



A Busy Week of Learning, Reflection and Competition

It has been another full and varied week at St Faith's, with pupils taking part in a wide range of learning opportunities, sporting fixtures, assemblies and events across the school.

Following last Saturday's Open Morning, staff have been preparing for and welcoming families to a programme of parent engagement events. Parent-Teacher Meetings for Years 3, 4 and 8 provided valuable opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss pupils' progress, celebrate achievements and discuss plans for the months ahead. We were also delighted to welcome prospective families on Wednesday to our Reception Observation Session as part of our admissions process for September 2027 entry.

Opportunity makes the Difference

At the beginning of Tuesday's whole-school assembly, it was my privilege to present badges to our new House Captains and Role-Specific Prefects.

The rest of the assembly was led by Mr Davenport, who challenged pupils to think differently about success and to recognise something that can easily be taken for granted: opportunity.

He began by sharing the story of Jonathan Edwards, one of the greatest triple jumpers in history and still the world record holder. Mr Davenport recounted how, when asked what had led to his remarkable success, Edwards had emphasised the importance of opportunity, rather than focusing solely on natural talent, training methods or technique.

Mr Davenport encouraged pupils to reflect on the opportunities they experience every day at St Faith's. From learning in the classroom and taking part in sport, music and drama, to forming friendships and exploring new interests, pupils benefit from experiences that are not equally available to children everywhere.

To help illustrate this, pupils from different year groups were asked to stand and represent the proportion of children worldwide who face significant challenges in their daily lives. As the

figures were revealed, pupils considered how millions of children lack access to safe housing, clean drinking water or education, live in areas affected by conflict, or have responsibilities to work in support of themselves or their families.

The visual impact was powerful. Looking around Ashburton Hall, pupils could see that for many children across the world, circumstances beyond their control can restrict access to opportunities that others may take for granted. Mr Davenport's message was clear: children may have similar talents, determination and potential, but can experience very different opportunities to develop their abilities and fulfil their ambitions.

He encouraged pupils to appreciate the opportunities they enjoy, to make the most of these experiences, and to recognise the responsibilities that accompany such opportunities. By making good use of their education and considering how they might contribute to the lives of others, pupils can make a positive difference to the world around them.

The assembly provided a thought-provoking reminder that success often begins not with ability alone, but with opportunity, and how we choose to make use of it.



Royal Society of Biology National Success for St Faith's Pupil

We are delighted to celebrate an outstanding national achievement by one of our Year 6 pupils, who has been named as the winner of the age 7–11 category in the Royal Society of Biology's prestigious *BioArtAttack 2026* competition.

The competition, which attracts entries from young people across the UK and beyond, combines science and art to celebrate careful observation of the natural world. Entrants are challenged to create detailed drawings or paintings of animals, plants or fungi, showcasing both artistic talent and an appreciation of biology.

Inspired by a visit to Barcelona Zoo, the winning painting of an Indian peafowl impressed the judges with its depiction of the striking colours and intricate textures of the bird's magnificent feathers. The artwork brings together careful scientific observation and artistic creativity, securing first place in the category.

This year's competition also highlighted the importance of protecting endangered species, marking 50 years since the UK ratified the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This wider theme encouraged young artists to consider the importance of biodiversity and the need to protect the natural world, alongside developing their skills of observation and artistic expression.

Many congratulations to our Year 6 pupil on this well-deserved recognition. Please see the sidebar to read the pupil's own reflections on the experience and the inspiration behind the winning artwork.





The Discovery Zone

Mrs Buchanan and Mrs Carpenter write,

"This term, the Discovery Zone and Learning Support team have been wonderfully busy and full of purpose. Ootie, our school therapy dog, has been working with many children across Pre Prep and Prep, offering calm companionship and gentle encouragement during sessions.

Our Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) has been providing targeted support for pupils across the school, helping children develop emotional literacy, resilience and confidence in managing feelings and friendships. Through individual and small-group sessions, pupils have been encouraged to build self-esteem, strengthen communication skills and develop positive strategies for wellbeing. Our break and lunchtime Wellbeing Hub has been a hive of activity as pupils drop in for guidance, reflection and quiet time.

Our SEN Sport Support Programme is providing specialist movement-based intervention and sports mentoring. Using sport and movement as the vehicle for learning, sessions are tailored to each child's age and needs, helping pupils develop resilience, independence and a positive relationship with movement.

This week, we also proudly celebrated Dyslexia Awareness Month with a special assembly led by some Year 6 pupils, who spoke brilliantly about the strengths and different ways of thinking that can be associated with dyslexia, highlighting creativity and problem-solving skills in particular."







Don't be Afraid to Shine Your Light

Mrs Burke writes,

"On Monday, 7KJB proudly presented an assembly entitled *Don't Be Afraid to Shine Your Light*. The assembly explored the powerful idea that everyone has their own unique superpower and something valuable to contribute. Pupils reflected on this theme through the inspiring *Kid President Pep Talk* video and the uplifting lyrics of *This Is Me* from *The Greatest Showman*. Through thoughtful readings and confident presentations, the class encouraged their peers to embrace their individuality and believe in themselves. The pupils entertained the rest of Year 7 brilliantly, engaging their audience throughout. It was a memorable assembly that provided plenty of inspiring food for thought."





Science in Focus

Mrs Pritchard writes,

“**Year 5** pupils have begun their new topic on **Environment, Variation and Classification**. They explored a range of habitats from around the world, investigating the environmental conditions found in each and considering how different animals are adapted to survive and thrive within them.

Year 6 have been studying **Sound**, learning how sound is produced and how it travels through different media. They also completed a literacy-based research task investigating the impact of loud sounds on hearing and the importance of protecting their ears from excessive noise exposure.

Year 7 are continuing their work on **Matter**. Through practical investigations, pupils explored the relationship between density and whether objects float or sink, using their observations to predict the density of water. They also used potassium permanganate in water to observe and explain the process of diffusion at a particle level.

Year 8 have been investigating the limiting factors affecting photosynthesis, considering how environmental conditions can influence plant growth. They are also preparing presentations exploring the crucial role plants play in tackling climate change and the global impact they have on maintaining healthy ecosystems.”

Year 6 PSHCE

As part of their PSHCE curriculum, Year 6 pupils have been learning about asthma, allergies and allergic reactions. During a session this week, Mrs Petkov helped the children explore the different types of asthma people can experience and demonstrated how to recognise and respond to an asthma attack.



School scenario: asthma during PE

11-13 minutes Fictional scenario, then discuss

On the school field

Sam stops running.

"My chest feels tight.
My inhaler is in my bag."

Sam is coughing and wheezing.

What would you do?

Where should Sam sit?

Who will bring help and the inhaler?

What would make you call 999?

New information: Sam can now only say a few words. What changes?

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Pea Planting

Mrs Scott writes,

“On Tuesday, the wonderful Eco assistants popped on a gardening glove and planted some pea plants which were kindly donated by the science department. They also looked at the progress of the pansies they planted last week. A beautiful time was had by all.”







Year 8 Scholarship Talk

It was a pleasure to welcome nine Sixth Form pupils from The Leys on Tuesday, several of them Old Fidelians, to speak to our Year 8 pupils about their scholarship experiences. Accompanied by Mr Elston, Director of Sport, they shared their experiences of the scholarship process, including the benefits of working towards a scholarship and the opportunities that holding one can offer at senior school.

Our pupils listened attentively, posed thoughtful questions and benefited from hearing first-hand about the experiences of pupils who have successfully followed this route, as they begin to consider their own next steps.







U13 IAPS Regional Hockey

Mrs Thompson writes,

“Last Friday, the U13 girls travelled to Framlingham to compete in the IAPS Regional Hockey Tournament. A slow start to the season meant the girls needed to rediscover the cutting edge they had shown last season when it mattered most.

Having drawn with Culford earlier in the week, who were also our first opponents of the tournament, we knew we needed to start well and get some points on the board. A 1–0 win set the tone for the day.

Qualifying second in our group and securing a place in the afternoon Cup Competition was the first challenge completed. We then progressed to the semi-final after beating Town Close, setting up a re-match against Bishop's Stortford, who had beaten us in last season's National Finals.



The girls produced an incredible performance, with every player competing for every ball. A 2–0 victory secured our place in Bristol next month.

With three of the teams from our pool stages finishing in the top four of the competition, it really did confirm that we had been in a very tough group. The girls were deservedly proud of their achievement, and excitement levels were high among both the players and their parents!

It was an incredible day, and we could not have been happier for what is a fantastic group of girls who love their hockey.

Bring on the Finals!"



U12 Hockey County Cup



Congratulations to our U12 girls, who competed in the County Cup at Wilberforce Road yesterday. In a closely contested tournament, the team demonstrated impressive consistency and determination across their six matches. Having drawn two games and lost just one, they went on to secure the County Cup title.

This is an outstanding achievement and one that should give the team great confidence as they look ahead to the East Regional Finals at the end of November, as well as the National IAPS Finals at Taunton School on Friday 13th November.

We are extremely proud of the team and congratulate all the girls on their excellent performance and well-deserved success.



Swimming Gala v. King's Ely

Mrs Critchley writes,

"On Monday afternoon, we travelled to King's Ely for our first swimming gala of the academic year, competing in a three-way fixture against King's Ely and Gresham's. Despite the dull weather and light drizzle, our swimmers approached the event with enthusiasm and enjoyed an afternoon of competitive racing.

It was particularly pleasing to see several new members of the team making their debut and representing the school with such commitment and enthusiasm, despite the chilly poolside conditions! Well done to the U13 boys for their strong performances against both schools. We finished in second place behind King's Ely and look forward to a rematch just after half-term."

Rugby Round-Up: Wins Beyond the Field

Mr Gillick writes,

"It was a busy week for rugby, with our U12 and U13 squads heading away to festivals against Bedford, Swanbourne and Oundle, while our U11s took part in the same festival format on home soil.

In terms of results, it was a positive week for St Faith's. However, as always, the scoreboard only tells part of the story.

Across the year groups, these festivals provide far more than just results. We saw resilience in abundance, players supporting one another through challenging moments, and squads and individuals being rotated to experience different positions. This exposure helps develop a greater appreciation of the game as a whole, encouraging players to become more adaptable, understand different roles and recognise the contribution everyone makes to the team.

Central to this is our desire to make rugby accessible and enjoyable for all. We want every pupil to feel that they have a place within the game and an opportunity to experience success, whether that comes through a great tackle, a well-timed pass, supporting a teammate or simply having the confidence to get involved. Development will look different for every player, and that

is something we should celebrate.

It was therefore particularly pleasing to receive such positive feedback from our staff. Mr Hill commented that he and Mr Critchley were “really pleased with the effort, teamwork and rugby on display”, highlighting some excellent passages of passing. Perhaps even more tellingly, an opposition parent made the effort to seek them out and praise the team.

There were similarly encouraging signs from our U11s, with Mr North noting the “smiles on faces” alongside the transfer of skills developed in training. Better tackling in twos, greater confidence in contact, improved defensive line speed and good use of the ball to the edge were all evident. For me, that combination of enjoyment and visible learning is exactly what school sport should be about.

These are the wins that don't always show up on a results sheet, but are just as important to the long-term development of our players.

And the wins weren't confined to the field.

A huge thank you to the parents who continue to support our rugby programme each week. In particular, the U13 parents deserve special recognition for their consistent presence, encouragement and positive enthusiasm throughout the season. Their support is a real testament to the delightful character of their children and is greatly appreciated by everyone involved.

They also provide a useful reminder that we all have a part to play in modelling the behaviours we expect from our players on the sidelines, and for that I am extremely grateful. Sport provides a brilliant opportunity to develop character, and that responsibility belongs to all of us, whether we're on the pitch or watching from the touchline.

Further down, after a sharp transition from football, we're excited to see our U9s build on the progress made in last week's fixtures when they travel away to St John's this week. Another opportunity to put their learning into practice, embrace the challenge and continue developing as young rugby players.

Plenty of positives to take away from another busy week of rugby. We continue to work towards a programme in which every pupil can participate, progress and feel valued. We continue to learn, develop and build, as players, teams and a rugby community.”



Calling All Old Fidelians

We are looking forward to welcoming Old Fidelians to our next sporting and social occasions this autumn, offering opportunities to reconnect with former classmates, friends and members of the school community.

Old Fidelians v Parents Football

Friday, 13th November, 5.30pm to 7.30pm, Sports Hall

Whether you are keen to take to the pitch or simply cheer from the sidelines, we hope you will join us for an enjoyable evening of football and an opportunity to catch up with old friends. Post-match refreshments will be served.

If you are able to join us for either event, please email marketing@stfaiths.co.uk and do let us

know if you have any dietary or medical requirements.

Steele Bodgers Rugby Match

Wednesday, 25th November

This much-loved rugby fixture offers another opportunity for Old Fidelians to meet former classmates and friends, with lunch beforehand. Please note that tickets for this event are limited. The match is organised directly by a group of Old Fidelians rather than the school's alumni association. Anyone interested in attending is welcome to contact marketing@stfaiths.co.uk in the first instance to enquire about availability.

Application Deadline

If you are applying for a place in Years 1–8 for your own children, or you know friends or colleagues who are intending to apply, please note that the deadline for applications is **Friday, 23rd October**.

And Finally...

I have particularly enjoyed hearing about the work taking place in the Discovery Zone this week, including the contribution of our newest four-legged colleague, Ottie. There is something rather appealing about the calm companionship she brings to her role, and I am delighted that she is becoming such a familiar part of school life.

I hope you enjoy a relaxing weekend and look forward to seeing everyone next week.

With all best wishes,



C. Hyde ~ Dunn

Crispin Hyde-Dunn