

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

08 November 2019

Good fortune was with us last Friday as the rain clouds skirted around Cambridge, providing us with a dry evening for the annual fireworks display. Once again the event was a 'sell-out' with 900 members of the St Faith's community joining us for this family occasion. There were plenty of 'ooos' and 'aaahs' from the children as the glittering spectacle lit up the sky, culminating in a surprise St Faith's finale (shown in the photo below). Many thanks indeed to all members of the SFPA committee and in particular, event coordinator Carl Rowland, who together with the Bursar and his team ensured that all aspects of the evening ran smoothly. Many of you will have noticed that Mr Rowland has acquired a new skill of making candyfloss – we lost count of how many he made and sold last Friday but he was so good at it the SFPA may well be calling on him again!

Anti-bullying Week

On Monday, as part of the national anti-bullying week, Mr Critchley (Director of Pastoral Care) led a whole school assembly focused on the theme 'Change Starts With Us'. He reminded us that every member of the St Faith's has a responsibility to keep our school a positive, happy and safe place. Throughout the week discussions on the theme of how to prevent bullying have been conducted in registration, tutor time and PSHCE lessons. Pupils in Years 3 to 8 have also completed their twice-yearly survey about how they are feeling in school; the pastoral team will then follow up with individual pupils about any concerns they have. For more information please see our 'Pastoral Spotlight' on side bar of this newsletter.

Academic Extension Day

The second of our Academic Extension (or AcE) Days was held on Tuesday. Such days provide an opportunity to extend the learning in Years 3-8 beyond what is usually achievable in the normal timetabled lessons.

Year 3 embraced the mind set of inventor extraordinaire, Mrs Armitage, the brainchild of illustrator and author, Quentin Blake. Amongst a range of activities connected to this character, the children designed bikes for Mrs Armitage and studied and explored the principles of cogs and chains to propel their contraptions.

Year 4 immersed themselves in Spanish culture with a day focused on the art, music, cookery

and food of the many countries inspired by Spain. The pupils practised culinary Spanish vocabulary through a number of games, sang food-inspired songs and prepared delicious empanadas. At lunch the whole school had the opportunity to enjoy a Latin-themed lunch of Tacos and spiced potato wedges.

On #ThisIsEngineering Day and in the same week that Bloodhound attempted to smash the land speed record in South Africa and Lewis Hamilton was crowned World Champion for the sixth time, it was only fitting that Year 5 should have the opportunity to experience for themselves the world of motorsport engineering. From designing bodywork to test driving the cars themselves, all pupils had the opportunity to experience the St Faith's Green Goblin racing cars.

In the classroom, Year 6 pupils spent their AcE day focusing on skills to help them study more efficiently. A variety of problem-solving activities (including Mr Mageean's chocolate cake conundrum) helped pupils tackle reasoning tests, while a session on conducting reliable internet searches helped pupils look for and identify trustworthy and accurate information online. They finished their day learning time management skills, essential for many of the assessments they will be taking in the future.

As part of the Arts Award project, Year 7 participated in a skills-share session which saw each child teach a new skill to a fellow pupil. These ranged from instrumental lessons in Music to oil pastel etchings in Art and stage-combat techniques in Drama. In the afternoon the Year 7s began work on their Arts Awards portfolios which will be completed over the course of the year.

Many Year 8 pupils will be sitting senior school entrance assessments in January and as such their Extension Day focused on exam techniques, practising Maths and English papers and learning how to prepare realistic revision plans. Such skills are, of course, important not just for the imminent exams but also for their long-term educational future. Over the next few months,

academic work in school will continue to focus on exam preparation.

Scott Polar Museum Visit

Turning to the Pre Prep, as part of their Fire and Ice topic this term, Year 2 visited the Polar Museum at the Scott Polar Research Institute this week. The children spent a morning learning about the history of polar exploration as they studied the artefacts, models and photographic archives of the museum.

Mental Health

Following on from Year 7's Mental Health Day last term, local Blues Duo, Stella and Chris Newman, visited St Faith's on Thursday to talk about their song writing and playing and how it helps them in their lives. After performing for the children, Stella talked about when and why she wrote the song, and what message it gives. This was a very mature conversation carefully tailored to the emotional development of the age group. If sessions such as this encourage children to talk to someone, write a poem, or play a song or instrument when they are feeling worried or upset, then they have been hugely beneficial.

Bewitched by Books

I am off now to watch the Year 5 Drama production, ***Bewitched by Books***. During this term, under the guidance of Ms Allen and Mrs Davies, the children have explored vocal and physical expression, and learned to use music, dance, mime and choral reading to create atmosphere, develop character and explore the fantastical worlds of their favourite books. This afternoon, the works of Greek Mythology, Grimm, Roald Dahl and J K Rowling are due to be brought to life in Ashburton Hall. In advance I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Ms Allen and Mrs Davies for putting together what I am sure will be a unique and entertaining performance. A few photos from this morning's dress rehearsals are below with more to follow next week.

And finally...

It wasn't just the fireworks that lit up the school site this week. In the hustle and bustle of school life, it is easy to miss the splendour of the ever-changing nature here at St Faith's. I thought, therefore, I would finish with this picture of the Ashburton Courtyard Maple Leaf tree that I took this week; many visitors comment to me about its radiant colour and, thinking of our uniform, ask if it had been planted with the St Faith's red in mind. We can't claim that but it is splendid don't you think?

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell