

9th February 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!

This is the final newsletter for Spring 1 term which means at the end of this week we will be half way through the academic year! It's hard to believe how quickly this has passed but time does fly when you're having fun!

International Week begins today so there should be lots of talk from children about the country they are studying in class and they may also be interested in completing a homework project. Any support with this is appreciated! More info in the newsletter.

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. The new wishlist link is up and running: <https://trumanbooks.co.uk/recommended-reads-for-kirkstall-valley>

The small school with a big heart



Diary Dates

9th February
International Week

Tuesday 10th February
Supper for Peace

Tuesday 10th February
Safer Internet Day

Friday 13th February
Break up for half-term

Monday 23rd February
Spring 2 begins

Attendance to date:

YR – 95% ↓

Year 1 – 95.2% ↑

Year 2 – 95.8% ↑

Year 3 – 92.9% -

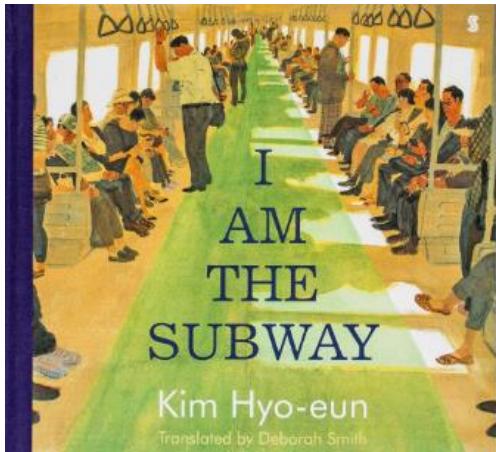
Year 4 – 91.7% ↓

Year 5 – 95.2% ↓

Year 6 – 95.3% ↑

School = 94.4% - (Target = 96%)

Robertson Recommends



I Am The Subway

By Kim Hyo-eun (Translated by Deborah Smith)

I've chosen an international title this week due to it being International Week.

Sometimes, the most profound lessons on community come from the quietest observers. *I Am The Subway* is a stunningly illustrated picture book told from the perspective of the Seoul subway itself. As the train rattles through the city, it introduces us to the passengers it carries—a weary shoemaker, a grandmother, a student—revealing the rich, complex inner lives behind the faces we pass every day.

For us as educators and parents, this book is a gentle but powerful tool for teaching empathy. It reminds us (and our children) that every stranger has a story, a struggle, and a destination. The watercolor illustrations are evocative and kinetic, capturing the hustle of the city alongside moments of quiet human dignity.

We are all fellow travellers. In a busy school or a bustling city, it is easy to see "crowds" rather than people. This book invites us to pause, look closer, and recognise the shared humanity in everyone we meet.

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 **TOMORROW!!**, **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.



This half-term's House Points Winners

🏆 House Point Winners: Wilson House!

I am delighted to announce that the winners of this half-term's House Point competition are **Wilson House**! To celebrate their collective effort and hard work, all children in Wilson House are invited to come to school in **non-uniform this Friday**. In addition to this, they will be enjoying some well-deserved extra playtime. A huge "well done" to everyone in Wilson House—keep up the brilliant standards!

Global Citizens: International Week (9th–13th February)

This week, we are celebrating our school's rich diversity with International Week. Following the theme of connection from our book recommendation, *I Am Subway*, we are dedicating this week to understanding the different cultures, languages, and stories that make up our community.

Here is what is happening and how you can get involved:

☞ Class Country Focus Each year group has adopted a country to research, exploring its geography, culture, food, and art.

- Nursery: Australia
- Reception: Pakistan
- Year 1: Italy
- Year 2: Kenya
- Year 3: Slovakia
- Year 4: Mexico
- Year 5: Colombia
- Year 6: Brazil

📅 Key Dates for Your Diary

- Tuesday 10th February: Supper for Peace
 - Time: After school in the Hall.
 - The Event: We invite all parents and staff to bring a dish to share that showcases their heritage. It is a wonderful opportunity to break bread together and celebrate our shared community.
- All week: Dual-Language Stories
 - We are hosting special reading sessions where stories will be shared in both English and a second language, supported by parent volunteers and some of our Year 6 students.
- Thursday – Quiz Assembly! Children will be battling it out to see which class has retained the most information about their countries!
- Friday 13th February: Presentation Assemblies
 - The children will be presenting their work, including facts, artwork, and songs. We warmly invite you to join us:
 - KS1 (Years 1 & 2): 1:15 pm – 2:00 pm
 - KS2 (Years 3–6): 2:15 pm – 3:00 pm

☞ Homework Project: This week, children are invited to create an A4 fact file, poem, or piece of artwork about a country of *their* choice. This is a chance for them to explore a place they are curious about or perhaps their own family heritage.

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

I have been blown away with the support of friends, family and community members alike. I am at £911 and am hoping to reach £1000 or more before June.

Lifelong Learning



Weekly Learning Update: The Reward of Breaking Through

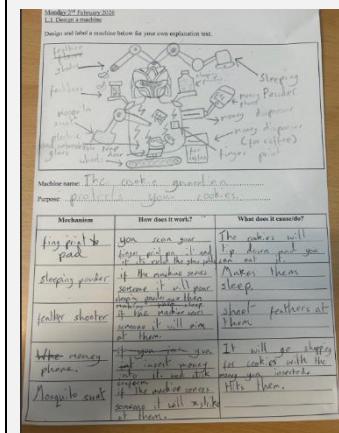
If last week was about the grit required to push through the 'dip', this week has offered a glimpse of the summit. After days where the Greek alphabet felt like an impenetrable code, I experienced that distinct, wonderful moment where things suddenly began to 'click'.

It wasn't a grand revelation, but a series of small victories. Symbols I had to labour over suddenly formed words without conscious effort; sounds began to carry meaning rather than just noise. That sudden fluidity provided a genuine rush of satisfaction—a reminder of why we endure the frustration of the early stages.

This feeling of the 'penny dropping' is precisely what we chase in the classroom. It reinforced for me that the reward for resilience isn't just a grade or a tick on a page, but the intrinsic joy of mastery. It is a powerful reminder that confusion is often just the precursor to clarity, provided we stay the course.

Spotlight on Learning

Year 4



Year 4 have been busy designing their very own machines in English lessons! Children have had to be creative with their design, ensuring it is also fit for purpose. One excellent example is a 'Cookie Guardian,' created to protect your cookies from your siblings! Pupils will be writing an explanation text this week to explain exactly how their machines operate. We can't wait to see their finished work!

OFSTED

As we continue to wait for our OFSTED inspection, I'd like to invite you to add any comments you may have to the Parent View section of the OFSTED portal. While many of you share your thoughts with us at the school gate or during parent evenings, it would be lovely to get some these wonderful comments (and of course anything we can do to improve) ready for when we are inspected. You can do this by visiting:

<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/how-to-use>

Assembly Music

Music of the Week: Tinariwen

You may have heard the children talking about the distinct, electric-guitar sounds we listened to in assembly this week. We have been listening to Tinariwen, a Grammy-winning band of Tuareg musicians from the Sahara Desert region of northern Mali.

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).

Hot Choc Fridays!



These events have been an absolute joy this half-term! We've now had four hot choc Fridays and I'm looking forward to the final one of the half-term this Friday. Invitations go out to the top Dojo earner for each class each week. We've been playing some great games of "would you rather". Children come up with the best reasons for their choices!

Did you know...?



The "Aha!" moment is a chemical reward! Following on from the description of that wonderful "clicking" moment in learning, did you know that your brain actually rewards you for figuring things out? When you solve a difficult problem or grasp a complex new concept, your brain releases a surge of dopamine—the same neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and motivation. Scientists call this the "intrinsic reward of learning." It explains why that sudden moment of clarity feels so satisfying; it is your brain's biological way of congratulating you and encouraging you to do it again. So, when a child (or an adult!) finally "gets it" after a period of struggle, they aren't just feeling relief—they are experiencing a natural high designed by evolution to keep us curious and learning.

Focus on

Arts Leaders



As Arts Leaders, we were proud to collect pupil voice to help shape a very important part of our school called the HEART curriculum. We listened to ideas and opinions from children across school, so everyone had a chance to be heard. The feedback showed us that HEART is much more than lessons in the classroom. It helps us stay healthy, enjoy exciting events like International Week, stay active, learn to be safe and responsible, and celebrate everyone's talents. With the insight which we have now gathered, we are going to look closely at all the ideas and work together to make our school even better!!

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	1 September	2025
Monday	3 November	2025
Monday	5 January	2026
Monday	20 July	2026
Tuesday	21 July	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