

Winter Term Newsletter 1

24th October 2025



**BROOKTHORPE
HALL SCHOOL**

Message from the Headteacher

Firstly, I would like to welcome all our families and friends to our first newsletter of this academic year. Brookthorpe Hall's newsletters will be a termly celebration of pupils' achievements, events and key information for parents and carers.

It has certainly felt like a very long and indeed busy term and we have packed so much into eight school weeks. All pupils have made great progress in transitioning to new classes and for new pupils to the school itself. I am extremely proud of all upper phase pupils who have quickly focused to learning with many sitting Functional Skills in English, Maths and Reading. This is a huge milestone for Brookthorpe Hall, and we are all incredibly proud of pupils who have displayed great resilience and determination to sit their exams.

Lower phase pupils have also settled well, and I am very impressed with the high-quality phonics and reading sessions that are taking place across all classes. Pupils in lower phase have also enjoyed the opportunity to visit Skills Zone in Gloucester which is a key aspect of our preparation for adulthood/careers curriculum.

The Wilderness Centre continues to be an integral part of our wider curriculum. This is an outdoor education centre located in the Forest of Dean which we have exclusive use of through the course of every week. While lower phase pupils have begun to explore tunnels and slacklines, upper phase have enjoyed geocaching.

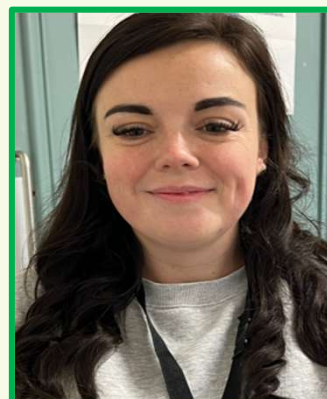
Through this term we have bid farewell to Manu Agarwal who was a long-standing Learning Support Assistant (LSA) in Pine Class who has pursued a career outside of education. We also say farewell to Fife in his role as cover supervisor. At the same time, I am delighted to welcome Erin Wylie to the Brookthorpe Hall team as a Learning Support Assistant. We also welcomed Lauren Rimmell to the team as a Pastoral Assistant. I look forward to confirming additional staffing appointments in the new term.

I would like to thank parents and carers for their continued support and to all our pupils for all their hard work and commitment this term. Everyone thoroughly deserves a rest over half-term and we look forward to welcoming pupils back to school on Monday 3rd November.

Jon Bell (Headteacher)



Lauren Rimmell



Erin Wylie

Acorn Class

We have had a fabulous start to the year in Acorns Class with our topic 'All About Me'. We have been learning all about ourselves, what we like and dislike, our families and some of our favourite things.

We have enjoyed sharing our favourite stories with the class and have begun writing some sentences in English that link to the stories we have been hearing.



In maths, the boys have worked hard to show off everything they have remembered from last year and we have learnt some new skills to do with numbers.



Within our topic this term, we have spent time with Hollie (our OT) to learn more about how our body feels and how we can help ourselves stay calm. We have learnt about skeletons and the different parts of our body and have explored lots of different sensory experiences to see what we like and dislike.



Well done for a great start to the year Acorns!

Beth (Acorn Class Teacher)
Claire & Kate (LSA)





Larch Class have had a brilliant start to the new school year! We have made some new friends, helped each other and learned some new brain-break skills.

We have been reading *The BFG* in English, practised our balancing in PE, built letters out of beads and Playdoh, we've learned a lot about Place Value in Maths and we've had fun at The Wilderness Centre!

We have looked at maps in Geography and found some of our favourite characters using Grid References. We've explored Solar Energy in Science and we've cooked veggie kebabs, rock buns and spring rolls!





Oak Class has been busy with lots of exciting learning this term! In Maths, we have been exploring place value through a range of hands-on activities to help us really understand how numbers work. The children have enjoyed using practical resources to build, compare, and order numbers - up to 3 digits.

In English, we recently finished reading *The Magic Finger* by Roald Dahl and have now started *The BFG*. The children are already enjoying learning about the characters and exploring Roald Dahl's imaginative language and storytelling style.

In Geography, we are learning about different types of settlements. To support our understanding, we have been investigating the type of settlement our school is in. This has included walking around the local area, making observations, and collecting data to help us draw our own conclusions.

It's been a fantastic few weeks of learning and discovery in Oak Class!

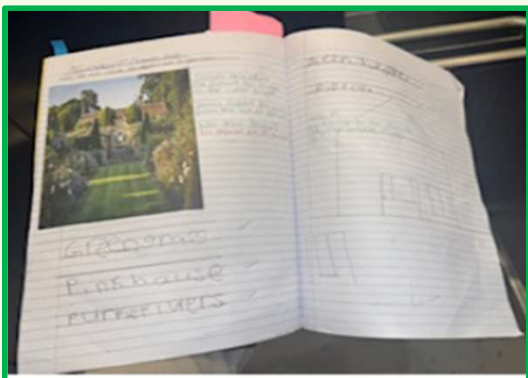
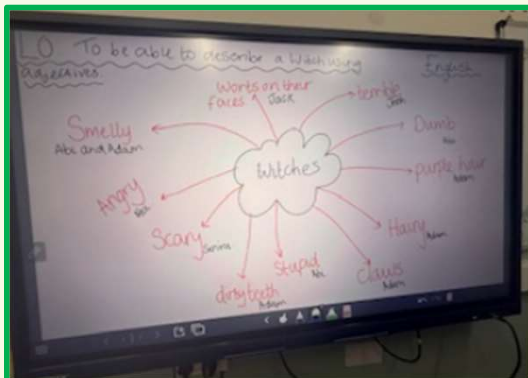


This term in Palm class we have welcomed a lot of new students, we have been learning how to take turns and sharing with other people.

We have also been learning about Roald Dahl, we have read two of his stories, The Magic Finger and The Witches, the children have enjoyed The Witches a lot being so close to Halloween.

We are very proud of the children in Palm class this term they have completed all their work and worked really hard during a long term.

Have a wonderful half term and we can't wait the next term!



Pine Class



This term in Pine we have introduced the students to Pet club, with the prospect of the students working towards their first AQA Award in Animal care. Linked to this, the students have visited the local farm next door to the school to meet the animals, and observe the different habitats that they live in. The students also got to sit on some actual farm machinery, which they especially loved doing, as well as feeding the pigs their morning feed, and interacting with the horses.

The students also visited 'All things wild', to gain some hands-on experience with the animals, including learning how to care for them, how to clean their enclosures and what food the different animals eat. Robyn is also hoping to plan a visit to a local animal rescue centre, so that the students can see the impact of animals that find themselves without the necessary love and care, and how they are cared for within the rescue centres.

We hope that receiving their first AQA Award will inspire the students to work hard to achieve their next AQA Award.



In Maths this term, the students have been looking at partitioning into the thousands. In English we have been working on using correct grammar and punctuation when forming a sentence. In Geography we have looked at the Countries and Counties within the United Kingdom.

In Science we have looked at the human digestive system and the students made their own models of the digestive system, using a variety of items. They used an inflated balloon to represent the stomach, some students used a cut up toilet roll tube to represent the small intestine, a pipe cleaner to show the oesophagus and play dough to mark out the gall bladder, diaphragm, large intestine and rectum.

Pine Class



The students are continuing to enjoy their Forest Green and PE sessions with Nethaniel and Jurell. This term in PE the students were introduced to Touch Rugby, and Hockey.

The students had an amazing trip to 'skill zone', as part of their career's lessons, learning about the different roles they could do in the future, including a shop keeper, police man, prison officer, road safety personnel etc. The students also learnt about different health and safety situations, such as not purchasing alcohol or tabaco if you're under the age of 18, not touching rubbish or used needles etc if found in a park or playground, how to stay safe if you're on your phone, road safety and fire safety in and around the home. The students were split into different groups, with students from different classes, allowing the students to work alongside and socialize with their peers, and had great fun visiting the different scenes that had been set up. Pine class students especially enjoyed getting to have a go at making a 999-emergency call, using a special interactive screen, that mimics a call handler in the various stations.





We have had a fantastic start to the Autumn Term in Yew class! We have learned lots of new skills in our lessons and enjoyed our learning.

In our Cooking sessions, we have been focusing on lots of different skills. When we made rock cakes, we firstly found out all about rationing and why rock cakes were so popular during WW2 before we developed our skills of weighing, mixing, rubbing-in and dividing



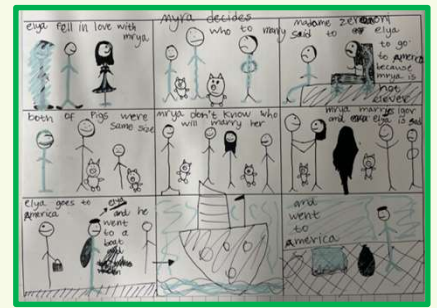
When we made our spring rolls, we discovered where they originated from, and that they had a filling and a pastry wrapper. We then had to chop, peel, grate and snip our ingredients to make our own. They were delicious!

We've had fun in our English lessons, too! We have been reading *The Magic Finger* by Roald Dahl. It's a very funny book but teaches us a few lessons too. We have explored some of the characters and used adjectives to describe them. We even created our WANTED poster. We also used drama to recreate the story through frieze-frame photos and some hand-drawn illustrations to make our own version to read to another class.

We are looking forward to next term!



Upper Phase English & History

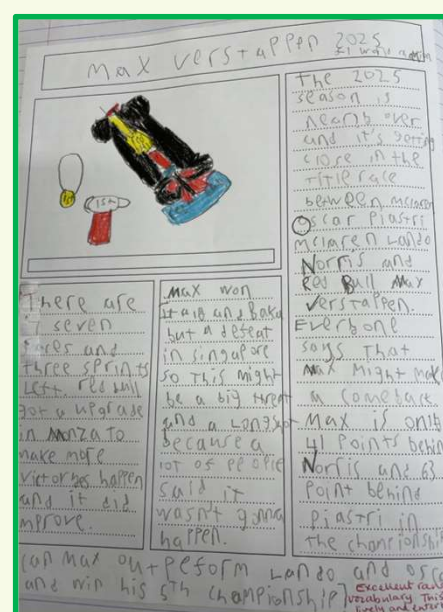
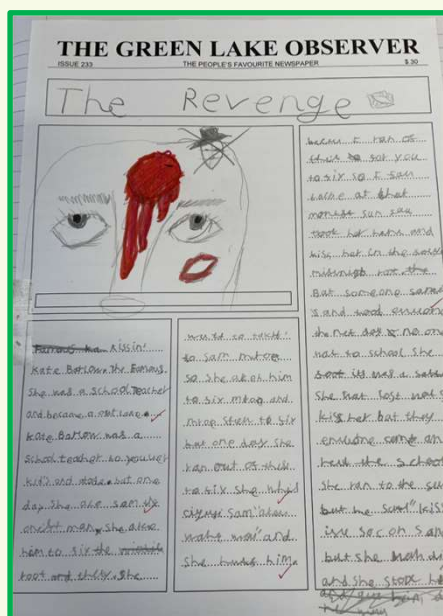


Elm students have shown a determination to succeed by working towards their English Functional Skills Level 1 qualification. They have just sat the Reading paper, with the plan to do the Writing exam by Christmas. Well done, Elm, for your hard work and resilience.

Cedar students have joined generations of young people by reading the famous novel, *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. They made links to the Russian Revolution and key 21st Century events and they learnt how these events shaped the novel. We discussed how and why *Animal Farm*, 80 years on, is just as relevant today as it was when it was first written.

Ash and Birch students have used the novel, *Holes*, to learn about American history, race and gender issues. Based on scenes in the book, they have written their own newspaper articles, paying attention to the audience and purpose of their writing. In a few weeks we'll have a cinema lesson, with popcorn, to watch the highly rated film.

Birch students have had fun bonding this term. They enjoyed a traditional Ploughman's lunch made with tomato chutney from tomatoes that they planted back in June. They also had a relaxing few hours in Stratford Park, where they had an ice cream, walked around the lake, and finished with time in the playground. This was a reward for all their hard work and good behaviour this term. They can look forward to a pizza delivery and a walk up Robinswood Hill for future rewards. As well as lunches and trips out, we have played word games, done quizzes, written stories and made plays to entertain each other.



Louise Taylor (Head of English)

Upper Phase Maths & Science



Maths

It has been an excellent start to the year for all students in upper phase maths this term. The focus of the first eight weeks has been to prepare students to sit their Functional Skills Entry Level 1 Maths Exam. This will be the first maths exam ever sat at Brookthorpe Hall!

As the Head of Maths, I cannot stress enough how proud I am of the effort put in by every single student in preparation for this exam, learners have engaged, had a fantastic attitude to learning and have already displayed fantastic progress in such a short space of time. With the exams being sat during the final week of the first term, I am hoping that results can be shared sometime in the forthcoming term.

The plan after half-term will be move up to the next level and prepare students to sit their Functional Skills Entry Level 2 Maths exam before the Christmas holidays.

(Russell – Head of Maths)

Science

Students have fully invested their interest in the practical side of science this term, they have completed many experiments ranging from the impact of liquid on an eggshell to finding the perfect ingredient quantities to make slime. Students have learnt how to conduct an experiment and log their results as well as being able to draw diagrams scientifically. We have tried to give the students a variety of different experiments that cover biology, chemistry, and physics. The students should be proud of the work they have produced this year and should look forward to more experiments next academic year.

Russell Beacham (Head of Maths)

Carina, Michaela, Saria and Leanne (Teaching Assistants)

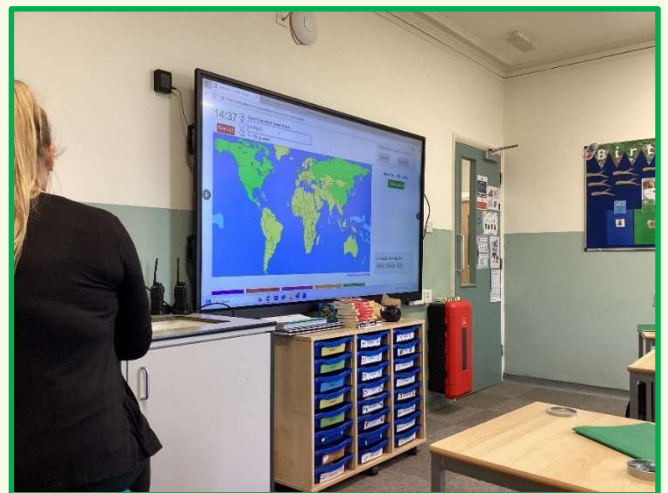
Upper Phase Wider Curriculum



Upper phase pupils have also taken part in cooking lessons this half term with some challenging recipes, and all risen to the challenge. Some of their products including sausage rolls, burger and thick cut chips, cookies and cakes.



In Geography Elm, Cedar, Birch and Ash have all been learning about the Countries of the World. They have started to narrow this down to learn more about the UK, focussing directly on plants and animals native to the UK. They have looked at capital cities and the characteristics of what makes a city.



Pupils have visited the Wilderness centre every where they work on their teamwork skills, communication skills and a variety of outdoor learning opportunities. Here they are taking on a low ropes course.

In PSHE this term, students have been exploring the Jigsaw topic *Being Me in My World*, which focuses on understanding who we are as individuals and as part of a wider community. This has involved learning about personal identity, family, friendships, and the values that make each of us unique. For many students, talking about themselves, their families, and their feelings can be challenging, as these conversations often bring up personal experiences and emotions. However, every student has shown great courage, honesty, and effort when taking part in discussions and activities.

Throughout the unit, students have reflected on how their actions and words affect others, and how kindness, respect, and empathy help create a positive classroom environment. They have learned about the importance of first impressions, how to listen carefully to others, and how to work together as a team to build strong, supportive relationships. We have also explored themes of belonging and community - what it means to feel safe, valued, and included both in school and beyond.

In Early Years, the children have focused on recognising and naming emotions, learning what it means to have “safe hands,” and developing their turn-taking and sharing skills through play. These foundational lessons help them build emotional literacy and self-regulation, supporting their ability to express themselves and form positive relationships with others.

Overall, *Being Me in My World* has helped all students gain a deeper understanding of themselves, their feelings, and their role in the world around them - an important step in developing confidence, empathy, and a sense of belonging.

Next term, we move on to our new Jigsaw topic, *Celebrating Difference*. This unit will encourage students to value diversity and recognise the importance of respect and inclusion. In the Upper Phases, we will explore themes such as discrimination, bullying, and social injustice, helping students understand the impact of prejudice and the importance of standing up for what is right. The Lower Phases will focus on friendship, kindness, and solving problems positively, while the Early Years will explore families, homes, and friendships through stories and play. Across all phases, students will continue to build their confidence, empathy, and sense of community as they learn to celebrate what makes each of us special.

Physical Education Update

In the final few weeks of P.E, our students came together for an exciting series of parachute games- and what a success it was! Classes worked side by side to lift, wave and coordinate the parachute, transforming teamwork and cooperation into pure fun.



From balancing volleys balls to running under the canopy in perfect unison, students practised communication, timing, and trust with one another. I was proud to see such a large group of students encouraging each other, being supportive, and demonstrating the spirit of community that makes our school special.

Jurell Williams (Sports Instructor)

Careers Update

We have had a busy half term with Lower Phase classes visiting SkillZONE, where they learnt about Fire Safety in the home, water, park, and road safety. They have a new Custody Suite scenario which the students enjoyed acting out being a Police Officer and what a cell looked like.

Gloucester Food Bank was presented with £125 by Theo this was what the students raised at the Summer Fayre, and they brought new goal posts and a basketball hoop for outdoor play. Lucas and I visited the local garden centre where we brought plants for the sensory garden that we will be building in our new allotment.

Students have been attending riding lessons and have been enjoying learning how to look after horses, tack them up and build their riding skills. Next term the students will be completing a series of AQA Awards for Horse riding and looking after a horse. This has proved popular with our students, and we are hoping to organise another session for further students in the New Year. It has been great to watch the students build confidence around the horses along with becoming friends with the farm dogs. We are also hoping that Cotswold Trail Riding Centre will become a regular work experience placement



Lower Phase students have been learning about Employability skills, such as communication skills, being on time, solving problems, resilience, helpfulness, and teamwork. Larch class has also learnt how to clean windows around the school. The lessons have been interactive with some great individual work and teamwork being displayed.

Careers Update

Transition Class/Pine has begun Module 1, The Incredible Futures Curriculum, Archie, and James have completed the workbook and will be awarded with an AQA Award. Well done to you both. Archie is also reviewing the schools Health and Safety Audit and will be putting together his own Audit which we will be reviewing every couple of weeks, this is a great opportunity for Archie to have an experience of work. Archie is passionate about Health and Safety, watch out Jim!!

Upper Phase students have continued to work on The Incredible Futures Curriculum. 6 students have completed Module 1 and Amelie has completed Module 4 well done to you all.

Our Christmas Fayre will soon be upon us, and we will be discussing what the students would like to make and what stalls we will have. Father Christmas will be making a guest appearance again. This year we are hoping to raise money for Smiles Café in Gloucester and The James Hopkins Trust and items for the school that the students have requested. This will be split evenly as all our previous events. Donations, ideas and volunteers will be welcome. The Christmas Fayre is on the 12th of December, times to be confirmed.

Oli Masters the Regional Careers Advisor visited this term and caught up with several Year 10 students, it was an informal chat just getting to know them, their interests and what would they like to do Post16. Year 11 student chats will be planned in for next term. We are hoping to have met with all Year 10 students this school year. Oli and I is also hoping to attend the next parent coffee morning in December.

We will be booking in more visitors to the school to talk about careers and are looking for volunteers, if any parents would like to come in to talk to the students about their career path, then please let me know.



Lower Phase Student Council Meeting



Outdoor Education



We're coming to the end of a brilliant first half term back at the Wilderness Centre and we've had some brilliant days. Lower Phase have been really enjoying exploring the tunnels and have made a fantastic start to learning their skills on our new slacklines! The new popdarts game has also been a big hit for those that aren't enjoying the slightly colder weather.

Upper phase have been focusing on Geocaching this half term - we've found lots of different caches in the Forest of Dean and on our trip to May Hill. The groups have been working fantastically well as a team and have deciphered some tricky clues. In recent weeks we have looked at possible hiding places for our own Geocaches and have been camouflaging the caches ready to be hidden.

Everyone has settled back into our routine at the Wilderness Centre brilliantly and I'm looking forward to next half term already! Hopefully we'll get some more snow just like last year...

Ed Farrow (Head of Outdoor Education)



Safeguarding Update

This term the safeguarding team have been supporting staff to enhance their knowledge and further develop their skills in the identification, reporting and most importantly supporting our young people who display behaviours and communicate language that are of a sexual nature.

In addition, our Upper Phase students will be engaging in a performance by a theatre company linked to the subject of Harmful Sexual Behaviour on Friday 24th of October 2025. The safeguarding, Pastoral and Clinical teams will be available during this performance to debrief any student who requires it.

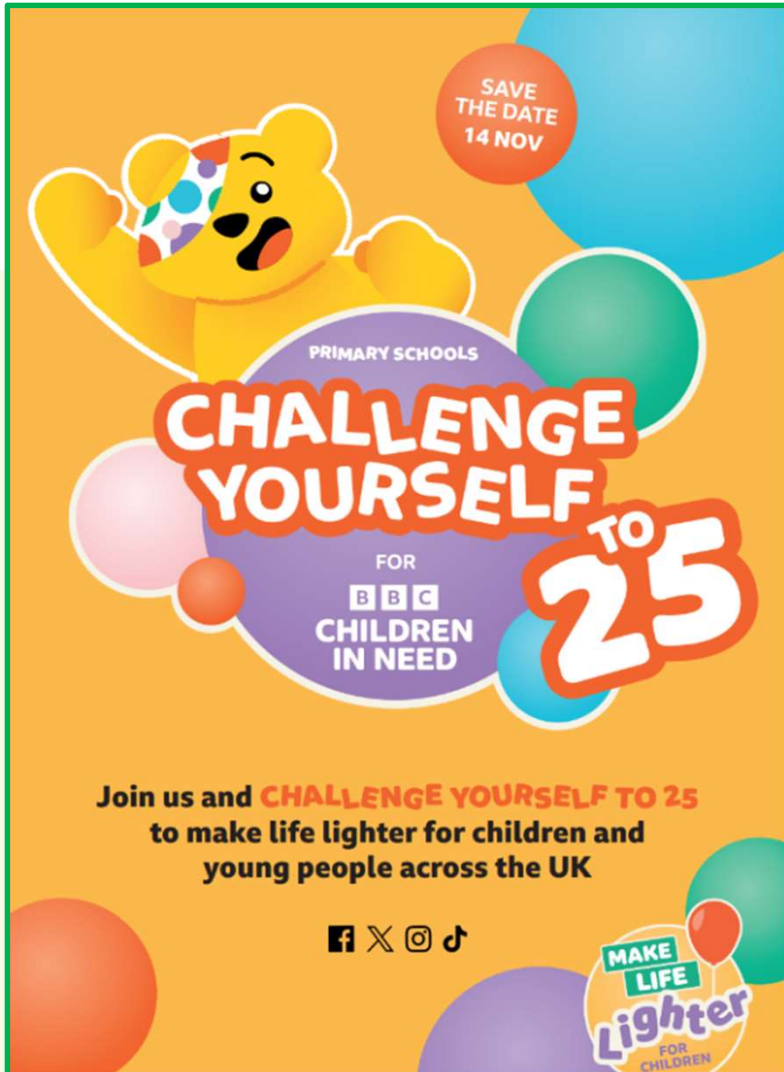
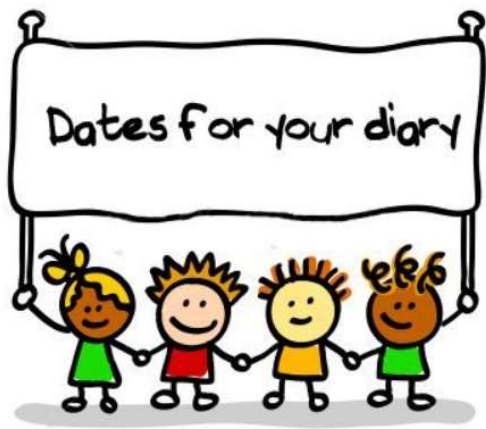
If you have any questions, or queries, please do not hesitate to contact the safeguarding team on

SafeguardingBHS@brookthorpehallschool.co.uk

Please see the links below for information and guidance from The Lucy Faithful Foundation to support yourselves and your young people as they navigate puberty, hormonal changes and relationship expectations.

[Helping Parents and Carers understand the sexual behaviours of teenagers](#)

Rhiannon Trevethan (Designated Safeguarding Lead)



Children in Need Friday 14th November

This year each class at Brookthorpe Hall will be taking on a challenge yourself to 25!

Each class by the end of this term will have chosen their challenge. Details of how to donate will follow after half term.

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BROOKTHORPE HALL SCHOOL

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