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# 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026

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## Kirkstall Valley Primary School



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Dear Kirkstall Valley Primary School Families,

How are you? I hope this newsletter finds you well.

We have finally been treated to a truly glorious, sunny weekend. I hope you all managed to spend some time outdoors enjoying the sudden burst of warmth; there is nothing quite like the first proper hints of spring to lift the spirits and re-energise us for the week ahead. I would also like to extend a very warm *Eid Mubarak* to all our families who celebrated the end of Ramadan over the weekend. I hope it was a joyous and peaceful time of reflection, feasting, and connection with your loved ones.

As always, if ever you want to get in touch about anything at all, please don't hesitate to do so—my door is always open.

Best wishes,

*Phil Robertson - Headteacher*

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### Donate a book!

Our library is a wonderful place but it takes a lot of time and money to keep it looking so good. If ever you felt like donating a book, you can do so via our local partner, Truman Books in Farsley. The new wishlist link is up and running: <https://trumanbooks.co.uk/recommended-reads-for-kirkstall-valley>

### Diary Dates

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March  
In-person parents' evening

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March  
Book Fair

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March  
Book Fair

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March  
Book Fair

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March  
Telephone parents' evening

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April  
Break up for Easter

### Attendance to date:

YR – 94.4% ↓

Year 1 – 94.8% ↓

Year 2 – 95.8% ↓ 👑

Year 3 – 92.6% ↓

Year 4 – 91.3% ↓

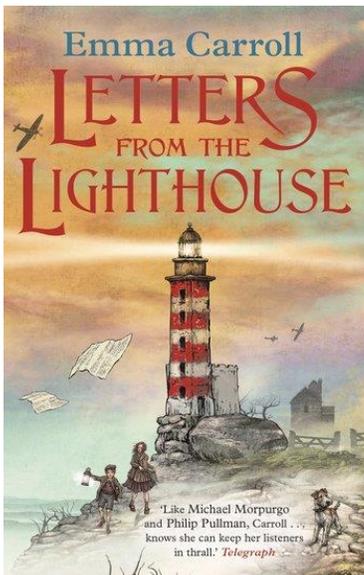
Year 5 – 94.6% ↓

Year 6 – 95.5% ↓

**School = 94.1% - (Target = 96%)**

## Robertson Recommends: Letters from the Lighthouse

By Emma Carroll



I have chosen this week's book not because I have just finished reading it, but because my wife is currently engrossed in it. Seeing it sitting on the kitchen table over the weekend has been a wonderful reminder of just how gripping this story is, and it has firmly bumped it back to the top of my own 'to-revisit' pile.

Set against the backdrop of the Second World War, the story follows Olive and her younger brother Cliff, who are evacuated from London to the Devonshire coast. However, this is not just a standard historical tale; it is a brilliantly constructed mystery. The children are desperately trying to uncover the truth about their older sister, Sukie, who disappeared during an air raid, leaving behind only a cryptic note and a whole host of questions.

Emma Carroll is a master of historical fiction for children, and she weaves a narrative that is both thrilling and deeply moving. For our older pupils, it offers a fantastic, immersive window into the past. More importantly, it beautifully explores our core school values of courage and compassion. It challenges the reader to think carefully about what it means to be displaced, how we treat those seeking refuge, and the extraordinary bravery ordinary people can show in the darkest of times.

It is a thoroughly compelling read, and one I highly recommend if you are looking for a story to share and discuss with your children. I certainly look forward to diving back into it myself—just as soon as my wife finishes it!

### Assemblies – Fair Play

In our assembly this week, we focused on football and what it truly means to be a leader on the pitch. We discussed how leadership isn't about holding a title, being the loudest voice, or even being the most skilful player; it is about creating a positive environment where every teammate feels valued. The children explored how our core values translate directly to the game: showing *courage* by not being afraid to make mistakes, *compassion* by encouraging others and demonstrating good sportsmanship, and *commitment* by working just as hard in practice as in a match and taking responsibility for the kit. We also made it very clear that respect is non-negotiable; accepting the referee's decision without argument and treating opponents with dignity are fundamental expectations. Finally, we took the opportunity to remind the children about our 'Game Leader Dojos' and the 'Player of the Week' awards in our Special Assemblies. It was a great way to reinforce that exceptional teamwork and true integrity on the pitch are always recognised and celebrated.

### A Reminder: Appropriate PE Kit

We have recently seen a decline in the standard of uniform worn on designated Physical Education days. Please accept this as a reminder that adherence to the school's PE kit policy is mandatory.

Having the right tools for the job is a fundamental part of preparation and readiness to learn, whether in the classroom or outside for PE. The required, acceptable PE kit is strictly limited to the following:

- **Shorts/leggings:** Plain blue or plain black
- **T-shirt:** Plain white or plain blue
- **Tracksuit:** Plain blue or plain black (for colder weather)

Football shirts, brightly coloured activewear, and heavily branded items are not permitted. Arriving in the correct kit ensures equality, safety, and a focused mindset for the lesson. I appreciate your co-operation in ensuring your child is correctly equipped for their PE days.

### **Coast to Coast: The Power of the System**

This past weekend, my training took me to the steep, unforgiving inclines of the North York Moors for a demanding 85-mile ride. I am delighted to report that the steady, often unglamorous routine of weekly training is truly paying dividends.

Despite the punishing elevation, I felt remarkably strong throughout the day and actually managed to record the 6th fastest time for the route. I share this not as a boast, but as a genuine reflection on the power of consistency. When you commit to a structured system and put in the quiet work week after week, your physiology adapts in incredible ways. Finishing a ride of that magnitude and still feeling physically good at the end was a wonderful validation of the process.

Of course, the reality that I will need to nearly double this distance for the full 154-mile event in June is still a daunting prospect! The finish line feels like a long way off, yet the progress is undeniable. I am moving ever closer to the goal, trusting that the preparation will continue to build the resilience required for the main event.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support this journey and my fundraising for Parkinson's UK. Every donation makes a very real difference. If you would like to contribute, my page remains open here: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/phil-robertson-2>.



### **Lifelong Learning: Returning with Renewed Focus**

Following my confession last week about taking an intentional pause from my Greek studies, I am pleased to report that the break has done me the world of good. Stepping away allowed me to fully recover my energy, and this week, I have found myself naturally eager to get back into the swing of it.

Of course, taking a break does come with a small, practical cost! When I finally opened my textbook again, I realised I had forgotten a fair bit of the vocabulary and grammar I thought I had previously mastered. I had to swallow my pride and dedicate my first few sessions purely to revision. However, because the foundational work had already been done, the knowledge came back surprisingly quickly. It was a reassuring reminder that learning is rarely lost entirely; it just sometimes needs a little dusting off.

With that revision now complete, I am comfortably moving on to new learning with a much clearer head.

This experience has been a great lesson in the natural rhythm of study. For our children, it is so important they understand that forgetting things and needing to revise is not a sign of failure—it is simply how the human brain works. Sometimes, stepping away and returning with fresh energy is the most productive thing a learner can do.

## Mindful Parking: A Plea for Compassion

As our school sits at the heart of a vibrant residential community, maintaining a positive relationship with our neighbours is incredibly important.

I am frequently contacted by local residents asking me to intervene in parking disputes or to enforce the Highway Code outside the school gates. I must be completely candid: I have absolutely no legal authority or jurisdiction to police the public roads or manage traffic.

The only true power I have in this situation is to appeal directly to you, our school community. I ask that when you are driving and parking around our site, you actively live by our core school values—particularly compassion.

Please be kind and considerate to those who live around the school. By taking an extra moment to park safely and legally, and by ensuring we never block driveways, park on restricted lines, or leave engines idling, we demonstrate the very respect and community spirit we work so hard to instil in our children every day.

Thank you for your continued support and co-operation in this matter.

## Spotlight on Learning

## Reception



This half term, Reception have been fully immersed in learning all about transport. A particular highlight has been their love for the story *Naughty Bus*, which quickly became a class favourite.

The children were delighted to discover that we even had our very own *Naughty Bus* in Reception! This cheeky, mischievous bus loved to explore, and the children were excited to spot it appearing in lots of different places around the school. This sparked great excitement and curiosity, as well as plenty of imaginative storytelling and conversation among the children.

## Assembly Music

### Music of the Week: Match of the Day

Our Music of the Week has been the instantly recognisable, iconic theme tune to *Match of the Day*. Given our assembly focus on football and leadership this week, it was the perfect track to get everyone energised as they walked into the hall.

The familiar brass intro instantly brought a smile to the children's faces and set a wonderfully upbeat tone. It served as a brilliant, joyous backdrop as we celebrated the teamwork, respect, and commitment we want to see on our school pitch, reminding the children that playing sport with integrity is something truly worth celebrating.

## Special Assemblies

If your child is up for an award at one of our special assemblies, I will send an invite by email on a Thursday. Please do check your emails (including junk folders).

### Did you know...?

#### The Power of the 'Protégé Effect'



We spend a lot of time in school teaching our children, but did you know that one of the most effective ways for a child to completely solidify their learning is to become the teacher themselves? Educational researchers call this the 'Protégé Effect'. When a child is asked to explain a new concept to someone else, their brain is forced to actively organise the information, sequence it logically, and identify any hidden gaps in their own understanding. It brilliantly shifts them from being passive receivers of information to active, confident owners of their learning.

This week, you might like to try a slight shift in your after-school routine. Instead of the traditional "What did you do today?"—which, as we all know, frequently results in a mumbled "nothing"—try asking, "Could you teach me something you learned in your topic today?" or "Show me how you worked out that maths problem."

By giving them the floor and allowing them to be the expert, we not only help embed their academic knowledge but also quietly build the self-assurance, patience, and communication skills that are so vital for their wider development.

### Focus on

#### The Power of Quiet Leadership



In a vibrant primary school, it is often easy to associate leadership with a title, a badge, or being the loudest voice in the room. However, some of the most profound examples we see from our pupils are acts of quiet, self-aware leadership. It is the child who independently chooses to stay in at breaktime to help a teacher prepare a classroom, or the pupil who sacrifices their own playtime to sit indoors with a friend who is nursing an injury. We see it in the children who quietly tidy away the football kit after a game, or those who stay behind to help stack the assembly benches without ever being asked. This kind of self-initiated, untitled leadership—driven purely by compassion and a steadfast commitment to our community—is precisely the quality we seek to instil in our children. It happens daily within our walls, and it is a constant source of immense pride for us all.

## Residential Trip Payment Reminder

- Please could we remind parents of children in Year 6 that the £50 deposit for the residential trip should already have been paid, as this was due at the end of September. The next instalment of £65 was due in November and then one was due by February half term.
- The final payment is due by the end of April.

Thank you for your support in helping us keep payments on track.

## Payments

A reminder that we no longer use ParentPay. All payments should be made through the Arbor app. Any issues with this please let the office know.



## Meet Our Governors



Hello! I'm Claire Bridges. I joined the team here a year and a half ago, and you will usually find me teaching in Year 6. Alongside my time in the classroom, I am the English Lead for the school, and I also have the wonderful job of organising and running our STEM assemblies.

I am currently stepping in as the interim staff governor while Mrs Cannan is away on her maternity leave. I was incredibly keen to take on this position, as I have a strong interest in school governance and am eager to learn more about the strategic side of school leadership. It is a fantastic opportunity to see how the governing body works behind the scenes to help our school thrive, and I am really looking forward to supporting our community from this new perspective!

Every day, every single person:



Safe



Ready



Respectful



Courage



Compassion



Commitment

## School calendar academic year 2025-2026

Holiday	Schools close	Schools open
Summer break		Tuesday 2 September 2025
Autumn mid-term	Friday 24 October 2025	Tuesday 4 November 2025
Christmas break	Friday 19 December 2025	Tuesday 6 January 2026
Spring mid-term	Friday 13 February 2026	Monday 23 February 2026
Easter break	Thursday 2 April 2026	Monday 20 April 2026
May Bank Holiday	Friday 1 May 2026	Tuesday 5 May 2026
Summer mid-term	Friday 22 May 2026	Monday 1 June 2026
Summer break	Friday 17 July 2026	

### Bank Holidays include

Christmas	25 & 26	December	2025
New Year's Day	1	January	2026
Good Friday	3	April	2026
Easter Monday	6	April	2026
May Day	4	May	2026
Spring Bank	25	May	2026
August	31	August	2026

### Teacher Training Days - School Closed

Monday	<u>1 September</u>	2025
Monday	<u>3 November</u>	2025
Monday	<u>5 January</u>	2026
Monday	<u>20 July</u>	2026
Tuesday	<u>21 July</u>	2026



School uniform:



You can buy a new school jumper or a school cardigan at the office.



Or you can buy pre-used uniform that other families have given to school.



Pre-used uniform



A small book bag: £5.00



A large book bag: £7.00



Children come to school in PE clothes on days they have PE