

# Brownedge St Mary's Catholic High School

Headteacher: Mrs N Oddie BA(Hons) NPQH



16 December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

## Christmas Newsletter 2024

As we reach the end of a long and fruitful term, we want to take a moment to reflect on all that has been achieved. Our pupils have produced some truly superb work, and the dedication of our staff has been inspiring. Every member of our school community has worked together to “let their light shine,” creating a supportive and vibrant environment for all. Find out all about our community’s achievements in our latest edition of Shining Lights – our termly newsletter. [To access editions of Shining Lights or Headteacher newsletters please click here](#)

I am also deeply grateful to you, our parents and guardians, for the vital role you play in this partnership—your encouragement, support, and involvement have been key to making this term such a success. As always, your voice and opinion matter and I would like to thank all who expressed an interest in supporting our parent forums. For future dates, please see our website for more details.

As we enter the third week of Advent, a time of joyful waiting, we are reminded of the hope and light the coming of Christ brings. May this season inspire us all as we look forward to Christmas with faith and anticipation. Looking ahead to 2025, I would like to share some important updates as we prepare for the New Year and the beginning of the Spring term.

### Staffing Update

We bid a fond farewell to Ms. Lane, our teacher of Geography, as she moves on to new opportunities. As a school community, we send her our heartfelt love and best wishes, and on behalf of the entire Brownedge family, we wish her every success in her future endeavours. Next term, we are delighted to welcome Mrs. Saint, who will be joining us as our new teacher of Health and Social Care. We look forward to her becoming a valued member of the Brownedge family. Congratulations also to two new Brownedge babies. Both Mrs Kellett and Mrs Tilling have had beautiful baby girls. We send them our love and wish them happiness and joy over the coming months; and hopefully restful nights too!

### Recognised Rewards

We are thrilled to share that Miss Oldham has received a national award for outstanding SEND provision—a testament to her incredible dedication and hard work. Additionally, our entire school community has been recognized with a national award for attendance, reflecting the importance of working together to support excellent attendance across the school. Attendance is vital for pupils' progress and enjoyment of school, and this recognition is a result of the shared commitment of staff, pupils, and parents. We want to thank you, our parents and guardians, for your crucial role in encouraging and supporting regular attendance—it truly makes a difference. Well done to everyone for this fantastic achievement!

### Beacon Award

Last year, we introduced our very own recognition award for pupils that work hard and contribute both inside and outside of school. The award highlights opportunities for pupils to contribute to our school and wider community by living out our Gospel values and “letting their light shine.” The award encourages pupils to step outside their comfort zones and develop new skills and interests. There are 3 stages of the award: Bronze, Silver and Gold and work in a very similar way to the Duke of Edinburgh Award, but more for Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils. Pupils have to complete tasks in order to get elements of the award “signed off”; this can include attending a CASEO club or enrichment opportunity, a club outside school, participating in a charity afternoon or Mary day activity and receiving Hope, Patience and Justice positive awards. It was fantastic to see over 50 pupils achieve the Bronze Award in its first year. Please encourage your child to get involved and see what colour award they can reach by the end of Year 9. How many will be distributed this year at church in our end of year celebration on Friday?

### Rewards Trips

It is superb to see so many pupils receiving rewards for their hard work, dedication and commitment to school. Over 400 pupils have accessed trips to Level, The Trafford Centre and Manchester Markets. Well done to all. If it wasn't to

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be this time, there are new opportunities to get involved next term as the count for criteria starts again after Christmas. Watch this space for more information on how to be able to be access these in 2025. I'd like to remind parents and pupils that if any pupil is absent on Wednesday and Friday without an authorised absence, then they will automatically forfeit the opportunity to access the next reward trip either in Spring or Summer. **Attendance on Wednesday and Friday is crucial!**

## Pupil Voice

We believe wholeheartedly that pupil voice is essential in creating a unified school community, where everyone feels part of one family. This term, we have been inspired by the exceptional work of our School House Council, including our pupil Senior Management Team. Both councils have taken on leadership roles in shaping key strategic and everyday decisions for the school. The members of each council have shown remarkable maturity and dedication, which is truly commendable. The School House Councils have played a central role in shaping new behaviour systems, planning the end-of-term rewards day, and contributing to the evaluation of behaviour, attendance, punctuality, and new school facilities. Their involvement has been invaluable.

## Charity Work this half term

Operation Christmas Child - Parents may recall that we once again supported Operation Christmas Child, run by Samaritan's Purse, this year. Thank you for the generous donations sent into school. We are proud to have sent over 45 shoeboxes to help children in greatest need.

Christmas Market - Many thanks to all who supported our Annual Christmas Markets. Our school hall had a buzz of festive celebration and merriment with over 40 stalls selling beautiful gifts and food. Father Christmas visited too and with his band of happy elves worked hard to discern those on the good list! A total of £1,066 was made in support of St Catherine's Hospice; a great achievement.

Christmas Jumper Day – Our Christmas Jumper Day this year was the best supported yet with over 200 pupils wearing their jumpers. Thank you for all who brought a tin in as a donation to our local food bank at St Aidan's Church.

## Christmas Food Vouchers

We can confirm that approval has been granted for schools to utilise the LCC Edenred account to order Christmas vouchers for benefits-eligible FSM pupils. Each eligible pupil will be issued with a £30 voucher to cover the two-week holiday period. Please contact [Mr Burrows](#), our school Business Manager if you have any questions.

## Holiday Pattern 2025-26

[The details of school holidays for 2025-26 have now been published on the school website.](#) With children from many feeder primary schools, it is not always easy to ensure our holiday pattern fits in with all other schools. However, we have followed closely the Lancashire pattern. I hope this will help reduce the number of requests for holidays to be taken in term time. With the new Government directives regarding fines for those taking consecutive holidays, please make sure you are aware of our published dates before booking for next year.

## End of School Arrangements

School finishes for Christmas on **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December at 1pm** approximately. We hope to celebrate Advent by holding a liturgy at St Mary's Church. There will be no school dinners served on this day, but there will be an extended break, with our usual food being served. **School will reopen on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January at 8.30am as normal.** We will publish this on the website at the start of January to help remember timings.

Wishing you a very joyful and rested Christmas. I wish you a very well-earned festive break and here's to a new year with plenty of opportunities to explore.

Kindest regards

Mrs Nicola Oddie  
Head Teacher