

# THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

06 October 2017

When children join St Faith's, at the age of 4, their families often think of their future association with the school as a nine-year journey. In reality, for most people, it's for life. The memories and friendships made here continue long after pupils move on to senior school, and barely a week passes by without us receiving a message of thanks from an Old Fidelian or a request to look around their former school. This summer, completely out of the blue, we heard from a group of gentlemen who were all in Year 3 at St Faith's 65 years ago! On Tuesday they came to visit, armed with a whole school photo of their time here, and oodles of amusing anecdotes of their teachers, lessons and playtime antics. Below is a photo of them now, in front of School House, with some of today's Year 3 pupils, and the whole school photo of 1952 (to enlarge the image, just click on the photograph).

As we toured the classrooms I heard sharp intakes of breath as they realised the full extent of the school's development over the years. There was plenty of surprised reactions amongst the children too, when they discovered that the gentlemen I brought in to their lessons, sat in their classrooms over six decades ago. The Old Fidelians had gone their separate ways after St Faith's, all using their personal talents and skills to make a success of their lives in different parts of the world, but their friendships remained. They wanted to return, to reminisce on their happy times here and to say thank you for everything St Faith's had done for them. One of the thank you letters I received reads, 'What we witnessed during your guided tour of the school was truly inspirational. This was also the case when we all started together at the school 65 years ago. St Faith's laid down solid foundations for all I have achieved in life. For this I remain very grateful to St Faith's, as well as, for the lasting friendships made during my time at the school.' It was a great honour to welcome them back.

It has been quite a week for welcoming back former pupils. On Wednesday, Paul Harmer drove from Gloucestershire to donate a whole school photo, and to see our Engineering in action, which he had heard much about. It was the first time Paul had been back to St Faith's since leaving in 1949! Since then he has enjoyed a successful career in the RAF and the Engineering Department at Cambridge University. It was a pleasure to meet Paul and hear more about the school in the post-war period.

## Jolly Phonics

When I show people around the school, they frequently comment on the happiness of the children and level of engagement in lessons. It is not surprising when you see the lengths to which our teachers go to make the lessons fun and challenging. A good example of this, is the way that the Foundation children learn to read, write and use numbers. The Foundation parents saw this for themselves on Monday evening when they were back in school for the Early Years Curriculum Presentation, which included an insight in to the world of jolly phonics. The room was full of smiles and laughter as parents acted out 'Rrrrrrrr' (the sound of a dog for 'r'), 'a,a,a,a,a' (ants crawling up your arm for sound of an 'a') and 'peh' (blowing out a candle for the sound of a 'p'). As well as being fun, it reinforced the message that learning is more effective when it is interactive and teachers and parents are working together for the good of the child. Thank you to everyone who took the time to attend.

## Sport

There was plenty of rrrrrring on the sports pitches this week as an enormous number of children enjoyed participating in the School teams. It gives me great joy to see the girls and boys playing sport and learning the important skills of teamwork, and winning and losing gracefully. On Wednesday afternoon, at the end of the U13A rugby match, the county referee approached me to say, that of all the school and club teams he referees, St Faith's pupils are the most respectful. For me, that means more than any result.

## Harvest Festival

We welcomed another visitor to the school this week, when Major Martin Cordner from the Salvation Army spoke in our Harvest Festival Service. He talked about the difference between 'wants' and 'needs' and emphasised the importance of sharing and doing everything we can to ensure others have what they need. He also spoke about the work of the Salvation Army in Cambridge and thanked the children and their families for the generous food donations. His talk, together with pupil-led prayers, a performance from the Junior Singers and a joyful whole-school rendition of the 'Harvest Samba' made for a lovely occasion.

## The Arts

on portraiture, many Year 8s took part in 'What is the real me?' workshop at The Fitzwilliam museum this week. The workshop explored what portraits tell us about people and their characters, including the techniques used to show differences between people and their feelings. Further visits are planned next week.

Some of the Year 8s have also visited the Great Hall at The Leys for a professional technical theatrical taster session, which focussed on lighting, sound and make-up. Pupils had hands-on experience of rigging theatre lights, amplifying sound and learning how to apply stage make-up.

## Open Morning

Thank you, in advance, to everyone who is helping to showcase the school tomorrow morning. With over 100 families attending, it should be a busy event. You may have noticed from the website that we have closed the books for the Foundation year group 2018, as it is now full with a long waiting list. There is a serious message here. In the future, families who are considering applying for a place in Foundation, must apply at least eighteen months prior to the entry date to ensure that we are in a position to process the application. We will continue to give priority to siblings, as we are a family-orientated school, but we can only do so if there is a space available. We would be grateful if you could pass on this message to any friends or family who are considering age 4 entry for their child.

## National Sports Finals

Congratulations to the girls who have qualified for the National U13 Hockey Finals later this term. Both our top girls' hockey teams, U12 and U13, pictured here, will be competing in national finals this term, which should be a great experience for the players involved.

## Finally...

On Tuesday, as I was showing the Old Fidelians around school, there was a look of shock on their faces as they saw a fire engine in front of the Southfield building, with its lights flashing and the fire crew unloading the water hoses. The conversation stopped and the gentlemen stared at me, looking for a reaction. There was a tangible sense of relief on their faces as I smiled and explained that the fire brigade had been invited to talk to the Year 1 pupils, as part of their topic on vehicles!

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell