

# First Grade Curriculum

The first grade experience at Springhurst is based on the belief that children learn by doing. When children are interested and actively involved, true learning occurs. Children learn best when provided with a wide range of stimulating ideas and activities that build upon their real life experiences.

Our goal is to create classrooms where the children are free to explore, react, think and grow at their own pace. As teachers, we will provide learning experiences that integrate students' interests with the first grade curriculum.



## Language Arts



Literacy develops from real life settings in which reading and writing are used to accomplish goals.

Reading, writing, speaking and language skills are interrelated. Therefore, they are taught concurrently throughout the curriculum. Literacy develops through active engagement within the environment. Children need opportunities to experiment daily with reading and writing. The classroom should provide rich demonstrations, interactions and independent explorations.

The first grade students are participating in a wonderful phonics program called Foundations. First graders use **Foundations** to provide a systematic and explicit approach to reading and spelling with phonics. **Foundations** instruction emphasizes phonemic awareness, phonics word study, high frequency word study, fluency, vocabulary, handwriting and spelling.

Children should be given opportunities to read through:

- independent reading or reading to each other
- storybook reading (reading aloud) including trade books, big books and poetry
- reading for information
- environmental print such as signs, charts, labels, etc.
- various activities to read print in meaningful context in the room
- controlled text with predictable storyline
- games, chants, poetry and songs

Children should be given opportunities to respond:

- through art, drama, and creative writing
- to experiment through relevant text

Children should be given opportunities to write often and for a wide variety of purposes and audiences. Children should experiment, collaborate and present to an audience. Once writing is established it carries over into other areas of the curriculum.

In first grade, children will make the transition from invented/temporary spelling and ultimately proceed at their own pace to conventional spelling. The use of invented/temporary spelling allows children to express themselves in writing as easily as possible.



## Math



We will be following the Primary Mathematics Program. In Primary Mathematics, concepts are presented in a clear and sequential way to facilitate understanding and confidence.

The program uses a methodology that proceeds from **concrete** (using concrete materials such as cubes, pattern blocks, and cards) to **pictorial** (2-D images of different familiar things) to **abstract** (numbers and symbols). Students first encounter mathematical concepts through the use of objects, and then move on to the pictorial stage in which pictures are used to model problems. When students are familiar with the ideas taught, they progress to a more advanced or abstract stage in which only number, notation, and symbols are used. This approach enables students to translate skills from the concrete to the abstract, and to understand mathematical concepts before learning the procedures and formulas.

Primary Mathematics emphasizes math facts, develops strong problem-solving skills, and meets the needs of a range of learners.



## Social Studies and Science



Our Social Studies curriculum stresses that children learn about themselves, their families and respecting others. We will learn about our town, in which we work, live and play. We strive to integrate all curriculum areas with our Science and Social Studies themes.

In science, we support the children's natural curiosity about their physical world by providing centers and units of study that allow them to have hands on experiences. We will also be using Science 21: A Comprehensive Standards-based Science Program for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner. In first grade the units of study are: Space Systems: Patterns and Cycles; Waves: Light and Sound; and Structure, Function and Information Processing.



## Character Education



Developing caring, responsible, and respectful community members through education and active participation is one of our primary goals as elementary school educators. Parental and guardian support is key to the success of some of these programs and initiatives. In grade 1, some of the topics we discuss in Second Step include: Skills for Learning, Empathy, Emotion Management, and Problem Solving.



### Homework



Reading for 10-15 minutes each night is expected. You may read with your child, to your child or have your child read alone. It is important that you talk about the content, share your responses and reactions with your child, and encourage your child to talk about what was read. Please make reading a priority in your home.

Math and/or some form of reading or language homework will be given on a regular basis. The purpose of these assignments is simply the practice of some concept that the child is working on. Homework and reading combined should not take longer than 20-25 minutes. Please set aside a quiet time and place for homework. Allow your child to work independently as much as possible. Your interest in your child's work is a very important component in the beginning development of good work habits and a positive attitude.



### Communication



Please remember that any changes to your child's dismissal must be completed through School Dismissal Manager.

Throughout the year, we will be observing your child's growth and development so that we can support their individual needs. It is helpful to advise your child's teacher if your child had a particularly difficult time, is experiencing some sort of change, or is under any unusual stress. We are always available to discuss any thoughts, questions or concerns.

**We look forward to a wonderful year with your child! Thank you!**