GRADE 2 CURRICULUM DESCRIPTIONS
SECOND SEMESTER 2014-15

Library
During the second half of the school year, Grade 2 students are encouraged to pursue their interests, as they enjoy selecting books in the library from an increasingly broad collection of picture books, chapter books, and non-fiction titles. In April, during National Poetry Month, students read and discuss poetry, focusing on narrative poems, and explore the library’s poetry section. As the year progresses, students enjoy reading and discussing non-fiction books in conjunction with their classroom work on non-fiction.

Literacy
Grade 2 students continue to develop as readers and writers as they examine the structure and elements of narrative and informational nonfiction. Expanding on their previous narrative work, the students thoughtfully discuss authors’ uses of detail, description and dialogue. They read a variety of personal narrative texts, both as a class and individually, and participate in meaningful conversations while making interpretations about the more complex story elements of character development, plot, theme and point of view. They then incorporate these craft skills into their own piece.

Integrated closely with their Community Study, the students then launch into an in-depth look at different forms of informational nonfiction writing. From books, to websites, to advertisements and signs, the students explore the ways writers use fact, opinion, persuasion and various formats depending on the audience and purpose of the piece, and begin to summarize and synthesize the information to deepen their understanding. While exploring the different structures in the community, they gather information from print, interviews and observations, and then combine the facts, their opinions and the art of persuasion into carefully crafted pieces aimed for specific audiences. Spelling, decoding and grammatical skills are strengthened as students continue to explore word structure, sentence structure and story structure.

Mathematics
Grade 2 students investigate organizational and physical structures both inside and outside of The School environment. With a critical eye, the children use a variety of addition and subtraction strategies and focus on efficiency by determining when to use each strategy in different problem solving situations. There is an emphasis on accuracy, flexibility, and efficiency with the support of models such as the open number line to represent their thinking. The problem solving work that follows encourages children to build problem solving habits of mind such as perseverance when working on more challenging problems. They also find a purpose for recording their process to communicate their thinking, and are asked to notice mathematical situations in their everyday lives. Students transition to applying their spatial reasoning skills while investigating structures in the community. This leads them through an in-depth study of the properties and relationships between shapes and spaces and helps them better understand their three-dimensional world. The end of the year concludes with an integrated study involving data analysis, number, and measurement which allow students to estimate, calculate, and use logical reasoning skills to develop an understanding of standard tools and units within authentic contexts. Within each inquiry students further develop their mathematical vocabulary and communication skills while working collaboratively with peers.
Performing Arts: Dance
Structure is a great source of inspiration for our dance lessons. We begin the semester creating small group dances based on various sculptures. This extensive project focuses on and introduces the “ingredients” of dance – time, space, energy and body. The children worked very hard and produced beautiful work that can be seen on The Tube. After spring break we continue our structure unit by focusing on multicultural dance and are able to showcase some of the dances in our May concert. Following our performance, the children take a deeper look at the folk dance from a single country. They dissect and analyze the structures within each dance, such as circle formations, partner work and props. With their newfound knowledge the children work in small groups to create their own folk dances. Alongside all of this challenging and creative work, the students continue to build on their dance technique skills through the warm-up, stretch, and traveling sequences. We also have ample theater experiences, including the wonderful opportunity of seeing a live performance by the New York City Ballet at Lincoln Center.

Performing Arts: Music
Music in Grade 2 is an exciting time for students to express themselves through singing and moving. Students continue to learn rhythms, rhythmic notation (including half notes, quarter notes and eighth notes), dynamics (the volume of the music) and tempo (the speed of the music). During their structure unit, students compose music, perform on instruments and perform in their own percussion orchestra. Grade 2 students sing a varied repertoire of songs including specific cultural pieces as part of their spring performance.

Science
During our winter unit, students engage in the engineering design process as they develop prototypes for bird feeders. They begin by researching feeders in terms of capacity, materials, construction, and design. Using their newfound knowledge, they brainstorm their own feeder designs and draw up a blueprint. Students then work through challenges as they transform their 2-D blueprint drawing into a 3-D feeder prototype using various materials. In the spring, students explore concepts of electricity and circuits. Students explore various ways of constructing a circuit and experiment with materials that are conductors and insulators.

Social Emotional Learning
In the second half of Grade 2, social emotional learning skills and objectives are built into the children’s study of Structure and Community. Through lessons that address essential questions involving the ways in which physical and organizational structures are employed to meet the needs of people in a community, the children acquire a deeper understanding of the interdependence and mutual responsibilities of community members. Working in large and small groups, the children develop relationships and work flexibly with diverse peers, become adept at using words to express a range of feelings, and understand the importance of taking responsibility for their own actions and attitudes.

Social Studies
Grade 2 has a yearlong theme of Community and focuses on the concepts of Expression and Structure. As they study expression in social studies, students explore their identities and see themselves as community members. We begin with activities to build a grade-level community filled with the collective strengths of the children. They gain an understanding of their roles in the community and recognize that they are each unique, together complete. There is an emphasis on
independent and cooperative learning opportunities. In addition, the children are inspired by historical and present day community leaders and changemakers and events to identify ways in which they can affect change in their communities. Students continue to examine the multifaceted aspects of their identities and began to look critically at stereotypes that can box people in. Through critical media literacy work, read-alouds, class discussions and brainstorms, and integrated projects, second the children engage in work around identifying and moving beyond stereotypes, so all community members can be who they are, appreciate diversity within the community, and celebrate their authentic selves. As they study structure, students investigate how physical and organizational structures help to meet the needs and wants of a community. They examine the ways families, The School, and other communities express their affiliation, and how these communities meet the needs of each member and help to make the groups within successful. Through observations and interviews, students investigate ways that different spaces and people within the school community meet collective needs. We continue this study in the neighborhood, looking at community structures that meet needs and make a positive impact.

Spanish Language/Literacy
This semester, Grade 2 students have been focusing on The School community. We start off by exploring school community members and their roles. The students also learn about different spaces of the building and the floors on which they are located, using ordinal numbers and basic prepositions. Students practice vocabulary by discussing important places and activities they do in their neighborhoods. Both of these units help to reinforce concepts taught across all disciplines relating to Structure, their overarching theme for second semester. In culture, students continue their study of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and utilize vocabulary pertaining to animals, clothing and food.

Technology
In Grade 2, students explored electricity as part of an integrated project with Art and Science. Children examined concepts around creating circuits and conductivity in all three environments. Students later applied concepts learned by creating a simple circuit board using Makey Makey and fully immersing themselves into the E-Textiles unit, reinforced in both Art and Technology. Students created Mii Dolls, designing how circuits would be connected, sewing them in place, testing and troubleshooting their connections and finally completing a rag doll complete with a functioning LED! Earlier in the term, students extended their coding abilities using Scratch Animation. Children learned advanced programming blocks and ideas like Go To and Glide and Switch Costume to create more complete animated stories.

Visual Arts
In the art studio, Grade 2 students deepen their understanding of the theme "structure" as a medium of artistic expression. During this process, students explore three-dimensional construction while discovering the unique qualities of materials such as paper, wood, wire, and clay. Studying works by professional artists such as Alexander Calder, Louise Nevelson, and Isamu Noguchi, and visiting Storm King Art Center, students connect their experiences in the studio to the larger environment. The semester ends with a technology and art collaboration focused on soft circuits and the design process. This experience allows students to use their knowledge of materials to make individual choices for their creations. In addition, students continue to develop their creative problem-solving skills and ability to work successfully in a collaborative space.
Wellness
In wellness, students work on building trust, practicing cooperation, improving general fitness and developing the eight basic locomotor skills. We spend the first part of the semester rock climbing on both the traverse wall and high ropes wall in the MPR. This unit allows students to use strength and flexibility, while completing different challenges on the wall. Connecting to the study of structure, we spend part of the year studying the skeletal and muscular systems of the human body and how exercise and diet affect the way our bodies work. To finish the semester, we focus on a variety of games and sports, with an emphasis on sportsmanship and teamwork.