



THE BAC
SUMMER EDITION
2025



FOREWORD

As we finish the school year, I just wanted to take a moment to say a huge thank you for making my first year as Headteacher here such a special one.

From day one, I've felt incredibly lucky to be part of this amazing school community. Our pupils are truly the heart of everything we do—they inspire us every single day with their determination, their personalities, and the joy they bring to school life. There have been so many brilliant learning experiences this year—far too many to list! Our PSHE days and focused learning events have really helped bring learning to life, and the enrichment activities, like community trips, house days and sports events, have created some truly precious moments. Seeing pupils grow in confidence, try new things, and enjoy being out and about has been a real highlight. The work our pupils do in school has been fantastic. Effort, determination and achievement from our students really embody our values of PRIDE:

- Pride in our appearance and all that we do
- Respect for ourself, others and the environment
- Independent living skills
- Determination to succeed
- Enjoyment of learning and life

To our fantastic staff—thank you for your hard work, creativity, and endless care. You make this school a place where every child is supported and celebrated. And to you, our families—thank you for your support, your encouragement, and for being such an important part of our school community. It's been a real pleasure getting to know so many of you this year.

We've had a year full of proud moments, and I'm so excited about what's to come. I'm looking forward to building on everything we've achieved together and continuing to make our school a place where every child can shine. Wishing you all a relaxing and happy summer break.

Warm wishes,
Jamie Campbell
Headteacher



AYNSLEY

It has been another exciting, engaging and enjoyable year in Aynsley Class this year! Our learning has been led by the three school anchors over the year: 'In the Beginning', 'Leaders and Followers', and 'Stories', each one taught through immersing students into sensory stories through a wide range of activities and sessions. These topics have allowed for our students to work towards their individual EHCP and Preparation for Adulthood outcomes, whilst also creating a love of learning within the classroom, and has allowed for mixed sessions across the classes and Pathways, and immersive, interactive experiences.

A consistent, and essential, aspect of our curriculum, throughout the year, has been our Daily Greeting session, which has had a massive impact on the progression of students' communication skills. We have students who are now much more confident in using their verbal skills to greet their peers and are now excited to share their news from home; students who are beginning to pick up key pathways in their PODD books and devices; and those who's signing has absolutely blossomed as the year has developed! As a class team, it has been a privilege to see our students progress in this way and become such confident characters, who are now more able to communicate their wants, needs, likes and dislikes.

There is so much we could say, but to summarise, we have had a jam-packed year of communication development, sensory exploration, immersive experiences, some incredible community visits, and lots of WOW moments from our students! We are very proud of the individual achievements students in Aynsley Class have made this year – we look forward to another year at Blackfriars, whilst also wishing one of our students a big good luck in their next journey at college!



BRIDGEWATER

BRIDGEWATER'S BRILLIANT YEAR: A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY, DREAMS, AND DELICIOUS BREAKS!

What a whirlwind of a year it's been at Bridgewater! From the very first day, the focus has been on connection, curiosity, and creativity. Pupils and staff kicked off the year by getting to know one another—not just names and faces, but hopes, needs, likes, and dreams. Through thoughtful questions and active listening, the class built a strong foundation of understanding and support, all with an eye on one exciting goal: Preparation for Adulthood.

LEARNING WITH PURPOSE AND PLAY

Every activity at Bridgewater is packed with purpose. Whether it's cooking, crafting, or community visits, students are developing essential life skills through structured, fun-filled experiences. These aren't just lessons—they're stepping stones to independence.

ASDAN ADVENTURES AND ASPIRATIONS

Creative planning has been the secret ingredient behind the school's ASDAN award journey. Pupils have explored personal interests and big dreams, turning them into real-world learning. From spooky antics at the pumpkin farm (a surprise first outing for new Headteacher Mr. Campbell!) to themed projects that spark imagination, every moment has been a chance to shine.





BRIDGEWATER CAFÉ: SERVING UP SUCCESS

One of the year's proudest achievements? The launch of the Bridgewater Café! What started as a simple cooking task has grown into a full-blown break-time café, run by students and serving the entire school. It's a delicious example of teamwork, responsibility, and real-world learning in action.

FROM SECRET GARDEN TO SEASONAL SHOWCASE

Inspired by The Secret Garden, students transformed an unused patch of land into a magical, ever-changing space. Through the seasons and through stories, they've created a garden that shows how creativity can bloom anywhere—even without a backyard. It's a living lesson in imagination, sustainability, and pride in one's environment.

Looking Ahead with such an exciting year behind them, the Bridgewater class is already buzzing with ideas for what's next. One thing's for sure: with this much heart, talent, and teamwork, the future is looking brighter than ever.



CHURCHILL

It has been a pleasure to be Churchill's form tutor this year. As my first year in this role, it has been incredibly rewarding to support the group as they have settled into the questioning pathway and grown in confidence over the months.

Churchill have had a fantastic year filled with a wide range of experiences both in and out of the classroom. A highlight was their trip to Westport Lake, where students enjoyed a brilliant afternoon outdoors around the lake building teamwork and resilience.



Over the course of the year, it has been wonderful to see the group really come out of their shells. Their positive energy, humour and enthusiasm have made form time a genuine joy. Alongside this, they have shown great creativity and collaboration through projects such as filming our Christmas video, where their acting skills really shone. The swimming gala went really well, and it was great to see how supportive they were of each other and how they praised one another for their efforts.

They have embraced every opportunity with a great attitude. It has been a privilege and I look forward to seeing all they go on to achieve.



CHUR



CLARICE

CLARICE'S MAGICAL YEAR OF LEARNING

This year, Clarice Class has truly embraced the magic of multi-sensory learning, sparking imagination, exploration, and growth in every corner of the classroom and far beyond it. Our journey was designed not only to inspire wonder, but to build meaningful skills that will prepare us for the wider world and adulthood ahead.

HOGWARTS COMES TO CLARICE

We began our year with a bang or perhaps a spell as we stepped into the enchanting world of Harry Potter. Our multi-sensory curriculum transformed familiar spaces into magical realms: potions fizzed, textures popped, Hogwarts was explored through themed storytelling sessions.

ONE LOVE, MANY LESSONS

Next, we turned up the volume and tuned into the life and lyrics of Bob Marley. His iconic message of unity “One Love” echoed through Clarice not only as music but as a sensory story. Lyrics were woven into tactile experiences, rhythmic movement, and emotional expression, helping students connect with powerful ideas of compassion, togetherness, and identity.

LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

One of our proudest achievements this year has been our active engagement with the community. Whether we were visiting the local fire station or braving the British seaside on a wet and windy day, our trips allowed students to encounter and experience the world around them building confidence, independence, and real-life social communication skills. Every journey was an opportunity to grow. These outings have provided opportunities to nurture responsibility and initiative and embed authentic skills for life beyond the classroom.

SCARECROW STARS OF THE FARM

Our involvement with a local farm “Bobby’s” gave us the chance to get our hands dirty literally! Students took part in creating “Clarice and Cluffy,” our very own scarecrows, combining creativity with practical problem-solving and teamwork. A fun sensory-rich experience had by all.



CLARICE

HERE'S TO A TRULY MAGICAL YEAR AND TO



THE MANY MORE ADVENTURES AHEAD!





Dudson's Magical Sensory Stories: A Journey Through Imagination and Senses

In Dudson class, storytelling is more than just reading aloud—it's a full-body experience that sparks imagination and engages every sense. Our sensory stories are designed to captivate and connect with our learners by offering a rich, multi-sensory journey. Through lights, sounds, movements, tastes, and textures, each story becomes a vibrant sensory workout that delights both students and staff alike.

During the spring term, we ventured into the enchanting world of *Monkey Puzzle* by Julia Donaldson. Dudson class followed the little monkey's heartfelt quest to find his mother, encountering a host of jungle animals along the way. Each encounter was brought to life through sensory stimuli: students listened to the deep, resonant croaks of American bullfrogs, watched the glowing flutter of butterfly wings, and inhaled the sweet scent of tropical fruits enjoyed by the bat. This immersive approach not only deepened engagement but also fostered meaningful connections with the story's characters and themes.

In the summer term, our storytelling adventures continued with *Tiddler: The Storytelling Fish*, perfectly aligned with our overarching theme of 'stories.' Students were transported to a magical underwater world, where they marvelled at the shimmering glow of jellyfish, felt the soft, squishy texture of squid tentacles, and experienced the refreshing spray of ocean waves. This captivating tale offered a unique opportunity to explore marine life through touch, sound, and sight, enriching students' understanding and appreciation of the underwater realm.

Each sensory story in Dudson class is a celebration of creativity, connection, and curiosity—where every learner is invited to dive in, explore, and be enchanted.





MIDDLEPORT



This year, Middleport began as a group of mostly Year 7 pupils starting their journey at Blackfriars. From the outset, students spent time getting to know one another, forming new friendships, experiencing new lessons, settling into routines, and exploring their new environment.

In the Autumn term, our focus aligned with the whole-school anchor, 'In the Beginning'. We explored what it means to be part of Middleport by learning about Middleport pottery, its history, patterns, and designs, before creating our own unique versions. Alongside this, we built on knowledge from primary school while also diving into new subjects such as Preparation for Adulthood, Home Cooking, and Reading and Communication.

In Home Cooking, we began with kitchen safety and then moved on to making breakfast favourites like scrambled eggs, cinnamon swirls and eggy bread. In Reading and Communication, we developed our ability to follow and give instructions through an 'I do, you do' game, and practised turn-taking and teamwork through board games, further strengthening our communication and friendships.

In the Spring term, our anchor moved to 'Leaders and Followers'. In Performing Arts, we explored the styles and signature moves of iconic dancers like Bob Fosse, Matthew Bourne, and Michael Jackson. Inspired by their work, students choreographed and performed their own group routines.

Finally, in the Summer term, our focus turned to 'Stories', centred around 'Claude at the Circus'. This story became the foundation for our Exploration of Anchor lessons, where students researched, designed, tested and created their own juggling balls. It's been a fantastic year for Middleport, full of new friendships, creative learning, and growing independence. We're proud of everything the students have achieved and excited for what comes next.



MOORCROFT

Moorcroft have had an incredible year, full of exploration, learning, new experiences and making new friendships. We welcomed some new students to our class in September who settled into Blackfriars very quickly and soon became well-loved members of Moorcroft.

We spent the first term following the anchor 'In the Beginning'. Our focus this term was ensuring students in Moorcroft had the opportunity to take part in discussions and practical activities to help us all to build positive friendships and relationships. To encourage this the students spent time engaging in structured, turn taking games which encouraged their communication skills.



To complete the year, we have explored the anchor 'stories' with a big focus on the story 'The Rainbow Fish'. Towards the end of the year, we were lucky enough to take a trip to the Blue Planet Aquarium as part of our learning. We had a lovely day looking and learning about the creatures that live in the sea. The students had an amazing time and especially enjoyed searching for the underwater creatures, such as the Octopus, that features in 'The Rainbow Fish' story.

'Leaders and Followers' was the second anchor we followed this year. Students in Moorcroft explored and discussed characteristics of what makes a good or bad leader through our English lessons as we read the story 'Peter Pan'. As our understanding of the story developed, we were able to use the 4D room to 'fly' to Neverland and immerse ourselves in the story fully. Students were able to explore the characters in the story by using props and costumes, listening to music and sounds and water play.



Some of the more memorable moments that students in Moorcroft have experienced this year have been our community visits, specifically to the Belong Centre. Here students had the opportunity to socialise with the residents and take part in their music and movement sessions which the residents loved just as much as we did! These sessions with the residents gave our students a safe place to grow in confidence, with some students even singing and dancing by themselves in front of everyone.

It has been a great year for everybody in Moorcroft! Each and every student has shown impressive personal development. They should all be immensely proud of themselves and we cannot wait to see what the next year brings!





ROYAL DOULTON

Royal Doulton class has been made up of year 8 and 9 students who are on their key stage 3 learning journey. From the beginning of the academic year students got to know each other or became reacquainted with previous class mates. The new timetable, routines, learning journey and class dynamic made for a vibrant new community and an interesting first half term.

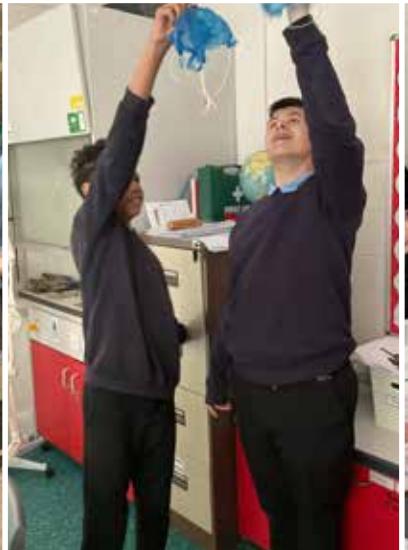
With learning framed by our whole-school anchor, 'In the Beginning', in form time we explored our evolving sense of identity as Royal Doulton class 2024-25, and the business history and designs of the iconic pottery brand, whose name we have adopted, Royal Doulton. This tied into our work linked to Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) and careers. Staff meetings with students and parents to allocate PFA targets linked to the student's EHCP targets began the PFA journey for this new academic year. Thus, across both timetabled subjects, and wider the curriculum 'In the Beginning' summed up our approach to learning for the first term.

In the Spring term, our anchor focused on 'Leaders and Followers'. In maths they explored money and percentages. Students challenged themselves to put their money skills into practise in real-life scenarios to improve their knowledge of working out costs and change. Through questioning, students they were able explain and justify their answers, so that they became more expert at working with money and applying this knowledge in real-life situations. Our PFA lessons and visits to Tesco enhanced this approach. Meanwhile in English we explored the character is Shakespeare's Macbeth as a leader and follower, as well as Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. By defining the qualities of a leader and follower, students learnt the shared qualities and personality traits.

Finally, in the Summer term, our anchor linked to 'Stories' rounded off our academic year. This has allowed students to reflect on their own learning story for this year, the progress made, lunchtime clubs attended, representing the school in sports tournaments, biking round Westport Lake and participating in House days. As I write this, we are looking forward to House Sports Day on the 15/07/25 and our end of year class trip to Tenpin Stoke and Trentham on the 16/07/25.

It's been an incredible year for Royal Doulton, full of new friendships, learning, self-reflection and growing independence. We're delighted for all they have achieved and are excited to witness what comes next.

Wishing you all a happy summer holiday,
Royal Doulton Class Team.



A DELICIOUS YEAR IN HOME COOKING!

This year in Home Cooking has been nothing short of amazing! Our students have embraced every opportunity to learn, create, and taste their way through a wide variety of recipes and cooking techniques.

Throughout the year, they've developed an impressive range of skills—from chopping, measuring, and weighing, to mastering the oven and hob. They've learned how to roll, cut, fold, mix, crack, flip, and boil with growing confidence and independence. What made this year extra special is that every recipe was chosen by the students themselves. Together, we explored a mouth-watering mix of breakfast favourites, savoury dishes, and sweet treats. It's been a joy to watch them not only cook but also taste and evaluate their creations—sometimes with delight, and sometimes with a firm “no thank you!”

Their enthusiasm, teamwork, and willingness to try new things have been truly inspiring. Every student should feel incredibly proud of what they've achieved in the kitchen this year. We can't wait to see what exciting dishes they'll cook up next!





Y10 AT BIG BEN!

Year 10 students from the Questioning Pathway enjoyed a sunny and eventful day in London on July 8th. Some broke personal bests by waking up at 5am to get to school in time for our early departure. Jez and Mark drove the buses in convoy all the way to the Houses of Parliament. We arrived, piled out of the buses and rushed to meet our tour guide, Nick. He was very entertaining, a font of knowledge and showed us round Westminster hall built in 1097 and the Central Lobby. Students had to vote on whether school holidays should be reduced. The ‘neys’ were decidedly louder than the “yehs” and the vote was quashed (thank goodness). To great delight Nick said the group were ‘skibidi’ and sent us on our way up to the public gallery where we observed the House of Commons debate a transport issue. Our MP, Adam Jogee, came to visit us and promised to come to school as soon as possible. As Westminster prepared for a visit by the French President, we slipped out to the neighbouring park for a much needed picnic by the river Thames.

On the way home we stopped at the services for some fast food to sustain us back to school.

WHAT DID THE STUDENTS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE DAY?

“My favourite was seeing the MPs meeting about the railways” Owen.

“Absolutely great.” Rosie

“Historical and interesting ” Linkin

“Tiring but fun.” Chris

“Up and down” Millie in reference to her plentiful trips in the Parliament lift!

“The trip was amazing.” Aimee-Leigh



LEAVERS 2025



LEAVERS' TRIP TO CHESTER ZOO & A NIGHT TO REMEMBER AT PROM

As the school year draws to a close, our Year 11 leavers marked the end of their journey with two unforgettable events: a wild day out at Chester Zoo and a magical evening at prom.

CHESTER ZOO ADVENTURE

On a sunny morning, excitement buzzed through the air as students boarded the mini-buses bound for Chester Zoo. With maps in hand and snacks at the ready, they set off to explore one of the UK's most beloved wildlife attractions. From majestic elephants and playful penguins to the awe-inspiring big cats, the day was filled with laughter, learning, and plenty of photo ops. Highlights included the butterfly house, the bat cave (not for the faint-hearted!), and the ever-popular giraffes and leopards. It was a perfect blend of fun and friendship, and a chance to make lasting memories before heading off on new adventures.

PROM NIGHT SPARKLE

Later that week, the class of 2025 swapped their uniforms for suits and gowns as they arrived in style for prom night. The venue was transformed into a glittering celebration space, in the student's chosen 'theme park' topic, complete with fairy lights, a dance floor, and a photo booth that captured countless smiles. After a buffet meal, students continued to dance the night away to live music performed by an ex-pupil and took part in games like 'hook a duck' and 'splat a rat'. The evening was a celebration of hard work, resilience, and the bonds formed over the years. Special thanks to the staff and prom committee for making the night so spectacular and to the many classes and staff who helped out with decorations and lots and lots of painting.

As we say goodbye to our leavers, we wish them all the best in their next chapters. Whether heading to college, apprenticeships, or new adventures, we know they'll continue to shine.

Here's to the memories made, the friendships forged, and the bright futures ahead.



SENSORY AND PHYSICAL CURRICULUM

This term, our school anchor has been stories. Through sensory and physical learning, our students have been building confidence, trying new things, and developing important life skills.

We've been encouraging pupils to think about their own stories - show they've progressed, what they've achieved, and what they can keep working on. This helps them feel proud, stay well, and take more control over how they learn and grow.

Our sensory and physical lessons are not just about movement—they also support learning across the curriculum, helping students build focus, independence, and resilience.

Over the summer term, pupils have explored how to keep active and healthy in fun and meaningful ways.

Here are just a few of their brilliant highlights:

BOXING

We were very lucky to visit Bear Town Boxing Club this term, alongside students from Portmeirion and Gladstone. The groups took part in boxing routines and fitness challenges, all linked to our Physical and Healthy Me focus. Pupils showed fantastic energy and effort, developing strength, coordination, and confidence in a new environment.





CYCLING

All of our students on the Questioning Pathway have had the opportunity to take part in cycling sessions at Westport Lake. We're very grateful to Green Door Cycling for welcoming us and providing access to their equipment at a reduced cost. Every student who attended enjoyed plenty of fresh air, fun, and lots of healthy exercise. It's been a brilliant way to get active and explore the outdoors in a safe and supportive setting.



EDGBASTON

Following our success in recent table cricket tournaments, we were thrilled to be invited to the West Midlands Regional Competition at Edgbaston. Our team represented the school brilliantly, showing great teamwork, focus, and determination. Although we narrowly lost a couple of games by just one run, the group gave it their all and finished a very respectable 6th overall. To top off a fantastic day, we even had the chance to go inside the stadium and catch a bit of the live Warwickshire match! The pupils did themselves and the whole school proud



PANATHLON

or the fourth year running, Blackfriars proudly organised the Panathlon event at Keele University. This fantastic day brought together SLD and PMLD students from SEND schools across North Staffordshire to take part in a wide range of activities, including sensory bowling, paddle tennis, and target throw. As always, the best part was seeing pupils from different schools mixing, laughing, and enjoying the experience together. A brilliant day of fun, friendship, and inclusive sport!



GIRLS' NETBALL & NEW FRIENDSHIPS

This term, our girls' had the fantastic opportunity to take part in the N.S.S.S.S.A. Girls Netball Tournament at Biddulph. It was a brand-new experience, playing in a round-robin format against other local SEND schools—and they absolutely rose to the challenge! The girls played with great determination, and their teamwork, passing, and movement were praised by staff and students from other schools. They represented Blackfriars with true P.R.I.D.E. and had a brilliant day of sport. One of the most memorable moments was the friendship they struck up with the team from Walton Hall School. The bond formed so quickly that our girls were soon invited to visit Walton Hall for a friendly netball rematch, a trip to their school farm, and some forest school fun.

The day was a huge success, full of laughter, teamwork, and new connections. In fact, the girls were so keen to stay in touch, they set up a chat group that same day!

We're now looking forward to welcoming the Walton Hall team to Blackfriars in the autumn term for the next chapter of this brilliant partnership.



A SUMMER TO REMEMBER

This summer has been packed with exciting experiences, active adventures, and plenty of smiles. From sensory journeys and fitness fun to sports competitions and outdoor activities, our students have embraced every opportunity with enthusiasm and resilience. Whether cycling by the lake, stepping into the ring at the boxing club, joining in with friends at the Panathlon, or the making and building of new friendships at Netball. This is exactly what we want our curriculum to be about: the enjoyment of movement, the friendships it creates, and the foundation for a lifetime participation. Every moment has helped build confidence, teamwork, and joy. We're so proud of how our pupils have challenged themselves, supported one another,

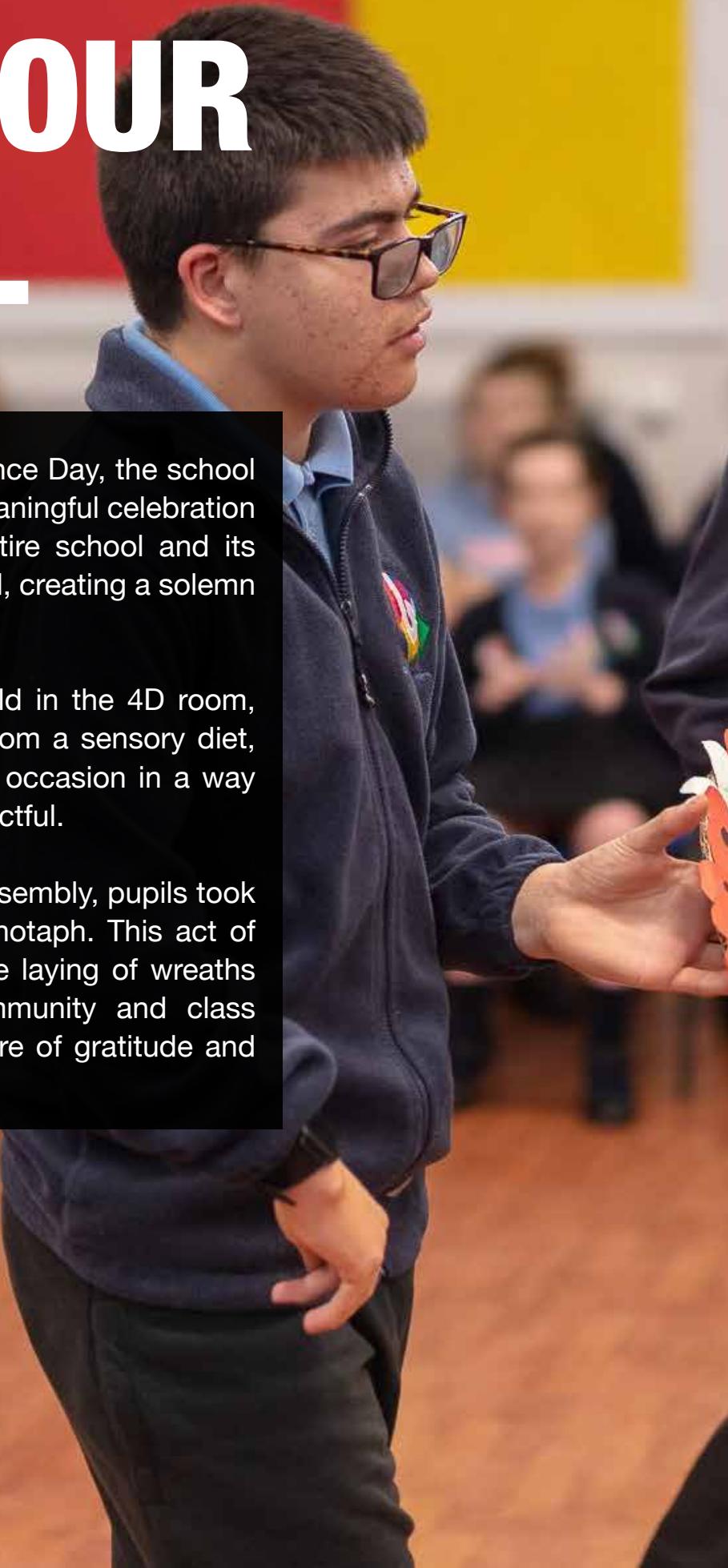
The most important thing about the activities is that we all had fun!!

REMEMBRANCE DAY AT OUR SCHOOL

In a heartfelt tribute to Remembrance Day, the school came together in a moving and meaningful celebration of respect and reflection. The entire school and its grounds were beautifully decorated, creating a solemn and thoughtful atmosphere.

A special sensory service was held in the 4D room, designed for pupils who benefit from a sensory diet, allowing them to engage with the occasion in a way that was both accessible and impactful.

During a powerful whole-school assembly, pupils took part in assembling a symbolic cenotaph. This act of remembrance was followed by the laying of wreaths by members of the school community and class representatives, each one a gesture of gratitude and honour for those who served.





D-DAY 80TH CELEBRATION

In a powerful and enriching week of learning, the school community came together to explore the history and significance of D-Day. This cross-curricular journey brought history to life, with a special focus on the resilience, unity, and hope that defined the era.

Music played a central role in the commemoration. Pupils learned wartime songs in their music lessons - melodies that once lifted spirits during dark times - and proudly showcased them during a moving assembly. These performances not only celebrated the power of song but also highlighted how communities can support one another through challenging moments.

Two assemblies were held to ensure every pupil could engage meaningfully. A whole-school assembly in the main hall brought everyone together in shared reflection, while a second, sensory-friendly assembly was held for students who benefit from a more supportive environment. Both gatherings offered opportunities to share knowledge, honour the past, and inspire empathy and understanding.

Through song, storytelling, and shared experiences, the school paid tribute to the courage of those involved in D-Day, while also fostering a deeper sense of connection and compassion among its pupils.



SWIMMING AND WATER SKILLS

Across the pathways swimming is an important staple in our timetables. It is crucial to our student's wellbeing and physical targets, through it's therapeutic qualities, as well as building confidence, self esteem and personal growth.

The targeted, personalised lessons delivered by the swimming team, Sharon Bailie and Lynette Alexander empower our students to develop their skills while stretch and challenging them to explore beyond their comfort zone

This year our swimming gala showcased all of the above and was the embodiment of Pride, so central to our school vision. The sportsmanship shown through out the events and the whole school celebration of outstanding achievements ended the school year on a high.



STAFF UPDATE



NEWS OF STAFF AND THEIR NEW BABIES...

Warm congratulations to our staff who have become mums this term and a warm welcome to their little ones ...

We wish them all the very best.



**Natasha welcomed
Rosalie**

**Immy welcomed
Louie**

**Lorissa welcomed
Franco**

A FOND FAREWELL

After twenty years of Service to Blackfriars we say a fond goodbye to Carol Slight. Carol joined Blackfriars in September 2005 and since then has inspired so many of our students to develop their artistic flair and for some to pursue art as a career.

Carol's impact on our school was summed up by Ruth in the following poem:

A Tribute to Carol – Our Creative Heart

In a school that's truly special, where bright minds bloom and grow, One soul has left a rainbow trail, wherever she would go. Carol, dear, it's time to rest, to paint new skies and roam, But first we share our love for you, before you journey home.

With hands that danced through paper scraps, and eyes that saw the gold, In broken brooches, vintage finds, and trinkets bright and bold. Your Dutch-born flair for colour burst in every piece you made, From vibrant collage masterpieces to jewellery well displayed.

The children felt your kindness, your patience like the sea, You nurtured every artist's spark, and helped them all break free. You saw in them the hidden light, you saw in scraps their worth— A treasure-hunter of the soul, who brought the best to birth.

Your outfits always told a tale, with necklaces so grand, Each earring shaped like joy itself, selected second-hand. Your laughter stitched through every class, your spirit set the tone, And now we try to thank you, though words stand still, alone.

How many lives you've coloured in, how many dreams set flight— Your legacy's not on a wall, but shining, warm, and bright. Though brushes rest and aprons hang, your art is far from done, You've painted love in hearts and minds—your greatest work, bar none.

So, Carol, raise your palette high, retirement calls anew, To days of quiet crafting joy, of treasures to pursue. The special school will miss you so—our jewel, kind and true, But what a masterpiece remains: the gift of simply you.

Ruth O'Connor July 2025.

We also say goodbye to Nicky Turner, Kayleigh Ryles, Lisa Rowlands and Jill Reagan. We thank them for all their service, hard work and care for our students.

NEW TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS ...

Congratulations also goes to Misbah Mahmood and Imogen Umney on completing their teaching qualification. They now embark on their one-year period of induction, followed by a two-year Early Professional Development (EPD) programme. We wish them good luck as they begin their teaching career.



CPD AND NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

As part of our staff Continuing Professional Development (CPD) we are proud to report that four of our teaching staff have engaged in studying and completing National Professional Qualifications in Leading Teaching and Leading Literacy.

The primary aim of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) in the teaching profession is to support and enhance the professional development of teachers and school leaders by providing evidence-informed training and fostering expertise in specialist areas of teaching practice or school leadership. These qualifications are designed to help educators become more effective, confident, and prepared for career progression and leadership roles, ultimately improving the quality of teaching and raising standards in schools.



Our Exploratory Pathway Lead, Miss Walton, and Immersive Pathway Lead, Miss Garratt, have both successfully completed a National Professional Qualification (NPQ) in 'Leading Teaching' this year. This qualification has supported both of our full-time teachers to become more expert in their additional leadership role.

The qualification covered a range of leadership knowledge and skills, including how to successfully implement strategies, the importance of the working memory and cognitive load for our students, how importance adaptation is for successful learning, and how to effectively work as part of a wider team, with the students' needs at the centre of all we do. Both Pathway Leads are now equipped with the knowledge of how-to best support staff to support students in order for them to achieve their best, in all that they do.

Both Miss Walton and Miss Garratt have said that the NPQ course, although they endured an intense assessment period in particular, has better prepared them for the additional roles and responsibilities they are now taking on within Blackfriars. They are both very much committed to ensuring all students are provided with the upmost best learning opportunities and experiences!

Maths Lead, Mrs Gardiner writes: The NPQLT (National Professional Qualification for Leading Teaching) course has been a transformative professional development experience, equipping me with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to support teaching and learning across the school. The training was carried out through a blend of evidence-based theory, practical application, and reflective practice and was designed to deepen understanding of effective pedagogy, curriculum design, and instructional leadership. With three sessions where staff from different schools came together to discuss effective practice, it also fostered a rich dialogue and collaborative learning environment, with effective peer support. The NPQLT has proven to be a rewarding journey and with the course's focus on sustainable improvement and impact has empowered me to implement strategic initiatives to enhance teaching practice and pupil outcomes.

Mrs Martin, Assistant Head and English Lead obtained her NPQ Leading Literacy in January of this year. Writing about the experience she reflected: "This course updated and empowered my ability to effectively teach and promote literacy across the whole school. The course content included a wider understanding of language, providing techniques to promote language and vocabulary acquisition across the stages relevant to our Pathways; crucial as the majority of our students have a communication and interaction target in their EHCP and a diagnosis of a language processing delay. Also, central to the course, was the delivery of practical skills to encourage and teach reading and phonics effectively and a wide range of insights into the teaching of writing skills, underpinned with an understanding of the role of working memory in this complex process. The blend of face-to-face conferences and monthly seminars via TEAMS provided a mix of practical application, evidence-based research and reflective practice that has provided a timely update to my Post Graduate Diploma in Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia) awarded previously. This opportunity to meet and network with colleagues from a wide range of schools, sharing of good practice and expertise added depth and value to the course and ultimately my teaching.

