

Year 8 Autumn Curriculum Update – September 2026

YEAR 8 AUTUMN TERM OVERVIEW

Welcome to the 2026-2027 academic year at Brooklands Academy!

2026 has been a huge year for us so far. Not only did we de-amalgamate from Walton High, but we also won Most Inspiring Secondary School of 2026, achieved the ARC Bronze Award and the Woodland Trust Gold Award.

As we begin our new exciting chapter as Brooklands Academy, our values of A Place to Belong, A Place to Learn and A Place to Achieve are at the forefront of everything we have been working hard to embed into our school, staff, students and community with us continuing to look at ways to improve communication, teaching and learning within our classrooms, consistency and building connections with Tutors.

A new year always means a chance for reinvention. Reinvention starts by taking chances. We encourage our students to approach September with the mindset of saying yes! We want to support our young people in taking calculated risks so that they can thrive in school and beyond. The yes might be to a new enrichment activity, a challenge within the classroom or to a new friend! Saying yes to something new is saying yes to personal growth!

Welcome to the new academic year, let's do this!

All the Progress Leaders at Brooklands Academy

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

This term students will be exploring different forms of creative writing and analysing a range of texts linked to the theme of Moments in Time.

In the first half term, students will learn how to write imaginatively, adapting tone, register and style to match purpose and audience. They will build on prior skills and create a narrative inspired by a picture and/or title.

In the second half term, students will explore a range of fiction extracts to study how writers use language and structure to create effects. They will learn how to annotate a text effectively to explore their own ideas and interpretations.

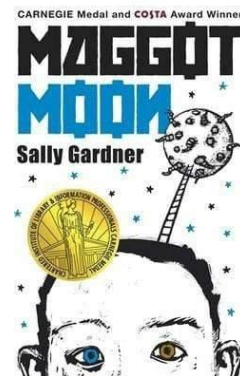


ENGLISH LITERATURE

This term students are enjoying an introduction to the Dystopian genre. Students explored a range of texts and conventions before starting to read our text of the term *Maggot Moon* by Sally Gardner.

Explores more mature themes and contexts, students will explore and alternate history featuring the space race, conspiracies, family and friendship and the theme of inclusion.

By the end of the term, students will have worked on interpreting, analysing and evaluating a statement based on a set text. They will learn how to respond effectively to a task, using references to support their ideas. They will be able to explain writers' methods and their effect and explore the contextual factors that underpin the writer's message.



MATHS

In Year 8, students continue to develop their mathematical knowledge and confidence through a range of topics that strengthen both numerical and algebraic understanding. During the autumn term, students explore ratio, proportion and scale, learning how these concepts can be applied to solve practical problems and interpret real-world situations. Students also develop their algebra skills through algebraic manipulation, learning to simplify expressions and work more confidently with mathematical notation.

Their understanding of coordinates and graphs is extended, enabling them to represent relationships visually and interpret graphical information accurately. Alongside this, students strengthen their number skills by learning to multiply and divide fractions, building fluency with calculations involving rational numbers. The term concludes with a study of symmetry and reflection, helping students to develop their spatial reasoning and understanding of geometrical transformations. Throughout the curriculum, students are encouraged to apply their learning to problem-solving tasks, communicate



their mathematical reasoning clearly, and build the resilience and confidence needed for future success in mathematics.

SCIENCE

During the autumn term, Year 8 pupils will study a range of topics across Biology, Chemistry, and Physics to further develop their scientific knowledge and skills. In Biology, pupils will explore plants and ecosystems, learning how plants function and how living organisms interact within different environments. They will examine topics such as plant structure, photosynthesis, and the relationships between organisms in ecosystems. In Chemistry, pupils will study chemical changes, where they will learn to identify signs of chemical reactions and understand how substances can change to form new materials.

They will also develop their practical skills through experiments linked to these concepts. At the end of these units, pupils will complete an assessment to evaluate their understanding and progress. Following this, pupils will move on to a Physics topic covering electricity and magnetism. In this unit, they will investigate how electrical circuits work, learn about current and voltage, and explore the properties and uses of magnets. Overall, pupils will continue to build their scientific knowledge and practical skills throughout the term, preparing them for further study as the year progresses.



ART

In Year 8 Art, students continue their exciting creative journey through a wide range of artistic styles, techniques, and processes. Building on the Year 7 foundation, with the theme “Journeys,” but this year students focus on the stories we tell through the places we experience and the people who shape our lives.

Students deepen their understanding of key art movements and learn how artists communicate ideas and respond to their environments. They further develop essential skills such as drawing from life, gridding for accuracy, painting, and basic photography.

A strong emphasis remains on the Formal Elements of Art—line, tone, shape, texture, composition, form, and colour, which supports students in gaining confidence when analysing and discussing artwork using specific art vocabulary.

Homework projects continue to reinforce classroom learning and encourage creative development. Over the year, students build their skills by:

Developing ideas through artist research, focusing on observational drawing and tonal work. Refining ideas by experimenting with mark-making, materials, and tonal techniques. Recording ideas via detailed observational studies that highlight tone and texture Presenting a



personal response through carefully organised sketchbooks and personal final pieces
Art is taught within a creative rotation alongside Food Technology and Design Technology, giving students the opportunity to engage with a variety of creative disciplines. Within the art rotation, projects are closely linked to the “Journeys” theme, with a focus on exploring places and people to express personal and shared stories through art.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

In this term, students explore two key areas of Computer Science: The Digital World and Binary.

During the first half of the term, students take a deeper look into the Digital World, focusing on the importance of online safety. They examine a range of real-world digital threats, including fraud, scams, cyberbullying, gaming addiction, and other online risks. Through discussion and case studies, students develop an understanding of how these issues affect individuals and communities. They are also introduced to practical strategies and digital tools that can help them stay safe online, empowering them to make informed and responsible choices in the digital space.



In the second half of the term, the focus shifts to Binary, the fundamental language of computers. Students learn how binary is used to represent different types of data within a computer system, including text, images, and sound. They gain hands-on experience converting between binary and other number systems, such as decimal and hexadecimal, and explore how and when these conversions are applied in real-world computing contexts.

DANCE

Year 8 begin the year with Exploring Musicals, learning choreography inspired by popular stage and screen productions. Students will discover how dance can tell a story and bring characters to life, while developing their confidence, teamwork, and performance skills. They will also explore the social and historical context behind a range of musicals. Performing Arts also offers a range of extracurricular opportunities, including Dance Company, Drama Club, and our annual School Musical, alongside many other performance opportunities at Brooklands. Speak to a Performing Arts teacher if you would like to get involved!



DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

In Year 8, students deepen their understanding of the design cycle and the iterative design process. The year begins with an in-depth exploration of influential design movements, where students investigate their historical context and lasting impact on the world of design.

Building on this knowledge, students will then develop and produce a unique clock design inspired by one of the movements they've studied—combining creativity with critical thinking and practical skills.



DRAMA

To welcome students back to Drama following their Year 7 experience, students will be exploring the exciting topics of Theatre Genres and 'Page to Stage'. This will be an opportunity for students to dive deeper into the workings of theatre-making, and how professional actors, scriptwriters and production teams work to bring a vision to life. It has been amazing to see so many keen students joining in with the Performing Arts extracurricular! Students are welcome to join the Drama Club, Encore Dance Company and are highly encouraged to audition for our upcoming annual musical!



FOOD AND NUTRITION

Students will build on knowledge from the previous year, developing a deeper understanding of the science of food. They will explore healthy eating in more detail, studying macronutrients and micronutrients and learning about their roles and functions within the body. Students will also extend their knowledge of food safety and hygiene, including the conditions required for bacterial growth and how food poisoning can be prevented. Practical skills will continue to develop through the preparation of a range of dishes, including Chow Mein, carrot and orange muffins, and pizza. These activities will help students refine key techniques such as mixing, baking, and cooking using a variety of methods.



GEOGRAPHY

This term we are looking at the continent of Africa – challenging misconceptions by exploring the diversity of its physical and human geography. Early in the topic we explore trends in the development of the continent and the important role of women in its continued progress. Then we will explore two diverse biomes – the Sahara Desert and tropical grasslands as well as human interaction (positive and negative!) with these. Finally, we look at the impact of cyclones when they hit the East of the continent. Students with a connection to the continent are encouraged to talk to their teacher about sharing this with the class. Those with a desire to make a positive impact on their local community and an interest in environmental sustainability are encouraged to join the school's 'eco-committee' in order to review the impact we have on the environment and to support projects to mitigate it.



HISTORY

Year 8 students begin the year with a study of the British Empire, exploring its growth, influence and legacy. Students investigate key questions including the motivations for establishing and expanding an empire, the reasons for decolonisation, and the impact of British rule on colonies across the world. Through these enquiries, students consider a range of perspectives and develop an understanding of the complex effects of empire on different peoples and societies. Throughout the year, students continue to develop their historical writing skills through the use of PEE paragraphs (Point, Evidence, Explanation). This structured approach helps them communicate their ideas clearly and support their arguments with accurate historical evidence. Students also explore historical debates and differing interpretations of events, helping them to understand that historians can hold different perspectives about the past and that history is often open to interpretation. This encourages critical thinking and supports students in forming balanced, evidence-based judgements about historical events.



LANGUAGES

FRENCH

This half term, Year 8 students will be exploring the topic of employment in their French lessons. They will learn how to describe different professions, where people work, and how to express opinions about various jobs. In addition, students will be introduced to the future tense, enabling them to talk about the careers they would like to pursue in the future. This unit aims to develop both vocabulary and grammatical understanding, while encouraging students to think about their aspirations in a new language



SPANISH

Students will study the themes of music, television programmes, and films. They will revisit and consolidate their understanding of the present tense, as well as expressing opinions and justifying them. Through this topic, students will also gain insight into music and celebrity culture within the Spanish-speaking world. In addition, they will expand their vocabulary while reinforcing key knowledge acquired in Year 7.



GERMAN

In German this term the students are learning about where they live. They will be looking at types and locations of houses, rooms of the house, furniture, and descriptions thereof. They will be looking at prepositions and how they affect the cases, as well as revising adjectival agreement. They will also be looking at how to describe where they will live in the future and their dream house.



MANDARIN

This term begins with an exciting journey around the world as students plan imaginary adventures to countries where Mandarin is spoken. Along the way, they will explore different cultures and compare school life across regions, from favourite subjects to daily schedules. Through engaging activities, students will learn to understand, discuss, and create school timetables in Mandarin, developing both their language skills and their appreciation of global perspectives and education systems.



MUSIC

Year 8 Music students have been exploring chords while developing their keyboard skills through the study of the Blues. They have been getting “In the Mood” as they rehearse Glenn Miller’s piece and listen to influential artists such as Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith. Students have also enjoyed improvising using the Blues scale and will continue to build these compositional skills as they move on to studying scores in Music for Film.



PE

This term, Year 8 students will build on the skills developed in Year 7 and begin to apply them more confidently in competitive situations. Students in the Girls PE Groups will continue to develop their performance in Netball, Basketball and Table Tennis, focusing on improving consistency, teamwork and tactical decision-making. Students in the Boys PE Groups will take part in Football, Tag Rugby and Health & Fitness, developing their understanding of game play, positional awareness and physical performance. Within Health & Fitness, students will begin using the fitness suite regularly, exploring the components of fitness in greater depth through a range of fitness tests and training methods. They will develop an understanding of how different methods of training can improve specific components of fitness and contribute to improved sporting performance and overall health. Baseline assessments at the start of the term will help ensure students are grouped appropriately to maximise progress and support individual development. A range of clubs and fixtures will also be available to support further development and enjoyment of sport.



RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY & ETHICS

This term, students will approach Religion, Philosophy and Ethics by examining two themes. The first theme focusses on the Philosophical question ‘Is there life after death?’ Students will examine a variety of religious and non-religious worldviews throughout this topic, whilst making links back to their Ultimate Questions study carried out at the start of Year 7.

Students will then examine the idea of a God, exploring belief in God and the impact this has on a believers’ life.

Year 8 are welcome to join the RPE book Club. Please contact Mrs Cartwright for more information.



CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Character Development equips students with the skills, knowledge and values needed to thrive in school and beyond and forms an important part of our Holistic Curriculum. This is a timetabled lesson that students do with their Form Tutor every Week A Wednesday, session two.

For the first half-term, students will be learning about Respect and how to show this in our community. Students will be developing their understanding of the British Values, such as tolerance and mutual respect, and what we mean by prejudice and discrimination in the context of ableism and sexism. Students will be exploring the impact of these and ways to promote a fairer society.

The second half-term's theme for Character Development is Mental Health. Students will be learning about mental health conditions, unhealthy versus healthy coping strategies and the support available for individuals experiencing poor mental health. There will also be a discussion of the importance of online safety and how to manage feelings of pressure, as well as how gratitude can positively influence our thoughts, feelings, and mental wellbeing.

