



VIRGINIA BEACH FRIENDS SCHOOL

Knowledge. Character. Community.

LOWER SCHOOL CURRICULUM

First Grade

Math

The First Grade math curriculum utilizes the Singapore Math Program which fosters a deeper understanding of math by presenting concepts in a clear and sequential way: from concrete to pictorial to abstract. The program is designed to ensure that students feel comfortable and familiar with the arithmetic processes.

The First Grade math curriculum emphasizes developing proficiency in using whole numbers in computation. Students represent quantity with numbers, diagrams, models, and number sense. Mental math strategies, simple multiplying, division, fractions, time, money and measurement are introduced. Students are required to learn and use the specialized vocabulary of mathematics. Math facts are emphasized along with the development of strong problem-solving skills.

Language Arts

The First Grade Language Arts Program fosters meaningful reading and writing experiences that keep students engaged by effectively meeting their needs in different ways. Students have daily opportunities to read and write for a variety of purposes, reflect and respond, converse and collaborate with others and display confidence and clarity in what they believe to be true.

The Superkids Reading Program is an articulated core literacy curriculum taught from Kindergarten through 2nd grade. Built on scientific research and proven pedagogy, it combines rigorous instruction with highly motivating materials. Systematic, explicit instruction, decodable texts, and elements that motivate the students through fun and engaging Superkids characters create enthusiastic readers and writers.

Science

The First Grade Science Program is designed to create an environment that fosters inquisitiveness and utilizes the student's innate drive to use their senses to explore the world around them. Students are encouraged to ask 'what if', 'why', 'why not' as they perceive and interpret science from their unique vantage point. A variety of tools, including technology, are utilized as students build proficiency in and understanding of the scientific process.

STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) practices are integrated throughout the curriculum. Areas of specific study include, but is not limited to: the ocean, plants and animals, states of matter, the solar system, conservation, force and simple machines. Each

unit is explored in a variety of ways and incorporated into multiple disciplines as we strive to build and encourage confident independent students.

Social Studies

The First Grade Social Studies Program was created to foster an environment where students develop awareness and appreciation of themselves and others, recognizing their similarities and differences while maintaining respect for and acceptance of each other. The uniqueness of each student is celebrated as we learn and grow in our knowledge of other people and their diverse cultures.

The social studies curriculum is separated into units of study that include but is not limited to self-awareness, community, past/present/future, Native Americans, voting, holidays, monuments, the Presidents, Martin Luther King, Jr., Black History, the seven continents, careers, and outreach. Learning about ourselves, our attributes, and each other will not be limited to a unit but instead be an evolving process as we celebrate the diverse nature, customs and holidays of each student throughout the school year.

Second Grade

Math

The Second Grade math curriculum continues to build on the student's knowledge of basic mathematical concepts and skills, extending their number sense to include three-digit numbers. Our Singapore Math textbooks and workbooks use the concrete-pictorial-abstract approach to enable students to learn mathematics meaningfully. Students begin to use standard U.S. customary and metric units of measure. They create and interpret picture and bar graphs. Students work with patterns and geometry to develop a knowledge of equality by identifying missing numbers in addition and subtraction facts.

Language Arts

The Second Grade language arts curriculum continues to emphasize reading. Students are exposed to fiction and nonfiction selections, developing their comprehension, expression, and fluency. Students identify main ideas and make predictions in their selections. Students write stories, and letters, learning to edit their pieces as they apply grammatical principles to the writing process. Students use reference materials to locate information. Vocabulary development is taught and reinforced through read-aloud stories and poems, and classroom discussions.

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Science

The Second Grade Science Program fosters an understanding of science process skills. Students observe, measure, classify, infer, predict and communicate their findings. They are encouraged to ask questions about the world around them and then find ways to investigate these questions and explore answers. Our curriculum also integrates a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) component so that students may have many opportunities to solve real-world problems on a smaller scale.

The science curriculum focuses on developing the students' curiosity and critical thinking by providing information and many opportunities for observation, experimentation and the sharing of ideas. We study living systems through habitat exploration and analyzing the interdependence of living and nonliving things. The concepts of change are explored in states of matter, life cycles, weather patterns and seasonal effects on plants and animals.

Social Studies

Second Grade Social Studies is about people and their world. We begin by looking at the globe and world map to see the place where we live. We examine the earth's water and land formations. We choose a place to study. We study its geography and combine resources. We examine people who live there: their community, culture, adaptation, and beliefs. The children compare and contrast their family with a family from a different country. We recognize and study people that have made a difference. We relate economic concepts to daily life.

Third Grade

Math

The Third Grade Math Program consists of 13 units. The students are provided with the necessary learning experiences beginning with the concrete and pictorial stages, followed by the abstract stage to enable them to learn mathematics meaningfully. This series encourages active thinking processes, communication of mathematical ideas and problem-solving. Using the Singapore Math curriculum, students continue to hone their math skills.

Language Arts

The Third Grade Language Arts Program encourages students to interact with literature and informational text by comparing and contrasting stories, discussing characters and describing a series of events, ideas or concepts using both novels and the Junior Great Books series.

Along with their reading, students will be writing in a variety of genres, including narrative, informational and persuasive. Student's produce developed, focused, organized, and edited work through collaboration with peers and self-assessment.

Students' daily objectives include vocabulary lessons and an individual self-paced Word Study program.

Science

The Third Grade Science Program consists of 4 units: The Study of Cells and Classification of life, Animals and Adaptations, Electricity and Magnetism and Earth Science. The skills that are intended to define the “investigative” component and the understanding of the nature of science for all of the third-grade standards.

Students continue to develop a range of inquiry skills and achieve proficiency with those skills in the context of the concepts developed at the third grade, and continue to strengthen their understanding of the components of the units in science. Our curriculum integrates a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) component so that students may have many opportunities to solve real-world problems on a smaller scale.

Social Studies

The Third Grade Social Studies Program encourages students to develop map skills by identifying the physical features of the United States and the world. Third graders examine the role of ancient Greece and Rome in the formation of the United States government, military, and architecture. Additionally, students discuss economic choices and the use of money to purchase products. Students learn how cultures have specialized in producing specific goods. Students define a government and learn about the national, state and local governments of the United States, Virginia and our region. Third-grade students examine the exploration of the Americas and the colonization of the United States. They study the Revolutionary War and the formation of a new nation. Finally, third graders discuss the diverse ethnic origins, customs, and traditions of countries around the world.

Fourth Grade

Math

The Fourth Grade Math Program consists of 11 units. The students are provided with the necessary learning experiences beginning with the concrete and pictorial stages, followed by the abstract stage to enable them to learn mathematics meaningfully. This series encourages active thinking processes, communication of mathematical ideas and problem-solving utilizing the Singapore Math curriculum.

Language Arts

The Fourth Grade Language Arts Program emphasizes reading skillfully with meaning and purpose using appropriate comprehension and vocabulary strategies. Students read, discuss, reflect and respond, using evidence from text through various readings including the Junior Great Books Program. Their understanding and use of language introduce imagery to their writing. Students are more aware of the convention of writing as they reflect on their strengths and weakness and strive to improve. Students will develop and demonstrate command of the conventions of grammar and usage when reading, writing and listening.

Students’ daily objectives will include vocabulary lessons and an individual self-paced Word Study program.

Science

The Fourth Grade Science Program consists of 5 units: The Study of Cells and Classification of Life, Water as a Resource, Animals and Adaptations, Electricity and Magnetism and Earth Science. Students continue to develop a range of inquiry skills and achieve proficiency with those skills in the context of concepts developed in Third Grade, and continue to strengthen their understanding of the components of the units in science. Our curriculum integrates a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) component so that students may have many opportunities to solve real-world problems on a smaller scale.

Social Studies

The Fourth Grade Social Studies Program requires students demonstrate knowledge of the physical geography of the state of Virginia. The students analyze and interpret maps to explain land formations, water features and locate and describe the regions of Virginia. Students develop an understanding of the people native to Virginia both past and present day. Furthermore, fourth graders examine how the Native Americans adapted to their environment and climate. Students explore the English colonization of Virginia, the settlement of Jamestown and the interactions of the Native Americans with the English colonists. The fourth-grade student recognizes the reasons for the conflict between England and the colonies and studies the Revolutionary War. The roles that Virginians played in the Revolutionary War and the formation of the new nation and government are discussed. Students describe the Western Migration and the Civil War. Finally, fourth graders discuss Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws and Civil Rights in Virginia.

Fifth Grade

Math

The Fifth Grade Math Program consists of 15 units. Math is a language, and the acquisition of the specialized vocabulary associated with numbers and problem solving is crucial to a student's understanding of mathematics.

The fifth-grade student develops proficiency in using whole numbers, fractions and decimals to problem solve. Students learn to solve problems utilizing addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Rounding and estimation are strategies used to check for accuracy. The fifth-grade student develops skills in time, money, measurement, geometry, graphing, probability and algebra. The fifth-grade student develops a great understanding by interacting with manipulatives, exploration, and small group interactions through the Singapore Math curriculum.

Language Arts

The Fifth Grade Language Arts Program consists of the following components: reading, writing, vocabulary development, oral communication, and word study. The fifth-grade student, utilizing the Junior Great Books Program, reads a variety of texts, to include non-fiction, fiction and poetry. The student develops strategies/methods to interact too, analyze, summarize and infer from the text. Students draw inferences, conclusions or generalizations about text and support these with textual evidence and prior knowledge. Students can identify the literary

elements of character, plot, theme, and setting. Students develop critical thinking skills by asking questions, evaluating ideas for sense and evidence, comparing and weighing evidence, and presenting ideas logically and persuasively. Additionally, students, through oral discussion, support their ideas with relevant evidence, modify an argument based on a shared inquiry discussion, and generate clear concepts with a focus in response to questions.

The fifth-grade student will compose a variety of written pieces. The student will write a research paper, summaries, compare and contrast essays, descriptions, poetry, a persuasive essay, and a personal narrative. Additionally, students take notes about a story, write about story themes, and expand on ideas raised in discussion.

The fifth-grade student develops his/her understanding of new words and concepts by receiving direct and explicit vocabulary instruction. Students also participate in a word study program to further increase their knowledge of word patterns, spelling rules, and to understand and derive meaning from Greek and Latin roots. Students are assessed on an individual basis using a spelling inventory. Students are then identified and grouped according to their developmental spelling stage. Students progress through five distinct stages of word study: Emergent, Letter Name, Within Word Pattern, Syllable Juncture, and Derivational Relations.

Students' daily objectives include vocabulary lessons from Wordly Wise and an individual self-paced Word Study program.

Science

The Fifth Grade Science Program stresses the importance of a variety of hands-on investigations to study earth, life, and physical sciences. Students use science skills to explore the world around them. Science skills learned in preceding grades including questioning, using and validating evidence, and systematic experimentation, are reinforced at this level.

The importance of selecting appropriate instruments for measuring and recording observations is also emphasized. The organization, analysis, and application of data continue to be an important focus of classroom inquiry. Students are introduced to more detailed scientific concepts and the tools used for studying them are expected to apply their knowledge in experiments and investigations. Our curriculum integrates a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) component so that students may have many opportunities to solve real-world problems on a smaller scale.

Social Studies

The Fifth Grade Social Studies student demonstrates knowledge of the physical geography of the United States. Students analyze and interpret maps to explain land formations, water features, as well as locate and describe the regions of the United States. Students develop an understanding of ancient civilizations and people native to the Americas. Students explore the European colonization of the United States beginning in 1565. Fifth graders evaluate the motives and accomplishments of the Spanish, Portuguese, French and English explorers. Students study the colonization of the United States. They identify the early English Colonies, New England Colonies, Middle Colonies, and Southern Colonies

The fifth-grade student recognizes the reasons for the conflict between England and the colonies. They study the Revolutionary War and discuss important events of 1775 and the

writing and signing of the Declaration of Independence. Students discuss the formation of the new nation and government, define the Constitution and compare Federalist and Anti-Federalist views of government. Students will describe the events leading up to the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, and Westward Expansion. Fifth graders examine the industrialized North and the agricultural South conflicts and the compromises leading up to Civil War. Students study the Civil War from secession to the end of the war. Student examines Lincoln's plan to reunite the North and South.

Lower School Spanish

The objectives of the Virginia Beach Friends School Spanish program are to provide our students with the essential tools needed to learn and recognize simple vocabulary words, produce writing and learn to use new words to communicate. As students rise in grade their language skills increase in complexity. Cultural awareness and understanding comprise a large part of the Spanish Program. Students are exposed to different customs and holidays throughout the world.

Lower School Music/Performing Arts

The Lower School Music Program offers students the opportunity for individual exploration as well as collaborative achievements. The Program's goal is to develop a love and respect for music so that it becomes a permanent and enjoyable part of students' lives. Students appreciate different genres of music such as jazz, classical, folk, and reggae with an emphasis on world rhythms. Instruction in vocal technique, singing, pitch perception, and basic notation of beat and rhythm and are encouraged to improvise and create original lyrics and composition. Our students experience life's musical elements in a musically and visually rich environment; Hands-on experience is an essential element in the learning process. First through fifth-grade students are offered sequential instruction on Orff instruments, African drums, steel pan, and keyboard. Fourth and fifth-grade students also receive instruction on recorders. Classes are designed to accommodate various learning styles and skill levels. Students share their talents with the community throughout the year, and they participate in Winter, and Spring performances.

Lower School Visual Arts

Lower School students are introduced to the Art studio as their creative workspace. They learn about the value and importance of respect for both personal spaces and in safety in a workplace. They gain a new respect for the value of their own creativity as they come in contact with the new space.

By actively engaging directly with the materials and medium in their raw forms students are building a strong technical vocabulary. With the thorough demonstration of materials, they learn what is available to them. Students learn about the safe handling, use, and care of materials while building new vocabulary of technique through multiple media and original work.