

# LONGCROFT

SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE —

## NEWS LETTER



### 200th Edition!

It has been our pleasure to share the exceptional progress and many wonderful achievements of our current and former pupils, Sixth Form students and school with our community!





# LONGCROFT

-SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE —

# NEWS LETTER



"I'm incredibly happy and fortunate that I've done what I wanted to do."

A murder in a quiet village is causing anxiety for a psychologist—who must face her fears to find the killer . . .

The publication of her debut novel, 'A Little Bird Told Me', saw former Longcroft student Rachael Gray realise an ambition held since her father read to her as a child.

Having earned A Levels in English Language, Psychology, Theatre Studies and General Studies, Rachael left Longcroft in 1996 to read Psychology at the University of Hull.

As a Doctor of Clinical Psychology, while Rachael enjoyed the privilege of working with the NHS and palliative care charities for over twenty years she had always harboured an ambition to be a writer.

### **Contents**

Headteacher's Welcome

**Lower School** 

**Upper School** 

Sixth Form

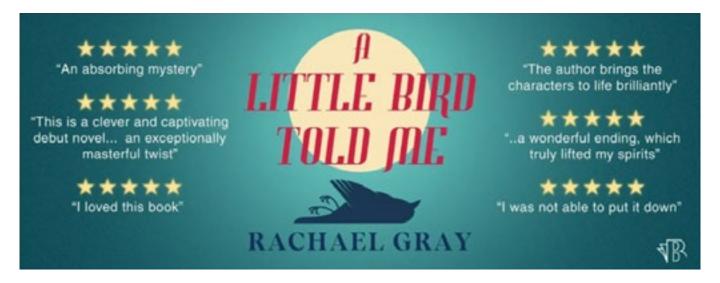
In Focus: Science

**Memory Lane** 

Extra-Curricular Timetable

**Library News** 





Rachael explained: "I did some evening classes and thought it wouldn't happen, but I always did a lot of reading. My dad used to read to me a lot and I always wanted to be the person who wrote the book. If it's something you enjoy, you've just got to keep practising."

"My mum picked up a copy from the Beverley Bookshop, which is really cool."

Rachael, who now lives in Normandy with her husband, explained: "We took the opportunity to move to France – I'd started writing the year before. I always wanted to be a writer – it's a lot of fun! It's hard work, but an incredible feeling. The writing of the first draft is the thing I like the most."

"You've not got to worry how it looks in the beginning because you can polish it. You get lots of rejections but you just need to keep at it."

The many readers who enjoy 'A Little Bird Told Me' can look forward to the forthcoming release of three more books which make up The Elderwick Mysteries series. The second is due to be released in December; the third in Spring.

Reviews are impressive.

"I really enjoyed this book. A cozy murder mystery with plenty of twists and turns. During reading this book I had everyone as the suspect. Love how it is written with great characters and great storyline."

"I enjoyed this book very much. Nice clear style and some lovely characters. Twists and turns along the way misled both Laurel and me, making it a pleasure when the reveal finally came. I look forward to reading the next books."

"The characters are engaging and credible, and the atmosphere, and, occasionally, small mindedness, of village life is captured convincingly. A good read, and a wonderful ending, which truly lifted my spirits."

"This was such an engaging and entertaining read! The village of Elderwick and its residents are presented through a lovely blend of immersive description and clever dialogue. This was my first foray into 'Cozy Crime' and I'm very glad I chose Rachael's novel to lead me in... it is perfect. Look forward to reading the next instalment."

"I'm looking forward to reading more from this author! If you're a fan of cosy mysteries, this is a must read!"

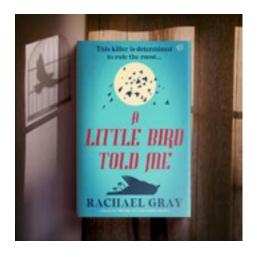
Rachael reflected: "It's nice to get positive reviews from people who don't know me. Not all books are for everyone – my books are very genre-based. You have to grow a bit of a thick skin. A lot of authors share the 1\* reviews they get and accept that it happens."



When asked about her preferred genre, Rachael said: "I've not settled on one yet. I love Agatha Christie and the Nancy Drew series – psychological thrillers. At the moment, very much crime." Rachael added: "My next idea is very different."

While Elderwick is a fictional village Rachael, who grew up in Cherry Burton, explained: "There are references to Beverley – the Library and Beverley Bookshop. The village is a bit of Cherry Burton, Bishop Burton and Walkington – I wanted to make it Beverley-based."

Rachael reminisced fondly about her years at Longcroft. "It feels like a long time ago! I enjoyed A Level Theatre Studies – there were only five of us and we were taught by Headteacher Mrs Hughes." Rachael also recalled a short story she shared with her English teacher Mr Smith. A close friend and fellow Theatre Studies student Matt Snowden reminisced: "A play we created for A-level Theatre Studies involved a



group of people who had been drawn to a self-improvement retreat, but they were actually all unknowingly connected and being manipulated. Rachael played the sinister schemer who knew all their secrets and was orchestrating everything. We also produced a very basic pantomime, which was a tremendous failure! Rachael portrayed the sarcastic magic mirror, speaking in riddles.

Both showed an early fondness for the mysterious, which she has clearly continued to nurture, as her debut novel is a whodunnit."

He added: "After Sixth Form we tried a bit of collaborative creative writing, which we would probably cringe at to read again today. Rachael's contributions were always far superior to mine, so it's not surprising she stuck with it, resulting in her becoming a published author after an amazing career in psychology."

Rachael said: "I'm incredibly happy and fortunate that I've done what I wanted to do. In my dreamworld I'd write a New York Times bestseller and TV series directed by Mackenzie Crook. She described British comedy television series 'Detectorists', written and directed by Crook who also stars alongside Toby Jones, as "a beautiful series". While her star changes from week to week Rachael suggested Anjana Vasan, who plays microbiology PhD student Amina in Nida Manzoor's sitcom 'We Are Lady Parts', describing her as "Very funny, but not 'silly-funny'".

Mr Baker said: "It was a pleasure to spend time discussing Rachael's book and career with her, and reminiscing about her years at Longcroft. I'm sure 'A Little Bird Told Me' will be hugely successful and her career will go from strength to strength. It's wonderful that she has been able to make her dream reality, and her story echoes our values."

Congratulations to Rachael on the successful publication of her first novel which will shortly be added to our Library here at Longcroft. Mr Baker concluded: "I'm sure Rachael will be proud that Longcroft pupils and Sixth Form students for years to come will draw inspiration from her work – her books will take pride of place in the very library she spent time in herself."

With her fear at an all-time high, her sleuthing partner gone missing, and village gossip spreading like wildfire, Laurel wonders who she can truly trust. Is it time to move on yet again? And will her newly formed friendships be enough to save her from this mysterious murderer?

Published by Bloodhound Books, copies of 'A Little Bird Told Me' are available to buy from bookshops including: The Beverley Bookshop, Beverley; The Stripey Badger, Grassington; Limestone Books, Settle. It can also be purchased online from Waterstones or Amazon: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Little-Bird-Told-Me-thrilling/dp/1917214421?source=ps-sl-shoppingads-lpcontext&ref\_=fplfs&psc=1&smid=A3P5ROKL5A1OLE

Rachael added: "By buying a copy of 'A Little Bird Told Me' before September 2025, you will be supporting the Airedale Hospital and Community Charity in West Yorkshire. I have many fond memories of my time working at Airedale and am thrilled to be able to give something back – 20% of my royalties from sales in year one, plus pre-orders." https://airedalecharity.org/

# Headteacher's Welcome

It is wonderful this week to be celebrating our 200th edition of the Longcroft Newsletter. Over several years now it has been an extraordinary record of our amazing children and their many achievements in school and beyond.

Scanning just a small selection of front covers that have been featured to acknowledge the milestone this week, provides a great reminder of the rich school experience we strive to deliver at Longcroft. It also highlights the many examples of pupils and students who go on to achieve amazing things in their lives beyond school. I am tremendously proud of our children, past and present, and all that they bring to our community and wider society as they make their way in the world.

Throughout this week I've enjoyed visiting lessons and talking to pupils and students about their experiences over these early weeks of the new academic year. I have been thoroughly impressed by the quality of presentation in books and of the focus and commitment demonstrated in lessons. It has also been great to see pupils involved in our extracurricular clubs and sporting fixtures as the busy autumn schedule gets in to full swing.

On Tuesday evening we welcomed over 70 families to our Learning Hub. Our highly skilled and experienced inclusion team were joined by a range of local services to promote the help and support available to our young people, including through valued expert partners. Senior leaders met with parents individually to discuss the support currently in place for their children and consider any further opportunities to develop their provision. We received some wonderful feedback and it was great to hear many of our staff specifically acknowledged for the work they have done with particular children, as well as being able to celebrate some of the amazing progress that has been made through a range of targeted intervention and support programmes.

At Longcroft we believe passionately in the importance of knowing and valuing each and every young person, and spending time with families helps us to learn even more about them. Every member of our community is unique and brings something special and different to our community. Events like this Tuesday are a great opportunity to celebrate just that.

Next Wednesday, we have our annual Open Evening with record numbers again having booked spaces to attend. We have been overwhelmed with volunteers to support the event from tour guides to subject ambassadors and our young people always represent us so well. I look forward sharing some pictures and reflections on the event next week.

I hope you enjoy reading more about what our young people have been getting involved with in this edition of our Newsletter. Have a great week.

Mr D Perry Headteacher



### **Reward Totals**

So far this term our pupils have been awarded the following rewards for acting with Great Heart, Thought and Vision:



Acts of Great

**HEART** 

7,266

**THOUGHT** 

32,571

**VISION** 

33,963

**GRAND TOTAL:** 

73,800







Longcroft School has a proud history of nurturing Performing Arts. This week has seen our first rehearsals for the year ahead and also saw our first Production meeting, looking at the year ahead in terms of performances and starting the planning. I for one am looking forward to watching what unfolds! Mr Perry and I were very impressed with initial attendance, with around one hundred pupils turning up to the first session.

We also had lots of our Key Stage 3 pupils attend sports clubs, such as football on Tuesday and table-tennis on Friday after school. We are looking forward to showcasing our facilities at next week's Open Evening on Wednesday 25th September; if you would like to book a place, you can do so at www.heartthoughtvision.co.uk

At Longcroft School, we believe that a child's education should be enriched through opportunities beyond the classroom. We provide an extensive range of activities and visits. Pupils can access a wide range of local visits, from participating in sports fixtures through one of our many sports clubs, to walking the East Yorkshire coast and appreciating the natural beauty of our local area.

We also pride ourselves on the quality international trips and visits that play a vital part in enriching the curriculum and giving our pupils valuable life experiences they are sure to recall fondly in future years. From ski-trips to cultural visits to New York, Paris and Barcelona, we offer some truly inspirational opportunities for our young people. Recently, I had the privilege to be able to visit Iceland with our Upper School pupils; a truly once in a lifetime experience. Seeing the Northern Lights, first hand, was breath-taking. There are more international trips in the pipeline this year too!

Our location, sports fields and views ensure that our pupils are fortunate and enjoy the wonderful countryside that surrounds the school. Our facilities are impressive — some of the very best in the region, including a Sports Hall, 3G floodlit pitch, dedicated dance, drama and music areas and a recording studio. Over the past month, our facilities have been a hive of activity, as pupils have participated in local and regional sports fixtures hosted on our school site.

Diversity is key for us at Longcroft School. Whether this is attending our Rainbow Council, to Dungeons & Dragons club, we make sure there is something for everyone. At Longcroft School, everyone is welcome, as we grow and learn together.

### The Riot Act a hit with Year 7

We were delighted to welcome drama group The Riot Act back to Longcroft after last year's successful visit.

Originally founded in 2009, the team of dynamic and experienced education providers deliver innovative and memorable learning experiences on a range of topics including road safety, promoting active travel and mental and physical health.

'What Went Down...' is a powerful, engaging drama which demonstrates safe behaviour around roads. The performance highlights the importance of recognising and understanding how peer influence effects our choices and behaviour and how to deal with it.



Miss Sinclair said: "I was incredibly proud of our pupils; in the workshop they were eager to share their thoughts on the play, and particularly their opinions on the main characters. Well done Year 7!" She added: "The Riot Act cast mentioned 'what3words' – an app which pinpoints any location using three words. Emergency services use it, and it was recommended pupils have it on their phone."

As usual the cast members were extremely impressed with our children. They said: "Year 7 were engaged throughout the play and participated well in the workshop. We had a great time working with the children – what a fantastic school!"

### Mr Worthington Head of Lower School





Congratulations to our Lower School pupils on the number of ClassCharts rewards they are receiving each week. The pupils who earned the most rewards last week are listed below.



### Year 7

Pallavi Whyte-Burman

William Battye

Scarlett Pashley

Archie Peacock

Reuben Todd

Leon Zielinski

Stanley Shaw

Nico Harrison

Cobie Hancock

Ava Hutchinson-Chan

### Year 8

Ryan Took

Ava Spink

Elspeth Collin

Rosie Fitton

George Hogg

Sabah Madina

Lilv Smedlev

Gabrielle Daniels-Robson

Lyra Daniels

Oscar Purchon

### Year 9

Holly Ruston

Lydia Chapman

Charlotte Sutcliffe

Reagan De Kock

James Shiels

Annabel Shepherd

Caitlin Groves

Patrick Marham

Jasmine Stephenson

Poppy Woolfitt

### **Attendance Matters!**

Each week we reflect on the importance of attendance at school by giving ClassCharts rewards for Great Vision to every pupil with 100% attendance the previous week. These pupils are then entered into a draw and the winner receives a £5 Amazon voucher.

### Last week's winners were:

Year 7: Lily Fowler

Year 8: George Hogg

Year 9: Lola Roberts





I look forward to meeting Year 10 parents and families on the 3rd October to formally welcome you to Upper School at the 'Welcome to GCSE Evening'. In the presentation we will take you through the changes you will see as your child enters Year 10 and share our values, expectations and support structures. You will receive a letter inviting you; it will include a link to book a place for the evening.

This year we will be using the data from the mocks and Year 10 teacher assessments to support pupils through Year 11, as we did with last year's cohort. From October onwards, we will be using two Form Periods a week to focus morning learning on subjects pupils need to develop most in.

In assembly this week our Upper School pupils looked at fresh starts, taking time to reflect on what they have achieved so far and their targets are for the future.

"You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending."

-C S Lewis

After a fortnight of learning, we are starting to reward pupils who have the highest number of Heart, Thought and Vision awards - the pupils in Years 10 and 11 earning the most rewards are listed each week at the end of my article and we will be



celebrating with individuals. The popular Hot Chocolate Fridays will be starting again soon for our Upper School pupils. We all believe effort has its own reward, but it is important to take some time to acknowledge and praise pupils who are living out the values of Longcroft School.

It has also been fantastic to have pupils already using GCSEPod, please see me if there are any login issues. Along with attendance and Period 6 sessions, GCSEPod usage was shown to have the biggest impact on learning last year. Our aim this year is to have all pupils in Year 11 taking advantage of everything we offer to create fantastic personal results.

### **Netball**

Congratulations to our Year 10 and 11 netball teams, who enjoyed their first matches of the new season this week. The Year 11 team are pictured following a close game against Beverley High School.

Mrs Holt said: "I was delighted with the girls' enthusiasm. They played well, and I am looking forward to seeing them progress as a team throughout the season."

Mr Henderson Head of Upper School







**Congratulations to our Lower School** pupils on the number of ClassCharts rewards they are receiving each week. The pupils who earned the most rewards last week are listed below.



### Year 10

Sam Al-Budri

Thomas Wells

Maisie Monaghan

Cody Keenan

Ben Carlyle-Smith

Poppy Cooper

Lily-Mae Tierney

Aidan Clayton

Levi Petherbridge

**Emily Gillett** 

### Year 11

Riley McGowan

Aneena Selby

Tabitha Coupe

Jasmine Lambert

Toby Robertson

Grace Murden

Noah Smith

Grace Crook

Tom Marriott

Matthew Harris

### **Attendance Matters!**

Each week we reflect on the importance of attendance at school by giving ClassCharts rewards for Great Vision to every pupil with 100% attendance the previous week. These pupils are then entered into a draw and the winner receives a £5 Amazon voucher.

### Last week's winner was:

Year 10: Luke Hodges

Year 11: Jack Watts







A big thank you to those Year 13 students and their parents who attended Thursday's UCAS Information Evening. With this dedication and aspiration, our Year 13 students are well on the way to the university placement success of last year.

Great Heart and Thought are needed for the step up to A level and BTEC qualifications. The students are faced with the first significant test of their ability to learn independently, retain lots of information and then communicate their knowledge and understanding to their examiner.

The Sixth Form experience starts with the teaching in the classroom of each subject students have chosen and are passionate about. Students soon realise that to be successful and know their subject in depth, they are required to undertake an hour's independent study for every hour with a teacher. Currently this is 4 hours per subject, 12 hours for students taking three subjects.

Homework mostly takes the form of work set by the teacher, for instance Maths has a rigorous format of book questions and online assessments. Other forms of work subjects require are preparatory reading of texts and the continual completion of coursework. All subjects require this dedication to independent study for the students to be fully prepared for their examinations.

It can take time for some students to make the transition, but I have seen and been informed our current Year 12 students have produced work to excellent standards already.

To help with what independent study can look like, some ideas are listed below:

- Reading back through class notes and relevant sections of the text book to review and consolidate work undertaken in the classroom.
- Making additional notes or resources such as flashcards to consolidate understanding and check knowledge (these are also useful revision resources for later).
- Completing extra practice questions to secure skills
- Researching relevant information
- Further reading into your subject area, for example using Oxford University's Oxplore site: https://oxplore.org/
- Reading news articles, watching documentaries or listening to podcasts.

Happy studying!

Mr Chapman | Head of Sixth Form





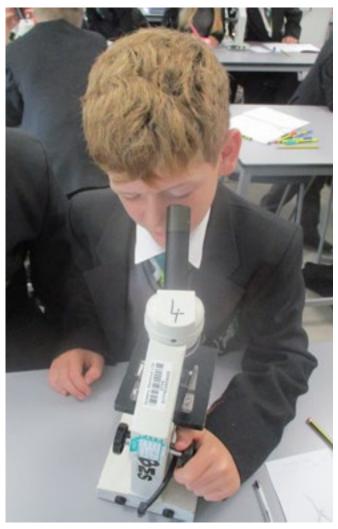




### IN FOCUS SCIENCE

This week we feature pupils in 7JPO who are pictured using microscopes in their Science lesson. Teacher Miss Woodhead explained: "This was pupils' first opportunity to use microscopes in a lesson at Longcroft, and they used pre-prepared slides of things they would recognise such as butterfly wings, threads and pieces of newspaper. They worked very well, showing care and precision."











### IN FOCUS SCIENCE

















### **Memory Lane**

This week we take a trip back to 2013 and feature two Year 11 tutor groups—Mr Fulleylove and Mr Rymer's tutor group 110 and Miss Meek's tutor group 11R are pictured.







### **Extra-curricular Opportunities**

### The following opportunities take place after school.

**Tuesday** Football – Mr Martin (3G)

Orchestra – Mrs Harris (Room 64)

Dungeons & Dragons Club – Miss Sinclair (Library)

**Wednesday** Rugby (Years 7 – 9) – Mr Cassidy (3G)

Choir – Mrs Harris (Room 64)

Netball – Mrs Holt

**Thursday** Girls' Football – Mrs Henderson

Musical Theatre – Mrs Harris and Mr Thomson (Theatre)

Friday Table Tennis – Mr Fox and Mr Henderson (Gym)

Badminton – Mr Cassidy (Sports Hall)







### DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CLUB

Room: Library

Tuesday Afterschool 3.10pm - 4.30pm

All year groups & staff welcome

Character sheets and dice provided

Just turn up or speak to Ms Sinclair (B1)











### The Friends' Corner

The Friends of Longcroft School (FOLS) are a group of parents who work together to raise funds for Longcroft, to help provide equipment and experiences the school budget couldn't cover.



fols@longcroft.eriding.net

Charity Reg No. 515674



For example, the FOLS have

provided funding for Bookbuzz books so every Year 7 pupil can receive a free book and we are assisting the school to develop a reading room. We raise money by selling refreshments at events such as school concerts and cinema nights we run for Year 7 and 8 pupils.

### But there are other ways parents can help the FOLS raise funds.

The FOLS run a monthly cash draw. For an annual fee of £12, you are entered into a monthly draw and the winner receives £15. Entries to the cash draw can be purchased on ParentPay.

The FOLS are supported by Easyfundraising. Easyfundraising is partnered with over 7,000 brands that make a donation to the FOLS each time you spend with them. All you need to do is download the Easyfundraising App and select Friends of Longcroft School as the cause you'd like to donate to.

Via the App, you select the company you wish to shop with such as Shein, Amazon, Tui and Boots. You shop as you would and on completion of your transaction, the FOLS get a donation. It doesn't cost you a thing!

You can follow the FOLS on Facebook, where you can see what we are up to.

You can also help at any of the events we hold. We don't ask for a set amount of time, we just ask you to help as and when you can.

If you would like any more information please email the FOLS at FOLS@longcroft.eriding.net









Next week our Year 7 pupils will be doing their STAR tests. The online tests last around 20 minutes and are multiple choice; they test reading, vocabulary and comprehension and allow us to determine the correct reading ages and book levels for your child.

"Reading is a discount ticket to everywhere." -Mary Schmich, American journalist and Pulitzer Prize Winner

Pupils will then be given a colour code on the Accelerated Reader scheme and select books based on that. After completing an AR book they will do a short, fun quiz to check their knowledge. Quizzes should be done as soon as possible after a book is completed and can be done at school or home.

STAR tests are nothing for pupils to worry about, but designed to help library staff and teachers ensure pupils are reading the right books for them. We don't want pupils to read books that are too easy, or overly taxing. We want them to grow and develop as readers and to enjoy reading.

Of course, children learn to read at various stages and just because your child is not reading at their biological age now, does not mean that they won't in the future. For some children reading is incredibly easy, for others it can present challenges.

The STAR tests also help us determine if your child needs additional literacy support. If so, they may be paired with a reading mentor, work on phonics, or do the Lexia programme. If you have any concerns about your child please don't hesitate to email or call staff in the library or talk to their Care and Achievement Co-ordinator. Over the forthcoming weeks I will be ringing home to let you know of any intervention your child will be accessing.

As parents and carers we can all help our children to grow as readers. Being an enthusiastic reader will help them so much with all aspects of the school curriculum. Below are a few tips you can use to support them.

### Top tips to keep children reading

### Read yourself

Establish an environment where reading is usual. Be a role model.

### Take time to listen to your child read

As much as possible, encourage your child to read aloud to you. Make it a habit. Praise and encourage them.

### Use a dictionary

When they come across more difficult vocabulary ask them to look up new words and then put them in a new sentence to check they know how to use the word.

### **Create options**

Encourage them to visit the school library, public libraries, and talk to librarians about different genres they can explore. Ask them to ask their teachers what their favourite book is. Buy them books as gifts to be valued. Ask friends and family to talk to them about books they've enjoyed.

### Sometimes less can be more

There are lots of quick reads and graphic novels in the library. If they are just developing as a reader don't let huge books overawe them.

### Talk to library staff and their English teachers

Ask for reading lists, read reviews in the press and online, and the Longcroft newsletter for reading recommendations.

### Use audiobooks

Audiobooks can be easily downloaded and are great for long journeys. They develop listening skills and the imagination.

### Play word board games, do crosswords, and play word association games

Games like Scrabble help with vocabulary and spelling. Crosswords and word association games are fun and helpful too.

### "The whole world opened up to me when I learned to read"

—Mary McCleod Bethune, American educator, philanthropist, humanitarian, womanist, and civil rights activist.



# Longcroft's New First Story Writer in residence is announced

### Calling all budding writers!

In a few weeks we will be welcoming Maureen Lennon to Longcroft as our new First Story writer in residence. This will be the fifth time Longcroft pupils and students have been privileged to work with a First Story professional writer. A huge thank you to the Friends of Longcroft, Beverley Town Council, and our SLT for supporting this wonderful enrichment project.

Maureen is a Hull based writer and graduate from the English and Theatre Studies BA from the University of Bristol and the Writing Performance and Publication MA from the University of Leeds. She is an Associate Artist of Middle Child Theatre, a Leeds Playhouse FUSE writer 2019 and a Sphinx30 playwright. In 2020, her play Helen, produced by Theatre 503 and Terrain Theatre in 2023, was shortlisted for the Theatre 503 International Playwriting prize.

Maureen is currently under commission to Silent Uproar, Hull Truck Theatre & Pilot Theatre, and Middle Child Theatre We can't wait to begin working with her.



First Story is England's leading creative writing charity for young people. It's aim is to raise the profile of creative writing and provide opportunities for the whole school to benefit from writing creatively and gain the skills and confidence to tell their own stories. As well as weekly workshops of deep learning for a core cohort, all pupils can enter national competitions, attend events, benefit from resources, and be inspired by their writer in residence.

If your child is interested in being part of the project please email **sonia.carvill@longcroft.eriding.net** for more information. This is a fantastic opportunity to have your writing published in a professional anthology that is included in the British Library collection.

### **Care and Achievement Co-ordinators**

Our Care and Achievement Co-ordinators work with specific year groups to ensure the welfare and progress of pupils and are the first point of contact for parents.

They support children to achieve academically by establishing a positive learning environment, visiting and working in lessons and supervising and supporting individuals and groups of pupils.

Our team, and their work mobile phone number which parents can use to contact them, are pictured below.



Year 7
Miss Fox
07342 342858
vicky.fox@longcroft.eriding.net



Year 8

Miss Harsley

07810 416081

katie.harsley@longcroft.eriding.net



Years 9 and 10 Mrs Newsam 07827 587483

zoe.newsam@longcroft.eriding.net



Year 11

Mrs Ellis

07900 394085

annette.ellis@longcroft.eriding.net