



**Victoria Park**  
Primary Academy

## School Newsletter published bi-weekly (#47) 22.02.24

**Late nights and exciting competitions!** This week has seen two finishes past bedtime as pupils in Year 6 represented VPA at the Verve Poetry Slam at the Birmingham Hippodrome, and then Year 5 travelled to Resorts World for the HUGE Young Voices concert. Year 5 continue their tour next week when some visit the prestigious King Edwards School in Edgbaston to test their maths wits against the brightest in Brum—good luck VPA! (And thanks to all the adults that have made these experiences possible by giving up their free time)

**Staffing updates:** After a long career spent in B66, Mrs Herbert (who has also taught some of our current parents) has moved on. She says: *“After over 21 years of memorable teaching at VPA, due to personal reasons the hard decision had to be made to leave. I wish everyone connected to the school happiness and future success.”* . We have the very capable and experienced Mr Hall taking over until the Summer. We also lose Mrs Kehla and Miss Sillwood soon to start their maternity leave, I’ve written to families in EYFS to introduce their replacements. Mrs Grice in Year 5 hopes to be back after Easter, in the meantime, Miss Kauser is kindly covering her class. We also welcome back Mrs Hipkiss.

**Parking safely:** You’ll have seen myself and Mr Blakey-Harris on the front gate and Mr Bahia on the side gate most mornings—this is to welcome children, but also to keep them safe from traffic and turning cars. Parents are not permitted past the first gate into the Ron Davis Centre—this is not our land, and is a dangerous place to turn cars due to the size and number of children running through. Equally the yellow lines and turning in Suffrage Street is not safe. If you need to drive, please leave earlier, or park a little further away so that you can safely walk the final part.

**Sandwell Youth Parliament:** We are extremely proud that one of our pupils who left us last year to join King Edwards has been selected as a candidate to join the Sandwell Youth Parliament. If selected he will represent the voices of young people in our community—especially Smethwick! To find out more, and to vote for Abhijay, please click [here](#).

**MMR and Measles at VPA:** I’ve spoken to Sandwell Public Health again this week—they’ve identified 80 children who attend VPA who **HAVEN’T** had an MMR Vaccination. They will send through the list of names as well as 80 Parental Consent forms for us to pass on. They will then come into school on **Wednesday March 6th** to provide the Vaccine. If you receive a consent form, or if you think any of your children still need the Vaccine to keep them safe, please do return it and attend on the 6th. There have now been confirmed cases of measles amongst children and young adults in local Smethwick schools.

As Winter bugs and sickness still linger, please can we support teaching good hygiene at home, 2 minute-hand washing and covering mouths and noses when we cough and sneeze.



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**The Golden Age of Islam:** As part of Year 4's Night at the Museum Challenge Pack, all three classes have spent a day this week with the Altru Drama team to learn about the huge historic achievements and legacy of the period. They then shared a performance of their learning with classes in Year 3. To learn about the background and content of the workshop, see [here](#).

**Year 6 SATs meetings:** As May approaches, teachers in Year 6 are hosting a series of events and workshops to help parents to support children at home. This afternoon's 6MA INSPiRE session will model some of the revision strategies and questions types that children will face. 6JD' have INSPiRE scheduled for 6 March and 6MC 14 March.

Next **Tuesday, 27 February at 3.30** will be a chance for all parents in Y6 to find out more about the process, the timetable, and strategies for keeping children calm during the lead up and the week of tests themselves.

**World book day, Thursday 7th March:** Many schools will be distributing the £1 book tokens this week however thanks to **phenomenal** effort from teachers (led by Mrs Yale whilst on her maternity leave), all children have been surveyed to choose the Free Book of their choice. We have exchanged all vouchers in advance so that children receive these on the day! This means families don't have to go to book shops and no favourite books will have run out! The day will be packed again with opportunities for children to interact with new books bought specifically for the event, hear stories read, swap teachers, swap classes and select new class texts to buy and share. We plan and fund these events rather than ask children to dress up, to maximise their interaction with books, and minimise cost to families as part of our Poverty Proofing Charter.

**Hardship fund and local support:** We recognise that the Freecycle events and Foodbank stall outside school have not been as frequent this year—this is because our suppliers and community projects have not had the surplus to donate. As a result, we've been gifted by a donor, a pot of funding to help families in crisis and extreme need. If you feel that you may need to access this, please ask the office to speak to Mrs Mahal.

With best wishes  
Mr Reed