

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

29 March 2019

One of the pleasures of living on site is seeing the wildlife appear when everyone has gone home. Last weekend, I took Mollie for her usual early morning walk and during the course of our stroll around the school grounds we saw a woodpecker, a heron (a frequent morning visitor this term), two mallards (Philip and Elizabeth) looking happy and settled on the Jubilee Pond, plenty of grey squirrels for Mollie to chase and, to our surprise, a muntjac deer in Tom's Garden. The startled muntjac looked as surprised as we were and soon scampered off to the far regions of the site, no doubt weaving its way in to a neighbouring garden. This short walk not only exemplified how fortunate we are to have such a green and open site but also proved to be a perfect prelude to Great British Nature Day on Monday.

Great British Nature Day

From understanding Fibonacci sequences in Maths to writing daffodil poems in English and building lizard loungers in Engineering, all lessons in Years 3 to 8 focused on the importance of nature. The Science Department took the opportunity to carry out a whole-school site ecological survey. This census enabled pupils to construct a detailed record of wildlife within various areas of the school grounds. Pupils recorded air temperature, conditions, dominant species of plants and animals and then made recommendations on which species might be attracted to their location and what improvements we need to make. Suffice to say, our children rose to the challenge admirably and their suggestions were well thought through. These included building bird boxes, removing fencing and replacing it with hedging so that birds can nest, and growing more bee-friendly plants in appropriate areas. The one suggestion, which might be harder to implement, was to attract more wildlife to School House field by encouraging the sports coaches to be quieter – I will put this to the Sports Department but I'm not sure how enthusiastic they will be about the proposal! Mrs Price plans to repeat the survey in a year's time to log changes and further our understanding of our impact on local wildlife.

One of the highlights of Great British Nature Day was a talk given by Mrs Patricia Zurita, a St Faith's parent and Chief Executive of BirdLife International. By showing examples of wildlife, Mrs Zurita explained that we are connected to nature, have a responsibility to help it and depend on each other for our survival. It was an inspirational presentation with a powerful message for us all.

Mary Poppins JR.

This week, to the delight of all who were fortunate enough to watch it, Year 6 gave a series of supercalifragilisticexpialidocious performances of their production 'Mary Poppins JR.' This all-singing, all-dancing production of Disney's family favourite was a joy to behold from beginning to end. The choreography of the songs and dances was exceptional – who knew that supercalifragilisticexpialidocious could be danced in sign language and at such high speed? The quality of not only the acting and singing, but also the costumes, make-up and set were exceptional. As ever, I was so impressed by the confidence and clarity of the performances, the enthusiasm with which the children participated and the immense hard work that had clearly gone into the production. As one parent emailed afterwards, 'Thank you for giving our children the chance to be involved in such a great project.' Indeed, Ms Allen, Miss Kennerley and Miss Smith always go the extra mile to ensure the Year 6 production is such a triumphant spectacle and this was no exception. It made a lot of parents and grandparents very happy indeed and I will remember it for many years to come.

[Photos Available here](#)

Fire Engine Visit to Foundation

Our youngest age group wrapped up their term's topic of Superheroes with a visit from real-life fire fighter superheroes on Monday morning. There was, of course, predictable excitement when the big red fire engine pulled into the playground in front of Southfield. Each class had the opportunity to inspect the fire engine and ask the firemen lots of questions. As you might expect, having a go with the hose was a popular activity. Afterwards the firemen spoke to the children about fire safety and the importance of fire alarms and detection systems. Finally they amazed the children with the speed with which they can put on their full protective equipment and breathing apparatus - just one minute!

AcE Day

Wednesday's off-timetable Academic Enrichment (AcE) Day saw the school, once again, transform into a hive of activity as pupils from Year 3 to 8 enjoyed a variety of enrichment topics, practical activities and off-site trips. Year 3 immersed themselves in the 'Science of the Senses' which included a number of practical sessions of a scented or tactile nature. Year 4 extended their knowledge about places of worship and in particular churches including a visit to Little St Mary's Church. Year 5 enjoyed a highly creative and artistic day working on the skills and imagery of a circus and produced some striking pieces of art work based on the work of

Henri Matisse. Year 6 were absorbed in their final preparations for the performances of Mary Poppins including a dress rehearsal to an audience from Year 2 and Babraham Primary School. Year 7 participated in an exciting Maths Team Challenge (details are in the index) and Year 8 spent the day considering, discussing and learning about possible future careers through talks from a variety of business people, charity leaders and influencers.

Clearly a day of such breadth and depth takes considerable organisation. My sincere thanks to all the staff who organised, coordinated and supported these enrichment events.

Easter House Challenge

On Tuesday afternoon, Years 3 and 4 enjoyed the annual Easter House Challenge egg-stravaganza. The Sports Hall was awash with flamboyantly decorated 'bunny ears' which the children themselves had decorated. A number of Easter themed games including the ever-popular 'bunny-tossing' proved hugely entertaining to all who participated. Clearly the anticipated arrival of the Easter bunny had everyone in a hoppingly-good mood.

Sport

Many congratulations to the U12 and U13 netballers who performed so well at the IAPS National Finals last Friday. I know that Mrs Melville and Mrs Bowes were proud of the girls reaching the finals and then representing the school with such credit. The U12 girls deserve a special mention for finishing 5th overall – a fantastic achievement.

On Tuesday I had the pleasure of watching 70 of our Year 3 and 4 children take part in an 'Open to All' swimming gala at The Leys pool. The event was very well supported by parents

and there was a lovely family atmosphere as the children showed off their swimming skills and enjoyed the thrill of the friendly races. Many thanks to Mrs North for orchestrating this inclusive gala.

Yesterday, Mrs Critchley organised a House Swimming Gala for Years 7 and 8, the first of its kind for quite a few years. We were delighted with the enthusiasm of the pupils, the standard of the races and the supportive atmosphere amongst the Houses. Further details are in the 'index' of this newsletter.

Year 1 Cookery Lesson

This week, Year 1 spent an afternoon with Head Chef, Kevin, learning about good food choices following their time in the Life Bus last week. Following the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' the children chose different fruit and vegetables which they arranged into caterpillar shapes on a tortilla wrap. They then wrapped their caterpillars into 'cocoons' and ate their delicious creations. What a fun and tasty way to learn about healthy eating.

Finally...

Whether you are travelling to exotic places, staying at home or planning to be outdoors with Great British nature, I wish you an enjoyable and peaceful Easter. I look forward to seeing you again when term resumes on Wednesday 24th April.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell