

FIRST GRADE

First graders are eager learners. They are observant and curious about their expanding world. Their rapidly growing skills begin to make possible both independent and collaborative exploration inside and outside the classroom.

Pine Hill first grade students experience a classroom environment that encourages active participation in observation, investigation, comparing, manipulating, and problem solving. Children are asked to make choices, take risks, learn from their mistakes, and gradually take more responsibility for their own learning.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

LEARNING AND GROWING Children have their own learning style and timetable for growth. They develop intellectually, emotionally, and physically at different times. Our program has been created to accommodate these natural differences in meaningful ways.

HOMEWORK First graders are given homework assignments at the beginning of each week. The assignments should take an average of fifteen minutes per night to complete. Occasionally, families will be asked to work on a project together. It is also expected that children will read and/or be read to for fifteen minutes each night. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to read to and with their children, model enjoyment of their own reading, and share personalized reading and writing experiences in the family/home setting. These are all important elements in the acquisition of language arts skills in children. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to contact the teacher if their first grader experiences any problems with homework assignments. In addition, students are given a monthly calendar with optional enrichment activities to complete at home.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS Report cards are sent home two times a year. Conferences will be scheduled twice during the year. Teachers are also available whenever clarification is needed on an issue involving a child's education. While phone calls and email messages will be returned as soon as possible, parents/guardians are reminded that teaching duties and other responsibilities make instantaneous communication impossible. Newsletters from the classroom will be sent by email periodically throughout the year.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Our academic program, which closely follows the Massachusetts Frameworks State Standards for first grade students, promotes thinking and communicating, as well as gaining and applying knowledge.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Reading

Instruction is designed to address children's varied learning styles and learning rates. First grade teachers make it a priority to create a comfortable setting that enables young children to

be serious about the task of becoming readers and writers. Reading Workshop in first grade is organized around a strategic balance of activities and lessons. Teachers provide direct models, such as when teaching mini lessons, reading aloud, and conferring with students.

The goals of Reading Workshop:

- Develop a love of reading
- Build students' stamina for reading independently
- Teach students effective strategies for processing text at increasing levels of difficulty
- Teach students strategies to decode words and comprehend text
- Teach students how to retell a story
- Develop fluency and expression

The core activity during reading workshop is small group reading instruction. Teachers also provide additional practice with reading skills by engaging children in word work, extension activities, or other literacy tasks. Instruction is guided by careful assessment and observation of each child's reading.

Units of Study:

- Launching: Students learn about Reading Workshop
- Monitor for Meaning: Students learn decoding strategies and check for understanding
- Retelling Fiction and Nonfiction: Students learn strategies to comprehend a book

Phonics

Phonetic skills are taught using the Foundations Program to meet the Common Core Standards. Foundations provides a systematic and explicit approach to reading and spelling with phonics. Children at all levels benefit from the decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling) strategies presented. Children are also given many opportunities to practice reading and writing skills. By the end of first grade, most children will have acquired essential decoding and encoding skills and will also use prediction and self-correction strategies effectively.

Students will learn:

- Letters, sounds, and formation
- Segmenting and blending of sounds
- Long and short vowels
- Consonant digraphs (wh, ch, sh, th, ck)
- Bonus letter spelling (ff, ll, ss, zz)
- Consonant blends
- R-controlled vowels
- syllables

Writing

Writing skills are taught using the Lucy Calkins Writing Workshop Model.

Writing Workshop is a structured, focused time for children to concentrate on the craft of writing. Through whole class mini lessons, small group instruction, and individual conferences, students will receive explicit instruction on essential writing strategies and skills. First grade writers are encouraged to use inventive spelling (temporary non-standard spelling) to increase writing fluency, to become comfortable in sharing their writing with others, and to gain increasing confidence and pride in their own ideas and writing abilities. A common list of high frequency words has been designated for each grade level. These words are based upon reading and writing. First graders will focus on being able to correctly read and spell this list of core words.

The Writing Workshop Units are:

- Personal Narratives (Small Moment Stories)
- Nonfiction (All About Books)
- Poetry
- Persuasive Writing

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics skills are taught using the Everyday Mathematics Program to meet the Common Core Standards. Children enter first grade with a rich background of mathematical understanding, information, and creativity. The mathematics program, Everyday Mathematics, takes advantage of this background and builds on their existing capabilities and experiences.

Students become familiar with mathematical patterns and relationships and are asked to interpret information, to make reasonable decisions, and to solve increasingly complex problems using a variety of mathematical approaches and tools. The Everyday Math program establishes a routine of thinking, talking, and writing about math. This allows children to have success when problem solving. The role of the teacher is to build student self-confidence, to nurture natural curiosity, to challenge with rich problems through which students will come to value mathematics, to provide a strong foundation for all further study, and to draw out students' mathematical power and abilities.

The Units of Study in Math are:

- Addition and Subtraction Math Facts
- Establishing Routines
- Everyday Uses of Numbers
- Visual Patterns and Number Patterns
- Thermometers, Linear Measures, and Clocks
- Relations, Number Stories, and Mental Arithmetic
- Geometry and Attributes
- Money
- Place Value

SOCIAL COMPETENCY

The socialization to school, which began in kindergarten, is continued and extended in first grade. The importance and need for rules, respect and concern for others, and personal responsibility is taught through our Social Competency Program called Open Circle. Through group work and examinations of social interactions in and outside the classroom, the children acquire skills that will make them effective decision-makers and problem solvers. Children are taught the characteristics and responsibilities of being a good citizen, which is part of our social studies curriculum content.

SOCIAL STUDIES

One primary goal of our social studies program is for students to understand and learn about the lives and times of famous Americans, as well as the meaning of the national holidays we celebrate. First graders will also learn about important national symbols and will explore the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance.

An introduction to life in modern China exposes our students to another culture and enables students to compare and contrast aspects of that country with our own. Learning about families in other cultures provides many opportunities to compare ways of living and the choices that people have to make based on their needs and where they live.

The introduction of maps and globes is another essential part of social studies for the first grade child. Through a variety of whole group and individual hands-on activities, the children will begin to develop a sense of geographical awareness. The students become familiar with what is represented on a map and a globe and how they are used. Cardinal directions and the locations of such places as the North and South Poles, the seven continents, and the oceans of the world are explored. Specific instructions on locating our town, our state, and American capital cities are presented.

SCIENCE

The science program promotes spontaneity and creativity as it exposes first graders to a wide variety of experiences. We want children to develop and maintain their curiosity about the physical and natural worlds. First graders will learn to become closer observers of their environment. Discriminating, sorting, classifying, sequencing, comparing, and measuring will be the skills driving our many explorations. Some of our work will be integrated with literature, math, field trips, art, music, and language arts.

Volunteers trained through the Broadmoor environmental program will guide first graders during environmental walks. In a study of woodland animals, students will travel to Broadmoor and observe evidence of animal homes and habitat, focusing on the beaver.

The major topics covered in first grade in science include:

- Life Sciences: trees, and New England woodland mammals
- Earth Science: seasons

- Physical Science: balls and ramps
- Technology/Engineering: build a kite (in conjunction with the study of China)

SPECIALIST PROGRAMS

HEALTH EDUCATION

The health education program, which compliments the science curriculum, is a comprehensive health and substance abuse prevention program using The Great Body Shop curriculum from the Children's Health Market. The overall goals of the health program are to facilitate understanding of fundamental health concepts and disease prevention. The program encourages students to build respect for and promote the health and well-being of one's self and others. The program also promotes the acceptance of personal responsibility for health-enhancing behaviors and the reduction of health risks. First grade students participate in a health class two times a month. A health tutor who is funded by the Community School Association leads the classes.

The topics covered in the Great Body Shop for first grade students include the following: Safety, The Body- Head to Toe, Nutrition, Medicine, How We Talk and Listen, Emotions, Drug Abuse Prevention, Illness, Respiratory System, and Physical Fitness.

Each topic includes a "Student Issue" from the Great Body Shop to be used as family health resource material. A monthly Parent Bulletin suggests family reading materials, helpful family websites, and information directed to parents/guardians.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In the first grade physical education program, children work on a variety of basic manipulative, loco motor, and non-loco motor movement skills. Students practice movement concepts including direction, balance, level, pathway, range, force absorption and fundamental game skills.

Fitness and wellness concepts are introduced and students are encouraged to engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity several times per week (outside of physical education class). Activities are selected to help students develop positive attitudes toward participation in physical activity and to help them recognize that physical activity is good for personal good health.

During the first grade year students learn to demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior by following classroom rules, procedures and safe practices, and by listening to teacher directions and suggestions.

First Grade Physical Education Performance Standards

- Performs most loco motor actions using mature form.
- Demonstrates skills of chasing, fleeing, and dodging to avoid or catch others.
- Tosses and catches a ball with no bounces.
- Kicks a stationary ball using a smooth continuous running step.
- Able to jump a rope turned by others.
- Maintains momentary stillness bearing weight on a variety of body parts

- Identifies and begins to utilize the technique employed (leg flexion) to soften the landing in jumping.
- Participates regularly in vigorous physical activity.
- Sustains moderate to vigorous physical activity for short periods of time.
- Identifies feelings that result from participation in physical activities.
- Recognizes the joy of shared play and interacts positively with students in class regardless of differences.
- Tries new movement activities and skills.
- Uses equipment and space safely and properly.
- Transfers rules of the gym to rules of the playground.

LIBRARY

The Pine Hill Library is open during school hours, and there are many resources available for students and Pine Hill Families to access 24/7 on the [Pine Hill Library website](#). You can find out which books are available in our library, which new books we have and you can learn about our exciting Birthday Book donation program.

One resource that has been created especially for Pine Hill students is [Pine Hill Libguides](#). This website contains enriching, student-friendly videos, web links, and photos that connect directly to our curriculum. You can even watch some informative student created projects!

The two major focus areas of the Pine Hill Library Program are Information and Media Literacy and Love of Reading.

Information and Media Literacy:

A student who is information and media literate:

- Engages in the information literacy process by accessing, evaluating and communicating informational text
- Uses a variety of skills and strategies to comprehend nonfiction and informational text
- Accesses and organizes information and media

Love of Reading:

A student who develops a love of reading:

- Has access to exciting and engaging literature in a comfortable and welcoming learning environment
- Reads for a variety of purposes and across content areas
- Independently reads books and texts each year

The teacher librarian works in collaboration with classroom teachers and the technology teacher to create opportunities for students to learn the skills needed to accomplish these goals. In addition to working collaboratively with students and teachers in the classroom, students attend

a schedule library class. In these classes the teacher librarian continues teaching these focus skills and fostering a love of reading.

Students in grades K- 5 check out books from the library as needed and during their scheduled library classes. Parents may also check out books from the Pine Hill Library. Send an email to the teacher librarian at ryanl@doversherborn.org to have an account created. Volunteers are always welcome as well!

ART

In first grade, the art curriculum is designed to provide a sequential development of basic art concepts in a wide variety of media. Activities are frequently coordinated to integrate with material presented in the classroom. Themes utilized are those of which the child has first-hand, personal knowledge. Included are themes such as home, family, pets, and holidays. Lettering lessons involve using the child's name for the design. Activities to promote sensitivity to color, texture, shape, and other concepts are also employed. Students are also taught the proper care and use of art materials, as well as responsibility and respect for each other's artwork. In support of the visual arts curriculum, parent volunteers periodically present "ArtWorks at Pine Hill", an art appreciation lesson and hands-on activity for each class of students.

TECHNOLOGY

Students are able to use technology to enhance learning in the classroom and in the computer lab. All first grade classes are scheduled to visit the computer lab on a weekly basis. Computers also are an integral part of the classroom, often utilized as another component of the learning centers approach.

Some examples of first grade software used at Pine Hill include:

- Pixie
- Thinking Things Collection
- Stationery Studio
- River Deep House Series
 - Bailey's Book House
 - Millie's Math House
- Trudy's Time & Place
- Sammy's Science House
- Read, Write & Type
- Interactive Math Journey
- Read, Write & Type
- Kids Works Deluxe

First grade students work on the following technology skills during the year:

- Basic technology terminology

- Responsible use of technology
- Basic skills for using hardware and software applications
- Practice using two hands on the keyboard
- Use of an application for basic drawing with technology
- Computerized test taking
- Use of the computer as a tool for learning and organizing information

MUSIC

The Philosophy of Orff Schulwerk, which is used at Pine Hill, states the following: music education shall be made available and appealing to every child. The student shall experience successful musical activities that demand total involvement, artistic discipline, creativity, sensitivity and active listening. These activities will lead to development of skills with each of the elements of music: rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and timbre.

In the Orff approach, the development from play through the exploration of musical elements and finally to musical understanding is carefully sequenced. The emphasis is on process rather than performance; on participation by all, each at his/her own level; on development of musical ideas rather than reproducing set forms. The characteristics unique to this approach are: the basis in speech play, the use of a special group of pitched percussion instruments and recorder, and the vital role of movement.

Skills: Since each child comes to school with different experiences, the development of skills in the primary years varies widely. Children who listen to music at home and have parents/guardians who sing and play musical games with them tend to progress more rapidly than those who have no outside musical activities at all.

By the end of Grade 1, each child will have mastered the following skills:

- Rhythm: the ability to maintain steady pulse (beat) and measured silence (rest), imitate and improvise simple rhythmic patterns, and have an awareness of accented and unaccented beats (meter).
- Melody: the ability to discriminate high and low pitches, recognize melodic contour and match singing tones identify and understand the concept of a musical scale.
- Harmony: the ability to provide simple accompaniment for melodies either vocally or instrumentally using sustained tones or short repeated patterns (ostinati).
- Form: an awareness of motive (question and answer), phrase, two-part (AB) and three-part (ABA) form.
- Timbre: the ability to use the voice with variety of inflection, diction and dynamics; ability to use a variety of percussion sounds (body, pitched, and non-pitched) to enhance musical experiences.

In addition, the songs and activities for the music program are selected to correlate, as much as possible, with the themes being explored in the first grade classroom. In this way, the children will begin to understand the relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside

the arts, music in relation to history and culture, and that music can be both an individual and a community experience, each with its own skills and rewards