



Update from the Head Teacher



Dear Parents and Carers,

As we head into the summer term, we wanted to update you on all the exciting and enriching activities that have taken place so far, as well as a few upcoming events and developments. Our pupils have been hard at work and have had a range of valuable experiences that have contributed to their personal growth and academic progress.

A special mention goes to our pupils who recently completed their Functional Skills exams. We are incredibly proud of their hard work and dedication and we are excited to see how their achievements will support their future success. These exams are an important step in developing essential skills that will be useful in both their academic and everyday lives.

In our ongoing efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils, we welcomed the local Fire Brigade to school to talk to our students about the dangers of arson. The session was both informative and thought-provoking, offering valuable insights into the risks and consequences of such actions, as well as providing guidance on how to make safer choices.

We are delighted to share that several of our pupils have successfully been reintegrated into mainstream education. This achievement marks an important milestone in their educational journey, and we couldn't be prouder of their resilience and determination. We will continue to support these pupils to ensure they thrive in their new environments.

World Book Day was a real highlight this term! Our staff embraced the spirit of the day by dressing up as iconic book characters, making the event both fun and engaging for the pupils. The day was filled with a range of exciting activities, from book swaps to reading

challenges, and it was wonderful to see our pupils so enthusiastic about celebrating the joy of reading.

We also had a visit from Open Road, who delivered an impactful session on the effects of drugs and the importance of making informed decisions. The pupils engaged thoughtfully in the discussions and the visit served as a crucial reminder about the potential dangers of drug misuse and the significance of making healthy choices.

Our pupils have had the opportunity to participate in various trips and visits this term, providing them with hands-on learning experiences outside the classroom. These activities have helped broaden their horizons, whether it's exploring new areas of interest or gaining real-world knowledge that complements their studies.

We are thrilled to announce the completion of our new £50,000 astro turf. This state-of-the-art facility will provide our pupils with a fantastic space to engage in sports and physical activities, enhancing their overall well-being and helping to promote teamwork and healthy competition. It's an exciting addition to our school and we are sure the students will make the most of it.

We look forward to the remainder of the term and all the exciting opportunities it will bring. Thank you for your continued support in helping us provide a safe, nurturing and inspiring environment for your child.

Mr E Muca (Landi)

Donaldson Class – Primary



In Donaldson this term, we have been reading *How To Train Your Dragon*. Pupils have enjoyed reading the book and even wrote their own chapter for the book. There were lots of amazing ideas flying around the classroom and pupils even begun to use

adverbials in their writing. In maths, we have had a focus around multiplication and division. Some pupils have worked on their times tables whilst others have begun working on multiplying and dividing larger numbers. During science, we have been learning about circuits and pupils enjoyed experimenting with the circuit equipment and trying to get the bulbs to light up. The focus in the classroom this term has been amazing and pupils have made great progress across all subjects.



Reading & Phonics

Pupils continue to engage well with the 'Read Write Inc' phonics programme and most pupils continue to make positive progress. These phonics skills are now being developed to support not only their reading skills but also their spelling skills. Pupils are now able to sound out words independently and begin to spell them independently also. For those pupils who have completed the phonics programme, reading remains a core skill to build upon throughout their time at VPA. We continue to read each morning to adults and support reading throughout all academic subjects. We encourage all pupils to grow their reading knowledge and their choice of reading books.

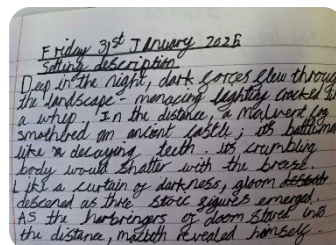
Harbour Class – Primary

We have had a really successful term in Harbour. Pupils have been learning about traditional tales and poetry during their literacy and methods for multiplying and measure in math. We have been working on building resilience and managing emotions which pupils have been working really hard on. With the arrival of Spring, we have been outside developing our garden area, planting seeds and bulbs which the pupils have really enjoyed. Great work everyone.



LEAP 1

Leap have had a very busy Spring term. Students have developed their creativity skills through their English and art, developed their resilience through their outdoor learning activities and been inspired by visits from outside agencies regarding future careers.



In English, we have studied Macbeth. Leap have written some fabulous descriptions of settings and characters.

In maths this term, we have been solving problems involving multiplication and division; fractions and percentages of amounts and constructing, measuring and using geometric notation.

In science, we have carried out a number of experiments looking particularly at fair testing. This picture is of mixing bicarbonate of soda with different strength of vinegar to see which would make the most gas.



For our passport activity, we have completed a number of different activities including planting bulbs and making models of the Globe Theatre.

We have been a number of outdoor learning adventures including the farm, Belchamps, Oxygen and the Zoo.

LEAP 2

This term we have been looking into what life was like in Tudor times. Studying the Tudor timeline of events, we considered the impact on England of the different monarchs. Looking at primary and secondary sources, we then researched topics such as housing, jobs, clothing, schooling and crime and punishment. We also looked at the symbolism found in Tudor portraits.

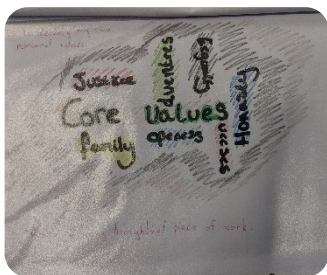


Our English led on from the Tudors as we studied the Shakespeare play, Macbeth. We have watched and read the story of Macbeth and had opportunities to act out parts of the play. We practiced writing prose using a variety of sentences and an increasingly wider vocabulary. We discussed how Shakespeare used iambic pentameter for most of his characters speech but used alliteration and rhyming

couplets when the witches spoke to set them apart as The Weird Sisters.

Maths this term included working out fractions and percentages, a useful skill for the future.

Our PSHE topic has been a consideration of our beliefs and values and those of other people. We did this through self-reflection, group discussion and respectful debate.



In science, we have conducted a variety of experiments such as: "How does the amount of gas released from a vinegar/baking powder mixture vary with differing amounts of vinegar?" We learnt how to successfully conduct an experiment and write up our method, results and conclusion. This included reflecting on the variables of an experiment, accuracy when recording results and safety considerations.



Enrichment trips have included trips to a farm and the beach where we had an ice cream, looked for creatures on the sea shore and made sand castles. We also

grew some spring flowers in the classroom to brighten things up.

STAG & LEAP Enrichment

As part of the curriculum, we work hard to create opportunities for all our pupils on the STAG and Leap pathways to gain important experiences outside the classroom. At Victory Park Academy, we pride ourselves in offering a tailored and enriched curriculum that engages all our students in different ways. These opportunities offer different experiences and provide our students a platform to develop curiosity, move out their comfort zone, access the community and try something new.

Combat Academy



Every Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon, our Leap and Stag students attend the new and improved facilities provided at Southend Combat Academy. The students get the chance to access the gym and learn how to

train safely and use fitness equipment to develop their strength, fitness and improve their health. It is a chance for them to get into positive lifestyle choices and release any built-up tensions. They are trained by professional coaches who teach them discipline, determination and commitment.

Belchamp's Activity Centre

Students are physically and mentally challenged every week by attending Belchamp's which is an outdoor experience where students get the opportunity to try something new, push themselves and enjoy the fresh air! This term students have experienced archery, pedal karting, air rifle shooting and wall climbing.



Maths

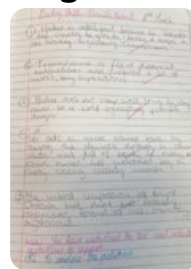


Well done to seventeen of our Year 11 pupils who have already passed their Functional Skills Maths (Level 1) this term!

And contributions to the six pupils who have additional passed their Functional Skills at Level 2!! Year 11 have been revising hard for their upcoming GCSEs and have covered topics such as, multiplying and dividing fractions, symmetry, averages and listing outcomes.

This term, our Year 10 pupils have been developing their problem-solving skills by tackling a variety of mathematical challenges.

English



For KS4 English, Year 10 pupils have been studying Gothic literature during Spring 2. This scheme of work aims to provide a thorough understanding of this classic genre by exploring influential authors, key Gothic themes, settings, plot narratives, and Gothic characters. Notable novels in this genre include "Dracula," "Jekyll and Hyde," and "Frankenstein." Additionally, contemporary media examples, such as "The Twilight Saga" and "The Vampire Diaries," have been analysed for their Gothic conventions. Pupils have enjoyed researching and creating their own Gothic monsters, as well as writing their own openings for Gothic short stories.

In Spring, Year 11 students designed and created a magazine of their choice, enhancing their non-fiction writing skills in reviews, letters, emails, articles, blogs, and travel writing. After completing the non-fiction writing assignments, students have been practicing for their GCSE English Language exams, which will take place on May 23 and June 6, 2024. In Spring 2, we focused on Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing. This paper consists of five questions: four reading questions and one writing question. Each question is worth a different number of marks and tests various skills: Q1 is worth 4 marks, Q2 is worth 8 marks, Q3 is worth 8 marks, Q4 is worth 20 marks, and Q5 is worth 40 marks. We also covered Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives, which contains five questions as well: Q1 is worth 4 marks, Q2 is worth 8 marks, Q3 is worth 12 marks, Q4 is worth 16 marks, and Q5 is worth 40 marks.



Literacy Update

During the spring term, our focus has been on encouraging reading, particularly reading for pleasure.



Staff members have actively promoted this by dressing up as various book characters for World Book Day and bringing in books they enjoy reading. Additionally, a staff member regularly sits with students in the library to read to them. We continue to integrate reading across the curriculum, engaging students in all subjects. This approach not only helps students become more involved with reading but also reduces anxiety around it. In English lessons, a wider variety of reading materials, both fiction and non-fiction, are now available for students to explore during their own time.

The day was very successful, really promoting reading for pleasure.

Art

Hello everyone, I am delighted to introduce myself as the new art teacher. Since taking on this role, I've been inspired by the enthusiasm and creativity our students bring to the classroom. They have adjusted remarkably well, and their artistic talents are truly shiny.

This term in Art, our GCSE Year 10 pupils have been diving deep into the theme of identity. They've been developing their ideas through research, experimentation and creative exploration. Meanwhile, our Year 11 students have been refining their personal responses to their set theme: Gathering, preparing for their upcoming 10-hour exam in May. Their hard work and dedication are evident in the inspiring pieces they are producing- we look forward to seeing their final outcomes!



Food Technology

The Pupils have produced some excellent work in food technology this term. We have cooked a variety of dishes including; Cajun chicken pasta, braised pork, lasagne, chicken pie and chocolate brownies. KS4 have been focusing on their final assessments and have produced some amazing menu's this year we are very proud of them all and look forward to seeing what the rest of the year 11 pupils produce over the next few weeks.

Science



This term, KS3 students have been studying the periodic table, focusing on elements, compounds and mixtures. They have explored how these can be chemically combined or separated, as well as the interactions between various elements and substances.

Meanwhile, Year 10 has been concentrating on chemistry, specifically on producing a chemical product. To prepare for this, they have been examining various household substances, testing their pH levels, and observing their reactions with each other to form new substances. They have been diligently planning a project to create plastic from potato



starch and we are eager to see the results of their final assessment.

In Year 11, students have been studying physics, focusing on the physical processes related to energy, electricity, and force. They have conducted investigations to understand concepts such as speed, energy transfer, electricity and finally, radiation and waves.

Hair & Beauty



In this term's hair and beauty course, we have been exploring a variety of hair styling techniques available in a salon setting. This has included learning how to work professionally and how to project a professional image while performing our tasks. Throughout the unit, the students have examined braiding, heat styling, setting, and updos, including wedding and festival hairstyles for inspiration.

Message from the Behaviour Lead

In a behaviour school, good behaviour is about respect, kindness and learning to make positive choices. Students are taught to take responsibility for their actions, support each other and grow emotionally. Teachers guide them with patience and care, helping them build confidence and self-discipline. By celebrating progress and focusing on improvement, these schools help students develop into respectful, responsible and confident individuals who can succeed in life.

Having said that, I would say that behaviour at VPA has been good this term and that all staff members have been on hand when called upon for support when a student has needed it. They have also made very good use of our wonderful onsite councillor Andrew Packer which has provided a great outlet for our pupils' frustrations.

For our enrichment and rewards this term, we have done lots of exciting things including our ever-popular Go-Karting trips, Colchester Zoo, Belchamps and Oxygen. Ninja Warrior has also been a reward that our students have taken part in. So here's to next term



when we will be taking some of our students to watch Back to Future in the West End! Among trips including laser tag at Stubbers!

Remember good behaviour means more rewards!

SEND

We have held two SEN pupil voice groups this term, one at Starbucks, focusing on the theme equality and diversity and one focusing on pupil surveys. The meetings have been very successful, generating lots of ideas around workshops, training, guest speakers and careers. The minutes have been added to our website.



Our Educational Psychologists have delivered some fantastic training to staff on Pathological Demand Avoidance. Information for parents is available on our website under SEN. We have also been updating our website with information on Trauma Informed Practice, training for staff that has been on going throughout the year.

All staff have been trained how to use the Verbo Platform, which is an online screening tool and resources for speech and language. We are now planning the to use the information to inform interventions and develop more social skills groups for pupils.



Two members of staff have completed ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) and are planning their own intervention group to help develop pupils' self-esteem.



The whole school celebrated Neurodiversity week, with activities planned across the whole week. Pupils went to the beach, took part in mindful meditation, sensory food tasting and a sensory circuit including bracelet making and Russian dancing!

Two pupils have been moved to mainstream schools this term through our fair access panel. They have worked very hard, self-reflected and built on their resilience whilst being at VPA. We wish them all the best!

Astro Turf



At the start of the year, we had new Astro Turf installed on the secondary playground. The pupils are all really enjoying this new facility and it has brought some much needed green to the school. PE lessons and break times have been given a new lease of life and we are all really glad to have this amazing new addition to our school.

Careers

Our Year 11 pupils have been working alongside our careers advisor and planning their next steps when they leave us at Victory Park. Pupils are aware of the actions they need to take to reach their new destinations and pupils and staff are working hard to ensure they make it.

Staff Well-Being



In our Spring term we have been looking after our awesome staffs' wellbeing. We joined Sutton House Academy for an exciting game of

Bingo, where staff were able to win some amazing prizes including the chance to go home early on a day of their choosing. We also had a fun cake decorating competition where staff were given an easter themed design to copy with the best winning a delicious prize.

Healthy schools, Healthy Lives



We are excited to announce that Victory Park has joined the Southend Healthy Learning Healthy Lives programme, which is an initiative designed to support schools in Southend-on-Sea to improve the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and parents of the school community.

The programme is award based, allowing participating schools to achieve accreditation by demonstrating their commitment to encouraging a healthy environment around the four key areas: Food, Drink & Oral Health, Physical Activity, PSHE (Personal, Social & Health Education), Emotional Health and Wellbeing.

This will open opportunities to work with other stakeholders and community initiatives to support the outcomes of all students physical and emotional wellbeing.

Pupil Voice



Every term, a group of students get together to talk about the school and any changes they think we could make to improve their time here at Victory Park. This is a great opportunity for them to have their voice heard.

In our recent pupil voice, we were discussing the activities we have to offer and what other activities students would like to take part in. There were some many great suggestions such as pottery painting, Marsh Farm and a bath bomb and skin care making experience to Lush (these are just to name a few). Students have shown a big interest in having a whole school fun day with a BBQ, music and games. This is something we are hoping to organise for the warmer weather. It is also a great way for students to build relationships with other pupils as well as staff.

Pupil voice is so important for our students to feel heard and it is amazing that they engage so well with it.

Quality of Education

Work scrutiny has and will continue to reflect best practices. Pupil progress and comments have clearly indicated how students can improve and is easy for them to understand. It is important that pupils' work demonstrates their responses to marking as this is linked to their progress, which is assessed during work scrutiny. Further training has been organized for newer staff and instructors on developing subject schemes of work (SOW) that maximize opportunities for student progress.

Learning Walks have taken place regularly, aiming to include a teaching staff member alongside the Senior

Leadership Team (SLT) to share good practices. Curriculum maps and weekly planners are used to identify where pupils are in their learning. Briefings have included reminders about lesson structure, pacing and effective questioning techniques. This term, behaviour has been a particular focus. The Teaching and Learning lead has provided examples of lesson structuring and various methods for managing pupil behaviour, which should support staff in planning and delivering lessons in their curriculum areas. Provisional Mapping has also been utilized to encourage student progress, as reflected in assessment data. To ensure that staff adhere to the behaviour policy, we have monitored implementation through Sleuth, helping pupils reach their full potential in lessons.

To promote a love of reading, we organized activities for World Book Day, including staff costume themes, and ensured that DIRT (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time) is regularly incorporated into lessons. In terms of pupil wellbeing, we have continued to work with students who are reluctant to come to school due to previous experiences. Extra-curricular activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, football, basketball, and a music club, have been offered. For safeguarding, pupils have engaged with an e-safety unit during PSHE lessons, and health and safety topics have been covered in Food Technology. This theme has also been incorporated into assembly discussions. Regarding behaviour, we have continued to utilize 'Time Out' cards and 'toilet passes,' with the behaviour lead monitoring corridors during lessons. For Teaching and Learning, we have maintained the induction process, explaining the Marking Policy to new pupils to help them feel more confident when joining lessons. Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) have assisted pupils by providing feedback from teachers and strategies for their next learning steps.

Curriculum



Local History Project has been added to the KS3 curriculum. The Local History Project is a teacher-directed collaborative project in which students research the history of their communities and share

their findings with their peers. The Local History Project enables the youth and teachers to collaborate locally and globally using technologies to enhance learning

and make a difference in their own communities and around the world. Outdoor learning is an important part of education and trips to local sites have been planned for pupils to visit:

6th January 2025 - St Nicholas Church, Canewdon and witchcraft;

20th January 2025 - Old Leigh and its connection to WW11;

3rd February 2025 - Hadleigh Castle and Salvation Army;

24th February 2025 - Hadleigh Park and Saxon roundhouse;

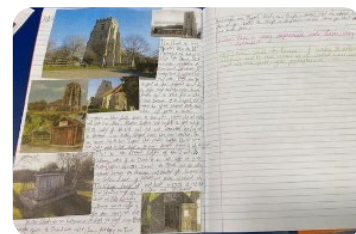
10th March 2025 - Priory Park; Saxon burial;

24th March 2025 - Rayleigh Mount Mill and Dutch roundhouse.

The goal of the project is to teach students to care about the places they live; appreciate historical and cultural environment, to care and respect older generations, to understand and appreciate a historical heritage of the past and the present; to create background of their own history and enhance awareness of the significance of local history to students' present lives; to develop research skills using a variety of sources such as interviews, letters, diaries, blogs and books; to form and develop academic skills, thinking, reasoning and teamwork skills; to develop ICT skills.



After the projects, students construct a project board and present their project at school, sharing their ideas with their classmates. Students conduct research about the history of their local communities and then share their findings in the form of essays, power point presentations, art and photos.



Work Scrutiny

In Spring 1, the following percentages were recorded: Curriculum - 100%; Marking Policy - 75%; Ambition -

100%; Progress and Learning - 86%; Quality Feedback - 100%; and Reading across the Curriculum - 100%. Compared to Autumn 2, 'Ambition' has increased by 9%. Many staff members have received one-on-one support to enhance their ability to challenge pupils and this is evident in the work scrutiny. We've also seen new pupils and staff joining or upskilling from Learning Support Assistant (LSA) to an Instructor role, which may have contributed to the 10% decrease in Progress and Learning. Additionally, with the implementation of the new marking scheme that includes literacy and numeracy targets, new staff have received assistance in documenting these individually as needed. New pupils are also briefed by the Teaching and Learning lead on how the marking scheme functions and their responsibilities in responding to teacher feedback. We will continue work scrutiny to reflect best practices. Pupil progress and comments will provide clear guidance on how to improve, ensuring they are easy for students to understand. It is important for pupils' work to demonstrate their responses to marking, as this is directly linked to progress, which will be reflected in future work scrutiny. Further training will be arranged for developing subject Schemes of Work (SOW) for newer staff and instructors, ensuring maximum opportunities for student progress are incorporated.

GCSE Dates

The dates for this year's GCSEs for Maths are Thursday 15th May 2025, Wednesday 4th June 2025 and Wednesday 11th June 2025.

GCSE English will be held on Friday, 23 May 2025 and Friday, 6 June 2025. All exams this year are in the morning so make sure you get a good night's sleep and arrive for 9:00am

Exam results will be available to collect on the VPA office on the morning of Thursday 21st August. Good luck to all our year 11s!

Attendance

Dear Parents/Carers, As we conclude the spring term, we want to express our gratitude for your continued support in ensuring regular attendance for your

children. Your efforts play a vital role in their educational journey.

We're thrilled to share that our overall attendance rate for the spring term is continuing to increase. Thank you for your commitment to making every school day count!

Congratulations to our students who achieved 100% attendance this term. Keep up the excellent work!

As we prepare for the summer term, let's continue to prioritize attendance. Regular attendance helps students stay on track with their learning and maintain strong connections with their peers.

Tips for Maintaining Good Attendance

Consistency is Key: Encourage your child to maintain a regular routine during the holidays to ease the transition back to school.

Plan Ahead: Schedule any necessary appointments or family activities outside of school hours to minimize disruptions to your child's learning.

Support and Communication

If you have any concerns or need assistance regarding attendance, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to support you and your child.

Thank you once again for your dedication to your child's education. We look forward to welcoming everyone back for a successful summer term!

Warm regards,

Charlotte Burch

Designated Safeguarding and Attendance Lead

Counselling



Students are very engaged with the onsite counselling service. This term I have held 140 counselling sessions which is an amazing testament to our wonderful pupils. Counselling provides an opportunity for safe non-judgemental conversations that are confidential. Some students meet me in our dedicated room, others prefer a walk to the shops and relax in the park. I feel very privileged to work with such interesting young people and I love coming to work to see them.

In my mentoring role, I am working with year 11 students as they prepare to leave VPA. The Positive Destinations programme provides a support network for the students. I will be their point of contact offering further support, mentoring and ensuring they have everything they need to continue their education over the summer break and into 2026. Every year 11 student has signed up and is really supportive.

Andrew Packer

School Mentor & Counsellor

A Message from the Designated Safeguarding Lead



Dear Parents, Carers, and Staff, As we wrap up the spring term, I want to take a moment to thank you all for your continued support and commitment to safeguarding at Victory Park Academy. It has been a busy term, and your efforts in keeping our school a safe and nurturing environment are greatly appreciated.

Safeguarding Highlights from This Term

Pupil Workshops: We held workshops for pupils on the dangers of Arson and the importance of preventing Hoax calling to emergency services delivered by the Essex Fire team.

Open Road Delivered sessions where pupils had the opportunity to discuss drugs and their effects. This was an engaging workshop with mature discussions on the subject.

Key Safeguarding Issues to Watch for Over the Holidays

Online Safety: With more free time, children may spend increased time online. Please continue to monitor their online activity and ensure they know how to stay safe.

Mental Health: The holidays can be a challenging time for some pupils. Keep an eye on any changes in behaviour and ensure they know they can reach out to trusted adults for support.

Community Safety: Remind children of the importance of staying safe in the community, whether playing outside or visiting friends.

Safeguarding Upcoming Events and Initiatives

Summer Term Safeguarding Training: We will conduct refresher training sessions for staff at the start of the summer term, focusing on any new safeguarding updates.

Pupil Safety workshops: Planned for the summer term, we will be holding workshops for pupils on online safety and anti-bullying. These sessions aim to empower students with the knowledge to protect themselves both online and offline. This initiative will include activities and workshops designed to reinforce the importance of personal safety.

Safeguarding How You Can Help

Stay Informed: Keep up to date with our safeguarding policies and procedures, available on the school website.

Report Concerns: If you have any concerns about a child's welfare, please contact me directly or use our safeguarding reporting channels.

We wish you all a safe and enjoyable holiday and look forward to seeing everyone back for the summer term.

Warm regards,

Charlotte

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Victory Park Academy

Key Dates

Last day of Spring Term

Friday 4th April 2025

Easter Break

Monday, 7th April to Monday, 21st April 2025

Friday day of Summer Term

Tuesday, 22nd April 2025