

To supermarket, playground for Tamil lessons

AT ST Hilda's Primary School, Tamil lessons can mean a trip to the supermarket – or the playground.

Tamil teacher Veronica Naidu believes her pupils, who mainly come from English-speaking backgrounds, connect more with the language when they can relate it to their daily lives.

“We are literally learning Tamil through experiences. These lessons really captivate them,” she said. And once you have their interest, half the game is won, said Ms Naidu.

Pupils are taken to the supermarket across the street from their school in Tampines, where they learn the names of fruits and vegetables in Tamil, particularly those used in Indian cooking. They even buy a few to set up a mock supermarket in their classrooms. Back in class, pupils role-play as shopkeepers and customers – in Tamil.

At the nearby playground, Ms Naidu's Primary 1 pupils are taught the Tamil names of different toys and games. They also get to practise writing Tamil letters in the coloured sand the teacher has with her.

Over at Rivervale Primary School in Sengkang, teachers encourage their pupils to make their own food. Last year, they learnt to make *muruku*, an Indian snack traditionally eaten during Deepavali.

Teacher Nanthini Rajendran also encourages them to use food items to make art. Her pupils have made collages of the Tamil alphabet using uncooked rice and spices.

“They need activities that use all their five senses to keep them interested,” she said.

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