

# Lower School



## GRADES K–3

Children in Grades K–3 proceed through predictable stages and phases, each at their own pace, and each in their own way. For this reason, our Lower School classrooms and program are carefully structured to support every child's individual journey. Through guided discovery and inquiry, our expert faculty help children build a solid foundation in reading, writing, and mathematics; explore and expand their understanding of the world around them through science and social studies; discover their creative talents through music and art; and grow as responsible citizens through our social curriculum, Responsive Classroom<sup>®</sup>. As a result, children become fluent learners by third grade, fully prepared to take on and enthusiastically embrace the challenges and opportunities of Middle School.

### Program & Curriculum Highlights

The focus in Lower School is on the success of the whole child, supporting and promoting each student's academic development, as well as their social, emotional, and moral growth. Teaching and learning is personalized to the maximum extent possible so that all students may experience challenge and success. A comprehensive social curriculum is framed around several themes focusing on cooperation, courage, and compassion.

- The Lower School language arts program is comprehensive and holistic, blending phonics, spelling, reader and writer workshops, authentic texts and a variety of genres, journaling, and analysis and reflection. Over the arc of Lower School, students build reading, comprehension, and writing skills.
- Social studies is integrated closely with language arts, with topics that include a history of the Berkshire community, early American history, geography and world cultures, peace, and history through biography. Classrooms and programs foster a love of learning and support each child's innate curiosity as they develop skills in writing, managing and creating projects, and oral presentations.
- Mathematics classes balance an emphasis on understanding concepts and learning skills through practice, real-life problem solving, activities, games, and the use of manipulatives.
- Hands-on science labs provide opportunities for exposure to science concepts while learning by doing. Topics include life, environmental, physical, and natural sciences. The campus nature trail and pond provide invaluable learning opportunities. In Grade 3, science is taught by our Middle School science teacher in the Peseckis Science Building and Lab Space.
- Foreign language instruction is an important feature in Lower School, where children build vocabulary and beginning grammar skills and oral proficiency in French and Spanish (one for each semester).
- Our robust studio arts program fully leverages the rich cultural landscape of the Berkshires. Classes include mixed media, sculpture, ceramics, painting & drawing, chorus, music theory and instrumental instruction, and theater arts.
- Lower School students enjoy a variety of field trips to area theaters, museums, nature centers, and businesses, where they see apply learning beyond the classroom and make connections between curricular themes and the world around them.
- Physical education classes and visits to the library round out the Lower School "specials" classes, and are taught by professionals who are each passionate about their chosen field and who share the love of their discipline with their students.
- Berkshire Country Day School's expansive 27-acre campus, including playground, fields, nature trails, and pond, is the setting for daily recess, nature studies, and healthy outdoor time.