

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

5th February 2021

In a week when national news brought more highs and lows, including the passing of the much-loved Captain Sir Tom Moore, and the reaching of the ten million vaccination milestone, life at St Faith's has felt, well, rather 'normal'. I never thought I would use the term 'normal' during the rapidly moving pandemic but after five weeks of online learning, with relatively few changes along the way, we have settled in to the steady routine of the Home Learning programme and the Critical Worker Service in school. Even going to the Sports Hall twice a week to have a Covid-19 test is beginning to feel part of the usual routine of school life. Who would have believed that it would have been possible a year ago. Nevertheless, I have to say that I really miss the buzz of seeing the children and staff each day and very much look forward to the St Faith's community being back together. In the meantime, I continue to be hugely impressed with how everyone has adapted to the new way of working.

A glance at some of the pupils' work in this newsletter shows clearly how well online lessons are progressing. This week's results of the recent Home Learning Survey, in which over 90% of parents rated the school's online provision as excellent or good, are also reassuring. Thank you very much for your support. We are acutely aware of the pressures on parents and staff in these difficult times, so it is good to know that our children are working well, and in true Fidelian style, making the most of the circumstances.

As you would expect, we are in the process of planning for the re-opening of school for all pupils, later this term. In the meantime, we'll settle for a few more 'normal' weeks in which our pupils continue to produce the quality of work shown in this newsletter.

English

This week we caught up with Head of English, Mrs Greaves, to find out more about Home Learning projects in her Department.

Year 3 and 4 pupils are immersing themselves in the delightful animal-centric novels of Dick King-Smith, through a combination of class-led and independent reading. Meanwhile Year 5 pupils are enjoying reading *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by CS Lewis. Pupils were tasked with creative and descriptive writing about their favourite sweets following Edmund's interactions with the White Witch. Anyone with a sweet tooth should enjoy the following pieces.

Year 7 are immersed in a creative writing project called, *Escape from Kraznir*, in which pupils become the fifth spy in a band of companions, seeking to retrieve the battle plans from Kraznir so that their country, Sinsil, can prepare to defend themselves from a threatened invasion. Here are excerpts from their most recent drafts.

[Alexander EMMA LILIA DYLAN](#)

Several Year 8 classes are studying *Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry*, by Mildred E Taylor, which follows the lives of a black family living in the southern states of America during the Great Depression. Mrs Switsur's class were struck by the powerful poem of 22 year-old Amanda Gorman who spoke so eloquently at the recent Presidential Inauguration in Washington DC. The class assessed sections of the poem and related them to what they had been reading in their class text. Others are looking at *Rebecca*, by Daphne du Maurier, and have been reflecting on some of the powerful descriptions within the text to create artistic and poetic impressions. Examples of some of the Year 8s' wonderfully creative responses are shown below.

[Inauguration poem extracts](#)

Pre Prep

Literacy skills are established at the earliest of ages and in the Pre Prep there is a strong focus on developing cursive handwriting, reading and creative writing.

Meanwhile, Year 2 have continued their Space explorations and been extending their literacy skills by reciting space poetry and writing planet acrostic poems. Using their impressive artistic skills, they have also been drawing and labelling rockets.

https://youtu.be/_SQDFhaJP_0

Children's Mental Health Week

This week is Children's Mental Health Week, with the theme for this year being 'Express Yourself'. Tutors have been sharing with their tutees, ideas and activities supporting positive mental health, including a short message from the Duchess of Cambridge, Patron of the children's mental health charity Place2be, in which she talked about the importance for children to express themselves and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings. Next Monday, during their Wellbeing Day, pupils in Years 3 to 8 will have an opportunity to engage in a wide range of creative activities away from screens. Mr Critchley's [Pastoral Spotlight](#), in the side bar of this newsletter, provides further information about how children's mental health can be supported.

New Era Examination Results

Speech and Drama pupils have once again achieved some super marks in the recent examination sessions which took place virtually via Zoom on Friday 29 January and Monday 1 February. 49 pupils took examinations across a broad spectrum of subjects achieving Merits and Distinctions in Verse and Prose Speaking, Solo and Duologue Mime, Duologue Devising Drama, Solo Shakespeare, Public Speaking and, new for 2021, Interview Technique. Warmest congratulations to you all for such a wonderful achievement in these challenging times!

If you would like your child to start Speech and Drama lessons, Miss Tucker is now taking enquiries, so please contact her by email stucker@stfaiths.co.uk

Recipes

It is good to hear that many of our pupils are enjoying cooking meals for their families during the lockdown period. Mr Mutucumarana was justifiably proud in sharing with me a short clip of an online cookery course that Max in his tutor group led last week. Max's grandfather passed on a 'meatballs in tomato sauce' recipe, which Max kindly shared with some of his class mates and Mr M in a 'live' Teams session. According to those who took part and enjoyed the final products of their efforts, the dish was delicious! We managed to persuade Max to share his recipe, which can be found in the button below if you wish to give it a go yourselves this weekend.

[Max's Recipe](#)

If our children need any further inspiration to roll up their sleeves and start cooking, here are some recipes which Kevin, our Head Chef, has produced for the St Faith's community. *Bon appétit!*

[VIEW KEVIN'S RECIPES](#)

Finally...

If you have a moment, please do listen to this recording of [J.S. Bach's Sinfonia in B minor](#), performed by Qiao (and taught by Mr Brown). It is a wonderful example of the power of music when, for just a few moments, everything stops as we listen and enjoy the composition and performance. It is also a welcome reminder of the hard work pupils continue to put into their instrumental and vocal studies with our outstanding team of Visiting Music Teachers. Enjoy!

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell