

ACHIEVE

The magazine of Pontefract Academies Trust

Issue 03 • Spring 2021

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ACADEMIES TRUST

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PONTEFRACT
ACADEMIES TRUST

WELCOME FROM OUR CEO

Welcome to the third edition of Achieve, our Trust magazine. I write this just over 12 months since the Prime Minister announced the first national lockdown and the last couple of school terms have been a time we will remember deeply.

I have spoken before about how our staff have found ways to connect and deliver remote learning and the way in which our pupils have demonstrated quite phenomenal levels of resilience.

Since the start of March, it has been great to see all of our pupils and staff back in our schools. I think that we are all ready to look forward to the post COVID-19 era when the Trust will look to capitalise on the progress we have made in the last year, despite the disruption we have all faced.

The lockdowns of the last year have not dimmed our vision as a Trust. Collectively as a community we have all dealt with everything the pandemic has thrown our way. It is true to say that it hasn't been easy and it does take its toll on our hardworking staff who have pushed back on the disruption to ensure our Pontefract pupils have not been badly disadvantaged.

Please enjoy reading the latest issue of Achieve. Our children and young people have accomplished some fantastic things despite a turbulent year.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support.



Julian Appleyard OBE

Chief Executive Officer

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
PONTEFRACT**

PRIMARY SCHOOL



HALFPENNY LANE

JUNIOR, INFANT &
NURSERY SCHOOL



LARKS HILL

JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL



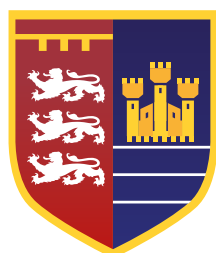
ORCHARD HEAD

JUNIOR, INFANT &
NURSERY SCHOOL



**THE ROOKERIES
CARLETON**

JUNIOR, INFANT &
NURSERY SCHOOL



**THE KING'S
SCHOOL**



**CARLETON
HIGH SCHOOL**

SPOTLIGHT

Celebrating World Book Day



Our teachers, pupils and parents didn't let lockdown stop them from celebrating this year's World Book Day as they enjoyed an action packed agenda to enjoy their love of storytelling and reading.

Harry Potters, Hermiones, Dennis the Menaces, Tom Gates and Fantastic Mr Foxes are just some of the characters that joined Pontefract Academies Trust online lessons to enjoy "The Masked Reader" event where staff disguised their faces and children and families had to guess who it was and what book they were reading.

World Book Day has always been an important date in the school calendar as it's a brilliant way to encourage all the children to try new books and build on their love of learning. It was fantastic to see everyone going to so much effort and dressing up even though most of them were at home.

All of our schools embraced the day with staff fancy dress competitions, story writing competitions, book voucher giveaways and an English department take over on The King's School Twitter account.

The ability to effectively read is fundamental to success both academically and personally. Reading is needed to master all subjects and therefore is the most important skill we teach at our Trust.

World Book Day is celebrated in more than 100 countries around the world and is a charity set up by UNESCO. According to UNESCO reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success – more than their family circumstances, their parents' educational background or their income. Their mission is to promote reading for pleasure, offering every child and young person the opportunity to have a book of their own.

WORLD BOOK DAY



FUNDRAISING



At the start of the school academic year, we as a Trust made the decision to support a local and national charity for the whole year. Based in Pontefract, The Prince of Wales Hospice provides palliative care and support for patients with life-limiting illnesses and their families. Each year they must raise 3 million pounds in order to keep their doors open. This charity was chosen due to the local link and the impact the charity has had on many of our friends and families.

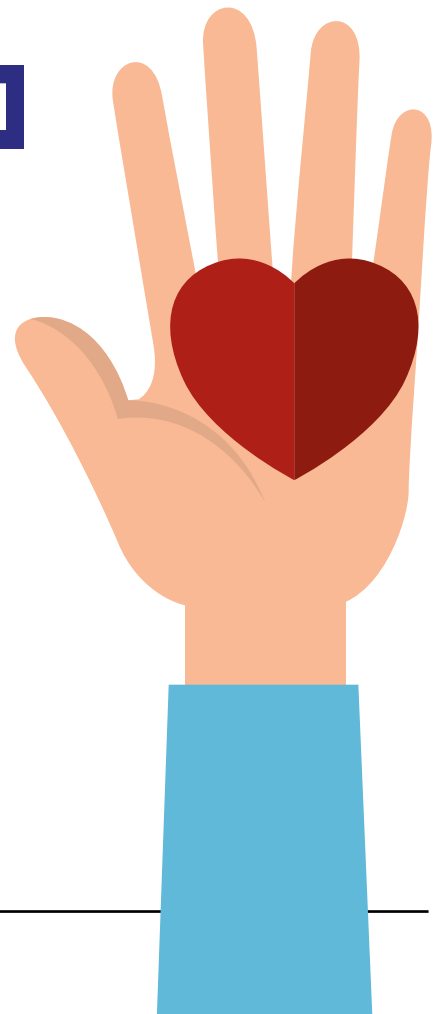


Over £7,500 raised

Pontefract Academies Trust has raised over £7,500 for The Prince of Wales Hospice in just four months.

All eight schools have been working incredibly hard to raise much needed funds for the Hospice as they know how difficult it has been for charities during the pandemic. Fundraising activities so far have included non-uniform days, Reindeer Runs, collecting money in the Hospice's star jars and much more. This phenomenal amount of money will enable the hospice to run an in-care bed for two whole weeks.

Rebecca Taylor, Community and Partnership Fundraiser at The Prince of Wales Hospice said: "We are so grateful to have the support of Pontefract Academies Trust. Their eagerness to fundraise for the hospice really shines through even during these exceptionally difficult times. We are delighted to hear that the schools are already keen to get involved in more fun fundraising activities this year. The children have made everyone at the hospice smile with their incredible fundraising efforts and we are in awe of their generosity to the hospice."





Super Seven-year-old Cycles 174 miles a month for charity



A super impressive seven year old boy called Leo from Carleton Park Junior and Infant School has inspired all of his family and classmates by cycling a staggering 174 miles throughout the month of February to raise money for the Life for a Kid charity. Leo loves riding his bike and raising money for charity. Last year Leo raised over £1,000 for the same charity by riding 110 miles so this challenge tested his cycling skills and endurance.

Leo's dad Jim Cain is part of a charity rugby team that includes professional rugby players such as Adrian Morley, Paul Sculthorpe, Lee Radford and Rob Burrow to help raise money for fantastic charities.

The Life For A Kid Sensory Centre located in Hull has over 30 registered special educational needs children supporting Autism, Aspergers, Mowat Wilson Syndrome and more.

All the money Leo raises goes to the charity and if anyone would like to sponsor Leo, the link to do so is here:
<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/JimCain1>

Headteacher at Carleton Park Junior and Infant School, Joe Ayre said: "We are all so proud and impressed with Leo and wish him all the success in completing this phenomenal challenge. To be able to ride 174 miles in just one month is an incredible achievement especially for a seven-year-old and we all enjoyed supporting him on this journey."

Leo, 7 said: "I loved riding my bike and for the whole month of February, I tried to ride my bike 10km a day. It was tiring but I was excited to go to new places and help other children who really need our support."

FUNDRAISING

Pontefract Caped Crusaders Celebrated Red Nose Day

Our 8 schools raised over £1,200 for Comic Relief this year. Wearing red, telling funny jokes and dressing up as their favourite superheroes are just some of the ways that the children at our schools celebrated Red Nose Day on Friday 19th March.

Carleton Park Junior & Infant School council had a committee meeting to decide what they would like to do and it was agreed that the whole school would enjoy a "Funny Friday Afternoon" and share as many jokes as they could.

The Rookeries Junior, Infant and Nursery School, welcomed lots of mini caped crusaders including Batman, Robin, Mr Incredibles and Wonderwoman to name just a few. Many children also asked if they could come dressed as today's hero's such as nurses, postmen, and their Mums!

All of our schools got creative and as well as wearing a red nose, wore red scarves, tights and head pieces all in aid of Comic Relief to raise as much money as they possibly could.

Joe Mitchell, Headteacher at Orchard Head Junior, Infant and Nursery school said: "Comic Relief is a great way for us all to come together and have some fun while raising money for charity at the same time. The children and teachers were very excited to come as superheros or in their favourite red outfit and it was great seeing the children's big smiles as they walked through the school gates."

According to the Comic Relief website the charity has raised more than £1.4 billion pounds over the past 35 years and this year money raised will be donated to heal homelessness and people facing abuse and mental health issues. Funds will also be donated to help people struggling because of the coronavirus pandemic.



RED NOSE DAY



Jessica's Fundraising Phenomenon

One very brave and resilient pupil at Halfpenny Lane Junior, Infant and Nursery School, has been nominated as a local 'lockdown hero'. Jessica, has appeared in the Wakefield Express due to her kind and helpful nature towards others. Jessica has climbed the equivalent height of Mount Everest in her home to raise funds for a little boy with Neuroblastoma. She has achieved this amazing feat by climbing up and down her stairs! The local community, Jessica's parents and the school are so proud of her. So far, Jessica has helped raise £230,000 and is now helping raise money for Henry the Brave, another little boy with the same condition.

What makes the achievement more amazing is that Jessica suffers from obstructive sleep apnoea, so she barely gets a full night's sleep. This has not hindered or prevented Jessica from reaching her goals and doing so with a smile on her face. In between climbing the equivalent of Mount Everest, Jessica has been completing her schoolwork and supporting her younger twin sisters to complete theirs.

Tom Fay, Director of Primary Education said "Jessica is not only a local lockdown hero but a national lockdown hero in our eyes. She is a role model for others and needs all the praise and recognition she can get for her selflessness and dedication to others in need. There have been a few 'wow' moments for me over the past 12 months in terms of what the young people in the Pontefract community have been doing to support others. Jessica's efforts are simply astounding and sit at the very top of those 'wow' feats."

Jessica said, "I Just like helping people and wanted to fundraise for that very reason. I've organised socially distanced tuck shops, tombola's, garden sales and I also organised an Easter colouring competition and selling Easter chicks to raise more money."



NEWS

Children's Mental Health Week

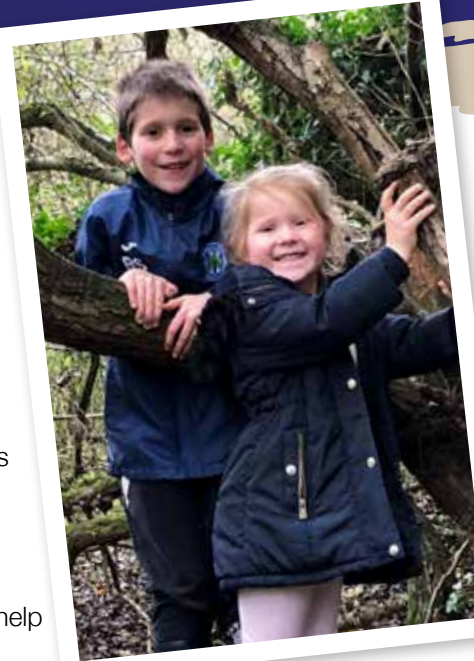
Children's Mental Health Week took place between the 1st – 7th of February. Our schools embraced the week and encouraged all of our pupils to find activities that help them feel good about themselves whether that be art, drama, exercise or music.

The schools followed the Place2Be's theme of 'Dress to Express' and all pupils and staff took part. Pupils were encouraged to wear their favourite colours or even sports strip to help share their feelings and thoughts.

Larks Hill Junior and Infant School enjoyed mindfulness drawing as part of their school day and Carleton High School hosted group sessions to discuss how they feel and how important it is to talk.

Carleton Park Junior & Infant School set challenges from their staff to help the children to get outside and explore, find different things locally and get creative. They gave the children the chance to win house points for participating.

Joe Ayre, Headteacher at Carleton Park Junior & Infant School, said: "Mental health is so important and it's great to see all the children embracing this very important week. We're constantly exploring new ways to engage with our pupils during this difficult time and I'm incredibly proud of everyone for their dedication and hard work."



Inspired by a Poem

Makenna, a pupil at The Rookeries Junior, Infant and Nursery School has been shielding at home since the beginning of lockdown. During this time, her mum, an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant at The Rookeries helped her find a poem to help inspire others. The poem "What Makes a Hero" gave Makenna the chance to let her teachers know she was thinking of them even though she hasn't been in school and to say thank you for including her in lessons whilst she's been staying safe at home.

Makenna said, "the poem makes me feel like this will all end and eventually we will be back together at some point. Until then I just have to keep safe. I miss my friends and being a little bit different from everyone else sometimes makes me sad, but I'm lucky to have good friends who care about me."



A Virtual Q&A as Part of National Careers Week

Local artist Rachel List, held a question and answer session with budding artists at Carleton High School in early March as part of a Google Classroom session. Rachel's Banksy style artwork of murals around Pontefract, celebrating the NHS, Sir Tom Moore and spreading a message of positivity and hope, have gained national acclaim over the last year, leading to gallery showings and fundraising for the NHS.

Carleton High School students took their time to prepare a raft of questions for Rachel. Appropriately for National Careers Week, students wanted to know where she got her inspirations from, and how she started as an artist.

Hungry for more, our students also had more technical questions linked to physical and digital art, and her methods for planning and completing her pieces, as well as any tips for them. All students really appreciated Rachel taking so much time to speak to them and inspiring them to create bigger and better things on their own journey as artists.



NEWS

King's 100 Club

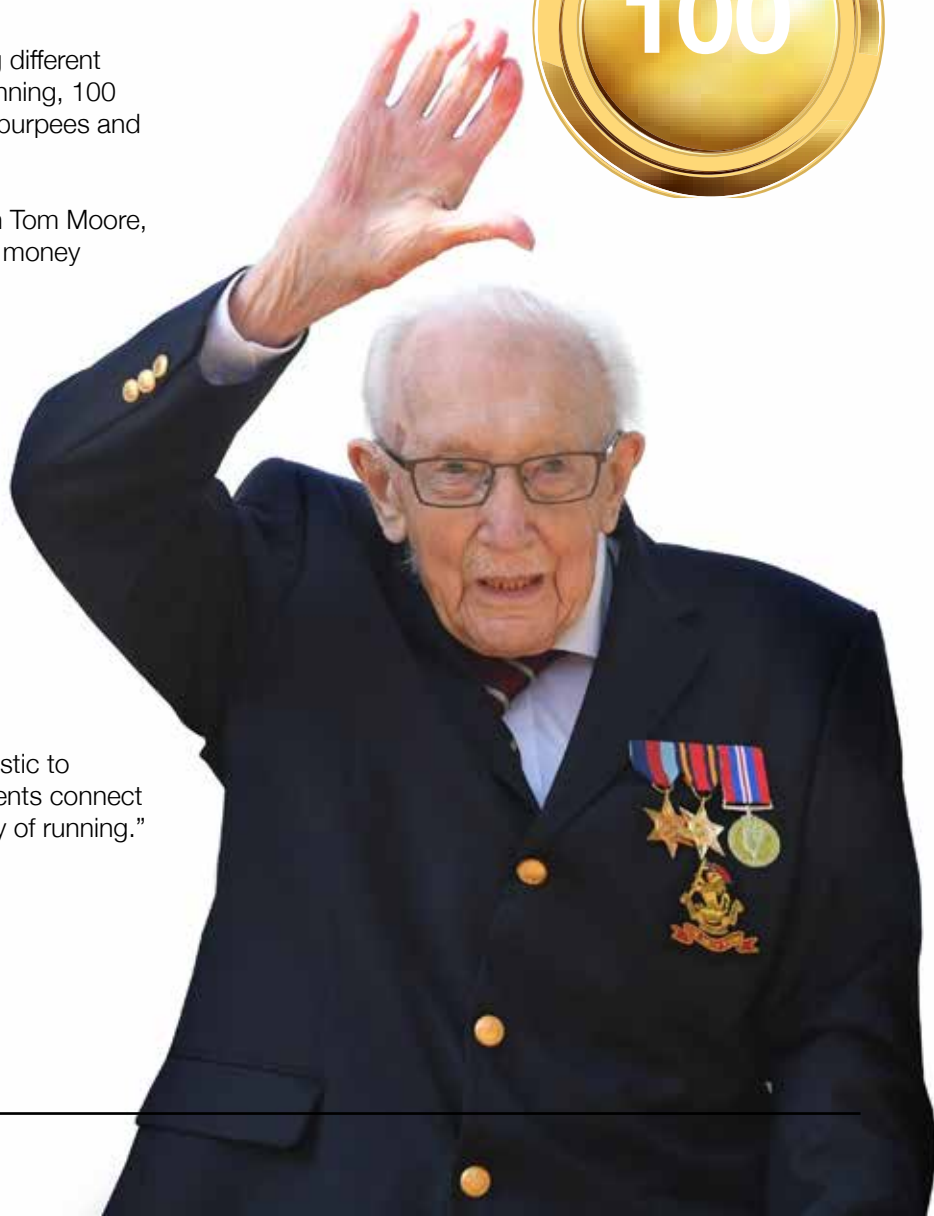
During lockdown 3, whilst home learning was in full swing, the staff at The King's School decided to set up a challenge that all of their students could take part in – the 100 club. The idea was that you had to do something active including the number 100. Some teachers did 100 squats, one did a handstand for 100 seconds and another did a 100 second plank.

Over 170 students took on the challenge doing different activities including 100 minutes walking and running, 100 star jumps, 100 laps around their garden, 100 burpees and the list goes on!

The activity was inspired by the late Sir Captain Tom Moore, who completed 100 laps of his garden to raise money for the NHS. Some of the classes even held competitions to see who could be the most adventurous. Teachers donated money to the NHS charities for the entries.

This wasn't the only active challenge that was set by the school to keep the students fit and healthy whilst remote learning. Every Tuesday students were invited to meet after "virtual school" to get out and about on a 20-30 minute run depending on their preference and ability. Between them the students covered 350km in 5 sessions.

Mr Leeson, PE Teacher said, "It has been fantastic to develop a running community, and let the students connect with each other, albeit virtually, to share their joy of running."



Blue Peter Badges for Two of our Pupils

Two delighted siblings Daisy and Henry from Halfpenny Lane Junior, Infant and Nursery School, have been awarded with their very own Blue Peter Badges for their fantastic artwork.

The children are absolutely ecstatic as they are both big fans of the popular Blue Peter TV programme and never believed they'd be awarded their own badges. Daisy drew a picture of all the presenters as well as the Blue Peter Ship and Henry drew a Remembrance Day poppy.

The school and Trust are so proud of Daisy and Henry and we're sure they'll both treasure these badges for years to come.



12 Pupils from Larks Hill Chosen for Young Writers Publication

The 29th year of the annual Young Writers competition received over 10,000 entries. We are delighted that 12 pupils' work from Larks Hill Junior and Infant School has been chosen for publication in *A Wander In The Woods – UK Fiction*. The pupils were awarded with a bookmark and a certificate to mark their achievement.

The aim of the Young Writers competition is to inspire children everywhere to become confident and passionate writers. Having their work published is a fantastic way to do this, as it boosts confidence and showcases writing skills as well as giving pupils a real audience and purpose for their writing.

The book is scheduled for publication on 7th May 2021 and as a participating school, Larks Hill will receive a complimentary copy.

One of the pupil winners said, "I really enjoy writing stories - it is great fun. Everything I learn in my English lessons, I try to apply to my poems and stories. It was also a challenge to limit my poem to 100 words but I'm excited to see my work in a book."



COMMUNITY

Pontefract Food Bank Donations During Lockdown



More than 500 teachers and staff from our Trust collected tins of food and urgent items to donate to the local Pontefract food bank. The Trust are pleased to be able to help them continue their phenomenal work of helping those needing support especially with the increased numbers during the pandemic.

Pontefract Food Bank, which is based at Central Methodist Church, Newgate, Pontefract are delighted to have the support of our Trust as they are urgently needing items such as tinned tuna, tinned meats, tinned potatoes, carrots and large size nappies to name just some of the products on their list.

CEO at Pontefract Academies Trust, Julian Appleyard OBE said: "I'm so incredibly proud of all the staff and teachers for as well as adapting to a new way of working they spent their free time supporting our local community. They have really demonstrated their community spirit and we hope our contribution will ensure that essential food will be available for those in need. We've already made three drop offs and hope to do many more in the future."

Covid-19 Pen Pals

Working with The Prince of Wales Hospice our schools have been writing letters to the various hero's at our local hospice. Letters were sent from all ages in our schools to all roles, including house keepers, trustees, chefs, and outreach coordinators. The letters were received with joy and smiles and we were told that the people opening the letters were extremely touched by the effort and time that had gone into them.

Orchard Head J.I. and N.School
Orchard Head Lane
Pontefract
West Yorkshire
WF8 2NJ
23.02.21

Dear Social Worker at the Prince of Wales Hospice,

I am writing to you to get a better view of what you do as an everyday job. Also thank you very much for taking your time reading this letter as I know you must be very busy.

Sorry not to introduce my self any sooner but my name is Sienna and I am ten years old. I like to get fresh air and hear all wonderful birds sing in such pure nature. How many enough about it, me how about you? What are your hobbies? Do you like your job? I sit here?

At the minute I still go to school but it's not the same and I would love it to just be normal so I could see all my friends. I sit the same with you?

Thank you so much for reading this short message. I really hope you can get back to me.

Your sincerely,
Sienna :)

Letter from Sienna, aged 10

Dear Sienna

My name is Jane and I am the Social Worker at the Prince of Wales Hospice. It was so lovely to receive your letter. A big thank you for supporting The Prince of Wales Hospice too.

It was lovely to hear about some of the things you like to do. Walking and listening to the birds sing is so lovely isn't it. I really enjoy this too and I belong to the RSPB which is an organisation that protects our birds. I don't know whether you have ever been to Fairburn Lings but that is a really nice place to walk and see the birds and wildlife. There are little Hides there where you can watch the birds without them seeing you. Walking is my main hobby but I also like to read, do jigsaws and be in my garden.

I have worked in the hospice for 5 years now Sienna and it is so rewarding to help people. This is really why I became a social worker, to try and help people live the best life that they can. Every day is different, a lot of people think that working in a hospice is quite sad but actually it can be a very happy place. My job can be hard at times but still enjoyable.

I too look forward to things being 'normal' again when I can meet my friends. It must be strange being in school when your friends are at home. Hopefully it won't be too long before you can see them again. Keep working hard at school Sienna and make sure you spend time doing the things you enjoy. Walking is so good for you and keeps you fit and healthy.

Thank you again Sienna for writing to me.

Yours sincerely

Jane
Social Worker

Reply from social worker at
The Prince of Wales Hospice, aged 59

PEOPLE

Getting To Know Us

In this edition of our magazine, we are speaking to Shaheen Shariff, Deputy Headteacher at Carleton High School. Shaheen works as part of our Senior Leadership Team alongside a dynamic team of leaders and staff. We strongly believe that inspirational staff are essential to delivering an outstanding education.

We are proud to have a dedicated team of talented and inspirational staff who are committed to delivering the highest standards for each student in the school.

How long have you been working at Carleton High School?

I have worked at Carleton High School since September 2020, as the students returned from the national lockdown.

What inspired you to work in education?

This is a simple answer. I wanted to help others. That is in my nature, it's how I've been brought up. Another influencing factor is that at each phase of my education, primary school through to university, I have had certain teachers that changed my life course. They believed in me and got me to the next step. I now want to have that impact on others.

What are your hobbies and what do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I enjoy spending time with my family and friends and at the moment I spend a lot of time going for walks! I also love watching TV where I don't have to think and I'm not ashamed to say my last watch was Married At First Sight Australia!



Shaheen Shariff
Deputy Headteacher,
Carleton High School

What aspect of your job gives you the most satisfaction and why?

It would have to be helping others improve and develop both academically and personally. This applies to both students I teach and staff I work alongside. I love watching somebody develop based on the help and guidance I have given. It's great to see people show their talents and realise their full potential. I suppose it goes back to how people in my life, both family and teachers, have done that for me and it's now my way of giving something back to others. An example I can give is from last year, where I heard a student speak in a full sentence for the first time, due to the provision we as a school had put in place for her. It absolutely made my day! So any positive impact (minor or significant) is what gives me satisfaction.

Do you have a life motto that you live by?

I'm a strong believer that you should live for others and not just yourself. Be good and be just. These are the values I've been brought up on.

Who's your hero and why?

My Dad. He is kind, respectful and a lovely man. He is just in all his actions; he helps people he doesn't even know. He's selfless and constantly gives what he can to others that are in need. If there were more people like my Dad in the world it would absolutely be a better place.

Quick Fire Round!

Book or kindle

✓ Book

TV or music

✓ TV

Walking or running

✓ Walking

Beach or exploring

✓ Beach

Hot or cold

✓ Hot

Welcome to Reuben

A very warm welcome to our new Trustee, Reuben Moore. Reuben currently works for Teach First and is responsible for developing new programmes that attract great people to be teachers and leaders and support them to be expert teachers or leaders. He and his team also work to make sure all programmes, current and new, meet the needs of our schools.

Reuben has been with Teach First for eight years, first as Local Director and then leading Initial Teacher Education work with universities. Before that, he spent 12 years as teacher and leader in schools and higher education.

Reuben is a founding fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching, a member of the Now Teach Advisory Board and the Chair of Governors at a local primary school in Leeds. We're excited to see Reuben's ideas come to life.





8 schools

ONE TRUST

pontefractacademiestrust.org.uk

Telephone: 01977 232146 • **Email:** adminsupport@patrust.org.uk
Twitter: @PontefractAT • **LinkedIn:** Pontefract Academies Trust