

KINDERGARTEN

CURRICULUM

VILLA ACADEMY CURRICULUM INFORMATION

KINDERGARTEN

LITERACY (READING / ORAL LANGUAGE)

Reading is a developmental process where children use strategies that help them understand meaning. The First Grade curriculum integrates the best aspects from a variety of programs to provide a well-balanced literacy program. Students participate in a variety of activities to improve phonemic awareness, reading, comprehension, word attack skills, and appreciation for literature. The reading curriculum includes:

- *Independent Reading*: Students are involved in reading individually during the day. Material read is developmentally appropriate and is both child- and teacher-selected.
- *Shared Reading*: Students experience stories, poems, chants, and choral readings as a group. The teacher reads and models daily speech, vocabulary, familiar phrases, expression and timing, word patterns, and the enjoyment of literature.
- *Guided Reading*: Students interact with the teacher to discuss decoding strategies, practice skills, respond, share, and make connections with their own experiences to a book at their unique instructional level.
- *Phonics*: Students learn consonants, short and long vowels, blends, and digraphs as well as how to decode words. Phonics skills are learned in the context of reading, using games, hands-on manipulatives, and literature-based activities.
- *Sight Word Reading*: Another reading strategy is exposing students to a variety of sight words to build a quick visual memory. Sight words are words that do not follow phonics rules, cannot be sounded out easily, and occur frequently in primary texts. A large sight vocabulary improves reading speed and fluency.

SCIENCE

The Science curriculum for Kindergarteners incorporates inquiry-based instruction and an introduction to the scientific method. Using Foss Kits, students explore and investigate life science through units on trees and animals, and physical science through a unit on fabrics. Each topical unit includes opportunities for students to use all four steps of the scientific method (observation, hypothesis, prediction, and experimentation/testing) and takes approximately six weeks to complete.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Students will explore concepts such as:

- All about me
- Me and my community (home, school, church, etc.)
- Safety
- Holidays and multicultural celebrations
- Fairytales around the world (Geography)
- “The Park” Storypath (working as a community)

These concepts are integrated into the literacy curriculum and other activities, such as field trips, art projects, music, and class meetings.

WRITING

The emphasis is for students to experience the writing process at their level and encourage the continuum of writing development. Children learn how to write by writing. Teachers provide frequent opportunities to write through *interactive/group writing, journal writing, guided writing, and independent writing*. By encouraging children to use invented spelling, students can write with less inhibition and see themselves as writers. The Six Traits Plus One model of writing is introduced to kindergarten students through reading quality literature and their own writings.

HANDWRITING

Handwriting is taught in a developmentally appropriate manner using the Handwriting Without Tears curriculum. (www.hwtears.com) The goal of handwriting instruction is to make legible and fluent handwriting an easy and automatic task for all students. Using a multisensory approach, instruction is based on what children already know and how they learn best. Teacher modeling, guided practice, and consistent child friendly language and habits facilitate and strengthen handwriting from year to year.

In kindergarten, students explore letters using age appropriate manipulatives and songs, continue to practice proper grip using crayons, chalk, and small pencils, and master the formation of all capital and small letters. Proper letter formation, spacing and size are also reinforced with the use of a student workbook.

MATH

The *Everyday Mathematics* program is guided by standards set by the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). A “spiraled” curriculum, six content strands are introduced continuously throughout the year, increasing in complexity and depth over time. Students are provided with many opportunities to think about problems within the context of everyday experiences. Lessons are formatted to encourage exploration, active thinking, cooperative, and hands-on learning.

The six content strands are:

- Number and Numeration
- Operations and Computation
- Data and Chance
- Measurement and Reference Frames
- Geometry
- Patterns, Functions, and Algebra

RELIGION

The focus of the religion program in Kindergarten is respect for self, each other, and the environment. Students come to know Jesus as a loving friend and God as a loving Father. Students learn about God through basic Catholic prayers and Old Testament Bible stories that are taught at an age appropriate level. Students celebrate events and seasons of the liturgical calendar, including Advent and Lent, and learn about the order of the Mass. Textbook: *Blest Are We* by Silver Burdett Ginn Religion

SPECIALISTS

Kindergarten students participate in a varied schedule and see specialists in the following areas:

Art: 60 minutes — *once a week*

French: 30 minutes — *twice a week*

Library: 30 minutes — *once a week*

Music: 30 minutes — *twice a week*

PE: 30 minutes — *twice a week*

Technology: 45 minutes — *once a week*

MUSIC

The purpose of our music program is to expose students to a wide range of musical experiences so they may develop a foundation for lifelong appreciation of music. This is accomplished by providing students with learning experiences so they develop the skills described by the Association for the Supervision of Curriculum Development (ASCD) benchmarks while learning concepts related to the elements of music. The activities designed to provide such experiences are singing, playing Orff and other percussion instruments, moving to music, listening, and performing.

LIBRARY

The goal of our program is to develop students who value learning and have the skills, strategies, and processes to be independent users of information. The library curriculum provides learning opportunities for students to develop skills in information literacy, literature appreciation, and responsible library behaviors.

Information Literacy and the Research Process

- Generate questions from text and listen to find answers
- Identify relevant resources

Library Responsibilities

- Locate fiction, non – fiction and picture books
- Compare styles of authors and illustrators
- Understand care of resources
- Select, use and return materials on time

Literature Appreciation and Reading for Meaning

- Listen and respond to WCCPB nominees and Caldecott winners
- Identify basic story elements
- Listen for and identify main ideas, details
- Recall facts of stories and illustrations
- Identify attributes of fairy tales, realistic and fantasy stories
- Listen and respond to traditional and contemporary genres
- Respond to stories with various cultural origins

TECHNOLOGY

Once each week, Lower School students come to Villa's Computer Lab to build their computer literacy skills and experiment with a range of programs, applications and equipment. Assigned projects undertaken in this class integrate with the students' classroom curriculum throughout the school year.

Kindergarten and First Grade students learn how to maneuver through several different programs initially. At the beginning of the year, students get to know the keyboard and essential keys such as Delete, Return and Shift. Students learn to use various tools within the *KidPix* program by completing projects based on stories read in class. In the spring, students begin to publish booklets using *EasyBook Deluxe* that reinforce their developing literacy skills.

FRENCH

The French program presents language in meaningful situations and builds continuity with the development of specific themes. Students use the language to communicate and to express. By incorporating Total Physical Response (TPR) and storytelling methods, students respond with physical activity to increasingly complex teacher commands. This develops oral comprehension and facilitates language acquisition and retention.

A variety of methods are used, including a whole language method and limited immersion. The majority of class time is conducted in French.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Kindergarten students are beginning a lifetime of movement. They are curious and eager to learn new skills. In kindergarten physical education, students develop gross motor skills, coordination, teamwork, following directions and playing in a structured environment. The movement skills learned in kindergarten forms the basis for future experiences and are used during a lifetime of physical activity.

ART

The objective of the Kindergarten through Third Grade visual arts program is to encourage artistic and aesthetic growth through teaching observation, use of a variety of art media to express and communicate, application of the creative process to solve problems, understanding and use of art elements and concepts, and the appreciation and enjoyment of the artistic process. Art history and cultural arts are also an integral part of students' art curriculum.