

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

19 June 2020

Last weekend, I read in a national newspaper that some animals, including birds and dogs, can sense at an early stage when thunderstorms are arriving. As with everything in the press, I took it with a pinch of salt. Then on a calm, sunny Tuesday evening with blue skies above, Mollie (our terrier dog) went in to a sudden state of panic, started shaking and leapt on to my lap as I was working at my computer. For half an hour or so, as she huddled ever closer to me, I wondered what had prompted her swift change of mood, but then, apparently from nowhere, dark menacing clouds arrived, thunder and lightning filled the skies and the heavens opened. Who needs a meteorologist when you have a Jack Russell!

The weather has indeed been unpredictable this week. One moment we have baked under intense sunshine and the next we have been deluged with short, sharp thunderstorms. Happy times for the gardeners but not necessarily great for operating a school. Nevertheless, day to day life at St Faith's has been remarkably calm this week, as our new systems of teaching and learning, drop-off and pick-up, lunches and breaks and safety protocols have bedded down well and become part of everyday life. Home Learning too is running smoother as the incremental improvements become established. It has all seemed, well, rather normal.

Year 2 Little Inventor Day

On Wednesday, Year 2 enjoyed a full day of engineering-focused home learning as they became Little Inventors for the day, under the direction of Mrs Oxborough. The morning began with an introductory video from Dr Hoyle about the essence of engineering - problem solving, applying knowledge and building solutions. Dr Hoyle then talked about the engineering process before setting the Year 2 pupils the task of designing and building a roller coaster. Live lesson link ups through the day with Mrs Oxborough allowed the children to ask questions and better understand the task set. Clearly, Year 2 relished the challenge and Mrs Oxborough and Dr Hoyle were delighted with the pupils' designs and prototypes, a few examples can be found here while all their creations can be seen on the [VLE](#).

[CURRENT PARENTS CAN VIEW ALL THE PHOTOS AND VIDEOS HERE](#)

New Era Exams

Throughout the past three months Miss Tucker, peripatetic Speech and Drama teacher, has

continued with virtual lessons for those under her tutelage. Living rooms have been re-deployed as virtual stages as her pupils have rehearsed their lines and refined their performances. Today and tomorrow, 46 pupils will be taking their New Era Speech and Drama exams. These include assessments in Reading, Public Speaking, Verse and Prose, Acting, and Shakespeare - all done virtually, using online video meeting apps to connect remotely with their examiners. We wish our pupils every success over the next two days.

The Great St Faith's Bake Off

A few weeks ago our resident baker, Miss Gilford, set a St Faith's Bake-Off challenge, asking pupils to bake either sweet or savoury treats or create show-stoppers with the theme of 'lockdown'. The response has been fantastic and Miss Gilford was thrilled with the photos submitted of various bakes, sharing them with Head Chef Kevin who commented, 'From looking at the photos I can see there has been a high standard of baking. I would happily tuck into some of the delicious goodies and also put some on the menu at St Faith's. I will be asking for the recipes soon!' As you can see below, the variety of baking was truly impressive and I suspect the waistlines of a few parents may have grown as a result!

Year 8 STEM Fair

As I mentioned last week, Year 8s are continuing to present the findings of the STEM Fair

projects via virtual meetings with their class mates. This week's presentations can be found [here](#) and are all well worth a look. Mrs Oxborough and Mr Brent, who coordinate the Green Goblins race team, were particularly interested in Ben's research into the best 'pushing' technique to achieve the fastest possible start at the beginning of a race. Ben's research should prove invaluable to the future Green Goblin teams!

20 Songs in 20 Days

For those partial to exercising your vocal cords, Ms Overman, Pre Prep Music teacher, has put together a [community sing along page](#). The page provides lessons, words and links to 20 songs which pupils, or indeed whole families, can try out over 20 days. Songs include 'You are my Sunshine' and 'Thank you for the Music', uplifting sing-a-long songs for quality family time. Today's song is in memory of Dame Vera Lynn, We'll Meet Again. I do hope you enjoy them.

Interactive Book

The Interactive Book is almost finished! Aided and abetted by her readers, Mrs Davis has led her characters through a lockdown, where children can only communicate via the 'versatelly', to a dramatic secret rescue of Sham's grandmother - and the group of Resisters is now plotting to bring down the Suits and their terrible Krissmas regime. But how will they do it? And will they succeed? The only way to find out is to keep reading/listening until the end - and if you haven't joined the Interactive Book club, it is never too late to begin!

[CATCH UP ON THE INTERACTIVE BOOK HERE](#)

Finally...

Next week, we welcome back two more year groups, 2 and 4, to help them prepare them for their transition to a new part of the school community in September. We will then have five year groups in school and four at home following the Home Learning programme. We continue to look forward to a time when all our year groups can once again be back together on site, and this is very much part of our planning.

On the subject of being back together, this week's [podcast](#) features 'We'll meet again' by Dame Vera Lynn who died this week, aged 103. What an important part she played in raising people's spirits when communities were separated during WW2. This is the 9th and final podcast from our resident DJ, Mr Gorick. In addition to music from the late Dame Vera, Mr G is joined by Head Chef Kevin, Miss Kennerley, Miss Gilford talks in more detail about the Bake Off, and Mrs Walker provides some remote Yoga advice. Many of you have been in touch over the past few months saying how much you have appreciated the podcast, and the opportunity to hear familiar voices while working from home. My sincere thanks go to Mr Gorick and all his contributors who have helped maintain the spirit of the St Faith's community during the lockdown period.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell