



SECOND GRADE CURRICULUM

I. Community Building:

Each day the Second Grade gathers for a morning meeting in order to build a sense of community. Our discussions promote the values we strive to live out each day: respect, love, understanding, passion for learning, critical thinking, determination and selflessness.

These values are incorporated into our school's mission. Our morning meeting weaves together our school-wide themes of community and stewardship, with emphasis on caring for our campus and the Fields for Friends project. Our morning meeting helps to establish a cooperative, peaceful and safe environment in which to learn and grow together.

We use positive discipline in the classroom and incorporate the 3 R's: reminding, reinforcing and rewarding positive behavior, good citizenship and consistent work habits. We also build community through games, songs, poems and class surveys from *The Responsive Classroom*.

II. Reading / Writing

Reading workshop is based on The Reading Project at Teacher's College, Columbia University. It is a comprehensive approach to teaching reading in which children read books independently at the reading level which they are comfortable as well as read in partnerships. They are introduced to topics such as gathering information, characterization, setting, retelling events and predicting outcomes during "strings of mini-lessons" which last from 10 – 15 minutes during a workshop. They develop "problem solving" strategies to figure out words they don't know as well as strengthen their phonetic foundation and sight word vocabulary. The idea is for children to take on novel texts, and gain fluency and independence. The ultimate goal in reading is to help children learn how to use independent reading strategies successfully and to develop a life-long love of literature.

Children take part in activities to extend their reading, such as writing, art projects, drama, discussions or more reading in order to make connections between texts they have read and their own life experience. Infusing their knowledge with written language that is meaningful to them occurs in a variety of ways: word studies, reading responses, book jackets, letters, posters and story writing. Our goal is to allocate 45 minutes per day for reading workshop.

Children spend 25 - 30 minutes reading independently, with the teacher, and/or with a partner and participate in a wide range of small group and individual reading and writing

activities in work time. The emphasis is on reading increasingly challenging books that are organized by level of difficulty. Children are grouped and regrouped in a dynamic process that involves ongoing observation and assessment. Most of the books they will be reading will be at their independent reading level (95 % accuracy) and books read at a 90 % accuracy will be read with direct support from a teacher. Our ultimate goal is for children to develop a lifelong love of literature. Our literacy framework includes four kinds of reading and four kinds of writing. Types of reading are: guided reading, independent reading, partner reading, reading aloud to the entire class, and shared reading in which the teacher reads the text and each child follows along joining in for various portions or refrains.

Writing workshop is based on The Writing Project at Teachers College, Columbia University. Workshops and small group mini-lessons address all aspects of the writing process. Topics may be theme-related, or based on reading literature, read aloud books and personal experiences. Individual conferences are held to provide each student with selective feedback on content, topic development and writing mechanics. We use *Printing Power* to practice letter formation and handwriting. Other types of writing are: independent writing such as personal narratives, stories, observations and poems; interactive writing in which everyone in the class contributes an idea, a sentence or multiple ideas to a message, list or story; and shared writing in which the teacher puts children's ideas into written language using large chart paper.

Spelling

In Second Grade we are using a new program called "Foundations." This program is based on the widely acclaimed and highly structured Wilson Language program. Foundations provides integrated instruction in "The Big Five" areas of reading; phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development and comprehension strategies. It relies on explicit, systematic instruction using repetition, feedback and motor memory. These multisensory experiences have been found to activate more brain circuitry and produce multiple representations in working memory. Student progress is monitored with tests, observation and evaluation of their daily work. Second Grade is heavily involved with phonics working with all six-syllable types and some exceptions as well as additional suffix endings and the introduction of spelling options. Each week students are presented words based on the weekly phonics lessons. They choose from one of eight exercises in their spelling homework to practice the words they are learning in the lesson. They study their weekly list each night and are tested on Fridays.

III. Social Studies

Units in Social Studies this year are:

Life in Colonial America from October to January

Map skills in January and February, with the primary focus on exploring the geography of the Pilgrims at Plymouth plantation.

March through June we study Pioneer Life and the Oregon Trail.

We integrate these themes into reading, writing, art and computer as much as possible. Field trips we look forward to include: A visit to The Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation

at Ridley Creek State Park, being a student during Colonial Times at the 1842 Octagonal School House in Newtown Square, and in the spring, a trip to the Glenside Theater for a production that supports our current curriculum.

IV. Math

We use *Math Trailblazers*, researched and developed by the University of Illinois at Chicago and published by Kendall Hunt, to enable students to actively engage in mathematical child-centered activities that will build their conceptual understanding and skills in mathematics. The *Trailblazers* curriculum provides students with opportunities to work in partnerships, small groups and large groups and focus on vital math concepts: building number sense; developing strategies for solving problems; and incorporating the TIMS Laboratory Method in which students draw pictures showing collected data, graph and analyze their data. The lessons help students strengthen their communication skills about math. Additionally, they incorporate scientific and language arts skills and thus integrate various subjects more effectively.

Having attended the *Math Trailblazers* Summer Institute in Chicago in July 2007, we are excited about piloting the newest version of this program which is designed to stimulate and challenge their mathematical problem-solving, reasoning and critical thinking skills.

V. Quakerism / Religion

Quakerism overlaps with community building and our Social Studies curriculum. We consider community building a major component of Quakerism and Religion as it teaches values, peaceful problem-solving, the process of consensus, service and respect for the Quaker belief: “that of God in every person.” The foundation of our teaching at FSH is derived from the Quaker philosophy that each child has a light within or a special strength that we come to acknowledge and to honor. Quakerism also includes appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism. In addition, students in Second Grade are partnered with a Pre-K student that contributes to community-building within the school and enables them to become a role model and friend.

VI. Homework

Homework for Second Grade involves reading for 20 minutes (or more) each night. This may be shared reading with a parent, independent reading or read aloud books with parents. Math homework will be given on Monday and Wednesday nights and spelling homework Monday through Thursday. Students will be tested on their word list on Fridays. Don’t worry if upper and lower case letters are mixed together. We will continue to work on all aspects of the writing process including spelling throughout the year.

Mary Scattergood
Katherine Renninger
Rev. 9/08