THAMES VALLEY SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER | 23RD OCTOBER 2026

Liberty Academy Trust

Thames Valley School





OUR VISION

Our vision is to create a world that works for autistic children and young people, by providing an exceptional educational offer, so that they achieve success now and are well-prepared for adulthood.

COURAGE
DETERMINATION
TEAMWORK







A MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Mrs Faragher



What an exciting end to the half term across our Hill Brow and Tilehurst sites!

It was wonderful to welcome parents, carers and family members to our Harvest Craft Event. Thank you for all the generous donations we received, which will be shared with a local charity, and for helping to create such beautiful craft projects alongside your children. It was fantastic to see so many families joining us for this special occasion.

This week, we were delighted to host Ms Galloway, Director of Education for Liberty Academy Trust, who visited Tilehurst to focus on the development of PSHE, English, and Preparation for Adulthood across the provision. She will be visiting Hill Brow later in November.

There have also been some fantastic enrichment opportunities for our pupils this week. Phoenix Class enjoyed a visit from a police officer, giving them the chance to learn more about the important role they play in our community, following on from Hill Brow's fire truck visit last week. Meanwhile, Pegasus Class ventured out into the community, developing their independence skills using public transport and ordering food in a busy bakery.

This week, we say goodbye to Mrs Ralph who, after 11 years is off to a new adventure in a mainstream setting! We wish Mrs Ralph the best of luck for the future. Pupils will also say goodbye to Mrs Holder who is retiring from her lunch time role after serving our pupils their dinners each day and somehow remembering all of their food preferences with ease! Staff will continue to see Mrs Holder each day as she continues with her early morning cleaning duties around the school.
We thank both individuals for their support over the years and for their impact on the school.

It has been a busy and successful term, filled with a wide range of enriching experiences. Pupils have settled well into their new classes, built positive relationships with their peers and staff, and continued to make excellent progress throughout the term.

Thank you to all of our families for your continued support. We wish you a restful and enjoyable half-term break and look forward to welcoming everyone back next term on Monday 2nd November. 🍂🍁

Mrs Faragher









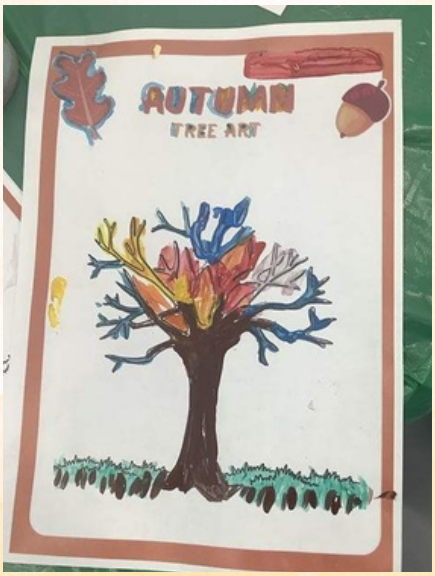


TVS HARVEST

Event













HARVEST EVENT































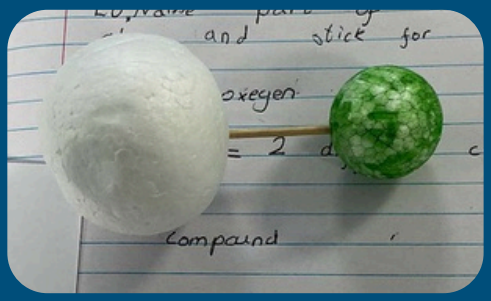


Thank you

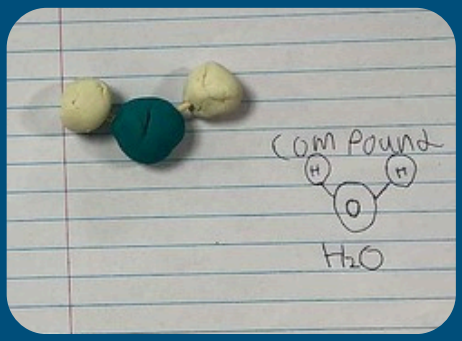
for your kind donations. We greatly appreciate your generosity and support. Your donations will be shared with local charities and community food banks to help those in need.

Science In Taurus

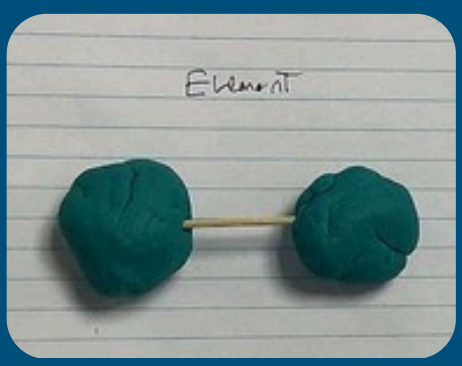
This week in Science, we have been revisiting and strengthening our understanding of atoms, elements and compounds.
Throughout this half term, we have been exploring the Periodic Table and learning about the properties of the elements it contains.
On Tuesday, we took our learning into the lab for a hands-on activity.
The class created models of elements and compounds using Play-Doh or polystyrene to represent atoms, with toothpicks representing the chemical bonds between them.
It was a fantastic opportunity for pupils to bring their learning to life, develop their scientific understanding and get creative while exploring how atoms join together to form different substances!











Food Tech in Taurus







This week in Taurus, we made delicious rocky road! The class had the opportunity to develop their culinary skills by safely using the hob to melt and combine the ingredients.
Everyone had their own ideas about what makes the perfect rocky road, with some pupils opting for plenty of biscuits while others preferred lots of marshmallows! It was a fun and engaging activity that allowed everyone to get creative while practising important kitchen safety and hygiene skills.







Fire Brigade visit at Hill Brow





















When do we need food containers this half term?

At TVS, pupils are expected to bring in containers to take home their cooking in food and catering lessons. The dates you will need them for are:

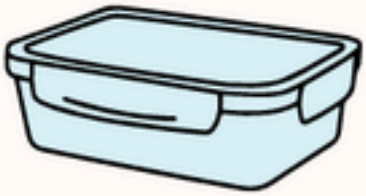
Libra & Taurus (yr7): Tuesdays

17/11, 01/12, 15/12



Aries (yr8): Wednesdays

17/11, 01/12, 15/12



Gemini (yr8): Thursdays

12/11, 26/11, 10/12, 17/12

Year 9 Hospitality & Catering: Tuesdays

10/11, 24/11, 08/12, 15/12

Year 9 Food Preparation & Nutrition: Fridays

13/11, 27/11, 11/12, 18/12

Year 10 Hospitality & Catering: Wednesdays

11/11, 25/11, 09/12, 16/12

PLEASE NO GLASS CONTAINERS!

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT WITH THIS, CONTACT MR NEWMAN ON TOM.NEWMAN@THAMESVALLEYSCHOOL.ORG.UK

FirstNews
NEWS TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE TALKING

Exploring Our Planet, Space and Student Voice

This week, pupils enjoyed another thought provoking First News session, exploring a range of fascinating topics and participating in lively debates.

KS2 pupils read 'Rainforests Keep Us Healthy!' and learned about the importance of tropical rainforests. Our Word of the Week was 'Rainforest.' Pupils discovered that rainforests help regulate the Earth's climate, support millions of plants and animals, and provide resources that people use every day. They were surprised to learn that medicines, coffee, chocolate and bananas all have links to rainforest plants. Pupils discussed whether governments should invest more money in protecting rainforests, with most agreeing that safeguarding these habitats is essential for wildlife, future generations and the health of our planet.

KS3 pupils explored 'The Curious Cloud on Mars' and investigated the Word of the Week, 'Hemisphere.' They learned about the mysterious Arsia Mons Elongated Cloud (AMEC), a remarkable cloud on Mars that can reach around 1,800 km in length and forms in an unusual way. Pupils debated whether governments should continue investing heavily in space exploration, with many recognising the benefits of scientific discovery, technological advancement and inspiration for future generations.

KS4 pupils studied 'Pupil Protest' and examined the Word of the Week, 'Protest.' They explored why hundreds of thousands of French pupils have been campaigning for better school conditions and discussed the balance between freedom of speech, safety and the right to education. Most pupils agreed that young people should have a voice in matters that affect their education, provided protests remain safe and respectful.

Through reading, discussion and debate, our pupils continue to develop the curiosity, confidence and critical thinking skills needed to become informed and active citizens of the future.

Have a wonderful half term holiday!

Miss Eirini Akrivopoulou
Head of English

FN

FirstNews

Liberty Academy Trust | Thames Valley School



Word Of The Week:

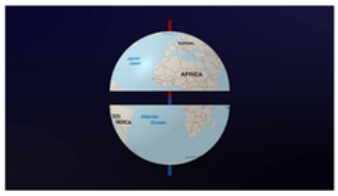
Rainforest (noun):

Meaning: a forest in a tropical area that receives a lot of rain.

Example: Many medicines come from plants found in the rainforest.

FirstNews

Liberty Academy Trust | Thames Valley School



Word Of The Week:

Hemisphere (noun):

One half of a planet, usually divided into northern/southern or eastern/western halves.

Example: The mysterious cloud appears during spring and summer in Mars' southern hemisphere.

irstNews

Liberty Academy Trust | Thames Valley School



Word Of The Week:

Protest (noun):

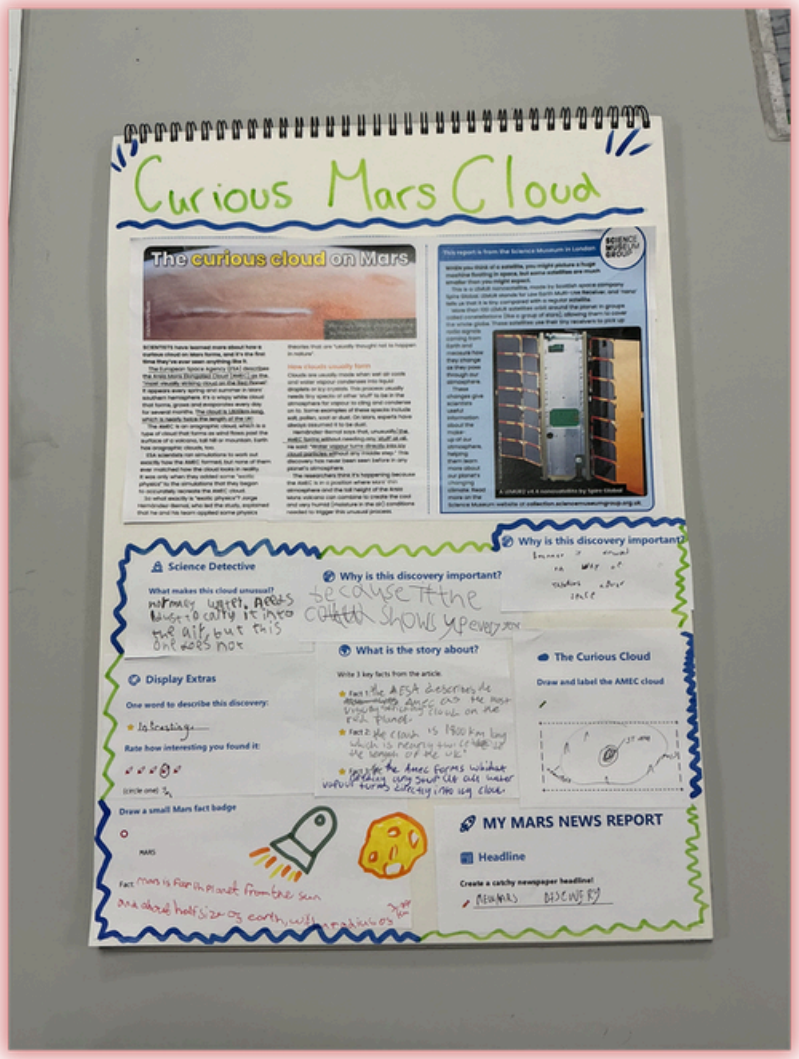
A statement or action showing disagreement with something.

Protest (verb):

To show that you disagree with something by standing somewhere, shouting, carrying signs, etc.

Example: Students joined a peaceful protest to ask for better school facilities.

A big crowd of demonstrators were protesting against cuts in health spending.



Transdisciplinary Team

Pupils at Hill Brow have been engaging in their daily bucket time. This is split into 4 stages.

Stage 1: the bucket, to focus attention

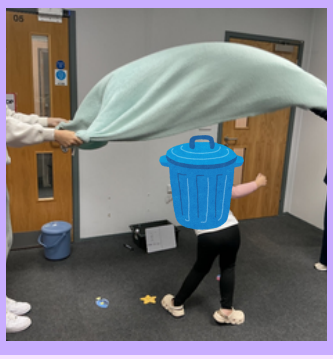




Stage 2: the attention builder, to sustain attention




Stage 3: the interactive game, to shift attention and take turns





Stage 4: the table activities, to develop transitions




FINDING OUR VOICE WITH AAC!



October is AAC awareness month!
AAC stands for **Augmentative and Alternative Communication.**

WHAT IS AAC?



It includes different ways of communicating, other than talking.

TYPES OF AAC

Gestures



Signing



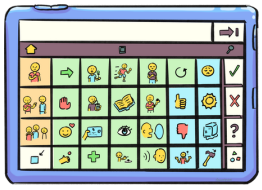
Writing



Communication board



Powered devices



Speech buttons



WHO CAN USE IT?

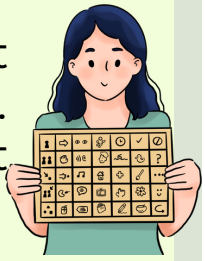
Anybody who needs extra support to communicate clearly and effectively!





Busting AAC Myths!

Myth VS Fact

Myth	Fact
“AAC will stop my child from talking.”	AAC cannot prevent speech development. In fact, it can support speech development. 
“They don’t seem motivated to use the communication board.”	Modeling using the communication board in key. AAC success depends on repetition and consistency. 
“It is too early to start AAC. Let us work on their talking first.”	AAC and speech development go hand in hand. It is never too early to use AAC to support communication. 
“Giving them too many AAC options (e.g., signs + pictures + powered device) will confuse them.”	Using multiple modes of communication (i.e., a total communication approach) leads to greater communication success. 

COMMUNICATION MADE SIMPLE
AAC TOP TIPS!

This week we look at top tips to support AAC at home and in the community.

01.

Model without expectation

- 'Modelling AAC' is to show your child how to use their AAC system (e.g., communication board).
- Point to the word as you speak.
- Do not expect a response. They will use their AAC system when they are ready.
- Continue modelling without expectation.





Model simple language

- Model single words in the beginning (e.g., more, finished, apple etc.)
- Once you and your child feel comfortable with the AAC system, model two word phrases (e.g., more water, help me).

02.

03.

Don't correct, Model instead

- Don't correct when your child points to the wrong button or uses a wrong sign.
- Model the correct word/sign instead.
- Making mistakes is part of their learning!





Make it accessible

- Carry your child's AAC system everywhere they go.
- Remember, it is their voice and their way of expressing themselves.
- Model new vocabulary in different contexts (e.g., at the park, model words 'swing', 'slide', 'up', 'down etc).

04.

Pupils Of The Term - Tilehurst

Thoughtful

Freddie Y has been awarded for consistently being kind, thoughtful, and supportive towards both his peers and staff. His positive attitude and willingness to help others make him a valued member of the school community.

Value

Daniel W has been awarded for working hard and showing great dedication to his learning. He always tries his best, approaches tasks positively, and shows excellent commitment and perseverance.

Safe

Theo K has been awarded for showing positive self-awareness and following instructions carefully to keep himself safe. He is making great progress in recognising safe choices and responding positively to guidance.

A huge congratulations to these pupils from all the TVS staff.

Pupils Of The Term - Hill Brow

Thoughtful

Macey Mae M has been awarded for the great progress she has made in accepting adult-led activities and engaging positively in regulation activities to support her learning and wellbeing.

Value

Remy L has been awarded for valuing his learning by engaging positively in adult-led activities and showing a strong willingness to learn and take part.

Safe

Yohan L has been awarded for demonstrating improved awareness of safe routines and building positive relationships with his peers. His progress in making positive choices and engaging with others has been wonderful to see.

A huge congratulations to these pupils from all the TVS staff.

Upcoming events

26th - 30th October *- Half Term*

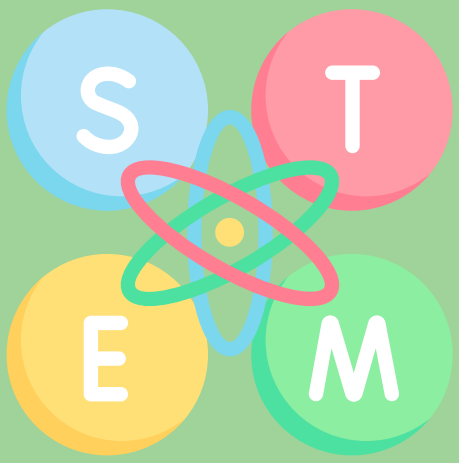
Monday 2nd November - Pupils return to school

2nd - 20th November - Year 11 Mocks Exams

9th November - Bebrus Challenge

Wednesday 11th November - Rememberance Day





Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths

From our Educational Trust Lead for STEM Dr P Warrlilow

Can you solve the riddles?

🧪 Junior Chemistry Riddle (KS3)
I can be a solid, liquid or gas.
I am made of tiny particles, but I'm not alive.
Everything around you is made of me.
What am I?

⚗️ **Senior Chemistry Riddle (GCSE/KS4)**
I am an element that's everywhere,
Without me, steel would rust no more.
I help you breathe with every breath,
Yet too much of me can fuel a fire's roar.
What am I?

Bonus Challenge (GCSE+)
I lose electrons but keep my name.
My charge changes, yet I'm still the same.
Metals do this every day.
What am I?

Answers:

Junior Chem Riddle: Matter Everything that has mass and takes up space is matter.
Everything that has mass and takes up space is matter.

Senior Chem Riddle: Oxygen
Oxygen is essential for respiration, is involved in rusting, and supports combustion.

Bonus Challenge (GCSE+)
A positive ion (cation).



Trust Leads News

Social Media

From our Operational Trust Lead for Social Media & Marketing Mrs K Webb

We're excited to be growing our social media presence across both the Trust and our schools, giving us even more opportunities to celebrate the incredible achievements, experiences and successes of our pupils and staff.

You can find details of all our social media channels on the contacts page at the end of this newsletter, and we would love for you to follow along and join our growing online community.

We are always keen to hear about our students' success stories, whether they happen in school or beyond, and would be delighted to share and celebrate these achievements with others. If you would like to share a story for our socials, please send them to kayleigh.webb@libertytrust.org.uk

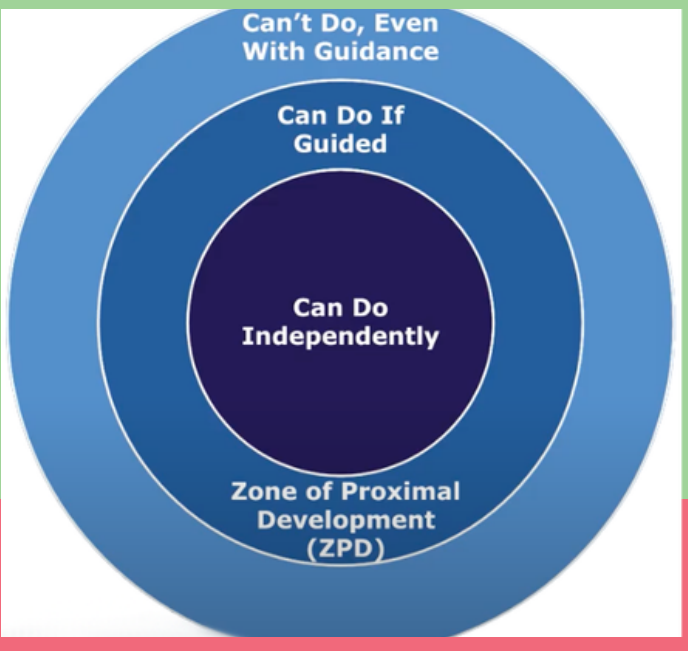
Please remember that our social media channels are intended solely for sharing school and Trust news and are not monitored as a means of contacting the school directly.

You may also notice a different look to our websites and social media pages. As part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding, we have updated our approach and no longer use identifiable photographs of students or staff. While this may make our online content look a little different, it helps us ensure the safety and privacy of everyone within our school community while continuing to showcase the wonderful things happening across our Trust.

Teaching & Learning

From our Educational Trust Lead for Teaching & Learning Mrs K Sercombe

Teaching and Learning has been a busy focus this half term. Through our ITP programme, colleagues have explored key areas of cognitive science, including neuroplasticity, memory, perception, attention and the Zone of Proximal Development. The sessions have generated excellent engagement and some fantastic professional discussion as we have considered how these ideas can translate into effective classroom practice. Alongside this, I have been reading The Scaffolding Effect by Rachel Ball and Alex Fairlamb, which has encouraged further reflection on the balance between support and independence for learners. It has also been wonderful to see students taking part in the Ökoscope competition and engaging with environmental issues beyond the classroom. Looking ahead, I am excited to visit Vanguard after half term.



What's on over half term

KIDS EAT FREE (OR FOR £1) OCTOBER HALF TERM 2026

moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free

ANGUS STEAKHOUSE
Kids under 8 eat FREE daily, 12pm to 5pm

ASDA
Kids eat for £1 daily, with no adult spend

ASK ITALIAN
Kids Eat Free October 9th - 31st via Perks App

BANANA TREE
Kids eat free this october with an adult

BELLA ITALIA
Children eat for £1 with any adult main

BILLS
Kids Eat Free Monday 26th – Friday 30th October

BREWDOG
Kids eat free this Oct with **KIDS EAT FREE** bookings

CAFE ROUGE
Kids Eat FREE 12-4pm every day of the week

CHIQUITO
Kids eat FREE during all school holidays

COCONUT TREE
Kids eat free Sun 18th Oct - Sun 1st Nov 2026

DOBBIES GARDEN CENTRES
Kids eat for £1 with an adult breakfast or lunch

FARMHOUSE INNS
2 Kids eat free during the October Half Term

FLAMING GRILL
1 Kid eats free weekdays this October half term

FRANKIE & BENNYS
Kids eat FREE during school holidays

FUTURE INNS
Under 5s eat for free with any adult meal

GORDON RAMSEY RESTAURANTS
Kids under 10 eat FREE all day, every day

HARVESTER
Kids eat for £1 until November 1st 2026 via App

HUNGRY HORSE
2 Kids eat for £1 this October Half Term

IKEA
Kids get a meal from 95p daily from 11am

LAS IGUANAS
Kids eat FREE with 'My Las Iguanas' App

MARCO PIERRE WHITE
Kids under 12 Eat FREE daily with an adult spend

MARSTON PUBS
kids eat for £1 during the october half term

MORRISONS
Kids Eat FREE all day, every day with a £5 spend

PAUSA CAFE @ DUNELM
Kids eat FREE with every £4 spend all day

PREMIER INN
2 kids eat for free with 1 adult breakfast

PRETO
Kids up to age 10 eat free with 1 paying adult

PUREZZA
Kids under 10 get free pizza with every adult meal

SA BRAINS PUBS
Kids eat for £1 on Wednesdays

SIZZLING PUBS
Kids eat for £1, Every Monday to Friday, 3 - 7pm

TESCO
Kids Eat free weekdays with an adult purchase

TGI FRIDAYS
Kids Eat Free with any adult meal (Via App)

THE REAL GREEK
Kids under 12 eat FREE Sundays with £10 spend

TOBY CARVERY
Kids eat for £1 until November 1st 2026 via App

TRAVELODGE
2 kids eat for free with 1 adult breakfast

TURTLE BAY
Kids eat free with a £15 adult spend via app

VILLAGE HOTELS
Kids eat free via the village app

YO! SUSHI
Kids eat free all day (weekdays) in school holidays

ZIZZI
Kids eat free weekdays in school holidays

Copyright of MONEY SAVING CENTRAL

HALLOWEEN PARTY & CINEMA SCREENINGS!

Reading

FREE POPCORN & SNACKS!

Ages 7-18 yrs only

NO NEED TO BOOK

FREE events with Reading Youth Service

SOUTHCOTE
Wednesday 28 Oct
5 - 8pm
Southcote Family Hub
85 Coronation Square
RG30 3QP

HEXHAM
Thursday 29 Oct
5 - 8pm
Hexham Community Centre
Bamburgh Close
RG2 7UD



FOR MORE INFORMATION
@readingyoungpeople
ryp@reading.gov.uk

For other October half term activities, go to brighterfuturesforchildren.org/haf-interest-form/

www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/youth-service

SPOOKTACULAR EVENTS

26th - 30th October 2026

Children Swim for £1 at all centres before 10am during the school holidays

Rivermead Leisure Centre
- Family Fun Swimming
- Toddler Splash
- Pool Inflatable and Slide
- Table Tennis
- Junior Gym

INTENSIVE SWIMMING SHORT COURSE
Four days of 30minute intensive swimming lessons

Palmer Park Leisure Centre
- Family Fun Swimming
- Toddler Splash
- £1 Football Drop In
- Wheelie Fun Cycling Sessions
- Junior Gym

South Reading Leisure Centre
- Family Swims
- £1 Football Drop In
- £1 Multi-Sport Drop In
- Junior Gym

FAMILY SWIMS
2 adults and 2 children swim for £5

Meadway Sports Centre
- Family Fun Swimming
- Family Badminton
- Soft Play with arts and crafts
- Pool Inflatable
- Junior Gym

Halloween Colouring Competition & Fancy Dress.
T&Cs in centre.

Book Activities Online
www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/reading/rivermead-leisure-centre/news/october-half-term-2026

BETTER

OCTOBER Half Term

Don't forget our special Monday opening!

SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER - SATURDAY 31 OCTOBER

THROUGHOUT HALF TERM

ACTIVITY CART
Donations welcome, drop in

PUMPKIN TRAIL FEATURING SILLY SQUIRREL
£1.50 per trail, pay on the day

BAYEUX BATTLE TRAIL
£1.50 per trail, pay on the day

BAYEUX BATTLE ACTIVITY PACK
£2.50 per pack, pay on the day

SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER
TALK: ALL ABOUT BATS!
All ages, 11am - 12pm
Free, book online

SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER
GO BATTY! BAT MOBILES
Families, 10am – 11am and 12pm -1pm
Free, drop in

MONDAY 26 OCTOBER
EVERYBODY'S WELCOME: BUILD THE CHANGE LEGO SESSIONS
Families, 2-hour sessions starting at 10am and 1pm
Suggested donation £4, book online

TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER
HALLEY'S COMET WORKSHOPS!
Families, 1-hour sessions starting at 10am, 11.15am, 1pm & 2.15pm
£4, book online

WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER
RHYMETIME AT READING MUSEUM
Families, 10.30am – 11am
Donations welcome, drop in

WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER
OBJECT HANDLING
All ages, 10.30am - 12pm
Free, drop in

WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER
EVERYBODY'S WELCOME: THE BIG DRAW
All ages, 10.30am - 3.30pm
Free, donations welcome, drop-in

THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER
VICTORIAN SCHOOLROOM EXPERIENCE IN THE GATEWAY
Ages 5+, 11am & 2pm (meeting at the Abbey Gateway)
£2 per person, pay on the day or book online

FROM SATURDAY 7 NOVEMBER (DURING DIWALI CELEBRATIONS)
ILLUMINATE TRAIL
£1.50 per trail, pay on the day

www.readingmuseum.org.uk

READING MUSEUM

What's on over half term





Giants at The Lexicon

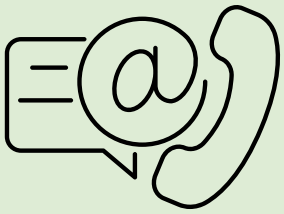
The much-loved Giants return to The Lexicon this October half term, reimagined for autumn. Dressed in leaves and pumpkins for the very first time, they will lead a series of Halloween-themed activities from Monday 19 October.





BROAD STREET BEATS RETURNS FOR A FRIGHTFULLY FUN OCTOBER
Saturday 24th October 11am-3pm

Contact Details



Thames Valley School - Tilehurst
A: Conwy Close | Tilehurst | Reading | Berkshire | RG30 4BZ
T: 0118 9424750
E: office@thamesvalleyschool.org.uk
W: www.thamesvalleyschool.org.uk

Thames Valley School - Hill Brow
A: Hill Brow | Hartland Road | Reading | Berkshire | RG2 8JD

for any Hill Brow queries, please email office@thamesvalleyschool.org.uk and our receptionist will pass onto the appropriate person to make contact with you.
Thank You

Reporting Absences - Pupils

To report a pupil's absence, please contact school office on 0118 9424750 (option 1) or email attendance@thamesvalleyschool.org.uk

For Medical appointments, please provide evidence of the appointment this can be sent via email or a screenshot attachment.

Liberty Academy Trust