

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

05 June 2020

Welcome Back

Welcome to the second half of the summer term! It is certainly not the summer term we had in mind when the academic year began way back in September. Nevertheless, this week has brought a renewed sense of optimism and vitality, a lifting of spirits, as three year groups returned to their classrooms. After months of almost total silence across the site, 'the fields were alive with the sound of children', as Julie Andrews would have sung had she been at St Faith's this week.

Lots of smiling faces greeted me as the pupils arrived at school, happy to be back together with friends and teachers after ten weeks at home. I am delighted to say that there has been a very high attendance with well over 90% of the pupils in the three eligible year groups back on site. With a maximum of 12 children in each classroom and a carefully tailored timetable of lessons and activities, the children seem more than happy with their modified arrangements.

When I called in to see the classes in action (keeping my distance of course), I was most impressed by the quality of the work and the focus of the children. Whilst live steaming a Computing lesson on website addresses, Mr Mitchell was testing the pupils on abbreviations for countries, beginning with 'uk' and 'fr' then moving on to less obvious ones such as 'es' and 'de'. These were all answered quickly, but there was a stunned silence as he asked for the country with the abbreviation 'wf' in its website address. I'll let you see if you can work that one out! I also listened to a fascinating lesson on Ancient Greek Theatre by Ms Allen, a drawing lesson by Mrs Bowes and a Year 1 comprehension exercise in which the pupils were given the answers and were required to deduce the questions.

The pupils have settled well in to break times too, enjoying the glorious sunshine at the beginning of the week. It has been great to see groups devising their own ingenious games to maintain social distancing. Here is a photo I took of The Year 6s playing wink murder at lunchtime!

There was a Mediterranean feel as the Pre Prep enjoyed their packed lunches under the shade of the giant pine trees.

A great deal of our planning has been devoted to the arrival and departure of pupils and I am pleased to say this has run smoothly this week, greatly aided by our welcoming and efficient support staff who always seem to rise to the occasion. Not surprisingly, the children adapted very quickly to the new routines.

Many thanks to all parents who have shown their appreciation, verbally and by email, for the arrangements that have been put in place. It has been a complex and significant piece of planning and we are relieved and pleased that week one has gone so well. As a message from one parent remarked, *Thank you so much for making our children's first day back so wonderful. I have two very happy content children tonight who have just loved being back albeit under a slightly different routine. Watching their faces as they walked in this morning was something I will always remember... the joy and excitement on their faces was so special.*

St Faith's Beach

As well as welcoming back Foundation and Years 1 and 6 we continue to provide a service in school for the children of keyworkers. Indeed, over half term many were in school enjoying a week free of the demands of the home learning curriculum. When I talked to the children one sunny afternoon last week, they told me that they had just been to the St Faith's beach! Not having been made aware that Cambridge was a coastal town I learnt, from further questioning, that in fact they were referring to the improvised use of the long jump pit, which in the half-term sunshine became the ideal spot for digging, building sand castles and pouring water. Judging by their broad grins, red faces and sandy limbs, they had enjoyed a wonderful time.

Home Learning Resumes

With the recommencement of the summer term, those pupils not in school have returned to following our Home Learning programme. Once again I would like to thank all parents for the relentless support they are providing for their children as they continue their St Faith's education remotely, and also to the staff too, who spent their half term preparing more online lessons as well as writing the end of year reports.

We will continue to develop the Home Learning programme in line with feedback and experience. Enhancements this week have included new live lessons in French (in addition to Spanish, Classics and Humanities) for Years 7 and 8 as well as the introduction of Engineering lessons for Years 3 and 4. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the Home Learning programme survey over half-term. Your feedback will very helpful in shape its future development. Once the results of the survey have been fully analysed we will be in touch to share them with you, together with the planned changes. We anticipate that this will be early next week.

Tudor Life

Year 6 has recently been researching Tudor Life in Humanities and were given a task to re-create a certain aspect of Tudor life. As is only to be expected from our pupils, they rose to the challenge in a variety of ways and I couldn't resist sharing their pieces of work with you below. From what I have seen, it is clear that the local teddy bear population will be relieved when the pupils have moved on from this task!

[VIEW THEIR CREATIVE WORK](#)

Creative Writing Awards

I was delighted to receive an email from Mrs Greaves, Head of English, this week informing us that six pupils had made it through the local round of the Rotary Young Writer competition and will now have their work submitted to the regional competition. Well done indeed to Rufus and Romily (Year 6), Eddie (Year 7) and Lulu, Louisa and Lily (Year 8). A special mention to Lily whose writing was judged to be the winner of the Intermediate Section. We look forward to hearing how they all get on in the next round.

Podcast

Grab you headphones, relax and listen to this week's St Faith's [Podcast!](#) Musical performances generously recorded by pupils and Music teachers during lockdown are a feature of this week's edition. Ryan's extraordinary composition 'Trojan Battle Song' is well worth a listen, as are performances by Ayla and Eray F, Elizabeth P, Mr Sedgwick, Mrs Cobb, Mrs Landymore, Mr Dolby, Miss Racine, Ms Mowatt and Mr Gorick! Not quite the Class Concerts week we had planned but we hope you enjoy the pieces. Please send any recordings to podcast@stfaiths.co.uk

Finally

Those of you who were regulars at school breakfast may be interested to see what the Dining Room looks like now - a new Year 6 social distancing classroom!

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell