



The Principal's Desk

The Spring term is always one of my favourites. Although it's a short one, it brings with it the promise of lighter evenings, warmer days, and—much to students' delight—the reopening of the school field at lunchtime.



Across classrooms, teachers continue to work incredibly hard to support students in their learning. Our routines are becoming firmly embedded, and we are seeing real consistency across the school, particularly in the completion of homework, preparation for assessments, and the building of strong learning habits within daily lessons.

A special mention must go to Year 11, who are demonstrating an impressive work ethic and a mature approach to their studies. Their commitment is evident, and we are extremely proud of the way they are preparing for the upcoming exam season. These positive habits will serve them well, and we wish them every success. Thank you to all parents and carers for the support you provide at home—your encouragement makes a tremendous difference and helps students maintain these routines and thrive.

In this issue:

Homegrown Success

Sasha's Stop

Parent Survey

Spotlight on Fluency

Gallery

Music Centre

Enrichment Update

Key Dates

From the Archive



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The Principal's Desk Continued...

We hope you enjoy reading this term's newsletter. As always, it offers a snapshot of the fantastic things happening across our school community. Meanwhile, we are already looking ahead to a busy and exciting summer term, with the Leavers' Ball, Activities Week, Year 10 work experience, and of course our much-loved Year 7 camp all on the horizon.

We also extend our thanks to our Parent Forum, governors, and fantastic PTA for everything they do to support the school throughout the year. This term's Quiz Night was just one example of staff, students, and the wider community coming together—read on to discover more highlights. Wishing you all a very happy and restful Easter break.

Mrs Rankine



If you would like a tour of BVC during the college day, please contact us on enquiries@bottishamvc.org

Our next tour date is 15th April 2026



HOMEGROWN SUCCESS



**Mr Darling's Journey
with BVC**

Captain Darling



It's always special when former students return to Bottisham Village College as members of staff — and few embody the spirit of our community quite like Chris Darling.

Full Circle



Chris attended BVC from 2006 to 2011 before studying at Hills Road Sixth Form and completing both his BA (Hons) in PE and School Sport and his PGCE at Sheffield Hallam University. In 2017, he returned to Bottisham — the school that shaped him — to begin his teaching career. Since then, he has taught across a remarkable range of subjects, including PE, BTEC Sport, Geography, RE & Philosophy, Computer Science, and Practical Literacy.



His memories of BVC as a student are rooted in enrichment: sports clubs, residential trips, and the after-school triathlon programme that first sparked his love of running. He even broke the school cross-country record in 2011 — a fact still fondly remembered by staff.

Today, Chris plays a key role as a Community Lead, working closely with local primaries, community organisations, and trip providers. Whether running sports festivals, organising visits to the local care home, or taking students to iconic sporting venues such as Wembley and Twickenham, he is committed to giving young people opportunities beyond the classroom. As a resident of Bottisham himself, he sees daily the positive impact that students make locally.

Outside school, Chris is an accomplished runner and a National Group Assistant Referee, officiating in the Football League and National League — a pathway first opened to him by an in-school flyer back in 2010.

Deputy Principal Ed Compton had this to say: “He’s more of a concept than a teacher, embodying everything we stand for as a college: commitment, energy and a passion for education.”



Chris’s advice to current students is simple: embrace every enrichment opportunity that BVC offers. It’s a philosophy he has lived himself — as a student, as a teacher, and as a proud member of the Bottisham community.





CELEBRATING A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Bottisham Village College is immensely proud of Sasha Walker (Year 9), whose vibrant artwork has transformed the High Street bus stop into a joyful new landmark for the whole community. Chosen from more than 400 student entries, Sasha's design now brightens the heart of the village and reflects her thoughtful, creative vision.

In her own words, Sasha set out to create “something bright and bold... something that would give the village a little more colour.”

Her artwork blends warmth, imagination, and a deep appreciation for Bottisham's natural and historic heritage. Inspired by Holy Trinity Church and the rich biodiversity of our surroundings, Sasha chose elements symbolising both place and season:

local wildlife, a shy bunny, and a striking yellow daffodil—a flower she selected for its association with new beginnings and the arrival of spring.

SASHA'S STOP



CLr Nadene Cundell, joined Mrs Rankine, Sasha and Charlotte Cane MP

The final design is simple, impactful, and full of heart: a piece that brings warmth in winter, excitement in summer, and pride all year round.

Sasha officially unveiled the new bus stop on Thursday 12th March with Charlotte Cane MP, marking a wonderful collaboration between the Parish Council and the College. We couldn't be prouder of her.



Sasha's bus stop design also reflects a core thread of the Village College ideal: connected communities. At Bottisham, we are committed to nurturing young people who play an active, positive role in the world around them. This spirit is seen every day in the countless students who volunteer through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award —supporting youth groups, helping the elderly, taking part in local litter-picking initiatives, and contributing to village life in so many meaningful ways. Sasha's artwork stands as a colourful reminder of what happens when our students use their talents to give something back: the whole community benefits.

“WE STILL BELIEVE THAT, 90 YEARS ON, HENRY MORRIS’S VISION OF THE VILLAGE COLLEGE BEING AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY IS STRONGER AND MORE IMPORTANT TODAY THAN IT EVER HAS BEEN.”

Jenny Rankine, Principal





PARENT SURVEY

This year's survey received 380 responses, giving us a clear and representative picture of how families feel about the school. We thought we would share some highlights and next steps.



My child is happy at this school
74%

+4.0% FROM 2025



The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.
55.0%

+13.8% FROM 2025



SEND: The school gives them the support they need to succeed.
45%

+15.4% FROM 2025

Next



Based on your comments, these are our next steps you would like us to focus on.

To further embed the gains with behaviour and bullying response (+14.8%)



Strengthen consistency of communication from subjects and teachers



Continue to drive consistent SEND provision across the college.



PARENTAL

COMMENTS

“

“My child is thriving at school — happy, making strong friendships, enjoying lessons and making great progress. Staff are encouraging and helpful in every subject so far.”

“The school has improved in many areas and my child is making good progress. There are still challenges, especially around communication, but the direction of travel is encouraging.”

“BVC offers a caring environment and staff work incredibly hard. Like many schools, pressures on staffing can make things inconsistent at times, but we can see the effort being made.”

“Behaviour has noticeably improved across the school. It feels calm, structured, and well led.”

“We’re pleased with the pastoral support and the positive atmosphere. Some systems could be more consistent, but the core experience for our child has been very good.”

“The staff are incredibly dedicated. Their support has helped my child thrive both academically and personally.”

“We can see how hard staff work to help students feel confident, supported, and ready to learn — thank you.”



”

In our college improvement plan for 2025//26, we have focused on three areas: Improve Attitudes to Learning, Raise Attainment (with a sharp focus on SEND) and to Strengthen Leadership and Management at all levels. We’re glad to see parents are recognising the work we are doing in these areas.

FLUENCY



A Growing Success Story

Over the past term, our Key Stage 3 library lessons have undergone an exciting transformation. As part of our whole-college reading strategy, we have introduced structured reading fluency routines — and the impact has been remarkable.

Rather than relying on passive, quiet reading, students now take part in high-quality fluency activities that allow them to hear expert reading, practise fluent delivery, and develop confidence in accessing challenging texts. These routines, which include echo reading, choral reading and structured reading conversations, are already strengthening the core skills that sit beneath successful comprehension.

Bringing Great Literature to Life

Students have engaged with a rich and ambitious range of texts, including *Dracula*, *The Hobbit*, *Sherlock Holmes* and a variety of short stories and extracts. Hearing these narratives read aloud — and then reading sections chorally or in echo — has brought energy and excitement into the library space.

What has been especially powerful is seeing students who often sit quietly during traditional reading lessons suddenly come alive as they join in with the rhythm, drama and pace of these classic works.

Laying the Foundations

One of the most encouraging aspects of this project is its potential scalability. Our aim is clear: to take these fluency routines beyond English and embed them across the wider curriculum next year.

From Science to History, Geography to Technology, every subject benefits when students can read confidently, fluently and with understanding. By trialling and refining these routines in KS3 library lessons, we are preparing a model that can support disciplinary reading in every classroom.



Looking Ahead

The early signs are overwhelmingly positive: higher engagement, greater confidence, and more students willing to read aloud than ever before. As we continue to refine the routines and develop staff training in 2026/27, reading fluency will become a central pillar of our teaching practice.

Most importantly, it is helping every child — not just the keenest readers — access the full richness of our curriculum.



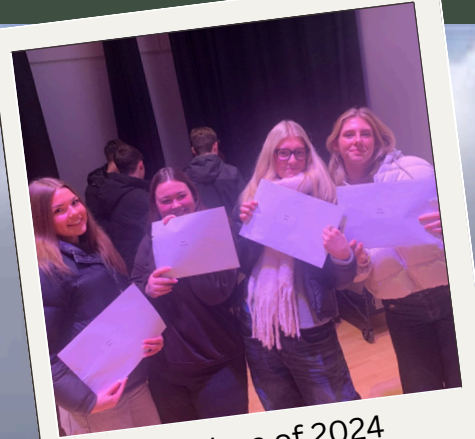
GALLERY



Freya's Shakespeare Performance



Golf Success



Class of 2024 Certificate Evening



Stapleford Granary Visit



Cross Country



Iceland



Year 11 Mock Interviews



Comic Relief Food



West End

MAJOR SUCCESS



BVC hits the right note

Music nurtures creativity, confidence and wellbeing, helping children connect with others and express themselves. At Bottisham, it embodies our ideals: **INSPIRING** ambition, **CARING** for every child's growth and **ENRICHING** their education through joyful, shared musical experiences that last a lifetime.



Since our official opening in Autumn 2024 the Bottisham Music Centre (BMC) has run a series of successful half-term workshops for children in years 3-7. Our pupils choose 4 different workshops over the 2 days which culminate in a concert for friends & families.

In September 2025 we launched our Saturday School. We currently run a weekly Rock School to develop our band skills. Rock School is open to singers, keyboard players, guitarists, bass players and drummers. This group has doubled in size and we are looking forward to offering a greater range of opportunities in September.

What is Bottisham Music Centre?

Half-term workshops and Saturday School for budding musicians in years 3-7.

Our 2-day half term workshops offer a variety of groups for musicians at all levels. You can bring your own instruments and try new ones.

From September 2026 our Saturday School will offer Rock School Beginners, Rock School, Orchestra and Bands.

For more information and to be included on our mailing list, please contact: BMC@bottishamvc.org.



- **Saturday School Summer Term starts 18th April 2026**
- **Our next half term workshop is on Tues & Weds 26th & 27th May 2026**

ENRICHMENT

UPDATE

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.



Harry Potter World



Copperbox Netball



Arsenal in The WSL

Clip & Climb

Parliament



*Year 9
Football
Success*



Key Dates

SUMMER
TERM
2026

APR

13

START OF TERM
(ALL STUDENTS)

MAY

25-29

HALF TERM

APR

20-30

GCSE SPEAKING
EXAMINATIONS

JUN

8-12

PARIS TRIP

APR

27-30

GCSE ART AND
PHOTOGRAPHY
EXAMS

JUN

13-14

DUKE OF
EDINBURGH
BRONZE
EXPEDITION

MAY

1

PROFESSIONAL
DAY (NO
STUDENTS)

JUN

26-28

DUKE OF
EDINBURGH SILVER
EXPEDITION

MAY-JUNE

7-19

YEAR 11 PUBLIC
EXAMINATIONS

JUN

26

LEAVERS' BALL

MAY

11+21

YEAR 10 X BAND/Y
BAND PARENTS'
EVENING

JUL

6-10

ACTIVITIES
WEEK/YEAR 10
WORK EXPERIENCE

MAY

13-16

BARCELONA TRIP

JUL

17

END OF TERM

The Archive

MID 1970'S

RAISING THE ROOF

The funds for this were raised by the community – later on money was raised for a roof



This photo is from the mid 1970s, when there were big changes for the college, with a change in Warden, and a change in status, from being a secondary modern to becoming a comprehensive school.

There was a lot of new building – for example the drama studio and what is now the project area, and also, separately, the building of the swimming pool, which is shown here. This was paid for by the community, following a campaign of fund raising. At first the pool was open air; later a roof was added – again paid for by the community.