



**IB RESULTS
DAY**



**CREATIVE ARTS
SHOWCASE**



**NEW STUDENT
UNION**



Varndean
Sixth Form College

UPDATE

AUTUMN 2025

RESULTS DAY





VARDEAN SIXTH FORM COLLEGE CELEBRATES OUTSTANDING IB DIPLOMA RESULTS AND STUDENT DESTINATIONS

Vardean Sixth Form College is proud to announce another exceptional year of achievement for students on the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme. The May 2025 cohort once again demonstrated the dedication, curiosity, and resilience that define our thriving IB community.

This year's results reflected the tremendous effort and academic excellence of our students, with 50% achieving over 36 points (the equivalent of AAA at A-level) and 24% securing 40 points or more (equivalent to A* A* A) – placing them among the top-performing IB students globally. The average point score across the cohort was 34.53 at time of release, which based on historic results is likely to be well above the international average.

IB Coordinator and Director of Curriculum Quality and Development, Lee Finlay-Gray, said:

"We are immensely proud of every single IB student. The results are a testament to their hard work, intellectual ambition, and commitment to global-minded learning. Behind every score is a story of perseverance, creativity, and growth."

IB students leave Vardean Sixth Form College, not only with world-class qualifications but also as confident, compassionate and critically-minded young adults. Many are now preparing to take their next steps at leading universities in the UK and abroad. 86% of university applicants secured places at Russell Group institutions.



SOME OF THIS YEAR'S SUCCESSSES INCLUDE:

- **Ayla Mackrory-Jamieson** (formerly Downlands Community School) - 44 points
- Politics and International Relations, London School of Economics.
- **Melissa Nielsen-Williams** (formerly The Turing School) - 42 points - Spanish and English Literature, University of Edinburgh.
- **Tom Vanstone** (formerly of Warden Park Academy) - 40 points - Mathematics, University of Glasgow.
- **Maya Mcdevitt** (formerly Dorothy Stringer) - 40 points - Geography with Environmental Mathematics, University of Leeds.
- **Mia Reid** (formerly Davisons CE High School, Worthing) - 40 points - English Literature & History, University of Manchester.
- **Misa Hayamizu-Dennis** (formerly Vardean School) - 37 points - Psychology, University of Bristol (2026)
- **Adam Alexander** (formerly Lewes Old Grammar) - 35 points - Finance: Business & Management, University of Exeter



EDUCATION & EARLY YEARS STUDENTS GET OFF TO A FUN START



Our Education and Early Years T Level students have had a fun start to the academic year. To assist with their learning on child development, they made playdough, cloud dough and oobleck, all great for teaching children maths concepts, developing fine motor skills and promoting language development. They have also played a range of games, including the parachute game, enabling them to learn about the skills involved in children's cognitive development, memory and concentration.

In October, students were trained in how to keep children and babies safe. Sarah Russell-Davis from Daisy First Aid, came in to deliver the Level 3 Paediatric First Aid Qualification to our students. This was a great opportunity for our learners to gain the qualification they will need to work in an early year's setting, ahead of their placement start date. We are delighted to say that 100% passed and gained their qualification! Well done to everyone and thank you to the lovely Sarah who taught them so well.

Later in October, Helen Bullingham from the Oral Health Promotion Team visited students to teach them about good oral hygiene and how to promote it with the children and families.



In addition to academic success, our students have embraced a rich programme of enrichment, community engagement and creativity through the IB's unique core elements—Theory of Knowledge, the Extended Essay, and CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service).

Principal Donna-Marie Janson commented:

"These results demonstrate the power of the IB Diploma to shape ambitious, inquisitive, and socially-conscious young people. We are so proud of their achievements and cannot wait to see how they continue to flourish and contribute to the world beyond Varndean Sixth Form College."

With its emphasis on critical thinking, intercultural understanding and academic breadth, the IB Diploma continues to offer a distinctive and transformative educational experience at Varndean Sixth Form College. We warmly congratulate the 'Class of 2025' and wish them every success in their exciting journeys ahead.



EARLY YEARS SUCCESSES

The Early Years Department are celebrating huge successes on the final cohort of the Cache Technical Diploma in Childcare and Education. 100% of students passed the course with 57% gaining an A grade or above, which sits well above national average. Four students secured places at universities including Durham, Brighton, Nottingham Trent and Norland and five gained full time employment in local nurseries as Early Years Educators. We are so proud of all the hard work and determination of our students and wish them every success in their future careers!



Varndean Sixth Form College celebrated another phenomenal year of exam success in the summer, as students achieved outstanding A Level and Level 3 vocational results. These impressive outcomes are a testament to the unwavering commitment, talent, and hard work of both students and staff.

The College recorded an impressive A Level pass rate of 98%, with over 50% of students securing top grades of A*-B and a quarter achieving a coveted A* or A grade, the highest ever. Over three-quarters of students achieved grades between A*-C, reflecting a consistent rise in academic performance.

Success also extended to vocational qualifications, where the College achieved an overall pass rate of 98%, with over 50% of students

earning the highest possible grades of Distinction or Distinction*. Our Early Years Department celebrated huge success with 100% of their students passing the CACHE Technical Diploma in Childcare and Education, with 57% gaining an A grade or above. This underlines Varndean Sixth Form College's strength across a diverse range of courses.

College Principal Donna-Marie Janson shared her pride in the results, saying:

"We are thrilled to see our students achieve such fantastic results. Their drive, resilience, and determination have truly paid off, and today we celebrate not just grades but the individual journeys and effort behind them. Our dedicated staff have played a vital role in supporting and inspiring our students every

step of the way. I am so proud of what we've achieved together as a college community, and I look forward to seeing our students continue to flourish in whatever path they take next. Congratulations to each and every one of you – you've absolutely earned this success."

Varndean Sixth Form College continues to stand out as one of the top educational providers in Sussex. Renowned for its high academic standards and inclusive ethos, the College offers a transformative learning experience that equips students not only for university and careers, but also for life beyond education. With a focus on excellence, personal growth, and well-being, Varndean Sixth Form College remains a place where every student thrives.

VARNDEAN SIXTH FORM COLLEGE CELEBRATES HIGHEST EVER RESULTS





HERE ARE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF VARNDEAN SIXTH FORM COLLEGE'S STUDENT SUCCESS THIS YEAR:

Maria Wakeham (formerly Downlands Community School), who achieved an outstanding 3 A* grades and 1 A grade, plus an A* in the Extended Project Qualification, and is now studying Classics at the University of Cambridge.

Ella Anderson (formerly Varndean School), who achieved 3 A* grades and is also now at the University of Cambridge studying Natural Sciences.

Lysander Pierce (formerly Dorothy Stringer School), who achieved A*AA, (plus A* in the EPQ), now studying English & French at the University of Bristol.

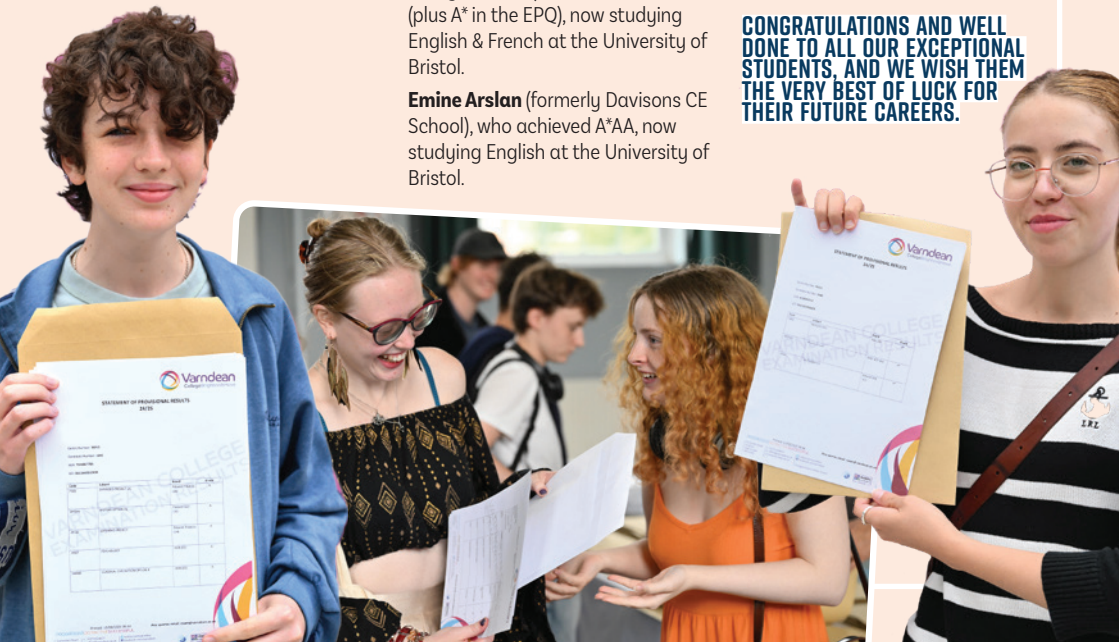
Emine Arslan (formerly Davisons CE School), who achieved A*AA, now studying English at the University of Bristol.

Artemii Teplov (formerly Peacehaven School), who achieved A*A and Distinction*, now studying Computer Science and Mathematics at Loughborough University.

Ellen Benant (formerly Brighton Girls), who achieved AAB (plus A* in the EPQ), now studying Psychology at University of Sheffield.

Ben Chalmers (formerly of Priory School, Lewes) AAA (plus A in the EPQ), studying History, University of Manchester.

CONGRATULATIONS AND WELL DONE TO ALL OUR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS, AND WE WISH THEM THE VERY BEST OF LUCK FOR THEIR FUTURE CAREERS.





CREATIVE ARTS SHOWCASE DAZZLES AUDIENCES WITH PHENOMENAL DISPLAYS



The winners were:

Rufus Marsh Design Prize
for 3D Design: **Rhys Griffiths**

Emerging Textiles Artist Award:
Georgina Dawson

Graphic Design Award: **Toby Hawes**

Aslan King & Nico Hicks Memorial
Award for Fine Art: **Freya Hatch and
Meadow Ravenhill**

Anne Howard Memorial Award:
Jett Vincent

Young Filmmaker Award:
Ben Hernandez

Best Media Product:
Sylvie Thackray

Best Short Film Award:
Constance Groves

Game Developer of the Year:
Evie Bates

Music Technology Prize:
Oscar Clarke

Sam Paterson Award for Drama
and Performing Arts:
Alice Burton and Libby Pook

Distance Danced 2025:
Ruby Rayment

Varndean Sixth Form College's annual Creative Arts Showcase took place in June, dazzling audiences with a phenomenal display and celebration of talent across all our Creative Arts courses! From captivating Dance and Drama performances to stunning Art, Textiles, Photography, Graphic Design and 3D Design displays, visitors had the opportunity to experience the immense talent of all our students. Guests also immersed themselves in the innovative worlds of Film Studies, Film Production, Media Studies, Music Production, and even Gaming – all crafted by our brilliant students. A true testament to the incredible creativity and passion of our tutors and the students they teach.

As part of the Showcase, the College also celebrated the outstanding work of its Creative Arts students by culminating in an awards ceremony to honour their exceptional talent and dedication. The ceremony recognised achievements spanning creative innovation, technical skill, and artistic vision.

The Showcase once again proved to be an inspiring testament to the talent, passion, and hard work of our students, shining a spotlight on the next generation of creative leaders. Congratulations to everyone!

Following on from the Creative Arts Showcase was our public Visual Arts

Exhibition which took place on Wed 11 and Thurs 12 June where visitors could view the incredible work of our 3D Design, Fine Art, Graphic Design, Photography and Textiles students.





CAREERS NEWS

Our first Careers Spotlight in Modern Foreign Languages took place in June. Organised by Spanish tutor, Ramon Oblanca Rogo, Spanish IB and A level students enjoyed a very inspiring talk by guest speaker, Taline Helpert, who shared her experience of working in South America. The talk was delivered in Spanish and students were given the opportunity to ask questions and to find out more about Peace Brigades International and the amazing work they undertake in Central and South America. Hopefully students now have a better idea of what it is like to work for a NGO and might even follow in Taline's footsteps!

During the summer, we were also delighted to welcome one of our ex-Vardean alumni back to college, Dr. Magda Lech, who studied the IB Diploma with us.

Magda visited the college to deliver a masterclass on pain perception and the neural pathways that register the sensation of pain in the brain. She presented this to our A Level and IB Biology students, as well as to A Level Psychology students who study a crucial module on Health Psychology.

In June, Vardean Sixth Form College also hosted an 'Internship Day' for all its Year 1 students. The programme consisted of local and national employers delivering sessions such as assessment centre activities, how to effectively use social media, how to make yourself stand out from the crowd in an interview, how to improve your cv, as well as other top employment tips. Thank you to all the businesses who joined us on the occasion, our students found the day informative and engaging and left feeling very inspired.

VARDEAN SIXTH FORM COLLEGE WIN 'CAREERS CHAMPIONS AWARD' YET AGAIN!

We were delighted once again to be awarded 'Careers Champions 2025' by The Careers and Enterprise Company and West Sussex, Brighton & Hove Careers Hub, for recognition of outstanding careers provision. Local employers were asked to nominate schools and colleges who have made a significant contribution to the careers and skills agenda, so it is wonderful to have the work we are doing at Vardean Sixth Form College recognised once again.

Pictured giving out advice to prospective students at our recent Open Day are our Careers Team, from LtoR Cordelia Dobbie, Kalee Jones, Teresa Hoyles and Kirsten Joris.



RECENT TRIPS



ARMY LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE DAY

BTEC Protective Services students experienced an incredible two days at a Leadership Challenge event hosted by the South East Army Engagement Team. Students enjoyed a range of activities at the Longmoor training camp aimed at enhancing leadership and team-building skills, as well as helping to gain a deeper understanding of the different roles and careers available in the Army.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN A PLETHORA OF TRIPS

In the summer, A Level Environmental Science students carried out an ecological study at Chichester Harbour. They were taught important techniques on sampling at the site, with a view to studying the process of sand dune and saltmarsh succession at East Head Spit and Snowhill Creek. They also learnt about coastal processes, including the many plant adaptations in regions which enable them to thrive in a location which is a harsh environment for plants. Programme Leader, Naomi Lask, said "Students learnt about the features of the protected habitats, why they are threatened and how

they are being conserved. The highlight of the day was trialling sampling techniques on the sand dunes and salt marsh, using a range of equipment to collect data on species diversity and different biotic factors."

Then in June, first year Environmental Science students visited the Arundel Wetland Centre for a day of fieldwork. They



were treated to a guided tour of the centre, learning about wetland ecosystems and the different conservation strategies used by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. Particular highlights included seeing the resident pelicans and the tiny ducklings in the rearing centre! Students collected data on microclimates, and investigated biotic and abiotic factors through some pond dipping. Despite the heat the students worked enthusiastically to collect data and practice different fieldwork techniques.





Later in October, Environmental Science students then visited Wakehurst Place. They were treated to a tour of the Millennium Seed Bank, learning about the conservation strategy and how the 2.5 billion seeds are preserved, followed by a guided walk around some of the most interesting and endangered trees on the site. They were able to carry out their own fieldwork, studying the impact of abiotic factors on different plant species. It was a fascinating and informative day out, and they were lucky to enjoy some autumn sunshine too!



GEOGRAPHY STUDENTS VISIT SHOREHAM BEACH AND KNEPP ESTATE

In May, A Level Geography students spent a day on Shoreham beach, undertaking fieldwork in preparation for their independent investigations and trialling a range of methods that they might want to use in their coursework projects. They measured beach profiles, conducted questionnaires, recorded rates of longshore drift and analysed sediment.

In June, Geography students then visited the Knepp Estate to learn more about the pioneering rewilding project and to conduct some of their own research. After a short introductory talk, they were taken on a two-hour guided walking safari and lucky enough to spot storks, longhorn cattle, fallow deer, Tamworth pigs, and to see the handiwork of the resident beavers. In the afternoon students trialled more research methods related to the carbon and water cycle topics, and were also able to ask the guides for advice on careers in conservation.



RECENT TRIPS



PSYCHOLOGY TRIP TO BETHLEM

In the Spring, Year 1 Psychology students visited Bethlem: The Museum of the Mind in Kent, which is a working psychiatric hospital. Students attended a talk on its history by the resident archivist, as well as learning about how diagnosis and treatment has changed over the decades. They also participated in small group work analysing 'The Maze' by William Kurelek, which he created to depict his struggles with mental health and his time at Bethlem. Students also visited the interactive museum and took part in a brilliant Q&A session.



PROTECTIVE SERVICES STUDENTS VISIT LEWES POLICE HQ

Protective Services students visited Lewes Police HQ in May to experience lessons on crime scene investigation, self-defence and recruitment. They also visited the 999 Control Room and met some traffic police to be shown the functions of a police car and a motorcycle. Students had a thoroughly enjoyable time, learning about progression into the Police and the specialisms available thereafter. Some great feedback was received from the Police trainers about their interest and engagement.

A LEVEL BUSINESS STUDENTS GAIN INSIGHT INTO THE OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS OF GATWICK AIRPORT

In May, first year A Level Business students took the train to Gatwick Airport to learn all about the business of running an international airport.

Gatwick staff volunteered their time to describe their work and explain how Gatwick functions as a business. The session began by outlining some of the operational headlines and giving an insight into the different career paths available at Gatwick. Ex-Vardean student, Austen Symons, gave a fantastic insight into his role as an economics analyst. Charlotte Walker spoke about the huge, complex investment programme that keeps Gatwick as

arguably the busiest and most efficient single runway airport in the world. Steve Wirths, Head of Strategic Finance, finished with a quick overview of the airport's profit and loss (P&L) account and the interesting ownership structure of the business.

After the talks, students were challenged to build a bridge using some pretty flimsy pieces of wood and bulldog clips. Their competitive natures came to the fore and some fun was had watching the bridges creak as additional weights were added during the testing. One bridge managed over 12kg - an impressive feat considering the record is 14kg for that exercise. It was a fun way to finish, whilst also underlining the importance of teamwork for any successful organisation! The students then headed for the airport

eateries to experience the commercial side of Gatwick in action!





POLITICS

Politics students have had a busy and eventful start to the new academic year. Year 2 A Level and IB students attended a conference at the University of Sussex titled "Politics in a Changing World". Students engaged in lectures from university professors on Corruption in the UK, Populists in Power and the Psychology of Protest. A truly stimulating and thought-provoking day was had by all.

Then later in September, students spent a day in London visiting the UK Supreme Court, where they engaged in a tour of all three courts to acquire an understanding of why we need the court and what its function is. They then went on to visit the Houses of Parliament, where they were fortunate to be able to go inside both the House of Commons and House of Lords. It was then back to the Education Centre for a workshop where students formed parties, wrote manifestos, selected a candidate and then held a secret ballot. Last stop of the day was then Europe House to discuss UK's new relationship with the EU after Brexit.





EVENTS



Our summer and autumn terms have been jam packed with events for departing students, new students and future prospective students.

In July we held a New Students' Day where our new cohort of students joining in September had the opportunity of meeting subject tutors in preparation for their journey as a Vardean Sixth Form College student.

That same day, we said a fond farewell with a Leavers' Celebration for our fabulous Year 2 students who were leaving us for pastures new, whether that be onto higher education, apprenticeships or directly into employment.

In July, we also had the pleasure of welcoming 1800 Year 10 students from schools across Sussex at our Year 10 Taster Days. Students were able to sample four different taster sessions of their choice, as well as learn how exciting and inspirational it would be to study at Vardean Sixth Form College.

Late August was time to welcome back our new applicants into college for a week of Enrolment meetings, followed by an Induction Day to prepare students for the start of teaching. Then in October, we held a very successful New Parents' Progression

Evening in collaboration with Brighton and Sussex universities. Hosted by Sussex University, parents were able to acquire a deeper understanding of the different progression routes available to their young people and learn about the UCAS application process.

The autumn term has also seen us hold our hugely successful Open Day in late September, at which prospective students and parents for 2026 were able to discover what an exceptional place Vardean Sixth Form College is, followed in early October by an International Baccalaureate Evening for those interested in finding out more about this popular alternative to A Levels. Throughout the autumn term, senior representatives from Vardean have also been participating in our comprehensive School Liaison Programme. This has involved attending Post-16 Evenings and Careers Fairs at 22 schools across Sussex, as well as delivering talks to Year 11 students at 13 different schools in Sussex. We are now looking ahead with excitement to our Open Evening on Thursday 6 November!

In July, after more than 7 hours in the minibus, eight Politics students and their tutor finally made it to Liverpool Hope University where they took part in the European Youth Parliament UK 2025 Summer National Session.

The session theme this year was 'Harmony: Striving for understanding and unity in an ever-changing world' and participants were encouraged to form new friendships, find common ground and learn from each other.

Over the course of the session, delegates across nine individual committees worked on and debated resolutions from a wide range of issues facing Europe today. Each day provided new opportunities for participants to connect with one another, from teambuilding exercises such as a scavenger hunt, to collaborative committee work and enthusiastic debates. An inspirational time for everyone.

POLITICS STUDENTS TAKE PART IN THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT UK 2025 SUMMER NATIONAL SESSION



FRESHERS' WEEK

September saw the start of a new term and Freshers' Week for our new students. A variety of fun activities were organised by our Student Union for all new students, including Movie Monday, Twinning Tuesday, Wacky Wednesday, Table Thursday and Fest Friday.

This was followed by a Freshers' Fair on the following Monday, where students were able to collect an array of information from our college library team, careers and wellbeing team, as well as local providers such as Sussex Police, Brighton & Hove Buses, Meningitis Now, SHAC, Flourish Mentors, Allsorts Youth, Impact Initiatives, RuOk, Sussex Nightstop, YMCA, Young Carers and Brighton Food Bank.



The Varndean Politics Society has already got off to a flying start, with a recent visit by Lib Dems MP, James MacCleary on 10 October. Students asked questions on topics from AI to what the Lib Dems stand for, social mobility and education. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule.





GREEN WEEK '25



Back in March, Varndean Sixth Form College celebrated Green Week. This year, the theme was the 'circular economy', and students were encouraged to consider what this means and what steps they can take towards it.

The week started with a fantastic talk from Claire Potter, Senior Lecturer in Product Design at the University of Sussex, and author of 'Welcome to the Circular Economy, the next step in sustainable living'. Students found out more about the difference between the circular and linear economy, and were inspired by examples of innovative circular designs by Claire and her Product Design students.

Other fascinating talks during the week included a Zoom lecture by Amy Twigger Holroyd, Associate Professor of Fashion and Sustainability at the Nottingham School of Art and Design. Amy

explained the research she has done into 'fashion fictions', inspired by her concerns about fast fashion. We were also joined by Matt Traini-Cobb, Parliamentary Advisor to local Green MP Sian Berry. Matt answered student questions and helped them understand how different careers can help make a difference to the planet. Our Politics Society were joined by local Green Councillors, Kerry Pickett and Steve Davies, who explained their roles and plans to

make Brighton a more sustainable city.

A highlight of the week was planting the Varndean Orchard! What better way to promote the circular economy than growing our own fruit? The college was donated 10 apple trees as part of Thatchers Community Orchard Project, which, as part of its 2025 apple tree planting season, is helping community groups, schools and charities across the UK plant more trees this spring.

Throughout Green Week, the fantastic students from the Climate and Environment Action Group also ran the Big Clothes Swap, encouraging students to support second hand clothes by donating unwanted clothes and then 'shopping' for free. The event was hugely successful thanks to the hard work from the student group, who have made a real start on bringing about the circular economy!





PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS ATTEND ONLINE CONFERENCE

A Level & BTEC Psychology students attended an online conference in the College's fantastic new immersive classroom, which made it feel like attending in real life! Speakers included Dr Lucy Johnstone who talked about formulation theory as an emerging alternative to psychiatric diagnosis; Professor Richard Wiseman discussing optical illusions, magic & paranormal activity; Professor Adrian Owen discussing communicating with people in the grey zone; and Dr Phil Banyard discussing science & truth in Psychology.



NEW STUDENT UNION

Vardean's new Student Union Leadership team were officially elected back in April.

Pictured are our new officers donning their Vardean Sixth Form College official hoodies, together with our amazing team of outgoing officers, the College Principal, Donna-Marie Janson and Student Guidance Coordinator, Daniela Sramova.

Congratulations to the new elected team and special thanks to all who were involved in the election process.

The new team comprises of: President: Jolanta Young

President: **Toby Douglass**

Democracy Officer: **Arun Webb**

Communications Officer: **Callum Shuttlewood**

Charity Officer: **Luca Demetriou-McCallum**

EDI Officer: **Connie Stanley**

Enrichment Officer: **Condra Osaretin**

Environment Officer: **Ziggy Guldhoj**

Events & Marketing Officer: **Jovana Geris**

Welfare & Wellbeing Officer: **Hattie Harrington**

PERFORMING ARTS STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE WORKSHOP

BTEC Performing Arts students participated in a Commedia dell'Arte Workshop. Students were treated to an inspiring and energetic workshop courtesy of Cheryl Stapleton from Learning Through Theatre.

Focusing on the expressive power of Commedia dell'Arte, students embraced mask work and physical clowning to embody classic characters. This practical experience allowed them to unlock new levels of physicality and comedic timing, providing invaluable tools and insights as they progressed through their BTEC and prepared for their production of 'A Servant of Two Masters' in June.



FILM PRODUCTION STUDENTS SHORTLISTED FOR MEDIAMAG PRODUCTION COMPETITION

Congratulations to Film Production students, Max Bell, Ben Hernandez and Rosie Merat-Brandwood, whose films were shortlisted in the MediaMag Production Competition 2025 awards.

Max and Ben's film 'The Interview' and Rosie's film 'Freedom of the Sea' were both shortlisted in the 'Best Short Film' category, which included well-crafted short films covering a diverse range of forms and genres, from creepy horror and sci-fi narratives, fantasy and game-playing to family psychodramas.

The competition winners were announced at an awards ceremony at the BFI Southbank on 11 July and the judges commented that this category was perhaps their hardest task because each and every short film was personal and unique.

So huge congratulations go once again to Rosie whose film 'Freedom of the Seas' was awarded the Winner in her category. Rosie is pictured (right) receiving her trophy.

GRAPHIC DESIGN TUTOR EXHIBITS AT FESTIVAL IN BARCELONA

Back earlier in July, Varndean Sixth Form College Graphic Design tutor, Rob Macdonald, was selected to exhibit at the Experimental Photo Festival in Barcelona, where he also taught a darkroom workshop and spoke at conference.

In 'City of Ghosts', Rob merged object and image with experimental photogram technique to create a visual language that reflected the tension between the benefits of tourism and its impact on local communities. Colour digital images taken in cities, including Madrid and São Paulo, were transformed into monochrome prints in the darkroom, combined with plastic signs that were turned into graphic black-and-white outlines. The series played with patterns, lines, and structures that interrupt the image, creating a new aesthetic that explores the relationship between tourism and the city. The human figures are intentionally ambiguous, and the vintage signs from the 1960s evoke a romanticised view of travel in the past, serving as commentary on the contemporary reality of protests against mass tourism. Congratulations Rob!



ROSIE WINS BEST DOCUMENTARY IN INTO FILM AWARDS

Congratulations to Year 2 Film Production student, Rosie Merat Brandwood (formerly of Patcham High School), who recently won 'Best Documentary' category (sponsored by IMDb) in the national INTO FILM Awards 2025.

With 24 films nominated across eight filmmaking categories, the Into Film Awards celebrate and showcase the phenomenal breadth and depth of young filmmaking talent across the UK.

Rosie's documentary 'The Freedom of the Sea' depicts the story of Rosie's own family, whom, having emigrated to Brighton in the wake of the Iranian revolution in the 1970s, discuss the difficult decision to leave their home, and the way being able to swim in the sea together is a perfect encapsulation of the freedom they found in the UK.

All the filmmaking nominees were invited to an Into Film Awards ceremony at London's Odeon Luxe Leicester Square on 24 June, where a host of filmmaking talent were on hand to present the various



awards to the winners. Rosie's award was presented to her by Sally El Hosaini and Amani Simpson. The ceremony was hosted by actor, presenter and author, Rose Ayling-Ellis MBE. Congratulations Rosie, we are so proud of you!

You can watch Rosie's documentary at:
<https://www.intofilm.org/news-and-views/articles/into-film-awards-2025>

STOP PRESS: Rosie has also recently been selected as one of the nominations in CINECITY The Brighton Film Festival's 'New Voices' programme for another film of hers, 'Peaches'. The festival will run from 30 October - 16 November in venues across Brighton and the local surrounding area. Congratulations once again Rosie.

THE TALENT ACCELERATOR PROGRAMME COMES TO VARNDEAN COLLEGE

In May, Amy and Maddie from the De La Warr Pavilion's 'Talent Accelerator Programme' visited Varndean College's Creative Arts students to talk about the exciting opportunities and range of experience, placements and pathways to working in the UK's vibrant Creative Arts industry.

Visitors also included Laura Windrum from the De La Warr Pavilion itself and actor, Rachelle Diedericks, who spoke about their experiences of working in the industry and offered advice for emerging artists, designers and technicians.

The Talent Accelerator is a De La Warr Pavilion programme that supports young people (aged 5 to 25) into creative careers in East Sussex. Pictured here are our students busy signing up on the apps recommended to them in order to get started on building their profiles within the industry.





CHEMISTRY NEWS

CHEMISTRY OLYMPIAD

Congratulations to our A Level Chemistry students who achieved 9 Bronze Awards, 2 Silver and 1 Gold in this year's RSC Chemistry Olympiad.

The Chemistry Olympiad is a competition designed to challenge Year 13 students in their knowledge of Chemistry, asking them to think outside the box and apply their knowledge to current scientific problems. Most of the entrants this year were first year Chemistry students, which just shows how excellent and up for a challenge our students are!

VARDEAN'S ASPIRING MEDICINE STUDENTS COMPLETE CLINICAL CASE HISTORY WORKSHOPS

As part of Vardean Sixth Form College's 'Aspire Programme' for gifted and talented students, a unique opportunity is given for all our aspiring doctors to gain valuable knowledge and skills in clinical medicine and practice.

The Clinical Case History Workshops which are run by Biology Tutor, Yaso Shan, is a 12-week series of intensive workshops that include theory and practice of invaluable skills, as well as an opportunity to learn from doctors who are all practicing in NHS Hospitals across Sussex and the South East.

In May, the College held an awards ceremony to celebrate students' successfully completing this programme of study, with Donna-Marie Janson (Principal and CEO) presenting each student with a certificate of completion.

The event was also attended by other members of the senior leadership team, which included James Gordon; Deputy Principal and Head of Curriculum, Jo Hambleton; Assistant Principal and Aspire Coordinator, Brian Marriott; Assistant Head of Science and Biology, as well as Emma-Jayne Hanner; Med-Vet-Dent Coordinator.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY - SURFACE COATINGS GROUP POSTER COMPETITION

Congratulations to Year 2 IB student Vanessa Zhou who entered the Royal Society of Chemistry's 'Surface Coatings Group' Poster Competition and won her stream against other college students from across the country.

Students were given a choice of prompts on the subject and asked to undertake their own research to produce a poster outlining their findings. Vanessa chose "Energy Savings through Coatings - A sustainable solution for buildings" for her subject and delivered an excellent, well-thought out and designed poster.

The judging panel were made up of people from surface coating specialties with many years' experience, including a global chemical company and a professor of surface science at the University of Cambridge.



CAMBRIDGE CHEMISTRY CHALLENGE (C3L6)

Well done to our students who managed to score 4 silver awards and 4 copper awards in the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge, with one student just two marks away from a gold!

The Cambridge Chemistry Challenge (C3L6) is a competition designed to challenge Year 12 students' chemical knowledge, with questions designed to expand their understanding of the world of chemistry. Competition for C3L6 is fierce so congratulations to everyone.



SUSSEX SCHOOLS TRACK AND FIELD WINNERS

Two Vardean Sixth Form College students excelled at this summer's Sussex Schools Track & Field Championships. Gabriel Bernard Siedel (right) won the Senior Boys Hammer with a throw of 43.28m. In the Senior Girls Pole Vault Imogen Clarke (above) took first place with a jump of 3.45m. Huge congratulations to both.



DANA BALLOUL RAISES AWARENESS OF CEREBRAL PALSY

Congratulations to Vardean Sixth Form College student, Dana Balloul, who back in the summer won 3rd place in the 'Brighton Miles' competition. 'Brighton Miles' is a one-mile running, jogging, or walking event that takes place in Preston Park during the Brighton Marathon weekend.

Dana, who has Cerebral Palsy and came to the UK when she was 10 years old to escape the war in Syria, trained extremely hard and is a shining example of resilience and determination. Dana said 'I loved running in the rain, it was a great feeling and is the best way to get pain out of your heart, for example, if you're feeling down and you want to cry just run under the rain and you are going to feel so good afterwards. For me, the rain is like my friend.'

In June, Dana also attended a 'Step into Medicine' workshop at the Royal Sussex County Hospital, which was an exciting opportunity for her and other Year 12 students who are interested in a career in medicine. The

workshop, organised by University Hospitals Sussex and Brighton and Sussex Medical School, provided admissions and works experience advice, clinical case discussions, as well as conversations with current medical students and doctors. Well done Dana, we are very proud of you.





STUDENTS PRESENTED WITH ANNUAL 'UPWARDS THROUGH BUSINESS' AWARDS

Varndean Sixth Form College's annual 'Upwards Through Business' Awards took place in the Spring. Each year, the Business Studies tutors nominate a small number of students for one of the UTB awards. For 2024-25, the department had about 370 students studying across the two years, making it a very difficult decision to choose the award winners.

These awards are not simply about academic performance – the main reward for that is the grade at the end of the course. The focus of these awards is instead about the students' attitude to learning and engagement with the subject. In particular we look at perseverance, engagement, independent study, organisation and contribution to class. The teachers naturally believe that the subject is so engaging that it would be impossible to not be 100% engaged! However, life is busy and there are many conflicting pressures on a student's time and energy. These awards reflect our students' commitment and progress in the subject, and the positive impact they have on the classes they are part of.

The Principal, Donna-Marie Janson, presented the awards at a lunchtime ceremony, congratulating students for their endeavours. Donna-Marie is pictured here, along with other departmental teaching staff, with just some of the winners.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Throughout October, Varndean Sixth Form College celebrated Black History Month. This year's theme was 'Standing Firm in Power and Pride' and throughout the month our College library highlighted some of the books and resources we have available and celebrated the resilience and contributions of Black communities. Posters were also on display in our foyer reflecting the essential pillars of Black British history.

