



REDDAM EARLY LEARNING SCHOOL ST LEONARDS NEWSLETTER



12th February 2021

Principal's Message

By Mrs Simone Cooke

Dear Parents,
Happy Lunar New Year everyone!
I hope you have enjoyed your celebrations. The children have had a lovely time this week engaging in their Chinese New Year provocations and enjoying their Yum cha feasts.

When reading through our newsletter and weekly programmes this week you will see our teachers constantly referring to their 'Provocations'. Many new families may wonder exactly what this means. In essence a provocation is precisely what the name suggests, it is a purposeful prompt that inspires inquiry, investigation and curiosity. It is a term that originates from the Reggio Emilia approach which forms an important part of our programme here at Reddam.

A provocation is designed to provoke and invite interest, creativity and discussion. It encourages children to think critically, respond creatively and expand learning, interests and skill development. Provocations are designed to be open ended and allow for children to be active participants in their learning, It enables children to have some control over the direction of what they learn about and therefore encourages them to be more engaged.

Rather than merely offering children a range of toys to play with each day, the teacher thoughtfully and creatively sets up intentional learning experiences based upon an area of interest. These may be based on broad questions posed by the children, such as What is a celebration? What lives in the Ocean? or What is a life cycle? Provocations are very diverse and reflect the age and interests of the class. It can range from exploring photography, to studying the solar system or investigating dinosaurs. They always contain a 'hands on' approach as young children need to learn through concrete involvement.

Each of the projects of enquiry and discovery that the Teachers have designed have been carefully planned and are based on observations they have made of your children, so that they are relevant to their specific needs and interests, making it a highly individualised programme. The Reggio approach makes good use of the physical environment, which acts as a “third teacher”, allowing space and time for discovery, and providing ample opportunities for children to express themselves. Whilst provocations are based on children’s interests, our Teachers employ intentional teaching strategies to extend upon these in order to create new and deeper understandings and challenge the children to consider how we can investigate further. This provides a wonderful balance between child led and teacher led learning.

Here at Reddam we are strong believers in collaboration. Provocations provide us with wonderful opportunities to have our children work together on projects, which encourages them to explore, observe, hypothesize, question and discuss. We want our children to be able to “think outside the square” and recognise that there are lots of questions to ask, but no one single answer. We aim to develop in each child processing skills that empowers them to make choices, decode problems and unlock talents that allows them to reach their full potential as a learner.

Over the next few weeks each of the classes has chosen to embark upon a Provocation which relates to the interests and needs of their particular class

1R: “Nursery Rhymes” **1E:** “Animal Habitats” **2R:** “The World Around Us” **2/3:** “All that Surrounds Me” **3R:** “This is Our World” **3/4:** “This is me” **4R/E:** “We are Investigators” **4A/D:** “Who am I”

Have a great weekend



Stage 1: 1R

By Mrs Amanda Felton

Ladybird, Ladybird fly away home

My goodness! The Ladybird flew away.... the Babies enjoyed learning an old-fashioned nursery rhyme this week about a ladybird. We spent time looking at the ladybird and her spots and doing all the actions of the rhyme.

The Babies demonstrated lovely sharing during this activity, as we know taking turns is a new skill for us to learn. After this experience each of the Babies enjoyed joining in painting their ladybird and wow! what little artists we have. We saw some master strokes with the brush and dabbing with the sponge to create some beautiful works of art. Keep up the good effort!

The Babies and the Teachers from the 1R room give a warm welcome to the new starters this week and they are settling in well. Well done new Babies!

This week we went adventuring up in the green space and continued to explore our new environment and friends... we sure did have lots of fun.



Stage 1: Playing with friends



Stage 1: Lets sing!



Stage 1: Settling in!



Stage 1: 1E

By Miss Justine Heydra

“Children see magic because they look for it.”- Christopher Moore

This week has been a fantastic and magical week under the sea. The children have all settled in beautifully and they were all very happy to explore the world around them and participate in group activities as well as join in our sensory table activities.

Our first sensory table activity was “Ocean Foam”, the children absolutely loved the texture of the foam. Some of them were a little cautious on whether to touch the foam and sea animals in the foam, however once encouraged by one of their teachers they were amazed at the experience and could not get enough of it. The ocean foam promoted fine motor skill development and the importance of discovering new and different textures to touch.

Our second sensory table activity was “Ocean Ice”. The children had the opportunity to play and explore with large ice cubes that had different ocean animals and sea shells frozen in the middle. The children found this activity fascinating, especially when they realised that the ice cubes were cold. They all enjoyed sliding the ice cubes around the tray and watching them melt revealing the ocean animals.

Our art activity for the week was centred around the different layers of the ocean and their colours. The children used droppers to drop different shades of blue and purple powder dye onto watercolour paper and then we observed as it rolled around on the page creating a very colourful and vibrant art piece. The droppers were easy for the children to use and they all mastered the skill of squeezing the top of the dropper to release the liquid, this also developed fine motor skills which included building hand strength and coordination.

Our literacy focus this week was a beautifully illustrated book called Big Fish - Little Fish, written by Fhiona Galloway. This book was filled with bright artwork and the children discovered opposites through a fun rhyming story.



Stage 1E: Ice escape!



Stage 1E: Ocean sensory play



Stage 1E: Under the sea droplet art



Stage 2R:

Miss Madeleine Grant

As this term's programme is centred on the many natural wonders that make up our Earth, we have decided to incorporate a focus on the social and cultural processes that take place in our world. At the beginning of term we celebrated Australia Day, and this week marks the Lunar New Year, so we have integrated these events into the children's programme as a means of acknowledging the personal and shared cultures that make up our wonderfully diverse community.

The early years is a time when children are discovering their self-identities, and their culture and background plays a huge role in realising the elements of belonging, being and becoming that make up our Early Years Learning Framework. Teaching cultural awareness from an early age also fosters a sense of understanding and respect towards the cultures and backgrounds of others.

To mark Australia Day we set up activities that drew influence from the rich cultural history of Indigenous Australia. The children engaged in collaborative painting projects that saw them create communal artworks made up of their individual efforts. During group times they love singing songs such as "*Inanay*", and during our circle times we have introduced an acknowledgement to the Cammeraygal land that the children can participate in.

We read books such as 'I'm Australian Too' by Mem Fox, and talked about the various countries that the children and teachers of 2R had connections to, and practiced saying greetings in the various languages we knew. To acknowledge our shared Australian identity the children painted the national floral emblem, wattle, using corks and sticks in yellow and brown paints to strengthen their fine motor skills.

This week the children created chūnlián inspired paintings to display for the Lunar New Year. They used fine sticks to leave strokes of gold paint on their red paper, and we looked at examples of these traditional decorations and talked about how the colours and characters used represents wishes of happiness and luck for the new year. We learnt that family and food is very important to the New Year celebrations! To replicate this in the children's play the children engaged their fine motor skills by using tongs to pick out 'dumplings' and 'noodles' from a tray of coloured rice.

Another activity presented the children with a variety of toy fruits in various colours. They were encouraged to sort and classify the fruit in whichever way they decided, to promote early mathematical thinking. This was also used as a means of measuring their colour recognition, and together we practiced saying the names of the colours in both English and Mandarin with the help of Miss Ariel.

Stage 2: Colour exploration



Stage 2: Australian art



Stage 2: Sensory tray exploration



Stage 2/3:

By Miss Gabriela Alvarez

Australian Aboriginal Culture

The fourth learning outcome of the Early Years Framework (EYLF) centers upon building respect for diversity; Educators recognize that diversity contributes to our society's richness and provides a good evidence base about ways of knowing. For Australia, it also includes promoting a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being.

We can develop positive attitudes towards cultural differences and have a positive impact on children by increasing their knowledge of different cultural practices and world views, developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures. The stories we read this week help children understand the adventurous nature and the essential core beliefs held in Aboriginal culture. Starting with "The Echidna and the Shade Tree," where we used the main character to make representations with playdoh. We further invited the children to make their Echidna and after holding discussions in group time, the children explored ideas using their imagination and creativity in play.

We also explored the Aboriginal diversity of culture, heritage, background, tradition, and explored how diversity presents opportunities for choices and new understandings. Extending on this activity, the children were further invited to Discover Aboriginal Symbols following the drawings with pebbles. This exposed the children to different languages and dialects and encouraged appreciation of linguistic diversity.

Sorting and grouping things is an essential cognitive skill. We extended on this by doing "Colour Matching," where we taught the children to notice similarities and differences and learn to categorize and develop early literacy and numeracy skills. Using description words to talk about how things are the same and different, i.e., colour, size, shape, what it is used for, made out of, or what category it belongs. Describing objects and looking for similarities and differences helps develop the language to classify, sort, and group things. Sorting objects, matching shapes, colours, and pictures help build the visual perception and thinking skills. Children can generally sort into colours before they can identify the name of the colours. Learning to categorize and classify helps memory skills.

We have also been learning about names through different activities. The children were invited to paint over their initials on a canvas, and they were all very proud of their creations displayed in our Art Gallery.

Children develop an appreciation of respect with reference to their cultural value system. We frequently encourage our children to develop a sense (i.e., internal appreciation) of respect through teaching children how to demonstrate respect for what is essential through their behaviour and interactions with others and their environment. By 'enacting' respectful behaviour when encouraged and reminded, children reinforce and solidify their understanding of the cultural value in any environment.

Stage 2: Can you make an echidna?



Stage 2: Exploring Aboriginal culture



Stage 2: Initials on canvas



Stage 2: Initials on canvas



Stage 3:

Miss Emily Chacon

Our second destination of our world exploration is China. We chose this destination as we have many Stage 3 families and teachers that are originally from China. We based our week over the traditions of Chinese New Year which falls on Friday 12th of February.

Giving and receiving money bags is a big tradition of Chinese New Year. So to incorporate this into our program we created a sensory bin with rice, gold coins and red money bags. The children were encouraged to search through the rice to find all the coins and place them into the bags.

Miss Vivian, who is from Shenyang, ran our Mandarin lessons throughout the week. Teaching the children how to count, say family members and different colours. As Chinese is already a language spoken at home, this came easy to them. But for the other children it was a new concept to grasp. Through counting Miss Vivian showed the children how to count using only one hand, as this was tricky for some children it was wonderful to see the children coming together and assisting each other with the hand movements. Some even went as far as moulding their friend's hands into the correct positions. Learning a new language at a young age offers many valuable skills such as critical thinking and mental flexibility, it is very beneficial for brain function. It is also a wonderful opportunity to expose our children to the wonders of other cultures and learn about other countries and traditions.

Our Yum Cha morning tea was a huge success, a big thank you to all the families that participated. The children were exposed to many new tastes and textures, and judging by the expressions on their faces they all loved it! Pineapple cakes, prawn crackers, spring rolls and dumplings were among the many different foods that were available.

It was wonderful to see the children's knowledge from their dumpling making lessons being transferred to eating real ones in their banquet. Talking about how to hold the dough and placing all the filling inside and squeezing the top to make sure nothing falls out.

Happy Lunar New Year!

Stage 3: Chinese New Year dramatic play



Stage 3: Exploring Chinese New Year traditions



Stage 3: Chinese New Year dramatic play



Stage 3: Chinese New Year afternoon tea!



Stage 3/4:

By Mrs Riina Andrew

The children noticed how tall I am, and the other teachers are and were wondering how tall they might be. This sparked a lot of interest with the children and so it was decided that we would make a class 'height chart'. We spent all week measuring each child while their friends watched on and predicted if they thought they were taller or shorter than the child who was measured before them. Once each child was measured, their string was added to the height chart which was hung on the wall for the children to view and discuss. We then decided to measure other body parts. We used coloured counters to measure our hands and coloured wooden blocks to measure the circumference of our bodies by first lying on the floor and working in groups to place blocks around each other.

The class then look their interest in measurement a step further and started to measure other items around the school. We measured the trees, walls, shoes and even some grass! One child decided to bring in a ruler from home and the children were then introduced to a more formal style of measurement compared to the informal style of measurement that we had been using in the previous experiences.

This week we also practised our number writing. Using pieces of chalk and small chalk boards, each child had the opportunity to choose a number to write and then try their hand at trying their best to copy it. Some children preferred to trace the large white numbers, while some others decided to copy several choices. Each child was also able to label each number as they used it and some children placed two numbers next to each other to make a double-digit number and write that number as well.

The final experience was using clothes pegs to place number cards in numerical order on a clothesline. The children had the choice of working together in small groups or individually to peg the cards in the correct order. Using the pegs was a way to develop fine motor skills, which are required for pencil grip.

Stage 3: Valentine's Day artwork



Stage 3: Valentine's Day artwork



Stage 3: Bottle top maths



Stage 3: Our Height Chart



Stage 3: Number exploration



Stage 4:

By Miss Emily Brazel and Miss Lauren Doughton

"I am... connected to my friends"

As an extension from our last provocation "I am connected to my family", the children then began looking at who else they feel connected to. We began the week by asking this question. The children proceeded to inform their teachers that they feel connected to their friends at school, followed by their reasoning. This sparked conversations around how we treat our friends at school and how they feel they would like to be treated. We created a mind map surround the topic "What makes a friend?". Each child gave us individual answers such as:

"Helping them with they're sad" Alex

"Reading a book with them" Aria

"Being helpful" Freja

"When they are feeling sad and you give them a cuddle" Madeleine

"Learning together" Joy

"Being kind to them" Oliver

"Play with them" Isabelle

Teachers set up a collaborative group project which allowed the children to work together in order to create a large art piece for their classroom. After we had this group discussion the children set to work. They worked either individually or as a team in order to create their own masterpiece. A piece of butcher's paper was left on the table for the week and each day a different medium was placed on the table for the children to use.

Collaborative learning plays a huge role in building communication and social skills of children. It can lead to deeper learning, improve self-esteem, and build an understanding of other's perspectives. Research shows that learning through collaboration with peers can build confidence, increase attention and motivation. It can also encourage children who are shy to engage in activities, which can help their oral communication skills. This art piece is up on our wall for you to take a look at!

Let's create friendship bracelets!

This week's provocation promotes the importance of being kind and caring to our friends around us. This week teachers discussed with the children about how we can be kind to one another and how we treat our friends. Teaching children to be a good friend will help them make lasting friendships throughout their lives. Life skills like these are important to learn at an early age because it will become more natural for your child the more they practice these skills. Teacher's set up a bracelet making experience which encouraged the children to use their creative skills to create a bracelet for a friend. The children they used their fine-motor and hand-eye coordination to carefully thread the bead onto the string. It was lovely to hear the beautiful conversations take place!

I am connected to my friend...

As we are discussing friendships and connections with one another, teachers went around the classroom and took photos of the children who are showing beautiful sharing, kindness and a connection with. Once it was taken it was then printed out and stuck on paper in order for the children to look at and discuss what they see with their teacher. The children were asked to talk about their friend whom they are in the picture with, using appropriate articulation and language skills. Once they had finished teachers wrote down on the board for the children to copy out using their fine-motor and concentration skills whilst practising their tripod grip. Throughout this experience teachers discussed with the children letter formation, structure of a sentence and the use of punctuation. Have a look on the wall at your child's beautiful writing!

Stage 4: Friendship bracelets



Stage 4: Friendship bracelets



Stage 4: Numericon counting



Stage 4: Working together to create art



Stage 4:

By Miss Maddie Criss & Miss Sarah Ross

Music naturally delights and moves most children. Throughout the early childhood years, children are learning to do new things with their body and music and movement encourages children to explore what they can do. When giving children the freedom to create their own music children are able to recognise and express their moods and feelings in a social way.

This week Stage Four went on a musical journey where they explored different types of instruments, sounds, and melodies. To begin this exploration the children listened to a story about the famous Musician, David Bowie. The story explored David's life growing up and how he aspired to be a Musician and Performer. The story teaches children about the importance of resilience when facing adversity and how using your own feelings and ideas when telling a story through music can have a big impact on other people's lives.

Afterwards the children discussed what types of songs they would like to make and were encouraged to use descriptive words such as soft, loud, fast, and slow. The children then spent time exploring instruments including xylophones, drums, and castanets.

How are instruments made?

Stage Four continued to explore sound through experimentation with different materials. This included an activity where children used beads and pom poms placed in a jar to make maracas. This proved to be a challenge as the children needed to test what amounts of materials, they needed to make the sound they desired. The children quickly noticed that if they put too many pom poms in their jar, they wouldn't be able to hear a sound when they shake their maraca. This led to further mathematical experimentation with ratios to discover which amounts of each material they needed.

Tambourine Making

After all their investigations Stage Four were invited to create their own instrument using paper plates and pasta. First the children decorated their plate using glitter, coloured tape, and collage materials. With help from a teacher they then stapled their plate together and added some pasta inside before closing the plate together. At the end the children had created their very own tambourine! The children were very excited to have made their own instrument and their new tambourines were enjoyed during play and music making.

House Keeping: Please ensure that your child brings a hat to school each day. Hats are vital in protecting your child from sunburn and must be worn when playing outdoors in the sun. Thank you!

Stage 4: Exploring instruments



Stage 4: Making our own instruments!



Stage 4: David Bowie inspiration



This week we continued with our exploration of the question “what is drama?” To start the lesson, we always have a shake of the parachute. In Stage 1/2 we went around the circle and named colours, feelings. We also had a sing of “If your happy and you know it”. We did stretches including the exploring the butterfly stretch, wind screen wipers and spider.

In Stage 2 the children had a go at some imaginative play. We pretended that the floor had magically changed surfaces, and we pretended to be walking on sharp bindies/weeds, slippery ice, sticky mud and hot lava.

Actors need an audience. I placed the children against a wall in the room. This was where the audience sat. We practiced turning on our listening ears and watching eyes, and we discussed what being a good audience member would look like. Audiences always clap at the end of a performance. We also practiced a bow.

I then pulled the children aside in groups of 3-4 (audience staying where they were), and gave a scenario for a scene. The children acted out the scene, and then bowed to signal the end of the performance. The audience then had to clap and guess what the actors were doing. Some examples included being hungry lions and finding something nice to eat and then falling asleep, stomping elephants who were thirsty and found a nice watering hole, and crocodiles who snapped up a nice fish.

Actors have to be good at pretending. In Stage 3 and 4 we have been talking about our imaginations and that we can pretend to be anything we want: animals, objects, characters from stories etc. This week we continued with the forest theme and imagined that the room we were in had big trees, lots of flowers, we heard snakes, saw a bear sleeping and went fishing. Some of the children extended the drama and told me what colour their flowers were and what they smelt like, I asked one child to describe what the snake looked like and some children wanted to leave the bear the fish we caught too!

Stage 4 extended on this and made some picture postcards. They made a frozen image of a forest, a haunted house and a park. Next week we will visit a house in the forest. I wonder who it will belong too?

Well done Everyone!



Yoga



Piano

Alan Tang

Stage 2 and Stage 3 students started with distinguishing between black keys and white keys. The students were taught the patterns of the black keys. Stage 3/4 and Stage 4 were also revised on the patterns of the keys and fingers exercise for both hands. We also played a song guessing game which encouraged the children to recognise different melody lines.





My Gym

