K Grade Curriculum
Plymouth Meeting Friends School
2021-2022

Philosophy/Overview

Instruction in Kindergarten focuses on developing foundational skills for later learning in all content areas. Language Arts instruction in Kindergarten helps students make connections between the alphabet and its role in reading. It is critical that students develop phonological awareness so they can move on to decoding words; yet, reading in Kindergarten extends beyond decoding words. Kindergarteners learn beginning skills to comprehend and analyze what they read. The Math In Focus curriculum introduces concepts using manipulatives to help students gain insight into the world of numbers and number sense. Students are introduced to the relationship between numbers and quantities and build a foundation for place value as they count, represent, and compare whole numbers. Social Studies lessons incorporate Quakerism, our heritage, families, communities, our world, and ourselves. One of our most important goals in Kindergarten is to teach the students to respect nature. Nature class themes change each month, covering a range of topics including animals, insects, trees, plants, seeds, sea life, and habitats.

Themes change each year according to the students in the Kindergarten classroom. Teachers recognize the importance of listening to the children's dialogue, play, and writing. What they study must have meaning and significance to them. Friendship is a recurring theme of study in the Kindergarten classroom every year. Students spend all year learning how to build friendships and maintain them, while recognizing the importance of listening to one another. Another ongoing theme is the study of one's self. Quakers believe there is a light in everyone; and teachers help the light of each student to shine so they feel confident and ready for the world.

Math

In Kindergarten Mathematics, students become proficient in basic computational skills and procedures, develop conceptual understandings, and become adept at problem-solving. Students also describe and model objects in their environment using simple geometric shapes and vocabulary. By integrating all areas of the curriculum with mathematics, Kindergarten students begin to connect math understanding to real-life experiences. The students work on rote counting by 1, 2, 5 and 10 to 100, and counting down from 20. During their exploration of number sense, kindergarteners learn how to make reasonable estimates, classify small groups of objects by number, and execute simple addition and subtraction combinations. Students also learn to identify and write numerals to 100. They collect, graph, and interpret data in many contexts including Science, Language Arts, Math, and Nature. Data is represented with tally marks, stickers, and colored squares. In their work on measurement, students study time, length, and weight. The study of time includes seasons, months, days of the week, dates, and

the passage of time (today, yesterday, and tomorrow). In their study of length and weight, kindergarteners work on both estimation and exact measurement using standard and non-standard units. Geometry work includes identifying symmetry and the attributes of shapes in various parts of the environment. Kindergarteners study shapes including circles, squares, triangles, rectangles, diamonds, hexagons, semi-circles, and ovals. Pattern work is done using pattern blocks and unifix cubes. Finally, Kindergarten students learn to identify coins by name and value.

Language Arts

Phonics, reading, and writing are all components of the Plymouth Meeting Friends School Kindergarten language arts curriculum. These areas are crucial in helping children build important literacy and communication skills.

Listening and Speaking

Throughout the school year, Kindergarten students learn the importance of whole body listening. Students are taught to settle their bodies, quiet their feet, listen with their ears, watch with their eyes, and raise a quiet hand. Students participate in multiple activities designed to boost listening and memory skills. Early in the school year, kindergarteners learn that they have a valued “voice”; and every student has numerous opportunities to use their voice in group discussions, author’s chair, and when giving “I messages”.

Reading

Language arts activities for Kindergarten aim to give students a thorough understanding of the sounds each letter makes and increase their understanding of the subtle differences in word meanings. Students discover new vocabulary words and develop fluency through reading activities that prompt them to answer basic questions about stories, nursery rhymes, and more. Students demonstrate an understanding of the organization and basic features of print. They gain an understanding of spoken words, syllables, and phonemes and apply phonics and word discovery skills when decoding words. Kindergarteners read early-emergent texts with purpose and understanding.

Writing

The Kindergarten writing curriculum incorporates prewriting and writing activities that give students the necessary skills to begin writing words, sentences, and stories. Students write an opinion using a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing. Often, kindergarteners are prompted to recall information from an experience and write about it including details and illustrations.

Social Studies

Social studies instruction in Kindergarten is a multidisciplinary, integrated approach to the study of people, their physical environment, traditions, leadership, and cultures. The social studies

curriculum includes geography, civics, economics, and history. Students recognize and describe how individuals and families are both similar and different. They recognize the roles and responsibilities of being a good citizen, and can explain how humans meet their needs in many different ways.

Social Emotional

The Kindergarten year is a critical period in social and emotional development. Early on, most children begin to distinguish between positive and negative emotions, as they also learn how to regulate their own emotions. In educating the whole child, the development of self-confidence and social skills are an important focus in Kindergarten. Our goal is for a child to feel good about themselves, respect others, function comfortably in the classroom with peers, and be able to meet challenges with open-mindedness and confidence. We make frequent use of the Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship as our model for behavior, both personal and interpersonal. Kindergarteners learn the Quaker practice of peaceful conflict resolution which helps to facilitate communication and cooperative problem-solving. Giving messages and using “I” statements are two strategies that encourage students to clearly state their individual needs.