Lower School

Kindergarten to Grade 3

The Lower School consists of three self-contained homeroom classes at each grade level in which children study language arts, math, and social studies with the homeroom teacher. With a child's move from the Nursery School to the Lower School, special classes increase in number, length, and meeting frequency. Lower School children leave the classroom for science, art, music, physical education, and library, while religion and Spanish teachers come to them. Teachers integrate technology into student learning experiences throughout the week.

Kindergarten

In their entry year to the Lower School, Kindergarten children enjoy a full-day experience that balances immersion in a print-rich literacy program; a wide variety of individual, small-group, and whole-group activities; choice time; and indoor and outdoor play.

Language Arts

The language arts program creates an environment that encourages a love of literature, emphasizes the value of print, and provides a wealth of reading and writing experiences. The program is responsive to children's varying strengths, needs, and interests. Throughout the year, children enjoy reading "Big Books" (large versions of books that enable students to see the words as the teacher reads) and interactive charts together, spending time browsing and reading books in appealing classroom libraries, and reading independently or with small groups. Foundational literacy skills such as letter recognition, letter-sound correspondence, rhyming, sight-word recognition, and blending and segmenting words are taught within meaningful contexts. Reading strategies such as using picture clues, sounding out words, and checking for meaning are emphasized as students become independent readers.

Listening to stories also provides opportunities to engage in comprehension activities, to build vocabulary, and to develop language skills. Rich literature extension activities include drawing, writing, creating class books, drama, and cooking. Reading several books by the same author or in the same genre encourages young readers to see patterns across texts, to make connections, and to build a developing literary awareness.

Writing and artistic expression are vital to the language arts program. Children label pictures, dictate their ideas and stories, and write words and sentences independently using invented/phonetic spelling. Students are introduced to a variety of genres, including narrative writing, informational writing, and persuasive writing.

Instruction in the correct formation of letters, upper- and lowercase, begins in Kindergarten. Children form letters with wooden pieces, practice with slates and small sponges, and trace over letters as they gain ease and comfort with directionality, spacing, and letter formation. The *Handwriting Without Tears* program guides instruction. As children gain knowledge of and confidence with letters and sounds, they become more independent in their writing. There are opportunities for children to create their own books, write letters, make lists, and explore print in a variety of forms. Children write their own stories as well as respond to books or class projects.

The creation of class books, as well as individual books, is also an important part of the program. Children enjoy reading and re-reading their favorites. These activities encourage creative expression while providing meaningful practice with sound-symbol relationships.

Listening and speaking experiences occur throughout the day. Through morning meetings, sharing time, story time, role-playing, shared reading, and play situations, children develop skills and gain confidence in listening and speaking.

Mathematics

The core of the Kindergarten math program is the *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space* curriculum. Developed by the Technical Education Research Centers (TERC), this program offers a series

of connected investigations of major mathematical ideas within the areas of number, data collection and analysis, geometry and measurement, and the mathematics of change.

The Kindergarten *Investigations* curriculum contains the following units:

- Counting People, Sorting Buttons (Classroom Routines and Materials)
- Counting Quantities, Comparing Lengths (Counting and Measuring)
- Make a Shape, Fill a Hexagon (2-D Geometry)
- Collect, Count, and Measure (Counting and Measuring)
- Build a Block, Build a Wall (3-D Geometry)
- How Many Now? (Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System)
- How Many Noses? How Many Eyes? (Modelling With Data)
- Ten Frames and Teen Numbers (Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System)

The program emphasizes reasoning about mathematical ideas, working with whole numbers, and exploring mathematical ideas and materials in a variety of contexts. Students are encouraged to explain their thinking in words, numbers, and pictures as they develop essential mathematical understanding.

Social Studies/Theme Studies

Kindergarten children begin their year focusing on what it means to be part of a community—in the classroom, the school, and the larger community beyond St. Patrick's. Learning to be a good friend, taking responsibility for one's needs and actions, and resolving conflicts in an appropriate manner are all emphasized throughout the year. Kindergarten students participate in community service projects such as making soup for individuals who are homeless for the Salvation Army's Grate Patrol. They also learn about Haiti and our sister school, St. Etienne, and collect underwear and socks for the young children there.

Recognizing the importance of families in the lives of young children, the class reads several books about all kinds of families. Throughout the year, family members are invited to share traditions and stories on each child's birthday or half-birthday. Sharing stories and traditions with each other focuses on the uniqueness, similarities, and differences among individuals, families, and cultures.

Kindergarten children learn about the significance of holidays and culture with a special emphasis on the "Holidays of Light" celebrations around the world. This unit culminates with each class creating its own personalized classroom holiday. Kindergarten students also explore various forms of transportation guided by student-centered inquiry. At the end of the year, Kindergartners undertake a scientific investigation that puts their inquiry-based skills to use as they learn "How to Be a Scientist" and delve deeper into homeroom-specific topics.

Science

Kindergarten children have two science classes each six-day cycle, one in the science lab and one in the classroom. During class, they have opportunities to investigate the worlds of physical and natural sciences. In the fall, children are encouraged to become excellent observers, to notice details, and to describe what they experience. As children study human physiology and anatomy, they learn about the "job" of various organs and systems and encounter the idea of form and function. Students collect colorful fall leaves for their leaf journals and learn to identify some tree species that are commonly found in the Washington, D.C. area. As winter approaches, children think about how animals stay warm and find food to eat when it gets cold. Concurrent with the social studies unit on "Holidays of Light" around the world, students explore the physical properties of light as they work with mirrors and flashlights. Perhaps the most memorable event in science for Kindergarten children is the culminating activity in their study of mollusks—a day to dissect squid and try calamari. The goals for Kindergarten children are to become comfortable with all things that pertain to the natural world and to develop a lifelong curiosity about and interest in the world of science.

Grade 1

Recognizing that all living things share an essential and critical interdependence, the Grade 1 curriculum is based on establishing appropriate foundations for building connections—between humans and their environment, people and cultures, culture and story, concepts and skills, and patterns in learning and nature. Three overarching questions guide our studies throughout the year: *How are we connected to each other? How are we connected to nature? How are we connected to the wider world?*

Language Arts

Reading is an integral part of each student's day in Grade 1. Children encounter text in many formats and work in whole-class, small-group, and individualized instructional settings where they

learn and practice strategies to develop decoding skills, comprehension, and oral reading fluency. They read the daily morning message, poems, songs, and a variety of books to build word knowledge, fluency, and confidence. Small-group instruction is tailored to meet children's individual strengths and needs. Daily read-alouds include picture books, chapter books, poetry, and nonfiction selections. Additionally, children explore traditional folk and fairy tales from around the world. They observe patterns and themes in the folktales of Africa and explore the connections between a country's culture and its literature. They learn to identify *pourquoi* tales and trickster tales, typical of West Africa, and to compare and contrast characters and themes.

Phonics instruction is integral to our language arts program. Grade 1 students build their knowledge of word patterns through reading and spelling games, word sorts, and sight-word instruction. Children complete a variety of activities throughout the week to help them master spelling patterns.

In the fall, children learn to write from their own experiences in a writing workshop. Throughout the year, students have multiple opportunities to write in a variety of genres, including poetry, letters, nonfiction and realistic fiction, and opinion writing. Children have the opportunity to see themselves as authors when their writing is published in the Publishing Center and they read their books to their classmates. The *Handwriting Without Tears* program is used to solidify the formation of upper- and lower-case letters.

Mathematics

The core of the Grade 1 math program is the I*nvestigations in Number, Data, and Space* curriculum. Developed by the Technical Education Research Centers (TERC), this program offers a series of connected investigations of major mathematical ideas within the areas of number, data collection and analysis, geometry and measurement, and the mathematics of change.

The Grade 1 *Investigations* curriculum contains the following units:

- Building Numbers and Solving Story Problems (Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System)
- Comparing and Combining Shapes (2-D Geometry)
- How Many of Each? How Many in All? (Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System)
- Fish Lengths and Fraction Rugs (Measurement and Fractions)
- Number Games and Crayon Puzzles (Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System)
- Would You Rather be an Eagle or a Whale? (Modeling with Data)
- How Many Tens? How Many Ones? (Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System)
- Blocks and Buildings (3-D Geometry)

In each unit, students actively engage in mathematical reasoning to solve complex problems. They represent, explain, and justify their thinking using mathematical tools. Investigations provides meaningful, repeated practice of basic facts and skills through the use of activities and games and a strong home-school partnership. Each investigation allows significant time for students to think about the problems and to model, draw, write, and talk with peers and the teacher about their mathematical thinking. Students work as a whole class, individually, in pairs, and in small groups.

Social Studies

In the fall, Grade 1 children explore the question, *How are we connected to each other?* They focus on establishing connections with friends in the classroom community. Through an interdisciplinary study of monarch butterflies, children examine their connection to the surrounding environment, asking, *How are we connected to nature?* Field trips to nearby wetland and woodland habitats such as Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Carderock Park, and the Anacostia Watershed allow students to learn about the plants, animals, and insects that are native to the Washington, D.C. area.

The question *How are we connected to the wider world?* guides social studies activities during the second half of the year, as children expand their understanding of the global community. Grade 1 children learn to see connections between themselves and others through stories, traditions, and family experiences. As we read trickster and *pourquoi* tales from a variety of African countries, we also compare and contrast basic geographical areas across the African continent, studying the relationships between animals and the wet/dry patterns in the savannas, the desert environment of North Africa and animals particular to it, and the habitat of rainforest plants and animals.

Children also delve into the question, *Where in the world do our goods come from?* They explore everyday items and develop an understanding and appreciation of how basic needs are met on a local and global scale. For example, students might trace where wool comes from and how it is produced, how the wool in a scarf is transformed from a sheep's back to a garment of clothing, how geography affects what a region produces, and how economies are involved.

Science

Grade 1 students are curious thinkers and avid experimenters. The goal of the science program is to deepen students' enthusiasm and wonder while guiding them through activities designed to help them become more disciplined young scientists. Lessons begin with a group discussion and instruction time followed by an investigative activity. Students practice observing, describing, predicting, testing, and recording their results. As students gain confidence and skill in reading and writing, labs might include simple written instructions and data-recording sheets. Lab time gives children opportunities to practice collaborating and sharing with classmates.

Children explore topics within three broadly defined subject areas: Life science, earth science, and physical science. The concept of cycles figures prominently in the curriculum as children observe insect, amphibian, and plant life cycles. Astronomy fascinates young children who are eager to think about our solar system and space travel. Students are introduced to Newton's First Law of Motion during an investigation of balance and motion. Throughout the year, students have opportunities to think and work like engineers as they confront challenges such as building slow-rolling runways, shadow-puppet theaters, suitcases for a seed, and a strong, stable bridge.

Grade 2

Language Arts

The language arts program equips students to develop into thoughtful, successful, and enthusiastic readers and writers. The balanced literacy program consists of four primary focus areas: First, independent, self-selected reading; second, small-group, teacher-guided reading; third, word study; and finally, writing. In this integrated, literature-based curriculum, children read a variety of genres and explore the many connections among literature, writing, science, social studies, and art. Interrelated activities encourage students to develop the strategies to read independently, to improve comprehension, to think critically, and to discuss ideas and different perspectives.

Early in the year, teachers devote ample time to developing productive independent reading time as students learn strategies for selecting appropriate books from a well-stocked classroom library. Students learn to be active, thoughtful readers who construct meaning by using a range of strategies including activating relevant prior knowledge, creating images, drawing inferences, asking questions, making predictions and connections, and synthesizing information. Engaging read-alouds provide literature frameworks within which students read, converse, and write as a whole group and as individuals. During units on nonfiction, students learn to read for information, identify the different features of nonfiction text, and synthesize information from multiple sources. The study of Chinese folktales and American Indian legends integrates themes from the social studies curriculum into language arts time.

Students engage in word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling instruction. Using a variety of developmentally appropriate spelling programs, including *Words Their Way, Orton-Gillingham,* and *Sitton Spelling,* we have designed a scope and sequence that meets the needs of all of our learners. Children are grouped according to their level of word knowledge and participate in hands-on activities in which they sort words according to patterns or spelling features. As children compare and contrast words, they discover similarities and differences within and between categories. Children complete a variety of activities throughout the week to help them master their words. As *Words Their Way* states, "The purpose of word study is to examine words in order to reveal consistencies with the written language system and to help students master the recognition, spelling, and meaning of specific words."

The goal of the writing program is to create independent, motivated writers who write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Lessons are designed to stimulate the imagination and interests of the children who write creative stories, poems, responses to literature, nonfiction pieces, and stories from personal experiences. Lessons emphasize choosing topics, developing story ideas, adding details, using vivid language, and writing clearly and fluently. Grade 2 students work on applying appropriate capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar throughout the year. Mini-lessons provide specific instruction in skills and mechanics. Students publish their writing in individual books as well as class books. They continue to practice handwriting skills through the *Handwriting Without Tears* program.

Mathematics

The core of the Grade 2 math program is the *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space* curriculum. Developed by the Technical Education Research Centers (TERC), this program offers a series of connected investigations of major mathematical ideas within the areas of number, data collection and analysis, geometry and measurement, and the mathematics of change.

The Grade 2 *Investigations* curriculum contains the following units with the primary emphasis on addition, subtraction, and the number system.

- Coins, Number Strings, and Story Problems (Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System)
- Attributes of Shapes and Parts of a Whole (Geometry and Fractions)
- How Many Stickers? How Many Cents? (Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System)
- Pockets, Teeth, and Guess My Rule (Modeling with Data)
- How Many Tens? How Many Hundreds? (Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System)
- How Far Can You Jump? (Linear Measurement)
- Partners, Teams, and Other Groups (Foundations of Multiplication)
- Enough for the Class? Enough for the Grade? (Additions, Subtraction, and the Number System)

In each unit, students actively engage in mathematical reasoning to solve complex problems. They represent, explain, and justify their thinking using mathematical tools and appropriate technology. *Investigations* provides meaningful, repeated practice of basic facts and skills through the use of activities and games and a strong home-school partnership. Each investigation allows significant time for students to think about the problems and to model, draw, write, and talk with peers and the teacher about their mathematical thinking. Students work as a whole class, individually, in pairs, and in small groups.

Social Studies

At the beginning of the year, Grade 2 students explore the question, *What is a community?* First, classes work to establish the classroom community using elements of practice from the Responsive Classroom. Students then study the St. Patrick's community. One aspect of this study is a focus on sustaining our current recycling initiatives. Students also study city planning and land use to explore the important elements that comprise a community.

Also in the fall, students undertake a study of China through folktales, nonfiction trade books, and hands-on activities. The folk literature of China provides a rich and multi-layered picture of Chinese culture. Children observe and compare the story structures, patterns, and themes found in these folktales. A variety of fiction and nonfiction books support the study. Texts may include *The Long-Haired Girl*, *The Weaving of a Dream*, *The Fourth Question*, *Hidden Army: Terracotta Warriors*, and *Little Panda*.

Beginning in January, students study the diverse cultures and customs of American Indians, with particular emphasis on the native peoples' relationships with and reverence for nature. Focusing on American Indian tribes from the Eastern Woodlands, Northwest Coast, and Plains regions of the United States, students explore how geographic location influences and shapes culture as expressed through shelter, food, clothing, transportation, and decorative arts. Videos, stories, legends, trade books, crafts, and field trips enhance the study of these cultures. Texts may include *The Rough-Faced Girl*, *The Salmon Twins*, *Storm Boy*, *Frog Girl*, and many titles by Paul Goble. Nonfiction titles may include *Totem Pole*, *Buffalo Days*, and *Powwow*. Social studies is often integrated with art, technology, and music. The annual Plains Indian Culture Days and the Grade 2 Celebration of American Indian Studies are culminating activities of the study of American Indians.

Science

In Grade 2 science, topics are presented in ways that challenge children to ask and wonder, look and listen, propose and test, and count and measure. The goal of the curriculum is to continue to entice children into a lifelong appreciation for the world of science. Children improve their skills in observing, describing, predicting, recording their results, and drawing conclusions. Students keep a science journal in which they record observations, instructions for investigations, data-recording sheets, and reflections.

Grade 2 students explore topics within three broadly defined subject areas: Life science, earth science, and physical science. When appropriate, developments in science and technology are highlighted. Topics are introduced in an historical context, encouraging students to think and work creatively as they try to imagine a world without electricity, wheeled vehicles, or smartphones.

In a physics unit, students investigate the properties of matter, beginning with liquids and solids. Their explorations involve dissolving, density, and sinking and floating and conclude with a study of the water cycle. Continuing with matter, children explore air and properties of gases, dispelling misconceptions that air is not matter. Following investigations into the properties of gases and air, students examine basic elements of weather and weather patterns. From observations of weather, students explore ways that people have harnessed wind energy. Students investigate different ways to catch the wind to solve several challenges, including designing and testing windmill blades. In the spring, students study insects, plants, and pollinators, exploring as the flora and fauna in the D.C. region start their seasonal growth. Students investigate life cycles of insects and plants and then consider the connections between the plant kingdom and insect class.

Grade 3

Language Arts

The goal of the reading program is to help students grow into thoughtful, engaged, independent readers. Whole-class study of novels; small-group book clubs including units of study covering series, mysteries, biographies, and stories of social justice; and books chosen and read by students during independent reading time all help students to develop literary appreciation and awareness, solidify skills, and strengthen comprehension. Children read, respond to, and discuss a variety of fiction and nonfiction. They continue learning to read for information, to use their prior knowledge to construct meaning, and to make personal connections to their reading. Grade 3 students focus on reading comprehension strategies such as identifying the main idea, recalling important information, unlocking vocabulary, summarizing, drawing inferences, and differentiating fact from opinion. Literature-based units incorporate literature, writing, art, and related areas of study and have as their focus fine children's literature such as *Because of Winn Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo and Jake Drake, *Bully Buster* by Andrew Clements.

In Grade 3, students continue the word study program begun in Grade 1, with periods devoted to the study of phonics, decoding skills, vocabulary, and spelling. Based on the program developed at the University of Virginia and described in the text *Words Their Way* by Donald Bear, et al., children are grouped according to their level of word knowledge and engage in hands-on activities in which they sort words according to patterns or spelling features. As children compare and contrast words, they discover similarities and differences within and between categories. Children complete a variety of activities throughout the week to help them master their words. *As Words Their Way* states, "The purpose of word study is to examine words in order to reveal consistencies with the written language system and to help students master the recognition, spelling, and meaning of specific words."

Varied writing activities provide students with practice and opportunities to improve the organization, clarity, and fluency of their writing. Through self-selected topics and teacher-guided writing projects, children improve their use of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Writing is integrated into all subjects. Children publish their writing in individual books as well as class books. Grade 3 students learn cursive writing through the *Handwriting Without Tears* program.

Mathematics

The core of the Grade 3 math program is the Investigations in Number, Data, and Space curriculum. Developed by the Technical Education Research Centers (TERC), this program offers a series of connected investigations of major mathematical ideas within the areas of number, data collection and analysis, geometry, and the mathematics of change.

The Grade 3 Investigations curriculum contains the following units:

- Understanding Equal Groups (Multiplication and Division)
- Graphs and Line Plots (Modeling with Data)
- Travel Stories and Collections (Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System)
- Perimeter, Area, and Polygons (2-D Geometry and Measurement)
- Cube Patterns, Arrays, and Multiples of 10 (Multiplication and Division)
- Fair Shares and Fractions on Number Lines (Fractions)
- How Many Miles? (Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System)
- Larger Numbers and Multi-Step Problems (Multiplication and Division)

In each unit, students actively engage in mathematical reasoning to solve complex problems. They represent, explain, and justify their thinking, using mathematical tools and appropriate technology. *Investigations* provides meaningful, repeated practice of basic facts and skills through the use of activities and games and a strong home-school partnership. Each investigation allows significant time for students to think about the problems and to model, draw, write, and talk with peers and the teacher about their mathematical thinking. Students work as a whole class, individually, in pairs, and in small groups.

Grade 3 students also take part in *Fantastic Five Mathematics,* daily math warm-ups that address five math standards (Numbers and Operations, Algebra, Geometry, Measurement, and Analogies and Probability).

Social Studies

Essential questions that guide the Grade 3 social studies program include *Why do people move to new places?* and *How do the geography and physical environment of the place affect the way people live?* The year begins with an interdisciplinary study of the United States. Using an inquiry-based approach, students embark on an independent research project. Students discover what makes each region of the United States unique, and they compare and contrast the regions. A culminating interdisciplinary presentation showcases student learning for parents and adults in the school community.

Students spend the second half of the year learning about two of the first permanent English settlements in the Mid-Atlantic region—Jamestown and St. Mary's City. They learn about the effects of new settlement on the people and cultures in the lands explored and settled by others as well as the problems and hardships faced by the new settlers. Students read a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts to develop their understanding, including *The Jamestown Colony* by Gail Sakurai and *Where Maryland Began…the Colonial History of St. Mary's County* by Sandy Shoemaker. Students design a game incorporating what they've learned. Students explore a variety of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artifacts and write about and discuss what the artifacts reveal about life in the past. In the spring, students undertake an in-depth biography study. Each student chooses a famous person, conducts research, and writes a first-person essay. Students dress in costume and present their essays.

In the fall, students work on building community within their classrooms. Throughout the year, Grade 3 students help to plan and lead community Town Hall Meetings for the whole Lower School. As part of building community, students participate in a day-long field trip to Hemlock Overlook and engage in team-building exercises and environmental education activities.

Science

Topics in Grade 3 science are designed to engage and foster a student's natural curiosity and desire to make discoveries. The simple process of asking questions is a powerful launchpad, taking students through the major disciplines of science: Physical science, earth science, and life science. Students explore these fields through a variety of investigations in which they work both independently and in small groups. Students learn firsthand the importance of problem-solving in scientific studies. They also learn to use scientific language, emphasizing the importance of recording and organizing information and observations. During a life science unit, Grade 3 takes an in-depth look at plants. Students explore different plant parts and how they help a plant survive and reproduce. As students become more familiar with plants, they prepare and observe soil in playground garden beds. Grade 3 students also explore concepts in physical science as students investigate motion and matter. Students discover the world of forces and what gets things to move—or stop. Students investigate the law of conservation of matter in a series of labs where students put scientific skills to use, including observing, measuring, recording, and following a procedure. As Grade 3 embarks on an earth science unit, students learn about the properties of rocks and minerals and the process of rock formation. Students investigate the major forces that shape and create the materials that make up our planet as well as some unique features of geology in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Special-Subject Classes

Religion

Religious education is a lifelong process through which the stories, traditions, rituals, and insights of a community of faith become integrated into every aspect of an individual's life. The goal of religious education at St. Patrick's is to introduce the young person to strong faith values, particularly as they are expressed in the teaching, worship, and history of the Episcopal Church. Essential themes of commitment, covenant, sacrifice, risk-taking, integrity, and service are at the heart of the religion curriculum. Weekly classroom lessons with the Lower School religion teacher encourage students to explore ideas freely, while providing an atmosphere that enables individuals to maintain and develop their own religious beliefs and personal values. Children learn about various faith traditions and celebrations across traditions, cultures, and religions. They also explore the meaning of the basic principles of honesty, responsibility, kindness, and respect that comprise the School Creed. During their time in the Lower School, children become familiar with the stories of the Old and New Testaments through class discussion, role-playing, games, and hands-on projects.

Each week, children attend Chapel, led by the Day School Chaplain. Chapels include songs, prayer, and scripture readings. The children learn of God's love and care for them and their world. The Chaplain builds personal relationships with the students, reinforcing the underlying message of our religious education program.

Spanish

Students begin a formal introduction to Spanish language and culture in PK, a study that continues in Kindergarten and Grades 1, 2, and 3. Meeting three times per six-day cycle, students acquire vocabulary relevant to their school and home lives while building confidence in the language by participating in classes conducted in Spanish. Students immerse themselves in a multi-sensory environment, using hands-on activities that involve music, stories, art projects, and role-playing. They listen to and practice correct pronunciation of Spanish words while beginning to use these words in basic conversational phrases. Our goal is for students to acquire language through a study of culture as they experience culture through the use of language.

In **Kindergarten,** students are introduced to the Spanish language and culture through stories, songs, poetry, dance, and movement. They acquire new words and expressions naturally as they learn authentic songs and rhymes that help them internalize the language and develop accurate pronunciation skills. One of the main goals of Kindergarten Spanish is for students to become accustomed to participating in classes taught in Spanish. From the outset, students listen to commands in Spanish and are encouraged to use the language in meaningful ways. Students learn how to respond to simple questions about their name, the day of the week, colors, shapes, and their own emotions.

Grade 1 students begin the year reviewing greetings and departures and using basic phrases to introduce themselves to their peers. Grade 1 students continue to acquire vocabulary relevant to their everyday lives including words pertaining to animals, body parts, family, numbers, colors, and sizes. Students learn how to answer questions about the date and weather in Spanish, as well as formulate descriptive sentences using learned vocabulary. Throughout the school year, students learn about Hispanic culture by focusing on Spanish and Mexican traditions and holidays.

In Grade 2, students review and expand upon the vocabulary they learned in Kindergarten and Grade 1. Students delve more deeply into units on colors, shapes, and numbers. Students also learn about animals. Throughout the year, students learn more words for body parts and clothing. Grade 2 students learn the alphabet and practice fine-tuning their listening and pronunciation skills. They learn basic grammar while using phrases to express answers to questions.

In Grade 3, students expand upon the vocabulary learned in previous grades and begin to express themselves in basic sentences. They learn beginning rules of grammar and sentence structure while practicing new vocabulary. Frequent exposure to and practice with gender and number rules allow students to become acquainted with the grammar; reciting poems and singing songs help students to be more comfortable comprehending and speaking the Spanish language. They learn vocabulary about their classes, school, and community as well as about describing themselves, transportation, and weather. Grade 3 students study some Hispanic cultures, with emphasis on Mexican and Mayan cultures.

Reading/Math Support

Recognizing that reading is critical to a child's overall academic success, and that not all children learn to read in the same way or at the same time, seven learning specialists work with small groups of children throughout the Lower School grades—three in Grade 1 and two each in Grades 2 and 3—during language arts time. Learning specialists also work in Kindergarten, assisting students based on needs determined by the homeroom teachers. After carefully assessing the children in the fall, learning specialists work with homeroom teachers to determine the best groupings to meet the individual needs of the children at each grade level. Small groups of children who need additional support or targeted instruction to solidify their reading or writing skills may work in a smaller classroom during part of the language arts time. Learning specialists may also work within homeroom classes assisting in one-on-one conferences, small-group strategy lessons, and book clubs throughout the language arts period.

A small group of children from a grade level who are exceptionally proficient readers may be taught together during part of the language arts time. Maintaining a flexible approach enables teachers to differentiate instruction to meet the individual needs of children in the most productive way.

Two teachers—the homeroom teacher and a learning specialist—work in each Grade 1 to Grade 3 classroom during the daily math period. The teaching pairs have latitude in determining how best to meet the needs of each group of children. Teachers use variety of whole-group, small-group, and individual instructional techniques to help children understand, practice, and master mathematical concepts and skills.

Library

The goals of the library program in the Lower School are to promote a love of literature and an appreciation of the value of reading, to promote inquiry-inspired reading, and to introduce students to the variety of materials in the Elementary School Library. Performance expectations are based on the *American Association of School Librarians: 21st Century Learning Standards.*

The emphasis of the **Kindergarten** program is to understand what kinds of books are available in the library. A genre study takes place throughout the year during which the librarians read aloud a variety of age-appropriate literature from every major genre in the library, including nonfiction and poetry. Kindergarten students have a short quiet reading time and then check out books. They may have up to two books checked out at a time.

In **Grade 1,** the program continues to center around choosing and enjoying literature, transitioning into a research and media literacy project in the Spring Trimester. Students hear longer, extended

stories through picture books and are introduced to beginning chapter books. The librarians often read selections that complement or extend the classroom curriculum. For example, in conjunction with the Ghana unit, students learn about Botswana in the library through reading *Akimbo and the Elephants* by Alexander McCall-Smith. Later in the year, they begin their media literacy research project by learning to use World Book Kids, a section of the World Book database for primary-aged students, to answer student-generated research questions. Grade 1 students have a short quiet reading time and then check out books. They may have up to two books checked out at a time.

In **Grade 2,** students focus especially on appreciating the language of stories—word choice, sensory descriptions, colorful expressions, and poetic vocabulary. They also refine their strategies for finding a good book to read. Near the end of the year, the librarians read aloud novels, especially those in series, which are long enough to stretch over several weeks. Students learn how to use the library catalog to find books for independent reading and for nonfiction research. Students complete additional units in media literacy using World Book online databases. Technology lessons, team-taught with the academic technology coordinator and embedded into library time, help students develop coding, video editing, and online-responsibility skills. Library lessons support units in the classroom, including community, China, American Indians, poetry, and nonfiction. Grade 2 students have a quiet reading time and an opportunity to check out a combination of three titles, including audiobooks, every time they come to the library.

In **Grade 3,** students delve further into the research process. In conjunction with Grade 3 study of the United States and the accompanying research project, students learn how to find books using the library's online catalog and the World Book student database, doing independent searches using keywords and learning search strategies. Reference skills are reinforced throughout the year including using encyclopedias, reading maps and atlases, learning nonfiction text features and how they are used, paraphrasing, utilizing multiple databases, and conducting general web searches. Students are introduced to the idea of evaluating digital resources to determine the credibility of the author/publisher and to determine the timeliness and accuracy of the content as well as understanding the value of vetted information. All of the research curriculum is scaffolded by units occurring in the classroom as well as in special-subject classes. Grade 3 students have a quiet reading time and may check out up to four titles. Embedded technology lessons continue in Grade 3 library time, empowering students to develop further their skills with coding, video, editing, and online responsibility.

Technology

The technology program aims to enrich the core curriculum by providing students with meaningful ways to create, communicate, collaborate, and consume critically as they explore the content they learn in math, language arts, science, social studies, and other classes. By the completion of Grade 3, all students will have experiences with technology and digital resources in the following ways. Students will:

- illustrate and communicate original ideas and stories using digital tools and media resources;
- create digital presentations, movies, animations created through coding, and other products to demonstrate understanding in content areas;
- demonstrate the safe and cooperative use of technology;
- use digital tools to solve problems; and
- find and evaluate information using digital resources.
- performance expectations are based on "Profiles of Technology-Literate Students" from the ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Students.

Students in the Lower School learn a variety of applications and skills. Software introduced includes, but is not limited to, Scratch and Tynker, which are child-friendly computer programming languages geared towards creating digital stories, animations, and games; online typing software to help students build keyboarding skills; collaborative video editing with WeVideo; curating digital portfolios with the Seesaw Learning Journal; and office software such as Google Docs and Google Slides.

Music

The music program fosters a lifelong love of music, develops the competencies that enable children to participate fully in the music curriculum, and lays a foundation for participation in music beyond St. Patrick's.

Music instruction occurs twice during each six-day cycle within a comprehensive framework stemming from the experiential processes of Orff-Schulwerk and Kodály. Children are introduced to, and develop increasing competence in, skills and concepts that they will build upon through the grade levels in what we describe as a spiraling curriculum. In each grade, classroom music includes experiential instruction in the concepts of pitch, rhythm, dynamics,

tempo, form, timbre, texture, and style. Students learn these concepts through listening, movement, speech, singing, creating, and instrumental work. Classroom instruments include Orff instruments—xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiels, unpitched percussion, and recorders—and a variety of world instruments.

Opportunities for performance abound at all grade levels. Whether these performances take place in the classroom, in weekly chapels, or for a large audience, they are vital to each child's development as a confident, poised, and skilled musician. Schoolwide highlights include the Christmas Pageant and the Lower School Chapel of Celebration.

Kindergarten music classes explore elemental music concepts of high/low, soft/loud, steady beat, and structure through singing, movement, body percussion, instrument-playing, creating, and listening activities. Songs, rhymes, poetry, chants, folktales, and storybooks form the instructional core from which these activities are built. Charts and pictures serve as supporting materials, encouraging comprehension of text and form. Students learn social skills as they work in cooperative groups to solve problems, express ideas in class discussions, and participate in imaginative games. Kindergarten music highlights include the Martin Luther King Jr. Chapel and a culminating year-end interdisciplinary performance.

Grade 1 music classes continue to develop listening, singing, rhythm, and instrument-playing skills. Solfège singing (do, re, mi, sol, la) and hand signs are introduced as vocal tools to reinforce pitch and melodic direction. As in Kindergarten, charts and pictures serve as supporting materials, encouraging comprehension of text and form. Students begin to identify, read, and construct rhythmic patterns. Students continue to incorporate percussion and Orff instruments to accompany songs, games, and listening selections drawn from American folk and world music. Activities include creative movement, circle games, and creating compositions to accompany story books, folktales, and poetry. Music classes explore authentic songs, dances, and instruments from a variety of African cultures that are studied in the social studies curriculum.

Grade 2 music classes begin with cooperative activities that focus on singing, rhythm, movement, and listening skills. Students expand their knowledge of rhythmic notation and solfège syllables (do, re, mi, sol, la) through the use of Orff instruments, various drums, other percussion instruments, and singing. Charts and pictures continue to serve as supporting materials, encouraging comprehension of text and form. In collaboration with the social studies unit on Chinese folktales and culture, students learn to read and chant rhythmic notation while playing in authentic luogu (Chinese percussion) ensembles, which include gongs, drums, and cymbals. Students focus on American Indian cultures and their music as they learn authentic songs, dances, and stories from various tribes. Instruments include the gathering drum, hoop drum, rattles, and bells. A Grade 2 music highlight is the spring 2 Celebration of American Indian Studies.

Grade 3 students continue to build their skills in reading and performing rhythmic patterns. Students are introduced to the soprano recorder and begin to read, compose, and play standard music notation on the five-line staff. Singing skills expand to include all solfège pitches in a major scale—do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do. Repertoire includes rounds, American and English folk songs, and spirituals. The study of early American folk music and dance is integrated with the language arts and social studies unit on the United States. Grade 3 students also engage in an in-depth study of the instruments of the orchestra.

Art

The Lower School art program is designed to empower students with the skills of artists. Children are encouraged to explore and experiment as they develop confidence in their artistic abilities. Students are exposed to a broad range of materials and provided with opportunities to create art with a range of purposes. Trips to art museums support student engagement with art, and the work of every child enlivens our hallways. Activities in both Whitehaven Campus Art Studios develop children's skills of observation and their awareness of the basic elements of art—line, shape, color, texture, value, and space. Art history and a working art vocabulary are introduced at every opportunity. Students apply critical-thinking skills to critique artwork and then use the information to improve their own pieces. Subjects are drawn from interdisciplinary studies and the surrounding world as well as personal experiences.

Kindergarten students visit the Art Studio once in each six-day cycle. The Kindergarten art program engages children in exploring and experimenting with a variety of materials and techniques including printmaking, paint, paper, scissors, glue, oil pastel, chalk, and clay. Through an assortment of projects, students develop their observational and fine-motor skills. Students learn new art vocabulary and are encouraged to make use of it while discussing their artwork and the work of others. By using a broad range of materials in small groups, students have the opportunity to build their confidence. Throughout the year, teachers introduce famous artists,

including Henri Matisse and Andy Goldsworthy, and students create work inspired by their individual styles. Personal experiences and classroom studies become subjects of and inspiration for artwork.

Grade 1 students visit the Art Studio twice in each six-day cycle. The art program focuses on exposure to a wide variety of materials, including paint, clay, collage, printmaking, and 3-D construction. Projects teach skills and techniques through exploratory activities. Many projects focus on the elements of art—line, shape, color, texture, value, and space—emphasizing creativity and experimentation as students develop an understanding of art and confidence in their abilities. Grade 1 incorporates units of homeroom study in addition to studying the artists Alexander Calder and Vincent Van Gogh, allowing students to develop a beginning understanding of art history and art from around the world. Throughout the year, students are guided through the process of reflection—upon their own work, classmates' work, and the work of famous artists.

Grade 2 students continue to build confidence in their artistic and visual skills. They develop a greater understanding of the elements of art—line, shape, color, texture, value, and space—and learn to use their knowledge and skills in a more sophisticated manner. As students become more comfortable with the tools of artists, the curriculum focuses on developing their ability to identify and discuss artwork. In concert with culture studies occurring in the homeroom, students examine and discuss the art of China and the American Indians. Students explore the styles of individual artists, such as Eric Carle and Brian Pinkney, and focus on developing a deeper understanding of the color wheel and color mixing.

Grade 3 students continue their exploration and skill development with paint, pastels, printmaking, clay, papier-mâché, and collage. Principles of design and compositional choices are intentionally incorporated into assignments along with the elements of art. Observational skills and artistic techniques are honed through both realistic and abstract projects, and experimentation is encouraged with each material. Some projects are linked with classroom units of studies, such as states and biographies, while others focus on thinking like an artist to develop each student's own ideas. Students study American folk art, learn about color theory in greater depth, and strive to express personal experience in their artwork. Regular discussions about artwork, the use of techniques, the elements of art, and the principles of design help to develop critical-thinking skills and artistic vocabulary.

Physical Education

The goal of the physical education program is to help children develop a love of and respect for physical movement and fitness. Within that context, there is a continual emphasis on individual effort, team cooperation, and social awareness. Ultimately, the aim is to establish patterns and habits that allow each person to have a physically active, healthy, and enjoyable life. Lower School physical education concentrates on five major areas: Body awareness, spatial awareness, locomotion skills, manipulative skills, and social interaction. By using a wide variety of competitive and noncompetitive games, dance, gymnastics, and physical fitness-related activities, children gain confidence with a range of physical skills. Activities include relays and field games, ball skills, gymnastics and tumbling, dance, jump rope, and free play.