



Starting the "Start Curriculum"

Principal Terumi Aketagawa



April, the month of cherry blossom petals falling and fluttering in the wind, has gone, and the trees have put on their beautiful green attire.

In the school yard, children can be seen playing enjoyably with students from different grades, and everyone is following the play time rules. The students in the new class and with their new teachers are off to a great start, and the school is filled with the kindness of their smiling faces.

As the pilot school of Minato City for teachers' research in 2016-2017, the school distributed questionnaires during the first graders' explanatory meeting held last February to promote the research. From the results of the survey, we are analyzing the concerns that parents and children have in regards to entering elementary school. The school is considering how the issues can be addressed, and putting new practices into place to mitigate them. The Nanzan Elementary School "Start Curriculum" is meant to tie the students' early education experiences together with their elementary school life, which began in April. After compiling the results of the curriculum from this year, a research presentation will be held along with open classes on February 9 (Fri), 2018.

As one example of the Start Curriculum, rather than the homeroom teacher explaining to the new students how to store their shoes in the shoe box, the sixth graders took time in the morning to instruct the younger students. The idea was that students learning and teaching each other will have a greater effect than just the teacher's instructions. For the sixth graders as well, it was an exercise in practicing consideration and kindness towards the younger students, and ties in with their studies about respect for human rights. Additionally, during the month of April the first graders' classes are not always cut into 45 minute blocks, but rather into learning modules of various lengths such as 15 or 30 minutes, and in this way the gap between the lengths of activities in elementary school kindergarten/pre-school is reduced.

The three means of connecting early education to elementary school

Post-elementary learning

Juvenile Independence: in life, academically, and emotionally.

Fostering the fundamentals of learning

Connection

Toddler

Learning through play and experience

Minato City Board of Education

From the Pre-Elementary curriculum "Growth and Learning"

Grade 6 looking after Grade 1



Start Curriculum (Elementary School)

The Start Curriculum is a plan that encompasses the first graders' elementary school life in the first weeks of April. It applies comprehensive instruction methods to make the best use of the unique qualities of early education to better link students' previous experiences to their new school life.

About the Application for the Special Academic Support Room and Arrangement of Academic Support Staff

Beginning last year, the school opened the "Step Room," which is a classroom offering additional academic support to students who are still developing their skills. The special support classroom was established as a means for students to improve and overcome struggles with life skills and/or academic skills.

Additionally, it is possible to request an academic support staff member, who will join students in their regular class to assist students individually with subjects they are struggling with.

Please contact the either the Vice Principal, the Special Support Coordinator, or your homeroom teacher about applying for support. The date for application to the Special Academic Support Room is May 26 (Fri). The Date to apply for academic support staff is May 19 (Fri).

May Calendar

|    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 1  | M  | Firetruck drawing (G1,2), Committee                                  |
| 2  | Tu | Firetruck drawing (additional day)                                   |
| 3  | W  | Constitution Day   |
| 4  | Th | Greenery Day   |
| 5  | F  | Children's Day   |
| 6  | Sa |  |
| 7  | Su |  |
| 8  | M  | Emergency drill, Group dismissal                                     |
| 9  | Tu | Field trip (G3,4)  |
| 10 | W  | Sinus check-up   |
| 11 | Th | Explanatory meeting for the Grade 6 trip, Dental check-up (G1, 5, 6) |
| 12 | F  | Dental check-up (G2, 3, 4) Field trip (G5, 6)                        |
| 13 | Sa | Club   |
| 14 | Su |  |
| 15 | M  |  |
| 16 | Tu | Field trip (in case of weather) (G3, 4)                              |
| 17 | W  | All-school Sports Day practice                                       |
| 18 | Th | Eye check-up, Art Field Trip (G4)                                    |
| 19 | F  | All-school Sports Day Practice                                       |
| 20 | Sa |  |
| 21 | Su |  |
| 22 | M  | Sports Day job activities  |
| 23 | Tu | All-school Sports Day Practice                                       |
| 24 | W  |  |
| 25 | Th | All-school practice (additional day)                                 |
| 26 | F  | Pre-Sports Day Preparation   |
| 27 | Sa | Sports Day   |
| 28 | Su |  |
| 29 | M  | Holiday in lieu  |
| 30 | Tu | Field trip (in case of weather) (G5, 6)                              |
| 31 | W  | Throwing-the-ball lesson   |

May Goal

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Life Guidance | Listen carefully when others are speaking |
|---------------|---|

Images of the school day-to-day activities can be seen on the school's blog. Please check the school's website for more information.

Grade 1

Class 1-1

A week passed in the blink of an eye after the Entrance Ceremony. Nearly every morning the 6<sup>th</sup> graders came to the classroom in the morning and either helped out or played with the first graders. With students from other grades stopping by during morning recess, the 1<sup>st</sup> grade classroom had a very fun and lively atmosphere throughout.

Language study has begun, starting with *hiragana*, and the students are carefully writing each character using correct posture and being conscious about how to hold their pencils properly. The students look forward to lunchtime every day asking questions like, "I wonder what's on the menu today?" or, "I wonder who will do the lunch broadcast?"

Moving forward, I hope the students can appreciate the fun of activities at school and experience quality time with their friends throughout the various activities at school.



Grade 1 Welcoming Ceremony

Special Events Coordinator

On April 15 (Sat) was the Grade 1 Welcoming Ceremony. Excitedly awaiting the arrival of the 1<sup>st</sup> graders, all the students in the school divided into groups to make preparations for the ceremony. The 2<sup>nd</sup> graders made medals, the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders prepared a paper-flower arch, the 4<sup>th</sup> grades wrote a message to the 1<sup>st</sup> graders, the 5<sup>th</sup> graders prepared the event space, and the 6<sup>th</sup> graders introduced Nanzan Elementary School with a quiz. With everybody taking responsibility for their roles, the students came together to make an event that was unique and special to Nanzan. Also, the gym was filled with heartfelt applause as the 1<sup>st</sup> graders introduced themselves one by one to their new schoolmates.

From now on, we look forward to seeing all the students at Nanzan working together, with the 6<sup>th</sup> graders in the lead, to make Nanzan a great school for everyone.

