

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

23 March 2018

Wow!

Wow, what a week! In the past seven days, St Faith's has been crowned national champions in two different sports and, on top of the normal timetable, our pupils have taken part in a chemistry festival, a national maths competition, Great British Nature Day, a swimming gala, four performances of *Madagascar*, the Easter House Challenge, house sports matches, an Easter egg hunt, an Engineering trip to Marshalls, a 'walk through Easter', a Geography field trip, a joint Chapel service with The Leys, a careers day, a Roman day, a Science day, a Speech and Drama recital and a whole school Easter Service! There is so much to say in my final newsletter of the term, it is difficult to know where to start.

Senior School Entrance

So I will begin with the important news that all the Year 8 pupils performed very well in their recent senior school entrance exams and an impressive 91% will be moving to their first choice school. Furthermore, sixteen pupils have been awarded twenty five scholarships to seven different schools; 8 Academic, 3 Art, 2 Drama, 4 Music, 7 Sport and 1 All-round. Many congratulations to the pupils and of course, thank you to their teachers for preparing them so well.

National Champions!

Many congratulations also to the U11 boys who won the IAPS National Hockey Finals at Tonbridge School on Wednesday. Approximately 200 independent schools across the UK entered this competition so we are extremely proud of our team for playing so well in both the regional competition and the national finals. The top 28 schools competed at Tonbridge and after winning their group, our team beat Bedford in the quarter-finals, King's College School in the semi-final and Foremarke Hall (Repton Prep) in the final, with the last match being decided on penalty shuffles - a tense and nerve-jangling few minutes for the parent supporters. There were tears of joy as the boys collected their medals and plenty of celebrations when the news arrived at school. One cannot underestimate this achievement; it requires outstanding individual talent and cohesive team work to become national champions. My sincere congratulations to the boys and their highly-skilled coaches, Mr Thompson, Mr Welch and Mr Johnson.

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The hockey result came just four days after two of our gymnastics teams – the U13 mixed and U11 boys - were crowned national champions in the BSGA Milano Team Trio Finals in Stoke on Trent. With a bronze medal in the U11 mixed category and a 9th place (out of 22 teams) in the U13 girls section, these were the best results St Faith's has achieved in these finals. Furthermore, owing to the success of our teams, the Eastern Region won the UK area championships for the first time. Not surprisingly, Mr and Mrs North and Miss Butler were delighted with the teams' performances. On Monday I received a lovely letter from the Chairman of the BSGSA, congratulating our gymnasts, which can be read [here](#).

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Not be left out, the U12 boys' hockey team won all five of their matches to claim the County Cup yesterday. Many congratulations to the boys who played brilliantly in this tournament.

Madagascar

It has been a fantastic week for Year 6. On Wednesday and Thursday evenings we were transported to Africa when Year 6 presented their version of Madagascar. This was a slick, colourful and joyous musical, fizzing with energy and humour. There was plenty of finesse too, as well as glorious singing and skilful acting which made the show hugely entertaining for the families, friends and staff who were fortunate enough to see it. At times the sheer level of performances, from both the main cast and the year group as a whole, belied the age of the pupils and 'wowed' the audience, with its pace and energy. All 73 Year 6 pupils took part, with the whole cast on stage for many of the scenes. Shows such as this enable the pupils to grow in confidence and develop the self-belief to perform in public - something which should prove valuable in later life. Many congratulations to all the cast who worked so hard in rehearsals and performed with so much vitality and enjoyment in the shows themselves, and to the large number of staff who were responsible for producing this musical, particularly the two Directors, Ms Allen and Miss Kennerley. As one parent emailed me today, 'The show was brilliant and the children's energy, enthusiasm and focus reflected the inspiration and commitment of all the teachers.'

Great British Nature Day

Thank you for the positive feedback about Great British Nature Day on Monday. Our staff produced over one hundred special lessons on the theme of British nature and our extended assembly with Pippa Howard (a St Faith's parent who works for Fauna and Flora International) proved to be enriching and fascinating for everyone who was there to hear her speak. We hope and trust that many of the children have been enthused to take a closer interest in the natural world around us.

Academic Extension (AcE) Day

The children were treated to another programme of special lessons on Wednesday. Year 3 carried out scientific experiments to explore 'our senses'; Year 4 visited Marshalls for a day of engineering; Year 5 focussed on the Romans; Year 6 rehearsed *Madagascar*; Year 7 visited the Botanic Gardens and Downing College and competed in a group national mathematics challenge; Year 8 spent time looking at possible future careers and meeting workers from local companies and organisations. AcE Day proved, once again, highly effective in extending and enriching the pupils' regular classwork. I am grateful to the teachers for their imagination and enthusiasm in creating and delivering these stimulating extension programmes.

Events at Cambridge University

This week has seen several events at Cambridge University. On Thursday, all our year 8 pupils attended a fascinating lecture, 'It's a gas', full of bangs and flashes, in the University Chemistry Department, as part of the Science Festival. On the same day four Year 8s – Lucy B, Grace G, Lex W and Lucas S – formed a team in the regional Salters' Chemistry Festival where they spent the day undertaking practical challenges in which they were judged on their teamwork, practical skills and application of knowledge. They competed with a large number of other schools and our team were delighted to be awarded third prize in the University Challenge.

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The Leys and St Faith's Foundation Chapel Service

On Tuesday, the Senior Choir joined The Leys Choir for the biennial Foundation Chapel Service, led by the Foundation Chaplain, Reverend Meharry. Both choirs performed separately then came together to sing Rutter's, 'All things bright and beautiful', a spine tingling piece which exemplified the musical talent in both schools; you can listen to it below.

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Finally...

Here is a photo of Daisy the donkey who joined us for the Pre Prep 'Walk through Easter' on Monday. Other Easter events this week have included an Easter House Challenge for Years 3 and 4, mathematical Easter Egg Hunt for Year 5 and today's whole-school Easter Service. Photographs of our Easter activities can be found below.

Thank you for your support in what has been a chilly, but nevertheless, busy and hugely enjoyable term. I hope you have a warm, relaxing and very pleasant Easter break and look forward to seeing you again when the Summer term begins on Wednesday 18th April.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell