

HOULTON AUTUMN NEWS 2021



HOULTON
SCHOOL



Welcome from the Principal

Welcome to the first half-termly edition of the Houlton School newsletter!

I hope you'll agree that it demonstrates our founding pupils and colleagues have lived the core Houlton pillars of **innovation**, **aspiration** and **excellence** in abundance so far this school year; of course, this publication provides just a snapshot of the transformational learning that pupils have enjoyed both in and out of the classroom – thank you to the teachers and support staff who have made all of that happen whilst adjusting to a new school, new systems and a brand new environment.

May I also take this opportunity to thank you for your patience where some things

have taken a little longer than we'd hoped with our set-up. The global pandemic and UK departure from the EU continue to impact supply chains and we know we won't get everything right first time. However, as Maya Angelou once wisely said, 'Do the best you can do until you know better; then, when you know better, do better...' We promise to listen, review and adapt as we grow together.

Our first half-term has focused on ensuring our pupils feel safe, happy and settled... what any parent wants from the transition to secondary school. We have also made clear from day one that we have the highest expectations of pupils' conduct, manners, appearance and their commitment to their studies, as we recognise the need to balance enjoyment

of school with academic success and rapid progress towards ambitious targets. Next half-term you will receive your child's first Progress Check in their core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science (PC1), with all other subjects being reported home in the Spring term for Progress Check Two (PC2), which will be immediately followed by our first Parents' Evening.

Thank you for your warmth, enthusiasm, feedback and partnership since the launch of our special Houlton family: we wish our pupils a very happy and safe half-term break and look forward to welcoming them back soon - rested, restored and eager to learn.

Michael McCulley
Principal



We are pleased to share this news story that was featured in last week's Rugby Observer

The transformation of a historic listed building into Rugby's new secondary school has been praised by the town's MP during a tour.

Mark Pawsey joined founding pupils and staff of Houlton School to explore the new site, which officially opened its doors to 180 Year 7 pupils last month.

He was joined by Nigel Hugill, Chief Executive of Houlton developers Urban&Civic, Johanne Thomas, Regional Director for Communities at Urban&Civic, and Houlton School's Principal,

Transformation of listed building into Rugby's new secondary school praised by MP

Michael McCulley, for a tour of the school.

Standing in the historic Grade II-listed Rugby Radio Station's Transmission Hall, which is now at the heart of the school campus, Mr Pawsey saw how many of the building's original features have been restored to link the new school to the heritage of the former Rugby Radio Station.

He was also shown the new school buildings – built as part of the two-year, £39million project to transform the site – which includes a humanities block and science labs.

Mr Pawsey said: "I've had the opportunity to see the development of Houlton School since work began and it was great to see the first cohort of Year 7 pupils enjoying the new facilities. The school delivers on creating a fully modern, state-of-the-art, educational centre whilst still recalling the unique heritage of the former Rugby Radio Station building.

"It is also thanks to the hard work of Urban&Civic and those who worked on building Houlton School that it has been able

to open on time, despite the challenges of the pandemic."

Johanne Thomas added: "We were keen to show Mark just how resilient Houlton has been through this challenging period – from all perspectives. Transforming a listed building into a school, through a global pandemic, has been a huge challenge but made possible through the commitment of our contractors and partnership with Principal Michael McCulley and Transforming Lives Education Trust (TLET)."

Michael McCulley added: "It was an honour to take Mark Pawsey on a tour of our finished school. As a new school, we have had the great privilege of building our community from scratch. We have taken so much inspiration from the iconic heritage and stunning architecture of our location, and have developed a campus featuring state-of-the-art facilities that will provide so many world class opportunities for our pupils."

By the Rugby Observer



Scientists of the future

Einstein, Hawking, Newton...

No one would question their intelligence nor their dedication to science. The contribution that they have made to the world of physics is enormous and unmatched... FOR NOW!

The Houlton scientists are well and truly on the scene and have made this first half-term in the science laboratory incredible.

Pupils have been learning all about space and the physics which governs it. They have looked at how organisations are using different types of spacecraft to search for life; how human lungs would behave in the

vacuum of space; and how mathematics can be used to calculate the distance between Earth and the Sun.

Our Houlton pupils have taken to this new challenge like a duck to water and embraced the conceptually difficult topics like no year group I have taught before. But perhaps the most awe-inspiring moments have come from the most recent lessons whilst looking at stars and black holes. I would love to be able to share a photograph of our pupils' faces after realising how big stars really are, and a subsequent photo of their jaws dropping further as they realise how big a black hole can be. But sadly I don't have one.

Instead, I would like you to watch the following videos in the order they are posted and imagine 30 faces all making the same face you do.

- 1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=octRYMsiLX0&t=147s>
- 2) www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgNDao7m41M

I hope you feel as in awe as our pupils did.

By Aaron Griffin, Head of Faculty for Science and Computer Science

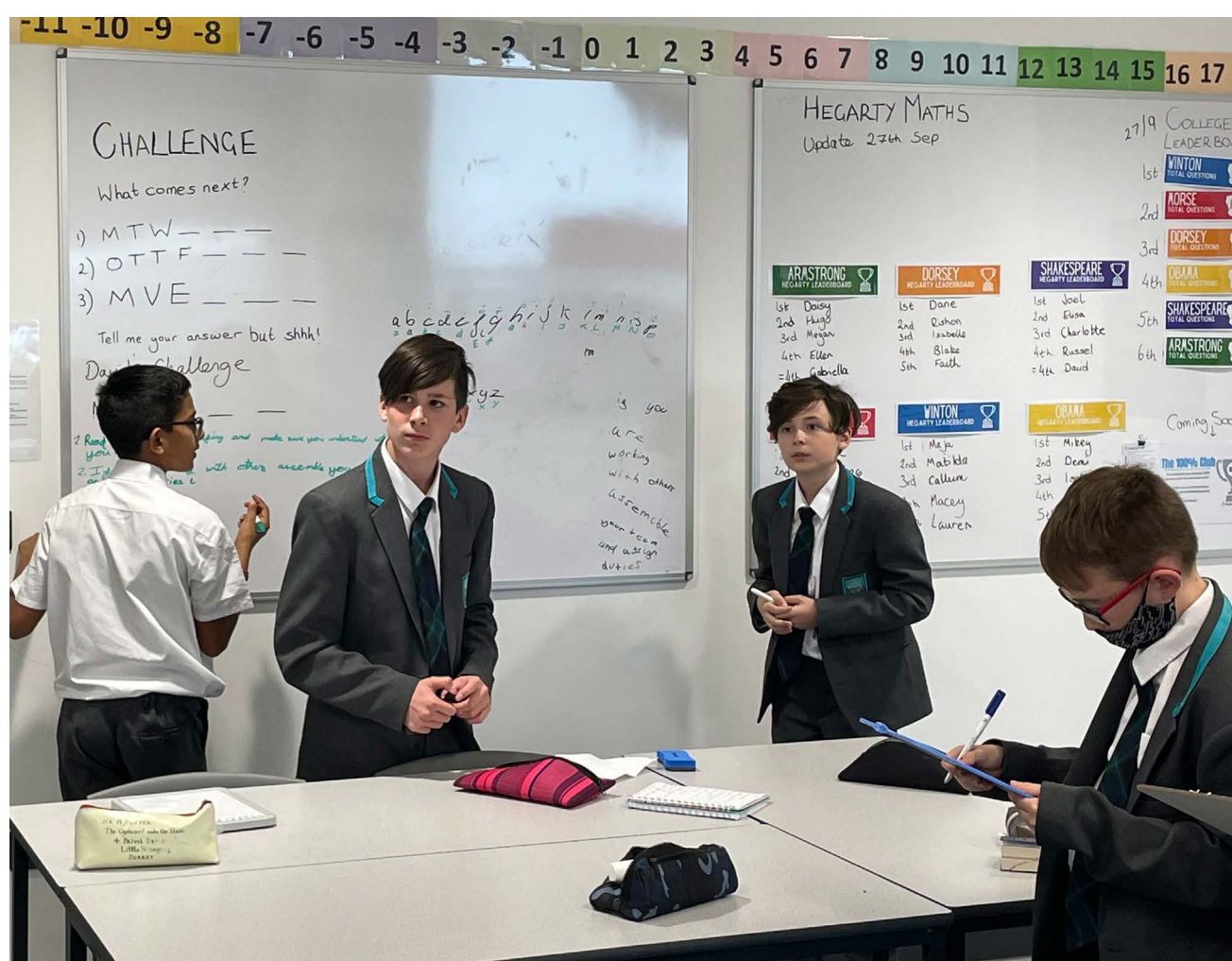
Houlton code breakers

Year 7 Code Breaking Club has begun the National Cipher Challenge this month. The National Cipher Challenge is a worldwide competition from the University of Southampton where pupils compete to solve ever-increasingly difficult ciphers in order to crack a mystery.

The mystery this year involves the 'Lighthouse Conspirators' and has introduced some characters called Jodie, Harry, Babbage, M and CH.

Year 7 have been working hard to solve the first two ciphers and cracked them with a Caesar Shift, but are ready for the next stage when they will find out what has been going on in a secret building in London...

By Jasmine Etheridge, Head of Faculty for Mathematics and Numeracy



Learning about the global refugee crisis

Throughout this half-term, Houlton pupils are exploring ideas about power, otherness and the adversity faced by millions of refugees around the world today.

In their English lessons, pupils have been reading 'Boy 87' by Ele Fountain, about a refugee boy named Shif and his fight for freedom. Pupils have been improving their oracy skills through debate and discussion around big issues like race, gender and dehumanisation. They have also been expanding their knowledge of the modern

world through reading articles for homework surrounding the refugee crisis.

In Acting, pupils have had the opportunity to empathise with the refugee experience by creating characters who have been displaced. They have been encouraged to challenge the status quo in the media and form their own opinion about these modern issues.

If your child has enjoyed this topic, Ele Fountain has written two other books, 'Lost' and 'Melt' which can be bought online or

found in the library. Other texts that they might find interesting include Benjamin Zephaniah's 'Windrush Child,' or Malorie Blackman's, 'Noughts and Crosses', both of which can be found in the library. Please encourage your children to explore texts like these and by other authors of Colour, particularly during October's Black History Month.

By Sian Warde, Head of Faculty for English, Literacy and Acting

Marking Black History Month

In the UK, we've celebrated Black History Month since 1987, when Ghanian born Akyaaba Addai Sebo introduced the concept from the time he spent in the USA in 1970s. Black History Month seeks to recognise and celebrate the achievements and contributions of the black African and Caribbean diaspora, both throughout history and modern day.

This year's Black History Month theme is "Proud To Be", where black people are encouraged to share and express what makes them proud of their heritage. This can be either a celebration of a figure from black history or a recounting of their own personal experiences or societal contribution.

Nelson Mandela had it right when he once said "Education is the most powerful weapon, that can be used to change the world." We should all look to further educate ourselves fully, not omitting any facet of society.

By Aiyana from 7M

Exploring Roman Artefacts

The whole of Year 7 were lucky enough to get hands-on in History as they explored different Roman artefacts from the local settlement of Tripontium.

We explored each different artefact and thought about what it told us about life in Roman times. They allowed us to understand how life has changed as well as how everyday life remains similar; for example, the Romans even had very basic calculators!

We especially enjoyed exploring the Roman tile, an object that is nearly 2000 years old (and even had a paw print in it). Considering it had been buried in the ground for so long, it was still in great condition. It was great to explore the work that real life Historians get up to every day and it helped us feel connected with the people who lived on the Dunsmore Plain such a long time ago.

By Hope, Sofia, Phoebe and Matilda from 7W

Languages and Culture Club

During this half-term's Languages and Culture Club, our pupils were lucky enough to enjoy a very French food-testing experience!

Mr Raffy and Mr Hill brought all the equipment for authentic crêpe making, on the traditional billig, a thick circular cast iron plate used by professionals in Brittany. It is the only way to make 'crêpes dentelle', lace crepes, which, whilst cooking, should reproduce the pattern of the headscarves of traditional Breton attire.

"It was fun to see how the crepes are made in the moment, they tasted amazing too!" – Lilly-Rose

"It was the first time I had crêpes, and it was delicious!" – Max

By Matthieu Raffy, Subject Team Leader: Modern Languages



What is Restart a Heart Day?

The European Resuscitation Council established the annual European Restart a Heart Day, which takes place worldwide on 16th October each year. The day encourages professionals and the public to receive training and to attempt resuscitation if required.

In 2019, 291,000 people in the UK were trained in resuscitation through Restart a

Heart Day.

I am proud to report that very soon every Houlton College will have had the opportunity to receive CPR training as part of our core PHRSE curriculum.

Everyone can resuscitate, we can all make a difference.

By Annie Divver, Pupil Experience Leader

Exploring Art and Design

It has been a busy half-term in the Art and Design Department.

Pupils from across the school enjoyed exploring our heritage site, experimenting with mark making and perspective during their art lessons. In Design and Technology, pupils also delved into the iterative design process, exploring new ergonomic handle designs for everyday objects and tools.

In 3D Art Club we also started the term by making coil pots, where pupils were encouraged to use a traditional technique alongside contemporary decoration.

By Russell Hill, Subject Team Leader: Creative

'Secondary Ready' Transition Day

We were delighted to welcome Dale Hancock and his team to lead our very first 'secondary ready' transition day at Houlton School.

Having faced almost two years of disrupted learning, we felt it was important to provide an additional layer of transition this year to ensure that our pupils felt encouraged, supported and 'ready' for the challenges ahead.

Pupils and staff had a fantastic day of problem solving, team building and resilience training – all designed to increase confidence, to break down barriers and to show our pupils what being part of our Houlton family really means.

All pupils got the chance to have a go at six carousel activities where they had the opportunity to meet new friends and to build new skills.

By Chloe Buckenham, Vice Principal



PE at Houlton

As the first half-term at Houlton School comes to a close, here in PE we have had a fast start getting straight into the action. Here are just some of the highlights from our first few weeks, with even more to come later in the year. Well done Team Houlton on an excellent start and we look forward to witnessing some more Houlton wins in the fixtures very soon.



Football Development School visit

This month we have been very fortunate to have welcomed specialist football coaches from FDS to deliver engaging football sessions within our PE lessons to all six colleges.

They have been full of competitions, games and most importantly fun.

Co-curricular clubs

Our sports clubs have now been running for a couple of weeks and the numbers are increasing week-on-week and growing in popularity.

We have a variety of clubs on at lunchtimes and after school, which include Badminton, Basketball, Volleyball, Netball and Football. These will change throughout the year to ensure pupils have access to a wide variety of sports.

Well done to all those who have already taken part and remember you just need your trainers for the lunchtime clubs.

School fixtures

So far this term we have been competing in our boys' football league against schools in Rugby and the surrounding areas. This term we have played against Lawrence Sheriff and Princethorpe, narrowly missing out on both wins.

However, we enjoyed more success vs. Bilton (4-3) and look forward to our first fixture vs. Avon Valley very soon. In the coming terms, we will see more fixtures in lots of different sports which will also be played against other local schools.

A special mention to both Brandon and Mikey on an excellent start in PE. Both were awarded R2s for their outstanding attitude and enthusiasm towards PE this term. They are always willing to help and lead others during lessons and co-curricular clubs, which is brilliant to see. Positive emails were also sent home to show appreciation of their efforts. Well done to both pupils!

By Abbie Hartfield, Teacher of Physical Education



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