



Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential.



@BlackfenSchool



<http://www.facebook.com/BlackfenSchoolForGirls>
www.blackfenschoolforgirls.co.uk

4th November 2024

Headteacher's Message

We hope that you have had a pleasant half term break. There are some great highlights to share with you from October as we've celebrated Black History Month, welcomed nos amis francais to the school and enjoyed a wonderful show of artistic talent in our dance choreography competition.

It's also been a very busy month with 5 open mornings and our open evening for prospective year 7s, and I'd like to say a huge thank you to our year 8 and post 16 students who did a great job doing tours for local parents and their daughters. I must also say thank you to the staff for their hard work in preparing the school for these visits. We have also welcomed parents of students from years 13, 12, 11, 10 and 7 to our information evenings. We were also grateful to host Bexley Voice who held an event for parents of children with a special educational need. Thank you to all parents who have attended these important events. It's so pleasing to see school, parents and students sharing key messages and working so well together.

In assemblies, our heads of year and assistant headteachers, Ms Woodhouse and Ms Magrowski, have shared key messages about the importance of our values for our school community. The school believes in three key values-respect, responsibility and resilience. Our focus has been respect.

When we talk about respect in our school community, we want to be clear that this includes respectful behaviour online, particularly on social media apps. We take this seriously because any poor behaviour online can be as disruptive to our community and our wellbeing as 'offline' behaviour.

Please do check your child's devices regularly and encourage kindness in online interactions. There are some pages of advice for supporting your child with respectful social media use on the school website.

Finally, as the days get colder, a reminder of the uniform requirements: students should wear a black or navy coat, their blazer, a white shirt and blue skirt or trousers and the school jumper or cardigan. Tights if worn should be black please and should not be worn with socks. Students are permitted to wear one pair of stud earrings only. Please do help your child to meet our expectations by encouraging them to wear the right things to school. We very much appreciate your cooperation and support with this.

Carrie Senior

Carrie Senior
Headteacher

Bexley LGBT Think Tank

A good mix of students from all Key Stages had the opportunity to join other young people educated in the Borough at Townley Grammar School on Tuesday 15th October, for the Bexley LGBT Think Tank.

There were plenty of opportunities for our students to mingle with the students from the other schools, and lots of friendships were forged. Key Stage 4 students had a great time making bracelets with students from Key Stage 5 at Townley, while also discussing the possibilities of making schools in the local area safer and more open for young people in the LGBT community. We heard some fantastic talks from representatives of Just Like Us, an LGBT charity that work with young people across the country, that gave us all some food for thought.

However, the highlight for all involved was definitely the Great British 'Gay-ke' Off, where students from Townley had baked us all some wonderful cakes to sample and we were able to vote for our favourite.

Huge thanks to everyone at Townley Grammar for hosting us, and we look forward to being able to host you all at some point in the new year.

Mrs D Dunsdon
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead
Student Co-ordinator
Teacher of History

Blackfen wishes all the Jewish members of our community a Happy Rosh Hashanah for the beginning of October. We hope you had a wonderful celebration.

Canteen

Reusables in the canteen

The introduction of reusable cutlery and dinnerware in the canteen has been a great success, with the majority of students transitioning smoothly from the disposables to the steam-washed melamine dinnerware.

This has been standard practice for the students who joined us from Sherwood Park school, as they are used to eating from reusable dinnerware in the Blackfen Canteen, which is steam-washed freshly in preparation for every lunch time, and they have been a great help in sign-posting for our other students in what to expect.

Unfortunately, we have a core group of around 100 students who persist in using the disposable dinnerware and cutlery, despite then eating their meal in the canteen rather than taking it away. This is at an additional cost of £50 per student, per academic year from their Wisepay account, and at an additional cost to the school in dealing with the refuse.

When asked, some of the students didn't seem to understand the costs both to the school and the environment that the continued use of disposables was causing. May we ask that you speak to your children about the importance of making responsible choices with regard to the limited resources within the school.

If this continues, we may have to enact a policy which prioritises space in the canteen for those using the reusable dinnerware, especially as the weather turns.

Please remind your children that there are many alternative places to eat packed lunches and 'grab and go' food around the school, such as the glasshouse and the sports hall.

Mrs D Dunsdon
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead
Student Co-ordinator
Teacher of History

Work Experience

Year 10 Work Experience 14th – 18th July 2025

I am writing to let you know that all year 10 pupils will be undertaking a one-week period of Work Experience next year from **14th July – 18th July 2025**. It is important to let you know at this early stage as the Work Experience Programme involves a great deal of planning.

The information letter was emailed to parent/carers by Edulink on 8th October. The letter details how the Work Experience Programme will run this year. We will be using Unifrog to input the placement information with no paperwork to return. Details of how to login to Unifrog were also in the letter. Your child would have received an email from Unifrog to their school email account. I would urge you to remind them to open this email and set their password with Unifrog as they will need this to input the details of their work experience placement.

All students will be visited in form time during October by Mrs Smith to show them how to input their placement details using Unifrog.

If you have not received the email I sent out on the 8th October please check your junk email and if still not received please email admin@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk to request another letter to be sent.

Placements are quite limited this year so I would ask students to make every effort to find their own placement early. If you have been offered a placement but still need confirmation, please chase the employer.

The Programme is designed to give young people a better insight into the world of work and to acquaint them with the key skills necessary to succeed in adult working life. Therefore, the placement may not be directly linked with your child's career ideas. Taking part in the Programme is an excellent opportunity for your child to learn and develop many transferable skills that will benefit them in the future.

Please can I remind you that all placements must be finalised by **Monday 17th March 2025**.

Save the date! Annual Careers Fair Tuesday 4th March 2025

We will be holding our Annual Careers Fair on Tuesday 4th March from 3.15pm until 6.00pm. We would like to see as many parents/carers and students attend as we expect this evening to be interesting and informative with many representatives attending. Further details to follow.

More information on Careers and Work Experience, including the school Careers Policy, is available on the school website under Policies and Curriculum.

Mrs K Smith
Careers Adviser



Dance and Drama

Dance and Drama extra-curricular, LAMDA and a trip to Trinity Laban Conservatoire.

It's been a busy start of the year for the Dance and Drama departments with clubs running at lunch and after school. Recently we held Dance Company and Disneyland Paris dance auditions and were very impressed with the standard of dance across the year groups, were looking forward to seeing what these dance groups achieve this year and know that the performances will be fantastic.

We have also seen the launch of LAMDA qualifications on a Friday, this has been popular with students across KS3 gaining UCAS points and qualifications in Drama.

Recently we also took Year 11 GCSE Dance to Trinity Laban Conservatoire where they participated in a workshop, watched undergraduate classes and listened to a careers talk. The students all did Blackfen proud and we're looking forward to seeing what they achieve in their final year.



Mrs N Jarman
Subject Leader of Dance and Drama
Second in Charge, Expressive Arts Faculty

English

READING MATTERS AT BLACKFEN!

“If we take a page [from a text book] 300 words in length, then 95% reading comprehension will leave something like 15 words on the page unclear or unknown.” Alex Quigley. Director of Huntington Research School, York.

For a text to be understood, 95% of the words must be known by the reader. This leaves 5% for the reader to figure out from the context. Let's consider this for a moment. 15 words a page is a lot of words if you don't know what they mean. But what about if only 70% of words in a text are understood? Or less? What effect does this have on our learning?

Here at Blackfen we know the *power* that having strong reading skills gives you. Being a proficient reader affects ALL subjects and ALL learning. This is why we do everything we can to support and encourage students to practise and strengthen their reading skills. We also hope it will foster a *love* of reading, too! Maybe even into the future . . .

How can we support students' reading?

- Each class in Year 7 and Year 8 has a designated LIBRARY lesson once a fortnight.

This is an opportunity to browse the books in the library and take books out. Students may take up to three books. When students finish a book, they should complete the related quiz in *Accelerated Reader*. Students can access *Accelerated Reader* at home too! This earns points for them individually and also points towards their class score.

Mr Love is quite competitive and so *his* classes frequently win! Who will be the winners this term?!

- There is a Year 7 and Year 8 Book Club run by our school Librarian, Mrs Kingsbury-Barker.

This year the Book Clubs run every other Friday lunchtime. Week A: Year 8. Week B: Year 7.

The FIRST Year 7 Book Club session of this year was Friday 27th September 2024 but it's never too late to join!

Any Year 7 or Year 8 student who is interested can just come along!

- There are competitions and other reading-focused events throughout the year.

This half term there is the Year 7 Halloween writing competition. In preparation for composing an amazing piece of spooky, gothic writing, students might be encouraged to read some! The competition will be launched in English classes and all students are expected to participate and submit their entry after half term.

- Each tutor group has a designated "Drop Everything And Read" day for ALL students up to Year 11.

Students MUST bring a reading book in for their tutor group's DEAR day, every week.

- Reading homework is also set in KS3, KS4 & KS5.

In Year 7 & Year 8 an hour's reading a week is now set as part of all students' English homework.

This is an automatic recurring homework set each week. Some students have been selected to complete this reading through the "*Bedrock Reading Programme*" which is a digital literacy curriculum which supports schools and parents in transforming the learning and literacy of children. Students will need headphones while accessing "*Bedrock*". "*Bedrock*" is a new initiative for us here at Blackfen and we are excited to see the results of our selected students! Year 8 have just started and we are about to launch with Year 7. If your daughter has not been selected for "*Bedrock*" the expectation is that she reads independently for an hour each week and then completes a quiz on "*Accelerated Reader*" once finished. Alternatively, students can use the programme to access some non-fiction articles which should only take a little while to work through. We totally understand that books vary massively in length and complexity – as do individual reading speeds – so we do not wish to set unrealistic goals in terms of finishing books. Students just need to read for a total of 60 minutes a week. Just 9 mins a day will achieve this!

Finally, if students are falling behind on their reading, Mr O'Connor will be running catch up sessions weekly on Mondays after half-term. We aim to have students attend this in place of detentions for missing homework!

So, if you ever hear, “I don’t have any homework.” THEY CAN ALWAYS READ!

**Miss P Higgins
Teacher of English**

English Revision

There will be after school revision for year 11 starting after half term to help with their English Language Paper 2 PPE. An email will be sent out next week confirming times, etc.

**Mr N Love
Head of English**

Jack Petchey Award

What is it?

- 9 students across Year 7-11 can win a Jack Petchey Award.
- Staff and Students will be asked to nominate someone who they believe deserves to win this award.
- The winner will receive a certificate, badge and are granted £300 to be spent on an area or department of their choice within school. They will also be invited to an awards evening with all of the winners from the Bexley Borough.
- You can be nominated for a Jack Petchey Award for the following reasons- Helping others, being a good role model, coping with adversity, doing community work, giving service within the community or maybe just trying really hard!

WELL DONE TO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING STUDENTS WHO WERE NOMINATED FOR THE AUTUMN TERM JACK PETCHEY AWARD-

Isla -10HWI-4

Alexia - 8AGR

Katie - 11MJA

Arisha - 10MSA

Kiyanah - 8 GVA-2

Phoebe - 11JLO-4

Darcie - 8INO

Hannah - 8AGR

Pheobe - 11RRE-5

Sadie - 7AVA

Imandi - 11CBL

Alexia - 11CBL

Megan - 12ACA

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS ARE-

Pheobe- 11RRE-5

Sadie- 7AVA

Alexia- 11CBL

Megan- 12ACA

**Miss R Padbury
Subject leader of Drama and Dance
Rewards Co-ordinator
Form Tutor of 7RPA**

Black History Month

Black History Month is an annual event, held in the UK in October each year. Black History Month was inaugurated to ensure that everyone can appreciate the unique and sometimes forgotten contributions that black people have made to the culture and history of the United Kingdom and helps us practise one of our most important values-respect. The events held to celebrate Black History Month are an important reminder of the strength we have in diversity.

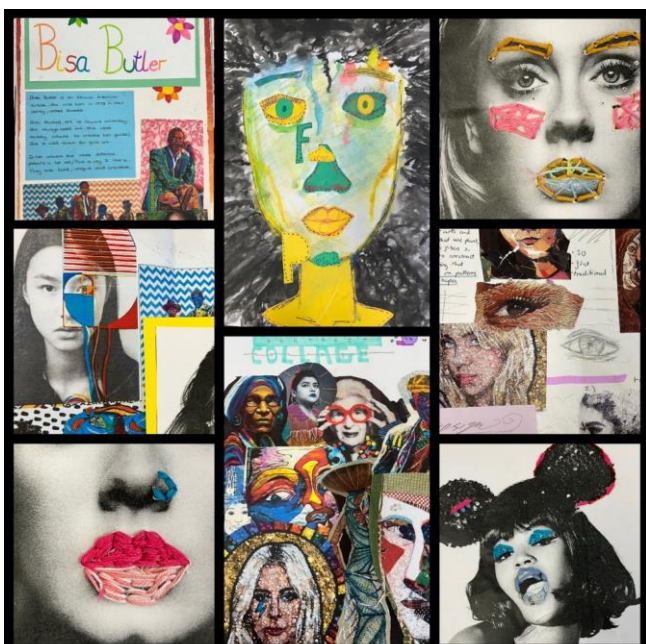
Blackfen celebrated Black History Month across all subjects. We've selected some highlights below to share with you in the newsletter!

Year 7 product designers created their own bridges inspired by Horace King, an American Architect who is considered the most respected bridge builder of the 19th century Deep South, constructing dozens of bridges in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi.

Yr8 Textiles looked at Bisa Butler, an Black American fibre artist who has created a new genre of quilting that has transformed the medium creating portraits of people of African descent, to inspire their own Fabric portraits & yr9 looking at colour & emotion, inspired by Yinka Ilori MBE, a Black British artist and designer known for his bold use of bright colours and playful designs.

In Food, Yr10 studied food provenance & food associated with black culture, culminating in the cooking of a dish including Jerk chicken. Year 9 Food technologists will be looking at tradition street food & cooking a selection of dishes of black origin.

In Citizenship, students studied 'Human Rights Heroes', investigating a range of Black change makers who have helped to ensure that all people in the United Kingdom are assured of their fundamental human rights. In History, Year 10 continue to study the history of migration into the UK. This unit explores the migration of many groups into Britain, from the Vikings in the early medieval period to the much more recent migration of peoples from the European Union in the 2000s. It's a fascinating study.



Information for Parent/Carers

Parking and drop offs on school site

Please may we remind parents that there is no parking on the school site. This also includes coming onto site to drop off students or items they have forgotten. Parking will need to be off site and parents can drop items at the reception by pressing the buzzer at the pedestrian entrance.

Finance

Wisepay – Topping up Food and Drink balances

The Finance office would like to share some tips about topping up your child's food and drink account via Wisepay

- There are two ways to top up – via the Website version of Wisepay or via the Wisepay App
- The minimum top up via the website version of Wisepay is £10, the App offers more flexibility and allows you to enter smaller amounts and a Quick Meal top up option
- **Please ensure that you top up your child's food and drink balance by the latest 10:30am for break or 12:45pm for lunch time, in order for the top up to be reflected in their available balance.**
- To install the Wisepay App, you will need to enter Blackfen's Organisation code which is **66 44 75 46**
- If your child is entitled to Free School Meals, they can **only use this amount at lunch time**. If they wish to purchase items at breakfast or break, this must be funded by the parent / carer.
- Please contact the Finance office on finance@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk if you require any further assistance.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
Events scheduled so far

Date	Event
Monday 4th – Thursday 7th November 2024	Paris trip (selected students)
Monday 11th – Sunday 17th November 2024	Year 11 RS trip to Rome (Selected students)
Tuesday 12th November 2024	Year 8 Careers Day (All day in school)
Thursday 21st November 2024	6th Form Open Evening Blackfen Students 5.00pm – 6.00pm Hurstmere Students 5.45pm – 6.45pm External Students 6.30pm – 7.30pm
Monday 25th November 2024	School INSET day
Thursday 28th November 2024	Year 10 NYC parents info meeting 4.30pm-6pm
Thursday 5th December 2024	Year 8/10 Ski trip Parent Information Evening 5.00pm – 6.00pm
Sunday 8th – Friday 13th December 2024	Year 10 trip to NYC (selected students)
Thursday 12th December 2024	Year 13 Parents' Evening 4.00pm – 6.30pm
Tuesday 17th December 2024	Winter Showcase
Friday 20th December 2024	Students' last day (finish at 12.15pm)
Monday 30th December – Friday 3rd January 2025	Xmas Holidays
Monday 6th January 2025	Students return to school