



Learning  
Support  
Department

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Day in  
the Life  
of 7KM

4-5



Sixth Form

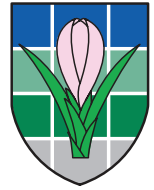
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SUPPORTING, CHALLENGING AND BUILDING INDEPENDENCE  
SPRING 2016  
ISSUE 7



Saffron Walden  
County High School

# Switch on



Meet our new Headteacher  
Caroline Derbyshire



Striving to  
achieve success

# From the Headteacher



**I AM DELIGHTED TO TAKE OVER  
THE LEADERSHIP OF SWCHS  
THIS TERM.**

All that I have seen confirms what I have been told by Governors, staff and past and present parents - that this is a school of which the local community can be extremely proud: it sets each child the challenge of meeting the highest expectations of academic achievement, it provides a significant level of support to the individual learner along the way, and it prepares the young person to step out, independently, into the world in order to make a valuable contribution to society.

Challenge, support, and independence are the three themes of this edition of Switch On. The three ideas combine powerfully in education, in coaching, and also in parenting. Children need to have goals that inspire and challenge them, they need their parents and teachers to support them along the way in

order to achieve these goals, and they need us to choose the right moment to 'let go' a little so that they try things for themselves.

## Challenge

Starting at a new school is a challenging thing to do. There is much to learn and understand, new routines to get into, new people to get to know, and a smooth transition to make so that momentum is not lost. Year 7 and I have been sharing this learning journey together as they, like me, adapt to a different and somewhat larger environment to the one they have been used to. Colleagues at SWCHS have worked very hard with Year 6 teachers in our partner primary schools to ensure that the transition is as seamless and smooth as possible, and you will see from the comments of the children in the article 'A Day in the Life of 7KM' that they are settling in beautifully and enjoying the challenge of new subjects, new routines and the variety of life at the school. Parents are playing their part in this growth by encouraging greater independence in planning for the day when packing up bags, getting into great, self-motivated routines in tackling homework, and keeping the conversations about learning alive at home.

In Year 8 there is always the danger that familiarity with the school breeds complacency, so to avoid this the school cranks up the level of challenge by pushing the children to achieve even more in lessons. The knowledge that options are to be taken in this year makes it vital that children make great progress in Year 8 and are ready for the GCSE years. The current Year 10, and all of the year groups that follow, will be taking an increasing number of the more challenging GCSE courses graded 9 to 1, instead of A\* to G. A three year run up to these difficult exams will really help the students to prepare well.

## Support

We all need help when faced with a new challenge. The system of support at SWCHS is built around the particular needs of individuals. All children meet tutors for one to one tutorial time, where reflecting on how well things are going is the central theme. Additional support for learning comes in the form of subject surgeries, and you can read more about the specialised work of the Learning Support Assistants on Page 3 in an article from our brilliant new SENCO Mr Heath. The pastoral care provided at SWCHS is second to none as students have access to counsellors, a school nurse, and a network of support agencies if they need it.

## Independence

You can really see the full impact of the way that the school fosters independence when you look at the students in the Sixth Form at SWCHS. Students arrive in Year 7 as young children and they grow and develop over seven years into the confident, articulate and enterprising young adults who leave us in Year 13. Charities Week demonstrates these independent qualities so well. It is organised by the Sixth Form Committee for the enjoyment of the school and for the benefit of others. This year the range of exciting and fun-filled events raised in excess of £12,000, which is a record amount. The skills required to galvanise a community of 2,300 people in the common aim of raising as much money as possible are not to be underestimated. The impressive total demonstrates that not only has this group of young people developed considerable independent leadership skills, but they are now in a position to make a positive difference to society.

Support and challenge seem to be the recipe for growth and independence.

**Caroline Derbyshire**



Creative endeavour in Art

# Learning Support Department

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IS A STEP TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY. AT SWCHS WE VALUE DIFFERENCE AND AIM TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH IS ENRICHING AND BENEFICIAL TO ALL.

At SWCHS we believe that everything we do should challenge our Special Educational Needs (SEN) students to achieve their full potential. We believe in personalising learning and creating environments where students can be courageous, take risks and succeed. This is only possible through the hard work and dedication of our SEN team.

At SWCHS we have a diverse SEN department. There are 25 Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) who have a range of qualifications and experiences. This allows us to provide a spectrum of support across a range of subjects and across a range of student learning needs.

It is intended that all students with additional needs will benefit from a detailed planning process. The LSAs have specific students that they work with in this way. They will spend time with that student exploring their achievements and discussing what they would like to accomplish next. This could be academic targets, such as to increase their reading age or go up a level in an assessment; or personal goals, such as making friends or being more independent.

Support comes in many forms at SWCHS. We offer in-class support; where an LSA will be based in a lesson. They will plan



beforehand and work closely in the lesson with the teacher to make sure that every student in the group can progress.

We also offer, where appropriate, extraction from lessons. This is always done with the agreement of the teacher and is a planned intervention. This can be a 10 minute reading session to help a student improve reading skills; or a 1-to-1 mentoring session for an hour. We also offer social skills and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy interventions to help students manage themselves in their wider school life.

We offer exam practice to students and explore techniques to help students revise and also deal with potential stress. After-school homework/coursework clubs are made available in addition to the groups already established by class teachers.

Our LSAs meet students before school between 8:20-8:35am to provide additional support regarding literacy, numeracy and organisation. We also run a club at break and lunch every day for students who prefer a quiet place to sit and enjoy lunch. We offer support with homework and revision during this time as well. On a Friday, we run a games club at lunchtime to promote social skills and help establish friendships.

We fundamentally believe that the key to success is through the continued communication and collaboration of the school, specialist services, and the family. With this in place, the best interests of the child can be championed and students will flourish.

**Mr P. Heath, SENCO**







Year 7 girls practising their netball skills



Year 7 boys testing their resilience in the Fitness Suite

# A Day in the Life of 7KM: meeting the challenge of 'big school'



WE'VE BEEN AT SWCHS FOR A FEW MONTHS NOW AND WE HAVE ALL SETTLED IN. IT WASN'T ALWAYS EASY TO CHANGE FROM PRIMARY SCHOOL, BUT NOW WE HAVE A GREAT TIME AT 'BIG SCHOOL'. THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS ON A NORMAL DAY:

- When we wake up in the mornings we have to check our planner before school to remind ourselves of which lessons we have today. Some of us get a bus or walk to school with friends.
- Some mornings we have Drama which is fun because you get to move about and act with your friends. It is nice to have a full practical lesson where we do everything that is active.
- Another lesson where we are together as a form class is Science. The best thing about Science are the practical lessons, especially setting things on fire with the Bunsen burners! Dr Gitsham is a great, fun teacher.
- After morning lessons it is lunchtime. As a form we couldn't agree what was the best thing to eat— some said egg sandwiches, some said Pasta King and some loved cheese baguettes! We did all agree that it makes you more independent having to queue and getting to choose your food.
- Ten students in our class are part of trampolining club after school. Miss Gilbert runs it (we think she is really nice!) and helps us learn new skills, although it can be challenging learning new moves!
- At the end of the school day, we have to do our homework, most of the time we do this independently. We all agreed that we have to get it done, even if we don't always love it!





Igniting a passion  
for Science



Problem solving together

# Year 8 – A snapshot in time

YEAR 8 STUDENTS, GONZALO MARTINEZ BATUECAS AND ZOE DE BRUIJN, OFFER A SNAPSHOT OF LIFE IN YEAR 8, PARTICULARLY HOW THEY FEEL THEY ARE SUPPORTED AND CHALLENGED AND HOW THEY FEEL LIFE AT SWCHS HELPS THEM BECOME MORE INDEPENDENT.

## CHALLENGE IN MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

In the Modern Foreign Languages area they have a goal of challenging students and making them push themselves to achieve more in lessons. One of the many methods they use is by talking completely in the foreign language students are learning. When coming into the classroom, teachers will greet you in the target language and give instructions to the class so students get a chance to find out what they mean. This challenges us to try and understand the new words the teacher is using. We asked a wide range of students what they thought about this approach and the majority of them confidently said this helps push them in every single lesson. Another way they try to stretch students is by including authentic language material and resources for the students to translate. The students also thought this approach really



Year 8 students enjoy the challenge of speaking German in their lesson.

helped them. Languages day is a significant event every year which encourages every student in the school to discover new things which will support them in future studies. On this day, language teachers decorate classrooms to celebrate the teaching of languages. All lessons have their own theme and you are taught something different in every one. Every different language is a world to explore, or should we say a world to be challenged by!

## SUPPORT – YOUR FORM TUTOR

Feeling unsure about something? You can always pop in to talk with your form tutor and have a chat.

Or want to find out about one of the many things going on? Your tutor is always there to help and inform you on all kinds of topics.

Remembering things is always hard, especially if you are new in the school, so your tutors will also remind you when a deadline is getting near!

Misunderstanding school requirements and events is very common for newcomers as well! So don't hesitate to talk with your tutor.

Teachers are also there to help, but for more important topics or more personal things, it is suggested to speak with your parents or form tutors.

Usually, students like to have a little break, especially at the end of a tiring long week. Therefore, some forms like to have fun in Friday form times.

Tutorials take place normally once a term and during this time, you get a chance to comment on all kinds of things you feel could be changed.

Once a week (depending on what year you are in), you will attend a whole Year assembly.

Ring a school member of staff can be a little embarrassing, but there is another way of getting hold of them. Emails are a useful way of contacting your Form Tutor, so go ahead!



## YEAR 8 AND STUDENT VOICE

Student Voice is made up of groups of students who have been elected by others in their own year group. These groups have responsibility for voicing ideas and changing things in the school for the students' benefit. We have three different groups that focus on different issues: Blue Voice (Teaching and Learning), Green Voice (Environment and Community) and Purple Voice (Student Wellbeing).

When we interviewed Year 8 students, 68% of those interviewed thought Student Voice was useful. When we asked why, some said 'Well, they get things done.' However 32% disagreed. When we asked why, one person said 'It doesn't voice our opinions well.' An example where student voice has been useful is when one group managed to change prices in the canteen for school lunches so you can now buy a drink, plate of hot food or a sandwich and a cake/cookie for only £2. Another group

recently has also changed something in our school, as they have managed to get separate bins for paper, bottles and food! It is efficient and helps the environment. They also have found a way to recycle the bottles in the canteen by putting bins especially for bottles around the school. In conclusion, Student Voice is well liked by Year 8 and is helpful according to the Year 8 student body.



Green Voice students build a giant water bottle in order to illustrate a potential 'waste problem' at SWCHS





A student reflecting on her work in Art



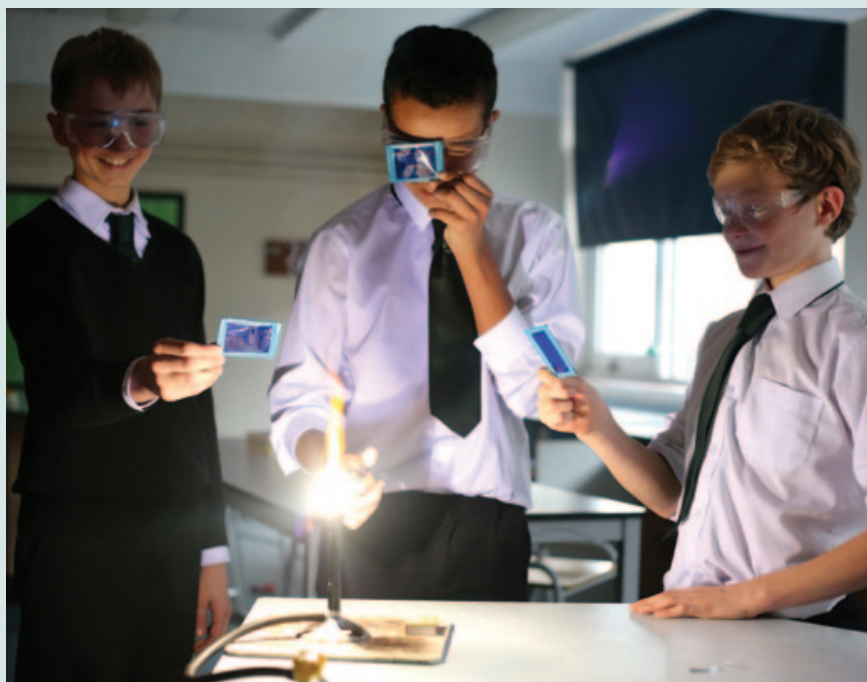
Practising hard in order to improve

# The journey towards GCSE - a KS4 perspective

APPROACHING GCSES CAN BE A DAUNTING EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS. KATIE ELLIS, MAIA LECKEY AND JOSHUA GRAHAM HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT SOME OF THE WAYS THEY HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED AND CHALLENGED AS THEY APPROACH THEIR GCSE EXAMS.

## CHALLENGE IN SCIENCE

During my time at SWCHS, I have studied a vast array of subjects, each offering their own sense of challenge. However, once this challenge is overcome it can lead to a sense of accomplishment. One example from my own studies is during a Biology lesson in which a rather challenging (for me at least!) task came about of understanding the purposes of tRNA and mRNA when it comes to the formation of DNA, and explaining them in a 6-mark question. After much longer than the suggested 6 minutes (I took 10 minutes) I finally finished the task by underlining the purposes of t and mRNA. After a quick discussion at the end of the lesson with my teacher, I grasped an understanding of the topic and how to answer various 6 Mark questions in Science, something which I am now rather proficient at. There are plenty of challenging, but not impossible, tasks at SWCHS. However, there is also a lot of support in order to help you achieve your personal best.



## YEAR 11 MOCK EXAMS

Mocks are a brilliant way to make sure students are effective learners - they help us prepare for our real exams in the Summer.

“Mocks have made me realise how I can improve my grades because I can work from the feedback I get from my teachers.”

“Mocks have helped me get revision notes together that are sufficient to use in the future”

“Mock exams definitely help to get me ready for the real exams in summer - the environment, what equipment I should have and shouldn't have for certain exams, etc.”

## SUBJECT SURGERIES TO PROVIDE SUPPORT

At SWCHS, support in lessons is offered non-stop. Some of the most helpful support strategies SWCHS provides are 'Subject Surgeries'. These are sessions usually at lunch time; however some may be after school too. These surgeries are available for any lesson, from Maths to Languages, and are run by teachers of that subject. They are a fun way to learn new things, or go through work you don't fully understand, and they can be a really helpful way to revise!



Learning about different techniques in Textiles



A complex demonstration in Engineering

## JOINING EXTRA-CURRICULAR CLUBS IN ORDER TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE

SWCHS is a place where you can become more independent. I have always been very shy, but I have a passion for Art and Music. The school has provided me with a place where I have been able to explore these interests and slowly build up my confidence - but it has taken me a long time.

In Year 7 I was extremely shy, but I soon developed a love for Drama and Music. I took the opportunity to join the School Choir, Concert Band and Drama Club. Through these few clubs and over the past five years, I have gradually built up my confidence; the clubs playing a huge part in helping me make so many new friends who also enjoy what I enjoy and share the same passion as me.

You too can also boost your own independence by joining a range of extra-curricular activities – from Sport, Art, Drama and Music, to Humanities and environmental clubs. For example, One World Group is a friendly club where people join together with the aim of making the world a better place

(many of the projects are charity-based). By joining clubs such as these, you will be doing

what you love and will meet people who share the same interests as you.



## What's stopping you from achieving your personal best?

### SUPPORT FOR OUR YEAR 11 STUDENTS

*Mrs J Watts (Year Achievement Coordinator for Year 11) outlines below the programme of support available to our students as they approach their exams.*

As Year 11 students receive mock examination results, staff are focusing on providing the necessary support; challenging students and improving their independent study skills in preparation for their GCSE exams. Where things haven't quite gone to plan in the mock exams, we aim to focus on resilience and courage – encouraging our students to move forward, confronting where things have gone wrong, and trying to close the learning gaps. For those who are proud of their achievements, challenge is key in the pursuit of excellence. Any student who is unsure how to achieve their personal best in the forthcoming exams should speak in the first instance to subject teachers or their form tutor. From here students will be signposted to an appropriate programme of support.

In order to equip students to be independent, and build on the study skills programme delivered to students in Year 10, all students were provided with revision planning workbooks before the mocks to help them plan their time effectively in the lead up to exams. Each department gave detailed revision guidance to help students arrive for their mock exams prepared.

Post mock exams, subject teachers will now be giving individual feedback to students on their performance to help close any remaining gaps. Our aspirational SWCHS GCSE targets (agreed by teachers and students together) challenge students to achieve, with support, the highest possible grades. This is particularly important this year, as the more popular universities are likely to use GCSE results in the selection process.

We are proud of the support programme we offer to all of our students, at every level. We would urge students to ask for help and make the most of these opportunities:

- Group and Individual Tutorial slots with form tutors to discuss both pastoral and academic issues.
- Specialist tutors offering 1-to-1 support in Maths and English for those who need it the most.
- Lunchtime surgeries and after school sessions in a range of curriculum areas.
- Revision programmes and 'Closing The Gap' sessions in every subject area.
- Weekly homework/revision sessions to support learning.
- Timetabled study support groups.
- Links with local universities to stretch and challenge students.
- Counsellors and Support Agencies – by appointment, as well as drop in sessions.
- School nurse.
- Dedicated Student Support Officer working alongside the YAC in every year group.





A Year 13 Photography student collating her work

# The Sixth Form

FERN O'GORMAN, OWEN EADY, LUCY CARDY AND NATALIE JOHNSON GIVE A FLAVOUR OF LIFE IN THE SIXTH FORM.

We are incredibly proud of our Sixth Form community, both outside and within school; we work tirelessly to challenge each other and ourselves. We believe this hard work creates a vibrant and buzzing atmosphere, where everyone gives and receives the help and support they need to reach new heights. The Sixth Form's self-run Committee and Union provides opportunities to create new connections, as we organise and design events for the whole school, taking charge of the annual phenomenon of Charities Week whilst organising mentoring and support for lower school members and preparing for the leavers' ball.

## MUSIC PRODIGY AWARDED SCHOLARSHIP

Year 13 student Eddie Curtis has recently received a prestigious scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music in South Kensington, London and the Trinity Laban



Conservatoire of Music and Dance. Eddie is an incredibly loyal member of the school's music department, participating in local and renowned brass bands such as the National Youth Brass Band and, more recently, the Saffron Walden Symphony Orchestra. The Music Academy has played a significant part in Eddie's progression from local bands to this scholarship at top colleges; receiving personal master classes from three top London professionals. His success will most definitely be an inspiration to the next generation of talented academicians and we wish Eddie the best of luck in the future.



## EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION

This year, approximately 30 Year 13 students have taken on the challenge of EPQ: an independent, investigative research project comprising of an individual's keen interest in a particular subject area. Students focus on a broader question and narrow it down to a more specialised nature whilst doing extensive extra research into their chosen topic. Students then display their work at the EPQ fair on a series of display boards and PowerPoint slides. Not only does this project encourage independent research into new subject areas, it also encourages individuals to identify flaws in their learning, assess their performance, and ultimately improve this ahead of prospects such as University or further research in the coming years.

## THE MODEL UNITED NATIONS CLUB

Our Model United Nations (MUN) club is full of budding debaters, politicians, and public speakers. Each year, our school is allocated three countries to represent at the annual MUN conference. This is a merging of many different schools, views and young people, which aims to imitate a real United Nations conference. This year the countries were Israel, Senegal and Russia, posing an exciting challenge for the students not only in terms of debating on compelling, relevant issues, but also in accurately representing potentially controversial views and political stances.

## RUNNING THE ECONOMY

Our team of Year 12 economists won a competition simulating the running of the economy at Cambridge University last term. The winning team (Leon Bozianu, Harry Kelvin, Thomas O'Brien and Owen Eddershaw) had to manipulate policies such as money supply, taxes and government spending to maximise economic welfare – A challenging task that involved achieving economic growth, yet balancing the budget and avoiding the

pitfalls of unemployment and inflation. They scored 5,000 points.







Our incredible Sixth Form Committee - the organisers of Charities Week

# Record breaking £12,326 raised during Charities Week

## CHARITIES WEEK

The pressure was on for this year's Sixth Form Committee, as they grappled to organise everyone's favourite annual event. Preparations started early on in October, creating previously unseen spectacles such as 'Lip Sync Battles' and 'Keeping up with the Humanities'. The team invited staff and students alike to forget the textbooks and take to the stage in a bid to raise money for charity. With the help of the school and the wider community our total came to

over £12,326 – beating the school's record two years in a row!

From Pit Gigs to Panel shows and festive singing bonanzas, the week was an exciting blur of events as the whole school came together to dress up, mess up, and raise money for charity.

This event began with a desire to help others and give back to the local community. Every year, this begins with the Senior Citizens' party;

a night of festive fun, carols and dancing as we waltzed glamorously into the Christmas spirit.

Moreover, the total raised is to be shared between eight local, national and international charities, nominated and voted for by students throughout the school.

### This year the chosen charities included:

- National Deaf Children's Society
- Farleigh Hospice
- REAL
- Riding for the Disabled Association
- Help for Heroes
- Mind
- Teenage Cancer Trust
- Open Door

The committee would like to extend a large thank you to everyone who made this year's Charities Week such a success. Without your support, this event would lack the enthusiasm that makes it so memorable.



## ELECTIVES

Once a week we take a break from our studies to spend an hour honing new skills. This hour allows us to have a short break from lessons to partake in challenging electives like the Music Academy, Press, and various sports, or to enrich our learning with electives such as Classics, Criminal Minds, and Debating. This opportunity allows us to gain a wider experience on specific subjects, whilst getting an insight into new interests we may wish to continue at higher education.

“The Sixth Form offers a lot of opportunities and support for you to start your own projects and aid your studies in creating portfolios for University”

Max Fawcett:  
Film and Drama student





A student  
mastering the skill  
of table tennis

## Date for the diary

### The Glass Knight

9th - 12th March, Saffron Hall

# SWCHS News

## WJEC MOVING IMAGE AWARDS

Congratulations to Benjamin Meads (a Year 13 student last year), whose short film *Disconnection* was shortlisted for the WJEC Moving Image Awards.

## CHRISTMAS CARD SALE

The One World Group held a very successful Christmas card sale, raising over £100 for a range of charities chosen by students. The cards were made by the One World Group and sold in school. Students then celebrated their hard work this year with a delicious Christmas lunch where foods from around the world were sampled.

## UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION UK – COUNTY HIGH WINS THE STRACHAN TROPHY!



The County High School team (led by Adam Langworthy with Natalie Johnson, Kieran Marshall and James Burns) were the 2015 winners of the Strachan Trophy, contested annually by the four secondary schools in Uttlesford. It was a tightly run contest between the SWCHS students and teams from The Friends' School and Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport.

Question Master, David Barrs, who also prepared the quiz, spoke of James Strachan at the outset. Strachan was a local teacher, a Quaker, and an ardent pacifist and internationalist who was a long-time and active member of the Saffron Walden and District Branch of the United Nations Association. On his death, the Branch decided to fund the annual quiz and the trophy in his memory. In 2015 it was contested for the 25th time.

The quiz is in eight sections, each consisting of ten questions covering topics such as

World Leaders, Recent Conflicts, and of course, the United Nations. David Barrs was assisted by Derryck Johnson (scorer) and Michael Swindlehurst, timekeeper. The trophy and the winning team's book tokens were presented by the Branch Treasurer, John Power.

## COUNTY HIGH ECONOMISTS ADVISE THE BANK OF ENGLAND



Saffron Walden County High Economics students comfortably won the first round of a prestigious competition run by the Bank of England. Each school makes a presentation to a panel of economists from the Bank of England recommending a policy decision to be implemented at the next meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee.

The judges were impressed with the quality of their presentation and the team's understanding of the balance of risks for the UK economy. The team, Michael Bishop, Matt Cousins, Luke Lanskey and Alex Lewis, were praised for their fluent presentation, comprehensive economic knowledge, and competent answers to challenging questions.

## NUFFIELD FOUNDATION STEM RESEARCH PLACEMENT

Over the summer, Alexander Lewis in Year 13 took part in a Nuffield Foundation STEM research placement at TWI in Cambridge. He worked with researchers and PhD students to prototype a passive domestic heating system. Alexander received a Gold Crest Award and is now in the finals for the UK's Young Scientist of the Year which is taking place at the NEC, Birmingham from the 15th-17th March. We wish him the best of luck!

## YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR

We were very proud to hear that Daisy Foster was a Young Person of the Year (YOPEY) finalist for the South East region, 2015. Daisy was nominated for her contributions and efforts

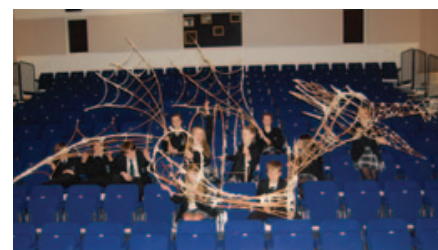
towards fundraising for the Motor Neurone Disease Research charity. The awards ceremony took place at the Queen Mary University of London on the afternoon of Saturday 21st November. It was a fantastic event that celebrated the achievements of young people like Daisy in the South East region. She was a very worthy runner up and we are very proud of all that she has done. Well done, Daisy!

## JACK PETCHEY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS AUTUMN TERM 2015

Many Congratulations to our three award winners for last term: Freya Stirling 7KEC; Lana Halewood 7VXK; Callum Vernon 11SJG. These students were voted to receive the award by Student Voice because of the care and support that they had given to their families and friends, in a time of need. Each student received £200 that they put towards treating their fellow students to trips and parties before Christmas. Many congratulations to all of them for being such considerate role models. See their stories in full on the Jack Petchey Award Board in B corridor.

## YEAR 9 CREATE THE GLASS KNIGHT'S FOE

24 Students in Year 9 Art and Design have been designing and constructing a large scale puppet since December to feature in the forthcoming production of *The Glass Knight*. Students worked in wire to create their own designs to begin with. They have then worked in teams with Mr. Ions to produce separate parts of the Basilisk using willow withies, following the ideas of the show's designer Neil Irish.



## BAR MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION

SWCHS students from across Years 10-13 took part in the Bar Mock Trial Competition at Ipswich Crown Court on Saturday 14th November 2015. We competed against seven other schools from across the region taking part in four trials





Team spirit shining through in PE lessons



Checking the seasoning in a homemade Shepherd's Pie

presided over by real judges. We got through the first round, which we have never done before! We went into the final against Farlingaye High School, a team wholly made up of Year 12 students. Sadly we lost to Farlingaye by only one point! The judge summed up by saying that both teams had performed superbly.

### SAFFRON WALDEN MUSIC FESTIVAL 2016, 26TH-28TH FEBRUARY

This will be County High's fourth Music Festival and the Winner's Concert will be held in Saffron Hall, our magnificent concert venue. This year we are proud to announce that we are introducing pre-grade 1 and ensemble classes. We are all very much looking forward to involving the local community in this great opportunity to showcase the musical talents of young people and give them the opportunity to demonstrate musical abilities in this inspiring and exciting auditorium.

Saffron Walden County High School has a well-established tradition of musical excellence. Over 400 students receive instrumental tuition, and the school has a very wide range of opportunities for students to play and sing together. This includes: school choirs, orchestras, concert and jazz bands and various ensembles for a wide range of instruments.

The Festival culminates in a winners' concert when the Mullucks Wells Trophy is awarded.

### MUSIC NEWS...

The Music Department are busy preparing for the next Music Tour. 85 students (from Years 7-13) will be travelling to the Black Forest in July to give four concerts featuring the Concert Band, Jazz Band and Orchestra.

The band ROOM C got through to the final of the bands' competition held in December at The Junction in Cambridge.

Well done to them as the competition was fierce. The final will be held at The Junction in March.



Two talented County High students were lucky enough to take part in a fabulous concert alongside superstar violinist, Nicola Benedetti in November. Frances Patterson and Aimee Lucas are members of the prestigious Britten

Sinfonia Academy and as part of this group took part in Sound Unbound, a weekend celebrating classical music. They performed on the main stage of the Barbican in London, playing pieces by Vivaldi and Stravinsky. Both girls are members of County High's Music Academy as well as studying for A levels. A delighted Frances told us: 'It was a real thrill to play with Nicola Benedetti. She is absolutely lovely and I have admired her for a really long time. I can't believe how lucky I am.'

### CHRISTMAS VARIETY SHOW

Prior to Christmas, a team of A Level Leisure Studies students organised the school's annual Christmas Variety Show involving acts from across the school. The show was a great start to Charities Week with music, dance and comedy. £2,000 was raised for charity and the organisers, performers and audience all had a great evening.

### READING WEEK

Students at SWCHS were treated to two visiting authors last week as part of Reading Week. The school's reading patron, the award-winning biographer Clare Mulley, spoke to sixth formers about the subject of her much acclaimed book *The Spy who Loved*, about the Second World War spy Christine Granville. Students were fascinated to learn not only about the life of this colourful





A lunchtime recital  
in the school foyer

## Date for the diary

Spring Concert - 16th March, Saffron Hall

### MEET THE GOVERNORS

We were delighted to be able to speak to a number of parents at the Year 10 parents' evening at the beginning of December. We received some really positive feedback about the school, as well as some suggestions for where things could be improved. All the points raised have been fed back to the senior leadership team at the school, so this is a really effective way for parents to get their views across. I and a fellow governor will attend the parents' evenings on the dates below, so please do come along if you would like to speak to us, regardless of whether or not you are attending the particular parents' evening with your child.

**Year 8 (W Half), Thursday 3rd March 2016**

**Year 9, Thursday 30th June 2016**

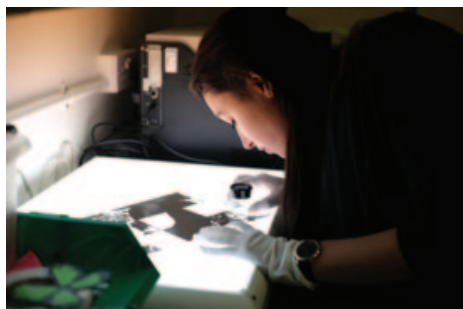
We look forward to meeting you.

**Barbara Calland, Chair of SWCHS Local Governing Body**

### MEET THE HEADTEACHER

Remember also that parents have the opportunity to meet Caroline Derbyshire, either individually or in small groups, at her Friday afternoon 'surgeries' between 2pm-5pm. This gives parents the opportunity to join the conversation about school improvement and to tell the Headteacher about what they like about the school, what we need to do more of, what we might do less of, and what might need to change.

To book a 15 minute appointment please email Kathleen Hutchinson at [headsqa@swchs.net](mailto:headsqa@swchs.net).



character but also to learn about how Clare went about researching her story.

Later in the week, in an event arranged by the reading patron, best-selling author Simon Scarrow also gave a talk which was attended by many interested students from a range of year groups. Simon, who is most famous for his *Cato and Macro* series set in 1st Century Roman Europe and the *Gladiator* series for younger readers, provided students with a vivid insight into the classical world that inspired his writing. The school will be holding a second reading week later in the year to celebrate the opening of its new library facility.

### ROTARY YOUNG CHEF COMPETITION DECEMBER 2015

This year SWCHS was represented at Joyce Frankland Academy by Sophie Griffiths in Year 9, and Patsy Attwood in Year 11. Both girls had to plan and cook a healthy two course meal for two adults. Sadly we did not have a winner this year but both girls worked hard during the 90 minute session and produced some lovely looking and tasting food.



### GOLD DUKE OF EDINBURGH

On Friday 8th January students who had completed their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, along with their leaders, were invited to Chelmsford Cathedral to receive their certificates and celebrate together. The Duke of Edinburgh scheme is the world's leading youth achievement award, giving millions of students the opportunity to be the best they can be. The Gold award involves at least 12 months of volunteering and developing physical skills, culminating in an expedition in the Lake district and a personal residential experience. Six students from SWCHS

achieved their Gold Award and three of them were able to attend the ceremony.

Emma Peal, Fraser Bush and Luke Dean are pictured right after receiving their awards.

They were joined by Carolyn Hulland, one of the leaders from SWCHS, who relishes the chance to swap experiences with other leaders and is reminded that it is time to start planning for next year's students!



### ARDUINO CLUB

The Year 7 and 8 students have been working on their robotics projects after school in the Arduino club. This project is an Arduino Mothbot. It drives towards light sources by working out the difference in light values in two light dependant resistors. It then figures out if it needs to turn left or right to balance them out. The boys finished wiring and coding this in their after-school club, but built the body over Christmas. Well done to Adam Hunter in 7IMA and Ryan Wulfse in 7AMB.



### NATIONAL STEP UP TO DANCE PROGRAMME

Congratulations to Becky Edwards (LSA in PE) who has been accepted to lead on the National Step up to Dance programme. She is leading the SWCHS Dance Academy and the students will be performing in "Spring Blast" Chelmsford on March 21st.

## 2015-2016 TERM DATES

#### SPRING TERM:

Term ends; Thursday 24th March 2016

#### SUMMER TERM:

Monday 11th April 2016 –  
Thursday 21st July 2016

*Half Term: 30th May – 3rd June*

*May Bank Holiday: 2nd May*

#### TRAINING DAYS:

Monday 11th April 2016

Monday 6th June 2016

Term dates can also be found on the school's website; [www.swchs.net](http://www.swchs.net)

### PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED BY

Thank you to Charlotte Wilson, Stephen Bond, Julia Condie and all members of staff who have kindly submitted photographs.

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