



EBOR ACADEMY TRUST

# School Report



Getting to know the  
Ebor Academy Trust



# Right Royal welcome at Robert Wilkinson

The Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Mr Barry Dodd CBE, formally opened Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy's new arts centre and classroom complex.

To be known as "The Green Wing", the £1m project comprises an arts centre for music and drama, three new classrooms, a staffroom and a School Direct teacher training room.

Funding for the new build came from the Education Funding Agency, recognising the need for permanent classrooms, plus an £80,000 donation from the Trust and an £80,000 grant from the Armed Forces Community Covenant Fund, provided to support the armed forces community in the Strensall area.

**The school turned out in force to meet the Lord Lieutenant – the Queen's representative – and he arrived to a sea of union flags**



So much has changed for the better since the Ebor Academy Trust was first established in December 2013.

From running one school in York to then supporting another, we have grown – and are still growing – into a multi-academy trust with a clear moral purpose. We want all our children and young people to leave our academies proud to have belonged to a caring school community and ready to take their place in a global society.

Our organisation is built on four distinct pillars to develop sustainable excellence in education:

The **quality of our teaching and learning** simply has to be the best there is. We believe that involving the teachers in our group fosters new thinking. We encourage innovation whilst ensuring appropriate levels of consistency.

We want to do what we can to **close the attainment gap** between disadvantaged pupils and others. We are inclusive and diverse and want everyone to achieve their potential, irrespective of background.

We want to encourage people into the teaching profession and offer **developmental and career opportunities** for all our staff.

And we are **passionate about collaboration**: working together to draw on a wide set of skills to offer opportunities to all.

Together we can a positive difference to children's lives and those of their families.



Richard Ludlow, Chief Executive, Ebor Academy Trust



# Blazing a trail for excellence in education

**“We want our hubs to be vibrant, exciting places that are stimulating for participating schools and their staff and of genuine benefit to local communities.”**

The Ebor Academy Trust doubled in size during 2015.

Ebor is a MAT – a multi-academy trust – which is a collection of schools working outside local authority control and directly answerable to the Department for Education.

What started as an alliance between Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy and Haxby Road Primary Academy has grown to include Brotherton and Byram Community Primary Academy near Knottingley and Ebor Academy Filey across on the Yorkshire coast. And in September 2016, Ebor will open and operate a brand new primary school,

Staynor Hall Community Primary Academy, in Selby. Others are in the pipeline.

Richard Ludlow has moved up from being Headteacher at Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy to become Chief Executive of the Ebor Academy Trust.

“We are having a range of conversations with a lot of schools, in York and across the north of England,” said Mr Ludlow. “Some are curious as to how it all works; others are seeing the benefits of close collaborations and may join us within Ebor. This is an exciting time to be in education.”

More than half of the country’s 5,000 secondary schools and over

ten per cent of the 23,000 primaries are now academies. City of York Council has always had an enviable reputation nationally for excellence in education, which may explain why schools in the city have not been quick off the mark when it comes to new ways of thinking. But with spending cuts and reorganisations, many schools are now looking to each other for support, rather than relying on the local authority.

“Converting to an academy doesn’t automatically improve a school and there are examples of good and bad academies, just as there are good and bad schools,” said Mr Ludlow. “There are some direct financial benefits but what we are finding is that headteachers enjoy working with other headteachers and the structure allows for creative thinking and innovative solutions.

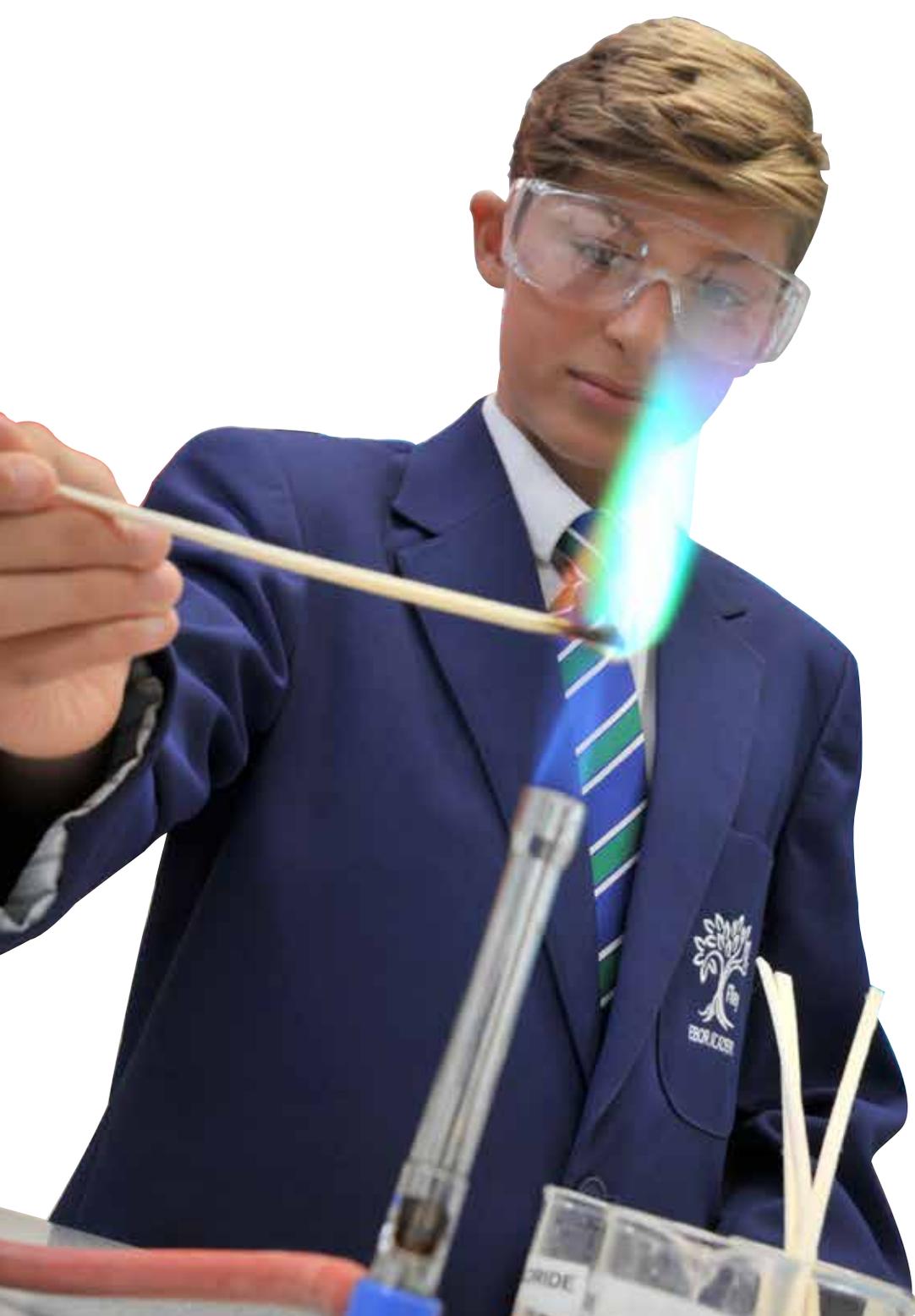
“This was brought to bear at a recent information evening in Selby when we pulled in specialists from throughout our group, to talk to parents and carers about what they might expect at the new primary school.

“A service for children which is often an unaffordable luxury as a single school, becomes viable when that resource can be shared among a group of schools. By their very nature, MATs open school leaders’ minds and make them entrepreneurial.

“Many of the ways of working that our children and young people are now used to in our academies, can be achieved within the state system but they don’t happen because

**Richard Ludlow  
with students at  
Ebor Academy Filey**





# Plans for a creative arts academy

Ebor is the driving force bidding for a new school for the creative arts.

If successful, the Creative Arts Academy York will:

- put creative arts at the centre of the curriculum, collaborating with specialists locally, nationally and internationally
- be located at the former Park & Ride site at Askham Bar
- have an extended school day, from 8am to 5pm
- have a York city-wide, inclusive admissions policy to fairly represent the wider community
- have an integrated special needs provision.

In addition, the new school will help relieve some of the primary place planning anxiety the city is facing, said Ebor Academy Trust chief executive Richard Ludlow: "This is a genuinely exciting opportunity to create something different and entirely new for the children and young people of York.

"Our performing arts classes will equip children with the tools to express themselves, our visual arts and technology classes will offer creative ways to explore the world and we will employ expert practitioners who can unlock children's potential.

"The Creative Arts Academy York will be non-traditional and committed to providing an excellent and rounded education. We will interweave creative and academic lessons to stimulate the children.

"We will be diverse and we will work to ensure all our pupils have the resilience and confidence to develop invaluable life skills."

The two-form entry primary school, which will admit 60 children a year, could be up and running from September 2017 if plans soon to be submitted to the Department for Education are approved.

"We will welcome children from across the city. Our website, [www.creativeartsacademyyork.org](http://www.creativeartsacademyyork.org) is the place for parents and carers to register their interest and find out more.

headteachers get used to a certain way of thinking."

Ebor Academy Trust also offers school to school support, allowing staff to develop their own careers while offering help to other schools. Their corporate services team, the so-called "engine room" of the operation, led by James Perry, finance director, coordinates the use of resources to support teaching and learning throughout the group. Key functions of the corporate services team are to ensure the long term viability of individual academies and the growth of the trust itself.

Richard Ludlow said: "It's our intention to develop hubs of schools,

in geographical areas, that can work together and work as part of our wider group, sharing and promoting the Ebor values of Excellence, Belonging, Opportunity and Respect.

"As Ebor expands, so too does our collective knowledge. We educate children from the age of two to 16 years. We have experience of outstanding schools, new-build schools, PFI and transforming struggling schools into beacons of excellence.

"We want our hubs to be vibrant, exciting places that are stimulating for participating schools and their staff and of genuine benefit to local communities."

**All fired up: a new school name and smart new uniform immediately sent out a clear message of change at Ebor Academy Filey**

## Rebecca McGuinn is Ebor's pastoral manager with evidence to support her belief that wellbeing is a whole school issue...

Although he might not know it, nine-year-old Mark's story is a good example of how schools working together in a multi-academy trust can really make a difference in improving children's lives.

Sitting in a circle with other Year 4s, in a session run by Ebor Academy Trust pastoral manager Rebecca McGuinn, Mark spoke quietly and nervously at first. We were in The Hub, which they called a sanctuary, not just another classroom, in part funded by a charity who provided comfy sofas and rugs for the floor.

Mark said he had been bullied – “but it went beyond bullying” – for some time, making his life a misery and he felt he had nowhere where he felt safe until The Hub came along. He sobbed as he told of his scratched leg and his bleeding nose, prompting a child to pass him a box of tissues and two others to give him a hug.

Growing in confidence and speaking up, he said he was proud that these sessions had helped him to stand up for himself and not feel afraid, or alone. Another boy chipped in: “you've got me now.”

Rebecca McGuinn has over ten years' experience in educational social work, working with children and family services in a school setting for a local authority. Her role was to reach young people at risk of permanent exclusion or non-attendance.

With an expertise in safeguarding, her supporting role to one of Ebor Academy Trust's schools was initially a day a week. Today Rebecca works full-time with the trust, across its schools and is a key member of the leadership team. The Hub model is being set up among other schools as they see the many benefits this kind of pastoral care can bring.

“Schools need an actual room that doesn't look like a classroom,” said Rebecca. “It's very important to offer something that's an alternative where families as well as staff and pupils can come and feel safe. Sometimes parents' relationships with schools have become fragmented and we



# Vital life

need to restore trust.

“At first it can feel like you're the fourth emergency service. It takes time to embed any new practice and emotions can be very raw.”

Knowing that safety, wellbeing and pupils having a voice is represented at the highest level in a school can offer something different to some parents who may not have fond memories of their own school days. “There's a different outlook when the interface between home and school is not

through a teacher,” said Rebecca.

Some children live in chaos, possibly caused by trauma and the crisis can be part of children's lives on a short- or long-term basis. But no child is beyond reach. “The ones some people see as the most difficult are the ones I love the most,” said Rebecca. “Every child can be accessed. It's all about relationships and making children feel valued. We offer warm snuggly areas and let them talk through their problems at



# lessons

their own pace. At least in school, we can be a crutch for them and they are safe, which for some is an achievement in itself.”

Bringing families into school to help them work through difficulty is a big part of the job. If a child sees there is a connection between home life and school, there is less room to play one off against the other – and can bring real benefits when the child sees parents and the school working together.

Rebecca’s role with the leadership team sends out a clear message that wellbeing is a whole school issue and not something reserved for the ‘special’ children. For an hour a week, entire classes sit in a circle to impress on them core values and they are empowered to form and share opinions about the world around them and the choices they make.

“We’re having a big push on life skills. We help give children the tools to articulate their emotions to make

sense of the world and give them every opportunity to be the best person they can be.

“An hour a week gives everyone in that circle the chance to tell other children what they feel, especially, for example, if they are upset about something. Restorative practice is an approach we have brought into our schools, that allows time and energy to be spent to promote victim awareness. This is very powerful and it means children who may be guilty of wrongdoing are supported to face up to the consequences of their actions and make amends – vital life lessons. This restorative approach to children’s welfare and wellbeing has got to be at the very heart of any school.”

## **“It’s all about relationships and making children feel valued”**

The challenges are similar across primary and secondary although there is less time to turnaround entrenched bad behaviour at secondary level. Aspirations are the same, however, even though it may be more difficult to rebuild relationships with parents as time is running out.

Expert support such as Rebecca’s is uncommon in state maintained schools because of ever increasing pressure on budgets. The pastoral manager role in a multi-academy trust is a reality because the costs can be shared among schools in the group.

It the end, in education, statistics matter. Before Rebecca came along, children were excluded – because it was the only tool – and a lot of pupils felt unsafe.

Now, there have been no exclusions, attendance is up and regular surveys show that more than 90 per cent of children feel safe – a massive increase.

Little wonder that more of Rebecca’s time is being spent on training staff at other schools and spreading best practice.



## Staynor Hall



# Enthusiasm grows for Selby's latest primary school

It was standing room only at Selby Town Hall as parents gathered to learn more about the new Staynor Hall Community Primary Academy, currently being built and which opens in September 2016.

Headteacher designate Mrs Gail Brown, with colleagues from other schools in the Ebor Academy Trust, which will run the new school, addressed over 150 parents, carers and children at an information evening in November 2015.

Mrs Brown said: "There was a lot of enthusiasm in the room for the new school and I am privileged to be its first headteacher. We are very keen to be part of the family of schools in Selby and I'm delighted that everyone is looking forward to the new school in Staynor Hall."

North Yorkshire County Council has assessed the need for extra primary school places which are likely to arise from the Selby's new housing in different year groups in 2016/2017.

As a result it has been agreed that the new school, in addition to opening up 30 Reception places to children starting school for the first time, should also offer places to children in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4. This will enable families moving into the development with children in these year groups to have a school place close to where they will be living.

Parents were told that building work is progressing well and the school will open in time. It will be equipped

# Meet the new Headteacher

The new Headteacher designate for Staynor Hall Community Primary Academy is Mrs Gail Brown, currently Executive Headteacher at Brotherton and Byram Community Primary Academy, near Knottingley.

Mrs Brown will be responsible for both schools initially and will divide her time between them as the Staynor Hall school gets up and running. She said: "The new school will create a natural partnership with our school in Brotherton and Byram, which already has strong connections with schools in Selby.

"Staynor Hall Community Primary Academy will be the newest member of the Selby family of schools and

it's part of my role to develop good working relationships with all the other schools in this area.

"I'm really looking forward to bringing together a high quality team to deliver an excellent education provision in Selby."

Mrs Brown has over 20 years experience in primary education. She has taught every primary age group and has successfully led two schools, leading one from Good to Outstanding and more recently a school from Special Measures to Good in the Ofsted ratings.

Mrs Brown has also spent four years working within a local authority school improvement team



Gail Brown



with the latest technology and will also host a Tiny Steps Academy for eligible two-year-olds and a nursery for three- and four-year-olds.

"Parents were asking about wrap around care – breakfast clubs and after school provision. We will certainly be offering this provision as part of our ambition for the school to be at the heart of the Staynor Hall community.

"We have yet to work out the details, and the timings of the

provision, but we will aim to fit in with what the demand is. It's the same, too, with the idea of holiday clubs. If there is sufficient demand, we will do our best to satisfy that demand."

More details, once agreed, will be posted to the new school's website, [www.staynorhallschool.org](http://www.staynorhallschool.org) and parents can add their email addresses onto the site to receive automatic notifications when new information is released.

By law, all new schools now

have to be either free schools or academies and the £5.5m Staynor Hall Community Primary Academy marks the first such school for North Yorkshire County Council. The county council will meet all costs in setting it up, with a contribution towards capital costs and the provision of the site from house builders Persimmon.

The Staynor Hall housing development, which was approved in 2005, will eventually comprise about 1,200 homes.

**Alan Rowlinson**  
of Ebor Academy  
Trust on site with  
**North Yorkshire  
County Councillor  
Steve Shawright  
and Suzanne Firth,**  
Strategic Planning  
Manager at NYCC

**“It’s a real bonus for the community”**

# Haxby Road Primary Academy welcomes two-year-olds



Haxby Road Primary Academy in York has extended its whole school provision and now welcomes two-year-olds.

The new Tiny Steps Academy, which Head of School Zoe Lightfoot believes makes Haxby Road the only 2-11 school within the city, started in 2015 after consultation and collaboration with the local community, other

providers in the area and City of York Council.

“Firstly we extended nursery times to enable parents to take their 15 hours of child care flexibly, to include a free meal for children stopping for the whole day and the option of paying for additional hours,” said Ms Lightfoot. “This has been a huge success and helped children with low on entry attainment to make accelerated progress.”

Now, following evidence of a significant need to work alongside families in the area, the school has opened its doors to all two-year-olds with its Tiny Steps Academy– with a child centred approach based around imaginative play, said Ms Lightfoot.

“We can take up to 22 children in two, two-and-a-half day slots which includes a free, nutritious hot

lunch on the full days. Top-up and wrap around care is also available for families to purchase. We have a highly specialised staff and an established family and pupil support team.

“It’s a real bonus for the community,” said Ms Lightfoot. “We are working hard to provide all that parents need to support their young children to grow and learn in a safe, caring environment. This goes beyond helping children to be school ready. We focus on speaking and listening, oracy, role play, creativity and construction.

“We have access to open spaces and soft play to promote physical development and work together to help build happy, ambitious and motivated tiny people.”

Parents who would like to know more should contact the school.



Zoe Lightfoot,  
Head of School at  
Haxby Road Primary  
Academy, with two-  
year-olds, from left,  
Ella Powell, Hannah  
Rasouli Sangachin  
and Alisha Ferguson



# MP sees changes for himself at a revitalised school

Reception children at Brotherton and Byram Community Primary Academy, from left, Logan Brocklesby, Jack Rotherforth, Zoe Kay and Paynton Wright, making cakes for Diwali with Ebor Academy Trust Chief Executive Richard Ludlow, left, MP Nigel Adams and Executive Headteacher Gail Brown. Below, Brotherton and Byram's new school prospectus

Brotherton and Byram Community Primary Academy is in now in a "completely different world" compared to how it used to be, said Selby and Ainsty MP Nigel Adams on his first visit to the school since it became part of Ebor Academy Trust.

The school, which was categorised as being in special measures by Ofsted, has since made rapid progress and is now officially a "good" school. It became an academy in the summer of 2015.

"I had heard about the good work going on at Brotherton and Byram Community Primary Academy and was keen to see the first school to convert to an academy in my constituency," said Mr Adams. "I

believe in the academy programme. Here and elsewhere it gives school management more flexibility and results tend to show a vast improvement. This is what everyone should want – the chance for children to go to an excellent school."

On his tour round the school, he fielded questions such as "What is the House of Parliament like?" and "How often have you been on TV?" He then sat in on a session at The Hub, the school's sanctuary for children that provides a place for them to talk about their feelings.

Mrs Gail Brown, Executive Headteacher at Brotherton and Byram Community Primary Academy, said the MP's visit had created a lot

of excitement around the school. She said: "I'm proud of what has been achieved here thanks to the hard work of children, parents and staff and collaboration with other academies in our group. We're now going from strength to strength."



**“We’re at the beginning of an exciting journey”**

# Partnerships breathe new life into coastal secondary school

Ebor Academy Filey is the new name for Filey School. But there’s more happening here than just a name change. It’s like a new school.

With the appointment of Mr Andrew Galbraith as Headteacher, Ebor Academy Filey is at the beginning of a new chapter in community secondary education in the town.

Everyone is working towards excellence in everything they do, saying it’s no less than what Filey and its young people deserve.

“We have many new faces in the teaching team: 16 new members of staff started in September 2015 and our first rate teacher development programme ensures a continual focus on excellence,” said Mr Galbraith.

“Science lessons are being revolutionised thanks to a partnership with the National Science Learning Centre. Science, technology, engineering and maths is a major priority for schools and the national centre, based at the University of York, has the largest collection of resources in the UK.”

This means science teachers, teaching assistants and technicians from Filey will attend courses to top up their knowledge, so they can pass on latest thinking to students.

Chromebooks are now being used in Geography, History and RE. The Humanities faculty is the first to receive the new kind of laptop computer, which will enhance learning opportunities across the subjects. Coupled with new computer suites, new servers and wi-fi across the site, Ebor Academy Filey students



will be ideally placed to make the most out of innovative teaching and learning techniques.

A new school day offers enhanced opportunities for learning. On top of the usual curriculum, students choose from a variety of additional subjects or have opportunities for additional support. Among “elective” subjects are sport, music, arts and literacy.

There are “stretch” projects for independent learning and “collective” learning sessions where different year groups attend masterclasses in core subject areas.

A new behaviour code has been introduced, promoting positive

learning habits. It provides clarity and consistency for all students.

To create a more social environment, family service dining has been introduced at lunchtimes. Rather than queuing for their meals, students are allocated tables where they serve each other. The move helps students get to know others outside their friendship groups and teachers and students eat together.

“Our mission is for our students to aspire, believe and achieve,” said Mr Galbraith. “We are at the beginning of an exciting journey at Ebor Academy Filey – we are proud to say to the young people of the area, come and join us.”

**Mr Andrew Galbraith, Headteacher, with, from left: Olivia Yalezo, Deputy Head Girl; John Storey, Deputy Head Boy; Lewis East, Head Boy; and Hannah Botterill, Head Girl**



**Owls of delight: Bobby Dunn, left, a Year 6 pupil of Hunmanby Primary School, with Michael Jarju, a Year 10 Ebor Academy Filey student and Rolo, a European Eagle Owl**

## Hogwarts for a day

Ebor Academy Filey was transformed into Hogwarts for a science inspiration day involving the area’s primary school pupils.

Some 150 children took part in three of the 12 hands-on Harry Potter-themed workshops, planned and delivered by members of the Ebor teaching team.

Enthusiastic junior wizards investigated floating liquids in potions class and made their own bubbling lava lamps. Other workshops involved flying broomsticks, making colour changing cup-holders, investigating frozen hands and designing, making and tasting their own herbal tea.