

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

03 May 2019

This is the time of the year when many year groups have their heads down, studiously working through assessment papers. This week, I witnessed several classes of younger pupils deep in concentration as they worked through English and Maths tests. Next week, Year 7 will sit their first set of formal examinations, a valuable experience that not only provides useful feedback on academic progress but also prepares them well for the many formal exams that they will need to sit in the future.

Speaking of exams, well done to the Year 8 pupils who sat senior school entrance exams last term. I am delighted to say that all Year 8 pupils have gained a place at a senior school of their choice, with 91% moving to their first choice school. Furthermore, 20 pupils were offered 30 scholarships to 6 different schools (with a few results pending); 8 Academic, 4 Art, 1 Drama, 5 Music and 12 Sport. These are terrific achievements and fully deserved. Many congratulations to the pupils concerned and of course, to the staff who taught them.

STEM Fair

The Hub was buzzing on Tuesday afternoon as the Year 8s proudly displayed their STEM projects to their teachers and parents. All projects were judged on their academic rigour, attention to detail, creativity and the quality of the presentation. The Year 8s did not disappoint!

Projects included assessing the merits, design and roll-out of an electronic homework diary, the development of a neural network to detect St Faith's blazers and a Scratch-based computer game to assist sufferers of Alzheimer's Disease. A number of ingeniously engineered inventions were also on display including a coin sorter, a jar opener for those only able to use one hand, and an affordable and reliable safety stirrup for the equestrian world, made using a 3D printer. Scientific questions posed and answered included, 'What are the shock absorbing properties of various shin pad brands?' (Puma came out best with the unbranded shin pad

demonstrating very poor shock absorbency) and 'Does the depth of water affect swim speed?' (the deeper the water the faster you can swim).

Clearly, much thought and effort had been put into each and every project on display and I would like to congratulate everyone on the quality of work presented. Two projects were declared winners of this year's fair - Henry's 'Flingonator' which showed how the mass of an object affects the distance it travels and Eric's 'Can an AI machine learn to play Tetris?'.

As one grandparent wrote in his email to me, *'It was a wonderful experience. The imagination shown by all the children in devising and carrying out their own experiments was deeply impressive. May I congratulate you and all your staff for the hard work I'm sure went in to encourage and support the children's efforts. You must all feel justly proud of the results for they are a credit to the whole school.'*

Summer Term Activities Start

From chess to cooking, tennis to touch rugby and ballet to brass ensemble there is certainly plenty of variety in the activities programme which started again this week. An impressive 26 music ensembles rehearse every week, including four choirs. On the sports pitches, 28 different sessions are being held each week, to cater for all ages, abilities and sports, including Kung-Fu, athletics, cricket and triathlon. Creative skills are being honed in clubs such as cake decorating, clay creations, book making and cross-stitch. Construction and engineering ideas are being worked on in Engineering, Lego, K'nex and Lego Wedo, while those with an interest in nature can be found assisting Mrs Price and Mrs Godsall in the school greenhouses or out and about in the grounds with Mrs Parker. Most secretive of all is the Spies, Secrets and Code-breaking club, but as yet we have not been able to discover any more about it!

Gym Glory

Last weekend, 84 children from Years 1 to 8 competed in the Midlands Gymnastics Championships at Stamford Junior School. They were in fantastic form after the Easter holiday break. Mr North, Mrs North and Miss Butler could not have been more proud of their achievements. On Saturday we swept the board winning every category: U9 Boys, U9 Mixed, U11 Boys, U11 Mixed, Girls' Advanced U9 and U9 Girls' Novice. Within these categories four pupils were crowned Individual Champions: Harry (U9 Boys and U9 Mixed), Hannah (U11 Mixed) Reuben (U11 Boys) and Emilia (U9 Novice). Two further St Faith's teams were placed 2nd on Saturday and six individual 2nd places and four individual 3rd places were awarded.

As if our successes on Saturday weren't enough, on Sunday three teams were crowned champions: U11 Novice Girls, U7 Boys and U11 Advanced Girls. Supporting these stellar team

results, four pupils were declared individual champions: Andrew (U7 Boys), Bethia (U7 Girls) Hannah (U11 Advanced Girls) and Evie (U11 B Advanced Girls). A further five teams and four individuals won 2nd place and two pupils were placed 3rd.

A huge thanks, as ever, to the parents and staff for their support over the weekend.

Pre Prep Walk Through Islam

Years 1 and 2 learnt more about Islam on Thursday in a carefully planned morning of activities. At six separate information stations the children learnt about key components of the Islamic faith.

Understanding different religious beliefs is an important factor in our children's appreciation of their place in the world. I would like to extend my thanks to those parents who took time out of their busy schedules to assist with the running of this event - it really does bring the children's learning to life in a most interactive way.

Sweet treats (a rarity these days with our healthy snack policy) were on sale on Thursday break time for Years 3 to 8, to raise funds for both the Eco-committee and the School Council. A wide variety of delicious goodies were generously baked and donated by pupils, parents and staff and sold in stalls across the school. £437.08 was raised in total and will be divided between the Eco-Committee and the School Council whose members will decide how best to utilise the funds.

Rebecca

One Year 8 English set has been studying the novel Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier. To demonstrate their understanding of the novel they each put together thoughtful, imaginative and creative responses to the text ranging from oil paintings and electronic games to news reports and even a rap! The pupils and their teacher, Mrs Yates, displayed their impressive creations to staff and parents on Thursday. All the pupils showed a clear understanding of the text, yet they all chose to depict this in such different and wonderful ways. Well done to everyone on the creativity and quality of work presented.

It has been a while....

.. since the word 'parking' has been mentioned in this newsletter, but unfortunately this week we have received complaints (from St Faith's parents) about the parking and driving at drop-off and collection times. Specifically, cars have been seen parking in the drop-off zones and queues of cars waiting for the gate to open have caused dangerous obstructions. On one day this week, most of the southbound lane of Trumpington Road outside the school was blocked by stationary cars queuing out from the gate, causing cyclists to swerve into the opposite carriageway to get passed and cars having to wait to overtake the obstacle. We ask all parents to drive and park with great care and courtesy, for the safety of our children and consideration for others.

Old Fidelian Lunches

On Thursday, a cheery group of Old Fidelians, most of whom hadn't been back to the school since they left in the 1970s, enjoyed a tour of the site and a school lunch in the Head's House with Jane and me. Here is a photo in their old dormitory which, they were stunned to see, is now one of the Foundation classrooms!

Year 8 Charity Challenge

36 Year 8 pupils have chosen to take part in an exciting new project this year – the £5 Charity Challenge. They will each receive a £5 interest free loan from the school to start their own small business. Each business will operate for 4 weeks and all profits will be donated to Makukhanye School to help to provide food for the orphaned pupils during weekends and school holidays. The 36 entrepreneurs can be seen at the top of this newsletter and more details are in the index.

Observational Drawing

My wife, Jane, had a surprise when she opened the front door to take Mollie for a walk on Thursday morning. A Year 6 Art class were making the most of the fine weather to develop their observational drawings – of our front door!

England Footballer

Many congratulations to Oliver (Year 8) who heard this week that he has been selected for the Independent Schools Football Association National Squad. He will train and play for the team at Harrow School in August. We wish him every success.

And finally...

In last week's newsletter, I promised to keep you updated on the emergence of the Pre Prep ducks. Well, here is Mrs Bates moving four new-borns out of the incubator to their first new home this morning. As you might expect, this has caused great excitement amongst the children (and staff) and there is the possibility of one or two more emerging this weekend.

Whatever you are doing over the next few days, I wish you a most enjoyable Bank Holiday weekend.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell