

The American School in London

K1: Semester 2 Curriculum Guide

By the end of the second reporting period, these are the ideas, concepts, and skills your child will have learned. We acknowledge that all children learn at different paces, and that it takes the students different lengths of time to master skills and concepts.

Social and Emotional Development

We are a play-based program and value the deep learning and development that occurs during children's play. Learning to play and work together in harmony is one of the most important goals in kindergarten. Children are explicitly taught conflict resolution strategies and are supported to solve social conflicts verbally. We expect children to manage and take responsibility for their own behavior. We focus on the values of empathy, respect, tolerance and sharing throughout the year.

Approaches to Learning

Our class environments and curriculum are designed to promote curiosity, flexibility and creativity. We encourage students to become independent learners, to make appropriate choices and to seek help from peers and adults when needed. We expect students to put forth their best effort, yet be willing to take risks and to learn from their mistakes. Our aim is to foster independence and promote problem solving strategies. The organization and care of work, materials and personal belongings is also a part of being independent in kindergarten. We encourage children to use language to communicate when they need help and to articulate their thinking.

Gross and Fine Motor Development

Gross motor skills are important to enable children to perform everyday functions at school. These include maintaining an upright sitting posture, navigating classroom and play spaces safely and having appropriate levels of movement. Children are also building their stamina to sustain appropriate mental and physical energy throughout the school day. Fine motor skills are necessary to succeed with academic tasks (e.g. cutting, drawing and writing) as well as to complete self care tasks such as independent dressing (coats, packing bags) and eating (managing lunch bags and food). We support the ongoing development of children's sensory systems in music, movement and physical education lessons and provide opportunities for "messy" play.

Speaking and Listening

Communication is a fundamental skill for both academic and social success. Across the curriculum, we focus on developing children's receptive, expressive and nonverbal language skills. Receptive language skills in kindergarten include engaged listening for increasingly longer periods of time and being able to hear, remember and follow 2 to 3 step directions. Expressive language skills include speaking clearly to ask questions, articulate thinking and effective communication to solve problems and have needs met. During play times the ability to move flexibly between listening and speaking is an important social skill. Nonverbal communication skills enable children to understand meaning and emotion from the body language, facial expressions and gestures of others.

Reading

In Semester 2, K1 students are exposed to activities that reinforce an understanding of the letters and sounds of the alphabet through the Wilson Foundations Program. Phonological awareness, rhyming and syllable work is also integrated into the students' day by reading big books, read alouds, poetry, the morning message and the daily schedule. Opportunities to explore books independently during quiet times and library visits are also provided.

Writing

By the end of K1, students should feel confident in expressing their ideas through drawing and writing. Students write throughout the day for various purposes. They are introduced to Writer's Workshop and are encouraged to use approximated spelling to convey their message. During Semester 2, students are encouraged to fill in missing letters on the daily morning message to reinforce letter/sound/symbol awareness.

Math

The K1 is guided by the Common Core State Standards, which encourages flexible thinking, sense making and the use of mathematical language to explain thinking. During Semester 2, children work on developing their number sense, focusing mainly on numbers under 10, through activities and games with meaningful contexts. Additional skills such as patterning, graphing, sorting and classifying continue to be covered. Other topics covered this semester include geometry, spatial reasoning, measurement, and number stories.

Project Work

Project work is an opportunity for a class to pursue an in-depth investigation of a topic using inquiry. During project work, we explore the world around us using close observation, recording (often with observational drawings), experimentation, data collection, and analysis. Teachers model the cyclical nature of research where questioning leads to research and findings lead to further questioning. Our project work depends and thrives on wonder. We wonder: What do I see when I look closely? How can I show what I see to others? What would happen if...? How can I find the answer to my question? What have I learned? Project work is different from a theme or topic based curriculum, in that the learning and discovery emerge from the children's questions and findings rather than being a series of lessons or content that is taught in a given sequence. This type of inquiry-based teaching engenders creativity, ownership, excitement and intellectually rich children's work and thinking.

PE

During the second term of physical education, the K1 children participate in a variety of cooperative and problem solving adventures, such as advanced spy training and circus skills. Visual tracking skills are reinforced through the use of balloons, scarves and catching implements. Coordination and spatial awareness are challenged in the swimming unit, which involves submersion, water play and safety. Through fitness games, the children become more aware of how their bodies respond to exercise, and most importantly, they become more confident movers.

Creative Arts

The creative arts program provides both visual and performing arts opportunities so the children can explore many expressive languages. It is influenced by the Reggio Emilia Approach whereby projects evolve from the children's own interests and curiosity about the world around them, often related to classroom research. This allows each child to develop his or her own creative potential, both individually and in small groups. The students are encouraged to reflect upon and discuss their creative work as they acquire new skills with a variety of media and techniques. In art they explore color, pattern, texture, line and form through painting, drawing and modeling. In music children develop their listening skills through learning a variety of songs and singing games. Many students are able to recognize the difference between their singing and speaking voice and are building confidence when singing. They learn nursery rhymes and children's songs that are especially designed to match their vocal range. The children experiment with rhythm and beat using percussion instruments and explore their sense of space through movement to music, individually and in group circle games. Spanish is incorporated into the program so they have opportunities to absorb simple vocabulary such as greetings, colors, numbers and body parts. Drama activities include simple storytelling from everyday life, role-play and engaging in imaginative interpretations of animals and well-known characters from children's fiction.