

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

24 May 2019

In a week when the sun shone gloriously on our beautiful school site, pupils skipped around school looking happy and relaxed and the ice cream van on Newton Road enjoyed bumper sales, I have plenty to report. A week is a long time at St Faith's and it never ceases to amaze me how much our children achieve in such a short period of time. This newsletter only scratches the surface of those achievements, but I trust it provides a flavour of what our talented pupils and staff have been up to over the past seven days.

Celebration of the Arts

On Monday, the Year 8 pupils not involved in the final rehearsals for *Guys and Dolls* spent the morning with local author Mark Wells. His novel, 'Riddle of the White Sphinx', is the first book in the 'Hidden Tales', a series of illustrated novels funded by the Arts Council of England where readers follow the footsteps of the characters to solve clues, decipher codes and discover a secret artefact hidden somewhere in their city. Mark's new book has been written to enthuse children about visiting museums and the many secrets kept within them. Year 8 used artwork from the book to solve clues at the Sedgwick museum as well as learning about Mark and his life as an author.

The pupils who elected not to take part in *Guys and Dolls* (the Year 8 production is always optional for pupils) have been working with the Art and Design Department and OH! Films over the past few months to plan, produce, choreograph and star in a LipSync video, to the tune of Queen's 'Don't Stop Me Now'. As you can see from the film, the children clearly relished the opportunity to throw caution to the wind as they took on this creative challenge. It should make you chuckle.

If that wasn't enough, the same pupils worked collaboratively to produce some of the stunning stage sets for the production of *Guys and Dolls*. I am grateful to our Arts Faculty for providing those pupils who are not so comfortable with the dramatic arts with creative opportunities to express themselves and their talents in such a positive way.

This week, after months of rehearsals, our budding Year 8 actors and actresses entertained us over two nights with a wonderful production of *Guys and Dolls JR*. Using a contemporary café-style audience seating arrangement, which allowed for free movement of the actors through the

hall, we were transported back in time to 1940's New York City. This slickly choreographed production followed the fortunes of the Gangsters and Dolls as they battled with what is right and wrong, thanks to strict words from the Missionaries. From maturely explored themes of love and marriage to dramatic stage combat and a whole ensemble salsa dance, the production contained something for everyone. The cast have thoroughly enjoyed the experience of putting this show together and have been exemplary in the way they have worked in rehearsals, supported each other and responded to the challenges of producing such an ambitious show. I was blown away by the quality of the performances, both individually and collectively. As one parent emailed to Ms Allen, *'We would like to say thank you for an outstanding show tonight. The performance will live long in our memories.'* It certainly will.

*All the pictures will be uploaded onto the VLE after Half Term**

Audiences at both productions were treated to a visual feast of Year 8 Art work in our Celebration of the Arts Exhibition. Art work from our current Year 8 pupils was displayed in Ashburton Hall for guests to admire as they mingled before and after the performances.

My sincere thanks to the talented Year 8s and, of course, to their teachers in the Arts Faculty, Mrs Bowes, Miss Smith, Mrs Ankin, Miss Kennerley, Mr Gorick and Ms Allen. This week was a truly wonderful celebration of the arts at St Faith's.

Ampleforth History Competition

Children from across the country were invited to participate in the annual Ampleforth History Competition by submitting a 1,500 word essay on a topic of their choice. Fifteen entries were submitted by Year 8 St Faith's pupils, each researched and written independently and all receiving Highly Commended recognition. I am delighted to announce that the competition was won by Connie with her essay 'Has the UK always been at odds with Europe?', while Theo finished 2nd thanks to his essay 'To what extent did Sweden remain neutral during WW2?'. The Head of History at Ampleforth, who judged the competition, was extremely impressed with the standard of all the St Faith's entries. Very well done indeed to everyone who took part.

[Has the UK always been at odds with Europe?](#)

[To what extent did Sweden remain neutral during WW2](#)

The Inspector Calls

Yesterday the Green Flag Inspector visited St Faith's. The Eco Committee showed the Inspector around the school to look closely at their many sustainability projects including recycling, waste reduction, bio-diversity work and the new water fountains. Miss Kennerley, who accompanied the tour, was hugely impressed by how the children spoke to the Inspector and answered his many searching questions, including, 'Would you be able to explain how your work in English or Maths developed your understanding and appreciation of sustainability and bio diversity?! Thankfully Sergio and a brave group of Y8s got the ball rolling and discussed their work on Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, poetry, and fractals in Maths as a way of looking towards nature for possible ways to develop new technologies! We are delighted to say that before leaving, the Inspector confirmed the renewal of our Green Flag status for another two years. Many congratulations to the children and particularly the Eco Committee. Sustainability will continue to be a focus of our work led, as always, by the children.

Tea-time Music

It was a wonderful treat to listen to our musicians – all 18 of them – performing in the Tea-Time Recital on Tuesday afternoon. Our beginner instrumentalists who dominated the programme were punctuated by a fine performance from Harriet who is in final preparations for her Grade 5 Jazz trumpet exam. Many of those who performed will be taking their ABRSM exams in June. From Bach on the 'cello, solo and duet pieces on the Steinway grand piano to 'Twist and Shout' on the guitar, the recital was the perfect retreat from the fast-paced life of St Faith's and a wonderful opportunity for our junior musicians to gain performance experience.

Sports Round-Up

Eight pupils represented the school this week at the IAPS Sailing Regatta, skilfully manoeuvring their RS Zest dinghies around the waters at Weymouth. In the U11 category Sam and Lochie finished 7th and siblings Archie and Effie finished 16th (out of 27). In the U13 class, Fran and Ewan were placed 32nd and George and Dom came an impressive 7th (out of 35). Very many thanks indeed to the parents who were willing to take their children to and from Weymouth for the event and to Dr Hoyle and Miss Wacey for coordinating events on the ground (and indeed on the water). Participation in events such as this would not be possible without the dedication of both parents and staff.

I am delighted to say that St Faith's won the Gresham's Eight-School Competition last Friday thanks to a brilliant 'can-do' approach from all who took part despite the challenging weather conditions.

On Saturday, forty six pupils from Years 3-8 bounced their way through two routines at the IAPS Trampolining Finals in Croydon. Many congratulations to everyone who took part (more details are in the index) and a special mention to the three teams (U9, U11 and U13 boys) and two individuals (Harry and Max) who won national titles. It was a truly magnificent day and one of which the children can be deservedly proud. As always, thank you very much to Mr and Mrs North.

Also on Saturday, the quality of golf on display at the Schools Golf Tournament held at The Lakes was impressive. In a tightly contested competition Netherhall School won with 8 points, while St Faith's finished joint second. Mr Mutucumarana was delighted with the spirit and sportsmanship displayed by all our players.

Finally, last weekend, Kuankuan and Dillon travelled all the way to Millfield School to compete in the IAPS Fencing Finals. Whilst they didn't win, they represented St Faith's superbly and performed well.

Finally

It was the turn of Mollie, our long-haired Irish Jack Russell, to meet members of the Animal Adventures club this week. Questions were fired at Jane and me from all directions, including:

Does Mollie like going in the car?

Yes, very much - she sits on the passenger's knee.

Does she have any dog friends?

Yes, Toby – Jane's mother's dog

Is Mollie frightened of anything?

Yes, fireworks, kites and the sound of the bleeper on the dishwasher!

I am now off to the Gog Magog golf course to play in the annual Old Fidelian v Staff golf match. Whatever you are doing over the Bank Holiday weekend and half-term, I wish you a most enjoyable break and look forward to seeing everyone back at St Faith's on Monday 3rd June.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell