

# THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

## 11th December 2020

It seems like a very long time ago since the beginning of term, when the gas company arrived unexpectedly to dig up Trumpington Road. The past three months have not been short of challenges but, as always, the St Faith's community has pulled together in great style to ensure that the children have enjoyed a broad and rigorous education. Staff have worked harder than ever before, often carrying out unfamiliar tasks in testing conditions. Pupils have shown great resilience in adapting to the different routines and parents have been hugely supportive and grateful for the continuity of education provided. It has been the toughest period in my career but I have never been so proud of the school.

### Science

Pupils' enjoyment and success was clearly evident in Science this week. Mrs Price, Head of Science, was so impressed by the confident, clear explanations of the Year 4 home-made experiments that she plans to show the videos to older pupils.

Meanwhile Year 5 has been learning about the 'magic' of capillary action by making paper flowers to visualise the process.

<https://youtu.be/ENTR81BwGrw>

Year 8 pupils have been studying light by dissecting a cow's eye! This helped them to have a better understanding of the function of each part of the eye and its role in transmitting light. As the eye was being dissected, there were a few squeamish looking faces amongst the class, but the general atmosphere was one of fascination and curiosity.

## **The Dentist will see you now...**

This week, Year 3 were joined (virtually) by parent, Dr Khanna, who spoke to the children about his work as a dentist and imparted some interesting facts about teeth. The children discovered that cheese is one of the best foods to eat (for our teeth) while sucking a slice of orange is actually really bad for them. They were also shocked to learn what happens if they don't look after their teeth. Hopefully, since the lesson, all Year 3 children have been counting a full two minutes while brushing their teeth, and haven't forgotten to brush (in circles) the inside and back teeth.

## **Music**

Many congratulations to all pupils (over 40) who took ABRSM music exams recently. The

results were most impressive with many Distinctions (90%) and Merits (80%) and almost all pupils achieving more than 75%, from Pre-Test to Grade 5. A number of children also passed ABRSM Grade 5 theory exams, which are considered to be equivalent to a GCSE. Mr Gorick is keen to remind all our musicians that the school holiday does not mean a holiday from practice. In the side bar of this newsletter, he has recommended a few ideas for entertaining virtual Christmas concerts, as a way to keep our young musicians engaged and inspired over the next few weeks.

Speaking of Music, this week we heard that Ryan in Year 7 was awarded second place in the prestigious Oakham School Christmas Carol composition competition in which pupils were challenged to write their own festive song. Here is a recording of Ryan's carol, 'Bright, bright, in silver light' which has been recorded by pupils of Oakham School as part of the award.

## Drama

Year 5 pupils have been busy rehearsing their mini-plays based on Roald Dahl's revolting rhymes, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *Cinderella*, *The Wolf's Tale* and *Snow White*. Here is an preview of the film which we hope to be able to release to Year 5 parents before Christmas.

<https://youtu.be/vDWj9ghZIGk>

## Primary Maths Challenge

I am delighted to announce that seven pupils have been awarded gold certificates for their excellent scores in the Primary Mathematics Challenge, aimed at pupils in Year 6. Answering the questions does not depend on mathematical knowledge alone, but on the ability to think things through, be logical and find ways to solve problems. Congratulations to all those who took part, especially Lauren, Saachi, Elizabeth, Sophie, Pablo, Zac and Annie on their gold awards.

## 8N Stories and Poems for Younger Pupils

Pupils in 8N have narrated a story by local authors Laura Robson Brown and Katherine Mann, *Fitz and Will The Cambridge Cats – The Festive Adventure*, and have shared it with pupils in Years 3 and 4 to enjoy as a Christmas treat. 8N enjoyed the process so much that they then went on to record a number of poems for Year 5 to enjoy. What a simple yet highly effective act of kindness. Thank you to 8N.

## Cards from St Faith's Christmas Past

We were delighted to receive from Old Fidelian, Anthony Bevan, school Christmas cards from 1946 and 1947. I thought you might be interested to see them. Clearly, the school colours of red, white and black have endured!

In contrast here (on the right) are some lovely paintings of reindeers which Year 6 have been working on.

## Christmas Lunches

Crackers and crowns adorned the tables of the Dining Room and Ashburton Hall on Tuesday and Wednesday as the school community enjoyed a festive lunch. From tasty turkey to perfect potatoes and scrumptious sprouts, plates were crowded with festive favourites. I even witnessed one child return for a third portion of sprouts as everyone tucked in to their delicious meals with a Christmas themed sound track playing in the background. My sincere thanks to our wonderful catering team who have worked so hard this term to ensure that the whole school enjoy nutritious and high quality lunches despite significant logistical challenges.

## Pre Prep Christmas Parties

There is, of course, no better way of working off the excesses of a full Christmas lunch than

party games as the Pre Prep found out on Tuesday afternoon. From musical statues, musical chairs and dancing to lots of joyful Christmas music, this really was the party of the year in the Pre Prep.

## Outreach

Christmas is, of course, a good time to focus on the needs of others so this week the pupils and staff have been encouraged to donate to a range of charities.

Pre Prep pupils were asked to bring in toys and books to donate to the Salvation Army. Years 3 and 4 brought in essential food items for Cambridge City. Jimmy's Night Shelter was the charity supported by pupils in Years 5 and 6 who kindly brought in items to create gift boxes of essential items for those who are currently homeless. Years 7 and 8 brought in donations for Cambridge Housing Services to support vulnerable young people in our area who might not otherwise receive presents this year.

Staff have donated gifts to be given to lonely, isolated older members of our local community and who will be spending Christmas alone. The gifts collected by Age UK may well be the only gift that these people receive this year. Children across the school have been designing and writing more than 200 Christmas cards to send with these gifts and deliver to our neighbours as you can see from the photos. It has been tremendously heart-warming to see how the whole St Faith's community has come together to support those in need this Christmas. Thank you to each and every one of you for your generosity.

## Christingle Service

Earlier today our Pre Prep classes were joined remotely by their families to enjoy our pre-recorded Christingle Service, always a charming service and this year made special as every child was able to experience the thrill of lighting their own Christingle candle. In lieu of the retiring collection that would have been made had we been able to invite parents in to school, please consider contributing to the work of the Children's Society.

[DONATE TO THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY](#)

[CURRENT PARENTS CAN WATCH THE CHRISTINGLE SERVICE HERE](#)

## Head of St Faith's Appointment

Today you should have received a message from the Chairman of Governors which informed

you that Dr Crispin Hyde-Dunn has been appointed as the Head of St Faith's from January 2022. Further to this message, I would like to say that I am delighted that Dr Hyde-Dunn will be leading the school after I retire next year. As a governor of his current school, The Dragon in Oxford, I know him well and can therefore say with confidence that Dr Hyde-Dunn is widely respected as an outstanding leader. The school and personally, Jane and I, look forward very much to welcoming Crispin and Lucy, his wife, to St Faith's and the long lead-in period (one year) will provide plenty of time for a smooth handover.

## Carol Service

This afternoon pupils in Years 3 to 8 enjoyed the first St Faith's Virtual Carol Service. This has been recorded over the past few weeks and skilfully edited by Mr Kucevicius and Mr Gorick. The pre-recorded video may be watched in conjunction with the accompanying [Order of Service](#) which includes the words to the carols should you wish to sing along from home. I would like to extend a big thank you to members of the newly-formed Chamber Choir (a small group of singers from one year group), under the dedicated tutelage of Mr Gorick, who gave up their early mornings and break times in order to rehearse and record the carols and bring us all a more formal taste of Christmas. I hope you will agree that this is a lovely alternative to our traditional gatherings in Ashburton Hall.

[CURRENT PARENTS CAN click here to DOWNLOAD THE choir music](#)

[https://youtu.be/26AcRN\\_dFfU](https://youtu.be/26AcRN_dFfU)

## Finally...

In the absence of our infamous Last House Standing event (which we hope to hold later in the academic year), pupils in Years 3 to 8 have instead taken part in our own version of The Twelve Days of Christmas, including a very special cameo appearance from a very busy man in red. After a long and highly successful term what a wonderful way of sending the school off for the Christmas holidays.

[https://youtu.be/O8jM\\_-DsQQE](https://youtu.be/O8jM_-DsQQE)

On behalf of everyone at St Faith's, I wish you and your family a very happy and safe Christmas and look forward to the community coming back together for the beginning of the Lent Term on Wednesday 6th January 2021. As the Christmas jumpers of our Pre Prep drop-off assistants remarked, 'Believe in your Elf'!

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell