



Dear Parents,

It is always a pleasure to keep you updated with the highlights of the last month's activities and special moments for the girls and boys of the Italian Embassy School.

Underwater Investigations at the Aquarium



The underwater world has been a central topic over the last few months for the Preschool children, and a trip to the Beijing Aquarium was an opportunity for the boys and girls to immerse themselves and observe and experience the marine world in real life.

Equipped with paper, pencils and cameras the children were off to the Beijing Aquarium to investigate and search for answers to the many questions and curiosities that have been on their mind while talking about fish and their environment in the classroom.

"This sting ray is huge! I don't think it will fit in our fish tank, it should stay here!"



A love for Minerals

Over the last few weeks, Year 2 has focused their studies on rocks and minerals. This topic has opened the door to a world of interesting facts that the students enjoy learning about. Minerals are found, often collected, and are regarded beautiful for their bright colours and shapes.

The Italian school's academic approach is composed of diverse activities and lines of enquiry: The teacher instills a natural and authentic curiosity in the children through specific observation and questions. From there the children's interest and desire for knowledge brings them to new discoveries and to reach their learning objectives, some of which are listed below:

1. Learn to observe, find similarities and differences in different objects
2. Ask themselves questions on the origin of what is all around us
3. Learn to carry out simple experiment and understand the outcomes
4. Learn to categorize objects by looking at their properties.

All the students already possess a subjective "view of the world around them" and try to find answers to their questions. This was evident during their studies of minerals, where the children at times formed concepts, which may not have been completely correct from a scientific point of view, but from the perspective of a child working to elaborate on his or her theories, was a more than valid approach. These particular ideas and concepts that the children form are vital for the teachers to form new contexts, lines of enquiry, and to propose activities observe and experiment, and to elaborate on previous ideas, thus making the children themselves active builders of their own knowledge.

Moreover, when children discuss amongst themselves ideas or theories that they themselves have developed, a different learning mechanism takes effect, and the children learn by each others' experiences. This is the basis of the cooperative and experiential approach to learning offered by the Italian School.

Some memorable quotes when sharing what they had learned amongst their peers:

"This big circle is the Earth's heart, and it's called the Nucleus.. This is where all the minerals come from!"

"Look at this mineral here, it won't let any light through. This one on the other hand just lets a small bit of light through!"

Difficult observations and advanced concepts. But when the children are explaining them, learning is fun!



Chasing a Panda.. in the theatre

Chasing a Panda all over China while learning about the earth's natural elements? You may think that sounds odd, but that's exactly what Primary (with the addition of some 5+ year olds from the preschool) students did thanks to a superb theatrical show.

On Friday the 24th March, the kids experienced this fabulous show and got involved in finding out about the elements that play an important role in Chinese culture. The TPO (Italian theatrical company of performers) guided the children in the discovery of the elements earth, fire, metal and wood through a magical atmosphere of lights, sounds and dance. Moving to the rhythm and becoming part of the narration, the children experimented with their body language and its infinite expressions, a characteristic form of communication for the TPO company.

"The Pandas Home" was an activity for the children to do back at school both before and after their experience at the theatre. Here are some phrases and thoughts:

"Will there be a real panda?"

"That can't be! How would they get it to act?"

"They'll have made a house out of bamboo"

"I don't think there'll be metal on the stage, someone might get hurt!"



Atelier del gusto, destination Puglia!

After a winter break we are back with our "Atelier del gusto", the activity that gets cook, teachers and parents involved at school.

Once again the parents rolled their sleeves up and got to work, this time kneading pizza dough to make Puglia style focaccia, and topping their delicious creations with different delicacies to suit the most important ingredient, which in this case is olive oil.

Giandomenico was sponsor and guest for the evening, explaining the characteristic taste and origin of his special oil: Polvanera, which is used by the school at every meal.



Agenda

12th April - Atelier del Gusto for parents - "Casatiello", ore 18.00 - 20.00

17th April - Easter Monday picnic breakfast, ore 8.30 - 9.30

17th - 21st April - Parent teacher interviews for Primary

26th April - School trip to the Natural Science Museum for Primary

28th April - Third date of the initiative "Add a parent to the table"