



Victory Park Academy News

Twitter: [__Victorypark_](#)

www.victorypark.org.uk

Autumn Term 2023

Update from the Head Teacher



As the Christmas Holidays approach, I would like to thank the whole school community for your commitment and co-operation in the school during the Autumn term. As always, we have managed to pack a huge amount into the Autumn

term, much of which is highlighted in this edition of the newsletter.

The school community continues to take pride in making the very best out of challenging circumstances. It gives me great pleasure to regularly carry out learning walks and see our students engaging in their learning, developing their resilience, communication, being happy and above all keeping safe. Over the Autumn term, our trust (Parallel Learning Trust) has purposefully commissioned an external specialist to Quality Assure the effectiveness of our provision achieving excellent feedback relating to the Quality of Education, SEND, Subject Focus, Wellbeing and Safeguarding. What continues to be clear from all reports received is that our students are making progress in school with highly effective staff who genuinely care.

Thank you to all our parents for being so flexible with the parent's afternoon arrangements that took place on 13th December. I hope that everybody has been able to meet with their child's class teacher and that you feel that you have been updated with individual progress. Can I remind you that whilst it is lovely to conduct the sessions face to face, we can also offer remote sessions for parents who are not able to attend or required to work at the times offered and that our doors remain open.

As always, outside of the cycle of parents evening, if you do have any concerns about your child or their learning, please do let us know and we will find a

mutually convenient time to talk about your concerns and hopefully be able to offer support.

Please follow us, if possible, on Twitter (@_VictoryPark_) as this often has daily posts relating to school life to keep you fully up to date.

On behalf of all the staff at VPA, I would like to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas. Thank you for your continued support.

Mr E Muca (Head Teacher)

Primary (Key Stage 2)

This term has been a busy one for Donaldson class we have had lots of visitors to the class including a new pet rabbit – Betty! Betty is now living in the primary corridor and pupils love seeing her daily and watching her hopping up and down.



As well as Betty, we have also had a visit from the recycling truck which prompted pupils to go on their own litter picking walk from Victory Park to Priory Park, we collected a whole bag of rubbish! As well as the recycling truck, we also had a visit from the firemen to discuss how to be safe at home and what to do if there is a fire – the students had some amazing questions for them.

In English, pupils have been focusing on their reading skills listening to George's Marvellous Medicine and using their comprehension skills to summarise what they have read and make inferences about the characters.



All primary pupils enjoyed a trip to the Cenotaph, this half term, to pay their respects to the fallen soldiers.



They all showed fantastic respect and staff were extremely proud!

As well as this, pupils have been using their reading skills during maths to solve word division problems. Pupils have been enjoying daily story times reading Matilda and discussing Miss Trunchbull – they do not approve of her discipline methods!

Primary (Harbour)



We have had an amazing time this term in Harbour class. Pupils have been engaging well with their learning of traditional tales for English and addition and subtraction methods in maths, as well as learning to tell the time. We have also been taking part in some

exciting Science experiments learning about the seasons which ended with a nature treasure hunt at the local park. Pupils have made great progress in their Phonics and reading which has been a big focus for all of them. Well done to all of our pupils for trying so hard and have a great Christmas all of you.

Read Write Inc



All primary pupils have been assessed for our Read Write Inc phonics programme

and those pupils with identified gaps receive one-to-one sessions with either our intervention teacher or their class teacher. Pupils receive four sessions per week with a focus on introducing one to two sounds per week. Pupils are then re-assessed each half-term with the hope that they move up one book colour per half term.

Secondary pupils are identified by their WRAT scores upon entering Victory Park and those who appear to have a gap in their reading age will be assessed for fresh start phonics programme. If they require sessions, they receive four sessions per week with our intervention teacher.

Science (Secondary)

This term in science year 11's has been looking at the variations in humans and animals. They have been preparing slides with cheek cells and onion cells to

compare them through a microscope and observing the differences.



Year 10 have been looking at solubility-planning and carrying out their own scientific investigations into the solubility of different substances. Using their developed knowledge on variables, they have planned how temperature may affect the solubility of a substances.

KS3 have been learning about energy and how this energy transfers through heating and our food sources. Pupils have carried out multiple investigations into the energy in food, thermal energy and energy from fuel.

Science (LEAP & STAG)

This half-term in science, we have been learning about the heart and circulation. We have dissected hearts in order to look at all the different parts. We also made 'blood' by replacing the four elements of blood for ingredients used in bubble tea: red blood cells were strawberry bubbles; white blood cells were lychee bubbles; plasma was elderflower cordial and platelets were white chocolate drops. It was delicious!



Hair & Beauty



Pupils this term have been learning how to carry out a service. They have worked on a number of techniques such as customer service skills in order to take a successful consultation before a treatment, nail painting skills creating French manicures, and their wash and blow dry techniques. They have looked at hygienic practices, tools and equipment along with time management of the service.

Maths (LEAP & STAG)

In maths, this half term, we have been beginning to use the mastery approach in maths where we use a concrete, pictorial and then abstract approach to our learning. We have used this approach to apply to multi-step worded questions using multiplication and division. In these questions we used to the bar model to draw out the questions (this made the problem much more understandable).

Maths (Key Stage 3)

From the start of the year pupils have been working really hard and have covered a range of topics including powers, prime numbers, multiplying fractions, simplifying fractions, working with negative numbers and finding the missing values to make an equation correct.

Try and balance this equation. If $11 \times 4 = ?$ What would $25 + ?$ be?

Maths (Key Stage 4)

It has been a jam-packed term for our students in KS4 maths, where we have covered topics such as pie charts, averages, converting currencies, transformations and developing problem solving skills.

TT Rock Stars

The academy has also recently signed up to Timetables Rock Stars, which is a popular online platform offering practice in basic arithmetic skills in a fun and rewarding environment. All students now have a log in and can practise their maths anywhere in the world!



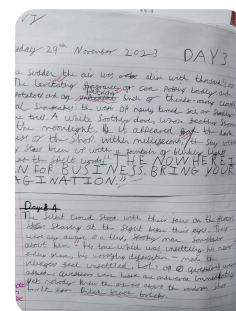
English (Key Stage 4)

All year 10 and 11 pupils have studied and taken their Functional Skills Level 1 exam and are currently waiting for the results. The purpose of the Functional Skills English Level 1 qualification is to prepare the learner for work, study and life. Pupils who achieve this qualification will demonstrate the ability to read, write, speak, listen and communicate in English. Pupils will be able to apply these skills effectively to a range of purposes in the workplace and in real life situations.

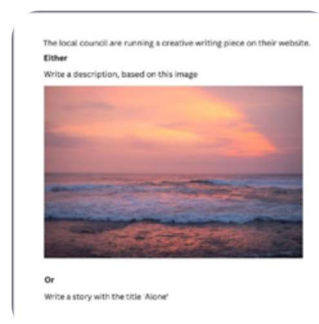
This is an additional qualification to the English to GCSE. We hope that pupils are successful!

Year 11 English

Pupils have been learning about Paper 1 question 5 of the GCSE English Language exam. This is worth half the total marks of the paper. This is where they can really let their imagination run free. It is the perfect place to let their creative skills take over. Pupils have a choice of two questions to answer.



Pupils can either write a description based on an image, or write a story with a title relevant to the theme of the paper.

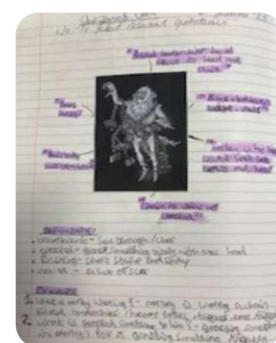


On the left is an example question in the same format that they will find in their exam. They only have to answer one of the two questions.

Skills we have learnt about include: plot; narrative voice; character; dramatic vocabulary; sensory language; figurative language; dialogue and punctuation.

Year 10 English

Pupils in year 10 have completed a unit on 'A Christmas Carol', the novella by Charles Dickens. Their work involved researching and learning about Victorian London and how poverty was crippling society. It covered the themes of redemption; poverty and social responsibility; Christmas Spirit/giving to charity and family. Pupils have learnt about the different characters and followed Scrooge's change in character which led him from being lonely and grumpy to happy and generous. Pupils learnt how to select quotations and analyse them.



Art



From the beginning of the year Key Stage 4 pupils have been working on GCSE coursework and the course demands that pupils work on a personal project that they are interested in.

The pupils have experimented with various materials such as shading pencils, charcoal, pastel, water colour paint and water colour pencils and have developed their skills. Recently they have progressed to painting with acrylic paint on large wooden boards. They have put a lot of time, effort into their work and displayed resilience and patience.

With the help of staff, all pupils have worked really hard and created some outstanding work – Well done to all!



Occupational Studies

This term in Occupational Studies our pupils have been covering a broad range of topics to explore potential interests and possible career options for the future. We have been learning a variety of skills on how to build internal and dryline them with plasterboard and the pupils have started to learn the basic processes of decorating the spaces they have built. In the new year the pupils will continue to decorate and learn how to cut angles for skirting and coving. The pupils are working towards their NCFE Level 1 and 2 qualifications and all are on track to succeed. Great work everyone and thanks for all the hard work.

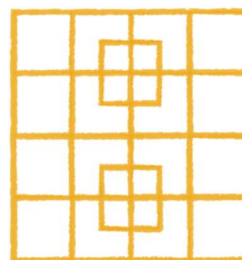


Numeracy Challenge

This term students have been given a numeracy and literacy challenge during tutor time. This includes How Many Squares?, Can You Name 20 Films?, The River Crossing Puzzle, City of Lies Puzzle and Pet Show Puzzle. The students have enjoyed trying to work out the answers as a group or individually. A prize has been

given out of a £5 voucher for the first student to come up with the correct answer.

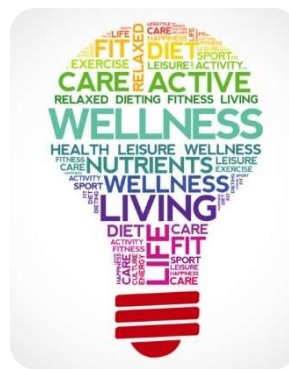
How Many Squares?



Teach Starter

Personal Well-Being

Year 11's has been learning about Sexual Relationships this term. The aim of this unit has been to provide students with the knowledge about sexual orientation. Students have been learning about legislation relating to sexual offences and also outlining what is meant by consent. Students have been studying what contraception is, the different methods of contraception and are now able to list the advantages and disadvantages of using some of them.



Message from our Counsellor & Mentor

I have now completed a year working at VPA and it's been an absolute pleasure being with these amazing young people. As a counsellor I am in a great position making no demands but as often the case, they are so engaging and willing to work with me. I have seen over 60 different students in this first year which is a fantastic level of commitment. I can offer support on a range of emotional issues and would encourage them to come and see me if they have any concerns. I currently work on Tuesdays and Thursdays but can change days to suit. Please contact me if you wish to make a referral. packera@victorypark.org.uk



I hope you have some rest at Christmas.

Examination News



Well done to the thirty Year 10 and Year 11 pupils who have recently sat their functional skills Level 1 examinations in both English and maths. The results should be in just after the Christmas break – Good luck to all!

PE

P.E this term has been excellent. The enthusiasm for trying new sports cannot be measured. This term, while playing badminton, we have introduced Spike ball to better our hand eye coordination which has seemed to pay off.



Chase Football is still a winner with KS3 and KS4 and gets very competitive. We have tried a new activity called Paddle for all at Garrons which makes tennis that little bit better.



Lastly, the Victory Park Gym has now opened and the pupils are getting stronger by the day taking advantage of our new gym equipment.

Food Technology

The Pupils have produced some excellent work in Food Technology this term. KS4 have been focusing on health and safety in the cooking environment and KS3 have been focusing on using different cooking skills. We have cooked a variety of dishes including; burgers, chili, stir fry and lemon drizzle cake. The pupils have also enjoyed making some Christmassy dishes during the last few weeks of term.



Nuclear Races (Enrichment Program)

Nuclear Races is an outdoor experience on the outskirts of Brentwood/Chipping Ongar. Victory Park's KS3, KS4 and STAG/LEAP enjoy once a week, regardless of the weather.

Set in over 2,000 acres of farmland and boasting over 150 individual obstacles in the picturesque landscaped fields and private forest, Nuclear Races offers something different! From any age to any fitness range, there will be an activity for our Victory Park pupils to engage in and flourish, with freedom and fresh air!



Horse Riding



This term we have been lucky enough to have funding for some sessions at Silver Birch Farm.

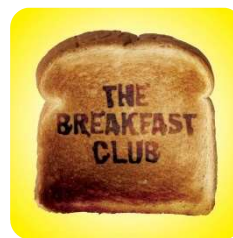
Pupils from Primary and Secondary attend weekly and get to interact with lots of different animals including rabbits, cows, alpacas and ponies. They have to complete various tasks around the farm from mucking out, filling hay nets for the animals and grooming the ponies and then they get to have a ride on their favourite pony.



Some of our secondary pupils have enjoyed it so much they have started volunteering at the farm at the weekend.

It is such a lovely activity for our pupils to take part in and interaction with animals of any sort helps to calm anxiety and stress. All our pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at the farm

Breakfast Club



We at Victory Park Academy know how important breakfast is to our student's well-being. Breakfast club starts at 8.30am-9.00am. They have a choice of cereal toast & fruit, we also play games (Uno, Connect 4 & various other games). This encourages pupil to have a positive start to the day.

Transition & Induction

Hello my name is Mrs Eileen Hawkes. I support pupils to have a positive transition into Victory Park Academy. Transition means change whilst becoming resilient and being able to cope with change, this a key life skill.



Assessments are important so we know the levels of individual pupils are working at. We aim to enhance pupils' development and attainment through developing a broad and balanced curriculum and offering unique educational opportunities.

It is important that students are also recognised for their good social skills such as; communication, verbal & non-verbal and visual skills.

We encourage Victory Park Academy students to take responsibility and develop their self -monitoring & their organisational skills.

Literacy

Literacy has been an intrinsic part of the VPA's push this year, ensuring that reading is embedded across the curriculum. Pupils have additional opportunities for support in reading through Read, Write Inc; Fresh Start for older pupils and Lexia, an interactive reading and grammar programme, all to help support literacy development.

Literacy skills, in particular, reading is very important because it allows pupils to access the full curriculum: pupils need to understand questions in both coursework and exams in every subject.



This term we have introduced a further interactive programme

called Spellzone which builds on phonics and teaches pupils different strategies to help pupils to improve with their spelling. Pupils have had a positive start on this programme and seem to enjoy it. Many pupils have dyslexia tendencies and this programme helps them to overcome difficulties with spelling.

Spelling & Dyslexia

Spelling and Dyslexia Spelling, Dyslexia and famous Dyslexics (spellzone.com)

English spelling is famous for being difficult - some people think it's amazing that any English children learn to spell accurately. Many people do have particular difficulty because their brains are organised in such a way that the skills needed for spelling do not come automatically. This difficulty is sometimes described as dyslexia.

It's estimated that 10% of the population are dyslexic to some extent - that means over 5 million people in Britain alone. One in 25 is said to be affected badly enough to need specialised help. These days, most schools and colleges do recognise dyslexia, but the extra help provided varies a great deal. Years ago, the situation was much worse: little was known about dyslexia and children who had literacy problems at school were often put in the lowest classes for all subjects. Many left schools lacking in confidence and have not reached their full potential.

Most dyslexic people do learn to read, although they may not find this easy. Spelling, however, usually remains a problem - and it has nothing to do with intelligence. Some of the world's greatest achievers have been awful at spelling, for example:

Albert Einstein, scientist, thought of by many to be the greatest genius who ever lived.

Some other famous dyslexics:

- Thomas Edison, inventor of the electric light bulb, the microphone etc.
- Agatha Christie, author.
- Richard Rogers, architect, designer of Lloyd's Building, London and the Pompidou Centre, Paris.
- Richard Branson, entrepreneur and adventurer.
- Henry Winkler "The Fonz", actor and author of Hank Zipzer books.
- Tom Cruise, Cher, Bob Hoskins, Anthony Hopkins, Sarah Brightman and several other well-known actors.

Curriculum

The curriculum from primary through to KS4 has been examined and yearly overviews for each key stage created. It outlines a summary of what will be taught, reading and assessment opportunities. In table form, it is easy to follow for pupils and parents and gives a clearer picture of what is on the agenda or horizon if looking ahead.

These will be uploaded onto Victory Park Academy's website under 'Pupils' then 'Curriculum'

KS2 CURRICULUM MAP 2023-2024						
	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
English
Maths
Science
History
Geography
Art
Music
Physical Education
Religious Education
Personal, Social and Health Education

Pupil Voice

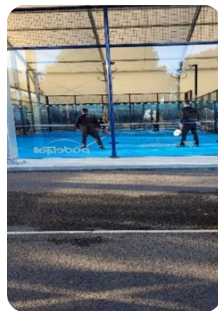


Every term we have a meeting to discuss various different topics and come up with new ideas for the school and what improvements we can make to the school and the pupils learning. So far, we have spoken about the rewards, enrichment trips and classrooms.

The students put forward many things they would like to see in the reward boxes such as; battery packs for phones, wireless speakers, fluffy socks and gift vouchers. Students have shown a real interest in the new enrichment trips we have put in place. Horse riding have proven to be a big hit with all our students and have received some amazing feedback. Students have also said that they would like to see some of the classrooms be redecorated using some warmer/calming colours. They feel that this could help with their learning engagement and help keep them calm during lessons. Students have shown real interest in pupil voice and being able to have a say.

Enrichment

It has been a good term with regards to our wide range of enrichment activities this term, we have had really good participation in Combat, Horse riding, chase football and our ever-popular rewards points trip to Oxygen. We have seen lots of good physical activities from our students from self-defence to double back flips on the trampolines.



We are also arranging for our students to visit the West Ham football stadium for a tour followed by a training session in Beckton with some of their coaches in the new year! What a great trip that should be! Mr Muca will definitely be going to that one too!



The year 10s and 11s have been taking part and volunteering in the new Duke of Edinburgh course that started in September. They have been volunteering at St Vincent's in Southend and have started to learn how to play golf. There was a lot of shouting "FORE!" from

the pupils

Behaviour

It has been a good term on the whole with regards to behaviour. However, uniform has at times been an issue. At Victory Park we do have high expectations around behaviour, attendance and punctuality as well as uniform. Please can you make sure that your child is in the correct uniform and in school on time.

Assembly

Assembly is held every Monday at 12.15pm. The assembly is divided into two sections. The first one is topic based- a rota has been prepared with the staff responsible added along with their date. The topics are based on calendar dates for National Awareness days; Religious festivals or current affairs. The relevant staff then deliver this and pupils have the chance to discuss its content, as well as learn something new or share their knowledge with others.

The second part is a powerful and purposeful way of reminding pupils of the Academy's expectations. Each pupil earns Sleuth points throughout the week and these points are collected up and analysed. Those pupils who have received enough points for Bronze-will pick something they like out of the box. The same is for silver and gold, with the quality of what they pick being greater depending on the metal colour. Some newer pupils find this public recognition a little embarrassing, however, the vast majority view it as part of the academy's culture and the uncomfortable feelings begin to dissipate. Moving forward, pupils have decided they would like to be involved in the buying of the prizes which will be discussed in the following Pupil Voice.

Attendance & Punctuality



We hope that the positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality continues to improve on our return from Christmas break.

Parents whose son/daughter is experiencing difficulties meeting our attendance and/or punctuality expectations are encouraged to actively engage in supporting them, and to work with us to improve this.

Daily late detentions are held at the end of each day for students who do not attend school on time. Students who are repeatedly late will be expected to remain in school on Friday afternoons for 50 minutes. You, as parents/carers, will be informed of this in advance.

Please encourage you son/daughter to be in school every day punctually, and to accept the sanction of detention if they are late. Understandably, there are occasions when students cannot come to school. When this occurs, please alert us in the first instant.

We send daily absence reports to home schools, local authorities and the DFE. Absent students can access lessons on the Online Learning Platform. Do contact us if there are any difficulties in accessing the materials. Students make the best progress by being in school daily. Please encourage your son/daughter to be here to enable them to fulfil their potential.

SEND



As we approach the Christmas break and draw a close to 2023, we can reflect on another exciting and positive year at

Victory Park. Our students have enjoyed a number of personal development activities throughout the Autumn half term including a weekly trip to the stables, where pupils get to ride and care for the horses and transfer some of the skills, they have been working on back at Victory Park. Students have continued to attend Combat Academy, where they are supported in areas such as personal space, resilience and managing emotions.

We have introduced a new target monitoring system, which has been very successful. Pupils now review their targets weekly with staff encouraging a greater

understanding and ownership of their own personal development.

Careers

This term at VPA has been a busy time for our careers provision. Year 11 pupils have been meeting with a member of the Connexions Team, who has been supporting them to work out their next steps and what routes they will need to take to reach their academic or work place goals. We also held a really successful careers fair, where we invited local colleges and apprenticeship providers as well as businesses from our area for pupils for both KS3 and KS4 as well



as primary, so they could get an idea of what jobs are out there and what they would need to do to get them. Connexions will continue to meet with pupils and we shall also be attending another careers fair at The Forum in Southend in the new year.

Key Dates

Last Day of Autumn Term

Thursday 21st December 2023

Christmas Break

Friday 22nd December to Sunday 31st December 2023

Bank Holiday

Monday 1st January 2024

Teachers Training Day

Tuesday 2nd January 2024

First Day of Spring Term

Wednesday 3rd January 2024



PHOTO GALLERY



Vinnies Pick N Mix

St Vincent's Centre, Southend VINNIES PICK N MIX

Vinnie's Pick n Mix is a low cost food market which takes place inside our centre, we will replenish stock throughout the market time so its fair for everyone attending.

**£5 first time you come then
£4, when you come next!**

Yearly membership costs just £1, Which entitles you to purchase up to 15 items for £4 shop!

**Every Friday -
10:00am- 12pm**

St Vincent's Centre
Unit 9 Victoria Business Park
Short Street
SS2 5BY



Reg Charity: 1053992

Christmas & Mental Health

Disconnect to reconnect

Christmas is all about quality time with friends and family. This Christmas practice keeping your phone in your pocket and really being present.

Stay hydrated

Set yourself up for success by drinking a glass of water as soon as you wake up each morning. Staying hydrated when surrounded by mulled wine and festive cocktails can be tricky!

Make time for you

Don't get bogged down with stress and to-do lists. Make sure you take 10 minutes out of every day to pamper yourself or just have some time on your own and give yourself a much needed break.

Eat your vitamins

During winter months our immune systems can be low, and lacking in Vitamin D! Make sure you fill up on at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day to keep feeling energised and healthy.

The 80-20 rule

Try to eat real, natural foods 80% of the time, and 20% of the time relax and indulge. Really enjoy and truly savor every mouthful on Christmas Day.

Get outside for a family winter walk

Thousands of studies have been carried out on the benefits of nature; from reducing depression and anxiety to lowering blood pressure and even helping with ADHD and autism in children.

Keep active

It can be very easy to curl up and stop your exercise routine over Christmas but try to keep active for both your body and mind. Just 15 minutes of exercise a day increases the amount of norepinephrine in your body - the chemical that can moderate our brain's response to stress and stressful situations.

Get some sleep!

Christmas can be stressful so it's even more important than normal to get a good night's sleep. Make sure you get at least 8 hours a night so your body can rest and recharge.

Let it go

Don't let the stress of present buying or socialising spiral out of control. Make a commitment to yourself to just let things go and enjoy each moment as it comes.

Take time to reflect

It's easy to get swept up in the Christmas festivities however it's important to pause and reflect. Take 10 minutes out of your week to jot down all of the things you are thankful for.

