

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

01 May 2020

Last week, I received an email from a parent who was keen to thank the school for the efforts that have been put in to developing the Home Learning programme. As part of this email, the parent mentioned that on the day of writing, 22nd April, the [50th Anniversary of Earth Day](#) was taking place and their work involved organising activities to mark this event. Now, to be honest, this date had almost passed me by, so I was grateful for the information and have subsequently reflected on the coincidence of the Anniversary occurring during this unprecedented lock-down period. For environmental campaigners and indeed, for anyone who cares about our planet, this time of isolation has brought hitherto unexpected benefits for the natural world. Cities across the continents are reporting much improved air quality and consequently, nature appears to be thriving in new ways. Perhaps this is the silver lining of the Coronavirus cloud? Only time will tell, but for now, we can continue to enjoy walks and bike rides, in a more peaceful environment at this beautiful time of the year. On this note, it was interesting to hear Mrs Burbridge's account in this week's St Faith's podcast of how the birds and nature in general are flourishing in her garden. I expect many of you are finding the same.

Time for Art

The isolation period has also provided more time for our pupils to develop their creative skills. Mrs Bowes, Head of Art and Design, is delighted with the quality and variety of art work that has been sent to her over the past few weeks. Many have been inspired by the challenges set on the VLE and the Home Learning tasks, while others have seized the opportunity to experiment with their own new techniques. Across the year groups it is clear to see that Art is helping many cope with the realities of lock-down and it is heartening to see the creative work being sent to us.

Sport

During this lock-down period, our ingenious sports staff have developed a range of home-made training videos to keep our pupils ready for their seasons as and when they are able to start. For parents struggling to keep active in the current circumstances there are plenty of [activities here for you to try too](#) (I would be especially keen to see home videos of you all practising hurdles over make-shift obstacles in your gardens and driveways!). There is a plethora of training videos to be found in the side bar of this newsletter.

[View the full PE page](#) [Watch hockey training videos on youtube](#)

In addition, and to keep the spirit of competitive sport alive, Mr Clayton-Smith has set a 'Beat the Teacher' challenge, open to both pupils and parents to post their 5km or 10km run times.

[FURTHER DETAILS AVAILABLE HERE](#)

Here is a message you will enjoy from the sports staff to the children, via Mr Helliwell.

The Home Learning Programme

It has been a productive week as teachers and families settle in to the Home Learning programme. I am grateful to the IT Network team, particularly Mr Southby, together with Mr Mitchell, Mrs Oxborough and Mr Mageean, for their excellent work in smoothing out the technical bumps in the systems. We continue to be hugely appreciative of the patience, understanding and efforts of parents in supporting their children with the Home Learning Programme. One email from a parent this week, summed up the situation, *'I'm sure you are all on your knees as teachers, especially those of you with kids. I find just helping X hard work. I think you are all amazing and I love St. Faith's more than ever now. So thank you so much for your hard work and amazing lessons.'*

While most of the school undertake their learning from home we continue to care for up to forty key worker children on site each week day. These pupils are following the Home Learning programme, which has allowed us to observe first-hand how successfully the children are adjusting to this new way of working. After a day or so of adapting to the new technologies we are now seeing the children in school settle to the set tasks with a striking degree of confidence and independence.

Reports from those at home are that many are working in the same way. The teachers have certainly been very impressed by the quality of the work produced and have sent me some examples, which are included in the side bar of this newsletter. Whilst this system of on-line learning is not something anyone expected, it is clear that even in these early stages, it will help to develop children's resilience and independence – skills which will hold them in good stead in the future and something which I have conveyed to the children in a message which will be sent to them on Monday morning.

Cambridge On-Line Orchestra

St Faith's percussion teacher, Mr Aldous, has created Cambridge's first on-line orchestra during the lock-down. This week the orchestra released their first remotely recorded piece, Hawaii Five-0, featuring 50 participants and over 60 individual recordings which Mr Aldous has pieced together to create this wonderful, up-lifting video. Look out for some current and former St Faith's musicians as you relax to the tropical beat. The main drummer is an Old Fidelian who is playing in his house in Los Angeles!

[WATCH THE YOUTUBE VIDEO](#)

Virtual Community

If you haven't done so already, please do have a look at the 'Virtual Community' page on the VLE. 'Thought for the Day' messages appear for the pupils in Years 3-5 and 6-8 each week day; these may be inspirational quotes or short stories. There are also weekly PSHCE messages for these age groups to consider, along with video clips. Pupils and parents can test themselves on the challenging weekly current affairs quiz - answers are provided! There are also suggestions for activities which children may enjoy, to get them away from screens. A new pastoral spotlight for parents appears each week this week's theme is wellbeing. Last, but certainly not least are the weekly House videos, posted on Thursdays. These are presented by the Heads of House, although many of them contain special guests! I hope that watching the videos will help the children feel part of their House whilst school is closed.

[VISIT THE VIRTUAL COMMUNITY PAGE](#)

Finally...

In the meantime, I am delighted to report the release of the latest St Faith's Podcast. This week, contributions include a sporting knowledge duel between Mr North and Mr Rusted, three poems and a story read by pupils, a message from Mrs Smith to Pre Prep, the latest extract from Mrs Davis' interactive book and plenty of musical entertainment.

[LISTEN TO MR GORICK'S PODCAST](#)

I wish you a safe and enjoyable weekend.

Nigel Helliwell