

St. Francis Catholic School 2009-2010 Curriculum Overview

Professional Staff

All St. Francis Pre-Kindergarten — 5th Grade teachers are degreed and/or state certified in early childhood or elementary education. The faculty and staff include professionals with bachelor's or master's degrees. Middle school teachers are either certified in their subject areas or are "highly qualified," meaning they have at least a bachelor's degree and have majors or minors in their assigned subjects. St. Francis professional staff participates in at least five days of professional development training each school year. The teachers of "Special" classes of Spanish, art, music, physical education, library science, and computer literacy are qualified to work in their fields and/or have college degrees and/or graduate degree level training in their respective fields. Dr. Mike Rockers, principal, has 3 post-graduate degrees and 32 years of experience as a teacher, principal, and superintendent in Catholic schools.

Accreditation

St. Francis maintains accreditation through three respected accrediting bodies: the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS), and the South Carolina Independent School Association, Inc. (SCISA). Accreditation from these agencies confirms a mark of quality recognized nationally. It provides external recognition of our school's commitment to:

- Meeting and exceeding standards based on education research and best practices.
- Continuous improvement based on a 5-year plan developed through a strategic planning process.
- A framework and support system to help meet and exceed local, state, and national requirements.

St. Francis Catholic School is a member of the National Catholic Educational Association and under the auspices of the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Charleston.

Curriculum Basics

St. Francis Catholic School bases its curriculum on state and Diocese of Charleston standards. South Carolina Curriculum Standards can be found at www.myschools.com/offices/sco/standards. Diocese of Charleston Curriculum Standards are on file in the school office. In addition to a strong curriculum in the "4 R's" of Religion, Reading, Writing and Arithmetic; the curriculum includes: science, social studies, computer, physical education, music, art, Spanish, and library science. All curriculum areas are instilled with religious faith and values which inspire and inform students.

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

Children are taught how to work in a semi-structured setting that encourages listening skills, cooperative play and learning, sharing, and taking turns. Children are encouraged to be sensitive and creative, building trust and security while learning. These two programs have been developed to channel all of the enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning into the school setting. Religion is taught daily. Children receive Spanish, art, music, physical education, library time and computer time each week. They attend the Eucharistic Celebration (Mass) once a week with their 7th or 8th Grade "buddies".

Pre-Kindergarten (4 years of age before September 1st)

Children learn through small group, large group, indoor, outdoor, and center activities. Math and reading readiness skills, music, art, social studies, and science are taught through units of interest to the children. The OPEN COURT READING SERIES is used as the primary basal text. OPEN COURT is a research-based curriculum grounded in systematic, explicit instruction of phonemic awareness, phonics and word knowledge, and comprehension skills. Zaner-Bloser Handwriting is used as the handwriting basal text. Fine motor skills are developed through use of manipulatives (interlocking building materials, puzzles, beads for stringing, etc.), scissors, crayons, and painting materials. Gross motor skills are developed through daily experiences of climbing, running, hopping, throwing, catching, digging, and other outdoor and gymnasium activities. Music and art are not just weekly classes, but are incorporated into the everyday classroom activities. Children attend the program from 8:15 AM until 2:45 PM, or they may attend from 8:15 AM until 11:00 AM.

Kindergarten (5 years of age before September 1st)

Our Kindergarten students participate in a balance of active and quiet activities. The OPEN COURT READING SERIES is used as the primary basal text (see above). Zaner-Bloser is the handwriting basal text. Students explore math concepts including counting, sorting, identifying shapes and the properties of shapes, measurement, simple addition and subtraction, ordinal positions, time, and money. The math book is the kindergarten level of the Harcourt Mathematics Series that is used in the elementary grades. *Five-year-olds learn much by exploring materials and interacting with others in various learning centers. The teacher interacts with children during this time and provides guidance to increase learning.* Music and art are taught as individual classes as well as being incorporated into regular classroom activities. Science, social studies, and health are taught through units of study. Children receive instruction from specialists in physical education, computer literacy, art, music, and Spanish.

Grades One through Five

Classes in first through fifth grades are self-contained classes. Students remain in their classrooms with their homeroom teachers for religion, language arts (reading, English, spelling, handwriting), mathematics, science, and social studies. Children generally receive instruction from specialty area teachers in art, music, physical education (PE), computer literacy, and Spanish. Children attend school liturgy (Mass) once a week, typically on Wednesdays. The children have a thirty minute lunch and one 10 – 20 minute recess period each day. They go to the library weekly. Children in grades one, two, three, four, and five participate in the Accelerated Reader© program.

The Handwriting Curriculum follows national recommendations regarding the introduction of cursive writing in the 3rd Grade. Students in lower grades use pencil grips (triangle grips in Pre-K and K; “Stetro” name brand grips with a star and arrow in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Grade).

The Mathematics Curriculum is based on the process standards developed by the Diocese of Charleston Superintendent’s Office with special emphasis on the following computational skills:

Grade 2

1. Addition facts – whole numbers 0 - 9
2. Subtraction facts – whole numbers 0 - 9
3. Addition of whole numbers – two digit addends
4. Subtraction of whole numbers – two digit minuend
5. Addition of whole numbers – varied numbers with 3 or less digits in addends
6. Subtraction of whole numbers – varied numbers with 3 or less digits in minuend and subtrahend
7. Multiplication of whole numbers – one digit multiplicand, one digit multiplier
8. Multiplication of whole numbers – one digit multiplier, two digit multiplicand
9. Multiplication of whole numbers – one digit multiplier, three digit multiplicand
10. Multiplication of whole numbers – two digit multiplier, two digit multiplicand
11. Division of whole numbers – two digit dividend, one digit divisor, no remainder

Grade 3

1. All of the above
2. Addition of whole numbers – varied numbers with 4 or more digits in addends
3. Subtraction of whole numbers – varied numbers with 4 or more digits in addends
4. Multiplication of whole numbers – two digit multiplier, three digit multiplicand
5. Division of whole numbers – three digit dividend, one digit divisor, no remainder in quotient
6. Division of whole numbers – three digit dividend, one digit divisor, with remainder in quotient

Grade 4

1. All of the above
2. Multiplication of whole numbers – two digit multiplier, four digit multiplicand
3. Division of whole numbers – three digit dividend, two digit divisor
4. Subtraction of decimals
5. Addition of fractions with common denominators
6. Addition of fractions with uncommon denominators
7. Subtraction of fractions with common denominators

Grade 5

1. All of the above
2. Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division of any two whole numbers
3. Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division of any two fractions
4. Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication of any two decimals

Texts used in the lower grades include:

Religion:	<u>Faith First</u> – Legacy Edition, RCL Publishing, 2005
Reading:	<u>Open Court</u> , 2005
Mathematics:	<u>Harcourt Math</u> , Harcourt, 2004
Science:	<u>Silver Burdett Ginn</u> , 1999
Social Studies:	<u>Silver Burdett Ginn</u> , 1997
Spelling:	<u>Spelling Workout</u> , Open Court 2006
Handwriting:	<u>Handwriting</u> , Zaner Bloser, 2007
English:	<u>Open Court</u> , 2005 with supplements from <u>Voyages in English</u> , Loyola Press

Middle School Curriculum (Grades Six, Seven, and Eight)

The middle school course of study requires that students change classes and follow an eight period day. The academic courses of study are described below. The middle school English and mathematics curriculum is academically advanced and builds on the strong foundation from the elementary grades.

English

The goal of middle school English is to develop effective writing, reading, research, and communication skills within an integrated curriculum that fosters the growth of grammar, composition, spelling, vocabulary, research, and critical reading skills in preparation for high school, college, and life. Students partake in an intensive study of English language grammar, usage, and mechanics that encompasses the study of 8 parts of speech – including sentence diagramming; punctuation; essential elements of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences; and phrases and clauses. Voyages in English, Loyola University Press, is the English grammar textbook. Written composition skills include paragraph development with the use of effective introductions, conclusions, transitions, and thesis statements in the writing of formal compositions. The following forms of formal compositions are completed: comparison/contrast, persuasive, process, classification, explanatory, descriptive, characterization, as well as various forms of creative writing. Spelling and vocabulary are taught in the English classes through both the use of Sadlier-Oxford's Vocabulary Workshop Levels A-C and selected words from literature study. Research skills are developed through the completion of M.L.A. style research papers that include works cited lists and in-text citations. Reading comprehension instruction focuses on the development of expository and critical reading skills as well as the appreciation of literature and literary elements through a series of poetry, short story, and novel studies.

Science

During the three years of middle school, students study the main concepts involved in Earth, Physical and Life Sciences each year. Sixth grade focuses on the nature of science, introduction to metric measurement, minerals, rocks and the classification of living things. Seventh grade delves into the types and features of waves, electricity, and magnetism, with the remainder of the year spent studying the various systems of the human body. Eighth grade spends an equal amount of time on basic chemistry and physics concepts, and then the study of the universe. Earth Science is also taught throughout the year. The Glencoe Science Voyages Series is used in all three grades. All middle school students thoroughly study the scientific method in context by completing individual science fair projects. They then are required to participate in a school Science Fair held in the spring. Labs are performed throughout the year with more extensive experiments performed in the eighth grade.

Religion

Middle school students make use of the Faith First- RCL program, The Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Sixth grade focuses on the creed/profession of faith, mysteries of the rosary, and a brief overview of the Old Testament Salvation History during the first half of the year. The second half emphasizes the seven sacraments, the life of grace and morality, and the life of prayer. Seventh grade spends half of the school year on Scripture studies, especially Genesis, Exodus and the early Old Testament books. The second half of the year is dedicated to the greatest liturgical time of the year: Lent and Paschal Time. The eighth graders first study the sacraments and then spend a semester on moral theology in preparation for their Confirmation, which usually takes place sometime in May of every year. All middle school students study the lives of the saints and participate in a November All Saints Quiz Bowl. The eighth graders lead the all -school Living Rosaries and act out the Stations of the Cross during Lent. Seventh and eighth grade students spend an extensive amount of time learning the ancient symbols of Our Faith and travel to St. John of the Baptist Cathedral in Savannah, Georgia to participate in a symbol hunt. The life of virtue and prayer is a continual focus in the middle school and times for adoration and the sacrament of confession is made available to the students.

Mathematics

Sixth graders begin their math studies by using the Glencoe Applications and Concepts Course 1, McGraw Hill, textbook. The text develops proficiency in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with whole numbers, fractions, decimals, integers, and rational numbers. Students are introduced to algebraic equations, exponents, ratios, percents, proportions, geometry and problem solving strategies. Seventh graders continue their math studies by using the Glencoe Applications and Concepts Course 2, McGraw Hill, textbook. This further develops concepts encountered in 6th grade with greater complexity. A strong emphasis is upon basics that prepare students for Algebra.

Eighth grade students continue their mathematics studies by taking either Algebra 1 or Pre-Algebra. The Algebra I course is a full-year program intended for students who have excelled in 7th Grade Math and have passed the algebra placement test. The course begins with a brief review of variables, properties of the number system, types of equations, numbers on a line, and addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of real numbers. It then covers solving equations and problems, polynomials, factoring polynomials, fractions, applying fractions, systems of linear equations, inequalities, rational and irrational numbers, and quadratic functions. The Algebra 1 students use the McDougal Littell Algebra 1 textbook, a high school course textbook. The Pre-Algebra students use the McDougal Littell Pre-Algebra textbook. All middle school students utilize technology through the use of calculators and mathematics websites. In the seventh and eighth grade, more emphasis is made in general operations and uses of a scientific calculator. Annual opportunities to demonstrate math abilities occur with the local SCISA Middle School Math Meet held in the fall and the national Math League Contest held in the spring.

Social Studies

Sixth graders learn about the world and ancient civilizations and their impact on western culture. These studies incorporate geography, citizenship/government, history, economics, and cultures. Seventh graders study American history from the first Americans through Reconstruction. Eighth graders study American history from Reconstruction to the present. Textbooks used in middle school are The World, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, and The American Republic, Glencoe McGraw Hill.

Other Curriculum Areas or “Specials”

Spanish (Pre-K - Grades 8)

Spanish is taught to Grade 8 five (5) times per week. Spanish is taught to Grades 6 and 7, four (4) periods per week. Spanish is taught to Grads 3, 4, and 5, twice per week, and to Grades Pre-K, K, 1 and 2 once (1) per week. The length of each period is 41 minutes.

Over the course of study from Grades 6 through Grade 8 the students are prepared for high school Spanish II. The curriculum meets and exceeds state standards in the areas of speaking, writing, reading, and listening as well as culture. Students become familiar with the geography, music, history, art, dance and customs of Spanish speaking countries. The Grades 3, 4, and 5 curriculums are thematically vocabulary based. Students learn vocabulary as it relates to daily activities and simple conversations. The skill objectives are mainly oral proficiency rather than written proficiency. Students work in small groups to produce written work. The Grades 1 and 2 Spanish curriculum is based on culture and study of Spanish speaking countries. Limited but useful vocabulary is established in thematic cultural units. Students create a travel “passport” to learn and explore the countries’ customs, music, art, dance and geography. The Grades Kindergarten and Pre-K Spanish curriculum is literary based. Students hear a story that incorporates Spanish vocabulary into an easily understood story line. After the story, a follow up activity is completed to reinforce the vocabulary and heighten awareness of the culture.

Art (Pre-K - Grades 8)

Students in grades Pre-K through 8 participate in art classes once a week. The art curriculum addresses the national visual arts content standards: understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes; using knowledge of structures and functions; choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas; understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures; reflecting upon and assessing the merits of their own and other's work; and making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

Music and Band (Pre-K – Grade 8)

Students in grades Pre-K – 8th Grade participate in music class once a week. The curriculum is general music with an emphasis on singing melody, rhythm, note reading, and performing. In the upper grades, skills necessary to read and perform music are expanded and refined. Music history, appreciation, and

knowledge about composers are included in the general music curriculum. A youth choir, with members in fourth grade, meets once a week and sings at all school liturgies. Students in Grade 3 – 8 may be members of our School Band. Musical productions are performed by many of the students throughout the year.

Physical Education (Pre-K – Grade 8)

The physical education curriculum begins with participation in activities that involve imagination, coordination, and basic game skills in the primary grades. Elementary students participate in activities and exercises that emphasize teamwork and skills used in a variety of sports and other physical activities. Middle school students work to further develop the skills, strategies, and teamwork needed by all through various games, activities, and exercises. Students have physical education class an average of twice a week.

Computer Literacy (Pre-K – Grade 8)

The purpose of the computer literacy curriculum is to assist students with development and mastery of computer skills that they will need for school and life activities. Included in the curriculum are keyboarding, word processing (Word), visual presentation slides (PowerPoint), spreadsheet applications (Excel), internet safety, searching and researching, and desktop publishing. Middle school students also have the chance during the week to access the computer lab for curriculum-related and research activities.

Library (Pre-K – Grade 8)

Students in the elementary grades are scheduled for weekly library classes. During the classes, a library or reference skill is taught, a story is read or book introduced, and children have an opportunity to check out library books. Unscheduled visits to the library are encouraged and can be worked out between teachers and the librarian. Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten children visit the library weekly for a story and introduction to beginning library skills.