



ST MARK'S C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Value in focus: FACE Values

Growing together,
becoming all we are created to be

2nd October 2026

HEADTEACHER'S MESSAGE



The Trunk of Our Teaching and Learning Tree: A couple of weeks ago, we introduced the Roots of our Teaching and Learning Tree, which represent the foundations for learning: our Vision and Values, Healthy Relationships, Being Ready to Learn, and having a Can-Do Attitude. This week, we have been focusing on the trunk of the tree. Just as a trunk helps a tree grow strong, these learning behaviours help children develop the knowledge, skills and character they need to flourish as learners.

The Trunk reminds us that learning is not just about what we know, but how we learn. We have even introduced special actions to help children remember each learning behaviour. Ask your child if they can show you the actions and explain what they mean!

It has been wonderful to see these learning habits already being used and celebrated in lessons and Collective Worship, helping our children grow into confident and successful learners.

The Trunk: growing strong in our learning

Engage (Action: Both hands point to the floor, then open outwards)

- We join in and play our part.
- We give our best.

How parents can help: Encourage your child to take an active part in conversations at home, contribute ideas and persevere with tasks, even when they are challenging.

Be Curious (Action: Hand on hip, thumb and finger on chin)

- We ask questions and explore new ideas.
- We think hard about our learning.

How parents can help: Encourage your child to ask questions about the world around them and talk together about things they are learning at school.

Reflect and Respond (Action: Hands move towards the body, then outwards)

- We think about what we have learned and how we learned it.
- We are open to feedback that helps us improve our work.
- We can explain what we are finding tricky and know where to go for help.

How parents can help: Ask your child what they have learned each day and what strategies helped them. Encourage them to see feedback as a positive way to improve.

Positive and Motivated (Action: One thumb up, then the other thumb up next to it)

- We are proud of and celebrate success.
- We encourage ourselves and others.
- We show enthusiasm and perseverance in our learning.

How parents can help: Celebrate effort as well as achievement, encourage a positive attitude towards learning and remind your child that perseverance helps us succeed.

Together, these four parts of the trunk help children build the knowledge, skills and character they need to become **growing learners**. By engaging, being curious, reflecting and responding, and staying positive and motivated, our children are developing the habits that will help them flourish both in school and beyond.

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



Learning Highlight of the Week

Class 1: In Music, Class 1 have been using 5-Minute Music Cards to learn all about pitch. They learnt the song 'The Ghost of Tom' and divided into two groups to sing it as a round, whilst developing their listening and pitch skills.

Class 2: The children constructed their own tepees in Outdoor Learning, using bamboo, potato sacks and string. They also played a variety of games linked to their topic, the Stone Age, putting their teamwork and creativity to the test.

Class 3: In Maths, Class 3 have been adding 4-digit numbers with one exchange. They are confidently building on the knowledge and skills they developed last year.

Class 4: English has been the highlight for Class 4 this week. They are planning their mythical adventure stories and are currently busy creating their plot points, developing exciting ideas for their story.

Class 5: In PSHE, the children explored the importance of working collaboratively. They were challenged to build the tallest tower using just six sheets of paper and a roll of Sellotape. The winning team was not simply the one with the tallest tower, but the group who worked most effectively together, showing excellent communication, cooperation and teamwork skills.

Class 6: Music was also a highlight for Class 6. The children have been learning about Blues music. They played glockenspiels and expertly played along to a track, whilst focussing on the beat and keeping in time with the music and their conductor.

Class 7 & 8: The highlight for Year 6 had to be their trip to London. For the full write up see page 3!

Cycle to School Week

St Mark's will be joining schools across the nation next week by encouraging our families to take part in Cycle to School Week, from **Monday 5 to Friday 9 October**. The week was expertly introduced to the children by our School Council today. A huge well done to all the children involved!

Cycle to School week is all about taking a new route to the school gate — one that's quicker, healthier, cheaper and a whole lot more fun!



Whether you're already rolling or just getting started, it's a great opportunity to build confidence, try something new and discover how good the school run can feel on wheels.

We would love to see as many children as possible cycle or scoot all or part of the way to school.

So, dust off those bikes, grab your scooters and let's get moving!



Allergy Awareness Assembly

This week, the children watched a live assembly about allergy awareness, exploring the question: How can we make our school allergy-aware?

We would like to share the recording of the assembly with you, so that you can watch it together at home and continue the conversation.

[Watch the Allergy Awareness Assembly on YouTube](#)



Online Safety Video

This month's Online Safety video theme is **Digital Wellbeing**.

The video provides a quick overview on how to help children build healthier tech habits.

Please click [here](#) to view the video on our website.



Harvest Foodbank Appeal - Next Week

If you are able to donate to our Harvest foodbank appeal, please do so by **next Thursday 8th October at 9am.**

Please see the list of essential items on Foodbank Shopping list that are most needed by the foodbank—but any non-perishable items are welcome!

Thank you so much for helping our school community support this appeal.



Shopping list

Tinned meat/fish
Tinned veg/fruit
Cooking sauces
Coffee
Milk (UHT)
Cereals
Fruit juice (long-life)
Jam
Instant mash / noodles
Toiletries

Year 6 London Trip

The Year 6 children enjoyed a fantastic trip to London this week. They began their day with a visit to the Houses of Parliament, where they took part in a workshop, learning lots of interesting facts about the workings of Parliament. They were also given a fascinating tour, including a visit to the House of Lords and House of Commons!

The day also included a walk past Westminster Abbey and through Parliament Square Gardens, which led them to the Cenotaph, 10 Downing Street and Horse Guards Parade.

They then enjoyed a trip on the London Eye. With glorious weather, they were treated to spectacular views across London, taking in the city in all its splendour.

The children were a real delight throughout the trip and represented our school brilliantly.

Well done to Year 6 and the whole team for making the day such a memorable one.



Join us this Hello Yellow!

Next **Friday 9 October 2026** we are encouraging children and staff to wear something yellow as part **YoungMinds** campaigns for World mental Health Day. At St Mark's, we care deeply about the wellbeing of each and every child. No young person should feel alone with their mental health and that's why **Hello Yellow** matters.

We would like to invite our school community to wear something **yellow** or **brightly coloured clothes**, as a way of making the day feel special.

If you would like to, you can also donate to support the incredible work of **YoungMinds**. Please do log on to ParentPay **from Wednesday lunchtime (7th October)** when the donation option will go live.

Most importantly, we want to share the resources which YoungMinds offer to support parents if you ever need help and advice to support your children.

- Online resources (www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/)
- A phone line, open 9.30am-4pm (0808 802 5544)
- An online chat for parents and carers to speak to trained professionals if you're concerned about your children's mental health [Parents Helpline](#) | [Mental Health Help for Your Child](#) | [YoungMinds](#)



Parent Volunteer Needed – Chinese Language Club

We are looking for a **parent volunteer** to be present during our Chinese Language Club, starting after half term.

You will need to have a **DBS check**, which the school will pay for.

Don't worry – **you won't need to teach Mandarin!** Our Chinese tutor will be leading the sessions and doing all the teaching. You may even pick up a little Mandarin along the way!

If you would like to volunteer for this role, please email **Mrs Hicks** at **admin@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk**. Many thanks!



Willow Dome

The Willow Dome in the playground was created in memory of Alice Barnett, one of our beloved pupils. Children love to spend their lunch and break times inside the dome – whether just chatting together, or using their imagination in role-play games.

Having been constructed of natural materials, it has weathered in the years since it was built so we are delighted to share that our Willow Dome is set to be re-built in December, this time in sturdier materials.

This is being fully funded by our wonderful PTA – we're very grateful that they are supporting this special project and to Mr Oakey for, once again, working with us to create a Dome, in memory of Alice, which the children can enjoy for years to come.

Michael Rosen Poetry Day and Poetry Competition

We are delighted to share that our school will be taking part in **Michael Rosen's Poetry Day** on **Thursday 12th November!**

The aim of the day is to "make reading, listening to, and writing poetry fun, enjoyable and accessible for all, helping children and young people of all ages to discover its magic."

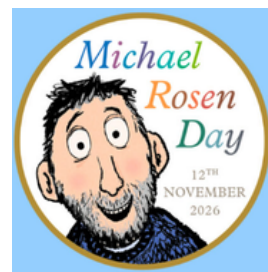
The children will take part in a live lesson with Michael Rosen, where he will read some of his poems and lead the children in a range of fun poetry activities.

Poetry Competition – Silly School Stuff

There is also an exciting poetry competition for the children to enter. Inspired by Michael Rosen's crazy and impossible poems about the funny things that can happen at school, children are being challenged to write their own "Silly School Stuff" poem.

Competition guidelines

- Poems should be no longer than 100 words.
- Poems must be based on the theme SILLY SCHOOL STUFF.
- Please include the child's first name, surname and year group above or below their poem.
- Each poem should be typed into a Word document.



How to enter

If your child would like to enter the competition, please send their completed poem to: **clerical@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk**
Please mark the email "**For the attention of Miss Thornhill**".

To allow us time to select and prepare our school entries, all poems must be received by St Mark's by **Friday 16th October**.

For further information about the competition, please visit <https://www.walker.co.uk/michael-rosen-day/poetry-competition/>

We can't wait to see the children's silly, funny, imaginative and wonderfully impossible school poems!

Coffee with Mrs Fitch

An opportunity for an informal get-together to share your 'New Year Group experiences', hear from Mrs Fitch about the school's priorities this year, and talk through any questions you may have.

Year 3 & 4: Wednesday 7 October, 2.30–3.00pm

Year 5 & 6: Wednesday 14 October, 2.30–3.00pm

Simply come to the main entrance, and we'll get you a cuppa! ☕

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, 2nd Sept, 22nd Oct, 23rd Oct, 7th June



Dates for your Diary

October

Mon 5th - Flu Immunisations

Mon 5th – Fri 9th - Cycle to School week

Wed 7th - Y3&4 Parents - Coffee with Mrs Fitch 2.30-3pm

Wed 7th - Year 6 (2025-26) Leavers Reunion 4.30pm-5pm

Thu 8th - Harvest Festival in School (Children Only)

Fri 9th - World Mental Health Day (Hello Yellow)

Mon 12th - Experience Harvest Y3-5 visit St Mark's Church

Tue 13th - Rags Collection

Tue 13th - Book Look

Wed 14th - Y5&6 Parents - Coffee with Mrs Fitch 2.30-3pm

Thu 22nd - INSET Day

Fri 23rd - INSET Day and End of Term One

Sat 31st - Year 6 Secondary Application Closing Date

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

Wed 18th - St Marks Open morning 10.30am

Mon 23rd - Anti Bullying Week Starts and Odd Socks Day

Tue 24th - St Marks Open morning 10.30am

December

Thu 3rd - Y3 Ukulele Concert for parents time tbc

Mon 7th - Carol Service **5.30-6.15** Yellow & Green House / **6.45-7.30**

Red & Blue House

Wed 9th - Panto 10am

Thu 10th - Christmas Jumper Day (Save the Children)

Wed 16th - Christmas lunch

Thu 17th - Concert for Rocksteady parents 2.15pm

Extra-Curricular Clubs Autumn Term 1 2026

Monday

Chinese Y3-6 3.15pm - 4.00pm

Gardening Y3-5 3.15pm - 4.00pm

Gymnastics Y3-6 3.15pm - 4.00pm

Homework Y3-6 3.15pm - 4.00pm

Recorders Y3-6 Lunchtime

Running Y3-6 3.15pm - 4.00pm

Tuesday

Orchestra Y3-6 Lunchtime

Boys Football Y5-6 Lunchtimes

Girls Football Y5-6 Lunchtimes

Choir Y3-6 3.15pm - 4.00pm

Tennis Y4-6 3.15pm - 4.10pm

Wednesday

Baking Buddies Y3-6 3.15pm - 4.30pm

Multisoccer 3.15pm - 4.15pm

Thursday

Kids with Bricks Y3-6 3.15pm - 4.00pm

Outdoor Learning 3.15pm - 4.15pm



Outdoor Learning



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

Please wear your PE Kit to School on PE days.



Class 1: Monday

Class 2: Wednesday

Class 3: Monday & Thursday (non swimmers)

Class 4: Monday & Thursday (non swimmers)

Class 5: Tuesday & Friday (non swimmers)

Class 6: Tuesday Friday (non swimmers)

Class 7: Wednesday & Friday (non swimmers)

Class 8: Tuesday & Friday (non swimmers)

Senior Leadership Team

Mrs Fitch: head@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk
Mr Edwards: deputy@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk
Mrs Whale: senco@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk
Mrs Hicks: admin@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk

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[Term Dates](#)