



St Mark's C of E Junior School

Growing together, becoming all we are created to be

Weekly Newsletter - Friday 28th November 2025

www.stmarksjunior.com

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

Our Value in focus this term is Compassion

Headteacher's Message:

It's going to be a busy few weeks as we move into December. Below is a list of the activities taking place before we finish for the term.

As excitement builds, our thoughts are turned towards ways we can show **compassion** and help others as this can be a very difficult time of year for many in our community. See overleaf information about the 'Under The Tree' Project, run by [YMCA Cheltenham](http://www.yunca.org.uk)—an opportunity to buy a child a gift this Christmas, who otherwise wouldn't have anything to open. Let's join together to help each other, this Christmas. **Have a super weekend, Mrs A Fitch and the Staff Team**



W/C 1st December

Mon 1st - Our Christmas Post Box is now open! You'll find it in the foyer, ready to receive your class Christmas cards for the rest of the term. Remember to write the recipient's class number on each envelope!

Wed 3rd - Year 6 Christmas Fair Making Day

Thu 4th - Christmas Fair

W/C 8th December

Tue 9th - Carol Services:

5.30 – 6.15 – Red & Blue - Plus Choir, Orchestra & Recorders

6.45 – 7.30 – Yellow & Green - Plus Choir, Orchestra & Recorders

Wed 10th - Panto Everyman Theatre Trip 9.15am-12.30pm (*Please bring packed lunches*)

Thu 11th - Christmas Jumper Day (*Save the children*)

Thu 11th - Ukulele Concert at 9am for parents of Year 5 & 6 ukulele students



W/C 15th December



Wed 17th - Christmas Lunch

Thu 18th - Rocksteady Concert @9.30am. Rocksteady Parents invited to attend.

Thu 18th - Year 3 DT Day

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

Fri 19th - End of Term 2



Learning Highlight of the Week

Class 1: In Outdoor Learning, Class 1 enjoyed creating their own cave paintings.

Class 2: Class 2 have been editing and publishing their first Stone Age story this week.

Class 3 & 4: The learning highlight for Year 4 was their trip to the Hindu Community Centre. See page 2 for more!

Class 5: In History, class 5 have been learning about King Alfred the Great and his valiant defence of his kingdom. They explored how he secured peace with the Vikings and discovered why, out of all the English kings and queens, Alfred is the only one remembered as "the Great." The children then wrote their own paragraphs about how they would like to be remembered in the future.

Class 6: The children have been exploring proper and improper fractions this week.

Class 7: Maths was also a highlight for class 7. They have been dividing fractions using the KFC method, which stands for **Keep, Flip, Change**.

Class 8: Class 8 have been learning Bhangra dancing, a genre of dance originating in the Punjab region of India. Bhangra dances are often performed in circles, featuring energetic shoulder and arm movements. Using this as their inspiration, the children worked in small groups to choreograph their own routines based on the story of a farmer.

Hindu Community Centre—Year 4 Visit

This week, Year 4 enjoyed a visit to the Krishna Temple in Cheltenham. The temple is supported by a dedicated team of volunteers who provide social connection and support for the community, as well as offering a peaceful space for prayer and reflection.



During the visit, the children were able to watch an Arti ceremony, a form of worship in which incense and light are offered to a deity. They also had the chance to ask thoughtful questions afterwards.

It was a pleasure to take the children out for the morning. Their behaviour was exemplary, and they were a real credit to St Mark's!



Christmas Concert

We can't wait for lots of fun at our Groovy Christmas night on **Tuesday 9th December (5.30 – 6.15pm – Red & Blue House Children / 6.45 – 7.30 pm – Yellow & Green House Children)**. *If your child is a member of the school Choir, Recorder, or Orchestra Clubs, please can they attend both sessions.*

Children are asked to come in anything **brightly coloured** - dig out your funky headwear, sunglasses, sequins or Christmas clothes! The brighter & funkier the better!!



Albert Dix Tournament

On an extremely cold autumn day last Friday, our football team took part in the Albert Dix Tournament. They played four very competitive matches and impressively topped their group, earning a place in the semi-finals against St Gregory's.

As is always the case against St Greg's, it was a tough and hard-fought match, with St Mark's unfortunately losing 1–0. **This result meant we were awarded joint 3rd place—an amazing achievement out of 18 schools competing.**

The team played some excellent football throughout the tournament and gave absolutely everything they had. **We're incredibly proud of their performance.**



Home League Match - St Marks V Springbank

A fantastic team performance, with great attitudes shown by every player. St Mark's dominated the game and won comfortably with an impressive 6–0 victory.

Teaching & Learning Owls

Gold - Josh

Silver - Annabelle, Primrose, Lexi, Esther & Oscar

Bronze - Luna, Felicity, Dontay & Albert

Congratulations to our badge winners!



YMCA Under the Tree Project

This year YMCA Cheltenham has launched a special 'Under the Tree' campaign, with the aim that every local child and adult staying in its temporary and emergency accommodation wakes up to a present this Christmas.

This is particularly important as the number of children in the YMCA accommodation this Christmas is expected to double. They also aim to provide each family with a food hamper.

St Mark's would love to support this important campaign to help those in need in Cheltenham to have a happier Christmas.

The YMCA have created an **Amazon wish list** so that, if people are able, they can pop one of the presents in to their Amazon basket. Once delivered you can either bring the gift in to school, and we will deliver them all to the charity, or you can take it to one of the five collection points in Cheltenham.

Here is a link to the Amazon wish list: [Amazon Wish List](#)

Full details of the campaign and options of how to donate can be found [here](#)



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
CHELTENHAM ROUND TABLE
PARAGON Gallery
ART UNION

What you need to know:

All entries MUST be handed to Mrs Edmondson by Wednesday 10th 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

Clerical@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk

The Read With Me

At St Mark's we have a team of volunteers from a charity called **Read with Me**, who come in and listen to the children read every week. Their mission is to ensure that in the future every child will move to secondary school being able to read well, as well as building confidence, whilst improving social and communication skills.



To help raise vital funds for Read With Me, founder and director Linda, will be participating in the Ragusa Half Marathon in January. We have been asked to share the fundraising page with our parents. Please see the link below. Every donation counts - just £1 can make a difference and help Read with Me reach their goal. Thank you!

www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/linda-thomas

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

- Year 5/6 Swimming Letter 2
- Y3 DT Day 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

Diary Dates

December

Wed 3rd - Year 6 Christmas Making Day

Thu 4th - Christmas Fair

Tue 9th - **Carol Services:**

5.30 – 6.15pm – Red & Blue House

6.45 – 7.30pm – Yellow & Green House

Choir, Recorder and Orchestra club members to attend both!

Wed 10th - Whole School Panto Trip 9.15am – 12.30pm

Thu 11th - Christmas Jumper Day (*Save the Children*)

Thu 11th - Ukulele Concert at 9am for parents of Year 5 & 6 ukulele students

Wed 17th - Christmas Lunch

Thu 18th - Rocksteady Concert for Rocksteady Parents 9.30am

Thu 18th - Year 3 DT Day

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

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

February

Tue 3rd - Year 6 National Measurement Check

Thu 4th - Rags Collection

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.

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.