

# HOULTON MAY NEWS 2025



HOULTON  
SCHOOL



## Welcome from the Principal

### Dear Houlton family,

**With the INSET day and bank holiday, this has been just a 3 week, three day half-term for pupils: you would be forgiven for thinking we may not have much to share in this newsletter but, of course, nothing could be further from the truth as you will see in the following pages.**

The Met Office tells us we have had one of the warmest Springs on record and it has certainly been nice to see our fair share of good weather, facilitating all sorts of outdoor learning opportunities some of which you will see within these pages - and we hope to have more of the same as we look forward to our final half-term of the academic year, which is jam-packed with transformational learning

opportunities such as our forthcoming sports day, multiple educational visits, our outdoor production of Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and, of course, our enrichment week that includes residential to PGL, Paris and Barcelona! So much to look forward to.

I'd like to say a big personal thank you to Mr Ridgeway who has been supporting our school for some time now in both Science and Mathematics whilst we have been waiting for newly appointed staff to join in those teams. Mr Ridgeway has more than once come to the end of one contract with us before then starting another, so I'm very grateful for all his support of pupils and am sure you will wish

him a fond farewell as he moves on to his next challenge - perhaps we'll see him in school again some time in the future; meanwhile, we welcome Mr Cairns as our new Head of Faculty for Mathematics and Numeracy, Mr McQueen to the Pupil Experience team and Mr James-Garnett who will soon join Mrs Warde and take over Ms Fleck's work as our new Restorative Justice, Welfare and Safeguarding lead.

As always, please enjoy a safe and happy half-term break and remember to keep yourselves safe whilst enjoying yourselves.

**Michael McCulley**  
Principal



# Celebrating 100 Years of History at Houlton

As we approach the centenary of Rugby Radio Station, pupils and staff at Houlton School are proud to be part of a legacy that helped shape global communication. Opened in 1926, the station was once one of the largest radio transmitting stations in the world and played a pivotal role in transatlantic communication, maritime safety and World War Two efforts.

The very site our school now stands on was once home to 57 radio transmitters spread across 1,600 acres. After the station closed in 2002, part of the historic transmitter building was preserved and transformed into Houlton School. Remnants of its past can still be seen throughout the school, offering a daily reminder of its rich heritage.

To mark this significant milestone, a Houlton Tapestry is being created – a digital mosaic that will feature thousands of photographs celebrating the station's 100-year story. Once completed, the artwork will be displayed here at Houlton School, at St Gabriel's CofE School and later at Rugby Museum and Art Gallery.



Our very own History Club has been hard at work capturing images around the school to submit to the project. From architectural details of the original building to moments of school life today, their contributions will help ensure Houlton's unique story is told for generations to come.

We encourage families and members of the local community to get involved by submitting their own photos to the tapestry. A dedicated website has been set up for submissions, and we look forward to seeing the final piece come together in celebration of our shared history.

**Mr Isaac Roy**  
**Teacher of History**







# Excitement Builds as Rehearsals Begin for A Midsummer Night's Dream

The Performing Arts Department at Houlton School is thrilled to announce that rehearsals are underway for this year's Upper School production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare.

Pupils in Year 9 and 10, along with our talented Performing Arts Scholars, were invited to audition - and what an incredible turnout it was! The audition process showcased an exceptional range of talent, creativity, and enthusiasm. With so many impressive performances, casting the show proved to be no easy task for the production team.

Now that the cast is set, rehearsals are in full swing, and the buzz of excitement is growing with each passing day. The production promises to bring Shakespeare's magical comedy to life with charm, wit, and unforgettable performances.

Mark your calendars! *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be performed at the picturesque Yelvertoft Theatre by the Pond on Wednesday 16th and Thursday 17th July 2025 at 6:30 pm. It's sure to be a highlight of the school year.

Ticket information will be released soon so keep an eye out! We look forward to welcoming you to an enchanting evening of theatre under the summer sky.

**The Performing Arts Team**



# Science Sparks Curiosity and Discovery

It's been a busy and exciting term for the Science Department, with pupils diving into hands-on experiments, creative challenges, and a taste of the wider universe!

Our Science Club has been full of energy and enthusiasm, as members tackled tricky logic puzzles, put their chemistry skills to the test by creating bouncy bubbles, and explored the physics of sound by crafting their very own panpipes.

Pupils have also had a chance to experience life as budding astronomers. Using a digital telescope simulation, they navigated the night sky, observing stars, planets, and

galaxies from the comfort of the computer lab. It was a fascinating window into the universe and sparked great questions about what lies beyond our world.

Our Year 7 pupils also had a fabulous time on their recent science trip; it was a brilliant opportunity to extend learning beyond the classroom and explore science in action.

Finally, a reminder for Year 10 pupils - revision materials are now available on

the school website. These are a great way to consolidate learning and prepare for upcoming assessments, so do make use of them.

From chemistry to cosmology, it's been an inspiring term - and there's plenty more to come!

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

## Computer Science

# Pupils Harness Tech, AI, and Coding Skills

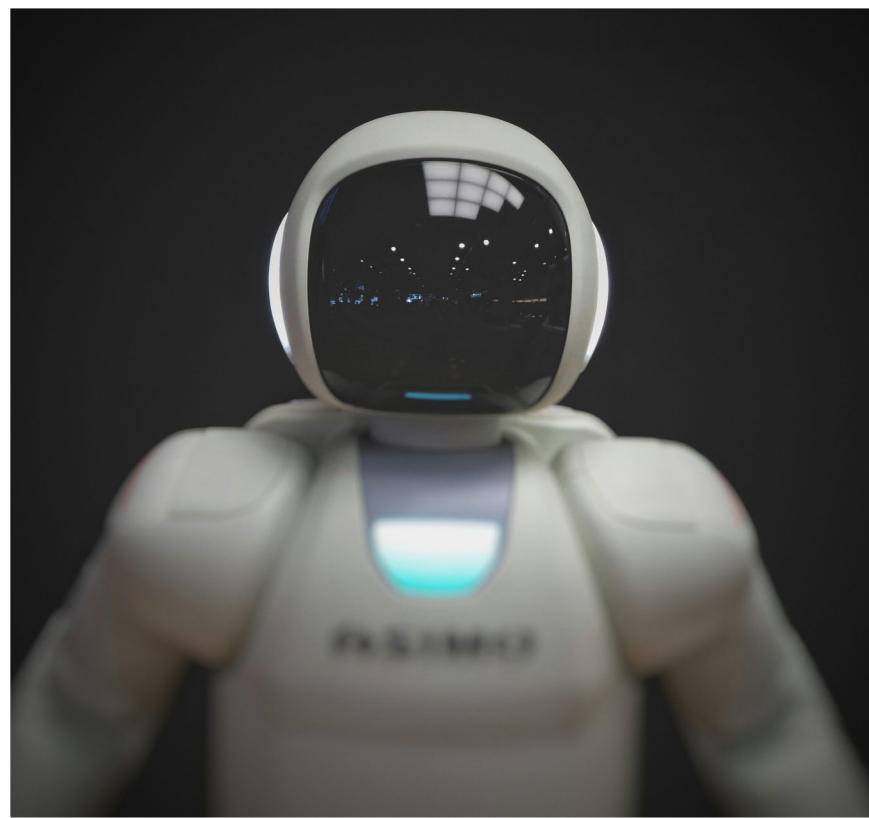
The modern pupil has a much broader range of electronic tools and devices at their disposal than pupils even 10 years ago. With the introduction of Artificial Intelligence, this will only continue to grow.

Year 9 pupils are currently looking at ways in which this modern technology can help us save on one of our most valuable assets - time. Advanced IT skills are designed for all pupils, regardless of their choice at KS4, to ensure they can save time and produce good quality work.

Pupils start to understand how these modern devices can be an amazing support tool during their studies. We aim to focus on making sure their presentations can impress, Word documents are formatted properly, reference lists are compiled, budgets are kept to, and the ever-useful mail merge can be used correctly. Year 9 will have an end-of-year assessment; more information will be sent out via email in the coming weeks.

Year 7 have started to look at coding, using our school micro bits (all named with a sci-fi and AI theme) to create animations and emotion badges. We will continue this work until the end of the year, where we will be using the micro:bits to direct our school robots (again, sci-fi and college-themed names) in a series of challenges.

Year 8 pupils are wrapping up their year with the creation of posters and materials to promote their games. To start, we have looked at an existing representation of an online safety poster, with pupils then creating their own to enter into our computing competition. R points are available and a place on one of the computer suite walls for the best of the best. After this, we are going to look at creating posters and other materials that they can use to convince others that their game is worth a purchase.



Year 10 pupils are working on their programming skills and exam practice. It doesn't seem like five minutes since we started the course, looking at computers and having now progressed all the way along to programming. Year 10 will have an end-of-year assessment; more information will be sent out via email in the coming weeks.

Finally, all pupils over the next few months will be asked to create a poster or infographic regarding careers in Computer Science and IT. There is a variety of information available online.

Do you use any form of IT in your job? Why not open the conversation and discuss what you use it for!

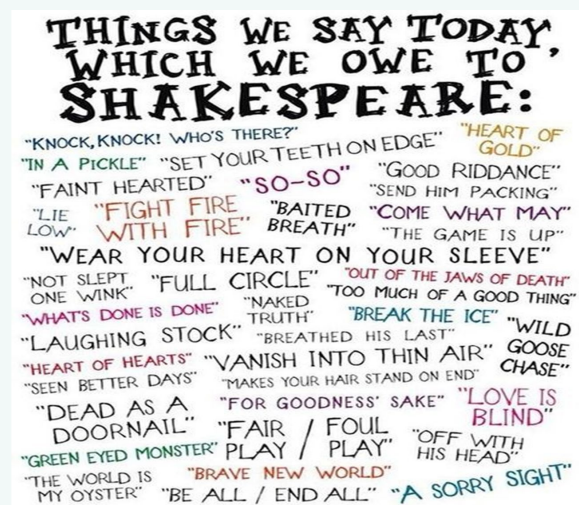
**Mr Matthew Cresswell-Peters**  
**Head of Computer Science**



# Key Stage 3

A relatively short and quiet half term in the English Department but there have been lots of important and, hopefully, interesting things learned!

Year 7 pupils have been learning about life and language in Shakespeare's time before moving on to the study of *The Merchant of Venice*. Parents beware if your sons and daughters start calling you a "varlet" or a "caitiff"!



Year 9 have begun their study of the modern novel, *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds. *Long Way Down* follows fifteen-year-old William Holloman during the two days after his beloved older brother is shot and killed. The story looks at both the inevitability and the futility of violence and revenge as Will meets a range of mysterious characters on his way to face his brother's killer. Pupils in 9 Shakespeare, Kleyton and Krishna, pictured here, seem to be loving this text!



Year 9 have been set an (optional) extended reading project this term in order to enhance their study of *Long Way Down* and help to prepare them for the rigours of GCSE. Pupils have the option to read any of the texts below and then complete one of the following tasks:

## Texts:

- **Harper Lee** - *To Kill a Mocking Bird*
- **CG Drews** - *The Boy Who Steals Houses*
- **Annie Proulx** - *Postcards*
- **JD Salinger** - *The Catcher in the Rye*
- **Mildred D. Taylor** - *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*
- **Marcus Sedgewick** - *Revolver*
- **Jason Wallace** - *Out of Shadows*
- **Rachel Ward** - *Numbers*

## Tasks:

- **Text to self** - Based upon the book you have just read, write a story about yourself that is related to an event or character that was in the book. Link your experience to no more than four situations that occurred within the text. Text to self is a great opportunity for pupils to become introspective about the content they read and make comparisons to their own experiences in life.
- **Dear diary task** - Place yourself in the shoes of one of the characters you have just read about and write a diary entry of a key moment from the story. Try to choose a moment in the story in which the character has plenty of interaction and emotion to share in a diary entry. Remember when you are writing a diary entry you are writing it from first person perspective. It is usually but not always written in present tense.
- **Thinking differently reading task** - Choose three important events from the text and explain how you would have handled them differently to the characters in the story. Explain how it may have changed the outcome of the story in either a small or major way. Be insightful here and think of the cause and effect. Sometimes your smallest action can have a major impact on others.

## GCSE

Year 10 pupils have begun their study of *Unseen Poetry* this half term, as they continue their relentless march towards next year's GCSE examinations (less than a year to go now!) I'm sure that all our pupils would love to hear about your favourite poems.

Perhaps even more exciting than poetry (!) is the Year 10 trip to see *An Inspector Calls* in Milton Keynes on Thursday 22nd. Even though I'm writing this before the trip has taken place, I'm sure that I'll be sharing stories of immaculate behaviour and a thoroughly enjoyable trip in next half term's newsletter.

Keep on reading!

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





# Social Science Pupils Share Stories

Just before the Easter break, a small group of Social Science pupils made another visit to Butler's Mews.

We spent a lovely couple of hours playing dominoes and Monopoly as well as chatting to the residents – as ever, their stories were fascinating and kept us all entertained. Pupils then very kindly prepared a basket of Easter treats and cards – all of which were very gratefully received! We look forward to another visit soon.

A reminder that Social Sciences pupils can drop in to ST 2.11 and ask questions about content and/or exam technique.

These sessions are held every Wednesday lunchtime in ST 2.11. All revision material can be accessed via Google Classroom.

I am still keen to bring these subjects to life for pupils so 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: [clarke@houlton.tlet.org.uk](mailto:clarke@houlton.tlet.org.uk).

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



## History

# Year 10 History Pupils Step Back in Time at Kenilworth Castle

Earlier this term, our Year 10 GCSE History pupils had the exciting opportunity to visit Kenilworth Castle as part of their study of Elizabethan England. The trip, which forms a vital part of the GCSE curriculum, brought to life key themes they've been exploring in the classroom, especially the power, politics, and prestige of Elizabeth I's court.

Pupils explored the Privy Gardens, Leicester's Building, the Keep, Great Hall, and Leicester's Gatehouse, all of which provided vivid context for their History Around Us GCSE paper. The highlight for many was the moment they stepped into the Privy Gardens. "We were wowed when we saw it

for the first time," said one pupil, "it was so beautiful – it really helped us understand how appearances were everything for Elizabethan nobles."

The group enjoyed an engaging educational talk from English Heritage staff, who expertly

linked the castle's features to the GCSE specification. Pupils learned how Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, transformed Kenilworth to impress Queen Elizabeth I – perfectly illustrating how architecture was used to project power and curry royal favour.

"The talk helped me connect everything we've learned in class to a real place," another pupil commented. "Seeing where Dudley hosted Elizabeth really made it all click."

Not only was the day filled with historical insight, but pupils also had time to enjoy the grounds, explore the ruins, and imagine life at court during one of the most fascinating periods in English history. The trip proved to be both fun and educational, with many pupils saying it deepened their understanding and appreciation of the subject.

A huge thank you to the staff and guides at Kenilworth Castle, and to our own History department for organising such a memorable and enriching day.

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





# Geographers Go Global

As we approach the May half term, the Geography department has been full of exciting and engaging lessons across all year groups. Here's what our pupils have been up to.

## Year 7

The Year 7s have been exploring the fascinating topic of hazardous earth. They've learned about the forces that shape our planet and, as part of their studies, have been tasked with creating earthquake-proof buildings using marshmallows and spaghetti! It's been a fun and hands-on way to understand engineering in disaster zones. After the May half term, they will move on to studying development and how countries progress socially, economically, and environmentally.

## Year 8

Year 8 pupils have been delving into the complexities of China and its growing global influence. They've studied China's political, economic, and environmental impacts on the world stage, and will soon wrap up the topic by drawing connections to Russia as another global superpower. After half term, Year 8 will begin their exploration of glaciated landscapes, looking at how glaciers have shaped the world we live in.

## Year 9

Year 9 is currently studying coastal geography, with a special focus on the Maldives. They've been investigating the impact of rising sea levels on this low-lying nation and discussing global consequences for vulnerable regions. After the half term, Year 9 will sit their end-of-year assessment before diving into the topic of sustainability and the role geography plays in building a sustainable future.



## Year 10

Our Year 10s are tackling the Living World topic from the AQA Geography syllabus. They've been learning about the Amazon rainforest and the Thar desert, examining the unique ecosystems and environmental challenges of these areas. After the May half term, Year 10 will focus on preparing for their mock exams. Parents will also receive confirmation of upcoming fieldwork trips to Hunstanton and the London Olympic Park, which will be invaluable to their learning experience.

We would like to thank parents for their ongoing support and wish everyone a restful and enjoyable half term!

**Mr Charlie McDermott**  
Head of Geography

## PHRSE

# PHRSE Pupils Build Confidence, Awareness, and Life Skills

This half term in PHRSE, pupils across all year groups have been engaging with important topics that support their personal development and help them navigate the world around them with confidence and awareness.

In Year 7, pupils have been learning about the different period products available and how to access them, helping to break down stigma and ensure everyone feels informed and supported.

Year 8 pupils have been exploring what shapes our expectations in relationships, including media influence, peer pressure, and the risks associated with sharing images online - vital learning in today's digital world.

Year 9 pupils have been focusing on contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), with a strong emphasis on safety, responsibility, and respect for self and others.

Our Year 10 pupils have been developing their understanding of personal finance, including budgeting and saving, while also beginning preparations for their upcoming work experience placements next half term - an exciting opportunity to apply their learning in real-world settings.

As ever, we are proud of the thoughtful, mature approach our pupils bring to PHRSE. These discussions are crucial in helping them build the knowledge and skills they need to lead healthy, respectful, and independent lives.

**Mrs Becky Cooper**  
Head of PHRSE and History Teacher



## Food Preparation and Nutrition

Year 7 have been learning about complex and simple carbohydrates and as a result have produced wholemeal mini pizzas. While Year 8 have also been looking at carbohydrates and creating ginger nut cookies.

Year 9 pupils have been developing their afternoon tea skills. By creating packaged mini-Victoria sponge cakes. Using electric mixtures and styling skills to achieve some wonderful, aesthetically pleasing products.

Our budding Head Chefs have been introduced this term to the Food Science section and are really trying to understand caramelisation, dextrinisation and gelatinisation processes.

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



## Art & Design

### KS3 Art pupils take part in 'Digital Tapestry Project'

KS3 Art pupils have been enjoying the sunshine this term as they have been drawing the historic Houlton building for the 'Digital Tapestry Project' with artist Alan Levy.

We are excited to see our artworks become part of a larger community piece which will be on display in Houlton, Rugby and in Maine, USA next year!

**Ms Ruth Woodcraft**  
Head of Faculty: Creative



## PE

### Pupils Hit Their Stride in Summer Athletics

As the summer term is in full swing, all year groups have been getting stuck into Athletics across their PE lessons.

For Year 7, it's been an exciting first experience on the track and field, as they build confidence and learn the fundamental skills of running and throwing. Meanwhile, Year 9 pupils have been pushing themselves to improve technique and beat personal bests, showing great determination and progress.

Year 10 pupils have brought a competitive edge to their athletics lessons, representing different countries in a series of mini lessons, with some excellent performances and teamwork on display!

There have been no external fixtures so far this half term, but we look forward to seeing the Year 10 Rounders team in action against Rugby High in the final week of term.

#### Summer Term Clubs:

- Rounders – Tuesdays
- Cricket – Tuesdays
- Athletics – Wednesdays
- Badminton – Various days throughout the week

As always, all pupils are welcome to attend clubs – no experience needed, just enthusiasm and a willingness to get involved!

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

**Miss Abbie Hartfield**  
Head of PE





# HOULTON

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## SCHOOL

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