



St Mark's C of E Junior School

Growing together, becoming all we are created to be

Weekly Newsletter - Friday 6th December 2024

www.stmarksjunior.com

All enquires: admin@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk

Our Value in focus this term is: TRUST



Headteacher's Message:

Today we had a visit from our local MP Max Wilkinson. He came to school to surprise the winner of his Christmas card design competition. A huge congratulations to Honey! She was presented with framed photo of her design and prize in our Celebration Assembly this morning. The exciting bit is that her design will be his official Christmas card which will be sent to all households in Cheltenham, which is around 25,000 homes! Wow, what a fantastic achievement!



Yesterday the boys football team played in the **ESFA Gloucestershire County Finals** having won the Cheltenham Albert Dix Tournament back in October.

The boys should be very proud of themselves. Every single member of the team played their heart out and showed excellent sportsmanship. They stuck together from start to finish, in what was absolutely treacherous conditions, in storm Darragh!



Final result—we came **2nd place** out of 200+ schools, which is an outstanding achievement and one that we can be proud to celebrate.

You can see from the results below how close it was.

Tournament Results

4 Group Matches

3 wins 1 draw

Semi Finals V Upton St Leonards

0-0 Won on Penalties 5-4

Final V Elmlea Lost 1-0

A huge thank you to Mrs Campbell for supporting the team through all the matches and well done again to the children. We couldn't be more proud of you all! Mrs Campbell said that it was a 'pleasure to be part of the team and I feel very lucky and proud to be working with such talented & delightful children.' **Congratulations again to you all!**

Good luck to Sam and Asa, who will once again play in the Cheltenham Schools' team tonight, against Gloucester - another big match!

Have a super weekend,

Mrs A Fitch and the Staff Team

Learning Highlight of the Week

Class 1: In DT, class 1 have enjoyed learning how to sew. This is in preparation for next week where they will get the opportunity to make clothes for a teddy.

Class 2: Class 2 have been making silhouettes of Stonehenge in Art this week.

Class 3 & 4: DT was also a highlight for class 3 & 4. They are in the planning stage for their Christmas buzzer game, which will involve using a circuit. They have drawn their designs and plan to make it before the end of term.

Class 5 & 6: The Anglo Saxon day had to be the highlight of the week for year 5. See page 3 for the full story.

Class 7: The children in class 7 enjoyed playing Tag Rugby matches in PE.

Class 8: Class 8 loved learning Bhangra dancing this week. Originating in Punjab, Bhangra is a folk dance that originally emerged as a way to rejoice in the harvest season. The children were put into groups and made up sequences based on a story of a farmer.

PTA News



Thank you to everyone who came to watch Arthur Christmas with us, we made over **£200!!!**

Non-Uniform Day—Friday 13th December

Next Friday 13th we are having a non school uniform day for bringing in a Teddy or bottle for the tombolas at the Christmas Fair which is the following Tuesday 17th.



Christmas Fair—Tuesday 17th December



During the Christmas Fair on Tuesday 17th all classes will be coming down to the hall to go around the stalls both PTA and Year 6 Business Link. There will be lots of things to buy and lots of games so please send in a little bit of cash with your child to school to enjoy the Christmas Fair. The fun will continue after school too so please come in after collecting children from the playground like normal and help us and the Year 6s raise some money.

Discos—Wednesday 18th December

On Wednesday 18th we have the Christmas disco—Years 3&4 6-6:45pm and Years 5&6 7-8pm. On the night please bring a water bottle, the entrance slip with £2 and change for sweets, glow sticks, tattoos and bracelets. Please do not bring phones, your own food or wear heels or heeilies.



Collection will be under the Willow tree and no children will be allowed to leave without an adult.

We also need volunteer parent helpers for the Year 3&4 disco. If you can help please email clerical@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk and we will pass on your details to the PTA.

Football Success

The girls team also played in a league match against Greatfield Park this week. It was a very physical match and Greatfield put up a really good fight. St Mark's showed great team spirit and played with excellent attitude.

The team are improving with every match they play and were thrilled with the final score winning 10-2.



Year 5 - Anglo Saxon Day

Year 5 had a fantastic Anglo Saxon themed immersive experience this week. They made a Round House which they used to create a mini village within a shoe box. They also made broaches which would have been worn to fasten their cloaks. Out of clay they got the opportunity to make an Anglo Saxon Amulet, which they designed with patterns as well as writing using the Anglo Saxon runic alphabet. One of their highlights from the day was making the peasant bread.

As you can see from the photos they really enjoyed these practical activities which will support their learning in history.



Bikeability - Year 6

Well done to the children who took Bikeability this week.

Bikeability is the national cycle training programme supported and subsidised by the Department for Transport. The course aims to build the skills and confidence of children who can already ride.

The instructors were so impressed with all the children and commented how well they supported one another while they were out on the road.

Well done children, such a lovely thing to hear from the Bikeability staff.



Panto Reminder

Next week the children will be going to see the Pantomime, Aladdin at the Everyman Theatre. The show starts at 2pm and we expect to be back at school at approximately 4.30pm.

All children will need to be collected by a parent as it will be dark.

Children will also need a **packed lunch** on the panto day.

Please wear school uniform (including class 2 who will not have PE due to the trip).



Christmas Card Reminder

Our festive Christmas Post Box is up in the foyer and ready to receive your Class Christmas cards throughout the rest of term.

Please remember to include the recipients name and class number



Teaching & Learning Owls

Bronze - Sienna

Congratulations to Sienna for achieving her bronze owl!



YEAR 4 PE — NEXT WEEK

PE for Year 4 will be outside on **Tuesday 10th December**.

Children will need to ensure they have suitable warm clothing.



Christmas Calendar Dates

W/C 9th December

Wed 11th - Panto 2pm

Collection at 4.30pm in the playground

Thu 12th - Carol Services:

5.30–6.15 *Yellow & Green house*

Plus choir, orchestra & recorders

6.45–7.30 *Red & Blue house*

Plus Choir, orchestra & recorders

Thu 12th - Christmas Jumper Day

(Save the Children)

W/C 16th December

Mon 16th - Year 6 Making day

Tue 17th - Rocksteady concert for Rocksteady Parents 9.30am

Tue 17th - Christmas Fair from 3.15pm

Children to bring in change

Tue 17th - Stone Age Outdoor Learning with Mr Oakey Class 2

Wed 18th - Stone Age Outdoor Learning with Mr Oakey Class 1

Wed 18th - PTA Discos Y3 & Y4 – 6-6.45pm / Y5 & Y6 – 7-8pm

Wed 18th - Thursday Lunch Menu

Thu 19th - Caterlink Christmas Lunch (Festive Menu Only—Lunches have been pre-ordered)

Fri 20th - End of Term - School Finishes Normal Time 3.10pm



Extra Curricular Clubs - Autumn Term 2

Monday

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Boys Football Y5-6 | Lunchtime |
| Baking Buddies Y3-6 | 3.10pm - 4.30pm |
| Gym Club Y3-6 | 3.10pm - 4.00pm |
| Chinese Language Y3-6 | 3.15pm - 4.15pm |
| Netball Y6 | 3.10pm - 4.15pm |
| Recorders Y3-6 | Lunchtime |
| Running Club Y3-6 | 3.10pm - 4.00pm |

Tuesday

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Orchestra Y3-6 | 3.10pm - 4.00pm |
| Tennis Y4-6 | 3.15pm - 4.15pm |

Wednesday

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Baking Buddies Y3-6 | 3.10pm - 4.30pm |
| Cyclestars Y3-6 | 3.15pm - 4.15pm |
| French Club Y3-6 | 3.10pm - 4.15pm |

Thursday

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Girls Football Y4-6 | Lunchtime |
| Coding Club Y6 | 3.10pm - 4.00pm |
| Choir Y3-6 | 3.10pm - 4.00pm |



Stone Age Outdoor Learning Days Y3

We are delighted that Mr Oakey will be leading Year 3 Stone Age Outdoor Learning days on the last week of term.

Class 2 - Tuesday 17th December

Class 1 - Wednesday 18th December

The children can wear non school uniform that they do not mind getting dirty.

Please ensure they wear warm clothing and have coats and wellies!



Outdoor Learning

We are thrilled to inform you that we will be resuming Outdoor Learning sessions every Thursday after Christmas. Each Year group will have a half terms' worth of sessions this year, beginning with Year 3, starting on Thursday January 9th.



2024 - 25



December

- Wed 11th - Panto 2pm performance
- Thu 12th - Carol Services: 5.30 – 6.15 (Yellow & Green house plus choir, orchestra and recorders) 6.45 – 7.30 (Red & Blue house plus choir, orchestra and recorders)
- Thu 12th - Christmas Jumper Day (Save the Children)
- Mon 16th - Year 6 Making day
- Tue 17th - Rocksteady concert for Rocksteady Parents 9.30am
- Tue 17th - Christmas Fair
- Tue 17th - Stone Age Outdoor Learning Class 2
- Wed 18th - Stone Age Outdoor Learning Class 1
- Wed 18th - PTA Discos Y3 & Y4 – 6-6.45pm / Y5 & Y6 – 7-8pm
- Wed 18th - Thursday Lunch Menu
- Thu 19th - Caterlink Christmas Lunch (Festive Menu Only)
- Fri 20th - End of Term 2

January

- Mon 6th - Start of Term 3
- Tue 11th - Safer Internet Day
- Tue 11th - Year 6 School Beat Session
- Tue 11th - Book Look
- Thu 16th - Year 5 First Swimming Lesson
- Fri 17th - Year 6 First Swimming Lesson
- Fri 24th - Rags Collection

Advance Notice of a Few Dates

- Tue 8th April - Easter Service 9.45am
- Tue 10th June - Sports Day

School Term Dates

2024-25

- Term 2: Mon 4th Nov – Fri 20th Dec 2024
- Term 3: Mon 6th Jan - Fri 14th Feb 2025
- Term 4: Mon 24th Feb – Fri 11th Apr 2025
- Term 5: Mon 28th April – Fri 23rd May 2025
- Term 6: Tue 3rd June – Fri 18th July 2025

Inset Days: 2nd June, 21st July



PE - Autumn Term 2

Children should come to school in their PE kit on PE days.

Class 1: Monday and Thursday

Class 2: Wednesday and Friday

Class 3: Tuesday and Wednesday

Class 4: Tuesday and Friday

Class 5: Tuesday and Thursday

Class 6: Tuesday and Thursday

Class 7: Tuesday and Friday

Class 8: Monday and Tuesday

Remember: tracksuit tops should be plain navy only. A school sweatshirt is absolutely fine.



Holiday Free School Meal (FSM) Voucher Scheme

We would like to make you aware of the holiday Free School Meal (FSM) voucher scheme that Gloucestershire County Council is currently offering to families in Gloucestershire.



Applications for holiday FSM vouchers for December 2024 Winter holiday will be open from midday 25 November until midday on 6 December.

Voucher emails will be sent from week commencing 16 December. Please check your junk/spam folders during this period as sometimes the vouchers end up there.

If you have not received their vouchers by 23 December, please submit a query via the Microsoft Form [HERE](#).

This Winter holiday period, Gloucestershire County Council will provide families in receipt of Free School Meals, who sign up to this offer, with vouchers to assist with food costs during the school holidays. The vouchers are funded through grant funding we have received, and they are separate to that of term time free school meals.

The scheme is for children in reception to year 11 who receive Pupil Premium (benefits-related) **free school meals** and attend a school in Gloucestershire.

Families who have signed up to the scheme or who are already registered will receive a total of £15 per child.

To find out more about the scheme and to apply, please visit [FAQs | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

Families who have signed up previously do not need to re-register for December 2024 holiday vouchers - they will already have been included. Families that have previously signed up will need to contact Gloucestershire County Council with any changes to their circumstances (e.g. if the number of children eligible increases or decreases). To ensure they reach all those who are eligible Gloucestershire County Council are encouraging parents that have not previously signed up, to sign up as soon as they can.

Please note Gloucestershire County Council will check eligibility for the scheme by cross-referencing with the term-time free school meal register. You can register by visiting the [apply for free school meals page](#).

Using vouchers – vouchers will only be awarded once the parent has registered for the scheme and cannot be backdated. Vouchers are valid for 6 months, although should be used in the holiday period in which they are awarded. If vouchers are not claimed and have expired, they cannot be re-issued. Vouchers not received should be queried via the Microsoft Form [HERE](#) by the end of the holiday period.

For any parents wishing to update details of an existing application, please submit an update existing details request via the Microsoft Form [HERE](#) so your account can be updated, as details are not automatically updated.

Move More Camp @ St Mark's Reminder

A reminder that *Move More* will be running an activity camp in the holidays at St Mark's on 2nd and 3rd of January.

They offer an award winning delivery and a huge range of activities.



A Very Regency Christmas

The Regent Arcade in Cheltenham are running some Christmas activities for families which they have asked us to share with you.

Please see link below.

<https://www.regentarcade.co.uk/Article?id=939>

