

A note to parents

This curriculum outline details what you can expect from the elementary schools of the Middletown public school district. While this guide is by no means comprehensive—much more goes on in our schools—we want to provide you with a clearer picture of our goals and expectations for first graders.

What follows, then, is the Grade 1 curriculum overview. We believe it is a challenging and engaging program, one designed to stimulate academic growth, social development, and enthusiasm for learning. All students will have opportunities to meet the learner outcomes in each of the curriculum areas. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call your child's teacher, building principal, or me.

We wish you and your child a successful year.

John Hennelly, Ph.D.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum/Instruction

Early Literacy

As directed by our state department of education, every Connecticut school district must devote greater attention to helping primary grades students become proficient readers and writers. In Middletown, our plans include

- promoting reading in all Middletown homes
- encouraging greater use of our city library
- increased and coordinated literacy instruction and assessment among all eight elementary schools
- earlier support to help *all* children become readers and writers
- providing parents with suggestions for extending and reinforcing classroom and independent reading

A more detailed overview of Middletown's 3-year early literacy plan is available upon request from the Curriculum Office.

Language Arts

Each of our elementary schools provides your children a rich, diverse, and developmentally appropriate language arts program designed to nurture their language interests and promote reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking.

At the end of Grade 1, your child will have

- applied appropriate reading strategies to construct meaning
- determined vocabulary from context
- identified important people, settings, events, and relationships in a story
- recognized main ideas/details in a story
- followed directions accurately
- participated in class discussions about literature
- applied the writing process in various forms
- generated ideas using visual organizers
- identified and correctly used capitalization in sentences

Mathematics

We hope to help first graders appreciate and enjoy math as they develop an understanding of its fundamental concepts (e.g., more, less, equal, sequencing). We engage students in hands-on, open-ended problems designed to help them become critical thinkers and math users.

At the end of Grade 1, your child will have

- rote counted by twos, fives, and tens up to 100
- reproduced numerals from 0-100 in printed form
- written and used addition/subtraction number sentences to find sums and differences to 12
- learned number facts in addition and subtraction (e.g., sums and differences to 12)
- sorted, resorted, and classified objects by at least one attribute (size, shape, color)
- discovered, created, used, and explained strategies for solving simple word problems
- created, reproduced, extended and named various patterns
- sorted, identified, and compared designated 2-dimensional shapes (e.g., squares, rectangles, circles, triangles)
- recognized, identified and compared simple fractions (1/2, 1/3, & 1/4)

- told time to the hour and half hour on non-digital clock sequenced events and compared the amount of time it takes to complete activities
- estimated and compared length, area and weight, using appropriate standard units
- used appropriate mathematical language

Science

Our hope in introducing first graders to science is that they experience richness and excitement of exploring and understanding the natural world. Through a variety of hands-on experiments we help students begin to understand and use the scientific process.

Your child will work toward achieving these learning objectives.

- the sun appears to move across the sky in the same way every day, but its path changes gradually over the seasons
- an object's position can be described by locating it relative to another object or the background
- an object's motion can be described by tracing and measuring its position over time
- living things have different structures and behaviors that allow them to meet their basic needs
- animals need air, water and food to survive
- plants need air, water and sunlight to survive
- organisms change in form and behavior as part of their life cycles
- some organisms undergo metamorphosis during their life cycles; other organisms grow and change, but their basic form stays essentially the same
- the properties of materials and organisms can be described more accurately through the use of standard measuring units
- various tools can be used to measure, describe and compare different objects and organisms

Social Studies

Our Grade 1 curriculum contains three major goals — to recognize and appreciate the family, schools, and neighborhood; to understand the similarities and differences of friends and families around the world; and, to learn to use maps and globes.

At the end of Grade 1, your child will have

- recognized and understood the different elements of family, school and neighborhood
- identified the different ethnic or cultural groups represented
- become aware of their own family diversity
- recognized similarities and differences in lifestyles of people from another culture
- recognized the different cultural customs and traditions of specific groups
- identified colors, shapes, and symbols on a map
- identified and used a map key
- learned and indicated direction on a map
- located continents, countries, states, and cities on a map and a globe

Personal & Social Development

The Middletown school system is committed to promoting life-long learning and encouraging the acquisition of character strengths. As children grow they need to acquire sound judgment, a sense of responsibility, and personal courage. They internalize these habits in two ways:

1. *By example:* Children learn from what they witness in the lives of parents and other adults whom they respect.
2. *Through directed practice:* Children learn from what they are repeatedly led to do by parents, teachers and other respected adults.

For these reasons it is important that schools and families work closely together.



Art

At the end of Grade 1, your child will have

- used art for self-expression
- identified connections between the visual arts and other disciplines (i.e., literature, history, music, science)
- known and recognized the basic characteristics of Impressionism through the work of Monet and Van Gogh, and Renaissance art through the work of DaVinci
- developed basic drawing skills (i.e., combining simple shapes to create more complex forms using curved and straight lines)
- recognized and applied
 - design elements of line, shape, color and texture
 - design principles of balance and space which focuses on symmetrical design
 - organization of lines, shapes and colors to create a good use of space
 - manipulative skills (i.e., cutting, folding, weaving, clay modeling)
 - paint application and brush control techniques
 - created African mask constructed with mixed media

Music

At the end of Grade 1, your child will have

- developed ability to match pitch; distinguish between high, low, loud, and soft; sing simple songs from memory
- demonstrated handling of various rhythm instruments
- improvised simple rhythms
- learned proper performance technique
- sung American, patriotic, folk songs, and songs from other cultures
- became familiar with the music of composers
- developed beat competency
- responded to music through movement
- begun to develop concert etiquette
- begun to explore music notation
- demonstrated ability to follow a melodic contour

Physical Education

While attending to each student's developmental stage, we help students gain the physical and social skills essential to living an active life. We offer opportunities for all students to develop and value their physical fitness while exhibiting positive character traits during physical activity.

At the end of Grade 1, your child will have

- learned to throw, kick, and hit a ball
- performed sustained exercise to increase heart rate and breathing
- followed rules, safety procedures, etiquette and good sportsmanship
- played cooperatively with peers of different backgrounds
- enjoyed participating in physical activities

Health

Health instruction in the primary grades focuses on safety, nutrition, and mental health. While students acquire awareness and skills in these areas through their physical education and science classes, much of the health curriculum—that which addresses substance abuse and conflict resolution—is delivered through *Here's Looking at You*, a commercially developed program in which all Middletown elementary teachers receive training.

Education Technology

At the end of Grade 1, your child will have

- used proper computer etiquette
- used correct computer terminology
- continued use of the keyboard and its functions
- continued to use technology for skill development and reinforcement



Notice to Parents & Guardians

Six years ago, Middletown Public Schools revised its elementary progress reports in hopes of giving parents a clearer picture of their children's academic and social progress. Because letter grades (A, B, C, etc.) mean different things to different people (e.g., Does C mean average, mediocre, or fair? Is being a C student an indicator of ability or achievement?), we moved to a simpler number and check system to assess achievement. Still, there were a few differences as we moved from kindergarten to grade 5. Recognizing that a consistent format would be in everybody's best interest, we have adopted the following for *all* elementary grades—including kindergarten:

Major subject performance

4=exceeds expectations
3=meets expectations
2=demonstrates progress
1=needs improvement/
has not shown progress

Sub-skills, specials and effort

+ =consistently strong
√ =evident
- =needs strengthening
* not introduced

Please note the number indicators beside the academic topics. These are designed to give you and your child a sense of her/his achievement relative to grade level expectations and standards set for that particular grade. We chose to use checks, pluses, and minuses to assess performance in sub-skills, specials, and effort to keep the focus on the major academic areas, and to provide our specials teachers a more manageable system since they often work with as many as 600 students.

Another important point to keep in mind as you review your child's progress report and discuss this with his/her teacher: Expectations are tied to standards that rise throughout the year. For instance, third grade writing that meets expectations (3) at the end of November does not meet third grade writing expectations at the end of May. So if your child receives the same number—let's say 2—in a subject for all three trimesters, it means that s/he has continued to make progress but has not met the expected standards for that *trimester*.

Middletown teachers and administrators are working hard to provide you with the clearest and most objective information about your child's academic, social, and physical growth. We appreciate your support, suggestions, and willingness to work with us. Should you have any questions, please contact your child's teacher, principal, or me.

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MIDDLETOWN

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2008-2009

GRADE 1



Curriculum Overview for Parents