



THE LOWER SCHOOL

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH FOURTH GRADE

The Lower School at Ashley Hall features a vibrant elementary education program that provides a nurturing environment where girls establish a strong foundation for rigorous and meaningful study and where there is a firm belief that self-advocacy and the building of self-esteem are critical to long-term academic success. Our integrated curriculum is taught by experienced faculty who understand how girls think, feel, and learn. Daily leadership opportunities give our girls the tools and self-confidence they need to successfully navigate the Intermediate and Upper School years.



ASHLEY HALL
FOUNDED 1909



THE LOWER SCHOOL CURRICULUM

LANGUAGE ARTS

Recognizing the crucial importance of literacy acquisition and developmentally appropriate language practices in these formative years, Ashley Hall faculty have implemented a curriculum that guides each student to achieve essential competencies in reading, writing, and speaking. Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through sixth grade, our young readers and writers are instructed using the workshop method. This method allows teachers to meet the individual needs of all students. During workshop time, students receive three types of instruction: whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction.

Kindergarten through second grade students receive explicit sequenced instructions in all areas of phonics. Phonics instructions includes, but is not limited to, phonemic and phonological development, the alphabetic principle, letter sound correspondence, short and long vowels, high frequency words, and phonograms. Ashley Hall's Lower School librarian works closely with students and teachers to make the library resources an essential component of the Lower School curriculum.

HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Students are introduced to the study of history and civic institutions through transdisciplinary classroom instruction and field trips designed to reinforce concepts and facilitate personal engagement with historical sites, municipal buildings, and public figures. Historical and biographical studies are integrated into the literacy curricula as well. In the fourth grade, students undertake a more formal study of American history.

SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Classroom instruction in the sciences is supplemented by laboratory work with the Lower School science specialist and field experiences through multiple field trips each semester. With a particular emphasis on the environment and ecosystems of the Lowcountry, the curriculum is project-based, allowing students to work on collaborative explorations, including partnerships with community organizations such as the South Carolina Aquarium and Department of Natural Resources.

Ashley Hall uses the Everyday Math program in kindergarten through fourth grade, which fosters higher-order thinking skills that allow students to master progressively more complex mathematical concepts and applications. The program emphasizes first conceptual understanding and then allows students to invent and explore standard algorithms.

Our benchmarks are robust and require girls to know their facts, achieve age-appropriate computational and research fluency, and to demonstrate creativity and capability around solving problems and making cross curricular applications, all of which we know serve girls best. Our STEAM projects and programming throughout the Lower School support this development of deep understanding and give the girls rich opportunities to undertake complex projects and practical application across their studies.

FINE & PERFORMING ARTS

Students in the Lower School have weekly music lessons in second through fourth grade in addition to access to instrumental instruction. All kindergarten and first grade students have daily small group strings instruction, and students in first through fourth grades have the opportunity to participate in Ashley Hall's Private Lesson Program offering individual instruction in piano, violin, viola, cello, and voice. The weekly visual arts classes focus on developmentally appropriate exploration of media and materials in an experiential setting to develop artistic behaviors.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

All students in kindergarten through fourth grade have French instruction as an integral part of their course of study. Working closely with classroom teachers, the French language instructor coordinates classroom readings and activities in French with students' work in other disciplines.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is introduced authentically through an age-appropriate curriculum starting in kindergarten. Our Lower School educators design experiences that leverage student devices or applications to support student mastery of content and skills within their classrooms. Pardue Hall is filled with students communicating, collaborating, and problem-solving on various projects, including coding in their math and science classes, researching for an upcoming insect unit, or recording their reflections on a particular unit of study to showcase their learning. Ashley Hall's Director of Innovation works closely with Lower School teachers to facilitate meaningful experiences with technology through an integrated approach.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Throughout the week, all students in kindergarten through fourth grade experience immersive and extensive physical activities, including swimming, dance, health, and fitness.

THE LOWER SCHOOL *at a* GLANCE

★ Pardue Hall houses students in kindergarten through fourth grade and offers a dedicated science laboratory with weekly hands-on instruction throughout the year.

★ Kindergarten students actively participate in sea turtle rescue projects through the South Carolina Aquarium located in Charleston.

★ Beginning in Lower School, there is a specialized wellness program designed to build character through the creative use of the School's seven Hallmarks to help give the girls the tools they need to navigate friendships and develop social skills.

★ Every kindergartner and first grader takes violin or cello, and all students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of music lessons including strings, piano, and voice.

★ Encouraging young female engineers, the Lower School features its own LEGO activities that introduce students to real-world engineering challenges by having them build LEGO-based robots that are coded to complete specific tasks.

★ The Lower School features a Literacy Programs Coordinator dedicated to working with faculty to foster classroom communities that build and nurture avid readers and effective writers.

★ The Lower School Math Specialist works with faculty and students to provide engaging activities and individualized support to ensure all students have a strong foundation in math.

★ Research shows that if girls do not develop interests in science, technology, engineering, arts, or math (STEAM) before or during their middle school years, they will most likely avoid future classes and careers in these areas altogether. At Ashley Hall, STEAM activities are an integral part of the curriculum.

★ By the time Ashley Hall girls reach fourth grade, they have a strong science background and are ready to dive into more complex STEAM concepts like computer coding from scratch or building a wind turbine.

★ As a continuation and adaptation of Reggio Emilia techniques, Lower School teachers and students engage in explorations which tap into students' natural curiosity and zeal for learning.

★ Teachers utilize responsive classroom methods to establish class routines and practices that encourage responsibility, respect, leadership skills, collaboration, independence, and confidence.

