

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

30 June 2017

Where has the time gone? I can't believe that another three terms have flown by and I am now sitting down to write the final newsletter of the academic year. For me, time has never passed as quickly as it does at St Faith's.

Classroom Accomplishments

When writing this weekly message to you I am always conscious that reported school news tends to focus on the wide range of 'public' events, particularly in Drama, Music and Sport, and as you know, there is plenty to celebrate about these at St Faith's. Therefore, as we reach the final stretch of the year, let me put in a word or two for the equally valuable accomplishments behind the classroom doors. When I visit lessons, as I do most days to deliver birthday cards or show prospective parents around the school, I am always struck by the vibrant and purposeful atmosphere in the classes. Happy children being taught by passionate teachers who go the extra mile to ensure that lessons are dynamic and rigorous. This was also the overwhelming impression gained by the Year 4 parents who joined me on tours of the school this term. I was surprised by how surprised the parents were, as I see this every day and, to a certain extent, take it for granted. By seeing lessons at first hand, the parents were clearly bowled over by the calm, rigorous and happy nature of the teaching and learning. Consequently, we will be repeating these tours next year and possibly introducing them for other year groups too.

I hope that at the end of another year, you can look back and see how well your child has progressed, in terms of both their learning and personal development. Over the past week I have had the pleasure of reading the end of year reports and it is clear to me how well our pupils are doing, and just as importantly, how much they enjoy school. Long may this continue.

Pre Prep Concert

In just over three weeks, the much-anticipated trip to Makukhanye (the township school we support) will depart, so this week's Pre Prep Concert, based on African music and traditions, whetted my appetite for the cultural delights awaiting us in South Africa. We were treated to an interactive celebration of the children's music making with lots of choral singing, some fine instrumental ensembles and energetic dancing, inter-dispersed with audience participation. Thank you to our Pre Prep Music Teacher, Ms Overman, and the Pre Prep Teaching Assistants who organised and managed this lovely afternoon of entertainment.

Enrichment Week

Today marks the end of Enrichment Week, a five-day off-timetable programme of enrichment and extension activities. Local, national and international trips have complemented a vast array of activities in school. Several year groups have set off on foot to explore many of the wonderful historical features of our home city – we are so fortunate to have Cambridge on our doorstep and we are making a concerted effort to make greater use of it. As well as the various outings to Cambridge, groups have visited The Globe, Tate Modern, Royal Observatory, Kew Gardens, Warwick Castle, Whipsnade Zoo, Nene Water Park and 'Bewilderwood'. Further afield our children are enjoying language courses in Salamanca (Year 6) and cultural visits in Rome and Pompeii (Year 8), and the gloriously hot weather in Spain and Italy.

Here at school the classrooms have been buzzing with Mandarin lessons, cooking courses, engineering activities, art programmes, historical-themed days, sport and of course, the ever popular Robot Olympics. The Roman and Viking invasions certainly livened things up, as did the Roman feast and Mad Hatter's Tea Party. I won't forget seeing gun powder propelled model cars whizzing across the netball court at terrific speeds; this formed part of the activity led by the 'Bloodhound' education project based on the world land speed record attempts. Enrichment Week is great for activities such as Art and Eco – more time, more space and more freedom for the children to express themselves. I am grateful to the staff, particularly Mrs White, the Enrichment Coordinator, for all their work in designing and organising these inspiring activities.

Today, Enrichment Week culminated in Makukhanye Day, a whole-school event designed to support our partnership school in South Africa, coordinated by Mrs North. This year, the activities focused on 'give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach a man how to fish and he will eat for a lifetime'. Mrs North presented an insightful assembly on sustainable communities in developing countries and how skill learning and education can change people's lives. Morning activities in Years 3 to 8 were based on learning new skills and it was lovely to see the Year 8s teaching the younger ones how to tell the time and tie a shoelace and school tie. This afternoon, we held a charity fair with a vast array of stalls and games (organised by the children) including, of course, an opportunity to throw wet sponges at the teachers. My suit is still drying out.

Speech Day

Despite the end of term being less than a week away, we still have a few major events to look

forward to, particularly Speech Day next Friday morning, when Professor Lord Mair, a former pupil and now Head of the Engineering Department, Cambridge University, will be our Guest of Honour. The Speech Day ceremony begins at 10.30am and ends at about 12 noon, and is the main event of the year when current and former pupils, staff, parents, governors and friends meet together to celebrate the success of the School. On this morning, Pre Prep pupils should wear summer uniform and children in Years 3 to 8 should come to school in winter uniform. All parents are welcome to attend the ceremony in the marquee and Gate 2 will be open from 9.45am.

Upcoming Events

Also next week, we have the Speech and Drama Showcase (Monday 7pm) and a Year 6 to 8 theatre trip to 'Wind in the Willows' in London (on Wednesday evening), and our runners and racing cars will be whizzing around tracks. Over twenty of our athletes will be competing in the national finals in Birmingham and the Green Goblins racing team will be taking part in their final event of the season, at Goodwood. We wish them every success.

School News

As usual, St Faith's will be a hive of activity during the holidays with a full programme of computing, arts, sports, and cookery courses, and an extensive schedule of building and maintenance, including the first phase of the new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths) Hub between Ashburton and Keynes. By the beginning of next term, the outdoor 'corridor' between the buildings should be a large indoor space with a glass roof. The following summer we plan to extend and re-fit the Science Laboratories, completing the Hub which will link the Science, Engineering, Computing, Art and Design and Maths Departments and create a large indoor space for inter-disciplinary project work. To give you a taste of things to come, a 'walk through' film of this facility can be viewed from the home page of our website or via this [link](#).

Speaking of the website, we will be launching a new website this summer. The process of 'going live' begins on 14th July and we hope that it will fully operational by the 17th July. We hope you like it!

The new STEAM Hub comes at a time when we have heard that for the fifth successive year, St Faith's has been granted Associate Membership of the Royal Society, in recognition of our 'outstanding Science teaching' (as the Society wrote). This is a privilege afforded to relatively few schools across the UK, and provides access to Royal Society resources and special events, such as the Annual Exhibition in London, which our pupils will be attending next week.

Amazon Drone Video

This week we discovered that the Amazon Drone Lab, based here in Cambridge, made a film of

our pupils' visit this term. The film can be viewed from the home page of our website or via this [link](#).

Whether you are flying to distant places or just taking it easy in Cambridge, I wish you and your family an enjoyable and relaxing summer holiday when it arrives.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell