



LOWER SCHOOL: KINDERGARTEN–GRADE 5

WHITEHAVEN CAMPUS

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. Science, art, music, physical education, library, religion, and Spanish are special subjects in the Lower School.

Core Courses

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 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 both as discrete phonemic-awareness lessons and within meaningful contexts. Reading strategies such as 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, build vocabulary, and develop language skills. Rich literature extension activities include drawing, writing, creating class books, drama, and poetry. Reading several books by the same author or in the same genre encourages young readers to see patterns across texts, make connections, and develop literary awareness.

Writing and artistic expression are vital to the language arts program. Children label pictures, dictate their ideas and stories, and write words, sentences, and stories independently applying phonics patterns learned and 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 lower-case, 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 *Illustrative Math* curriculum. The big ideas in Kindergarten include: representing and comparing whole numbers, initially with sets of objects; understanding and applying addition and subtraction; and describing shapes and space. More time in Kindergarten is devoted to numbers than to other topics.

The Kindergarten *Illustrative Math* curriculum contains the following units:

- Math In Our World
- Numbers 1–10
- Flat Shapes All Around Us
- Understanding Addition and Subtraction
- Composing and Decomposing Numbers to 10
- Numbers 0–20
- Solid Shapes All Around Us
- Putting It all Together

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 in need through the Salvation Army's Grate Patrol. They also learn about Haiti and our sister school, St. Etienne.

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 with the class. 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 learn about inventors and explore various inventions guided by student-centered inquiry. At the end of the year, Kindergarteners undertake a scientific investigation that puts their inquiry-based skills to use as they consider a need and create their own inventions.

SCIENCE

Kindergarten children have two science classes each six-day cycle in the science lab, one in a half-group and one as a full class. During class, they have opportunities to investigate the worlds of physical and natural sciences. In the fall, children are encouraged to become excellent observers, 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. In addition, 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. They enjoy reading 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 *Illustrative Math* curriculum. The big ideas in Grade 1 include: developing understanding of addition, subtraction, and strategies for addition and subtraction within 20; developing understanding of whole-number relationships and place value, including grouping in tens and ones; developing understanding of linear measurement and measuring lengths as iterating length units; and reasoning about attributes of, and composing and decomposing geometric shapes.

The Grade 1 *Illustrative Math* curriculum contains the following units:

- Adding, Subtracting, and Working with Data
- Addition and Subtraction Story Problems
- Adding and Subtracting Within 20
- Numbers to 99
- Adding within 100
- Length Measurements within 120 Units
- Geometry and Time
- Putting it All Together

In each unit, students actively engage in mathematical reasoning to solve complex problems. They represent, explain, and justify their thinking using mathematical tools. *Illustrative Math* 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

The three overarching questions—*How are we connected to each other?*, *How are we connected to nature?*, and *How are we connected to the world?*—play a prominent role in the Grade 1 social studies curriculum. In the fall, students focus on establishing connections with friends in the classroom community. Through an interdisciplinary study of monarch butterflies, children examine their connection to the environment, learning about migration, life cycles, and how human actions affect nature. Field trips to area museums and national and state parks allow students to learn about the plants, animals, and insects that are native to the Washington, D.C. area.

During the second half of the year, Grade 1 children expand their awareness of the global community. After reading a variety of folktales from around the world, students focus their attention on West African *pourquoi* and trickster tales, such as the Anansi stories from Ghana. Children then learn about the rich culture and varied geography of Ghana. Throughout this study, children make connections between themselves and others through an exploration of stories, traditions, and family experiences.

In the spring, children continue to investigate connections as they delve into the questions *What is healthy eating?* and *Where does our food come from?* Children learn about the five food groups and the importance of a balanced diet. Then they begin to explore the origins of produce, noticing that some foods are grown locally and others come from around the world. They develop an understanding and appreciation of the farm-to-table process and use their expert knowledge to create games and books to teach younger students. Students enjoy visits to local working farms.

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 by utilizing an intentional combination of independent reading, small-group work, book clubs, interactive read-alouds, word study, and writing. In this integrated, literature-based curriculum, children read a variety of genres and explore the many connections among literature, writing, science, social studies, music, and art. Intentionally-designed activities encourage students to develop 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 stories integrates social studies and language arts.

Students engage in word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling instruction. Using a variety of developmentally appropriate resources, including *Words Their Way* and *Orton-Gillingham*, we have designed a word-study program that meets the needs of all of our learners. Children are flexibly grouped according to their 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 solidify their understanding of each concept. 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 writing mechanics. Students publish their writing in individual books and engage in various writing celebrations. In addition, cursive writing is introduced through the *Handwriting Without Tears* program.

MATHEMATICS

The core of the Grade 2 math program is the *Illustrative Math* curriculum. The big ideas in Grade 2 include: extending understanding of the base-ten number system, building fluency with addition and subtraction, using standard units of measure, and describing and analyzing shapes.

The Grade 2 *Illustrative Math* curriculum contains the following units:

- Adding, Subtracting, and Working with Data
- Adding and Subtracting within 100
- Measuring Length
- Addition and Subtraction on the Number Line
- Numbers to 1000
- Geometry, Time, and Money
- Adding and Subtracting within 1,000
- Equal Groups
- Putting it All Together

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. *Illustrative Math* provides meaningful, repeated practice of basic facts and skills through the use of activities and games. Each unit 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. Students then study the St. Patrick’s community. One aspect of this study is a focus on sustaining our current waste-reduction initiatives,

including recycling and composting. Students also study city planning and land use to explore the important elements that comprise a community. Local field trips help support students' understanding of community.

Also in the fall, students undertake a study of China through folktales, nonfiction books, videos, 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 Seven Chinese Sisters*, *The Seven Chinese Brothers*, *Cat and Rat*, *Sam and the Lucky Money*, *Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like*, *Eyes of the Dragon*, *The Boy Who Painted Dragons*, and *A Big Mooncake for Little Star*.

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, crafts, and field trips enhance the study of these cultures. Texts may include *Children of the Longhouse*, *The Rough-Faced Girl*, *Storm Boy*, *Frog Girl*, *Totem Pole*, *Tasunka*, and *Go Show the World*. Social studies is often integrated with art, technology, and music. The annual American Indians Culture Days is a culminating activity 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 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, sinking and floating, and conclude with a

study of the water cycle. Continuing with matter, children explore air and properties of gasses, dispelling misconceptions that air is not matter. Following investigations into the properties of gasses 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 the 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 *Lola Levine Is Not Mean* by Monica Brown.

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. Using a variety of developmentally appropriate resources, including *Words Their Way* and *Orton-Gillingham*, we have designed a word-study program that meets the needs of all of our learners. Children are flexibly grouped according to their 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.

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 units include a variety of genres such as personal narrative, fairy tales, realistic fiction, and biography essays. Writing is integrated into all subjects. Children publish their writing in individual books as well as class books. Grade 3 students practice and refine their cursive writing through the *Handwriting Without Tears* program and begin learning to type using the online *Typing Pal* program

MATHEMATICS

The core of the Grade 3 math program is the *Illustrative Math* curriculum. The big ideas in Grade 3 include: developing an understanding of multiplication and division and learning strategies for multiplication and division within 1000; developing an understanding of fractions, especially unit fractions (fractions with numerator 1); developing an understanding of the structure of rectangular arrays and of area; and describing and analyzing two-dimensional shapes.

The Grade 3 *Illustrative Math* curriculum contains the following units:

- Introducing Multiplication
- Area and Multiplication
- Wrapping up Addition and Subtraction within 1,000
- Relating Multiplication to Division
- Fractions as Numbers
- Measuring Length, Time, Liquid Volume, and Weight
- Two-dimensional Shapes and Perimeter
- Putting it All Together

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. *Illustrative Math* 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 *How do the geography and physical environment of a place affect the way people live?* and *What can we learn from the origins of our country?* The year begins with an interdisciplinary study of the United States. Using an inquiry-based approach, students embark on an independent research project. After learning some

background knowledge about the different regions of the United States and acquiring map skills to identify and label the states within each region, students then choose a state to research. A culminating interdisciplinary presentation showcases student learning for parents and adults in the school community.

Students spend the second trimester learning about the history and context surrounding the first permanent English settlement in the Mid-Atlantic region: Jamestown. Using perspective-taking as a framing tool throughout the unit, students examine a variety of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artifacts and write about and discuss what the artifacts reveal about life in the past. They learn about the effects of the settlement on the Native Powhatan people as well as the problems and hardships faced by the English and enslaved Africans. In addition, in order to understand the changes that occurred for members of all three groups, students learn about what life was like before 1607 in three locations: The Ndongo Kingdom of present-day Angola, the Powhatan Empire in present-day Virginia, and England. Students read a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts to develop their understanding, including *The Colonies: Voices in African-American History* from Modern Curriculum Press, *The 1619 Project: Born on the Water* by Nicole Hannah-Jones and Renee Watson, *Blood on the River* by Elisa Carbone, and *Powhatan Indians* by Suzanne Morgan Williams.

The spring trimester is enhanced by an interdisciplinary study of Washington, DC. We learn about how DC became the capital, address questions around statehood, think about the origins of DC's diverse and wide-ranging culture and natural environment, and discuss ways to become problem-solvers to address inequalities and social issues that exist in different parts of the city. We journey to Kingman and Heritage Islands in order to explore the Anacostia River ecosystem as part of this unit in coordination with the science department. By the end of the unit, students can answer the question: *What makes DC unique?*

In addition, students work on building community within their classrooms. In particular, we focus on the values shared in the St. Patrick's Creed and developing a sense of self-awareness and personal identity. As part of building this sense of community, students participate in two day-long field trips 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 launch pad, taking students through the major disciplines of science: Life science, physical science, and earth 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 in which they 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.

GRADE 4

LANGUAGE ARTS

The Grade 4 language arts program centers around the theme, *Growing Our Story: Looking In, Looking Out*. Knowing that the literature we read helps us to connect with the world, students see themselves through the lens of a good story. They also learn to appreciate more about the world outside of themselves by reading other people's stories with varying perspectives in a variety of genres. Developing an appreciation for the growing complexity of the books they read, students practice using comprehension strategies to monitor for understanding and to read for deeper meaning by observing story elements, including character change, drawing conclusions, making inferences, and identifying the “big ideas” (themes) that live beyond the book.

Across the year, students strengthen their fluency and comprehension by reading with intention independently and in small-group book discussions, and by actively listening and sharing ideas during whole-class read-alouds. They examine genres such as fantasy, realistic fiction, poetry, and historical fiction. Students also continue to develop skills necessary for reading nonfiction texts while becoming more adept in retelling, summarizing, and supporting their thinking with evidence from the text. In our realistic fiction study, students gain understanding by seeing how fictional characters deal with everyday problems. Understanding the importance of setting and building knowledge of historical world events guides our reading of historical fiction, in which the main character, often a child, is called on to accomplish heroic feats. Toward the end of the year, the students stretch their imaginations when reading fantasy. The fantasy world creates the desired distance needed to contemplate the

conflicts portraying the struggle of good versus evil; these conflicts help students to cross the bridge from literal to more abstract and figurative thinking.

The Grade 4 students have many opportunities to practice the conventions of writing and self-expression to enhance their written language skills as they work towards developing their voices. With an emphasis on descriptive and informational pieces (poems, a draft of the first chapter of their own fantasy novel, note taking, nonfiction research), students practice describing a topic using details. With their book responses, students further develop their ability to present their ideas clearly and, in some cases, to explain and analyze them. All projects involve students (1) setting a purpose and establishing background; (2) drafting; (3) rereading, reflecting, and revising; and (4) publishing their work. In addition to these individual writing projects, writing is integrated throughout the curriculum as students are frequently called upon to respond in writing to topics in math, science, and social studies.

We reinforce writing mechanics and grammar through explicit instruction and daily practice. Spelling continues to be a focus in Grade 4. Students begin by studying high-frequency words and then move on to study specific spelling patterns and rules as well as continuing the word study program *Words Their Way*. To encourage growth in vocabulary and verbal reasoning, students learn and review content-specific vocabulary words in related subject areas.

MATHEMATICS

The Grade 4 math program is built on the *Illustrative Math* curriculum. The big ideas in Grade 4 include: developing understanding and fluency with multi-digit multiplication, and developing understanding of dividing to find quotients involving multi-digit dividends; developing an understanding of fraction equivalence, addition and subtraction of fractions with like denominators, and multiplication of fractions by whole numbers; understanding that geometric figures can be analyzed and classified based on their properties, such as having parallel sides, perpendicular sides, particular angle measures, and symmetry.

The Grade 4 *Illustrative Math* curriculum contains the following units:

- Factors and Multiples
- Fraction Equivalence and Comparison
- Extending Operations to Fractions
- From Hundredths to Hundred-thousands
- Multiplicative Comparison and Measurement
- Multiplying and Dividing Multi-digit Numbers
- Angles and Angle Measurement
- Properties of Two-Dimensional Shapes
- Putting it All Together

SOCIAL STUDIES

The overarching theme of Grade 4 social studies is the exploration of the questions, *How do physical and social environments affect individuals and groups?* and *What does it mean to be a citizen not just locally, but nationally and globally, as well?* Students look critically at history, understand differences between primary and secondary sources, learn how to interrogate dominant narratives and concepts, and contextualize conflicting viewpoints. We explore these topics through examples of colonization, immigration, exclusion, power, and resistance from around the world, as well as issues related to stewardship of the natural world.

We begin the year with an introductory unit on geography. To grow student understanding of the impact geography has on our everyday lives, as well as the past, time is spent learning how to read maps and globes and to locate and describe different places. The knowledge and skills gained in this unit build the foundation for our study of endangered animals, during which students discuss the connectivity between the animal world, the environment, and human interaction with both. By researching a particular species to understand why it is endangered and what can be done to protect it, students are inspired to become stewards helping to keep our natural world healthy.

The Spring Trimester begins with a study of the three branches that make up the United States government. We end the year by exploring how immigration helped shape the landscape of the United States. Students read articles describing the push-pull factors that influenced why different groups chose, or were forced, to leave their homes and immigrate to America. They also read that not all groups received the same treatment or rights and that this led to oppression and injustices. By looking at how Mahatma Gandhi, Pauli Murray, Nelson Mandela, and others from around the world stood up to such wrongs, students are encouraged to think about how they can also find a voice in supporting causes they believe in.

SCIENCE

Experimentation, observation, analysis, and collaborative discussion drive the Grade 4 science experience. Science is an active discipline, and Grade 4 students are expected to be involved participants in a variety of activities that will ultimately enhance their scientific literacy. In the beginning of the year, students explore energy and change through first-hand experiences. Students investigate electromagnetic forces and useful applications of electromagnetism in everyday life through engineering design challenges. Students explore energy transfer through waves, repeating patterns of motion that result in sound and motion. In the Grade 4 environments unit, students study structures and behaviors of organisms and relationships between organisms and their environments. Understanding these relationships, students are prepared with the knowledge

and awareness of limits and how human behavior can change environments. Students explore a variety of organisms across the unit, conducting experiments, collecting data, and analyzing and interpreting results. Grade 4 students participate in a fish-hatching program to help restore populations of the American Shad in the Potomac River. Following the release of newly hatched American Shad, students explore river systems, erosion, and patterns of change over time.

GRADE 5

LANGUAGE ARTS

Reading, writing, speaking, and listening form the backbone of the Grade 5 language arts experience as students grow as active readers, confident writers, and critical thinkers. Literature selections reflect a wide variety of genres offering varying cultural and historical perspectives that provide students with opportunities to process text in many different ways. While writing is connected to reading through literature, students are encouraged to select topics about which they care about or have concern for and then to write within a given structure—narrative, informational, research-based persuasive essays, letters, memoirs, and more. Ongoing exposure and practice in vocabulary, grammar, and spelling serve to strengthen each student’s literacy skills.

Throughout the year, students read books from each of the genres—realistic fiction, biographies, nonfiction/informational, short stories, poetry—independently, in small groups (book clubs), and as a whole class. Independent reading and associated projects afford students opportunities to experience literature in a self-directed manner. Works read in class help students create a shared framework for analysis, encouraging them to become critical readers. Small groupings of students meet, providing a more intimate setting in which students and their teacher work together to comprehend a text *before*, *during*, and *after* reading. As close readers, students examine the elements of literature—character, setting, conflict, theme, and style. They seek to meet the demands of whatever they decide to read by practicing important reading strategies such as making predictions, determining importance, making inferences, and summarizing information. Through engagement with guided discussions, varied text, and explicit reading instruction, students think more effectively and with greater depth and insight.

An integral part of the curriculum in language arts, writing is embedded in all the academic subject areas, particularly social studies. In language arts, students have time and space to write about things that matter to them. They start the year with an emphasis on maintaining a writer’s notebook to record insights, observations, and anecdotes. In addition to a writer’s notebook, students keep a folder for drafts and mentor texts related to the

current unit of study. The writing folder may also contain checklists in which students self-assess their writing and create goal sheets. Using the process approach to writing, students learn the strategies they need to brainstorm ideas, draft, revise, edit, and publish. Explicit teaching of key characteristics of writing is a part of a writer's workshop where ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions are examined closely. Additional classwork focuses on the foundational skills, including handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, grammar, usage, and vocabulary. Creating a supportive classroom community of writers is a critical element in encouraging students to enjoy writing and expand their writing skills.

MATHEMATICS

The Grade 5 math program is built on the *Illustrative Math* curriculum. The big ideas in Grade 5 include: developing fluency with addition and subtraction of fractions, developing understanding of multiplication and division of fractions in limited cases (unit fractions divided by whole numbers and whole numbers divided by unit fractions), extending division to two-digit divisors, developing understanding of operations with decimals to hundredths, developing fluency with whole number and decimal operations, and developing understanding of volume.

The Grade 5 *Illustrative Math* curriculum contains the following units:

- Finding Volume
- Fractions as Quotients and Fraction Multiplication
- Multiplying and Dividing Fractions
- Wrapping up Multiplication and Division with Multi-digit Numbers
- Place Value Patterns and Decimal Operations
- More Decimal And Fraction Operations
- Shapes on the Coordinate Plane
- Putting it All Together

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Grade 5 social studies curriculum is built around the connections between culture, community and commerce. We examine aspects of all these in our three units of study.

The year begins with an exploration of food production, land use, and supply chain. Students examine how the basics of our economy work and look at modern problems that can interrupt or interfere with those processes. Field excursions include a trip to Camp Horizons where students examine food production and how sustainable agriculture and consumer input shape the industry.

Next, students will inquire into trade routes along the Silk Road and the Indian Ocean from around 800 to 1450 CE. This is a rich time period to explore how culture, customs, and traditions migrate and expand through commerce and gives

students a chance to explore parts of the world that can be left out of traditional units based around the Age of Exploration.

The highlight of the Grade 5 year is the Archeological Dig, a cooperative effort in which each homeroom develops a culture using the knowledge students have gained during the study of ancient civilizations. Students create all aspects of the culture, which are then represented by artifacts designed and constructed in class and later buried at the on-site Dig location. Students from another Grade 5 homeroom excavate the artifacts and analyze the created culture in an attempt to replicate the challenges and successes associated with a real archaeological excavation.

Throughout the year, students use atlases, maps, magazine articles, resources from the library, audio-visual materials, and field studies. Experiences include writing a research report about a topic of their own choosing, debating current events, inquiring into both modern and ancient practices in land use, architecture and design, and writing a research-based persuasive essay on the societal shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture.

SCIENCE

By Grade 5, students have become adept in their ability to frame questions about the world. These questions serve to initiate a process of discovery that culminates in a broader understanding of the earth, life, and physical sciences they encounter every day. Students enhance this understanding by developing and conducting original experiments and constructing and testing models. Students have the chance to explore the living and non-living characteristics of oceans. By studying our world's ocean systems, the organisms that inhabit them, and the environmental conditions that affect them, students develop a greater sense of responsibility for their world.

A large part of the year is devoted to exploring the physical properties that help shape our lives. The curriculum covers the fundamental principles behind motion as students study friction and Newton's laws of motion, force, and speed. In this unit, students design their own experiments to learn about the relationship between mass, force, and acceleration. Throughout their study, students hone their skills in data collection and analysis. The work enables students to see how some of the world's greatest inventions have resulted from understanding the basic principles of motion. Following the physics unit, students are introduced to the electromagnetic spectrum. They learn about the different types of electromagnetic radiation and the ways we utilize it. Later studies focus on visible light, the light spectrum, mixing light, and understanding why we see different colors. This unit culminates in several investigations involving the reflection, refraction, and absorption of light. Grade 5 students end their scientific studies learning about the earth science concept of plate tectonics and completing a design challenge.

Special-Subject Classes

SPANISH

Students begin a formal introduction to Spanish language and culture in PK, a study that continues throughout a student's time in the Lower School. 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, 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.

The five “C” goals of language acquisition, *Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities* guide our program. These five goals are achieved by communicating more effectively, learning to interact with cultural competency, making connections across disciplines and diverse perspectives, making comparisons of cultures studied and their own culture, and learning to participate in a multilingual global community.

We offer, in addition to the core program, a **Spanish for Heritage Speakers class**. Beginning in Grade 2, students who are heritage or native speakers or who have a strong connection to the language and culture and have a high level of language competency, are invited to participate in this class. Students meet once a cycle to engage in the study of the Spanish language and culture with an emphasis on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students progressively solidify their listening and speaking skills through guided conversation and full-immersion classes. They are also given multiple opportunities to experience the culture through shared conversation, field trips, and participation in the annual Café de Poetas event where they share the Hispanic literature and culture with the school community.

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 names, 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 and 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 of colors, shapes; they learn the days of the week, the month of the year, numbers 1 to 31, and vocabulary about transportation. Students also learn about farm animals, seasons, and fruits. 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 to talk about the weather, their classes, school, and community; they learn to describe themselves, their activities, sports and hobbies. Grade 3 students study some Hispanic cultures, with an emphasis on Mexican and Mayan cultures.

Students in **Grade 4** continue their study of Spanish language and culture. Maps are used to learn the names and locations of the 24 countries that comprise the Spanish-speaking world across four continents. Through conversations, activities, and the use of technology, students continue to build a working knowledge of the Spanish language. Students continue to learn everyday vocabulary and incorporate this vocabulary into conversations. Students learn to express likes and dislikes as they begin to form complete sentences. At the end of the year, students read a short graphic novel and then write their own graphic novel, a practice that supports and strengthens their understanding of how to ask questions, form proper grammatical structures, employ basic verb conjugations, and expand their vocabulary. Students learn about various traditions and customs in

the Spanish-speaking world and, by year's end, are able to express basic ideas in Spanish, both orally and in writing.

Students in Grade 5 continue to become familiar with speaking and listening while learning grammatical concepts and building on their existing vocabulary. Classes are multi-sensory and provide haptic, auditory, and visual input with the goal of helping students become confident in reading, writing, listening, and participating in conversations and discussions that employ the vocabulary learned in the course. Following a comprehensive review of the previous year, students embark on a more intensive Spanish course, which replaces English in the classroom. During the year, students have several oral presentations geared toward developing confidence in speaking Spanish and, at the end of the year, they read a short novel in Spanish, which provides multiple opportunities to use the language orally and in writing.

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, two each in Grades 2 and 3, and one each in Grades 4 and 5—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.

Learning specialists join many of the math classes in the Lower School to provide additional support for differentiation. The teaching pairs have latitude in determining how best to meet the needs of each group of children. Teachers use a 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 for students and the librarians to answer the following two essential questions:

1. What do books and information teach us about ourselves, each other, and the world?
2. How do wondering, investigating, and creating together help us grow as a community of readers, thinkers, friends, and citizens?

In the process of exploring the aforementioned questions, students strengthen their love of literature, develop an understanding of the value of reading, and strengthen their inquiry and research skills.

In the **Kindergarten through Grade 2** library program, students:

- learn about the parts of a book and how to take care of library books;
- learn strategies for finding a good book to read;
- learn what authors and illustrators do and where to find their names on books;
- learn how to read the pictures of a book, strengthening their visual literacy skills through the Whole Book Approach and the Visual Thinking Strategy;
- learn how to find books on the shelves and/or how to use the online catalog;
- learn about genres, characters, and settings;
- practice listening closely during read-alouds to retell their favorite parts of stories focusing on characters and setting;
- use the See-Think-Wonder process to strengthen their inquiry skills;
- learn how to use various online databases and how to find facts to share with others; and
- extend classroom learning with activities focused on Haiti and other social studies topics.

In the **Grade 3 through Grade 5** library program, students:

- gain independence with finding and checking out materials from the library;
- examine primary sources using the See-Think-Wonder routine;
- engage in inquiry-based research;
- extend classroom research using a variety of digital resources including databases, archives, and e-books;
- identify mirror books in which they see themselves and window books in which they understand the lives and perspectives of people with a variety of lived experiences;
- use online resources to help build knowledge and inspire curiosity;
- explore nonfiction formats and determine the use of each;

- develop information literacy and online safety skills;
- share their learning through a variety of media; and
- extend classroom learning with activities focused on Haiti and other social studies topics.

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 5, 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;
- develop healthy, critical, and balanced approaches to consuming media;
- 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, a child-friendly computer programming language 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.

RELIGION

Episcopal schools are created to be communities that honor, celebrate, and worship God as the center of life. They are created to be models of God’s love and grace. Episcopal schools have been established, however, not solely as communities for Christians, as parish churches are, but as ecumenical and diverse ministries of educational and human formation for people of all faiths and backgrounds. (National Association of Episcopal Schools)

Each week, Lower School students 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. During the year, every Grade 3 student has the opportunity to serve as an acolyte, Grade 4 and 5 students have the opportunity to

read lessons and prayers in Chapel. The Chaplain builds personal relationships with the students, reinforcing the underlying message of our religious education program.

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 classroom religious education at St. Patrick’s is to introduce students to important faith values, particularly as they are expressed in the teaching, worship, and history of the Episcopal Church and across the major world faith traditions. At the heart of the religion curriculum are the essential themes of compassion, covenant, and service, and central questions of *What is the nature of the world?*, *What is a spiritual life?*, and *What is my relationship to others and to God?* Once-a-cycle classroom lessons with the Lower School religion teacher encourage students to explore ideas freely, and engage with religious traditions from around the world, while providing an atmosphere that enables individuals to maintain and develop their own beliefs and personal values.

In **Kindergarten to Grade 3**, children learn about various faith traditions and celebrations from a range of cultures and religions, where classes often reflect back on the week’s Chapel themes. They also explore the meaning of the basic principles of honesty, responsibility, kindness, and respect that comprise the School Creed. Children also become familiar with the essential beliefs and practices of the Episcopal tradition, focusing on stories from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament through class discussion, role-playing, games, and hands-on projects.

The **Grade 4** curriculum is organized around the study of sacred spaces, symbols, and stories, beginning with those within our own families. The course begins with students sharing sacred family stories, exploring the sacred space of St. Patrick’s, and then finding their voices in that space. Again, students have the opportunity to reflect back on weekly Chapel themes. Through primarily student-led class discussions, art and art history, scripture readings, and hands-on projects, students then explore in more detail the six major world faiths: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism. Indeed, course discussions honor the variety of religious expressions among students themselves.

The **Grade 5** curriculum is organized around social justice. Students explore the ways in which history, the parables of Jesus, and sacred texts from the six major world faiths inform our understanding of serving others. Students explore how empathy, compassion, and justice can be fostered in the school community and the larger world. All students participate in our annual Gifts for Good alternative holiday gifts fair and hear from guest speakers from throughout the greater Washington area about what it takes to serve and uphold the dignity of every human being. Close reading and discussion of

scripture from different faith traditions, writing projects, and class discussions frame the subject matter and enhance the classroom experience. Ultimately, students will learn the essential link between faith and action. In order to undertake the more-intensive work of preparing for Gifts for Good, Grade 5 religion classes are held two times each cycle for the first half of the year.

COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR LOWER SCHOOL

Service opportunities provide a vital part of the curriculum. Serving others teaches students to move from their own world into the larger world to explore how important, fulfilling, and life-giving the experience of helping others can be. While service opportunities are numerous and varied, they all serve one purpose: To inspire a spirit of compassion and understanding, not only of oneself, but of those we serve.

Service activities have included:

- participating in the award-winning Salvation Army Grate Patrol program and Samaritan Ministry in which members of the St. Patrick's community prepare and distribute soup, sandwiches, toiletries, and snacks for people experiencing homelessness twice each month;
- conducting drives and fundraisers for our sister school in Haiti, St. Etienne (Hoops for Haiti, school supplies, scholarship sponsorships, underwear and socks, toiletries, prescription glasses), along with other relief efforts;
- making quilt squares for St. Peter's Love Quilt Project, which provides quilts to orphaned children in South Africa.
- collect donations at Christmas time for Bright Beginnings, a local charity which provides resources and services for children and parents experiencing economic instability.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ATHLETICS

Physical education classes are part of the regular program starting in Nursery through Grade 6. Grades 7 and 8 students are required to participate in a sport. The goal of the physical education program is to help children develop a love of and respect for physical movement and fitness. Within that goal is a continual emphasis on individual effort, team cooperation, and social awareness. Ultimately, students establish patterns and habits that allow each of them to have a physically active, healthy, and enjoyable lifestyle.

Lower School physical education classes center on five areas: body awareness, spatial awareness, locomotion

skills, manipulative skills, and social interaction. Activities are adjusted to include increasingly complex movement as students proceed through the grade levels. In addition, students take part in more formalized games and other activities that develop cardiovascular fitness, strength, and flexibility. Examples include field games such as football, soccer, and lacrosse as well as advanced manipulative skills such as juggling and intermediate gymnastics, and cardiovascular exercise such as running, jumping rope, and aerobics.

St. Patrick's offers students the chance to participate in seasonal instructional clinics and intramural team sports, including developmental lacrosse, soccer, and basketball, which are available to students in Grades 4 and 5.

HEALTH

We begin with formal Health classes for the first time in Grade 5. Many students begin to have questions about physical, emotional, and social changes they go through during puberty, and our curriculum is designed to help ease this transition. During these classes we cover changes that occur during puberty in both biological male and biological female bodies. We also discuss managing emotions, understanding and respecting personal boundaries, and exploring our identities and examining stereotypes related to gender expression. The lessons occur in a co-ed setting in both homeroom and science classes and the content is taught by a combination of our school counselors, nurses, and science teachers.

THE ARTS

Studio Art

The Lower School art program is designed to empower students with the skills of artists. We believe that creative expression is learnable and attainable. Building students' confidence in their artistic ability is central to the curriculum. Students become increasingly familiar with a broad range of materials and are provided with opportunities to create art with varying purposes. Children are encouraged to explore and experiment as they develop their confidence, and learn to reflect on, critique, and appreciate their own work and that of others. 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 students' skills of observation and perception while heightening their awareness of the elements of art and principles of design. Art history and a working art vocabulary are introduced at every opportunity. Subject matter is drawn from a variety of sources, including still life, nature, the work of other artists and cultures, classroom themes, set design, and personal experiences. Students expand their understanding of the connections art holds with many disciplines of study through integrated 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 techniques using materials including printmaking, paints, 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, Yayoi Kusama, and Andy Goldsworthy, and students create pieces 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 paints, clay, collage, charcoal, 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 Katsushika Hokusai, 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 visual and artistic 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. 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 Paul Klee, and focus on developing a deeper understanding of the color wheel and color mixing. As students become more comfortable with the tools of artists, the curriculum focuses on developing their ability to discuss artwork and the principles of design are introduced as a means of focusing conversations.

Grade 3 students continue their exploration and skill development with paint, pastels, printmaking, clay, 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 the fifty states, fairy tales, and biographies, while

others focus on thinking like an artist to develop each student’s own ideas. Students study American folk art and quilts from Gee’s Bend, learn about color theory in greater depth, and strive to communicate more clearly through the creation of symbols and a focus on compositional choices. Regular discussions about artwork, the use of techniques, the elements of art, and principles of design help to develop critical-thinking skills and artistic vocabulary.

The **Grade 4** curriculum further develops students’ observational skills, use of the elements of art, and proficiency with tools and materials. It integrates with classroom units such as geometry and the concept of journal-keeping. Students deepen their understanding of realistic work with a variety of drawing exercises as well as units on still-life and drawing geometric forms accurately. Students also study and complete projects related to the work of artists Andy Goldsworthy, Wassily Kandinsky, and Hilma af Klint, whose diverse styles and artistic perceptions inform students’ understanding of abstract work and expression. Students work with contour line, proportion, positive/negative space, color mixing, and the use of value to create light, shadow, and volume.

The **Grade 5** curriculum continues to reinforce the development of observational skills while refining students’ understanding of the elements of art and principles of design and use of these ideas to achieve personal expression. Longer projects are completed in a variety of materials with more advanced techniques introduced for each. Students behave like artists, practicing the thorough development of ideas and options for thoughtful execution using paint, ceramics, printmaking, and pen. Many units ask students to discuss and reflect on the compositional decisions artists make and how those decisions can communicate ideas and influence the viewer. Grade 5 students play with the concept of self-portrait, learning how to represent themselves realistically as well as experiment with showing aspects of personality in more abstract pieces. Units also connect with language arts and the Archeological Dig.

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 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. Music notation and reading become increasingly challenging in the upper elementary grades with the expectation that, as they transition to middle school, students will be fluent in writing and reading all the notes of the C, F, and G pentatonic scales on the treble staff. 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. A schoolwide highlight includes the Christmas Pageant.

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 Chapel honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and a culminating year-end interdisciplinary performance centered on the circus.

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. Students explore ways to bring folk tales from Ghana to life as a performance that connects to the Grade 1 West Africa unit. A Grade 1 highlight is participation in the Grades 1-7 Christmas Pageant for the first time.

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. A Grade 2 highlight is a performance connected with the study of poetry where each class creates a unique movement- and music-filled presentation inspired by a wide variety of well-known poems as well as original pieces created by the students.

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. Students gain familiarity with reading songs from a hymnal as they use this skill in several chapels a year. The study of early American folk music and dance is integrated with the language arts and social studies unit in the United States culminating in a grade-level performance.

The **Grade 4** curriculum continues to build on the music concepts of melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, and form through vocal exploration, instrument-playing, movement, improvisation, notation, and creation of elemental melodies, rhythms, and chants. Students increase their repertoire to include rounds, two-part songs, American folk music, and world music. Soprano recorder instruction continues with an emphasis on music-reading and improvisation. Students experience more complexity in their ensemble playing by adding multiple layered parts and exploring transposition.

The **Grade 5** curriculum continues to build on the music concepts of melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, and form through vocal exploration, instrument-playing, movement, improvisation, notation, and creation of elemental melodies, rhythms, and chants. Students continue to learn soprano recorder with an emphasis on increasingly difficult music-reading and improvisation. Using traditional drum-circle techniques, students create layered rhythmic patterns through rote learning as they respond to each other as an ensemble. The Winter Trimester encompasses musical and dramatic skills, collaborative work, and community-building skills as students create a full grade-level performance opportunity to be shared on stage. The students are responsible for making decisions about choreography, script, ensemble work, music arrangement, and staging. The final product is an arts-integrated performance accomplished with the support of their music, art, and homeroom teachers.

Performing Ensembles

The performing ensemble program offers both instrumental and choral opportunities for students in Grades 4 to 8. These ensembles provide instruction in advanced musical techniques, develop self-confidence through performance, and reinforce cooperative skills within an ensemble.

Grades 4 and 5: Orff Ensemble

The Orff Ensemble, open to students in Grades 4 and 5, develops necessary ensemble skills such as playing independent parts, appropriate mallet technique, and the ability to listen. Orff Schulwerk, as envisioned by composer Carl Orff, is a way to teach and learn music through singing, movement, and playing instruments. Our Orff Ensemble, which has grown out of this process, uses a variety of pitched and unpitched percussion instruments, including body percussion, xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiel, drums, and bass tubes. Performances for this ensemble include special Chapels and all scheduled school concerts.

Grades 5 and 6: Young Singers

The Young Singers of St. Patrick's consists of all Grade 5 students and Grade 6 students on an elective basis. Choir members are expected to make a commitment to attending all rehearsals, which occur during school hours, and to singing at all performances, several of which are outside school hours. Membership in the choir provides an exciting opportunity for students to develop good vocal techniques (sight-reading, ensemble, and choral literature skills), self-confidence through performance, friendships, and leadership skills.