
8th December 2025



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!

Exciting week ahead this week with our Christmas performances! I hope you will be able to attend one of them this week. I can assure you that if you're not feeling in the festive spirit this morning, you will be by Friday!

I do want to say a big thank you to the children and also the adults in school who work so hard to put these on for you.

If ever you want to get in touch, 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



Diary Dates

Tuesday 9th December
EYFS performances

Wednesday 10th
December
Y 1,2 and 3 performances

Thursday 11th December
Y 4,5 and 6 performances

Thursday 11th December
Christmas jumper and dinner day

Friday 12th December
Leeds Rhinos/Network Rail in Y6

Friday 19th December
End of term

Attendance to date:

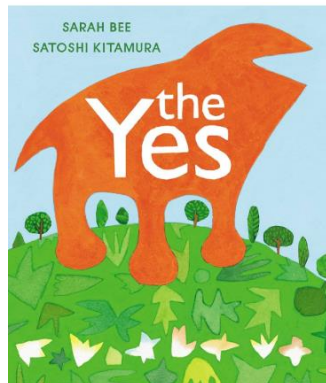
YR – 95% ↑
Year 1 – 93.8% ↓
Year 2 – 95.4% ↑👑
Year 3 – 93.2% ↓
Year 4 – 92.6% -
Year 5 – 94.9% ↑
Year 6 – 94.9% ↓

School = 94.3% (Target = 96%)

so easily through our website or by visiting

<https://www.anewchapterbooks.com/shop?Wishlists=Kirkstall+Valley+Primary+School>

I will be changing the bookshop to Truman Books in Farsley soon and will update the link in the website when I've done this but probably not until the New Year.



Robertson Recommends

The Yes by Sarah Bee I cannot recommend this book highly enough. *The Yes* is a modern fable about a small orange character who decides to leave their comfortable nest to see the world. It is a masterclass in resilience and optimism, beautifully illustrated by Satoshi Kitamura. I was due to share this book with children last week but have had to save it due to the demands on our hall. I am looking forward to talking with the children about how we handle new challenges and the importance of saying "Yes" to learning, even when it feels difficult. This week is also an assembly 'write-off' so it will be next week now! A brilliant read for all ages.

Spotlight on Learning

Year 3



Year Three love science! This half of term, we have been exploring forces and magnets. We used our scientific skills to investigate how friction affects movement. We tested different surfaces and predicted which would slow objects down the most. We also explored magnets, using interactive experiments to investigate how they attract and repel. We really enjoyed testing their strength, our record-breaking magnet managed to hold an incredible chain of 29 paperclips! We will wrap this topic up by exploring our STEM hero, Jyoti Sehdev—a civil engineer. Together, we'll discover what civil engineers do, think about examples of their work in our local community, and learn about the scientific skills needed to become one.

Christmas Performances

We are really looking forward to the performances this week! We do have some tickets left and we have now opened this up to additional family members so if you were hoping to get more tickets, just visit the School Shop on the Arbor app.


Assembly Music

In Assembly on Friday we listened to Try Everything by Shakira which features in the Zootropolis 2 movie. This was after some strong persuasive arguments by a Year 6 pupil! I enjoyed it (and so did everyone else!).

Punctuality Update

This week, we introduced a more consistent system for notifying parents when children arrive late to school. We know that the school run can be stressful—traffic, weather, and lost shoes happen to the best of us! However, we have also seen a creeping rise in lateness that we need to address to protect learning time.

We have decided to send notifications on a Friday for every instance of lateness that week to ensure we are treating every family exactly the same. Please do not feel disheartened by a text; simply treat it as a "nudge" to help us maximise your child's learning time. We value hard work and punctuality, and having children in class on time is the very best start we can give them.

Did you know...?	Geminids meteor shower 
	Keep your eyes on the sky this week! The Geminids meteor shower peaks around the 13th and 14th of December. It is one of the most active meteor showers of the year, with up to 120 'shooting stars' per hour visible in dark skies. I know our skies aren't exactly dark in West Yorkshire, but there is still a chance to see something if it's at least clear! Most children know that I'm a keen astronomer so I'll definitely be keeping my eyes open! Regardless of whether you see anything or not, it is a wonderful opportunity to bundle up warm, step outside, and look up at the universe with your children.

Attendance

I cannot stress enough that every single school day matters. Primary education is cumulative; it is like building a wall where every lesson is a brick that supports the next. When a child misses a Monday, the maths concept taught on Tuesday becomes shaky, and by Wednesday, they can feel lost and anxious. Attendance is not simply about obeying rules or hitting targets; it is about **commitment** to one's own potential. We work incredibly hard to design a curriculum that flows seamlessly, but we need your children here to experience it. Please, help us to help them keep those foundations strong—every day counts.

Focus on

Digital Leaders



This half term, our wonderful Year 6 Digital Leaders have been working hard in Computing lessons. They have been visiting Years 1, 2 and 3 each week to support the younger pupils. All Digital Leaders have shown great compassion, patience and kindness towards the younger children when they have needed help using the computers.

Lessons this half term have included topics such as creating digital art, online safety, creating presentations and learning about the email system. Our Digital Leaders have been able to share their knowledge and skills in all lessons and have made a real impact on the progress made by our younger pupils. Well done Digital Leaders, and thank you for your help!

What do our School Governors actually do?



We often talk about the Governing Body, but their role is sometimes misunderstood. You can think of them as the school's 'critical friends'. They are a group of volunteers—including parents, staff, and members of the local community—who don't manage the school day-to-day (that is my job), but who work behind the scenes to ensure we are meeting our high standards. Their three main core functions are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
2. Holding me and the leadership team to account for the educational performance of the school.
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent. They ask the challenging questions to ensure we are doing the very best for every child.

A note on Times tables...

We know that learning times tables can sometimes feel like a hurdle for both children and parents. However, recall of these facts is the foundation for so much of the Maths curriculum in Key Stage 2, from fractions to area.

The Road to 12x12: What to expect when?

It is important to remember that learning times tables is a marathon, not a sprint. We do not expect a Year 1 child to know 7×8 ! The curriculum is designed to build courage and confidence year on year.

Here is the national expectation for each age group, so you know exactly which tables to focus on at home:

- Year 1: Counting in steps of 2, 5, and 10. (e.g., "10, 20, 30...").
- Year 2: Recalling the 2, 5, and 10 times tables securely.
- Year 3: Introducing the 3, 4, and 8 times tables.
- Year 4: The Big Aim! By June of Year 4, the national expectation is that children can recall all tables up to 12×12 .
 - Note: This coincides with the statutory 'Multiplication Tables Check' (MTC) administered by the government.
- Years 5 & 6: Focus on fluency and application (using these facts to solve division, fractions, and percentage problems).

A Note on Compassion:

We know children learn at different rates. If your child is in Year 4 and still finding the 2s tricky, we will support them where they are, rather than panicking about where they "should" be. Please speak to your class teacher if you are worried.

Parent Guide: Supporting Times Tables at Home

Here is how you can support your child using our values of Courage, Compassion, and Commitment.

1. Compassion: Reduce the Pressure (The "Low Stakes" Approach)

Maths anxiety is real. If a child feels panicked, their working memory shuts down, and they cannot learn.

- Don't quiz them when they are tired. Avoid the "spot check" immediately after school.
- Use a "Cheat Sheet". When practising homework, let them have the times tables written out in front of them. It builds confidence to see the answer, rather than guessing and getting it wrong. Over time, they will need the sheet less and less.
- Focus on what they DO know. If they are stuck on 7 times 8, remind them they might already know 8 times 7.

2. Courage: Tackle the Tricky Ones (Concrete & Visual)

Some children struggle to just "memorise" numbers. They need to see what the maths looks like.

- Pasta Arrays: If they are stuck on the 4x table, get some dried pasta or Lego bricks. physically make 4 piles of 3, then 4 piles of 4. Seeing the "groups" helps the numbers stick.
- The "Seven" Wall: The 6, 7, and 8 times tables are notoriously the hardest. Encourage your child to show courage by picking one tricky fact (e.g., $7 \times 8 = 56$) and sticking it on the fridge or the bathroom mirror for a week until it is conquered.

3. Commitment: Little and Often

Deep learning happens through "spaced repetition"—lots of short bursts rather than one long session.

- The Car Journey: Choose one table to chant on the way to school.
- Ad Break Challenges: "How many times can you write out the 5x table before the TV show comes back on?"
- TTRS: A commitment of just 3 minutes a day on Times Tables Rock Stars (Garage Mode) is proven to be more effective than 30 minutes once a week.

Try These "No-Screen" Games at Home

1. Multiplication War (Card Game)

- Remove the Jacks, Queens, and Kings from a deck of cards.
- Split the deck between two players.
- Both flip a card at the same time.
- The first person to multiply the two numbers and shout the answer wins both cards.
- Note: If this is too hard, keep one card face up (e.g., a 5) and just flip one card to multiply by 5.

2. The "Buzz" Game

- Count up from 1 as a family (taking turns).
- Choose a "forbidden" times table (e.g., 4).
- Every time you hit a multiple of 4 (4, 8, 12, 16...), you must say "BUZZ" instead of the number.
- If you say the number, you are out!

3. Supermarket Estimates

- "These yoghurts are in packs of 6. If we bought 4 packs, how many would we have?"
- Real-world context helps children see why we learn this.

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