
9th 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!

What a week it was for us last week! OFSTED and World Book Day made sure our feet didn't really touch the ground! A little more about our inspection below. This week is Mock SATs for our Year 6s – again, a bit more about that below.

Our Y5s are getting a taste of High School life this morning when they head up to Lawnswood to see their dress rehearsal of The Wiz. I'm envious I'm not able to go with them for that one!

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>



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 – 94.9% -

Year 1 – 95.2% -

Year 2 – 96% ↑ 👑

Year 3 – 93.2% ↑

Year 4 – 91.6% -

Year 5 – 95.1% -

Year 6 – 95.8% ↑

School = 94.5% - (Target = 96%)

A Reflection on Our Recent Inspection

As you know, we welcomed the Ofsted inspection team to our school for two days last week. Welcoming external visitors to scrutinise our work is always an intense experience, but it is also a highly valuable opportunity for reflection and learning. Now that the process has concluded, I wanted to share a few thoughts with you.

Firstly, I want to offer a sincere thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the parent survey. The overwhelmingly positive responses were deeply heartening to read. They provided the inspection team with a remarkably clear picture of the strong, supportive partnership we share with our families, which is the foundation of everything we do.

I am immensely proud of our children. Regardless of who was in the building, they went about their learning with characteristic joy and focus. They were a true credit to you, naturally demonstrating our core values of courage, compassion, and commitment in every interaction. Equally, I must publicly recognise our staff. Their unwavering dedication to the children and their quiet, relentless hard work shone brightly throughout the two days. It is a privilege to lead such a devoted team.

As is standard procedure following an inspection, the final outcomes and grades remain strictly under embargo while the report is being written and quality-assured. This means I am currently unable to share any specific details or results with you.

However, we look forward to the full, finalised report being published in the coming weeks, and I will, of course, share it with you the moment it becomes available. Thank you, once again, for your ongoing support; it is moments like these that truly highlight the strength of our community.

Year 6 Mock SATs: A Low-Pressure Practice

This week, our Year 6 pupils will be completing their mock SATs. I want to reassure all our families that we approach these practice papers exactly as we will the final assessments in May: with absolute calm and zero pressure. For us, these moments are simply a practical exercise—a chance for the children to familiarise themselves with the format and for us as teachers to see where we can best support their learning over the coming months. We measure our children by their everyday courage, compassion, and commitment, not by a test score. We ask only that they come in, have a go, and view this week simply as another routine opportunity to learn and grow.

Mindful Parking and Our Community

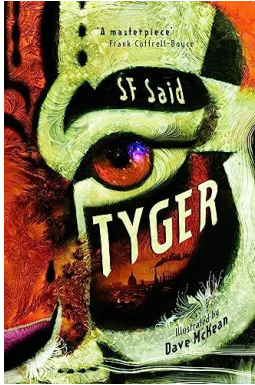
As our school sits at the heart of a vibrant, densely populated residential area, I want to take a brief moment to ask for your help during the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. We are incredibly fortunate to enjoy an excellent relationship with our local neighbours, and preserving this requires a collective effort.

Please can I ask that you are always considerate when choosing where to park your vehicles. Crucially, to ensure excellent visibility and safety for everyone, please avoid parking on corners marked with double yellow lines or on the yellow zig-zag markings directly outside the school gates. Finally, if you are stationary while waiting, please switch off your engine; this simple act dramatically improves the air quality our children breathe.

Thank you for your continued support in demonstrating compassion for our local residents and a shared commitment to keeping our school community safe.

Robertson Recommends: Tyger

By SF Said



I have chosen this book this week because it is a breathtaking masterpiece that reminds us of the extraordinary potential hidden within every one of us. It is a story that doesn't just entertain; it inspires a different way of looking at the world.

Set in an alternate, strange version of London, the story follows Adam and Zadie, who discover a mythical, spark-filled Tyger in a hidden rubbish dump. The Tyger is in danger, and as the children strive to save her, they uncover "the doors of perception"—the idea that we can all see and do much more than we imagine if we have the courage to try.

Our Year 6 pupils are currently reading this in class, and it is sparking some incredible discussions. For us as parents and carers, the book carries a powerful message about courage and commitment. It explores how we can overcome fear and prejudice by holding onto our integrity and looking for the "spark" in others.

SF Said's writing is lyrical and profound, paired with striking illustrations by Dave McKean that capture the book's sense of wonder and mystery. It feels like a future classic—a story that stays with you long after the final page is turned.

In a world that can sometimes feel restrictive, *Tyger* is a stirring call to look for the beauty and power in the everyday. It teaches our children that they are not defined by their circumstances, but by their imagination and their kindness.

It is a staple in our school library—I highly recommend asking your Year 6 children about it!

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: The Reward of Resilience

As many of you know, I have been training hard for my 154-mile sponsored cycle in June. This past weekend marked a significant milestone in that journey: a 110-mile training event that served as a true test of both my physical preparation and my mental discipline.

I am delighted to share that the ride was a great success. After the challenge of the 'taper'—that difficult period of pulling back and resting when every instinct told me to keep pushing—I finally saw the benefit. Stepping onto the pedals with fresh legs and a clear mind allowed me to truly reap the rewards of the months of work I've put in so far. It was a powerful reminder that growth doesn't just happen during the "doing"; it happens in the recovery, too.

Trusting the process isn't always easy, especially when the goal feels so large, but hitting that 110-mile mark has given me immense confidence as I look toward the final challenge this summer.

A Fundraising Milestone

I am riding to raise money for Parkinson's UK, a charity that remains very close to my heart. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our school community, friends, and family, I am thrilled to announce that I have officially reached my initial target of £1,000, with the total currently sitting at £1,002!

I am deeply moved by this support. Now that we have hit this milestone, it is simply a question of how much further we can go for this fantastic charity before the main event in June. Every extra pound provides vital support for those living with Parkinson's.

If you feel able to help us push that total even higher, you can find my fundraising page here:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/phil-robertson-2>. Your encouragement truly keeps those wheels turning!

Lifelong Learning



The Discipline of Consistency: The Power of the Pivot

Following the high of recent "click" moments in my Greek studies, this week has been a grounding reminder of the reality of long-term learning. If previous weeks were the view from the summit, this week has been about navigating a sudden change in the weather.

I'll be honest: I have had to temporarily postpone my language work over the last few days. Between the intense focus required for our recent school inspection and the physical demands of my 110-mile cycle, I found myself simply too depleted to give Greek the mental energy it deserves.

When life's demands peak—as they often do in a vibrant school community—it is tempting to feel a sense of failure when we can't "do it all." However, I am learning that true discipline isn't about rigid perfection; it is about knowing when to pause so that you have the strength to restart. It is about choosing sustainable progress over burnout.

This is a lesson I hope to model for our pupils: that being a learner involves managing your energy and showing the grit to return to a task after a setback. Sometimes, the most disciplined thing you can do is acknowledge your limits, rest, and then find the courage to begin again.

I am excited to get back into the rhythm this week. I won't be charging ahead to new grammar just yet; instead, I'll be starting with some essential revision to steady my foundations. The "newness" may have faded, but the commitment remains. I am staying the course.

Spotlight on Learning

Year 3



Welcome back to the second half of the spring term. The children have returned with great energy and have been noticing signs of spring around school, which meant we were finally able to carry out our shadow experiment. In English, we are finishing our newspaper reports on Chingle Hall before moving on to writing poetry, while continuing to develop grammar, reading and spelling. In maths, the children are making great progress with fractions, which can be tricky. In science, we are investigating how shadows change with light, while in history we are studying the Viking raids beginning with Lindisfarne. In design technology, the children will design and make their own pencil cases.

Assembly Music

Music of the Week: We Are the Champions

Our Music of the Week has been the triumphant, iconic anthem *We Are the Champions* by Queen. Following the immense effort, courage, and collective commitment shown by our staff and pupils during the recent inspection, it felt only right to fill the school with a track universally recognised as a powerful celebration of perseverance and shared success.

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 Cognitive Spark of Morning Movement



Following on from recent reminders about health and readiness, I want to share a brief thought on how physical movement primes the brain for learning. In any demanding physical or mental endeavour, starting from a complete standstill makes the initial effort feel twice as hard. Just as an athlete warms up before an event, a short burst of physical activity before the school bell rings—whether that is a brisk walk, scooting to school, or ten minutes of active play—quietly boosts a child's concentration, mood, and energy levels in the classroom long before the first lesson begins. Movement increases blood flow, delivering vital oxygen to the brain and releasing chemicals that actively improve focus and retention. Encouraging our children to build a simple, consistent habit of morning activity ensures their biological systems are 'warmed up' and ready for the academic challenges of the day. Whenever possible, factoring a few minutes of active travel into the morning routine pays real dividends; good preparation is half the battle when it comes to keeping their minds sharp and bodies resilient for the day ahead.



The school councillors have met together to establish a plan of action moving forward. We discussed the importance of a fair election process and that each councillor was elected democratically and what this entails. It was highlighted that each councillor has a responsibility to represent their class and school - they will be representatives who will advocate for their peers and that this is essential to flag concerns and make progress. They were tasked with locating and assessing the condition of their class's student voice boxes and will be leading a class discussion to encourage their peers to post ideas and suggestions in the new and improved boxes. We will then meet to look over all suggestions and decide on a particular recommendation that is realistic and achievable. The councillors will then fundraise and implement change linked to our focus recommendation. The children already had some fantastic ideas around different ways they could fundraise for their project. Please encourage your children to utilise the student voice boxes over the coming weeks and we welcome everyone's suggestions!

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.



A Word of Thanks to Our Governors

I must also extend my deepest gratitude to our governing body. When the call came, they stepped forward without hesitation, generously giving up hours of their own professional and personal time to meet with the inspection team. Their deep understanding of our school and their unwavering commitment to our children's success shone through in every conversation. Governance is often unseen, quiet work, but during those two days, their strategic support and calm, steadfast leadership were invaluable. I am incredibly fortunate to work alongside a team that embodies such genuine dedication to our community, and I want to publicly thank them for everything they do behind the scenes.

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