



YLT Yorkshire Learning Trust

Newsletter

January 2026

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CEO Update



As we begin a new year and our second term as Yorkshire Learning Trust, I want to take a moment to reflect on what we have already achieved

together and to thank every student, parent, carer, member of staff, governor and volunteer across our community. Our first term as YLT was one of change, optimism and significant hard work—matched by a deep sense of purpose and care.

One of the most important things we did was bring all our staff together for our Trust-wide day on belonging and mattering. We did this because we believe—unapologetically—that every child should feel known and valued in their school. This commitment is becoming the heart of our identity as a Trust, and the impact of that shared focus is already visible in our schools.

Across our 17 schools, the autumn term showed countless examples of that belief lived out: moments of kindness, creativity in curriculum, support for families, and leadership that kept community at the centre—even when the term brought real challenges. In this newsletter you'll see a snapshot of that work: different stories, but all connected by the same thread of ambition and care.

As we move into 2026, our vision remains clear: schools where young people belong deeply, matter greatly, and achieve highly. We are continuing to build a Trust rooted in place, confident in purpose, and determined to give every pupil the opportunities, support and inspiration they deserve.

Thank you for everything you have contributed so far. I look forward to all that we will build and strengthen together in the months ahead.

Warmest Wishes
Ian Yapp

Chair of Trust Board Update



We would usually issue a Newsletter at the end of a term; last term, of course, ended with tragic events and loss for which we are, together, so very sad. Our thoughts are with all those involved and with Ellie's family and friends.

The 2026 Chinese Zodiac year is the Year of the Fire Horse, symbolising intense energy, freedom, adventure, and swift action, encouraging bold moves, career growth, new beginnings, and chasing ambitions with passion, though requiring balance with mindfulness to avoid impulsiveness, making it a year for visibility and forward momentum after a period of reflection. Whilst I've AI to thank for the pithy summary, that does chime.

We are now a new Trust — the Yorkshire Learning Trust — and I would like to thank everyone, both for their commitment to and embracing of YLT from SYMAT and STAR respectively, as well as for their willingness to share, listen and learn, and their appetite to develop as we move ahead.

With such global turmoil and uncertainty at the moment, rife with intolerance and fear for many for their futures, I'm incredibly proud of our organisation and comforted by the knowledge that our Trust remains rooted in its values of Aspiration, Inclusion, Integrity and Collaboration. I know that these pervade all of our school lives and am grateful to everyone who continues to ensure that these are, and remain, part of our DNA.

I wish everyone well for 2026; as AA Milne (via Christopher Robin) said,

“You’re braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.”

Best Wishes
Nick Sheppard



Autumn Term 2025

We were absolutely delighted that, at the start of the autumn term, Saxton School was awarded the 'School of the Year' prize in the York Press Community Pride awards. The judges specially mentioned the range of opportunities that our children have, and how we are able to achieve so much as a very small school. We are very proud of this award and are delighted that our success has been recognised.



We are also very pleased that our wraparound care provision continues to grow successfully. Our free breakfast club, provided as part of the government's national pilot scheme, has proved to be particularly popular. A large number of our children attend and are able to have a healthy breakfast, and do calm social activities, before their learning day begins. Last term, we added porridge and beans on toast to the menu, which are proving to be popular. The success of the club was recognised in a case study that can be found on the government website, as well as featuring in local and national media, and Mr Weights was invited to Downing Street to meet the Prime Minister and other business and government leaders to talk about how the provision operates.



Monk Fryston School had a SIAMS (church school) inspection in October. The inspector was extremely positive about the work that the school does, and wrote a glowing report that evidences the success that is achieved. We were particularly proud that they found that: "focusing on 'doing what is good,' permeates every aspect of school life", and "Lives have been inspired and transformed through opportunities provided by the school."

Work in environmental education continues. We are delighted to be acting as community ambassadors to showcase the achievements we have had in reducing carbon emissions and broader environmental aspects. In November, we hosted a visit from Ashden (the charity that organises the 'Let's Go Zero' campaign) and community leaders from our region to showcase what we have done. The Eco Warriors led them on a tour of the school and described their work in addressing environmental issues and climate change. The visitors were really inspired to hear about their achievements, and gave extremely positive feedback afterwards. We look forward to continuing our Green Flag journey throughout the rest of this year.

Since returning in September, we have had an incredibly busy and exciting start to the school year. The children have settled in brilliantly and shown a fantastic attitude towards their learning, quickly embracing new routines and opportunities. Their enthusiasm and readiness to learn have helped create a positive atmosphere across school, setting us up for a successful year ahead.

We have already enjoyed a wide range of enriching experiences. Our **Year 6** pupils had an unforgettable time on their residential trip to Kingswood, building confidence, teamwork, and independence. **Reception** and **Year 1** loved their visit to Lotherton, exploring the grounds and taking part in hands-on activities that supported their learning. **Year 4** also had a valuable cultural experience during their visit to the Synagogue, deepening their understanding of different faiths and communities.

Sport has been another highlight, with several events and tournaments that took place last term. Our football and rugby teams represented the school with great determination, teamwork, and sportsmanship. We are incredibly proud of their efforts and achievements.



It has also been wonderful to welcome parents and families into school to celebrate the children's learning. These sessions gave families the chance to see first-hand the work their children are producing, take part in learning activities, and share in the pride of their achievements. Strengthening these home-school partnerships is so important, and we are grateful to everyone who joined us.

We would like to thank all pupils, staff, and families for their support and hard work during the very full and rewarding start to the year.

Last term was a very busy term here at Riverside

In September, we were visited by the NYCC cycling roadshow, and the KS2 children had the chance to try out lots of different types of bikes; they had a great time!



In October, we celebrated World Mental Health Day by writing compliments for one another in Family Groups. It was a lovely way to celebrate every member of our community.



We have also come together as a school community to help others who are less fortunate than we are. We had an amazing response to our Harvest Festival collection, which we shared between the local foodbank. It was lovely to come together as a community in St. Mary's Church and be thankful.

Our cooking club was a big hit last term. Children made cheese straws, biscuits, cakes, and (the most popular of all) pizza!

Our **Year 4** children went on their residential trip to Malham Cove last term. They visited a farm, went to a softplay and hiked around the cove. They definitely slept well after that!

Alongside nature walks, Children in Need fundraising, Remembrance Day and sporting success (including another Selby District Cup win), we were delighted to open a new climbing frame funded by Friends of Riverside.





We had a **fun-filled** and **jam-packed** term here at Dunnington CE Primary School, filled with lots of learning, opportunities for enrichment, sporting success and a gorgeous Nativity which put us all in the festive spirit. It has been wonderful to see the children in reception settle in so fantastically and to welcome their families into the school community.

We were so excited to formally introduce the OPAL programme, having done lots of preparation over the summer term. We are determined to improve the playtime and lunchtime experience for all children, improving wellbeing whilst also developing really important skills such as cooperation, imagination, initiative and risk-taking. It is safe to say that last term, we have embraced the mud! As well as traditional playtime games and football, our playtime now has so much more to offer: a hugely popular mud kitchen and digging area, scooters and ride ons, social spaces made up of logs and tyres, planting areas, messy play, dressing up clothes, musical instruments and more! The impact has already been transformational. We are so excited to see what this next term brings, the children (and staff) are particularly excited about den building, tree climbing and opening up our wildlife area.



Our **Year 5** and **6** pupils enjoyed a visit from our local MP, Luke Charters, who praised the thoughtful and challenging questions asked about Parliament, the community and the future. He has promised to return in the Spring to see how our OPAL plans are progressing.



We also celebrated lots of sporting successes last term. Alongside strong performances in cross country and football, our **Year 5** and **6** dance club shone at the Everybody Dance Festival at York Theatre Royal, receiving rapturous applause. We were also crowned Nerf Champions in York's inter-school competition, thanks to excellent teamwork and resilience.



We finished the term with a SIAMs inspection, which gave us the opportunity to celebrate all things Dunnington. We are looking forward to receiving the report in the coming weeks. What a wonderful term it was!





The children have had a great start to the school academic year, with parent engagement activities, forest schools, cross country events, band and choir performances, church services and much more!

Early Years Foundation Stage

In Reception class we have read the book Owl Babies and used talk for writing to tell the story to each other. We have been hunting for nests outside and made our own cosy nest for owls in our garden. We also investigated owl pellets to find out what owls eat and created some beautiful owl masks using collage and feathers.

Key Stage One

Last half term the children in Years 1 and 2 have been working hard on their writing as we look at a traditional tale and its alternative The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig. We have been using our printing skills in art to create collaborative paintings that we then added line drawn flowers too.



Key Stage Two - Year Three

In English, we have been learning about instructional writing by making our own ice cream! First, we followed a set of instructions to make ice cream by hand. Then, we explored what makes a good set of instructions. Finally, the children wrote their own instructions to help others make ice cream just like we did.

Key Stage Two - Year Four

Last term we invited our families into school to show off the wonderful artwork that we have produced. We have been learning and exploring repeating patterns. The afternoon was a success that was very well attended. The family members loved seeing our exhibition and even had a go at the techniques themselves! A great time was had by all.



Key Stage Two - Year Five

We have considered the positive and negative aspects of mountain life and had a special visit from a class member's parent who has just trekked Mount Kilimanjaro. She shared some wonderful photographs of her trek, explaining the different terrains which she encountered during her walk.

Key Stage Two - Year Six

The children in Year 6 had their residential visit to Robinwood in September, where the class showed great resilience in trying new activities, sleeping away from home and working together. We have been looking at how art can be used to share messages of protest and tried new skills in printing to add a screen-printed element to our own protest posters.



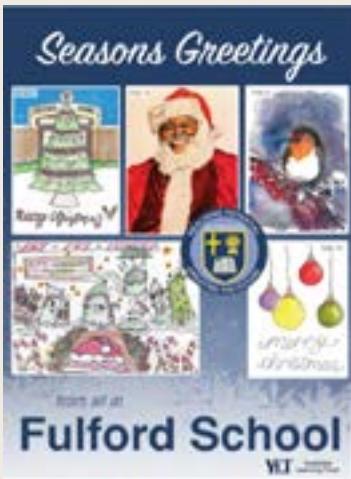
We had a fantastic start to the academic year and it's hard not to feel proud of everything our students and staff have achieved.

Last term was packed with opportunities, challenges, and successes, and it has been superb to see the energy and commitment that everyone has shown.

From academic progress to pastoral development, every year group has embraced their pledges and demonstrated what it means to be part of the Fulford community.

One of the standout moments was the **Year 7** Graduation Event, which brought together over 500 parents and students to celebrate the fantastic start our newest cohort has made to secondary school. It was a wonderful occasion that reflected the hard work and enthusiasm of both students and staff.

Beyond the classroom, students have shown an incredible sense of responsibility and compassion through fundraising and community initiatives. On World Mental Health Day, they raised over £1,000 for Young Minds, and our Christmas Jumper Day saw record-breaking food donations for York Food Bank. Alongside this, students raised £450 for SASH, supporting young people facing homelessness, and £250 for the British Red Cross Gaza Crisis Appeal. These efforts not only provided vital support to those in need but also helped students understand the importance of giving back to the community and beyond.



Creativity was also on display through our Christmas Card Competition, which saw fantastic entries from all year groups.

The winning design became our official school card, shared widely across the community and used to support vulnerable people in the area. Congratulations to the following students whose Christmas designs were chosen: Lily Ross Y7, Yeseniiia Honcharova Y8, Adam Kahil Y9, Grace Baggaley Y10 and Bert Obi Y12.

Music and performance took centre stage at the Winter Concert, where over 100 students created a truly memorable evening. It was inspiring to see students performing, hosting, and working behind the scenes to make the event a success.



Another highlight was our first Alternative Curriculum Day, which offered students experiences beyond the ordinary classroom. From trips and workshops to sessions led by external providers, the day gave students the chance to explore new ideas and develop skills in exciting and innovative ways.

Alongside this, extra-curricular opportunities have flourished, with students taking part in sporting events, STEM competitions, lunchtime and after-school clubs, curriculum visits, and even overseas residential.

As we start the new term, we wish our **Year 11** and **Year 13** students the very best as they approach their final mocks and prepare for exams. We know they will rise to the challenge and achieve amazing things.

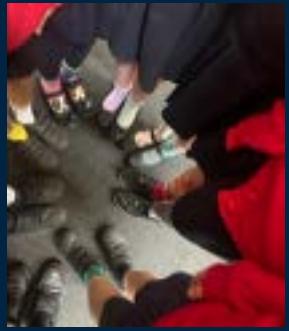
Our first term was a fantastic example of what makes Fulford special—a community where ambition, creativity, and kindness thrive. We can't wait to see what the rest of the year brings.



As we begin a new term, we would like to share some of the wonderful learning and experiences that took place across our school last term. It was a productive and enjoyable term at Appleton, during which we welcomed back Mrs Cato and extended a warm welcome to Mrs McCartney, who has joined our teaching team.

The Autumn term was filled with memorable events and enriching activities. We supported and celebrated both Odd Socks Day and Children in Need, promoting their important messages and contributing to these valuable causes. Our Enterprise Challenge was a particular highlight, with every class participating enthusiastically. From Halloween discos and swimming lessons, to the 'Reindeer Rush' and Young Voices rehearsals, there was a real buzz throughout the school.

Our new **Reception** children made an excellent start to their Appleton Roebuck journeys. They settled into school life remarkably well and made strong early progress. We especially enjoyed seeing their enthusiasm during Drawing Club, where the children have explored a different book each week and created some incredible inventions to solve some of the characters' problems! All of this has led to some amazing mark making, drawing and writing as the Reception children have shared their ideas in their own way, in what is always a much anticipated lesson each day. They have also fully immersed themselves in their 'Light Up the World' learning journey where they have explored different celebrations starting with the story of the 'Gunpowder Plot', then looking at the 'Festival of Light' in Diwali and culminating in the countdown (throughout Advent) to Christmas!



Pupils in **Years 1 and 2** spent the term learning all about the Great Fire of London. They explored how the fire began and why it spread so rapidly throughout the city. A highlight of their learning was a visit from firefighters from Tadcaster Fire Station, who spoke to the children about fire safety and demonstrated some of the equipment used in modern firefighting. To bring their learning to life, the children baked

bread, just like Thomas Farriner once did on Pudding Lane, and thoroughly enjoyed dressing up as people from 1666. In Science, they investigated the fascinating world of animals, learning about mammals, reptiles, birds, amphibians, and fish, and discussed the characteristics that make each group unique. It was a term full of excitement, discovery, and hands-on learning.

Year 3 and 4 children had a wonderful term exploring their Roman learning journey. A visit to Murton Park brought their studies to life as they trained to be legionnaires, met Boudicca and learned about the Iceni tribe and the Battle of Watling Street.

The children were captivated by Roman history and daily life, and to top off the journey, they hosted mums and dads for a pizza banquet. Buon appetito!



Our **Year 5** and **6** pupils fully immersed themselves in their Anglo-Saxon and Viking learning journey. They explored many aspects of life in Anglo-Saxon and Viking Britain, from Viking gods and beliefs to the structure of the Heptarchy and the reigns of various Saxon kings. They also took part in an action-packed Viking invasion experience, during which they crafted their own shields and stood together to form a shield wall. During the second half of the term, the children focussed on Design and Technology, developing their woodwork skills to create cam toys. The term concluded with an exciting visit to Jorvik, where they explored the Viking city and took part in a battle tactics workshop.

We ended the term with a whole-school trip to York College for the pantomime, alongside our own Christmas nativities. It really was a busy term!



We are delighted to share the wonderful learning, creativity and achievements that have been taking place across our classrooms.

Our Seahorses

(Nursery) have settled beautifully into school life and are growing in confidence each week. They enjoy weekly Storytime and Rhyme Time visits to the library, as well as exploring a new “Book of the Week”.



A favourite has been We're Going on a Bear Hunt, which inspired an exciting bear hunt adventure around Forest School and the wider school grounds.

Our **Reception** children have had a fantastic start to school and are really settling into their new routines. They've loved getting to know 59 new friends, and our classrooms are already buzzing with chatter, play, and big smiles.

The highlight so far has been our very first trip to Stockeld Park, where the children explored, laughed, and made wonderful memories together. It's been such a lovely beginning, and we're excited for all the fun still to come!

Year 1 had a brilliant start, launching Curious Quests to elevate their writing. They showcased artwork inspired by special places in a stunning Art Gallery event and showed growing confidence in maths through hands-on, practical learning.



Year 2 focused on teamwork and confident communication through our A-Z values. They have loved preparing for their Christmas production and exploring their ‘Roots and Wings’ learning journey.

The children planned a local park visit using map skills, created puppets of themselves, strengthened their 2, 5 and 10 multiples, and enjoyed an exciting TT Rockstars launch. We are so proud of how well they have settled.

Year 3 enjoyed an action-packed term of History and STEM. From crafting clay Bronze Age houses to designing Iron Age tools, weapons and weaving, they have fully immersed themselves in the past.

In Science, they built working bionic hands to explore how muscles and tendons move—an activity that sparked huge excitement. Their progress in swimming has also been impressive, with confidence growing each week.





Year 4 began with an Ancient Greece re-ignite day and their very own Olympic Games—where the Athenians were victorious! They have developed new skills including stitching, podcast creation and learning the recorder.

To end the term, they have embraced the festive spirit by decorating their classrooms using natural materials from Forest School.

Year 5 have loved exploring the Romans. During our landing pad, John visited with real artefacts, taught us about the Roman Army, shared games and let the children dress as soldiers.

Near Christmas, the class enjoyed a fantastic party at Elland Road, watching a pantomime, enjoying lunch, dancing and playing under a snow machine.

Year 6 have had an exciting half term, starting with a week at Bewerley Park where everyone pushed beyond their comfort zones, tried new adventures and absolutely loved the experience.



Back in school, we have continued our Maths mastery journey, tackling more complex written problems involving area, perimeter and shape.

Our topic on globalisation and fair trade has sparked real curiosity, especially as it links to our English focus on fast fashion and persuasive writing.

These lessons have led to passionate, thoughtful debates as pupils explore how companies can make positive change.

We had our successful Bring and Buy sale, raising funds for our Young Voices trip in February.

We are proud to offer high-quality Nursery provision for three- and four-year-olds in the Sherburn-in-Elmet community. Our offer includes morning and afternoon teaching sessions, as well as before- and after-school wrap-around care. Families can choose any combination of sessions, ensuring a flexible, nurturing and enriching start for our youngest learners.

To find out more about our full Nursery offer, please visit 'Our Offer' on our school website.

Since returning in September, school has been buzzing with activity, energy, and plenty of fantastic learning opportunities. The children have settled back into routines beautifully and have shown great enthusiasm, resilience, and curiosity. Their positive start has created a wonderful atmosphere across the school and set us up for a brilliant year ahead.

Last term has been rich with memorable moments.

Year 6 had an incredible time on their residential visit to Kingswood, challenging themselves, building independence, and working as a team.

We were also excited for our trip to the pantomime, which provided lots of fun and laughter. We gathered for our Christingle service, a special tradition that brought our school community together during the festive season.



In November, we marked Anti-Bullying Week with a strong focus on kindness and the importance of supporting one another. Children took part in activities that encouraged empathy, friendship, and positive choices.

They even set themselves the challenge of learning a new skill, highlighting how trying something new can build confidence and deepen respect for others. It was a powerful and uplifting week that helped reinforce our shared values.



We have also been delighted to welcome families into school. Our Art celebration events showcased the impressive progress pupils have made with their creative skills, while Early Years stay-and-play sessions gave parents the chance to join in with the children's learning and enjoy the magic of the classroom.



Following a vibrant and rewarding first term, we want to thank all pupils, staff, and families for their ongoing support and involvement. We look forward to welcoming you back this term for even more exciting learning adventures.

We had a fantastic autumn term here at Brayton. We were delighted to welcome the first children to our new targeted mainstream provision (TMP) 'The Beacon' a few weeks ago, and we are looking forward to welcoming more children in the near future. A TMP provides specialist support within a mainstream setting, so all children can flourish, thrive and succeed. We are extremely lucky to have such a wonderful learning space in school for the new provision, to support the high level of need in the local area.



Last term began with our **Year 6** children visiting Marrick Priory for a few days of fun and adventure. It was fantastic to see them embrace new challenges with resilience and enthusiasm. Another

exciting trip that took place last term was a visit to Bradford to see the musical Matilda. The children thoroughly enjoyed the performance, and were lucky enough to meet with a member of the backstage team who shared lots of behind-the-scenes secrets.



One of our focuses last term was our continued work towards our Global Neighbours Bronze award. To support children's understanding of the importance of taking action against injustice, and being a courageous advocate for change, each class has chosen a charity that they are going to support. Our EYFS charity was Children in Need, and the children took part in a sponsored 3-legged race to raise money for this important cause. They were very excited to welcome in a Look North film crew to get involved in the action! Thanks to the amazing generosity of our school community, they raised an incredible £1770.00.



Our **Year 5** children took part in UK Parliament week in November, and welcomed our local MP, Keir Mather, into school so they could find out more about his role, and ask questions about the things that matter to them. They asked some challenging questions about national and global problems, such as global warming and climate change, and it was great to see them so interested in the work Keir Mather does, and how our parliamentary system works.

Our **Year 1** children have also been thinking about the changes they would like to see in the world, and how they can take action to improve our local area. Following a walk around the village, looking at the different geographical features, they were disappointed to see how poorly maintained the local park is. They decided they would like to share their concerns with the parish council, writing letters explaining what they had seen and suggesting changes that could be made.



Bishopthorpe

Infant School

and

Archbishop of York

CE Junior School

It has been an exciting start to the academic year, becoming a member of the newly-formed Yorkshire Learning Trust. We are thrilled to be able to work more closely with many different colleagues in other schools in the Trust and continue to build positive working relationships, based around the Trust's focus of 'Belonging and Mattering'. We are excited for the opportunities that lie ahead.

We have also started a new initiative that will bring our two schools even closer together. Last term, we introduced a new Team System where every child and member of staff now belongs to one of our four Teams: North, East, South, and West. These Teams link to our new kite theme and reflect the different directions a kite can travel. Just as a kite can move in many directions depending on the wind, we recognise that each child's journey may look different – but we are all lifted by the same shared values and community. These new shared KITE Values, which will be central to everything we do across both schools, are: **Kind, Inclusive, Thrive, and Explore**



Bishopthorpe Infant School

In keeping with the 'Belonging and Mattering' theme, we welcomed our newest additions to our school in September. Our **EYFS** cohort have settled brilliantly into school and had a great first term. To help them feel happy and comfortable, we introduced a buddy system with the **Year 2** children, which has been a huge success. The **Reception** children have also enjoyed their first school visit to our local library in Bishopthorpe and had visitors into class to teach them about important life skills and jobs.



Providing enriching experiences is an important part of what we do to support our children's love of learning. In October, all the Infant children were treated to a special visitor, Dawn Treacher, a local children's author and illustrator, came into school to share her new book 'Mabel and the Flower Spell'. With her cauldron and spell ingredients helping to bring the story to life, the children were inspired to create their own witch/wizard-themed stories and have continued to write independently during their own time.



Bishopthorpe

Infant School

and

Archbishop of York

CE Junior School

Archbishop of York's CE Junior School

The History curriculum came alive at the Junior School last term. In **Years 3 and 4**, after learning about prehistoric cave art, the children stepped back in time and foraged around the school grounds to find natural mark-making materials. They cheated a little with some modern-day paint for their collaborative handprint art.

The **Year 5 and 6** children enjoyed a visit to the Jorvik Viking Centre and the Dig in November, becoming Vikings themselves and learning about archaeology. Hands-on learning at its best!

We always encourage children to think about and support others within the local community and wider world. Last term, as in previous years, both schools were particularly proud to support the Children in Distress charity and their 'Love in A Box' Christmas shoebox appeal, as well as our local York Food Bank and Children in Need. At the Juniors, two of our Year 5 children also organised a cake sale to support the charity Young Epilepsy. The people of Bishopthorpe continue to show kindness and generosity towards others, and we are pleased to play our part in this positive community action.





September saw the arrival of our largest cohort of Year 7s, making the transition from primary to secondary school. **Year 7** have settled in brilliantly, taking advantage of the many opportunities offered throughout school, whether that be taking part in library competitions - creating artefacts and archeological finds, visiting The Deep with the Creative department or taking part in the numerous extra-curricular sporting activities, Year 7 have made a successful start to their Sherburn High School journeys. They have a number of events to look forward to such as the overnight residential and the Humanities trip to York. It was wonderful to see Year 7 students attend the rewards afternoon tea with parents and carers, celebrating their first 50 days at SHS. Year 7 students have achieved 1000s of positive points and continue to excel every day with ambition, respect and community.

Sports continue to play a central role in life at Sherburn High School with our **Year 7** and **Year 9** footballers achieving success in the English Schools' FA Cup and progressing through the rounds victorious. Extra-curricular sports are a vital part of the Sherburn High School community, where students are expected to be ambitious in their quest for success. Girls' rugby is a new addition to the roster, and every day, students from all year groups can take part in team or individual activities.

The school's winter show was a resounding success with a large number of students showcasing their incredible talents for a packed auditorium.

Proud parents and teachers watched as students sang, danced and played musical instruments, bringing festive cheer before the Christmas holidays. It was thanks to the commitment of the Performing Arts Department that this was able to take place, and we look forward to the summer showcase.

Careers and personal development continue to be a key element of our students' academic and pastoral journey. Students have access to external speakers and career guidance.

A group of **Year 9** students has been working with an external agency to develop their study skills and to focus on their ambitions and aspirations. As part of this, the group will be visiting Drax Power Station.



Furthermore, **Year 11** and **Post-16** students have attended careers fairs, and Year 11 took part in a careers day, which saw them creating CVs and being interviewed by business leaders.

Finally, literacy continues to grow from strength to strength with a significant number of students using the school library and **Key Stage**

3 students and **Year 9** students have timetabled slots to be able to use the library regularly. We are looking forward to celebrating the 2026 Year of Reading and have exciting competitions and events planned, including the annual Year 7 Readathon and supporting the charity Read for Good for World Book Day. We were privileged to receive recognition from Read for Good for the monies raised in 2025 and hope to raise even more in 2026.



Church Flower Arranging for Christmas

Last term, our **Year 5** children had a wonderful time decorating St Mary's Church alongside some of our governors and other kind volunteers. They foraged for foliage and created beautiful decorations, helping to prepare the church and lead us into the season of Advent. We later returned to St Mary's for the Christingle service, where Rev Paulie led the school in a joyful Christmas act of worship before we broke up for the holidays.



Birds of Prey Day

This year, our class names are inspired by British birds. As part of our transition process, pupils learn more about their class bird and share this knowledge with others across the school. The Friends of Kirk Fenton kindly treated the children to a Birds of Prey day, giving them the opportunity to meet and learn about a range of birds. Each class received a non-fiction bird book to continue their learning and enthusiasm.



OPAL Continues...



Last term, we continued our journey with Outdoor Play and Learning, embracing all weathers as we learned how to navigate the rain and mud! Our parents have been incredibly supportive and clearly recognise the value of play; as a result, we have been very grateful for donations of outgrown wellies and waterproofs. The children have enjoyed a wide range of imaginative play experiences, including playing in a boat, running a hair salon, putting on shows, and using natural resources such as conkers and pine cones in their play. Our next step will be to gradually increase challenge and risk, with more opportunities for climbing and building.



The final weeks of the term were incredibly difficult following the tragic death of Year 12 student Ellie. We would like to thank colleagues across TGS, YLT and the wider community for their support. We are also grateful to students for the compassion, dignity and respect shown during this time. Year 12 students have demonstrated incredible strength, while other year groups have shown kindness and support. This truly reflects the special community that TGS is.

Celebrating our students' successes

We are delighted to have celebrated so many successes with our students last term.

Our DEBATING SOCIETY saw great success in the regional heat 1 of the prestigious English Speaking Union School Mace Competition, which took place at Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School in Leeds.

Debating against Penistone Grammar School, our Debating Club were opposing the motion that 'This House would ban dating and relationship-based reality TV'. The entire Club of 15 students from all years (7-13) were involved in crafting our points, with Robert W, Luke S and Henry T taking on the role of Debater at the competition. As one of three schools that got through to the next heat, we are looking forward to the next competition this month.

Our Football teams enjoyed success last term too, with both the Girls and Boys teams across all age groups showing resilience, team spirit and commitment.



Each week students are nominated for our '**Friday First Recognition Award**' by their teachers, form tutors, year and pastoral leaders for a variety of reasons - whether it is completing course work

to a particularly high standard, enthusiastically participating in class, helping peers, always trying their best and leading by example, or being true to the TGS core values of ambition, responsibility, respect and resilience. We look forward to more celebrations throughout the year.

Our fabulous Art department recently welcomed **Totally Locally Tadcaster** to TGS - an initiative designed in supporting local businesses and fostering a collaborative community spirit. As part of this, Kate and Mark engaged TGS Year 12 Fine Art students in a creative discussion about what makes Tadcaster unique: the things they love, the town's character, and the possibilities for its future. It was a wonderful opportunity for students to reflect on their connection to their local town and to express these ideas artistically. Alongside this, we also had a fantastic opportunity to work with The Barn community centre in Tadcaster, exploring ways to create collaborative art that responds to ecological themes and the climate crisis through a project titled My Ecology Gallery. Our Year 13 students began their creative collaborative journey through a meeting with David Gluck; one of our governors and the CEO of **The Barn** / Tadcaster and Rural Community Interest Company, to discuss ideas for a community art piece that would involve younger students from the local area. The aim is to create something exciting, bespoke, and deeply rooted in the theme of the local environment.

This collaboration not only allows our students to develop their creative, leadership and teamwork skills, but also helps them to build valuable employability and personal skills for the future, as well as create something exciting for our community to visit and enjoy. Thank you to everyone involved.



Fundraising and supporting our community

We are delighted to share that after our massive fundraising in the summer term, we were successful in raising just short of **£68,500**, which has meant that work on the refurbishment of our athletics track could begin in September.

After a couple of delays due to weather, the hardcore base and specialist redgra top surface have been installed. Jump pits and the 'Wembley' football pitch have also had a makeover, ready for football tournaments in the near future. Lights and a 'rabbit fence' to discourage our neighbourly creatures from digging at the track are to be installed shortly.



We are planning an official opening celebration event in April ahead of the 2026 Athletics season and look forward to sharing more details as they are available.

As a school, we really value being an active part of our community, and we take part in fundraising opportunities to support various charities. Last term, our Sixth Form organised a really successful 'Wear it Pink' day, raising over **£600**.

We were proud to support the **Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal**. **Christmas Jumper Day** on 10th December gave students and staff the opportunity to wear festive jumpers or accessories in aid of Martin House, and we once again had our **Christmas Hamper Appeal** in aid of the Wetherby and District Foodbank.

Thank you to everyone who has donated in some way to any of these charities. We appreciate your support and know that it makes a difference.

Date for your Diary

We are excited to invite you to the Performing Arts whole school production of Shrek Junior on **Tuesday 3rd, Wednesday 4th and Thursday 5th February** (starting at 7.00pm). Tickets are available on Ticket Source priced: £7.00 adults, £3.50 concessions (children to age 18/school year 13 and over 70's), or £22.00 a group ticket for 4.

www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on?q=tadcaster%20grammar%20school

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff and the TGS family who made last term the success was - everything you do is appreciated.



What a vibrant and enriching term it was across the school! From our youngest learners in Reception settling beautifully into school life and exploring celebrations and seasonal change, to our oldest pupils in Year 6 running their very own Chinese restaurant, every year group has thrown themselves into exciting hands-on learning. Children have created art, built models, investigated history, explored science, welcomed families into school, and brought their topics to life through trips, performances and imaginative projects. Last term was been filled with curiosity, creativity and fantastic achievements—well done to all our pupils for their enthusiasm and hard work!

Early Years Foundation Stage

Reception have had a fantastic first term in school, the children quickly developed friendships and routines. We have enjoyed many activities linked to our topics about ourselves and celebrations. We have created transient art faces, learnt about Diwali, made clay diya lamps, and more recently, helped Stickman escape from the ice. It was also lovely to invite parents into school one afternoon to share some Autumn crafts with their children to enrich their learning about Autumn.



Year 2

In Year 2, our learning has focused around two key texts; Traction Man and Major Glad and Major Dizzy. The children enjoyed a ‘build day’ which involved designing and building a playground for traction man out of recycled materials. The teamwork and communication skills were excellent and showed their creative thinking skills - some designs even had a zip wire and a slide! Alongside our work on Major Glad and Major Dizzy, we have been learning about the Victorians. We made comparisons between the lives of rich and poor children and wrote diaries in the role of working children. In preparation for Christmas, we also invite parents to come to a presentation and retelling of ‘A Christmas Carol’ by Charles Dickens. Year 2’s highlights so far have been Guy Fawkes, playing the glockenspiel and painting firework pictures in art.

Year 1

Year 1 have had a fabulous start to the second half of the Autumn term. The children have been busy observing the changes in season; taking part in Autumn hunts, leaf crafts and pumpkin/squash investigations. All the while linking Science to our Writing and DT topics. Year 1 have worked hard learning about the genre of information texts, sharing information about Autumn and researching new facts about celebrations, animals and the vegetables we could harvest (or pumpkins to pick!). The children are busy inspecting the mystery arrival of our Hedgehog (bread) family, which arrived recently in a warm and cosy nest ready for hibernation.



Year 3

Last term, Year 3 have been exploring the history of locomotives! We have researched the differences and similarities between the very first trains and the trains we use today. By doing so, we learnt a lot about Stephenson’s Rocket and how, for its time, it was a remarkable invention. Our trip to the York Railway Museum brought our learning to life. We spent time in the Wonderlab, where we were able to understand forces and structures better, and we also got to see the wonderful trains the museum has to offer—deepening our understanding of how trains have changed throughout time. The children were curious and enthusiastic throughout a fantastic term of discovery!



Year Four

Year 4 have enjoyed their recent Roman Day, during which they learnt about Roman construction, food, art, and even experienced marching as legionaries – we all agreed that given the sound just our class's feet made, it would have been quite terrifying to hear an entire legion of Romans approaching!

They also recorded a podcast all about the Romans in Britain using their knowledge from the work they've done over the term. At the end of the day, parents and carers were invited to come in to visit a 'Roman Museum' that the children had created using their knowledge of the topic.

Year Five

Last term, Year 5 were fully immersed themselves in the fascinating world of the Normans, bringing the events of 1066 and beyond to life through hands-on creative projects. Our classroom transformed into a workshop as we meticulously crafted our own Norman shields, started weaving our version of the famous Bayeux Tapestry, compiled our own mini-Domesday Books, and engineered impressive Motte and Bailey castles. Beyond the building and creating, we have also had lots of fun channelling our inner historians,

researching a wealth of interesting and often unusual facts about William the Conqueror to inform the compelling biographies we are writing.

Year Six

Last term, children's learning was centred on the fascinating world of the ancient Chinese Shang Dynasty. The children threw themselves into every aspect of the topic—most notably by planning, preparing and running their own Chinese restaurant for parents, "The Hungry Dragon." From designing the menu and cooking dishes to welcoming guests and serving food with big smiles, the children showcased teamwork, creativity and confidence. The restaurant received rave reviews! In Science, the class have been investigating angles of reflection, using laser pens to explore how light behaves. In computing, the children have been developing skills in computer-aided design, creating detailed models of ancient cities inspired by their history learning. In English, they've been crafting exciting flashback stories. Using a mysterious Shang Dynasty object as a portal to the past, they have written imaginative, atmospheric and engaging stories!



More Trust News

Last term was a busy and exciting term across Riverside Primary School and Brayton CofE Primary School, working closely with the Local Authority to develop a Targeted Mainstream Provision (TMP) at both school settings. The TMPs are known in school as **The Beacon**. A TMP provides specialist support within a mainstream setting, so all children can flourish, thrive and succeed in all they do, as well as be appropriately prepared for their next stage in life.

Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do within The Beacon. We have developed an inclusive learning environment specifically designed to support children with a range of Communication and Interaction (C&I) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs within a mainstream primary setting. Each Beacon will provide a bespoke and personalised education for up to 8 children, with an individualised timetable focusing on EHCP outcomes, personal and social development, independence, addressing barriers to learning and incorporating time within both The Beacon and within the mainstream classroom, as appropriate for each individual child. Over last term, we have welcomed our first few children into The Beacon at each school site, and they are settling into their new routines and environments well. We look forward to more children joining us from other local schools as The Beacons continue to develop and grow.

We are extremely lucky to have wonderful learning spaces in both schools and have appointed great teams to each Beacon. We would like to thank the wider YLT team for making this happen over the Summer holidays and Autumn term. We look forward to sharing more updates about The Beacon and supporting the children within both settings.





Yorkshire
Learning
Trust

Make a difference, become a governor

**Do you have a passion for education,
a little time, and a desire to see our local
schools thrive?**

**Please consider becoming a governor.
No prior education experience necessary.**

We have a small number of vacancies for governors at some of our schools within Yorkshire Learning Trust. Please see: <https://www.ylt.org.uk/governor-information-and-vacancies> for our current vacancies.

Governors are the strategic voice of the school community. They are volunteers who regularly meet to ensure the school leadership provides the best possible education for its students.

Why should you become a governor?

- Shape the future: Governors play a vital role in setting the school's vision and strategic direction. Your experience and insights can directly impact the lives of students and staff.
- Develop your skills: Being a governor is a fantastic opportunity to develop leadership, strategic thinking, and governance skills.
- Give back to your community: This is a rewarding way to use your expertise to make a positive impact on our schools and the wider community.

Time commitment is manageable. Governor meetings are typically held six times a year (once each half term), with reading or monitoring activity taking place outside of meeting. Full training is provided.

Interested or know someone who might be? Please contact Rachel Greenhalgh, Head of Governance at r.greenhalgh@ylt.org.uk for further information and application form, or see our website at: <https://www.ylt.org.uk/governor-information-and-vacancies>.

Yorkshire Learning Trust are dedicated to providing high-quality, inclusive education that empowers every young person to achieve their full potential.

We look forward to welcoming you to our team!



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