

Comberton Village College receives national recognition for performance

Comberton Village College are delighted that their excellent outcomes have been recognised by SSAT (The Schools, Students and Teachers Network) in this year's Educational Outcomes Awards. The award recognises that Comberton Village College is among the highest performing secondary schools in the country, based on 2024 performance data and information from Ofsted.

Comberton Village College was recognised for being in the top 10% of non-selective schools nationally for student attainment in the 2024 end of KS4 exams.

The SSAT Educational Outcomes database compares all state-funded schools in England. To be recognised with an Educational Outcomes Award is a significant achievement and a testament to the work of the whole school community.

Principal, Peter Law, said "It is a great pleasure to see the hard work of pupils and staff (as well as great support from the parents and wider community) reflected in this award for wonderful



**SSAT
EDUCATIONAL
OUTCOMES
AWARDS 2024**

results. Many congratulations to our pupils from year 11 who achieved so highly." Sue Williamson, Chief Executive of SSAT said:

"Congratulations to Comberton Village College on winning an SSAT Educational Outcomes Award. This success is down to the superb learning and teaching, outstanding support and inspirational leadership of staff. You have made a huge difference to the lives of the young people in your school. Thank you."

DUKE OF EDINBURGH



The weekend of 21st -23rd March marked the commencement of Duke of Edinburgh season.

This year is a bumper year for those taking the Silver award, with 90 pupils in Year 10 participating.

Their practice expedition took place in the Chiltern Hills; their awarding expedition takes place in the Peak District in Activities Week.

To complete the expedition, pupils must be self-sufficient for the weekend, bring all clothing, food and sleeping equipment necessary. They must then navigate their way along a 20km route on two consecutive days in small groups, relying only on a compass and a map.



The weekend was not without its challenges: thunder and lightning and HS2 constructions sites did what they could to intensify the experience! However, pupils did extremely well and overcame any challenges they faced.

As always, it was a pleasure to accompany the young people on this trip and observe their brilliant team-work, resilience and tuneful singing in action.



WORLD BOOK DAY

It was fantastic to see so many students engaging enthusiastically with all things literary in celebration of World Book Day on the 6th March. With activities including: a KS3 Treasure hunt; a quiz; free World Book Day books; the English department and Librarians dressed up as myths and legends; and a book-themed bake-off, the power of reading was certainly obvious!

The WBD Bake Off was held in the library. Students were invited to bake a cake with a book-related design in mind. The entries were amazingly varied! We had cakes that depicted: a skull from Treasure Island, a stack of books for Matilda, Dr Seuss' Green Eggs and Ham and even Hagrid's hut in cake form!

We want to say a huge congratulations to all the students who entered the Bake-Off competition. All the cakes were of a very high standard and the creativity was outstanding. With 18 cakes being entered, the decision making was very difficult... but we finally came up with winners:

KS3

Winners – Hattie C and Erica R, Matilda

Runners up- Hanna E and Orla G, Fireborn

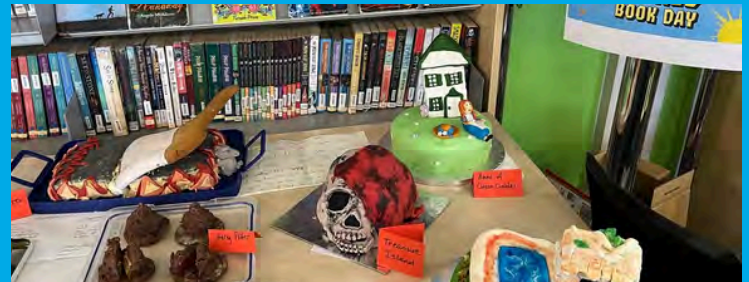
Poppy B, Titanic

Alex I, Treasure Island

KS4

Winner- Maya K, Anne of Green Gables

Runner up- Charlotte M, Ready Player One



HELEN MOSS CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

At the start of this half term, the Library, and the English department hosted author Helen Moss to do a creative writing workshop with a group of 35 Year 8 students.

Based on the theme 'Hidden Depths', Moss encouraged the students to consider that characters are not always as they seem; what thoughts might lie beneath the surface? How might their exterior presentation be different?

Using her own characters as examples, Moss encouraged the students to take inspiration from their own experiences and everyday life, challenging them to write about the contrast between what is seen and what is felt. Students were very keen to contribute their ideas, and all wrote excellently. Some of the most powerful contrasts can be read here:



'Just because I'm younger than you doesn't mean I'm not as smart.'

'Just because I always talk doesn't mean I know what I'm talking about.'

'Just because I talk doesn't mean I'm not learning.'

YEAR 7 AUTHOR TALK

In February, a group of Year 7 pupils were kindly invited to The Stephen Perse School in Cambridge to hear the author Alison Steadman talk about her best-selling Skandar series that is all about a fantastical world of bloodthirsty unicorns.

Pupils were each generously gifted a signed copy of Alison's first book in the series - Skandar and the Unicorn Thief – which is also available in the school library for anyone to borrow.

Alison gave a very lively and interactive talk that included inviting the audience (of about 300 children) to help her pick a new character for the 5th, and final, book in the epic adventure series.

We are now waiting to see how the new character appears in the next book! CVC students were confident to speak up in front of everybody to ask Alison questions and were inspired by her enthusiasm, passion for entertaining and love of ideas and creativity.

Ms. Palmer, Assistant Librarian



NATIONAL READING CHAMPION QUIZ

In March, two teams represented Comberton VC in the National Reading Champions Quiz. The quiz is an aspirational event run by the National Literacy Trust, that recognises and celebrates the book knowledge of more than 2,000 keen readers aged 10 to 14 each year. Pupils from Years 7, 8 and 9 answered questions



and solved brainteasers all about books and reading in a cross-regional heat online, against 23 other teams from around the country. They faced multiple choices, odd-ones-out, video clues, anagrams, and much more over 10 rounds, all about youth fiction from classics to modern bestsellers.

They did incredibly well, with Team A placing 4th and Team B placing 9th in the highest scoring heat of the competition so far! Team B also managed to correctly answer the hardest question of the quiz! Our teams were a credit to the school, demonstrating their love of reading, as well as excellent teamwork and enthusiasm!

Can you answer the hardest question?
Recall which house number each of these fictional families live at, and add the three numbers together for your answer:

The Dursleys of Privet Drive
The Browns of Windsor Gardens
The Banks of Cherry Tree Lane

Answers:

The Dursleys live at 4 Privet Drive (Harry Potter)

The Browns live at 32 Windsor Gardens (Paddington Bear)

The Banks live at 17 Cherry Tree Lane (Mary Poppins)
 $4+32+17=53$

Published Poets!

Four of our fantastic Year 8s got through to the final of the Mother Tongue Other Tongue competition.

This competition is held all over England. They either wrote a poem in a language they already speak at home or a language they are learning.

The final was held at Cambridge University on Wednesday 19th March. The multi award-winning Joelle Taylor was there to award the prizes and treat the audience to some sensational performances of her own poetry. Two of our four finalists were winners!

Congratulations to all four pupils, we are extremely proud of you.

Winners: Shaked Z and Gian P

Finalists: Alys P and Ali H

They will all be published poets once the poetry anthology comes out next year.



Spanish Exchange



In early March we welcomed some pupils and teachers from our partner school, Colegio Rosa Molas in Zaragoza. Year 9 pupils had visited Spain last November so this time it was their turn to host! The British host families gave a very warm welcome to their visiting pupils, with the Spanish teachers commenting on how kind everybody had been.

Bringing the Spanish sun with them, the pupils enjoyed an almost-typical week in the life of a British pupil. The Spanish pupils had day trips to Cambridge and London. They also visited Meridian Primary School to teach some Spanish to Year 6, did team-building activities with their partners and talked to Year 8 about life in Zaragoza.

I was very proud of the groups of Comberton pupils involved in the trip, they were great ambassadors for the school. I would like to thank the teachers that organised special activities for the exchange pupils: Mrs Whiddett, Ms Armorgie and Mr Hyde, with a special thanks to the unmatched support from Mrs Shorten.

Miss Allinson

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (continued...)

Life as a Language Leader!

This year we have 21 Language Leaders, who are pupils that go into primary schools to support teaching languages to younger pupils.

'In Language Leaders we really enjoyed going to different primary schools and teaching them about Spanish or French.

We went to two primary schools: Barnabas Oley in Great Gransden and Meridian in Comberton. Other groups went to Coton and Barton primary schools. At Barnabas Oley we taught a lesson about ice cream and how to



order it. At Meridian we taught Year 6 about the weather and seasons, including a song! It was an amazing opportunity as it improved our organisation, communication, teaching and overall Spanish skills.

It also helped us to make decisions quickly, be flexible and make changes to our lesson plans based on teacher feedback.

Overall, it was a wonderful experience, and we would definitely recommend it to future Year 9 students.'

By Clemence, Lois and Anna, Year 9 Language Leaders.



Faraday Challenge

I was one of six Year 8 students who went to Saffron Waldon County High to represent CVC at a Faraday Challenge event in February. We were tasked with building a product which focused on using batteries sustainably. During the development process we wrote a log to record what we had done and what we intended to do like real engineers would. We used circuits in our products, incorporating LEDs, Buzzers, motors, LDRs, Solar panels, cells, etc. All materials and components used for our product could be purchased using fake money at the shop, this was managed by our allocated finance manager in our team. At the end of the challenge we pitched our products to judges like a real business might do to potential buyers. The day was overall really fun and it helped me develop many skill such as teamwork, budgeting, presenting to an audience, and engineering skills.

Daniel Year 8

SheCanEngineer

12 Year 10s had the lucky opportunity to attend the SheCanEngineer day on the 21st of March, hosted by the Cambridge University Women's Engineering Society at the Department of Engineering. We had a great time learning about the careers we could follow in engineering, and had the chance to meet and talk with professionals currently working in a wide range of fields. I think this was not only inspiring but also informative, and helped us understand what paths we could take to pursue a job in engineering. There was a design workshop, in which we discovered more about how engineering works in the real world. We were given roles and worked collaboratively in teams to construct a stadium, which involved measures such as location planning, fire safety and lighting design. The day ended with a student-led tour of the department. We saw various labs, student projects, and were told about what you would study if you chose to take a degree in engineering at Cambridge. I think this was a really fun and valuable experience, and we gained so many insights into where engineering could take us in the future.

Jess, Year 10





Meteorite talk

During British Science Week we were lucky enough to have Dr Diane Turner come to speak to us about meteorites and brought some of the UK's second largest collection of meteorites with her. Pupils and staff from across the school came to listen to the talk and enjoyed having the opportunity to hold pieces of meteorites including Nakhla from Mars and even a piece of the moon! Dr Turner was very impressed with the interest and questions from our pupils.



Sixth form STEM Project Day

A group of Year 12 and 13s went to a STEM project day at The Technology Partnership, where they had the opportunity to tour a modern STEM place of study, meet, question and work with students ambassadors and STEM professionals. Students engaged in practical and real-world STEM activities and learnt about the ways local businesses are solving some of the greatest issues facing the world today.

The students had a very successful days and were great ambassadors for CSF.



SCIENCE DEPARTMENT (continued)...

STEM Club

STEM club has had a fantastic term full of a variety of experiments, from making timers to time for exactly 60 seconds to seeing whether dock leaves really do help nettle stings to making circuit boards. New members are always welcome in Sc12 on Mondays 3-4pm.



Year 9 talk

During Science week Year 9 had Dr Penny Beckerson from the University of Essex come to talk to them about STEM and its benefits in the real world. She spoke about how different jobs in the daily world are related to science and how many opportunities and fields there are in every aspect. She provided many examples of jobs in the science stream like engineering, medicine, environmental science, space research and multiple other opportunities.

One of the most interesting facts I heard about during the talk was that there are many careers related to agriculture, gardening and the environment. Overall, the talk was positive and inspiring. It made me really wonder how many interesting jobs and opportunities are available to us.

Vardhini Year 9

ROBOTICS CLUB

Comberton Village College team secure spot at world's largest youth robotics competition, UK

Team "Bob" from Comberton Village College were crowned with the Innovator award at FIRST Tech Challenge UK's regional qualifying tournament in Birmingham on 12th March 2025, earning themselves a spot at the challenge's UK Championship.

The event saw teams from across the region showcasing their engineering and coding skills as they competed for industry-judged awards that celebrate innovation, design, community outreach and more.

Being crowned Innovators means the team have secured themselves a spot at the UK Championships to represent Cambridge at the London Copper Box Arena in June. They'll go head-to-head against 47 other UK teams. The Innovate Award recognises teams that think imaginatively to bring their designs to life.

Teams put their student-built robots to the test in this year's water-themed challenge, INTO THE DEEP, presented by RTX. During two-and-a-half-minute matches, alliances of two teams compete to score points by completing complex tasks using robots programmed for both autonomous and driver-controlled operation. "The teams' incredible creativity, resilience and problem-solving skills truly demonstrate what it takes to succeed in STEM and their futures.

FIRST
TECH
CHALLENGE
UK & IRELAND

Let's build
More Than Robots



Not only have they risen to the challenge, but they've also reminded us all that teamwork and collaboration are what's needed to tackle tomorrow's biggest challenges.

A huge congratulations to all teams for being true representations of their region.

FIRST Tech Challenge UK empowers young people aged 12-18 with the technical knowledge and soft skills to thrive in STEM and beyond. From September to March, working like teams in industry and often supported by a mentor, they design, build and program a robot to compete at progressive events. Beyond technical skills, the challenge fosters teamwork, problem-solving and resilience, communication, project management, and fundraising.

CAMBRIDGE FESTIVAL FILM SCREENING

Lily and Freya both attended The Cambridge Festival Film Screening after many of our eco team were interviewed for the film last year. They displayed information about the college and eco team's most recent and impressive achievements. This allowed the public time to ask any questions that they may have had about either the film or the work that has been done at CVC and CSF. Freya also sat on a panel of guests after the film showing, along with Mr Gordon and other environmental activists, including Tom Heap. They took questions from the audience and enjoyed answering anything from their own personal actions and future goals to our own school achievements. The event overall was a huge success, allowing for another opportunity of collaboration and sharing our environmental initiatives with other members of the public and other schools. We are looking forward to more of these events in the Spring/Summer term!



Right: Freya speaks at the Cambridge Festival Film Screening



PASTORAL EVENTS

Year 9 Healthy Relationship workshop

“Tender is a charity that runs Drama courses for students and adults to inform them about healthy relationships and abuse. Launched in 2003 they work in secondary and primary schools, specialist schools, youth centres, alternative provisions and community groups. They teach people how to recognise early signs of abuse and build essential emotional and communication skills. During our workshop we did many exercises to teach us about the different types of abuse and how they are dealt with. In my opinion the best exercise we did was the temperature line. In this exercise we placed words on a healthy to unhealthy scale and we then learned about context and how it can change the meaning of a word. For example the word ‘kissing’ can be healthy if surrounded by words like love, respect and consent however it can be unhealthy if surrounded by words such as shouting, swearing or disrespect. This can be applied in school in friendships by respecting each other’s boundaries, listening to each other, being kind, having trust and respect and being honest with each other.”

Year 9 pupil account from one of a group of pupils who are working as Healthy Relationships Ambassadors to help promote this message around school.



Year 7 Laser Tag

We had 11 Year 7s take part in a lazer tag event where they got to compete against 13 Year 7 pupils from Melbourne Village College.

We had a slow start to the competition where the pupils were learning how to aim their guns and find protection at the same time! The CVC Year 7s lost the first game and then went on a winning streak for the next few events.

It was great to see the pupils grow in confidence and communicate with each other in order to be successful in the different challenges which they faced. They excelled in protecting ‘the box’ in the centre of the battlefield with some very energetic and courageous performances but ‘protect the VIP’ was their favourite challenge.

Lots of fun was had by all with the scores ending in a well deserved draw with both schools winning 3 challenges each.

A big thank you to the lazer tag company for providing such a great experience for our Year 7s.

PASTORAL EVENTS

(continued...)

Year 7 'tenner' challenge success!

Year 7 tutor groups got into the entrepreneurial spirit as they battled to become winners of the Tenner Challenge. Each tutor group was given an initial £10 loan and tried to make as much profit as possible. The event took place during lunchtimes throughout the week beginning 17th March 2025. With the proceeds going towards Cancer Research UK, there was a variety of creative business ideas. These included homes made cakes, jewelry, knitted animals, fresh popcorn, tombola and even a 'sweet pong' competition.

Mr Cook, Teacher of Business and Enterprise, said 'I was really impressed with how all the students embraced the challenge. They worked so hard at promoting and running their businesses. The competition helped students develop crucial life skills such as money management, personal selling, time management and teamwork. It was nice to be able to facilitate this through the competition. The feedback from students and staff has been positive and I must mention the year 7 tutors who were excellent at supporting the idea'

Overall, the competition raised an astonishing £900.73. The winning tutor group will be announced at the end of term celebration assembly.



SPORT UPDATE

U15 Girls' Cricket

We are extremely proud of our U15 Girls' Cricket team who are newly formed and recently took part in an indoor tournament. Here is a comment from our captain, Matilda:

"We went to Impington VC to play an indoor cricket tournament against 3 other teams. After a few training sessions, we used our batting skills to score lots of runs and bowling techniques to get the batters out. We worked really well as a team and were very good at encouraging each other. Our communication skills made fielding a big success and we did some amazing catches making it difficult for the other team's batters to last."

This performance saw our girls qualify for the County Finals, held at Cambridge University Sports Centre on Monday 24th March. The girls worked so hard as a team, against some very experienced players.

Overall, they placed 4th and gained fantastic experience. Their team spirit, enthusiasm and respect for others was exceptional to see. Miss Armorgie and Miss Cotton are very proud of all of them and cannot wait for the outdoor tournament.



U13 Girls' Cricket

Our U13 girls' team had an exciting and eventful indoor cricket competition on Tuesday 28th January, especially impressive given they only had two training sessions prior to the event. In their first game, they showcased their skills and determination, securing a convincing victory with a total of 71 runs. In the second game, the match was incredibly close and ended in a draw, with both teams scoring 49 runs each. However, the outcome was decided based on the number of wickets lost. Our team lost 3 wickets, while the opposing team lost 2 wickets, resulting in a narrow loss for our team.

Overall, the girls placed 2nd in the tournament and demonstrated excellent teamwork and resilience throughout. Their efforts in both games were commendable, and they should be proud of their performance, especially considering their limited preparation time. Most importantly, the girls thoroughly enjoyed the whole event. Miss Cotton and Miss Armorgie are very proud of them all.

Miss Armorgie, Teacher of PE

SPORT UPDATE (continued...)

Boys' football teams reach the County Cup Final!!

At the beginning of March, our Year 11 boys' football team got through to the County Final after a fantastic win against Abbey College (4-1).

Then to add to this success, our Year 7 boys' team also made it through, putting in a focused performance at the semifinal of the Cambridge County Cup! The Year 7 team faced strong opposition and fought hard in a physical match.

We look forward to seeing their performance in the Finals!



National Schools Trampoline Finals!

Towards the end of March, five of our pupils competed in the National Schools Trampoline Finals!

They travelled to Derby Arena to compete at a very high level and demonstrated huge commitment and skill.

Huge congratulations to Michael (9th), Elijah (11th), Cameron (11th), Etienne (10th) and Jessica (pictured, 6th).

SIXTH FORM UPDATE

Progression conference Day

Year 12 students took the first steps towards planning for life after sixth form as they attended the college's annual Progression Conference Day at the beginning of March.

Designed to offer an introduction to post-18 choices, students took part in a number of activities across the day that highlighted the range of pathways and opportunities available to them, from university and apprenticeships to gap years and routes into employment.

During the morning, students had opportunities to begin or extend their research and planning into possible next steps, supported by access to the universal destinations platform, Unifrog.

Alongside individual conversations with academic tutors, students also had the opportunity to attend live talks from guest speakers with expertise in specific post-18 fields.

Guidance on university applications came from Mike Nicholson, Director of Recruitment, Admissions and Participation at the University of Cambridge, who offered valuable insights into the application process based on his many years of experience in this role. This was supplemented by a session delivered by our own Mrs Peacey who offered specific

guidance to those considering applications to Oxbridge, or for competitive courses such as medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine.

The afternoon session was dedicated to a special event for which our Head of Careers, Mrs Lawson, convened representatives from businesses and organisations across a range of sectors, allowing our students to explore routes into employment and pathways such as school leaver programmes and apprenticeships.

With the wheels in motion, CSF staff are now looking forward to working closely with Year 12 students in the coming months to build on their initial research and help them plan for the future with confidence.

Careers Event

The photo below features some of our speakers, that attended our careers event, including The British Army, Co-Founder of Clip and Climb, Cambridge Regional College and Ethicronics.

For further information please visit:

[Building a Parent, Student & Alumni Network \(typeform.com\)](https://typeform.com)



SIXTH FORM UPDATE (continued...)

Henry Morris Memorial Trust grants

15 CSF students across Year 12 and Year 13 applied to the Henry Morris Memorial Trust for a grant in January 2025.

We are delighted by the recent news that they have all been successful in securing a grant(s) for all or part of their proposed travel projects.

In total they will have collectively received thousands of pounds from this fantastic charity. From a trip to go hillwalking in Scotland, to a post A-level European tour, our students have embraced the idea of "Projects with purpose".

The significant number of applicants is perhaps no surprise, as our Trust Director of Sixth Form, Mr Clarke is a serving Trustee of the Henry Morris Memorial Trust and helps to publicise the opportunity (and potential of the grant scheme).



PROJECTS WITH PURPOSE

The Henry Morris Memorial Trust aims to promote the ethos of the "Village College movement", celebrating the work of Henry Morris who was Chief Education Officer for Cambridgeshire and oversaw the design and opening of Sawston Village College in 1930. Many more Village Colleges followed, implementing Henry's community education vision.

We still experience the legacy of his vision today, with Comberton VC offering adult education courses and hosting a multitude of community events and activities in the evening and at weekends.

More information can be found at henrymorris.org.

Young people across Cambridgeshire from Year 9 to Year 13 are invited to apply, with an annual deadline in January.

Hopefully many more CVC and CSF students will apply next year!

Mr Clarke, Director of Sixth Form

SIXTH FORM UPDATE

(continued...)

6th form Theatre Studies trip

The Year 12 and 13 Theatre Studies students had a trip to the Rose Theatre in Kingston, London to see the much anticipated production of *The House Party*, by Laura Lomas.

The play is a modernised version of August Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, and offered a delightful mix of humour, drama, and social commentary.

Created in collaboration between the theatre companies Headlong and Frantic Assembly, the production was a compelling and sharply humorous exploration of friendship, adulthood, and the emotional complexities that surface when old friends gather.

Set in the familiar yet intimate environment of a house party, the play weaved a narrative that at its core, aimed to update Strindberg's original play for a 21st-century audience, and in doing so, it brought into sharp focus the themes of



class, power, and privilege that remain as relevant today as ever.

The students had a fantastic evening and are now unpicking the devastatingly powerful performance in readiness for their examinations.

Mr Frost, Head of Sixth Form and Teacher of Drama.

SIXTH FORM UPDATE

(continued...)

Year 12 Whipsnade Zoo visit



Recently the year 12 Environmental Science class visited Whipsnade zoo where they attended a talk about conservation and zoo ethics. The talk was very relevant and topical discussing the need to provide animals with plenty of space for roaming and how far zoos have come in treatment of animals since the 1900s when many zoos kept animals in cages far too small for their needs.

At the time of its creation, Whipsnade was a world leader in creating more humane conservation environments and it is continuing with its aim to provide high standards of care for the animals.

The talk also allowed the students to debate which animals should be kept in captivity and if zoos should keep animals that aren't endangered.

The students then spent the rest of the day visiting the animals. Some of the highlights were a rhino calf, the otters, camels and the warm butterfly house.

Overall the students had an insightful, enjoyable trip and hope to return soon.



SIXTH FORM UPDATE

(continued...)

Year 12 Visit Day to Wadham College, University of Oxford

On 20th March 2025, a small group of Year 12 prospective early entry applicants visited Wadham college, one of the constituent colleges of the University of Oxford.

The morning session started with an overview of the Oxford's tutorial system, its rich history and research facilities.

Students opted to attend one of two academic taster sessions in either the humanities or a STEM subject. The 90 minute



taster sessions, led by MSc students at Wadham, focused on Whales or Neuroscience - specifically translational research at the cell and circuit level, including Parkinson's.

In the afternoon students were treated to a tour of the college grounds in the sunshine and attended a personal statement workshop with Dr Munro.

Mrs Peacey, Deputy Head of Sixth Form