



Welcome to Second Grade!

JULY 2021

Second graders with their gap-toothed smiles are a marvel! They look a little different from day to day, with some teeth falling out while others are coming in, and because they cannot always keep track of their growing bodies, they may stumble as they run across the playground. Second graders can plan more than in years past, and this means they can begin thinking more strategically. They make plans with friends and recess games are more easily organized and can go on for days. Negotiating the rules and fair play is an important topic during second-grade recess, one that teachers help students with throughout the year.

Reading and writing workshops are part of the schedule for all grades. Second graders are more likely to read books that cannot be completed in a single sitting. The world is fascinating to a second grader and reading and writing units on informational text allow them time to study, explore and share their interests. We follow the Teachers College Reading and Writing Units of Study throughout the Lower School. In addition, poetry is everywhere, and a beautiful end-of-the-year unit on poetry is a chance to think a bit more carefully about word choice and how words can be organized on a page to communicate ideas.

Second graders plan their writing lives and live with a piece of writing a bit longer, thus revision and editing are an important part of second grade. They write in complete sentences and spell more words conventionally. Following the *Words Their Way* sequence, we provide targeted instruction about spelling rules and patterns. Students practice handwriting (manuscript), following the sequence of *Handwriting Without Tears*. Second-grade writers have an opportunity to publish their work in the Lower School literary journal, *DEscribe*.

Solving problems is at the heart of the Lower School's mathematics curriculum. Following the scope and sequence provided by Singapore Math, students solve simple multi-step word problems in second grade, using a technique called the "bar model" method. Bar models are a tool to represent arithmetical quantities by line segments. Second-grade math units of study include operating in a base ten number system, measurement (length and weight), multiplication and division; mental math and algebraic thinking, measurement II (money, fractions, time, capacity), and data and geometry. Students have a Dreambox account where they can practice, develop and master math skills and concepts at home.

In social studies second graders study the idea of community with a focus on the community of Dwight-Englewood school and the city of Englewood as well. They explore the campus of Dwight-Englewood and learn about the people who make up the community. A study of the city of Englewood introduces the roles and responsibilities of local government. Students read and create simple maps and learn about the geography of Englewood and New Jersey.

Second-graders visit the music room where they play rhythm instruments, listen to music, and sing songs with more than one verse. They work with pitched and unpitched percussion instruments, learn about the lives and music of Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms and Tchaikovsky. Typically, in the spring first, second, third and fourth grade students attend a concert at NJPAC presented by the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra; our hope is we will be able to resume this exciting field trip very soon. We also hope our performances, such as the Lower School Spring Concert and Art Show, will be safe to hold in person very soon!

Health and Wellness takes place in the Lower School gym. Second graders are exposed to a wide variety of activities to develop an understanding of fitness and basic skills. They learn to use a fitnessgram and participate in *Jump Rope for Heart*. Sports introduced and practiced include soccer, flag football, handball, basketball, floor hockey, base games and lacrosse. They also



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engage in basic movement and motor skills to improve overall fitness, hand/eye and foot/eye coordination, and body/spatial awareness. When possible, and frequently in the spring, students have Health and Wellness on the school's Leggett Field.

In Spanish students practice the days of the week and months of the year, learn numbers, greetings, foods and weather terms. They begin to maintain a simple conversation and gain more confidence speaking!

Second grade visits the Swartley Arts Building for art. They learn about color, line, shape and pattern while exploring drawing, painting, collaging, sculpture and printmaking. Students work independently and collaboratively, and all students produce a collection of work to represent their progress within each medium. They develop the language for talking about art by studying their own work, the work of their peers and professional artists.

As part of technology students learn flowcharts and simple coding through the use of programs such as *Light-Bot*, *Kodable*, *Scratch Jr.*, and *Hopscotch*.

Budding scientists visit the science room where they study content in life, physical and earth science and spend a great deal of time outdoors learning about the natural world and our own environment. A love of nature and studying the world around us is cultivated.

Second graders can do a lot! Their competencies are growing, and we work hard to help them feel grown-up and capable, while at the same time protecting their childhood and giving them time for fun and playfulness – for it is that combination which is the special joy of second grade!