

# Beginning with Children

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CHARTER SCHOOL 2

## Our Curriculum

We use an inquiry-based workshop model of instruction for delivery in all major subjects. The model consists of key elements that provide for instructional coherence across the school. The workshop includes a mini-lesson or direct instruction, guided practice, independent application, assessment, and review/sharing. During the mini-lesson skills and strategies are taught directly and modeled for students. It is followed by guided practice with all students. The guided practice reinforces the skills taught in the mini-lesson and provides the teacher with the opportunity to assess student acquisition. If students demonstrate basic understanding of the new skill they are sent off to work independently or in small groups to apply the new skill. The teacher observes and assesses student application of the skill and conducts a final summary and review of the day's learning. Journals, response logs and notebooks are essential tools of this instructional model across subject areas and grades.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

The core ELA curriculum is the Journeys Common Core literacy program. Journeys embeds Common Core-based instruction into every unit and lesson. It is a comprehensive program that provides the resources needed to plan and assess effectively, as well as teach and engage students. The Journeys student text uses the Common Core to engage students and build comprehension skills with materials leveled to ensure all readers receive the proper support and challenge. All Journeys Common Core leveled readers are leveled by consulting author Irene Fountas, these texts apply comprehension skills and strategies from the core lessons and support students at their instructional level. The writing portion of the Journeys Common Core program is a combination of direct writing instruction through common core mini-lessons and student practice utilizing the Common Core Writing Handbook.

### MATHEMATICS

We use Math in Focus, (Singapore Math), as our core mathematics program for grades K-5. Math in Focus is especially strong in developing conceptual understanding. It differs from the original Singapore series in that it is also aligned with the NCTM (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) standards as well as with the Common Core Standards. However, unlike most programs aligned with the NCTM standards, it does not try to teach every concept every year. Instead, it focuses on fewer topics but teaches them thoroughly so they need not be retaught continually. The scope and sequence are advanced as with the original series. A major focus is upon preparing students for success in algebra. Consequently, algebraic thinking and expressions are introduced early and used frequently throughout the series. This program will be delivered through a workshop model, similar to the language arts delivery system which includes mini-lessons, guided practice, independent practice, and assessment.

### SCIENCE

The science program utilizes an investigations-based framework through the FOSS (Full Option Science System) Program. Children develop their scientific practice skills through observing, communicating with their classmates and the community, asking questions, testing out ideas and systems, and measuring. All students keep a science notebook where they record their observations and results through drawings, diagrams, questions, tables, and their own explanations.

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Scientists engage with the world through different mediums - exploration, investigation, reading, writing, and observing the natural world around them. At BwCCS2, we foster a sense of curiosity and engagement with the natural world through observation and relating concepts to children's everyday lives. Different topics include earth science, life science, physical science, and chemical science. Students are also encouraged to engage as citizen scientists and take an active role in using a scientific lens to take care of our communities.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

The Social studies program, based on the NYC Department of Education Social Studies Units of Study, includes history, economics, geography and civics, citizenship and government. The social studies program provides students with rich subject matter and content knowledge. Students learn about the community, workforce, connections to family, and diversity within and among cultural groups that span across time and geographical locations. Students will learn to critically analyze primary and secondary resources, create classroom presentations, be exposed to non-fiction writing and texts, and learn to make connections with the past in order to understand current events. They will take grade appropriate field trips to help reinforce real-world connections with content themes.

## ART INSTRUCTION

The BwCCS2 Art program is designed to aid students in growing their own individual ideas and creativity. To this end, students are often given "thinking jobs" instead of step-by-step projects. The Art room is set up with different centers giving each student the freedom to choose his or her materials, concepts and deadlines. Our artists all participate in 2 or more art shows over the course of the year and student work can be seen throughout the building all year round!

## MUSIC

BWCCS2's music program is designed around building confident, well-rounded musicians. All of our students receive vocal and instrumental instruction based on the strongest traditional and modern music education practices.

Our K-2 students focus heavily on developing their singing voice and learn to play percussion instruments as an ensemble, particularly on drums and xylophones. Our upper school students focus more heavily on instrumental music, learning the recorder, ukulele, guitar, keyboard, and percussion.

Our students all give several vocal music performances each year and are fortunate to be accompanied by our staff band, The Beginners. Students are able to work in collaboration with skilled musicians and become a part of the creative process of performing modern music in a wide range of styles. Music is the universal language, and our students are given the opportunity to become truly fluent, capable musicians.

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### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

BwCCS2's Physical Education program aims to build the physical literacy of our students. Physical literacy is the understanding that an active body is essential for a healthy human. In our PE program, students are given the space and safety to exercise their bodies, grow stronger, and learn the behaviors that lead to lasting health.

### DRAMA

In addition to PE, upper school students in grades 3, 4 and 5 also participate in a theater education program for several weeks during the school year. 3rd grade performers focus entirely on improvisational theater games, building the tools of voice and body to communicate clearly. 4th graders build on this foundation and begin to memorize and perform text. 5th graders work more extensively with text and create performances that we share with our school community.