



Lower School - 2nd Grade Overview

Second grade is a magical time of wonder and exploration with creative opportunities and enrichment experiences. Second grade students travel around the world across all subjects. Using adventure journals, students record their discoveries and are able to reflect on what this new knowledge means to them as learners and explorers of our world.

Reading: The second grade reading program balances fiction and non-fiction reading materials. As students gain skills, they are able to tackle more complex texts with the support of graphic organizers. Specific use of graphic organizers is explicitly taught and practiced through read alouds, shared reading, and independent reading. The three main areas of focus in reading are vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Second grade allows students the critical time to practice these skills. A basic foundation of skills combined with reading extensions encourages and motivates students to be successful lifetime readers.

Spelling: The second grade spelling curriculum, *Primary Spelling by Pattern*, uses an approach of teaching structured language and word study. This approach is grounded in the science of reading that English spelling contains many predictable patterns if students recognize the patterns. The program emphasizes spelling patterns, word structure and its relation to word meaning, and high frequency words most often used in writing. It also continues a strong emphasis in phonics by teaching and reinforcing the 72 phonemes in the English language. The program requires students to deconstruct, construct, analyze, and compare words.

Grammar: The *Shurley English* curriculum teaches grammar and written composition skills. Students learn a catchy jingle for each part of speech (nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, pronouns, prepositions, and articles) and how to classify those parts of speech in sentences. The combination of visual, verbal, and written activities addresses different learning styles. As sentences become increasingly complex, students show mastery identifying parts of speech and their syntax, learn proper usage, capitalization, and punctuation. This mastery enables students to construct sentences, paragraphs and longer compositions.

Writing: The writing curriculum builds on the *Shurley Method* and provides structure for students to practice the mechanics through application. Students study the formation of proper paragraphs through creative writing, research projects, and journal writing. When students are given an opportunity to write about what they know, they become better writers. In second grade, students will demonstrate connections across the curriculum. The handwriting curriculum focuses on correct *D'Nealian* manuscript letter formation for the first semester and then students begin an introduction into cursive handwriting during the second semester.

Math: The second grade mathematics curriculum is *Dimensions Math*. The *Dimensions Math* program promotes strong number sense, concrete examples, and hands-on activities to reinforce new skills. Main focal points are practice and mastery of addition, subtraction, and multiplication facts, computation, measurement concepts, mental calculation, money, fractions and time. The curriculum incorporates challenges and extensions in problem-solving and practical application of computational and conceptual math skills.

Science: Second graders experience science through hands-on investigations, literacy-rich activities, and interactive digital tools to empower students to think, read, write, and debate as real scientists and engineers. These experiences engage students in relevant, real-world problems where they investigate scientific phenomena, engage in collaboration and discussion, and develop models or explanations in order to arrive at solutions. Our second grade science curriculum covers living things, habitats, weather and sky, matter, motion and energy. In order to promote a common scientific language among learners, observations, resources, and vocabulary pertaining to each unit are recorded in journals and/or lab reports. Students enjoy hands-on, cooperative investigations both in the classroom and in the science lab.

Social Studies: Using the *Core Knowledge* curriculum, our second graders study the following topics: Americans Move West, Making the Constitution, Ancient Greece, Ancient China, Geography of the Americas, Civil Rights Leaders, and citizenship. The social studies curriculum integrates with all subject areas. Students are given the opportunity to research topics of interest and apply what they have learned through special projects such as dressing as famous inventors and giving presentations at the Second Grade Inventors' Wax Museum. Adventure Club reinforces learned concepts in each of these units by completing hands-on comprehensive activities and documenting highlights in their adventure journals.

Social and Emotional Development: The St. George social and emotional curriculum is based on the *Responsive Classroom* model, which takes a proactive approach that focuses on creating a loving and respectful classroom community where each child feels valued and known by his or her teachers and peers. Every day begins with a morning meeting where students are greeted by name and invited to share about themselves. During this time, teachers introduce a variety of social skills throughout the year including: identifying feelings of self and others, resolving conflict, showing kindness, listening and responding, regulating emotions, practicing empathy, being a good citizen, and standing up for what is right. These skills are then discussed and modeled frequently by children and teachers alike. This approach provides each student with the tools to grow his or her own emotional intelligence, while also creating an environment of connectivity and care.

Co-Curricular Classes: Students regularly attend the following co-curricular classes: physical education three times a week; music, art, library, Spanish, science lab, and STEAM once a week; and recess daily. Students also attend a developmentally appropriate chapel daily. Second graders have the added privilege of reading scripture aloud in daily chapel.