

United Friends School Third and Fourth Grade Curriculum at a Glance

Language Arts

Reading: The Readers Workshop has several components including mini-lessons, independent reading time, guided reading and read alouds. Children learn to participate in literature circles and begin to read analytically to gather meaning and information. They continue to develop book selection, reading and comprehension skills and fluency. Their response to literature includes journal entries, projects, and class discussions. Children read silently with sustained concentration; self-correct without prompting and apply a range of word building strategies for decoding. Teachers read aloud on a daily basis.

Writing: In the Writer's Workshop approach, children use the writing process: brainstorm, write, revise, edit and publish. This approach "gives students direct instruction in writing by different methods; whole class, small group and individual." In addition, Writer's Workshop uses literature to teach children the craft of writing and encourages independence.

Spelling: *Words Their Way* covers the following five areas; phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. Children are assessed at the beginning of the year and placed in the appropriate area.

Handwriting: The PAF Handwriting program focuses on supporting students' ability to write legibly and easily.

Math

The *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum emphasizes: "Use of concrete, real-life examples that are meaningful and memorable as an introduction to key mathematical concepts. Repeated exposures to mathematical concepts and skills to develop children's ability to recall knowledge from long-term memory. Frequent practice of basic computation skills to build mastery of procedures and quick recall of facts, often through games and verbal exercises. Use of multiple methods and problem-solving strategies to foster true proficiency and accommodate different learning styles."

The third and fourth grade *Everyday Mathematics* program emphasizes the following grade level goals: number and numeration, operations and computation, data and chance, geometry patterns, functions, and algebra.

Science

In the study of science, we provide opportunities for children to learn that "people can figure out how the world works, that the universe is a unified system, that knowledge gained from studying one part of it can often be applied to other parts, and that knowledge is both stable and subject to change." Benchmarks for Science Literacy

This is accomplished by providing a science program that enables children to be independent learners and thinkers who are engaged in the scientific process of discovery. Children learn to observe, question, organize, research, and connect information as they construct meaning. Science is taught in a rotating three-year cycle as follows:

Yr 1: Earth and Space Science

Yr 2: Life Science

Yr 3: Physical Science

Social Studies

Our primary goals in teaching social studies include: to develop cultural awareness, to improve the ability of children to think critically and analytically about social issues, and to empower our children to think from multiple perspectives, especially while developing their own.

We do this by providing many opportunities to explore and understand topics drawing upon such disciplines as history, geography, economics, anthropology, archaeology, sociology, political science, and religion. We seek to integrate the study of the social sciences with the humanities so that children begin to see these topics as complex, interrelated ones. Social studies is taught in a rotating three-year cycle as follows:

Yr 1: one or more topics related to:

- Europe (e.g. mapping, culture, country-studies, etc.)
- Asia (e.g. country study including religion, culture, art, historical period, etc.)
- United States (e.g. civil rights, judicial system, government, Quaker history)

Yr 2: one or more topics related to:

- North America (e.g. Canada, Mexico, Native Americans, etc.)
- South America (e.g. Incas, Patagonia, etc.)
- United States (e.g. polar expeditions, geography, slavery, etc.)

Yr 3: one or more topics related to:

- Africa (e.g. Egypt, culture studies, rites of passage, etc.)
- Oceania (e.g. native cultures, art, etc.)
- United States (e.g. mapping, states and capitals, the constitution, etc.)

Spirituality

Each class has regular Meetings for Worship in their classrooms and each look different depending on the age of the children. There are Meetings that are periods of silent worship in which teachers help children sit still and listen to their inner voices. Some classes light candles to help children focus, while others have centering jars or rocks. There are Meetings that reflect on Quaker history or issues of peace and justice in the world and in the school. Children learn to address immediate conflicts, and all classes work hard to learn the skills of resolving conflicts without violence. Each year, we engage in a community focus of one testimony. We attempt to nourish spiritual growth within each child and inspire a greater sense of self-worth and respect for others.