



Friday 20th December 2024

Dear Parents/Carers and Students,

We have now come to the end of our first full term of this academic year.

There have been some wonderful achievements and successes, some of which are included in this newsletter. The students have worked extremely hard, particularly our exam groups, and we are very proud of the determination they have demonstrated. Congratulations to those who were recognised within celebration assemblies and reward events.

As we come to the end of a term, we have a small number of staff moving on. I want to give special mention to Mr George, Assistant Headteacher and Computer Science Teacher, who is leaving us from January and currently on the ski trip. Mr George has been pivotal in raising standards within Year 11 and organising our first in-person parents' evening for several years. We thank him, and others departing, for their contributions and dedication to our school and wish them well.

As communicated, Monday 6th January is a teacher training day. All year groups will be back at school on Tuesday 7th January. As before, students will be expected in line-up, for 08.35, in the full and correct uniform.

Finally, may I wish you all a restful and happy Christmas however you spend this. We know that such times vary from family to family and circumstances may make it difficult for some. Please continue to look out for each other and share positivity and good wishes. Reaching out to family and friends who may be having a tougher time this year will go a long way.

Have a lovely break, Merry Christmas and a good beginning to 2025 when it appears.

Mrs Douglas, Headteacher

Upcoming Dates

- Christmas Holiday
Monday 23rd December to Friday 3rd January 2025
- Monday 6th January
Inset Day
- Tuesday 7th January
Students return to school
- Thursday 6th / Friday 7th February
History RS Residential Trip
- 11th to 13th February
Mary Poppins Performance
- Half Term
Monday 17th to Friday 21st February
- Easter Holiday
Monday 7th to Monday 21st April
- Tuesday 22nd April
Inset Day
- Wednesday 23rd April
Students return to school
- Half Term
Monday 26th to Friday 30th May
- Summer Holiday
Monday 21st July

(Please note that dates may be subject to change)



Rewarding Students

Mr McKane, Assistant Headteacher

Our ‘Golden Ticket’ is given out in every lesson, every day, to recognise and reward students. Furthermore, we regularly hold reward events with the Headteacher.

Celebration Breakfast with the Headteacher!

Well done to all those students who were invited to the weekly Headteacher Celebration Breakfast with Mrs Douglas on a Friday during Tutor time.



The criteria this half term has been Most Golden Tickets.

These students all fulfil our values of Aim High, Be Kind and Take Responsibility and Mrs Douglas is very proud to offer this treat and to meet with them in this way.

Well done to:

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Sixth Form
Jude S	Stanley L	Alfie A	Davide P	Aidan J	Alex B
Callum B	Ava-Grace O	Freddie P	Shaylan P	Aleksej K	Moses C
Harry B	Bence B	Jake B	Chloe P	Amelia P	Ellouise D
Maci-Grace B	Miller J	Eli C	Yancy E	Joanna Alexa C	Caitlyn I
Shaya A	Smrithi A	Jaxx B	Kamari H	Hammad M	Jun N
Jayden B	Mishela K	Regan B	Bodie T	Charles F	Eleonora
Lacey H	Zoe F	Maddie B	Olyver C	Lauren M	Sam L
Louie P	Josh P	Amber B		Piotr A	Amber W
	Eleanor M	Summer D		Tabitha M	
	Ralphie H	Lauren C		Ashton S	
	Lily D-P	Molly D		Henry F	
	Ella-Grace M	Zac W		Jack P	

Rewards Trips

In this last week of term we celebrated our top achievement point winners with Rewards Events. On Tuesday 17th December our Bronze winners were entertained with a cinema showing of Inside Out 2 in the main hall with popcorn. Silver winners were treated to an Inflatables course in the Sports Hall on Wednesday and finally on Thursday our Gold award winners had a trip out to Bowling and Laser Quest in Wokingham.

Well done to everyone who participated.



Christmas Showcase

Mrs Lazarczuk, Head of PE

On Tuesday 17th December, we hosted our Winter Showcase. It was a wonderful opportunity for our Key Stage 4 and 5 students to shine. There were plenty of dance pieces, a couple of singers, a monologue and a pianist. The programme was packed with talent.

The students who danced as soloists, duo's, trio's and quartets all choreographed their pieces themselves. The energy, precision and aesthetics that they each brought to those dances was outstanding. It was clear how much hard work had gone into perfecting the dances. It was excellent practice for their upcoming dance assessments for GCSE dance.

Faith and Caitlyn sang exceptionally, a huge achievement singing solo to a captive audience. Eleonora devised and delivered a monologue on her own, which formed part of her assessment for her Gold Arts Award. Aleksej played the piano beautifully, bringing a tear to many an eye with just how exquisite it was.

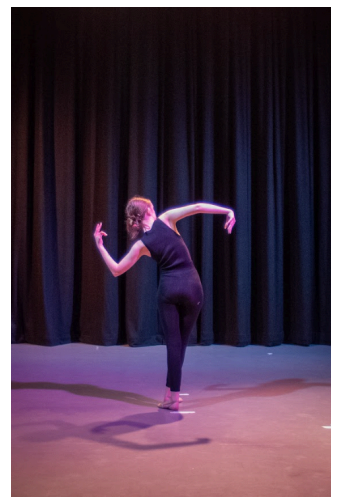
The change in confidence, since key stage three, was evident in each and every student and we are so proud of them all.

Mika, Amber, Eleonora and Caitlyn from our sixth form team supported with lights, sound and production - skills that will support them in their own development of working within the performing arts.

Our very own Mrs Wilhelmy was our official photographer and pictured some truly iconic moments.

A huge thank you to Mrs Salamani and Mrs Hope in preparing the students to perform.

We are looking forward to creating our next showcase and also our production of Mary Poppins.





The Globe Players

Mrs Lewis, English

On Thursday 19th December Brakenhale School welcomed The Globe Players, who captivated our Key Stage 4 students with exciting performances of two GCSE texts: Macbeth and A Christmas Carol. The event took place in the main hall, which felt like a real theatre as students were completely absorbed in the magic of live performance.

The Globe Players are known for their ability to bring stories to life. They featured a cast of four talented actors who used cross-casting and multi-roling to tell both stories. This creative approach made the performances lively and engaging, allowing students to see the characters in a contemporary way.

The show was not just entertaining; it also included educational moments that explained the deeper meanings of the texts. These insights helped students understand the authors' intentions and the themes within the stories. The actors made connections between the performances and the analytical aspects of the texts, which made the experience both engaging and meaningful.

Year 11 students were especially well-behaved, creating an atmosphere that felt just like a professional theatre. It was clear both year groups enjoyed the performances while also grasping the important ideas behind the texts.

Overall, the visit from the Globe Players showed how powerful theatre can be for learning. This event not only deepened students' understanding of their GCSE English texts but also encouraged a greater appreciation for the performing arts.

A big thank you to the Globe Players for their incredible performance and to all the students for representing Brakenhale School so well. Thank you to staff for your support for modelling and upholding high standards. We look forward to more exciting events in the new year!



Visiting MP

Mrs Powell, Assistant Headteacher

On Thursday 28th November our local MP, Peter Swallow, came to visit the school and spent some time with the CCF.





Jamie's Farm

Miss Scott, Assistant Head of Year 9

We had such a wholesome, laughter-filled week at Jamie's Farm with a mixed group of twelve Year 8 and Year 9 students. All of these students went from strength to strength during their stay, tackling personal challenges and trying lots of new things. We saw real growth in these young students over the week where they approached all tasks with positivity and enthusiasm. Even if they were unsure at first, they all rose to each challenge, pushed themselves out of their comfort zones and showed real determination and strength of character.

Over the course of the week all students took turns in the kitchen, really demonstrating and honing their culinary skills. All pupils worked in small groups on rotation and collaborated brilliantly producing some amazing dishes with fresh produce collected from the garden. Examples of these were hash browns, pumpkin soup, roasted vegetables, pancakes and a selection of pizzas in the wood-fired oven outside.

Our wonderful students also baked tasty treats for our daily teatime snack such as lemon drizzle cake, chocolate chip cookies, flapjacks and brownies.

These snacks gave us an energy boost to go out for our daily late afternoon country walks during which we played games and took in the beautiful scenery of the farm and surrounding countryside.

There was a real sense of fun on the farm and the group really bonded, opening up, being kind, supportive, and encouraging towards each other. Other activities our students experienced were log chopping, painting, gardening, beekeeping, woodwork and farming. The group loved picking up and cuddling the chickens in particular, walking the dogs and horses, but not all were as keen on milking the cows on an early morning!

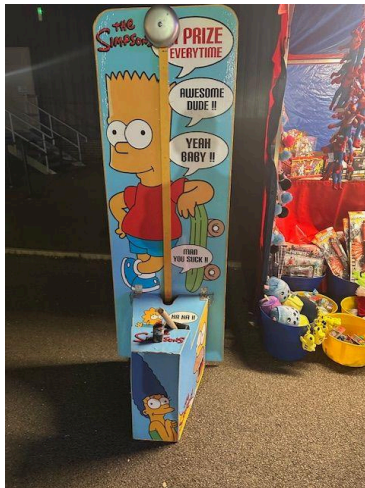
We are beyond proud of how all of our students approached and tackled lots of new experiences, really pushed themselves and each other to succeed, as well as how they managed themselves throughout their stay. We recognise the numerous challenges our students faced by agreeing to visit Jamie's farm, but they did themselves and our whole school community proud. A whole week in a new environment and experiencing this 'life-swap' without any of their usual technology and getting to know new people can be hard to do, however they all excelled and showed real maturity, sharing emotions and leaning on each other for support which was lovely to see. We're excited to see them apply this experience back at school and with their future endeavours, as well as continue to support each other as kindly as on the farm.



Christmas Fayre

Mr Barlow, Attendance Champion

Our inaugural Parent Forum Christmas Fayre on Friday 6th December was a run-away success! Food vans and fairground rides shared our quad with gift stalls, games and even Santa's Grotto! We are delighted to have raised a fabulous £1100 for the school.



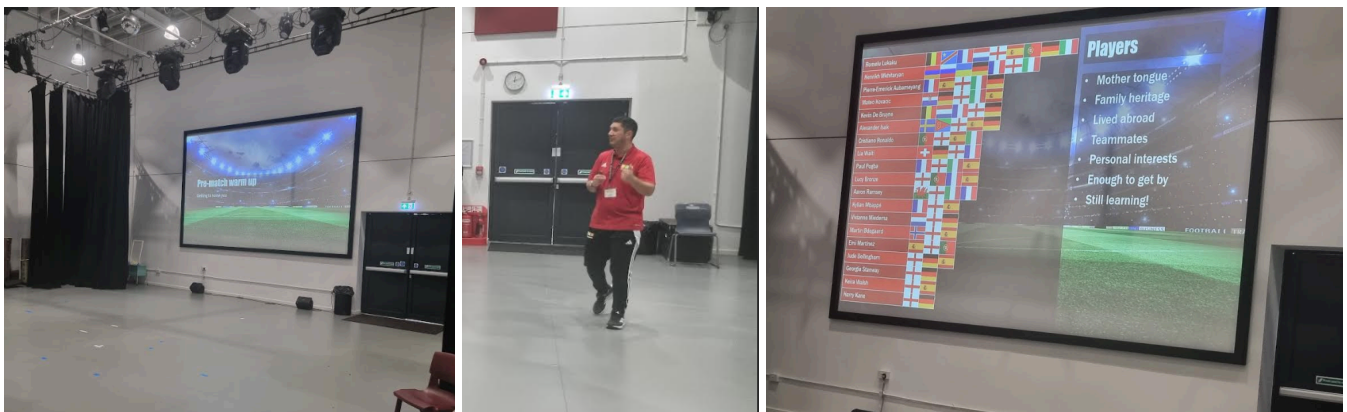


Year 9 Football Talk

Mrs Appleton, Assistant Head of Year 8

On Friday 6th December Year 9 were lucky to sit and listen to Steve Eadon from Mingalaba, who spent over 15 years of his career working for Arsenal FC, talk to them about the power of studying languages. Steve studied German and Spanish at university and it is these skills which enabled him to have a successful career in football - training players from all over the world and getting to travel alongside them. In his role at Arsenal, Steve often visited schools in the surrounding area of the Emirates Stadium to encourage students to learn foreign languages as part of Arsenal's community outreach projects. Steve has now turned this passion into starting his own business Mingalaba and talking to secondary school students about all the amazing possibilities for work that are open to them if they continue to study languages. He talked about roles in football from coaching to travel manager and how languages help you to secure and be successful in these roles, roles which exist outside of the footballing world as well. Steve was able to convince huge footballing stars such as Mesut Ozil to do interviews with him, purely by offering to speak in their native tongue!

I hope that the students found Steve's talk interesting and inspiring, and that this will play a part in their decision making when it comes to selecting their GCSE choices in the new year. Languages open many doors in careers and also help significantly with university applications. Being able to communicate - even at a basic level - in another language sets you apart from the crowd and could help you to secure fantastic opportunities for your future.



Sixth Form Open Evening

Miss Loj, Assistant Headteacher

On Thursday 29th November we opened our doors to showcase our school to prospective Sixth Form students and their families.

Sixth Form applications are currently open.

To find out more please visit our website:

<https://www.brakenhale.co.uk/sixth-form/welcome>





PE and Extra Curricular

Mrs Lazarczuk, Head of PE, Mr Maye, Second in PE and PE Team

WOW What a busy second half term in PE!!!

PE have been immensely busy this second Half Term, offering new clubs, taking on more schools at fixtures its been so great to see the students wearing the new Kits with pride and doing the School Proud!

Here are some of the highlights...

NETBALL

We have had a continuation of Netball this half term with more students given the opportunity to play with some B Team tournaments where the girls smashed it winning games and providing lots of smiles and great effort all round!

FOOTBALL

The football season has started!!! With both boys and girls taking to the field in the County Cup wearing our NEW Brakenhale Football Kit! Football will continue in full after Christmas with the starting of the Leagues so watch this space!

Highlights so far...

Year 7 Girls winning in Extra time vs Trinity 3-2 to take a place in the 2nd round. The Year 9 Boys progressing 2 rounds of the County cup with most recently a 5-1 win over Highdown School. The Year 10 Boys came from behind to fight back to 3-3 only to be beaten in the last minute of extra time.

More amazing performances to come...



BASKETBALL

We have been running Basketball clubs since September and these paid off with a number of our students across year groups donning the NEW Brakenhale Basketball kits and taking on the other local schools in a mix of 3v3 and 5v5 full court games. We came out on top in most of these which is testament to our Reading Rockets link.

CROSS COUNTRY

Mr Maye took 2 teams of 6 runners from year 7,8,9 to compete against all the local secondary schools in a cold wet muddy course. Each student ran their socks off!!!!



SPORTS LEADERS

Our Year 10 Sports Leader students managed a Rugby Festival for 17 of the local primary schools with great enthusiasm and with great pride received some amazing feedback from organisers and local schools with how well it was run, delivered and the way the students were with the Year 3 and 4 students - they all had an amazing time. Very proud to hear and see them in action!

They proudly wore the new Sports Leaders kit, and we had great comments about that too!

The leaders have a busy January with their next events of indoor athletics.. Watch this space!



Extra Curricular

Please look out on the website for the New Terms Extra Curricular Clubs coming in January!

From all of us in PE have an amazing Festive Period but make sure you continue to do a little activity - be it new bikes, skateboards or even a nice Boxing day walk!



Pride of Bracknell Forest Awards

Visit <https://prideofbracknell.com/nominate/> to nominate before the deadline: 21st February 2025.

20 Years of Celebrating Bracknell Forest's Heroes!

Who is your LOCAL HERO?

PRIDE OF BRACKNELL FOREST AWARDS 2025

The Pride of Bracknell Forest Awards celebrate the achievements of outstanding individuals and organisations in our community. We showcase those local heroes who make life in the Bracknell Forest better.

Show your support by nominating someone today:

- Business of the Year
- Charity of the Year
- The John Nike Pride of Bracknell Forest Award (Adult & Young)
- Long-Standing Service to the Community Award
- School of the Year
- Sport & Achievement Award (Adult & Young)
- Teacher of the Year
- Team of the Year
- Young Person in Business

prideofbracknell.com/nominate
contact@prideofbracknell.com
 Pride of Bracknell Forest Awards
 @PoBFA

Please submit all nominations by Friday 21st February

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PRIDE OF BRACKNELL FOREST AWARDS 2025

The Pride of Bracknell Forest Awards celebrate the achievements of outstanding individuals and organisations in our community. We showcase those local heroes who make life in the Bracknell Forest better.

Nominate a deserving young person for one of these categories:

- The John Nike Pride of Bracknell Forest Young Person's Award
- Sport & Achievement Young Person's Award
- Young Person in Business

prideofbracknell.com/nominate
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Please submit all nominations by Friday 21st February



Community

School Office

Safety on and around the School Site

Please take extra precautions when accessing and using the school site. Please **avoid blocking** access roads when **parking** or **waiting** and please drive carefully. Please do not use the disabled spaces unless you have a disabled badge.

Littering and Congregating

Could we please ask parents to remind students not to leave litter around the community and to respect the neighbours when gathering.

Neighbourly Courtesy

When dropping off or collecting students could we please remind parents to respect the local community and not park across or block entrances to local organisations and driveways. Please park sensibly in surrounding roads, do not park on double yellow lines and do not use spaces in the Open Learning Centre which are reserved for their clientele.



Reminders

School Office



Outgrown or Leavers' Uniform

If you have any outgrown uniform or PE kit, or if your child has left Brakenhale, the school would be most grateful to receive your donations to help us fulfil second hand uniform requests.

We are especially interested in blazers, ties and school skirts.

Many thanks



LOST PROPERTY REMINDER

All NAMED

Lost Property
to be collected from
Main Reception

All UNNAMED

Lost Property
to be collected from
B Block



Support for Parents

Safeguarding Team

Parenting support and courses

Activities Calendar 2024-25

When?	Activity	Venue	Cost	Ages
14th -16th Feb	Leadership Residential	TBC	£30.00	11-17yrs
19th Feb	Stadium Tour	Wembley, London	£20.00	11-17yrs

Clubs / Participants are responsible for their own transport unless stated on the trip letters.

For more information or to book on please speak to your youth leader or contact;
Berkshire Youth on 01189 090 927 or admin@berkshireyouth.co.uk

Place2Be - Get Urgent Help



Improving children's mental health

For staff, families and young people seeking support over Christmas going through a crisis or needing help. There are lots of organisations out there to support you. If someone's life is in immediate danger, please call 999.

Their [website](#) provides details for organisations who provide free, 24/7 support to people in the UK.

Braccan Walk Youth Hub
Under the Braccan Walk Car Park - next to the entrance/exit
RG12 1GN

Sexual Health
Drop in (age 13+)

Youth Service
Drop in (age 11+)

at Braccan Walk Youth Hub every Tuesday 3pm - 5pm

Drop-in and speak with a clinician for:

- Sexual health advice
- Condoms
- Contraception and emergency contraception
- Pregnancy testing
- STI testing

You can also book online by scanning the QR code:

Understanding consent

Let's talk about sex

Worried about your relationship

Supporting Your Children Workshops

To book a space please email your full name to Inge.Taylor@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

These sessions are universal (not specific for SEND) and for adults supporting **not** the children themselves so **please arrange childcare if needed**

Each course is a **standalone 2-hour session** - please be aware that spaces are offered on a **first come first served basis** and parents should not just turn up.

Once you have completed an enrolment form your space will be confirmed

Please only book onto the sessions if you are **going to be able to attend** to avoid other parents missing out on the opportunity to have a place or let me know if you can no longer attend.

Helping children to overcome anxious thoughts and worries.

A 2-hour session looking at:

- What happens when children become anxious?
- Impact current events have had on children's mental health.
- Techniques for helping children deal with their fears / worries.

Tuesday 14th January 2025 **(15 spaces)**

@ Bracknell Open Learning Centre

9.30 – 11.30 am

Monday 27th January 2025 **(16 spaces)**

@ Bracknell Open Learning Centre

6.30 – 8.30 pm

Managing Behaviour in a Positive Way

A 2-hour session looking at:

- Gain insight into your parenting style / relationship with your child.
- Learn or revisit positive ways of managing behaviour!
- Strategies to deal with unacceptable behaviours.

Thursday 5th December 2024 **(9 spaces)**

@ Bracknell Open Learning Centre

9.30 – 11.30 am

Thursday 23rd January 2025 **(14 spaces)**

@ Bracknell Open Learning Centre

6.30 – 8.30 pm

Monday 10th February 2025 **(16 spaces)**

@ Bracknell Open Learning Centre

9.30 – 11.30 am

Supporting Children to get a Healthy Night's Sleep

A 2-hour session looking at:

- The different sleep issues facing our families.
- Tips on how to get a good night's sleep.
- Help children develop good sleeping habits.

Thursday 13th February 2025 **(16 spaces)**

@ Bracknell Open Learning Centre

9.30 – 11.30 am

Parenting pre / early-teens in a Positive Way (aged 10 – 13)

A 2-hour session looking at:

- Gain insight into the impact of your parenting style!
- Positive techniques for managing older children's behaviour.
- Boosting your relationship and communication with your child.

Tuesday 28th January 2025 **(16 spaces)**

@ Bracknell Open Learning Centre

9.30 – 11.30 am

Encouraging Resilience – Keep Calm and Bounce Back A 2-hour session looking at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · How to build your child’s natural resilience. · Encouraging your child’s positive social skills. · Encouraging children out of their comfort zone and not to give up. 	
Tuesday 21 st January 2025 (16 spaces) @ Bracknell Open Learning Centre	9.30 – 11.30 am
Wednesday 2 nd February 2025 (16 spaces) @ Bracknell Open Learning Centre	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Supporting a smooth transition from Year R to Year 1 and beyond (not school specific) A 2-hour session looking at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · What’s involved in transition from reception to year 1. · The best ways to support the transition. · Boosting your child’s resilience to cope with the change 	
Tuesday 11th February 2025 (15 spaces) @ Bracknell Open Learning Centre	9.30 – 11.30 am
Thursday 27 th February 2025 (16 spaces) @ Bracknell Open Learning Centre	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Reducing Sibling Rivalry A 2-hour session looking at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Encouraging a more harmonious sibling relationship · Learn / revisit techniques for children to cope with being a sibling. · Boosting children's emotional literacy 	
Monday 3 rd March 2025 (16 spaces) @ Bracknell Open Learning Centre	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Single Parent, Separated and Blended families – supporting children to cope with different family dynamics. A 2-hour session looking at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Different family dynamics and how they can work. · Parental conflict resolutions · Being the best parent that you can be for your child 	
Wednesday 12 th February 2025 (16 spaces) @ Bracknell Open Learning Centre	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Supporting a smooth secondary school Transition (YR 5/6 parents) A 2-hour session looking at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · What the transition involves · The positives and concerns of transitioning to a new setting · Boosting your child’s ability to have a smooth transition 	
Monday 10 th March 2025 (16 spaces) @ Bracknell Open Learning Centre	6.30 – 8.30 pm
If there are no suitable dates, please advise so that you can be added to the waiting list for future sessions	



Term Dates 2024/25

AUTUMN TERM 2024

Wednesday 4th September – Friday 20th December 2024

Christmas holiday

Monday 23rd December 2024 to Monday 6th January 2025

SPRING TERM 2025

Tuesday 7th January – Friday 4th April 2025

Inset day

Monday 6th January 2025

Half term

Monday 17th February to Friday 21st February 2025

Easter holiday

Monday 7th April to Monday 21st April 2025

SUMMER TERM 2025

Wednesday 23rd April – Friday 18th July 2025

Inset day

Tuesday 22nd April 2025

Bank Holiday

Monday 5th May 2025

Half term

Monday 26th May to Friday 30th May 2025

Inset day

Monday 21st July 2025

Inset day

Tuesday 22nd July 2025

Bank Holidays (UK) during school holidays

Christmas Day

Wednesday 25th December 2024

Boxing Day

Thursday 26th December 2024

New Year's Day

Wednesday 1st January 2025

Good Friday

Friday 18th April 2025

Easter Monday

Monday 21st April 2025

Bank Holiday

Monday 26th May 2025

Please check the school website regularly for current information.



Brakenhale School, Rectory Lane, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 7BA

☎ 01344 423041 | ✉ mainreception@brakenhale.co.uk | 🌐 www.brakenhale.co.uk

Part of the Greenshaw Learning Trust

