



NEWS FROM THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

This article was published in the SSAT (Schools Network)

Teachers in boiler suits at a crime scene help Y6-Y7 transition students overcome their nerves



Katie Ray, English teacher, Prospect School, describes their use of a particular poem to create excitement about English and an experience of success

Year 6 to Year 7 transition lessons always seem more difficult to plan than those which are being delivered to your 'own' class. The biggest tightrope to walk is making the lesson enjoyable and engaging and, at the same time, ensuring that students feel they have learnt something in that hour. Our aim is, when they return to us in September, not only do they look forward to the subject but they feel that they have already achieved something in English here at Prospect. The students that make up our cohort tend to enjoy English but they can also find it difficult to access; we often have students with reading ages below chronological age as well as students with English as an additional language.

Colleagues and I were keen for students to be hooked as soon as they entered and we knew that our hook had to be good enough for each student to forget that they were nervous, being in a new environment with new people.

The lesson we delivered as a department this year focused on improving students' inference skills, with the Simon Armitage poem 'About His Person' as the stimulus. We set up each classroom with a crime scene – drew around each other with chalk to create the outline, laid out the objects referenced in the text and screened our rooms with 'police tape'. Each teacher, wearing a boiler suit, welcomed the class at the door, ushering them into what had been transformed into an active crime scene.

Part of the rationale: personally, I think the best way to put someone else at ease is to present yourself as vulnerable, which is where the boiler suits we wore came in. (I had purchased these after a TEEP Inset session where a character analysis activity had been suggested, using them.)

The students were engaged and wanted to know *how* and *why* the man had died. In pairs, the students worked their way around each item found on the man. Clue cards were available if students needed pointing in the right direction, as they inferred what they could about the man and *how* and *why* he'd died. In notebooks, students were encouraged to combine their inferences before refining their solution with each new item.

Only when we had reached a conclusion did we introduce the poem, make the skills we had been using explicit and link them to other lessons they had.

I am confident that students left those classrooms that day excited about English and feeling successful.

Ms K. Ray
2nd in English Dept

Pizza Party Celebrations for Year 9

On Friday, 19th October, 31 students have been nominated by their tutors to celebrate their amazing attendance records, commendable approach to school life and a brilliant start to Year 9.

Huge congratulations from Miss Smith and your tutors.

Information from Ms M. Morris (Deputy Headteacher)



Halloween Advice For Reading 2018

This is a message from the Reading Neighbourhood Policing Teams concerning Halloween.
Liz Herbert (Police, NHW & Community Messaging Co-ordinator, Reading LPA)

The Reading Neighbourhood Policing Teams will be carrying out high-visibility patrols over Halloween to deal with any incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Here's some simple advice to help you have a fun and safe Halloween:

- Young children should never go out trick or treating without being accompanied by an adult.
- Don't knock on the doors of strangers; only go to the houses of people you know.
- Never go into a stranger's house.
- Keep to well lit areas, wear bright clothing and carry a torch.
- Remember road safety advice.
- Take care not to frighten elderly or vulnerable people.
- If a house is displaying a "no trick or treat" sign please don't knock on the door.
- Children don't be offended if your local shop does not serve you with eggs or flour. We have been working with local stores to discourage their sale to young people.

If at any point you do feel nervous or unsafe:

- Don't open your door if you're unsure who is there. Use your spy-hole, look out of a window, and use your door chain if you decide to open your door.
- Have a contact number of a close relative or good neighbour by your telephone, just in case you need to phone them.
- If you are part of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, let your co-ordinator know that you will be on your own at Halloween. If you are a co-ordinator, please identify people in your scheme that may be vulnerable and offer them reassurance.

Thames Valley Police will **not** tolerate any anti-social behaviour at anytime of the year.

To report anti-social behaviour please call the 24 hour non-emergency number on 101. If it is a crime in progress, call 999 immediately.

We have copies of "No Trick or Treat" flyers if you would like a supply for your NHW members - please contact Liz Herbert on 01865 845309.

CAREERS NEWS (Siobhan Gallivan—Head of Department)

Interview with our Prospect School Counsellor/Psychotherapist Mr Brendan Keane-Grufferty



1. What did you want to be when you were at school? A vet was my original plan. I grew up on a farm and I had seen most things including regular veterinary visits. I am from a farming background and love rural life and so I've always been drawn to the outdoors. I didn't get a place at University and it is a points based system in Ireland. I needed 50 more points for a place. I wanted to be a teacher as a backup plan and I got a secondary school teaching place in Dublin in 1997. I started that but left after a couple of months as it wasn't for me. That was a hard decision and at the time it felt like a huge failing to me. I wasn't ready and I don't think I was suitably prepared for University life. It was a huge change that I didn't manage well, so I left. I remember meeting the Course Head at the time to say I couldn't do it and I'd have to leave.

- 2. What subjects did you enjoy and why?** Geography particularly as I loved looking at maps and looking for places. It was also linked to my love of countryside and landscape. I liked understanding why the landscape is the way it is. We had quite a few ancient settlements and burial sites and we had a Crannog and a Ringfort on our land at home. I was always fascinated by them. I didn't like English however, that was my best grade! I don't know why I was so good at it, perhaps I didn't appreciate it. One thing has remained unchanged and that was I loved the Poetry of Patrick Kavanagh and Seamus Heaney. I still do. I loved History and the facts of origins, development of people/humanity. And then Biology. I was ok at that. I got it. It was factual and I'm a factual person.
- 3. What subjects were a challenge?** Irish was a challenge as it was so badly taught. It's strange how these things happen because now it's seen as a cool language but then it was so out of touch that I couldn't relate to it. Maths was always my hardest scariest subject – I never had a natural flair for maths. Couldn't relate to maths. Students come to me with the same issues and concerns around maths and I understand that but also explain I now recognise that problem solving is an important part of maths.
- 4. What was your first proper fulltime job after college/university/school?** I've always worked whether farming from a young age through to weekend and summer holiday jobs. I've had a lot of jobs. I qualified as an Environmental Health Officer in 2002 and I moved to Donegal in the North West of Ireland. I did this job for 5 years. I then used this qualification to work in the UK and did 8 years here as an Environmental Health Officer. It started as food hygiene inspections and I went on to work in Housing and Assessing Housing Conditions. I did that for a few years until I exhausted that career.
- 5. How did you decide which was the right career for you?** I did some voluntary work with AWARE Ireland – they are an organisation that help people overcome depression. I found I had a natural skill for listening and attuning to people and their stories. I felt I had a natural tendency to help. Over the next 6/7 years I trained as a Psychotherapist/Counsellor. I was also working fulltime. I did a Post Graduate Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy that took three years part time. It was stressful to work full time and study. It involved finding placement and working up my hours and then of course, I also had to finance this myself.

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CAREERS NEWS
(Siobhan Gallivan—Head of Department)
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- 6. If you could give your younger self some careers advice what would it be?** I would say that hindsight is amazing and my one regret is that I didn't study psychology as that would have really benefited me. You need your foundation level in this area. Although, there was not an option to consider this at the time. I would also tell myself to see a qualified impartial careers adviser. Take your time, consider all the subjects and consider the subject that you love. Listen to yourself.
- 7. If you could do any job or career what would it be?** Still a vet but it's a 7 year degree in Ireland. I could do it now as I feel more able and mature to do it. It's a hard study and I'm not sure the 18 year old me would have managed it.
- 8. What do you enjoy about your job?** I love seeing students every day and if I could help every one of them, I would. Young people who come to me are trusting, respectful and real. I love that about the school and it's generally always been my experience of young people. Young people value the quiet space available to them but also value the respect afforded them which is easier for me because I don't teach and so don't place consequences etc.
- 9. If you could change one thing about your job/career what would that be?** For definite the salary - it is undervalued as a career and as mental health services persistently and consistently retract funding the role has now reduced to a volunteer role in many areas. It's improving but not enough. If there were 40 hours in the week, I would feel I can see everyone I need to see.
- 10. What are the main skills you need to do your job?** Definitely good communication skills including active listening and mirroring expected behaviours with young people. Also, the ability to listen calmly and not get hung up on fixing something. Some situations you can't fix but you can help someone to manage better. Sometimes I love the challenge but that comes from experience. I don't now feel the need to have all the facts to work out the issue. I let it develop naturally. That can be hard for young people, as they often want an immediate fix. There's a huge reliance on respect for the young person, trust and being authentic and real. The belief that change is possible.
- 11. Are there any specific qualifications/skills needed? If so what?** I see many future counsellors come through my doors. Those with excellent listening skills and are good at giving support and advice to their friends. A huge majority really care and want to help. I see calmness in some students and such a caring nature that it's natural to see this possibility in them. You can't learn empathy but you can develop it. The career is changing and I've been fortunate in that regard because once you could do a basic certificate in counselling and you were a counsellor. That's dangerous and so the career is competency based. I would recommend a psychotherapy degree. However, you can do an undergraduate degree and often it is a career for the later stages in your life as maturity is important. A lot of this is to do with self-awareness. Self-awareness is a constantly changing and developing thing.
- 12. Any advice for parents?** Specifically, I recognise a lot of pressure can come from home in my work with young people. Young people will often mention that they don't get time at home with family and that family may not always listen to them. Even if they do, they don't actively listen without coming in with their perspective or telling the young person what to do. So I'd encourage families to listen to their children and let them speak and share what they need to without interruption. Also, to trust them as they generally can make good decisions.

CAREERS NEWS
(Siobhan Gallivan—Head of Department)
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Find Your Future Day - Reading University - Wednesday, 10th October 2018

This was a Careers Event offered to our Year 9 students by Reading University. It included workshops which were delivered by university staff and students. The day included a tour of the campus which gave our students an insight into university life and what it had to offer.

Going to Reading University is an experience for me of how university will feel. We started off the day in a lecture where we wrote about the careers we could choose in the future, which made me more aware of the decisions we might take. The first 2 hours of the day we heard about the subjects which were taught during World War 1. This was fun to learn and really interesting. Lunch was the best, there was so much to choose from in the student cafeteria. Afterwards we had a tour of the university and then to finish off the day, we were able to ask our student guides questions about university life and life as a student in general.

Haadi A—Year 9

Find your Future day was an amazing experience for everyone. The day centred around what it would be like to be at a University in the future. In the morning, during our first lecture in a lecture theatre, we wrote about different careers and those which might interest us in the future. The day made me realise how important my future is and about going to university; the day made going to university feel more 'real'.

Keiton S—Year 9

PROSPECT SCHOOL CALENDAR		
Date	Trip	Details
Friday 19 th October 2018 After school	Fright Night Thorpe Park CHERTSEY	6 th Formers getting to know each other.
Monday to Friday 22 nd to 26 th October 2018	HALF - TERM	
Thursday	Year 8 Careers Assembly	Choosing GCSE Options.
Monday	Year 9 Careers Assembly	Dealing with challenges.
Tuesday 6 th November 2018	Safe Drive, Stay Alive Conference The Hexagon READING	6 th Formers Better awareness of how to drive safely.