



The Pleckgate High School Newsletter

April 2025



Year 9 Magistrates Competition

Headteacher Mrs McGinty took a group to Preston Crown Court where they had to compete against six other schools and in front of Magistrates and a Crown Court Judge.

Mrs McGinty said: "While they did not win, the group were amazing and I was really proud of them. They held their nerve and supported each other really well."

"They have all turned up every Friday after school since December without fail and have worked so hard. What a wonderful group of pupils."

Pupil Madiha was a defence lawyer on the day and said: "I applied for this competition because I was in two minds when it came to choosing my options – the medicine or law route."

"This was an incredible experience to be part of. The competition was a remarkable opportunity. It involved preparing for the trial, understanding the law in detail, constructing arguments and predicting the other team's case."

"I always want to challenge and push myself in many situations and scenarios."

"We may not have won but we put in so much effort and tried our best. Most of all, we had fun and it was an amazing bonding experience. A huge thank you to Mrs McGinty for all her hard work to make it the best possible experience for us."

Year 11 Football Team's Triumph



Our Year 11 football team were crowned champions of the Blackburn and District Schools B League with a clean sweep, winning all their games.

They faced four teams – Tauheedul Boys High School, Blackburn Central High School, Our Lady and St John's and Witton Park Academy – and defeated them all. It was the result of five years of hard work and determination as the side had spent years finishing bottom of the B League.

They could have given up but dedicated their time to practice on the AstroTurf at lunch and after school to become a well-drilled machine. They faced Witton Park in their final match needing to beat them to clinch the title.

Salaar and Fida scored superb goals to give Pleckgate a 2-0 lead at half-time before two quickfire goals after the break brought Witton level.

Witton were in the ascendancy but Pleckgate showed true character and grit to keep fighting and free kick specialist Hamza struck home the winning goal to seal the championship and wild celebrations.

Proud manager Mr Haworth said: "This achievement ranks up there with anything achieved during my time at Pleckgate. Every one of the "Haworth's Heroes" deserved the accolade of Man of the Match. Hopefully every player will have learned key lessons during their five years playing football that they will carry with them for life."

Support over the holidays



During our assemblies and pastoral sessions, we have shared information with all pupils regarding available support, advice and guidance that can be accessed from a range of agencies whilst the school is closed.

Information has been shared with pupils via their Google Classroom areas signposting some of these services.

Additionally, our school website contains lots of useful content, information and advice regarding help that can be accessed by young people, see www.pleckgate.com/pd-pleckgate.

We also have access to The Online Safety Hub which has been designed to provide parents with a range of resources, information, tools and guidance to help protect your children from harm in the online world. www.educationpartnershiptrust.onlinesafetyhub.uk

It includes information on the latest hot topics when it comes to keeping children safe. These topics include how to manage your child's screen time, understand the latest gaming platforms and what they mean for your child's safety.



Burnley College's annual AMSP Maths Feast

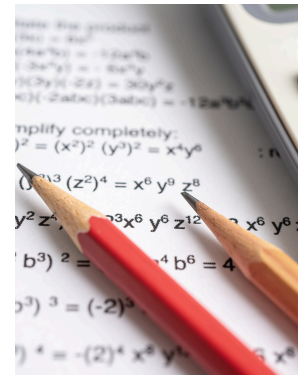
Pleckgate's girls came out on top as they showed off their mathematical expertise at Burnley College's annual AMSP Maths Feast.

AMSP stands for Advance Mathematical Support Programme, a government-led initiative aimed at promoting maths. Pleckgate won this competition in 2022 and 2024 so this year's eight talented mathematicians had a hard act to follow.

Aamna, Mehak, Sumaiya and Safia represented Pleckgate as the girls' team. Hamza, Zakariyah, Sheraz and Owais made up the boys' team. They faced competition from 30 other teams and the Maths Feast consisted of four difficult rounds.

The first round was a problem solving round using logic and was won by our girls' team. The second round was an extremely difficult spatial round with our girls' team again coming out on top. In round three, the girls' team scored highly on a difficult critical thinking calculator problem and won again.

The final round was a relay round consisting of challenging mathematical problems on a variety of topics but the Pleckgate girls were unable to make it a clean sweep of winning all four rounds. However, they were announced overall winners and will be rewarded with Amazon vouchers.



Pleckgate staff take part in One Voice Blackburn's 'I'm not a Muslim but I will fast for one day' initiative 2025.

Our staff members including Mrs Savage, Miss Knight, Mr Carter, Mr Bajkowski, Miss Bland, Mrs Belshaw and Mrs Hopkinson took part in One Voice Blackburn's [#imnotamuslimbutiwillfastforoneday](#) campaign 2025.

Mrs Savage said: "I take part in this initiative every year with One Voice because I think it is so important to do especially when I am working in a school with so many Muslim pupils. I expect them to turn up and work hard but I need to be mindful of how difficult this can be whilst fasting and the only way to truly understand this is to fast myself."

Miss Knight said: "I want to see/feel what our pupils go through during this month especially as an RE teacher, it's hard to teach something you've never experienced."

Mr Bajkowski said: "The time of Ramadan brings a real sense of community and camaraderie within school. By fasting it allows you to feel part of that community and share, in a small way, part of the journey that our pupils go on."

Miss Bland said: "I'm fasting because I want to take this opportunity to empathise with my pupils and also to take this time to think of those less fortunate than myself who don't always know where their next meal will come from."



A visit to St Bedes



A group of our pupils visited St Bede's High School as part of The Linking Schools Network.

The aim was for pupils to understand the similarities and differences between people in the same community of Blackburn.

They participated in a number of activities, including a tower challenge, in which both schools were mixed into groups and they all had to work together to build the tallest and strongest tower.

Furthermore, pupils got to see and educate each other on culture, religion and life.

The two schools are aiming to meet again in the summer term to conclude our linking of schools.

A Year of Growth for Pleckgate's Head Boy and Head Girl

Our Head Boy Peter and Head Girl Anam enthused that their year as Pleckgate's top role models has been 'fun and confidence boosting.'



Anam, who wants to be a physiotherapist, said: "What I have enjoyed most is giving talks at our open events and also at our Achievement Evening where the previous Year 11s came back. It was fun but also a bit scary.

"Being Head Girl carries a lot of responsibility, there is a lot to live up to, but I feel it's helped me a lot. It's made me more approachable, I can make friends easier."

Peter said: "From being Head Boy, my social confidence has increased such a lot. I have gained a lot from public speaking and I feel it's helped me all-round.

"It's been such a fun year. I want to study Maths, Physics and probably Chemistry as I want to be an aerospace engineer."



History Book Club

Our History Book Club members have been reviewing 'The Week at World's End' by Emma Carroll. The History Book Club runs once a month over lunchtime with Miss Robinson.

'The Week at World's End' is set in 1962 during the Cold War and the Cuban Missile Crisis and Stevie and Ray find a runaway girl, Anna, in their coal shed who is on the run from people trying to poison her.

Here are some reviews from our pupils:

"My favourite part was then the children went to the protest and used their voices to try and change the world and when they went to the beach. This part was a really nice read and also built up the suspense that it might be the end."

"I learnt that people protested against nuclear war. I also know that bombs have a negative effect on people who had the slightest amount of exposure to them."

One member described it as: "Historical, Interesting, Amazing."
Another as: "Factual, Full of Suspense, Inspiring."



Florence Nightingale Day at Lancaster University



Pupils attended Lancaster University's Florence Nightingale Day to listen to talks from female mathematicians.

The day is designed for girls and teachers to listen to female mathematicians and statisticians and see how women are playing a significant role in current research.

The speeches were from Dr Carolina Euan, from Lancaster University's Schools of Mathematical Sciences, Sophie Maclean, from the Department of Mathematics at Kings College London, and Gail Collyer-Hoar, from the School of Computing and Communications at Lancaster University.

As well as speeches there was also quizzes and team-building exercises.

Pleckgate's Head of Maths Mr Khan said: "The day showcased successful women in mathematics, statistics and operational research at various stages of their careers and it was very informative."

"Our pupils enjoyed the day out and were inspired to take maths further."

Author Nathan Parker visits Pleckgate!

Author Nathan Parker hoped to inspire a love of reading in Pleckgate pupils after spending World Book Day with them.



The Blackpool writer and poet gave assemblies to Years 7-9 in the morning while carrying out creative writing workshops with Year 10s in the afternoon.

Nathan, who has twice been nominated for Lancashire Book of the Year, has written the 'The Granville Series' for age 13+ which he describes as 'gritty, young adult fiction' and this week realised 'The Crossover' for aged 10-14-year-olds.

"It's the second time I have come to Pleckgate," said Nathan, who talked about how he found a love of writing. It's well-organised and the pupils are receptive. It has a lovely feel and the pupils always ask a lot of questions, they are genuinely interested."

Pleckgate celebrates World Book Day 2025!



Pupils talked about their love of books on World Book Day.

Year 7 Oliver said: "My favourite book is 'Diary of Wimpy Kid'. I like the story, I like funny books."

Aleena said: "I like horror books, they have a lot of mystery and are scary. I love English."

Librarian Mrs Hanson has organised a number of competitions. There was a Design a Bookmark, which is a national competition from National Book Tokens. This year the theme was 'Read Your Way.' There was also an in-school 'Picture This' competition where pupils can take a photo in an unusual place of them reading a book.



Pupils gain insight at STACI logistics company in Blackburn

Pupils explored a variety of career options with a visit to logistics company STACI at one of their bases at Walker Park in Blackburn. The STACI Group has sites all over the world and employs more than 5000 people.

Year 10 LPSO Mr Hussain said: "The visit was nothing short of amazing as the pupils had the opportunity to tour the facility, explore the warehouse, gain insights into different job role and were tasked to take part in packaging activities.

We extend a huge thank you to STACI for generously hosting our pupils and providing them with such a valuable learning opportunity.



Our Young Leaders praised as 'some of the best ever leaders'

Our Young Leaders were praised as 'some of the best ever leaders' and have been invited to help out at a county event.

The Year 10s were involved in the Secondary Panathlon SEND multi-skills event and went above and beyond for the younger pupils.

They stepped up to lead individual sessions and stations, helping younger pupils from varying schools who required support and encouragement.

Andy Lord who works for Panathlon across the North-West said: "They are some of the best leaders I have ever worked with."

Due to impressing the organisers, the Young Leaders have been invited to help out at the Lancashire Panathlon Special Schools Final (multi-sports) in Blackpool in March.



Hackathon at Blackburn College



Pupils attended the CyberFirst Mega Days Hackathon hosted by Blackburn College - and one of our group won the main competition!

It was a well-organised and informative day where pupils were firstly shown around the Cyber Hub in the University Centre and they were blown away by some of the facilities.

After this, they had a short talk around careers in Computer Science and Cyber Security.

This gave pupils a few different options to think about when they leave school, with questions about apprenticeships and university.

For the main activity, pupils were split up in to groups of five and they then pitted their wits against other schools.

They had 12 challenges which included decoding text, deciphering messages, using encoding techniques such as morse code and cracking codes.

This was a fantastic challenge which all pupils worked extremely hard on .

CyberFirst held a mini awards ceremony at the end of the day and 5 of our pupils came 1st place and won the competition! They were: Hadia, Tayyaba, Laiba, Khalid and Zian.

Year 11 netball team's final tournament



Our Year 11 netball team played their final tournament as a team, displaying five years of hard work, dedication and commitment.

It was a test for the girls, in the middle of Ramadan, but Mrs Ryding was proud of their attitude at the recent Blackburn with Darwen netball tournament.

Safa, Lojayn and Fiza provided a solid defensive base with inspirational centre and captain Anam at the heart of all Pleckgate's quality play.

Wing attack Mariyah was energetic going forward and Aliza showed off her all-star quality. Maryam excelled in the role of goal shooter, which was a new position for her, and exemplified the togetherness the team has displayed throughout their five years at Pleckgate.

They overcame QEGS 7-2 and narrowly lost to two quality teams in St Wilfreds and Our Lady and St Johns.

Mrs Ryding said: "This was the final tournament for one of the finest teams that Pleckgate have produced. They have all worked hard in training and matches and been an absolute credit to the school, learning valuable lessons for life along the way that only sport can teach."

As a reward, a trip is being arranged for the squad to watch Manchester Thunder v London Mavericks in April.



Pupils experience life in the Victorian Workhouse

A group of pupils recently visited the Victorian Workhouse Museum in Ripon, stepping back in time to walk in the footsteps of the Victorian poor. Pupils were given the opportunity to explore the museum and then took part in three activities.

The first activity was the Schoolroom, where the pupils experienced the education and discipline typical of children in workhouses. The second was Guardian's Board where the pupils role-played being members of the Guardian's Board who would listen to requests for help from 'paupers' and question them before deciding on a course of action. The third was Laundry Chores where pupils learned how to beat rugs, grate carbolic soap and wash and mangle clothes.

The visit to the Victorian Workhouse Museum offered a valuable lesson in social history, giving pupils a firsthand understanding of what it was like to live in a workhouse.



Exploring the wonders of science!

It was Science Week in March, ten days spent celebrating Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

A number of our Year 11 triple science pupils told us about their love of the subject.

Sanaa said: "I think science helps build confidence with practical experiments and also independent learning. In practical's, there is always new equipment to use as well. I want to work in a pharmacy in the future."

Sophia said: "I think science encourages team work as you work with partners, sometimes who you wouldn't normally work with, but you find a way to work together. You learn new skills and it also builds confidence. I want to work in medicine."

Mariyah said: "It teaches you how to write up practical experiments, so it's useful for English as well. Science also teaches you how to follow instructions. I want to be a paramedic."

Hurulaine, who wants to be a dermatologist, added: "Science is behind everything in the world. Science, new drugs and so on, can help you make a positive impact in the future."



Pleckgate's school council initiatives for a better school environment

Our School Council have been exploring a number of ideas which they believe will make Pleckgate even better.

The School Council consists of pupils from Years 7-11 who meet to discuss how they believe they can improve the school and then put their suggestions before the Senior Leadership Team.

Year 10 Yassin said: "I have asked about more career trips, out of school. I have also talked about a room where we can put our extra bags, for example gym bags if we have after-school clubs so we don't have to carry them around all day."

Year 8 Mesum said: "My idea is to have sessions about AI in school. That is going to be so important in the next generation so I think we need to look to the future."

Year 9 Aaminah said: "I think we should have more equipment in the school yard, like benches. I also think that we should remove some of the one-way system in school."



Year 8 pupils showcase creativity with Mexican Day of the Dead skulls



Our Year 8 pupils have truly outdone themselves with their latest art project—clay skulls inspired by the Mexican Day of the Dead!

Fresh out of the kiln, these incredible pieces of artwork reflect the immense talent, creativity, and dedication of our pupils.

The vibrant and imaginative designs showcase the pupils' attention to detail and their passion for exploring different cultural traditions through art.

Each skull is unique, with intricate patterns and colourful decorations that bring the spirit of the Day of the Dead to life.

These stunning clay skulls are a testament to their artistic skills and a wonderful celebration of their hard work.



Year 9 pupils share insights on selecting options



Year 9 pupils know that selecting their options is a worrying time as they want to make sure they choose the subjects which are right for them.

Pleckgate’s staff have been praised as being extremely helpful in guiding pupils to subjects they thrive at while also selecting the ones which will help them with their future career ambitions.

Zaina said: “I wanted to do Triple Science so I needed all my options based around that. The teachers gave me advice on parents’ evening on how to do that. We also got to go around different classes where teachers told us about their subjects and the exams just in case anyone was undecided.”

Zayn said: “Art was my priority as I love art and my art teacher supported me in this. We got good advice at parents’ evening and we did listen so I understood how to make the right choices for me.”

Pupils learn about coastal issues at RNLI St Anne’s



Pupils visited the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) at St Anne’s to learn about the essential work they do, linking directly to their studies on coastal processes, defences, and the impacts of tourism.

This hands-on experience provided a valuable real-world connection to classroom lessons, giving pupils a deeper understanding of how human activity and natural processes shape the coast and the importance of protecting it.

A big thank you to the RNLI at St Anne’s for hosting this informative visit!

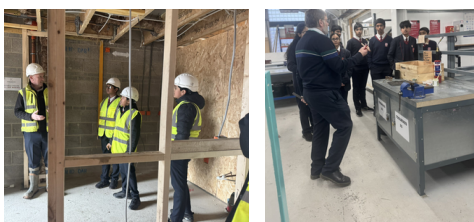
Pleckgate celebrates #MotherLanguagesDay

To mark International #MotherLanguagesDay, the languages department organised a special language enrichment day, facilitated by colleagues from Lancaster University.

Pupils had the opportunity to explore the importance of learning languages, with a focus on how multilingualism opens doors to global opportunities.

The day also highlighted the upcoming Paris Olympics 2024, discussing the role of languages in international events.

One of the highlights of the day was an introduction to Chinese, where pupils learned about the language’s significance and cultural aspects. The event was a fun and engaging way to celebrate linguistic diversity and inspire pupils to embrace learning new languages.



Blackburn College hosts a Construction Industry Day for pupils

A huge thank you to Blackburn College for hosting an incredible Construction Industry Day for our pupils!

This hands-on event provided pupils with a unique opportunity to explore the world of construction and gain valuable insights into the industry.

The day began with a visit to a Barnfield site and Kingwood Homes, where pupils witnessed construction in action.

They had the chance to see first-hand how a building project comes together, from foundations to finishing touches, and spoke with industry professionals about the various roles within the sector.

After the site visits, pupils headed to Blackburn College, where they participated in engaging, hands-on construction activities. These activities allowed them to try their hand at different construction techniques and gain a practical understanding of the skills required in the industry.

The event was a fantastic experience, offering a real-world look at the diverse career opportunities within construction and inspiring them to consider a future in this dynamic field.



Annie Jr production



Rehearsals for our school production of Annie Jr have been going brilliantly so far!

The cast has been working hard each week, with vocal rehearsals on Mondays, drama sessions on Fridays, and full staging and choreography practice every Wednesday after school.

Everyone is showing real dedication, learning their lines, songs, and routines with enthusiasm. The energy is building each week, and it's exciting to see the show starting to come together.

With the performance set for July, we're on track for a fantastic production that the whole school can be proud of!

Pupils celebrate achievement at end-of-term assemblies

Pupils from all year groups gathered for their much-anticipated end-of-term achievement assemblies, a special occasion to recognise the hard work and accomplishments of pupils across the school.



During the assemblies, pupils were celebrated for their academic successes, extracurricular contributions, and overall dedication.

Awards were presented by tutors, subject leads, and heads of year, each recognising individual and group achievements in various areas, from excellent academic performance to outstanding contributions to school life.

This event was a wonderful celebration of the incredible achievements within the school community, showcasing the diverse talents and hard work of pupils across all year groups.

It was a fitting way to end the term, leaving pupils motivated and inspired for the challenges ahead.

Careers Fair 2025

"It's opened my eyes to a number of other options" was the view of one of the pupils at our informative Careers Fair.

41 businesses, colleges and universities attended the second running of this fantastic event where pupils from Years 8-11 had the chance to engage with companies and make informed decisions about their future.

Year 11 Sophia said: "I want to be a doctor so I have talked to a few people including East Lancashire Health Maternity."

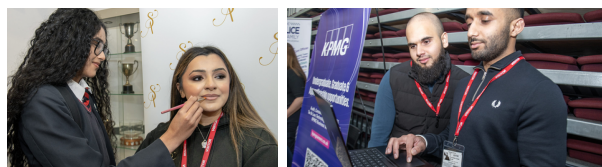
Afia is interested in radiology. "I like looking at X-Rays and I really enjoy physics."

Martin Jenkins is an orthotist at East Lancashire Hospital Trust. He said: "There is a shortage of orthotists in the UK so we are looking to attract more. The pupils have asked us lots of questions."

Sohail said: "I want to go into construction. I was thinking about going to college and doing a T-Level but after speaking to STORY I am hoping to go straight into an apprenticeship at a company."

Bentley, based in Crewe, was extremely popular. Ben Hall, a Mechanical Engineering Placement pupils at Bentley, said: "I am really passionate about Bentley. We have everything here from finance, to events, to HR, to engineering."

Youth Action were offering courses for pupils. Development Officer Kim Tattersall said: "We offer courses for 8-16-year-olds in Blackburn. We came to Pleckgate as we have free courses on writing CVs, volunteering sessions and more."



KPMG meant Class of 2021 Muhammad Dilawar returned to Pleckgate. "I haven't been back since results day so it is a bit weird. It's nice to see some familiar faces. I think I was in Year 11 when these present Year 11s were in Year 7 so a couple remember me! Pleckgate was great for me, I got the grades I needed here to go onto college and then to KPMG so it's been a domino effect. I want to show pupils that you can achieve what you want."

Blackburn College's pupRecruitment Co-ordinator Elisha Cox said: "We do have a large intake from Pleckgate so I have been busy. There are a lot of pupils asking me questions and 90 percent of them have already applied. They are just asking for more course information and the next stage for them now that they have applied."