

11th May 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.

As we step into another busy week of the summer term, my immediate thoughts are, of course, with our fantastic Year 6 children who began their SATs this morning. Walking through the corridors today, I was incredibly proud of the calm, focused, and mature approach they have brought to school and the compassion all of our children have shown by using quieter voices! We often talk to the children about facing challenges with courage and a steady mindset; this week is a perfect opportunity for them to put exactly that into practice. They have worked exceptionally hard to prepare, and whatever the final results may bring, our overriding feeling as a staff team is one of immense pride in their commitment.

Elsewhere in school, the momentum continues to build as we look ahead to the half-term break... Next up: Sports Days!

As always, if you have anything you'd like to discuss, you are most welcome to come and talk with me.

Best wishes,

Phil Robertson - Headteacher



Diary Dates

Friday 15th May
BROWNLEE House plus all of Y6
non-uniform day

Monday 18th May
Nursery Sports Day at 1:45pm

Tuesday 19th May
Y 1/2/3 Sports Day 1pm

Wednesday 20th May
Y 4/5/6 Sports Day 1pm

Thursday 21st May
Reception Sports Day 1:45pm

Friday 22nd May
Year 6 depart for residential

Friday 22nd May
Non-uniform day (all) – please
bring sweets for summer fayre if
you can!

Friday 22nd May
Break for Half Term

Attendance to date:

YR – 94.5% ↑

Year 1 – 94.9% -

Year 2 – 95.4% -

Year 3 – 92.5% ↑

Year 4 – 91.4% ↓

Year 5 – 94.4% ↓

Year 6 – 95.6% ↑ 👑

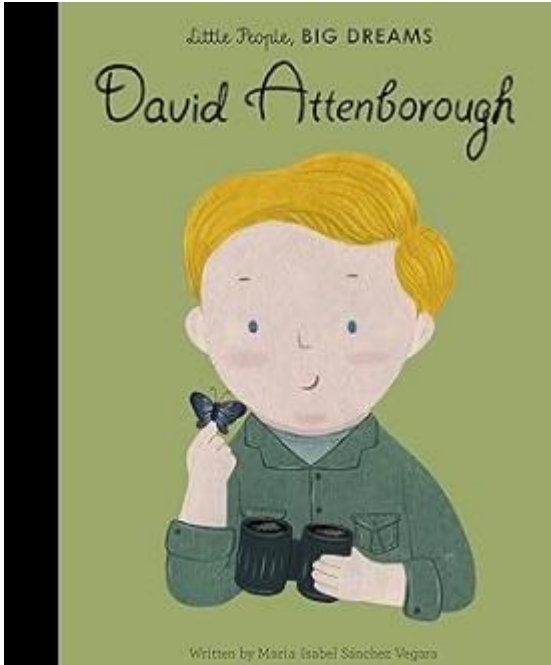
School = **94.1%** - (Target = 96%)

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>

Robertson Recommends: David Attenborough (Little People, BIG DREAMS)

By Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara



As you will notice further on in this week's newsletter, we are spending quite a bit of time talking about the legendary Sir David Attenborough. To tie in with this, my book recommendation this week is from the absolutely brilliant *Little People, BIG DREAMS* series, focusing on the man himself.

This wonderfully illustrated book tells the story of how a young boy from Leicester, who simply loved collecting fossils and observing the natural world around him, grew up to become one of the most inspiring and influential broadcasters in history. It traces his journey from a curious child to a pioneering television presenter who brought the marvels of the animal kingdom directly into our living rooms.

What I find so powerful about this particular biography is its central message: every great scientist, explorer, and changemaker started out as a child with a simple, quiet fascination for the world. It is a profound reminder of the importance of lifelong learning and humility—showing us that no matter how much we discover, the natural world always has more to teach us.

It is incredibly accessible for our younger readers in EYFS and Key Stage 1, yet the message is universally inspiring for our older children (and indeed, us adults!). If you want to spark a conversation about conservation, curiosity, and the sheer wonder of our planet, this is the perfect place to start.

Team Points Update & Non-Uniform Days!

A huge congratulations must go to the children in Brownlee House, who have triumphantly won the team points total for this half-term! To celebrate their fantastic effort, all children in Brownlee House are invited to come to school in non-uniform this Friday. We would also like to extend this invitation to ALL of our Year 6 children, regardless of their house, as a special well done to celebrate reaching the end of SATs week!

Please do not worry if your child is not in Brownlee or Year 6, as we have a second non-uniform day coming up for the entire school on the final Friday of the half-term (22nd May). For this whole-school non-uniform day, all we ask is that, if you are able to, children bring in a small donation of sweets to help us prepare for the highly anticipated KVPS Summer Fayre later this year.



Coast to Coast: The Final Push

I am incredibly relieved to report that the lingering virus is finally a thing of the past, and I am officially in the 'final push' stage of my training for the Coast to Coast challenge on the 6th of June.

Last Saturday, I managed to get back out for a solid 60-mile ride, which included a punishing number of hills just to make sure the legs were truly awake! The plan for this coming weekend is to squeeze in one final, mammoth 100-mile route. After that, somewhat terrifyingly, it will be time to start 'tapering'—meaning I will gradually reduce my mileage to ensure my body is rested and ready for the main event. It is genuinely hard to believe how quickly the date has come around!

As always, a huge thank you to everyone who has supported my fundraising for Parkinson's UK. If you would like to contribute as we approach the big day, my page is here: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/phil-robertson-2>.




Lifelong Learning: A Cretan Twist

With my recent virus thankfully banished, I have been able to give my language studies a proper amount of focus again this week. As we are heading back to Crete for our family holiday this August, I have decided to set myself an additional, slightly daunting challenge: learning some specifically Cretan words and phrases!

Standard Greek is tricky enough to wrap my head around, but the local Cretan dialect is wonderfully distinct. My goal is to add a touch of genuine authenticity to my attempts at conversation and to show a deeper respect for the local culture when we arrive.

It is a brilliant reminder of how diving a little deeper into a subject—moving beyond just the absolute basics—can unlock a much richer and more rewarding experience. It is exactly the kind of inquisitive, 'deep-dive' approach to learning that we love to see from the children in the classroom. Now, I just have to hope my pronunciation is up to scratch!

Spotlight on Learning	SATs: more than just a score 
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Throughout this week, our Year 6 pupils will be undertaking their Key Stage 2 SATs. For those less familiar with the structure, these national assessments evaluate the children's understanding in English—specifically reading, spelling, punctuation, and grammar—alongside arithmetic and mathematical reasoning. We have organised the week to be as calm and supportive as possible, with the papers taken each morning and the afternoons reserved for more relaxed, normal classroom activities to help them decompress. However, I want to take this moment to clearly reiterate a core belief of our school: SATs are simply one single, narrow measure of a child's progress. While we are immensely proud of the academic dedication they have shown, we place exactly equal importance on how they have grown as well-rounded young people. A test score will never reflect their sense of humour, their creativity, or the compassion and courage they show each other every day. These personal qualities are the true measure of their success, and we could not be prouder of the brilliant individuals they are becoming.

Upcoming Sports Days

We are absolutely delighted to invite all parents and carers to join us for our upcoming Sports Days. It is always a wonderful highlight of the summer term, and the children would be absolutely thrilled to see as many of you there as possible cheering them on from the sidelines!

Please make a note of the specific dates, times, and locations for your child's year group:

- Nursery: Monday 18th May at 1:45 pm (Location: At school)
- Years 1, 2, and 3: Tuesday 19th May at 1:00 pm (Location: GOALS Soccer Centre, Redcote Lane, Leeds, LS4 2AW)
- Years 4, 5, and 6: Wednesday 20th May at 1:00 pm (Location: GOALS Soccer Centre, Redcote Lane, Leeds, LS4 2AW)
- Reception: Thursday 21st May at 1:45 pm (Location: At school)

Celebrating a Century: Happy 100th Birthday, Sir David!

As I am sure many of you are aware, last Friday marked an incredibly special national milestone: the 100th birthday of the remarkable Sir David Attenborough. To mark this historic occasion, our children spent time last week delving into his extraordinary life and legacy. From his early days of fossil hunting to becoming the undisputed voice of the natural world, it was wonderful to see the children so inspired by his lifelong commitment to our planet.

The week culminated in a fantastic national online event on Friday afternoon, where our classes joined schools from right across the country to celebrate his centenary together. Sir David's enduring sense of wonder, his profound humility, and his absolute dedication to protecting the natural world are qualities we strive to instil in all our pupils. It was a truly joyful way to end the week and a fitting tribute to a man who has taught us all so much about the beautiful, fragile earth we call home.

Assembly Music

Music of the Week: What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong

Given our focus on Sir David Attenborough and the awe-inspiring beauty of the natural environment this week, our Music of the Week simply had to be What a Wonderful World by the legendary Louis Armstrong. There was truly no other choice!

Hearing Armstrong's unmistakable, gravelly voice filling the hall provided a beautifully calm and uplifting start to our mornings. The song's timeless message served as a poignant reminder for us all to pause, look around, and appreciate the simple, everyday marvels of our planet—from the green trees to the blooming roses—as well as the people we share it with. It was the absolute perfect soundtrack to a week dedicated to celebrating our world and our place within it.

MindMate Support Team

We are really pleased that we are engaging the services of this team for some of our children currently. The team will also be spending some time in school next week as part of Mental Health Awareness Week. Here is some more information about this team:

The MindMate Support Team is a Mental Health Support Team (MHST), part of a nationwide programme that brings mental health practitioners into education settings to support the emotional wellbeing of children and young people.

We work alongside existing services, as well as school staff and parents or caregivers, to provide evidence-based interventions for children experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties, such as worry, anxiety, and low mood.

We also offer workshops for staff, young people, and parents or caregivers to help support children with a range of challenges, including worry, exam stress, managing emotions, coping with transitions, and building resilience.

Our practitioners can support you in identifying and accessing additional services where needed, and we provide resources to help school staff support children and young people within their education setting.

We value the views of parents and caregivers and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to share more information about our service.

Focus on



Ms Selby writes:

Last term, I am delighted to say all seven Young Interpreters completed their training and they are now doing an incredible job taking turns to support younger children who are still learning English, at play times and lunch times. They set up playground games, help them communicate and crucially encourage them to play with other children and build social connections. They also listen to some of the younger children read, twice a week, helping them further develop their reading and comprehension skills. It is always great to see them chat with and engage the younger readers in their books, and the younger children seem to really enjoy it too.

Did you know...?

The Wood Wide Web



In a week where we have been celebrating Sir David Attenborough and the wonders of the natural world, it seems only fitting to look at one of nature's most incredible hidden secrets!

When you walk through a woodland, it is easy to think of each tree as a solitary individual, standing on its own. But did you know that beneath our feet, trees are actually talking to one another?

Scientists have discovered a vast, underground network of fungi connecting the roots of trees, affectionately known as the 'Wood Wide Web'. Through this astonishing network, older, stronger trees (often called 'Mother Trees') can share essential nutrients and water with younger, struggling saplings hidden in the shade. Even more amazingly, if a tree is being attacked by insects, it can send chemical warning signals through the fungal network to tell its neighbours to raise their own defences!

It is a brilliant reminder that, in the natural world, survival isn't just about the strongest individual standing alone—it is about community, communication, and looking out for one another. What a wonderful, ecological lesson for us all to take into the week ahead!

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).

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.

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!

SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) You will frequently hear teachers refer to 'SPaG', particularly as children move up through Key Stage 1 and into Key Stage 2. This simply stands for Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar. It covers everything from the basics of learning where to place a capital letter and a full stop, right through to understanding much more complex grammatical concepts like fronted adverbials, subordinate clauses, and past progressive tense. (I must confess, some of the terminology often requires a quick refresher for us adults, too!)

ARE (Age Related Expectations) You will very likely see this acronym on your child's end-of-year report. When we say a child is 'working at ARE', it simply means they are currently achieving the level of reading, writing, and maths that is expected for their specific age group by the end of the academic year. Alongside this, you might also see 'WTS' (Working Towards the Standard) if they are taking a little longer to grasp certain concepts, or 'GDS' (Greater Depth Standard) if they are currently working beyond the expected level.

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



Kirkstall Valley Primary School

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Head Teacher: Mr Phil Robertson
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