Pastoral Spotlight November 2026

Collaboration

Collaboration is one of our school's Learning Habits and, since the start of term, there have been countless opportunities for pupils to develop this important skill. Whether working together in Mathematics to solve complex problems, analysing sources in Humanities, or supporting one another through paired reading and discussion, collaboration is woven throughout school life.

This week, pupils across the school enjoyed hearing about the diverse range of activities that formed our Year 7 Team Building initiative. Pupils were given the opportunity to strengthen existing friendships, forge new connections and discover more about themselves through a variety of physical and mental challenges. Tasks included crossing an imaginary river using limited equipment, putting up tents, sailing, orienteering across a four-mile route and solving a range of team challenges. Success depended not on individual ability, but on communication, cooperation and perseverance. As highlighted in this week's whole-school assembly, the Year 7 pupils also had to draw on problem-solving, initiative, resilience and adaptability throughout their experiences at St Faith's and Grafham Water.

While activities such as these are memorable, they also highlight an important educational principle: pupils often learn best when they learn together. Collaborative learning encourages children to explain their thinking, listen carefully to different perspectives and work collectively towards a shared goal. In doing so, they develop confidence in expressing their ideas, strengthen their communication skills and deepen their understanding of the subject matter.

Beyond academic benefits, collaboration plays a vital role in pupils' personal development. Working alongside others teaches fairness, responsibility and respect. It requires pupils to consider the needs of their peers, resolve disagreements constructively and recognise the value that each person brings to a team. These experiences help to cultivate empathy, integrity and accountability.

Collaboration also fosters a powerful sense of belonging. Through shared challenges, pupils develop an appreciation of community and an understanding that they are part of something greater than themselves. They learn to support one another, especially when things do not go to plan. The Jacob's Ladder and crate-stacking high ropes activities at Grafham Water brought this vividly to life: those climbing relied on a helping hand, practical advice or simple encouragement, while pupils on the ground played an equally important role by belaying, managing ropes and helping to keep their teammates safe.

This week's assembly also offered a powerful reminder that an important contribution is not always the most visible one. Mrs Davies illustrated this through the example of Formula One, where the driver may be the person in the spotlight, but success depends

on a much wider team of engineers, mechanics, strategists and others, many doing vital work behind the scenes. The same principle applied at Grafham Water: some pupils were striving to climb higher on Jacob's ladder, while others helped their teammates in the background belaying the rope to help the others succeed. Both roles mattered.

Collaborative learning experiences are at the centre of life at St Faith's. Pupils learn that success is often achieved not alone, but together. They learn that sometimes their role is to achieve something themselves, while at other times it is to help somebody else achieve something. Recognising the value of both — and appreciating contributions that may go unseen — is an important lesson in teamwork, community and belonging, and one that will serve them well both in school and beyond.





Mrs N Critchley

Head of Year 7 and Bentley House