



DARWEN VALE

An Aldridge Community Academy 

1894 NEWSLETTER

END OF TERM-July 2025 EDITION



We are pleased to present the Thirteenth edition of our 1894 Newsletter. In this edition, you will read about 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



Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of the academic year, I am writing to share some reflections and important updates with you all. This letter is particularly poignant for me, as it marks the end of my time as Principal at Darwen Vale High School. This year has been one of growth, opportunity, and achievement for our school community. I am incredibly proud of what our students and staff have accomplished together.

Some of the highlights include the successful reintroduction of Work Experience for our Year 10 students, with over 100 young people spending a week with local employers—gaining invaluable insight into the world of work. We also launched the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme, with 45 students in Years 9 and 10 signing up for this exciting challenge. Our school production of *Annie* in December was a true triumph, showcasing the incredible talent and teamwork of our students and staff. Enrichment has continued to thrive, with a wide range of activities including theatre trips, new clubs such as Debating, Dungeons and Dragons, and the ever-popular LEGO Club. Our students have also had the chance to explore future pathways with visits to PwC in Leeds, Edge Hill University, Oxford University, and UCLAN, among others. Looking ahead, we're excited to be expanding our curriculum with the introduction of GCSE Religious Studies, GCSE PE, and Health and Social Care from next academic year—broadening the opportunities available to our students.

This year has also been a fantastic one for sporting success at Darwen Vale. Our Year 9 girls made it through to the county finals for rounders, while our Under 13s Cricket Team were crowned winners of the Blackburn with Darwen Cricket Cup. The Year 8 girls rounders team triumphed in the borough tournament, and our Year 8 boys football team were officially crowned League Champions in May. The list of achievements could go on! The season culminated in our annual Sports Awards Evening last week, a truly special event organised by our brilliant PE team to celebrate the dedication, talent, and sportsmanship of our students. A huge thank you to the PE department for their hard work and commitment throughout the year.

We've also seen some fantastic internal promotions that reflect the strength and talent within our staff team. Mr Venables, currently Vice Principal, will now lead our Sixth Form provision as Head of School for D6. In our pastoral team, Miss Buck has been promoted from Teaching Assistant to Assistant Head of Year, Mrs Moss from Teaching Assistant to Deputy SENCo, and Mrs Cook from Assistant Head of Year to Head of Year.

As we celebrate these new beginnings, we also say goodbye to some valued colleagues. Mrs Little, who has been a passionate champion of enrichment and theatre visits; Mrs McKenna, who has led our Year 11 cohort with unwavering care and dedication; Mr Bebro, our inspiring Head of Drama, who is moving on to a Head of Faculty role; Miss Miller, our French teacher; Miss Sri-Udom, who is leaving the teaching profession; and Miss Ashcroft, our Head of English. Each of them has made a lasting impact on our school, and we wish them all the very best in their next chapters.

Principal's Message Continued...

As we look ahead to the new academic year, I'd like to remind you that term dates are available on our website at www.darwenvale.com/termdates. Students in Years 7, 11, 12, and 13 will return to school on Wednesday 3rd September, with students in Years 8, 9, and 10 returning on Thursday 4th September. All students are expected to arrive in full school uniform and with their usual equipment, ready for learning.

Personally, it has been an immense privilege to serve as Principal of Darwen Vale over the past eight years. I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved together, and I leave knowing that the school is in a strong position to continue its journey of improvement and excellence. I want to thank you - our parents and carers - for your unwavering support, your trust, and your partnership. Your involvement has been vital in helping us create a nurturing and ambitious environment for every student.

As I prepare to hand over the leadership of the school, I do so with complete confidence in the dedicated team who will continue to guide Darwen Vale forward. It has been a pleasure to welcome Mrs Giraud, our new Executive Principal, into the Vale community over the past few weeks. Her time spent in school has given her a real sense of the energy, ambition, and care that define our students and staff. I am excited for all that lies ahead for the school under her leadership. Thank you once again for your continued support. I wish you and your families a restful, enjoyable summer and every success in the future.

With warmest regards and sincere thanks,

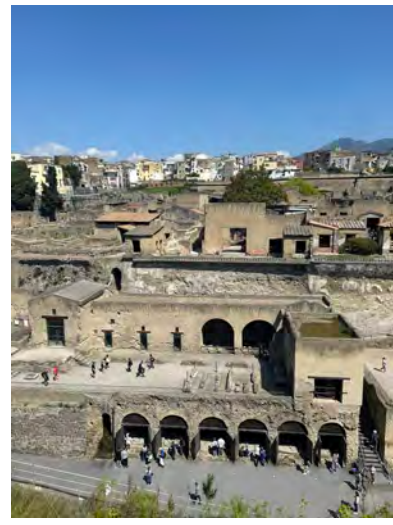
Mr M Little



Principal

Italy Trip

In April, 28 of our students took a trip to Italy. They stayed in Naples where they visited The Amalfi and it's Coast, Positano, Pompeii and Mount Vesuvius. They learnt all about how Pompeii was buried under meters of ash and volcanic rock after the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D. They have a fantastic time both students and staff. They also went to a typical Italian pizzeria where they got a chance to make some pizza. Thank you to Miss Sri-Udom for organising a wonderful trip.





Derian House Fun Raiser



Let's get physical!

We went back to school today (April 3rd) to support the epic team of teachers and students who took on the 14th annual circuit training event at Darwen Vale High School.

Led by our Community Ambassador and DVHS teacher Wayne Hartley, the dedicated squad of students from [#TeamVale](#) have once again raised more than £10,000 for us this year as part of their seven-hour non-stop HIIT fundraiser. Since the challenge's inception back in 2011, the high school has donated almost £100,000 to their local children's hospice, for which we are extremely grateful

[#ThankYouThursday](#)





Part Two Of The Darian House Fundraisers

Celebration - say hello to our second batch of fabulous fundraisers.

A Year 4 student at Salmesbury CE Primary School made dozens of paper aeroplanes and sold them for friends for 50p each. He managed to raise over £20 for us in the process!

Berry's George Donnelly raised over £1,370 for us by taking on the TCS London Marathon at the weekend...

...as did Darwen Vale High School teacher Elliot Welsh, who raised £450.

Our friends at Rivi Barn Bikers donated loads of Easter eggs for our staff and families to enjoy over Easter.

Katie and Rebecca from Wigan Warriors dropped by the hospice to donate a whole host of club goodies for our children and young people. The cuddly toys, arts and craft kits, and jigsaws were a big hit with our mini Warriors!





Theatre Trip

Our final theatre trip of the year took place on Wednesday. Mrs Little took 40 eager students to see Mary Poppins in Manchester. The students had a wonderful time and represented the school perfectly. It was great to hear that a significant number of the students that were invited on the trip were either pupil premium or students with SEN.



C.V. Building Workshop



Year 10 students had the fantastic opportunity to participate in a valuable workplace visit, aimed at enhancing their career readiness. The event was designed to help students gain practical experience and insights into the world of work, and to build crucial skills for their future careers.

The day began with students engaging in mock interviews, where they had the chance to practice answering questions in a professional setting. Volunteers from Crown Paints played the role of interviewers, offering constructive feedback on their communication skills, body language, and how they presented themselves. This hands-on experience was invaluable for boosting the students' confidence, helping them better understand what to expect during real job interviews.

Following the interviews, the students took part in a C.V. building workshop, where they learned how to craft professional C.V.'s that highlight their strengths, skills, and experiences. The session was led by experts who shared tips on how to make a C.V. stand out and what employers look for in potential candidates. Students were also encouraged to start thinking about part-time jobs, volunteering, and extracurricular activities as ways to build their C.V. from an early stage.

This event was an exciting and informative step for our Year 10 students as they continue to explore future career paths and develop essential skills for their professional journeys. We are grateful to Crown Paints for providing this unique experience and look forward to more opportunities like this in the future!

Year 7 Cyber & E-Sports Super-curricular club



Our Year 7 Cyber & E-Sports Super-curricular club is in full swing! We had our first session tonight. We meet each week in the Science computer room on Wednesdays at 3pm and welcome new members! These sessions have been kindly funded by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council as part of the MEGA Hubs Programme delivered by IN4Group.

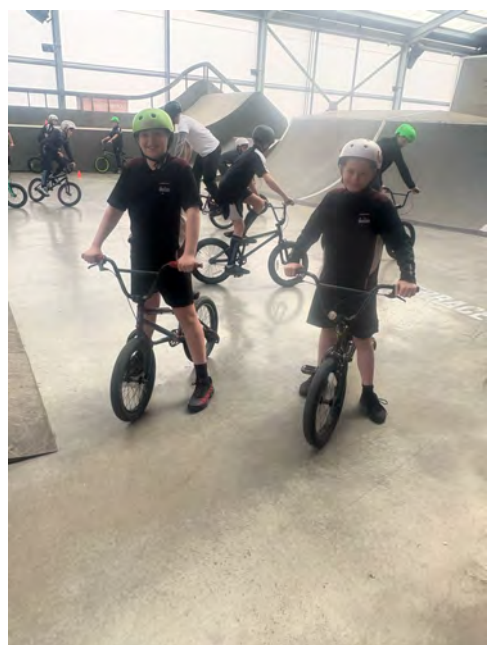




British Cycling



Well done to 9 of our Year 8 pupils who stepped out of their comfort zone and showed great resilience at Junction 4 Skate Park—giving 100% while trying out BMX, skateboarding, and scootering. Maybe some future Tony Hawks in the making!





Bank Of England



Our Year 8s heard from Mr Clark from the Bank of England on 17th March. Mr Clark gave a fascinating talk about the role of the bank & his career.



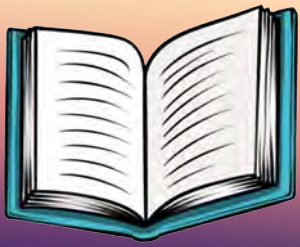


Hospitality Trip to Northcote



A big thank you to Miss Walsh who organised a wonderful trip for our Y10 hospitality students to visit Northcote! The students had a wonderful time and were able to meet the inspiring Lisa Goodwin-Allen!



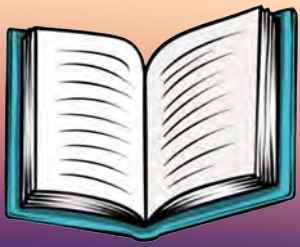


World Book Day



We've had a wonderful day celebrating World Book Day! Teachers dressed up as various characters from their favourite books. Don't forget that encouraging your child to read daily significantly boosts a child's attainment!





World Book Day

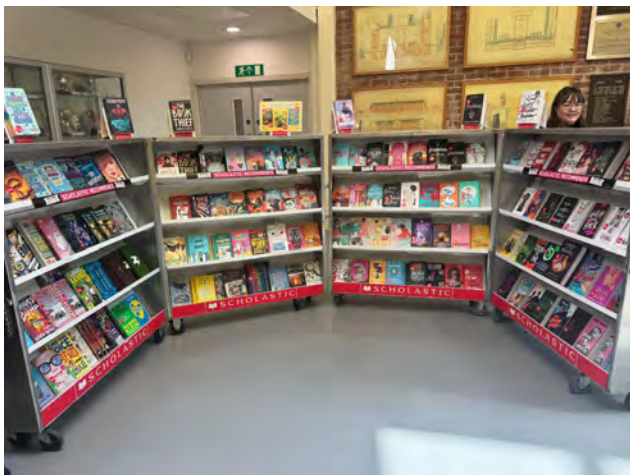
Part 2



Get ready to dive into a world of stories, adventure, and knowledge!
Darwen Vale High School hosted Scholastic Book Fair from June 11th to June 18th.

This was a fantastic opportunity for our students to browse a wide selection of engaging books, from thrilling fiction to fascinating non-fiction, to discovering new favourites and to grab the latest in a beloved series.

Every book purchased helped to earn rewards for our school library.





Careers Day

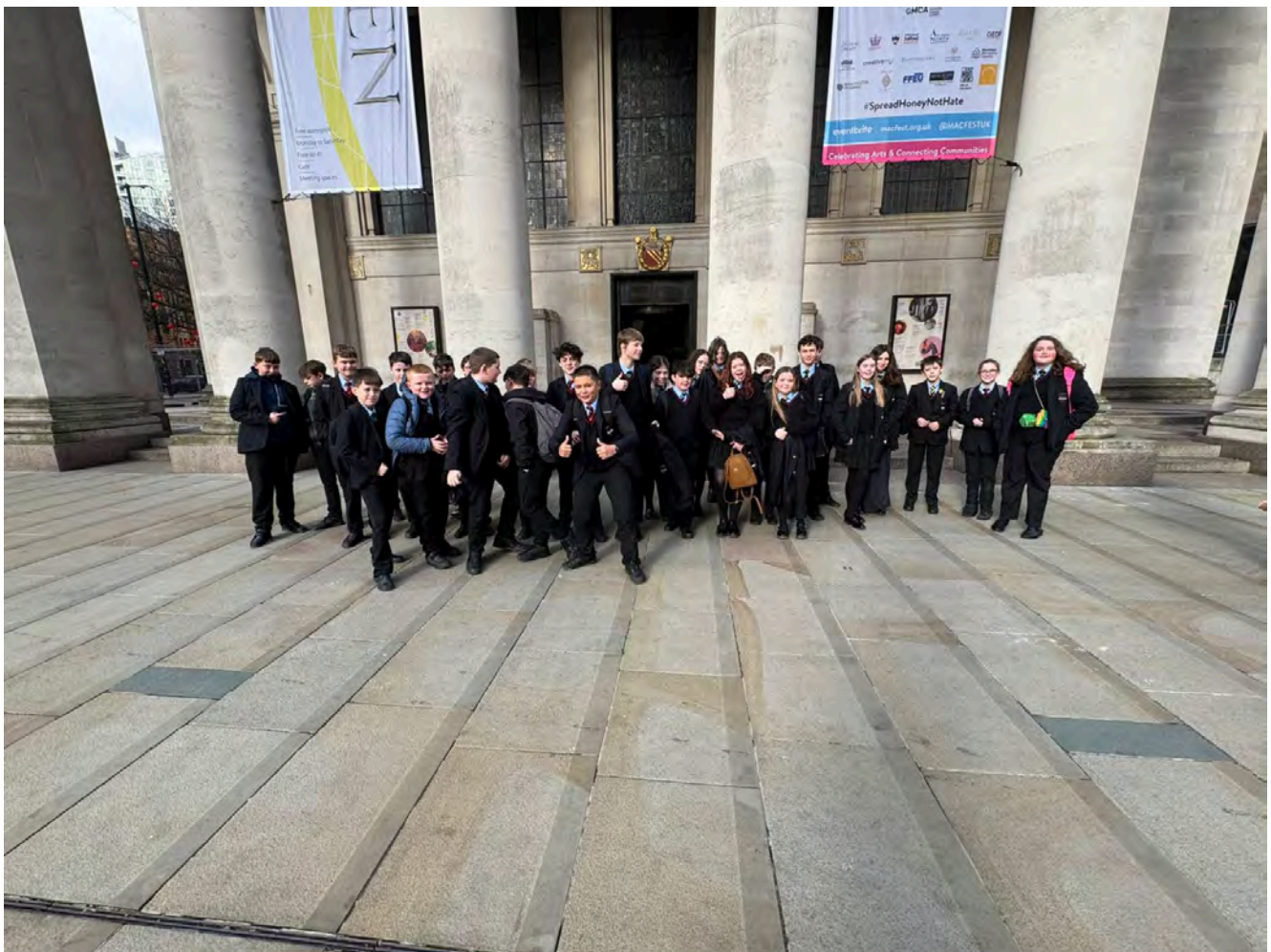
Our Careers Fair is in full swing! We've got some great employers & FE providers talking to students throughout the day! We've got Edge Hill University, Specsavers, Manchester Metropolitan University, Department for Work and Pensions - DWP, Lloyds Bank, Training 2000 Brookhouse Aerospace & British Army to name a few!



Trip to the library



Our Year 8s are having a fab time at Manchester Central Library! A big thank you to Ms Raseta for organising!

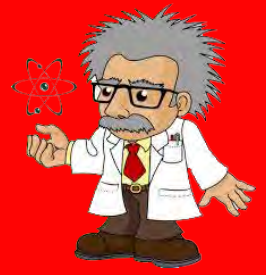


Holocaust Education

Our Year 9 students heard from Heidi Argent MBE during Period 5 today. This recording was from the Holocaust Educational Trust (UK). Students in Y9 have been learning about the Holocaust in their history lessons so were able to apply their learning to this moving session!



Visit To The Science & Industry Museum



What day some of our Year 8s have had visiting the Manchester Science & Industry Museum!

They saw Steven Hawkins' wheel chair, applied different forces to flight, learnt and saw how Manchester machinery shaped the modern world, explored different scientific concepts and learnt to use physics and engineering knowledge to problem solve. A huge thank you to Miss Kerr for organising this great opportunity!





Year 10 Leeds University trip

A big thank you to PwC for inviting 50 of our Year 9 students to their offices in Leeds. Students had a tour of their offices, met employees and took part in various activities. A big thank you to Miss Lamster, Mr Woodall, Miss Leatherbarrow & Mr Kolossov for accompanying!

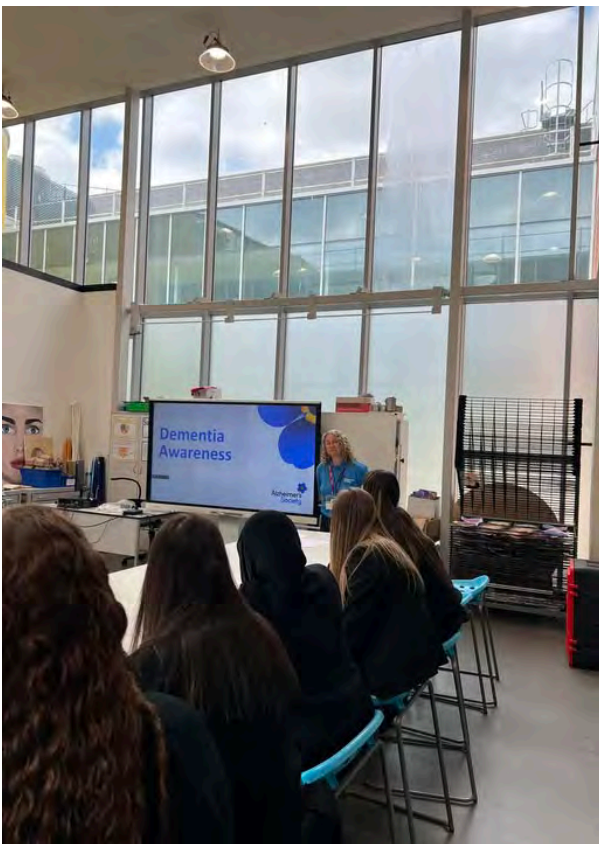


Alzheimer's/Dementia Workshop



Some of our Y9s volunteered to take part in some sessions delivered by the Alzheimer's Society. The sessions were informative and we're grateful for the visit. The students were a credit to our school community & asked some thought provoking questions!

#WeCare #TeamVale





Year 7 Football

Huge congratulations to our Year 7 football team for finishing in the top 4 schools in Lancashire in the County Cup! An incredible achievement and a testament to their hard work, talent, and team spirit!

[#Proud](#) [#Top4](#) [#Teamwork](#)



Year 8 Football



CHAMPIONS!

Huge congrats to our Year 8 boys football team who were officially crowned League Champions! An outstanding season full of passion, skill, and teamwork. Well deserved!

[#LeagueChampions](#) [#ProudTeam](#)





Farewell To Our Year 11

We said a fond farewell to our Year 11s. They have impressed us so much with their hard work & dedication throughout this exam season and we wish them well. See you on results day - 21st August 2025!

[#TeamVale](#)



Lancashire Mind Visits Year 7–10

Focusing on Wellbeing and Resilience

This term, students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 were fortunate to take part in a series of assemblies delivered by Lancashire Mind, focusing on the Five Ways to Wellbeing. These informative and inspiring sessions explored important themes around mental health, emotional wellbeing, and understanding ourselves and our individual needs.

The assemblies encouraged students to think about what it means to be mentally healthy and introduced practical strategies to support everyday wellbeing. Topics included resilience, recognising and managing emotions, and how we can all take simple steps to look after our mental health—just as we do our physical health. Lancashire Mind also highlighted the importance of the five key actions for wellbeing: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning, and Give. Students were encouraged to reflect on how these can be built into daily life to boost mood, reduce stress, and improve overall mental fitness.

It was a valuable and timely reminder that mental health matters, and with the right tools and mindset, we can all build resilience and thrive—both in and out of school.





Army Careers Assembly



Wednesday's assembly offered a fascinating insight into the diverse and rewarding career opportunities available within the British Army. Representatives from the local Army Recruitment Centre delivered an engaging presentation, challenging common misconceptions and highlighting the vast array of roles beyond the traditional combat focus. The assembly began by outlining the core values of the Army – discipline, respect, integrity, loyalty, and selfless commitment – emphasising that these principles underpin every aspect of military life, regardless of the specific role. Students learned that a career in the Army is about more than just serving your country; it's about personal growth, acquiring valuable skills, and embarking on a journey of continuous learning and development.



Prom



The Darwen Vale High School Prom, held at the elegant Whitehall Hotel, was nothing short of spectacular – a fitting celebration for a year group that has shown resilience, hard work and a community spirit throughout their time at school.

From the moment guests began to arrive, it was clear that this prom was going to be one to remember. Students went above and beyond with their arrival transport choices, turning the entrance into a show stopping red carpet event. From the roar of quad bikes and motorcycle escort to the elegance of a Rolls Royce and a Ferrari purring up the driveway, the evening started with glamour and excitement. There was even a pink Porsche that turned heads and brought smiles, alongside a horse and a tractor, bringing a unique countryside flair. One of the standout moments on arrival was Mrs McKenna going above and beyond to bring the theme to life – dressing up as Elphaba from Wicked.

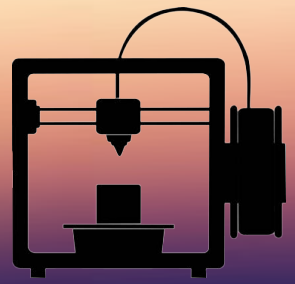
The Whitehall Hotel provided a beautiful backdrop for the celebration. The staff were welcoming and did a fantastic job in making the night run smoothly, and the pride and maturity of the students was evident throughout. The students were treated to a delicious buffet served on platters, fantastic music and atmosphere full of joy and laughter. The dance floor was packed from start to finish, with everyone enjoying their final evening together before moving on to new chapters.

Darwen Vale's Year 11 Prom was more than a party – it was a celebration of achievements, friendships and the spirit of a school community that supports and uplifts its students. Congratulations to all the students and staff for making it such a memorable night!





3D Printing Workshop



On the 4th and 11th of July, 40 Year 8 pupils took part in an exciting 3D printing and design workshop, delivered by BAE Systems in partnership with Create Education. The workshop aimed to inspire the next generation of designers and engineers by introducing students to 3D design software, creative design processes, and modern manufacturing techniques.

Throughout the day, pupils used professional 3D design tools to create their own rockets and robots, exploring how these could be brought to life using 3D printing technology. They also examined real-world examples of 3D printed products and discovered how this technology is being used both in homes and across various industries.

The day concluded with pupils launching 3D printed rockets and a lively discussion about future careers in the world of 3D design and engineering.



Knife Safety Assembly



On Monday 14th July, we had the privilege of welcoming The JJ Effect, an inspiring and impactful youth organisation, to speak with our Year 9 and Year 10 students about the dangers and consequences of knife crime.

The JJ Effect was founded in memory of Jon-Jo Highton, whose life was tragically cut short due to knife violence. His brother, Byron Highton now works tirelessly to raise awareness up and down the country, educating young people, and preventing further tragedies by sharing real-life stories, facts, and heartfelt messages.

The powerful presentation held in the school hall was a mix of storytelling, videos, and open conversation. Students listened attentively as Byron shared personal experiences and the long-lasting impact knife crime has on individuals, families, and communities. It was an emotional and eye-opening session that prompted reflection and important discussions.

Students were reminded of the importance of making positive choices, understanding peer pressure, and the strength it takes to walk away from dangerous situations. Byron emphasised that carrying a knife doesn't offer protection — it puts lives at risk, including your own.





Sports Day Week

Sporting Excellence Celebrated at Darwen Vale High School Awards Evening:

Darwen Vale High School was a hub of excitement and pride last week as we held our annual Sports Day Awards Evening, celebrating the outstanding achievements of our students in athletics and sportsmanship.

The evening was a fantastic opportunity to recognise the dedication, talent, and teamwork displayed by our pupils throughout our recent Sports Day. From thrilling tug of war to impressive spirit in rounders and football to a energetic and competitive game of dodgeball, our students truly embodied the spirit of healthy competition and resilience.

Parents, staff, and students gathered to applaud the efforts of our young athletes. Trophies and certificates were presented to those who excelled in their individual events, as well as to the overall winning houses for their collective performance and enthusiastic participation. It was particularly heartening to see the support and encouragement each student offered to their peers, showcasing the strong community spirit within Darwen Vale.

A huge congratulations goes out to all the participants for their fantastic efforts, and a special well done to our award winners for their exceptional achievements. We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to all the PE team who organised and ran a successful Sports Days.



New Year 7 Induction



It was lovely to meet our new Year 7 cohort last week for their two induction days. We can't wait to welcome you to the Vale family in September! We'll be writing to all parents/guardians early next week with some final reminders ready for their first day.

[#TeamVale](#) [#year6transition](#)



End Of Year Trips



Rain or Shine, Rewards Trips Were a Roaring Success!

Despite the unpredictable British summer weather, our recent rewards trips proved to be an absolute triumph, bringing smiles and unforgettable experiences to our deserving students! Even a few raindrops couldn't dampen the spirits of our pupils as they ventured to exciting destinations across the Northwest.

Chester Zoo: A Wild Day Out!

Our students had a fantastic time at Chester Zoo, exploring the incredible diversity of the animal kingdom. From majestic giraffes to playful monkeys and fascinating big cats, there was something to captivate everyone. Even with some showers, the indoor exhibits like the Monsoon Forest and Realm of the Red Ape provided plenty of opportunities to stay dry while still observing incredible wildlife up close. The students showed great enthusiasm for learning about conservation and the habitats of these amazing creatures.

Alton Towers: Thrills, Spills, and Indoor Fun!

For those seeking adrenaline-pumping adventures, Alton Towers delivered! Despite a few downpours, our students embraced the excitement of the rides. We made good use of the covered areas and attractions, with the Alton Towers Dungeon and Sharkbait Reef Sea Life Centre proving to be popular choices for staying out of the rain while still enjoying fantastic experiences. The students' resilience and positive attitudes truly shone through, making the most of every moment.

Blackpool Pleasure Beach: Seaside Fun:

Blackpool Pleasure Beach offered classic seaside thrills, and while the weather might have encouraged a few extra splashes, it didn't stop our students from having a blast! Many enjoyed the covered rides and arcade games, and the iconic Grand National and Big One were still a huge hit for those brave enough to face the elements. The lively atmosphere and the chance to enjoy some traditional amusements made for a memorable day.

The Trafford Centre: Retail Therapy and More!

Our visit to The Trafford Centre provided a perfect indoor escape on a particularly wet day. Students enjoyed exploring the vast array of shops, with many taking the opportunity to find some great deals or simply browse. Beyond shopping, attractions like LEGOLAND Discovery Centre and SEA LIFE Manchester offered engaging and interactive experiences, ensuring there was plenty to keep everyone entertained and dry.

A huge well done to all the students who earned these fantastic rewards trips through their hard work, excellent behaviour, and commitment throughout the academic year. We are incredibly proud of their positive attitudes and the way they represented Darwen Vale High School. A special thank you also goes to all the staff members who organised and accompanied these trips, ensuring that every student had a safe, enjoyable, and rewarding experience.