

Beast from the East?

Meet Power of the Word

Mr Perks

Did they honestly believe, for even a nanosecond, that an eye-blistering, finger-

immobilising, nose-running, lip- gelling **glacial wind from Siberia** would make us forget about World Book Day?

Have they ever visited Calder House?

Thursday's maths lesson . . .

Edward: 'I couldn't sleep last night, Mr Perks'

Mr Perks: 'Why's that, Ed?'

Edward: 'I was too excited!!'

Mr Perks: 'What are you so excited about?'

Stage Direction: *Quizzical stare (held for an unnervingly long period of time) at Mr Perks, as if he is demonstrating the first signs of insanity.*

Edward: 'World Book Day, Mr Perks!!!!'

I know, I know: I have used an unusually large number of exclamation marks to punctuate the above (perhaps evidence that I am insane), but this is truly how World Book Day grabs us at Calder House – not just the children, but staff, too (especially Ms Cooney: you do not want to cross her in our annual 'Best Dressed Door' competition – where we turn our doors into our favourite book covers). **Someone ought to invent a**

punctuation mark that yells louder than an exclamation mark.

Something loud enough to be heard above a Siberian wind, anyway.

There is much to love about World Book Day, not least having a legitimate giggle at other members of staff. But, my favourite part is when I take the time to stroll around the school, taking photographs and watching the ear-to-ear delight stretched across every face.

I speak a lot about what it means to be a 'Thriving Dyslexic.' **If you want to know what a 'thriving dyslexic' looks like, pop along to one of our World Book days and stick your head around one of the doors.**

Terry Pratchett once said: '*Stories of the imagination tend to upset those without one.*' What you see on this day above all others is the dyslexic learner at their most creative . . . at their best. *What you see are the strengths that come with dyslexia - the parts of the profile that are garlands to be celebrated, not shackles to be endured.* You will see children working well together. You will see some work of staggering imaginative power and aptitude. It is as Pratchett says: the Imagination is like an exercise bicycle. It may not actually take you anywhere, but it tones up the muscles that can.

But, ***perhaps more importantly, it is what you hear.*** You hear laughter . . . a lot of laughter.

You hear what good motivation and self-esteem *sound* like.

Motivation is key to literacy, but especially to reading. Research has established how a child's self-concept as a reader (that is to say: their motivation) will either obstruct or enable academic progress with reading.

So, that has always been where Calder House starts.

I guess what I like most about World Book Day is the way it reminds us all of the importance of story. We have always tried to give children the strategies and knowledge that empower them to, essentially, go off into life and 'make their own stories.' **This, really, is what 'Education' should be about: making our own stories, as opposed to allowing ourselves simply to become part of somebody else's.** The pen may not actually be mightier than the sword, but few of us can doubt the power of Story. Certainly, you would not doubt it if you could see our children on this day, running around the playground *in character* (Daniel Day-Lewis would be proud).

May I commend to you the website's 'Gallery,' where you will find many photographs to mark this terrific day.

Mr Perks