

SHAK CHUNG SHAN MEMORIAL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



# SCS ENGLISH TIMES



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## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

English is a global language. Learning English unites people of different nationalities and allows us to communicate with each other. Beyond communication, learning English can also enrich our lives when we master good English skills by Studying Smart. One example is reading. Reading allows us to learn beyond the classroom and opens new worlds to us. We gain new knowledge and are exposed to different cultures. All this is beneficial when we further our studies and will remain with us as we strive for our future career goals.

Our school provides students with a Language-Rich Learning Environment through our formal and extended curriculum. Students are immersed in English when they participate in English activities such as the SCS Science Fair, Debating and more. I wish for our students to learn English in a warm and relaxing atmosphere so that a love of the language can develop. As your principal, it is my hope that all of you will try your best in your studies. Treasure the Language-Rich Learning Environment that SCS provides and reap the rewards of learning English.

Principal Yau Yue Man

## FROM THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

The English teachers at SCS are dedicated, passionate and creative about teaching English to our students. We teach wholeheartedly to support and nurture our students, to provide a rich interactive environment for English language learning and to instill in our students a heart and mind for learning.

The English curriculum is constantly developing and expanding to meet the diverse learning needs of our students and over the years we have created many unique school-based programmes such as phonics, e-learning, interview skills training, and literacy, to name just a few. Furthermore, we have additional support for our students to gain the foundational skills needed to learn English as well as Gifted and Talented programmes to challenge and raise the ceiling of our students' potential.

In this magazine, you will find that our English department has embraced our school's core values of **Study Smart, Courage to Create** and **Serve God and Others**. Through the core values, we equip our students with the skills they need such as critical thinking, creativity, and leadership. We hope our students will become strong, independent lifelong learners.

# LANGUAGE RICH LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

BUILDING ENGLISH EXPERIENCES FOR OUR STUDENTS



We believe that a Language Rich Learning Environment (LRLE) is essential in providing students authentic opportunities to use English inside and outside of the classroom. A Language Rich Learning Environment is a habit of learning for our students and has become part of the English school culture at SCS.

It began as a response to the Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan School LRLE policy to provide authentic situations for students to use English to communicate. Since then, we have built up our LRLE school policy so that our English learning environment is enriched. Our school campus is print-rich with many posters promoting the use of English such as idioms, parts of speech, vocabulary words for expanding speech and writing as well as our school published LRLE Handbook (see box below). We also have many immersive English activities with our Native English speaking Teachers (NETs) in the classrooms, at recess, and during post-exam activities. Every student also has an English Pass which is an English activity book that encourages students to participate in English activities.

The more opportunities we create and provide for our students, the more chances they have to use English to communicate with others.

## LRLE Handbook

Every student has an LRLE Handbook. It is a resource book of useful English expressions to enable students to communicate in English during classroom interactions, group discussions, presentations and more. It also acts as a resource bank with extensive vocabulary for elaboration (e.g. adjectives, creative words, etc.) and idioms that students can refer to when they do writing or speaking activities.



# STUDY SMART



## CHUNK, CHECK, CHEER WITH PHONICS

Phonics is the building block to learning how to read, write, and speak. Through phonics, students understand the system of relationships between letter and sounds in a language to decode unfamiliar words. Our school has a phonics programme that progresses from P.1 to P.6 and it is integrated into the daily teaching and learning.

Students learn to break new words down into **Chunks**. Then they **Check** their understanding by thinking and relating it to similar words. We end with a **Cheer!** We also have a school-based phonics app, Magic Chunking Bee to support phonics learning at home. It is tailor-made for our students, teaching them how to form the sounds and helping them chunk.



## LEARNING IDIOMS BY HEART

An idiom is an expression with a figurative meaning. We hear and use idioms frequently in every-day language. Idioms can be powerful tools to elaborate our writing and to draw attention to our meaning. Idioms also expand our students' ability to communicate, enhance their thinking skills and are an enjoyable way to use language.

Our school promotes idioms to our students in our LRLE handbook, the print-rich environment, the Spellathon and other activities. Our students start learning idioms in P.1 and more expressions are added every year so that by P.6 using idioms is a piece of cake. Using idioms has made our students' writing and speech richer in context and creativity.



## ENGLISH ROOM LESSONS

Our English room is a bright, colourful and interactive room. It is aligned with our school's policy of LRLE, providing a print-rich environment so that students develop the habit of self-learning and are engaged in the lessons.

Students from P.1 to P.3 have lessons in the English room in our adapted PLP-R/W programme. The four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are integrated into the programme and enhanced through different learning processes. Students work closely with the NET and English teachers in guided reading and writing. Differentiated instruction is carried out to cater for all learning abilities. Students also have the chance to do collaborative learning as well as reflect on their progress.

Upper primary students also have a chance to go to the lesson room for lessons on interview skills training, English activities, and as part of our school-based literacy programme.





## SCIENCE IN ENGLISH

What is science? How do we think and use language like a scientist? Learning science at an early age helps the brain grow in finding new knowledge to solve problems and explores a child's natural curiosity.

Our students start learning science in English starting in P.1. They learn the scientific vocabulary through hands-on inquiry as they try to make sense of the world around them. Students gain the skills of observing, predicting, classifying, and communicating and this is integrated with the four main skills of English language learning.

For upper primary students, we offer a gifted and talented programme, Super Detectives. Our students are challenged in using the language of the discipline as they learn how to ask scientific questions, make hypotheses, conduct experiments, record their observations, and analyse their results. The programme ends with our annual SCS Science Fair. Students showcase their own experiments to their classmates and teachers and hope to win the Best Experiment prize.



## EARLY INTERVENTION AND SUPER READERS

Early reading skills are important for academic and social success. The early primary years are a critical development period. Through our early intervention programmes and activities, we help our struggling readers gain the foundational skills needed to be successful in learning English.

English Buddies is our extra-curricular class where students play phonics and reading games in a small group setting. Super Readers is conducted at recess and provides students with one-on-one help with our SCS Ambassadors and English Smarties. Our parent volunteers also come during Morning DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) to provide individual attention for our students using our school-based early intervention programme.

## KS2 LITERACY PROGRAMME

Being exposed to well-written books can expand a child's creativity and horizons. In KS2 (P.4 to P.6), we guide our students through chapter books and longer texts. Students are introduced to a wide variety of literature at a level of reading that will bridge their studies as they continue onto secondary school.

We do various differentiated activities including drama linked to the stories, process writing, book reports, dictionary skills, class discussions, and story summaries. Through reading, students go on a journey and learn about different cultures. . We even have a Pen Pal activity linked to our literacy programme. Students write to new friends from around the world to share their love of reading.



## e-LEARNING FOR BETTER ENGLISH

We live in a technology driven world and to equip our students for success we have developed a school-based e-learning curriculum called Better English. The Better English curriculum uses a Blended Teaching approach (traditional teaching + e-teaching). Having technology at their fingertips, students can search for information instantly, learn to communicate effectively, expand their creativity, scaffold their self-learning skills and collaborate with their peers and teacher. The e-resources are interactive and use a learning-by-doing approach. We also make use of other e-platforms so that our students have access to a wide variety of reading and learning material.



# LIBRARY READING LESSONS

LEARNING TO READ, READING TO LEARN



## our Beliefs

- Children's reading habits need to be nurtured, scaffolded and supported.
- Every child has different learning abilities.
- Through reading, children can become lifelong learners.

Our library reading lessons are a small group reading class with the English teacher, the librarian and the NET. Students are divided into groups according to ability with a yearly assessment that tracks their progress from P.1 to P.3.

Emergent readers are given support in foundational skills such as decoding, phonics and high frequency words recognition to build up their confidence in reading. Early fluent readers are taught thinking skills such as predictions and inferences along with the foundational reading skills to build up their comprehension of different texts. Our fluent readers are challenged to do Reciprocal Teaching as they are able to read texts with less familiar topics, fewer pictures, challenging vocabulary and complex sentences. Through Reciprocal Teaching, they gain independence of learning and build up their critical thinking skills (see box below to learn more).

We have devoted many resources in the reading materials, instructional aids, and even the teachers themselves to our library reading programme as we truly believe that if students can learn to read, they can read to learn!



## ABOUT RECIPROCAL TEACHING

Reciprocal Teaching is an instructional strategy in which students become the teachers in small groups to promote enhanced comprehension. Students take on different roles to lead group discussions using the four strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing. Students think about their own thought processes during reading (metacognition) and take an interactive role in their learning.



The Questioner poses questions about unclear parts or puzzling information.



The Clarifier discusses or makes clear unknown words or ideas in the text.



The Predictor uses clues to predict what the group will learn and/or what will happen next in the text.



The Summarizer tells the group what was read in their own words and points out main ideas or the theme of the text.



# ARE YOU AN OUTSTANDING SPELLER?

## SCS STUDENTS HIT THE BOOKS FOR THE SPELLATHON

Our annual Spellathon has been running for over 10 years now! It is a fund-raising activity in which students earn donations from friends or family by participating in a spelling challenge. The funding from the Spellathon goes towards resources and development of our English curriculum. The aims of the Spellathon are to encourage students to expand their vocabulary, strengthen their spelling and pronunciation, and consolidate their knowledge as well as to raise their interest in learning English.

Students Study Smart by using phonics. They need to use the chunking and spelling skills they learned in phonics lessons when revising the words. Students have Courage to Create when they challenge themselves to use their expanded vocabulary and idioms to express themselves. Finally, students Serve God and the school by finding sponsors, raising funds and encouraging their classmates to succeed. The Spellathon is a fantastic way for parents to be involved in their child's learning as well as supporting SCS.

There are many prizes for the Best Spellers in each class, Outstanding Spellers in each level and the Outstanding fundraising students. We end the Spellathon with an awards ceremony and a tea party with our principal as the special guest to celebrate our students' hard work! If students hit the books and learn all the words by heart, spelling is a piece of cake!



# COURAGE TO CREATE

## SPEECH FESTIVAL SUCCESS

Our students join the Speech Festival every year with great results. Our students have joined the solo speaking, prose reading, lower primary choral speaking and upper primary harmonic speaking competitions. Practice makes perfect and our students train hard to prepare for the competition. They learn how to speak with feeling using facial expressions in addition to their voices. They need courage to recite the poems by heart in front of an audience. Our students place well in the individual competitions every year, achieving Merit.

Both our lower primary choral speaking team and our upper primary harmonic speaking team placed 3rd in the competition! Students need to speak in harmony with their classmates and build up teamwork. Also, our parent helpers volunteer their time to design and create beautiful costumes for our teams. We are proud of our students' achievements and we encourage more and more students to participate every year.

Should we have PE lessons every day? Are zoos good for animals? Should we have school uniforms? These questions and more are discussed in a formal setting in the English debating team. Debating requires students to excel at communicating their ideas, form strong arguments, listen critically to their opponents, and make effective rebuttals.

Students research the topics by themselves to find evidence from reliable sources to support their arguments. They write their own speeches which improves their writing and high-order thinking. Then they practice speaking fluently and persuasively to present their arguments. Our students have entered the HKPTU Primary English Debating Competition and our senior team achieved 1st Runner-up while our junior team achieved 2nd Runner-up!

Students in the spotlight! The SCS Drama Club aims to teach students drama, stage and acting skills through English. Students are encouraged to express themselves and use their bodies to tell a story. These skills are taught to them through drama games and activities. We have short dramas throughout the year, which builds reading aloud and intonation skills for students and improves their fluency of speaking. We also organize outings for students to watch English plays so that they are exposed to the dramatic arts. Some students were even invited to RTHK to put on a radio drama for Sunday Smile!



## ENGLISH DEBATING TEAM

## LIGHTS, ACTION, DRAMA!



# LRLE ACTIVITIES

We have many fun LRLE events for our students throughout the school year such as English day games, recess activities and post-exam activities. At recess, the NET conducts English activities on the playground such as sports, ball games, or active games to get our students moving and using English at the same time.

Our students also have fun in our post-exam whole level LRLE activities. This year we held thrilling English Quiz competitions in the hall. Students had to work in teams to use the LRLE Handbook to answer questions in the fastest time.

That's not all. Lower primary students had an exciting Treasure Hunt where they looked for clues hidden around the playground. Some clues required them to seek information from the NETs and their English teachers so that they could practice their speaking skills. Upper primary students had a QR Code Treasure Hunt where they searched for hidden QR Codes and used their iPads to find interesting information on the internet.

Our biggest event is the annual World Book Day. Our English Smarties and SCS Ambassadors prepared a lot of activities and games for the students to learn the importance of literacy. There were games that reviewed reading strategies, phonics skills, high frequency words, and book characteristics as well as activities to expand students' vocabulary and dictionary skills. Students read fairy tales and other amazing books in our reading corner. Reading is essential to being an independent learner and our SCS Ambassadors and English Smarties were on hand to share the love of reading with everyone.

When students participate in the LRLE activities or talk to teachers in English, they can get stickers for their English Pass. The English Pass has other activities such as word search, idiom clues, crosswords, and word puzzles. The more activities students complete, the more stickers they collect in their English Pass. At the end of the school year, students redeem the stickers for amazing prizes. Our students love all the LRLE activities and it creates a fun environment for students to speak in English.



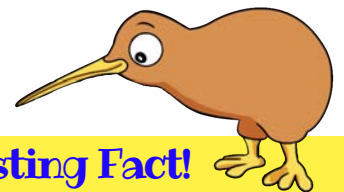
# New Zealand Study Tour



What better way to immerse yourself in English language learning than on a study tour?

Our school recently organized a joint study tour to New Zealand with four other Catholic schools. Six of our primary students signed up, Jeffrey, Quentin, Angel, Mimi, Venus and Summer. They had a great time as they embraced the life of a Kiwi (\*), attended classes at a local school, interacted with their host families, and marvelled at the stunning views.

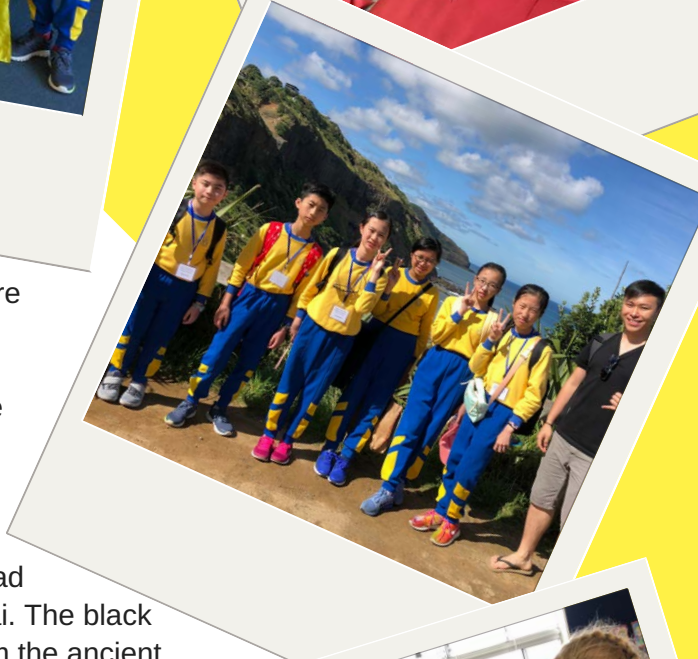
Our students had many chances to speak in English in an authentic environment by attending lessons at Helensville Primary School. Each student was assigned a buddy and they played together, had lunch together and learned together every day.



## \* Interesting Fact!

Did you know a kiwi is a small flightless bird that only lives in New Zealand? It is also used to refer to the people and culture of New Zealand too.





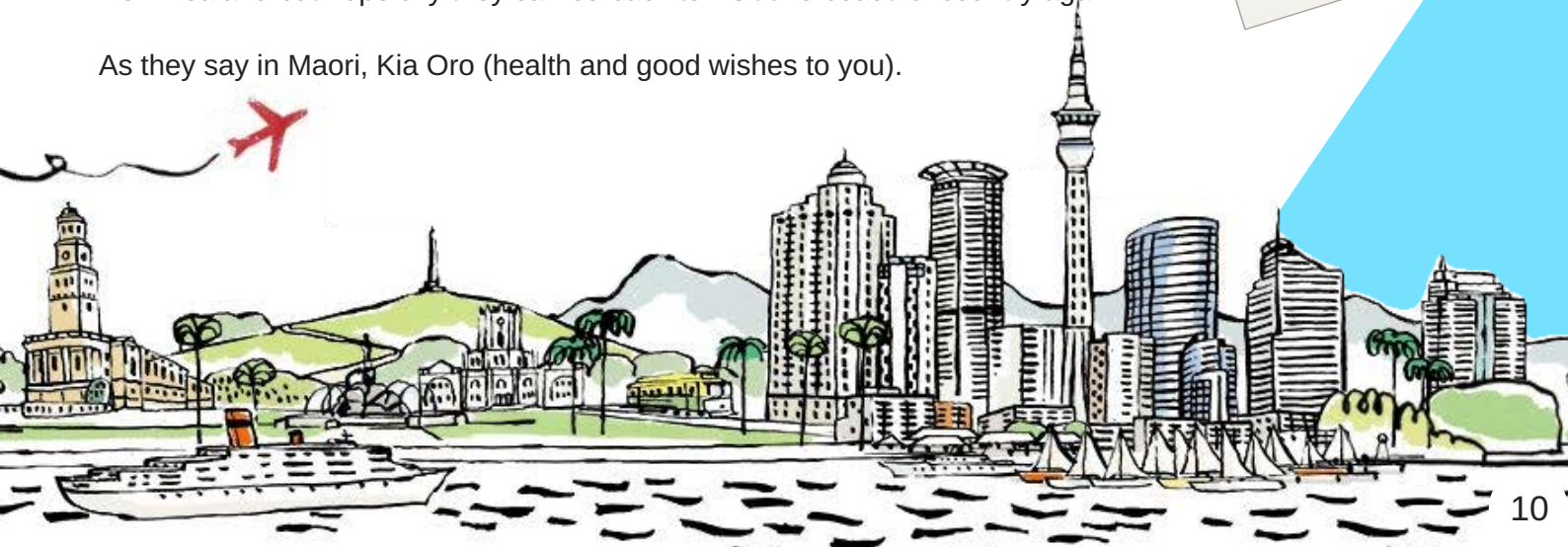
The teachers and students at Helensville Primary School were very welcoming and eager to share their culture and school life. One interesting cultural difference was that students in New Zealand sometimes go barefoot all day, even out on the playground. Our students also shared with their buddies about the Hong Kong culture and even taught the New Zealand students how to do some handicraft.

New Zealand is known for its natural beauty. The students had the chance to visit a world famous black sand beach, Muriwai. The black sand of Muriwai beach is caused by iron content derived from the ancient volcanoes in the area. From the beach, there's a spectacular view of the Tasman sea and the cliffs are also where many gannets (a seabird) nest.

They also visited the Auckland Zoo to see the kiwi bird; Sheep World to see how farmers in New Zealand farm their sheep, and then harvest and use their wool; and finally to the Auckland War Memorial Museum to learn about the Maori culture and history of New Zealand. The Maori are the indigenous Polynesian people of New Zealand and arrived around AD950 in canoes. They have their own unique culture and language.

It was an exciting trip but most of all, the people of New Zealand were very friendly, helpful and generous with their smiles. Our students and teacher did not want to leave New Zealand but hopefully they can be back to visit this beautiful country again.

As they say in Maori, Kia Oro (health and good wishes to you).



# SERVE GOD AND OTHERS

## LEARNING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Our school recruits English Smarties and SCS Ambassadors from P.2 to P.6. Our students demonstrate responsibility, teamwork and excellent leadership skills as they Serve God and the school. They are smart, responsible and caring as they volunteer their time to help other students learn English and guide them in doing the English activities. They have great teamwork with our Aunties and Uncles English to hold recess AUE activities in the English room every Tuesday and they are creative in organizing and holding English day or LRLE activities.

Furthermore, there are many chances for our SCS Ambassadors to practice their public speaking skills during morning assemblies, and special events, as well as give talks or school tours to visitors. Students work hard to prepare the scripts and speak with confidence. Recently, our students presented a talk on the LRLE curriculum at SCS to visiting teachers and principals from other schools.



## AUNTIES AND UNCLES ENGLISH

Our parent volunteers are our greatest asset. They Study Smart by helping our students to improve their English through early intervention during Morning DEAR every week and special speaking training for the exams. They love learning phonics and high frequency words along with our students.

They have Courage to Create exciting and engaging English games for our students to play every Tuesday during AUE activities in the English room. Students love playing the games created by our Aunties and they can win special prizes too. During the Speech Festival, our parent volunteers create many beautiful costumes and props for our choral speaking competitions.

They Serve God and our school by volunteering their invaluable time and helping wholeheartedly. Thank you Aunties and Uncles for your continual support and love!

