

Open Window School  
*for children who love to learn*

# Kindergarten - Fifth Grade Curriculum Guide



# Preparing Students for a Diverse and Changing World..

Open Window School students are prepared academically, intellectually and socially to face the demands of a changing world. We have the joy of working with exceptional children who exhibit extraordinary skills and talents. Our students develop a deeper understanding of advanced subject matter that enhances problem-solving, critical thinking, innovation and creativity. Designed to deliver an outstanding academic education, hallmarks of our program include:

- ~Solid foundation in math, language arts, science, and social studies
- ~Key learning experiences in the arts, world language, social skill development, health, as well as information and media literacy
- ~Challenge through acceleration, enrichment and choice
- ~Teaching that matches interests, learning styles and abilities to concepts and skill instruction
- ~Small class size and small group instruction
- ~Inquiry based learning

Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and approaches in the classroom that reflect the current research and best practices in gifted and talented education. Hands-on approaches tantalize and engage our children as they dig deep into topics and explore concepts. Students are provided opportunities to apply skills across content areas, extend learning to problem-based activities and interact with resources beyond the classroom walls.

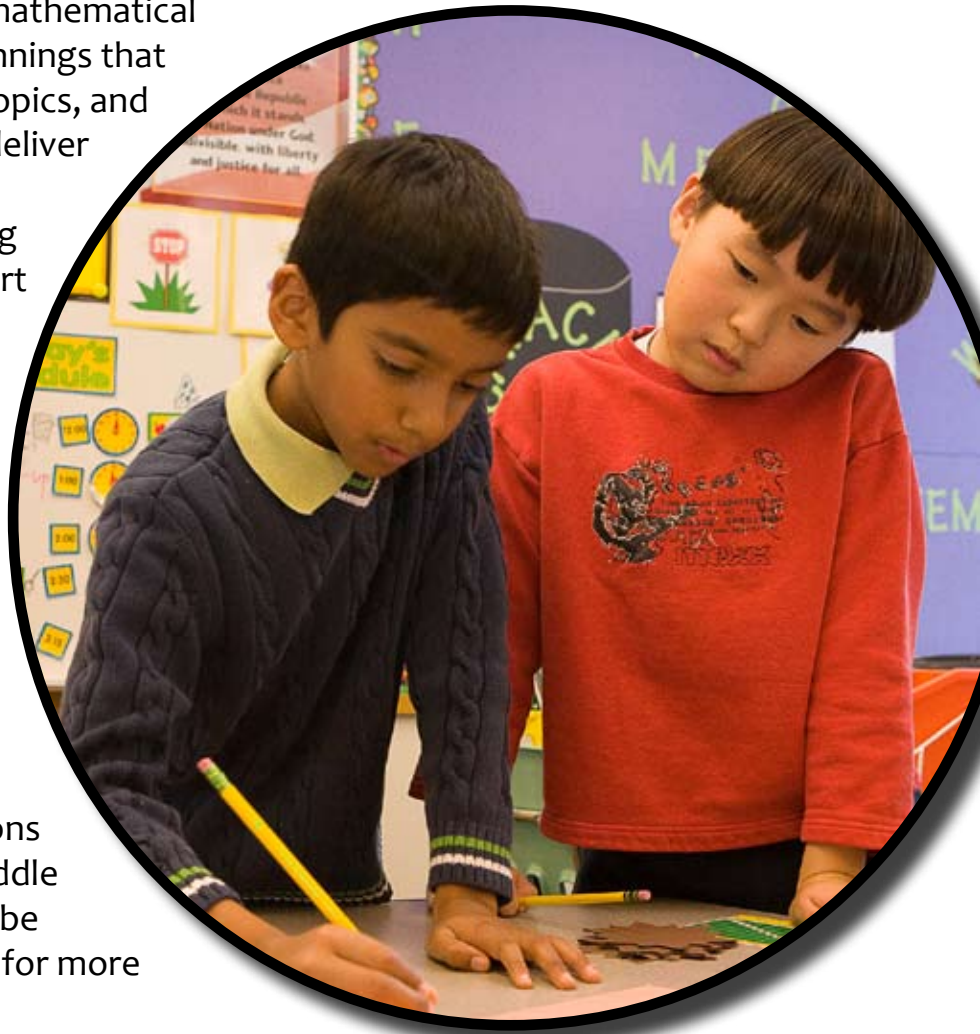
# Math

Working from the premise that “one size does not fit all” and, importantly, giving kids credit for what they already know, we found that *enVision Math* offers the necessary basic skills, explicit instruction in mathematical processes and problem solving, and is readily adaptable to the differentiation strategies our students require. The program emphasizes twenty mathematical “big ideas” or conceptual underpinnings that provide cohesion across lessons, topics, and grades. Teachers are prepared to deliver multiple levels of math instruction within a single classroom. Providing challenge, acceleration, and support based upon the assessed needs of students.

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of *enVision*. This frequent monitoring of student progress is carefully woven in the *enVision* framework, providing teachers with information about students that will guide instruction. The program is organized in a way that facilitates fluidity in the level of instruction in all classes. It transitions directly into the Vista Academy middle school math curriculum which can be offered to students who are ready for more advanced instruction.

Using *enVision*'s digital environment is truly exciting!

This component increases student and teacher access to math concepts and resources, not only providing greater potential for customization of the curriculum, but also for interactive learning with the use of SMART Boards, visual learning animations, animated glossaries and Digital Student and Teacher Editions. These integrated digital resources are designed to promote teaching and learning and are a wonderful match for Open Window School.



# Language Arts

Reading, writing, speaking, listening. All are part of the broad divisions of what is commonly called in elementary education, Language Arts. Reading to learn, communicating effectively through print and oral communication, developing the human connections that are personally possible through speech, are the cornerstones of all learning. Add to this, precocious thinkers who have an unquenchable need-to-know and the result is an amazing Language Arts program.

Students enter kindergarten learning about sounds, letters, and words. They develop along a continuum that prepares them to have a broad and deep understanding of informational and literary text. Instruction supports students as they become responsible for reflecting on their skills and adjusting their comprehension and vocabulary strategies to become better readers. Students discuss, reflect and respond to a wide variety of literary genres and informational text using specific textual evidence. OWS students revel in reading for pleasure and choosing books based on personal preference, genre or author. They begin middle school as competent, purposeful readers.



The journey to writing proficiency begins with the use of pictures and print to convey meaning. Students progress until they have developed a strong personal voice in their writing which is often accompanied by humor, reflects strong opinions or is effectively persuasive. Students use precise vocabulary in content-area writing. They experiment with complex sentence structures and varying leads and endings. Students can apply provided criteria for critiquing their own work and that of others. Students' writing becomes an effective vehicle for self expression and communication of ideas.

OWS students hone listening, speaking and presentation skills as they move through the school. They expand observation skills and listening strategies to interpret, comprehend and analyze complex auditory and visual information. Student repertoires of oral presentation skills continue to increase as topics and available technologies become more complex. OWS students learn to communicate effectively academically and personally. They are fully prepared for the increased demands of middle school.

# Science



Students entering the Open Window School science room are immediately faced with a bulletin board display that asks the question “What does a scientist look like?” That the question is strategically placed over a mirror is no accident. Our science curriculum asks students, from very young ages, to think scientifically, to ask questions, to utilize their keen observation abilities, to form hypotheses, to relish the sheer fun of experimentation, and to make the important connections necessary in the scientific process. To be a scientist comes very naturally to OWS students.

With science units from the Lawrence Hall of Science as the springboard, hallmarks of the OWS Science curriculum include:

- ~Inquiry based, hands-on learning
- ~High interest topics of study
- ~Topics that are matched to developing cognitive skills of the learners
- ~Studies that are guided by “Big Ideas” and “Essential Questions”
- ~Intellectually rigorous content

Our science program is led by teachers who are preparing their students for life in an increasingly complex scientific and technological world. Investigating concepts such as energy, patterns of change, variation, systems and interactions, and scale and structure are the core of our program, all the while encouraging students to look for the scientific patterns, relationships and interconnections of our world. Students become familiar with the natural world, its diversity and interdependence.

Is gravity a fact or theory? How will renewable energy shape the future? What is snow? Open Window School scientists - those kids in the mirror - are using their scientific knowledge to develop some answers.





# Social Studies

**W**hat makes a civilized society? What is culture? Who bears responsibility in a community? These are just a few of the questions posed to OWS students in social studies.

Open Window School is committed to developing responsible citizens in a culturally diverse and democratic society in an interdependent world. Students strive to understand their own power and responsibility as citizens of the world. They are prepared to make sound judgments, to actively contribute to sustaining a democratic society, to good stewardship of the natural environment, and to the health and prosperity of their own communities.

OWS has chosen to align our social studies curriculum with state and national standards which reflect a research based scope and sequence that is developmentally appropriate for our deep-thinking students. We have refined and expanded the topics studied at each grade level to meet the needs and interests of gifted and talented students. Instruction is delivered using a variety of strategies, experiences, and simulations. As students exit middle school they possess a knowledge of history, geography, civics and economics, which are fundamental to students' ability to understand the world we live in. They are skilled in inquiry, interpersonal relations, and critical reasoning which are all essential to the ability to gather, interpret, and analyze information. Students are able to engage in respectful and productive civic discourse, and to draw conclusions consistent with one's own values and beliefs. Respect for the values of a diverse and democratic society is fostered in our students and motivates them to safeguard their own rights and the rights of others and to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens in a democracy.

We seek to instill in our students a commitment to civic participation. OWS social studies curriculum includes opportunities for students to understand and experience their own power to make a positive difference, through service, to their communities and the world.

# Kids Making a Difference

One of the qualities that we foster in OWS students is the understanding that they can have a positive impact on others. This awareness is cultivated in many ways at Open Window School.

The “Buddy System” is one way for OWS students to experience positive social impact and leadership skills. Cross-grade activities are planned on a regular basis throughout the year. This allows older students the opportunity to teach and mentor while modeling social, emotional and academic skills. Younger students feel respected, part of a collaborative and nurturing environment, and recognized as valuable members of the school community. The relationships that blossom between students are evident not only in the planned activities, but also on the playground, before- and after-school care, and other moments when buddies greet each other with obvious delight.

Beyond the campus, OWS students have found meaningful ways to contribute to the community. Each year, many of our classes participate in activities that help others outside our school. Examples include: planting trees, a winter mitten drive, collecting school supplies for First Place School, King County Humane Society Pet Food Drive, Compost Ambassadors, Hopelink, and other community support activities throughout the year, including a school wide commitment to Jump Rope for Heart. Parents often help our teachers find these meaningful opportunities for our children.

Intermediate grade students also participate in overnight outdoor education camps that engage students in environmental education. Trips to *Islandwood* and *Camp Colman* generate ideas and activities that result in a dedication to genuine community improvement and service learning. Students are prompted to examine environmental issues from multiple and diverse perspectives. To that end, OWS is working towards becoming a “green school.” Vista Academy students have also been instrumental in restoration work as part of the Mountains to Sound Greenway.

In their years at OWS, students will grow as human beings. Academic skills, creative expression, and problem solving are important. In addition, the experiences described above cultivate awareness of others, a sense of responsibility, and strong character.



# In addition...

Open Window School students are enriched by their work with seven different specialist teachers. These experiences complement and extend classroom learning and are intriguing and stimulating.

Library classes reinforce the pleasure of reading and expose the children to global literature. Our librarian builds research and information skills as students move into the older grades. The program builds upon the concept that libraries are portals to information and life-long learning.

Technology becomes a tool rather than a destination for OWS students and often dovetails with library research. Students are taught the features and benefits of the technology at their fingertips and learn to use it effectively.

Spanish classes introduce OWS students to the language and its cultures. Students learn basic sounds and vocabulary as they prepare for more rigorous language study in the older grades.

Physical Education classes focus on skills, sportsmanship and health at every grade level. Classes are conducted in a noncompetitive environment that encourages students to acquire healthy habits to last a lifetime.

Open Window School celebrates the arts! Classes in visual arts intrigue and delight our students as they explore mediums of expression and experience success. Music includes moving to the beat, historical studies, interpretation, singing and playing instruments. Students have the opportunity to participate in performance groups which include a recorder ensemble and choir. These experiences are enhanced by drama classes which develop poise, confidence and theatrical skills. All OWS artistic elements come together in annual grade level performances. Teachers and specialists collaborate to bring the highlights of classroom units to the stage. Parents and students are enthralled by the results, culminating in cries of “Bravo” for all!

