



REDDAM EARLY LEARNING SCHOOL ST LEONARDS NEWSLETTER



REDDAM

ELS

19th November 2021

Principal's Message

By Mrs Simone Cooke

"The future belongs to the curious. The ones who are not afraid to try it, explore it, poke at it, question it and turn it inside out"

Dear Parents,

I have no doubt that you are familiar with the never-ending litany of questions that your child asks: "Where does the rainbow come from?", " Why does a snail have a shell?", " How does a plane fly in the sky?", " Why do volcanoes explode?". These wonderful questions are the basis for the learning programmes that our teachers explore with the children . Responding to the curiosity of our children allows us to create meaningful projects where we can invite the children to investigate alongside us. By asking questions and actively seeking answers our children construct their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. The children have enjoyed some wonderful investigations this year from the timeline of man, to natural disasters, outer space and coding and robotics. Each has been driven by the children's questions and has shaped their inquiry. The autumn leaf that they found on their walk to school, the tadpoles that were brought in for news time or the snail that they discovered in the garden , each becomes a lesson of discovery.

Wondering is an essential stage of learning. By teaching our children how to hypothesize we teach them how to think creatively and develop higher order thinking skills that allows them to solve problems and learn new information. Our differentiated learning programme at Reddam means that our children can access information no matter what their level of understanding, from simple questioning to advanced analysis. By engaging in collaborative and co-operative learning we encourage our children to share their questions and opinions with others. Working on their provocations together encourages children to learn important skills of brainstorming and encourages them to understand that there is not always one right answer to a question, but multiple ways of thinking.

Principal's Message Continued...

Promoting curiosity and wonder helps our children to also expand their vocabulary as they start to describe what they are thinking, seeing, hearing and experiencing. Fostering children's natural curiosity means they can spend countless hours tinkering, building, creating and attempting to figure out things for themselves. By selecting topics that are inspired by their personal interests our children are far more motivated to learn and discover.

At Reddam we encourage our children to ask questions, be involved in collaborative projects and we as teachers act as positive role models. If children see us reading, trying to solve problems and persevering with difficult tasks, they will do the same. You will notice that we often set up tinkering trays or loose parts play so that our children can explore, experiment, build and create to their hearts content and continue to ask those never-ending questions of what, how, when and why?

Thank you also to all our parents for bringing your children for their school photographs. Whilst we have not been able to hold formal photographs this year I am certain you will be thrilled with the wonderful job the teachers have done in putting these together, so that our children can continue to have a special record of these treasured years. We will be ensuring that you each receive a copy of these at our end of year celebrations.



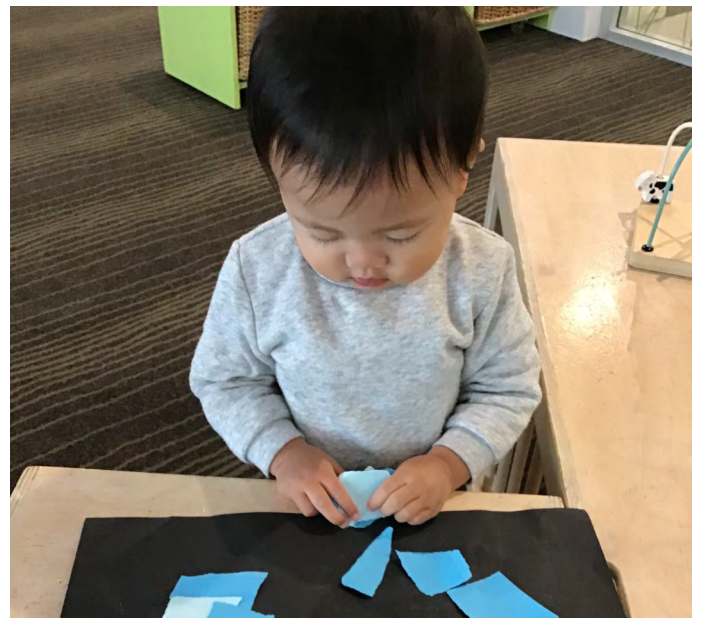
Water investigation!

What a wonderful way to be introduced to science than through water play. Learning all about cause and effect was our focus this week . Each of our Babies had a turn at learning about sinking and floating. We had lots of splashing and throwing the toys into the sensory box. Everyone enjoyed themselves as they huddled together to experiment, pour, mix and splash. The Babies then moved onto their water collage artwork where they shared the artwork by placing the different coloured blue paper onto the black to represent water.

The children are really enjoying their specialist classes each of the Babies had a turn with My Gym, with lots of tumbles and jumps. We also had PE classes and the Babies really loved the parachute play and the thrill of it going up and down. Just watching them trying to catch the parachute was just all part of the excitement of the game. Well done little ones, it has been another exciting week of new experiences



Stage 1R: Creating Our Collage



Stage 1R: Water Play



Exploring Nature

*The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect
but by the play instinct." – Carl Jung*

This week in Stage 1E and 1D, We explored nature through different materials and enjoyed some amazing hands-on sensory activities.

Sensory activities have great benefits for toddlers and develop a wide range of skills. Some of these great developmental skills include; assisting to build nerve connections in the brain, it encourages the development of motor skills, whilst also encouraging language development and encourages scientific thinking and problem solving.

Our first sensory activity was our natural tuff tray tree. This was a group activity and the children loved exploring all the natural materials while playing with one another and interacting with their friends. The tree consisted of rice noodles dyed green "resembling leaves" and for the branches and tree trunk we used toddler sized wooden blocks that they could stack and re arrange. Our third element was sand, which the children always enjoy exploring and playing with.

The children were delighted to explore this tuff tray and used a variety of words such as; green, tree, leaves, brown and sand. We also expanded our vocabulary and describing words by repeating terms such as; tree trunk, branches, rough sand, smooth branches, and sticky leaves.

Our second sensory activity involved bright green and brown play dough. The children could explore and play using the play dough and a variety of natural resources such as bark, stones and large seeds. Some of the benefits for this sensory activity included, fine-motor skill development, it encouraged creativity, hand-eye coordination and social skills. Play dough also has a very calming effect on children as they engage and become completely involved in what they are creating.

This week we also took our class photos, and I would like to thank all the parents for bringing their children into school for those photo days. I will be sending out a link to a google drive via email by the end of next week in order for parents to download these photos. The children all looked beautiful and we all enjoyed this process with the children as we captured some much treasured memories for 2021.

Wishing you all a wonderful and safe weekend.

Stage 1E + 1D: Natural Playdough Exploration



Stage 1E + 1D: Tree Investigation & Play



Self Identity

“Being recognises the significance of the here and now in children’s lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life’s joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life. The early childhood years are not solely preparation for the future but also about the present.” **Early Years Learning Framework**

This week we focused the core element of being by exploring the children’s emerging concept of self-identity. The class is now reaching the age where their sense of self has developed to the point where they are able to think about themselves in both concrete and abstract terms, and view not only their world around them but their own place within it.

We set up an art activity that encouraged them to engage in self-reflection and let their perceptions of themselves guide them. They sat in front of a mirror and were given a pen and paper and asked to draw what they saw. While their self-realisation may be emerging, for most their drawing skills are still building up to the ‘preschematic stage’ where they can intentionally draw representational creations.

We asked them to identify and describe their features, such as where their eyes, nose and mouth were placed, what colour their hair and eyes were, and encouraged them to share their thoughts on what they looked like. Their comments gave us an insight into how they viewed themselves, both in a tangible sense as well as showing their blossoming self-esteem.

“My eyes are blue and blue is my favourite colour” – Alex

“Me got big muscles and strong muscles” – Charlie P

“I am happy, and I am Iron Man” – James

“My face looks like a circle” – Charles O

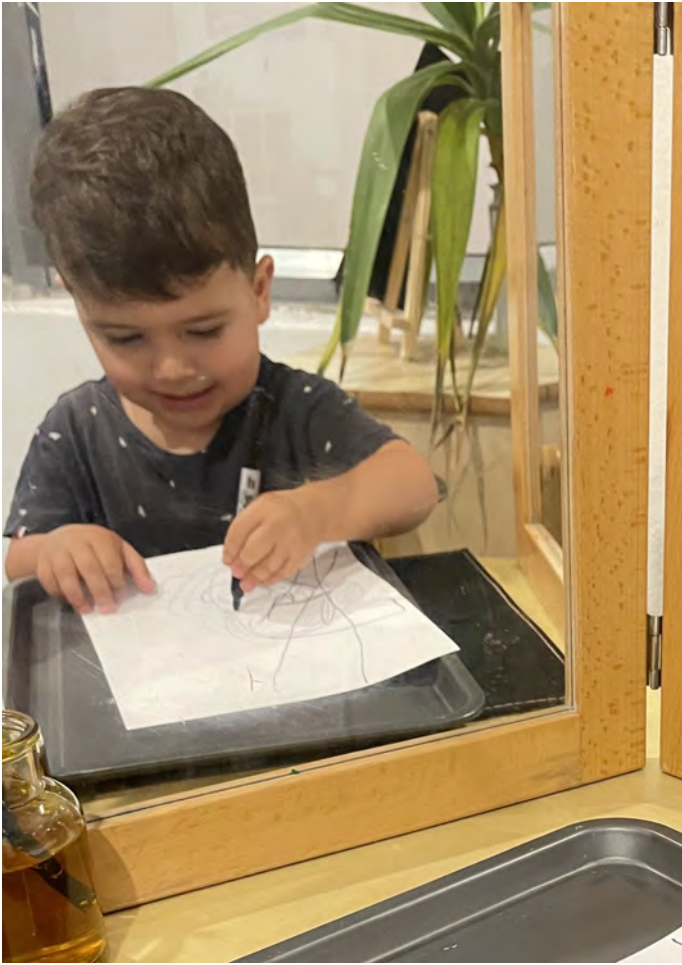
“I look like a princess” – MyLan

“Morgan is beautiful” - Morgan

“Beautiful me!” - Emmett

Once they were finished their drawing, they painted using the same watercolours we used for our original self-portraits. While most of the artworks didn’t quite look like themselves, the process of creating them revealed the children do have an understanding of representational drawing, and are on the cusp of entering the preschematic stage. Each squiggle and scribble was put on intentionally, and they told us which feature was represented in each mark they made.

Stage 2R: Self Portraits



Stage 2R: Friendships!



Stage 2/3

By Gabriela Guimaraes

Observing Snails

What do you think about snails? Ok so they like to take the odd nibble on our vegetable gardens and they are a little slimy, but for the children they are truly fascinating; mesmerizing even.

These little guys have come to stay with us this week. A small tank has made the perfect observation for these snails. Have you ever seen the underside of a snail? The way they move, it's fascinating. The children were able to watch the snails, see them emerge from their shells and then make their way up the tank, watching their muscles move back and forth.

We know now how snails make light work of our veggies. They are ferocious eaters. Have you ever seen a snail eat? On the underside of their heads they actually have these quite large mouths, and they eat a lot! The children have been able to feed snails and watch them munching away.

Using playdough and loose part shells together we set up an invitation for the children to make their own snails. It was a perfect activity that paired playful fun with learning. When sitting down with the children and some playdough, we never thought that adding shells to our play would inspire interesting questions and creations. The snails were all so unique and different in shapes and sizes. It was definitely a great way to make real life representation of snails.



Stage 2/3: Investigating Snails



Stage 2/3: Creating Snails



When I Grow Up

Following on from the children's interest in colours, we continued our exploration and discovery.

Last week the children engaged in mixing colour experiments with coloured water on paper towels. So this week we changed the experiment to mixing paint onto white paper.

The children were given red, blue and yellow paint and were asked to spread a colour onto their page, choose another colour and mix them. This experience allowed for the children to get creative, and allowed lots of opportunities for all kinds of learning.

Doing so on white paper really allowed the children to view the colours being created easily.

The basic transformation from primary to secondary colours was not a new concept for the children, but it was still magical for them to be making that change themselves!

Our second experience was a water colour changing station, the children LOVED this experiment!

In a small container was water, and in front were red, blue and yellow food colour dye. Using pipettes the children gathered the dye and dropped it into the water. Of course changing the colours as they mixed.

This experience is a simple, natural way for kids to learn the basis of colour; it introduces colour to them in a way that meets their level of understanding and comprehension. What's even better—mixing colours can be therapeutic. It's soothing, relaxing, and can relieve stress.

To follow on from this experience, we poured the coloured water into bigger tubs, then added different sized cups, funnels, pipets and containers, allowing for the children to further explore colour while discovering math. Exploring materials in water enables children to try out mathematical ideas, develop problem-solving skills, pose questions and use mathematical language independently or with others in activities where a specific result or answer is not expected.

Stage 3: Exploring Primary Colours



Stage 3: Experimenting with Primary Colours



Stage 3: Photo Day



Investigation: Numeracy

To finish off the final few weeks of the year, we will be focusing on numbers and numeracy. As the class discovered with literacy, numbers are everywhere we look. Counting and mathematical situations are part of everyday life. The children have all shared their counting skills and which number they can count up to "I can count to 100", was the most common exclamation made. Using simple mathematical equations, each child had the opportunity to practise their numeracy skills at a variety of number themed experiences.

Using visual representations, the children were asked to label each number card and then choose their own to practise writing. Some children chose lots of number cards and wrote all the numbers and others preferred to only choose one card and practise writing that same number repeatedly.

Next we studied the meanings of addition, subtraction and equals. We then sat at the table with bowls of numbers and tried to make our own equations. Some mats were addition mats and others were subtraction mats and we chose small numbers to place on our mat. Together we worked on the answer with each other and celebrated our achievements together.

We also enjoyed number songs this week, such as, 'The Ants Go Marching', 'Ten Green Bottles' and 'Dr Knickerbocker'. Some of the class were already familiar with one or more of these songs and for others they were new songs to learn. The whole class were very enthusiastic with learning/singing these songs and asked to sing them again over and over during the week.

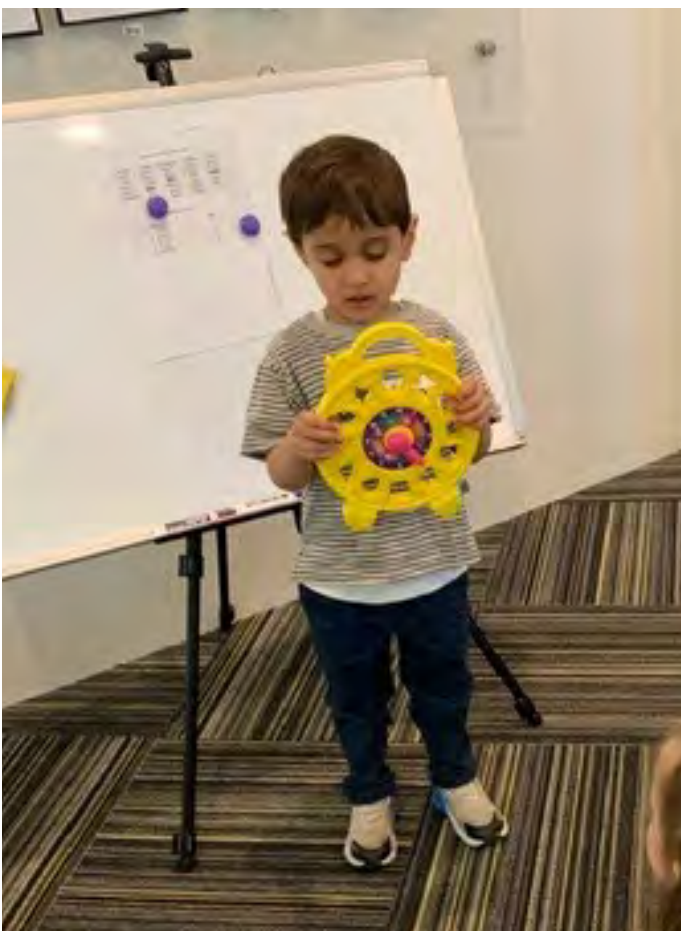
The final activity was at the loose parts table. Number mats were provided and the children were asked to label the number on their mat, sound out the letters of the spelling of that letter and then place the same number of loose parts on the mat. Again we worked with each other and assisted each other when needed. Great group work 3/4.

Thank you to all the parents who have bought in Christmas Concert clothing. We are practising very hard and it promises to be a fantastic show!

Stage 3/4: Learning Maths & Matching Numbers



Stage 3/4: Number Patterns & News Time



Stage 4 School Readiness

With Christmas only a short time away the children practised their writing skills. For Christmas I would like.... Was the statement that was at the heart of conversations this week.

As we move into our Christmas provocation we decided to start with the most important thing in the eyes of a child when it comes to Christmas time and this being "What I want for Christmas." All of the children have lists that run for pages and are holding onto the hope that their dreams of getting what they want come true.

We started by brainstorming what we want for Christmas? Here are some of our responses;

Alexander: Jet Ski
 Faith: Unicorn
 Oliver: Hover Soccer ball
 Angus: Bird (A seagull)
 Rian: PJ Mask toy
 Aiden: Lego
 Leo: Green Ninja
 William M: Video Games
 Tom: Bike
 Lachlan: Motor Bike
 Isaac L: Robot
 Sofia: Fuzzy Owl
 Tahlia: Elsa Dress
 Gaolin: Toy train
 Hayley S: Blue butterfly wings
 Freja: Robot
 Eleanor O: Rapunzel Costume

WOW! I hope Santa is feeling generous this year with our children's requests.

From our discussion we moved onto looking at the structure of a letter. We write to communicate with others. Sometimes the purpose is to achieve something, like the children's Santa letters. Unfortunately, the messages we give our children about writing are often very different. When we prompt children by saying "Is that all you've written?" then they learn that writing is about quantity not quality.

When our only response to their writing is to correct the errors, rather than read the message, children learn that writing is just a kind of test that you get right or wrong. When we do this writing doesn't seem to have any purpose, or elicit any kind of meaningful response, then it can be hard to get excited about doing it. Instead, it can feel pointless.

The age of pen-and-paper letter-writing may have passed, but technology has stepped in and the need to write has never been greater. Using technology is what we have turned to, I even know myself I can type faster than I can write and I know children are so tech savvy these days they will be able to tell you how to use any type of technology.

Stage 4 School Readiness

There is nothing wrong with this kind of writing. It suits the audience and the purpose. It gets the job done.

We wrote our letters to Santa and drew him a picture. The children were very proud of their work.

Another activity that we did this week was as a group we drew a big Christmas tree and as a team we painted it, the children were able to put decorations onto it.

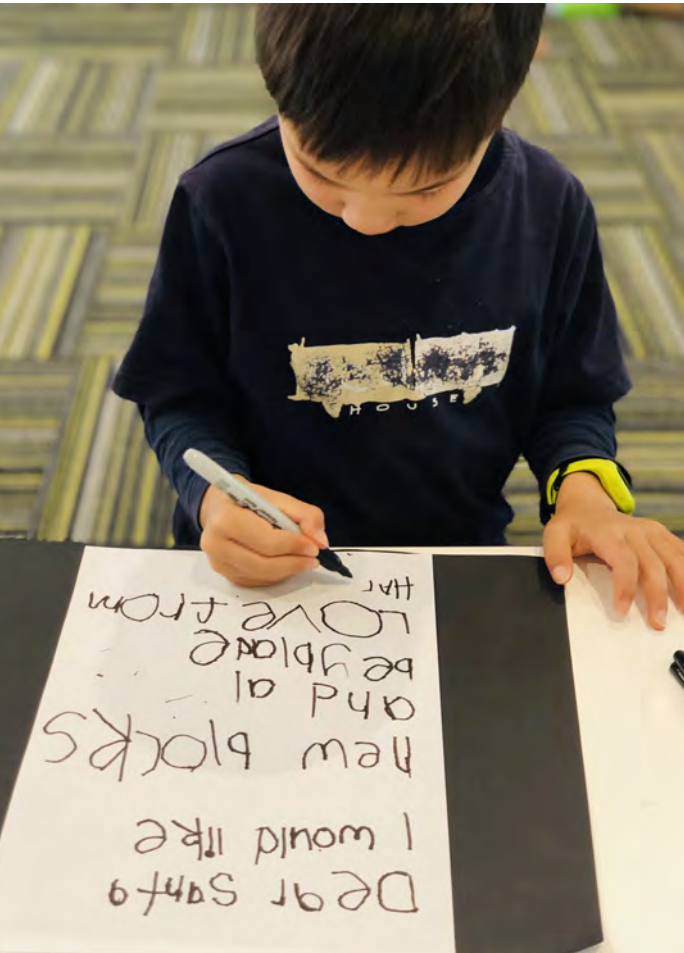
As we get ready for the end of year celebrations you will notice a lot of Christmas work on our walls and we are all working together to decorate and prepare our classroom. I would like to invite you to come into our classroom and look around.

Reminder:

If you are in Lauren's class please don't forget to bring in your Christmas concert clothes before the 30th of November.



Stage 4: Practising Our Writing Skills



Stage 4: Photo Day



This week in Drama, Stages 1 and 2 explored an art theme. We began by getting on our trains to Drama land so we could use our imagination to create some wonderful art pieces. We used the ribbons as paint brushes and explored colours and textures, painting a rainbow together which was accompanied with music so they could flow to the rhythm and beat. We used our body to become paintings and sculptures, our face to show emotions and our voice to express what we thought of our creations. Well, done to Hazel and Dani in Stage 1 your creations were fantastic and Franco, Amelia and Tilly in Stage 2 who did a wonderful paint brush dance using different body parts to paint!

In Stage 3 and 4 we continued with our art-themed creative drama lesson, children were guided to sing, dance, share stories, and play. We began with a silly imagination warm up where the children pretended to pop themselves into a big piece of bubble gum. They began by spreading out around the room with plenty of self-space. I invited the children to take a piece of gum out of their pocket and put it in their mouth. (This is imaginary of course, and I pretended to do the same) We had lots of different types of gum including Chilli flavoured, sour, and toffee so I think you can guess what their faces looked like!

Next, we did some Guided Imagery. Guided imagery is great for teaching children about using all of their senses. We went on a journey that allowed the children to relax and to use their imaginations. I invited the children to find a comfy place to lie down on the ground. This is what we did:

The Magical Museum

I asked the children to take a few deep breaths as we relax our faces, shoulders, heads, bellies, legs, and feet. Now close your eyes and join me on this little journey. Here we go! You are strolling down a little path in the forest. It's a beautiful, spring day. You are bare-foot and feel the dirt under your feet. All around you are beautiful, green, mossy trees. It's cool and fresh. Breathe in the pine scent. A little yellow bird rests on a branch in front of you. It sings a little song as if to welcome you. It flits off the branch and you follow it down the pathway. Ahead of you is shiny golden door. The bird seems to be guiding you toward it. Magically, the door opens, and bright sunny light pours out. You step inside to find a glorious museum. Now you can feel the cold marble tiles under your feet. As you look up you can see the bright blue sky. This is an open-air museum. It is light and bright, and you feel happy. The bird guides you down a little hallway to a room with big paintings. Just ahead you see a painting of a waterfall with a rainbow. In fact, it looks so real that you can feel the water splashing gently on your face. It's misty and cool. Now the bird guides you to another painting. This one is dark colors. It's an old-fashioned table made of wood. It looks so real that you can run your hand over the hard wood. There is a bowl of fruit on the table. Take any piece of fruit you like and eat it. What does it taste like? Feel like? Smell like? Now the bird is leading you to an easel with a big white canvas. There are some finger paints on a table, all sorts of colors. Choose your favorite. Dip your hands in the cool, gooey paint. Now spread the paint on the canvas with your hands. Maybe you even mix colors together. Make some swirly, whirly art. That looks wonderful, but we better wash off our hands. Head back over to the waterfall painting and let the water wash away all the paint. Nice and clean! The yellow bird is now leading you back out into the forest. Take one last look at the museum. You leave the cold tile floor stepping back onto the dirt path of the forest. The golden door closes slowly behind you. Continue on the path back to here and now.

Drama

Once we had finished the guided imagery, I asked the following questions:
When you got to the museum, what did it look like? What kind of fruit did you eat from the table?
Do you feel as if you could really taste the fruit?
Do you want to go back to this museum again?
Did it make you feel peaceful, happy, anxious, or sad? Why? What other places would be fun to visit in this way?



Drama



Piano

By Mr Alan Tang

We had another exciting week of Piano lessons at Reddam. Stage 4 and 3/4 had refined their finger motor skills to play "Brother John". With half of the class being able to play half of the song was a great progress. Many children could locate C, D, E, F and G across this stage. Stage 2 and 3 were able to find C, D and E. They had started to learn "Brother John" as well. If there was a "Perseverance Award", it would go to Stage 3/4, with many of them trying really hard. Many of the children were encouraged to challenge themselves and overcome difficulties during the lesson. It would be a great way to inspire them musically and build up perseverance. Stage 1 was delighted to hear a classic high energy French's song "The Can Can". The upbeat song made them bounce around a little. Looking forward to next week's Piano lesson.



My Gym



My Gym



My Physical Education

