

CEO Updates
from
Jo Robinson

If you need to contact me, please do not hesitate to do so by email: jrobinson@ycatschools.co.uk

Welcome back to school and the new academic year! I hope you have all had an enjoyable summer and managed to get a well-deserved break.



When I was appointed the new CEO of YCAT at the beginning of the year I could never have imagined that I would be starting my new role in September 2020 unable to come into your schools. We continue to be working in very challenging times for schools – perhaps the most challenging since the Second World War. Confirmed cases of the Covid 19 virus continue to be rising and therefore it is of paramount importance that we all continue to work together to mitigate the risks of the virus, keeping all the children and adults in our schools as safe as possible. Therefore, for the next half term I have asked all schools to ensure they do not have additional adult visitors inside school, including parents, Governors and the YCAT Central team, unless they are essential for the continuation of the curriculum or for maintenance and safety of the school building.

Once everyone has quickly settled back into school life, the key priorities for all schools will be tackling pupils' learning loss due to the unprecedented period of school closure and the seven-week summer holiday alongside ensuring that children's mental health and well-being is strong.

Following his retirement from the role of CEO at the end of August I am very pleased that Don Parker will be continuing to work for our group of schools leading on 'Curriculum Research and Development and School to School support'. Don has recently done a considerable amount of research into tackling learning loss and the most effective strategies for teachers to support children in 'catching-up', which will inform the work of YCAT and HART partnership schools this term. Don and I will be working closely with all YCAT schools as they implement their Covid 19 recovery plans throughout the year. My particular focus this half term we will be providing bespoke support for Headteachers and their staff through Microsoft TEAMS meetings, working together to ensure that all YCAT children recover from any potential learning loss as quickly as possible.

I look forward to working with you all in my new role.

Keep well and stay safe!

Best wishes

Jo

YORKSHIRE COLLABORATIVE ACADEMY TRUST

Working and learning together to improve children's lives



Curriculum Research and
Development Updates
from
Don Parker

*If you need to contact me please do not hesitate to
do so by email: dparker@ycatschools.co.uk*



Supporting pupils' recovery from learning loss during school closure is the key priority for all schools this year. This is a huge challenge for our teachers and support staff, particularly in light of the continuing pandemic. The lengthy period of school closure has inevitably created an urgency to address children's learning loss as quickly as possible and this runs the risk of rushing 'catch up' and preventing pupils' deepening learning and establishing fluency. Effective "catch up of pupils' learning" requires planned provision that applies the principles from cognitive science that ensures effective learning and was a key focus in last year's YCAT CPD and support.

The 'must haves' from cognitive science that will ensure pupils' 'catch up' are:

- Identify gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Plan sequenced work units of 'catch up' to tackle essential gaps of knowledge.
- Build knowledge systematically.
- Provide deliberate practice to develop fluency.
- Avoid the temptation to try to catch up too quickly and make sure essential knowledge is being fully embedded.
- Provide spaced recalls to ensure new knowledge is deepened in pupils' long-term memory and can be retrieved quickly.
- Pupils' develop automaticity 'drawing on' knowledge in their work.
- Make sure lessons do not overload pupils' working memory by having too many activities taking place.

I look forward to working with you all again this academic year!

Don

CFO Updates
from
Sarah Johnson

*If you need to contact me please do not hesitate to
do so by email: sjohnson@ycatschools.co.uk*

Myself and the YCAT central team are in the process of closing down the last financial year, and preparing the year end accounts for - statutory annual returns, the Trustees meeting, and the upcoming Audit. We have a lot of work to do and a very short time in which to accomplish it. I thank all the Headteachers, YCAT central team and school administrators in advance for your help and support in achieving the deadlines we are required to meet.

To achieve the year end closedown, all transactions relating to last financial year must be on the system preferably by Friday 11 September – it's extremely tight but I'm hoping that we can all work together to achieve it! I do appreciate that you are all extremely busy, but I thank you again for working with us at this challenging time.

Best wishes to all
Sarah



YCAT Central Updates

*If you need to contact the central office please
email: finance@ycatschools.co.uk*

This half term the YCAT central team are operating a blended approach to working as the size of the office means it is impossible to safely social distance. There will be one member of the team in the YCAT office everyday whilst the others will be working remotely, this will be discussed at the Admin meeting on Thursday and a timetable will be circulated to you all detailing our working patterns. These arrangements will be reviewed regularly and schools will be updated of any changes as they happen.

Over the summer holidays some of our schools have seen significant works going on as a result of the successful CIF bids. Leyburn School has all its fascia boards replaced and the whole school is now looking very smart. Hawes School has had new windows, stone and drainage repairs. Whilst work has begun at Lothersdale School to replace all the fire doors and have a new boiler fitted in the October half term.



HART Teaching School Updates

*If you need to contact HART please email:
HART@ycatschools.co.uk*

This will be the most challenging and stressful year for schools in living memory and this year's HART provision has been designed to support schools in these difficult times. HART appreciates that at the moment schools have one main focus - safety - alongside the day to day running of their sites, however below is some of the support we are providing at this time.

Our leadership meetings and CPD will be provided by Microsoft Teams at least until the end of this term. The first HART Leadership Meeting is on 7th October, 9:30 to 11:00am, and the agenda will include the usual updates. The main item will be a school self-evaluation template that covers recovery from school closure including examples of schools' completed text.

Please make sure HARTADMIN@ycatschools.co.uk has your email address to receive your invite to the HART meeting and future CPD.

Forthcoming CPD reminders:

Improving your school's systematic reading through scenario leadership - Tuesday 13th October, an afternoon session - £45

Strategic Recovery from learning loss as a result of school closure - Wednesday 21st October, an afternoon session - £45



Harrogate & Rural
TEACHING ALLIANCE

General Updates

Reading Plus



We are pleased to confirm that YCAT has updated its Reading Plus subscription for another 3 years. Across our schools Reading Plus continues to support our children in achieving good outcomes and has proved to be a valuable online tool during the period of remote learning. As a Trust we will continue to evaluate the most effective uses of the programme to ensure that its use is optimised across schools.

Dolce – Catering Company

The first week back will no doubt have been particularly challenging in our school dining halls! Embedding new routines to ensure that the whole school can eat their lunch whilst remaining in the group bubbles will take time and there will have been lots of tweaking of arrangements each day, until schools are satisfied that their lunchtime provision is working as smoothly and as efficiently as possible at this time



The regional manager of Dolce has been in contact with YCAT last week to gather feedback and discuss Dolce's plans for the new academic year. A request was made by YCAT that any changes or enhancements that Dolce wish to make in their kitchens be shared with Headteachers in advance so that there is strong communication between the catering company and YCAT schools. Our catering and midday supervisory staff are an integral part of our staff teams and it is very important that schools have knowledge of what is expected of them in the dining hall.

YCAT Parent Survey to Review Home Learning



A simple survey has been emailed to all parents of children in YCAT schools to gather their views about the period of home learning. The purpose of the survey is to evaluate which subjects children were able to engage with successfully at home and also the availability of online devices in children's home to support learning tasks. This evidence will support our planning for potential future periods of home learning.

Welcome to our new Headteachers!

We are really pleased to welcome to YCAT Colum Grogan as the Headteacher of Lothersdale School and Richard Street as the Headteacher of Bilton Grange School. We look forward to working with them both in their new roles and hopefully it will not be too long until face to face meetings are possible and we can all welcome them in person.

Colum Grogan



Richard Street



Out and About in YCAT Schools



Due to the continuing pandemic our classrooms and provision continue to look different at the start of the new academic year. Here are just a few photos from Leyburn and Lothersdale schools to show how they have adjusted to the government guidance in their KS2 and EYFS classrooms.



Our Local Governing Body and Trustees are operating remotely at the moment and their main priorities for this term are:

- The safe and effective return to school
- Supporting children and staff during these challenging times.
- Strategically addressing learning loss and identifying ways of improving remote learning in the likelihood of further school closures.

In addition, it is important that all staff and governors read and adhere to the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance which was most recently updated on 1 September 2020, and which came into force on 1 September 2020.

