

Bottisham Village College Newsletter

April 2025



The Principal's Desk

As we approach the end of term, I want to reflect on a fantastic start to 2025 at Bottisham Village College. I am incredibly proud of our students, who excel in academics, creativity, and extracurricular activities. Their hard work and enthusiasm continue to impress us all.

I'm also delighted to share that Bottisham Village College has received the prestigious Platinum Artsmark Award, recognising our commitment to arts education and creativity across the curriculum—a fantastic achievement for our community.

It has been great welcoming parents for tours, and we appreciate your engagement with our upcoming survey, an important opportunity to shape the college's future.

This term, we've strengthened our school community through events such as information evenings, school tours, and coffee mornings with senior staff. The turnout at our parent forum was fantastic, and your feedback is invaluable. More events are scheduled next term—dates are available on our website.

Thank you for your support in raising expectations and ensuring students arrive ready to learn, on time, and with a positive mindset. Your partnership is greatly valued.

Wishing you all a restful and enjoyable break.



In this issue:

Artsmark

Spotlight on Reading

MFL: More Than Words

Anglian Learning

Tackling Bullying Together

Gallery

Adding to the Equation

Enrichment Update

Key Dates

From the Archive



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**Artsmark
Platinum Award**
Awarded by Arts
Council England



BOTTISHAM VILLAGE COLLEGE ACHIEVES PLATINUM ARTSMARK AWARD

We are thrilled to announce that Bottisham Village College has been awarded the prestigious Platinum Artsmark Award! This is the highest recognition for our commitment to arts and creativity in education, and we are incredibly proud of this achievement.

The Artsmark Award, accredited by Arts Council England, celebrates schools that champion high-quality arts and cultural education. Achieving Platinum status is a testament to the dedication, passion, and innovation of our students, staff, and community. At Bottisham Village College, we believe in the power of the arts to inspire, educate, and transform lives.

A Commitment to the Arts

From whole-school musicals and Trust-wide creative events to student-led workshops and exhibitions, the arts are embedded in every aspect of our curriculum. Our involvement in the national Creativity Collaboratives project has further strengthened our commitment to using creative approaches across all areas of learning, fostering confidence, critical thinking, and self-expression in our students.

Student-Led Creativity

Our students play an active role in shaping our creative culture. Through performances, exhibitions, and workshops, they have embraced opportunities to lead and innovate. Their enthusiasm and dedication continue to drive the arts forward at Bottisham Village College, making our school a dynamic and inspiring place to learn.

A Shared Success

This achievement would not have been possible without the support of our staff, students, parents, and local creative partners. Their enthusiasm and dedication have been instrumental in securing this award, and we are grateful for their contributions.

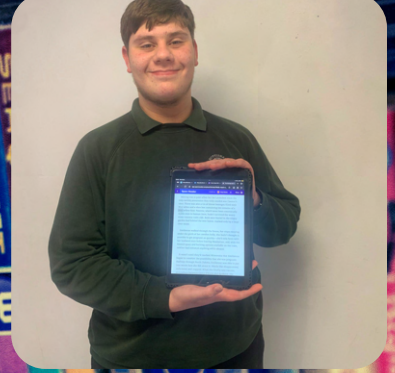
Looking Ahead

While we celebrate this milestone, our journey does not end here. We remain committed to expanding creative opportunities, ensuring every student can explore and develop their artistic potential. Thank you for being part of this incredible achievement—we look forward to many more exciting artistic endeavours ahead!



SPOTLIGHT ON...

READING



Reading: Unlocking Futures

Reading has always been at the heart of Bottisham Village College, but this year, we have shone an even brighter spotlight on our reading culture. From exciting library events to cutting-edge digital platforms and targeted interventions, we are committed to ensuring that every student becomes a confident and capable reader.

The Library: A Hub of Inspiration

At the heart of our reading culture is our incredible librarian, Mr Ricketts. He works tirelessly to make the library a vibrant and welcoming space, organising competitions, author visits, and providing a safe and stimulating environment for our avid readers. Whether students are seeking the latest bestseller, a quiet place to study, or inspiration from visiting writers, the library remains the beating heart of literacy at BVC.

Sparx Reader: A Game-Changer

Our students have truly excelled with Sparx Reader this year, embracing its structured approach to reading. The results speak for themselves—students have collectively read for over 12,000 hours!

More importantly, the majority have made significant improvements in reading speed, accuracy, and words per minute. Reading stamina is a crucial skill for success at Key Stage 4, and our students recognise that every minute spent reading is an investment in their future.

Scholarship Interventions: Unlocking Potential

For students who need extra support, our scholarship interventions provide targeted help. By focusing on morphology—the study of word structure—we are helping students unlock vocabulary and develop a deeper understanding of language. This approach is proving to be incredibly effective, with many students making noticeable progress in their reading confidence and comprehension.

Looking Ahead: Embedding Morphology Across the Curriculum

The next step in our journey is to empower teachers to use morphology within their classrooms, ensuring that students can tackle complex, subject-specific (Tier 3) vocabulary with confidence. By embedding these strategies across all subjects, we will equip our students with the literacy skills they need to thrive academically and beyond.

At Bottisham Village College, we believe that reading truly unlocks futures. With a thriving reading culture, dedicated staff, and ambitious students, we are excited to see where this journey takes us next!

MORE THAN WORDS

We talk to Cecile Larrieu, Head of MFL at Bottisham Village College, about the impact of language learning and the root of this faculty's success over the past few years.

INSPIRING GLOBAL CITIZENS

Cecile Larrieu, our longstanding Head of MFL, is passionate about language learning and deeply committed to our vision for education at Bottisham Village College. She believes that learning a language is more than an academic exercise—it is a powerful tool for shaping futures. “Languages prepare students for a global society, encouraging problem-solving and awareness of the wider world,” she explains. By fostering linguistic competence, we develop students’ cognitive abilities and cultural understanding, ensuring they are well-prepared for future success.

Mastering a foreign language strengthens memory, literacy, and communication skills. “Learning a foreign language is a brain workout, just like maths,” Cecile explains. It nurtures empathy, intercultural understanding, and critical thinking. Multilingualism is also a valuable career asset, opening doors to international opportunities.

*MFL is
both
popular
and
successful
at BVC*

Our curriculum covers People and Lifestyle, Popular Culture, Communication, and the World Around Us. “These themes allow students to progress from simple conversations to discussing global issues,” Cecile notes. From making plans to debating technology’s impact, students gain confidence in real-world communication.

THE BOTTISHAM APPROACH: INNOVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

We take an evidence-based approach, using Parallel Texts, Sentence Builders, and Knowledge Organisers to ensure all students make progress. Our MARSEARS framework (Modelling, Receptive Processing, Structured Production, and Spontaneity) supports fluency development. Lessons are interactive, using mini whiteboards, collaboration, and independent learning to engage students.

*Cecile is
Head of
Modern
Foreign
Languages
at BVC*



BRINGING LANGUAGES TO LIFE

Our European Day of Languages Bake-Off and trips to Paris, Berlin, and Barcelona immerse students in real-world language use. The Year 8 Normandy trip blends history and French, offering a rich cross-curricular experience.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: AMBITION FOR EXCELLENCE

“We’re excited about the new GCSE course, and early results are promising,” Cecile shares. As we move forward, we remain committed to ensuring every student benefits from a challenging and rewarding language education. At Bottisham, language learning is more than words—it’s about unlocking futures and embracing the multilingual world.





GALLERY



BVC Flags reach
Antarctica



Performing Arts
Exams



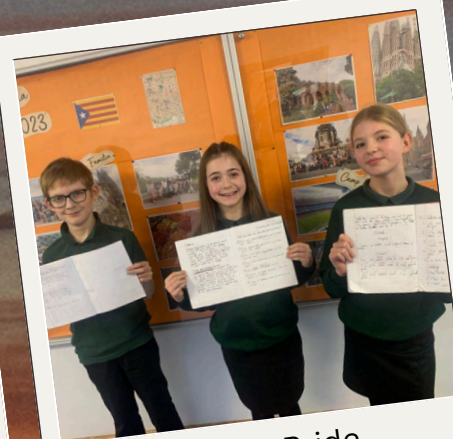
Badminton Success



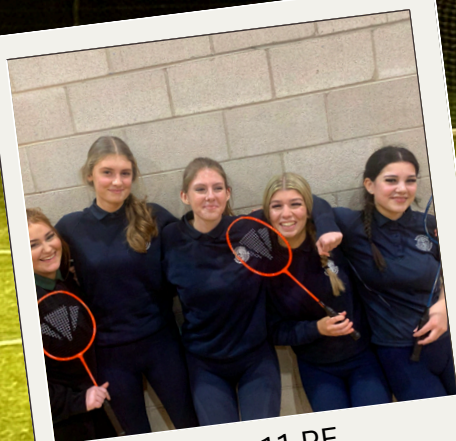
Short story
competition winners



Dance visit



Work Pride



Year 11 PE

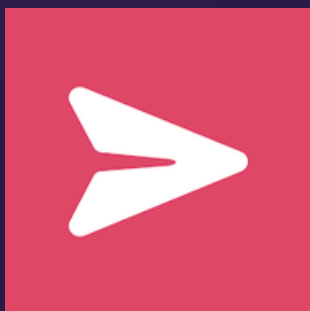


Pathways to the
Future



Cambridge United
Football Success

New App Launching at BVC



We are thrilled to announce that Bottisham Village College will soon be launching the Reach More Parents app—a comprehensive platform designed to enhance communication between school and home, making it more efficient and user-friendly.

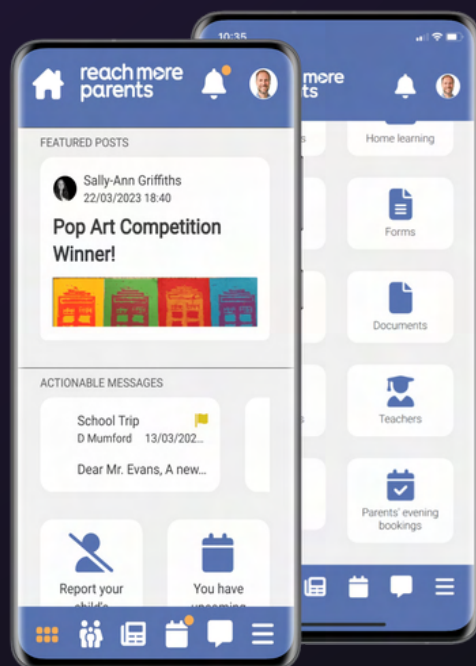
Unified Communication: Receive all school messages, updates, and news in one centralised location, reducing the need for multiple apps and ensuring you never miss important information.

This is in response to valuable feedback from parents over the past year: you want us to streamline and simplify how we communicate with you.

Next Steps:

We will be sending out login details shortly, so please keep an eye on your inbox. Once received, you can download the app from the App Store or Google Play and follow the setup instructions.

We are excited about this new chapter in our school's communication and look forward to connecting with you through the Reach More Parents app!



BELONGING BY DESIGN: MENTAL HEALTH



As Director of Inclusion for Anglian Learning, I wish to share our [Belonging by Design](#) strategy. This initiative is a priority for Anglian Learning for the next three years. The five strands of Belonging by Design are Attendance, Communities, Inclusion, Mental Health and Relationships



**YP
MH** | The Foundation
for Young People's
Mental Health

Anglian Learning is beginning a collaboration with Cambridge-based charity, [The Foundation for Young People's Mental Health](#), to progress the [Mental Health](#) strand of Belonging by Design. The collaboration aims to help Anglian Learning and its schools select and implement evidence-based approaches for:

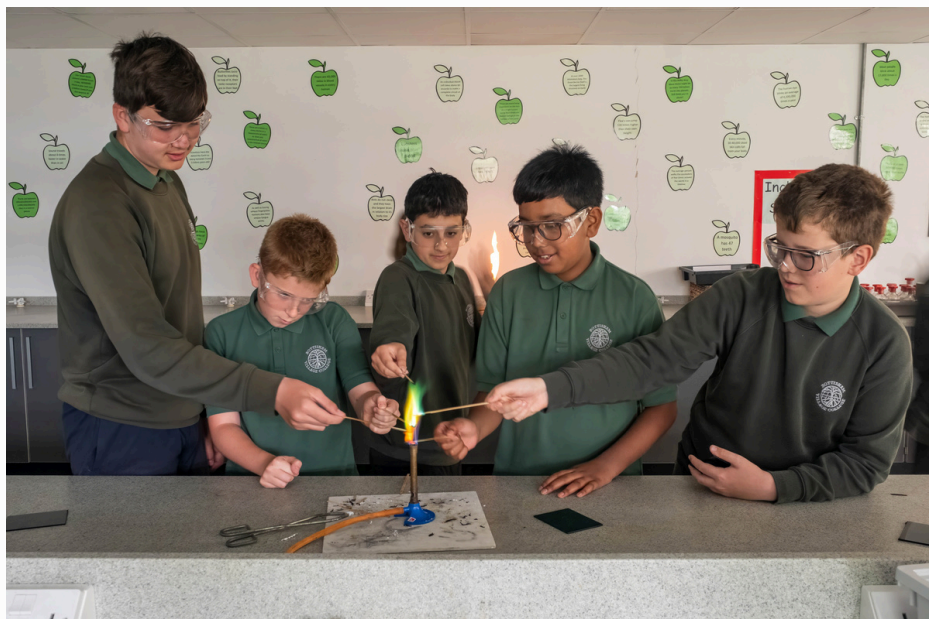
- Preventing and recognising mental health conditions, such as depression.
- Supporting and managing pupils experiencing mental ill health.

The first phase will focus on providing accessible information to colleagues, pupils, parents and carers to improve understanding of:

- What depression is and what causes it
- How to manage personal risk factors
- How to make simple lifestyle choices that promote positive mental health

While the initial focus is on depression, the prevention strategies will promote overall mental wellbeing. YPMH's research highlights the impact of everyday factors such as food, movement, sleep, chronic stress, loneliness, and substance use on mental health.

Improvements in these areas can help prevent and even reduce conditions like depression. Please see the Foundation for Young People's Mental Health flyer which can be found [here](#).



Alongside YPMH, Anglian Learning will work with existing partnerships. [Innovate IFG](#), our school's catering suppliers and [Anglian Leisure](#), our sport, fitness and leisure centres will help to provide easily accessible advice, nutrition guidance, support and activities for pupils and whole school communities.

As part of our strategy to identify mental health needs, by the end of this academic year, our secondary schools will ask pupils to participate in an anonymised online mental health screening tool to gain further insight into the levels of need for pupils across Anglian Learning.

Your child's wellbeing is important. We will actively share guidance on maintaining good mental health as part of our Belonging by Design: Mental Health approach. We aim for your child to have a sense of belonging within their school and to enable them to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Camilla Saunders
Director of Inclusion



Innovate

TACKLING BULLYING TOGETHER: STRENGTHENING OUR CULTURE OF RESPECT AT BVC

At Bottisham Village College, we are resolute in our commitment to creating an environment where every student feels safe, supported, and able to thrive. Over the past two terms, we have taken significant steps to enhance how we prevent and respond to bullying—strengthening systems, improving communication, and embedding a culture rooted in respect throughout the college.

STRENGTHENED PASTORAL CAPACITY

A major development this year has been the expansion of our pastoral team. Every year group now benefits from a dedicated, non-teaching pastoral lead, ensuring students receive timely, consistent, and personalised support. These staff are highly visible during social times—wearing pink high-vis jackets—and known to students by name. Their focused role allows for faster intervention, better communication with families, and more effective follow-up when concerns are raised. In parallel, we have restructured our behaviour team and appointed a dedicated Restorative Lead, who works specifically with students that have perpetrated bullying or child-on-child abuse. This role ensures meaningful interventions that break cycles of behaviour, support change, and reinforce college values.



SPECIALIST SUPPORT: DRAWING ON EXPERT EXPERIENCE

We continue to benefit from the input of Phil Priestley, a behaviour consultant and former police sergeant with extensive experience supporting young people. Phil has worked directly with repeated perpetrators through mentoring and group interventions and is a valued contributor to our work on restorative practice and behaviour reform.

Our Principal, Mrs Rankine, has also met individually with every student involved in confirmed repeated bullying this year, reinforcing expectations and ensuring students understand the seriousness of their actions and the importance of our shared college values.

EQUIPPING STAFF TO RESPOND CONSISTENTLY

On 14 February, all staff took part in specialist anti-bullying training, using the Anti-Bullying Alliance toolkit. A key focus was understanding the group dynamic—recognising that bullying is rarely a two-person issue, but often involves roles such as ringleaders, reinforcers, bystanders, and defenders. Staff were trained to identify and address the full dynamic, ensuring no enabling behaviours are left unchallenged.

NEW WAYS FOR STUDENTS TO REPORT

While students can already report concerns in person or via the 'Report Bullying' button on our website, we will shortly be launching physical reporting boxes at key locations around the school. These will offer a discreet and accessible way for students to raise concerns. Each will be checked regularly, with all reports responded to in line with our Anti-Bullying Policy.



YEAR 7: ONLINE BEHAVIOUR AND RELATIONAL CONFLICT

Although the number of bullying cases remains relatively low, we have seen increased relational conflict in Year 7, much of it linked to the misuse of smartphones and social media outside school. In response, we have:

- Delivered targeted assemblies on digital responsibility and respectful communication.
- Engaged families with guidance on managing device use at home.
- Monitored patterns of behaviour closely through safeguarding and pastoral systems.
- Intervened early with both individuals and peer groups to rebuild relationships.

We are clear that no matter where it occurs—on site or online—any behaviour that causes harm will be taken seriously.

REAL PROGRESS: MEASURABLE IMPACT

- 95% of confirmed bullying cases investigated within one day.
- 100% parental satisfaction in our latest quality assurance sample.
- 77% of confirmed perpetrators have not reoffended.
- Only 2 suspensions for bullying this year, down from 12 during the same period last year—reflecting our move toward restorative approaches.
- 71% of students now feel confident the school deals with bullying effectively (up from 66%).

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP: HOW YOU CAN HELP

Our Anti-Bullying Policy outlines how families can support their children and work with us effectively:

- Understand what bullying is:
 - “The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.”
- Talk to your child: Encourage them to share what has happened and how it made them feel.
- Contact us directly: Concerns should be raised with the Year Team or pastoral lead, not via social media or peer-to-peer discussion.
- Monitor online activity: Help children use technology safely, and report inappropriate online behaviour to both the school and platforms involved.
- Support the follow-up process: We conduct follow-ups at 2 days, 2 weeks, and 2 months to ensure bullying has stopped and wellbeing is restored.

When school and home work together, we are far more likely to achieve long-term change. Thank you for supporting this partnership.



NEXT STEPS

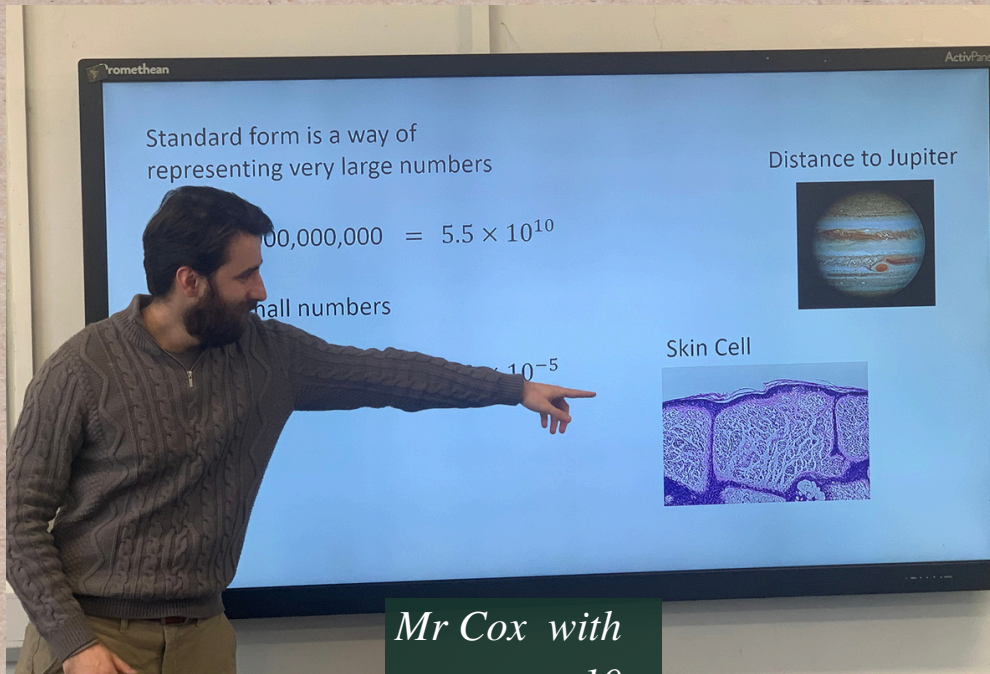
Looking ahead, we will:

- Launch our student wellbeing ambassador programme.
- Deliver parent workshops on tackling bullying.
- Review and update our PSHE curriculum with a sharper focus on digital safety and group dynamics.

Together, we are building a school where every student is Ready, Respectful, and Safe—in the classroom, in the corridor, and online.

ADDING TO OUR EQUATION

INTRODUCING OUR NEW DEPUTY HEAD OF MATHS, MR TOM COX



*Mr Cox with
year 10*

**“MATHS ISN'T
JUST ABOUT
NUMBERS”**

Since joining Bottisham Village College as the new Deputy Head of Maths, Mr. Tom Cox has seamlessly integrated into the school community, bringing with him a passion for mathematics and a commitment to excellence. "From the moment I arrived, I felt welcomed," he says. "The students are eager to learn, and the staff have been incredibly supportive."

Stepping into his role mid-year was challenging, particularly in building relationships with students. However, his engaging teaching style is already making an impact. One standout moment came during a lesson on sequences with Year 8: "Sir, I think that is the best lesson I've ever had," a student told him. Moments like these affirm his belief in making maths both accessible and enjoyable.

Mr. Cox is committed to Bottisham's ethos, ensuring all students feel inspired and supported. "I want to be known for both high standards and care for students," he states. He believes in fostering confidence and resilience in his students, encouraging them to embrace problem-solving with enthusiasm. "Mathematics isn't just about numbers; it's about developing logical thinking and persistence, which are valuable life skills."

Beyond the classroom, Mr. Cox is eager to contribute to the school's wider community. He is passionate about enrichment activities, including maths challenges and competitions, which provide students with opportunities to apply their skills in exciting new ways. "Seeing students push themselves beyond their comfort zone and achieve something they didn't think possible is incredibly rewarding," he shares. He is also looking forward to collaborating with colleagues to develop new strategies that enhance student learning.

Looking ahead, Mr. Cox is excited to shape the future of mathematics education at Bottisham Village College. With his dedication, enthusiasm, and belief in the power of education, he is set to make a lasting impact, guiding students towards both academic success and valuable life skills.

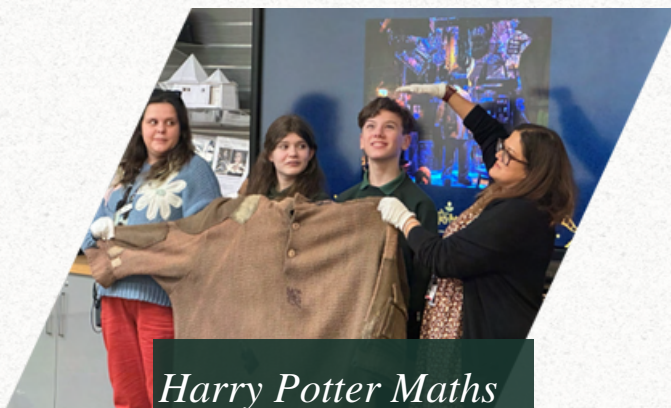
ENRICHMENT UPDATE



Watching England win at Wembley: a really successful trip

A feature of our school is the range of opportunities we offer our students outside of the curriculum: trips, visits, clubs and experiences. Here's a brief snapshot of the events which have taken place this academic year so far.

Sporting success



Harry Potter Maths



Photography



*Table
Tennis*



Key Dates

SUMMER
TERM
2025

APR

22

START OF TERM
FOR ALL

MAY

12

YEAR 10 X BAND
PARENTS' EVENING

APR

25

FRIENDS OF BVC
QUIZ

MAY

16-18

YEAR 10
DERBYSHIRE TRIP

APRIL

30

YEAR 11 LEAVERS'
DAY

MAY

21

YEAR 10 Y BAND
PARENTS' EVENING

MAY

5

MAY DAY

FEB

17-21

HALF-TERM

MAY

8

GCSE
EXAMINATIONS
START

MAY

26-30

HALF TERM

MAY

7-10

BARCELONA TRIP

JUNE

27

LEAVERS' BALL

MAY

9-11

YEAR 9 BRONZE DUKE OF
EDINBURGH PRACTICE

JUL

7-11

WORK EXPERIENCE
AND ACTIVITIES
WEEK

JUL

18

END OF TERM

The Director of Secondary Education

As our pupils and their families get set for the Easter break, I would like to take this opportunity to share some key highlights of the work Anglian Learning has undertaken during an empowering Spring term.

My congratulations to Bottisham Village College for being awarded Artsmark Platinum. This achievement highlights the creative opportunities available to pupils and the hard work undertaken by staff to be rewarded the highest accolade by Artsmark, who are supported by Arts Council England. We warmly welcome Stour Valley Community School, based in Clare, Suffolk, who joined Anglian Learning alongside Clare Community Primary School on 1 March 2025.

One continued focus across all our secondary schools has been school improvement. Following the appointment of Jonathan Rockey, Deputy Director of Secondary Education, who previously led a successful secondary school and is a serving His Majesty's Inspector, we have been continuing our work to help deliver our Academies Improvement plans alongside our ongoing development of teaching for Creativity (a national Arts Council England project). More recently, there has been a focus on intentionally developing a culture of positive regard within our academies' communities. Both aspects are key to our goal to strengthen and nurture a sense of belonging.



It has been a very busy and productive term, full of focused lessons, exam preparation, applications for post-16, university and apprenticeship places alongside school productions, ski trips, European city visits and our ever-increasing opportunities to engage in a wide range of clubs and societies. I wish all families a restful Easter break and thank you for your continued support. For more information on our Trust's activities, please visit our website www.anglianlearning.org, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Duncan Cooper, Director of Secondary Education



Mr Rockey and Mr Cooper

The Archive

DINING HALL

WE THINK THIS IS FROM THE 1950'S



This shows dining arrangements in the early 1950s. We believe that students had to eat in silence, and that some students had to serve the teachers, who sat on the stage. A new dining hall was added in the second half of the 50s; this became the old new dining hall when the new dining hall was constructed in the 2020s.

The original dining hall (which doubled as a cinema for the community) is now the library.