



LOWER SCHOOL

2021/22

CURRICULUM GUIDE

GRADES PK-4



Lower School CURRICULUM GUIDE

Academic Program Overview

The Lower School at Sidwell Friends is a joyful, learning-filled experience for children. The teachers are skilled at teaching the whole child, fostering not only their academic skills, but their physical development, social-emotional learning, and spiritual lives. The Lower School's end goal is for children to be happy, grounded, independent young people with the ideas, curiosity, and skills to let their lives speak—both at School and in the broader community.

Spiritual and Social-Emotional Learning

As a Quaker School, Sidwell Friends is committed to the social, emotional, and spiritual development and well-being of children. The School weaves these lessons into every aspect of the curriculum. The goal is to help children develop into kind, ethical, compassionate people. Based on the idea that there is “that of God in everyone,” children are taught to joyfully embrace differences while seeking to understand the common bonds that unite us. Throughout the curriculum, Sidwell Friends teaches the Quaker testimonies of peace, kindness, empathy, stewardship, equality, community, simplicity, and integrity, and challenges students to live these values in their everyday lives. A Quaker education inspires students to let their lives speak and to embrace the shared responsibility of working toward a more just, equitable, and sustainable world. Quakerism is open to families of all faiths, and the School's Quaker education clerks work hard to incorporate opportunities for interfaith celebrations and dialogue.

Equity, Justice and Community

Equity work is a central tenet of Sidwell Friends, and the School is committed to creating a just and equitable learning environment for all students. At the core, we seek to ensure that every child feels known, loved, and affirmed for who they are as people and as learners. As learners, our students discover that their voice matters and that they are equal partners in the learning process. They set goals, self-reflect, see feedback as essential to growth, and feel a sense of agency and ownership over their learning.

Our curriculum is designed with the idea of windows and mirrors in mind: We want students to both see themselves reflected in our curriculum and for them to find joy, meaning, and connection in learning deeply about the experiences of others. In addition, we are committed to embedding anti-racist and anti-bias practices in our

program, helping students to both develop a strong voice and set of skills to combat racism, prejudice, and bias in their everyday lives and to learn to be effective advocates and agents of change. These skills grow and develop over time in the Lower School, culminating in our 4th Grade Ethical Leadership Projects. The fall and spring projects are an opportunity for students to apply the spiritual, academic, and social-emotional learning they have gained during their elementary years to inquire into an authentic, real world question of personal importance.

Meeting for Worship

Meeting for Worship is an important part of the Lower School. Each week, the School gathers in various configurations for Meeting for Worship. Meetings are about 20 minutes long in the Lower School, and each meeting begins with a query developed by one of the Lower School classes. Queries, which are typically tied to one or more of the Quaker testimonies, are a way to center our thinking and to reflect on concerns relevant to our lives. Following the reading of the query, children have time for silent worship. Silent worship builds community and gives children a chance to pause, breathe, and reflect. During this time, we listen to our inner teacher: that still, small voice inside each of us. During silent worship, we listen for messages that might come to us, and children learn to discriminate between those messages that are for personal self-reflection and those that they may choose to share aloud in order to provide the full community an opportunity for further reflection and growth. Meetings end with a heart-to-hand greeting and there is time at the end of the Meeting for Worship for joy and fellowship in being together.

Throughout PK–4th grades, teachers explicitly teach students the history of Quakerism and share stories that bring to life Quaker faith and practices. Students learn the Quaker process as a way of making decisions; they learn to write queries and practice ways to listen in expectant silence.

Gathering Time

In classrooms, the academic day typically begins with Morning Gathering (sometimes called “Morning Meeting”) and ends with Closing Gathering. Morning Gathering is a powerful tool for building community and practicing social and academic skills. During Morning Gathering, students typically begin with a brief moment of silence that allows each child to transition to the space and center themselves, followed by a greeting in which each child is welcomed

and affirmed. Students also have the opportunity to share important events in their lives, to practice listening and speaking skills, and to learn about the academic work of the day. Many Gatherings also involve elements of fun and team building that allow children to practice academic and social skills and, most importantly, to start their day with joy and camaraderie. Many classrooms also end the day with a Closing Gathering. This meeting offers students an important opportunity to re-center themselves, reflect on the work of the day, share gratitude, and reconnect as a community of learners.

Social-Emotional Curriculum

Lower School teachers are skilled at integrating social-emotional learning throughout the day, whether it's fostering curiosity and perseverance in a math class, modeling collaboration skills in reading partnerships, teaching conflict resolution at recess, or encouraging reflection during Closing Gathering. In addition, the School's learning specialist and its counselor have regular meetings with each classroom to explicitly teach additional tools and strategies. The curriculum includes skills for learning (particularly executive functioning skills), emotion management, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and anti-bias and empathy development. In addition, 4th graders are part of a "Baby Watch" program designed to teach children about human development and to deepen their empathy skills.

Service Learning

The Lower School has a vibrant service learning program, and service to others is an integral part of the classroom experience. The goals of the service learning program are to develop a sense of care, responsibility, and civic duty in students, as well as to allow students the opportunity to experience the joy and personal fulfillment in serving others. The service learning program was created with the following qualities in mind:

Integrative: Service learning experiences are an integrated part of the academic experience, rather than a stand-alone experience for students.

Reflective: The School provides students with structured opportunities to reflect deeply on their experiences in order to examine their beliefs and assumptions and to create meaning in their own lives.

Contextualized: In their service work, students have opportunities to work alongside community members and experienced professionals in order to learn about the complex challenges (and opportunities) in the field.

Strength-Based: The service learning program draws on existing community strengths, resources, and leadership in order to effect change.

Reciprocal: The service learning program is built on the idea of reciprocity. In every relationship, we seek to both give and receive.

Lifelong: The goal is to make service learning a part of every child's life both inside and outside of School. Sidwell Friends has long-standing partnerships with three local organizations—A Wider Circle, Bethesda Cares, and Martha's Table—which the Lower School supports with division-wide projects. Students and families support these efforts through volunteering and donation drives. Twice a week, kindergarten students work with family volunteers to pack up the School's unserved cafeteria food for our friends at Bethesda Cares. And each week, two classes chop veggies to deliver to Martha's Table for their kitchen. In addition, each grade level supports other service-learning initiatives that are embedded within their curriculum.

To best serve our children, the Sidwell Friends Lower School program:

- honors the Light in every child.
- embraces the whole child and attends to their social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual development.
- teaches for goodness, justice, and having a positive impact on the larger world.
- nurtures the "teacher within" each child.
- strives for deep personal understanding and meaning—and encourages that reflection to extend beyond the classroom.
- values learning as a process of continuing revelation and empowers student ownership of learning.
- cultivates a disposition to learning that includes risk-taking, perseverance, curiosity, self-knowledge, reflection, and joy.
- educates for critical thinking and logic as well as for imagination, playfulness, and intuition.
- holds high academic expectations for all students while respecting the pace of each child's development.
- builds a community of learners, including families, teachers, staff, and children.
- teaches children to challenge bias and prejudice, embrace diversity, and view issues from multiple perspectives.

PK PROGRAM

The PK program is a play-based program, and the Lower School encourages its youngest learners to explore their worlds with greater independence, observe what they see, ask big questions, and investigate their environment. The program builds self-knowledge, self-regulation, empathy, problem-solving skills, and a joyful approach to learning. The PK curriculum is flexible, with projects emerging from the needs and interests of each particular cohort of learners, and highly structured around well-defined routines and expectations.

Learning experiences include dramatic play, painting, drawing, and building. Children have opportunities each day to use tools that strengthen their fine and gross motor skills, including scissors, paintbrushes, shovels, etc. During indoor exploration time, the focus is on the process, rather than the product, and the teachers act as coaches and facilitators, helping each child learn and grow. Outdoor learning and play are vibrant parts of the PK program. The classroom opens into an outdoor space and students have ready access to play equipment, building materials, balls, jump ropes, etc.

Social-emotional learning is a key part of the PK program, and the Lower School weaves it into each part of the day. Children learn to center themselves and to balance their individual needs with being part of a group. Throughout the year, they learn to:

- respect and appreciate differences.
- engage in peaceful conflict resolution.
- respond flexibly to transition and change.
- work and play independently and with peers.
- play fairly and incorporate the ideas and suggestions of others.
- share ideas.
- listen attentively to others.
- identify and manage feelings.

Academic subjects are also integrated throughout each aspect of the day.



Literacy in PK

The PK classroom is a literacy-rich environment in which children are encouraged to explore books and writing throughout their day. Read-alouds, access to interesting texts, and an exploration of environmental print offer children opportunities to propel their emergent reading and writing skills, and to foster a love and curiosity of books. Children are in very different places in terms of their developmental journey, and teachers differentiate to meet the needs of each child. Through informal and teacher-directed literacy activities, students receive a strong foundation in listening, reading, and writing skills; sharing their ideas with others; and thinking deeply about books. Below are some typical skills and concepts that students will develop in the PK classroom:

- communicating ideas clearly and concisely
- telling stories with a clear beginning, middle, and end
- identifying and generating rhymes and alliteration
- clapping and counting syllables
- recognizing and naming uppercase letters
- demonstrating letter-sound correspondence for most letters
- writing their name and recognizing classmates' names
- understanding concepts of print (how books work, understanding that print conveys a message, directionality, etc.)
- engaging in different kinds of emergent writing: labeling, letters, stories, etc.
- developing an understanding of character, setting, and plot
- exploring fiction and nonfiction.

In addition, PK uses the Sounds in Motion program to develop and support phonological processing, including listening skills, phonological working memory, and phonological awareness. Sounds in Motion also supports articulation and builds vocabulary

Math in PK

The Lower School weaves math throughout the PK curriculum, and children explore concepts such as numbers, equivalence, symmetry, similarity/difference, and measurement. Through play and guided learning, they grapple with real problems, such as building tall block buildings, designing patterns and sorting, counting, and comparing materials. Teachers watch students play and “collect” what the children are thinking about so they can plan activities that challenge or extend that thinking. Children are invited to wonder, explore, and use math in authentic ways throughout their day. Below are



some typical skills and concepts students will develop in the PK classroom:

- count with understanding to 20
- recognize and write numerals 0 to 10
- develop a sense of numbers through 10
- become familiar with symmetry
- identify two-dimensional shapes
- sort by multiple attributes
- create and extend simple patterns
- use simple addition and subtraction in classroom life
- use manipulatives to solve problems
- share mathematical thinking with others
- participate in data collection, representation, and interpretation
- engage in measurement activities.

Social Studies in PK

PK students start the year with a unit called “All About Me.” They learn to talk about differences, share about their families, and value the diversity within the classroom. They then branch out to learn about Sidwell Friends and the people and natural world that make up the Bethesda campus. The second focus is on being members of the global community. PK students learn about communities around the world and about the vast, great big world that is waiting for them to explore. The third focus is the Quaker curriculum. Children learn about testimonies, experience Meeting for Worship, and learn the stories and practices that bind the community together. And most importantly, the youngest learners think about how they can let their lives speak and model the values of kindness, peace, friendship, stewardship, and care throughout their daily lives.



K-4 Program **LANGUAGE ARTS**

The goal of the Lower School language arts program is to help students become engaged, thoughtful, imaginative, and critical readers, writers, speakers, and listeners. The curriculum comprises reading, writing, handwriting, spelling, vocabulary, listening, and presentation skills. Children need the underlying building blocks of language (phonics, grammar, spelling, and mechanics) to read and write with fluency. They also need lots of opportunities to apply these skills and strategies in authentic literacy tasks that are meaningful, engaging, and push them to think and produce at high levels. In both reading and writing, teachers model the skills and strategies that skilled readers and writers use. The program is highly differentiated, with students working in small groups, in partnerships, and in one-on-ones with teachers.

Oral Language

Listening and speaking are important components of the language arts program. Strong reading comprehension *starts* with strong oral language comprehension. When reading, students use their mental storehouse of sounds and vocabulary to match what they see in print to what they know about the English language. Through sharing in Morning Gathering, classroom presentations, writing shares, and class plays, students develop awareness of sounds and spoken language, and add to their mental lexicon. They also learn to express their ideas confidently, concisely, and clearly. Students are also taught to be active listeners who listen expectantly to their classmates, ask thoughtful questions, and offer insightful points to move toward greater understanding.

Reading

The Lower School uses a workshop approach to teaching reading, and the curriculum is designed to nurture and challenge the range of readers in each year. Students read a wide variety of authors and genres with the goals of nurturing a joyful attitude toward learning and developing a broader understanding of the world. Through direct instruction, small group work, and individual conferences, students become skilled, fluent, engaged readers who make connections, search for big ideas, and explore new perspectives. The reading program is differentiated, and children read books that are “just right” for the skills and strategies they are learning. In each classroom, teachers help build a community of readers who are eager to talk about, share, and recommend books to one another. Students discuss books in partnerships, book clubs, and as a class, and they showcase what they learn in both spoken conversations and through written responses to their reading.

Reading: Kindergarten

In kindergarten, children begin to form their identities as readers. Using the workshop approach, the kindergarten teachers foster a love of reading among the School’s youngest learners. Children develop concepts of print, phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and the knowledge of how stories work to support their emerging reading skills. As they move through the year, students learn decoding strategies, use picture clues, work on fluency, and communicate meaning. Throughout the year, they read from a variety of books: fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. As the year progresses, they work toward using these strategies with greater independence to read with accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. As they get into more complex texts, kindergartners pay attention to characters, setting, and plot, as well as becoming experts in the nonfiction texts they read.

Reading: 1st Grade

For young readers, 1st grade is a year of big growth, and students’ reading skills take off as the year progresses. Through small group work, individual reading conferences, and partner work, students learn to build good reading habits. They practice using a variety of strategies to effectively decode, read with fluency, and attend to meaning. Additionally, children are introduced to comprehension strategies, build word-solving strategies, add to their growing vocabulary, and explore author’s craft. In nonfiction reading, students explore the elements of nonfiction texts while learning about the world. In fiction reading, the spotlight is on story elements and building skills that are foundational to comprehension, including empathy, perspective-taking, envisioning, prediction, character study, and interpretation.

K-4 Program

LANGUAGE ARTS



Reading: 2nd Grade

In 2nd grade, children move from focusing on decoding to focusing on fluency and reading for meaning. The year begins with students taking increasing ownership over their reading lives and pulling together all their skills and strategies to figure out hard words, understand the author's craft, and build big ideas about the books they are reading. In fiction, folktale, and poetry reading, 2nd grade readers work in partnerships and book clubs to learn from one another and push their thinking. They study the author's craft as a way of understanding how authors use word choice, figurative language, punctuation, and patterns to create mood and evoke feelings. In nonfiction work, students become experts on new topics while working on vocabulary development and comparing and contrasting information across texts.

Reading: 3rd Grade

The 3rd grade marks an important transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Students ramp up their reading skills by working on acquiring new vocabulary, making inferences, envisioning, and predicting. They read a variety of genres, including biography, nonfiction, realistic fiction, fantasy, mystery, and poetry. In nonfiction texts, students learn how to ascertain main ideas, recognize text structures,

compare texts, and think critically about perspective and bias in the books they read. During research projects, students work in groups to gather information, synthesize across texts, organize information, and share new lessons with classmates. In fiction reading, 3rd graders sharpen their inferencing skills by closely observing characters and making predictions based on those characters' personalities.

Reading: 4th Grade

In 4th grade, students are ready to dive into complex texts. In fiction reading, 4th graders study the complexity of characters and themes and delve into books that explore a range of social- and environmental-justice issues. Teachers select books that enable students to build a global perspective and to connect to the concepts and content they are learning in other disciplines. In 4th grade, students set personal reading goals, compare and contrast texts, and build skills that transfer to their independent reading lives. They also explore historical fiction, learn to read analytically, synthesize complicated narratives, search for big ideas, and discover the relationship between time and place. In nonfiction reading, students work in research groups to practice synthesis of information, close reading of texts, and evaluation of bias and perspective in the authors they read.

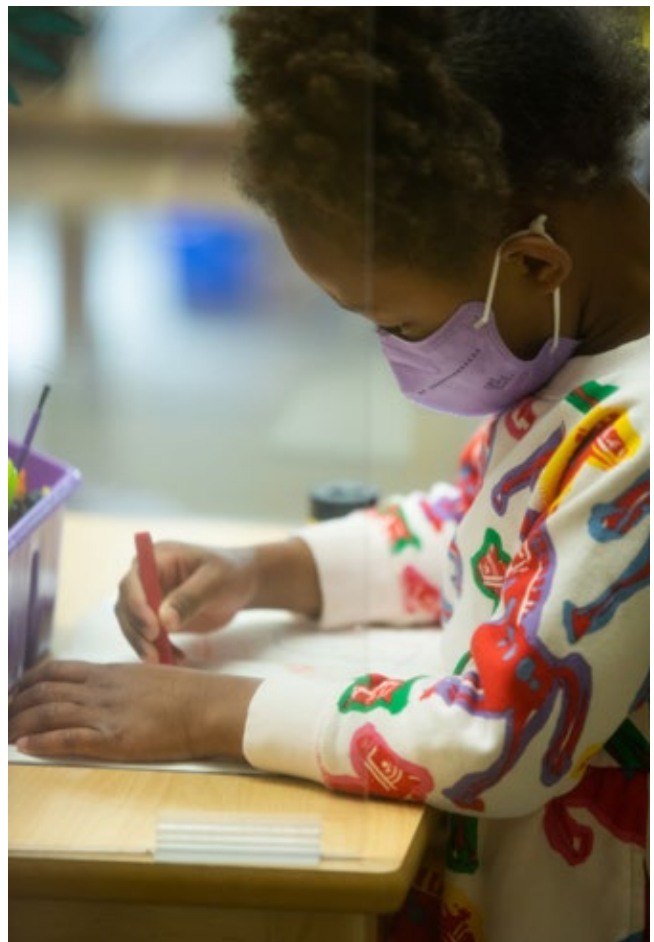
Writing

The Lower School uses a workshop approach to teach writing. In writing, students learn to find their own unique voice as authors as they explore a range of different kinds of writing: opinion and argument writing, informational writing, poetry, and narrative. Through direct instruction, one-on-one conferring, and small group work, they learn to express their ideas, write with fluency and organization, and communicate effectively with different audiences. Throughout their time in the Lower School, students explore a variety of genres (folktales, poetry, small-moment writing, research, persuasive essays, etc.), build their craft as writers, and tackle precision in writing mechanics (spelling, punctuation, and grammar). Students learn the writing process and become independent at generating ideas, drafting pieces, revising work based on teacher and peer feedback, and editing pieces for publication.

In addition to writing workshops, students have explicit instruction in phonics and word work as they learn to break the “code” of the English language. K-4th grade classrooms use the Words Their Way analytic phonics program to develop understanding of orthography (spelling) and morphology (meaning). This work is differentiated to meet the range of learners in the classroom.

Writing: Kindergarten

In kindergarten, children begin to explore writing. At the beginning of the year, writing composition instruction is more informal and integrated throughout the day. Children write notes to one another, label the classroom, write messages in their dramatic play, and leave detailed notes in the block center. Emergent writing at this age includes squiggles, shapes, and some letters or words, depending on the child. As the year progresses, children learn to communicate ideas and stories through drawings and labels. As they begin to associate letters and letter sounds, they are encouraged to attempt spelling words independently, using inventive spelling. As the year progresses, they work on narrative writing, choosing small moments from their lives to stretch out and share with classmates. The focus is on making the stories “readable” (through sounds and pictures). Students practice letter formation, spacing, and directionality in their writing. Teachers use Handwriting Without Tears, Foundations, and other programs to introduce children to proper letter formation and to reinforce letter knowledge. Students also have a chance to write how-to books as part of their study of informational writing, which is an opportunity for them to share step-by-step instructions for something they are particularly skilled at, whether it’s baking, drawing, or shooting a basketball. Throughout the year, students will dive into other genres as well, including letter writing and poetry.



K-4 Program

LANGUAGE ARTS



Writing: 1st Grade

The 1st grade is a big year for writers, as many have begun to master the basics of the phonetic code and are ready to apply these newfound skills to their own writing. The School introduces its 1st grade writers to the steps of the writing process: drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. They practice spacing words, beginning sentences with a capital letter, and ending with appropriate punctuation. Teachers use Handwriting Without Tears to help children develop proper print letter formation, and students transition to writing lowercase letters. Students begin the year with a focus on “small-moment” writing—turning everyday events from life into focused, structured stories, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. As they become more proficient, children learn to bring their writing to life by adding details, dialogue, and thoughts and feelings to their stories. In an integrated social studies/literacy unit, 1st graders enter the world of informational writing by researching community helpers. They learn the structure of nonfiction texts (labels, domain-specific vocabulary, charts, pictures, etc.) and use these in their own writing to create engaging teaching texts. The year ends with a dive into opinion writing, where children hone the art of argumentation. They express their ideas and learn to bolster their arguments in convincing ways.

Writing: 2nd Grade

In 2nd grade, students are ready for a challenge in writing. Across genres, children study mentor authors and learn to understand and apply the techniques that those authors use to engage readers. Across the board, 2nd graders also work to improve their sentence fluency and to organize their writing clearly in different genres. They explore narrative writing through both personal narratives and folktales. Students pay special attention to revising work, incorporating the craft techniques they’ve studied, and bringing writing to life with dialogue, thoughts, and feelings. Students learn to create multidimensional characters and to organize their writing in order to share a clear message. In nonfiction work, students delve into informational writing—researching various organisms—and use all they’ve learned about the structure and craft of nonfiction texts to create engaging educational texts for their classmates. Students also study persuasive writing, where they further hone their argumentation skills by using details and evidence to support their ideas. Connecting to the reading work, students write book reviews to encourage classmates to read some of their favorite 2nd grade finds. The year ends with a study of poetry in which children explore and savor the power of language. Students experiment with rhythm, cadence, rhyme, visualization, and figurative language to make clear and powerful poetry.



Writing: 3rd Grade

The 3rd grade represents a marked jump in terms of the quantity and complexity of students' writing. During the year, students revisit personal narrative writing. They mine their lives for stories, looking for important moments and experiences that they want to share with others. They extend work done in prior years and focus on writing for meaning, considering the audience, and revising work based on peer and teacher feedback. Another focus in 3rd grade is persuasive writing. This unit combines research and opinion writing, and 3rd graders use their newfound abilities to gather and organize information to persuade people about topics of importance to them. They also have an opportunity to delve into the world of poetry, paying special attention to the range of poetic devices and forms. In this unit, the focus is on the power of word choice, imagery, and ideas. Polished writing mechanics are a focus throughout the year in 3rd grade, as expectations for proper punctuation, sentence structure, capitalization, and spelling increase. In both narrative and informational writing, students learn how to organize their writing by using paragraphs. Cursive is introduced in 3rd grade, and students may also begin practicing keyboarding skills.

Writing: 4th Grade

In 4th grade, students are on the cusp of writing more academic texts, and the 4th grade curriculum familiarizes students with the genres they will encounter throughout the rest of their schooling: essays and research reports. The goal is proficiency, as 4th graders get ready to head to the Middle School, and students write with greater volume and frequency. In narrative writing, students have an opportunity to explore personal narratives. Students learn to write with depth about meaningful moments in their lives and find important lessons to share. Also, 4th graders have a chance to do a deeper dive into poetry, learning about new genres like spoken-word poetry. In nonfiction writing, students tackle research projects that connect with their social-studies work. They collect evidence, synthesize information across texts, evaluate texts for bias and perspective, and use details to bring new topics and time periods to life. In persuasive writing, students learn the components of essay writing, with a focus on organization and form. They gather evidence to express and support opinions on topics they know well. Students are expected to write with conventional spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing. Cursive writing and keyboarding practices are also ongoing in 4th grade.

K-4 Program

MATHEMATICS

Sidwell Friends' math program is designed to build fluent mathematicians, skilled problem solvers, and creative thinkers. The goal of the program is to help students construct their own mathematical knowledge. In the Lower School, students learn not only how to use algorithms, but how to think mathematically and tackle authentic, real-world math problems. The math classrooms encourage risk-taking, sense-making, curiosity, and wonder. Teachers and students alike explicitly cultivate growth mind-sets. Teachers introduce new concepts in ways that allow children to move from the concrete to the pictorial to the abstract. In addition to building skills and fluency, the program focuses on developing mathematical habits of mind: perseverance, precision, reasoning, and logic. Teachers use ongoing assessments to differentiate and drive instruction.

Mathematics: Kindergarten

In kindergarten, teachers create an atmosphere of wonder and exploration around math and then weave it throughout the day, beginning with the Morning Gathering. Children practice important counting and place-value skills by looking at attendance, studying the calendar, tracking the weather, and analyzing data from the question of the day. Skills emphasized in kindergarten include learning to write and recognize numerals, developing a sense of 10, and learning to count and sequence amounts. Through whole-class activities, stations, and small group work, teachers guide and facilitate learning. There are ongoing opportunities for the free exploration of materials—including blocks, Cuisenaire rods, coins, shells, and other collections—which in turn naturally encourage children to ask questions and cultivate mathematical thinking.

Mathematics: 1st Grade

The 1st grade program develops a solid foundation for all budding mathematicians. The goal in 1st grade is for students to develop a deep understanding of numbers. Developing “number sense” involves exploring what numbers mean and their relationship to one another. Students learn to be fluid and flexible in their understanding of how numbers work. In 1st grade, students focus on learning numbers one through 100, counting by various patterns, and understanding place value through the hundreds. They become skilled at composing and decomposing numbers and work toward fluency in beginning addition and subtraction facts to 10. Also, students explore geometry, patterns, coins, and measurement. Teachers use games, hands-on materials, and lots of time for play and exploration to engage children and to foster a love of and confidence with mathematics.





Mathematics: 2nd Grade

The 2nd grade program continues to develop number sense with a focus on mastering the basic skills of addition and subtraction, as well as building a deep conceptual understanding of place value. In 2nd grade, students develop fluency in their addition and subtraction facts to 20 and develop strategies for multi-digit addition and subtraction. In 2nd grade, students explore math in real-life situations and build a tool kit of strategies for solving mathematical problems. In addition, 2nd graders explore numbers through 1,000, learn to tell time, dive into geometry, manipulate bills and coins, grapple with measurement, and collect and display data. A big focus in 2nd grade is building a mathematical mindset by persevering through difficult problems and finding multiple pathways to solve problems. Teachers use games, exploration, and small group work to meet each child's needs and to help them grow into confident, competent mathematicians.

Mathematics: 3rd Grade

The 3rd grade is another important year in math, as students continue to build conceptual and computational foundations for all four operations: addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Throughout the year, they explore the concepts behind these operations, learn strategies to help them increase fluency, and work toward automaticity. In addition, the curriculum focuses on

problem solving, and teachers challenge students to solve real-world, multistep problems using a variety of different strategies. The 3rd grade curriculum also delves into fractions and geometry, and it exposes students to basic algebraic properties.

Mathematics: 4th Grade

The 4th grade math program consolidates students' conceptual and computational foundations while further strengthening problem-solving skills and positive identities as mathematicians. Throughout the year, students have the opportunity to delve into project-based learning that requires them to integrate skills, content, and comprehension across units and then apply them in real-life settings. Teachers weave algebraic thinking into each topic strand. Students have ample opportunities to engage in mathematical discourse. They work on expanding their math vocabulary and explaining their ideas clearly and concisely, using words, models, and diagrams. Students solidify a mastery of all four operations with multi-digit numbers. The program continues to develop students' understanding of place value, adds to students' repertoire of problem-solving strategies, introduces the addition and subtraction of fractions and decimals, and reinforces a solid understanding of 2D and 3D geometry. Measurement with both metric and standard units is applied to perimeter and area. Data analysis includes determining the mean, mode, and median.

K-4 Program

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social studies in the Lower School focuses on developing a deep appreciation for and understanding of the interconnectedness of the world. Throughout the Lower School experience, students reflect on their own lives and the lives of others in their communities and in the world at large, examining both the diversity of the world and the common threads that run through different time periods and cultures. The aim is to create engaged citizens with the knowledge and skills to make a positive impact on the world both locally and globally. Students begin with a study of self and their own community, gradually branching out in larger circles to include the greater global community. The social studies program is project-based and challenges students to look at issues—historical and contemporary—from various viewpoints and perspectives. The Lower School weaves service learning throughout the social studies program, and environmental stewardship serves as a thematic through line from kindergarten through 4th grade.

Social Studies: Kindergarten

The kindergarten social studies program focuses on three core concepts: identity and culture; community; and peace. Throughout the year, families participate in the yearlong Roots program, in which they share their unique family cultural stories. Through these personal experiences, kindergartners learn about diverse cultures and family structures. They develop pride, confidence, and healthy self-esteem in their identity, and they learn to talk about difference with respect and curiosity. Teachers also weave beginning map skills throughout the presentations. The kindergarten program also focuses on building community within the classroom and within the Lower School. Concepts like peace, teamwork, responsibility, and gratitude are integrated throughout. In addition, kindergartners focus on identifying and understanding feelings, using their words and actions to show care and concern, regulating strong emotions, and effectively solving problems.



work together to meet their basic needs. Embedded throughout the year are service-learning opportunities as students explore how they can be contributing members of the larger community. Students also practice research and geography skills.

Social Studies: 1st Grade

Through field trips, projects, research, and discussions, 1st grade children explore the theme of community. They begin the year by learning about one another, building a strong classroom community, and learning how to be good stewards of the environment. The 1st graders then broaden their lenses to analyze the School, their neighborhood, and the city, studying how people

Social Studies: 2nd Grade

In 2nd grade, students immerse themselves in a study of time, place, and culture. The 2nd graders begin the year by studying the concept of perspective and how history can be told differently depending on the vantage point. They then immerse themselves in a yearlong study of the Chesapeake Bay region, looking at both the ecosystem itself and the peoples who have lived in this area. Students explore the diversity of cultures



that developed along the Eastern Shore and analyze the connection between geography and culture. As they study the interdependence and deep respect the Native Americans have for the environment, 2nd graders are challenged to think about how their community uses resources and how they can become better stewards of the environment. Environmental service work is a large part of the 2nd grade curriculum, and students engage in this work on and off campus. Research and geography skills are embedded throughout the year. The 2nd graders also have ample opportunity to explore interdisciplinary passion projects that allow them to immerse themselves in areas of interest and to share their excitement and what they learned with classmates.

Social Studies: 3rd Grade

The School's 3rd graders become historians and take a look at how and why it is important to study the past. The year begins with an exploration of elders in the community, and students learn how to ask questions, consider perspectives, and learn about other time periods. Students go out into the field to learn about historians' work: They participate in an archeological dig, analyze primary and secondary sources, and learn to curate their own exhibits. The year ends with a study of the people and places that make up the United States of America, which culminates in individual research projects on the 50 states. A study of Quakerism runs throughout the year, and the 3rd graders explore the history, faith, and beliefs of Quakers. As part of this, they read and analyze Robert Lawrence Smith's *A Quaker Book of Wisdom*, looking for inspiration and connection to their own lives.

Social Studies: 4th Grade

In 4th grade, students flex their ethical leadership skills through the Honorable Ann Winkelman Brown

Ethical Leadership Experience. The Ethical Leadership Experience creates an immersive, project-based laboratory in which students build the content knowledge and skills they need to tackle issues of equity and justice, specifically as it relates to climate and racial justice. First, students study the historical relationship between land and people, with a focus on ancient China. The lessons focus on three through lines: perspective, balance, and innovation. The year begins with a look at the vast geography of China and its impact on culture. Students grapple with questions like "Why is 'where' important?" and "How does the land affect the people?" Students study the importance of water and look at issues of sustainability then and now, both in China and in the local Chesapeake Bay watershed. Students then move into a study of innovation, looking at everything from arts and scientific advancements to various belief systems. Finally, the 4th graders study power and government in ancient China during the Han Dynasty. Throughout the year, students are immersed in opportunities to explore Chinese culture locally and to practice their emerging Chinese language skills in a weekly language class. A second strand of 4th grade social studies focuses on contemporary issues of equity and justice. Through cause/effect analyses, perspective-taking, and historical thinking moves, students learn to analyze issues, identify root causes, and brainstorm solutions. In addition, students work with community partners, such as A Wider Circle, to contextualize learning and to take immediate action. An end-of-year field trip to Echo Hill Camp consolidates the lessons across both strands and positions students to undertake the final element of the Honorable Ann Winkelman Brown Ethical Leadership Experience: turning lessons into action by designing and implementing their own project that addresses an issue of equity and justice.

K-4 Program SPECIALS

Science

The Lower School science program taps into children's innate curiosity and wonder and then focuses students on building a connectedness to and an appreciation of the natural world. Teachers ground students in basic scientific knowledge while the children gain confidence in their abilities to observe, ask questions, design experiments, and seek deeper understanding. Lower School science studies present concepts and skills in a manner that is exciting, relevant, fun, and intellectually challenging. There is a balance of exposure to the physical sciences, earth sciences, and life sciences. The goal is for students to see science as an ongoing quest to understand the wonders of the world and to see themselves as active participants in that quest.

Science: PK and Kindergarten

In PK and kindergarten, science is taught in the "Exploratorium." The School's youngest students become naturalists and learn to connect to the natural world through hands-on, outdoor experiences in which they discover and observe living things in their immediate surroundings. Embedded in the program are ongoing opportunities to practice and learn the essential social skills of empathy, questioning, perspective taking, compromise, listening, problem solving, and collaboration. The Exploratorium offers a balance between play and guided discovery. Throughout the year, students explore composting, building, gardening, and tree studies, and they practice scientific skills such as observing, asking questions, collecting data, conducting experiments, and making hypotheses. In addition, there are opportunities to explore and play with a wide variety of materials, including large blocks, small building materials, and natural materials that offer opportunities for discovery through playful collaboration.

Science: 1st Grade

In 1st grade, students practice observing, predicting, inferring, and collecting data. They explore physical, life, and earth sciences each year by studying topics such as trees, flowers, birds, animal adaptations, weather, and mirrors. The science program intersects with the themes and topics covered in social studies as 1st graders explore the idea of community: What comprises community? How does the natural world connect to the community? How do animal communities operate in ways that are similar and different to ours? How can students be better stewards of the environment?

Science: 2nd Grade

In 2nd grade, students dive more deeply into the scientific process, observing, predicting, inferring, collecting, and looking critically at data. They explore physical, life, and earth sciences through a variety of topics. The 2nd graders study insect life cycles, simple machines, weather and weather-reporting tools, and the local habitat and food chains. The science program intersects with the themes and topics covered in social studies as 2nd graders immerse themselves in a study of people and their environments. Embedded in the program are opportunities for service learning, and the 2nd graders work with local park services to identify and remove invasive species from local parks.

Science: 3rd Grade

In 3rd grade, students study watersheds and the water cycles, the solar system, simple machines and electricity, and the human body. Students begin to set up experiments and manipulate variables. Teachers place an emphasis on accurately recording the scientific process and reporting the results truthfully.

Science: 4th Grade

The 4th graders learn about recycling, rocks and minerals, plate tectonics, simple chemistry, electricity, the skeleton, and human growth. In the spring, the science teacher and the Lower School counselor collaborate to introduce topics on human sexuality. Students continue to set up experiments and manipulate variables. Teachers place an emphasis on accurately recording the scientific process and reporting the results truthfully.



Spanish

The Lower School Spanish program is designed to instill a love of language, develop an appreciation for the larger world, and build cultural competencies that will help students thrive in a globalized world. The goal is to help students reach beginning levels of oral proficiency in Spanish through activities like music, dance, crafts, and other forms of expression. The classroom promotes risk-taking, approximation, and joyful use of the language to interact with friends and teachers. Children have a chance to showcase their language skills through menu reading at lunch, sharing monthly queries in the target language, and incorporating the language into school-wide celebrations and assemblies.

Spanish: Kindergarten

All kindergarten students are immersed in Spanish-language activities and learn about Hispanic culture through story, song, and movement. They build a knowledge of vocabulary and grammar with a focus on developing oral skills through various thematic units. They practice basic words and respond to simple commands while connecting the language to themes in the classroom and around the School.

Spanish: 1st and 2nd Grade

In 1st and 2nd grade, students further develop oral proficiency by engaging in singing, games, class discussions, and other activities. They continue to build knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, and they explore

and learn to appreciate other cultures. They make connections across curricula and cultures, and they collaborate with classmates.

Spanish: 3rd and 4th Grade

The 3rd and 4th grade programs are designed around thematic units that take concepts taught in other content areas (science, math, social studies, art, music) and combine them with the cultural elements of Spanish-speaking communities. The program includes the use of short stories, authentic resources, and audiovisual materials to present and reinforce vocabulary and grammar structures in a meaningful context.



K-4 Program **SPECIALS: THE ARTS**

Students are immersed in art and music each week. Through these programs, students have the opportunity to express themselves artistically, whether in painting, drawing, singing, or playing instruments. The Lower School's goals include fostering a love of the arts, helping children find joy in the creative process, and opening students' eyes to the diversity of artistic experiences.

Music

The Lower School's music program encompasses all aspects of music: singing, playing instruments, creative movement, and dancing, all of which contribute to musical literacy and a deeper understanding of history and culture.

Music: Kindergarten

Kindergartners are explorers, and this yearning for knowledge can be showcased through music. Essential learning outcomes include:

- rhythm: feeling and demonstrating a steady beat
- melody: demonstrating knowledge of sol-mi and learning the four voices: whisper, singing, speaking, and calling
- texture: recognizing the role our bodies and voices can play in music
- harmony: exploring in unison
- form: realizing same and different
- movement: basic body awareness both alone and in relation to others

Music: 1st Grade

In 1st grade, students continue this exploration and build on basic concepts of music through singing, speaking, dancing, and playing in class settings and storybook performances. Essential learning outcomes include:

- rhythm: recognizing one and two sounds through basic rhythmic building bricks
- melody: creating simple sol-mi-la patterns and singing in various pentatonic modes
- texture: adding unpitched and pitched percussion instruments through rhythmic and melodic activities, improvisation, and simple patterns
- harmony: exploring harmony created through xylophone and singing relationships
- form: identifying AB and other basic form structures
- movement: learning folk dances and play parties in whole-class and partner settings, and exploring creative movement through isolating body parts, starting and stopping activities, and simple movement sentences

Music: 2nd Grade

In 2nd grade, students expand their understanding of previously learned musical concepts and deepen their explorations in various forms: use of text, visual art, props, and more. Essential learning outcomes include:

- rhythm: expanding use of rhythmic building bricks
- melody: connecting solfège symbols to hand signs, and singing more complex melodies in various pentatonic modes
- texture: layering unpitched and pitched percussion instruments through various ostinatos, bourdons, and color parts
- harmony: creating harmony through layered xylophone parts and canonic exploration through body percussion, sung or spoken word, and instrumentation
- form: exploring elemental form structures and other song forms, including verse and refrain and call and response

- movement: learning folk dances in more complex formations, creating movement sentences, identifying locomotor/non-locomotor/stopping words, and composing pieces using basic elements of dance

Music: 3rd Grade

In 3rd grade, students deepen their connection with these musical concepts through notation, improvisation, expanded rhythmic and melodic patterns, and playing the soprano recorder. Essential learning outcomes include:

- rhythm: synthesis of all six rhythmic building bricks through improvisation and composition, as well as a continued exploration of different metric structures
- melody: simple melodic pieces on the recorder, more advanced melodies using different pentatonic homes on the xylophone, and diatonic sung melodies
- texture: three-part xylophone pieces combining singing, recorder, xylophone, and unpitched percussion instruments through Orff instrumentations
- harmony: more complex bourdons, ostinatos, and color parts, and two- and three-part sung canon
- form: composing and improvising in various elemental forms, understanding and playing in rondo, and reviewing previous formal structures
- movement: expanded use of folk dance; creative movement pieces alone, with a partner, and in small groups; and deeper awareness of elements of dance

Music: 4th Grade

In 4th grade, students continue all the concepts learned in previous years and expand their understanding through world music traditions, expanded recorder use, and exploration of jazz. Students also participate in chorus, and the culmination of their Lower School musical journey is a Celebration Concert in April. Essential learning outcomes include:

- rhythm: exploring 16th notes, uneven meter, complex metric structures, Keith Terry body percussion, and more challenging rhythmic patterns
- melody: singing in major and minor diatonic scales, playing the blues scale, and exploring other complex melodic structures
- texture: improvising and composing various Orff instrumentations using concepts learned previously, including using four or more parts
- harmony: exploring tonal degrees, relationships, and patterns
- form: creating in previously learned forms and exploring composed and narrative structures for performance-based pieces
- movement: exploring world music through dance, creating improvisatory pieces through complex dance elements, and working in larger groups to choreograph movement pieces

K-4 Program

SPECIALS: THE ARTS

Visual Arts

Visual art is a vibrant part of the Lower School experience. Both in the classroom and in weekly art classes, students often use art as a way to learn about new concepts and ideas and as a way to communicate their own big ideas about the world.

The arts at the Lower School provide children an opportunity to experience their creative selves by experimenting with foundational elements of art such as line, shape, color, pattern, composition, form, texture, and scale. Students explore these concepts while using a wide array of materials and techniques, such as papier-mâché, painting, drawing, construction and assemblage, fiber arts, printmaking, collage, and ceramics.

Students are exposed to a diverse set of artists, movements, and cultures throughout history and are frequent visitors to local museums. The art curriculum incorporates social- and environmental justice themes, as well as classroom studies in social studies and math. Through an interdisciplinary approach, students feel a sense of connection and accomplishment as they grow in skill while fully embracing the notion that “practice makes progress.”





Visual art is a daily focus in the PK and kindergarten classrooms. The teachers create opportunities for the youngest learners to observe art, reflect on what they see, and express themselves through a variety of materials and techniques that are connected to classroom themes and studies. Student artwork is joyously displayed on classroom walls and in the hallways.

Visual Arts: 1st Grade

In 1st grade, the art program focuses on exploration of basic art concepts and skills. Projects are designed to develop fine and gross motor skills. Art elements are introduced through painting, drawing, and clay activities based on concepts of line, shape, color, form, pattern, and texture. The 1st graders will come into contact with a variety of materials and processes. Through contact with these materials and by exploring these processes, students begin to develop art skills that enhance competency in other areas—such as language arts, social studies, math, and science.

Visual Arts: 2nd Grade

The 2nd graders focus on applying beginning concepts and skills. They have the opportunity to refine listening and discussion skills and develop proper use and control of tools and materials. Fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination are further developed by using a wide range of media and techniques. Line, shape, color, form, pattern, and texture continue to play a role in establishing notions about composition, and color theory is explored in great detail. At this stage, students are encouraged to work with others while still maintaining personal preferences.

Visual Arts: 3rd Grade

In 3rd grade, students further enhance fine and gross motor skills and hand-eye coordination. By using a variety of media and techniques, students discover a developing ability to execute more conscious planning of artwork. Multimedia and collaborative projects capitalize on these growing skills. Aesthetic self-judgment and evaluation continue to develop and play an important role for 3rd graders. Teachers help students develop problem-solving techniques as more individualistic work emerges. Students also look at renowned artists' work in a historical context; for example, when 3rd graders create self-portraits, they study the portraits created by famous artists through the ages.

Visual Arts: 4th Grade

The 4th grade students incorporate much that they have previously learned to a new year of art. The 4th grade activities become more specific and product-oriented. Awareness of the self and the world are more keenly developed and incorporated into the students' work. For example, students make masks by plastering each other's faces. They are then encouraged to elaborate on the experience by incorporating multiple contextual details in support of a transformation beyond the "face." Art projects support and enhance the ancient China social-studies theme, and the students enjoy many of the School's culminating art traditions.

K-4 Program SPECIALS

Physical Education

The Lower School physical education program is designed to encourage a lifelong enjoyment of physical pursuits, foster connections between mind, body, and spirit, build children's motor-development skills, and to bring to life the Quaker values of collaboration, teamwork, and sportsmanship. Our PE program fuses skill-building methodology with adventure education, and the PE teachers create lessons that are designed to build each child's fitness and skill level. Through age-appropriate, engaging, and playful activities, the PE curriculum develops motor and movement skills in three areas: locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative skills. The PE curriculum also develops spatial awareness, alignment and flexibility, knowledge of movement patterns, and awareness of form and function. Students develop these skills through carefully scaffolded team building activities, cooperative games, and sport-themes units. PE teachers routinely use reflection and post-activity debriefs to cultivate students' self-awareness and mind-body-spirit connection..

Physical Education: PK–2nd Grades

The physical education program for kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd graders is designed with early elementary students in mind. The focus is on building healthy habits and a love of physical activity from the beginning. Children learn locomotor fundamentals (running, skipping, galloping, sliding, leaping, and hopping) and practice controlling their bodies in space. Teachers add rhythmic elements and integrate concepts such as directionality and speed. In addition, students work on their stability and balance, and play games that teach the basics of throwing, catching, and kicking. There is also a large focus on developing students' social and emotional skills, such as staying on the group plan, taking turns, regulating feelings, sharing materials, resolving conflicts productively, and demonstrating good sportsmanship. As the children move into 1st and 2nd grade, they learn about the impact of physical activity on the body, including heart rate, breathing, and perspiration.

Physical Education: 3rd and 4th Grade

In 3rd and 4th grades, the PE program continues to focus on building healthy habits and a love of physical activity. By 3rd grade, children have developed solid locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative skills, and are ready for the next level of challenge. In 3rd and 4th grades, the focus shifts from skill development to application of skills, and students have the opportunity to practice these



skills in sport-specific activities such as soccer, football, basketball, and baseball/softball. By 4th grade, students participate in cooperative games and team building activities that require high levels of strategic thinking and teamwork. Through games, drills, and activities, students increase their flexibility, strength, and overall endurance. 4th graders also begin to take an active role in assessing and monitoring their fitness and overall physical, social, and emotional health. In addition, the upper-elementary program is centered around core Quaker values: perseverance, self-discipline, respect, integrity, patience, teamwork, and collaboration. The 4th grade students are expected to be leaders on the fields and courts, work effectively in small and large group settings, and demonstrate inclusive and respectful play.

Library

The Lower School library has a vibrant collection of books and online resources that are accessible to both students and their families. The collection focuses on normalizing diversity through materials and texts that represent global perspectives and Quaker values. Students visit the library weekly to listen to read-alouds, to explore and discuss books, and to check out new books. Issues of literacy justice are integrated throughout the curriculum. The librarian collaborates with teachers and students to teach the research process and to support inquiry projects by curating print and online resources for students to explore. In addition, the librarian works with the technology team and other teachers to teach digital-citizenship skills, such as information literacy, creative credit, and copyright.

Instructional Technology

Lower School has a one-to-one iPad program for kindergarten through 4th grade. The iPads are available as tools in the classroom so that students have opportunities to express themselves in a variety of creative ways. For younger students, the iPads offer the opportunity to record a story or to describe the meaning of their writing. Students can practice literacy and math skills through visual cues and interactive activities. The older students are able to collaborate in Google Docs and are encouraged to find a variety of ways to express their thinking. Digital ethics are taught throughout the year, either in the classroom or in the library program. Lessons include:

- Consent with photos: Classes create an agreement at the start of the year to ask permission to take and share one another's photos.
- Appropriate use of technology: how we understand, respect, and observe teacher expectations for use of technology in class.
- Integrity with technology: discussions about personal choices with technology and how they reflect who we are in the "real" world.
- Finding balance with technology: reflecting on the role technology plays in our lives and how we choose to spend time with others.
- The research process and digital literacy: Students learn effective search techniques; how to evaluate the quality, credibility, and validity of websites and online resources; and how to give proper credit.

Coding is also a growing part of the Lower School curriculum, and teachers work with the instructional technologist to integrate coding into the math curriculum in meaningful ways. In addition, teachers collaborate across the curriculum to provide spaces and opportunities for maker-centered learning.



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