

December 2024

Dear Families,

RE: Three things to make you smile

I'm very aware that it's sometimes hard to get a feel for the culture that we're trying to create at Farlingaye. That's why I've started writing this monthly message - so that you get a little insight into the values that we want to encourage and celebrate.

For December, I'm going to draw your attention to three stories that all shed light on something that's very close to our hearts...

Who'd be a Teacher eh?

In recent weeks, students from Year 9 have been visiting local primary schools to deliver fantastic language-learning experiences. Believe me, this can be quite an intimidating experience (!) but our students made us proud.

After participating in a project teaching German to Year 6 pupils at St Mary's Primary School, some of our Year 9 students shared their reflections:

"Although we thought at first that it was going to be a bit scary—as we didn't want the children to not enjoy themselves or not want to learn—everyone was so happy and excited to learn German."

"We had a great time, and it was a lot of fun! We enjoyed seeing the children grow in confidence. They made it easy for us to teach them because their attitude was so positive."

"We 100% recommend this activity to future Year 9 students. It helps you step out of your comfort zone and is a great way to teach German to the next generation. It was such a rewarding experience sharing our knowledge with others."

A huge well done to everyone involved for your creativity, dedication, and the wonderful impact you've made.

A Dream Come True

Earlier this term, Tallulah, a year 10 student, applied for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, in the form of a week-long, fully funded football coaching experience with AFC Augsburg in Germany. This opportunity (open to just 20 students from PASCH Schools across the whole of North West Europe) combines professional football training with immersive German language learning.

To apply, Tallulah had to write a "Letter of Motivation" in German (which I think most of us would find hard enough to do in English). Despite her nerves, she dedicated hours to crafting her letter, and her hard work paid off: her application impressed the organisers so much that she was offered a place!

In February 2025, Tallulah will travel to Germany to train with AFC Augsburg, visit Bayern Munich, and further develop her football skills while practising her German.

Tallulah's parents shared their pride:

"Football is Tallulah's biggest love in life, and this opportunity combines her passion for the sport with her growing love of the German language. While there are some nerves about travelling alone and meeting new people, we know she will embrace this opportunity wholeheartedly, and we couldn't be prouder."

Taking a Voice in School Improvement

At Farlingaye, we take pride in fostering a sense of ownership among our students. This is their school, and we encourage them to play an active role in shaping it. Whether through councils, surveys, or personal initiatives, we value their ideas and insights.

One such moment occurred recently when Isabella, one of our brilliant Year 10 students, approached us with a thoughtful idea: introducing a GCSE in British Sign Language (BSL). Isabella highlighted how this could not only provide students with valuable skills for communication and inclusivity but also raise awareness of the challenges faced by the Deaf community.

Her proposal was heartfelt and inspiring. Isabella shared how learning BSL would have personally benefited her and her family, as her father is Deaf and previously played for England Deaf Rugby. She pointed out the practical benefits:

- BSL is a language used in our own country, unlike other foreign language options.
- It is inclusive, benefiting students with strong visual processing skills or those who may find learning spoken languages challenging.
- It offers fantastic career opportunities as interpreters are in high demand across settings like hospitals, events, and education.

While we can't promise an immediate addition to the curriculum, Isabella's suggestion has sparked meaningful discussions within our school and with external organisations. Her courage to voice her ideas and her drive to make a difference truly embody the values we strive to nurture at Farlingaye.

Pulling it all together.

If there is one thread that flows through all these stories it is that our students are learning how to put themselves into difficult, demanding and sometimes nerve-wracking situations (!) That takes courage, imagination and confidence.

These are *crucial* life skills.

Ones that will help them achieve their highest ambitions in life. Most important of all, they *aren't* part of the National Curriculum. In fact, they can't even be taught. These traits come from creating a culture within the school that enables our students to push themselves - and to inspire all of us with their talent, determination, and kindness.

We couldn't be prouder.

Thank you for taking the time to read, and I hope these stories bring a little extra positivity to your day.



Have a wonderful December

Yours sincerely

Mr P Smith
Headteacher