

What a wonderful first half of the Spring Term we've had -full of top-rate sporting achievements. There has been the District Swimming Gala – at which we won bronze medals and football matches at Beaudesert.



But mostly we have played netball.

Special arrangements were made to take all our Year 6 girls to an afternoon of netball at Wycliffe College. The netball matches were held as a festival, with the schools integrated for an hour of skills practice and social interaction, followed by some amazing high-quality netball matches. And, Hopelands won all their matches.

High praise was given to the girls of Hopelands from all the Wycliffe staff who attended. In fact, the staff assumed the girls played for netball clubs outside of school, coached by professional players, (where in fact our girls were the only ones that didn't!). All the girls should be so proud of their conduct and the high level of skill shown throughout the afternoon. The only person disappointed was Mrs McQuillan who had hoped for a warmer teaching environment, the sports hall, although wonderful was, as one parent expressed on arrival, 'warmer outside'!

The following week Mrs McQuillan decided to take *two* teams to the Netball Festival at Cheltenham College, which meant no one was left out in year 6. Unfortunately, it was really difficult to select who should go in the A Squad and who should go in the B Squad as so many children play at such a high level. Thankfully some of the children decided for themselves, (which made Mrs McQ's life a lot easier), so thank you very much, to Maisie, Poppy, Abby and Saba for volunteering as this meant they could play in their chosen positions.



The netball was, as always, played at a very high level at the college - they win the county netball each year. But, what a blow when one of our A Squad star players – Ethan - twisted his ankle in the first five minutes playing against the college's A Team and had to come off court. This was a great loss to our team as Ethan is so tall and talented. However, using a reserve from another school and rearranging our team, we still only lost by one goal. In fact, we had all of the play, and the college had struggled to keep up with us, until this incident. Another factor was that the nets were set at adult height to which our shooters had to adjust in the first 5 minutes. Still, once these little hiccups were overcome all our other matches were easily won; our shooters didn't hesitate and all children played brilliantly all afternoon.

The B Squad showed equal talent from many individuals, especially Maisie and Saba who played to their usual high standard and Frankie whose ability showed a marked progression steadily all afternoon. They worked extremely well and all the players developed as a team, beating their final opponents of the afternoon.

It was a great finale to the half term with adults, spectators and children being spoilt at a wonderful match tea. The children were replete, medals awarded and a happy time was had by all!

