

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

10 January 2020

Happy New Year!

Children's alarm clocks are ringing again and the joy of the school run has returned – Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed a wonderful Christmas break and that your children have settled back in to school feeling refreshed and ready for the challenges of the new term. Judging from my conversations this week, getting out of bed early on dark January mornings is not universally popular nor the easiest task after the Christmas break. Nevertheless, it has been great to see the community reunited and back in to the swing of school routines. It was particularly good to meet and greet so many smiling faces as parents and children arrived back at St Faith's on Wednesday morning. The weather may be gloomy, but there is renewed vitality around school. I wish everyone a very happy and fulfilling 2020.

Looking Forward, Giving Back

Our start of term assembly on Wednesday focused on the beginning of the new year. I talked about the Roman God of beginnings, Janus and how, with two heads, Janus is able to look back as well as forward. With 'eyes in the back of his head', or rather two heads, I did remark that Janus would have made a great teacher – and parent! We discussed how January is a good time to look back and reflect on past achievements as well as look forward to set new goals.

The theme, 'Looking Forward, Giving Back' will be a feature of the school's work over the coming year as I highlighted to colleagues when the staff team reconvened on Monday morning. St Faith's will continue to innovate and ensure that our pupils are prepared well for the future, both educationally and in the way they understand their place and responsibilities in the wider world. As we move in to the next decade, we will continue to develop our outreach work and trust that this philanthropic approach, combined with the school's innovative education, will help our young people to develop a mind-set of 'looking forward and giving back'.

Charity News

In that spirit, I am delighted to share news of the significant funds raised in the last week of term. The annual Christmas Jumper Day saw us raise a staggering £755 which has been sent to support the Mathieson Music School in India – a charity about which I have written in the past. In addition, collections after our two carol services raised an impressive £775 for the local Salvation Army. Thank you to everyone who supported these charities by making donations.

Ski Trip

In the very small hours of the 14th December, thirty five pupils and five members of staff set off for Mayrhofen, Austria for five days of alpine adventure. Winter sport conditions were fantastic and all pupils, from beginners to the most advanced, enjoyed a wonderful week of fresh air, high octane entertainment and après-ski fun. Very many thanks to all the staff, led by Miss Kennerley, who looked after the children so well and ensured that they had such a memorable time.

Here are a few photos and a video posted on the Twitter feed during the trip.

https://twitter.com/St_Faiths/status/1207411673193164806

New Era Drama Results

Just before the end of term over 30 pupils received the wonderful news that they had achieved

the highest grade of Distinction in the recent Speech and Drama examinations. Pupils took exams in Verse and Prose Speaking, Shakespeare, Mime and Speaking in Public in the first set of examinations since moving from LAMDA to New Era Examinations. Technically more challenging than the LAMDA examination subjects, our pupils skills were certainly challenged. The results, however, were superb. My warmest congratulations to all who took the exams and my sincere thanks to our Speech and Drama teacher, Miss Tucker, who does such a wonderful job in preparing the children for these demanding exams.

Assessments

This is the time of the year when many of our Year 8 pupils have their heads down, revising for and sitting entrance and scholarship assessments to senior schools. A good number of our Year 6 pupils will also be focused on tests as on Monday we will be hosting the annual Leys Preliminary Assessment. This test, unique to St Faith's, allows pupils to secure a Year 9 place at The Leys two years early. The Year 8s and 6s are very well prepared but will still have more than a twinge of anxiety as the day of the exam approaches. My very best wishes to them over the coming weeks.

New Year's Resolutions

I was very taken with the new display board as I passed through 1DH classroom yesterday. A giant goalpost complete with a football for each child, on which they have written their first goal for the term, took pride of place in the classroom. One child had written that they wanted to use capital letters, another to join up their handwriting and Miss Digby had set a class goal for all pupils to line up smartly in order. Even the teachers had set goals for themselves – Mrs Scott to improve her handwriting and Miss Digby to drink more water and eat less chocolate. As the term progresses and goals are achieved, footballs are moved in between the goalposts and goals are scored! Even by the time I saw the board one goal had already been scored – well done to Ben on independently remembering to use finger spaces between words in his writing. May we all achieve our individual goals in 2020 as successfully as Ben!

Finally...

Every day at St Faith's brings a surprise. Today, Frank came to my office to show me his latest origami creation, which as you can see from this short film, is amazing!

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell