

Victory Park Academy Newsletter

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Spring Term 2023

Update from the Head Teacher



Welcome to the Spring edition of our Newsletter. We have had a busy half term with: World Book Day, cultural and educational visits and we still have lots more ahead. Please ensure you keep up to date with the

school calendar of events, we wouldn't want you to miss anything.

As I write this term newsletter the sky is blue and the sun is shining, warmer days are starting to make an appearance and staff have a spring in their step. We are now over halfway through this school year and you should be very proud of your children's achievements; whether they be academic, personal development, the arts or for following our school values.

I hope you are able to see, in this Newsletter, some examples of the wonderful experiences and learning your children have at Victory Park Academy.

Lastly, I would like to wish you all a very happy Easter.

Mr E Muca (Interim Head Teacher)

Update from Assistant Head Teacher



So often we hear the words Wellbeing and Mental Health, of which is an integral part of what we continue to support at VPA. Siobhan Taylor this term has become a Senior Mental Health Lead expanding on

our already well-established Pastoral and well-being team. This term we have re-introduced the girls/boys' groups that meet weekly for a double period to build

on their social and emotional skills and giving them the opportunity to inform what our Wellbeing focus should be. (Please see our links for support around wellbeing and mental health on our school website and never hesitate to contact the Pastoral lead Siobhan Taylor for support).



We have successfully received funding to further expand our enrichment timetable and have submitted a further bid for Astro turf of which we are awaiting a response. These bids have allowed for the pupils to have, weekly combat, weekly nuclear races, weekly visits to badminton, weekly visits to Base Jump furthermore next term we will have: Basketball, Exotic Animals Sessions, Theatre Trips, Graffiti artists, Adventure Island, Farm visits and more.

An engaging Enrichment timetable not only offers our pupils complementary educational experiences but also has a positive impact on attendance, we have welcomed 15 new starters this half term to VPA. At the end of each half term, we have a Wellbeing week every afternoon for both pupils and staff. Last half term we raised £800 for Macmillan, this was achieved through sponsored walks and a bike marathon. This week we have been able to offer Nuclear Races, Base jump, Great VPA Bake Off, Art competitions, Stubbers (which include Laser Combat, Paddle Boarding, High Ropes. We will end this term with an Easter fun morning inviting parents and carers as well as agencies involved with VPA Stakeholders and Governors. These mornings have been introduced for the last 3 half terms, it is an opportunity for pupils to show their work, for staff to meet families, homemade cake and a nice cup of tea makes the mornings very inviting.

Pupil Voice plays a big part in how we decide how our wellbeing week will look. Next term we are looking at local Community building and local charities.

Primary



The spring term has been a busy one for primary, they have enjoyed learning about the film 'Up' and writing their own adventure stories which were amazing! In their Science lessons they enjoyed learning about forces and magnets and the effects different surfaces can have on speed of

movement of objects.

During maths, students have enjoyed learning about fractions and finding fractions of amounts. Students across both classes have enjoyed working as teams to create some amazing creations out of junk modelling, we have had superheroes (with wings!) and transformer robots. Carrying on with our creative theme as part of their personal development lesson children worked together to create a group collage picture based around their likes. We had a nature theme and a gaming theme.



The harbour classroom have enjoyed attending weekly art sessions and have been using paint, canvas and sponges to create spring pictures. As always, our pet



guinea pig, Fudge, has been present in the classroom and pupils are enjoying having him as a calming presence. One pupil now has an animal care session where she will be taking care of Fudge and cleaning out his cage! We are also introducing a new pet to the primary area, a lovely rabbit (pictures to follow!).

We look forward to seeing the rabbit grow and become a part of our primary classrooms. Students this half term have been attending Base Jump on a

Friday. As of next half term primary students will have to show give core behaviours in order to attend, these are:

- Coming into school safely.
- Using kind and friendly words.
- Using safe hands and feet.
- Following instructions.
- Having correct uniform.
- Coming in from break safely.

Children will earn stars for each behaviour and at the end of the week adults will check the chart and decide who has been safe enough to attend.

Art

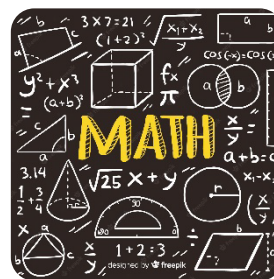


This term the Key Stage 4 pupils have been working on GCSE Exam work based on the theme of 'Lock'. The pupils have used a range of techniques and developed some really personal ideas. Keep going Year 11 because the exam is in May.

This term all of the pupils have been working on their own idea for the Art Competition, which will be judged on Friday 31st March by pupils, staff and parents. Everyone has put a lot of effort into their work and the finished pieces look really effective. All of the pupils have improved their skills and have displayed resilience and patience. With the help of staff, all pupils have worked really hard and created some outstanding work – well done to all!



KS3 Maths



This term the pupils have been working really hard and have covered a range of topics including converting temperature, converting Imperial to Metric amounts, plotting coordinates and calculating the area of rectangles, triangles and compound shapes.

If 1 foot = 30 cm and 1 inch = 2.5 cm what is the length of 8 foot and 5 inches in centimetres?

KS4 Maths



Nine of our Year 11 pupils have already passed their Functional Skills Maths (Level 1), and one pupil has passed Level 2, well done! There will be one last opportunity to sit this exam

before we hit GCSEs this year. Functional Skills English will be on Wednesday 19th April and maths will be on the following day – Thursday 20th April. Good luck to all.

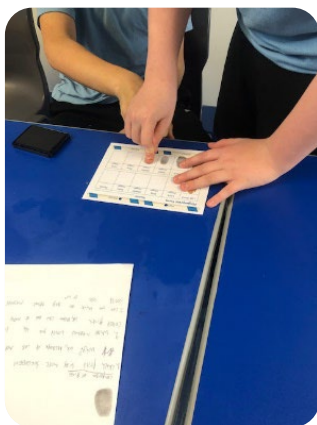
Applied Science



In KS3 this term we have been exploring the world of Physics. At the beginning of term pupils were looking at the force of gravity. The pupils enjoyed practical sessions exploring air resistance making different types of parachutes and exploring the results of their tests. The final part of term

pupils have been learning about circuits. This unit allowed pupils to learn about complete circular pathways that electricity flows through.

In year 10 this term pupils have become forensic scientists to solve the case of “who killed the teaching staff!” Pupils have been learning how to collect and record evidence from simulated crime scenes and then gone on to analyse and evaluate all the evidence found to build their case and prove who committed the crime.



In year 11 we have been investigating the solubility of different substances as part of our unit AS6: Carrying out a scientific experiment.

Pupils have been working independently to experiment with the substances, they have looked at coffee, flour, sugar, salt, jelly, sugar and a few more. Their results have been interesting.

Pupil Voice

Lots has been discussed this term around what the pupils would like to achieve within the school. A hot



topic within Pupil voice has been our enrichment programmes and reward incentives. Pupils have agreed that our reward boxes are working

well, we just need pupils to input more ideas into what they would like to see within these boxes. One of the discussions we had with pupils was around the types of enrichments programmes we offer.

As a school we have worked well with Southend Combat Academy and our pupils' love our sessions with them, but it was voiced that they felt two sessions a week was too much and they would rather an alternative. This half term we have introduced a weekly session to Base Jump, in which pupils must achieve their behaviour points to attend and Pupils are loving this.

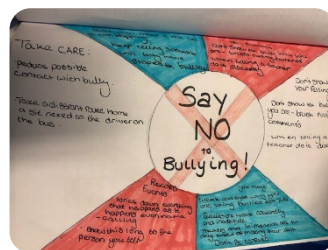
Hair & Beauty



Hair and Beauty pupils have been focusing on completing their coursework this term, as well as practising the practical skills they have learned throughout the year. We have run some client sessions where pupils have

had the opportunity to practise on different year groups.

Personal Wellbeing



Pupils in year 10 have been learning the difference between being “assertive”, “passive” and “aggressive”. The pupils have taken part in role play lesson playing out

different social situations to explore how each characteristic can change the situations we may find ourselves in.

In year 11 pupils have been looking at bullying. We have discussed how bullying can affect us emotionally

and physically and how our actions can help tackle bullying. Pupils have taken part in lots of class discussions about “what is bullying” and reflecting on this within the discussions. Pupils have also worked on creating. Anti-bullying posters which could go up around the school, as you can see below.

Leap/STAG



Leap and STAG have enjoyed a fun filled term. We have begun visiting Nuclear Races in Brentwood weekly and it is safe to say that the pupils (and staff) have got

stuck in! They have enjoyed Olympic rings, climbing, obstacle courses, zip lines, sliding into water and much more! We are all very excited to get back there next term in the warmer weather.

The students have also worked really hard in Art decorating our hallway as well as making masterpieces for the Art competition. The pupils have also been lucky enough to go on trips to Barleylands farm as well as the Sealife Centre and we are looking forward to organising a trip to the theatre next term to see how it is all run behind the scenes.



Stubbers



This term we have had another amazing opportunity to go to Stubbers again and activities have included Paddleboarding, high ropes and laser combat

which was very successful and enjoyed by all! We look forward to another trip at the end of next term.

PE

The students have had a nice but energetic time playing Badminton at Garrons Leisure Centre.

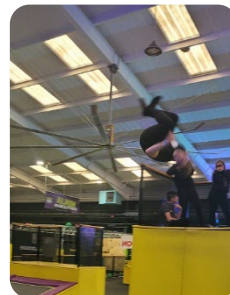
Combat

The students that have attended the sessions really do enjoy the physical side of combat. At least six



students have attended each session and every one of them have improved not only their fitness but their self-defence skills.

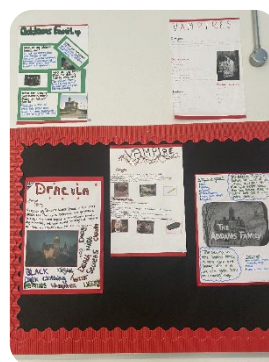
Base Jump



What a term for enrichment we have had! Students have been rewarded with this weekly trip as long as their points in class have been high and their behaviour around school has been good. There have been 12 pupils each week that have attended each

week and are improving their back and front flips with each week that passes. Mr B can still only do a star jump sadly!

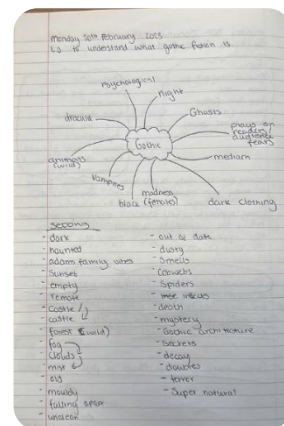
English



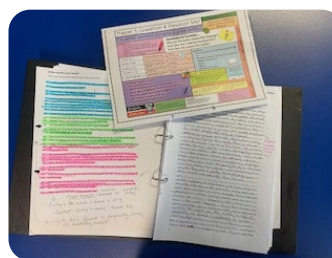
Year 10 pupils have been studying Gothic literature in Spring 2. This scheme of work provides an understanding of this classic genre by covering influential authors, key Gothic themes, settings, plot narratives and Gothic characters. Famous novels such as Dracula, Jekyll and

Hyde and Frankenstein are looked at as well as shorter stories such as The Monkey Paw.

Contemporary media is analysed for gothic conventions such as The Adams family and The Vampire Diaries. Pupils have enjoyed researching and creating their own Gothic monsters.



Year 11 pupils have been completing practice papers for their GCSE English Language exams on 5th and 12th June 2023. In Spring 2, we have focused on paper 1 – Explorations in creative reading and writing – the paper has 5



questions: 4 reading questions and 1 written question. Each question has different marks and tests a different skill (Q1-4 marks; Q2-

8marks; Q3 8 Marks; Q4 20 marks and Q5 40 marks).

Literacy, Phonics; Reading and Lexia

Literacy is at the heart of teaching and is embedded within the whole school curriculum. Since September 2022, there has been a big push on encouraging pupils to read, both for their learning and for pleasure. Classrooms have reading areas with books and bean bags- there is also a small library. It is noticeable when completing learning walks that reading has become habitual and pupils are now seeing this progress reflecting across their subjects. During the Spring term, 54.7 % of pupils met (90.5% met or partially met) their literacy target.

Phonics has been very successful both for RWI (mainly primary) and Fresh start (the subsequent course) pupils, the latter three pupils have successfully completed the course. At Victory Park Academy, all pupils are assessed using WRAT5 (Wide Range Achievement Test) every six months (March and October) of each year. The WRAT5 measures and monitors fundamental reading, spelling and comprehension skills.

Pupils are ranked in order, by comparing the difference between their WRAT score and their true chronological age for each of the three component sections – Reading, Spelling, and Comprehension. 20% of learners with the greatest difference between their WRAT score and actual age, are identified for additional support in each of the areas.

53 pupils completed their WRAT in March 2023, as detailed below:

Key Stage	Male	Female	PP	NPP	Total
2	5	-	3	2	5
3	6	4	9	1	10
4	14	14	20	8	28
LEAP/STAG	8	2	9	1	10
Total	33	20	41	12	53

As a result of intervention work (Phonics; Lexia) and reading across the curriculum, reading is the strongest component, followed by comprehension.

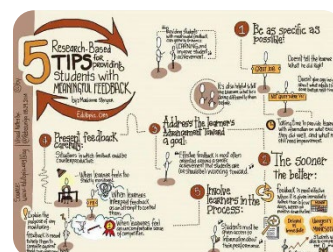
Lexia



Lexia intervention data shows that 100% of pupils made progress in all three areas but at different levels- 63% (29) at foundational level in

word study; 30% (14) at intermediate level in word study and 7% (3) at advanced level in word study. 55% (25) at foundational level in grammar; 38% (17) at intermediate level in grammar and 7% (3) at advanced level in grammar. Lastly, 31% (15) made progress in foundational comprehension exercises; 38% (17) at intermediate level in comprehension exercises.

Marking & Feedback



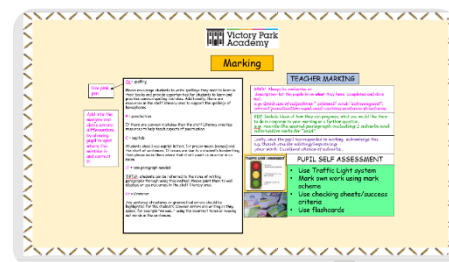
One of the most effective uses of a teacher's time is in giving... good feedback - which should be specific and encouraging. Teachers will use a

variety of feedback methods- see below...

All pupils' work will be marked by the teachers – we use a pink pen to comment on what pupils have done well; green pen for how pupils can improve their work and purple pen for any pupil responses to the marking. Therefore, all pupils are very clear in each subject what they need to do to improve and move onto the next step in their learning.

Work Scrutiny

Work Scrutiny takes place every week on a rota, to allow all staff to participate- and two subjects books



and folders are looked at each week. Criteria are used to measure the work scrutiny and automatic

feedback given to the teachers. This is used to ensure all pupils across the curriculum are given targets so they can improve in all subjects.

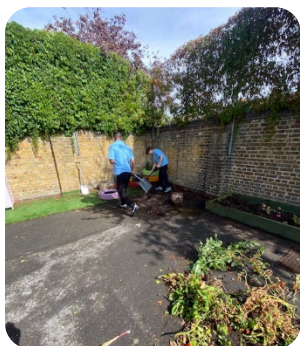
Food Technology



This has been my first term teaching food technology; it has been a very successful term and the pupils have made some excellent dishes. The pupils have enjoyed learning how to make; Spaghetti Bolognese, chicken curry, Bombay potatoes and

flatbreads. As well as some tasty desserts like Banoffee Pie. We enjoyed making lots of pancakes for pancake day as well as some treats for easter. The pupils have produced some excellent theory work, we have been learning about nutrition, the pupils have been able to discuss how the dishes they have prepared can form part of a balanced diet.

Occupational Studies



We have had a fantastic term in occupational studies and both KS3 and KS4 have shown great engagement in this subject. We have enjoyed being outside planting bulbs for spring and demonstrating our new found skills in

bricklaying. Excellent work everyone.

Princes Trust



Princes Trust this term has been focused around teamwork and its advantages and disadvantages. We have worked

together on building a shed and pupils have been showing how well they can work together and the benefits of doing this.

Careers



This term we had one of our best Careers Fairs yet, with local businesses and college providers in attendance, helping our pupils plan their next steps or show them the options that they have.

Both parents and pupils felt the event was a great success and has been a real positive for this term.

Exam News



Note in your diary, the dates for this year's GCSE exams.

All exams will be held in the morning starting at 9:00am.

GCSE English is on Monday 5th June and Monday 12th June and GCSE Maths will be on Friday 19th May, Wednesday 7th June and Wednesday 14th June!

Thursday 24th August 2023 is examination results day

Results can be collected from the VPA office between 9:00am and 11:00am on the day or they will be posted out to any Year 11 pupil who cannot make it in!

SATs

Due to the additional coronation Bank holiday on 8th May, Key Stage 2 SATs will start a day later on Tuesday 9th May until Friday 12th May this year.

SEND



This term has been an exciting term at Victory Park as we have developed our sensory room that all pupils can access for some calm time, guided journeys and 1:1 sessions with adults. Leap have continued to develop our outside animal area, which will house rabbits, chickens

and hopefully much more! The students are alongside this learning about animal care and welfare, to support the maintenance and upkeep of the provision. Leap have started to go to Nuclear Races once a week as part of their personal development curriculum, which has been a healthy challenge for both staff and pupils.

There have some exciting trips for our pupils including a visit to the farm and weekly sessions at our local trampoline park, which pupils have expressed they would like to repeat next term.

Counselling & Mentoring



Introducing the new school counsellor and mentor Andrew Packer.

I have been working in the school since January 2023 and have had the privilege of working with many of the students. They have been

very engaging and as we work together, I am able to offer my support and help. I have previously worked in the public sector specialising in Safeguarding for 31

years, I am a qualified Counsellor. I can offer the students confidential counselling sessions. In my role as a mentor the students can speak to me at any time and discuss issues they are having. We often use goal setting exercises to help them understand what is going on for them. I encourage all the students to come and see me on Thursdays when I am at the school. Please email me if you would like further information. Many thanks Andy
packera@victorypark.org.uk

Key Dates

Last day of Spring Term

Friday 31st March 2023

Easter Break

Monday 3rd April to Friday 14th April 2023

First day of Summer Term

Monday 17th April 2023

ONLINE CONTENT

10 tips to keep your children safe online

The internet has transformed the ability to access content. Many apps that children use are dependent on user-generated content which can encourage freedom of expression, imagination and creativity. However, due to the sheer volume uploaded every day, it can be difficult for platforms to regulate and moderate everything, which means that disturbing or distressing images, videos or audio clips can slip through the net. That's why we've created this guide to provide parents and carers with some useful tips on keeping children safe online.



1 MONITOR VIEWING HABITS

Whilst most apps have moderation tools, inappropriate content can still slip through the net.



2 CHECK ONLINE CONTENT

Understand what's being shared or what seems to be 'trending' at the moment.



3 CHECK AGE-RATINGS

Make sure they are old enough to use the app and meet the recommended age-limit.



4 CHANGE PRIVACY SETTINGS

Make accounts private and set content filters and parental controls where possible.



5 SPEND TIME ON THE APP

Get used to how apps work, what content is available and what your child likes to watch.



6 LET CHILDREN KNOW YOU'RE THERE

Ensure they know that there is support and advice available to them if they need it.



7 ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING

Talk about what people might post online and why some posts could cause distress.



8 LEARN HOW TO REPORT & BLOCK

Always make sure that children know how to use the reporting tools on social media apps.



9 KEEP AN OPEN DIALOGUE

If a child sees distressing material online; listen to their concerns, empathise and offer reassurance.



10 SEEK FURTHER SUPPORT

If a child has been affected by something they've seen online, seek support from your school's safeguarding lead.

NOS
National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

