



Vanguard School

End of Term Newsletter

Friday 19th December, 2025



Principal note

It is hard to believe that this newsletter marks the end of term and 2025! We have definitely packed a lot in and there have been many individual progresses both large and small which have been celebrated across the term. Vanguard has also received a number of visits from the CEO, Trustees, the Quality and Standards team and the Lambeth School Improvement Partner; all have highlighted the continued improvements across the school as we build on the strength of our Good Ofsted rating. All commented during their visits and learning walks on greater engagement and of teaching and learning as strengths, noting a sense of calm and purpose.

There was also of note, a clear impact of the therapy team providing support to our autistic learners and teaching staff and the review process around sensory and metacognition targets (focusing on how we learn). Additionally, they have provided weekly whole class sessions for Key Stage 3 in the areas of social communication, emotional literacy, sensory regulation and fine motor (total approx. 40 sessions across the half term). They have also started a weekly Key Stage 4 & 5 'Girls Group' and weekly Sixth Form Groups.

The pupils have done themselves proud and deserve to have a restful break over the next couple of weeks.

We welcome Michelle Hall who joined us in November. She has been appointed as HLTA for the 6th Form and will also be working closely alongside the Therapy Team to provide interventions in the New Year. We also welcome Michelle Smith who will be our part-time SEND administrator and starts in January. We also wish to thank Harry Mitchell for supporting both staff and pupils this year and wish him luck as he ventures into a new career phase in the world of Finance.

A reminder that the staff return on Monday, 5th January for Inset Day and pupils return at the normal time of 8.45am on Tuesday, 6th January 2026. In the meantime, I and my colleagues wish those who celebrate the tradition, a very Merry Christmas and all a restful break and a happy New Year!

A Christmas Carol

On Thursday 20th November, Christmas came early as we ran our annual visit to watch the production of 'A Christmas Carol' at the Old Vic theatre.

Students from Years 10, 11 and 12, their parents and staff had a great night at the performance of the story which we study for GCSE. In the words of one of our students, "I can't believe what I've just Witnessed!"



Important Dates

Monday 5th January, 2026 Staff inset day
Tuesday 6th January All students return to school at 8:45am
Wednesday 11th February Year 9 Options Afternoon (in person) 3:30pm - 5pm
Friday 13th February half-term break 3:30pm
Monday 23rd February students return to school at 8:45am



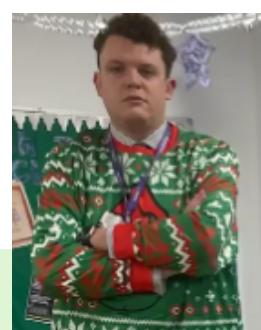
Christmas Card Competition



Beautifully designed and skilful Christmas-themed digital and photography work created by Marc in Year 11 (1st and 2nd panel) and Rene in Year 10 (3rd panel).

Rick Renton, Art Teacher

Students and staff were provided with a full-on Christmas Lunch. Thank you to all our catering staff for all their hard work – much appreciated! Some of us chose to wear our Christmas Jumpers in order to raise monies for our chosen charity, Centrepoint.



Christmas Jumper Day



Vanguard School

Trips & Visits



Our learners took part in the Winter Wonderwheels event at Dorney Lake and truly excelled. Despite the challenging weather, they showed incredible resilience, enthusiasm, and teamwork. It was inspiring to see them embrace the experience and have such a fantastic time. Events like these not only showcase their determination but also highlight the importance of inclusion and participation in wider community activities. We are proud of their achievements and the way they represented our school.

Zarko Zahariev, Head of PE, Careers & 6th Form Lead



Super proud of all our learners, with Baris achieving 1st place with Tyon, Abdul and Francisco closely behind and for all our pupils achieving 5km in the rain. Thank you to all the staff and parents who supported them!

Rachael Clements, Principal



Take the Lead Workshop The Old Vic: Sixth Form and Year 11 students participated in their very first Take the Lead employability workshop, delivered through The Old Vic. This programme is designed to build confidence, communication, and workplace skills. Our students engaged brilliantly, showing maturity and creativity throughout the session. They gained valuable insights into how theatre and performance can translate into employability skills such as teamwork, adaptability, and presentation. This was the first session in the programme, with the second scheduled for January. Following this, students will also enjoy a trip to the Royal Bank of Canada, where they will see how these skills connect to real-world professional environments. We are excited to see how they continue to grow through each stage of this journey.

Year 10 Employability Workshop Barclays & The Talent Foundry - Over the past four weeks, Year 10 students have been involved in an employability programme run by Barclays in partnership with The Talent Foundry. Delivered during PDL lessons, the workshops gave students valuable insights into the world of work, helping them develop essential skills for their future careers. Their commitment and performance were outstanding. Many students commented on how the sessions opened their eyes to new opportunities and gave them confidence in their own abilities. This initiative has laid strong foundations for their next steps in education and beyond.

AA Educate Sixth Form Careers Programme: Our Sixth Form learners have been taking part in the AA Educate Careers Programme, which focuses on meaningful work experience and connecting students with employers in industries that match their interests. This initiative is helping them explore career pathways and gain practical knowledge to prepare for life beyond school. The programme has already sparked enthusiasm among students who are eager to pursue placements and build professional networks. By linking them directly with employers, AA Educate is aiming to give our learners a head start in shaping their futures.

Careers

Mr Zahariev, Sixth Form and Careers Lead



Since coming together, the Junior Leadership Team (JLT) and the Student Executive Team (SET) have worked on different initiatives including gaining the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Bronze Award. The SET have also supported work to develop the Eco-Schools Award and we have some exciting plans for Vanguard to be more considerate of its carbon footprint. The JLT have been consulted on the quality of education and behaviour within the school, which they are happy with. This term, the SET attended the Senior Leadership Team to discuss sustainability, energy consumption and recycling.

Keep your eyes peeled for lots more exciting work from the JLT and SET in the coming year.

Dan Bunker, Head of Pastoral and Behaviour



In the New Year, David Ritchie, our Designated Safeguarding Lead, will be meeting with the Leading Parent Partnership to discuss actions in our aim to develop greater partnership and collaboration with families. This will include a series of coffee mornings, workshops and events enabling us to improve opportunities for communication and feedback as well as provide opportunities to build a support network with other parents and carers.



Leading Parent Partnership Award

Note from the SENDCo

At Vanguard we follow a cycle for Annual Reviews. This may mean that your child's Review is held either later or earlier than scheduled. This cycle has been organised to take into account preparation for transitions so that Plans are as up-to-date as possible for consultations. In the Spring Term 2026 we will be holding the Annual Reviews for Year 9 and Year 7. Invitations are sent out by both email and post. If you would like professionals involved in your child's case from outside the school and Local Authority invited please let us know.

Therapy Team

During this academic year, we hope to welcome a few students, from universities in and around London, who are training to be Occupational Therapists and Speech & Language Therapists. They will join the therapy team to provide additional input for some students at Vanguard, whilst being overseen and supported by our therapists, OT Shira Zechaira and SaLT Sam Jashek.



We have had the privilege of spending this Autumn term getting to know your young people and supporting them in school.

Regulation at home has been raised throughout the term, so we want to provide some related strategies that may be helpful for you and your young people. Each strategy is an option for your young person, so it is important that it is presented as a choice. For example: "I can see you are not happy, would you like to..."

Strategies to provide calming sensory input throughout the day

- Yoga
- Dancing activities (e.g., "Just Dance" on YouTube)
- Help with carrying heavy shopping bags / moving furniture
- Walks
- Walking up / down the stairs
- Physical activities – football, climbing walls, swimming
- For ones who enjoy it – cooking and baking
- Rolling inside a blanket ("sausage roll")
- Building an indoor obstacle course
- Building an indoor fort
- Floor time – many activities can be done on the floor, such as drawing, reading, building puzzles, and playing board games.
- Messy play – can be done in many ways, like playing with shaving foam, making slime, and playing with kinetic sand.



Strategies to support at challenging times

- A quite space with low lighting
- Body squeezes – preferably to self
- A strong hug – until the young person shows they want to stop
- Guided breathing – model and breath with them
- Taking a walk outside
- Talking to an adult
- Listening to music



Top Tips

- Reduce your use of language – use short, simple phrases
- Lower demands
- Pause and allow time for thinking
- Be patient when they are explaining their perspective



We look forward to seeing you return for the new half-term on

Tuesday 6th January, 2026 at 8:45am

Have a lovely New Year!