Building Skills for the Future

What do *The Traitors* and Formula 1 have in common? This was the thought-provoking question posed by Mrs Davies to pupils during the whole-school assembly on Tuesday, in which she explored the skills needed to succeed, not only at school, but in future education and employment.

Although a Formula 1 driver may appear to compete alone, every success depends upon a much wider team of engineers, strategists, mechanics and pit crew. Similarly, success in *The Traitors* requires participants to listen carefully, communicate effectively, solve problems, adapt to changing circumstances and have the confidence to contribute their ideas. These qualities reflect the skills employers consistently value, including teamwork, communication, initiative, resilience, adaptability and problem-solving.

At St Faith's, pupils have opportunities to develop these qualities from an early age. Through our Learning Habits, lessons, activities and wider opportunities, children are encouraged to think independently, work collaboratively, respond positively to challenges and take responsibility for their contributions.

The assembly reflected on the Year 7 teambuilding programme, including activities at school and at Grafham Water. Whether pupils were putting up tents, protecting eggs during an engineering challenge, navigating the reservoir, sailing, mountain biking or tackling high-rope activities, they were continually strengthening skills that will be important throughout their lives.

Mr Critchley noted these experiences also reinforce an important message about teamwork: making a valuable contribution does not always mean being the person in the spotlight. Sometimes success comes from achieving something ourselves, while at other times our most important role is helping someone else to succeed.

The assembly also looked ahead to the opportunities pupils will have to explore different careers and professions. In Year 8, pupils are encouraged to begin considering their interests, strengths and the many different pathways that may be open to them. This will include a dedicated Careers Morning as part of the February Academic Extension Day, giving pupils an opportunity to learn about a range of professions and to consider how the skills they are

developing at St Faith's connect with the world of work.

While choosing a career may still feel some way off, these early conversations encourage pupils to think about their interests and abilities, and to approach the many possibilities ahead with curiosity, confidence and an open mind.



Happy First Birthday to St Faith's Preschool

This week marks a very special milestone for St Faith's as we celebrate the first anniversary of our Preschool. Since opening its doors just one year ago, Preschool has established itself as a happy and nurturing introduction to life at St Faith's, welcoming a growing number of families into our community from the age of three.

We are especially delighted that every child from our first cohort who turned four during their Preschool year chose to continue their St Faith's journey, moving into Reception this September. It has been wonderful to see them settling into their new classes and enjoying the next stage of their education.

A special thank you to our dedicated Preschool staff and to all our families for embracing and supporting this important addition to St Faith's.

If you would like your child to be part of our growing Preschool community, please contact **admissions@stfaiths.co.uk** or visit our Preschool website to find out more.

This Week at St Faith’s



This Week at St Faith’s





Inspired by Yayoi Kusama

Miss Herbert writes,

"Cultivating Change very kindly donated the leftover pumpkins from their recent sale to Reception. We have used them for rolling to build our arm muscles and have ordered them by size. We had fun painting them and washing them. The children painted the pumpkins from observation and, finally, inspired by Yayoi Kusama (the 'Princess of Polka Dots'), decorated them with spots using pom-poms."

This Week at St Faith's



This Week at St Faith’s





'C Cubed' Update

Mrs Davies writes,

"C Cubed is our cross-Foundation Academic Enrichment initiative, designed to promote curiosity, creativity and connections beyond the curriculum. At its heart, C Cubed gives pupils opportunities to be intellectually adventurous: to stretch themselves and their thinking, move beyond their comfort zones and tackle questions without straightforward answers. In doing so, we hope pupils develop the confidence, curiosity and ambition to explore ideas independently and see where their thinking can take them.

Our Year 7 and 8 essay competition was launched just before half-term, with pupils choosing from a wide range of thought-provoking questions, including:

- *Football has been described as 'the beautiful game'. Do you think this is a fair description?*

- *Who deserves to be rich?*
- *Does Science cause problems faster than it can solve them? Discuss with reference to a contemporary or historic situation.*

We have been delighted by the ambition, curiosity and individuality evident in pupils' first drafts. The breadth of thinking has been particularly impressive. One pupil, exploring the mysteries of Mathematics, observes that 'a prime number has a simple definition, but nobody has yet been able to predict when they will occur', before considering why mathematicians continue to explore prime numbers thousands of years after the Ancient Greeks. Another pupil, considering whether technology might provide an answer to loneliness, reaches the striking conclusion that 'even if a human loves a robot, the robot cannot love them back.'

Elsewhere, pupils have explored everything from climate change and the oceans, to the purpose of scientific enquiry. 'The purpose of science is to push boundaries and test the unknown,' argues one pupil, capturing particularly well the spirit of C Cubed itself. Reflecting on the extraordinary scale and mystery of the oceans, another concludes simply, 'I have only scratched the surface.'

First drafts are now being reviewed ahead of the final submission date of 16th November, and we look forward to seeing how pupils refine and develop their arguments further.

Meanwhile, our next C Cubed lunchtime talk takes place next Thursday, when we will welcome four Lower Sixth pupils from The Leys. They have chosen the intriguing title 'What would you do? Adventures in Situational Ethics!' for their session. We are sure that this will provide another opportunity for pupils to grapple with challenging questions, consider different perspectives and think critically about how they reach their own conclusions."

Science in Focus

Mrs Pritchard writes,

"It has been another wonderfully busy week in Science, with pupils across the school investigating everything from digestion and cheek cells to predator-prey relationships, solubility and the behaviour of light.

Year 3 began their new topic on the digestive system, and it quickly became clear just how much they already knew! Pupils confidently shared ideas about saliva, teeth "mashing up" food, stomach acid and the roles of the small and large intestines. There was particular amazement when we discovered that the intestines together are around **7.5 metres long**! Some pupils even brought the liver, pancreas and insulin into our discussions. We then followed food on its fascinating journey through the digestive system, beginning with its passage down the oesophagus, before turning our attention to healthy eating.

Year 4 have started their new unit on electricity. They have been thinking carefully about electrical safety, identifying mains and battery-powered appliances and considering where the electricity we use every day actually comes from. This led to some thoughtful discussion about **renewable and non-renewable energy sources** and the choices we make about generating electricity.

Year 5 have been stretching their scientific thinking by exploring **predator-prey relationships**, tackling graphs normally encountered further up the school and using them to identify patterns in populations. They have also been busy identifying food chains and food webs before creating increasingly complex webs of their own. The opportunity to **draw directly onto the tables** while constructing their food webs proved particularly exciting!

Year 6 took their microscopy skills to another level this week by preparing their **own microscope slides using cheek cells collected with a swab**. There was plenty of excitement as pupils focused their microscopes and realised they could actually see their own cells! They then used careful observation skills to produce detailed scientific drawings of what they had seen.

Year 7 put their teamwork and investigative skills to the test as they worked collaboratively to discover the relationship between the **temperature of a solution and the mass of a substance that can dissolve before saturation is reached**. They also began their new topic on respiration in suitably memorable fashion, with an impressive **incendiary demonstration** exploring the energy stored in sugar. It certainly brought the idea of energy release to life!

Finally, **Year 8** began the fascinating topic of light. Pupils constructed **pinhole cameras** and used them to investigate the image produced by a filament lamp. They then explored how and why light changes direction as it passes between different materials, tackling a practical investigation more commonly encountered at **KS4**. It was fantastic to see them applying careful observations and increasingly sophisticated scientific thinking to explain the phenomenon of refraction."

Remembrance and Poppy Appeal

Next week, we will come together as a school to mark Remembrance Day. On Tuesday 10th November we will gather in the afternoon for our Remembrance Service and then at 11am on Wednesday 11th November, St Faith's will fall silent in respectful remembrance.

Miss Kennerley writes,

"From today until Wednesday 11th November, the Year 8 Prefects will be collecting donations for the Royal British Legion and distributing poppies at school. They will be at the points of entrance to school each morning and afternoon and will be visiting different areas of the school during morning registration and break times in preparation for our Remembrance Service on Tuesday afternoon and our Act of Remembrance at 11am on Wednesday 11th. Please provide your child with money for a donation if you would like them to receive a poppy. QR codes are also shown on each poppy box if parents would prefer to make an online donation."



Action for Happiness

Mrs North writes,

"On Thursday, the Years 5 and 6 assembly explored the theme of 'Action for Happiness'. At this time of year, when the days are shorter and the weather can be gloomy, it can be helpful to think about the things that contribute to our wellbeing. The assembly introduced the Action for Happiness programme, which offers practical ideas for supporting wellbeing and includes an app that adults can download. There are 10 keys to the programme, which together spell out GREAT DREAM.

Over the coming months, we will introduce each of these keys, exploring practical ways of supporting happiness and wellbeing. 'Action for Happiness' has produced a month-long calendar for families to follow during November. I have included it here for any families who would like to explore some of these ideas together."

Please see the 10 keys to the programme and the calendar for November in the side bar.





English Schools' Cross-Country Cup (Regional Finals)

Mr Mageean writes,

"Well done to our Year 7/8 Girls' Cross-Country team that competed at the Regional Finals of the English Schools' Cup, hosted by Stowe School, on Thursday 5th November.

Mr Mageean and Mrs Underwood accompanied the team as they competed alongside the best 17 qualifying schools from Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Norfolk and Northamptonshire, due to the success of our team when winning the First Round in Ely just before half term.

On a perfect day for running, the girls performed very well on the hilly 2400m course. Our finishing positions of 21st, 22nd, 25th, 48th, 57th and 62nd placed us as 6th team overall! The team should all be very proud of their achievement at this level and they are all now already looking forward to the District Schools' Cross-Country Championships which take place for Years 7 & 8

in the final week of this term."



Rowing Regatta

Miss Kennerley writes,

"On Wednesday, 10 rowers from St John's joined us for the first indoor rowing regatta of the academic year. This was the largest event we have hosted, with 25 of our Y6-8 pupils taking part. The pupils participated in individual sprint races and team relays, aiming to beat their own personal best times and distances.

Our more experienced rowers tested themselves over longer distances and times (250m and 60 seconds) while our novices competed in shorter races (100m, 125m and 30 seconds). Everyone enjoyed the competitive, but supportive and encouraging environment, and all participants received a certificate recording their achievement in each event."

This Week at St Faith’s



This Week at St Faith's





And Finally…

There is always a great sense of excitement surrounding our annual SFPA Fireworks Display. It is one of those special occasions that brings a different atmosphere to the school grounds, and I am very much looking forward to joining many of our families for the evening. My thanks to the SFPA for their considerable work in organising the event, and to our Grounds Team and all the staff involved in helping everything run smoothly.

I hope you enjoy the evening and wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable weekend.

With all best wishes,



Crispin Hyde-Dunn