
26th January 2026



Kirkstall Valley Primary School

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Dear Kirkstall Valley Primary School Families,

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

So much going on in school at the moment. We have been planning our International Week activities for the final week of this half-term. We always invite those of you who speak an additional language to come into school and read a story for our children. If this is something you'd be interested in doing, please get in touch and let me know.

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

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. Just give them a call or visit their website and they'll be happy to help!



Diary Dates

Thursday 29th January
RIAT Stem Glider Challenge - Year 5

Thursday 29th January
Chinese New Year

9th February
International Week

Tuesday 10th February
Supper for Peace

Tuesday 10th February
Safer Internet Day

Attendance to date:

YR – 95.2% ↑

Year 1 – 95.1% ↑

Year 2 – 95.8% ↓ 🏰

Year 3 – 93.1% ↓

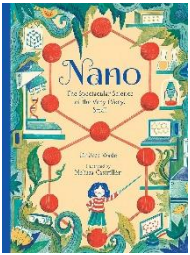
Year 4 – 92.6% ↓

Year 5 – 95.3% ↑

Year 6 – 95.4% ↑

School = 94.6% - (Target = 96%)

Robertson Recommends



In this week's "Robertson Recommends," I am delighted to highlight an extraordinary piece of non-fiction: *Nano: The Spectacular Science of the Very (Very) Small* by Dr Jess Wade. While we often encourage children to look at the "big picture," this book invites them to do the exact opposite by exploring the microscopic world of atoms and nanotechnology.

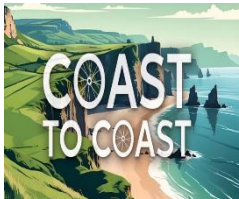
With stunning illustrations by Melissa Castrillón, it transforms complex physics and chemistry into a visual narrative that is as beautiful as it is informative. It is a perfect choice for sparking curiosity about how the world is built from the tiny building blocks of matter, proving that you don't need a massive scale to make a massive impact. Whether your child is a budding scientist or simply loves a wonder-filled story, this is a must-read for the family bookshelf (also available in our library!).

Celebrating Our Community: Supper for Peace As part of our upcoming International Week, we are delighted to invite you to one of the true highlights of our school calendar: the **Supper for Peace**.

Taking place after school on **Tuesday, 10th February**, this event is a wonderful opportunity for us to pause and come together through the universal language of food. We invite all staff and families to bring in and share a dish that is special to them. Each year, it is a privilege to see the true diversity of our school represented on these tables, with brilliant cuisine arriving from near and far.

Please do prioritise attending this event if you can; it is the presence of our families that makes it such a success. Furthermore, do look out for the variety of exciting projects your children will be undertaking throughout International Week—it promises to be a fantastic celebration of our global community.

Coast to Coast



I am currently training very hard for an ultra-cycling event in June this year. I'll be (hopefully!) riding from Seascale on the West Coast via the Cumbrian hills of Hardknott and Wrynose across to Whitby on the East Coast. 154 miles of cycling, 10,500ft of elevation and somewhere in the region of 10 hours (again, hopefully!).

I'll be raising money for Parkinsons UK, a charity I have a personal connection with. If you felt able to support this charity, my fundraising page can be found at https://www.justgiving.com/page/phil-robertson-2?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

Lifelong Learning



In this week's update on my personal learning journey, I have been continuing to immerse myself in the world of Greek. I must admit, however, that mastering the Greek alphabet is proving to be a humbling challenge. Transitioning from the familiar Latin script to entirely new characters requires a level of mental gymnastics I hadn't quite anticipated!

This experience has given me a profound new insight into the cognitive load our pupils face when English is an additional language (EAL). Navigating a new set of symbols while trying to decipher meaning is an exhausting process. It serves as a powerful reminder of the resilience shown by our children who arrive at school every day ready to learn in a language—and sometimes a script—that is not their own. It has certainly reinforced my commitment to ensuring our school remains a supportive and patient environment for every learner finding their voice



Year 5 have been working hard across the curriculum. In maths, they have been learning long multiplication and are making great progress. In geography, the children have been exploring latitude and longitude and using them to locate places on a world map and in art, they have started an exciting new unit on fashion design, inspired by their previous science topic on space. We are so excited to see some 'Cosmic Costumes'. Our new science topic this half term is lifecycles and they have been learning about the life cycle of a plant, developing their understanding of how plants grow and change.

Names in clothes

As we move through the term, our collection of "unclaimed" jumpers and coats continues to grow. To help us reunite lost items with their rightful owners, please could I ask that you clearly label all items of clothing with your child's name.

When items are lost, it can be quite unsettling for children, and having a name inside allows us to return the garment to them instantly, saving both time and upset. Whether you use iron-on labels, permanent markers, or traditional name tapes, that small step makes a significant difference to our daily routines. Thank you for your continued support in helping us keep the school tidy and well-organised.

Please also return clothes to school if your child mistakenly brings home things which don't belong to them!

OFSTED

As you may be aware, schools operate within specific windows for Ofsted inspections, and we have now entered ours. Far from being a cause for apprehension, we view this as a welcome opportunity. We are incredibly proud of the courageous, compassionate, and committed community we have built at KVPS. We strive for excellence every day—not for the sake of inspectors, but for the benefit of your children. When the call eventually comes, we look forward to opening our doors and showing the inspection team exactly what makes our school such a special place to learn and grow.

Assembly Music

Piece: Bridge Over Troubled Water **Artist:** Simon and Garfunkel (1970)

This piece of music fitted the theme of one of our assemblies perfectly last week. See further on in the newsletter for more information.

Did you know...?

Reading



Learning to read is like "rewiring" the brain! Did you know that humans aren't actually born with a brain region dedicated to reading? Instead, as children learn to connect letters to sounds (phonics), they actually "recycle" and rewire areas originally used for recognizing faces and objects. Research shows that when children focus on letter-sound relationships rather than just memorising whole words, it sparks far more activity in the left side of the brain—the area best wired for language and skilled reading. This "mental gymnastics" is exactly what makes learning a new script—like the Greek alphabet I've been struggling with—so exhausting!

In assembly last week, we have been exploring the theme of 'Bridging Generations'.

While this is the national theme for Holocaust Memorial Day (January 27th), we have adapted the message to fit our primary context, focusing on the values of compassion and connection. We discussed how older generations hold a wealth of wisdom and how, by simply listening, we can build bridges between the past and the future.

We have set the children a special challenge this week: to become "Memory Keepers."

You may find your child coming home with more questions than usual! They have been encouraged to find a parent, grandparent, or older relative and ask them about their lives. They might ask what school was like "in the olden days," what your favourite games were, or what the world looked like before smartphones.

We hope you will enjoy these conversations. In a fast-paced world, taking a quiet moment to share a story is one of the most powerful ways to teach our children about where they come from and the resilience of those who came before them.

Thank you for helping them build these bridges.

Focus on

Young Interpreters



This term sees the relaunch of our Young Interpreters Scheme. We have seven Young Interpreters in Years 5 and 6, who are trained to support children in school who speak English as an Additional Language. Whether or not the Young Interpreters themselves are bilingual, they receive training and regular support to use body language, gesture and simplified language to support new children who speak little or no English and make sure they feel welcome in school, particularly at playtimes and lunchtimes. They also help younger children with their reading. They do a fabulous job

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.

There are two remaining instalments of £65:

- one due by February half term
- and the final payment 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.



Your PTA: Fueling the Extras

While the school budget covers the essentials of learning, it is our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that funds the magic in the margins. From subsidising school trips and purchasing new playground equipment to funding visiting authors and STEM workshops, the PTA pays for the "extras" that turn a good education into a memorable one. But they cannot do it without your voice and your hands. Getting involved does not require a seat on a committee or hours of meetings; it simply needs parents willing to offer a small slice of time to help us build a richer experience for every child.

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