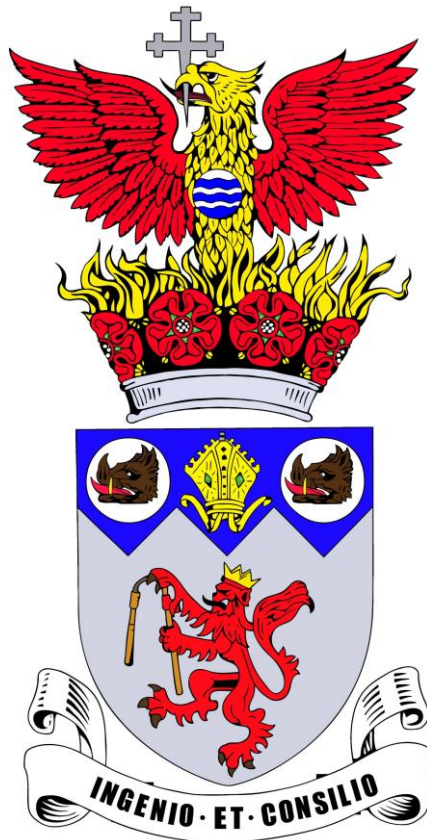


# Irlam and Cadishead Academy



## Year 6 Transition English Workbook

Hello everyone. We hope you are looking forward to joining us at Irlam and Cadishead Academy. I am sure you are excited about starting Year 7 in September. This small workbook is to help you start to think about what you might (or might not) expect to see when you come to us later this year.

One thing you might be worried about are the teachers you might meet. In books and stories there are some great descriptions of teachers:

Here is a famous example from Roald Dahl's 'Matilda':

**"Miss Trunchbull, the Headmistress, was something else altogether. She was a gigantic holy terror, a fierce tyrannical monster, who frightened the life out of pupils and teachers alike. There was an aura of menace about her even at a distance, and when she came up close you could almost feel the dangerous heat radiating from her as from a red hot rod of metal.**

**When she marched – Miss Trunchbull never walked, she always marched like a storm trooper, with long strides and arms swinging when she marched along a corridor you could actually hear her snorting as she went, and if a group of children happened to be in her path, she ploughed right on through them like a tank, with small people bouncing off her to left and right.**

**She was above all a most formidable female. She had once been a famous athlete, and even now the muscles were still clearly in evidence. You could see them in the bull neck, in the**

**big shoulders, in the thick arms, in the sinewy wrists and in the powerful legs. Looking at her, you got the feeling that this was someone who could bend iron bars and tear telephone directories in half. Her face, I'm afraid, was neither a thing of beauty nor a joy for ever.**

**She had an obstinate chin, a cruel mouth and small arrogant eyes. And as for her clothes...they were, to say the least, extremely odd. She always had on a brown cotton smock which was pinched in around the waist with a wide leather belt. This belt was fastened in front with an enormous silver buckle. The massive thighs which emerged from out of the smock were encased in a pair of extraordinary breeches, bottle green in colour and made of coarse twill. These breeches reached to just below the knees and from there on down she sported green stockings with turn up tops, which displayed her calf muscles to perfection.**

**On her feet she wore flat heeled brown brogues with leather flaps. She looked, in short, more like a rather eccentric and bloodthirsty follower of the staghounds than the headmistress of a nice school for children."**

Do not worry – there are plenty of nice teachers at Irlam and Cadishead Academy!

## Activity 1

Design and describe both a good and a bad teacher.

Each teacher must have: -

- A simile to describe the way they walk or stand;
- A simile to describe the way they look;
- A simile to describe the way students act when near the teacher;
- An appropriate name that reflects his or her personality.

One thing we really encourage our students to do is to read and to read widely. It is very important to continue to do this at secondary school: it helps you to understand difficult topics in all your subjects – not just English. Here is Matilda again. This time she visits the library:

**By the time she was three, Matilda had taught herself to read by studying newspapers and magazines that lay around the house. At the age of four, she could read fast and well and she naturally began hankering after books. The only book in the whole of this enlightened household was something called Easy Cooking belonging to her mother, and when she had read this from cover to cover and had learnt all the recipes by heart, she decided she wanted something more interesting.**

**‘Daddy,’ she said, ‘do you think you could buy me a book?’**

**‘A book?’ he said. ‘What d’you want a flaming book for?’**

**‘To read, Daddy.’**

**‘What’s wrong with the telly, for heaven’s sake? We’ve got a lovely telly with a twelve-inch screen and now you come asking for a book! You’re getting spoiled, my girl!’**

**Nearly every weekday afternoon Matilda was left alone in the house. Her brother (five years older than her) went to school. Her father went to work and her mother went out playing bingo in a town eight miles away. Mrs Wormwood was hooked on bingo and played it five afternoons a week. On the afternoon of the day when her father had refused to buy her a book, Matilda set out all by herself to walk to the public**

library in the village. When she arrived, she introduced herself to the librarian, Mrs Phelps. She asked if she might sit awhile and read a book. Mrs Phelps, slightly taken aback at the arrival of such a tiny girl unaccompanied by a parent, nevertheless told her she was very welcome.

‘Where are the children’s books please?’ Matilda asked.

‘They’re over there on those lower shelves,’ Mrs Phelps told her. ‘Would you like me to help you find a nice one with lots of pictures in it?’

‘No, thank you,’ Matilda said. ‘I’m sure I can manage.’

From then on, every afternoon, as soon as her mother had left for bingo, Matilda would toddle down to the library. The walk took only ten minutes and this allowed her two glorious hours sitting quietly by herself in a cosy corner devouring one book after another. When she had read every single children’s book in the place, she started wandering round in search of something else.

Mrs Phelps, who had been watching her with fascination for the past few weeks, now got up from her desk and went over to her.

‘Can I help you, Matilda?’ she asked.

‘I’m wondering what to read next,’ Matilda said. ‘I’ve finished all the children’s books.’

‘You mean you’ve looked at the pictures?’

‘Yes, but I’ve read the books as well.’

**Mrs Phelps looked down at Matilda from her great height and Matilda looked right back up at her.**

**‘I thought some were very poor,’ Matilda said, ‘But others were lovely. I liked The Secret Garden best of all. It was full of mystery. The mystery of the room behind the closed door and the mystery of the garden behind the big wall.’**

**Mrs Phelps was stunned. ‘Exactly how old are you, Matilda?’ she asked.**

**‘Four years and three months,’ Matilda said.**

**Mrs Phelps was more stunned than ever, but she had the sense not to show it. ‘What sort of a book would you like to read next?’ she asked.**

**Matilda said, ‘I would like a really good one that grown-ups read. A famous one. I don’t know any names.’**

**Mrs Phelps looked along the shelves, taking her time. She didn’t quite know what to bring out. How, she asked herself, does one choose a famous grown-up book for a four-year-old girl? Her first thought was to pick a young teenager’s romance of the kind that is written for fifteen-year-old schoolgirls, but for some reason she found herself instinctively walking past that particular shelf.**

**‘Try this,’ she said at last. ‘It’s very famous and very good. If it’s too long for you, just let me know and I’ll find something shorter and a bit easier.’**

**‘Great Expectations,’ Matilda read, ‘by Charles Dickens. I’d love to try it.’**

**I must be mad, Mrs Phelps told herself, but to Matilda she said, 'Of course you may try it.'**

**Over the next few afternoons, Mrs Phelps could hardly take her eyes from the small girl sitting for hour after hour in the big armchair at the far end of the room with the book on her lap. It was necessary to rest it on the lap because it was too heavy for her to hold up, which meant she had to sit leaning forward in order to read. And a strange sight it was, this tiny dark-haired person sitting there with her feet nowhere near touching the floor, totally absorbed in the wonderful adventures of Pip and old Miss Havisham and her cobwebbed house and by the spell of magic that Dickens the great storyteller had woven with his words. The only movement from the reader was the lifting of the hand every now and then to turn over a page, and Mrs Phelps always felt sad when the time came for her to cross the floor and say, 'It's ten to five, Matilda.'**

## **Activity 2**

**What is your favourite book? Write a book review, explaining why you like the book. Try to include the following:**

- What was the book about?**
- What was the best bit?**
- Who was your favourite character and why?**
- Why would you recommend this book to other children?**



We would imagine that you are full of mixed emotions about your first day at Irlam and Cadishead Academy. That is why we try to help you get to know the school before you come here.

This next extract is from a book called 'As I Walked Out One Summer Morning'. It is about a little boy called Laurie Lee (Loll) and his first day at school.

**The village school, when I came to it, was at its peak. Wild boys and girls from miles around - from the outlying farms and half-hidden hovels way up at the end of the valley - swept down each day to add to our numbers, bringing with them strange oaths and odours, quaint garments and curious pies. They were my first amazed vision of any world outside the womanly warmth of my family; I didn't expect to survive it for long, and I was then only four.**

**The morning came, without any warning, when my sisters surrounded me, warpped me in the scarves, tied up my bootlace, thrust a cap on my head, and stuffed a baked potato in my pocket.**

**"What's this?" I said.**

**"You're starting school today."**

**"I ain't. I'm stopping 'ome."**

**"Now, come on, Loll. You're a big boy now."**

**"I ain't."**

**"You are. "**

**"Boo-hoo."**

**They picked me up bodily, kicking and bawling, and carried me up the road.**

**"Boys who don't go to school get put into the boxes, and turn into rabbits, and get chopped up on Sundays."**

**I felt this was overdoing it rather, but I said no more after that. I arrived the school just three feet tall and fatly wrapped in my scarves. The playground roared liked a rodeo, and the potato burned through my thigh. Old boots, ragged stockings, torn trousers and skirts, went skating and skidding around me. The rabble closed in; I was encircled; grit flew in my face like shrapnel. Tall girls with frizzled hair, and huge boys with sharp elbows, began to prod me with hideous interest. They plucked at my scarves, spun me round like a top, screwed my nose, and stole my potato.**

**I was rescued at last by a gracious lady --- the sixteen-year-old junior teacher --- who boxed a few ears and dried my face and sent me off to The Infants. I spent that first day picking holes in paper, then went home in a smouldering temper.**

**"What's the matter, Loll? Didn't he like it at school, then?"**

**"They never gave me the present!"**

**"Present? What present?"**

**"They said they 'd give me a present."**

**"Well, now, I'm sure they didn't"**

**"They did! They said: ` You're Laurie Lee, ain't you? Well, just you sit there for the present.` I sat there all day but I never got it. I ain't going back there again!"**

### **Activity 3**

**Write a poem about your primary school. It could be about your first day but any day that was special to you is fine.**

## Challenge Activity

At Irlam and Cadishead Academy, we like our students to push themselves, particularly when faced with challenges. This extract is taken from 'Nicholas Nickleby' by Charles Dickens (A book read by Matilda!). It describes a Victorian school called Dotheboys Hall and its teacher Mr Squeers – a horrible and brutal man:

### Extract 1

### Activity 4

### Fill in the blanks!

Now, the fact was, that both Mr and Mrs Squeers viewed the boys in the light of their proper and natural \_\_\_\_\_; or, in other words, they held and \_\_\_\_\_ that their business and profession was to get as much from every boy as could by possibility be screwed out of him. On this point they were both \_\_\_\_\_, and behaved in unison accordingly. The only \_\_\_\_\_ between them was, that Mrs Squeers waged war against the enemy openly and fearlessly, and that Squeers \_\_\_\_\_ his rascality, even at home, with a spice of his habitual deceit; as if he really had a \_\_\_\_\_ of someday or other being able to take himself in, and persuade his own \_\_\_\_\_ that he was a very good fellow.

agreed

considered

covered

difference

enemies

friends

mind

notion

## **Extract 2**

**'Now,' said Squeers, giving the desk a great rap with his cane, which made half the little boys nearly jump out of their boots, 'is that physicking over?'**

**'Just over,' said Mrs Squeers, choking the last boy in her hurry, and tapping the crown of his head with the wooden spoon to restore him. 'Here, you Smike; take away now. Look sharp!'**

**Smike shuffled out with the basin, and Mrs Squeers having called up a little boy with a curly head, and wiped her hands upon it, hurried out after him into a species of wash-house, where there was a small fire and a large kettle, together with a number of little wooden bowls which were arranged upon a board.**

**Into these bowls, Mrs Squeers, assisted by the hungry servant, poured a brown composition, which looked like diluted pincushions without the covers, and was called porridge. A minute wedge of brown bread was inserted in each bowl, and when they had eaten their porridge by means of the bread, the boys ate the bread itself, and had finished their breakfast; whereupon Mr Squeers said, in a solemn voice, 'For what we have received, may the Lord make us truly thankful!'--and went away to his own.**

**Nicholas distended his stomach with a bowl of porridge, for much the same reason which induces some savages to swallow earth--lest they should be inconveniently hungry when there is nothing to eat. Having further disposed of a slice**

of bread and butter, allotted to him in virtue of his office, he sat himself down, to wait for school-time.

He could not but observe how silent and sad the boys all seemed to be. There was none of the noise and clamour of a schoolroom; none of its boisterous play, or hearty mirth. The children sat crouching and shivering together, and seemed to lack the spirit to move about. The only pupil who evinced the slightest tendency towards locomotion or playfulness was Master Squeers, and as his chief amusement was to tread upon the other boys' toes in his new boots, his flow of spirits was rather disagreeable than otherwise.

After some half-hour's delay, Mr Squeers reappeared, and the boys took their places and their books, of which latter commodity the average might be about one to eight learners. A few minutes having elapsed, during which Mr Squeers looked very profound, as if he had a perfect apprehension of what was inside all the books, and could say every word of their contents by heart if he only chose to take the trouble, that gentleman called up the first class.

Obedient to this summons there ranged themselves in front of the schoolmaster's desk, half-a-dozen scarecrows, out at knees and elbows, one of whom placed a torn and filthy book beneath his learned eye.

'This is the first class in English spelling and philosophy, Nickleby,' said Squeers, beckoning Nicholas to stand beside him. 'We'll get up a Latin one, and hand that over to you. Now, then, where's the first boy?'

'Please, sir, he's cleaning the back-parlour window,' said the temporary head of the philosophical class.

'So he is, to be sure,' rejoined Squeers. 'We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C-l-e-a- n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of book, he goes and does it. It's just the same principle as the use of the globes. Where's the second boy?'

'Please, sir, he's weeding the garden,' replied a small voice.

'To be sure,' said Squeers, by no means disconcerted. 'So he is. B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, tin, bottin, n-e-y, ney, bottinney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby: what do you think of it?'

## Activity 5

Investigate what it was like to be at school during Victorian England:

- What were the classrooms like?
- What subjects were children taught?
- What were punishments like?

Mr Squeers was based on a real teacher. It is argued that he was either called Mr Twycross of Winton Hall in Westmoreland (now part of Cumbria) or William Shaw of Bowes Academy in Yorkshire.

Write a newspaper report highlighting the terrible conditions at Dotheboys Hall and its terrible headmaster, Mr Squeers.