

Program of Studies

Berkshire Country Day School

Where you belong.

Lower School
2009–10

Kindergarten

Our Kindergarten program is designed to facilitate and nurture the growth and development of the whole child. As children move through the various phases of social, emotional, and intellectual development, their classroom becomes an active learning environment where they feel comfortable trying new things, taking risks and learning from their mistakes. Allowing them many opportunities to succeed helps build self-confidence and self-esteem.

Andrea Patel

Many social and academic learning goals are addressed using The Responsive Classroom© Approach. The Responsive Classroom© techniques allow for the creation of a classroom where all students are welcomed, respected, and feel empowered to make choices. Some of these practices include Morning Meeting, Guided Discovery, Rules and Logical Consequences, and Academic Choice. Throughout the year, we work together to help develop a sense of respect for one another, take care of our environment, and learn to take responsibility for our actions.

The Kindergarten language arts program includes reading, writing, listening and speaking. Our program builds on what the children already know about language to help them develop confidence as effective communicators. We use the Project Read Language Arts program to teach phonemic awareness as well as reading and writing skills. Proper formation of upper and lower case letters as well as numerals are taught through Project Read's handwriting program. Daily practice with each of the four areas contributes to the children's whole language development and they are each given a place in the language arts program. For example:

- *Reading*—morning messages, poem and song charts, big books, daily schedule, classroom books, library books, stories composed by the children themselves.
- *Writing*—group stories, journals, individual picture stories, group and individual creative writing projects, story dictation.
- *Listening and Speaking*—poetry, chants, finger-plays, stories and chapter books read aloud to the group, conversation at group time, sharing time, snack and lunch, and peer readers. Teachers model correct use of language at all times.

Kindergarten children are encouraged to write independently and to approximate spelling as best they can. As young children write, they actively pull together much of what they know about language. As they acquire more understanding of sound-symbol relationships and with continued practice, children begin to master the mechanics. Over the next several years, standard

spelling replaces invented spelling. Conveying the pleasure and excitement of literacy is our primary goal.

The Kindergarten math curriculum is designed to help children appreciate the usefulness of mathematical ideas and skills in everyday life. We emphasize counting and numeration, not only because children are naturally curious and motivated in these areas, but also because they form the basis for much mathematical understanding. Math experiences include patterning, sorting, and classifying, comparing, and logical thinking, and are significant features in our program. Graphing is practiced throughout the curriculum. These skills contribute to a broad base of mathematical understanding.

Young children especially need to manipulate objects physically as they practice math concepts. In the beginning, each child freely explores all the materials available in the program to determine each material's unique possibilities and limitations, to discover and explore pattern, spatial relationships, balance, and classification spontaneously. Materials will then be used selectively for learning and practicing math concepts. Among the materials frequently used are pattern blocks, dominoes, dice, unifix cubes, geoboards, jewels, various kinds of counters, Cuisenaire rods, links and collections.

The children study a variety of different topics in the science and social studies programs. These topics help cultivate a sense of wonder about the natural world and spark children's natural curiosity. Children are empowered to ask questions and are encouraged to look for answers using a variety of resources. We take field trips to enrich learning experiences and to put them into real life context. Some of the topics we will explore this year are caterpillars and butterflies, skeletons, Native Americans, penguins in Antarctica, the ocean, cows, and the rain forest.

In addition to scheduled classes in art with the art teacher, our classroom provides a wide variety of art experiences, which stimulate creativity and encourage personal expression. We paint, draw with colored pencils, crayons, cray-pas and markers, make play dough, model with clay, and create collages using tissue paper, recycled objects, and other materials. Time is allowed for exploration of materials, creating an arena for individual and group expression.

Art

Laura Piasecki

Kindergarten students attend class in the art studio in Furey Hall twice a week for 40 minutes. During this time students will be introduced to the project or exploration of the day and given time to plan their work. They will work in a variety of materials with concentration on personal exploration and process. As the year goes on they will begin to reflect on their work and learn vocabulary to describe their process and projects. Students will paint, draw, sculpt, and build using materials from watercolor to clay, with an expansive array of textures, colors, and challenges to build their knowledge of the mediums available to artists.

Topics that will guide the assignments will include ideas from their own experiences, their school, their communities, and the environment. Proper use and care of materials will be emphasized at all times. The children will learn about working together to take care of the tools, materials, and art room.

Please come and visit anytime and share what you like to do in art with us.

French

Mme. Maria Whalen

Students meet for French three times a week for 20-minute lessons. Our goal is to introduce the French language. The teaching will be based on children's natural curiosity and the instinctive learning abilities of their age. The child's capacity to imitate will be used to help the students to articulate the very different French sounds.

The focus will be placed on making the students comfortable in learning French and making the lessons enjoyable and interesting.

By the end of the year, the students should develop confidence and interest in learning French, and will have obtained some basic vocabulary and phonetic skills necessary for future progress.

Teaching Methods

Extensive use of games, songs, rhymes, and interactive exercises as teaching tools.

Subjects

Simple greetings, numbers, alphabet, colors, body parts, family, animals, clothes, fruits, and familiar objects.

Connections will be made to homeroom units such as butterflies, food and animals as often as possible.

Library

Jeff Uhas

The library program at BCD seeks to support the overall mission of the school through providing an atmosphere which promotes inquiry, discovery, and academic excellence while realizing each student's unique potential.

The library serves as a resource for the entire BCD community equipping faculty as well as students with materials that complement their courses of study. In addition to serving as a resource, the early childhood library program will introduce students to the excitement and opportunities that the library has to offer. Students will become familiar with the organization of the library while learning of some of the different materials and genres available in the library.

In addition to exploring the library, students will engage in weekly read alouds during which participation and active listening will be stressed. These high interest stories will be selected to complement areas covered in the classroom as well highlight aspects of story form. Finally, the opportunity to borrow materials will provide the students with the responsibility of caring for and returning books. Students will be encouraged to visit the library outside of their scheduled class period to further explore their own areas of interest.

Music

Heather Fishman

The Music Curriculum in Preschool and Lower School is based on the belief that each child can do well and enjoy music in a supportive environment that fosters creativity and freedom of expression.

Kindergarten meets twice a week for 30 minutes. Children participate in a wide range of musical activities including singing, dancing, listening, playing instruments and movement. Students are introduced to simple rhythmic concepts and notation. Singing is focused mainly on folk songs and games and the selection of materials reflect consideration of each child's growing and changing abilities. Many styles of music are explored when listening, dancing, and playing.

Physical Education

Gail Heady

The physical education program in the Preschool Division is separated into three areas of development for each class: equipment play, a theme for the month, and small games.

Equipment play activities help develop the abilities children need to participate in actual sports later on.

Small equipment play activities include: Balls, Hoops, Ropes, Cones, Bean Bags, Balloons, and Scarves. Large equipment play activities include: Parachutes, Tires, Scooters, Mats, Beams, and the Climbing Wall.

Each physical education class has a theme so we can concentrate on an area appropriate for four and five year olds. We can see how they improve their motor skills, listening skills, ability to follow directions, and memory retention. A theme will usually last four weeks. Themes include: Signals, Animals, Shapes and Pathways, Obstacle Courses, Ball Skills, Stunts. Alphabet Letters, and Exercises.

To finish each class the children gather for a small game that is fun and designed to promote positive interaction among the group. Small Games include: Pac Man, Gingerbread Man, and Two-Headed Monster.

Please dress children appropriately on gym days.
Thank you.

Science

Jenney Smith

The primary goal of the science curriculum is to engage students in inquiry, exploration, and discovery. The children will be encouraged to ask questions and will be guided to answer those questions. Through this program we hope that children will become excited and curious about the world in which they live.

These goals will be achieved through the study of different topics throughout the year. At times, areas of study will be connected to the general curriculum. We will also be free to explore topics that the children find interesting or that present themselves in our everyday lives. Topics we will explore this year include but are not limited to: trees, our five senses, mixing colors, Berkshire animals, cooking and exercise, the solar system, snowflakes, plants, worms, compost, and ponds.

The BCD campus will provide us with many opportunities to delve into our various areas of study. We will walk on the nature trail, visit the pond, and observe the animals in our environment. These activities will enrich the science curriculum by providing a balance between our exciting indoor classrooms and abundant outdoor classroom.

Grade 1

Teachers should foster independent and creative thinking in children and help them become socially responsible. This can be achieved by offering them the tools, materials, and opportunities to create their own solutions to the inevitable conflicts that arise in life. Teachers and other adults have the responsibility to help children see beauty, have greater awareness of others, and to foster their intelligence, in order to make them aware of their ecological and social responsibilities in our world.

Susan Frantz

Children learn best by being immersed in a stimulating environment. They must have opportunities to observe, imitate, practice, and experiment, and have opportunities to discuss, listen, and understand new facts and ideas. Children need to be encouraged, and guided in their learning. At this age, learning by doing is a most important part of their development.

Lesson plans are developed to work with small groups or with the entire class. Formally, language arts, reading, math, and social studies are taught. Time is also devoted to learning about social and environmental issues, and developing multicultural awareness. The math program will begin with many experiential and hands-on activities. This approach incorporates games and constant interaction with both teacher and classmates. The reading program integrates reading, writing, phonics, and spelling.

The social studies units set the classroom themes for the year: trees and fall, celebrations and peace, Japan, whales, Arctic life, Young Authors, and spring/plants.

Communication between teachers and parents is very important. Children will begin to know and appreciate the partnership between home and school as teachers communicate on a regular basis.

Art

Laura Piasecki

Grade 1 students have art twice a week for forty minutes in the art studio in Furey Hall. Lessons begin with a warm-up exercise and will end with a time to reflect on the work done during the class. Art activities will be varied and will include a range of assignments. Students will draw, paint, sculpt, print, and build. They will learn about art-making as well as reflect on their own art-making. Children of this age are naturally creative and love to 'do art.' What they can benefit from is learning about different mediums and that there can be an infinite number of ways of capturing an idea. They also benefit from talking about what they intend to do and what they mean by what they do.

Topics that will guide the assignments will include ideas from their own experiences, their school, their communities, the environment, and the art of other cultures. While they are studying Japan, in their social studies curriculum, we will look at and create items derived from Japanese art.

In the spring we will go on a field trip to the Norman Rockwell museum both to see the art and to learn about the value of museum visits. Proper use and care of materials will be emphasized at all times. The children will learn about working together to take care of the tools, materials, and art room. Please come and visit anytime and share what you like to do in art with us.

Chorus

Heather Fishman

Students in Grades 1–3 participate in Chorus once a week for 30 minutes. Focus is on preparation for concerts and performances. Proper breathing and vocal technique is emphasized and a variety of repertoire is chosen.

French

Mme. Maria Whalen

In Grade 1, students meet for French 3 times per week for 20 minutes. The goal is to develop basic skills of interacting in the French Language. Students will ask and answer simple questions and will play simple interactive games in French. The extension and enhancement of vocabulary and expressions will be developed in spiral progression. The previously learned topics will be reviewed and expanded, and new material will build on this previous knowledge.

Teaching Methods

Games, stories, songs, rhymes, interactive exercises, and some storybooks will be used in class.

Subjects

Greetings and directions, numbers, colors, shapes, body parts, family, animals, clothes, house, food, familiar objects, and aspects of French culture.

Library

Jeff Uhas

The library program at BCD seeks to support the overall mission of the school through providing an atmosphere which promotes inquiry, discovery, and academic excellence while realizing each student's unique potential.

The library serves as a resource for the entire BCD community equipping faculty as well as students with materials that complement their courses of study. In addition to serving as a resource, the lower school library program will build students' awareness of the library in order to equip them with the skills and abilities to become information-literate and independent learners. Students will learn of the role of the library as a place to find material for both information and enjoyment.

During their weekly scheduled classes, the students will gain an understanding of the unique characteristics of various media through the completion of projects including genre and author studies. Students will learn how to locate, use, and synthesize information from these various sources in order to create a finished product. These projects will be guided by students' interests and structured to incorporate material from other content areas to maintain the vital connection between the classroom and the library. In addition to exploring the library, students will engage in weekly read alouds during which participation and active listening will be stressed. These high interest stories will be selected to complement areas covered in the classroom as well to highlight aspects of story form. Finally, the opportunity to borrow materials will provide the students with the responsibility of caring for and returning books. Students will be encouraged to visit the library outside of their scheduled class period to further explore their own areas of interest.

Music

Heather Fishman

The Music Curriculum in Preschool and Lower School is based on the belief that each child can do well and enjoy music in a supportive environment that fosters creativity and freedom of expression.

Grade 1 meets twice a week for 30 minutes. The music curriculum for Grade 1 consists of music activities such as singing, listening, playing, and performing. Through music, students discover and explore the concepts of melody, harmony, dynamics, and form.

A typical class includes movement activities to develop rhythmic coordination and singing, accompanied by rhythmic response through body movement and/or instrument playing. Music reading emphasizes quarter

note, eighth note, and quarter rest patterns. Lessons also include listening to various selections in order to appreciate different styles.

The main objective of the music activities is to develop creativity and self-expression, as well as to develop music skills for personal enjoyment

Physical Education

Gail Heady

The physical education program for Grades 1, 2, and 3 is designed to help students learn and strengthen the skills necessary for playing and becoming successful at all of the sports available to our children today. We also continue to take a serious look at the physical fitness level of each child and make sure they learn to understand the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle.

This year we will use the Sports For All program as a guideline to teach basic skills children need to participate in many specific sports. It focuses on group games and physical activities developmentally appropriate for this age. Ideas for this year include: Walking, Group Challenges, Volleyball Skills, Scavenger Hunts, Ice Skating, Obstacle Courses, Soccer Skills, Gymnastic Skills, Golf, Field Hockey Skills, Circus Unit, Lacrosse, Family Games, Basketball Skills, and Tag Games.

Please check your child's schedule for gym days. Long skirts, clogs, party shoes, etc. are not appropriate. An extra pair of sneakers for Fitzpatrick Hall is mandatory. The sneakers can be old, but the children must carry them to gym.

Science

Jenney Smith

The Lower School Science Curriculum exposes the students to a wide variety of skills. Skills will be developed in the context of life, environmental, physical, earth and health sciences. The work and themes developed in the homeroom classrooms will be expanded upon and integrated into the curriculum as the year progresses whenever possible. Our campus is used to explore plants and animals, as well as to foster an understanding of natural areas. A typical class begins with a group discussion followed by an activity involving creating, investigating or exploring the topic at hand. Hands-on learning is stressed. In Grade 1 science topics covered may include: Trees, Water Experiments, Kitchen Chemistry, Magnets and Electricity, Simple Machines, Design Technology, Signs of Spring.

Grade 2

In Grade 2, the developing child's academic, social, and emotional growth is nurtured in many ways. Through regular use of cooperative learning and conflict resolution, by modeling and teaching attitudes of positive self-esteem and acceptance of other's differences and similarities, a strong learning community is formed.

Kathy Clausen

Within an environment where limits and rules are clear, children assume an ever-increasing sense of responsibility and self-control. By adapting curriculum to the developmental phases of the seven to eight year old and by allowing for each child's individuality, the innate curiosity and natural creativity of each of the students remains strong, providing the basis for intellectual growth.

The comprehensive language arts program encompasses creative and expository writing, a phonetic approach to spelling, fine-tuning of printing, and a literature-based reading program. While inventive spelling is still expected in writing, students will move toward more frequent use of conventional spelling as the year progresses. In addition to writing poetry, students will memorize poems and participate in recitation exercises.

The reading program blends techniques from both whole-language and phonics methodologies. Some of the areas covered will be: sound/symbol relationships, decoding and sight words, grammar, silent and oral reading, comprehension, and literary genres. Children will be grouped by ability to best address their needs as individual learners and promote success. The children will hear stories read out loud, read together as a whole class, and read one-to-one with Pre-School students. Through exposure to excellent children's literature, students develop a love of reading that will last a lifetime.

The study of mathematics emphasizes mental math, understanding concepts through practice, real-life problem solving, and learning through games and the use of manipulatives. The skills covered will be: addition, subtraction, multiplication, tables and graphs, estimation, basic fractions, geometry, money, time, measurement, probability and statistics, and patterns. Children of this age learn best through a hands-on approach with many different manipulatives. Use of math journals and cooperative problem-solving are weekly activities.

The year begins with a focus on Responsive Classroom® meetings and activities which allow the children to become acquainted with their peers. Through this carefully structured introduction to the year and

classroom expectations, the students realize their responsibility to themselves, to each other, and to the BCD community. The study of Colonial America is the first social study unit. In December the entire Lower School studies peace and peacemakers. In the winter, Mexico is the focus, since it is a neighbor, it is colorful, and its impact on our country is significant. The study of the Native Americans of New England is done in the spring. Social studies units are project oriented, include field trips where appropriate, and help to develop interpretive and critical thinking skills.

In conclusion, the Grade 2 curriculum is a well-rounded one in which children can grow and learn in all areas. Through the combined efforts of the school, classroom, and home, these young children develop strengths as students and as members of our larger community.

Art

Laura Piasecki

Grade 2 students have art twice a week for forty minutes in the art studio in Furey Hall. Lessons begin with a warm-up exercise and will end with a time to reflect on the work done during the class. Art activities will be varied and will include a range of assignments. Students will draw, paint, sculpt, print, and build. They will learn about art-making as well as reflect on their own art-making. Children of this age are naturally creative and love to 'do art.' What they can benefit from is learning about different mediums and that there can be an infinite number of ways of capturing an idea. They also benefit from talking about what they intend to do and what they mean by what they do.

Topics that will guide the assignments will include ideas from their own experiences, their school, their communities, the environment, and the art of other cultures. While they are studying Mexico in their social studies curriculum, we will look at and create items derived from Mexican art.

In the spring we will go on a field trip to the MassMO-CA museum, where we will participate in an art-making activity, see the art on display, and learn about the value of museum visits.

Proper use and care of materials will be emphasized at all times. The children will learn about working together to take care of the tools, materials, and art room. Please come and visit anytime and share what you like to do in art with us.

Chorus

Heather Fishman

Students in Grades 1–3 participate in Chorus once a week for 30 minutes. Focus is on preparation for concerts and performances. Proper breathing and vocal technique is emphasized and a variety of repertoire is chosen.

French

Mme. Maria Whalen

In Grade 2, students meet for French three times a week for 20 minutes. The goal of the French Curriculum is to enhance listening skills and to encourage oral participation. The students will learn new vocabulary and intonations from stories and audiovisual material. The principle of the spiral progression of language development continues to be applied. The students will find already familiar expressions, structures, and vocabulary in new situations and learn how to integrate them in more advanced subjects.

Teaching Methods

Games, stories, songs, rhymes, interactive exercises, audiovisual material, and simple dialogues. Occasional picture books will be used in class to extend themes and vocabulary, also allowing the students to become accustomed to seeing written French in an enjoyable context.

Subjects

Greetings and directions, numbers, colors, shapes, body parts, family, animals, clothes, house, school, food, transportation, calendar, common prepositions, aspects of French culture, and developing awareness of the variety of cultures in francophone countries.

Library

Jeff Uhas

The library program at BCD seeks to support the overall mission of the school through providing an atmosphere which promotes inquiry, discovery, and academic excellence while realizing each student's unique potential.

The library serves as a resource for the entire BCD community equipping faculty as well as students with materials that complement their courses of study. In addition to serving as a resource, the lower school library program will build students' awareness of the library

in order to equip them with the skills and abilities to become information-literate and independent learners. Students will learn of the role of the library as a place to find material for both information and enjoyment.

During their weekly scheduled classes, the students will gain an understanding of the unique characteristics of various media through the completion of projects including genre and author studies. Students will learn how to locate, use, and synthesize information from these various sources in order to create a finished product. These projects will be guided by students' interests and structured to incorporate material from other content areas to maintain the vital connection between the classroom and the library.

In addition to exploring the library, students will engage in weekly read alouds during which participation and active listening will be stressed. These high interest stories will be selected to complement areas covered in the classroom as well to highlight aspects of story form. Finally, the opportunity to borrow materials will provide the students with the responsibility of caring for and returning books. Students will be encouraged to visit the library outside of their scheduled class period to further explore their own areas of interest.

Music

Heather Fishman

The Music Curriculum in Preschool and Lower School is based on the belief that each child can do well and enjoy music in a supportive environment that fosters creativity and freedom of expression.

Grade 2 meets twice a week for 30 minutes. The music curriculum for Grade 2 consists of music activities such as singing, listening, playing, performing, and movement. Through music, students discover and explore the concepts of melody, harmony, texture, dynamics, rhythm, and form.

Throughout the year, students work to develop rhythmic coordination, vocal accuracy, self-expression, and confidence in performance. Classes include singing and playing various folk songs, games, and dances, in addition to learning solfege and rhythm reading. Musical literacy focuses on pitches sol, mi, la, do, and re, as well as quarter note, eighth note, half note, sixteenth note, whole rest, half rest, and quarter rest values in various combinations.

A typical class may include echo clapping, pattern reading, listening to musical compositions for the purpose of recognition or comparison, and the playing of Orff instruments.

The main objective of the music activities is to develop creativity and self-expression, as well as to develop music skills for personal enjoyment.

Physical Education

Gail Heady

The physical education program for Grades 1, 2, and 3 is designed to help students learn and strengthen the skills necessary for playing and becoming successful at all of the sports available to our children today. We also continue to take a serious look at the physical fitness level of each child and make sure they learn to understand the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle.

This year we will use the Sports For All program as a guideline to teach basic skills children need to participate in many specific sports. It focuses on group games and physical activities developmentally appropriate for this age. Ideas for this year include: Walking, Group Challenges, Volleyball Skills, Scavenger Hunts, Ice Skating, Obstacle Courses, Soccer Skills, Gymnastic Skills, Golf, Field Hockey Skills, Circus Unit, Lacrosse, Family Games, Basketball Skills, and Tag Games.

Please check your child's schedule for gym days. Long skirts, clogs, party shoes, etc. are not appropriate. An extra pair of sneakers for Fitzpatrick Hall is mandatory. The sneakers can be old, but the children must carry them to gym.

Science

Jenney Smith

The Lower School Science Curriculum exposes the students to a wide variety of skills. Skills will be developed in the context of life, environmental, physical, earth and health sciences. The work and themes developed in the homeroom classrooms will be expanded upon and integrated into the curriculum as the year progresses whenever possible. Our campus is used to explore plants and animals, as well as to foster an understanding of natural areas. A typical class begins with a group discussion followed by an activity involving creating, investigating or exploring the topic at hand. Hands-on learning is stressed. In Grade 2, science topics covered may include pond ecosystems, earth science, rocks and minerals, electricity, design technology, systems of the human body and nature on Mike's Trail.

Grade 3

The wealth of knowledge a person gains throughout his or her lifetime is impossible to measure and will certainly vary from person to person. However, regardless of this scope of information, the foundation for all learning remains a constant. All that we know and think throughout our lifetime is based upon fundamentals, and these basic skills develop from higher-level thinking.

Gill Levesque Romano

Grade 3 strives to instill a sense of academic and social responsibility in its students. The environment is one that fosters acceptance and respect for each class member's ideas and concerns. It is a safe place to express oneself and take risks without fear of rejection or failure.

Mathematics skills are important tools that your child will use throughout his or her life. This ability encompasses more than just the computation of numbers. It involves being able to investigate, organize, apply and communicate findings when presented with information. The goal of the Grade 3 program is to develop a strong foundation of basic mathematics procedures. This year your child will be learning a variety of fundamental operations in class. Some of the areas of study include multi-digit addition and subtraction, multiplication, division, elapsed time, and fractions. After exploring these concepts, your child will bring home his or her math book which will serve as a reference to help maintain these important skills.

The English curriculum uses children's literature to instill a love of reading in students. Within the classroom is a cozy "Book Nook" that encourages students to read and curl up with a piece of literature of their choice when time permits. Phonics instruction and a variety of decoding strategies are taught on a daily basis to help students progress towards reading fluently. Grade 3rs learn to express their ideas about the presented material in writing using complete sentences, proper punctuation, conventional spelling and details from the text to support thoughts/opinions. Grammar, spelling, and the writing process are taught separately from reading. Students during these periods learn about grammatical rules, sentence structure, paragraph formation and the concept of multiple drafts. The Zaner-Bloser method of cursive writing is taught as part of the Grade 3 curriculum. The children have a workbook that is used to introduce and practice the proper formation of each letter.

In Social Studies the children learn geography based on the textbook *The Making of Our America* as well as through a multitude of additional resources. Areas of study include Berkshire County, The Settling of the United States, Canada, and Australia. Each unit explores

geographical features, manufactured products, historical facts, government, famous people, and interesting places to visit within the various sites. Research projects serve as the culminating activity for each topic.

Homework is given four nights per week and is an important vehicle for reinforcing the concepts the children have learned in class. This process helps students develop a sense of responsibility for taking an assignment home, completing the work, and returning it to school. Reviewing papers your child brings home and encouraging him/her to correct any errors reinforces the learning process. Pride in a job well done is a positive self-esteem builder.

The goal of the Grade 3 program is to develop a sense of security, respect, and tolerance within the walls of the classroom and beyond. Children are encouraged to make sound decisions regarding class citizenship, academics, and to offer ideas that will make the environment a better place to learn and explore. Open communication between home and school is essential. Learning is a process and it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to work with you and your child.

Art

Marilyn Orner Cromwell

Art is an integral part of a BCD education. All students have art classes twice a week. Visual language, a powerful tool for communication and expression, is taught. Over the years, students have an opportunity to create artwork in a studio setting, to learn principles of art and to learn to reflect on artwork. The emphasis is on making art, with art history being taught peripherally through the study of individual artists, movements in art, slides and videos, and reproductions. Art is also an avenue to learn to appreciate and respect the richness of other cultures. I work with other teachers to coordinate art projects with student studies. Knowing about the time period and manipulating relevant materials enhances both experiences. I incorporate other arts into some assignments in order to tap into areas where every student is comfortable. The art room does offer a change for students from other academic subjects. First, it is a large, messy space. Let your child know if you want him/her to use a smock, or send them to school in casual clothes

on art days. More importantly, in art, there are as many right answers as there are children. There is the opportunity for individual growth through invention and exploration. Art encourages divergent thinking. I hope to foster students' ability to seek solutions to the problems the assignments set for them through their own reflection, to learn to value multiple responses, and to provide the setting for creative thinking. These are all skills that our increasingly global, complex world will require of them. There is flexibility both in the projects I present and in the time the student has to complete them. The Art Department offers a variety of experiences with drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, collage, textiles and design. Photography maybe employed too, with and without cameras. There are certain projects that are cornerstones of each grade level program. The projects build upon skills and past experiences while offering greater depth and new materials. The program is responsive to student interests, opportunities that arise, and my search for new and better ideas. The curriculum that follows is, therefore, subject to change. Finally, the art room is a place where a lot more happens than creating artwork. There are a lot of interactions that take place in the art room. It is these interactions, as well as specific art works, upon which the comments are based.

Please feel free to visit the art room. If you have any special artistic skill or expertise that you would be willing to share, please let me know. Most of all, art should be fun!

Grade 3rs are encouraged to explore both the world around them, and their emotions and ideas visually. We will utilize both experiences for inspiration and subject matter for our projects. Topics will include self portraits, color, robot design and landscape design. The class will also decorate the BCD tree for the Festival of Trees at the Berkshire Museum.

Chorus

Heather Fishman

Students in Grades 1–3 participate in Chorus once a week for 30 minutes. Focus is on preparation for concerts and performances. Proper breathing and vocal technique is emphasized and a variety of repertoire is chosen.

French

Mme. Maria Whalen

Students in Grade 3 meet for French three times a week for 20 minutes. The Goals of the Grade 3 French curriculum include the development of listening comprehension and conversation skills. In addition to building vocabulary, the students will be encouraged to communicate using longer phrases or sentences whenever possible. Cultivation of a good French ac-

cent continues through conversations. The students will be introduced to simple written French.

Teaching Methods

Previously learned material will be reviewed and extended using games, songs, and hands-on activities. Audiovisual materials will allow the students to develop listening comprehension while hearing a variety of people speaking French. The students will work with SYMTALK cards, games and the book *Gérarde & Ses Copains* to build sentences, expanding their conversational ability.

Subjects

Greetings and directions, numbers, colors, shapes, body parts, family, animals, clothes, house, food, transportation, calendar, school, weather, sports, common prepositions, and developing an awareness of the variety of cultures in francophone countries.

Library

Jeff Uhas

The library program at BCD seeks to support the overall mission of the school through providing an atmosphere which promotes inquiry, discovery, and academic excellence while realizing each student's unique potential.

The library serves as a resource for the entire BCD community equipping faculty as well as students with materials that complement their courses of study. In addition to serving as a resource, the Lower School library program will build students' awareness of the library in order to equip them with the skills and abilities to become information-literate and independent learners. Students will learn of the role of the library as a place to find material for both information and enjoyment. During their weekly scheduled classes, the students will gain an understanding of the unique characteristics of various media through the completion of projects including genre and author studies. Students will learn how to locate, use, and synthesize information from these various sources in order to create a finished product. These projects will be guided by students' interests and structured to incorporate material from other content areas to maintain the vital connection between the classroom and the library.

In addition to exploring the library, students will engage in weekly read alouds during which participation and active listening will be stressed. These high interest stories will be selected to complement areas covered in the classroom as well to highlight aspects of story form. Finally, the opportunity to borrow materials will provide the students with the responsibility of caring for and returning books. Students will be encouraged to visit the library outside of their scheduled class period to further explore their own areas of interest.

Music

Heather Fishman

The Music Curriculum in Preschool and Lower School is based on the belief that each child can do well and enjoy music in a supportive environment that fosters creativity and freedom of expression.

Grade 3 meets twice a week for 30 minutes. The music curriculum for Grade 3 consists of music activities such as singing, listening, playing, performing, and dance. Students begin playing soprano recorder during the spring term. A typical class includes music reading and dictation, singing, rhythmic response through body movement, and instrument playing. Lessons also include listening to various selections in order to appreciate different styles of music, as well as to develop skills in recognizing outstanding melodic and rhythmic patterns and compositional form. Students develop rhythmic coordination and vocal accuracy. They focus on quarter note, eighth note, sixteenth note, half note, and whole note combinations along with their various rests as well as on pitches do, re, mi, sol, and la in various combinations.

The main objective of the music activities is to develop creativity and self-expression, as well as to develop music skills for personal enjoyment.

Physical Education

Gail Heady

The physical education program for Grades 1, 2, and 3 is designed to help students learn and strengthen the skills necessary for playing and becoming successful at all of the sports available to our children today. We also continue to take a serious look at the physical fitness level of each child and make sure they learn to understand the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle. This year we will use the Sports For All program as a guideline to teach basic skills children need to participate in many specific sports. It focuses on group games and physical activities developmentally appropriate for this age. Ideas for this year include: Walking, Group Challenges, Volleyball Skills, Scavenger Hunts, Ice Skating, Obstacle Courses, Soccer Skills, Gymnastic Skills, Golf, Field Hockey Skills, Circus Unit, Lacrosse, Family Games, Basketball Skills, and Tag Games. Please check your child's schedule for gym days. Long skirts, clogs, party shoes, etc. are not appropriate. An extra pair

of sneakers for Fitzpatrick Hall is mandatory. The sneakers can be old, but the children must carry them to gym.

Science

Tim Gore

The Lower School Science Curriculum exposes the students to a wide variety of skills. Skills will be developed in the context of life, environmental, physical, earth and health sciences. The work and themes developed in the homeroom classrooms will be expanded upon and integrated into the curriculum as the year progresses whenever possible. Our campus is used to explore plants and animals, as well as to foster an understanding of natural areas. A typical class begins with a group discussion followed by an activity involving creating, investigating or exploring the topic at hand. Hands-on learning is stressed.

In Grade 3 science topics covered may include: Flight and Aerodynamics, Weather, Kitchen Chemistry, Forensics, Electricity, Design Technology, and Nature in Spring.