



St Mark's C of E Junior School

Growing together, becoming all we are created to be

Weekly Newsletter - Friday 9th May 2025

www.stmarksjunior.com

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

Our Value in focus this term is: SERVICE

Headteacher's Message:

Having enjoyed the Bank Holiday weekend, we have packed in our learning this week. We are certainly making the most of every moment, given the length of this rather short half term!

Next week, our wonderful Year 6s will be sitting SATs (Statutory Assessment Tests). This is an opportunity for the children to celebrate their hard work and fantastic attitude to their learning, drawing on their knowledge built up across Year 3, 4, 5 and 6.

The children and Year 6 teaching team have been working particularly hard recently to ensure they are in the best position to tackle the tests with confidence. We could not be prouder of you all. Go for it—**and remember there is not, and shall never be, a way to test all of the amazing things that makes you who you really are.**

**PROUD
OF YOU!**

Do your very best, give it your all; but also know this is a very small reflection of **wonderful you!**

I am delighted to inform you that after an intensive day of interviews and lesson observations, on Wednesday we appointed a new Class Teacher who will start in September 25, following Mrs Chamberlain's decision to take early retirement. **Miss Barrett** will join the teaching team as an Early Career Teacher, having spent 2 years in journalism before venturing into the teaching profession. Miss Barrett is full of energy and spark; she has an excellent understanding of high quality teaching and learning which was demonstrated brilliantly across all interview tasks and we very much look forward to all she will bring to our fantastic teaching team.

Those who have been able to pop into school recently may have noticed that we have an additional member of our admin team. Mrs Christensen is now working alongside Mrs Anderson each morning, answering enquiries and helping to ensure 'front of house' runs smoothly. Mrs Christensen has a calm, nurturing approach, she is learning fast and is on hand to help. Please do introduce yourself when you have a moment.

**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

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), within a rolling 10 week period. Thank you for your continued cooperation in supporting your child's education.

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

Learning Highlight of the Week

Class 1: In PE, class 1 learnt how a relay race works. They practised the correct starting position to receive the baton and then took part in some races.

Class 2: The children have had an introduction into their new topic Ancient Egypt. They created a timeline and plotted Egypt on a map.

Class 3: Class 3 created a 'Faerie' for a field guide, inspired by the book *The Spiderwick Chronicles*.

Class 4: The highlight for class 4 was learning how to play Boccia. Boccia is a precision ball sport similar to bowls.

Class 5: Class 5 have been exploring the idea of threads in History. They looked back over the different History topics they have studied so far and listed what they have learnt. This is in readiness for their new topic 'Mayans'.

Class 6: In Computing, the children have enjoyed coding Micro:bits.

Class 7: In PE, class 7 have been honing their fielding and batting skills, using the sport of Danish Longball.

Class 8: Class 8 have enjoyed using their creative skills in Outdoor Learning this week.

Rounders Tournament

On Wednesday, 14 children from Year 5 & 6 took part in a Rounders Tournament at Leckhampton High School.

The children played brilliantly against some tough opposition. They played 7 matches in total, winning 5, drawing 1 and conceding 1.

We were extremely proud of the way the children represented St Mark's, showing our school values in action. We were particularly impressed with their sportsmanship and team work. Well done children!

To top it off we came away with 2nd place and silver medals. A brilliant result!



VE Day 80th

Yesterday we marked the historic 80th anniversary of VE Day as a school community. The children and staff were invited to wear red, white, blue for the day and in class learnt about the significance of the occasion.

On Tuesday, we were also invited to colour in 80th VE day celebration posters by ASDA's community champion. Thank you to the children who took part during their lunchtime and also those who took the posters home to do. If you get a chance do pop along to ASDA to see their fantastic work.



Good Luck

A shout out to Archie in Year 5 who has been selected to represent Gloucestershire Tennis in the prestigious 10U County Cup. Archie will be competing this weekend.



Good luck Archie—we can't wait to hear how you get on! We know you'll smash it!



St Mark's Spring Fair
Wednesday 21st May 3.15pm—7pm

On **Wednesday 21st May** come and have some fun after school at the Spring Fair! There will be lots of stalls to entertain you, including bungee trampolines!! Come along and enjoy a hot dog, ice cream, or have a drink at the bar. The Cheltenham Silver Training band (featuring Mr Sim!) will be performing too!

Anyone who can help man a stall for a little bit, or help with setting up or packing away please let us know.



Next Friday 16th is a free dress day where children can come to school in their own home clothes in exchange for bringing in a bottle for the bottle tombola.

Thank you for your continued support at our PTA events!



Teaching & Learning Owls

Bronze - Oliver

Congratulations to Oliver!



Class 4 Message

PE Next Week

Next week, Class 4 will be doing PE on Tuesday and Thursday NOT Friday.

Please wear school uniform on Friday and PE kit on Tuesday and Thursday.



Sports day is taking place on **Tuesday 10th June**.

There will be some inter-house activities happening in the morning and races in the afternoon with a picnic over lunch. Parents are welcome to attend for part or all of the day!

Timings

9.00am - 12.00pm - Inter-house class activities

12.00pm - 12:45pm - Picnic lunch on the field

1.00pm - House captains will lead each house out and around the track

1.15pm - 2.55pm - Races

All children will require a packed lunch on the day.

Move More Holiday Camp @ St Mark's

Move More are delivering their popular Holiday Camps across Cheltenham and surrounding area this May Half Term including one at St Mark's!

They are non-profit holiday camps which provide children with lots of opportunities to be active, have fun, make friends and try lots of new and different activities.

You can find out more and book online at <https://www.move-more.org/camps/>.



Extra Curricular Clubs - SUMMER TERM 1

Monday

Baking Buddies Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.30pm
Gym Club Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Chinese Language Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.15pm
Recorders Y3-6	Lunchtime (Plus Tue 6th May)



Tuesday

Board Games Y3-4	12.40pm - 1.10pm
Orchestra Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Rounders Y5-6 (Ends 13th May)	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Tennis Y4-6	3.15pm - 4.15pm

Wednesday

Baking Buddies Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.30pm
Cyclestars Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.15pm
European Languages Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.15pm
Magical Maths Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.15pm

Thursday

Coding Club Y5-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Choir Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm
Outdoor Learning Y3-4	3.15pm - 4.15pm
Reading & Times Tables Y3-6	3.10pm - 4.00pm

Rags 2 Riches 4 Schools—This MONDAY!

There will be a used clothing collection at St Mark's this Monday 12th May.



To help raise money for the school, please drop off bags of clean unwanted clothes, pairs of shoes, bags etc. Click [here](#) for full list of what can be collected. Please note they cannot take school uniforms.

Please use your own bags as we do not have Rags 2 Riches collection bags this time.

Drop off bags outside the Reception area by 9am on Monday.

Thank you for your support.

School Term Dates

2024-25

Term 5: Mon 28th April – Fri 23rd May 2025

Term 6: Tue 3rd June – Fri 18th July 2025

Inset Days: 2nd June, 21st July



2024 - 25



May

Mon 12th - Rags Collection
Mon 12th - 14th - SATS Week
Fri 16th - Non Uniform Day (Bring in a bottle for the Spring Fayre Bottle Tombola)
Tue 20th - Cadbury World Trip Year 5
Tue 20th - Class 7 Book Look
Tue 20th - Swimming Gala 7pm
Wed 21st - GWR Trip Year 6
Wed 21st - Spring Fair (No Clubs on)
Thu 22nd - Book Look (Excluding Class 7)
Fri 23rd - End of Term 5

June

Mon 2nd - INSET Day (No children in school)
Tue 3rd - Start of Term 6
Thu 5th - Year 2 Transition Evening @ St Mark's 6.30pm
Thu 5th - Charity Fayre 3.10pm
Tue 10th - Sports Day
Wed 11th - Y6 Leavers Service Gloucester Cathedral (Children Only)
Fri 13th - Sports Day Back Up
Mon 16th - Midsummer Concert 6.30pm
Wed 18th - Drayton Manor Trip Year 6
Fri 20th - Whole Class and Year 6 photos
Fri 20th - Prince of Wales Athletics Event
Tue 24th - Year 6 Production 1.40pm Performance
Tue 24th - Piano Recital after school
Wed 25th - Year 6 Production 7.00pm Performance
Wed 25th - Cheltenham Tour Trip Year 4
Thu 26th - 'Explore our World' Year 5 Bournside Visit
Mon 30th - Bournside Transition Week

Letters Sent Home

- Drayton Manor Y6
- Burnham-on-Sea Y3
- Explore our World—Bournside Y5
- Curriculum Maps & Letters



Outdoor Learning - Summer Term 1

Class 7: Thursday Morning
Class 8: Thursday Afternoon



Please ensure your child wears suitable outdoor learning clothes to school and brings wellies and a warm waterproof coat every Thursday

PE - Summer Term 1

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

Class 1: Monday and Thursday

Class 2: Wednesday and Friday

Class 3: Tuesday and Wednesday

Class 4: Tuesday and Friday

Class 5: Tuesday and Thursday

Class 6: Tuesday and Thursday

Class 7: Tuesday

Class 8: Friday

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



Holiday Free School Meal (FSM) Voucher Scheme

We would like to make you aware of the holiday Free School Meal (FSM) voucher scheme that Gloucestershire County Council is currently offering to families in Gloucestershire.

This May Half Term, 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 that 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 May Half Term holiday vouchers - they will already have been included. If there has been any changes to your circumstances (e.g. if the number of children eligible increases or decreases) please contact Gloucestershire County Council.

For anyone wishing to update details of an existing application, please submit an update existing details request via the Microsoft Form [HERE](#) so that your records can be updated.

Applications for holiday FSM vouchers for the May Half Term 2025 will be open from midday 29 April until midday on 13 May. Voucher emails will be sent from **week commencing 19 May**. During this period please check your junk/spam folders as sometimes the vouchers end up there. If you have not received your vouchers by 26 May, please submit a query via the Microsoft Form [HERE](#).

Please note that Gloucestershire County Council check eligibility for the scheme by cross-referencing with the term-time free school meal register, so please make sure you are eligible and registered beforehand. You can register by visiting the [apply for free school meals](#) page.

Using vouchers – vouchers need to be used will only be awarded once you have registered for the scheme and cannot be backdated. Vouchers are valid for 6 months, although 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. Vouchers not received should be queried via the Microsoft Form [HERE](#) by the end of the holiday period.

To find out more about the scheme and to apply, please visit [FAQs | Gloucestershire County Council](#).

