

18<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Families,

This week's letter is an opportunity to share the events that surround World Book Day 2024, which we celebrated in the week of the 7<sup>th</sup> March. Developing a love of reading and improving reading ability is a key area of improvement for our school. Our students read twice a week every morning in form time, we have form groups visiting our library routinely and we actively encourage borrowing from our mobile library trolley. World Book Day is a marker in the academic calendar when all schools place an even greater focus on reading; and at GAA we are no exception.

In the week before World Book Day, we launched The Masked Reader, this involves listening to audio clips in form time, a range of teachers read excerpts from books and the students loved guessing who the reader was. Every book we selected is in our library, helping to highlight options to borrow. As an added bonus, students got to read their form time book *every* morning. Please encourage your child to visit the library or to borrow from our library trolley. Also ask your child about the book they are reading during form time, the plot and the characters for example.

In the week of World Book Day, we launched a Decorate Your Door competition. Highlighting the top borrows from our library as themes. The Masked Reader continued to run in form time alongside the extra reading days, we delivered a themed assembly and distributed book tokens – if your child did not get their World Book Day token, please pop into the library as we have spares. In addition, we have had activities and competitions in our library at break, lunch and after school. Every day during the week of World Book Day, we had prize draws and we gave out brand new free books to students who engaged with the activities and competitions. On Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March, we welcomed both Year 5 and Year 6 students from Hurst Knoll St James Primary School into our library, each had an hour session delivered by Miss Selwood our Librarian. Some of our Year 11 students helped to plan and run the sessions and it was great to see them interact with the primary students.

On World Book Day itself, we shared an exemplary piece of creative writing written by one of our avid Year 11 readers with all students on World Book Day. The students read the piece as their 'do now' lesson starter over the course of the day and discussed how reading for pleasure can lead to success in writing too. On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March, we culminated our celebrations with a visit from Angela Raynor MP, linked to International Women's Day and reading for pleasure, again in our library.

In the week leading up to World Book Day, we had the privilege of delivering fifty books to Ashton West End Primary, which will be added to their school library. Our librarian worked with the Year 6 winner of GAA's open evening competition to select the books and was able to take part in a school assembly to show the children the new additions to their library. Several of the pupils at Ashton West End will be joining us at GAA in September, so it was fantastic to see them already so engaged and enthusiastic about our library and reading offer.

Furthermore, we received wonderful news, fortuitously – on the Sunday before our World Book Day week activities began, we were informed that we had been awarded a grant of £1000 from the Siobhan Down Trust, this money is the result of a bid we submitted. The grant specifically promotes the art of 'book browsing', so a lucky group of students will visit a bookstore, spend time browsing the shelves and selecting brand new books for our library catalogue. Our students are avid readers, as our reading strategy has grown, so too have the borrowing rates and this grant will make a huge difference to our students.

Whilst the World Book Day movement absolutely helps to raise the profile of reading, here at GAA, our strategy to promote reading is not reliant upon this one-off, high-profile event. Next week, the students continue to read in form time, they continue with their Reading Plus lessons, the library continues to offer a wide variety of enrichment activities, the library trolley will be out, our community book swap continues to be active and we have several reading and vocabulary interventions running. We are always looking for ways to improve our strategies and ideas to develop reading and would welcome any feedback from families about this important work.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs C Johnston

Assistant Principal Reading and Disciplinary Literacy