

# IMAGINE

BALSAM ACADEMY

FIRST QUARTER  
APRIL - JUNE 2017-2018

*What we want to see is the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of the child.*

*- George Bernard Shaw*

## YEAR END REPORT

Living by the school's motto 'Maximize Potential', Balsam Academy embraces the culture of consistent learning and improvement, as we believe that excellence is a journey and not the destination.

We have always held onto the belief that every child is unique and every child can learn. Thus, our teachers have looked at improving their classroom practices through skillful teaching, the use of differentiated instruction and assessments to meet the different profile and needs of our learners. Our teachers have collaborated with Professional Learning Teams to better the methods of teaching. Moving forward, we are committed to nurture every Balsamite to become the dynamic thinkers, inspiring leaders, contributing citizens and the one learning community we have envisioned them to be.

For the cognitive development of our learners, we will continue to make learning authentic and meaningful for every Balsamite. It will be insufficient to see learning as mere acquisition of knowledge and skills; we want every Balsamite to be able to see how their learning can impact them as an individual and the community by applying these learnings.

Education is a large piece of 'heart-work' that requires the school and stakeholders to see through together as collaborating partners. Balsam Academy is indeed fortunate to have a group of supportive stakeholders with us in this journey.

We thank our parents who have been actively supporting and rallying behind the staff as we work towards better achievements and excellence.

We thank our School Management, chaired by Smt.Saroja Balaram for their support and guidance. We shall continue to strive in encouraging, nurturing, and developing our children's potentials to bring out the best in them.

*With a draw of the First Quarter, we release our first newsletter to share the success stories that we have spun. We began the year with an instructional system and structure, an aligned set of pacing guides, a fresh approach, new entrants, and a common goal to work towards the vision and mission of the school.*

Our appreciation and thanks to our dedicated and passionate teachers who have walked the extra mile for our students, and supportive parents who provided the encouragement and interest towards the development of the School.

We look forward to working together to a more successful and enriching academic year for our children.

## NEW DAWN

School re-opened for the summer session on 10th April. The students were welcomed back with open hands and the support they needed to move on the next level. New class, new environment provided ample opportunity for them to take up studies in a diligent way. Several strategies in teaching and learning were implemented.

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## Welcome to the 2017-18 Academic Year!

As we embark on our fourteenth year of excellence, we wish to take a moment to thank our outstanding parents and community for continuous and consistent support. Your support and willingness in making this community a better place is unparalleled, and we will continue to work keeping in mind the best interests for the children.

This year we will continue to strive to create even more authentic and innovative learning opportunities for students. Our highly skilled and effective faculty embraces working together to ensure content alignment and sharing best practices to enhance their pedagogy. We know that by working together we create opportunities for students to achieve beyond their own perceived ability levels.

As always, we encourage students to take both academic and extracurricular activities. We have so much to offer on both the fronts, only to further enhance the child's experience in the school. All the details are available in our [ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING \(ERP\)](#).

If you have not done so yet, please become familiar with our ERP and sign up for our daily announcement

for your child each day. It is an excellent communication tool for all community members. Please take a few moments to do this to stay updated.

We believe our greatest strength is the support that all of you give us and we would like to thank you again for this and hope for a continued relationship. We are very proud of our reality that here, there is an opportunity for everyone to be involved; this includes students, parents, and members of the community.

We are excited for the 2017-18 school year. Together, we can ensure that this will be our best year yet.

Here's to a great year together,

**Team Balsam**

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## Student Orientation Program - April 2017

The new academic year began with well-organized student orientation program in the month of April. Welcoming the students, the secondary head disseminated information regarding the secondary school operation and the CBSE reforms with respect to the new examination system. It was an informative session for students as their apprehensions regarding the changes made in the system were addressed. The program also briefed about the new team of leaders for the classes.

*Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking that makes what we read ours.*

*- John Locke*

## Child Centred Approach

The sessions for Primary and Middle were experiential. That was a perfect summer session for our children. The schedule was planned with an intention to engage the young minds with more of practical experience. We provided an environment to build social skills. Kids were challenged and encouraged to grow with every passing day. In a way, they got to reinvent themselves.

During April, we covered reading, story narration, science experiment, aerobics, recitation and phonics as a part of learning. Extra-curricular activities like art, craft, music, cooking, etc., gave exposure to kids. Self-confidence and esteem was raised. To put it in a nutshell, it was a productive session both for the students and for the facilitators. These activities were designed to make children think and transform from passive learners to active doers.

G1 to G3 students participated in circle time activities. We started our day with yoga, stretching, active games

that involved movement and met the physical needs of growing children. These activities varied the tempo of the day and allowed children to "get the wiggles out" when they seemed to lose focus. Making time for dancing to music with varied rhythms and playing games like skipping gave children opportunities to learn about space and how their bodies moved.

**Art and Craft** can make an impact in our kids' education. This art form engages students and sneakily enhances their skills -- including improved spatial perception and logical and sequential thinking. Grade 3 Students made symmetrical butterflies and flower origami. Students enjoyed the session and keenly followed the teacher.

**Phonics** is a branch of linguistics where the sounds and physical properties of human speech are studied. Phonics reading is highly essential in every child education so we recapped the sounds, focused more on decoding and blending. As it was our foundation classes we focused more on basic skills.



**Music** is an amazing tool for teaching languages, especially to children. Good songs will bounce around in a learner's head long after their lesson is over. Young learners picked up vocabulary, grammatical structures, and the rhythm of the language simply by doing what they already love to do...singing. Grade 3 students were taken to multi-utility hall and they thoroughly enjoyed the 'Tiffa-taffa' song.

**Cooking** helped our kids to build confidence; they learnt about kitchen safety, gained an understanding of nutrition and calorie count. Students prepared 'simili' – traditional sweet made with ragi and groundnuts, ragi bread, veg roll and moong dhal balls. The kids joyfully engaged themselves in making the dishes and invited the teachers from middle and secondary level to taste. The students also listed the nutrient value of the delicacies they made.

**Kitchen Science** – The Session was taken over by our young Einsteins of G4. The students made simple hand pump with syringe, Cup Helicopter and Turbine Sprinkler.

Cross-curricular enrichment activities were adopted by the teachers to promote child-centered approach which enhanced children's creativity and built skills in critical thinking, listening, memory, visualization, and concentration.

**Reading Session** builds the desire to read! To enhance the interest level among the students, a simple story (A clever Answer) was read by the students in groups of 5. Later the students discussed the climax of the story.

*The Responsive Classroom approach creates an ideal environment for learning-- every teacher should know about it.*

*- Daniel Goleman*

## Induction and Professional Development

Indeed, a great start for Balsam facilitators too!! A series of workshops was conducted for the teachers to enhance and embrace their skills. The month of April began with the workshop headed by **Ms. Joy**, who gave an insight into classroom management. Teachers attended the first phase of training from 3rd to 5th of April that enriched them with multiple ways of engaging kids and to prepare lesson plans.

The workshop on 3rd of April about 'Planning' covered various aspects of curriculum. It helped them link the lessons based on multiple intelligence. Following which, 'Healthy Discipline' was presented on 4th of April where the important pro-active role of a teacher was familiarized. The final session was on 5th of April based on 'Physical Training Curriculum' which changed their perspective about handling PE sessions.

The second phase of training commenced from 13th and went on till the 15th of April comprising of the child developmental stages and several aspects involved. Overall, the workshop turned out to be a great learning experience for teachers.

11th May was a special day as it was the day of reporting for the faculty members. The first day of school for teachers started with an ice breaking activity, binding them together and realize the importance of working together. The day began with Morning Prayer followed by activity using Lego toys.

It was truly a different experience for teachers as they had always guided students while playing but never played. It was winded up with high spirit of team building. The school head presented slides about the norms, rules and regulations, policies and agenda for the year 2017-18. Respective department members sat through and reviewed their Annual Curriculum Plans and Lesson plans.



A line of activities was planned for the weeks to come. Grouped into three teams - house wise the teachers were engaged in many activities such as Debate, Cookery, Sports time and Quiz.

Sports department made a presentation on the 12th of May and shared their strategic plan for the academic year. It was interesting to know that they had planned to allow the middle and secondary students to pick a primary and secondary sport of their choice and provide efficient training to them.

## Madras Dyslexia Association Workshop

We had an eye-opening session presented by **Madras Dyslexia Association** for a week (15/5/2017-20/5/2017) which gave us a complete insight into the problems faced by certain students who require differential learning tools (Especially Dyslexic children) along with the ways to aid the students. Multiple sessions were conducted to concentrate on the aspects like Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Experienced resource persons from MDA pitched in to train us on finding feasible solutions.



Some remedies suggested for the students who have a problem in reading are:

- Tap on the lap
- Raising voice on his/her left ears
- Draw arches in their notebooks etc.

#### Key Takeaways

- Dyslexia is a lifelong, brain-based issue that makes it difficult for people to read.
- Signs of dyslexia can look different at different ages.
- There are many tools and strategies that can help your child with dyslexia succeed in school and in life.

First day and third day of MDA training was headed by **Mrs.Latha**. Her introduction made us understand that “Dyslexia is not a disease or an identifiable physical condition, but a learning style”. As facilitators, we had a clear picture on how to identify a dyslexic student at an early stage and help them overcome their problems. She also discussed about writing and highlighted reasons for poor handwriting and remedial measures to resolve.

Second day of MDA training session was by **Mrs. Meenakshi**. She mainly focused on spelling and writing. She aided us by providing various techniques to learn the spellings and the basic rules to be followed in writing Magic ‘e’, Long Vowel “a”, and highlighted the spelling rules.

The final session of MDA training was headed by **Mrs.Harini Ramanujan** on the topic “Multiple Intelligence” and traditional method of teaching. We could integrate the subjects with a different perspective.

By the end of the workshop, we had answers for many problems and multiple ways to resolve them. To put it in a nut shell, all these sessions served as eye openers to our facilitators right from the lower grade to secondary. It sensitized us to incline towards dyslexic learners.

## Subject Enrichment Programmes

Opportunities and activities beyond the classroom form an important and exciting feature about school life at Balsam Academy. At Balsam Academy, we believe that education goes beyond the classroom, and we strive to provide the opportunities for our facilitators to develop several key skills and competencies.

Subject Enrichment Programme for English, Math, Science and Social Science was organised on 22nd and 23rd of May by **The Teacher Foundation (TTF)**, Bangalore across the levels.

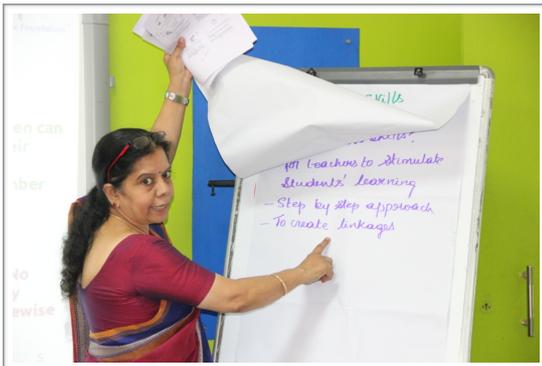
The Teacher Foundation came up with a workshop for **English** Language enrichment programme which focussed on teaching methodologies with more emphasis on grammar content. **Mrs. Vijayalakshmi** from Teacher Foundation was the resource person. Vocabulary, prefix, suffix, punctuations, degrees of comparison, phonics, active and passive voice, contractions and possessives were a part of the first day workshop. She enriched the teachers with several methodologies in teaching of grammar to attract the attention of the students. The second day workshop focussed on pre-and post-listening skills, voice modulation, intonation and stress, speaking skills with Reader's Theatre and five steps of writing process. The session served to be an interactive one which would enhance the teaching methodologies of a teacher and the interest level of the students. The program overall was an eye opener in teaching and learning of English subjected towards LSRW.

As part of subject enrichment initiatives, a two-day workshop for **Social sciences**’ faculty was organized

in the month of May in association with Teacher foundation, Bangalore. **Mrs. Rosamma Francis** was the resource person. The workshop was interactive and more than informative as the entire group tried to share their views about teaching science. They had some activities that tried out to involve role play and drama in making concepts interesting for the students. Some different worksheets were suggested to teach specific concepts. Understanding and creating timelines and chronology was challenging. Mapping techniques were shared. Overall it was an interesting and introspective workshop which unearthed the skills to teach social sciences more effectively.

**Mathematics** enrichment workshop was conducted by **Akila S. Rao**. She focussed on activities like Interactive number board, story board, spinners, geoboard, tangram, and paper folding. These activities would enhance the interest level and remove the fear factor among students to learn difficult concepts. Over all it served as a platform for teaching the subject with a different approach.

The **Science** enrichment workshop was conducted by **Mrs. Roopa**. The workshop aimed at enhancing the teaching and learning process of Science. The importance of the process skill was highlighted to develop a conceptual understanding of Science and to foster a scientific attitude among children. The teachers also analysed specific ways to make a few changes in the lessons to achieve the purpose of learning. The teachers also learned about the different approaches for hands on science and how to match the appropriate approach with the content, process and learning goals. The teachers analysed that if scope is given to children to practice all the science skills, they will turn into independent and responsible learners.



### Formative Assessment and Positive Attitude-Teaching Learning Environment

The Teacher Foundation workshop was conducted on the above topics for all the teachers across the levels on 24th and 25th of May by **Ms. Mithila Ketkar**. The program focused on the objectives of CBSE introducing FA as a part of the curriculum. She came out with different ideas on how to implement FA's in classroom to enhance student's learning. She also gave suggestions and methodologies for a positive learning environment to build up a good rapport between teachers and students. The program came to an end with a positive note by the teachers to take the teaching methodologies to their classrooms for imparting a wider knowledge to the young minds.

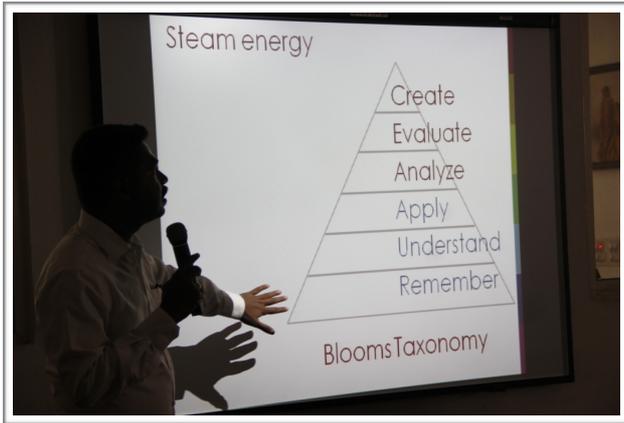
The workshop served as an eye-opener as it clearly suggested ways to take the subject to the level of the student and how to make it interesting and enjoyable. Later all the teachers involved themselves in thematic classroom display planning, lesson plans tailored for June sessions, contest plans, assembly plans and PODS plan etc.



### Kinder Parent Orientation Program

Parent Orientation Program was conducted for LKG & UKG on 3rd of June. The parents made time to attend the morning session (LKG) & afternoon session (UKG) respectively. The session briefed them about the upcoming year for the students.

The outcome of the POP from parents was considerably good. Around 90% of the parents submitted the stationery kit on the mentioned dates. We also found kids bringing fruits & nuts instead of cakes & sweets as mentioned during the POP. Only a few of the kids bought heavy food items which resolved after personal intimation. The uniform pattern was also maintained by all parents. The kids were pro-active and confident in the classrooms. Overall all the key aspects we mentioned in the POP were followed by the parents making the effective.



## 2016-17 Class X CBSE Board Exam Results

<b>APEARED</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PASSED</b>	19
<b>A1</b>	18
<b>A2</b>	1
<b>CGPA 10</b>	5

*It was a red-letter day in the annals of Balsam history. Once again our students proved their academic pursuit as they emerged with flying colours.*

*The students and parents were elated with the results and felt happy to see their efforts, hard work and endurance bear real fruits. They also didn't miss the opportunity to introspect and recall the strategies they had used in preparation for this success.*



## Chrysalis Workshop

Kindergarten teachers had their first workshop from Chrysalis for the year 2017-18 on 17th of June. An insight into the changes involving curriculum this year followed by session briefing the importance of learning outcomes which will help our kids grasp the concept easily. We also had a discussion on 21 Day reading challenge that will help to enhance the students to read words at the end of it.

In addition to the workshop, **Mr.Parthasarathy**, resource person from Chrysalis addressed the parents and explained about the benefits behind implementing the curriculum. On more pressing matters, the parents were informed of the important dates (Payment of academic and transport fee dates, stationery kit submission).



## Photography Workshop

It is pertinent to say that "Joyful June" began on 9th June with a photography session from "Ambitions 4 photography Academy" by **Mr. K.L. Raja Ponsing**, founder and director of photography academy. After learning a few techniques, the facilitators demonstrated practical usage of the same, giving us feedback and encouraging us to address the photographer in every student.

*The holidays were ending, and the school bell rang for the first time in a while. We had a new class of students in LKG B with a whole lot of butterflies in their stomach, which soon fled away after the ice breaking sessions and games. It was a roller coaster of a day for all of us, but one we'll always cherish.*

*"Yoga is the journey of the self, through the self, to the self."  
- The Bhagavad Gita*

## Yoga Day

International Yoga Day was celebrated on June 21, 2017. The day started with yoga performance and meditation. It was surprising to see our heroes standing with one leg doing the toughest step in Yoga. Yoga Day had its impact on students as they understood the importance of yoga in their life. Yoga as an art helps the individual to mould the unhealthy habits and transform their lifestyle, ensuring that brain cells remain active to be performing at its peak.

The show was honoured by **Mr. Annamalai**, the chief guest for the day. He is a retired railway staff with 30 years of experience as a practitioner of discipline and yoga. He appreciated the students for putting up a great show before sharing the benefits of yoga. He urged the audience to practice yoga stating it as a way to improve memory, inner well-being, boost self-confidence and to achieve a peaceful society.



## Investiture Ceremony

The Student Council members took charge after obtaining their badges from honourable guest, **Mr. Thiyagachandan** the sports director of VIT University and our trustee, **Ms. Anitha**. Students received their badges and took an oath to perform their duties with utmost responsibility. It was indeed a moment so pride for the badge holders to get charged up and move ahead as meticulous army.

The Chief Guest congratulated the members of the School Council Body. He insisted that they abide by the oath they took. He appreciated the teachers for playing such a vital role in moulding tomorrow's leaders and requested them keep doing what they do best.



## Assemblies

The class of LKG students were given the topic of **Cleanliness** to showcase as part of their assembly. Since this was the first assembly of the term it was preceded by the teachers. The session had a story, rhymes and an action song by teachers. Finally, a rhyme was sung by everyone with a pledge to maintain personal hygiene.

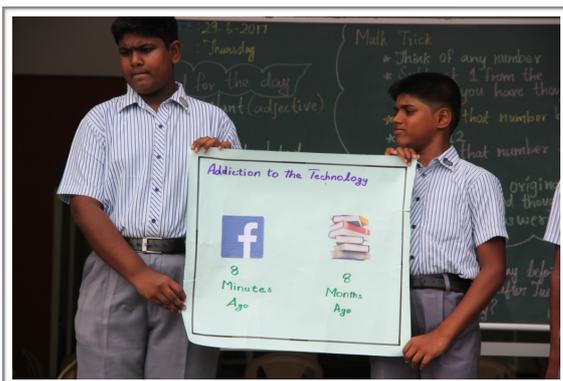
Middle and Secondary observed **World Blood Donor Day**, with the assembly titled **The giving tree**. It was all about raising awareness about the importance of donating blood, and encouraging people to donate.

The assembly aimed to highlight stories of people whose lives have been saved through blood donation,

to motivate regular blood donors to continue giving blood, and motivate people in good health who have never given blood to begin doing so, particularly young people.

On the notion that good parenting is key to a child's growth, the primary school had a wonderful opportunity to share this moment with their fathers. "**Father - my best friend**" showcased the importance of inculcating the important values for life and how so many of us are attached to our fathers, to help us continue this life in the right path and revive humanity in this world.

**Roars of ocean** was conducted by Grade 8A students on the 29th of June which exhibited immense talents of the students. They put their thoughts to bring about an awareness to the problems that we must face soon if we do not reconsider our actions now.



## Ramadan Celebration

“Pray-Fast-Share” is the slogan of all Muslims during the month of Ramadan. We had a peaceful celebration for Eid with students dressed in vibrant colours and dance performances. The facilitators of kinder explained the importance of Eid and sharing of food. They spindled the importance of celebrating Ramzan with song, dance and narration. It was a mind-blowing performance by the students.



## After School Programs Orientation

**Mr. Raman Vijayan**, embraced the occasion to share the importance of sports in the development of a student. More specifically on how football as a sport inculcates the human values in a student, be it in maintaining physical fitness and well-being or providing emotional support and working together as a team. He went on to demonstrate a few techniques that would be introduced into the program.



## Trip to Agastya

The Grade 10 students accompanied by two teachers were on an educational trip to Agastya Foundation, Kuppam. The students were fortunate to spend time in Agastya which is entrusted in transforming rural education in India. The objective of the trip was to kindle curiosity and set the students to discover the world around them.

The Agastya campus in Kuppam is spread across 172 acres and gets 500 young visitors from the Government schools nearby. On the first day, the students were encouraged to explore, examine and investigate the various scientific phenomena in the various labs dedicated to Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Math, Art and Robotics.



The most popular models in the physics labs were the Bhishma's chair, whispering dish, antigravity mirror, reaction time, double ended cone and square wheel bike. In the chemistry lab, the students watched in awe an artificial volcano and the magic of lighting a spirit lamp without a flame. The biology lab provided them with the specimens of human and animal body parts and a microscopic view of various micro-organisms. The students were exposed to the creativity in art and learnt several ways of preparing art from waste. The students were enthralled to find technology walking in pace in the photographic lab, computer lab and the media lab. The robotics lab inspired the students to do robotic models. The students were taken for a night sky watch; they watched celestial objects like the planet Jupiter along with its 4 satellites.

The next day students went for an eco-walk on the hillside, where figures of man, woman and a child were outlined with rocks. Within the outline was a well-tended garden with Ayurvedic herbs and plants. The students became acquainted with the names of the herbal plants and their benefits. In the later part of the session the students tried their hands on various activities related to electricity.

The trip excited the students not only with the experience of a panoramic view of the hill side but also with a satisfaction of fulfilling the objective of the trip.

## Parent-Teacher Council Meeting

The first Parent Teacher council meeting held on 25th of June had the important facts about the bonding between parents and teachers which will help us make this year 2017-18 a successful one. We had parents from LKG to G10 participating in the workshop. All the parents spoke about the concerns they faced last year and the solutions for the same were sought out.



## Broadcasting

With the availability of PA system in school this year, it allowed us to introduce small broadcasting sessions during the timed breaks. The broadcast would feature fun questionnaire and any important announcements to the students and staff, carried out by the day's broadcaster. This new element in the school was very much welcomed by all and has become a tradition now.

