

# Brownedge St Mary's Catholic High School

Headteacher: Mrs N Oddie BA(Hons) NPQH



*Let your  
light shine*

Dear Parents/Carers

## September 2019 Newsletter

I am delighted to be writing to you as the new Head Teacher of Brownedge St. Mary's. It is a privilege to have been appointed by the school Governors and entrusted with the job of leading such a fantastic school.

Many of you will already know me; having started my career here almost 25 years ago. I worked alongside Mr Reynolds for 7 years as Deputy Headteacher and through my time here I have developed a deep understanding of our school and an unwavering belief in all our students. It is truly a warm, welcoming and vibrant place to be, where we work as a family to support, challenge and care for one another, striving continuously for excellence and to be the best that we can be. Our school is a family school, where all staff know every student and relationships matter. I am determined that our school builds on this legacy and continues to flourish. Many new initiatives have already been implemented in order to lay solid foundations to support our drive for excellence and we are at an exciting stage in our development with high aspirations for our future success.

I am looking forward to working with the whole community as we strive for even greater success for all our young people. In 2014 Pope Francis quoted an African proverb, which says: 'It takes a village to raise a child.' By working together, in partnership, we can ensure that all our students 'let their light shine', make excellent progress and leave us with the necessary skills and attitudes to lead successful and fulfilling lives.

The start of the year is a good time to share news and to bring to your minds once again existing important procedures and practices for the smooth running of our school.

### Staff Update

The start of the new term sees thirteen new staff join Brownedge in various positions across the school – a record in my time at school. Five of these new staff join our superb support and administration staff in school – Miss Adams as Technology/Art Technician, Miss Bowe as Lay Chaplain, Mrs Chester as Admissions Officer and PA, Miss Conway as HLTA and Mr S Wilson as Behaviour Mentor. Our teaching staff has also increased by eight members – a true reflection of our increasing pupil roll and of the popularity of the school as parents first choice in the local area. Miss Bleasdale joins us as Assistant Headteacher and Food Technology specialist, Mr Booth in PE and Maths, Miss Needham and Mrs Cleary in English, Mr Cowan in Maths, Mr Parr in Computer Science and Mr Duffy and Mrs Weights in RE. A very warm welcome to them all.

### GCSE 2019: great results!

Congratulations to our GCSE leavers who picked up their GCSEs in August. This was a record year for us in students scooping grades 9, 8 and 7 and a good measure of how we push our brightest students to do their best. And it wasn't just our able students that made good progress. The hard work and commitment put in by many students paid off! Staff, as always, worked so hard to ensure students did well. There was no secret formula for success this year. This is a real message for students in school now: **Keep working hard, learn from mistakes and try, try again.**

### Uniform Matters

Like any good school we have a high standard of uniform, approved by Governors, which we daily enforce. Thank you for your support in this. Most students arrive smart, stay smart and leave the school smart. Where there are issues, they tend to be around the same areas: skirts and shoes. We have a constant battle on our hands in terms of skirts – they must not be rolled up and should sit naturally just above the knee. Shoes need to be within the published guidelines on the school website which can be found in the Information section.

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## **Open Evening Thursday 26th September: early school closure**

This takes place on Thursday September 26th at 6.30pm. As in previous years school will close at 12.50pm on this day to allow the school to fully prepare for this important evening. There will be no dinners served on this day but there will be more substantial snacks available in the mid-morning break. Pupils entitled to Free School Meals can draw down their allowance at morning break on this day. If you have a younger child in the school and this presents you with a problem, please let me know in a brief note and I will ensure your child is supervised in school until 3.05pm as normal. Many pupils have volunteered to help which is fantastic.

## **Punctuality and Attendance**

Punctuality to school and to lessons is vitally important. Poor punctuality affects learning and behaviour, not only of the pupil who is late, but it has an impact on all other learners. Punctuality is also a key workplace skill: employees that are regularly late for work lose their jobs. Last year we launched a new punctuality system in school with great impact. This year we are looking to roll this out to all years. Please look out for more information about this over the next few months. Details of school holidays for 2019-20 are published on the school website and next week they will be updated with details for 2020-2021. All our holiday patterns try to link with those of local primary schools. As you know, requests for holidays in term time can only be approved in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis. The vast majority are not approved. The Governing Body supports the use of Penalty Notices to improve pupils' attendance.

## **New POD Behaviour Unit**

September will see the opening of our new Behaviour Unit which has been given the name 'The POD'. POD is an acronym for Path of Damascus and pupils failing to live up to the behaviour expectations of school will spend time in the unit. The unit name is in reference to the conversion to Christianity of the apostle Paul whilst on the road to Damascus from Jerusalem. During this journey Paul 'saw the light' and we hope that pupils, from spending time in the unit will too, see the light, and where a great change in their attitude and behaviour takes place.

## **INSIGHT**

Many parents are taking advantage of our web-based portal called INSIGHT and viewing live information on their child's progress, attendance, behaviour and homework. This allows parents and carers to be kept up to date with all aspects of their child's learning in school. The link to Insight can be found on the school website as a tab at the top of the homepage. We have issued parents with passwords for Insight but if you cannot locate your password, please email Mr Banks and he will provide you with one. ([banksj@st-maryshigh.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:banksj@st-maryshigh.lancs.sch.uk))

## **Charity work in the next half term**

As a way of living out our **commitment to love, service and justice** in the local and global community we will be encouraging pupils to support two charity events this half term. Once again, we will be supporting the Macmillan Coffee Morning on Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> September and the Christmas Shoe Box Appeal with an own clothes day on Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> October. More information will follow on how to support these two wonderful causes.

## **Parent Views**

There will be many challenges ahead, not least an impending OFSTED and the Government changes to what is expected of schools. It is important that we work together to make sure OUR school serves the needs of OUR young people. Only by working together can we make sure our children enjoy school and develop the skills and knowledge they need to build successful, happy lives. To that end, I will be introducing Parent Forums with an opportunity for parents and carers to help shape the future of school through sharing ideas and concerns. If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact Mr Wilson via email on [wilson@st-maryshigh.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:wilson@st-maryshigh.lancs.sch.uk) and he will be in contact with further details.

I am really looking forward to working in partnership with you this year. I have no doubt that exciting times are ahead for our students and it is a privilege to be part of this journey. Wishing you a good Autumn.

Mrs Nicola Oddie  
Headteacher