

A photograph of three young children at a wooden table. One child is holding a magnifying glass over a small object on the table. Another child is looking at the same object. A third child is also looking down at the table. On the table are several wooden discs with different patterns, some in a wooden bowl. A potted plant is on the left. In the background, there is a sign that says 'Aboriginal Symbol Story Stones'.

REDDAM EARLY LEARNING SCHOOL LINDFIELD NEWSLETTER



REDDAM
ELS

31ST JANUARY 2020

Principal's Message

By Mrs Kath Boyd

Dear Parents,

I offer a very warm welcome to all our returning families and a special salutation to the new children, parents and teachers. We opened our doors on January 7th, and amidst the chaos in our world (bushfires, air pollution and health epidemics) we have had a calm and positive start to the year. The tears at drop off are now dissipating quickly as the children happily get distracted by a loving hug or enticing creative experience. Thank you to all the nurturing teachers who worked alongside me throughout January. The staff here view each child as *beautiful, powerful, competent, creative, curious* and *full of potential*. Furthermore, they recognise that their job as Reggio Emilia Inspired Teachers is to "support these qualities and to challenge children in appropriate ways." (L. Cadwell) What a fortunate community to have such passionate professionals guiding their children!

The teaching teams prepared a variety of dynamic learning opportunities for the children during the holiday break and are thrilled to be back in the classroom and getting to know their new 'students'. Our littlest friends in Stage 1 are settling in beautifully and adore exploring the newly renovated S1/S2 outdoor space. The Stage 2 children have embraced the daily lessons that are presented by our Specialist Teachers with gusto. Our Stage 3 and Stage 4 children have been remarkably grown-up for their teachers, who keep telling me how impressed they are with the maturity, focus and helpfulness the children are displaying.

We are very much looking forward to the final stages of the building works being completed and Stage 3 relocating to their new learning space. I will keep you up-to-date with any relevant information as it comes to hand. It is inspiring to walk around this lush campus, reflecting upon the journey this school has been on and imagining the exciting future and possibilities that lay ahead.

Our **Parent Information Evening** is being held on **Tuesday 4th February** (Week 2) from 6:30 – 8.30pm. This information evening is extremely important and we do urge one if not both parents to attend. It enables parents to get to know their child's teachers; gain insight into the practical workings of the classroom and ELS; understand the daily routine; ask questions; discover ways in which all the family can be involved and, *most importantly*, meet other parents. Please note that this is a child-free event.

On this Information Evening each Core Teacher will highlight the importance of open communication channels between home and school. When we share information, everyone can be aware of children's strengths and challenges and can work together to support children's social and emotional wellbeing.

Principal's Message Continued...

"Communicating together involves a two-way sharing of information and helps to develop a common understanding, meaning it is easier for parents and teachers to support one another. Effective communication also helps families and teachers to build a trusting partnership and develop honest and respectful relationships. When families and teachers have a genuine interest in one another, people are able to be open about their thoughts and feelings. When families communicate effectively, this allows early childhood staff to understand what is happening at home or how they would like their children's behaviour managed in the service. When teachers communicate effectively, parents and carers are able to understand what is happening in their child's day and how they are progressing at the service."

(Kid's Matter – 2020)

Parents are encouraged to:

1. Chat with your child's Core Teacher during Morning Drop Off or in the afternoon before 4pm.

*Messages given to Teachers (listed below) between 4pm – 6pm will be passed onto Core Teachers the next morning.

2. Email your child's Core Teacher if you are unable to chat in person or if information needs to be shared throughout the day:

Stage 1	natalie.horstman@reddamels.com.au
Stage 2	skye.parker@reddamels.com.au
Stage 3R	lucy.beck@reddamels.com.au
Stage 3E	sara.haddadi@reddamels.com.au
Stage 4R	lanneke.jones@reddamels.com.au
Stage 4E	lauren.hall@reddamels.com.au

3. Contact Lisa or myself on (02) 9415 8099 or the following email addresses if something urgent arises:

Enrolments Officer / Principal's PA lisa.bates@reddamels.com.au

Principal kath.boyd@reddamels.com.au

4. Email your child's Core Teacher or myself if you require a private meeting.

5. Read and contribute to the **Learning Journals & Student Observations** (Tapestry), **Kiosk Messages** (posted by the Core Teacher on the class iPad when necessary), the **Weekly Reddam Newsletter**, **Provocation Displays** and **emails** from your Core Teacher, Lisa or me.

6. Note information that is displayed on or near the sign-in desks.

Wishing you all a peaceful weekend...enjoy the cool change.



Welcome to 2020 beautiful Stage 1 families! Manoela, Heather and I (Natalie) are thrilled to be teaching your little ones. This term we are going to provide opportunities for these young children to explore the variety of indoor/outdoor learning spaces and participate in experiences aimed at enhancing their social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills. Over the past three weeks we have welcomed Myra, Sarah, Joanna, Clement and Felix into our class - how fabulous!

During our first week (Week A) we focused on settling the children and building genuine relationships between the children and between teachers & the children. There were lots of cuddles offered as some children had never been away from their parents before. We aim for the children to feel a sense of belonging in the classroom and in the surrounding play areas. We invited the children to play outside in the sand pit with buckets and spades and explore their sensory skills by holding sand between their fingertips. Some even attempted to taste the sand . . . yum yum!

Musical instruments such as the xylophone were popular amongst the children, and helped them settle after the morning drop off. The vegetable stacker was also well used - enhancing the children's fine motor skills through play. We have a couple of crawlers in Stage 1 and it's been lovely it's been lovely witnessing them become more independent and comfortable in this environment. As part of our group time we sang a variety of Nursery Rhymes which the children enjoyed. The 'Old Macdonald had a Farm' interactive puppet show was also a hit with a couple of children making the different sounds of the animals.

During Week B we experienced the inaugural Playball session with Coach Lauren (Monday), Simply Fun with Coach Alex (Tuesday) and Drama with Xanthe (Thursday). As the classes progressed the children warmed up and started to participate. We provided play dough for the children to manipulate, adding wooden paddle pop and loose parts to enhance the experience.

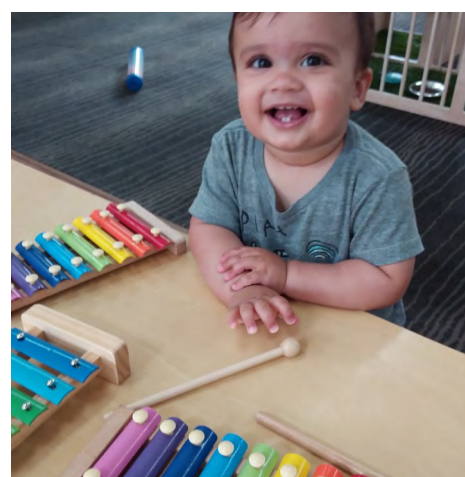
To celebrate Chinese New Year this week (Week C) the children explored their creativity by using cotton buds and sponges as their painting tools. Together with red and yellow paint they created artworks which represent fireworks. To develop their fine motor skills the children also painted with pegs. Next week we will start to investigate the theme 'Who am I?'.

Looking forward to a great Term 1 and beyond!

Natalie, Manoela & Heather



Stage 1: Exploring Our New Environment



Stage 1: Forging Friendships



Stage 1: Let's Explore the Outdoors!



Stage 1: Chinese New Year Artwork



Welcome everyone to the New Year! Stage 2 families thank you for sharing your holiday stories and photos as a launching point for the children's transition into school life. It is a massive step in development for our two year olds to venture out into the world and learn to trust new adults, make new connections with their peers, explore new challenges and even for some of our new friends, learn a new language. This has presented as the most challenging aspect for our new friends, who are just learning to speak English. In the spirit of inclusion, cultural diversity, familiarity and finding a shared perspective we explored the country of China which happily coincided with Chinese New Year.

The rich culture of China gave us an opportunity to celebrate the customs around this holiday by making fans, as an expression of good luck, fashion and generosity. We set to work on a class art project making a Dragon using thirteen joints as it is considered auspicious. Charity made an amazing foaming dragon that used the chemical reaction between bi-carbonate soda and vinegar to bring magic and drama to our imagination. We discovered the colours of red and gold are considered to be lucky and we used these colours to create a good luck symbol to bring in the New Year. We experimented with water dyed red and its effect on noodles using the scientific method to imagine, experiment and discover. What is a New Year without fireworks? The Stage 2 children were given the opportunity to light up their page with sparkles of all colours representing the glittering show that inspires us for the year ahead.

Our literacy program was complemented by a number of books, the first explaining the customs of Chinese New Year such as cleaning, polishing, getting haircuts, cooking dumplings, a picture tour of Beijing, the Story of Mulan and lastly a book of Chinese proverbs illustrated such as 'The Panda and their Chopsticks' which spoke of two tables of pandas. Both tables had ridiculously long chopsticks. The first table all the pandas were only helping themselves which meant chaos, chopsticks and food were flying everywhere, no panda's were eating and getting crankier as they got hungrier. In the second room the other table of panda's were using their giant chopsticks to take it in turns calmly feeding each other! There was no mess, no waste and everyone had their belly full in no time. This beautiful fable underpins a shared cultural value between Australia, China and wider humanity that we wished to share in the microcosm of our classroom; together we are better with co-operation, care and we can all have our needs met moving into the future millenia.

Our Provocation this term, 'All About Me' will inspire the children to explore aspects of their identity and as the children grow in their knowledge, their teachers will grow alongside them. In class, the children have been spending time sharing information about themselves and their families with the class, building a sense of belonging and connectedness to their school environment.

Have a wonderful weekend,

Skye, Pawinee, Charity, Connie, Rebecca



Stage 2: Chinese New Year Celebrations



Stage 2: Exploring Our New Environment



Stage 2: Building Friendships & Exploring Our Environment



Hello Reddam Families!

January has certainly been eventful with the Stage 3 children engaging in a busy and versatile vacation care program over January.

The past three weeks started with introducing children to a new routine in Stage 3. To feel safe and secure, children need a consistent routine throughout the day. We have learnt to hang our bags on our lockers and put our drink bottles on the trolley and get started for the day! We have also had a strong focus on 'Belonging' to make children and families feel respected, comfortable and valued in our classroom. The Early Years Learning Framework states these trusting relationships are incredibly important for children's development and wellbeing. "In Early Childhood and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. It also shapes who children are and who they can become". To build on this sense of belonging, each morning we sing a 'Good Morning' song to each child as a group to build this sense of community. And then we read a story together to develop literacy but also as a time of joy and laughter.

The start of our term began with reading stories about Australian Animals, talking about fire and what the Fire Brigade do. This provocation was decided as important for the children due to the recent bushfires all around Australia. We had fire engines in our construction area and also wooden blocks, cylinders and fireman costumes. This sparked a keen engagement from the class! The children turned the cylinders into 'water hoses' and enjoyed making 'nee naw' sounds, putting on their uniform and rushing to put out fires! This dramatic play is so rich and incredibly important for children's development. "Children use play to investigate, imagine and explore ideas." (Early Years Learning Framework, Outcome 4.1, p.37) Through this rich engagement we see how capable and knowledgeable children are and the amazing ways they share this knowledge.

"The child is made of one hundred. The child has one hundred languages. A hundred hands. A hundred thoughts. A hundred ways of thinking. Of playing. Of speaking." (Loris Malaguzzi)

This then sparked an investigation into transport over the next week into all sorts of transport including cars, trains, and trucks.

The children have also demonstrated this rich imagination and understanding of the world with the dollies and doctors kit. They loved using the stethoscope to check their friend's heart and give baby medicine and wrap her up.

As we are developing self-help skills and promoting independence in Stage 3, the children have engaged in intentional fine motor experiences to strengthen the use of the small muscles in hands and fingers. The children investigated droppers by using them to splatter watercolor on their paper to create a unique artwork.

We have also had moments of pure joy, like James, Henry and Oscar jumping in water puddles after the rain and exploring how it got there!

Our classroom is a kind space where we are learning to:

- Share and take turns
- Listen to our teacher and friends when they are speaking
- Use 'gentle hands'
- Say sorry when necessary
- Respect our friends and teachers
- Respect our books and resources
- Wash our hands with soap after going to the toilet and before eating
- Recognise emotions
- Build a positive self-identity/self esteem
- Feel a sense of safety and belonging
- Give everything a go and try our very best
- Have fun!

We look forward to all of the learning, joy and investigations to take place this term!

Lucy, Rebecca, Bo, Vivian and Doris

Stage 3R: Dramatic Play: Bushfire Rescue



Stage 3R: Developing Numeracy Skills: Making Playdough



Stage 3R: Exploring Numeracy & Measurement



Stage 3R: Language & Literacy



Stage 3R: Fine Motor Skills



Welcome back to school and what a fabulous start to the year! It has been wonderful to see our new Stage 3E children building new friendships, developing connections with their educators and familiarising themselves with their new classroom and routine. These past three weeks we have been learning about the children's individual interests and what the children did during their vacation.

We commenced **Week A** by sharing what we did during our summer break. The beach was a big theme with many of our children spending warm summer days building sandcastles and riding the waves. Creative experiences involved painting still life sea creatures using water colour paint. As we did this, we learned about the different sea creatures which inhabit the coastline of Australia. We also looked at the different layers of the ocean and the creatures that inhabit each layer. Other experiences included exploring sea themed slime, washing sea creatures at our sea rescue station and we did a spot of fishing at our water play station. Books centred around ocean and beach themes with sea creatures as the focus. Our favourite book of the week was titled *Magic Beach* by Alison Lester. The story sets the scene of a beach as a place of discovery where rockpools and the surf are extraordinary places and where sand sculptures are more than just castles.

Guided by the children's interests, during **Week B** we focused on insects and minibeasts. Our journey began with a look at the lifecycle of a honeybee. We learned about the different types of bees that inhabit a hive and the important roles that they all play. Our nectar transfer station was a hit with the children eagerly using small pipets to transfer nectar from a jar to smaller containers, whilst doing so they developed hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. Mid-week we looked at the lifecycle of a butterfly, commencing with the egg, then moving to the larva, the pupa or chrysalis then emerging as a butterfly. We noticed the beautiful colours and the symmetry of a butterfly's wings, inspired by this we created symmetrical butterfly paintings. Following on from our interest in butterflies, we created a butterfly small world garden with a range of stunning butterflies. Our maths focus for the week involved sorting and counting butterflies and a range of insects and minibeasts.

Our final week (**Week C**) of vacation care revolved around Australia Day celebrations as the children eagerly talked about what they might be doing during the public holiday long weekend. We helped to develop an awareness of the up and coming public holiday with experience including damper making, exploring Aboriginal story stones, investigating native Australian wildlife and sea creatures and learning about native flora and fauna. It was wonderful to see the children so enthusiastically exploring these experiences in preparation for Australia Day.

Our Provocation this term, 'All About Me' will inspire the children to explore aspects of their identity and as the children grow in their knowledge, their teachers will grow alongside them. In class, the children have been spending time sharing information about themselves and their families with the class. Building a sense of belonging and connectedness to their school environment.

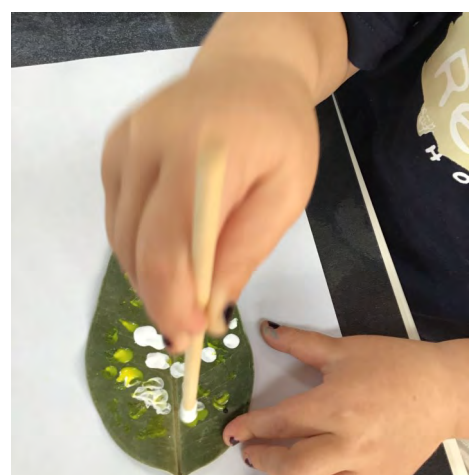
Have a lovely weekend!

Sara & Justin

PS: Our sincere thanks to Miss Joselyn for compiling this article for the first newsletter of 2020. Jos is currently taking Carer's Leave and we wish her whole family all the best during this difficult time. Congratulation to Sara & Justin for the outstanding educational experiences they have provided for the Stage 3 children over the past three weeks.



Stage 3E: Celebrating Australia Day



Stage 3E: Sea Creature Rescue Station



Stage 3E: Insects & Minibeasts: Butterfly Garden



Stage 3E: Insects & Minibeasts: Nectar Transfer Station



Stage 3E: Painting & Drawing Insects



Welcome to a brand new year and we hope that all of our families have had a relaxing holiday period. During the month of January the Stage 4 children have engaged with experiences that centre around our beautiful country of Australia. Our storybooks, music sessions and classroom experiences have invited the children to explore animals, traditions, indigenous cultures and broaden their understanding of how our country is made up of states and territories.

"Music enhances the education of our children by helping them to make connections and broadening the depth with which they think and feel. If we are to hope for a society of culturally literate people, music must be a vital part of our children's education." (Yo-Yo Ma - Cellist)

The past three weeks have introduced the children to music through singing, movement and body percussion to consolidate our understanding of beat and rhythm. Our Australian theme is helping the children develop a sense of belonging to our world. The music experiences include *Inanay from the Torres Strait in Yorta Yorta* with clapsticks and percussion instruments; a call and response song about a little boy, Malokay; *Home Among the Gumtrees* helped us learn about our bushland home; and Tommy the Termite who helped the Aboriginals make their instruments. Australia Day is approaching and we have used the opportunity to consolidate the Australian theme by learning the National Anthem, and the popular song *I am, You are, We are Australian*.

Reading together is an important part of each day, helping to spark your child's imagination and stimulate curiosity. We have discussed what 'Dreamtime Stories' are, and indigenous stories of how the earth came to be. Our first Dreamtime Story was called *How the Birds Got Their Colours*. We then looked at photos of some colourful birds from Australia including the familiar rainbow lorikeet, rosella, finch and king parrot. *When the Snake Bites the Sun* tells us that in the beginning there was a big and little sun. Later the children were invited to make their own snakes by winding colourful wool around a cardboard snake shape.

We read *Jinormous Jack*, *Turtle Song* and *Coral Trail*, *Ribbit the Frog*, and Australian Classics including *Possum Magic* by Mem Fox. We followed Grandma Poss and Hush around the capital cities of Australia as they searched for 'people food' to make Hush visible again. One of the food items was a vegemite sandwich. As a cooking experience the children were invited to make their own vegemite sandwiches as a mid-morning snack.

In our atelier the children were inspired by Australian flora and fauna and Aboriginal art techniques to create their masterpieces. The children created their own interpretations of Uluru using oil pastels, with a focus on creating the ground, rock and sky, and studying the earth tones. The class enjoyed painting gum tree blossoms, printing with forks to create bottlebrush and grevillea flowers, dot painting, and creating didgeridoos to play. In a short amount of time the children have demonstrated a lot of concentration and patience as they learn to create a finished artwork. It's wonderful to see the children persisting with each technique and being proud of their efforts.

(Continued on next page)

Our classroom experiences included small world play with Australian animals and natural materials where the children enjoyed role-playing and creating homes for each animal. The children also learnt how the Aboriginals use symbols instead of words to write their stories and communicate. The children were invited to draw all of the different lines and shapes that represented animals, weather, nature and people, enhancing their pre-writing skills. Cooking experiences were also facilitated where the children learnt about measuring, manipulated utensils and took turns to make their own damper bread and a delicious lamington man covered in chocolate and coconut, inspired by our storybook *The Lamington Man*, an Aussie version of the classic tale of the *Gingerbread Man* by Kel Richards.

We have also been learning to implement our classroom guidelines in Stage 4. These include:

- Using our manners "please" and "thank you"
- Using gentle hands with our resources and each other
- Walking in our classroom
- Showing kindness and respect to each other
- Following step-by-step instructions from the teachers
- Self-help skills such as recognising our belongings and toileting hygiene/hand washing
- Self-regulating and recognising our emotions

The Stage 4 teaching team is looking forward to meeting all our parents at the Parent Information Evening on Tuesday 4th February from 6.30pm.

Lauren, Lanneke, Luan and Jenny



Stage 4: Acting Out Wombat Stew



Stage 4: Australian-Themed Cooking Experience



Stage 4: Celebrating Lunar New Year: Year of the Rat



Stage 4: Incorporating Australia into Our Artwork



Stage 4: Sensory & Manipulation



Stage 4: Fine Motor Experiences



Dear Parents,

Stage 2: This was the second Mandarin Lesson in 2020 for the children in Stage 2. When I entered the classroom, the teachers encouraged all the children to sit on the mat. I was so impressed with the way these sweet children moved to the floor ready to learn. We started by saying "Hello" (ni hao) in Chinese. More than six children started to say "ni hao" and interacted with me very well. Next, we read a book, named "NI HAO". The children were happy to help me turn the pages. During the music time, we continued to learn the 'Happy Song'. Stage 2 were glad to follow the rhythm, clap their hands and stomp their feet.

Stage 3 reviewed how to greet each other in Chinese by passing and catching a ball. It looked like most of the children have grasped how to say "ni hao" (hello). We then started to learn family members. We learnt how to say dad (ba ba) and mum (ma ma) in Chinese with toys. Afterwards, we learnt a sentence, "ni hao, ba ba!" (hello dad). We used the Peppa Pig family to practise the sentence. At the end of the lesson, we enjoyed music.

In **Stage 4**, we started to review greeting words. The children have grasped how to say 'hello' (ni hao), 'good morning' (zao shang hao), 'good evening' (wan shang hao) and 'how are you' (ni hao ma). However, they did not know how to say 'good afternoon' in Mandarin. We learnt it and then practised it with a game. Next, we reviewed how to say different colors in Chinese. We reviewed red (hong se), green (lǜ se), blue (lan se), and yellow (huang se). We played the color memory game. It was so fun and the children were greatly involved in the learning process and the game. The second target was to learn/review fruit. We focused on pear (li) and grape (pu tao). With the help of the stories, it was quite easy for children to memorize the two words.

The lessons are going quite well. Although the levels were different among those 3 stages, the children are making progress based on their own levels - what a great start to the year.



Hi champs!

Lauren taught us how to play the “shark and the stingray” game. The sharks and the stingrays cross over the ocean without “boofing” into each other. Lauren then went faster and faster and we were running around in circles. Crazy!!

We all found our own hoop and Lauren instructed us what to do with the hoop – jump into the hoop, jump out of the hoop, jump over the hoop, walk around the hoop, etc. We all had a turn to spin the hoop, wait for the hoop to fall onto the ground and jump in. Wait, wait, wait and jump!

Doughnuts! We all asked to catch doughnuts – definitely one of our best games!

Lauren placed some hurdles on the court and we did some throwing **OVER** the hurdles in front of us. Then, we did some **ROLLING UNDER** the hurdles. Lauren held up a hoop and we threw our balls **THROUGH** the hoop.

Lauren set up an obstacle course for us with hurdles, beanbags, tunnel and hoops and we tried to cross the circuit from one piece of equipment to another, always remembering to cheer for our little friends. YAY! That's how good sports behave!

Hot balls..... we ran around the court and Lauren rolled “hot balls” towards our feet. We need to really use footwork skills and try our best to dodge the balls.

Lauren divided us into two relay teams, using a beanbag as a baton. She set up hurdles for both teams and we had races jumping over the hurdles like real big kids!! Lauren always tells us “it's not important who wins, it's just awesome to have some fun and be a true sport”.

Creep crawly.....ask your children!

See you next week champs!

Lauren



Hello wonderful Reddam ELS Lindfield families, I am thrilled to be returning to the beautiful campus for specialist music classes in 2020. I was excited to meet some fresh new faces and greet lots of familiar ones - my goodness how everybody has grown over the break - I couldn't quite believe it!

This week, rather than working on a particular theme for our lessons, we took the opportunity for a relaxed series of classes where we could all slowly get back into the swing of things. I introduced a new 'Hello/ Goodbye' song to each class and we will all sing it together at the beginning and end of every class this year.

"Hello, hello, hello everyone. Hello, hello, I'm glad you're here today! Hello, hello, hello everyone. Hello, hello, it's time for us to play!"

Stage 1 - Stage 1 settled into music class so easily, it's as if they'd been doing it their entire lives! Easton chilled out at the back of the group, making himself comfortable on some cushions - singing and smiling along to *Twinkle, Twinkle* while Leon laughed and danced his way through *Baby Shark*. Joanna watched me carefully for the first 10 mins before deciding music class was okay by her and requesting *Incy Wincy Spider*.

Stage 2 - I was enthusiastically greeted by Grace and Jasper in the Stage 2 classroom. Jack and Ellie also ran to me and sat down full of excitement as soon as I walked through the door! Ryan loved singing along to *Wheels on the Bus* and everyone thought it was very funny when I started squealing during the lyric *The Babies on the Bus go Waaaahhhhh...* Bria requested *Baa Baa Black Sheep* and sang and swayed her way through the entire song.

Stage 3 - 3R had a lovely mix of old and new faces in today's class and, accordingly we did some old and new material! Xavi remained engaged for the entire music lesson today and suggested some excellent animals during his favourite *Sleeping Bunnies*. Cameryn picked up our new *Hello/Goodbye* song very quickly and was singing along after hearing it only once (very impressive!). Justin absolutely loved the session - clapping and squealing with delight after every song!

3E greeted me by singing a song they had learned during the week in Japanese - it was wonderful! Eleanor was very interested in my Ukulele and so I showed the class how to gently strum a chord and almost everybody decided they would like to have a try! Ryunosuke requested *Baby Shark* right away and Christabelle wanted to sing *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* - of course we had to do both!

Stage 4 - Stage 4 began by learning the *Hello Song* and picked it up so quickly that after repeating it only once, everybody was singing along! Next we sang the *Name Song*. I like to do this song with Stage 4 from the first day of term one with the aim that every child will be able to sing "My name is _____" confidently in front of the class by the end of Term 2. This song is a test in both confidence and active listening skills as it is a call-and-response song. Today Xavier was so incredibly focussed and even helped his new classmates sing their names so after we had sung everybody's name, he got to choose which song we sang next. He chose *Karate Stop* a dancing game that requires the children to freeze whenever I sing the word "STOP" or any word that rhymes with it!

I'm looking forward to a wonderful year at your fabulous ELS - Chloe



Hi everyone, it's Alex, I'm the instructor from Simply Fun who has had the pleasure of teaching your children this week!

We began all of our lessons this week with singing self introductions to get everybody relaxed, acquainted, and ready to move into the exercises with confidence. We set our warm up dances to music in order to get the children familiar with the concepts of rhythm and flow. For the younger age groups our warm up songs involved learning the body parts and animals, for our older age groups we looked at different ways of moving in order to get all of the major muscle groups warm. I was very impressed at how quickly everyone got into the warm up and how enthusiastic they all were.

After our warm up we went into some basic stretches, also set to music. Our stretching routine this week was not particularly intensive, we're going to build on it throughout the term to increase their flexibility in a safe and gradual manner. Our stretching song this week was *Baby Shark*, which despite being slightly outdated at this point was an absolute hit with everybody! It was very cute to hear some of the students singing along.

We began the program this week with some rather challenging exercises, despite this everybody persevered and put their all into every activity. The youngest age groups worked on their fine motor skills, the middle age groups worked on some educational concepts, and the eldest age groups worked on gross motor skills. We will further build on the skills we learnt this week in week two, I hope they can show off their new found abilities to you at home!

It was then time for what seemed to be their favourite part of the lesson; the circuit! Using a variety of fun equipment we built a circuit that challenged their gross motor skills, coordination, balance, and adaptability. There were lots of giggles and lots of wobbles, and for their first go at the obstacle course they all did extremely well.

The older age groups were then introduced to Creative Dance, whilst the little ones had some fun with the parachute. Our dance section began by breaking down a complex move into easily understandable parts which we drilled for a while, before moving into a more creative flow session. Throughout the dance all of us counted together, counting in time to the music builds on the concepts of rhythm, beat, and timing, allowing for better precision when setting dance moves to music.

We finished up our lessons with a goodbye song, bringing everyone back together and providing a relaxing end to a series of fast-paced activities.

Overall I was very impressed with everybody's performance this week, they were a joy to teach and I can't wait to see them again soon!



How exciting to be joining you again for Drama Lessons at Reddam ELS Lindfield. We always start drama lessons with parachute games. This week, after singing our Hello Song, we flew like aeroplanes and landed on a "rainbow". The children were then asked what colour they were sitting on and what was something of that colour. We then did some shaking - fast and slow, starting and stopping, up and down, and we always finish with going under (which they love!). Jack from Stage 2 always looks forward to going under the parachute!

This week we explored **"What is drama?"** To help us this week we had a visit from Ballet Bear in Stage 1, 2 and 3. Stage 4 explored these concepts without Ballet Bear to help them.

Actors need to be good at copying. We copy different people so we can become that character. Ballet Bear loves to play "Ballet Bear says". We play games like "Ballet Bear says" in drama to encourage spatial and body awareness. To play, Ballet Bear called out things like "touch your nose", "clap your hands", and "tickle your toes", and the children were encouraged to copy. For Stage 2 and up, if Ballet Bear didn't say "Ballet Bear says..." the children were told not to copy! This caused a lot of giggling - especially in Stage 3.

Ballet Bear then wanted to see if we could be different characters. **Actors have to be good at pretending.** The children became astronauts walking on the moon, superheroes (flying through the woods - suggested by Viggo, Stage 3), elephants, and giraffes. We added in, for Stage 3, a "freeze" component, where the children stopped when Ballet Bear stopped!

We then explored our emotions. **Actors need to be able to show their emotions.** We discussed where we show emotions? (on our faces). The children showed me (and Ballet Bear) angry, sad, confused, bored, shocked, excited, and happy. Edie from Stage 4 has a very convincing angry face!

We then explored space. **Actors need to have good spatial awareness.** The children spread into their own space, and then pantomimed being stuck in a box. Stage 2 and 3 started in a very small box, that eventually grew into a big one. Stage 4 started big, and became small. Stage 4 were encouraged to use their faces to express how they felt about the box shrinking, and how they would break out when the box was at its smallest. Were they scared to be stuck? Sore? Angry? After breaking out of our box, I called out various pairings for Stage 4 like "touch the floor with only 1 hand and 1 foot", "put 4 little fingers together", or "put 2 ears together" to further our work with spatial awareness.

We then played "Pass the ball" in Stages 2 & 3, and "What's the goo for you?" in Stage 4. This is two variations of the same game to encourage imaginative play and spatial awareness. In Stage 2 and 3, an imaginary ball was passed around the circle. The children were encouraged to throw the ball in the air and catch it, and bounce it on the floor. We then passed an imaginary kitten around the circle. We discussed: how would we hold the kitten? Would we be gentle or rough? In Stage 4, I started off with some imaginary magical goo that could be changed into anything! The goo was passed around the circle, and the children were asked "what's the goo for you?" Some cool suggestions were a butterfly, a crown, a witch, a banana, some watermelon, and Elsa.

What a brilliant start to 2020 :)

