

# Spring Term Newsletter 1

13<sup>th</sup> February 2026



**BROOKTHORPE  
HALL SCHOOL**

## Message from the Headteacher

It has certainly been a very wet and grey start to 2026, but this has not prevented our pupils from enjoying a host of trips, visits and extended curriculum activities. Pupils in our Lower Phase have thoroughly enjoyed visiting the VR Xperience, a local farm and Jumpin' Fun. While our Upper Phase pupils have been focused on their functional skills exams towards the end of term, they have also had the opportunity to test their skill and ability at 270 Climbing Park and visit our local Padel Club. Additionally, I am really pleased that a growing number of pupils are now visiting local stables to experience horse riding and equine care on a weekly basis. Even in depths of winter, pupils continue to engage with a variety of outdoor education activities at the Wilderness Centre in the Forest of Dean.

I am immensely proud to announce that our first cohort of pupils have started their bronze Duke of Edinburgh award. The cohort of 8 pupils are already working hard to complete the volunteering and physical components of their award, and the group are already planning to complete their hike in the summer term with Ed (Outdoor Education Lead).

As you can see, Brookthorpe Hall's extended curriculum continues to grow from strength to strength, and I am looking forward to sharing even more exciting opportunities for all pupils next term.



As Brookthorpe Hall's pupil numbers continue to grow, our staff team also needs to do the same. Therefore, I am delighted to confirm that Laura Mitchell has joined our Learning Support Assistant Team. Laura has been working in Oak class for a number of months and I am pleased to welcome her permanently to the Brookthorpe Hall team.



Laura Mitchell (LSA)

Jon Bell (Headteacher)



Acorns have really got stuck into our topic this term 'Ready, Steady, Grow!' We have had the chance to explore lots around plants, animals and farms, both through our stories and getting to experience some of it ourselves.

In English, we have read *Oliver's Vegetables* and *The Enormous Turnip*. The boys have all done a fabulous job of learning these new texts and engaged brilliantly in creating some simple retellings. We did our first sensory stories this term and definitely enjoyed getting a bit mucky while hearing each story!



In maths, we have continued our learning on addition and subtraction. Thanks to lots of fun with practical resources we are now able to write number sentences and use number bonds to help us add. Some of us have even been working with numbers in the thousands!





Outside of our core subjects, Acorns have had the chance to immerse themselves in our topic. We have planted lots of seeds to help us understand that all plants grow from seeds. Some of our plants have been put into the school allotment to keep growing there. We even explored the inside of some fruit to prove they were grown from seeds, before using them to make some prints.



We have also enjoyed learning all about different farm animals. We have listened to the different noises that animals make, made footprints using paint and enjoyed getting messy (again!) with a muddy farm set up full of farm animals.

In cooking, we have been working with lots of different vegetables. The boys have done a fabulous job at listening in each cooking session and trying different foods that they might not have had before.



### ***Games, Crowns, Fires and Rockpools!***

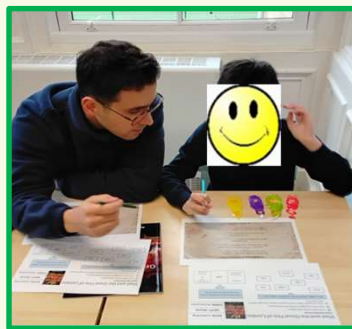
Another fun filled half term for Larch Class... starting with a fortnightly games session to practise understanding instructions, taking turns and empower interaction. Connect 4 is firm favourite but we also like a jigsaw and a round of What Am I?

In History we have looked at two famous Scots, Robert Burns, ahead of Burns Night, and Robert the Bruce. We wrote an acrostic poem as a group and used our fine motor skills to make pipe cleaner spiders and crowns.

In English we read Vlad and the Great Fire of London. We pretended to be Vlad by wearing our Vlad hats, this made it easier to think about how Vlad might have been feeling. We had a go at drawing Vlad the flea and his best friend Boxtan the rat by following step-by-step instructions. We helped find the missing pieces of Vlad's diary entries and learned some rhyming words to help Vlad complete his poem. From Fires to Rockpools, we are now reading Sally and the Limpet... We've built our own rock pool, thought about how Sally might have felt having a limpet stuck to her finger and we have our own 'listening limpets' to look after.



Maths has been busier this half term, we've all increased our independent working time and attend a 'Learning with Laura' session each lesson before exploring something fun in the Tuff Tray together.



We are looking forward to the weather warming up next half term and hopefully getting outside for some of our learning!



Oak Class have had a busy and exciting term full of creativity, learning and hands-on experiences. We recently completed our class text *Vlad and the Great Fire of London*, which inspired engaging discussions and activities linked to history and storytelling. In our topic work, we explored the Stone Age, where pupils learned about prehistoric life and even created their own Stone Age jewellery.

The children also enjoyed developing practical everyday skills through cooking activities, building confidence and independence in the kitchen. Our creative side has flourished through Stone Age art, including fantastic cave painting projects that allowed everyone to express their imagination while learning about early human creativity.



## Palm Class



Palm class have had a busy term. We have moved to a new classroom, and we have settled in well.

English this term has been based on the theme of “History hackers”. Pupils have studied and analysed the events of The Great Fire of London. They have written diary entries in the form of different characters. Boxtor the rat seems to be the favourite character in our class book. Josh noted how sad the children were when they had to leave Pudding Lane.



In science and history pupils have studied the human body and the life and times of Florence Nightingale. This inspired Abi to research first aid courses, and she is now an expert in using the recovery position.

Pupils continue to excel in PE with Jurell. Robbie has earned a certificate each week of this term.

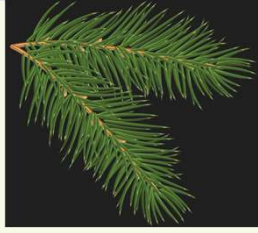
Palm classes are now completing the interoception curriculum. We are focussing on the use of our hands and manipulating different objects. The class used pipe cleaners to make glasses and models.

The end of pupils will enjoy reward time with a Valentine’s Day special. They will make various artefacts and investigate ways to be kind to each other.

Hazel (Palm Teacher)

Leanne (LSA)

## Pine Class



This term in Pine we have introduced the students to the Ancient Greeks and completed lots of different activities around this theme.

In Art, the students learnt about the use of pottery during the time. The pottery shown to the students depicted the various events in the Olympics that the Greeks created, including chariot racing, discus throwing and wrestling. The students were asked to draw their own pottery based on the examples and created some amazing designs.

The students also worked with clay to produce their own pot or tile, with a Greek design carved into the clay. To finish the creations off, once the clay had dried, the students then painted the pots and tiles; they were very proud of their creations.



The students have enjoyed lots of variety at their Wilderness sessions this term, getting to visit different areas within the Forest of Dean. The students have visited the lake near the Wilderness Centre and we went to visit some abandoned mines and learnt all about the history of the mining. We also visited an area within the forest where beavers have been released to support the biodiversity in the Forest of Dean. The students learnt about how beavers act as ecosystem engineers that support rivers by building dams, which slow water velocity, reduce downstream flooding, and enhance water quality.

## Pine Class



The students enjoyed seeing the trees that the beavers had felled in preparation to make dams.

In cooking, we have taken part in food tasting and will be trying foods from different countries. Our first food tasting session was foods from Asia.

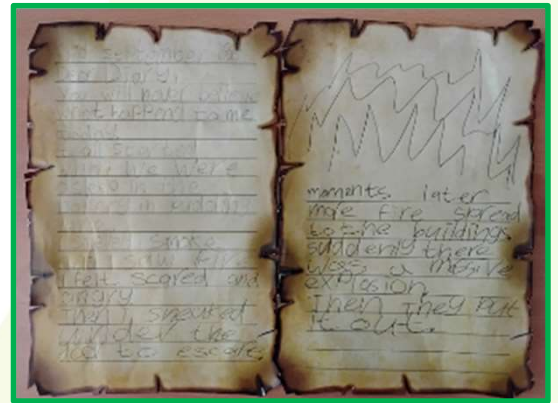
We also had great fun at Jumpin' Fun for our reward trip!



## Yew Class



We have had a very busy few weeks in Yew. We started the year off with a trip to VR Xperience in Gloucester as we had earned our award in class. It was great and we'd love to go again so we are working hard to earn our reward points!



English, we have been studying a book about *The Great Fire of London*. In it, we learned that the fire started in a baker, so in our cookery session, we made bread. We also learned about Samuel Pepys, who kept a diary during the time of the fire, and recorded the whole event, so we wrote a diary entry as if we were one of the characters in the book.

We have been doing lots of fun things during our PE lessons too. We measured how high we could jump, and practiced our Yoga moves and our balances and stretches



February is Chinese New Year, so we have been busy making lanterns and dragons, to decorate the Hall. We've also been looking at mark making and using different drawing techniques to create flowers.

## Upper Phase English & History



The Functional Skills exam has been the focus this term. Shout out to Zeph and Jack for impressing the audience with their presentations on gaming. They passed the first part of the Speaking and Listening exam. All formal phase students are improving their writing skills and learning how to write a discussion essay. This term we discussed the topic of violence in sport and students learnt how to present an argument.

In the semi-formal phase, students are reading *The Last Bear* by Hannah Gold. They have met the main character, April Wood, who finds herself on Bear Island with the last polar bear left. Later in the term they will write a first-person diary entry. To build context, students are researching environmental problems that have caused polar bears to become endangered. In the spring, we will do our bit for the environment by planting seeds in the allotment.

Students are taking advantage of our library, which has a large selection of new reading books for all levels and abilities. Big congratulations to Lucas, Issy, Shay and Kitty for reading and quizzing and going the extra mile to improve their reading skills.



Louise Taylor (Head of English)  
Carina, Michaela, Sue, Cat, Claire and Leanne (Learning Support Assistants)

## Upper Phase Maths & Science



What can I say it has been another brilliant term of learning and progressing in Upper Phase maths with the majority of our students sitting their Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2 and Entry Level 3 Functional Skills exams. To date we have a current pass rate of 100% for Entry Level 1, 88% for Entry Level 2 and I can only foresee our Entry Level 3 exam results following a similar suit. Each Upper Phase class this term has been following a slightly different pathway, and all have worked incredibly hard to progress their maths understanding.

Ash Class have been focusing on Entry Level 2 and Entry Level 3 with all of the students engaging brilliantly in lessons and contributing well to whole class discussions. I would like to give a special mention to Simrah and Izzy who have made some massive progress this term especially in the number topics we have looked at.

Birch Class have been focusing on both maths for mastery and Functional Skills Entry Level 2. The class have completed some excellent independent work and students have been very inquisitive about the different methods used to multiply and add numbers mentally. I would again like to give a special mention to Sam, Dalton and Will who have engaged brilliantly and have really shown a massive improvement in maths.

Cedar Class have been focusing on Entry Level 2 and Entry Level 3 with all students really challenging themselves to understand the more complex maths topics. Every student in Cedar class this term has mastered the written methods of calculation without making any mistakes. Special mention to Shay and Lucas who have worked tirelessly to improve their Entry Level 2 maths score, with both getting 97% in the most recent practice paper.

Elm Class have been focusing on Entry Level 3 and some Level 1 topics. The students are really trying to challenge themselves in this class, focusing on exam style questions and worded questions to work on their problem-solving skills. They have all come up with ways that allow them to break down a question and work out what they need to gain full marks. Special mention to Amelie and Evie who have excelled in maths this term!

Brilliant term! Let's continue this next term

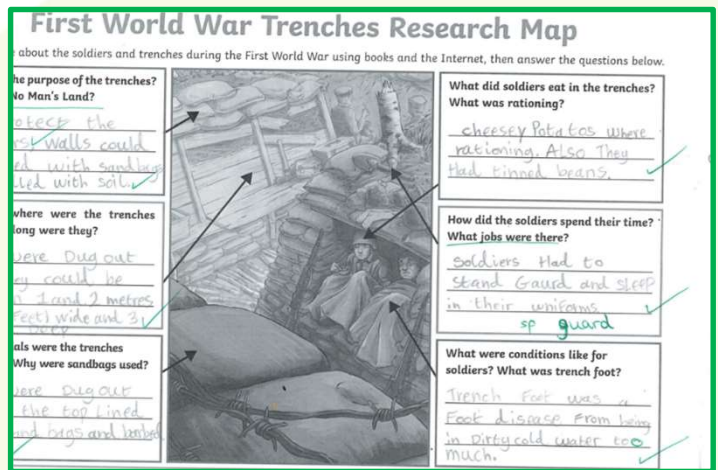
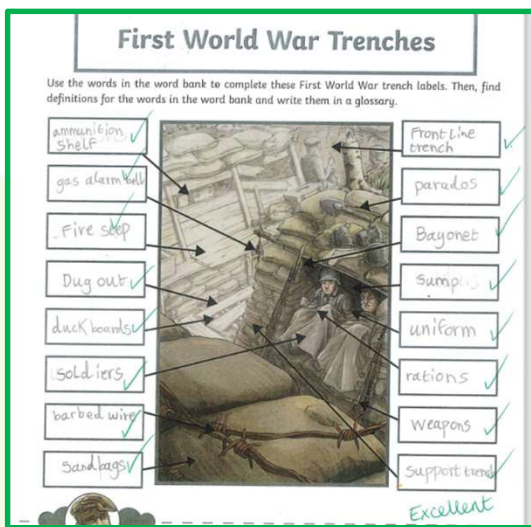
Russell – (Head of Maths/Science)

Carina, Michaela, Sue, Cat, Claire and Leanne (Learning Support Assistants)

# Upper Phase Wider Curriculum



For Humanities this term, students in upper phase have been concentrating on History. They have started to look at WW1 and the significant events between 1914 and 1918. They started by learning about how and why the war started, then they built upon this by researching trench warfare and conscription. They explored the horrific living conditions for the soldiers including trench foot and lice. (Some pieces of work from Elm below)



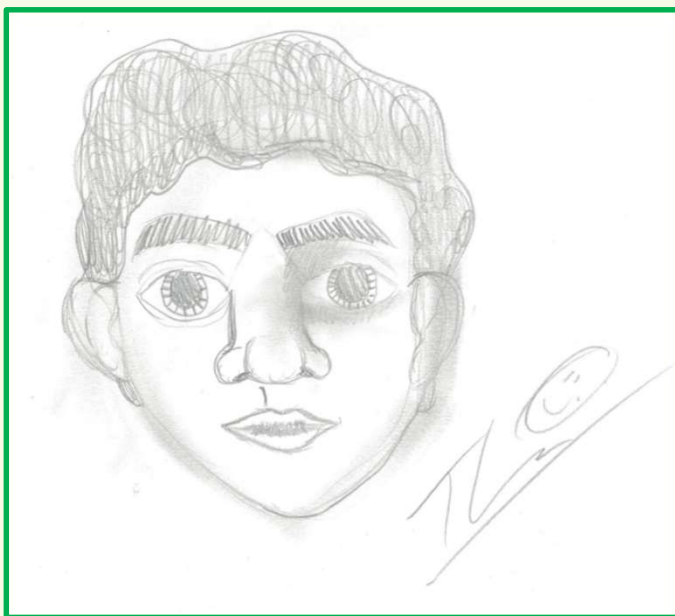
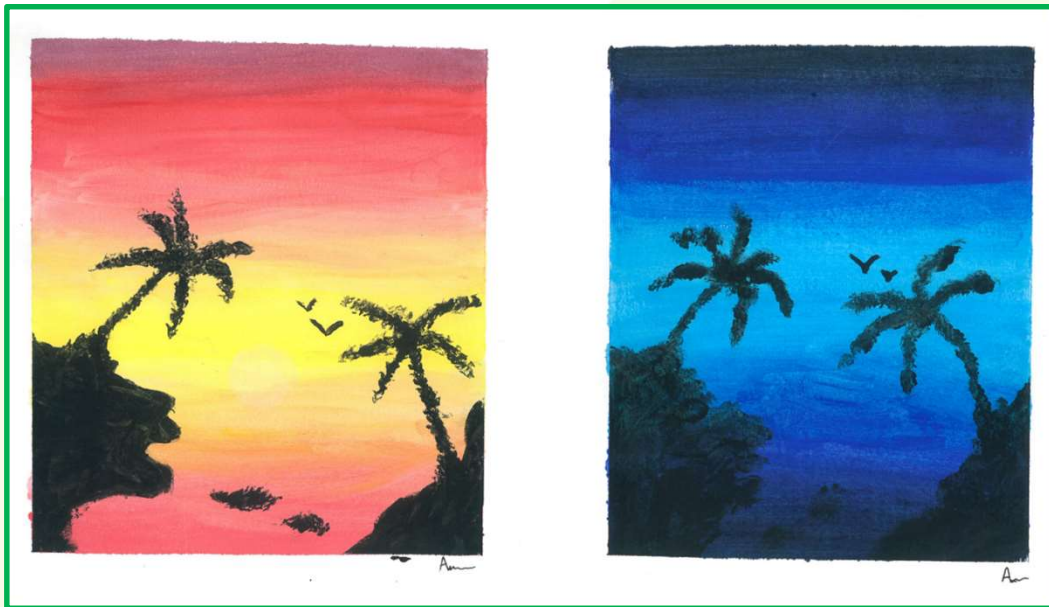
**Cooking** – Upper phase students have been embedding life skills in their cooking lessons, learning how to use different equipment in the kitchen such as air fryers and following several step instructions in recipes. They have been making a variety of dishes from pasta meals to delicious cookies, a great way to prepare them for cooking more independently in the future. Upper phase students then tied their history work in with cooking, using a rationing recipe for cheese and potato dumplings (some examples produced by Cedar).



## Upper Phase Wider Curriculum



**Art** – In Art, the upper phase students have been learning about composition. They have explored different stylistic principles of Art such as proportion, unity, depth and scale. They have produced some excellent pieces of work with incredible imagination and planning put into each piece. (some Art pieces from Elm below).



## Computing Update

In computing this term, we have been focusing on block-based programming in both the upper and lower phase. The lower phase have been looking at how we can use sequences of code to create and play music, as well as make their own characters move within a game. Culminating in pupils using their knowledge to begin to create their own musical game from the ground up within Scratch.



Our upper phase have similarly been using Scratch, looking at variables and conditions within their coding to be able to make projects that are more interactive and engaging. Each student has now planned their own project linked to one of their interests, which we are now in the process of developing..

## PSHE Update

Students have enjoyed engaging in a wide range of activities this term, including celebrations for LGBTQ+ History Month and Chinese New Year.

Across the cohorts, our topic has been “Dreams and Goals.” Students have responded positively to lessons on money management, budgeting, and goal setting. They have also explored the experience of disappointment and developed strategies to recognise and manage these feelings in a healthy way.

We are finishing the half term with a celebration of Chinese cuisine and a talk from a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Students have valued the opportunity to express who they are, explore identity, and deepen their understanding of respect and inclusion for others.



## Physical Education Update

### Upper phase update

A small group of students from the Upper Phase recently had a fantastic opportunity to visit the local Padel Club and be introduced to the exciting sport of padel. During the visit, students learned the basic rules and techniques of the game, and experienced the fast-paced, fun nature of this growing sport. The visit was an enjoyable and enriching experience, giving students the chance to try something new while staying active and engaged. We would like to thank the Padel Club for their warm welcome and for inspiring our students both on and off the court.



### Lower phase update

Students in the Lower Phase have been busy taking part in fitness testing during their PE lessons, focusing on key areas of physical fitness: power, speed, stamina, and flexibility. An important part of the process was learning how to record their results, helping students understand that fitness can be measured, tracked, and improved over time.



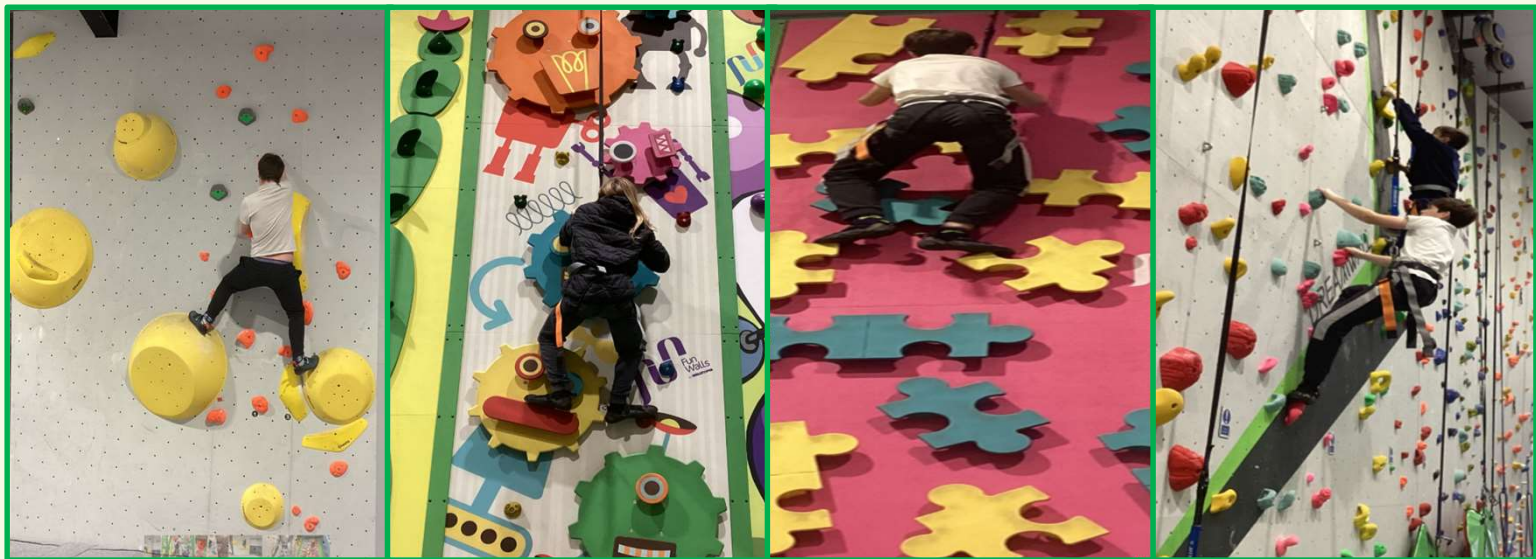
## Outdoor Education

Well done to all the students (and staff) for making it through a very wet and cold half term - sadly we didn't get any snow but we've been making the most of it.

Lower Phase have been starting their Wild Passports and have been identifying different species of native trees and insects. However, the definite favourite activity has been going to try and spot the beavers in the Forest of Dean! We've looked at the many trees the beavers have brought down and the dams they have made, but so far no beaver sightings - we'll keep trying! There has also been a lot of exploring elsewhere in the Forest of Dean where we've been investigating the sites of abandoned mines and train tunnels!

In Upper Phase we've also had a couple of visits to the beavers and the abandoned mines, but the really exciting trips have been to the Forest of Dean mountain biking area. So far, we've just walked around and explored but I am currently in the process of booking sessions for Upper Phase to give some biking a go. Also, near the biking area, the Thursday group has been working together brilliantly to make a dam in the nearby stream - we'll have to see if its still there after half term!

In the final week of term, we've had our reward trips for those students that have had brilliant attendance, engagement and behaviour at the Wilderness Centre. Each group has visited 270 Climbing and had a two-hour session on the fun walls and the bouldering area - everyone has really enjoyed it and tried their best!



## Clinical Team Update

This term, in addition to sessions with students, we have delivered advanced training to staff on our AAD (Ask, Accept, Develop) framework.

Please see our website if you would like to know more about this. Here are some activities you may want to try over the half term:

### Interoception

Interoception is the ability to recognise and respond to signals within the body. These signals may be telling us that we are tired/cold/hungry or they may be telling us that we are frustrated/worried.

Many of our students have difficulty recognising signals from their bodies. You may want to try these activities to help:

- Label how your body feels during daily tasks (e.g. 'my heart is beating fast after running up the stairs'). Be specific in the descriptive words you use. Your child will pick up on these comments. You can extend this by asking similar questions of your child (e.g. 'Are your hands hot or cold after playing with ice?')
- Use Yoga poses or stretches to encourage the child to notice which muscles are tightening or relaxing. Stop the activity if pain is caused.

### Social Communication

Social communication is how we interact, form relationships and understand social rules.

To develop social communication skills you may want to:

- Instigate role play with your child to practice different social situations (e.g. buying something from a shop, telling a friend you don't want to play anymore)
- Play 'Emotions Charades'. Draw/print out 2-3 pictures showing different emotions. Act out one of the emotions and ask your child to choose from the pictures which emotion you were acting out. Encourage them to tell you what clues they picked up on from your facial expression and body language.
- Play turn-taking games such as Uno, Connect 4, Snakes and Ladders. Name who's turn it is (e.g. 'Dad's turn')
- Build a Lego model together. Encourage your child to describe the pieces of Lego they are looking for (e.g. colour, size, shape)

Please contact [therapy.team@brookthorpehallschool.co.uk](mailto:therapy.team@brookthorpehallschool.co.uk) if you would like suggestions that are tailored for your child



## Careers Week – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March



We are delighted to be holding our very first **Careers Week** from **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March**. Lessons will include aspects of careers and preparation for adulthood learning. There will be a range of **special** events and visitors coming into Brookthorpe Hall to meet pupils, talk about their jobs and answer pupils' questions.

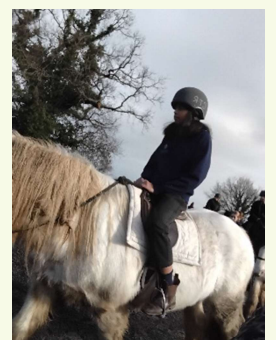
The highlight of the week will include a **Futures Event** that will be held at Brookthorpe Hall on **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March** between 10:00 and 12:00. There will be a range of organisations visiting us on this day:

- Army/Navy/RAF
- Helping Hands
- Police
- Sky Lark+
- SGS College
- Gloucester College
- Bankside School and College



Other local employers and educational settings are currently confirming their attendance. We will announce more organisations who will visit at the start of the new term.

Parents are warmly invited to visit our Futures Event and we will be contacting you in the new term to confirm attendance and your preferred time slots. Parents from other local SEND settings will also be invited to attend this event.



This half term for careers, we have had more students attend horse riding . This is a popular activity and will be giving more students the opportunity to attend in the summer term. The Wednesday group have been working on the AQA Award for horse riding and the Friday group will be beginning theirs after half term.

4 students attended the HALT Project at Cheltenham Animal Rescue Centre, where they helped to clean out rabbits, met and played with a rescue cat and dog. They learnt about looking after animals and to make dog biscuits from scratch. Each student came away with a certificate. We also have 4 more students attending the day next half term.

We held our first Careers Coffee Morning which was attended by Oli Masters, this was short notice and we will look to hold another one. This is an opportunity to talk to myself and Oli who is the Regional Futures Coach to answer any questions or receive advice on Post 16 providers and to understand what is next.

Our first Incredible Futures Week starts on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March, where we will talk to our students about qualifications, foundation courses and invite employers in to talk about their jobs. We are also looking for any parents/carers/family members that may be able to take part.

We attended the Post 16 Event for SEND Students on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, this was informative and we managed to talk to all the providers and take away information .Many of these providers will be attending our Incredible Futures Fayre on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 10 to 12. This event is open to parents; Oli will also be in attendance. The Police , Army, Navy, and RAF have been booked , and we are hoping to have a few more key employers attending.

Below are a few websites of providers that are attending and websites that students use during careers and other subjects.

[www.skylarkplus.com](http://www.skylarkplus.com)

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers>

<https://careerpilot.org.uk/>

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/>

<https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/>

[www.sgscol.ac.uk](http://www.sgscol.ac.uk)

[www.gloscol.ac.uk](http://www.gloscol.ac.uk)

[www.gccplus.org](http://www.gccplus.org)

[www.chase@sgscol.ac.uk](http://www.chase@sgscol.ac.uk)

[www.amazingapprenticeships.com](http://www.amazingapprenticeships.com)



# Incredible Futures

Brookthorpe Hall School

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**10:00 - 12:00**

**All parents are invited to join students in exploring future career prospects and what could be!**

**There will be opportunities to meet others from the community including:**

**Police**

**South Glos &  
Stroud College**

**Royal Navy**

**Royal Air  
Force**

**Gloucestershire  
College**

**British  
Army**



**Stroud Road, Gloucester GL4 0UN**

We have already raised money for the James Hopkins Trust in our Christmas Fayre. We are proud that this very important charity is our chosen charity for 2026. While raising money for children receiving respite care from James Hopkins Trust, fundraising will also help our pupils explore inclusion, diversity, difference and help to develop social and communication skills. Details of James Hopkins Trust's Easter fundraising appeal is below, thank you for donating if you are able to do so.



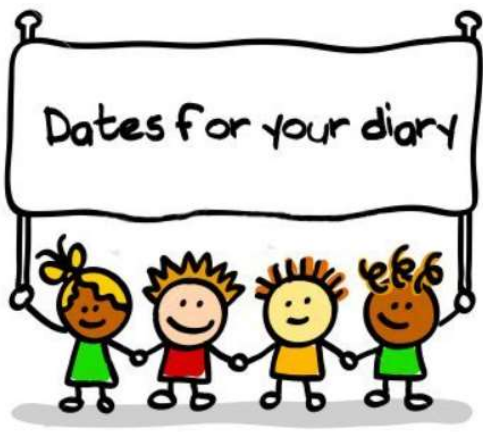
# Easter Appeal 2026

Many of our children are unable to eat orally,  
so we are asking for a **£2** donation to fund  
Easter activities and respite during the  
Easter Half Term instead!



Scan to  
Donate





**Term Dates 25/26**

Term 1: Mon 1st Sept – Fri 24th Oct 2025

Term 2: Mon 3rd Nov – Fri 19th Dec 2025

Term 3: Mon 5th Jan - Fri 13th Feb 2026

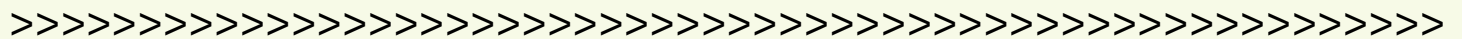
Term 4: Mon 23rd Feb – Fri 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2026

Term 5: Mon 13th April – Fri 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026

Term 6: Mon 1st June – Mon 20th July 2026

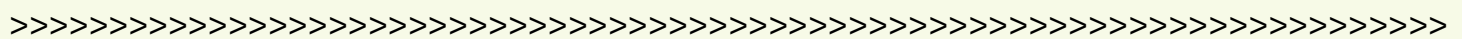
**INSET Days**

- Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025
- Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025
- Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026**
- Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2026



Start of Term 4                      Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February

Next INSET Day                      Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March





# **BROOKTHORPE HALL SCHOOL**



## **Contact Details**

Brookthorpe Hall School, Stroud  
Road, Gloucester GL4 0UN  
01452 717004