

THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

WINTER RAFFLE 2025 – DON'T MISS OUT!

Our Winter Raffle launches today, and this year's prize list is fantastic! We have an amazing range of experiences and treats on offer, including:

- ✨ 2 tickets to the Strictly Come Dancing Live Tour – Friday 6th February at the M&S Bank Arena
 - 🎯 Delta Force Paintball – £100 voucher
 - 📦 Amazon – £50 voucher
 - 🎮 One Under Liverpool – 10 free game vouchers
 - 🎨 Frankie's Paint-It Pottery – £20 voucher
 - 🎧 Silent Adventures – £30 voucher
 - 🚣 Liverpool Rowing Club – rowing lesson for 4 along the docks
 - 👤 Funbox – 2 hours unlimited play + 2 soft toys
 - 🍷 Wine Set – Prosecco, red and white
 - 🍷 19 Crimes Set – red, white and rosé

Raffle tickets are just £1 each and can be purchased online using the link provided. The raffle will be fully operated through People's Fundraising.

Where Your Money Goes

Every ticket you buy directly benefits our pupils. Funds raised help us to provide:

High-quality resources that enhance learning across subjects
Enrichment activities, including clubs, workshops, cultural events and educational visits
Support for our Development Fund, which helps improve school facilities and create new opportunities for all students

Your contributions truly make a difference, enabling us to offer experiences and equipment that go beyond everyday classroom provision.

Key Dates

Closing date: Monday 15th December at 12pm
Prize draw: Monday 15th December at 1pm

Winners will be notified by email, and prizes can be collected from the school reception.
Thank you for your continued support and good luck! 🍀



HISTORY PUPILS SHINE AT LJMU'S GREAT DEBATE 2026 HEAT

On Tuesday 25th November, two enthusiastic Y11 History pupils travelled to the Liverpool campus of LJMU to take part in the regional heat of the prestigious national competition run by the Historical Association: The Great Debate 2026.

This year's challenge asked:

"How important are personal and public records as evidence for explaining the story, or stories, of your local area?"

Each participant had five minutes to deliver an original speech, drawing on research and historical evidence to argue their case. Pupils explored various sources, including formal records, informal documents, personal archives, and place-based evidence, while developing their public speaking and persuasive skills.

Representing our school, Vlad and Evie, in Year 11, delivered outstanding speeches:

- Evie spoke passionately about her town of Cronton, weaving local history into a compelling narrative.
- Vlad focused on Liverpool Castle and Medieval records, bringing fascinating insights into the city's past.

We are thrilled to announce that Evie won her heat and is through to the next round in Manchester in the New Year! Congratulations to both pupils for their dedication and hard work, and best of luck to Evie as she continues her journey in this prestigious competition.

The event was not only an academic challenge but also a personal growth opportunity, helping pupils develop confidence, debating skills, and critical thinking. A visit to LJMU also provided an inspiring glimpse of university life.

Thank you to the History staff, families, and pupils for their support and commitment.

**THE GREAT
DEBATE
2026**



PAULA BARKER MP MEETS BLUE COAT SCHOOL COUNCIL TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL PRIORITIES

We were delighted to welcome Paula Barker MP to Blue Coat School this week for a highly productive meeting with our School Council representatives and pupils involved in raising awareness about the ongoing Prince Alfred Road traffic issues.

During the discussion, pupils outlined concerns about congestion, unsafe parking and visibility during busy periods, and they offered thoughtful suggestions on how these challenges might be addressed. Paula listened closely, asking questions and encouraging further input as the students explained their proposals for raising community awareness and working collaboratively with local authorities.

The conversation naturally broadened into a wider exploration of key issues affecting young people today. Our School Council representatives spoke confidently about the impact of mobile phones, the importance of mental health support, the risks associated with misinformation online, and their enthusiasm for our new house enrichment activities.

Paula Barker expressed how impressed she was by the pupils' insight, clarity and maturity. She praised them for the respectful and articulate way they contributed to the discussion, noting that their thoughtful perspectives reflected the school's ethos and the strength of student leadership at Blue Coat.

We are incredibly proud of our pupils for representing the school with such confidence and integrity. Their engagement with real community issues, combined with their willingness to advocate for positive change, is a testament to their character and the supportive environment fostered at Blue Coat.

We look forward to continuing this dialogue with Paula Barker MP and to involving our pupils in the ongoing work to improve safety, wellbeing and opportunity for all members of our school community.



INCLUSION COFFEE AFTERNOON SUPPORTING EVERY LEARNER AT BLUE COAT

On Friday 28th November, Blue Coat School hosted its termly Inclusion Coffee Afternoon, a welcoming event designed to bring together parents, carers, staff and visiting agencies to celebrate the strength of our Inclusion community and to ensure every pupil receives the support they need to thrive.

The afternoon provided families with the opportunity to hear more about the extensive work we do to support inclusion at Blue Coat. This includes our commitment to high-quality classroom teaching for all learners, targeted interventions, in-class support from our dedicated Learning Support Assistants, and personalised plans designed in partnership with pupils and their families. We also showcased our pastoral systems, mental-health support, wellbeing provision, enrichment programmes, and our ongoing work with external professionals to ensure students receive specialist support when needed.

The event was intentionally informal and friendly, allowing parents and carers to speak openly with staff and ask questions about the support available. One of the most valuable elements of the afternoon was the opportunity for parents and carers to offer feedback. Their insights help us to strengthen our provision, refine communication and ensure that our approach continues to reflect the needs of our community. These conversations play a vital role in shaping how we develop our Inclusion strategy going forward.

The Inclusion Coffee Afternoon also served as a meaningful space for families to connect with one another, share experiences and build supportive relationships. Many parents expressed how reassuring it was to meet others on similar journeys and to know that the school is working collaboratively with both families and external partners.

We would like to thank all parents, carers, staff and agency representatives who attended. Your contributions help ensure that Blue Coat remains a place where every learner feels valued, supported and understood. We look forward to continuing these conversations and welcoming you back to future Inclusion events.

SPORTS REPORT – THIS WEEK’S HIGHLIGHTS

Our teams have once again demonstrated outstanding talent, teamwork, and determination across a busy week of fixtures. From hard-fought basketball battles to a thrilling football cup final, our students continue to make us incredibly proud.

🏀 BASKETBALL 🏀

U19 Boys - Victory in the English Schools Competition

The U19 Boys delivered a commanding performance with a 78–59 win over Wirral Grammar. Their fast-paced offence, disciplined defence, and excellent teamwork secured a well-deserved victory. A brilliant result that keeps their English Schools campaign on track, well done to all involved!

U14 Boys – Narrow Defeat in a Close Contest

In a tense and competitive fixture, the U14 Boys were edged out 42–44 by Helsby in the English Schools competition. Despite the narrow loss, the team showed resilience, skill, and great promise for the season ahead. They should be incredibly proud of their efforts.

⚽ FOOTBALL ⚽

U14 Girls - City Runners-Up in the Liverpool Cup

A huge congratulations to the U14 Girls' Football team, who reached the Liverpool Cup Final and finished 2nd in the city after a hard-fought match against Calderstones. Although they narrowly missed out on the trophy, their commitment, teamwork, and competitive spirit throughout the tournament have been outstanding. An exceptional achievement - well done, girls!





NEW CURRICULUM PROPOSALS

We are pleased to share an important update on our curriculum review. A letter has now been sent to all parents outlining our proposed move to a three-year KS3, a two-year KS4, and increased teaching time at KS5 from November 2025.

Why the Change?

We're making adjustments to our curriculum structure to better support learning and wellbeing across all key stages:

Key Stage 3 (KS3)

Restores full national curriculum breadth.
Supports pupils joining us from over 100 primary schools.
Strengthens provision for SEND and disadvantaged learners.

Key Stage 4 (KS4)

Reduction in the number of GCSEs studied to support pupil wellbeing and allow more focused option choices. A two-year KS4 still provides 50 lessons per cycle, ensuring no loss of learning time while offering a balanced and sustainable GCSE programme.

Key Stage 5 (KS5)

Each A-level subject will receive 10 lessons per cycle, enabling deeper learning and better preparation for university and apprenticeship degree pathways.

What This Means for Our School

This model protects subject breadth, improves long-term curriculum sustainability and ensures pupils receive the high-quality, academically ambitious education Blue Coat is known for.

Next Steps

Parents are invited to share feedback with Headteacher's PA or attend our information event on **Friday 5th December at 4.00pm.**

MATHS EXCELLENCE AT BLUE COAT

We are proud to celebrate the work of Miss Withers, Second in Maths, for her contribution to the NCETM (National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics). In her role, Miss Withers helps drive high-quality maths teaching across our region, ensuring the latest national approaches and mastery techniques are embedded into classrooms.

At Blue Coat, this work continues through the regular training sessions we host for maths teachers from local secondary schools. These sessions enable colleagues to share best practices, learn from one another, and focus on strategies to improve results, particularly for key target groups of pupils.

We are delighted to be working with the following schools as part of this initiative:

Shevington High School, Kings Leadership Academy – Phoenix, St Edmund Arrowsmith, Byrchall High School, Childwall Sports & Science Academy, Cansfield High School, Meols Cop High School, and Bank View School.

Thanks to Miss Withers' leadership and the commitment of our brilliant Maths Department, Blue Coat remains at the forefront of innovative, research-led maths teaching. Their work is making a real difference for students both in our school and across the wider community.



INSPIRING READERS

We promote a love of reading through:
Library access until 5pm
World Book Day celebrations
Reading competitions and events
School-wide use of Sparx Reader
A termly literacy newsletter

BUILDING LITERACY ACROSS ALL SUBJECTS

Departments support pupils with key vocabulary, command words and subject-specific reading lists, helping students tackle challenging texts in every discipline.

REINFORCING SKILLS EVERY DAY

Form time includes regular reading linked to personal development, NGRT reading tests and targeted support where needed.

Older students also take part in mock interviews and workshops to strengthen communication, confidence and preparation for future pathways.

In English, Sparx Reader is used consistently from Year 7-11, ensuring structured, monitored reading practice.

TARGETED SUPPORT

Students with lower reading ages receive SENDCo-led intervention, while additional communication and English support is provided where required.

WORKING WITH PARENTS

Families are encouraged to support reading at home, discussing set texts and ensure Sparx Reader homework is completed.



1	HONGHAI (7TU)	5,474 SRP
2	POPPY (8TO)	3,828 SRP
3	DANIEL (7TU)	3,347 SRP



THE SEASON OF ADVENT: A TIME OF WAITING, HOPE AND PREPARATION

As we enter the month of December, our school community begins the season of Advent, a special period in the Christian calendar that invites reflection, hope and anticipation in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Advent lasts four weeks, beginning on the Sunday closest to 30 November. These four weeks symbolize the four thousand years of waiting in the Old Testament for the coming of Christ and reflect the four themes that shape the season:

Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

Each week invites Christians to focus on one of these values, represented by the candles on the Advent wreath.

Advent is more than a countdown to Christmas. It's a time for reflection, preparation, and connection. Amid the busyness of school life, Advent encourages us to pause, prepare not just for celebrations but for acts of kindness and gratitude, and embrace hope, knowing that even small moments of generosity can bring light into the world.

Most importantly, Advent reminds us of the power of community. In school, it's an opportunity to show love and care in our classrooms, friendships, and wider community, whether through charity projects, small acts of kindness, or simply taking time to appreciate others.

As we journey through these four weeks, may this season bring peace, joy, and a renewed sense of purpose to everyone in our school community.



HANUKKAH: A FESTIVAL OF LIGHT AND HOPE

Hanukkah takes place this year from the evening of Thursday 25 December to the evening of Friday 2 January.

Hanukkah is an eight-day Jewish festival that celebrates light, hope and resilience. It marks the moment over 2,000 years ago when a small amount of oil, enough for one day, miraculously burned for eight days as the Jewish people rededicated the Temple in Jerusalem.

Families celebrate by lighting a candle on the menorah each night, enjoying traditional foods like latkes and doughnuts, playing dreidel, and spending time together.

Hanukkah is important today because it reminds us of:

- Hope in challenging times
- Resilience and perseverance
- The importance of freedom of belief
- The power of small acts of light and kindness

As the candles grow brighter each night, Hanukkah encourages us all to bring a little more light into the world.



12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS FOODBANK APPEAL 2025



This December, our school community is once again supporting the 12 Days of Christmas Foodbank Appeal, led by 12Tu and 12Cu, to help local families across Liverpool during one of the toughest times of the year.

The appeal encourages every form group to donate essential food items, with sixth form students collecting contributions each morning. The form with the most donations will even win a prize!

The need for support across our local area has never been clearer. According to recent reports, more than 2 in 3 children are living in poverty in some parts of Merseyside. In the neighbourhoods surrounding our school alone, child poverty rates range from 15.9% to over 50%, highlighting the daily challenges faced by families within our wider community.

At the same time, 1 in 3 adults in Liverpool are experiencing food insecurity, meaning they regularly struggle to access enough nutritious food. The food banks we support, founded in 2009 by local churches and community groups as part of the Trussell Trust, have fed more than 16,500 people since opening, including 8,402 people in the last year alone. These foodbanks do more than offer emergency food; they provide compassion, dignity and a sense of hope for those experiencing real hardship.

The impact of this support is evident in the heartfelt words of service users:

“The people at the foodbank were wonderful; they understood and saved us.”

“Without the foodbank, I don’t think I would be here today.”

Such testimonies reflect just how vital these donations are to local families in crisis.

Last year, global superstar Taylor Swift drew national attention to the issue by donating to foodbanks in every city on her Eras Tour, including Liverpool. Her generosity was described as “incredible and so appreciated,” with charities saying it would make a difference to thousands of local people. By taking part in our school’s appeal, students can follow her example and help bring comfort and hope to families within our own community this Christmas.

All students are encouraged to bring in items from the donation list, though additional non-perishable items are also welcome. Perishable or fresh foods cannot be accepted. Donations should be placed in the box in each form room.

Thank you to everyone supporting the 12 Days of Christmas Foodbank Appeal. Your kindness will make a real difference.

Shopping list

- Tinned meat/fish
- Tinned veg/fruit
- Tinned tomatoes
- Instant coffee
- Milk (UHT or powdered)
- Biscuits
- Fruit juice (long-life)
- Tinned custard
- Jam
- Instant mashed potato



LIFE AND LEARNING IN SENEGAL: AN UPDATE FROM MS ROWE

We were delighted to hear from our colleague, Ms Kirsty Rowe, who has now settled into her new role in Senegal. She sends warm greetings to everyone at BCS.

Arriving in October meant jumping straight into Senegal's most intense weather. As Ms Rowe shared:

"Apparently October is the hottest and most humid month... Senegal is the 3rd hottest country in the world based on average monthly temperature!"

Despite the challenging climate, she has embraced her new surroundings with enthusiasm. She is enjoying her teaching, noting how motivated and keen to learn her students are.

Ms Rowe has also spent time learning about the community. Recently, she visited two charities that support vulnerable children:

"It is so sad to see so many children living on the streets, sometimes alone and sometimes with their mums."

These visits have strengthened her connection to the country and its people, and highlighted the important work underway to protect and support young lives.

During her days off, she's been cooling down at the pool or beach and discovering delicious Senegalese cuisine. An exciting bonus has been seeing places she once taught about:

"Dakar features in one of our textbooks, it's so nice to see and experience it in real life!"

Ms Rowe sends her best wishes to everyone at BCS:

"Miss you all and miss our lovely students. Best wishes to you, and give my regards to the staff."

We wish Ms Rowe continued success and adventure in Senegal, and we look forward to hearing more about her inspiring journey.



🎄 DESIGN A CHRISTMAS MUG COMPETITION 🎄

Calling all students in Years 7-9!

Get festive and show off your creativity by designing a mug that celebrates Christmas, represents our whole school, and creatively showcases our House System:

Curie • Franklin • Roscoe • Seacole • Turing • Tod

🏆 Prizes 🏆

Winning designs will be printed on mugs
House points awarded for every entry!

📅 **Deadline: Friday 5th December** 📅



BIOLOGY PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION 2025 - HABITATS



We're excited to announce this year's Biology Photography Competition! The theme is 'Habitats' and we want you to showcase animals, plants, or fungi within their wider ecosystem.

Focus on the biodiversity of your chosen habitat, whether it's a tiny microhabitat or a vast landscape.

Your photographs could:

Zoom in on a subject using macro-photography

Capture a wider perspective on land, underwater, or even from above!

📅 **Closing date: 18th December** 📅

Please email your entries, marked 'Photography Competition', to Mrs Bruce.

Remember to Include:

Your name and form group

A brief description of what you've captured

We can't wait to see your creativity and the incredible habitats you discover!



🧬 SPECIMEN DRAWING COMPETITION 🧬

Create an A3 artwork showing plant or animal anatomy

Draw, paint, sketch, or go digital!

📅 **Closing date: 18th December 2025** 📅

Submit to Mrs Bruce in N14

Need paper? See Mrs Bruce in N14.

Prizes and achievement points to be won - get creative!



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

▶ YOUTUBE ▶

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Almost anyone with an internet connection knows YouTube. The Google-owned site lets anyone upload videos to be shared around the world, and as a result, it's an incredible resource with instant free access to material covering every conceivable topic. But with over 500 hours of video uploaded every minute, not all of it will be appropriate for young eyes.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

YouTube is free and can be accessed via numerous devices, even without creating a YouTube account. Some content is flagged as 'age-restricted' (requiring the user to be logged into an account with a verified age of 18), but children can still view some mildly inappropriate content. This can include profanity and violence, which some young users may find upsetting.

CONNECT WITH STRANGERS

YouTube recommends videos related to what the user has previously watched on their account, aiming to provide content that will interest them. This is intended to be helpful but it can also lead to binge-watching and screen addiction – especially if 'auto-play' is active. Users without an account are shown popular videos from the last 24 hours, which might not always be suitable for children.

RADICALISATION

YouTube's algorithm tends to promote content that's getting the most traffic – a lot of which can be quite extreme. This can be fine for harmless topics, but YouTube isn't regulated like television, and that means that conspiracy theories, fake news and hateful ideologies can occasionally surface to warp impressionable minds all too easily. Remember – the more they watch, the more they'll be recommended.

CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

YouTube is a social media platform which allows people to interact with other (usually unknown) users. Account holders can leave comments on any video they have access to, as well as message other users directly. Connecting with strangers online can potentially lead to children being exposed to adult language, cyberbullying and – in the worst cases – online predators. If a child is creating content themselves, this can increase the likelihood of them becoming a target.

TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

YouTube is teeming with trends and challenges, some of which are fun to watch and join in with. Children often find these immensely entertaining and might want to try them out. Most challenges tend to be safe, but many others may cause physical or emotional harm children who watch or copy them. The painful 'salt and ice challenge' – where people use these two ingredients to burn their skin – is just one of many examples.

SNEAKY SCAMMERS

The comments sections of popular content creators regularly have scammers posing as that influencer, attempting to lure users into clicking on their phishing links. Scammers impersonate YouTubers by adopting their names and profile images, and often offer cash gifts or 'get rich quick' schemes. Children may not realise that these users aren't who they claim to be.

Advice for Parents & Educators

APPLY RESTRICTED MODE

For older children, Restricted Mode is an optional setting that prevents YouTube from showing inappropriate material (such as drug and alcohol abuse, graphic violence, and sexual content) to underage viewers. To prevent children from chancing across age-inappropriate content on the platform, we would recommend enabling Restricted Mode on each device that they use to access YouTube. It's worth also turning the auto-play feature off, to prevent YouTube's algorithm automatically recommending something inappropriate.



TRY GOOGLE FAMILY

Creating a Google Family account allows parents and carers to monitor what their child is watching, uploading, and sharing with other users. It will also display their recently watched videos, searches, and recommended videos. In general, a Google Family account gives a parent or carer oversight of how their child uses sites like YouTube and helps to ensure that they are only accessing appropriate content.



MONITOR ENGAGEMENT

YouTube is the online viewing platform of choice for billions of people, many of them under 18. Younger children will watch different content to older ones, of course. You may want to keep an eye on how children interact with this material – and, if applicable, with content creators – to understand what they're interested in. Remember that creators often share content outside of YouTube, so don't ignore their web presence elsewhere!



CONSIDER YOUTUBE KIDS

It's possible to sidestep most inappropriate content completely via Google's own YouTube Kids app for Android handsets and iPhone. This lets you filter content by "preschool" (4 and under), "younger" (ages 5 to 8) and "older" (ages 9 to 12). This isn't a perfect substitute for personal supervision, as the app's filtering system is automated, and Google can't manually review all videos.

CHECK PRIVACY SETTINGS

YouTube gives users the option of uploading videos as 'private' or 'unlisted' – so they could be shared exclusively with family and friends, for example. Comments on videos can also be disabled and channels that a child is subscribed to can be hidden. If the child is only uploading videos set as 'private', they are far less likely to receive direct messages from strangers.



LIMIT SPENDING

Although YouTube is free, it does offer some in-app purchases. For example, users can rent and buy TV shows and movies to watch. If you'd like to avoid children purchasing content online, limit their access to online payment methods. Many parents have discovered the hard way that a child happily consuming a paid-for series quickly leads to an unexpected bill!



Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



The National College®

UPCOMING EVENTS



The Blue Coat School

Winter Market & Choir Rehearsal

Sunday 7th December
12.00pm - 3.00pm

Celebrate the season at our School Christmas Market!
Stop by for refreshments and listen to our choirs' Carol Concert rehearsal

Gift Stalls
Student Stalls
Tombola
Festive refreshments
Watch the choir rehearse in the Chapel

Open to the Blue Coat Community
including family, friends, Old Blues and local residents

Tickets £3, available soon!

12 Days of Christmas

Monday December 2nd - Tinned Meat/Fish
Tuesday December 3rd - Milk (UHT or Powdered)
Wednesday December 4th - Jam
Thursday December 5th - Feminine Hygiene Products
Friday December 6th - Instant Coffee
Monday December 9th - Tinned Veg/Fruit
Tuesday December 10th - Fruit Juice (Long Life)
Wednesday December 11th - Tinned Tomatoes
Thursday December 12th - Tinned Custard
Friday December 13th - Biscuits
Monday December 16th - Instant Mashed Potato
Tuesday December 17th - Shampoo and Soap

Supporting: South Liverpool Foodbank Christmas Appeal

TOMBOLA PRIZES NEEDED

DROP AT RECEPTION
before 5th December

New items: Bottles (alcoholic and non-alcoholic, books (adult and teen), toiletry gifts, stationery items, chocolates, sweets, etc.




The Blue Coat School

Winter Market Christmas Jumper Swap

Give your old jumper, get a new one!

Save money and reduce waste this Christmas by joining The Christmas Jumper Swap!

Drop off your unwanted Christmas Jumpers at the reception before Wednesday 3rd December. For every item you donate, you'll receive a token to pick out a "new" (to you!) item at the Winter Market Jumpers for all the family available!

Drop off by:
Wednesday 3rd December, 1pm Contact: Mrs Kerr - Design Technology

Winter Market
Sunday 7th December
12pm - 3pm

SUPPORT THE EXPERIENCES THAT HELP SHAPE STUDENTS

From clubs and competitions to creative projects and performances, our students gain so much from extracurricular opportunities, and your support keeps them going.

A contribution of just £10 per term (£30 per year) per student makes a real difference. Plus, every £10 donation earns a chance to win £50 in our monthly raffle!

See Parentmail for payment details and give today, together we can keep our enrichment programme rich, varied, and open to all.

