



# REDDAM EARLY LEARNING SCHOOL WOOLLAHRA NEWSLETTER



## Dee's Message

18 FEBRUARY 2021

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

During the course of the year, we enjoy celebrating special days with the children in the ELS. Whether it is to make them feel extra special on their birthdays or on other significant days in their lives, there is nothing like the smiles on their faces when they realise that they are the centre of a celebration. Then there are other days and events that we choose to highlight, just as we did last week with Valentine's Day. We hope that all our families enjoyed celebrating the day on Sunday and that plenty of love was flowing in and around your family.

Valentine's Day was an ideal opportunity to explore the theme of love with the children in the ELS. Even though they are young, there is no doubt that they know a whole lot about love, both in that which they have received from others and in the love that

they enjoy showing to the important people in their lives. The Early Years Framework speaks of the three pillars of 'belonging, being and becoming' and there is no doubt that these are underpinned by the affection, support and caring which the children experience from their families and from the teachers.

A sense of belonging has definitely been enhanced during the first few weeks of the term, as the teachers have encouraged the children to tell their friends something about who they are, what they like doing, and so on. Even the youngest children in the ELS have heard their own names being continually affirmed, along with those of their friends, which all helps to build on their sense of identity.

# Dee's Message

Sharing pictures of themselves and of their families adds to a sense of belonging, both to their families but also to their school groups, with whom they are able to share part of their lives. The children will often be found staring with great interest at the photos of their friends and their families which are posted on the classroom walls, all of which exposes them to the broader community of which they are a part.

In the ELS, we love sharing cultural and religious ceremonies with the children and these also add to their sense of belonging to a particular culture. Having family members come to the school to share important cultural events with the children opens their eyes to the cultural traditions of others and helps them to develop empathy and understanding.

Surrounding the children with walls adorned with their own creations also does much to enhance their feeling of belonging in that place – and of having created some part of its beauty. They are able to appreciate not only their own works of art but also those of their friends. We hope that each day brings a greater sense of belonging and contentment for the children in the ELS, and that as they do so, they feel even more secure to explore the wonderful possibilities of who they are as unique individuals.

Enjoy the weekend!

**Dee Pitcairn**  
**Principal**



# The Nest (1R)

Kiri Winders, Rachael Soegiono, Min Pattharasiritanarat & Rochelle Lundie

What a beautiful week it was in the Nest. The children are all really settled and getting used to their new routine. The educators in the Nest are enjoying having lovely little conversations and interactions with the children. Our children have been really enjoying playing in our kitchen area.

Early in the week, teacher Rachael set up a home provocation in the centre of the room, with some kitchen utensils, bowls and toy food for the children to play with. They all sat around exploring this area, using their imaginations as they engaged in pretend cooking, transferring food from one bowl to the next. We read and sang "Cows in the kitchen", while learning all the sounds of all the farm animals. The children were so happy to potter around playing in the toy kitchen and other toys throughout the week. They just loved transferring the 'food' into the containers and bowls and stir it around.

They also enjoy filling up the little baskets and transporting objects around the room to place them somewhere else. This pattern of repetition in their play is what we call a schema, which allows children to explore and develop their play through their thoughts and ideas.

Our lovely casual teacher, Helena, wrote a children's story for our Chinese New Year celebrations. Today she shared her story about Nian the dragon with the children. We started making our own dragon and little red and gold fans to put up on display on our board for all to see. Celebrating the cultural heritage of the children in our classroom is important to us and helps to create a sense of belonging and identity for our children. We will also be visiting other cultures within our Nest family over the coming weeks.



# The Nest (1R)

## Photo Gallery



# Fledglings (1E)

By Hannah Corrigan, Jane Teh, and Nadia Breus

Each week we offer activities that reflect both the children's interests as well as cultural and community events and celebrations. We embraced cultural diversity in our classroom this week by celebrating Lunar New Year. It is very meaningful for children and educators to share our different cultures and backgrounds, explore difference and respect the many beliefs and traditions that diversity presents.

As this celebration falls in Spring, we were inspired by the beautiful pictures of the cherry blossom trees, and we got creative at the Mini Atelier.

We read a book called "Lanterns and Firecrackers" by Jonny Tucker. We spoke about different traditions that take place in homes over this holiday which include cleaning, displaying flowers and gatherings of family which brings happiness.

At Lunar New Year it is a tradition to give the gift of a red envelope. These are filled with money and symbolise good wishes and luck for the new year ahead.

The red colour symbolises good luck and prosperity in China and other Asian countries.



# Fledglings (1E)

## Photo Gallery



# Stage 2

By Daniella Gosty, Karla Cabezas, Shauna Corry, Sarah Noone, Roberta Sokame and Joyce Matsui

## Being and Belonging

As we conclude yet another Valentine's Day celebration the children have further developed an interest in making new connections with their peers. This was observed when Matilda and Penelope walked into school together holding hands on Monday and Leanne gave Phoebe a hug on Thursday when she seemed sad. Often, during our morning group times, the children have been able to recall the names of their friends and will sometimes ask, "Where is...?" if they are absent from school.

These observations allow us to see the importance of being part of a group and being involved in social play. Besides having fun (which has value in itself!), children learn social skills that include communication, cooperation, problem-solving, and perspective taking through play, exploration and activities. Research shows that social skills help children succeed in school and in life, too.

We can support children's social skill development by playing with the children and modelling the positive social behaviours we want them to use. Learning the skills that children practise in social play also takes lots of adult support. Here is why:

- Young children often do not know what is expected in different social situations.

- They lack experience and knowledge of appropriate ways to resolve conflicts.
- They are naturally egocentric, so it is hard for them to understand others' intentions and feelings.

With this in mind, in Stage 2 we strive to provide the children with a range of different opportunities to further encourage their social skill development through turn-taking games and circle action games which they really enjoy.

## Chinese New Year

This week we also briefly introduced the celebration of Chinese New Year, as the children were very intrigued by the sparkly dragon brought into our classroom. Through stories we will continue to learn more and discover who, when and what this celebration is all about.

We will begin working on our first collaborative art project together with our Kookaburra friends to help us celebrate this bright and wonderful cultural celebration together.



# Stage 2 Photo Gallery





# Stage 3

By Christina Mandalidis, Susan Casey, Jason Corrigan and Yuliya Ginis

## Lunar New Year Celebrations and Pre-Writing Skills

The Stage 3R children were very busy exploring Lunar New Year this past week. They really took to the story of Nian. As the legend goes, a monster called Nian would come out to eat villagers and destroy their houses on each New Year's Eve. The villagers discovered three things that Nian was afraid of. The colour red, loud noises and fire. The next year they used these things to scare him away. Since then, it has become a tradition at Lunar New Year to light firecrackers as a major custom to celebrate the coming of the New Year, and also a way to enhance the festive atmosphere.

It is an important custom to set off firecrackers during the Lunar New Year period. Lunar New Year celebrations would not be complete without them. Why light firecrackers on Lunar New Year? In traditional Chinese culture, firecrackers were originally used to scare away evil spirits.

This then led to an art experience at the painting table where the children used cut up paper towel rolls and red paint to make firecrackers and they used as much glitter as they wanted to make them sparkle. As they made this, they listened to traditional Chinese music in the background.

Next, the Children were introduced to rattle-drums, which are some of the oldest and most traditional toys in China. It is a small double-sided drum with a handle and a wooden ball hanging from string attached to each end of the edge to beat the drum. When swayed, the balls on both sides will beat the drum, sending out rattling sounds. The children loved using the rattle-drums during group time but also in their free-play.

Lastly, the children re-enacted the story of Nian, using rattle drums, red material and a lion puppet to represent Nian. They got very loud and scared Nian away. They each took turns to play different roles and had lots of fun while doing it!

The children also participated in a great pre-writing experience. Before children can write they need to be able to recognise and execute certain lines, curves and symbols. This is all part of pre-writing. Pre-writing skills are the fundamental skills children need to develop before they are able to write. These skills contribute to the child's ability to hold and use a pencil, and the ability to draw, write, copy, and colour. A major component of pre-writing skills are pre-writing shapes.

These are the pencil strokes that most letters, numbers and early drawings are comprised of. This week, the children used large symbol cards consisting of different patterns and the loose parts gems and stones. The children used the stones to follow the lines and create amazing patterns whilst also learning valuable pre-writing skills. The children showed great persistence as they stayed to finish their symbol to the best of their ability. This experience will be used throughout the year to help develop the children's pre-writing skills but to also increase their time spent at an experience to complete it with the desired outcome.

# Stage 3

## Photo Gallery



# Stage 3

## Photo Gallery



# Stage 3 Photo Gallery



# Stage 4

By Cassandra Holmes, Jane Pledger, Sandra Carberry, Nina Bergel and Kristina Rocchi

This term in Krissie's class we are exploring what it means to be 'Me', 'Who I am' and 'How I belong'. As a class, we read a book called 'All my friends and me', which helped the children to become aware of connections, similarities and differences between each other.

"So no matter the colour of your skin, hair or eyes. We're all very similar when you look inside." Australian Human Rights Commission.

We had a lovely time looking back at old photos of when we were a baby, and we enjoyed listening to stories that were shared by our mums and dads describing what we were like. Some of the children were eager to share what they remembered from when they were a baby (or at least what they were told):

**Jarvis:** "I liked looking at the trees and giraffes that were hanging next to the curtains."

**Timothy:** "When I was a baby, I loved playing with my baby toys and my sister. I was eating milk with mummy."

**Sivan:** "I liked milk and chicken and I still do. I cried a lot and I liked playing with all my toys."

There have been a number of important celebrations that we have enjoyed taking part in this term, including Australia Day, Valentine's Day, and Chinese New Year.

To celebrate Valentine's Day, we read the book "The things I love about me" by Tracey Moroney. We discussed how it is a day of love and for celebrating all the things in the world that we love, such as our family, friends and pets. We also shared stories of who we love and why. Some the children's responses were:

**Owen:** "I love my Daddy because he gives me a million cuddles every day."

**Stella:** "I love Willy and Mi because they give me treats like lollies, marshmallows and chocolate. They also let me sleep at their house."

**Billie:** "I love my family. We go camping together."

Last Friday we celebrated Chinese New Year. We discussed that it is Year of the 'Ox' and that every year is represented by a different animal. "What's an Ox?" asked Billie. "It is a kind of animal," responded Dylan. "It's like a bull and really strong," added Daniel. "Am I an Ox?" asked Isabella puzzled. We researched the year we were born and discovered that the children turning 5 years old are monkeys and the children turning 4 are roosters. They found this pretty funny!

Some of the children celebrate Chinese New Year with their families and wanted to share their traditions with us. "At home I have a duck and it's full of coins. The coins are for buying stuff for the Chinese celebration. We buy lanterns and decorate our house. My grandpa comes to our house and he brings me chocolate all day long. Mum and dad cook, and they make lettuce, jelly fish, fish, noodles and soup. We eat special biscuits for dessert," said Jeffrey.

Lastly, over the past couple of weeks, we have been focusing on our school values with lots of emphasis on manners and respect. We take pride in having good manners as it is important to be polite and courteous, to listen and look at others when they speak and to use polite phrases like "please", "thank you" and "excuse me". This ties nicely into our golden nuggets rewards system where the children can earn golden nuggets for following the school values.

# Stage 4

## Photo Gallery



# Stage 4

## Photo Gallery



# Stage 4

## Photo Gallery





# Dance & Drama

By Laura Hudson

**Stage 1 and 2** explored the theme of Bears with the popular nursery rhyme "**Teddy Bear's Picnic**". Extending on our ideas from last week, we used our imagination to walk/jump/skip through the woods and arrive at our picnic (on the parachute). Stage 2 are very good at following the leader, and we are beginning to introduce walking in rhythms and freezing. Waiting at our picnic was a stuffed toy (1 per child). The stuffed toys were hungry! We discussed what food might be served at a picnic, and pantomimed eating some of the foods. The stuffed toys then wanted us to put on a show for them. The children lined up the toys so that they were sitting like an audience.

We discussed "**What makes a good audience?**" The children came up with some great answers including "audiences are quiet", "audiences clap for you", and "audiences face the front". We then showed the toys how good we are at balancing on one leg, touching our toes, making shapes with our bodies like stars and circles, walking like a bear, and touching our noses. We finished by shaking the parachute for the toys. Alfie in Stage 1 is becoming more and more confident with the parachute and had a huge smile while we were shaking. Stage 2 practised their bows for the toys and then helped to pack away.

**Stage 3 and 4** explored the theme of bears in a few different ways. We started the lesson with reading the book "**A Beginner's Guide to Bear Spotting**" by Michelle Robinson and David Roberts. The book explains two different types of bears, black and brown bears, and what to do if you find one in the wild. We then decided to go on our own bear hunt! First, we needed to pack an imaginary bag. The children came up with ideas on what we might need. Some suggestions included hats, sunscreen, food, water, jumpers, and binoculars. We used the popular song "**We're Going on a Bear Hunt**" as a backing for our hunt.

Noah and Sia from Stage 3 knew all the words! We mimed spotting and then going through the long grass (swish, swash), through the mud (squelch, squelch), and through the lake (splish, splash) to try and find a bear. I always try to encourage the children to say the words with me. Oh no! We came across a big black bear... I asked the children what we do when we see a black bear, to test their memories. The book told us that when we see a black bear, we need to back away slowly. Oh no! We came across a big brown bear... Again, I asked the children what we should do. The book told us we need to lie down and stay very still if we see a brown bear.

We then saw both a brown and black bear at the same time! Stage 4 were very excited to spray the bears with pepper spray. We then had to run away! The children tested their memories by remembering where each location was in the room without my help and going back through them in order. After getting back from our bear hunt, there was a lovely picnic waiting for us. The children each had a stuffed toy to enjoy the picnic with.

We pantomimed eating some food, and then put on a show for our toys. Stage 4 showed off their balancing skills, by doing balancing tricks with their eyes closed! We discussed "**What makes a good audience?**" and "**What makes a good performer?**" At the end of our show, we bowed to show the audience we were done, and the audience erupted in applause!

# Dance & Drama

By Laura Hudson



# Music

By Nick Summerfeld

Expression is important. I feel that learning to express oneself is incredibly valuable, whether that be creatively or through simple communication. Starting the class with our 'Expression Circle' is such a simple, but great exercise which many of the kids really come to love as the year progresses.

In Stage 3 and 4 we began the class with asking the children for something that makes them feel happy. To help encourage independent thinking, I asked them to think of something else if any answers were repeated.

We sang through our 'Good Morning Song' slowly as we have some new friends with us, and then moved into our scales. This week we used a variety of animal sounds to different scales. The children hopped like bunnies; oinked like pigs; meowed like cats; and bubbled their lips to try to imitate elephants. Giraffes were a popular suggestion - but I came to realise I had no clue what noise they made!

Once our voices were warm, we had a sing through 'Open Shut Them'. It is a great little exercise to get the children engaged and turn on their thinking caps by doing 'the silly one', which is all the actions but reversed. It is also great for coordination. After this, we moved onto our numbers. We continued working on 8 to 5 and back as the children wrapped their minds around the pattern. They have to think about counting backwards, then forward all while in time, pitch and remembering what comes next!

To continue D.I.Y instruments and sound, we explored 'Pitch' using hydrophones (water in glass jars). Given examples on the piano of 'high' and 'low', the children were given two jars with different volumes of water to create different pitches. They were then asked to identify which pitch was the 'high' pitch. This also encouraged motor movement as the children challenged themselves to take their own lids off the jars.

With the risk of spilling jars, we took it one further and tried to get the water in each of their jars equal to create two sounds at the same pitch which is a great exercise for visual-motor integration - connecting sight with motor movement.

In Stage Two and The Fledglings we warmed up with 'Hokey Pokey' which never fails to get the kids moving and make some smiles around the class. After singing out 'Good Morning Song' we sang through some simple single note scales on 'BA'. After moving into firm favourites 'ABC', 'Open Shut Them' and 'The Sunflower Song' we worked on our step-claps (or for some of The Fledglings, just claps) for 'Gahloomph'. This exercise not only encourages motor movement, but helps build coordination and timing.

To keep with the theme of DIY instruments, we also had some fun with the water and filling up our jars to make different sounds. The Fledglings had free-play amongst the jars which were on the floor, and Stage 2 were each given their own jar. To create a variety of sounds we hit the jars with lids on, and then we took our lids off to see the difference in sound. We also hit the wooden floor and carpet to discover what type of sound that would create.



# Music

By Nick Summerfeld



# Happy Birthday



## **Reddam Early Learning**

would like to wish a very happy birthday to

**Hunter Thompson, Mya MacIver, Isabella Stesel,  
Louis Johnson, Quentin Kwan & Oscar Truong**

who celebrate their special day this week  
and over the weekend.

**We hope you have a fabulous day!**

