



# Pathfinder News

The latest updates from across the Trust

December 2023

## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from everyone at Pathfinder

We have made it to the end of another incredibly busy and productive autumn term. I would like to thank the children and staff in all of our schools for their hard work and perseverance over the past 15 weeks.

At the beginning of September we were delighted to welcome Huntington Primary Academy and Poppleton Road Primary School into Pathfinder. We are now serving more than 5,000 students across the Trust with a workforce of almost 750 members of staff. We are also working with a number of schools who are exploring the possibility of joining Pathfinder in the future.

We were just a couple of weeks into the term when Acomb Primary School received a call from Ofsted. Following an extremely positive inspection, the school was judged Outstanding in all areas. A remarkable and well-deserved achievement. St Lawrence's CE Primary School also had a visit from Ofsted in November. We are eagerly awaiting the publication of the report and are looking forward to sharing the outcome.

As we have mentioned in previous

newsletters, two Pathfinder schools successfully achieved a place on the government's School Rebuilding Programme which carries out major rebuilding and refurbishment projects in schools across England. Hempland Primary School has recently had plans for their new build approved by City of York Council with work due to begin on site early next year. The proposal for Tang Hall Primary School's rebuild will be consulted on in January before the plans are submitted for approval. We are looking forward to sharing more on both projects in the coming months.

Finally, it was fantastic to celebrate the Christmas story with so many of our Pathfinder children, staff and families at Archbishop Holgate's Christmas Carol Service in York Minster. Thank you and well done to everyone who took part for making it such an amazing evening filled with music, drama and dance.

Have a safe and peaceful Christmas and Happy New Year from everyone at Pathfinder.

**Andrew Daly** | Chief Executive Officer

### Inside this issue



**Archbishop Holgate's School Christmas Carol Service**

Page 2



**Acomb Primary School celebrates Outstanding Ofsted judgement**

Page 3



**Plans approved for Hempland Primary School new build**

Page 10

## Our schools

Pathfinder was formed in August 2016, initially between just four schools. Today, we are 13 schools strong, serving more than 5,000 students and their families across York.



# A Saviour for all



## Archbishop Holgate's School Christmas Carol Service

Archbishop Holgate's School celebrated their annual carol service in York Minster during the first week in December. In recent years this has become a popular community occasion and parents, governors, children and members of the public packed the cathedral close to capacity. This year, more than 1360 people attended, making it the largest congregation in the history of this partnership between the school and the Minster.

Those present heard the Christmas story retold through music, drama, bible readings, prayers and carols. This was done with a particular focus on the perspective of the shepherds in the Christmas story and how the birth of Jesus is good news of the coming of a Saviour for All. Over 150 students from Archbishop Holgate's participated in the service as singers, readers, actors, musicians, ushers and technical crew. This year the combined Primary School Choir consisted of over 400 pupils from 13 local Primary schools. There was also a Community Choir of parents, governors and staff from Archbishop Holgate's School and others in Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust.

The school was delighted that the Dean of York Minster, the Very Revd Dominic Barrington, attended the service. The preacher at the service was the Rt Revd Anna Eltringham, Bishop of Ripon. Bishop Anna spoke of how at Christmas time we engage in belief in many different forms. She reminded us that the original and the best version of Christmas is about believing and trusting in God, just like the shepherds did. She reminded all who were present that Jesus knows every one of us because he became one of us, and knows every human emotion. This truth is good news for everyone that can't be contained, as the shepherds themselves discovered.





# Acomb Primary School celebrates Outstanding Ofsted judgement



Acomb Primary School's Headteacher, Lee Haynes, with students

Students and staff at Acomb Primary School have been celebrating the school being judged Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted. Headteacher, Lee Haynes, said: "I am thrilled that Ofsted has recognised the strengths of our school. This report shows the hard work and dedication that the whole school community has invested to make Acomb Primary an exceptional place to learn and work. We are especially pleased that our work on the personal development of pupils has been recognised as a strength."

The school was previously judged Good and had an ungraded inspection in May 2022 where Ofsted found enough evidence of improved performance to suggest the school could be judged outstanding at its next inspection.

Describing what it is like to attend the school, the report opens with: "Acomb Primary School has a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils love their school. They demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to their education." The report goes on to praise the school's 'exceptional curriculum' including the support for pupils with SEND to fully access the curriculum and achieve the same outcomes as their peers. The wider personal development pupils receive was recognised as a

particular strength of the school, with the report stating: "The school's 'Acorns' initiative enhances pupils' learning. These are a wide, rich set of experiences that give pupils opportunities to develop their character and to make a difference to the school, their community and the wider world."

Highlighting the leadership of the school, the report noted: "The trust and local governing committee recognise the strength of the school leadership. Leadership at all levels is extraordinary." The school's Chair of Governors, Jennifer Garbutt, said: "This outstanding result is incredibly well deserved. It recognises what a special place Acomb Primary is and how hard all the staff work to give our children an exceptional start in life."

Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust's CEO, Andrew Daly, said: "Acomb's Ofsted success is recognition of the hard work and dedication of the entire school community. Outstanding judgements are not easy to achieve and are testament to the continued focus to deliver an excellent, all-round, education each and every day. Well done to the staff, children, governors and families on this well-deserved outcome."

## Valuing the uniqueness and diversity of our schools

Pathfinder is a flourishing and supportive partnership of church and community schools, where a clear and ambitious vision of a high quality inclusive education **sets the course** and permeates across all areas of school life. Pathfinder has a proven track record of **leading the way**. We are a Trust with strong examination results, high-quality teaching and learning, an inspiring curriculum, excellent opportunities for personal development and a wide, varied programme of extra curricular opportunities.

We understand that achievement comes in many different forms and work collectively to **serve and inspire**, nurturing aspiration and promoting excellence in all our students. We value the uniqueness and diversity of each of our schools, celebrating this distinctiveness and the contributions they make to the wider Pathfinder community.



**Setting the course**



**Leading the way**



**Serving and inspiring**

## News from our schools



### ACOMB PRIMARY SCHOOL



This term in Reception, we have been on our very first school trip to Acomb Explore Library. Children didn't let the windy autumn day hinder our

trip and they all walked so sensibly to and from the library, accompanied by our parent helpers. Once we arrived, we sat down to listen to a story and found out about the different

things we could do at the library. The children were also fortunate enough to take part in a drama workshop run by Jorvik!

As part of our 'Light and Dark' topic we learned about what happens during the day and what happens at night time. Children learned the names of and Makaton signs for different nocturnal animals including fox, owl and hedgehog.

Ryan from Owl Adventures came to visit us, bringing some friends for us to meet! Children listened so carefully to Ryan as he told us about what owls eat and how they catch their prey. Then it was time to meet and hold Gizmo the owl, who we discovered was the same age as the children in our class!

To conclude our visit, the owls showed off their acrobatic skills, flying over our heads and landing on



the beams in our hall. Reception were so inspired by their owl visit they spent the rest of the week drawing owls, making owl food in the mud kitchen and building owl nests using twigs and leaves.

The following week we decided to read 'Owl Babies' by Martin Waddell, joining in with repeated phrases from the story and writing a speech bubble for Bill the owl!



### Badger Hill PRIMARY SCHOOL



This has been a very busy term at Badger Hill! We have focused on history and art this half term which has resulted in some fabulous

learning, all based around Yorkshire. We held a Yorkshire art competition which showed off the skills of our children and we now know we have some wonderful artists at Badger Hill. Our history topics have included World War 2, the invention of the steam engine, York and its history of chocolate making and the impact of the Romans on York itself.

Year 6 lived out our values of Achieve, Believe and Create as they took part in a week long residential at Peat Rigg! This saw them take on zip wires, canoeing, crate challenges and finally an abseil over a viaduct! Not for the faint hearted. The children all



loved the experience and haven't stopped talking about it since!

In the last few weeks, amongst all our learning we have also been feeling very Christmassy! This has included a wonderful nativity in Reception and KS1, carol singing in the local care home, a wonderful Christmas Fayre and singing at the Barbican. Our choir took to the stage to sing two carols at the community carol service on 17 December! They were fabulous and it was wonderful to be part of such a festive event.



# News from our schools



Our autumn term has been packed with experiences and opportunities to enhance our curriculum and create wonderful memories for our children.

Early Years were introduced to religious and cultural festivals including Diwali, Hanukkah, Ramadan and the Chinese New Year through a wonderful book called 'Little Glow'. This inspired the creation of bonfire night sky artwork and rangoli patterns in Reception and clay Diva lamps in Nursery.

A grandparent came to visit Year 1 to talk about childhood in the 1950s and family trees. In geography children learnt about continents and the countries, capital cities and settlements of the United Kingdom.

Year 2 studied historically significant people who have had a major impact on the world such as Neil Armstrong and Rosa Parks. They learnt how to use timelines and historical models to explore their significance.

A trip to the Yorkshire Museum provided Year 3 and 4 with the opportunity to explore life in York under the Romans and beyond. Year 5 were taken back in time to the banks of the Yellow River in China where the powerful Shang Dynasty used to dwell. The topic was enhanced by a drama-filled workshop where children became members of the dynasty's elite army.

A visit to Eden Camp in Malton allowed Year 6 to discover more about the causes, events and consequences of the First and Second World Wars. The children considered the influence of new inventions on warfare and how life in Great Britain was affected.

One of the biggest highlights for Year 6 this term has to be the inaugural residential trip to Kingswood at Dearne Valley. This allowed the children to develop their problem solving and communication skills whilst boosting their self confidence and resilience.



## Hempland Primary School

Hempland have been out and about in the community this term with many events to celebrate. We are once again participating in the York Minster Christmas Tree Festival (and hoping for a win for the best dressed tree for the third year running!) Our Year 5 school councillors did a fabulous job of decorating our tree and were then interviewed for BBC Radio York to say why we got involved and to explain the theme of our tree. This was very exciting!

Our Year 3 children headed out to Mossdale Residence Care Home to perform a selection of Christmas tunes which entertained all of the residents. They sang, danced and signed and provided great all round entertainment!

The Year 3 children also performed for our local residents who we invited into school to enjoy a drink, mince pie and a festive performance. This was a really lovely event and based on the feedback we received, definitely something we will be repeating.

Our Singstars School Choir made the short walk to our local community centre to perform for the Heworth Retired Men's Forum and showcased their singing. The choir performed brilliantly and certainly spread so much Christmas cheer to the audience! Merry Christmas!



## News from our schools



### Heworth

Church of England Primary School

During the first week in November, the children at Heworth CE Primary School took part in UK Parliament Week. This annual event aims to spread the word about what Parliament is, what it does and how children can involve themselves in activities which encourage democracy. We therefore decided that this was the perfect week to run elections for our School Council and our Year 6 Collective Worship Team.

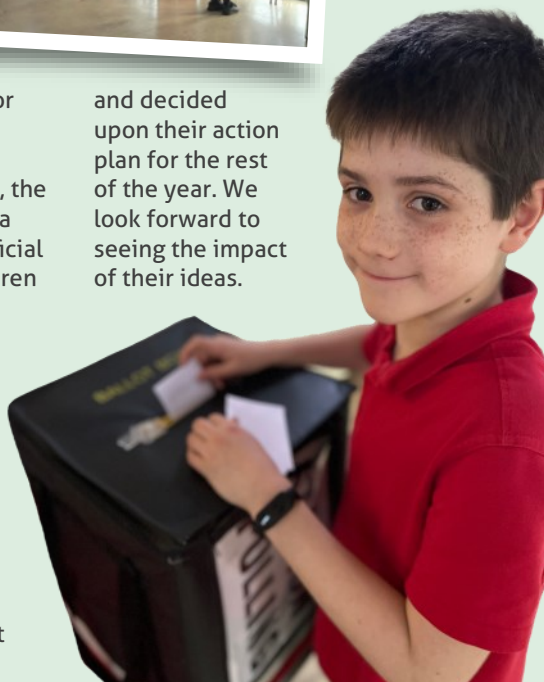
The week began with children being taught what democracy is and how important it is to be a courageous advocate (someone who supports, champions and speaks up for a cause that is important and meaningful to them). Our children

were then encouraged to stand for election, write manifestos and present these to their peers.

During the middle of the week, the school hall was transformed into a polling station, complete with official signage and polling booths. Children came to the hall class by class, confirming their identities before collecting their ballot papers, filling them in and posting them in an official ballot box.

After collating the votes, we announced our new School Councillors and Collective Worship Team members in front of a packed school hall during our Friday Collective Worship time. Our teams have already met

and decided upon their action plan for the rest of the year. We look forward to seeing the impact of their ideas.



### Huntington

PRIMARY ACADEMY



As part of our vision at Huntington, we want our pupils to embrace challenges and opportunities both inside and outside the classroom, with a sense of positivity and responsibility.

This term we are delighted to be offering a new opportunity for the children through Rock Steady Music School. We had a fantastic

introduction to the program in an assembly. The lead teacher, Tim, was able to show all the children the different instruments and gave the opportunity for some of them to join the band in the workshops which followed. The children were then able to sign up for band sessions and we are pleased to say these have been very popular already.

As part of our work to develop the curriculum, we look for trips and visits to enhance the children's experience of a topic. This term we have had a number of trips including Year 2 visiting the National Railway Museum as part of their topic - Railways. This topic, encouraging children to feel a sense of belonging to our city, has focused on the rise of the railway industry and its impact on York.



Year 3 also visited the Yorkshire Museum to take part in an exciting pilot which is being run by The British Museum and Art Explora. They had an interactive challenge to take part in, exploring life in Roman York.



# News from our schools

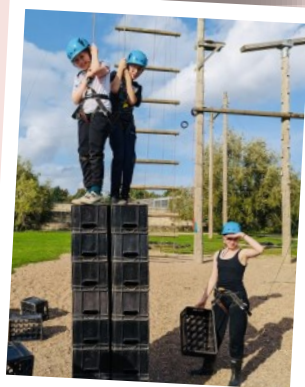


## New Earswick Primary School

We have had a super autumn term at New Earswick Primary School! There have been all sorts of exciting activities happening within school, out of school, as well as new opportunities arising for the children. We have started to grow our enrichment offer for the pupils, so clubs such as basketball, learning to play the guitar and chess have proved popular. We have lots of ideas for future clubs so we're excited about what 2024 has in store.

We held our first film night before half term for KS1 pupils to raise money for school funds. The children loved coming into school after hours in their pyjamas to watch a film and eat popcorn with their friends in the hall. We're now planning further film nights for the older children too. Year 6 thoroughly embraced their residential trip to Kingswood in September and it was a good start to the new academic year with regards to teamwork skills, resilience and risk taking!

At the other end of school, in Early Years, the children have settled really well and Reception pupils are loving their weekly visits to our friends at New Lodge Care Home. The children and residents alike get so much out of the visits so we're aiming for children in all year groups to visit in the new year. Trips to the York Food Festival, the Theatre to see Stickman, visits to the local church, library and Folk Hall have all enriched the children's learning and we're looking forward to more trips and workshops in the new year. We're concluding 2023 with our magical Early Years and KS1 Nativities, our first Christmas Fayre as well as KS2 Carol Concerts performed at both the local church and York Minster!



## Poppleton Road Primary School

Our first term with Pathfinder has been very exciting and busy. The children have been very motivated and engaged in all of their learning and have really enjoyed focusing on our school value of Success. We have celebrated all of the success of our children both in and out of school and it was wonderful to hear how one of our Year 2 children had worked so hard to learn their 2 times table, whilst we celebrated the success in tennis of one of our Year 3 children.

We have been on some very exciting trips and had some very interesting visitors including an Anglo Saxon!

Food preparation and cooking is a really important part of our Design and Technology work at Poppleton Road. All year groups prepare and cook at least once a term and have produced some amazing food like pumpkin soup and a full three course meal. This term our Year 1 children prepared their own food for their Christmas party.

Christmas is a really special time at Poppleton Road and the whole school are involved in the excitement. The success of our productions was great with every single Year Group taking part and we are always very proud of the amazing singing, dancing and acting.

We have also welcomed our families into school for Christmas crafts which have produced some wonderful creations. This year the choir sang at the Minster and we loved the song so much the whole school learnt to sing it for our Christmas Service at Holy Redeemer Church. We will finish our term and Christmas celebrations with our Christmas parties and delicious Christmas dinner.





**Rufforth  
Primary School**  
· Inspire · Care · Grow ·

A first for Rufforth this year was our children in Key Stage 2 joining the Pathfinder primary choir as part of Archbishop Holgate's School Christmas service. This wonderfully festive event in the beautiful York Minster was a privilege to be part of.

As part of our festivities in the lead up to Christmas, children at Rufforth participated in a sponsored Reindeer Rush and raised over £600 for St Leonard's Hospice along with funds raised earlier in the term for Children in Need.

Our Christmas celebrations are in full swing. Classes 1 and 2 have performed their nativity and we look forward to our Key Stage 2 carol service next week. Parties, panto and craft days are also part of the festivities at Rufforth.



**St Barnabas**  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

This term has flown by and we are looking forward to our Christmas celebrations. In November, our Year 5 and 6 children had an amazing time

on residential at Robinwood. They threw themselves into all the activities; encouraging each other, working as a team and demonstrating our school values of Courage, Compassion and Creativity.

Our Reception children have fully settled in and blossomed in their first term. A few weeks ago they walked to the York Explore Library in the city centre where they enjoyed learning about the library, choosing books and listening to a story read by the librarian. The children have learned lots and showed great courage when they got to hold an owl on a recent birds of prey visit to school.

We are grateful to the volunteers at St Barnabas Church who led a



Christmas themed prayer spaces day recently. Each class took part in a range of creative activities to help them to reflect on the themes of love, forgiveness and joy at Christmas time. In the quiet and special atmosphere of the church, children thought about their own feelings as well as how experiencing the Christmas story told with the use of figures in sand enabled us to better understand the journeys made by different people on the first Christmas.





## News from our schools



**St Lawrence's**  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Lawrence's is a great place to be at the moment. We have had an amazing term which culminated with a visit from Ofsted. This was a very positive experience for us and shows how far the school has come on its journey.



Once again, the school has been super busy! We have been delighted to take part in Raquets Cubed sessions for our Year 5s. The children attend a tennis session each week at the University of York Tennis Dome with a professional instructor, STEM activities and then have their tea together afterwards. Who knows, we may have some future Wimbledon winners in our midst!

Our children constantly make us proud and non more so than when the Year 5 and 6 pupils performed a violin concert for their parents. There was an excellent turn out and everyone enjoyed performing and showing off what they had learnt over the past term.

There were further performances from our Years 3 and 4 who visited a local care home to sing carols and Christmas songs to the residents and from our Early Years and KS1

children who have been performing their nativities to their parents. On top of all this, we have also been sewing, practising gymnastic skills, drawing, collecting for Harvest and busy just learning! Phew!



**Tang Hall**  
Primary School

This year, Tang Hall Primary School, is participating in the REACH project. REACH (Reconnecting Education, the Arts, Creativity and Heritage) is the Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) for York. It is made up of a diverse range of organisations from the local authority, public health, cultural, education and community sectors, who have agreed to work in partnership to provide opportunities for children and young people to benefit from the amazing creative and cultural offer across York. REACH's core purpose is to strive for York to be the first city to achieve cultural entitlement for all children and young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

So far this year, we have been matched with a REACH Champion who will support school with our journey. Our champion has been into school to meet our children and lead a whole school assembly. He has also worked with key teachers to recruit a team of REACH Ambassadors who will ensure the voice of their peers is always at the centre of what we do at Tang Hall. The Ambassadors next job is to book a school experience to increase either the arts, creativity or heritage education within the school. The team are looking forward to this great opportunity.

To further ensure the success of the project, we have also been engaging with other organisations this term, including the York Travellers Trust, English Heritage and local theatres where we have been successful in enabling pupils to visit performances of 'The House with Chicken Legs' at the Theatre Royal, 'Oliver' at Queen Margaret's School and welcomed Riding Lights Theatre group into Tang Hall for their performance of 'Give it back, Mak'. We are also looking forward to our own nativity productions performed by Early Years and KS1 pupils this Christmas.





## Train to teach at Pathfinder

Are you interested in training to become a teacher? The Pathfinder Teaching School Hub delivers Initial Teacher Training for both primary and secondary trainees. The courses combine in-school training with the latest research-led practice provided by our partner universities.

We are open for applications for our teacher training courses starting in September 2024 and are looking for people who have a degree, a passion for teaching and who want to inspire young people to fulfil their potential. If this sounds like you, contact us to find out about the training opportunities we have available. Call 01904 806900 or email [info@tsh.pmat.academy](mailto:info@tsh.pmat.academy). You can also find out more on our website [pathfinder-tsh.co.uk](http://pathfinder-tsh.co.uk).



Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust  
Archbishop Holgate's School  
Hull Road, York YO10 5ZA

- 01904 806000
- [info@pmat.academy](mailto:info@pmat.academy)
- [www.pathfindermat.co.uk](http://www.pathfindermat.co.uk)
- @PathfinderMAT

Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust is an exempt charity registered in England and Wales.  
Company Number: 07559610.  
Registered Office: Archbishop Holgate's School,  
Hull Road, York YO10 5ZA.

# Plans approved for Hempland Primary School new build



3D render of Hempland Primary School's new building due to begin construction early in the new year

Plans to construct a new two-storey building for Hempland Primary School have been unanimously approved by City of York Council's planning committee. Hempland successfully achieved a place on the government's School Rebuilding Programme which carries out major rebuilding and refurbishment projects in schools and colleges across England. The school's current building has reached the end of its functional life and will be completely rebuilt under the Department for Education led programme.

Staff from both the school and Pathfinder have been working closely with the Department for Education and contractor, ISG Construction, on the plans for the new building. The new school is designed to be net carbon zero in operation and will be built to the latest construction standards. It will provide modern, state of the art

facilities to help support an excellent and enriching education for all students and will include a main hall, kitchen, library, staff room and reception area along with classrooms, cloakrooms, toilets and offices.

Under the approved plans, the new building will be constructed behind the current school avoiding the need for any temporary accommodation during construction. Once the new school is opened, the old building will be demolished to make way for an Early Years play area and landscaping. Work on site is due to begin early next year and is expected to be completed by autumn 2025.

We are delighted that the project has passed this important milestone and are looking forward to continuing our successful partnership with the DfE and ISG to deliver a world-class school for the Hempland community.

## Tang Hall Primary School Rebuild - Public Consultation



We are keen to get the views of parents, residents and local stakeholders on the plans to rebuild Tang Hall Primary School as part of the DfE's School Rebuilding Programme. A public consultation is taking place at the school on Wednesday 10 January 2024 at 3.00pm. For more information, please visit our website [pathfinder.academy](http://pathfinder.academy).