

# THE BAC

AUTUMN EDITION

2025



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# Welcome

**to the Autumn Term edition of the Blackfriars Academy Chronicle.**

Inside, you'll find a celebration of the wonderful events and activities that have taken place throughout the term. We truly value your ongoing support and partnership; working closely with you enables us to provide your child with a meaningful, engaging, and exciting educational experience.

Our continued development of the Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Targets - now reviewed and shared each term - is another example of how your involvement strengthens our work. Your positive feedback on the PfA Target sheets has been greatly appreciated, and we look forward to using this approach to further focus our learning so that every child leaves school fully prepared for the next stage of their educational journey. Thank you for your collaboration and commitment.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated and highly skilled staff team who work tirelessly to provide a rich variety of fun, purposeful, and inspiring learning opportunities for your child. I hope you enjoy reading this term's edition of the BAC and taking a glimpse into the experiences that have shaped our school community over the past months.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your family a peaceful and joyous Christmas and a very happy New Year.



# Aynsley

In Aynsley Class this term, we have welcomed old students into school for the first time. We also welcomed new students to the class. It has been great to see all students adjusting to this changing class and begin to build friendships and relationships with class staff.

As the Anchor this term has been a very important aspect of our learning. We have focused on the recognition of both ourselves and others through our Daily Morning Greetings. We are very much communicative and have a wide range of communication skills. We are in class, but have also allowed students to present their personal preferences through sharing their favourite songs in class; whilst learning how to listen and interact with others; along with continuing to recognise the importance of increasing levels of independence.

Another key element of our learning has been our Sensory Story: 'Incredible You'. We have used the mirrors before going on a journey to see you are, and that everyone is incredible. We have focused on each student through singing and sharing their preferences.

It has been a very successful year and we are looking forward to what the year has to bring!



# ey

have welcomed back the academic year, but the school too! It has adapted so well to their mild positive rapport staff and their peers.

een 'Identity', a very g has been to develop and others around us, eting sessions. These n driven, utilising a systems within the ll of our students to ces and personalities s with the rest of the appropriately greet ngside beginning to their own name with nce.



orning, to delve into the anchor 'Identity' deeper, has been our weekly We have started each of these sessions, by exploring our reflections n immersive story adventure, to show there is no one better than who credible in their own way. We finished every story with a celebration g and dancing, which has been enjoyed by all!

nd positive start to the year, and we are excited to see what the rest





# Clarice

## A Season of Growth, Joy, and Discovery

This term has been nothing short of extraordinary for Clarice, where every day has brought opportunities to learn, explore, and celebrate individuality. From the very beginning, we embraced the sensory story *I Am Me!*, a powerful journey that reminded us of the importance of authentic self-awareness, and joy. Through multi-sensory storytelling, students were immersed in experiences that affirmed their uniqueness and reinforced the message that each of us matters. This became a foundation for mindfulness and self-celebration, encouraging students to connect with themselves and each other in meaningful ways.

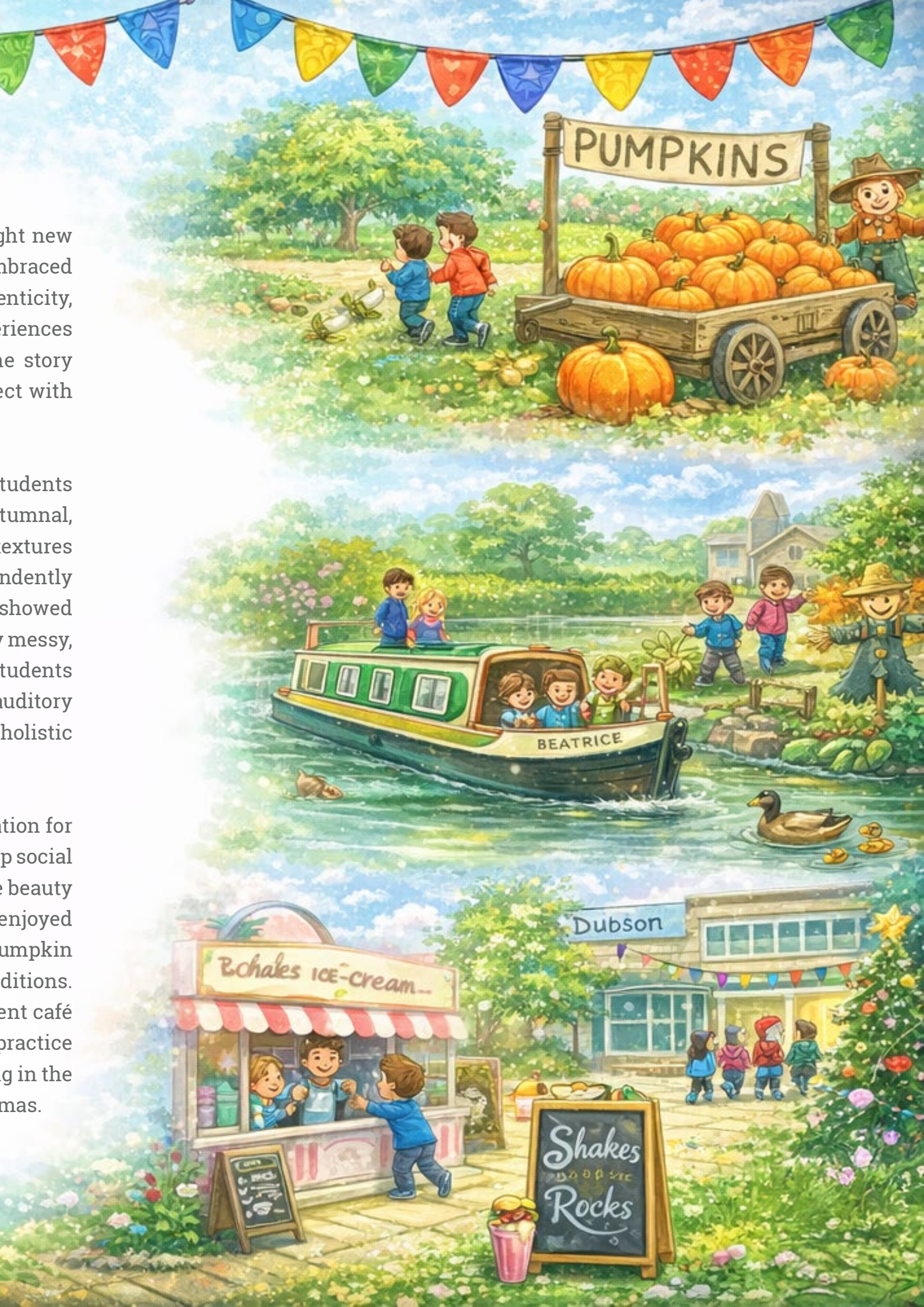
Building on this, we adopted the Engagement Model Framework to guide our learning. Students demonstrated exploration as they eagerly investigated sensory tuff trays filled with messy, auditory, and creative materials. Their anticipation was evident when they reached for familiar textures or waited for sounds and smells to unfold. Initiation shone through as students independently engaged with resources, while persistence was celebrated in the sustained effort they showed when manipulating objects, pouring, squeezing, and tasting. These sessions were gloriously wonderfully exciting, and deeply creative, a true celebration of learning through all senses. Students used their hands to strengthen fine-motor skills, their eyes and ears to absorb visual and auditory stimuli, and even their taste buds to explore edible sensory items. Each activity embedded an inclusive approach, that was engaging, ensuring that everyone had meaningful participation.

Beyond the classroom, our adventures extended into the community as part of our Preparation for Adulthood curriculum. These trips were not just outings, but planned opportunities to develop confidence, adaptability, and independence. At Trentham Gardens, students experienced the beauty of nature while practicing navigation and social interaction. On the Beatrice Barge, they enjoyed the calming rhythm of canal life, learning patience and teamwork. The visit to Endon Park Farm was a sensory delight, with vibrant colours, earthy textures, and the joy of seasonal produce. At Shakes on the Rocks, students explored choice-making and social exchanges in a different, cafe-like environment, while Bobby's Ice-Cream Parlour offered the sweetest opportunity to practice communication, decision-making, and of course, indulge in a well-earned treat, lastly getting into the Christmas spirit with Dudson class, sharing experiences and building the lead up to Christmas.

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Together, these experiences have created a term filled with laughter, growth, and unforgettable memories. Our class has not only embraced the Engagement Model Framework but has lived it! Exploring, anticipating, initiating, persisting, and realising their potential in every activity. As we look back, we celebrate a community of learners who have thrived through sensory exploration, creative expression, and real-world adventures. This has truly been a season of growth, joy, and discovery, and we cannot wait to see where our next journey takes us.



# Dudson

## Following the Yellow Brick Road: Dudson's Autumn Adventures

Dudson have had the travel bug this Autumn Term! We have travelled the yellow brick road with Dorothy and her friends and explored the different colours of the rainbow. In our sensory story we experienced the tornado.





# Bridgewater

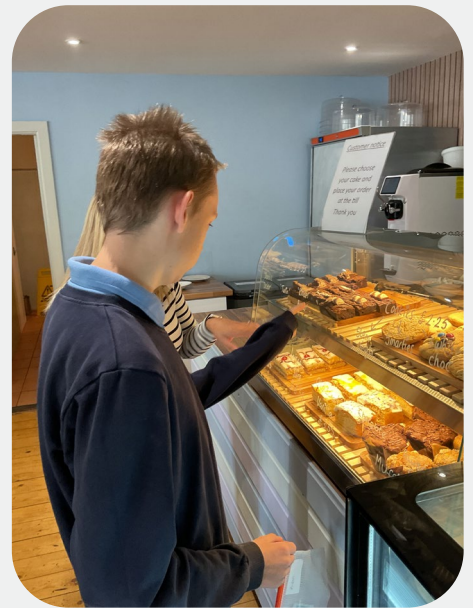
## Hogwarts Edition

### Welcome to Bridgewater – Where Magic Meets Learning!

Since September, Bridgewater has been transformed into Hogwarts! The Sorting Hat has spoken (yes, it really talked!) and placed our students into magical work groups. This enchanting theme has inspired lessons across all subjects, making learning spellbinding and fun.

### Magical Adventures Beyond the Castle Walls

Our students have ventured into the community for café supplies, taking turns to order, pay, and collect items—practicing real-life skills worthy of any wizard! These trips also included visits to shops, cafés, and places of interest, all under the banner of Learning for Life: planning, budgeting, and money management.



## **Potions, Charms & Science Wonders**

In Science, students explored the mysteries of the human skeleton, creating lungs and brains with hands-on magic! They discovered how the heart works and even brewed up creativity in English with IT-supported poetry, snowy puzzles, and artistic spells. IT lessons have focused on internet and email safety, a charm that will protect them all year long.

## **Special Spells of Respect**

Our Remembrance activities gave students the chance to sell poppies in the community, showing respect and unity. Bridgewater continues to create special services for all pathways, making our school a truly magical place.

## **Accreditation Achievements**

Some students are working toward their magical qualifications—proof that hard work and dedication are the strongest spells of all!



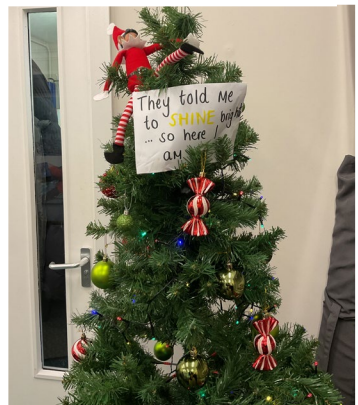
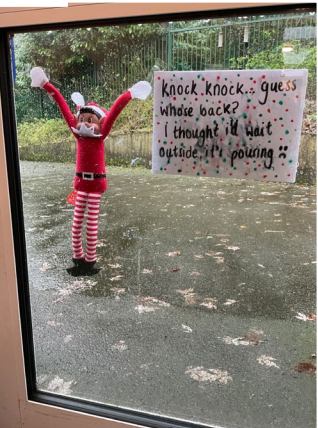
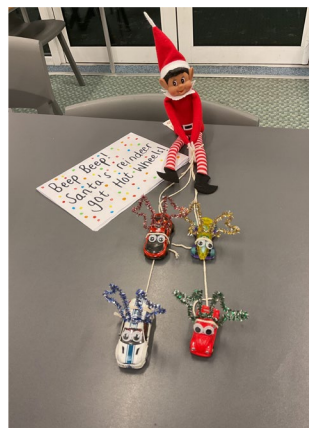
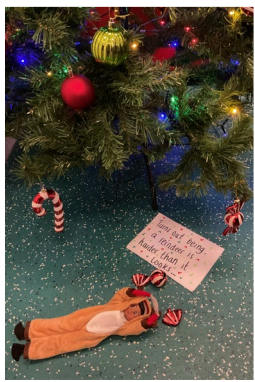
# Churchill

## Elf on the Shelf

In Churchill class we've had lots of festive fun thanks to our cheeky Elf on the Shelf, Sparkle. Sparkle has been up to all sorts of mischief this December - from dressing up as a reindeer to accidentally smashing a bauble!

Every morning the children rush in to see what Sparkle has been up to and it always brings plenty of laughter and excitement. It's been a brilliant way to count down to Christmas together and Sparkle has definitely made sure our classroom is full of festive cheer.





Elf Shenanigans!

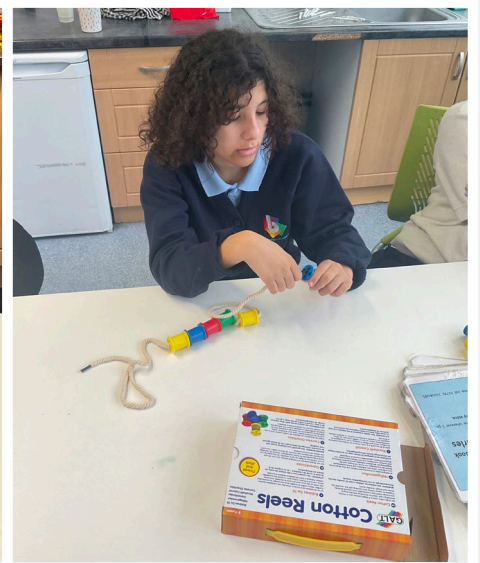


# Middleport

## Discovering Identity and Belonging in Middleport Class

Middleport's focus this term has been in line with the whole school anchor 'Identity'. As a class of mostly year 7 students that joined Blackfriars in September 2025, we completed lots of activities that focused on how we begin to make new friendships, follow new routines, and explore our new environment. We also thought about what it means to be in Middleport through exploring what Middleport pottery is and what designs are used before going on to make our own version of Middleport pottery.

During the Autumn term we continued to develop our knowledge in lessons we had taken part in at primary school, but we also started developing skills and knowledge in new subjects, including preparation for adulthood, home cooking, and communication lessons.



In English lesson this term we have used our class book 'There's only one you' to begin thinking about our identity. We started by thinking about what makes us unique, and different from our friends. Students were able to talk about if they were tall or short, their hair and eye colour and what they liked to play with, amongst others.

In our communication lessons we have spent time making new friends through shared activities including art, fine motor activities and games. Students were able to follow instructions to play games with their peers, sharing the joys of winning and working as part of a team.

The Middleport term is very proud of how well the students have adapted to life at Blackfriars, made new friends, and settled into their new routine. We hope to continue this into the new year.



# Performing Arts Show

The performing arts option group staged their Christmas show this week. This crucial aspect of their course was a huge success, performed in front of the whole school and their parents. Many thanks to all involved.





# Moorcroft

Moorcroft have had a fantastic first term, with more learning, experiences and a great start to our new school year in Year 8, 9 or 10. We spent the first term following the anchor 'Identity'. Our focus for this was to think about both our own identity and the identity of our class name 'Moorcroft.'

In English we have read three different texts 'Incredible Me,' 'You Choose' and we ended this half term with 'A Christmas Carol.' We used these texts to explore how we have our own unique Identity and to learn more about ourselves as a class team. We linked this to Art by completing some amazing art work where everyone's skills shone through. We did some individual pieces to reflect our personality and share with each other the different things that we like and then a whole class piece to represent what we had learnt about the style of the famous potter who our class takes their name from.

In Food technology we make lots of different things to enable us to make personal choices, for example pizzas with different toppings and omelettes with our choice of filling.





In Preparation for Adulthood we completed activities to make progress towards our personal targets by taking part in discussions and practical activities such as making lists to prepare to go shopping which ended with a visit to B&M to buy the things that we needed for our Christmas fayre stall. We worked out what we could buy within our budget and used our list and the signs in the shop to help us find what we needed.

Each student has shown some impressive personal development this term and also had a lot of fun! We are looking forward to seeing what 2026 brings!

# Gladstone

## A Busy and Rewarding Term for Gladstone Students

This term has been an exciting and productive one for students in Gladstone. They have worked hard towards their qualifications across a wide range of subjects while also gaining valuable hands-on experience through weekly work placements. These placements have seen students take on diverse roles in engineering, catering, retail, education, housekeeping, front of house, and caretaking—developing practical skills and confidence in real-world settings.

Alongside their academic and vocational commitments, half of our students have been channeling their creativity into preparing for the much-anticipated Christmas play. From crafting props to rehearsing lines and perfecting their performances, they've been working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the show is a success—while keeping the details under wraps for that element of festive surprise!

In mathematics, after weeks of focused effort toward qualifications, students enjoyed a change of pace with engaging STEM activities. One highlight was the creation of “Hoopsters” using straws and paper, followed by a lively trial session, to see whose design could stay airborne the longest. It was a fantastic way to combine problem-solving with fun and teamwork.



# Portmeirion

## Residential

As part of our wider education Blackfriars Academy offers all our students the opportunity to experience a residential trip during their time with us. To this end, Portmeirion class went on a two-night residential to Standon Bowers. We will let the student's words and pictures tell their story.



"My favourite activity was rifle shooting. The gun was pretty difficult to use at first, but once I got the hang of it, it was really fun."

"My favourite part of Standon Bowers was the Night walk and staying in the dorms."



"Among all the activities I participated in, I particularly enjoyed rifle shooting. It was engaging and enjoyable and a completely new experience for me, as I had never handled a air rifle before but despite that I did quite well. It was an enjoyable experience all together trying and experiencing a lot of new different things. I didn't really know what it would be like having a sleepover, but it was fairly fun."

"I enjoyed the climbing wall! I completed every single wall, even one on the corner with tiny foot and finger holds, that the instructor said does not happen very often."



"I was so nervous to go but so pleased I went. The night walk and archery were my favourite activities."



"I enjoyed roasting marshmallows around the campfire and telling stories."



"I was so excited for Standon Bowers but a little nervous because it was my first residential trip ever. My favourite thing we did was the climbing wall. I got all the way up and I was so, so proud of myself. So pleased I went."





“So, my favorite activity I did was rifle shooting because it was fun and entertaining, I also never wielded a gun before even though it's not like a proper gun since it was an air rifle.”



“The dorms were really cool and fun!”

“I was so proud of myself for doing the high ropes! The campfire was good, we were all laughing.”



“My trip to Standon Bowers was amazing. I enjoyed archery and the climbing wall.”



# Royal Doulton

It has been such a privilege to watch the class of 25-26 come together in September, bond and develop a strong sense of community and identity.

Interestingly their developing sense of identity directly links to the whole school learning anchor for this term, identity. Through the lens of identity, the class has explored their subjects across timetable, working with focus and determination. For example, they have read the novels "Skellig" by David Almond and "Holes" by Louis Sachar focus on the sense of identity of key characters, while in Maths the lens has been used to consider the characteristic of time and measure. The world of Monks and monasteries have been explored in History, directly linking back to the Newcastle Under Lyme Friary, a religious house of the Dominican friars, founded sometime in the 13th century built on the land that the school now stands on. Indeed, this was where we got our name, Blackfriars, as this was the name given to the monks, as they wore black habits.

In late September the classes elected representatives to the School Council. We held hustings in class to elect our representative and were delighted with the number of students who put their names forward and then presented their pitch to the class. Voting was decisive and congratulations to Harrison who was elected. It was important for our students to see democracy in action and to understand how this underpins our society.

Trips out have included sporting activities, visiting the Parish Church, St Giles to hear and experience the atmosphere and the building as well as regular trips to our Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) room and Morrisons as part of our PFA learning journey.

We look forward to building on these firm foundations next term.







# Royal Shakespeare

## Company Associate School Programme

We are delighted to announce that Blackfriars Academy has been selected for the Royal Shakespeare Company Associate School Programme, run in partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Staffordshire to have been selected, after a rigorous interview process.

We join a local and national network of schools, teachers and young people, who will work vivid, accessible and enjoyable for all young people.

Our current school priorities include strengthening oracy and metacognition through explicit teaching practices, a focus on metacognition strategies to help embed learning into long-term memory. The rehearsal room approach is aligned closely with these aims, particularly in the way it supports learning through performance. These approaches will also complement our efforts to build confidence in performance and storytelling.

We see this programme as central to both our current work with literature, enriching cultural capital, and supporting young people's work. It also provides access to a range of experiences of high-quality performance pathways.

As an associate school we now have access to transformative experiences in the theatre to unlock the power of storytelling and the opportunity for us exploring and performing two Shakespeare plays across the year. We will be performing "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in the summer term. More details to follow ...

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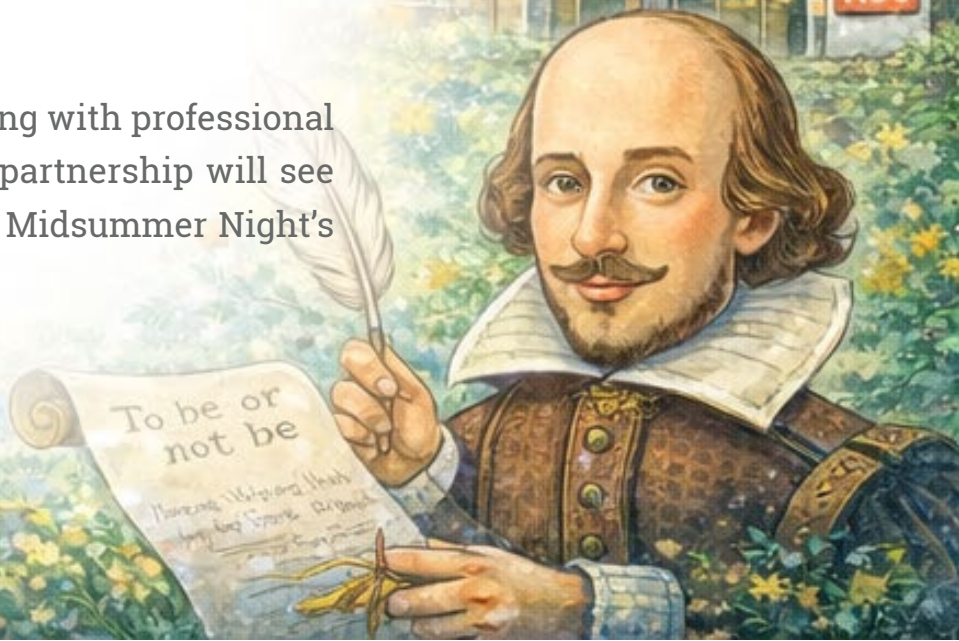
has been selected to join the Royal Shakespeare Company at the New Vic Theatre. We are the only special school in the new process.

and theatre professionals committed to making Shakespeare's

and reading for meaning across the curriculum, reinforcing strategies and using a spiral curriculum model to embed the approach used in the Associate Schools Programme aligns with immersion, repetition, inclusivity and creative exploration. We build student confidence, resilience, and self-esteem through

and our future direction: deepening students' engagement with life skills through the timeless relevance of Shakespeare's high-quality theatre that some of our students across all our

Additional staff and student training, working with professional staff on the richness of language. This two-year partnership will see the whole school, the first being "A Midsummer Night's



# Sensory and Physical Curriculum

## Autumn Term Update: Personal, HRF, Cognitive and Cooperative Units of Work

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We look forward to building on these firm foundations next term.

**The most important thing about the activities is that they are all fun!!**



# Christmas Fair

Many thanks to all who attended! Our Christmas Fair was a joyous afternoon and because of everyone's efforts we raised over £1,500 for our school.



# Amber

## A Fantastic First Term with Royal Doulton Class

"This term, I have had the pleasure of joining the Royal Doulton class as a trainee teacher with KNSTE. It has been an amazing start to my teaching journey. I have been lucky enough to teach some English, maths, history, PE, science, and each lesson has shown me how creative, resilient and enthusiastic the Royal Doulton class are.

In history, we stepped back in time to act out the day in the life of a medieval monk, the class really got stuck in with this, costumes and vows of silence included! We braved the cold in maths to play a game of 'What's the Time, Mr Wolf' to support our learning of time. I have been impressed by the lively debates in English about both Skellig that they read before half term and more recently, Holes.

The learners of Royal Doulton have impressed me greatly with their kindness and enthusiasm, thank you Royal Doulton for such a lovely start to my teaching career!"



**Keele and  
North Staffordshire  
TEACHER EDUCATION**

*Rooted in evidence; reaching for excellence.*

# Blackfriars Academy

## Term Dates 2025-2026 (Pupils)

September 2025						
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November 2025						
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December 2025						
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January 2026						
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February 2026						
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March 2026						
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April 2026						
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May 2026						
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June 2026						
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July 2026						
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August 2026						
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 School Open  
 School Closed

# SEND YOUTH CLUB

**FOR AGES 12 TO 24 YEARS**

Meet other young people and make friends with activities like playing pool, plate spinning and other circus skills, social games and board games like UNO. Make something with art and craft. Or you tell us what you would like to do!

**TWO FREE YOUTH CLUBS**

**Every Tuesday**

At Bentilee Youth Club, ST2 0OEU

Time - 6:45pm until 8:45pm

**Every Wednesday**

At Chell Heath Family Hub, ST6 6QW

Time - 6:45pm until 8:45pm

For more information

Email - [alan.mason@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:alan.mason@stoke.gov.uk)

Phone - 07717 714 299



STAFFORSHIRE  
CRICKET



# Join the Super 15

## Free cricket sessions!

Improve your skills! All disabilities welcome | Ages 10-25

Select Sundays in 2025 | Oct 12 | Nov 2, 16 | Dec 14 from 11.30am-

Select Sundays in 2026 | Jan 4.18 | Feb 1, 15 | Mar 1, 15, 2p 4:30pm

Clayton Sports Centre, 1 Stafford Avenue, Newcastle ST5 38N For  
more information

contact Steve Lightfoot  
[s.lightfoot@starrardstrectet.co.uk](mailto:s.lightfoot@starrardstrectet.co.uk)  
or visit [www.lordstaverners.org](http://www.lordstaverners.org)



LORD'S TAVERNERS  
Giving young people a sporting chance



## **Staffordshire Families Integrated Front Door (SFIFD)**

if you have concerns or are worried for a child and wish to make a referral: 0300 111 8007

## **NSPCC Helpline**

Call 0808 800 5000 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) if you're worried about a child.  
NSPCC Christmas Support [[nspcc.org.uk](http://nspcc.org.uk)]

## **Childline**

Childline Free, confidential support for children and young people: 0800 1111 or [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)

## **Samaritans**

116 123 [samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

## **Citizens Advice**

Citizens Advice Staffordshire – Debt, benefits, budgeting  
0808 278 7874

## **StepChange**

StepChange Debt Charity – Free debt advice  
0800 138 1111