



School Improvement Plan: 2024-2025



Our Context

Thornhill Primary School is located on the traditional territory of the Kitselas People of the Ts'msyen nation. Kitselas means 'People of the Canyon' and the village of Gitaus and its neighbouring National Historic Site of Kitselas Canyon is only minutes down the highway from our school. Other students from the Kitselas nation live in Kulspai, which is located down the Skeena River to the east of our school.

We have a student population this year of 186 whose homes come from an expansive geographical area which includes Usk, Gitaus, Kleanza, Gossen, Copper Mountain, Upper and Lower Thornhill, Jackpine, Lakelse Lake, Kulspai, Queensway, Old Remo, and all areas in-between. As one of the few K-3 primary schools left in the province, we boast 10 classrooms, a popular StrongStart Program, and a Just B4 Preschool Program. We run a well-attended Breakfast Club before school and have a lunch program that is used by most students, especially on hot lunch days.

Besides their teachers and educational assistants, students are supported by our two Indigenous Support Workers, Learner Support teacher, Speech and Language team, literacy support teacher, and teacher librarian.

Our students are outdoorsy and adventurous. They are brave performers in our music concerts and practitioners of kindness. They embrace participation in cultural events and take care of our school and each other. Our students love The Terry Fox Fun, Christmas Concerts, National Indigenous Peoples Day, Hobiye, Chinese New Year, Run for Fun, Fun Day, Spirit Weeks, Funny Bone Friday, Movie Nights, and our weekly Caught Being Kind draws.



Our Learners

Proficiency for all students in literacy is the main area of focus for our school. Our children have a curiosity for and enjoyment of books. They love hearing stories, taking books out of the library, and sharing connections.

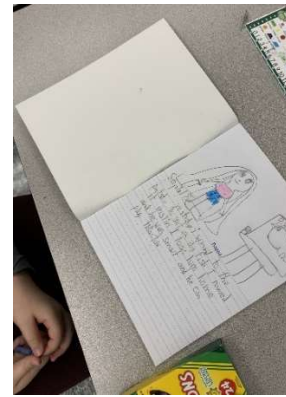
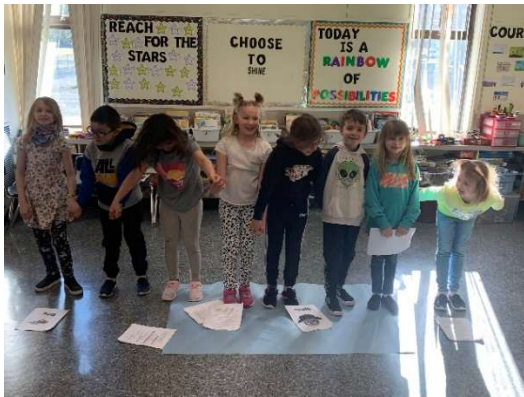
Our learners use developmentally appropriate reading, listening, and viewing strategies to make meaning.



Kindergarten students look at, listen to, and retell stories during literacy centres.

Our learners engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers to develop understanding of self, identity, and community.

Our learners plan and create a variety of different communication forms for different purposes and audiences.



Grade 2 students take a bow after performing a short play. Grade 3 students share their original poetry during a class reading event. Students write and draw in their personal journals.

Our Focus

Literacy

Our students' learning goal is to read fluently at grade level.

This year, six of our teachers began using the evidence based UFLI program for explicit literacy instruction. Some teachers wholly embraced the program, while others began introducing parts of it to the classes. In some classrooms the explicit teaching was augmented by:

- Using music and song to reinforce concepts
- Using word walls for 'heart' words
- Having students practice skills in play-based literacy stations

Other teachers continued to use their own programs or methods, Secret Stories, and the LIPS Program.

Students practice reading as a class, in guided reading groups, with buddy readers, and independently. We continued to have extra literacy support pull out groups in the afternoon.

Teachers received training in UFLI and Acadience Assessment this year. Many teachers used their collaboration time to become familiar with the program. This spring a few staff did extra professional development by joining Dyslexia Canada's Literacy Series and discussing its themes the next day at lunchtime.

Indigenous Education

Our school goal for indigenous education is to incorporate more Ts'msyen Sm'algyax into the school and each classroom.

This year classes were exposed to the language through seasonal rounds lessons and morning announcements (greetings/ days of the week). Several staff took part in a professional development Sm'algyax language session in May run by Ocean Georgelin.

Mental Health

Our staff would like to go back to using school-wide programs that promote healthy conflict resolution and self-regulation strategies. In previous years, the WITS program has been used in the school, and staff would like to see it come back into regular usage. The Zones of Self-Regulation is used wholly by some classes and piece-meal by others. We would like to see this running in all classrooms so that there is a common language throughout the school.

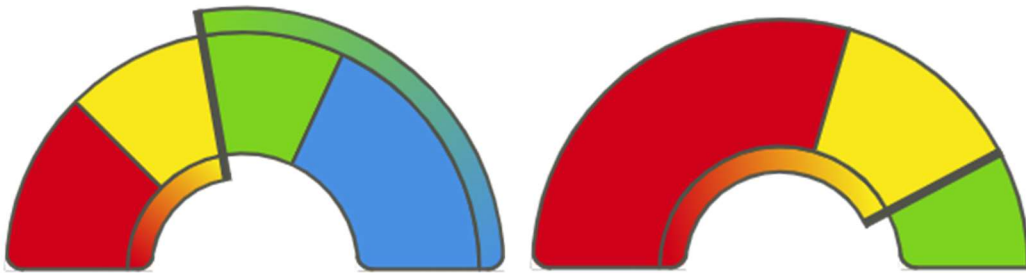
Our Next Steps

Literacy

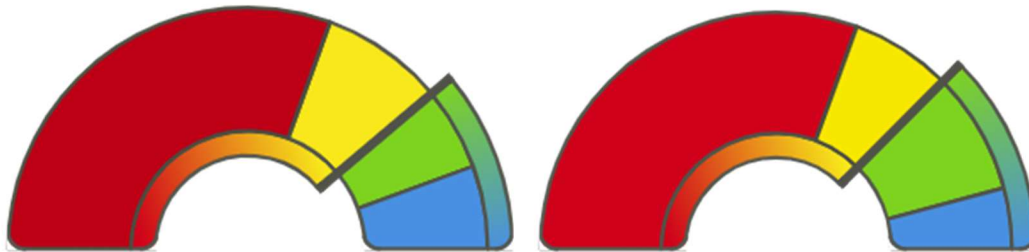
Our school began using the Acadience Assessment this year to determine how students were doing in acquiring reading skills. Assessments were done later in November (because training needed to occur), February, and the end of May.

Below are the Composite Reading Scores for all assessed students, by grade.

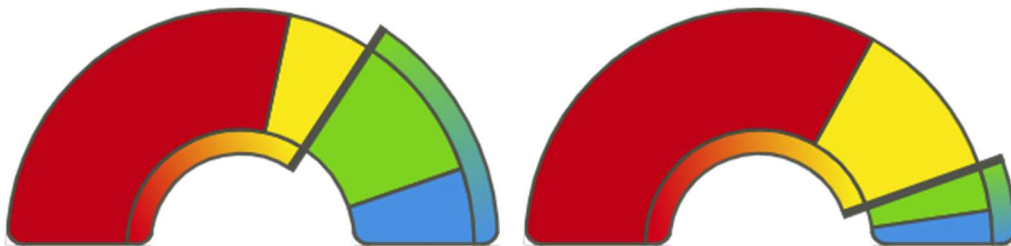
Red= Well Below Level, **Yellow**= Below Level, **Green**= At level, **Blue**= Above Level.



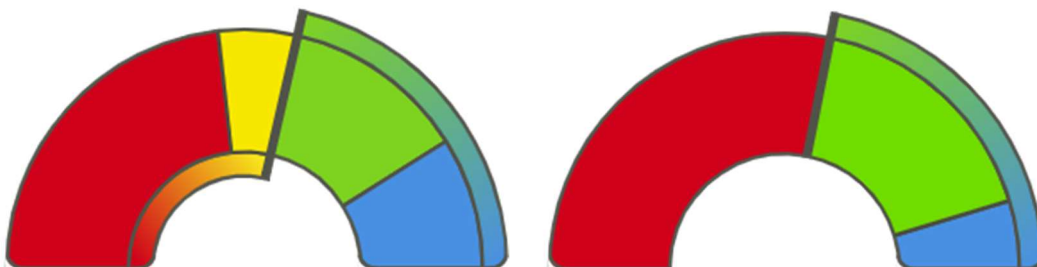
Kindergarten Acadience Scores November and May Assessments



Grade 1 Acadience Scores November and May Assessments



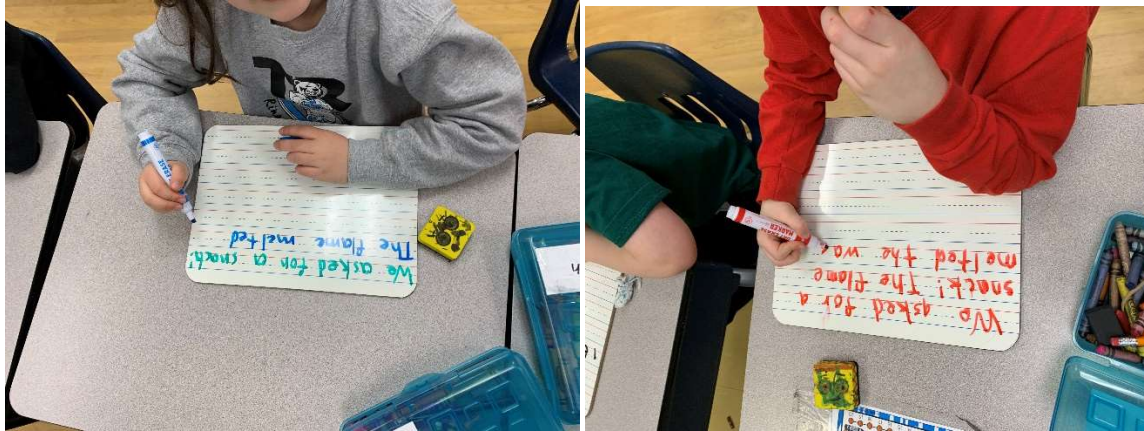
Grade 2 Acadience Scores November and May Assessments



Grade 3 Acadience Scores November and May Assessments

From the above visuals, we can see that we have much to do in helping our students achieve their reading goals. However, in classes that have used UFLI daily, improvement in phonemic awareness, decoding, and spelling have been noted by teachers.

Below, grade 1 students write together, using the patterns taught in that week's lessons.



Changes that we will implement in the 2024-2025 school year are....

- The first Acadience Assessment will occur in early October so that a more accurate picture of where students are at will be given.
- Our literacy support teacher will move away from pull-out groups and into the classrooms to support teachers in using UFLI and helping to implement tier two support in the room.
- Teachers will receive support and gain confidence in using the Acadience tool for progress monitoring. This will help inform their instruction, see trends, and become more adept at using the Acadience Assessment.
- More decodable book sets will be purchased, including the new series coming out from Strong Nations Publishing.
- More 'Lunch Time Learning Sessions' will be available for staff to share challenges, ideas, and successes.
- A Literacy Afternoon (like POPS: Parents of Primary Students) is being planned so that parents and guardians can join their children in literacy activities that can easily be practiced at home.

Indigenous Education

- Our staff will develop a 'month by month' language focus that can easily be used in all classes (greetings, days of the week, numbers, colors...)
- Our staff will host a Professional Development Day to learn more Ts'msyen Sm'algyax. We will try to acquire Ocean Georgelin for this, hopefully for October.
- We will work with our Indigenous Education Support Worker, Liz Dowse, to put together a seasonal rounds resource that can be easily used by teachers in their classrooms.

- We will increase the Sm'algyax signage in our school by labeling rooms and objects that are frequently used.

Mental Health

- Our September assembly will introduce WITS to the student body. Ideally a member of the community (Sheriff's Office?) will join this assembly.
- Classrooms will have WITS posters to remind students of the steps/strategies for dealing with conflict.
- The counsellor will help teachers who are not familiar with the program, the Zones of Self-Regulation, in September/October.
- The school bulletin board (outside the office) will display the Zones and strategies for easy reminders to students.