

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

15 June 2018

It's foot to the floor at this high octane time of the year. 'Full on' some may say and indeed, the school days have become more intense as the many special events arrive thick and fast. Since I wrote to you last week, we have had a Parents' Summer Party, a STEM Fair, two Speech and Drama Showcases, Music Exams, a rowing regatta, outings to a farm, a country park and the Fens, a sculpture walk around Cambridge, national finals in swimming and triathlon, a tennis tournament, a School Council and Eco Committee barbeque, oodles of house and inter-school matches, Sports Day and House Gymnastics. We even managed to organise and host a cricket tournament for eleven schools and a gymnastics competition for five. Sometimes I wonder how we pack it all in. For the answer, you only need to look at our staff. As many of you have commented to me in recent weeks, to put on such a rich and varied programme of activities for the children, on top of the normal timetable of lessons, requires total commitment from staff. We are very fortunate to have that here at St Faith's.

Summer Party

The commitment of the SFPA was clearly evident on Saturday, when 250 parents enjoyed a fabulous evening of socialising, dancing and punting. Set in the most splendid river location at the Double Tree by Hilton, with the Caribbean sound of a steel band, people meandered between the river bank and hotel lounges and the conversation flowed well in to the night. Thank you so much to the SFPA Committee for organising this party, particularly the commanders-in-chief, Aldo Marino, Yolande Dennis, Tash Lygoe, Carl Rowland, Pamela Niedbalski, Gerlin Moses and Monique Carew. As planned, the boat made by Year 8 in the after-school Engineering activity was raffled and the proud owners are the Heslop family. The lovely coincidence is that their daughter was one of the pupils who helped to build it. As you can see from the photo, I couldn't resist the urge to try the boat out for myself, ably supported by Dr Hoyle. I am pleased to say that we both stayed dry.

STEM Fair

Which toothpaste is the most effective? Which type of sunglasses provide the best protection? Which type of soil grows the best lettuce? Which fabric is the safest in a fire? What is the best product for removing graffiti? Which type of projector makes the best hologram? Which fizzy drink is worst for your teeth? The Ashburton Hall was buzzing with excitement as our Year 8s showcased interactive investigations to their parents and teachers. Each Year 8 pupil selected

their own real-life related question to investigate, designed the experiments and produced their own exhibition display. We even had an aquarium, as one pupil had investigated the memory of goldfish. Just in case you are wondering, the conclusion was that goldfish do have memories as they remembered the colour of the container which contained their food! Many thanks to the Year 8s, and their Science and Engineering teachers for this wonderful project and fascinating exhibition.

Speech and Drama

As you know, being able to speak and perform in front of an audience is a life skill which many adults find difficult, so it warms my heart when I see our pupils acting with so much confidence and enthusiasm, as I have done at the two Speech and Drama events this week. As I said at the end of year 'Showcase' last night it takes plenty of skill and courage to get up on stage and engage an audience. Thank you and congratulations to every pupil who contributed to the two excellent events and good luck in your forthcoming Speech and Drama examinations.

Writing Competitions - Winners

On Tuesday, Mr Dover and Mrs Holdsworth from the Cambridge South Rotary Club, came to present certificates and prizes to our winners in the recent Rotary Young Writer Competition. Mr Dover remarked to me that the pieces of creative writing submitted by St Faith's pupils were 'heads and shoulders above those from other entrants'. Many congratulations to the pupils and their excellent English teachers.

Also this week, we heard that four of our pupils – Dominic (Y1), Tristan (Y2), Connie (Y7) and Rive (Y8) won awards in the SATIPS National Handwriting Competition 2018. This is great news and an endorsement of our handwriting programme across the school.

Sport

Ten of our top swimmers performed superbly in the National Finals in the Olympic Pool, London, last Saturday. The standard was red hot and whilst we didn't win any medals, our pupils enjoyed a fantastic experience, with no less than five school records being broken on the day. Ania K (50m freestyle), Chris H (50m breaststroke), Amelia S (50m breaststroke) all broke school records as did the relay team (Ania, Nadine, Emily and Amelia) in the medley and freestyle races. Thank you very much to Mrs Critchley, our swimming coach, who accompanied the children on the day. Further details are included in the index of this newsletter.

The gymnasts were also in fine form on Sunday when Mr and Mrs North hosted the 'S' Club competition – an invitational girls' event for St Faith's, St Mary's (Hampstead), Stamford, Stormont and St Albans. When I called in to watch, I was impressed by the organisation of the event and the spirit in which the teams were competing. It was a lovely day and the icing on the cake was that our teams finished first in every age category.

Last year, five schools entered the IAPS U11 Girls' Regional Cricket Competition; this year it attracted 11, which tells you a lot about the rapid growth of girls' cricket. On a glorious Wednesday at Latham Fields, our team won every match and therefore ran out winners. Congratulations to the girls and their coach, Mr Stafford.

Our athletes are also on fine form. Thanks to their outstanding performances at Bedford last week, 21 of our pupils have qualified for the National Prep Schools' Finals in Birmingham later this term. We have captured a few photos of Sports Day and House Gymnastics.

A special mention too, for our triathletes who competed in the national championships at Dulwich Prep, Cranbrook on Sunday. They represented St Faith's in style, with Reuben C finishing 4th (out of 67), Stephanie B (11th), Nick H (11th), Jeremy P (18th), Harper R (19th), Maxim H (20th) and Jacob C (46th). Our pupils returned having enjoyed a fantastic experience. Further details can be read in the index of this newsletter.

Finally..

The Senior Singers will be performing choral evensong at Newton Parish Church at 6pm on Sunday. This should warm up their vocal chords for the big music event of the year, on Monday evening, at West Road Concert Hall, when all our senior choirs, bands and ensembles will be performing. All families are most welcome to attend these events.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell