

Brownedge St Mary's Catholic High School

Headteacher: Mrs N Oddie BA(Hons) NPQH



Let your
light shine

09 March 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

NEWSLETTER 7

As we move into the second half of the spring term, we begin our journey towards Easter. During the half-term break we marked the start of **Lent**, an important season in the life of our Catholic school community. Lent encourages us to reflect on the three pillars of **Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving**, considering how we grow in faith and support others. **Prayer** continues to be central to daily life in school, and during Lent we take additional opportunities to pause and reflect together. These include **Eucharistic Adoration on Thursday lunchtimes and Stations of the Cross during Friday lunchtimes**, offering a quiet space for prayer during this special season. Pupils, families and staff are warmly invited to join our **weekly Mass every Tuesday at 3.15pm in the school chapel**. Through **almsgiving**, pupils will support a number of charitable initiatives including **St Joseph's Penny Box** and taking part in the **CAFOD Big Lent Walk**. Our Lenten fundraising will culminate in the ever-popular **Charity Afternoon**, where House forms organise activities to raise money for their chosen charities. We look forward to sharing some of the highlights in the Spring edition of our *Shining Lights* newsletter.

Mobile Phones and Contact During the School Day

Mobile phones and their impact on young people have been widely discussed in the media, particularly in relation to distraction, wellbeing, and learning. We are pleased that, in school, pupils generally meet expectations and mobile phones do not disrupt learning. However, we continue to see concerns where pupils use mobile phones to contact home during the school day. Pupils must not contact parents or carers directly during school hours, as this can lead to unnecessary worry before staff have the opportunity to support the situation appropriately. Pupils are always able to contact home through school staff when needed. After half term, any pupil found contacting home directly during the school day using a mobile phone will receive an extended detention, and the phone will be confiscated in line with our behaviour policy. We thank parents and carers for reinforcing this expectation at home so that the school day remains calm, safe, and focused for all.

Preston Vault Youth Zone

At the beginning of this half term, school had the opportunity to take a group of pupils to visit and experience the new **Vault Youth Zone** in Preston ahead of its opening. Pupils were able to explore the fantastic facilities and take part in a range of activities including sport, climbing, music and creative arts. The centre provides a safe, welcoming space for young people aged **11–16** to spend time with friends, try new activities and access support from trained youth workers, all for a small membership fee. If you would like to find out more about membership or the activities available, please [visit the website or contact the Youth Zone directly](#) through the information provided on their site.



Big Lent Walk As part of our Lenten activities, pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 will once again be taking part in CAFOD's Big Lent Walk on Wednesday 25th March. CAFOD challenge supporters to walk 200km over the forty days of Lent, but at Brownedge we will be attempting to complete that distance together in just a few hours through the combined efforts of our school community. To support this important cause, we have set up a JustGiving page where donations can be made. Mr Hayhurst will share further details about the day shortly, but if you would like to support the event now, please use the QR code to donate and help us raise funds for this worthwhile charity. [Big Lent Walk](#)

Expressive Arts Evening and School Production – Save the Dates!

We are looking forward to hosting an Expressive Arts Evening in school, where pupils will have the opportunity to showcase their talents across music, drama, art and dance. This promises to be a wonderful celebration of the creativity within our school community, giving pupils the chance to share their gifts and confidence with family and friends. The date – **Wednesday 1st April at 7pm** in our school hall. Building on this celebration of the arts, rehearsals are also in full swing for this year's school production of *Sister Act*. The hall is already filled with the sound of uplifting music, big dance numbers and plenty of laughter as our talented cast and crew work hard to bring this vibrant, feel-good show to life. It promises to be a fantastic evening of entertainment, and we would love to see as many parents,

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families and friends there as possible to support our performers. Save the dates – **8th, 9th and 10th July** and get ready to clap along — it's going to be a joyful night! Ticket details will be shared very soon.

Primary School Visits

This half term we are delighted to welcome pupils from our local primary schools to Brownedge for our **Year 5 Taster Days**. These visits give pupils the opportunity to experience life at Brownedge, take part in a range of exciting activities and begin to get a feel for our school community. It is always a real joy to meet the young people who may soon become part of our school, and our pupil leaders take great pride in helping to guide and support them throughout the day. Seeing their excitement, curiosity and enthusiasm reminds us how special these early connections are. We hope these visits help pupils feel a sense of welcome and belonging as they begin to see themselves as part of the **Brownedge family**, and we look forward to welcoming many of them back in the years ahead.

Year 11

Over the coming weeks, our Year 11 pupils begin the final stage of their journey towards their GCSE examinations. This is an important and demanding time, and we are incredibly proud of the commitment and resilience they have shown throughout their time at Brownedge. As a school community, we will continue to support and encourage them in every way we can during these final preparations. We wish all of our Year 11 pupils the very best as they approach their exams and thank families for the support they provide at home. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers during the weeks ahead as they work towards this important milestone in their education.

Food Vouchers

Families of pupils eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals will continue to receive supermarket vouchers for the Easter holiday period, funded through Lancashire County Council's Household Support Fund. These vouchers help support families with food costs during the school holidays, and details about how they will be distributed will be shared with eligible families shortly. Please contact [Mr Burrows](#), our school Business Manager if you have any questions.

Lancashire County Council have recently confirmed that the Household Support Fund will end from April 2026 and will be replaced by a new Crisis and Resilience Fund. Under the new arrangements, holiday free school meal vouchers will no longer be provided automatically during school holidays. While further details about the new support scheme are expected later in the year, we wanted to make families aware of this change in advance. As always, if families need support or advice, please do not hesitate to contact school and we will do our best to help signpost appropriate services.

Thank you, as always, for the continued support you show to the school and to our wider community. The strong partnership between school and home plays such an important role in helping our pupils thrive, and we are very grateful for the encouragement, understanding and positivity that families bring to all aspects of school life.

Kindest regards

Mrs N Oddie, Headteacher