



## LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS

[04/04/11]

### Traditional Games Promote Game sense

The school's curriculum places a significant emphasis on health and physical development and the children attending Elmwood Normal School are fortunate to have teachers who strongly promote these aspects. There is an appreciation that children need to gain understanding and skill to manage and adjust to the way they grow up and mature. Keeping children active and playing is essential to their health and physical development, and something as simple as a traditional game can be enough to get them up and moving. Most schools, including Elmwood, have creative playgrounds with some exciting equipment that entertains and keeps the children active. However, the traditional playground games, especially at Elmwood with limited playground space, will always be a popular playground activity also.

Traditional playground games such as Tag, Bullrush (tag or tackle), Four Square, Kickball, Tiggy, Dodgeball, Hopscotch, Jump Rope have been around for many years, and still as popular as ever. The children are also very innovative as they create new games and rules themselves. Therefore one of the most valuable things a child can learn from playground games is 'game sense'.

*Game sense* is taught in a supervised approach where the children are encouraged to think of tactics, make good and quick decisions and solve game problems throughout the games they play. Teaching *game sense* through the development of movement and play strategies has been a training priority for teachers. This is an additional teaching method to the traditional approach where the "skill" and "techniques" are taught in isolation. In PE lessons seen at school today, we are wanting to develop the children's own thought processes around the skills and techniques they need to acquire, to be able to play in a smarter way. The focus then centres on developing the children's self-assessment in game play and encouraging their own feedback of what they need to learn to achieve sporting success.

Our sports leaders have been encouraging colleagues to bring this aspect alive in their daily physical education lessons. The children are being taught to *strategise* so that the games they play and enjoy make better sense and become even more challenging and exciting. Learning to understand the many clues of the games and developing the necessary "smartness" to participate successfully, are being taught through the children's daily PE lessons and sports activities.

It's an appropriate time to acknowledge the teachers for this work as the winter sports season approaches. The well-organised Y3 sports programme on Friday afternoons now brings opportunities for both competitive and non-competitive involvement for all children. The trial procedure to select the competitive teams for inter-school competition deserves special mention as this is taking place over the next few weeks and early in Term 2. Coaches do not want to see children playing in grades they cannot cope with and this may initially result in some disappointments for some children as a result of non-selection. Please understand that these decisions are based on the coaches' understandings of levels of readiness as well as the personal safety of those competing.

Kevin Gooch  
Principal