



St Mark's C of E Junior School

Growing together, becoming all we are created to be

Weekly Newsletter - Friday 19th December 2025

www.stmarksjunior.com

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

Our Value in focus this term is Compassion

Headteacher's Message:

As we finish a busy and rewarding term, I want to take the opportunity to thank you for your continued support. This term has been full of wonderful learning, creative projects, and moments that truly reflect the spirit of St Mark's. From Christmas performances to charity collections, our community has shown kindness, resilience, and generosity. We are so proud of our pupils and grateful to our dedicated staff for their hard work.

This week has been a fantastic end to the term, with children balancing Christmas fun and learning brilliantly. A highlight was Wednesday's Christmas lunch, enjoyed by staff and children together, with live music from Cheltenham Silver Band—including our own Mr Sim and Mrs Wildman!

(See page 2 for photos.)

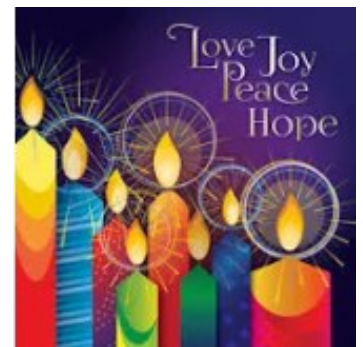
As we celebrate Christmas, let us remember its true meaning—a time of hope, peace, and love. I hope you enjoy a wonderful break with family and friends. Thank you for all you do to make St Mark's such a special place.

Please do encourage your child to prepare for the *Look Who's Talking* competition over the holiday. See page 4 for details and letter sent out today.

Wishing you a joyful Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year. We look forward to welcoming the children back on **Monday 5th January** for another exciting term.

Warmest wishes,

Mrs A Fitch and the Staff Team



Learning Highlight of the Week

Class 1 & 2: Year 3 thoroughly enjoyed their DT sewing day, in which they made Stone Age outfits for their own teddy bears. They learnt different types of stitching as well as how to sew on buttons.

Class 3: In Geography, Class 3 have been learning about Greece and in particular what is exported to the UK from Greece. As part of their learning, the children took part in a Greek food tasting session. They sampled feta cheese, olives, pitta bread, hummus, tzatziki, and Greek yoghurt with honey. In true *MasterChef* style, the children rated each dish out of five stars.

Class 4: Similarly to Class 3 last week, Class 4 enjoyed constructing their own steady-hand game. Building on their circuit knowledge from last term, they constructed a circuit and built their own switches.

Class 5 & 6: The highlight for Year 5 this week was English. Pupils have been writing stories based on the theme *Give a Little Love*, focusing on a hedgehog who wanted to fly. They incorporated similes, relative clauses and fronted adverbials into their stories, resulting in some truly amazing pieces of writing. Class 6 turned their stories into a 'published' book, while Class 5 decorated their stories with illustrations and also created a Christmas decoration to accompany their work.

Class 7: Class 7 have been making iMovie's based on stories that they have written.

Class 8: The highlight for Class 8 was making Christmas cards for the residents of Whittington House.

Teaching & Learning Owls

Gold - Josh, Stella & Amelia

Silver - Jess & Ollie

Bronze - Summer

Congratulations to our badge winners!



Christmas Lunch

There was lots of fun and festive cheer to be had at our lovely Christmas lunch on Wednesday. Children and staff came together to enjoy a delicious meal prepared by Caterlink. A huge thank you to the Caterlink team for providing such a fantastic feast.



We were also delighted to welcome music, performed by Mr Sim, Mrs Wildman, their friends and members of the Cheltenham Silver Band. There is nothing more Christmassy than festive music played by a Brass band and they really were fantastic. Thank you for making the time to come and play for us, it really did make our Christmas lunch even more special.



Rocksteady Concert

It's that time of year again when we were treated to an end of term Rocksteady Concert, by pupils who attend weekly lessons with band leader Alex. Four bands took the stage, each delivering a fantastic performance.



The first was **The Blue Ice Dragons**, who performed the pop tune *Dance Monkey*. Their timing was fantastic and the song was beautifully sung — well done!

Next came the Christmas tunes. The aptly named band, **Elves** kicked things off with *Merry Christmas Everyone*.

This group included two new players, who after just a handful of lessons, have been busy learning Rocksteady fundamentals. With fabulous vocals on top, they did an amazing job — congratulations!

Our third band, **The Candy Crushes**, performed the classic Wizzard Christmas rock song *I wish it Could be Christmas Everyday*. They played an instrumental version, tackling some complicated swing and shuffle beats, as well coping with a key change. Fantastic work guys!

Our fourth and final band, **Astroford**, you may remember from last year. This is one of our larger bands and they did not disappoint. For such a big group, they did a fantastic job staying in time with one another, as well as smashing all the words—well done, **Astroford!**

It was a fantastic concert all round, and we look forward to seeing everyone's progression next year.



Parent Pay—Lunch Arrears



Please can you ensure that your ParentPay account for school lunches remains in credit. If your account currently has any arrears, we kindly ask that these are cleared over the holiday period.



ParentPay allows you to set up automatic email notifications when your balance falls below a chosen amount (we suggest £5). This can help you manage your account and prevent it from going into arrears.

Whittington House Visit

Today, some of our Year 6 children visited **Whittington House Nursing Home** to spread some Christmas cheer within the community. They have been busy making beautiful Christmas cards for the residents of Whittington House, which they personally hand-delivered. The cards were very gratefully received.

Thank you to the Year 6 children and team who made this happen!



Lego Club

Every week, Lego club enters the *Kids with Bricks* national inter-school competition by uploading a photo of our latest creation to their website. This term's topic is **Fabretta's Farm** and last week the children were busy building scarecrows. Their fantastic effort saw St Mark's catapult up the leader board to **38th place**, after being awarded **15 points** as one of *Fabretta's Favourites*.



Well done, Lego Club!



LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

On Wednesday this week, children were made aware of an Oracy Competition for Gloucestershire Primary schools. We strongly encourage as many children as possible to prepare a two minute speech to perform to their class. Following class heats and year group heats, two children will be selected to represent our school against other local schools in the coming months.

Children can talk about anything they choose to for their two minute slot. Although they can't use technology, they can bring in any props they wish to.

The first round will take place during the first week of term after the Christmas holidays.

Top Tips

1. Select a topic you have genuine interest in
2. Speak clearly and engage your audience - get them involved
3. Practise your presentation to friends and family at home

Extra Curricular Clubs Spring 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
Hockey Y5-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Netball Y5-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Recorders Y3-6	Lunchtime

Tuesday

Orchestra Y3-6	12.30pm - 1.00pm
Book Club Y3-4	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

Brass Club Y4	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Coding Y6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Kids with Bricks (Lego) Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm

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 3: Mon 5th Jan - Fri 13th Feb 2026

Term 4: Mon 23th 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

- School Day Timings
- Mr Sim
- CCTV
- Oracy Competition—Look Who's Talking



2025-26



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
Mon 26th - SEND Coffee Morning 9am Year 3&4
Tue 27th - SEND Coffee Morning 9am Year 5&6

February

Tue 3rd - Year 6 National Measurement Check
Thu 5th - Rags Collection
Thu 5th - Gymnastics Competition—9.30am-11.30am Yr 3 & 4
Thu 5th - Gymnastics Competition—12-30 – 2.30pm Yr 5 & 6
Mon 9th - Children's Mental Health Week
Tue 10th - Safer Internet Day
Thu 12th - Book Look
Fri 13th - End of Term 3
Mon - 23rd Start of Term 4

Advance Notice of Some Key Dates

11th May - Y6 SATs Week
10th June - Sports Day
8th - 10th July - Y6 Residential
16th July - Y6 St Mark's School Leavers Service - 1.45pm

PE - Spring Term 1

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

All swimmers to wear PE Kit on a Wednesday

Class 1: Tuesday & Thursday

Class 2: Tuesday & Thursday

Class 3: Monday & Friday

Class 4: Thursday & Friday

Class 5: Tuesday & Wednesday

Class 6: Wednesday & Thursday

Class 7: Wednesday & Friday

Class 8: Wednesday & Friday



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

Outdoor Learning - Autumn Term 2

Outdoor Learning has finished for the term and will return again after Easter.

