

**BUCKINGHAM BROWNE & NICHOLS  
LOWER SCHOOL**



**CURRICULUM OVERVIEW  
KINDERGARTEN  
2026-2027**

## **Kindergarten Teachers**

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

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# Kindergarten Curriculum Overview

## Homeroom

In Kindergarten, children develop and strengthen their social and academic skills through discussion, exploration, play, and small and whole group activities. Teachers strive to nurture Kindergartners' insatiable curiosity, while encouraging their growing independence and ability to work cooperatively within a group.

The goal in Kindergarten is to support children in playing and working together in a respectful, cooperative, and caring way. This involves self-reflection, building relationships and partnerships with members of their immediate community, exploring identity, and learning about other communities. Teachers work to foster children's growing self-esteem and their joy of learning.

## Language Arts

The Kindergarten language arts curriculum is designed to nurture a love for and enjoyment of literature, to develop an understanding of oral and written communication, and to build confidence in the four components of literacy: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Kindergarten uses *Foundations* to support handwriting, phonics, phonological/phonemic awareness, and word study.

In Kindergarten, students:

- Build phonemic awareness skills by manipulating sounds and learning to discriminate between individual phonemes;
- Learn and apply sound-symbol relationships and begin to use phonetic skills to decode and encode words;
- Participate in word study activities to increase recognition of high frequency words.
- Explore multiple genres of literature;
- Tell and retell stories, ask and respond to questions, and express overall comprehension;
- Learn to use writing as a creative and effective form of communication through journal writing, project work and *Writer's Workshop*;
- Engage in strategy-based guided reading groups.

A reading specialist works with Kindergarten teachers and students to provide additional support.

## Social Studies

Students in Kindergarten engage in social studies curriculum content through project-based work. The chosen curriculum content reflects the various interests of the students and the teachers. Essential questions lay the foundation for social studies project work. These

## **Social Studies (continued)**

questions are designed to engage students in a wide array of learning experiences as they work toward a common goal. It is through these experiences that students build on their existing schema to create new knowledge. Projects additionally allow for the integration of curriculum areas such as math, ELA, science, and art, thus exposing students to authentic applications of these subjects.

## **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.

Math in Kindergarten is all about numbers. Students begin to build their understanding of the number system by learning to ask quantitative questions and then develop the skills to answer those questions including counting, ordering, adding, and subtracting. Students also explore their world using geometry by recognizing, describing, and classifying two and three dimensional shapes.

Kindergarten uses high quality, research based resources including the *Bridges in Mathematics* curriculum. Math is taught using a hands-on approach in whole group investigations, small group activities, and individual practice, utilizing mathematical tools to support students concept development.

In Kindergarten, students will:

- Write numbers 0-20 (may have reversals)
- Count in sequence by ones and tens to one hundred
- Subitize quantities up to 5
- Add and subtract small quantities
- Add and subtract within 5 fluently
- Build and break apart numbers by place value
- Classify shapes by attributes
- Solve problems in context

## **Science**

Students use a hands-on inquiry-based program to study science. This allows the students 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.

## Science (continued)

### What is around us? Practicing observation skills while exploring our own “backyard.”

- Identify characteristics of living vs. non-living things and create collages of these items.
- Take a field trip to Longfellow Park to collect leaves and sort the leaves based on their attributes.
- Create a leaf creature and a key to identify the leaves.

### Animal Observations

- Make detailed observations, draw, and learn about the science animals.
- Create a factual electronic book about the science animals using the app Book Creator.
- Assemble a black bear skeleton.
- Learn about how a fertile egg develops into a chick and observe and sketch chicks.

### Chemistry

- Discover how salt and vinegar can clean pennies.
- Investigate how different liquids interact and make a lava explosion using oil, water, food coloring and salt.

### Sound

- Experiment with tuning forks to discover that sound is vibration and can move objects.
- Experiment and test different materials to understand how sound travels in different materials.
- Make hypotheses to determine what types of vibrations make low and high- pitched sounds.
- Challenge students to amplify a sound and then create a roaring “animal”.

### Forces and Motion

- Find the center of mass of classroom items and paper bees.
- Learn about Newton’s laws of motion through observation and experiments.
- Investigate friction by rolling marbles on different materials.
- Construct and test a blow rocket to observe the effects of gravity on an object.

## 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).

## Lower School World Languages (continued)

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

Kindergarteners explore Spanish once a week for 30 minutes. Many Kindergarten students continue to acquire some basic Spanish through songs, stories, games, and movement activities, as well as listening to stories. Children continue building upon the language skills they explored as Beginners and take part in activities and lessons in the target language.

It's important to acknowledge that students come to Spanish class with different experiences in relation to language learning.

The BB&N World Language Program from Beginners through Second Grade follows what is known as a spiral model, where students explore many of the same topics year after year but with different challenges at each grade level that build upon the skills learned in the previous years.

### Music

Kindergarteners attend music in half groups on a weekly basis. Activities center on the children's experience of music through singing, moving, listening, playing instruments, and creating music through improvisation. Kindergarteners explore topics of social responsibility, environmental care, diversity, and empathy through music. The overall objective is for students to use a variety of tools to explore and communicate their music ideas to others.

The skills students develop include:

#### Rhythm

- Demonstrate pulse through movement and instrument playing.
- Create rhythms on pitched and unpitched instruments that fit with recorded music.
- Notate rhythmic patterns using invented symbols.

#### Melody

- Experience melodic shape through movement.
- Improvise melodies on classroom instruments.
- Write down melodic shapes on paper, and "read" melodic shapes and gestures.
- Explore barred instruments (xylophone/metallophone/glockenspiel).

#### Harmony

- Experience tonality differences.
- Sing/chant with teacher-accompanied Ostinato.

#### Form

- Experience phrase.
- Experience ABAB patterns.
- Organize original compositions according to a basic pattern.

## **Music (continued)**

### Expressive Qualities

- Explore space in movement as related to pitch, beat, rhythm, tempo, and dynamics.
- Experience:
  - Tempo contrasts, dynamic contrasts, timbre contrasts.
  - Global music related to classroom themes.
- Unpitched percussion technique.

### Timbre

- Investigate everyday objects and recycled materials and describe sound qualities.
- Become familiar with families of instruments in the orchestra as well as families of percussion instruments.

## **Visual Art**

In Kindergarten, the creative process includes describing, imagining, examining and art making. Children have the opportunity to explore ideas, materials, and the basic elements of art throughout the year. Through actively experiencing a variety of media, children learn how to use simple tools and techniques to make works of art including through paint, collage, assembly, drawing, sculpting and printmaking. Areas of focus typically include nature, personal interest, classroom themes, self-portraits and art/artists.

## **Library**

Students visit the library once a week as a class, where they listen to stories, select books to take home, and begin to develop their library skills. The read aloud time provides an opportunity to:

- Discover the joy of reading.
- Enrich their vocabulary and develop listening skills.
- Talk about the role of the author and the illustrator.
- Use picture clues to aid in understanding material.

When they sign out books, the students are able to choose from a variety of titles and genres as well as learn the responsibility of borrowing and returning a book within a given period of time. As the year progresses, students will learn:

- How the library is arranged by categories.
- What types of books can be found in the library.
- To distinguish between fiction and non-fiction.
- How to browse the library to find material of personal interest.

## 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.

## Physical Education

In Kindergarten, lessons continue to focus on the fundamental locomotor and non-locomotor movement skills. Students begin each year with a review of the different ways they have learned to move their bodies.

### Play/ Movement Exploration:

- The Kindergarten students experience forming shapes and patterns with the body, rhythmic activities, and combining locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative skills into new patterns. Students experience body awareness, body support, and creative movement as they explore floor patterns, pathways, and body levels.

### Manipulative Activities:

- Opposition and visual concentration are emphasized with skills including: throwing, kicking, bouncing, catching, passing, and rolling different balls, while varying or controlling the direction and force. The short and long jump ropes are introduced.

### Locomotor Skills:

- Learn our own personal and safe space while moving in the gym in a large group: jogging, running, moving while changing direction, learning to skip, gallop, slide, hop, and jump.

### Non - Locomotor Skills:

- Stretching, lifting, creative movement in acting games

### Rhythmic Activities:

- Music games and moving to music are introduced as the students experience tempo and rhythm, as well as dances in circles, lines, hip-hop and square dancing.

### Gymnastics:

- Mats are used for rolls, animal walks, and balance stunts. Work on the low balance beam is continued with more complex walks and balance stunts. Upper body strength develops on the rope ladder, climbing rope, and cargo net.

## Physical Education (continued)

### Group Games:

- The students learn to play as a group in running games that emphasize counting, colors, and imaginary themes while sharing equipment, taking turns, and practicing group respect.

### Mindfulness:

- The students practice mindfulness. The purpose of teaching mindfulness meditation is to help students focus their attention on the present moment.

## Responsive Classroom

*Responsive Classroom* is a school-wide program that supports the development of important habits of mind. These habits of mind cultivate positive communication, character development, interpersonal relationships, and responsibility for the broader school community. In Kindergarten, we work to:

- Build class rules and commit to being positive community citizens;
- Develop morning meeting skills such as active listeners, learning different greetings, practicing eye contact, and communicating with peers, teachers and other adults;
- Speak assertively and respectfully in morning meetings;
- Show responsible behavior moving about campus, within classrooms, and on field trips;
- Learn to seek teacher mediation as needed to resolve conflicts, to use words over actions, and to broaden the base of friendships to include new friends.

## Homework

There is no formal, regularly assigned homework for children in Kindergarten. Parents are strongly encouraged to read aloud to their children for a minimum of 15 minutes every day.