

Picture Story Books (Creative Writing) – Lower Primary, Middle Primary and Upper Primary divisions

STS Section Coordinators: Leonie Lang and Judith Sise

Like Judith, who has coordinated this section for many years, I have been amazed at the inventiveness of primary students' Science Talent Search entries in the creative writing section. This year's topic of FUTURE EARTH involved issues that really interested and concerned primary students. Sustainability, with an emphasis on recycling and water and energy conservation was a major theme, especially in the lower and middle sections. "It's the little things..." was a popular topic, closely followed by "Congratulations, you've saved the earth". The little things done by children and families to conserve or re-cycle can save the earth for the future. Upper primary students were also interested in future discoveries in science and medicine. "It is spreading..." was popular at this level. There were some wonderful science fiction stories predicting cures for diseases and technological advances.

Students generally followed the criteria and it is pleasing that this year there were fewer students laminating their entries and using thick paper or cardboard for their stories. The use of spiral bound booklets and thick, cardboard folders has made for weighty and awkward packing problems, creating a costly postage bill. The entries are mailed to judges across the city and country Victoria and as the postage charges rise yearly, the price of sending entries is considerable. Further, schools must pay for the postal return of the entries. So teachers, it is in your school's interests to urge students to follow the criteria. If students complied with the criteria of "flat, A4 sheets of paper in manila folders" this money could be used for more bursaries rather than postage.

This brings me to the wonderful team of judges who receive entries in mid July with a note to complete judging within the next fourteen days and they DO – well, with the exception of one or two who haven't full Australia Post's co-operation. Well done judges for a magnificent job and for always commenting positively on the creativity of the stories and the enjoyment of reading students' entries. Thanks also to the science and classroom teachers for their continued support for this section of Science Talent Search. Also a big thank you to the many parents and grandparents who inspire and assist students to think, to research and to produce picture stories highlighting science. Congratulations to all students who took the challenge of creating such delightful picture story books in 2017.

This year, Judith was away at a crucial time for the competition so I had the delightful job of collating the judged entries. As I said, the creativity shown by the students was amazing.