

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

02 March 2018

The Beast from The East

On a week when the 'Beast from the East' brought an arctic chill, freezing blizzards and blankets of snow, the sun did make an appearance, and at times, as it glistened in the clear blue sky, provided just the slightest hint of Spring. Or was that me just dreaming of warmer times to come? Inevitably, sports matches have been cancelled and some aspects of school have been adapted but, by and large, the show has gone on and as usual, there is plenty to report at the end of this week.

By the way, I blame myself for this week's dreadful weather. Over half-term I wrote my assembly for last Monday, and decided, as this week marks the beginning of March, to base it on the theme of Spring! It started snowing half an hour before the assembly began, so my presentation about the burst of 'new life' at Spring and the arrival of glorious colourful blossom occurred at the same time as the daffodil bulbs were being smothered in snow. C'est la vie. As usual, the children could see the amusing side and I think, rather enjoyed looking ahead to warmer weeks ahead.

On a more serious note, the weather has tested the resilience of the school community this week. I would like to thank all the staff who have, as usual, pulled together and gone the extra mile to ensure that school has run as normally as possible. It is times like this when the quality and commitment of the staff team really shines through. Thank you also to our families, many of whom have braved the difficult icy conditions in travelling to and from school. Despite the conditions we have had relatively few pupil absences. There has been plenty of grit, both metaphorically and in reality, to keep the show on the road, and I am grateful to everyone who has braved the conditions and enabled our pupils to enjoy a productive week.

Pantomimes

The Ashburton Hall provided a warm, safe haven this week and there have been plenty of reasons to go there. On Wednesday afternoon, the mini-pantomimes by Year 4 were hugely entertaining, providing a hilarious series of comedy scenes. The quality of acting and slick stage craft were a testament to the talents of the pupils. The whole year group participated and there

was a real sense of team work as each class performed a ten-minute version of a well-known pantomime. I am delighted to say that Cinderella found her Prince, Jack out-witted the giant, Dick Whittington made his fortune in the city and Snow White survived the poisoned apple. My sincere thanks to Ms Allen, our Head of Drama, for all her effort and expertise in producing such an entertaining show and of course, to the stars themselves – the children – who rose to the occasion. As they glided around the stage, recalling their lines with precision and performing with such confidence it was easy to forget that they are only eight or nine years old. Many congratulations to everyone involved – you certainly created plenty of warmth and laughter on a freezing afternoon. As an email from a parent to Ms Allen said, 'thank you very much for a wonderful performance today! I enjoyed every second!'

2JJ Assembly

2JJ's assembly in the Hall on Wednesday morning was also well produced and took us out of wintry climes to the tropical African jungle, transported by the children on their imaginary magic carpet. The class performed 'How the Leopard got his Spots' most confidently, with very clear narration, and afterwards presented some fascinating facts about African animals – rhinos have fantastic hearing, giraffes are the tallest animals in the world and elephants eat for 16 hours a day. There was some impressive art work on display too and the assembly ended with some rousing congregational singing. 'A heart-warming start to the day' as one parent said to me as they marched out of the hall in to the blizzard.

Sport

Many congratulations to the U11 boys' hockey team that finished 2nd in the recent regional competition and in doing so qualified for the national finals at Tonbridge School on 21st March.

Well done also to the girls who won the U11 Netball County Cup.

The swimmers have been in action this week, competing in the IAPS regional qualifiers in the Leys pool. It was great to see so many children from schools in the area taking part. We are hopeful that some of our pupils will have swum fast enough to qualify for the national finals in London later this year.

Old Fidelians

Speaking of sport, I am relieved to say that I just about survived the annual staff v Old Fidelians football match last Friday evening. This year a parents' team joined us to make a thrilling three-way contest, with the parents coming out on top.

On the theme of Old Fidelians, we welcomed the new Head of Haileybury to St Faith's this week. Martin Collier attended St Faith's as a pupil and, until Monday, hadn't returned since he left in 1973. He was blown away by the development of the site and also commented on the happiness of the children.

Book Launch

Further to last week's news of the publication of Mrs White's book, [A Good Education](#), I am delighted to invite you to an informal Book Launch in the Drama Room, between 16:00 and 17:00 on Friday 16th March. This will provide the opportunity to view the book over a cup of tea and speak to Mrs White about this impressive publication. Copies will be available at the discounted price of £18. All parents are welcome to come along and may bring their children too. Please register your interest on this [link](#).

Finally,

Good luck to our gymnasts, the U10 and U11 girls, who will be competing in the Five-Piece Premier National Championships at Milton Keynes on Sunday.

I will finish with a few images of the week: the 6L girls presenting their Quick 'n' Easy Healthy Recipe Book pitch, Dragons' Den style, to Mr Brent and me on Monday morning (the book should be published early next term, subject to the Dragons providing the funding); Miss Johnson and her cheerful 'Library Assistants' on World Book Day (1st March); and Mr Gillick who was certainly not intimidated by the Beast from the East, carrying out his break time duty in his shorts.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell

