

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

22 September 2017

Before I begin to describe some of the recent school events, allow me to share with you part of an email from a parent of one of our new recruits, a boy in Foundation, aged 4, which I received this week. The mother writes, 'On day two, a small girl held the gate open for us. She looked me in the eye, beamed a beautiful smile and confidently asked if my son was new. I said, "yes" and asked if she was in Year 1. She replied, "yes, ohhhh he's going to love it here". It took me a few moments to take it in. How absolutely wonderful.'

Opening gates and doors for each other, welcoming people warmly, looking people in the eye and having a smart appearance are all important life-skills, 'the oil in the cogs of life' I have heard some say, which I believe should be learnt and developed during prep school years. I am very pleased to say that the overwhelming feedback I receive from staff, parents and members of the wider community is that our pupils are polite and well-mannered, but we won't be taking this for granted over the course of the year so there will continue to be plenty of reminders as the weeks go by. In this respect, the teas after the sports matches play a valuable role, providing pupils with the opportunity to meet and greet others. That's why we insist that players sit opposite a member of visiting team, as shown in the photograph.

Back in the Swing

It is great to be back in the swing of term, with so many lessons and activities now up and running. In just one brief tour of the school yesterday I saw a Year 6 class tackling binary fractions in Computing, a Year 4 class learning about Aboriginal paintings, a Year 7 golf lesson in PE, in which the children's swings were being filmed (rather than me), and the new Foundation children enjoying their first balance bike session.

Earlier this week, I came across a Year 8 class who had been 'stranded on a desert island' and were making shelters, using only newspaper and tape. Over the next few weeks they will be aiming to survive and find their way back to civilisation. Their task involved making the shelter in silence, after only five minutes of team planning and discussion. The second lesson challenged them to make a bridge to cross a crocodile infested river to collect bananas and mangoes. As Dr Hoyle said, 'I thought the pupils would benefit from building a full scale bridge, as it requires a different thought problem solving process to building a small scale model. The contractors working on the STEAM Hub had some spare timber, which we cut to size and found some tree stakes for the cross supports.' Later in the term, the classes will be asked to build a waterproof container to deliver a message. The message they receive will contain instructions to build a

motor out of a battery, a screw and a magnet, which they will use to construct a paddleboat to take them off the island. Not surprisingly, the Year 8s were enthralled and revelling in the challenge.

Old Fidelian Reunion

The wet and gloomy weather last Friday didn't deter our former pupils, almost 100 of them, who returned to St Faith's for the annual Old Fidelian barbecue. Humorous anecdotes of school life emanated from all quarters as staff and alumni reminisced to the sound of the sizzling barbecue. It was great to see the young Old Fidelians take the time to come back to meet their former teachers and also the not-so-young Old Fidelians, many of whom travelled long distances across the country to be here. For the first time, we held a netball match prior to the barbecue, which brought back many of the girls who are now at senior school. It is difficult for me to convey to you in this newsletter just how much genuine affection our former pupils have for St Faith's, but I hope these photos give you a glimpse of this convivial evening.

Chariots of Fire

day morning, you couldn't fail to hear Mrs North's encouragement to the thousands of runners who participated in the annual [Chariots of Fire](#) relay race. You may have even have heard her in Saffron Walden. As the large St Faith's contingent of families and friends stood on Silver Street Bridge, barely a moment passed without seeing a member of staff, parent, governor, former pupil or friend of the school running around the Cambridge colleges. I am pleased to report that our two staff teams gave a very good account of themselves although the main achievement for many was just completing the course with their bodies reasonably intact. The Pre Prep was very well represented and might even now claim to be the fittest department of the school, although the Sports Faculty might have something to say about that. The Silver Street Bridge 'roar' certainly spurred on our runners and created a St Faith's feel-good factor. Thank you to all our supporters and well done to everyone who survived the challenge!

Forthcoming Events

Tomorrow morning, I will be joining many of the new Foundation families for the SFPA Scavenger Hunt in which the young children attempt to negotiate their way around the school grounds, following a planned course of activities and games. The real point of the morning is to enable the new families to meet and the children to familiarise themselves with the school. It is good to know that the weather is set fair for what should be a lovely occasion.

On Tuesday, we will be staging a whole school photograph, which in time, will be available for purchase. Fingers crossed for a dry day.

I will be conspicuous by my absence from Wednesday next week as I will be at the annual prep school Heads' Conference, a gathering of over 300 school leaders from the UK and overseas which, this year, is based in Edinburgh.

Finally...

Mr Gorick took this photo when we visited the ostrich farm in South Africa this summer and sent it to me this week, suggesting that we have a caption competition! So if you have any amusing suggestions which can be repeated in this newsletter please send them to my P.A. Mrs Greer (headsec@stfaiths.co.uk).

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell