

GRADE TWO  
2007-2008



The second grade program takes place in a nurturing environment which provides hands on, experiential learning within the framework of a rich curriculum. Personal growth in resourcefulness and independence are overarching goals of the year. Respect, tolerance and goodwill are core values that are practiced daily. The second grade program seeks to enable students to become independent thinkers while building and expanding basic skills acquired in previous grades. Students gain confidence in problem-solving in all areas. Second graders learn how to express their ideas clearly in writing and discourse. Active listening and greater organizational skills are taught and practiced. Through partner and group work, second graders learn how to cooperate with each other to achieve common goals.

**READING AND LANGUAGE ARTS:** A rich literature-based language arts program is evidenced by the wide array of reading material, the inclusion of poetry and drama, and the emphasis on writing across the curriculum. Writing skills are taught formally and practiced creatively. Students document seasonal changes on a special tree by keeping a tree journal. Over the course of the year they write poetry, using different poem forms, and draw, paint and otherwise depict their tree using a variety of art media. Second grade uses a literature-based reading program. Some of the class selections are: *Tornado* (Byers), *Shoeshine Girl* (Bulla), *The Beast in Ms. Rooney's Room* (Giff), *Hawk, I'm Your Brother* (Baylor), *The Courage of Sarah Noble* (Dalglish), *Superfudge* (Blume), *Little House on the Prairie* (Wilder), *The Chocolate Touch*, *Sarah, Plain and Tall* (MacLachlan), and *Hatchet* (Paulsen). Fluency and comprehension skills are emphasized by focusing on reading with expression, inferencing, understanding main ideas and cause and effect relationships. Students analyze and explore literature through discussions, projects, and writing responses. Students use the "process" approach to writing. They are inspired by life experiences to create meaningful, imaginative stories. Their writing progresses through six stages: brainstorming, rough draft, conferencing, revising, editing and final copy. Second grade writing projects includes narrative stories, poems, literature responses, research reports, science procedures and journal entries. The second grade uses the Modern Curriculum Press and Steck-Vaughn series for the phonics and spelling. Spelling words are also drawn from the books the students are reading and commonly used words from their writing. Emphasis is placed on spelling, punctuation and handwriting as well as developing clear, descriptive writing. In the latter part of the year, the children are introduced to cursive writing. Second graders learn keyboarding skills through the "Mavis Beacon" and "All Star Typing Soccer" programs.

**MATHEMATICS:** In the second grade, an understanding of mathematical concepts is developed through the use of manipulatives and broad application. Activities include sorting, classifying and counting a variety of objects, weighing and measuring in units, telling time, dividing a shape or a group of objects into parts or fractions, comparing shapes and sizes of objects, and studying patterns. Attribute and pattern blocks, cuisenaire rods, unifix cubes,

metersticks, rulers, scales, tangrams and math games are used for concept development. Mathematical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are performed on real materials before they are encountered as abstract exercises. The second grade uses Everyday Mathematics by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. The program is supplemented by a wide variety of explorations in logic and problem solving activities. Math for the day may be stations that are centered around one topic such as place value, fractions, time and money. Students explore and reinforce concepts by doing hands on activities at each station. Math stations also provide an opportunity to practice cooperative partnerships and peer coaching, skills that are taught and emphasized in second grade.

**SOCIAL STUDIES:** Second graders study physical geography throughout the year. This includes studying continents and oceans, and learning basic mapping skills. Second graders follow an historical thread by learning about the first European settlers in New England, beginning with the Pilgrims in the 1600s. We use history and literature books, as well as the internet to enhance our study of 18th and 19th century colonialism and the westward movement of the Pioneers. A day in the one-room schoolhouse at Historic Deerfield in the late spring is the culminating activity of our history unit. Each year the class studies a different country or culture. We compare the life of an 8 year old in America to the the life of an 8 year old in another country and in this way we gain some global perspective. The National Geographic Explorer monthly magazine helps us keep up with current events from around the world.

**SCIENCE:** The science program for second graders is a year long investigation of the forest behind TGS. Our study focuses on the woodland environment. We will learn about the variety of plants and animals and natural systems that make up the ecosystem. In the fall second graders start the year with a unit on Birds of Prey. The connection between form and function is stressed. Students explore the world of hawks and owls, learn about migration, and discover some basic principles of aerodynamics. A hike up Putney Mountain during peak hawk migration and a trip to The Vermont Institute of Natural Science are field trips that we take during the fall. During the winter months we study Vermont mammals. Our focus is habitat, survival and tracking. Students write a research report on a particular Vermont mammal. Second graders also participate in a year long study of water and water issues. Pond-life, oceanography, water scarcity, conservation and pollution are several of the topics that come under this umbrella. During the year we explore the physical realm of science through small group, hands-on experiments that are related to various units such as our insulation investigation that coincides with our study of Vermont mammals.

**ART:** Second graders begin the year exploring color and investigating the relationship between light and color. Primary colors, secondary colors and complementary colors are introduced. Art activities are done in a variety of media such as clay sculpture, painting, collage, sketching, printing and three-dimensional constructions. Children ponder texture, line, color and form. Many art activities and projects are connected to content areas. We look at the work of Sonia Delauney as we create our own geometrical designs. Georges Seurat and Maurice Pendergast will represent the technique of pointillism. Twice a year the students participate in a week-long art intensive with Tara Sullivan.

**SOCIAL CURRICULUM:** The social curriculum at TGS is designed to complement the academic curriculum and help maintain a healthy social and learning environment. We define a healthy school community as a place where people have a sense of belonging, where adults and students extend and receive respect in their relationships with each other, and where people feel both a sense of support and personal challenge to help them learn and grow as human beings.

We work on important community skills such as cooperation, team building, personal and social responsibility, active listening,, emotional literacy, respect for diversity, conflict resolution, and problem solving.

**PHYSICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT:** The second graders work daily on developing physical skills. Activities range from organized soccer games, to hiking through the woods, to new games and relays with the K-1 classes. In the winter, the second graders cross-country ski with the rest of the school. All these activities develop physical awareness, strength and endurance, flexibility, balance, cooperation, listening skills, and team sports. Spring sports include wiffleball, kickball and soccer. Throughout the year, students will work on personal fitness goals through the Presidential Challenge.

**COMPUTER:** The computer program in the second grade is designed to familiarize the student with the computer and the use of the keyboard as well as various programs that reinforce reading, math, and critical thinking skills. The math programs are made available during free times or math choice times. Students will practice keyboarding skills approximately 15 minutes twice a week. The objective for second grade is to learn finger placement, the space bar, delete and shift keys. Second graders will use bookmarked web sites on the internet to find information about Vermont mammals for their research reports.

**HOMEWORK:** In second grade, students are assigned approximately 30 minutes of homework on Monday through Thursday nights. This includes 20 minutes of reading aloud or silent reading on their own. A short spelling or math assignment is generally given in addition to the reading assignment. Students will occasionally have a writing assignment to work on at home.