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Curriculum Statement

Head of School, working with the administration staff, is responsible for designing the school curriculum within the guidelines of the school's philosophy and objectives.

The ACS Cobham curriculum is based on American educational aims and therefore uses sanctioned materials (textbooks and teachers' guides) from the United States. These materials are created by major US educational publishers who work from very strict guidelines set by the State Department of Education. Our materials and curriculum reflect those used in the accredited independent schools in the US, thus allowing our students admission into the American system of higher education (universities and colleges).

We add to the core curriculum by taking the circumstances of our international student body and its particular situation into account. We create appropriate goals and related activities in order to meet specific needs of our students who are not involved in the core programme (ie International Baccalaureate).

It is the responsibility of the Head of School and his designated assistants (Principals) to develop an on-going programme of curriculum development to ensure that the school curriculum is up-to-date in its course offerings, textbook selection, university admission requirements and teacher training.

Statement of Philosophy

ACS International Schools is:

- A dynamic educational community made up of international students, teachers, supporting staff and parents
- Accredited by The New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

We offer:

- A secular, American based curriculum for students aged 2 to 18
- An American High School Diploma
- The International Baccalaureate Diploma
- Advanced Placement courses.

The success of our programme is based on:

- Teamwork, collaboration, and the broad participation of our community
- The pool of diverse ideas, experiences, and values which our community offers through the involvement of each individual
- A thorough awareness of educational programmes throughout the world
- Continuous learning and professional development.

We provide:

- Each student with the opportunity and support to reach their full potential
- Each family with effective guidance to pursue the next step in each student's formal education.

We believe that:

- All students can learn and each is a unique individual with equal potential to make a positive contribution to our school community
- It is important to instill an enthusiasm for life-long learning in each student along with the skills necessary to prepare for the challenges and changes which will be faced in their future
- Our students must develop the skills and understanding that will enable them to become responsible, contributing citizens of the global community
- Physical activity, a healthy diet, and well-informed decision-making are important for a healthy lifestyle
- Self expression is enhanced through the development of aesthetic appreciation.

We support our philosophy through:

- High standards of achievement and performance
- A developmental, student-centred approach to teaching
- A comprehensive and varied curriculum aimed at understanding
- A constructivist approach to learning and understanding through the development of critical and creative thinking skills
- Independent learning skills and self-reflection in the learning process
- Constructive feedback for learning
- Nurturing a strong sense of self-esteem, personal integrity, and a respectful, caring attitude toward others
- Developing an understanding of, and appreciation for, the philosophies of people from many different cultures
- Facing problems within a framework of fairness and shared values
- Nurturing a sense of responsibility for our environment
- Encouraging participation in fine arts through a variety of fine arts opportunities
- Teaching the principles associated with healthy living and encouraging participation in physical activity.

Lower School Statement of Philosophy

The Lower School teachers work together to provide a stimulating and positive environment in which children learn, grow and appreciate cultural diversities.

We believe in an inquiry-based approach to the process of learning that emphasises creative and critical thinking.

We recognise and address the broad range of developmental needs of children aged 6 to 10 years. We support these needs by assisting students in the transition from Early Childhood to Lower School, encouraging positive social interaction with peers and providing opportunities for students to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for life-long learning and successful social interactions.

We value the importance of maintaining close communications with families to promote the development of the whole child.

Introduction

In keeping with the school's stated philosophy, developing the whole child continues through Lower School.

Our programme encourages continuous learning. It teaches students to develop the fundamental skills necessary for independent learning and successful problem solving. Teachers provide learning experiences which are appropriate to a student's age, learning readiness and stage of development. We take a developmental, student-centred approach to instruction that capitalises on each student's strengths and supports each student's weaknesses. The school fosters a warm, caring learning environment with freedom of expression and respect for others as key elements.

The academic programme consists of four core subjects: Language Arts – Reading and Writing; Mathematics; Science and Social Studies. Special subjects taught by specialists consist of Art, Music, Computers, Physical Education, French, Library, Dance and Movement, and People Skills.

We provide additional support for children who are learning English as an additional language. The Lower School resource teachers offer a collaborative, team-based approach to design and implement modifications that support student learning.

This curriculum provides an overview of the subjects studied at each grade level and gives information on the content of each course. The following table relates your child's age to our grade levels.

Age	Entry Grade
6-7 yrs	1 st Grade
7-8 yrs	2 nd Grade
8-9 yrs	3 rd Grade
9-10 yrs	4 th Grade

1st-4th Grade Language Arts Overview

The Lower School Language Arts programme focuses on students acquiring the skills to read, write, speak and listen well, and to examine and process information using these interrelated skills. The programme is based on standards and benchmarks set by National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the International Reading Association (IRA) and Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL).

The Language Arts curriculum delivered in 1st through 4th Grade is developmentally appropriate for each grade level and incorporates the components of a balanced literacy programme. These include daily or weekly blocks of reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, shared writing, interactive writing, writing workshop minilessons and independent writing. Lower School teachers use a variety of formal and informal assessments to ascertain strengths and instructional goals for all students in the class. The Bonnie Campbell Hill Reading Continuum, which is included in the 2nd and 4th quarter report cards, also serves as a helpful tool for teachers to track individuals' progress in reading. Teachers follow the reading workshop and writing workshop models of instruction. They design and teach whole-class reading and writing units which target the needs of the class, enabling them to provide appropriate instruction and support to small groups of students and individuals.

Reading Workshop

Reading workshop is a teaching method used to foster independence, interest, and a desire to read. It is done through the use of mini-lessons which, in the beginning of the year, help students to find books at their "just right" level and progress to specific strategies for reading. While students are independently reading, they are also actively engaged in their book. They are, for example, looking for connections, making predictions, and inferring. They are not simply reading, but thinking and interpreting. Teachers are conferencing with students, holding small group lessons and having book talks. All of these components allow for a differentiated and individualised reading experience for all students. At the end of the period, students might summarise their thinking in a written response. The class comes back together as a group to share and discuss selection, thoughts, questions, connections, confusion, etc. with their peers thus informing the teacher's decisions about future instructional needs.

Writing Workshop

Writing workshop is implemented in 1st through 4th Grade classrooms, which allows continuity of the routines and structures of this instructional method. During writing workshop, students spend most of their time writing after a brief instructional minilesson. As in reading workshop, the class comes back together at the end of each session to share what they have learned or to read aloud some of their writing. Over time, students learn to choose their own topics and to manage their own development as they work through a wide variety of writing projects in a sustained and self-directed manner. In writing workshop classrooms, full class lessons are short and tightly focused. As in professional writing workshops, emphasis is placed on sharing work with the class, on peer conferencing and editing, and on the collection of a wide variety of work in a writing folder, and eventually in a portfolio. Teachers often write with their students and share their own work as well. The workshop setting encourages students to think of themselves as writers, and to take their writing seriously.

Spelling/ Word Study

While the majority of the Language Arts instruction in the Lower School is centred around reading and writing workshops, explicit spelling instruction and practice is scheduled for the week. Each week students are introduced to a list of words that have a common element (i.e. prefixes or suffixes) or spelling pattern to them. These words would have been carefully selected for groups of students with similar needs based on assessment results as well as from examining the students' everyday writing. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring that the students know the meanings of the words and can transfer their knowledge of the spelling patterns being studied to new words in their daily writing. During classroom literacy time, the children will do a variety of activities with his/her words from the week's words/spelling focus and may bring the word list home to practice for homework.

1st-4th Grade Mathematics Overview

The Lower School's **Mathematics** curriculum is based on the school's adoption of the Everyday Mathematics programme (McGraw Hill) for 1st through 4th Grade. Everyday Math was developed by the University of Chicago School Math Project in order to enable elementary grades to learn more mathematical content and become life-long mathematical thinkers. This is a spiralling curriculum as concepts are more fully understood after repeated exposures. The Programme goals are based on the US National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards and benchmarks and are organised by the following content strands which extend across all grade levels:

- Numeration and Order
- Operations and Computation
- Patterns, Functions and Sequences
- Algebra and Uses of Variables
- Geometry and Spatial Sense
- Measures and Measurement
- Reference Frames
- Data and Chance.

The Everyday Math lessons are based on the following components: Math Message; Math games; Math Boxes for review and skills maintenance; major instructional activities; ongoing learning and practice; and differentiation options. 1st through 4th Grade teachers allocate a minimum of 60 minutes per day for Everyday Math instruction as this is required by the programme to complete all the strands and units over the period of a year.

In Everyday Math, students start by developing easy strategies and then move on to more sophisticated methods of problem solving as they progress through the grades. They develop the following process skills: mental arithmetic skills and reflexes; estimation and number sense; problem solving and mathematical modelling; algorithmic and procedural thinking. The games component provides practice for these skills.

Everyday Math assessment is based on a continuum of skills which are presented to students and parents at the beginning of each unit. Each student is evaluated on the goals for the unit through a variety of assessment strategies. End of unit tests help determine how well the students have mastered the goals. The Everyday Math programme is very comprehensive and builds in differentiated instruction for a wide range of skills to support students who struggle with math and also stretch students who need to be challenged mathematically.

Home links (1st to 3rd Grade) and Study links (4th Grade) from Everyday Mathematics are sent home throughout each unit to reinforce and support what is being covered in class. They consist of active projects and ongoing review problems and are sent home weekly. Everyday Math interactive parent presentations are provided annually by grade level teams and at parent coffees.

1st-4th Grade Science Overview

Science in the Lower School builds upon the children's natural curiosity and inquisitiveness. Students develop scientific literacy and acquire scientific knowledge essential to understanding, so that they may become independent learners.

The Science programme is based on the school's adopted National Science Education Standards (NSES):

1. Science as Inquiry
2. Physical Science (Physical and Chemical)
3. Life Science
4. Earth and Space Science
5. Environment, Technology and Society.

Kindergarten classes teach scientific topics through integrated science and social studies units based on discovery themes, such as Five Senses, Penguins, Eggs and Insects.

Science in the 1st to 4th Grades is based on a balance of Earth, Life, Physical and Environmental Science. The curriculum provides students with experiences and training in observing, predicting, recording, experimenting, evaluating and communicating results. The programme emphasises a hands-on approach, with opportunities to interact as directly as possible with the natural world. This approach allows children to practice problem solving skills, develop positive science attitudes, learn new science content and increase their scientific literacy. Each grade level participates in one science fair during the year.

There is a Science Laboratory and a Science teacher, with weekly Science lessons built into the schedule. 1st to 4th Grades come to the Science Lab once a week to carry out an inquiry based investigation. The lessons in the Science Lab will then be followed up by further Science lessons in the classroom. Some of the lessons take place outdoors and make use of the extensive campus, including the pond and outdoor classroom.

1st-4th Grade Social Studies Overview

The Lower school's Social Studies curriculum is based on schoolwide adoption of the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS) standards which consist of the following ten themes:

1. Culture: Sociology/Anthropology
2. Time, Continuity and Change: History
3. People, Places and Environment: Geography
4. Individual Development and Identity: Psychology
5. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions: Political Science
6. Power, Authority, and Governance: Government
7. Production, Distribution, and Consumption: Economics
8. Science, Technology, and Society
9. Global Connections: Sustainability
10. Civic Ideals and Practices: Citizenship.

Grade levels teach three to four Social Studies units per year built upon these NCSS themes, which serve as the vehicle for the development of skills and globally minded attitudes. In order to understand the local heritage of our host country, each grade has at least one unit based on an element of British life or culture. To honour our diverse student body and build internationally-minded thinkers, grade levels are developing units with links to one of the major continents in the world.

Unit Topics:

1st Grade: Classroom community, cultures, a child's life in England compared to a child's life in Africa

2nd Grade: Community building, Children at Work and School in Victorian England; India-Cultural Connections and Comparisons with England

3rd Grade: World Geography, Class Cultures and Identity, Indigenous Peoples: New Zealand and Australia, North and South America, Exploration and Innovation, Tudors in Britain

4th Grade: European Geography, Sustainability, Introduction to Celts and Romans in Britain, Economics and Consumerism.

Work with these units is interdisciplinary and language arts plays an integral part. Students read and interact with non-fiction text for shared and guided reading and the writing genre pieces are sometimes related to the topics. In addition, the creative arts, library and technology, as well as People Skills classes make connections with the topics.

Our social studies units are enhanced by enrichment opportunities. At the Annual LS International Fair, over 30 country booths, organised by parents, promote an understanding of the cultures present at ACS. In addition, an exciting variety of projects, visitors and field trips foster active participation, critical thinking and appreciation for the topics studied. These include drama presentations, museum trips and presentations.

The Country Representative Group (CRG) also organise flag raising ceremonies to celebrate each county represented in our school.

1st Grade Course Descriptions (1 of 2)

Language Arts

Reading

The Reading programme is comprehensive and developmental using the reading workshop as an instructional method (see Language Arts Overview). The focus is on the reading process for understanding as well as reading for enjoyment. Reading materials include a variety of literary genres and informational texts.

Students at this age may read and exhibit behaviours within several stages of the Bonnie Campbell Hill Reading Continuum: emerging, developing, beginning and expanding. They are instructed and assessed on oral reading, reading habits and attitude, reading strategies, comprehension and response, and self-evaluation. Through a variety of assessment tools including the Development Reading Assessment (DRA) and reading continuum, students are guided individually and in small groups by specific instructional strategies. Students use levelled texts from the Lower School levelled library as well as classroom libraries.

For whole-class instruction, teachers read aloud texts to students from a variety of genres; Poetry, fiction and non-fiction trade books. To foster independence, teachers and the librarian guide students to self-select books at an appropriate level. A daily block of time with the classroom teacher is allocated for reading instruction. Reading is also integrated into Social Studies and Science units and library time.

Writing

Reading and writing in a 1st Grade classroom are mutually enhancing. Reading instruction improves writing and writing instruction improves reading. Teachers provide blocks of time each week for writing activities which focus on students learning and using the writing process. 1st Grade students participate in a writing workshop (see Language Arts overview) where instruction targets their individual needs as a writer. Writing is also integrated into Social Studies and Science so students will write in a variety of genres for different purposes and audiences.

The writing process is introduced and students are encouraged to generate and expand their ideas. Pre-writing activities include collaborative writing, drawing/illustrating, discussion, and dramatisation. At this early stage, the content of the writing is considered more important than accurate spelling and grammar. Revision techniques are introduced and children begin to publish their writing with the help of teachers.

At this age there is a wide range of acceptable attempts at writing. In the early stages, children frequently represent words with only a beginning and ending phonemes. As they learn to read, they make generalisations about spelling patterns and phoneme/grapheme (sound/letter) associations. Children gradually learn to create words, sentences, and paragraphs for different genres including narrative, procedural and informational reports and poetry. Published work is used to model different authors' crafts and techniques.

Spelling

Our spelling programme is closely linked to reading and writing. In 1st Grade, the focus is on developing spelling patterns based on consonant and vowel sounds. Inventive spelling, the process of phonetically sounding out words, is encouraged in early writing. The programme is based on building phonemic and phonological awareness and sight words knowledge. Provision is made for students who need enrichment or review. All students are provided with word lists that are individualised and are at a developmentally appropriate level (see Language Arts overview).

Mathematics

The 1st Grade Mathematics curriculum is based on the school's adoption of the Everyday Mathematics programme (McGraw Hill); (see Mathematics Overview). This programme is based on content and process standards, spiralling concepts, problem solving and concept reinforcement through games, and a continuum of skills.

1st Grade Course Descriptions (2 of 2)

The following units are taught in 1st Grade:

1. Establishing Routines
2. Everyday Uses of Numbers
3. Visual Patterns, Number Patterns, Counting
4. Measurement and Basic Facts
5. Place Value, Number Stories, and Basic Facts
6. Developing Fact Power
7. Geometry and Attributes
8. Mental Arithmetic, Money, and Fractions
9. Place Value and Fractions.

For each unit, teachers send home a letter outlining goals, a checklist of goals achieved, and regular home links for review and games.

Science

Science is taught by a science teacher in the science laboratory on a weekly basis.

The 1st Grade Science units are as follows:

- **What Do Scientists Do?** Learning how to observe, ask questions, predict, record and compare data
- **Teeth and Germs** Learning about personal hygiene and how to look after your teeth
- **Sound** Understanding the nature and physical properties of sound
- **British Plants** Understanding what plants need to survive, identifying how the different parts of a plant, help the plant to survive and learning about which plants we eat
- **British Animals** Classifying and studying birds and animals at ACS Cobham campus as a habitat
- **African Plants and African Animals** Compared to British plants and animals.

Social Studies

The Social Studies topics are integrated into the whole curriculum with an emphasis on the Language Arts area. The units of study are Community Building, mapping skills, a Child's Life in Britain compared to a Child's Life in Africa, African animals. The curriculum is enhanced by projects, presentations and field trips where appropriate.

2nd Grade Course Descriptions (1 of 2)

Language Arts

Reading

The Reading programme is comprehensive and developmental using the reading workshop as an instructional method (see Language Arts Overview). The focus for 2nd Grade is building and developing fluency and comprehension strategies through a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts.

Students at this age may read and exhibit reading behaviours within several stages of the Bonnie Campbell Hill Reading Continuum: developing, beginning, expanding and bridging. They are instructed and assessed on oral reading, reading habits and attitudes, reading strategies, comprehension and response, and self-evaluation. Through a variety of assessment tools including the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and reading continuum, students are guided individually and in small groups by specific instructional strategies. Students use levelled texts from the Lower School levelled library and classroom libraries. Whole class reading units are designed to teach decoding skills, comprehension strategies, reading process and behaviours.

For whole class instruction, teachers read aloud single texts to all students from a variety of sources including picture books, fiction (trade books) as well as non-fiction. For individual instruction, teachers and the librarian guide students to self-select books at an appropriate level. A daily block of time with the classroom teacher is allocated for reading instruction; reading is also integrated into social studies and science units and library time.

Writing

The writing programme focuses on students' learning through the use of authentic literature through writing units of study which complement the reading units. 2nd Grade students participate in a writing workshop (see Language arts overview) where instruction targets their individual needs as a writer.

The writing process is emphasised and students are encouraged to generate and expand their ideas. Planning includes drawings/illustrations and discussion. At this stage, the content and fluidity of idea are considered more important than mechanics; however students are encouraged to revise and edit their own work. One-to-one writing conferences provide the opportunities to individualise instruction across all areas. Children have their own writing portfolios and receive help with editing, spelling and punctuation errors. Children share their writing informally and publish in a variety of forms. Writing is also integrated into all curricular areas so students will write in a variety of genres for different purposes and audiences.

Spelling

Children are taught how to spell through spelling strategies and patterns using weekly word lists. All students are provided with word lists that are individualised and are at a developmentally appropriate level (see Language Arts overview). Emphasis is placed on recognising spelling patterns so the student can apply these rules/patterns to new and unfamiliar words in their daily writing.

Mathematics

The 2nd Grade mathematics curriculum follows the everyday mathematics programme (McGraw Hill). Emphasis is placed on a realistic approach to problem solving, frequent and distributed practice of basic skills, a spiraling approach that revisits topics regularly and activities that explore a wide variety of content with opportunities for students to apply their skills and understandings to geometry, measurement and algebra.

2nd Grade Course Descriptions (2 of 2)

The following units are taught (one hour each day) in 2nd Grade:

1. Numbers and Routines
2. Addition and Subtraction Facts
3. Place Value, Money, and Time
4. Addition and Subtraction
5. 3D and 2D Shapes
6. Whole Number Operations and Number Stories
7. Patterns and Rules
8. Fractions
9. Measurement
10. Decimals and Place Value
11. Whole –Number Operations Revisited.

For each unit teachers send home a letter outlining goals, a checklist of goals achieved, and weekly home links for review and games.

Science

Science is taught by a science teacher in the science laboratory on a weekly basis.

The 2nd Grade science units are as follows:

- **Bats** Understanding how bats live in diverse habitats where their unique structures allow them to meet their needs and the indispensable role they play in our eco-systems
- **Magnets** Understanding the nature and physical properties of magnetism and learning about magnetic interaction
- **Electricity** Learning about static electricity, series and parallel circuits, switches and becoming aware of the dangers of electricity
- **Light and the Eye** Understanding the nature and physical properties of light and learning how the eye functions.

Social Studies

The units of study are Community Building, Mapping Skills, Victorian Times, Children at Work and School, India: Cultural connections. A variety of field trips and presentations complement the Social Studies curriculum.

3rd Grade Course Descriptions (1 of 2)

Language Arts:

Reading

The Reading programme is comprehensive and developmental using the reading workshop as an instructional method (see Language Arts Overview). The reading programme balances students' abilities to read for understanding as well as for enjoyment and exposes students to a greater variety of literary genres and informational texts.

Students at this age may read and exhibit reading behaviours within several stages of the Bonnie Campbell Hill Reading Continuum: beginning, expanding, bridging and fluent. They are instructed and assessed on types of texts and oral reading, attitude, reading strategies, comprehension and response, and self-evaluation. Through a variety of assessment tools including the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Reading Continuum, students are guided individually and in small groups by specific instructional strategies. Students use levelled texts from the Lower School levelled library and classroom libraries.

For whole class instruction, teachers read aloud single texts to all students and model use of different strategies from a variety of sources including fiction (trade books) and non-fiction. For individual instruction, teachers and the librarian guide students to self-select books at an appropriate level. A regular block of time with the classroom teacher is allocated for small-group reading instruction. Reading is also integrated into social studies and science units and library time.

Writing

Reading and writing often complement each other as students write about their reading and read to understand an author's purpose and writing craft. Writing is sometimes integrated into social studies and science so that students write in a variety of genres for different purposes and audiences.

Teachers provide blocks of time each week for writing workshop units (see Language Arts overview). Each unit focuses on craft, genre or conventions. In addition, students follow the steps of the writing process: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Students maintain a writing notebook in which they gather ideas and apply new skills.

Spelling

Our emphasis in spelling is on learning to spell words which are used in daily reading and writing. Students learn to use word structure and meaning to aid spelling. Spelling patterns are reviewed. Provision is made for students who need enrichment or review. All students are provided with word lists that are individualised and are at a developmentally appropriate level (see Language Arts overview).

Mathematics

The 3rd Grade Mathematics curriculum follows the Everyday Mathematics programme (McGraw Hill); (see Mathematics Overview). This programme is based on content and process standards, spiralling concepts, problem solving through games, and a continuum of skills.

3rd Grade Course Descriptions (2 of 2)

The following units are taught (one hour each day) in 3rd Grade:

1. Routines, Reviews, and Assessments
2. Adding and Subtracting Whole Numbers
3. Linear Measures and Areas
4. Multiplication and Division
5. Place Value in Whole Numbers and Decimals
6. Geometry
7. Multiplication and Division
8. Fractions
9. Multiplication and Division
10. Measurement and Data
11. Probability; End-of-Year Review.

For each unit teachers send home a letter outlining goals, a checklist of goals achieved, and daily home links for review and games.

Science

Science is taught by a science teacher in the science laboratory on a weekly basis.

The 3rd Grade science units are as follows:

- **Trees** Identifying trees native to Britain, understanding what function leaves, roots and trunks have and understanding how trees help the environment
- **Nutrition and the Digestive System** Gaining an awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet and identifying the various parts of the digestive system.
- **Simple Machines** Understanding how inclined planes, levers, wheels and axles and pulleys work and recognising that machines were invented to make work easier
- **Water** Understanding the unusual properties of water and why it is so vital to life on earth

Social Studies

Map skills are taught and developed throughout the year. Other units of study are Indigenous People in Australia and New Zealand, North and South America; Exploration and Innovation, and Tudors in Britain. Students develop skills such as reading for information, note-taking, placing events in chronological order, and comparing and contrasting. A variety of field trips and presentations complement the social studies and science curriculum.

4th Grade Course Descriptions (1 of 2)

Language Arts:

Reading

The Reading programme is comprehensive and developmental using the reading workshop as an instructional method (see Language Arts Overview). The Reading programme balances students' abilities to read for understanding as well as for enjoyment and exposes students to a greater variety of literary genres and informational texts.

Students at this age may read and exhibit reading behaviours within several stages of the Bonnie Campbell Hill Reading Continuum: expanding, bridging, fluent and proficient. They are instructed and assessed on oral reading, reading habits and attitude, reading strategies, comprehension and response, and self-evaluation. Through a variety of assessment tools including the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Reading Continuum, students are guided individually and in small groups by specific instructional strategies. Students use levelled texts from the Lower School levelled library and classroom libraries.

For full group instruction, teachers select texts from a variety of genre. These sources include chapter books, fiction (trade books) and non-fiction. For individual instruction, teachers and the librarian guide students to self-select books at an appropriate level.

Daily, a developmentally appropriate block of time is allocated for reading instruction; reading is also integrated into social studies and science units and library time.

Writing

Reading and writing often complement each other as students write about their reading and read to understand an author's purpose and writing craft. Writing is sometimes integrated into social studies and science so that students write in a variety of genres for different purposes and audiences. 4th Grade students participate in a writing workshop (see Language Arts overview) where instruction targets their individual needs as a writer.

Teachers provide blocks of time each week for writing workshop units. Each unit focuses on craft, genre or conventions. In addition, students follow the steps of the writing process: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Students maintain a writing notebook in which they gather ideas and apply new skills.

Spelling

Our Spelling programme is closely linked to reading and writing and focuses on enhancing vocabulary. The emphasis is on learning to spell words needed in daily reading and writing. Students learn to use word structure and meaning to aid spelling. Spelling generalisations are reviewed and more sophisticated patterns are introduced. Spelling lists are individualised and are at a developmentally appropriate level (see Language Arts overview). Students use a range of appropriate strategies to edit, proofread, and correct spelling in their own work. Students extend their vocabulary skills by exploring the meanings and parts of new words using Collins' Focus English Word Book.

Mathematics

The 4th Grade Mathematics curriculum follows the Everyday Mathematics programme (McGraw Hill); (see Mathematics Overview). This programme is based on content and process standards, spiralling concepts, problem solving through games, and a continuum of skills.

4th Grade Course Descriptions (2 of 2)

The following units are taught (one hour each day) in 4th Grade:

1. Naming and Constructing Geometric Figures
2. Using Numbers and Organising Data
3. Multiplication, Division; Number Sentences and Algebra
4. Decimals and Their Uses
5. Big Numbers, Estimation, and Computation
6. Division; Map Reference Frames; Measures of Angles
7. Fractions and Their Uses; Chance and Probability
8. Perimeter and Area
9. Fractions, Decimals and Percents
10. Reflections and Symmetry
11. 3-D Shapes, Weight, Volume, and Capacity
12. Rates.

At the beginning of each unit, a Family Letter is sent home outlining the learning goals and explaining the content of the unit. An individual Profile of Progress, which indicates the child's skill level in relation to the expected level of skill for the learning goals, is sent home at the end of each unit. Through the unit, Study Links are assigned as homework to review and reinforce concepts and skills taught in class.

Science

Science is taught by a science teacher, with the class teacher present, in the science laboratory on a weekly basis.

The 4th Grade science units are as follows:

- **Geology** Labelling the basic structure of the Earth, identifying igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rocks and conducting tests leading to mineral identification
- **Environmental Studies** Understanding the responsibilities humans have towards the planet and generating solutions which can be implemented in their daily lives to reduce carbon emissions
- **The Skeletal and Circulatory Systems** Labelling a basic diagram of the skeleton, understanding the importance of protecting the skull, and understanding the importance of regular exercise, a balanced diet and positive lifestyle choices to ensure a healthy heart
- **Insects** Understanding how insects adapt to the habitat in which they live and how important they are to the environment.

Social Studies

Our first unit of study exposes students to European geography and culture. Students use atlases, identify hemispheres, latitude and longitude, and distinguish varying landforms and geographic features. The second quarter focuses on environmental studies (in conjunction with science). Students look at environmental issues through the lens of the United Nations and debating important issues. The third quarter is a study of early British history during the Celtic and Roman Age. Students create citizens of the Roman Empire and travel around Britain in order to report back to the Emperor. The fourth quarter is a study of Economics and consumerism, where students work in teams to create businesses and gather market research, advertise and sell products to make a profit.

Special Areas (1 of 4)

Art

The art programme involves children from 1st through to 4th grade. Each class has one 50 minute lesson per week. Through recently adopted standards of attainment as set out by the Massachusetts Department of Education, the programme encourages children to observe closely, record their observations and express their feelings and ideas as well as enabling them to undertake a wide range of art, craft and design activities. Skills and knowledge are developed through individual and collaborative work in two and three dimensions, using a range of materials and processes, and through investigating the work of artists, some of whom have pieces on permanent display at the National Gallery.

Cross-curricular teaching enables children to express aspects of knowledge gained in science or social studies in an artistic form, thus enriching their learning experience. For example:

- 1st Grade students learn about plants in science. In art they compare the ways in which artists such as Monet, van Gogh and Matisse depict flowers and plants in their work. Resulting activities include drawing, painting, printing, collage and clay modelling
- 2nd Grade students investigate different shapes in math, and light and colour in science. In art they consider how artists such as Wassily Kandinsky use shape and colour in their work. They use complementary colours and geometric shapes to create abstract compositions
- 3rd Grade students study indigenous people in Social Studies. In art they create aboriginal style paintings, Native American Indian Totem Poles and their interpretation of the Aztec calendar stone
- 4th Grade students investigate the Celts and the Romans in Britain. In art they design and make Celtic jewellery in clay. They depict characters from Roman mythology and use glass tesserae to make mosaics.

Student artwork is displayed continuously throughout the year, providing a visible means of motivation, encouragement and recognition for all students.

Computer

The ICT program involves students in 1st through 4th Grades for 50 minutes each week in the computer lab. Wherever possible the emphasis of the programme is on students developing their ability to use technology as a tool to enhance class based work. As well having a computer lab, students have access to laptops in 3rd and 4th Grades and iPads in 1st and 2nd Grades.

As an introduction to computer use, all students are taught about Internet safety and protecting their personal information.

Students in 1st Grade gain familiarity and confidence with a wide range of programs throughout the year. They learn to paint and draw, compose a song, create a short animated film and use the Internet to research topics being taught in the classroom. Websites, such as EducationCity, BrainPop and Mathletics are used to strengthen concepts. Technology skills are further enhanced with the use of iPads in the classroom.

Students in 2nd Grade engage in more extensive use of applications. Touch-typing lessons are introduced and continue throughout the year. Students create documents and learn editing skills. The multimedia facilities of the computer lab are explored as students create slideshow presentations and movies. The Internet is used as a resource to research topics being taught in the classroom and specific websites, such as EducationCity, BrainPop and Mathletics are used to reinforce skills and concepts being taught in the classroom. Technology skills are further enhanced with the use of iPads in the classroom.

Students in 3rd Grade learn editing skills to allow them to work independently when using laptops in the classroom. Keynote, Pages and other productivity applications are used to create work based on topics taught in the classroom. Students use Garageband to create podcasts. Internet research skills are taught in collaboration with the librarian. Math, Literacy and Science skills are practised using Educationcity, Mathletics and other websites.

Students further extend their use of technology in 4th Grade. They begin to use their technical knowledge to choose the appropriate program for the task and audience. The use digital cameras, webcams and the Internet allows students to view the computer lab as an extension of their classroom and as a means of producing work. Students are taught how to create web pages, movies, and digital multimedia presentations. All these projects are related to topics being taught in other subject areas. To further enhance the ICT curriculum students have access to a set of laptops for use in the classroom. The students continue their touch-typing lessons and work throughout the year at improving these skills. Math, Literacy and Science skills are practised using Educationcity, Mathletics and other websites.

Special Areas (2 of 4)

Dance and Movement

Students from 1st to 2nd Grade have a 40 min Dance & Movement class period per week. The classes emphasise the development of the whole child, focusing on body and spatial awareness, motor skills and rhythm.

Through movement and dramatic activities, the children are challenged to control their bodies as they move to manipulate objects, interact with the space around them, and move with others. They are taught perceptual skills, interpretation and critical reflection.

The Dance & Movement programme provides students with a wide range of skills including motor skills and artistic expression and can help form the foundation for many academic activities in school. Through a variety of disciplines it reinforces the cross-curricular nature of learning with thematic and topical work.

French

The French programme involves children from Foundation years to 4th Grade. In the Lower School, each grade has two 30 minute lessons each week. Our Lower School French programme follows the ACTFL standards recently adopted throughout the school.

In the Lower School, children are first exposed to two main skills, Listening and Speaking, which have a prominent place in Language acquisition. The children are encouraged to listen, speak and interact with the teacher and one another, with an emphasis on good pronunciation and intonation. Focus is not only on communication, but also on understanding other cultures (discovering and comparing with their own). Two additional skills, Reading (word recognition) and Writing, are introduced in 3rd and 4th Grade. The children are first exposed to simple words and sentences and are gradually encouraged to use and adapt them to various contexts.

They are exposed to numerous topics and activities, with relevant links being made to what is studied in the classroom:

- **1st Grade:** The focus is on listening and speaking. Language is taught using various activities including rhymes, songs, games and story telling. They learn how to express simple opinions (likes and dislikes). The main topics are numbers, classroom objects, colours, animals, pets, my body, and the weather.
- **2nd Grade:** The focus is still on listening and speaking with the introduction of role plays (little conversations), calendar, mathematics games, songs, games with numerous resources (aural, visual). The main topics are numbers, months, weather (calendar), classroom vocabulary (understanding and responding to simple instructions), French cultural awareness (geography), colours, my clothes, and sports.
- **3rd Grade:** Reading (word recognition) and writing are gently introduced. The main topics are me, my family, food, how to order and pay in a café. Calendar is on-going and reinforced from 2nd Grade. The children are exposed to more challenging role plays as listening and speaking are the prevalent skills.
- **4th Grade:** The four major skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), are practiced with Speaking and Listening being the most important. The focus is mainly on pronunciation and being able to recognise, remember, manipulate the vocabulary and adapt it to different contexts. The children have the opportunity to write simple sentences though little project work. The main topics are a review of basic classroom vocabulary (numbers, calendar), me, my family, and travel.

New topics are introduced each quarter but there are always opportunities to build on previous knowledge for pupils who have taken French for several years. Cultural awareness is raised through teaching about festivals and traditions as they occur.

Above all, we want the children to feel confident and enjoy the experience of learning about another language and culture. The aim is to encourage risk-taking in speaking, building self-confidence in a fun and non-threatening atmosphere where each student can learn and progress at their own level and ability.

Special Areas (3 of 4)

Library programme

The goal of the Lower School Library is to balance two important roles within the school: Firstly, to encourage and facilitate independent reading and secondly, to support research skills and information literacy. For students, teachers, and parents from 1st through to 4th Grade, the library is here to provide a warm, welcoming, and stimulating learning environment, as well as resources in an increasingly varied range of formats in order to enrich both the academic curriculum and the interests of developing readers.

Students visit the library with their classes on a weekly basis and receive instruction time with the librarian every other week. Library lessons focus primarily on cultivating a love of reading in every student. This is done in many different ways, from exploring the work of key authors and illustrators to taking an active part in book award events and learning how to use technology to share book reviews and recommendations.

Information skills are taught primarily within the context of classroom units in collaboration with teachers. The librarian works with both classroom teachers and special area teachers, in particular the computer and technology teacher, to identify important skills that bolster information literacy, such as using keywords effectively in online searching. The goal is to present information literacy as something that is directly related to classroom learning, with a set of skills that can be built upon from one year to the next as the student moves on.

The library benefits from a tradition of strong support and enthusiasm among everyone in the Lower School community. Its history of hosting award-winning storytellers, poets, authors, and illustrators has expanded to include author events in ACS Cobham's interactive learning centre and storytelling in the school's beautiful outdoor spaces. Special events are organised throughout the year in order to provide every child with an opportunity to catch the reading bug. Parents play a big role in the life of the library as well, both as volunteers and as regular borrowers of library materials themselves.

The library currently has over 14,000 different titles, including several hundred books in 17 languages in our international collection. It is open from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm daily, except for Wednesdays, when it closes at 3:00 pm.

Music

The Music programme in the Lower School involves children from 1st through to 4th Grade and uses the internationally recognised Orff and Kodály. Each class in 1st to 4th Grade has two 40 minute periods per week.

The Music programme aims to help children develop an enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of music and group performance. Through a sequentially planned curriculum that provides experiences at various levels of singing, playing, listening and moving, children are encouraged to develop their musicianship. Using the complete range of Orff instruments, students are actively developing physical, melodic and rhythmic skills.

1st to 2nd Grade students participate in a variety of musical activities involving creative movement, classroom percussion instruments, singing and perceptive listening. Developing "inner-hearing" (an innate sense of tonality) is stressed, as are rhythm and psychomotor skills.

In 3rd Grade students begin playing the recorder as an introduction to group instrumental playing and reading standard music notation. 3rd and 4th Graders have the opportunity to join the Lower School choir and 4th Graders to join the 4th/5th Grade orchestra.

During the school year, each grade level presents an evening performance. This is a showcase for the children to demonstrate their attained music skills, and for them to experience the process involved in working on a large-scale presentation.

Lower School Choir

The Lower School Choir is an optional programme offered to 3rd and 4th Grade students who like to sing and are willing to participate in a variety of concerts and assemblies in and outside of school.

The rehearsals are held once a week before school. Rehearsals involve developing music skills and the singing voice, and learning to perform a variety of songs in unison and harmony parts.

Special Areas (4 of 4)

4th/5th Grade Orchestra

Lower School students who play orchestral or band instruments have the opportunity to join the 4th/5th Grade Orchestra who meet before school or during the day.

Students in the orchestra are required to begin (or continue) private lessons on their instruments; the orchestra provides an additional opportunity to use those skills learned in private study, while adding the interest of group interaction. In the orchestra, students are introduced to the standard expectations of a performing group, such as keeping a common beat, following a conductor, and listening to other players in the orchestra. Teamwork and dependability are encouraged. The orchestra typically plays in a number of concerts during the school year.

Physical Education

1st through 4th Grade students have two 50 minute classes per week. The Physical Education programme is designed to teach children to understand and practice healthy living. Students are encouraged to develop and maintain appropriate fitness levels through participation in various activities. Each child is given many opportunities to experience success. The activities help the child form a good self-image and cultivate the ability to play and work cooperatively with another person, a small group or in a large group.

The 1st and 2nd Grade programme emphasises development of body awareness and fine and gross motor skills, safety, basic health concepts, and the ability to follow directions when playing simple games. The 3rd and 4th Grade programme continues to emphasise the skills learned in the initial years. Basic concepts and strategies related to team play are introduced and gradually expanded. During the Lower School years, all children are introduced to and participate in activities such as swimming, gymnastics, dance, track and field, orienteering, mini-rugby, soccer, basketball, volleyball, striking skills, manipulatives and parachute activities.

All students 1st-4th Grade are required to wear a standard ACS Cobham uniform (shorts and T-shirt) for Physical Education classes, and have a change of shoes for indoor classes.

For health and safety reasons students are not permitted to wear jewellery during PE classes. If a student is to be excused from PE a note (email) from the parents is required before the lesson.

For more details on rules and regulations during PE classes, please refer to the students beginning of the year pack, which should include a letter related specifically to Lower School PE.

Lower School Learning Support (1 of 2)

Philosophy

The Lower School Learning Support team strives to enable each student to access the curriculum to the best of his/her ability. The programme aims to maximise each child's potential through teaching the skills and strategies required of life-long learners and contributing members of society.

Student Study Team

The Student Study Team (SST) works together to support children with academic, social, emotional and transitional needs. A structured process has been developed to help teachers and parents find strategies to assist students. This SST process begins with a concern about a student either from the classroom teacher or a parent. Once the parent and the teacher have discussed options, a referral is submitted to the lower school counsellor. The counsellor subsequently schedules a meeting with the parents, an administrator, the child's classroom teacher, a resource team member, and any other relevant professional who works with the child.

At the SST meeting, we discuss and agree upon a plan of action to benefit the student. This plan may include any of the following:

- Additional classroom options for accommodations and modifications
- Individual tutoring
- In-class or pullout resource lessons
- Outside referrals, such as for medical examinations, an educational psychological assessment, occupational assessment/therapy, speech-language assessment/therapy, and/or counselling.

Once a decision has been made, the team monitors the student's progress. A follow-up SST meeting may be scheduled to review and modify goals as necessary. If the learning support programme cannot meet a student's needs, information on finding alternative school settings may be provided.

Classroom modifications are supported by the resource teachers in collaboration with the classroom teachers. Parents are informed of progress through conferences, telephone calls and written reports. Follow up SST meetings are also scheduled to monitor progress and adapt changes.

Additional literacy support is offered through the use of the computerised program Lexia. This program is designed to develop phonological awareness and sound-symbol correspondence. The interactive phonics-based activities help develop automatic word recognition and comprehension. Children who would benefit from using the Lexia program are withdrawn from French and are scheduled during those periods.

People Skills

In 3rd and 4th Grades, students attend a regular weekly area class called People Skills. In People Skills, we focus on building healthy relationships and getting along with friends, peers, teachers and the world at large. The circle time method is used to raise self-awareness and to develop personal and social skills. Discussions are held in a circular formation to encourage interaction and participation. Different tools such as role-play, games, team building activities, discussions in pairs and group work are used to make learning a positive experience. Students are encouraged to participate, practise and use the skills in everyday life.

The People Skills curriculum covers a range of different topics such as conflict resolution, communication, bullying and assertiveness skills. We also look at keeping safe, peer pressure, team work, debate, culture and more.

The programme further aims for students to:

- Develop confidence, responsibility, leadership and personal skills
- Prepare to play an active role as future citizens
- Develop a healthy and safe lifestyle
- Develop positive relationships while respecting differences between people.

Lower School Learning Support (2 of 2)

Resource Centre

The Lower School resource team strives to enable each student to access the curriculum to the best of his/her ability. The programme aims to maximise each child's potential through teaching the skills and strategies required of life-long learners and contributing members of society. Resource teachers meet regularly with class teachers to discuss students and to plan for differentiation.

The Resource Centre offers support in literacy and numeracy at a variety of levels depending on the needs of the child. The resource team collaborates with classroom teachers to put into place appropriate modifications to assist the child's learning. Resource supports classroom programmes as well as using its own in order to target children's needs. Children meet with a resource teacher either in small groups or in the classroom setting.

When a student requires additional support in order to meet his or her academic and/or social potential, we work as a collaborative team to design and implement modifications to support learning and growth. The Student Support Team (SST) includes the parent, classroom teacher, resource teacher, counsellor and an administrator. The team will meet to identify the student's strengths, and discuss areas of concern.

Counselling Programme

The Lower School Counselling Programme is available to students and teachers, with the aim of supporting students in their social and emotional wellbeing and to support growth towards academic goals. The programme consists of a variety of services and activities, including individual, group and classroom guidance, parent and teacher consultation and information and referral assistance to appropriate external agencies. There is also support available to meet transitional challenges faced by international students and their families.

At ACS Cobham, we believe that the social and emotional development of a child and the enhancement of positive self-esteem, are as important as academic growth. We therefore focus on the whole child and follow a holistic approach in our daily dealings with each individual child.

From early childhood into the primary years, we teach important values such as sharing, kindness, problem-solving skills, taking responsibility and caring for others and the environment.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Students in 1st through 4th Grade who are learning English as an Additional Language will spend the majority of their school day in regular grade level classes. An EAL teacher will provide additional pull-out instruction and support in literacy and content-areas. The students' English proficiency levels in reading, writing, speaking and listening, will determine the amount of time spent with this teacher. The EAL sessions will include instruction related to the classroom curriculum to develop that knowledge and understanding in appropriate ways, using simpler vocabulary and a higher level of visual support.

Some EAL sessions will take place during the class's French time in order to minimise the amount of time the student misses classroom instruction. During the early years of language and literacy development, children will most benefit from learning the language of instruction prior to being exposed to another new language.

As EAL students develop their skills in English throughout the year, they may begin to transition back into the classroom, which will then be the optimal environment for continued learning and success. This will look different for different children – it may mean that an EAL teacher is implementing inclusion support in the classroom, or it could mean the number of times students receive support each week is lessened. If it is agreed that students have reached a level where they no longer require additional EAL support, they will begin attending French with the class.