



ST MARK'S C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Value in focus: FACE Values

Growing together,
becoming all we are created to be

9th October 2026

HEADTEACHER'S MESSAGE

We were truly overwhelmed by the generosity shown by our families through the wonderful harvest donations given to **Cheltenham Foodbank**.

Thank you for your kindness and support. We know that these gifts will make a transformational difference to families in our local community and were a very special part of our Harvest Festival yesterday.



During our special **Harvest Collective Worship**, our House Captains proudly carried the donations down the aisle as an act of offering and thanksgiving, reminding us all of the importance of giving generously in our everyday lives.



We were also delighted to be joined by **Matt Craig** who works in our local churches and schools, who once again brought the value of thankfulness to life through engaging games and thought-provoking reflections, helping us to consider the many blessings we enjoy and how we can share those blessings with others. Many thanks once again for your generous donations as we show our value of **Compassion** to our local community.

With my best wishes for a lovely weekend,
Mrs A Fitch and the Staff Team

Please see below how our gifts nearly filled a whole van full of essentials for families who need them most!



Learning Highlight

Class 1: In English, Class 1 have been publishing their stories inspired by *How to Wash a Woolly Mammoth*. The children were able to choose their own Stone Age creature to create their very own adventures.

Class 2: In Outdoor Learning, the children took part in an immersive Stone Age experience. They made their own bread and butter, which they enjoyed eating with some honey. They also explored traditional building techniques by using the wattle and daub method to construct their very own wall.

Class 3: Class 3 have been learning about the differences between the Athenians and the Spartans in Ancient Greece. The children will be using their new knowledge to create posters, to show what they have learnt.

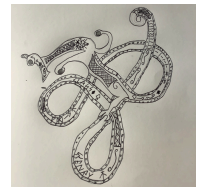
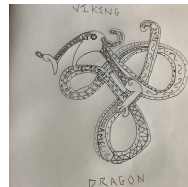
Class 4: In Science, the children have been learning how to present data using a variety of graphs and charts.

Class 5: Class 5 have been learning about the key features of an Anglo-Saxon village, exploring what made a village successful. They put their knowledge into practise by creating their own bird's-eye view maps, including these features.

Class 6: In Maths, Class 6 have been learning how to identify and calculate square numbers. They have shown a great understanding and have grown in confidence as they put their skills into practise.

Class 7: In RE, Class 7 have been researching scientists who were leaders of different faiths or held religious beliefs. They explored whether their beliefs were complimentary or contradictory to science. The children will use the information they have gathered to create their own fact files.

Class 8: Class 8 have been drawing Viking dragons in Art, developing their artistic skills and producing some fabulous pieces of work.



Cycle to School Week

Well done and thank you to everyone who was able to pedal or scoot to school this week!

It has been fantastic to see so many of you choosing these active ways to travel to school. Cycle to School Week is such a fun week to be involved in, and it's a great way to keep ourselves healthy and active. Plus, by leaving the car at home, we're also helping to reduce our impact on the environment.



Well done, everyone, and thank you for getting involved!



Rags 2 Riches 4 Schools Collection

Next **Tuesday, 13th October**, is our Rags 2 Riches 4 Schools collection!

Rags 2 Riches is a fantastic way for us to raise much-needed funds for resources and projects that directly benefit our children. If you're having a clear-out, we would be incredibly grateful for any donations.

Please place any unwanted clothing, shoes and/or accessories into a bin bag or plastic bag and return them to school by 9:00am on Tuesday 13th October.

Unfortunately, **school uniform cannot be accepted.**

For a full list of items that can be collected, please visit [Rags 2 Riches 4 Schools](#).

Thank you, as always, for your continued support — it is very much appreciated!



We Took Part in Hello Yellow!

Today we joined communities across the UK by taking part in **World Mental Health Day's Hello Yellow campaign**. This annual campaign, organised by YoungMinds, raises awareness and vital funds to support young people's mental health. Children and staff marked the day by wearing yellow or brightly coloured clothing.

We also spent time in class building our understanding of **what we mean by 'Belonging': What makes us feel a sense of belonging and how can we take steps to help others to feel this in our every-day lives**. Thank you to everyone who has donated so generously to the YoungMinds charity. So far we have raised an incredible £185.

- Online resources (www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/)
- A phone line for parent support, open 9.30am-4pm (0808 802 5544)

By taking part and showing our support, we can all help to ensure that no young person feels alone when facing challenges with their mental health.

Thank you for your wonderful support and generosity!



Teaching & Learning Owls

Silver - Rhys

Bronze - Ethan

Congratulations to our badge winners!



Cross Country Challenge at Ashley Manor

Yesterday, the boys took part in a cross-country race at Ashley Manor. It was a beautiful autumnal day, with glorious sunshine and just a little chill in the air!

The course was challenging, but a firm favourite with the children thanks to its wonderful scenery. There is always such a fantastic sense of achievement in completing the course, and it was lovely to see the boys rise to the challenge.



Well done to all our competitors, and good luck to the girls competing today!

We look forward to hearing how you get on!

Coffee With Mrs Fitch

Thank you to the Year 3 and 4 parents who joined our first Coffee with Mrs Fitch session. It was wonderful to hear such positive feedback about the children's successful transition into their new year groups. Parents shared that children have settled well, are enjoying school, making strong progress and are eager to learn each day.



Key discussion points included:

- Positive feedback about children's transition, progress and enthusiasm for learning.
- Appreciation for the clarity of school communication, particularly the weekly newsletter.
- Discussion about how our Teaching and Learning Tree is creating a shared language for effective teaching and learning across the school.
- A request for additional resources to help parents when supporting learning at home, including short online tutorials for families, particularly in mathematics, to explain teaching approaches and practical ways parents can help.
- The possibility of sharing age-related expectations with families so that support at home can be pitched appropriately.

We will be looking to develop these online support resources during Autumn Term 2.

Congestion at the school gates

A key discussion point was congestion around the Benhall and St Mark's entrances at the start of the school day. To improve safety, we are taking the following steps:

- Families approaching from Hatherley Road are encouraged to use the **main pedestrian entrance** and walk around to the playground.
- Children with **bikes and scooters** are especially encouraged to use this entrance.
- We are exploring **widening the gateway** when fencing is replaced.
- We are considering a **one-way system** for leaving the school site to ease congestion.
- We will continue to work closely with **Benhall Infant School** to identify further ways to improve safety and reduce crowding.

If you are willing to pop on a hi-vis vest and help marshal families as we introduce these changes, we would love to hear from you. With your support, we can put measures in place as quickly as possible to help keep all families safe. Please email clerical@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk if you can help.

Coffee with Mrs Fitch for 5 & 6 Parents: Wed 14th Oct 2.30pm – please do come along if you can!

Parent Pay

We kindly ask all parents to ensure that their ParentPay account remains in credit for school lunches. If you have any outstanding balances, please arrange to clear them over the weekend.

Did you know? You can set up automatic email alerts on ParentPay to notify you when your balance falls below a set amount (we suggest £5). ParentPay also offers a new auto top-up feature, making it even easier to keep your account topped up and stay on top of payments.

Do take a look at these features to help stay on top of payments with ease.



Poetry Competition Reminder

There is still time for your child to enter the Michael Rosen poetry competition. Inspired by his 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

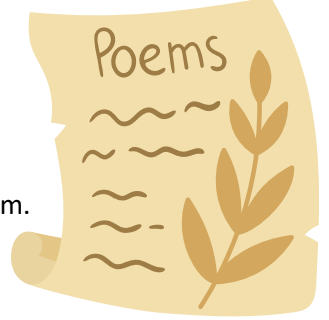
If your child would like to enter the competition, please send their completed poem to: **clerical@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk**

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!



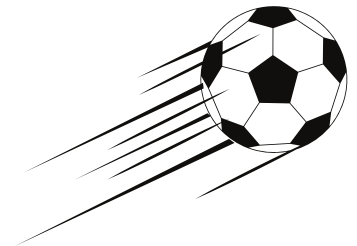
St Mark's Kick Off the Football Season

St Mark's 2–2 St Gregory's

A positive start to this year's league campaign with a hard-fought 2–2 draw against a very difficult St Gregory's side.

Playing on the tricky St Gregory's Astro, the whole team worked incredibly hard and played some really impressive football. They created chances and battled right until the final whistle, but couldn't quite find the winner.

A great team effort and a very positive start to the league campaign. Well done.



Family Football at Kayte Lane!

Looking for an affordable family day out this Sunday? Cheltenham Town Women take on Plymouth Argyle at Kayte Lane, Bishops Cleeve (GL52 3PD), on Sunday 11 October at 2pm.

The Robinesses compete in Tier 3 of the women's football pyramid, directly below WSL2, offering the chance to watch high-level women's football right here in the local community.

Tickets are just £7.50 for adults, £1 for Under-18s and £5 for students. Families can also take advantage of the £15 Family Ticket, covering 2 adults and up to 4 Under-18s, making it ideal if your children want to bring some friends along too!

Tickets are available online or at the gate on the day.

Come along and get behind the Robinesses!



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 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 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 (No children in school)

Fri 23rd - INSET Day (No children in school)

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 Mark's Open morning 10.30am

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

Tue 24th - St Mark's Open morning 10.30am

Thu 26th - St Mark's Open morning 10.30am

Thu 26th - PTA Sip and Paint evening

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

All enquiries:

admin@st-marks.gloucs.sch.uk
01242 702280

www.stmarksjunior.com

[Term Dates](#)