

WILLIAMSTOWN



PRIMARY SCHOOL



Learning Program
Grade 3/4

Introduction

Welcome to Grade 3/4 at Williamstown Primary School. The aim of this booklet is to give you an insight into the type of learning that is happening in your child's classroom on a daily basis.

Team Approach

The 3/4 teaching team in 2017 is:

- Carmel Tran and Mary Colangelo (3/4C)
- Matt Eason-Jones with ESS Nicola Welham (3/4E)
- Molly Hedditch and Robin Nankivell (3/4H)
- Joel Kitchen with ESS Julie Lance (3/4K)
- Anna Swan – Team Leader (3/4S)
- Rochelle White – Team Leader (3/4W)

Lessons in 3/4 are planned together with each teacher adding his or her experiences and knowledge to put together a curriculum that is differentiated, engaging and inclusive of all students and their various learning styles. We work hard to ensure that students are all taught the same curriculum, with each individual teacher adding his or own personal touch.

We meet on a weekly basis to discuss the needs, strengths and areas for improvement of our students. We share ideas, collaborate the various strategies used to teach particular units and review our teaching practices. Most importantly, we ensure that each classroom is well supported by all team members.

Learning To Learn, Learning To Be

There are two types of learning that take place in the classroom. The first is called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), in which students are introduced to concepts that are the next step in their learning. The second is called the Zone of Actual Development (ZAD), in which students practise the knowledge or skills they have learnt, in order to embed that learning in their minds until it can be recalled automatically. Both types of learning are equally important.

When learning, students in 3/4 are being asked to look for the challenge that is not too easy and not too hard, but just right for them. In this way, they can locate their ZPD for themselves and manage their own learning.

We are encouraging the development of a Growth Mindset in the classroom. Educational research has shown that students who have a Growth Mindset are more successful learners. Growth Mindset is the attitude that, it's better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all. It's also called the Not Yet movement. In other words, you haven't failed; you just haven't got it yet.

We are also encouraging the production of Five Star Quality Work when completing classroom tasks. You should find examples of Five Star Quality Work on display in your child's classroom.

Independent Learning & Leadership

One of the main aims of the 3/4 program is to help students become more independent learners. Thus, students in Grade 3 are introduced to using their own lockers, managing stationary in a personal pencil case and are expected to take responsibility for their iPads. They are also exposed to skills and strategies that allow them to start thinking more critically. For Grade 4s, it is about consolidating the previous year's efforts towards becoming an independent learner, and developing leadership skills in readiness for the move to Grade 5/6 and the Middle Years program.

Literacy

English is comprised of many different elements – reading, writing, spelling, and speaking & listening - all of which are intertwined. Generally speaking, students do a two-hour block of literacy every day. Each class operates a similar program, with teachers modifying for the particular needs of their grade.

Reading

Reading lessons consist of a warm-up activity followed by a Whole Class Focus (WCF). Students then split into groups to complete a set literacy activity. To conclude the lesson students come back together to reflect and share.

Reading activities include: independent reading, comprehension activities, spelling tasks, reading journal reflections and guided reading with the teacher. Activities are differentiated according to student need.

Writing

In 3/4, students focus on five main text types: Recount, Narrative, Persuasive, Informative and Poetry.

This year we continue to use two writing programs. The first, which assists students with the 'mechanics' of writing, is called VCOP. This stands for vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation. The other writing program, which aims to develop structural skills, such as story plotting, is called Seven Steps to Writing Success.

A typical writing lesson involves a warm up activity followed by our WCF. From here students work independently, focusing on the lesson's learning intention, or in small groups with the teacher for guided sessions. To conclude the lesson, students come back together to share and reflect.

Spelling

Each week we focus on a different aspect of spelling, as well as spelling rules. Homework spelling words reflect this focus and are differentiated to suit your child's needs. They are specifically selected to build automatic recall ability (ZAD). Thus, it is very important that your child practises the words they have been given by their teacher. Students are tested on their knowledge of the spelling words on Fridays.

Speaking and Listening

Students in 3/4 are encouraged to share their thoughts and opinions on a regular basis. They speak in front of the class during class presentations, during share and reflection time and during open class discussions. They are also expected to listen to their peers, as well as their teachers.

Numeracy

During Numeracy lessons we cover three strands of mathematical knowledge: Number & Algebra, Measurement & Geometry and Statistics & Probability. A typical lesson consists of a warm up game/activity followed by a 15-minute WCF. Students then break into groups to complete an activity based on the learning intention, or in a small group with the teacher. Each activity is differentiated to suit each group's needs. To conclude the lesson students will share/reflect on their learning.

A major focus in 3/4 is the learning of timetables and basic number facts between 1-20 e.g. $6+7=13$. Being able to quickly recall these number facts is absolutely critical in order for students to be able to compute higher order equations.

Integrated Studies

A different Integrated Studies unit is taught each term. This year the topics are: Learning To Learn; Learning To Be, Smooth Moves (Science - Physics), Our Sporting Bodies (Health), Feathers, Fur, Fins and Scales (Science - Biology) and Mighty Makers (Technology). Each topic is taught explicitly twice per week, as well as integrated into other areas of the curriculum through various readings, discussions, activities and presentations. To conclude each unit, students complete an inquiry-based task/project where they investigate their own wonderings and questions.

Child Wise

All 3/4 students will take part in a personal safety program developed by Child Wise, Australia's leading child abuse prevention organisation. These sessions are designed to build students' resilience and confidence, in order for them to problem solve and identify strategies that prevent harm and abuse. There will be three main ideas as a focus each term, and the 3/4 students will be involved in activities and discussions within the classroom facilitated by their classroom teacher. For more information, please visit www.childwise.org.au.

Digital Learning Technologies

In 3/4, the BYOiD program has become an integral tool in enhancing the curriculum and providing the students with varied, differentiated and engaging learning opportunities. This includes the use of the Internet and apps such as Edmodo, Mathletics, Literacy Planet, Popplet and Explain Everything to demonstrate learning, inquire about a new topic, share thoughts and ideas, as well as develop new skills and strategies when problem solving.

Specialist Subjects

Williamstown Primary School offers four specialist classes – Art, Music, Physical Education and French. Each specialist class runs once per week, every term, with the exception of French. Each year level completes three terms of French per year.

Homework

This year, homework will be completed in a workbook. It will generally be sent home on a Monday and due back on Friday of the same week. Students will be expected to practise their 10-12 spelling words and the nominated times table, complete a Critical and Creative Thinking task and read for 15-20 minutes per night. Towards the end of each term students will also be asked to complete a project linked to the Integrated Studies topic.

Camp

This year, the 3/4 students will be attending the Melbourne Zoo for one night, for the wonderful Zoo Snooze. On the night of your child's camp, you will take your child to the zoo for a 6pm start. The students will get settled in their tents, have dinner then embark on a night tour of the zoo. In the morning after breakfast, there will be an early morning tour, after which we are able to tour the zoo at our leisure for the remainder of the day. Students will return to the school by bus and will be expected back at 3:00pm.

The Zoo Snooze timetable:

3/4C – Monday 10th September

3/4H – Tuesday 11th September

3/4E – Wednesday 12th September

3/4W – Thursday 13th September

3/4 S – Monday 17th September

3/4 K – Tuesday 18th September

Conclusion

If you have any further questions about the curriculum, please feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher for more information.