

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

5th March 2021

As we look forward to the full re-opening of school on Monday, long for 'normal' life to resume over the coming months and marvel at the speed of the vaccine roll-out, no one can be in any doubt about the importance of science in our lives. As double Nobel Prize winner, Marie Curie, remarked, *'Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.'* Her words are as appropriate today as they were over 100 years ago.

Today marks the beginning of [British Science Week](#), so it seems appropriate that the focus of this newsletter is Science. Even though our laboratories have stood empty since December, Mrs Price, Head of Science, has much to report. Adapting a practical subject to teaching online has not been straightforward but our Science staff have been wonderfully creative in modifying topics to deliver theory lessons, demonstrate live experiments and set challenging investigations for pupils to undertake in their homes. This week, Mrs Price even managed to twist the arm of the Executive Vice President of AstraZeneca and St Faith's parent, Sir Mene Pangalos, to explain to our older pupils how the vaccine has been developed, how it was trialled and how it works. I watched the 30-minute interview (as he was grilled by his daughters, Sofi and Anna) and found it compelling, as did our Year 7 and 8 classes.

Science at St Faith's

Understanding the world scientifically begins in the Pre Prep and recently, Year 2 have been learning about eyes as part of their topic on senses, identifying different parts of the eye and making observational drawings, complete with labels.

Year 3 have been studying plants and this week, specifically the role of the stem. Using coloured water, celery sticks and carnations they observed the role of the stem in transporting water up the plant and were amazed to see the colours of the carnation petals turn from white to blue.

Year 4 pupils have been studying the musculoskeletal system and have used their creative skills to build some wonderful 2-D skeletons as well as complete a number of tasks that focused on joints and muscles.

Year 5 pupils have been studying microbes and have made some superb models (unsurprisingly, there were several examples of Coronavirus). They also undertook their own experiments at home to understand the ideal conditions for blue mould on bread. One parent told Mrs Price at the recent parents' consultation evening that she is still finding plastic bags of mouldy bread in the most unusual places around her house! Year 5 have also researched methods of food preservation and undertook a survey in their own kitchens, as well as watching live demonstrations of experiments, to find out the ideal conditions for growing yeast.

At the start of the Lent Term, Year 6 studied diet, teeth and bones. Teachers demonstrated how to test for starch while pupils surveyed the food in their kitchen cupboards to compare nutritional content. Year 6 have moved on to looking at reproduction by studying flowering plants, and have investigated the anatomy of a hen's egg. Joseph's document on the anatomy of a hen's egg and description of how he prepared and ate his research clearly show some of the upsides of home learning!

Meanwhile, pupils in Year 7 have studied respiration, undertaking a detailed study of aerobic and anaerobic respiration, including researching the structure of the lungs and heart. They have been promised the dissection of a pig's heart when they are back in school, which is always a memorable event, and only for those with a strong constitution. In recent lessons, Year 7 have moved on to studying combustion, specifically gases. Dylan very ingeniously demonstrated the effect of home-produced carbon dioxide on a flame in a short home video.

Year 8 started the term studying forces, using home-made paper aeroplanes as well as household irons and different types of paper to demonstrate friction and drag. More recently and most topically, Year 8 have focused on the role of microbes and how our bodies are designed to protect ourselves, and heard a clear and captivating explanation of the Covid vaccine from Sir Mene Pangalos. Pupil comments afterwards included, *'I really enjoyed hearing about the spike protein and how it is used to attack our immune system'*, and *'I enjoyed hearing about the different problems faced while producing a vaccine and from someone who worked with one of the fastest produced vaccine.'* Our sincere thanks to Sir Mene for taking the time to share his experience with our children.

Caring for our Planet

Foundation pupils have been thinking about the care and protection of our planet, with a specific focus on recycling. Inspired by the real-life work of Greta Thunberg and the fictional superhero

'Michael Recycle', the children created posters to encourage recycling.

Wellbeing

As our days of home learning draw to a close, we are all only too aware of the impact of screen time on our health and wellbeing. Hope in Year 8, with support from her fellow pupils in 8B, has generated a Powerpoint to provide advice to those learning and working from home. Whilst the school community will be returning to the classroom on Monday, there will be many of you at home who may benefit from Hope's suggestions – enjoy!

<https://youtu.be/QkXhGaKRwJQ>

Back to School Preparations

St Faith's has been a hive of activity this week, as we prepare for the full re-opening of school on Monday. Much of our time has been taken by managing the complex logistics of Covid testing and for that, we must thank Mrs Moore (Operations Manager), Mr Critchley, the Health Centre team and the Office and Bursary staff. It has been 'all hands on deck' as we endeavour to put everything in place for Monday. Even my wife, Jane, has become a fully-trained NHS Covid-test registrar, providing valuable support as staff arrived in the Sports Hall for their bi-weekly lateral-flow tests over the past 8 weeks. As you can see from the photo, today it was the turn of the Year 7 and 8 pupils to be tested on site, before their return on Monday. May I kindly ask you to carefully note the messages sent to you this week which explain how the school will operate over the coming weeks, including arrangements for testing.

SFPA Quiz

Last Friday night, an impressive 89 teams joined the second SFPA organised virtual quiz, which I once again had the pleasure of hosting. There were plenty of questions focused on all things St Faith's and Cambridge and it was lovely to see the wider school community come together, albeit virtually, for some light-hearted and often quite competitive entertainment. Thank you to the SFPA Committee, particularly Gerlin Moses, Carl Rowland and Fernando Pinho, for organising this event.

World Book Day

Books were the focus yesterday, as we celebrated World Book Day. Not to be deterred by virtual library sessions and home learning, our Librarians Miss Johnson and Mrs Warren devised the following presentation, which encourages pupils to make their own book marks using templates created by author and illustrator Rob Biddulph. In addition, Miss Johnson is looking for pupils to design their own alternative front covers of their favourite books; entries should be made via tutors by Friday 12th March and the winning design from each year group will receive a £10 book voucher and have their entries displayed in a future newsletter. As you can see from the photo below, children in school celebrated World Book Day by dressing up as a well-known literary character.

[Activities to try and Videos to watch](#)

Finally

Our teachers are looking forward to returning to the classroom and I suspect that many parents will breathe a sigh of relief that home learning has come to an end. As I will explain on Monday, for the children, the return to school will understandably, generate a range of emotions from sheer excitement to a few worries and nerves. We will be ready for that and will be doing everything we can to help the children settle back in to school life. With this in mind, I thought that you might enjoy this charming film from Daisy in Year 2 who participated in a virtual Speech and Drama course over half-term and in doing so, recorded this topical poem about returning to school.

https://youtu.be/_8EVsQU4js8

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell