

Friday Focus

Issue 187 | January 2026



Highlights of this week's news at school and forthcoming events



JTMAT HISTORY COMPETITION

Before Christmas our Year 12 History subject ambassadors and 3 of our History GCSE students represented the school at the JTMAT History competition at the National Memorial Arboretum. Students were tasked with the creation of a presentation about one of the many memorials at the Arboretum. All students worked incredibly hard researching their chosen memorial which was the memorial dedicated to the St. John's Ambulance. They created and delivered a detailed and informative presentation to the other schools involved in the JTMAT competition and the judging panel at the Arboretum. Although, they did not win the competition, the effort and commitment each student put into the project was commendable and they all did a fantastic job of representing the school. Well done to all involved.



YEAR 8 TRIP TO LILLE & BELGIUM

Our trip to Lille and Belgium was a truly memorable experience, filled with culture, laughter and festive fun. Students immersed themselves in traditions with a French bakery visit and a Belgian chocolate workshop, they explored the magical Lille Christmas Market, and took part in exciting activities including quizzes, games and a silent disco back at the château. One of the highlights was our visit to a chocolate factory, where everyone loved learning how chocolate is made and decorating their own bars to take home. Alongside the educational experiences and opportunities to practise their French, there were plenty of special moments - from celebrating a birthday abroad and trying new foods, to singing on the coaches, shopping for treats and souvenirs, and sharing lots of laughter with friends and staff. It was a fantastic trip that created lasting memories for everyone involved. A big thank you to Mr Sutton for his superb organisation of the trip, once again.

Photo of the week #weareblythe

WELCOME

Although the weather has meant it has been a slightly unusual start to term, I am glad that we have managed to keep the disruption to normal school life to a minimum whilst ensuring the safety of staff and students remains a priority. The forecast looks better for the next couple of weeks and we can but hope that we have now seen the worst of the wintery weather!

Mrs Johnson

Headteacher

Pride, Respect & Kindness



ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS & SUPPORT OUR PRODUCTION

Following the success of last year's We Will Rock You, Blythe Bridge High School and Sixth Form is excited to present Annie Jr from 10th-12th February 2026. With over 750 audience members expected, the show is likely to sell out. We are inviting local businesses to sponsor the production by placing a colour advert in our programme:

- Full page: £80 + VAT (£96)
- Half page: £50 + VAT (£60)
- Quarter page: £30 + VAT (£36)

To take part, please email your advert and chosen option to h.blissett@bbs.co.uk by Friday 30th January. Please also let us know if you prefer to pay by cheque or invoice.



YEAR 11 GEOGRAPHY

11Y2 used their problem solving and teamwork skills to tackle Miss Bloore's revision challenges. They demonstrated excellent determination to succeed, making Miss Bloore proud with their recall of their GCSE geography content and skills.



YEAR 12 INDUSTRY VISIT TO SLOUGH

Year 12 A level maths students spent the day in industry working as statisticians and scientists. Led by former student Ellie Rogers, they travelled to the company's UK base in Slough for a full day of activities. We are incredibly grateful that Ellie has kept in touch with us, sharing her journey since leaving the sixth form including studying maths at the University of Bath. Many thanks to Ellie for inviting our students to see this vital work and prompt discussions about future career options.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM VISIT

Our A-level scientists attended the Christmas lectures at the university of Birmingham. Scientists in the fields of astrophysics, haematology and palaeontology delivered lectures explaining how exoplanets were being discovered from an Antarctic base, how drugs are being developed to treat unknown blood disorders based in research around platelets and how fossils were discovered during field work in Morocco. Following this, students were given a campus tour by student ambassadors. Students had a Christmas sing-along on the bus ride back up the motorway.



MARVELLOUS MUSICIANS

Our musicians were busy last term with Christmas events! Some of our fabulous musicians went to support and perform in the Moorlands Music Centre Concert at the start of December which was brilliant to see all room full of the next generation of musicians! A number of the same musicians went to HMYOI Werrington to do Christmas carolling for their Christmas market and we met both the governor and the mayor! What an honour that was - even if it was quite rainy, the smiles never dampened and we sang our hearts out! Thank you to Miss Green and Mr K Knight for the support for this event. Miss Balewski is so proud of all our musicians and the dedication they put into their musicianship. If you are thinking of joining us, January is a great time to come and give it a go! Thursday 3:10pm - 4:30pm in N26.

YEAR 7 READATHON

Our readathon is officially complete! The enthusiasm throughout was absolutely fantastic, with so many students already asking when we can do it again - always the best feedback! It was wonderful to see such a wide variety of books being read across all genres, proving there really is something for everyone. We are incredibly proud of Year 7 for their focus, commitment, and positive attitude towards reading.



DIGITAL CREATIVITY

We are proud to celebrate Stevie C, 7EMF, who has been using his digital creativity to help his mum edit social media content for her work. Stevie regularly edits and trims videos, adds subtitles, and designs titles. Stevie and his family visited the Regent Theatre to watch Cinderella, where his mum interviewed local hero Jonathan Wilkes for independent news platform The Knot (@theknot.news).

Stevie helped edit the interview into an Instagram Reel (also shared on Facebook), designing the title banner "Interview with Jonathan Wilkes at the Regent for Cinderella" and trimming the footage to create a polished final video - which already has over 1,300 views and counting! Stevie also assisted with editing two additional videos, adding headers and removing unnecessary material.

Stevie said, "I like editing as a hobby because I feel proud when I watch the final result. I help my mum out, my dad films the videos and I edit them afterwards." In school, Stevie is really enjoying French, maths, and music. Keep up the fantastic work, Stevie - a brilliant example of creativity and leadership!

YEAR 7 BIKEABILITY

Thank you to Bike Right for visiting today and delivering the Level 3 Bikeability course to our Year 7 students. They learned how to plan a journey, maintain suitable riding positions, pass queuing traffic and use junctions controlled by traffic lights. The groups thoroughly enjoyed themselves and we had lovely feedback from the instructors that they were very polite and enthusiastic. Well done team!

Thanks to our site staff who have worked incredibly hard this week to ensure our school site has remained open and safe for staff and students. You are a brilliant team displaying our school values of pride, respect and kindness!



Christmas at Blythe Bridge

As we step into 2026, we're excited for what's ahead. Before we do, here's a look back at the festive moments we shared at school in December.



Our Christmas House Bake Off was a tremendous success. Congratulations to winner, Grace H and to our runners up, Kyan B, Aariya K and Maisie P.



Thank you to everyone who helped to raise so much money for our chosen charities by wearing a festive jumper or hat. Here is a flashback to 2021 when our current Year 11 were celebrating the end of their first term in Year 7.



What an amazing 12 Days of Christmas Reading Challenge we have had! Mrs Jones was so impressed by the effort, creativity, and enthusiasm shown by everyone who took part, choosing winners was not easy at all. Because the entries were such a high standard, she decided to award three Grand Prizes!

Our Grand Prize Winners are: Fergus G, 7HSS, Cara P, 7LRO and Georgia S, 7LRO. Well done to all three of you, your entries really stood out! A huge thank you to everyone who participated and made this challenge such a success. We loved seeing your reading tasks and hope you discovered some great new books along the way.

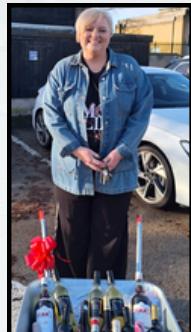
9SAH decided that they wanted to create Christmas boxes for Animal Lifeline for the dogs to open on Christmas Day. They donated treats and toys for the dogs to enjoy and wrapped them during break times, showing the importance of charity during Christmas.



We have a final winner for our Twelve (school) Days of Christmas Raffle!

Many thanks to everyone who supported this raffle. We raised over £1000 which means we can fund the new goalposts on the top field.

Special thanks to Mrs Hayes for all her hard work in putting together the prizes.



Our Year 13 physics students were set an extra challenge to research 'The Physics of Christmas'. After selecting a question to investigate such as 'How much energy does it take to warm all of the mince pies Santa eats?' they researched and presented their ideas to the panel of students and teachers.

Overall winner Isaac was awarded the trophy and prize after he delivered a presentation on 'Assuming no magic is involved, how many reindeer would it take to pull a sleigh full of presents?' Well done to you all.



Thank you to all who attended our Christmas Fayre and to our fantastic student and staff helpers who worked hard to ensure the event went smoothly.



Staff Christmas Dinner



It was lovely to see our staff taking a moment to enjoy Christmas lunch and each other's company. Thank you to all of the staff who made it possible! It was delicious.

In case you missed our Christmas video, please check it out on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/A9IW9aYViag?feature=shared>



It wasn't just staff and students who had a Christmas break - our guinea pigs, John and Darren and our rabbit, Bertie were cared for over Christmas. It certainly looked like they all had a fantastic time. Thank you!

Bertie: Bertie spent the festive season with a wonderful host family where he didn't just enjoy the treats - he made a brand-new best friend. Check out him bonding with his feline foster sibling! It is proof that the holiday spirit really does bring everyone together.

John and Darren: "We have been having a lovely time on our Christmas 'Vacay' with Lauren, at Chez-Foxes. We have been spoilt rotten with lots of cuddles, lovely veggies and tasty hay, and Santa Clause dropped by with some willow balls and fleeces for us to decorate our indoor (cold weather storage) hotel room. 5 stars - would highly recommend! In fact, we have been so busy, not even had time to send any postcards - so we thought you'd like to see some of our Christmas selfies."

Thank you to the Fox family for taking such great care of them. We are not sure they will want to come back after living their best life with the family!





SPRING TERM

MONDAY P4 CITIZENSHIP



Year 7: How do I learn best and stay organised?

Year 8: Which skills matter most at work?

Year 9: How do I choose subjects that fit me?

Year 10: How do I find real opportunities that fit me?

Year 11: Revision skills

KEY DATES

Monday 12th January

- Year 7 Progress Evening

Monday 19th-20th January

- Year 11 GCSE Food Exam

Wednesday 21st January

- Primary Cluster Concert

Friday 30th January

- Careers Fair



CAREERS SPOTLIGHT - BENCHMARK 7

Over the next few weeks; Mr Goodwin, Miss Housley and Mrs Baines will be organising and preparing for the annual careers fair. We will have over 30 representatives supporting the event from colleges, universities, apprenticeship providers and other industries. If you work for a company which would like to be part of the careers fair and have a stand to talk to our Year 11 -13 students about career opportunities in your sectors please email m.goodwin@bb-hs.co.uk



ASSEMBLIES

Year 7-11: Safeguarding / safety in school



Year 12
The Seven Deadly Sins



Group	Block 4 (5) 12 th Jan-13 th Feb
Year 7 Girls AC	Dance
Year 7 Girls DV	OAA
Year 7 Boys AC	Swimming
Year 7 Boys DV	Handball
Year 8 Girls AC	HRE
Year 8 Girls DV	Dance
Year 8 Boys AC	Basketball
Year 8 Boys DV	Football
Year 9 Girls AC	Volleyball
Year 9 Girls DV	Dance
Year 9 Boys AC	Handball
Year 9 Boys DV	Swimming



REMINDER

A reminder for students to check their timetables and bring in the correct kit for their PE lessons with appropriate footwear. Please also remember to bring in ingredients for food technology lessons.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Thank You

A MASSIVE thank you to our PRK team and Year 11 prefects who helped at the Christmas Fayre. Whether you were running a stall or working behind the scenes in the run-up to the day, we are so grateful for your hard work and dedication as student leaders.

Interested in joining the PRK team? Please speak to Mrs Avons or email E.Avons@bb-hs.co.uk to register your interest.

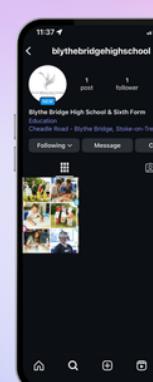
MENU CHOICE

STREATRIES		LUNCH MENU: TRADITIONAL	
WEEK 2 Autumn Winter 2023/24 16/10/25, 09/11/25, 30/11/25, 20/12/25, 16/01/26		Portugal MON	Elome STYLE TUE
MAINS		Peri Chicken & Macho Pea Pasta Bake Chilli Lime Aoli	Honey Mustard Glazed British Bangers with Onion
SIDES		Peri Crispy Chicken & Butterbean Pasta Bake	Honey Mustard Glazed Veggie Bangers with Roasted Red Onion
PASTA & NOODLE POTS		Zesty Dressed Roast Broccoli	Leek Mashed Potatoes, Musty Peas & Gravy
DELI HOT		Thai Green Vegetable Noodles	Roasties, Savoy Cabbage & Cauliflower
FILLINGS		Best Ever Bolognese	Chilli Mac n Cheese
BIG BOWL SALAD		Classic Meatball Pasta	Garlic Rice, Roasted Cauliflower & Green Beans
DESSERTS		Classic Veggie Chow Mein	Garden Peas or Baked Beans
DAILY MEAL DEALS Regular Chef's Specials		Super Green Lentil Pesto	Irish Curry Sauce Chip Shop Gravy
BBQ & Crispy Onion Wings		BBQ & Crispy Onion Wings	Choose from Battered Fish Sausage & Veg Sausage Pizza Slice Chicken Nuggets Chips
CURRIES & SPICIES		Crispy Chicken Burger	Butternut Tomato Chilli Macnacilla
FISH & CHIPS		Thai Curry Pizza Slice	Garlic Rice, Roasted Cauliflower & Green Beans
CHEESE, BEANS & TUNA DAILY		Curried Chicken & Spinach Wrap	Garden Peas or Baked Beans
FISH & CHIPS		Cheese & Tuna Daily	Irish Curry Sauce Chip Shop Gravy
FILLINGS		Spicy Peri Chicken & Cheese	Butterbean Marinara
BIG BOWL SALAD		Bolognese	Chicken Tikka Masala
DESSERTS		Meatball Marinara	All The Classics
DAILY! Freshly Made from Scratch		Chicken Tikka Masala	Honey Mustard Chicken Cobb Salad
DAILY! Freshly Made from Scratch		Custard Tart	Cheesecake Cookie Slice
DAILY! Freshly Made from Scratch		Coconut & Pineapple Upside Down Cake	Handmade Deli Sandwiches, Baguettes, Wraps, Salads & More!
DAILY! Freshly Made from Scratch		Fresh Cut Fruit & Yogurt Pots Available Daily	Delikitchen Hot Grab & Go

Follow us on



@blythebridgehighschool



Check this out



Drama Reading



This half term's recommendations are:



If you are interested in purchasing items please email t.matthias@bb-hs.co.uk and we will let you know what we have in stock. Donations are always welcome.

Did you know you can raise free donations for Blythe Bridge High School & Sixth Form every time you shop online? With over 7,500 retailers including Tesco, Amazon, John Lewis and more, a percentage of what you spend is donated to our school at no extra cost to you. Signing up takes just a moment and is completely free – simply scan the QR code below to get started and help support our students.



6 Reasons to Put Your Phone Away

by @Inner_Drive www.innerdrive.co.uk



Lowers Concentration

Having your phone out while doing homework or revision has been shown to reduce performance by 20%.



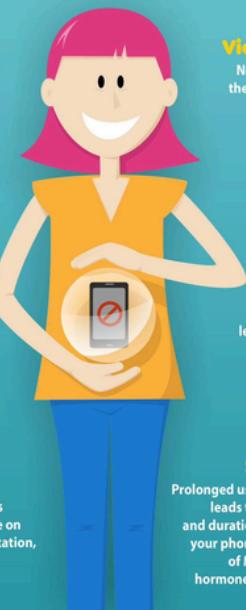
Increases FOMO

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), or the compulsive need to know what others are doing, leads to worse moods and increased anxiety.



Increases Stress and Anxiety

Overuse of mobile phones leads to increased anxiety, feelings of loneliness and low self-esteem. Reliance on mobile phones can cause irritation, frustration and impatience.



Wars Your View of Reality

Nobody is as happy as they seem on Facebook or as wise as they appear on Twitter.



Reduces Memory

Instant messages are distracting, which often leads to forgetfulness.



Makes You Sleep Worse

Prolonged use of a mobile phone leads to poor sleep quality and duration. The backlight on your phone delays the release of Melatonin, which is a hormone important for sleep.



Train to Teach in Local Schools

Primary (3-7) • Primary (5-11) • Secondary (11-16)



The John Taylor SCITT

jtscitt.co.uk

BLYTHE BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM

COMMUNITY LETTINGS



Blythe Bridge High School & Sixth Form is excited to offer our school facilities to the local community and businesses.

If you are looking for a regular indoor or outdoor venue for your club or society, or a space for a one off event, we offer a range of facilities.

THESE INCLUDE

**MUGA PITCHES ● GRASS FOOTBALL PITCHES ●
MAIN HALL ● CLASSROOMS ● ICT SUITES ● ART
FACILITIES ● HARD COURTS ● SWIMMING POOL**



Scan the QR code for our price list and a copy of our hire request form
01782 392519
office@bb-hs.co.uk
ST11 9PW



Free School Meals



See if you are entitled...

It costs nothing to try, so why not give it a go!

You may be eligible for support via benefits related Free School Meals if you meet any of the following low income entitlement criteria:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance. Please note the 'new style' job seekers allowance is not a qualifying benefit.
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance. Please note the 'new style' employment and support allowance is not a qualifying benefit.
- Eligible for Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit and the household income (as used by HMRC to assess tax credits) is not more than £16,190.
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- In receipt of the 4 week run on of working tax credit
- Universal credit (provided you have an annual net earned household income of no more than £7,400 as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods). Your net earned income is your household income after taxes and deductions and does not include income from Universal Credit or any other benefits you may receive.

Even if your child prefers packed lunch, it is worth registering to receive benefits such as:

- A discounted place on some school trips
- Year 6 Headstart pack on transition including one school tie and headphones
- 20% voucher for National Schoolwear, Hanley
- Access to free food and activities during the school holidays

Help the school by registering for Free School Meals!

By registering for Free School Meals, you will also allow school to receive PUPIL PREMIUM, which is extra money from the government to support children from families on lower incomes. The funding that school receives can be used for a range of interventions including help with costs of school trips, music fees, teaching assistant staff, after school programmes and equipment.

The Pupil Premium strategy can be found on the school website.

Holiday Activities and Food



www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Educational-awards-benefits/Holiday-activities-and-food/Holiday-Activities-and-Food.aspx



To apply, visit the Staffordshire County Council website
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/educational-awards-benefits/freeschoolmeals/apply-online.aspx