

St. David's Holy Faith School Library



Quarterly Update March 2024

Librarian: Mairéad Duggan

Quarterly Report – March 2024

Paired Reading/Peer Tutoring with St. Brigid’s National School

“A great way to connect”. This was the verdict of one of our Transition Year readers after our inaugural paired reading session, as she was delighted to find herself reading with a young family friend. Another student found himself reading with his little sister, who got a special sibling introduction to her new school. Our latest group of readers has two sibling pairs, with two pairs of brothers reading together. A vibrant hum of reading is the backdrop to these sessions; where connections between our two Holy Faith schools are continually established and refreshed.

Paired Reading is often used as a short-term reading intervention however, in this case, it has also evolved into a social intervention. This initiative makes the transition from primary to secondary school a little easier for our incoming 1st Years. The younger student is invited to choose a book from a carefully curated selection of age-appropriate titles. We provide the students with; two copies of each book (one for the reader and one for the tutor), a folder with a label, a book review form, a bookmark and some colouring pencils.

The younger students proceed to read with the TY students, and the tutors help them out if they get stuck on a word or a sentence. If the primary students get tired and need a break, their tutors will take over the reading for a little while. Once the sessions are over, we store the books and materials in a

folder with the students' names so that for the next session, they can resume where they left off the previous week.

There is an obvious chemistry between the peer tutors and their readers. An organic mentoring relationship between all students seemed to grow from this interaction. Students from both schools either gravitated towards faces they already knew, or were introduced to new friends and potential mentors for their secondary school journey.

We hope to expand this initiative out to all our feeder schools next year, with a view to improving literacy levels and easing the transition for all. In consultation with other departments, we might expand this initiative to include a tour of the school facilitated by TY students and other induction activities.

We also hope to put together a proposal for Children's Books Ireland for a '*Communities of Learning*' Initiative. The ties between our two schools (already strong) are becoming closer and stronger with every session. We would love to establish a strong community of learning in Greystones with our new library at its epicentre. Huge thanks to the wonderful Ms. Costello (Principal of St. Brigid's) who has been the driving force behind all the logistics, and also to Ms. Courtney (our fantastic TY Co-Ordinator) who is the driving force behind all our TY initiatives.

Special Events this Term

1. *Exchange Students Irish Language Classes – TY Students*
2. *Languages Games – Ms. Foynes*
3. *Chess Competition between Teachers and Students– Mr. O'Donnchada*
4. *Creative Writing Competitions – Mr. Doyle and Ms. Duggan*

Exam Week

The library became a hive of activity once again during exam week. Many students used the facility to study between exams. The library also became a centre for academic activity after school as senior students used the facility to study for their Mock exams.

Cataloguing

Cataloguing is also progressing and we try to do a little every day. Several of the TY students have been trained in and are helping out with this mammoth task. Along with the Junior Fiction and Recommended Reads, we have now catalogued almost half of the Senior Fiction along with the Home- Economics Section and most of the Geography section.

Public Library Links

The 5th Year History students are researching their History Projects and some have ordered their specialist topic books through the school library. We have a long-term loan facility which allows the students to order books and keep them for extended periods to complete their projects. Some 3rd Year students have also ordered books for art projects.

This is a great facility offered by our local library as many of these specialist topics involve very expensive books which are only relevant to one student. This saves us time, money and space, and offers students a wealth of knowledge on a variety of topics without major expense.

Staff Book Club

We had our inaugural meeting of the staff book club with 9 members turning up on cold Friday afternoon in January. The first title that we chose was 'Small Things Like These' by Claire Keegan. I ordered multiple copies of the book in the hope that we can share these copies with our feeder schools to establish their own book clubs and further enhance the links between our schools.

'The Bee Sting' by Paul Murray is our next choice as Ireland's Book of the Year 2023. We will meet to discuss same after Easter. We will have two choices for our next book club.

'Before the Coffee Gets Cold' by Toshikazu Kawaguchi about a small Japanese café that offers its visitors the chance to travel back in time is one of our options. 'Breakdown' by Cathy Sweeney (a former teacher in St. David's) is our other choice. The vote for the title was split down the middle so some copies of both are available for borrowing in the library.

It might be an option in the future to establish a book club for parents if there was an interest in same.

Mindfulness Programmes - Guidance

Mr. Fox has begun to bring groups in to practice mindfulness as a way for students to destress and relax. The students follow an official mindfulness programme and we finish every class with a mindful body-scan meditation. The library is a great space to practice mindfulness due to the comfortable seating and relaxing views.

Ms. Grogan has organized for many students who need quiet time, to decompress in the library. This is part of a strategy to offer sanctuary during the school day to students who need it. We are currently working on a display of our mindful artwork for the library noticeboard.

It is becoming more and more apparent that a pressing need for a lot of our students, is for a quiet space for them to seek sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of school life, particularly at lunchtime and breaktime. The Librarian is working in tandem with both members of the Guidance Department to provide this as much as possible for students who need this space.

Arts Programme Classes

Film Studies Classes

Thanks to Ms. Bailey both 1st and 2nd Years who have language exemptions are partaking in a short film-studies course. Ms. Carey has agreed to help with props and costumes and we are workshopping a script written by one of our talented 1st Year writers.

We had a little visitor on Friday 15th to star in our dog movie. *Lollipop Apple*, a local pet, was loaned to us to make a short movie from a dog's perspective. The 2nd Year Group are looking at making a short movie called 'The Cone' with the footage from this project. Three of the 2nd Years came out to film some snippets of the movie and all excelled in different areas of film-making. The idea is to use the footage to come up with a script for a voiceover. This initiative works on visual literacy skills, digital media skills and creative writing for the students. The qualitative feedback collected so far would suggest that it is a really positive initiative for students in terms of both engagement and attendance.

Creative Writing and Illustrating

Mr. Doyle's 'Learning to Learn Group' have been doing a creative stint in the library where we are reading, writing and illustrating to work on their creative writing and visual literacy skills.

The students are reading Katherine Rundell's YA fantasy book 'Impossible Creatures', as a group in library class. We first analysed the list of impossible creatures that the author had invented and then looked at the accompanying illustrations.

Then the students get two templates; one for illustration and one for creative description and then they are given the task of creating their own 'impossible creature'. There are prizes (book tokens) for the best entries and these will be displayed on the library noticeboard after the competition is over. We would like to open up the competition to the whole school after the Easter holidays.

This group have also started to compile entries for another History-based competition based on the Irish Flag. Thanks to Mr. Doyle for facilitating this arts-based learning programme.

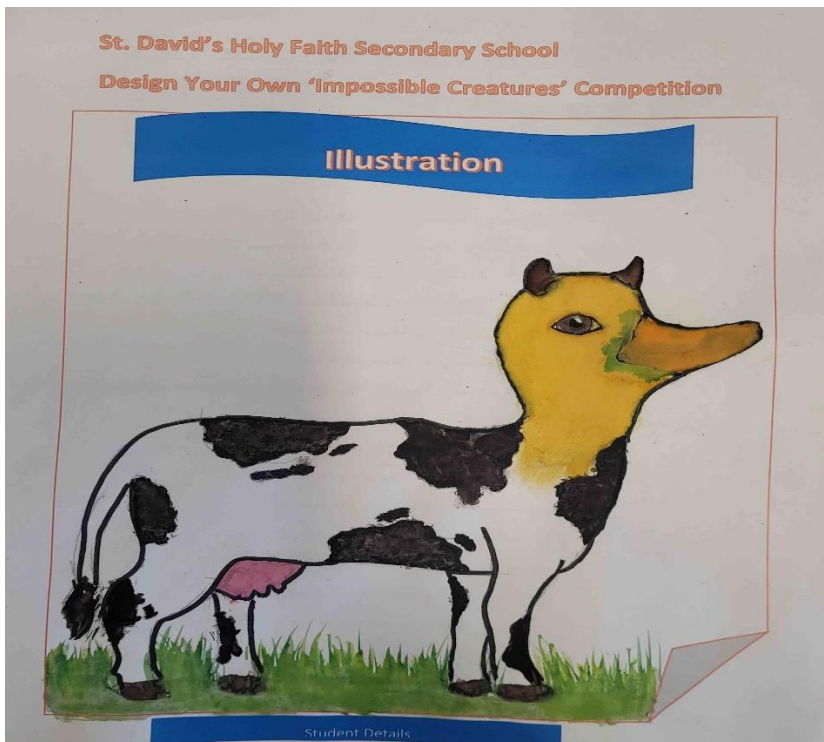
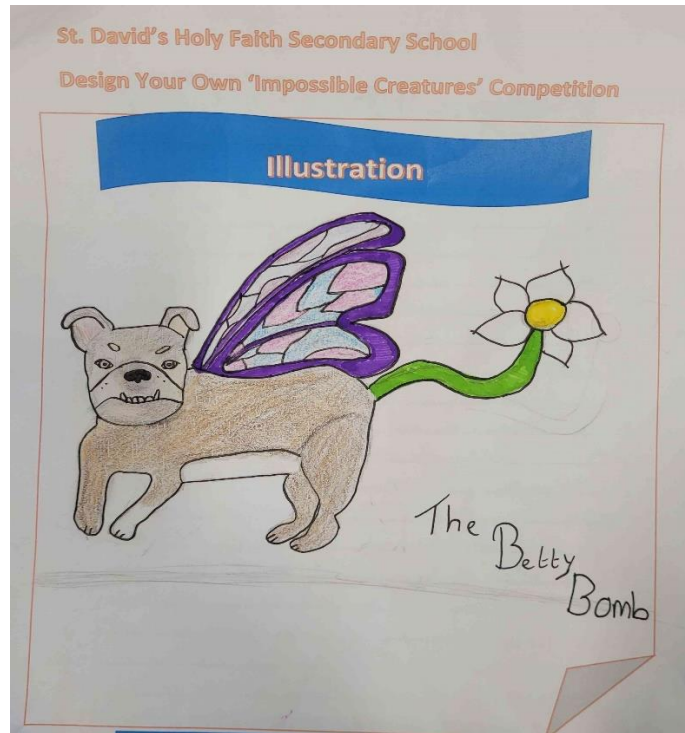
TY students also have a *Creative Arts Programme* running throughout their language classes facilitated by Ms. Foyne. They are working on a series of children's books written in the French language and illustrated by the students themselves. The artwork is fantastic and looks like becoming a publishable project. They have 'Pierre a Paris', 'Abeille' and 'Pomme' almost finished with other titles also in progress. Watch this space for publishing news. (See attached illustrations).

These books may be used for the French language teaching that our students are involved in, in local primary schools.

French Language Picturebooks



Creative Writing/Illustrating Competition



Creative Clubs in the School Library

Film, Creative Writing, Illustration

It is *Movie Time* after school on Wednesdays where we watch and make short films. We also review them if we have time. And then on Fridays, it's time for budding writers and illustrators to flourish in Creative Writing Club at lunchtime.

In Film Club, the students have watched a number of short films for inspiration. They also hope to make (or participate in making) a short film of their own this year. Helen Flanagan, (Film Artist and our Creative Schools Associate) is interested in helping us to make some shorts over the course of the year and has visited St. David's to meet with the Film club and discuss their upcoming projects.

In Creative Writing Club, the students have already worked on their 6 Word Short Stories and 6 Word Memoirs. Students are beginning to share their work and there are quite a few talented writers emerging. A couple of illustrators have joined our ranks also and are working on their visual literacy through the medium of illustrated storytelling. These students are submitting work for the various competitions advertised throughout the school. One of our 2nd Years is a talented poet and has produced several poems on various topics and a couple of entries for competitions.

Crochet Club

This term started with the addition of another club which is student-led. Our Crochet Club is now up and running with talented tutor Lauren Byrnes (5th Year) leading the charge. Students were delighted with their progress after one session, with some managing to crochet some lovely friendship bracelets in

their first class. We look forward to a term of creativity and inspiration in this new crafting class. (See attached photos)





Plans for Next Term

1. Paired Reading: Finish the Paired Reading Project and source some qualitative feedback from TY students to tweak the project for next year.
2. Library Council: Have two meetings with the newly established Library Council.
3. Library Policy: Write and submit to the Board of Management our new library policy which will come from the library council meetings and have an active consultative student voice.
4. Cataloguing: Finish all the fiction and most of the non-fiction by the end of June. Labelling of the fiction books should also be finished by the end of June.
5. Apply to Children's Books Ireland for funding for our 'Communities of Learning Initiative'.
6. Apply to Poetry Ireland for an author visit for our Creative Writing Club.