

SCHOOL PROSPECTUS



HOUSTONE
SCHOOL

**ACADEMIC, DISCIPLINED,
EXTRAORDINARY**

www.houstoneschool.co.uk



CONTENTS

ABOUT US **03**

CURRICULUM **04**

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION **05**

FAQS **06**

WORKING WITH US **07**

ABOUT US

ADVANTAGE SCHOOLS

Advantage Schools is an ambitious school trust located in Bedfordshire.

Formed in April 2017 we also run Elstow School and Bedford Free School. We believe very strongly in our values of aspiration, respect and honesty, which guide everything we do.

We exist to serve our communities – the pupils and families of Bedford and Central Bedfordshire – in order to offer a real choice. We specialise in an academic education that offers excellent results, a great learning environment with routines and structures that ensure excellent behaviour, and phenomenal extra-curricular opportunities. Our schools are genuinely comprehensive, and we believe that every child can go on to achieve extraordinary things.

We ensure that our curriculum is rich in knowledge, we expect hard work and do not make excuses. We believe in working together with families to support high expectations that meet young people's aspirations. Every pupil should have the option to go to university at 18, and for the vast majority this should be the choice of highly-selective universities. We hence craft our curriculum around the core knowledge contained in traditional academic subjects.

We believe all our pupils have a right to the assumed knowledge that educated people take for granted, and aspire to ensure that all our pupils join the community of educated citizens.

OUR BRAND NEW SCHOOL

Houstone School is a state school opening in 2022, set up by Advantage Schools, a school trust that runs schools in Bedfordshire.

Our brand new, purpose built school will be designed around our plans to deliver a world-class education and will feature a sports hall, playing field, art and music studios, and IT suited alongside traditional classrooms.

Like all state schools in the area, Houstone School is open to all pupils regardless of income or ability. We are regulated and inspected by Ofsted, enter our pupils for GCSEs, and have our exam results published in league tables.

But there are some key differences that make Houstone School so distinctive. We've heard for some time that the local community want something new and better for families in Houghton Regis. Some parents that we have spoken to said they wanted their children to experience a better education, with very strong standards of behaviour, a different approach to pupils with additional needs that believes that they can meet high expectations, and aspects like longer school days that fit in with modern family life, alongside a real commitment to getting the curriculum, teaching and learning right.

We are going to make Houstone School that school – founded by our school trust, and shaped by local people.

We are ambitious to be the best school in the country.

WE BELIEVE, GIVEN THE RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES, ALL CHILDREN ARE CAPABLE OF EXTRAORDINARY THINGS. HOUSTONE SCHOOL WILL BE ACADEMIC, DISCIPLINED AND EXTRAORDINARY.

CURRICULUM

ACADEMIC & BALANCED

The curriculum is at the heart of our vision for education.

We believe all our pupils are entitled to a broad, balanced curriculum, so we won't make assumptions, excuses, or lower the bar.

Instead, our school will provide an exceptional learning environment, within which pupils will be empowered and supported to achieve extraordinary outcomes.

Our curriculum will ensure pupils are prepared for a fulfilling life, including the opportunity to go to a great university and pursue the career of their choice. To achieve this, we will teach an academic, knowledge-rich curriculum enhanced by an entitlement to enrichment for all.

The quality of our curriculum and teaching will be crucial in achieving the big ambitions we have for the school to become a national beacon of excellence and for pupils to be nurtured and make unrivalled progress.

Our curriculum will have the following features:

- An intensive focus on the basics of maths and English, including effective and timely support for those who need it
- An academic, knowledge-rich curriculum for all including science, the humanities, languages, art, computing, drama, music and PE
- A focus on reading including time spent reading for pleasure collectively as a tutor group each day
- A comprehensive timetable of enrichment opportunities built into the school day, including inclusive sporting opportunities
- Music for All – all pupils taught to read music and play an instrument from Year 7
- Enhanced support for pupils with lower attendance
- A focus on preparing every single pupil to attend a good university
- A longer school day, including supervised 'prep' time each day for all pupils to complete their homework in a quiet, focused environment



THE QUALITY OF OUR CURRICULUM AND TEACHING WILL BE CRUCIAL IN ACHIEVING THE BIG AMBITIONS WE HAVE FOR THE SCHOOL TO BECOME A NATIONAL BEACON OF EXCELLENCE.

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

NO SELECTION BY ABILITY

Houstone School is a comprehensive school and we do not select by ability or aptitude.

Year 7 applications

All applications for places at Houstone School are made in accordance with the Local Authority's co-ordinated admission arrangements and will be made on the common application form provided and administered by the Local Authority. These can be obtained through the Central Bedfordshire Council: https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/5/school_admissions

Once Central Bedfordshire has processed your application it will be forwarded to us at Houstone School. The school has an admission number of 180 for entry into year 7. The school will admit this number if there are sufficient applications. Where fewer applications are received the school will offer places to all those who have applied. Please see the admission policy which can be found on our website for information related to our oversubscription criteria.

**Closing date for Year 7 applications is 31/10/2021.
Year 7 offers will be made on 01/03/2022.**

If we have not entered into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State opening the school by that date, they will be conditional offers and will be confirmed once we have a signed funding agreement.

Late applications

All applications received by the LA after the deadline will be considered to be late applications. Late applications will be considered after those received on time.

Years 8, 9 and 10

For those entering years 8, 9 and 10 further information on applying for a school place will be provided shortly and we are working with the Local Authority to make this process as simple and easily understandable as possible. We again have an admission number of 180 per year group. This means that we believe that we should be able to meet demand in years 8-10 for what are known as 'mid-year' applications when the local authority is able to process them. We anticipate that this will be by May of 2022.

Please sign up to our mailing list on our website and we will email you as soon as mid-year admissions for years 8, 9 and 10 can be processed.

Open Events

We will be holding Open Events throughout the year for all parents and children interested in finding out more about Houstone School.

Please keep an eye on our website or sign up to our mailing list to be kept up to date with Open Events.



FAQs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do we apply for admission?

If your son or daughter is due to start Year 7 in September 2022, you apply via the local authority admissions service. The application deadline is 31st October 2021.

There will be 180 places available in September 2022 for years 7, 8, 9 and 10.

If your son or daughter is due to start Year 8, 9 or 10 in September 2022, you can apply for a place at the school at Easter. We will publish more information on our website following further discussions with the Local Authority Admissions team as soon as we are able to.

Who will the Principal be?

We are advertising for the Principal in October 2021 and anticipate that she or he will start at Easter 2022, but we will announce this on our website as soon as we are able to.

What will my child study at Houstone?

We will have an academic-focussed curriculum that gives plenty of time to the basics of English, maths and science. All pupils will also study at least one language, history, geography, RE, PE, music, art and computing. In addition to this, during our extended school day we will have 'electives' – extra-curricular activities that all pupils will participate in.

We intend to supplement this curriculum with other subjects but this will be subject to the appointment of the Principal and key teaching staff.

Are all aspects of the school day compulsory, including Prep?

Yes, all aspects are compulsory except for additional sporting fixtures (which are strongly encouraged), and breakfast and homework clubs, which will be optional for pupils who regularly complete homework on time.

Prep, morning meetings and reading time are all compulsory.

With regard to fixtures, we expect parents to support pupils representing the school.

Will there be a uniform and if so, what will it be and who will supply it?

Yes, there will be a formal school uniform and school PE kit. We are discussing this with suppliers now, and will announce it in the summer term as soon as we are able to. Parents/ carers will be responsible for ensuring their children have the correct uniform.

My child has an EHCP. I want them to attend Houstone School. What do I do?

You should contact Central Bedfordshire's SEND team:
Telephone 0300 300 8356
Email statass@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

I am interested in serving on the Local Governing Body. How can I do this?

Sign up for updates and register your interest at info@houstoneschool.co.uk

What happens if the building is delayed?

The local authority are responsible for the building and ensuring that it is completed on schedule. We hope that it won't be delayed, but are talking to the local authority about alternative plans if something unexpected happens. If there is a problem, we will work with the local authority to find an alternative temporary site.

If you have a question that isn't answered here, please email us at info@houstoneschool.co.uk

WORKING WITH US

ASPIRATION, RESPECT & HONESTY

Advantage Schools is different, and hence working for Houstone School will be very different!

We expect our staff to be aligned with the Advantage Schools values of Aspiration, Respect, Honesty as these really do drive what we do across the Trust.

We also expect our pupils and staff to 'go the extra mile'. We are unashamedly in favour of hard work. As a result, our staff are very special, and our pupils get a great deal.

At the same time, we have tried to strip away some things that are common in many schools, but we think take up too much time. This particularly relates to teaching staff, and we think it makes working at our schools enticing and exciting. In our schools, there are no unwieldy and impossible marking policies. To support with issues around workload, there are also no written reports, and our pupils' behaviour is impeccable, supported by same-day whole-school sanctions where necessary. These are delivered centrally so teachers are not overburdened, and in support of all of this Senior Leaders have a very high profile to ensure teachers are supported.

We believe professional learning is a right for staff and we do everything possible to free up teachers to visit other schools, attend external professional learning including courses, and to collaborate and become experts in teaching their subject.

Support staff across the Trust are highly valued and are experts in their field.

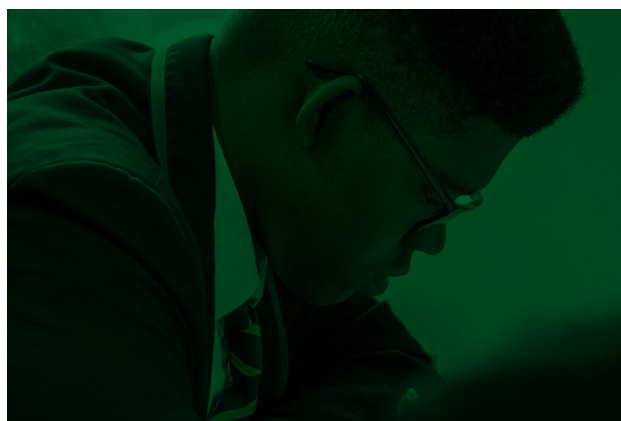
Support and Development:

Career development is a priority – and as the Trust grows so will opportunities for staff within the Trust, across our schools.

We offer financial assistance for relevant post-graduate study. We have partnerships with a number of local training providers, Ambition Institute, the DRET Teaching School Hub and the STEP Ahead Teaching School Hub.

We will be advertising for job roles within Houstone School in Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022.

WE DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENABLE TEACHERS TO ACCESS ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SO THAT THEY CAN BECOME EXPERTS IN TEACHING THEIR SUBJECT.



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