



Welcome to the first 1S Newsletter of 2017

The children have transitioned smoothly from Prep and have fully embraced all that the class one offers. This term we have begun to learn the many uses of block crayons for drawing and there has been much excitement as new colours are offered for their individual crayon packs.

We have been working in the Steiner three-day rhythm, with the oral story telling repeated over three days, accompanied by drawing and writing on day two and three. The importance of sleep in the learning process is key in the philosophy and enables the children to fully absorb the messages and teaching of the stories, this is the reason why stories are repeated.

The Grimms fairy tales we use support the development of imagination, and in turn, intellect as the children form the images of the story in their own way. The children show great listening skills and I believe this is a result of the story telling they have experienced in the Prep year. They already show a real love of literature and immerse themselves wholeheartedly in the stories they hear, it is a delight to see. Your child may have repeated some of their drawing and writing with you at home, their progress in only five weeks has been great to watch.

We are moving from an introduction to the alphabet through our literacy block into number recognition and correspondence, exploring Roman numerals alongside Arabic numbers. The Roman numerals give a strong pictorial representation of number value, for example as 4 is shown as IIII, (which is one reason why 4 is not shown as IV) and support our number rhymes and activities. In every aspect of the curriculum we work with the senses and use whole body movements to reinforce learning. This is particularly true in Form Drawing, where we move through straight lines and curves, 'drawing' in the air with bold, large movements before applying this to chalk or crayon drawings. By exploring straight and curved lines this way we support the skills required for correct, confident writing later. Form drawing also helps to develop spatial awareness and fine motor skills. It is often used in art therapy too as it is a 'grounding' activity. The children are really enjoying this aspect of the curriculum and have asked for larger paper sheets to use so that they can continue their patterns in grand scale. Morning Circle with its rhythms and specific movements is a crucial part of every day. One of our verses is, "I am a strong and mighty tree" and accompanied by physical movements to emphasise the straightness and strength. Of course, this is also about the children themselves being strong and ready for each day.

We are building on the children's earlier experiences of Wet On Wet painting now by looking at the impact colours have upon each other and also upon ourselves as we use them; the feelings they illicit and how they can be used to create warmth, coolness or shape. In our craft and eurhythmy we complement the curriculum learning with similar skills- the 'in and out' motion of the loom weaving for our recorder cases and the pattern making with the coloured wool mirroring the hand movements we are using for our early writing and form drawing. Focusing on physical balance and the imagination to climb the 'witch's ladder' and move rhythmically in the shapes of our form drawing. Every aspect of

learning is linked to support and cement the learning experiences the children need and enjoy at this stage in their physical, emotional and intellectual development.

Last week Wolfgang, a lecturer with 30 years' experience at the Melbourne Steiner Seminar, offered our parents a talk about Steiner education for primary children, with a key focus on the Class one age group. Feedback from those who attended has been very positive and we are hoping to provide a written summary of the key points discussed for everyone soon.

As we continue to build the secure rhythms and routines within which the children can thrive and develop on their school journey I ask for your support to ensure the children arrive in time to start their day with their classmates at 9am, and are collected promptly at 3.20pm. Children arriving late regularly can feel as though they have missed something or feel self-conscious because the Morning Circle has commenced without them, this can cause more anxiety than you may imagine and should be avoided if at all possible.

I now have a school email account (mason.joanne.j@edumail.vic.gov.au) for non-urgent contact, I check this at least once daily. I politely request that you do not contact me on my personal mobile number as I find this intrusive when I am at home, especially late at night and I try not to use my phone during school hours. Any urgent messages and calls can be passed to me via the school office.

It has been so helpful to meet many of you at the recent Parent Teacher evenings. If you were unable to attend please let me know of an alternative time to talk. It is invaluable to hear your concerns, share your knowledge of your child and gain an understanding of each one outside of school. Later in the year I will be able to meet with you all again to share my experiences of teaching and knowing your child as a member of class one. Thank you for your continued support.

Blessings

Joanne