

# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ACADEMICS

## Grade Level Classrooms

### **Pre-Kindergarten 3 (PK 3)**

At AISJ, Pre-Kindergarten 3 (PK 3) children are offered a supportive and child-centered school environment where carefully planned programs and theme-based "learning centers" lead the students toward exploration and interaction. Daily activities are planned in a safe nurturing environment rich in language, constructive play, active exploration and social interaction.

Three year-old students enrolled in the PK 3 program attend school from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. In each class there are a minimum of 12 children to a maximum of 14, with one teacher and one instructional assistant so that the appropriate adult/child ratio is maintained.

It is a unique, exciting, and spacious place where children can engage in active learning in different areas of classroom centers. One of our overall goals in PK 3 is the development of language skills in English.

The teacher guides and facilitates the children's learning rather than teach, tell, and direct. The daily schedule accommodates indoor play, outdoor play, and special classes where children are encouraged to work in large and small groups, as well as independently. This balance of diverse types of interaction helps to develop a variety of social skills and to allow for different types of social and educational guidance.

### **Pre-Kindergarten 4 (PK 4)**

The PK 4 program provides an education which is adaptable to each child's needs, interests, and level of development. Children's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth are enhanced through a variety of activities that meet individual and group needs. The PK 4 program:

- Focuses on oral language development as the basis for thinking, Pre-writing and pre-reading.
- Builds on, improves, and increases the knowledge skills that children bring to school.
- Promotes an appreciation of the similarities and differences among people.
- Incorporates active learning through body movement activities, manipulation of learning materials, and interaction with others.
- Uses ongoing performance assessment to observe, document, and analyze children's learning behavior in the areas of language arts, social studies, math/science, and fine and gross motor skills.

- Encourages a love of learning.

Children learn, grow, and develop at different rates. Differences can be observed in children of the same age who may vary in their ability to perform certain physical, social, or intellectual tasks. All students will progress at their own rates of development. Each student is given the opportunity to experience success and build a positive self-concept.

In the elementary years, a sound foundation in speaking, writing, reading, and mathematics prepares students for academic success in later years. Wherever possible, concrete objects and manipulatives introduce concepts to students. Hands-on activities that include learning experiences help students to understand concepts and ideas prior to the introduction of abstract symbols.

### **Kindergarten (KG)**

The AISJ Kindergarten facilitates developmentally appropriate practices to enable young children to develop skills and behaviors needed to grow socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Kindergarten concepts are taught using meaningful hands-on activities. Children explore concepts through a theme-based approach that integrates all core subject areas including language arts, math, science, and social studies.

Children are immersed in English language through oral language activities, poems and songs, children's literature, and a print rich environment. Beginning reading and writing skills are developed through whole group, small group, and individual instruction. Because students are immersed in reading and writing process, students reading and writing skills progress naturally in a stress free environment.

Kindergarten learning centers provide a developmentally appropriate structure to enhance the learning of young children. Centers promote learning while the children play. The AISJ Kindergarten facilitates two types of centers: Literacy centers and Developmental centers. Literacy centers are structured literacy based centers related to the theme. Developmental centers provide children with the opportunity to develop needed social skills through a play environment. Developmental centers are self-selected and allow students to develop autonomy and confidence in their social relationships.

The hours for Kindergarten are 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.. The average class size is 20 children with one teacher and one instructional assistant.

### **First Grade**

The First Grade curriculum builds on prior knowledge to develop fundamental reading, writing, and mathematical skills. Through exploration, cooperative learning, problem solving, critical thinking, and exploration students are guided to develop cognitive, social, and behavioral habits necessary for success in their

child's learning by attending student-parent-teacher conferences that allow for goal setting. Students are taught to be cognizant of the learning process and are allowed time for self-reflection.

Grade 1 classrooms provide an environment rich in print and oral language. Reading and writing instruction are integrated and holistic as each process builds upon the other. Daily oral reading, shared language experiences, small group guided reading, word study, creative writing, responsive writing, thematic study, nonfiction writing, vocabulary development, and handwriting are all integral parts of daily language instruction. ESL and reading specialists, who conduct comprehensive pre and post year assessments, further support language and reading instruction.

Science and social studies are integrated with the language arts, thematically. These units support children as they learn about themselves and their world environment. The science concepts of "Soap, Water, and Bubbles" and "Mud" are two examples that are discovered through active exploration and hands-on experiments following the scientific method. Vocabulary and concept development are reinforced through reading, writing, and oral language activities.

The mathematics program focuses on the understanding of number properties, using strategies to solve addition and subtraction calculations, understanding, and using base ten manipulatives (one cubes, ten stick and 100 flats), recognizing patterns in numbers, and creating and solving real life story problems. Utilizing a wide variety of hands-on manipulatives enables students to move from concrete to symbolic operations. Students learn to relate mathematics to their world.

All instruction is tailored for diverse learning styles and differentiated development learning readiness. First grade is an eventful year of self-discovery where tools are given to the students to enable them to become independent learners working in a collaborative environment.

## **Second Grade**

Second Grade is an important year academically, socially, and emotionally in the life of the young child. It is the bridge between early and intermediate primary education and is a busy and exciting year for students as they are challenged at their individual levels. The Language Arts program consists of the four elements of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Among the types of reading the students participate in on a daily basis are: shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, buddy reading, and literature circle reading. A writing workshop format is used to guide the students towards becoming confident and willing young authors. Creativity and independence in writing is encouraged while conventional structure and spellings are simultaneously fostered. The Social Studies program introduces the students to a wide variety of important themes including: interaction within different environments, commonality and diversity,

conflict and cooperation, and building citizenship. Second grade science explores many themes that establish foundations from all the branches of life, earth, and physical science. The Mathematics program furthers the students' exposure to the basics of computation and provides an introduction to geometry and algebra.

### **Third Grade**

In teaching Third Grade concepts, teachers strive to develop the "whole-child" academically, interpersonally, physically, and emotionally. Students remain with the same teacher for language arts, math, social studies, and science. Specialists instruct students in computer science, music, Arabic, physical education, art, and library.

The Language arts program revolves and evolves around themes and is based on fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Writing is integrated throughout all the curriculum areas and the program focuses on the 6+1 writing traits. Spelling focuses on spelling well in writing, not just spelling well on a test. A Guided Reading program and Literature Circles further enrich the language arts curriculum with their individualized approach. The math curriculum includes place value through hundred thousands, advanced addition and subtraction, multiplication and division, basic fractions, computation, data analysis and statistics, probability, measurement, patterns, relations, functions, basic geometry and algebra concepts, with an emphasis on mathematical reasoning and mathematical communication. The social studies and science program is theme based, too. Social Studies themes reflect history, geography, culture and economics with special accent on Saudi Arabia. The science curriculum focuses on the human body, nutrition, plants and animals, space, natural resources of the Earth, matter, heat, and energy.

### **Fourth Grade**

Students in fourth grade are placed in a self-contained classroom for their core curriculum: math, language arts, social studies, science and health. Specialists in library, music, art, computer, science and physical education support learning in the core areas. In math, various problem-solving strategies are taught, in addition to a review of advanced subtraction, addition, geometry, multiplication, and division. Fractions and decimals are also introduced. Integrated Language Arts occurs across the curriculum and includes a variety of creative writing activities, story summaries, and story sequencing following the 6+1 Writing Traits. Students work in a reading program following Literature Circles and use a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction literature. In Social Studies, students study the five regions of the United States, with an in-depth look at the Native American tribes of the five regions. They also study map and globe-reading skills and an in-depth look at Saudi Arabia culture and traditions. Science units are based on the AERO standards, and include such units of study as health and nutrition, geology, space, force, and motion. These units are explored using hands-on, inquiry-based activities that are designed to further the child's understanding of the content and foster natural curiosity. The scientific method is emphasized with each concept and technology integrated into the core curriculum.

## **Fifth Grade**

Using hands on activities, small group and whole class discussions, as well as other methods of learning, fifth graders will explore the following:

- Social Studies: US history from the Native Americans to the development of the 13 colonies, the Revolutionary War, and finally the Civil War.
- English: Basic parts of speech, proper use of grammar, sentence structure, creative writing of various genres of both a fictional (e.g. mystery, fantasy, etc.) and nonfictional nature (e.g. letters, reports, etc.).
- Reading: Various novels units with genres of historical fiction, realistic fiction, fantasy and mystery. Guided reading, literature circle and whole class discussions will be used.
- Science: Units include the scientific method, “sun, moon, earth, and stars”, matter, cells and different human body systems. Hands-on activities and visits to the lab happen on a regular basis.
- Math: Place value; adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing whole numbers, decimals, fractions; geometry; measurement; data and statistics.
- 

## **Arabic Programs**

### **Arabic**

The main goal of the Arabic language program in PK 4 – Gr. 5 is to provide Arabic speaking students with fundamental knowledge, and skills that can be used to provide a strong base with which students can communicate effectively in Arabic. The Arabic language program encompasses reading, handwriting, spelling, grammar, comprehension, dictation, conversation, listening, composition and the study of literature.

### **Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL)**

The main goal of Arabic as a Foreign Language in PK 4 Grade 5 is to introduce the nonspeaking Arabic students to the Arabic language, its alphabet, reading, and sounds. Students will enrich their Arabic vocabulary and their understanding of the language. They will also be able to use, read, write, spell, and speak many Arabic words and sentences.

### **Arabic Culture**

One period per week, non-Muslim students in grades 1 – 5 will engage in electives, which will reflect our multinational school environment. They will participate in activities that provide cultural awareness and understanding of their host country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## **Islamic Studies**

The main goal of Islamic Studies is to enable students in grades 1-5 to have a good knowledge of the Holy Qur'raan and holy sayings of Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.). These programs encompass the study of the Holy Qu'raan, Hadeeth (teaching and instructions), worshipping, Prophet Mohammed's life, and religious stories. During these studies, the concept of morality and values of Islam will be stressed.

## **Specialist Programs**

### **Art**

Art provides forms of nonverbal communication that can strengthen the presentation of ideas and emotions. Through art education, students learn to understand the variety of the functions and purposes for creating art; learn to identify and appreciate the similarities and the differences of diverse cultures, now and in the past, as expressed through their art; and recognize art as integral to daily life in that our constructed environment is shaped and influenced by the elements of art and principles of design. Children learn to express themselves through color, line, shape, form, texture and space. Integration with grade level topics and local culture enhances their artistic experience.

### **Computer**

All students from KG2 – Grade 5 have computer class twice in a six-day rotation cycle. The curriculum aims to providing technology awareness in students; to teach basic computer skills; and to use skills to enhance their educational experience. Furthermore, the students will be introduced to the fundamental concepts of the computer. Integration between computer curriculum and core curriculum is a school goal.

PK 3 students learn the basics of computer such as the different parts of the computer and how each part is used. They will also learn to take care of their computer and use their computer to practice their core curriculum skills.

PK 4 and Kindergarten students learn basic computer skills and learn to take care of their computer. They learn to use a mouse and learn to key their name using the keyboard.

First and Second graders will learn the different input, processing, output and storage devices and will also focus on using computers to write, draw, and to use internet websites for educational purposes and reinforce core curricular skills.

Grade 3 students learn proper keyboarding skills and basic word processing skills at this grade level. Students also learn to create an animated power point presentation.

Grade 4 and Grade 5 students use the Internet to find information and use

Microsoft Word to organize this information and present their reports in an appealing style using publishing and presentation software.

The elementary computer lab is divided into two labs. Lab 1 has 16 computers, which are used for PK 3 – Gr. 2; Lab 2 has 24 computers for Grs. 3 – 5. Each student workstation includes a computer with CD, disk, USB drives, Microsoft Office programs, laser mouse, headphones, scanner, laser printer, and projector.

### **Library Media Center Program**

The purpose and intent of a library media center is to allow students to feel comfortable in gaining access to information in many forms. Whether it is through the use of books, magazines, newspapers, or the Internet, students can use these tools to accomplish many tasks. It is the goal of the AISJ Library Media Center that all students are able to access, find, and utilize the information they need. Students in grades PK3 – 5 visit the library regularly for book checkout, participation in library science and skill lessons, and in literature appreciation sessions. Skills are built in the younger grades so that independence can occur when they are in middle and high school. Students in grades 6 – 12 use the library and it's facilities flexibly so that they may utilize the resources when it is convenient for them. The library media specialist also works cooperatively with the teachers of all grade levels to team teach important research skills as well as help students develop into strong users of information.

### **Music**

The music program in the elementary school for PK 3 – Gr. 5 focuses on the development of appreciation, understanding, and attitudes essential to music literacy. The student experiences music through a variety of related activities which include listening, singing, moving, and playing melodic and chordal instruments. Emphasis is placed on exploration, appreciation, creativity, expression, and enjoyment.

### **Physical Education**

The elementary physical education program provides a safe, sequential, and developmentally appropriate program of fitness and motor skills addressing students' needs and potential. Physical education is an essential part of each student's overall education with movement as its foundation. The program offers meaningful and individualized practices for students.

The process of education requires the integration of psychomotor, cognitive, and affective learning. As a part of this process, the physical education content area establishes the competencies and skills necessary for all AISJ students to be physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally educated.

Physical education is not unstructured for free play. The physical education curriculum serves as the foundation for continued physical and social development. Students are to explore various sports and health—enhancing

activities in middle school and to eventually develop a degree of expertise in an area of their choice in high school.

Students are expected to dress out for every PE lesson; discuss any injury or illness with your PE teacher as well as with the school nurse at the beginning of the school year and / or class. If a class is missed, then a note from the parents is required. Any period of time over three (3) days, requires a doctor's note given to the PE teacher at the start of the class.

Grading in physical education is used for guidance, placement, and measuring achievement. Grades are based on the degree to which students achieve a set of established objectives. These objectives are linked to the National Performance Standards, which in turn relate to the National Content Standards in physical education.

## **Support Programs**

### **Student Support Team (SST)**

The Student Support Team consists of professionals in the areas of English as a Second Language, reading, learning, counseling, and administration.

This team meets weekly to review, analyze, problem solve, and assess student referral cases with the homeroom teachers in determining specific learning needs of their students.

### **English as a Second Language (ESL)**

The ESL program is a developmental program, which guides the students through all the stages of second language acquisition while integrating the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Its purpose is to raise the student's level of proficiency in all four of these skilled areas as well as the student's proficiency in the areas of academic achievement, social skills, and self-esteem so they can function effectively in an English-speaking environment. To ensure communication, ESL teachers and classroom teachers meet regularly to collaborate and plan activities that foster the acquisition of the English language and the required skills needed to become academically successful in their grade level. The students are monitored each quarter with a progress report that is designed specifically for ESL students. A report card that is tailored for ESL student sent home four times a year.

### **Guidance Counselor**

Elementary school counselors are professional educators with a mental health perspective who understand and respond to the challenges presented by today's diverse student population. Elementary school counselors don't work in isolation; rather they are integral to the total educational program. They provide proactive leadership that engages all stakeholders in the delivery of programs and services to help students achieve school success. Counselors align with the school's

mission to support the academic achievement of all students as they prepare for the ever-changing world of the 21st century. This mission is accomplished through the design, development, implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive, developmental and systematic school counseling program.

1. Elementary School Students' Developmental Needs:

The elementary years are a time when students begin to develop their academic self-concept and their feelings of competence and confidence as learners. They are beginning to develop decision-making, communication and life skills, as well as and character values. It is also a time when students develop and acquire attitudes toward school, self, peers, social groups and family. Comprehensive developmental school counseling programs provide education, prevention and intervention services, which are integrated into all aspects of children's lives. Early identification and intervention of children's academic and personal/social needs is essential in removing barriers to learning and in promoting academic achievement. The knowledge, attitudes and skills that students acquire in the areas of academic, career and personal/social development during these elementary years serve as the foundation for future success.

2. LEARNING FOR LIFE counseling program:

**School Guidance Curriculum**

- Education on understanding self and others
- Peer relationships, coping strategies and effective social skills
- Communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution
- Multicultural/diversity awareness
- Goal setting and decision-making
- Academic support, including organizational, study and test-taking skills

**Responsive Services**

- Individual and small-group counseling
- Individual/family/school crisis intervention
- Conflict resolution
- Consultation/collaboration
- Referrals

**Individual Student Planning**

- Individual and small-group counseling
- Goal setting/decisionmaking
- Education on understanding of self, including strengths and weaknesses
- Transition plans

### 3. Elementary School Counselors Collaborate:

#### **Parents**

##### Parent education

- Communication/networking
- Academic planning
- One-on-one parent conferencing
- Interpretation of assessment results

#### **Teachers**

- Classroom guidance activities
- Academic support, including learning style assessment and education to help students succeed academically At-risk student identification and implementation of interventions to enhance success

#### **Administrators**

- School climate
- Behavioral management plans
- School-wide needs assessments
- Student data and results
- Student assistance team building
- 

### **Learning Support (LS)**

The Learning Support resource program offers a reinforcing environment, extra resources, time and any additional tools for those students who require such needs. The program focuses on individualized learning in either a pull-in or pull-out model. Instructional groups are kept small in number to allow for as much One-on-one assistance for optimal learning while all content areas are addressed as the need arises. Learning Support provides a positive setting where education is fostered and valued for all students who are serviced.

### **Reading Support**

The reading specialist works closely with the elementary administration and classroom teachers to build an environment that promotes reading. Students identified as needing reading support will participate in a combination of pullout and push-in services. The goal of reading support is to give students confidence in their reading abilities by helping them gain the necessary skills.

### **Instructional Assistants (IA)**

Instructional assistants support our students and the academic programs across all grade levels in the elementary school. Our PK3 KG classes each have a full-time instructional assistant to assist the teacher in working with your children. Grades 2 / 3 and grades 4 / 5 each share an instructional assistant. Instructional assistants also support our specialist and resources programs in art and physical education, plus there are two full-time IA's in the Library Media Center.

**Support Staff**

The support staff consists of the elementary secretary and registrar. When making appointments, you may contact the elementary administrative assistant at 662 0051, ext. 250. The registrar will be your contact person for all new registrations and information on student files (ext. 224).