



St Mark's C of E Junior School

Growing together, becoming all we are created to be

Weekly Newsletter - Friday 24th April 2026

www.stmarksjunior.com

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

Our Value in focus this term is Friendship

Headteacher's Message:

No Mow May – Showing Compassion to our Environment: Be kind, Notice the Need!

This May, led by our wonderful **School Council Eco Team**, we are proud to be supporting **No Mow May**, a national campaign led by wildlife trusts and environmental charities to help protect our vital pollinators.



What is No Mow May?

No Mow May encourages people to leave lawns uncut for the month of May, allowing wildflowers to grow. These provide vital food and shelter for insects at a crucial time of year. With **23 million gardens in the UK**, our green spaces play an important role in supporting wildlife.

Longer grass helps sustain a wide variety of invertebrates and provides food for birds, particularly as May is when many are preparing to build nests. By reducing mowing, lawns can produce **up to ten times more nectar**, supporting the **270 species of bee** found in the UK.

Many plants we think of as weeds are actually essential for pollinators. **Dandelions**, for example, are an important early food source – it takes around **six dandelions to support just one bumblebee**.

No garden? No problem!

You don't need a lawn to take part. **Wildflowers in pots or containers** are an easy and effective way to help pollinators, whether on a balcony, windowsill or doorstep.



Eco-work in School

Our **School Council Eco-Team**, working closely with **Mrs Reilly**, has been doing fantastic work to enhance our outdoor environment. Together they have:



- Created more **eco-friendly spaces** to encourage wildlife and insects
- Developed areas where **fruit and vegetables** are being grown
- Begun work on a **sensory garden**, with a variety of scented and tactile plants that help us appreciate the diversity of plant life and engage our senses

We are incredibly proud of their efforts to make our school grounds a welcoming place for both nature and our children.

Get involved!

We would love to see how your family is taking part in No Mow May. Please send us:

- Photos of **No Mow May gardens**
- **Wildflower patches**
- **Pots or containers** planted to help pollinators



Children can print photos and pass them to their **School Council Eco-Team Representative**, or grown-ups can email them to: schoolcouncil@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk.

Entries will earn raffle tickets towards gaining your next Owl! Showing that you care about your environment is a crucial way of showing compassion and learning to live gently in our world.

Every unmown patch, pot or planter helps. Together, we can make a real difference for wildlife—one garden at a time.

Have a super weekend, Mrs A Fitch and the Staff Team

GIRLS SCHOOL LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

Last Friday, our girls' football team took part in the **league finals**, competing in a round-robin tournament against five other strong teams. Across five matches, they produced an outstanding performance, remaining unbeaten with four wins and one draw.

The team showed excellent consistency throughout, combining attacking flair with solid defensive organisation. Their teamwork, discipline, and determination were evident in every game, as they rose to each challenge and maintained their momentum from start to finish.

As a result of their efforts, they finished top of the table and St Mark's were deservedly **crowned champions** for the **third year** in a row. This remarkable achievement reflects their hard work, commitment, and fantastic team spirit.

A huge congratulations to all the players on a memorable and well-earned success.



Message from Mrs Campbell

I am incredibly proud of each and every one of the girls. Many of this team only began their footballing journey a few years ago, and in the finals they demonstrated just how far they have come. Their progress, teamwork, and growing confidence have been a pleasure to witness throughout the year.

It has been a privilege to work with such a committed and enthusiastic group of girls and I wish them all the very best as they continue their football journey.

Winning the girls' league title for the third year running is a fantastic achievement for St Mark's. The team has shown outstanding determination, resilience, and sportsmanship, representing the school with great pride at every stage.

Learning Highlight of the Week

Class 1 & 2: In English, Year 3 created non-chronological reports about plants. They enjoyed the challenge of editing and publishing the work themselves.

Class 3: In RE, Class 3 produced some fabulous chalk drawings inspired by the Pentecost.

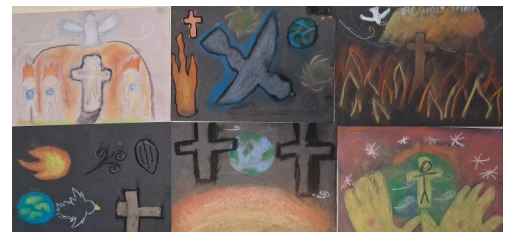
Class 4: Class 4 enjoyed their computing lessons this week. They created storyboards using animation to illustrate life cycles, linking closely with what they have been learning in science.

Class 5: Computing was also a highlight for Class 5. They have been using formulas in Excel to add, subtract, multiply and divide.

Class 6: Class 6 explored mathematical nets (2D patterns that can be folded) to create 3D shapes.

Class 7: In Computing, the children used the Turing test to explore artificial intelligence. By asking questions, they had to determine whether they were interacting with a chatbot or a human.

Class 8: In Science, Class 8 have been learning about blood and the roles of plasma, platelets, and white and red blood cells. They also enjoyed a heart-themed cake baked by Lottie.



Sports Hall Athletics

Last Friday a team of children took part in a Sports Hall Athletics competition run by Move More at the Cheltenham Ladies College. The St Mark's team enjoyed taking part in a selection of indoor running and field events and particularly excelled in the sprinting and jumping events!

It was such a joy to take the children out for the morning. They represented St Mark's brilliantly, demonstrating exceptional manners and sportsmanship. Well done!

Thank you to Move More, the Ladies College who stepped in at the last minute to host the event, and to Mrs Campbell and Mrs Beames who accompanied the children.



A Special Treat for the love of Science

This week, Year 6 were in for a real treat, thanks to Lottie, who baked a wonderful '1 ❤️ Science' cake, for the children to enjoy. Lottie has shown a fantastic enthusiasm for Science, which has been her favourite subject this year. Each year since Year 4, Lottie has created a cake inspired by her favourite topic—showcasing both her creativity and passion.

In Year 4, she baked an impressive volcano cake; in Year 5, a beautifully designed moon cake; and this year, a heart-shaped cake to reflect their learning in biology.

Thank you, Lottie, for such a beautiful and thoughtful creation, and for sharing both your love of Science and baking with your friends.



Teaching & Learning Owls

Silver - Ollie

Bronze - Rufus

Congratulations to our badge winners!



Reading Award

Huge congratulations to Eleanor and Scott who have completed the Year 3 reading list.

This is such a fantastic achievement and we are super proud of you both!



Extra Curricular Clubs Summer Term 1

Monday

Baking Buddies Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.30pm
Chinese Language Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.15pm
Gardening Club Y3-4	3.15pm - 4.00pm
Gymnastics Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.05pm
Netball Y5-6	3.15pm - 4.00pm
Recorders Y3-6	Lunchtime
Rounders Y5-6	3.15pm - 4.00pm



Tuesday

Board Games Y3-4	12.40pm - 1.10pm
Orchestra Y3-6	12.30pm - 1.00pm
Choir Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.00pm
Tennis Y4-6	3.15pm - 4.10pm

Wednesday

Baking Buddies Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.30pm
Cricket Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.15pm

Thursday

Coding Y6	3.15pm - 4.00pm
Kids with Bricks Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.00pm
Outdoor Learning	3.15pm - 4.15pm
Science	3.15pm - 4.00pm

Online Safety Newsletter Subscription: NEW FEATURE

As you may be aware, St Mark's subscribes to a monthly online newsletter for our parents, which we share with you at the start of each month. We are excited to announce that along with our monthly parent newsletter, we will now be able to share a short online safety video monthly aimed at parents/carers.



The theme of the video this month is **online gaming** and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

School Term Dates - 2025-26

Term 5: Mon 13th April – Fri 22nd May 2026

Term 6: Mon 1st June – Mon 20th July 2026

Inset Days: 1st June 2026, 20th July 2026

Lunch Arrears

Please can you ensure that your ParentPay account for school lunches remains in credit.



2025-26



May

Mon 4th May - Bank Holiday
 Wed 6th - Cadbury World Year 5
 Fri 8th - PTA non-school uniform day for bottle/ teddy for Fair
 Mon 11th — Thu 14th - Y6 SATs Week
 Sat 16th - Summer Fair
 Tue 19th - Book Look
 Wed 20th - GWR Trip Year 6
 Fri 22nd - End of Term 5

June

Mon 1st - Inset Day (no children in school)
 Tue 9th - Y6 Leavers Service, Gloucester Cathedral (Pupils only)
 Wed 10th - Sports Day
 Mon 15th - Midsummer Concert 6.30pm
 Wed 17th - Drayton Manor Y6 Trip
 Fri 19th - PTA Lido Evening
 Tue 23rd - Year 6 Production Matinee Performance
 Tue 23rd - Piano Recital (Mrs Bennett's Pupils & Parents)
 Wed 24th - Year 6 Production - Evening performance
 Wed 24th - Whole Class Photos and Year 6 Leavers Photographs
 Thu 25th - 'Explore our World' Day Year 5 at Bournside
 Mon 29th - Fri 3rd - Bournside Transition Week
 Tue 30th - Rags Collection

Advance Notice of Some Key Dates

8th - 10th July - Y6 Residential
 16th July - Y6 St Mark's School Leavers Service - 1.45pm

Outdoor Learning - Summer Term 1

Class 1: Thursday Morning

Class 2: 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.

PE - Summer Term 1

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

Class 1: Friday

Class 2: Tuesday

Class 3: Monday & Tuesday

Class 4: Tuesday & Friday

Class 5: Tuesday & Thursday

Class 6: Tuesday & Thursday

Class 7: Monday & Wednesday

Class 8: Wednesday & Friday



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