World Book Day Assembly

Did you know that 2026 is the National Year of Reading, and that the strapline for its campaign is *Go All In*?

In preparation for World Book Day on Thursday, Miss Johnson and our Pupil Librarians led an assembly celebrating the joy of reading and the power of storytelling. With the help of the House Captains representing each of the four Houses, the assembly transformed into an interactive quiz. The House Captains were challenged to identify 'blurry' book covers, unscramble book titles from emojis and guess books from their descriptions — all with enthusiastic support from the pupil audience. The quiz concluded in a three-way tie, with each contestant receiving a well-earned prize.

Alongside book-themed costumes and home clothes, Thursday also marked our annual Chaucer Choose-Day, a fundraising event in support of the Arthur Rank Hospice. The day was filled with energy and generosity, as pupils and staff came together to support this meaningful cause. It was very clear how much care and imagination had gone into both pupils' and teachers' costume choices. As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words, and we do hope you enjoy the accompanying montage capturing the spirit of the day.

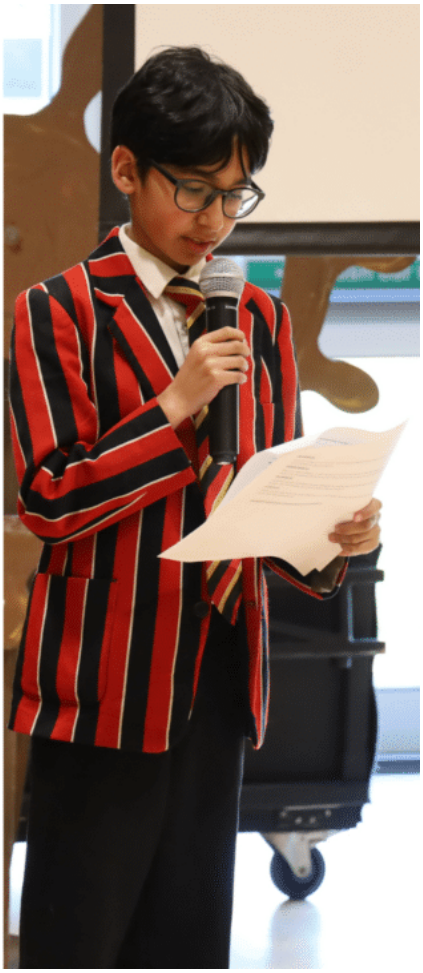
This Week at St Faith’s



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Seeing Beyond the Surface – Year 8 Assembly

Mr Critchley writes,

"Optical illusions are great fun — they trick our eyes and remind us that what we think we see isn't always what is really there. But they also offer an important lesson: sometimes we can misunderstand people in the same way.

All of us have moments when we hide how we really feel — smiling when we are embarrassed, chatting away when we are shy, or pretending everything is fine when it is not. On the outside, we may look one way; on the inside, we may feel something very different.

That is why it is important not to make quick judgements. In the Bible, when Samuel was choosing the next king, he was drawn to the eldest son who looked the part. However, God reminded him, 'People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.' The youngest son, David — unexpected and overlooked — was chosen instead.

Mr Critchley asked the Year 8s to consider how well they truly know the people around them. 'Their favourite food? Their worries? Their achievements?' Often, we know far less than we think. So this week, let us try to look beyond appearances — to be slow to judge and quick to understand."

CMR Surgical – Year 7 Technology Talk

(Written by the Year 8 STEM Prefects)

"This Monday, 2nd March, a team from CMR Surgical visited the Year 7s to teach us all about their incredible Versius surgical robots. The team was led by Dr Mark Slack, one of the company's co?founders, and they explained how the idea of building a new type of surgical robot first began. We learned that CMR Surgical was founded in 2014 by five innovators, including Dr Slack and Luke Hares, who wanted to transform the way surgery is done around the world. The year group was shown around several activities and demonstrations in order to find out more.

To kick off the afternoon, the Head of Marketing introduced what CMR Surgical actually does — they design and build the Versius Surgical Robotic System, which helps doctors perform minimal access (keyhole) surgery more easily and more precisely. We were then shown how surgery used to be done back in the 1800s, when doctors had to make huge cuts in the body, which meant extremely high risks and large, painful wounds. Later, laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery was invented, which used much smaller cuts and was much safer. However, even with this amazing discovery, laparoscopic surgery caused a lot of physical strain for doctors and had some technical and visual limitations – which needed to be improved with a new invention.

The Head of Marketing explained how Dr Slack, with his surgical expertise, teamed up with engineer Luke Hares to develop the Versius robot. Their design imitates the human hand, except with better precision, dexterity, and ergonomics. After lots of brainstorming and the development of an early prototype (which was actually made from wood and bolts!), they eventually created the final version of the Versius surgical system. Since then, the Versius system has been used in tens of thousands of surgical procedures worldwide, helping patients all around the globe.

As well as the robot itself, we learned how CMR uses Virtual Reality (VR) headsets to train surgeons. VR is used for this because it is just a simulation, so it cannot harm or affect anyone. The VR puts you in an alternate world with a 360?degree view of an operating room, and with the controllers you can pick up scalpels, scissors, and other tools used in real operations. It is designed to feel like you are actually inside a surgery, just without the pressure of a real patient.

Overall, the visit was a huge success. The talk from the Head of Marketing, and the many interesting and interactive activities helped us understand how much thought and teamwork goes into creating an invention like the Versius robot. The CMR team was extremely enthusiastic and kind, and it was a pleasure to have them with us. We feel incredibly lucky to have had the chance to meet such inspiring people and learn about cutting?edge medical technology being developed right here in Cambridge. It was an amazing experience for both the Year 7s and the Year 8 STEM Prefects!"



This Week at St Faith's





In the Science Labs This Week

Mrs Pritchard writes,

Year 8 – Pressure and the Collapsing Can Demonstration

"Year 8 have been investigating pressure and how temperature changes can dramatically affect the pressure inside a container. To bring this concept to life, pupils took part in the much-loved collapsing can demonstration.

After heating a small amount of water inside an aluminium can, pupils observed how water vapour displaced the air. When the can was quickly inverted into cold water, it imploded instantly. This striking demonstration illustrated how rapid cooling reduces internal pressure, allowing the greater external air pressure to crush the can.

The demonstration prompted thoughtful discussion about real-world applications, from weather

systems to industrial safety and submarines, providing a memorable visual anchor for understanding pressure."

Year 7 – Exothermic and Endothermic Reactions

"Year 7 have been investigating exothermic and endothermic reactions, exploring how chemical changes can cause temperature to rise or fall. Using thermometers and everyday reactants, pupils measured temperature changes and observed how energy is transferred. They were particularly interested to see how exothermic reactions release heat, while endothermic reactions absorb it, leading to a cooling effect. The practical work gave pupils a clear, hands-on understanding of energy changes in chemistry."

Year 5 – Household Acids

"Year 5 have been exploring acids, alkalis and pH through practical investigations using household substances. Pupils tested ethanoic acid (vinegar), lemon juice, milk (lactic acid), sucrose solution and sodium chloride solution, adding universal indicator to observe colour changes. They compared results to the pH scale to determine whether each substance was acidic, neutral or alkaline.

The activity built confidence in making predictions and recording observations, while also revealing the science hidden in everyday products."

This Week at St Faith’s



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The Language Carousel

(Written by the Year 8 Languages Prefect)

"During the first half of Lent term, the current Year 8 pupils were given the opportunity to have a taste of what some future schools might include in their languages curriculum. The unique St Faith's Language Carousel offers a wide variety of options beyond the usual French, Spanish and Classics and includes: German, Mandarin and Italian, as well as lessons on French Culture, Spanish Culture, and WoLLoW (World of Languages, Languages of the World).

During the fabulous experience, we learnt how to talk about pets, family, colours and basic words and phrases in German, thanks to Mrs Duedney. In Italian, we were taught by Mrs Hughes-Morgan about food, how to order it, and different greetings. Additionally, we absorbed the complexity of the Mandarin language, with Mrs Kwok teaching us how many different ways there are to pronounce the letter 'a', and we also spent time trying to write Mandarin characters. Led by Mrs O'Reilly and Mrs Celedonio Bonete, we learned about Spanish and

French culture, including neighbouring countries and what foods are traditionally eaten in France and Spain. On the penultimate day we discovered the compelling world of WoLLoW with Mrs O'Reilly.

Here is some feedback the Y8s shared about the experience

Year 8s were asked to reflect on the experience and shared the following comments:

- Mandarin was my favourite because I really enjoyed writing the characters and found the fact that there are so many different ways to pronounce a word really interesting.
- I really enjoyed German and Mandarin because we haven't really experienced anything like that before so it was exciting.
- I enjoyed learning more about Spanish and French culture, as I want to continue with these subjects for my GCSEs.
- I enjoyed Italian as I could see the similarities with the other languages we have learned.

Evensong at Rugby School

Mr Gorick writes,

"Yesterday members of our Chamber Choir travelled to Rugby School to sing alongside their choir for a joint Evensong. The occasion proved both enriching and inspiring for everyone involved.

From the very first responses, it was clear that the performance pressure of singing in a new environment brought out the best in our pupils. This kind of pressure is not only healthy but essential, as it helps young musicians develop poise, musicality, and resilience in real performance settings.

The anthem, *The Road Home* by Stephen Paulus, was a particular highlight. Its lyrical warmth and emotional clarity were delivered with such sensitivity that Rugby School staff and pupils were genuinely taken aback by the quality of St Faith's singing. Many described it as sublime and the piece clearly left a lasting impression on all who heard it.

Rugby School is widely regarded as one of the finest secondary school music departments in

the country, with a choral tradition that is both distinguished and nationally recognised. Their choirs maintain an exceptionally high standard, they even appear regularly on BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong, a platform reserved for the most accomplished choral foundations. That a school with such a unique and celebrated choral heritage should speak so warmly about the quality of music at St Faith's reinforces the remarkable standard of music making here. Their praise serves as a powerful affirmation of the excellence, ambition and musical maturity shown by our Chamber Choir.

Singing in different acoustics is an invaluable part of a musician's development. Only a few weeks ago the Chamber Choir filled the vast space of Liverpool Cathedral with their singing. Although Rugby School's chapel offers a completely different acoustic, the choir responded with remarkable musical intelligence. The space provided just enough resonance to allow them to shape phrases with nuance and the pupils adapted instantly and confidently.

Rugby School were generous and appreciative hosts and are very keen to welcome us back soon. They felt that our choir brought a tangible lift to their worship and enhanced the musical atmosphere of the service.

Opportunities like this, which take pupils out of their familiar surroundings and place them in new and inspiring venues, are essential for building confidence, broadening musical experience, and nurturing artistic growth. Our Chamber Choir embraced the challenge magnificently and represented St Faith's with musicianship, dignity and pride.

We look forward to many more collaborations of this kind in the future."

This Week at St Faith’s



Year 8 PSHCE

Mrs Parker writes,

"In PSHCE, our Year 8 pupils have been continuing their focus on 'Future Choices' by reflecting on the skills that will equip them well for the future job market. Recently, they practised their collaboration and problem-solving skills, by working together in groups to solve this practical challenge: what is the largest possible loop of paper you can create using only a single A4 sheet and a pair of scissors?"



Sports News

ISGA Gymnastics Nationals

Mrs North writes

"Tormead School hosted The Under 9 and Under 11 2026 Gymnastics Independent Schools 5-piece Nationals in Guildford last weekend. We were proud to enter a team in each competition. Miss Butler and Mr North did an incredible job of coaching the teams on the day and the children were composed, professional and great fun to be with at this event.

Our Under 9 Nationals team featured two Year 4 girls and three pupils from Year 3. It was wonderful to see how confidently the youngest gymnasts handled the competitive atmosphere. They were especially impressive during the group sequence, which requires four team members to perform a routine in perfect synchronisation.

As a result of everyone's outstanding performances, the group finished in 6th place and were awarded medals for their efforts. In addition, one of our Year 4 pupils achieved an impressive silver medal individually and received a trophy to keep for the year.

On Sunday, six members of Year 6 worked exceptionally hard to secure 6th place in the overall competition. In addition, four members of the team delivered a precise and controlled group sequence, earning well?deserved bronze medals in the group event. This was a tremendous achievement, and the whole team was thrilled with their results.

Thanks so much to Mr North, Miss Butler, and to Mrs Oxborough who has become the ISGA official scorer. She made the event run extremely smoothly because of her stellar work."

U12 IAPS Netball National Finals

Mrs Critchley writes,

"On Monday we enjoyed a wonderful day of netball in the glorious Surrey sunshine at Cranleigh School as we competed at the IAPS National Netball Tournament alongside 19 other schools from across the south of England. The pool stage was tough, and after this challenging stage,

we progressed into the bowl competition. A fiercely fought match against Halstead School for the 3rd and 4th place play off was the highlight of the day. We initially went ahead, but Halstead clawed their way back into the game and at full time, the score was 7-7. Five minutes of extra time was needed to bring this match to a conclusion, and after going ahead by 2 goals early on, we held onto the lead, and secured 3rd place with an 11-9 win. Well done to the whole team, who never gave up despite the strong field; we left with big smiles on our faces!"



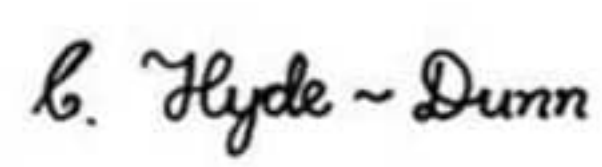
Looking ahead and the Cambridge Festival

As a University city, we are very fortunate to have the Cambridge Festival on our doorstep. If you have time in the coming weeks, there are many family-friendly events to explore. Amongst these is the Cambridge West Family Day, taking place on 21st March at the University's West Cambridge Site. Families can drop into a wide range of free, hands-on science and engineering activities designed especially for children, with departments including computing, physics, engineering, maths, materials science and veterinary medicine all taking part. Children will have the opportunity to explore how things work and try practical activities — from experiments and demonstrations to astronomy and Antarctic science. Following on from this, the weekend of 28th – 29th March is the Family Weekend, with activities based at a wide range of locations throughout the city, with topics including archaeology, planets, Japanese art and "dancing science". More details are available online at the festival website: https://www.festival.cam.ac.uk/events.

And Finally…

As we close a week shaped by stories, reflection and innovation — and characterised by the welcome appearance on site this week of robot surgeons, wizards, Jedi, Sherlock Holmes, Tinkerbell, dinosaurs and even Paddington Bear — I do hope there is space this weekend for a chapter of your own choosing. For some of you this may include taking part in Sunday's Cambridge Half Marathon. Whether you are running the course or supporting those doing so, I wish you all a very enjoyable weekend.

With all best wishes,



Crispin Hyde-Dunn