

School Newsletter

March 2017



Spring is a time associated with growth, and we are heartened by the developments and progress we see in the children around school each day. Let's continue to encourage and support their curiosity, happiness, and eagerness to learn at home and school.

School Director's message

Dear parents and children,

Flowers, butterflies, chicks, and bunnies are starting to pop up around school, which is the first sign that spring is upon us! We're now busy preparing for the month of April and look forward to seeing all of the children in their spring bonnets at our Easter parade on **Thursday, 13 April**. We hope you're getting creative with the children at home and having fun together on their bonnet designs. There will be festive activities for the children on that day and then parents are invited to attend the parade later in the morning. Don't forget that our afternoon students are requested to join the morning session on 13 April, so that all Mills students can party together.

In May we will celebrate Book Week. Communication, language, and literature are highly valued at Mills, and we encourage a love of exploring books in all of our students. Reading builds imagination, improves logic, reasoning, and critical thinking skills, and increases the range and depth of children's vocabulary, sentence structure, and communication. Book Week 2017 will focus on Dr Seuss and his wonderfully wacky rhyming stories. Rhyming words help develop a child's phonemic awareness (the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words), and many of the Book Week activities will be fuelled by phonemic exercises delivered during class time also. There will be ample opportunity for the children to dress up, perform, create stories, and other fun activities and competitions throughout that week. We hope to have a few guest authors visit school during Book Week and also welcome parents reading to the students too.

Music appreciation is also an important element of our curriculum at Mills. Studies have shown that musical experiences in early childhood can accelerate brain development, particularly in the areas of language acquisition and reading skills. Music also helps strengthen memory skills, confidence, and self-expression. It's no wonder the students have been delighted with our new music corner in the Wonder Room, where they can explore the wide range of musical instruments during free play sessions! It's encouraging to watch their enthusiasm and joy during these periods.



During March, the students completed their second Topic Assessment of Term 2, and I welcome the updates provided by their teachers who are increasingly pleased with the progress they are seeing in school. Progress Records and Portfolios are currently being reviewed and completed, recording accomplishments to date. These documents will be sent home during the Easter holidays. We hope you will be as proud of your child's achievements as we are. Please remember to send the Progress Records and Portfolios back to school after the holidays as we update them each week.



We were delighted to hear recently that the toys, clothes, stationery, and baby items, donated by our generous parents and students during Care for All Things week, had arrived at Agtangao Day Development Centre in the Philippines. Such occasions are a valuable opportunity for students to consider others in need and to reflect on the many things we take for granted each day. We appreciate your support of these school initiatives and thank you for your kindness. A big thank you also to our generous Mills staff for covering the cost of transporting the items to the Philippines.



Huge congratulations to the Mills students who participated in the first LCM Speech Festival recently. It takes focus, practice, and strength of character to stand up in front of so many people and perform with confidence. Well done, children – you should be very proud of your achievements!



Kind regards,
Ms Deirdre

Updates

School photo day and summer uniform

Please note that our **Annual School Photo Day** will be on **Thursday, 6 April**. It is compulsory that students wear summer uniform on this day, so please confirm your summer uniform orders, if you have not done so already. Please note that patterned socks are not permitted, and students should wear plain white socks.



Lost and found box

Our lost and found box at the administration desk is currently quite full. Please check it for any items you are missing.

Spring Workshops

We have a wide range of Storytelling, Cooking, Musical Theatre, Art, and Phonics workshops on offer. If you are in Hong Kong from 18 to 22 April, this is a great way to keep the children happy and engaged in their learning. Visit our website for our Spring Workshops information.



Summer Workshops

Lots of families are already planning ahead to prevent summer learning loss, and are enrolling in our comprehensive range of workshops which run from 3 July to 11 August. Visit our website for more information about our summer programme.



Playgroup

Dear Playgroup Junior and Playgroup parents,

This month has been dedicated to learning all about the wonders of springtime. Through songs, games, and artwork, we have explored various spring animals such as butterflies, ladybugs, bunnies, and ducks, as well as getting interactive with our sensory bins filled with flowers and fun little critters hiding within.

With a few new faces joining Playgroup this month (mine included!), it's a joy to see new friendships blossoming every day, as well as students helping one another out in getting to know the routines and transitioning between activities.

With Easter just around the corner, we look forward to bringing even more festive spirit into the classroom and making some extra special artworks to bring home for the holidays. Be sure to check out what we've been up to in March on our dedicated display board near the front desk!

Hugs and kisses,
Ms Kate



Pre-Nursery (PN)

Dear parents and children,

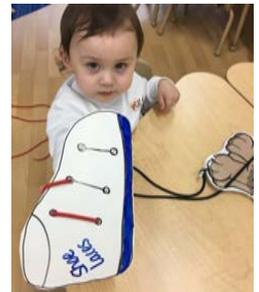
This month has been a very busy one. We've been reviewing all the different things we have learnt to do this year, from running and jumping, painting and drawing, to learning to put on our own shoes and wash our hands. The children love trying to do things for themselves – it increases their sense of independence and confidence whilst going about their daily routines. We encourage everyone to keep up the good work, especially with putting on shoes in the morning when you arrive at school and are going home.

We really enjoyed the *Rainbow Song* we sang for our spring assembly and hope you did too! It is one of the children's favourite songs learnt in class and we are very proud that they can sing along together. We are also very proud that the children are gaining more confidence and are able to stand up in front of such a big crowd during assemblies. Lots of the PN children are toilet training. If you feel your child is ready, please speak to us directly and we will be able to guide and help you. Don't be worried about accidents; they are normal and happen. Just make sure you put enough spare clothing in their schoolbags.

We hope that you got to spend some precious time as a family on British Mother's Day on Sunday, 26 March. The children were very excited to take home their crafts as a gift for their mums, and were able to tell their teachers how much they loved their mum, which was very sweet to hear!

We are looking forward to April, as we will be celebrating Easter with our bonnet parade. We can't wait to see all the different designs!

Lots of Love,
Ms Emma, Ms Michelle, Ms Rhawnie, Ms Sylvia



K1

Dear parents and children,

It's been another eventful month! Our recent field trip was a great opportunity for the children to explore outside the classroom, and it was lovely to see you. As the children roamed in the natural environment together, it was endearing to see their delight whilst feeling the wet grass and touching the vegetables in the field crops area. These simple, tactile experiences should be valued. They provide a wealth of engaging information and first-hand experience that clearly is absorbing for children. We recommend that you encourage your child to explore in nature freely, as this expands their comprehension and understanding of the beautiful world we live in.

The children have now successfully completed their topic *Jobs People Do* and have moved on to the new topic *Super Seasons*. They've learned that each season has typical weather conditions, specific holidays, festive traditions, and even animal behaviour. They studied each season and quickly learnt the characteristics that make each season different from the others. In order to enhance the children's learning further, we prepared a variety of seasonal sensory play activities, including planting, playing with sand, and making and tasting ice lollies. As you can imagine, the children were very eager to try out all the activities!

We're providing lots of opportunities for the children to explore different materials and develop their imaginations, and their ideas are really blossoming now. We've built a little imaginary play corner in the K1 classroom and the children have named their recent cardboard construction as a 'rocket', 'spaceship', 'castle', 'house', etc.

The students are also becoming increasingly interested in reading activities, and they have started to create stories by looking at the pictures and 'reading' the book to their friends. They are always excited when Mystery Readers come to class – please let us know if you are interested in reading to the children!

Hugs,
Ms Jean, Ms Wanna, Ms Kate



K2

Dear K2 parents and children,

Spring has sprung!

Our recent topic was *The Magic of Science* and the children learnt about primary and secondary colours. We explained that by mixing two primary colours together you create a secondary colour and the children had fun trying it for themselves. Our room was quickly awash with all the colours of the rainbow! From this, they then did an experiment with diluted food colouring and watched how the various coloured dyes soaked up into paper towels and mixed to create new colours. Science really does look like magic at times! They also created coloured fans made from cellophane and explored optical colour mixing. During our Skittles experiment we also experienced



colour mixing when we placed the candy in a circle on a plate, added water, and watched the coloured dyes bleed from the candy and blend together on the plate. Finally, we introduced an apple experiment to find out why apples turn brown. This was a fun science project that allowed the children a chance to explore what happens to fruit when it's cut. There were abundant predictions, observations, and recording of results. They dipped slices of apple into vinegar, milk, salt, water, and lemon juice, and discovered that lemon juice prevents the apples from turning brown.



The children are now focusing on how magnets work. Their studies include learning about the history, different types, and uses of magnets. They've really enjoyed exploring this area and have made some clever observations during various experiments. We also had fun making magnetic fishing games and improved our dexterity during these activities.



In phonics, the children will be learning the sounds *ou – oi – ue – er – ar*. After they have completed these sounds, they will start working in their Phonics Workbook 2 and they will also begin working in their Literacy Workbook soon.



We look forward to lots of exciting new areas of study during the remainder of Term 2.

Ms Franziska and Ms Jasmine

K3

Dear K3 parents and children,



We have had a busy term, full of fun activities! The children continue to work hard and it has been wonderful to see their efforts paying off.

In English, the students are developing their knowledge of compound words, and learning about the structure of stories by using beginning, middle, and ending words, so that their sentences make sense and their stories flow. They continue to complete activities where they write missing words in sentences. They are also developing their reading and writing during literacy classes, and their weekly English dictation exercises have really helped them develop the skill to write simple sentences neatly and accurately.



In Maths, the children have moved on to telling the time. They have started with simple time terminology such as 'o'clock' and 'half past'. We have also been focusing on the sequence of time being 'before' and 'after'. The class has just begun briefly learning about tens and units.



During our Design and Technology lessons, the children have each made a food item relating to our current topic *Health and Nutrition*. The foods were made from crumpled newspaper and then covered in paper mâché. Getting creative can sure be messy and fun! During art sessions the students then painted and decorated their food sculptures. They are now on display outside the classroom for everyone to enjoy, and will go home in the next couple of weeks.



The class has been lucky to have Ms Deirdre come show us how to make a plaster relief as a Mother's Day gift. During this process, the students learnt how to carve their design into a tray of clay and discovered that the letters of their name had to

be carved backwards in order for the text to appear correctly in the final outcome. This was a wonderful way to introduce the concept of positive and negative, and also mirror writing. Once plaster was mixed and poured over the clay carvings, and allowed to dry, we then separated the clay and plaster and the children were delighted to see their plaster relief creations.



I'm encouraging the children to broaden their imaginations and have introduced them to a few Roald Dahl books which I have been reading to them at the end of the day. I ask them questions related to the stories each day and award them House tokens if they can answer the questions correctly. This is a fun way to develop their focus, concentration, and logical thinking, and also encourage them to construct full sentences in answer to questions.

Kind regards,
Ms Tracy

Mandarin

Playgroup Junior and Playgroup

The Playgroup parents and children always enjoy the movement and music sessions. For the theme of *Spring*, we role played being butterflies, birds, frogs and little bees, and the children also learned the song *The Wonderful and Colourful World*. I hope that everyone is enjoying this beautiful season of Spring.

Sze Laoshi (Ms Yan)



Pre-Nursery

Through various stories and activities for our theme *Look What I Can Do*, the children learned new vocabulary such as *painting*, *running*, *bathing*, and *jumping*. They also learned the song *Clap Your Little Hands*, and when the teacher asked "What will you do?" the children were able to give answers such as "I will take a bath and run". They also practised and developed their self-help skills through the activities.

Sze Laoshi (Ms Yan)



K1

For the theme of *Four Seasons*, the children learned to identify different characteristics of the four seasons through sensory play, games, and other class activities. They learned theme-based vocabulary such as *seeds*, *sweater*, etc. In the story *Ants and the Watermelon*, the children learned that watermelon is a popular summer fruit and also discovered how ants are good at problem solving as they worked together to move the watermelon in the story! In sports, the children played *Walk Around a Circle*, and fine tuned their listening skills as they practised how to follow instructions and react quickly when changing from a walking, standing, or sitting position.

Joice Laoshi (Ms Joice)



K2

In the theme *People Who Help Us*, K2 students learned about many occupations, including firefighter, doctor, engineer, nurse, chef, police officer, farmer, and teacher. They learned theme-based vocabulary and practised constructing sentences. During role play activities, the children dressed up as engineers and learned why wearing a helmet is important in this job. They learned that chefs work together to prepare different meals and they discussed different cooking techniques. The students also discussed what they wanted to be when they grew up and demonstrated their understanding of different occupations by asking their classmates questions. They also drew a picture of *themselves in the future*. We hope that all of the children continue to study hard and that their dreams come true.

Fan Laoshi (Miss Selina)



K3

For the theme of *Zoo Animals*, the students learned various animal names including *tiger, lion, elephant, orangutan, giraffe* and *zebra*. They also explored this vocabulary through the story *Zoo*. They followed instructions well and were able to match animal images to the corresponding vocabulary cards. The children also increased their understanding during animal role play games and they learned to sing the *Animal Gymnastics* song. They thoroughly enjoyed this theme.

Sze Laoshi (Miss Yan)

