

15. Do teachers plan together?



Random units without a big-picture plan

Projects in art/technology reflect lessons in history/math

20. Are students physically active?



No gym, dance or movement in class, watching movies at lunch

Outdoors every day, jumping, dancing and skipping at lunch

Culture & tone

You don't want anarchy ... or a police state

16. What's the noise level?



Can hear a pin drop

A productive hum

17. What do you hear?



Shouting and yelling

Grown-ups and kids speak in respectful voices

18. Are parents involved?



Parents shut out

Parents & staff work as a team

Gym, recess & play

Kids shouldn't sit still all day

19. Work/play balance?



All work - no play or recess

Purposeful play, guided by teachers

Lunch & after-school

How students spend their free time

21. What's the lunchroom like?



Rowdy, messy, smelly

Orderly and clean

22. After-school programs?



Limited, expensive

Free for all students, extensive opportunities

InsideSchools



What to look for on an elementary school tour

InsideSchools

Your independent guide to New York City public schools

We want to know what you think about this school. Add comments on our site: insideschools.org

THE NEW SCHOOL

CENTER FOR NEW YORK CITY AFFAIRS

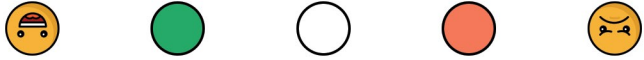
72 Fifth Avenue, 6th floor, New York, NY 10011

A checklist for parents by the InsideSchools staff

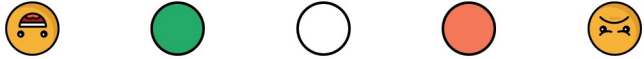
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First impressions

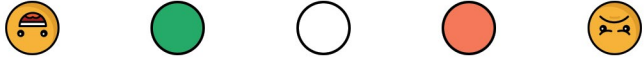
Trust your instincts. First impressions count



Unfriendly



Dark, dirty, messy



Bare walls, cookie cutter-work, store-bought decorations

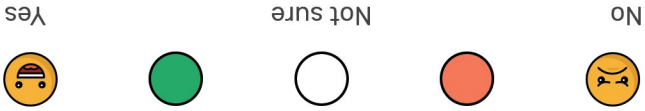
Artwork, essays, science & social studies projects, math problems

Leadership

A principal can make or break a school



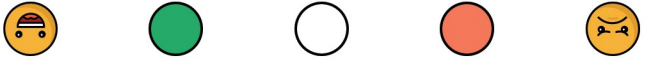
5. Is there a clear plan to achieve that vision?



Academics

Great schools explore all subjects

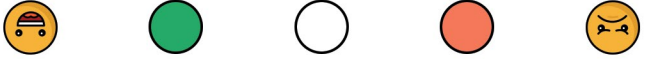
6. Reading



Book excerpts or really simple books, even in 5th grade

Kids enjoy picture books, science books, historical novels and complex chapter books

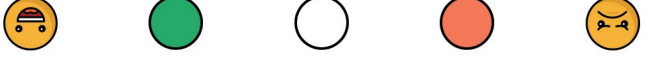
7. Writing



Short essays with copied facts

Lots of high-quality essays on a range of topics

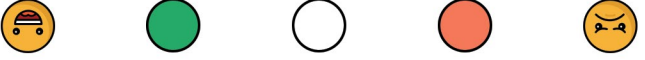
8. Math



Nothing but worksheets or little evidence of math

Legos, blocks, dice, play money, different ways to solve problems

9. Social studies



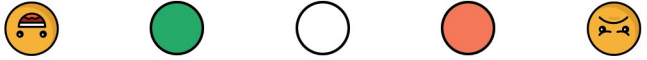
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Maps, globes, timelines, thematic studies on bridges or subways

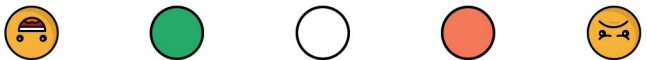
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A great teacher will make you envy your child

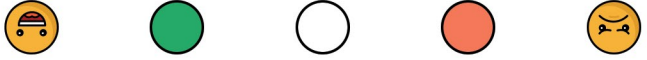
11. Are students engaged?



Kids so focused they don't notice visitors in the room

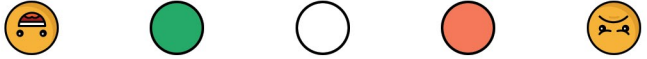


Teachers do all the talking



Teachers encourage children to read harder books, write longer essays, do more complex math

14. Do teachers support struggling kids?

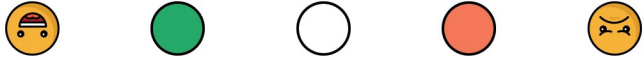


Teachers work with individual children or small groups

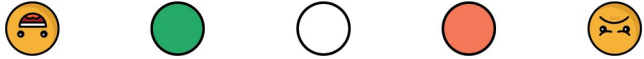
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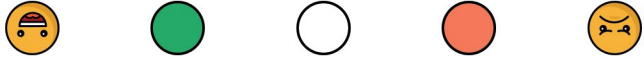
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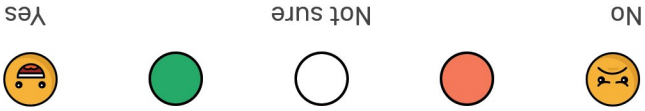
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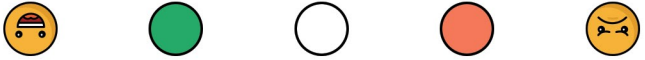
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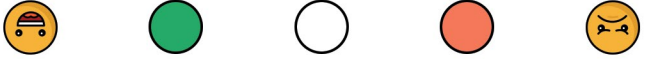
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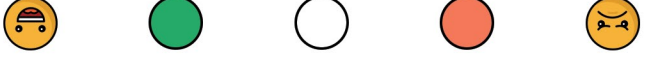
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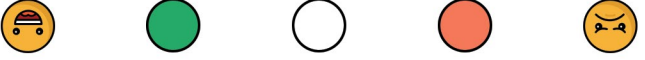
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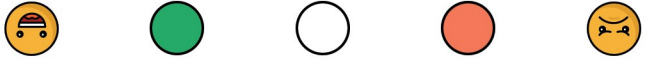
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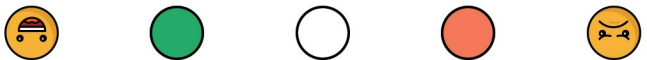
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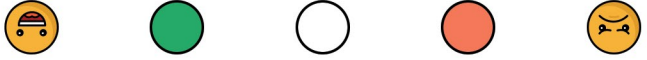
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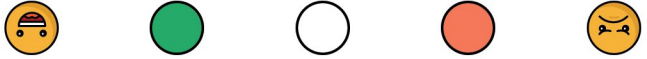


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