

Future

Field Trip Fun

Last week we went to the Ecohydrology Research Institute. Researchers from the institute talked about their studies on the interaction between water and the ecosystem. They showed how insects, animals, and vegetation adapt to their environment. Students, as well as the teachers, greatly enjoyed the excursion. We learned a lot from the researchers and had a fun time exploring the forest and playing in the river. The forest was very beautiful. Tall trees, green moss, clear water, little crabs running along the banks of streams, and different vegetation new to me - everything that made the forest look enchanted. Both children and teachers were surprised that such beauty is only 3-4 km away from school. I think the children will remember this trip for a long time.

What about the music classes? The fourth graders are working on Shining Future 輝く未来へ right now. For part of the song, they have been singing just "lalala." This month, they write lyrics for this part. Walking into their music classroom, one could see how excited they are for the final version by how fully immersed they are in making the lyrics. They sang this song at a special concert and 一年生迎える会, and the whole school was very proud of their work. And thanks to this everyone's encouragement, all the fourth graders are now very engaged and feel responsible for making the song even better.

This semester, the students have also started working with the micro:bit. It is a kind of chip that students can program using their iPad to do different things. Some students are already familiar with the device, so they help other students in class. Thanks to Mr. Aratani's clear explanations on how to work with the micro:bit, everyone can already work independently and

try different programs from the textbook. I am amazed at how quickly children learn things and are already grouping to do some complex programming together. Students like programming a lot. That is good because they need programming skills in almost any occupation, whether it is engineering or even blogging and design. And in the future, when they will be university students, programming skills will probably be as essential as knowledge of the language or mathematics.

All in all, it's been an enjoyable and relaxing week. The weather changes drastically daily: one day it's hot, and the next it's chilly, so it's easy to catch a cold. Students need rest, good nutrition, and fresh air the most now. We, teachers, are trying to create informative and light lessons so that students don't stress too much and get sick.

Hopefully, soon it gets better. Please, stay safe, everyone!

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