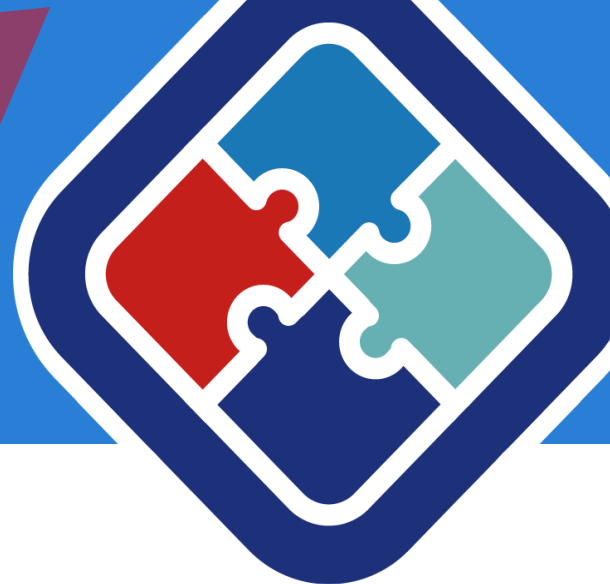
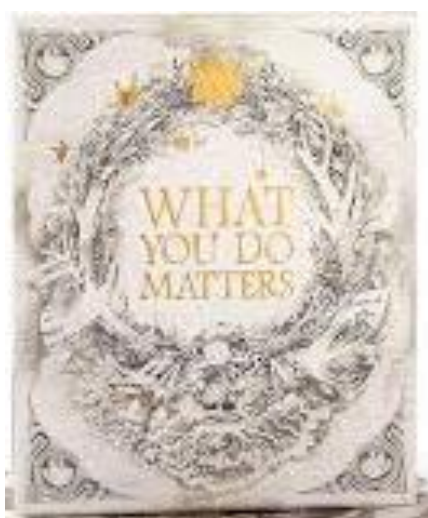


YCAT SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Issue 16 🎂 July 2025

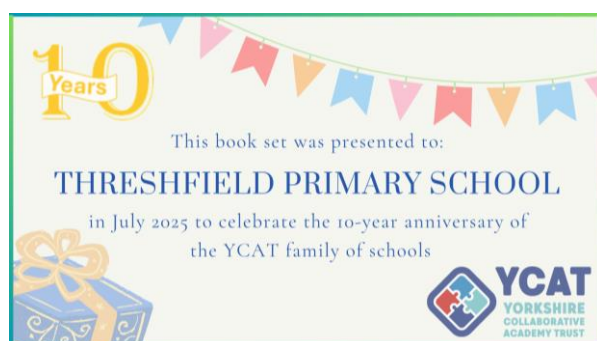


10 years of YCAT!



This summer marks ten years since the formation of Yorkshire Collaborative Academy Trust. In 2015, YCAT comprised just three schools and there were around 500 children in the Trust. Ten years on and we are a family of 11 schools, working and learning together to improve the lives of over 1400 children!

To celebrate this landmark anniversary, YCAT is donating a beautiful keepsake set of books to every school in the Trust at the start of the new academic year. Gorgeously illustrated, the 'What you do matters' trio of books promotes resilience and self-esteem.



Contents

CEO and CFO updates.....	2
Chair of Trustees' update.....	3
Curriculum news.....	4
Other news.....	5-9
Professional development.....	10-11
Governance.....	12
Research update.....	13-14
Book corner.....	15
Inclusion in YCAT schools.....	16-23
Goodbye and thank you.....	24

‘Working and learning together to improve children’s lives’

CEO Update - Jo Robinson

As we approach the end of another school year, I want to thank you all for your continued dedication to our children and communities. Visiting our schools throughout the year, I am always inspired by the creativity, care and professionalism I see in every setting.

This year, we've welcomed Osmotherley and Cononley into the YCAT family. It has been a pleasure to get to know their pupils and staff, and I look forward to deepening those relationships next year.

Schools have engaged positively with the HART Primary Curriculum Quality Mark, and it's been encouraging to see thoughtful, honest self-evaluation across the Trust. These reflections are vital as we continue to strengthen our practice and shape key school improvement priorities for the coming year.

Overall, end-of-year outcomes show encouraging progress, and I want to thank you for your continued hard work and commitment to high-quality teaching. While we've identified areas for further development - particularly in maths - we move into next year with a clear focus and the support needed to continue improving.

Our work on inclusion has also strengthened this year. Support from our SEND Adviser is now embedded and having real impact. I've been especially pleased to see the range of interventions in place and the strong understanding staff have of their pupils' individual needs. This will remain a key focus for us all next year.

As we look ahead, I'm proud to share that YCAT will celebrate its 10th anniversary on 1 August 2025 - a significant milestone. When Don Parker (Askwith), Judith Ratcliffe (Bilton) and I (Lothersdale) helped establish the Trust, we believed that by working together, we could make a bigger difference to children's lives. That founding principle still drives us all today. It's a privilege to have served as CEO for the last five years and to work with such a committed and inspiring group of colleagues across our schools.

Thank you again for all you do. I hope you enjoy a restful, well-deserved summer break and I look forward to working with you again in September.

With very best wishes,
Jo

CFO Update

MyView app

Did you know you can now get instant access to Pay slips and payroll information on your phone through the MyView app? It's quicker and easier than using MyView through the browser and can be set up in seconds. [Click here](#) for full instructions on how to download the app and log in.

MyView Wagestream

YCAT employees can take advantage of a new service available through NYES Employment Support called Wagestream. This includes the 'PayNow' offering, which allows you to draw up to 50% of your salary (capped at £1,000) before the end of the month, via an app on your phone. You can also use a feature called Benefit Checker to get free tailored advice on what benefits you might be eligible for and how to access these. To take advantage of everything Wagestream can offer, simply contact the YCAT central team.

'Working and learning together to improve children's lives'



Chair of Trustees' Update

Jenny Baynes

I'd like to extend my thanks, on behalf of the Trustees, for the hard work and commitment shown by staff and Governors across our YCAT schools.

At a time when attendance is a national concern, we're particularly proud of the Trust's strong attendance: overall **96.2%** and persistent absence at just **6.3%**, both well ahead of national figures. This is a fantastic achievement and testament to the efforts of staff, pupils, and families.

Governance remains a key focus as we grow. A Trustee Working Party is reviewing our operating model to ensure strength across all schools, and we appreciate the input of the Governors and Headteachers who've completed the Governance survey so far.

This year saw the launch of the YCAT Safeguarding Reviews, which have confirmed the strength of safeguarding cultures across our schools. Thank you to Nick Coates for leading this important work. We will continue to refine our safeguarding systems next year, with training to include updates on reporting 'near misses' and the revised *Keeping Children Safe in Education* guidance.

We are also pleased to see increasing alignment in SEND practice across the Trust. The support provided by Claire Ashton, our SEND Adviser, is making a visible and positive difference, and we are grateful for the commitment of all staff in promoting inclusive, high-quality provision for all learners.

Looking ahead, a key priority will be embedding the DfE's *Good Estates Management* guidance and developing a sustainability plan. While CIF bids were unsuccessful this year, we remain focused on long-term estate improvement and will review our five-year priorities this autumn.

Thank you to every member of our school communities and the central team for everything you've done this year.

Wishing you all a restful and well-deserved summer break.

Jenny

YCAT's Areas of Focus for 2025/26

As we look ahead to the 2025/26 academic year, our Trust-wide improvement priorities are focused on strengthening practice, securing better outcomes for all pupils, and ensuring we continue to grow and operate effectively as a collaborative of 11 schools. Key priorities include:

Early Years (EYFS): Establish a clear, shared understanding of high-quality early years practice, including a review of enabling environments.

Maths: Maintain a strong focus on fluency and ensure teaching is consistently adapted to meet the needs of all learners.

Writing: Respond to the new DfE Writing Framework and evaluate curriculum intent and implementation across the Trust to ensure evidence-based approaches for improved outcomes.

Governance: Review and refine our governance operating model, ensuring full compliance with updates to the Academy Trust Handbook Review.

Estates: Embed the DfE's *Good Estate Management for Schools (GEMS)* guidance and confirm a Trust-wide five-year strategic estates plan.

Sustainability: Develop a Trust sustainability plan to support long-term, efficient use of resources

Inclusion: Review evidence-based approaches using the EEF 7-Step Model to strengthen support for our most vulnerable learners and redefine our Trust-wide inclusion strategy.

'Working and learning together to improve children's lives'



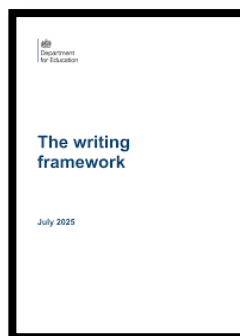
The Writing Framework

We've been eagerly waiting the release of the new DfE Writing Framework, and it's finally here! We know the majority of staff teams won't have had a chance to fully explore the document yet due to the busy end of term! But rest assured, the Trust will be here to guide and support our schools as we consider any changes to our writing practice.

At first glance, the phonics-inspired framework really seems to reinforce the key messages we've been championing across YCAT for the past three years.

It emphasises the importance of ensuring children have a solid grasp of transcriptional skills like handwriting and spelling before rushing into more creative writing. This approach aligns closely with the consistent focus we've had on securing those essential building blocks first.

We'll keep you updated through our meetings and networks and provide practical support as we work through the details together.



National year of reading 2026

On 7 July, the Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson, announced that 2026 will be designated as The National Year of Reading; a vital campaign aimed at reversing the decline in reading.

This exciting DfE initiative, delivered in partnership with the National Literacy Trust, seeks to reposition reading as a relevant, and empowering activity for all.

We're incredibly fortunate to have Esther Brown, English Leader at Hawes Primary School and a member of the National Literacy Trust team, in the YCAT family. Esther will share national initiatives with our schools and support us to plan inspiring reading events throughout the year. As a Trust, we look forward to embracing this opportunity to celebrate reading, enrich our curriculum, and foster a lifelong love of books and literacy in all our pupils.

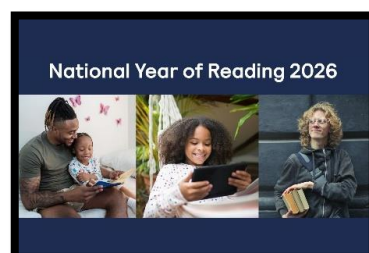


EYFS focus

The DfE has made it clear that a national priority for the year ahead is to ensure all EYFS children - particularly the most disadvantaged - have the best possible start through access to high-quality early education. Recent national EYFS

conferences have focused on closing the attainment gap by improving early language and literacy, raising the overall quality of provision, and ensuring EY education is more accessible and affordable for families.

In response to this, YCAT will make EYFS a key Trust priority in 2025/26. Our focus will be on defining what strong early years practice looks like and working collaboratively to build greater consistency of provision across all our schools — including a review of what we understand to be the key features of high-quality enabling environments. We are committed to supporting our EYFS teams to share effective practice, strengthen professional development, and ensure every child in every YCAT school gets the strong start they deserve.



‘Working and learning together to improve children’s lives’

Other news

Staff wellbeing: help us make a difference

At YCAT, staff health and wellbeing remains a top priority. We know that when our teams feel supported, valued, and cared for, it has a powerful impact on the whole school community. In the autumn term 2024, only a small number of staff across the Trust completed the Health and Wellbeing Survey. As a result, North Yorkshire has kindly offered to re-run the survey in the new academic year, giving us another opportunity to gather feedback.

Trustees are particularly keen to capture whether improvements have made a difference this year - but to do that, we need your input. We strongly encourage as many colleagues as possible to complete the survey when it is reissued. Your responses will help us evaluate what's working, where further support is needed, and how we can continue to make YCAT a great place to work. Let's keep the conversation going and keep making staff wellbeing a shared priority.

Congratulations, Rory!

We're delighted to share some truly exciting news from one of our schools. Rory, a Year 5 pupil at Bradleys Both Primary School, has been cast in the upcoming HBO *Harry Potter* television series, playing none other than **Neville Longbottom**.

Rory is a dedicated and talented young actor who has been involved in auditions and filming over the past 18 months. While this news has been under wraps due to the level of national interest, Rory's name was officially confirmed this week in social media and the BBC's coverage of the casting announcement.

This is an incredible achievement that reflects not only Rory's talent, but also his perseverance and professionalism at such a young age. We are immensely proud of him and look forward to supporting him on this exciting journey. Well done, Rory from everyone across our family of schools!



Attendance

We're proud to celebrate the impressive attendance



levels across the Trust this year. Our overall average attendance is **96.2%**, well above the national average of **94.8%**. For pupils eligible for free school meals, our Trust average attendance is an impressive **94.4%**, compared to the national average of **92.4%**. Similarly, attendance for pupils with SEND in our Trust stands at **95.3%**, notably higher than the national average of **92.4%**. Even more encouraging is our persistent absence rate, which is just **6.3%**, significantly lower than the national figure of **12.5%**. These strong attendance figures reflect the dedication and hard work of staff, pupils, and families across YCAT, creating positive and inclusive learning environments that truly support every child's education. It's an achievement we should all be very proud of!

Cyber Security: Protecting Our Schools Together



Recent cyber-attacks on schools and businesses across the country serve as a reminder that we are all at risk, and that cyber security is everyone's responsibility. To help protect our Trust and its schools, it is essential that all staff complete the [National Cyber Security Centre's free online](#)

[training for school staff](#). The course takes approximately **20 minutes** to complete and covers key topics to help you stay safe online and recognise potential threats. Completing this training is not only good practice but also a requirement for our insurance cover.



'Working and learning together to improve children's lives'

Ambitious development plans at Threshfield Primary School

This year, Threshfield Primary School has had a very exciting change to its school demographics. Following a complex application process, they were awarded a grant of £100,000 to extend the school building to welcome 2-year-olds into their school community. The new classroom will neighbour the existing reception and preschool classroom and will be part of an EYFS unit. The enterprising development will enable Threshfield to provide daily childcare to fifteen 2-year-olds and extend more daily places to their preschool children.

Both this government and the last government pledged their commitment to the childcare plan to revolutionise savings for working parents using 30 hours of childcare. The final phase of their plan is set to be rolled out in September 2025 with all working parents being offered 30 hours funded places from the term following their child turning 9 months old. Threshfield Primary School is proud to be part of this initiative to support the working families in our community by offering high-quality provision and care for their children. The nursery classroom is due to open Monday 1st September 2025. Best of luck to everyone involved in making this ambitious plan a reality.



The poster features a dark blue background. At the top left, the text 'Threshfield Primary School' is in yellow, with 'Nursery' in white script below it. To the right is the YCAT logo (Yorkshire Collaborative Academy Trust) with the text 'YCAT YORKSHIRE COLLABORATIVE ACADEMY TRUST'. Below the school name is the phone number '01756 752348'. In the center, it says 'Opens September 2025'. On the left, there is an Ofsted 'Good Provider' badge and the Threshfield Primary School crest. On the right, there are two photos of children playing outdoors. At the bottom right, it says 'From 24 months'.



‘Working and learning together to improve children’s lives’

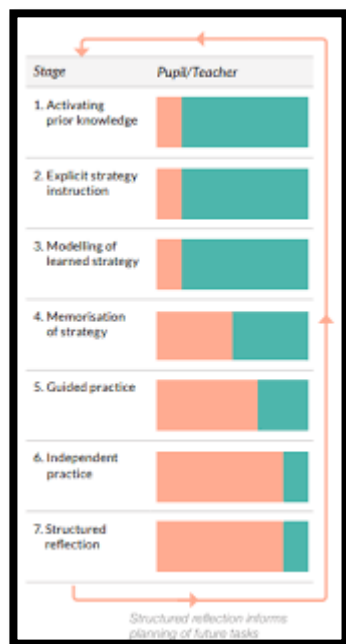


Other news

Ofsted

From November 2025, Ofsted will introduce further changes to their inspection framework to what (we are led to believe) will provide a more detailed and supportive approach. Rather than focusing on a single overall judgement, inspections will assess schools across multiple key areas, including curriculum, teaching quality, behaviour, inclusion, and safeguarding. Each area will receive a rating from 'Exemplary' to 'Attention Needed', giving a clearer picture of strengths and areas for development.

There will be no more ungraded "light-touch" visits; every inspection will be a full graded review. The new framework also places a stronger emphasis on inclusion, pupil wellbeing, and understanding the unique challenges schools face, alongside providing enhanced support where needed.



Inclusion

As part of our commitment to ensuring the best possible support for our most vulnerable learners, YCAT is adopting the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) 7-Step Model to guide our inclusive practice and provision for pupils with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs.

This exciting, evidence-informed approach helps schools take a structured, strategic view of behaviour and SEMH by supporting thoughtful decision-making, intervention planning and whole-school culture. It ensures we match the right support to pupil needs and monitor its impact over time.

This work will be led by Claire Ashton, our Trust SEND Adviser, who will be working closely with SENCOs across YCAT. Schools will begin to trial the approach next term, using it to shape more consistent, inclusive practice that helps every child feel supported, understood, and able to thrive.

We're excited about the potential of this framework to further improve how we meet the needs of our most vulnerable learners — and we look forward to sharing learning and impact as the work develops. Alongside implementing the EEF 7-Step Model, all SENCOs will also be supporting staff to complete a valuable piece of CPD from the National Association for Special Educational Needs. The online course, titled 'Promoting Independence', has been highlighted by Claire Ashton as an excellent resource for all staff working with children with SEND. This training is **free** to access via the [Whole School SEND CPD portal](#): Staff simply need to create a free NASEN account, then complete Unit 19: Promoting Independence. We encourage all colleagues to take advantage of this high-quality CPD as we continue to strengthen inclusive practice across YCAT.

Gold for Hawes!

Hawes Primary School has been awarded the gold award in the school games mark scheme. To achieve gold, schools must demonstrate they are challenging themselves and making progress over seven areas, including inclusion, physical literacy and positive experiences, youth engagement, curriculum and culture. Well done to all involved!



'Working and learning together to improve children's lives'

YCAT Admin and Headteacher Conference



On Tuesday 10th June, administrators and Headteachers joined some of the YCAT central team for a full day's conference. It was a packed agenda, with presentations made from Yasmine Lamoudi of Captiva Learning, Nicola Brown from NYES HR, Dale Barton and Selena Jaconelli from NYES Health & Safety, and Katie Pickles and Sam Thompson from NYES Employment Support. Topics covered included apprenticeship opportunities for YCAT staff, managing complaints and challenging conversations, reporting near misses, cybersecurity, getting the most from MyView, Wave Stream and using card readers for school payments. In the afternoon, colleagues broke into groups and headteachers shared best practice on ~~xxx~~ while the administrators had a financial processes masterclass from CFO Sarah Johnson. Participants in feedback reported finding the day really worthwhile, with great opportunities to meet with peers in 'real time' and share experiences as well as discuss important issues and get relevant updates.

Comments included:

"Good to put faces to names" **"I enjoyed the day and having speakers from various places"**

"The day felt purposeful and efficient" *"Really enjoyable and productive"*

"Sessions were informative and useful" **"I came away feeling that the day had been very worthwhile"**



'Working and learning together to improve children's lives'



Congratulations Natalie

On 14th June 2025, Natalie Knight, a valued member of the YCAT community, took on the Great North Swim, completing a 1-mile open water challenge in Windermere in an impressive 49 minutes. Despite choppy conditions (following a night of thunderstorms) and a cool 16°C water temperature, Natalie described the swim as an enjoyable and rewarding experience after months of training.



Natalie's incredible efforts have raised over £1,600 through her JustGiving page to support Lothersdale Primary School in updating their technology resources. In addition, she has organised further fundraising activities, including a wellness evening with a sound bath and guided meditation, as well as a raffle — together raising over £200 more so far. If you would like to show your support, you can find Natalie's JustGiving page here:

[Crowdfunding For Good From JustGiving.](#)

Goodbye and thank you

It is hard to imagine Osmotherley School without Ms Pickard. For 25 years she has shown tremendous care for the children and has been passionate about the subjects she's taught, especially maths, RE and history. We'll never forget her leavers' service performances, including hilarious raps that she'd written for each of the Year 6 children. Everyone in the audience was crying with laughter and her anecdotes in the staffroom often provoke the same reaction. We will miss Ms Pickard, but we would like to thank her for all her hard work. We wish her a long and happy retirement and look forward to hearing about her adventures.



Goodbye and thank you

After more than 12 dedicated years at Lothersdale School, Steph Ellison is retiring from her role as school administrator - and she'll be truly missed by everyone. Her pride in her work and deep understanding of school life have made her a highly valued member of the school and YCAT team. While we're lucky she'll continue to support YCAT as clerk to Governors and admin support, we hope she now gets to enjoy more time with loved ones, travelling – and in her much-loved garden!



Bradleys Both School gains recognition for asthma work

Bradleys Both School has gained the Asthma Friendly School accreditation in recognition of its approach and provision to support children with asthma. The West Yorkshire Asthma Friendly Schools Initiative aims to improve the care of pupils with asthma by raising awareness through information, training and support for school staff as well as pupils, parents and carers. To achieve Asthma Friendly School status a school is required to meet 8 key objectives around asthma care and process, including all staff to be trained in asthma awareness and implementing an asthma policy. Congratulations to all the Bradley staff!

‘Working and learning together to improve children’s lives’



Professional development

Safeguarding: Continuing to Strengthen our practice

At YCAT, maintaining strong safeguarding cultures across all our schools remains an absolute priority. Throughout the year, our Trust Safeguarding Reviews and North Yorkshire audits have played an important role in helping us regularly evaluate our systems and practices, ensuring they remain as robust and effective as possible.

To support this ongoing work, the September training day will begin with a Trust-wide safeguarding update, delivered online (approx. 1 hour 15 minutes). This session will include:

- The 2025 Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance and associated updates
- A focus on the importance of reporting 'near misses'
- A short input on understanding what meets the threshold for reporting a concern

The session aims to ensure consistent safeguarding messages are shared across YCAT schools and that every member of staff feels confident in their role. Thank you for all that you do to safeguard and support the children in our family of schools. Your commitment makes a genuine difference.

CPD and Networks

Thank you to all the subject leaders who completed the YCAT Network Evaluation Survey in June. Your feedback has been invaluable in helping us shape our CPD and network offer for the year ahead. It's clear that colleagues value the opportunity to connect, share practice, hear the latest YCAT updates, and engage with current research. We remain committed to providing these professional learning opportunities and are proud of the wide range of networks now established across the Trust. While we encourage subject leaders to attend, these sessions are also open to any colleagues who wish to develop their knowledge - particularly those aspiring to leadership.

Network dates for 2025/26 have now been set in the table below - please support us by saving them in your calendars early to avoid clashes. We look forward to another year of rich collaboration and professional growth.

Network Group	AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER
DSL	15th October 2025	11th Feb 2026	6th May 2026
SENCO	22nd October 2025	4th Feb 2026 (f2f)	24th June 2026
EYFS	12th November 2025	25th February 2026	3rd June 2026
English	6th October 2025	12th January 2026	20th April 2026
Maths	13th October 2025	26th January 2026	27th April 2026
Personal Development	25th November 2025	17th March 2026	9th June 2026
DHT/Senior Leader	10th Dec 2025	23rd March 2026	22nd June 2026

PCQM Success

A huge well done to **Bilton, Askwith and Hawes**, who have each been awarded the HART Primary Curriculum Quality Mark following a rigorous validation

process. This award reflects the depth and quality of curriculum work taking place in each school.

As part of the process, staff carried out detailed self-evaluation across all areas of the curriculum, with a particular focus on ensuring strong progression and coherence from EYFS through to Year 6. Each school identified clear strategic priorities to further enhance their curriculum offer, proving a strong culture of continuous improvement.

Staff spoke very positively about the process and its impact, and we are excited to see more YCAT schools completing their reviews and requesting validation in the coming academic year.



‘Working and learning together to improve children’s lives’



Professional development

HART ALLIANCE CPD 2025-6

<p>Leadership that drives learning</p> <p>Establishing strong leadership across the school to ensure improvement priorities are fully achieved by moving away from ineffective practices and focusing on approaches that have the greatest impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30th Sept 2025; 3.45pm-4.45pm • Booking Link 	<p>Writing progression: a systematic approach</p> <p>Building foundational writing knowledge systematically to ensure pupils progress at the right pace. Examples are provided of planning that meets pupils' needs in small learning steps to build fluency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14th Oct 2025; 3.45pm-4.45pm • Booking Link
<p>Understanding the new Ofsted framework</p> <p>This course offers an update on the latest Ofsted framework, equipping teachers with the key information and insights they need to stay informed and prepared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23rd Oct 2025; 3.45pm-4.45pm • Booking Link 	<p>Effective adjustments in maths</p> <p>Making effective adjustments in maths to meet the learning needs of all children. Examples of materials, approaches and videos of lessons will be shared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11th Nov 2025; 3.45pm-4.45pm • Booking Link
<p>A whole-school approach to oracy</p> <p>Askwith School will share their whole-school oracy approach, highlighting successes and challenges in implementation. Schools who are completing this year's Primary Curriculum Quality Mark will be able to receive their award during the next school year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8th Dec 2025; 3.45pm-4.45pm • Booking Link 	<p>Ensuring an ambitious curriculum</p> <p>Ensuring an ambitious curriculum and provision for vulnerable, SEND, and disadvantaged pupils. Understanding what ambition looks like, and materials to support your reviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28th Jan 2026; 3.45pm-4.45pm • Booking Link
<p>Supporting teaching assistants</p> <p>Updates on key provision, and how to ensure learning support improves children's fluency and recall of essential knowledge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9th Feb 2026; 3.45pm-4.45pm • Booking Link 	<p>Evaluating the impact of your practice in the EYFS</p> <p>What leaders and teachers need to know and implement consistently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd March 2026; 3.45pm-4.45pm • Booking Link
<p>Making a Difference in PSED</p> <p>Making a difference in Personal, Social & Emotional Development: evaluating and enhancing your curriculum for greater impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16th March 2026; 3.45pm-4.45pm • Booking Link 	

‘Working and learning together to improve children’s lives’



Governance

YCAT Members, Trustees and Local Governors

Behind everything we do as a Trust sits the hardworking volunteers who steer YCAT through its strategic journey and ensure we are always striving for the very best outcomes for all the children across our family of schools.

Members and Trustees Academy Trusts are charitable companies and must have members to hold the Trust Board to account. The trustees are the custodians of YCAT'S vision, values and are responsible for planning our strategic direction.

Local Governing Bodies LGBs have a vital role in leading the school, ensuring high-quality education that meets the needs of all children and the community.

Governance Support

Meeting the requirements of Trust Governance is a complex and demanding responsibility. It requires Governors to interpret and engage with a wide range of specialised data and reports, including financial information, the Ofsted inspection framework, and matters relating to SEND, among others.

To support this, all Governors, Trustees, and Members are provided with membership to the National Governance Association. In addition, YCAT offers a comprehensive programme of training and support, designed to strengthen effective governance across our schools and the central Trust Board:

Governance strategy

To evaluate and strengthen the effectiveness of YCAT Governance, the Trustees have identified nine objectives, including improving communication and updating the committee structure. Two surveys were sent out this term to discover what Governors and Headteachers felt about the current Governance arrangements and inform improvement.

Some responses so far:

'I am still trying to understand the best way to support and challenge our headteacher constructively'

'[Guidance from the Trust] is helpful'

'Governors have been extremely well supported with the CPD on offer'

	Autumn term 2025	Spring term 2026	Summer term 2026
Clerks' Briefings	Thurs 4 Sept; 10.30am LINK	Thurs 8 Jan; 10.30am LINK	Thurs 16 Apr; 10.30am LINK
Chairs of Governors' Briefings	Thurs 4 Sept; 6.30pm LINK	Thurs 8 Jan; 6.30pm LINK	Thurs 16 Apr; 6.30pm LINK
Link H&S Governors' Briefings	Mon 15 Sept; 6.30pm LINK	TBC	TBC
Link SEND Governors' Briefings	Weds 24 Sept; 6.30pm LINK	TBC	TBC
Link Safeguarding Governors' Briefings	Thurs 18 Sept; 6.30pm LINK	TBC	TBC
Bitesize Training Opportunities for all Governors	THE POWER OF WHY? ASKING THE RIGHT QS Weds 10 Sept; 6.30 - 7.00pm LINK UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL FINANCE Tues 11 Nov; 6.30 - 7.15pm LINK	EYES ON ATTENDANCE – A GOVERNORS ROLE Weds 4 Feb; 6.30 - 7.00pm LINK THE NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK Thurs 12 Mar; 6.30 - 7.15pm LINK	SEND & INCLUSION – WHAT EVERY GOVERNOR SHOULD KNOW Weds 29 Apr; 6.30 - 7.15pm LINK



'Working and learning together to improve children's lives'

Research update

The National Literacy Trust's *Children and Young People's Reading in 2024* report reveals a sharp and concerning decline in reading enjoyment and frequency among children. YCAT encourages all staff to consider the research and reflect on how reading for pleasure is supported in your classroom. The full report can be read by following this link: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/children-and-young-peoples-reading-in-2024/>

Key points from the report:

- Just 34.6% of 8–18-year-olds say they enjoy reading — the lowest figure recorded since 2005
- Only 1 in 5 read daily in their free time
- Reading enjoyment drops sharply after age 11, highlighting the importance of strong habits in primary
- Children who enjoy reading are 8 times more likely to read daily and show stronger literacy outcomes

What can we do in primary settings?

- Give pupils regular choice and ownership over what they read
- Foster a visible, engaging reading culture in every classroom
- Make time for independent, enjoyable reading each day
- Share and celebrate books that reflect children's interests and lives

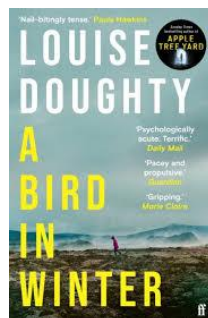
By embedding reading for pleasure into our daily routines, we can help ensure every child leaves primary school with a lifelong love of reading.

Recommended Summer Holiday Reads for staff



Set in 1979 Yorkshire during the Yorkshire Ripper murders, this debut novel follows 12-year-old Miv and her friend Sharon as they create a “list of suspicious things”(and people) to uncover the identity of the killer. Through Miv’s innocent yet increasingly perceptive eyes, we gain a heartfelt coming-of-age

story rich in period detail - from drainpipe jeans to shag-pile carpets - which also explores themes of fear, friendship, domestic violence, racism and community secrets. Praised for its vivid, authentic voice, warmth, and emotional depth, this novel blends mystery with empathy and delivers powerful insights into the resilience of a young girl growing up in unsettling times.



This gripping psychological thriller follows Heather (nicknamed "Bird"), a seasoned intelligence officer who abruptly walks out on her comfortable life in Birmingham and goes on the run. Using disguises and spy craft, she traverses remote landscapes from Scotland to Iceland, haunted by paranoia and pursued by unseen adversaries. As her flight unfolds, secrets from her past, including ties to the Secret Service and her emotionally complex family history, gradually emerge. The novel expertly balances pulse-quickening tension with introspective character development, set against vividly described wintry backdrops. Readers praise Bird as “complex and unusual,” and note that the story feels “like you’re on the run right there with her,” with sensory detail that keeps you hooked.

‘Working and learning together to improve children’s lives’



Research update

Redrafting with Impact: Using AI and Teacher Feedback to Boost Writing

A recent *No More Marking* blog from Daisy Christodoulou showcases how a Year 6 redrafting project led to significant improvements in pupil writing. (Read the full blog [here](#)). The redrafted work showed clearer structure, improved sentence construction, and richer vocabulary.

This is the start of the original piece, from March

It all started in a planet crumbling to pieces, one peaceful day while Eliza was sleeping she woke up to a loud bang not knowing what it was she looked out the window the planet was destroyed. In the darkness Eliza saw a mysterious figure standing on a rock she ran straight to the person it was her best friend, her friend explained how they need to find a fairy who shall fix everything. But there was a problem four aliens where guarding the entrance to the fairy. They where terrified not knowing what to do, they where the only people left all people were relying on them so they set of.

Here's the start of the redrafted piece, from May.

It all began on a planet crumbling to pieces. One peaceful morning, while Eliza was sleeping, she was jolted awake by a thunderous bang. Heart pounding, she stumbled to the window - only to find a planet falling apart.

In the eerie darkness, a mysterious figure appeared, standing atop a jagged rock. Without hesitation, Eliza sprinted towards them - and gasped in relief. It was her best friend, Brigita. Brigita was the same age as Eliza, the same height as Eliza and even had the same birthday. "We need to find the fairy," Brigita said urgently, "She's the only one who can fix this!"

Why is the redrafted piece better?

- It's paragraphed, which helps give it a clearer narrative structure.
- The sentence structure is more accurate and sophisticated. The run-ons have been eliminated, and noun appositive phrases have been added. Compare the second sentence of the original piece with the second and third sentence of the redrafted piece.

One peaceful day while Eliza was sleeping she woke up to a loud bang not knowing what it was she looked out the window the planet was destroyed.


One peaceful morning, while Eliza was sleeping, she was jolted awake by a thunderous bang. Heart pounding, she stumbled to the window - only to find a planet falling apart.

- The vocabulary is improved e.g. jolted, thunderous, stumbled, eerie.

The success came from combining **detailed AI-generated feedback** with **teacher insight and guidance**. Pupils received personalised reports targeting key writing areas (e.g. run-on sentences, vocabulary, punctuation), and these were used in class to guide discussion, editing, and rewriting.

The teacher:

- Reviewed feedback as a class and discussed strategies using talk partners
- Used ChatGPT to generate specific, differentiated targets for each pupil
- Supported pupils in editing their original work before producing improved drafts

 **Key takeaway:** While AI tools offer powerful feedback, it's the teacher who ensures pupils understand and apply it effectively - making feedback meaningful and transformative.

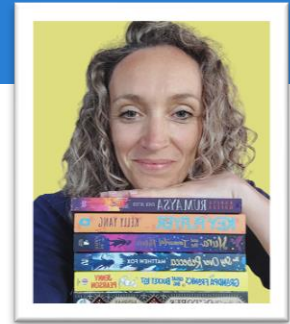


‘Working and learning together to improve children’s lives’

Book corner

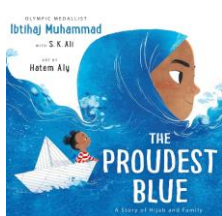
Mrs Brown's Books

Esther Brown, KS2 teacher at Hawes Primary School and book lover @mrsbrownsbookbox

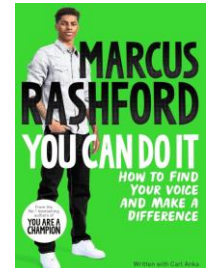
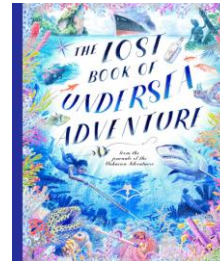
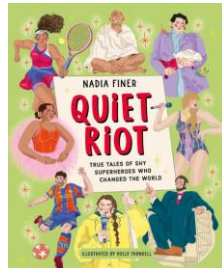
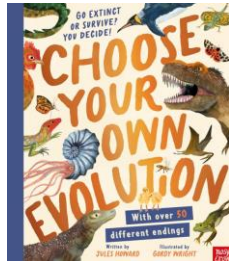
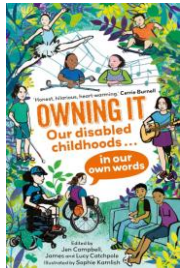


Every year the Reading Agency and libraries across the country share the Summer Reading Challenge that encourages children to read six books over the summer holiday. This year the theme is Story Garden: [Summer Reading Challenge](#). BUT did you know that there is also a Teacher's Reading Challenge? This is an initiative run by The Reading Agency in partnership with the Open University that encourages teachers to read six or more children's books over summer so they can use them in the classroom or have more recommendations to share with pupils. Research from Teresa Cremin (2014) shows that: 'Teachers with a rich and wide knowledge of children's literature and other texts are best placed to help their pupils unlock the many and varied benefits of reading for pleasure' You can find out more and join in here: [Teachers' Reading Challenge](#). Here's some recommendations from me; let me know if you try any:

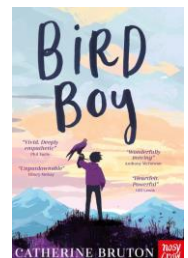
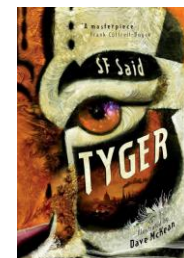
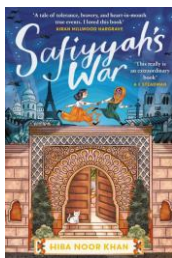
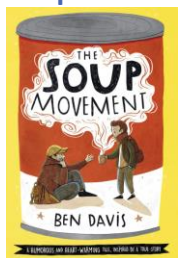
Picture books:



Non-fiction books:



Chapter books:



'Working and learning together to improve children's lives'



SEND and Inclusion in YCAT

This term we are celebrating the brilliant adaptive practice taking place every day across our family of schools



"If you get it right for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable
you get it right for everyone"
Sir Michael Oliver

Askwith Primary School



"I wish for a world that views disability, mental or physical, not as a hindrance but as unique attributes that can be seen as powerful assets if given the right opportunities" Oliver Sacks

Bilton Grange Primary School



"Concentrate on things your disability doesn't prevent you doing well, and don't regret the things it interferes with"
Stephen Hawking

Bradleys Both Primary School



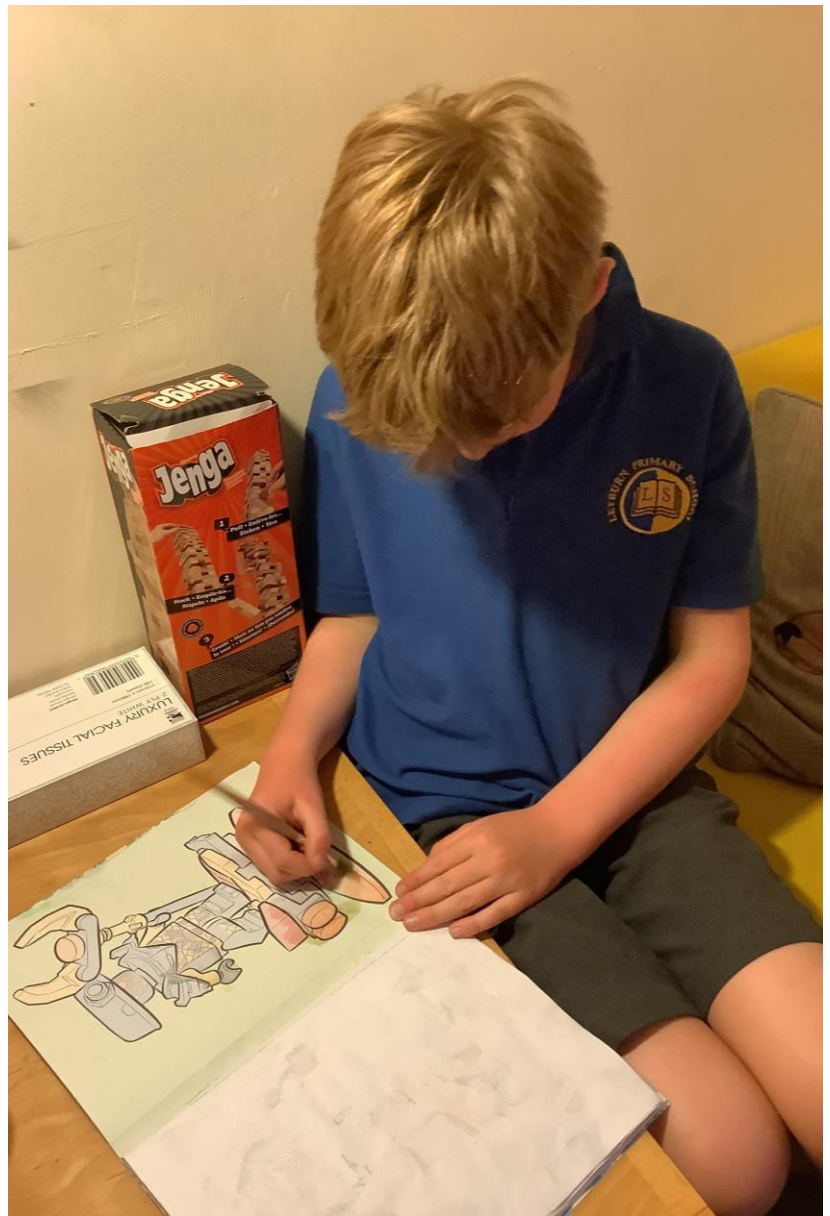
"The biggest barriers I've faced have been from people who make assumptions about what I can't do"
Tanni Grey-Thompson

Hawes Primary School



“I don’t need easy. I just need possible”
Bethany Hamilton

Leyburn Primary School



“Inclusive education is not a privilege. It is a fundamental human right” Ban Ki-moon

Osmotherley Primary School



“We need to make every single thing accessible to every single person with a disability” Stevie Wonder

Threshfield Primary School

The People Behind the Progress

From tiny acorns, mighty oaks grow

Our school ethos is the guiding light to all our school's decision. Whether that be curriculum development or educational visit choices. However, we also know that sometimes all of us need a little help. Our highly trained and dedicated staff are vigilant to our children's needs in a wide range of areas – not only academic. Actions are then swiftly taken to support the children to ensure they have the confidence, knowledge, skills and support to move forward. It is the skill and care of the staff delivering these programmes which really make the difference to our children.



Gemma Metcalfe is our EYFS specialist teacher who delivers high quality intervention for social and emotional and communication and language detection and support in the early years.



Lisa Naisbett is our pastoral lead in school. She offers a wide range of support programmes to meet our children's SEMH needs. Lisa also delivers our rapid-catch-up reading programme across KS2.



Caroline Clarke delivers fine-motor intervention and Precision Teaching to support children's development across KS2.



Sarah Churcher is our specialist music teacher. Not only does she lead music lessons across school and our award-winning choir she also delivers individual speech and language sessions to children identified as needing support.

“Disability doesn’t make you exceptional, but questioning what you think you know about it does” Stella Young

♥ Thank you and goodbye ♥

As we come to the end of another school year, we have to say farewell to some colleagues who are leaving YCAT. We are very thankful for their contribution to our schools and the care and commitment they have shown to our children. They will all be greatly missed and everyone in the YCAT family wishes them the very best for the future.

Lorraine

Lorraine Comerford has been teaching at Threshfield Primary school for five years and leaves them this summer.

Luisa

After five years of teaching at Darley Primary School, Luisa Prentice leaves this summer.

Helen

Helen Moran is leaving Cononley School after two years working there as a Teaching Assistant.

Linda

Teacher Linda Pickard is leaving Osmotherley Primary after 25 years at the school.



Steph

After 12 years of working as the Administrator, Steph Ellison is leaving Lothersdale Primary School

Catherine

Summerbridge School is saying farewell to Catherine Barnes, who has been teaching at the school for seven years.

Alison

Alison Evans is leaving Darley Primary School after teaching there for 13 years.

Deb

Teacher Deb Horsman is leaving Cononley Primary School after nearly two years.

Wishing you all a peaceful and restful summer!