

# Orange Room First Grade Curriculum

Building a sense of community in which each child recognizes and realizes the importance of compassion, communication, respect, cooperation, and problem solving is central to the Orange Room class structure. The children have a variety of opportunities to direct their learning based on their natural curiosity and interests. The Orange Room curriculum is both theme and literature-based, incorporating the four core content areas: Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. Artistic expression using a variety of media is integrated into all of the four core content areas. The children are immersed in the themes with opportunities to transform the appearance of the classroom based on the theme. Children are encouraged to become "experts" and teach each other and other classes the thematic concepts covered in class. Diverse approaches are used in the presentation of content in order to incorporate the children's individual learning styles. Activities are hands-on and experiential. The children are encouraged to move at a pace that is right for them as individual learners. Developing a positive learning environment that supports and encourages a love of learning is an important goal in the Orange Room.

## Community Circle

After Math each day, the Orange Roomers engage in "Mindful Minutes." We take a break and sit quietly at the tables for 2-4 minutes. The students are encouraged to focus on their breathing and reflect upon their present thoughts and emotions. The goal of "Mindful Minutes" is to help students become aware of their thoughts and emotions in a nonjudgmental way and rest their brains.

After "Mindful Minutes," the Orange Roomers meet on the carpet to go over the calendar, count the days of school, observe and record the weather, go over the schedule for the day, and discuss the morning question. Many calendar concepts are covered using both the English and Spanish languages. Children count in Spanish to find out what day it is. The date (day of the week, number, and month) is repeated in both languages. Spanish is also used when discussing types of weather. The calendar activities incorporate the following concepts: number recognition; writing the date; and recognizing

and predicting patterns. Counting the days of school helps children become familiar with the concept of place value. The weather activities provide practice with reading a thermometer, determining the change in temperature from day to day, and forming and reading a graph of the weather each month. The children read the schedule as a class and learn to recognize the words that relate to daily events. The Morning Question provides the children with the opportunity to express and articulate their feelings, ideas, and experiences in a non-threatening environment. Most Morning Questions relate to the theme and encourage discussion to enrich the children's understanding of thematic concepts. Community Circle is designed to set a positive tone for the day.

## **Math**

BNS utilizes the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project curriculum, Everyday Mathematics, in addition to other math resources. The curriculum provides opportunities for problem solving and concept application through the use of games and hands-on routines. Everyday Mathematics is a spiraling curriculum in that it introduces new concepts and revisits these concepts at different points throughout the year and subsequent years. Other resources are used to supplement Everyday Mathematics based on the need for further review or extension of the concepts covered in the curriculum. The following is a list of the math concepts and skills that will be covered during the year in the First Grade Everyday Mathematics curriculum:

- Establish Math routines
- Use tools for Mathematics
- Identify even and odd numbers
- Compare Numbers
- Order whole numbers
- Create and count tally marks
- Count by 1s, 2s, 5s, and 10s
- Solve number stories
- Find equivalent names for numbers
- Identify and represent numbers using base-10 blocks
- Find complements of 10
- Tell Time (hour, half-hour and quarter-hour) on analog and digital clocks
- Identify value of pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters and dollar bills

- Count combinations of coins and make exchanges between coins
- Create and extend visual patterns
- Problem solve using a number line
- Measure to nearest inch and centimeter
- Collect and organize data
- Use charts and graphs to answer questions
- Identify place value up to 1,000
- Write whole numbers up to 1,000
- Read temperature on a Fahrenheit thermometer
- Write fact families
- Compare geometric shapes by attributes
- Identify polygons
- Identify shapes having a line of symmetry
- Determine equal shares
- Fractions-divide shapes into equal parts and identify fractional parts of a region
- Identify tens and ones
- Patterns
- Solve number-grid Puzzles
- Add and Subtract 2-digit numbers
- Solve "What's My Rule?" and Frames-and-Arrows problems

\*The students are divided into Math groups based on their end-of-the-year Kindergarten evaluations. Groups will move through the concepts in the Everyday Mathematics curriculum at a pace that meets the needs of the students in each group. We will play math games the first Friday of each month to reinforce concepts covered in math.

## **Literacy Curriculum**

The Orange Room Literacy Curriculum includes several individual components which work together to strengthen and build literacy skills.

### **A. Theme Book**

The Orange Room uses a literature-based approach which highlights the theme through the use of a theme book each week. Each week a different book, based on the theme, is used to reinforce a variety of Language Arts skills and concepts. The teacher reads the theme book the first three days

of the week. Mini-lessons, following or preceding the reading, incorporate the following concepts:

- Identifying the main idea of the story
- Making predictions before and during the reading
- Retelling story events using the structure of beginning, middle, and end
- Summarizing orally what was read
- Recognizing the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts
- Identifying and describing the setting of the story
- Answering who, what, when, where, why, and how questions
- Creating a timeline of events

After listening to the theme book, the children begin to illustrate and practice reading a "Little Book." This book is either a scaled down version of the theme book or the same text as the theme book. The children read and draw their own illustrations to match the text on each page. The purpose of "Little Books" is to effectively combine reading comprehension skills with decoding strategies in order to build confidence in reading as well as develop reading skills and fluency.

On the fourth day of each week, the children take turns retelling the story. This provides the teacher with an assessment of the children's reading comprehension skills and understanding of story development.

On the fifth day of each week, the children choose parts and act out the story. This approach allows children to "jump into the book" and develop an appreciation and love of literature.

## **B. Reading and Writing Workshop**

Several approaches to literacy are incorporated into Reading and Writing Workshop.

### **1. Mini-lessons**

Children are encouraged to approach reading by becoming "Reading Detectives" and look for "clues" to decode and read unfamiliar words.

Many "Reading Detective Clues" are introduced during Morning Question. After each "Reading Detective Clue" is introduced, the clue is posted on a bulletin board in the Orange Room. Students identify "Reading Detective Clues" in the Morning Question each day and take turns reading the questions. During the second half of the year, the teacher includes spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors in the Morning Question. The students identify and correct the errors.

The teacher and children will identify strategies children can use when they encounter unfamiliar words. The children each have a bookmark with the strategies listed. After identifying the strategies as a class, the children write down the strategy or strategies they use to decode the unfamiliar words they encounter when they are reading independently and mark the page(s) with the unfamiliar word(s) using sticky notes. The children meet with the teacher weekly to share the strategies they used.

Other lessons are based on first grade literacy objectives. Children exhibit their understanding of the concepts presented in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to: reading leveled books, creating and publishing class books, writing stories, composing poems, correcting grammar and punctuation in sentences, and expressing themselves in writing.

## 2. Literacy Centers

The children are divided into small, leveled groups for Literacy Centers. The children rotate between five centers each week. The five centers include a Little Book center, a guided reading center, a literacy game center, a journal writing center, and a reading response center.

- **Little Book center**- the children read, decode, and illustrate their Little Books.
- **Guided Reading center**- the children go over their journal writing, read books at their reading level aloud, and respond to reading comprehension questions with the teacher.

- **Literacy Game center-** the children play games practicing a specific literacy skill or objective.
- **Journal writing center-** the children practice expressing their thoughts and ideas in writing as well as practice their penmanship.
- **Reading Response center-** the children choose a book at their reading level to read independently. The children are encouraged to use the "Five Finger Rule" when choosing a book. If they cannot read more than five words on the first page, they are encouraged to choose different books that better fit their current reading levels. The children log the books they read in a Reading Response Record. As the year progresses, children are asked to complete Reading Response projects. The Reading Response projects are designed to reinforce and assess the children's reading comprehension skills.

### 3. **Word Study or S.P.I.R.E.**

The students are divided into small groups based on their performance on the Spelling Inventory and/or S.P.I.R.E. assessment.

#### **Word Study**

The students are given a weekly spelling list based on their assessed developmental levels of spelling exhibited on the Words Their Way Spelling Inventory. The book Words Their Way, developed and written by Donald R. Bear, Marcia Invernizzi, Shane Templeton, and Francine Johnston, provides the Word Study concepts used in the Orange Room. Word Study is a "developmental study of words by features" (Words Their Way, p.182). Students meet in small groups and work independently to complete word sorts, long and short vowel contrasts, consonant blends and digraphs practice, and word family studies. After working with their spelling words throughout the week at school and at home, a Spelling Try is given each Friday to assess the children's understanding and application of the week's spelling patterns. The Spelling Try consists of words from the weekly lists as well as words that are not on the lists, but that follow the same spelling patterns. The purpose of Word Study is to strengthen word knowledge. With the growth of word knowledge, skills associated with reading, writing, oral language, and comprehension are also strengthened.

### **S.P.I.R.E. (Specialized Program Individualizing Reading Excellence)**

The teacher guides students in S.P.I.R.E. groups through specific sequenced lesson plans designed to provide direct instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The students meet twice a week to work through a lesson plan that focuses on a specific concept. They complete a sound, word, and dictation assessment on Friday. Students are given reading and spelling practice to work on at home to complement the practice completed in class.

#### **4. Class Decoding Strategy Meeting**

The class meets once a week to discuss decoding strategies that individual students have used during their independent reading time. The students use sticky notes to mark pages and words that they decoded while reading independently. On each sticky note, the student indicates the word and decoding strategy or strategies they used. At the beginning of the year, the teacher presents the decoding strategies during mini-lessons. Decoding strategies include: sliding into words, chunking (dividing a word into smaller chunks), looking for "Reading Detective Clues" (see Mini-lesson section), looking for a word within a word, asking "Does it make sense?," trying a different vowel sound, skipping the word and then coming back, using the pictures, rereading the sentence, and other strategies the students come up with. If a student shares a word that they could not decode independently, the class works together to try and decode the word. After a student shares their word or strategy, the class applauds the student's careful reading. The purpose of this activity is to help students strengthen their independent reading skills and reading fluency, and to gain confidence in their decoding abilities.

### **C. Journal Writing**

Students express their ideas in writing and meet individually with the teacher to read and edit their writing. Students are encouraged to complete journal entries independently. Children are expected and encouraged to spell unfamiliar words using their understanding of "Reading Detective Clues" and spelling patterns covered in Word

Study, as well as high frequency word lists and invented spelling (spelling phonetically).

## **D. Handwriting**

The children receive specific handwriting instruction using the Zaner-Bloser First Grade Handwriting Book. Children practice writing upper and lower-case letters appropriately. Handwriting practice is also incorporated into Reading and Writing Workshop.

## **E. Read Aloud**

Two days a week the teacher reads to the children from a chapter book. Children are encouraged to relax, listen, reflect and create illustrations in their minds.

### **First Grade Literacy Objectives:**

- Apply knowledge of how print is organized and read
- Identify isolated words and sentences in text
- Identify and employ strategies to decode unfamiliar words
- Use phonetic strategies to self-correct reading errors when possible
- Recognize and read high-frequency words
- Accurately read common, irregularly spelled words
- Use beginning and ending consonants to decode one-syllable words
- Use two-letter consonant blends and digraphs to decode unfamiliar words
- Use word patterns to decode unfamiliar words
- Use end punctuation to guide oral reading
- Use pictures and context to assist meaning-making
- Self-check for meaning during reading
- Read leveled text with fluency and comprehension
- Answer who, what, when, where, and why questions after reading independently
- Recognize and decode compound words
- Use appropriate spacing of words and sentences



- Write legibly in manuscript on all assignments
- Generate pre-writing idea or plan
- Focus on one idea or topic when writing independently
- Capitalize the beginning of each sentence
- Capitalize proper nouns
- Use invented spelling and phonics to spell independently
- Use knowledge of beginning and end consonant sounds to spell unfamiliar words
- Use vowels (a,e,i,o,u and sometimes y) in each word when writing
- Recognize long and short vowel sounds when reading
- Recognize long and short vowel sounds when writing
- Use two-letter consonant blends and digraphs to spell unfamiliar words
- Represent each syllable of a word when writing independently
- Spell common, high-frequency words accurately
- Use complete sentence structure
- Punctuate using basic end punctuation (period, question mark, and exclamation point)
- Alphabetize words to the second letter
- Use descriptive vocabulary in writing
- Correctly spell assigned words on a weekly Spelling Try
- Use a dictionary to find unfamiliar words, with assistance if necessary

## **Theme Activities**

The themes for the year are based on the children's interests and the Virginia Standards of Learning for Social Studies and Science for First Grade. The themes vary in length. Some themes may be covered in one week and others may be covered in three weeks. The length of the themes is based on the children's curiosity and enthusiasm for the subject matter. During Theme activities, the class engages in discussions, conducts experiments, and participates in hands-on, theme-related activities. The loft in the Orange Room is often a focal point for different themes. As the year progresses, the loft will transform into habitats or structures related to many of the themes. The children have an opportunity to explore and become immersed in the themes. They also assume the role of teacher and showcase

their knowledge of the themes while giving tours and educating students from other classes, as well as parent visitors.

This year the following themes will be covered in the Orange Room:

August                      Free to Be You and Me (Celebrating Individuality)

September                Communities  
                                  Maps and Mapmaking

October                     Seasonal Changes (Fall/Harvest)  
                                  Appalachia (biology)

November                 Appalachia (geology)  
                                  Cherokee Nation

December                 Native American Cultures

January                    Space  
                                  Polar Regions

February                  Water/Matter  
                                  Important Americans in History

March                      Machines and Motion  
                                  Exploring the Ocean

April                        Exploring the Ocean  
                                  What We Buy-Our Economy  
                                  Plants

May                         Rain Forest  
                                  Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

June                        School Fun Days!

**Star-of-the-Week**

For the first 15 weeks of the school year, each child has the opportunity to be the Star-of-the-Week. Three days a week, the Star-of-the-Week has 15 minutes to share something about him or herself. This exercise helps children gain valuable experience speaking in front of a group. The class community has an opportunity to gain an appreciation of and celebrate the individuality and uniqueness of each child.

## **Resident Expert**

During the second half of the year, each child has the opportunity to be a Resident Expert. Each child chooses a Social Studies or Science subject he or she is interested in learning more about (preferably a subject that will not be covered in the Orange Room Themes). With family support, the child conducts an in-depth study of the subject and prepares three 15 minute presentations or activities related to the chosen subject. The child becomes the "expert" and teaches the class about his/her chosen topic.

## **Additional Subjects**

Orange Roomers will receive regular instruction in Art, Physical Education, Spanish, and Music. Teachers specializing in these subjects provide the curriculum and instruction.

## **Assessment**

Assessment in the Orange Room is both formal and informal. Formal assessments are used to assess progress in Reading, Math, and Spelling. The Houghton Mifflin Leveled Reading Assessment is used to assess the reading level of each student at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The assessments used in Math are provided by both the teacher and the Everyday Mathematics curriculum. Words Their Way spelling inventories are given three times a year to assess the progressing spelling levels of each student. S.P.I.R.E. assessments are given as needed. Spelling assessments (spelling tries) are given on a weekly basis. Informal assessments include teacher observations and anecdotal records as well as the assessment of skills and participation in small and large group discussions and activities. Assessment of Science and Social Studies concepts is gauged through

project work and participation in class discussions and activities. Parent-teacher conferences are held three times during the school year to discuss the children's progress. A formal written evaluation is prepared at the end of the year and is reviewed in the final parent-teacher conference.