

Mud, mud, glorious mud!

Wednesday 27th July

For our Investigations session today, we headed down to the Bush Block for our weekly visit. It was a cold, rainy day, but that didn't deter the children's excitement. The children put on their gumboots and rain jackets and we set off towards the Bush Block. As we walked the rain lightly showered from the sky. Once we arrived in the Bush Block we gathered under the shelter to discuss the boundaries and expectations for today's visit. Once we had finished our discussion the children set off to investigate. It wasn't before long when some of the children had made a wonderful discovery! "Mrs Watson, Mrs Watson! We've found mud! Come and see!" Jackson excitedly announced as he ran towards me. Lucas and Blake were in tow and were amazed by the discovery. I was interested to see their finding so I followed the children towards the mud. As I began to follow, a number of children wanted to see what all the excitement was about.

Sure enough, there was mud. It was wonderful to see the children so excited. As the children began to explore the mud their faces filled with delight. A few children started by placing one gumboot into the mud, then the other. After a while the mud was filled with children! As the children walked through the mud they found something interesting. "Mrs Watson, my gumboot is getting stuck!" exclaimed Blake. "Mine too!" said Eddie. The children began to experiment and explore whose gumboots would stick and who's wouldn't. Ruby, George and Eddie tested out their gumboots to see which ones would stick. "Mine stick really well!" announced George.



After a while, the children further explored the mud by seeing what it felt like. They placed their hands in as the investigated. Bridget and Jackson enjoyed the smooth feeling of the mud and proudly showed me their hands as they posed for a photo. Jack had also explored the mud using his hands. Tom had grabbed some of the mud and began to smear it onto a log. I approached Tom and said, "What does it feel like, Tom?" Tom replied, "This feels awesome!" as he continued to smooth the mud on the log. Blake had been busy discovering a wall like structure where he planned to continue building it.



As I watched I saw Lucas, Hugh, Jack, Anuj and Jackson help Blake to build the wall. They noticed a huge pile of rocks and decided they would be a good addition to their wall. "We need to find the good rocks," Hugh mentioned to the boys. They began searching for rocks and began to build their wall. Tom was continuing to explore the mud by scooping it out and painting it onto a new log. Bridget and George had found a large rock and were covering it with the mud. They found it stuck really well and began making patterns using their fingers. The children were so engaged in their play and made many observations in their learning.



I walked over to Bridget, George and Tom and posed a question to them, "I wonder if we could make some marks in the mud?" as I picked up a stick. Bridget and George found a stick of their own. Bridget took her stick and began to write her name on the muddy rock. "B...r...i...d...g...e...t," she said as she spelled her name out. Then it was George's turn. He confidently approached the rock and wrote his name. Tom had gone back to his first log and I invited him to try and write his name. He

began with an upper case /T/ and then a lower case /o/. I enjoyed seeing his pleased reaction after he had formed letters using the mud.



Hayley, Indie and Ella had been observing the other children writing in the mud. This inspired them to try, however they weren't ready to enter to squelchy mud so they found some harder mud to test out some writing. Hayley found that writing in the firmer mud required her to push a bit harder with her stick. Indie had found a branch with some leaves still attached and began to write her name, then Ella's name. As I wandered back to the squelchy mud I observed the children continuing to build the wall. Bridget, Georg and Tom had joined in the task and the children worked cooperatively together towards their shared goal. Hugh was in charge of finding the rocks to use, while the rest of the children worked to construct the wall.



As I continued to watch I enjoyed watching the children explore and enjoy the outdoors and become closer with nature. Jack and Jackson had discovered they could slide down the muddy slope. So they began to see who could slide down the fastest and which pair of gumboots was the best for sliding.

As they tested their theory out, the boys tried different ways of approaching the slope. Jack tried a bigger run up while Jackson tried taking longer steps to investigate how they could go faster.



Hugh, Lucas, Jesse and Anuj were continuing to build the wall. Jackson had finished his sliding experiment and returned to help the boys to finish building the wall. Hugh carefully selected each rock and passed it to the boys. Lucas thoughtfully placed each rock onto the wall. He was working to precisely fit each rock so the wall wouldn't fall down. Jesse was exploring hidden rocks under the mud and collecting them to add to the wall. The creativity and thought processes were highly thought out and fascinating to watch.



Soon it was time to finish our Investigations session. I didn't want to stop the children's play as they were so engaged; however we needed to get back for lunch. We all washed our gumboots and raincoats with the water from the hose and were ready to leave the Bush Block. What a memorable Investigations session!



Learning observed

The children really enjoyed exploring and playing in the mud. The joy on their faces made the spontaneous discovery a very memorable one. I enjoyed watching the children create and share their wonder. It was wonderful to see a range of children enjoy the mud, particularly children who don't usually like getting 'dirty'. I also had a few children speak to me once we had left and they expressed their intention to have a play in the mud next time. This showed me that they weren't ready today to explore, however now felt confident for next time.

The children demonstrated respect for the environment while they explored their environment in a safe, secure and supported manner. The children were able to resource their own learning through connecting with nature and natural materials. Through sensory exploration the children demonstrated curiosity, enthusiasm and inquiry while discovering the mud. As the children created and experimented they demonstrated confidence, cooperation, communication and creative thinking. The children interacted positively together to achieve their desired outcomes for their common objectives.

The children that were involved in mark making were able to transfer their literacy knowledge and skills from one context to another. They were able to use their letter formation and sound knowledge to write in the mud. The children that wrote in the harder mud began to explore the properties of mud as the hardness depended on the amount of water. The children who build the wall explored 3D shapes and their properties. The children worked out which rocks would stack best to hold up the wall. The children who explored sliding in the mud were able to begin to understand velocity and hypothesising how to increase their speed by trying different approaches and techniques.

Australian Curriculum outcomes met for Foundation

English

- Recognise and name all upper and lower case letters (graphemes) and know the most common sound that each letter represents (ACELA1440)
- Understand how to use knowledge of letters and sounds including onset and rime to spell words (ACELA1438)
- Know how to read and write some high-frequency words and other familiar words (ACELA1817)
- Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations (ACELY1646)
- Use interaction skills including listening while others speak, using appropriate voice levels, articulation and body language, gestures and eye contact (ACELY1784)
- Produce some lower case and upper case letters using learned letter formations (ACELY1653)

Maths

- Sort, describe and name familiar two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects in the environment (ACMMG009)
- Describe position and movement (ACMMG010)

Science

- The way objects move depends on a variety of factors, including their size and shape (ACSSU005)
- Science involves observing, asking questions about, and describing changes in, objects and events (ACSHE013)
- Pose and respond to questions about familiar objects and events (AC SIS014)
- Participate in guided investigations and make observations using the senses (AC SIS011)
- Share observations and ideas (AC SIS012)

Visual Arts

- Use and experiment with different materials, techniques, technologies and processes to make artworks (ACAVAM107)

Design and Technology

- Sequence steps for making designed solutions and working collaboratively (ACTDEP009)

Health and Physical Education

- Participate in play that promotes engagement with outdoor settings and the natural environment (ACPPS007)
- Test possible solutions to movement challenges through trial and error (ACPMP013)