

Sixth Grade

Curriculum:

Roman and Medieval History, Ancient China, World Geography, Mineralogy, Astronomy, Physics (acoustics, optics, electricity, magnetism, heat), Geometry and Geometric Drawing with Instruments, Business Math, Biographies, Composition, Spelling, Grammar, Arithmetic (percentage), Literature

The extraordinary Waldorf humanities curriculum takes the students through the full sweep of their cultural heritage. It begins with fairy tales in the first grade and continues with myths and legends in the second grade. The Old Testament in grade three, Norse mythology in grade four, and the ancient cultures of India, Africa, Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia, and Greece in grade five, provide the background for the study of history and are presented from original texts and biographies of key individuals. By experiencing these cultures through their legends and literature, the children gain flexibility and an appreciation for the diversity of humankind. By the end of eighth grade, the students have journeyed from Greece and Rome to medieval history, through the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Age of Exploration and finally arrive at the present day.

In Sixth grade, the students continue their journey through history with their studies of Roman and Medieval history. In the spring, Sixth grade students from Waldorf schools all over Oregon gather to complete their study of the Middle Ages with a Medieval tournament, offering challenges in archery, javelin, tug-o-war, and team building activities. With the theme of knighthood and service to the community, the sixth grade partners with Corvallis Parks & Recreation for a series of community service projects.

Sixth graders often experience social upheaval during this year of tremendous change. To help students work together as a team, CWS partners with OSU for Challenge Course activities. The primary purpose of these programs is to challenge members of a group to overcome a series of obstacles by working together.

Science in Waldorf schools is taught in a dynamic, interactive and experiential way, which prompts students to develop observational skills, critical thinking and sound judgment. Our approach to the study of physics is phenomenological. This means that the students closely observe certain phenomena, like the behavior of metal when it is heated, and then, through discussion, work to understand why that behavior is happening. The information gained by these experiments is secondary to the process of coming to a conclusion. Unlike the scientific method, which involves predicting what will happen, this approach sharpens the ability to observe objectively and translate these observations into new concepts about the behavior of the world around us.

Mineralogy is a perfect subject to further develop the students' logical reasoning skills. Three basic rock types are introduced: sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic, and students are taught how each is formed. From there, like detectives, students examine rocks and try to determine the history of those rocks. Sixth grade students study volcanoes, the formation of mountains, and the rock cycle. Students explore the gifts of the minerals, from coal and oil, to glass and semiconductors.

To further enrich the science curriculum, the sixth grade class embarks on an expedition to a geologically rich area, as well as partners with local astronomers for star gazing.

Sixth grade mathematics includes a project based study of business math. Classes often start their own small business, in order to have a practical and enthusiastic experience. As children approach adolescence, they begin to have more interest in the workings of society. This subject is an opportunity to explore the way that money and business function in our world. Sixth grade students begin by discussing the development of money over time, from self-sufficient economies, to barter systems, to money economies. Students use their newly gained knowledge of decimals and percentages to work with tax, simple interest, discount, and other business formulas.