

Trinity boys put their money where their mouth is

BY Amy Fallon and Emma Horn

HOW LONG could you go without speaking?

Turns out the boys at Trinity Grammar School in Sydney can go a very long time – for a good cause.

In February 230 boys from kindergarten to Year 6 took a vow of silence for one day to raise money for the Cambodia Day Without Speech.

More than 600,000 people in the south-east Asian country, many of them children, have a speaking or swallowing disability, but aren't getting help because there aren't many speech therapists, a charity called OIC Cambodia says.

OIC stands for "Oh! I see", to show someone understands something.

LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

One of those kids is Ling Ouk, 13, who is in Year 3 at a school in Siem Reap province. He has cerebral palsy.

Before OIC began helping Ling, he couldn't speak clearly. A few years ago he couldn't even go to school.

But now he does – and loves it.

"I like reading because I can practise my speaking," says Ling. And



Ollie Walker, aged 11, didn't speak for a whole day at school and raised \$7000 for the kids of Cambodia. PHOTO supplied

he counts, says the names of all the months and sings to prove it.

Ling's teachers can also understand him better.

Phearom Chea, an OIC disability worker who helps Ling, has no idea why speech therapy in Cambodia had been missing until OIC set up a trial in 2014.

"Why don't the government see this as important?" she says.

At Ling's school, there are more than 400 children, and 18 have learning difficulties.

SHHHH!

Some Trinity classes gave up talking for an hour or two.

But Patricia Duke's Year 6 class wanted to do something special. The 22 boys in class 6D wanted to try to understand what it felt like to struggle to talk every day.

"We were only asked to do an hour of silence, but the boys didn't think that was challenging enough," Ms Duke says. "So ... [they] stayed quiet for a whole school day."

The boys communicated by writing on whiteboards around the classroom.

"It was really amazing to watch the boys sort of self-censoring themselves," Ms Duke says. "So if one of them went out to the bathroom and started speaking, the others would get really upset with him."

24-HOUR SILENCE

Ollie Walker, 11, is in another Year 6 class at Trinity. He didn't think that even a whole school day was long enough to really understand what it's like to not be able to speak.

Ollie told his parents he would go a full day without speaking, and his dad, who didn't believe he could, said he would double what Ollie raised.

Ollie got to \$3,500. His dad, Richard, kept his word, so Ollie's total was \$7,000.

"We take speaking for granted I think, because we can do it," says Ollie. "But a lot of people in the world can't."

His friends and family tried to get him to speak – they even called him on the phone thinking that would make him crack. But it didn't.

And next year? "I'd like to do a full weekend without talking!" says Ollie.

Below, Ling Ouk, 13, at school in Cambodia with his classmates. He can speak much more easily thanks to speech therapy.

PHOTO Amy Fallon



MOVIE REVIEW



Give me action and imagination!



Briley Culbert, aged eight, from Victoria, went to see *Alice Through the Looking Glass*. She liked the action best.



("Because most of the movie is interesting, but the first part is very slow.")



THIS MOVIE IS ABOUT ...

Alice trying to find the high tops so the Mad Hatter does not get too sick and die from his illness. She finds a clock and goes through it to Tick Tock's lair and finds him. She asks: "May I use some of your time?" And he says: "I am time." Alice is shocked so then she tries to find the Chronosphere (a spinning globe that allows you to travel through the Ocean of Time to the past).

She drops it, but it turns into the time machine and she goes back into the past to save the high tops.

MY FAVOURITE PART WAS ...

when they find the high tops but get caught because, to me, it is the most exciting and action-packed part of the film.

MY LEAST FAVOURITE PART OF THE MOVIE IS ...

the start when she comes to London from a ship since she is a pirate sailing the Never Seas. There is not much action.

WHAT I LEARNT FROM THE MOVIE IS ...

the importance of helping your friends out.

THE WORD THAT BEST DESCRIBES THE MOVIE IS ...

inspirational. Because I was inspired by the imagination in the story.

Alice Through the Looking Glass is rated PG. It contains mild themes and some scenes may scare young children.

Above, Alice returns to Underland and travels back in time to save the Mad Hatter in Alice Through the Looking Glass.

IMAGE Peter Mountain/Disney