

# HOULTON OCTOBER NEWS 2024



HOULTON  
SCHOOL



## Welcome from the Principal

### Dear Houlton family,

Welcome to the first newsletter of our new academic year. We were delighted to welcome back our returning pupils and, of course, our fourth cohort of Year 7 pupils; we have been delighted with how well Y7 have settled, demonstrated by this cohort breaking the records for both the number of pupils achieving their Bronze Houlton Excellence Award and staying in the 'Zero' club for October half-term!

You will see from the attached articles that it has been a very busy autumn for us with all sorts of exciting and transformational learning opportunities coming together to reflect our core pillars of innovation, aspiration and excellence. One thing that didn't make the print deadline this time was our 'Wear it Pink' day in support of Breast Cancer Awareness, for which we raised £1,700 - an incredible achievement for such a small and developing school and real testimony to the work of Mrs Kirsopp and Mrs Sandall in sharing their personal stories and motivating our pupils to shine.

We have a couple of very sad farewells this half-term. Firstly, Mr 'Flats' O'Flaherty who has been part of the

TLET family at both Ashlawn and Houlton for some years, is relocating to Yorkshire and a new role there. We wish him and his family every success. Therefore, Mr Leeson will be joining us in the Science team after half-term.

Finally, Mrs Burns will be leaving us just after half-term. Mrs Burns has worked for TLET in one capacity or another, not for months, not for years, but for decades (!) Since our inception, she has been my PA, the Office Manager, the Cover Manager, Data Manager, Front of House, Timetabler - she has, in essence, been the glue that has held the operation of the school together behind the scenes. It is with huge sadness that we say goodbye, but we are delighted that she has relocated to Lincolnshire and semi-retirement with her family. A number of new colleagues have joined us this academic year who will be picking up aspects of Mrs Burns's work so if you're not sure who to contact, take a look at our 'Meet the Team' page on the website to see the new faces and colleagues supporting across different areas.

Have a lovely, restful half-term everyone - and stay safe over hallowe'en if you're out trick or treating!

**Michael McCulley**  
Principal

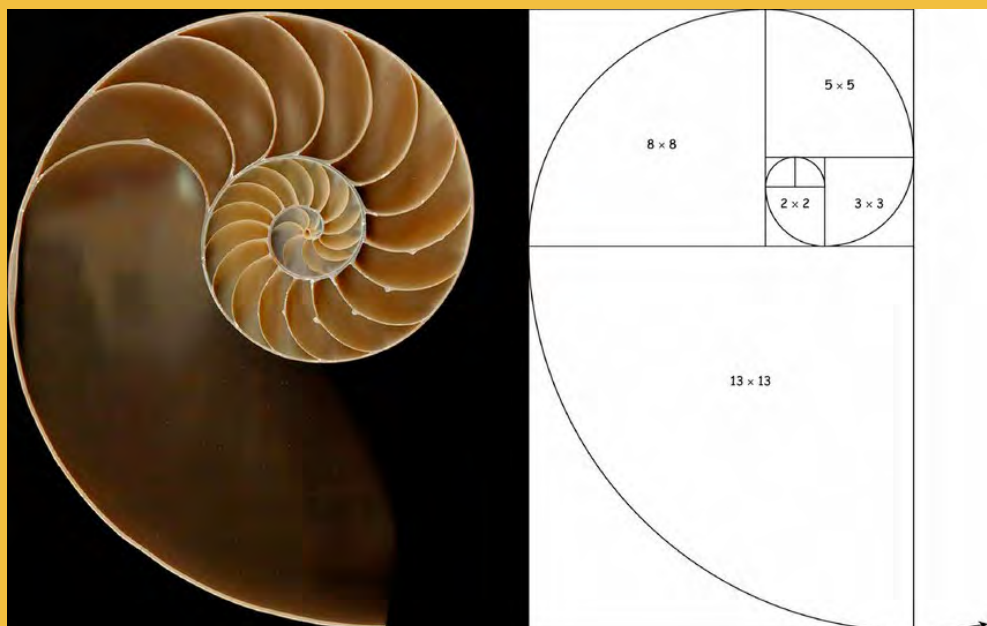
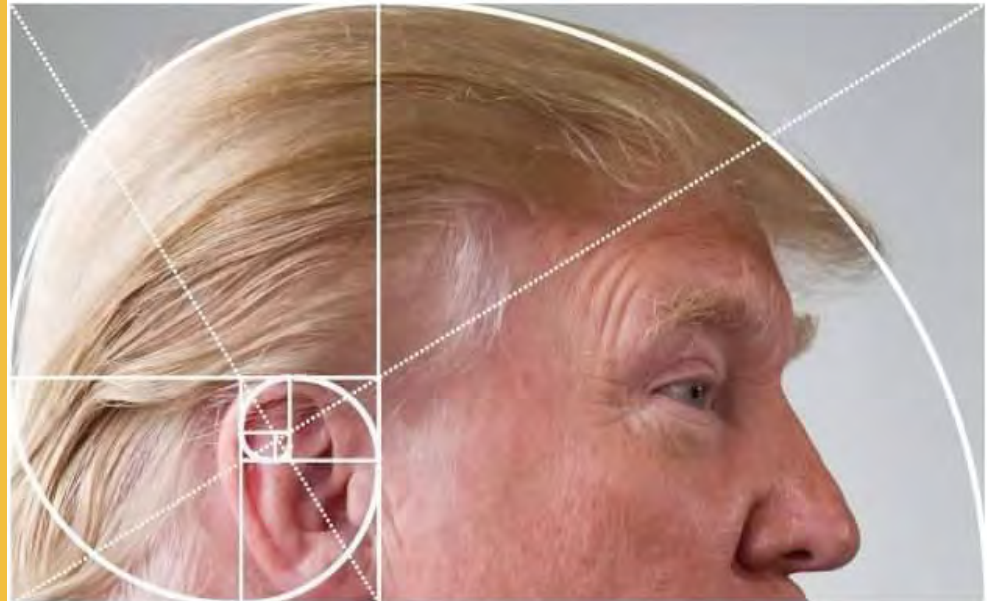
# Year 7 pupils uncover the beauty of the Fibonacci sequence in everyday life

This half term, our Year 7 pupils have been looking into how nature can produce imaginative sequences.

Their journey began by looking into how sequences can be represented in different ways. This led them to investigate if there were any similarities or differences between different types of sequences and how they could be represented and they soon discovered that sequences could take many forms. Our Year 7 pupils were then able to identify if these sequences were linear or non-linear.

They also spent time discovering one of the most famous mathematical sequences, the Fibonacci sequence. Pupils spent time investigating the Fibonacci sequence and soon found it hiding in plain sight (not even Former Presidents of the USA can hide from the Fibonacci sequence).

**Mr Sam Edmonds**  
Head of Faculty: Mathematics and Numeracy



# Houlton Science Club Launches CREST Award Projects

Science Club at Houlton has begun in earnest as members started pooling together ideas for their CREST award applications. CREST is a scheme that inspires young people to think and behave like scientists and engineers.

Years 7 and 8 are working towards the Bronze award and Years 9 and 10 the Silver award. We have some groups investigating the difference between shop-bought and home-made fizzy drinks, some investigating what makes bath bombs fizz with the aim of making their own, and other groups looking to construct and fly a model rocket, plus many more. Pupils are currently in the planning stages, and we hope to have images of their successes next time!

If you would like to know more about the CREST award, then click here: [www.crestawards.org](http://www.crestawards.org)

**Mr Kris Docherty**  
Second in Charge: Science



# Year 7 dive into computing and game development with Moodle

A new academic year at Houlton has brought with it a new platform for all computing classes - The Moodle. This new system moves all our pupils to work online, increasing their contact time with computers as well as allowing them to receive faster feedback!

To start the year, **Year 7** pupils have 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 parents/carers and guardians read this article 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** pupils have started the year revisiting the internals of a computer system before starting to look at how games are created. This forms part of our long-term project with pupils creating a 'choose your own adventure' game in Python.

This term has focused on the planning section of game creation, such as choosing themes, settings, objectives, etc. This also includes some media-based work such as creating mood boards. Some of the ideas we are seeing within their portfolios are very intriguing!

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

**Year 9** pupils 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.

To demonstrate this, we took to one of Houlton's science labs, and using a mixture of

coloured dye, tubing, stopwatches, beakers and taps, we tested the theory. We ran water at the same speed through each of the tubes and timed to see which filled faster.

The larger tubing filled up much faster than the smaller tube. We also discussed this in real life terms, and what pupils would be seeing if they were streaming a show on their favourite streaming service.

I am looking forward to teaching the Year 9s about some of the aspects of creative media next term, where we will be looking at designing a product.

## Reminder

School username and password for Edulink and signing into the computers: Y24 + surname + first letter of first name.

The login for Google suites e.g. Gmail and Classrooms is: username + @houlton.tlet.org.uk. The password for all of these will be the same password pupils set in school. For pupils in Years 8-10, emails no longer end @houltonschool.org.uk and are now @houlton.tlet.org.uk

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

## History

# Year 9 pupils uncover local history through WWI research

This term, our Year 9 pupils have been exploring the significant contributions of Rugby's soldiers to the First World War using the website [www.astreetnearyou.org](http://www.astreetnearyou.org)

This project has allowed them to uncover fascinating stories of local heroes, including the remarkable history of Douglas Little, a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force.

Douglas Little was stationed at the Lilbourne airfield, a site of great historical importance, based at the edge of the current Houlton School field. During World War I, this airfield hosted numerous training squadrons, including No. 10 Training Squadron, which operated iconic aircraft like the Avro 504 and Sopwith Camel. Little, like many others, trained on this ground, honing his skills before his untimely death in a flying accident near South Kilworth.

	Name	Regiment and rank	Death	Age	Place of burial	Parents	Married Y/N	Children Y/N	Additional information
1	Sydney George Worley	Lancashire Fusiliers Lieutenant	22/10/1917	27	Tyne Cot Belgium	N/A	N/A	N/A	Instantly killed at Passchendaele in 1917.
2	Ensl Thomas Graham Ross	Royal Fusiliers Private	7/1/17	33	Menin Gate	Frederick Bott	Y	N/A	Killed in action at Ypres Enlisted in Mkt. Harborough
3	Perceval Allen Allen	Worcestershire Lance Corporal	27/7/16	23	Thiepval	N/A	N/A	N/A	killed at the Somme
4	Corporal. Hanks	Royal Fusiliers	23/4/17	28	Chili Trench	N/A	N/A	N/A	Killed by shrapnel Arras
5	Thomas Starr Owen	Royal Welsh Fusiliers Second Lieutenant	8/10/1918	34	Madin-de-Pierre	Harry Starr + Ellen Owen	N/A	N/A	Killed in France
6	Major Black	5th Dragoon Guards Major	11/2/1917	26	Skopje	N/A	N/A	N/A	killed by 2 Germans on a bombing raid
7	William Earl	Royal Navy Volunteers	13/11/16	24	Thiepval Memorial	Charles + Florence Earl	N/A	N/A	Played hockey for Scotland Led company in attack at Beaumont-Hamel
8	Douglas Little	Royal Air Force Second Lieutenant	21/6/18	19	Clifton Road, Rugby	WG Little	N/A	N/A	Flying accident near South Kilworth based at the school!
9	Corporal Harvey	Hampshire Regiment Lance Corporal	1/7/16	34	Sucerie Military Cemetery	N/A	Y	Y (2)	Lived in Lilbourne - killed on day 1 of the Somme
10	Lance Corporal Mervock	Royal Wiltshire Lance Corporal	04/09/18	33	Barentthal Italy	John Mervock	Y (Amy)	N	Won the Military Medal killed in action.

This project has not only deepened our pupils' understanding of World War I but also created a personal connection to local history, as they discovered that their school once stood on a site that played a crucial role in the conflict.

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

# Houlton kicks off GCSE Psychology and Sociology

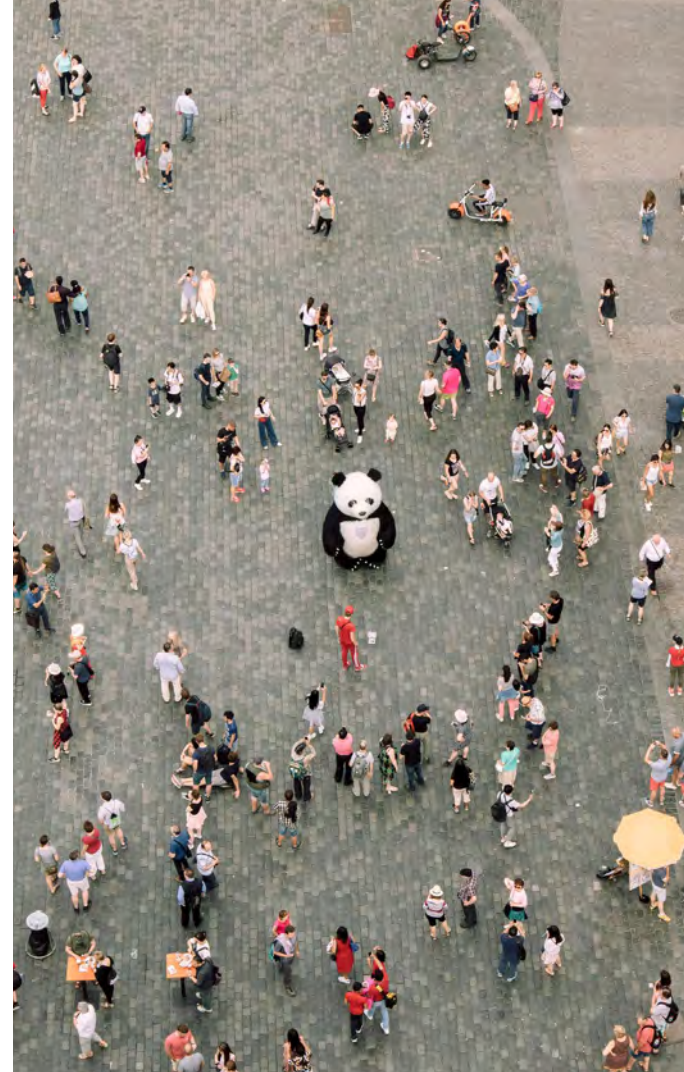
It has been great to get started with both GCSE Psychology and Sociology this term. Pupils in both subjects have been learning what I term the 'building blocks' of each subject.

In Psychology, pupils have been looking at the origins of Psychology before starting their study of memory. Pupils have been able to take part in a couple of experiments to investigate the capacity of their short-term memory. If you fancy having a go, click on the link to a version of the experiment: [www.memorylosstest.com/digit-span](http://www.memorylosstest.com/digit-span)

In Sociology, pupils have been learning about the key perspectives before starting to apply them to education, crime and families. Pupils have looked at Marxism, functionalism and feminism and have wrapped their minds around a lot of new terminology.

Pupils gain a number of transferable skills from studying social science, such as problem solving, communication, analysis and critical thinking. Alongside developing these skills in the classroom, I am keen to bring these subjects to life for pupils. To this end, if you or anyone you know works in a related field and would be willing to come and talk to the pupils about what 'A day in the life of...' is like, I would love to hear from you! Please email me on [clarke@houlton.tlet.org.uk](mailto:clarke@houlton.tlet.org.uk)

**Ms Emma Clark**  
Head of Social Sciences



## Geography

# Houlton Geography launches GCSE studies with coasts and climate change

Over the past few weeks, we have welcomed our new Year 7s to Geography, as well as welcoming back our other year groups. We have been particularly excited to start our GCSE journey with the three classes worth of pupils who have taken it as an option.

As part of the AQA Spec at GCSE, pupils have been completing the Coasts unit. They have looked in depth at the processes, landforms and management techniques that we find on UK coastlines and will be completing their first formal assessment after half term.

I have been very proud of the attitude and work rate of all the Year 10 geographers who settled down and welcomed me as a new teacher to the school and made me feel at home very quickly. I look forward to teaching the next unit, Rivers, which begins after half term.

Year 9 pupils have been looking at climate change and tropical storms. They have learned about a range of key concepts such as the natural and human causes of climate change, how it has social, economic, and environmental effects, and how it can be managed through mitigation and adaptation strategies.

They have looked at how this could affect the frequency, intensity, and distribution of tropical storms, as well as how storms form and what impacts they have, by looking at Hurricane Katrina (2005), but also linking in the recent events of Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

Year 8 pupils have been studying biomes and have looked at a range of aspects, including what the world's main biomes are, where they are located and their key characteristics. They have looked at the importance of ecological hotspots, what they are, how they are threatened and what strategies can be used to manage them more effectively and sustainably in the future.

Year 7 pupils have been doing their introduction to Geography unit and have covered a range of aspects, including the different types of geography, the basic geography of Warwickshire, the UK and

Europe, how the Earth began and why continents move, how to use atlases, how weather is different from climate and why some countries are more developed than others. We have been very pleased by the way Year 7 pupils have settled into their lessons and the clear enthusiasm they have shown.

We look forward to sharing what else has been happening in Geography in the next newsletter.

**Mr Darren Jones**  
Teacher of Geography



# An exciting start to the term for the Houlton English department

There have been some staffing changes in the Houlton English Department this academic year, so we'd like to take a moment to introduce the new team:

Mr Coleman is now Head of Faculty, seconded by Miss Schofield.

We also welcome Mrs Subramaniam to the department, who has taken over the lessons of Mrs Warde, the new Assistant Headteacher in charge of Behaviour, and who will return to our corridors shortly. Miss Lancini and Mrs Straw are familiar English Department faces to one and all, and they have already taught most pupils at Houlton School.



## Black History Month 2024

In honour of Black History Month, pupils across both Key Stages joined a national virtual talk, hosted by 'Lit in Colour', with Baroness Lola Young, entitled 'Reclaiming our narrative: Art, Activism, and Advocacy'. Actress, academic, activist, and campaigner for social justice, during her virtual talk, Baroness Young shared both positive experiences and challenges she has faced relating to her culture, heritage, and passions, giving advice to pupils about using resources available to them and making the most of what they have in order to achieve their full potential.

"Baroness Young's talk was a very eye-opening experience. To learn about being a minority in times when there wasn't as much representation and hear about how Young was able to get through this and become the person she is today, even though she was discouraged, is very inspirational."

By Niamh M. (9 Dorsey)



## Competition – Fright Club

Get involved today in the Young Writers' ghost story writing competition!

From creepy tales to urban legends and supernatural spine chillers... what lurks in your imagination?

A ghost story is a timeless classic style of creative writing and we're inviting pupils to write their own short story inspired by things that go bump in the night!

You could be inspired by a real place that is rumoured to be haunted, choose a supernatural being to be the star of your story or even be a ghost hunter telling us of their experiences.

Use atmosphere, tension and suspense to create your own hair-raising tale.

There is a 250-word limit, prizes up for grabs, and the possibility of having your story published.

If you're interested, then please see Miss Schofield in HU0.06 for more information.

Deadline: Monday 2nd December 2024.

**Miss Claire Schofield**  
**Second in Charge: English**

## Tyrannical power, Greek Mythology and The Byronic Hero... Oh my!

At the beginning of this new academic year, pupils are currently focusing on an exciting variety of class readers:

Year 7 pupils are reading 'Boy 87' by Ele Fountain, a moving story of a 14-year-old boy named Shif who is forced to leave his home country and embark on a dangerous journey to escape imprisonment and find safety. In this unit, we are focusing on understanding different kinds of power in countries around the world and the term refugee (considering the societal stereotypes attached to that word).

If pupils are enjoying 'Boy 87' then they might also want to read some of these titles:

- 'The Boy at the Back of the Class' by Onjali. Q. Rauf
- 'Pig-heart Boy' by Malorie Blackman
- 'The Boy in the Tower' by Polly Ho-Yen

Year 8 pupils are reading a modern adaptation of 'The Odyssey' and following the mythological tales of the Greek hero Odysseus. In this unit, pupils have been looking at the different mythological gods and monsters which have been passed down in Ancient Greek history, and designing our own; recognising what advances ancient Greek culture has given us today and comparing religion with our modern beliefs.

If pupils are enjoying 'The Odyssey,' then they might also want to read:

- Percy Jackson and The Olympians by Rick Riordan
- 'Medusa: The Girl Behind the Myth' by Jessie Burton
- 'The Atlas of Monsters' by Sandra Lawrence & Stuart Hill.

Year 9 have been looking at an abridged adaptation of the Victorian novel 'Jane Eyre' by Charlotte Bronte. Carrying on with their studies on Victorian society in Year 8,

they have been focusing on differences in class and the expectations that correspond with that position, the Byronic Hero, and conventions of the Gothic novel.

If pupils are enjoying 'Jane Eyre,' then they might also want to read:

- 'The Graveyard Book' by Neil Gaiman
- 'Cirque du Freak' by Darren Shan
- 'The Vampire Diaries' by LJ Smith.

Year 10 begin their GCSEs by studying the modern play 'An Inspector Calls' by JB Priestley. This play focuses on teaching important lessons on social responsibility, equality, and kindness as we follow the lives of the Birling family, who slowly begin to realise the consequences of their actions as the chain of events unfolds.

We will be looking to take a small group of Year 10 pupils to watch a performance of 'An Inspector Calls' in Milton Keynes in May 2025, so watch out for upcoming trip letters...

# Exploring religious beliefs and values at Houlton

## Year 7

In an insightful and engaging term, Year 7 pupils at Houlton have been on an interesting journey exploring religious beliefs that shape our world. The curriculum this term has been centred around understanding different faiths, delving into holy scriptures, exploring places of worship, and appreciating the diverse ways in which believers express their faith.

Throughout the term, pupils have been actively engaged in studying sacred texts from various religions, gaining valuable insights into the beliefs that guide millions of people around the world.

## Year 8

Throughout this term, Year 8 pupils embarked on a fascinating exploration of the diverse religious stances surrounding mind-altering substances. These young minds dived into class discussions and explored the teachings of various faiths.

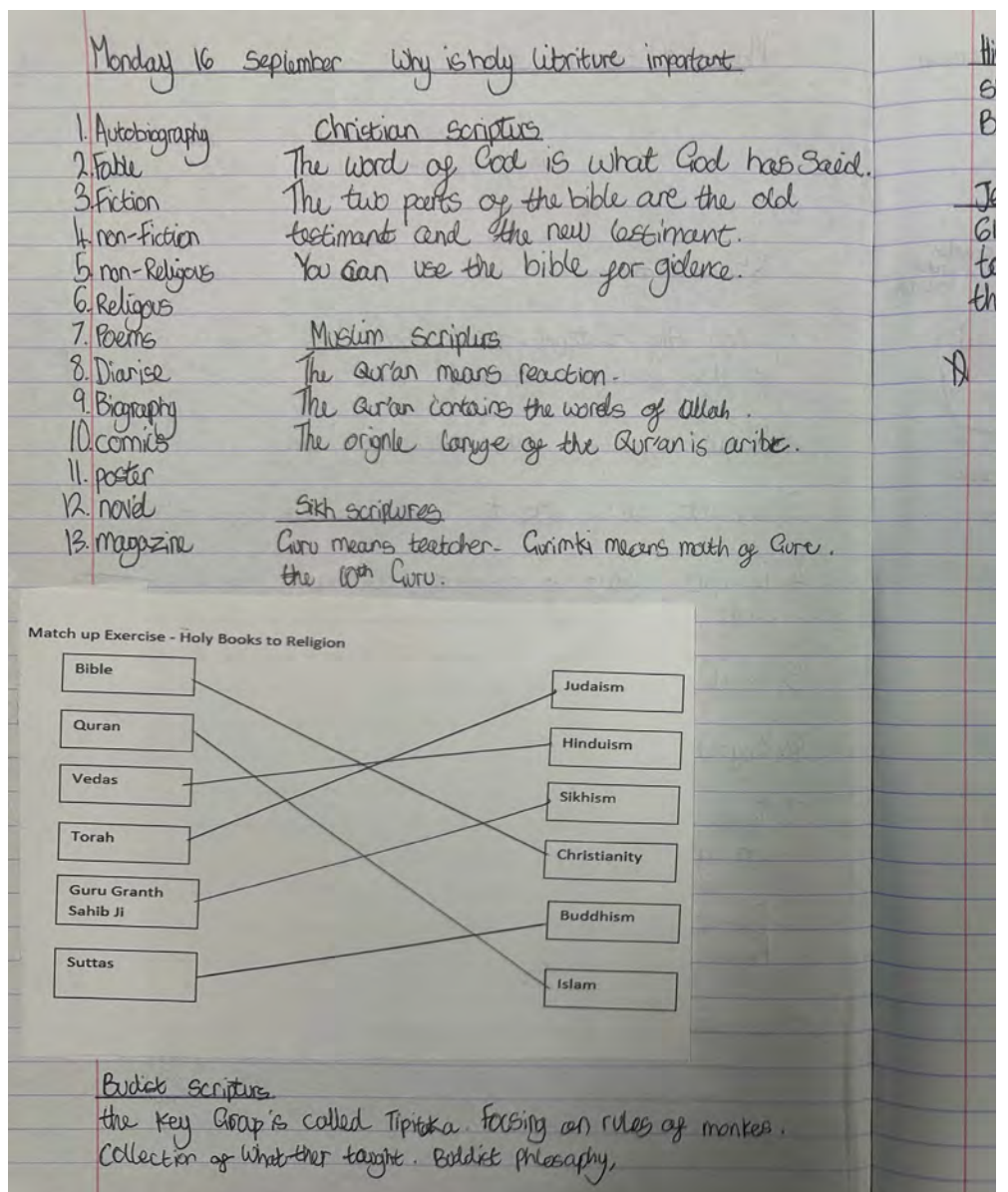
One of the key techniques employed in their learning journey is the 'Point, Evidence, and Explain' (PEE) method, which enables pupils to articulate their ideas with clarity and confidence. By understanding this method, pupils have gained the confidence to draw connections between religious principles and the practical implications of these teachings on the use of mind-altering substances.

## Year 9

To promote tolerance, understanding, and critical thinking, pupils in Year 9 have been exploring the religious beliefs and values that shape our perceptions of crime and punishment.

Year 9 pupils have embarked on an eye-opening journey, examining how various religions interpret the concepts of crime, justice, and punishment. By exploring how different faiths view crime and punishment, our pupils are gaining a more profound insight into human beliefs and the role these beliefs play in shaping our society.

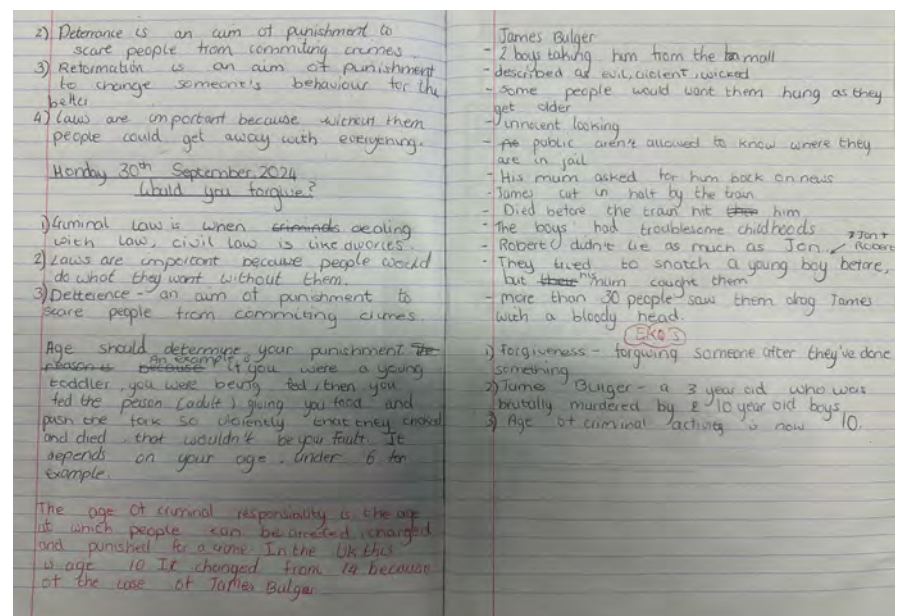
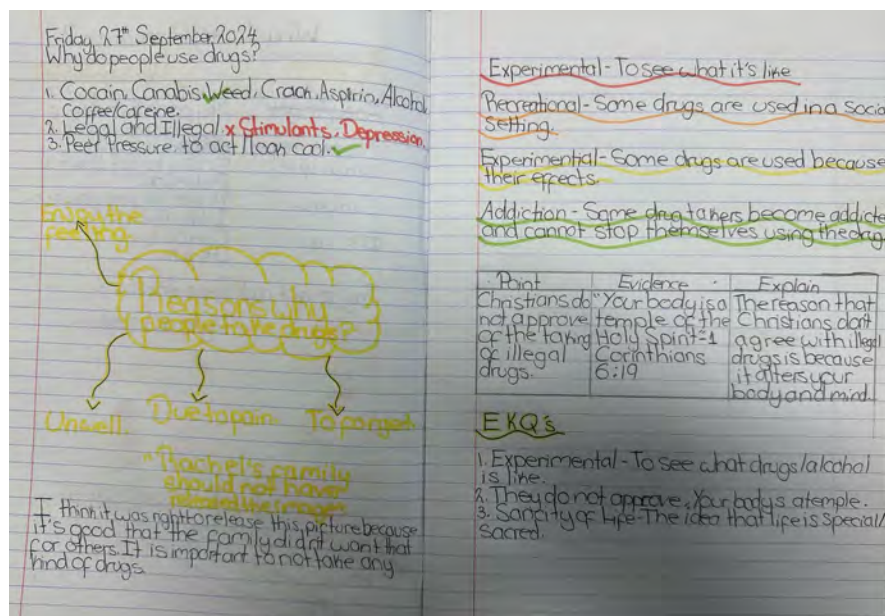
Pupils have also been engaging in a comprehensive study of crime and punishment, delving into real-life case studies to better



understand the complexities of the justice system. One of the key cases they've focused on is the tragic story of James Bulger, a case that has sparked intense discussions and reflections among the pupils.

By analysing real-world examples, the pupils have been able to engage in in-depth conversations about the legal and ethical issues surrounding crime, justice, and the consequences of criminal actions. This approach allows them to connect historical and contemporary events with their studies, encouraging critical thinking and empathy for those affected by crime.

### Mrs Dupinder Ghatora Head of Religious Studies



# Houlton pupils engage in meaningful PHRSE lessons

As we reach the end of the term, we would like to share some insights into the important work our pupils have been undertaking in PHRSE lessons.

**Year 7:** This term, our Year 7 pupils have been focusing on the transition to secondary school. They have engaged in discussions and activities designed to build confidence, foster friendships, and navigate the challenges of their new environment. They have also been discussing the goals that they would like to reach during their time at Houlton School and setting personal targets to achieve their values and aims.

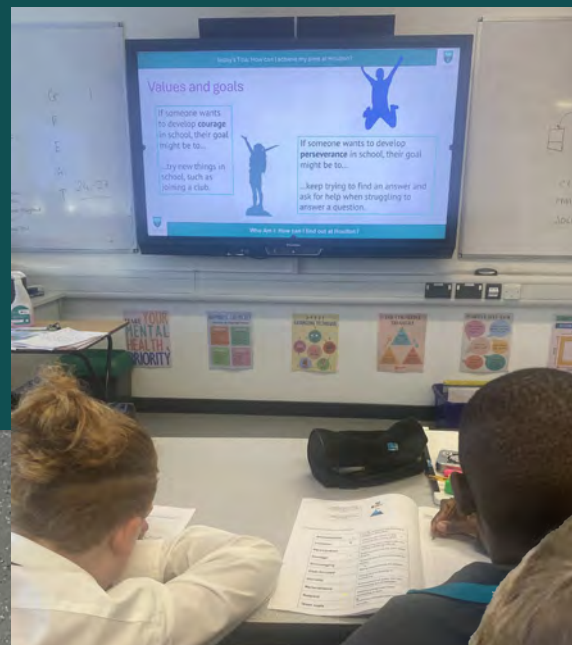
**Year 8:** Our Year 8 pupils have been exploring how to manage influences around substances. Through interactive sessions, they have learnt to identify peer pressure, understand the risks associated with substance use, and develop strategies to make informed choices.

**Year 9:** The focus for Year 9 has been on healthy lifestyles. Pupils have examined the

importance of nutrition, physical activity, and mental well-being. They participated in sessions that encouraged them to set personal health goals and understand the long-term benefits of a balanced lifestyle.

**Year 10:** Finally, Year 10 has delved into mental health awareness. Through discussions, role-plays, and the use of Mind resources, they have gained valuable insights into managing stress, recognising signs of mental health issues, and knowing where to seek help.

**Mrs Becky Cooper**  
Head of PHRSE



# Welcome to GCSE Business Studies – A world of creativity and discovery!

Our GCSE Business Studies pupils have hit the ground running this term, diving into exciting, hands-on activities designed to ignite their entrepreneurial spirits.

From the moment they stepped into class, they've been encouraged to think outside the box and turn ordinary ideas into extraordinary products.

One of the highlights so far has been the "Humble Potato Challenge", where pupils transformed the everyday potato into innovative new products. The standout

creation? Potato-based cosmetics! Yes, you heard it right – skin creams, exfoliators, and even hair treatments, all derived from potatoes. This exercise taught pupils about product development, branding, and market positioning.

Next up was a mouthwatering task—market mapping with chocolate! Pupils analysed different chocolate brands, charting out where each sit in the competitive landscape, giving them a hands-on understanding of market analysis.

Next, our budding business experts ventured into the exciting world of market research, completing a task on healthy fast-food options. Armed with surveys, they interviewed pupils to understand consumer



preferences, giving them real-world insight into market research.

With activities like these, GCSE Business Studies is proving to be an exciting, practical course, setting pupils on the path to becoming tomorrow's business leaders!

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

## Creative

# V&A Innovate National Schools Challenge

Our fourth instalment of the V&A Innovate National Schools Challenge took place this term and it was bigger and better than ever!

Mr Hill has been working with the V&A to produce this year's themes, classroom resources, and guidance for pupils across the country and we are so excited to see how our pupils tackle this year's themes. Working in collaboration with our Creative Champions from Years 8 and 9, 180 Year 7 pupils joined forces for a day of innovation and creativity.

V&A Innovate is an annual National Schools Challenge, asking pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 to work in teams of between 4 – 6 to design a solution to a real-world problem. The V&A are asking pupils to work in teams to follow a human-centred design process and respond to one of the three challenge themes inspired by V&A collections:

**Transform:** How might we transform our world for the better? How might we transform objects around us to make them suit our needs without further impacting the environment?

**Belong:** How might we use design to bring people together, make people feel included and give them a sense of belonging? How can design be used to express a set of shared values, identities and symbols?

**Celebrate:** Could we use design to make how we celebrate more sustainable? Or how might you design a celebration for a person or group of people?

We hope we can build on our previous wins and secure a place in this year's final.

**Mr Russell Hill**  
Head of Faculty: Creative



# V&A



# Year 8: Can design make life easier?

Year 8 pupils are currently exploring this question as they work through the complexities of embedding empathy into the design process.

We all know somebody who might struggle with certain tasks and their ability may be inhibited by disability, lack of confidence or even basic know-how. Our young designers are busy using anthropometric data to ensure their products are truly ergonomic.

Pupils are guided through a series of challenges as they develop empathy for the needs of others.

We have seen some incredible outcomes as they design and manufacture implements to help people serve their food despite having varying needs.

**Mr Russell Hill**  
Head of Faculty: Creative



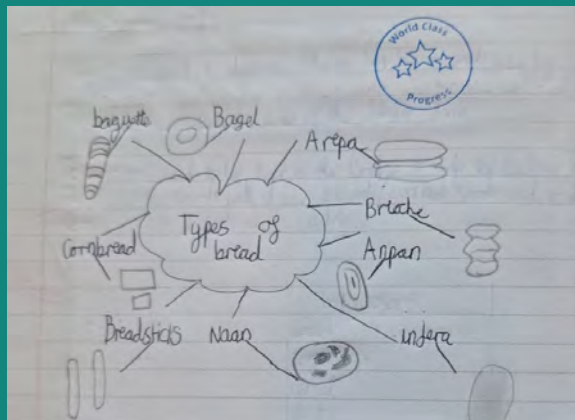
## Food Preparation & Nutrition

### Year 10

Our Food GCSE groups have been very busy this term, learning many new high-level skills. They have also had industry experts in to demonstrate these skills. This has included exploring the commodity of bread along with nutrients within vegetables.

They conducted a workshop with Rugby Real Bread owner, Paul, to make focaccia.

Pupils were then lucky enough to have a session with The Gourmet Chef from Coventry where the chef cooked his menu



of the month and gave valuable insight into the industry and pathways into employment within it.

Pupils have been making focaccia, Chelsea buns, hot cross buns, lentil curry, flavoured naan, and spring rolls.

### Year 9

#### The Big Question for this term: How Multicultural is Houlton?

Street food is one of the areas through which this Big Question is being explored throughout Year 9. Pupils have researched a variety of street food vendors and carried out a practical of making churros, using deep-fat fryers and piping techniques, along with looking at the origins of empanadas - which we will be making as well!

### Year 8

#### Big Question: Do nutrients change when heated?

Pupils have started by recapping on prior knowledge from Year 7 in terms of cross-contamination and bacteria. Looking



into detail about how bacteria can pass and how to prevent food poisoning.

The year group has been working towards making chicken/corn curry and transferring these skills from the theoretical lessons to the practical.

### Year 7

#### Big Question: What skills does a Commis Chef need?

Pupils have been looking right back to the basic skills every kitchen porter needs to graduate to a commis chef, in particular looking at hazards, such as bacteria and ways this can be passed from foods and surfaces, how to prevent them in the kitchen, and understanding key components of nutrients within types of flour. Pupils have also made wholemeal bread buns.

**Mrs Baldeep Dvgun**  
Head of Food Preparation & Nutrition

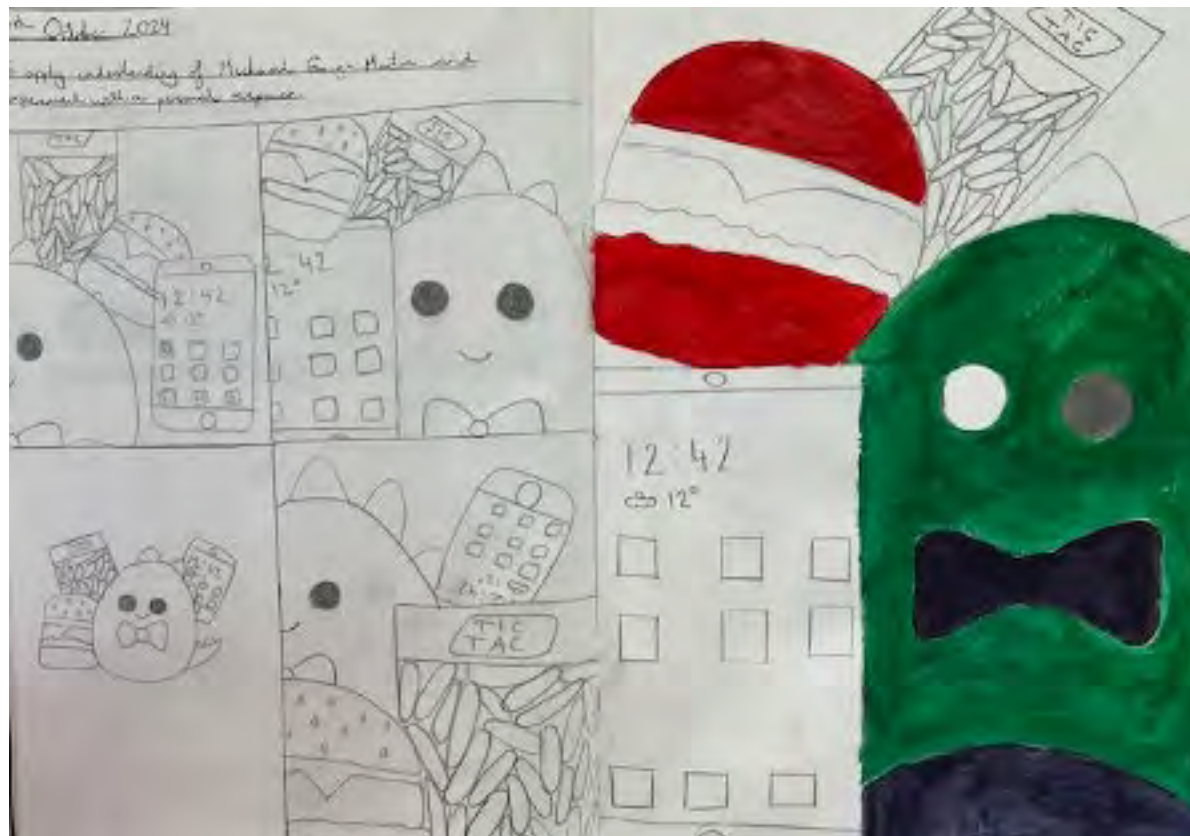


## Year 7: 'What skills do artists need?'

Year 7 pupils have made an impressive start to their first term at Houlton by trying out the fundamental skills needed by an artist! They have been exploring how to draw shapes and forms, how to mark-make and create tone, and very tricky one and two-point perspective.

## Year 8: 'How still is life?'

Year 8 pupils have been creating personal responses to the still-life artist Michael Craig-Martin. They have been learning how to draw objects, how to simplify shapes and revisiting their knowledge of colour theory. These outcomes will be painted in bright, contrasting colours.



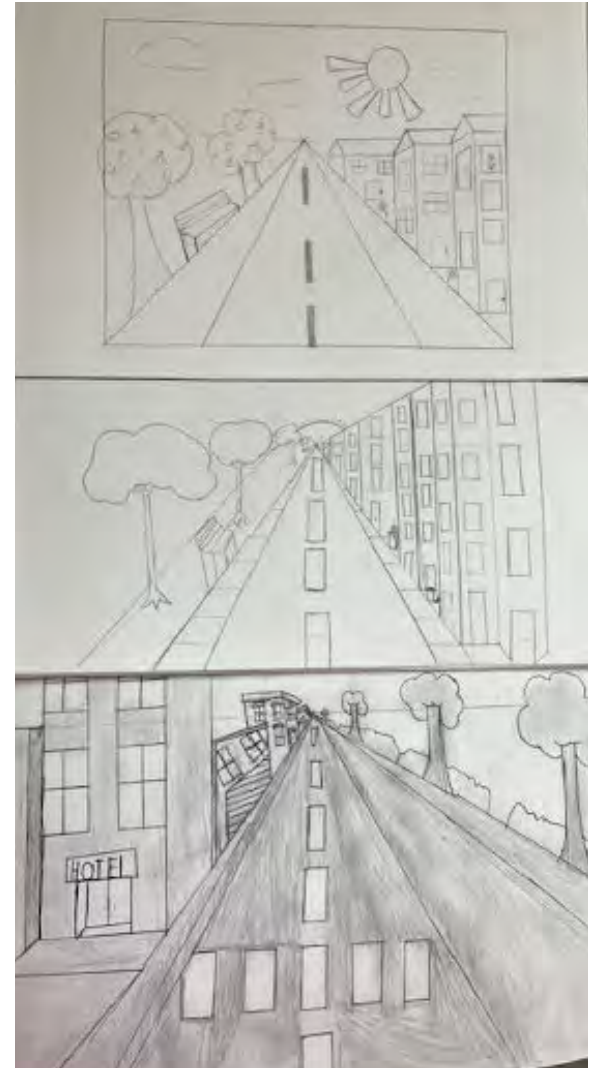
## Year 9: 'Jewellery making' co-curricular club

Year 9 pupils have kicked off jewellery making club by creating personal button badges using clay. There will be a kiln fired before we explore how we can add a pop of colour using glazes. We are excited to be trying out a variety of jewellery making techniques over the next few weeks!

## Year 10: 'How natural is our world?'

Year 10 GCSE Fine Art pupils are exploring the Natural World and revisiting the formal elements of Art and Design. From fruits and vegetables to coral, sea urchins, and even animal skulls – they have used a wide variety of visual sources for inspiration as they experiment with mixed media techniques.

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



# Spanish

During this first term, Year 7, 8, 9, and 10 pupils have been engaging in exciting and challenging activities to develop their Spanish skills, with each year group focusing on different aspects of the language and culture.

## Year 7: Answering the Big Question: "Who am I?"

Year 7 pupils have started exploring the Spanish language by answering the Big Question: **"Who am I?"**. They have been learning how to introduce themselves, share basic information about who they are, and talk about their identity in Spanish. This term, they have practised saying their name, age, nationality, and some hobbies, taking their first steps in communicating in this new language.

## Year 8: Answering the Big Question: "Should we be proud of where we live?"

In Year 8, pupils have been developing their ability to describe their surroundings, answering the Big Question: **"Should we be proud of where we live?"**. They have been working on describing their city or town, using vocabulary to talk about their environment and important places, and expressing their opinions about what they like or dislike about where they live. This theme allows them to deepen their expression of personal opinions in Spanish.

## Year 9: Answering the Big Question: "Are Spanish and English pop cultures different?"

Year 9 pupils have been introduced to Spanish pop culture and have started comparing it to English pop culture while answering the Big Question: **"Are Spanish and English pop cultures different?"**. They have been analysing films, music, and key

figures from both cultures, learning to make comparisons in Spanish. This topic has allowed them to explore the similarities and differences between the two cultures, using the language to express their ideas and opinions.

## Year 10: Answering the Big Question: "How do we have fun?"

Year 10 pupils have begun their first year of the GCSE course with the Big Question: **"How do we have fun?"**. They have been reviewing different verb tenses in Spanish, practising how to talk about leisure activities and entertainment. Additionally, they have been working on developing the four key skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing, preparing for the challenges of GCSE and improving their command of the Spanish language.

**Ms Carola Casanovas**  
Head of Spanish



# Salut à tous!

We're off to a fantastic start in French this term! In Year 7, our pupils have been delving into deep philosophical questions about friendship with **"Qu'est-ce qu'un ami?"** These big questions have encouraged them to think critically, draw on their prior knowledge, and express their own opinions.

In Year 8, we're exploring the complex relationship between self-expression, societal expectations, and personal identity through **"Mon look, la mode, c'est fini?"**. This topic has sparked lively discussions about cultural norms and the power of fashion.

In Year 9, we're examining the impact of technology on our lives, our relationships, and our society with **"Pour ou contre les nouvelles technologies."** This thought-provoking inquiry has led to in-depth debates about the benefits and drawbacks of digital advancements.

We're having a blast learning about French culture, language, and history.

Meanwhile... Our Year 10 GCSE French pupils are working hard! They've hit the ground running and are diligently working through their Edexcel Pearson GCSE course. We're excited to see their progress and are confident in their ability to achieve great results. For more information on the GCSE French specification, please visit the Edexcel Pearson website.

**Au fait**, did you hear the exciting news? We're planning a trip to Paris next year! Imagine strolling through the charming streets of Montmartre, where artists like Picasso and Van Gogh once lived and worked. We'll also be visiting the Palace of Versailles, a stunning example of French Baroque architecture. And for a spooky touch, we'll venture into the Catacombs, a vast network of underground tunnels that once served as a mass grave.

Keep your eyes peeled for more information about this incredible opportunity.

We leave you with a challenge: could you complete one of the Bell Tasks our Year 9 pupils had to tackle this term?

À bientôt! The French Department

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



Mon GPS est incorrect, je suis perdu ! je devais être en ville, mais je suis à la montagne??? **Roberte**

Bonjour, j'ai bu un café ici, il y a une heure. J'ai perdu mon téléphone, peut-être j'ai perdu mon téléphone ici? il est bleu. La marque? C'est un iPhone. Le Modele? iPhone 14 Pro Max **Jane**

Oui alló, bonjour madame. J'ai téléchargé l'application SNCF sur mon portable, et j'ai acheté un ticket de train pour deux adultes et un enfant, de Paris à Marseille. Mais il y a un problème: j'ai perdu l'email avec le code QR du ticket... Vous pouvez m'aider? **Sophie**

Voilà pourquoi je n'aime pas la technologie ! C'est horrible ! Je voudrais acheter un ticket pour le concert de Taylor Swift, mais j'ai rafraichi la page, et maintenant, je suis dans la queue, numéro 1454... Et maintenant, c'est fini ! **Tom**

**BT: Get ready to read one of these speech bubbles out loud. Write down at least 3 phonics rules you know will help you pronounce it right. (example: 's' is silent at the end of words)**

# Making music at Houlton School

Instrumental lessons have officially re-started this year, and we are thrilled by the overwhelming response from pupils.

A wide range of instruments, from guitars and violins to pianos and drums, have been in high demand, showcasing the diverse musical interests of our pupils.

It's wonderful to see so many eager musicians taking part in these lessons, and we're excited to watch their skills develop. We kindly remind parents to regularly check Involvement to view instrumental lesson

schedules and to monitor their child's attendance and progress. This is a great way to stay informed about your child's musical journey and ensure they are making the most of this opportunity. If your child is not currently enrolled in lessons, don't worry—there will be more chances to sign up soon!

In addition to individual lessons, the Music Department's co-curricular activities have launched with great success. Our lunchtime choirs and after-school band practices have quickly gained popularity, with pupils showing incredible dedication and talent. These sessions have already produced some impressive results, as pupils come together to perform both well-known covers and original compositions. We are

especially excited to see the creativity that has emerged, with many pupils beginning to experiment with songwriting and musical arrangement. These activities provide an excellent platform for pupils to not only enhance their musical skills but also to collaborate and develop confidence in their abilities. We encourage all pupils with an interest in music to get involved and take advantage of these exciting opportunities!

Stay tuned for more updates from the Music Department as the year progresses, and we look forward to sharing our pupils' achievements with you!

**Mr Peter Bridgwood**  
Head of Music

# Exciting Pantomime Production by Year 10 BTEC Dance and Acting Pupils

We are thrilled to announce that our Year 10 BTEC Dance and Acting pupils are hard at work preparing a delightful pantomime that will bring joy to audiences both in local primary schools and right here in our own auditorium.

The pupils have embraced the challenge of creating a lively and engaging performance, ready for the upcoming Christmas season. As part of this project, the pupils will tour local primary schools, sharing their performance with younger audiences, then working with pupils after the show on a performance workshop. This initiative not only highlights the talent of our pupils but also builds connections with local schools, promoting the importance of performing arts.

Mark Your Calendars! We invite everyone to join us for a special performance on Wednesday 11th December at 5pm in the auditorium. This will be a fantastic opportunity for parents, friends, and the school community to support our talented Year 10 performers and enjoy an evening of entertainment. Stay tuned for further updates.

## Dance Club Updates

As the school year progresses, our dance clubs are in full swing.

Our Year 7 and 8 Dance Club, with an enthusiastic membership of 40 dancers, is preparing for an enchanting performance inspired by the classic tale of Aladdin.

Pupils are exploring various dance styles and incorporating a range of vibrant props to bring the dance to life.

Meanwhile, the Year 9 and 10 Dance Club is hard at work on a contemporary piece that pays homage to influential women throughout history. The powerful performance piece blends artistic expression with a meaningful message.

Both clubs are preparing to showcase their talent at the upcoming Great Big Dance Off competition in March, where they'll compete against other schools from across the West Midlands.

Both clubs invite parents and friends to witness their progress in a special performance scheduled for Wednesday 11th December at 5pm in the auditorium. This event will be a fantastic opportunity to support our dancers and celebrate their hard work and creativity. We hope to see you there! Stay tuned for more updates as these clubs continue to develop their routines and prepare for exciting performances ahead!

**Miss Frankie Connolly**  
Head of Dance



# Exciting auditions for Lion King Jr. – A proud showcase of talent!

We are thrilled to announce the successful auditions for our upcoming production of Lion King Jr.!

Over the past few weeks, our talented pupils have taken to the stage, pouring their hearts into both singing and acting and we couldn't be prouder of their dedication and creativity.

The energy in the room during auditions was truly electric. From soulful renditions of beloved songs to powerful performances that brought the characters to life, each pupil showcased their unique talents and passion for the arts. It was a joy to see how they embraced the spirit of teamwork and collaboration, supporting one another with kind words and encouragement throughout the process. This warm atmosphere created an unforgettable experience for everyone involved.

Mark your calendars! Our show dates are set for Wednesday 9th April to Friday 11th April 2025. You won't want to miss the incredible performances our pupils have in store for you. Tickets will be on sale soon, so keep an eye out for updates!

A heartfelt thank you to all the pupils for their hard work, enthusiasm, and the wonderful camaraderie they displayed. We can't wait to see you all shine on stage in Lion King Jr.!

## Exciting opportunity: Sign up for LAMDA classes!

We are thrilled to announce that pupils will soon have the opportunity to enrol in LAMDA (London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art) classes!

Similar to our instrumental lessons, these engaging sessions will be held during the school day and taught by qualified LAMDA professionals.

Pupils can sign up for a variety of classes, including **Musical Theatre, Acting, Public Speaking, and Verse and Prose.** These offerings cater to diverse interests and skill levels, ensuring that every pupil can find a class that inspires them.

LAMDA classes provide an excellent chance to develop essential skills in performance, speech, and communication. Whether your child is a budding performer or simply looking to build confidence, these classes

are designed to nurture creativity and enhance personal expression.

What's more, higher-level LAMDA qualifications carry UCAS points, which can significantly benefit pupils applying for university. This means that participating in LAMDA can not only enrich their artistic skills but also enhance their academic profile.

We are also pleased to announce that fully funded places will be available for pupil premium pupils, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate regardless of their financial situation.

The LAMDA curriculum focuses on a range of performance techniques, speech training, and drama exercises, all aimed at fostering talent and self-assurance. With experienced instructors guiding the way, pupils will receive personalised support tailored to their individual needs.

Enrolment details will be shared soon, so keep an eye out for more information! We encourage all pupils to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to explore their creative potential and enhance their skills through LAMDA.

We can't wait to see the incredible talent that emerges from these classes!

## Year 10 Performing Arts pupils enjoy an inspiring day at the Globe Theatre and Tate Modern

Our Year 10 Performing Arts pupils recently had the fantastic opportunity to attend a performance of *The Comedy of Errors* at the iconic Globe Theatre.

This trip was designed to help pupils understand the techniques of outdoor Shakespearean performance as they prepare for their own production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is open to all pupils in Years 9 and 10, and set to take place at Yelvertoft Theatre by the Pond in July.

The experience at the Globe was nothing short of magical. Surrounded by the vibrant energy of live theatre, our pupils observed the unique ways in which the outdoor setting influenced the performance style. They noted how the actors engaged with the audience and used the environment to enhance the storytelling— all vital insights they can incorporate into their upcoming show.

Following their visit to the Globe, the pupils also explored the Tate Modern to gain inspiration for their production roles. As they began studying aspects of set design, props, and costumes, the Tate provided a rich source of creativity. The diverse artworks and installations sparked ideas about how to bring the whimsical world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to life, encouraging pupils to think outside the box and draw from various artistic influences.

Both outings were invaluable experiences that will undoubtedly enrich our pupils' understanding of performance and production. We are excited to see how they will apply their newfound knowledge and inspiration as they embark on their journey to create a captivating rendition of this beloved Shakespearean classic.

Stay tuned for more updates as our talented Year 9 and 10 performers prepare for their July production!

**Mr David Bird**  
Head of Acting

# PE Updates

## Curriculum lessons this half term

**Year 7:** Netball

**Year 8:** Badminton

**Year 9:** Handball

**Year 10:** Netball / Aussie Rules / Gaelic Football

## Co-curricular opportunities this term:

- Mixed Football (Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday)
- Netball (Tuesday after school)
- Running Club (Thursday after school)
- Girls Football (Wednesday after school)
- Volleyball (Tuesday after school)

## PE Fixture News:

This term has seen the return of our winter sports. We have had our Year 8/9/10 Netball fixtures and our mixed Football has also been running.

## Year 10 Netball results:

Rugby Free 8 – 15 Houlton

Avon Valley 2 – 14 Houlton

Rugby High 14 – 5 Houlton

## Year 9 Netball results:

Rugby Free – Houlton (L)

Rugby High 14 – 2 Houlton

## Year 8 Netball results:

Rugby Free – Houlton (L)

Rugby High 16 – 7 Houlton

## Mixed Football:

Year 7 – 0 – 4 L Princethorpe

Year 10 – 0 – 4 Ashlawn

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



## GCSE PE – Our first ever cohort!

Our Year 10 GCSE PE pupils have embarked on an exciting journey as the first-ever cohort to take this course at Houlton School.

So far, they have been diving into the topic of physical training, exploring the components of fitness such as strength, endurance, and flexibility. They've also been getting to grips with key principles of training, including FITT (Frequency, Intensity, Time, Type) and SPORT (Specificity, Progression, Overload, Reversibility, Tedium). Additionally, they've started to examine various methods of training, equipping themselves with a well-rounded foundation for future lessons.

**Miss Abbie Hartfield**  
Head of PE



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