

**BUCKINGHAM BROWNE & NICHOLS
LOWER SCHOOL**



**CURRICULUM OVERVIEW
GRADE THREE
2026-2027**

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*** Includes Language Arts, Mathematics and Social Studies instruction**

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GRADE THREE CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Language Arts

The language arts program equips students to develop reading and writing skills as they use a variety of text sources to inform their learning. In third grade, students:

- Gain exposure to a broad selection of literature, including biographies, novels, and informational texts
- Practice inferential thinking
- Read books of their own choosing during Reading Workshop and Academic Choice Time
- Sharpen oral reading skills by building fluency and reading aloud with expression
- Participate in the writing process by prewriting (e.g. generating ideas, planning, researching topics, organizing ideas), drafting (e.g. revising, editing, and conferring), and publishing narrative and expository pieces
- Participate in literature circles designed to promote dialogue about books through the sharing of summaries, predictions, text connections, and visualizations
- Learn to identify main ideas and supporting details
- Use graphic organizers to improve comprehension and written organization
- Learn to consistently apply spelling and grammar conventions
- Learn to spell and read grade-appropriate high frequency words
- Write responses to literature and social studies texts
- Learn lowercase and uppercase cursive and begin touch-typing

Evaluation and informal assessments occur regularly, while standardized assessments occur several times a year. Academic support specialists work with the third grade team to plan consistent, interconnected lessons and to provide additional support for children who need to further develop their language arts skills.

Social Studies

Third graders explore three primary social studies topics over the course of the school year.

The Characteristics of Leadership

Students learn about a variety of influential world leaders – including Sonia Sotomayor, Harvey Milk, and Wangari Maathai – through shared reading experiences and discussions. After reflecting on the biographies read, students consider what qualities effective leaders possess and begin to cultivate those qualities in their own lives. Students also assume leadership roles on campus as they organize the annual Cradles to Crayons clothing drive and enjoy having Beginner buddies during Community Time. Team-building activities, grade-wide conversations, and an interdisciplinary culminating project round out the unit.

Understanding Differences

Students learn about a variety of physical and developmental disabilities, including blindness, limb loss, Down syndrome, and communication disorders. Visitors from Canine Companions for Independence, Perkins School for the Blind, Helping Hands, and Changing Perspectives

Social Studies (continued)

provide students with opportunities to ask thoughtful questions and learn about the experiences of those living with neurological and physical challenges. Children also consider the benefits of assistive technology and accessible architecture during a variety of project-based explorations.

Mathematics

At BB&N we believe that math should be joyful and engaging. Our program grows children's fluency with numbers and is rich in numbers-based experiences. We provide opportunities at every level for students to engage in mathematical explorations, to reason mathematically, and to express their ideas. We strive to strike a balance between larger conceptual understandings and specific skills and procedural fluency. We believe that all of our students can and will learn math.

Third grade formally introduces multiplication and division. Using both new and familiar models such as number lines, arrays, and ratio tables, students develop a deep understanding of the concept of equal groups and equal sharing. Students are expected to learn multiplication combinations through 10×10 and to apply their understanding of place value to develop strategies for multiplying multi-digit numbers. Students consolidate their understanding of addition and subtraction strategies including algorithms. Students extend their understanding of place value and work with numbers in the millions and build understanding of the base ten system and multiplicative patterns. Third graders continue to build their understanding of fractions as numbers by working with visual and concrete materials such as fraction bars, models, and number lines. Students use these strategies along with their number sense to begin investigating equivalent fractions, comparing fractions, and adding and subtracting fractions with similar denominators.

Third grade uses high quality, research based resources including the *Bridges in Mathematics* curriculum. Classes are co-taught by the homeroom teacher and a math specialist using a hands-on approach in whole group investigations, small group activities, and individual practice. Beginning in third grade students are given weekly math homework.

In third grade students will:

- Fluently add and subtract numbers using a variety of mental math strategies and the standard algorithms
- Demonstrates understanding of place value patterns and works with numbers into the millions
- Uses fact strategies to Fluently multiply to 10×10 and related division facts
- Multiply by multiples of 10 and 100
- Represent and solve addition, subtraction, multiplication, and word problems using equations
- Solve multi-step problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division

Mathematics (continued)

- Solve whole number area and perimeter problems
- Demonstrate an understanding of fractions as numbers
- Identify and generate equivalent fractions
- Compare fractions
- Add and subtract fractions with similar denominators
- Define and classify polygons
- Solve problems with elapsed time and tell time to the minute

Science

Students use a hands-on inquiry based program to study science. This approach allows them to develop and use process skills in order to gain a body of scientific knowledge. Listed below are the units of study and highlights of the content and skills covered.

Electricity

- Discovering a variety of ways to light one bulb using one wire and one battery.
- Using bulb and battery holders to create circuits with multiple batteries and bulbs
- Comparing parallel circuits with series circuits.
- Testing classroom items to discover which are insulators and which are conductors
- Creating a conductive design using copper wire tape and a LED.
- Creating quiz boards; game boards that light up when you connect the question to the correct answer.

Geology

- Observing rocks and minerals using a hand lens, streak plates and balances.
- Learning about how rocks are formed and becoming familiar with the terms igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic.
- Discussing and exploring how the earth changes through processes such as erosion and volcanoes.
- Making fossils and learning how they provide information about plants and animals that lived long ago.

Eyes

- Learning about the parts of the eye and how the eye and brain work together to allow sight.
- Exploring optical illusions and the benefits of binocular vision.

The Mysterious Powder

- Examining and comparing four white powders.
- Observing and describing the reactions of the powders with water, vinegar, iodine and red cabbage juice.
- Applying the above information to solve a mystery involving a white powder found on the school yard of a fictitious school.

Lower School World Languages

Our goal is to help students to build a foundation for future language learning and to be prepared to communicate as global citizens of an interconnected world. To do this, we want to highlight and embrace student identities and provide an environment where they are comfortable taking risks and applying a growth mindset to language learning.

The Lower School World Language Department uses an approach to teaching languages that focuses on proficiency and communication in an engaging and low stress environment.

Teaching with comprehensible input prioritizes the delivery of understandable messages that are personalized, meaningful, interesting and relevant to our students. The goal of our classes is for students to acquire Spanish or French through communication and active participation. When age appropriate, we aim to spend at least 90% of our classes in the target language focusing on listening and reading to provide input (as opposed to formal vocabulary and grammar instruction).

We also strive to provide opportunities to explore other cultures and to do interdisciplinary work that allows students to connect and expand upon what they are learning in other places.

Spanish

Third Graders explore World Language twice a week for 45 minutes each. The class is divided in half groups, which allows for active participation in class. Each student will take Spanish for half of the year and French for half of the year (the order will vary by half group). At the end of the school year, students and families will have the opportunity to choose which language (French/Spanish) their student will commit to for grades 4-6. The hope is that by experiencing each language for one semester in third grade, students will feel better informed and better equipped to make the decision that is right for their interests and learning.

Both French and Spanish classes follow a similar model that students are used to from Spanish class in Beginners through Second Grade. In both languages, speaking/listening warm-ups, daily routines and closing activities create predictable structure to support confidence and practice content learned in class. Students are expected to speak the target language in class, and are supported and encouraged to do so with a variety of strategies. Class content strives to be engaging, focused on high-frequency words, and connected to meaningful content for the student. Repetition and spiral techniques allow students to begin to build proficiency and overall comfort in the language. Typical classroom activities include songs, reading, story listening, drawing, writing, short video clips, projects, role playing, and games.

Information Science/Library

Third graders come to library once a week in half groups to choose books for stories, and for Information Science, where they work on developing research and critical thinking skills using both online sources and print materials. During the course of the year students learn how to:

- Use the online library catalog to find books
- Practice using call numbers to locate books on the library shelves
- Explore and use appropriate research materials such as World Book online
- Use National Geographic Places and Animals online to support Social Studies work
- Create “Book Adds” for their favorite books, using pictures they print or paper and crayons to share and display their comments
- Locate and explore biographies as part of a whole class project
- Understand differences between fact and opinion
- Begin to understand the organization of materials in libraries using Dewey

Technology

At the BB&N Lower School, it is our intention to integrate technology into the classroom in meaningful ways, and our goal is to teach students the skills necessary to be successful throughout the school year as well as to prepare them for future years. Through technological integration we give our students an introduction to word processing, spreadsheets and graphing, presentation software, three-dimensional design, internet safety and digital citizenship, online research, robotics, and programming. Our teachers create academic environments that facilitate student creativity, innovation, communication, and collaboration with others, while developing students into critical thinkers, problem solvers, and decision makers.

Music

Curriculum Statement: Third grade students will engage in practicing, performing, improvising, and creating music using the recorder and other barred Orff and percussion instruments. All concepts listed below will be explored through a diverse repertoire of songs from various music genres. Students will engage in listening exercises to expand their knowledge of different styles of music and will also explore the historical background and contextual aspects of the repertoire.

- Rhythm
 - Demonstrate pulse in different meters
 - Read, write, and identify:
 - Time signatures: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, common-time, and cut-time
 - Quarter, eighth, half, dotted half, whole notes and rests
 - Transition from second grade method to count-based rhythmic reading

Music (continued)

- Pitch
 - Read, write, and identify treble clef notes
 - Read, practice, and perform notes on the recorder using proper technique
 - GAB, high CD, low DEF (optional: C, F#, high E)
- Melody and Harmony
 - Identify treble clef notes and the major scale utilizing solfege
 - Identify, create, and improvise melodic patterns
 - Learn basic harmonies and instrumental accompaniments
 - Demonstrate artistic melodic phrasing on voice and various classroom instruments utilizing proper technique
- Form and Composition
 - Identify, recognize, and create various musical forms: sonata, rondo, themes and variation, chorus and verse, call and response, round/canon, ostinato
 - Compose and improvise multi-instrumental arrangements
- Articulation
 - Identify music markings: i.e., repeat, D.C./D.S. al fine/al coda, fermata
 - Identify and perform music with various styles of articulation: i.e., legato, slurs, staccato, accents
- Dynamics
 - Identify, recognize, and perform various musical dynamics
 - forte, piano, fortissimo, pianissimo, mezzo forte/piano
 - crescendo, decrescendo, ritardando
- Tempo
 - Identify, recognize, and perform various musical tempi
 - Allegro, andante, adagio, moderato, lento
 - Accelerando, diminuendo
- Timbre
 - Watch, listen to, discuss, and identify musical instruments using the Western European Classical model (brass, woodwind, percussion, and strings) and the [Hornbostel-Sachs](#) classification system

Integrated Arts

The goal of integrated arts in third grade is to explore big ideas about leadership, identity, culture, differences, community and advocacy through investigating art and art materials. Students will develop skill in sketching, observational drawing, handbuilding and sculpting in clay, building and developing competency in woodworking hand tools, painting with watercolor and tempera, creating dynamic design and drafting comics.

Essential Questions We Explore Include:

- What role does artwork play in a culture?
- How do artists tell stories through their work?
- How do artists make a difference in their world?
- How do artists advocate for what they believe in?

Integrated Arts (continued)

Key Content:

- Pattern and mark making
- Additive and Subtractive Ceramic Sculpture
- Box Making
- Portraiture and Figure Drawing from Observation
- Illustration
- Graphic Design
- Additive and Subtractive Wooden Sculpture

Integrated arts acts as a platform for collaboration across disciplines. This collaboration helps students see the connectivity between subjects and the interconnectivity of our world. These interdisciplinary connections emerge over the course of our studies, as students explore key questions and ideas through art-making. Our final products will vary from year to year based on the questions and curiosities of our students.

Health and Physical Education

Program Approach

The Grades 2–6 curriculum is part of a coherent Health program that extends from Grades 2–10. Across the Lower School grades described here, Health and Physical Education are connected parts of students' learning about wellbeing. The scope and sequence is informed by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Framework. Health instruction builds knowledge and skills related to self-awareness, emotional regulation, relationships, decision-making, personal safety, and care for the body. Physical Education—and, beginning in Grade 6, the athletics program—provides authentic opportunities to apply many of these skills through movement, teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and navigating challenge. Grades 2–5 participate in a Health/PE rotation, while Grade 6 Health continues alongside the athletics program. Across Grades 2–6, Health is taught in half groups by Health and PE faculty, creating more room for discussion, participation, and support. PE and athletics provide ongoing opportunities to reinforce relevant skills and habits. This design recognizes that learning is strengthened when ideas are introduced explicitly, practiced in more than one setting, and reinforced through shared language. Across the grade span, the curriculum gradually asks students to move from noticing and naming with adult support, to selecting and practicing strategies, to considering more complex situations and communicating their thinking.

Health

Grade 3 Health builds on these foundations by asking students to choose and apply strategies with greater independence. Students practice communicating clearly, working through everyday challenges, making safe decisions, and asking for help when needed.

Health and Physical Education (continued)

Physical Education

In Grade 3, students deepen the development and application of team-sport skills. Competition is introduced through a positive approach that emphasizes team effort, cooperation, participation, and sportsmanship. Students build skills through instruction and repetition, followed by application in lead-up and small-group games.

- **Soccer:** Practice dribbling, passing, goalkeeping, scoring, and introductory offensive and defensive strategies.
- **Kickball:** Learn base running, pitching, fielding, catching, throwing, positions, and rules.
- **Football:** Practice passing, catching, punting, and running with a football.
- **Basketball:** Develop dribbling, passing, catching, shooting, and an understanding of offensive and defensive positions.
- **Volleyball:** Learn setting, bumping, serving, and rotation.
- **Group games:** Develop awareness of rules and strategies while strengthening participation, sportsmanship, coordination, flexibility, agility, balance, and fitness.
- **Floor hockey:** Practice dribbling, passing, shooting, and goalkeeping in lead-up games.
- **Rhythmic activities:** Participate in hip-hop, folk dancing, and music-based warm-up exercises.
- **Track and field:** Explore dashes, team relays, hurdles, distance running, modified shot put, discus, javelin, and standing and running long jump.
- **T-ball and wiffle ball:** Develop fielding and hitting skills and learn rules in preparation for softball in later grades.
- **Relaxation, breathing, and mindfulness:** Use quiet, mindful activities to relax, attend to breathing, and strengthen concentration.

The Responsive Classroom

The Lower School uses the social curricular practices of *The Responsive Classroom*. Third graders learn to speak clearly and respectfully during Morning Meeting and class discussions. They also learn to focus on the discussion topic and to contribute positively and consistently. Students begin to assume greater responsibility for managing time wisely, setting personal limits, and following limits set by teachers. All children work towards developing greater self-control and using kind, affirming words in both academic and social situations. Students also practice including peers in group games as well as accepting losses or setbacks with resilience.

Homework

- Third grade homework progresses logically and incrementally over the course of the year.
- Reading homework consists of 20 minutes of independent active reading and recording.
- Language Arts homework consists of one double-sided grammar practice page on Mondays and Wednesdays.
- Math homework consists of one double-sided practice page on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Spelling homework consists of a rule-based list of twelve words to review throughout the week in preparation for a dictation at the end of the week.

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