



# REDDAM EARLY LEARNING SCHOOL ST LEONARDS NEWSLETTER



REDDAM

ELS

29th October 2021

## Principal's Message

By Mrs Simone Cooke

Dear Parents,

What a wonderful time the children have had this week dressing up for Halloween, carving pumpkins and trick and treating with their friends. With Christmas fast approaching it is timely that we discuss how we approach Celebrations and how we make them inclusive for everyone. Here at Reddam we have many rich and diverse cultures with many different traditions, values and beliefs. Celebrations provide us with a concrete way to share our cultural backgrounds, to build tolerance and understanding, celebrate cultural diversity and build respect and a sense of belonging for everyone.

Throughout the year we draw upon the celebrations that hold meaning to our particular children, these include a wide array of celebrations based on our children's cultural heritage and interests, these may include Christmas, Chinese New Year, Diwali, Hannukah, Mother's Day, Halloween, Reconciliation day. There is no doubt that children love Celebrations and traditions and rituals are important for fostering a young child's personal identity and sense of belonging. They teach values, offer comfort and security and create lasting memories. Just as Sunday dinners, family game nights or family reunions hold special memories in our lives, so too do our school celebrations.

We invite each of our families to share your family traditions with us. We want to honour the rich cultural diversity of all our children here at Reddam, embedding it into our day to day classroom practices where we can raise an awareness in our children of other ways of being and belonging. Please let your class teacher know if your family has a special celebration coming up so that we can celebrate these events with them.

We know that Birthday parties are also important to our children and our families, which is why we welcome you to celebrate your child's birthday with their class. Particularly at a time of Covid when many children have not had the opportunity to celebrate their special day, being able to celebrate with their school friends is more im-

## Principal's Message Continued...

portant than ever before. However, please remember that as some of our children have nut allergies and our school is a 'nut free' zone, we do request that you do not send in cakes that contain nuts. We have special egg free, milk free and nut free muffins that we can offer as alternatives for our children who have allergies so we can ensure that they can also be included in our celebrations.

Our Christmas concerts as you are aware, are planned to take place in December. As soon as we have greater clarity over NSW Health advise in regard to end of year school gatherings, we will provide you with exact times for these events, as per my previous email. We will also video our concerts again this year so that you can send these precious moments onto family and friends. Please be aware that it is a requirement that anyone attending a school event is fully vaccinated in order to protect our children and wider community.

We look forward to sharing many celebrations together in the weeks ahead.





# Halloween Fun





# Halloween Fun





# Halloween Fun





# Halloween Fun





# Halloween Fun





## Making Friends

This week we have been enjoying the sunshine and playing out in our lovely new backyard. Climbing, balancing, playing with one another as we build our connections. Friendship is very important at this age as our Babies learn to communicate through facial expressions and body gestures. Our delightful Babies are growing and developing more and more everyday, as they become more inquisitive about the world around them. Through socialisation and exploration the Babies are showing us all the wonderful new skills they have developed. Climbing and throwing balls, riding bikes and going down slides. We have also just started our PE classes for the Babies and they showed such wonderful engagement with our PE teacher Mr Brendan, as he showed each of our little ones how to move their arms and throw balls.

We continue with our collaborative experience and explore further our investigation into soil and are placing soil into the mimi pots as part of our planting experience this week, which is wonderful for building our children's dexterity skills and concentration.

Well done Babies! It's been a wonderful week.





# Stage 1R: Potting Our Plants





# Stage 1R: Gathering Seeds





# Stage 1R: Friday Antics





## Nature & Loose Parts

*"Just like a Bee needs a Flower; a Child needs Nature."* **Brandi Rondinelli**

This week has been an amazing and fun filled week in Stage 1E and 1D. We continued our Nature and Loose parts provocation and had some exciting sensory activities for the children.

Our first sensory activity was investigating beautiful flowers and leaves on wooden boards with magnifying glasses. This was very exciting for the little ones and formed part of our Curious Carl and Curious Callie investigation programme. As most of the children have gone on weekend adventures with either Curious Carl or Curious Callie they all recognised our friends and were extremely excited to investigate just like them. This sensory activity promoted concentration, hand-eye coordination and fine-motor skills.

Our second sensory activity was playing and exploring "Mushy/Slime sand". This sensory activity was sand mix with dishwashing liquid and proved to be a great touch activity. The children loved the different texture of this sand. The sand resembled wet sand, however had a more slime like feel to it. The children enjoyed squishing it between their fingers and digging small holes in the sand.

With the warmer weather the children also had so much fun with water play in our outdoor area. They enjoyed splashing and playing with various bugs and buckets in our tuff tray.

Water play encourages language skills and social interaction either by talking or listening. Water play also help strengthen the children's gross and fine-motor skills.

Lastly, we had so much fun with our Halloween Dress up on both Thursday and Friday. The children arrived in such amazing little outfits and pumpkins was definitely a winner amongst our little ones. We enjoyed some new song based on Halloween and the children loved seeing all the different outfits on their friends. Wishing you all a safe and wonderful weekend.





## Stage 1E + 1D: Investigating Flowers





# Stage 1E + 1D: Mushy Sand





# Stage 1E + 1D: Curious Carl & Curious Callie





## Happy Halloween!

What a fun week it has been! The children have been so excited for Halloween, so we decided to incorporate the celebrations into our topic of self-identity as we asked the children to come in dressed as their alter-egos. We had so many superheroes, princesses, witches and pumpkins, Wiggles, dragons, and more! They loved showing off their costumes with each other and role playing as their character!

While the main theme of the week was exploring different identities, we also encouraged the children to engage in a bit of self-reflection – literally! Each child sat down in front of a mirror and used a marker to draw a self portrait over their reflection. We talked with them as they observed their face, asking them to describe what they saw and what they were drawing. Some mapped out their features, carefully drawing on eyes and tracing around the reflection of their face. Others preferred to colour in and give their reflection some decorative face paint!

During group times we prepared for the festivities by making jack-o-lanterns! Miss Itzi and Miss Chisa brought in huge orange pumpkins, and as a class we looked at images of jack-o-lanterns to inspire their imaginations and encourage them to share what they already knew with the class. Many instantly recognised them as 'Halloween pumpkins', and we talked about how the funny faces were meant to scare away any monsters!

We began by mapping out the features we wanted our pumpkins to have, based on the shapes used in the pictures we looked at. We asked them to use their critical thinking skills to decide what the most important features were when creating a recognisable face, and what geometric shapes we should use. We settled on triangles for eyes, a rectangle for a nose, and learnt the name of a new four-sided shape called a trapezium that was perfect for a grinning mouth. We encouraged them to refine their pencil grip as they held the markers and coloured in the shapes, and found the task required extra coordination as they balanced the pumpkin on its side and drew over the round and bumpy surface!

After the face was done, Miss Chisa carefully cut a hole in the top and the children took turns at hollowing out the pumpkin, using big spoons to scoop out the goop and seeds. This turned out to be a great sensory experience, as they felt the slimy pulp and picked out the large, smooth seeds. Once we had a hollow shell Miss Itzi cut out the shapes we had made, and our jack-o-lantern friend was complete!



## Stage 2R: Self Portrait Creations





# Stage 2R: Pumpkin Carving





## Stage 2: Halloween Fun!





## The Life Cycle of Butterflies

We started this term's provocation from exploring the flowers. We looked at the different types of flowers and participated in a number of different experiences to help us understand how plants grow. As we were looking through how plants grow from a small seed, we also noticed that there are some fascinating mini beasts that we could always find around those beautiful flowers. Therefore, to further support children's interest in learning about nature and following their interest, we decided to investigate the life cycle of butterflies.

'*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*' by Eric Carle is a very meaningful book that vividly draws on the life cycle of butterflies for our young readers. It is loved by our children as we learnt how the caterpillar grew and transformed into a beautiful butterfly. Besides, it also helps the children to build a foundation for their number sense as we learn through the cycles of daytime and night-time, and the cycle of days of the week. '*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*' provided us with infinite possibilities to explore with children. Reading quality books in the early years is important and supports children in their multiple areas of development, such as language and communication, emotions, and cognitive development. Quality picture books offer countless opportunities for shared and meaningful learning experiences for young children. Moreover, young children take delight in repeated re-readings. As scenarios show, they can also notice the smallest details which we even often miss. Therefore, no matter how many times we have read the caterpillar book, the children want us to re-read it again!

Another experience that was inspired by '*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*' required the children to manipulate the hole punchers and coordinate their hands and eyes through threading. This experience requires children to exercise their fine motor skills while synchronising their hands and fingers. This builds the muscles in their wrists, which will then later be used for handwriting. It is challenging for our children to master the tools, yet they were very focused and determined in the process of learning.

To extend on the children's interest in investigating the life cycle of butterflies, we also provided the children with the resin specimen blocks. These specimens allow children to examine the features of nature in minute detail, observing the different colours, sizes, and shapes in the different stages of the caterpillar and butterfly cycle.

This week's inquiry question that we raised to our children was 'Tell us something that you are really good at.', here are some of the answers from them

'I am good at playing with my sister. When my sister gets upset, I will help her by giving cuddles. We like to play with the ballerina game. We will put on the reindeer dresses and spin around.' - Amelia

'I am good at cleaning the beach. I can pick some rubbish up and put it in the bin. Then, I will get my vacuum to clean up all the sand.' - Flynn

'I am good at picking up flowers. I like to go to the garden and pick up the most beautiful flowers.' - Annabelle S.



## Stage 2/3: Exploring Butterfly Life Cycles





## Stage 2/3: Investigating Caterpillar Specimens





## Stage 2/3: Outdoor Fun!





## When I Grow Up

Following on from our kitchen play, the children have transferred these skills to their meal times. Each week the children have been rotating 'Helping Hands' which allows each child to be responsible for things across their school day. For example, we have 'morning tea helpers' and 'afternoon tea helper', this job allows the children to help set up the table and serve their friends.

Once the children finish their meals, instead of the teacher refilling their bowls and cups, the children are now doing for themselves. Of course there were little spills on the table or floor, but the children and teachers worked collaboratively to try again. Teaching children to be independent is very important skills for them to have, as it increases their responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. It allows them to feel empowered, working on their social skills and reasoning, it also helps develop self-esteem.

Across the year the children have been singing our Jolly Phonics songs, which has really assisted them with our literacy lessons and activities. Moving further along in our preschool program, children continued to develop their literacy skills. Teaching literacy skills is a good start to help children to learn how to spell and write their names as the letters of their first names, as usually this first letter is the one children are taught. Therefore, the knowledge of a relationship between letters and sounds will be developed in children and they would likely start to learn other words.

Firstly, children have been asked to find their name tag and spell their names. Thus they were able to find the correct letters that involved both capital letters and lower case letters. It could help them to understand different shapes and functions between letters. Once they collect all the letters correctly, children could stamp their name in the play dough.

Continuing on from our kitchen play, the children have been further developing their self-help and life skills in class. This week the children practiced washing dishes through this open-ended sensory experience. Trays were filled with water and soap, and children were provided with "dirty" dishes and a dish sponge.

Teaching life skills such as this helps to set children up for success, and using a play based experience makes this learning fun and engaging. Furthermore, developing these skills teaches children responsibility as well as building on their self-esteem and confidence as they learn to master "adult" tasks.



## Stage 3: Helping Hands





## Stage 3: Name Stamping Fun





## Stage 3: Snail Race!





# Stage 3/4

By Ms Riina Andrew

## Investigation: Literacy

This week we continued with our exploration of literacy. The letter of the week was 'i' and we found them all around our environment. Children also presented their news items and we had a plethora of ice creams, ice cubes, ice trays, the letter i and insects. Everyone has been so involved in their learning of the vowels and the sounds they make. Keep up the interesting news items next week.

We also brainstormed words that begin with the letter i and I was very impressed with the suggestions from the class. Next week (working through the vowels), we will look at the letter o, so again, please send your child with news items to share beginning with this letter.

At the artwork table this week, we decided to paint a picture of our favourite thing that begins with the first letter of our name. To start off this process, we first discussed the things that we liked the best and then narrowed our choice down to one item. With the assistance of the teachers, we painted the first letter of our name and then painted the special item of our choice. We were all very proud of our work and enjoyed looking at the display of artwork on our wall throughout the day.

Two other activities of the week, were the 'Letter Puzzles' and 'Bobbing Cork Catch'. At the first table, we chose letters that we were familiar with and joined them together to make words. Some words were correct and some were made up. The children enjoyed trying to sound out the words that they had made and laughed at the made up ones. At the end of the game, we tallied up the results and discussed the letter that was found the most. At the second game, we used tongs to pick up corks that were floating in water. Again, we made a checklist of the letters that were written on each cork found and tallied up the findings at the end of the activity. This ended another week of literacy learning!





# Stage 3/4: Cork Catching & Things I like





# Stage 3/4: Letter Puzzle & Letter Writing





# Stage 3/4: Sharing News





## School Readiness

As we continue to prepare Stage Four for Primary School we engaged the children in a discussion about what to expect when they are in class. This included ideas of what the children will learn and some of the expectations the teachers will have of the children for example; raising a hand to ask a question, looking and listening, and sitting at a table when doing some learning activities. Afterwards, we asked the children what they might like to learn or achieve when they go to school. The children then recorded their goal and drew a picture of them flying towards their goal in a rocket symbolic of them being able to reach their personal goals on their journey through school. Some of the children's goals included;

"My goal for kindergarten is to learn how plants grow," said Frank.

"My goal for kindergarten is to get a gold star," said Isobel.

"My goal for kindergarten is to be good at sharing," said Rian.

"My goal for kindergarten is to learn science," said Jason.

"My goal for kindergarten is to learn about computers," said Evander.

"My goal for kindergarten is to be a good listener," said Noah.

"My goal for kindergarten is to learn how rockets fly," said Amelia.

"My goal for kindergarten is to improve my handwriting," said Henry F.

"My goal for kindergarten is to learn how to play soccer," said Isola.

## Creative Arts

To support Stage Four's handwriting skills and ability to sequence and follow instructions the children participated in a line art project. First, the children were given a set of instructions to follow and provided with the materials necessary. Next, the children used crayons to create a variety of different patterned lines across their artwork and then neatly used water colour to fill in the different segments they had created. As the children created the patterned lines they practiced different fine motor movements related to the development of cursive writing. During this art lesson the children's working memories were put to the test as they were required to create the art piece using a specific method to successfully achieve the desired effect. We are so proud of all the children's ability to follow a set of clear instructions and carry them out successfully while also creating beautifully unique artworks in the process.

## Numeracy: Measurement

The children continued with their exploration of measurement this week now focusing on length. The children were introduced to rulers as a tool for measuring objects. The children practiced skills necessary for measuring objects accurately including; measuring beginning from the number zero and; lining their object up close and parallel to the ruler. The children were so excited to explore the length of some of their favourite toys and natural resources at school and even practiced recording their findings with pencil and paper.



# Stage 4 School Readiness

## Literacy

During our literacy activities this week the children began to explore three letter consonant vowel consonant words. As the class is very familiar with single letter phonemes the children practiced sounding out the words displayed on cards alongside a corresponding picture as a support prompt. The children were so proud of themselves as they accurately decoded the words. From this experience the children were able to build their confidence in beginner reading skills that will support them as they approach more complex reading strategies at school. Afterwards, the children spent time attempting to write the words and drawing a picture to match.

As the children displayed such interest in writing and exploring the shapes of letters the children were invited to practice their letter formation while also creating patterns. The children used loose parts to create patterns and followed the directions on each letter of the alphabet to practice and visualise the correct way to form the letters when writing.

**Reminder:** Please ensure that your child is wearing their full school uniform each day when coming to Reddam. In addition, as it is getting hotter please ensure your child brings their hat to play out in the sun. Thank you!





# Stage 4: Line Artwork



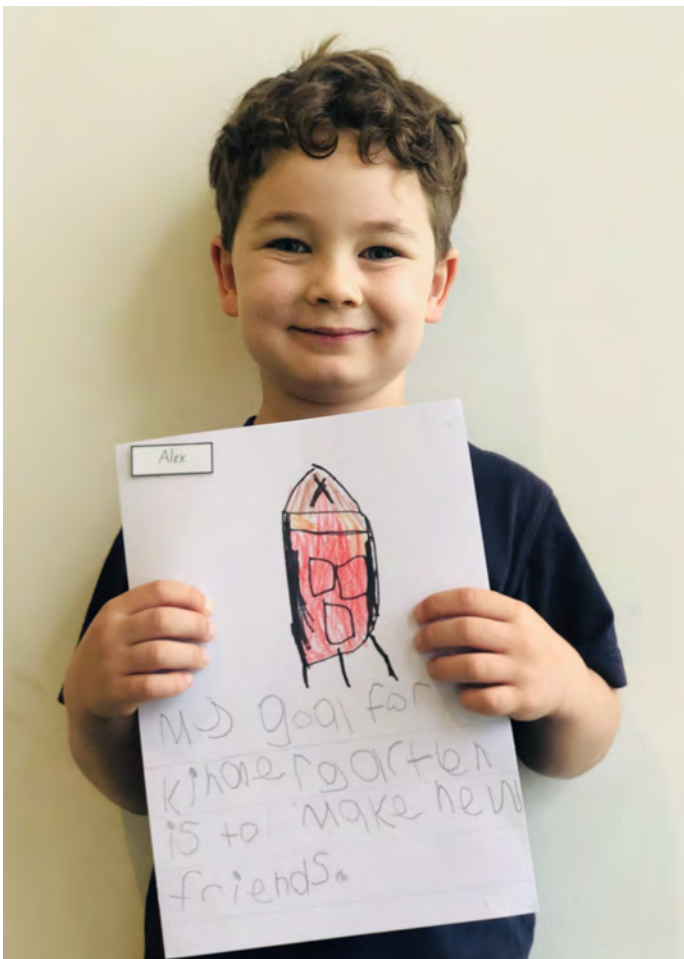


# Stage 4: Investigating Measurements





# Stage 4: Creative Writing





# Piano

By Mr Alan Tang

This week was the first week back after lockdown. It was exciting to be back and teach students face to face after 3 months of "Two dimensional" zoom's lessons. The focus of this week was revision of the basics before learning new songs. Stage 3 and 4 have retained all the important fundamentals of the piano. Many of them were able to find and recognise keys across the keyboard. We had a finger exercise competition for both hands. They also taught how to identify their left hand (with thumb and index fingers out, it looks like a caption letter L). More advanced students were required to do C Major arpeggio "broken chord" exercise. Stage 2 was extremely well behaved. They have matured and they have been re-taught the basics. It is so great to be back and I am looking forward to next week already.





# Physical Education

