



St Mark's C of E Junior School

Growing together, becoming all we are created to be

Weekly Newsletter - Friday 6th February 2026

www.stmarksjunior.com

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

Our Value in focus this term is Courage

Headteacher's Message:

Children's Mental Health Week: *This Is My Place*

Next week, we will be celebrating **Children's Mental Health Week**, and this year's theme is ***This Is My Place***. The theme focuses on the importance of *belonging*—feeling part of something meaningful, whether that's a family, a school community, a group of friends, or a team.

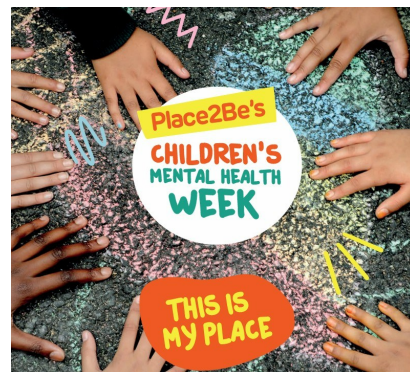
When children feel a true sense of belonging, they feel happy, safe, confident, and ready to learn. Feeling connected to others supports positive mental health, helps children build resilience, improves friendships, and strengthens self-esteem.

What we'll be exploring in school

Throughout the week, children will take part in activities and discussions that help them think about:

- What makes them feel they belong.
- The people and places that help them feel valued, welcomed, and accepted.
- Ways they can help others feel included—through kindness, listening, and looking out for one another.
- How we can celebrate our uniqueness and support each other in our school community.

We will also be sharing examples of "*This Is My Place*" from pupils so we can learn from one another about the moments, places, and people that help us feel happy and connected.



Continuing the conversation at home

Here are some simple ways families can nurture belonging:

Ideas from the children:

- Spend time playing games or doing activities together
- Talk openly about feelings and worries
- Encourage friendships and opportunities to meet others
- Make time to be around people who help you feel good
- Make sure children know they have an adult to talk to when they're unhappy

Additional tips:

Be authentic: Celebrate who you are as a family, and encourage children to be their true selves.

Embrace uniqueness: Help children notice and value their individual strengths.

Follow interests: Support children in taking part in clubs or hobbies they enjoy—shared interests help build connection.

Listen to feelings: Notice when children may be feeling lonely or disconnected and talk about what might help.

A Family Pack with further ideas and activities will be attached to this newsletter. We hope it helps you continue these important conversations at home and supports ***every child in St Mark's school community to feel a true sense of belonging and worth.*** *Have a super weekend, Mrs A Fitch and the Staff Team*

Children's Mental Health Week – School Council Message

Wear colourful clothes that you feel comfortable in on **Friday 13th February**

This supports the theme of **Belonging – This is my Place**.

Belonging comes from being accepted for who you are. By wearing our own clothes, we feel this helps children feel comfortable and that whilst we are different, we are all similar in lots of ways. At St Marks's, we all fit in. We all belong.

The School Council would like to ask pupils for a donation of £1 to take part to raise money to buy ***new and repair existing equipment as well as buying trees, bulbs (which will come back every year) and vegetable seeds for the school grounds*** as part of working towards earning ***our Eco-Schools Green Flag Award***.

Belonging

English Schools' Football Association National Cup Competition

You may remember that Ethan and Tommy were selected after rigorous trials to represent St Mark's as part of the Cheltenham Schools team.

Both boys, along with their teammates, have now become **history makers**, as never before has a Cheltenham Primary Schools FA team progressed this far in a national cup competition.

Cheltenham's impressive cup run included the following results:

1st round: South Birmingham 4 Cheltenham 7

2nd round: Cheltenham 1 Gloucester 0

3rd round: Oxford 1 Cheltenham 1

(Cheltenham won 3-1 on penalties after extra time)

4th round: Cheltenham 4 Swansea 2

After reaching the quarter-finals, Cheltenham lost to a very strong Liverpool side — the reigning champions, who have won the competition for the past four consecutive years.

The effort, determination, and teamwork shown by Ethan, Tommy, and the entire squad throughout the competition has been outstanding. The Cheltenham Primary Schools FA has rightly recognised the team as true history makers.

To top off this incredible achievement, the boys and the whole Cheltenham team have been invited on a five-day tour in Milan, Italy, where they will play against two top academy teams.

We are incredibly proud of Ethan and Tommy, and of the entire Cheltenham Schools squad — what an amazing achievement. Congratulations to all involved!



Gymnastics Competition

Yesterday, we took two teams to Rowan Gymnastics Club to take part in the Key Steps Schools Gymnastics Competition. The children have been working incredibly hard over the past few weeks, perfecting their floor and vault routines, and their hard work certainly paid off!

The children performed their routines with great skill, commitment, and enthusiasm and were an absolute delight to watch. It was also fantastic to see how supportive they were of one another throughout the competition. Our school value of compassion was very much evident for all to see.

To top it all off, our Year 3 & 4 team came away with a silver medal—huge congratulations to them!



A special mention to Benhall Infants School, who finished 3rd in their competition—great job, everyone!

It was a fabulous day, and you should all be very proud of your performances.

Learning Highlight of the Week

Class 1: In PE, the children thoroughly enjoyed a competitive game of bench ball. They demonstrated excellent teamwork and ball passing skills, while supporting and encouraging one another throughout the game.

Class 2: In English, Class 2 have been tasting a variety of fruits to help them collect descriptive vocabulary for their shape poems. Some children stepped out of their comfort zone by trying fruits they had not tasted before.

Class 3: The children have been creating Gaudi inspired mosaics using string and foil.

Class 4: In PE, Class 4 have been practising shooting drills. They have progressed to the stage where they can now play mini-matches, which they are thoroughly enjoying.

Class 5: The children took part in a Science investigation exploring what factors affect how quickly sugar dissolves in water.

Class 6: In Art, the children used the school iPads to take photographs of objects and their reflections. They explored how angles, lighting and positioning affect the way the objects and their reflections appear in the photos.

Class 7 & 8: Class 7 & 8 came together in the hall this week to take part in a mock trial. They took on a variety of courtroom roles including magistrates, prosecution and defence lawyers, defendants, courtroom artists and reporters. The activity gave students a hands-on insight into how the justice system works, while developing their confidence, teamwork and speaking skills.

Lunch Arrears Reminder

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.



Reading Award

Amelia has completed the Year 6 reading list! She has been so dedicated to her reading throughout her time here at St Mark's and has worked incredibly hard to achieve this feat — and it's only February!



Well done,
Amelia.

We are super
proud of you!

Year 6 Sweet Sale

Year 6 children will be holding a sweet sale to raise money for the Year 6 Leaversfest.

The sale will take place on **Friday 13th February**. Sweet cones will be available for **£1.50**, with **cash only** accepted.

Please come along and support the Year 6 children.

Thank you!



Teaching & Learning Owls

Gold - Oliver

Bronze - Jacob, Theo, Reggie, Thomas, Daniel & Harry

Congratulations to our badge winners!



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!

Rags Collection

Thank you to everyone who donated items of clothing and accessories for our *Rags 2 Riches 4 Schools* collection this week. **We collected an impressive 41 bags, so thank you all for your generosity!**

All money raised goes directly to the school. Last year, some of the funds were used to buy crackers for the children for our Christmas lunch, which were gratefully received.

Thank you again for your continued support. The next collection will take place on **30th June**.



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



2025-26



February

Mon 9th - Children's Mental Health Week

Tue 10th - Safer Internet Day

Thu 12th - Book Look

Fri 13th - House Board Games Afternoon - Bring a game from home (no electronic games please)

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

- Staff Changes Summer Term 2026
- Clubs Information - Spring Term 2
- Waterways Museum Trip Year 5



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