



YCAT NEWSLETTER

July 2020

CEO

This has been the most challenging time for schools for more than 75 years and as we approach the end of the school year it is important to reflect on what our schools have achieved since the 23rd March.

Our staff have kept schools open for key workers and vulnerable children including during holidays, extended the opening to priority age groups, set a range of bespoke work for children working at home, kept in touch with children and families providing advice and support, providing transition support for children's new classes next year and providing meals and food for families. This has been achieved through a determined team approach that has been possible because of the incredible goodwill shown by our staff. This support has been provided at a time when staff have faced daily anxiety and uncertainty about a horrid virus that we are still just beginning to understand. The kindness and humanity shown in our schools has been humbling. Thank you to all staff who will need this year's summer break more than ever to rest and recover and prepare for the challenge of supporting all children returning to school and catching up in their learning from September.

This is my final newsletter as CEO and I would like to thank staff, headteachers, governors, trustees and members for their support during the last five years; it has been appreciated.

My very best wishes to Jo Robinson in her new role as CEO. Her focus in leadership puts the needs of all children at its heart and this always shines through in everything she does. She will be greatly missed by everyone in the Lothersdale School community, but she will continue to work with the school in her new role from September.

Congratulations to Colum Grogan who has been appointed as the new headteacher at Lothersdale School. We look forward to working with him in the new school year.

Good wishes to Judith Ratcliffe, Headteacher at Bilton School, who retires at the end of term. Judith has worked at Bilton for 29 years serving the community and caring for generations of children with genuine interest and compassion. She will be greatly missed and a huge thank you from everyone in YCAT. I am pleased to announce that Richard Street has been appointed headteacher from September and Sian James has been appointed as Deputy Headteacher. Our congratulations and good wishes to them both; we wish them every success.

We are very pleased to announce that Victoria Lickley has been seconded to lead the Red Kite SCITT Primary Programme in the Harrogate area for the next year. This is a well-deserved opportunity after many years leading the HART SCITT.

Antonia Lowe leaves YCAT at the end of the summer term. During the last 8 years she has had an important role in the strategic development of HART SCITT and Teaching School. A special thank you to Antonia for her huge commitment and dedication

We are very fortunate to have high quality staff across our schools in a wide range of roles: headteachers, leaders, teachers, administrators, teaching assistants, catering and caretaking and cleaning. The success of our Trust is also a result of the high quality volunteers who undertake key roles as trustees and governors. Jan Linsley tells us about her work as a governor and her role as a National Leader of Governance.

Jan Linsley
Chair of Governors, Hawes Primary School



After a career in teaching English in secondary schools, I became a governor to make a contribution in my local community. I wanted to make sure that all children get the best education they can, and that they enjoy their time in school!

As an independent consultant for the last few years, I have been working with National Teaching Schools to support schools in difficulties; provide high quality professional development and train our next generation of teachers. I was made aware that there was a shortage of National Leaders of Governance (NLG) in certain areas of the country - North Yorkshire being one of those areas.

Following a successful Ofsted inspection at my local school, where I'm Chair of Governors, I approached Don Parker to provide a reference in order for me to apply to be NLG. I was designated by the Department for Education in July 2017 and have supported governance in a number of schools since then.

I was asked to chair the Local Governing Body at Hawes Primary School whilst it was in difficulties. I enjoyed my time there so much, that I've stayed on! We now have a full set of governors who I'm delighted to work with.

I've supported school governance through 3 DfE funded school improvement projects in Leeds, Bradford and Teesside where I have offered training to make sure governors understand the projects. I've also spent time developing case studies with the schools to demonstrate the positive impact these projects have had.

The most common deployments have been to coach new Chairs of Governors to understand their role; advise on governance in Multi-Academy Trusts; and chair Interim Executive Boards until struggling schools can convert to academies. I have also been asked to be an independent governor helping schools deal with complaints; have dealt with disciplinary matters; commissioned a financial investigation and managed headteacher absences.

Some of the role is just "hard slog" but much of it is really rewarding. Why do I do it? It's simple, I do it to make a difference to the lives of children. I would urge anyone reading this article to consider being a governor; to chair a governing board and ultimately to consider becoming a National Leader of Governance and work with other schools!

CFO

I took up my new post as CFO at the beginning of March and shortly afterwards we entered the new normal! As a result I have not been able to follow the initial plan to meet all headteachers and admin staff before the end of the school year. However, I have been able to meet you remotely through teams and we will continue with this approach for school staff and governors next term.

We are reviewing some of our internal systems to find ways to further improve the information provided to schools and the Trust.

Thank you all for your support at this difficult time.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Sarah Beveridge headteacher at Leyburn led our Health and Well-being staff survey questionnaire across our schools during the early spring term.

Sarah tells us about how Leyburn School have embraced an agenda to support children with emotional trauma.

‘The staff at Leyburn School have been trained in both Restorative Practice and in Emotion Coaching and Sarah Beveridge is a member of the North East Regional Emotion Coaching Interest Group. The school has children trained as Emotion Coaching Champions and also has a support group for parents who use this approach with their own children. As part of its support for children and families, the school also has an experienced ATA who is a trained mental health first aider and recently ELSA trained.

As a result of this provision, the school has been recognised as an Attachment Aware School.

The next phase of our development is to become a trauma-informed school and so Sarah is undertaking a Diploma in Trauma and Mental Health Informed Schools and Communities run by Trauma Informed Schools UK. This practical skill based training course, underpinned by over 1000 evidence-based psychological, medical and neuroscientific research studies, is designed to inform and empower schools to respond effectively to vulnerable and challenging children and those who have suffered a trauma or have a mental health issue. Without such interventions, painful life experiences are likely to persist through challenging behaviour, blocks to learning and life-long physical and mental health problems.

The training provides vital tools and techniques in knowing how to be in relationship with troubled children and respond effectively to challenging or distressing behaviour in terms of what to say and how to be. Research shows that just one such emotionally available adult before the age 18 is enough to prevent years of suffering (personal and societal) and the medicalising of distress with psychiatric labels and medication.

She will also be trained to know when to seek the support of psychologist-led supervision, and when, due to limits of competence, to refer on.

The course not only focuses on work with individual children but also on changing whole school cultures to be mentally healthy for all. The course covers interventions designed specifically to address teacher stress, teacher absence and poor staff retention, which Leyburn has been exploring for a number of years.

GOVERNANCE

During this year we have welcomed three new trustees to the YCAT Board:

Alex Hornby – presently CEO Transdev

Frank Jones - wide range of business experience and IT

Diane McConnel - wide range of accountancy experience.

We hope they will enjoy their new roles and look forward to working with them.

This has been a very challenging time for schools and their communities.

Governors have had remote meetings and we will review the benefits and advantages of some meetings continuing remotely after Covid 19.

Key areas for governors to consider in meetings going forward:

- Review the progress that was made introducing the new curriculum from September to March 2020. Create a new plan of action to ensure full implementation of the curriculum.
- Ensure safe and effective planning for the return of all pupils to school in September.
- Support pupils' mental health and mitigate anxiety on their return to school.
- Identify the key gaps in pupils' learning after the return to school after closure for each year group.
- Ensure there is a strategic plan to address pupil groups learning loss at the beginning of the next school year.

We will provide governor updates during the year for safeguarding and child protection.

There will be a short support session available to LGBs focusing on ways to evaluate the impact of planned catch up for learning loss from school closure (30 minute session at the start of a governors meeting on TEAMS).

IMPACT CASE STUDY OF READING PLUS

YCAT schools support pupils' reading with the computer-based programme "Reading Plus" and an evaluation of its impact is below.

Reading Plus in Year 4 2018-19



Lexiles Ranges Tracking Document (based on formative assessment)

Year 4

Lexile Range Target 620-790 (Level C) by end of Y4

Target Usage 12 hours per term min. (36 hours over an academic year)

Target Reading Speed by end of Y4 = 145wpm

Pupil last name	Pupil first name	BENCHMARK DATE & TIME	Total usage to date (hours)	Total Reading Lessons (SR)	Lexile Range after initial benchmark (B1)	Current Lexile Range	Level Gain	Reading Speed in words per minute (wpm) from initial baseline	Current Reading Speed in words per minute (wpm)	Reading Speed Gain in words per minute (wpm)
		17/09/2018 11:58	11.7	56	770-870	950-1030	2	219	336	117
		17/09/2018 11:53	12.1	81	620-790	950-1030	3	256	339	83
		17/09/2018 11:52	14.8	74	620-790	850-980	2	168	253	85
		17/09/2018 11:55	17.2	88	400-640	850-980	3	135	222	87
		17/09/2018 12:09	12.4	68	230-420	770-870	3	89	240	151
		17/09/2018 12:07	15.8	72	230-420	770-870	3	112	226	114
		17/09/2018 12:45	9.2	28	230-420	400-640	2	112	120	15
		17/09/2018 12:27	11.2	49	230-420	620-790	2	140	237	97
		17/09/2018 12:34	14.9	49	Below 230	230-420	1	66	75	13
		17/09/2018 11:56	16.6	103	Below 230	770-870	4	145	249	104
		17/09/2018 12:06	15.2	68	Below 230	400-640	2	113	244	131
		17/09/2018 12:04	17.2	120	Below 230	620-790	3	137	241	104
		17/09/2018 12:10	10.1	66	Below 230	400-640	2	188	260	72
		17/09/2018 12:12	14.2	82	Below 230	230-420	1	121	191	70
		17/09/2018 12:09	12.7	54	Below 230	230-420	1	60	123	63
		18/09/2018 12:07	16.3	68	Below 230	620-790	3	89	175	86
		17/09/2018 12:12	9	49	Below 230	400-640	2	142	227	85

Reading Plus as an intervention in year 5 and 6

Current year 2019-2020	Y2 SAT	Y6 end of Spring data collection
Pupil 1 (PP)	WT (ss 95)	WT (ss 101)
Pupil 2 (SEN)	WT (ss 87)	WT (ss 98)
Pupil 3	Exp (ss 100)	Exp (ss 106)

2018-2019	Y2 SAT	Y6 SAT
Pupil 1	2C	Exp (ss 103)
Pupil 2 (SEN)	2C	Exp (100)

2017-2018	Y2 SAT	Y6 SAT
Pupil 1 (PP)	2B	Exp (103)
Pupil 2 (SEN)	2C	Exp (101)

Reading Plus is a computer-based reading programme that assesses and monitors pupils' progress in reading. It provides a variety of texts and tracks pupils' fluency and comprehension, including vocabulary skills, visual skills, silent reading fluency and comprehension skills.

Askwith Primary School has used the programme in the year 4 cohort and extended it as an intervention in year 5 and 6, for four years. It is recommended that pupils use the programme for 20 minutes a day. Although this is a time commitment, we have found that the pupils have a positive approach to using Reading Plus and those children deemed as reluctant readers are highly motivated to access and engage with the programme. The programme is user friendly for both pupil and teacher and technical support from providers is easy to access and very detailed.

We have found that use of the programme results in a significant increase in fluency and comprehension. Evidence shows that some lower ability children are not always immediately ready for the programme at the start of Year 4. Therefore, they show less significant impact over the year. However, when the programme is extended as an intervention in Year 5 and Year 6, there is evidence of good progress.

BUILDINGS/ESTATES

Congratulation to Hawes, Leyburn and Lothersdale who have been successful in this year's Condition Improvement Fund bids. Work will now be commissioned to provide boilers, drainage systems, fire doors, windows and roof repairs at a total cost of £660,000.

During the last three years all our schools have benefitted from improvements from the fund that cost £1.4 million. A special thank you to Janine Benson, from the YCAT Central team, for her sterling work in helping to secure the bids.