

Brownedge St Mary's Catholic High School

Headteacher: Mrs N Oddie BA(Hons) NPQH



*Let your
light shine*

07 July 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

NEWSLETTER 12

As another academic year draws to a close, it is always a time for reflection. Looking back over the past ten months, I am filled with enormous pride in all that our pupils have achieved. From welcoming our newest Year 7 pupils last September to celebrating our Year 11 leavers as they completed their GCSE examinations, this has been another year full of growth, opportunity and success. As always, the full story of another incredibly busy term will be shared in our **Shining Lights** newsletter, available on Firefly and our social media channels before the summer holidays. It is always a wonderful reminder of just how much our pupils experience both inside and beyond the classroom.

Schools are measured in examination results, attendance figures and inspection outcomes, but those statistics only ever tell part of the story. What I will remember most about this year are the countless everyday moments that make Brownedge such a special place: pupils supporting one another, acts of kindness that often go unseen, achievements celebrated with humility and young people growing in confidence, character and faith. Every day, our pupils continue to demonstrate what it truly means to *'Let your light shine.'*

None of this would be possible without the support of our parents and carers. Thank you for the encouragement you provide at home, for working in partnership with us and for placing your trust in our school. Together, we continue to create a community where every child is known, valued and encouraged to become the very best version of themselves.

School Production – Sister Act Jnr

Our talented pupils have been working incredibly hard preparing for this year's school production of **Sister Act Jnr**. Rehearsals have been taking place for many weeks and I have no doubt audiences are in for a fantastic performance. There are still tickets available, and I would encourage anyone who has not yet booked to come along and support our pupils. School productions are always a highlight of the Brownedge calendar and provide our young people with the opportunity to develop confidence, teamwork and creativity whilst showcasing the remarkable talents we are fortunate to have within our school community.

Staffing Changes

At this time of year, we also say farewell to colleagues who are moving on to new opportunities. Mrs Preston (English) and Miss Sabino (Mathematics) leave Brownedge this summer to continue their careers in new schools. On behalf of pupils, parents, governors and staff, I would like to thank them both for their commitment and contribution to our school community. We wish them every happiness and success as they begin the next stage of their journey in education. We are equally delighted to welcome several new members of staff who will be joining us in September: **Mrs Parsons** – Second in English, **Mr Holloway** – Second in Mathematics, **Mrs Leese** – Teacher of Science, **Miss Cegielka** – Teacher of English and **Miss Abbott** – Teacher of Physical Education. I know they will receive a very warm Brownedge welcome and quickly become valued members of our school family.

Investing in Brownedge's Future

One thing that has always characterised Brownedge is that we never stand still. Every year we look for ways to improve the experience of our pupils, ensuring that our school continues to provide an environment where young people feel safe, inspired and proud to learn. Over the summer holiday, a significant programme of investment will take place across the school. Pupils returning in September will benefit from a brand-new, state-of-the-art Food Technology classroom, a dedicated Dance Studio within our sports facilities, enhanced entrance gates and further security improvements, including additional electronic door access systems and CCTV. We are also continuing to invest heavily in technology, with upgrades to our wireless network, new AI technologies to support teaching and learning, replacement interactive whiteboards, new teacher workstations and improved ICT resources throughout

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the school. Alongside this, new wall art and refreshed learning spaces will further enhance our environment, creating a school that reflects the ambition, creativity and sense of belonging we want every pupil to experience.

These improvements represent far more than new facilities. They demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing the very best learning environment for our pupils—one that supports high-quality teaching, encourages engagement, promotes wellbeing and ensures Brownedge remains a school where every young person can flourish.

Extreme Reading: Summer Reading Challenge 2026

"Get caught read-handed this summer." We are inviting all pupils (and staff!) to take part in our **Extreme Reading Competition 2026** (web link: [Reading Events | Brownedge St Mary's Catholic High School](#))! This is a chance to show that reading can happen anywhere! Pupils should take a safe, creative photograph of themselves reading in an unusual place and submit it with a short review comment explaining why their chosen book is a quality read. Entries should include the book title, author, photograph, and review comment to Mrs Crew. The deadline for submissions is **Friday 4th September 2026**.

Mobile Phone Consultation

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our recent consultation on the possible introduction of mobile phone pouches. We were delighted with the level of engagement and greatly appreciated the thoughtful and constructive feedback we received. 78% of pupils were supportive or strongly supportive of the proposal, with parents identifying improved concentration, fewer distractions, better pupil wellbeing, reduced social media issues and increased face-to-face interaction as the main potential benefits. The most common concerns related to communication between home and school, the practical arrangements at the start and end of the day, and ensuring phones remain safe and accessible when needed. These are all areas we are carefully considering as we review the proposal. We would like to invite all parents and carers to a further information and discussion evening on **Monday 13th July at 6.00pm**, where we will share the consultation findings in more detail, explain how the system would work and answer any questions before any final decision is made.

Free School Meals – Important Changes from September 2026

The Government has announced significant changes to Free School Meal eligibility from September 2026. The most important change is that **all children living in households receiving Universal Credit will now be entitled to Free School Meals**, meaning many more families will qualify than under the current system. If your child already receives Free School Meals, Lancashire County Council will automatically review your eligibility before the start of the new academic year and will contact you if there is any change to your entitlement. Families who have not previously qualified but who receive Universal Credit are encouraged to apply as soon as possible so that support can be in place for September. Even if your child chooses not to have a school meal, registering for Free School Meals helps schools secure additional funding that supports pupils' education and wellbeing. If you think your family may now be eligible, or would like further advice, please contact Lancashire County Council's Pupil Access Team FSM.South@lancashire.gov.uk or speak to the school office, who will be happy to help.

Holiday activities and FSM Vouchers Summer 2026

Families eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals can also access Lancashire's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme over the summer holidays, offering free activities and healthy meals for children. Details of local provision are available on the Lancashire County Council website. If you are interested in seeing what is on offer, please visit southribble.gov.uk/haf or contact haf@southribble.gov.uk

Uniform Reminder for September

A reminder that, from September 2026, in line with Government guidance, the only compulsory branded items will be the school blazer, tie, girls' skirt and PE t-shirt. Our branded PE quarter-zip fleece, shorts, skirt and leggings will continue to be available to purchase for families who wish to do so but are no longer compulsory. A reminder that the quarter-zip fleece can worn in the winter as a jumper, under the school blazer. We also ask parents to ensure that all pupils return in the correct uniform.

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In particular, girls choosing to wear trousers should wear **straight, tailored school trousers**. Leggings, jeggings, flared or bell-bottom styles, and trousers made from stretchy lycra or sportswear-style materials are **not** part of our school uniform. Please also ensure pupils meet our expectations regarding shoes, hair, jewellery and piercings. Full uniform guidance is available on our website, and we are happy to advise if you are unsure before purchasing uniform for September.

Uniform Pop-up shop

South Ribble Borough Council will be operating a 1-day School Uniform pop-up shop for all schools in South Ribble at Bamber Bridge Methodist Church on Thursday 6 August from 10am to 3pm. For further information please contact: communities@southribble.gov.uk

Keeping Safe This Summer

As the summer holidays begin, I would like to encourage all parents and carers to spend a few moments talking to their children about staying safe. Sadly, there have been a number of tragic incidents across our local area over the past year, reminding us how quickly situations can become dangerous.

We have spoken to pupils in school about the risks associated with open water, railway lines and other hazardous locations, and we ask that these important messages are reinforced at home. We also encourage families to remind young people about staying safe when out with friends, making sensible decisions online and knowing what to do if they ever feel unsafe or concerned. The summer holidays should be a time for rest, enjoyment and making happy memories. By continuing to work together, we can help ensure that all of our young people return to school in September safe, well and ready for another successful year. Further advice and practical guidance on keeping young people safe this summer can be found on the following websites:

- [RNLI – Float to Live](#)
- [Network Rail – Rail Safety](#)

School Holidays Next Year

The school holiday times are printed at the end of this letter. Please do not take holidays during term time.

End of Term and September Return

We end the school year, as is our tradition, with our whole school Celebration of the Word at St Mary's Church. School will finish at approximately **1.15pm** on the final day of term, **Friday 17 July**. There will be no school dinners available, although our usual breaktime provision will remain available. We look forward to welcoming Year 7 pupils as they begin their Brownedge journey in September, together with all of our returning pupils as we begin another exciting academic year. **We reopen on Thursday 3rd September**. Year 7 pupils will start their high school journey at 8.30am, with all other year groups joining at 9.30am. Pupils are to gather on the Tennis Courts to be welcomed by their Form Tutors and Heads of House.

I continue to feel enormously proud of what our pupils have achieved and of the community we have built together. Brownedge is far more than a school; it is a family built on faith, respect, service and a shared commitment to helping every young person flourish. I hope you and your families enjoy a safe, restful and well-deserved summer break. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in September, refreshed and ready for another exciting year of learning, opportunity and success.

With every blessing,

Mrs N Oddie
Headteacher

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Let your

Term Dates 2026-27

<u>Autumn Term 2025</u>	
INSET DAY	Tuesday 1 st September 2026
INSET DAY	Wednesday 2 nd September 2026
School Reopens	Thursday 3 rd September 2026
Last Day of School for Half-Term 1	Friday 23 rd October 2026
School Reopens for Half-Term 2	Monday 2 nd November 2026
Last Day of School for Half-Term 2	Friday 18 th December 2026
<u>Spring Term 2027</u>	
School Reopens for Half-Term 3	Monday 4 th January 2027
Last Day of School for Half-Term 3	Friday 12 th February 2027
School Reopens for Half-Term 4	Monday 22 nd February 2027
Last Day of School for Half-Term 4	Thursday 25 th March 2027
<u>Summer Term 2026</u>	
School Reopens for Half-Term 5	Monday 12 th April 2027
Bank Holiday	Monday 3 rd May 2027
Last Day of School for Half-Term 5	Friday 28 th May 2027
School Reopens for Half-Term 6	Monday 7 th June 2027
Last Day of School for Half-Term 6	Friday 16 th July 2027
INSET DAY	Monday 19 th July 2027
INSET Day	Tuesday 20 th July 2027
INSET Day	Wednesday 21 st July 2027