20th November 2026 / Series 32/ Issue no 12

Valence News

Light, Hope and Togetherness

Over the last two weeks, a number of students have been learning about Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights. Diwali celebrates the victory of light over darkness, good over evil and hope over despair. The festival is linked to the story of Prince Rama and his wife Sita, who returned home after a long journey and were welcomed by people lighting lamps to guide their way.

Last week, to coincide with this year's festival which took place in the UK on Sunday 8th November, students took part in a special Diwali workshop in the main hall where they enjoyed traditional music and dance activities, learning more about the customs, culture and meaning behind this important festival. There was plenty of enthusiasm and adding to the occasion, staff members came to school on that day dressed in traditional clothing, helping to bring the celebration to life and encourage conversations about culture, identity and community.



The message of Diwali is one that speaks to all of us, whatever our beliefs or background. The idea of choosing light over darkness reminds us of the values we strive to live by every day at Valence School. In particular, it connects strongly with two of our five learning ethos areas: Respect and Positivity.

We show Respect by learning about each other's beliefs, cultures and celebrations, recognising that our school community is enriched by the differences we share. Taking time to understand and appreciate the traditions of others helps us build kindness and stronger relationships. Diwali's message of hope and optimism also reflects our commitment to Positivity. At Valence, we focus on what we can do, rather than what we cannot do because of our disabilities. Every day, our students demonstrate determination, resilience and a positive outlook as they learn, achieve and overcome challenges. Just as Diwali celebrates light shining brightly despite the darkness, we celebrate the strengths, talents and successes of every student.

As we continue through the year, the lessons of Diwali provide a powerful reminder that positivity, respect and understanding can help us all shine a little brighter. Through learning about and celebrating important events such as Diwali, we not only broaden our understanding of the world around us but also strengthen the values that make our school community such a special place.

Matthew Strange, B.Ed (Hons) NPQH | Principal
Phone: 01959 562156 | Mob: 07894 483673

Hawking 6 Cookery Enrichment Programme



This year, some students in Hawking 6 are taking part in an exciting new Cookery Enrichment Programme. Designed for students who have successfully completed their BTEC Level 1 and 2 qualifications, the programme aims to broaden food knowledge while developing important independence, planning and life skills.

Each term, students explore a different country, learning about its culture, food traditions and national dishes. The programme begins with a cookery demonstration from Steve, a former chef with 12 years of professional experience, before students undertake their own practical challenge.





Our first destination was Italy. Students watched a demonstration of fresh pasta-making, learning how to prepare ravioli filled with ricotta and sage. They then carried out their own research and took responsibility for planning, shopping for and cooking an Italian-inspired meal. Students made Chicken Milanese with roasted potato wedges, accompanied by Mason's Italian-inspired "special sauce"!

Where possible, each term also includes a restaurant visit or external food-related experience. To round off the Italian unit, students visited Pizza Express in Sevenoaks to sample authentic Italian-style pizzas. The trip was thoroughly enjoyed by all, with students rating the pizzas highly and even spotting a familiar face from the Valence alumni community.





This term, students are focusing on British cuisine. They will explore both traditional and modern versions of the classic sausage roll during a cookery demonstration, before designing, shopping for and preparing their own British-inspired dishes. The term will also include a visit to a British restaurant and a butchery demonstration at a local farm shop, giving students valuable insight into where food comes from and the skills involved in producing it.

The programme has already proven to be a fantastic opportunity for students to build confidence, independence and practical life skills whilst developing a greater appreciation of food and different cultures from around the world.



News from Simmonds 1



Last term, we were busy welcoming new students to Valence and getting to know our new class team. We have started a new lesson called 'Core Word'. We explore a new word each week and listen to songs and stories to better understand the word. One of our favourite lessons focused on 'like' where we read a story called 'Dragons Love Tacos'. We had fun making our own tacos and saying what filling we would like.

The students in Simmonds 1 had fun celebrating harvest and decorating a pumpkin. They decided to turn their pumpkin into a fairy garden. We created autumn trees using fingerprints to make the background. We went on nature hunts to find fallen leaves and sticks to make the floor. Simmonds 1 won the award for the best pumpkin in the Simmonds pathway!



This term in Rabbit Class, we have been learning about the topic of celebrations.



We have explored a range of celebrations, including Halloween, Bonfire Night, Remembrance Day, Diwali, and Christmas. The students have created some beautiful artwork, decorations, and other meaningful projects, such as the wreaths we laid during our Remembrance Day assembly to honour and remember the soldiers who fought for our country.

The class has thoroughly enjoyed learning about the different celebrations that take place in the lead-up to Christmas. They have explored how each celebration is unique, while also discovering some of the traditions and customs that they share. It has been wonderful to see the students develop their understanding of different cultures and celebrations from around the world.



Opportunities

S**ummer Holiday Opportunities for Young People with Additional Needs**

One of our staff team, Elena Kent, spent part of her summer this year volunteering with the Newman Holiday Trust, a charity that provides supported holiday experiences for children and young people aged 4-18 with disabilities and additional needs.

The charity offers fun-filled residential holidays, including activities such as swimming, animal encounters, messy play, visits to attractions and much more, all within a safe environment supported by a dedicated team of volunteers.

Elena says that this experience was one of the most rewarding weeks of her year and was inspired by the positive impact the holiday had on the children who attended.

As preparations begin for future summer programmes, families may wish to find out more about the opportunities available through the trust.

Find out more: The Newman Holiday Trust

Please note: Valence School is not involved in the organisation, delivery or selection process for these holidays. However, we are happy to share details of opportunities that may be of interest to our families.


Friends of Valence
CHRISTMAS RAFFLE
Get your tickets for the Friends of Valence Christmas raffle!! Lots of fabulous prizes to be won and a wonderful way to support the school too!
DRAW AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY
SUNDAY 6TH DECEMBER 3.45PM
Tickets on sale from Saturday 14th November at 9am
https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/raffle/fov-christmas-party-2026

CHRISTMAS HAMPER DONATIONS IN EXCHANGE FOR NON SCHOOL UNIFORM DAYS





The Friends of Valence are starting to make up Hampers to sell at the Christmas Party on Sunday 6th December



Doonation Days





Monday 2nd November
Monday 9th November
Monday 16th November
Monday 25th November





Hand in your donations to Reception



Senior Staff On-call Rota from 23rd November 2026

Matt Strange 07894 483673 **Lisa Kavanagh 07912 124724**

Kate Bayman 07827 961903 **Jo Chivers 07896 905095**

Date	Day	Time	DSL	DSL overnight
Nov 23, 2026	Monday	09:00 To midday	Kate Baymen	Matt Strange
		Midday to 4pm	Matt Strange	
Nov 24, 2026	Tuesday	09:00 To midday	Matt Strange	Lisa Kavanagh
		Midday to 4pm	Lisa Kavanagh	
Nov 25, 2026	Wednesday	09:00 To midday	Lisa Kavanagh	Kate Bayman
		Midday to 4pm	Kate Bayman	
Nov 26, 2026	Thursday	09:00 To midday	Kate Bayman	Jo Chivers
		Midday to 4pm	Jo Chivers	
Nov 27, 2026	Friday	09:00 To midday	Jo Chivers	Closed
		Midday to 4pm	Lisa Kavanagh	



Friends raising funds



Valence School

Valence School Christmas Party

hosted by Friends of Valence

Sunday 6th December

1.00pm – 4.00pm

£3 per person in advance | **£5 per person on the day**



1.30 – 3.00 Christmas entertainment for all the family, singing, dancing and interactive games and much more

3.00 – 3.45 **Signing Choir** – with an opportunity to join in and learn to sign along

3.45 Raffle draw







Christmas stalls including Christmas toys, hampers and Valence produce.



Face painting



Refreshments including hot dogs and mince pies and beer and wine.



£3 per child to see **Father Christmas** in a low sensory environment, so all our children can take part and receive a gift.



Bring all your friends and family

Come along this social event where you can meet other parents and their families and share the one thing you have in common

Valence school

To book in advance email
friends@valence.kent.sch.uk

Last chance to pay for advanced tickets will be Friday 27th November