

First Grade

First grade is a year of discovery and wonder. Students of this age are still living in a world of imagination, and so learning is presented through rich fairytales, that captivate the interest and enthusiasm of the six year old child.

Students learn number sense, sequencing, and all four processes during the First grade. They learn about place value, roman numerals and tallying. They begin to recognize the mathematical patterns in nature and the world around them. They sort and group actual objects, as well as learn how to write and figure numbers on paper, to create strong associations. Students learn to count forward and backward by 1,2,3,5 and 10. They learn the relationship between the processes, which they know of as 'math families'. Students practice simple mental computations every day, through math stories shared by their teacher.

Throughout the Waldorf mathematics curriculum there is an emphasis on deep understanding, flexibility of thinking and the ability to mentally picture. Students are engaged physically, emotionally and mentally in their introduction to mathematics with rhythmic and sensory activities incorporated into their lessons, and new material presented in creative and meaningful ways.

From stories told orally by the teacher, the students in First grade draw pictures, and from these pictures letters emerge. A hut might become H, a dragon might become D, and a queen, Q. Students learn to write the letters through many senses. As well as writing with crayon and paper, the students may trace the letter on a friend's back, write with their toes, walk the shape of the letter on the ground, or trace it with their finger in a pan of shaving cream!

During First grade, memory is developed and strengthened through story review and oral recitation of verse and poetry. Speech exercises help students to enunciate clearly and develop phonemic awareness. Students participate in a class play.

By the end of the year, students have progressed to writing sentences, reading their own writing, and have learned the sounds of letters and some letter combinations.

Singing is a part of every day, and during the First grade the pentatonic flute (a simple wooden recorder) is introduced. Students learn pitch and rhythm by ear, at this age. Reading musical notation begins in third grade.

Students are active, with opportunities to move spread throughout the day. Students participate in rhythmic movement activities that help develop and integrate the body and mind and target balance, spatial awareness, eye tracking, and integrating the right and left, upper and lower parts of the body. This is helpful as students learn to read, write, and sit at a desk for increasing periods. First grade students participate in Games classes where the emphasis is on team games that build stamina, speed, balance, cooperation and sportsmanship. Students often enjoy robust activities like gardening and neighborhood walks. Our students go outside to play in all weather.

Students paint with wet on wet watercolor as they explore the qualities of the colors and the medium. They draw with beeswax block crayons. In handwork class the students learn to knit, which is both a useful skill and a great tool in the development of hand eye coordination and brain development.

The subjects presented by the class teacher are supplemented by specialty classes in Spanish, handwork and eurythmy.