

Educational Program Overview

Our program provides opportunities and experiences for all students to master the county and state-required skills and competencies while focusing on each child's individual needs, differences, development and learning styles. We are committed to having a small class size, which affords the teacher and teacher assistants the time and energy to individualize instruction, as well as perform regular observational assessments.

The Sunshine State Standards and Orange County Benchmarks are used as the foundation for curriculum development and student advancement. We use a variety of major publishers for textbooks and other classroom resources: *Houghton Mifflin Reading*, *Harcourt Science and Social Studies*, *McGraw Hill Science (5th Grade only)*, *The Wright Group Mathematics*, *Zaner-Bloser Writing*, *Scholastic Phonics* & *The Wright Group DLM-Early Childhood Express (Pre-K)*. These sources are supplemented with a variety of additional teacher resources and hands-on games and manipulatives.

Students are taught through a thematic, "hands-on" approach to learning that includes a balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities in a risk-free environment. Students are encouraged to voice their ideas and opinions while becoming problem solvers and critical/creative thinkers. Students also learn about God's love through a daily Christian Education curriculum and weekly Chapel sessions.

All of our students and teachers work closely together in a Multi-Age setting. Students work and play alongside classmates of varying skill levels and stages of development. The Multi-Age concept has widely been accepted as an authentic representation of community living.

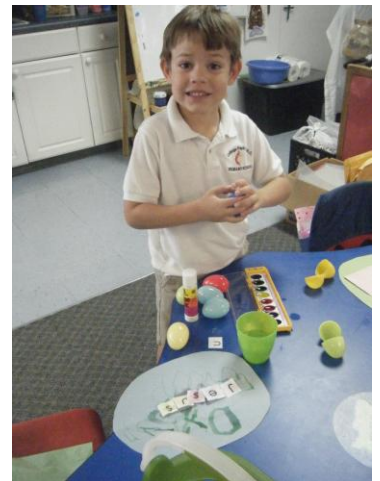


Core Curriculum Hours

8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Our school day runs a bit longer than many other schools because:

- Our program is based on hands-on learning, projects, and field trips with a balance of teacher-directed and student-initiated activities. This approach to learning requires more time than a typical school's approach to teaching, which is primarily teacher-directed, with an emphasis on "book work" and testing, rather than experiential learning; which we believe fosters long-term retention.
- Students receive at least 30 minutes of PE/Recess per day.
- Students are allotted a morning snack period to relax and replenish their energy.
- Students are allotted a 30-minute lunch period.





Advantages of Multi-Age

- It allows for flexibility in the grouping of children according to need, ability or interest; not just by age.
- Problems associated with yearly transitions from one grade to another can be overcome more quickly.
- As the student-teacher-parent relationship develops over a longer period of time, students will receive greater support for their success in school.
- Children work at their own pace. Their program is not geared to the work of a single year but can be adjusted over two or more years.
- Older children benefit from the quality of leadership and responsibility they develop by working with younger children
- Younger children are often stimulated intellectually by the older children.
- Children have a broader social experience with increased opportunities to lead and to follow, to collaborate and to develop stable peer relationships.

Standardized Testing

The Primary School's Philosophy of Education does not lend itself to standardized testing. The FCAT is based on the Sunshine State Standards. Our program is also based on the Sunshine State Standards and our students must master those standards in order to be promoted to the next grade level. However, we do not base the mastery of skills on one test alone. Children's mastery of standards are based on tests, homework, in-class assignments, passive observation and projects, collectively.

After-School Enrichment Program

Our school offers parents a quality After-School Enrichment Program. This is a time for students to relax, socialize, play and continue the learning process through scheduled activities. We offer a low student to teacher ratio and a daily schedule. This gives students a sense of security and predictability and gives teachers the structure needed to run a safe and effective after-school program.

2nd-5th Grade students are allotted a 30-minute Study Hall after school to work on independent homework assignments. These students still require a parent to check over their work each evening. Afternoon Teachers are there to supervise and manage student behavior and answer basic questions. These teachers are not expected to tutor students or check their homework for correct answers.

Kindergarten and 1st Grade students are not yet independent learners and require parental assistance on assignments; therefore, homework must be completed at home with a parent or guardian. The purpose of homework at this stage is to acclimate students and parents to setting aside time each evening for homework, projects and study time.



Spanish Instruction

Pre-K through 5th Grade students attend Spanish Language classes twice each week. Research shows us that this is the prime age to learn a second language. Through music, art, movement and other creative activities, students are taught the language. Students, also, participate in a Cinco de Mayo Fiesta each year.



Parent Teacher Organization PTO

The Primary School administration, teachers and parents are passionate about working together for the benefit of our students. The PTO meets one Thursday each month from 6:15-7:15 to collaborate on fundraising and family fun activities. The PTO hosts an annual festival, collects box tops, publishes a yearbook and sponsors various other activities.



Field Trips

To promote “real world learning”, each class schedules several field trips throughout the school year, as a part of basic curriculum activities. Students have the opportunity to experience hands-on learning within a natural context, fostering long-term retention of new concepts and ideas and recognizing different learning styles.

