



St Mark's C of E Junior School

Growing together, becoming all we are created to be

Weekly Newsletter - Friday 2nd May 2025

www.stmarksjunior.com

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

Our Value in focus this term is: SERVICE

Headteacher's Message:

Summer Term is well and truly underway and what glorious weather to kick it off with!

I do hope the Easter break brought some special time with family and friends—we're very much looking forward to all that this term will bring.

Please do keep an eye on the upcoming events—there are lots of them!



This term our value in focus is Service. We will be exploring themes such as: **Using our talents to serve, Receiving as well as giving, Giving with no strings attached, Serving with a cheerful heart.**

This week we have begun to think about ways in which we might spot **Service in Action.**

Here are some of the children's ideas so far:

Standing up for each other

Everlasting fun and kindness

Responsibility and respect

Volunteering to help those in need

Investing our time

Collaborating, consideration, caring for each other

Engage – everyone playing their part

By the end of term, the hope is that we are more aware of ways in which we can help others, how others have helped us and the difference this makes to our lives.

Have a super Bank Holiday weekend everyone,

Mrs A Fitch and the Staff Team

Learning Highlight of the Week

Class 1: In PE, Class 1 have started their Athletics unit and have been working hard on their sprinting technique.

Class 2: Class 2 started their new History topic by making Egyptian Collars.

Class 3: Class 3 also enjoyed athletics this week, where they have also been honing their sprinting skills.

Class 4: In Computing, the children made an animation to explain the food chain, which also linked to what they have been learning in Science.

Class 5: The highlight for Class 5 was also Computing. They learnt how to use Micro:bit programming software.

Class 6: In Art and History, the children have been learning about the Mayans. They drew pictures inspired by Mayan artwork and in history drew pictures of what Mayans might have looked like and what they ate.

Class 7 & 8: Year 6 had the first Outdoor Learning session of the year. They made seed bombs as well as exploring the Outdoor Learning space, thinking about how they could improve this environment. They also explored friction by striking together flint and steel to create a spark to light a fire.

St Mark's Girls Crowned League Champions!

This week we are delighted to share with you the achievements of our brilliant girls football team, who were crowned League Champions! The match report below, from coach Jenny Campbell, summarises how far the team and girls football has come!

'Our girls' team competed in the league finals this week—on one of the hottest days of the year! In the semi-final against Bishops Cleeve, the team delivered an outstanding performance, dominating from start to finish and securing a 2–0 victory.

Next up was the final against **Swindon Village, a team unbeaten for over two years** and the very team that defeated us in last year's school tournament final. We knew it would be a tough challenge. But our girls rose to the occasion, showing incredible resilience, determination, and tactical adaptability.

It was a fiercely contested and physical game—highlighting just how far girls' football has come. St Mark's clinched a **brilliant 1–0 win**, earning the title of **Girls School League Champions—a truly well-deserved victory!**

Huge congratulations to the whole team—what an achievement!

The progress our girls have made since the beginning of the school year is remarkable. Many of them have gone on to join grassroots football teams, which is fantastic for their development and for the future of football at St Mark's.



It has been a pleasure being part of the St Mark's Girls football team.'

What an amazing achievement for the team and a proud moment for St Mark's!

Special thanks has to go to Jenny for all her hard work coaching and supporting the team at all the fixtures this year.



Gloucestershire Camera Club Photography Competition

On Tuesday evening Samuel and Penny attended the GCC awards ceremony at the Playhouse Theatre in Cheltenham. The venue was buzzing with excitement as the awards were presented to the children. Samuel and Penny both received Commended awards for their photos which were presented by the Town's Mayor Cllr Paul Baker.

You may remember that St Mark's won the best overall Primary school entry last year, well we only went and **won it again!!!** This is the first time that the same school has won the Best Primary School Award two year's running. What an achievement! **Huge congratulations to all the children who entered their photographs into the competition, each and everyone one of you contributed to us winning this award.**



80th Anniversary of VE Day

Next Thursday 8th May we will be marking the 80th Anniversary of VE Day with a **red, white & blue** dress up day.

The children are welcome to wear items of **red, white & blue** clothing and any Union Jack accessories in place of their uniform.

The children will be learning about the significance of this occasion through the day, in school.



Teaching & Learning Owls

Gold - Amber & Hannah

Bronze - Seb

Congratulations to our owl badge winners!



Cycle Stars—BSCA Circuit Racing

On 13th April St Mark's enjoyed success at the BSCA Circuit Racing. **St Mark's came a fantastic 2nd place out of the 19 schools that entered.**

Dexter won the years 1,2,3 novice race and Isaac came 4th followed by Max who came 8th both qualifying for the advanced group in years 1,2,3.

In the years 4,5, 6 Novice race, Teddy came 6th, with Beau, Freddie and Langdon all racing valiantly.

William and Chris also qualified for the advanced group whilst up against some tough competition in their category.



Well done to all the children who took part and represented St Mark's. We are all very impressed and look forward to seeing how you all progress.

There are still spaces available for Cycle Stars club this term, email cycles-tars001@gmail.com for more information.

A huge THANK YOU to our TSB Volunteers!

In the Easter holidays, one of our parents and her colleagues from TSB spent a day brightening up our school and its grounds!

The seven volunteers painted a corridor, toilet walls and the school gate. They also re-varnished the large planters, benches and fence posts in the playground.

We can't thank them enough for the difference they have made and the positive energy they brought with them!



Thank you

Tree Pruning

Over the Easter holidays there was a great team effort to tackle a tree at the end of our field which had become overgrown.

Thanks to our Caretaker Mr Apps as well as Riana from year 5 and her family.

You all did a brilliant job!



Cheltenham Jazz Festival

Yesterday Year 5 went on a trip to the Cheltenham Jazz Festival. The Jazz Festivals schools programme provides an opportunity for children to experience and celebrate the world of jazz. This year the concert took place inside a Big Top. We were taken on a musical adventure exploring the fundamentals of Jazz by the band, Happy Vampers. The performers demonstrated the different hand gestures they use to indicate things like changes in tempo, volume, or key, or to signal the end of a solo or chorus. They also demonstrated "call and response" which refers to a musical exchange where one musician (or section) presents a musical phrase (the "call"), and another musician (or section) responds with a complementary phrase. It was a fascinating insight into the world of Jazz.



What a fantastic concert and the children did so well considering what a hot day it was.



Tag Rugby Tournament

On Wednesday, 12 children from Y5 and Y6 participated in a Rugby Festival at Newlands. There were a total of 31 teams from schools around Cheltenham. In the morning we played six games in a pool of schools and were then placed in groups for the afternoon. The focus was very much on fair play, teamwork and positive attitudes throughout the day.

After our morning matches we were placed in the second pool of six and played some great rugby. The positive attitude and determination was maintained throughout the day despite the heat. The players were also very grateful for the ice lollies that were dropped off at lunchtime.

A great performance from all the children involved.



Miss Thom and Mrs Hopkinson 'Walk the Walk' Fundraising Challenge

Miss Thom and Mrs Hopkinson are taking part in the 'walk the walk' challenge. A walking marathon around the city of London starting around midnight. They would like to share details of their challenge with our whole school community.



'Breast Cancer has impacted so many lives, albeit directly or indirectly, so therefore, we want to make a positive difference and raise funds for a worthwhile cause. Although separately, we have completed many fundraising challenges, this is the 1st time we have done one together.

A challenge that is exciting to be part of, but one that is going to push us to our fitness limits. We will be adorning as much pink, glitter and flashing lights as possible and hopefully making friends along the way.'



If you would like to make a donation please click [here](#) to be taken to their fundraising page. Thank you!

Sports Day



Sports day will be 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 (All children will require a packed lunch)

12.55pm

Children to meet in the hall & parents to find a spot by the track.

House captains will lead each house out and around the track

1.15pm - 2.55pm

Races



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](#).

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—Monday 12th May

It's time again for that much needed clear out of any unwanted clothing, shoes and accessories.



The Rags2riches4schools project is primarily about protecting our planet, and as a bonus, we will be **raising funds for our school to use** on projects for the children.

We would love to see a full van load of donations from St Mark's. Please drop off items in your own bags into the office. The collection will be on **Monday 12th May** at 9am.

Click [here](#) for full list of what can be collected. Please note they cannot take school uniforms.

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 5th - Bank Holiday
Thu 8th - VE Day - Children can wear red, white & blue.
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 - Swimming Gala
Wed 21st - GWR Trip Year 6
Wed 21st - Spring Fayre (No Clubs on)
Thu 22nd - Book Look
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
Wed 25th - Year 6 Production 7.00pm Performance
Thu 26th - 'Explore our World' Year 5 Bournside Visit
Mon 30th - Bournside Transition Week

Letters Sent Home

- Rocksteady Letter



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

Please note: all children must wear long trousers for safety reasons.

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.