

Houlton School
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Lorna Pountney
Head of School

25th March 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of the spring term, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and for taking the time to complete our Parent Questionnaire in January. Your feedback is invaluable in helping us reflect on our practice and shape our next steps as a school community.

We have carefully reviewed all responses and have grouped your feedback into key themes. Below is an update on the areas you raised and the actions we have taken so far.

Communication and Transparency

Many parents asked for clearer, more regular communication and timely responses to queries. In response:

- Weekly bulletins are now shared, providing updates and key information, along with useful links.
- Parent Forums have been introduced and are well attended (16 parents in December and 19 in February).
- Staff have been reminded of expectations around responding to emails, including a 48-hour response or holding reply.
- Guidance has been shared with staff regarding appropriate use of email (To/CC/BCC).
- We are committed to being open and transparent; staff updates are now included in weekly communications.
- Our half termly newsletters share the amazing experiences that enrich your children's education.

Staffing and Stability

We understand that staff consistency is important to families. This time of year is always a busy period with staff promotions and family decisions to move away. We will endeavor to keep you updated on staffing changes as and when they happen.

- A weekly staff wellbeing email has been introduced to support and retain staff.
- Half-termly wellbeing meetings take place, with whole-school actions shared where needed.
- Training has been provided to middle leaders on staff absence and return-to-work processes.
- Half-termly staff breakfasts are also in place to support morale and retention.
- A number of internal opportunities for strategic leadership are being introduced to support staff growth and development. These include the support for the quality of education and other key areas of whole school improvement.
- Recruitment for new team members once a role becomes available is being completed promptly to ensure that we get the largest number of applicants.

Behaviour, Standards and Safety

Parents raised the importance of high standards and consistency.

- A new behaviour policy has been written following parent feedback. This will be shared with you shortly.
- Expectations are reinforced regularly through assemblies and form time.
- Uniform standards are being more consistently enforced, with reminders, checks, and communication home where needed.
- A new uniform policy (from September 2026) will be shared shortly.
- Concerns around bullying are being addressed through stronger and more consistent sanctions.
- Unisex toilets were removed in January 2026.

SEND Provision and Support

We recognise that SEND provision remains a key priority.

- The Inclusion Team has been restructured to increase capacity.
- Additional support is currently in place through external leadership support.
- A parent coffee morning will be launched in the summer term to strengthen communication.
- A larger space for nurture and intervention is being developed.
- We are continuing to work on improving communication and consistency, and we value parental insight into individual needs.

Curriculum, Teaching and Achievement

Parents asked for greater clarity and continued academic support.

- Sets have been introduced in English and Maths for Years 10 and 11, with very positive feedback.
- A range of GCSE revision sessions (after school, February and Easter) have been well attended.
- Further information about curriculum time allocation will be shared once the new timetable is finalised for September.
- We will provide clearer communication on when reports are issued for each year group. This will be shared on our website from September.
- The school continues to review the curriculum structure to ensure that all students are stretched and challenged through the best quality teaching and groupings.

Enrichment and Student Experience

We know how important wider opportunities are for students.

- We are working to minimise last-minute cancellations of clubs; where unavoidable, staff have been reminded to inform families promptly.
- Rewards for students will be reintroduced in the summer term, with a greater focus on recognising positive behaviour and attitudes. All students have a rewards assembly at the end of each term.
- The recent Year 9 Options Evening was highly successful, with strong engagement from families.
- We have run 16 trips so far this year and have many more planned for the summer term.
- We have launched our work experience programme for our current Year 10 and hope that all students find a placement to further enrich their CV.

Facilities and Environment

Parents highlighted several areas relating to the school environment.

- While the size of the canteen cannot be increased, issues with food availability have been addressed with our catering provider.
- Monthly meetings are taking place with facilities to improve site cleanliness, although recruitment of cleaning staff remains a challenge.
- Discreet sanitary products are available from Heads of Year offices.
- Undercover outdoor seating is being considered as a future development.
- Website updates are now being made regularly to ensure information is current.

Safety and Logistics

Concerns were raised about drop-off and pick-up arrangements.

- Alternative arrangements have been shared to reduce congestion at the school gates. The gates will be repaired over the Easter break.
- We are exploring longer-term solutions, including discussions around a potential one-way system with Urban and Civic.

School Vision Statement

As a staff body, we recognised the need to develop a new vision statement and, working collaboratively, have created one that reflects what we aspire for Houlton School to be.



We are a supportive, caring community that champions every child. We work together to drive happiness, achievement and personal success.

We celebrate difference, and foster talent and ambition.

From an early age, our pupils are encouraged to aspire, and through inclusive teaching, high expectations, and a supportive community, we nurture potential and ensure that every child is celebrated.

We are committed to continuing to listen, reflect, and improve. Your feedback plays a vital role in shaping our priorities, and we will continue to provide updates on our progress.

If you have any further feedback or would like to attend a future Parent Forum, please do get in touch. We will send another Parent Questionnaire out during the summer term.

Thank you once again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Pountney'.

Lorna Pountney
Head of School