



Lower School Course of Study

2018-2019



STRONG MINDS.
KIND HEARTS.

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Friends Academy

Lower School Course of Study

Introduction

Welcome to the Lower School! The years your child spends in the Lower School are filled with surprise, discovery, and achievement. These are the foundation years, and it is our goal to ensure that each child leaves the Lower School with a solid sense of self, a love of learning, and a curiosity for life that enables him or her to approach new opportunities with confidence and competence.

This guide provides parents with some general information and an overview of our philosophy and practices in the Lower School. It includes straightforward answers to some parents' most frequently asked questions.

Philosophy

Quaker philosophy is at the heart of our school, and Quaker beliefs permeate daily life, providing a framework for the continuing revelation of each student's unique gifts. Quakers believe that everyone may have direct experience of God by affirming that there is 'that of God in everyone.' The Quaker tenets of simplicity, moderation, equality, resolution of conflict through nonviolent means, community service, and shared decision-making are interwoven throughout the fabric of school life. These tenets are manifested in the following ways:

Meeting for Worship

Meeting for Worship is the center of Quaker life and at the heart of a Friends school. We gather together as a community in a silence that grows deeper as it progresses. Anyone may speak if they feel inspired to do so, since everyone can be a minister with insights to share. Generally, grades two through five meet on Thursday afternoons at 2:15 p.m. in the Matinecock Meeting House while the younger students have Meeting in their classrooms. On special occasions, such as Thanksgiving, Kindergarten through fifth grade students travel to the Meeting House for a special Meeting for Worship with the entire Lower School Community.

Other Quaker-related activities

Gathering

We hold a Gathering every week in the library, on Friday mornings, to discuss the life of the school, share ideas and give notice to school activities. Every child in the Lower School gathers in the library, and for a short time we are one. At Gathering we speak about special holidays and cultural events, hear a story, sing songs, or discuss community service and more.

Worship Sharing

Oftentimes the Lower School students do not go to Meeting for Worship but stay in their classrooms for worship sharing. "Worship sharing is a kind of guided meditation. By focusing on a particular question, it helps us to explore our own experience and share with each other more deeply than we would in normal conversation. It seeks to draw us into sacred space, where we can take down our usual defenses, and encounter each other in 'that which is eternal.'" Worship sharing is intimate and gives the most reserved student the opportunity to share what is on his mind.

Quakerism in the Lower School

- Daily use of moment of silence and handshake
- Class period designated in the weekly schedule for Community Meeting
- Quaker-in-Residence regular classroom visits and programs
- Query-based approach (using the testimonies as a framework)
- Lower School TASQUE (Teachers And Students for QUaker Education) is a committee of teachers and students in grades 3, 4 and 5 devoted to educating the school community about Quaker beliefs and practices.
- Stories (library books, Candles In The Dark, etc.)
- Songs (George Fox song, Harriet Tubman, Lucretia Mott, Magic Penny, etc.)
- Ideas/presentations at Gathering
- Ongoing family service projects (get the parents and siblings on board...)
- Pen pals with other Quaker elementary schools/ share ideas/video/skype visits
- “Meeting buddies” from other classes
- Worship sharing sessions (activity taught by Quakers on the faculty...)
- Outside speakers/resources

Meeting for Community

Starting in Early Childhood, the children take part in a weekly community meeting where students and teachers participate in open dialogue about their collective triumphs and concerns. When issues of concern arise, the group strives to formulate consensual solutions. There are many opportunities throughout every day for students to practice the peaceful resolution of conflict. It is not uncommon to see teachers huddled with a small group of children as they facilitate a resolution to the occasional conflicts that arise between individuals and among groups of children.

During Meeting for Community, the children are introduced to a Testimony of the Month. Each month, the children will learn about one of the testimonies in SPICES and we will implement that testimony into our daily curriculum.

TASQUE (Teachers And Students for Quaker Understanding and Education)

Lower School TASQUE is a committee of teachers, the Quaker-in-Residence and students devoted to educating the school community about Quaker beliefs and practices. TASQUE is open to children of all different faiths and beliefs. In fact, we believe the greater the diversity, the richer the experiences are for the students. The activities and projects are student-centered and children in grades 3, 4 and 5 are invited to participate. Students who agree to be part of TASQUE make a commitment to be involved in a project that usually spans about three months.

Community Service

Consistent with our Quaker mission that emphasizes “caring service to others,” children participate in hands-on, age-appropriate service learning activities. Some of our recent efforts have included making holiday care packages for hospitalized children, writing letters to students in Houston in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey and collecting for Birthday Wishes for homeless children.

Responsive Classroom

The Responsive Classroom is a classroom management philosophy that will help:

- Build community
- Teach social skills
- Create a trusting partnership between home and school
- Utilize best practices including collaboration and multiple intelligences

General Information

Teachers and Teams

Our Lower School Teachers

- All of our classroom teachers have undergraduate degrees from accredited private and public colleges and universities;
- Most teachers hold master's degrees when they are hired and all are encouraged to participate in our professional development program.
- Their personal and professional goals must be consistent with Quaker philosophy and mission.

The Lower School is divided into three teams:

Early Childhood	Play Group, Pre-Kindergarten	8:1 ratio
K-2	Grades Kindergarten & 1	2 teachers in each grade
3-5	Grades 3 & 4	2 teachers in each grade
4/5	Grades 5	3 teachers in grade 5

Our enrollment structure is shaped somewhat like an inverted pyramid, with usually fewer than 16 children in our Early Childhood classes, increasing gradually to 45 in 5th grade. Reading groups range from 6 to 8 students per teacher through fourth grade.

After School Programs

In Lower School we have an extended day component connected with our popular Enrichment Program. Extended Day begins on the first day of school, and enrichment starts soon after. Enrichment is divided into two ten-week sessions, with consideration of holidays. Enrichment began simply providing after school chess and Chinese, and now our offerings are quite expansive.

The Lower School After-School Program

The Lower School-After School Programs are comprised of two components, Extended Day and Enrichment. Both Extended Day and Enrichment are available to all Lower School students, including Early Childhood through Grade 5.

1. Extended Day Program

Extended Day is an opportunity for all students to engage in hands-on, multi-sensory activities in a variety of areas. The activities are created and supervised by certified teachers and teacher assistants. A few of many activities children can participate in include baking, arts and crafts, imaginary play, manipulatives such as Legos or puzzles and/or outdoor play. In addition, daily homework time is scheduled into every afternoon. Extended Day is available Monday through Friday from 2:45-6:00 for Early Childhood, and 3:10-6:00 for Lower School students on all regular school days. Snacks are provided daily. Extended Day offers two enrollment options at two different rates for your convenience (i.e Regularly Scheduled or Drop-In). Please see our After School web page for enrollment details and fees.

2. Enrichment Programs

Our Enrichment program is designed to broaden our students' experiences, deepen their understanding of various subject matters, and develop specific skill sets. Classes are taught by experienced Friends faculty members and professional instructors. Sessions are grouped to accommodate various learning levels and may be grade specific due to the field of study. Enrichment classes are offered in three sessions. The Fall session runs from September to November, the winter session runs from January to February and the Spring session runs from February to May. Classes are offered Monday through Thursday on regular school days. Early Childhood classes run from 3-3:45pm and K-5th grade classes run from 3:20-4:20 on specified days. Snack is provided daily. Please see our Enrichment Class web page for course descriptions, dates, enrollment details and fees.

Snacks and Lunch

All children are served a light snack at mid-morning in their classrooms. All students in grades Kindergarten - 5 have lunch in the dining commons with their teachers and are served a hot lunch with many cold options.

Bus Service

Friends Academy students may apply to their local school districts for bus service. This application must be made by April 1st and applies to those students who live within a 15-mile radius of the school.

Early Childhood

The Early Childhood Center is a community of children, families and teachers valuing joyful learning experiences that take place through creative exploration, thoughtful discovery, and meaningful play experiences. Our goal is to create an environment each and every day in which children's curiosity is nurtured, diversity is valued, and families feel connected to their child's learning experience.

Our Approach

We believe children learn best when they are passionate and motivated about what they are doing. Observing the children and listening carefully to their interactions help us learn what interests them, using their ideas and interests as the foundation upon which we build our curriculum. As the children investigate and explore collaboratively through hands on experiences, we guide them to help develop critical thinking skills such as problem-solving, perseverance, and the ability to express themselves and value the voices and ideas of others.

Through careful observation of the children's work in progress, we are able to document the process of their learning. By using written word, photographs, and video, teachers are able to delve deeply into the learning process and assess not only what the children are learning but how they learn best. The documentation of their work also helps parents to learn about their child's work and to feel connected to what is happening in the classroom. It offers a chance for the children to reflect on the process and make deeper connections to their work.

Exploration, investigation and inquiry are the basis for all learning that takes place in our program. Through experiential learning, children participate in hands-on activities which encourage questions to be generated organically throughout the process. Children work in small collaborative groupings fostering good communication skills, positive peer interactions, and teamwork.

Literacy, math, science and social studies, are curriculum areas that are blended into meaningful play experiences throughout our days. Block play is emphasized throughout the day, creating a space for the children to be creative, explorative, imaginative and inventive. Block play encourages spatial awareness, socialization, shape recognition, cause and effect, and imaginative play scenarios. Block play also encourages children to start making predictions, comparisons, and helps to expand their vocabulary as they communicate with each other in collaboration. Spanish, Physical Education, Creative Movement Music and Library classes are included in our weekly schedule, enriching the learning that is taking place.

Quaker Values are at the core of who we are and what we do. From the very start of their Friends Academy experience in our program, children are immersed in the Quaker values of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, and Stewardship. Each day the children gather in morning Circle Time to greet each other, shake hands, communicate and share their thoughts. Our curriculum is enriched through cross-divisional community service activities and collaboration with our resident Quaker, Teacher John. Each and every day starts and ends with a moment of silence and each meal begins with reflection of gratitude. Children are taught the importance of showing kindness, compassion and respect for their peers and for the world around them.

Kindergarten

Our specialized and unique program fosters a genuine love of learning in our students coupled with the heartfelt understanding of others. Students will leave kindergarten as emergent readers with a variety of skills and learned strategies. We focus on building confidence in our young learners as well as a sense of security with who they are and how they contribute to their community.

Language Arts

Wilson Foundations – A multisensory language program that provides children of all learning abilities with a solid foundation for reading and spelling. In Foundations, phonics and word study are taught explicitly and cumulatively. Children have extensive opportunities to practice and apply their skills at school across all content areas.

Handwriting without Tears – This program uses explicit demonstrations and multisensory instruction to help children begin to achieve legible and fluent handwriting. Hands-on activities teach students correct formation, spacing, and sequencing when forming upper and lower case letters. Children begin to develop their writing skills through this play-based instruction.

Balanced Literacy – This approach to reading occurs every day in kindergarten in a variety of capacities. Balanced literacy involves the students in engaging activities such as read alouds, independent reading, shared reading and guided reading. Shared reading is an interactive experience that occurs when students join in or share the reading of an enlarged text while guided and supported by a teacher. Students observe the teacher reading the text with fluency and expression. In guided reading, students are challenged at their instructional level in small groups of 3 to 5 children. Using questions and coaching statements, the teacher guides the children to the author’s message and reinforces particular literacy skills, such as strategies to figure out unknown words and how to deal with difficult sentence structures.

Reading Workshop – Students are taught strategies for reading and reading comprehension. The teachers are able to differentiate and meet the needs of all their students. Reading Workshop helps to foster a love of reading and gives students chances to practice reading strategies independently and with guidance. The basic philosophy behind the Reading Workshop is to allow students to spend an extended amount of time reading authentic texts that interest them on a daily basis and to provide opportunities to talk about literature. The ultimate goal of a Reading Workshop is always to develop life-long passionate readers.

Writing Workshop – Children plan, draft, revise, publish, and celebrate their writing. They explore various genres including true stories, procedural writing (How-To Books), informational, and persuasive writing. Writing Workshop begins with teachers and children coming together for a mini-lesson, during which direct instruction in a particular skill is provided. Students then write independently, while teachers confer with individuals or small groups with similar needs. At the end of the workshop, there are opportunities for sharing. The goal is to practice communicating ideas, gain confidence, hone skills, and enjoy writing!

Mathematics

Kindergarten uses the My Math program which aligns itself with the common core standards. The students are provided with frequent opportunities to discover and explore the interrelationships among a broad range of mathematical topics. We follow a math workshop approach, which allows students to learn new math content each day, practice math strategies in a variety of ways, and reflect on learning through verbal or written sharing. The predictable structure of math workshop makes it easier for students to participate in differentiated activities. A variety of math manipulatives are used to help the children understand the concepts taught in each unit. This hands-on method makes abstract math ideas concrete through the use of visuals.

Social Studies

In Kindergarten, students begin to develop awareness about self, family and community. Our focus on self-identity is integral in helping children understand who they are and their role in our classroom community. Throughout the school year, we discuss and share holidays and cultural traditions that are special to our students, as well as learning and modeling the Quaker testimonies. As the children gain appreciation for themselves and their classmates, the focus turns towards our school community. The students learn about the buildings at Friends Academy and the different people who make our school a special place. During the school year, we share our studies with our families at our Learning Celebration Day.

Responsive Classroom

We use this approach in kindergarten to help create warm, safe and happy learning environment for each of our students. Responsive Classroom supports students in taking risks while learning and reaching their full potential. It also teaches the children how to take ownership and show responsibility in their classroom and school. Students learn how to work together by cooperating and including others during activities and through morning meeting they learn to improve their communication skills and gain confidence.

Quakerism

We introduce the incredibly valuable philosophy of Quakerism into the Kindergarten classroom. Each day starts and ends with a moment of silence and happy thoughts. In Meeting for Worship, the children are introduced to a *Testimony of the Month*. Each month, the children will learn about one of the Quaker testimonies in SPICES (Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship) and we implement the monthly testimony into our Meeting for Worship queries as well as our daily curriculum.

First Grade

Our program focuses on helping students and teachers make connections for learning, vital links that unite all aspects of the curriculum. Quaker beliefs permeate daily life with an emphasis on the discovery of each student's unique gifts. The Quaker tenets of simplicity, moderation, equality, resolution of conflict through nonviolent means, community service, and shared decision-making are interwoven throughout the curriculum.

Language Arts

Balanced literacy begins with creating a genuine appreciation for good literature. In first grade children are involved in daily reading, writing, speaking, and listening experiences related to learning what good readers and writers do. Direct instruction teaching phonics, grammar skills, reading and comprehension strategies, and writing skills are the foundation of our program. Some of the key components include shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading. Writing instruction includes modeled or interactive writing, shared writing, guided writing (Writing Workshop) and independent writing. Teacher read alouds model fluency and expression and allow for opportunities for students to be exposed to a wide variety of texts.

Wilson Foundations – Teachers build on students' foundation in letter formation, print knowledge, alphabetic awareness, phonological and phonemic awareness. Multisensory routines initiated in Kindergarten continue and additional techniques are introduced. Students receive explicit and systematic instruction in word structure and have multiple opportunities to practice and apply skills such as blends, digraphs, base words, suffixes, syllable types, and high frequency words when spelling and reading. Vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension are also important components of the first grade Foundations program.

Guided Reading – Students continue to learn in small groups at their instructional level. Student progress is ensured by regular, individual assessments and flexible grouping procedures. First grade Guided Reading instruction is bolstered by a large collection of quality children's literature. Within their groups, students have daily opportunities to practice their skills and add to their repertoire of reading strategies. Emphasis is placed on word recognition, phonics, vocabulary, and literal and interpretive comprehension and students have frequent opportunities to write about their reading.

Writing Workshop – Through the first grade Writing Workshop, students learn that there is a process that underlies what all writers do. Through mini-lessons and the close study of grade-level literature, students receive direct and explicit instruction in the skills and strategies of proficient writing. They engage in frequent, goal-driven practice within various genres such as narrative, persuasive and informational writing and they benefit from regular assessment-based feedback. As in all Writing Workshops, students draft, revise, publish and celebrate their wonderful work.

Mathematics

The My Math program uses an approach with increased emphasis on "focus, coherence, and rigor". The highlights of the program include: Multiple experiences to build conceptual understanding, strategies for real-world problem solving, online components that allow for review, practice, and enrichment as well as informal and formal assessments. We will focus on the following core mathematics strands throughout the year: Addition and subtraction concepts to 20, place value and two-digit addition and subtraction, graphs, measurement, time, two and three-dimensional shapes, and equal shares. Two days a week will be devoted to teaching using the workshop model. This approach allows for guided instruction in a small group setting.

Social Studies

The first grade social studies program embraces the theme "We Are One People with Universal Human Needs." It focuses on helping students learn about their roles as members of a school and local community. Throughout the year, learning will deepen student understanding of common humanity across various cultural differences through investigations of some universal human needs and wants. Our studies will examine the people within our local community and neighborhood as they connect to the global community at large. The study of holidays, as well as Quakerism, will be interspersed throughout the year to celebrate a variety of cultures and traditions. For our Learning Celebration we will invite our families into our classrooms to have a first hand experience of our application of these themes and topics.

Second Grade

We continue to foster a love of reading by teaching how to choose books that are just right for the child. We teach strategies for making good book choices, including how to know if a book is easy, just right or challenging. We also teach how to “buzz” which means to talk to their peers about books they have read. Second graders begin the year in small Guided Reading groups at their instructional level. They review and hone their reading strategies, build their fluency, and explore many facets of comprehension.

Language Arts

Wilson Foundations – The carefully structured scope and sequence of this wonderful hands-on program enables teachers and students to build on previously taught skills and provides the framework and routines for introducing new concepts. In second grade students learn to identify all six syllable types, read and spell words with short, long and r-controlled vowels and vowel teams as well as those with unexpected vowel sounds. Explicit irregular word instruction continues and emphasis is placed on mechanics such as capitalization and punctuation as well as vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. As always frequent opportunities for skill practice and application are provided.

Writing Workshop – This writing process approach continues to be at the heart of writing instruction in second grade. Through mini-lessons, practice and publishing, students explore writing across the narrative, opinion and informational genres. They have opportunities to demonstrate command of the conventions of grammar, capitalization, punctuation and spelling and they build confidence in their ability to communicate their ideas when writing. The Writing Workshop experience is enhanced by quality mentor text literature and one-on-one teacher/student conferences. Students regularly share and celebrate their work with one another.

Mathematics

Second grade uses the McGraw-Hill My Math curriculum. Woven throughout the program are opportunities for conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application. The students are exposed to fun, interactive lessons that encourage engagement in a variety of ways. Vocabulary cards, talk math, real-world problem solving, digital resources, and hands-on activities are all used to explore and discover mathematical concepts. An emphasis is placed on the following strands:

- Apply Addition and Subtraction Concepts
- Number Patterns
- Add and Subtract Two-Digit Numbers
- Place Value to 1,000
- Add and Subtract Three-Digit Numbers
- Money
- Data Analysis
- Time
- Customary and Metric Lengths
- Geometric Shapes and Equal Shares

We are committed to meeting the needs of each student and our math workshop approach allows us to do so. Math Workshop, with guided math instruction, involves teaching students in small group settings. While the teacher is working with a few students, others are engaged in learning independently, with a partner, or in a small collaborative group. Students rotate through hands-on activities/games, independent work and direct instruction. This approach allows students to talk about their mathematical thinking, work with and learn from peers, challenge themselves while taking risks and to focus on conceptual understanding.

Social Studies

In second grade, students apply the emerging understanding of civics, economics and geography of their community. Students learn about how their community works as well as a variety of ways that communities organize themselves. To develop an understanding, students examine the geographic and economic aspects of life on Long Island today.

Third Grade

When entering the third grade classroom, it is immediately apparent that building community, strengthening respect, and practicing Quaker values and testimonies as supported by the Responsive Classroom model is in the forefront of each day's work. Throughout the year, the foundation for a respectful, empathetic, and caring community is taught, emphasized, and practiced.

Under the guidance of their teacher, the children establish the base upon which the community operates and thrives. Community Meetings provide opportunities to problem solve and when necessary, make the appropriate "apology of action." The children learn from the moment they walk through the door that this is a safe place to be; growing as a learner, the children discover that it is alright to make mistakes, learn from them, and move on.

Language Arts

Reading Workshop: The third grade language arts curriculum is built around the Lucy Calkins Reading and Writing Workshop model. Building "stamina" and "volume" are at the core of both curriculums and one of the main focal points of our teaching, which is why we continually ask the children to read, read, read. Texts in the classroom libraries have been carefully collected to reflect diversity and a variety of genres to help students get "hooked" and feel connected to their reading. In the Reading Workshop the students read genres such as realistic fiction, historical fiction, biographies, mysteries, and a wide range of non-fiction books. We meet in small groups for guided reading and focus on different reading strategies such as: Using prior knowledge to make connections with the text, pausing and monitoring for understanding, and making inferences supported by information found in the text. The students learn to identify different story elements, to recognize how the author uses language when telling the story, to analyzing characters and their motives, and to expand their vocabulary. Learning the difference between an inferential question and a literal one gives the students the opportunity to learn how to dig deeper into the meaning of the story, while at the same time strengthening their comprehension skills. We ask the students to be watchful and observant readers and thinkers.

Writing Workshop: In the Writing Workshop, the students focus on personal narratives, informational books, and persuasive arguments. In all units the children work through the writing process: Developing their ideas, writing a rough draft, revising their work, editing, and publishing. In the personal narrative they learn how to expand their writing by using dialogue and good expression. The informational unit calls for them to "write like an expert" about a topic that they are most connected with and one that is the most familiar to them. Persuasive writing teaches students how to collect evidence to support bold, brave opinions through speech writing, editorials, and persuasive letters. Our spelling program is differentiated according a student's specific needs. We incorporate Words Their Way into the spelling curriculum and students are taught different spelling patterns in small groups. They are also given a "No Excuses" word list of high frequency words, which they are expected to know. The students work to apply the spelling skills they have learned in their writing. For both workshops, each student has a reading and writing partner in order to provide opportunities to work together discussing what they are reading and writing.

Mathematics

We use My Math for our mathematics instruction, a curriculum built using the Common Core and the Standards for Mathematical Practice. My Math weaves together conceptual understanding, procedural skill, fluency, and application, and teaches students the skills and strategies needed to tackle real world problems. It is multimodal, and has a website component that provides students with access to math games for automaticity, worksheets for extra practice, and each night's homework. In addition to the student online component, there is a teacher version that includes videos, songs, and the electronic version of the workbook, all of which can be projected on the Smartboard.

As part of our instruction, students use manipulatives and draw models and pictures to represent their thinking. They also work in small groups to develop the skills needed to articulate their thinking and teach their strategies to others. Students strengthen their abilities to learn from their (and others') mistakes to determine sound, efficient methods for solving problems.

We use Math Workshop to create individualized instruction based on each student's needs. Students are grouped together based on their level of understanding, and receive teacher support in a small group setting. Groups are fluid and change every week based on students' needs. Students not participating in small group instruction play math games for review, or complete independent work to demonstrate understanding. All student work is studied to then inform the next workshop's groupings

Social Studies

In social studies, third graders learn about Quaker history, influential Quakers, and Quaker practice throughout the year while also focusing on three main units: the relationship between geography and Long Island Native Americans' adaptation for survival, how communities may change against their will due to external forces, and how communities can respond to external forces of change by being activists. While learning about these topics, students use research skills to create projects, which incorporate literature, technology, and geographical study. Through a social justice lens, students also learn the importance of learning from various perspectives when studying historical events in order to understand all voices surrounding these moments. Throughout the year, students also work on getting to know themselves deeply by developing their working on self-identity. We value what each child brings to the classroom community. With our Quaker commitment to diversity and the investigation of different cultures, not only within our school community, but also within the broader global community, this study gives the students a wider understanding of the many different people with whom they share the Earth.

Fourth Grade

Our aim is to expose the children to and help them make connections with different types of literature. At the same time, we hope to encourage a love of learning and a sense of excitement about the material covered. Through their interaction with literature, students strengthen existing decoding skills, acquire new vocabulary, and enhance their comprehension skills. Small reading groups provide an opportunity for each child to actively participate in reading groups discussions and cooperative activities based on the literary selections.

Language Arts – Balanced Literacy Program

The goal of the fourth grade literacy program is to create a more analytical approach to reading and writing. Through immersion in quality literature, students strengthen their existing decoding skills, acquire new vocabulary and enhance their comprehension of the material read. Children are exposed to a variety of genres, some of which are directly connected to our social studies curriculum. Assessing students' comprehension is done through group discussion, diverse levels of questioning, dramatic play and activities such as games, the arts, and cooking.

To quote Lucy Calkins, founder of the Writing Workshop, "We need to provide children the opportunity and instruction necessary for them to cycle through the writing process regularly as they write, rehearse, draft, revise, edit, and publish their writing." The fourth grade writing program encourages each child to think about him or herself as special and to continue the foundation laid in their previous writing lessons. There is continuity across the Lower School as writing traits, such as ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions are used to augment the Writing Workshop. Fourth graders write in many different genres, but focus on narrative, informational, and persuasive writing.

The spelling program is supported by the Everyday Spelling curriculum, which develops and strengthens previously taught skills and strategies. Students also learn to target their own commonly misspelled words and to become more proficient spellers. Grammar skills are addressed through specific instruction and daily review of material taught.

Mathematics

Fourth grade uses the My Math text. Woven throughout the program are opportunities for conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application. Building on the foundation of the K-2 model, the students are exposed to fun, interactive lessons that encourage engagement in a variety of ways. Vocabulary cards, talk math, real-world problem solving, digital resources, and hands-on activities are all used to explore and discover mathematical concepts. An emphasis is placed on the following strands:

- Place Value
- Add and Subtract Whole Numbers
- Understand Multiplication and Division
- Multiply with One-Digit and Two-Digit Numbers
- Divide by a One-Digit Number
- Patterns and Sequences
- Fractions and Decimals
- Operations with Fractions
- Customary and Metric Measurement
- Perimeter and Area
- Geometry

We are committed to meeting the needs of each student and our math workshop approach allows us to do so. Math Workshop, with guided math instruction, involves teaching students in small group settings. While the teacher is working with a few students, others are engaged in learning independently, with a partner, or in a small collaborative group. Students rotate through hands-on activities/games, independent work and direct instruction. This approach allows students to talk about their mathematical thinking, work with and learn from peers, challenge themselves while taking risks and to focus on conceptual understanding.

Social Studies

Fourth grade begins by exploring the history of New York State, including Long Island. Students study map skills, the economy and how it has changed, citizenship and government, as well as the history of the region. Areas of history include: the American Revolution, European Exploration and Colonial Life, the building of the Erie Canal, the Underground Railroad and the influx of migrants in the late 19th and 20th centuries. They also read a weekly social studies newspaper called, “New York Studies Weekly.”

Fifth Grade

Fifth grade is a transitional year. Students learn how to develop and strengthen the necessary skills both academically and socially that allow them to make a smooth shift from being a lower school student to entering the wonders of middle school. Much is changing in their world, and the focus is on reinforcing the values they have been taught through the Quaker tenets as well as the lessons they have learned through Responsive Classroom teachings. The goal is to foster independent, responsible, and confident rising sixth graders. This is a collaborative effort that is infused throughout the curriculum, supported by faculty in all special areas, and strengthened through numerous interactive games, activities, and discussions.

Language Arts

Reading and writing have a powerful interrelationship. When the students are learning how to think about texts as readers, they are also learning how to notice the craft of writing. In fifth grade, we hope to inspire and foster a lifelong love of language.

During reading instruction, students explore genres and develop a variety of reading skills. By incorporating the Reading Workshop model, students' appreciation for reading is enhanced, as is their understanding of the many reasons we read. Students have opportunities to choose their books, and they read every day, thereby building both their reading stamina and volume. They strengthen their capacity to make connections and broaden their knowledge of literary works. The ability to understand plot elements, comprehend texts, and reflect on reading both verbally and in writing is at the heart of our reading program.

Consistent with the Lower School's commitment to the Lucy Calkins Writing Workshop model, fifth grade students continue to build on the skills and strategies that have been introduced, taught, practiced, and developed since Kindergarten. Writing traits such as ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions are explored in depth, and the students are expected to produce a high quality of writing in three major genres: personal narrative, opinion/persuasive, and research-based/informational writing. The Writing Workshop also supports other genres such as fictional narrative and poetry. Taking a piece to publication is the same in all genres: collect and select notebook entries, draft, revise, edit, and publish.

Our language arts program addresses grammar, spelling, and vocabulary through Reading and Writing Workshops, active student participation, and ongoing review of students' written work. The purpose of grammar instruction is to improve the clarity and correctness of students' written work. Grammar concepts are explicitly discussed and explored through mini-lessons and the writing process. In word study, students learn to generalize spelling sounds, patterns, and rules, and they develop strategies for memorizing high frequency words. They also build vocabulary by exploring word origins and meanings. Students have opportunities to practice skills in lessons as well as in the context of Writing Workshop.

Mathematics

Fifth grade uses the McGraw-Hill My Math curriculum. Woven throughout the program are opportunities for conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application. Building on the foundation of the K-4 model, the students are exposed to fun, interactive lessons that encourage engagement in a variety of ways. Vocabulary cards, talk math, real-world problem solving, digital resources, and hands-on activities are all used to explore and discover mathematical concepts. An emphasis is placed on the following strands:

- Place Value
- Multiplication and Division
- Decimals
- Expressions and Patterns
- Fractions
- Measurement
- Perimeter and Area
- Geometry

We are committed to meeting the needs of each student and our math workshop approach allows us to do so. Math Workshop, with guided math instruction, involves teaching students in small group settings. While the teacher is working with a few students, others are engaged in learning independently, with a partner, or in a small collaborative group. Students rotate through hands-on activities/games, independent work and direct instruction. This approach allows students to talk about their mathematical thinking, work with and learn from peers, challenge themselves while taking risks and to focus on conceptual understanding.

Social Studies

The fifth grade social studies curriculum centers on United States geography, United States history, service learning, government, economics, and current events. Freedom and the rights of individuals are important themes that are viewed through different lenses over the course of the year. During their studies, students acquire information through a variety of sources, evaluate that information, and then present it in a way that reflects their understanding. Skills such as interpreting primary and secondary sources, doing research, taking notes and developing good study habits are continually reinforced.

Woven through the social studies curriculum are the important themes of character education, Quakerism, social justice, activism and global studies. Service learning is an important focus of our work as well. A culmination of all of the important work that is learned will end with A Learning Celebration, to which the parents and family members are invited, is a culmination of all that is learned in this exciting program.

Specials

Science

The main objective in Lower School Science is to foster a sense of exploration and discovery by observing the natural world. Students are encouraged to maximize the use of resources to develop their observational skills. As they learn to observe the natural world, students begin to ask their own questions about how and why things work. This in turn leads students to begin to develop their own hypotheses, which naturally leads them to search for answers and attempt to develop inquiry-based experiments. In this way, students are led through the scientific method as a natural process of observing and questioning the world around them. We explore physical science, earth science, life science, engineering and technology and work to create a seamless curriculum that encompasses other disciplines.

In all grade levels students will identify the parts of a system, how the parts function together and why they cannot function properly if a part is missing. They can apply this to the many facets of science. Some of the topics covered in science are the human body, space, ecology, metamorphosis of various living organisms, energy, inventions, earth science and environmental science.

Students investigate and explore the process of the “scientific method”— the process of making observations, recording evidence, and drawing conclusions. They focus on both scientific literacy and the scientific process utilizing age appropriate hands-on activities. They will also have the opportunity to take a closer look at features of specific living organisms that they observe in the science room.

World Languages

All students in the Lower School participate in the World Languages and Cultures program. In an effort to lay the foundation for communication, Early Childhood through fourth grade students study the Spanish language and culture. As students enter fifth grade, all students are given the opportunity to explore multiple languages and cultures: French, Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. Beyond exposure, this allows them to make an informed decision about their language selection as they enter the Middle School. The instructional goal is to develop listening skills, auditory discrimination, auditory processing, speaking skills, and linguistic awareness as well as cultural exposure to the target language. To enhance learning in addition to context, collaboration with the classroom teachers as well as other special area teachers will take place to integrate and incorporate concepts in the grade level curriculum. These goals are achieved by incorporating rhymes, songs, poems, games, music, movement, storytelling, role-playing, art projects, technology, and simple conversations into daily classroom activities. Learning will take place through concrete experiences such as visuals, manipulatives, and hands-on activities that are integral components of instruction accompanied by aural-oral language use.

The Spanish curriculum includes the following concepts: greetings, awareness of self, body parts, games, colors, shapes, numbers, directions, weather, seasons, holidays, traditions, telling time, days of the week, months of the year, foods, family members, clothing, forms of transportation, sports, occupations, knowledge of Spanish speaking countries around the world, and animals found in various environments.

Visual Art

Everyone is an Artist

The Art Studio in the Lower School is a welcoming, safe and inspiring work environment where students are encouraged to take risks and develop their aesthetic awareness. Personal views are respected, differences are celebrated and all students are considered working artists.

Practice Makes Better

Through carefully designed explorative activities, students engage and experiment with a wide range of materials and processes that will allow them to discover their creative potential. Throughout the school year, students will explore a variety of art process and techniques such as drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, sculpture, and clay handbuilding.

Materials are the Best Teacher

Essentially, the learning that takes place in the Art Studio happens primarily through hands-on kinesthetic experiences. In other words, Art is a process as well as a product, therefore, exploration through multi-sensory experience allow

students to think about a concept in a variety of ways as well as embraces the multiple intelligences. When children are given the opportunity to explore a material before being told how to use it, they are more likely to build a personal relationship with the material and develop their ability as an artist. In Early Childhood, students begin to develop a relationship with materials through explorative experiences that focus on the actions of painting, collage and sculpture. Emphasis is placed on the process of art making rather than the products. Students in grades K-5 will often explore a material prior to focusing on a specific concept or being asked to work towards a desired goal or product. Materials and techniques are revisited in future grades in a more advanced way to build skill, creativity and confidence in the art making process.

Making Connections

The Visual Art curriculum in the Lower School is often integrated with other academic disciplines, such as cultural studies, science, math and music. Integration takes place where there is an authentic overlap of goals and objectives for both disciplines. Integrated and kinesthetic activities help students gain a deeper understanding of grade level objectives while having the opportunity to think and study them through various artistic, scientific, mathematical and cultural lenses.

Music

It is the goal of the Friends Academy Music Department that each of our students would develop and nurture a life-long love of making and supporting music both in the local and global community of the Arts. We employ a spiraling curriculum designed to tap into the innate talents in each child and stimulate them into becoming tuneful, beautiful and artful musicians. We use a wide variety of activities, which encourage the creativity of each individual through a safe environment of mutual exploration and focus our learning through the lens of the FA Five Strands of Music (Music Making, Music Literacy, Music Connections, Music Legacy, and Character Development).

Each of our LS musicians explores numerous pitched and non-pitched instruments. (Including Orff Instruments and recorders.) They begin to play in a formal ensemble (Band or Orchestra) in 4th grade. Particular care is taken to introduce students to appropriate care and maintenance for musical instruments and the responsibilities of each individual as a musical ensemble member.

We offer many informal opportunities for performance throughout the year as well as at least two formal presentations in concerts or class presentations. Students regularly accompany songs in our performances. All of our young musicians from Kindergarten – Fifth Grade perform in our annual Winter Concert, which is held the day before our Winter Holiday Break. Third – Fifth Grade students also perform in the Spring Concert.

FA Five Strands of Music Education

- Music Making
- Music Literacy
- Music Connections
- Music Legacy
- Character Development

Music Making

By exploring, creating, replicating, and observing music, students build their technical and expressive skill, develop their artistry and a unique personal voice in music, and experience the power of music to communicate. They understand music as a universal language and a legacy of expression in every culture.

Music Literacy

Students develop a working knowledge of music language and aesthetics, and apply it to analyzing, evaluating, documenting, creating, and performing music. They recognize their roles as articulate, literate musicians when communicating with their families, schools, and communities through music.

Specials (continued)

Making Connections

By investigating historical, social, and cultural contexts, and by exploring common themes and principles connecting music with other disciplines, students enrich their creative work and understand the significance of music in the evolution of human thought and expression.

Music Legacy

Students discover their place in the future of music as musicians, teachers, parents, philanthropists, and stewards of music.

Character Development

Students develop integrity, respect, kindness, teamwork, patience, self-management, focus, critical thinking, leadership, discernment, perseverance, service, and stewardship. Students learn the intrinsic value in creating an aesthetic.

Library

All of the children in the Lower School, from Play Group through fourth grade, have scheduled library classes. Students learn age appropriate library and research skills, for example how to locate a book on the shelf. At each grade level the students are also read aloud to. Reading aloud is an important activity that benefits the listener by encouraging vocabulary development and broadening the imagination. During book selection time, the children are allowed to choose freely from the fiction and non-fiction collections. In fifth grade, library time is unscheduled. Students will come to the library as needed for research and leisure reading. At all grade levels, the librarian works closely with the classroom teachers to provide materials needed for planned units of study. The Lower School Library is also a place where children are welcome to come find answers to individual questions that they may have. Special collections available for circulation include World Language materials and audiobooks.

Health

The objective of the Lower School health education program is to begin equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy choices throughout their lives. In the Lower School, we use the “Great Body Shop” as the foundation for our curriculum. The “Great Body Shop” is a comprehensive health program that uses multiple strategies promoting a positive impact on children’s health attitudes, knowledge and behavior. The program includes topics that cover all aspects of physical, mental, social, emotional health, and safety, including substance abuse and violence prevention, injury and personal safety, fitness and nutrition, disease and illness prevention, body systems, growth & development, illness & disease prevention and consumer and environmental health. Additionally, each unit incorporates the skills of interpersonal communication, advocacy for person, family and community health, self-management, decision-making and goal-setting.

Physical Education

In the elementary grades, the physical education program emphasizes the development of fundamental locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative skills through the main content areas of educational games and dance. The movement framework, (i.e., body, space, effort, and relationship) is also a part of the core content and is the basis for developing, expanding, and refining children’s range of motor skills and awareness. The motor skill foundations established during the elementary grades enhance children’s social, cognitive and physical development and increase the likelihood of continued interest and participation in physical activity.

Health-fitness concepts at elementary grades are supported by a rich experience in many basic movement forms and are folded into the curriculum. The health-fitness components of flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, muscle fitness and body composition are supported through the Fitnessgram which assesses each individual’s health-fitness levels beginning in 3rd grade and serves as an educational tool to address these concepts within our curriculum.

Students also enjoy a dance program inherent in their curriculum, once a week for half of the year.

Special Programs/Trips

Outdoor Education

Outdoor education activities and field trips, for example, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Green Meadow Farm, Planting Fields, Sunken Meadow Park, NYC Museums, Nassau County Museum and Shelter Island.

Cultural Arts

The Parent Council provides the Lower School with money to see performances and meet artists. Author Jack Gantos has been a visitor as well as trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, who has worked with our brass students. A wide variety of performances include, ballet, poets, singers, Chinese and Flamenco dancers, the Black Violins, themed assemblies such as Anti-Bullying, science and more.

Student Performances

There are many performances by Lower School students such as: Winter and Spring programs; 100th Day celebration in younger grades; meet the Authors in Kindergarten; Early Childhood Song Feast; first grade Readers Theater, fifth grade Friendsville and Inventions Convention; fourth grade alternative energy presentation and many more. Our largest performance piece is the Holiday Sing, which takes place directly before our Holiday Break in December.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Interdisciplinary Curriculum?

Many subjects in Lower School are presented interdisciplinary. That is, teachers help students understand the process and approaches to various disciplines through the connection of ideas, information and perspectives. Some examples of topics that are taught across the curriculum:

- Social studies, arts, geography, modern language, etc. – all grades
- Math and geography – all grades
- Greeting cards for Winter Shelter residence – art, writing, Quaker values – Kindergarten
- Quaker study – social studies, reading, writing art, technology – grade one
- Responsive Classroom and Quaker and Character Education – all grades
- Writing, reading and writing across the curriculum – all grades
- Cell Study in science and art-grade three
- Quaker tenets, reading and art – grade two
- Art and community service – soup bowls project-grade four and Upper School
- Inventions study in science and social studies – grade five
- Reading, writing, dance, art and more – grade five

Q: What is the World Language Program; why introduce a second language at the elementary level?

The program's objective is to expose young children to the sounds and structures of a language other than English, while fostering receptivity toward another culture. The program is content-related, reinforcing concepts, themes and skills presented in the regular class. Songs, games, stories, etc. common to the traditional curriculum for Lower School are easily translated into the target language of Spanish in grades Play Group – fourth grade. The fifth grade children are given the opportunity to explore multiple languages and cultures: French, Mandarin Chinese and Spanish.

Brain research supports second language learning as soon as possible. Children under the age of ten who learn a second language usually develop native-like pronunciation. Enhanced problem solving skills, improved performance in their first language and demonstrate a broader appreciation for people of other cultures.

Q: What is the communication between school and home?

The school has a number of ways it communicates with parents over the course of the year:

Back-to-School Night

In September, the Lower School hosts “Back-to-School Night” and invites parents to view their child’s classroom and hear from the teachers about the curriculum for the year.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

As mentioned above, the core teacher convenes two formal parent conferences (one in the fall and one in the second semester) and informal ones as needed. These conferences are designed to give parents an assessment of student progress in areas of academic and social/emotional growth. Dates for conferences are on the glossy calendar.

Progress Reports

Formal written reports are submitted to parents twice a year (winter and end of year) in all grades. Goal setting sheets, which documents goals set by teachers and parent, are given to parents at the end of the Fall Conference.

Parent Coffees

The Lower School Principal hosts Parent Coffees for parents during the year. These informal gatherings offer an opportunity for parents to hear about the life of the school and to ask questions and raise concerns.

Inside FA and Among Friends

Friends Academy’s weekly e-Bulletin and monthly e-Magazine.

Mrs. McLean’s Blog

Lower School Principal Debby McLean posts regularly about life in the Lower School at www.fa.org. You can also follow her on Instagram@debbymclean.

Q: How are students assessed?

- Though a formal grading system is in place at the Middle and Upper School levels, our philosophy is consistent in that we do not rank in class nor do we compute grade point average.
- We do assess achievement in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics in the later grades.
- In third, fourth and fifth grades the children take an independent school standardized test called the CPT IV, commonly called the ERBs.
- Speech and language screenings are done by an outside consultant.



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