

HOULTON SPRING NEWS 2024



HOULTON
SCHOOL



Welcome from the Principal

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our latest newsletter, which only goes to show that whilst it may have been a shorter half-term this time, our amazing Houlton family has been achieving so much and taking full advantage of the transformational learning experiences that have been on offer since we returned in January.

Our recruitment campaign for our next exciting year of opening has begun in earnest, meaning I have had the privilege of reading hundreds of impressive applications and meeting potential colleagues eager to join the team. Pupils in Year 9 have now made

their KS4 Options choices - we will let families know the outcomes of these just after the Easter break, as some of the final allocations are reliant upon the recruitment process. Rest assured, we'll do our best to accommodate as many first and second choices as possible.

We will learn who has been allocated a place to join us in Year 7 2024 very soon - and I am delighted that early indications from the admissions team suggest we have had another record-breaking year of applications, continuing to be one of the most oversubscribed schools in both Rugby borough and across Warwickshire. This is testament

to the hard work, support and collegiality of our Houlton family, so thank you for all of your ongoing support with establishing our local reputation so firmly.

I'm looking forward to the anticipated brighter, longer days that the second half of the Spring term brings every year. Sometimes winter can feel very long, but as Victor Hugo writes in *Les Miserables*, '...even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise...!' Have a restorative, safe half-term and we look forward to welcoming pupils back on Monday 19 February.

Michael McCulley
Principal

Year 9 has delved into the data handling cycle this term, engaging in a delightful exploration centred around everyone's favourite treat – Smarties!

This journey began with our intriguing Big Question: Do you always have the same colours in a tube of Smarties?

Pupils were encouraged to craft their hypotheses related to tubes of Smarties, which they then investigated using their newfound data handling skills during our lessons.

Let's take a peek at a couple of the hypotheses and their corresponding results:

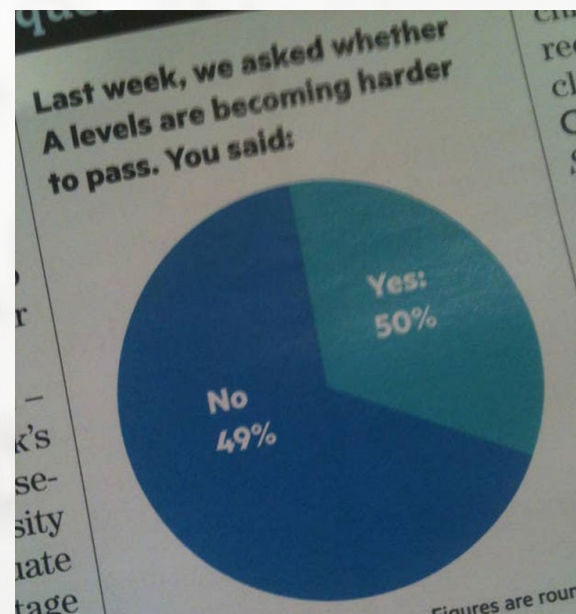
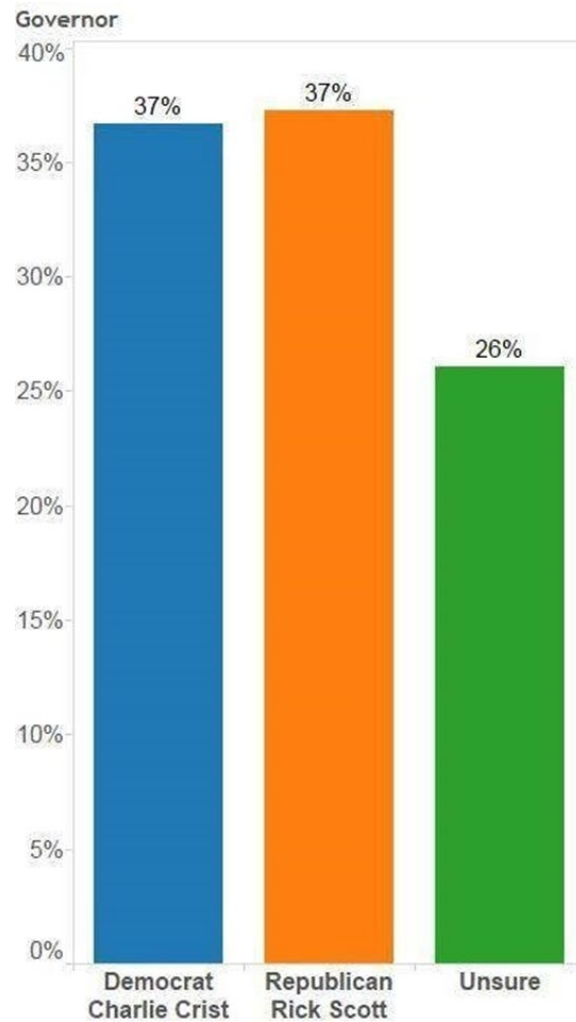
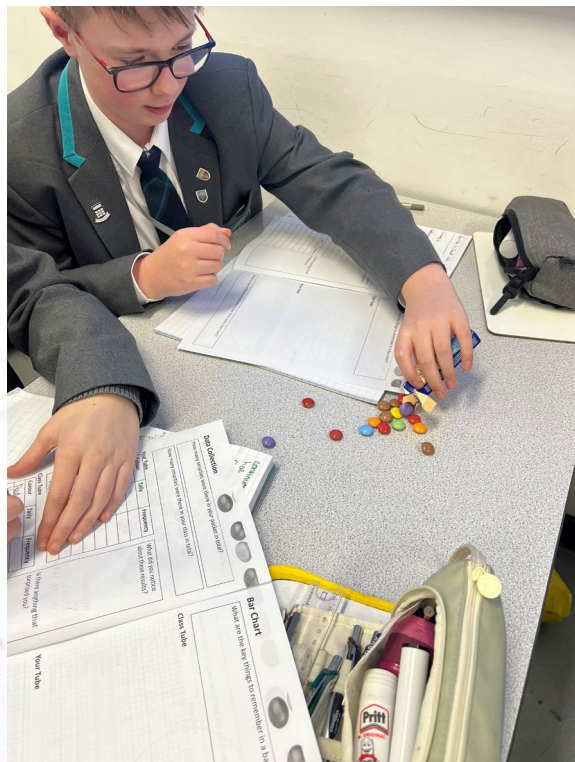
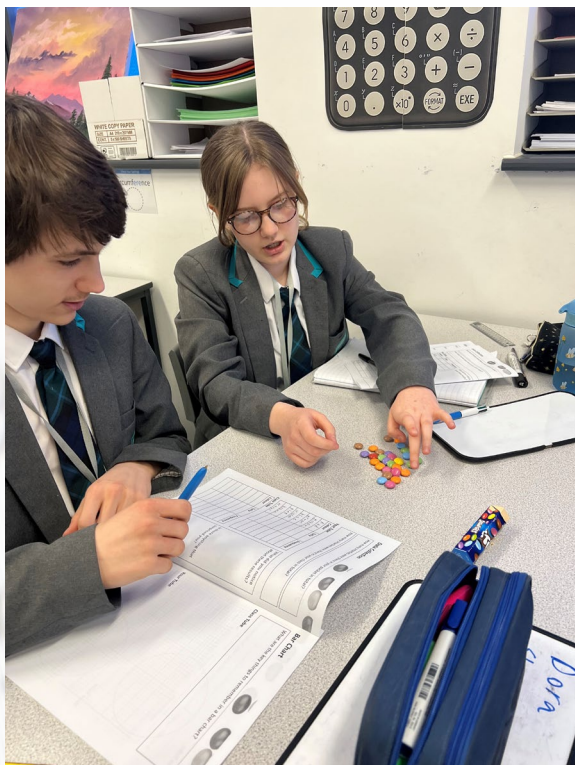
Katherine took on the challenge with her hypothesis: 'You always get a different amount of each colour Smartie'

She found: "My results told me that I was correct, however, if I chose specific colours my hypothesis would have been wrong. For example, if I said that there would be more orange Smarties than red Smarties then this would be wrong because according to my results, I had 2 orange and 6 red."

Esther, in her exploration, tested the hypothesis: 'You will never get the same amount of red Smarties as brown Smarties' "I found in our Smarties pack we got 4 red; however, we got no brown so that shows that our hypothesis was right"

To visually represent their results, pupils utilised a variety of graphs. Additionally, they had the chance to critically examine some misleading graphs prevalent in the media. Can you spot the flaws in these graphs?

By Miss Jasmine Etheridge
Head of Faculty: Mathematics & Numeracy



Deadly animals

In the fascinating world of biology, Year 9 pupils have been delving into the intricate details of both human and animal organ systems, using deadly animals as a context for their studies.

The pupils' recent explorations have taken them through the skeletal and nervous systems, offering a hands-on experience that goes beyond textbooks and into the realm of practical understanding.

The skeletal system, often referred to as the framework of the body, was a focal point of the pupils' recent investigations. In a captivating dissection session, pupils meticulously examined the inner workings of a chicken foot.

The goal was to unveil the secrets of joints and tendons, crucial components of both animal and human anatomy. The practical nature of this exercise allowed pupils to witness first-hand how bones, joints, and tendons collaborate to facilitate movement and provide structural support.

The dissection of the chicken foot provided a unique opportunity for pupils to apply theoretical knowledge to a real-life scenario. By physically engaging with the subject matter, they gained a deeper appreciation for the complexity and functionality of the skeletal system. This hands-on experience not only enhanced their understanding of the topic but also fuelled their curiosity to explore further into the world of anatomy.



Moving on from the skeletal system, pupils shifted their focus to the nervous system. A particularly memorable session involved a demonstration of a brain dissection, where pupils could observe the intricate structure of this vital organ. Comparisons between the dissected animal brain and a human brain were drawn, emphasising both the similarities and differences.

The nervous system, responsible for transmitting signals between different parts of the body, was unravelled before the pupils' eyes. Witnessing the dissection allowed them to connect theoretical knowledge with tangible reality, fostering a deeper comprehension of the nervous system's role in coordinating bodily functions.

These practical explorations not only served as a means to grasp the complexities of organ systems but also ignited a sense of curiosity and awe among the Year 9 pupils. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, the educators aimed to inspire a lifelong interest in the biological sciences.

By Mr Aaron Griffin
Head of Faculty: Science and Computer Science

Computer Science

This term in Computer Science, we have delved headlong into the world of programming in Years 7 and 9.

Year 7 pupils have focused on the theory of programming, looking at flow charts, pseudocode, iteration, selection and sequencing.

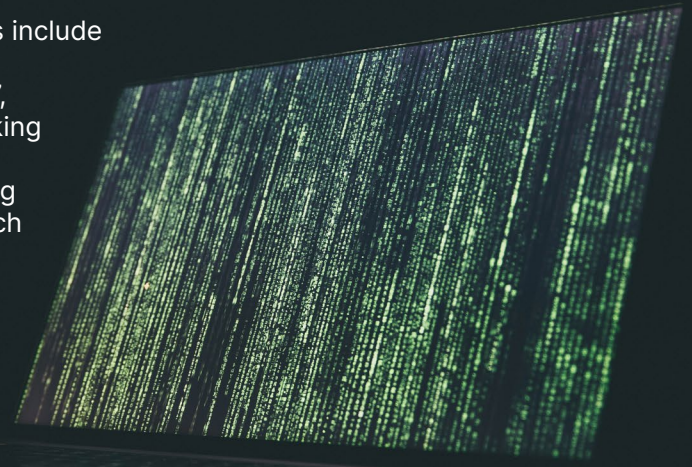
Year 9 has revisited and enhanced their skills in Python from last year, focussing on implementing variables, IF statements and For loops, and will soon move on to While loops.

Year 8, meanwhile, entered the world of data handling and began looking into 'The Next Big Thing', our scenario for this year's cohort. Scenario work allows the pupils to put themselves in a real world styled situation where they can carry out research and work on 'What If' scenarios within given guidelines. The aim within this unit is to ensure pupils are able to use spreadsheets for various purposes, but primarily as a budgeting tool.

The Computer Science department has with certain areas of work (primarily programming and data handling at the moment) introduced 'how to' videos which allow pupils to revisit key areas of learning multiple times and when they are not in the classroom.

Our upcoming topics include Programming with Makecode for Year 7, Computational Thinking for Year 8, and the impacts of computing for Year 9, all of which promise to develop different aspects of pupils' knowledge.

**By Mr Matthew
Cresswell-Peters
Subject Team
Leader: Computer
Science**



English

Pupils from all year groups have begun studying different forms of literature this term, to broaden their horizons and allow them to explore how English can be used in many ways.

Year 7 has started to study poetry, looking at the specific tools and techniques that poets use to send their messages. Pupils have been reading the poem 'The British (serves 60 million)' by the late Benjamin Zephaniah, to consider ideas around race, heritage, nationality and equality.

We hope that, through this, they have had the chance to deepen their understanding of British values and the importance of acceptance as a fundamental part of Houlton School culture.

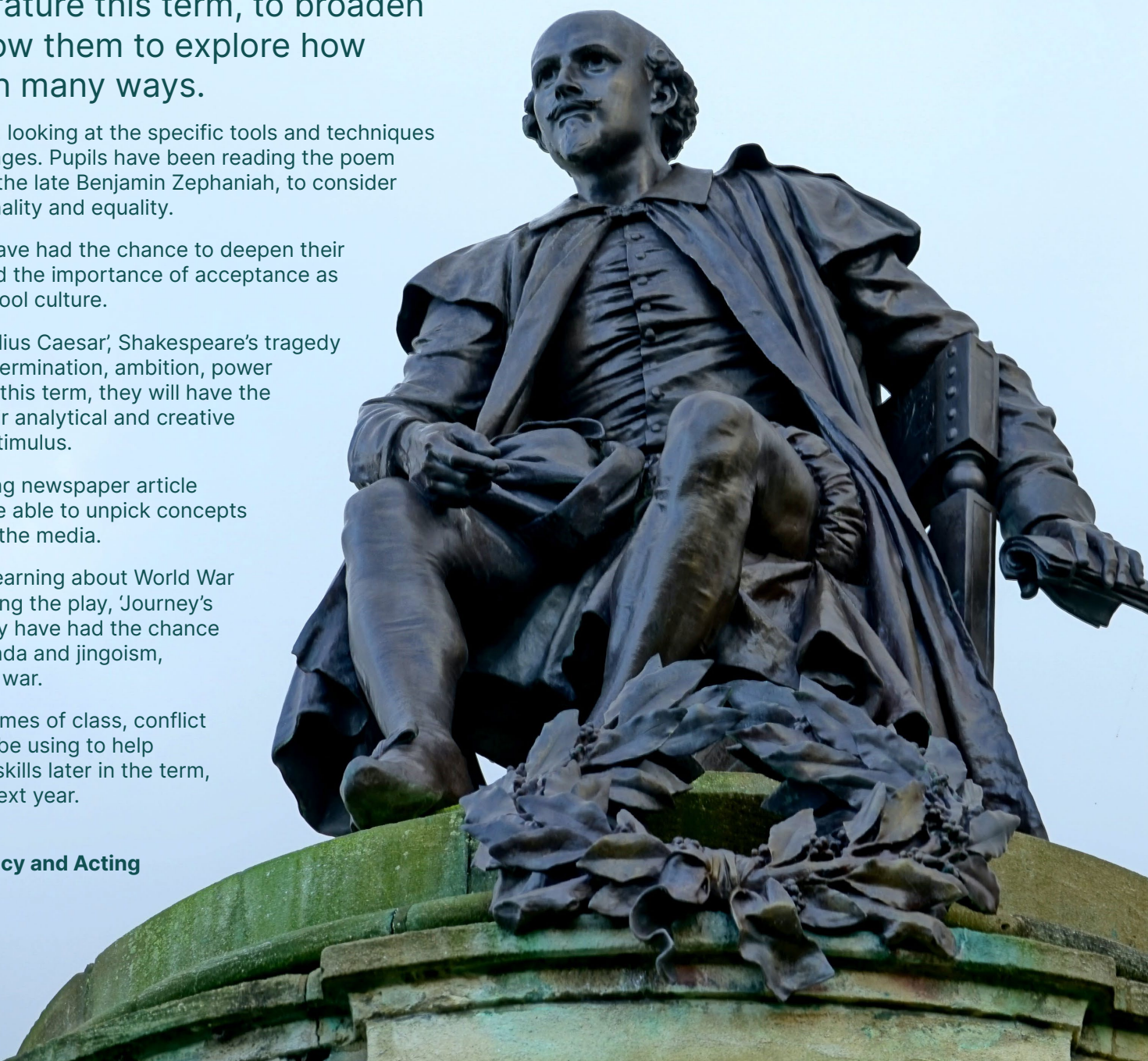
Year 8 pupils have moved on to 'Julius Caesar', Shakespeare's tragedy that investigates themes of predetermination, ambition, power and loyalty. As they move through this term, they will have the opportunity to further develop their analytical and creative writing skills, using this play as a stimulus.

We are looking forward to beginning newspaper article writing with them, where we will be able to unpick concepts around bias and sensationalism in the media.

Finally, Year 9 pupils have begun learning about World War One poetry and are currently reading the play, 'Journey's End', set in the WW1 trenches. They have had the chance to consider ideas around propaganda and jingoism, versus the reality of life during the war.

Through this play, we consider themes of class, conflict and disillusionment, which we will be using to help pupils develop their essay writing skills later in the term, in preparation for beginning KS4 next year.

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



History

Death and Taxes - Year 7 creates medieval board game!

Embarking on a captivating journey, Year 7 delved into the challenges of a medieval English village through an engaging board game! As young lords, ladies and villeins, pupils navigated famine, combated death, tackled taxing issues, and addressed the scarcity of medical care.

This interactive lesson transformed the classroom into a dynamic medieval realm, blending education with excitement. Through strategic thinking and collaboration, pupils not only conquered the game but also gained valuable insights into the complexities of historical village life. Fun and learning merged in this thrilling educational escapade!

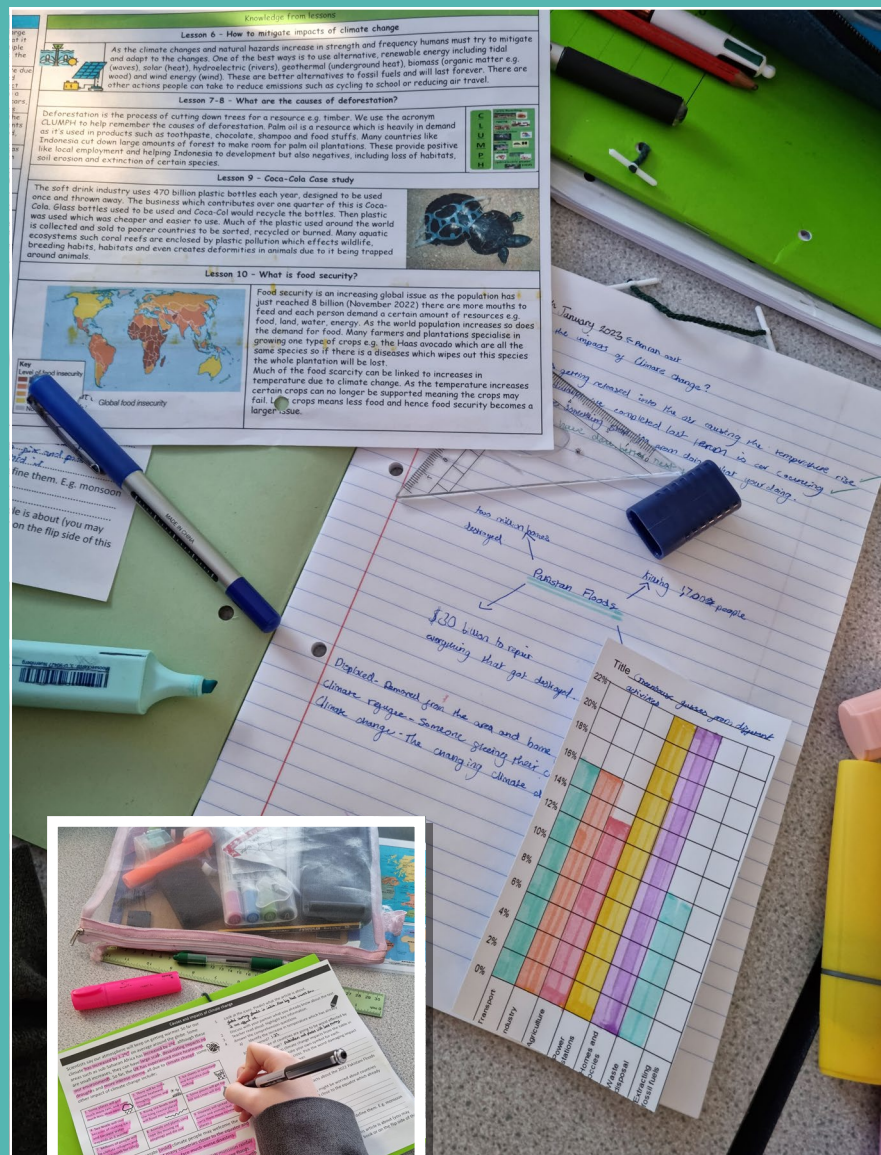
Year 7 Unleashes Minecraft Magic: Crafting Medieval Castles with Enthusiasm!

Year 7 combined history with technology, using Minecraft to construct medieval castles. Brimming with creativity, pupils dived into the history of these buildings, recreating iconic Motte and Bailey castles

in meticulous detail. From towering motte hills to bustling baileys, every aspect is a testament to their historical knowledge and digital prowess.

This project not only sparks a love for history but also hones problem-solving skills. Witness the excitement as these young architects bring virtual strongholds to life, creating a pixelated medieval world that's both historically accurate and visually stunning! Below are pictures of Ben P (7S) and Anith K (7A).

By Mr Jamie Abbott
Head of Faculty: Humanities



Geography

How do humans impact our world?

Year 7 pupils have been exploring the Big Question: How do humans impact our world?

To this end, pupils have been investigating the enhanced greenhouse effect, their carbon footprint and exploring the June 2022 Pakistan floods. This has been delivered through our literacy aim of "reading for meaning," a digestible and comprehension-based way of looking at text to help pupils retain information and better understand what their reading. Pupils have produced excellent pieces of work!

Year 8 pupils have now become glaciologists!

Exploring how glaciers impact our world, from glacial landforms to tourist attractions!

Pupils started the topic by exploring the rock cycle in a unique way, with Starburst sweets. Pupils heated, applied pressure, and melted the sweets to show the rock cycle. In the following lessons pupils have explored UK geology and topography and identifying links between rock structure and land height/shape.

The importance of Mega Cities

Year 9 pupils have explored the importance of Mega Cities around the world, investigating Detroit's population changes, Dharavi, Mumbai and Lagos, Nigeria.

Pupils have attempted to answer the Big Question: What are Mega Cities and why are they important? focusing on formal and informal employment and the opportunities Mega Cities in particular present.

By Mr Chris Youmans
Subject Team Leader: Geography



Religious Studies

Year 7

In an exciting new academic chapter, Year 7 pupils at Houlton School have embarked on a captivating exploration into the fundamental beliefs that set Christianity apart from other major world religions. This insightful journey has not only broadened their understanding of different faiths but also fostered a sense of respect and appreciation for diverse religious perspectives.

The current topic, "What fundamental beliefs set Christianity apart from other major world religions?" has ignited curiosity and engaged pupils in meaningful discussions, providing them with a deeper understanding of the core beliefs that distinguish Christianity within the global tapestry of beliefs.

Throughout this topic, pupils have demonstrated commendable respect for the beliefs of others. The curriculum has encouraged dialogue and critical thinking, allowing pupils to ask questions, share their perspectives, and engage in constructive conversations with their peers.

Year 8

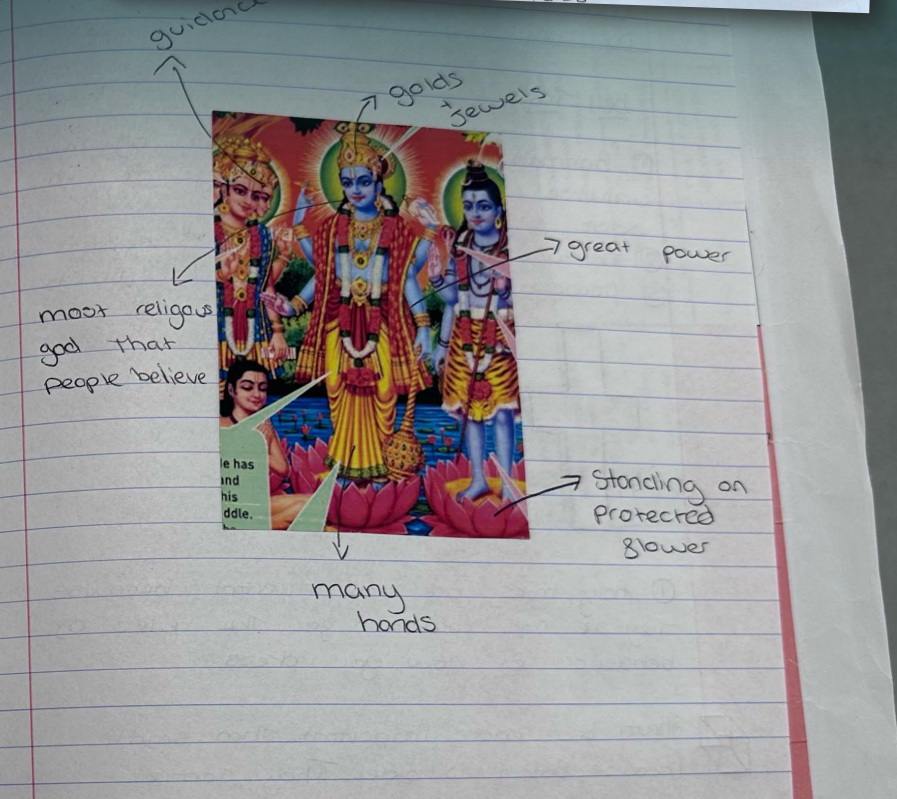
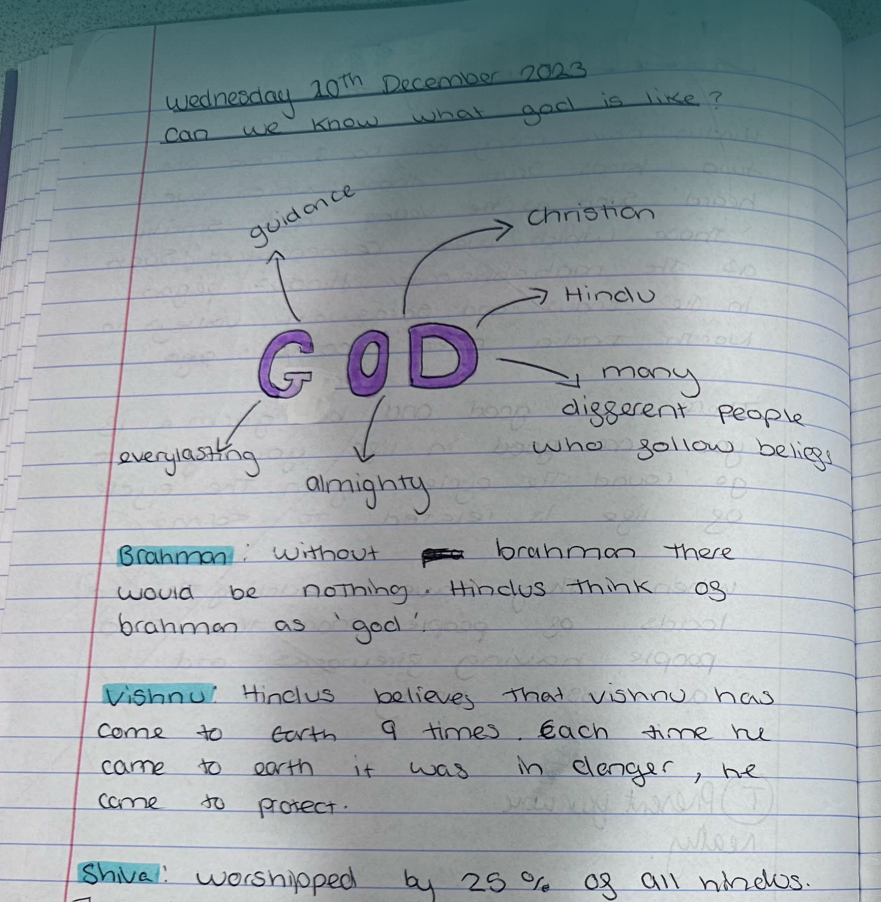
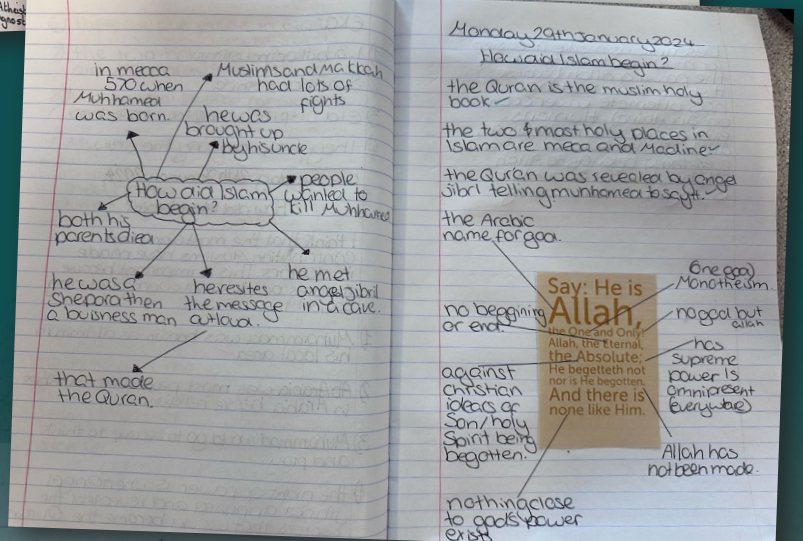
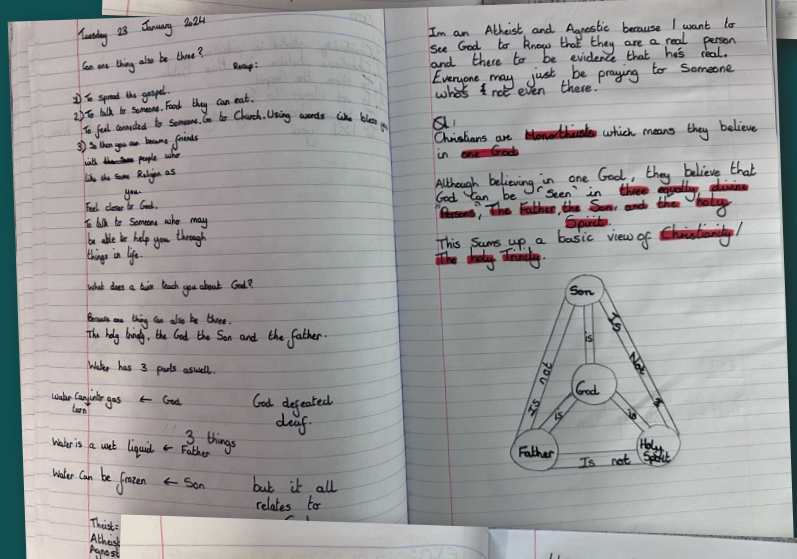
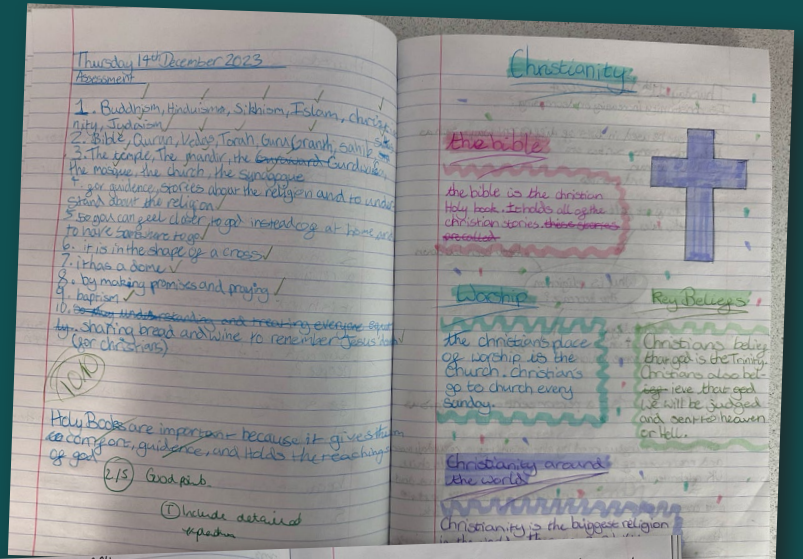
This term, Year 8 pupils embark on a enchanting exploration of the key pillars and beliefs that form the foundation of Islam. This enriching academic journey not only deepens their understanding of one of the world's major religions but also reinforces the values of respect, curiosity, and cultural appreciation.

The current topic, "What are the key pillars and beliefs that form the foundation of Islam?" has captivated the attention of Year 8 pupils, sparking engaging discussions and fostering a climate of respect for diverse religious perspectives.

Year 9

Year 9 pupils at Houlton School are delving into the essence of Hinduism, exploring its influence on the lives of followers. The fascinating stories of Rama and Sita have captured pupils' interest, adding vibrancy to lessons. Additionally, the festive celebrations of Holi and Diwali have brought joy and cultural understanding to the classroom, fostering curiosity and appreciation for Hindu traditions.

By Mrs Dupinder Ghatora
Subject Team Leader: Religious Studies



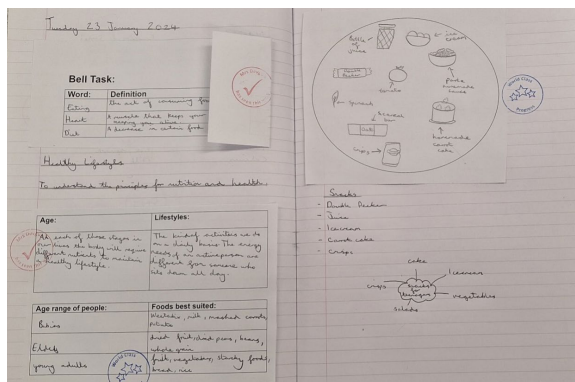
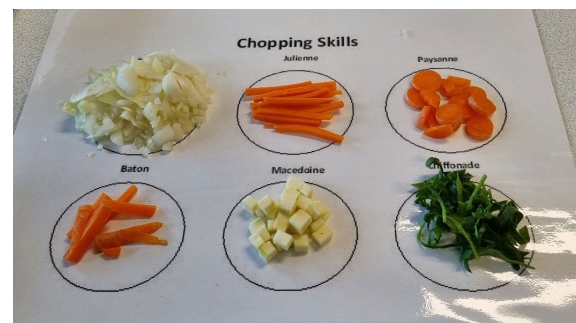
Food Preparation and Nutrition

Year 9 have been learning about different chopping skills in Food and Nutrition.

They have carried out their own chopping skills mats with a variety of vegetables and used them in creating flavour for Paella dishes.

Year 7 Pupils have been working hard in theory lessons too, looking at lifestyle and age categories of people and how this affects nutrition.

By Mrs Baldeep Devgun
Teacher of Food Preparation and Nutrition



Design and Technology

180 Keyrings

Avocados, Rugby balls, doughnuts and the Rugby clock tower were just some of the shapes our young designers created when casting pewter during the manufacture of their keyrings, inspired by the visitors to Rugby Art Gallery & Museum. Vigorous filing, sanding, polishing and buffing, along with some great enameling, resulted in some professional outcomes from all pupils.

This marks the completion of Year 7's first Big Question at Houlton School in Design & Technology and it is fantastic to see each pupil walk out of the workshop with a sense of pride as they produce their first product.

Lisi Aerospace X Houlton Designers

Lisi Aerospace is a worldwide manufacturing specialist for assembly solutions as well as engine and structural components used in aircrafts. This Big Question asks our pupils to consider factors in 'reducing weight without compromising strength'.

Year 9 pupils will be visiting Lisi Aerospace for a unique insight into design and manufacturing processes prior to exploring the Big Question - 'Does Weight Compromise Strength?' Pupils will explore how raw materials are processed, the development of key technologies, workshop equipment and the robotics training suite.



By Mr Russell Hill
Subject Team Leader: Creative



Bonjour/Hola everyone!

This term has been short yet filled with thought-provoking Big Questions in both French and Spanish:

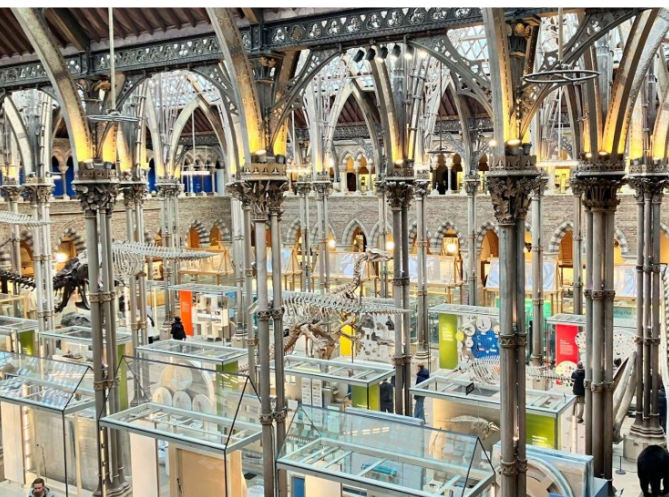
In French, Year 9 pupils embraced the challenge of "How to live a healthier life?" Year 8 embarked on an insightful exploration into the world of self-expression through their hobbies, while Year 7 immersed themselves in the captivating inquiry, "Who am I?" - sparking profound reflections.

Shifting gears to Spanish, the excitement continued with Year 7 pondering the intriguing question, "Where do I live?" Year 8 pupils passionately investigated the realms of leading a healthier life, and Year 9 embarked on a fascinating exploration of personal growth with the question, "Me and My World: How much have I changed?" - igniting a journey of self-discovery and introspection.

On a grand scale, a group of Year 8 and 9 pupils ventured to Keble College, Oxford, for an unforgettable experience. Here, they seized the unique opportunity to engage in lively discussions with Keble undergraduate pupils, exploring the University of Oxford's digital resource, Oxplore, and its Big Questions with unique perspectives. Following this enlightening encounter, our pupils expanded their horizons further with an awe-inspiring visit to the National History Museum of Oxford. Amidst the historical treasures, they marvelled at the mythical dodo, adding a touch of awareness to life's footprint on wildlife to their already enriching educational journey.

Merci et hasta luego!

By Mr Matthieu Raffy
Subject Team Leader: Modern Languages



Joyful Tunes Under the Stars and Shrek The Musical takes Centre Stage

A huge thank you to everyone who attended and supported our budding musicians, making our Christmas Carol Concert a great success, and creating a magical evening of music beneath the open sky.

The festive spirit illuminated the night as our talented pupils showcased their musical prowess, spreading cheer and merriment outdoors.

As we bid farewell to the holiday season, we are diving headfirst into our next musical adventure—Shrek The Musical! Rehearsals are in full swing, with our dedicated pupils working tirelessly to bring this beloved fairy tale to life on stage. Stay tuned for details on show dates and ticket information. It promises to be an ogre-sized production filled with laughter and enchanting melodies!

In Year 7, our budding musicians are not only exploring the world of string instruments but are also delving into the timeless rhythm of the 12-bar blues on their ukuleles. The bluesy notes and catchy tunes created by our talented Year 7 pupils add an extra layer of soulful harmony to our music department. Witnessing their enthusiasm for this classic genre is truly a testament to their musical growth.

In Year 8, our pupils are embarking on a musical journey around the globe! They are currently immersed in the exploration of world music, with a focus on the captivating sounds of Gamelan and the rhythmic beats of Reggae. This cultural exploration enhances their understanding of diverse musical traditions, broadening their musical horizons.

Meanwhile, in Year 9, our pupils are embracing modern technology to recreate the latest pop hits. Using the innovative platform BandLab, they are gaining hands-on experience in music production, composition, and collaboration. It's a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to explore the intersection of technology and music, showcasing their creativity and passion for the art.

If you are interested in learning an instrument don't forget to ask Mr. Bridgwood for more details.

By Mr Peter Bridgwood
Subject Team Leader: Performing Arts - Music



Acting

Year 8

This half-term, Year 8 pupils are expanding their characterisation abilities by taking on the role of eight and ten-year-olds, in addition to a creepy antagonist in Judith Johnson's Scary Play.

The play focuses on characters facing their fears. Pupils will be taking both acting and directorial roles when tasked with staging their own adaptation of a specific extract.

A Big Thank You from the Performing Arts Faculty

On behalf of the performing arts faculty, we wanted to say a huge thank you to parents/ carers and pupils who bought tickets to the Performing Arts Xmas Showcase back in December. With your help and support, we raised over £175 for the Trussell Trust and £175 for future performing arts events at Houlton.



Dance

KS3's Big Questions for this term are:

Y7: Does history and culture influence dance?

Y8: Are some performance skills more important than others?

Y9: Is dancing just about dance?

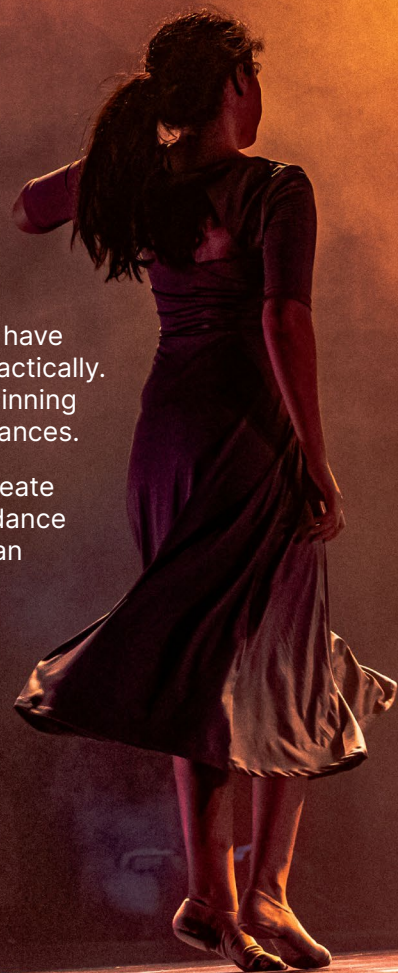
Year 7 pupils have been exploring dance styles from around the world. They have been watching and analysing African dance and the haka, then recreating this for themselves practically. Pupils have been gaining understanding of the history of each style and applying stylistic qualities to their dances.

Year 8 pupils are focusing on their performance skills this term. They are currently exploring contemporary dance. They have learnt about the stylistic qualities of the style, applying this practically. They have also learnt about the "chance method" and are beginning to use this as a choreographic approach to create their own dances.

Year 9 pupils are working collaboratively with their peers to create a dance music video. They are exploring site specific dance (dance created for specific surroundings) and have each been given an industry role such as a director, choreographer, or camera operator. Next term, each class will have created their very own dance music video.

Co-curricular is in full swing, with dance club on a Wednesday lunch time (week B), cheer squad on a Wednesday after school, and Shrek the Musical rehearsals every Wednesday and Friday after school.

By Miss Frankie Connolly
Subject Team Leader: Performing Arts- Dance



Streaming productions from the National Theatre

Please note, all Houlton pupils now have free access to streamed theatre shows from National Theatre.

Login: <https://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/home>
Username: **HXXVYZ**
Password: **TGGBKT**

(The Log in button can be found in the top right-hand corner of the landing page. If you copy and paste the details, please be very careful not to include any invisible spaces as these will invalidate the details.)

Once on the page, pupils should click Browse Contents and click Videos.

Miss Henry-Moore's recommendations:

1. Wonder.land * recommended for children aged 11+
2. Wuthering Heights * recommended for children aged 12+

This login must not be offered to anyone external to Houlton or posted on social media.

By Miss Michelle Henry-Moore
Subject Team Leader:
Performing Arts – Acting

PE

Curriculum lessons and our Big Questions for this term are:

Year 7: Gymnastics/Problem solving –

Are components of fitness important for elite performers?

Year 8: Handball – Why are rules and regulations important in sport?

Year 9: Basketball - What is more important, extrinsic or intrinsic motivation and how does this link to long term healthy participation?

Co-curricular opportunities this term:

- Rugby
- Football
- Netball
- Volleyball
- Badminton
- Cheerleading
- Dance
- Basketball

Please follow our twitter page with all news regarding fixtures, results and PE department news. [@HoultonPEdept](#)

Our PE department is looking out for the following qualities for pupils to win our Pupil of the Term award:

- Going above and beyond to help out in PE/ Dance lessons
- Demonstrating exceptional effort and enthusiasm consistently across the term
- Taking an active part in our co-curricular clubs and teams
- A positive attitude and a willingness to learn
- Being polite, punctual, reliable and organised

The pupil who wins this award will receive an R2 and a piece of sporting equipment!

Well done to Connie (8A) who won our award at the end of Christmas for her positive attitude, enthusiasm in lessons, commitment to co-curricular clubs and willingness to learn. Our next Pupil of the Term will be awarded at Easter.

PE news

Well done to our four pupils who competed in the Cross Country competition at Princethorpe College in January. Big shout outs to Lauren (9W), Isaac (7D), Hope (7M) and Charlotte (7A) for competing.

A special mention to Isaac who came 6th overall in his event, an excellent effort against a strong field on pupils!

Big question answers from pupils from their knowledge checkers:

One way our body changes when we do exercise is we sweat. This happens because we need this to cool down so we do not overheat while exercising. This could have an impact on our performance because if we did not sweat then we would be more susceptible to increased breathing, fatigue and nausea.

Another way that our body changes when we exercise is that our heart rate increases when we exercise. This is because there is oxygen in our blood and our muscles need oxygen to work efficiently, so your heart rate quickens up to get blood to all the areas being used while playing sport. This has an impact on our performance because it keeps you energised for longer and a reduced risk if getting DOMS.

A further way that our body changes when doing exercise is that our body produces muscles, improves mental health and makes you less likely to catch diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes and several cancers.

It can also improve your social skills and how you handle situations. This has an impact on our performance because if we have a positive mindset you are more likely to achieve more and have beneficial impacts in the long run. Overall, I believe that the main 3 things our body does when we exercise is that it makes you: sweat makes your heart rate increase makes you a better person
Gabs H 8D – Can we have a change of heart?

One way our body changes when we exercise is that we sweat and our body does this to cool our body down so we don't overheat. This can affect our performance as we are more likely to be dehydrated and have to drink lots of water while playing sports.

Another way our body changes when we exercise is that you may feel nauseous. This happens because of dehydration and that your gut loses blood to pump other muscles. This can affect our performance because we may feel too sick to carry on.

Delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) can affect our performance by causing limited movement, discomfort and pain while doing sports which could lead to people having to sit out. DOMS is likely to be caused by temporary microtears or inflammation in the muscle as it's a side effect to the repair process of muscle damage.

Scarlett 8W – Can we have a change of heart?

To outwit an opponent in racket sports you can play a overhead clear and then do a drop shot so they have to run to the front of the court. This is important because it means that they have a lower chance of hitting the shuttle and it mixes up the pace of the player.

To outwit an opponent in racket sports you can act like you are going to play a dropshot (stand in the position of a dropshot) and then play an overhead clear. This is important because it changes your tactics so you don't

just use the same type of shot every time otherwise they will know where you will hit the shuttle (don't be predictable.)

To outwit an opponent in racket sports you can change your speed and power of your shots. This is important because you don't want the game to always be at the same speed, you want to outwit them by changing the power you use and the speed you move at.

Ethan 7S – How do we outwit opponents in Racket sports?

To outwit an opponent from a serve you would do a forehand long or short shot is they were stood in the middle. This is important as the opponent will not be able to retreat to the back of the court in time to reach the shuttlecock you can then serve fast and you will catch them off guard and score more points.

You could do a smash shot if they were close to the net. You could do a net shot if they were stood towards the back of the court therefore the opposition wouldn't make it to the shuttlecock in time. This is important because it will tire the opponent out and it will score you points. Another way to outwit an opponent is to play a serve to the oppositions weaker return shot. This is important as you are playing a serve to the opponents backhand weakness.

Leo 7W – How do we outwit opponents in Racket sports?

**By Mrs Abbie Oldham
Subject Team Leader: Physical Education**



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