ST MARK'S C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Value in focus: FACE Values | Growing together, becoming all we are created to be | 16th October 2026

HEADTEACHER'S MESSAGE

Another super week at St Mark's! We have continued our focus on the **Trunk of our Teaching and Learning Tree: Engage, Be Curious, Be Positive and Motivated, and Reflect and Respond.**

These are the behaviours we want children to draw upon to help them grow as learners, and it has been fantastic to see them being put into practice across school. There has also been lots of enthusiasm in our Friday **Celebration Collective Worship**, as we use the special actions for each behaviour and celebrate, through our certificates, which parts of our Learning Tree children have brought to life that week.

Another important way in which our children can **engage and make a difference** is through pupil leadership. This week, our **School Council and FACE Champions were elected**, and I am delighted to announce our new pupil voice groups below.



Well done to our counsellors **Harriet, Jude, Liam, Byron, Lola and Lottie** and Vice Councillors, **Harry, Kryansh, Pia, Henry B, Liberty and Archie**

Our School Council gives children a genuine opportunity to share their views and ideas about life at St Mark's. Our councillors will think about what they love about our school, listen to ideas about what we could do even better and help to make a positive difference to school life.



Congratulation to our new FACE committee members, **Millie, Bea, Belle, Elsie, Poppy, Hasvi, Anwen, Kieron, Lilyana, Divit, Felicity, Neve, Florence, Hannah and Thea.**

Our FACE Champions have a slightly different but equally important role. They are role models for our values of Forgiveness, Aspire, Compassion and Engage, helping us find new ways of living these values throughout school. They will promote positive mental health and wellbeing and strengthen our links with the wider community through charity and community activities.

Together, these groups provide another important way for us to listen to children's ideas and feedback and turn them into positive action. We want our pupils to know that their voice matters and that they can play an active part in making a positive difference to our school and the community around us.

A huge well done to everyone who put themselves forward, and congratulations to our newly elected School Councillors and FACE Champions. I am really looking forward to seeing their ideas develop as we continue to put our vision into action: 'Growing together, becoming all we are created to be.'

Just a reminder that term finishes for children on Wednesday 21st October.

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

Experience Harvest



On Monday, children in Years 3, 4 and 5 visited St Mark's Church for Experience Harvest. The children were divided into groups and explored different stations around the church, each focusing on a different aspect of the harvest: Harvest of the Garden, Harvest of the Sea, Harvest of the Grain, Harvest of the Earth and Harvest of the Flock.

At each station, the children took part in activities and learnt more about where our food comes from. The ***Open the Book*** team linked each station to stories from the Bible, helping the children understand the deeper meaning of Harvest.



For example, Harvest of the Sea was linked to the Bible story of the boy who offered his five barley loaves and two fish to Jesus and his disciples. This story reminds us that even the smallest offering can achieve great things and highlights the importance of sharing and generosity. As part of this activity, the children made their own paper boats.

The key message throughout the experience was that **Harvest is a time to be grateful** — to give thanks for the food we eat and the people who provide it.

A huge **thank you** to the **Open the Book** team and additional memebrs of St Mark's Church for providing such an engaging and meaningful experience for our children.

Cross Country Challenge at Ashley Manor

Last Friday, some of our girls took part in a cross-country race at Ashley Manor. It was another glorious day, with the sun shining down on the runners!

The course at Ashley Manor is a challenging one, with plenty of hills as well as some fast-paced sections. The St Mark's girls gave it their all, showing fantastic determination and putting everything they had into the race.



A huge well done to all our runners for their amazing effort!

A special mention goes to Thea, who finished in an incredible 4th place – what a fantastic achievement!



We would also like to give a big shout-out to our supportive parents and to Lottie, who came along to cheer on her friends. It was lovely to see such great team spirit and encouragement.

Well done, girls! It was a fantastic event, and we are very proud of you all!

Learning Highlight

Class 1: In History, the children have been learning about the everyday items a Stone Age child might have used. They explored physical artefacts to discover more about what life might have been like during this period. They have also learnt the names of the three periods of the Stone Age: Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic.

Class 2: Class 2 have thoroughly enjoyed designing their Christmas cards this week and are looking forward to sharing their wonderful designs with their parents.

Class 3: In English, the children have been publishing their Greek adventure stories, inspired by the book *Beasts of Olympus*. They have taken great care to present their stories beautifully, using their very best handwriting.

Class 4: Class 4 have thoroughly enjoyed creating their own Greek Mythological creatures.

Class 5: History was also a learning highlight for Class 5. The children have been learning about the Anglo-Saxon system of crime and justice, focusing on the three ordeals used to help determine whether someone was innocent or guilty.

Class 6: In PE, the children were excited to choose between playing mini-netball matches within their houses or designing and building their very own crazy golf courses. Those who chose golf showed fantastic creativity, using different equipment and heights to create challenging courses for their balls to travel through.

Class 7: This week, Class 7 have enjoyed creating Viking Dragon drawings in Art. They were shown how to sketch the structure of the dragon, before designing their own Viking inspired patterns to fill the shape.

Class 8: The children have enjoyed writing recounts of their recent London trip, reflecting on their experiences and recalling the highlights of their visit.

Walking Home after Clubs

After half term we will need children to be collected by a parent or carer after after-school clubs, as the evenings will be getting darker. Sunset will be around 4.15pm from mid-November.



Thank you for your understanding.

Rags Collection

Thank you to everyone who was able to donated items of clothing to our Rags 2 Riches 4 schools collection.

We collected 54 bags and raised a fantastic £50, so a huge t**hank you, as always, for your continued support —**
it is very much appreciated!

PTA Paint & Sip Night – Thursday 26th Nov

Join us for a creative evening of painting, sipping and socialising at St Mark's Junior School on **Thursday 26th November at 7.30pm.**

For £35 per person, you can enjoy a relaxing and fun-filled evening, with all painting materials and guidance included. You can choose to paint a mug or create your own wax melt burner, and enjoy a delicious charcuterie, cheese or sweet treat board alongside your chosen activity.

Even better, **£5 from every ticket sold will be donated directly to the PTA,** helping to support our school.

Whether you're a budding artist or simply looking for a lovely evening with friends, this is a great opportunity to get creative while supporting St Mark's. We hope to see lots of you there!

The Poppy Project

We are inviting all children to take part in our **Poppy Project 2026** to help us remember and honour the brave people who have served, sacrificed and lost their lives in wars and conflicts.

Your Challenge

Over half term, create your very own poppy to contribute to our school remembrance project! You can make your poppy using any medium you like.

Be as creative and imaginative as you wish! Here are some ideas to inspire you:



- Painting, drawing or colouring
- Paper, card or collage
- Knitting, crochet, sewing or felt
- Clay, salt dough or other modelling materials
- Recycled or natural materials
- Digital art or mixed media



These are just ideas – we would love to see your own unique creations!

What Does Your Poppy Represent?

The poppy is a symbol of remembrance. As you create your poppy, think about what remembrance means to you and how we can honour those who have helped to protect others and bring peace. You could even include a short message of remembrance or peace with your creation.

Important Deadline

All poppies must be brought into school by **Friday 6th November 2026.** Please make sure your poppy is ready and **handed in to Mrs Edmondson** by this date so that it can be included in our school project.

We cannot wait to see the wonderful, thoughtful and imaginative poppies you create. Every poppy will help us come together as a school community to remember, reflect and show our respect.

Remember. Reflect. Create.

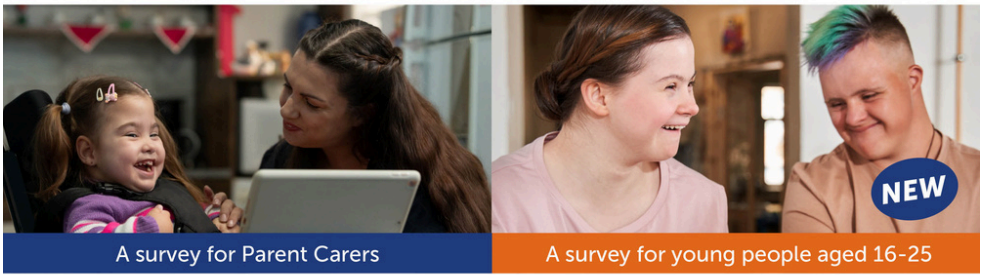
Thank you for taking part in our Poppy Project 2026.





Annual SEND Surveys 2026

Helping shape services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and disabilities



SEND families and young people are invited to help shape SEND services in Gloucestershire in the Annual SEND Surveys. The surveys opened on Monday, 5 October 2026 and will close on Friday, 4 December 2026. They were also promoted in October's edition of the SEND Families in Partnership newsletter Launch of latest Annual SEND Surveys 2026 | Gloucestershire County Council.

Parent Carers of children and young people (aged 0-25) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are being encouraged to share their experiences and help improve support for families across Gloucestershire. Following feedback from last year, there is also a separate survey for young people and adults aged 16 to 25 so they can share their experiences directly.

Run by Gloucestershire's SEND and Inclusion Local Area Partnership, which includes Gloucestershire County Council, local NHS partners and the voluntary and community sector, the surveys give families an opportunity to say what is working well, what could be better and what matters most to them.

Feedback from families is used to help shape support and services across education, health, care and early help. Importantly, what families tell us is helping to make a difference.

How findings are used: 'you said, we did' new reports for 2026
Valuable insights and feedback, including from last year's Annual SEND Survey 2025, are helping us to understand what and how we can do better.

Survey findings are analysed and reported through the annual 'you said, we did' Local Offer reports. The two 2026 reports were published on 10 September and featured in the September SEND Families in Partnership newsletter:

- Report for parent carers on the Have Your Say pages on the Local Offer
- Report for young people on the Future Me website

Hearing from all communities
Last year, 679 Parent Carers responded. Most respondents were from White British communities and had school-aged children aged 5 to 16. This year, we particularly want to hear from:

- SEND families and young people from all communities across Gloucestershire.
- Young people aged 16 to 25 and their families.
- Families with children in Early Years.

Parent Carers in SEND families can have their say now by completing the Gloucestershire Parent Carer SEND Survey

Young people (aged 16-25) with SEND can have their say now by completing the Gloucestershire Young Person with SEND Survey

Every response can help us improve support for children, young people and their families. Thank you for helping us gather a fuller picture of SEND experiences across the 0 to 25 age range and all communities in Gloucestershire.

For more information on how Parent Carers can have their say, please visit Gloucestershire's Local Offer website for Parent Carers, Support for Families with SEND in the 'Have your Say' pages.

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 202
Term 6: Mon 7th June – Wed 21st July 202



Inset Days: 1st Sept, 2nd Sept, 22nd Oct, 23rd Oct, 7th June

Dates for your Diary



October

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
Thu 5th - Greystones Farm Trip Year 3 Class 1
Tue 10th - Parents' Evening 3.30-6.00
Thu 12th - Greystones Farm Trip Year 3 Class 2
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
Thu 3rd - Christmas Fair
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
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Term Dates