A Look at Learning in Grade Three

Third grade marks the ***transition*** period between the primary and the intermediate level in the elementary school. One of the major changes you and your child will discover is the emphasis on becoming an independent student. Your child will also be "reading to learn" instead of "learning to read". Across the entire curriculum, reading comprehension is key to your child's educational success.

The learning experiences in the third grade include the following areas of focus:

Language Arts
In reading, third graders will develop reading strategies related to comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and expanding vocabulary through independent reading, literature circles, and guided reading. Reading continuums and the *Developmental Reading Assessment* (DRA) are used to assess progress.

By the end of third grade students:

- Read intermediate level chapter books (DRA levels 30-38) independently and fluently.
- Are able to read independently for 30 minutes
- Master a variety of reading strategies:
  - Use word structure cues when encountering unknown words.
  - Make predictions.
  - Summarize
  - Make connections (self-to-text, text-to-text, text-to-world).

During writing workshop, third graders use *Lucy Calkins Units of Study* in addition to the *Six Plus One Traits of Writing* as they implement the writing process. Third graders learn to write a combination of genres including personal narratives, informational essays, persuasive essays, fiction and poetry. Through *Words Their Way*, students learn how to spell the English language; develop numerous strategies and extend that learning into their writing. In third grade, students will also learn cursive using D'Nealian handwriting.

By the end of third grade students:

- Know and follow to writing process.
- Use paragraphs to organize writing.
- Add descriptive details and or dialogue to enrich their writing.
- Use grade level grammar expectations.
  - Write complete sentences using correct capitalization (holidays, titles, greetings, names, months)
  - Use commas for day, month, and year, closing of letters, cities and states.
  - Begin to use apostrophes in contractions and singular possessives.
  - Begin to indicate paragraphs.
- Write for 45 minutes independently.

Social Studies

Our social studies is integrated to other subject areas with an emphasis on "Explore Nepal". In our three units students learn about their roles and responsibilities in our school community and in our neighborhood community by following a community service model. Other academic topics include map skills and geography, environment and change, and history, culture and folk tales. The *Responsive Classroom* is an integral part of our curriculum that encourages the development of emotional intelligence and social skills. The focus is to create a classroom community that is nurturing to both self-esteem and academic performance.

By the end of third grade students:

- Define and locate Prime Meridian and Equator, hemispheres, continents and oceans.
- Locate Nepal on a map as well as their home country.
- Explains how environments influence the development of a culture's lifestyle, traditions and beliefs and the ways people affect their environment as they meet their needs.
- Understands how contributions made by various cultural groups have shaped particular communities and regions.

Mathematics

Everyday Mathematics and *Investigations* are used as core resources to focus on the areas of Numeracy, Geometry, Measurement, Data Analysis and Problem Solving. Third graders are expected to have a secure grasp of basic addition and subtraction facts, as they focus on adding and subtracting larger numbers. Students will develop an understanding of multiplication, division, and fractions. Emphasis will be on application of mathematical knowledge to everyday life.

By the end of third grade students:

- Add and subtract multi-digit numbers.
- Master basic multiplication facts to 10 using a variety of strategies.
- Apply estimation in addition and subtraction to check solutions.
- Construct and analyze bar, picture and line graphs.
- Measure to ½ and ¼ parts of linear units.
- Calculate perimeter of polygons.

Science

Through the use of the scientific process, third graders will study rocks and minerals (earth science), sound (physical science), and plants (biology). Students will have opportunities for in-depth exploration and hands-on experiences.

By the end of third grade students:

- Experience and explain the scientific method.
    - Identify and classify rocks (igneous, metamorphic, sedimentary)
    - Learn properties of sound.
    - Gather data on the life cycle of a bean plant.
    - Model the interdependency between plants and insects (bee).

Along with these core areas of study, the third grade students study with specialist teachers in art, music, physical education, French, and an integrated technology/library program.