Team took up their positions in September and have been involved in a range of activities.

So far, they have engaged in gathering student voice in response to the 'back to basics' approach that we adopted at the beginning of term, with a key focus on: mobile phones; uniform; coats in the building; false nails and eye-lashes; dyed hair etc. They also organised and managed the elections of the new Student Parliament.

The Student Leadership Team all attended and supported our Open Evening, which was very well attended, and the two Head Students: Max Jones and Alisha Karabacak both made speeches during the presentations to parents at this event.

Representatives of the Student Leadership Team and of the Student Parliament contributed to the range of Remembrance Day activities at school. Several students gave readings of very poignant poems during the service after a week of selling poppies during tutor time, at break and during lunchtime.

Lest we Forget



On 11th November, representatives from every tutor group laid a cross at the front of school, signed by every member of the form. Many students wrote personal messages of thanks for all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Miss McIvor in Art had also arranged for students to create poppies which were displayed like a waterfall in the Diner along with the talented Mr Blain in Technology who designed a sculpture of a soldier which acted as a focal point for the assembly. The sculpture included both a cross and moon and crescent to enable both Christians and Muslims to be recognised in the sacrifices made, in recognition of our inclusive culture within school.

This assembly, along with the activities undertaken by students in tutor time and in RE, History and Personal Development illustrate the way in which we aim for our curriculum to develop the character of students through social, moral, spiritual and cultural development opportunities such as this and demonstrate our core value of respect.

Students in Years 7 and 8 were together for our remembrance assembly at 10.45 led by Mrs Hudson, and all other students and staff were able to participate through a live link into every classroom. Our Head students, Max and Alicia along with Hayden and Cheyene in Year 7 were all involved in delivering some beautiful readings and the Cadets laid a wreath. At 11.00, we held a 2 minutes silence started by Mr Ben Littler from the Chester Wind Band playing the Last Post. You could have heard a pin drop across the whole school. The assembly was recorded and shared on our school website for others to share in our community. It was a poignant moment to mark this day of remembrance and Blacon High School did it with the utmost respect and I was incredibly proud of the way that everyone came together to mark this day.

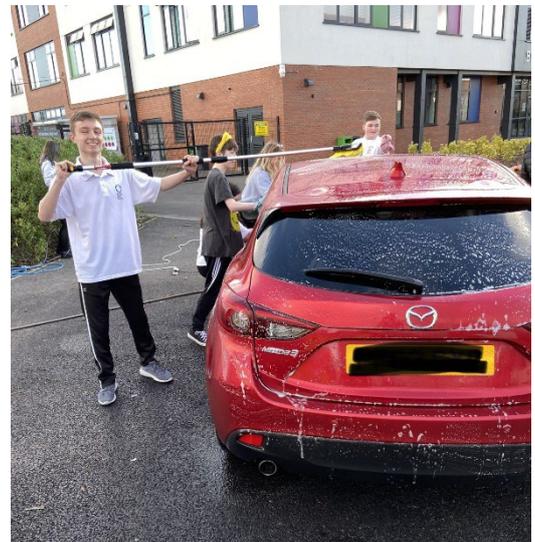


Children in Need

Both the Student Leadership team and the Student Parliament were involved in a range of fund-raising activities during Children in Need Week. Events included: Name the cuddly Elephant; Name the cuddly Lion; Number of Sweets in a Jar; a staff Bake-Off; Beat the Goalie Challenge and a Car Wash. In total, students raised over £300 for Children in Need.

Several members of the Student Leadership Team have been delivering 'basic skills' mentoring to students in Year 7 once a week in the Diner during the extended half-hour tutor time. This initiative has been well received and is impactful. It is mutually beneficial as, in addition to supporting basic skills for the Year 7 students, it develops independence, resilience, responsibility and confidence for the Year 11s who are delivering the mentoring. I will find a way of acknowledging the commitment to the scheme.

Blacon High School will, once again, lead the BEV Democracy Group. The first session, which was delivered remotely, was on Friday 3rd December when our head students prepared and delivered a presentation: 'What is Democracy?' Then, they lead the ensuing discussion and agreed topics for debate in future sessions, which will also be attended by our Year 7 Student Parliament representatives. Our students have led the work of this cross-phase group successfully for a number of years now.



The Bursary Programme

Ex-student and bursary beneficiary, Russell Harrison, visited the school recently to share his progress. Russ' is now in the upper sixth at Merchiston Castle in Edinburgh, and is currently predicted an 'A' and two 'B's at A Level. He is in the process of completing applications to university and is hoping to go to the London School of Economics. He plays the trombone, a skill he developed here, and during his visit, Blacon High School was able to gift him an instrument to enable him to continue to play as he has never had one of his own. STO recently met with Will Luc on a visit to his school, St Peter's in York, and is delighted to report that he is predicted to achieve three 'A's and is hoping to study medicine.

Both students who were successful in gaining places on the scheme for the academic year 2020/21, have now almost completed their first full term and we have had positive reports from both schools: Gordonstoun and Durham. A further two students from the current Year 11 have been successful in the selection process for the Hope opportunity Trust bursary scheme, subject to GCSE outcomes in 2022.

Our continued commitment to the bursary scheme underpins fantastic, potentially life-changing opportunities that have supported almost forty students from Blacon High School (so far) to study A levels at some of the top independent schools in the country, almost all of whom have gone on to university and some amazing careers. It is our fundamental aim to improve life chances and enable students to be ready for the future and this programme is a reflection of our ambition for students to achieve at the highest levels and compete side by side with anyone.

I wish everyone all the best for Christmas and look forward to everything we will continue to achieve together in the new-year ahead.

Rachel Hudson - Headteacher