



Vanguard Learning Trust Newsletter

Edition 19: March 2025

Languages week

Ruislip High and Vyners held their first joint languages week from Tuesday 25th February to Monday 3rd March 2025. (Ruislip High has held an annual languages week for the last five years.)

The week began with Year 9 students at Ruislip High enjoying a talk from Steve Eadon, a former coach for Arsenal Football Club. During his time at Arsenal, Steve managed the award-winning Arsenal Double Club languages project, using football as a tool to inspire young people to learn new languages. Steve emphasised to students the importance of languages, including how they can open doors in individuals' future careers. The students left the assembly inspired, having had the chance to ask Steve thoughtful questions about his experiences.

In addition, over 100 students watched Disney's *Jungle Cruise* in Spanish and, the following day, 50 students watched it in French. During both screenings, students enjoyed free popcorn donated by CineWorld. Students in Years 7 to 9, who study French or Spanish, were treated to a theatre production performed entirely in French or Spanish; some of the students commented afterwards that they were pleased they could understand the performance in the foreign language.

There was also a Year 9 languages breakfast which was hosted by the Year 10 language ambassadors. The event was attended by over 130 students and was a resounding success. Students enjoyed an array of French and Spanish food, ranging from croissants to churros.



Ruislip High's students at the languages breakfast

'Languages week has opened up so many opportunities for all of the students. We got to experience different cultural activities which aren't normally available. We are all so grateful. It was the highlight of my year!'

Megan, Year 9, Ruislip High



Volunteers at Vyners playing extras in the Spanish play by Onatti Productions

At Vyners, Year 9 students, together with Key Stage 4 classes, also enjoyed plays for their respective languages from Onatti Productions, a company which writes accessible live theatre to complement students' foreign language development. Key Stage 3 students were also treated to a workshop led by the school's language ambassadors on constructed languages from the world of fiction.

'I really enjoyed the Spanish play as the actors were very interactive and funny. The play really helped my Spanish to develop and understand words in a real-life situation.'

Ria, Year 10, Vyners

Throughout the week, language-themed activities were delivered in lessons across the schools to demonstrate to students the influence of languages across the curriculum.

The week was a great success and plans are already underway for next year's Languages Week.

Student activities

Equality week

The Trust's annual equality week was held from Monday 3rd to Friday 7th March 2025. The theme of empathy - learning, reflecting and changing - provided the focus for the week, encouraging a deep dive into how people perceive and respond to individual differences in school communities.

One of the central objectives of the week was to raise awareness about the difference between equality and equity. Through workshops, presentations and interactive discussions, students explored how equality and equity apply to their everyday lives; students were challenged to understand the distinction between the two constructs in order to promote fairness and create environments for everyone to succeed.

Another key goal of equality week was to promote discourse about the language used to describe individual differences. The words people use shape perceptions and the week focused on how respectful, inclusive language fosters an atmosphere of belonging. The week encouraged students to engage in discussions about how language influences stereotypes, biases and their understanding of identity.

'We learned that people need different things in life. In assembly we learned that different bikes are needed depending on how tall people are or if they have a disability.'

Rae, Year 2, Ryefield

'During equality week, I enjoyed our PE lesson. We played a game called 'cross the river' but we could only use body language and actions to communicate with each other. When we got to the other side, we



Year 6 students at Hermitage discussing inclusive language

couldn't call out to our team. It was difficult but I really enjoyed it.'

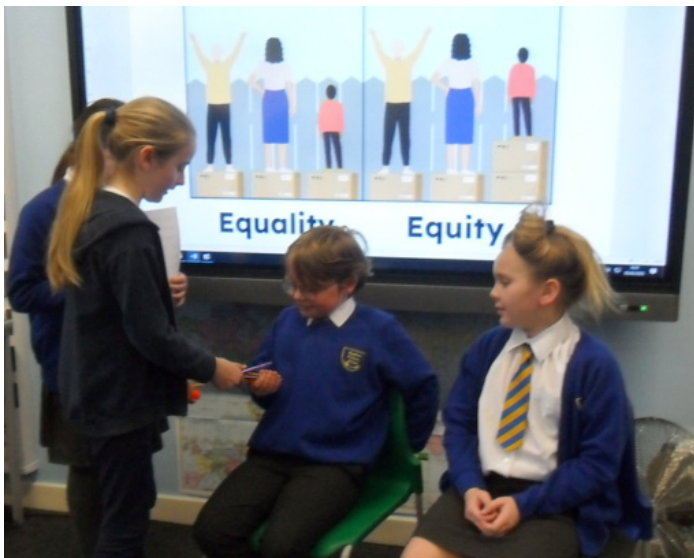
Johnny, Year 5, Field End

Spelling bee

All six schools associated with the Trust took part in the sixth annual Trust-wide spelling bee on Wednesday 22nd January 2025, hosted at Ruislip High. The Serkis performance hall filled up with audience members from the schools, including several Ruislip High Year 7 forms, excited to see their peers take to the stage.

Each team of four took turns to spell increasingly difficult words out loud, a feat of not only academic prowess but also admirable confidence. Every participant excelled, achieving points for their teams and even spelling words such as 'gargantuan', 'tortoise' and 'distracted'. The rapid-fire round increased the tension even further, with a two-minute timer ticking away as the students tried to fit in as many correct spellings as possible. Even the presenter struggled to keep up with the pace of the eager 10-year-old spellers!

It was anyone's game for most of the competition but Oak Farm took the lead in the final round. They were, however, pipped at the post by Vyners, the overall winners. The team's victory was well deserved and was helped along by star-speller Lisa, who was crowned the 'Best Speller in the Trust', as well as earning 10 points for her team. Dr Lecky, chief executive officer, and Mr Davies, Ruislip High's headteacher, were both present at the awards ceremony and conveyed their pride in all the students involved. Overall, the



Year 5 students at Ryefield taking part in an art competition

Student activities



Vyners' winning spelling bee team

afternoon was a huge success, offering all the schools an excellent opportunity to learn, collaborate with others and develop their confidence

'It was a great opportunity to test the spelling ability of all the schools in the Trust with an engaging and fun activity.'

Farida, Year 6, Ryefield

'At first, I was scared, but I learned how to overcome my stage-fright and I loved it so much that I would like to do it again and again.'

Ashlee, Year 7, Ruislip High

Poetry course

This term, the second Trust-wide poetry course took place with all schools in the Trust participating. Students studied one poem each week for four weeks. The poems studied were:

- 'Where I'm from' by Kwame Alexander
- 'Caged Bird' by Dr Maya Angelou
- 'Refugees' by Bill Bilston
- 'If all the world were paper' by Joseph Coelho

While studying the weekly poems, students shared their thoughts and responses with other Trust schools via a blog. In total, there were over 180 blog posts by students during the four weeks of the course.

Following this, the students were invited to enter the Trust-wide poetry competition. A number of students across the Trust had their poems commended, including some being selected as their school's best entry. In addition, the student deemed to have entered the best poem overall was crowned the VLT Poet Laureate. The winner and VLT Poet Laureate for 2025 is Shreyaba from Oak Farm. Congratulations to Shreyaba and all the students who participated in the course.



VLT Poet Laureate for 2025

Netball tournament

On Wednesday 5th March 2025, Oak Farm was excited to welcome staff and students for the second Trust-wide netball tournament. There were many closely competed games between the schools, who each brought one girls' team and one mixed team to compete in a 'mini league'.

Each team demonstrated excellent teamwork, resilience and positivity throughout the afternoon, which resulted in Vyners earning both the mixed and girls' team trophies. Ruislip High was in second place in each league, with Oak Farm and Hermitage placed third in the mixed and girls leagues respectively. Every school represented the Trust admirably and the students are looking forward to future Trust-wide events.



Vyners' and Ruislip High's girls' teams in action

Student activities, league and awards

'I enjoyed playing netball with all of my friends and improving my skills.'

Shrey, Year 6, Oak Farm

'It was a great opportunity to play against the other schools.'

Emily, Year 7, Vyners

Science challenge

Hermitage Primary School hosted the Trust-wide science challenge on Wednesday 26th March 2025. All six schools associated with the Trust participated in the event. The students impressed everyone with their vast knowledge of the periodic table and it was wonderful to see their eagerness to showcase all that they know. What shone through on the day was the teamwork and camaraderie that each school displayed and true sportsmanship.

Having Dr Lecky as a special guest helped inspire these budding scientists and her extensive knowledge allowed the addition of a tiebreaker activity. The staff and students at Hermitage are already excited for next year's competition. Huge congratulations to all the students involved.

'We absolutely loved the competition, especially the puzzle. We would love to do it again next year as it was a great challenge. Perhaps we could do the puzzle where all the elements are separated. We aim to win next year!'

Hermitage's science challenge team

'The whole event was challenging but unforgettable. The tiebreaker was intense, but when we won, I was shocked and felt like I could burst! It was an amazing team effort.'

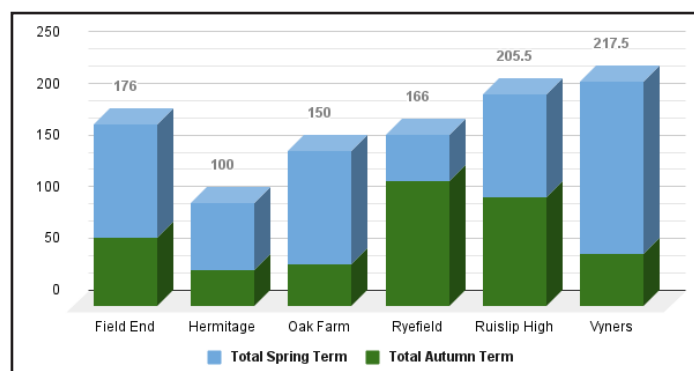
Emily, Year 6, Field End



Students taking part in the science challenge

Student league

A new student league was launched in September 2024 in which schools are awarded points for each activity they participate in with additional points being awarded for winners and runners up to competitive activities. At the end of the academic year, a VLT cup will be awarded to the school with the most points. Each half term, schools are informed of the latest scores in the league table. The figure below shows the current position of each school in the league following the points accrued from the autumn and spring term activities.



Student awards

Our student awards involve each school in the Trust selecting students, one from each key stage, except for Field End's who are all in KS2, to receive an award for demonstrating one of the Trust's values. This term's value was 'Community: Collective responsibility, collaborating within and beyond the Trust'. The recipients received a certificate and a Trust pin badge and a postcard was sent home to their parents/carers.

The recipients were as follows:

Field End: Mia, Aaron and Zakariya, KS2

Hermitage: Lulu-Jay, EYFS, Bella, KS1, Tanvi, KS2

Oak Farm: Alex, EYFS, Grayson, KS1, Deema, KS2

Ruislip High: Luca, KS3, Dillon, KS4, Aylar, KS5

Ryefield: Manvit, EYFS, Feryal, KS1, Annushri, KS2

Vyners: Chloe, KS3, Caitlin, KS4, Matin, KS5

