

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

11 September 2020

As I mentioned in my message to you last week, the beginning of term marked the first day at school for our Foundation pupils, and at the top end of the school, the first day as a Prefect for our Year 8s. These are both significant milestones in a child's life at St Faith's. This week saw another important moment in time when, on Tuesday, the Year 3s appeared at school wearing their brand new uniform. The children were beaming with delight as their stripy St Faith's blazers and colourful house ties gleamed in the autumn sunlight. The pride on their faces was clearly evident when I spoke to them at break time and took these photos. Earlier today one boy made the teachers giggle when he arrived at school, grinning from ear to ear and stridently announcing to everyone, 'Yessss, I've been waiting all summer to wear this uniform!'

Year 5 Scientists

It wasn't just Year 3 marking significant educational milestones this week. In the Science Laboratories our Year 5 pupils experienced their very first lesson using the Bunsen Burner. Under the watchful eye of the Science staff, they learnt the theory of the Bunsen Burner flame before lighting one themselves. After a few shaky-handed moments, I am delighted to say that all pupils gained in confidence and are well on their way to achieving their Bunsen Burner Licences and becoming fully fledged scientists. As I know from touring the school with prospective parents, lessons using the Bunsen Burner are often indelibly etched on a person's memory of school life and, I suspect for many of our Year 5s, their experience this week will be long remembered.

Roald Dahl Day

Our librarians, Miss Johnson and Mrs Warren organised a slightly different celebration of Roald Dahl Day this year with specially selected video clips and activities enjoyed during Tutor sessions this morning. Beginning a school day with the words of one of the world's most beloved children's authors proved to be a wonderful way to stimulate imaginations! A Roald Dahl quiz was also organised to celebrate the famous author's birthday (details are in the sidebar). As always, we are grateful to our wonderful librarians for arranging these activities.

Zoom

In this world of virtual meetings, I was delighted to spend time on Monday and Tuesday evenings connecting with our SFPA and Old Fidelian committees via *Zoom*. 'You're on mute' has become a new common phrase nowadays, as anyone who regularly attends virtual meetings knows. The other phrase I have noticed creeping in, particularly in families with several older children, is '*sorry there isn't enough bandwidth in the house to support the video call*'. Despite the technical challenges both meetings were productive and we look forward to being able to share plans with you in due course about how these two invaluable communities will continue to support the school.

Tatler

This week saw publication of the 2020 Tatler Schools Guide and we are delighted to say that St Faith's has been included again. Schools have no influence on what the Tatler editors write nor can they pay for inclusion. The Guide aims to reflect the current views of parents and the wider community. Editors visit schools regularly - one came to St Faith's last January and followed up by contacting parents. '*The school's strong academic ethos is driven by an innovative future-focused curriculum and an emphasis on engineering, which gives pupils invaluable problem-solving skills and a confidence that's evident across the board,*' was part of the write up from Tatler in this year's Guide. After quizzing parents and pupils alike, the quality of our food was a strong theme with Tatler declaring, '*The food is also ridiculously good:* favourites include chicken katsu curry with pak choi' Having enjoyed Kevin's katsu curry yesterday, I can say with confidence that it is still delicious!

Finally...

In these different times, let me share with you three situations which I witnessed this week that we wouldn't have seen a year ago: Mr Mitchell having a socially-distanced lunch in Tom's Garden, Mrs North cleaning PE equipment in between lessons and Mr Davenport, Mrs Caughtry and Mrs Sandercock managing the pick-up of Year 5 pupils.

I have to say that the staff team have been superb in adapting to the new way of working and it has been great to see routines bedding down this week. Many have commented to me on how good it is to be back and I, too, have really enjoyed having the pupils and staff here on site again. It may be slightly different, but the St Faith's buzz has definitely returned!

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell