



St Mark's C of E Junior School

Growing together, becoming all we are created to be

Weekly Newsletter - Friday 17th July 2026

www.stmarksjunior.com

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

Our Value in focus this term is Respect

End of Year Headteacher's Message:

As we reach the end of another fantastic year, it is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on all that we have achieved together as a school community. There have been so many memorable moments, incredible achievements and reasons to be proud.

None of this would be possible without our exceptional staff team. Their dedication, care and commitment provide our children with the opportunities to learn, grow and flourish every day. Relationships are at the heart of St Mark's, and our staff consistently model the kindness, respect and compassion that make our school such a special place. On behalf of our children, families and governors, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to every member of staff for all that they do.

Today, we also bid farewell to our wonderful Year 6 pupils. We are incredibly proud of the young people you have become and of the way you have lived out our FACE Values of Forgiveness, Aspire, Compassion and Engage. As you move on to the next stage of your journey, remember **'you bring to this world things that no one else can.'** Go for it!

We must also say goodbye to three much-valued members of the St Mark's team.



Thank you for everything, Mr Sim!

We will miss you!



Mr Sim, our wonderful Deputy Head, leaves after an extraordinary 29 years of dedicated service to St Mark's. His passion for the school, unwavering commitment and care for generations of children have helped shape our community in countless ways. We thank him for the remarkable contribution he has made and wish him every happiness in the future.

Mrs O'Connor - After 12 years at St Mark's, Mrs O'Connor will be moving on to take up a new teaching SENCO role in a school within Gloucestershire. During her time at St Mark's, she has made a significant contribution as both a class teacher and Higher Level Teaching Assistant. We are so grateful for her dedication and care and wish her every success in this exciting new chapter.



Miss Ryman will also be leaving after 14 years as a valued member of our Teaching Assistant team. Her compassion, encouragement and commitment have made a lasting difference to so many children and families. We wish her every success as she begins her new role as a Family Support Worker with Gloucestershire County Council.

My thanks to you, as parents, for your continued support throughout the year. We hope you have a wonderful summer filled with rest, fun and special times with family and friends, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back to St Mark's on **Thursday 3rd September** for another exciting year ahead.

With our very best wishes to you all and have a super summer,

Mrs A Fitch and the Staff Team

Reading Award

Congratulations to **Ayla (Y6), Ben S, Ben W, and Elizabeth (Y3)** on completing their reading lists!

Finishing the reading list is no easy feat, and you have all done an incredible job—Well done! **Joshie** also received a special reading award for his dedication to reading and the wide variety of books he has read this year! Congratulations!



Celebrating Mr Sim

We could not let **Mr Sim** leave St Mark's without marking the occasion with something truly special and so on Wednesday we held an assembly dedicated to celebrating Mr Sim and the incredible **29 years** he has dedicated to St Mark's!

The assembly began with Mr Sim being presented with his very own leavers' T-shirt and hoodie, which, of course, he was encouraged to put on straight away!

We enjoyed musical performances from the school choir, recorder group and orchestra, thanks to Mrs Bennett, alongside some very special guests – former pupils and friends who returned to perform a selection of fantastic brass pieces. This was particularly fitting, as Mr Sim is a keen brass player and a member of the Cheltenham Silver Band.

Mr Sim was given the choice of simply enjoying the performances or joining in, and, true to form, he chose to take part! He played the Cornet, Tenor Horn and even a Recorder!

With joyful renditions of Summer Holiday and The Muppet Show Theme from the brass ensemble, it was a truly memorable send-off. Our sincere thanks go to the Knight family, Mrs Wildman and friends for their fantastic performances.

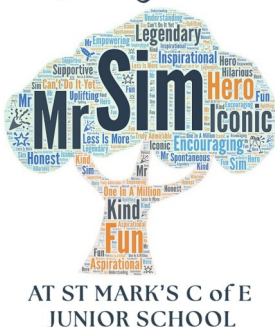
Staff and children also shared their memories and stories, creating a heartfelt yet humorous celebration for someone who has given so much to the St Mark's community.

A huge thank you to the children and staff for contributing to the beautiful memory book, put together with the help of former pupil, Gracie.



CELEBRATING
29 Years

It was a fitting tribute to Mr Sim and a wonderful celebration of everything he has brought to our school community over the past 29 years. Thank you Mr Sim!



AT ST MARK'S C of E
JUNIOR SCHOOL



Thank You from Mr Sim!

As I come to the end of my time at St Mark's, I wanted to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed towards my leaving gifts. Your generosity and kindness have been truly overwhelming.

It has been both a privilege and a pleasure to work at the school for the past 29 years. I have been incredibly fortunate to work with such wonderful children, supportive families and dedicated colleagues, and I will leave with many happy memories.

Thanks to your generosity, I appear to have been equipped with everything needed for some very comfortable camping adventures over the summer months! Although, if I'm honest, I suspect I'll be more of a fair-weather camper – preferably with a local pub within easy walking distance!

I have had a lovely final week at school. My special Leavers' Service on Wednesday was especially memorable, and I have been touched by the many thoughtful messages, cards and kind words from the children.

Thank you once again for your support over the years. I wish all of our families the very best for the future and hope you all have a wonderful summer.



Learning Highlight of the Week

Class 1: Class 1 thoroughly enjoyed their Egyptian-themed topic day. Please see page 4 to read all about it!

Class 2: In Science, the children made shadow puppets, which they used to investigate how the length of a shadow changes depending on the distance from the light source.

Class 3: In Art, Class 3 enjoyed part of their marble reward, decorating glass jars and bookmarks using acrylic paints, gems and stickers.

Class 4: Class 4 enjoyed using Boomwhackers in Music to explore pitch and sound waves, linking to what they have been learning about in Science.

Classes 5 & 6: Year 5 also enjoyed Art this week. They have completed their rainforest artwork, using a range of mixed media, including collage, pastels and pencils, to create their final pieces. Their work was inspired by the artists Henri Matisse and Henri Rousseau, whom they have been learning about.

Class 7 & 8: Year 6 have enjoyed spending time together this week, signing shirts, collecting memories, and looking ahead to the exciting opportunities that await them as they prepare for the next stage of their journey.

Teaching & Learning Owls

Star - Josh, Amelia, Bella

Gold - Lyra, Joshie, Jacob, Beau, Archie & Ethan

Silver - Jerry, Jackson

Bronze - Byron, Niko & Max

Congratulations to our badge winners!



Football News

We are thrilled to share that **Henry in Class 6** has been selected to play for the Cheltenham Schools Under 11s team, representing both his school and the team during the coming season. This is a fantastic achievement, and we are incredibly proud of you, Henry.

Well done to **Frankie** and **Leo** for making it through numerous trials and getting to the final cut—a brilliant accomplishment!

Congratulations to **Tommy** and **Ethan** who represented the school this year. You did us incredibly proud and thank you for your commitment, dedication, and excellent sportsmanship.

Thank You—A huge thank you to the Jones family, William and Izzy, and their Nan, who recently won a selection of children's books from Waterstones. They have very kindly donated some of their prize books to St Mark's.

Thank you for your generosity.

These books will be enjoyed by many of our children for



Talent Show

Following last year's success and championed by the School Council, we were treated to a fantastic afternoon of entertainment at the St Mark's Talent Show Finals on Monday.

We were blown away by the incredible range of talent and confidence on display. The programme featured an exciting variety of performances, including dancers, gymnasts, rhythmic gymnasts, acrobats, singers, magicians, as well as a drum solo. There were impressive solo performances alongside fantastic group acts, with children showcasing their creativity, talent and teamwork.



Congratulations to our winners:

- **Year 3** – Felicity & Millie
- **Year 4** – Summer
- **Year 5** – Kiara, Margot, Nancy, Evie, Louisa & Honey
- **Year 6** – Oscar

A huge well done to everyone who took part. From the initial auditions through to the finals, every performer should be incredibly proud of themselves. We thoroughly enjoyed watching each and every performance.

A special thank you to **Emma Ward** for returning to St Mark's to join our judging panel. It was no easy task choosing just one winner from each year group – the standard of performances was exceptionally high!

Thank you to Mrs Reilly and the school council for organising such a fabulous event.

Sports Day

On Monday, the children were finally able to take part in Sports Day after two previous postponements due to the weather. It was well worth the wait!

The children were absolutely fantastic, proudly supporting their houses, cheering on their friends, and giving every event their very best effort. We were incredibly impressed by their determination, enthusiasm, and outstanding sportsmanship throughout the morning.

Congratulations to **Green house** for winning the closely contested Sports Day Shield – a fantastic effort!



It was a wonderful morning, and we would like to thank all the families who were able to join us to cheer on the children. Your support was very much appreciated and helped make the event even more special.

Thank you to Mrs Tarren for lending the school a PA system for the event, it very much helped bring the event to life.



Year 3 Egyptian Day

On Tuesday, Year 3 took part in an exciting Egyptian themed Topic Day. Although dressing up was optional, the children made a fantastic effort with their costumes. They all looked amazing!



Linking to their recent learning in Maths, the children made their own pyramids using 3D nets before creating Egyptian dioramas featuring their finished pyramids.

The children also enjoyed a cooking activity, where they used their peeling, grating and slicing skills to make their own delicious flatbreads.

It was a wonderful day of creative learning, and the children fully immersed themselves in the activities. Well done, Year 3!



Nominate St Mark's PTA – Help Us Win £1,000!

The Benefact Group's **Movement for Good** programme is giving away **£1,000** to nominated charities, and **St Mark's PTA** could be one of the winners!

If you have a moment, we'd be so grateful if you could nominate us by following the link below and searing for our school using our postcode GL51 6NU:

https://movementforgood.com/draws/1000?utm_source=Email-giving&utm_campaign=12days24-launch&cmp=1&utm_medium=HTMLEmail#charitySearchForm

Thank you so much for your support!

Extra Curricular Clubs Autumn Term 1

Monday

Baking Buddies Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.30pm	Starts 14/09
Gardening Club Y3-5	3.15pm - 4.00pm	Starts 14/09
Gymnastics Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.00pm	Starts 07/09
Homework Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.00pm	Starts 14/09
Recorders Y3-6	Lunchtime	Starts 14/09
Running Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.00pm	Starts 14/09

Tuesday

Orchestra Y3-6	Lunchtime	Starts 15/09
Choir Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.00pm	Starts 08/09
Tennis Y4-6	3.15pm - 4.10pm	Starts 08/09

Wednesday

Baking Buddies Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.30pm	Starts 16/09
Multisoccer	3.15pm - 4.15pm	Starts 09/06

Thursday

Kids with Bricks Y3-6	3.15pm - 4.00pm	Starts 10/09
Outdoor Learning	3.15pm - 4.15pm	Starts 17/09

Day to be confirmed

Boys Football Y5-6	Lunchtimes tbc
Girls Football Y5-6	Lunchtimes tbc



School Term Dates - 2026-27

Term 1: Tue 1st Sept – Fri 23rd Oct 2026

Term 2: Mon 2nd Nov – Fri 18th Dec 2026

Term 3: Mon 4th Jan - Fri 12th Feb 2027

Term 4: Mon 22nd Feb – Thu 25th Mar 2027

Term 5: Mon 12th April – Fri 28th May 2027

Term 6: Mon 7th June – Wed 21st July 2027

Inset Days:

1st Sept 2026, 2nd Sept 2026, 22nd Oct 2026, 23rd Oct 2026, 7th June 2027



Letter Sent Home

- Year 6 London Trip
- Young Voices Registration Letter
- Autumn Term Clubs Letter and Timetable
- Swimming Letter 2
- Panto Letter



2026-27

September

Tue 1st - INSET Day (No children in school)
Wed 2nd - INSET Day (No children in school)
Thu 3rd - First Day Back for Children
Mon 7th - Thu 10th Year 6 Bikeability
Tue 8th - Year 3 Parent Drop in 3-3.30pm
Sun 13th - Happy's Circus @ St Mark's School 12.30pm
Wed 30th - Year 6 London Trip to Parliament

October

Mon 5th - Flu Immunisations
Mon 5th – Fri 9th - Cycle to School week
Wed 7th - Year 3 & 4 Parents - Coffee with Mrs Fitch 2.30-3pm
Thu 8th - Rags Collection
Fri 9th - World Mental Health Day (Hello Yellow)
Tue 13th - Book Look
Wed 14th - Year 5 & 6 Parents - Coffee with Mrs Fitch 2.30-3pm
Tue 20th - Harvest Festival in School (Children Only)
Thu 22nd - INSET Day
Fri 24th - INSET Day and End of Term One

November

Mon 2nd - Start of Term 2
Tue 10th – Parents' Evening 3.30-6.00
Thu 12th – Parents' Evening 3.30-6.00
Fri 13th - Children in Need
Mon 23rd - Anti Bullying Week Starts and Odd Socks Day



Outdoor Learning - Autumn Term 1

Class 1: Thursday Afternoon

Class 2: Thursday Morning

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 - Autumn Term 1

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



Class 1: Monday

Class 2: Wednesday

Class 3: Thursday (non swimmers) & Friday

Class 4: Thursday (non swimmers) & Friday

Class 5: Tuesday & Friday (non swimmers)

Class 6: Tuesday Friday (non swimmers)

Class 7: Tuesday & Friday (non swimmers)

Class 8: Tuesday & Friday (non swimmers)

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