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22<sup>nd</sup> June 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 and your family well.

We are at the stage of the academic year now where things happen very quickly and before we know it the end of the year will be upon us. Teachers are busily writing end of year reports and we are finalising staffing for next year which is never an easy task!

I am really looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible (albeit largely from the stocks!) tomorrow at the annual Summer Fayre. The forecast is HOT so come along and enjoy the afternoon!

Have a great week ahead ☺

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 23<sup>rd</sup> June  
Summer Fayre

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June  
Whole School Screen Free Day

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July  
Transition Morning

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July  
KS1 Sports Day

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July pm  
Y6 Leavers' Assembly

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July  
Break for Summer

### Attendance to date:

YR – 94.2% -

Year 1 – 95.4% ↑

Year 2 – 95.5% ↑

Year 3 – 92.4% ↑

Year 4 – 91.3% ↓

Year 5 – 94.0% -

Year 6 – 95.7% ↑ 👑

**School = 94% - (Target = 96%)**

## Robertson Recommends: The Girl Who Stole an Elephant

By Nizrana Farook



As we edge ever closer to the long summer break, my book choice for this week is the perfect high-speed adventure for the children to get their teeth into while enjoying the sunshine! I have chosen *The Girl Who Stole an Elephant* by the wonderfully talented Nizrana Farook.

Set in a vibrant, tropical landscape that instantly makes you feel as though you are on holiday, the story follows a courageous girl named Chaya. She is a bit of a Robin Hood figure in her village, always looking out for others. However, when she steals the Queen's jewels to help a friend in need, she finds herself in serious trouble. Her escape leads to a thrilling, fast-paced journey deep into the jungle, complete with loyal friends, a few narrow escapes, and, of course, a majestic, stolen royal elephant!

It is an absolute rollercoaster of a read that keeps you gripped from the very first chapter. Beyond the fantastic adventure, Chaya's story perfectly highlights our school values of **Courage** and **Compassion**, showing just how far true friends will go to support each other when things get tough. It is a brilliant, sun-soaked escapade that I highly recommend for our Key Stage 2 children as they start thinking about building their summer holiday reading lists!

### Important Update: Free School Meals are Changing

Great news for our school community! The government is expanding Free School Meals from September 2026.

- What is changing? The previous household income cap is being removed for families on Universal Credit. Every household receiving Universal Credit will now qualify for free meals, regardless of their working hours or earnings.
- Why apply? Even if your child currently gets automatic free meals in Reception, Year 1, or Year 2, formally applying through the new criteria unlocks crucial extra funding for our school. This money directly pays for extra staff, resources, and clubs.
- What you need to do: **Please keep an eye out for correspondence** which will be coming out this week explaining exactly what you need to do to apply under the new rules.

### Headingley and Kirkstall Combined Schools Band

Huge congratulations to the HKCSB (sounds like a bank – we need a new name!) for playing so well at the Shire Oak Youth Music Festival on Saturday. It was an absolute pleasure to along and listen to them (and others) play. Fantastic musical and school ambassadors. Well done and a huge thank you to Mrs Braithwaite for everything she does for music in our school.

## Coast to Coast: The Next Chapter



It's been really lovely to be able to just cycle since I finished the Coast to Coast challenge and not have to worry about the right speeds/distance/elevation/watts etc etc. I went for a glorious 40 mile ride early on Saturday morning out into the countryside around Bolton Abbey. I always think how lucky we are to live in such close proximity to beauty even though we live in such an urban setting.

For next year's Parkinson's challenge, the front runner is London to Paris in 24 hours however this offers even more logistical challenges than the Coast to Coast. I have a long time to plan yet though!



## Lifelong Learning: A Greek Weather Forecast

As we continue to enjoy the summer term and look forward to our family holiday to Crete, my Greek language studies have naturally turned towards the weather!

Given how much time we spend talking about the weather here in Yorkshire—especially when trying to plan outdoor school events or weekend bike rides—it felt like an absolutely essential topic to master. I have been busily learning the vocabulary for sunshine, heat, and clear blue skies. I must admit, looking at the Mediterranean forecast is certainly a lot more optimistic than trying to predict when the next rain shower will catch us out on the playground!

Practising these new phrases has been a brilliant daily habit. Checking the forecast for Crete and trying to translate it each morning has made the learning process feel incredibly real and purposeful. It is a great reminder for the children that applying what we learn to real-world situations, whether that is reading a thermometer in science or calculating the time of a journey, is one of the very best ways to make new knowledge stick!

## Lost Property: A Helpful Uniform Reminder

As the weather starts to warm up and the children naturally begin taking off their school jumpers and cardigans during playtimes and outdoor activities, our lost property pile can grow rather rapidly! To help us reunite misplaced items with their rightful owners as quickly as possible, please could I kindly ask that all items of school uniform, PE kits, and outerwear are clearly labelled with your child's first name and surname. When every blue jumper and cardigan looks identical, a quick scribble with a permanent laundry marker or a simple stick-on label makes a world of difference. It not only saves our staff team valuable time at the end of the day, but it also saves families the unnecessary expense and frustration of replacing missing clothing. Thank you so much for your cooperation with this!

## 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).

## Staying Safe in the Sun: A Hot Week Ahead!

As we look ahead to the forecast for this week, it seems my Greek weather vocabulary might actually come in handy right here in Leeds! We are expecting some very hot and sunny days, so we need to work together to ensure all the children are prepared to safely enjoy their time outdoors.

Please could I kindly ask for your support with the following three summer essentials:

- **Water Bottles:** Please ensure your child comes to school with a clearly named, refillable water bottle. We will be reminding them to drink plenty of water and stay hydrated throughout the day.
- **Sun Hats:** A wide-brimmed hat or cap (named!) is vital for keeping the sun off their faces and necks during break times, lunchtimes, and outdoor PE lessons.
- **Sunscreen:** Please apply a high-factor, long-lasting sunscreen to your child *before* they leave the house in the morning.

We will, of course, be keeping a very close eye on the temperatures, ensuring the children make use of the (limited) shaded areas on the playground, and adapting our outdoor activities if it becomes too warm. Thank you so much for your help in keeping everyone cool, safe, and ready to learn!



Last week, Year 5 enjoyed their trip to Tropical World. They took part in an exciting rainforest workshop and then spent time exploring the fascinating animals and creatures inside. We were certainly sweating in the butterfly house, but the children were extremely well behaved throughout the day and proved to be fantastic role models. Everyone had a wonderful experience and learned lots about rainforest habitats and wildlife.



### Music of the Week: Music of the Week: 'Summer' (from The Four Seasons) by Antonio Vivaldi

Following on from our Summer Solstice 'Did You Know?' fact, our music of the week shifted from last week's quiet piano to something wonderfully dramatic and energetic: *Summer* from Antonio Vivaldi's famous violin concertos, *The Four Seasons*.

Written exactly to mimic the sounds of nature, this piece captures the full intensity of a hot summer's day—from the gentle, lazy warmth of the morning sun to the sudden, dramatic arrival of a summer thunderstorm. It was fantastic to see the children's faces as the violins started playing at lightning speed!

Listening to classical music that tells such a vivid story is a brilliant way to fire up the children's imaginations. It served as a fantastic reminder of our school value of **Courage**, as the music builds with immense energy and power, encouraging everyone to channel that same vibrant enthusiasm into their learning as we power through these final weeks of the school year!

## Did you know...?

**When the Sun Stands Still!**



As we enjoyed the weekend just gone, we also passed a very special milestone in our calendar: the Summer Solstice, which occurred on Sunday 21st June!

Did you know that the word "solstice" actually comes from the Latin words *sol* (meaning 'sun') and *sistere* (meaning 'to stand still')? Because of the way the Earth orbits the sun, to early astronomers, the sun appeared to stop moving higher in the sky, pause for a few days, and then reverse its direction.

This happens because the Earth is tilted on its axis, and right now, our half of the globe (the Northern Hemisphere) is leaning as close to the sun as it possibly can. It brings us the longest stretch of daylight of the entire year! It is a brilliant piece of real-world science happening right above our heads, and the perfect excuse to make the most of those long, light evenings as we get Ready for the summer holidays!

## Summer Fayre



Our **world-famous\* Summer Fayre** will be taking place again on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June straight after school. If you'd like to win a tombola prize, try your luck on a variety of stalls or soak the Headteacher with soggy sponges, then do come along!

\* I told my Dad about it and he lives in America.

# Focus on

Mindmate Leaders



As MindMate Leaders, we are proud to be part of a school community where courage, commitment, and compassion guide the way we treat one another. This week, we encouraging the school community to celebrate our differences, show kindness to those around us, and speak up if we see someone being left out. Together, we can make sure everyone feels safe, respected, and valued. Remember: our differences are our strength, and every small act of kindness makes a big difference.

## 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.

## Jargon Buster



We know that education is one of the worst institutions for using technical jargon and acronyms. In this section over the next term, I'll try and explain a few!

**INSET (In-Service Education and Training)** You will have undoubtedly seen these days dotted around our school calendar! An INSET day is a day when the school is closed to children, but our staff team is still very much hard at work. Schools are allocated five of these days each academic year, and we use them for vital staff training, whole-school curriculum planning, and reviewing our safeguarding policies. It is essentially dedicated time for our teachers and support staff to learn and collaborate so that we can continue to provide the very best environment and education for your children.

**SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar)** If you have children moving through the school, you may well have heard them mention 'SPaG' when talking about their English lessons! It simply stands for Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar. The primary curriculum places a strong emphasis on the technical side of writing, meaning children are often taught complex grammatical terms—like 'fronted adverbials' or 'subordinate clauses'—at a surprisingly young age. Please do not panic if they ask you for help with their SPaG homework and you find yourself needing to double-check the definitions first; it is a very common experience for parents!

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



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Chair of Governors: Mrs Colleen Jackson

**School calendar academic year 2026-2027**

Holiday	Schools close	Schools open
Summer break		Wednesday 2 September 2026
Autumn mid-term	Friday 23 October 2026	Tuesday 3 November 2026
Christmas break	Friday 18 December 2026	Tuesday 5 January 2027
Spring mid-term	Friday 12 February 2027	Monday 22 February 2027
Easter break	Friday 2 April 2027	Monday 19 April 2027
May Bank Holiday	Friday 30 April 2027	Tuesday 4 May 2027
Summer mid-term	Thursday 27 May 2027	Monday 7 June 2027
Summer break	Thursday 22 July 2027	

**Bank Holidays include**

Christmas	25 & 28	December	2026
New Year's Day	1	January	2027
Good Friday	26	March	2027
Easter Monday	29	March	2027
May Day	3	May	2027
Spring Bank	31	May	2027
August	30	August	2027

**Teacher Training Days - School Closed**

Tuesday	1	September	2026
Monday	2	November	2026
Monday	4	January	2027
Friday	28	May	2027
Friday	25	June	2027



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