

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

5 May 2017

What a difference a week makes. A week last Monday, as I sauntered out of a classroom having conducted a lesson observation, I saw my PA, Mrs Greer, striding towards me. In my job, this is never a good sign.

Inspection

As Mrs Greer approached, a flurry of possible disasters crossed my mind, so when she announced that the long-awaited call from the inspectors had arrived, I almost had a sense of relief. Two days later, after a lot of information-gathering and questionnaire-filling, the inspectors crossed the threshold, armed with bulging folders and long lists of searching questions. It proved to be an intense and successful couple of days during which the strength and cohesiveness of our community shone brightly. Inspectors commented particularly on the very positive responses in the parent questionnaires. 'You should be delighted with these', was the first comment from the Lead Inspector as she summarised the questionnaire responses in our meeting on Wednesday morning. The inspectors also highlighted the dedication and commitment of our staff, and the 'happy and articulate pupils', as they put it.

The full report will be published in 4-6 weeks and until then I am not permitted to divulge details, suffice to say that we are delighted with the outcomes. I am not anticipating that the report will reach the best-sellers list, as it will appear a little dry, to say the least. The inspection regime has changed (again) and this particular inspection focussed entirely on regulatory compliance. The report will list the judgements of the inspectors in relation to the many statutory regulations, which are fundamental to the safety, welfare and education of your children and therefore, very important.

The distraction of the inspection prevented me from writing to you on Friday. Thank you to our Marketing Manager, Dr Pangalos who, at relatively late notice, agreed to write last week's newsletter. I am sure you agree that she did a great job.

Assessments, Exams and Co-Curricular

When I walk around school at this time of the year, I see great contrasts. Assessments and examinations loom large for many pupils; several year groups have or will have their heads down, studiously working their way through the test papers. At the same time, there continues to be great excitement across a wide range of co-curricular activities, both in and out of the classrooms. Mathematicians are preparing for the Year 6 Cambridgeshire Maths Challenge (hosted at St Faith's), athletes are limbering up for the two Sports Days, musicians are practising for the summer concerts and our budding young actors are deep in final rehearsals for the *'We will Rock you'*, which takes place on 24th and 25th May. There is much to look forward to in the coming weeks.

Cambridgeshire Chess League

Last weekend, the Cambridgeshire Chess League reached a fitting climax when the final matches were contested, as usual, in the Ashburton Hall. Our 'A' Team (pictured below) finished 2nd – their best ever placing in the league – to the great excitement of the players and Mr Mitchell. Further details are in the index of this newsletter. It gives me great pleasure to see chess thriving in the school. We now have over 80 players attending the various chess clubs and three teams in the Cambridgeshire League. This is mainly due to Mr Mitchell's dedication and enthusiasm for chess and his real desire to promote the sport across the region. He tells me that almost 30 schools have signed up to next season's league.

SFPA Summer Party

Tickets are now on sale for the [SFPA summer party](#) at the Double Tree by Hilton on Saturday 10th June. Drinks and a barbecue on the lawns (weather permitting), a chauffeured punt down the river and music and dancing (with a DJ) in the hotel should make for a great evening so do come along if you can – all parents are welcome. The main purpose of the evening is social but any surplus funds will be put towards school equipment. Just last week, the SFPA Committee agreed to fund half the cost of new Pre Prep playground apparatus, similar to those that have been recently installed in other areas of the school. This should be up and ready to be used

later this summer. Substantial investment such as this is possible because recent SFPA events have been very well attended by parents.

Congratulations

On the staff front, I am sure you will be delighted to hear that Grace Iris Rose Walker arrived on 27th April, weighing 6lb 9oz. Mrs Walker and her daughter are in fine form.

On the sports front, I congratulate William Brent on taking a hat-trick against the Perse this week; most cricketers never achieve this in their lifetime, never mind at the age of 12.

Sporting Events

Finally, I wish good luck to the ten pupils who are representing St Faith's in national sporting events this weekend. Amelia Sangster, Chris Howe and Herbie Linney are competing in the Prep Schools National Swimming Finals at the K2 Sports Centre in Crawley. At the same time, seven gymnasts – Max Burnell, Guy Nichols, Nina Lane, Viraj Shah, Harry Bennett-Coles, Connie Topel and Finn Hutchison – are taking part in the British Schools Tumbling and Acrobatics Finals in Stoke. Both the gymnastics and swimming finals will offer tough competition and we really hope our pupils feel proud of their performances whatever the outcome.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell