



Art, Catherine Gallant

First grade students start off the school year by reviewing the basics of line, shape and color. We will critique artwork by Kandinsky and discuss his use of these elements within his work. First grade artists will then create their own composition, inspired by Kandinsky, where they will apply their knowledge of line, shape, and color and how each element connects to the overall feeling of the artwork. First grade students will continue learning about lines by creating collages, paintings and sculptures.

We will be spending some time learning about Pablo Picasso; his life and a variety of his creative periods such as: blue period, and cubism. Throughout the unit, students explore form, color, and line design. Ultimately, the students will create a series of artwork inspired by Picasso.

“Young children are active and exuberant explorers. Artistic images capture the physical and sensory aspects of their discoveries. They love to express the movement, feeling and tactile qualities of animals, places and people. They tell stories by combining their observations with their inner worlds of fantasy and include details that capture the important parts of their ideas. Art making becomes an important spur to the use of imagination.”

By Professor Judith M. Burton, Art and Art Education Program, Teachers College Columbia University

<http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/teachlearn/arts/blueprints/visual-arts-blueprint.html>



Dance, Catherine Gallant

Dance creates and retains a wholeness of body, mind and spirit. It enables the moving learner to explore the world as a place of infinite possibility. This primary creative dance emerges from the child as a process of development, which embraces inquiry, observation, feeling, invention, response, and evaluation.

Our initial activities this year are designed to foster understanding of personal space and the need to maintain it while working in general space with others. Every session involves practice at turn taking and attentively observing the creative efforts of others. Most children have now cultivated a reservoir of strategies for protection of and respect for their own space and that of the people around them. The idea of listening takes on a new dimension as we learn to “listen” with our entire body. Developing this “listening body” focuses the attention to discover a new level of awareness for nonverbal participation.

Through directed improvisation first grade classes will work with the movement elements of level - (high, middle, low), weight - (heavy, light), direction - (forward, back, side), texture - (bumpy, smooth, mushy), shape - (curved, straight, twisted, symmetrical/asymmetrical) and space - (near and far). The introduction of movement sentences began with the Leaf Dance (Twist, Whirl, Float, Roll). Students worked as a whole group to experience the different movement qualities of each action and then in small groups to work on sequencing, and memorization. In first grade the Leaf Dance also includes the concept of symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes.

October brings our study of shadows. What do dancing shadows feel like? How are shadows different than reflections? We will read the poem “Little Shadow” which explores the qualities of shadows (light, quiet, expanding, contracting). In the Dance studio students will make shadow dances using a screen and light source.

We will also explore shadows extensively through inquiry, personal observations and commentary, stories, and poetry.

Motif writing, a simplified form of Labanotation, will be introduced and explored as a way of capturing and preserving movement phrases as they evolve into dances. Students observe and analyze movement in a highly specific way gaining an understanding of how to notate changes in levels, motion/stillness, stretching/bending and balance/off balance using the motif symbols on flash cards and sentence strips.

In January and February first graders will work with partners on the Snow Person dance, learn the Lion Dance (to celebrate Chinese New Year), and experience the sensation of bound and free flow in The Spaghetti Dance. In March our movement investigations will be inspired by the "Seed Story". This narrative is expressed through the body as the seed is planted, nourished by the sun, rain, and magic of our imaginations. In April/May we will continue our creation of "movement sentences" as we enter our unit on water movement. First we will gather action words by watching water movement on video. This action vocabulary becomes the raw material for our water "studies". Drip/Swirl, Splash/Float, Bubble/Flow are examples of a two-word movement sentence. In first grade, students work in trios to formulate and perform their own water dances. Students will work cooperatively as we explore

the special movement qualities of water; from the stillness of a glass of water to the raging waves of the ocean. In the first grade we take time to notate all of our dances at the end of our units using motif symbols.

Movement is integral to the learning process of young children. To learn more about dance education K-12 check out the NYCDOE Blueprint for the Arts in DANCE at http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/teachlearn/arts/canda_dance.html



Music, Mary Cherney

This year first grade students will be exploring music through the use of movement, speech, songs, instruments and focused listening. Movement activities help students develop a sense of pulse (keeping a steady beat) and tempo (the fastness or slowness of the beat), both of which are indispensable for instrument playing and ensemble work. Movement is also used for exploring accents and meter, stressed and unstressed beats. Creative movement continues to be an important component in many of the music games that we play.

Through the use of pitched instruments, such as the xylophone and glockenspiel, first graders will become familiar with note names (our musical alphabet) and the concept that pitches repeat at different levels of sound (octaves). This fall we will gradually expand our singing range, with emphasis on matching pitches accurately.

One major element of the first grade music curriculum is the introduction of written musical symbols. First graders will use note cards this fall to read and write rhythm patterns using quarter notes, eighth notes and quarter rests. By the end of the year we will be adding triplets and sixteenth notes to this list.

I look forward to teaching your children songs about community and neighborhood this fall to enrich their social studies curriculum. As the year progresses, other projects will include creating musical settings for narrative folk tales and learning songs from a variety of cultures.



Physical Education, James Herlihy

The Physical Education program at PS 89 is centered around teaching your children the importance of living a healthy and physically fit life style. We use the “Physical Best Curriculum.” Our goal is to improve your child’s health and fitness in a fun manner and safe environment. Learning to be physically active is important because it keeps children in school and helps them perform better academically. In grades K-2, your child will learn to move through space using different pathways, different locomotor movements, such as hop, skip, run. They will also learn to cooperate with other students and develop a sense of fair play and sportsmanship. Students are always encouraged to try their best and be respectful of other students.



Science, Diane Reed-Paly

The first grade science curriculum is designed to build upon the skills and concepts introduced in kindergarten. It also looks forward by introducing new process learning skills and information that will be revisited in later years. The first grade classes come to the Science Lab once a week for a fifty minute period. Their work will be sent home for you to share with them. Students will explore in observations, develop problem-solving skills, and use their natural interest in science to become active engaged learners. There are three main units of study: Animals Diversity, The Properties of Matter (solids, liquids, and gases), and Weather and the Seasons.

During Animal Diversity, students will develop their knowledge about the animal kingdom and how their adaptations help them to survive. By studying animal groups they can learn science content knowledge, analyze, and compare & contrast, while working in groups or individually. In the unit on the Properties of Matter students will focus on the real world around them. The solids, liquids, and gases around us can be used in hands-on explorations for great science learning. In the spring the Weather and the Seasons Unit will focus on the changes in our environment. Students explore this rhythm of nature by taking a closer look at air temperature, sunlight, precipitation, clouds, and the moon. The curriculum follows the NY City Scope and Sequence and meets all city and state standards. I look forward to a wonderful year full of discoveries and fun science learning.