

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

05 October 2018

Wildflower Meadow

Before the winter descends upon us, and the darker days set in, let's savour a flash of colour on the school site which has been recently created by our keen young gardeners. The new wildflower meadow (pictured here) next to the Jubilee Pond, is the latest addition to the development of environmental areas around the school and I hope you agree, it looks stunning. This area will continue to be used for ecology topics in Years 5 and 7, as well as providing a haven of tranquillity for all to enjoy. Thank you particularly to Charlie (Year 8) and Sam, the School Gardener, for their work in developing this area.

Jolly Phonics

When I show prospective parents around the school, they almost always comment on the happiness of the children and level of engagement in lessons. It is not surprising when you see the lengths to which the teachers go to make the lessons fun and challenging. A good example of this, is the way that the Foundation children, aged 4, learn to read and write. Parents saw this for themselves on Monday evening when they were back in school to hear about the Early Years curriculum and specifically, the world of jolly phonics. The room was full of smiles and laughter as parents acted out 'rrrr' (the sound of a dog growling for 'r'), 'a,a,a,' (ants crawling up your arm for sound of an 'a') and 'peh' (blowing out a candle for the sound of a 'p'). Parents also spent time viewing the many practical resources used in the classrooms. The evening highlighted the fact that learning is most effective when it is interactive and teachers and parents are working together for the good of the child. Thank you to everyone who took the time to attend.

Harvest Festival

Major Martin Corder from the Salvation Army was our guest at our Harvest Festival Service this week. He talked about the importance of planting seeds, metaphorically and literally, and emphasised the importance of sharing. He thanked the children and their families for the generous food donations and explained that these will enable the Salvation Army to provide meals for many months to come. His talk, together with pupil-led prayers, a performance from the Junior Singers and a joyful whole-school rendition of the 'Harvest Samba' made for a lovely occasion.

Local Visits

This week, the Year 8s visited the Great Hall at The Leys for a professional technical theatrical taster session, which focussed on lighting, sound and make-up. Pupils had hands-on experience of rigging theatre lights, amplifying sound and learning how to apply stage make-up. As you can see, they had a great time! Many thanks to the Leys staff for making this possible.

Back in the summer, three of our pupils, Bethany (2JJ), Charlie (4L) and Hope (6B) won a competition run by the Nuffield. The children were given the challenge of designing their own robots based on the hospital's new £1 million MAKO robot which is now helping to perform orthopaedic operations. They were also asked to suggest a name for the new robot.

This week, Bethany, Charlie and Hope had the opportunity to visit the hospital to meet staff and see the robot at first hand. In the photo at the top of this newsletter, they can be seen being presented with their prizes by the Hospital Director, Adrian Connolly.

Newsletter Club

ed by the recently formed after-school Newsletter Club, a group of budding reporters who were armed with official clipboards and a list of challenging interview questions. On Wednesday, we visited Jane and Mollie there to assist me. The first edition of the newsletter, containing details of Mollie's squirrel-chasing life that have never been revealed before, will be published, digitally and in print, later this term.

Sport

The sports teams have got off to a great start this year and so far, the weather has been kind to the players and spectators. Here are a few photos, one from the IAPS Football Tournament last weekend (the boys played very well and finished 11th out of 24 teams), one from the U11 rugby matches against New Hall this week and one of the U12 girls' hockey side that finished as runners-up in the County Cup (losing the final on penalty flicks) and thereby qualifying for the East region Finals.

Open Morning

You may have noticed that tomorrow, we will not be hosting an Open Morning as we have traditionally done at this time of the year. Following a comprehensive review of Open Morning, we realised that the considerable resources - time and finances - required to organise and run the event could be used more effectively. Instead of a Saturday Open Morning, we now offer a greater number of personal tours for prospective parents during the school week, allowing families to experience the 'real' St Faith's during normal school hours.

Parking

This week, we have received concerns from parents about inconsiderate and unsafe parking around the school, which is a shame given the lengths we have gone to try to ensure the safety of the children at drop-off and collection times. Despite the care and consideration that the vast majority of drivers show, there is a genuine concern, from parents and the school, that one piece of careless or thoughtless driving in the future may cause a serious injury. So this a plea to all drivers – please do follow the School's arrangements for parking and traffic flow and show the care and consideration required to keep our children safe. Thank you.

Finally...

On a more positive note, I thought you might like to see two Old Fidelians who went their separate ways after leaving St Faith's in 2012 and were reunited at St John's College, Oxford this week. William moved on to Eton and Sam to The Leys and last weekend, they came back together for their university studies. William is reading Chemistry and Sam, History and Economics. We wish them every happiness and success in the next stage of their education.

With all good wishes.

Nigel Helliwell