



St Mark's C E Primary School

13th February 2026

Newsletter No 20

<https://www.st-marks.kent.sch.uk/>

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you all have a lovely, peaceful half term break.

Girls Football



On Monday, the girl's football team played a match against Langton Green. Unfortunately, we lost but our goalie, Hallie who got Player of the Match, made some cracking saves! Overall, we had great fun and showed great sportsmanship to each other. A special shout out to our defence who stopped more than eight goals going in. Written by Isabella G

St Mark's Prayer Competition

We are excited to launch our St Mark's Prayer Competition.

Yesterday in worship, the children were thinking about our School Values of courage, compassion, and creativity.

They have now been invited to write their own prayers which they must hand in by 9am on Friday 27th February. Rev. Claire and the Leading Lights will look at the entries, and we will select several prayers to be used during our daily school worship. We are looking forward to receiving their prayers. Mrs Vickers



Dates to remember.

Added dates in yellow.

February

16th – 20th MegaCamps at school

23rd (Mon) Inset Day

24th (Tue) Term 4 starts

24th (Tue) EYs Hearing Screening

27th (Fri) Y4 Dover swimming starts swimming

27th (Fri) PTA School Legacy Disco Y5 and Y6

March

4th (Wed) Year 1 Wakehurst Place

5th (Thurs) World Book Day

6th (Fri) PTA Uniform sale and sweet treats 3:15pm

9th - 12th Book Fair

9th – 13th Science Week

9th (Mon) Parents Evening 3.30-5.30

12th (Thurs) Parents Evening 3:30 – 7pm

17th (Tue) Y2L Sharing Assembly 9am

19th (Thurs) Y1A Sharing Assembly 9am

20th (Fri) Red Nose Day

20th (Fri) Parent Rep Meeting

23rd (Mon) Year 6 Easter Experience

24th (Tue) Rocksteady Concert

28th (Sat) PTA Easter Hunt

30th (Mon) Easter Service at church

April

1st (Wed) Year 3 to Maidstone Museum

2nd (Thurs) Last day of Term

7th – 17th Mega Camps at school

20th (Mon) Term 5 starts

23rd (Thurs) EY Vision Screening

24th (Fri) St Mark's Day

24th (Fri) School Photographer: Class Photos

Term Dates etc are on our website

www.st-marks.kent.sch.uk

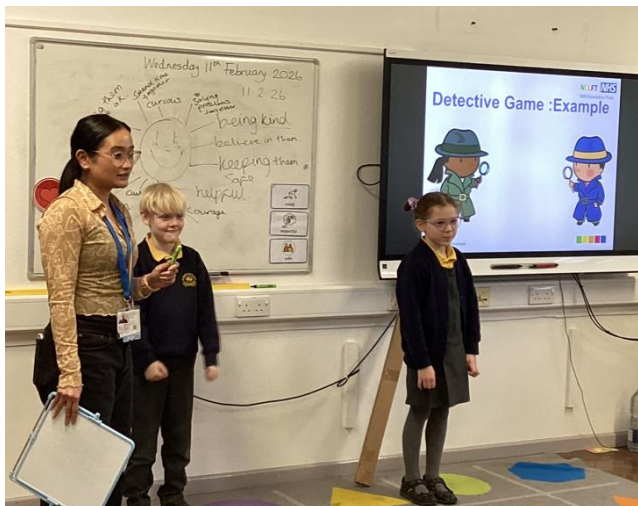


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Aspire, Believe, Succeed

School Lunches

Term 4 lunches have now been uploaded to Arbor and can be chosen. Continuing the "Around the World" series, meals on Thursday 26th February will be coming from USA! Please see menu for details.



Year 3 Friendship Workshop

Lewes Class played games including organising themselves into height order without talking and guessing how others feel in a variety of situations. These activities helped us to develop our skills in working together as a team. We explored all the ways we can show friendship towards others.

Read to Succeed

Our reading challenge continues to move forwards. We have reached that fabulous part of the year when the book cupboard is being accessed regularly, and we have currently given out 115 books for 100 reads! This is wonderful but our aim was that every child should have a book by the end of the summer term so please keep reading.

Rewards handed out so far:

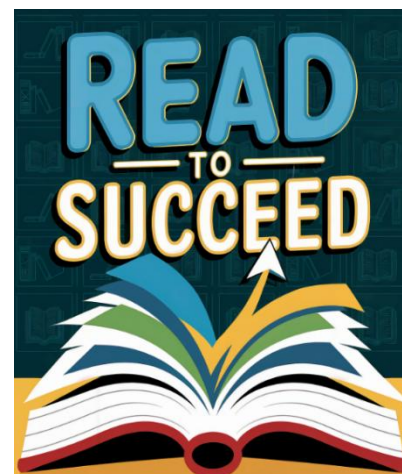
- 311 pencils or badges (only 21 more pencils/badges to go for a full house)
- 246 bookmarks
- 173 reading bugs
- 115 books
- 16 tea party invites

Well done to Tonbridge and Oxford class who currently head up the most rewards currently collected.

A huge thank you to the PTA who continue to support this incentive. Please do keep reading - *2026 is the National Year of Reading.*

Remember that seeing adults in their lives reading and as readers will encourage them to value and see the importance in reading.

Below are a few reminders about our reading programme, the Read to Succeed and pleasure for reading



Read to Succeed FAQ's

How are reads counted?

We ask that reads are counted weekly by either the class teacher or teaching partner and recorded on a spreadsheet. However, on occasions this may be fortnightly if something unforeseen has arisen in the classroom on the day of the count.

Only reads entered into the reading journal count towards the points. Once in KS2 children can write up their own reading but a parent must sign this.

All reading entries need to be signed.



How many reads can be earned each week?

A maximum of 7 reads can be earned weekly. This is 1 read per day for the allotted time. We ask that you aim for 5 reads a week.

They may read more than once a day, but this counts as 1 read.

Reading points can be earned over a school break. Therefore, if a child reads every day for the allotted time during the Christmas holidays they could earn 14 reading points.

How long should each read be?

Early Years and Key Stage 1 children should read for 15-20 mins per day

Key Stage 2 children should read for 30-40 minutes per day.

They may read for longer than this, but this will only count as 1 read.

What can be read?

Anything can be read as long as it adds up to the allotted time for their age group e.g., fiction and non-fiction books, poetry, magazine articles, newspaper entries (if appropriate). This is how we are building a love for reading/reading for pleasure.

When and how are books changed?

All children in KS1 should be coming home with a Little Wandle book and a reading for pleasure book taken from the reading corner in class.

In Early Years and KS1 the Little Wandle books are changed weekly. This is so that each book is read covering the appropriate teaching as per instructed by the scheme. Please visit <https://www.littlewandle.org.uk/> for further information about Phonics and early reading or look in the back of the Little Wandle books.

Once children have moved beyond the Little Wandle books they will move to a levelled Accelerated Reader text and will continue have another pleasure for reading text. Either of these can be read for the reading points. They should be changed when they have been finished or if your child decides that they are not enjoying the story.

From Year 2 the children are responsible for changing their book when they need to, this is to encourage independence. Books are available in all corridors for the children to access with ease.

What is reading for pleasure?

This is children engaging in reading of anything they enjoy and have chosen to engage in.

Safer Internet Day

On Tuesday 10th February, our school celebrated Safer Internet Day, focusing on the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI).

In EYFS and KS1, children explored the safe use of AI in everyday technology, like smart speakers. In KS2, pupils considered a wider range of AI tools and discussed what is safe and appropriate online. AI allows computers and devices to “learn” and respond in clever ways. Children may encounter AI through voice assistants, video recommendations, online games, and search engines. Research

from the Alan Turing Institute (2025) found that 1 in 4 children aged 8–12 are already using AI technology.

While AI can be helpful, not all tools are suitable for children. Many platforms, including chatbots like ChatGPT, are designed for users aged 13 and older. Parents should check recommended ages and guide their child's use carefully. For younger children, it's important that AI is used with an adult so they can learn safely.

In school, we encourage children to think critically about what they see online and to make safe choices when using technology and to create a personal online safety plan.

How parents can help

- Talk with your child about what AI is and how it works, explaining that it does not always get things right.
- Check age ratings on apps, games, or AI tools, and supervise their use.
- Protect personal information — remind children not to share names, school details, photos, or passwords online.
- Encourage questions — let them know they can speak to a trusted adult if something online seems confusing or worrying.
- Think critically together — help children understand that not everything they see online is true.
- By working together, we can help children develop the skills they need to use technology safely and confidently.



PTA News

Calling all Year 5&6's! Last chance to purchase your tickets for the Year 6 Legacy Disco:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-GB/ticketing/year-6-legacy-disco>

Get booking your tickets ASAP for the eggs-citing brand-new St Mark's PTA Easter Egg Hunt! We moved it to **SUNDAY** 29th March to enable as many of you to come along as possible. There will be two trail "levels": one for your younger ones and then the wanna-be detectives can help solve the clues left by the "Pecky Blinders" who have been up to mischief in the grounds of the school! To book: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-GB/ticketing/st-marks-pta-easter-egg-hunt--2026>



Great Athletes: Courtney Orange

Thank you so much for sponsoring your child when Courtney Orange came to St Mark's last week. The children had such a great time, and the school raised a total of £1,557 in the process! We will let you know what we have been able to spend the money on shortly. Thank you for your support.

Reminders

- Lunch menu next week: **Week 1** Menu can be found on our website [St Mark's Church of England Primary School - Lunches](#) and also on the quick links tab on our website.
- **No nuts or nut spreads please.** Please click below for lunchbox ideas and recipes. [Lunchbox ideas and recipes – Healthier Families - NHS](#)

Head's Heroes, Attendance and Punctuality

On Fridays we celebrate children for their effort and achievements throughout the week:

Extra playtime goes to:

Attendance: Y5 Tonbridge
Punctuality: Y5 Hever
This week's Attendance: 95.8%

This week the Head's Heroes are:

EYFS Camber	Bert	For always being an enthusiastic learner. You have inspired others to learn about space and shared your knowledge with the rest of the class.
EYFS Windsor	Aria	For being confident and using her big voice more, to share her ideas and opinions with her friends and Teachers!
Y1 Arundel	Jamie	For trying his best all week and making Mrs Kington proud 😊
Y1 Bodiam	Evie	For showing kindness and thoughtfulness to all
Y2 Leeds	Giles	For always being a positive influence in class and showing compassion.
Y2 Pevensey	Yash	For his confidence in multiplication and division!
Y3 Lewes	Mara	Writing a beautiful shape poem.
Y3 Deal	Gabby	For her enthusiasm to always share her thoughts and ideas in class discussion.
Y4 Dover	Ibrahim	For his creativity and determination with our DT this term. Well done 😊
Y4 Farnham	George-Derick	Excellent improvement in handwriting and positive attitude.
Y5 Hever	Jacob	For an excellent biography and for his outstanding mental maths skills!
Y5 Tonbridge	Melissa	For the determination and resilience whilst learning more times tables. Well done!
Y6 Oxford	Bella JS	For using her metacognitive strategies to help find the way she learns best!
Y6 Rochester	Rochester	For actively making new discoveries while studying Light and linking this to meaningful, new learning. Well done! 😊

This week's Unsung Heroes are:

Tonbridge: Leon, Scarlett, Tyler, Audrey, Alanna, Kyla, Olivia, Ivan, Orla, Manahil, Nirvi, Karina, Finley, Autumn and Josh.

Bodiam – Sophia, Clarice, Charlotte

Yours sincerely,

Mr S Bird
Headteacher

