

November / December 2025 Newsletter



Sawston
Village College

Dates for your Diary:

5 January	Spring term begins	29 January	Year 9 Report 2 issued
13-14 January	Year 9 exams	5 February	Year 9 Parents' Evening
15 January	Year 10 Meet the Mentor Evening	9 February	Year 9 Men/DTP vaccinations
19 January	Year 10 GCSE RE Walsingham trip	12-17 February	Year 11 Berlin trip
19 January	Year 11 mock interview CEIAG event	13 February	Staff training day- school closed to pupils
21 January	Year 9 CEIAG conference day	16-20 February	Half term
22 January	Year 9 Options Evening	25 February	Year 11 additional mock exams
22 January	NT Live: Hamlet	26 February	Year 8 Report 2 issued
28 January	Year 11 additional mock exams	27 February	ABSRM exams
29 January	Year 10 Drama trip - 'Blood Brothers'		



Christmas is a time of joy and generosity as seen in our Carol Service, Bumper Quiz, Christmas meal, Sawston Give campaign, songs for Bircham House, Winter Fair and Christmas Jumper Day. Sadly, in schools, it is also the end of another term when we sometimes have to say goodbye to colleagues who are moving on. Mr Loveday, PE, is leaving to take up a teaching post closer to home in the Fens and Dr Milner, TA, follows her

passion to become a lecturer. We thank them both for all they have done and wish them great success in the future. Talking of the future, steelwork is largely complete for the new build which has really taken shape. Work has begun on laying a floor for construction to continue on the upper level. In addition, demolition of the old changing rooms will start in the January now that we have moved into the temporary PE accommodation. We are hoping that some further tarmac and resurfacing work of the

Sports Centre roadway and additional lighting here, in the bus bay and on the front pathway will also create safer routes in the darker, wetter months. Throughout the works to date, pupils have been wonderful in adjusting to new routes, keeping their distance from the compound and work areas and respecting their new environment. Whilst some noise disruption to lessons is inevitable with such a large build, B+K's considerate construction has meant that we have been able to minimise this as far as possible. Again, credit should be given to pupils and staff for making necessary adjustments as the machinery thumps and bumps in the distance.

The longest term draws to an end and it would be remiss not to give a special mention to our Year 7s. They have made an excellent start with us and we have high hopes for what this cohort can achieve in their studies, in school life and in the future.

Merry Christmas one and all. We hope you have a relaxing break and pupils return refreshed, rejuvenated and prepared to meet the high expectations they set for themselves.

'A loving heart is the truest wisdom.' Dickens, Great Expectations.

Mr Russell, Principal

Update from Jonathan Culpin

As CEO of Anglian Learning, the school Trust which supports your child/ren's school, I would like to share some key highlights of the work we have undertaken in the last few months. These activities have benefitted the pupils, workforce and communities of our Trust.

Firstly, I was delighted to attend our [Platform 25 exhibition](#) in Cambridge which brings together artwork from each of our secondary schools. As usual, the quality on display was impressive and many congratulations to all pupils whose work was exhibited. My thanks also to the art teachers across our Trust for their support of the exhibition, which was open to members of the public.

We also launched Anglian Learning's long-term strategy, which has three main areas of focus: Belonging by Design, Great Schools and Connected Communities. Next term, I will share with you more information about this strategy. We have already started to drive forward in each area, including the launch of webinars to support parent, carer and pupil wellbeing as part of Belonging by Design and working in partnership with the Foundation for Young People's Mental Health. More details can be found [here](#).

We have been supporting the development of our school estate, using government funding to invest in EV chargers, refurbishing numerous classrooms, toilets and play facilities and, most ambitiously, working alongside the Department for Education to start the remodelling of Sawston Village College.

In January, we look forward to welcoming four new schools to our Trust, with one being Soham Village College. The school's vision and values align well with Anglian Learning's, making them a perfect fit for our community. We look forward to learning from each other and inviting their pupils to take part in our Trust-wide events in the coming months and years.

I wish all families a restful break and thank you for your continued support as we work together. For more information on our Trust's activities, please visit our website <https://anglianlearning.org/>, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Jonathan Culpin, CEO



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Update from English

Congratulations to Year 11 for the successful completion of their mocks - especially for sitting their first full English Language paper with all the demands of managing the timing of the reading section. Year 10 have also been working hard on exploring Shakespeare's Macbeth in readiness for their first Literature milestone this month. Year 8 and Year 9 have been producing some fabulous creative writing, and it's been a pleasure to see Year 7 getting stuck in to writing and performing their own poetry. We're also delighted to share that some of our keen poets have had poems accepted into an anthology for young writers.

Miss Bunting, Head of English



Update from History

This term in history pupils have been doing a lot of impressive work. Our Year 7s have been wondering why some people from the past are so celebrated whilst others are forgotten through a comparative study on Kings Alfred and Aethelstan. Meanwhile, Year 8 have tackled the complexities of the 17th Century Dissenters and Year 9 have asked 'how representative' one man from Sawston's experience was of the First World War. As ever, our Key Stage Four cohorts have worked exceptionally hard, reflected in a fantastic set of Year 11 mock results. Beyond the classroom, History Film Club have enjoyed the classic Goodnight Mister Tom and the KS4 History Scholars have, among other things, analysed David Mitchell's humorous portrayal of William the Conqueror in his book Unruly.

Miss Phillips, Head of History (Maternity Cover)



Update from Geography

As we come to the end of this autumn term, we reflect on the brilliant effort shown by pupils in Geography. Year 7 have impressed with their enthusiasm and inquisitiveness in lessons and are now looking ahead to their new topic exploring the climate emergency. Year 8 have explored tectonic hazards and the effects that they can have on people, using the example of the tsunami in Japan in 2011. Year 9 have showed great interest in the differences in development across the world, and we have been impressed in the contributions made to discussions in lessons. Some pupils have also engaged with the online RGS Geography careers events this term. Look out for new opportunities in the Spring!

Miss Evans, Head of Geography



Business Studies Update

Business Studies Club is going well and runs on Tuesday lunchtimes. Pupils who attend the club have explored various topics to date, including the basics of business and the birth and growth of Rolex as a brand, product life cycles and extension strategies, business start-ups and the importance to a business of differentiating a product/service. In addition to this, we have also looked at economics, taxation and government. We have also explored the life story of Jeff Bezos and evaluated him as a role model. We look forward to studying further themes next term.

Mr Darcy, Head of Business Studies



Update from Maths

Maths teachers are renowned for bad Maths jokes: "Why was the maths book so sad at Christmas? Because it had too many problems!", "Why is 6 afraid of 7? Because 7 8 (ate) 9!" But this term, the joke has been on us! Saying the phrase 'six, seven' has caused pupils great delight in the latest meme-based craze to sweep through classrooms. It's surprising how many times a maths teacher can say 'six seven' without thinking, causing the class to burst into laughter. Thankfully we're a resilient bunch, and nothing deflates a craze more emphatically than an adult trying to join in. As we head into the new year, we hope pupils will continue to embrace new learning opportunities that focus on both creativity and critical thinking. Whether it's problem-solving, patterns, or puzzles, we look forward to seeing our pupils' mathematical minds grow in 2026.

Mrs Shearn, Head of Maths



Sawston
Adult
Learning



Here in Adult Learning, we are proud to be able to offer a varied programme of courses to inspire your creativity, boost your confidence and provide opportunities to make new friends. For the up-coming spring term, starting in January, we are very excited to be able to offer two brand new evening courses: Photography for Beginners and Improvised Theatre for Adults. So, if you fancy trying something new to mark the beginning of the new year or you would like to extend already existing skills, please do have a look at the Adult Learning section of the Sawston Village College website for more information.

Visit our website at: www.sawstonvc.org/adult-learning,
Email community@sawstonvc.org, or
Phone 01223 712424.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Mrs Catherine Hayes, Adult Learning Manager



We have various group exercise classes on offer here at Anglian Leisure Sawston. They are perfect for people who are looking to exercise in a fun, friendly, sociable environment. Our current pay as you go classes include, Kettlercise, Rebounding, Bootcamp, Triplefit and Zumba.

In the new year we will be introducing two new classes: StrongHer, which is a supportive strength training class designed for women in perimenopause and menopause. The focus is on building muscle, improving bone health, boosting metabolism, and increasing confidence through safe, effective resistance training. The second class is a Strength and Balance class, which is a gentle, supportive class designed to help older adults stay strong, steady and confident in everyday life. The session focusses on improving muscle strength, balance, posture and mobility, using resistance bands and functional movements. The class is friendly, welcoming and suitable for all abilities - work at your own pace with guidance from a qualified instructor. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of our customers!

Fleur Harrower, Assistant Manager

Computer Science Update

It has been another busy half term for our pupils in Computer Science. We started with the Year 11 mock exams, as well as assessments for all other year groups. Since then, Year 11 have been brushing up on areas of improvement picked up from the mocks. Year 10 continue to work through the GCSE course, moving on from their Python crash course to cover algorithms and more elements of programming. Year 7 and 8 pupils have been developing their understanding of the important areas of e-safety and cyber security, while Year 9 have looked at the different layers of computing systems. Outside of lessons, it has been a pleasure to see so many pupils coming along to CS1 and 2 at lunchtimes to work on coding and other independent projects, and we have also had a team of Year 8 pupils taking part in the CyberFirst Girls Competition. We are now ready for a break and a chance to recharge over the holidays, and would like to wish all our pupils a very Merry Christmas!

Mrs Wagstaff, Assistant Principal



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Drama Update

It has been an exciting and creative half term in the Drama department. Year 10 enjoyed a fantastic trip to the Barbican to see Wendy and Peter Pan, an experience that will support them in writing their theatre reviews for the GCSE course. Year 11s have now completed their mock exams and are working hard in lessons to address misconceptions and strengthen their exam technique. They are also starting to prepare their scripted performances in readiness for the examiner who will visit in the summer term.

Our Year 9 pupils have completed their first GCSE-style devising mock, demonstrating impressive imagination and commitment as they begin to develop their understanding of the KS4 course. Meanwhile, Year 8s have devised, rehearsed and filmed their own silent movies, showcasing excellent storytelling through physical performance. These films will be edited next half term in their Computer Science lessons, bringing an exciting cross-curricular element to their work.

Year 7s have stepped into the spooky world of Darkwood Manor, exploring character, atmosphere and dramatic tension in their first performance assessment at secondary school.

We have also been thrilled to see 117 pupils audition in the initial round for our school musical, Oliver! Principal role auditions are now underway, and we look forward to announcing the cast just before the Christmas break.

Mr Bell, Head of Drama



Top: Senior singers at the King's College Carol Service for Schools
Bottom: The Jazz Band performing at the Cambridge Jazz Festival



Update from Music

The Music Department is proud of pupils' effort and determination this half term in both curriculum and extracurricular work. After their successful Last Choir Standing performances, Year 7 mastered a tuned-percussion piece and began pentatonic improvisation, while Year 8 explored chords, rhythms, riffs and the history of Blues. Both year groups also impressed in their first singing assembly. Year 9 pupils have analysed Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring, tackling a challenging listening milestone with great tenacity. Year 10 pupils have taken a trip through early music history, before beginning their study of Music for Film. Year 11s have studied and performed global rhythmic traditions, from Bhangra to Calypso to Djembe drumming.

Beyond the classroom, pupils continue to shine. The Jazz Band, led by Mr Barlow, gave a fantastic performance at Cambridge Jazz Festival in November. Recorders and Folk Ensembles inspired Icknield Primary School pupils in a performance and workshop held at Sawston, led by Mrs Gilbert. Mrs Greaney led a once-in-a-lifetime trip for senior singers in Madrigals and Madriguys to attend King's College Carol Service. This was fantastic preparation for Sawston's own carol service at Great St Mary's Church, which our singing and brass ensembles, full of current and past pupils and staff, are excited to share with our wider school community on Thursday, 18 December.

Mrs Johnson, Head of Music



We've now finished our screenings for this year and we kick off 2026 with the NT Live's Hamlet on 22 January 2026. For tickets and to see what else is coming up, check out our website: www.sawstoncinema.org.



Ms Lesley Morgan, Arts Development Manager

Art Update

The Art department is busy: Year 7s are working towards their Bronze Arts Award, building creativity and technical skill through hands-on arts projects. They are exploring Monument Valley and using isometric drawing to design their own mind-bending game levels. Meanwhile, Year 8s are mastering 1-point and 2-point perspective to create convincing depth in streets, buildings, and interiors, sharpening their understanding of proportion and space, while Year 9s are pushing beyond traditional spatial rules through reversed perspective and optical illusion, studying artists who use distortion and impossible structures to spark creative risk-taking and critical thinking.

At KS4, Year 10 Art are expanding their skills through dynamic workshops exploring varied drawing techniques and the construction of sculptural space, while Year 10 Photography are learning digital software and image manipulation to create professional-style magazine covers. Year 11 Art are completing their Component 1 by developing personal themes and satirical imagery to produce artworks with rich, layered meaning. Meanwhile, Year 11 Photography are stepping into the professional and applied world, creating industry-style images for movie posters, music bands, and magazine covers.

Congratulation to all our pupils for their incredible commitment and outstanding artwork.

Dr De Sainte Cluque, Head of Art



Year 10 pupils enjoyed a sculpting workshop with artist Michael Condron.



Cooking Highlights

Our Year 7 pupils enjoyed learning the rubbing-in method to create delicious cheese scones, while the Year 9s explored the science of baking by making rough puff pastry from scratch and producing tasty sausage rolls. Our Year 8s learned about healthy eating and prepared a healthier macaroni cheese as their milestone, adapting the traditional recipe. Some Year 9 pupils also made chow mein for their milestone, with Trinabha presenting the dish artfully, and they created winter trifles, learning how to prepare crème pâtissière, with Felix making an extra effort by bringing homemade jelly to complete the desserts. Demi and Kvita impressed everyone with excellent decorating skills. Trifle-making was a big hit, with pupils enjoying every step of layering, piping, and decorating!

Mrs Shaw, Head of Food



House News

As we approach the end of a long and busy period it's important to take a moment to reflect on how amazing our young people have been over this half term. The Sawston CARE values have been demonstrated in abundance with fundraising for Children in Need, collecting a huge number of donations for our Sawston Gives campaign and many more wonderful pupil-led events. Our final week approaches with pupil Christmas Dinner, Gt St Mary's Carol Concert and our annual Christmas Quiz to top off our Interhouse competitions this term.

However you choose to celebrate, we wish you a restful and peaceful Christmas break. We look forward to seeing everyone in the New Year ready for 2026 and all that it will bring.

Miss Hunt, Year 9 Lead and Head of Earhart House, on behalf of the Heads of House



Update from MFL

Well done to all pupils for their hard work this term!

Learning a language requires frequent practice. When it comes to vocabulary learning, little and often is best, with frequent revisiting of vocabulary to ensure it remains in pupils' long-term memory. Your children are routinely set vocabulary learning homework and tested in the lesson. We encourage pupils to experiment with a range of techniques and strategies (flashcards, mind-maps, look-say-cover-write-check to name a few) in order to develop the most efficient method for them to learn. The MFL department also uses the website [Quizlet](#) to help pupils revise in a more fun, interactive way, the app can be downloaded on phones and tablets to practise anytime, anywhere.

Your support in helping your child revise and test themselves at home would be much appreciated! Why not set your family the challenge to learn some new words during the break?

Joyeux Noël, Feliz Navidad, Frohe Weihnachten

Mrs Deleplanque, Head of MFL



Welcome to STEM Club!

It has been wonderful to welcome so many Year 7 and Year 8 pupils to our weekly Junior STEM Club. So far this term, pupils have been busy isolating different pigments from leaves, creating the longest marble run, investigating the colours produced by different metal ions when heated, and protecting an egg as it falls from the heights of the Edinburgh Block staircase. All Year 7 and Year 8 pupils are welcome to come along. Junior STEM club runs every Wednesday after school and will return on 7 January.

Mr Ferguson, Science Teacher



Update from DT

The autumn term has burst into action in DT, and the excitement in our workshops is fantastic. Every year group is diving into hands-on learning and building new skills. Year 7s have kicked off the year by designing and producing vibrant coasters. Year 8s are eagerly crafting their own device stands, showing creativity and focus. Year 9s are getting stuck into carpentry, gaining confidence with tools and techniques. Year 10s are fully immersed in making their educational toys, bringing their ideas to life with energy and imagination. Meanwhile, Year 11s are busy model-making their final GCSE designs, preparing for an amazing finish to their course.

A wonderful term, well done everyone!



The DT Team

And finally...

We send our best wishes for the festive season to all and hope you have a happy and relaxing break. School begins again for everyone on Monday, 5 January 2026. We look forward to seeing pupils and staff then.



Professional Learning

Staff have been busy engaging with various training and development opportunities this term. Engendering a greater sense of belonging in our pupils and supporting those with specific needs were two key areas of focus. We were pleased to welcome our link Educational Psychologist last month who delivered training to all teachers and year leads on better understanding neurodiversity. We are also considering the quality of pupils' written work, as well as developing oracy skills in the classroom. Training from Geoff Barton, Chair of the Oracy Education Commission, is due to take place on Thursday, 18 December, ready for staff to implement new strategies in January.

Miss Gelder, Deputy Principal



Update from Religion and Worldviews

It has been a busy half-term in Religion and Worldviews! Year 7 pupils have explored Judaism through powerful stories that deepen their understanding of key beliefs. Year 8s have examined equality in Sikhi and considered how its teachings shape life today. Year 9s have begun their topic on relationships and families, discussing values, responsibilities, and the diversity of family life. Year 10s have launched their Higher Project Qualification, designing research projects on philosophical questions that inspire them. Meanwhile, Year 11s have completed their mocks and are refining exam technique while tackling issues such as capital punishment and justice.

Mrs Venn, Head of Religion and Worldviews



PE Update - Cross Country Competition

Our pupils in Years 7–10 delivered an exceptional performance at the Cambridgeshire Cross Country Competition held at Netherhall School, showcasing not only their athletic ability but also their commitment, positivity, and team spirit. With each race featuring over 100 determined participants - and some events reaching more than 160 runners - the standard of competition was high. Despite this, our pupils approached every race with confidence, energy, and a willingness to push themselves beyond their comfort zones.

A special congratulations goes to the three pupils who achieved outstanding top-16 finishes, securing their well-earned places in the next round at Kings Ely. Their success reflects their dedication to training, their perseverance on the day, and their ability to stay focused under pressure. Henry Harper (Y7) came 11th, Benjamin Zenner Branco (Y9) came 4th and Jasmine Green (Y10) came 5th. Equally inspiring was the tremendous support shown among Sawston Village College pupils throughout the event. It was this team spirit, as much as the athletic success, that made the day so memorable. Well done to all who took part - you represented the school brilliantly. With such enthusiasm and talent, the future of Sawston Village College cross country is incredibly exciting.

Mr Trent, PE Teacher



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