

# MAGICAL BUTTERFLIES AT BIALIK COLLEGE

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A magical butterfly enclosure has been developed at Bialik College, populated with butterflies bred by the students themselves. The project is part of Bialik's innovative STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) initiatives that have proved to be immensely popular with the students and has successfully engaged more girls in science than ever before.

With help and advice from Bialik parent and Scientist, Eddie Tsyrlin, Bialik acquired caterpillar eggs, which were raised and cared for throughout their larval and chrysalid stages. In preparation for the arrival of the eggs, the Year 4 students were responsible for making sure there would be a sufficient food supply. Upon investigation, it was learned that this particular species of caterpillar eats sweet potato plants and so into Bialik's award-winning Kitchen Garden the students went! Once there were enough mature plants to sustain a whole community of caterpillars, the eggs and caterpillar enclosures were brought in.

Primary students were asked what do they think and wonder about when they see the little creatures (the hallmarks of Bialik College's Cultures of Thinking approach) and the questions were very insightful: "I wonder what type of plant this is?", "I wonder how old is this plant?", "I wonder how the caterpillar got inside the cage?", "I wonder how many degrees it is in the cage?", "Will they stay in the cage when they become butterflies?" and "How long it takes for caterpillars to turn into butterflies?" They are now well on their way to discovering answers to all these fascinating questions.



Through art, discussion and observation, Bialik College's Early Learning Centre students have been learning about the critters' habitat, their life cycle and were able to observe and enjoy the butterflies once they were released into the atrium. As the caterpillar enclosures were initially housed in the Science laboratories, the Middle and Senior students also had a chance to incorporate aspects of the project into their particular learning. And finally, as community and family learning is prioritised at Bialik, they have been inviting families to visit the atrium, now that the butterflies have matured.

Assistant Head of ELC, Helene Oberman, says, "Our students showed a natural curiosity about butterflies and being able to be involved in breeding them has resulted in very real and meaningful learning experiences for teachers, students and families alike."

For more information please visit [www.bialik.vic.edu.au](http://www.bialik.vic.edu.au)