



DARWEN VALE

An Aldridge Community Academy 

1894 NEWSLETTER

END OF TERM-DECEMBER 2024 EDITION



We are pleased to present the Twelfth edition of our newsletter on this edition you will read a out some of the highlights of this term's subject activities and also a few of the exciting trips, work experience and festive themed activities our students have taken part in.

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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE



As we approach the end of our September term, I am writing to parents to reflect on the many successes of the term, detail the arrangements for the final week and set out the arrangements for our return to school in January. It has been a long and action-packed term. We are really pleased with our new post 16 offer: D6. If parents have not had the chance to see this - please don't hesitate to come in and see the common room area and new study suite. Our new sixth form students have really integrated themselves into the school community and immersed themselves in their A level studies. If you didn't know Vale is now offering the chance for students to continue with us to 18 studying Maths, Chemistry, Biology, Physics and History. This is a partnership initiative with DACA and DAES and between us we offer a really comprehensive post 16 offer.

We hosted our annual open evening which was the best attended ever. Over 400 families visited the school on 26th September and had a wonderful evening seeing the best that Vale has to offer. As a result, we will be oversubscribed again next year. We have had over 500 applications for places in next year's year 7. Almost 300 of these applications were first choice applicants for just 240 places.

Our Remembrance Service in school was as powerful as ever. The Mayors of Blackburn and Darwen, along with many other VIPs were in attendance. The whole school witnessed an incredibly powerful assembly followed by a truly moving service at our 'Book of Remembrance' in the main school reception. The Last Post and Reveille were played, a wreath was laid, and VIPs and our school cadets paid their respects.

One of our school priorities this year has been to extend our cultural capital offer and provide our students with a wide variety of enrichment opportunities. It has proved a challenge, but I think we have really risen to it. Our sixth form students have visited Edge Hill University, attended a residential and attended a university fair at Old Trafford.

Year 11 students have taken part in an English and Maths/outdoor adventure residential at Winmarleigh Hall. This was to develop their teamwork, resilience and simply to have a good time. The bootcamp always leads into the mock examinations in November. These have yielded some fantastic results, and we are confident that results will rise again with this crop of students. We fed results back to parents at the second of our Year 11 evenings just last week. They have also begun preparations for life after Vale with Mock interviews and visits to post 16 providers including of course D6! To support their learning, they attended a live performance of the Willy Russell musical "Blood brothers" at the Palace theatre in Manchester - a text they study for the English Literature component of their course.

We are becoming quite the regulars at the Palace Theatre and our new "Theatre Club" has attended productions of: Grease, Wicked, Chicago and Elf! Let's hope our budding musical theatre students take the experience into our own production of Annie in the final week of term; Tuesday 17th December at 7pm.

Year 7 have had a great start to life at Vale. A massive thanks must go to Mr Baines for taking the WHOLE year group (that's over 240 students!) on a PGL residential to Winmarleigh. They had a great time with outdoor activities such as abseiling, canoeing, and orienteering.

They had a fun Halloween disco too and more recently have enjoyed a fabulous Rocket making challenge organised by one of our science teachers Ms Kerr.

To celebrate Global Entrepreneurship week pupils could enter an Entrepreneurship competition to design a brand for the Computing and Business Studies department. There were some fantastic entries with two teams being placed joint first place - Gareth Rogers Year 8 and Leyton Wright & Oliver Bury Year 7

Principal's Message

Continued...

Year 8 too got involved in rocket making and a smaller group of students did the school and the year group proud taking part in the prestigious mathematics themed Faraday challenge. Our Year 8 and Year 9 students had the opportunity to visit Quarry Bank Mill with our geography department. Nearly 150 students visited the historic site and learned from the wonderful volunteers at the National Trust.

Year 10 students have taken part in Gambling Workshops looking at the risks of online gambling. They've also taken part in an Army Careers Assembly which saw two army officers come to Vale to talk to students about careers in the armed forces.

Year 10 will be completing their first set of mock examinations from the 13th January. This is their first opportunity to sit assessments in mock conditions and we feel that to replicate the GCSE exam process at the earliest time is the most effective method of allowing students to focus on applying all their learning during, what can be, a very stressful time. We understand that GCSEs can be daunting, without the added pressure caused by gaps in student learning during the pandemic. We wish to support both pupils and parents throughout the process. We want to ensure that we keep you informed about the progress of your child, and to enable you to support and motivate them to achieve a set of qualifications that reflect their ability and that they can be proud of. Students' mock timetables can be found on MCAS.

It has been an extremely busy yet rewarding half term in PE. We have seen our U14's and U16's Girls crowned District Football League Champions. Staying with football, 4 out of 5 of our Boys teams have progressed to the next round of the Lancashire Cup. In netball, our girls' teams have started the season well, with a special mention to our Year 8's who have only lost one game so far all season. Lastly at the recent indoor athletics competition, our Year 7 boys and girls received a bronze medal for finishing third overall.

Next half term sees the start of the basketball season which holds particular promise for our Year 7 team. More fixtures for both netball and football including girls Year 7 futsal tournaments, as well as hosting primary athletics competitions. Another busy half term but just the way we like it. #weworkhard #teamvale

As per the communication sent last week school will carry on as usual in the final week and will close to students at 3pm on Friday 20th December. We have really listened to parents on this issue. Many parents have shared concerns about the disruption to routines and childcare issues caused by previous early finishes. Parents have also questioned the educational value of a three-period day. As a result, lessons will continue (some might have a Christmas theme) and students will be learning until we close for the Christmas period.

I look forward to welcoming all students back to Darwen Vale on Monday 6th January at 8.30am.

A reminder about uniform expectations, we are still in winter uniform upon our return in January. This includes no false eyelashes, acrylic nails or trainers. Any students who are in the incorrect uniform will need to either borrow items from the uniform store or return home to correct their uniform.

Yours sincerely,

D6 Sixth Form



We're very excited to be able to offer something new for September 2024.

We've joined forces with Darwen Aldridge Enterprise Studio and Darwen Aldridge Community academy to create a unique sixthform experience across our three Aldridge sites.

This is giving them access to the very best facilities and teaching across Darwen, as well as access to a broader range of courses including A Levels and BTECs. They browse our range of courses on OUR new [D6 website here](#). Depending on the course you want to study, you'll be based across either one, two, or all three of our settings and don't worry about travel. we'll provide transport to get you around.

This is your chance to get ahead. Because D6 is your competitive advantage.



To apply
[Click Here](#)



Darwen Vale Open Evening



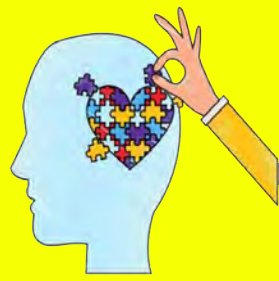
We had a great evening and despite there being two other open evenings that night, we had a record number of visitors come through the door with 6 families in total.

We had a steady stream of visitors and had some fabulous comments on social media and emails already. We even had 6 students volunteering to help out during the evening..

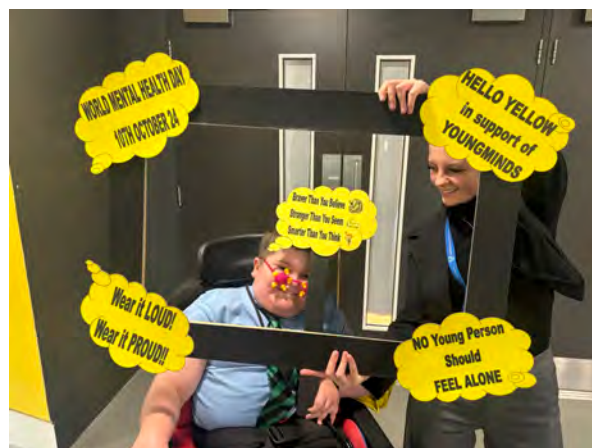
An amazing performance by Phoebe, singing as Mr Dobson was playing the piano as the families made their way to their seats in the main hall for Mr Little's speech.

We had our student Ambassadors giving an amazing speech, explaining why Vale is the first choice.

World Mental Health Day



We asked students to wear full school uniform, but we asked that everyone accessorise this by wearing something yellow. Examples may be hair accessories, laces,, socks,, hats We collected donations on the day for **YYoung Minds**





Red Cross Visit



'We were delighted to welcome the British Red Cross into Vale on Monday 28th October to run some sessions with our Year 7 students looking at First Aid. Our students loved the sessions and enjoyed learning various techniques that they can apply later in life'.

PGL Winmarleigh Hall



Our students had a wonderful time at PGL Winmarleigh Hall! They've done so much in such a short space of time and even managed to squeeze in some English & Maths revision!

A massive thank you to Mrs McKenna, Mr Adcroft, Miss Price, Mr Woodall, Mrs Little & Miss Townsend! #TeamVale

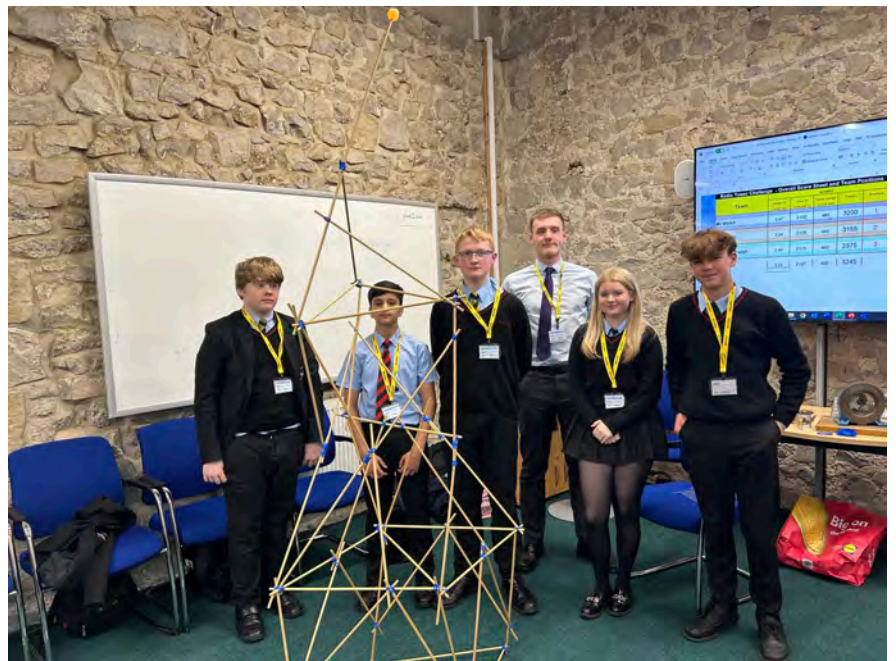




Johnson Matthey



The students were amazing and got involved in all aspects of the trip, from the site tour to the team building activity. We were able to see the plant in action, from the labs to the machinery, to building our very own radio towers, where the students competed for the tallest, most cost efficient and structural tower. The students were then able to speak to some apprentices to ask questions and get to know the pathway into engineering. Overall, the day was very educational and successful, and Johnson Matthey credited our students on their attitude and behaviour throughout the day. We hope to run the trip regularly and from relationship with Johnson Matthey.





Ripon Museum Trip



On Wednesday 2nd October, Miss Raseta and a team of dedicated Dickensians took a group of 75, Year 7 students to delve into the Victorian era, the time of Charles Dickens' famous character Oliver Twist, at Ripon Museums in Yorkshire.

The students were split into three groups, and each experienced the historical sites of a Victorian workhouse, courthouse and prison. The thirst for knowledge, and the love of dressing up, they displayed was infectious and a wonderful time was had by all who attended.

The students were also highly praised by the school co-ordination at Ripon Museums who stated that our students were "exemplary with impeccable manners who loved getting stuck into the history of the Victorian era" that links to their current topic in English.

Staff and students alike had a wonderful time, and we can't wait to see how this new contextual knowledge enhances their knowledge and skills in their English lessons.





Lowry Trip



Our students had a wonderful time visiting The Lowry on the 9th of October. A big thank you to Ms Ramsey for organising this great opportunity for our students.





Heritage Day and Macmillan Coffee morning



On Saturday 14th September we held our annual Heritage Day and Macmillan coffee morning that saw us raised over £93 pound for Macmillan Cancer Support. We also had a treasure hunt for the children who came, and the winners got to have some chocolate as a prize. The Mayor of Blackburn and his Wife had a guided tour around school by our prefects.





The annual Mayors Remembrance Concert



A big shout out to all the students that represented us at the annual Mayors Remembrance Concert at King Georges Hall this evening! Our students performed a moving piece where they read letters from the First World War! It was also lovely to see our students representing the Royal British Legion & the Sea Cadets! #TeamVale #WeCare





Year 10 Gambling Workshops



GAMBLING COMMISSION

Gambling is on the rise amongst young people with 26% of students surveyed nationally aged between 11 and 17 having spent their own money on a form of gambling! Half of our Year 10 cohort heard from Beacon Counselling Trust with various sessions running about gambling awareness & looking at the risks of addiction!

[#TeamVale](#) [#WeCare](#)

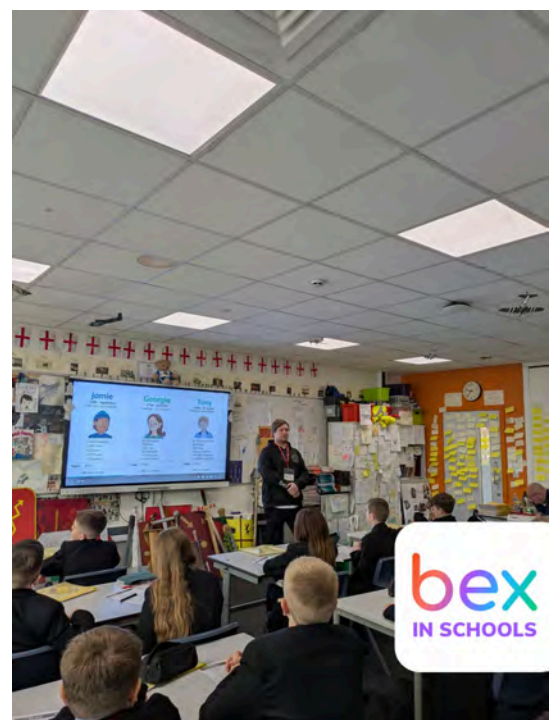




Bex Card Visit



This is what the visitors said. “We've been visiting Darwen Vale High School on 18th November. We had the pleasure to teach Year 7 and 8 all about financial literacy. Please get in touch if your school would like bex to deliver free financial literacy workshops
hello@bexcard.co.uk





Year 11 Theatre Trip



On 21st November, our Year 11 students had a great time watching Blood Brothers at the Palace Theatre & Opera House Manchester! A massive thank you to Miss Ashcroft for organising such an exciting trip for our Year 11s! #TeamVale





Wicked Theatre Trip



Our theatre trip's latest outing to see 'Wicked' was a smash hit. 40 students in KS3 made their way to Manchester for the Theatre Clubs 4th outing of the year! A big thank you to Mrs Little for organising another great opportunity for our students.





Army Careers Talk



Our Year 10s were lucky to hear from two army officers who came to Vale on Monday 2nd December. The officers talk to the whole cohort about the various careers available in the army. We were delighted that one of the army officers actually attended Vale in the 1990s!



Student Signed To Blackpool Football Club



We are so proud of Oliver H in Y11 who has signed for Blackpool Football Club this week! One to watch! #TeamVale #WeAimHigh

T-LEVELS

THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION



Today Scott Feast and Lisa Morris came into deliver an assembly to Year 11 about studying for T-Levels at D6 from September 2025.

Students really enjoyed the assembly and used the lunchtime drop-in session that was held in the D6 area to apply for a place.





Prize Presentation Evening



It was a great turn out and everyone was in good spirit. It was very impressive to see students getting more than one or even two awards. Mr Bebro led our student with a little taste of the 17th of December's performance of Annie. They did a fantastic job.



Quarry Bank Mill Trip



Over 150 of our students visited Quarry Bank Mill this week! They spent time looking around the old cotton mill & the apprentice house where children would stay. It was a fun & interactive day and staff commented on how well behaved our students were! A big thank you to Miss Sri-Udom & her team for organising such a wonderful trip!

[#TeamVale](#) [#Geography](#) [#History](#) [#nationaltrust](#)





10 Days Of Christmas



We're doing a big push on attendance in the run up to Christmas with our '10 days of Christmas'! We've got plenty of prizes up for grabs! Each day, a student will be selected at random to win the prize. All students need to do is be in school with 100% for that week!

#AttendanceMatters
#TeamVale





Mock Interviews



This week, Year 11 students took an important step in preparing for their future college and job opportunities with a mock interview session featuring local employers. The event was designed to simulate real-world interview experiences, helping students gain valuable insights and build the confidence they need to succeed in their future careers.

Each student participated in an individual interview, tailored to mirror the types of questions and situations they may face when applying for college placements or jobs. Afterward, they received constructive feedback from the employers, offering a unique opportunity to learn about their strengths and areas for improvement.

This hands-on experience not only gave students a taste of what to expect in professional settings but also provided them with personalised advice to enhance their interview skills, communication, and professional demeanour. With the support of local employers, Year 11 students are now better equipped to approach their future interviews with confidence and clarity.

This mock interview session is just one of the many ways we are helping our students build the essential skills needed for success in the next chapter of their educational and professional journeys. We are proud of their efforts and look forward to seeing them thrive!





Annie JR.



They were amazing, such a talented group of students. The atmosphere felt electric with everyone in the audience had a smile on their faces. Mr Bebro with Miss Townsend and Mr Dobson did a fantastic job putting this together. They got a well-deserved standing ovation. A huge success.



Charity Football Match



There is absolutely no need to mention the score ... but we should say a big thank you to all that took part in the 'Year 11 vs Staff' charity football match. Thank you to the supporters that came to watch & also to our former students that came back to referee and be the linesmen. A big final thank you to Mr Welsh for organising!

[#TeamVale](#) [#cheerfulindefeat](#)

