

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

24th November 2023

Hannah Parker, Cross-Channel Swimmer

In Monday's school assembly, I had the pleasure of congratulating our new Year 8 House Captains and present them with their badges. It was also an opportunity to remind pupils that, whilst such roles carry significant leadership responsibilities for those individuals, they also require the support of the pupils in each of their Houses.

The children then listened to a truly inspirational presentation from our visiting speaker Hannah Parker, who in 2021 completed a solo swim across The English Channel. An alumna of St Mary's and The Perse, Hannah had always swum competitively, but the training for the cross-channel swim was altogether of a different magnitude. She raised £5,000 in order to be able to undertake the swim with the necessary safety support, and her preparation included night-time swims in cool temperatures.

As any attempt to swim across the Channel requires certain weather conditions, Hannah had to wait a full five weeks before she received the call to go ahead. That was at 11.40pm on 6th September 2021. The crossing took her 13hr 10 mins, and because of the nature of the tides, rather than a following a straight route of 22 miles (as the crow flies), Hannah ended up swimming an incredible 48 miles! In doing so, she raised more than £18,000 for charity. Hannah reminded the children of the importance of resilience, which is one of our eight Learning Habits. Hannah explained that through her experience, she came to understand that she was capable of so much more than she had at first thought. Hannah's closing words were those of Captain Matthew Webb, the first person to swim unassisted across the English Channel in 1875, "Nothing great is easy".

Mr Mark Mason

On Monday, Mark Mason, one of our visiting music teachers, gave an extremely thought provoking talk to Year 7 pupils. Mark who has multiple sclerosis, talked about his disability and how this changed his life when he was in his mid-twenties. Mark's talk was full of positivity, and he encouraged the pupils to consider how they might seek and achieve happiness in a competitive world. Mark also answered a wide range of questions which the pupils asked him about his disability, his daily life and work at St Faith's. We are very grateful to Mark for giving up his time and talking with such inspiring insight to our Year 7 pupils.



Diwali Assembly

Last week, Pre Prep children from the Hindi club organised a Diwali assembly to celebrate the festival, which this year took place on 12th November. Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights with its variations also celebrated in other Indian religions. It symbolises the spiritual 'victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance'.



Inspired by Paul Klee

This week, class 2JC have been completing line drawings of monsters inspired by the artist Paul Klee. Born in 1879, his highly individual style was influenced by movements in art that included expressionism, cubism, and surrealism. The Year 2 pupils have demonstrated tremendous creativity and have produced some excellent work.

National Road Safety Week (20th-25th November)

This year's [National Road Safety Week](#) theme is helping people understand why safe speeds are so vital. We want to help all the members of our community engage with road safety at this particular time of year, as the beginning and end of our school days become increasingly dark and cold. Pupils have been involved each day this week, and members of the School Council and Eco-Committee have put in a lot of time preparing for the event, including making a wonderful and eye-catching '20 is plenty' road sign. Pupils helped to monitor speeds on Newton Road and staff donned their high-vis jackets – a particularly important reminder of how

vital it is to be highly visible to car drivers, pedestrians and other cyclists when cycling.

Year 8 Buddies

One of the qualities that we value greatly at St Faith's is the strength of community fostered at school. This includes the integration of children across year groups. This week our Year 8 Prefects undertook the opportunity to prepare and run activities for children in Year 3. Communication, leadership and teamwork skills were all in evidence and the older pupils were excellent role models for the younger children, who can aspire to become Prefects themselves in due course.

Year 5 Parent-Teacher Meetings

On Monday it was a pleasure to meet so many families, this time of pupils in Year 5, at our final Parent-Teacher meeting of the Michaelmas term. The evenings are an opportunity for our parents to meet their children's teachers and to discuss their children's progress and Learning Habits. These events are an important part of the ongoing partnership between home and school, and I do hope that they were informative and helpful.

Autumn Concert

Yesterday evening pupils, staff and parents assembled in Ashburton Hall to enjoy some outstanding performances from eleven senior music ensembles. The concert involved an ambitious breadth of repertoire, ranging from Bach to 'The Greatest Showman', delivered with true excellence to a highly appreciative audience. Thanks to our talented Music Department and many hours of dedicated rehearsal, we listened in captivated silence to some very moving classical performances as well as tapping our feet along to jazz and disco funk. It was a most enjoyable and uplifting evening.

Foundation 2024 Play Sessions

On Wednesday, we welcomed a group of prospective families to St Faith's, who hope to join our Foundation classes in September 2024. Whilst the children enjoyed a learning and discovery session with the Early Years team in one of the Foundation classrooms, the parents stayed for some refreshments.

In The Classrooms This Week

At the senior end of the school, our Year 8 pupils have been busy this week preparing for senior school entrance exams by practising past papers under the guidance of their teachers. Year 8



have also been developing their imitative writing skills this week. Some pupils who experienced an imitative writing exam paper last week during AcE day, consolidated their knowledge by teaching the skills they had learnt to their classmates when exploring the text 'I, Robot' by Isaac Asimov. Some of our younger pupils have been particularly enjoying their PE lessons, as they develop their fine motor skills with hoops and balls. Our Year 5 pupils have been reading *The Firework Maker's Daughter* by Phillip Pullman and I was very pleased to see the progress our Year 7 artists had made continuing their illuminated letters – many of them utilising iPads to assist with their designs. Meanwhile in Year 7 Science, exploration of solubility has been the focus this week, with experiments involving household ingredients such as salt and sugar, and in Engineering they have been designing air powered rockets. Continuing the scientific theme, in Year 4 the pupils have been learning about protein and carbohydrates in our diet, whilst in Maths, they have been working on their multiplication and division skills.



The 2024 Cricketer Schools Guide



The UK's best schools for cricket have been revealed in The Cricketer Schools Guide 2024 and once again, we are delighted that St Faith's has appeared in the list. The guide features the top 100 senior, top 50 prep/junior schools and the top 20 all-girls' schools for cricket. All entries are judged against an extensive set of criteria, which include a compelling commitment to cricket in the curriculum, facilities, fixture programmes and coaching.

U13 Girls' IAPS Hockey National Finals

Last Friday morning, the Year 8 girls' hockey team travelled to Haileybury College for the IAPS Hockey National Finals. Whilst expectation was high, there was the recognition that to win within a tournament format of much shorter games, an element of luck is always required. There was a sense of anxiousness amongst the parents due to the incredibly competitive pool the team was drawn in. Clifton College and Cranleigh School, 2nd and 3rd at last year's finals were amongst the teams. The girls were amazing all day, winning all five pool games. Scoring 9 goals, whilst not conceding any, they found a talented Sevenoaks side awaiting them in the quarter final. A nervous performance, but overall a comfortable one, saw them through to the semi-finals with a 1-0 win.

The girls' performances were causing a bit of a stir amongst the other teams and parents. The opposition become more and more physical in their approach and unfortunately that took its toll by the time of the semi-final against Cheam. Whilst they were a solid, well-drilled team, the girls didn't perform quite as well as they had throughout the day, and lost a tight game 1-0. A little disappointed, but extremely proud was the overriding feeling, having finished in the top four in the country. Whilst leaving Haileybury without the winning trophy, they did leave with everyone's respect and admiration, not only for their style of hockey, but the way the girls conducted themselves throughout the whole day. Mr Thompson said "What great ambassadors they are for St Faith's and their parents!"

U11 Girls' East Regional Hockey Finals



Gresham's School was the venue for our much-improved U11 girls' team to compete at the East Regional Finals. A slow start against the top two sides in their pool meant the team was fighting an uphill battle to qualify for the semi-final. The girls improved immensely throughout the day, playing some fantastic hockey between the two 'D's. The team did finish strongly ending up 7th in the East of England. The girls came away knowing they could compete at that level as a group, whilst being clear about what to work on for the coming season. Mr Thompson said "What a lovely, enthusiastic and committed team they have been to work with".

The Caven Cup

On Wednesday the Year 5 Caven Cup rugby finals day took place at St Faith's. To explain a little further about the Caven Cup, each week the boys have 3 Games lessons. The first 2 lessons are used to focus on a particular action that applies to Year 5 rugby such as passing, tackling, rucking, spacing out, defensive lines, offloads etc. The third lesson is then used as a more competitive environment where the boys can apply these skills under slightly more pressure. The match will have a bonus point system that applies to their weekly focus. For example, if their weekly focus is passing, then they will get bonus points in the Caven Cup match for passing.



5 weeks of group stages culminated in this week's finals day where the boys were able to bring together all of the skills they have been learning each week. With matches being only 5 or 6 a-

side, there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to get involved and success can be found in both skill and physicality.

Named after Mr Caven (who designed the trophy himself!) we hope that this tradition runs for many years to come, and it is something that becomes folklore amongst the Year 5 boys! The team names in the Finals are shown below, but we won't reveal the winners or how the teams played as we think it would be only fair for the boys to tell their parents themselves if they wish to.

Caven Cup Plate Finals

Northampton Saints v Leinster

Bordeaux Beagles v Cardiff

Caven Cup Finals

Racing 92 v DHL Stormers

Glasgow v Leicester

And Finally...

With our Advent Service taking place on Monday and talk of the Christmas Fair gathering pace, we are all really looking forward to sharing a range of festive school events with you in the coming weeks. In the meantime I wish you a happy and peaceful weekend.

With all best wishes,



Dr Crispin Hyde-Dunn