



# St Mark's C of E Junior School

*Growing together, becoming all we are created to be*

Weekly Newsletter - Friday 20th September 2024

[www.stmarksjunior.com](http://www.stmarksjunior.com)

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Our Value in focus this term is: Respect

## Headteacher's Message:

We've had a fantastic week with much to celebrate. There is a lot to get used to at the start of a new school year but the children are showing excellent attitudes and engagement in their learning in their new year groups.

We have, of course, had the wonderful iSingPop working with us through this week, led by Jessica Bennett – a former pupil of St Mark's and daughter of Mrs Bennett who leads Choir, Orchestra and peripatetic piano and violin teacher sessions at school. It has been a fantastic week – thank you to all the children for their enthusiasm and commitment to singing their little hearts out! I look forward to seeing as many children and families as possible later today at our **concerts at 2pm and 6pm in St Mark's Church**. *Huge thanks to St Mark's Church for significantly contributing to the cost of this project. This has meant that we can distribute access to the songs to all families for free, once the children's album has been released (in approx. 2 weeks' time).*



**We are all really looking forward to our school Musical Theatre sessions starting next week!** The sessions will be run by Emma Ward: a highly regarded teacher, running private classes through 'Emma Ward Dance and Performing Arts' - I know some families at St Mark's attend with great enthusiasm! *Enormous thanks to the PTA for making this possible.*

The children will have an hour session per week on a Wednesday or Thursday, for the next 10 weeks. The sessions will culminate in a performance to parents of a famous musical (to be revealed to the children in the first session!) on **Friday 29th November - save the date! Performance times to be published in next week's newsletter so please do keep an eye out for this.**

We work extremely hard to give all children as many different opportunities to access a range of experiences as possible at St Mark's. It may well be that these sessions take some children well out of their comfort zone, but my hope is that through the term, with all of us taking part, confidence will grow and we will see children achieving something they never thought possible!

## Outdoor Learning

It is with great sadness to inform you that Mr Oakey, our Outdoor Learning teacher, has needed to make the difficult decision, this week, to stop his school sessions. I know this will be of great disappointment to many as we were all very much looking forward to Outdoor Learning sessions beginning again on 30<sup>th</sup> September. However, Mr Oakey's sculpture business is requiring an increased level of time and investment, making weekly schools work impossible to manage.

St Mark's has been privileged to have benefited so significantly from Mr Oakey's work since 2020 and I know he will be sorely missed by many. We will always be deeply thankful for the way in which we have been able to work with Mr Oakey to create enhanced learning experiences for the children.



We now need to take time to explore alternative Outdoor Learning provision as this is something I know is an extremely beneficial aspect of the curriculum for many children. Please do get in touch with the school office with any potential contacts.

**With my best wishes for a super weekend, Mrs A Fitch and the Staff Team**

### *Learning Highlight of the Week*

**Class 1:** Class 1 have been using their English writing and readings skills, to follow a set of instructions, in order to make their Woolly Mammoths out of milk bottles.

**Class 2:** The children thoroughly enjoyed painting their clay pots this week whilst learning about the vision of our school and how we are all unique and made for a purpose - just like our pots.

**Class 3:** In computing the children used scratch to create shapes using coding.

**Class 4:** The children enjoyed deciding whether they are Athenians or Spartans in History.

**Class 5 & 6:** Class 5 and 6 have been practising their shooting skills in Netball.

**Class 7:** The children have been looking at the history of gaming and game consoles in computing. They will be using coding to design their own games in Scratch.

**Class 8:** In English the children have been writing their own diary entries about their fantastic trip to London.

### Year Group Book Lists

Each year group has it's very own book list. These lists have been stuck into your child's reading diary. You can also view the book lists on our website by following this link.

<https://www.stmarksjunior.com/year-group-book-lists>

In each classroom is a selection of books from the book list and our aim, through continued fundraising, is to complete these sets.

Every child who completes the reading list will get special recognition with a pin badge.

**We hope your child enjoys the selection of books and happy reading!**



### Springbank Community Group

We have been made aware of a couple of projects run by the Community Springbank Group. In particular their Autism Support Group.



Springbank Community Group secured funding to support young people who have either a diagnosis of Autism or who present with Autistic Traits, and their families. They do this by providing a specialist youth project which meet at Brizen Young People's Centre, GL514BB.

In addition they have a Autism Support Coffee Morning on each Monday for parents and carers at their community café based at Ron Smith Pavilion GL510LH.

For more information you can contact [info@springbankcommunitygroup.org](mailto:info@springbankcommunitygroup.org)



We are supporting #CycleToSchoolWeek with @BikeabilityUK. A pedal/scooter powered commute is good for our health, our schools, and our planet!

Each class will be keeping a tally each day of the number of children who are walking, cycling or scootering to school. This data will then be presented by some of the Year 6 children to the rest of the school the following week.

[Our top tips for cycling to school \(bikeability.org.uk\)](https://bikeability.org.uk)

## Cheltenham Literature Festival - Children's Book Swap

There are lots of free activities for children during the Cheltenham Literature Festival and one event we wanted to share with you is the **Children's Book Swap**.

The book swap is a lovely event taking place on **Sunday 13th October 11am—3pm**. Bring along your old favourite books and exchange them for some new ones.

To find out more about free activities for children, see pages 10 and 11 of the Literature Festival brochure by clicking here [What's on | Cheltenham Festivals](#)

**CHELTENHAM**  
**Festivals**

## Rags 2 Riches 4 Schools Collection - Thursday 3rd October

Rags 2 Riches 4 Schools is an easy, efficient way for our school to earn some extra funds for resources and projects.

A collection for St Mark's is scheduled for **Thursday 3rd October** so why not have that much needed clear out of any unwanted clothing and shoes.

Rags 4 Riches have supplied us with their own collection bags which will be coming home with the children.

Click [here](#) for a full list of what can be collected or visit [www.rags2riches4schools.co.uk](http://www.rags2riches4schools.co.uk)



school uniform



**Unfortunately they are unable to take school uniforms.**

## Holiday Free School Meal (FSM) Voucher Scheme

The holiday vouchers are designed to support eligible children in reception to year 11 who receive Pupil Premium (income-related) free school meals and attend a school in Gloucestershire, and families where no other support is available.



**Gloucestershire County Council are committed to supporting families with 1 week of vouchers at £15 per child, per week for the October 2024 holiday.** This is funded through grant funding they have received, and is separate to that of term time free school meals and the HAF programme. The offer complements the Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF) taking place through the longer holidays which can provide a meal for children attending events. Vouchers are not available as an alternative to HAF.

**Applications for holiday FSM vouchers for October 2024 holiday will be open from midday 2 September 2024 until midday on 20 September 2024. They will be unable to accept any applications after this date. Vouchers will be distributed to families the week commencing 30 September 2024.**

If you have not received your their voucher by 7 October 2024, please check your spam/junk mailboxes for an email from [selectcode@select-your-reward.co.uk](mailto:selectcode@select-your-reward.co.uk), as well as ensuring that your mailbox settings allow junk mail.

Families who have signed up previously do not need to re-register for October 2024 half-term holiday vouchers - you will already have been included.

For any parents wishing to update details of an existing application, please email [childrensfund@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:childrensfund@gloucestershire.gov.uk) by 13 October 2024, so they can update your account, as details are not automatically updated.

## Extra Curricular Clubs - Autumn Term 1

### 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
Choir Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Dynamos Cricket Y4-6	3.10pm - 4.10pm



## School Term Dates

### 2024-25

Term 1: Wed 4th Sept – Thu 24th Oct 2024
Term 2: Mon 4th Nov – Fri 20th Dec 2024
Term 3: on 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 & 3rd September, 25th October, 2nd June, 21st July**



## Letters Sent Home

- Greystones Farm Trip Year 3
- Young Voices Letter—to Young Voices participants



## 2024 - 25



### September

Mon 23rd - Cycle to School Week

### October

Tue 1st - Year 6 2023-24 cohort reunion  
Wed 2nd - Coffee with Mrs Fitch - Year 3 & 4 Parents  
Thu 3rd - Rags Collection  
Wed 9th - Coffee with Mrs Fitch - Year 5 & 6 Parents  
Thu 10th - World Mental Health Day  
Mon 21st - Book Look Class 1  
Tue 22nd - Book Look Classes 2 - 8  
Thu 24th - Harvest Festival (Just children)

### November

Thu 7th - Greystones Farm Class 1  
Fri 8th - Greystones Farm Class 2  
Mon 11th - Anti-Bullying Week  
Tue 12th - Odd Socks Day  
Fri 19th Children in Need  
Fri 29th - Musical Theatre Performance Timings tbc

### December

Wed 11th - Panto 2pm performance  
Thu 12th - Carol Services: 5.30 – 6.15 (Yellow & Green house plus choir) 6.45 – 7.30 (Red & Blue house plus choir)

## PE - Autumn Term 1

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.**

