

E D I T I O N F I V E



DARWEN
VALE

An Aldridge Community Academy



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear parents and all members of the Vale community

I am delighted to be writing the inaugural foreword for this year's first edition of 1894, our school newsletter. It feels amazing to be getting back to some sense of normality. We have seen students return to a more traditional form of education, free from bubbles, face masks and separate entrances, exits and social times. We did see a small increase in Covid rates but swiftly introduced a range of measures including enhanced cleaning, increased communication and ventilation and our rates have subsequently dropped sharply, a pleasing validation of the measures we have taken.

Our new school day is working well and credit must go to our catering team and staff whose efforts have meant that a move to a thirty-minute lunch period has been very simple and has resulted in even better standards of student conduct supported by line ups prior to re-entry to the building. Period 6 is now established as a mandatory part of the school day on student timetables. This is providing our Key stage 4 students with an additional 135 minutes of learning in the Core subjects and their options each week. The commitment of our students to achieve is admirable and another established facet of life at Vale is our Saturday provision. We have 4 academic mentors who provide tuition in maths, English and science every Saturday with over 50 students on average taking advantage of an offer not many state school students are given. Small group and one – one tuition is very costly and is provided for students in all year groups across the week and for key stage 4 on weekends. Support for our Key stage 4 students was evident at our fantastically attended progress evening for year 11. Parents packed into Vale to hear a presentation on how best to support students in their final year, speak to subject teachers and purchase revision materials and study guides.

The success that vale has seen in its examination results is no doubt one of the reasons for our surging popularity. Just 4 years ago there were 740 students at vale and now that number sits at not far short of 1000. If this year open evening is anything to go by our numbers will take another sharp rise in 2022. Over

400 families visited the school on 21st September for our first live open evening since 2019. It was a spectacular evening and the feedback I have received from parents has been overwhelmingly positive. Due to the sheer weight of numbers I have had to run tours for additional parents on the last two consecutive Saturdays and a number of parents took me up on my offer to show anyone around Vale at any time during the school day. I have no concerns showing parents around during the school day; culture is strong at Vale and our students are our greatest asset and ambassadors. The parents I have shown round during the school day have all commented on the positive, calm orderly learning environment as much as the stunning facilities.

Our improvements as a school have been noted in our reviewing together days. These days are a chance for the CEO of the Aldridge Trust to bring her team of education experts to really put the Vale community under the microscope. These were some of the comments that they made:

- Culture is strong in the classroom. Students are well focussed, keen to engage with their learning and want to do well. Teachers contribute well to this with well-planned and





delivered lessons that come from strong curriculum.

- Routines are delivered with consistency, students know what they should be doing and where they should be going. Where this is not the case, adults step in and guide the students quickly and effectively.
- Staff across the school are highly visible and students know how to access support if needed. As a result, student behaviour is well managed.

Other notable events and initiatives include the fantastic opportunity awarded to the whole school community and particularly the student Council, who had the chance to meet the local MP; Jake Berry. The council harnessed the questions of all members of the school community and put these to Mr Berry who fielded the enquiries and provided some really interesting views and responses. The event was reported on in the Lancashire Telegraph and Mr Berry even talked up Vale's Saturday provision in an interview on "Any questions"

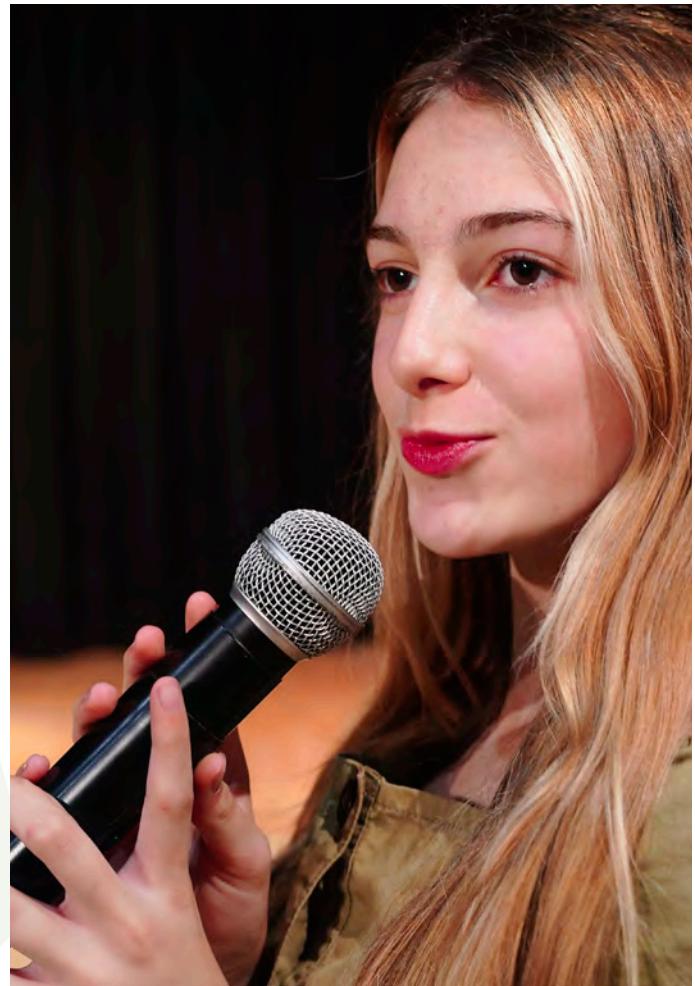
Our new House system is fast becoming part of school life. Students have been allocated Houses; Turing, Holmes, Shakespeare and Curie after the famous mathematician, athlete, playwright and scientist respectively. Students have had house assemblies and already had the opportunity to win house points in competitions including French, maths and reading. The House system is aimed to develop teamwork, esprit de corps and a greater sense of community.

Finally coming full circle it was fabulous to spend the afternoon of Friday 8th October in a packed

school Hall seeing 10 talented individuals compete for the coveted award of Vale idol. Our annual singing competition has not taken place since 2019 when Kenzie Blakey was crowned vale idol. This year the prize went to the fabulously talented phoebe Whittaker. Congratulations to the winner and indeed to all those who took part.

#WeAimHigh #WeWorkHard

#WeCare #WeAreVale



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

A GREAT HERITAGE DAY!

On September 8th, we had our annual heritage day, where old students were able to look at pictures and yearbooks from their time at the school. We had a great turnout of people attending to look back at the history of the school.

All archives, photos, head teacher log books, inspection reports, performance programmes and more from 1897 - 1980s were at one side of the room while the newer year books, photos and newspaper articles were available for newer years. Even tapes of Darwen Vale radio from the 2000s were playing.

Headteacher, Matthew Little said: "We had approximately 70 visitors, including the Mayor and Mayoress of Blackburn with Darwen, and the Mayor of Darwen.

"We had ex-pupils and staff who enjoyed the day looking through old pictures, log books and found their names in school records."

John Dalton, local historian, had his collection of photos from the grammar school days and there was a projection in the hall of 'A Century of Students'.

Our prefects were on site to welcome visitors and provide tours around our amazing facilities.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Blackburn with Darwen and the Mayor of Darwen visited and spent a few hours looking around, were taken on a tour and enjoyed some refreshments.

The school also used the opportunity to hold a Macmillan coffee morning in the dining hall with a range of delicious cakes and tea/coffee where we raised £92.00.

There was also a treasure hunt for younger visitors to get them delving into the archives and they received a small chocolate bar on completion.





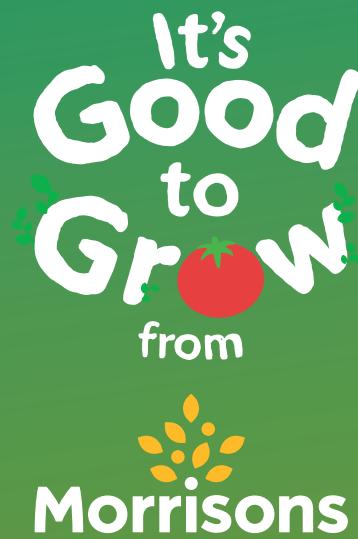
THE GROW GANG GROWING IN SIZE!

This year Grow Gang is back and are hoping to build on the amazing start we had last year. We have already had new members joining from other year groups, aside from the original year 8 members. We have a lot to do as the weeds have taken hold over the summer break.

We are also looking forward to working with the students from Endeavour. Our joint venture is to make the flower bed outside reception a real focus as you walk towards our school.

To help support the students I have nominated Darwen Vale into Morrisons Good to Grow scheme. The scheme provides schools with equipment such as tools and seeds to carry out gardening projects in their schools. Customers now receive 2 points with every £10 spent in store! Please nominate Darwen Vale to receive your points using your moro card app or send the printed voucher into school.

Thank you From Mrs Padmore & The Grow Gang



SCAN THE CODE
TO JOIN OUR
TEAM ON THE
GOOD TO GROW
SCHEME.



BLACKBURN IS HIRING - CAREERS TRIP

On Wednesday we took Year 10 to Ewood Park to take part in a Council organised careers fair. This is the first face to face careers event that we have attended since before the pandemic.

Students were able to talk to colleges, apprenticeship providers and local employers to gain information that is vital for them to make an informed decision about their future.

Students engaged in activities like welding via a VR headset and sewing using an industrial sewing machine provided by Herbert Parkinson. The event was a massive success with positive feedback from students.

Upon the return journey our bus driver said "The students are a credit to Darwen Vale"

#TeamVale #Proud



VALE GOES MULTI-LINGUAL

Following European Day of Languages on September 26th, we saw Darwen Vale go multi-lingual. Dates were on boards and in books in a variety of languages - French, Spanish, Italian, Welsh - some even braved Japanese. Ganbarimashita! Staff decorated their doors with posters of languages and language facts for pupils to find and fill in their passports. What a perfect way to launch this year's trips to France!



PYTHON PROGRAMMING JOURNEY

Year 8 pupils are currently starting their programming journey using Python programming. The program is used by many real-world applications such as

Facebook, Netflix, Instagram, Pinterest and NASA! Nasa once stated that Python : "Python allows us to tackle the complexity of programs without getting bogged down in the language". Pupils have been learning how to code the computer to print text, ask questions allowing users to respond.



YOUNG EINSTEIN'S SCIENCE CLUB

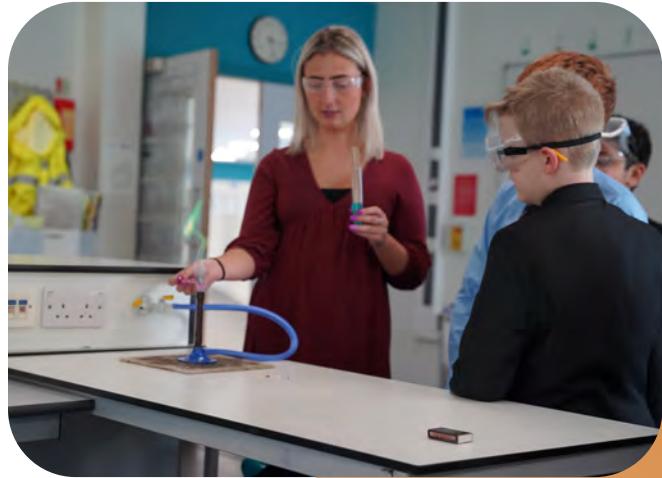
Young Einstein's is the BRAND NEW year 7 science club! You can find us in room 126 after school 3:00 - 3:45 every Wednesday. During this time, students get to experience the exciting world of science, completing experiments which also enhance students' scientific knowledge.

We are proud to say we are a diverse club that includes all genders, abilities, ethnicities and backgrounds.

Our mini Einstein's have created bouncy balls & rainbow fire and so much more!!!! This is in addition to designing 3-D glasses, flares and exploding metals using only tap water!

We blow stuff up, cut open organs and make objects move without even touching them.

Explore the magical world around us, from protons to planets, discover different with science club.





KEEPING ACTIVE WITH VALE P.E

KS3 Girls Football

Also, since September there has been a great turn out for the girl's football. The girls are demonstrating passion, determination and are committed to the club ready for fixtures to begin. Games will begin after half term.

Volleyball

Volleyball continues to be a growing club at Darwen Vale High School. Pupils are enjoying the sport and have shown amazing talent so far! From a club which started out with 3 pupils is now an ever-growing club with almost 20 pupils. Miss Stanley states "My goal since starting at Darwen Vale has

always been to inspire and provide opportunities for pupils that they would not normally get outside of school. It has been most rewarding witnessing young children finding a new talent and potentially new hobby!"

Netball

Netball is officially underway at Darwen Vale. Years 7, 8 and 9 have shown great determination, sportsmanship and dedication since netball has restarted. Overall, there has been a mass turn out of over 30 pupils across KS3 who have shown a love for netball and a drive to represent the school in the upcoming fixtures. Fixture will commence after half term.



KEEPING ACTIVE WITH VALE P.E

Boys Football Y7-10

It has been fantastic to have our year 7, 8, 9 and 10 boys back playing competitive football after a long break. Having already played multiple schools across the borough already. We continue to play fixtures throughout October and will update on results in the next newsletter.

KS3 Basketball

Basketball has seen over 20 pupils per year across KS3 attend lunch time practices. Pupils have been developing their skill learned in lesson with more game-based concepts and rule developments. Games will start after half term with county fixtures included

KS3 Rugby Mixed

KS3 Rugby has flourished since the start of this year resulting in over 40 pupils training hard preparing for fixtures to begin. With the help of Blackburn Rugby Club proving specialists to help coach our pupils to play to the best of their ability, but most importantly to enjoy themselves and have fun. Within lessons, specialist coaching has also happened to create that elite feel with lessons

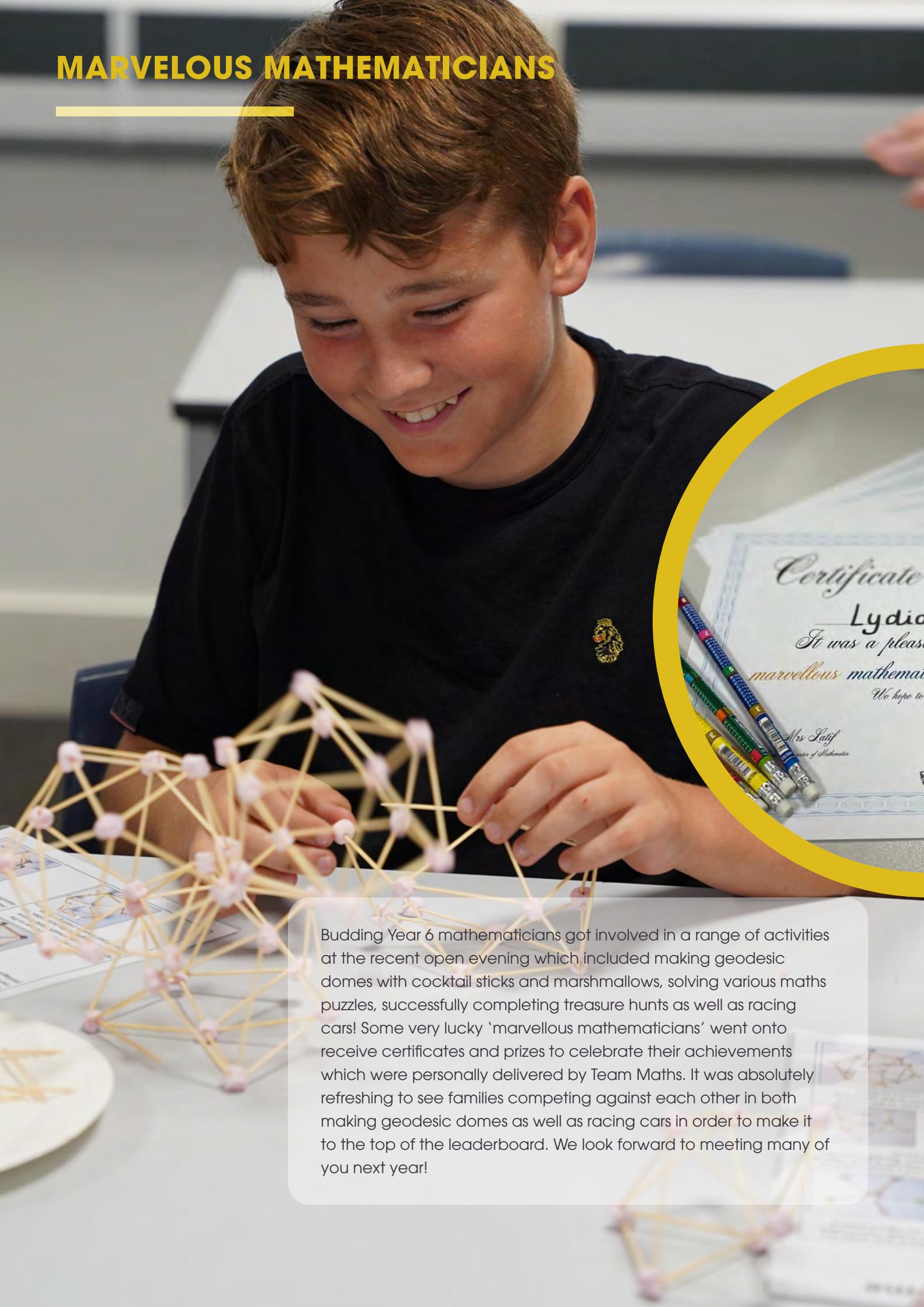
Friday Lunch Dodgeball

Dodgeball club continues to grow, this is a time for pupils to have a break from the classroom, to destress and have some fun! It gives our pupils a positive sense of community and to socialise with friends





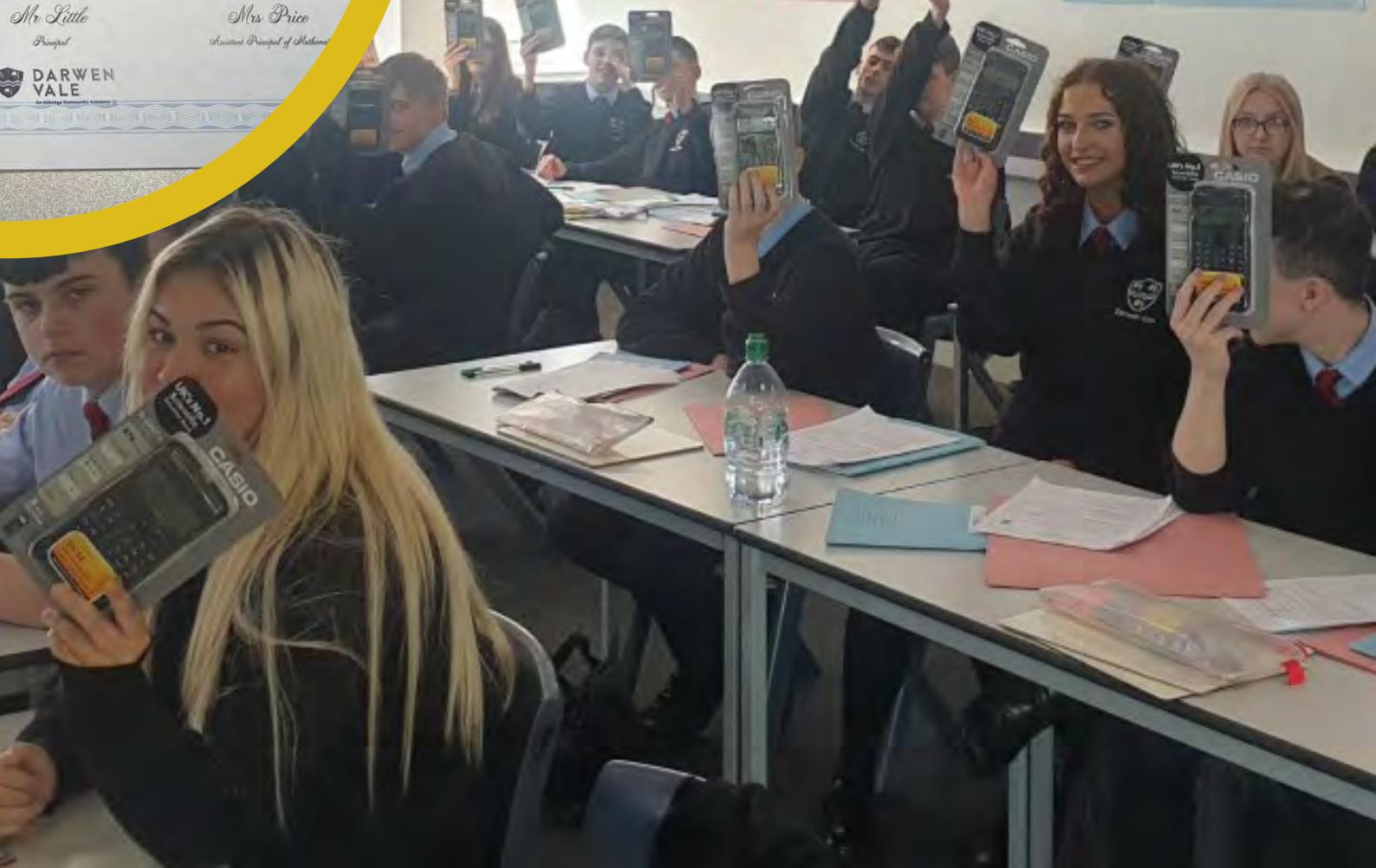
MARVELOUS MATHEMATICIANS



Budding Year 6 mathematicians got involved in a range of activities at the recent open evening which included making geodesic domes with cocktail sticks and marshmallows, solving various maths puzzles, successfully completing treasure hunts as well as racing cars! Some very lucky 'marvellous mathematicians' went onto receive certificates and prizes to celebrate their achievements which were personally delivered by Team Maths. It was absolutely refreshing to see families competing against each other in both making geodesic domes as well as racing cars in order to make it to the top of the leaderboard. We look forward to meeting many of you next year!

YEAR 11 CALCULATORS

To support our Maths lessons, this term we have distributed free calculators to the whole of Year 11. That's another great addition to their learning arsenal!

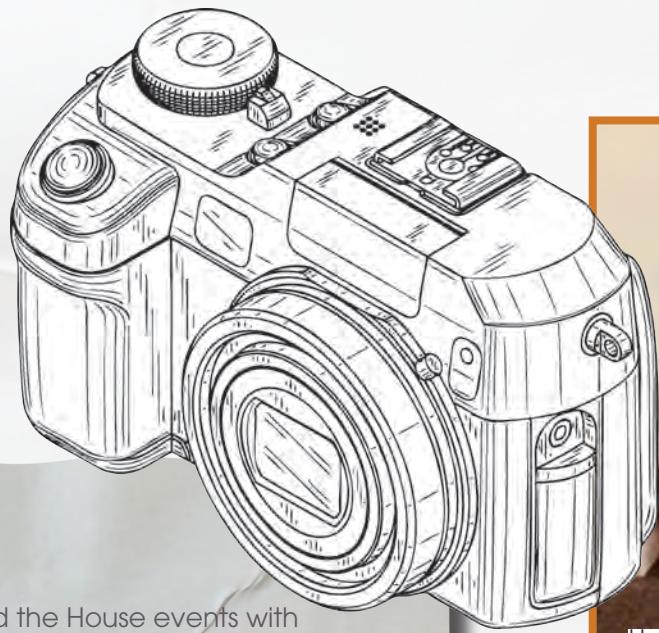


SINGING TO THE STARS - VALE IDOL GALLERY





GET CAUGHT READING



In September, the English department kickstarted the House events with the 'Get Caught Reading' Competition. Pupils and staff were given the opportunity to be creative and photograph themselves reading in either their favourite place or an unusual place.

With the judging complete and house points awarded, I can now reveal the winners...

Best pupil photographs:

1st place - Archie K, 7C - **Turing**

2nd place - Jenson L, 8A - **Shakespeare**

3rd place - Oscar F, 9E - **Holmes**

Best staff photograph:

Mrs Chadwick, 8F - **Curie**

House with the most entries:

Turing

Well done to all pupils and staff involved. Please take a look at some of our brilliant entries!

Miss Ashcroft



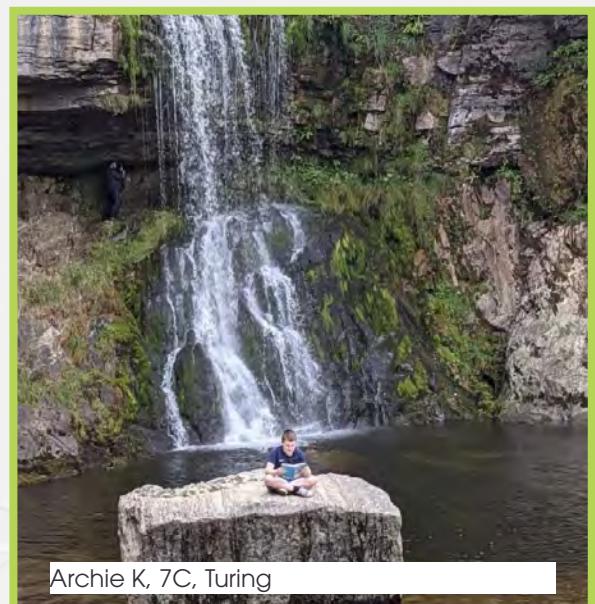
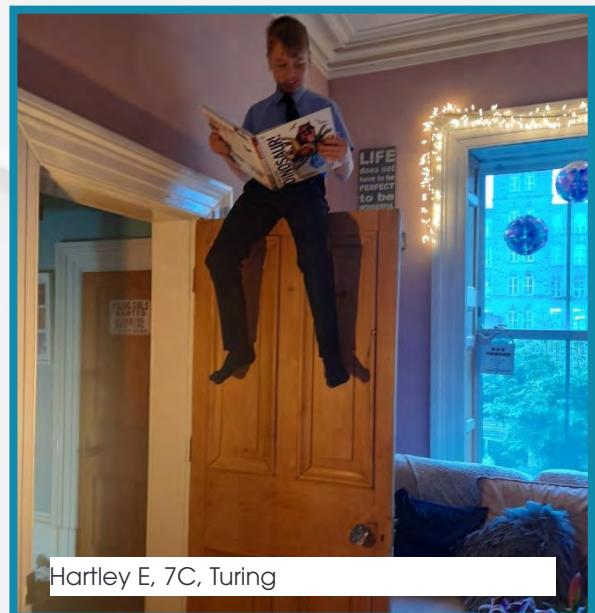
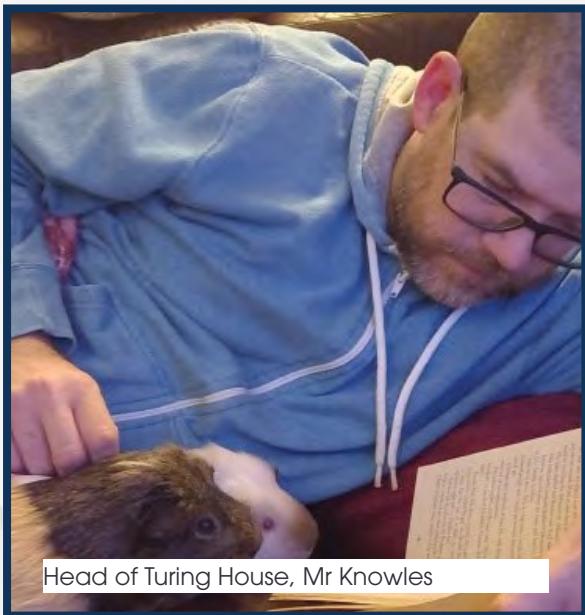
Head of Shakespeare! Shakespeare! Miss Royle's dedication to her hobby...



Phoebe W, 8A, Shakespeare!



Alfie H, 7H, Holmes



HOSPITALITY AND CATERING IN ACTION

Hospitality and Catering students have been cooking up a storm providing refreshments for #TeamVale. Hospitality and Catering in action.



A SNEAK PEEK IN TO CREATE

Fantastic progress has been made this term, take a look at some of the amazing sketchbooks produced by our students and the amazing creation of donut keyrings!



UPCOMING EVENTS

November

- 8th November 2021 - Start of Maths Week
- 8th November 2021 - Global Entrepreneurship Week
- 11th November 2021 - Remembrance Day & Remembrance Assembly
- 18th November 2021 - KS4 Awards Evening from 6:00pm
- 22nd November 2021 - Inset Day - School Closed
- 23rd November 2021 - Fibonacci Day
- 25th November 2021 - KS3 Awards Evening from 6:00pm

December

- 9th December 2021 - Aldridge Christmas Concert
- 14th December 2021 - Year 9 Parents Evening 5:00pm - 7:00pm
- 15th December 2021 - Christmas Cabaret
- 16th December 2021 - Christmas Cabaret
- 17th December 2021 - Last Day of Term

January

- 4th January 2022 - First Day of New Term