

Ravenscroft School  
Lower School  
Curriculum Guide  
2016-2017

**Table of Contents**

Mission, Vision, and Values Statement.....	2
Introduction.....	3
Curriculum Overview .....	4
Pre-Kindergarten .....	4
Kindergarten.....	6
First Grade .....	8
Second Grade.....	10
Third Grade .....	12
Fourth Grade .....	14
Fifth Grade.....	16
Extracurricular Options .....	19
Academic Skills .....	21
Homework.....	21

## Mission, Vision, and Values Statement

### OUR MISSION

The Ravenscroft community, guided by our legacy of excellence, nurtures individual potential and prepares students to thrive in a complex and interdependent world.

### OUR VISION

Through the implementation of our Strategic Plan, Ravenscroft will build upon its status as the premier comprehensive, independent college preparatory school in our community and will become a preeminent academic institution in the Southeast. The key elements of our vision include a commitment to the following:

Academic: Provide a rich and appropriately challenging curriculum taught with passion by a nurturing and knowledgeable faculty.

Community: Enhance our contribution to become a more valued member of our community and increase our diversity to better reflect that of our area.

Environment: Promote a working and learning environment that expects and celebrates mutual respect, personal responsibility, ethical leadership, and a sense of humor that restores.

Journey: Inspire our School community to value the educational journey as much as the outcome.

Relationships: Nourish meaningful and supportive relationships among students, teachers, staff, alumni, parents, and in the greater community.

### OUR VALUES

Our values ground our School, programs, and initiatives in the most important aspects of the Ravenscroft community – people and their collective growth. They reflect our legacy of excellence with an inspired commitment to the future.

An Engaged Mind: A student's mind is engaged by a developmentally appropriate and balanced college preparatory program emphasizing inquiry, critical thinking, and a love of learning.

An Ethical Character: A student's character is enhanced and horizons are broadened through leadership, extracurricular, community service, and global study/travel opportunities.

An Aesthetic Appreciation: A student's talents are cultivated and creative mind is enriched by a comprehensive program of Fine Arts.

A Healthy Lifestyle: A student's personal fitness and physical wellness are promoted through a complete physical education and interscholastic athletic program emphasizing lifelong health, discipline, sportsmanship, and teamwork.

A Spiritual Foundation: A student's faith is developed as we embrace the Judeo-Christian tradition of Ravenscroft and respect the religious beliefs of each individual. As a community, we will model and teach values such as honor, respect, responsibility, and compassion.

## INTRODUCTION

Ravenscroft's Lower School serves students in Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5. The faculty and staff are committed to strengthening and enhancing the individual potential of each student through a wide variety of learning opportunities. There is close communication between home and school as we strive to create a community built on mutual respect, personal responsibility, and ethical leadership.

The Lower School faculty is dedicated to offering an elementary school experience that is both enjoyable and challenging. Students' developmental readiness and individual needs are taken into consideration by our faculty. Structure and spontaneity combine to give our students opportunities to grow and develop skills as they mature and move through the grades. Good work and study habits, as well as the development of basic skills, are an important part of our curriculum. Forward thinking and creative, the Lower School faculty provides a program composed of rich and diverse experiences designed to spark enthusiasm for learning.

The following guide is an overview of the curriculum offered in Lower School. It gives a snapshot of the skills developed by our students as they move through the core and special curricular areas.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### PRE-KINDERGARTEN

#### LANGUAGE ARTS

Language comes alive in the Pre/Kindergarten classroom through a balanced literacy approach in a warm, friendly environment featuring The Land of the Letter People. The Letter People are interactive friends who guide the children in literacy development, oral language, social skills, and fine-motor skills with hands-on learning opportunities. The program balances phonemic awareness and alphabetic principle with literature-based learning and vocabulary development. A wide range of whole-class, small-group, and individual learning experiences provide numerous avenues leading toward literacy. Our program provides an emotional engagement that empowers learning and lasts a lifetime. Children become involved in the lives and adventures of the “Huggable” Letter People. They consider them as friends who bring the alphabet to life! Writing Workshop encourages students to express ideas through drawing and using inventive spelling. Our Peak with Books program develops an appreciation of literature and enhances listening skills as children work towards lengthening their attention spans.

#### MATHEMATICS

Mathematics is integrated with daily routines and activities in our Pre/Kindergarten classroom. Children participate in hands-on exploration, using a wide variety of materials, through individual, partner, small group, and whole group investigations. Units of study include numeration, geometry, collecting data (graphing), operations and computation, classifications, patterns, money, and calendar studies. Classroom routines give children real-life opportunities to develop and refine their ideas about mathematics. The Pre/Kindergarten *Everyday Mathematics* program is a resource that is based on activities that are meaningful and productive, and help children become independent thinkers. Our program emphasizes conceptual understanding while building a mastery of basic skills. It is based on how children learn and what they are interested in while preparing them for their future mathematical needs. Through a comprehensive approach to differentiating instruction, we provide a variety of ways to help children with their pacing needs in mind.

#### SCIENCE

The Pre/Kindergarten science program is integrated, in part, with our language arts curriculum. Children learn through inquiry as they are introduced to processes of observation, prediction, exploration, investigation, and interpretation. We explore the world by observing and manipulating common objects and materials in the environment. Units of study include magnets, five senses, health awareness, animals in winter, dinosaurs, water, weather and seasons, solar system, light and color, environmental awareness, and plants. Our students participate in coordinating Science Lab experiences with Ravenscroft’s special area science instructor. The Science Lab program covers a range of topics that correlate well with classroom instruction. Lessons include experiments, nature walks, and investigations involving areas of life science and physical science. Health and safety are always an important part of Science Lab lessons.

#### SOCIAL STUDIES

The Pre/Kindergarten social studies program has interdisciplinary connections to the other subject areas of the curriculum. The program is based on children’s personal experiences in their immediate world and helps students move beyond their sense of place. A thematic emphasis is on highly interactive, child-centered experiences which start with self-awareness and progress to encourage new insights into family and friends, home, school, and local community. Making connections to the larger world is explored. Goals include growth in self-awareness with an emphasis on social interactions such as taking turns, sharing, and respecting others. An appreciation of important historical persons and familiar holidays is fostered. Maps and globes are introduced. Many opportunities for play provide the vehicle through which many themes are explored. Units of study include school, homes, families, our community, and going places. Faraway places and times long ago are reached through connections to the children’s personal world today.

### MEDIA

Pre-Kindergarten students visit the library weekly and are introduced to library etiquette and procedures. Children enjoy listening to stories during their visit, and checking out books to take home and share with their parents. Follow up activities from the read alouds help support students' comprehension of the stories read. The media center collaborates with classroom teachers to integrate the classroom curriculum with the stories and activities completed in the library.

### SPANISH

The Spanish program in Pre-Kindergarten provides young children with the opportunity to learn a foreign language through a variety of ways, taking into account the theory of multiple intelligences and the Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) approach. The Spanish program at this level focuses on the development of listening and speaking skills, and introduces children to the Hispanic World.

### GUIDANCE

Guidance classes in Pre-Kindergarten include an introduction to what a counselor's job is, and how and when counselors can help boys and girls. Later lessons include interpersonal topics like sharing, kindness, cooperation, following directions, and manners. Small group interactions and story times convey the content. Making good choices in these areas is the beginning of Leading Self.

### MUSIC

This class is designed to introduce the young child into the world of music through activities that will generate the expression of pitch, projection of the singing voice, rhythmic pulse, and differing styles. The activities include: singing in the context of song stories, singing seasonal and cultural repertoire, playing non-pitched percussion instruments to add color and beat, and dancing and movement to express pulse and style of the music.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education is lively, energy-filled learning for all Pre-Kindergarten students. Classes are designed to introduce new ways to move, be active, and enjoy physical activity. Students learn basic locomotor and non-locomotor skills, the concepts of physical boundaries, and moving safely in various pathways. Individual, partner, and small group work emphasizes cooperation, empathy, and teamwork.

### VISUAL ARTS

Art instruction is provided to Pre-Kindergarten students in a hands-on learning environment in which our youngest children are free to express their individual creativity through both direct instruction and exploration. Many projects are integrated with the Pre-Kindergarten curriculum in order to coordinate with specific themes, seasons, holidays, and to reinforce basic skills such as colors, shapes, and patterns. The children are introduced to a variety of media and basic tools as they develop fine motor coordination, the ability to follow instructions, and gain independence as they experience opportunities designed to enhance confidence and self-esteem.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### KINDERGARTEN

#### LANGUAGE ARTS

The workshop model is used in Kindergarten for the delivery of literacy instruction. Instruction is designed to take each child to the next level along the path to becoming a confident, eager learner: all of which is based on individual developmental and academic strengths and areas for growth. Reading instruction happens moment-to-moment in the classroom as teachers establish the conditions in which children learn to read and to write, assess what children can do, and then teach children to take one step and then subsequent steps forward as readers. The reading workshop provides direct and explicit instruction through mini-lessons, stretches of time to read emergent storybooks, shared reading texts, and just-right books and individual conferencing and coaching. The yearlong writing curriculum is taught through the following units of study: narrative, informational, and persuasive. The writing workshop also begins with a mini-lesson providing direct and explicit instruction and children work on many pieces of writing based on the instruction that they have received. Teachers confer with children individually and in small groups. The alphabetic principle, phonemic awareness, letter/sound associations, print awareness, and sight word recognition are integrated into our reading and writing workshops.

#### MATHEMATICS

The Kindergarten math curriculum emphasizes skills, concepts and strategies for problem solving. Units of study include counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, numbers in base ten, geometry, measurement and data. Instruction is delivered through a workshop model. Lessons are integrated with daily routines and hands-on activities that encourage collaboration and dialogue. Students integrate their understandings of numbers, geometry, and measurement to enhance their mathematical thinking and number sense. Students choose, combine and apply effective strategies for answering quantitative questions. Teachers confer with children individually and in small groups, as well.

#### SCIENCE

The Kindergarten science program incorporates the following areas of science: life, physical, and earth, in addition to safety and health awareness. Life science units of study include: plants, animals, insects, our bodies, and the five senses. Physical science units include: light, shadows, and an introduction to the scientific method. Earth science units include: weather, seasons, and environmental awareness. Kindergarten students also have a Science Lab component where learning is experiential, as students explore living things, starting with their own senses and moving on to small, common insects and spiders. Later in the year, they turn outwards to the physical world of light and shadows, weather and the seasons. Students begin to learn to make predictions about simple investigations. Students take nature walks to enjoy and explore our campus and the nearby woods of the neighboring horse farm. Safety is always foremost on the agenda, as we learn how to collect samples carefully and responsibly during Science Lab.

#### SOCIAL STUDIES

Kindergarten social studies emphasizes areas important to the young child. We begin the year focusing on self and continue with an understanding of the child's relationships at school, with family and friends. We expand our study to our community and the world around us. The traits from the Ravenscroft Character Tree, courage, respect, responsibility, dedication, spirit, honor, and compassion, are integrated into lessons throughout the year. As part of the Citizen Leader Framework in kindergarten, we focus on leading ourselves. The competencies of being self-aware, accountable, motivated, growth-minded and resilient are the goals for kindergarten.

#### TECHNOLOGY

Kindergarten begins their technology and digital learning experiences with an introduction to basic computer operations. Students have scheduled classes with opportunities to become familiar with using a mouse, using headphones, locating letter keys, an understanding of using a keyboard, and creating simple text. Students will use

age appropriate multi-media programs, devices, and school selected websites. SMARTBoards and iPads are used in the computer lab and classrooms for visual and interactive learning.

### MEDIA

During visits to the library, procedures and library etiquette are reinforced. Students continue to enjoy listening to picture books being read aloud, checking out their own personal library book, and they also complete an activity that helps promote story comprehension. Comparing and contrasting is introduced to Kindergarten students by having the children hear different versions of popular stories and discussing the similarities and differences between the original and other versions.

### SPANISH

The Spanish program in Kindergarten provides young children with the opportunity to learn a foreign language through a variety of ways, taking into account the theory of multiple intelligences and the Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) approach. The Spanish program at this level focuses on the development of listening and speaking skills, and includes the teaching of phonics through rhymes and songs. Students continue to be exposed to the culture of the Hispanic World.

### GUIDANCE

Kindergarten guidance topics include self- and social-awareness, social skills, and basic group discussion skills. As we continue work on Leading Self, character traits such as respect and responsibility are emphasized as well. Stories and conversations are shared which highlight these areas. We also practice reading faces and body language, and talk about good ways to play with others.

### MUSIC

This class is designed to create experiences in matching pitches while singing, solo singing, discriminating high, medium and low pitches, and using singing as an expressive tool to convey emotional content. Students focus on music literacy through the use of Kodaly Solfege syllables and TaKaDiMi rhythm syllables. Students are encouraged to create and master playing patterns on the xylophones and glockenspiels, and also create accompaniments on wood, metal, and skin unpitched percussion instruments. Singing games and international folk dancing are central elements of each class. The students are exposed to classical orchestral literature by Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, and Vivaldi.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In Kindergarten, emphasis is placed on continued development of basic motor skills and movement patterns. Basic manipulative skills such as throwing, catching, bouncing, and kicking are introduced. Students begin to appreciate the importance of cooperative play and lifetime fitness through lead-up games and basic skill development. Positive attitudes toward physical activity and health and wellness are fostered, encouraging development of self-esteem, individual skills, and cooperation.

### VISUAL ARTS

Art instruction is provided to Kindergarten students in a hands-on learning environment in which our young students are free to express their individual creativity through both direct instruction and exploration. Many projects are integrated with the Kindergarten curriculum in order to coordinate with and reinforce basic skills and concepts introduced in the classroom. The children continue to work with a variety of media and basic tools as they develop fine motor skills, the ability to follow multi-step instructions, and gain independence as they experience continued opportunities designed to enhance confidence and self-esteem.

### VIOLIN

All Kindergarten students take group instruction in violin. There are six to eight students in each violin class, and it is taught as their introduction to instrumental music. Areas of emphasis include care of the violin and bow, parts of the instrument, playing position and bow control. Introductory note-reading and performance preparation are also covered.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### FIRST GRADE

#### LANGUAGE ARTS

A balanced literacy program is offered in first grade. Instruction is delivered throughout the day in a variety of formats: reading workshop, writing workshop, and word study/spelling instruction. This multi-faceted approach provides students with the necessary tools to read for meaning and to write with greater clarity. Hands-on phonics lessons ensure that students consistently practice manipulating words, explore word structure, and internalize word patterns through repeated exposure. Instruction is designed to promote the development of independent thinkers who take responsibility for their learning, and appreciate the need to fully comprehend spoken and written language—both as a reader and a writer. During reading workshop, students will learn to use strategies that will improve their comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and vocabulary. Units of study for writing workshop include: personal narratives, informational writing, All-About books, friendly letters, procedural writing, response to reading, persuasive writing, and poetry.

#### MATHEMATICS

First grade math instruction includes daily lessons on the following topics: operations and algebraic thinking, numbers and operations in base ten, measurement and data, and geometry. Math instruction is delivered in a workshop model including: number talks, whole group instruction, and differentiated small groups. Students are introduced to a variety of strategies for solving computation problems and begin to master their addition and subtraction facts. Students use what they have learned about computation to engage in authentic problem solving.

#### SCIENCE

The first grade science program continues the experiential explorations of Kindergarten, and covers the major science disciplines of life, physical, and earth science. Life science activities involve an exploration of living things versus non-living things, and plants—especially trees and leaves. Physical science themes are the properties of air and water. Earth science includes primary observations about our earth, as well as rocks and minerals. In addition, students will participate in STEM+ activities to develop problem solving, engineering, and team building skills.

#### SOCIAL STUDIES

Social studies concepts are integrated into reading and writing units of study throughout the year. Students read a variety of information texts, and they write about their understanding in response to what they have read. Units of study include the following strands: civics and government, culture, economics, geography, and environmental literacy. First graders are encouraged to model the character traits of courage, responsibility, compassion, honor, respect, dedication, and spirit. Throughout the first grade year, students engage in a variety of activities that enhance their self-awareness and personal accountability. The competencies of motivation, resilience, and growth-mindedness are the cornerstones of social studies learning in first grade.

#### TECHNOLOGY

First grade technology experiences begin with an introduction to basic computer skills which we continue throughout the year. Students have scheduled class time in the computer lab, along with flexible computer time for projects. We use a variety of curriculum software and web-based programs that support reading, writing, and math skills. Specialized programs allow students to create art, make voice recordings, and slide shows. In addition to the computer lab, we use a center lab located steps away from our classrooms. SMARTBoards and document cameras engage our students with interactive learning all year.

#### MEDIA

During weekly visits to the library, first grade students learn about authors and illustrators. Throughout the year, students research several different authors and illustrators, and learn to distinguish the form and purpose of fiction and nonfiction texts. Story comprehension continues to be a focus and several books in rhyme are read aloud to promote fluent reading. First graders are encouraged to find “just right” books to ensure they are reading books

appropriate for their reading level. At the end of the school year, students are introduced to the library catalog on the computers in the library. In addition, students visit the library biweekly to book shop for resources to support the reading program.

### SPANISH

The Spanish program in first grade provides young students with the opportunity to learn a foreign language through a variety of ways, taking into account the theory of multiple intelligences and the Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) approach. The Spanish program at this level focuses on the development of listening and speaking skills. Students will start reading and recognizing rhyming words, and participate in activities that promote an appreciation and understanding of the Hispanic World.

### GUIDANCE

Kelso the Frog leads first grade students in learning problem-solving skills. Determining the difference in large and small problems is discussed, as is the importance of involving adults in solving large problems. Nine different strategies for solving small problems are shared and explored, as are other aspects of Leading Self. On-going work with the Ravenscroft Character Tree traits continues as well.

### MUSIC

This class incorporates the experiences and skills learned in previous grade levels and students begin learning about the process of interpreting symbols as a representation of pitch and rhythm. Students focus on music literacy through the use of Kodaly Solfege syllables and TaKaDiMi rhythm syllables. Students are encouraged to improvise with their voices and create music of their own on pitched and unpitched instruments. With the help of the SMARTBoard, children place notes on the staff and sing the melodies based on contour and scale number. The production of a musical play each spring encourages each student to participate in singing, blocking, acting, and dancing. Students are exposed to classical orchestral literature by Tchaikovsky, Saint Seans, Grieg, and Beethoven.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In first grade, continued refinement of motor skills and movement patterns is promoted. The program is structured so that each child can increase competence in physical fitness, body management, rhythmic awareness, and related motor skills. This environment, based on the Lead From Here Framework, encourages children to develop desirable social standards and ethical concepts.

### VISUAL ARTS

Foundation art in first grade incorporates ideas from history, science, geography, holidays, and classroom curriculum as students learn to master tools and art materials. Lessons emphasize process rather than product, leaving room for creative interpretation while following sequential steps directed by the instructor. New experiences, such as mixing colors while painting from a primary palette, are part of the first grade experience. Our spacious studio facility includes an easel-painting center, ceramics kiln, computer, reference library, sewing machines, printmaking press, and a life-sized skeleton model.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### SECOND GRADE

#### LANGUAGE ARTS

Through a reading workshop approach, mini-lessons provide students with opportunities to develop, practice, and enhance reading strategies. Individual conferences, guided small group instruction, and collaborative work provide a differentiated program. With attention to the individual's unique strengths and areas for growth, the skills of comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and vocabulary yield a solid reading foundation. The spelling program teaches strategies for a lifetime of successful written expression in the real world. This lifelong spelling ability grows through skills instruction (phonics, word origins, spelling rules, and usage), through a student's everyday writing, and through word study on specific words a student has not yet mastered. Writing workshop supports students as they develop writing skills. In writing workshop, units of study include: narratives, informative, biographies, opinion, and poetry. For all writing genres, grammar, revising, and editing strategies will be taught. I

#### MATHEMATICS

Through math workshop, which includes whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction, students have the opportunity to experience broad, rich, and balanced mathematics. The following content strands are emphasized: number and numeration, operations and computations, data and measurement, and geometry. By the conclusion of second grade, students will be able to add and subtract numbers fluently. Through the use of mathematical practices, students will revisit topics through ongoing practice, games, and problem solving to ensure concept development for all students.

#### SCIENCE

The second grade science program covers the major science disciplines of life and physical science. Life science activities examine the life cycles of various animals. Physical science explores sound and simple machines, as well as force and motion. The students employ the scientific method to explore force and motion. They capture their observations in their writing. This writing is then used to support the writing unit, "Writing Like a Scientist". As with all grades, safety is regularly part of our work and discussions in the Science Lab component of second grade. Throughout the year, projects on sound, simple machines, and life cycles are memorable events for the students and help develop a variety of process and thinking skills.

#### SOCIAL STUDIES

The second grade social studies program introduces students to units of study that include geography, economics, current events, environmental literacy (conservation/natural resources) and biographical research. Essential geography skills provide students with the knowledge and understanding of reference and resource materials. Maps and globes are used to develop basic geographic terminology and to locate features such as bodies of water and landforms. Working to develop global citizenship, second graders are encouraged to exhibit Lower School's character traits of courage, responsibility, compassion, honor, respect, dedication, and spirit. An integral part of second grade is the expectation that students are leading themselves and leading with others to help change their world.

#### TECHNOLOGY

Technology integration for second grade begins with developing and building on our basic computer operating skills. Our second graders have a scheduled class time in the computer lab and have opportunities for flexible time to work on projects throughout the year. Students use software and web-based programs that promote reading, writing, math, and organizational skills. In addition, digital tools are being integrated with classroom projects in order to share our work outside of the classroom. Kid friendly presentation software allows our students to create, illustrate, record, save, and export files to other programs and public folder directories. SMARTBoards and a center lab allow easy access to computers and interactive learning each day.

## MEDIA

During second grade, one focus is on imagination, and students learn how an author needs to have a good imagination to write an entertaining story. Students are introduced to the setup of our library, so they can begin to find books independently. Second grade has several beginning research opportunities in their classrooms; students complete dinosaur and biography research projects. The media center curriculum is integrated into these projects and students learn about reading books to gather information when they visit the library. Students discover that books are written in several different forms and are introduced to many writing styles. Students visit the library biweekly to shop for books in order to support the reading program.

## SPANISH

The Spanish program in second grade provides students with the opportunity to learn a foreign language through a variety of ways, taking into account the theory of multiple intelligences and the Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) approach. The Spanish program at this level focuses on the development of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students will start reading and recognizing rhyming words and will progress to reading and writing sentences. Students will also participate in activities that promote an appreciation and understanding of the Hispanic World.

## GUIDANCE

Second graders revisit the problem-solving strategies learned the previous year. We practice using the strategies in classrooms, at lunch, and in playground settings. By exploring and practicing problem-solving strategies, children can become more skilled when Leading Self and Leading with Others. Students learn about feelings – their own and others – and the work on character traits and community values continues through stories such as *Have you Filled a Bucket Today?* and *The Bully Blockers Club*.

## MUSIC

In this class, students are introduced to written music using sheet music and the SMARTBoard. Students focus on music literacy through the use of Kodaly Solfege syllables and TaKaDiMi rhythm syllables. They become familiar with the appearance of melodies on the staff, the appearance and performance of notes of differing note values, the letter names of the notes on the staff, and the verse style of song notation. Students enjoy adding new folk and popular dances and singing games to their repertoire. They are exposed to classical orchestral literature of Vivaldi, Beethoven, Bach, and Brahms. Singing remains at the core of their musical experience, as well as developing mallet technique on xylophones, metallophones, and glockenspiels.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In second grade, emphasis is placed on perfecting basic motor skills and patterns with a focus on combining the movements necessary for participating successfully in a variety of physical activities. Second grade becomes a time to discover strength and movement, and to apply these skills to accomplish age appropriate goals. Students learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle and begin to demonstrate teamwork and sportsmanship in a host of group and individual activities.

## VISUAL ARTS

Foundation art in second grade incorporates ideas from history, science, geography, holidays, and classroom curriculum as students learn to master tools and art materials. Lessons emphasize process rather than product, leaving room for creative interpretation while following sequential steps directed by the instructor. Experiences, such as mixing colors while painting from a primary palette, are part of the second grade experience. Our spacious studio facility includes an easel-painting center, ceramics kiln, computer, reference library, sewing machines, a printmaking press and a life-sized skeleton model.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### THIRD GRADE

#### LANGUAGE ARTS

The third grade language arts curriculum includes reading, written expression, writing mechanics, listening, and speaking. Students are taught genre specific strategies in order to increase fluency and accuracy, expand vocabulary, and comprehend text. Students are learning to think critically about what they have read through reflections in their reader's notebooks, and conversations in reading partnerships and book clubs. Through the use of mentor texts, reading and writing are integrated. Students experience writing about reading, narrative, opinion, informational, and fairy tale genres. Written expression focuses on the craft of writing, which includes organization, idea development, language use, word choice and writer's voice. Topics included in writing mechanics instruction include: conventions of text, layout, grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Cursive handwriting is also introduced in the third grade. In order to meet the needs of all students, instruction is differentiated through a workshop model.

#### MATHEMATICS

In third grade mathematics, students explore patterns in their study of geometry, numeration, and algebra. Third graders will utilize both standard and metric measurement in a variety of applications. By the conclusion of the year, the basic number facts will have been applied using the four operations: addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Problem solving is integrated throughout the curriculum. A workshop model is used in order to provide instruction that meets the needs of all students.

#### SCIENCE

The third grade science program includes the study of Nutrition, Earth, Moon, Sun, the Animal Kingdom, and Construction and Engineering. In third grade Science Lab, students continue with concrete experiences that are integrated with the classroom units of study. Physical science is emphasized in Science Lab and covers construction patterns, patterns and prediction, as well as the metric measurement system. As with all grades, health and safety are regularly part of our work discussions in the Science Lab component of third grade.

#### SOCIAL STUDIES

The third grade social studies program includes the study of civics and government, history, geography, economics, and environmental and financial literacy. Technology and creative arts are used for various projects throughout the year. Real life application of these complex concepts is exemplified by listening to local leaders in our community and reading about current events.

#### TECHNOLOGY

Technology for our third grade students is integrated through flexible and on demand computer classes in a computer lab, computer center lab, and using Google Chromebooks. Students use desktop publishing, presentation software, keyboarding software, and online Google Apps for Education programs. Basic computer operation and navigation skills continue to develop. Digital tools, online resources, curriculum specific software, and database experiences provide multiple learning formats.

#### MEDIA

During weekly visits to the library, third graders learn how books are categorized in the library, where different types of books are located, and how to use the computers to find the type of book you want and then how to find that book within the library. Students are introduced to many authors through booktalks each week. The media center also provides support for the third grade animal research project that students complete in their classrooms. The themes of comparing and contrasting continue in third grade, and there is also an in-depth author study that students will participate in. Finally, students book shop weekly to select individual texts to support the reading program.

## SPANISH

The Spanish program in third grade provides students with the opportunity to learn a foreign language through a variety of ways, taking into account the theory of multiple intelligences and the Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) content-enriched approach. The Spanish program at this level integrates content learning with language development via activities where the main topics come from the classroom curriculum content areas (i.e., social studies, mathematics, science), so that language is acquired in a meaningful context. The Spanish program in third grade provides a framework for developing higher cognitive skills, as well as a vehicle for both language learning and content learning. Students also will participate in activities that promote an appreciation and understanding of the Hispanic World.

## GUIDANCE

In third grade, guidance classes continue previous themes and focus attention on the ways we treat other people – especially when teachers are not guiding the interactions directly, or when people have perspectives or interests which are different than our own. To Lead with Others requires practice with being empathetic and inclusive, in particular. Playground games, groups, and activities fuel discussions of the best ways to collaborate, communicate, and manage disagreements. The Ravenscroft Character Tree and read-aloud stories provide springboards for discussion of differences, resolving conflict, solving problems, and growing friendships.

## MUSIC

In third grade music classes, students read and perform melodies on barred instruments and learn to layer 2 and 3 parts. Students focus on music literacy through the use of Kodaly Solfege syllables and TaKaDiMi rhythm syllables. Using the Recorder Karate curriculum, students learn to read and play melodies on eight pitches and reinforce knowledge and mastery of reading note names in the treble clef. They are taught to sight sing the melodies as part of learning to perform them on recorders. Students are also composing and notating melodies for their recorders. In addition to singing solos and singing in small groups, students learn to sing in harmony through descants, partner songs, and rounds. Students experience the elements of music through dancing, playing, composing, singing, analyzing, and listening. They are exposed to the classical orchestral literature of Beethoven, Bach, Kodaly, Orff, and Mozart.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Third grade physical education emphasizes perceptual awareness, transferring motor skill patterns into movements necessary for modified game play, and overall health and fitness. Basic health and wellness behaviors such as disease prevention, proper nutrition, and healthy living are introduced. Students are assessed on their fitness throughout the year, utilizing criteria from the Fitnessgram physical fitness assessment program. Activities are designed to evaluate upper body strength, cardio respiratory health, agility, and flexibility.

## VISUAL ARTS

Continuing foundation art in third grade, students are encouraged toward self-directed discovery within the parameters of a specific project. Projects can now evolve over several weeks' time. Crafts, such as weaving and sewing, are important additions to this curriculum. Art history and drawing, especially from still life, are introduced at this age. Our studio reference library includes detailed animal models that provide lifelike subject matter for drawing and sculpture. Visual resources include photographs of animals and landscapes, as well as reproductions of art masterpieces. Students refer to these while painting, learning composition, color mixing, and brush stroke techniques.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### FOURTH GRADE

#### LANGUAGE ARTS

Fourth grade students engage in reading, writing, speaking and listening to express their understanding of the world and to articulate relevant global changes as they perceive them. During reading workshop, students participate in fiction and nonfiction book clubs. They express their understanding of what they read through written responses. They grow their understanding through collaborative peer discussions. Writing workshop addresses the following units of study: narrative, informational and persuasive. Students hone skills learned in earlier grade levels. Mini-lessons focus on elaboration, organization, revision, mechanics and grammar. Students participate in differentiated word study which includes spelling and vocabulary.

#### MATHEMATICS

Units of study in fourth grade include computation, geometry, measurement, problem solving, patterns, working with data, and probability. The students expand on their knowledge of basic facts by learning multi-digit multiplication and long division. Computation of fractions is also introduced as well as fraction, decimal, and percent conversions. Students utilize several adaptive, digital programs to practice skills learned in class. There are opportunities for cooperative learning and math games. Math is taught using the workshop model which includes whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction. This model supports explicit instruction as well as differentiation.

#### SCIENCE

The fourth grade science curriculum is divided into life and earth sciences. We begin the year by focusing on the role of scientists in our world and “The Scientific Process” through labs and experiments. Students then rotate among the four teachers to focus on a specialized area of study. The four units are engineering, light, plants, and the human body. During the engineering design unit, students are introduced to the basic principles of engineering while learning about problem solving and the steps of the design process. The students are introduced to light through a variety of hands-on experiments and lessons. The topics range from sources of light to how we see different colors. The plant unit focuses on the life cycle of a plant. Students discover information about seeds and flowers through experiments. The three parts of a plant, photosynthesis, and the development of new seeds are also discussed in the unit of study. The study of the human body begins with a look at cells. Students will learn about their bodies by conducting experiments that look at heart rate, lung capacity, and reaction time. Technology and discovery activities enhance the science curriculum. The Science Lab instructor provides enrichment activities to support the classroom teachers.

#### SOCIAL STUDIES

The fourth grade social studies curriculum is based on the study of North Carolina. We begin with map skills and geographical terms as they relate to the three regions of North Carolina and then proceed to a study of Native Americans and people who immigrated to North Carolina. We then follow the colonial settlement through the Civil War. We study state government, economics and technology as these subjects relate specifically to North Carolina. Students use research skills, textbooks, North Carolina newspapers, and various technology tools to complete individual and group projects. Students learn the US states. Students also read a variety of historical fiction novels with North Carolina as the primary setting.

#### TECHNOLOGY

Fourth grade technology integration takes place in the classroom, computer lab, center computer lab, and at home. Students use flexible and on demand computer lab time, use a center lab station outside the classroom, and use Google Chromebooks to complete independent research, word processing, and projects. Traditional and digital learning formats, Google Apps, and web-based tools are used to engage students in the creating, collaborating,

communicating, evaluating, and sharing process. A variety of curriculum software provides skills reinforcement, and SMARTBoards are used for visual and interactive learning in the classrooms.

### MEDIA

Students are introduced to the research model and practice each step to have a better understanding of the process. Fourth graders practice those research skills using various sources, online and in print, studying our global focus. In addition, students continue to learn about different authors through booktalks.

### SPANISH

The Spanish program in fourth grade provides students with the opportunity to learn a foreign language through a variety of ways. Multiple intelligences, the Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) approach, and ACTFL's performance-based assessments provide opportunities for students to acquire the skills necessary for communication in the target language. Core curriculum areas of social studies, mathematics, and science are integrated through content-based learning. Connections with Hispanic culture provide insight into the Spanish-speaking world. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are emphasized to broaden students' exposure to the language.

### GUIDANCE

Fourth graders build affective vocabulary and work to increase sensitivity to others in guidance class discussions. Real life and adult-provided scenarios help children increase their interpersonal problem-solving skills and enlarge personal and group empathy, and begin to explore Changing Your World in more depth. Personal responsibility, in the context of group dynamics, is explored, as are effective ways to resist peer mistreatment and cliquish behaviors. Work on the Ravenscroft Character Tree traits continues in fourth grade.

### MUSIC

In fourth grade general music classes, students study the following elements of music: melody, harmony, tempo, rhythm, dynamics, texture, and timbre. Students focus on music literacy through the use of Kodaly Solfege syllables and TaKaDiMi rhythm syllables. Students sing in unison as well as two-part and three-part harmony and expand their knowledge of vocal technique.. They develop skills in reading, composing, and improvising musical notation. Students also broaden their musical literacy by experiencing various genres, as well as multicultural music through playing, listening, singing, and dancing. They have opportunities to learn and perform multi-layered musical instrumentation by using barred and percussion instruments. Students also read, discuss, and interpret music as it relates to culture and history. Fourth grade students audition for, rehears, and perform a musical in the spring.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students in fourth grade participate in developmentally appropriate activities, balancing the acquisition of individual skills with the concept of team play. Concepts from the Lead From Here framework are incorporated into lessons, focusing on Leading Self and Leading With Others. Fitness development takes on a more specialized scope in the fourth grade. Fitness development routines become a part of each class, so that overload can be incorporated into the routine for maximum development. Students are assessed on their fitness throughout the year, utilizing criteria from the Fitnessgram physical fitness assessment program.

### VISUAL ARTS

In fourth grade art classes, drawing, painting and sculpture are emphasized, with a special focus on keen observation and contemplation. Cultural history, artistic styles, famous artists, abstract ideas, and still-life become the foundation for our studies. Students are encouraged to work independently to find solutions as they strive to complete their artwork. Techniques that add shading and the illusion of volume are explored, especially as we make charcoal and pastel portraits. Humorous ways of interpreting the ordinary helps put a new twist on our ceramics sculpture, while an academic approach to studio time nurtures appreciation for artistic expression and the fine arts in general.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### FIFTH GRADE

#### LANGUAGE ARTS

The fifth grade language arts program uses multiple resources to develop, strengthen, and enhance a student's comprehension, vocabulary, written, and oral language. Emphasis is put on meeting the individual needs of each student by providing exposure to a variety of genres and reading strategies to develop these skills. In addition to our Lower School library, our fifth grade library has an assortment of novels and non-fiction selections to accommodate the range of reading and interest levels of our fifth graders. Students also engage in active discussions through specific units of study, and book clubs. Vocabulary enrichment is developed through exposure to multiple word meanings, contextual analysis, and participation in oral and written activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Reading and writing workshops are integrated in order to encourage meaningful connections between the genres being explored. We emphasize an understanding of both purpose and structure, and students have an opportunity to develop four types of writing: narrative, memoir, information, and literary essay. Throughout the year, we use the writing process to advance three major areas of writing, organizational structure, idea development, and language conventions. Structure focuses on leads, transitions, and endings. Idea development supports the practice of elaboration and craft. Language conventions include mechanics, usage, and sentence formation. We strive to enable children not just to write capably, but to enjoy the act of writing, and to appreciate good writing wherever they see it, in all its many forms.

#### MATHEMATICS

As fifth grade mathematicians continue their transition from concrete to abstract learners, they enjoy the connections they find between challenging new math concepts and the world around them. Students in fifth grade practice computation in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with whole numbers, decimal numbers, and fractions. They refine their estimation and mental math abilities and apply their computation skills to problem solving activities. A yearlong strand that is woven throughout the curriculum addresses the relationship between fractions, decimals, and percents as they relate to probability and data analysis. Plane, solid, and motion geometry concepts are explored through manipulative activities and the use of protractors and compasses. Students will learn to use formulas to determine area and volume. As the year progresses, lessons introduce exponential and scientific notation, order of operations, positive and negative integers, measurement conversions, and using variables in basic algebraic expressions.

#### SCIENCE

Fifth grade students continue to learn the scientific method using a hands-on, inquiry based approach. Students work in small groups in the classroom science lab using the scientific method to conduct experiments and investigations. This general course includes units which introduce students to the engineering process, physics, chemistry, biology, and earth science. In our engineering unit, students design, build, and test an invention of their own that solves a problem or meets a need. Fifth graders measure speed with ramps and toy cars, conduct motion and force experiments, and build roller coasters to learn the laws of motion in our physics unit. While learning geology, students make models of buildings to simulate earthquakes and create models to learn about plate tectonics, the rock cycle, and volcanoes. Students investigate matter and chemistry by experimenting with the phases of matter, learning about molecules and atoms, testing soil and water samples, and making chemical reactions, crystals, solutions, and mixtures. In our electromagnetism unit, students investigate magnets, electricity, circuits, electric motors, solar and wind power, and power generation by making electrical circuits and simple motors. In our ecosystems unit, students learn what makes up a healthy ecosystem, the importance of diversity, and conduct experiments with yeast and molds to understand the role decomposers play. The textbook for this course, *Science Fusion*, incorporates active reading strategies to help students develop their understanding of the concepts while promoting science literacy.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

The fifth grade social studies curriculum is a chronological study of American history from its beginning through the Civil War. Map skills and research skills are incorporated into the study of the history, geography, and economics of our country. Critical thinking skills are promoted as students learn to observe, compare, classify, predict, and think reasonably and reflectively when making decisions. The course is designed to develop an understanding and respect for our American heritage, to promote awareness and respect for our diverse cultures, to nurture a sense of responsibility for our natural environment, and to instill an appreciation for the value of cooperation, rules, and laws. Students learn to collaborate with others through project-based learning inquiries, using primary and secondary sources.

## TECHNOLOGY

Technology integration for our fifth graders involves more student independence with project based learning. Students utilize a desktop computer lab near their classroom, use Chromebooks running the Google Chrome operating system, and benefit from a scheduled and flexible computer lab time. SMARTBoards are used in each classroom for interactive and visual instruction. Students use desktop publishing, word processing, spreadsheets, digital tools, Web 2.0 tools, Google Apps for collaborating with classmates on projects, and maintain a digital portfolio. A variety of curriculum software and web-based programs are available to reinforce skills in all subject areas.

## MEDIA

During fifth grade, research and literature studies are the main focus when students visit the library. The media center curriculum is integrated throughout the fifth grade core curriculum, and support is provided for several different reading and writing research projects. Students practice using various sources, online and in print, for their research projects. A focus on judging the quality and type of information a resource provides occurs during research practice. Many opportunities for short writing exercises, that support a theme or concept, are also provided to the fifth graders.

## SPANISH

The Spanish program in fifth grade provides students the chance to learn a foreign language through a variety of ways. Multiple intelligences, the Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) approach, and ACTFL's performance-based assessments provide opportunities for students to acquire skills necessary for communication in the target language. Core curriculum areas of social studies, mathematics, and science are integrated through content-based learning. Connections with Hispanic culture provide insight into the Spanish-speaking world. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are emphasized to broaden students' exposure to the language.

## GUIDANCE

Fifth grade guidance classes continue to work on personal responsibility, group dynamics, and affecting positive change in the world around us. Being respectful of self and others, and being responsible for your own actions are the focus during guidance classes. Enlarging tolerance, extending friendships, appreciating differences, managing interpersonal relationships (both in person and online) are topics for exploration and discussion. Work on the Ravenscroft Character Tree traits continues, with a special focus on honor. Towards the end of the year, conversations regarding some aspects of early adolescence and Middle School life are held in preparation for the transition which approaches.

## MUSIC

In fifth grade music classes, students review and further explore the following elements of music: melody, harmony, tempo, rhythm, dynamics, texture, form, and expression. Students focus on music literacy through the use of Kodaly Solfege syllables and TaKaDiMi rhythm syllables. Students sing in unison, as well as two-part and three-part harmony. They continue to develop their skills in musical notation, instrumental accompaniments, and vocal technique. They also have opportunities to experience more complex concepts involved in composition,

improvisation, and music theory. Students also broaden their musical literacy by experiencing various genres, as well as multicultural music through playing, listening, singing, and dancing. They have opportunities to learn and perform multi-layered musical instrumentation by using barred and percussion instruments. Students also read, discuss and interpret music as it relates to culture and history. Fifth grade students audition for, rehears, and perform a musical in the spring.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Fifth grade physical education students continue to develop and refine previously learned skills, applying them to a variety of modified games designed to improve performance in sports that will be offered in Middle School. Students develop conflict resolution skills and group decision making procedures, and work to build teamwork and collaboration skills through a variety of challenging, yet enjoyable, activities. Emphasis is placed on providing students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make healthy lifestyle choices. Students are assessed on their fitness throughout the year, utilizing criteria from the Fitnessgram physical fitness assessment program. Lessons are designed to help students understand the principles, components and practices of health related physical fitness.

### VISUAL ARTS

In fifth grade art classes, drawing, painting and sculpture are emphasized, with a special focus on keen observation and contemplation. Cultural history, artistic styles, famous artists, abstract ideas, and still-life become the foundation for our studies. Students are encouraged to work independently to find solutions as they strive to complete their artwork. Techniques that add shading and the illusion of volume are explored, especially as we make charcoal and pastel portraits. Humorous ways of interpreting the ordinary helps put a new twist on our ceramics sculpture, while an academic approach to studio time nurtures appreciation for artistic expression and the fine arts in general.

## EXTRACURRICULAR OPTIONS

### 1<sup>ST</sup> GRADE VIOLIN

First grade violin class is offered to all students regardless of previous experience. Students meet in groups of seven to nine and are taught the basic skills necessary to succeed in learning to play an instrument. Areas of emphasis include care of the violin and bow, parts of the instrument, playing position, bow control, introductory music theory, note-reading and performance skills.

### 2<sup>ND</sup> GRADE VIOLIN

Second grade violin class is offered to students who have taken first grade violin or the equivalent. Students meet in groups of seven to nine and are taught the skills necessary to make and understand music. Areas of emphasis include care of the violin and bow, playing position, finger facility, bow control, basic music theory, note-reading, musical expression and performance skills. A beginner-level course requiring no previous experience as well as group instruction in viola and cello are also available.

### 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE VIOLIN

Third grade violin class is offered to students who have taken second grade violin or the equivalent. Students meet in groups of seven to nine and are taught the skills necessary to make and understand music. Areas of emphasis include care of the violin and bow, playing position, basic shifting, finger facility, vibrato, bowing techniques, music theory, note-reading, musical expression and performance skills. Motivated students who wish to audition for the Lower School Orchestra (mainly a 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade group) may do so. A beginner-level course requiring no previous experience as well as group instruction in viola and cello are also available.

### 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STRINGS

Fourth grade violin, viola, and cello classes are offered to students who have taken third grade strings or the equivalent. Students are taught the skills necessary to make and understand music as part of a larger group. It is recommended that students in this class also participate in the Lower School Orchestra, where they will put their newly acquired skills to broader use. Areas of emphasis in both of these groups include playing position, basic shifting, finger facility, vibrato, bowing techniques, music theory, note-reading, musical expression and performance skills. A beginner-level course requiring no previous experience is available. . Students who enroll in the beginning class will need to wait at least one semester before joining the Lower School Orchestra.

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STRINGS

Fifth grade violin, viola, and cello classes are offered to students who have taken fourth grade strings or the equivalent. Students are taught the skills necessary to make music with and help lead a multi-level ensemble. It is recommended that students in this class also participate in the Lower School Orchestra, where they will put their newly acquired skills to broader use. Areas of emphasis in both of these groups include playing position, basic shifting, finger facility, vibrato, bowing techniques, music theory, note-reading, musical expression and performance skills. A beginner-level course requiring no previous experience is available. Students who enroll in the beginning class will need to wait at least one semester before joining the Lower School Orchestra

### STRING ORCHESTRA

The Lower School String Orchestra is open to all fourth and fifth grade string players who are enrolled in their grade-level strings class or private lessons. Areas of emphasis are similar to those of the fourth and fifth grade classes but are expanded to include independence of musical line and a wider variety of rehearsal techniques in this larger group. The group meets on Tuesdays after school and performs at various school functions as well as on their own concerts.

#### 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE BAND

The course is open to all 4th Graders and is designed as an introduction to band. No previous experience is necessary. Students may choose flute, clarinet, trumpet or trombone. Provision is made for students to play bells who have documented physical or medical limitations to play a wind instrument. Instrument selection is at the teacher's discretion based on physical limitations but striving to honor the student's preference. Students will be expected to attend rehearsals twice a week: once after school on Wednesdays and once during the regular school day. Students will also be expected to commit 15 to 30 minutes each week to individual practice at home and to keep a record of their practice time. Students in band are expected to provide their own instruments and need to have a home computer capable of running the SmartMusic assessment program ([www.smartmusic.com](http://www.smartmusic.com)).

#### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE BAND

The course is open to all 5<sup>th</sup> Graders and is designed to be a continuation of instruction begun in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Provision is made for 5<sup>th</sup> grade beginners who are willing to put in extra time and effort. Returning students have the option to learn a new instrument at the teacher's discretion. Students will be expected to attend rehearsals twice a week: once after school on Mondays and once during the regular school day. Students will also be expected to commit 30 to 45 minutes each week to individual practice at home and to keep a record of their practice time. Students in band are expected to provide their own instruments and need to have a home computer capable of running the SmartMusic assessment program ([www.smartmusic.com](http://www.smartmusic.com)).

#### CHOIR

Lower School Choir is made up of students in Grades 3, 4, and 5. These boys and girls are invited to participate in choir rehearsals weekly on Thursday afternoons and to participate in all performances during the school year. Students are not auditioned to perform in this ensemble, but are expected to participate for the entire year and attend all performances on and off campus. Students rehearse and perform a variety of unison and two part choral literature. This group has limited enrollment.

#### RAVING RAVENS

This choral ensemble is an auditioned group of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls. The group is limited to 25 singers and all students must also sing in Lower School Choir large ensemble. Auditions for enrolled students take place in the spring, and auditions for new students take place during the first few weeks of school. This special ensemble performs in the community for a variety of events and on campus for chapels and concerts during the school year.

#### DRAMA TROUPE

The Lower School Drama Troupe is an auditioned group of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls. Auditions for enrolled students take place in the spring, and auditions for new students take place during the first few weeks of school. All members are expected to sing and act. Members of the Drama Troupe learn basic acting skills and techniques, perform monologues and partner scenes, as well as performing a musical cabaret at the end of the year. Students also perform for various events on campus during the school year.

#### PRIVATE LESSONS

Private lessons are fee based and are available in the following areas: piano, strings, brass, woodwinds and percussion. Lessons are scheduled during the school day, during designated times which have been approved by the Administration of all three Divisions.

## ACADEMIC SKILLS

***Pre-requisite:*** Before a student may enter the program, he/she must have a current psycho-educational evaluation completed within the past three years. Maintaining a current psycho-educational evaluation is necessary to remain in the program.

Academic Skills, a fee-based program, is designed for students who experience significant academic challenges, yet who may or may not have a diagnosed learning difference. In a small group setting, students focus on individualized goals designed to help them develop their potential. Reading, written language, and math skills are strengthened using research-based programs. In addition, Academic Skills teachers work closely with classroom teachers to provide curricular support and instructional strategies for students enrolled in the program.

## HOMEWORK

As an important part of the academic program, homework serves a variety of functions for students. It provides opportunities for students to practice and review skills taught during class time as well as to integrate skills already mastered. In addition, homework serves to develop regular habits of self-directed work, responsibility, and self-discipline.

Parents are asked to reinforce with their children both self-discipline and good study habits. While parents themselves are sometimes asked to play a role of direct assistance in their child's homework efforts, they are always encouraged to create a home environment that facilitates student self-study and promotes an efficient use of time.

In addition to a nightly reading time of about fifteen minutes, there is also an expectation that all Lower School students will engage in other homework activities.