

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

27 January 2017

As I helped Miss McNally clear away the last few remaining chairs from the Sports Hall on Sunday evening we reflected on what had been a thoroughly wonderful day.

National Four-Piece Finals - Gymnastics

Two hundred and forty gymnasts in forty teams from twenty-one schools came from far and wide to compete in the National Four-Piece Finals here in our Sports Hall. The standard was red hot. Bodies flew over apparatus, tumbled across mats and performed eye-watering stretches that most of us can only dream about. The Sports Hall, decked out with a vast range of the latest gymnastics equipment, looked magnificent and the visiting national judges, all in uniformed blazers, brought gravitas to the occasion. This was a big and ambitious event which required a team effort from the St Faith's community to hold it all together. Staff, as always, were generous with their time and commitment, and were supported by a large team of volunteer parents and pupils who gave up their day to sell refreshments, manage the warm-up facilities, distribute programmes, welcome our visitors and point people in the right direction. My sincere thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of the occasion – I heard nothing but compliments from the large band of merry supporters accompanying the visiting schools. The cherry on the cake, and a very large one at that, was the performances of the St Faith's teams, two of which (the U9 and U11 Boys) won national titles, with two pupils – Viraj S and Guy N - winning their respective individual events. Many congratulations to all the boys who took part and their dedicated coaches, Miss McNally, Mr North and Miss Butler. On Sunday evening I made the long commute back to my house with a broad smile and a deep sense of satisfaction that we had pulled it off. This is a royal 'we' of course, as my contribution was limited to giving a vote of thanks and presenting the medals. The real work was done by Miss McNally, ably assisted by Mr North and Miss Butler, who orchestrated the whole show superbly, with their characteristic endless enthusiasm and energy.

Drama Workshop

This week we welcomed more visitors to the school. A group of children from two local special needs schools – Castle and Granta, joined some of our Year 7 pupils for two days of Drama workshops. Drama is an ideal forum for the children of the three schools to connect and work together, each learning from the others, the skills and confidence to create a group performance. It's challenging for all those involved, but for many an experience they will never forget. For our pupils, this is, of course, much more than Drama. Their work with the children who have learning difficulties requires considerable empathy, patience and understanding; life

skills which should hold them in good stead in the future. My thanks to Ms Allen, our Head of Drama, who kindly hosted this valuable annual event.

Pre Prep Assemblies

On Wednesday morning, Jane and I joined parents and staff to watch Class 2RB's assembly, a most entertaining display of the children's recent work on the Solar System. Random facts appeared from all directions – Venus is the hottest planet, Uranus the coldest, Jupiter spins the quickest and Saturn's ring is made of ice – for example. We were shown the class's mnemonic to remember the order of the planets (from the Sun) – **My Very Easy Method Just Speeds Up Naming Planets** – and learnt that if Mercury is the size of a peppercorn, Jupiter would be the size of a watermelon! We even heard an enchanting planet song which reinforced the children's knowledge. As Mrs Smith said, this assembly was another good example of how interactive teaching engages the children and makes learning so much more effective. Thank you to 2RB, and Mrs Brading and Mrs Coster, for such a lovely start to the day.

Norwich Theatre Company

Finally, here are a couple of lovely photos from the amazing puppet show on Tuesday afternoon, when the Pre Prep children enjoyed a magical performance of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale, 'The Tinderbox'. Norwich Theatre Company enthralled the children with their colourful and imaginative array of puppets and staging which brought to life this traditional children's story.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell