

HOULTON END OF YEAR NEWS 2024



HOULTON
SCHOOL



Welcome from the Principal

Dear Houlton family,

I'm delighted to be able to share with you our final newsletter of the academic year; it never ceases to amaze me how much we manage to achieve together as a very small secondary community, and reading through these pages is a welcome reminder of the incredible and transformational experiences that pupils enjoy here.

Three concurrent residentials to Condover Hall, France and Spain are true testament to the commitment of our team to your children with them giving up time with their own families to make life-long memories with ours - and, of course, there was no shortage of enrichment opportunities back here at school, too, with everything from RSC workshops with professional actors to spending time with live animals in school and everything in between.

Schools are transient places and it is with some sadness that we say goodbye to a number of colleagues this summer, although there is a bitter sweetness as all are moving on to exciting things. As Lewis Carroll once wrote, 'In the end, we only regret the chances we didn't take' and in this spirit, Miss Etheridge is off on an amazing overseas adventure in Australia (we look forward to hearing all about her next chapter!); Mr Griffin, having recently welcomed a

new member to his family, is moving to a promoted post closer to home; Mr Youmans is relocating to the home of British tea up in Yorkshire and takes up a new role there; Mr Saporosi and Mr Hillman are both transitioning from Teaching Assistant to teacher training next year - though Mr Hillman will be on placement with us here, so you'll still see him around; there are also some exciting changes within the team. Mr Nash moves from Front of House to become one of our Teaching Assistants; Mrs Cooper moves from Inclusion to become our new Head of PHRSE; and Miss Warde transitions from Head of English to the senior leadership team as Assistant Principal. Consequently, there are a number of new colleagues joining us in September, a flavour of which you can see on our updated 'Meet the Team' page online, which went live yesterday.

Our little community takes another stride forward in September as we embark on supporting 720 children and their families - we earnestly look forward to this next phase of our development and to continuing to work with all of our existing families, too.

I wish you all a very safe and exciting summer holiday. See you in September.

Michael McCulley
Principal



Celebrations and Challenges at Condover Hall

Over 90 Year 7 pupils had the wonderful opportunity of visiting Shropshire's Condover Hall for a week of activities, expanding their horizons beyond the classroom. Pupils were given the opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities, both indoors and outdoors.

These included archery, giant Cluedo, run-around quiz, Jacob's ladder, fencing, conquest (inflatable laser tag), abseiling, low ropes and team challenges, dance mania, buggy building, and the ever-soggy raft building. They even got to watch the England vs. Netherlands game in the mansion, which added to the sense of celebration and fun overall.

I was genuinely proud of our Year 7's and how they threw themselves into each activity with confidence and enthusiasm, even when it was raining heavily on Thursday. They returned to Houlton much quieter and more tired than when they left, but with memories that will last for a long time. These trips could not go ahead without the staff team, and I would like to take a moment to once again thank them for taking time away from their families and for all their support and kindness they showed to our pupils during our week away.

Mr Matt Cresswell-Peters
Head of Department: Computer Science



Year 8 Amiens adventure leaves lasting impression

Year 8 pupils returned from their trip to Amiens, France, last week, brimming with excitement and unforgettable memories. The action-packed itinerary offered a perfect blend of culture, adventure, and culinary delights.

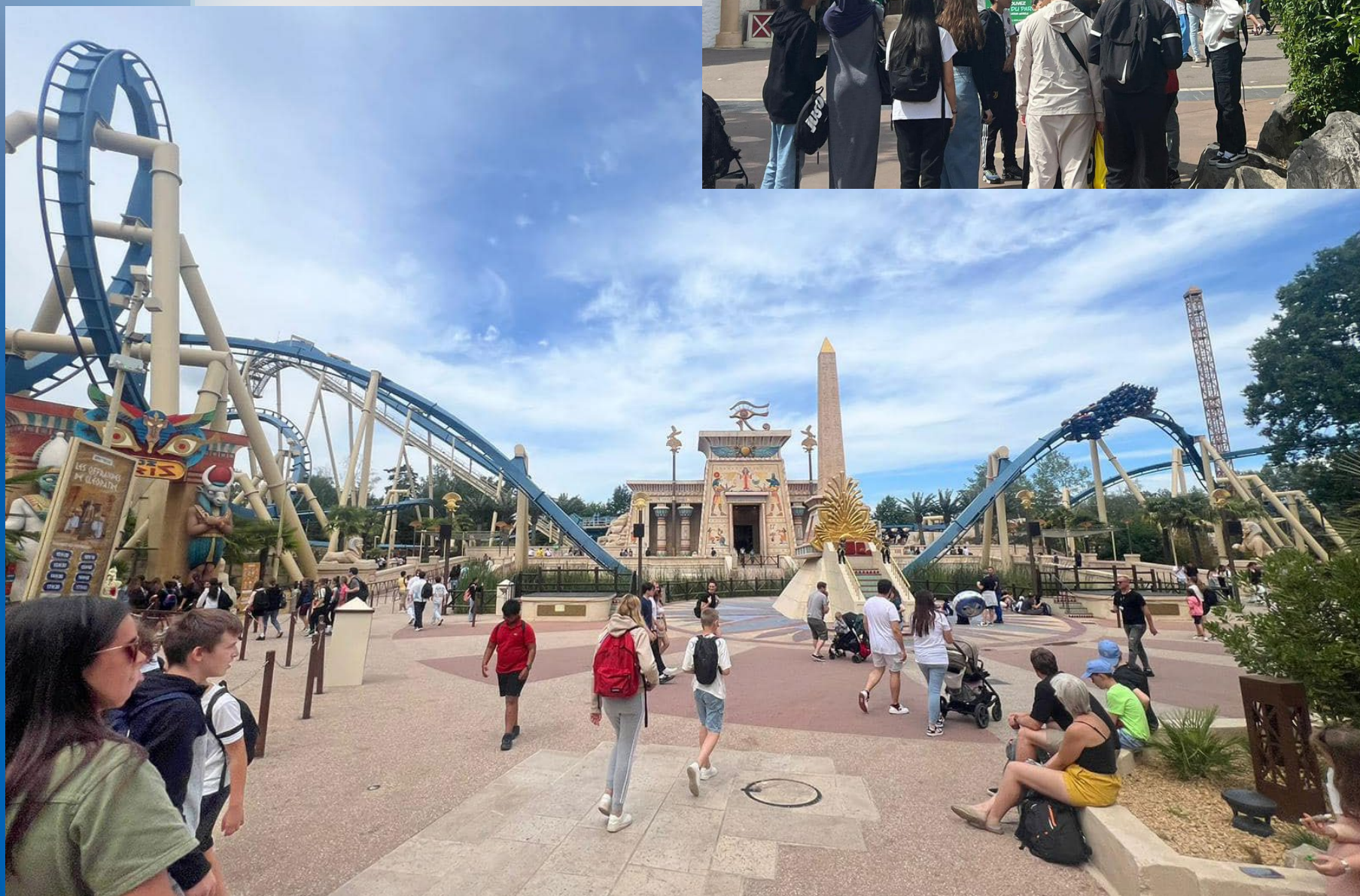
Day one saw the group exploring the unique floating gardens of the Hortillonages by boat before marvelling at the grandeur of Amiens Cathedral. A visit to Amiens Zoo provided a fun-filled afternoon, albeit with a brief but torrential downpour. The day concluded with a hearty meal at Flunch.

The following day offered a fascinating insight into French gastronomy with a visit to a snail farm, where pupils bravely sampled the local delicacy. A trip to Chocolaterie Beussent showcased the art of chocolate making, from bean to praline, tantalising taste buds along the way. The afternoon was dedicated to history and leisure, with a poignant visit to the Vimy Ridge war memorial followed by shopping at a French hypermarket and a fun-filled evening of bowling and pizza. To top off a memorable day, many pupils and staff were treated to England's thrilling Euro semi-final victory over the Netherlands.

The final day was pure adrenaline as the group headed to Parc Astérix, enjoying the thrill of numerous roller coasters and other exhilarating rides. The opportunity for a McDonald's meal rounded off the day before the journey home the next morning.

Tired but exhilarated, the pupils returned with a wealth of experiences and a newfound appreciation for French culture. This transformative trip has undoubtedly created lasting memories for all involved.

Mr Mark Couch
Teacher of Modern Languages



Excursion to Spain: A Week of Unforgettable Memories and Learning

Our recent school trip to Spain was an incredible journey filled with fun, education, and cultural immersion. Here's a recap of our exciting week!

We kicked off our adventure with a visit to the thrilling Port Aventura Theme Park. The pupils had an exhilarating time exploring the various rides and attractions. From heart-pounding roller coasters to captivating shows, the park offered something for everyone. It was a perfect start to our trip, allowing pupils to bond and make new friends.

Next, we explored the bustling Rambla, where pupils soaked up the vibrant atmosphere of one of Barcelona's most famous streets. The highlight of this part of our journey was our visit to Parc Guell, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Pupils marvelled at Gaudí's whimsical architecture and learned about his unique contribution to modernism. We concluded this day with a special tapas evening meal, featuring all the dishes we had studied in school. It was a delicious way to deepen our appreciation for Spanish cuisine.

Our adventure continued with visits to some of Barcelona's most iconic sights. We started with the awe-inspiring Sagrada Família, where pupils were amazed by the intricate details of Gaudí's masterpiece. Following this,

we took a scenic ride on the Montjuic Cable Car, offering stunning views of Barcelona. The day ended with a visit to Montjuic Castle, where pupils learned about the historical significance of this fortress while enjoying panoramic views of the city.

After an incredible few days it was time to head back home. Pupils returned to England carrying with them a wealth of memories and a deeper understanding of the Spanish language and culture.

This trip was more than just a city break; it was an educational experience that brought Spanish lessons to life. Pupils not only had a fantastic time but also gained invaluable insights into a different culture, enhancing their language skills and broadening their horizons. Here's to more adventures and lifelong memories!

Mr Matthieu Raffy
Head of Faculty: Modern Languages



Success for Brilliant Year 7 Scholars

27 Year 7 pupils attended a graduation event at the University of Warwick to celebrate their successful completion of the Brilliant Club's Scholars' Programme.

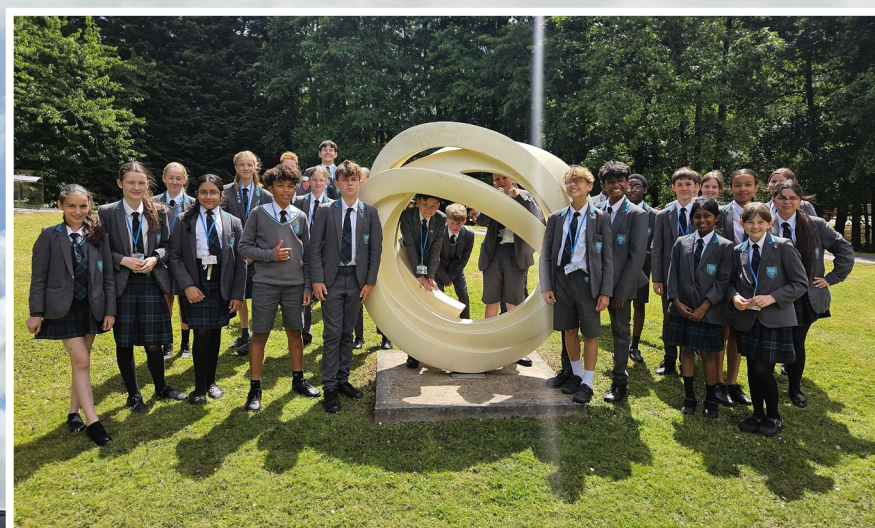
While some completed an English critical thinking course, others explored global warming and ways of reducing CO₂ for our local community. Following five tutorials with a PhD expert, pupils completed a challenging assignment on their topics and acted on the feedback given to make excellent progress and produce some outstanding work.

As well as listening to keynote speakers, pupils went on a fabulous walking tour of Warwick University's campus with our two student ambassadors, Phoebe (studying Medicine) and Kushan (studying Business). They both shared valuable insights into their experience of university life and what the amazing campus has to offer.

Our two PhD tutors, Alex and Rachel, were so impressed with the pupils. Rachel told me they were 'a lovely group to teach' who 'worked hard'; Alex said they 'performed excellently'. To receive this praise from such highly educated professionals is a real honour.

I can't wait to discover what courses our Scholars' Programme pupils will study next academic year.

Ms Angela Lancini
Assistant Principal



Tantalising Tessellations!

We are thrilled to announce the results of our Mathematics Tessellation Art Competition!

This annual event showcases the creative and mathematical talents of our Year 7 pupils as they explore the fascinating world of tessellations.

This year, we received numerous outstanding entries that demonstrated both artistic flair and mathematical precision. Tessellations, the art of tiling a plane using one or more geometric shapes with no overlaps or gaps, offer a unique blend of creativity and logic, and our pupils rose to the challenge beautifully.

We are proud to reveal that the winning entry for this year is titled "Kwazy Katz".

This exceptional piece was created by Serena, 7M, who used an imaginative design of interlocking cat shapes. The clever design, intricate patterns, and vibrant colours of "Kwazy Katz" stood out as a true masterpiece of tessellation art. Serena won a new art set to help support her creative talents.

We would also like to celebrate our two runners-up, Isabelle, 7O, and Sophie, 7S, for their "Miss Etheridge" inspired and lion tessellation pieces. We would also like to commend all participants for their hard work and creativity. Each entry reflected a unique perspective and an impressive understanding of tessellations.

Thank you to all who participated in and supported this competition. We look forward to seeing even more incredible tessellation art in next year's competition!



Junior Maths Kangaroo

We are delighted to share some exciting news about one of our talented pupils, Kieran, 7M, who recently competed in the prestigious Junior Maths Kangaroo Competition.

This international mathematics competition is known for challenging pupils with problems that test their logical reasoning, problem-solving skills, and mathematical creativity.

Kieran's achievement in this competition is a testament to his commitment and enthusiasm for mathematics. The UKMT invites pupils to take part following their Junior Maths Challenge score and so we are incredibly proud that Kieran had this opportunity to represent Houlton School in this competition.

Next year, Kieran will be moving up to the Intermediate Maths Challenge as he joins Year 9 and we wish him and others who will take part in Year 8 good luck in the future.





Houlton School extends heartfelt congratulations to all participants for their exemplary performance and commitment.

Each student's effort and enthusiasm have made our school proud, and we look forward to seeing their continued success in future challenges. Thank you to our dedicated maths teachers for their support and encouragement, and to the families who cheered on our athletes every step of the way.

Go Houlton School!

Miss Jasmine Etheridge
Head of Faculty: Mathematics & Numeracy

National Junior Maths Challenge Makes Houlton School Proud

We are delighted to share the outstanding results of the National Junior Maths Challenge, where our talented pupils from Years 7 and 8 showcased their mathematical brilliance.

Selected by their maths teachers based on class work, aptitude, and assessment results, over a hundred pupils rose to the occasion and represented Houlton School with distinction.

We are particularly pleased to announce the exceptional achievements of Kieran P and Olivia K, who both earned the prestigious Gold Standard.

Additionally, Kieran was honoured with the Best in School award for his remarkable performance.

The competition was tough, but our pupils excelled, with 12 pupils attaining the Silver Standard and 22 pupils achieving the Bronze Standard.

These accolades are a testament to the hard work, dedication, and passion our pupils have for mathematics.

Mr Vijay Malhi
Teacher of Mathematics

Science Star Dome

By Izzy and Lauren, 70

In science, Year 7 have been learning all about physics and the topic of space. We all had the opportunity to see a professional star dome! After some basic safety instructions, we all entered the dome which was blanketed with stars and the infinite black.

First, we were able to choose one of the eight planets in our solar system. We got to explore all the facts and figures in this experience and learn more about each individual planet. Did you know Saturn has 146 moons? Later, they showed us that connecting the stars can reveal constellations.

We had the joy of learning all about the stars and constellations, and the stories behind their names, such as Hercules. The star tells the story of a demigod who must complete some tasks to prove himself to Zeus, the king of the gods. He also fights multiple constellations, like Draco the dragon! The experience of learning all about stars was very thrilling yet relaxing.

After all of this, we were asked to carefully exit the dome. We were all extremely disappointed for this amazing journey across space to end, but we were able to ask interesting questions to the wonderful and knowledgeable team that made the dome experience happen.

We also want to say a big thank you to the teachers who set up this trip. We are incredibly grateful.

Mr Aaron Griffin
Head of Faculty: Science and Computer Science

Exciting Advances in Computer Science Curriculum This Term

This term in Computer Science we have started work on Python with Year 8, advanced computer skills with Year 9, and animation with Year 7, along with finishing our binary and LOGIC unit.

Year 9 began to develop pupils IT skills ready for GCSE, regardless of their subject. Computers and their software can be an amazing support tool during pupils' studies. One of our key areas was referencing and how using Microsoft Word can be used to make this process much easier and time efficient.

Year 8 pupils have dived into the world of Python and developed their understanding of this coding language, ready for further development next year. So far, we have covered creating variables, syntax, and logic errors, as well as implementing inputs and outputs. Python is a key programming language for our curriculum at KS3 and KS4 and has real world implementations. For example, Netflix uses Python to develop and maintain its website and mobile apps. (More information on this can be found at netflixtechblog.com – article name – Python at Netflix)

Year 7 worked fantastically in our binary unit and gained a greater understanding of how computers run. We then looked at the introduction of animation to the silver screen and pupils had the opportunity to work on Piskal to create some basic sprites.

In addition to our main topic work, pupils have been introduced to iDEA, one of the online platforms we plan to use next year to aid pupils in developing their understanding of the real-world applications of computing. Every pupil will have access to the bronze, silver and gold badges and will need to complete a series of minimum requirements for each section. Apart from the citizen section, where pupils will be expected to complete specific units, they will be able to select their own units to complete.

Mr Matt Cresswell-Peters
Head of Department: Computer Science

Exploring World Religions

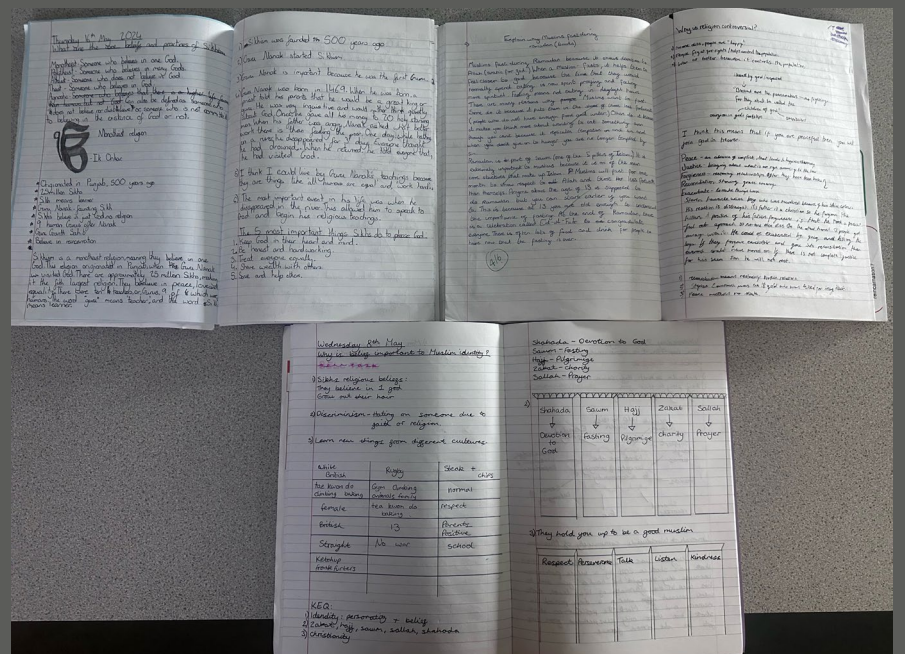
This academic year, our Key Stage 3 (KS3) pupils have embarked on a journey through our Religious Education (RE) curriculum, exploring into three captivating topics each year.

They explored the richness of world religions, from Christianity and Islam to Hinduism and Sikhism, gaining a deep appreciation for diverse beliefs and practices. This exploration has fostered a culture of respect and understanding within our school community, teaching pupils to value the cultures that surround them.

In addition to understanding world religions, our pupils tackled ethical and moral questions, enhancing their critical thinking skills. They engaged in spirited debates on justice, human rights, and the role of religion in contemporary society.

These discussions have not only sharpened their ability to articulate and defend their views but also taught them the importance of listening and considering multiple perspectives. Through RE, our pupils are not just learning about different faiths but are becoming thoughtful, open-minded individuals prepared to navigate and contribute to our diverse world.

Miss Dupinder Ghatora
Head of Religious Studies



Enrichment Week English Activities

English played a huge part in this year's Enrichment Week.

Find out what pupils have been up to using their literary skills:

"Fair is foul and foul is fair!" - Houlton pupils experience 'Macbeth' at the Royal Shakespeare Company

During Enrichment Week, 17 of our very lucky pupils took a trip to Stratford-upon-Avon to visit the birthplace of the incomparable playwright and our college ambassador, William Shakespeare.

Led by RSC veteran practitioner Conor, they got to experience some professional drama games, were introduced to Shakespearean language and got to grips with the plot of 'Macbeth' whilst using a professional rehearsal space. Jasmine (8M) said, "I've learned to feel more confident when it comes to acting and performing."

The day concluded with a whistle-stop performance of 'Macbeth' to showcase some of their new skills, as well as "teamwork, resilience and collaboration." – **Georgina (7W)**

"Shiver-me-timbers!" - There's treasure to be found at Houlton School!

Racing around, looking for, and unriddling clues is what one hundred and fifty pupils have been doing this term! Using their knowledge of the site, prior literary learning, and decoding skills, each group was able to solve the mystery and find the pirates' treasure!

"The riddles were a bit tricky, but I had fun and I enjoyed the teamwork. My favourite part was all the running around and I was part of the winning team!" – **Lexi (8W)**

A bit of fruit... for thought! - Houlton pupils get hands on with their creative writing!

As part of the creative writing workshop, pupils developed sensory poems based on their fruit salads, and scripts inspired by Edward Hopper's 'Nighthawks.' This gave pupils the opportunity to express themselves in different forms and promoted figurative rather than literal thinking.

"It was nice to be able to use my creativity for something other than schoolwork. I'm usually reading, so this time it's nice to be the author. I especially enjoyed the 'Nighthawks' as this plays into what I'm interested in: thrillers, crime and mystery." – **Mehk (8O)**



Strawberries on the beach by Happiness, Jasmine & Olivia (8M)

Strawberries in a picnic box, or ruby red jewels in a treasure box?

The juice turns into pink lemonade, better than the rest!

Miniscule, sunny yellow seeds transform into vast desert islands in the distance.

The sliced strawberries smell of fruit growing in the vegetation, wafting through the summer breeze.

Damp, mushy strawberries become the texture of once round sandcastles, broken down by the tide with ease.

The taste of the fresh fruit reminds you of nostalgic childhood holidays at the seaside, accompanied with the soft buzz of children laughing in the background, practically being able to taste the soft-serve ice-cream on waffle cones.

Miss Claire Schofield
Second in Department: English



Creative Champions 2024!

Six more Houlton School pupils join the growing list of incredible pupils who champion creativity at every opportunity.

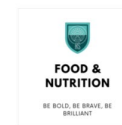
It is without question that the following award winners have not only demonstrated creativity but have championed it at every opportunity and, at times, exceeded both mine and their own expectations.

These pupils have employed creativity across all subjects and continue to provoke, inspire, and capture all that is great about art, design and food.

We are excited for these pupils to partake in several leadership opportunities over the coming academic year.

Huge Congratulations!

By Mr Russell Hill
Head of Faculty: Creative [Art/DT/Food/Photography]



Chef Award for Excellence

**Isla Van
Lawrence**



Designer Award for Excellence

**James
Charlotte**



Artist Award for Excellence

**Molly
Oliver**

Spanish

This term, our Year 7 pupils have been busy learning how to express their future plans in Spanish. Through engaging lessons and interactive activities, they have mastered phrases like “voy a” (I am going to).

Whether planning a dream vacation or setting future career goals, our pupils are now equipped to articulate their aspirations with confidence.

Our Year 8 pupils have embarked on an exciting journey with “Don Quijote de la Mancha.” This classic novel has sparked their

imaginations and provided rich content for exploring Spanish culture and language. In addition, the pupils had the unique opportunity to see the play “Reserva Duplicada,” performed by Mario and Laura.

This live performance not only brought their studies to life but also showcased the talents of their exceptional actors.

Year 9 pupils explored deeper into the vibrant world of Spanish festivals. From the lively celebrations of La Tomatina to the solemn processions of Semana Santa, pupils have explored the traditions, history, and cultural significance of these events.

Each year group has made significant strides in their understanding and appreciation of the Spanish language and culture this term. We are incredibly proud of their achievements and look forward to seeing how they will continue to grow in their futures.

Ms Carola Casanovas
Head of Spanish

Food Preparation and Nutrition

Year 9

Continuing the theme of Afternoon Tea, Year 9 pupils have been creating savoury dishes with their own seasoning of choice. They have been making ham, cheese and chive scones, looking particularly at the styling of a traditional scone to change the appearance and make it appealing.

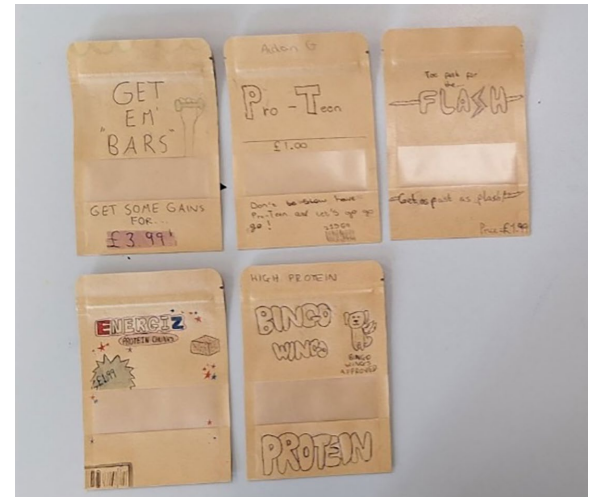
Year 9s have then created their own themed afternoon tea menus, incorporating some of the traditional aspects.



Year 8

Shaping and combining have been the main skills that our Year 8 pupils have been developing, with an understanding of the combinations of ingredients that make up wholesome protein dishes.

Pupils have been particularly looking at high biological value ingredients and low biological value ingredients. Pupils have incorporated the brunoise technique with an onion into mince. Then they seasoned and shaped individual meatballs, or Quorn and created their own sauce.



Year 7

Pupils have been busy researching and understanding different types of ingredients that provide the body with protein.

They have created some packaging to accompany their protein bites.

Mrs Baldeep Dvgun
Teacher of Food Preparation and Nutrition



National Art Bytes Award

Secondary schools across the country submitted artwork from the most talented year 9 pupils for the National Art Bytes competition. We were thrilled to receive the news that Oliver H (9 Winton) was awarded first place in the public vote!

Making its way to the national finals, Oliver's work, titled 'Line Drawing,' impressed the judging panel so much that they awarded him both the regional and national secondary prizes.

Russell Hill, Head of Faculty: Creative, said: "German-Swiss artist Paul Klee once described drawing as 'taking a line for a walk' and Oliver's work plays somewhere between the formal and informal acts of drawing.

"In essence, this is a three-dimensional drawing that looks beyond the constraints of traditional mediums such as pen and paper. Oliver reconsiders the practice of drawing and its capacity to change and evolve. I am thrilled that this mature piece of work has been recognised by the judges and his peers."

The judges described the work as "beautiful, lovely and strong work," and we couldn't agree more.

We are hugely proud of all the pupils that submitted their work and in particular, Houlton School's finalists.

Mr Russell Hill
Head of Faculty: Creative [Art/DT/Food/Photography]



SHREK the Musical Jr. - A Roaring Success!

This past term, our school auditorium was transformed into a magical, swampy wonderland as our talented pupils took to the stage to perform SHREK the Musical Jr.

The adaptation of the beloved animated film brought laughter and an overwhelming sense of pride. The cast's energy and enthusiasm made each performance truly unforgettable.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the incredible cast and crew for their hard work and dedication. Your commitment to rehearsals, seamless scene changes, and creative set and costume designs ensured a flawless production.

A special thank you goes out to our senior leadership team, front of house staff, and site team for their unwavering support. Your encouragement and contributions were invaluable. Thank you to everyone who attended, supported, and believed in this production.



Bravo to all for making SHREK the Musical Jr. a triumphant showcase of our school's talent and spirit, and we look forward to welcoming you to our musical next year!

Mr Peter Bridgwood
Head of Music

Performing Arts – Dance

Pupils Shine at Festival on the Close

On 25th June, Houlton's budding performers had the incredible opportunity of participating in Rugby School's annual Festival on the Close, a five-day celebration of culture, creativity and community.

This year, the highlight of the festival was undoubtedly the presence of the world-famous theatre percussion group, STOMP. Our pupils spent the entire day in workshops and rehearsals with STOMP professionals, culminating in an unforgettable evening performance on the festival stage.

The day began with an introduction to the basic techniques of percussion, rhythm, and movement, with activities designed to develop teamwork and synchronisation.

The pupils were divided into smaller groups, each guided by a STOMP member who taught them how to use pipes, water bottles, and even their bodies to create intricate beats. By the afternoon, the pupils were proficiently creating complex rhythms and eagerly rehearsing for the evening's performance.

The collaborative piece between student-stompers and professional stompers was a fabulous display of rhythm and movement. The pupils executed their parts with confidence and enthusiasm, earning cheers and applause from the audience. The performance was a testament to the pupils' professionalism, dedication and the outstanding guidance of the STOMP professionals.

A huge congratulations to all the pupils involved.

Miss Frankie Connolly
Head of Dance



Mindful Makes and Pride & Allies Clubs

It has been another busy term in Mindful Makes and Pride & Allies Clubs.

Pupils have planned and participated in activities such as the ever-popular fruit kebabs, tomato slice planting, Easter pompoms, rocky road, sports day college banners and miniature worry dolls.

Both groups continue to grow as we look forward to welcoming our new intake in September.

Miss Annie Divver
Year 9 PEL, Mental Health and First Aid Lead



PE

Sports Day 2024

Our sports day this year was a huge success, with over 540 pupils taking part in various sporting activities across the day.

Pupils competed against other colleges in rounders, cricket, handball, tug of war and track events. It was great to see the team spirit amongst colleges and the sportsmanship shown throughout.

Across the day, pupils competed to win points for their colleges in order to win the college shield. Pupils were also awarded individual points for showing any of the Houlton school values. Many pupils were awarded points for sportsmanship and kindness.

Previous winners:

2022 – Winton
2023 – Winton
2024 – Morse



A massive congratulations to Morse College for winning sports day this year! A new name on the sports day shield and a thoroughly deserved win for their efforts on the day.

A huge thank you to all the staff that helped out on the day to ensure the pupils had an enjoyable experience.

We would also like to acknowledge some pupils who have gone above and beyond in PE this year and those individuals will be recognised in the end of year extravaganza for their efforts in PE.

Year 7 – Charlotte B (7A), Jonny M (7W), Adley (7O)

Year 8 – Lilane C (8A), Austin B (8D), Natasha (8M)

Year 9 – Sofia M (9W), Lacey G (9W), Rodrigo (9A)

These pupils have shown the following qualities:

- Resilience
- Leadership
- Perseverance
- Kindness
- Willingness to improve
- Commitment to co-curricular clubs and fixtures
- Punctuality and Organisation
- Going above and beyond to help staff and pupils



We look forward to welcoming our pupils back in September for another year full of exciting opportunities in sports! Our fixtures and clubs will be up and running as soon as possible!

Please follow our Twitter page for all news regarding fixtures, results and PE department news. @HoultonPEdept

Mrs Abbie Oldham
Head of PE





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