



# St Mark's C of E Junior School

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

Weekly Newsletter - Friday 30th January 2026

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

All enquires: [admin@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk)

Our Value in focus this term is Courage

## Headteacher's Message:

### Changes to School Timings

A reminder that the School timings are set to change after half term, effective from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026, Spring Term 2.

#### • Benhall Infant School:

- ◇ Start: **8:40am**
- ◇ Finish: **3:10pm**

#### • St Mark's:

- ◇ Start: **8:45am\***
- ◇ Finish: **3:15pm**



\*St Mark's will continue with our 'soft start' to the school day, **with children welcomed in from 8.35am.**

We appreciate your understanding and support as we implement these changes and thank you for working with us to ensure the best possible experience for our children and families.



### Attendance

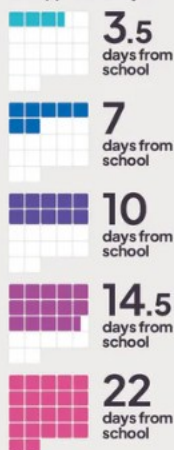
I am aware of an increasing number of absence request forms being submitted for family holidays. Please be reminded that every lesson is a crucial part of your child's learning journey, and frequent absences can hinder their progress. We must follow the DFE's statutory attendance guidance and cannot authorise holiday requests. Absences can be authorised in 'exceptional circumstances'.

**Please be aware that you can be given a Penalty Notice for periods of unauthorised holidays if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences (equivalent to 5 school days),**

If your child is late every day by...



Your child would have lost approximately...



### School Punctuality

Please be reminded that children should arrive at their classroom between **8:35am and 8:50am**. Lessons start promptly at **8:50am** and any child arriving after this time will miss valuable learning time.

Should your child arrive late, they must enter the building via **Reception** and report to the **school office** as a late arrival. They will be required to provide their name, class and the reason for their lateness.

**Remember: every school day counts.** When children attend regularly, they build stronger friendships, develop greater confidence, and make the best possible progress in their learning. *Thank you for your continued support in helping your children be here, on time, every day—together, we're giving them the strongest foundation to grow and flourish.*

*With my best wishes for a lovely weekend. Mrs A Fitch and the Staff Team*

### Football News

Our girls' football team went to **Dunalley** school for their last league match fixture. They delivered a dominant performance to claim a convincing **5-0 victory**.

From the opening whistle, the team showed confidence, energy and excellent teamwork, controlling possession and setting the tempo of the game. **The team are now through to the league finals for the 3rd year running. Well done girls!**



## School Council News

Thank you to everyone who visited the **School Council's Big Garden Birdwatch stall** last Friday to buy bird seed. We hope you all had lots of fun and success counting the birds in your garden for the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch over the weekend.

**We're excited to share that we sold an incredible 92 bags of seed and raised £46, which will go towards new birdfeeders to encourage wildlife to thrive in our school grounds—thank you all for your support!**



## Netball

A huge well done to all the girls who represented St Mark's in our matches against Leckhampton! Our opponents brought some extremely confident and experienced netball players, but our teams rose to the challenge with determination and pride.

The A team held on to a draw right up until the final quarter, showing resilience, teamwork, and brilliant defensive play before Leckhampton managed to edge ahead. It was an exciting match from start to finish, and you should all be incredibly proud of how you played.

A special mention must also go to our B team, many of whom only started playing netball this year. You have worked so hard to build your skills and confidence, and stepping out onto the court for your first competitive match is an achievement in itself. You played with enthusiasm, supported each other throughout, and showed just how much progress you've made in such a short time.

For many of our players, this was their first ever netball match—what an experience! Every single one of you worked hard, encouraged each other, and put into practice everything you've been learning in training. Most importantly, you played with joy, teamwork, and true St Mark's spirit.

**Thank you for representing St Mark's so impeccably. We are incredibly proud of you all—keep practising, keep improving, and keep enjoying your netball!**



## Deputy Head Vacancy

The job advert for the Deputy Head position is now available on our [website](#).

The closing date for applications is **Friday 13th February 2026 at 12:00 noon**.



## Teaching & Learning Owls

**Gold - Lena and Freddie**

**Congratulations to our badge winners!**



## Learning Highlight of the Week

**Class 1:** Class 1 thoroughly enjoyed their French lesson this week. In a fun and interactive session, they learnt French greetings and had the opportunity to walk around the classroom greeting their friends in French, putting into practise what they had learnt.

**Class 2:** Following on from their last Geography lesson, where the children learnt to read different map symbols, they have progressed to learning how to read maps using four-figure grid references.

**Class 3:** In indoor PE, Class 3 had a fantastic dance lesson this week. They focused on counting eight beats in order to synchronise their movement with rhythm and had great fun putting together an exciting sequence of moves.

**Class 4:** In Geography, the children have been making brochures and leaflets advertising the lost city of Pompeii.

**Class 5:** Class 5 had a fun and interactive music lesson this week. They began with a five-minute music card activity, which included a musical pattern to help them understand tempo. They then learnt the words to a South African song entitled *Shosholoz* and finished the lesson by learning some of the song's chords on the Glockenspiel.

**Class 6:** In Computing, Class 6 have been exploring ready made games in *Scratch* to deepen their understanding of the coding involved. This is in preparation for next week, when they will be creating their own games using a variable.

**Class 7:** In PE, the children were looking at key collaboration and teamwork skills, such as travelling across space in different ways, and as part of a group. They also took part in blindfold challenges.

**Class 8:** Class 8 have been creating their own independent newspaper articles! They could choose between fiction or nonfiction and were tasked with including subheadings, quotes, and photos, which they carefully labelled.

## Road Safety

I regret to inform you that further incidents of dangerous driving have been reported on Robert Burns Avenue this week. This is of significant concern to our school community, as it puts the safety of our children and families at risk. While we know that the vast majority of parents and carers drive responsibly, we ask all those who need to arrive by car to please allow sufficient time and ensure they drive safely, legally, and with consideration for others.



**We are specifically seeing an increase of cars parking or stopping on the zig-zag lines outside school.** This is dangerous and puts children and families at real risk by blocking visibility at the busiest times of the day. **Please do not park, stop, or wait on the zig-zags at any time.**

We have requested increased **police patrols** during drop-off and pick-up times as an additional safety measure.

We remain fully committed to doing everything we can to safeguard our children and families. We understand that school drop-off and pick-up times are very busy and pressured, however the safety of our children and wider school community must always come first and cannot be compromised.

Thank you for working with us to keep our community safe.

## Rags Collection

### Thursday 5th February

For a full list of items that can be collected, please visit:

[www.rags2riches4schools.co.uk](http://www.rags2riches4schools.co.uk)

**Thank you for your continued support  
— it is very much appreciated!**



## Badminton Success



Last Saturday Bea took a trip all the way up to Sheffield for the **National DSAuk Badminton Tournament**. It was a fun, yet competitive tournament which kickstarts the DSAuk sports events calendar for the year.

Bea only started playing Badminton last September and has really taken to the sport. She had a fantastic competition, finishing with a **gold medal** for the singles category for her age group.

**Well done, Bea – what a fantastic achievement!**

## 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!*

## 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 as soon as possible.

Did you know that ParentPay allows you to set up automatic email notifications when your balance falls below a chosen amount? This can help you manage your account and prevent it from going into arrears.



## School Term Dates

### 2025-26

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



## 2025-26



### 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

### March

Mon 2nd—Fri 6th - Book Week  
 Wed 4th - Speaking Out Competition 9am  
 Wed 4th - Book Fair after School  
 Thu 5th - World Book Day  
 Tue 17th - Parents Evening  
 Wed 18th Parents Evening  
 Thus 19th - Y4 National Roman Legion Museum Trip  
 Thus 19th - Y5 Waterways Trip

### 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

## Letters Sent Home

- No letters this week



## 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.**