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Dear Houlton family

### **Report of Graded Ofsted Inspection for Houlton School, April 2024**

I hope that this letter finds you well and that your child is settling back into the summer term following the Easter break.

As you are aware, at the end of February of this year our academy was visited by the schools' inspectorate, Ofsted. This was a two-day inspection to assess our academy and included observations of lessons as well as discussions with leaders, staff, pupils and parents. This really was a community effort, and we would like to thank everyone who contributed to the inspection process.

I am delighted to now be able to share with you that the inspectors were incredibly complimentary about Houlton School and have judged our academy to be **'Good' across all inspection categories!**

This was our first official, graded Ofsted since we opened in 2021, so it is truly a milestone moment for us. What we also take great heart from is that the inspectors were very much talking about our overall journey to Outstanding as part of their feedback – what we need, more than anything, is further time to embed our aspirations and ethos.

There is a huge amount for us to celebrate, and I'd like to draw your attention to some particular highlights:

- Houlton School is aspirational for all its pupils, including those pupils with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It wants all pupils to achieve well academically and be ready for life in the wider world.
- Many pupils rise to the challenges set by the school. They work hard, adhere to the rules and routines and contribute to school life. As a result, most pupils learn well in their lessons and take part in the wealth of clubs and trips on offer.
- The school has developed a broad and wide-ranging curriculum for all pupils. The academic curriculum sits alongside a 'co-curriculum' that extends pupils' learning beyond their taught subjects.
- The school has given careful thought to the substance of the curriculum in each subject. Each new topic in each subject is underpinned by a 'big question'. Pupils learn the important knowledge that they need to help answer this question, connecting new knowledge with what they have learned before.

- Pupils with SEND are expected to learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Staff identify pupils' specific needs and share detailed information with teachers so that they can support pupils in their lessons.
- The school is determined that pupils should read widely and often. In developing the curriculum, each subject team has also considered how it can promote and model reading. Pupils who need help to improve their reading, including those with SEND, get the help and support they need.
- The trust and governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders and this is helping to distil, strengthen and share the vision for the school.

Areas for improvement were identified as further professional development for some teaching staff to improve curriculum delivery, and building upon community relationships so that all pupils' families share our vision for the academy and commit to our ethos and values.

Overall, this is a great report and we will incorporate the feedback into our existing programmes for continuous improvement and development.

I'd like to use this opportunity to say a huge thank you to everyone in our school community – our staff, pupils, parents and carers – we are all so proud to work with you to achieve this milestone. That is the real meaning of the Houlton family.

Ofsted reports are, of course, not the only measure of a success and we believe that the defining sign that we are doing the right thing by our community is the strength of our brilliant pupils. In partnership with our parents and staff, we really believe that Houlton is a place where children and young people can flourish and thrive.

A copy of the full report is now available to download from the academy's website [here](#). It will also be uploaded to the Ofsted website in the next week or so. If you have any questions, then please do get in touch and I will do all that I can to answer them.

Yours faithfully



**Michael McCulley**  
Principal