

Valence News



A Crucial Moment for SEND

This week's King's Speech confirmed that a new Education Bill will legislate SEND reform, marking a significant moment for education—and particularly for specialist provision.

The ambition to create a more inclusive system is welcome. However, the success will depend on how well it recognises the full range of need, including those children and young people whose needs cannot be met within mainstream settings.

This week, I have responded to the Department for Education's SEND consultation on behalf of the school, and have also written to our MP, Laura Trott, to ensure that these important considerations are clearly understood.

At the heart of our response is a simple but vital message: children and young people with complex medical needs must not become less visible within a reformed system.

For some families, no matter how hard schools work to be inclusive, mainstream education may not be the right or safest environment. There remains a group of children who need highly specialist support, equipment and care in order to access learning at all.

It is especially important that any changes to the system fully recognise how medical needs, physical disability and mobility challenges interact. Without careful planning, there is a risk that children could be placed in settings that are not able to meet their needs safely or effectively—something no parent would ever want.

Above all, specialist provision must continue to be recognised as an essential part of the education system. For some children, access to education depends on it. This is not about preference—it is about ensuring that every child has the opportunity to learn in a way that is safe, supportive and right for them.

Parents and carers can view the SEND consultation via the Department for Education website.

We know how deeply families care about getting the right support for their children, and we will continue to speak up to ensure that those voices are heard, valued and reflected in the future of SEND provision.

Matthew Strange, B.Ed (Hons) NPQH | Principal

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🌟 Meet One of Our New Keyworkers 🌟

Sara Massot – Residential Keyworker



My name is Sara Massot, and I'm very happy to introduce myself to students, parents, carers, and colleagues as a Keyworker in the Residential Team at Valence School. I joined Valence in March 2026, and I have already felt incredibly proud to become part of such a caring and supportive community.

A Little About Me

I am originally from France and spent over ten wonderful years living in Toulouse, a vibrant city in the south of the country. During this time, I worked in Child Protection Services as a social worker, where I supported and advocated for vulnerable children and their families. This experience has deeply shaped who I am and continues to inspire my passion for working with young people, helping them feel safe, valued, and supported.



In November 2025, I made the exciting decision to move to England and begin a new personal and professional adventure. Joining Valence School marked my first experience working within an English educational setting, and it has been both an exciting and rewarding challenge.

Life at Valence School

From my very first day, I have been struck by the kindness, patience, and warmth shown by everyone at Valence. Staff, students, and parents have all played a part in helping me settle in and feel truly welcomed.

💖 I genuinely feel that I have found a home at Valence School, and I am so grateful for the support I continue to receive each day.



I am really looking forward to continuing my journey at Valence School and contributing my experience, enthusiasm, and care to the Residential Team and wider school community. It is a privilege to work alongside such dedicated colleagues and to support the amazing students who make Valence such a special place.

Thank you for the warm welcome I have received – I'm excited about what the future holds and look forward to getting to know many of you along the way!

Warm regards,

Sara Massot

Residential Keyworker

✦ *We're delighted to welcome Sara to the Valence family!* ✦



DofE Expedition Success - Bronze & Silver!

The DofE Expedition season has started.

Bronze Expedition

On Monday 27th - Tuesday 28th April, seven students from Simmonds successfully completed their Bronze DofE Expedition. Over two days, the group visited Shorne Woods Country Park and Bedgebury Pinetum, covering a total of 2.5 miles. On the Monday evening the students chose to make pizzas for their dinner. Throughout the expedition, students worked brilliantly as a team, supporting one another and showing great enthusiasm and perseverance.

Congratulations to:

Oliver, Talleulah, Connor, Isobel, Kitty, Dilly and Sasha.



Day 1: Shorne Woods Country Park



Day 2: Bedgebury Pinetum



Silver Expeditions

Four students took part in their Silver DofE Expeditions, completing both a Practice and a Qualifier expedition.

The Practice Expedition took place on Wednesday 22nd - Thursday 23rd April, where students explored Sevenoaks Nature Reserve and Westerham Town.

This was followed by the Qualifier Expedition from Tuesday 5th - Thursday 7th May, visiting Shorne Woods Country Park, Knole Park and Leybourne Lakes.

Across the five days of expeditions, students covered an impressive 8 miles. They worked extremely hard, showed excellent teamwork and demonstrated real resilience in meeting the challenges of the award.

Congratulations to:

Callum, Chase, Lucie and Joshua

Practice Expedition



Day 1: Westerham Town

Day 2: Sevenoaks Nature Reserve



Qualifier Expedition





Day 2: Shorne Woods Country Park





Day 3: Knole Park



I would like to thank all the staff involved in making the expeditions happen; REP Managers, Jo Chivers, Kitchen Team, Health Team, Sarah Braim, Helen Roberts, Helen Trent, Rachel Lott, Joanna Sinclair, Nancy Styles, Lindon Philander, Khaleem Crookes, Jess Hylands, Rosie Floyd, Mandy Kent, Grace Moll, Steve Jones, Nat Farmer (who accompanied Lucie on all 5 days of her Silver Expeditions), Karen Sheppard (who supported the students on 6 out of 7 expedition days!!) and finally Tom Stevens and Caroline Nimmo who were our expedition assessors.

Tim Longthorne - Duke of Edinburgh Leader

Reminder for Parents/Carers: Free School Meals – please apply!

Just a quick reminder to apply for **Free School Meals**, if you think you might be eligible. Even if your child already gets a meal at school, registering really helps. It means:

- your child can get **free, nutritious meals**
- the school receives **additional funding**, which helps pay for resources, staff, and enrichment activities that benefit all pupils

Applying is **quick and confidential**. If you're unsure whether you qualify, it's still worth checking – many families are eligible and don't know it. Thank you for your support – it really does make a difference to our school community . If you need help applying, please speak to Reception.

Senior Staff On-call Rota from 15th May 2026

Matt Strange **07894 483673**
Lisa Kavanagh **07912 124724**
Jo Chivers **07896 905095**

Date	Day	Time	DSL	DSL
15/05/26	Friday	09:00 To midday	Lisa Kavanagh	Closed
		Midday to 4pm	Matt Strange	
18/05/26	Monday	09:00 To midday	Matt Strange	Lisa Kavanagh
		Midday to 4pm	Lisa Kavanagh	
19/05/26	Tuesday	09:00 To midday	Lisa Kavanagh	Matt Strange
		Midday to 4pm	Matt Strange	
20/05/26	Wednesday	09:00 To midday	Lisa Kavanagh	Kate Bayman
		Midday to 4pm	Kate Bayman	
21/05/26	Thursday	09:00 To midday	Kate Bayman	Lisa Kavanagh
		Midday to 4pm	Jo Chivers	
22/05/26	Friday	09:00 To midday	Jo Chivers	Closed for Half Term
		Midday to 4pm	Lisa Kavanagh	