



**Brook Green**  
CENTRE FOR LEARNING

# Brook Times

TERMLY NEWSLETTER FROM BROOK  
GREEN CENTRE FOR LEARNING

DECEMBER 2021

*Welcome to our termly school newsletter where we are really proud to share some of the fantastic things that staff and students have been doing over the past term.*



Wow - we have finally got to the end of a very busy term and would like to say a huge thank you for all your messages of support and kind words in what has been a really challenging time for all of us.

We hope that our latest newsletter shares with you some of the very positive and happy activities and learning that have been going on in school despite the ongoing disruption caused by Covid.

Year 7 and 8 have enjoyed getting out there and getting muddy in their Learning in The Natural Environment lessons, whilst Year 9 have been introduced to the Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) Award. Our Year 10 spend a day a week on DoE so this is a great introduction for Year 9. As part of their DoE Volunteering programme Year 10 organised our student Christmas Craziness afternoon so that we still had some fun together in a COVID secure way before the end of term.

The school council organised Christmas Jumper day in aid of a local children's charity and Mrs Gerdes is still busy making facemasks which we hope to fund another beautiful Guide dog from – this year it's going to be Pudding! Mrs Wenmoth has also been incredibly busy with her team of Elves making yummy starters and puds for our Christmas dinner with Julia and Lucy from CaterEd making our tasty turkey, roast potatoes and vegetables.

Mason, in Year 10 has made staff very happy again by the reintroduction of our Friday coffee treat using his Barista skills supported by Alfie who chases us for our coffee money!

Year 11 have all benefitted from an amazing personalised Next Steps programme this term and are out at different providers such as Norpro, Discovery College, Construction SW, Bike Space and BEEs as part of their transition plans. We are really proud at how they have gone out and represented BGCFL.

Regular Lateral Flow Testing has really helped in our battle against Covid and the government has told secondary schools to test students for Covid on-site when they return after the Christmas holidays in January. Students should have one test on-site as they return to school, followed by another at home three to four days later.

To enable us to do this we will be having a staggered start to term with Year 7, 10 and 11 returning on Tuesday January 4th and Years 8 and 9 returning on Wednesday January 5th. We know that this is not going to be easy for some families to accommodate but hope you will understand the importance of it after what could be a busy Christmas of activities and gatherings.

We know this continues to be really difficult time for all of our young people and their families but we want you to know we are still all here for you by phone, e mail or in person - we really hope to be able to 'see' you all again next year.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a bright and happy 2022.

Sara Jordan and Team BGCFL





## Remembrance Day

This year as every year Brook Green stopped to remember and share stories about who have been affected by conflict. Staff and students told stories of family members who fought in campaigns, such as Mrs Wenmoth's Uncle George. Some of our students also attended Remembrance Parade with their Cadet groups and youth groups, such as Mason, pictured here who attends Army Cadets.



## Respect Week

During November we took part in National Anti-Bullying week. Through out the week students completed a range of tasks and discussions about Respect and how we get along with others. Each tutor group was asked to summarise their learning and outcomes for our in school competition. We had quite a variety of entries including a song. Feeling safe is important and work under taken throughout that week reinforced this and the importance of talking and sharing concerns.



## News from 7RR

Malachi has been working really hard, collecting house points, working towards earning the football boots and he got them Monday 29th November.

7RR have been learning about positive attitudes on the careers skill builder, also learning about their own emotions and understanding other people's emotions. Learning from Stonewall that we are all different and all should be treated with respect. 7RR were delighted to when a prize for their work.



## Enterprise

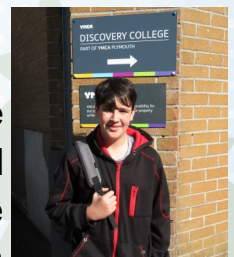
Across the school we always have a range of small enterprise activities going on. With the build up to the festive season well on the way year 11 students have been making gifts to sell. Unfortunately we have not been able to hold our Christmas fayre this year but we are always looking for places to sell our bits and pieces and as soon as it is safe to do so our infamous Brook Green Fayres will be back.

In March with thanks to a grant from The Careers and Enterprise company the school was able to purchase a professional barista machine. Throughout the school we have a number of student who are interested in careers within hospitality and to start their journeys we have our Friday morning staff coffee shop. Thank you Mason and Alfi who are currently running that for us.



## Vocational Placements

At Brook Green Centre for Learning we are very privileged to be able to offer and commission a wide range of vocational placements as part of student's school week. Typically these placements and work experience placements start in year 10 with some students attending specialised vocational settings for at least one day a week. These courses can range from Marine Engineering and sport to hair and beauty. As well as the development of the vocational experiences students are able to further develop their social skills and find it easier to transition to college and post 16 placements.

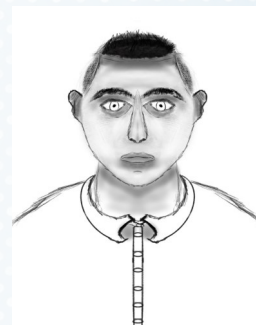
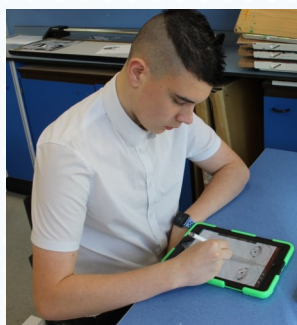


## Pro-create Drawings

On Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> of November, the year 10 GCSE Art and Design option group used the Procreate tool on the iPads and an apple pencil to draw self-portraits. Students explored sketching tools focusing on line, texture and tone. They were also shown how to use symmetry where needed.

The theme of the year 9 unit of work is African masks. As part of the design process, students used procreate to draw African masks. They used symmetry when needed and added colour using the colour fill tool.

Year 9s and year 10s thoroughly enjoyed this way of working. It is a very accessible way of working for students of all abilities.

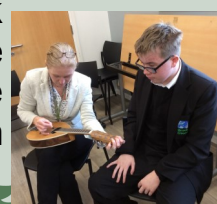


## Wren music

Over a six week period Wren Music worked with our students to complete a music project. Two professional community musicians from Wren Music ran five music-making sessions in partnership with our school staff. Returning at the same time every week, the musicians established musical routines including hello and goodbye songs. Every young person in the project took part in instrumental work (playing in a band), singing and song-writing (on relevant topics).



Each week our students had an opportunity for active participation in new musical material, developed peer recognition, tolerance levels and were supported to make musical choices. In the sixth week we had performance of the music and songs we have learned and created in front of parents.



## Precision Training

Precision Training helps the student to become more confident with their learning across the curriculum. It is a nationally recognised approach and has been proven to help students to improve their reading ages, in some cases improving the reading age by 5 months in just ten weeks.

At Brook Green, all the students receive Precision Training Reading four times a week. Generally, this takes between 2-5 minutes per student each day. They start off at their last reading point (the number of words) and unfamiliar words are added as soon as they have reached mastery. This then continues each term. At the end of term, this data is collected and allows the teacher/TLA/student to get regular feedback as to the effectiveness of this teaching approach.

Advantages of Precision Training feedback for students are:

1. Provides students with knowledge of results.
2. Provides a visual display of performance;
3. Students know exactly what needs to be learnt and the level of mastery required.

Students are also given homework for Precision Training which is based around dictionary/thesaurus work also sentence level work.

## Word of the week

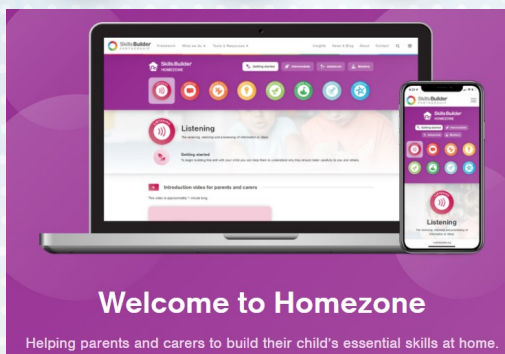
Every Monday the students are introduced to a new word. During Monday morning Building Blocks the students explore the word, the word class (noun, adjective, verb) what it means, the origin of the word (etymology), words with similar meanings and usage (synonyms) and words opposite in meaning (antonyms). The students are shown examples of the word in sentences and are encouraged to try to use the word. Staff members take the opportunity during their lessons and interactions with the students to use the word in context.

Words of the week this term have been

- artificial
- imperative
- meagre
- procrastinate
- ravenous

word  
of the  
week





## **SkillsBuilder.**

SkillsBuilder is an online resource, used widely by school across the country, which tracks and records student's skills. It is based on the key skills that employers have recognised as vital for success in the work place. These skills are focused in to 8 key

areas; listening , speaking, problem solving, creativity, staying positive, aiming high, leadership and teamwork. On the 2nd December they launched their 'Homezone'. This is an online provision for parents and carers to be able to further their understanding of the key area and find different ways to develop their ward's skills. The website provides examples of different tasks that can be completed at home to enhance each of the different levels of each skill. You can access this at <https://www.skillsbuilder.org/homezone>.

Each skill is split in to 15 individual steps, each with increasing complexity, ranging from getting started, intermediate, advanced and mastery. Homezone provides ideas for each step and helps students to enhance their skills. We look forward to seeing any outcomes of any of the tasks that you complete.

## **Teamwork.**

We are functionless without it. That is why we need to embrace it in people so that we can tackle big issues like climate change. Teamwork includes responsibility, friendships and kind comments to each other. We need it to help us with daily tasks like the dishes: you can't dry without a washer. Or a factory: you can't mould an item without a maker. My peers in 8LW say that teamwork is the key to happy lives. Brennan says he helps others during woodwork. Kiam says he helps people from another tutor group in maths. I feel like I have been helped by others, but I also try to help others out. I think that the person who has helped me through this year is my best friend Harvey.

Shane Year 8



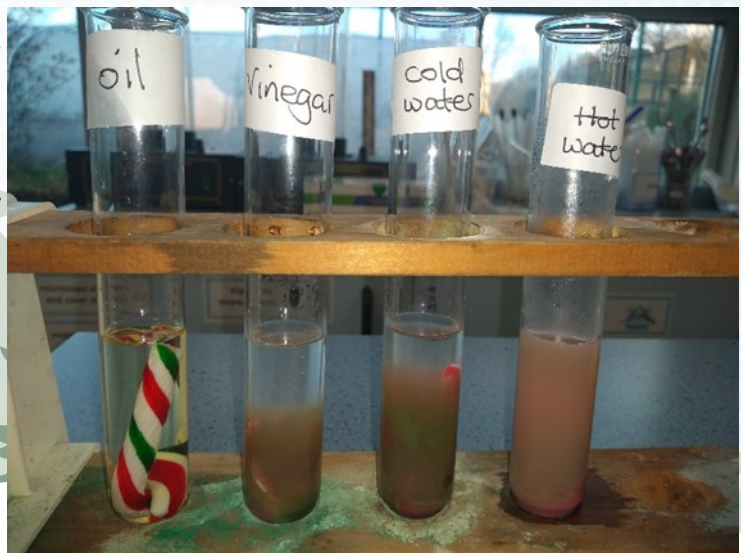
## Dissolving Candy Canes

Year 7 science classes have been working on a holiday-themed investigation – Which solvent will dissolve a candy cane the fastest? (A solvent is the liquid part of a solution.)

7CW helped quite a lot with the planning of this investigation, and work done in the experiment as well as comments about it by 7RR has led to an extension of the experiment using more solvents and different timing methods.

Thanks to Ms Harwood's ingenious design and the assistant elf, Mr Weber, the year 7s have been able to showcase important scientific skills including planning, predicting, observation, measuring, recording, graphing, analysing and evaluating. They have also shown that they know about fair testing and different types of variables.

By looking at the photograph of one of the experiments, can you work out which solvent is best at dissolving a candy cane and which is worst. Think about why this might be.



## Learning Outdoors

I liked being in the woods when it was raining.

I liked the fire, but it kept going in our eyes,  
the fire made everyone stink of smoke.

Hannah , Year 8



## Year 10's Christmas Cake Recipe

As part of Design Technology students work towards a range of Unit Awards. Over the last few weeks the year 10 Design Technology class have been researching Christmas Cake, it's history, different recipes and had a go at making some in the new LifeSkills area. The recipe that they used was adapted from Mary Berry's classic Christmas cake recipe, but due to being a 'nut free school we had to change a few things. Obviously if you make this at home you may also wish to soak the dried fruit or feed the cake once it is cooked.

### Recipe:

#### For the cake:

500g mixed dried fruit  
350g glace cherries (halved)  
2 oranges (zested and juiced)  
250g butter, softened  
250g light or dark muscovado sugar  
4 large eggs  
1 tbsp. black treacle  
2 tsp mixed spice  
275g plain flour

#### For the decorations:

Apricot jam (warmed and sieved)  
Icing sugar  
Nut free marzipan (optional)  
Ready to use Fondant icing



### Method:

- 1: Grease and line the cooking tins. Either a 23cm deep round tin or recycle food tin cans and make small individual cakes. Pre-heat the oven to 140C /120C Fan / Gas
- 2: Measure and cream the butter and sugar together in a large mixing bowl.
- 3: Add the eggs to the creamed batter
- 4: Mix in the mixed spice, flour and black treacle.
- 5: Mix in the dried fruit and glace cherries.
- 6: Bake in the centre of the oven. The time will depend on the size of cake tin used. For individual cakes bake for approximately 90min and 4hours for a 23cm tin. Check that it is cooked by inserting a skewer in to the cake. If it comes out clean then the cake is cooked.



- 7: To cover turn the cake upside down, remove any greaseproof paper. Cover in a layer of apricot jam. Roll out the marzipan and lay in over the cake and trim to shape.

- 8: Cover the marzipan with some of the apricot jam; roll out the fondant icing and cover. Shaping to fit and finish. Add decorations as wished.



## **School Council's Staff Interview**

On the 6th December members of the school council interviewed Mrs Dean. Read on below to find out what they found.

### **What is your favourite colour?**

Oh, my favourites are all shades of blue, but I also love red.

### **How many children do you have?**

I have three children.

### **Why did you want to work at Brook Green?**

That's a really interesting question. I came here on placement with Marjon University as I was training to be a PE teacher and once I qualified I was lucky enough to be successful in getting a job here! I just loved the school, the people and especially the students! So I really wanted to stay.

### **Why did you go to Marjon University?**

Ah, another fab question. I've been really lucky over the years and had some fab jobs but I realised a while ago that I still have another 20 ish years to work and I wanted to spend that doing something I really love, and that is teaching. So I decided to change career, go back to university and train to be a teacher. The rest as they say is history!!

**Umm ok – you don't have to answer this if you don't want to but do you have a favourite student or class?? (laughing)**

Ha ha, oh no you can't ask me that!! (shock and laughing) no you can't ask me that – love you all!

### **What is your favourite food?**

Spaghetti bolognaise!! Some people will already know this – but I once went on holiday to Malta for 14 days, and for 12 nights I had spaghetti Bolognaise for tea, in a different restaurant every night.

**Ha ha I love your commitment Miss Dean!** Yes I am very committed.

### **What is your favourite subject to teach?**

Ah well, I love teaching PSHE, Humanities and PE. I've also had good fun with French too!

**Oh that's cool!**

### **Are you in a house yet?**

Yes, I'll need to check which one it is, I think it's windy. Yes, I'm sure.

### **Do you like it when you're in the inclusion centre?**

Yes I quite like it, it means I get to spend quality time with students and get to know them better.

### **What exactly is your job?**

OK, so I'm cover supervisor, so that means if for any reason a Teacher or TLA isn't in, maybe they're poorly or on a course or something then I come in and either support the class or teach the lesson. It's great because I get to work with everyone and move around the school a lot and I get to meet everybody.

**Ah well that's fab Miss Dean, thank you for answering my questions – it's been great getting to know you!!**

Aww thanks Harley, it's been a treat haha.



## **Financial Education**

It is now over three years ago that Brook Green was awarded for being a Centre of Excellence in Financial Education. We were one of first special schools in the United Kingdom to get this award. The award and accreditation last for three years, but extended to four due to the pandemic, so this year we will be working hard towards reaccreditation in 2022.

This is an award given to schools who are able to show that they have a diverse and in-depth programme of teaching all things financial. We work across curriculum areas such as how to open and use a bank account, taught in PSHE lessons, how to cook on a budget in Food Technology and working with money in Maths. Our students are all involved in this, at every level. We take some students to the local shops to show them the price of groceries, how to use the self-service tills and how to use cash and check their change. Others can visit a local bank and find out all about different bank accounts, how to get a loan and even mortgage advice. All are taught about the money we use, how to estimate the cost of several items, work out the total bill and of course to work out any change required. Some students even spent a morning in a pizza restaurant making pizzas and learning about the catering business.

As we begin to work towards reaccreditation, some lessons after Christmas will involve some sort of financial education. You can help us and your child by looking at things at home. For instance, when you go shopping together look at the prices of different groceries or clothes items. Many students are unaware that a bottle of milk is cheaper than a bottle of Coke or that bananas are cheaper than crisps, or that a pair of trainers can cost more than a weekly shop. Many games also involve money such as Monopoly and Pay Day.





## **All Move Project.**

Once again, we have been lucky enough to be invited to take part in the Mencap funded "All move Project" delivered by Argyle.

The All Move Project is a Mencap physical activity initiative for schools and youth groups which support 11-16-year olds with a learning disability (school years 7-11). All Move takes the format of a virtual marathon - 26 hours of activity - and has been designed to increase the opportunities for young people with a learning disability to get and stay physically active. It aims to embed an enjoyment of physical activity within the challenge, outside of the challenge and beyond the challenge!

It has been another great start for a new group of students to have the opportunity to get active and enjoy the fun of movement! 12 students from across all year groups invited to take part and have been engaged in a wide variety of activities to promote healthy life styles and the fun of games.

This is a fantastic initiative to encourage students to exercise more and to learn more about their physical capabilities and experience some fun and exciting ways of doing it.

Good luck to all those involved and most important have fun!

J Stephenson PE Lead



## **Plymouth City Patriots**

7CW were given the amazing opportunity to participate in fun sessions with Plymouth City Patriots (formerly Plymouth Raiders) this term. They enjoyed various basketball related activities which encourage team building and social interaction, whilst also learning skills and strategies. The highlight for most of the students was meeting several of the Plymouth City Patriot players and having their photograph taken with them.



## Term dates

Start of Term 3: Tuesday 4th January 2022 for year 7, 10 and 11 students

Wednesday 5th January 2022 for year 8 and 9 students

End of Term 3: Friday 18th February 2022

Non-student day: Monday 28th February 2022

Start of term 4: Tuesday 2nd March 2022

End of term 4: Friday 8th April 2022

Start Term 5: Monday 25th April 2022

End of term 5: Friday 27th May 2022

Start of term 6: Tuesday 7th June 2022

Non-student day: Friday 24th June 2022



## Your Safeguarding Team

Brook Green Centre for Learning is committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all our students. We believe that our students have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment which includes the right to protection from all types of abuse; where staff are vigilant for signs of any student in distress and are confident about applying our safeguarding processes to avert and alleviate any such problems. Our Safeguarding and Child protection policy is on our website.



**DESIGNATED LEAD: SARA JORDAN**

**Deputy Designated Leads:**

Maria Krac and Allison Newcombe

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