

MVC NEWS



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Spring 2024

The News Magazine of Melbourn Village College, an Academy of The Cam Academy Trust



A world of opportunity

We are always aiming to improve the opportunities available to our students, who engage with such a positive attitude and enthusiasm.

As part of our development — which, in truth, our Ofsted judgement has only served to hasten — the support provided by the Trust has enabled us to purchase additional resources and broaden the extra curricular activities.

These activities give the students a deeper and new understanding of the taught subjects, enhance their personal development and provide opportunities to support those who are less fortunate.

Part of the funding that we have received is used to support the organisation of such meaningful extra-curricular events, such as the CREST Award and Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Staff are also encouraged to seek new opportunities for their students, and they are now supported by a dedicated administration team and a Senior Leader, Cat Nicholls, who has responsibility for integrating these opportunities into the curriculum; enhancing the experiences for our students.

I am really pleased that last term there was more availability of such opportunities for the students without the disruption to our daily timetable or negatively affecting students' attitudes to their learning.

In fact, attendance has increased, potentially as a result of students being more motivated to attend school.

Our additional resources are also being used in part to develop all members of our school community by providing strategies to support not only the students' work, but that of others.

This is important as we acknowledge that our environment has changed, with everyone being rightly more aware of their own well-being alongside the well-being of others.



CREATIVE WRITING IN PROGRESS: *Extra-curricular give a deeper understanding of taught subjects.*

I have spoken to many parents who are concerned about their child's mental health, and I want to take this opportunity to reinforce that, while our students' school experience is partly about preparing them for their examinations, we must, as adults, support students constantly. For example, we look to deliver the best learning experiences possible, while we look after students' mental health and create a positive working environment. I fully appreciate the support that parents are offering through the various forums available, and, according to the latest student and parent survey results, MVC is positively developing and becoming a better school for all its members.

Christopher Bennet, Executive Headteacher

Investigations lead to STEM awards

Forty students in Years 7 and 8 are working towards a STEM award that is proving popular at Melbourn.

The college takes part in the CREST Award scheme, run by The British Science Association, which gives young people the chance to choose their own subject and methodology to complete a hands-on investigation, individually or in groups. It is a nationally-recognised scheme for student-led projects in the STEM subjects of science, technology, engineering and maths, and is externally moderated.

The award started last year when those in Year 7 took the bronze standard during enrichment time.

That level takes about 10 hours on the project and write-up and the results are submitted electronically by science teacher Tracey Mayhead, who runs the enrichment activity.

She was really impressed by the ideas that the group came up with as they investigated a diverse range of topics from 'How to write secret notes' to 'roller coasters'.

Those students were keen to continue and

are now working on their silver award, which takes about 30 hours, thanks to a chance offer from a Cambridge college.

Mrs Mayhead was contacted by Rachel Thorley, who is in charge of outreach at Churchill College, Cambridge, offering to work with MVC students.

The students have been looking at humidity, temperature and sustainability in classrooms with a monitor that has been travelling around the school.

They are now analysing the data collected ahead of a visit to Churchill early next term to present their findings and, hopefully, receive accreditation for the silver award. During the day they will present posters and podcasts to evidence their research and will have the opportunity to work with the engineering department that has been supporting their efforts.

There are also now 26 students in Year 7 currently working towards their bronze award as the scheme grows in popularity. They have also come up with a range of things to investigate, from 'Which are the crispiest crisps?' to 'What makes lip balms soft?'



CREST OF A WAVE: *Students work on their awards.*

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BACK ON THE PROGRAMME: The Duke of Edinburgh scheme will run again at MVC.



DofE award to relaunch

Students currently in Year 9 who feared they had missed out on taking the Duke of Edinburgh Award will be given the chance to participate in the next academic year.

The bronze award is usually available to Year 9 students each year, but as our new Duke of Edinburgh Lead, Alice Powell only joined us in December, she has been concentrating on helping those who started in 2022-23 complete their bronze awards.

However, plans are being put together to launch the scheme to both the current Year 8 and Year 9 so they can start their DofE journey in September. For those that will be in Yr 10 from September who were not able to start their Bronze award this year, there will be the opportunity to start the Bronze award or progress directly to the Silver award (further six months required) as a direct entry participant.

Meanwhile, 60 students currently in Years 10 and 11 are busy finishing off their skills, volunteering and physical activity sections, having trained and completed their expedition last summer.

Mrs Powell currently spends a day a week at Melbourn, where she holds a weekly drop-in to answer participants' queries and offer support, and the rest of the week

at St Peter's where she also runs their DofE award. There may be the opportunity to run joint practice and qualifying expeditions with the Huntingdon partner school and fellow Cam Academy Trust member, working alongside an approved activity provider.

The DofE Award is widely recognised by potential employers and is a brilliant way for a young person to discover how much they are capable of, make new friends, follow their passions, learn new skills, and make a difference in their community. It is a non-competitive award that runs at three levels — with Gold available at many sixth forms, including Comberton, which is also part of the Trust.

At bronze and silver level, there are four sections — volunteering, physical, skills and the expedition, with a residential requirement added for the Gold level.

Participants choose what they would like to do for the first three sections while the expedition — which is often held locally at Grafham Water for Bronze and then further afield in the Peak District for Silver — involves spending time (the amount increases incrementally for each award) hiking, navigating, working on a team goal, cooking and camping in the countryside. Comprehensive training/practice expedition takes place before the assessed expedition.

Ambassadors trained

Ten Melbourn students have been trained as anti-bullying ambassadors. The Year 9 and 10 students attended a special training course in Bedford earlier this month and are now able to help their peers deal with incidents of bullying. The anti-bullying programme was delivered by The Diana Award, the only charity set up in memory of the late Princess of Wales, and her belief that young people have the power to change the world.

It raises awareness of bullying behaviour and supports schools and young people to tackle it across the UK and beyond.

Their Anti-Bullying Ambassador Programme has a strong peer-to-peer focus, with facilitators giving young people the skills and confidence to become key figures in tackling bullying in their schools long after the training has finished. The charity's anti-bullying work is recognised as world class thanks to this sustainable and youth-led approach.

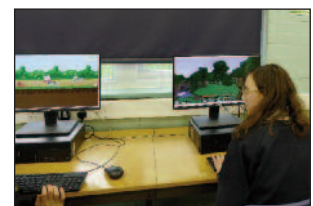
Assistant Principal John Barnes said: "We recognise the impact that bullying can have on the wellbeing of young people and as such, we have robust mechanisms in place to ensure that bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively.

"To continue this work, we were given the opportunity to train 10 of our students to become anti-bullying ambassadors through the Diana Award.

"This will give students at MVC further opportunities to report incidents to their peers as well as teachers."



CHOICES, CHOICES: Science Club, Drama Club and Minecraft were among the opportunities available this term.



Something for all

Science Club is just one of the many extra-curricular options for students at lunchtime and after-school.

In a recent meeting they were able to look at different reactions. They created elephants' toothpaste, a foamy substance caused by the rapid decomposition of hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) using potassium iodide (KI) or yeast and warm water as a catalyst. How rapidly the reaction proceeds will depend on the concentration of hydrogen peroxide. They also saw 'the blue bottle' which is a reversible reaction where the contents of the bottle goes blue when shaken and gradually changes back to transparent. They also did the Iodine clock reaction where the contents go from transparent one second to completely black the next.

Options change on a termly basis but since January students had a wide range of activities to choose from including different sport and music clubs, drama, art, DT, a number of revision and booster classes in various subjects, Minecraft, Warhammer and the Mandarin Excellence Programme.

NEWLY TRAINED: Melbourn's anti-bullying team.



Turbo boost for reading

Melbourn's new initiative to help boost students' reading ages is already showing promising results.

There is a highly evidenced correlation between reading ages and GCSE grades and Melbourn is using the Lexonik reading programme to improve the vocabulary and reading ages of students which will, in turn, enable them to be able to access the best grades possible.

Last term 24 students started on the intensive six-week programme that helps them to decode words at a faster rate and with greater accuracy. The positive attitude that the students showed towards the programme was phenomenal and a real credit to them. A further 40 Year 7s have been involved since the February half-term break.

The programme claims to accelerate reading ages by an average of 27 months in six weeks and Head of English Simon Luxton said that the improvements

in the first cohort were 'astonishing'.

The average reading age of the first group of participants, currently in Year 11, went up by 33 months in just six weeks.

Mr Luxton said "I am very proud of the work put in by the students and the way they approached this programme. These massive improvements will stand them in excellent stead as they prepare for their GCSE examinations."

He added that the programme, alongside developing a culture of reading for pleasure, is an important part of the process to make MVC 'A Reading School'. Other strategies include enabling students to read for pleasure as often as possible and allowing them the



EARLY SUCCESS: The first results from the Lexonik reading programme were 'astonishing'.

opportunity to talk with staff about what they are reading.

Teachers are sharing their book choices by displaying 'I am reading ...' posters on their classroom doors and asking students what they are reading as a way of getting to know more about them and enabling students to ask the same questions of staff.



FANS AND REPORTERS: Melbourn's budding sports journalists at a Cambridge United match.



Exploring the world of sports journalism

Students from Melbourn Village College have enjoyed a flavour of the life of a sports journalist.

In January, a group of 46 students travelled to the Cledara Abbey Stadium to watch home heroes Cambridge United take on Fleetwood Town, in partnership with the Cambridge United Foundation.

Spurring the Us on to a 2-1 victory amidst an electric atmosphere at the final whistle, the students were tasked with writing a match report, detailing the events of the game, under the tutelage of former sports journalist-turned-teacher Tom Jackson.

The students were walked through the fundamental aspects of a match report; from summarising the key events of the match to exploring the style of the student's writing. The purpose of the activity is to encourage students to reflect on

their experiences and think creatively when retelling them.

The extra-curricular activity forms part of a wider journalism initiative at the school which includes the school's Sports Journalism club.

The club introduces students to the world of sports reporting — exploring how journalists report on sports events, conduct interviews, and select the most intriguing stories that arise from them. Through this, the club supports students in developing their written communications alongside their speaking and listening skills.

Another exciting trip was arranged for this month (after the magazine had gone to print), when 50 students ventured to Wembley Stadium in London to see the England national team face Belgium as they began their preparations for the 2024 UEFA Euros this summer.

Macbeth 'comes alive'

Students in Year 11 were treated to an excellent theatrical performance of Macbeth by the Quantum Theatre Company.

Seeing a play in performance was a new experience for many students, and the English, Media and Drama department were delighted to host the four talented performers, who moved the play from the script to the stage for our students, helping them to understand the dynamics of the tragedy as live theatre.

We aim to provide our students with an exciting, enriched curriculum that offers them wider and different opportunities to understand the arts, and this occasion definitely met that aspiration.

Students described their enjoyment of this version of their GCSE text (especially the sword fighting), commenting that it helped them to understand Macbeth and his motivations, and that they felt it would help them to revise.

"We were delighted with the engagement that students showed, and that our visitors commented on their concentration and interest," said English teacher Sarah Hallam. "We were very pleased to offer our students this opportunity, which we plan to repeat for other year groups in due course."



SPELLBINDING: Students enjoyed the fight scenes and felt a live show helped them better understand Macbeth.

Exam tips from the top

Thirty Year 10 and 11 students travelled to the Cambridge Corn Exchange to watch some inspirational presentations from scientists and a chief examiner as part of GCSE Science Live.

The day started with Professor Dave Cliff, who spoke about The Past and Future of Computers.

He was followed by Dr Anna Ploszajski, who is a materials scientist. She spoke about her swim across the English Chanel and how she had used materials science to decide what swimsuit to use and the food she ate.

Stewart Chenery, the AQA Chief Examiner for science and the editor, author and co-author of many revision guides, then spoke about top tips for the GCSEs, such as looking at command words and how to structure answers to exam questions.

Professor Lord Robert Winston spoke next about his long career studying human fertility.

Helen Czarski, a physicist, gave a presentation on her work studying the effects of climate change using the bubbles under waves.

The final speaker was Professor Steve Jones, a geneticist, who looked at how genetics and nurture affects our lives.

The talks were all fascinating and useful and our students were extremely well behaved and had a great time.

They were a credit to both themselves and the school.



GOING LIVE: Students at the Science Live! event, which included (bottom left) fertility expert Prof. Sir Robert Winston.



Library to reopen

Melbourn Village College is a 'reading school' where literacy is promoted across every aspect of the curriculum.

We believe the ability to access written material is the right of every student, enabling them to discover new facts, supports learning and opens up a world of exciting ideas, stories and opportunities.

Reading for pleasure improves self-esteem, concentration, critical and analytical thinking skills, memory and expands vocabulary.

To support the school in this we are delighted to announce the reopening of our library with the help of more than £20,000 from The Cam Academy Trust.

This will give students the chance to read for pleasure more often and to expand the amount and types of reading they do. We look forward to seeing our students enjoy the library and the resources within it.



DUE TO REOPEN: The MVC library.

Food, glorious food . . .

Science Week once again at MVC this term, with the theme for 2024 being 'food.'

Over the course of a week in mid-March, pupils have been busily designing their 'tea clipper' boats and then racing them along water-filled guttering in our science labs.

Although it was a little wet, the pupils were very competitive, wanting to be the fastest!

They learned about the Cutty Sark ship and why it was important to transport foods (especially tea) across the seas before they went mouldy.



TASTE TEST: Students sample 'Frankenstein's Foods'

We were visited by the Cambridge Science Learning Centre and pupils learned about digestion – all Year 8 took part!

During lunchtimes all pupils, but particularly KS3 pupils, were able to experience a whole range of different activities, from 'party in a bell jar' and 'radioactive popcorn' to 'Frankenstein Foods'.

A very big thanks to all the science staff and technicians, especially Mrs Mayhead, who worked so hard over this week!



PARTY TIME: Science teacher Mark Washbrook creates a 'party in a bell jar'.



WE ARE WHAT WE EAT: Year 8 learn about digestion.



SINK OR SWIM? Year 7 have been boat-building during Science Week.

Sun shines on artists

Year 11 GCSE Art students braved the cold to go to the Cambridge University Botanic Garden and the world-famous Fitzwilliam Museum.

The beautiful winter sunshine allowed students to draw and photograph the extensive gardens to support their GCSE exam preparation. Students then warmed up in the hot houses, looking at a variety of tropical plants.

Earlier they had toured the Fitzwilliam collection to photograph and draw interesting artwork and the historical collections to enhance their research in preparation for their fine art exam in May.

Year 11 Art students behaved impeccably, showing artistic curiosity, enthusiasm and were a pleasure to take on the trip.

Art teachers Mrs Ward and Mrs Heeks thoroughly enjoyed seeing the students engage so positively with the museum and respond creatively while looking at the beautiful gardens.



WARMING UP: In the Botanic Garden hot houses while checking out the tropical plants.



EXAM PREPARATION: Drawing, photographing and researching at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

Workshop gives students new experience

Melbourn Art Department welcomed acclaimed local artist Judith Handley to present her work and for Year 10 and 11 students to enjoy a two-hour, lino-printing workshop. Students were shown the amazing artwork Judith does using lino and different background techniques.

Her work is local — for the National Trust and at Wicken Fen — and is based around the nature she sees there.

Art teacher Sarah Heeks met Ms Handley at a lino printing workshop she was running at Anglesey Abbey and was so inspired by her work she asked her if she could visit MVC and show the students.

The artist was able to give the students a real insight into the creative process and to learn how to lino cut.

Each year group had a two-hour slot to learn how to draw, trace down, cut and print their own lino design and add the work to their GCSE portfolio. The workshop was amazing for the students, and



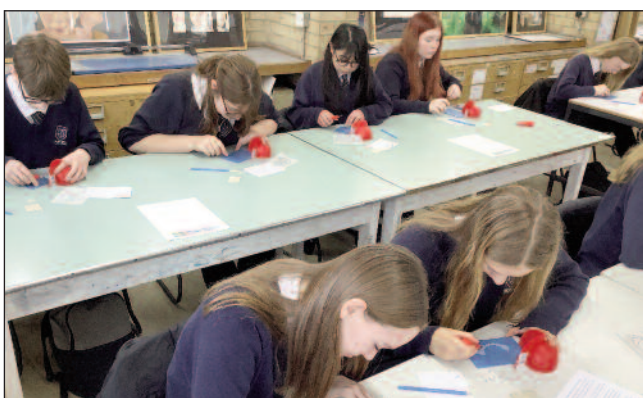
DESIGN AND PRINT: Students have a go at making and printing using lino.

they produced creative work within a limited time span, learning new skills, and enhancing their creative ideas and coursework.

Ms Handley was impressed with the students' creative ideas, dedication to learning and enjoyment of a new skill. She really enjoyed

visiting the school and interacting with our brilliant art students.

It is hoped to continue running these workshops next year to further enhance the Key Stage 4 art curriculum and for the students to learn directly from a fantastic local practising artist.



LOCAL EXPERT: Judith Handley ran lino print workshops for Year 10 and 11 GCSE artists.

New Chief Exec chosen

The Trust has appointed a new Chief Executive.

Claire Heald will take over from Stephen Munday, who has been Chief Executive since the Trust was formed in 2011 to oversee the conversion of Comberton Village College to an academy.

She takes up the post overseeing the four secondary schools, two sixth forms and seven primary phase schools in June.

Stephen retires from the post this week, having initially joined Comberton Village College as Principal in 2001 before moving on to lead the Trust which oversees it when it became an academy 10 years later.

Mark Norman, the Director of Finance and Operations, will be acting CEO for the interim period.

Claire's appointment, following a rigorous selection process, comes as CAT looks to the next stage of its development.

Alongside potential future growth — with Fowlmere Primary School set to join next month and a number of other schools also interested — the sixth form at Cambourne is set to open in September 2024, with new, state-of-the-art facilities.

Claire joins from Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), a network of 57 schools nationwide, where she is currently National Director of Education.

Before joining AET in 2021, she was Deputy Chief Executive at Inspiration Trust, a Norfolk-based group of 16 schools. Claire founded and led a free school in Norwich, and before this had a number of senior leadership roles in Norfolk schools.

During her time at AET, the proportion of schools rated Good or Outstanding by



APPOINTED: Claire Heald will take over as Chief Executive in June.

Ofsted improved from 71% to 86%. Last year also saw AET's highest results on record.

Claire is also a trustee of The Difference, a charity whose focus is to improve the life outcomes of the most vulnerable children in society.

Sue Williamson, CAT's Chair of Trustees, said: "I am absolutely delighted that Claire Heald will be joining the Trust family later this school year.

"She has an impressive track record — both throughout her time at AET and prior to that at Inspiration Trust.

"She very much shares in our values at CAT, and I have every confidence that our trust will go from strength to strength under Claire's leadership as we move into this next phase of our development.

"Claire will be joining us at an exciting time for the trust — our new sixth form will be opening, and we have a healthy pipeline of schools expressing an interest in joining our family. This will be an important new chapter for us, and we are absolutely committed

to delivering the high-quality education that local families deserve." Claire said: "I am thrilled to be taking on the post of Chief Executive at The Cam Academy Trust. The Trust has the potential to be an exceptional group of schools. "As a values-driven leader, their six core principles resonate deeply with me, particularly around standards of excellence and inclusion. It's also very important to me that the Trust's schools continue to be at the heart of their communities. "I'm very much looking forward to getting to know all of the schools and working with the staff to build on the successes to date."

First leader bows out

Stephen Munday, the first and only leader of The Cam Academy Trust since its inception — originally as The Comberton Academy Trust — retires from his role this week.

Before he helped set up the Trust in 2011, he was Principal of its founder member, Comberton Village College.

He said: "It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have served as the Chief Executive of our Trust since establishing it 13 years' ago.

"The world has moved on a lot in that time and the Trust has grown and developed both in its number of schools and also in

terms of the influence that it has exercised on the local education system and beyond.

"But what has not changes are the values and principles upon which we are based and that frame all that we do.

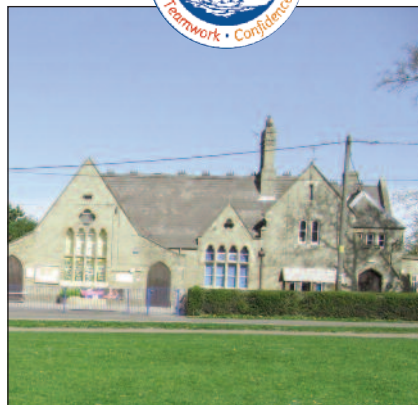
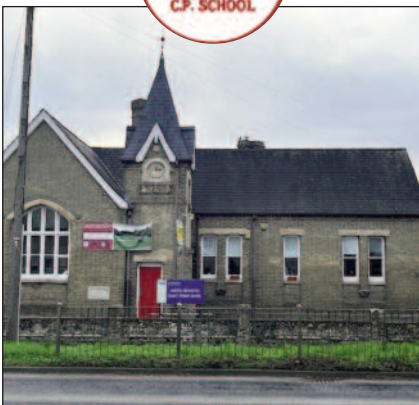
"This matters at all times, including when a new Chief Executive takes over from a previous Chief Executive. People may come and go, but the essence of what our educational organisation and community is stays the same.

"It is in safe hands, ultimately the hands of all staff who work in our Trust and group of schools."



CONFIDENT: Stephen Munday is certain the Trust is in good hands — of those who work in it and its schools.

Two more schools move closer to joining



After a long journey and a lot of hard work by all, Fowlmere Primary School is on the cusp of joining The Cam Academy Trust.

There is still some last-minute work to be done, but the sincere hope is that the school can become part of the Trust from April.

The school is local and feeds into Melbourn Village College. The move to join the Trust will strengthen further our aim to create strong local educational communities and work at the centre of our communities.

Harston and Newton Primary School is another that feeds into Melbourn Village College.

It is also seeking to join us. Following a pause in the process while a new Chief Executive of the Trust was appointed, this process is now fully resuming.

It is hoped that formal approval can be granted soon after Easter and that the formalities enabling the school to become part of the Trust can be worked through.

Chinese New Year welcomed

Students in Year 7 were treated to a 'monster' performance as the Chinese Year of the Dragon was ushered in.

The London Chinatown Chinese Association (LCCA) martial arts cultural practitioners and community groups brought the New Year celebrations to life with vibrant performances to ward off the mythical 'Nian' monster.

Tradition has it that the colour red, loud noises and fireworks scare off the monster and the performers

brought this idea to life with a spellbinding performance of the Lion Dance.

Lion Dance is an important ritual in Chinese tradition, believed to bring good luck and drive away evil spirits on auspicious occasions, like the start of a new year. Pupils not only learned about the traditions of Chinese New Year but also enjoyed playing traditional Chinese instruments, like gongs and drums, and learning the Lion Dance movements with the performers.



LION DANCE: Traditionally performed to ward off evil spirits.



GETTING INVOLVED: Students had the chance to meet the Lion Dance performers, try the instruments and even get inside the costume as they learned more about the Chinese New Year.



Colour change

There's been a slight change to the new skirt being introduced to Melbourn's school uniform from September.

It has been decided to have a navy skirt with grey stripes rather than the original navy and blue version.

The new skirt is the main change in uniform for the new academic year and will apply to students in Years 7-10, as Executive Headteacher Christopher Bennet looks to continue improving standards.

Students moving into Year 11 will still be allowed to wear the existing black knee-length skirt and the option of tailored straight-leg trousers, without external pockets, or shorts is still acceptable for all.

The only other change is in the PE shorts, which have a woven vertical-striped pattern (shadow stripe).

These were only previously available from the official suppliers, Royston-based Schoolyard, but can now be purchased from any supplier who stocks the same type.

Mr Bennet reiterated that financial support will be available to those families who may find this change a significant burden.

The new skirts will be available from Schoolyard from next month:

<https://mvc.schoolyard-online.co.uk/>



VARIATION: The new kilt will have grey stripes instead of blue as originally planned.



BOUNCING: Students enjoyed a trip to a trampoline park.

Hard work rewarded

To celebrate the achievements of students in the Student Support Centre, who worked really hard in school, SENDCo Sean Pollock organised a trip to 'Gravity' — the indoor trampoline park in Stevenage — at the end of last term.

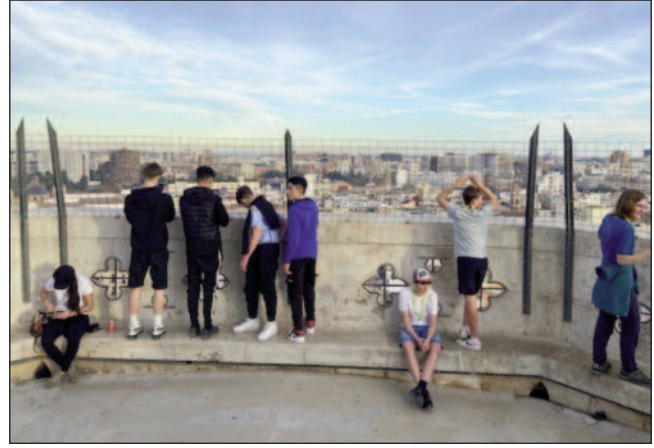
A brilliant time was had by all who attended.

This term's trip — to Clip n Climb in Cambridge — was taking place on the last day before the holidays.





SPANISH IMMERSION: Pupils and staff spent three days visiting some of Valencia's biggest attractions as well as sampling the local food and practising their language skills.



New city to explore

A group of 30 Year 10 and 11 pupils visited Valencia for three days late last term.

This was Melbourn's first trip to the city and everyone, including accompanying staff, Mrs Stanley, Mr Willder and Mrs Neville, enjoyed the experience.

The weather was perfect and it was nice to see blue skies and enjoy the sunshine while things were much greyer in England in December.

The group visited many of the key sites of the city, including the Ciudad de las Ciencias y las Artes, the Cathedral and the Turia Gardens.

Pupils enjoyed the freedom of buying their own lunch in different places each day.

After a very early start, they ended the first day with a climb to the top of the Miguelete Tower to enjoy panoramic views of the city.

A highlight of the second day was the first of two Spanish lessons which were 'better than lessons in school' and enjoyed by everyone. They also visited the Fallera museum to learn about the Fallas festival.

On the final day the group ended their trip with chocolate and churros in the main square. Staff reported that it was a pleasure to spend time with some very motivated pupils, who are real credit to Melbourn.

Mrs Stanley is hoping to be able to run the same trip this December.



Students team up for Spanish interaction

Year 8 students spent an exciting day at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford with a visiting group from Spain.

They teamed up with students from the Sagrada Familia School in Cantabria for an interactive day of languages and history.

The day was led by José Herrera, from Links Into Spanish, and Melbourn languages teacher, Mrs Stanley.

After an ice-breaking activity using Spanish and English, the students split into mixed teams to tour the Battle of Britain Hangar and the American Air Museum.

Each team then delivered a presentation to the whole group in both languages with students acting as 'teachers' of their own language.

Four students, Josh, Benjamin (both Franklin), Emilijus and William (both Darwin) reported: "Twenty-nine Year 8 students visited Duxford on 6th February with pupils from the Sagrada Familia school for a Spanish interaction day. "We got picked up from Melbourn by coach and everyone sat with a Spanish

pupil and introduced themselves on the way to Duxford.

"The boys soon found a common interest — sport!

"When we arrived at Duxford we talked in Spanish and English to everyone and then were put into groups.

"Our groups visited Concorde and the Airborne Assault Museum and made notes in English and Spanish.

"Each group made a presentation in English and Spanish. Finally we all had lunch together before getting back on the bus to school.

"We learnt new words like 'to explain' which is 'explicar'. We also learnt new phrases such as 'How old are you' and how to say new sports such as basketball and football.

"It was very interesting learning about the Spanish students' lives compared to ours. We all really enjoyed the day and made some new friends, as well as practising our Spanish.

"Mrs Stanley said that the students were exceptionally well-behaved and a real credit to the school!"



WORKING TOGETHER: Melbourn students and their Spanish counterparts at Duxford.

Not just a day at seaside

Forty Year 11 Geography students visited Southwold on the Suffolk coast to complete the fieldwork element of their GCSE course.

A two-hour trip was made longer with the A14 being closed due to flooding, but this did not dampen our spirits and we arrived at the seaside with the sun shining. The group was met by Chris, from the Southwold Geography Academy, and taken to the fieldwork centre where students were guided through the plan for the day. Various activities were completed during the visit, including land use surveys, longshore drift experiments and studying the various coastal defences found along the seafront.

The weather was kind to us in the morning and, after fish and chips and ice cream, the students started to complete the afternoon studies.

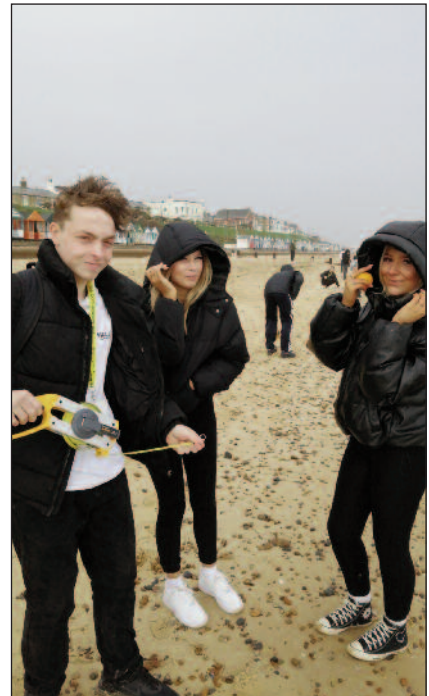
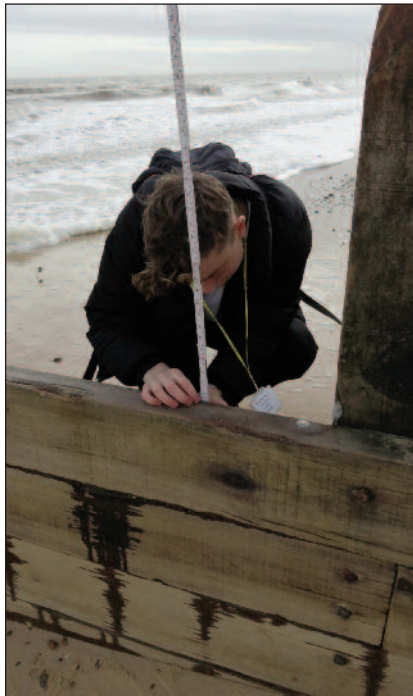
With the majority of the work completed and just 30 minutes left before we departed, the clouds opened, and students had the 'added bonus' of seeing localised flooding first hand.

Despite this and the traffic problems, the students gained a huge amount and were a pleasure to take out for the day.

John Barnes, Assistant Principal



FIELDWORK: Coastal investigations form part of students' GCSE Geography coursework.



Spanish excellence!

A group of students in Key Stage 3 have been busy improving their Spanish vocabulary after entering a nationwide competition.

Around 100 chose to take part in Languagenut UK and now the 20 best from Melbourn's Years 7, 8 and 9 have been rewarded with excellence points.

The top five — Lillian (7FRA), who was in the top 300 nationally, Wincy (7DAR), Charlie (8FRA), Maisie (9LEW) and Anastasiia (7FRA) — earned the maximum five points, with the next 15 each earning three points. All 20 have received certificates.

All KS3 students will have the chance to collect excellence points — and boost their Spanish — with another Languagenut UK Secondary competition in June. Spanish teacher Ivana Stanley said:

“This wasn't a competition that I entered students for; they chose to take part which is very impressive. Well done to everyone who took part and improved their Spanish. I hope there will be even more students involved for the next competition, which I will publicise.”



POINTS MEANS PRIZES: As well as excellence points, the top three students received goodies from Languagenut.



SUCCESS: Students with their certificates after taking an extra RE course.

Cause for cheer

Students are celebrating collecting their first national exam grades.

They have been awarded certificates for passing the Educas GCSE short course in Religious Studies — worth half a GCSE grade.

They sat the exam last summer after voluntarily taking the course as an additional qualification.

The group of students, who were in Year 10 at the time, studied throughout last year and seven of them collected grades ranging from 4 to 8.

With RE being a compulsory subject, but not one that is offered as a full GCSE at Melbourn, students were

given the opportunity to put their work towards a recognised qualification.

Aliya (Newton), Maddie (Goodall) and Mayuha (Darwin) said the course focused on Christianity and Buddhism, the relationship between these religions and how the religions have changed.

Students also looked at modern issues with following a faith, how to respect and better understand different cultures and relationships.

Aliya added: “Doing the mini RE course and exam was good preparation for the full GCSEs exams we will be doing later this year.”



FOCUS ON WOMEN: Celebrating the achievements of women and girls and empowering young people to make further changes.

Empowering next leaders

On Friday, March 8th, Melbourn Village College radiated with energy and enthusiasm as it hosted its inaugural International Women's Day (IWD) Conference.

The event served as a platform for students to delve into discussions, share perspectives, and contribute to shaping policies aimed at promoting gender equality and empowerment within the school community.

The conference kicked off with an opening address by Christina Nager, Senior Economic Policy Developer for the Government, delivered via webcam. Her words set the tone for the day, emphasising the importance of empowering the next generation of leaders to champion gender equality.

Throughout the conference, students heard from esteemed speakers who shared their insights and experiences:

Ruth Brown, Deputy Leader of North Herts Council, highlighted the importance of celebrating women's and girls' achievements, inspiring attendees with stories of



perseverance and triumph.

Sarah Baker, Media Developer for HAVAS in London, raised awareness about discrimination, urging students to become agents of change in combating gender-based biases and stereotypes.

Shelley Ward, a childcare business owner, emphasised the significance of ensuring inclusion in International Women's Day actions, encouraging students to embrace diversity and promote inclusivity in all aspects of their lives.

These thought-provoking sessions sparked lively discussions among students, who eagerly shared their perspectives and ideas on how to foster a more equitable and inclusive environment at MVC.

One of the highlights of the conference was the formation of the International Women's Day Committee, comprising dedicated students who were tasked with developing a policy proposal focused on IWD and equality across the school. Guided by their passion and commitment, the leading committee members collaborated with their peers, school staff, and guest speakers to draft a comprehensive policy that reflects the aspirations of the MVC community. Their proposal, which outlined actionable steps to promote gender equality and empower women within the school, received by Mr Stuart will be shared with the school's Senior Leadership Team. This will then be reviewed and put into place once agreed upon by the committee.

As the conference drew to a close, there was a sense of empowerment and inspiration in the air. Students left feeling motivated and empowered to enact positive change within their school community and beyond.

The MVC IWD Conference was not only a celebration of women's achievements but also a call to action for the entire school community to work together in creating a more inclusive and equitable world. By empowering tomorrow's leaders today, MVC is paving the way for a brighter and more gender-equal future.

James Stuart, Head of Humanities



TAKING TIME TO CHOOSE: Students were able to find out what each optional subject involves and have a 'taster' lesson.

Separate sciences offer another option

Pupils currently in Year 9 have been given the choice of studying separate sciences for GCSE for the first time.

In the past Science Department staff have decided who will study the three separate sciences — biology, chemistry and physics — and who will study the combined course, which is worth two GCSEs.

This year pupils were given information, in their options booklet and in science lessons, to help them make the choice.

That was part of an options process that started in December to enable students to state subject preferences for Year 10 and 11.

While some schools pre-plan 'blocks' on the timetable and student choices have to fit in with these, Melbourn gives pupils free choice and the blocks are then created based on those choices, within the available staffing and time constraints.

This means the 'blocks' vary from year to year; some do not gain enough interest to run while others are oversubscribed. In these cases, discussions took place with those pupils involved.

Musical talent on show

Students with a love of music were given the opportunity to practise their performance skills when Melbourn staged a concert for parents, family and friends at the end of last term.

The event featured the MVC Choir, Chamber Ensemble and Show Band as well as some solo and duet performances and included pupils from all year groups. Music lead teacher Mr Thomson is now hoping that some of the talented KS3 musicians have opted for GCSE Music.

"Much talent was displayed on the evening by our KS3 students (as well as KS4) and I hope many of these fine young musicians will consider GCSE Music as a fitting option, in due course," he said.

He also had a special mention for Year 11 Event Prefect Samuel (11HAW) as well as the staff who made the concert possible — Mr Bennet, Mr Perry, Mrs Forrester, Mrs Jackson, Mr Brame, Mr Tobutt, Dr Wilson, Mrs Mayhead, Mrs Shakespeare, Mrs Nicholls and Mr Barlow.



PERFORMERS: At the most recent concert.



GUESSING GAMES: Students ask questions to try to work out what job the visiting speakers do.



Linking work to learning

Earlier this month, the Year 7 cohort took part in a 'What's My Line' event as part of the MVC careers programme.

This offered them the chance to encounter the world of work by meeting career professionals, who invited them to guess their line of work by asking a series of questions.

Our visitors included representatives from HR and Recruitment as well as an Engineer, who designs and builds bridges, a Scuba diving instructor and a member of the British Antarctic Survey. A selection of appropriate 'props' provided clues to their professions.

After a selection of interesting and probing questions, our guests revealed their

job titles and answered questions about the specific role — although only one revealed their salary!

Event organiser, Peter Buncombe, from Form The Future, said: "This is always a popular event and the volunteers were particularly impressed with the behaviour and questions from the students."

Terry Brame, MVC Careers Advice Lead, added: "Providing encounters with the world of work and speaking to a range of professionals like this is an excellent way for younger students to begin to realise that their education forms the start of a very important life journey."



ARE YOU RECEIVING?
Students send messages using Morse or other codes.

Discovering code

Think of computing lessons and you probably imagine a class of students sat in front of screens.

However, some of teacher James Richardson's Year 8 pupils found themselves out on the field earlier this month.

They were challenged to send messages using Morse Code — or a code they devised themselves — using a variety of methods; red and green paper, drums, bells etc.

Some were more successful than others!

Great fun was had by all but the lesson had an important purpose. It introduced students to different types of code — the bedrock of computer science — and data science.

EMPOWER FUTURES BY BECOMING A TEACHING ASSISTANT

We have positions available across our schools

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www.catrust.co.uk/key-information/vacancies

Speedy teacher alert!

If you have Mr Barlow on your trail, don't think for a minute you will be able to get away!

The speedy PE teacher and Head of Year 11 sliced almost two minutes off his personal best time for a half marathon earlier this month when he completed the Cambridge race in 1hr 27 min and 44 sec. He was delighted with the time and said the conditions — fine and cool with very little wind — were perfect for a good time.

Although he has run sub 1 hr 30 minutes for the 13.1 miles before, this was by far his best run and was a classic case of triumph over adversity.

He had been doing high intensity training as a result of stomach problems before February half-term and it seems the change in regime worked to his advantage — although he is now thinking about taking a break from running.

Well done Mr Barlow!



PERSONAL BEST: For teacher Richard Barlow in the Cambridge half marathon.

Teams shine in home tournament

A team from MVC won the Year 8 small schools six-a-side 12-team tournament hosted on Melbourn's astroturf pitch. In fact, home teams dominated, with all three reaching the quarter-finals and two making it to the last four, one having knocked out their schoolmates in the last eight. The one team that reached the final also came out victorious.

Special mention to Harry for scoring the winning goal in the final and to Josh for a fine penalty save in a semi-final shoot-out.

It was also really great to see the two MVC teams who hadn't reached the final cheering on their peers and celebrating with them at the end.

The Year 8 team then followed up with a confidence-boosting win in the District Cup, beating Trumpington 4-0 to set up a quarter-final clash with neighbours Sawston.



YEAR 8 IN FOCUS: Action from the tournament (left), the winning team (bottom left) and the side that progressed in the District Cup (below).



Optimistic for next year's challenge



GOOD UPTAKE: Plenty of students chose to play basketball after school this term.

The popularity of basketball as an enrichment activity, with a good mix of boys and girls attending, as well as the gutsy performances of a largely Year 8 squad in the District under-14 league, has given PE teacher Richard Barlow grounds for optimism ahead of next season's competition.

"We chose to field a development team of mainly Year 8 this year with one eye on next year's league," he said. "The pupils know what they need to do to compete next year and will have learned a lot from their three matches this season."

Those were against Comberton, Bassingbourn and Perse and proved a steep learning curve against older opponents.

Friendship and fun . . .

The South Cambs School Sports Partnership this term hosted a 'Friendship Games' event at Melbourn Village College, which involved Year 5 and 6 pupils from five of its partner primary schools — Barrington, Fowlmere, Melbourn, Foxton and Meldreth.

Around 50 children took part in the event, which was focused on supporting children's transition to secondary school by helping them to develop new friendships and increase their confidence and motivation, while also engaging new audiences in physical activity and sport.

During the afternoon youngsters took part in a number of different activities which they might not have tried before. These included archery, new age kurling, sport stacking, table tennis and dodgeball.

Sport leaders from MVC led the activities and supported the children throughout, making sure they had a really fun-packed afternoon.

Claire McDonnell, organiser of the event, said: "The focus was very much on providing a fun and enjoyable event for the children, giving them a chance to try out some new sports and activities and perhaps helping them to make some new

friends, while giving them confidence to try new things."

One member of staff commented on how "the event was such a positive experience for all the children, it was great to see them all engaged in the activities, especially one child, in particular, who was really anxious about attending."

Another teacher commented: "What an amazing experience it was for all of the children involved. We had some really positive feedback from the children and the adults saw some of them grow in confidence throughout the afternoon and really enjoy taking part."

Children commented on how it was a "nice opportunity to meet future classmates" that it was "just good to be here" and "the leaders were really nice" and "everyone was chatty and happy".

A lot of the children also said how they felt more confident to try new things following the event, how they had started to make new friends and how they loved trying the different activities.

TRANSITION ACTIVITIES: Melbourn sports leaders helped primary pupils try new sports and make friends ahead of the move to secondary school.



There's no stopping Harston's hotshots!

Harston & Newton are the 'Small Schools' Quicksticks hockey champions again.

They retained their title at the annual Year 5 and 6 competition against 11 other teams in the event at the Cambridge University Sports Ground on Wilberforce Road.

The Quicksticks format is played by four-a-side teams made up of two boys and two girls. There are no goalkeepers, and the game is played with bigger and lighter balls making it safe, fun and accessible to all.

Teams were split into pools and played seven-minute matches to decide which division they went into for the next round.

Harston & Newton won their pool to go into Division One against Barrington, Coton and newcomers Histon & Impington Park.

There were lots of competitive matches in the division stages, but Harston & Newton were the clear winners, coming out victorious in all seven of their matches on the day, scoring 26 goals and only conceding two — a huge congratulations to them. Runners-up were Coton Primary School. Other local schools taking part included Foxton, Hauxton, Meldreth and Thriplow.

The 'Big Schools' competition, involving 20 teams, has new champions. Although they qualified two teams for Division One alongside Trumpington Park and University of Cambridge Primary, Histon and Impington Brook were pipped for the title. Their first team finished with two wins and a draw in their final round matches and lost out to Trumpington on goal difference. There was also recognition on the day for those teams who had taken part in the 'Spirit of the Games' and demonstrated good teamwork and honesty in their performances.

There were lots of nominations for these awards which was great to see but the winners were Willingham and Elsworth, who were chosen for showing great teamwork, being supportive of their teammates and demonstrating fair play towards other teams.

EFFORTS REWARDED: Medals all round for the panathlon participants.



Taking on the challenge

Six students from MVC went to Comberton Village College early in the term for a Panathlon Challenge, an event for those with disabilities and special educational needs.

Oliver, Zayn (both 7FRA), Tom (7LEW), Bailey (7NEW), Amelie (7DAR) and Alex (since left MVC) participated in a variety of games including bocchia, polybat, skittles and

precision bean bag.

They all showed a lot of enthusiasm and took part in all the events that were available. They put a lot of effort into building up their points, but unfortunately didn't make it into the top three.

Kelly Coghlan, Head of PE, said: "Shame the students didn't win, but they definitely gave it a good go."



BEST OF THE BUNCH: Harston and Newton's winning squad.



HAVING A GO: Pupils from five Trust schools had the chance to learn new stunts on BMX bikes and scooters.

A piece of the action!

Students from Melbourn joined their peers from the other Cam Academy Trust secondary schools plus Gamlingay Village Primary for an Action Sports Experience Day.

More than 50 Year 7 students from MVC, Comberton, Cambourne and St Peter's and some Year 6 pupils from Gamlingay were pushed out of their comfort zones and challenged to master new skills with an 'I can' attitude at the BMX and scooter workshops at Comberton Village College.

The day was organised by the South Cambs School Sport Partnership and delivered by professional stunt scooter rider Terry Price and ex-BMX world champion Mike Mullen. Students first listened to an inspirational talk from Mike, where he spoke about how he got

into BMXing and the challenges he faced and had to overcome as he learnt from his failures to master riding and reach the top of his sport. Mike then impressed the students with a trick and stunt display before they were fitted with helmets and took part in separate BMX and scooter workshops.

Despite many of them initially feeling nervous or scared, by the end of the sessions the students all had beaming smiles across their faces as they learnt how to handle their fears and gained a real sense of achievement from persevering and stretching themselves to learn something new.

The day ended with motivational story from Terry about how he began scooter riding, the challenges he faced and how they were overcome. He finished off with a huge backflip!



FOCUS: Pupils concentrate on getting their cups stacked!



It all stacks up to a fun day for youngsters

Cup stacking, an individual or team activity, in which children stack and unstack cups through a variety of fun relay races and challenges made its mark on more than 130 Key Stage 2 children at Melbourn Village College.

Jointly hosted by the South Cambs Sports Partnership and Di Baker – of Speed Stacks UK – 10 primary schools attended the festival with Sports Leaders from MVC leading the different activities.

During the morning session, groups of 10 – 12 children from Foxton, Swavesey, Barton, The Meadow, Trumpington Park and Fen Drayton took to the sports hall to take part in seven different dynamic activities that served to promote both hand-eye coordination and motor skills while fostering teamwork and healthy competition.

After lunch, a further four schools arrived with equally enthusiastic children — Melbourn, Willingham, Bassingbourn and Linton Heights. While the 'Caterpillar Relay', the 'Pyramid to 6' and the 'Stack and Back Relay' all proved popular, the hands down favourite was the '3-3' timed stack!

Despite initially feeling a little 'overwhelmed', 'nervous' and 'scared', by the end of both the morning and afternoon sessions, the children left with smiles on their faces having thoroughly enjoyed the different activities on offer. One pupil from Melbourn left saying, 'this has been amazing!' another stated how they had 'loved all of the activities' and 'can we do it again?'

As well as enthusiastically leading the activities, the sports leaders from MVC actively encouraged

the children and awarded stickers to those demonstrating the School Games values of Teamwork, Determination and Self-Belief. Alongside individual stickers, the leaders nominated schools for their collective participation over the course of the day. Melbourn were 'consistently supportive of each other', Bassingbourn 'worked extremely well together, encouraged others in their team and showed great determination', Fen Drayton showed, 'great enthusiasm and determination in every activity with all team members contributing their best efforts', while Barton were noted for, 'showing good communication across all the activities'.



MELBOURN SPORTS CENTRE news

For those of you who don't already know, we have:

- A state-of-the-art fitness suite offering a variety of membership schemes
- A 20-metre swimming pool (kept ever so slightly warmer than most!)
- A comprehensive swimming lesson programme, catering for all ages and abilities
- Upgraded multisports courts for hire including tennis, football and squash courts
- Water sports courses and activities
- Traditional and modern exercise classes
- Access to Melbourn Village College sports hall and gymnasium for activities such as trampolining, badminton and basketball
- Supervised sports and pool parties

OUR SWIMMING POOL

It's been another busy season for us here at MSC! January saw an influx of new members all wishing to get fit and healthy for 2024. In association with South Cambs District Council, and after the success of the first scheme in the Autumn, we've held two more brilliant new health and fitness schemes aimed exclusively at those suffering from higher BMI – the Exercise4Fun programme. We're hoping we can continue to offer this scheme into the Spring and Summer months, so watch this space! We are always running our GP Referral scheme as well, which is another highly effective way to get fit and healthy.

We had a bumper bag of Christmas and Half Term activities for children to enjoy, including our Ofsted-registered PlayScheme, and a Swimming Crash Course too. Our Rookie Lifeguard course goes from strength to strength, which has proved very popular. The students learnt water safety and the basics of becoming lifesavers, a fabulous skill.

This term we've also welcomed back local primary schools including Melbourn and Foxton, and the School Sports Partnership for top-up swimming. We hope to see you all this Spring for plenty of sports activities and challenges to keep you fit and well, and thank you once again for your continued support.

OUR ASTRO-TURF PITCH

Our new 3G Astroturf pitch continues to be popular, with local clubs and organisations lining up to make good use of this fabulous facility addition to the Melbourn site, including local team Melbourn Dynamos and Cambridge United soccer camps at Christmas, training stars of the future. For more information on how to book the pitch, and for prices, please contact robbie@mc-sport.co.uk

OUR FITNESS SUITE

Why not take advantage of one of our great membership schemes to our fitness suite, including C.V machines and resistance machines, an ideal location for keeping fit and healthy! We are also continuing to work closely with South Cambridgeshire District Council and local GPs in providing the Active and Healthy 4 Life Scheme.

April 2024

We've got a bumper bag of Easter activities this year, including our OFSTED registered Play Scheme, where children can enjoy trampolining, swimming, and creative crafts. Other holiday activities include Swimming Crash Courses. NB. These activities do require booking, as spaces are limited.

We also welcome the return of the national Swimathon to MSC, helping raise money for cancer research and support, so why not get involved?

May 2024

We welcome back the outdoor sports and tennis season this month. And for all you budding Wimbledon stars, courts can be hired mid-week and at weekends. Later this month, we will be running our children's holiday activities once again to coincide with the Whitsun holiday, with PlayScheme and a mixture of indoor and outdoor activities available.

June 2024

For something a bit different this Fathers' Day, how about treating your dad to his own gym membership or purchasing a gift voucher for our other activities here at Melbourn Sports? It's a great way to help a loved one get fit!

Plus, why not start planning your summer sports early this year, with our holiday courses like the Children's Sports Camps and Swimming Crash Courses on offer? Bookings taken from June onwards.

Other activities available include:

- Our usual popular swimming lessons, both group and private
- A range of aquatic exercise classes including Aqua-fit and Swim-Clinic (pool training session)
- Indoor and Outdoor Court Hire

We'd like to end with a huge thank you for your continuing support. All leisure facilities, particularly smaller ones, are struggling to survive, but with your help and patronage, we will continue to thrive!

For further details on memberships or any of our activities, please call 01763 263313 or go online at www.mc-sport.co.uk. You can also follow us on our Facebook page (melbournsports).

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