

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

16 November 2018

This is the time of the year when the conveyor belt of school term gathers pace and special events come along thick and fast. Blink and you'll miss one, so please do keep a close eye on the calendar over the coming weeks. The first Christmas event is next Friday (1500-1800), when the SFPA will be hosting a Christmas Fair in Ashburton Hall and the new Hub. There will be a wide range of stalls to buy Christmas presents and plenty of games and activities for the children, so it should be a great family event.

Engineering and The Hub

On Monday, St Faith's organised and hosted the first national training course for senior managers and teachers to learn how to introduce and teach Engineering to the 7-13 age group. The course was fully subscribed, with 30 people attending. Mrs White and Dr Hoyle spoke to the delegates about the principles behind the introduction of Engineering and how we have planned and resourced the lessons at St Faith's. The main part of the day, however, was practical, with the delegates working in teams, attempting to engineer solutions to problems posed by Dr Hoyle. The idea, of course, was for the teachers to experience Engineering lessons from the pupils' point of view. The feedback we received from the delegates has been overwhelmingly positive and our umbrella organisation, IAPS (Independent Association of Prep Schools), has already indicated that they would like us to follow-up by running similar courses in the future. As I wrote in an article for a national magazine recently, 'Watch out, Engineering could be coming to a school near you!'

Tonight sees the official opening of The Hub, with Professor Lord Mair, Old Fidelian and until last week, the President of the Institution of Civil Engineering, as our Guest of Honour. It should be a great night for the School, with over 100 people from the wider community coming to celebrate the opening of this outstanding new facility.

Assemblies

This week, I had the pleasure of witnessing two excellent assemblies. On Monday, Mr Critchley led, with the assistance of Year 7 pupils, a thought provoking whole-school assembly on the importance of kindness and respect, to mark National Anti-Bullying Week.

Wednesday morning got off to a flying start with 1RP's assembly on the subject of creating

stories. We heard four lovely stories, created and acted out confidently by the class. The children enjoyed the experience of performing to their teachers and parents and, as Mrs Smith remarked, are clearly benefiting from the multi-sensory approach to building stories in class.

Foundation Class Visits

On Tuesday, Jane and I welcomed the three Foundation Classes to my study. As each class crept in we were met by a sea of wide-eyed faces and a stunned silence. It didn't take long, however, for the interrogation to begin. Surprise questions were fired from all quarters of the room. 'What is my favourite colour?' (St Faith's red of course), 'How old are you?' (less than 100 we agreed – the girl who asked the question told her mother at the end of the day that she thinks I am 92!), 'What games do I play on my computer?', 'What is my favourite dinosaur?', 'How do I use my knife and fork?' and 'What do you do all day?' (a question many might wonder). Fortunately, we managed to negotiate ourselves through most of the questions and emerged from the interrogation relatively unscathed. It was a real treat to meet the Foundation children in my study and one of the great pleasures will be seeing the boys and girls develop over the coming years as they move through the School.





Drama

It seems like a long time ago, but last Friday, the Year 5s presented 'Wonderland', a series of 4 playlets inspired by *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. This term, all four Year 5 classes have been exploring Lewis Carroll's weird and wonderful stories in Drama lessons. Through workshops, they have learnt more about vocal and physical expressions and how to use music, dance, shadow puppetry, mime and choral reading to create atmosphere, develop character and explore the fantastical world of Alice. The playlets on Friday were a testament to the talent and creativity of the children and the ingenuity of our Year 5 Drama teachers, Mrs Davis and Ms Allen, in pulling it all together to produce such a slick and entertaining show.

Music

The past week has seen two musical events, the Tea-Time Concert last Friday and the Autumn Concert last night. The informal nature of the Tea-Time Concert enables soloists to play to their parents and teachers in a relatively relaxed setting. The Autumn Concert is the first major music occasion of the year and a great opportunity for many of the ensembles to perform. Given that the groups have been together for just six weeks, the quality was remarkable. It was great to see so many musicians performing and hear such a wide range of musical groups, from the jazz band to the guitar ensemble and the senior strings to the large concert band. Many thanks to all the musicians who played and to the Music staff, led by Mr Gorick, for organising such an entertaining evening.

Art

One of the pleasures of my job is seeing the wonderful art produced by the children each week.

On Tuesday, as part of Art Enrichment program, Year 8 pupils used oil to paint self-portraits with advice from the award winning painter, Heloise Toop. Also this week the Pre Prep after school club, Crafty Creations, produced watercolour paintings inspired by watching an animation about the WW1 poppy fields. Year 3 were also busy exploring colour mixing and perspective whilst composing these beautiful paintings of meadows.

Sport

It has also been a busy week for the sports teams. Last weekend, at Stamford School, saw the first of this year's national gym finals, the 'two-piece' competition, in which competitors perform vaults and a floor routine. Our gymnasts did the school proud and came away with no less than five national titles, winning both the individual and team championships at U11 and U13 boys' age groups and the U9 boys' team championships. For the girls, the event represented a national qualifier. Our girls' teams were also on fine form, especially the U10 girls who finished 2nd and qualified for the ISGA national finals in March. Many congratulations to all the boys and girls who took part and a special mention to Max (U11) and James (U13) who won the individual boys' competitions.

On Tuesday, the U13 girls' hockey team were in action at Millfield School, in the National Prep Schools Finals, a tournament for the top 20 sides in the UK. By winning three and drawing one of their four group matches (v King's Taunton, Cargilfield Edinburgh, Cranleigh and Winchester House), our girls won their group and qualified for the quarter finals which they won against Clifton College, 1-0. In a tight semi-final, our team narrowly lost 1-2 to Sherbourne. To finish in the top four teams in the UK is a fantastic achievement and one of which to be very proud. Many congratulations to the girls and their coach, Mr Thompson.

Many congratulations also to the U11 girls' hockey team who were placed 4th in the Eastern Region Finals on Wednesday. They had to qualify through the County Cup, so the team did extremely well to reach the finals and then perform so well.

Today it is the turn of the U12 girls' team to play in the Eastern Region finals so we will hear more about that in next week's newsletter

Book Fair

There was a calm and relaxed atmosphere in the Library when I popped in to the Book Fair this week. Pupils were selecting their favourite novels and engrossed in reading. Miss Johnson and Mrs Warren have certainly created a most welcoming and comfortable 'place to chill out' as one girl put it when I asked her why she enjoyed coming to the Library. Thank you to everyone who has supported the Book Fair this week.

Finally..

Today, we heard that, for the second consecutive year, St Faith's has been short-listed for the Times Educational Supplement 'Prep School of the Year' award. The winner will be announced at the awards ceremony in London on 1st February. Further details of the awards can be read via this [link](#)

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell