

1st and 2nd Grade

Overview of Curriculum and Expectations

The 1st and 2nd grade curriculum is both exciting and challenging to the students.

Social Studies:

Our core curriculum alternates each year between two focuses, New York City and Water. Within our curriculum focus of Water we look at the various forms of water, weather, the water cycle, major bodies of water in and around New York, and the aquatic life that thrives in them. To help lay the framework for this, we begin with the basics of water - What is it? Students explore water through hands-on activities and experiments to help draw conclusions about the substance and its various forms. We also extend these understandings into an exploration of how it is important to the survival of people, plants, and animals. The students will work with Pat in the Science room as well, conducting experiments and drawing conclusions as scientists. We will center our field trips on searching for water sources around New York City, and visiting places like gardens, and the Coney Island Aquarium to observe water as a habitat and a part of the city. We will also spend time talking about transportation, bridges, tunnels, and the island of Manhattan. These trips are a wonderful hands-on way for children to truly experience this great city.

During our New York City curriculum we launch our study of the city by discussing some landmarks we have seen as well as some that we would like to visit. Our study is neighborhood based and we will focus on various neighborhoods through the city to study. To help lay the framework for this, we begin with a neighborhood walk of the East Village, a neighborhood familiar to all our students. We take neighborhood walks of the surrounding area and document our noticings with maps. To help the students develop their map skills, we begin by creating maps of our classroom and our school. The Lower East Side is home to many parks, gardens and markets that each of the classes visits and shares information about. Some of the other neighborhoods our classes study and visit are China Town, Little India, Little Italy and Harlem. Field trips and visits to these locations are a vital component to support our curriculum. In addition, we further our study by taking a closer look at New York City's Transportation System, the Markets of New York City and also the bridges and tunnels that connect all of the boroughs to surrounding land. These trips are a wonderful hands-on way for children to truly experience this great city.

Reader's Workshop:

Reader's Workshop focuses on students developing good reading habits. Each workshop usually begins with a mini-lesson and is followed by students reading independently, with a partner, or in small groups. During this time, teachers hold reading conferences with students in order to meet individual needs. We work with each student to develop reading skills, learn new reading strategies, and choose

appropriate books so that children are able to read successfully and with confidence. As we confer with students, we make formal and informal assessments of their reading behaviors so as to inform instruction. It is expected that students choose books from the leveled library and read independently. Students are also expected to read with their reading partners and discuss books at length.

Our work in Reader's Workshop is broken into several components. These include:

Read Aloud: A time when students can listen to a story read to them by the teacher. The teacher will ask comprehension questions throughout the book.

Shared Reading: The teacher and the students read a big book, poem or song together. This is an excellent time for students to practice the reading strategies that they are learning.

Partner Reading: Partner reading gives the students the opportunity to read together and to learn from each other.

Guided Reading: This will take place in small groups of 3-5 students. The teacher will choose a text at a suitable level for all the group members. The work in guided reading takes place when the other students are reading independently.

Writer's Workshop:

The goal of Writer's Workshop is to both meet each student's individual needs and to stretch their ability as writers. Each day starts with a mini-lesson that leads into active writing and illustrating and concludes with children sharing their work with the class. Students are encouraged to use inventive spelling to put their thoughts and ideas into writing. This helps them to take risks as a writer. Students grow a more firm foundation of the writing process so that they can follow an organized plan each time they create a piece of writing. While the students are writing independently, teachers conduct writing conferences with individual students as well as small groups. Conference time is used to assist students in the process of writing as well as providing the skills and strategies they need to become better writers. When our classes publish a new piece of writing we invite our families and school community to come celebrate our work as authors!

Math Workshop:

As part of our Math curriculum, students are broken up into smaller groups to fit their needs. There are two math groups for each grade level, which provides small class sizes in math and therefore more individualized instruction. Math is a time where students are expected to construct meaning about numbers and how they work through a variety of hands-on activities. We use a curriculum called TERC (Technical Education Research Centers), known as Investigations. The TERC curriculum helps provide students with the opportunity to learn in an environment that stresses making sense of mathematics, building on the ideas that they already have, and learn about new ideas that they have never encountered. This is done through the use of hands-on manipulatives and small group games.

Science:

Working with our Science teacher Pat, students look at New York City with a scientific eye. Each of the 1st and 2nd grade classes explores different and exciting things both in their classrooms and in the Science Room. Our classrooms are all equipped with Foss Kits, containing hands-on science activities. Making the curriculum connection across subject areas lays the groundwork for an enriched New York City Study. For a more detailed explanation of our Science work, please look at our Science curriculum write up

Word Study:

Students exploring the sounds and letters that help create words. We begin with a focus on the classroom word wall. The words wall is also a tool that students will use in their writing. Students can find high frequency and sight words that they might use in their writing. Each week, five words will be added to the wall.

The main program we will use to supplement our word study work is Words Their Way for First and Second grade. This program allows children to engage in hands-on activities while learning about letters, sounds and words.

Choice Time:

Choice Time is a portion of our daily schedule where students make new discoveries through academic and social play. During this time students make independent choices and steer their own learning. The children go off to a specific area of the classroom and work cooperatively with a small group of their peers to achieve a learning task. Some Choice Time activities include:

| | |
|---------|------------------|
| Blocks | Art |
| Legos | Painting |
| Puzzles | Chess |
| Games | Listening Center |