

Date: Friday 22nd May 2026

The Valley Newsletter

Important Dates Coming Up...

Week: 25th – 29th May 2026
HALF TERM
UPCOMING EVENTS Week: 1st – 5th June 2026
<p><u>Monday 1st June- Thursday 4th June</u> Yr11 Activities Week <u>Monday 1st June</u> Firsy day back for all students Shopping trip-Pre Voc Yr11 Activities Week: Cinema, McDonalds, Bowling <u>Tuesday 2nd June</u> Yr11 Activities Week: Brighton <u>Wednesday 3rd June</u> GCSE Maths exam Yr11 Activities Week: Gosling Park <u>Thursday 4th June</u> KS3 Swimming Yr11 Activities Week: Chessington <u>Friday 5th June</u> Yr11 Reports being sent out</p>

As we reach the end of another busy and rewarding half-term, it's a great opportunity to reflect on the many experiences our students have enjoyed and the progress they have made across the school. Our Year 7 students rounded off their London topic with an exciting trip to the capital, bringing their learning to life and creating lasting memories along the way. Meanwhile, our Duke of Edinburgh group have shown real determination as they continue to practise their walks in preparation for their upcoming expedition. We were delighted to welcome the parents of our Year 9 students into school for a coffee morning, where they had the chance to look through their child's work and celebrate their achievements together. Our Student Council also made the most of the good weather with a well-earned picnic in Fairlands Park, and we were proud to host a girls' football tournament, where our students showed fantastic teamwork, enthusiasm and sportsmanship. It has truly been a half-term full of activity, learning and community spirit. Thank you, as always, for your continued support, and we hope you all have a restful and enjoyable half-term break.

Year 7 Afternoon Tea

As part of Orange Class's term topic on London, we read the book *Romeo's Tea with the Queen*. We discussed high tea etiquette and wrote invitations to some staff members to join us. The pupils enjoyed setting the table and used newly learned phrases while entertaining their guests.

We ended the term with a trip to London, where we were on the lookout for places offering high tea to make real-life links to our learning.



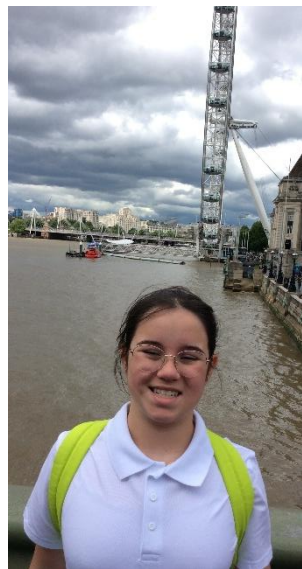
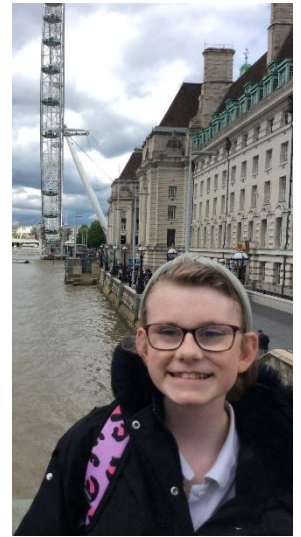
At the farm

Year 10 and 11 students took part in a wonderful work experience trip to the Farm.



Year 7 Trip To London

Year 7 Orange, Violet and Silver classes enjoyed a trip into London to visit the Tower of London. We walked around the grounds, spotted the ravens and Beefeaters, and even got to see the Crown Jewels. We then took the coach to see the London Eye and walked over the bridge to get a better view of Big Ben. Students also enjoyed spending time playing in the park before heading home. This trip was a fantastic opportunity for students to learn more about British history while creating lasting memories with their friends.



Maroon Class at waste-Not-Want-Not

This week, Maroon Class enjoyed a fantastic visit to *Waste Not Want Not*. It was lovely to see how much the plant nursery has changed since our work experience there in the Autumn term. We began with a short walk around the site, recalling what we could remember and noticing the new developments.

One highlight of the visit was seeing the bee hives. Students watched quietly as bees buzzed in and out, showing great curiosity and respect for the environment.

Our main task was to create our own hanging baskets. Working in small groups, students filled baskets with soil and carefully



arranged a beautiful selection of flowers and plants. Following Rob's expert guidance, they created a 'pillar' in the centre, added three 'fillers', and finished with five 'spillers' around the edge. The teamwork, listening skills and creativity on display were fantastic.

After all their hard work, the group enjoyed a well-earned treat of hot chocolate and doughnuts.

To top off an already memorable trip, we were incredibly lucky to meet Kim Wilde, one of the patrons of Waste Not Want Not. She very kindly agreed to have a photograph with us—what a wonderful surprise to end the day. It really felt like one of those moments where *"we're the kids in America"*—excited, joyful and making memories together.

A big well done to all students for their positive attitudes and brilliant effort throughout the visit.



Year 9 Coffee Morning

The Year 9 Coffee Morning was a very successful event, and it was a pleasure to welcome so many parents into school. Parents shared highly positive feedback, particularly regarding the noticeable improvements in students' work throughout the year. It was also encouraging to hear how happy both students and parents are with the school and the support provided.

Opportunities such as these are invaluable in strengthening communication between home and school, enabling us to work in partnership to support students' learning and progress. Following half term, we will begin planning for the Year 10 Coffee Morning and look forward to continuing these important conversations with families.



The Valley School Lunchtime Pickleball Club

We have introduced a new fun sport to the school called Pickleball, a cross between badminton and tennis, and we are delighted how many students have been attending the lunchtime club. So far we have introduced some of the basic rules and skills and will be developing these further in future sessions.

We would like to thank Royston Pickleball Club members for their kind donations of equipment including Paddles (bats) and balls which have enabled us to run these sessions.



Girls' football tournament

On the 21st of May, we proudly hosted a girls' football tournament at The Valley School with three other schools attending alongside our two Valley teams.

For many of our girls, this was their very first opportunity to represent the school in a sports fixture, and every single player showed fantastic effort, determination and teamwork throughout the morning. It was brilliant to see their confidence grow with every game played.

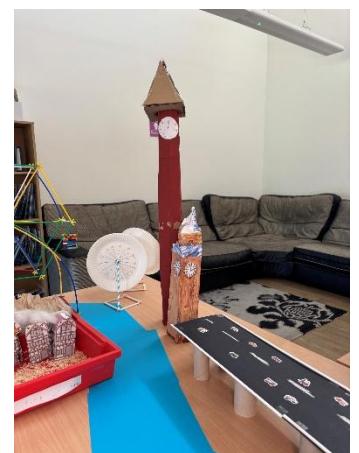
Our two teams finished on opposite sides of the table. One team was outstanding throughout the tournament, winning all their matches and deservedly claiming victory. The other team may not have managed to record a win, but they competed brilliantly in a series of very close games and never stopped giving their all until the final whistle.

The morning was a fantastic celebration of girls' football, sportsmanship and participation, and we are incredibly proud of all the players involved. Well done to everyone who took part and thank you to the visiting schools for helping make the event such a success.



Year 7 Creating London

Year 7 have been creating their own version of London throughout History. Students have thoroughly enjoyed creating their favourite piece of London History and sharing this with SLT.





Free Folk by the Oak Tickets!

The charity Happy Days have offered Valley students and their families free tickets to this lovely festival in Hatfield. All the information is below. Please do let us know if you attend.

Tickets will be distributed on a first come first served basis and parents simply need to call me (Rob) on 01462 530710 if they are interested or have any questions. Cut off for ticket applications is Friday 17 July.

The event is an outside music festival in the fields of Hatfield House. Gates open at 12 noon, and it finishes at approximately 10.30pm but attendees are free to arrive and leave at any time throughout the day. More info here

> <https://www.folkbytheoak.com/festival-info>



May Half Term Tips for Parents of Secondary-Age Children with Learning Disabilities in Hertfordshire

May half term can feel overwhelming when you're trying to find activities that are genuinely inclusive, calm, affordable and suitable for older children and teens. Hertfordshire has some great SEND-friendly options this year, especially for neurodivergent young people and families looking for lower-pressure days out.

Check the Hertfordshire SEND Local Offer first

The best starting point for up-to-date activities, short breaks, clubs and funding support is the [Hertfordshire SEND Local Offer](#). It includes:

- SEND holiday clubs
- Herts Card/HAND discounts
- Short breaks
- Family support services
- Activities for teenagers and young adults



Free and funded SEND activities

This half term, Hertfordshire County Council-funded activities include outdoor adventure sessions for SEND young people aged 13–19 at Hudnall Park. Activities include zip lines, archery and woodland sessions in smaller supported groups.

You can also look into the county's [Short Breaks programme](#), which offers holiday clubs and supported activities specifically for disabled children and teens.

SEND-friendly activity ideas in Hertfordshire

Outdoor and sensory-friendly days out

- Hertfordshire Zoo
A good option for teens who enjoy animals and quieter walking spaces. The World of Dinosaurs area is often popular with autistic and sensory-seeking young people.
- World of Dinosaurs
Interactive dinosaur experience inside Hertfordshire Zoo with immersive displays.
- Aldenham Country Park
Spacious outdoor setting with farm animals, woodland walks and picnic areas — useful for children who need movement breaks.
- Leavesden Country Park
Great free option for low-pressure walks, scooters, football or sensory regulation outdoors.



- Knebworth House
Adventure playgrounds and open space work well for older children who prefer active outdoor time.

Inclusive organisations and SEND support groups

- SPACE Hertfordshire
Runs autism and neurodiversity-friendly events, youth activities and parent support across Hertfordshire.
- Hertsmere Mencap
Offers activities, youth clubs and family support for children and young people with learning disabilities.

Budget-friendly tips for families

- Apply for the HAND/Herts Card through the Local Offer for discounts and concessions.
- Many attractions are quieter midweek mornings — worth planning around sensory needs.
- Bring headphones, snacks and a backup quiet-space plan for busy venues.
- Check if venues offer relaxed sessions or accessibility support before travelling.
- Some SEND activities do not require an EHCP to attend.

Good low-pressure options for secondary-age children

Older SEND children often prefer:

- Gaming cafés
- Bowling at quieter times
- Nature walks
- Small-group sports
- Creative workshops
- Animal experiences
- Photography walks



- Swimming during off-peak sessions

Other family-friendly venues worth checking

Hertfordshire Sports Village

Often runs family swimming and inclusive sports sessions.

- BEAM
Theatre and arts venue with family events and performances.
- Hatfield House, Park and Gardens
Large grounds ideal for relaxed family days out.
- 360 Play Stevenage - Family Entertainment Centre and Party Venue
Indoor option for rainy days with active play spaces.

One final tip

Try not to over-plan the whole week. Many SEND families find one main activity per day — with recovery time built in — works far better than packed schedules. Flexible plans usually lead to calmer, happier half terms for everyone.

Services for your people

At Services for Young People (SfYP) we welcome young people aged 11-17, up to 25 for care leavers and those with SEND in Hertfordshire, to join our youth work projects. We are committed to giving young people high quality opportunities to learn life skills and excel in their personal and social development. We aim to address issues at the earliest opportunity to give young people the best chance to succeed, have a voice in their community, reach their potential, and make a successful transition into adulthood. If you feel your young person would benefit from attending a youth work project, please complete the referral form on our [website here](#).

For further information or inquiries, please see the SfYP website: www.servicesforyoungpeople.org, email

us: sfyp.stevenage@hertfordshire.gov.uk, or phone us: 01438 843340. We look forward to welcoming your young person soon!

The logo for Services for Young People is a purple rounded rectangle with a yellow border. The text "Services for Young People" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within the rectangle.

**Services for
Young People**

Headlice

Head lice can affect children of all ages and are spread through close head-to-head contact. We kindly ask parents and carers to check their child's hair regularly, particularly behind the ears and at the nape of the neck, using a fine-toothed detection comb on wet, conditioned hair. Live lice are small and can move quickly, while eggs (nits) are tiny and attached firmly to the hair close to the scalp. If head lice are found, treatment should begin promptly using either a recommended lotion or the wet-combing method, following the instructions carefully. To help prevent the spread, please encourage your child not to share hairbrushes, hats, or hair accessories. Thank you for your support in helping us minimise the spread within school.



After-School Clubs After Half Term

After-school 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 are as follows:

Tuesday

Learn to Cycle Club (max.14) - This club is designed for students who are not yet confident riding a bicycle and would benefit from additional support.

Performing Arts Club (max. 30)

Thursday

Art and Craft Club (max. 14)

The list of students expected to attend clubs on Tuesdays and Thursdays will be sent as a separate email 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 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.