

# THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

**25 September 2020**

*'No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main,'*  
(John Donne 1572-1631).

'Community' was the theme of this week's whole school assembly, delivered by Mrs Davies (Deputy Head Academic) to 4JB and live streamed to all the other classes. She described the Italian town of Roseto Valforte where for centuries the community supported itself and its inhabitants. The promise of work in the slate quarries of Pennsylvania, USA in the 1880s led to a wave of emigration and the establishment of a new settlement near Bangor, USA, aptly named Roseto, as a cultural enclave, a home away from home, so to speak, for the emigrants.

The community has been the focus of much scientific and sociological research since its residents exhibited half the national average rate of cardiovascular disease. The reason? Community, or the so-called 'Roseto Effect'. Researchers concluded that the support the community gave each and every one of its members resulted in reduced stress and overall improved well-being which translated into significantly improved health outcomes. A fascinating story and a powerful message for our pupils, particularly in these challenging times.

Mrs Davies went on to explain how the St Faith's community can continue to support one another and why this is so important for both the school and everyone's well-being. And to make the story even more poignant, Mrs Davies was approached on the path after her assembly by a pupil whose family once lived in Roseto Valforte. This is indeed a small world.

## **Year 2 Science**

This week our community of budding scientists in Year 2 have been conducting their own investigations. Children have been asking 'how?', 'why?' and 'what will happen if?', making predictions, following simple experiments and learning how to be specific in their observations. The experiments centred around their favourite topic - sweets and sugar!

## **Year 8 Assessments**

As an integral part of the academic curriculum, Year 7 normally undertake an exam week during the summer term. This promotes the development of strong study skills and provides valuable experience of exam conditions. Of course, last term we were unable to hold such assessments for our then Year 7s so instead this week the Year 8s have been completing tests in English, Maths and Science. Comprising a Foundation paper and a Higher paper in each subject, the exams are designed to stretch our pupils, testing their detailed knowledge and understanding of their Year 7 work and preparing them for forthcoming senior school examinations. While scaled back from a normal assessment week it has, none the less, been an intense week for Year 8. We trust they will enjoy a brief respite over the weekend before their learning continues unabated next week!

## Virtual Library

This week saw the start of 'Virtual Library' sessions during which Miss Johnson beamed into Year 5 English classrooms via *Teams* video link. During the sessions, she was able to discuss the latest publications to arrive on the shelves of the library and to hear from the children what they have been reading and are hoping to read. Over the past 10 days our 'Book Boxes' scheme has also gone live. Children can now choose books from a selection or request books by filling in a form.

Children can now also explore the new links on the Assignment pages of their English *Teams* which allows them to request specific books from the library, or seek advice about future reading. Requests and recommendations are then delivered to English lessons, whilst returned books are quarantined for 72 hours before being ready to go back into circulation; thus keeping everyone safe whilst keeping alive the love of reading at St Faith's. As Miss Johnson says to the children, "If you can't come to the library, the library can come to you!"

## Art and Drama

It has been a busy start to the year for the Art Department as new projects have been introduced to each year group. For example, Year 3 pupils have been experimenting with mixing the primary colours on the colour wheel; this knowledge will be used to create a painting of a meadow. Year 5 pupils have been sketching outdoors, observing and working hard to draw accurately the details found on the school buildings. These detailed sketches will be the starting point to make abstract designs in the style of artists, Paul Klee and Piet Mondrian. Year 8s are studying portraiture and once they have practised drawing the facial features, such as the eye (seen in the gallery below), the challenge will be to produce a portrait using the dry-point etching technique. Here are a few examples of their work to date.

In Drama, Year 5 have been working on choral speech, adding in lots of expression. We thought you would like to see 5B's response to the opening of Roald Dahl's rhyme 'Cinderella'.

## And Finally...

Whilst delivering a birthday card this week I was asked by pupils in a Year 4 classroom if they could sing *Happy Birthday*. As singing isn't currently permissible we collectively concluded that humming was still feasible and thus we all launched into a hummed rendition of this popular tune. This caused great hilarity both in the class and the passers-by who stopped to join in, and was both a great example of a delightfully light-hearted moment of celebration, and the power of community in these challenging times.

With all best wishes

Nigel Helliwell