



# Newsletter Friday 7th March 2025

A BRAVE AND MIGHTY MAN  
Judges 6 Frieze Panels 3 and 4  
People of God

The Lord turned toward Gideon and said, "Then use your great power and go save the Israelites from the Midianites. I am sending you to save them."

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the daffodils begin to bloom and the days grow longer, we're thrilled to see signs of spring all around! It's wonderful to see the children enjoying the brighter, warmer weather in the playground. However, please remember to send your child to school with a coat or jumper, as the British weather is very fickle and unpredictable.

Welcome, Mini Marsdens!

We're delighted to announce that our Mini Marsdens group is going really well. It takes place every Tuesday morning in the school hall from 8:45am to about 10:00am. It's a fantastic opportunity for parents of younger children to connect, share experiences, and for little ones to enjoy some playtime. Mrs Walsh has led two wonderful sessions, and we'd love to see even more of you there! Come along for a friendly chat and a cup of tea. We would love to meet parents and little people who don't even have a connection with school. Encourage them to come along and see how wonderful we are!



Need to Get a Message Through?  
Meet Our Message Lady!

We understand that sometimes you need to get a message to your child's teacher at the beginning of the school day. To make this easier, we have a dedicated message lady on the yard during morning drop-off. She will be stationed near the main gate into the yard, has a clipboard and is happy to take any urgent messages. She is called Mrs Stone. This is a quick and efficient way to ensure your message gets through without keeping the class teacher talking when they need to be sorting out a smooth start to the learning day.

I am also aware that some of you may be unfamiliar with our morning whistle routine. On the first whistle the children go to their lines. On the second whistle they are quiet and smart, ready to move into their learning space' (school). This is also the sign for you to go about your daily business because the children are now safely in the care of the school staff.

We're committed to creating a supportive and engaging environment for all our pupils and families. Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Wishing you a happy and sunny spring! Fingers crossed.

Warm Regards

Mrs M M Underwood.



### This weeks Medal Winners are:

Rory	-	Reception	- for superb segmenting
Riley	-	Year 1	- for sensational science
Logan	-	Year 2	- for marvellous maths
Riana	-	Year 3	- for achieving 100% in their spelling test
Harry S	-	Year 3	- for achieving 100% in their spelling test
Olivia	-	Year 3	- for achieving 100% in their spelling test
Aviya	-	Year 4	- for amazing confident retelling of the bible story about Gideon
Isaac	-	Year 6	- for fabulous content and handwriting in literacy
Sam	-	Year 6	- for sensational Shakespearean writing
Jasmine	-	Year 6	- for sensational Shakespearean writing



Friends of St John's are holding an Easter bingo night on 3rd April. We need helpers to serve hot dogs and man the tuck shop. If you are able to help ensure the night is a success please see the office. More details about tickets to follow.



### Fundraising

Please sign up with the Easy Fundraising Website to help raise vital funds for our school. It is free and very easy to register. Scan the attached QR code and get started.

### GMSJ Food bank

Our staff are working hard to keep the food bank well-stocked for our school families. All the items we provide have been sourced and collected by our staff members and it is topped up at least 3 times a week. This is something we at GMSJ are very proud of. Unfortunately, a few individuals are taking excessive amounts, which is impacting our ability to support everyone in need. This misuse is disheartening and depletes resources for those who truly rely on them. Please be respectful when using the foodbank and take only what you need. Our Motto is "Take what you need, Give when you can."

### Dates for your Diary

11th March	Y1	Local Walk
13th March	Y2	Thornton Hall Farm
13th March	KS2	Careers Day
14th March	CHOIR	Winter Gardens
19th March	Y4	Viking Visit
20th March	Rec	Little Lancashire Village
26th March	Y4	Towneley River Visit
26th March	ALL SCHOOL	GMSJ Book Day
26th March	ALL SCHOOL	Parents Evening
26 Mar- 2 Apr	ALL SCHOOL	Book Fair
29th April	PARENTS	Friends Meeting 3.30pm
19-21st May	Y6	Robinwood

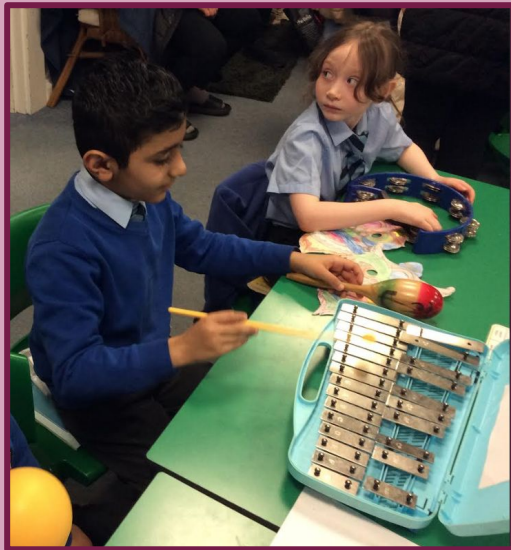


Before February half-term, Year 4 enjoyed a Glow Dodgeball session with Sports Cool during Ace time.



Year 4 started their swimming lessons last week. The children loved their time in the water.

Year 3 invited parents and carers in before half-term to showcase their music skills.



# Mini

Baby & Toddler  
**GROUP**



# Marsdens



A new baby and toddler group every Tuesday in the main hall of GMSJ from 8:45 – 10am. First session Tues 25<sup>th</sup> February  
(Term-time only)

Come and have a cup of tea or coffee, a biscuit and a chat.



Please note, this is not a drop off session – adults must stay.

For further info contact school on 01282 615055.

All welcome, you do not need to already have a child attending GMSJ, so let everyone know.



# Great Marsden St John's Primary School

Church of England Academy

Headteacher  
Mrs M Underwood  
BA Hons | QTS | NPQH

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The Friends of Great Marsden St Johns do a lot to contribute to the school. All things the Friends group do are done to benefit the children, this includes funding transport to go on school trips and provide new sheds to store and maintain the children's toys. We all greatly appreciate what they do for us, but as with all things, money is the largest hurdle in giving the children the best experiences we can offer. The friends have signed up to Easyfundraising, a fantastic way to raise money for the children by buying the things you love or need.

Purchase items from your favourite vendors, ranging from Argos and Ebay, to M&S, Sainsburys and even Just Eats. You purchase what you want from these vendors and they make a donation to the Friends. On the website you can see what percentage of your purchase will be donated. This is a no extra cost way of donating to the school while you do your shopping.

Scan the QR code below to be taken to the easyfundraising website for Friends of Great Marsden. Please sign up, explore and use the website when shopping. Every penny helps benefit the children.



# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST READING SKILLS

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditional books remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

## 1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF TEXT

Before integrating technology, consider the types of text that a child engages with. If they need help on an e-reader, digital reading apps can assist by scanning and reading words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practice are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

## 2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles – such as dyslexia-friendly fonts – are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

## 3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user-friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

## 4 INTERACTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

## 5 VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

## 6 SUBTITLES AND CLOSED CAPTIONS

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their favourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written words sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them to words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

## 7 USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

## 9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

## 8 VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

## 10 SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides opportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13–16 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media sites include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

## Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lown is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, [Neuroteachers](https://www.neuroteachers.com), which offers a library of short, 'bite-size' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-sensory trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College