

THE VALLEY NEWS

April, 2024

KEY DATES:

Monday 6th May:
May Day Closure

Friday 24th May:
School closes for
Half Term

The Principal's Message

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to update you regarding mobile phones and electronic devices at The Valley Leadership Academy. At The Valley, we want to support our pupils to achieve their fullest potential career and develop good character, and we know that great learning underpins this. We have noticed that for some students, mobile phones can be a distraction to learning and can have a negative impact on their mental health and well-being.



Due to this, we feel strongly as a school community that the use of electronic devices and mobile phones should be restricted during the school day. Research shows that schools that have banned the use of mobile phones are seeing a significant rise in student outcomes, improved mental health and social interaction skills. This for us, gives a strong rationale for ensuring that mobile phones are neither seen nor heard during the school day. Whilst we already have in place a policy that restricts the use of mobile phones by pupils on the school site, from Monday 15 April, this policy has been enhanced and we are ensuring that it is adhered to rigorously.

What have we done so far?

- Before the Easter holidays we spoke with students about the use of mobile phones, which included dedicated lessons and a series of assemblies.
- We also met with a number of parents to discuss the ban and the positive impact it will have on their children's education and wellbeing.
- We have arranged for external agencies to deliver sessions on the impact of mobile phones on young people's mental health.



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TheValleyLeadershipAcademy



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We will also be educating students on how to use devices responsibly and sharing further information on how parents/carers can monitor their child's use. We wish to thank you for your support, and we know that we can rely on your assistance in this important endeavour. Thank you for your support in this matter.

Mr S Carey - Principal

NO PHONE ZONE!

**Monday
15th
April**



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 Part of Star

Exploring Future Pathways!

This term, our students embarked on an exciting journey into the world of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) careers at the Work-Wise STEM Careers Event. This immersive experience provided a glimpse into the vast array of opportunities awaiting our budding scientists, engineers, and innovators.

From engaging workshops to captivating demonstrations, the event was a melting pot of inspiration and knowledge. Students had the chance to interact with professionals from various STEM fields, gaining valuable insights into the real-world applications of their classroom learning.



One highlight of the trip was the hands-on activities, where students got to experiment with cutting-edge technologies and participate in interactive demonstrations. Whether programming robots, conducting virtual experiments, or exploring renewable energy solutions, our students were fully immersed in the STEM experience.

The enthusiasm and curiosity displayed by our students throughout the event were truly commendable. Their eagerness to learn and explore different career paths within the STEM fields underscored the importance of such opportunities in shaping their future aspirations.



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Aspiring Stars!

On the 5 March, 30 lucky Year 10 pupils had the amazing opportunity of visiting Oxford University. The visit to Queen's College was designed to show our pupils what a day in the life of an Oxford University student looks like and what they should aim to do if they wish to apply for a place there.

After a long coach trip down to Oxford, the day started with an interactive session looking at university life and dispelling some myths around who can or can't go to Oxford University. Our pupils then had a look around the college, taking in some of the inspirational facilities that are among the best in the world; with some current undergraduate student ambassadors leading the tour. Our pupils got to see the Queen's College Library, which ranks within the top 10 libraries in the world, as well as the beautiful chapel and its surrounding grounds. They were able to ask the university ambassadors questions relating to their studies, their daily routines and how they managed to secure places at such a prestigious university.



Our pupils then enjoyed a delicious lunch in the college's beautiful dining hall before being taken across the city to visit the Weston Library. Here, they had the opportunity to view some of their vast collection of books and visit the Chaucer exhibition, which contained books that were several hundred years old! This included the oldest manuscript of The Canterbury Tales. Our pupils were also given a tour of the library where they were able to see how the old books are checked and restored, before visiting a viewing gallery on the roof to take in some beautiful views of the city. After this, they returned for one last session at the college before heading back home.

Our pupils had a great time on this visit and we are proud of the way they represented the school. It was a very long day but we hope that it helped to raise their aspirations in wanting to secure a place at such a prestigious institution.



Shining Departments...Geography!

Thirty intrepid year 11 geographers (plus Mrs Eccleston, Mrs Barlow, Mr Stringer and Mr Price) set off from TVLA in the mist and wind and rain to travel to “sunny” Morecambe. The coach ride down was non eventful with surprisingly little traffic and little disturbance on the coach.

We arrived in the rain and freezing wind to Morecambe, where the beach was beckoning the students to go and play...but geography fieldwork had to be completed before any frivolity!

We walked along the prom (during which the rain stopped, thankfully) stopping to complete a building decay survey, environmental quality survey and an annotated map of regeneration happening in the area.



The old ladies enjoying a quiet brunch were treated to a fabulous greeting from our year 11 boys waving at them through the window (they good naturedly waved back)! Then it was lunch and KFC beckoned, we had never seen them move so fast!

After lunch, the work and walk continued down to the statue of Eric Morecambe to complete a questionnaire. They had to ask members of the public (who told me how polite and lovely our students were) what their thoughts were on the regeneration of the area, with some interesting answers.

It was then a fast march back along the prom to the coach to make it back to school on time. Everyone made it in one piece although a little tired, we had just walked them at least 5 miles, some students enjoyed throwing stones on the beach and playing on a local playground. The coach ride home was again uneventful apart from a solitary donut rolling all the way from the back of the bus to the front.

Everyone arrived back safe and sound in time to get the bus home from school, probably to go for a long nap!



Sports Stars!

In PE last half term, there has once again been a number of opportunities for our students to develop their love of sport and physical activity.

The biggest event of the half term saw our fantastic dance team take to the stage to represent our school in the annual 'Rossendale Schools Dance Festival' and their performance did not disappoint! They gave a wonderful performance displaying the theme of 'breaking boundaries' to celebrate women throughout history who have fought to 'break boundaries' in the fight for gender equality. Their dedication leading up to the festival has to be commended through their hard work and determination to learn and perfect their routine and this certainly showed in their performance on the night. The effort they put into their final dance was truly remarkable and they should all be very proud of their performance. We are very proud of them for not only their dance performance, but for also being wonderful ambassadors for our school!



In addition to the dance festival, we have hosted and taken part in a range of activities involving other schools. There has been a number of football fixtures for different year groups, most recently with the Year 7 boys narrowly missing out against BRGS in the Rossendale Schools League. We also hosted and participated in a Year 8 B Team 7-side tournament aimed at encouraging inter-school participation for more of our students. Our boys represented the school excellently and achieved some good results within this competition.

In other news, our U16 boys won the Rossendale schools' badminton competition held at All Saints High School, beating every school we played! An amazing achievement considering that our boys were a mixture of Year 8 and Year 10 students who were facing Year 11 students from other schools.

In the Rossendale schools' sports hall athletics competition, our Year 8 students performed extremely well and represented the school brilliantly. The boys team finished 3rd overall and the girls 5th overall. A brilliant effort once again from all our students.



Our busy extra-curricular programme has continued over the last half term with a wide range of activities available to our students. The uptake for many of these has been fantastic, particularly judo, football and trampolining. We do still have spaces available for students in yoga, rugby and kickboxing! If your child is interested in taking part in these activities, please encourage them to come and speak to the PE staff.

Next term we look forward to more fantastic opportunities for our students to engage with in the PE department.

The Valley Sports Leaders!

As we reflect on the achievements of the last half term, it gives us great pleasure to shine a spotlight on the incredible accomplishments of our dedicated sports leaders. Their unwavering commitment and enthusiasm have truly elevated the standard of sporting events within our school community.

Throughout the term, our sports leaders have been at the forefront of numerous primary and secondary school events, showcasing their passion for sportsmanship and leadership. From officiating the boys' and girls' badminton qualifiers to leading younger pupils in the Fundamental Movement Skills festival, their dedication has been exemplary.



One of the highlights of this term was the annual Boccia Championships, where both primary and secondary school pupils with special educational needs participated, the winners of both events qualified to represent Rossendale at the North West Championships. Our leaders demonstrated and developed their understanding of the inclusivity of sport and were excellent role models throughout the championships.

Moreover, our sports leaders played a pivotal role in the success of the Rossendale Dance Competition, a showcase attended by over 1,600 audience members. Their behind-the-scenes efforts ensured the seamless execution of the event, reflecting their professionalism and teamwork.



It is with immense pride that we commend our sports leaders for their invaluable contributions to our school's sporting landscape. Their dedication, perseverance, and spirit embody the very essence of our school community. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of them for their tireless efforts in promoting sportsmanship, inclusivity, and excellence.



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