# CONTENTS

## PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION
- Constructivism 6
- Assessment 7

## LOWER SCHOOL
### ACADEMIC OVERVIEW
- Early Childhood
  - 4s, 5s and 6s Overview 10
  - Open Work in the Early Childhood Classrooms 11
- Community Work
  - (Social Studies and Science) Essential Questions + Key Skills 12
- Literacy
  - Essential Questions + Key Skills 16
- Math
  - Essential Questions + Key Skills 20
- Movement 24
- Spanish 24
- Visual Arts 25
- Music 25

## 7S THROUGH 10S
### Academic Overview 26
- Social Studies Essential Questions + Key Skills 28
- Science Essential Questions + Key Skills 32
- Literacy Essential Questions + Key Skills 36
- Handwriting and Keyboarding Skills in the Lower School 40
- Spelling and Grammar Skills in the Lower School 41
- Math Essential Questions + Key Skills 42
- Technology 46
- Open Work and Labs 47
- Health 47
- Movement 48
- Visual Arts 48
- Spanish 49
- Music 49

## MIDDLE SCHOOL
### ACADEMIC OVERVIEW
- Humanities 50
- Essential Questions + Key Skills 52
- Literacy Essential Questions + Key Skills 56
- Math Essential Questions + Key Skills 60
- Science Essential Questions + Key Skills 64
- Spanish Essential Questions + Key Skills 68
- Arts 70
- Physical Education 70
- Technology 71
- Independent Work 71
- Advisory 72
- Community Service 73
- Health 73
- High School Preparation 73
Progressive education is a movement dedicated to educating the whole child, with an emphasis on social justice. At Greene Hill we are guided by these meaningful principles every day. In the 1900s, during the Progressive Era of reform, socially-minded activists and educational theorists like Jane Addams and John Dewey aligned their theories of progressivism with those of earlier philosophers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Their beliefs about child development, such as the importance of active engagement and educating the whole person, have influenced the core principles of progressive education to this day.

For over 60 years, John Dewey (1859 – 1952) shaped progressive educational theory and practice. The Laboratory School in Chicago, founded with his wife, became a place for his research and observations and led to the writing of numerous articles and books. Dewey codified the way we think of progressive education today in books like “The School and Society” and “Democracy in Education”.

A GENERAL SUMMARY OF DEWEY’S PHILOSOPHY INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING TENETS:

- Education is a process of living, not a preparation for living.
- Curriculum should be based on children’s interests with some structure provided by adults.
- The most meaningful experiences for children are ones rooted in their current stage of development and the scientific method.
- School should prepare children to be fully participatory members of a democratic society.
- School should be equally concerned with the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical needs of the child.
Constructivism is at the heart of Greene Hill School’s approach to teaching. It is the theory that all people construct their own knowledge, developing meaning and understanding through experience and reflection.

Based on the research of developmental psychologists and educational theorists like Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Eleanor Duckworth, constructivist theory provides a strong framework through which we at Greene Hill understand how children learn and what our role is in supporting their learning. We see learning as an active, life-long process, through which people continuously build upon what they already know to refine ideas and create a more complex worldview. The constructivist classroom provides ample opportunities for posing questions, formulating and testing ideas through hands-on experience, and examining theories through rich discussion.

At the onset of an immigration study, children interview relatives, family friends, and community members about their experiences coming to America. Through discussion and readings, they identify common themes in the immigration experience, and wonder together about the stories that stand outside those themes.

Children examine well-written picture books to see how authors use commas, making generalizations and developing rules for their usage that they can immediately apply to their own writing.

Children use graph paper or base-ten blocks to make physical models of double-digit multiplication, figuring out how that representation relates to the standard U.S. algorithm for multiplication, and to other methods as well.

A class learning about bread experiments to find the right ratio between flour and water, and tries baking a loaf without yeast to see what will happen. They decide what their next step will be to better understand the process.

At Greene Hill School, our approach to assessment is consistent with our overall philosophy of teaching and learning. We consider the whole child, and we value the deep and ongoing relationship between teacher and student. Instead of using standardized testing, we consider assessment part of the authentic work that teachers and students do together every day.

Through careful observation and dialog, analysis of children’s work, and deep familiarity with nationally considered standards and benchmarks, teachers are closely attuned to their students’ development. They use that knowledge to drive their teaching decisions, and to ensure that children are acquiring appropriate skills and understandings.

In addition, our Learning Specialist and teachers find that regularly applied formal benchmark assessment tools for reading and math skills lend consistency and clarity to our understanding of students’ academic development. Every year parents participate in three parent-teacher conferences and receive two detailed narrative reports to provide clear communication about a child’s academic progress.
Lower School students are involved in deep and engaging studies that help them make sense of the world around them and build their own knowledge, with adult guidance. Through authentic work and exploration of open-ended essential questions over time children develop more nuanced understandings of the complex systems and processes that make up our world, and see themselves as active participants. They learn academic skills explicitly in support of this work.
EARLY CHILDHOOD

4s, 5s and 6s

The early childhood program at Greene Hill provides young children with opportunities to engage creatively with each other, and with a variety of materials. Children in the 4s class make choices about how to spend their time throughout the day, using materials like blocks, paint, puzzles, and games. They gather for shared experiences like read-alouds, songs, and short daily classes like Spanish, music, visual arts, or movement. Their days are structured and consistent, with outdoor play time in the morning and a rest after lunch.

Direct instruction in reading, writing, and math begins in the 5s, within the context of a day still filled with play and exploration. Class-wide studies for the 5s and 6s allow children to learn more about the social and natural world through community investigations. Work in the block area is crucial to these age groups, as children interpret structures and systems they’ve seen in their community.

In the 4s, the unit blocks, easel paints, water table, and clay are always available. Through extended experience with those open-ended materials, the children’s work develops in complex and often surprising ways. Students make discoveries about mixing colors or balancing tall buildings. They are deeply invested in the dramatic play that evolves around block buildings and clay, and tell elaborate stories to accompany their paintings or work at the water table. They move fluidly between materials and activities, finding opportunities to work independently or with peers. Most important, children experience the satisfaction of making their own choices and following their own ideas.

In the 5s and 6s classrooms, children learn to stay with their Open Work choices for longer stretches of time, beginning to return to work over several days. Their repertoire expands to include activities like bookmaking, cardboard construction, science experimentation, and puppetry. The explorations and creations of Open Work in the early childhood classrooms set the stage for continued self-initiated work throughout the Lower School, as children acquire the ability to manage more complicated projects. Encouraged to share their ideas with classmates, they become increasingly comfortable giving and receiving feedback and reflecting on their own work.

5s and 6s participate in Labs, ten-session mixed-age mini-courses focused on topics and interests like tinkering, insects, sculpture, and newspaper. Children bring ideas and skills that they’ve learned in Labs back to their classrooms.

Open Work is a daily opportunity for children to engage in self-initiated work with a range of materials.
For the first three years, social studies and science work are deeply intertwined in the classrooms, as children are immersed in experiences that help them better understand their communities and environments. While certain studies may fall neatly into the categories of science or social studies, at this age the connections among them are very strong, with most explorations highly integrated in nature. We call these core studies “Community Work.” Whole-class block building is an important arena for learning: children build realistic scaled models based on first-hand research, and then use their structures to deepen their experience through dramatic play and reenactment.

Each year, Greene Hill selects thematic units that are both age appropriate and exciting for students, based on both teacher and student interests. There are some general themes and specific concepts that are addressed every year, ensuring that students experience a rich, comprehensive curriculum over the course of their time at Greene Hill School. For each major unit of study, specific inquiry skills and areas of content knowledge are outlined and used as benchmarks to assess children’s learning.
Social Studies and Science | 4s – 6s

4s
Explorations of families, jobs, and life cycles are typical themes the 4s pursue as they begin thinking about their place in school and their neighborhood, and paying attention to the natural world. Children in the 4s have many opportunities to play. Through open-ended materials such as blocks, sand, paint, and water they explore and practice concepts of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts. As children grow, first-hand experience continues to be integral to learning.

5s
5s begin to explore familiar institutions and places — the school, the grocery store, the park — with a more finely tuned eye. Children may learn about the people and processes involved in food production, delivery, and preparation. They take trips to community gardens, rooftop farms, farmers markets, the food co-op, supermarkets, and restaurants. Studies of local trees, and the creatures that live in them, provide meaningful opportunities for children to explore the intricacies and diversity of natural life.

6s
6s often study neighborhood businesses, exploring the ways in which people work together in various roles to accomplish complicated tasks. Children may research the workings of restaurants through visits, interviews, and a variety of media, culminating in the creation of their own restaurant. A study of the East River provides the chance to explore a local ecosystem, leading to a greater appreciation for how people and animals make use of their environment.

Key Social Studies Skills 4s - 6s
Develop conflict resolution skills and a sense of responsibility toward self and others.
Communicate needs and feelings clearly and respectfully.
Acquire interviewing and note-taking skills.
Notice similarities and differences in people and places.
Recognize interdependence in a variety of contexts.

Key Science Skills 4s - 6s
Use observation skills to generate questions.
Identify the needs of living things.
Explore physical properties of matter, and changes in plants and animals through the seasons.
Understand how particular physical traits of animals affect their survival.
Compare and contrast animal species.
Begin to make logical inferences based on real-world experience.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
Community Work | 4s – 6s

How do people cooperate to get complex jobs done?
What are some important places in our neighborhood?
Where does our food come from?
How do people and animals make use of their environment?
At Greene Hill we approach the teaching of reading and writing holistically and joyously. We ensure that our expectations of children are attuned to what we know about typical patterns of development. Children progress through emergent literacy stages into becoming true, independent readers and writers, engaging with the written word with zest and confidence. The 5s and 6s participate in intensive small-group work with teachers, as the children hone decoding skills, always keeping comprehension and enjoyment at the center of their reading work. Children use writing across the curriculum as a means to form and communicate ideas; they also focus on particular genres of creative writing. Using a constructivist and systematic approach called Words Their Way, children identify and use predictable spelling patterns and work on committing certain high-frequency words to memory. Developing skills are assessed through teacher conferences and observations, periodic benchmark assessments for reading, and checklists or rubrics specific to the writing genres they study.
Early literacy activities and experiences are embedded in the daily work of the 4s. Children listen to books read aloud, sometimes studying particular genres like fairy tales, and share books with each other. Children tell each other stories that grow from communal play in the block area, or from a child’s painting. They use blank books to compose stories or record everything they know about someone or something close to their hearts. As their awareness of letters and sounds grows over the year, 4-year-olds begin sorting objects or pictures based on the first sound they hear, and some use those initial sounds to try writing words on their own.

Explicit reading and writing instruction begins in the 5s. At the beginning of the year, children of this age already have a strong relationship with literature — they can retell familiar stories and use picture clues to help them narrate favorite books. They use drawings to compose their own true and imagined tales. As the year progresses, they build knowledge of how written language works to become increasingly skillful and independent as readers and writers. By the end of the year they are able to express themselves through writing and are able to read simple books on their own. Typical genre studies for the 5s include All-about Books, Personal Narrative, and Poetry.

6s anticipate becoming more skillful readers and writers over the course of the year and have high expectations for themselves. The logistics of reading and writing are still new and challenging for six-year-olds, but they are highly motivated to become more independent. As children become able to read more challenging books on their own, they still view reading as something to love and to share with others. The 6s continue to use a balanced literacy framework of reading workshop, writing workshop, small group work, word study, shared reading, and read-alouds. Students write for a variety of purposes and begin to return to their written pieces for the purpose of revising and editing. 6s typically revisit familiar genres, gaining experience writing narrative fiction and writing more expressively and playfully.

Key Literacy Skills 4s

- Make connections to stories and poems.
- Observe predictable story elements in a genre like fairy tales.
- Identify letters and recognize letter-sound correspondence.
- Notice and generate rhyming words.
- Recount and compose stories orally.
- Use writing and drawing tools competently.

Key Literacy Skills 5s and 6s

- Integrate decoding and comprehension skills to read with purpose and meaning.
- Recognize “narrative arc” of stories and incorporate into own compositions.
- Use writing to capture a moment, or share ideas.
- Recognize and use the conventions of a variety of genres.
- Use the writing process to generate ideas, draft, revise and edit, and share their writing.
- Write sentences with beginning capitals and ending punctuation.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do letters combine to make words?
- How can I use language to share my ideas?
- How can I keep a clear picture in my mind of what I’m reading? What can I do if I begin to lose that picture?
- What techniques do published authors use that I can try myself?
- What are some similarities and differences between poetry and prose? Narrative fiction and narrative nonfiction? How-to books and All-about books?
Young children have many opportunities to develop their mathematical thinking. Children in the 4s are guided as they make discoveries about number and shape in the context of their work and play. Formal daily math instruction begins in the 5s. We use *Investigations in Number, Data and Space*, a constructivist curriculum that provides children with hands-on experience through which they build mathematical understanding and skill. They explore the distinct mathematical strands of number and operation, patterns and functions, data and probability, geometry, and measurement. Assessment of their mathematical skills and reasoning happens through daily teacher observations, analysis of children’s work, and performance assessments built into the curriculum.
Math \ 4s – 6s

4s
Whether building with blocks, preparing class snacks, or keeping track of the jobs people do in the neighborhood, children in the 4s are using numbers to make sense of their world. They begin to move beyond rote counting to a deeper understanding of numbers as representations of specific quantities. They use simple charts to represent data, and play games that involve sorting, classifying, comparing sizes and quantities, or identifying patterns.

5s
The 5s math program introduces children to many of the materials, structures, and routines that they will be using throughout the Lower School years. Students use daily practices like studying the calendar and taking attendance to build number sense. They refine counting skills, compare quantities, and add and subtract small numbers, using cubes or other math materials to make the work concrete. At the same time, 5s begin to use number sentences (equations) to represent computations with pencil and paper. They develop logical skills by sorting and classifying shapes according to different attributes, and by identifying and describing simple repeating patterns. Children design surveys and keep track of responses, learning to interpret real-world data.

6s
Young mathematicians in the 6s are becoming comfortable working with numbers in more abstract ways, acquiring a stronger understanding of the base-ten number system. Through games and story problems, students’ work focuses on gaining an understanding of addition and subtraction, using numbers and notation to represent these operations, and finding different strategies for solving problems. They also discover more real-world uses for measurement and data analysis, and continue to work with patterns, functions, and two- and three-dimensional shapes.

Math | 4s – 6s

Key Math Skills 4s - 6s
Develop strategies for accurately counting a set of objects by ones.
Use the concept of equivalence.
Use manipulatives, drawings, tools, and notations to show strategies and solutions.
Construct, describe, and extend repeating patterns.
Carry out data investigations and represent data visually.
Describe, identify, compare, and sort two- and three-dimensional shapes.
Understand length and use linear units.
Make sense of strategies to solve addition and subtraction problems with small numbers.
Gain fluency with addition combinations of 10.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
Math | 4s – 6s
What strategies can I use to count this set of cubes accurately?
Is there a way to share a limited number of materials fairly?
How can I make sure I’ll have enough blocks for my building?
What do different geometric shapes have in common and how do we describe them?
How can numbers help us identify patterns in the world around us?
How do the symbols + and - represent changes in quantity?

GREENE HILL SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE
Students in the 4s, 5s, and 6s explore the elements of creative dance and basic game structure. Gross and fine motor development is encouraged through running, jumping, galloping, skipping, as well as throwing, catching, kicking, and dribbling. Spatial awareness, bodily coordination and control, musicality, self-expression, and social cooperation are practiced through a variety of creative movement activities, group challenges, and games. Students learn to work together in space, navigating their own bodies safely while working with partners and in small groups.

Spanish instruction in the early childhood classes is designed to be fun and to encourage risk-taking in a new language. 4s and 5s learn basic vocabulary and expressions in weekly sessions. They focus on greetings, colors, numbers, the alphabet, the calendar, animals, the body, and food, through games, songs, and other interactive activities. 6s extend their work through twice-weekly sessions, making more curricular connections and improving their Spanish conversational skills.

The core of music education for 4s, 5s, and 6s is about using voices, movement, and instruments. Students sing, clap, and play to the beat as they learn the basic patterns of making music together. Children are introduced to small hand-held percussion instruments like maracas, tambourines, triangles, claves, sticks, woodblocks, and bells. They sing songs and play games that develop skills like echoing movements and sounds, building rhythmic consistency, and cultivating memory for melody. Students explore music from the United States, Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia, and create songs of their own.

Daily life in the early childhood classrooms is full of creative arts experiences with a variety of open-ended materials. Children also participate in weekly visual arts classes with artists in the community on a trimester basis, allowing children the unique opportunity to work with a particular art medium for an extended period of time. Recent collaborations include classes in woodworking, ceramics, and painting.
In the upper grade classrooms, students begin to consider more distant places and times, and more abstract scientific concepts. Their social studies work brings students in contact with the diversity of human experience, gaining a global perspective and contending with issues of social justice. Classes visit the Science Lab for twice-weekly sessions with a science teacher, and begin trimester-long technology courses. Homework begins, with nightly reading Logs for 7s, and two assignments a week beginning in the 8s and increasing in frequency through the 10s. Students have daily opportunities for self-initiated work during Open Work, sometimes in connection with shared curricular studies but also in pursuit of outside interests and skills.
Older students in the Lower School begin by looking at their neighborhood today, and gradually expand outward across time and space to embark on historical studies for the first time. Children come to appreciate the dynamism and diversity of New York City, including the role they play as engaged citizens in its evolving story. Expanding on the idea of citizenship, our older students learn about the roots of our government and culture, what makes our city and country distinct in the world, as well as what links us to other countries and cultures. These historical studies pave the way for explorations of American history and government, and provide context for later studies of ancient civilizations.
7s
The 7s investigate familiar and tangible elements of their urban environment in new and more complex ways. By observing aspects of their immediate surroundings and visiting other parts of the city, students make comparisons among neighborhoods. An in-depth study of the transportation system gives 7s a stronger geographic understanding of the five boroughs, as well as a chance to look at how this complex system evolved over time as the city expanded. A study of local bridges is often a highlight, allowing students to explore engineering principles and historical developments.

8s
In the 8s, students study the history of New York City through the lens of immigration, identifying common themes across time. Students become immersed in studies of daily life during distinct historical periods, learning research skills through studying maps, photos, documents, and data. Because it is their first historical study they start closest to home, examining family stories of immigration. Students then work backwards through time across different periods — for example, the turn of the 20th century, and the Dutch Colonial Era. They become adept at using evidence to support their growing ideas about the past, linking their own families’ experiences to the experiences of others throughout history.

9s
Students in the 9s consider questions of governance in the Americas. They look to current-day local politics as a precursor for studying life in the colonies before the American Revolution, and learn about the factors that led to the formation a new nation. They extend this arc to look at the government of a people indigenous to the Western Hemisphere such as the Maya or Lenape. Over the course of the year students gain a critical lens for looking at history and consider issues of power and justice, the individual and society.

10s
10s broaden their understanding of the distant past through in-depth studies of ancient civilizations such as Greece and China. By examining the cultural, governmental, and philosophical aspects of Greek society, students continue to foster an understanding of the foundations on which our own society was built. The study of ancient China provides an important contrast, especially in terms of government and culture. 10s students sharpen their critical thinking skills and further hone abilities in developing and expressing strong arguments through writing and oral debate.

Key Social Studies Skills 7s - 10s
Understand concepts of chronology and historical events.
Appreciate similarities and differences among cultures.
Raise questions and seek answers from historical stories and records from the past.
Understand the interdependency of living things and physical environments.
Learn about government structures and the need for rules for resolving conflicts and disagreements.
Read and interpret different types of maps.
Apply information from field trips to classroom work.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
Social Studies | 7s – 10s
What do neighborhoods have in common and how do they differ?
How can citizens make important changes in local community?
What does it mean to live in a community consisting of people from all over the world?
What are the factors that influence people’s moves across continents and cultures?
Who has access to power in society?
Whose story is being told?
What do the artistic and scientific achievements of past cultures tell us about those societies, and how have they influenced our own?
How have different civilizations used their natural resources effectively?
What factors contribute to the success and demise of an empire?
Beginning in the 7s, students at Greene Hill work in the Science Lab twice a week. Their classroom teachers collaborate in this work and facilitate interdisciplinary connections. Investigations are hands-on and exploratory, providing students with a solid foundation in content knowledge across the key fields of earth, life, and physical sciences. Students also acquire a strong facility with scientific process skills, learning how to conduct authentic research to make discoveries. Teachers articulate specific benchmarks for each unit of study to evaluate students’ understanding of content knowledge and use of inquiry skills.
Science I 7s – 10s

**7s**
Science in the 7s explores interdependent relationships in different ecosystems, the structure and properties of matter, and some of the many processes that shape the Earth. They are introduced to the steps of the scientific method and begin to apply them to investigations of plant diversity, forces and motion, and earth materials. They develop skill in planning and conducting investigations, observing, describing, and classifying objects and phenomena, constructing evidence-based explanations, and analyzing data.

**8s**
Major themes explored in the 8s are life cycles and traits of living things, forces and motion, and weather patterns and phenomena. Students continue to practice applying the scientific method to pose and answer questions and satisfy their curiosity. Their hands-on explorations take place alongside book research as students formalize their knowledge of physical phenomena. They learn how to use evidence to construct explanations, determine cause and effect relationships, and represent and interpret data.

**9s**
In the 9s, students explore the function and survival of living things, the transfer of energy, the use of renewable and nonrenewable energy, and the interactions between the geosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, and biosphere. They learn about the work of research scientists and review current scientific research. They collect and organize data, making choices about the most appropriate way to represent their findings and looking for apparent patterns or relationships in data.

**10s**
10s continue to explore the movement of energy through ecosystems; their work with the interactions of the Earth’s systems extends to include patterns observed in space. Students also focus on renewable resources and conservation efforts. An emphasis on stewardship and conservation is appropriate for this age group as children deepen their understanding of the interconnectedness of living things and the role of human-kind. Students take more ownership over the scientific inquiry process, pursuing topics and questions and constructing experiments more independently.

### Key Science Skills 7s - 10s

- Describe and compare physical properties.
- Describe the basic life functions and life cycles of plants and animals.
- Develop reasonable hypotheses, and evaluate those hypotheses in light of data collected.
- Employ tools to gather, analyze, and interpret data.
- Formulate and communicate explanations using evidence.
- Identify dependent and independent variables.

### Essential Questions

**Science I 7s – 10s**

- What causes objects to move?
- What are ways that energy can be transformed?
- What roles do plants and animals play in their environments?
- What are the properties of electricity and magnetism?
- How are plants and animals in an ecosystem interconnected?
- What are the processes that shape landforms and bodies of water on Earth?
- How can we formulate questions of scientific inquiry and construct scientific investigations to explore those questions?
Greene Hill students experience reading and writing across many contexts and genres, enjoying literature independently and socially, conducting research, reading and interpreting primary sources, writing and speaking persuasively, and analyzing texts in increasingly sophisticated ways. Their teachers come to know them deeply as readers and writers, and assess their growth through a variety of measures, including frequent observation and conferring, periodic assessments with benchmark books, and writing rubrics tailored to specific projects and genres.
LITERACY

Key Literary Skills 7s - 10s

Read and write with fluency and stamina across a variety of genres.

Make inferences.

Identify the author’s perspective.

Identify themes in literature and the different ways authors develop those themes.

Strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, and publishing a piece of work.

Integrate reading and writing skills by conducting research and presenting findings.

Engage with peers in conversation to express one’s own ideas clearly and persuasively, and to actively respond to the ideas of others.

Demonstrate increasing mastery of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Why do so many stories seem to have heroes and villains?

How can I read between the lines to figure out what is really motivating these characters?

How can I capture my readers’ attention and keep them engaged in my story?

What pieces of information will be most persuasive as I build a written argument?

What discussion questions will help my book club understand the story on a deeper level?

Why do some themes in literature recur frequently?

LITERACY | 7s – 10s

7s

7s are increasingly fluent and nuanced readers and writers. Reading and writing are approached joyfully and pursued independently; however, the class also builds strong community around literacy, forming discussion groups around shared books or series, or giving each other carefully considered feedback about written work. Students continue to refine their writing skills with a new emphasis on revision for content and style. Key genre studies in the 7s are typically personal narratives, how-to books, and fantasy.

8s

Working in the contexts of whole-class book discussions, small, independently run book groups, and partnerships, 8s discuss what they read. They reflect on various aspects of their books: sharing exciting moments, identifying a problem in a story, making inferences, identifying common themes, and creating book recommendations. In addition, 8s gain skills in note-taking and analysis of nonfiction texts as they examine books about history, as well as primary source documents connected to their work in social studies. In the writing workshop, students learn to follow the steps of the writing process more independently to find their unique voices. Genres studied include memoirs, interviews, letter writing, biographies, historical fiction, and persuasive writing.

9s

Students in the 9s approach reading and writing with greater independence and purpose. Much of the work they do is integrated with social studies and science, as students become more adept at analyzing and creating nonfiction texts. 9s are also cultivating a deeper love of literature, with the ability to sustain whole-group or small-group discussions around books with more sophistication and independence. Typical experiences include: an integrated reading and writing unit on award-winning picture books; a workshop structure that supports children in their independent reading; and experience in writing a variety of genres, with an emphasis on narrative, persuasive, and informative writing.

10s

The 10s continue to practice and improve foundational reading and writing skills, with an emphasis on critical thinking and analysis. Students compare and contrast a variety of genres and strengthen their comprehension of complex texts. As writers, 10s refine their awareness of audience and purpose. They write in a variety of nonfiction forms, including persuasive pieces and research reports. They strengthen research skills such as note-taking, collecting and analyzing information, prioritizing and organizing, and presenting information in clear and engaging ways.

7s

Read and write with fluency and stamina across a variety of genres.

Make inferences.

Identify the author’s perspective.

Identify themes in literature and the different ways authors develop those themes.

Strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, and publishing a piece of work.

Integrate reading and writing skills by conducting research and presenting findings.

Engage with peers in conversation to express one’s own ideas clearly and persuasively, and to actively respond to the ideas of others.

Demonstrate increasing mastery of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Literacy | 7s – 10s

Why do so many stories seem to have heroes and villains?

How can I read between the lines to figure out what is really motivating these characters?

How can I capture my readers’ attention and keep them engaged in my story?

What pieces of information will be most persuasive as I build a written argument?

What discussion questions will help my book club understand the story on a deeper level?

Why do some themes in literature recur frequently?
LOWER SCHOOL SKILLS

As children are becoming more skillful at composing their thoughts, they are also working toward mastery of the physical logistics of writing.

In the 4s, as children are learning to identify letters and the sounds they make, they are also involved in multi-sensory experiences that help them form letters and numbers correctly. Explicit handwriting instruction begins in the 5s and extends through the 10s, using a program called Handwriting Without Tears. 5s, 6s, and 7s learn and practice correct letter formation in print to acquire fluency and stamina as writers; 8s begin to study cursive, and start using cursive more consistently in their own writing by the 9s. Children continue to practice handwriting skills through the 10s.

Keyboarding skills are taught beginning in the 8s with a program called Typing Pal; children in the 8s, 9s, and 10s practice their keyboarding skills at school and at home. By the end of the 8s year, students are ready to use computers to publish written work. In the 9s, they are beginning to compose directly on laptops.

Our approach to spelling instruction is called “Word Study,” based on a program called Words Their Way. Through games and activities including word sorts, students gain a general knowledge of English spelling and learn how to examine words through active exploration using a hands-on, manipulative approach. They learn the regularities, patterns, and conventions of English orthography needed to read and spell, understanding over time how the layers of alphabet, pattern, and meaning apply to spelling. Students also discover generalizations about spelling, instead of just spelling rules. Similarly, they attend to correct grammatical usage and punctuation over time by examining good writing together, noticing patterns and anomalies, looking for rules, and experimenting with usage.

HANDWRITING + KEYBOARDING

SPELLING + GRAMMAR
The Lower School math curriculum, *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space*, gives students a strong foundation in the mathematical strands of number and operation, patterns and functions, data and probability, geometry, and measurement. Students use mathematical skills to identify and solve authentic problems. While students master computation skills, we emphasize developing strong mathematical reasoning and problem-solving, as well as the ability to communicate clearly about math. As in the lower grades, assessment for this age group happens through daily teacher observations, analysis of children’s work, and performance assessments built into the curriculum.
Math | 7s – 10s

7s
7-year-olds deepen their work with number and operations to incorporate new skills like counting by groups, accurately and efficiently adding and subtracting numbers up to 100, estimating addition and subtraction problems up to 1,000, and identifying generalizations about the properties of even and odd numbers. They begin to explore fractions, understanding them as ways of representing equal parts of a whole, as well as equal parts of a group. Their work with patterns and functions extends to using tables to represent and predict change in linear relationships, for example, keeping track of how many rooms are in a multi-story building by knowing how many rooms are on each floor. Work continues with telling time, place value, coin combinations, and two- and three-dimensional shapes.

8s
A major emphasis for the 8s is on constructing a strong understanding of multiplication and division. 8s conceptualize multiplication as a way of representing “things that come in groups,” and work with arrays as a model. They understand division to be the inverse of multiplication; their initial strategies for solving division problems often involve using that relationship. They acquire fluency with multiplying numbers with a product up to 50, and also gain accuracy and efficiency in adding and subtracting numbers up to 1,000. Another key area for 8s is the study of fractions. They become more comfortable working with halves, fourths, eighths, thirds, and sixths, as well as simple decimal fractions like 0.50 and 0.25. Students learn to use graphs to represent linear change, and begin to develop a more refined vocabulary for describing and classifying geometric shapes, including describing and measuring angles. They learn to find area and perimeter and to determine the volume of rectangular prisms.

9s
Multiplication and division are still major themes of math work in the 9s. Students gain fluency with multiplication facts up to 12 x 12, and learn strategies for multiplying two-digit numbers. They use their understanding of multiplication, and of factors and multiples, to tackle division problems with larger numbers as well. Their work with fractions becomes more sophisticated, as they begin to compare and manipulate both fractions and decimals. 9s become skillful in analyzing and interpreting data, beginning to apply concepts of probability by determining the relative likelihood of different outcomes. They use line graphs to track rates of change, analyzing, for example, data about the growth rate of a plant, noticing when it grew more quickly or slowly.

10s
In the 10s, students work to expand their understanding of the number system to 100,000 and beyond. Their computational fluency increases, and they are now able to examine a variety of procedures or algorithms for computing, including the standard U.S. algorithms for multiplication and subtraction, understanding how those algorithms work, and determining which ones are most useful given particular numbers or contexts. They tackle multiplication problems with two- and three-digit numbers and solve division problems with two-digit divisors. They recognize the relationships between fractions, decimals, and percents, moving between them more comfortably. 10s analyze data in new ways, for example, describing the probability of an event. Their work with geometry extends to structuring prisms, cylinders, and cones, and determining their volume.

Math | 7s – 10s

Key Math Skills 7s - 10s

Explore problems in depth.

Compute with whole numbers with efficiency, fluency, and flexibility.

Apply familiar mathematical principles to unfamiliar situations.

Identify multiple ways to solve problems, and choose among different strategies.

Communicate mathematical ideas clearly and concisely.

Represent mathematical thinking using models, diagrams, and graphs.

Make connections among mathematical ideas.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Math | 7s – 10s

How can I use the relationship between addition and subtraction (or multiplication and division) to solve problems?

How can I represent quantities that fall in between whole numbers?

Why do some computational procedures work better than others for certain numbers or situations?

What is the difference between ways of describing and computing length, area, and volume?

Where do number patterns occur in the “real world”?

How do I know my answer is correct? Is there another way to check it?

How can I use “friendly numbers” or create an equivalent expression that will help me solve this problem?

What is the difference between theoretical and experimental probability?
At Greene Hill students learn that, while computers are important tools for research and communication, they are also tools for creativity, design, and bringing ideas to fruition. By engaging in self-initiated projects and open-ended experimentation, children learn how to solve problems in innovative ways. The technology program begins in the 7s, with one trimester of weekly instruction per year.

7s learn to use computers as tools for creativity and design. They start by taking apart a computer and acting out the ways in which the different components work together. They begin to learn simple algorithms by working with LOGO floor robots, and are then introduced to programming using Scratch. 8s and 9s continue to work with Scratch, developing their programming skills and learning about grids, debugging, object interaction, conditionals, and sensing. They work on independent and group projects that integrate their programming skills in new ways. In the 10s, they extend their work by programming physical objects that respond to their commands.

Sometimes Open Work is focused on a particular curricular area or topic. Students might create books or perform plays, or design scientific experiments. At other times, students are able to incorporate skills they have learned in new ways, for example, by applying research skills to their own areas of interest, teaching classmates a new craft, or extending work done in technology class to their own projects.

Multi-age Labs provide another arena for students to acquire new skills and pursue interests. Labs convene around topics like engineering, poetry, or jewelry, allowing for the development of core skills in novel ways. The experience students gain in Labs deepens the work they do back in their classrooms during Open Work. As students get older, greater emphasis is placed on planning independent or group projects during Open Work and articulating the standards by which they believe projects ought to be evaluated.

Health education focuses on providing students with accurate information and clear communication skills around issues of human development, friendships and relationships, and other concerns. While our school-wide approach to conflict resolution, social development, and science education addresses many health issues throughout the Lower School experience, trimester-long weekly courses for 9s and 10s with a Health Educator address some particular questions typical of pre-adolescents, particularly around changing bodies and social relationships.
MOVEMENT

7s – 10s

Movement expands in the upper grades from the basic elements of dance and sports to include the concepts of movement phrases, choreography, folk dance, and performance, as well as the more complicated game structures involved in soccer, volleyball, basketball, kickball, and games of the children’s own invention. Students begin thinking critically about how games work and how to participate in them in a way that feels safe, fun, inclusive, and challenging. These games increase endurance, strength, and more advanced ball skills. Upper grade students continue to learn how to navigate their own bodies safely through space while working energetically and rigorously. They practice managing their social-emotional responses to game play and cooperation.

SPANISH

7s – 10s

In the upper grades, students continue to increase their Spanish vocabulary and conversational skills. More and more, they learn to use Spanish across other areas of their curriculum: solving math problems in Spanish, telling time, learning vocabulary that relates to science and social studies topics. As their conversational skills grow, so do their writing skills, eventually becoming proficient at writing paragraphs in Spanish around a variety of topics. Students also learn more about Spanish-speaking countries and cultures around the world.

VISUAL ARTS

7s – 10s

Students take weekly visual arts classes with artists in the community on a trimester basis, allowing children the unique opportunity to work with a particular art medium for an extended period of time. Recent collaborations include classes in woodworking, ceramics, painting and mural design. Returning to the same core materials from year to year provides children with the chance to extend their work even further. Additionally, visual arts work is integrated throughout daily life in the classroom.

MUSIC

7s – 10s

7s work with Orff mallet instruments: xylophones, metallophones and glockenspiels. They study the technical aspects of music: working with pitched instruments, reading rhythm notation, taking apart songs to create new patterns, and learning to sing in two parts: rounds and multi-part songs. 8s learn to play recorders, creating ensembles with voice and percussion, and learn to read melodic notation. The 9s and 10s combine the skills they have accumulated in ensemble music-making, incorporating recorder, percussion, voice, lyrics, improvisation, and composition. They are also introduced to a new instrument, typically guitar.
Greene Hill Middle School students are empowered and motivated to investigate their own areas of interest, work collaboratively, and complete complex projects. Students think creatively and with flexibility as they consider difficult questions and take ownership of their own learning. In 6th grade, students have separate teachers for math, humanities, science, and Spanish. In most cases, students stay together as a full group, although in certain instances they will work in half groups.

To address both academic and social-emotional needs, students are part of small advisory groups which meet weekly to discuss their classwork, adolescent issues, and plan community service projects. Greene Hill School’s community-based arts partnerships expand in the Middle School enabling young adolescents to have broad exposure to both visual and performing arts in conjunction with local organizations.

Students will leave Greene Hill with a love of learning and a clear sense of themselves as important members of their community as they embark upon their high school experience. Our rich academic curriculum, emphasis on critical thinking and communication will enable them to gain entry into the high school of their choice.
Our humanities curriculum helps students develop the traditional skills of critical reading, persuasive writing, analytical thinking, and research, within the context of learning about the past. These skills help students analyze situations through a historical lens. Humanities classes in the Middle School are a combination of literacy and social studies based on the premise that students become more engaged readers and more prolific writers if they are deeply immersed in their curricular content. History and social studies continue to be at the core of the curriculum as students engage in in-depth investigations of cultures from around the world. One goal of the Middle School humanities curriculum is to tie together contemporaneously occurring events around the world. Overarching questions include: Whose story is being told? How does conflict shape history? How has technology changed history? Course topics may change from year to year based on teacher and student interest.

Field trips play an integral role in our curriculum as students take full advantage of all that New York City has to offer. Visits may include the Cloisters, The American Museum of Natural History, The Asia Society, and the New York Historical Society. The purpose of these excursions is not just to view art and artifacts related to their studies, but also to provide children with primary experiences to help answer questions such as: How can art provide us with insights into belief systems and ways of life?
6th Grade: The Medieval Perspective
Following upon the study of ancient civilizations in the 10s, 6th graders delve into the Middle Ages, learning about European, Middle Eastern, Asian, and North American civilizations from the 5th to 15th centuries. Studies focus on the function of class structure and social hierarchies and the role of religion. Classes look at ways in which aspects of modern society such as legal systems and mathematics stem from events and innovations that took place more than 1,000 years ago. Students continue to deepen their understanding of the concepts of historical perspective and bias as they learn how one’s point of view can shape the recounting of history.

7th Grade: Revolution and Innovation
Seventh graders explore the concepts of revolution and innovation through science, cultural perspective, and government in Europe and America. They begin by exploring the technological and intellectual innovations of the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution. Students trace the paths of European explorers as they venture out across the world in the 15th century and then compare and contrast the expeditions of Europeans to the “new world” in later centuries. Students end the year by revisiting the Colonial era and the American Revolution, with a deeper context for the colonists’ desire for independence and change. Students relate what they learn to 21st-century globalization.

8th Grade: Justice
Eighth graders extend the study of American history by tracing the path from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement. This tumultuous period invites examination of issues of equality and justice, with attention to legal, military, social, and moral drivers of change. Complicated topics such as slavery, voting rights, marriage rights, privacy, and freedom of thought and speech are an important part of students’ exploration of this era. Students make connections between challenges Americans faced in the past and those they continue to contend with today.

Key Social Studies Skills
Middle School
Consider multiple perspectives.
Locate, interpret and integrate a wide variety of primary sources.
Analyze the interrelationships of a civilization’s components, e.g. government, religion, trade.
Ask probing questions about history that spark conversation.
Process information; take notes, outline, summarize.
Develop sophisticated arguments; support ideas with logical reasoning and evidence both orally and in writing.
Draw connections between historical and current events.
Analyze the origins, authenticity and validity of information found in electronic resources.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
Social Studies | Middle School
What are the roles, rights, and responsibilities of people in society?
What are the threads of continuity and change throughout history?
How do the beliefs and values of a diverse culture affect individuals and society?
What happens when cultures collide?
What impact does trade have on a culture?
Who has access to power?
How did major scientific, mathematical, and technological advances affect society?
What insights can historical narrative teach us about the current day?
Reading and writing are embedded in our interdisciplinary humanities program in the Middle School. Students express themselves creatively within the social studies content and beyond it. Throughout the 6th to 8th grade years, students write memoirs, editorials, and short stories. Teachers provide many opportunities for students to engage in analytical reading and model strategies for reading comprehension and analysis. We balance expository and imaginative writing, stressing clarity and organization. Vocabulary development and the rules of spelling and grammar are incorporated into lessons; students are encouraged to recognize the importance of self-editing. Students read fiction and nonfiction independently and in small groups, and share their thinking about reading with their peers both face-to-face and in online blogs.
6th Grade
Sixth graders examine character development across a wide range of literature. They compare and contrast themes in different genres such as poetry and short stories. Students expand their ability to converse about what they are reading through regular discussions and forums. Some of the books that students may read: Walk Two Moons, The Uglies, The Absolutely True Adventure of a Part-Time Indian, and America Street. Students continue to work in genres like essays and narratives, bringing new craft techniques and critical thinking skills to these forms.

7th Grade
In 7th grade students are introduced to the works of William Shakespeare and have the opportunity to enact scenes from his plays. They examine closely the use of language and experiment with writing in a similar style. Some other books that students may read: The House on Mango Street, Chains, and The Omnivore’s Dilemma (Young Adult version). Their writing includes fiction as well as persuasive and informational pieces that provide students with a chance to do more in-depth integration of research-based evidence.

8th Grade
Eighth graders employ a variety of literary techniques such as flashbacks, variation in point of view, and comparison of themes across three texts in their writing. They analyze complex texts and think about abstract themes in literature such as: how doing the right thing can sometimes lead to problematic outcomes, or the ways in which characters find happiness in the face of adversity. They incorporate this analysis into both written and oral presentations. Some of the books students may read: The Diary of Anne Frank, Animal Farm, To Kill a Mockingbird, and Things Fall Apart.

Key Literacy Skills
Middle School
Analyze an author’s point of view.
Compare and contrast texts, themes, genres, points of view.
Engage in collaborative conversations about texts.
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
Develop logical arguments.
Demonstrate command of the conventions of English in writing and speaking.

Essential Questions
Literacy | Middle School
What are ways in which authors create characters who change over time?
What strategies do authors use to create a sense of identity for their characters?
How does a text reflect a set of cultural values?
What makes a hero different from a celebrity?
How does the text rely upon or break cultural assumptions?
Our Middle School uses the Connected Math Project (CMP3) program, which is a natural extension of the constructivist Investigations in Number, Data, and Space curriculum from the Lower School. This program allows students to build their knowledge of mathematics through exploration of real-world problems, engaging math activities, and opportunities to construct their own understandings of mathematical concepts. The focus is not on rote memorization of algorithms, but rather on determining strategies and finding different routes to the solution of a problem. We encourage students to reason abstractly, persevere in problem solving, and explain their solutions clearly. Math is another lens through which to see the world as students explore questions that address authentic applications such as economics, statistics, and architecture.

The four math strands that are taught throughout the Middle School years are:

NUMBER AND OPERATION
DATA ANALYSIS AND PROBABILITY
GEOMETRY AND MEASUREMENT
ALGEBRA AND FUNCTIONS

Each year builds upon what was learned in the prior year with the concepts and skills deepening as students progress. Middle School students may also participate in a weekly math seminar, an opportunity to dig more deeply into complex mathematical problem-solving.
Math | Middle School

6th Grade
Sixth grade students analyze operations. They develop an understanding of prime factorization and the use of order of operations. Students study ratios, rational numbers, and equivalence. They deepen their familiarity with fractions and expand their ability to perform operations with fractions, decimals, and percents through working with number lines, examining rate tables, and making comparisons. Later in the year, sixth graders study geometry as they work with area, perimeter, and volume of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes.

7th Grade
Seventh graders use logical reasoning to analyze geometric attributes. They develop their understanding of similarity, congruence, and proportional relationships as part of a geometry strand. Students embark on a study of integers and rational numbers, looking at order of operations and mathematical properties as a way to make computational sequences clear. Students become more flexible and skilled in using strategies for comparing fractions, ratios, rates, and percents.

8th Grade
Eighth grade students learn about mathematical models such as data tables, graphs, and equations, and their application in problem solving. They focus on linear relationships, examining equality, equations, and data analysis. As part of a geometry strand, students learn about the Pythagorean Theorem, making connections among the concepts of area, distance, and irrational numbers. Exponential functions are used to solve real-world problems involving topics like population growth and decay. Building upon their 6th and 7th grade exposure to variables, 8th graders look at the characteristics of quadratic relationships as they continue to explore algebraic concepts.

Math | Middle School

Key Math Skills
Middle School

Analyze problems and persevere in solving them.

Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

Use a mathematical framework to analyze a situation or pose a problem.

Employ appropriate tools strategically.

Attend to precision.

Look for and make use of structure.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
Math | Middle School

Why do we use variables?

How can prime factorization help us solve problems?

How can I design a data investigation to answer a question?

What display is appropriate for a given set of data?

When are negative numbers used and why are they important?

How do you find the value of the unknown?

How can objects be represented and compared using geometric attributes?

What different interpretations can be obtained from a particular pattern or relationship?
Middle School science is based on in-depth investigations of the natural world. Students participate in inquiry-based units of study where they ask questions, make hypotheses, gather evidence, and share their findings. These investigations create a foundation of science knowledge that students will build upon in high school and beyond. Students explore topics within the core fields of earth, life, physical and chemical sciences, and engage in activities that spark curiosity and promote their interests. Taking on authentic problems, students will interpret data and use evidence to support their scientific conclusions. By the time students leave Middle School, they will be able to create and conduct scientific experiments independently, including analyzing their data and presenting their discoveries.
Science | Middle School

6th Grade
With an overall focus on earth science, 6th graders study water cycles and rock formations and the connection between them. They closely examine weather patterns and the global climate, as well as the processes that shape the earth, such as plate tectonics, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. They also explore topics in chemistry, studying particles, elements, atoms, and molecules.

7th Grade
A study of life science explores the components that are essential to all life. Students examine cells, organ systems, and their functions to understand how human bodies work and change. Another component of this study is genetics and inherited traits. Taking a broader look at living things, students learn about natural selection and the impact of environmental change on organisms. Students continue learning chemistry through an investigation of the properties of matter and chemical reactions.

8th Grade
The primary topic in 8th grade is physical science. Students start by exploring light, its movement, its effect on matter, and how it is perceived by the human eye. Later, classes focus on energy; the different types, how energy flows and transforms. Once they understand the basic concept of energy types such as thermal, kinetic, and elastic, 8th graders delve into an investigation of force, motion, and friction. As a culmination of the Middle School chemistry strand, 8th graders look at food as an energy source and explore its chemical makeup.

Key Science Skills
Middle School

- Ask questions and define problems.
- Plan and carry out investigations by collecting data.
- Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence.
- Develop and use models to describe, test, and predict.
- Gather, read, assess, and synthesize information from multiple appropriate sources.
- Develop scientific explanations based on valid and reliable evidence.
- Construct an oral or written argument supported by empirical evidence and scientific reasoning.
- Clearly communicate scientific ideas both visually and in written form.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
Science | Middle School

- How does water shape our world?
- What causes changes in weather?
- How is the Earth transforming over time?
- What do all organisms need to live?
- How does the human body function?
- What can affect the traits of an organism?
- What is energy?
- How do the laws of physics affect movement?
Our foreign language program is geared toward increasing tools for interpersonal communication and fostering a global perspective. It addresses the 5Cs: communication, culture, connections between disciplines, comparisons between languages, and communities of language speakers. Our language program focuses on Spanish because it is a language that students encounter in daily life in New York City and because 8th graders will look towards visiting a Spanish-speaking country as part of their week-long community service project. We expect them to be able to engage as fully as possible with the people they encounter, so we want students to be proficient Spanish speakers by the end of Middle School.

**SPANISH**

**Middle School**

**6th Grade**
In 6th grade, all students study Spanish. We feel it is important to have a solid foundation as well as a strong connection between the academic aspect of learning a second language and real-life language usage. Since for some students this will be the first exposure to in-depth study of Spanish, the emphasis will be on language structures, vocabulary, and grammar. For students who have had previous Spanish instruction, classes will be more intensive with a focus on conversation.

**7th Grade**
In 7th grade, students may have the opportunity to start another language in addition to Spanish, such as Latin. We will also provide students with the opportunity to take online language courses. The goals of the Spanish program include becoming more fluent in conversation, understanding grammatical forms, and improving their ability to write.

**8th Grade**
In addition to strengthening their conversational skills in anticipation of our community service trip, 8th grade students learn to present information effectively both orally and in writing in a second language. As part of their growing ability to think abstractly as well as their increased knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, 8th graders have opportunities to read, analyze, and discuss literature in Spanish.

**Key Spanish Skills**

**Middle School**

- Engage in conversation.
- Understand and interpret written and spoken language.
- Present information, concepts, and ideas orally and in writing.
- Understand cultural difference between native speakers of the language and speakers of American English.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

**Spanish | Middle School**

- What are the key components necessary to be able to communicate in another language?
- What cultural variations exist in the language?
- What does language tell us about culture?
- What can we learn about our own language by studying a second language?
- What comparisons can we make between English and other languages?
VISUAL ARTS: Students have hands-on experiences with a variety of media such as wood, clay, paint, paper, and glass. Our students attend arts class once a week with a trimester rotation ensuring that each year they participate in three distinct arts programs. Partnerships may include: Construction Kids (woodworking), Urban Glass (glassworking), as well as several independent artists with local studios.

PERFORMING ARTS operates on a similar trimester basis to visual arts. Students participate in music, dance, and drama throughout the year. Our partnerships may include a music program in conjunction with the Brooklyn Music School and a drama program benefiting from local groups like BAM and Theater for a New Audience.

Our commitment to daily physical exercise continues in the Middle School where students have time for both structured and unstructured sports. Outside time is offered daily. Physical education is offered regularly with students participating in a running program, games yard, cooperative games, and several team sports. Athletics are also part of our after-school programming. In 7th grade students are eligible to join interscholastic sports teams.

At Greene Hill students learn that, while computers are important tools for research and communication, they are also tools for creativity, design, and bringing ideas to fruition. By engaging in self-initiated projects and open-ended experimentation, children learn how to solve problems in innovative ways.

Middle grade students have at their disposal a wide array of computer technology to spark their imaginations, to create projects, and to use for learning. They employ tools such as Scratch to animate, breadboards to experiment in circuit design, and a variety of other programs to design web pages. Projects may include building clocks, making programmable lamps, and solving real-world problems with green energy. Borrowing from the ideas of the Lifelong Kindergarten group at the MIT Media Lab and Stanford’s FabLab, children use technology purposefully and creatively.

Middle school students have many opportunities to follow their interests and delve into independent projects across the curriculum. Examples may include research projects on civilizations during the Middle Ages, exploration and creation of an object based on colonial craft-making techniques, or a multimedia presentation on a civil justice issue. Students also explore areas outside of the curriculum through weekly independent work time. Projects may include writing for a neighborhood newspaper, engaging in advanced computer programming such as robotics, or interning with a local artist.
Middle School

Each student is a member of a small advisory group that provides ongoing academic and social support. Advisory groups ensure that all students are connected to one of the adults in the community as well as to a smaller subset of their peers. We address the developmental needs of each student by assisting them in being well-organized, comfortable with routine study practices, responsible for their own work, and respectful in their social interactions. Advisory is also a place where we attend to the needs of the ever-changing social sphere of young adolescents.

COMMUNITY SERVICE  Middle School

Greene Hill students are active stewards of community life in their Brooklyn neighborhoods, in NYC at large, and beyond. The aim of our community service program is for students to engage in projects where they can have a direct impact, develop meaningful relationships with members of the community and their peers, and have a high level of respect for their environment. Since service learning is an integral part of the social-emotional curriculum we believe it is important for students to have a say in the projects that they undertake. By the end of Middle School, GHS students will have had the opportunity to take part in a service-based week-long trip, plan a service project with their classmates, and participate in community work throughout the three years. Through these experiences students develop their capacity for compassion, empathy, and caring.

HEALTH  Middle School

Our health curriculum addresses the physical, social, and emotional stages of early adolescence. The focus is on providing students with clear information regarding adolescent development and answering questions they may have. Students discuss their changing bodies, interpersonal relationships, and issues of self-identity.

Students graduating from Greene Hill will be poised to attend any of the broad range of excellent NYC high schools, both independent and public. Our commitment to instilling critical-thinking enables our students to think deeply, communicate effectively, and transition to high school smoothly. In 7th grade, we offer a formalized high school preparation program so that students are ready to take any necessary standardized tests in 8th grade. In addition, we support students in their collection of any portfolio materials they may need. Our small size enables us to support families in the high school admissions process and advocate on behalf of our graduates with high school admissions officers.