



NESTON
HIGH SCHOOL

Headteacher's report to Trustees

Autumn Term 2025

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ADMISSIONS

STUART NUTTALL

Number of pupils currently on roll:

Year group	Total
Year 7	291
Year 8	300
Year 9	296
Year 10	294
Year 11	301
Year 12	120
Year 13	122
Totals	1724

In Year admission/leavers since September 2025

New starters

Y7 x 7 – 5x gained places via the Year 7 Waiting List, 2x gained places through live applications

Y8 x 6 – 5x gained places through live applications, 1x gained a place from the Year 8 Waiting List

Y9 x 9 – gained places through live applications

Y10 x 1 – gained a place through a live application

Y11 x 3 – gained places through live applications

Leavers

Y7 x 11 – 4x accepted an offer of a place at another school before starting at Neston, 3x withdrew their application to begin Elective Home Education before starting at Neston, 1x under CWaC SEND Team, 3x moved schools after starting at Neston

Y8 x 4 – moved schools

Y9 x 8 – 7x moved schools, 1x permanent exclusion

Y10 x 6 – 5x moved schools, 1x EOTAS named in EHCP

Y11 x 2 – moved schools

Y12 x 3 – 2x moved schools, 1x training

Y13 x 1 – moved school

Dual Registration

We have 15 students that are registered at Neston High School and attend other school settings:

- 3x Ancora House

ADMISSIONS

STUART NUTTALL

- 3x Joseph Paxton Campus
- 2x Ellesmere Port CofE College
- 2x The Bridge
- 1x Wirral Hospitals' School
- 1x Ellesmere Port Catholic High
- 1x South Wirral High
- 1x Upton-by-Chester

Due to lower numbers on our feeder primary school rolls for incoming year groups, as well as the new approach being used by grammar schools in Wirral of conducting a 12+ exam on the first day of term in September to recruit additional students, the Headteacher has decided to implement a temporary increase to our Pupil Admission Number (PAN) for the new Y7 intake in September 2026 (supported by Trustees). We have informed Cheshire West Admissions that 320 places can be allocated to Neston in the next formal admissions round. This will create a "buffer" should the pattern of late withdrawals which we have seen in the last two years continue. It is important to note that if the intake falls below 300, the Local Authority will only back-fill places back up to our usual PAN of 300, and not back up to 320.

SIXTH FORM RECRUITMENT UPDATE

LUKE BURTON

Following the successful changes to last year's recruitment process, resulting in 119 students in this year's year 12, the Sixth Form team have been working hard to build on previous successes.

This year's recruitment process started in year 10 with Sixth Form Introduction Assemblies and has continued into year 11 with the Sixth Form Open Evening taking place in early October, this is earlier than we have run the event in previous years. We are hoping that this has provided us with the opportunity to speak with students before they have the chance to visit our competitors. Open Evening marked the start of our application process.

As the academic year continues, students will receive a Sixth Form Questions and Answer session to inform students and to keep the Sixth Form application process high profile, this will be led by a select team of Sixth Form Students, some of whom have chosen to return from other Sixth Forms. The Sixth Form team are currently exploring the opportunity of running a Sixth Form taster day for students to further their understanding of the A level courses they may choose. The Sixth Form showcase will run in the new year to give students the opportunity to talk with our current Sixth Form students about their courses. Finally, students will be interviewed in the summer term to discuss course choices and suitability for the Sixth Form.

At the time of writing this, we have 177 application responses to the Sixth Form from our current year 11 cohort. At the same point last year I reported to you that we had 170 application responses so numbers of students interested remains consistent with previous years. Of the 177 students who have responded 140 have indicated that Neston High School is their first choice with another 15 indicating there are considering Neston as a possible option.

In addition to the students who are applying from Neston we have 21 students who have made applications from other schools. To encourage this, we have made we have made contact with local schools who do not have a post 16 offer, including South Wirral High School who have recently closed their Sixth Form. Students from these schools have been invited in for an additional open even style event resulting in 6 students applying

from Pensby, 3 from South Wirral with the rest made up from other local schools including some of the local grammar schools.

Having looked at the previous year's application data there is often additional applications that come through during the rest of the academic year. Last year an additional 8 students applied from this point. I would be hopeful that with a continued effort and more recruitment events planned, our application number may still rise further.

The initial data collected has highlighted the following subjects as popular amongst our Y11 cohort: Criminology, Psychology, History, Media, Maths, Law and English Language.

A review of the applications current academic ability is underway. Of the 30 higher ability students in the year group 53% of these have indicated they are applying with Neston as first choice and an additional 7% stating they are considering Neston. Conversations with these high ability students are already underway with senior staff and the Sixth Form team with these students who are reporting that 4 of these students are now considering Neston's Sixth Form with the intention of staying. This would take this number to 66% which is roughly in line with the number of high ability student who applied in the previous year.

Out of the 202 middle ability year 11 students 52% of these have applied for a place in the Sixth Form with an additional 5% who have indicated they are considering Neston as an option.

There are 33 low ability students in year 11, 21% of these have applied for a place in the Sixth Form with an additional 6% who have indicated they are considering Neston as an option.

In other Sixth Form news I am happy to say that we have six year 13 students who have applied for either Oxford or Cambridge, 5 of these have been successful in securing an interview.

Autumn Term 2025 - until 24/10/25

Year	Year %	PP %	Non PP %	Gap %	FSM %
7	96.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	91.7
8	92.6	86.4	94.4	8.0	86.4
9	93.2	89.6	94.0	4.4	88.8
10	93.3	90.0	94.0	4.0	89.3
11	91.9	88.0	92.9	4.9	85.6
12	94.4				
13	91.1				

Year 7 – 11	93.6	88.4	94.8	4.4	88.1
Year 7 - 13	93.4				

Main school attendance is 93.6% which is above both National (93.0%) and Local Authority (92.5%) averages. As per the DfE's attendance and data tracking and comparison tool, this places Neston High School 8th out 20

ATTENDANCE

LAWRENCE CRAY

school in the Local Authority as well as in the top fifth decile nationally. Attendance is broadly stable compared to last year.

The average gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantage has reduced by 1.3% from 5.7% at this time last year. All main school year groups have improved their attendance in comparison to their equivalent years at this time last year. This is with the exception of Year 8 which has a number of complex cases that affect both the overall attendance and the attendance of their disadvantaged groups.

Disadvantaged pupils will be the main focus for action, building on the improvements already seen. Each year group have identified cohorts for interventions bespoke to their profile, eg Y10 Pupil Premium boys, and will have support provided to them through targets, meetings, rewards and more. All pastoral work for attendance comes with a disadvantaged first approach. This is inclusive of tutor conversations, attendance calls, meetings and celebration.

SAFEGUARDING

TOM CAIRNEY

Number of students at Child in Need	3
Number of students with a Child Protection Plan in place	6
Number of open TAFs	8
Students on individual risk assessment	11 (4 educated off-site)

This Term:

- Inset day 1: whole school training on basic safeguarding awareness and processes within school to report concerns. An overview of updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 was also provided with protected time for staff to read the same and complete a questionnaire.
- Inset day 2: whole school half-day basic awareness training delivered by Local Authority SCIE Team
- DDSL facilitated two new mentoring programmes with One Life, and SHINE to key cohorts of students identified as needing support with transition from key stage 2 and 3.
- DSL requested Local Authority SCIE Team to inspect the school's safeguarding practices which took place on 12 November 2025. The inspection included a deep dive into processes, record keeping, multi-agency collaboration, training and culture. Actions included sharing good practice with LA to support their supervision of other educational settings.
- DSL facilitated the final round of wellbeing surveys for the current year 11 students as part of LJMU Multimodal Approach to Prevention of Suicide in Schools (MAPSS). After which, Grass Roots suicide prevention charity came into school and delivered workshops over 4 days to all our year 11 students on spotting the signs of when a peer may have suicidal ideation.
- Pastoral staff received training from Martin Gallier project; the accredited SafeTALK qualification. This was funded by Public Health England after the school was flagged by Starting Well Service for their existing efforts to support children's mental health. This training is part of a wide project to achieve the 'Suicide Safer School' award.

- In October, DSL led a review into filtering and monitoring of school equipment linked to the internet. This review highlighted concerns with SLT iPads. Adult content, Child Sexual Abuse Images, Terrorism, and Offensive Language are categories of content that are screened. Devices accessed by students had effective filtering, however, SLT iPads failed to block one or more websites on the Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit list (CTIRU). This has now been remedied.
- Whilst not a mandatory requirement from the DfE, the DSL and JCD will be exploring 'decryption' capabilities of the school's filtering software, so that more granular insights of content embedded within web pages (within video content for example) occur, strengthening the school's position.
- The Safeguarding team planner first tested with year 9 (current year 10) rolled out to other year groups. The impact of tracking low-level pastoral concerns on staff ability to triage has been evident, it is intended that the possibility of early intervention will be increased with greater efficiency and oversight by linked SLT through the planner. Staff workload and capacity will be better understood enhancing key pastoral staff's ability to provide timely intervention.
- DSL reviewed how the school captures student voice and data related to safeguarding themes and how top-level data from CPOMs provides headline themes/issues, predominantly mental health, but not student attitudes or experiences. A programme of student surveys will be rolled out over the year with the overarching aim to collate snippets of feedback relating to our children's experiences, as opposed to applying the national picture to policy/intervention decisions in our setting. The first of which obtained data on social media use and harmful content seen by our children.
- DSL continues to utilise the Inclusion Bulletin to provide frequent succinct guides on key issues: Individual Risk Assessments, Children and Pornography, Private Fostering Arrangements, and The Dark Web.
- DSL is a member of the Local Authority's Safeguarding Children Partnership having met with senior colleagues in CWAC on 3 occasions this term to discuss the authority's strategic priorities in relation to 'Educational Neglect' and the safeguarding of children not on roll at school across the borough.

This term has seen significant progress across key areas of school development, with a strong emphasis on quality assurance, curriculum innovation, and inclusive practice. A comprehensive QA process was launched, beginning with a Sixth Form focus week and extending into departmental weeks that incorporated drop-ins, leaders' meetings, student voice activities, and book looks. This has helped to embed a positive drop-in culture across the school, strengthening consistency and transparency in classroom practice.

Alongside this, the Year 9 Options process was successfully introduced, providing students and families with clear guidance through online presentations, options booklets, marketplace activities, assemblies, and an alternative curriculum identification process.

Teaching and learning has been further enhanced through the creation of a new strategies book, which places evidence-informed practice at the heart of classroom delivery, and the launch of staff focus groups exploring innovative approaches, including the use of AI in the classroom to enrich pedagogy and engagement. In addition, systems for alternative provision have been refined through the introduction of a tracker and strengthened QA processes, resulting in a significant reduction in the number of students requiring alternative provision and evidencing stronger mainstream inclusion. Collectively, these developments demonstrate a clear trajectory of improvement, with a culture of high-quality teaching, informed curriculum choices, and inclusive provision ensuring that all learners thrive.

KS4 Leaders

I am delighted to say, following a rigorous recruitment process, four students have been appointed to lead the KS3/ KS4 Student Council:

Lead Students:

- Beth Harding
- Ewan Humphries

Deputy Lead Students

- Ruby Leech
- Oliver Lucas

The council has already made a significant contribution to the school's reflection on potential changes to school uniform and to selecting school charities (see below). Also, the council has identified some key areas of focus for the remainder of this year and is looking forward to working on these. Each committee will be chaired by a Y11 student and will comprise a representative cross-section of students. Their voices will be vital in developing our work in the following areas:

- Anti Bullying
- Anti Hate
- Curriculum Development
- Enrichment

Tracking Enrichment

This term, Mr Sidwell has developed our capacity to track all of the trips and enrichment activities undertaken by students. Through his diligence, and the hard work of staff right across the school, we have a comprehensive record of which trips, clubs, events, lunchtime activities and competitions each individual student has experienced. For the first time, we can now produce a detailed report on the impact our enrichment programme which will be used, term on term, to improve our offer and support individuals who are struggling to engage with enrichment activities.

House Competitions

Three house competitions have now closed. Three competitions in particular captured students' imaginations and led to very full 'post-bags' of entries:

Art: Design a Christmas Card

English: Write a Christmas Poem

Geography: design a flag to represent Neston High School

There is also a Christmas Baking competition which will close on Monday 15th December.

We have received hundreds of entries, all of which have been acknowledged through our PDEx Points system. In

the final assemblies of term, we will celebrate both the winning students and the winning houses.

School Charities

Staff and students have selected ten charities which will be the focal point for our fundraising activities in 2026. As we approach Christmas, these will be launched and students encouraged to start planning fundraising activities. As you will see from the list attached, five of the charities are linked to houses. Our intention is that a renewed focus on houses supporting worthy causes will help us strengthen the connection students feel to their house. The charities selected represent a diverse group of causes, locally, nationally and internationally. As an outward looking school which prides itself on strong community links, we look forward to supporting each charity with energy and determination.

SCAN ME
Staff Charity: AndysManClub – Its OK to Talk

SCAN ME
Local Charity: Jackson's Animal Rescue

SCAN ME
National Charity: Centrepont

SCAN ME
International Charity: Friends of Mulanji Orphans

SCAN ME
Grenfell: RNLI Lifeboats

SCAN ME
Overton: Ahead of the Game Foundation

SCAN ME
Summers: Breast Cancer

SCAN ME
Stewart: William's Gift

SCAN ME
Talbot: Owen McVeigh Foundation

SCAN ME
Sixth Form: Blood Cancer UK

NESTON HIGH SCHOOL
CHARITABLE COMMITMENTS 2026

ANTI BULLYING

JOHN MILLINGTON

I am delighted to report success in applying to participate in the Diana Award Anti-Bullying programme. This is a powerful programme with a national profile. Next term, 100 students from Neston High School and partner primary schools will gather in Bushell Hall to be trained as Anti-Bullying ambassadors. This in turn will lead to a high-profile, whole school activity to build further a robust anti-bullying culture. As demonstrated by the exceptional work undertaken by our Anthony Walker ambassadors, the best outcomes are achieved when staff and students work in partnership to create culture change.

ASSESSMENT AND TRACKING

EDEL METCALFE

Summer examination outcomes have been analysed carefully with all curriculum leaders and key priorities set for the academic year ahead. Examination board feedback has been utilised by them to identify areas of strength and areas for development. The assessment calendar has been strategically designed this year to ensure data analysis can take place at key check points to allow for intervention and action plans to be designed with Curriculum leaders to review progress throughout the year. It also reflects discussion within the well-being group and staff voice to change the dates of key assessments windows for internal assessments.

This term, Curriculum Leaders have had individual quality assurance meetings to review their Y11 and Y13 assessments for the current cohort. This was based on results gathered after a September baseline mock for Y11, a change to the previous assessment calendar. A particular focus in these meetings has been placed on Disadvantaged, SEND and our Higher Attaining Female students to continue raising attainment in these key student groups.

The invigilator team has completed updated on-site training with JCQ. From this year, internal examinations are being invigilated for the most part by teaching staff and therefore making financial savings on invigilation. This was also implemented in September, when we supervised y7 CATs tests in lessons, also saving on invigilation costs. Our Year 13 and Year 11 successful SLT Mentoring programme has taken place this term with all students being set personal targets to support their progress. This programme will continue in the Spring term where students will review exam outcomes.

Staff have now entered ATL data for all y7 and 8, with the first round of reports for y9 also going home this week. All students, in all year groups will have received a report home to parents this term keeping parents firmly involved in their child's learning journey. We have held two successful parents' evenings on site (Year 13 and Year 11) receiving positive feedback from families who have appreciated the opportunity to talk face to face with teachers. Year 7 and 9 are upcoming in December and Year 8 immediately after the Christmas break.

The January External Examination series begins on Tuesday 6th January. This is planned and processes/revision sessions are in place to support all students sitting these important unit exams. The Year 13 Centre Assessed Exams that begin Monday 12th January are scheduled and students have received all key information to prepare early. The Year 11 Centre Assessed Exams then begin on Monday January 26th with all students having received personalised revision prompts and their most recent parents evening and a revision booklet of materials to use.

Number of suspension occasions

	Totals 2018- 2019	Totals 2019- 2020*	Totals 2020 - 2021 ♦	Totals 2021 - 2022	Totals 2022 - 2023	Totals 2023 - 2024	Totals 2024 - 2025	Autumn 1 2025	Autumn 1 2024	Difference
Year 7	7	1	20	3	11	5	44	0	1	-1
Year 8	3	9	8	28	13	24	47	12	0	+12
Year 9	18	11	17	31	64	46	58	18	6	+12
Year 10	13	22	27	37	31	62	74	8	10	-2
Year 11	19	16	39	7	19	35	64	20	17	+3
Year 12	0	0	0	4	1	3	0	3	0	+3
Year 13	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	-
Totals	60	59	111	111	140	175	287	61	34	+27
Total Number of Days	73	152	206	310.5	243.5	255.5	382.5	66.5	58	+8.5
Total Number of students	46	43	66	96	87	82	118	44	25	+19

*Includes the period of school closure from March – August 2020

♦ Includes the period of school closure from January – March 2021

Analysis of days lost to suspensions HT1 2024 vs HT1 2025:

Behaviours	HT1 2024	HT1 2025
Bullying	2	
Disobedience/disrespect to staff	1	8.5
Drug related	15	5
Persistent disruptive behaviour	30.5	61
Physical assault/violent behaviour against a pupil	5.5	18.5
Racist abuse		2
Sexual misconduct	5	
Smoking/vaping	12.5	11.5
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil	9	
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult or staff	9	
Total excluding device issues	89.5	106.5
<i>Mobile device/inappropriate items</i>		<i>19.5</i>
Total	89.5	126

Given the overall improvements in behaviour across the school, our strategic focus has shifted toward addressing repeated lower-level issues. Regular analysis of weekly trends has enabled staff to target persistent behaviours such

as internal truancy, taking clear and decisive action as early intervention to reduce these in the longer term. This proactive approach explains, in part, why the figure for persistent disruptive behaviour is significantly higher this year. Additionally, two in-year transfer students from a local school account for 24 days combined. Both are receiving bespoke support plans tailored to their complex needs and family circumstances.

The introduction of suspensions for mobile phone use under the new ban has had a significant impact beyond the immediate consequence for individuals. By enforcing clear boundaries, the policy has reduced distractions in lessons, improved focus and strengthened the learning environment across the school. Corridors and social spaces feel calmer, with fewer incidents linked to online conflict or inappropriate device use. Staff report greater consistency in expectations and students are engaging more positively with face-to-face interactions during break times. Overall, the ban is supporting a culture where learning and wellbeing take priority.

Number of Permanent Exclusions

	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020*	2020 – 2021 ♦	2021 – 2022	2023 – 2024	2023 – 2024	2024 – 2025	Autumn 2025
Year 7							1	1 pending
Year 8						1		1
Year 9				1	1		2	
Year 10		1	1	1			4	
Year 11						1		2 pending
Total	0	1	1	2	1	2	7	

*Includes the period of school closure from March – August 2020

♦ Includes the period of school closure from January – March 2021

STAFF ABSENCE

Autumn Term 2025

Absence days 1st Sep – October half term

	Autumn 1 2024		Autumn 1 2025		Difference
	No. of days	Long term absence notes	No. of days	Long term absence notes	
Teaching staff days absence	158	Includes 3 long term absence	89	Includes 1 long term absence	-69
Support staff days absence	201	Includes 4 long term absence	190	Includes 4 long term absence	-11

If long-term absence is excluded, the number of days absence is as follows:

	Autumn 1 2024	Autumn 1 2025	Difference
Teaching staff days absence	67	66	-1
Support staff days absence	83	61	-22

New Absence Policy update

The new absence policy was introduced in January 2024 and as part of this process 40 absence reviews meetings have taken place with colleagues who have hit absence triggers.

As a comparison since the new absence policy was introduced, absence for the Spring and Summer terms year on year is as follows:

	Spring and Summer terms 2024		Spring and Summer terms 2025		Difference
	No. of days	Long term absence notes	No. of days	Long term absence notes	
Teaching staff days absence	613	Includes 3 long term absence	408	Includes 3 long term absence	-205
Support staff days absence	720	Includes 7 long term absence	520	Includes 7 long term absence	-200

STAFFING CHANGES SUMMARY (AUTUMN 2025)

NAME	ROLE IN SCHOOL	DETAIL
New starters		
Neneh Bennet	Teacher of IT – joined May 2025	To replace colleagues who have gained promotion within school.
Donna Rogers	Head of Year – joined June 2025	To replace leaving colleague.
Libby McCormack	Teacher of Maths	To replace colleague who gained promotion within school.
Robert Williams	Teacher of DT	To replace leaving colleague.
Kate Ferguson	Teacher of English	To replace colleagues returning to reduced hours after maternity leave.
Pallvi Clarke	Teacher of IT	Maternity cover.
Rachel Hughes	SEN Administrator	To replace leaving colleague.
Anna Grace	Attendance Administrator	To replace colleague who secured a new role within school.
Karen Clarke	Cleaner	To replace leaving colleague.
Kanyant Pringle	Kitchen Assistant	To replace leaving colleague.
Damien Greenhalgh	Science Technician	To replace leaving colleague.
Leavers		
Jordan Conway	Teacher of DT	Moved out of area.
Alison Moxham	Teacher of Languages	Retirement (not replaced)
Rosie Williams	Teacher of RE	End of maternity cover.
James Wise	Teacher of English	End of maternity cover.
Tracy Hickman	SEN Administrator	Retirement
Liane Drummond	Science Technician	Change of career.
Alexia Harold	Kitchen Assistant	Change of career.

Steplab

This term, staff professional development has focused on improving consistency in classroom practice and strengthening whole-school routines. We have embedded Steplab for instructional coaching, increased learning drop-ins, and used rehearsal-based training to develop a shared approach to routines particularly for active listening expectations. Staff have also been increasingly engaged in sharing good practice across the school as evidenced by the number of drop-in visits that have taken place and 'shout outs' when staff have seen excellent classroom practice. So far this academic year 179 drop-in visits have taken place and 95 'shout outs' have been given for teachers who deserve to be publicly praised .

Drop in visits provide an opportunity for staff to:

- Observe the implementation of routines
- Identify emerging strengths
- Provide quick, supportive feedback
- Detect whole-school patterns and CPD needs

Drop-ins have helped ensure that training is having a clear impact in day-to-day teaching and have strengthened dialogue around professional development. In addition they enable SLT and Curriculum Leaders to identify appropriate CPD at a whole school, department and individual level.

Staff Induction

The staff induction programme is well embedded and supports ECTs, trainee teachers and new staff in professional development including training specific to Neston High School. Sessions this term have included a focus on 'Effective use of LSAs', 'Data systems and using data effectively' and a session on 'My life as an ECT' in order for previous ECTs to share experiences and support staff well-being.

This year we have 3 ECTs in Year 1 and 4 ECTs in Year 2 of the programme. In addition to school training Year 1 ECTs are supported by UCL for training and face to face events and Year 2 ECTs are supported by Best Practice Network.

The school is currently supporting PGCE students from Chester University in Science and P.E. as well as a trainee in History from Associated Merseyside Partnership School Centred Initial Teacher Training.

National Professional Qualification courses

At present we have 5 staff who are completing an NPQ in Leading Teaching and one who is completing an NPQ in Leading Behaviour and Culture in order to further develop our teaching staff.

Visits this term from our Health and Safety consultants Compliance Education have covered:

- Briefing for all staff covering Health & Safety awareness in schools
- Site security review
- Review of site risk assessments
- COSHH register
- Staff risk assessments (medical and maternity)
- Lockdown procedure feedback
- Attend health & safety termly meeting with SLT & Unions

Next term:

- Curriculum area risk assessment reviews
- Accident reporting

Lockdown Drills

Two lockdown drills were conducted during the term. The first was a light-touch reassurance exercise carried out in classrooms to demonstrate the procedure to students. The second drill took place at the start of break to test the response during a less structured part of the day. Following both drills, staff were invited to provide feedback on what worked well and to suggest any areas for improvement.

Fire Drills

Two fire drills were also completed during the autumn term. The first occurred early in the term to familiarise students and new staff with evacuation procedures. The second was initiated in response to a false alarm but was treated as a full evacuation.

Kirsty Cunningham
November 2025