

Kindergarten K2 – Learning Area specific course descriptions

QUEST
<p>Why the world works the way it does? Do birds have ears? How do wheels move? How do we have different seasons? These are some of the important relevant questions that pre-schoolers are curious about; learning with inquiry and thinking purposefully with direction and interest is essential in the classrooms of the kindergarten students during the Quest sessions.</p> <p>Early childhood is the stage where students are open minded, curious and stimulated with new thoughts and ideas. This is the perfect opportunity for the students to be engaged with scaffolded interactions, discussions and conversations that will begin to set them off on an inquiry cycle. The Quest classroom aims to keep the thirst for new knowledge and information alive with various sensorial and stimulating experiences.</p> <p>Each grade level is challenged with appropriate levels of inquiry and thinking. The lower kindergarten students sort out information presented to them, look for patterns, raise questions and make relevant observations and make sense of the information presented to them. Likewise, the upper level kindergarten students take the same skills further by making connections, reviewing prior knowledge, investigating new resources and making their own hypothesis.</p> <p>Students are taken through the journey of guided inquiry in the classrooms with themes that are chosen at the beginning of the term. Various subjects like science, social science, and arts are chosen for the inquiry cycle. Multiple skills and personal development opportunities are thrown into the classroom discussions to help students enjoy the experiences that a Quest classroom has to offer. Each unit of inquiry is covered for a period of five weeks with activities, interactions, collaborative discussions and individual portfolio assignments. Often, students come forth with new perspectives and ideas that further extend the unit of inquiry to new dimensions and areas.</p>
EARLY LITERACY
<p>The Upper Kindergarten language program will focus on getting students ready to read and write. They are introduced to a range of books from different genres like fiction, nonfiction and poetry. Students learn to appreciate the form and structure of the different texts like non-chronological reports, information text, dictionary, fairy tales, traditional stories, poems and recounts. They will know how to predict the contents of a book and become familiar with different ways of retelling a familiar tale. They will be able to write simple texts based on those that have been read together and recount their own experiences.</p> <p>Students learn and explore the beauty and meaning of the written language through poetry. The concepts embedded in poetry like rhyme and imagery are crucial to decoding, comprehension and fluency- the backbone of good reading.</p> <p>Students are introduced to speaking and listening as important aspects of language by incorporating Show and Tell, Recitation, Recounts in the classroom to hone their skills. They learn to write in the cursive handwriting following rules of punctuation and capitalization. Students participate in two class projects building up on all the aspects of reading, writing, listening and speaking, making connections and questioning.</p>

EARLY MATH

Students of K2 will progress further, developing number concepts for numbers 1-10 by forming number bonds, make number stories and learn the operations of addition and subtraction. They are able to tell the difference between shapes and identify shapes from their day to day environment. They learn and identify patterns, capacity, length, weight and pictorial representation by solving simple problems involving these concepts.

PERFORMING ARTS

Performing arts is integrated into the curriculum at the pre-primary level to target multiple skills on the personal and interpersonal level of the students. While participating in the performing arts classes, students begin to learn basic loco-motor movements and skills that harness multiple areas of learning like mathematical skills, sensorial skills, visual skills and higher order thinking skills. Students begin to appreciate themselves and learn to work collaboratively with their peers for the activities that are designed. A session in performing arts might include a range of activities and lessons designed to target specific skills like pantomimes, physical movement classes, role- plays, activities to instil imagination and creativity, enjoying songs and rhymes and making sense of different stimuli presented to them.

Students begin the year with basic movement classes, collaborative activities, skills that help them to be more expressive and creative while learning to be independent thinkers and risk takers. Students are encouraged to work collaboratively for activities to hone new skills and abilities that include listening and speaking activities, dramatic play and enjoying other kinaesthetic activities.

VISUAL ARTS

The creative arts classes are filled with new and familiar experiences of dabbling and working with different art materials and resources. Students enjoy working with materials that include crayons, oil pastels, watercolours and acrylic paints. A step by step progression of fine and gross motor skills are planned for the students to build up their hand eye coordination skills and later build more complex skills while working with different techniques and creative processes while continuing to help students use their creativity and imagination to express their thoughts and ideas on different mediums. The art classes encourage students to enhance their social, emotional and cognitive skills as students are encouraged to think on their own and implement their ideas on paper in group formats and independently.

The upper kindergarten students identify their primary and secondary colours and are encouraged to use lines, patterns and shapes in individual drawings and group art work. Students are made familiar with the elements of art and are given opportunities to apply different artistic techniques in their work. Students dabble with paint and crayons to create their own masterpieces representing their individuality and creativity throughout the school year.

READING

At Ekya, reading is given a special place as it is the foundation of all learning processes. The Love to Read Program aims to introduce children to magic of the written word, and encouraging the life-long habit of reading, to make confident and interested readers. The reading program will lay a foundation of strong vocabulary and will promote creative writing in students in the years to come. In the Pre- Primary years, the objective will be to develop a habit of reading in the students.

SHOW AND TELL

Show and Tell in the early childhood classroom has numerous benefits for young children. These early oral experiences help to build effective communication and listening skills that are essential for a young student's development. It also encourages emotional development in the student, as he or she shares their interests, favourite objects, important people, and exciting experiences with their peers. Students begin to learn the importance of body language, active listening and eye contact with their audience. They understand time and the restrictions it brings for a speaker and how hence it is very important to think, reflect and prepare in advance for a show and tell experience in the classroom. Students also learn about turn taking and patience while enhancing their spoken language skills.

PLAYTIME

Play is the child's work. Play programs at school give teachers and students the chance to play together in a safe and stimulating environment. Play time for the students includes opportunities to play outside the classrooms in the playground, play area or sand pit. Students' physical and gross motor skills are encouraged during free play as both young boys and girls indulge in activities that peak their interests by choosing activities like building sand castles, walking on the sand, running around the playground or climbing the play equipment. Conversations and interactions among the students are the most animated in the play area as students discuss, share and communicate with their peers about multiple topics of interest to them. Kinaesthetic movements that are planned for the students during play time enhance their movements and ensure the students benefit on multiple levels from these experiences.

ACTIVITY TIME

The pre-primary students have activity time interspersed into the time table. Teachers select and place appropriate resources/materials for students to engage with to address multiple cognitive skills like memory, concentration, attention and problem solving skills. The manipulatives that are provided to students might include building blocks, different sized balls, natural and recyclable materials and miniature objects that can be used to engage in role play and pretend play activities. Simple cooperative games are kept ready for the students to manipulate and use while engaging in conversations with their peers. Appropriate materials are set intentionally for the students to feel excited and motivated enough to want to work with these materials. Teachers facilitate and engage the students with meaningful conversations while at the activity centre.

PUPPETRY

Puppet time at school is both entertaining and captivating for all age groups from the Montessori toddlers to the upper kindergarten students. Children believe and relate to them on multiple levels; they enter and explore the fascinating inventive world that puppets create. Puppets have positive influences within a preschool classroom as teachers indulge in role play and make believe stories and characters. Puppets can model all relevant, necessary manners and emotions, giving children opportunities for enhancing their communicative and social development skills. Feelings such as patience, understanding, acceptance, self-regulation and empathy can be addressed and explored through many types of puppet play. Puppet classes stimulate children's imagination, encourage creative play and discovery. They can be a powerful way of bringing story time to life; puppets also provide opportunities for shy students to come forward and feel safe enough to indulge in creating their own stories and narratives.

PRE-PRIMARY STORYTELLING

The inclusion of additional storytelling classes into the reading program for Pre-Primary grades is quite unique. The broader goal is to benefit the healthy development of a child's verbal skills, imagination, values, cognitive dexterity, and creative skills. The use of voice modulation, expression, gestures, characterization, dramatization and pace achieves the objective of creating a love for reading.

Puppets are a great tool for storytelling. Teachers make use of this tool extensively to supplement storytelling classes. Puppets are also used as mascots for reading class to allow children to associate concepts quicker and assimilate them better. For example "Neha Noun" or "Vishal Verb" could make an appearance when there is new and challenging vocabulary that needs to be identified. When children consistently see Neha noun each time a new noun is introduced they will encode it better as a noun as learning then becomes multi-sensory.

Another important aspect of using puppets in Pre-Primary is the obvious dramatization or characterisation route where they are assigned specific characters to help bring a story alive to a class.

OTHER

Students in Kindergarten also attend weekly sessions in Gardening, Play Area, Sandpit and quiet reading time at the school library.