

YCAT Spring Newsletter

News, updates and training from across our family of schools



CONTENTS

Chair of
Trustees' update
Page 2

YCAT
Safeguarding &
CFO update
Page 3

SEND reform
Page 4-5

News
Page 6

Mrs Brown's
Books **Page 7**

World Book Day
in YCAT schools
Page 8

CEO Update

By Jo Robinson

As we reach the end of the Spring term, I'd like to thank all staff, governors and trustees across our schools and central team for your continued hard work and dedication. Your commitment to the success and wellbeing of our pupils is truly valued, and I'm grateful for the care and professionalism you bring to your roles every day. It was a real highlight to see so many of our class-based colleagues come together for the Trust training day in February. The focus on Strong Foundations created a powerful opportunity for collaboration and professional dialogue. Thank you for the enthusiasm, openness and engagement you brought to the day. Since then, I've had the pleasure of seeing the positive impact of this work in action in schools; particularly in improvements to handwriting and presentation. I look forward to seeing this continue to strengthen outcomes in writing across the Trust.

As we look to the Summer term, we know there's more to do to fully embed our Trust inclusion strategy, STRIVE, and ensure we consistently meet the needs of all learners. Key to this is developing highly effective adaptive teaching, so all pupils are supported to "keep up" with their peers through classroom practice that reduces barriers to learning. To support this, we'll be providing further Trust-wide training next term, which we strongly encourage colleagues to engage with, as we continue to build confidence and consistency in this crucial area.

I wish you all a very happy and restful Easter break, and hope you are able to enjoy some well-deserved time with family and friends. With very best wishes, Jo



Chair of Trustees' update

By Jenny Baynes

I would like to thank all staff, governors and school communities across YCAT for your continued hard work and dedication.

Trustees remain committed to ensuring strong and effective governance. As part of our ongoing review, we are working closely with the Executive Team to ensure our structures are robust and fit for purpose. This includes the introduction of a new Standards and Achievement Committee, which meets termly to review school improvement priorities and pupil achievement data, strengthening our oversight in this key area.

We are also mindful of the evolving Ofsted framework and the increased expectations schools are working within. We recognise the continued effort this requires.

Attendance remains a significant strength across the Trust. At the most recent data capture, all schools were at least in line with national averages, with the majority above. Persistent absenteeism is also significantly below national figures, reflecting the strong and consistent focus from leaders and staff - thank you.

Trustees are also working with the Executive Team to refine YCAT's long-term strategy, now we are securely established as a Trust of 11 schools. A strategy day is planned for June, with outcomes to be shared with schools and governors shortly afterwards.

Thank you once again for your commitment to the children and communities we serve. Wishing you all a happy and restful Easter break.



Governor Training

We are building up a catalogue of Governor training recordings, including link Governor briefings, Understanding School Finance, Ofsted updates and Risk Register training. You can find the folder with all the recordings and slides in [here](#) (remember you must be logged into your YCAT emails to access these files).

Dates for the diary:

1. CHAIRS OF GOVERNORS' BRIEFING

Thurs 16 April 2026 – 6:30 to 7:30pm

2. SEND & INCLUSION – WHAT EVERY GOVERNOR SHOULD KNOW

Weds 29 April 2026 – 6:30pm to 7:15pm

3. SAFEGUARDING LINK GOVERNORS' BRIEFING

Weds 6 May 2026 – 6:30 to 7:15pm

4. SEND LINK GOVERNORS' BRIEFING

Weds 13 May 2026 – 6:30 to 7:15pm

Please note all Governors are automatically issued with a TEAMS link to these training sessions.



YCAT Safeguarding

By safeguarding
trustee *Lizzie Oliver*

Through the Spring term, link governors for Safeguarding and SEND have met to share their practice, learn about Trust priorities and access support for carrying out their roles. Taking on a link role can feel daunting, particularly when tackling such complex topics, but it is also a great way to get to know an area of the school in-depth and build relationships with staff. The time and commitment that each of our link governors gives is hugely appreciated. Conversations at the Spring meetings have included finding out what it is like to carry out a link visit, the types of questions to ask and the themes that emerge from them across the Trust. For trustees, the work of link governors also helps provide assurances about the experiences of learners in YCAT's schools.

More widely, the Department for Education is currently consulting on proposed changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education – the core statutory guidance that sets out the legal duties of schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This year's proposed update contains significant changes and it will be important for all governors and trustees (as well as YCAT staff) to take time later this year to understand what's new, once the final version has been released for implementation from September 2026.



CFO updates

Have You Downloaded the MyView App Yet? The MyView app gives you quick, secure access to your pay and personal information anytime, anywhere.

With the app, you can:

- View your payslips instantly
- Access your P60 and other documents
- Update your personal details
- Stay on top of your employment information

Getting started is simple:

1. Download "MyView (for Zellis HCM Cloud)" from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store
2. Open the app and select 'Get started'
3. Choose 'Enter registration code'
4. Enter the registration code:
northyorkshire
5. Select 'Verify'
6. Tap 'MyView' and log in using your details

Important: You'll need your employee number to register.

SEND reform proposals

By Claire Ashton, YCAT SEND Advisor



The landscape of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision in England is entering a period of significant reform, prompted by the Government's Every Child Achieving and Thriving Schools White Paper, published on 23 February 2026. The white paper outlines long-term structural changes to ensure more consistent, high-quality support for children with additional needs. These reforms propose reshaping SEND provision so that most children can be effectively supported in mainstream settings, backed by clearer national expectations and strengthened inclusion practices. Alongside these ambitions, the Government has launched a national consultation on SEND reforms, inviting contributions from educators, families and professionals. This consultation remains open until **11:59pm on 18 May 2026**, and we strongly encourage colleagues across YCAT to share their perspectives and help influence future policy. The consultation can be accessed via the [Department for Education's website](#).

These national developments will ultimately contribute to the creation of a new SEND Code of Practice, with plans for updated guidance that strengthens early identification and introduces national inclusion standards to support more consistent provision across all phases of education.

In parallel, Ofsted has implemented the most substantial changes to its inspection framework in over a decade, with the renewed approach. A key feature of this framework is a sharpened focus on inclusion, which now forms a standalone judgement within inspection outcomes. Inspectors evaluate how effectively schools identify pupils' needs, how inclusion is embedded in everyday classroom practice, and how well support works in real contexts through case sampling and learning walks. This shift aligns closely with YCAT's values and ongoing commitment to equity across all schools.

S	SUPPORT We provide tailored support to meet the needs of every child, ensuring barriers to learning and participation are removed.	
T	TRUST We foster trusting relationships between families, staff and communities, creating safe and respectful environments	
R	RESPECT We celebrate individuality and promote mutual respect, valuing every child's voice, identity and lived experience	
I	INSPIRE We inspire ambition and curiosity, nurturing every child's potential through high-quality teaching and inclusive opportunities	
V	VALUE We value diversity as a strength, embedding equity and fairness in all our policies, practices and curriculum	
E	EMPOWER We empower children to be confident, resilient and active participants in their learning and school communities	

Within our Trust, the new **STRIVE Inclusion Strategy** has been embedded across all settings, driving consistent, evidence-informed practice. Through case sampling, collaborative reviews and strengthened systems for early identification—supported by concern forms—schools are increasingly able to identify and respond to emerging needs at the earliest stage. We are already seeing strong examples of inclusive practice across classrooms, demonstrating the impact of staff expertise and the shared commitment to



ensuring every pupil is supported to succeed.

As we look ahead to the next term, adaptive teaching will be an area of collective focus. The Education Endowment Foundation's 7-Step Model sits at the heart of this work, helping teachers make purposeful, responsive adaptations rooted in assessment and pupil understanding. Each school has already started to implement this into their practice and will be contributing analysis, case examples and reflections, which we will draw together at Trust level to deepen our shared practice.

Across YCAT's eleven schools, **17.9% of pupils are currently on the SEND register**, placing us slightly below the national average of 19.5%. Our highest area of identified need is **Speech, Language and Communication**, reflecting ongoing national concerns regarding early communication development. All schools continue to implement a clear graduated response, ensuring early, proactive identification of need through robust concern-form processes and targeted support pathways.

I'd like to say a sincere thanks for your dedication, professionalism and unwavering commitment to inclusion. The changes ahead present both challenges and opportunities, but together—through collaboration, shared expertise and a strong sense of purpose—we'll continue to ensure that every child across YCAT is able to thrive.

YCAT whole-Trust training day

On 23rd February 2026, over 100 colleagues from YCAT schools came together to Bilton Grange Primary School for our annual whole-trust training day.

- **All staff were brought together for the morning session** to learn from Jo Robinson about Securing Strong Foundations in early reading and early writing.
- **In the afternoon the teachers split into four groups** (EYFS, KS1, LKS2 and UKS2) to discuss and moderate writing.
- **Teaching Assistants worked with Claire Ashton (SEND advisor)** in the afternoon looking at strategies to support vulnerable children.

Feedback on the day:

- "The time to work collaboratively was really beneficial"*
- "The sessions were very useful, not only as Ofsted preparation but also as support for teaching and learning, every day in the classroom"*
- "A good day. Pitched well and timed well"*
- "Liked having time to talk to teachers from other schools and opportunities to collaborate and share ideas"*
- "Supportive atmosphere."*

Suggestions for future training:

- Reading fluency training
- Benefits of outdoor learning with research and a variety of restorative practices
- Emotional Literacy and networking with other TAs.
- SEND specifically in Early Years.
- Specialist subject workshops to deepen knowledge and planning approaches across the Foundation subjects.
- New SEND legislation.
- Inclusion and adaptations

Handwriting beats typing: why it still matters (and not just for Ofsted)



In a world where almost everything is becoming digital, it's easy to wonder why handwriting is suddenly getting so much attention again, especially from Ofsted as part of their 'strong foundations' focus. But here's the key message for us as educators: handwriting isn't important *because* Ofsted say so. It's important because the research is now overwhelming — handwriting makes learning stick.

A major 2024 peer-reviewed study from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (backed by Scientific American and more than 30 other papers) shows that when children handwrite, something remarkable happens in the brain:

- More areas of the brain activate

- The brain works harder and builds stronger neural pathways

- Memory and recall improve

- Understanding deepens

- Early reading, spelling and fine motor development are strengthened

Typing is fast and convenient — but it doesn't engage the brain in the same rich, multisensory way.

Handwriting requires children to see, feel, and physically create each letter, which forms a much stronger memory trace. That's why pupils who handwrite fluently typically recall more, understand better, and retain their learning for longer.

Bottom line:

- More brain action = deeper learning

- Handwriting matters — not for compliance, but for cognition.

“When children hand write, something remarkable happens in the brain”

Fundraising

The staff of Bilton Grange Primary School are undertaking the Yorkshire Three Peaks challenge to raise money for Yorkshire Cancer Research to honour their amazing colleague and friend Julie Miller. After a fierce fight with Bowel Cancer, Julie is now on the road to recovery, and to show their support the Bilton team endeavour to raise £2000. If you would like to contribute, please use this [link](#).



Hawes award

Hawes Primary School has been awarded the Music Mark of Recognition for Dedication & Improvement from The North Yorkshire Music Service. This award is to celebrate the value that staff places on music in Hawes school. Congratulations to everyone involved!





World Book Day

Across our family of schools

