

The American School in London

K2: 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 K2, we want our students to learn to read, and we want them to love to read. By the middle of the year, kindergarten children have developed the language, writing and literacy skills and concepts that enable them to approach reading with excitement and confidence. Children are grouped into small guided reading groups and continue to practice reading texts at their level. Attention is paid to an individual child's reading skills as well as his or her social/emotional maturity and disposition towards reading. Using big books and familiar texts, we will continue to teach reading skills and behaviors, including recognizing high frequency words, one-to-one matching, noticing patterns, using cues in pictures and texts, and participating in conversations about books.

Writing

Our writing program seeks to develop students who naturally and joyfully choose to write as a form of expression. By the second half of the year, kindergarten students see themselves as writers and bring their knowledge and skills to write for many purposes. We value the learning and practice of the conventions of writing (e.g. handwriting, spelling, punctuation, etc.) as well as the behaviors and dispositions of writers (e.g. thinking like a reader, exploring genres, experimenting with illustration techniques, etc.) This semester, students focus on narrative writing and continue to develop their sense of story elements through oral storytelling and rich children's literature.

Math

The math curriculum in LS is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Students use a variety of tools 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

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.

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. They 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.

PE

In the second term of physical education, the K2 children explore climbing and jumping through adventure games, improve their visual tracking through striking activities, and learn about heart health through the use of pedometers. The children learn how to create shapes with their bodies and became more familiar with the concepts of direction, level, and transferring weight. In addition to becoming more competent movers, they practice sportsmanship and conflict resolution through cooperative games.