



St Mark's C of E Junior School

Growing together, becoming all we are created to be

Weekly Newsletter - Friday 21st November 2025

www.stmarksjunior.com

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

Our Value in focus this term is Compassion

Headteacher's Message:

We have enjoyed another packed week at school—again much to celebrate as the children immerse themselves in their learning and show excellent attitudes towards others.

This is particularly apparent, when children go off site for visits and trips - without fail, we receive comments back from members of the public or from the organisation working with the children about how **engaged, kind and polite** the children are. Although this is what we expect from children representing St Mark's, it is a joy to see and hear.

Our value in focus for the remainder of this term is **Compassion**. The children have created a whole school Acrostic Poem showing what Compassion looks like in action, for us here at St Mark's. We were inspired by **Children In Need Challenge 25 campaign** so we are challenging ourselves to see if, as classes, we can show compassion in **25 different ways** through the week!

I wonder if you can spot some of these happening at home too?!

Caring for everyone

Optimistic and joyful

Making friends

Playing your part

Always have a positive attitude

Supporting each other

Staying positive and carrying each others burdens (coming alongside each other)

Interested in others' worries

Offering your help

Noticing the need



Have a super weekend,

Mrs A Fitch and the Staff Team

Learning Highlight of the Week

Class 1: Class 1 really enjoyed taking part in a Drama lesson this week run by Thrive Drama. See page 3 for more!

Class 2: The children had a brilliant time on their trip to Greystones farm, learning all about the Stone Age.

Class 3: Year 4 had an immersive English lesson this week, re-enacting Theseus and the Minotaur. They started by watching the Lego movie, which helped bring the story to life. Then some of the children created a human labyrinth, while others played the role of either Theseus or the Minotaur. The aim of the lesson was to teach the children about suspense writing.

Class 4: In Computing, class 4 learnt how to start a sequence of code with 'broadcasting' instead of using the 'green flag'. The children also said that their learning highlight this week was being taught by Mr Duffy.

Class 5: In Art, the children have been working on the backgrounds of their Freda Kahlo inspired self portraits.

Class 6: Using 'Tinkercad', the children have been adding more details to their rooms and houses.

Class 7: Class 7 have enjoyed learning sculpting techniques to create Viking portraits out of clay.

Class 8: This week, Class 8's learning highlight was also Art. Following in the footsteps of Class 7 last week, the children have been creating beautiful silk paintings inspired by Viking knot designs.

Greystones Farm - Class 2 Trip

This week, Class 2 enjoyed their trip to Greystones Farm. The children had a wonderful time exploring the site and discovering what life would have been like for its inhabitants during the Stone Age, which is their topic this term.

Similarly to Class 1, they loved investigating the roundhouse, lighting fires, cooking and trying out the traditional Wattle and Daub building technique. They threw themselves into every activity with enthusiasm and a positive, 'can-do' attitude.

It was a fantastic day out, and we hope the children return to the classroom excited and full of new knowledge about their topic.



Christmas Fair

Can you help Year 6 source some items for the Christmas Fair?

If you have any **kitchen rolls**, **clean jars** and **pringle tubes** please can you drop them into school. **Thank you!**



Waiting at the Gate

Please can we remind children when waiting at the gate at the beginning of the school day to wait safely and in single file, especially if they have a bike.



It is important that they avoid blocking the pathways so pedestrians can pass through easily.

Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Utilita Kids Cup

The Utilita Cup is a nationwide football competition for young players, giving finalists the incredible opportunity to play at Wembley Stadium.

On Thursday, our team competed in the first round of the tournament at Bishops Cleeve Football Club. We were drawn into a very tough group, but our players rose to the challenge. We won two matches convincingly, narrowly lost a third 1–0 in the final few seconds, and despite a strong effort in our last game, we unfortunately didn't progress to the next stage.

We want to say a massive well done to all the players — you were outstanding, and we could not be more proud of you.

Wishing you the very best of luck in today's Albert Dix tournament!



Thrive Drama Sessions Year 3

Year 3 had a fantastic session with **Thrive Drama** today. Thrive Drama is designed to build confidence and resilience through creative drama activities, whilst having lots of fun.

The children played a range of games that encouraged them to think about the different ways we can use our voices. In another exercise, they explored how body language can express a mood or feeling.

The children then did some acting in smaller groups. Each group was given a different scenario where someone had made a mistake, such as missing a chance to score in a football match, or accidentally calling a teacher "Mum."

They worked together to create a freeze-frame picture of their scenario. Afterwards, they discussed how it is ok to make mistakes and that when there is something you can't do, you can remind yourself, "I can't do this **yet**."

It was a lovely, engaging session, and Year 3 impressed us with their creativity and enthusiasm!



PTA Reminders

Christmas Jumper Sale - Wednesday 26th November

Come along to the Christmas Jumper Sale after school on Wednesday. Please hand donations into the office on Monday and Tuesday next week

Popcorn Night - Thursday 27th November

Don't miss the PTA's Popcorn Night next Thursday! We'll be watching *The Twits*, and entry is just **£2**, which you need to bring to school with your movie slip. Money must be given to the class teacher on or before the day.

Keep an eye out for the slips coming home next week.



Preloved Uniform Sale - Friday 28th November

The PTA will be holding a preloved uniform sale in the playground after school next Friday. Please do stop by and have a look! Uniform donations can be handed into school the school office to be collected by PTA.



Cheltenham Young Artist 2026
CYA MY FAVOURITE THINGS

*It might be a view, a sport, your family, a pet or a special occasion..
 YOUR favourite thing. We invite pupils to enter one A4 artwork*

**Primary & Secondary Winners - Cash Prizes
 Best School Trophy**

**50 pictures chosen by the Judges will be exhibited at the
 Gardens Gallery on JANUARY 17th & 18th 2026**

Entries Close: **Friday December 12th 2025**
 For further information and rules ask your teacher or visit
www.gardensgallery.co.uk

Gardens Gallery
 Montpellier Gardens
 Cheltenham GL50 1SW

SPONSORS
  

What you need to know:

All entries **MUST** be handed to Mrs Edmondson by Wednesday 11th December.

2D Medium: paint, pencil, crayon, pastel, inks, acrylics on canvas board.

NO collage, NO photography, NO oil paint.

On the back you **MUST** print in BLOCK CAPITALS:

Title of art work

Pupil name

Age

St. Mark's CofE Junior School
 Mrs Edmondson

Holiday Free School Meal (FSM)

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



This Winter Holiday, 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 they have received, which is 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 for one week.

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

Applications for holiday FSM vouchers for the Winter holiday 2025 will be **open from midday 25 November until midday on 9 December. Voucher emails will be sent from week commencing 15 December.**

Please check your junk/spam folders during this period as sometimes the vouchers end up there. If you do not receive your voucher by **22 December**, please submit a query via the Microsoft Form [HERE](#)

To find out more about the scheme and to apply please visit the holiday free school meal voucher webpage here: [Holiday free school meal vouchers | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

Please note that GCC check eligibility for the scheme against the term-time free school meal register, so please make sure you are registered beforehand. You can register by visiting the [apply for free school meals](#) page.

Using vouchers – vouchers will only be awarded once you have registered for the scheme and cannot be backdated. Vouchers 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.

If you wish to update details of an existing application, please submit an update existing details request via the Microsoft Form [HERE](#) so GCC can update their account, as details are not automatically updated.

Christmas Messy Church — Come Make an Edible Nativity!

Our families have been invited to St Mark's Church for a festive, family-fun Christmas Messy Church.

Children and adults are invited to get creative and build your very own edible nativity scene using sweet treats and snacks. There will be seasonal crafts, a short Christmas service, a hot meal and plenty of sticky, smile-filled fun for everyone.



Date: Sunday 7th December

Time: 3.30-5.30

Location: St Mark Church, GL51 7AL

All families are welcome, and there's no cost to take part. Come along, get creative, and start the Christmas season with a joyful, hands-on celebration!

To book please click [here](#)

Cold Weather

As the weather becomes colder, we recommend that children wear jogging bottoms for PE instead of shorts.



Please also remember to send them in with a coat each day. Hats, gloves, and scarves may also be worn during break and lunchtime.

A reminder that all items need to be clearly labelled with your child's name.

Thank you!



Caterlink Colouring Competition



Attached to this week's newsletter is a Christmas colouring competition run by our school meal provider, Caterlink.

If your child would like to enter the competition, please colour in the Christmas stocking picture. If you need the stocking template printed, we can do this for you in the school office. Remember to include their name and the school's name on the sheet. Then, take a picture of your stocking and email it to clerical@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk. We will forward all entries to Caterlink.

The competition closes on 5th December and there will be prizes for the lucky winners!

Good luck, everyone!

Benhall Residence Association—Meet Santa Event

Benhall Residence Association are running a **Meet Santa** event and a **Raffle** in aid of their Defibrillator Installation fund, which they hope to install on Robert Burns Avenue outside our school.

The event and raffle draw will be on Sunday 7th December

Meet Santa 11.00am to 3.00pm

Raffle Draw 4.00pm

St Mark's families have been invited to the event which is being held in Santa's Grotto at the National Hunt pub.

The cost is £5 per child.

There will be a table with paper, envelopes, pencils and stickers, so that children can write their letter to Santa. There will also be Christmas Postbox and each child will receive an Usborne book from Santa.

Please visit www.benhallresidentsassociation.org where you can purchase tickets for both the raffle and meet Santa event.



Extra Curricular Clubs - Autumn Term 2



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

Tuesday

Orchestra Y3-6	12.30pm - 1.00pm
Choir Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Tennis Y4-6	3.15pm - 4.10pm

Wednesday

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

Thursday

Coding Y6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Kids with Bricks (Lego) Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Outdoor Learning Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.15pm

Friday

Girls Football Y4-6	12.30pm - 1.00pm
Boys Football Y5-6	1.00pm - 1.30pm

Please see club selections [table](#) for club dates!

School Term Dates

2025-26

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

- CATs Reports Year 3
- Pioneer Residential Year 6 Letter



Outdoor Learning - Autumn Term 2

Class 2: Thursday Morning

Class 1: 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.



2025-26



November

Tue 25th - Hindu Centre Year 4 Trip
 Thu 27th - PTA Movie/Popcorn Night
 Fri 28th - Preloved Uniform Sale

December

Thu 4th - Christmas Fair
 Tue 9th - **Carol Services:**
 5.30 – 6.15pm – Red & Blue House
 6.45 – 7.30pm – Yellow & Green House
 Wed 10th - Whole School Panto Trip 9.15am – 12.30pm
 Thu 11th - Christmas Jumper Day (Save the Children)
 Wed 17th - Christmas Lunch
 Thu 18th - Rocksteady Concert for Rocksteady Parents 9.30am
 Thu 18th - PTA Disco
 Fri 19th - End of Term 2

January

Mon 5th - Term 3 starts
 Tue 6th - Skillzone Trip Class 6
 Wed 7th - Skillzone Trip Class 5
 Wed 14th - Year 5/6 Swimming Lessons Start

PE - Autumn Term 2

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

Class 1: Tuesday

Class 2: Monday

Class 3: Monday & Friday

Class 4: Monday & Friday

Class 5: Tuesday & Friday

Class 6: Tuesday & Thursday

Class 7: Monday & Friday

Class 8: Wednesday & Friday



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