



Victoria Park
Primary Academy

School Newsletter published bi-weekly (#50) 19.04.24

We appreciate the many conversations that teachers have held with families at this week's Parents' Evening. Colleagues reported a genuine buzz around the school hall and across in the Early Years building. I apologise for my lack of presence - it was my turn as a parent to receive a call from my son's school to come and collect him after being sick! 5RG and 4PM will contact families to reschedule before half-term.

Final training days, and term dates: School will be closed for all children on **Monday 24th June**, when all 10 Victoria Academies Schools come together to share best practice techniques and strategies for improving Oracy and the quality of talk across lessons. We'll also close on Bank Holiday **Monday 6th May**. Half-term will be from **27th until the 31st May**. The final day of term is **Friday 19th July** when we finish at midday.

The OPAL project (Outdoor Play and Learning): Last week the children experienced their first taste of 'Freedom Friday'. All pupils, from Reception (who wore high-vis jackets so that we could easily spot them), to our oldest Year Six children were given free reign to access all of the secure parts of our school site. Both top playgrounds, the natural space behind the Year Two classrooms, the climbing frames and the entire school field. We were watching closely to see the impact of the experiment - we saw siblings find each other to play, Year Four children were including the very youngest in wild flower picking and ball games, and all children appeared to cover more physical ground as they travelled from one corner to another.

We now start the programme with gusto. Each Friday afternoon we will have an assembly to introduce a new aspect of play or equipment and ask children to agree the safety rules and ideas of how they use them. This week we have pooled all of our existing resources to share. The week after we introduce music and musical instruments, then cardboard for crafting before more large-scale junk equipment in June. Look out for the Parent Questionnaire and open-lunch sessions to come later this term.

SEN Hub events: It's now over six months since we launched our SEN learning Hubs. These have gone from strength to strength, with many of the children now spending time in a combination of Hub and classroom setting. Thank you for the Reception Hub Tea Party this week. The KS2 mixed Hub will host their first drop-in workshop to support Independence on Thursday 23rd May.

Year One Phonics Screening Meeting: Summer term sees the start of our statutory test period. All children in Year One will be tested on the Phonics sounds that they have been taught this year. A leader in school will ask them to read 40 words and sounds to assess their learning. The Year One team will write out and invite parents to a meeting to share arrangements in more detail shortly.



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Nursery and Reception - updates and spaces: Thank you to the parents and teachers who accompanied the classes to Smethwick Library this week. The staff shared that our families were a credit to the school, and remarked on how well the children listened to the stories being told. Each class now has a library card and a book to read and return. A Saturday morning walk to our local Library is a regular trip - albeit if my toddler still spends the time mainly rolling on the floor refusing to look at any actual books.

Our reception places have been confirmed this week - we still have spaces to fill. Please speak to Mrs Howell, our EYFS leader, for more information, or contact Sandwell LA to book a space.

Our Nursery provision will have an exciting new team in place from September, and we hope to expand the provision available - in terms of free hours for parents and to explore starts for 2 year olds - again, speak to either Mrs Howell, or Mrs Uppal in the school office to either book a tour or find out more.

Two new faces who will definitely be appearing in Nursery are our two newest school pets - our Guinea Pigs. Children and pupils can add their ideas for names to the list by the entrance door.

Late Collection, impact and approach: We've recently experienced an increase in children being collected late. This is unfair for the staff members who have to stay with children, often after their working hours are over. Going forward, families collecting after 3.30pm will need to record the collection on the Inventory Computer screen. Where more than 3 instances occur, families will be referred to our wraparound partner, 4Community Trust to register with them.

Champions!: Well done to our Year Five footballers who returned victorious from the Sandwell wide competition last week. This builds on further strong relations with host school Holy Lodge, who also send their Basketball Coach to work with KS2 every Wednesday.

Year Five: Staying with Year Five, congratulations to all for a successful trip to Warwick Castle this week. We say goodbye and good luck today to Mrs Cavill who starts her maternity leave, but welcome Miss Hughes to lead 5SC who has worked in school since September and will be supported by Mr Atkinson.

I hope that all families who celebrated Eid and Vaisakhi last week had joyous occasions.
Best wishes, Mr Reed