Liverpool Music Tour: A Remarkable Three Days of Musicianship and Character

Mr Gorick writes,

"From Wednesday 11th to Saturday 14th February, fifty of our young musicians took part in a three?day tour to Liverpool, giving four performances in some of the city's most inspiring venues, including the largest Anglican Cathedral in Europe. The tour demonstrated not only the exceptional musical abilities of our pupils, but also their maturity, kindness, and dedication.

Our first performance took place on Thursday evening in the beautiful surroundings of Liverpool Parish Church. The pupils rose to the occasion magnificently, taking full advantage of the church's resonant acoustic. While we are fortunate to have Ashburton Hall at school, its acoustic offers a rather different experience. Performing in a more receptive space allowed the pupils to hear themselves and one another with clarity. A powerful "aha" moment that boosted confidence and reminded them just how musically capable they really are. Much like an athlete suddenly performing better when the track conditions are designed uniquely to favour them, the pupils flourished.

Friday began with a deeply poignant visit to Alder Hey Children's Hospital, where our musicians performed for patients, families, and staff. The solo singers were extraordinary, and the Senior Brass Ensemble delivered a sparkling performance of remarkable poise. The atmosphere was emotionally charged, staff members were visibly moved. It was humbling to witness our pupils bringing joy and hope into a place that sees the highs and lows of both profound struggle and recovery on a daily basis.

At lunchtime, pupils performed in the Lady Chapel of Liverpool Cathedral to a full public audience, supported by many St Faith's parents who had travelled to be there. Their presence made a huge difference. Soloists shone, and ensembles including the Jazz Ensemble, Purcell Ensemble, Concert Band and Chamber Choir gave performances of great polish and musical maturity. The Chamber Choir's rendition of *How Can I Keep from Singing?* was especially memorable.

The tour culminated on Friday evening with Evensong in Liverpool Cathedral, where our pupils

were joined by adult singers from Liverpool Cathedral Choir singing the lower parts of the repertoire we have been learning since Michaelmas half?term. With just fifteen minutes to rehearse nearly forty minutes of music, the pupils displayed remarkable professionalism. Their singing of the psalms, notoriously difficult for those new to Anglican chant, was outstanding. Watching the Chamber Choir glance back at the adult singers when they first heard them, with a sense of awe and delight was a special moment.

Their performance of the anthem *The Road Home* was beautifully poised, drawing warm praise from cathedral staff and the professional adult singers for their tone and musicianship. Singing in a space of such scale allowed others, and the pupils themselves, to appreciate just how exceptional St Faith's premier choral ensemble is. For our pupils to deliver four such high?quality performances within twenty?four hours is nothing short of extraordinary.

Throughout the tour, we received repeated compliments on the pupils' manners, politeness, discipline, and kindness. These qualities are not secondary to music; they are integral. Music at its heart is communication, connection, empathy and integrity. How musicians carry themselves shapes the music they make. The pupils exemplified this.

My deepest thanks go to their instrumental and singing teachers for preparing them so well, and to parents for your encouragement, especially with practice, which we know is not always easy. Without this foundation, the pupils could not have achieved what they did.

I am also enormously grateful to Mr Critchley, Miss Kennerly, Mr Sedgwick and Ms Elcome for their musicianship, organisation and good humour throughout the tour.

Words, photos and recordings capture only a fraction of what was achieved on these three remarkable days. What we will remember most are the shared moments, pupils and staff together, of growth, joy and outstanding music-making."

This Week at St Faith’s



This Week at St Faith’s





Finding the Right Words in Pre Prep

In this week's Pre Prep assembly, Mrs Wakefield invited the children to explore a theme that sits at the heart of positive friendships and happy school days: "Using Our Words." It's a message many of you will recognise from conversations at home too, and one that grows in importance as children learn how powerful language can be.

Mrs Wakefield spoke about the many ways words help us—how they can build friendships, solve problems, express feelings, and help everyone feel included. But she also acknowledged something we all experience: sometimes finding the right words can feel really difficult, and occasionally we can't find any words at all.

To support the children in developing these vital skills, the Pre Prep team have been teaching and practising language for a range of everyday situations. Through role play and discussion, pupils have been learning how to:

- **Disagree politely**, without hurting feelings
- **Solve problems together**, using calm and kind communication
- **Invite others to join in**, ensuring no one feels left out

Importantly, the children have also been learning that it is absolutely fine to say **"No"** when they need to. Phrases such as *"I'm doing this now, but can we play together later?"* gave them the confidence to set gentle boundaries while still showing consideration for others. These tools are designed to help the children continue to grow as thoughtful, expressive and empathetic communicators—both in the classroom and beyond.



Big Brother, Big Sister

Mrs North writes,

"2026 marks the fourth year of our pastoral venture connecting Year 7 pupils with Year 2 pupils. There is a dual aim to this programme. Primarily, it supports Pre Prep children as they prepare to transition smoothly to the 'Prep' area of the school, where they will don our distinctive striped red and black blazers for the first time. Meanwhile, the experience offers volunteer Year 7 pupils an excellent opportunity to demonstrate responsibility and leadership. This helps them in turn to prepare for their ascendance to the top of the school this September, where they will become prefects and role models for our younger pupils. It is no coincidence that these older pupils step into leadership just as Year 2 move into the house system as its youngest members.

In previous years, the venture has been launched in the Summer Term. However, with Year 7 exams, summer sport and numerous warm-weather activities, time has often felt compressed, making it harder for the connections to develop in the most meaningful and valuable way.

Therefore this year, thanks to enhanced tutor time in the afternoons, it was decided to introduce the programme before half term in the Lent Term. Year 7s were invited to take part in either helping the Year 2 children prepare for Year 3 as "Big Brothers" or "Big Sisters", or, to become involved in creating a community project which will benefit the school population in some way.

In early February, the community project pupils met to discuss the idea of contributing to a community. Meanwhile the Big Brother, Big Sister participants completed an orientation that introduced them to the process, and guided them on the responsibilities and important elements concerned with helping younger children. The group heard about the importance of setting good examples, not having 'favourites', always treating the younger children with respect and appreciating the need for patience and understanding.

On Tuesday the Big Brothers and Big Sisters were paired with their younger 'siblings', much to the excitement of both groups. In most cases, each Year 7 was paired with one younger child, although a small number of Year 2 pupils are supported by two older pupils. The aim of the introductory session was simple: to meet and learn one another's names. The younger children brought books to read, and the older pupils were encouraged to find out about their new charges.

At the end of the session everyone was excited to share their news with others in their class. The enthusiasm was evident, and our year 7 pupils shared some valuable reflections. One boy said, 'Our younger pupil was rather nervous but became really talkative'. One Year 7 girl said enthusiastically, 'This is the best idea. I am so happy to be able to participate in this venture and to integrate with some of the smallest members of the school.'

The next opportunity to meet up will be on 13th March. Sessions will continue throughout the school year and into next academic year, bridging the gap for the youngest children between Pre Prep and Prep, while enhancing opportunities to develop responsibility among the Year 7s."



This Week at St Faith’s





A Celebration of Exceptional Musicianship

Mr Gorick writes,

"This week we enjoyed a wonderful celebration of musical talent as pupils from across the school took part in our annual Soloists Music Festival. Every performer showed real poise and musical maturity, and there was a genuine sense of joy in their music making. The whole event had an atmosphere that was both inspiring and uplifting.

Two performers were commended for Outstanding Performance on the day. Several others were awarded Highly Commended for particularly notable performances. Although these pupils received special recognition, the standard of musicianship across both classes was consistently high, and every performer contributed to a memorable morning.

Our adjudicator, Ms Sophie Biddell, Director of Music at Christ Church Cathedral School in Oxford, spoke warmly about the quality of the performances she heard. She praised St Faith's

for what she described as a superb musical culture and was struck by the confidence and self-possession shown by such young musicians. She noted how carefully pupils prepared themselves before performing, taking a moment to settle and focus, and presenting themselves with a calm assurance more often seen in older and more experienced players. On two occasions she remarked that our pupils were modelling professional standards, such was the overall standard and the shared commitment to music making.

These comments reflect the hard work that went into preparing for the day, and the breadth of talent and natural musicianship on display. The intermediate class showed real strength in depth and demonstrated that they are more than ready to rise to the challenge set by our senior musicians. In many ways they are already doing so.

Musicians sometimes dwell on the things that do not go quite as planned, focusing on areas to improve rather than acknowledging what went well. This reflective instinct is vital. It is, after all, how musicians refine their craft and learn from experience (not that we witnessed anything amiss on this occasion!). Yet it is equally important to remember that music is, at its heart, a source of joy, hope and connection. As musicians, we should never lose sight of the extraordinary gift we have in being able to share that with others.

Congratulations once again to all our performers for an inspiring day of music-making."

This Week at St Faith's



This Week at St Faith’s





The Solar System, Space and the Wider Universe

Mrs Pritchard writes,

"Our Year 5 pupils had the great pleasure of welcoming Mr Kevin Reid, an astronomy enthusiast and space aficionado, for an engaging and interactive session on the Solar System, space, and the wider Universe.

During the workshop, pupils modelled the scale of our Solar System, gaining a powerful conceptual understanding of just how vast it truly is. Their curiosity was boundless, and they asked a range of thoughtful and probing questions—so much so that it proved quite a challenge to persuade them to move on to their next lesson.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to Mr Reid for sharing his passion and expertise. We look forward to inviting him back next year for another inspiring visit."


Jupiter



Class Concerts

The Class Concert Series burst into life in the week after half term, as it always does. It has been a joy to see and hear pupils performing with such energy and confidence. Already we have enjoyed a wide range of performances in class music lessons, and there is a wonderful sense of anticipation for the many more still to come.

This term has felt especially vibrant in the Music Department. The excitement of yesterday's Soloists Music Festival and the Liverpool tour are still very much with us. One can see it in the way pupils approach their performances, sharing their music making with a sense of pride. It all adds to a thriving atmosphere that celebrates music across the St Faith's.

All year groups in the Prep School are welcome to take part this term, apart from Years 6 and 8, who are fully involved in preparing their productions.

This Week at St Faith's




MUSICAL THEATRE
Director
Choreographer
Musical Director
Principals
Company
Collaboration
Jazz and Blues



Intermediate Maths Challenge

Mrs Rainsford writes,

"In the first half of this term, a selection of Year 8 pupils chose to participate in the Intermediate Maths Challenge. We are delighted to share the results: 4 Gold awards, 9 Silver awards and 11 Bronze awards. These results are particularly remarkable as the challenge is aimed at pupils in Years 9 to 11 and involves a range of problem?solving tasks that encourage mathematical reasoning and precision of thought.

The paper consists of 25 questions, with incorrect answers after question 15 carrying negative marking! Pupils worked diligently through the problems and demonstrated impressive resilience and determination. We wish the very best of luck to those who have been invited to take part in the subsequent Kangaroo Round."

This Week at St Faith’s



This Week at St Faith’s





IAPS Swimming

Mrs Critchley writes,

"Yesterday afternoon we travelled to Dulwich College in South London to compete in the National IAPS Swimming qualification round. With ten schools in attendance, it was a busy and action-packed afternoon of highly competitive swimming. Although we don't have official times yet, according to my stopwatch, it was clear that many new personal best times were achieved! We will need to wait until the end of March to find out if any individual swimmers or relay teams will go on to compete in the finals in June. The children did St Faith's proud, and it was a pleasure to watch them race and perform so superbly."



ISGA Five-Piece Premier National Gymnastics Championships

This weekend our U9 and U11 Girls' teams will be competing at Tormead School in the ISGA Five-Piece Premier National Gymnastics Championships. We wish them every success!

Pop-in & Play

On Wednesday morning, we were very pleased to welcome families to a wonderfully well?attended Pop?in & Play session in our Early Years classrooms and outdoor area. Thanks to the milder weather, children were able to make full use of the beautiful outdoor spaces that St Faith's is fortunate to enjoy, while parents enjoyed the opportunity to ask questions in a friendly

and informal setting.

Interest in our new Preschool remains very strong, reflected in the growing number of children joining us at 3+. As ever, we would be grateful if you could continue to share news of our 3+ provision with friends and colleagues who may be considering options for their younger children.

Pre Prep & Year 3 Open Morning – Saturday, 25th April

This brings us neatly to our upcoming Pre Prep & Year 3 Open Morning. We are delighted to confirm that registrations are now open via the school website, and we look forward to welcoming prospective families for what promises to be an informative and enjoyable event, Visits & Open Mornings – St Faith's Cambridge.

And Finally…

As February comes to an end, I am sure that many of you have noticed the changing of the season, as the school grounds are starting to look a little different. There has been some welcome sunshine, the light is lingering longer in the afternoons, and the early bulbs are beginning to appear. It is a small shift, but a cheering sign that Spring is on the way. Wishing you a happy and peaceful weekend.

With all best wishes,



Crispin Hyde-Dunn