

THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

CELEBRATING OUR RCO REACCREDITATION



We are proud to announce the successful reaccreditation of the school by the Royal College of Organists (RCO), marking an important milestone in our continued commitment to excellence in music education. To celebrate this achievement, the school hosted a wide range of local and national organisations, with our main guests including Sir Andrew Parmley and Lady Ann Dodd, whose presence added great distinction to the occasion and highlighted the national significance of our work in music.

The celebration event showcased an impressive programme of performances from pupils across multiple year groups. These performances reflected not only the technical skill of our students, but also their confidence, musicality and passion. The variety of ensembles and soloists demonstrated the depth and diversity of musical talent across the school.

The RCO works nationally to promote excellence in organ playing and choral music, while supporting young musicians through structured training, enrichment and performance opportunities. Its accreditation recognises schools that provide outstanding musical education, strong progression pathways, and meaningful access to high-level musical experiences. Our reaccreditation affirms the quality of our provision and the strength of our musical community.

Central to this success is the RCO Young Scholars Programme, which offers pupils exceptional opportunities to develop their musicianship through specialist tuition, mentoring, masterclasses and performance experiences. The programme nurtures ambition and artistic excellence, providing pupils with inspiration and pathways into advanced musical study and performance.



GO ALL IN .. FOR READING IN 2026

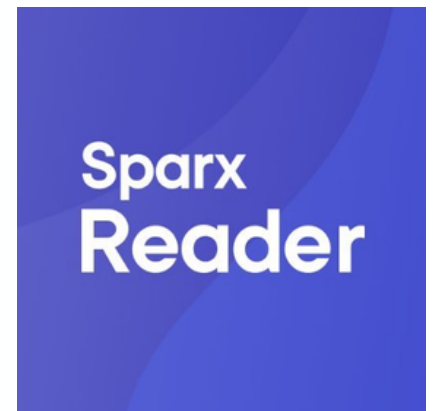
2026 has been designated the National Year of Reading, under the theme "Go All In," a national campaign to re-ignite reading for pleasure and to embed reading as a normal, enjoyable part of everyday life. The initiative recognises that reading is fundamental not only to academic success, but also to wellbeing, confidence and long-term opportunity. It calls on schools, families and communities to work together to make reading more visible, accessible and relevant for all young people.

At The Blue Coat School, this aligns closely with our commitment to excellence in literacy and personal development. Reading is central to our academic culture, but also to the development of curiosity, independence and intellectual character. The National Year of Reading provides a powerful opportunity to strengthen existing practice and to ensure that reading remains a shared priority across all areas of school life.

This year we have launched Sparx Reader, providing students with structured, personalised support that encourages regular reading and builds consistency and confidence. The platform allows us to combine accountability with choice, helping students to develop sustainable reading habits while still engaging with texts that interest and motivate them.

We are also extending our focus on reading into the Sixth Form, where it will form a key part of our wider Personal Development curriculum. Here, reading will support students' intellectual maturity, critical thinking and cultural capital, preparing them not only for academic success but for informed and engaged citizenship beyond school.

Beyond the classroom, the National Year of Reading highlights the importance of community partnerships, libraries and family engagement. In a city with Liverpool's rich cultural identity, reading can be a shared civic endeavour. By "going all in" together, schools and communities can ensure that reading becomes a lasting habit, not just for 2026, but for life.



TRUSTEE DEVELOPMENT DAY STRENGTHENS STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP UNDER THE NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK

On 17th January, Trustees came together for a focused development day aimed at strengthening their understanding of the new Ofsted inspection framework and how it is being implemented in practice. The session provided valuable insight into the evolving inspection landscape and ensured that Trustees are well equipped to fulfil their strategic role with confidence and clarity.

The development day explored the key principles underpinning the new framework, particularly the increased emphasis on a school's intent, implementation and impact. Trustees examined how Ofsted is seeking to understand not only what schools do, but why they do it, and how effectively their decisions translate into meaningful outcomes for pupils. This reinforced the importance of clear strategic vision and robust oversight.

A significant part of the session focused on the updated Ofsted toolkit. Trustees reviewed the key changes, including the sharper focus on curriculum coherence, personal development, safeguarding culture, and leadership effectiveness. The toolkit was explored as both an evaluative and developmental resource, supporting Trustees in asking the right strategic questions and in understanding how evidence is gathered and interpreted during inspection.

Importantly, the toolkit is now being used to inform and strengthen Trustees' strategic development of the school. By aligning governance practice with the language and expectations of the new framework, Trustees are better placed to challenge, support and guide senior leaders in shaping long-term priorities and sustaining high standards.

The development day reaffirmed the Trust's commitment to strong, informed governance. By investing in Trustee development and maintaining a clear understanding of national accountability frameworks, the Trust continues to ensure that strategic leadership remains ambitious, well-informed and firmly focused on securing the best possible outcomes for all pupils.



STRENGTHENING OUR DIGITAL DEFENCES: WHOLE-SCHOOL CYBERSECURITY TRAINING

This year, the school has placed a strong emphasis on cybersecurity by ensuring that all staff receive dedicated training in digital safety and data protection. In an increasingly digital environment, schools hold sensitive information and rely on technology for teaching, communication and administration. Building staff confidence and awareness is therefore essential in protecting both our community and our systems.

Our work is supported by Secure Schools, an organisation that specialises in helping schools develop robust cybersecurity practices. Secure Schools provides practical guidance tailored to educational settings, focusing on everyday risks such as phishing emails, password security, data handling, and the safe use of online platforms. Their approach emphasises that cybersecurity is not just a technical issue, but a shared responsibility across the whole school.

Alongside this, staff training is aligned with the National Cyber Security Training Programme, which aims to raise digital resilience across public sector organisations. The programme promotes a culture of vigilance, encouraging staff to recognise potential threats, respond appropriately to incidents, and adopt secure habits in their daily professional practice.

Key areas of training include identifying suspicious communications, protecting personal and student data, using strong authentication methods, and understanding how small actions can significantly reduce risk. By embedding these principles into routine practice, the school is strengthening its overall digital safeguarding culture.

This work reflects our commitment to protecting our community and ensuring that our digital environment is safe, secure and resilient. By investing in high-quality cybersecurity training for all staff, we are not only meeting national expectations but actively building a stronger, more secure foundation for the future of learning.



**Secure
Schools**



in association with
**National Cyber
Security Centre**

YEAR 10 STUDENTS LEAD THE WAY IN VIOLENCE REDUCTION TRAINING

This term, a group of Year 10 pupils from The Blue Coat School took part in a two-day training programme delivered by Merseyside's Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP). The programme supports our commitment to personal development and student leadership, equipping pupils with the skills and confidence to act as positive role models within the school community.

MVRP is a multi-agency partnership that works across Merseyside to prevent violence by tackling its root causes. It brings together education, health, police and youth services to promote early intervention, raise awareness, and empower young people to make safe, informed choices that benefit both themselves and others.

During the training, pupils explored themes such as peer influence, conflict resolution, communication skills and personal responsibility. Sessions were highly interactive, encouraging students to reflect on real-life situations and to develop strategies for supporting positive behaviour and decision-making.

As a result of this training, Year 10 pupils will lead sessions with Year 8 students, sharing key messages and guiding discussion around safety, respect and responsible choices. This peer-led model strengthens confidence, leadership and community, while reinforcing our belief that students play a vital role in shaping a safe and supportive school environment.



**MERSEYSIDE
Violence
Reduction
Partnership**



SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD WITH GCSE SPANISH SPEAKING MOCK EXAMINATIONS

Over the next few weeks, we will be holding the GCSE Languages Speaking mock examinations, which are an important step in preparing students for their final assessments later in the year. These mocks are designed to mirror the format, expectations and pressures of the real examination, helping students to build confidence, refine their skills and understand exactly what is required for success. They provide a valuable opportunity to practise under exam conditions and to identify areas for improvement.

Parents can play a key role in supporting preparation. Encouraging short, regular speaking practice is far more effective than last-minute revision. Asking your child to practise their answers aloud, talk through their topics, or explain what they are revising helps to build fluency and confidence. Even without speaking Spanish or French, listening, offering encouragement, and helping them stay calm and organised can make a significant difference.

Students should focus on developing strong communication skills. This includes giving extended responses, using a range of tenses, expressing opinions and justifying them, and aiming for clear pronunciation. Confidence is essential: speaking steadily, projecting their voice, and recovering calmly from any mistakes are all important exam skills. Understanding their prepared answers, rather than simply memorising them, allows students to adapt naturally to different questions.

We wish all our students the very best in their GCSE Language Speaking mock examinations. They have shown real dedication in preparing for this stage, and these mocks will play an important role in building confidence for the final examinations later in the year. We are extremely proud of their hard work, commitment and determination.



SONIA AND THAKSHAYA ACCEPTED ONTO UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE PROGRAMME

We are delighted to announce that Sonia and Thakshaya have been accepted onto the Future Ready! programme run by Homerton College, University of Cambridge. They applied independently after the opportunity was shared by the Careers Team, showing impressive initiative and ambition. Both students were awarded a Merit for the strength of their applications, and we congratulate them on this outstanding achievement.

Future Ready! is a free programme for Year 10 students designed to develop key academic skills needed for success at GCSE and beyond, while also introducing students to university-style learning. It supports independent thinking, essay writing and confidence in academic discussion, helping students to prepare for future study.

The programme runs from 3rd March to 26th March 2026, with weekly online sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00–6:30pm. Students will work towards writing an essay answering the question “Is knowledge dangerous?”, with access to optional one-to-one support sessions to help refine their ideas and work.

The course will conclude with a Celebration Event at Homerton College on Saturday 11th April, where students will tour the college, meet current undergraduates and take part in the Homerton Science Escape Game. Prizes will be awarded for the best essays, and we look forward to sharing Sonia and Thakshaya’s reflections on this exciting experience in a future newsletter.



SPORTS REPORT

It has been another busy and exciting week for school sport, with pupils competing across a range of activities and showing great commitment and determination.

In football, the Year 7 team faced a strong St Hilda's side and, despite a spirited performance, were defeated 4-1. The team worked hard throughout the match and showed resilience, with many positive moments that will provide a solid foundation for future fixtures.

Our Indoor Athletics teams also performed admirably. The Year 7 and 8 girls finished in 6th place overall, demonstrating excellent effort and teamwork across all events. The Year 7 and 8 boys delivered an outstanding performance, finishing 2nd and qualifying for the Merseyside Championships. This is a fantastic achievement and reflects both their talent and their dedication in training.

Looking ahead, we have an exciting basketball fixture taking place this afternoon, when our U19 team will face Northampton Boys. This promises to be a high-quality and competitive match, and support from the school community would be greatly appreciated.

Well done to all pupils who have represented the school so far. Your effort, attitude, and commitment continue to be a credit to the school.



STUDENT VOICE IN ACTION AT THE CUNARD BUILDING

On Wednesday, five of our students had the opportunity to visit the Cunard Building to attend an important meeting with Child Friendly City. The visit began with a short tour of the historic building, giving students valuable insight into its significance and role within the city.

They then met with several council representatives to discuss their upcoming project, which focuses on raising awareness of misinformation and disinformation in schools. The discussion was both thoughtful and purposeful, with students presenting their ideas clearly and confidently.

They were a real credit to the school, demonstrating maturity, insight, and strong communication skills throughout the meeting. We are very proud of the way they represented our community and look forward to seeing how their awareness campaign will support, inform, and empower other students across the school and beyond.





READING
Sparx Super Star


 **HONGYANG (7TO)**


 **JADEN (7FR)**


 **HAMZAH (7TU)**




MATHS
Sparx Super Star

 **KARLA (8SE)**

 **JAMES (7RO)**

 **NEVEAHA (10FR)**



KEY DATES

Date	Event
Tuesday 27th January 2026	Y8 Online Parents Evening - 4:15pm
Thursday 29th January 2026	Year 11 Options Afternoon
Monday 9th February - Thursday 12th February 2026	School Show - Hadestown
Friday 13th February 2026	Term ends at 3:30pm
Monday 16th February 2026 - Friday 20th February 2026	Half Term / Ski Trip
Monday 23rd February 2026	Students Return
Tuesday 24th February 2026	Y13 UCAS Next Steps Evening
Tuesday 3rd March 2026	Y13 Parents' Evening - 4:15pm
Friday 6th March 2026	Careers Fair
Tuesday 10th March 2026	Y12 Next Steps Evening
Thursday 12th March 2026	Y11 options deadline
Monday 16th March 2026	Y8 Careers Day
Friday 20th March 2026 - Saturday 21st March 2026	Y9 DofE Bronze practice expedition
Thursday 26th March 2026	Open Day
Thursday 26th March 2026	Term ends at 3:30pm
Friday 27th March 2026 - Friday 10th April 2026	Easter Break

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.



The Liverpool Blue Coat School Foundation

DEDICATE A PLAQUE ON OUR CHAPEL PEWS



We invite alumni, families and friends of the school to leave a lasting mark on our community by sponsoring a personalised plaque on a chapel pew.

For £100, you can dedicate a plaque in your name or in memory of a former student, becoming a meaningful part of the school's history for generations to come. This is a unique opportunity to honour a loved one, celebrate your connection to the school, and support the ongoing care of our cherished chapel.



Email: foundation@bluecoatschool.org.uk for more information



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST READING SKILLS

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditional books remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF TEXT

Before integrating technology, consider the types of text that a child engages with. If they need help on occasion, digital reading pens can assist by scanning and reciting words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practice are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles – such as dyslexia-friendly fonts – are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in Settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

4 INTERACTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

5 VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

6 SUBTITLES AND CLOSED CAPTIONS

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their favourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written words sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them to words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

7 USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press Play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

8 VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

10 SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides opportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13–16 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media videos include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowri is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, Neuroteachers, which offers a library of short, 'how-to' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-academy trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®