



St Mark's C of E Junior School

Growing together, becoming all we are created to be

Weekly Newsletter - Friday 19th September 2025

www.stmarksjunior.com

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

Our Value in focus this term are our FACE Values

Headteacher's Message:

We are delighted with the way in which the school year has started - the children are coming into school each morning happy, settled and ready to learn. So a **huge thank you** to parents and family members for all you have done to support the children in these early days of the school year.

We realise some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances, but we also know that when children miss too much school— regardless of the reason – it can cause them to fall behind academically. The NHS have produced guidance that will help parents with questions around the health of their child/ren and school attendance here: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)

We open the gates at **8.35am** when the children can get themselves settled for the day and begin learning activities. If your child can get into school for **8.35am**, **this means that they could be accessing up to 15 more minutes per day of learning**, accumulating up to **1 hour and 15 minutes of extra learning per week!**

The below graphic (*see attached poster for full version*) summarises the impact that even arriving late has. Missed learning not only affects children's academic progress, but it can also result in the child feeling anxious or embarrassed when joining the class late. **Please ensure your child arrives from 8.35am and by 8.50am at the very latest to allow them to start the day feeling calm and settled.**

If you are concerned about your child's attendance, then please contact us at school as soon as possible so that we can better understand the issues, and ensure appropriate support is put in place to support you, your family, and your child to prevent further absences.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to enabling your child to thrive and flourish here at St Mark's.

Average learning time per day: **5 HOURS.**

If you are 15 minutes late each day, you will have missed **2 FULL WEEKS** at school in one year.

School gates open at **8.35am**. All children **MUST** be in school **by 8.50am** at the very latest.



Please have a quick look at the poster attached giving further details.

Have a super weekend,

Mrs A Fitch and the Staff Team

Learning Highlight of the Week

Class 1: Class 1 have been learning Dance Mat typing in Computing. Dance Mat Typing helps children learn to type – or if they can type already, it will help them get even better!

Class 2: Class 2 have made their clay pots with Mrs Fitch this week. We thought together about our school vision and how we are growing as people and have been created to be our unique selves! Whilst we made the clay pots, we were reminded that our unique finger prints will be all over our pots – there will be not be a pot the same! In the same way, 'there will never be another me' – we have been created for a purpose and we need everyone to play their part and be their unique and wonderful selves! The pots will now join the family of pots in the entrance hall. Class 1's turn next week!

Class 3 & 4: Year 4 begin their musical journey this week - learning to play the Cornet and Baby Tuba.

Class 5 & 6: Year 5 had their first session with sports coaches from Gloucester Rugby. They played mini games to improve their catching skills. They also explored 'TREDS', which stands for Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship and how 'TREDS' should be implemented in every lessons.

Class 7: In Computing, the children have been using Scratch. They followed a tutorial in order to make a Pong Game, using Boolean coding.

Class 8: The children have been focusing on teamwork in PE, playing Benchball and other team games.

Willow Dome Makeover

We are aware that the Willow Dome needs some TLC. Don't worry – Mr Oakey has come to our rescue! Today, Mr Oakey brought over some more willow and showed some staff and children how to weave and strengthen the structure. Over the next few weeks, we should see our precious Willow Dome, along with the star on top, get restored to its former glory!



Rags 2 Riches 4 Schools Collection - Friday 10th October

Rags 2 Riches 4 Schools is a fantastic way for schools to earn some much needed cash for resources and projects for the children. A collection for St Mark's is scheduled for **Friday 10th October** so why not have that much needed clear out of any unwanted clothing and shoes.

To help us raise funds for our school, please pop any unwanted clothing, shoes and/or accessories in a bin bag, or plastic bag and return to school by 9am on the day. Please note *Rags 2 Riches* are not providing schools with their own bags at the moment.

Unfortunately they are unable to take school uniforms.

Click [here](#) for what can be



a full list of collected or

visit www.rags2riches4schools.co.uk

Year 4 Curriculum Meeting

A reminder that the Curriculum meeting for Year 4 is on Thursday.

Yr 4—Thursday 25th September @ 4pm

Meeting Link:

[Year 4 Curriculum Meeting | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)



Year 3, 5 & 6 Curriculum Meetings

If you were not able to attend your child's curriculum meeting on TEAMS this week, the recordings of the meetings are now available on your child's Year group page on our website.

www.stmarksjunior.com/topic/children



BBC 500 Words Competition 2025

Next Wednesday we will be introducing the children to the **BBC's 500 Words competition**. The competition is a great opportunity for the children to engage more with literacy and writing, building confidence and inspiring the next generation of budding writers!

The 500 Words competition 2025/26 will be open for entries from 8am on Tuesday 23rd September and entries close on Friday 7th November at 9pm.

Parents will need to submit their child's entry via the BBC website [500 words](#), but we will spend time in school next week, watching and participating in the live lesson as well as showing the children how to enter.

There are two age categories: 5-7 and 8-11 year-olds. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are not marked – as has always been the case for 500 Words, it's about our writers' brilliant creativity! There are prizes to be won – each winner will take home a bundle of books and the gold winners will also win 500 books for their school library.

50 finalists will be invited to a star-studded grand final in February 2026, which will be supported by His Majesty The King. The official panel of celebrity judges are Sir Lenny Henry, Malorie Blackman, Francesca Simon, Charlie Higson and Frank Cottrell-Boyce.

What are the rules around 500 Words stories?

Children are encouraged to write a story they would love to read themselves.

All 500 Words stories must:

- **Be 500 words or less** (title is not included in the number)
- Be written by an individual and not a group
- Be a child's own original idea
- Be prose, not rap or poem

Stories must not:

- Give any personal details of the child, including their name
- Recount an historical event (but they can use a real person or historical character as a source of inspiration)
- Be created, written or developed by AI

In every 500 Words competition, all stories are judged on the following criteria:

Characterisation, Plot, Originality, Language and Enjoyment.

If your child is interested, please click on the link below to access resources from last year's competition – read and listen to the top 25 stories.

[500 words](#)

[500 words: Everything you need to know](#)

In addition to the National competition, we will have an Inter-School competition too, with prizes given!

If you would like to enter our school writing competition, please can your child bring a copy of their story into school. Prizes will be given to Lower school and Upper school winners. The deadline for entries will be the same as the BBC 500 Words competition November 7th.



Good luck to all the children who take part and enjoy writing your stories!

Extra Curricular Clubs - Autumn Term 1



Monday

Baking Buddies Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.30pm
Chinese Language Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.15pm
Gymnastics Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Netball Y5-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Recorders Y3-6	Lunchtime
Running Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm

Tuesday

Choir Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Orchestra Y3-6	12.30pm - 1.00pm
Tennis Y4-6	3.15pm - 4.15pm

Wednesday

Baking Buddies Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.30pm
Cyclestars Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.15pm

Thursday

Outdoor Learning Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.15pm
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Friday

Girls Football Y4-6	12.30pm - 1.00pm
Boys Football Y4-6	1.00pm - 1.30pm

School Term Dates

2025-26

- Term 1: Mon 1st Sept – Fri 24th Oct 2025
- Term 2: Mon 3rd Nov – Fri 19th Dec 2025
- Term 3: Mon 5th Jan - Fri 13th Feb 2026
- Term 4: Mon 23rd Feb – Fri 27th Mar 2026
- Term 5: Mon 13th April – Fri 22nd May 2026
- Term 6: Mon 1st June – Mon 20th July 2026

Inset Days:

1st Sept, 2nd Sept, 24th Oct, 1st June 2026, 20th July 2026



Letters Sent Home

- Greystones Farm Trip and Stone Age Day— Year 3
- Year 6 Bikeability Letter



2025-26



September

Mon 22nd - All Saints' Academy Transition visit at St Mark's. Y6 parents invited to speak with the All Saints' team @ 3.10pm
Thu 25th - Y4 Curriculum Parents Meeting via Teams @ 4pm

October

Wed 1st - Year 3 & 4 Parents - Coffee with Mrs Fitch 2.30-3pm
Mon 6th - Flu Immunisation day
Wed 8th - Year 5 & 6 Parents - Coffee with Mrs Fitch 2.30-3pm
Thu 9th - PTA AGM (location & time tbc)
Fri 10th - Rags Collection
Fri 10th - World Mental Health Day (Hello Yellow)
Mon 13th - Fri 17th - Cycle to School Week
Tue 14th - Harvest Festival (Children Only)
Mon 20th - Thu 23rd - Bikeability Year 6
Tue 21st - Book Look 3.10pm
Thu 23rd - St Mark' Open Morning 11-12pm
Fri 24th INSET DAY - No children in School
Fri 24th End of Term 1

November

Mon 3rd - Start of Term 2
Fri 7th - Stone Age Day Year 3
Mon 10th - Fri 14th - Anti Bullying Week
Tue 11th - We the Curious Year 4 Trip (details to follow)
Wed 12th - Parents Evening (timings tbc)
Thu 13th - Parents Evening (timings tbc)
Thu 13th - Greystones Farm Class 1 Trip
Fri 14th - Children in Need
Thu 20th - Greystones Farm Class 2 Trip

Outdoor Learning - Autumn Term 1

Class 3: Thursday Morning

Class 4: Thursday Afternoon

Please ensure your child wears suitable outdoor learning clothes to school and brings wellies and a warm waterproof coat every Thursday

Please note: all children must wear long trousers for safety reasons.



PE - Autumn Term 1

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

Class 1: Tuesday & Thursday

Class 2: Tuesday & Thursday

Class 3: Monday

Class 4: Friday

Class 5: Tuesday & Friday

Class 6: Thursday & Friday

Class 7: Monday & Friday

Class 8: Wednesday & Friday

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





Open Days at St Mark's

Please join us

*for a **tour of the school** led by our Year 6 children
followed by a **short talk***

from the Headteacher and Senior Leaders

Thursday 23rd October 11:00-12:00

Monday 10th November 11:00-12:00

Friday 21st November 11:00-12:00

To book your space, please contact our school office:

Email: clerical@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk

Phone: 01242 702280