



Newsletter 9 – Friday 23rd January, 2026

Dear Cragside Family,

As always, we have had enjoyed a very busy two weeks in school, with a whole range of different learning experiences for our children, which have ranged from skipping and table tennis workshops and our wonderful star gazing, which was hosted by our Space Club attendees and Kielder Observatory. A very big thank you to all of the children who were involved running workshops and experiments during this event and for encouraging a love of Space in other children. It was a shame that the clouds affected what we are able to view from the telescope, but it was great that there was a short time that children could view Jupiter when there was a small break in the clouds. Thank you to all of you who attended this free event – the feedback from children and families was really positive. I was also delighted to see so many of our Reception children's families at this morning's Reception Curriculum morning. The session which Mrs Clarke led, felt so purposeful in sharing with you how we teach our children to decode, spell and enjoy reading a story. Thank you to those of you who were able to join this session – I know that the children love having their grown-ups in school and showing off their learning.

A note about parental messaging groups

I would like to take a moment to address the growing impact that parental messaging groups are beginning to have within our school community, particularly causing upset and distress to some individual families. Staff and I often see screenshots, chats or hear from families that children, incidents and, on a small number of occasions, school staff, have been referred to inaccurately or that situations shared on a WhatsApp group have been misrepresented and miscommunicated and have subsequently been shared or interpreted as fact. Increasingly, teaching staff are spending valuable time responding to issues arising from adults messaging, which inevitably detracts from the time available for teaching and learning. Myself and my staff team are deeply invested in ensuring the very best for every child and will always contact families directly if there is a concern regarding behaviour, wellbeing or to follow up on a situation if one has arisen during the school day. As you know, we are an incredibly open and approachable school, and aim to manage any concerns relating to individual children professionally and fairly. If there is an incident or we have a concern about a child, we are in direct contact with families to discuss these. Equally, if you have any concerns, please contact school staff directly to share these. Please be mindful that information shared on these messaging sites is not always factually accurate.

High Flying Readers – A message from Miss Rennison

This morning in Cragside has been one of my favourite mornings! As you all know, at Cragside, we love to share a love of reading and inspire all of our families to enjoy books together. We encourage reading at home as much as possible to help your child become resilient and confident readers and this morning we have celebrated the commitment of some of our 'High Flying Readers' that have caught our eyes for showing a love of reading. One child from each class will proudly carry home a Star Reader trophy in recognition of their hard work in reading. Well done to all of our High Flying readers for this half term. Try and read as much as you can at home to try to earn a reading trophy next half term!

Parent Governor

I would like to announce that Suzanna Armstrong has been appointed as our new parent governor, following the recent vacancy on our Governing Body. Mrs Armstrong brings valuable skills and experience to the Governing Body and is keen to work alongside school leaders and fellow governors to support the continued and strategic development of our school. I'd like to thank Mrs Armstrong for her willing to volunteer her time to this important role.



Energy Saving Week – A message from Mrs Beacher

We started Energy Saving Week by sharing top tips on how we can save energy at home and at school. The Climate Change Champions announced the class who saved the most energy would receive extra playtime next week. The winning class was Mr Freedman's class- Well done! The Climate Change Champions have done a fantastic job this week monitoring and recording our energy use in school.

This week's Climate Change Challenge...

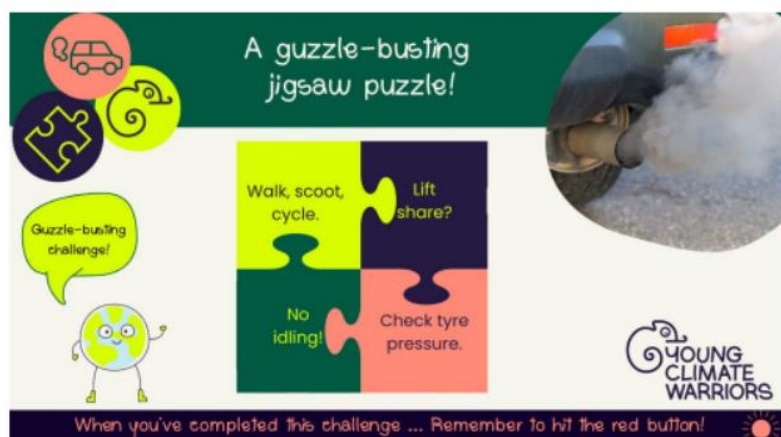
How many electric vehicles can you spot? How many days can you walk, scooter or cycle to school? Why not have fun making a bird feeder and take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch?

More and more electric vehicles are being driven on our roads. See how many you can spot on your route to school.

Idling for just 30 seconds produces twice as much air pollution and wastes more fuel than switching off and restarting your engine.

It's national puzzle day – 29th Jan – check out the challenge on our website for a [Climate Change Crossword and Word Search!](#)

Birds, and insects which they feed on, are particularly sensitive to air pollution. Join The [2026 Big Garden Birdwatch this weekend!](#)



Cars and vans are responsible for about 19% of carbon dioxide emissions in Europe.



www.youngclimatewarriors.org

Attendance Matters – An update from Mrs Bilton

Why School Attendance Matters (taken from a Department for Education blog). Every day at school counts. The evidence is clear - even a few days of missed school can have a significant impact on a child's education and future prospects.

How attendance affects attainment-

Recent research by the Department for Education shows just how closely attendance and attainment are linked. At primary school, children who attend school nearly every day in Year 6 (95-100% attendance) are 30% more likely to reach the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared to similar pupils who attend 90-95% of the time.

This is why we're always working to improve attendance at Cragside.





Class attendance

Every week, Mrs Gillooly our Attendance Officer, Carol Barnfather our EWO, and I, monitor every child's attendance. We also monitor class attendance and share it with you.

RLC - 90%
RNH - 90.48%
1LT - 95.77%
1KB - 99.2%
2RC - 99.05%
2JF - 95.29%
3EO - 97.5%
3DF - 98.08%
4UC - 98%
4SG - 96.92%
5KR - 95.33%
5HC - 97.14%
6ER - 96.52%
6JB - 97.39%

Well done 1KB and 2RC, very close to 100% attendance!

Attendance Ambassadors

This week, I was delighted to appoint four Year 6 Attendance Ambassadors. Their first responsibility today was to celebrate great attendance in school with some hot chocolate rewards. I agreed that hot chocolate was a great choice in this awful January weather! If your child comes home this evening with a Great Attendance sticker, they've enjoyed a hot chocolate/juice reward too.

Whole School Attendance

Our current school attendance is 95.7%. I'm delighted to say that each week this term, our attendance has improved. Well done Cragside families! As always, I'm very keen to work with you to improve attendance wherever possible. With that in mind, please don't hesitate to be in touch if there is anything at all I can do to support with your child's attendance.



**Let Your
Light Shine**

St Matthew's Gospel

Dates for your diary – Spring term 2026

During the Spring term, we would like to welcome you into school to give you the opportunity to come and see teaching and learning in our school and to actively participate in a learning activity with your child. These sessions will be held in the school hall and will begin at 9.00am. They will last approximately 45 minutes, but this may vary depending on the content and age of the children.

Wednesday 28 th January	Year 6 Curriculum workshop and SATs Information session for parents and carers
Wednesday 4 th February	Year 3 Curriculum Workshop
Monday 9 th February	Children's Mental Health week commences
Tuesday 10 th February	Safer Internet Day
Wednesday 11 th February	Parent/Carer Consultation Meetings 3.30-6.00pm
Thursday 12 th February	Year 2 Curriculum Morning for Parents
Friday 13 th February	3.15pm – School closes for Spring half term holiday
Monday 23 rd February	Children return to school following the half term holiday Fairtrade Fortnight begins
Wednesday 25 th February	Parent/Carer Consultation Meetings 3.30-6.00pm
Thursday 5 th March	World Book Day
Thursday 12 th March	Year 5 Curriculum Workshop
Wednesday 18 th March	Year 4 Curriculum Workshop
Thursday 19 th March	Year 1 Curriculum Workshop
Thursday 26 th March	Easter Church Services at St Nicholas' Church 9.30am Year 5 & Year 6 11.00am Year 1 & Year 2 2.00pm Year 3 & Year 4
Wednesday 1 st April	Judging Day – Decorate an Easter egg competition
Thursday 2 nd April	3.15pm – End of Spring Term
Monday 20 th April	8.45am – Children return to school for beginning of Summer term
Monday 11 th May to Thursday 14 th May	– Year 6 SATs
Monday 1 st June to Friday 12 th June	– Year 4 Multiplication Check
Monday 8 th June to Friday 12 th June	– Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

Many thanks for your ongoing support. Have a lovely weekend.

Joanne Parker

