



The Village School

Montessori Education | est. 1977

Upper Elementary (Ages 9 to 12 years old)

The Upper Elementary Program for grades 4 through 6 is designed to address all aspects of a student's learning. The individual academic, social and emotional needs of the student are inseparable and equally important. The classroom provides an inquisitive, cooperative, and respectful environment with academic opportunities and challenges that enable students to grow as open-minded, critically thinking individuals. For details of our curriculum please see the descriptions of the individual areas below.

The Upper Elementary Montessori classroom provides the framework for students to become academically strong, proficient and curious learners. Students become knowledgeable in content areas and are taught to think critically and creatively rather than merely memorize information. They actively engage in building a strong academic foundation through continual exploration of new ideas. Students experience learning as a natural and life long process.

The curriculum supports the passage from concrete to abstract thinking, providing the materials and experiences to make it a successful transition to content based instruction. Individual, partner and small group projects are integral parts of the learning process, helping students develop time management, organization and cooperative social skills. Students become motivated and interested participants in learning as they experience the challenges of a stimulating academic environment. Through the process of seeking out the necessary assistance and resources in the classroom, collaborating with others and receiving feedback about their work, students develop greater independence and understanding of their personal learning styles.

Through regular community meetings and teacher modeling and facilitation, students develop intrapersonal and conflict resolution skills.

Public speaking develops on a small scale through participation in class group presentations and progresses to oral presentations before an entire school community assembly. Sixth year students conclude an entire year of study on a topic of their choice by presenting their research to their fellow classmates, parents, teachers and other members of the school community.

Language

Reading

The reading curriculum supports the process by which readers actively construct meaning and relate prior knowledge to written text. Proficient readers use a variety of strategies to adapt to increasing levels of complexity and respond to text in a critical manner.

Writing

The writing curriculum is designed to develop effective communication skills that may be incorporated into a variety of writing styles and genres. Writing techniques and concepts are introduced and expanded over a three year period. Students apply concepts on an increasingly independent level and

begin to develop a personal writing style. Student writing will evolve and progress in length, sentence complexity, level of vocabulary and organization. Students are taught the mechanics and elements of writing as they practice with creative writing, letter writing, tall tales, memoirs, news writing, fairy tales, essays, reports and poetry.

Research

Students build upon the research skills practiced in Lower Elementary to learn about topics of study in greater depth. With their developing reading and writing skills, students use classroom library and Internet resources to gather information and prepare reports of a depth and length that is appropriate for the developmental skills of each learner. Sixth year students conduct extensive research on a topic they select to pursue during the course of the school year. A variety of sources are used in preparation for writing their in-depth research paper.

Grammar

The grammar curriculum is designed to strengthen language skills as they apply to reading and writing. Students learn the complex structure of language and draw finer distinctions between the functions of words. Sentence analysis study provides the tools for understanding and developing awareness of the structure of language.

Vocabulary

The development and use of vocabulary is essential to effective spoken and written communication. The Montessori classroom is rich in opportunities to study multiple word meanings, etymology and development of a rich foundation of words.

Spelling

The Instructional Level Spelling Program meets the needs of a variety of learners and fosters the development of standard spelling. Students are introduced to one specific spelling pattern per week and learn words that fit that specific rule.

Oral Presentations and Performances

Speaking formally and informally and listening to others are all essential components of the learning process. Students engage in discourse and dialogue about literature, nonfiction and other topics on a daily basis. They are presented with opportunities to prepare and participate in presentations to small and large audiences. The Sixth Year Expert Project Presentation represents a very important right of passage for Upper Elementary level students who are moving on to Middle School, as they present their research before a full auditorium of students, parents and teachers. The confidence that our students display in speaking before such a large audience is an outgrowth of having many opportunities throughout their years in Lower and Upper Elementary to practice and develop essential oral speaking skills.

Students rehearse and perform a yearly play before the entire school community. All students are actors in these performances, which usually involve literature or cultural themes.

Mathematics

Mathematics

The Math Curriculum provides a concrete foundation for new concepts being introduced, while maximizing successful passage to abstraction. Students continue practicing with materials to enhance the internalization of increasingly more complex operations. Emphasis is placed on the use of math as a

part of daily life to solve problems. As students progress through the program, they will appreciate the relevance and usefulness of mathematics.

Students learn and practice strategies involved in solving word problems. They read the problem, determine the method for solving it and execute the necessary steps to reach a reasonable solution.

Geometry

The Geometry curriculum includes the study of equivalence between shapes, calculation of area, volume and surface area, and the study of the circle. Teachers present lessons using concrete materials to demonstrate concepts. Students derive the abstract formulas for calculations through their practice with the Montessori geometry materials. The Customary System of Measurement and the Metric System of Measurement are explored.

Science & Cultural Studies

The Cultural curriculum integrates studies in History, Biology, Physical Science and Geography.

History

The History curriculum focuses on the role that humans have played since their arrival on the planet. Students study evolution and the cosmic role of humans in the universe. Fundamental needs throughout time are studied as students learn about the similarities and differences in how these needs were met while researching the great achievements of past civilizations.

Part of the three year cycle of study in History entails learning about the structure of the government and history of New Jersey.

Biology

Students study the vital functions of plants and animals, classification of all the kingdoms of life, and a study of the human body as a system. The science of life and life processes are explored, including the structure, function, growth, origin, evolution and distribution of living organisms. Students learn that all forms of life are specially adapted for their own survival.

Physical Science

The Physical Science curriculum provides the foundation for understanding the basic laws of physics and chemistry. Students study the physical forces that shape our planet while developing knowledge of the characteristics of nonliving elements on Earth. They are continuously involved in researching and refining their observational skills. The scientific method of observation is used to make predictions, conduct experiments, make observations, evaluate results and draw conclusions. Students learn about simple machines, electricity and magnetism, basics of chemistry, the solar system the wetland environment and weather as units of study.

Geography

The study of geography includes exploration of the Earth's physical characteristics, as well as the study of patterns of human settlement and influence on the Earth. Students develop map- reading skills with use of geographic tools and acquire understanding of patterns that shape the Earth's surface. They study land and water forms, the characteristics of ecosystems and processes that create patterns on Earth.

Field Trips

Field trips are designed to enhance the cultural and science curriculum by providing students with direct exposure to topic areas they are studying in the classroom. Museum trips, trips to zoos and nature preserves, visits to the New Jersey state capital and theater performances all make it possible to extend the classroom boundaries to the outside world. A yearly away trip helps students formulate appropriate responses to a variety of scenarios outside the home and school as students develop stronger bonds with their peers.

Community Service

Upper Elementary students are given opportunities to experience the concept of community on many levels. Within their classrooms, students play a daily role in assuming responsibility for the care of their immediate environment. They serve their larger school community by helping younger students in the Toddler and Primary classes as well as in the Main Office. Students at this level are responsible for coordinating all aspects of our yearly food and coat drive.