

Gymnastics at St Faith's

Annually, late February and early March herald the culmination of the official gymnastics season and St Faith's has been involved in competitions in Luton, Elstree, Chelmsford, Guildford and Stoke on Trent during the last three weekends. Incredibly, 42 gymnasts have competed over 4 different competitions, some of which are for qualification for a further national event in Stoke in April. Some of the boys have participated in all four distinctly different events; Trios, Floor and Vault regionals, ISGA Nationals and Sports Acro and Tumbling regionals.

Our fortunes have been mixed, reflecting the unbelievable level of prowess in school gymnastics in 2024. More and more schools rely on gymnasts training at local clubs for multiple hours each week to bolster their team scores. It is important to remain focused on our philosophy that primarily we are school based gymnasts training a maximum of 2 hours a week and participating for fun, enjoyment and to experience the camaraderie of teamwork.

Thanks must go to Mrs Oxborough who has taken on the role of scorer for ISGA, completing the whole weekend at Tormead. In addition these competitions could not go on without the coaching expertise and driving prowess of Mr Mageean, Mr Johnson and Miss Butler. Coaching help in preparation for the competitions has been provided by Max Burnell, Mr North and Mrs Hutton.

24th February

Under 9 ISGA Nationals, Tormead Guildford

Our U9s had a fantastic competition, finishing 4th in the group and 4th overall. As all top 6 places gain medals the girls were happy to come away with two medals each. The most exciting news of the last three weekends has to be the crowning of Matilda in 4C as Individual Under 9 Silver medallist out of 65 gymnasts. Everyone was delighted for her but she remained calm and modest.

25th February

Under 11 Nationals at Tormead, Guildford

The team was in fine form upon arrival at Tormead. They had trained hard and they produced excellent skills and routines throughout the competition. Their group was possibly not quite as sharp as it has been, but their shapes, agilities and general poise were laudable. When the results were announced, St Faith's finished in 8th place in the group and 11th place overall. On this occasion it was difficult to see where they could have done something different to gain more marks. The standard overall across all teams was quite remarkable and for us it was a situation of being beaten by extraordinary teams rather than making mistakes that caused our final ranking. With luck, the girls can reflect on their best efforts and appreciate the high standard of their opposition rather than dwelling on a lower position than they would have hoped for.

2nd March

4piece Nationals Haberdashers', Elstree

This competition is the top private schools' event for boys each year. We had a full quota of teams, being represented by U9s, U11s and U14s. The day started well with solid performances from all boys and we completed our competition with individual champions in Under 9 and Under 14 age groups, as well as team trophies for Under 9 and Under 14 age groups. Our Under 11s finished 3rd in a strong field of 6 teams and our highest scorer finished joint 4th and in the medals. Congratulations to Samuel and Ollie who won gold medals on this occasion.

3rd March

Under 10 and Under 13 Nationals, Haberdashers' Elstree

Our Under 10 team was suddenly depleted just before this competition as the date clashed with another event. We needed to add two new gymnasts to the team who had not competed in the Under 9s the week before. To our delight, two members of Year 3 agreed to join the team and proved themselves to be a tremendous bonus to the Under 10s. The team finished a creditable 12th in a very strong competition but were honoured to receive the Spirit Trophy, voted on by the judges who recognised their enthusiasm and wholehearted support for each other throughout the day.

The Under 13 team competed with grace, poise, strength and agility. They started on Group Sequence which they performed absolutely beautifully. Medals are awarded to 6th place in this event and the scores also go forward to be added to the team 4 piece score. To our delight the girls' stunning performance earned them 6th place group sequence medals and helped to secure their final team position of 9th. It was a satisfying day for everyone.

3rd March

Under 11 and Under 14 Regional Floor and Vault, Chelmsford

A really big thanks to Mr Johnson and Mr Mageean who travelled to Chelmsford to coach the boys while Miss Butler and Mrs North stayed at Haberdashers' to coach the girls.

Our boys competed with skill and determination to gain gold medal position in both Under 11 boys and Under 14 boys divisions. They advance to Stoke on Trent on 20th April and 21st April. The Under 11s will be defending St Faiths' National title which was won in both 2023 and 2022.

8th March

Milano Trios National Finals

The Under 13 mixed team finished 9th in a strong field of 15 schools. The Under 13 boys team took Silver medals, narrowly missing Gold by 0.15. The field of 10 schools offered the boys' biggest competition this year.

Most exciting was that our mixed team score was added to the other mixed team from the East region and the combined mixed teams came 2nd in the inter-regional battle. Finally, all Under 13 representatives' scores were added together to give a combined East score. The

combined U13 mixed, U13 boys and U13 girls from the East finished 3rd overall and all received a ribbon.

9th March

Milano Trios National Finals

This was a great opportunity for our Under 11 trio teams to show their best work. The boys started off the day and the mixed team closed the proceedings in the very last round. Both sets of gymnasts worked hard to contribute to the overall team score with the boys triumphing in Silver medal position. Despite being soundly beaten into second place by an incredible team from Marlborough School in Wales, our boys ensured a creditable gap between them and the next-placed team. Despite thorough preparation and very slick skills the Under 11 mixed field proved to be too strong for our gymnasts who finished in 8th position out of 14 schools without making a mistake all day.

10th March

East Area Sports Acro Regionals and Tumbling at Salto Gym Club in Luton

This much anticipated competition was run in a very professional manner by Salto Gymnastics Club. Our tumbler was in a tough group of boys, vying for a medal. He held his nerve and recorded a resounding win, securing a place at Tumbling Nationals on 20th April in Stoke. Joining him will be our winning Under 14 Men's pair and, to our absolute delight, one of our Under 11 Women's pairs who finished in Gold medal position. Mention must also be made of our other Under 14 Men's pair who finished second and of all our remaining pairs who performed so well on the day.