

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

24 February 2017

I hope your children have settled back in to school after the break and have a renewed spring in their step after a busy first half of term. The many winter coughs and colds have largely disappeared and it has been great to see the children and staff on fine form this week. The mild weather at the beginning of the week was a real bonus, when the pupils were able to use the full extent of the school grounds at break times – the first time for many months. Storm Doris gave us a reality check, which I hope will be just a blip in the gradual warming of the weather as we move towards Easter.

Community Spirit

It is, of course, half way through the school year as well as half way through the term. In assembly this week, I took the opportunity to remind everyone of our 'theme for the year', service. We discussed how we can serve our community, and the wider world, through kindness, respect, politeness and effective teamwork. I used examples from the animal kingdom, specifically geese flying in formation, meerkats on sentry patrol and penguins huddling to keep warm, to illustrate how communities stay strong by everyone working together, unselfishly and with a common sense of purpose. Never a week goes by without someone commenting to me on the community spirit at St Faith's, so I am keen that the children understand, appreciate and cherish this, without taking any of it for granted.

Entrance Examination Results

Community spirits have been cheered by the senior school entrance examinations results that have landed on my desk over the past few weeks. The performances of our pupils and the feedback from the senior schools has been extremely positive, not just in terms of the results but also the impressive way our pupils conducted themselves in interviews and meetings with key staff. To date, nineteen pupils have gained twenty-seven scholarships at eight different schools; eleven academic, one all-round, two art, five drama, two music and six sport. An outstanding feature of this year's senior school exam results is just how many of our pupils have gained places at their first choice school. I will provide further details when the outcomes of all the examinations have been received later this term but in the meantime, I would like to congratulate the pupils on these significant successes.

Quiz Teams

I would also like to congratulate the School General Knowledge Team – Ash Goel, Neal Tuladhar, Harry Pritchard and Toby Goodman on finishing a highly respectable third in the Eastern Region Heat of the National Inter-School Quiz. By all accounts it was a nail-biting finish with St Faith's leading for most of the way. It is the first time we have entered this competition so a big thank you to Miss Dow and Mrs Hoole for preparing and taking the team.

Awards

Two small, but significant awards came our way this week. We heard that our computer network passed the 'Cyber essentials +' test, an external accreditation which recognises strong network security. That represents a big pat on the back to our Network Team, headed by Charlie Cochrane. On Wednesday afternoon, Mr Brent was at Peterborough Football Club where the City Mayor presented him with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Travel Plan Award in recognition of the school's 'creativity, innovation, and continued progress in promoting sustainable transport', as the associated letter states. As you are aware, this is a key area for the school so it is reassuring to receive an external accreditation such as this. Many thanks to Mr Brent, Miss Pearson (Operations Manager) and their team.

National Finals

The next few weeks will be a busy time for our sports teams, many of which will be competing in national finals. The U11 boys' hockey team became the latest side to qualify for the National Finals when they finished as runners-up in the Eastern Region Championships this week – very well done to them.

School Council

On Thursday two members of the School Council came to see me to discuss the pupils' suggestions for improving the school. I really enjoy these meetings and this week's was no exception, with a wide range of topics raised, including the size of the dining tables, the quality of the PE shirts and number of netball hoops in the playground! There are always some unusual ideas put forward as well as some very practical ones, many of which are taken on board and become reality, including the outdoor climbing frames which were designed by the School Council. Here is a picture of Tom, Rowan and me in mid-discussion.

This evening I am playing in the annual staff v Old Fidelian indoor football match, so if you see me moving gingerly around the school on Monday you will know why.

Have a good weekend,

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell