



HOUSTONE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Academic • Disciplined • Extraordinary

Issue 2, December 2021

Dear Parents, Families and Pupils,

It's been two months since we distributed our first newsletter and in that time, there's been lots going on which we are excited to update you on in this newsletter.

Please remember that you can always contact us on info@houstoneschool.co.uk and that we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Forward this to your friends who might not have heard of us yet, and get them to sign up via our website: www.houstoneschool.co.uk.

We'd like to take this opportunity to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Whatever your family's customs and traditions, and however you will spend the festive period, may we wish you a happy, restful, and safe Christmas break. We look forward to working with the Houghton Regis community in 2022 as we move ever closer towards embarking on our first academic year at Houstone School!

Best wishes,
The Houstone School Team

ADMISSIONS

We have exciting news for families of pupils currently in years 7, 8 or 9!

September 2022 admissions for Houstone School for pupils who are currently in years 7, 8 or 9 will open in **January 2022**. This is much earlier than we'd previously thought, and we are delighted that Central Bedfordshire Local Authority have said that they'll open these up early to give families some security about where their children will attend school from September.

This means that you will be able to apply for a transfer to Houstone School to start in year 8, 9 or 10 in September from the **5th January 2022**. This is regardless of which school your child currently attends.

There are 180 places in each year group, and we are investigating how we put on a virtual and a face-to-face event early in the new year so that you can meet with us and the Principal Designate, Elizabeth English. We will update our mailing list, website and social media in due course with information on these events.

INTRODUCTION FROM MS ELIZABETH ENGLISH, PRINCIPAL DESIGNATE

It is absolutely fantastic to write to you having been appointed as the Principal of Houstone School. I am so excited to get started, taking up my post in April 2022, and cannot wait to meet all the students, families and members of the local community who are all eagerly anticipating the opening of our new school.

I started my teaching career in Edmonton, North London, where I trained on the TeachFirst scheme, and stayed for several years before leaving to teach in New Zealand. Life, and teaching, was certainly different on the other side of the world, and I learned a great deal from working with my international colleagues.

I am currently the Vice-Principal at Harris Academy St. John's Wood where I have been for the past 4 years. During this time, I have been part of a team that has turned around a failing school and transformed it into a high-performing one, with sixth-form results in the top 1% for progress nationally. This is what I'm truly passionate about: giving students the experiences and qualifications that let them go out and compete in the world, whether that is at their choice of university, apprenticeship, or workplace.



My priority for Houstone is to recruit the absolute best teachers and support staff who will build this school into something we are all proud of. The first appointments will be made early in 2022, and I will share news around these as soon as I can. Designing a rich, challenging curriculum and setting up the systems that will underpin the daily life of the school will also keep me busy until we welcome our first cohort of students in September 2022. There are great opportunities to use our new facilities to give students high-quality extra-curricular experiences and planning for this is already well underway.

There will be opportunities in early 2022 to meet with me and hear more about my vision for the school. Before then, I can tell you this: we are going to build one of the best schools in the country for Houghton Regis, and you will be so proud of your children for all their achievements at Houstone in the coming years.



**LATEST
NEWS**



VISITS TO SITE FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

We are really excited to announce that we have been given approval for parents and pupils of Houstone School to have the opportunity to visit and tour the site prior to the building officially opening in September 2022! We will update you on the details when we know more.

BUILD UPDATE

The Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer and Facilities Manager of Advantage Schools visited the Houstone site on 14 December 2021 for the monthly update on progress of the build from the contractors.

Progress since our last visit was good and the builders have been fortunate with the weather and minimal rain fall, which has helped the build progress well.

We could see the roof on both buildings nearing completion and work on the floors was actively ongoing. Block work in the Sports Hall was going up and the rooms were beginning to take shape.

We were able to visit the first floor of the teaching block for the first time and it was interesting to see the layout in person rather than on the plans. Work has also been conducted on preparing the tennis court area at the rear since our last visit.

It was a really exciting visit and it's great to see the building grow into more of a school every time we visit!



WHAT WILL THE NEW SCHOOL BUILDING HAVE TO OFFER?

Houstone School will be a modern, state-of-the-art, educational building which will offer exceptional facilities to pupils. The £21 million building will have a whole host of features which include:

The teaching block will include areas for core subjects along with specific areas for music, drama and science. There will also be a hall and library for presentations, events, research and study.

The site will also contain a sports hall, activity studio, MUGA (multi-use games area) and tennis courts – it is anticipated that these will be available for use by the pupils and community alike.

Extensive playing fields to the rear of the site will be used for a variety of sports and activities in due course.



WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING AT ADVANTAGE SCHOOLS?

ELSTOW SCHOOL CHOIR

Elstow have recently started a choir which runs every Tuesday after school, led by choirmaster Andy Winder and is open to all pupils. The program is fully funded by the school and with 50 pupils attending already it is proving to be very popular, although more are always welcome. The choir will continue all year and pupils are hoping to put on an Easter concert to show off all their hard work.



QUEEN'S PARK ACADEMY JOIN ADVANTAGE SCHOOLS



We are delighted to announce that Queen's Park Academy has officially joined the Advantage Schools family. Queen's Park colleagues attended the most recent Advantage Schools training day and we've enjoyed getting to know each other. We are looking forward to sharing more updates on Queen's Park Academy in future newsletters!

BFS STUDENTS VISIT WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

In November, a group of Year 11 pupils had the amazing opportunity to visit Wadham College, Oxford University to experience what life is like at the university and how to apply to study there.

Pupils received academic mentoring, a tour of the College and conduct interviews with current Oxford students. We're sure we will see some of these students studying at Oxford in a few years!





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