

Curriculum Outline: Grade One 2017-18

Zoe Donoahue – Jackman Institute of Child Study Lab School

Welcome to Grade One! The following is information about the Grade One program that I hope you will find useful. I am happy to answer questions about the curriculum throughout the year.

Reading

Learning to read and improving reading skills is a critical part of the Grade One year. Over the year the children will have many opportunities to learn new skills, practise reading, and develop a positive attitude toward and love of reading. The focus when reading always needs to be on making meaning, rather than on accurate word-for-word reading. Children will learn and practise a variety of strategies to identify words and will read texts that are at a “just right” level for them.

At home, it is critical that children are read aloud to each day by an adult, even after they can read for themselves. Hearing books that are above children’s independent reading level exposes children to vocabulary, sentence structure, and story structures that they will encounter as they are able to tackle harder books on their own.

A Borrow-A-Book program will begin early in the year. Children will bring home books to read aloud to a parent in the evening. Beginning in October, the children will bring home a book of poems to read each weekend.

The reading program will consist of:

Quiet Reading – Children read books of their own choosing. This is a time when children may practise reading on their own, with a friend, or with a teacher and browse through a variety of books such as picture books, short novels, books from the Jackman ICS Library, non-fiction texts, and poetry.

Independent Reading – Children read on their own from books that are at a “just right” level. This is a time for children to practise their reading and for the teachers to listen to children read aloud, help them with reading strategies, and talk to them about what they are reading.

Guided Reading – A small group of children with similar needs reads a text just above their independent reading level under the guidance of a teacher. The teacher provides planned instruction, as well as instruction from needs that arise as the children read. Instruction about spelling patterns, phonics, reading strategies, making predictions and inferences, and reading different genres of text may also occur during this time.

Direct Reading Instruction – The children visit Judith, our Special Ed. teacher, in small groups for the Direct Reading Instruction program four times a week. This program focuses on explicit phonetic instruction and matches the children’s current skills and instructional needs.

Reading Aloud – The teachers will read aloud to the children from picture books, poetry, enlarged texts, novels, and non-fiction texts. Discussions will help children to clarify and show their understanding of the text, make predictions and inferences, connect texts to their own lives, knowledge and experiences, and respond to texts.

Choral Reading – Children will read aloud as a class from enlarged texts. This helps children to build fluency and sight vocabulary and to use of a variety of reading strategies, and is fun!

Small Group Activities – Children will participate in small group reading activities such as reading our weekly poem aloud and doing related activities, reading with a partner, or creating and reading a text based on a familiar picture book.

Reading Aloud to a Teacher – Children will read aloud to a teacher for practice and for assessment purposes.

Reading Response – Children will respond to books by retelling favourite parts, by relating books to their own lives and to other books, and by reflecting on the story. This response may be oral, written or artistic.

Writing

The writing program will consist of:

Units of Study for Primary Grades, a writing program that explicitly teaches the writing process through a variety of units focusing on different genres. The children will have three Writing Workshop times a week consisting of a “mini-lesson”, time to write with the support of their teachers, and a time to share their writing with their classmates.

Writing for Different Purposes – Children write in their Lab Books about learning related to our current Inquiry work, write notes, letters and lists, and write responses to what they have read. There are many opportunities to practise writing for a variety of purposes.

Mechanics – Children will learn to write short, simple sentences with capitals and end punctuation. As children are

ready, their sentences will become longer and more complex and they will be taught necessary punctuation.

Spelling Instruction – Children are expected to have an ever-growing repertoire of commonly used words that they can spell correctly. These words can be copied from our class Word Wall and from each child's Sight Word Card, which consists of words that they are learning to spell. When writing, children are encouraged to "stretch out" the sounds in words and record the sounds that they hear. Spelling instruction takes place in small groups, during Guided Reading lessons, during an activity called Making Words, as a part of our Morning Message, and when children are producing their own writing.

Printing Instruction – The Handwriting Without Tears program focuses on correct and efficient letter formation and proper grip. Children will learn the upper and lower case letters and numerals and will be reminded to use what they have learned in their daily writing work.

Inquiry

The children will learn about Science and Social Studies topics through an inquiry-based approach, beginning with their own questions and theories. The children will improve their ideas and find answers to their problems of understanding through:

Knowledge Building Talks, where children sit in a circle and have a discussion where they share theories, ideas, questions, their own knowledge, and new information.

Reading and being read to from non-fiction books, appropriate Internet resources, articles.

Writing and drawing about their understandings and questions and eventually in writing on Knowledge Forum, an on-line collaborative work space.

Participating in hands-on experiences in the classroom.

Going on field trips and having guest speakers.

Pursing their interests at home, if they wish. On occasion children will be asked to think about their inquiry work at home or to gather resources from home, the Internet or Public Libraries. Children's contributions from home to our inquiry work are always welcome.

Mathematics

The mathematics program will follow the Ontario Curriculum under five strands: Numeration and Number Sense, Geometry and Spatial Sense, Measurement, Data Management and Probability, and Patterning and Algebra.

The expectations for Grade One will be addressed through:

Math Lessons – Math is usually taught in half groups. Lessons include instruction, discussions where children articulate theories and explain their thinking, opportunities to work with concrete materials to make discoveries, learn concepts and consolidate learning, time to practise skills through playing math games, and times when children record their mathematical thinking and solutions on paper.

The Daily Calendar Routine – During our daily Calendar routine children watch data accumulate and learn to record and analyse this data using charts, tallies, graphs, and number lines. They learn about concepts such as place value, odd and even numbers, number patterns, and counting forwards and backwards by different numbers.

Board Games – Children may choose to play Board Games that require them to count, add and strategize.

Structures – At our weekly Structures time each child works on his or her own to build with materials such as blocks, wooden planks, cups, wooden bungs, or film containers. Children explore and learn about concepts such as balance, symmetry, pattern, quantity, seriation, number relationships, and stability. They design and modify their structures, solve problems, and learn about the qualities and characteristics of materials that vary in shape, size, and composition.

Specialty Subjects

Gym will be taught by Mike on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays in half groups. Running shoes are a must for each class.

French will be taught by Tania in half groups every day except Friday. Drama with Sarah is on Thursdays. Music with Russell is on Mondays. Library with Krista is on Tuesdays. Judith is the Special Education teacher. Our Special Friends are Robin's Grade Fours. We meet on Wednesdays.

Contacting Me

I am usually available before and after school for shorter conversations. Appointments can be scheduled when we need more time to talk. If you need to contact me in a timely way, please call the school office at 934-4517 and Nancy can pass the message on to me right away. This is especially important if there is a change in your child's after school care arrangements. For less urgent matters you can e-mail me at zoe.donoahue@utoronto.ca