

# Practice Snapshot

## Seville Road State School

### Celebrating Mr Squiggle's Birthday

Given the diverse cultural backgrounds of the children enrolled at Seville Road State School, the Prep teacher determined that in order to address the Humanities and Social Sciences content descriptor relating to how individuals and families commemorate past events that are important to them (ACHASSK012), a shared celebratory event that children from diverse backgrounds could relate to was needed. In addition, she was keen for her Prep children to engage in real life numeracy activities that would require them to represent practical situations to model addition and sharing (ACMNA004).

At the start of the year, she had introduced the children to a puppet by the name of Mr Squiggle - a character well known to adults due to the long-running television show in which he starred. Some research revealed that this year would be his 55th birthday, so the teacher determined that she would involve the children in a range of activities relating to the planning and celebration of this key event.

She began with some explicit teaching about why we celebrate past events such as birthdays, anniversaries and historic events, inviting the children to share their own experiences of these. Then, together with the children, she created a play environment around the theme of party planning. Initially the planning related to arranging parties for various book characters, with numeracy-related tasks being set for the children. These tasks included setting the table with the correct number of places, sorting out how many cups and plates would be required based on the number of invited guests, measuring containers of water to ensure that each guest received the same amount in their cups, sharing out balloons and hats.

Soon it was time to commence planning for the big event – Mr Squiggle's party. With the date set more than four weeks out, the children eagerly counted down the days on the class calendar while they began working on preparations. These included sending out invitations, making gifts, writing lists, baking cupcakes, making and counting party materials and more modelling and sharing activities. The children also visited a party planner website



to research what activities might be available at the event, and soon many were busy creating a "Pin the nose on Mr Squiggle game" and props for a photo booth. One boy was keen to offer some entertainment at the party, so developed his own puppet show to share on the day.

With many of the children having limited prior experience of attending parties, there was great excitement as the day arrived. Parents were not invited to the event, but were asked instead to collaborate with their children to create a message for Mr Squiggle, and this resulted in some wonderful outcomes, including messages from some parents who do not normally engage in school activities.

Summative assessment tasks relating to the two, focus content descriptors revealed that most children achieved the required assessment standard. In addition, opportunities for the use of rich and contextualised oral language, negotiation and collaboration with others, had led to improvement in the children's communication skills.

Across the school there was great interest in this event, with children in upper year levels keen to participate. Mr Squiggle's birthday had become a true whole-of-school celebration.