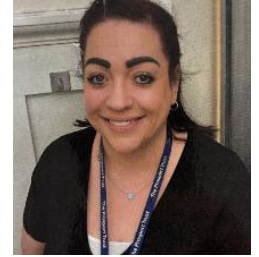


Date: 30th April 2026 Issue : 5

Dear Parents/carers,

I hope that you all had a really lovely and restful Easter break. The children have, once again, returned to school with positive attitudes and lots of smiles. Please look at the diary dates later in this newsletter- this Summer term is set to be a busy one.



On 8th July from 3.30-5pm we are planning to hold a 'games' event for all families in the school. We would love for as many families to attend with your child/children. Each child who attends with a parent/carer will receive a pack of resources to play lots of games. We are looking forward to hosting this and will send more details closer to the time.

Thank you to the **PTA** for gifting every child an Easter Egg on March 27th. The PTA are planning on having their AGM (Annual General Meeting) in May and will let you know when a time and date has been confirmed. Please do come along if you are interested in finding out more about the PTA at St Mark's, and how you can be involved.

Staffing news: Welcome to Mrs Coombes who joined us in the office in March. Mrs Hagan has joined Mrs Smith, Mrs Wright and me as part of the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Leader) team.

Thank you for your support as we have all been getting used to the operating times for the school office. Just a reminder that the **school office is open from 9-4pm Monday to Friday**. Please continue to encourage your child to take messages to their teacher as this develops their independence and resilience and please use **Studybugs to report absences**.

Thank you for supporting our decision to close the Queen's Road gate at drop off and pick ups each day, due to safeguarding all members of our school. Please do remember that the **entrance to school opens for children at 8.40am** so please remain with your child until a member of staff has opened the door. Also please do not park on the 'zig zag' lines outside of school as these are there as a 'mandatory safety zone' to keep everyone safe as they come in to school. Thank you for your cooperation with this.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter.

Best regards,

Rachel Jones



Learning updates



During the Spring term we are encouraging the children to face **challenges** in learning and life with confidence. We have also been focusing on oracy, discussing what we are learning so that we understand learning better.

All of the children have been busy working very hard and learning lots- here are some of the highlights since the last newsletter:



Diamond class- The children explored the topics of inheritance, evolution and survival of the fittest during our 'Voyage of the Beagle' project. They produced inherited feature cards, classification keys and completed a sketch study of adapted animals in the style of Charles Darwins' research drawings. Diamond class really enjoyed learning about how species can change over time to adapt to their situations and environments.

Ruby class have been enjoying their project 'Ready Steady Grow'. They visited Hinton Ampner to gather ideas for their own gardens and are exploring seeds and plants.



Emerald class loved "visiting" New Zealand after making passports and hoping aboard their class flight to Auckland. They discovered many interesting facts about the human and physical features of this incredible place. Share the children's wonderful home learning posters and our class powerpoint by clicking this link: [St Mark's Church of England Primary School - Happy Holiday Spring 2 2026](#)



Emerald class' Titanic broadcast is also fantastic, click here to find out all about Titanic: [St Mark's Church of England Primary School - SOS Titanic Spring 1 2026](#) (it is at the bottom of the web page).

In **Sapphire Class** this term they celebrated Pause Day by completing reflective activities linked to spirituality. The class also led the Easter Service at St Mark's Church, this year's theme was 'The Sounds of Holy Week'. They told the story of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection using sounds, songs and passages from the bible.



Vision



Living and Learning together- Building Firm Foundations



Our vision is for all children to develop a lifelong love of learning and sense of belonging, within a welcoming, nurturing and inclusive Christian community. All children have the opportunity to become free thinking, responsible citizens, whilst understanding and appreciating the wonder of our world. Children leave St Mark's with the confidence to live fulfilling lives, based on the teachings and example of Jesus.

Matthew 7:24-27

Children have been selected in Celebration Worship on Friday as 'Builder of the week' where they have shown dedication to improving in one of the CIRCLE values. They have been enjoying wearing their hard hats around school and celebrating the firm foundations they are building on.



Builders of the week since last newsletter:

Ralf, the Y1/2 Gym Team, Mary H, Niyarika, Teddi, Emerald Class, Marni, Lucia, Ezra, Lyra K, Teddy S and Diamond Class, Ayaan, Esther, Musadiq and Andrae.

Attendance

In the Spring term, some children were unwell. Let's hope that the better weather will mean less coughs and colds and less illness. If you are not sure whether your child should be in school please look on the NHS website for helpful advice: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)



If you, or your child, are concerned about your child's attendance or punctuality, please contact Rachel Jones (Attendance Leader) in school to discuss this further. There is also support and guidance for parents about attendance at: [Attendance guidance for parents | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

Reminders about Penalty Notices:

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions (1 session is a morning or afternoon) or more, within a 10 week period, and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of Mrs Wright, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. This also includes children being late to school on 10 or more occasions after registers close at 9am, without good reason.

Raising Young Voices

Seven children from Year 3/4 (from the School Council and Digital Leaders) visited Rushmoor Borough Council to take part in their Raising Young Voices day. They listened to a talk about the role of the borough council and the council chamber. They then went on a tour of the council offices, including visiting the Mayor's parlour, while completing a quiz about what they were seeing. After, the Mayor arrived and got dressed in his mayoral robes, talking to the children about each item. The Mayor and his mace carrier demonstrated how council meetings begin and the speech traffic light system. Finally the children had the opportunity to hold their own council meeting and were tasked with organising next year's budget while also reducing the council's spending.



Easter Week 2026

Easter Egg Competition

There were lots of amazing entries in the decorate an egg competition. This year's theme was animals- see if you can spot which animals these are. Well done to all of the children who entered- the staff found it really hard to choose winners.



Pause Day

In the morning of Thursday 26th March, we had our annual Pause Day. The children engaged positively in a range of activities. These activities were planned in order for the children to reflect on the world around them and to 'pause' and consider what they think and believe. All of the children also explored more about the Easter story and what this means to them. During Pause Day Emerald Class created beautiful Triptych pictures sequencing three important parts of the Easter story. These were displayed in the church on Easter Sunday. Thank you to Mrs Smith for organising the Pause Day and to the children for engaging in the day respectfully and positively.



Easter Service

Sapphire Class led the whole school in our Easter Service on Thursday 26th March. The children read, spoke, sang and played their recorders amazingly well. The service gave us all time to reflect and focus on what we are grateful for. Thank you to Mrs Bishop, Mrs Hagan, Mrs Armstrong, Miss Sandberg and the children, who worked hard to make it such an amazing service and thank you to the staff at St Mark's Church for welcoming us once again.

World Book Day Tea Party

Well done to the children who won the golden tickets from the Wowza bars for a tea party with Mrs Jones. We had a lovely time, chatting about books we like and laughing when Mrs Jones spilt water on the table cloth! Thank you to the PTA for organising this for us.



Dates for your diaries

Summer Term	Event
11 th -14 th May	Year 6 SATs Assessments
Friday 22 nd May	INSET day (school is closed)
25 th -29 th May	Half term
1 st -5 th June	Year 4 MTC (Multiplication Tables Check)
8 th -11 th June	Year 1 Phonics Screening
Thursday 11 th June	Year 6 Think Safe visit
15 th -19 th June	Reception Bike week
Tuesday 16 th June	Year 6 visit to Guildford Cathedral- leavers Service
Monday 22 nd June	INSET day (school closed)
Tuesday 23 rd June	Year 6 visit Farnborough Sixth Form College
Wednesday 24 th June	Sports Day- details to follow
Tuesday 30 th June	KS1 performance
Wednesday 1 st July- Thursday 2 nd July	Transition days
Sports week- 6 th -10 th July	Sports week- children can wear PE kit all week as there will be sporting activities every day of the week (details to follow)
Wednesday 8 th July 3.30-5pm	Family Games Event (details to follow)
Tuesday 14 th July	KS2 performance (details to follow)
Thursday 16 th July	Big Day Out
Tuesday 21 st July at 9.30am	Year 6 leavers service at St Mark's Church

Online Safety/Safeguarding Updates

Is my child ready for a phone?

As a parent of a (nearly) teenager, I know the peer pressure involved with phones and apps for children. However, as parents and carers, it is our number one job to keep our children safe. My top tip for parents would always be to talk to your child about what they are doing on their device (if they have one). Having open discussions about the internet and the world of technology enables children to come and speak to you if something makes them feel uncomfortable or if something has gone wrong.

The NSPCC have worked with Vodafone to develop a tool to use as a family to consider whether your child is 'ready' for the responsibility of a phone:

[How to Choose Your Child's First Phone | Vodafone UK](#)

If you and your children already have devices you might be interested in using this **Digital Family Pledge** to set rules and expectations about phone use:

[Digital Family Pledge - Vodafone UK News Centre](#)

This **NSPCC Toolkit** also has some great tips and advice for phone/device/internet safety:

[Phone safety for your family | NSPCC Toolkit | Vodafone UK](#)



Kids Online Safety from DSIT (Department for Science, Innovation and Technology)

[Help your child stay safe online - Kids Online Safety](#)

The UK government has launched the 'Kids Online Safety' campaign to help parents and carers support their children to navigate the digital world safely and confidently. On this website you can *'find practical information from trusted places to help you feel more confident on the steps you can take to protect your child online.'*

Using the link below you can also contribute to a national survey (by May 26th), where the Government are consulting on:

- *setting a minimum age for children to access social media - and what age would be right*
- *restricting risky functionalities and design features that encourage excessive use, such as infinite scrolling and autoplay*
- *whether the digital age of consent should be raised*
- *how age verification and age assurance technologies can support effective implementation*
- *whether the guidance on the use of mobile phones in schools should be put on a statutory footing*
- *better support for parents, including clearer guidance and simpler parental controls*

Please complete the survey here: [Growing up in the online world: a national consultation - GOV.UK](#)

Please come and speak to me if you have any questions about how you can support your child. Also please look on the school website: [St Mark's Church of England Primary School - Keeping your child safe online for guides and tips about internet safety.](#)

Fearless reporting

We have been asked to share with you the following link from Crimestoppers.

Fearless enables young people to pass on information about crime 100% anonymously

[Fearless: Anonymous Reporting for a Safer Community | Crimestoppers](#)

