

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

09 February 2018

TES Awards

I found myself in very good company last night as our senior management team gathered in London for the 2018 TES (Times Educational Supplement) Independent Schools Awards. I am delighted to say that St Faith's won the 'Strategic education initiative of the year' award, for our introduction of Engineering to the curriculum. The ceremony attracted over 400 people, was held at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London, hosted by Gyles Brandreth, and celebrated outstanding achievements in independent schools. In the words of the TES judges, 'Engineering at St Faith's is a STEM dream, and is producing our engineers of the future. An admirable, innovative and challenging project, using local expertise and encouragement, with superb results. To introduce Engineering as a curriculum subject from age 7 is a bold and inspirational step. We were deeply impressed.'

The introduction of Engineering has been an exciting venture, largely driven by our Head of Science, Alison Price, and Deputy Head Academic Margaret White and now superbly taught by Nici Hoyle and Liz Oxborough. It is their foresight, ambition and dedication which has made it possible and led to Engineering being one of the most popular and successful subjects in our curriculum. This prize will give us the encouragement to keep going and help other schools that might be interested, to do the same.

For more coverage of the awards, profiles of the winners and photographs from the evening, please visit isawards.co.uk.

Music Tour to Liverpool

As quick as the pace of life is nowadays, there are still moments which stop us in our tracks. Wednesday afternoon was one of those occasions, when the Senior Singers led Evensong in the largest Cathedral in the UK, the spectacular Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool. For choristers, this was the equivalent of playing tennis at Wimbledon, performing in The Globe or exhibiting work in Tate Britain. Even Mr Gorick looked slightly apprehensive as our forty or so choristers processed towards the choir stalls at the beginning of the service, immaculately attired in their St Faith's blazers. He had no need to worry. The sound of our choir was simply majestic, reverberating around the cavernous Cathedral to the accompaniment of the organ. Even the pupils themselves looked surprised as their singing bounced back off the Cathedral walls; this was so different to their rehearsals in the Ashburton Hall. The Archdeacon of Liverpool was

generous in his praise for our choir, and rightly so. This was a lifetime experience for all involved and a perfect beginning to the four-day Music tour to Liverpool, which includes visits to the Beatles Museum, the Museum of Liverpool as well as concerts at Liverpool Parish Church and the Metropolitan Cathedral. A video of the choir rehearsing is available on this [link](#).

Book Week

Reading, always at the heart of a good education, was the main topic of conversation this week thanks to the annual arrival of Book Week in the Library. Once again our wonderful Librarian, Miss Johnson, served up a fabulous feast of literary events for the whole school, from Pre Prep to Year 8. On Tuesday Katie Dale, author of the Fairy Tale Twists series came to visit Year 3 and 4 and willingly signed copies of her book after spending some time talking to the children about her inspirations. Matt Dickinson, award-winning writer and film-maker with a passion for climbing and adventure, met Years 5 to 8 on Thursday. Matt's inspiration for outdoor pursuits was first kindled in his school library as a 12 year old when he picked up a book about mountaineering. Matt's two-book series, 'Mortal Chaos' and 'The Everest Files' were inspired by his own adventures which have taken him to Antarctica, Africa and the Himalayas. Understandably our pupils were enthralled with his tales of falling into ice crevasses part way up Everest and evacuating colleagues from Base Camp due to altitude sickness; his video from the summit of Everest clearly grabbed the attention of all in the room.

The wonderful events of Book Week drew to a climax today with a Pre Prep book character dress-up day. The Pre Prep staff threw themselves into the spirit of the day with costumes from 'Giraffes Can't Dance' and 'The World's Worst Children', and Mrs Smith swapped roles for the day with Miss Trunchball from Roald Dahl's 'Matilda'. In addition, Guy Parker Rees, author and illustrator of books including 'Tom and Millie's Great Big Treasure Hunt', 'Giraffes Can't Dance' and 'Never Ask a Dinosaur to Dinner', among others, spent some time with our wonderfully attired Pre Prep children.

Drama 4 All

Our Foundation children had a visit from a 'Little Green Alien' and were whisked away to a far-away galaxy (in the safety of the Sports Hall) on Tuesday afternoon. Through story-telling, role-play, rhyme, song, and movement the children were taken on a fascinating improvisation to outer space. The children impressed the alien with their knowledge of the solar system, informing him of facts like "Saturn has rings" and "Mars is red". After a quick visit to the planets, they stopped off at the moon to eat moon rock with flavours such as chocolate and strawberries. This was organised with the help from the drama company Perform who run

regular weekly classes in the local area. Clearly, our Foundation pupils relished their intergalactic experience!

Sport

Our aim to make a sporting life fully inclusive at St Faith's has been in evidence this half of term where, for the first time, every pupil in Years 4-8 played in a competitive fixture (this doesn't yet apply to Year 3 as their fixtures are after half term). This week alone 30 teams competed in both home and away matches. It is a wonderful experience for anyone to represent their school in a competitive sport and we are so grateful to our sports department for making it possible for all the children.

Blue Plaque Society

On Wednesday night I attended, along with 400 others, an event at the Guildhall, to commemorate the centenary of women first getting the vote in the UK. As part of the event, a blue plaque dedicated to Dame Millicent Fawcett, a leading suffragist, lifelong campaigner for women's education and equal citizenship, and co-founder of Newnham College, was unveiled. In a listener vote on Wednesday's Radio 4 Today programme, Millicent Fawcett was voted the most influential woman of the past 100 years.

The main reason I attended the event was to support Christopher Teo, a former St Faith's pupil who left in 2016. You may know that Christopher built a website and App for the Cambridge Blue Plaque Society, so that people can locate the blue plaques and find out more about the historical buildings and famous people which the blue plaques commemorate. On Wednesday evening, the Chairman of the Blue Plaque Society and Mayor of Cambridge thanked Christopher for his valuable work and presented him with a certificate of thanks. The address of the website is www.cambridgeblueplaques.org.uk. Christopher built the App and website whilst he was at St Faith's, with help from Mr Mitchell. The Blue Plaque Society has invited Christopher to continue to work with them.

Finally...

Next week will no doubt provide a welcome respite for all from the fast-paced life of the school routine, although for those looking to put a little adventure in their lives remember that the Library's Extreme Reading Competition kicks off today (details in the index)! Whatever you are doing over the holiday, whether postbags of Valentines cards arrive on your doorstep or not, I wish you an enjoyable and relaxing half-term and I look forward to seeing you when term resumes on Monday 19th February.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell