

First Grade Course Description

Overview for Parents

Teacher: Chris Cassell

Content Goals

Our main objective in first grade is to provide your child with an engaging and supportive environment in which to explore and learn. Helping your child build genuine self-confidence and develop a love of learning is of paramount importance to the first grade team. Age-appropriate organizational skills and work habits are also modeled and encouraged.

Academic goals in first grade include improving your child's literacy. Activities designed to strengthen decoding skills as well as practice with reading comprehension will occur on a daily basis. Your first grader will also be introduced to a wide variety of literary genres and writing techniques. Grammar lessons compliment our writing program with lessons on the basic writing mechanics and the parts of speech. Practicing handwriting is a priority in first grade. Your child will use the D'Nealian handwriting program, where letter formation leads more easily into cursive writing, beginning in second grade. In spelling, your first grader will learn the common sight words, as well as the beginning spelling rules.

In math, your child will learn basic arithmetic skills and will explore different strategies for problem solving. Students will be exposed to a rich and diverse history curriculum with a special emphasis on geography and ancient cultures. Science lessons will focus on concepts and materials supporting physical, earth and life sciences.

For character education we use the Core Virtues program. Core Virtues was created by the founder of Crossroads Academy, Mary Beth Klee. Every month we introduce a new virtue such as respect, loyalty, and gratitude. We bring these virtues to life through oral reading of high quality literature and through modeling.

Expectations for Students:

Our principle expectation is that our students will try their best. This includes taking responsibility for their school work, homework, and classroom jobs as well as caring for their school environment and classmates. We show respect and courtesy toward our students and expect that they will emulate this behavior. Finally, we want our first graders to enjoy school; we will be encouraging enthusiasm, participation, and initiative.

Homework Requirement

Homework is integrated into the first grade program at Crossroads Academy. Your child is asked to spend time reading every day. Depending upon his/her ability level, this may include reading aloud a decodable book or other simple text book that may be sent home with your child, having an adult read a high interest selection aloud and/or independent silent reading. All children would benefit by a combination of these activities. In addition, math homework is generally sent home Monday through Thursday. Handwriting practice, grammar, or spelling may also be assigned. Additional work related to other topics will at times be sent home as well as assignments designed to meet the needs of individual children.

Contacting the Teacher

If you leave a voice mail for me at school before 3:00 I will do my best to return your call the same day. You may also e-mail me at chris.cassell@crossroadsacademy.org.



95 Dartmouth College Highway, Lyme, NH 03768
www.crossroadsacademy.org • 603.795.3111