



St Wilfrid's CE Primary School

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'Learning and Growing Together; Living Life in all its Fullness'

Wednesday 1st October

Dear Parents/Carers,

Off-By-Heart Poetry Competition

I am so excited to introduce our Off by Heart poetry recital competition and we cannot wait to be stunned by the children and their ability to stand confidently in front of an audience and bring poetry to life.

All children in school are asked to learn a poem off by heart from the selection teachers will share with the children before the end of term. Between **10th and 14th November** children will recite their chosen poem in their classroom with their classmates – all the children will be celebrated.

The following week, two children from each year group in EYFS and KS1, and four children from each year group in KS2, will go forward to the finale in front of the whole school, an audience of parents and a panel of judges in the **week commencing 17th November**.

Performances will be judged on the delivery of the poem e.g. the clarity, feeling and expression of the words but children may use props, actions, drama etc to enhance their performance if they wish. All the performances will be celebrated and there will be prizes on offer for the winning recitals. This is an opportunity for the children to have some fun whilst challenging themselves at the same time!

Our KS2 finalists will also be entered in to the National Poetry By Heart competition which takes place in the Spring term. Info about this will be sent out later.

Memorising a poem is a fantastic achievement; learning how to perform it well is a separate challenge that needs spending a little more time on. Small things make a big difference eg

- announcing the poem, knowing the title and poet.
- Slowing down so the audience can take it in.
- Keeping your voice up at the end of the lines.
- Thinking about pauses offered by punctuation and white space.
- Keeping it organic: let the words of the poem breathe rather than smothering them with gestures.
- Short poems are easier to commit to memory but often harder to perform well as you have to create your impact on the audience so quickly.

While we are aware that memorising a poem can and should be a challenging experience, we believe it must also be a positive and rewarding one. We know that you will be in the best position to judge how this balance of challenge and enjoyment can be achieved sensitively as children practise their poems at home and we appreciate your help and support with this. Children should be encouraged to take part at a level that suits them best. We want them to enjoy reading their poems!

There is some useful [information here](#) on how to learn a poem.

Thank you for supporting us with this.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Miss Cousin", is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Miss Cousin

To learn a poem by heart is to take it into your very soul, where it can ignite the flame of creativity and illuminate the corridors of your mind." - Edgar Allan Poe