



Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential



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28th March 2024



Head Teacher's Message

Dear parents/carers,

This will be my final entry for the school newsletter.

This was my **first** entry to the newsletter in January 2007:

It is a privilege and a pleasure to take on the position of Head Teacher at Blackfen and I have enjoyed my first two weeks at the school.

During the first two weeks of this term I have met all students in years 7 – 11 in assembly. In these assemblies I have been emphasising that all young people have skills and talents in a range of areas and it is vital that as young people they share these talents with others. In addition they should recognise the talents that other people have and should value the contribution that other people make. More important than this is how we should all work as a team and pull together. I very much see my role at Blackfen as ensuring that the whole community works together to have a positive impact on learning and achievement in the school. The School is our school and it will continue to be successful if we all – students, parents, staff and governors – work together as a team.

To be honest, this is probably the same as I would still say today! It has been a privilege and a pleasure to lead the school over the last 17+ years. I would like to thank the school community for the “send-off” I have received during assemblies in the last 2 weeks. There has been some tremendous performances and some great singing. I will treasure the books from each community which contain messages from all the young people in the school. Finally, I would like to thank you all for your kind wishes, words, cards and gifts. I am very touched by you all. With this in mind, I will sign off now. Retirement is around the corner for me but I look forward to hearing about the

ongoing and future successes of the school under the leadership of Ms Senior. I know that the school is in very good hands.

Staffing news

We wish Ms Murphy all the best in the future. Ms Murphy has worked at the school for almost 12 years, most recently as a science teacher. We thank her for all her work.

I would like to thank all staff for all their work this term.

Best wishes



Matthew Brown, Head Teacher

Governors Message

As the School prepares to embark upon the Easter break it will be with considerable sadness, for as you are aware Matthew Brown will be retiring after seventeen years as Head Teacher. His contribution has been immense, both in guiding the school to remarkable achievements during his tenure, as well as handling the enormous challenges presented by the COVID pandemic. Throughout his time at the School Mr Brown has always worked closely with the Governing Body, ensuring that a collaborative and effective relationship was maintained. The Governing Body wish Mr Brown well in his retirement and celebrate his incredible contribution to the School. Ms Carrie Senior will be taking over as Head Teacher on the 1st May 2024. The interim period between Mr Brown's departure and Ms Senior joining will be managed by the Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with the Governing Body. The Governing Body wish the new Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership every success in the new term.

The Spring Term itself has been a busy one and the School will embark on a new era in the Summer Term with the arrival of a new Head Teacher and the focus on examinations. The Governing Body congratulate Carrie Senior on her appointment and look forward to working with her and wish our students every success in their examinations. We are confident that the high achievements of previous years will be maintained.

Next term members of the Governing Body will continue to make visits to the School including those to Faculty and the Senior Leadership Team, as a continuing part of our regular monitoring procedures, which will include meetings between the new Head Teacher and the Chair and Vice Chairs of Governors. These too will be reported back to the full Governing Body meeting when it next meets.

One important event in particular to report upon which took place this term is the Careers Fair. This yearly event, which is organised by Mrs Smith, was a tremendous success, with many stalls present and was attended by members of the Governing Body. Well done to everyone concerned.

The Governing Body would like to take this opportunity to wish students, staff, parents and carers a restful Easter break.

Stuart Fitz-Gerald
Chair of Governors

Literacy Across the Curriculum

Many congratulations to Lolade (R7) and Gracie (G6) for representing Blackfen at this year's Bexley Regional Final of the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge, which took place on Monday 18th March 2024. With speeches entitled 'Escaping Reality' and 'Cancel the Silence', they both performed competitively in front of a large audience against students from other schools in the borough.

They were chosen out of a group of 45 Year 10 students who attended a day's workshop last November on developing oracy and public speaking skills, and have since demonstrated persistence and resilience in writing, shaping, memorising and performing these speeches. Mrs Norwood would like to thank all the students who have taken part during this year's Speak Out challenge, especially those who continued with further mentoring.



Ms Norwood
Teacher of English and Literacy Coordinator

Cambridge University – Year 10 Targeted Workshop on applying for competitive Universities

We were delighted to welcome Gwyneth Hamand from Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge University to present a workshop to selected year 10 students with aspirations on applying for competitive Universities including Cambridge and other Russell Group Universities.

The aims of the workshop were to encourage young people in year 10 in to consider what they need to do now to support them

making applications to competitive universities, and in particular Oxford and Cambridge, in the future.

The students completed activities including:

- Learning about selective universities and what they are looking for
- Engaging in critical thinking activities, students reflected on their interests and how to explore them further
- Considered the importance of choosing the right A level combinations
- Addressing some of the myths around selective universities
- Concluding with a debate about a topical issue



"The Oxbridge workshop was very insightful, interactive, and interesting. We delved into the daily life of a university student and explored the contrasts between school and university. Gwyneth shared the pros and cons of university life and provided practical advice for navigating unfamiliar situations. Additionally, we also received guidance on making A-Level choices that aligned with our desired degrees. Gwyneth also provided us with various websites that for further reading, which was very useful and interesting. Overall, I found this workshop highly beneficial, and it prompted me to reflect on my future decisions. Many thanks to Mrs. Smith and Gwyneth for organizing this event."

Feedback above from Sanjana – Yellow 4

The workshops finished with Gwyneth wishing our students good luck for their studies and applications and looking forward to hearing their success stories in the future.

Mrs K Smith
Careers Adviser

Careers - Year 9 Key Stage 4 Course Selection booklet Prize Winners

As part of the Year 9 KS4 options process all Year 9 students were issued with the 'Year 9 preparation for Key Stage Course Selection booklet' during a community session in December. The booklet was designed to help students reflect and think through the selection process, with sections of the booklet to be completed during community time and at home. All students were asked to bring their booklet to their 1-2-1 interview with Leadership Team and the best completed booklets would be selected into a prize draw.

After much deliberation, due to the high standard of completion of the booklets, the main prize winners were:

Ghausiya – Purple 3
Daisy – Blue 1
Lexi – Red 3
Dhimitra – Purple 7
Dulya – Purple – 3

Congratulations to the prize winners and also to all students who completed their booklets! We wish you good luck for year 10 and the start of your Key Stage 4 Courses.



Wishing you all a restful Easter break

Mrs Kellie Smith
Careers Adviser

Chess Tournament

Blackfen held its second Chess Tournament of the school year on Tuesday 27th March.

The students have been progressing and improving week on week during the weekly chess club, so it was always going to be an interesting battle for the prestigious Blackfen chess title. There was some really close matches but Iris in Year 9B6 held her nerve and won all 6 of her matches to hold on to the Blackfen Chess Champion title. Congratulations to Iris and to all the students who took part.



Mr Love, Faculty Leader for English

Catering Service price increase

The latest National Living Wage has increased the employment cost to the school and in particular the catering staff. This cost will need to be passed on to some of the food products. This will not affect the cost of the main school meal known as Enjoy, Street Food and Hot Grab and Go that remains at £2.60 along with bottle water prices remaining the same. These new price menus will be added to the Blackfen website as soon as we receive them. These can be found under School Life – Parents – School Catering – Menu Enjoy – Master Menu. The increase of 5p will affect all other products and will start when we return from the Easter break.

I would like to take this opportunity to raise the fact that there are still quite a number of students that are entitled to Free School Meals not taking up this offer. For whatever reason your young person is not taking up this offer I can assure you that not only will they be receiving a very good nutritious meal the whole process is anonymous. They receive £2.60 to be used for a lunch time meal. They can still purchase items from the catering areas at breakfast and break time however, this will need to come from their catering account topped up by yourselves.

If you would like to discuss please contact the school on
Admin@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk

Mr Morgan
Business Manager.



(answers next time)

NEWTON'S MISSING PRODUCT

Write the digits 1 to 8 in the squares below to make the product correct.

$$\begin{array}{r} \\ \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Last puzzle answers:

1)	7	6	13	19	32	5)	8	-5	3	-2	1
2)	70	40	110	150	260	6)	3	-4	-1	-5	-6
3)	0.3	0.5	0.8	1.3	2.1	7)	-7	-2	-9	-11	-20
4)	0.4	0.8	1.2	2	3.2	8)	0.5	0.4	0.9	1.3	2.2

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Events scheduled so far

DATE	EVENT
Friday 29th March 2024	Bank Holiday
Monday 1st April – Friday 12th April 2024	Easter Holidays
Monday 15 th April 2024 15 th – 19 th April 2024	Summer Term starts Achievement Assemblies
Thursday 25 th April 2024	Year 7 Parents Evening
Monday 29 th April 2024	Year 8 HPV Immunisations Year 10/11 Citizenship Trip to Royal Courts of Justice
Wednesday 1 st May 2024	Year 10 Drama Theatre Trip
Monday 6th May 2024	Bank Holiday
Thursday 9 th May 2024	Year 8 Parents Evening
Thursday 9 th & Friday 10 th May 2024	D of E Bronze Final Expedition
Thursday 16 th & Friday 17 th May 2024 Thursday 16 th May 2024	D of E Bronze Final Expedition Year 12 Parents Evening
Monday 27th to Friday 31st May 2024	Half Term
Wednesday 26 th June 2024	Year 8 HPV immunisation catchups
Thursday 27 th June 2024	Challenge Day 3
Friday 28 th June 2024	Year 12 Induction Day
Tuesday 2 nd July 2024	Year 6 Induction Day Year 6 Parents Induction Evening
Monday 8 th July 2024	Year 8/9 immunisation catchups
Monday 8 th – Friday 12 th July 2024 8 th – 19 th July 2024	Celebration Presentations Year 10 Work Experience
Thursday 11 th July 2024	Sports Day
Wednesday 17 th & Thursday 18 th July 2024	Discover Days
Friday 19 th July 2024	Last Day of Term – early finish