

January / February 2026 Newsletter



Dates for your Diary:

23 February	Year 10 Drama Blood Brothers workshop	12 March	Year 10 Report 2 issued
25 February	Year 11 additional mock exams	12 March	Exhibition on Screen: Turner & Constable
26 February	Year 11 Group Photograph	13 March	West Road concert
26 February	Year 8 Report 2 issued	17 March	Year 8 CEIAG conference day
26 February	NT Live: The Audience	19 March	Year 7 Report 2 issued
27 February	ABSRM exams	19 March	Sawston Cinema: I Swear
5 March	Year 8 Parents' Evening	24 March	Year 8 HPV vaccinations
5 March	Sawston Cinema: Hard Truths	25 March	Gym & Dance display
9 March	Year 11 Elevate Education morning	26 March	Year 11 Report 3 issued
11 March	Year 11 Exams Information Evening	27 March	Spring term ends



It has been a very damp start to 2026. Not ideal when half the campus is a building site and mud is seemingly everywhere. We have done our best to keep pathways clear and our cleaning bill has certainly seen an increase; we apologise for the extra laundry at home!

Despite the very wet weather, the new build is on track and if there are no delays we anticipate moving into the new building in January 2027. This will require some additional closure days either side of Christmas and once we are able to finalise the dates we will inform parents. Meanwhile, the structural insulated panels will start to be constructed, as will the external walls and roofing works, which will weatherproof the building. Grouting the precast floors and applying the fire-retardant spray to the erected steelwork will be completed in the coming weeks. The old OWL building has been demolished and work to the new staff car park begins soon.

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Inside the Sports Centre, the old floor has been ripped up and scaffolding is in place ready to start the roof works; external scaffolding and more hoarding fencing to keep everyone out will also be constructed soon. With cherry pickers, excavators, cranes and other heavy machinery on site, it is certainly a hit with any fan of Bob the Builder.

Winter has also brought its fair share of bugs this year. This has impacted staff as well as pupils with high absence and, unfortunately, more agency staff than we would like. However, thanks to your support and pupils' resilience, our attendance figures are holding up. As we all know, there is a direct correlation between sense of belonging, progress, attainment and attendance. So, thank you for all you are doing to encourage pupils to be at school on time every day. With spring around the corner, we are looking forward to our West Road Music Concert and the Gym and Dance Display. The grass will recover, the longer days will lift everyone's mood and expectation will build for successes to come.

'Mud, mud, glorious mud/Nothing quite like it for cooling the blood' - Flanders and Swan, 1956

Mr Russell, Principal

Year 9 Sports Leaders smash it at local Primary Schools!

Our Year 9 Sports Leaders have been out and about, and what a fantastic job they've done! Over the past few weeks, the group visited six local feeder primary schools, delivering action-packed mini indoor athletics events to Year 3 and Year 4 pupils.

Each visit was full of energy as our leaders confidently ran six different activities, including shuttle runs, speed bounce and a target throw challenge. From organising equipment to explaining rules and cheering everyone on, they took full responsibility for making each session fun, inclusive and engaging.

What impressed us most wasn't just their organisation (though that was excellent!), it was their compassion, excitement and enthusiasm. Their positive attitudes were completely contagious, and it was wonderful to see the

primary pupils throwing themselves into every activity with huge smiles on their faces. These sessions form an important part of the Sports Leaders qualification, and our pupils should be incredibly proud of what they achieved. They represented our school



brilliantly and proved just how powerful sport can be in bringing people together. Well done to all of our Year 9 Sports Leaders, you've done yourselves, Mr Trent, and myself extremely proud!

Mrs Dennis and Mr Trent, PE Teachers



Update from English

Congratulations in English go first to Year 9s, who produced some thoroughly wonderful pieces of creative writing in their exams earlier this term. Year 11s are also well into exam mode with a Language Paper 2 GCSE mock this term and the final Literature Paper 2 mock to come at the start of next half term. Year 8s have produced some lovely narratives inspired by Shaun Tan's graphic novel *The Arrival* and, classes in Year 7 have also been impressing staff with their empathy and maturity in discussions and analysis linked to the novel *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness.

Miss Bunting, Head of English



Update from History

It's been another busy half-term for the history department. Year 11s have been enjoying studying the history of migration to England whilst Year 10s have just finished their work on America. Members of the KS4 History Scholars club had the privilege of visiting Highgate Synagogue in January where they listened to Holocaust historian Dr Shirli Gilbert speak and asked her their questions. Lower down the school, pupils have been enjoying studying the Russian Revolution through the story of the Metropol Hotel, discovering the lives of pre-colonial Native Americans and debating how much the Normans really changed England. Members of the KS3 History Guild have learnt about surprisingly successfully medieval cures and the amazing story of the Nome Serum run in Alaska.

Miss Phillips, Head of History (Maternity Cover)



Update from Geography

This half term has seen our KS3 pupils start their new topics. Y7 are exploring the climate emergency, focussing this half term on the causes of climate change. Y8 are completing mini enquiries on Russia, Asia and Middle East. Y9 are turning their attention to our fragile global environments and the threats that are currently facing them. As our Y11 pupils approach their exams in the summer, attention has turned to revision as we complete the final topics of content. Revision sessions take place every Tuesday after school and have been well attended so far. Timetables can be found outside the Geography classrooms. Additional revision materials can be found on the SVC Geography website, which pupils can access through their school accounts.

Miss Evans, Head of Geography



Business Studies Update

We will be carrying out some market research with Years 7, 8 and 9 over the next few weeks. This will be used to see what products we want to sell them for Easter as part of learning about business, marketing and research. So, we have been looking at methods of market research like carrying out surveys and marketing more generally.

We are mainly looking at sweet products, such as chocolate, given the upcoming Easter break and so we have been working hard.

Special mention should be made of our CEO, Finance Manager, Head of Sales and Head of Marketing (pupils: Michael Roper, George Sullivan, Matthew Cleator, and Joshua Lee) who have been outstanding in their work and commitment. I thank them - and the other Business Club members - for their hard work.

Mr Darcy, Head of Business Studies



Update from Maths

It's been business as usual in the Maths department. Year 9s sat end of Key Stage 3 Maths exams in January and are to be congratulated on their maturity, resilience and hard work in preparing for their milestones. They have since been learning about different aspects of Financial Literacy, always a topic that engages a great deal of interest. From tax and national insurance to mortgages and pay day loans, we hope that the pupils are better informed to make sensible monetary decisions as young adults.

Mrs Shearn, Head of Maths



Sawston Adult Learning



Our weekly Spring term courses are now up and running, and attention is now focused on our Saturday workshops which, this term, will be held on 7 March 2026.

We are very excited to be able to offer a brand-new photography workshop, focusing on portrait lighting. Learners will have the opportunity to explore the roles of various lighting, the use of reflectors and how to expose images for flattering, professional results.

We are also offering our popular seed saving, willow and Indian cookery workshops, as usual.

Please visit our website or contact the office for further details or to book any of these workshops.

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

Mrs Catherine Hayes, Adult Learning Manager



We like to offer our customers as much variety as possible when it comes to the activities on offer here at Anglian Leisure Sawston. Our most recent addition is a chair-based strength and balance class. The class focuses on gentle resistance exercises and balance training; all performed from or around a chair. Suitable for older adults, or those with limited mobility, participants will enhance strength, coordination, and confidence in everyday movements. Come along to boost your stability, prevent falls and feel stronger, all while enjoying a friendly group atmosphere.

Day: Wednesday

Time: 10.15-11.15 am

Location: Squash court

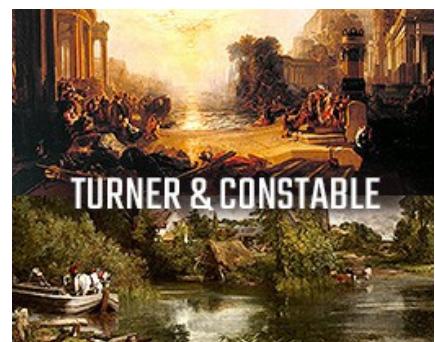
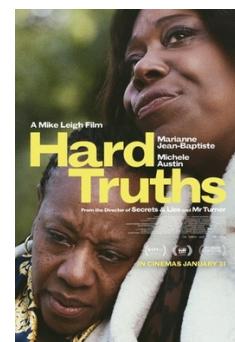
Contact: fharrower@anglianleisure.co.uk
(Brief suitability assessment required prior to attendance).

Fleur Harrower, Assistant Manager



We've started 2026 with a good range of screenings and have a lot more in store. For tickets and to see what else is coming up, check out our website: www.sawstoncinema.org.

Ms Lesley Morgan, Arts Development Manager



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Drama Update

It has been a busy and exciting time in the Drama Department this term, with pupils across all year groups developing their creativity, confidence and performance skills. Year 7 pupils are currently in the process of writing their own parodies of classic fairy tales. They have been exploring character, storytelling and comedy, with some wonderfully imaginative ideas already taking shape. Year 8s are travelling back to the roots of theatre as they study Greek Theatre. They are learning about the importance of chorus, movement and voice, and how these early theatrical traditions continue to influence performance today. Year 9s have been working on Shakespeare and are now preparing to select a text to rehearse and perform next half term. This is an exciting step as they begin to bring the language and characters to life on stage. Year 10s recently visited the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry to see Blood Brothers, which has supported their learning ready for their written exams. Pupils are also delving deeper into their devising unit in preparation for their performances in May. Year 11s are working hard rehearsing their scripted performances in preparation for their upcoming exam, while also sharpening their exam skills ready for the summer series. Extra-curricular Drama is thriving through clubs, LAMDA and the school production, which is progressing well. Rehearsals are focused and productive and we look forward to presenting Oliver! in summer 2026. Tickets will be on sale soon!

Mr Bell, Head of Drama



Creativity is in full flow across the Art Department! Our Year 11 Art and Photography pupils are being supported by Jose Bustos, an internationally recognised screenwriter and author of Five Pilots, which placed consistently in the top 10 % of major Los Angeles competitions from 2016–21. Born in Caracas, Venezuela, Jose Bustos relocated to Los Angeles to complete a BFA in Communications (Audiovisual Arts), three UCLA honours programs, and earned a James Kirkwood Jr. Prize nomination. He is guiding pupils through storytelling, narrative structure, and artistic ethics, helping them develop ideas, sharpen themes, and build creative confidence.

At the same time, pupils from all year groups have been collaborating on a commissioned mural project. Working together, pupils are designing three large-scale panels, integrated with painted wall backgrounds and enhanced by clay works from other workshops. The result will be a bold, multi-disciplinary installation celebrating collaboration, creativity, and ambition.

Dr De Sainte Cluque, Head of Art



Update from Music

It has been an exciting half term in the Music Department, both inside and outside of lessons.

Pupils in Year 11 GCSE Music have been exploring the world of music in film, their final area of study, as well as working hard towards the completion of their second composition and ensemble performances for coursework. Pupils in Year 10 have dived into the world of the Baroque Concerto, exploring the stylistic features through listening, performing and composing. Lots of pupils in Key Stage 3 are also embarking on composing projects too; pupils in Year 9 are using djembe drums to create rhythmical compositions, Year 8 are creating their own rock and pop pieces, and pupils in Year 7 are performing and composing Baroque dance music. It has been a pleasure to hear pupils working collaboratively and creatively to create some stylistic and ambitious pieces.

Outside of the classroom, pupils are busy preparing for our two upcoming performance events, the first of which is the Year 11 GCSE Class Fundraising Concert at Michaelhouse in Cambridge on Thursday 26 February, with proceeds going towards the Leavers' Ball. Our String Orchestra will also be performing at this event; it is sure to be a fantastic evening. Across all ensembles, pupils and tutors are then working hard for our West Road Concert, which this year will be on Friday 13 March. This annual event is a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to perform in this renowned concert hall, and for parents, carers and friends to hear the vast array of musical talent Sawston has to offer. As always, we are extremely grateful for the effort and dedication of all pupils working towards these performances, and also to the teachers and tutors who commit their time to leading and joining in with these ensembles.

Mrs Johnson, Head of Music

Update from Art



Eatwell Guide Pizza Challenge

This half term, Year 7 pupils have been exploring the Eatwell Guide and the importance of healthy eating. For their milestone task, they were challenged to design and prepare their own Eatwell Guide pizzas that would appeal to teenagers, incorporating ingredients from each food group. Pupils chose a variety of toppings, including bell peppers, reduced-fat cheese, olives, mushrooms, and chicken, to create pizzas that were both nutritious and visually appealing. The finished pizzas were highly creative, featuring fun shapes such as turtles, dogs, ice creams, emoji icons, and headsets. Pupils worked independently throughout the practical and demonstrated confidence and creativity. A fantastic effort by Year 7s!

Mrs Shaw, Head of Food

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House News

Sawston Village College pupils welcomed the new year beneath softly drifting snowflakes (and a few flying snowballs). We came together for thoughtful Holocaust Memorial assemblies, reminding us of the importance of compassion and remembrance. Year 9 pupils tackled their exams brilliantly, while Year 11 pupils powered through another round of mocks. Our House assemblies focused on resilience, a theme our students show in abundance on a daily basis. We rounded off the half term with Year group celebration assemblies, recognising excellence displayed across every subject. Plenty more awaits us on the other side of the holiday. Enjoy a wonderful break!

Mr Davis, Year 7 Lead and Head of da Vinci House, on behalf of the Heads of House



Professional Learning

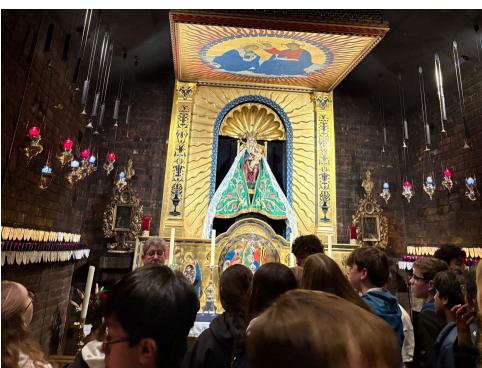
Despite this being a short half term, staff have continued to develop their practice. All teachers took part in further training around Positive Regard and the Regulate, Relate, Repair model underpinning this. The Professional Learning discussion group members have been piloting 'Learning Walk Thrus', developed by Tom Sherrington, with their pupils and convened to discuss how the most impactful strategies can be shared more widely. Finally, staff will spend time during our Training Day on Friday, 13 February thinking about how we can develop oracy skills in our pupils to support them when they move on from Sawston Village College into their next stages of learning and work.

Miss Geller, Deputy Principal



Update from Religion and Worldviews

It has been another busy half term in Religion and Worldviews. In January, Year 10 GCSE pupils visited Walsingham in Norfolk, a pilgrimage site for 1,000 years. They learnt about the history of the Holy House shrine and observed a sprinkling ceremony at the holy well, followed by a Q&A with a Bishop. Meanwhile, Year 7s explored beliefs and practices in Islam, Year 8s examined whether life became better or worse for humanity after 'The Fall', and Year 9s completed their study of relationship ethics and gender roles. Year 10s are progressing with their independent philosophy investigation for the Higher Project Qualification which will be finished in March. Our wonderful Year 11s are now busy revising for their GCSE.



Mrs Venn,
Head of
Religion and
Worldviews



Update from MFL

It has been another busy half term in MFL as pupils continue to develop their language skills and practise vocabulary, grammar and phonics whilst finding out about foreign cultures. Year 7s have been practising key verbs (such as to have, to be and to do) and related vocabulary and are starting to be able to build a wider range of sentences.

Year 8 pupils have been focusing on building different tenses and are starting to be able to use the future and/or past tenses.

Year 9 pupils are now juggling three tenses and increasingly complex grammatical structures.

Year 10 and 11 pupils are covering the GCSE themes, revisiting Key Stage 3 concepts and furthering their knowledge of tenses and grammar while extending their vocabulary knowledge.

Well done to all pupils for their hard work. We wish you all a restful half term break. Why not find a foreign film or series on a streaming platform and watch it with your child with English subtitles?

Mrs Deleplanque, Head of MFL



Update from DT

DT staff and pupils have been investigating the use of the new 3D printers through a hands-on project. Pupils designed original components using CAD software, exported their files, and prepared them using a slicer to generate print instructions. They then safely produced their designs on the 3D printers, evaluating accuracy and quality. Engagement levels were high, with pupils and staff excited to see digital ideas become physical objects. The project developed problem-solving skills, creativity, and resilience. Following this success, the department will now explore where best to incorporate these CAD/CAM skills within the curriculum.

Mr Bannister, Subject Lead for DT



Debate Club welcomes visitor

The Debate Club was delighted to have Lord Simon Woolley, Principal of Homerton College, University of Cambridge, join them for a session recently.



And finally...

We hope you have a happy and relaxing half term break. School begins again for everyone on Monday, 23 February 2026. We look forward to seeing pupils and staff then.

