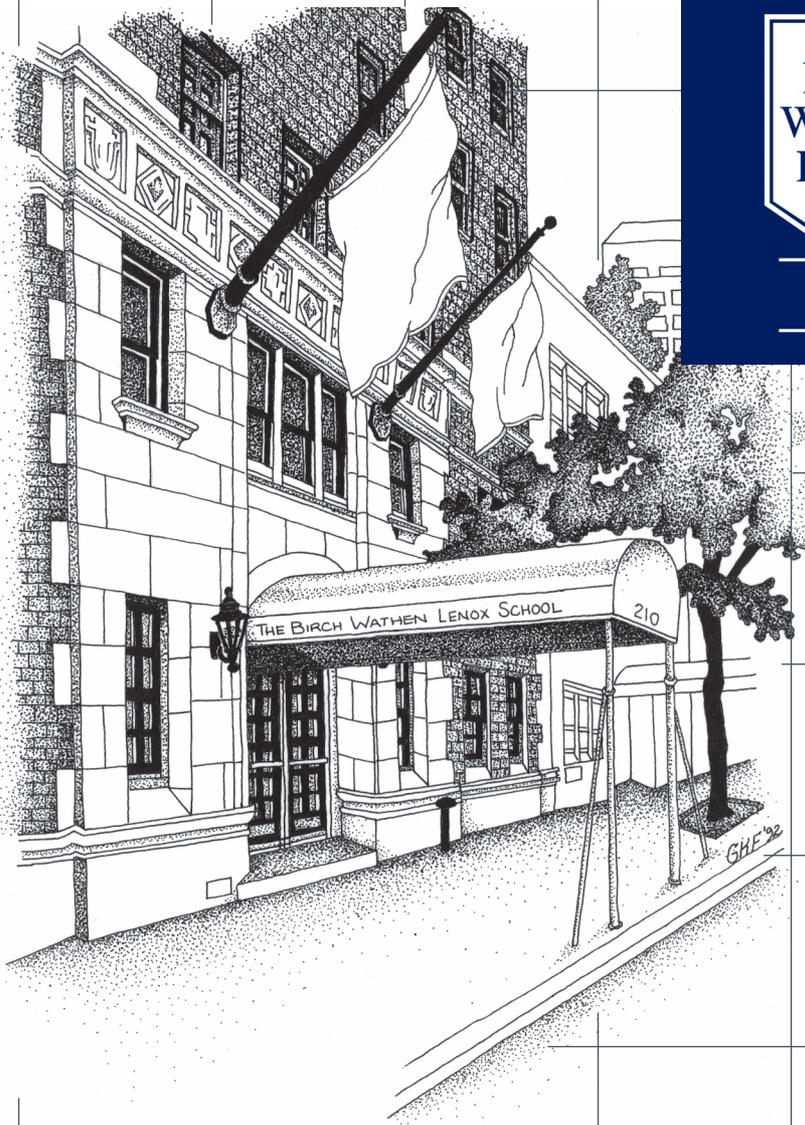


Lower School Course of Study

THE
BIRCH
WATHEN
LENOX
SCHOOL

1916



Kindergarten

School begins for these five-year olds in a setting that offers challenge and adventure. The Kindergarten year is filled with a wide array of experiences in both academic and personal growth. Days include structured learning time as well as time for each child to explore at his or her own pace. One of our goals is to help children observe and organize their immediate surroundings, especially their family, school and community. Whether it be in reading, math, art or physical education, all children are encouraged to discover new skills and are given the support and materials to do so. Throughout the year, children learn how to share with others, as they take pride in their own accomplishments. Every effort is made to ensure that each child's first experience in learning is a happy and successful endeavor.

Language Arts The primary goal of our Reading Program is to ignite interest and encourage a love of books. Many types of books are explored including the ones authored by the children. Pre-readiness skills are developed as each child progresses with the introduction of more advanced skills. There is a strong emphasis on phonics and the reading materials are varied in this area from format reading workbooks to games created in the classroom for groups and individuals. Freedom is given to each child to progress at his or her own pace in this highly developmental area.

Verbal Expression The Kindergarten Program allows for a wealth of experiences through which the children may express themselves. Self-confidence and clarity of expression are encouraged through many types of oral exercises. These include: reading aloud their writings as well as others; sharing stories; and participating in group discussion. Children use language to communicate in many different ways. An extensive vocabulary is enriched with the continuation of these skills throughout the year.

Writing The primary goal of the Writing Program is to develop the following skills: small motor control; proper formation of upper and lower case letters; and sequencing of words and ideas. The goal is to build confidence in the children's ability to express themselves in a

“The aim of education is the knowledge not of fact, but of values.”

—Dean William R. Inge

written form. Story dictation is also employed. The writing process implements a phonetic approach. Children also begin to build a collection of sight words which they incorporate into their writing.

Library The children are introduced to the world of books by creating an atmosphere that enables them to experience the library as a warm, inviting and friendly place. Students develop an appreciation of literature through storytelling. The children are taught how to care for books. Listening and discussion skills are developed. Basic library terms and concepts are introduced, reviewed and reinforced.

Mathematics The conceptual approach of the Singapore Math program recognizes the need to build on children's natural ways of representing their ideas about numbers. Students are given opportunities to investigate, discover, explore and apply their own solutions to mathematical problems. Children learn to use numbers to make connections and understand the relationships between them in relation to real life situations. Students use a rich array of math manipulatives and everyday classroom objects to explore new concepts, practice skills and communicate ideas. The program follows the Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract sequence. Some topics that we cover are number sense, sorting, patterns, solid and flat shapes, ordinal numbers, length and height, measurement, addition, subtraction, and money.

Social Studies The goal of the Social Studies program is to help the children increase their understanding of the social environment and its many aspects, to enlarge their view of the world and the ways in which we relate to each other. The issues involved can spring from the child's own experiences. Through the program the children become aware of themselves and then graduate to family structure, community life and occupations. They learn about people of other countries as well. Worksheets, maps, globes and audio-visual materials are used in our social studies program to expand their knowledge of the world at large.

Science The Science curriculum focuses on the environment and our relationship to it. Hands-on experiences and observation are emphasized as the children develop skills in gathering, recording and interpreting information. An understanding of cause and effect is fostered by the study of nature-e.g., weather, seasons, plants and animals. Children learn to take care of themselves through nutrition and health, and their world through a clean, safe environment.

Art Young children possess a rich store of creative resources. In helping them to progress on each level of skill development, it is the aim of the art program for Kindergarten to give children the means to access these resources. Focus is upon cutting, picture building, working with lines and shapes and color mixing. The children are introduced to mediums such as collage, printmaking, painting with tempera, watercolor and oil pastels. They will also be using different materials such as cardboard, paper and fabric.

Music The Music Program in Kindergarten is designed to keep the children actively engaged in all aspects of musical expression. There is an emphasis on individual and collective singing. The many songs are chosen for their musical beauty and diverse appeal. Musical concepts, especially rhythmic notation, are introduced in Kindergarten through games and activities. Orff instruments are added to songs and movement pieces. New skills are reinforced and each child's natural ability in music is developed. The Music Program has been modified this year due to COVID-19. There will be no singing. Please see the new Performing Arts Program curriculum at the back of this book.

Introduction to World Languages World Languages begin in Kindergarten with French and Spanish each being taught, respectively, one half of the year. Through audiovisual resources and various activities students will be introduced to the phonetic sounds of each language in order to begin developing their pronunciation skills.

Computer Computer education is an integral part of our curriculum in the Lower School. The Computer Program in Kindergarten introduces the children to the basic computer parts and how a computer functions; using appropriate software the children enjoy learning. The computers are integrated into the activities of the classroom and the children are brought into the Computer Lab for one period each week.

Physical Education Our philosophy within Kindergarten Physical Education is to create an enjoyable learning environment. At this age level we will encourage the students to explore their own space with close teacher interaction. They will develop their fundamental skills as well as learn cooperative play through organizational games.

Grade 1

“The goal of education is to excite in the young a boundless sense of curiosity about life, so that the growing child shall come to comprehend it with an excitement tempered by awe and wonder.

—John Garre

First Graders are insatiably curious, wonderfully adaptive and eager to learn. The quality of mental activity rather than the speed of development is emphasized and the curiosity and imagination of the child is rewarded. Playing well in a group and cooperating by taking turns become second nature. The goal is for the child to have a good sense of self, aware of being a separate person who functions independently of the child’s family. The capacity of the child to use language will grow tremendously this year, and the child will become more aware of current events and motivated enough to start choosing books to read independently. The children will begin to understand the use of math to solve problems in the world around them. The children are encouraged to fulfill these goals with praise for their individual efforts. It is hoped that the First Grader experiences the success they need to help build a strong foundation for future personality growth and development.

Language Arts Reading is a basic life skill, a cornerstone for success in school and in life. The children are taught a systematic means of unlocking new words in a phonics based decoding method, along with comprehension skills. They are given an opportunity to apply their reading skills in a variety of reading situations, using the best of traditional and modern literature as well as content area material. The material chosen contains a high proportion of the words conforming to the phonics being taught. The comprehension strategy involves explaining the steps in a thought process with guidance from the teacher to locate important details. Writing activities as well as opportunities for independent silent reading are integrated into the reading period. Chapter books are read to the children throughout the year.

Library Students begin the process that leads to the independent use of the library. This includes understanding the arrangement of materials, library book terms and concepts. The different types of library materials are introduced to help the students begin to develop their own individual interest areas. Storytelling is an integral part of the library curriculum.

Mathematics The Singapore Math program encourages the students to become critical thinkers and problem solvers. We incorporate a variety of manipulatives to ensure that the students have a solid understanding of the concepts covered. The students experiment, explore, and share their ideas about numbers and their use in everyday life. We concentrate on building problem-solving skills and strategies, counting, comparing, and writing numbers to 100, adding and subtracting 1-digit and 2-digit numbers, classifying and sorting shapes and patterns, measuring length and weight, and using calendars, time, and money.

Social Studies In the First Grade, the children focus on an in-depth study of the community in which we live. We will investigate three different communities: the classroom, the school, and the neighborhood. Through cooperative learning groups and independent work, students will explore various city parks and focus on the importance of these parks to the surrounding community. It is a natural progression from Kindergarten to First Grade for the children to become aware of their role in the community. As a result of their natural curiosity, their knowledge will grow as they become detectives and discover answers to their important questions.

In addition, each month we will explore various holidays focusing on important figures in our world.

During the year, the children will learn how to write and conduct interviews, learn mapping skills, work on hands-on projects and develop research skills.

Science The First Grade begins the year learning about the scientific method and how to state a clear hypothesis. This introduces students to the concept of making thoughtful predictions, conducting experiments, and analyzing results. Hands-on experiments give students a sense of responsibility while teaching them the rules and procedures of the classroom. Later in the year students study animal classifications, focusing on the differences between vertebrates and invertebrates. To underline these distinctions, students conduct behavioral and physical observations of the classroom animals. Describing and illustrating their

observations solidifies their understanding of the characteristics of each class of animal. Lastly, students consider these animals within a larger habitat or in the context of a life cycle.

“The secret of education is respecting the child.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Art As creative development progresses, children begin to acquire a sense of style and design. Focus in the First Grade is upon picture organization, color and figure/field relationships. New techniques are introduced as students continue to work within a variety of mediums: painting, drawing and sculpture. Projects undertaken in First Grade have included papier-mâché animal containers, invented instruments, pop-up faces and symmetrical transfer drawings. Ideas are ever-changing to adapt to the children’s interests and sense of imagery.

Music The First Grade Music Program is a continuation of skills introduced in Kindergarten. Because of their improved small motor control, the children use the Orff instruments frequently as a means of reinforcing and building on the concepts begun in Kindergarten. The concept of ensemble playing begins in First Grade to teach the children how to work together to create a harmonious whole. Further work is done to help the child develop a true singing voice and to sing on pitch. The many activities include creative movement as well as simple dances. The children are now familiar with rhythmic symbols and can distinguish between them. This lays the groundwork for musical staff reading later on. The Music curriculum has been modified this year due to COVID-19. Please see the new Performing Arts Program curriculum in the back of this book.

Computer The Computer Program in First Grade continues to develop skills at the computer. Writing and drawing software is introduced to enrich their experience. The children are brought into the Computer Lab for one period each week. They are now familiar with the keyboard and can work more independently.

Introduction to World Languages In the First Grade, students continue their respective half year study of French and Spanish. Basic greetings, colors, numbers and shapes are taught through various activities in order to further develop pronunciation skills.

Physical Education Our philosophy within First Grade Physical Education is to provide an enjoyable environment. When children in this age group find joy and reward through physical activity, positive approach behaviors are developed that can last a lifetime. We will continue to develop body management. Internal and external directionality will also be explored. Basic skills will continue to be developed along with the reinforcement of team play and group activities.

Grade 2

“The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery.”

—Mark Van Doren

Second Grade is a year of excitement, as the children discover that the skills introduced in Kindergarten and First Grade can be utilized in various ways, bringing intellectual stimulation and enjoyment into their lives. Basic skills are strengthened and refined. In a number of subject areas, skill acquisition is taught not merely as an end in itself, but as a means for mastering real-life situations. As academic skills develop, an emphasis is placed upon skill application.

Language Arts In reading, growth at the appropriate pace is ensured by small groupings and daily group instruction with close teacher contact. The children practice decoding and comprehension skills, then apply them through the reading of novels and non-fiction works from our classroom library. The writing program is comprised of poetry, creative writing, and expository writing. Self-editing of one’s work is stressed so that handwriting, punctuation, spelling and sentence structure skills which are otherwise refined in structured-classroom lessons are applied in the writing process.

Library The students begin to build a solid background of information and data regarding terms and concepts as a prerequisite for the formal teaching of information and retrieval skills. Terms and concepts are reviewed and reinforced through use. The children are introduced to the special areas of literature and become familiar with the arrangement in the library of fiction and non-fiction.

Mathematics Singapore math creates an atmosphere that continues to inspire our children with a love for math. Second Grade Math will focus on building problem-solving skills and strategies. Singapore math lessons engage students through the concepts of concrete, pictorial, and abstract learning. The topics covered in Second Grade include counting, comparing, and writing numbers to 1,000, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, measuring length, mass and volume in metric and customary units, geometry, telling time, and money. In addition, students are able to apply the skills they learn to real world word problems using bar models.

Social Studies In the Second Grade, the children are beginning to gain an understanding of the diversity of human culture. We begin the year with the study of Native Americans. Through storybooks, research, and creating our own Native American Museum, we develop an awareness of their history, culture, and importance in North America.

The second unit is a study of Immigration. We learn about Ellis Island and life in New York City in the early 1900's. The children listen to stories, and participate in a simulated immigration activity to further their understanding of this important period in New York's history.

Our third unit focuses on mapping skills. We learn the cardinal directions, how to use a compass rose, how to read a map key, and map-making skills. We study globes, maps of the country, and maps of New York City. The students also learn about the various uses of different types of maps. They practice developing their sense of direction through playing games, creating and coloring maps, and discussions.

Our final unit is a study of New York City. The rich diversity of cultures within the city makes it an innately multicultural unit. Map skills, the five boroughs and landmark buildings are an integral part of the curriculum. Novels, poems and stories that take place in or relate to New York City are read and explored.

Science The Second Grade curriculum focuses on Life Science and allows many opportunities for observation in the classroom. The year begins with an in-depth look at plants, from the parts of a seed to the stems and leaves. Dissecting a seed and monitoring plant growth in journal entries expand students' knowledge and inquiry skills. To place plants in the context of a larger environment, tropical rainforests are studied next. Students learn the interconnectedness of organisms in a single habitat, in addition to how rainforests are structured, their geographic locations, and the natural resources they provide. A final unit focusing on the prehistoric world allows students to examine the process and conditions needed for fossils to form and model these in the classroom.

Art By Second Grade, children tend to be somewhat self-directed in pursuing their creative goals. It is the aim of the Second Grade program to stimulate an interest in self expression and work to reinforce each child's creative direction. Art projects are designed to create opportunities for the children to follow their own learning or creative styles. Projects are geared to the levels of our students' sophistication. Recent projects have included the making of sculptured mummies,

shadow puppets and mixed media sculptures. Children are also made more aware of the art, which is part of our culture, both past and present.

Music The Grade Two music program is geared to the increased motor ability of 7-8 year olds and the solid musical foundation laid in Kindergarten and Grade One. The students use Orff instruments for improvisation as well as for learning patterns to accompany songs, dances and games. Reading from the musical staff is begun in preparation for learning to play the recorder the following year in Grade Three.

The Music Program has been modified this year due to COVID-19. Please see the attachment in the back of the book about the Performing Arts Program this year.

Computer The children are brought into the Computer Lab for one period each week. They are formally introduced to the computer as a tool for writing and for drawing. They become familiar with the parts of the computer and how it functions. Simple word processing programs are used to develop their writing skills. Our objectives for the Lower School computer curriculum are to help the children gain practical skills, and to motivate the children to use the computer for many purposes.

Introduction to World Languages In the Second Grade, all students continue their introduction to French and Spanish. Each language is taught for approximately half a year, twice a week. After a review of the alphabet, vocabulary related to each letter, greetings, colors, and numbers from zero to ten, additional greetings, the seasons, the weather and the numbers from eleven to thirty are taught. Students will engage in various age appropriate activities, including singing songs, in order to continue developing their listening and speaking skills.

Physical Education Second Graders will continue to develop their basic skills. More group activities will be played at this level, as well as the introduction of divergent and educational movement. They will be introduced to simple rhythms in movement and age appropriate exercises, including tumbling. Exercises in object-handling, balance, body awareness and perceptual-motor coordination will develop perceptual skills. The development of social skills, cooperation and self control are emphasized through group games.

Grade 3

Third Grade sees the students developing into independent, socially aware children. They are ready and eager to display their abilities, as they incorporate their basic skills into more advanced processes. At this grade level, curiosity and skill levels merge, allowing these children to explore time and space. They learn to answer their own questions with newly refined research skills. The Grade Three curriculum matches the students' needs by allowing them to probe, inquire, question and evaluate lessons beyond the confines of the written word, thereby integrating competence with their burgeoning need for independence.

Language Arts Reading and Writing are combined in this program which stresses the integration of skills used in each subject. Literary forms including poetry, short stories and novels will be read in class. Group discussions will emphasize more advanced techniques of interpretation, prediction and context development. The students will be writing, revising and editing their work on an ongoing basis. They will be creating their own poetry, short stories and diaries. Through the activity of prewriting, students will learn how to develop complex sentences out of ideas and paragraphs out of sentences. The final process will yield pieces that the students will feel proud to have completed. Grammar and technical skills will be emphasized. The English component of the curriculum works in tandem with writing, where students utilize their English lessons in their creative work. Perfecting individual cursive styles, and using the dictionary will be included in our study. Our spelling methods combine the auditory, visual and kinesthetic approaches. Through self-corrected pretests, lessons and quizzes, students gain confidence as they discover the correct principles of spelling.

Library Students are introduced to online databases. The Social Studies curriculum is supplemented using specific databases, maps, globes, and print materials. Students continue to explore literature and independent reading.

Mathematics The Singapore Math program in Third Grade teaches the students to think logically about real-world problems. We work in small groups using games, hands-on materials, and group discussions to encourage critical thinking skills and numerical fluency. In order to develop a deep understanding, concepts are introduced through the concrete, pictorial, abstract framework. Topics covered include place value, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, money, time, graphing, measurement, and identifying geometric shapes.

Social Studies In Third Grade the students study the world by traveling virtually through different countries. We begin by reviewing mapping skills and familiarizing the children with the continents and oceans. Throughout our study, we undergo a more in-depth look at several countries and learn about culture, food, entertainment, clothing, language, education and tourism of each country. The children study these countries through class and small group discussions, readings, hands-on activities, role-playing, and individual and group projects. The children will become culturally aware and responsive to the diversity of the world in which they live. We conclude each unit by drawing parallels and differences between each country and the United States of America. Throughout the study, the children will learn valuable research skills. This interdisciplinary curriculum includes activities in library, art and computer.

Science The Third Grade curriculum encourages students to learn through independent exploration and inquiry-based lessons. These interactive and experiential activities allow students to make discoveries and form their own conclusions, which are then reinforced by class discussions and written work. The year opens with an extensive overview of animal adaptations, examining the body parts, body coverings, and behaviors that help animals survive in their environments. Later topics include water and the water cycle, circuits, electricity, forces, and Newton's Three Laws of Motion. As the year progresses, independent class work and group projects are increasingly emphasized, providing students the opportunity to take ownership of the lesson material.

Art Third graders work extensively with different media to refine their skills and to develop a more objective approach to their work. Students continue to work with painting, sculpture and collage, exploring the variations present in each medium. Special projects in printmaking or papermaking may be included. Conventions and the more formal elements of visual composition, such as perspective, are observed and discussed.

Music Recorder is introduced for the first time in Grade Three. Students are now ready for reading music from the staff. By the end of Grade Three, the children will be able to play a pleasing and challenging group of recorder pieces. Recorders are put together with Orff instruments and ensemble playing continues. There will be no Chorus this year due to COVID-19. Please see the attached sheet at the end of this book about the new Performing Arts Program curriculum.

Computer In the Third Grade, the students meet in the Computer Lab for two periods each week. They learn about different computer parts. They begin to use Google Drive accounts to complete school assignments. They learn beginner concepts in programming. Finally, they start using new techniques in typing to become faster and more efficient computer users.

Physical Education The Third Grade Physical Education Program is comprised of a sequential curriculum which develops efficient movement patterns. Organized games, sports lead-up skills, and physical fitness routines are a daily part of this educational regimen. Emphasis is placed on the development of strong, healthy individuals who have a positive attitude toward physical activity.

Grade 4

*“Youth is the
trustee of
posterity.”*

—Benjamin Disraeli

By the time the children reach the Fourth Grade, they are ready to broaden the requirements of academic responsibilities. The children will continue to have guided support by the teacher in a nurturing environment. Greater demands will focus on the achievement of individual academic success. Special attention is given to the student’s social development. The importance of respecting their peers, cooperation, honesty and positive self-esteem are discussed throughout the year to establish the foundation for solid decision-making in the future.

Language Arts The study of literature includes the study of a variety of novels. The program emphasizes group discussion, comprehension, word analysis and vocabulary development. Grammar and technical skills are reinforced through the writing process. Children will be encouraged to proofread their assignments for proper paragraph form and content. Spelling, creative writing and cursive writing are an integral part of the total curriculum.

Library Database and other research skills are reinforced through the integration of technology into the Library program. The students become more familiar with and proficient at using print and digital resources in connection with academic projects. Independent pleasure reading outside the curriculum is also emphasized, as the students are encouraged to explore the Fiction and Non-Fiction library collections.

Mathematics The goal of the Singapore Math program in Fourth Grade is to continue to build and develop a deeper understanding of the concepts taught in previous years. The students will continue to learn new concepts in a strategic, sequential order through a visual and hands-on approach. Through clear and engaging lessons, the children will master new skills and solve multi-step word problems to instill a concrete understanding of the concepts at hand. Topics covered include place value, multiplication, division, graphing, fractions, decimals, and geometry.

Social Studies The Fourth Grade Social Studies program focuses on the five regions of the United States. The program presents the regions through the lens of four social sciences - economics, geography, political science, and history. Through interactive lessons and hands-on activities, the students explore the landforms, natural resources, customs, and culture of each region. Students begin to think like social scientists as they "tour" the regions, identifying the features that make each region distinct and the characteristics that unite them.

Science The Fourth Grade Science program emphasizes independent inquiry and comprehensive critical thinking. Through topics in Earth Science, such as the composition of the Earth, rocks, minerals, tectonic plates, and volcanoes, students begin to further develop the skills they will use in higher grades. A major unit on the forms and sources of energy gives students the opportunity to connect classroom learning to the outside world, particularly when we compare and contrast fossil fuels and alternative energy options. Lastly, in the Fourth Grade students begin their two-part investigation of Environmental Science designed to expose students to the current real world application of this scientific discipline. In this unit, students solidify their knowledge of factors that are important to environmental science, such as biodiversity, conservation, and pollution, through examining case studies and current events. Students practice keeping organized binders, identifying key ideas within scientific text, and completing written assignments using their class notebooks as reference material. Long-term group projects supplement the lessons and allow hands-on exploration of each subject. Oral presentations, homework, and poster reports are also introduced in the Fourth Grade.

Art The Fourth Graders continue their creative expression through collage design, printmaking and small-scale sculpture. Work in painting is also an integral part of the program, where students are continuously developing their visual skills and expanding their imaginations. The development of a clear sense of space, form, color and texture is emphasized.

Music Grade Four continues directly from work begun in the earlier grades. Students are able to deal with more challenges on Orff instruments. Reading from the musical staff is emphasized in Grade Four. The Instrumental Program begins in Grade Four. The students will be introduced to string instruments; the violin, the viola and the cello. The students will select one of these string instruments to learn to play. Daily practice of ten minutes or more is required. Please see the attached sheet, in the back of this book, about the new curriculum for Performing Arts due to COVID-19.

Survey of World Languages In the Fourth Grade, all students are introduced to the French, Japanese and Spanish languages. Greetings, basic conversations and thematic vocabulary focusing on numbers, colors, the days of the week, the months of the year, the seasons and countries will be taught. Students will engage in various activities to practice their speaking, listening and writing skills. In addition, the culture of countries where the aforementioned World Languages are spoken will be discussed.

Computer In the Fourth Grade, the students meet in the Computer Lab for two periods each week. They learn new hardware and software terms. They work on their word processing and power point skills in Google Drive. They learn and practice concepts in coding, and eventually create their own programs using Scratch. Finally, they work on their typing skills to become faster and more efficient computer users.

Physical Education The Fourth Grade Physical Education Program continues to provide students with opportunities for participation in a variety of activities through sequential instruction and movement experiences. Their physical development will be enhanced by a well-monitored fitness program. There will be more emphasis placed on specialized skills and sports activities. All these approaches will be positive to encourage a lifelong appreciation for physical fitness.

Grade 5

The Fifth Grade year is one in which the student is challenged both intellectually and socially. Under close instruction and guidance, the student is encouraged to assume more responsibility and independence. It is a year of transition, preparing the children to assume more mature roles in the school structure as well as affording them a smooth passage from the Lower School to the Middle School. The children begin to understand their place in the world through in-depth discussion and expression of ideas and opinions regarding subject matter and world issues. The material and the class atmosphere both focus on values and morals. With growing self-confidence and assurance, the group is well prepared to assume the expectations of Middle School.

Language Arts The goal of the Fifth Grade English Program is to ensure solid reading and writing skills. Novels are used to refine and polish the fundamentals of reading. Group discussions encourage students to answer comprehension and inferential questions as well as identify literary devices. Writing assignments based on these novels are also completed. The Writing Process is used to help students become independent writers. They are taught correct paragraph structure and learn to expand their sentences through the use of newly learned grammatical concepts. Both creative and expository writing are emphasized.

Library The close correlation of library skills with the classroom curriculum is the primary objective for the students. Research work in Social Studies is emphasized. Students review the library classification system. The BWL databases are used extensively in preparation for Middle School. With the new design of the Lower School Library,

*“It is an
absolute
perfection to
know how to
get the very
most out of
one’s own
individuality.”*

—Michel de Montaigne

students will have better access to the technology we use. We added more laptops and Chromebooks to our library along with an additional overhead screen for teaching purposes. This additional technology will enhance the learning of all our students.

“True success is overcoming the fear of being unsuccessful.”

—Paul Sweeney

Mathematics The Fifth Grade Singapore Math Curriculum presents math concepts in a visual format. Visual models are used to help students transition to solve problems abstractly. This year students will see an emphasis on problem solving, skill consolidation, and a deep understanding in preparation for algebra. In addition, there is a focus on fractions and proportional reasoning as well as problem solving. Other skills covered in Fifth Grade consist of multiplication and division with whole numbers and fractions, area and volume, ratios, decimals, graphing, probability, and angles.

Social Studies New York State, its history and geographical significance, is the focus of the Fifth Grade Social Studies Program. An in-depth study of the city and state in which we live allows the children to develop an understanding of their environment and a sense of pride in their heritage. Special projects, research papers, readings and historical site visitations are essential to the success of this program. Current events and a reinforcement of geography skills will further enhance this course of study.

Science The Fifth Grade Science program allows students to fully explore topics in Environmental, Biological, and Physical Science. A weekly lab period helps to facilitate this deep immersion, as does the increased use of technology and math in lessons, homework, research, and projects. As students prepare for Middle School they are expected to use and develop subject specific language and terms in their oral and written work. Fifth Grade Science begins with the second part of an intensive two-year focus on Environmental Studies. The first Environmental Science Unit builds off of the knowledge base students established in the Fourth Grade allowing for a specific laboratory focus on the three central topics biodiversity, conservation, and pollution. Biological Science units in the Fifth Grade span a focus on biomes and food chains, raptors, and photosynthesis.

The Fifth Grade transitions to learning about Neuroscience. We study how the nervous system sends messages from different parts of our body to our brain, all around our brain, and from our brain out to the muscles in our body. We will conduct many lab experiments that test how we use our brain to sense the world around us, think and feel, solve problems, and store memories. While this unit emphasizes

the human brain, there are many similarities between the sheep brain and the human brain. Students will be able to dissect a sheep brain to familiarize themselves with the three-dimensional structure of the brain and to locate important structures in the brain.

The Fifth Grade will conclude the year by completing a hands-on scientific investigation for the Science Fair. Over a three week period, students will work independently to design, test, analyze and create a presentation that uses scientific methods to solve a problem. Please note that the entire project will be during school hours.

Art The Fifth Grade Art curriculum stresses creativity, intuition and expressiveness. In the art studio, the students learn to explore techniques and are encouraged to develop their own style. Projects include drawing, painting, collage and three-dimensional constructions and mixed media works. Children experiment with various media to discover their tactile, manipulative and creative possibilities.

Music In Grade Five students continue music classes with an emphasis on music appreciation. The Instrumental Program continues in Grade Five. The students will continue to study the string instrument that they selected in Grade Four. Daily practice of ten minutes or more is required. Please see the new Performing Arts curriculum in the back of this book.

Survey of World Languages In the Fifth Grade, all students continue studying the French, Japanese and Spanish languages. Greetings, basic conversation and thematic vocabulary focusing on numbers, colors, the days of the week, the months of the year, the seasons and countries will be reviewed. More advanced conversations as well as additional thematic vocabulary focusing on family members, school supplies, classroom items and clothes will be taught. Students will continue engaging in various activities to practice their speaking, listening and writing skills. In addition, cultural exposure of various countries will be enhanced.

Computer In the Fifth Grade, the students meet in the Computer Lab for two periods each week. They learn new hardware and software terms. They work on their word processing and power point skills in Google Drive. They use spreadsheets to analyze data. They learn and practice concepts in coding, and eventually create their own programs using Scratch. Finally, they work on their typing skills to become faster and more efficient computer users.

Physical Education At this age level they continue to develop their specialized skills through various sports activities all year long. They will participate in more lead up games enabling them to partake in a competitive sports program of their choice. Their physical fitness will continually be monitored by their teachers in hopes of encouraging more positive and healthy behavior.

The Peer Relations Program

The Peer Relations Program is a program for elementary school children. It is taught on a weekly basis and endeavors to promote social and emotional growth in the children.

The primary focus of the program is in:

- 1) Equipping the students to develop social skills both within the school community and outside;
- 2) Building increased self-awareness and positive self-esteem; and
- 3) Developing decision making skills.

The curriculum is divided into a primary and intermediate level. Each level includes a lesson in self-awareness, relationships and decision making. Although the instructions are very specific for each lesson, the teacher is encouraged to be flexible and to adapt the contents to meet the needs of the particular students in the group. The teacher promotes an atmosphere of trust, support and honesty by listening, accepting and respecting what each student has to say.

The Lower School Peer Relations Program is committed to developing in our children certain social skills such as: assertiveness; the ability to say “no”; decision-making and problem-solving skills; the ability to comfortably express one’s opinion; the ability to constructively deal with negative emotions; and the wise selection of friends.

Human Development Curriculum

The goal of the Human Development Curriculum in The Birch Wathen Lenox School's Fifth Grade is to increase self-understanding, self-esteem and enhance social and communication skills. It is our belief that a program designed to achieve these goals will prepare the students to cope with peer pressures, academic pursuits and develop themselves unencumbered, to whatever extent possible, by many of the social pressures of our times.

The program consists of:

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION around appropriate health concerns, bodily changes and relevant current topics of concern. The use of audio visual materials and appropriate readings are routine features of this curriculum.

SMALL GROUPS of students that meet together with our School Psychologist in order to address areas of particular concern. Sometimes these groups are ongoing, other times they may meet for a single session. Some of the topics have included: feelings of being left out and feeling inadequate, and coping with illness and loss.

INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS with students and their families. When a student is experiencing difficulties that persist and hinder that child's ability to function satisfactorily in school, it is frequently very productive to meet with both parents, the student and our Lower School Director and School Psychologist.

All meetings and discussions with parents will be virtual this year due to COVID-19.

Poetry

Kindergarten through Grade 5

Lower School students study poetic form, publish work as a class, and discuss what makes poetry exciting. Each student has the opportunity to show a poem to the community via BWL's Poetry Calendar and works to refine his or her craft through ample time spent writing in class.

In K-2nd Grades, students work on a class song using skills learned while writing poetry with Assistant Headmaster Ryan Clinesmith. These songs are presented at the Global Poetry Festival and at assemblies and concerts throughout the year. The goal in these grades is to teach students that poetry can be written through dictation. The Craft of Poetry is an oral tradition as well as a written one.

In the 3rd-5th Grades students study one poetic form or concept each week for a month. Their work culminates in a class publication and publishing party. Completed work emphasizes interdisciplinary connection, a practice of writing and editing, with a focus on collaboration.

BWL's Lower School poetry curriculum is meant to advance critical thinking skills by guiding student through a process of self-expression within constraint and form.

The Poetry Curriculum will be modified this year due to COVID-19.

Performing Arts Program

Kindergarten through Grade 5

While this year may look a bit different than years past, we are really excited about some of the Performing Arts opportunities and programs for our Lower School students.

Students will return to the in-person weekly and/or biweekly general music and instrumental classes that they have always loved. Regrettably, we will not be able to sing or use wind instruments in the fall, but that will not hinder your child's opportunity to perform. In conjunction with the music teachers, each class will showcase what they've learned at the end of the semester in a live performance incorporating instruments, storytelling, and dance. Additionally, each class will participate in theater workshops throughout the year that will explore improvisation, character creation, monologue and scene work, and choreography. We will be sharing the original ideas developed in these classes at an assembly later in the year.



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