

**Date: Friday 17th October 2025**

## **The Valley Newsletter**

As we reach the end of this half term, I want to take a moment to reflect on what has been a truly positive and productive few weeks at The Valley School.

Our Upper School students have shown real maturity and dedication, working hard and conducting themselves impeccably throughout their exams. It's been a pleasure to see their focus and determination in action.

We've also been delighted to welcome our new Year 7s, who have already proven themselves to be a wonderful addition to our school community—enthusiastic, kind, and full of potential.

This week, our Year 9 students enjoyed an exciting and educational trip to RAF Hendon, while parents had the opportunity to take part in a valuable MHST workshop. And to round off the half term in style, our Year 10 group hosted an incredible Friday afternoon event for the whole school, featuring a Disco and an Escape Room—both of which were a huge hit!

Thank you for your continued support. We wish all our students and families a restful and enjoyable break.

### **Orange Class Science**

This half term in Science, students have been learning all about vertebrates and invertebrates. Orange Class brought the topic to life in a creative and hands-on way—using pasta to build models of animal skeletons!

The activity helped students understand the structure and function of skeletons in vertebrates, while also sparking lots of discussion and curiosity about the differences between animals with and without backbones. It was a fun and memorable way to reinforce their learning.

Well done, Orange Class, for your brilliant creativity and scientific thinking!



Orange class also dove into the fascinating world of jellyfish! Through an engaging and hands-on learning experience, they discovered what makes these mysterious sea creatures so unique—from their translucent bodies to their trailing tentacles and arms. To bring their learning to life, students created their very own jellyfish models using plastic bags. Each creation featured carefully crafted strands to represent the jellyfish’s tentacles and arms, helping to reinforce their understanding of jellyfish anatomy in a fun and creative way.



### Year 11 Catering students

Year 11 Catering students impressed with their presentation skills as they made mini fruit pavlovas from scratch during this week’s lesson! Over the course of the half term, we have been extending their learning from cooking in a home setting to thinking about working in professional kitchens. Students were given a basic recipe and then had freedom to decorate and finish their pavlovas however they chose. I’m sure you’ll agree they look fantastic!



## Year 9 Remembrance Day Art

9 Green and 9 Yellow have produced these beautiful poppy wreaths and poppy art for Remembrance Day in their Art lessons. From 28<sup>th</sup> October until November 11<sup>th</sup>, the British Legion will be selling poppies in the Westgate Centre, Stevenage and the wreaths and artwork will be on display alongside art from other local schools. If you are in the town during this time, do go along and admire their work.



## Year 8 Science

Over the past two weeks, Year 8 students have been diving into some fascinating hands-on science experiments.

Last week, we explored the functions of the heart. Students had the unique opportunity to dissect a pig's heart, allowing them to see firsthand the four chambers and valves that keep blood flowing through our bodies. It was a brilliant way to bring biology to life and deepen understanding of how the heart works.

This week, we shifted focus to dental health with a creative experiment using eggs. Students placed eggs in various liquids — including Ruben's, coffee, and vinegar — and left them overnight. The next day, they used toothbrushes to observe how each liquid stained the eggs, simulating the effects these drinks can have on our teeth. It was a powerful visual demonstration of why brushing and healthy choices matter!



## BTEC, Year 11

### Performing Arts

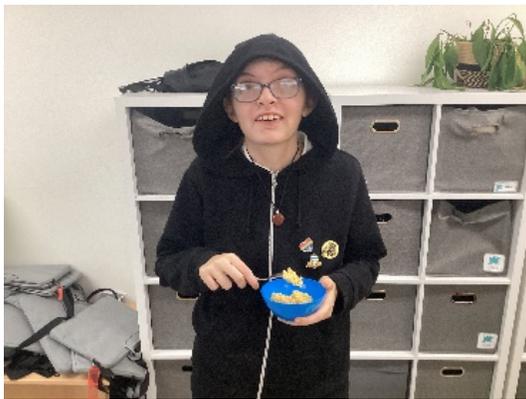
As part of their BTEC, Year 11 Performing Art students are planning an updated performance of Dicken's 'A Christmas Carol'. There are several food items referenced in their script, so students spent some time today trying these..... or at least the braver amongst them did.



Sardines received an almost unanimous thumbs down, though Rufus bravely tried them! Ramen noodles were a success. Laurence found baloney (or spam) to be a little like pâté! But the firm favourite was definitely humbugs!

Yummy humbug, rather than bah humbug!

More news of their performance will follow after half term.



### **A Heartfelt Thank You to Mr and Mrs Thomas and their company Wrapped Signs**

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Mr and Mrs Thomas for their incredibly kind gesture in updating the sign at the front of The Valley School. Their generosity in providing the sign writing free of charge has really helped us out, and we are truly grateful for their time, skill, and support. It's acts of kindness like this that help make our school community so special.



## Mouritz Botha, England Rugby Union, Visits the Valley School

On Thursday 16th October, a group of students had the fantastic opportunity to be coached by elite Rugby Union player Mouritz Botha.

The students were fully engaged throughout the session, showing great effort, enthusiasm, and teamwork. They eagerly took part in discussions, demonstrated their passing skills, and learned valuable techniques directly from Mouritz.

The school would like to extend its sincere thanks to Mrs Wharton for organising the workshops, and especially to Mouritz for generously giving his time to share his experience and expertise with our students.



### Barber Brilliance in Brisbane!

Our very own Martina Barber has returned from her trip to Brisbane, where she competed in the 2025 Virtus World Athletics Championships.

We are thrilled to announce her fantastic results:

- 7th place in the 100m final, running an impressive 14.53 seconds
- 6th place in the Long Jump, achieving a season's best of 4.70m
- 6th place in the Discus, throwing three personal bests, with her longest throw reaching 25.68m

In addition to her outstanding performances, Martina was given the great honour of being the flag bearer for Team GB at both the opening and closing ceremonies — a wonderful recognition of her dedication, sportsmanship, and leadership.

Everyone at The Valley School is extremely proud of Miss Barber's achievements and the way she continues to represent herself and our school with pride on the world stage.



### Creative Collaboration in Coral Class

Students in Coral Class have been busy exploring creativity and teamwork through two exciting projects this week.

First, pupils worked in pairs to design and build imaginative Lego models. This hands-on activity encouraged collaboration, problem-solving, and creativity. Once completed, each pair proudly shared their creations with the rest of the class, sparking lively discussions and admiration for each other's ideas.

In another artistic venture, Coral Class drew inspiration from the Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo, known for his unique portraits composed entirely of fruits, vegetables, and flowers. Students used this concept to craft their own imaginative portrait heads, blending natural elements into expressive and colourful artworks.



### Year 9 Trip to RAF Hendon

It was a wonderful educational experience for all of Year 9 to visit RAF Hendon and do a WW2 workshop while they were there. The students had the opportunity to see Spitfires, an Avro Lancaster and even go in some WW2 planes.

At the workshop, the Air Raid Warden warned us to cover our windows before the air raid, and when we heard the air raid siren, we went into an air raid shelter and heard the bombs dropping while we waited in the dark! The students were calm about the experience- until they were told if they needed the toilet, they would have to use a chamber pot in the shelter! Luckily, the all clear siren sounded before anyone needed to use it!

The original RAF uniforms were heavy and a bit itchy, but it was fun to try them on and pose with a plane!

The students of Year 9 represented The Valley School so well, enjoying the displays and participating in the activities with enthusiasm. We even had members of the public comment on their kindness and respect for others. Well done, Year 9!



### **NHS dentist availability.**

Shephall Dental are taking bookings for the half term onwards. They are currently accepting new NHS patients aged 16 and under. For more information on caring for children's teeth, please visit: -

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-teeth-and-gums/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/>

Dental health and

autism <https://www.autismtoothcare.com/>

To book an appointment, please call Shephall Dental on 01438 351556



### **Half Term Support and Activities –**

#### **A Message from Mrs Roberts the Family Engagement Lead at The Valley School**

As we approach the October half term, we understand that school holidays can be a busy and sometimes challenging time for families. To help you plan enjoyable and inclusive activities for your children, we've put together a selection of local opportunities, events, and support available during the break.

#### **Local Activities and Offers**

##### **David Lloyd Leisure**

Free passes are available for children from Saturday 25th to Friday 31st October at David Lloyd clubs.

This is a great way to stay active and try new facilities.

[Claim your free pass here](#)

#### **Cinema Experiences**

- Cineworld: *Movies for Juniors* from £3.99, including autism-friendly screenings. [Cineworld Juniors & SEND Info](#)
- Odeon: Family-friendly movies starting from £2.95, including inclusive SEND screenings. [Odeon Family Movies](#)
- Campus West (Welwyn): Enjoy cinema, roller skating, and soft play – discounts available with a [Zebracard](#). [Visit Campus West](#)

#### **Swimming Opportunities**

Everyone Active centres across the area are offering family swim sessions daily:

- [Stevenage Swimming Centre](#)
- [Hitchin Swimming & Fitness Centre](#): Sensory swim on Sundays (6:00–7:00pm)
- [Hartham Leisure Centre](#) (Hertford)

## **Bowling**

Hollywood Bowl is offering half-price games and Halloween-themed events.

[Check offers here](#)

## **Other Inclusive Activities**

- **[Church Farm Spookfest \(Ardeley\)](#)**: Daily Halloween fun from 18th–31st October, starting at £7.95.
- Jump City Trampolining (Cheshunt): **SEND sessions Saturday mornings 9–10am.**

[Jump City Tickets](#)

## **Outdoor Fun**

- [ParksHerts](#): A fantastic guide to all local parks across Hertfordshire.
- Fairlands Valley Park (Stevenage): A local favourite with free parking.
- National Trust: Junior membership is just £12 per year, and an “Essential Companion” card gives free access to carers.

## **[National Trust Access Info](#)**

### **SEND & Family Support Resources**

We know that navigating support can be overwhelming, so here are some key resources:

- **[Hertfordshire SEND Local Offer](#)**: Find services and activities for children with additional needs.
- **Helping Herts**: Directory of free and low-cost activities this half term.  
[View free activities](#)
- **[SPACE Hertfordshire](#)**: Events, lending libraries, and support for families of neurodivergent children.
- **[Herts Disability Sports Foundation \(HDSF\)](#)**: Inclusive sport and activity sessions.

### **Additional Family Support**

- **[Herts Card \(formerly HAND\)](#)**: Discounts and offers for families with additional needs.
- **[Carers in Herts](#)**: Apply for a Carer’s Passport for further leisure discounts.
- **[Families First](#)**: Early help for challenges related to parenting, finance, school, or SEND.
- **HertsHelp**: For urgent family support including food, essentials, and advice.

Visit [[www.hertshelp.net](http://www.hertshelp.net)]HertsHelp

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We hope this round-up helps you enjoy a fulfilling, inclusive, and supported half-term.

### Half-Term Special Offer for The Valley School

With half-term just around the corner, we're excited to offer a special 20% discount to your school community! As part of our ongoing commitment to farming, education, and outdoor learning, we want to make this experience even more accessible for your pupils.

Offer valid: 20th–25th October 2025

Book now at: [www.thepopfarm.co.uk](http://www.thepopfarm.co.uk)

Use code: indhalf20 at checkout to receive your discount.

Come and explore the wonders of farming and nature with us this half-term!

With best wishes,

Farmer Ian

### After School Clubs This Term

This starts again on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025. The activities start at 3.15pm and go on until 4.15pm. Parents will need to collect students at 4.15pm from reception.

The clubs on offer after half term are as follows:

#### Tuesday

Sports Club (max. 14)

Performing Arts Club (max. 30)

#### Thursday

Art and Craft Club (max. 15)

The list of students expected to attend clubs on Tuesdays and Thursdays is attached to this newsletter. If your child is on this list, then it means that we have received your permission and that arrangements regarding transport home for your child have been agreed with you. If this is not the case, you need to contact [admin@thevalley.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@thevalley.herts.sch.uk) so we can address any anomalies well before the evening.

**Students will not be able to join a club after this list has been published until the following week as organising transport and supervision is too complex to do well with very short notice.**

Thank you for your support with this.

