
16th March 2026



Kirkstall Valley Primary School

Argie Road, Leeds LS4 2QZ

www.kirkstallvalley.org.uk T: 0113 887 8982

Dear Kirkstall Valley Primary School Families,

How are you? I hope this newsletter finds you well and that you all enjoyed a restorative weekend.

As yesterday was Mothering Sunday, I want to start by sending my warmest wishes to all the mothers, grandmothers, and maternal figures within our school community. I hope those of you who celebrate were able to enjoy some protected, quality time with your families. The quiet dedication and care you provide at home form the absolute foundation of our children's success, and we are incredibly grateful for the partnership we share with you.

After the intense pace of the previous few weeks, it feels wonderful to be settling back into our usual rhythm. I want to say a huge well done to our Year 6 pupils, who handled their mock SATs last week with fantastic maturity and characteristic calm. They truly embodied our school values.

As always, 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



Diary Dates

Tuesday 24th March
In-person parents' evening

Wednesday 25th March
Book Fair

Thursday 26th March
Book Fair

Friday 27th March
Book Fair

Tuesday 31st March
Telephone parents' evening

Thursday 2nd April
Break up for Easter

Attendance to date:

YR – 94.5% ↓

Year 1 – 95.2% -

Year 2 – 96% -👑

Year 3 – 92.9% ↓

Year 4 – 91.7% ↑

Year 5 – 95% ↓

Year 6 – 95.8% -

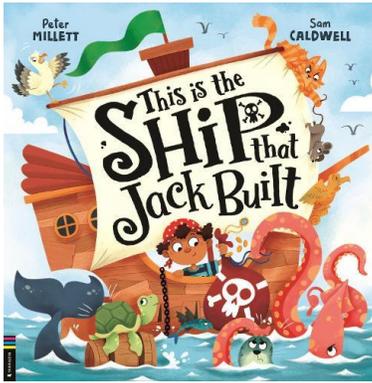
School = **94.4%** - (Target = 96%)

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: This is the Ship that Jack Built

By Peter Millett (Illustrated by Sam Caldwell)



I have chosen this particular book for our younger readers this week, largely because I had the absolute privilege of reading it to our Nursery class recently, and it produced the most wonderful chorus of giggles.

A joyful, pirate-themed twist on the traditional nursery rhyme, the story follows Jack, an enterprising young pirate who builds a ship to protect his precious cargo of gold. However, a whole host of cheeky sea creatures—from a rat and a squid to a seal and a whale with a splashy tail—have other ideas and try to snatch the loot from right under his nose.

As educators and parents, we know that the best learning often happens when children are having too much fun to notice. This book is written as a cumulative tale, meaning the rhythmic, rhyming text builds and repeats with every page turn. This super-catchy repetition is not just entertaining; it is a fantastic hook that naturally encourages early years children to join in, predict what happens next, and develop their early language skills.

The bold, vibrant illustrations brilliantly capture the ensuing chaos and are packed with details that our youngest pupils loved spotting. It is a wonderful reminder that sometimes, the simplest shared routines—like laughing together over a wonderfully silly book—are where the most profound connections take place.

If you have a young child at home, I highly recommend tracking this one down for a rollicking read-aloud session.

Assemblies – The Power of Belief

In our assemblies recently, we have been exploring the profound link between self-belief and human achievement. We began with Henry Ford's timeless observation: "*Whether you think you can, or you think you can't – you're probably right.*" To bring this to life, the children looked at two monumental moments in athletic history where the limits of human endurance were rewritten by the power of the mind. We discussed Roger Bannister breaking the 'impossible' four-minute mile in 1954, and Eliud Kipchoge's historic sub-two-hour marathon, proving his famous mantra that "no human is limited." Both athletes achieved greatness not just through rigorous physical preparation, but through an absolute, unwavering mental clarity that refused to accept defeat.

For our children, the everyday message is vital: the most significant barriers we face are often the ones we build in our own minds. Whether they are tackling a complex maths problem or trying a new sport, we are teaching them to take control of their inner narrative. When they approach challenges with genuine courage and a resolute commitment to the hard work required, the seemingly impossible becomes achievable. I encourage you to continue this conversation at home this weekend; when you hear "I can't", gently remind them of the incredible things that happen when we simply decide "I can". Together, we can model the compassion needed to support them through those difficult, barrier-breaking moments.

A Reminder: Appropriate PE Kit

We have recently seen a decline in the standard of uniform worn on designated Physical Education days. Please accept this as a reminder that adherence to the school's PE kit policy is mandatory.

Having the right tools for the job is a fundamental part of preparation and readiness to learn, whether in the classroom or outside for PE. The required, acceptable PE kit is strictly limited to the following:

- **Shorts/leggings:** Plain blue or plain black
- **T-shirt:** Plain white or plain blue
- **Tracksuit:** Plain blue or plain black (for colder weather)

Football shirts, brightly coloured activewear, and heavily branded items are not permitted. Arriving in the correct kit ensures equality, safety, and a focused mindset for the lesson. I appreciate your co-operation in ensuring your child is correctly equipped for their PE days.

Coast to Coast: Embracing the Incline

Following the success of last weekend's 110-mile sportive, this week's training programme has been an exercise in deliberate restraint. I have scaled back the daily mileage, focusing entirely on recovery to ensure my legs are primed for the next phase of preparation.

This Saturday brings another significant test, this time shifting the focus from pure distance to climbing. I will be heading to the beautiful, but unforgiving, North York Moors. At 85 miles, the route is slightly shorter than last week's endeavour, but it more than makes up for it with a substantially higher elevation profile.

It will be a different kind of physical and mental challenge. Where last week required steady persistence over a long duration, this weekend will demand a calm, measured approach to steep ascents. It is a lesson in accepting the terrain as it comes—controlling the effort on the punishing climbs and using the descents to recover. Managing these different types of strain is a vital part of the refining process as I build toward the full 154-mile event in June.

Thank you again to everyone who has so generously supported my fundraising for Parkinson's UK. Having passed the £1,000 mark last week, every new donation feels like an extra push up those Moorland hills! If you would like to contribute, my page remains open here: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/phil-robertson-2>.

Lifelong Learning



Lifelong Learning: The Art of the Intentional Pause

I must make a confession this week: despite my firm intentions to dive back into my Greek revision, I haven't opened my textbook once. I simply have not found the time, the energy, or the motivation.

In the past, I might have felt a deep sense of frustration about this. However, I am increasingly viewing this not as a failure of discipline, but as an exercise in realistic prioritisation. Between the physical toll of recovering from last weekend's 110-mile cycle, preparing for the upcoming North York Moors ride, and ensuring total professional focus here at school following a highly demanding few weeks, my capacity was fully spoken for.

To force myself to study Greek late into the evening would have been counterproductive. It would have meant doing it poorly, sacrificing essential physical recovery, and, most importantly, compromising my ability to be 100% present with my family when I am at home.

There is a profound difference between giving up and intentionally pausing. True resilience isn't about relentlessly pushing forward on all fronts simultaneously; it is having the clarity to know which plates to keep spinning and which ones to gently set down for a season. I can accept what is currently outside my capacity. The Greek language has survived for thousands of years; it will patiently wait for me for a few more weeks!

For our children, I think this is a vital lesson to model. We live in a world that constantly demands 'more', but sometimes the most productive and healthy thing we can do is to confidently say, "Not right now."

Spotlight on Learning

Year 5



Year 5: A Taste of High School Life

I am delighted to report that our Year 5 pupils had a fantastic time last week when they visited Lawnswood High School to watch a dress rehearsal of their latest production, *The Wiz*. The performance was absolutely brilliant. For the staff who attended, it was a particularly proud moment to spot several former Kirkstall Valley pupils thriving up on stage; it is always a joy to see our alumni continuing to grow in confidence and creativity as they progress through secondary education.

Above all, I must commend our Year 5 children. They conducted themselves with characteristic maturity, acting as brilliant ambassadors for our school and naturally demonstrating our core values of courage, compassion, and commitment throughout the visit. It is moments like these that make me incredibly proud of the culture we are building together.

Assembly Music

Music of the Week: Chariots of Fire

Our Music of the Week has been the unmistakable, stirring theme from *Chariots of Fire* by Vangelis. We chose this iconic piece because, in school this week, we have been thinking about running and the historic achievement of breaking the four-minute mile.

For a long time, the world believed that running a mile in under four minutes was a physical impossibility. Yet, through sheer grit, unwavering commitment, and the courage to push beyond accepted limits, Sir Roger Bannister proved it could be done.

The slow, rhythmic pulse of this music perfectly captures that sense of deep focus and steady endurance. It has served as a wonderful backdrop in our assemblies, reminding the children that the barriers we face—whether in learning, sport, or life—are often just waiting to be broken by someone willing to put in the hard work.

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).

Did you know...?

The Timeless Power of Storytelling



On Friday morning, Key Stage 1 pupils enjoyed a wonderful visit from storyteller Ian Douglas. Ian shared a collection of lively, expressive and comical stories that had the children laughing, listening carefully and joining in with great enthusiasm. Through his energetic storytelling and brilliant character voices, Ian brought each tale to life, capturing the pupils' imaginations from start to finish. The children loved the humour, actions and surprises woven into the stories, making it a truly engaging experience for everyone involved.

But beyond the laughter, there is a profound cognitive process at work here. Storytelling is the oldest and most fundamental method we have for making sense of the world. When children are engrossed in a narrative, they are actively developing empathy—stepping into the shoes of characters and navigating new emotional landscapes. It is a powerful tool for building compassion and

understanding in our young learners.

Visits like this help to inspire a love of stories, develop listening skills and spark creativity in our young learners. Furthermore, watching a master storyteller models the courage and communication skills required to hold a room and share ideas with clarity.

A big thank you to Ian for such an entertaining and memorable morning for our Key Stage 1 pupils. It is a brilliant reminder that sometimes, the most essential learning happens simply by sitting together and listening to a well-told tale.

Focus on

Mindmate Leaders



MindMate Leaders recently delivered a fantastic virtual assembly focusing on emotional regulation and ways we can look after our wellbeing during the school day.

During the assembly, the MindMate leaders explained how we all experience different emotions and that it's normal for our feelings to change throughout the day. They demonstrated some simple but powerful techniques that pupils can use when they feel overwhelmed, worried or frustrated. These included:

- Breathing exercises to help calm the body and mind
- Tapping techniques to release tension and refocus
- Identifying which Zone of Regulation they are in and choosing strategies to help them return to a calm, ready-to-learn state

Pupils then had the opportunity to practise these strategies together, making the assembly interactive and engaging.

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.



Meet Our Governors



Hi, I'm Yoshiko :)

I have children in years 1 and 3, and I want them and all children at KVPS to have the best possible experience. At work I manage mental health services, and I love working with young people to improve the support we offer. As a governor I use this experience to support with monitoring Wellbeing (of children and staff) and Personal Development (which is about children being themselves and being safe, happy and healthy). I'm also part of the Sustainability group (which is about our school's impact on the environment).

Feel free to have a chat with me about these things or anything else!

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