

8th June 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 and that you all enjoyed a wonderful, restful May half-term break.

We are now (unbelievably) into our final half-term of the academic year. Our focus shifts to preparing children for moves to their new classes and in some cases their new schools.

I was very lucky to attend the Y6 residential trip (more to follow) and this half-term will also see a flurry of trips and visitors and generally a lot of fun things to fit in before we close for the summer.

Please note, I have added the 26/27 academic calendar to the bottom of this newsletter for your information.

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>

Diary Dates

Wednesday 10th June
Year 5 trip to Tropical World

Thursday 11th June
First Lego League Cup

Friday 12th June
Science in Schools Community show

Wednesday 17th June
Year 6 Safety visit to Leeds Railway Station

Tuesday 23rd June
Summer Fayre

Wednesday 24th June
Whole School Screen Free Day

Wednesday 1st July
Transition Morning

Attendance to date:

YR – 94.3% -

Year 1 – 95.2% ↑

Year 2 – 95.5% ↓

Year 3 – 92.5% -

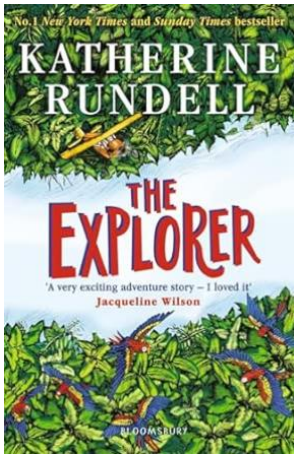
Year 4 – 91.3% ↑

Year 5 – 94.1% ↓

Year 6 – 95.8% ↑ 👑

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

Robertson Recommends: The Explorer



Watching our Year 6 children build rafts, tackle the zip-line, and constantly encourage one another at Caythorpe Court completely inspired my book choice for this week. If there is one story that perfectly captures the spirit of resilience, teamwork, and outdoor adventure, it is *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell.

The story follows four children who find themselves stranded in the vast, untamed Amazon rainforest after their small plane crashes. With no adults to guide them, they must learn to survive by building their own shelter, foraging for food, and constructing a raft to navigate the treacherous river. Just like our Year 6s over the residential weekend, the characters quickly realise that their greatest tool for survival is not just bravery, but their ability to work together and look after one another.

It is a breathtakingly exciting read that keeps you absolutely gripped from the very first page. While the challenges the characters face are perhaps a little more extreme than those in North Lincolnshire, the underlying message is exactly the same: children are capable of extraordinary things when they push their limits and support their friends. It is an absolute must-read for our older children in Key Stage 2!

Year 6 Residential

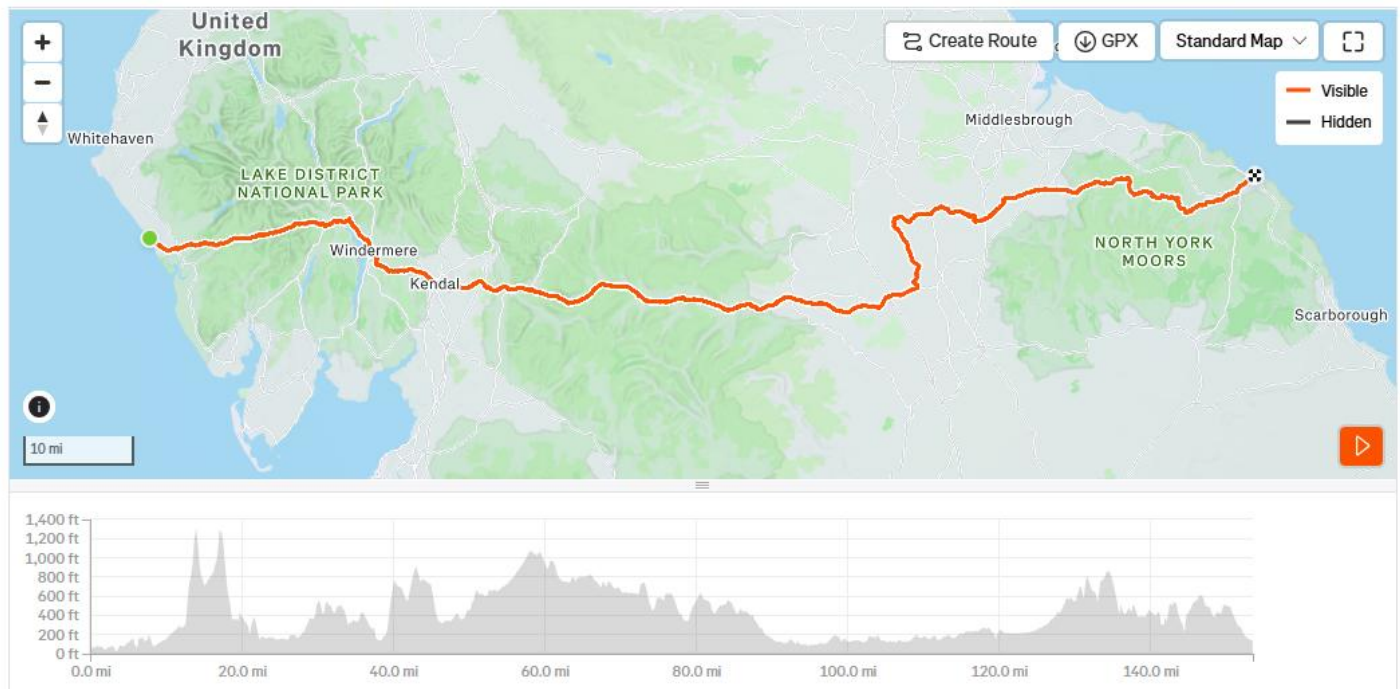


At the very end of last half term, I had the immense pleasure and privilege of accompanying our Year 6s to Caythorpe Court in North Lincolnshire for their Residential Trip. We spent two nights away and took part in an intense programme of activities from archery to zip-lining; fencing to raft-building! The children were just incredible – constantly looking after one another and encouraging each other to push their limits. What a fantastic group of children who showed me beyond any doubt that they are ready for the next stage in their education journeys.

For many children, this was their first time of being away from home overnight and they coped brilliantly. All children were just such a credit to their families and our school. I couldn't have been any prouder!

A huge thank you also to Mrs May, Mrs Collins and Mr Baldock for giving up their personal time to support the children.

Coast to Coast: I did it!!



Please excuse a couple of very self-indulgent photos this week! On Saturday I competed in the Coast to Coast event – 154 miles from Seascale on the West Coast to Whitby on the East. I had been looking at the weather forecast all week and had noticed a very real chance of an Easterly wind and rain for the whole distance – and it didn't disappoint! This made everything a lot more challenging and very unpleasant in places but thinking about the things that mattered most kept me going – and our school and the amazing support I've had was right up there!

I was very pleased to see the Whitby coastline after 11 hours and 42 minutes cycling time! I am a little tender and tired today but feel proud to have got this done and to have raised some money for a charity which is so important to me.

Thank you so much to everyone who has supported the fundraising for Parkinson's UK. If you would like to contribute you are still able to do so for a week or so. My page is here: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/phil-robertson-2>.



Lifelong Learning

A complete rest break from Greek this week as I had other matters on my mind!

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).

Spotlight on Learning

Reception



Last Thursday, Reception enjoyed an amazing day at Yorkshire Wildlife Park. The visit was a fantastic way to kick-start our learning about animals and their habitats. The children were excited to see a wide variety of animals, including lions, giraffes, sea lions, red pandas, wallabies, monkeys and many more. The polar bears were particularly impressive, swimming in the water and relaxing on the grass like giant teddy bears! As wonderful as the animals were, it was the children who truly made the day special. Their behaviour was exceptional throughout the visit. They walked around the huge park all day with enthusiasm, excitement and curiosity, asking thoughtful questions and showing a genuine interest in learning about the different animals. Well done, Reception! We are incredibly proud of you all.

Assembly Focus: Peacemakers

We are thinking a lot about how we handle disagreements on the playground and in general unstructured time in school. We are trying to ensure our school is an inclusive environment for everyone and that inevitable disagreements are handled effectively with children having the tools to be able to sort minor disagreements themselves.

Music of the Week: With a Little Help from My Friends by The Beatles

There are very few songs that capture the spirit of community and teamwork quite as perfectly as our Music of the Week: *With a Little Help from My Friends* by The Beatles.

I chose this absolute classic after spending the end of the last half-term away with our wonderful Year 6 children on their residential trip. Watching them look after one another, encourage each other through challenging activities, and celebrate each success together was the ultimate demonstration of friendship in action. Hearing this song ring out through the hall was a fantastic way to bring that spirit back into school, reminding all of our children that whether they are tackling a tricky classroom task or pushing their personal limits, nobody has to face challenges alone. It perfectly encapsulates our school value of compassion and set a brilliantly supportive tone for the week ahead.

Did you know...?



As bicycles have been very much on my mind over the weekend, it seems the perfect time to look at where these fantastic machines actually came from!

Did you know that the very first bicycles didn't even have pedals or gears?

Invented in 1817 by a German baron named Karl von Drais, the earliest version of the bicycle was originally called a 'Laufmaschine' (running machine), but later became known as a 'Dandy Horse'. It was essentially a wooden frame with two wheels, and instead of pedalling, the rider had to push themselves along the ground with their feet to build up speed—very much like a modern-day toddler's balance bike!

It wasn't until around 40 years later that pedals were finally added, saving everyone an awful lot of scuffed shoes. It is a wonderful reminder that even the most brilliant, world-changing inventions often start off as very simple ideas that take years of resilience and tinkering to perfect!

Focus on

FIRST LEGO League: Building Skills and Friendships



I am incredibly proud to share that a number of our children have been taking part in a fantastic after-school club as part of the FIRST LEGO League initiative. While the problem-solving, engineering, and teamwork skills being developed are brilliant in their own right, what makes this club truly special is that some of our older children have stepped up to facilitate the sessions for our younger pupils. Seeing our senior children demonstrate such wonderful leadership, patience, and compassion as they actively guide the younger ones through their complex Lego builds is an absolute joy to watch. It is a shining example of our school community working together across the year groups, and a true testament to the mature, caring role models our older children have become!

A big thank you to Mrs Ellis for giving up her time to run this brilliant after school club.

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!

KS1 & KS2 (Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2) Following on from our explanation of EYFS (Nursery and Reception) before the half-term break, you will frequently hear us refer to 'Key Stages' as your children move through the school. Key Stage 1 (KS1) covers Years 1 and 2, while Key Stage 2 (KS2) is the longest phase, covering the junior years from Year 3 right up to Year 6. We use these terms to group the children for things like specific curriculum expectations, assemblies, and sports events!

PSC (Phonics Screening Check) As we are now in June, parents of Year 1 children might have heard this acronym mentioned recently! The PSC is a short, light-touch statutory assessment that children take nationwide around this time of year. It is simply a way for us to check your child's ability to decode and read words using the phonics skills they have been practising in class. There is absolutely no pressure attached to it—in fact, most children simply view it as a quiet few minutes spent reading a mix of real words and made-up 'alien' words one-on-one with their teacher.

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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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