

Our Stories

Support

Success

Care

Renmark Education Partnership

Renmark High School immerses students in reading to improve literacy skills

Students at Renmark High School are discovering their passion for reading thanks to a school-wide initiative, Reading for Enjoyment.

The Reading for Enjoyment initiative was established after staff at RHS noted a growing trend that students were reading less as they progressed through high school. Studies have consistently shown that there is a direct link between how much students read for enjoyment and their achievement in the development of vocabulary, general knowledge, spelling and verbal fluency.

As a result, the Literacy and Numeracy Site Improvement Group set out to establish a whole school reading strategy. The idea is to encourage a culture of reading for enjoyment at Renmark High which in turn will lead to improved literacy outcomes for students.

The RHS Literacy Mentor has been instrumental in supporting staff to develop strategies to improve reading comprehension and complement the Reading for Enjoyment initiative. The HASS faculty has developed a 'Readings Booklet' filled with articles, short stories and poetry that complements the content taught in HASS classes. The English Faculty provides students with regular opportunities to visit the library in addition to ensuring that 15 minutes of each lesson is dedicated to reading for enjoyment. Specialised subject teachers also recommend texts to help consolidate understanding of concepts.



Since introducing the Reading for Enjoyment initiative in 2016 the interest in reading across RHS has increased dramatically. Robust conversations between students are often had about the merits of novels and reading recommendations are shared among the student body.

Library staff are continually developing new ways to entice students. This includes changing genre displays in the library, developing reading lists based on student demands, new book lists on the library webpage and Facebook page, access to eBooks, eBook readers and growing the increasingly popular graphic novel collection.

The goal of the Reading for Enjoyment initiative is to develop students who are proficient and confident readers and who, most importantly, enjoy reading. Safe to say, they are already making great progress!





WHO'S EATING THE BROCCOLI LEAVES IN THE VEGIE PATCH?

The Early Years Framework and mantra of 'Belonging, Being and Becoming' drives the curriculum at Renmark West Preschool. In Term 1, the curriculum centres on taking children on a journey to feel that they 'Belong' at Renmark West Preschool.

At the start of 2017 the preschool's vegie patch was renovated and extended as a way to bring children, parents and educators together. We held an open morning where the children invited their family to join them at preschool and planted vegetables and herbs together. The patch was flourishing...until something began to eat the broccoli leaves!

In Term 2 an eagle-eyed preschooler noticed some holes in the leaves of the broccoli. Armed with a magnifying glass he, and many others, set out to find the critter responsible. Numerous sightings occurred and clipboards were provided for children to draw and record the data that they found. Turns out it was a caterpillar!

The children had just read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* as a literary text, and immediately linked what they had seen in real life, (holes in the broccoli leaves), with what they had read in the book. The discovery of the caterpillar also led to further impetus to learn about the life cycle of a caterpillar.

This child led approach to learning is central to the learning at Renmark West Preschool. Early Childhood Worker, Liz Angeletti explains 'Our focus is firmly child oriented. We want our learning experiences to be a collaborative experience between the children and educators.'

Since the caterpillar was found in the broccoli leaves, the children's knowledge, language and inquisitiveness have all been extended and supported. They have also developed a fantastic knowledge of the many critters that live in the vegie patch and their favourite plants to eat!



Student voice transforming learning at Renmark West PS



Renmark West Primary School (RWPS) is encouraging students to have their say about learning at the school. The school is incorporating student voice into activities throughout Term 2 as a part of their approach to visible learning.

Over the past six weeks RWPS has implemented a range of different initiatives with students to capture their thoughts on teaching and learning at the school.

Principal Judy Cottam says, 'Developing an understanding of how our students feel about learning is imperative to their studies.' She explains, 'As teachers we need to adapt and respond according to the needs of our students. Student voice is providing the foundation of information we need to transform the school.'

To spark the voices of students, Mrs Mod met with groups from all of the primary classes to discuss 'What a good learner looks like at our school.' The purpose was to help students develop an understanding of what is expected of themselves and their teachers.

A series of video interviews with students provided a wealth of information for teachers to use to adapt their teaching methods. Students were also asked to reflect on the inspiring and passionate teachers they have had at school. The students were very insightful and quickly identified the teacher behaviour that best supported their learning.

The school also conducted real-time feedback in the classrooms. While working on tasks students were asked 'What are you learning' and 'How will you know you have learnt the skill.' Interestingly most students could describe what they are learning but few could articulate how they would know they have the skill mastered. This immediately identified that teachers need to provide real world examples of skills in action to assist students in their learning.

This is only the beginning of strong student voice at RWPS. As Judy explains, 'By encouraging our students to have an active and authentic voice in their learning we are enhancing the learning process. Our goal is to improve the way teachers teach and students learn.'

'As teachers we need to adapt and respond according to the needs of our students.'

RENMARK CHILDREN'S CENTRE SAYS BONJOUR TO THE WORLD!



In 2014 Renmark Children's Centre (RCC) submitted an expression of interest to bring the Early Learning Languages Australia - ELLA program to the centre. From over 1200 applicants, RCC was lucky enough to be one of 40 centres across Australia to be chosen.

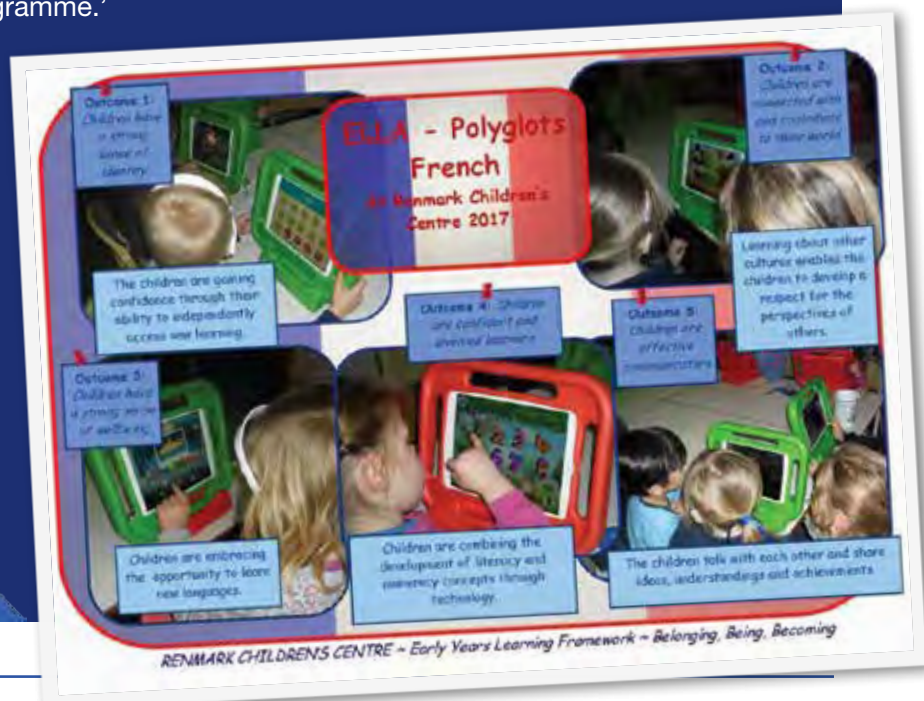
Three years on and the program is still running strong! All 4 year old children at the centre participate in the program and are learning French and improving their literacy skills.

Learning a different language to improve literacy skills in English seems like a strange approach. Teacher Pat Morris explains, 'Research shows that learning languages develops children's overall literacy and strengthens literacy related capabilities.' Turns out, the research was right! Data was collected about children's progress and success during the initial trial of the program in 2015. This information revealed that the approach was working and that children were making progress in all learning areas as a result.

The approach taken by RCC in teaching the ELLA program has been instrumental in the success of the initiative. Pat says, 'Many children are confident and regular users of technology at home. Therefore we felt that if play based technology is the way of the future, then this was the likeliest way of successfully engaging the children in the language programme.'

The centre took the ten iPads provided to them and developed a year long sequential roll out of play based activities within seven different apps, all in French. The children have individual logins to the software which makes it easy for teachers to track and monitor progress.

Children who have participated in the program have started school with a keen interest in learning languages in addition to a better understanding of their own literacy skills. Not to mention they also have a large repertoire of French words, phrases and songs to impress their classmates!



CONNECTING THE *young* AND *old* THROUGH MUSIC



Students from Renmark Primary School are connecting with dementia patients from the Renmark Aged Care facility in a brand new initiative from Country Arts SA and the Flinders University School of Medicine.

The program is called 'Spinback' and aims to explore the power of music to provoke memory in those with dementia. Thirteen Year 4 and 5 students from RPS have joined with sound producer, DJ TRIP, performance artist Jessica Foster, dancer Tanya Voges and photographer Terry Marter for a 10-week residency at Renmark Paringa Aged Care Unit.

Renmark Primary School Principal Lyn Bretag explains the benefits for students, 'Making connections with the community and learning in an authentic context is a vital component of education.' Participating in the Spinback program provides an opportunity for students to learn beyond the school environment. Lyn says 'Our students are doing something that is making a difference to our local community. We're looking forward to finding out the impact of the program after its evaluation by Flinders University researchers.'

Since participating in the project, the children have developed a deep understanding of what dementia is and how it affects the brain. All of the students have

learned to respond with empathy and kindness. The students also take great delight in knowing that the residents love seeing and working with them, having fun and sharing life stories.

The Spinback project is a team effort from everyone involved and wouldn't be possible without a significant commitment from staff, parents, volunteers and students at Renmark Primary. There will be an official launch and exhibition of the journey through photos, videos and music at the end of the program.

Be sure to keep an eye out for it!



Renmark North Primary School set to hold their 60th Annual Continental!

This year marks the 60th Annual Continental for Renmark North Primary School (RNPS). This is a fantastic event and an outstanding achievement for the school community.

The Continental is a fun filled family experience that was established to raise money to enrich the learning environment of children at RNPS. Not only is the Continental a fundraiser, but a key component of how students and staff at RNPS connect with local community members.

The planning process for the Continental begins 12 months in advance with a team of dedicated volunteers consisting of Governing Council members, parents, staff and community members. Students are also involved in the preparations, helping to design games for the night along with developing signage and information.

Over the past 60 years the Continental has helped to strengthen relationships throughout the school. Each year staff note how the event enhances the connection they have with their student's parents and siblings which in turn develops the student/teacher relationship.

As always, an event such as the RNPS Continental doesn't happen without the support of local businesses. Over the past 60 years so many local businesses have gone above and beyond for RNPS to which they say a big thank you!

This year the Continental will be held on Friday 10 November. The 60th anniversary celebrations will include a display of past events, increased invitations to old scholars to attend along with a range of guest MCs on the evening.

Mark the date in your diary so you don't miss out!



SHARED PLAY BUILDS POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AT RENMARK CHILDREN'S CENTRE



Every Thursday the Kookaburra Room (2,3 & 4-year-olds) join with the Kindy group at Renmark Children's Centre (RCC) to play cooperatively and build positive relationships. The initiative is called Shared Play and throughout the morning children are free to move between both rooms, experience the different activities on offer and come together to sing songs as a group.

Cindy Milne, preschool teacher, has been involved in facilitating the Shared Play program. She explains, 'Our shared play session on Thursday mornings is the first step in integrating shared play into our everyday program.' Cindy says, 'Once our backyard redevelopment is complete it will allow children across the site to share the entire natural outdoor play space on a daily basis. We thought it was important to establish best practice before the redevelopment was completed to ensure maximum benefits for the children.'

Since introducing Shared Play, staff at RCC have noted the positive changes in the children. The older children in the Kindy room are displaying empathy for the younger children; they want to look after and nurture their younger peers. For the children from the Kookaburra room, they are developing trusting relationships with the Kindy educators which will lead to a smoother transition to Kindy.

Parents have also provided positive feedback regarding the Shared Play program. Cindy notes, 'Parents like children having the opportunity to extend their friendship circle and establishing friendships with children from other rooms.' In addition to new friends, children also have the opportunity to connect and play with their siblings from other rooms and extended family members, e.g. cousins.

Shared Play will continue and become more prevalent at RCC once the yard development is complete. A positive for everyone involved!



Renmark Education Partnership

What's On

June 26

Year 11 Exams (all week)
Renmark High School

June 29

Assembly
Renmark Primary School

June 29

Assembly
Renmark West Primary School

July 2

NAIDOC Week begins
Renmark Partnership Sites

July 3

Year 12 Exams (all week)
Renmark High School

Australian Business Week
Renmark High School

July 26

Hachioji Japanese Homestay Visit
Renmark High School

Awards Ceremony
Renmark High School

August 3

Riverland Festival of Music
Renmark North Primary School

August 16

Future Planning Expo
Renmark High School

August 21

Book Week begins
Renmark North Primary School

August 23

Book Week dress up day
Theme: 'Escape to everywhere'
Renmark North Primary School

September 29

Spring Fair
Renmark West Primary School

Get involved

Renmark West Preschool Playgroup for 0 - 4 year olds

Every Friday (during school term)
Cost - \$3 per family, per session or \$15 per family for the term.
9am - 10:30am
Bring a fruit snack, water and hat.
Call 8595 1036 for more info.

Renmark Children's Centre Baby Playgroup

Wednesdays (during school term)
For babies aged 0-18 months
9:30am - 10:30am
Babies play, sing and socialise.
CaFHS nurse also available.
No cost. Everyone welcome.
Call 8586 6063 for more info.

Renmark Children's Centre Community Playgroup

Every Friday (during school term)
11am - 1:00pm
Call 8586 6063 for more info.



Government of South Australia

Department for Education and
Child Development