

The background features a collage of colorful, semi-transparent letters and shapes in shades of purple, blue, green, and yellow. The letters are of various sizes and orientations, creating a vibrant and playful atmosphere. The text is centered and clearly legible against this background.

# A song a day makes English fun every day

Star of the Sea Catholic Kindergarten

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# School background

- Located in Chai Wan, HK Island
- Established since 1976
- Curriculum:
  - A locally published story series is adopted as the main learning materials
  - Songs and nursery rhymes are also adopted as supplementary materials

# Teachers' background

- Experienced in pre-primary education
- Confident in English
- Started to conduct Shared Reading a few years ago
- Attended some workshops on Shared Reading provided by the school sponsoring body
- Enthusiastic and willing to try-out new teaching strategies

# Children's background

- Most of them reside in the neighbouring public housing
- Their family backgrounds vary from new immigrants from mainland China to middle class
- Some of them are taken care of by grandparents
- For most of them, the school seems to be the main source of their exposure to English language

# Participation to the project

- Joined the 'Quality English Language Education at Pre-primary Level' Project in 2008-2010
- Three teachers were nominated
- Both K2 and K3 are involved
- Through the workshops provided, teachers were exposed to:
  - Shared Reading
  - Teaching of Phonics
  - Using of Songs, Rhymes and Games
  - Storytelling
  - Show-and-Tell
  - Real-life Experience Activities
  - Drama Activities

# Children's needs identified

- Lack opportunities to speak and listen to English outside school
- School was the only source of exposure to English

# Opportunities identified in learning and teaching

- Teachers like using songs for daily activities across different learning areas
- Children enjoy singing songs
- Children love revisiting the songs they learnt from time to time



# Aims of this study

- Provide children with more exposure to English through songs:
  - English language environment (print rich)
  - Daily routine (non-print)
- Enhance children's interests and motivations to participate in English language activities
- Enhance children's listening and speaking skills through singing activities



# Why use songs?

Curriculum Guide recommends using songs:

*Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to ---*

**a. Develop interest in learning English;**

- *Listen to and read stories and nursery rhymes; and*
- *Recognise and make use of vocabulary related to their everyday life or what interests them.*

**b. Listen to and understand *simple conversation in everyday life*; and**

**c. Sing or recite nursery rhymes and employ simple words used in everyday life.**

# Why use songs?

## *Principles of Teaching*

- a. *Teachers should cultivate children's interest in English and motivate them to learn by **using authentic materials to create a language-rich and interesting environment.***
- b. *Teachers should let children learn through **pleasurable activities** such as **singing** nursery rhymes, play, story-telling etc.*
- c. *Teachers should provide children with opportunities to listen to and **speak in English through conversations**, reading stories aloud and play.*
- d. *Language activities have to meet children's developmental needs. Any teaching approach that is overly bound by chosen texts or strenuous written exercises should be avoided. Rote-learning or dictation should not be adopted. Otherwise, children's interest in learning English will be weakened because of the pressure.*

# Why use songs?

Suitable ways of exposing children to English:

- With opportunities to listen to and speak English
- Language-rich and interesting environment
- Pleasurable activities
- Using authentic materials
- Stress free and fun
- Meet children's developmental needs
- Multi-sensory

**Singing activities are suitable for pre-primary children.**

# Using songs as daily routine

- According to Fisher (1998):
  - Singing as signal of the start of a class
    - suggests a joyful activity is coming up
    - gives children time for tuning in
    - enables learners to become familiar with many texts that have learnt or will be use throughout the year.
  - Working over time with a repetitive song provides learners with many opportunities to apply skills (listening and speaking) in a variety of meaningful ways.

# 1st year of joining the project

Sep, 2008	Three teachers are nominated to join the 'Quality English Language Education at Pre-primary Level' Project
May, 2009	Project teachers attended the workshops 'Exposing children to English through Songs, Rhymes and Games'
Jun, 2009	Project teachers try-out using songs as Extended Activities of Shared Reading

# 2nd year of joining the project

Aug, 2009	Planning with the Officer of establishing daily routines using songs
Sep, 2009 – Jun, 2010	Implementation
End of Jun, 2010	Evaluation



# Time Frame

Sep, 2009	Oct, 2009	Nov, 2009	Dec, 2009	Jan, 2010	Feb, 2010	Mar, 2010	Apr, 2010	May, 2010	Jun, 2010
<b>Using songs as Extended Activities of Shared Reading --- To build a repertoire of familiar songs</b>									
Introduce the Greeting Song and the Story Time Song		Sing the Greeting Song and the Story Time Song as the beginning of an English language activity				<b>Daily routine established</b>			
		Introduce the Weather Song and Days of the Week		Read the calendar and weather chart. Then sing the Days of the Week and Weather Song as daily routine					
				Sing a familiar song before the English activity of the day					



# Implementation: Approach

- Teachers introduced Greeting Song and Story Time Song first because:
  - the tunes are easy and familiar to students
  - there are repeated lines
- Method
  - At the beginning
    - teachers sang the songs to students
  - After a few sessions
    - teachers invited children to sing after her and do the gestures
  - After a month
    - most children were able to sing with the teachers and do the gestures while they were singing
- Teachers then introduced the Days of the Week and Weather Song



# Implementation: Approach

- Sing a familiar song of children's choice
  - Teachers often sing a song with children as an extended activity after shared-read a story.
  - Teachers posted the song sheets of the songs on the walls.
  - Before they started the story time, teachers would invite children to choose and sing a familiar song.



# Findings

Children were provided with more exposure to English through print rich environment:

- The song sheets posted on the classroom walls allowed children to see 'ENGLISH' in the school environment and to see the lyrics (words) of the songs they have learnt



# Findings

Children were provided with more exposure to English through daily routine:

- Children sang songs and interacted with teachers (e.g. greetings, talking about the weather and calendar) in a more authentic, natural and meaningful situations



# Findings

- Children's interests and motivation to participate in English language activities were enhanced
  - Children participated actively in the daily routine





# Findings

- Children's listening and speaking skills were enhanced through singing activities
  - Teachers found that children were more willing to speak English even outside the classroom
  - Some parents offered feedback that their children liked singing the English songs learnt at home
- Children's learning of English were better sustained as daily routines repeated regularly and naturally

# Difficulties encountered

- Difficult to find songs with:
  - language appropriated for children's level
  - pleasing and easy-to-follow tune
  - lyrics fitted well in the tune which would not distort the natural stress and rhythm of the language
- Lack of space for displaying the song sheets in the classroom
  - Insufficient space to display several songs in the same period of time



# Teachers' reflection and learning

- Teachers reported that:
  - they mainly used songs as supplement to the main learning materials in the past
  - they learnt that songs can be used in a variety of ways for language learning other than just singing
- Teachers felt satisfied and successful that:
  - children enjoyed the English time and they looked forward to it
  - children showed enthusiasm when they were invited to choose a song to sing

# Implication

- Songs are good means to expose children to English in the pre-primary classrooms
- They provide children with fun and enjoyable learning experience
- Children could be engaged easily and actively through singing songs
- Sustainability of learning seems more possible when children are engaged in a fun activity like singing songs

# The Way Forward

- In 2010-2011 school year:
  - Adopt daily routine as part of their English language curriculum
  - K2 and K3 will be introduced with different set of songs for routines
    - suits children's level
    - enrich their learning experience
  - Introduce English songs to other daily activities:
    - Morning assembly
    - Toilet time
    - Swapping groups for activity
    - Getting ready to go home

Thank you very much!



# Question and Answer

The background features a vibrant, multi-colored gradient from purple at the bottom to white at the top. Scattered across the lower half are various 3D block letters in shades of pink, blue, green, and yellow. In the bottom right corner, there is a stylized silhouette of a city skyline with several skyscrapers of varying heights.

# References

Curriculum Development Council (2006).

*Guide to the pre-primary curriculum.*

Hong Kong: The Education and Manpower Bureau, HKSAR.

Fisher, B. (1998). *Joyful learning in kindergarten (Revised edition).*

Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann