

Academic Program

Grades K-6

Literacy Reading

CIS has implemented a balanced literacy approach to the focus of our reading program. Our aim is to provide students with the necessary components to master written and oral communication; reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing, and encourage our students to become proficient readers, writers and speakers, so they become successful, contributing adults and lifelong learners. Balanced literacy incorporates many of the research-based “best practices” advocated by leading educators.

Balanced Literacy

Students are active in a ‘print-rich’ literacy program. Teacher-centered, direct instruction is one component of a comprehensive plan of proficiency; students are taught word skills, and are exposed to a variety of genres to develop their ability to comprehend different contexts.

Students have opportunities to read in paired, shared and group settings. They write for specific functions and in a variety of ways across content areas. They develop diverse skills in narrative and expository writing through modeled, group, shared and independent writing experiences. They are able to select and vary reading and writing strategies based on audience and purpose.

Students serve as editors and audiences for one another during reading instruction. Teachers facilitate direct or small group work skill or comprehension instruction; use Graphic organizers of thinking maps along with other reading and writing activities.

Assessment for the balanced literacy program includes both formative and summative assessment based on the grade level in English Language Arts competencies. These assessments document student development in reading, writing, speaking, listening skills, strategies, and comprehension. The North Carolina Standard Course of Study objectives as well as teacher designed assessments are continual ways for tracking student progress over time.

The ultimate goal of CIS’s balanced literacy program is for students to move comfortably and competently between various types of communication in reading, writing, speaking, listening and responding.

CIS has adopted *Write Source* which is a writing process to encourage students to develop a piece of writing over time in five recursive stages that mirror the stages that experts go through when working on their own authentic writing-pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing or proofreading, and publishing. Students learn the “six traits” model to help identify the strengths and weaknesses in a piece of writing and to develop common vocabulary for talking about writing: *interesting ideas, a logical organization, an engaging voice, original word choice, good sentence flow, correct writing mechanics, such as spelling, punctuation, and grammar usage.*

Reading Instruction

Our Kindergarten through Sixth grade students are also provided specific targeted instruction with supplemental strategies used in *Grow into Reading, Lessons in Literacy, Spelling for Writers, Handwriting Without Tears.* Teachers use these strategies for differentiated instruction on key reading skills that all students need: phonics and work study, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, research skills, and phonological awareness.

Mathematics

The goal of mathematics at Carolina International School is to enable all students to develop mathematical power and confidence in their ability to do mathematics. Our curriculum focuses on significant mathematical ideas that encompass both concepts and skills through rich explorations, problems, and applications that enable students to develop a genuine understanding of the larger ideas of mathematics.

Mathematics at Carolina International School includes and goes beyond:

- Learning correct use of the concepts, skills, symbols, and vocabulary identified in the mathematics standard course of study, including number facts and relationships.
- Work with math manipulatives to help form a sense of number.
- Work with geometric shapes and patterns to facilitate the development of spatial reasoning.
- Use their own knowledge and experience- working alone, in pairs, in small or large groups-to solve challenging problems, a major goal of studying mathematics.

Investigations in Number, Data and Space is CIS's chosen program for mathematics in elementary grades. It is a program based on years of research by the National Science Foundation and National Council of Mathematics about how children learn mathematics. Each grade level consists of a set of separate units, each offering two to eight weeks of work. These units of study are presented through investigations that involve students in the exploration of major mathematical ideas and often revolve around related areas, for example, addition and subtraction or geometry and fractions.

Approaching mathematics content thorough investigations helps students develop the flexibility and confidence in approaching problems, fluency in using mathematical skills and tools to solve problems, and proficiency in evaluating their solutions. Computational fluency of basic number combinations develops through understanding of number relationships and practice in games and activities. Students also build a repertoire of ways to communicate about their mathematical thinking while their enjoyment and application of mathematics grows.