

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

03 July 2020

The end of the school year is a time for reflection, a chance to look back at pupils' achievements and celebrate collective successes. Sadly, the main event for doing this – Speech Day – has not been possible this year. Instead, we have produced a Speech Day film; below is the public version with the Prize Winners lists omitted (for data protection purposes). You should have received the link to the St Faith's community version earlier today. We hope you enjoy the film and the opportunity to join us virtually in celebrating the past three terms.

<https://youtu.be/5zF--uJj67w>

I have to say that despite the unusual circumstances, St Faith's has thrived. I have never felt so proud of our community and the way our staff, pupils and parents have pulled together to meet the challenges of the pandemic. My inbox is awash with messages from parents thanking the staff for their work over the past five months. This extract from one I received on Tuesday conveys a message common to most.

We wanted to write to you, to convey our sincere thanks to you and all of your staff for the way that you have reacted to the pandemic and continued to provide education to the children in unprecedented and extremely challenging times. You should be extremely proud of the way the whole team has pulled together.

The speed and fluidity of the situation has been challenging, to say the least, and I am the first to admit we haven't got it right all of the time. Nevertheless, as we complete one of the most unusual years in the School's history, we should look back with pride on what we have achieved together and look forward with a renewed sense of optimism that we will continue to meet the challenges that lay ahead. My sincere thanks to everyone – staff, pupils and parents – for the part you have played in enabling the school to flourish this year.

Action from This Week...

I thought you might be interested to see how school is operating in these unusual times, so armed with my mobile phone, I made this short film as I walked around school on Thursday and Friday mornings.

<https://youtu.be/n71ZhcykQYE>

Year 8

It has been a great pleasure to have our Year 8 pupils back in school for their final week at St Faith's. As well as having the opportunity to catch up with teachers who have supported them on their journey through St Faith's, they have been able to take part in special activities. On Wednesday, they enjoyed an alternative Year 8 Sports Day, with individual times and distances being recorded across a variety of socially-distanced disciplines. The atmosphere was no less competitive than usual! Today they watched the Speech Day film, had a BBQ lunch on the Latham Road sports fields and received their Yearbooks, leavers' badges, book tokens, Colours, certificates, and 'hoodies' at a social-distanced presentation in the Headmaster's Garden. Despite the unusual circumstances, the Year 8s really enjoyed seeing their friends and teachers and spending their last few days in school. We will miss them a great deal but wish them all every happiness and success as they move on to pastures new. As Old Fidelians, they will always be welcome back. Here is an extract from one of many lovely messages I received from Year 8 parents this week:

I am very sorry not to be able to say thank you to you in person and having to do it by email is not ideal, but we wanted to thank you so very much. St Faith's is such a fabulous school. We wanted to thank you and your staff for all the hard work you have put in over the past few months, but especially throughout the whole time our boys have been at St Faith's. X has had a fantastic time at St Faith's and we are all very sad that that part of his school journey is over but we are all excited for the next stage. I can't express how much pleasure we have derived from seeing him grow up confident and happy with the help of all his teachers and friends and how happy he now is. We will be very sorry not to be seeing the stripy blazers and chequered mat again but it was wonderful that the Year 8s could get back for the last week and again thank you for managing to arrange this. It has been a pleasure to be a St Faith's parent.

Record-Breaking Speech and Drama Success

I am thrilled to announce that all 46 pupils who took (online) New Era Speech and Drama exams two weeks ago, achieved a Distinction – a 100% Distinction rate which we believe is a first for the school.

The exams included Reading, Public Speaking, Verse and Prose Speaking, Shakespeare, and Solo and Duologue Acting, and ranged in complexity from Preliminary Grade through to Grade 4.

Public speaking is a life skill and the ability to communicate clearly and concisely will stand our pupils in very good stead in the future. Furthermore, the practical exploration of prose, poetry and plays enables pupils to elevate their understanding of the written word and therefore support their academic work. With all this in mind it is even more pleasing to receive such an outstanding set of results.

My sincere thanks to Miss Tucker for persevering in very challenging circumstances and developing a whole new way of teaching Drama virtually. Many congratulations also, to the

children who clearly worked hard to put in place the teaching points Miss Tucker gave them and who learnt new ways of performing which could be accessed and assessed online. I look forward to congratulating the children personally when we are all back in school together.

Further details on how to sign your child up for Speech and Drama lessons may be found in the index of this newsletter.

Literary Success

This week we heard that Sofi P's story, *Grunt the Aardvark*, has been judged by Ross Welford as runner-up in his Re-Writing Competition. Ross, an author of children's books who visited St Faith's last term as part of our Book Week, commented on Sofi's clever story plot, lovely descriptions and good humour. Many congratulations to Sofi. A copy of Sofi's story is in the index.

'A Time We Will Never See'

The Interactive Book now has a title! Mrs Davis and her band of book followers held an official naming party last week (with Mrs Davis and many of the participants dressed up as their favourite book characters!) and the outcome was 'A Time We Will Never See' (A Krissmas Tale). Written by Mrs Davis and guided in its direction by pupils who have followed the trials and tribulations of Sham and Priya over the past 11 weeks, the [final chapter](#) went 'live' today. Further illustrations can still be added over the summer, so if you haven't had an opportunity to read, listen or contribute, there is still plenty of time. Thank you to Mrs Davis for her ingenuity and energy in conceiving this project and for embracing the collective imagination of our pupils. The whole project has embodied the spirit of the school during a very unusual time in our history.

Pre Prep Sports Day

Pre Prep held a distinctly different type of sports day this morning. Each 'bubble' took part in a series of socially distanced races on School House field to celebrate the end of the school year.

[MORE PHOTOS ON THE VLE HERE](#)

Fund Raising for Makukhanye

Having been inspired by their trip to South Africa with the school last summer, three Year 8 boys, Rory, Callum and Ewan, completed their own team triathlon last weekend, to raise money for Makukhanye School. The boys began in damp conditions at 7:30am on Saturday morning and by lunchtime had completed their individual challenges. Rory cycled a total of 82km to Ely and back; this is the distance Maukuhanye families have to travel from Jeffreys Bay to Port Elizabeth to obtain official papers so that they can exist legally and the school can receive funding for their attendance. Callum ran and rowed a total of 12km; this is the distance around the perimeter of Robben Island. Ewan completed a 7.5km swim in recognition of the 'freedom swim' from Robben Island to Bloubergstrand, Cape Town - he then carried on until Rory arrived back from his bike ride so swam a total of 10km. Collectively this was quite an endurance feat! So far the boys have raised an impressive £1,808 for Makukhanye and they are justifiably delighted. Very well done to Callum, Rory and Ewan – we are proud of you.

A number of pupils have expressed disappointment in the past few weeks that we were unable to hold our annual Makukhanye fundraising fair this year and have indicated that they intend to do something over the summer holidays to raise funds for our South African partnership school. This is heart-warming to hear. Please keep us informed of any Makukhanye fund-raising projects.

Old Fidelian News

Speaking of Old Fidelians, last week I updated you on news of OFs taking on leadership roles at Uppingham. This week I am delighted to say I have learned that no less than eight OFs have been made Prefects at The Leys. Olivia B, Grace K and Wilf B have all be appointed as Heads of their Houses; Will S, Sebi R, Freddy R and Evie G are all Deputy Heads of their Houses and Ruby J is the Sports Prefect. This week, I also heard that Rebecca M has been made a Prefect at Oakham. It is such a pleasure to hear how well our OFs continue to do at their senior schools; our sincere congratulations to everyone.

How to Complicate Balloon Popping

Year 4 pupils were recently challenged with learning more about and making their own Rube Goldberg Machines in Engineering. For those not familiar this involves making machines intentionally designed to perform a simple task in an indirect and overly complicated way. Mrs Oxborough was particularly impressed with Thomas's 'Balloon Popping' machine. I couldn't resist sharing it with you.

Updates

You may recall that last week we drew your attention to the beautiful heart shape drawn in the sky and wondered how it came to be. Apparently this was a gesture from St Catherine's College to the Graduates of 2020 who at that specific time, should have been enjoying their graduation ceremony, but were unable to given the Coronavirus situation. What a lovely way to send them off for the summer! We still have no feedback on how the St Faith's blazer came to be worn by a member of The Style Council at the 1985 LiveAid concert; do get in touch if you can shed any light on this mystery!

Finally...

With the delights of warm summer days ahead, I will finish by sharing with you this enchanting video of 'Dragonfly', sung by many of our senior singers during lockdown and produced by Mr Gorick and Mr Lepage Dean.

I wish you all an enjoyable summer and look forward, very much, to the school community coming back together in September.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell