

# The American School in London

## K2: Semester 1 Curriculum Guide

By the end of the first 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. Your child's teacher will update you on their initial social, emotional, and academic progress at October conferences and provide a more formal report card in February.

### 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

Reading is integrated throughout the day. We develop the children's literacy skills and foster a love of reading through shared reading, big books, read alouds, songs and poetry. The children learn the letters and sounds of the alphabet and begin to use them to read. They also begin to build a bank of high frequency words.

## Writing

Children write throughout the day for various purposes. They are introduced to Writer's Workshop and genre studies. They are encouraged to use invented spelling to convey their message in writing. Conventional spelling is introduced with a high frequency word list and through exploring environmental print. We model conventions of language such as punctuation, spacing, word choice and grammar. The formation of upper and lower case letters is taught using the Foundations handwriting program with an emphasis on lower case letters.

## Math

Our math curriculum is based on the Common Core State Standards to build number sense and promote problem solving. Children are counting, sorting, classifying, graphing and investigating numbers, shapes and patterns throughout the semester. In addition, math concepts are embedded into daily routines as we take attendance, complete the calendar, record the days in school and graph data.

## Project Work

During project work, children are involved in in-depth investigations of relevant topics. The key feature of a project is that it is a research effort deliberately focused on finding answers to questions about a topic posed either by the students or the teacher.

## 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. Each child is able to develop his or her own creative potential, both individually and in small groups. They are encouraged to reflect upon and discuss their creative work as they acquire new skills in different media. In art they explore color, pattern, line and form through painting, drawing and modeling and by looking in depth at the work of different artists. In music the children learn songs and action games from a variety of cultural sources, stimulating the recognition of rhythm, tempo and dynamics and fostering an awareness of their own and other cultures. Children become more consistent and confident when using their singing voice and begin to demonstrate a stronger sense of melody. They experiment with tuned and untuned percussion instruments and are developing their listening skills, musical memory and sense of space through movement to music, exploring different skills to encourage individual expression and learning to take turns in group dances and circle games. Spanish is incorporated into the program so they have opportunities to practice greetings, colors, numbers and body parts. In drama children engage in storytelling using real life scenarios, their imaginations and traditional folk and fairytales.

## PE

In the first term of PE, the children explore spatial awareness, locomotor skills, and respond to signals. They participate in activities which reinforce their core strength, balance, tracking and eye hand coordination. Learning to work independently, stay on a task, and develop self-control are fundamental principles for early childhood physical education. During cooperative activities, such as spy training, the children begin to take risks, resolve conflicts and learn to manage their emotions.