

A photograph of children in a classroom. In the foreground, a young boy with brown hair, wearing a green school uniform, is smiling at the camera while holding a piece of blue paper. To his right, a girl with long brown hair, wearing glasses and a green headband, is looking down at a piece of paper. In the background, another boy is focused on a task at a table. The setting appears to be a well-lit classroom with educational materials.

ISSUE 15

One Family

with Wonder

Successful Funding Bid for Wonder Learning Partnership

Explore Wonder...

Estates and Compliance: Successful Funding Bid

Curriculum Conversation: The Wonder of Play

Governance: Annual Governance Survey



Wonder
Learning Partnership
Educate | Empower | Engage | Enrich

One Family

ISSUE 15

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Welcome to the Wonder Learning Partnership

We believe passionately, as a rural charitable Trust, that our children, in our villages, market and coastal towns, should be entitled to an education that celebrates the traditions of our communities, which recognises the history and values of our rural schools, their individuality and distinctiveness.

We are child focused, driven by an absolute desire to know and care for each child as an individual. A love of learning and a real passion for teaching. Our mission is to ensure every child receives the very best teaching, follows a challenging and exciting curriculum that broadens their understanding and provides a wealth of knowledge, not only within specific subjects, but across disciplines and time. Exposing them to the true majesty and wonder of creation, within nature, across the world, in different cultures and societies.

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“Wonder is the beginning of wisdom” Socrates

Our Values

Educate

We are committed to educating the whole child and believe every child should reach their potential.

Empower

We will empower our whole school community through support, development, and value in the pursuit of excellence.

Engage

We will engage in best practice to develop the personal qualities and aspirations of pupils and staff.

Enrich

We will ensure our children are exposed to a wealth of experiences and opportunities.

We welcome any school partner into the Wonder Learning Partnership and look forward to hearing from you. Our team is here to help across a breadth of areas whether this is peer to peer support, compliance, curriculum development or if you are seeking to join our Trust. Please get in touch at office@wlp.education.



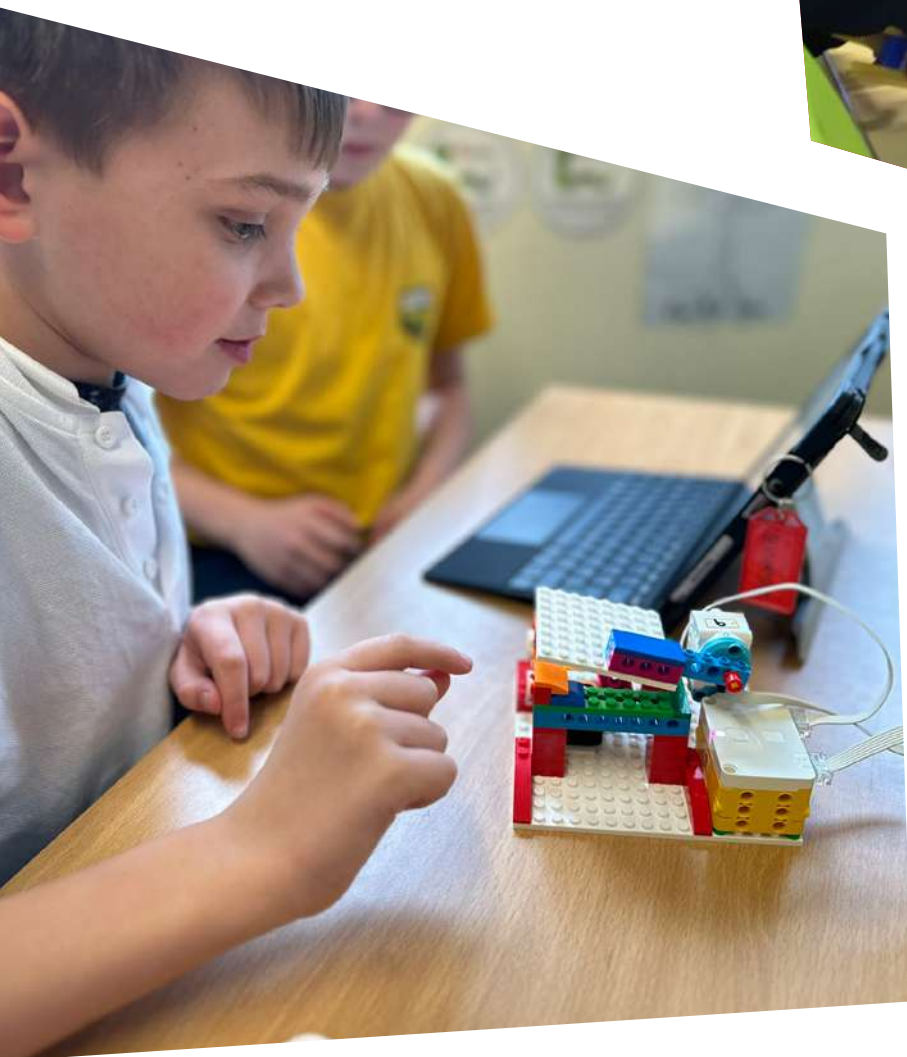
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Wonder School Family News

The Nest's Nurturing Environment

Pocklington Junior School's nurturing space, The Nest, allows children to explore their individuality whilst engaging in small group learning and personal development. It is fabulous to see the children continue to build upon their skills of working and playing together as a team, taking time out to discuss things that may be bothering them and showing great sportsmanship in our games. Seeing them proudly share their maths and English work with their parents and carers is always a pleasure.



Lego Rubbish Monster Machines

Pupils at Melbourne Primary School developed their coding skills in their latest project where they created Lego Monster Rubbish Machines. Through trial and error and some exploration, the children were able to design, build and program their robotic creations.

Bringing STEM to life in the classroom is really exciting for pupils and introduces key skills to them. There was a great deal of creativity and resilience during the lesson as they upgraded the program functions.

Wonder School Family News



Developing Key Life Skills

Early Years Foundation pupils at Stamford Bridge School were given the fabulous opportunity to develop their day-to-day life skills as they went shopping for the ingredients needed for a cake they will bake in class. So many areas of learning were covered as they made their list, walked to the shop, found their items and counted the money to pay for them. This is all before the actual science of baking a cake! We do think activities like this are superb not only for the children but for the local community who get to experience our wonderful and respectful children.

Budding Scientists

Pupils at Woldgate School embraced British Science Week, an annual celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). Woldgate School conducted over 100 practical activities and demonstrations with the help of members of their STEM club. Year 7 investigated kinetic energy, Year 8 tested different composts and Year

9 conducted experiments to extract DNA from fruit and made pendulum swings. The pupils are credited for their teamwork, perseverance and time management. Well done to the STEM club for the organisation and commitment to running a fabulous Science Week!



Competition Winner: Anthology Cover Design

Congratulations to the Sixth Form student at Longcroft School and Sixth Form College whose design won the cover competition for the next publication in Longcroft's anthology series. Competition was fierce with outstanding pieces of work with amazing concepts and ideas being submitted. We look forward to seeing Weaving Dreams published in July.



Wonder School Family News



PHSE Diversity

KS3 pupils at Eskdale School welcomed Ayaz Bhuta MBE to give a talk on his inspiring life as a British Paralympic wheelchair rugby player. Ayaz spoke of his challenges as a child growing up with a disability, his struggles as other people placed limitations on his abilities, and his overwhelming resilience and strength in fighting those limitations and barriers to go on and win a gold medal in the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics. Ayaz was very open to questions and a group of pupils stayed after the talk to ask a range of questions. Staff were impressed with the inquisitiveness and emotional intelligence shown by pupils as they chatted with Ayaz about everything from his disability to his training regime, proudest moments and words of wisdom. Ayaz advised our pupils to 'never let anyone tell you, you can't be what you want to be. Work hard, train hard and go do whatever you want to do.' Wise words indeed and from a very credible source.

Successful Field Trip!

Students studying A-level biology at Whitby Sixth Form undertook a variety of field work techniques including random quadrat sampling of sphagnum moss and continual line transect down a gradient to monitor species distribution. They had to dodge the adders that were happily soaking up the sun on day one! On the next very wet day, the group chose to investigate the effect of stream velocity on mayfly nymph populations. They completed the Spearman's Rank statistical analysis and found that they could accept their hypothesis. It was happily reported that the stream had an abundance of these indicator species which suggests a very clean water course. Well done biologists!





Estates and Compliance

Wonder Learning Partnership Awarded Development Funding

The Wonder Learning Partnership has great pleasure in announcing its success in being the only Trust or school in the East Riding of Yorkshire to secure funding through the Department for Education's Condition Improvement Fund Programme for the following projects:

Melbourne Primary School for the construction of two new classrooms.

Woldgate School and Sixth Form College for the upgrade of the Fire Detection System, Replacement Fire Doors, Emergency Lighting plus further works for the building which is not being replaced as part of the already granted Rebuild Programme.

The Department for Education made available £450 million through the Condition Improvement Fund programme. There were 2,016 applications for 3,034 projects, following the assessment of applications the Department of Education in 2024-25 will provide funding for 866 of those projects at 733 academies, sixth-form colleges, and voluntary-aided schools.

Adele Pinder, Trust Director of Estates and Compliance, said, "This is an extremely exciting time for the Wonder Learning Partnership. We have worked extremely hard to secure this funding alongside our partners and look forward to working alongside them to deliver the projects to ensure our schools are providing the best learning spaces for our children."

There are a number of other major estates projects taking place across the Wonder Learning Partnership now and within the coming months. The DfE Schools Rebuild Programme has started at Woldgate School and Sixth Form College, this will deliver a new Main School Building, a Sports Building with Sports Hall, Activity Studio, Fitness Suite and Food Servery/Dining Area and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA).

The Wonder Learning Partnership is also with the Local Authority funding the addition of two new classrooms at Pocklington Junior School to increase capacity. These are due for completion by September 2025.

Jonathan Britton, Trust CEO, added, "There will also be a 3-year refurbishment plan to develop 'Wonder Learning Spaces' across classrooms and teaching spaces in all Wonder Learning Partnership primary schools. We are committed to creating environments for both colleagues and children to flourish and look forward to seeing learning spaces develop."



The Wonder of Play

Four weeks ago, I found myself standing over a water play table in one of our EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) settings being corrected on my dinosaur names by one of our nursery children. He had a dinosaur in the water, and I thought I would tell him its proper name – Ichthyosaur. I was confident about that. I have seen the one in the Yorkshire Museum.

He told me, in no uncertain terms that it was, in fact, a placodus. I think, after some googling, he was probably right. It had a far shorter jaw than the ichthyosaur.

This is one reason why I love working in education. Children surprise you. Not just with the things they do in the classroom but outside of it. I know a pupil who once remarked in a pupil survey that history disagreed with him because, he said, it was unreasonable to ask him to remember strings of names and sequences of events when he had such a bad memory. Recently I was walking behind him in a corridor and heard him talking about a football match in excruciating detail – from who scored each goal and in what minute, who passed to who, and what this did for the team in their overall standing in the league.



Gareth Davies

Trust Head of Curriculum and Assessment



However, the lengths we will go to in order to learn about and master the things that we enjoy – or that lead to things we enjoy – are incredible. I have known children learn to bake, paint, sculpt, fix engines, learn the piano from YouTube tutorials, even learn to fly in their own time. We do this – practicing, rehearsing, learning – because we want to and so it is leisure, not work. A nursery age child learns the difference between an ichthyosaur and a placodus because they love learning about dinosaurs. They perhaps don't see it as learning or school – they see it as play – but this is a habit and a mindset that we want to see grow with them through their earliest experiences of school, to the end of their formal education, and into adult life. A lifelong love of learning.

This is why play is so central to our favoured pedagogy in Early Years. In their early years, children learn to learn – and they learn to be themselves. We do this by placing play at the very heart of our provision.



The benefits of play

We believe that creativity, positive experiences of learning, independence, and challenge are best delivered through high quality play, and we are not alone in this. There has been a considerable amount of research into the benefits of play and the types of play that are most effective. Research reviews on the subject often come to the same five key features of impactful play and these inform our provision.

Wonder-ful play

Parents or carers may recognise calling their children down to dinner. You call and they reply that they will be down in a minute. Perhaps you hear the LEGO rustling upstairs. Moments pass – you call again. They reply they will be there in just a moment – the tower they are building is just at a crucial stage...

We want children to be happy and take pleasure in their play. This is, of course, to ensure positive attitudes to learning from the outset of their education but also because **engaging** play is **effective** play. Engaging learning is effective learning. There is ample evidence increased dopamine levels in the brain's reward system are linked to enhanced memory, attention, mental shifting, creativity, (Cools, 2011) – and that curiosity and intrinsic motivation leads to enhanced neural activity (Kang et al. 2009). However, one only has to see how a child even from a young age takes great pleasure in learning about and exploring the things they are interested in – be it dinosaurs, animals, or players on a football team to see how wonder and joy inspire learning. If they love their play – love their learning – they will also be more inclined to accept failure because they will be so driven by the activity.



Meaningful play

Meaningful experiences provide opportunities for children to learn by introducing novel, interactive, and interesting stimuli that link to and develop existing knowledge. This might be to help their analogical reasoning, for example, as they move from learning to name a triangle, for example, to recognising them or building with them in real life to make a bridge.

Play in this way often has to be planned for and it is active, engaging, and purposeful.



Active play

Young children today have access to resources and technology that, as a child, we could have only dreamed about. When I was a child TV sets were the size of large suitcases – now a child can hold a screen the size and thickness of an exercise book and access thousands of games and television shows. However, as amazing as this technology can be it is often passive and solitary.

The proliferation of screens and digital devices has sparked research into their often-negative impact on early childhood development. Two key components of active play in our settings are agency and flow. Agency places the child at the heart of activity because it allows them to lead and direct play. Flow allows them the independence to move at their pace through and between activities. Both are key to the development of independence and confidence



Iterative play

If children are engaged and engrossed in their learning through play (if it is joyful and fun) they will be more likely to persevere with it. With practice, iteration – trial and error – increasingly engages parts of the brain related to taking alternative perspectives, flexible thinking, and creativity. It also builds resilience when things do not work first time. Hence, wonder is so important. A love of learning and engagement in an activity even helps them negotiate challenge and even failure and so builds resilience and self-regulation.



Socially interactive play

Positive child interactions and opportunity to interact with their peers using play is the foundation for developing healthy social and emotional regulation. Early social interaction promotes plasticity in the brain to help cope with challenges later in life and playing and exploring through play is the ideal catalyst for meaningful talk.

This is not new thinking. Vygotsky – one of the theorists children learn about at A Level language – saw the social as essential to learning. He wrote:

“What a child can do in cooperation today, he can do alone tomorrow.”

However, in addition, social play involves talk. Talk develops language. The play – the game, the puzzle, the building – becomes a pilot to develop speech and language.

I would like to thank Abi, Tara, and Charlie – Early Years leads for three schools who have been part of our EYFS planning days – for some truly fascinating curriculum conversations over the last year or so. Thanks to you all – and I look forward to more conversations and to seeing play flourish not only in Early Years but across the Key Stages.

I would challenge anyone planning a scheme of learning to ask themselves – where is the play in this? Where is the fun? Have you included the wonder?



Governance



Department
for Education



Annual Governance Survey (NGA)

The National Governance Association's (NGA) 14th annual survey for governors and trustees in state schools across England is now open, offering you a unique opportunity to have your say on the current state of school and trust governance!

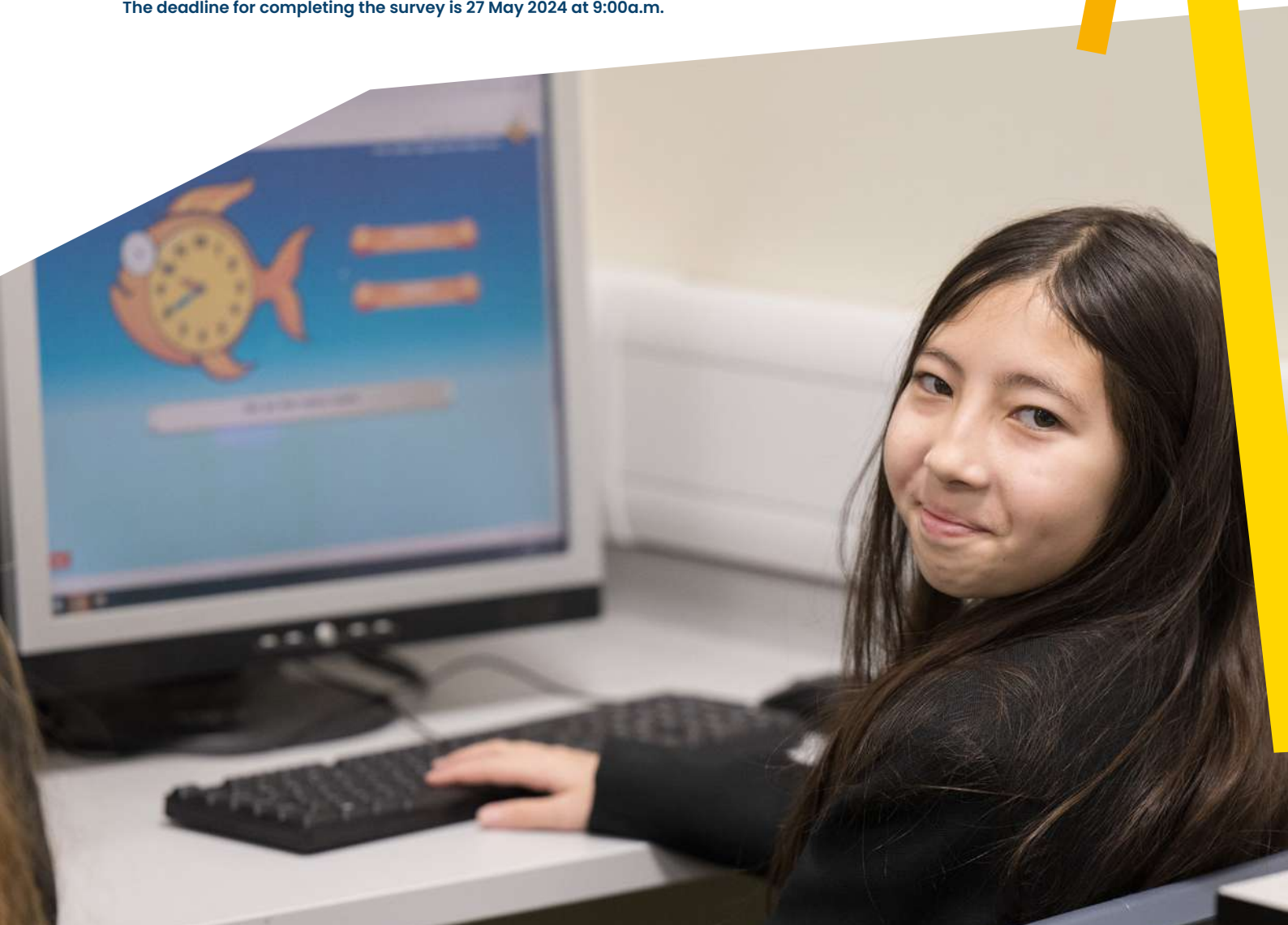
The survey is the only regular, comprehensive source of information on the views, demographics, and experiences of one of England's largest volunteer forces. Like last year, the survey is hosted by Edurio, England's leading stakeholder feedback platform for schools and multi-academy trusts.

Your participation in this survey is not just important; it's crucial. Your voice matters and will make a real difference in shaping the future of the education system. Be a part of the change that you want to see.

NGA and the wider education sector will use the survey findings to significantly enhance the support and guidance available to governing boards. Your participation will also amplify the voice of school and trust governance in consultations on the future of education and help us accurately represent your views at a national level, playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of education and governance in England.

The survey needs to be completed in one sitting, it is recommend setting aside around **30 minutes** to complete it, depending on the details of your answers.

The deadline for completing the survey is 27 May 2024 at 9:00a.m.





Professional Development with the Institute of Education

Designed to empower colleagues and achieve higher pupil outcomes, our courses are delivered by active teaching practitioners and educational leaders with the content being evidence-informed, up to date and contextually relevant.

We also work with strategic partners to provide an exceptional training school offer. All of our professional development courses are delivered from our Centres of Excellence across the East Riding of Yorkshire and North Yorkshire.

1. Choose your training course
2. Choose your nearest Centre of Excellence
3. Complete our booking form to secure your place

For more information and course booking visit:
[www.wlp.education/
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Training & CPD Courses & Events

The Wonder Institute of Education’s training content is evidence-informed, up to date and contextually relevant to classrooms and schools. Recognising that time is precious, we are delivering our training from Centres of Excellence across North Yorkshire and the East Riding of Yorkshire.

All Training Courses	Leadership Courses	Teaching and Learning Courses	SEND Courses
Safeguarding Courses	Governance Courses	Networking Events	Early Careers Teachers





Recruiting Trust Governors

WHAT IS BEING A TRUST GOVERNOR:

- > Rewarding
- > Sharing & gaining knowledge and skills
- > Strategic working
- > Being a critical friend

Contact us if you would like to know more:

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Succeed, Together**

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