

Oxford Preparatory School Lower School Curriculum 2024-2025

Lower School Curriculum Philosophy

In the Lower School, we believe a child's path to college begins when their educational journey in kindergarten. We want students to develop ownership of their learning and take responsibility for completing their work, while developing a love of learning that lasts a lifetime. We hold all students to high academic expectations and encourage family involvement in our community. We want our classroom to be challenging, joyful places where students feel that they belong and are encouraged to develop their intellectual interests and passions.

Kindergarten through 2nd Grade

Our Kindergarten through 2nd grade students receive the majority of their instruction from their homeroom teacher. Students receive instruction in Math, Reading, Writing, Social Studies and Science. The focus at this level is developing literacy skills and oftentimes subjects are integrated with assignments and projects. Our classrooms provide whole group instruction focused on the mastery of North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Teachers regularly pull students in small groups to reinforce skills at an individualized level.

Our classrooms use the Letterland curriculum program to introduce letters and sounds to students. Classrooms also put an emphasis on the importance of phonemic awareness with daily oral practice in sound manipulation. In addition, our students interact with decodable text as well as leveled readers. We believe that students need to be reading text and be read to everyday. Grade level uses a provided reading list, ensuring students are exposed to a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts.

In math, we believe students learn best through using manipulatives and structured curriculum. Our K-2 teachers use resources from Eureka Math Squared and supplemental sources that develop student conceptual and problem solving skills. Teachers regularly conference with students during math instruction so we can get in their heads and develop student numeracy skills.

We believe hands-on learning and field trips enhance student learning and encourage teachers to plan and execute students' experiences throughout the year.

3rd Grade through 6th Grade Curriculum

Our 3rd through 6th grade students have 3 core academic teachers - one for English / Language Arts, one for mathematics instruction and one for Social Studies and Science instruction. Students are grouped to allow for differentiated approaches to take place to meet unique learning needs, including acceleration and remediation as needed. All grade levels teach North Carolina Standard Course of Study Standards and use curriculum resources to support learning goals. Teachers are encouraged to integrate authentic texts and novels throughout the curriculum.

For math, teachers use Eureka Math Squared materials, along with hands-on supplements to develop students' math knowledge. We believe students need to grasp algorithms as well as develop strategies to approach problem solving. The teachers utilize online resources and math games to help provide students with opportunities to develop and practice their math skills.

In Social Studies and Science, these are the grade levels where students begin to develop their core knowledge of scientific concepts and begin to develop their understanding of history and the world around

them. Hands-on exploration in areas of the students' choice are encouraged to make content materials relevant to their lives. Teachers use a variety of primary and secondary sources, along with curriculum materials from Learned Notebooks and Studies Weekly, to provide students quality instructional materials.

Specials Classes

All students in grades Kindergarten through 5th Grade take one special class daily. Special classes at the Elementary level include Music, Spanish, Art and Physical Education. The goal of the special class is to provide opportunities for students to develop mastery of skills outside of the traditional classroom environment. Teachers use the North Carolina standards in these areas to craft unique lessons to meet the needs of students. Students are not given a numeric grade in these classes, but assessed on a scale of 1-4. Beginning in 6th grade, students attend the same special class for an entire quarter and receive an academic grade in the subject area to support the transition to the Upper School of having grades in all classes.

Honor Code

Each student in the Lower School is asked to sign the Honor Code each year, where they agree to respect members of the community and be leaders. We expect students to Choose the Hard Right over the Easy Wrong. We teach students to take personal responsibility for their actions and how their actions impact others.

Read to Achieve (Grade 3-4)

Read to Achieve is a North Carolina legislative act that states: All students must be proficient readers by the end of third grade. In other words, your child must read on a third grade level to be promoted to the fourth grade. Students who are not proficient readers by the end of third grade must be given extra support. Students in 3rd grade will take a BOG (Beginning of Grade) test in reading during the 1st 3 weeks of 3rd grade. During the year, students will develop a reading portfolio where they will be able to demonstrate their mastery of reading standards. At the end of the 3rd grade year, students will take the EOG in reading and have the opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency on alternative assessments as well. Students not proficient at the end of the year will be invited to attend a Read to Achieve Summer Camp.

Homework Policy

The Lower School believes that homework is an important part of the school experience and helps connect the learning going on in the classroom to the home environment. Key Beliefs that drive homework at the Lower School:

- Reading at home builds strong foundational skills and helps cultivate a love of literature
- Spelling and Vocabulary word helps students learn how to study over time.
- Practicing math problems helps students develop fluency and accuracy in their calculation skills.
- Having students use creativity to demonstrate their knowledge in projects helps deepen student learning.

Homework is assigned in all grade levels nightly from Monday through Thursday. Some projects may be assigned over weekends. No homework or assignments are given over the breaks from school.

Cursive Writing / Multiplication Tables

Students are given instruction in their multiplication tables and expected to master by the end of 3rd grade. Students will be given access to a curriculum to learn cursive writing. All students should be able to produce a piece of cursive writing by the end of 5th grade.