

2nd February 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!

January seemed like a long month! However, February is finally here and we are moving ever closer to warmer, brighter and (hopefully!) drier weather.

Final call for readers: We always invite those of you who speak an additional language to come into school and read a story for our children. If this is something you'd be interested in doing, please get in touch and let me know.

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>

The small school with a big heart



Diary Dates

9th February
International Week

Tuesday 10th February
Supper for Peace

Tuesday 10th February
Safer Internet Day

Friday 13th February
Break up for half-term

Monday 23rd February
Spring 2 begins

Attendance to date:

YR – 95.1%	↓
Year 1 – 95%	↓
Year 2 – 95.7%	↓
Year 3 – 92.9%	↓
Year 4 – 92.1%	↓
Year 5 – 95.3%	-
Year 6 – 95.2%	↑

School = 94.4% - (Target = 96%)

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Robertson Recommends



Tom's Magnificent Machines

By Linda Sarah and Ben Mantle

This week, I have a special recommendation that comes with a wonderful backstory. This book was originally recommended to me by one of our current Year 6 pupils when they were back in Year 4. I have held onto that recommendation, and it was a pleasure to reshare it with the school during our reading assembly this week.

Tom's Magnificent Machines is a visually stunning and emotionally resonant story about a boy and his father who channel their creativity to overcome sadness. It is a masterclass in resilience and the joy of invention. Reading this together in assembly was a highlight of my week; the children were captivated by the whimsical illustrations and the touching narrative of finding happiness in the things we build together.

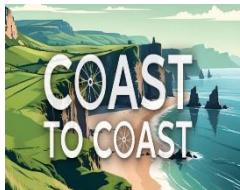
If you are looking for a story that celebrates imagination and the bond between parent and child, this is a perfect choice.

Celebrating Our Community: Supper for Peace As part of our upcoming International Week, we are delighted to invite you to one of the true highlights of our school calendar: the **Supper for Peace**.

Taking place after school on **Tuesday, 10th February**, this event is a wonderful opportunity for us to pause and come together through the universal language of food. We invite all staff and families to bring in and share a dish that is special to them. Each year, it is a privilege to see the true diversity of our school represented on these tables, with brilliant cuisine arriving from near and far.

Please do prioritise attending this event if you can; it is the presence of our families that makes it such a success. Furthermore, do look out for the variety of exciting projects your children will be undertaking throughout International Week—it promises to be a fantastic celebration of our global community.

Coast to Coast



I am currently training very hard for an ultra-cycling event in June this year. I'll be (hopefully!) riding from Seascale on the West Coast via the Cumbrian hills of Hardknott and Wrynose across to Whitby on the East Coast. 154 miles of cycling, 10,500ft of elevation and somewhere in the region of 10 hours (again, hopefully!).

I'll be raising money for Parkinsons UK, a charity I have a personal connection with. If you felt able to support this charity, my fundraising page can be found at https://www.justgiving.com/page/phil-robertson-2?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

I have been blown away with the support of friends, family and community members alike. I am at £911 and am hoping to reach £1000 or more before June.

**Weekly Learning Update: The Discipline of Consistency**

Following my update last week on the cognitive challenge of the Greek alphabet, this week has presented a different hurdle: the discipline of consistency.

The initial burst of enthusiasm that often accompanies a new project has settled, leaving behind the stark reality of the daily grind. I must admit, I have found it harder this week to carve out the time and mental space required for deep practice. It is one thing to decide to learn; it is quite another to show up to the task when the diary is full and energy is low.

This struggle has made me reflect on what we ask of our pupils when the novelty of a new topic fades. We speak often of resilience, but experiencing this 'dip' first-hand is a reminder that learning is not linear. Motivation gets you started, but it is habit that keeps you going. I am sticking at it, reminding myself that progress is often invisible in the moment, and that the most important study session is the one you don't feel like doing.

Spotlight on Learning

Year 2

Year 2 have been proudly demonstrating the school values as part of their exciting new Fishkeeper Fry project. Fishkeeper Fry is a specially designed programme that explores the science and art of caring for fish. Alongside their science learning about living things and habitats, Year 2 have shown great courage by taking on new responsibilities and confidently preparing their aquarium, ready for their very first fish to arrive TOMORROW! Year 2 are incredibly excited to welcome their new aquatic friends and to show compassion through careful teamwork and precise monitoring of their needs. Year 2 would also like to give a special shout-out to the Year 5 and 6 Reading Buddies, who generously give up their own time each day to listen to some of them read. Thank you!

Names in clothes

As we move through the term, our collection of "unclaimed" jumpers and coats continues to grow. To help us reunite lost items with their rightful owners, please could I ask that you clearly label all items of clothing with your child's name.

When items are lost, it can be quite unsettling for children, and having a name inside allows us to return the garment to them instantly, saving both time and upset. Whether you use iron-on labels, permanent markers, or traditional name tapes, that small step makes a significant difference to our daily routines. Thank you for your continued support in helping us keep the school tidy and well-organised.

Please also return clothes to school if your child mistakenly brings home things which don't belong to them!

OFSTED

As you may be aware, schools operate within specific windows for Ofsted inspections, and we have now entered ours. Far from being a cause for apprehension, we view this as a welcome opportunity. We are incredibly proud of the courageous, compassionate, and committed community we have built at KVPS. We strive for excellence every day—not for the sake of inspectors, but for the benefit of your children. When the call eventually comes, we look forward to opening our doors and showing the inspection team exactly what makes our school such a special place to learn and grow.

Assembly Music

Piece: Lean on Me **Artist:** Bill Withers (1972)

Lean on Me is one of the most enduring anthems of friendship and support in music history. Bill Withers wrote the song based on his experiences growing up in a coal-mining town in West Virginia. It reflects a time and place where community wasn't just a concept, but a survival mechanism—where neighbours helped one another instinctively because they knew that everyone would eventually face hard times.

Special Assemblies

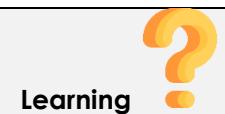
If your child is up for an award at one of our special assemblies, I will send an invite by email on a Thursday. Please do check your emails (including junk folders).

Hot Choc Fridays!



Every Friday morning, I get the wonderful opportunity to share a hot chocolate (or juice if preferred) with the top Class Dojo earners of the week. It's wonderful to spend a bit of time with children who have gone the extra mile that week and really challenged themselves to be their best. We share a nice drink and play some silly games! I also always ask them to tell me what they'd do if they were Headteacher for the day. You can imagine the responses!

Did you know...?



Learning changes the physical structure of your brain!

Following on from last week's look at "rewiring," did you know that learning actually thickens the cortex of the brain?

Neuroplasticity isn't just a metaphor; it's a physical reality. When we learn a new skill—whether it's a child mastering multiplication tables or an adult (like me!) struggling with a new language—our neurons form new connections and strengthen existing ones. This process, known as synaptogenesis, physically increases the density of the brain matter in those areas.

It is like a muscle: the more you use it, the stronger and more complex it becomes. This means that every time a pupil pushes through a difficult lesson, they aren't just acquiring knowledge; they are literally building a better brain. It's a powerful reminder that the feeling of "struggle" is actually the feeling of growth happening in real-time.

Focus on

Extra-curricular Clubs

We try to offer a range of clubs for children to take part in after school. Currently we have available: Chess Club, Band, Dance and Dodge Ball. Look out for more opportunities next half-term!

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.



Your PTA: Fueling the Extras

While the school budget covers the essentials of learning, it is our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that funds the magic in the margins. From subsidising school trips and purchasing new playground equipment to funding visiting authors and STEM workshops, the PTA pays for the "extras" that turn a good education into a memorable one. But they cannot do it without your voice and your hands. Getting involved does not require a seat on a committee or hours of meetings; it simply needs parents willing to offer a small slice of time to help us build a richer experience for every child.

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	1 September	2025
Monday	3 November	2025
Monday	5 January	2026
Monday	20 July	2026
Tuesday	21 July	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