

WELCOME TO LOWER SCHOOL!

The Lower School at Seattle Country Day School is committed to viewing each child in their social, emotional, and academic wholeness. Our talented educators deeply understand and nurture the unique characteristics of gifted children. We believe that each child develops at their own pace intellectually, creatively, socially, physically, and emotionally. While honoring each child's curiosity, we help them develop and apply skills that demonstrate understanding, respect, and self-confidence. Academically, emphasis is placed on enrichment designed to broaden conceptual understanding, rather than acceleration. Children who are ready to take academic, creative, and cognitive leaps find the support and encouragement they need.



HOW WE TEACH

The Lower School at Seattle Country Day School creates learning opportunities that encourage children to develop divergent critical-thinking abilities and personal problem-solving strategies. We celebrate spontaneous discoveries as children begin to develop higher-level thinking skills through inquiry and open-ended questions. Our enriched classes allow for the expansion of topics into meaningful interdisciplinary experiences. We use methods that encourage children to learn creatively through real-world application and hands-on exploration with manipulatives.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

In balance with academic growth, the Lower School also strives to develop the social and emotional skill set of each student to support an interconnected school community. We concern ourselves with intrapersonal as well as the interpersonal skills, so that each student is able to maintain personal emotional health as well as engage with peers in a positive and productive manner.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Lower School comes together for Community Service projects four times each year. Students care for a local park in partnership with the City of Seattle, as well as hear from local community service leaders. Outside speakers visit the school to share personal examples of community service and share how our children can help. Small action projects such as making crafting kits for Children's Hospital or hygiene packs for a local shelter are also common.

HOMEWORK

Seattle Country Day School does not believe in using a large amount of homework as a learning tool. We find that our students are so focused and engaged that they often need a break at the end of the long school day. We also wish to leave room for outside-of-school activities. As children progress through the Lower School, meaningful tasks or projects may be sent home intermittently or on a regular basis but they are meant to cement concepts from the classroom and should not be a burden on home life. Reading as a shared and independent experience is always a valid experience at home and should be encouraged most days.

FIELD TRIPS AND OUTSIDE EXPERIENCES

Leaving the classroom and spending time in the wider community is an integral part of the Lower School experience. On their journey through Lower School, students may visit the Children's Theatre, the Zoo, Golden Gardens Beach, Pike Place Market, the Pumpkin Patch, North Station Recycling Center, and as part of our Winterim program students can ski and ice-skate.

LANGUAGE ARTS

The focus of the Lower School language arts program is the study of the interrelated processes of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Children are immersed daily in a wide variety of literacy experiences to help them develop a love of language and passion for language. A balance of explicit teaching of skills and inquiry is used to give the students the skills needed to express themselves and the space to be creative.

K

Literacy experiences include literature appreciation, reading strategies and skills (including phonemic awareness and phonics skills), beginning writing and spelling skills, and oral communication.

1

The literacy experiences center around four main areas of study: literature - reading strategies and skills; phonemic awareness - letter and sound associations; writing - appropriate writing skills including handwriting; and oral communication - listening, speaking and performance skills.

2

Through the use of children's literature, students develop comprehension, vocabulary, decoding, and phonics skills. Students discuss reasons for reading and writing, and craft oral and written responses to literature. Our program uses a Writer's Workshop approach in which students draft, proofread, peer conference, edit with an adult, and publish through peer presentation. In reading, students practice skills that help them acquire a deeper understanding of texts, grasp inferences, and make deductions. We also study words and spelling in our *Spelling Connections* scheme.

3

Our language arts program in third grade is literature-based. Within each literature text, we will examine literal and interpretive comprehension, vocabulary, and composition. Writer's Workshop is also an important component of the third-grade language arts program. Writer's Workshop is a comprehensive writing program that enables the student to become both an author and a critic. It builds confidence and reinforces writing skills through the stages of writing: drafting, proof reading, peer conferencing, revising, meeting with an adult, and publishing.

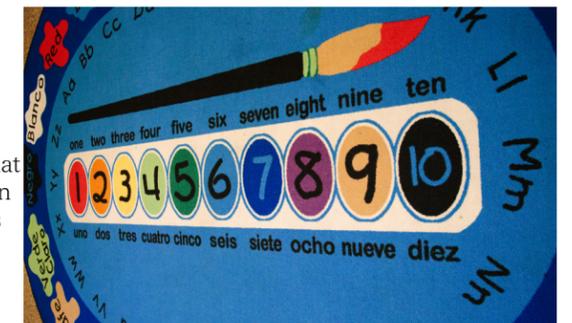


LIBRARY

The Seattle Country Day School Library is a resource for our whole community. Students have one dedicated library session per week, but many also visit the Library before and after school or during the recess period. The most common themes in library class are exploration, comparison, evaluation, and appreciation of literature in a variety of forms, both fiction and non-fiction. Each week, the students are provided time to browse through the collection and check out books and other media.

SPANISH

The goal of Spanish is to emphasize the study of the Spanish language as well as the study of the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries. The majority of classes are conducted in Spanish, and often connect with what is happening in homeroom classes in the school. Our curriculum includes a focus on speaking and listening, along with reading and writing.



MATH

The goal of the lower school math program is to instill a feeling of joy for mathematics whilst guiding students through concrete experiences toward developing a solid conceptual foundation. Accuracy with basic arithmetic skills and an appreciation of patterns and relationships is fundamental to our program.

K The goal of the math program is to encourage discovery and to develop an understanding of mathematical patterns and concepts through the use of concrete materials. Students’ understanding of concepts progresses from free exploration to working at a connecting level with symbols, and finally to working with equations at an abstract level. Areas of study include: the calendar, patterning, graphing, symmetry, place value, geometry, number sense, problem solving, measurements, and equations.

1 The program is designed to help young children see relationships and interconnections in mathematics and to enable them to deal with mathematical ideas and concepts. Children are encouraged to question, investigate, hypothesize, discover and communicate their findings. Areas of study include: estimation, counting, graphing, writing numbers, computation strategies, patterning, problem solving, time, money, place value, measurements, fractions, and geometry. Working with puzzles is a key part of the first-grade program.

2 Students encounter an in-depth math program that encourages flexibility, accuracy, and efficiency. Our multidimensional students work through a spiraling curriculum that touches on topics several times during the year. Second graders explore place value and number concepts, multi-digit addition and subtraction, time, temperature, money, graphing, problem solving, fractions, multiplication, and division.

3 At this level we apply prior knowledge, and construct new knowledge, through hands-on, exploratory and open-ended activities. Key elements include exploration of ancient number systems, base counting, multiplication, division, geometry, and fractions. Problem solving is a constant theme throughout the year.

MATH EXPLORATIONS AND ENRICHMENT offer students meaningful, hands-on mathematical experiences. Math Explorations focuses on the inspirational aspects of math. We examine the beauty of fractals, how Fibonacci numbers are found in nature, how a piece of graph paper turns into a work of art using patterns, and how hexaflexagons and hexahexaflexagons work. We explore engineering concepts by building with blocks, popsicle sticks and Klikkos, and even have cantilevering challenges.

SCIENCE

K Salmon life cycle
Beginning science process skills
Materials and Interactions
Seed Germination and Plant Growth

1 Properties, Grouping and Serial Ordering
Electrical Interaction
Bats
Gear and Pulley Systems
Chemical Interaction
Magnetic Interaction
Life Cycle of Living Organisms

2 Leaves and Trees
Weather
Birds
Rocks and Minerals

3 Worm Bin Ecosystem
Slime Investigation
Classification
Astronomy and Rocketry
Flight and Air Pressure
Simple Machines

SOCIAL STUDIES

K Self-esteem and friendship skills
Holiday Celebrations from around the world
Pacific Northwest Coast Native American culture
Community Service
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other historical figures
Celebration of families and parents

1 Native Americans
Explorers
The Pilgrims and Pioneers
Cultural Heritage and Culture Feast

2 Map Skills
Landforms
Economics
Communities
The 50 States

3 Critical Literacy skills and Civil Discourse
Schools through time
Maps
Current Events
My Head of School Candidate
Learning to Read History

TECHNOLOGY



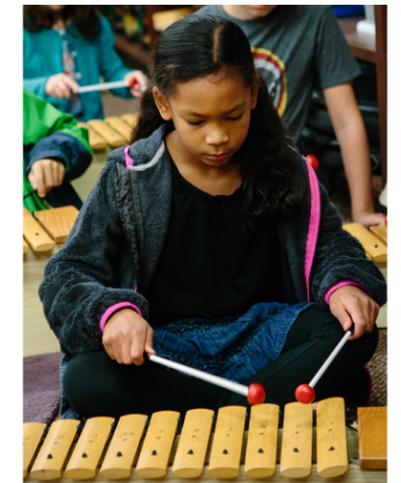
The technology program capitalizes on enthusiasm and encouraging our students to be creators of new ideas and knowledge, rather than just consumers of information. Activities and projects are open-ended to allow each student to work at an appropriate level and pace to develop divergent and critical thinking skills in relation to technology. Throughout the Lower School, students use basic operations and concepts, productivity tools, various communication tools, programming, consider the ethical and responsible use of technology, and work with maker cultural literacy.

ART

Artists take inspiration from nature, well-known artists, stories, classroom studies, and their own imaginations. The art experiences promote learning about materials through experimentation, sharing ideas among classmates, taking risks with their work, and above all, enjoying the process of making art and making visible their singular ideas.



MUSIC



The goal of music is to develop a love and understanding of music. Students discover concepts and musical styles through movement, play, instruments, singing, and listening. Rhythmic and melodic concepts are introduced as children progress through the Lower School. Musical productions occur in second and third grade.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION



The goal of the Physical Education program is to enhance skills, coordination, physical fitness, and improve self-confidence for a lifetime of health and wellness. This is achieved through movement, exercise, and organized game activities. All movement experiences will provide opportunities for the development of positive personal and social behaviors as well as sportsmanship.

HEALTH

The goal of Health is for students to develop patterns of behavior that promote healthy living physically, mentally, and socially. Social and Emotional Learning is an important component of Health class where students are explicitly taught social skills and emotional regulation.