

South York  
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

## Summer Term Newsletter 2024

Welcome to the SYMAT Newsletter.

At the end of a very successful year for our schools it gives us the opportunity to share some of our successes and to give you an insight into the workings of the trust.

As a trust our job is to make our schools great. That happens when we all come together standing shoulder to shoulder in good times and through challenges. We all know the financial pressures that education is under and the difficulties some have had to overcome post-pandemic. The support of parents and the wider community is vital in the success of all our children and young people, and we thank you for this.

Over the year, we have made changes to further support our schools and bring about even higher levels of cooperation. Mrs Hancy, Head Teacher at Dunnington has become our primary school improvement lead and following Fulford's Outstanding Ofsted I have moved full-time to the role of CEO. This gives me a full strategic oversight of all the schools and affords me time to really get involved in each school, including some teaching of year 6 maths as our children prepared for their SATS.

Whilst we work closely together developing and sharing common best practice, our schools retain their identity and individuality. We are schools that are rooted in our communities and with a desire to serve.

A shining example of that service has been Mrs Hancy's headship at Dunnington. Over 17 years she has educated, nurtured and loved thousands of children and families. As she leaves Dunnington at the end of this term we wish her well and thank her for the exemplary work that she has done and all that she means to us. The good news is we will not be losing Mrs Hancy from the trust, and she will continue her role as Primary School Improvement Lead as we embark on another exciting academic year in September.

Until then, I hope you enjoy hearing about what is happening in our schools and trust and wish you a fun-filled summer break.

Steve Lewis  
CEO

### **SYMAT Central Team News**

#### **IT Technical Services**

Our IT team have successfully taken over management of the IT systems at AYJS to bring them in line with trust wide IT Services. We are continuing our work to centralise and improve the IT offer across all the schools and will be bringing Bishopthorpe onboard by the end of the year.

Andy Church  
IT Technical Services Manager

#### **Estates and Facilities**

The Trust has just brought its caretaking services and is managing all planned and preventative maintenance directly rather than through third parties. This is allowing us to improve compliance and be more reactive to our schools needs.

Since the 1st April the vast majority of the facilities works being conducted in the trust schools has now been taken on by a central team. This has involved some streamlining, and selecting local trusted

contractors to build a strong working relationship with the schools moving forward. All the planned preventative maintenance within the schools is now being managed by 5-6 contractors, which has reduced from a list of approximately 30 across the sites previously. This provides us with an easier to manage and more cost effective approach to our compliance, and so far has been very successful. The remaining 2 schools will be taken over fully as of the 1st August as we continue to try and improve the service heading into the future.

The mobile caretaking team have taken on the responsibility of the smaller jobs around the schools, and have already shown what value they can bring. They have fixed everything from a simple door handle, to replacing complete areas of decking, and all for a fraction of the cost of engaging an external contractor. The feedback from across the schools so far has been very favourable, and the team are enjoying getting out and working at the primary schools.

Here are pictures of some replacement decking installed by the Trust team at Dunnington primary – something that would have previously been financially out of reach and therefore unused!



Jay Walby  
Estate and Facilities Manager

### Primary School Improvement

2023-24 has seen exciting, new opportunities for groups of staff across the trust to effectively **collaborate** on school improvement matters. SENCOs, Early Years practitioners and subject and safeguarding leaders have valued regular meetings to learn from each other and to support and develop aspects of the curriculum, provision and practice across our schools.

There have been a number of professional development opportunities for staff to work beyond their own school environment, examining pedagogical practices, developing resources to support teaching and learning across our establishments and demonstrating a **shared responsibility** for the students in all of our schools.

Key pieces of work are underway to further enhance the teaching of writing across the trust and also to develop **inclusive** practices and provision to support some of our most vulnerable students.

It has been a privilege to be involved in the coordination of much of this work since September, and to spend time supporting and also learning from so many talented colleagues in our schools.

Caroline Hancy  
Primary School Improvement Lead



## Archbishop of York Church of England Junior School News

***What a remarkable year it has been for the Juniors!***

***Positive Ofsted and SIAMS inspections, which reflect our commitment to excellence and our vibrant school community. Our dedicated efforts in developing a new curriculum have begun to take shape, promising even more engaging and enriching learning experiences for our children.***



Visit to the Mosque to enhance the RE curriculum



### **Roman Workshops in Y3/4**

Fantastic experience learning about all the 'Romans' in a fun and interactive way.

### **Residential experiences at Peat Rigg and Bushcraft**

***On the sports front, our teams have achieved fantastic successes, showcasing their talent and dedication in a wide range of sports and competitions.***



**York and North Yorkshire Champions!** Representing North Yorkshire in the regional finals in Liverpool.



**Panathlon Games Opportunity** to attend fun and inclusive games.

**Success in Football, Netball, Cricket!**

***Additionally, a wide range of enrichment programmes and charity initiatives have inspired our children and fostered a strong sense of community and social responsibility.***



**Children in Distress - Shoebox Appeal 2023** – the school community collected 202 shoe boxes and a bag full of beautiful hand-knitted hats!



### **A visit from The Brownlee Brothers!**

The Brownlee Brothers came to school to take part in a PE lesson and Q and A session—What a day to remember!



Motivational assembly with **Sean Gaffney** (Invictus Games & Commonwealth Games athlete)



**Choir and Windband Performance at the Methodist Church**







## Bishopthorpe Infant School News

***What a fantastic year it has been for the Infants!***

***We are proud of the positive teaching and learning experiences that have shaped this year, driving academic excellence and pupil growth and broadening their horizons.***



**Dinostar Workshops**—Being palaeontologists for the day and learning all about dinosaurs and fossils with Steve from the Dinostar Museum in Hull. An incredible experience!



**'Wondrous Winter Tales'** performance with Jenna Drury from Mud Pie Arts Company

Fantastic interactive storytelling session including three traditional folk tales from Scandinavia, which included snow bears, dragons, trolls and fairies!

***Our enriched curriculum has been bolstered with a variety of activities and opportunities, providing our children with a well-rounded and dynamic educational experience. These initiatives have not only enhanced our curriculum but also inspired our children, nurturing their talents.***



**Yorkshire Arboretum visit** involving outdoor music workshop and a potion making tree trail with Acorn the fairy!



**Woldies Lavender Farm** Minibeast hunt, tree spotting, leaf rubbing, den building, bird and butterfly spotting and garden games in the games maze.



### **Dress to Express Day organised by our School Council**

Everyone enjoyed coming to school today wearing our own clothes to express ourselves for 'Dress to Express Day'. Some people chose to wear pyjamas, some came in football kits, some in disco diva outfits and some people came in comfy onesies. Everyone looked exquisite and so different.



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## Dunnington Church of England Primary School News

What a busy year it has been here at Dunnington! There are so many highlights, including amazing learning opportunities, working closely with the schools within the South York MAT to develop best practice, a huge amount of sporting success, wonderful school trips and many exciting enrichment opportunities. As the new head of school, it has been a real privilege to be welcomed so warmly into the school community and to be surrounded by such wonderful pupils, staff and parents.

### Amazing Learning Opportunities

The staff at Dunnington work so hard to make the learning fun and engaging for the children – and they love telling me all about it! Learning about different historical topics has particularly inspired the children – especially the gruesome bits. Here are a few of the creations made by classes, which have often been used to inspire incredible writing.



### Sporting successes

We have had a phenomenal amount of sporting success this year. This is not only due to having lots of talented athletes in school, but also down to the excellent coaching of Mr Sellers. the amazing organisation of Mrs Rowntree and the superb support from all our families! Well done to all the winning teams!



### Competition Winners

Year 5 successfully took part in the National Farm and Food Primary Competition winning workshops for the



entire school, where we learned how to make butter. They also won a school trip to a farm for year 5, where they made flour, learned all about worms and compost and got to meet some



animals. Well done year 5!

### Residentials

Year 5 and 6 have recently enjoyed residentials to Boggle Hole and Newby Wiske – they had an amazing time, did themselves proud and made memories they will never forget!



### ADHD Friendly Schools Award

In January, City of York launched the York Neurodiversity Project. The aim of this project is to develop understanding of neurodiversity. The focus of the work is to upskill staff at all stages of education to ensure that learners can achieve their potential. As part of this project, 8 schools are supported to complete the ADHD Friendly School Award. We were lucky enough to be selected as one of these schools

and, as a result, we are receiving lots of training and support to enhance and improve our provision. The training has been fascinating so far and we are looking forward to seeing all of our new knowledge in action next academic year.



### Goodbye Mrs Hancy

The next few weeks look set to be emotional as we say goodbye to Mrs Hancy, who has been headteacher at Dunnington Primary School for nearly 18 years. Mrs Hancy is a phenomenal leader, who has expertly navigated the school through so many successes but also through both challenging and sad times. She cares so deeply for the children, families and staff and she embodies every single one of our values.

I know it will be incredibly hard to say goodbye, but we are so honoured and privileged to have had Mrs Hancy at the helm for so long. We have learned from the best and we are forever grateful for everything she has done.

Good luck Mrs Hancy – you will be missed by everyone here at Dunnington.





## Escrick Church of England Primary School News

As we look back on a wonderful year at Escrick we are proud to share some key events that truly reflect our values of 'FLOURISH'. Each of these events has provided invaluable opportunities for our pupils to grow and thrive, embodying our commitment to helping every child 'FLOURISH'.

**EYFS:** The reception children were very lucky to welcome several parent visitors into school as part of the spring term topic, 'Wheels, wings and other things'. They received a visit from Northside Truck and Van, who brought a Mercedes truck to school! The children were able to get in the cab, sit on the seats and bed and see the instruments and controls on the dash. We also had a visit from a pilot, another parent brought his adventure bike and a further parent brought a drone to demonstrate how it could be used by farmers in addition to tractors.



**Year 1:** Year 1 have loved going to Forest School every other week this year. They have developed fine and gross motor skills in craft activities using tools such as secateurs and drills to make items such as elder and conker bracelets, and used their knotting skills when making apple pizzas for birds. Year 1 have been relating lots of their learning to the Rights of the Child and use their woodland time to explore their right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.



**Year 2:** In the Autumn term Year 2 found out about recycling as part of their Science topics of 'Materials'. Children had a go at recycling paper in various ways, turning discarded paper into trinket pots and even processing it to make new paper. In the Spring and Summer terms children in KS2 have had the opportunity to join Miss Curry after school in Sewing and Textiles club. Children learnt basic stitches and used these to sew a lined purse. The children also got to try out various textile working techniques including weaving, wet felting, crochet and tie-dyeing.

**Year 3:** During Spring term, Year 3 were learning all about the Stone Age to the Iron Age in their History lessons. At the end of the topic, the children had a fantastic enrichment day where they dressed up as Stone Age people, made bone jewellery, created some Stone Age cave drawings, made tools, completed coded maths and even recreated Stonehenge using biscuits! Parents were very impressed with the children's understanding and enthusiasm, when they joined us at the end of the day for a showcase of learning and were taught some new skills.

**Year 4:** Year 4 took part in a delicious chocolate project as part of their work on Charlie and the Chocolate factory by Roald Dahl. During the project, we learnt about the stages of making chocolate and York's integral role in this process. Children also had the opportunity to design and make their own chocolate bars with unique flavour combinations - they took these home for their families at Easter. Each of their colourful designs were painted by the children onto a wooden disc which was displayed as a sculpture in a craft festival in York City Centre.



**Year 5:** Year 5 have been busy being historians this year! We had the best time doing Egyptian dances and sports in PE, making our own Papyrus paper and drawing hieroglyphics. We even ended the topic with an Egyptian dress up day - we looked fantastic! This half-term we had the amazing opportunity to be part of a pilot activity day at the Yorkshire Museum - 'Odyssey'. We met some characters from throughout history who had become tangled in the timeline - we had to help get them home through a portal by finding artefacts and information throughout the museum.

**Year 6:** Year 6 have been flourishing with their work on British Values this year! To celebrate UK Parliament Week in Autumn, children completed various activities linked to democracy and the rule of law. The week culminated in a visit from MP Keir Mather, our local Member of Parliament for Selby and Ainsty. Mr Mather had a tour of school and even led an assembly where he introduced himself, talked in detail about his journey to becoming an MP, his daily duties, meeting the King and what he hopes to achieve in the local area! Mr Mather said, "It brings me enormous joy to visit successful local schools such as Escrick Primary, the like of which provide a warm, welcoming and nourishing learning environment."

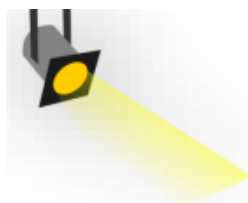
**Inclusion/SEND:** This year has seen the successful implementation of our new school behaviour policy. The linked behaviour pyramids are effective in providing a clear visual of behaviours and are displayed within each classroom. This policy aligns closely with the 'Zones of Regulation' curriculum which supports children to discuss different emotions and help with strategies to self-regulate their own feelings. This has better equipped pupils to navigate the ups and downs of life and is embedded throughout the school. We discuss mental health and wellbeing regularly in assemblies, in PSHE lessons and in Well Being ambassadors' meetings. We are delighted to have also been selected to take part in the Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) project. The PINS project offers a unique opportunity for us to work in collaboration with colleagues from health, social care, and parent carer forums to develop innovative approaches to the teaching and learning within school.





## Fulford School News

Honesty Empathy Ambition Respect Tolerance



At Fulford School, students are given fantastic enrichment opportunities with various extra-curricular clubs and trips running throughout the year!

This term we shine the spotlight on our Creative Arts Faculty.



### Oliver!

This year's school show involved over 190 students working both on the stage and behind it!

Performing to packed audiences for three nights, and to the local primary schools for the dress rehearsal, the cast entertained and thrilled the audiences with favourite numbers such as "Consider Yourself" and "I'll Do Anything!"



### Spring Concert

In May, we held our annual Spring Concert. The concert featured performances by over 90 students including the orchestra, swing band, choir, and a rousing finale of S Club 7's 'Reach' from all performers.

Well done to all the students involved including the performers, back stage helpers, tech team, and comperes.

You are all amazing!



### Head Teacher's Gallery

Each half term, we select one student from each year group who has created exceptional artwork within the department.

These pictures are then exhibited in the Head Teacher's Gallery.





## Wheldrake with Thorganby Church of England Primary School News

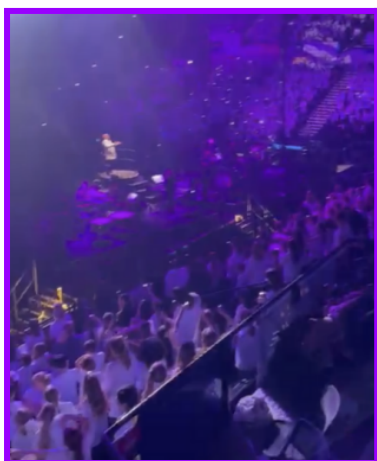
We have had a busy and exciting year at Wheldrake with Thorganby CE Primary School. In addition to our curriculum, we have had visitors, trips, community events and much more.

In the **Autumn Term** the children in Reception and Key Stage One performed a wonderful Nativity, Shine Star Shine. We were so impressed with how confident they were performing on the stage. The songs were really catchy too!

We have continued our relationship with Wheldrake Sharing Life throughout this year and started with our pupils from Year 5 singing carols to the clients. Pupils in Year 3 also went carolling in the community by visiting Somerset House, a nursing home in the village, and sang some popular and traditional songs to the residents.

We started a shared writing project with Dunnington CE Primary School this term between Year 3 and Year 6. The children wrote quest stories and made a twist to rewrite their stories and improve their writing skills.

Every year at Christmas, each class creates a board to be displayed in St Helen's Church in Wheldrake. Each class linked their art end points with our theme for this year 'Christmas around the World'.



In the **Spring Term** the pupils in Reception and Key Stage One organised a Farmers Market to raise funds for waterproof storage for the garden. The pupils baked bread, planted seeds and made cakes to sell to their families after school. It was a great success raising over £260!

Our subject leaders have been working in networks across SYMAT this year, with focused subject leader meetings. The sessions have been held at different schools, with specific goals to each subject. We are looking forward to continuing our networking opportunities into the next academic year.

As part of their history topic on Crime and Punishment, Year 4 had a trip to York the Castle Museum in York. They learnt about Dick Turpin and Black Bess and some pupils were even locked in jail!

We took part in an amazing concert in Sheffield Arena for Young Voices. We took 50 Key Stage Two pupils in our choir and had the fantastic experience performing as part of a choir with hundreds of other schools.

In the **Summer Term** we were invited to create a flower display for the Flower Festival at St Michael and All Angels Church in Sutton Upon Derwent. The children in Reception class put together a flower display for Sutton upon Derwent Flower Festival. The brief was to create a display with the chorus of 'All Things Bright and Beautiful'.

Year 5 completed their history topic of World War 2 with an evacuation day, where they came to school dressed in war time outfits, made air raid shelters and wrote letters from evacuees. The pupils also had a trip to Eden Camp where they experienced recreations of the Blitz, German U-Boats and prisoner of war camps. Pupils in Reception and Year 2 had a trip to The Deep as part of their Science and topic units. They had a 'whale of a time'!

The pupils in Year 5 all took part in the Brownlee Foundation Mini Triathlon at York Sport. It was the wettest day on record but they had a great time. We were impressed with how inclusive the event was for all pupils.

Pupils in Year 6 are putting their end of year show together, Shrek the Musical. If the rehearsals are anything to go by, we are in for a treat!

We hosted the Sharing Life coffee mornings in school this term, which gave more classes the opportunity to meet the clients, serve cake and play games with them. The children in Year 2 sang songs to the clients, which they enjoyed.



**Be Aspirational ~ Be Collaborative ~ Be Inclusive ~ Be Responsible**