

Trust Annual Newsletter

26

WORKING TOGETHER
FOR CHILDREN

Welcome to Ad Astra Academy Trust

from the CEO

On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank you for all the support you continually give to our schools within Ad Astra Academy Trust. I am proud to be CEO of an organisation that is currently one of the largest employers within the Tees Valley and South Durham.

We are a highly regarded multi-academy trust based in the North East of England. As a Trust, we strongly believe in maximising togetherness. Our schools learn and improve alongside one another, united by mutual support and respect. Our aim is to provide every child with an innovative, high-quality education that inspires them to achieve their full potential.

The Latin phrase Ad Astra means "to the stars". Our strapline, "Stars in the Making", reflects the ambitious vision shared across each of our school communities: that every child and every member of staff can be the very best they can be.

We want everyone within Ad Astra to flourish and achieve their best. As you read our fourth annual newsletter, I hope you will recognise that each of our schools is a unique, vibrant and thriving community where children are safe, happy and highly valued.

As an inclusive Trust, we work tirelessly to ensure that every young person can overcome barriers to learning and succeed. While our schools benefit from the support, expertise and opportunities that come from being part of a family of schools, we also recognise that we learn as much from them as they do from the Trust. It is this shared commitment to collaboration, excellence and continuous improvement that makes Ad Astra such a special place to learn and work.

Our STARS VALUES reverberate across the organisation;
SUPPORT, TOGETHERNESS, ACHIEVE, RESPECT, SUCCESS
and this newsletter demonstrates how they are embedded in our schools.

Ad Astra invests deeply in its people and partnerships. As your schools become an integral part of our Trust, we continue to work together to realise the full benefit of belonging to a strong family of schools. This shared Trust Dividend brings lasting and meaningful added value, made possible by our collective strength, and will help transform our schools both now and in the future.

2025-26 has been an exciting and challenging year. Brougham Primary and Crooksbarrow Primary School were recognised by DfE for excellent outcomes for disadvantaged pupil outcomes with a letter from the Secretary of State. Results are starting to come in, and we expect to be reporting significant success in our schools when they are published especially in Early Years, Phonics and the Multiplication Tables Check. We are almost at the end of our first ever School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) cohort and 50% have already gained teaching posts within the Trust at the time of writing, with 9 candidates signed up for 2026-27; we are very proud of this aspect of the Trust, so please spread the word if you or anyone you know wants to train as a teacher in your local school.

Ad Astra is not only a great place to learn, but also a great place to work. It was brilliant to see our recently retired senior leader, Caroline Tyreman (who spent 35 years at Brougham Primary) awarded the British Empire Medal in the King's Birthday Honours in June. We also say goodbye to colleagues this month such as Vanessa Allison and Dave Mclean who have given between them over 60 years of service to their schools (Ayresome and West Park respectively) as they start their retirement in September and Becki Le, Assistant Headteacher at Ayresome who moves to Vietnam this month to work in an international school. Our staff mean everything to the Trust, so we wish them all well.

I hope you enjoy learning about all the schools in our Trust. By the autumn we will be educating over 3,500 children and employing around 500 staff. I continue to be proud to lead this organisation. Enjoy your break over the summer and we will see you all in September.

Please look at our website for more details www.adastraschools.org

Andy Brown OBE
CEO



WORKING TOGETHER
FOR CHILDREN

School Improvement Team

As we reflect on another successful year across our Trust, we are immensely proud of the dedication, ambition and collaboration demonstrated by our schools. This year, our collective focus has centred on three key improvement priorities: **adaptive teaching, oracy** and **early years development**.

These areas are fundamental to ensuring that every child receives the highest quality educational experience. Through adaptive teaching, colleagues continue to refine their practice to meet the diverse needs of learners, ensuring that all pupils are appropriately supported and challenged to achieve their potential. Our focus on oracy recognises the vital role that speaking and listening play in learning, confidence-building and future success, while our commitment to early years provision ensures that children develop the strong foundations they need for lifelong learning.

A key focus across Ad Astra is the commitment to ensuring that provision is right for every pupil. Whether through curriculum development, pastoral support, inclusion strategies or enrichment programmes, schools remain focused on creating supportive environments where all children are **RESPECTed** and can thrive. This work is underpinned by our shared Trust values, which continue to guide decision-making, shape school cultures and inspire our daily practice.

As a School Improvement Team, we feel privileged to work **TOGETHER** with such committed, talented and dedicated staff. Their professionalism, passion and determination to provide the very best for pupils are evident in every school we visit. Most importantly, we are continually inspired by the remarkable pupils across our Trust, whose enthusiasm, resilience, kindness and **ACHIEVEMENTS** remind us why this work matters so much.

Collaboration is key – our Headteachers working as part of a triad to challenge and support each other, teachers working as part of professional networks, co-designing CPD and Trust-level documentation, support staff visiting other schools to see how excellent practice can support them in their roles, pupils sharing a stage or a sports field, performing or competing against each other. The result is clear – our Trust Divided: by sharing our expertise we achieve more **TOGETHER** than any school could alone.

We look forward to continuing this journey together as we strive for excellence and ensure that every child receives the opportunities and **SUPPORT** they deserve.

The School Improvement Team



Mrs Durnion



Mr Wiley



Mrs Rathmell

Thank you from our Chair of Trustees

I know that we say this every year – but this year has been challenging. It has also been a year when there have been notable achievements and where the strategic approach we have taken to school improvement, cross school support and inclusion and financial resilience have had a demonstrable impact in all areas of our schools.

When visiting schools, I see a common purpose around the approach to learning and experiences, based on detailed knowledge about the children attending the school and the communities it serves. Our schools range across different Local Authorities, very different communities and areas of specialism and expertise. The amount of informal, school-initiated support for each other was a very pleasant surprise building on the depth of expertise and skills that sit within schools.

At our recent Festival of Education, I was struck by the quiet air of confidence I picked up from the attendees. Not confidence in an arrogant way – far from that but confidence in what we (schools in the Trust) are doing and why. Yes, most school groups sat together but there was also a lot of chatting and recognition across school groups.

This has not happened by accident. Andy, as our CEO, our Head Teachers and Central Team leaders have modelled this way of working. I feel strongly that we need to find a way to capture this because it is what underpins our Trust.

The coming academic year will be equally challenging, I am sure. We will be seeking a new CEO to build on the incredible legacy that Andy has established. It is fitting that I take this opportunity (the first of many I hope) to thank Andy for what he has done to date and will continue to achieve and the observations I have made above reflect the impact he has had as CEO.

Richenda Broad
Chair of Trustees



Our Ayresome community is flourishing through stronger professional links, thriving through the dedication of a passionate team whilst remaining a School of Sanctuary and Rights Respecting Gold School where our diversity of 82% EAL learners is a real strength. Inclusion and togetherness are woven through all we do: this has been recognised for a fourth consecutive year by being awarded Flagship Status as part of our Inclusion Quality Mark Award and being asked to apply for IQM National Inclusion Champion Status 2026 as well supporting schools regionally and nationally.



Our **SUPPORT, TOGETHERNESS and RESPECT** have gone hand in hand this year with our community reach and offer to ensure that our children and families are fully represented within our community, can have a sense of belonging and really bring to life our new school strapline: Being. Belonging. Becoming. Through events to support the wider environment such as a community litter pick with other local agencies, to better understand their learning in Geography and Science for Year 3, we have not only supported our local community but done so with a sense of pride and teamwork which has made us extremely proud. Another example has been our strengthened work with INTO University ensuring that our diverse range of faiths, nationalities and cultures are fully represented and respected, whilst working together to raise ambitions for all within the family dynamic.

ACHIEVE - And what an achievement for us this year; **Platinum OPAL award for our Lunchtime Play provision.** This extends our outstanding offer of play and continuous provision throughout our Early Years and Key Stage 1 phases with feedback from our assessor which stated: "It was a delight to return to Ayresome and once again see the quality of your playtimes to be truly exceptional. Your site provides children with a rich variety of play opportunities from den building to mud kitchens, varied movements and journeys, swings and hanging upside down to accessing your brand-new garden space. Every child at Ayresome has the freedom to play and become whoever they choose to be on a daily basis, and that in itself is invaluable."






Ayresome Primary School

We're excited to welcome you to a Stronger Practice Hub Open Setting at Ayresome Primary School, a setting where inclusion is not just a priority, but a lived, daily commitment.

Supporting children as they settle, grow, and thrive has never been more important, especially for those navigating transitions and learning English as an Additional Language (EAL).

As an IQM Centre of Excellence Flagship school, Ayresome look forward to bringing together early years professionals who are passionate about inclusive, high-quality practice.



9th June 2026
4pm-5pm

SUCCESS - Our Early Years provision continues to be an exceptionally strong area of school and has had huge success across this year. Pleasingly for school, this has been recognised in a number of ways and is credit to the hard work from staff and support from families which allows us to facilitate and enable all children to be the best that they can be. Our children have flourished as we have worked through our second year of having brand new outdoor provision which sparks and develops curiosity and independence. Our Inclusion Quality Mark work and work towards Early Years Quality Mark have highlighted some amazing provision - "It is like a hug with some incredibly inviting, engaging and purposeful spaces." Our expansion to offer warm and safe spaces for our 0-2 year old Blooming Stars group has meant our doors have been opened to an even wider audience and the babies in attendance have loved our provision. These developments led to a regional showcase, celebrating our successes with adaptations to meet the needs of EAL learners within such an inclusive environment and feedback from peer practitioners was fantastic.

Mrs Haylock



Barnard Grove Primary



As another successful year draws to a close, we are delighted to reflect on the many achievements, experiences and milestones that have made this year so memorable at Barnard Grove Primary School. Our school continues to be a place where children are encouraged to thrive, supported to reach their potential and inspired to become confident, caring members of the community. None of this would be possible without the dedication of our staff, the enthusiasm of our children and the continued support of our families. Together, we have much to celebrate as we look back on the year and look forward with excitement to the opportunities that lie ahead.

Support

Support is at the heart of everything we do at Barnard Grove. From the moment children enter our school, they are encouraged, nurtured and challenged to become the very best versions of themselves. We recognise that every child is unique, and we work hard to ensure that the right support is available to help each individual thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

This commitment extends beyond the classroom. Our staff work closely with families, external agencies and the wider community to provide guidance and opportunities that enable children to succeed. Whether offering additional learning support, promoting wellbeing, or celebrating personal achievements, we are proud of the caring and inclusive environment that exists throughout our school.

By supporting one another, we create a culture where confidence grows, potential is realised, and everyone feels valued as part of the Barnard Grove family.

Togetherness

Our school community continues to thrive because of the strong sense of togetherness that exists between children, staff, families, the Governing Body, Ad Astra Academy Trust and the wider community. We strive to ensure that everyone feels welcomed, valued and included.

Children have benefited from a rich programme of educational visits and residential experiences that have strengthened friendships, developed teamwork and created lasting memories. Through these experiences, children have learned the importance of supporting one another, working collaboratively and contributing positively to the world around them.

Achieve

At Barnard Grove, we believe that every achievement matters. Whether it is learning to read; mastering times tables; developing confidence; representing the school in sporting competitions; or preparing for the transition to secondary school, we celebrate each step of every child's journey.

Throughout the year, our pupils have excelled in a wide range of activities. Our Year 5 'Poetry' teams performed brilliantly at the Trust Poetry Slam, with one team winning the event and the other finishing third, and our brilliant mathematicians did themselves proud at the International Primary Kangaroo Maths competition, with Rory Hanson achieving the highest individual score. Sporting success is many and varied, with the highlight being the consistent success of our girls' dodgeball team. Following months of competition, the girls secured a place at the National Dodgeball Finals, travelling to Kettering to put Barnard Grove on the map. Although competition was tough, we managed to gain a top 10 place in the country! However, a special mention must also go to our Year 2 skipping team; they 'skipped' back to school with the festival winner's trophy.

Academic progress has again remained strong, with many of our key measures throughout school being at least in-line with children, nationally. We are incredibly proud of the effort, perseverance and ambition shown by all of our children. Sometimes, achievement can't be measured in winning something or being 'at the expected standard', so we celebrate individual success at every level. This really hit home for us all during Barnard's Got Talent at Easter. Our days were filled with our exceptional children showcasing their many talents, bravely putting themselves forward to entertain and amuse us. The finals afternoon was an excellent example of children being enabled to succeed and stretch themselves.

Respect

Respect remains at the heart of everything we do. Our pupils consistently demonstrate kindness, understanding and consideration towards others, helping to create a safe and supportive environment where everyone can flourish.

As our school community becomes increasingly diverse, we continue to celebrate different cultures, backgrounds and experiences. Children are encouraged to appreciate and learn from one another, developing the values and attitudes that will help them become responsible citizens. Our commitment to supporting local charities and community initiatives also reflects our desire to make a positive difference beyond the school gates.

Success

This year has been another successful chapter in the life of Barnard Grove Primary School. Our children continue to demonstrate determination, resilience and a love of learning, achieving excellent outcomes both academically and personally. We are proud of the progress made across all year groups and of the positive relationships that make our school such a special place to learn and grow.

Our commitment to providing a high-quality education has been recognised through continued strong performance and positive feedback from visitors, families and external partners. These successes are a reflection of the dedication shown by all of the Barnard Grove family, working together towards common goals.



As we look back on another fantastic year, we would like to thank everyone involved in our school for their continued support and commitment to Barnard Grove Primary School. Together, we have celebrated successes, overcome challenges and created opportunities for every child to learn, grow and flourish. We remain incredibly proud of all that has been achieved and are excited about what the future holds. As we move forward into another academic year, we will continue to nurture ambition, inspire confidence and encourage every child to reach for the stars. After all, at Barnard Grove, we are proud to be "Stars in the Making", shining brightly today and building successful futures for tomorrow.

Mr Walker



Support

At Brougham Primary School, support is at the heart of everything we do. We want every child, family and member of staff to feel a strong sense of belonging in a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment.

This year, we have worked closely with families, celebrated every success (big and small), and provided both academic and emotional support so that pupils feel valued, confident and understood. We are equally proud of the way our staff support one another, creating a caring team that strengthens our whole school community.

Our partnership with IntoUniversity has further enriched this work, helping to broaden pupils' horizons and raise aspirations. Through inspiring workshops and visits to universities, children have grown in confidence, developed ambition and felt proud of what they can achieve, knowing they are fully supported to succeed.

Togetherness

Our value of Togetherness has truly shone this year, bringing our community together. We have loved welcoming families into school for workshops, events and celebrations creating special opportunities to learn, play and make lasting memories together. A highlight has been our involvement in the Play Power initiative with Play Out Hartlepool, encouraging families to enjoy the simple joy of play and spend quality time together.

We've also worked closely with local organisations and charities, helping pupils understand the importance of giving back to their community. We are also delighted to welcome back a former Brougham pupil now as a class teacher! This truly reflects what Togetherness means: a community where everyone belongs and stays connected long after leaving our school gates.

Achieve

We are incredibly proud to have received a letter from the Secretary of State for Education this year recognising the strong progress made by pupils across our school. This is a wonderful achievement and highlights our commitment to ensuring every child succeeds.

We are also thrilled that Miss Tyerman has been awarded a British Empire Medal in the King's Honours List, recognising 35 years of dedication, particularly her outstanding work as our SENDCo. This reflects our commitment to inclusive practice and supporting every pupil to achieve their very best.

Respect

This year, our pupils have shown fantastic respect for their environment and community. Through the Clean Up UK initiative, they collected an incredible 80 bags of litter, helping to keep our local area clean and safe. Pupils also demonstrated kindness and compassion by achieving the Bright Sparks Challenge Gold Award in support of Hartlepool Hospice, raising funds to help those in need. By caring for others, looking after the environment and working together, our pupils continue to be wonderful role models in the local community.



Success

This year has seen the exciting relaunch of our enrichment offer, creating even more opportunities for every child to shine through our Trust's STARS values.

Pupils have enjoyed an even wider range of clubs, including:

- Maths & Phonics Challenge
- STEM & Science
- Stars of the Future (enterprise)
- Performers of the Future (drama)
- Junior Bee Keeping

These experiences have helped children discover new talents, raise aspirations, grow in confidence and celebrate success in many different ways.

We're especially proud of the growth in pupil leadership, with roles such as Head Pupils, Eco Warriors, Curriculum Ambassadors and School Council making a real difference across school.

Thanks to these opportunities, more children than ever are getting involved, trying new things and celebrating their achievements. It has been wonderful to see our whole school community truly living out the STARS values proving that success comes in many forms.

Mrs Greenan



Crooksbar Primary



This has been another great year at Crooksbar. Following on from our fantastic OFSTED report, we have further embedded our curriculum to give our children an excellent foundation as they move through school.

Our Early Years setting has gone from strength to strength, with our Saturday 'Stay and Play' sessions fully booked over the year. This has given our young families a chance to experience school life in a relaxed and informal setting and has contributed massively to our Nursery being completely full for the upcoming year and our Reception classes for September 27 being oversubscribed. We have also been accredited for Early Talk Boost linked to oracy in the Early Years.

Earlier this year we were honoured to receive a letter from Bridget Philipson, Secretary of State for Education, congratulating us on the achievement of our Pupil Premium and disadvantaged children. This continues to be a focus for us moving into 26/27.

We are proud to be the successful pilot school to offer Alliance Decider Life Skills Workshop to parents on an evening, which has been accessed by over 15 families across the half term.

We are very proud of our School Council, who have coordinated Democracy week, using official ballot boxes to democratically vote for an authentic experience linked to British Values. Along with this we saw a fundraising effort which has directly driven the refurbishment of the pupil toilets-all down to the power of pupil voice! Our use of a local artist for the BlueMonday project (Mental Health) obtained significant press coverage.

We are delighted to see a number of our staff working hard to complete NPQs in order to take their working practice onto the next level. We have a new SENDCO for September, who after a year working with our Trust SEND lead will be taking on full responsibility. This is quite the success story, starting from Ad Astra pupil, to volunteer, to ECT to senior leader. An amazing example of growing our own!

Our Sporting achievements have been many: Y5 Stockton Athletics champions, 1st place in Stockton KS2 cross-country (and 2nd in the Tees Valley) just to name a few. Our main achievement here though has been the actual number of our children taking part, who have gone out and represented our school in a respectful manner.

Finally, we were delighted to receive our latest Trust Edurio report recently. The big takeaway messages here are that the Crooksbar remains a good place to work, staff continue to be enthused and when matched with our positive pupil voice, this creates an excellent foundation upon which we can build upon again in 26/27. These experiences have helped children discover new talents, raise aspirations, grow in confidence and celebrate success in many different ways.

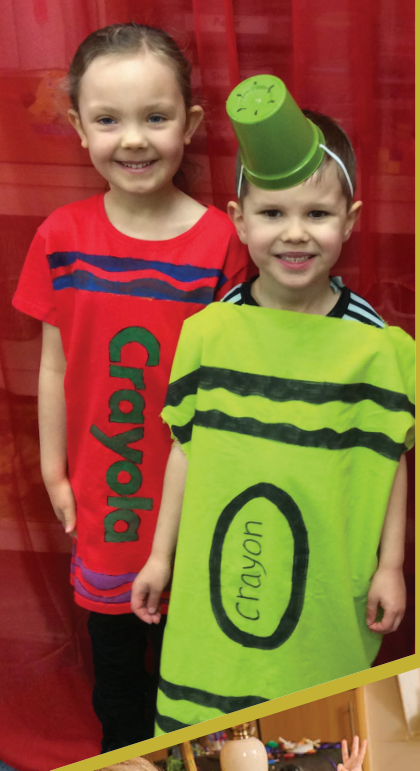
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Mr Twiby





WORKING
FOR CHILD





TOGETHER
CHILDREN



Deaf Hill and Kelloe Primaries



It seems like only yesterday that we were reflecting on last years achievements! Both schools have had another fabulous year, working hard to ensure that every child at Deaf Hill and Kelloe develops a sense of community and belonging – being a fundamentally good person who loves school and cares about their impact on others.

Support

In May we started the DfE funded free breakfast club at Deaf Hill. We now offer all children a nutritious breakfast before school, supporting learning, wellbeing, and families. Attendance at the breakfast club has been excellent with over 50 children attending daily and on one occasion we had 79 children having a healthy breakfast in school! We will be starting the free breakfast club at Kelloe Primary in September, and we are looking forward to welcoming a similar number of children.



Togetherness

The Friends of Kelloe School have worked with the local community, council and school staff to raise over £35,000 to purchase a Trim Trail that will greatly enhance the pupil's playtime experience at school. The highlight was a 24-hour run covering 100 miles that one of our parents completed with support from the whole school community, which alone raised over £5000. At Deaf Hill the Friends of the school continue to put on outstanding events in school, the Summer and Christmas Fairs being highlights. We are very lucky to have such supportive parent groups at both schools.

Achieve

We have been especially proud of the achievements of our Early Years and Year 1 pupils this year at Deaf Hill and Kelloe. At both schools, over the last three years, our results at the end of Reception have been higher than similar schools nationally. By the time the children leave Early Years at both schools they are fully prepared for the next steps in their education due to the amazing progress they make! In Year 1 pupils at both schools have made remarkable progress in phonics, surpassing expectations and becoming confident readers.

Respect

At Kelloe Primary we have strengthened our links with St. Helen's Church, and we have weekly visits from Revd. Peter Kashouris who supports children with reading and enables children to appreciate the community they belong to. At Deaf Hill, our Y6 children continue to have a weekly session with the 'Knitting Nanas' which helps children and adults to get to know people from different generations. At both schools many children have benefitted from 'Relax Kids' a structured program that teaches children respect, mindfulness, relaxation, and emotional regulation through a fun, creative, and holistic seven-step method.

Success

We have been working hard to adapt and improve our curriculum at both schools. We have developed our curriculum around three core principles These principles have been developed to ensure a shared, consistent understanding of high-quality teaching across the school, so that all pupils are supported to think deeply, learn effectively and retain knowledge over time. As a result of these principles, our aim is for:

- All pupils to be able to access and engage in their learning, including adaptive teaching (inclusion)
- Familiar routines and high-quality teaching approaches present in every classroom (consistency)
- Pupils having to think hard and produce high-quality work (high expectations)

Finally thank you to everyone who has supported Deaf Hill and Kelloe Primary Schools this year – we are ready for a break but will be raring to go again in September!



Mr Newton



Support – Transforming Inclusion Across Rosebrook

In June, we were incredibly proud to welcome the Local Authority for an Inclusion Review, which showcased the significant progress we have made across the school. The visit highlighted the journey we have been on to create a more inclusive environment where every child feels safe, supported and ready to learn.

Key developments included the introduction of our new Behaviour and Relationships Policy, the creation of calming corners in classrooms and extensive staff professional development focused on supporting children with additional needs and promoting emotional wellbeing. Through calm, consistent approaches and a shared commitment from all staff, we have strengthened our provision and created environments where children can thrive both academically and personally. The review recognised the positive impact of these changes and celebrated the dedication of our staff in ensuring inclusion remains at the heart of everything we do.



Togetherness

Throughout the year, staff have come together regularly to engage in bespoke professional development tailored to the needs of our pupils. Delivered by specialist practitioners, this training has included a focus on PACE, understanding wants versus needs, co-regulation, and supporting neurodivergent girls. These sessions have strengthened staff knowledge, skills, and confidence, enabling us to provide increasingly effective support for our pupils. We are incredibly proud of the way our staff team has collaborated, shared expertise, and worked together to meet the needs of some of our most complex and challenging learners. Their commitment, professionalism, and collective approach have had a significant impact on the wellbeing and progress of our pupils.

Achievement – Our Best Ever Phonics Results

This year saw Rosebrook achieve its **highest-ever** Phonics Screening Check result, with an **outstanding 90%** of pupils meeting the expected standard. This achievement reflects the hard work, commitment and collaboration of our entire school community.

From quality-first teaching in the classroom to targeted phonics interventions, after-school clubs and parent workshops, every possible support was put in place to help our children succeed. Staff, pupils and families worked together with a shared goal, ensuring children developed the confidence and skills needed to become successful readers.

We are incredibly proud of our pupils for their determination and resilience and grateful to our staff and parents for their unwavering support. This result is a testament to what can be achieved when we work together.

Respect – Representing Rosebrook

Throughout this year, our children have represented Rosebrook with immense pride, consistently demonstrating our core value of respect in everything they do. Whether attending residential visits to Whitby, Ullswater, or even Paris, staff were overwhelmed by the exceptional levels of respect, courtesy, and maturity shown by our pupils. Feedback from every venue was overwhelmingly positive, with many commenting that our children were an absolute delight and would be welcomed back at any time. This respect extends beyond educational visits and is recognised throughout our wider community. Equally, our staff continually go above and beyond for every child, fostering a culture of mutual respect that is felt across the school.



Success – Sporting Excellence and Determination

Rosebrook pupils have represented the school with pride throughout the year, demonstrating not only their athletic abilities but also our core values of determination, respect and teamwork.

Sixteen pupils participated in a range of Key Stage 2 sporting events, proudly wearing our new school sports uniforms and acting as excellent ambassadors for Rosebrook. We attended local athletics competitions, with seven pupils progressing through to the Tees Valley finals. We were also delighted to have three pupils selected to represent Stockton in cross-country events.

These achievements, alongside our commitment to providing high-quality sporting opportunities, contributed to Rosebrook achieving the Gold School Games Mark Award. This prestigious recognition reflects the dedication of our pupils, staff and wider school community in promoting participation, achievement and sporting success for all.

Mrs Lyons



Sunnyside Academy



We have had another fantastic year at Sunnyside Academy! As we reflect upon our success, we are very grateful for the continued support for our school community and launched this academic year with a community event that embraced the Ad Astra Trust values of:

Support, Togetherness, Achieve, Respect and Success!

Support

We believe that our Mental Health and pastoral support offer for children, families and staff is a key strength of the school.

As a THRIVE school, we recognise the importance of early intervention and offer a tiered approach that includes therapeutic support such as ELSA, Draw & Talk Therapy, Counselling support and referrals to other agencies.

Togetherness

OPAL (Outdoor Play And Learning) has been a huge success! Our playtimes are so much more fun and engaging! It has been lovely to see children helping each other play safely and creatively.

Thank you for the kind donations of toys and equipment over the year and please keep it coming as we will continue OPAL developments next year!



Achieve

We continue to have aspirations for all of our children and have been involved in lots of events over the year, music performances, sports competitions and educational visits.

In March, we held our annual careers fayre and had many organisations come to visit us and talk about future career opportunities. It was a huge success! Children dressed up as their chosen profession and got involved in a variety of activities over the week. This is something that we commit to every year and each year we continue to have a wide range of organisations that want to be involved. They love coming to Sunnyside!

Respect

We believe that children should play a big part in helping their community, being a good citizen and showing respect to others. We have an active school council who have been involved in fund raising for charities this year and visited the Cenotaph to lay the first poppies in the Remembrance Ceremony held at the Cenotaph.

Success

Sunnyside Academy works in partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). This means that we all learn about the works of William Shakespeare in a fun way. We use a range of drama approaches to explore important themes and ideas that are relevant today.

Every year, we learn a different play and explore some of the language and vocabulary. Our staff also get to be trained by Royal Shakespeare actors! This year is special as we got to perform the Merchant of Venice at Middlesbrough Little Theatre. Funded and supported by Middlesbrough Borough Council's 10x10 Pledge.



Mrs Sutton



West Park Primary School: Celebrating Our STARS Values

As we reflect on this year at West Park Primary School, we do so with immense pride and gratitude for everything our school community has achieved together. It has been a year filled with exciting opportunities, memorable experiences and meaningful developments, all rooted in the Ad Astra Trust values of **Support, Togetherness, Achieve, Respect and Success**. Most importantly, it has been a year where we have strengthened the sense of belonging across West Park, ensuring that every child, adult and family feels proud to be part of our school community.

Support

This year, we have placed children's wellbeing, confidence and personal development at the heart of school life. We began the year with the aim of enriching children's opportunities and experiences through the development of our Personal Development Curriculum. A key part of this has been ensuring that every child in Key Stage 2 had the opportunity to take part in a residential experience, helping them build resilience, independence and confidence. Our youngest children have also enjoyed learning beyond the classroom, with Nursery visiting Monk Farm to learn about farm animals and Reception travelling to Tynemouth to explore sea life.

Togetherness

A key success this year has been the introduction of our new house system, which has brought children and adults together with a shared sense of identity and belonging. Families within school were allocated to the same house, helping to strengthen links between siblings, families and the wider school community. Children from Nursery to Year 6 have worked together, supported each other and competed for house points through a wide range of activities. Our half-termly house days have included fun runs, talent shows, maths challenges and collections for the local food bank.



Achieve

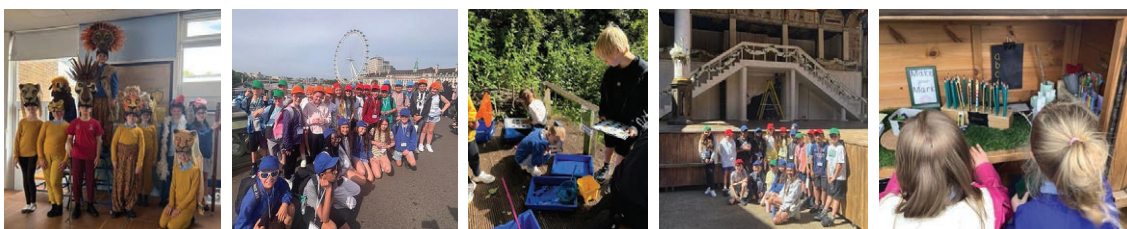
There has been so much to celebrate in terms of achievement. This year, we implemented a new writing scheme across school, supported by outdoor writing sheds that have helped immerse children in writing opportunities across the curriculum. This has brought a renewed love of writing into school, inspiring pupils to write with purpose, creativity and confidence. We were delighted that this work was recognised as excellent in a recent external review. Children have also embraced opportunities such as performing at the Poetry Slam and competing in regional sports competitions. We are proud not only of the outcomes our children achieve, but also of the effort, courage and determination they show along the way.

Respect

Respect has been central to the way we have developed our school environment and learning spaces. At the start of the year, our Key Stage 1 children returned to newly decorated classrooms designed to promote regulation, emotional safety and successful learning. Calm, neutral colours and carefully considered spaces have helped reduce distractions and create classrooms where children can thrive. After Easter, we were also delighted to open our new central library, a multi-use space for calm learning, reading, reflection and connection.

Success

The success of this year belongs to our whole school community. Year 3 enjoyed a Big Camp Out on the school field, with stargazing, camp songs and toasted marshmallows. Year 4 travelled to Durham for an outdoor adventure residential, testing their courage and teamwork. Year 5 experienced a Night at the Museum at Beamish, deepening their knowledge of North East history, while Year 6 visited London for sightseeing, Harry Potter magic and a West End performance of The Lion King. These moments, alongside our new house system, improved learning environments and renewed focus on writing, have made this a year to remember. As we look ahead, we do so with excitement and ambition, knowing that together we will continue to support every child to grow, achieve and succeed.



Mrs Sheffield



Support

This year has seen the continued development of our pupil groups across school. It has been impressive to see the commitment and dedication that our children have shown in these roles, where they have had opportunities to support whole school improvement, whilst further developing their own leadership skills. Whether this be as an Art Ambassador, a Digital Leader, an Eco Councillor, a Happiness Hero, a Play Leader, a Reading Ambassador, a Safeguarding Councillor or a School Councillor, every single pupil engaged in these groups has had a role to play. They have led assemblies, raised money for charity and for school funds, engaged in school and wider initiatives, spoken at meetings with Governors and also taken opportunities to support each other, whether this be outside at play time or lunchtime or during after school clubs. We are excited to see how each of our pupil groups continue to evolve in the next academic year!

Togetherness

We are delighted to see our 'Togetherness' and inclusion praised and celebrated within our recent Inclusion Quality Mark report. Following a verification visit, we have retained our status as a Flagship School for the second year running. Some particular highlights from our report are shown below:

'West View's approach to inclusion is a genuine strength.'

'Relational practice and a culture of kindness underpin excellent behaviour and attitudes across school. Where pupils may need support, parents are seen as critical partners.'

'Staff said they feel "energised and empowered," by leaders' inclusive vision. They feel supported, trusted and proud of the school's work and their own contribution within the team. They describe West View as a place where "every child is safe, known and valued." I would agree.'

'The school continues to move from strength to strength in terms of its superb inclusive practice and I am firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to maintain its status as a Flagship School.'



Achieve

We have been on a journey to improve our play provision over the last 2 years, focusing especially on the play experiences and opportunities that pupils have at break time and lunchtime. We have implemented the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) programme and have recently achieved the Silver Accreditation! Our allocated OPAL mentor shared that our playtimes are 'inclusive, joyful and provide a wonderful variety of types of play.' We are excited to continue on our journey to improve play further so keep your eyes peeled for new and exciting zones. Climbing structures pending!



Respect

This year, our wonderful Eco Council have continued their great work with Thrive Teesside and Voices of Hartlepool, working hard in the community garden over at West View Advice and Resource Centre. Pupils have spent lots of time in the garden, learning and planting – they have planted tomatoes, carrots, potatoes and onions for the community to enjoy. They have also recently made fat balls to take home for the birds. It is wonderful to see our children engaging positively and respectfully with our local area, developing their awareness of the green spaces around them and taking pride in improving and maintaining these.



Success

We are delighted to share our arts success. West View Primary School has achieved the Artsmark Gold Award! Our school has been recognised for making **'significant strides in embedding arts and culture as part of its core identity, creating a richer, more equitable curriculum for all pupils...ensuring no child misses out on key cultural and creative experiences.'**

We are also an Arts Award Centre, which affords our children the opportunity to gain recognition and accreditation for their creative achievements. We are looking forward to our next arts showcase in school as well as our next award submission. Children in Years 3 and 5 have been busy preparing their work for this.



Artsmark
Gold Award
Awarded by Arts
Council England

Miss Furness



Strong Foundations, Brighter Futures

Togetherness takes centre stage at our 2026 Festival of Education

More than 400 teachers, support staff and education professionals from across Ad Astra Academy Trust came together at Teesside University for this year's Festival of Education.

With the theme **Strong Foundations, Brighter Futures**, the annual conference celebrated the importance of working together to ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive.

The day opened with a moving performance from Sunnyside Academy's pupil and staff choirs, whose songs celebrated inclusion, belonging and the belief that every child can succeed.

Chief Executive Officer Andy Brown OBE welcomed delegates by reflecting on the lasting impact schools can have on young people's lives. Sharing the story of former pupil and Middlesbrough-born footballer Robbie Blake, he spoke about the importance of recognising children's individual strengths and giving them opportunities to flourish.

He also acknowledged the challenges currently facing education, including SEND reform, attendance and funding pressures, but emphasised that collaboration remains one of the Trust's greatest strengths.

"Our strength has never been individual schools," he said. "Our strength has always been, and always will be, what happens when schools work together."

Mr Brown also celebrated the achievements of schools across the Trust over the past year and thanked staff for their continued dedication to children and families. He highlighted the Trust's recent staff survey, which found that 92% of employees feel supported by colleagues and comfortable asking for help when they need it – a reflection of the Trust's values-led culture.



The conference featured keynote speaker Chris Zarraga from Schools North East, alongside a varied programme of workshops exploring topics including early years development, communication with parents, wellbeing and mental health.

The event also raised funds for Tom's Trust, a charity supporting children with brain tumours and their families.

Donations were made in memory of former West Park Primary School pupil Alex Bell, who received care at the Great North Children's Hospital before he sadly passed away earlier this year, aged 11.

Pupils from Ayresome Primary School brought energy and colour to the day with a dance performance based on the theme **"Different countries, one team"**, showcasing the school's inclusive ethos and celebrating the diversity of its community.

The conference ended on a high note with local musician Mike McGrother and the Infant Hercules Pub Choir. Male colleagues from across the Trust joined the choir on stage for a memorable finale that demonstrated the power of music to bring people together and perfectly reflected the conference's overarching theme of togetherness.

The Festival of Education was a celebration of the collaboration, care and ambition that define Ad Astra Academy Trust. By sharing ideas, learning from one another and celebrating success, colleagues left inspired to continue building strong foundations and brighter futures for every child.



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West View
Primary School