

Friday Focus

Issue 190 | January 2026



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

Photo of the week
#weareblythe



CAREERS FAIR

A big thank you to all of the representatives who attended our annual careers fair today, plus those who gave informative talks. It was wonderful to see Year 11, 12 and 13 students engage with the colleges, universities and companies. The young skills leaders did a fantastic job looking after our visitors and displayed the essential skills they represent.

WELCOME

My thanks go to Mr Goodwin, Miss Housley and Mrs Baines for all their hard work in putting together such a wonderful Careers Fair. Visitors are always impressed with how much our students interact with their displays and ask relevant questions about their company or university/college. Our student careers champions did a great job supporting at the event and I know they helped keep the refreshments and car parking running smoothly

Mrs Johnson
Headteacher

Pride, Respect & Kindness

COUNCIL VIDEO FEATURE

Back in November, we invited Freya from Staffordshire County Council into school to collect some footage to go into a new video about the new SEND strategy across Staffordshire. Footage of our school features alongside several other schools in the county, with Toby B in Year 10 providing a fantastic voiceover. We hope you enjoy the video.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtEWHiVluiE>



ANNIE UPDATES

In just two weeks, the curtain will rise on our school production of Annie. Rehearsals are in full swing, with our cast and crew working incredibly hard – learning lines, finalising costumes and perfecting their performances to bring this much-loved show to life. Tickets are selling quickly, so don't miss out! Make sure you secure your seats and join us for what promises to be a fantastic evening of entertainment. Book now via ParentPay: www.parentpay.com/

Last chance to advertise your business!

Today is the final day to submit an advert for our event programme. This is a great opportunity to promote your business to our school community and support our production at the same time. Prices can be found on page 2. If you would like to take part, please contact h.blissett@bb-hs.co.uk by Friday 30th January.



Pride • Respect • Kindness



AFRICAN ADVENTURES

We are entering our third year partnering African Adventures and Port Vale to give our students the opportunity to visit Kenya on a volunteering trip and our 2027 group had their fundraiser at Port Vale this week. It was race night and families and friends turned out to show their full support. The students did an amazing job and showed the confidence and skills they will take to Kenya working when with schools and communities. All our students going to Kenya in 2026 and 2027 are looking forward to being back at Port Vale in March as part of the Kenya takeover.



READING: THE SILO TRILOGY BY HUGH HOWEY - MISS BALEWSKI

"We do not know why we are here. We do not know who built the Silo. We do not know why everything outside the Silo is as it is. We do not know when it will be safe to go outside. We only know that day is not this day."

A dystopian story based in a silo underground because outside is too toxic to live. Juliette, a mechanic, uncovers some disturbing information that it might be a fabricated reality that they are living in...and anyone who questions the rules (known as 'The Pact') is sent out to clean... Juliette is sent out to clean because she is getting close to finding out the truth and she is the only one who has ever survived going outside. I have, so far, read book 1 in the trilogy and am about to start book 2. I'm looking forward to seeing how the story progresses!

BLYTHE BRIDGE SIXTH FORM

BY YEAR 12 ELLIE

I study psychology, sociology & health and social care. I chose to stay at Blythe for sixth form because I feel more comfortable in a familiar environment and the school supported my chosen subjects. I am constantly pushed and supported to further my education as well as my real-life experience, and much more.

My favourite part of sixth form, so far, has been the ability to study and catch up on homework, in my private study periods, allowing for a better work-home life balance and less stress regarding revision and other studies.

I am involved in the EPQ extracurricular project which is very enriching and informative.

Top Readers

Blythe Bridge Reads

















Well done to Nova C, Isobel G, Archie H, Elif K B, Lucy B, Lauren F, Emily F, Kyan B, Jayce M & Olivia F



READING SUPERSTARS

Congratulations to our top 10 readers across the whole school for the autumn term! We are so proud of the dedication, enthusiasm, and love of reading you have shown. Your commitment to picking up a book, challenging yourselves and exploring new stories is fantastic to see. Keep turning those pages - you are setting a brilliant example for the whole school!

QUIZ TIME!!!



What is the name of the orphanage where Annie lives?

- Sunshine Home
- Happy Hills Orphanage
- Girls' Orphanage of New York
- Municipal Girls Orphanage

SIXTH FORM ANNIE QUIZ

How well do you know Annie?! Here is a little quiz created by our sixth formers so you know what to expect in our upcoming school play. Our students have been working so hard to make it a show you do not want to miss!

Inspirational Learning Group



















Pride • Respect • Kindness

YEAR 11 TOUR VIDEO

Friday lunchtime - 'Miss, can we make a short video tour of our school? It would help new students and we want to try to make social media a positive place.' By Saturday afternoon, this amazing group of Year 11 were working on their first video. Recorded and edited completely by the students - who would like to thank the staff volunteers they encountered while recording their tour! We think they did a great job, despite the rain. We look forward to the team's next idea.

Year 9 recently took part in the Oli Leigh Trust Mental Health Challenge with the Inspirational Learning Group, where they learned about mental health awareness and worked hard to develop their own innovative services to support wellbeing. Through the challenge, they strengthened essential skills including teamwork, leadership, and communication.

A huge congratulations to "Minds Unwind", whose idea offered a fresh, practical way to help young people use the power of words through journaling. Their approach encourages students to manage emotions day-to-day, while also recognising when it is important to seek support. A simple, tangible tool like this can be genuinely powerful - and the team presented it brilliantly.

Congratulations to the "Minds Unwind" Team: Amelia C, Holly H, Elizabeth L, Arthur O, Hattie S and Megan W.

A big well done to Bradley R and Michael O, who showcased impressive presentation skills and stepped in last minute to support the winning group's presentation.

Thank you to all of Year 9 for your mature approach and hard work throughout the morning's activities.

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@bb-hs.co.uk by Friday 30th January. Please also let us know if you prefer to pay by cheque or invoice.



LOOKING FORWARD



SPRING TERM MONDAY P4 CITIZENSHIP

Year 7: How do I stay safe and positive online?
 Year 8: How do I judge what to believe online?
 Year 9: What are my rights at work?
 Year 10: How do I choose smartly between budgets, risks and contracts?
 Year 11: Revision skills



Year 12 will reflect on the careers fair.
 Year 13 will be having an exams focus this week with mock results and a focus on strategies for final exams.

KEY DATES

Monday 2nd February
 • Year 12 / Year 13 Progress Evening

Tuesday 10th - Thursday 12th February
 • Annie Jr Performances

Monday 9th - Friday 13th February
 • Year 12 + 13 assessment week



CAREERS SPOTLIGHT - BENCHMARK 7

This week, we were pleased to welcome Reaseheath College and Stoke on Trent College, who delivered informative and engaging assemblies to our students, exploring the wide range of options available to them beyond school.

The sessions gave students valuable insight into further education pathways, courses and career opportunities, helping them to start thinking about their next steps and future ambitions.

We are very grateful to both colleges for taking the time to visit, share their expertise and support our students in making informed choices about their futures.



Year 7 - 11: Respect
 Year 12 & 13: Annie



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

Student leadership at its finest! A huge well done to our fantastic Careers Champions who led the Careers Fair with confidence, professionalism and pride. They were a real credit to the school. Interested in becoming a Careers / Skills Champion? Speak to Mr Goodwin to find out more. A special shout-out to Year 13 Micah H, who handled refreshments with incredible enthusiasm and speed - thank you for keeping everything running smoothly and our visitors hydrated!



MENU CHOICE



Check this out

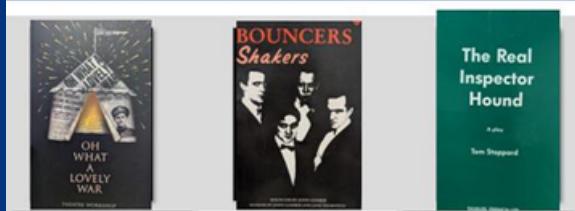


Drama Reading

Fancy reading a playscript instead of a novel?

Every half term, the drama department will recommend three playscripts that you can borrow to read.

This half term's recommendations are:



Oh What A Lovely War
War is a satirical take on WW1, full of song and dance that juxtapose greatly with those moments of shock and anger..

Bouncers and Shakers is a double bill of loud, proud, physical plays that show life in a Northern town as a variety of characters get ready for a big night out.

The Real Inspector Hound follows two theatre critics watching a ludicrous whodunnit who then become involved in the action.

You are very welcome to borrow these or other plays through Mrs Baines.

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.



Wears 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.



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.



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