



YCAT AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

Issue 11 ★ December 2023

CEO Update

Jo Robinson



Dear Colleagues,

I would like to take the opportunity to warmly welcome Darley and Summerbridge Federation of schools to YCAT. We're all enjoying working with the schools and look forward to getting to know the staff and children more during the rest of the academic year.

I am pleased to let you know we are further improving our central services for schools, and this has started with the recent appointments of Kerry Young, our new Operations Manager who is quickly settling into the trust, and Tracey Curtis as Governance Lead.

We're also providing all schools with more specialist support for SEND, developing a Curriculum Tool Kit to support schools and completing further policy development work. This will begin in January and we're looking forward to sharing more information on SEND on our training day at the start of term.

Across the trust there has been a continued focus by schools on enhancing their curriculums with a wide range of personal development opportunities for the children including visits, visitors and extracurricular activities. I'm very proud of the rich and broad curriculums provided by our schools and know how staff across the trust continually go 'above and beyond' to provide these experiences for our children. I hope you enjoy looking at examples of these in the photographs from this term's work at the end of the newsletter.

After this very long term I thank all staff, governors, trustees and members for their hard work and commitment. Everyone thoroughly deserves a holiday now and I hope you all have a lovely Christmas break with your families and friends.

With very best wishes, Jo

Contents

- Chair of Trustees' update.....2
- Trust Governance..... 2-3
- YCAT & HART Professional Development.....4-6
- CFO's update.....7
- News.....8
- Research update.....9
- Book Club.....10
- Personal Development and faith learning in our schools this term.....11-19

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



Chair of Trustees' Update

Jenny Baynes

One of our trust's priorities is to ensure the facilities and fabric of all of our schools are maintained to a high standard so children and staff work in a pleasant and conducive environment for learning. To that end, it was important that we responded quickly to the news that RAAC had been found in school buildings across the country. We commissioned full RAAC surveys to be completed by a qualified assessor and I'm very pleased to report no RAAC was found in any of our school buildings.

We would like to extend congratulations to Bilton Grange School who had a very successful OFSTED inspection in October. We recognise the school inspection process is a stressful time for staff and want to say thank you to everyone at Bilton for their commitment and hard work.

We are continuing to extend the trust's support for school improvement and central services for schools. This has included extra support for SEND, establishing a new operations manager post and a lead of governance. It's been a very successful term because of the aligned team approach across the trust that is built on the commitment and hard work of staff, school governors, members and trustees.

A huge thank you to you all and have a wonderful Christmas.

Meet our Governance Lead

Tracey Curtis is supporting governance at all levels, including procedures, compliance and alignment of roles and responsibilities. She is also supporting the work of the clerks for our local governing bodies.



Tracey Curtis

Meet our Operations Manager

Kerry has worked in a number of MATs and was previously manager of the Teaching School Hub. She'll be working with schools to ensure YCAT business functions are operating effectively and efficiently.



Kerry Young

There is emerging evidence that schools' governing body meetings across North Yorkshire are providing a strong and effective focus on safeguarding, health and safety, finance and marketing. However, there is often less focus and time spent on curriculum development and impact. During the next term we will be providing additional advice and guidance to ensure a strong and effective focus on curriculum impact.

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

Trust Governance

This term we provided a Governor update to all YCAT and HART schools which focused on monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, as well as highlighting a National Governance Association safeguarding module that all YCAT Governors, Trustees and members are required to complete to ensure they meet the statutory governor safeguarding training requirements of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' Sept 2023. Thank you to everyone who has completed the training - we hope you've found it useful. Next term we are providing the following opportunities for Governors. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on these sessions which will be held online (please contact robinson@ycatschools.co.uk if you would like to attend):

Governor Training/Network Meeting	Who for?	Date / Time
Clerk of Governors' Group	Session will be led by Tracey Curtis and Jo Robinson and is suitable for all Clerks of Govs	Thursday 11 January 2024 9:30am to 10:30am
Chair of Governors Group	Chairs of Governors	tbc
National Governance Association – How to make the most of your NGA subscription! Find out how to access courses and resources to support you in being effective in your role as a Trustee, Governor or Member.	Session will be led by Charlotte Hodgson from the NGA and is suitable for all Governors, Trustees and Members	Weds 31 January 2024 6.00pm to 6.30pm
YCAT Monitoring the Curriculum Update – an update on effective ways to monitor and evaluate the school's curriculum.	Session will be led by Jo Robinson and is suitable for all Governors	Thursday 22 February 6:30pm to 7:15pm
YCAT Bitesize Academy Finance – an update on management accounts and the budgeting cycle.	Session will be led by Sarah Johnson, CFO and is suitable for all Governors	Tuesday 5 March 2024 6:30pm to 7:15pm

NGA Support

Governors, trustees and members are all able to access the NGA website for online training and tools to help Governing Bodies to be effective. In order to support challenge, the NGA have collated some useful prompts:

Questions to ask on educational performance:

<https://www.nga.org.uk/knowledge-centre/questions-about-educational-performance/>

Questions to ask on curriculum:

<https://www.nga.org.uk/knowledge-centre/questions-about-the-curriculum/>

Questions to ask about staff policies, performance and wellbeing.

<https://www.nga.org.uk/knowledge-centre/questions-about-staffing/>

Questions to ask about behaviour:

<https://www.nga.org.uk/knowledge-centre/questions-about-behaviour/>

Questions to ask about pupil premium:

<https://www.nga.org.uk/knowledge-centre/questions-about-pupil-premium/>

Monitoring Educational Performance:

<https://www.nga.org.uk/knowledge-centre/monitoring-educational-performance/>

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

YCAT Professional Development

TRAINING DAY – 8th JANUARY 2024

There will be an online session at the start of the training day for all schools from 9.15 – 10:30 that will introduce the SEND leadership support the Trust has commissioned and also provide all staff with training on 'Clicker8' which will be provided online by Andrew Cummings from Crick Software. Clicker8 is a SEND resource which all schools have free access to through the NY SEND Locality Hubs.

Dates for the diary

Network/Group	Date (all run from 3.45 to 4.30pm)
Expert Practitioner Group (Curriculum leaders)	Wednesday 23 January 2024
Early Reading and Writing Network (EYFS and KS1)	Monday 26 February 2024
SENCO Network	Wednesday 7 February 2024
Deputy Headteacher and Senior Leader's Group	Thursday 22 February 2024
EYFS Network	Wednesday 31 January 2024
Safeguarding Network	Tuesday 30 January 2024
Personal Development Network (PSHE leaders, senior leaders)	Thursday 25 January 2024
Maths Network (Maths subject leaders, senior leaders)	Wednesday 10 January 2024
KS2 Writing/Spelling Network – attend HART Spelling course	Thursday 18 January 2024

HART CPD

Music Subject Leader Update	Monday 15 January 3:45pm to 4:45pm	https://forms.office.com/e/q0muRuvDeJ
PE Subject Leader Update	Monday 29 January 3:45pm to 4:45pm	https://forms.office.com/e/kqTr4A0k6P
PSHE Subject Leader Update	Monday 5 February 3:45pm to 4:45pm	https://forms.office.com/e/ZN89gDgUe1
RE Subject Leader Update	Tuesday 20 February 3:45pm to 4:45pm	https://forms.office.com/e/cLXXFv23XZ
Science Subject Leader Update	Tuesday 5 March 3:45pm to 4:45pm	https://forms.office.com/e/Ku5hW5SP4W
Music Subject Leader Update	Monday 15 January 3:45pm to 4:45pm	https://forms.office.com/e/XYybg1EBMy

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

Why have we created Reach Out CPD?

By Professor Robert Winston

If you're going to single out the most important job in our society, it has to be teaching.

Whenever I stand in front of a primary school class it's a bit terrifying because they will ask the most difficult questions about science.



It's often harder to teach an 8-year-old than an 18-year-old, but the rewards are massive because of the enthusiasm you gain. If we want a better society, we have to invest in these younger children.

Science isn't just for scientists

Primary science isn't just about nurturing the scientists of the future. It's about ensuring every child develops a natural curiosity about the world around them and starts to think analytically about situations.

Why should I eat this food or that food? Why is this product better than that? Why should I vote for this energy policy? Science is behind so many of today's decisions, let alone tomorrow's.

Helping teachers feel confident

Teachers are key to creating this science-literate society. They can inspire children to think more scientifically. Teacher confidence has been proven to impact children's outcomes in science, but, naturally, most primary school teachers don't have a science background.

That's why we have developed Reach Out CPD – to give every primary school teacher the professional development, support and materials they need to teach science with confidence. And to make it fun!

'Reach Out Science'

Free CPD

Imperial College, London has created 30 free courses with resources to help teachers inspire young learners from 5–11-year-old. The free CPD covers everything from plants to planets. Each one provides teachers with concise topic knowledge and a whole raft of resources to use in class, including captivating short videos, practical activities and experiments, whiteboard visuals and more.

Topics covered include:

- Seasonal Changes
- Environment and Habitats
- Light and Sound
- Forces and Magnets
- Future of Energy
- Working Scientifically
- Food and Feeding
- Body Systems
- Plants
- Planet Earth and Space
- Animals and Humans
- Rocks and Soils

“Teachers are key to creating this science-literate society”

Raising Attainment with Wellbeing

Representatives from 6 schools across the Trust held their first meeting on the 2nd October to consider their schools' priorities for our Raising Attainment with Wellbeing Project. This project aims to 'create an inclusive learning environment that supports and nurtures the highest possible levels of emotional wellbeing, accelerating progress and securing better personal outcomes.'

The project leaders then all met individually with John Rees to create their own action plans, using resources from Teaching Times. Projects range from developing schools' outside space, rethinking playtime to strengthening pupil voice. Although the schools have specific areas which they have identified, shared priorities across the Trust are developing core strength, becoming attachment aware and strengthening awareness of diversity.



This is an exciting project where we can share ideas, collaborate on projects and learn from each other.

Trust SEND support



We're delighted to be able to share with you that ADYS SEND consultancy will be supporting the Trust one day a week for the rest of the academic year. This has been made possible as a result of our recent successful Trust Capacity Funding bid. Claire Ashton will work for YCAT every Wednesday; her main focus will be supporting staff across the Trust to effectively meet the needs of our children with SEND. She'll lead SENCO networks, staff training and visit all schools to offer advice and support.

More information will be shared on the January training day but in the meantime please note the following dates for your diaries:

Wed 31st Jan – online training for parents on 'Supporting your child with literacy and numeracy difficulties at home' – 1 to 2pm or 4 to 5pm

Wed 21st Feb – online training for all YCAT staff on 'Supporting children in class with literacy and numeracy difficulties' - 3.30 and 5pm

Wed 24th April – online training for parents - content tbd - 4 to 5pm

Wed 1st May – online training for all YCAT staff - content tbd - 3.30 to 5pm

TSH training



New for Feb 2024, the National Professional Qualification in Leading Primary Mathematics is delivered over 12 months via online seminars, flexible online learning and two conferences. It's suitable for teachers familiar with mastery approaches and wanting to improve leadership skills.

[To find out more, please click here](#)

NPQs are still all fully funded, with additional funding available for participants from schools with fewer than 600 pupils.

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

CFO's update

Changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme

When the Government reformed public service pension schemes in 2014 and 2015, older members were protected from the changes. In December 2018, the Courts ruled that younger members of the judges' and firefighters' pension schemes had been discriminated against because the protections did not apply to them.

This ruling is called the McCloud judgment after a member of the judges' pension scheme involved in the case. The rules of all public service pension schemes, including the Local Government Pension Scheme, changed from 1 October 2023 because of the ruling. The changes are known as the McCloud remedy, and they remove the age discrimination found in the McCloud judgment.

The new rules from 1 October 2023 constitute a 'material change to basic scheme information'. To find out more, please see the information below. **(NOTE: this applies to support staff only, not teachers)**


McCloud disclosure
leaflet.docx


McCloud public
service form.docx

YCAT finance team



**Sarah Johnson -
CFO**



**Suzanne Watson –
Finance Administrator**

Tax codes

Have you checked your Tax Code recently? You can check your tax code on your payslip in My View - it is shown on every payslip. If your tax code is BR then you are paying tax at the basic rate, which is currently 20%. This means you are paying 20% of your earnings as tax and do not have any allowance to reduce the amount of tax you pay.

If you are a new starter you will need to provide your school HR administrator with a copy of your P45 for them to forward to our payroll provider. If you do not have a P45 then you will need to contact the tax office to understand what your tax code should be.

My View

Don't forget that you can find lots of interesting and useful information about your role, salary, tax and pension on My View:

<https://selfservice.northyorks.gov.uk/dashboard/dashboard-ui/index.html#/landing>

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



Threshfield school to join YCAT

We are looking forward to welcoming Threshfield Primary School to the YCAT family of schools in 2024. Over the last couple of years, we have worked more closely with the school and are pleased they have chosen to join YCAT. The academy conversion process has begun, and we hope this will be completed by the end of the spring term. We will keep you updated on conversion progress in the next newsletter.



ECO Team school campaign

In the new year YCAT is linking with Power Down Pete to focus on a trust wide energy saving project. The CEO and Power Down Pete will meet online with two representatives from each school's pupil Eco teams.

The first project will be aimed at trying to achieve a percentage energy drop for all schools by turning the lights off in areas where children and staff are not working. The aim is for the first meeting to take place during a lunchtime in the week beginning January 15th – more details will be sent to schools when Power Down Pete has confirmed his availability.



Changes to Initial Teacher Training

There are significant changes for initial teacher training from next September.

1. Intensive Training Practice (ITAP) will be introduced to courses from September and it will be taught for 4 weeks in the one-year programme. The approach will focus on essential foundational knowledge and skills that will be delivered by an instructional coaching model similar to the training for doctors.
2. All teachers who mentor a trainee teacher from September will need to have 22 hours of mentoring training. At the moment the logistics of how this can be achieved is unclear. However, we see wider benefits and potential for teachers to receive high quality training in mentoring colleagues that will strengthen support for all staff in school, not just trainees.

YCATering launch

Following significant increases in the cost of providing school meals, this term we have been looking into affordable alternative options for six of our schools. After much research, we have come to the decision that we will manage school meals ourselves, giving us more freedom to shape cost-effective, healthy and tempting menus that our children will enjoy. Look out for the new YCATering service after February half term.

Research update

No More Marking blogs from Daisy Christodoulou

The knowledge vs skills debate

Last month, Daisy asked what we can learn from dissatisfaction with Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence. Skills vs knowledge is a perennial educational debate, and if this flagship skills-based curriculum is not working out, then that's worth exploring. Asking what's the right balance between knowledge & skills is like asking what's the right balance between ingredients and cake. Ingredients make the cake, just as knowledge makes the skill. Knowledge and skills are **not** a pendulum. You can't think of this debate as one where the pendulum tipped too far towards skills, but now you want to avoid it tipping too far towards knowledge. Instead, we need to think of knowledge as a pathway to skill. You teach knowledge, and skills are the end result.

[Read the full blog here](#)

This month, Daisy followed up with a response to questions raised by the previous blog, specifically: 'But are **all** skills composed of knowledge? Even practical skills like drama and football, or even maths?' Her answer is as follows:

- All complex skills are composed of smaller units, and have to be taught by building up those smaller units.
- Sometimes we call those smaller units knowledge. Sometimes we call those smaller units sub-skills.

[Read the full blog here](#)

Misconceptions and multiple choice

Multiple-choice questions (MCQs) often get a bad reputation - with some justification. They often have quite artificial designs that don't have much in common with real-world tasks. So there is always a risk that a student can do well on an MCQ test but this won't tell you much about their understanding of the concept in question. However, whilst this is a risk, we feel it is one that can be mitigated by a) good question design and b) statistical analysis.

[Read the full blog here](#)

“The ingredients make the cake, just as the knowledge makes the skill.”



Writing progression

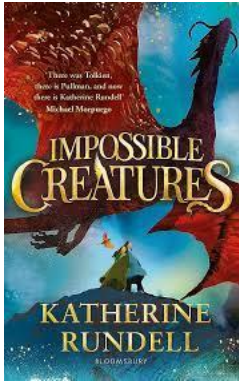
Comparative Judgement works best used 1-3 times a year to assess writing tasks. When monitoring students' progress in between assessment points, many schools use a 'learning ladder' series of statements that students need to achieve. However, these are **very hard to interpret consistently!**

No More Marking has worked with The Writing Revolution to identify ten concepts that will help students become better writers. We've defined these as statements like on a typical learning ladder, but there is a crucial difference: each statement is attached to ten multiple-choice questions. Teachers can measure a student's performance based on how many questions they get right.

Teachers can scan in the papers to our website which will automatically mark and analyse the responses, and provide a colour-coded spreadsheet that is consistent, because the numbers & colours on it are based on responses to specific questions.

[Read the full blog here](#)

Book club



Katherine Rundell is a remarkable author who became famous 10 years ago with the publication of her bestselling book *Rooftoppers*. Her latest book *Impossible Creatures* is suitable for 9 years and above.

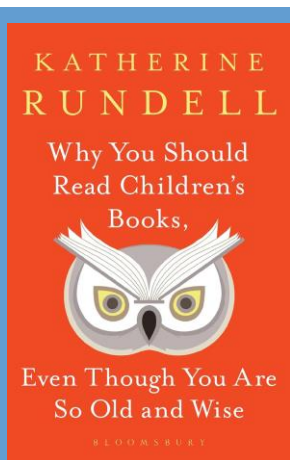
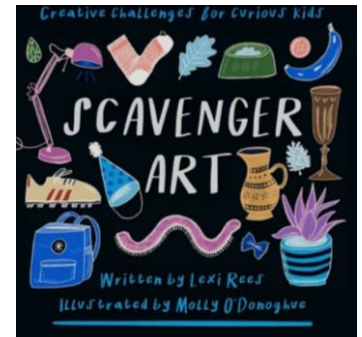
Review from The Spinoff:

“There was Tolkien, there is Pullman and now there is Katherine Rundell. Wondrous invention, marvellous writing,’ writes *the* Michael Morpurgo on the cover of Katherine Rundell’s latest novel for children, a rip-roaring fantasy adventure called *Impossible Creatures*. It’s a stonking endorsement but the novel lives up to the hype: *Impossible Creatures* is charming, cinematic and carries with it the urgent message of the need for an immediate focus on, and deep care of, our wondrous natural environment.”

Scavenger Art by Lexi Rees and Molly O’Donoghue. This is a great creative activity book that helps to support children’s drawing. It’s suitable for 6 to 10 year-olds.

Review from The School Reading List:

“This book is perfect for use both at home - inside on a rainy day, or outside searching - or at school - in a classroom setting it can be scaled up for use inside by a whole class, or on the school grounds. 52 new scavenger hunts, with guides on how and where to look for items to draw, together with hints on perspective, the use of lighting, shape and colour.”



Quick Read for Grown-ups

Katherine Rundell has also published an essay *Why You Should Read Children’s Books, Even Though You Are So Old And Wise*. She reminds us of the richness of children’s stories and the great sustaining truths which we all need and should all return to.

Review from The Financial Times:

“It’s a short book but it packs a real punch. Rundell makes an irresistible case and reminds you of the wonder and excitement of reading, discovering and learning. She is a brilliant, ferocious communicator; I found her use of language and some of her tropes thrilling and fascinating and enormously generative. A real delight.”

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

Askwith Primary



“We celebrate the diversity of the world and the contributions made by all communities, races, cultures and beliefs.”

Bilton Grange Primary



“Mutual respect and co-operation within a nurturing, secure and stimulating environment”

Bradleys Both Primary



“LIFE - Learn, Inspire, Flourish, Engage”

Darley Primary



“Keep me safe, make me happy, help me learn”

Hawes Primary



“Not just a school; taking learning to other places”

Leyburn Primary



"Inspired to be the best that we can be!"

Lothersdale Primary



“Fluent learners broadening their horizons”

Osmotherley Primary



“We endeavour to encourage independent learning through a varied and vast creative curriculum”

Summerbridge Primary



"Keep me safe, make me happy, help me learn"