



Blackrock College Bulletin

Bulletin No. 03 2025 – 2026

The Big Beach Clean 2025

As part of their Sustainability module, our Transition Year students proudly participated in An Taisce's Clean Coasts national "Big Beach Clean." On a bright and sunny morning, they conducted a beach clean-up along Blackrock's scenic coastline.

The students were pleased to report that litter levels were low—an encouraging sign of growing environmental awareness. They would like to remind everyone to continue playing their part: take your litter home and always "leave no trace."



Sustainability in Action

As part of our Sustainability module, students explored the importance of "Repair" as a key principle in reducing waste and promoting mindful consumption. In a hands-on workshop, they learned basic sewing techniques and successfully sewed on buttons—an essential life skill!



We hope they will put their new skills to effective use at home by mending minor tears and replacing missing buttons, helping extend the life of their garments and reduce textile waste. Small stitches can make a substantial impact!

Poetry for Environmental Awareness Week

To celebrate Environmental Awareness Week 2nd years took to writing poetry inspired by the nature around them. Here is a selection of their work.

Aodhfin McMahon

A stem breaks through the concrete floor,
A silent guest at rusted door.
No field, no rain just smoke and stone,
Yet still, the wild makes roots its own.
Where steel and shadow fill the air,
A single leaf says, "I am there....."



A Rose by Ben Brown

A rose unfolds with gentle grace,
Soft petals bright, a sweet embrace.
Its fragrance lingers in the air,
A timeless beauty, rich and rare.

The Great big apple tree – By David Neligan

When the trees start to wither, and leaves line the ground.
The cold air is bitter, and the wind howls,
Where once there was laughter, there's silence now.
The apples have fallen, the last ones are bruised,
The branches hang heavy, tired, and used.
As pale, grey clouds move slowly across a dark sky.



Poetry for Environmental Awareness Week

Evan Murphy

The wind blows in from off the sea
It runs through grass and shakes the trees
The clouds roll by in skies of grey
No light to break the dark of day
A fox walks quietly through the rain
Across the grass and back again
The ocean crashes on the shore
And leaves its foam along the floor.



Juan Monfort Rivila

A bird sings,
its chirps echo through the woods.
Leaves swing,
And the air smells like rain that's not here yet.
Clouds hang heavy,
the sun peeks out but the air is wet,
and suddenly everything feels alive again.
Dew makes the grass sparkle.
A tiny fox tiptoes by,
It's tail rubbing against the wet grass,
chasing mice in the morning light.



Poetry for Environmental Awareness Week

Marius Weermanthri-Flynn

In unexpected places, these plants grow strong
Weeds in walls, where roots belong
In abandoned spots, seeds find life
And prettiness blooms and shines its light.



Roan Smith

A Bloom

from tiny seed to fragile weed.
A show of solidarity, in a world absent of clarity
Curls up to catch the light
Giving humans quite the fright
But if you stop and look it is quite a delight
Resilient but just brilliant
Gets knocked down but shall not drown
Lonely but free, as it should be.

Dragons' Den Mentoring Session 2



The second mentoring session of our Transition Year Dragons' Den initiative took place recently, and the feedback from our panel of expert Dragons was nothing short of glowing. They praised the students for their creativity, initiative, and enterprising spirit, with standout ideas ranging from solutions to labour shortages to sustainable fashion ventures and inventive golf equipment designs.

The grand final is set for **7th November 2025**, promising an exciting showcase of student-led innovation. To be considered for shortlisting, students must submit a fully completed business plan—an essential step to ensure that each concept is clearly defined and strategically developed ahead of the final pitch.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Dragons for their time, insight, and encouragement. Their thoughtful guidance continues to inspire our students to think big, aim high, and bring their ideas to life.



Junior Debating – MACE – Clonkeen College

On Saturday, September 27th, five talented 2nd and 3rd Year students from Blackrock College took part in the first round of this year's prestigious MACE Competition. Representing the school were:

- **Fergal McPolin, Maurice Neligan, and Neil Doyle** (3rd Year)
- **Sheng Yu Han and Jasper Turner** (2nd Year)

The motions debated included:

- *This House Would Ban separate gender categories in entertainment awards (Oscars)*
- *This House Would Ban all political advertisements on social media.*
- *This House (as the EU) Would Significantly Increase Spending in the Defence Budget*

Each student spoke with clarity, conviction, and confidence, standing out in a field of over 120 competitors. A special congratulations to **Neil Doyle**, who was recognised as the **sixth best speaker** of the round—an outstanding achievement!

We are incredibly proud of all five debaters for representing Blackrock College with such poise and passion.



News from the Castle

The first few weeks of Castle life have been full of energy and promise. A fresh vibrancy now fills the halls, thanks to the arrival of new boarders from around the world, while returning students have settled back in and continue to represent the boarding school with pride and distinction.



A strong sense of fraternity is already taking root. Bonds are forming over evening tip rugby sessions, Friday night football, and Saturday excursions. Academically, students have come together in study groups and Dragon's Den teams, supporting one another and laying the foundation for lasting friendships.

For many, the Castle is more than just a residence—it is a home away from home. It holds a cherished place within the school community, and the boarders of 2025/26 are eager to contribute to its proud tradition of academic, sporting, and recreational excellence.

Here is to a year of growth, camaraderie, and unforgettable memories.



Snapshot of the 6th Year Retreats



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Celebrating Literacy Day

To mark Literacy Day, we were thrilled to welcome Blackrock's favourite poet, **Tony Curtis**, who gave a fun and lively talk on poetry to all of Second Year. He even had everyone humming along to a rendition of *Robert Frost's* classic, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*!

A big well done to **Jamie O'Brien**, **Conor Larkin**, and **Rían Flood**, who confidently took to the stage to recite their own poetry — fantastic work!

Meanwhile, our Transition Year students had the chance to hear from **Mark Byrne** and **James Odlum**, who sat down with **Sinéad O'Carroll** (host of *The 42* podcast and editor of *TheJournal.ie*) and **Ciarán Murphy** (author, *Irish Times* sportswriter, and co-creator of *Second Captains*). Their conversation covered everything from journalism and live reporting to writing under pressure — and even a chat about their *special jersey*!

A special thank-you also goes to **Alex Power** and **Paddy English** for introducing the event and helping make the morning such a success.



Junior 3rds - 5ths Roundup

The week of October 1st brought sunshine and spirited competition as our Junior Thirds and Junior Fourths took on St. Michael's College at home.

The **J3s**, captained by **Peter Donnelly** and vice-captained by **James Power**, faced a challenging start, with St. Michael's launching strong attacks early on. However, our boys responded with a resilient defensive effort and turned the tide, securing a well-earned 31-19 victory.

Meanwhile, the **J4s**, led by **Ciaran McNabb** and **Seb Keane**, enjoyed a dominant performance, finishing with an impressive 69-5 win. Under **Mr Smith's** guidance, the team made the most of every opportunity, showcasing excellent teamwork and attacking flair.

These results capped off two weeks of hard work, commitment, and positive attitudes. With momentum building, the squads now look ahead to their upcoming **Sedbergh trip**, departing on **October 10th**—an exciting next chapter in their rugby journey.



Swimming Gala

This year's Swimming Gala proved to be a fantastic event, filled with excitement, close finishes, and impressive performances from students across all year groups.

The **Principal's Trophy** was jointly awarded to **Jamie Cahill (4th Year)** and **Will Collins (6th Year)** for their outstanding achievements. In the Junior Championship, **Josh O'Rourke (2nd Year)** took first place, followed closely by **Sam Ramke (3rd Year)**.

In the year-group competitions, **Leman House** dominated the **2nd, 3rd, and 4th Year** events, while **DeValera House** led the way in both the **5th and 6th Year** categories.

The individual 50m freestyle races were another highlight of the evening, highlighting some remarkable talent. Winners included **Josh O'Rourke (2nd Year)**, **Sam Ramke (3rd Year)**, **James Cahill (4th Year)**, **Andrew Kearney (5th Year)**, and **Will Collins (6th Year)**.

Congratulations to all the swimmers for their effort, enthusiasm, and sportsmanship, making this year's gala such an enjoyable and memorable occasion!

Tennis

Max Naughton (Second Year) and **Jack Moloney** (Third Year) were part of the victorious Leinster team that won the Junior Interprovincial Championships in Belfast at the end of September.



Sailing

Last Year's Shanahan Cup Winners

The boys started this year's competition with a joint 1st place result with Gonzaga.

They are back on the water in November.



U16B Basketball League Competition



The U16 squad has opened their league campaign in style, securing two impressive back-to-back victories over Marian College (50–38) and Gonzaga College (39–23). These wins mark the end of the team's losing streak from recent years and signal a promising season ahead.

In their home opener against Marian, 'Rock took control early, posting 34 points in the first half while allowing just 13. A disciplined mix of zone and one-on-one defence kept Marian contained throughout. Despite a brief third-quarter surge from the visitors, 'Rock maintained composure and closed out the game confidently.

The momentum continued away to Gonzaga, where early offensive drives from **Sergio Martinez** (4th Year), **Denis Lucey** (2nd Year), and **Luka Daly** (3rd Year) established a commanding 24–8 halftime lead. Gonzaga rallied to narrow the gap to 29–20, but 'Rock responded with sharp defensive play. **David Freeman** (4th Year) and **Luka Daly** dominated the boards, while **Dylan Walshe** (3rd Year) applied relentless pressure, forcing key turnovers.

Sergio Martinez led the scoring across both fixtures with a combined 48 points, supported by standout contributions from **Denis Lucey** (24 points). Captain **Tom O'Brien** (3rd Year) and the entire squad can take immense pride in a strong and confident start to the season.

The Blackrock College U19 team have also recorded victories over both Marian College and Gonzaga College SJ.

Looking ahead, the teams will face Nord Anglia and St Kilian's DS in their upcoming fixtures.

New players are encouraged to come along and try out on **Thursdays at 4 p.m.**



Karl Ashe Memorial Cup

This year's Karl Ash Memorial Cup once again proved to be a highlight of the school calendar, delivering excitement from start to finish.

The competition kicked off with two fiercely contested semifinals: the **Boarders** took on the **Fourth Years**, while the **Fifth Years** faced the **Sixth Years**. Both games were closely fought, setting up a thrilling final between the **Boarders** and the **Sixth Years**.

The final did not disappoint, featuring impressive performances on both sides. In the end, it was the **Sixth Years** who held their composure to secure victory with a score of 6.08 to 5.06.

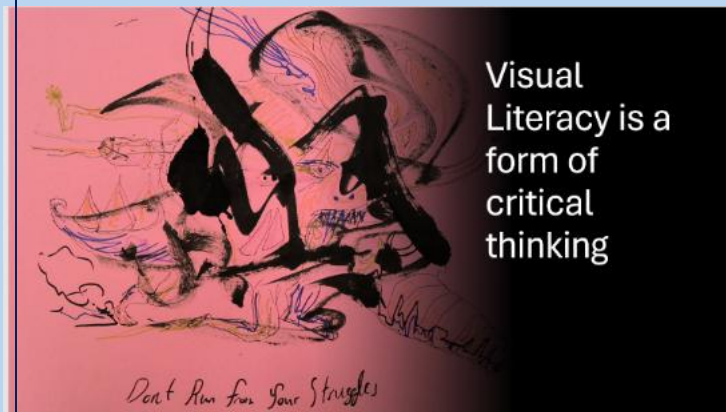
Congratulations to the **Sixth Years** on a well-deserved and hard-fought win!







Art Club: Linking Wellbeing and Literacy



To mark Wellbeing Week and Literacy Day, the Art Club and a group of 5th Year students collaborated to create a unique exhibition now on display in the library.

The project began with each student making a spontaneous, abstract splash of paint, which then served as inspiration for a visual narrative. In the next stage, students gave their artwork a verbal title, linking creativity in art with expression through language.



Don't Forget – Mark Your Calendars!



Saturday, October 11th and Sunday, October 12th

Sedbergh Rugby Festival

Monday, October 13th to Friday, October 17th

Maths Week

Thursday, October 23rd

3rd Year Family Mass (*6:15pm*)

Thursday, October 23rd

Rock-Ed (*7:30pm*)

Saturday, October 25th to Sunday, November 3rd

Mid-term Break