

Literary kids set sights on title

It's 100 questions, flat out, and the winner takes all.

It's the Hawke's Bay round of the Kids Lit quiz, and the winners taking all this year after a hotly contested 24-team battle were Hereworth School year 8 pupils Sam Davies, Niklas Buddo, Jannie Rickman and Sam Tremain.

Twenty-four year 7 and 8 teams from schools throughout Hawke's Bay entered this year's competition, which was started in Hawke's Bay in 1991 by ex-Napier teacher Wayne Mills, now a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Education, University of Auckland School of Arts, Languages, and Literacies.

Wayne now takes the Kids Lit Quiz around the world, travelling "thousands of miles a year to Scotland, Beijing, London and all over".

He began the quiz because, he says, he never saw kids rewarded for reading.

"For decades in schools we've recognised achievement in other arenas through science fairs, mathematics and, above all, in sport. There was nothing for our passionate young readers."

To do well in the kids lit quiz, kids have to have read widely — everything from *Harry Potter* to comics and nursery rhymes,



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says Wayne, "as they can be asked questions on any style of children's book in the world."

There are prizes galore from books to cash, with the regional winners going to the national final in Auckland this month to compete for \$10,000 in prize money and a trip to the international final in Johannesburg.

The Hereworth boys are no strangers to the podium. They competed last year as a year 7 team and came third, so their coach, Hereworth School librarian Sue Apperley knew they had a good chance at the top spot this year.

"For the last six weeks we have met every morning for half an hour's practice, including a lot of quizzes covering the whole spectrum of children's literature from the classics to today.

"Our team was selected for its diversity, with one avid reader of the older classics, one fan of fantasy and others keen on sports stories. But in the main, they just love to read."



STUDY TIME: Hard at work brushing up for the next round of the Kids Lit Quiz are Hereworth School students (from left) Jamie Rickman, Niklas Buddo, librarian and coach Sue Apperley, Sam Davies and Sam Tremain.

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For their regional win the boys each received a crisp new \$50 note.

Now they are studying for the national competition in Auckland.

"They are quite convinced they are going to win that and go to South Africa for the world finals," says Sue.

"They can be asked questions on any style of children's book in the world."