

Wednesday 20.09.2023

Learning Stations

In groups: put the text in order

The graphic features a light blue background with a stylized Union Jack flag in the top right corner. The title 'Welcome to Britain's Strictest School' is written in a large, red, serif font. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

Welcome to Britain's Strictest School

There's something strange about the students in the corridors of Michaela Community School. These young people, who are walking in single file to their next class, are completely silent. Not speaking in the corridors is only one of the many school rules that they've been taught to obey at Michaela, the strictest school in Britain.

Head teacher Katharine Birbalsingh enforces a "no excuses" policy when it comes to behaviour at Michaela, located in an area of London where a third of families live in poverty. In class, students are punished for arriving one minute late or not doing their homework. The same goes for not having a pen, rolling their eyes at a teacher or turning round during the lesson.

Strict rules apply to every aspect of school life. The corridor carpet has a black line in it for students to follow when they change classrooms. The bathrooms have no mirrors. Make-up and jewellery are banned and uniforms must be perfect. Teachers will confiscate any smartphone they see or hear and keep it for up to 16 weeks.

Does it sound like a prison? The school's many critics say so. Birbalsingh has also received plenty of criticism for her teaching methods. At Michaela, all lessons take place with the teacher standing in front of the class. There's no group work, and the focus is on learning by heart. Many modern educators emphasise independent and critical thinking, believing students can learn facts on their own. Birbalsingh believes in critical thinking, but only after children have acquired facts and knowledge from their teachers.

All this sounds very old-fashioned, but so far, it's been working. Michaela got top marks in its first inspection by Ofsted, the committee that makes sure schools are meeting the government's teaching standards. The inspectors were impressed by the lively teaching that took place while they were observing lessons, by the progress the students had made and by their positive attitudes toward learning. Students "are challenged by demanding work that motivates them to meet their teachers' expectations," said their report.

The most amazing thing is that students at Michaela say they love it. Ask them, and they'll tell you that they are happy at school and take pride in what they've achieved. Although they live in a tough neighbourhood, inside school, the structure and order means they are safe. With no bullying or disruptions, they're free to concentrate on learning. And they are learning an enormous amount.

Activity 1

2 Skim the article. In which paragraph/s does the article discuss ... ?

- a rules at Michaela School
- b how students feel about the school
- c teaching methods at Michaela School
- d whether Michaela School is successful
- e criticism of the school

3 Read the article. Choose the correct answer.



- 1 What do school critics say about Michaela School?
 - a They accept the teaching methods, but feel the rules are too strict.
 - b They support the rules, but not the teaching methods.
 - c They disagree with the rules and teaching methods.
 - d They feel the rules and teaching methods are necessary.
- 2 Critical thinking at Michaela School is
 - a done after students have learned facts on their own
 - b not part of the teaching method
 - c done mainly in groups
 - d based on facts taught in the lesson

- 3 The Ofsted report
- a found that lessons at Michaela School are not boring
 - b would not surprise modern educators
 - c found that students' progress was slow
 - d was both positive and negative
- 4 The writer mentions the tough neighbourhood to show
- a that students there are especially difficult
 - b the difference between the school and its environment
 - c why there are many disruptions
 - d that students cannot concentrate at home

4 Complete the sentences using your own words.



- 1 In the corridors at Michaela, students are not allowed
- 2 In class, students are punished if they don't
- 3 Students must not wear
- 4 Smartphones are
- 5 Critics compare the school to a prison because
- 6 During lessons, the teacher always

WORDS FROM THE TEXT

5 Find words or expressions in the article that mean:



- 1 not more than (lines 16-22)
- 2 information (lines 23-33)
- 3 until now (lines 34-44)
- 4 violent or with a lot of crime (lines 45-52)
- 5 quantity (lines 45-52)

6 Choose the correct answer.

- 1 Teachers **emphasise** things that they think are *amusing / important*.
- 2 People who live in **poverty** don't have much *time / money*.
- 3 If you **turn round**, you look at what is *above / behind* you.
- 4 If you **acquire** a skill, you *learn / teach* it.
- 5 People speak *quietly / energetically* during a **lively** discussion.
- 6 Laws are usually **enforced** by *police officers / members of parliament*.
- 7 If you **achieve** a good result, you *can be proud / must work harder*.
- 8 It's *respectful / impolite* to **roll your eyes** at someone.



COLLOCATIONS WITH MAKE AND TAKE

There are many collocations in English with the verbs *make* and *take*.

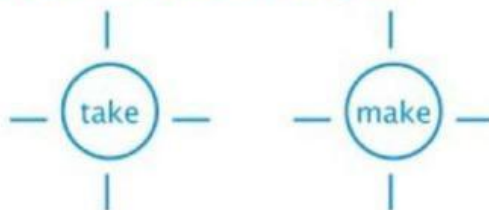
Complete the expressions below with make or take. Check your answers in the text.

.... **place** **progress**
.... **sure** **pride in**



7 Copy and complete the diagrams with the expressions below.

fun of ■ for granted ■ a mistake ■ notes ■ sense
part in ■ a decision ■ advantage of



8 Complete the sentences with the collocations you formed in Exercise 7.

- 1 I may some extra-curricular activities this year.
- 2 You should this wonderful opportunity.
- 3 You lose points if you in grammar.
- 4 It's wrong to other people.
- 5 I don't understand what you're saying.
It doesn't
- 6 You'll need to about what you want to study.
- 7 I always during the professor's talks.
- 8 Teachers work very hard, but
students often them

