

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

15 February 2019

Did it feel as if spring was arriving this week or am I being too optimistic? I appreciate that just mentioning the word 'spring' might be tempting fate. I recall vividly that last year, well after the daffodils and crocuses had appeared and the sweet smell of freshly mown grass had started wafting through my open office window, I prepared an assembly on 'The Wonders of Spring'. It seemed so appropriate at the time. On the day of the assembly itself, however, as I walked from my office to the hall contemplating the finer points of my presentation, the heavens opened and it started snowing – and boy, did it snow. After the assembly, we all emerged from the hall to see a totally white school site and, soon after that, the 'Beast from the East' arrived and the country ground to a halt. So you won't be surprised to hear that this year, I am not planning an assembly on spring.

Inter-House Geography Quiz

There was great excitement at the annual Inter-House Geography Quiz last Friday. As usual Miss Dow, Head of Humanities, had put together a wonderful array of challenging questions, and an inclusive and interactive quiz format for the four teams to compete. This event has such a feel-good factor with pupils pitting their wits in a light-hearted but competitive atmosphere. Many congratulations to the Bentley pupils who ran out winners. To give you an idea of the standard of questions, here are a few examples taken from this year's quiz:

- The River Missouri is the longest river in the USA. How long is it to the nearest 500 miles?
- Which college in Cambridge University is the oldest?
- Of the 32 nations that qualified for the 2018 FIFA World Cup, which country has the smallest population?
- In which Asian country was the Buddha born?
- What is the capital of Yemen?

The answers are in the Index of this newsletter.

Book Week 2019

This week, we were thrilled to welcome three inspirational authors to St Faith's as part of our annual Book Week celebrations. First up was award winning author Piers Torday on Monday. Piers spoke to Years 5 to 8 with rich enthusiasm and humour about his inspiration for writing and certainly lived up *The Guardian's* recent endorsement of his work; 'Piers Torday continues to demonstrate that he is one of the best writers for children working today'.

Later in the week, Cambridge University alumni Christopher Lloyd took our Year 3 and 4 pupils on a hilarious musical, historical, scientific and geographic tour de force of his latest book, 'Absolutely Everything!' Pupils also relished the opportunity to meet Christopher during a lunchtime book-signing in the library and probe him with insightful questions.

Today it was the turn of the Pre Prep to celebrate their love of reading with a glorious display of book character costumes in the Ashburton Hall, to welcome local author Lou Carter. The interactive talk saw our youngest bookworms acting out their own dragon story based on Lou's bestselling picture book 'There is No Dragon in this Story'. This proved to be a wonderful finalé to another busy book week!

All this, together with the 'Big Book Swap' in the Library at lunchtimes and after school, has made this week a fabulous feast of literary events, beautifully put together by our brilliant librarians, Miss Johnson and Mrs Warren. As Alan Bennett once remarked, 'a book is a device to ignite the imagination'. Our pupils' imagination will certainly have been ignited by what they saw, heard and read this week.

Pre Prep Assembly

On Wednesday, 2RB's assembly began with the amusing tongue twister, 'She sells seashells by the seashore'. This led us nicely in to the main subject of the assembly, Mary Anning, a 19th century fossil collector who contributed important information about prehistoric life. We learnt, amongst other things, that Mary supported herself by selling fossils to geologists and tourists and was not recognised by the scientific community who at that time, were mainly men. The children's clear diction and confident acting made for a most entertaining and interesting start to the day which linked very well with this term's topic on dinosaurs.

Triple County Champions!

In the past ten days three of our boys' hockey teams, U11, U12 and U13, have won their respective County Cups. We think this is the first time all three sides have achieved the 'Triple Crown' in the same season. Many congratulations to all the boys involved.

Thank you

Thank you for the great response to our revised traffic and parking arrangements this week. Daily parking and drop-off has worked well despite the disruption caused by the roadworks along Trumpington Road. We have appreciated the cooperation of our families and many parents have commented to me on the well organised temporary arrangements put in place by Miss Pearson, our Operations Manager.

Finally...

This evening I will be joining an elite and highly-tuned team of staff footballers who will be playing in the annual indoor matches against the Old Fidelians and parents. This is good timing as it may take me the whole of half-term to recover.

Prior to the football match, staff and governors will be gathering to say farewell to Mrs White, our long-standing and highly respected Deputy Head Academic. Mrs White has played a hugely valuable role in raising academic standards and developing our curriculum over recent years. She will be much missed but we wish her every happiness and success as she moves with her husband, Ian, to the West Country where he will take up his new post as Vice Chancellor of the University of Bath.

I wish all our families a most enjoyable half-term break and look forward to seeing the St Faith's community back together on Monday 25th February.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell

