



23 September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **BBC's 500 Words story writing competition**

As part of our continuing drive to develop writing at Greenway, we are keen to provide children with opportunities to write for clear understandable and relevant purposes. Research is clear: when children have a clearly defined reason to write, they produce higher quality results. With this in mind, we are encouraging every child at Greenway from Year 1-6 to take part in the BBC's acclaimed *500 Words* story writing competition!

During assemblies, I have introduced the children to the competition and how it will work at Greenway. I have explained that they will soon take part in a specially planned story planning workshop with their teachers. The purpose of this will be to enthuse, stimulate and ultimately nail down story ideas and then map out their story plan ready for their Big Write! Following the planning session, teachers will then set the story writing itself as a weekly homelearning task.

Writing the story as a homelearning (rather than in school) will support the need for the story to be wholly independent and original. Judges are looking for stories that children themselves would like to read – but also show something of their individual personality and wit.

When the special homework is set, children will be reminded of the following:

- The stories will be judged in two age categories: 5-7 and 8-11.
- Stories can be any length **up to 500** words (not including the title).
- The story writing needs to be independent – no help from parents required (outside lots of healthy encouragement and writing snacks)!
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation are not assessed – it's about creativity!
- Story entries need to be typed (not hand written)\*
- If your child does not wish their story to be submitted to the competition, this is of course fine - and there would be no requirement to type it up.
- The deadline for submission will be when your child's teacher sets the homework deadline.
- All entries will be collated at school and will be submitted to the competition over half term (to meet the competition deadline in early November).

\*We appreciate that our younger children will need support to have their stories typed. Please do let your class teacher know if you will struggle to facilitate this.

All submitted entries are read, judged and then shortlisted by the 500 Words judges and the finalists will be invited to go to a glamorous grand final in February next year. This year the grand final took place at Buckingham Palace! Each winner takes home a bundle of books and the Gold winners also win 500 books for their school library! Winners will also receive specially created illustrations of their story by a top children's book illustrator.

You might want to watch this montage from last year's grand final <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/500-words/articles/zfwdtcw#zdwtdcw>

I know that children are already very excited and story ideas have been rolling around the playground! I do look forward to seeing that enthusiasm for writing spin as the children embark on this story-writing adventure and I appreciate your support with the above.

Mrs Bennett

English Subject Leader



Crossways, Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 3NH • T: 01442 866249  
admin@greenway.herts.sch.uk • www.greenway.herts.sch.uk  
Head Teacher: Katharine Ellwood

