

Spring Term Newsletter 2

23rd May 2025



**BROOKTHORPE
HALL SCHOOL**

Message from the Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been an unusually short term, but we have certainly packed a lot in at Brookthorpe. I am extremely proud to confirm that our most recent OFSTED monitoring inspection on 26th March confirmed that Brookthorpe Hall has met all Independent School Standards. As a school community, we have all worked together to ensure that our pupils receive the very best in terms of academic and holistic opportunities and I would not only like to thank all our staff team but also parents for their continued support as we have been on this journey of improvement together. This journey does not end here! This is only the beginning as we are now moving forwards with great confidence to inspire our pupils to be the very best that they can be.

I have also been very impressed with the success of the new rewards system that was launched in only January. Pupils are frequently achieving their 'reward time' and the end of each day and are now beginning to engage with reflection time too. A number of class rewards have also been achieved with some classes enjoying watching a selected film with their favourite foods or even another class trip to Ninja Warrior in Gloucester.

Looking forward to next term, I am delighted to confirm that Maxine Hughes will be joining us as a teacher in our Upper Phase at the start of next term. Maxine joins us as a vastly experienced teacher who has taught at other SEND settings, and we look forward to welcoming her to our staff team very soon.

Please also take a careful look at our 'dates for the diary' page as pupils and staff are already preparing for our Summer Fayre that will be hosted on Friday 20th June. Like our successful Christmas Fayre, pupils are organising and preparing stalls as part of their Careers lessons, and I am looking forward to seeing their entrepreneurial spirit once again. We will also be hosting an end of year BBQ on 16th July and a leavers' assembly on 18th July.

Please have a wonderful half-term. I am looking forward to celebrating a very successful academic year with pupils and their families this summer.



Jon Bell (Headteacher)

Beltane Fire Festival

Thursday 1st May

As part of our curriculum, we celebrate festivals from a variety of cultures. We recently enjoyed celebrating Eid al-Fitr and this term pupils have focused on the Scottish Beltane Festival. Beltane is an old Gaelic festival to welcome in the summer where hopes and wishes are shared and crowns are made to thank the earth for the good things it provides us. To celebrate Beltane all pupils and staff participated in food tasting, ribbon stick making, flower crown making, fire pit activities and traditional Highland Games. It was another wonderful moment where our school community came together again!

Thank you to our psychotherapist, Fiona, for organising such a wonderful festival.





Shoelaces and Seeds!

Larch Class have been working hard on lots of things this half term; reading Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, fractions in Maths, staying active in PE and Forest Green Rovers and looking at our favourite place in Geography.

However, our highlights have been learning to tie shoelaces and planting some seeds! We've been using the bunny ears method when practising our laces and we are growing brad beans and hopefully we will be able to try some of our cress before half term!



Laura (Larch Class Teacher)
Dani (Teaching Assistant)
Cat (Teaching Assistant)

Oak Class



Oak class have been making the most of the nice weather and participating in a range of different activities outside whilst it has been sunny. The students have really enjoyed helping Jim building the new allotment and were excited to get to have a go with some of Jim's tools to do some real construction work. The class also thoroughly enjoyed a PSHE lesson in which every student had the opportunity to pot and plant their own sunflower, and all of them got stuck in enjoying the hands-on nature of the lesson. We were very fortunate to have Jacqui join us for our weekly show and tell and she mentioned that "it was wonderful to see the students engaging with each other and asking questions". It has been wonderful each week seeing the students bring in something special to themselves and having the opportunity to share it with their classmates and friends!



Toby (Yew Class Teacher)
Sam & Jan (Teaching Assistants)



Over the past few weeks, Yew class has been diving into a series of engaging and meaningful lessons designed to spark curiosity and build essential skills. We've explored Queen Elizabeth II early childhood and her own experiences of World War II, identifying key characters in the story of Charlie and the Chocolate factory, helping to build an allotment in the grass area and explored patterns and textures. We have been encouraging students to think critically, ask questions, and connect their learning to the world around them. A highlight this term was a visit from the Army, where students had the opportunity to learn about teamwork, and the diverse range of roles within the military. It was an inspiring and informative experience for all.





This term in English we have been looking at the book 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'. We have enjoyed reading the story as a class. We have also been focusing on Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives and Adverbs when completing our work.

This term in Art we have worked around a theme of robots. The students have been very creative in designing their own 'Eco friendly' robots, using recycled materials, and will eventually make our own using recycled items such as cardboard boxes, plastic bottles and plastic lids etc. We also looked at the use of robots in Art. There were some amazing drawings, we have some very talented Artists in Pine.

In Geography we looked at the different areas of our school from an aerial photograph and learnt how to create a route map on the photograph to show someone that has never visited the school before, to help them find important areas.

In History, we have been looking at the life of Queen Elizabeth II. The students have enjoyed learning about the Queen's life from birth to adult hood, and learning what she was like as a child, growing up in the Royal Family.



Instead of Cooking this term, we have started to create our very own Allotment in school for the students to grow their own produce, whilst learning some new skills. The students have really engaged with the activity and have enjoyed using different tools to build the boundary fencing for the Allotment, whilst working as a team, with students from other years.

Pine Class



The students are continuing to enjoy their PE sessions with Jurell and were introduced to Hockey this term, where they learnt how to control the ball by passing it to one another.

Pine class have enjoyed meeting Maya's new Chicks that she has hatched from eggs. Maya brought in her most recently hatched chicks, and one that was a few weeks old, to show the difference in size.



Now the weather is getting warmer, the students have enjoyed taking part in firing water rockets, and sling shot water bombs at the Wilderness Centre, where they get the opportunity to stay nice and cool.



Robyn (Pine Class Teacher)
Ellie & Manu (Teaching Assistants)

Acorn Class



This term in Acorns we have been learning about the film Bugs Life and the importance of working with others to achieve different types of outcomes.

We were very proud of all the boys for playing alongside each other and sharing the sand pit, which they have done amazingly with.

We have told the boys that were doing dinosaurs next term, which they are all very much looking forward to!

Have a fab break boys!!



Palm Class



It has been a short but very busy term in Palm class with lots of learning opportunities. As part of careers, Major Fulford came to visit the boys in their classroom. A lot of fun was had trying on the different hats and learning how to salute. The boys were privileged to look at two photo albums. Both albums were put together during active service. Hazel bought in her Grandad's medals from his time in the Navy. Major Fulford was full of information about each medal and the battles which her grandad was in. He also told Hazel how she could research her Grandad's military history. Something which is already happening!



The pupils in Palm class celebrated VE day. They used their artistic skills to make flags and banners. They also decorate paper tea pots and cups using vintage style print outs.

Maya bought her 4-week-old chicks into school. Tommy had the confidence to stroke one of the chicks. Well done, Tommy! The class continue to enjoy Wednesday morning trips out with Ed. The boys are learning where the best parks are in the local community. Sam helped Ed complete a vehicle check before one trip. Great work Sam, it's good to know the school car is in good working order.

Each Tuesday we are now treated to a relaxing Storytime with Sue. We pull down the blinds in the classroom, turn on our sensory egg lights, get comfy and just enjoy listening to the story. Palm class are already looking forward to the summer fayre. Team Palm are busy making birthday cards and thank you cards to sell on the day.

Hazel (Palm Class Teacher)
Monali (Teaching Assistant)

Upper Phase English



The students in Upper Phase English have been looking at how a charity works. They have researched local charities and will choose one to support for the Summer Fayre. Working closely with Careers, we will expect a visit from local charities, who will tell us about their work and how they raise money. Within this scheme of work, students have revised spelling, punctuation and grammar skills and they will practise their writing skills by sending letters to their chosen charity.



Birch Class

In Birch, students have enjoyed a variety of different activities. They've held baby chicks; they've baked scones with fresh strawberries and cream for a delicious cream tea; and they have planted vegetable seeds in preparation for their plant stall at the Summer Fayre. This week, we will enjoy a trip to Stratford Park for an ice cream as a reward for excellent behaviour and work this term. Go, Birch!

Louise Taylor (Head of English and Birch Class Tutor)
Sue and Claire (Birch Class Teaching Assistants)

Upper Phase Maths



Upper Phase Maths this term –

Yet again the students continue to make excellent progress in maths at Brookthorpe Hall School. It has been brilliant to see the confidence of each individual grow and students are starting to become excellent problem-solvers.

When I started here maths felt like a bit of a barrier to many of our learners however, it has been great to see how well they are flourishing. This has been strengthened by some fantastic results in our latest assessment. Students who I would like to give a special mention to for their progress are:

- Theo – achieving a good score in his Functional Skills Entry Level 2 assessment.
- Oliver –completing his first ever Functional Skills Entry Level 2 assessment.
- Dalton – for improving his Functional Skills Entry Level 2 assessment.
- Jonah – for improving his Functional Skills Entry Level 3 assessment.
- Shay – for improving his Functional Skills Entry Level 3 assessment.
- Jack – scoring a fantastic grade in his Functional Skills Entry Level 3 assessment which was the highest amongst all of the Upper Phase.

I could not be prouder of how the students in Upper Phase have taken to maths this academic year to date, the attitudes to learning are incredible and they are really seeing the success of their hard work.

Russell Beacham (Head of Maths)

Upper Phase Maths & Science



Upper Phase Maths

Another great term in Upper Phase maths has seen students really take the next big leap in terms of their progress. There has been a real focus on students being able to articulate what maths they are doing as well as showing what they have done to solve a problem. The reason for this was that it deepens their thinking and stretches them to answer the question as to why.

The main objective of maths this term has been to focus on students critical thinking skills and encourage them to check their work and provide self/peer feedback before having their work marked by the teacher. This added responsibility for their own learning has resulted in all students progressing this term and it has been great to see. I would like to give shout outs to Shay, Andrzej, Jack, Simrah, Kelan, Dalton, Theo, Turner and Jenson who have all made fantastic progress in all areas of maths this term, keep it up!

Upper Phase Science

Science this term has taken a very different look this term compared to previous terms. As a school we have wanted to get students interested in the world of science and understand how fun it can be, that is the reason why we have been doing experiments in every lesson this term. Students have used physics to create towers to support weight, chemistry to create their own lava lamps and next term will be using biology to understand the water cycle. All the students in upper phase have engaged in all these lessons and have given each experiment their best efforts.

Russell Beacham (Head of Maths)

Elm Class



Elm Class

This term has been a great term for the newly formed Elm class, with the class increasing from 3 students to 7 students it has been great to see the interactions and friendships that have been made in such a short period of time.

Elm class have received brilliant feedback from teachers, especially in: Maths, English, Science, Careers and PE. Elm class have enjoyed a great term at the wilderness centre where they have taken part in activities such as archery, walking across the Malvern Hills, shooting and water fights. The class should be really proud of the progress in and out of the classroom they have made this term.



Russell Beacham (Elm Class tutor)
Saria, Leanne and Michaela (Teaching Assistants)

Cedar Class

Cedar have had a brilliant half term and have reached their Fuzzy rewards which they have chosen to go to Ninja Warrior for! They work hard to support each other and always try their best to complete each lesson to the best of their ability. Students are beginning to form some lovely friendships with the new students in the class which has been lovely to see.

The Cedar boys have enjoyed playing lots of games out in the sunshine during breaktime and structured outside time. They all have such wonderful imaginations and sure do know how to come up with a fun game!

Cedar have enjoyed their PSHE lessons this half term, learning about healthy eating and gardening. They too have enjoyed making some savoury dishes in cooking, including omelettes! In art, they have been drawing doodles, which we hope to print onto sellable items for the summer fayre. In geography, Cedar have been starting to learn about earthquakes, and their knowledge is quite impressive! Cedar continues to smash their maths lessons and enjoy reading *After*, by Morris Gleitzman, in English, which continues to educate students about the Holocaust.

This half term, we celebrated our first Scottish Highland Games, as part of our International Education. Cedar absolutely loved getting involved, particularly with the Tug of War!

Well done Cedar on a brilliant half term.

Emma Prendergast (Cedar Class Tutor)
Carina (Cedar Teaching Assistant)

Outdoor Education

The hot weather is here, and we've been making the most of it at the Wilderness Centre and beyond! Some favourite activities like Archery Tag and Water Rockets have continued, but we have also tried out some new things including our water balloon slingshots. There have also been a few water balloon battles which have been great fun!

Other highlights have included a brilliant walk in the Malvern Hills, a visit from the Police sniffer dogs and a great Air Rifles session!

Lots to look forward to after the half term break including Paddleboarding, Raft Building and much more!

Well done everyone and thanks for all your enthusiasm!



Ed Farrow (Head of Outdoor Education)

PSHE has turned a page this half term; we have moved onto learning about Independent Living Skills. The short half term has been the perfect amount of time to have a bit of fun whilst learning and exploring real life avenues.

Upper Phase worked hard learning about nutrition, looking at food groups, balanced diets and simple, but healthy meals that they can make at home. They even got to make a simple chicken wrap with salad, which they enjoyed eating in class!

They later moved onto learning about benefits of being amongst nature, and the importance of gardening for our environment and our minds, whilst planting their own sunflowers, carrots and potatoes!

Furthermore, and in our final week before the holiday, they will be helping to keep the school grounds tidy, including picking up rubbish, watering the plants and trimming back some trees.

Lower Phase has similarly looked at nutrition, meal preparation and balanced diets. They too have enjoyed planting their sunflowers, carrots and potatoes and later, next week, will move onto looking at how to stay safe in the community, including recognising unsafe situations and knowing emergency numbers.

Each topic has been carefully picked in aim to teach students several skills that they might be able to use either at home, or during life beyond school.

Next half term, Upper Phase students will be deep diving into Sex Education, well-being and relationships, and Lower Phase will be looking at relationships, self-care and hygiene.

Careers Update

This Term we had the second Army visit for Careers for Lower Phase . It was an interactive session, and the students asked lots of questions and enjoyed dressing up, looking at medals learning what items are stored in a soldier's kit including water purifying tablets and waterproof paper notebook.

We also had a visit from the Local Recycling centre on the M5 to talk about what they do and how we can recycle everyday items, this links to launching a student led project soon in school to improve the schools recycling and to raise awareness in school.

The Incredible Futures lessons continue, and the following students have achieved their AQA Award for:

Unit 1 Self Awareness:

Theo
Zeph
Amelie
Shay
Jack
Andrzej
Sam W
Ezra
Hugh
Kelan
LJ

Unit 2 Making Informed Career Choices:

Theo
Zeph
Jack

Careers Update

There will be opportunities for all students to achieve the AQA Award for each Module. Mod 3 'Why do we work' has started and is planned to be completed by the end of the year.

We have begun to create an allotment in school and many students have been supporting the process, putting up fences and drilling holes into the ground for the posts. We are hoping this will be an interactive experience for our students where they can learn to grow and nurture plants and create a calm/ sensory space.

Students are also getting involved in the planning of the Summer Fayre by choosing and planning what their class would like to do. We have students making things, baking, guess the name of the teddy and guess the number of sweets in the jar and back by popular demand, Tombola!!! To name a few.

Emma Watkins (Head of Careers)



Summer Fayre

Friday 20th June
2:00pm - 4:30pm



**BROOKTHORPE
HALL SCHOOL**

The money raised will go towards outdoor equipment and local charities!

Open to the community

Raffle, Tombola, Guess the weight of the cake, Name the teddy and various stalls...

Drinks and handmade cakes supplied by our students



**Brookthorpe Hall School
Stroud Road
Gloucester GL4 0UN**

£10 a table, plus a raffle prize!
Call 01452 717004 to book your table today



Outcomes
First Group

Options Autism

This term in PE we have moved onto athletics and explored different components of fitness which factor into sporting performance. We tested and measured power using the event of long jump, and tested agility using the Illinois agility test.

Long jump

Long jump has been both fun and educational, learning how to increase distance and using momentum to carry ourselves further. As well as seeing short term improvement in a lot of our students they found it extremely fun jumping and crashing onto the mats. Many students were willing to challenge themselves by increasing the distance which they needed to jump which further allowed us to explore the meaning of an 'invalid' attempt and 'remaining' attempts as the children really pushed themselves.



Jurell Williams (PE Teacher)



Safeguarding Update

This term our Safeguarding theme for staff CPD has been prevent and counterterrorism.

The aim of our Safeguarding theme this term, is to ensure we are keeping the young people within our school community safe within and outside of school. As a staff team, we have explored the indicators of radicalisation which includes behaviours and communication changes and what to do if we have a concern that a child is being radicalised or exploited, particularly online.

As parents it is important for you to be informed regarding Prevent as last year's prevent referrals across the UK (2024) were for young people aged between 11 and 15 years.

The Outcomes First Group policy **“Protecting children from Radicalisation and extremism defines the categories within prevent as:**

- Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

- Terrorism** (as defined in the Terrorism Act 2000) is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

• **Extremism** is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, which aims to: negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2). (updated from definition in the Prevent Duty 2011 New definition of extremism (2024))

The process of radicalisation is very subtle and can occur over a long period of time. The NSPCC shares that the process of radicalisation can include:

- being [groomed](#) online or in person
- exploitation, including [sexual exploitation](#)
- psychological manipulation
- exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information
- the risk of physical harm or death through extremist acts.

In addition, the NSPCC outline indicators that a young person is being radicalised:

- spend increasing amounts of time talking to people with extreme views (this includes online and offline communication)
- change their style of dress or personal appearance
- lose interest in friends and activities that are not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause
- have material or symbols associated with an extreme cause
- try to recruit others to join the cause

What can you do as parents:

- Create a safe space for them to talk
- Reassure them that you are there to help
- Be curious and take an interest in their online friendships

Additional information:

- [Educate Against Hate - Prevent Parent Booklet](#)
- [Educate Against Hate - Top Tips for Parents \(Online Safe](#)

Safeguarding Parent Survey

At Brookthorpe Hall School between February and May the Safeguarding team have been gaining the voices of staff and students about the school community and safeguarding culture.

The time has come to ask you, our parents and carers for your voices about the school community and safeguarding culture.

Please click the link below which is a Microsoft Forms. Can we ask that responses are sent to us by: Friday 13th June 2025.

[Parent and Carer school community survey](#)

Within the next school newsletter at the end of the academic year, we will publish the results of our school community and culture surveys.

Many thanks in advance for your cooperation.

Rhi Trevethan – Designated Safeguarding Lead



Term 6: Mon 2nd June – Mon 21st July 2025 36 days

Remaining INSET Days

- Friday 11th April 2025
- Monday 21st July 2025

[illegible]

Summer Bank Holiday 25th August 2025

[illegible]

Dates for the Diary!

- Summer Fayre: Friday 20th June
-
- School Disco: Friday 11th July. Lower and Upper Phase
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- End of year party/BBQ: 16TH July
-
- Leavers Celebration: 18th July



BROOKTHORPE HALL SCHOOL



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