Culture & tone

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

What's the noise level? Can hear a pin A productive hum. drop. What do you hear? Shouting and Grown-ups and kids yelling. speak in respectful voices. Are parents involved? Parents & Parents shut out. staff work as a team. Gym, recess & play Kids shouldn't sit still all day Work/play balance? All work - no Purposeful play or play, guided by teachers. recess. Are students physically active? No gym, dance

or movement in class, watching movies at lunch. Outdoors every day, jumping, dancing and skipping.

What's the lunchroom like? What's the lunchroom like? What's the lunchroom like? Rowdy, messy, smelly. Orderly and clean. After-school programs? Limited, expensive.

Notes

opportunities.



SCHOOL NAME:



What to look for on an elementary school tour

A checklist for parents by the Insideschools staff.

Did this school match our Insideschools profile? We want to know what you think – so add your comments on our site.

Insideschools.org

contact@insideschools.org (212) 229 5471

First impressions

Trust your instincts. First impressions count.

Security guard and office staff Unfriendly. Friendly. Building Dark, dirty, Bright, clean, orderly. messy. Student work on display Bare walls, cookie Artwork, essays, science & social cutter-work, storebought decorations. studies projects. math problems. Leadership A principal can make or break a school. Does the principal have a clear vision? No. Not sure? Yes! Is there a clear plan to achieve that vision? No. Not sure? Yes!

Academics Teaching Great schools explore all subjects. A great teacher will make you envy your child. Reading Are students engaged? Kids distracted, Book excerpts or Kids enjoy picture Kids so focused books, science they don't notice really simple bored, aimless. books, historical visitors in the room books, even in novels and complex 5th grade. chapter books. Who does the talking? Writing Teachers do all the Teachers talking. encourage kids Short essays with Lots of highto talk. copied facts. quality essays on a range of topics. Do teachers challenge top students? Math One-size-fits-all lessons. Nothing but Legos, blocks, dice, worksheets or little play money, evidence of math. different ways to solve problems. Do teachers support struggling kids? Social studies One-size-fits-all No evidence of Maps, globes, lessons. history or timelines, thematic geography. studies on bridges or subways. Do teachers plan together? Science Random units No evidence of Plants, animals, without a bigcooking supplies, eggs science. picture plan. hatching, experiments in every class.

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

> Teachers work with individual children or small groups.



art/technology reflect lessons in history/math.