Friends Academy 1876

Foundations *of Wonder*

LOWER SCHOOL EARLY CHILDHOOD–GRADE 4

Lower School is a place of wonder, play, growth—and joyful academic excellence.

Deeply rooted in Quaker values and nurtured within a warm, developmental community, our youngest learners are encouraged to explore boldly, collaborate creatively, and grow whole—in heart, mind, and spirit. Whether they are discovering letters and numbers, investigating the natural world, enjoying their first performances, or practicing gratitude and appreciation, every child is known, valued, and celebrated.

In our Lower School, learning unfolds through hands-on exploration and intentional relationships. From the spark of first discoveries to the assured voices of Grade 4, students are inspired to ask questions, think deeply, and recognize their own strengths. We honor laughter, curiosity, and the journey—not just the milestones.

What Sets Us Apart

- **Academic Confidence** Structured learning and Responsive Classroom techniques that foster foundational fluency and academic readiness in literacy, math, and social skills and focus on critical thinking
- **Community-Centeredness** Daily Morning Meetings, biweekly Gratitude Gathering, and weekly Quaker Meeting for Worship that build voice, gratitude, and reflection
- **Whole-Child Approach** Teachers who know every learner intimately, guiding them academically, socially, and emotionally
- **A Campus for All** Cherishing the joys of childhood in an environment where the youngest students can learn from the oldest, as well as access to the state-of-the-art resources, facilities, and experts of the larger school from their first days on campus

ACADEMIC JOURNEY BY GRADE

Play Group (Age 3)

A Reggio Emilia-inspired, play-based experience allows children to develop foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and social interaction through exploration, storytelling, art, sensory play, and nature experiences. Teachers follow each child's interest, fostering self-expression, collaboration, curiosity, and ecological stewardship. Spanish World Language exposure begins here.

Pre-Kindergarten

Joyful learning is centered in Pre-K. Literacy centers on letter recognition, phonemic awareness, and emergent writing. In math, students develop number sense through counting, patterns, and manipulatives. Daily Morning Meetings build community; art, music, and movement classes introduce creative exploration.

Kindergarten

Building on Pre-K foundations, Kindergarteners dive into guided reading groups and phonics instruction, begin writing narratives, and learn the structure of number operations. Science explorations (such as plant life cycles) and thematic social studies (exploring community and belonging) integrate with art, drama, and music. Morning Meeting builds confidence in presenting and listening.

Grade 1

Reading fluency grows with engaging chapter books and writing projects. Math dives into addition and subtraction strategies, simple geometry, and problem-solving. Science labs invite hands-on discovery, while social studies emphasizes community relationships and cultural traditions. Students also begin more regular World Language exposure and deepen their exploration of creative arts.

Grade 2

Students strengthen literacy through comprehension work and paragraph writing, and math through multi-digit addition/subtraction and early multiplication. Science and social studies introduce inquiry-based projects such as meteorological studies and local history. Technology integration begins with responsible keyboarding, early coding, and research. Arts and music develop creative voices.

Grade 3

Readers and writers deepen their skills, producing short essays and reflecting on texts. Math progresses to multi-digit operations, fractions, and measurement. Science investigations explore ecosystems and forces of motion, and social studies analysis covers local and state history. World Languages (Spanish) continues, and drama and ensemble music become more formalized.

Grade 4

Students build academic independence with novel-length reading, persuasive writing, and research essays. Math includes fractions, decimals, perimeter, area, and data analysis. Science studies earth, life, and physical science through experiments and field observations. Social studies teaches civic responsibility, and world language skills advance. Arts, music, and drama offer ensemble performances and the chance to engage in all-school events.

WORLD LANGUAGES AT FA

Learning the Spanish language begins in Early Childhood through music, movement, and other dynamic modalities. Spanish learning amplifies in Kindergarten through Grade 4 with increased language mastery and an appreciation of culture. Students graduate from Lower School prepared to continue their study of Spanish or choose another language offering (Chinese or French) in Middle School.

CREATIVITY, PLAY & COMMUNITY

Art & Performance

Visual art, music, movement, and drama are woven into every grade. From Play Group recitals to Grade 4 performances on the main stage, in our state-of-the-art theater, each student finds a creative outlet. Seasonal showcases and art festivals invite families to witness this growth in joyful collaboration.

Outdoor Learning

Our campus serves as an extension of the classroom. Lower School students plant gardens, collect specimens, build birdhouses, and explore trails. Outdoor learning fosters ecological responsibility and hands-on science skills.

Service & Leadership

From sharing a class project in Kindergarten to collaborating with and befriending Grade 12 students in cross-grade community groups, Lower Schoolers learn that their voices matter. Buddy programs connect them with older students, nurturing empathy and mentorship.

The Path to Middle School and Beyond

Our Lower School lays the foundation for confident transition to Middle School. Starting in Grade 4, students develop advocacy and organizational skills, visit Middle School classrooms, and participate in joint advisory groups with older students. Through cross-divisional gatherings, children begin to envision themselves as Middle Schoolers and Upper Schoolers—ready to step into leadership, inquiry, and creative problem-solving.

Quaker Foundations

Quaker values shape every moment in Lower School.

- **Simplicity & Stewardship:** Caring for our school, each other, and our environment
- **Peace & Integrity:** Kindness, fairness, and honesty in daily life
- **Community & Equity:** Every child belongs and contributes
- **Service:** Even small kindnesses—listening, sharing, helping—matter

Daily classroom Morning Meetings and weekly Gatherings and Meetings for Worship foster reflection, gratitude, and a sense of shared purpose.

GRADE 4 FAVORITES

Clockwise from top left >

ZAVI
Favorite field trip: Garvies Point. "It's amazing to find Cretaceous-era fossils so near to here."

HAVANA
Favorite lesson: Honoring changemakers. "I reported on Aretha Franklin. She sang for equality and justice."

FRANNY
Weekly highlight: Getting a hug from Mrs. Weinstein. "She was my second grade teacher and I still visit her."

RYDER
Favorite book: *Patriots, Redcoats and Spies* by Robert Skead. "I'm getting really into Revolutionary War history this year."

Game, Set, Sisters!
Books Bring Me JOY!

LET'S CONNECT

We invite you to walk our grounds, talk with our community, and discover the kind of education that engages heart, mind, and spirit.

Friends Academy

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