

Shared reading

SECTION

3

Extract 1

- Read the poem. Ask the children why they think it should be sung. It is based on a hymn ('When a Knight Won His Spurs'). Elicit the form of the poem. It is in three verses, and, within each, words from the hymn alternate with interjections from the headmaster, admonishing pupils who are misbehaving in some way.
- Ask: *How does the author indicate which words are which?* (By using italic and speech marks.) Can the children describe both styles? (The narrative form of the hymn and the second-person address

with imperative verbs for the interjections.)

- Examine how the two parts knit together (through rhymes in the second/fourth, and sixth/eighth lines of each verse, and also by rhythm – the Headmaster's words fit with the music).
- Circle any unfamiliar words ('spurs', 'lance', 'charger'). Can the children suggest meanings? Underline the metaphorical phrases 'won his spurs' and 'Let faith be my shield' and challenge the children to replace them with simple modern phrases.

Extract 2

- Read the poem together. Encourage the children to explain what is happening and what has been found as a result. What do they think the balls represent? (The passing of time, different generations of children at the school.)
- Look at the way the poem is structured in seven verses and in a narrative form that describes chronologically what happened that day.
- Circle any unfamiliar words ('perished', 'relic'). Challenge the children to suggest the meaning, identify the part of speech and suggest a synonym. Can they identify and explain the abbreviation 'Comp'? (Short for Comprehensive school.)

- Ask the children if they can find a metaphor ('graveyard for balls') and a simile ('It was like Aero') and explain what each means.
- Look at the third verse. Discuss the effect of the repetition of 'balls'. It emphasises the large number of balls that have collected on the roof.
- Underline the phrase 'least un-bouncy'. Can the children suggest a more usual way of saying this? ('Most bouncy'). Why do they think the author has used this wording? (To stress that none of the balls has much bounce any more.) Why do the pupils take a ball for the nature table? (So they can examine all the moss growing on it.)

Extract 3

- Read the poem together. Elicit what the poem is about. (Scabs from injuries to children's knees and how they got there.) Examine how the poem is structured: in eight four-line stanzas, each focusing on one scab.
- Explore the word patterns in the verses: the repetition in the first line, an adjective describing the type of scab in the second line, then an explanation of why or how that word suits.
- Circle the more difficult adjectives, such as 'psychological' and 'pugilistical'. Encourage the

children to find clues from the word patterns that will help them work out the meanings. For example, Jean's scab is 'geographical' because it occurred on a journey; Henry's is 'historical' because it is so old... so can they work out what 'pugilistical' means from the clue that Paul was *fighting*?

- Discuss the humorous tone of the poem and see if the children can explain the jokes in verses 4 and 7. (Sally just uses her scab to try to get out of PE; Eric's skates were cheap and dodgy.)

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