

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

3 February 2017

I really enjoyed Maths when I was a pupil, which is why I went on to study the subject at university and teach it, firstly at senior school level then in prep schools. Over the years I have come to appreciate that Maths is not everyone's cup of tea and to be honest, have become slightly frustrated by the subject's relative poor image in the UK, certainly compared to countries in the Far East. So it warms my heart to see anything done to promote Maths and show how it can be fun and exciting for even the most numerically challenged.

Cambridgeshire Maths Challenge

On Tuesday we held the inaugural Cambridgeshire Maths Challenge for Year 4 pupils which, I am delighted to say, attracted 34 schools. Over 130 children competed in teams which tackled a wonderful range of mathematical puzzles; when I called in to the Ashburton Hall to see the children in action, the room was fizzing with energy and excitement. One of our teams finished in 2nd place, an excellent achievement, but the real winner was Maths itself and the evident success of this new event. It was lovely to see all the competitors full of enthusiasm when they left the Hall and went for their much deserved afternoon tea in the Dining Room. My sincere thanks to Mr Kite, our Head of Maths, and his departmental colleagues for organising the afternoon, which complements the annual Cambridgeshire Schools Maths Challenge we host in the summer. We have received several complimentary emails over the past few days including one from a teacher at Queen Edith School, which reads:

'It was my first time at one of your Challenges, and I was most impressed with the organisation, the variety of challenges for the children which kept them all engaged, and the positive mathematical atmosphere surrounding the whole event. Thank you for all your hard work organising it.'

Buddy Sessions

Speaking of a positive atmosphere, I was hugely impressed by the way the Year 8s conducted their Buddy Sessions this week. For those not familiar with the Buddy Scheme, each half-term, every Year 8 pupil visits a tutor group in Year 3, 4, 5 or 6 to lead a pastoral session on a particular theme. The Year 8s plan and deliver the sessions under the guidance of the Heads of House. This week, I saw sessions on 'listening skills' which the Year 3 and 4 children were thoroughly enjoying. The Buddy Scheme promotes a valuable link between the Year 8s and the younger children and, of course, develops the leadership skills of our eldest pupils.

Pre Prep Assemblies

On Wednesday morning the words, '*That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind*' rang around the Hall as 2JP presented an enthralling assembly on space. We were fortunate to have with us several famous astronauts including our own Neil Armstrong, Helen Sharman and Tim Peake and, would you believe it, the first dog (Laika) which travelled into Space, came along too. I smiled and chuckled my way through the entire assembly which was so well delivered by the class. It makes me proud to see our young children remembering so many lines and speaking so confidently in front of a large audience and as you can see from the appearance of the paparazzi after the assembly had finished, I was not the only one to feel proud as I left the Hall. I have also included a photo of Alex receiving his birthday card from me this week, as, behind us, you can see the excellent display on Space in 2JP's classroom.

Ready, Steady, Cook

Do you remember the TV programme, 'Ready, Steady, Cook?' Well, this afternoon, we held our own edition with the help of Chartwells, our catering team. After a presentation to the Year 6 and 8 pupils on nutrition and healthy diets, two teams battled it out for the honour of creating the best meal in just 10 minutes. The challenge certainly caught the imagination of our pupils who were having a wonderful time when I called in to watch.

Gymnastic Competitions

Good luck to all gymnasts who are representing St Faith's at East Region Gymnastics Competitions this weekend. We are fielding five teams in the Milano Trios competition at Mark Hall School in Harlow, Essex and 11 pairs and one tumbler on Sunday in the Sports Acrobatics Regionals at Salto Gymnastics Club in Luton on Sunday.

Foundation Concert

On Thursday evening St Faith's will be hosting the biennial Foundation Concert, an event designed to showcase the musical talent at both St Faith's and The Leys. The Concert will include performances from the St Faith's Concert Band and Big Band, and The Leys Chamber Choir as well as some pieces from their top solo instrumentalists. As a finalé, the choirs from both schools will join the St Faith's Singers (our adult choir) to perform John Rutter's 'Gloria'. All families are welcome to attend the concert; please contact the School Office to reserve seats.

Next week will see a host of special events as part of Book Week. Authors will be visiting St Faith's to talk to the children about their work, the library will be hosting lunchtime literary activities and a book swap at the end of school on Friday. Further details of Book Week are in

the index of this newsletter.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell