Smartypants (Pete In School) by Maira Kalman

If Only School Were This Much Fun

Having a dog in class is always a clue that its going to be an interesting day, especially when the dog in question-and the one with all the answers-is the insatiable canine gourmand Pete, last seen munching everything from jellybeans to underwear on his way through the alphabet in What Pete Ate from A-Z.

Poppy Wise has mixed feelings about school and her teachers have mixed feelings about her dog, Pete. Pete wreaks havoc in math; causes chaos in science (Mrs. Magma has a meltdown when he swallows her microscope!); and is a star in art (Miss Crumple finds Pete colorful when he eats all the crayons). As Pete gets his fill of knowledge, he also serves as an impetus for learning rules are made to be broken and there is no end to learning. This new adventure is sure to be another giggly meal for readers who relish ridiculousness, randomness, rambunctiousness and alliteration.-Time Out New York

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My Personal Review:
Although I am somewhat older than the suggested age range for this book, I loved the combination of witty illustrations and sly humor. Kalman's imagination is free-wheeling and far-reaching (have YOU ever considered what you'd do if your dog swallowed the remote?) and in a few words she encapsulates the essence of the educational experience--long stretches of boredom punctuated by occasional moments of terror.

The read-aloud length is ten minutes (fifteen if you're laughing really hard), just about perfect for children with short attention spans and their weary parents. The pop quiz at the end is worth the price of admission. Did I
mention that all the characters have wonderfully creative names (and nicknames) and that the principal's bird realizes that he has a birdbrain? This was our first venture into Kalman territory, just enough to whet the appetite and make me eager to read the rest of her work.

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