

# The Village School Kindergarten – First Grade Curriculum

## Morning Meeting

Morning meeting provides a friendly and enjoyable daily routine, giving children opportunities for song, movement, the sharing of news, ideas, and theme related objects.

## Theme

Themes last a typical ten week cycle. They often reflect the changing seasons, and tie in as closely as possible with the children's immediate experience. Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade share the same themes though they have different activities and outcomes. Examples of themes include: Gardens and Vegetables, Birds, Earth and Rocks, Olden Times, and Spring.

## Language Arts

**Story:** Weekly stories are chosen, to support the theme. Stories are used in a variety of ways including telling, retelling, journaling, and acting out. These stories are taken from the Brothers Grimm, other popular folktales, and picture books.

**Reading:** Children enter Kindergarten at different developmental stages and we support them from where they are. We gradually introduce a levelled reading program to Kindergarten along with a comprehensive phonics program which guides them along the path of emergent reading. By the beginning of 1<sup>st</sup> grade each child will be familiar with their reading level and will continue to take home 'just right' books that will move them towards fluent reading.

**Writing:** In kindergarten children begin writing in journals, and in a variety of book making activities. Writing is often based around our themes and styles include personal experiences, book reflections, story writing, and poetry. These activities are extended in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade.

**Handwriting:** The class follows the *Handwriting Without Tears* program which provides multi-sensory instruction in Kindergarten, and a continuation of the approach in First Grade.

**Phonics and Word Study:** The kindergarten follow the Orton-Gillingham program *Recipe For Reading*, which methodically builds children's early reading and writing skills. Half way through the kindergarten year and in 1<sup>st</sup> grade we use the Fountas-Pinnell program *Phonics Lessons* and weekly spelling practice is introduced in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

**Reading Partners:** Students are partnered with older reading partners from the upper grades for the year. This is a great way to encourage joint learning and cement friendships across the school. These visits take place on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and are highly anticipated.

**Quiet Reading:** Children arrive in the classroom at 1:00 pm after lunch recess and find a quiet place to curl up with a book or just rest. This time also provides excellent opportunities for the teacher to engage in one-on-one reading with students.

## Choice Time

Choice time activities take place daily. They cover a variety of subjects including reading, writing, theme, art and craft activities, and creative play. Choice time also includes opportunities for teacher-pupil one-on-one sessions.

## Math

The K-1 class follows the math *Investigations* curriculum. This curriculum allows the children to build math skills, learn number sense and participate in activities through practical, hands on investigations. It builds confidence and the enjoyment of math activities. The Kindergarten has lessons with Kim and the 1<sup>st</sup> grade with Martin. A variety of teaching methods are used, including whole class, partner, and individual activities. There are math areas in the classroom with activities for the children to explore during choice time.

### **Science and Nature**

The K-1 class has weekly science lessons, nature hikes, and trips throughout the year to Sweetwater Farm. Katrina Walton, one of our science teachers, plans and teaches these lessons alongside Martin. The main focus for science is on exploring and observing the natural world. Areas in the classroom often provide a place to display items brought back for appreciation and study. Journals are used by the class to record sightings and experiences.

### **Physical Education**

The Friday session of Phys. Ed provides an opportunity for children to engage in a longer session of activity such as hiking. Where appropriate, K and 1<sup>st</sup> graders participate in similar activities as the upper grades. Through the week there are also numerous Phys. Ed. opportunities such as outdoor recess and indoor activities such as stretching and balancing. Loren leads a yoga class on Friday mornings.

### **Music**

Children begin the year singing seasonal songs, songs about growing, and favorite well-known songs in Spanish and English. Throughout the year, movements, dances, and rhythm instruments such as drums, maracas, and rain sticks will accompany many of the songs. All K-1 students will participate in weekly recorder lessons in small groups. Students should practice recorder 5 minutes a day at home – it makes a big difference in their progress.

### **Spanish**

Spanish is taught through movement, stories, games and songs, and is based on the TPR (Total Physical Response) system. Students practice basic greetings and phrases, learn to respond to common classroom instructions, and work together to act out short stories in Spanish.

### **Art and Crafts**

Art takes place in the classroom daily. We have a weekly art session with our art teacher Elizabeth. In the once a week special class, a project is introduced through a brief song or story. Then comes the fun part... we all sit down and paint, draw or sculpt with clay or do an open ended art activity tied to the K-1 theme. The goal of these art projects is to have the children feel successful with new experiences and materials, to have fun, and to spark creativity in a non-verbal way. Art hour will include watercolor, clay, collage, and simple weaving.

### **Recess**

In keeping with the Village school ethos, the importance of recess is emphasised as a time of great learning - physical, emotional and social. Since most of the school day is structured, recess gives the children a blank canvas for imaginative and physical play together. Teachers are present and encourage children to find solutions together when differences arise.

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding the K-1 classroom, or your child, call Martin anytime after school, or please arrange to meet with him after school.

We look forward to a full year of learning, growth and joy with the children.

Martin Brown – K-1 Class teacher.