

# THE PARK SCHOOL

**2019-2020** CURRICULUM GUIDE



GRADE 1

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## OVERVIEW

First grade is an exciting year, full of learning, friendship, and social/emotional growth. Drawing from the *Responsive Classroom* approach, teachers and students establish a safe and collaborative community of learners and friends. Daily morning meetings provide a foundation for a supportive and engaged classroom community.

Throughout literacy, mathematics, and social studies instruction, students participate in whole group lessons, cooperative activities, conferences with their teachers, and independent work time. Examples include small group book discussions, partnered math explorations and teacher/student writing conferences. The curriculum is differentiated to meet the needs and interests of individual learners. Each night, first graders read “just right” books in order to build fluency and comprehension. Grade 1 classrooms have individual iPads, giving students and teachers the additional ability to utilize age-appropriate and collaborative tools.

Grade 1 is further enriched by weekly science, art, music, and PE lessons outside the classroom.

## LITERACY

Grade 1 continues to build upon the foundations introduced in Kindergarten with oral and written language, listening, and reading. Writing and reading are taught through a variety of approaches in Grade 1, and the children gain confidence in their language skills.

### Reading

The goal for all children is to develop a life-long love of reading. Teachers provide children with a wide range of meaningful experiences with print. This is accomplished through whole group and small group instruction, as well as working one-on-one with each child. An extensive class library of leveled books encourages children to read independently. As students begin to read, they are provided with many activities that reinforce literacy skills. Other areas of concentration include listening skills, participating in book discussions, responding to what has been read, and using prior knowledge to make connections to life and other literature.

### Writing

The goal for all children is that they see themselves as writers. The writing program instructs children in the process of planning, composing, revising, and celebrating written work. Writer’s Workshop provides children with the opportunity to write pieces, drawing from their own knowledge and experiences. Teachers implement *The Teacher’s College Writing Units of Study* with a focus on clarity, adding detail, and making the writing come to life. First graders focus on the following genres: narrative, nonfiction, persuasive, and realistic fiction.

### Spelling and Handwriting

A sequenced progression of phonics skills is taught throughout the year with the *Wilson Foundations* program, and this learning is supported with a web-based phonetic program, *Lexia*. This integrated, systemic curriculum focuses on word study, spelling, and handwriting. Handwriting instruction and practice are ongoing. High frequency non-phonetic words are introduced regularly throughout the year for reading and spelling mastery.

## MATHEMATICS

The goal of our math program is to promote deep understanding of mathematics and to develop mathematically proficient students who can think, reason, model and solve problems. All students in Kindergarten – Grade 5 use the *Investigations 3rd Edition* program. Park provides opportunities for all students to build a strong foundation of mathematical knowledge while engaging in rich, meaningful, and cognitively demanding activities. Students use mathematical tools and representations to model and solve problems and are asked to communicate their thinking clearly. Students are expected to do more than memorize steps and procedures, but to develop a rigorous understanding of mathematical ideas, compute with fluency, and appreciate the breadth and depth of mathematics.

### Number and Operations

Students extend their understanding of counting and the number sequence, building a strong foundation for their work with place value and the operations of addition and subtraction. Activities, classroom routines, and games ask students to combine two or more quantities, to remove one quantity from another, and to compose and decompose numbers in different ways. Students build an understanding of a variety of story problems while solving and representing problems with unknowns in all positions.

## Geometry and Measurement

**Geometry:** First graders focus on the careful observation, description, and comparison of two-dimensional (2-D) and three dimensional (3-D) geometric shapes. Students determine which attributes of shapes are, or are not, important as they describe, build, draw, sort, and compare 2-D and 3-D shapes. In their work with fractions, students partition familiar 2-D shapes into halves, quarters, and other fractional parts, and in doing so, they separate 2-D shapes into two or more smaller shapes.

**Measurement:** Students develop a foundation of skills for accurate linear measurement. They measure both objects and distances with the understanding that length is a stable and measurable dimension. Time and using clocks as tool for measuring time, is explored as students learn to read a clock and think about schedules. As students learn to measure, they encounter fractions in the form of lengths that are not a whole number of units and times that are on the half hour.

## Data Analysis

Data investigations engage students in applying mathematical knowledge in a real world context. They carry out their own data investigations, developing a question, collecting the data, representing the data, and describing and interpreting the data.

## SCIENCE

The two primary goals for science in the first grade are to provide experiences that ignite curiosity and to learn the language and skills of science, essential for school and life. The Grade 1 science program focuses on the essential question, “*Why is water so important?*” Students have many opportunities to explore this question both in the classroom and throughout the outdoor spaces on our campus. This is an inquiry-based, hands-on, yearlong exploration of the effects water has on our earth and on all living organisms, with experiences in each of the four sciences, Life, Physical, Earth, and Engineering. The curriculum is in close alignment with both the Next Generation Science Standards and areas of learning in the students’ home classrooms.

Learning will be organized under the following sub-questions.

**What is water?** ... a basic exploration of the properties

of water, a comparison of different liquids, and an introduction to the water cycle. This unit serves as an introduction to physical science.

**What happens when water moves?** ... observation, discussion, and hands-on activities to explore how currents, puddling, and erosion create different types of landforms found on a map. This unit will build on the concepts of earth science introduced in Kindergarten science.

**What if you do not have enough water?** ... investigations into the desert regions of the United State, with an eye on scarcity. Each student will create a short, non-fiction report on a desert inhabitant and it’s necessary adaptations. This is a life science unit.

**How do we span bodies of water?** ... analyzing different types of bridges, using the Golden Gate Straight as a case study, students will create their own body of water and design and build a bridge to span this water. This is an engineering unit.

**How do we measure and change water?** ... utilizing a variety of measurement tools found in a science lab, students will explore the different ways to measure water and they will investigate states of matter, all through hands-on activities. Learning to record data like a scientist is the focus skill of this unit.

**Is Water a Want or Need?** ... considering a variety of functions in the human body. In a final project students will consider all they have learned about water. Using claims and evidence, they will generate arguments to support their understanding of this vital global question.

*Classes meet twice each week in 40-minute sessions.*

## SOCIAL STUDIES

The Grade 1 social studies curriculum begins with a focus on building the classroom community. In the first weeks of school, teachers and students work together to build a safe, engaging, and inclusive learning environment where all members feel known and valued. Throughout these beginning weeks, students are explicitly taught the routines and expectations of their classrooms. First graders next embark upon a geography unit, where they begin to recognize themselves as residents of a continent, country, region, state and city or town.

Students use maps, globes, and various technology tools in their geographical learning and exploring. Students will also study national landmarks and symbols, while developing an understanding of their significance to the United States of America.

## **ART**

Park's visual art program formally begins in Grade 1. The curriculum is designed to give students mastery of the techniques and tools necessary for artistic self-expression. Designed to spiral, the comprehensive curriculum provides children with skills and concepts that are intentional, sequentially taught, reinforced, and built upon over their years at Park. The goal is for every child to have the confidence to find an entry point, to take creative leaps, and succeed in non-verbal expression.

First graders explore a broad variety of art concepts and methods. Freely experimenting with 2-D and 3-D materials, students begin to develop and improve hands-on skills and creative thinking. They investigate basic principles and elements of visual art: line, shape, color-mixing, transparency, texture, and composition by creating collages, drawings and paintings, and paper sculptures. Students learn how to organize materials and clean up by themselves. Teachers work to create a cooperative atmosphere where children delight in working together.

*Throughout the year, students meet for 40 minute classes twice each week.*

## **MUSIC**

The general music curriculum, in alignment with the National Association for Music Education standards, consists of singing, listening, playing, movement, and performing. Through music, children discover and explore the concepts of tone, color, harmony, texture, dynamics, and form.

A typical class includes echo clapping to develop rhythmic coordination and singing, accompanied by rhythmic response through body movement and/or instrument playing. Music reading emphasizes quarter note, eighth note, and quarter rest patterns, as well as solfege pitches "sol" and "mi." Lessons also include listening to different styles of music and recognizing outstanding melodic and rhythmic patterns. Students respond

to the music through movement and the playing of various instruments. Attention is given to the historical, cultural, and social context of the music.

Park's music program helps to foster creativity and self-expression, while developing the student's music skills. Performances and informances are used as learning tools and are opportunities for students to demonstrate what they are learning in music class.

*Classes meet two times per week in 40-minute sessions.*

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

In Grade 1, the Physical Education program aims to expand children's awareness of movement and to teach basic skills with various pieces of equipment. Children are introduced to the importance of physical fitness through a variety of fun activities. The program encourages each child to progress at his or her own speed and allows for individual differences and interests. Although students are at different skill levels, each child is challenged to improve.

First-grade classes begin with warm-up exercises and elements of physical fitness. Students develop locomotor skills and basic skills using balls and other manipulatives. They also jump rope, dance, experience track & field events, and participate in gymnastics, circuit stations, and small-sided games. Group problem-solving challenges emphasize the importance of cooperation in achieving a common goal. Good sportsmanship, fair play, and respect for individual differences are stressed at all times.

*Classes meet three times per week in 40-minute sessions.*

## **LIBRARY**

Grade 1 students are eager and ready for an introductory exploration of the Library's multi-faceted collection. Therefore, library classes focus on books that represent a wide range of literary genres and subject matters, including picture books, early readers, fairy tales, science books, sports books, etc.

Weekly, 40-minute library classes allow for formal instruction and browsing time, when students explore and extend their knowledge of the library and its holdings. Students are encouraged to check out books, and library and classroom teachers assist in finding appropriate reading-level material.

Students learn age appropriate literature evaluation skills and participate in a national book award contest. Students also continue to explore and incorporate the Library Makerspace for project-based learning. Finally, author visits are frequently arranged to emphasize the work and skill that go into making books, and these visits round out a student's experience of the library as a dynamic place for the exchange of ideas.