

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

12 January 2018

Happy New Year!

Children's morning alarm clocks are ringing again, the joy of the school run has returned, pencils have been sharpened, shoes have been polished and we are back in the swing of term. Happy New Year and welcome back for what promises to be another busy and exciting term. I hope you enjoyed a wonderful Christmas break and your offspring are feeling refreshed and ready for the challenges of the weeks ahead. It is always great to see the joy on the faces of the children as the St Faith's community comes back together and, as families poured through the school gates on Wednesday, it felt like a very large reunion.

Life Skills

Our start of term assembly on Wednesday focused on the beginning of the new year. I talked about the Roman God of beginnings, Janus and how, with two heads, Janus is able to look back as well as forward. With eyes in the back of his head, or rather two heads, I did remark great teacher! On a more serious note, I said that January is a good time to look back and reflect on past achievements and progress and the children were encouraged to think about their learning habits in class and how close to being their 'best selves' they have been over the past year (on the basis that nobody is perfect!). I was able to use this opportunity to emphasise, once again, the importance of kindness, respect, manners and excellent learning habits - life skills which will hold our children in very good stead in the future.

Claytime

Speaking of beginnings, on Thursday, Foundation and Year 1 enjoyed an interactive story-telling session, 'Claytime', aimed at developing the children's creativity and imagination as well as their understanding of structuring a story, using a beginning, middle and end. When I called in to the Ashburton Hall, the children were fully engaged in creating their own story, as the artists modelled the clay to illustrate the flow of ideas. Later in the session the children made their own clay models and then returned to their classrooms to write their own structured stories.

Holiday Work

During the holidays the site has been a hive of activity with support staff and contractors working hard to ensure the school is fully prepared for the new term. Much of the credit for the excellent condition and organisation of our classrooms and grounds should be given to Mr Brent, our Bursar, and his excellent team of support staff including Mr Hullyer (Estates Supervisor), Mr Cochrane (Network Manager), Mrs Greer (Office Manager) and Miss Pearson (Operations Manager). Their valuable work behind the scenes ensures our pupils have the best possible learning environment and at the beginning of the term, they deserve a big thank you.

Ski Trip

In the first week of the school holiday, a St Faith's party travelled to Mayrhofen, Austria, for a week of skiing. Smooth travel arrangements, comfortable accommodation and excellent snow conditions made for a great week of skiing and relaxation. I am delighted to say that the trip went very well indeed and everyone arrived back safely, feeling refreshed from a week in the exhilarating alpine air. My sincere thanks to Miss Kennerley, the trip leader, and the staff who assisted her, Mr North, Mr Graves and Ms Cox, for all their work in organising and managing this trip so well.

Royal Society

It was a happy beginning to the New Year when we heard that the Royal Society has renewed St Faith's status as a member of its Schools Network. This membership gives access to their resources and special events in science, mathematics and computing and enables our staff and pupils to interact with other members of The Royal Society. We value this membership and the many benefits it brings to our work and the children's education.

Calendars

We have had a fantastic response from parents about the new electronic filtered calendars for different sections of the school (Pre Prep, Years 3 and 4, Years 5 to 8 and whole school), which Mr Mageean sent to all parents in the last week of the Michaelmas Term. If this passed you by at the end of the busy term, and you would like to know more please click on [this link](#) for additional information.

Assessments

This is the time of the year when many of our Year 8 pupils have their heads down, revising for and sitting the various entrance and scholarship assessments to senior schools. They are very well prepared but will still have more than a twinge of anxiety as the day of the exam approaches. My very best wishes to them and indeed every member of the St Faith's community for a happy, fulfilling and successful 2018

Have a good weekend,

Nigel Helliwell