

I Spy

I Think

I Wonder

Joint Inquiry Adventure

Rendelsham Kindergarten

And Junior Primary Class

(Integrated age levels 3 ½ - 7 years)

OUR INQUIRY ADVENTURE FOCUSES ON ENGAGING CHILDREN TO “SPY – THINK – WONDER”

Children are invited to...

- Find out what’s important to them
- Develop curiosity and a sense of wonder
- Engage in deep and meaningful conversation
- Develop new thinking and questioning
- Develop a sense of responsibility, optimism and gain a greater understanding of connections and their place in the world.

The SPY role builds a sense of fun and excitement as the children take ownership of their learning.

Children will share in

Planning | Decision making | Recording | Mapping | Finding out | Reflection and Evaluation

Integrated age levels 3 ½ - 7 years

Anticipated outcomes include...

Strengthening social skills and networks between school and kindergarten

Learning to notice and observe detail

Understanding and looking at the world from a fresh perspective

Sparking curiosity and interest in the things around us that often go unnoticed

Deepening children’s conversation, thinking and wondering

Engaging in technology with greater confidence and competence

Children’s motivation to discuss, write about and share experiences

Children being engaged through ‘real life’ relevance and displaying a sense of purpose

Children asking new and meaningful questions

This inquiry adventure is not so much about the answers but the thinking and learning that happens along the way. It is also based on the belief that questioning is the foundation of inquiry.

PREPARING FOR THE INQUIRY ADVENTURE

AIM: DEVELOP 3 AREAS

1. **Learning to Notice** (not just look) – we called this spying to add a bit of fun, excitement and discovery. This includes observing detail and noticing from different perspectives.
2. **Developing Thinking** – lots of opportunities for sharing knowledge and new ideas. Learning from each other and raising an awareness of our thinking and learning.
3. **Learning to Wonder – Higher Order Thinking** - posing some tricky questions and developing a questioning culture. Pushing the boundaries and thinking about things in new ways.

ALSO UNDERPINNING THE PROJECT

1. **Technology** - empowering children to use flip video, camera, computer, microscope, web cam etc. to investigate, record and document the learning.
2. **Empowering Children to have ownership of their learning**
3. **The Natural World** - real life relevance and “hands on” exploration
4. **Small Interest Groups** – following passions and catering for different learning styles

GETTING STARTED: STAFF PLANNING AND CHALLENGES

1. **Staff planning** – Staff meet together to discuss and build ideas. We soon became aware of some limitations we might face.
2. **Recognising early challenges** – kindergarten small part time rural centre, Junior Primary teachers share teach, we only coincided 1 or 2 days per week. The school camp would also take a week out, and then we had school holidays and school open day, not to mention the new group of 3 ½ yr olds starting kindly.
3. **To help overcome these challenges** –
We decided there would be times we would be together and other times we would continue separately in our own settings.

EXPLICIT TEACHING ... NOTICING, THINKING AND WONDERING

1. ***What do you notice?*** Looking in a different way, detail, and perspective.
2. ***Thinking*** – Talked about using our brain and how we know things.
3. ***What does wonder mean?***

“When you’re wondering something”

“When you think about something”

“I wonder what I’m going to do at school today”

“When you’re thinking about something but you don’t really know”

“I don’t know what wonder is” said the new 3 ½ yr. old.

CHILDREN TAKING OWNERSHIP OF THEIR LEARNING:

PLANNING, DECISION MAKING

What is a plan?

“You need a book”

“When you don’t know what you are doing, then you write it down.”

Brainstorming ideas

Where could we go spying?

What might we need to help us?

The kindy and school children gathered together in small groups to record their ideas through their drawings on shared large pieces of paper.

LOCAL SURROUNDS – A GOOD STARTING PLACE

MAGNIFYING GLASSES & FLIP VIDEO A REAL HIT.

Each child having a magnifying glass made all the difference. We don’t often have this luxury and the children usually have to share such resources. With the new flip video and the magnifying glasses there was plenty of enthusiasm, lots of conversation and interesting discoveries.

CHILDREN’S VOICE

How do they know how to make webs?

“They are just born knowing”

“At the back of them they have these holes and that’s what sprays the web”

“The more they eat the more they make web”

LET'S GO ON A TRIP! YEAH!

(Great excitement, more planning and preparation, lots of enthusiasm)
WHERE, HOW, WHEN, WHO, WHAT?

The final outcome... A day trip to... ***LAKE MCINTYRE: NATURAL SETTING, WETLANDS, BIRD HIDES, LOOKOUTS, BOARDWALKS***

HOW DID THE TRIP GO?

THE USE OF "I WONDER" LANGUAGE WAS AMAZING!

The modeling of "I wonder" language was an important part of our planning and the success of this was very evident on the trip. It was encouraging to see the level of engagement and understanding of spy, think and wonder.

PARENTS GREAT ROLE MODELS AND SUPPORT

Parents were fabulous in also modeling and supporting children to wonder. They assisted the children in recording and extending their thinking. One of the parents had brought along a bird identification book which turned out to be a real bonus.

THE CLIPBOARDS GAVE A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND DIRECTION

Each child had their personal clipboard for the day with some sheets for their recordings and wondering. These gave the children a sense of direction and purpose and really enhanced the success of the day. I was surprised that they had such an influence. Once again it a real bonus not having to share resources as there was one each.

CHILDREN LYING ON THEIR BACKS LOOKING AT THE SKY

Children's voice

1. ***Noticed a jet leaving a trail*** - I asked...I wonder why it leaves a track?

"So it can follow it back and know where to go"

"The jet could be pulling a cloud apart"

"It's just like a car that puffs out stuff... like smoke"

2. ***Beautiful eagle flew high in the sky*** - observation, conversation

"It's gliding"

"It could be flapping but you can't see it"

"They glide when they're tired"

"It's heading toward the sun"

3. ***I wonder how clouds are made?***

"I know, APCEL makes it. It's made of paper and smoke. It stinks"

FOLLOWING CHILDREN'S PASSIONS, INTERESTS AND STRENGTHS

Three creative children immersed themselves in the natural setting using the sky as the focus for their painting. It was absolutely inspiring to listen and watch as the three were totally engrossed in the experience. They had complete ownership as they mixed their own shades of blue to replicate what they were viewing. There was lots of enthusiasm and exclamations as they discovered experimented. "It's exciting the colours you can make", "Look, this is cool!"

They chatted about how great it was doing it outside... "There's more wild life and air and it's nice and sunny", "It's because you're outside and you hear the birds and stuff"

None of the children had painted on a real canvas before and they were quite ecstatic. ***It was obvious that the authenticity of the experience was very empowering.*** This experience took a few sessions to complete. Once they started their painting, there wasn't a sound. They worked silently as they totally immersed themselves in the experience. The expression on their faces and looks of concentration was truly inspiring. It was a huge reminder of offering authentic and quality experience.

"That was fun Judy." (Rosie 4yrs.) "It was awesome" "Totally awesome" the others responded. Can we do this every day? ***Later when Rosie watched me print out the photograph of her as she painted, she commented "I was really concentrating, wasn't I?"***

MUSIC IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - "I SPY SONG"

Children took turns spying things during the personally written verses of the song. Once again being in the natural environment offered a new dimension. "I Spy, We Spy, Eli Spies,..." etc.

EMPOWERING CHILDREN TO CONFIDENTLY EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY

The inquiry adventure offered many authentic opportunities to support children in developing both confidence and skill in using technology.

1. Flip Videos – these were a hit! They are so easy to use and lots of fun. They could replay their recordings instantly and independently which proved most rewarding for them. They interviewed each other to find out what they wondered about. They enjoyed chatting with the adults and interviewing them too. Some wandered off to quietly video the things they had discovered. They could follow their own interests and choose whatever they liked to record. They would then play them back, sharing them with friends.

2. Microscope - Used back in the centre and projected onto the interactive whiteboard.

3. Cameras – sometimes had turns of these on the trip

4. Computers - Published their wonderings from what they recorded

5. Web Cam & Interactive whiteboard

WE WERE REMINDED OF...

1. The value of experiences away from the centre or classroom – offering authenticity and quality of experiences
2. Good resources and plenty of them for each child where possible

THANK YOU TO ECHO

The grant money from ECHO certainly assisted in the success of our inquiry project. It was wonderful to have enough resources for each individual child eg. clip boards, magnifying glasses etc. It also enabled us to acquire the flip videos which proved to be a real hit with the children. It supported us in offering authentic experiences and assisting the children to have ownership of their learning.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The possibilities are endless! The inquiry process can take you anywhere!