

# HOULTON OCTOBER NEWS 2025



HOULTON  
SCHOOL



## Welcome from the Head of School

### Dear Parents and Carers,

**I am delighted to introduce myself as the new Head of School at Houlton School. Over the past eight weeks, it has been an absolute pleasure getting to know our wonderful students, staff, and wider community. I have felt incredibly welcomed and am already so proud to be part of such a vibrant and forward-thinking school.**

I am very much looking forward to working alongside Mr. Paul Brockwell as we lead Houlton School into the next exciting phase of its journey. Together, we are committed to ensuring that every student

continues to thrive — academically, socially, and personally — as part of our growing school community.

We also want to work closely with you. We know how important a strong and positive relationship is with our parents, so we are going to be launching parent forums and parent surgeries to ensure that you have plenty of opportunities to have your thoughts and views heard. We can always achieve more by working together.

As we look ahead, I would like to remind families that next term is a seven-week term, and we have a fantastic range of activities, experiences, and opportunities planned for our students — both inside

and outside the classroom. It promises to be another busy and rewarding chapter for everyone at Houlton.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. I am truly looking forward to working closely with parents and carers in the months ahead as we continue to make Houlton School a place where every student can succeed and flourish.

Warm regards,

**Lorna Pountney**  
Head of School





# Duke of Edinburgh's Award 2025

We are so pleased that so many students will be taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) programme once again this academic year. We will be running our Bronze Award for Year 9 and Silver Award for Year 10 participants.

The DofE Award is one of the most respected and transformative youth programmes in the UK, inspiring young people to step outside their comfort zones and challenge themselves in meaningful ways. Whether they are volunteering in the local community, learning a new skill, getting active, or embarking on an adventurous expedition, participants grow in confidence, independence, and self-belief.

At Houlton School, the DofE programme perfectly reflects our core values of Innovation, Aspiration, and Excellence. Students demonstrate innovation by developing new skills and finding creative solutions to challenges; aspiration through setting ambitious personal goals and showing commitment to achieving them; and excellence by working as part of a team, showing resilience, and striving to be their very best throughout their journey.

The DofE Award is also highly valued by colleges, universities, and employers. We strongly encourage parents and carers to support their child in this year's programme and to help them make the most of this outstanding opportunity.

Please send any questions directly to the DofE Manager [hunterj@houlton.tlet.org.uk](mailto:hunterj@houlton.tlet.org.uk), if you require further information about this year's programme.

**Mr James Hunter**  
DofE Manager



## Performing Arts Students Gear Up for a Show-Stopping Winter Festival!

Our talented BTEC Performing Arts students are busy preparing for an exciting season of performances that promise to light up the stage this winter.

Our Year 10 performers are currently rehearsing for this year's pantomime, Rick Whittington.

This lively production will see our actors and dancers joining forces for a fun-filled, collaborative show that will tour six local primary schools in the area.

Last year's tour was a huge hit, and we can't wait to bring the magic of pantomime back to our community once again. The production

will also feature as part of the upcoming Houlton Performing Arts Winter Festival.

Meanwhile, our Year 11 BTEC students are hard at work rehearsing a condensed version of Chicago: The Musical. This stylish and energetic performance will showcase the incredible talent and dedication of our senior students, who will also present their work at the Winter Festival.

The Houlton Performing Arts Winter Festival will run from 16th–18th December, featuring

nightly performances from Rick Whittington, Chicago, the Performing Arts Scholars Society, and the Dance Club.

Audiences will also get a special sneak preview of our next major production, Little Shop of Horrors, with a number performed by the cast.

Don't miss your opportunity to see the Winter Festival - tickets are expected to sell out fast, so be sure to keep an eye out for more details coming soon!

## Little Shop of Horrors 2026

Excitement is growing across the school as preparations for this year's musical, Little Shop of Horrors, get underway! After a round of highly successful auditions, our talented cast has been announced, and rehearsals are in full swing.

Students have hit the ground running, learning music, choreography, and scenes for what will be a spectacular production (with a few surprises along the way!)

We're thrilled to announce that audiences won't have to wait too long to get a taste of the show - our cast will be performing a special preview at the Performing Arts Winter Festival, taking place from 16th to 18th December 2025.

Save the Date: Be sure to join us for the full performances of Little Shop of Horrors from 24th to 26th March 2026, where our talented students will bring this cult-classic musical to life on stage - mark your calendars and stay tuned for ticket details soon!

**Mr Peter Bridgwood**  
Head of Faculty: Performing Arts [Music]



# Discovery in Action!

The science labs have been buzzing with activity across all key stages this term!

Our Key Stage 3 Science Club members have embraced engineering challenges, focusing on aerodynamics by building and testing paper planes and creating inventive cardboard contraptions. Meanwhile,

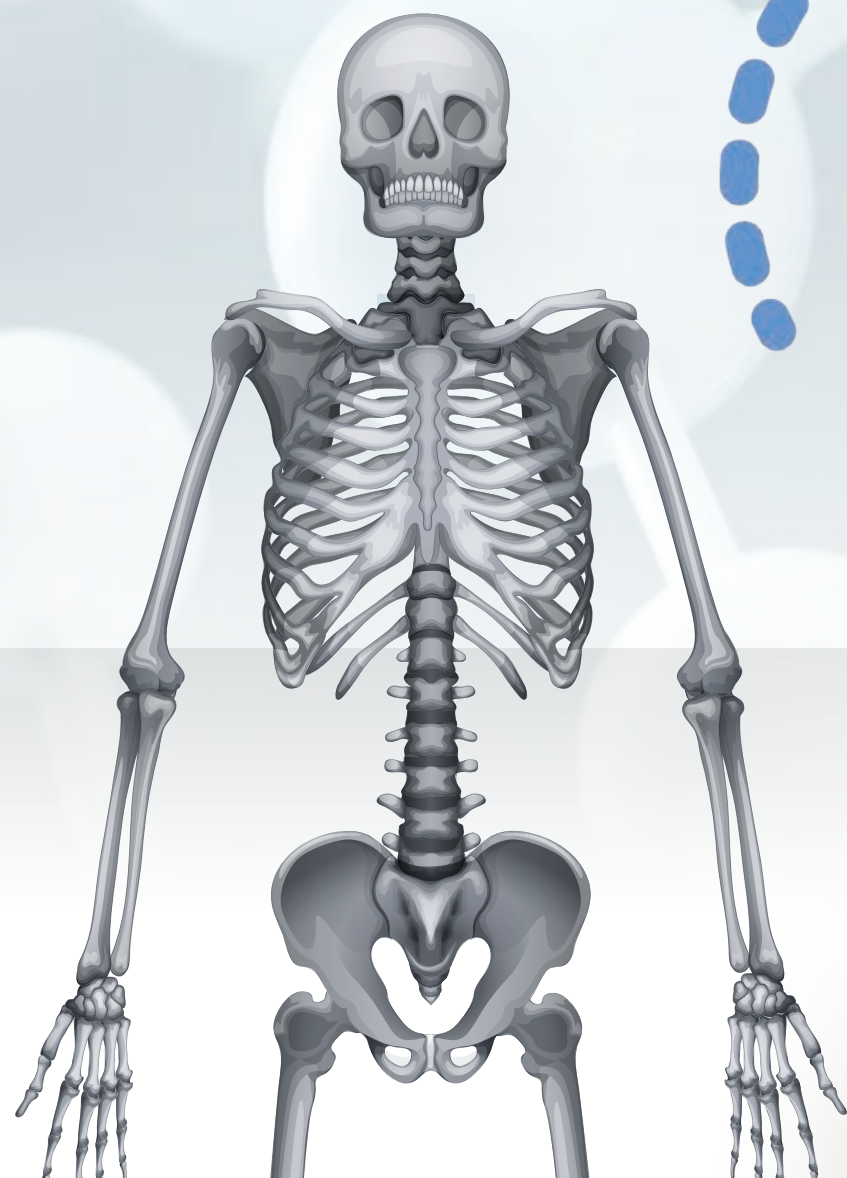
**Year 7** students have turned into forensic investigators, using their developing chemistry skills to analyse evidence and solve a thrilling 'murder mystery'—a practical and engaging way to learn.

**Year 8** has been delving into the crucial topic of energy, exploring transformations and conservation with hands-on experiments, and **Year 9** students are tackling biology, focusing on the intricate structure and function of the skeletal system.

**Year 10** has made a strong start to their GCSE courses, getting to grips with new and challenging concepts across physics, chemistry, and biology.

Finally, **Year 11** students are in full exam preparation mode! The department is running practical revision sessions every Thursday to hone their laboratory skills and consolidate their knowledge in preparation for their upcoming mock exams. Keep up the great work, everyone!

**Dr James Towey**  
**Head of Faculty: Science**





## Computer Science

A new year at Houlton has begun, and the sound of clacking keys once again fills the Computer Science rooms.

Development of Moodle continues, with the new Year 7 cohort having been introduced to Moodle along with lessons on file management, passwords and searching the web. We've also looked at ways to stay safe online and why the age limit for social media is 13+, including apps like Instagram, WhatsApp and TikTok.

I would recommend that parents/carers and guardians read this article about this important topic on CEOP's website [www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/articles/is-my-child-ready-for-social-media](http://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/articles/is-my-child-ready-for-social-media).

Year 8 have started the year revisiting the internals of a computer system before starting to look at how games are created. With our recent delivery of sample computers, we will be looking at this topic again in the future, with students being able to take apart and physically investigate the internals first-hand. This forms part of our long-term project with students creating a

'choose your own adventure' game in Python. This term we have focused on the planning section of game creation, for example, choosing themes, settings, objectives, etc. This also includes some media-based work, such as creating mood boards. Working with our English department we have selected four possible stories: the Cyclops, Scylla and Charybdis, the Lotus Eaters and Circe's Island.

Year 9 started this term looking at networks and communication. Learning about how data is transmitted and how networks are created using different topologies, with students developing their understanding by applying their knowledge to real world situations.

We have also tackled the misconception that internet speed is determined by available bandwidth. The speed provided by your internet service provider is always the same, but bandwidth allows us to move the data from point A to point B at a higher rate. We also discussed this in real-life terms and what students would be seeing if they were streaming a show on their favourite streaming service.

Year 10 have started working on their GCSE in Computer Science, focusing on computer components and then programming,

whilst Year 11 are focusing on developing their programming skills and revising for their upcoming Mocks. Both Year 10 and 11 have access to Smart Revise, which provides them with exam-style questions and forms part of their homework and revision.

### Reminder – Login Details

#### School Computers and Edulink

- Username: Y25 + surname + first initial (e.g. Y25smithj)
- Password: The same password students set in school

#### Google Suite (Gmail, Google Classroom, etc.)

- Email/Username: [username]@houlton.tlet.org.uk (e.g. y25smithj@houlton.tlet.org.uk)
- Password: The same as the school/Edulink password

#### Moodle

- Username: Same as above without email suffix (e.g. y25smithj)
- Password: Chosen by students

**Mr Matt Cresswell-Peters**  
**Head of Computer Science**

## Social Sciences

It has been a busy and exciting half-term in the Social Sciences Department, with students across Health and Social Care, Psychology, and Sociology developing their understanding of people and society through engaging, hands-on learning.

In Year 10, Health and Social Care students have been exploring how individuals grow and change across the life stages by making their very own "PIES" - no baking involved! The acronym stands for physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development, and has helped students understand how each area contributes to overall wellbeing.

In Psychology, both year groups have been busy thinking about the mind and behaviour in action. Year 10 Psychology students have been taking on the roles of both researcher and participant, investigating the capacity of short-term memory (STM). By conducting their own experiments, students have been able to experience first-hand how psychological research is carried out - developing both their scientific and analytical skills along the way.

Meanwhile, Year 11 Psychology students have been delving into the fascinating world of visual illusions - discovering how our brains can sometimes trick us into seeing things that aren't quite what they seem. They've explored how perception works and what these illusions reveal about the incredible complexity of the human brain.



Year 10 Sociology students have been introduced to key sociological perspectives that shape our understanding of the world, such as Functionalism, Marxism, and Feminism, alongside learning about key research methods that sociologists use to study social life. While Year 11 students have been examining patterns of educational achievement among different groups in society, exploring how factors such as class, gender, and ethnicity can influence success in school.

Across all subjects, our students have shown great enthusiasm - we're proud of their hard work and can't wait to see what the next half term brings!

**Ms Emma Clark**  
**Head of Social Sciences**



# Year 7 and 8 Shine in English

## Key Stage 3:

What an incredible start to the new term in English! Our new Year 7 students have become immersed in the world of Shif and Bini in Boy 87. Some of the discussions in class have shown a fantastic grasp of our key concepts of heroism, adversity, immigration and otherness.

This term, our 'Student of the Term' winner was selected amongst the Year 7 cohort, with the winner being Samuel! Other nominees by their class teacher were - Esther, Amaya, Evelyn, Bella, Emma, Iris, and Alfred.

Year 8 have spent this term exploring Ancient Greece through our abridged version of The Odyssey. A definite highlight has been the home learning tasks completed. Apologies for any students missed off this list, but a huge round of applause and many, many Reward points have been handed out to:

James, Eric, Georgia, Olivia, Karthikeya, Jemimah, Joshua, Jack, Hattie, Ellis, Varonika, Finley, Dylan, Mia, Eva-Mae, Kirin, Avishai, Harry and Seb.

## GCSE

In Year 11, students are moving towards their November mock exams. These exams will play a vital role in ensuring that all students have covered the content for their Summer GCSEs and have experience of what these papers look like. All Year 11 will complete a GCSE

Language Paper 2 and a GCSE Literature Paper 2, focusing on: An Inspector Calls, GCSE Poetry Anthology: Power and Conflict, and Unseen Poetry.

Please support your child with their revision in the lead-up to these mocks.

There are lots of websites that can provide revision support. We have filled Google Classroom and Edulink with resources, but if you wish to access more, these are some of the best:

### GCSE English Language (AQA) Paper 2

- <https://www.fairfax.bham.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Language-Paper-2-Revision-Guide-AQA.pdf>

### GCSE English Literature (AQA) Paper 2

- <https://www.aqaenglishrevision.com/an-inspector-calls>
- <https://www.bourne.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/AQA-Power-and-Conflict-GCSE-Revision-Guide-LA.pdf>
- <https://www.aqaenglishrevision.com/unseen-poetry>

After the half-term break, students will be starting to look at:

- Year 7: Boy 87 - Writing
- Year 8: The Odyssey - Writing
- Year 9: Long Way Down - Writing
- Year 10: A Christmas Carol, Chapters 3 to the end
- Year 11: Spoken Language Assessment and Macbeth

Keep on reading!

**Mr Ben Coleman**  
Head of English and Literacy





# When in Rome... Be a Soldier!

This term, Year 7 had the opportunity to swap their normal classrooms for the parade ground on their recent trip to Lunt Roman Fort. From the moment they tried on Roman uniforms, everyone was ready to step back nearly 2,000 years in time.

Armed (safely!) with their equipment - and learning their Latin names as they went - students discovered just how heavy a soldier's kit could be. The real test came with military drills: marching in formation, practising commands, and finding out how teamwork made the Roman army so powerful.

One student said, "It felt like we were actually in the Roman army," still buzzing from the experience.

We cannot thank the brilliant team at Lunt Fort enough, who made the day so fun and totally different from a normal history lesson!

**Mr Isaac Roy**  
Teacher of History





## Key Stage 3: Building the Foundations of Geography

Our Year 7 students have made a start to their Geography learning this term by exploring the question: "What is a Geographer?"

They've been developing essential geographical skills, including map reading, scale interpretation, and grid referencing. These skills have been put into practice using Ordnance Survey maps, helping students understand how geographers use spatial data to make sense of the world around them.

In Year 8, the focus has turned to weather and climate. Students have been learning how to interpret weather data, identify climate patterns, and understand how these influence our daily lives. To bring this learning to life, the department will soon be conducting a microclimate investigation around the school site - a fantastic

opportunity for students to collect data and apply their classroom learning outdoors.

Our Year 9 geographers have been tackling one of the most pressing issues of our time: climate change. They've been exploring global and local impacts and studying key mitigation and adaptation strategies. To conclude the unit, students were challenged to think creatively - designing their own innovative ideas for combating climate change in the future.

Key Stage 4: Developing Deeper Geographical Understanding

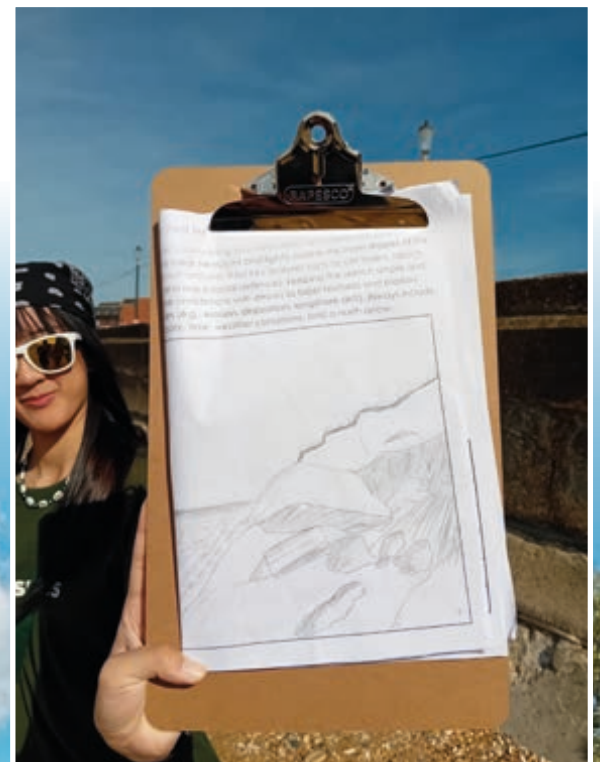
Our Year 10 students have made a strong start to their AQA GCSE Geography course,

focusing on the dynamic topic of Coasts. They have explored coastal processes, landforms, and management strategies, building both their knowledge and their exam skills. As the half term approaches, Year 10 will have sat their first end-of-topic assessment, marking an important milestone in their GCSE studies.

Year 11 students have also been delving into the Changing Economic World unit, with detailed case studies on Nigeria, Jamaica, and the UK. These lessons have encouraged them to think critically about global development, inequality, and the role of international trade and aid. In addition, Year 11 have successfully completed their fieldwork in Hunstanton and the London Olympic Park this term, gathering valuable data and experiences to support their AQA Paper 3 preparation.

We are all incredibly proud of the effort and curiosity our students have shown so far. Well done from all of us in the Geography Department for a fantastic start to the new year.

**Mr Charlie McDermott**  
Head of Geography





# Celebrating Cultural Diversity: Learning About Diwali

We love celebrating the many different cultures and traditions that make our community so special. This term, students have been learning about Diwali – the Festival of Lights – and exploring what this celebration means to people around the world.

Through their Religious Studies lessons and tutor time, students have discovered the story and symbolism behind Diwali, which is celebrated by many Hindu, Sikh, Jain, and some Buddhist communities. The festival marks the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil, and is often celebrated with lights, candles, colourful decorations, and time spent with family and friends.

As part of their learning, students in the RS department have created bright and imaginative posters to share what they've learned about Diwali. These are now proudly displayed around the department, helping everyone in school to appreciate the beauty and meaning of this special festival.

By learning about different cultures and faiths, our students are deepening their understanding of the world around them and helping to make Houlton School a place where everyone feels valued and included.

**Mrs Dupinder Ghatora**  
Head of Religious Studies



## PHRSE

# Start a Heart Day - Learning Lifesaving Skills

This month, students across the school took part in 'Start a Heart Day', an important national event that helps young people learn vital CPR skills.

As part of our PHRSE curriculum, students in Years 8 to 11 have been using resources from the British Heart Foundation during tutor time to refresh their knowledge of CPR and practice what to do in an emergency.

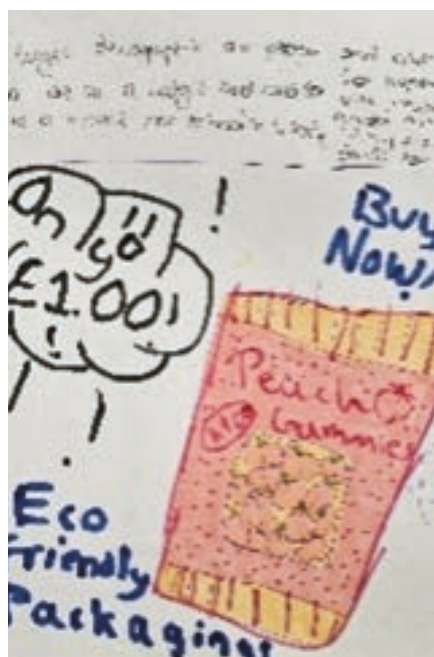
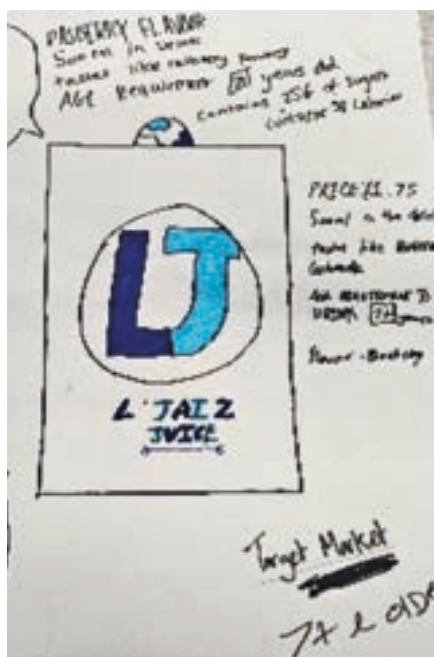
Our Year 7 students have also been learning these essential lifesaving skills, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to feel confident and capable of helping others in a medical emergency.

Learning CPR is an invaluable skill that could one day help save a life, and we are proud to be supporting this national initiative.

**Mrs Becky Cooper**  
Head of PHRSE







## Real-World Thinking in Action

Our Business students have been putting their learning into practice and developing valuable real-world skills.

Year 10 students have been stepping into the shoes of entrepreneurs. After learning about how businesses identify customer needs and target specific markets, they were challenged to design and pitch their own new products. From snacks and drinks to creative bespoke items, the ideas were imaginative, well thought out, and presented with confidence.

In Year 11, students have been exploring how businesses make key operational decisions - from different production methods and managing stock to understanding quality control and the role of technology. To bring these ideas to life, students became manufacturers of origami cat faces in a fun, hands-on activity. Working in teams, they tested out job, batch, and flow production systems, gaining first-hand experience of how each method affects efficiency, quality, and teamwork.

These activities highlight how Business lessons at Houlton School help students think critically, work collaboratively, and apply their learning to real-world situations - skills that will serve them well both in school and beyond.

**Mr Jamie Abbott**  
Head of Faculty: Humanities



## Art & Design

# Houlton Students Shine at Art Exhibition

In September, students from Houlton took part in an 'inter-schools' Art Exhibition at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum. Well done to all those students who had work selected, it was a pleasure to showcase the vast creative talent we have here at Houlton School!

Year 11 Fine Art students had the opportunity to take part in a Street Art workshop with visiting local Street Artist 'Kleo Paints'. It was a vibrant, energetic session with students learning new skills and techniques whilst producing some eye-catching pieces for their portfolios. We are hoping to display some of these incredible pieces around the school campus.

**Ms Ruth Woodcraft**  
Head of Art and Photography





# Cooking Up Confidence in Food and Nutrition

It's been a busy and exciting term in Food Preparation and Nutrition, with students across all year groups learning new skills and deepening their understanding of food and nutrition.

Year 7 students have been getting to grips with food theory, learning about how food poisoning can occur and, most importantly, how to prevent it. This has given them a strong foundation for safe and confident cooking in the kitchen.

Our Year 10 students have been developing a wide range of advanced skills this term, supported by visits from industry experts. Students explored the nutritional value of bread products during a workshop with Paul from Rugby Real Bread, where they made delicious cinnamon buns and plaited loaves. They were also treated to a session with The Gourmet Chef from Coventry, who cooked his "menu of the month" and shared valuable insights into careers within the hospitality and catering industry.

Year 11 students have been hard at work on their NEA1 investigations, experimenting with different raising agents in cupcakes and analysing how these affect texture, taste, and appearance. Their practical experiments have given them a real insight into scientific investigation.

It's been fantastic to see students across all year groups showing enthusiasm for cooking, as they continue to develop their culinary skills.

**Mrs Baldeep Devgun**  
Head of Food Preparation and Nutrition





# MFL Students Take on the World!

Our Year 11 French and Spanish GCSE students have been jet-setting across the curriculum without leaving their seats! Our budding young linguists have been tackling Big Questions and exploring vibrant cultures, proving that language learning is about so much more than just grammar.

Our Francophiles have become a think-tank for the planet as they tackle Module 6 of the Edexcel curriculum; "Notre planète". They've been contemplating the Big Question, "Qui doit sauver la planète?" ("Who must save the planet?").

From climate change to pollution, these students are not just learning vocabulary; they're becoming eco-conscious global citizens. This unit gets them talking about how we can all work together to protect our environment, using their French skills to discuss solutions to some of the world's most pressing issues.

Meanwhile, our Spanish students have been immersed in the rhythms and colours of Colombia. Diving into Module 6, "Mi Barrio y Yo" ("My Neighbourhood and I"), they've explored the incredible vibrancy of Colombian culture.

From the rich history and music to the bustling city of Medellín, they've been discovering a new part of the world and mastering tricky new grammar & vocabulary, all while learning about a country known for its upbeat, friendly, and fun-loving attitude.

It's been a fantastic half-term of discovery. Well done to all our Year 11 linguists for embracing these challenging and brilliant topics!

**Mr Matthieu Raffy**  
**Head of Faculty: Modern Languages**



## Performing Arts

# Performing Arts Scholars Shine in Auditions and Celebration Events

Houlton School's vibrant Performing Arts Scholars Society (PASS) recently held its much-anticipated auditions, giving students in Years 7 to 9 the chance to showcase their talents in dance, acting, and music. With only 14 places available in each discipline, competition was high, and the standard of performance truly exceptional.

The successful scholars will go on to represent Houlton School through a variety of specialist workshops, theatre trips, and creative projects over the coming year, enriching their artistic skills and confidence.

To celebrate their achievement, all scholars were invited to attend the powerful one-woman musical *Black is the Colour of My Voice* at the Macready Theatre on 10th October. The performance, inspired by the life of Nina Simone, offered an inspiring

exploration of resilience, creativity, and the power of performance.

As part of their ongoing development, scholars will also be given the exciting opportunity to attend a special production of *The Nutcracker* at the Macready Theatre later this term (free of charge) - a festive treat that promises to delight and inspire.

Head of Performing Arts, Peter Bridgewood, said: "We are so proud of the passion and

commitment shown by our students. PASS is not just about performance, but about expression, collaboration, and confidence. We can't wait to see our scholars grow as artists this year."

Congratulations to all our new Performing Arts Scholars - an exciting year of creativity lies ahead!

**Mr David Bird**  
**Head of Acting**



# Outstanding Team Spirit and Success in PE

It has been fantastic to see all students approaching their PE lessons with such enthusiasm and commitment this term. Every year group has made an excellent start, showing great energy, teamwork, and a real willingness to learn and improve.

It's been a busy half-term of fixtures, with our Year 8, 9, 10, and 11 Netball teams all in action, alongside our Mixed Football teams competing across multiple age groups. A special mention goes to our U16 Football team, who remain unbeaten so far this season and are eagerly preparing for their upcoming Warwickshire County Cup fixture - well done!

I'd also like to give a shout out to Alfie in Year 7, who competed in the recent cross country competition in Stratford, finishing with a time of 12:39 - well done!

Year 9 have impressed in Handball, demonstrating strong communication and competitive spirit, while Year 8 have been focusing on Badminton, refining their control, technique, and accuracy. Our newest members of the Houlton PE community, Year 7, have made a fantastic start learning Netball and developing their teamwork and spatial awareness.

Our Year 11 students have been introduced to two exciting new sports - Pickleball and Tchoukball - broadening their skills and understanding of invasion and net games. Year 10 have been consolidating their learning in Volleyball and Badminton, working hard to develop consistency and tactical awareness.

Our extracurricular clubs continue to thrive, with Volleyball Club seeing record attendance across all year groups. Football club for



all years, Badminton Club on several evenings each week, Rugby club, Running club, Table Tennis club and GCSE Practical Moderation sessions have also added to the club timetable. A huge well done to all students who have represented Houlton with pride and determination this half term.

We are also delighted to welcome Miss Ashmore to the PE team this year. She is teaching across all year groups and will be leading, alongside Miss Hartfield, the GCSE PE course for both Year 10 and Year 11 students.

Looking ahead, next half term's focus will shift towards Basketball and Badminton fixtures. In addition, Netball and Girls' Football Clubs will begin after half term - we encourage as many students as possible to get involved.

Thank you to all students for your hard work and positive attitude this term - we're proud of the start you've made and look forward to an exciting and active second half of the term!

**Miss Abbie Hartfield**  
Head of PE





# HOULTON

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## SCHOOL

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