

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

29th January 2021

The World Economic Forum is meeting (virtually of course) in Davos this week. Out of curiosity, I took a look at their website and spotted this statement on the main page, which struck a chord for me.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that no institution or individual alone can address the economic, environmental, social and technological challenges of our complex, interdependent world.

We are all indeed part of one world. That's why at St Faith's we encourage our pupils to be global citizens, to understand their place in the world, to appreciate its past and present and to be part of its future. As I mentioned in last week's newsletter, the study of global languages is a key component of our education. We focus too on the more generic global values of kindness and philanthropy, through our 'Looking Forward-Giving Back' outreach programme. Sustainability remains a central feature of our work and we will continue to ensure that our curriculum is future-focussed and prepares children well for the modern world. Essentially, we aim for pupils to leave St Faith's with an understanding of how to contribute to and improve the world in which they live.

Humanities

Key to this understanding and appreciation of the wider world is Humanities, the study of History, Geography and Religious Studies. This week I caught up with the teachers of Humanities to find out more about what is going on across the school and discovered that a diverse range of topics are being explored.

Year 3 are studying Stone Age Britain. When I dropped in to a critical worker class this week they were busy learning about how Stone Age man made tools and weapons out of flint, using a process called flint knapping. The children tried this by using bars of soap, in place of flint, to make their weapons. Meanwhile home-learners were tasked with making their own Stone Age axes.

The Norman conquest of 1066 is the fascinating topic for Year 4 History this term. Children have just finished learning all about the Battle of Hastings and have used their knowledge to create detailed story boards of the famous event, before moving on to learn about the Bayeux Tapestry.

Moving away from European history, Year 5 are learning about Ecosystems, focusing on the tropical rainforests and how plants and animals adapt to live there, the harm caused by humans, and the many ongoing conservation projects. Last week they focused on the 'layers' of the rainforest and drew detailed diagrams to demonstrate their understanding. This week they have been extending their understanding by looking at the Forests' Nutrient Cycle.

The Americas is the focus for Year 6 historians, specifically the Spanish New World of the 15th and 16th centuries. The voyages of Christopher Columbus and Hernán Cortés are their particular inspiration with lessons focusing on the rise and fall of empires and the importance of religion in society at that time. On Tuesday, Year 6 enjoyed a talk by Humanities teacher, Mrs Critchley, who, in 1992, took part in a recreation of the first voyage to the New World. She discussed with the children the critical differences between Columbus's 1492 voyage and her own journey 500 years later.

<https://youtu.be/Yo9KWq80i3s>

Back in the UK, Year 7 pupils have been looking at the common issue of coastal erosion. A main focus of this topic has been the precarious position of Happisburgh in Norfolk. The children have used their geographical understanding to write letters defending or opposing measures to protect the village from erosion, or have made posters to highlight the challenges facing the community.

Heading to the Southern Hemisphere, Year 8 Geographers are completing a unit on development, by comparing South Africa with other countries, in terms of economic and social development, and considering why some countries are less economically developed than others. Meanwhile, Year 8 historians have been studying Victorian Britain, looking closely at demonstrations during that time and trying to understand why they came about and what societal changes ensued.

Humanities is such a fascinating and ever-changing subject, in which children learn so much about the world around them. No doubt in years to come, St Faith's pupils will, in Humanities lessons, be learning about the Covid-19 pandemic and the effect it had on the world.

Pre Prep

Understanding the world we live in is clearly not ambitious enough for our curious Pre Prep children. Year 2 are currently exploring all aspects of space, from the planets to space exploration. This week, the children received a surprise letter from NASA asking them to apply to be the astronauts of the future! They all diligently wrote their letters explaining why they would make excellent astronauts.

Whether you are an astronaut drifting through space, or enjoying learning from home it is always important to keep connected with your friends and teachers. In Pre Prep, our pupils connect each week for 'circle time' with critical worker pupils in school chatting to their friends at home via Teams. One-to-one reading is proving to be a wonderful way for our staff to connect with each child on a regular basis.

What do I want to be when I grow up? This week, I was very impressed to see the work of Foundation children, who had been tasked to think about what they want to be when they grow up, having read the story '*Pilot Ray – The Tale of a Snail*'. Not surprisingly, doctors and vets were among the most popular ambitions, with one pupil wanting to be a paleontologist!

Speech and Drama Exams

Ambition and being anything you want to be is at the fore of the minds of the pupils who are taking their New Era Speech and Drama virtual examinations today and on Monday. Over 50 pupils in Years 3 to Year 8 have been working hard with Miss Tucker, on a range of disciplines from Shakespeare to Public Speaking and Poetry to Mime. I wish all our pupils the very best of luck and look forward to hearing how they have performed.

Finally

I know that many of you enjoyed the arrival of snow last weekend. Here is a photo from the Henderson family who built a most impressive snowman which, as you can see, already has an allegiance to a North London football club! According to the weather forecast, there may be more opportunities to build snow sculptures this weekend.

Whatever you are doing over the coming days, I wish you and your family a very pleasant weekend.

Nigel Helliwell