

# ACHIEVE

The magazine of Pontefract Academies Trust

Issue 01 • March 2020

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ACADEMIES TRUST

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**PONTEFRACT**  
ACADEMIES TRUST

# WELCOME

I wish you a very warm welcome to the first issue of Achieve, our new magazine for parents, carers, friends and all stakeholders of the Trust community. We have introduced Achieve to keep you informed about the latest news from the Trust and hope that it shines a light on all the great things our schools are achieving.

The Trust runs a family of eight primary and secondary schools across Pontefract and was set up back in 2013. The Trust is fortunate to have a very talented team of staff, trustees and School Performance Review Boards who are committed to delivering the best education to almost 4000 children and young people in our schools. Improving the life chances of all of the children and young people we teach is at the centre of what we do. We want them to succeed at the highest levels of education, employment and professions, in what is an increasingly competitive world.

The support each of our schools receive from parents, carers, partners and the local community plays a big part in achieving successful outcomes for our pupils, so thank you for your continued support. Together we are transforming lives and making sure we deliver the very best we can for all of our pupils.

I am delighted to be able to share news of some of our key achievements and our school and trust-wide initiatives through this termly magazine. I hope it keeps you informed about how we are delivering on our vision, where every child and young person makes outstanding progress.

### **Julian Appleyard OBE**

Chief Executive Officer  
Pontefract Academies Trust



# NEWS

## Full marks for Pontefract Academies Trust

**Top 10% of education trusts in the country and three schools in the top 10 of all Wakefield primary schools**

The Trust has been named in the top 10% of education trusts in the country in the Department for Education Performance Tables for primary schools, published in December.

The performance tables compared the performance of 297 multi academy trusts for primary school performance with the Trust being rated 22nd in the rank order for attainment. The performance sees a reversal in fortunes for the Trust having been rated the 11th worst performing trust the previous year and places the Trust as one of the most improved in the sector!

77% of children in the Trust primary schools achieved the national expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the age of 11, against a national average of 65%.

The Trust is also celebrating the fantastic news that three of our primary schools were placed in the top 10 of all primary schools in the Wakefield Local Authority for the first time ever! Halfpenny Lane, Larks Hill and Carleton Park were the schools making the top 10.

We are delighted with the improvements that have been made across our family of primary schools. There has been a real effort over the last 18 months to raise standards and the performance tables are a strong endorsement of the work of staff and pupils across our schools.

The primary schools' performance comes on the back of the improvement made by the Trust in delivering an Ofsted good judgement for Carleton High School in July last year, the first time the school had received this for 10 years.

## Orchard Head Junior, Infant and Nursery School has reason to celebrate after being rated a “Good” school

Orchard Head was one of a handful of schools in the district to be inspected using the new Ofsted inspection framework, back in November.

Ian Clennan, Her Majesty's Inspector, identified that the 'school had improved since the last inspection', with the 'head of school leading the school very well'. The school was identified as a 'happy place to be', with 'family and community being at the heart of the school'. It was found that the Trust had 'transformed governance' and 'governors held school leaders to account', whilst the Trust 'worked with teachers to map out what pupils should learn'.

We are thrilled that Ofsted recognised the improvements made across the school and that 'reading is at the heart of the curriculum'.

During the inspection, there was specific focus on the quality of teaching of reading, maths and PE. Reference was also made to how pupils learnt and remembered mathematical knowledge and skills well. Additionally, leaders were praised for 'helping pupils in their love of reading, with teachers choosing from a wide variety of books for pupils to read' and that 'teachers read with enthusiasm to pupils'. The inspection team also found that 'younger children get off to a great start in the early years'.

Ofsted recognised that the school wants all pupils to achieve well in every subject and that 'pupil welfare has the highest priority'. The inspection report stated that the school 'makes sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get all the support they need' and that 'leaders work well with other professionals to get pupils extra help'.

**“Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They are well behaved and engaged in lessons. Staff have high expectations for pupils.”**

**Ofsted**  
Good  
Provider





# SPOTLIGHT

## Primary reading in action

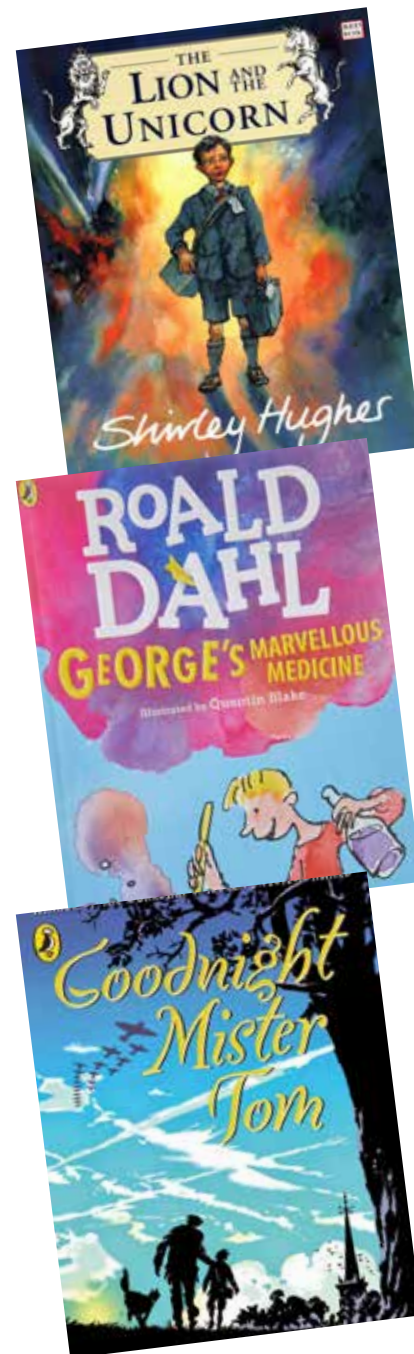
This academic year all primary schools across the Trust have focused upon embedding our new reading strategy. Reading opens or closes doors to pretty much everything in life and we see it as the cornerstone for children in our schools. Put simply, good readers do well at school and it is critical that our children leave primary school able to read fluently as this sets them up well for secondary school. The ability to effectively read and decode a variety of text types is fundamentally linked to academic success.

Children learn to read on entry to our schools. All of the primary schools in the Trust use the Read Write Inc. phonics programme to help them learn the alphabetic code. This phonics programme allows children to learn to form each letter, spell correctly and compose their ideas step-by-step. Children learn one way to read the 40+ sounds and blend these sounds into words. They then learn to read the same sounds with alternative graphemes. The plan for our pupils is that they experience success from the very start. Lively phonics books are very closely matched to their widening knowledge of phonics and “tricky” words, and as children re-read the stories their fluency increases.

Every primary school in our Trust follows the same reading strategy (from Early Years to Year 6), using the same core selection of books (our literary canon). These books, a selection of fiction, non-fiction and poetry, bring the National Curriculum to life and immerse our children in every subject that they are taught. Moreover, the use of the same books across the primary phase facilitates more useful dialogue between schools regarding the reading strategy, the development of resources and the sharing of best practice. We are relentless in our ambition to make every child a confident reader. Across the primary schools there are three distinct opportunities to read every day. We call these the 3P's of reading:

Reading for **pleasure** – linked to children's own reading.  
 Reading for **purpose** – linked to our literary canon.  
 Reading for **productivity** – linked to the foundation subjects in all key stages.

Once pupils make the transition to secondary school, the opportunities to develop their wider reading skills continue. We recognise that older pupils' reading habits are changing. Pupils are, in the main, reading differently; exchanging traditional books for electronic books. Weekly D.E.A.R (Drop Everything And Read) sessions give pupils and teachers time to read what they want to read. To develop a reading culture, it is important that everybody participates. For pupils, it is an opportunity to share what they have read and receive the support that they need for further reading exploration and reflection. More importantly, these activities promote a deeper understanding of literature and language, and ensure the importance of reading stays at the heart of our daily work.



## Governance in action

The Department for Education Governance Handbook describes governance as providing a confident and strong strategic leadership, leading to robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.

The Trust governance model consists of the following governance groups, members of which come from a range of professional backgrounds and stakeholder groups, all of whom give up their time on a voluntary basis.

### Members

Operate at a strategic level with ultimate control over the direction of the Trust.

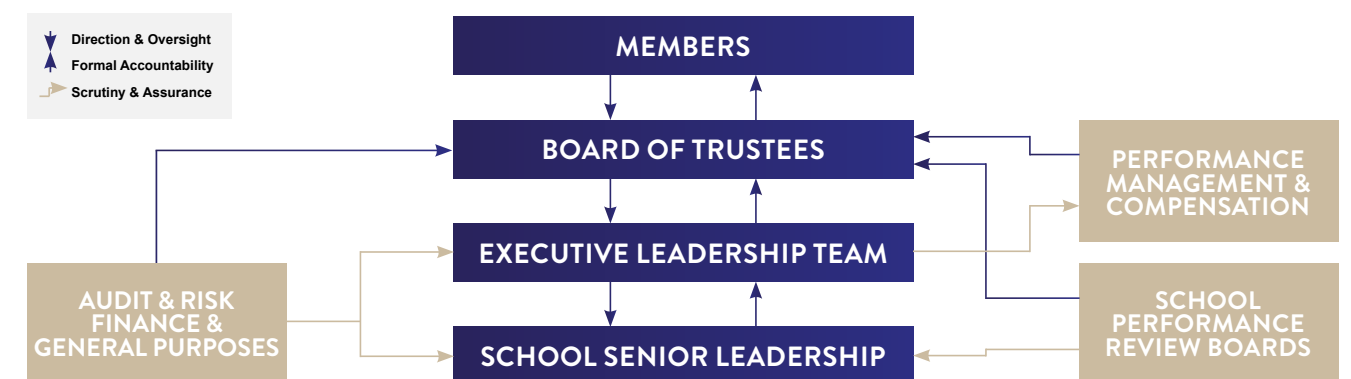
### Board of Trustees

Set the clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction, hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the Trust and oversee financial performance.

### Trust Board Sub-Committees

The management assurance sub-committees (Audit & Risk and Finance & General Purposes) assure and reinforce high levels of compliance, effective management controls, risk management and financial planning and monitoring throughout the Trust.

The performance review sub-committees (Performance Management & Compensation and School Performance Review Boards) serve to reinforce the delivery of overall trust objectives and improved educational standards.



Heads of School are challenged and supported by School Performance Review Boards (SPRBs) who are appointed by the Trust Board, ensuring they have a balance of skills required to effectively oversee a school.

The Trust has statutory duties and Ofsted requirements to meet in relation to governance. As such each SPRB has a named linked representative for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Safeguarding and Pupil Premium. The SPRBs appoint these annually at the first meetings of the academic year. These representatives link with named leaders in schools with whom they liaise with to monitor activity and compliance in these areas.

Members of the SPRBs have a key role in the management of pupil behaviour through their participation, where necessary, on Behaviour Panels determining decisions relating to exclusions. The SPRBs lead on community and stakeholder engagement through celebrating the achievements of the schools, communicating with stakeholders and inviting their feedback.

If you are interested in becoming a member of one of our School Performance Review Boards, please email [clerk@patrust.org.uk](mailto:clerk@patrust.org.uk)



# View on governance

**“The head of school leads the school very well. The multi academy trust has transformed governance. Governors hold school leaders to account. They have ambitious plans for improving the curriculum.”**

**Orchard Head Junior, Infant & Nursery School (November 2019)**

**“The Trust has created clear lines of accountability between themselves and local governors. This means that everyone is clear about who does what. The performance management of the head of school is carefully and regularly reviewed. The targets are well aligned to the school improvement plan. This joined-up approach is helping to improve the school further.”**

**Carleton High School (July 2019)**

**“The SPRB is exceptionally led and demonstrates an insightful and precise level of detail and knowledge about the school. The governance structure of the school is outstanding because members of the SPRB probe and challenge as appropriate. They play their part in enabling and ensuring that pupils receive a high-quality educational experience.”**

**Carleton Park Junior & Infant School (July 2019)**

**“Leaders, including governors, ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.”**

**Larks Hill Junior & Infant School (July 2019)**

**“Governors’ effectiveness has been enhanced through the support of the new trust leaders. Governors now work more collaboratively with other trust schools, which is extending their expertise. Governors are working alongside school leaders to help shape the strategic direction of the school with the support of the trust leadership team.”**

**The Rookeries Junior, Infant & Nursery School (March 2019)**

**“Lines of accountability between the trust, SPRB and school leaders have been strengthened recently by the introduction of achievement and improvement meetings with a partner school.”**

**Halfpenny Lane Junior, Infant & Nursery School (February 2019)**

## Academy trusts - A few facts

As an education trust, we understand that the education world goes through many changes and can have, at times, a language of its own. Below provides some information on academy trusts that stakeholders may find useful.

**Academy trusts are not businesses – nor are they run by ‘private’ people.**

Academy trusts are education charities that are set up purely for the purpose of running and improving schools. Trustees have strict duties under charity law and company law. Trustees hold public office – they do not run the trust for ‘private’ interest but are required to advance education for public benefit. They are required to uphold the Nolan Principles of Public Life.

**Sponsors, trustees and/or members cannot make profits.**

As education charities, academy trusts are not allowed to make profits or distribute profits to trustees or members. All surpluses are invested into the front-line to improve the quality of education.

**Academy trusts are highly accountable.**

Academy trusts are held to account to a higher standard than maintained schools. The obligation of transparency and accountability is much greater than maintained schools. They are held to account by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Ofsted and Regional Schools Commissioners.

They are required to have an independent audit annually and to publish their accounts. They are also required to disclose executive pay in thresholds. If the ESFA investigates a trust, the investigation report is published on the government’s website. There is no similar requirement on local authorities to publish investigation reports or disclose headteacher pay.

Academy trusts are part of state-funded education. Like any other state school, academies are free to attend, inspected in the same way and children take the same tests and exams. Academy trusts are state-funded – parents do not pay fees. They operate in accordance with their funding agreement with the Secretary of State.

More than half of pupils in England – 3.8 million pupils – are educated in academy schools. This is seven in 10 secondary pupils and three in 10 primary pupils.

**Land is not passed into ‘private’ ownership and trusts need permission to sell land – just like maintained schools.**

Academy trusts can have various tenure types, but most hold their sites on long leases from the local authority, for a nominal charge. There are controls on the disposal of academy and maintained school publicly funded land. The Secretary of State’s permission is required for the disposal of publicly funded school land or school land which has been enhanced at public expense.

**Academy trusts are subject to most of the same direct statutory duties as maintained mainstream schools, in respect of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).**

As such, mainstream academies must:

- Have regard to the statutory SEND Code of Practice.
- Use their best endeavours to make sure a child with SEN gets the support they need.
- Designate a qualified teacher to be the Special Educational Needs Coordinator.
- Co-operate with the local authority in respect of the child.
- Admit a child where the school is named on that child’s Education, Health and Care Plan.
- Ensure that children, young people and their families are involved in decision-making and planning.
- Academy trusts must comply with the same law on admissions as maintained schools.
- The Department for Education’s model funding agreement for mainstream academies requires them to comply in full with the Department for Education School Admissions Code and the law relating to admissions.

**So why are trusts a good thing?**

Trusts are specialist organisations set up to run and improve schools – this is why it is clearer to talk about school trusts, rather than academy trusts. There is a very clear lines of accountability in the school trust model.

Many academies now work together in a group of schools as one entity, to improve and maintain high educational standards across the group. Where a trust runs a group of schools, it has the power to create a collaborative framework.

A group of schools working together in a single entity can do lots of things that are harder for stand-alone schools to do:

- Teachers work and learn together to improve the way they teach;
- Schools share practices that make a difference to the quality of teaching;
- Teachers and leaders can work together on the things that matter, like curriculum and assessment;
- Failing schools can improve – only one in 10 schools that were required to join a trust were judged good or outstanding before they converted, compared with almost seven in 10 after they joined a trust (of those that had been inspected);
- It is more possible for teachers and leaders to move to another school to help improve the quality of education where that school is struggling and these moves are more likely to be to schools with more disadvantaged pupils; and
- It is more possible to be efficient and thereby to invest money in supporting pupils to have wider opportunities.



# COMMUNITY

## Inspirational Speaker Visits

Inspirational speaker, Jim Gump, visited primary schools across the Trust as part of our ongoing initiative to invite guest speakers into our schools to share their experiences and achievements with us all.

In 2010, Jim decided that he was going to complete a 10k run every day of the year, which he achieved. He subsequently decided to challenge himself to run 10k every day and then perform a Triathlon (on the same day), 365 days of the year! A challenge he has also successfully accomplished.

Jim spoke with real passion and personal experience about the many different benefits associated with living a healthy and balanced lifestyle. A great deal of his delivery to the children was based upon the importance of engaging with and learning about the world around us. His talk really did resonate with the children, who were able to make a number of links to the different books that they are currently reading and studying. The assemblies were followed by running sessions with individual classes, leaving the children enthused and motivated.



On January 27, The King's School marked Holocaust Memorial Day to remember those people who lost their lives during World War Two and other instances of genocide. The school were honoured to welcome Anaïs Mutumba who is a Rwandan genocide survivor to deliver a talk to pupils in years 7-11.

Anaïs Mutumba is now a journalist living in the UK who is dedicated to promoting awareness of the genocide against the Tutsi people in Rwanda in 1994. The school were privileged to hear first-hand about her experiences and about Rwanda today.

Olivia Hayburn (Year 8) said, 'In my opinion, I thought the assembly was very emotional. It was interesting to learn about the lady's past. She talked about the impact of the awful event and how her family and their home were affected. Even though the situation and some of her stories were upsetting, the other stories she told about her wanting to be a vet and how it saved her and her family from the danger were extremely inspiring.'

Amelie Roper (Year 8) explained 'I felt intrigued about how someone who had been through so much could stand there with no visible tears in her eyes and a smile on her face. I thought about it for a bit until I had an epiphany and suddenly I realised how amazing this woman is. I wholeheartedly applaud her for being able to open her heart and forgive people despite having lived through such violence and hate.'

The theme for this year's Holocaust Memorial Day was to 'Stand Together' and this is an experience that pupils will be able to take forward and use to inspire them in their own lives.

## Indoor Athletics Success

Larks Hill J & I School's Under 11 Indoor Athletics Team recently competed in the Pontefract Academies Trust Primary School Competition, which was hosted by The King's School. Following a very competitive, well organised and enjoyable event, the team were crowned winners and as a result of this success, qualified to represent the Trust at 'The Five Towns School Games Indoor Athletics Competition' which was held at Minsthorpe Community College.

Once again, the children performed and competed wonderfully well on the day, across a range of different indoor athletics events and challenges. The training that had taken place prior to the competition certainly proved to be invaluable, as the children were successful in all of the different running, jumping and throwing events. After all the events had been completed, there was a careful tallying of the scores and Larks Hill emerged victorious! The squad will now represent 'The Five Towns' at 'The Yorkshire Primary Schools Indoor Athletics Finals' which are due to be held at Huddersfield Sports and Leisure Centre on March 17.



## Young Voices

Primary pupils were very excited to perform in the Young Voices Choir, the largest school choir in the world, at Sheffield Arena.

Prior to the event, the children attended weekly after-school clubs, where they practised the songs that they were to sing during the concert. Their hard work really paid off - they sang beautifully and their behaviour was impeccable.

Many of our children had never been to such an event before, or to such a large venue, so it was rather awe-inspiring to know that they would be singing there in front of so many people. They were thrilled to find that they were not only singing along with other schools from around the country, but that they would be joined by professional artists such as Tony Hadley from Spandau Ballet and performing moves along with the dance troupe "Urban Strides"!

To complete the fun, the children sang a 'Fright-fest' medley of songs, which included, "Ghostbusters", "Monster Mash" and "Little Shop of Horrors".

## Pupils with exceptional IQ scores

Four Year 7 pupils from Carleton High scored top marks on the Mensa IQ test and received invitations to become members of the elite group. James Davies scored 162 points in the Mensa test, which is two points higher than Stephen Hawking and Albert Einstein! Ryco Attwood, Mia Garner and Tom Groves also achieved scores over 150. We are incredibly proud of them all on this amazing achievement.

British Mensa has more than 20,000 members from all ages and backgrounds with IQs in the top two percent. It was founded in 1946 in Oxford by Lancelot Lionel Ware, a scientist and lawyer, and Roland Berrill, an Australian barrister.





# PEOPLE

## Interview with Kate Wood PE School Sport and Wellbeing Coordinator

Kate Wood is the PE School Sport and Wellbeing Coordinator for the Trust's primary schools, and has worked for the Trust for just over a year.

Originally from Ormskirk, Kate moved to Leeds at the age of 18 to train as a Secondary PE Teacher at Leeds Metropolitan University. She has experience of working in a range of secondary schools located in Warrington, Wigan and Leeds - this is her first role within the primary sector. Kate is extremely passionate about sport and loves playing hockey and tag rugby in her spare time.

Kate's core responsibilities are to:

- Develop the curriculum to ensure that all pupils have a positive experience of PE during their time at primary school.
- Provide all pupils with opportunities to develop their interest in sport, through regular competition.
- Help pupils and staff recognise the importance of physical activity, in order to develop a healthy mind.

### What attracted you to work for the Trust?

I wanted to work for an employer where I felt valued and I could make a difference. Physical activity and sport is extremely important to the Trust so I knew that I would be supported and encouraged to provide pupils with the best experience of PE and school sport possible.

### What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?

I enjoy having the autonomy to develop a PE curriculum that I believe will help all pupils to enjoy and achieve through PE and sport. I also enjoy working across all of the Trust's primary schools, with a range of staff, helping them to deliver the curriculum to the best standard possible.

### How has your role impacted on the children?

Hopefully, the children are now experiencing a wider range of activities in their PE lessons, higher quality

PE lessons and more opportunities to take part in competitive sports. My aim is to ensure that all pupils have a healthy active lifestyle and if the children enjoy physical activity in school, they are more likely to get involved in their own time.

### What did you do prior to working for the Trust?

I worked as a Secondary PE teacher for 8 years. I also lived in Australia for a year working on an iron ore mine, however, I decided that wasn't the life for me.

### What motivates you to work hard?

Seeing the children enjoying PE, school sport and physical activity. If I can help every pupil, regardless of ability, age or gender, find at least one activity that they enjoy and want to pursue outside of school, then I will be extremely happy.

### What have you gained from working at the Trust?

I have gained a greater understanding of the primary curriculum and how PE can develop so many different skills, such as, map reading in orienteering which pupils are also working on during their maths and geography lessons. PE also develops life skills such as resilience, communication and teamwork. Sometimes the physical nature of the PE lesson isn't the most important thing to come out of it, it's the personal development and development of core values that can be the emphasis of the lesson.

### What do you enjoy doing when you aren't at work?

I play hockey for Ben Rhydding Ladies 1s. Playing hockey is my main passion and something I put a lot of time in to so as to ensure I can perform at the highest level. I also play in a Tag Rugby team which I enjoy, particularly the social side of it - there isn't any pressure to perform, it's just a really good stress relief. Outside of sport I love travelling to new places with my wife, we always make sure we have a new adventure in the diary to look forward to.

**“I wanted to work for an employer where I felt valued and I could make a difference.”**



## Key Appointments

**Lee Verity**, Director of English, working across both Trust secondary schools.

**Helen Daly**, Assistant Headteacher at The King's School.

# ABOUT US

## Mission

Running top-quality, high-achieving schools that give our children and young people the chance in life they deserve.

## Vision

Where every child and young person makes outstanding progress.

## Core Values and Guiding Principles

### Achievement without excuses

We have an unwavering focus on achievement. This is paramount so that all of our children and young people enjoy greater life chances. We take responsibility for ensuring that they succeed. We own our own performance and do not rest on our laurels or seek to blame others.

### Our people matter

We know that our people make a difference to the lives of our 3-16 year olds. We want to make our schools places where great teachers want to teach, lead and build a career. Investment in the recruitment, development and retention of the best people is a top priority. We aim to provide professional working environments, where our people have the support and the tools to do a great job, and push our children and young people to scale new heights in a safe and secure environment.

### Excellence as standard

We set high standards. "Good enough" is simply not. We do not accept second best from our pupils or ourselves. The Trust aims to be a highly reliable school improvement organisation that is disciplined in its approach to improving performance. A Trust with clear plans and, simple and precisely executed systems that not only develops and sustains excellent performance but never stifles individual flair.

### Pupils come first

Our schools are run for the benefit of children and young people, not the ease of adults. Their achievement comes first and staff in schools and the central trust office work to this end. The Trust aims to keep low priority tasks away from front line teachers and leaders so that they can focus explicitly on our core business of teaching and learning.

### Stronger as one

We take collective responsibility for each other and the results of all of our children and young people. We enjoy sharing our success as a Trust, while recognising the strengths of individuals and each school. To this end, collective accountability is rooted in a "if one fails we all fail" mentality. As a family of schools, we collaborate with each other, challenge each other and share best practice. We do not let competition get in the way of our desire to get the best outcomes for all.

# OUR SCHOOLS



**CARLETON PARK**

JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL



**DE LACY  
PONTEFRAC**

PRIMARY SCHOOL



**HALFPENNY LANE**

JUNIOR, INFANT &  
NURSERY SCHOOL



**LARKS HILL**

JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL



**ORCHARD HEAD**

JUNIOR, INFANT &  
NURSERY SCHOOL

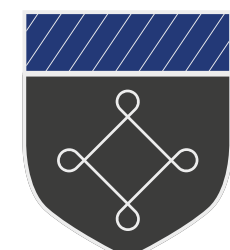


**THE ROOKERIES  
CARLETON**

JUNIOR, INFANT &  
NURSERY SCHOOL



**THE KING'S  
SCHOOL**



**CARLETON  
HIGH SCHOOL**





8 schools

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**ONE TRUST**