



EBOR ACADEMY TRUST

October 2017
Website edition

SCHOOL REPORT



DAME JUDI DENCH

Leading figures from the arts pledge support for Creative Arts Academy



EARLY EXCELLENCE

Partnership boosts Early Years training in York and North Yorkshire



FIRE!

20th anniversary of Park Grove blaze

SEN ACROSS EBOR

Inclusion: helping everyone belong

INSPIRING LEADERS

Developing careers

New ways of working

Excellence | Belonging | Opportunity | Respect



Executive Headteachers, from left, Gail Brown, Jeanette Sutherland and Dave Barber

Executive Heads join the Ebor team

Two new Executive Headteachers have been appointed by Ebor Academy Trust.

Jeanette Sutherland, Executive Headteacher at Alderman Cogan's Church of England Primary Academy in Hull and Dave Barber, formerly headteacher at Hambleton Church of England Primary School in Selby, will lead the Ebor East Riding and Ebor South hubs respectively at the growing, York-based multi-academy trust. Jeanette and Dave join Gail Brown and Richard

Ludlow who will head up the Ebor Central and Ebor Yorkshire Coast hubs. Richard also remains Chief Executive of the trust, which was established in 2013.

"As Ebor matures and grows, I am delighted to welcome Jeanette and Dave, two exceptional school leaders, to our family of schools," said Richard. "It is part of our plan to establish hubs of up to ten schools in each of four geographically close locations, and the new appointments are key in the continuous improvement of schools joining Ebor."

"The Executive Headteachers have a responsibility to ensure an appropriate balance between quality assurance – holding schools to account – and school improvement support, to make sure school improvement is achieved."

Dave Barber also becomes School to School Support Director.

Now we are 14

There are currently 14 schools in Ebor Academy Trust, with more queueing up to join.

As at 1 October 2017 Ebor comprises:

- Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy
- Haxby Road Primary Academy
- Brotherton and Byram Community Primary Academy
- Ebor Academy Filey
- Staynor Hall Community Primary Academy
- Siggleshorne Church of England Primary Academy
- Camblesforth Community Primary Academy
- Filey Church of England Nursery and Infants Academy
- Park Grove Primary Academy
- Sproatley Endowed Church of England Academy
- Alderman Cogan's Church of England Primary Academy
- Easington Church of England Primary
- Patrington Church of England Primary
- Marfleet Primary School

We look forward to welcoming the following to our growing family of schools, as soon as legalities are completed.

- Tockwith Church of England Primary
- Hob Moor Community Primary
- Hob Moor Oaks
- Lakeside Primary
- Osbaldwick Primary
- We hope to announce soon the site and the opening date for the Creative Arts Academy in York.
- There are also two schools in consultation who may opt to join us.



Ebor Academy Trust:
our geographical
area



Living our values has opened up new opportunities

Right now there are 14 schools in Ebor Academy Trust and ten more at various stages on their journey to joining us.

We've come a long way since adding our first school, Haxby Road Primary, in February 2014. It needed urgent help and the only way to do it properly was to academise our founding school, Robert Wilkinson Primary, and sponsor Haxby Road. We became the first multi-academy trust in York and quickly began to see the benefits of collaborative working – sharing best practice, developing our staff and, most importantly, improving outcomes for children.

In January 2017 Ofsted validated the hard work of a lot of people by awarding a 'Good' rating to Haxby Road – a tremendous achievement.

The Ofsted ruling also gave us an official stamp of approval, endorsing the systems and methods we had adopted at Haxby Road and elsewhere.

The team here at Ebor has school improvement at our core. We are always seeking ways of doing things better and I am constantly impressed by the dedication, enthusiasm and vigour of our teaching staff and school leaders as we learn from one another and bring tangible benefits to the ways we work and to the children trusted to our care.

At a time of budget pressures the like of which schools haven't

seen before, we are growing as a group and succeeding thanks to innovative ways of working. It isn't rocket science: we look after people, help them in their careers, see them flourish, open up opportunities – and all in parallel with educating our children. They are the ones who benefit most from motivated staff.

As well as the old Roman name for York, Ebor is an acronym for the four values we subscribe to: excellence, belonging, opportunity and respect. Excellence in all we do; a sense of belonging and solidarity for everyone in our group; the opportunities presented when we work together; and respect for what we do and for each other.

Living these values has opened up opportunities for Ebor, too. We are now working alongside Early Excellence, a nationally recognised resource and training provider, to establish a centre of excellence and training facility for early years education in the north of England. It will be based at Osbaldwick Primary, soon to join the Ebor family of schools.

We have also joined forces with Inspiring Leaders, a not-for-profit company comprising teaching schools and other multi-academy trusts, to help advance the careers of personnel across our group, producing the next generation of headteachers. This activity sits

neatly alongside our own continuous professional training programmes within Ebor Training.

Our network of regional hubs is coming together, in York, Selby, the East Riding and on the Yorkshire Coast, with the appointment of Executive Headteachers for each of these areas. It is the Executive Headteachers' jobs to make sure all our schools operate to the highest of professional standards.

Our central services team continues to expand as we take on more schools and more responsibility. Previously we bought in local authority solutions for aspects of school management. Today, with a governance lead and director of communications, our own finance director, finance manager, HR director, HR manager, payroll manager, estates and facilities manager, academy business manager and several administrators, we are establishing better, bespoke and more joined-up solutions with real-time financial reporting among many of the benefits.

I hope you enjoy reading this magazine and learning more about Ebor.

RICHARD LUDLOW
Chief Executive and
Executive Headteacher

Plan for an early years centre of excellence



PARTNERSHIP: from left, Richard Ludlow, Ebor's Chief Executive; Lesley Barringer, Osbaldwick Primary School headteacher; and Nikki Walters, Early Excellence regional development manager, at Osbaldwick's The Leyes site. Above, how the entrance to the training centre might look



Ebor Academy Trust has joined forces with Early Excellence to enhance early years teaching across York and North Yorkshire. The centre of excellence will be based at Osbaldwick Primary School in York, which is due to join Ebor in 2018.

Early Excellence is an established national leader specialising in developing young children's education. The York centre will join other centres in London and Huddersfield.

"This is a collaboration which will provide benefits to all concerned and especially young children in York and North Yorkshire," said Richard

Ludlow, Chief Executive of Ebor Academy Trust.

"There is capacity at Osbaldwick's The Leyes site and this will be a two-year phased project which will include improvements to teaching spaces,

reconfiguring the entrance to accommodate training facilities and adding a car park for participants in Early Excellence's training courses.

"We share Early Excellence's vision for high quality training and support for school improvement."

Lesley Barringer, headteacher at Osbaldwick, said: "We are absolutely delighted to have the space to be able to host such a prestigious partnership. Our own first class staff are on hand to continue to learn from some of the innovative and best practice being demonstrated. Our children will consequently benefit from excellent provision and the

arrangement will bring welcome extra funding for our school."

Liz Marsden, Early Excellence founder and director, said: "Every day we champion the development of inspirational learning and teaching, offering expert advice, support and training to schools and settings across the UK. We help schools and early years settings to understand and respond to the ever changing landscape of education policy and keep a sharp focus on the leadership of quality provision.

"We too are excited at the prospect of developing an early years centre of excellence in York."

Making good use of additional space

Osbaldwick Primary School is on two sites, following the LA's decision to close Derwent Primary School and create an enlarged Osbaldwick in 2013.

Planned housing in the area has not transpired, however, and so the school has surplus space.

Taking up some of the accommodation will be the Early Excellence training centre. Ebor's central services team, comprising finance, HR, school support, admin support and estates, also plan to move there soon. Currently the central Ebor team is based at Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy in Strensall.

EX Early Excellence
Centre for Inspirational Learning

EBOR ACADEMY TRUST

Free EXAT assessment training for EY colleagues

A half-day course exclusively for Ebor Academy Trust schools and those soon to join. This training is provided as part of the start up cost for the EXAT tracking tool. It is highly recommended for all colleagues attending.

Thursday 21 September, Stajnor Hall Community Primary Academy, Selby

— morning and afternoon sessions (20 places available on each). Lunch provided, simple free car parking. Session 1: 9am-12noon. Lunch: 12noon-1pm. Session 2: 1pm-4pm

EXAT is one complete solution for assessing, tracking, documenting, moderating and reporting children's learning from birth-five years. Practitioners are able to assess, track and document children's learning. The EXAT system includes the functionality to create stunning learning journals and access a wealth of summative data and reports – functions essential for school leaders and managers of settings.

This half-day course is available for practitioners registered to use EXAT in their schools/settings. During this course practitioners will explore the full EXAT system and consider how EXAT can support best practice back at their school or setting.

Benefits

- A deeper understanding and familiarity of the EXAT system and functions.
- Strengthen Early Years assessment knowledge and practice.
- Strategies to confidently use EXAT to maximum effect both at practice and strategic level.

to be

Academy specialists make a difference across the trust

Ebor has a growing team of academy specialists – currently science, maths, English, IT, SEN, and wellbeing and behaviour – who have demonstrated great skills in teaching and learning.

They are experts in their field who work across our schools, helping to improve outcomes for children.

Academy specialists understand what makes a difference when developing learning opportunities through challenge and support and work closely with school staff to equip them with new tools, techniques and methods.

Most of our academy specialists are employed as teachers within our schools, but have time – two or three days per week – allocated to working across the trust in school improvement activity.

One of the team, Helen Jones, who until the end of last term taught at Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy, is now full-time Ebor Academy Maths Specialist working across our schools.

Helen is among 70 expert maths teachers from schools across England who has been chosen to

take part in an exchange to Shanghai, China as part of the Maths Hubs programme.

The purpose of the trip is to further develop the understanding and implementation of “mastery approaches” to teaching maths.

Helen says: “I’m thrilled to have been selected, it’s an incredible opportunity which, in the long run, will benefit hundreds of children across the trust.”

This is the fourth teacher exchange with schools in Shanghai and is one part of the Teaching for Mastery Programme, run by the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) in conjunction with the Maths Hubs programme, and funded by the Department for Education.

The group of teachers, all of whom have completed training as Mastery Specialists in a programme run by the NCETM and Maths Hubs, will be visiting Shanghai in September this year, and hosting their partner teachers from Shanghai in English schools in January 2018.

**Ebor Academy
Maths Specialist
Helen Jones is
Shanghai-bound in
an exchange visit**



Creative Arts Academy moves a step closer

Dame Judi Dench leads a distinguished list of supporters looking forward to the opening of Ebor’s Creative Arts Academy.

We now expect to be able to announce the whereabouts of the site, and confirm an opening date for the school, in November 2017.

The new school was given the go-ahead by the government in summer 2016 and since then, a team comprising the Department for Education, the Education Funding and Skills Agency and Ebor have been working on finding a site appropriate for a two-form entry primary school.

After considering – and rejecting – over 30 possibilities, a site has emerged but we are under strict instructions not to reveal the location until heads of terms have been agreed. This step then secures the site for us.

Dame Judi Dench said: “Anything that will encourage young people from a very early age to appreciate the arts and to enjoy them is to be applauded.”

Sir Nicholas Serota, chairman for Arts Council England said: “I strongly support the creation of the Creative Arts Academy in York and wish you every success.”

Kay Mellor OBE, an acclaimed scriptwriter, said: “I hope that the school will inspire the next generations of individuals who can excel in the creative industries.”

Damian Cruden, York Theatre Royal’s Artistic Director, said: “Creative ability and confidence allows us to be problem solvers. The ability to think in the abstract is enhanced and developed with creative activity.”

Work of art



A project to boost confidence in teaching and learning in art across four Ebor schools has been hailed as a big success



LOUISE BROOKE

Art has played a huge part in children's learning at four of our primary schools thanks to a project lead by Louise Brooke, Ebor Creative Arts Specialist.

Louise has worked with colleagues at Park Grove, Staynor Hall, Sigglesthorne and Robert Wilkinson, helping them to embed art across the curriculum. Louise has worked with different year groups at each school, developing teaching and learning in art to coincide with each individual school's current projects and activities, but her main priorities were to give staff the confidence and tools to teach art and to promote creativity.

At Park Grove, Louise worked closely with Natalie, one of the HLTAs to give her the skills and confidence to develop a robust and curriculum-led art programme for Year 3 and 4 children. She also worked with the teaching staff on how to embed art into the children's World War II studies and on observational techniques with some of the younger children.

Staynor Hall pupils created Impressionist art which was showcased in the first end-of-year exhibition for parents. The children's creations were also entered into local



Bringing art into World War II studies at Park Grove (above and below left)



Art at Robert Wilkinson

competition, Selby in Bloom.

At Sigglesthorne, the children worked throughout the year on drawing, art history, painting, printing, 3D skills and sketchbook work focusing on buildings and architecture in and around Hull, which was used as part of an exhibition for Hull City of Culture.

Robert Wilkinson staff are working with Louise on a two-year programme, learning new art

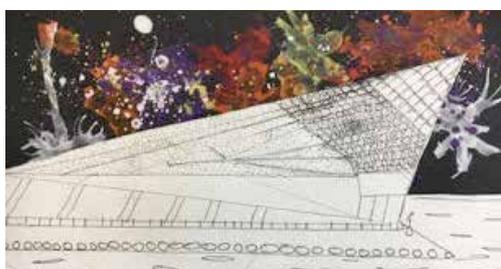
techniques and gaining confidence in areas they are less familiar with. Louise also supports staff to deliver projects linked to other areas of the curriculum including literacy, history, geography, music and science.

Louise said: "It's been great to see the staff gain confidence in using art across the curriculum, and to see the children creating brilliant artwork that not only brings their learning to life, but which they are proud of. The schools have held exhibitions and used the artwork in displays across the schools so that parents and the local community can see the children's work. It's wonderful to be able to work across so many schools, sharing and supporting, but most importantly seeing so much creativity and enthusiasm."





Dramatic poppies at Park Grove, above. Left, a wall of artwork at Robert Wilkinson. Below left, two examples from Sigglesthorpe and below, early years teacher Natalie Blythe and budding artists at Staynor Hall



Twenty years ago this year, Park Grove was consumed by fire in a devastating blaze that 100 firefighters fought to control. In a special project to commemorate the event, teacher Deborah Carr-Brion and her class tracked down the newspaper reporter, Barry Neild, who covered the fire and invited him back to school. This is his story...

Sometimes it takes a question from a 10 year old to finally put everything in perspective.

I'm facing a class of them at Park Grove Primary Academy, the York primary that burned down in a spectacular blaze 20 years ago, and someone just asked a question that made my neck hairs stand on end.

The fire is the reason I'm here. In 1997, on the February night when an electrical fault sparked the fire that consumed the heart of Park Grove, I was a young reporter on the scene.

Arriving around midnight, I watched as the first visible flames that appeared at the school's windows become giant plumes of orange billowing into the sky.

It was a heartbreaking sight. I remember being awestruck by the scale of the both the destruction and the responsibility of reporting it.

And when the firefighters had done their work, I remember being led by one of them into the ruined school to inspect the damage.

That was my final glimpse of Park Grove – a charred skeleton, reeking of smoke and dripping from the gallons of water pumped into its blazing heart. A bleak sight.

In the days, weeks and months that followed, other colleagues picked up the story of the school as it scrambled to find emergency classrooms and teaching equipment for its children.

By the time the school was rebuilt, I'd already left York for London –



A fire that still burns brightly

an ambitious reporter lured by the promise of adventures that inspired me to become a journalist in the first place.

I never forgot about the school and the fire though. The sight of the school's Victorian architecture silhouetted against the flames is seared into my memory.

And, it seems, Park Grove hasn't

forgotten me. When the Press re-printed some of my old stories to mark the anniversary of the fire, teachers at the school used them as study aids, encouraging the children to write poems based on my feverish descriptions of the night.

This, says teacher Deborah Carr-Brion, whose own experiences as a staff member at the time of the fire inspired her to organise the poetry project, prompted a rather blunt line of inquiry from one pupil.

"Is Barry Neild still alive?"

A few Facebook queries later, Mrs Carr-Brion established that I was, at the ripe old age of 46, still breathing and still a journalist, in London.

We exchanged a few messages and she sent me some examples of the children's work – incredibly inventive pieces that vividly brought the emotions of the night back to life.

Another poem saw the events from the perspective of the fire itself: "A sudden burst of life hits me, and, with darkness and hatred in my heart, I attach myself to the nearest brick and begin my dastardly work..."

Most news reports are fleeting things, evaporating within hours of

Still alive: Barry Neild, left, with children from Park Grove Primary Academy and teacher Deborah Carr-Brion, right



Ebor joins 'Inspiring Leaders' network

being written. To have one of mine revived after 20 years in such a wonderful way was an unexpectedly uplifting experience.

Not only because of the significance of the Park Grove school fire in my journalistic career, but also because the children's work for me marked a renewed connection with York – the city I grew up in.

I spent my formative years in York, attending a primary school that was designed by celebrated local architect Walter Henry Brierley, the man who also created Park Grove's distinctive redbrick structure.

So, when the invitation comes to head back to York to meet the children who'd been writing the poems, I jump at the chance.

I enjoy a fascinating day. The structure I last saw as a ravaged skeleton is now a beautiful, light-filled atrium that looks as modern as Brierley's design must've when the school opened in 1895.

I meet the young poets and we discuss how they decided to, as one put it, "magpie" my reports for descriptive language to bring the scene to life.

Then I spend time talking about the night of the fire and my career as a journalist – and answering a lot of incredibly good questions.

Including the one from a 10-year-old boy that stops me in my tracks: "What part of your career would you like to go back and do all over again?"

My first response is working in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban – an exciting time during which I met my future wife.

Then I think harder, and the actual answer takes me by surprise: My time working as a reporter in York.

Because this question has made me realise that, driven as I was by my ambitions to leave York and see the world, I didn't make the most of my time here. And it was only once I was out in the world that I really began to fully appreciate where I was from.

Of course, I wouldn't like to go back and see Park Grove school burn down all over again, but just as the fire helped create the fantastic place that the school is today, it's also helped shape my career and yet still keep me connected to a city I'm immensely proud to call home.

Ebor Academy Trust has joined forces with a school leadership organisation to develop the next generation of headteachers and school leaders.

Ebor has linked up with Inspiring Leaders, a not-for-profit company based in the Midlands, to develop a York hub for the delivery of their National Professional Qualification Middle Leadership (NPQML) and Senior Leadership (NPQSL) programmes.

Inspiring Leaders currently consists of five outstanding teaching schools, a special school and a delivery partner in the East Midlands who are licensed to deliver NPQH, NPQSL, NPQML and DSBM. The schools came together through a shared passion and commitment to develop the inspirational school leaders of tomorrow.

Chief Executive Richard Ludlow said: "Working with like-minded



people committed to raising attainment for all our pupils is driving our growth plans.

"Improving outcomes in children's education is at the heart of everything we do and providing opportunities for staff to progress their careers helps everyone in our school communities.

"We are thrilled to be part of the Inspiring Leaders network."

Ebor Training goes from strength to strength

The Trust's training and professional development arm, Ebor Training, continues to go from strength to strength.

During its first year, Ebor Training has welcomed over 180 participants on over 25 training programmes, in addition to offering bespoke training and consultancy in schools.

Ebor Training is now headed up by Dave Barber, Ebor's School to School Support Director and Executive Headteacher. Dave said: "Training and CPD is essential for anyone working in education and by listening to our colleagues in the profession, we try to offer an array of programmes which cover training to make sure we all meet compliance requirements, but which also refreshes and enhances the way we teach and lead.

"Much of the training is delivered by our own fantastic academy specialists, but we often ask external colleagues to come in to deliver training and share their expertise.

"Our programmes are open to

anyone regardless of whether they are working within the Ebor Academy Trust. Ebor schools benefit from free places or much-reduced prices."

This autumn our Recently Qualified Teacher (RQT) Programme begins again, offering six focused key sessions for teachers in their second or third year in the profession. The programme aims to develop participants' pedagogical skills as well as their leadership skills.

In addition, participants will also develop a network of peer support and establish professional relationships with colleagues from other schools.

New courses and programmes are added to the website on a regular basis. Go to www.ebortraining.ebor, academy or follow us on Twitter @EborTraining.



‘Inclusion is a way of thinking, a way of being and a way of making decisions about helping everyone belong...’



Ebor Academy Trust has a truly inclusive approach towards meeting the needs of our learners; a team of specialist staff who work with colleagues, agencies and families to ensure that views are heard and there is a pro-active approach towards responding to individual need.

Ebor’s core values stand true when talking about SEN: we strive for *Excellence* for **all** our pupils, we create environments and communities where our children feel they *Belong*, we are constantly looking to provide enriching and fulfilling *Opportunities* that are best suited to the relevant outcomes of our pupils, we *Respect* all of our partners in the learning process and give them the skills to teach and to learn.

Ebor has a vision in which it strives to meet all its learners’ needs but with a recognition that some pupils will require more support beyond that of a mainstream setting at times.

Haxby Road Enhanced Resource Provision for primary aged pupils with communication and interaction needs

is within our family of schools and we look forward to Hob Moor Oaks special school joining us soon.

This will mean that the level of expertise, skill and knowledge is second to none and as such, the SEN strategy currently being developed is something truly special.

All our children and young people deserve the best possible school experience. Staff need to be reflective on their own practice, be aware of how to meet need through the implementation of various strategies, but most importantly,

have an attitude that is open to new possibilities.

We firmly believe that SEN support is not just about getting it right at a ‘specialist’ level for those pupils with identified SEN, but having a ‘universal’ approach to meeting need is paramount. Our team focuses on the wider school environment as well as on individuals by carrying out audits and supporting our schools to adapt their environment and embed methods to incorporate strategies that benefit all.

By getting the universal level right,

THE PROFESSIONAL’S VIEW

I love my job! I live and breathe the concept of inclusion within primary schools and feel so lucky that Ebor Academy Trust have given me the opportunity to spread this passion across all of our schools.

I have worked within our schools for 14 years and started to be SENCO nine years ago. Since then, I have been given the opportunity to be part of some invaluable experiences and have recently worked on secondment as a SEN Designated Officer at the local authority in York.

Being the Head of the Enhanced Resource Provision for Communication and Interaction at Haxby Road enables me to work

with a number of schools across the city as our pupils are dual-placed.

There is nothing more rewarding than seeing a child thrive in the classroom when adaptations have

been made to make it work.

Equally, there is nothing more frustrating than seeing a child struggle who could succeed with sometimes simple strategies being implemented.

I know that with the right support for staff and the commitment made by Ebor, we can empower staff to unpick and identify need, to recognise how best to support our young people to put this into practice.



LESLEY THOMPSON





we can create the best life chances and experiences for **all** our pupils.

The role of the SENCO requires a variety of skills: someone who can adapt to manage a range of situations; an excellent communicator, administrator, organiser, leader, advisor, problem-solver – the list goes on.

It is a role that benefits from having peer support networks as no two cases are ever the same. At Ebor, we have developed a SEN support network where all our SENCOs can meet termly for support and advice.

We are not in this alone and as such, there are always opportunities to share knowledge and experiences.

Almost 21% of pupils under the age of 16 have special educational needs and it has been reported (Daily Telegraph, July 2017) that most of these pupils have been diagnosed by the schools and not outside agencies.

As an academy group, we know that there needs to be consistency across all of our schools so that if a child is placed on the SEN Register in one school, that would be identified in other schools in the same way.

To address this, clear systems have been designed and are in the process of being implemented and embedded. Our team of specialists offer training and support to carry out all our processes and to skill up staff in areas related to supporting inclusion and identifying/meeting need.

Through the development of these (and upcoming) innovative approaches and strategies, we are confident that as an academy trust we will be fully committed to providing an education that best fits the needs of all our pupils.

AN AUTISTIC PERSON'S PERSPECTIVE

School, for many people, was a wonderful, life-forming experience that is looked back on fondly and continues to inform moral and personal decisions.

And yet for some people – people like me – it was something to be endured.

Not so much an experience as a bombardment. The colours, smells, the noise, and feeling like it all needed to be filtered.

Back then, and we're not talking too many years ago, there was nothing like the systems I have seen in place at Haxby Road Primary Academy. Children are now being taught social communication skills in an environment adjusted for their needs.

Teachers are aware of those needs, and diagnoses have happened at an early age.

It wasn't until the age of ten that I found out I was autistic. The years that following were ones of compromise and breaking points as I tried to navigate learning acceptable social behaviours and develop the concentration needed for mainstream education.

I had to take some of those years out and it became too much at times.

Eventually I found people who understood,

and when I reached college I met some unforgettable individuals who changed my world.

Thanks to the support I received I had people who could tell me about

what I was going through or, when it was not clear, would listen as I attempted to figure out what was wrong.

It all comes down to understanding: when parent, child and academic staff are aware of a situation, the conversations that are needed will happen.

All the socialisation and learning I didn't experience until I was a teenager, is happening for the children of Haxby Road now.

After a long path which was easy for no-one, I have my degree, and beyond all possible expectations came out with a first.

I know the learning is going to continue and it will involve more conversations and more adjustments – but I have been equipped with the confidence to do it on my own.



FINLAY DOYLE

It's all GOOD!

Haxby Road now the best it has ever been

The benefits of becoming an academy have been highlighted by school inspectors who have awarded a 'Good' rating to Haxby Road Primary Academy.

When it was Haxby Road Primary School, it was never rated as highly in its 113-year history and for the last decade had suffered a string of poor inspection reports.

Now, a relentless drive to improve outcomes for pupils has been praised by Ofsted for the "exciting learning" taking place.

Haxby Road was the first school to join Ebor Academy Trust in February 2014 and this is the first inspection since Ebor stepped in to help.

"This is excellent news for all concerned," said Ebor's Chief Executive Richard Ludlow. "All children deserve to attend a Good school. Success comes from collaboration, relentless positivity and a relentless belief that all those in the school can succeed."

Zoe Lightfoot, headteacher at the time, said: "The staff, governors, parents and children are all delighted with our inspection outcome. It is great to see that Ofsted have acknowledged the drive and dedication within our Haxby Road family, to raise standards and aspirations for our children. We are very pleased that our school community has been officially



Zoe Lightfoot and Richard Ludlow celebrate the 'Good' Ofsted rating with Year 4 pupils

recognised as being as great as we know it is and I feel very proud to lead such a focused and passionate team."

Inspectors said the shared vision of all leaders and their effective communication with the whole school community had been fundamental in steering improvements in outcomes for pupils: "There is a very strong partnership between the school and the academy trust; everyone speaks confidently about the gains this partnership has brought, particularly in terms of developing a culture of purpose and improvement."

The work to improve partnerships with parents has also been highly effective, said the report. The determination to make sure that

parents feel welcome and part of their child's learning is paying off. Parents speak warmly about their involvement in the school and how the school supports them and their child. For example, one parent said: "Staff are always there if you need some help – for children and for parents". The family café gives parents the opportunity to meet other parents, particularly when they are new to the school. The improved opportunities for staff and parents to work together are having a positive impact on the progress pupils are making.

Special educational needs at the school was also applauded, with effective systems in place for checking pupils' progress.

Laura takes the helm at an 'amazing' school



Haxby Road Primary Academy's deputy headteacher, Laura Woodward, is now head of school.

The promotion comes after Zoe Lightfoot moved on, to Hempland.

Miss Woodward has been at Haxby Road for four years. She was deputy head for two years and before Haxby Road, spent eight years at an infants' school in Airedale.

"I am thrilled to move up to be head of school, and it will be a privilege to lead a fantastic team and continue to work with some brilliant children," said

Miss Woodward. "I'm looking forward to developing further the excellent work we do here – this really is an amazing school."

As part of the recruitment process, Miss Woodward was interviewed by a panel made up of members of the school council. "They made it clear they wanted a head with certain qualities. It was a tough interview!"

Chair of governors Rebecca Kell said: "Laura is a credit to the school and deserves her promotion. We have come a long way with Haxby Road."

Sigglesthorne 'creative, at times inspiring'

A Church of England school in the East Riding that converted to an academy at the end of 2016 has been praised for its "true sense of community... this is a family".

Sigglesthorne Church of England Primary Academy was awarded a 'Good' rating by inspectors from SIAMS, the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools.

In their report, inspectors said its chosen values of truth, community and perseverance are "clearly visible in all aspects of this school's work. Such values impact positively on achievement and attainment."

They noted that the school was very popular with its local community and praised the children for "exhibiting excellent conduct, demonstrating great care, compassion and support for their peers."

"The children's learning and wellbeing is good, with children stating how much they enjoy school. This results in good attendance. They feel confident to approach staff with any problems or concerns." A parent said that: "nothing is too much trouble."

Sigglesthorne joined Ebor Academy Trust in December 2016.



Jacqui Grant, head of school, said: "We are all thrilled to receive such an excellent report that captures the essence of our wonderful school community. I'd particularly like to thank the children, who are a constant source of inspiration and encouragement for the staff."

School inspectors were complimentary about the role of the trust in their report. They said: "The trust's aim is to celebrate the uniqueness of each school and to add value to life at the school in whatever way it can. This is an ethos that staff and parents value greatly."

Jacqui Grant and Sigglesthorne children celebrate their success

Staynor Hall delivers a 'fantastic experience'

Parents at Selby's newest school gave teachers and staff a massive thumbs-up at the end of its first term.

Staynor Hall Community Primary Academy opened in September 2016 and feedback has hailed its "brilliant teamwork" and "excellent standard of teaching".

"With a brand new school, starting from scratch is easier," said Gail Brown, Executive Headteacher, "It means we have started the way we mean to go on."

Innovations that are proving popular include an online, interactive community where class teachers can communicate directly with parents using a smartphone app. The paperless environment means messages get out quickly and the school knows they have been read.

All children take part in compulsory "family dining" where they take it in turns to serve each other on tables, eating set menus alongside teachers to encourage a sense of belonging.

"I am really impressed with the

school so far," said Julia Booth, mum of Benjamin, aged five. "When he started school, Benjamin could not hold a pencil. He is now coming home and writing his name and spelling a lot of the words he is learning at school without any encouragement. The best thing is the fact that he seems to enjoy it, and it is great to see him grow in confidence."

John Tweedlie, dad of Alex, said: "It's been a fantastic experience from the start until now and I can't wait to see what's down the line – although it doesn't have to come too quickly!"

Aquilla Softley, mum of two-year-old Harrison, said the school and its Tiny Steps provision was "a breath of fresh air". She said: "Harry went from not liking being separated from me, to not stopping talking about school and his friends. Moving my little boy here has been the best decision I made and I couldn't praise the school enough."

Tim Jolly became headteacher at Staynor Hall at Easter.

BEV AND CAROLINE TAKE TOP POSITIONS



Bev Fletcher, a school leader with a passion for science, is now headteacher at Camblesforth Community Primary Academy. Mrs Fletcher was previously head of school at Brotherton and Byram Community Primary Academy.



Caroline Towler is now head of school at Brotherton and Byram Community Primary Academy. Miss Towler was previously Ebor Academy Trust's director of teaching and learning and was vice principal at Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy, York. Prior to that she worked as deputy headteacher at Brayton CE Primary School.

Why our school joined

Jo Sawyer, headteacher at Park Grove in York and **Denise Crosier**, headteacher at Filey Infants, reflect on the journey their schools took which led them to joining Ebor in April 2017

What were the motivations of you/ your governors for your school to become part of the Trust?

Jo: We wanted to be part of a community of schools that all worked together with a shared vision. We were drawn to Ebor because of its values and its great reputation and at the same time it was early enough in its development for us to contribute to shaping the Trust.

Denise: Governors explored various academy options, including forming our own MAT, but felt the wider community in joining Ebor was a very favourable option.

What are the benefits of being part of a multi-academy trust?

Jo: The shared working has been fantastic. We have been part of the Assessment Group which has developed a new system for the whole Trust, and the recruitment of new staff has been so much easier and more efficient.

Denise: Opportunities to see other practice and take part in training with practitioners from a wider area, plus the chance to moderate with schools outside of North Yorkshire, gave us a much wider perspective. This inspired, motivated and challenged our staff.

Ebor have been welcoming and have demonstrated they are willing to listen – we feel we are in it together.

Was there anything you didn't expect?

Jo: Things have gone as we expected so far and it will be interesting to see how things progress.

Denise: Joining has mostly met our expectations but I have to say there was increased expenditure to change MIS, including server, assessment materials and so on, and this not being included in the conversion grant expenditure, has impacted negatively on my school budget.

Some Ebor practices are not aligned to NYCC practices but we have adapted and adopted – for example, our SEN Information Report, in order to be compliant as a North Yorkshire school.

How did you find the conversion process?

Jo: This was straightforward although we did need to extend the consultation process due to parents' questions. We started the process in September 2016 and converted on 1 April 2017.

Denise: Overall an OK process but a more structured timeline has since



On the ball in Filey

Smart new sports facilities at Ebor Academy Filey are benefiting students and the community.

Astroturf and 3G pitches are popular and are a bookable resource for local sports clubs, managed by Elaine Jones, School Business Manager.

A public consultation process last November showed the demand for sports facilities locally.

Since then Scarborough Borough Council and Filey Town Council have identified and allocated £300,000 of funding towards phase 2 of the development, which will be to

convert the old swimming pool building into a sports hall.

"We are currently gathering letters of support from community groups for phase 3, which will be the addition of a multi-purpose gym," said Andrew Galbraith, Headteacher at Ebor Academy Filey.

Ebor

evolved which will benefit other converting schools. We feel we have been able to help to shape the future in this regard. 1 April is not an advisable date for conversion as the beginning/end of the LA financial year presented some difficulties in tying up finances quickly.

Now that the dust has settled, how do you feel about the move?

Jo: We are delighted that we made the decision to join Ebor. The central team have been fantastic and are always at the end of the telephone to help with queries or concerns. Working with other schools in the group has inspired the Park Grove staff. The parents and children haven't seen a lot of change so far, but from a back office point of view we have seen many changes and introduced systems which will ultimately cut down our workload.

Denise: The conversion felt right for our school throughout the whole process and we are pleased that we went ahead with Ebor. We are delighted to be part of it.

That said, it would have been helpful if the additional expenditure, such as IT conversion, had been met from the conversion grant but I accept that is a finite amount and will only stretch so far.

The change from an April financial year to September has left us in limbo when writing the school development plan as we are not sure of our financial capacity to deliver it when we are already into the new school year without a set budget.

Is there anything else that might be helpful to other headteachers thinking about becoming an academy and joining Ebor?

Jo: When you first join the Trust there are many new systems and processes to learn which can mean extra work. It is well worth it, though, because there is so much to gain from working together as a group. Joining Ebor was a great decision for Park Grove and worth the time and work needed to go through the conversion process.

Denise: It was an excellent decision by governors to join Ebor Academy Trust and we are looking forward to growing within the organisation for the benefit of our whole community.

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Why should our school become an academy?

There are many reasons schools convert to academy status and join a multi-academy trust. Diminishing local authority budgets and the knock-on effect of less support is a key reason, but so is peer-to-peer support and the idea of collaborating with other schools so as to share best practice. Many examples of close co-operation between schools exist currently in clusters, but this is dependent on goodwill and is unenforceable. In a multi-academy trust environment, the support structure is more formalised. Access to Ebor's central services team is another benefit and allows schools to be able to concentrate on teaching and learning, leaving finance, marketing and communications, human resources, IT and estates and facilities to the Trust's own experts.

If we joined Ebor would our curriculum change?

No.

Can schools keep their own core values or do they adopt Ebor ones?

Schools' own core values will not change unless the local governing body wants to change them. Excellence, Belonging, Opportunity and Respect are the Trust's overarching values.

Do academies get inspected by Ofsted?

Yes. There is no difference in Ofsted's inspection regime.

Do schools recruit their own staff when vacancies occur?

Ebor's central services team support all schools with their recruitment, this can include job evaluation, advertising and interviewing.

Will the school day and holidays remain as at present?

Yes.

Might other people come in to observe our school?

Providing standards are maintained, there will be minimal intervention from Ebor. The emphasis is on collaboration and learning from each other.

On transfer, will all staff be kept on?

All contracted staff will be transferred to Ebor under TUPE regulations.

Will the letterhead, logo or school name change?

Information on the school letterhead has to change to comply with Companies House regulations. There is no insistence that school logos change, but many schools see this as an opportunity to look again at their visual identity and perhaps update it. Ebor prefers all its schools to be renamed as academies.

Are exclusions dealt with any differently as an academy?

No.

Who takes responsibility for the pension arrangements of staff?

All pension rights of employees are protected as part of the TUPE process. This means that Ebor Academy Trust would assume the pension obligations.

What happens when staff leave?

As at present, when staff leave it is an opportunity for the headteacher/local governing body to assess and make a decision on the best way to handle the imminent vacancy.

How does the funding work?

The level of funding remains the same, however it comes directly to the trust rather than through the local authority.

Does academy status affect SEN or pupil premium funding?

No, not at all.

When schools convert, who then owns the school buildings and land?

The academy trust will take responsibility for buildings and land under a 125 year lease agreement – ownership does not transfer across.

Will becoming an academy affect admissions arrangements?

No.

Can an academy trust decide to bring in academic selection?

No, this is not permitted in law.

What will the responsibilities of the governing body be?

The local governing body (LGB) will be a committee of the trust board, where full legal responsibility lies. However for good or outstanding schools, the LGB has maximum delegation and so retains high levels of autonomy.



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