

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

10 March 2017

In a week when we had International Women's Day (8th March), I found it useful to reflect on the recent achievements of our young women here at St Faith's. It is a fact that to date, eighteen of this year's twenty-seven senior school scholarships have been awarded to girls.

Computing, Engineering and Science

Delving a little deeper, in to the wonderful world of computing, I discovered that eight out of the top ten performers in Year 8 Computing lessons are girls and this pattern is similar in younger age groups, according to Mr Mitchell. This is impressive. When I show prospective parents around the school, it gives me great pleasure to see the girls attacking their Engineering projects with gusto and I hope that many will go on to pursue an Engineering career and help meet the shortage of Engineers in the UK. We are blessed at St Faith's to have two qualified female Engineers teaching the subject and in this respect, our girls have excellent role models. This, of course, applies to our Science too. One mother recently commented that she was delighted when, as part of the Year 4 Science AcE Day last Friday, her daughter, when asked to draw a scientist, drew a woman; this is something, which she acknowledged, was far less likely to have happened a few decades ago.

House Music Finals

So we have much to celebrate when it comes to the achievements of our young women. In the House Music Finals on Monday evening, an event which I found uplifting and inspiring, two of the three winners (Matilda W, Alex R and Ben L) were girls. The adjudicator, Andrew Forbes, former Director of Music at Oundle School, wrote to Mr Gorick afterwards,

'Just to congratulate you and your department on an excellent Music Competition. The standard was exceptionally high, across all three competitions. It was an event that the school should be hugely proud of.'

I could not agree more. Well done to all the pupils who competed, not least for the courage and confidence you showed in performing a solo in front of your peers, parents and teachers.

Year 1 Production

Confidence simply flowed across the stage in the Year 1 production of 'Hansel and Gretel' on Wednesday. The children seamlessly sang and danced their way from one scene to the next, with great joy and enthusiasm. It was a beautifully produced show - slick, neat and hugely entertaining with, crucially, all the children playing an important part. As I glanced around the audience half way through the show and saw rows of proud smiling parents and grandparents with tears rolling down their cheeks, I knew I was not the only one who had been touched by the enchanting performances. I called in to the Year 1 classrooms the next morning to say thank you (again) to the children and staff and was delighted to read some of the stories which had recently been written, based on the structure of Hansel and Gretel. I thought you might like to see some, so I have included a few in the index.

Tea Time Concert

Our older Drama students have also been in action this week. I popped in to the Drama Tea Time Concert on Tuesday to see our budding actors presenting their pieces for The Sudbury Performing Arts Festival this week. Judging from what I witnessed, our pupils should do very well indeed

Sports Results

As the end of the winter sports season approaches, county, regional and national sports finals arrive like London buses, on a good day. Almost every day over the next week or so our sports

teams are competing in the finals of a prestigious sports event. Yesterday our U11 boys' hockey team competed in the County Cup and U13 girls' hockey side competed in the Eastern Region Finals at Redbridge. Today, Jane, Mollie and I cheered along the U13 netballers (pictured above) in the National Finals at Basildon; this weekend our gymnasts will be in Stoke, participating in the National Team Trio Championships; on Monday the U11 boys' hockey team will be competing in the National Finals at Repton School; on Tuesday the U13 boys' hockey side will be in action in the Regional Finals at Bedford; on Wednesday the U11 girls' hockey team will be in Redbridge for the Eastern Regional Finals; then we have a breather until Sunday when three of our rugby teams will be competing in the National Finals at Epsom College. The PE and Games Department work really hard to ensure that sport is inclusive (we fielded 23 teams on Wednesday afternoon for example) as well as challenging for the most able, so I am delighted that so many of our pupils will have the opportunity of competing at regional or national level over the next week. It would be nice to do well, and our pupils will certainly be trying their best to do so, but the real benefit of these events is just being there, and our players having the opportunity to test their skills against some of the strongest school teams in the region and country.

Fairtrade Fortnight

In the middle of Fairtrade Fortnight, I visited the Eco Committee meeting on Tuesday to hear about recent and future eco events. I was pleased, but not surprised, to learn that the Fairtrade cake sale was a success and that this week's Year 8 Buddy Sessions and Monday's assembly (led by Miss Kennerley) will focus on Fairtrade. It will be a busy few months for the Eco Committee as they prepare for our next Green Flag inspection in late June (we hope).

Quizzes

I am now off to do my Jeremy Paxman impression as I host the keenly contested annual Inter-House Geography Quiz, after which I will be joining parents for the SFPA Quiz evening. I think that will be enough questions for one day.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has supported the Makukhanye lunches, the final one of which was this week. I know that many of you have enjoyed sampling the St Faith's lunches, and Jane and I have appreciated the opportunity to meet with many of you in our own home. We are pleased to say that almost £600 has been raised for our South African partnership school, which a party of staff and pupils will be visiting this summer.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell