



ST PIRAN'S SCHOOL



The English Department

UPPER SCHOOL

Easter Welcome Letter

Welcome back to what is going to be an enjoyable and eventful Easter Term. The English Department would like to inform the parents of what can be expected from this term, and what the children are being encouraged to focus on.

Book Week

The main theme for the week is to inform our pupils about the magic of reading. The week's theme, 'Off to The Land of Nod' will highlight the importance of sleep, dreams and imagination; all encouraged by reading before bedtime. Reading will fill their minds with wonder – making them drift off to 'The Land of Nod'. This is when the magic and adventure of dreams begin – perfect for exciting narrative writing.

We would like to invite you to take a photo of your child, in their pyjamas, holding their favourite book in front of their face. Please would you send the photograph in to their English teacher who will use it to create a display to promote Book Week. The display will generate interest in guessing which pupil is behind the book!

During the week of 6th February there will be a visiting author, John Dougherty, who will be working with Years 5, 6 and 8 to inspire the children with their writing ability. The activities arranged throughout the week for the English lessons will focus on writing effective narratives, key planning skills and imaginative ideas – all stimulated through a photograph taken of your child in their sleep positions. Parents, it would be great if you could do the 'sneaky' thing and take the photo of your child when they are actually asleep. Please may these photos be with pupils for the week commencing Monday 6th February, ready to be used in lessons. If you wish to send the photos in before, your child's English teacher will collect them ready for Book Week.

Each afternoon from 3.30-4.15pm and 5.45-6.15pm, the Travelling Book Company Stall will be situated in Big School allowing you to browse and purchase books for your child. Look out for John Dougherty's books such as *Zeus Sorts it Out*. Also, *Zeus on the Loose* was shortlisted for the Branford Boase Award in 2004 and *Jack Slater, Monster Investigator* was shortlisted for the Ottaker's Children's Book Prize in 2005.

At the end of the week, Thursday February 9th, the whole school will come together to share the celebration of Book Week and the activities which will have taken place during the week. On this day we would like the children, and teachers, to come to school in their pyjamas, an alternative to the normal fancy dress. The children seem very excited about this already with lots of ideas about dressing gowns, teddy bears and slippers. If children do wish to wear slippers, it is advisable that they bring shoes for outdoor wear too.

Handwriting and Presentation

We are always reminding pupils that their handwriting and presentation must be neat at all times to ensure meaning is communicated clearly. It is important that pupils proof read their work so that simple errors are recognised and corrected. This will support their overall grades and levels when it comes to assessments and exams. Simple mistakes cost marks.

For handwriting and presentation to be neat, pupils must remember to:

- ✓ Write in pupil's neatest handwriting style or St. Piran's Cursive Style;
- ✓ Keep writing on the line;
- ✓ Keep writing close to the margin;
- ✓ Use capital letters at the beginning and full stops at the end of sentences;
- ✓ Make sure the spaces between words are as wide the letter "o" (just like o this);
- ✓ Form upper case (capital letters) and lower case letters correctly (Aa Bb Cc...), so that the reader can tell the difference between them;
- ✓ Make sure that the ascenders (tall letters) are the correct height (b d f h k l t);
- ✓ Make sure that the descenders hang below the line (f g j p q y).

Handwriting Competition

The week after half term all pupils will have the opportunity to produce their best handwriting to enter into St Piran's annual Handwriting Competition. The task will be given to the pupils throughout Book Week for them to plan and finalize. The competition is judged by Mrs Knibbe and the winner, together with commendations, is announced at the end of term assembly.

Spellings

This term, your child will continue to bring home a weekly spelling list from the St. Piran's Spelling Programme, and it is very helpful if you can help them with this. The key is 'little and often'; they won't remember the rule if they try to cram the night before the test. If your child finds learning spellings difficult (and many do), it is better to employ a multi-sensory approach to revising spellings. Please encourage that spelling tests are necessary in order to develop a better understanding of words used in an unseen text for exam or assessment purposes. Spelling tests also build confidence in the choice of more mature vocabulary used in independent work.

The spelling games below have been designed to help with home learning between pupils and parents - why not give them a go:

Tasty Words:

Parents can give children tasty things to spell words with, like raisins or sweets, to encourage children to spell out the spelling words. Then, when they spell them correctly, they can get to eat them as a treat!

Story Time:

Children can write a short story using all the spelling words. Make sure they don't forget to check their punctuation!

Simple Sentence:

Parents can advise children to write a sentence for each of the spelling words. Remind children that each sentence must start with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

Finger Tracing:

Offer children to spell out each of the spelling words on a person's back using the index finger. Then it's their turn to write the words for others to feel and spell.

Reading

One of the most frequently asked questions of English teachers is, "How can I make my child read more?" Well, the first answer to that is, make it part of their culture and not a punishment. If a child is surrounded by books and by adults who read, it will become second nature to them. Reading before 'lights out' can be a treat; a trip to the public library to change their library books can be genuinely exciting. Your child's English Teacher will be able to recommend suitable books for your child or request the reading list from the department. Children like having books recommended to them by their friends, however please ensure you check the titles and content of these books as there are some books other parents allow their children to read and you may not.

Every pupil in Upper School can borrow books from the Learning Resource Centre during reading time. We do promote the children to regularly keep their Reading Records up to date, and also ask that parents encourage this too; even making a comment for support.

In support of Book Week, please try promoting reading at bedtime so that your child is in a 'quiet zone' to help them focus the magic a book can offer any reader. This will then help them prepare for sleep. They will drift off to 'The Land of Nod' and awake in the morning full of dreams, adventure and imagination after a good night's sleep – all fuelled by reading before bed. Exactly what any English teacher requires – focused and imaginative pupils for the day ahead.

Poetry Competition

Well done to all those pupils who entered the Young Writer's Poetry Competition last term. A number of pupils were contacted over the Christmas holidays and were successful in the publication of their poems in the books, *Past and Present – A Collection of Poetry* and *Travel Back in Rhyme poetry Collection*. Copies of these books will be kept in the British Library as well as the The St. Piran's LRC too!

Questions and Support

There may be occasions when you, as parents, need further explanation about what your child is doing in English lessons, or you would like additional information about certain activities or even their progress, beyond what you receive in the reports and at Parents' Evenings. If you do not have your child's direct English teacher's email address, please contact the School Office to forward your enquiry.

As a department, we look forward to a positive and progressive term.

Miss Galloso

Head of English