

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

22nd January 2021

'The world is intertwined today, much more than it was when I was coming out of school. Because of that, you really need to have a deep understanding of cultures around the world. I have learned to not just appreciate this but to celebrate it. The thing that makes the world interesting is our differences, not just our similarities.' **Tim Cook, CEO of Apple**

These words resonated with me when I read them, because one of the biggest changes at St Faith's during my time here has been the increase in the cultural diversity of our families. In a recent survey, we discovered that our pupils speak over 20 different mother-tongue languages. This is now a real strength of the school and hugely beneficial for our children to grow up surrounded by people of different cultures and nationalities. Barely a day passes without my reflecting on how fortunate we are to be living and working together in such an internationally diverse community. Personally, I have loved meeting families from different parts of the world and have greatly appreciated the value they have added to our school. This will surely help to prepare our children for the modern world which, as Tim Cook says, is intertwined more than ever before.

Spanish

It is no wonder then that our Modern and Classical Languages Department is such an important part of the school, or as one Lead Inspector remarked, 'A beacon of excellent practice.' We are often asked by visiting prospective parents why Spanish, rather than French, is the School's first foreign language, being taught from age 4. Well, Spanish is spoken by approximately twice as many people in the world than French and importantly, it is easier to learn. According to Mrs O'Reilly, Head of Modern and Classical Languages, who was born and grew up in France, Spanish is the best way to begin language-learning because largely, what you hear is what you write. It builds strong phonetic and linguistic foundations for language learning and then prepares children to start learning Latin (from Year 5) and French (from Year 6) at St Faith's. This view is becoming increasingly common across the education sector with a rise in Spanish curriculum coverage each year, particularly in senior schools, where there has been a notable increase in GCSE candidates.

<https://youtu.be/AgZszAISrbY>

Last week, our youngest pupils in Foundation began their Spanish lessons by singing some lively songs. Meanwhile, Year 1 pupils, who have fully mastered singing 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes' in Spanish are being encouraged to look up Spanish recipes and cook them as part of their home learning! Here are Max and Oscar (1WD) proudly displaying their delicious Spanish omelettes which they chose to cook.

<https://youtu.be/AnwVljHUDds>

Classics

From Year 5, St Faith's pupils are introduced to Classics. The academic disciplines of modern languages, such as Spanish and French, are underpinned by Latin which serves to sharpen powers of logic and discrimination and increases all-round linguistic competence. Taught both as Latin and Classical History, this subject also covers the history of ancient civilizations, giving depth and perspective to the discussion of contemporary issues such as democracy.

<https://youtu.be/0PyYYauxyyE>

French

With Spanish and Latin already familiar, our pupils are then very ready to start learning French in Year 6, a language they pick up very quickly due to the similarities between the three dialects.

<https://youtu.be/cl9SYPVBbZ4>

Year 8 Language Carousel

In their final year at St Faith's, pupils are treated to a language carousel. The languages we offer vary each year according to the availability of teachers, and in recent years, have included Mandarin, Russian, German, Greek and Arabic. Pupils not only learn the basics of the languages but also the cultures, helping to prepare our children for the possibility of living and working in those areas of the world.

Residential Trips

In 'normal times', a series of residential trips serve to consolidate language lessons as pupils put their linguistic skills to the test in Salamanca, Spain (Year 6), the Ardèche, France (Year 7) and see the historical relics of the Roman civilisation with their own eyes in Rome and Pompeii

(Year 8). It will be a wonderful moment when these trips resume, as they are hugely popular and rewarding experiences for the children.

Language of Art

34th US President Dwight D, Eisenhower once famously stated, *'Art is a universal language and through it, each nation makes its own unique contribution to the culture of mankind.'* It was appropriate then that Foundation, who have already started their languages journey, were tasked with developing their fine motor skills this week by cutting, tearing and sticking coloured paper to make art work inspired by French impressionist artist, Henri Matisse. Their brightly coloured creations are a splash of joy in these dark winter days.

Entry Assessments

Pandemic or not the normal rhythms of school life continue. This half-term sees our pupils sitting entry assessments for senior schools, but in a very different way to usual, with online tests at home replacing paper exams in schools. It has not been easy - for the pupils and the schools - to adjust to this new way of testing, but I am sure that our candidates will rise to the challenges and do themselves, and St Faith's, proud.

Children hoping to come to St Faith's in the future also sat online assessments this week. Carefully monitored by Ms Cornell (Registrar) and Mrs Sandercock, (PA to the Deputy Head), via Teams video links, pupils sat assessments in Maths and English and, in keeping with the school's diversity, we welcomed candidates from many parts of the UK and from several international locations too.

Sports Videos

Further to last week's newsletter on sport, thank you to the many children who rose to the sports challenges and submitted videos. I am so impressed by your skills. Here are the videos from pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. We'll show the Year 6, 7 and 8s next week.

[YEAR 3 AND 4](#) [Year 5](#)

Financial Curriculum

Twelve months ago, when I visited a state school in London to help the Head introduce Engineering to their curriculum, I had a most inspirational meeting with their Chair of

Governors. It turned out that he too had designed a new resource for schools – a Financial Curriculum - and was in the process of rolling it out across the education sector, via the charity he had set up. *City Pay it Forward* was established by a group of finance professionals and educators who have collaborated with schools to teach children the basics in financial literacy, including savings, budgeting, borrowing and investing. With the current lockdown in mind, their six learning modules have been modified to fit home-learning, so I thought you might be interested to see it. This new [Financial Curriculum](#) would be particularly suitable for children in Years 4 to 6.

Finally....

This week, I heard from parents that their children are still enjoying receiving their birthday cards. This morning, I was delighted to be invited to 6C's online tutor group session, so I could wish Lily a Happy Birthday! It was lovely to see the smiling faces of the children enjoying each other's company in a relaxed manner.

Whether you are celebrating a family birthday or not, I wish you a pleasant weekend.

Nigel Helliwell