Mui Wo OWLS School – ‘Our students fly high’

Providing quality bilingual education on Lantau

Curriculum Information for Primary Years
MESSAGE FROM OWLS

At Mui Wo OWLS School, we take great pride in ensuring that we offer a warm welcome to all pupils, parents/carers and members of the local and wider community. We, as a staff, look forward to working in partnership with parents and carers to provide a rich and stimulating education for all our children.

We make every effort to offer the highest standard of education in a safe, caring and interesting environment.

We are committed to keeping our class sizes small to ensure our children receive the best education possible. At OWLS, we provide opportunities to allow each child to achieve his / her full potential. We are a non selective school and we believe each child is unique, with unique abilities.

We have an open door policy, so please feel free to come and take a look around our school.

Should you wish further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

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At Mui Wo OWLS Primary School we provide:

- A wonderful, caring, holistic education for your child
- A safe environment in which your child can explore, play and learn (OWLS has air purifiers in every classroom)
- International curriculum based on UK National Curriculum, adapted to meet Hong Kong needs
- High teacher to student ratio
- A bilingual programme – majority of curriculum taught in English with Mandarin taught daily as a second language
- Qualified and experienced teachers
- Special Needs support
- Gifted extension programme
- An immersion approach to additional language teaching
- Full curriculum requirements with strong emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy
- Traditional materials and Montessori materials in every classroom to support learning
- Technology enhanced learning for primary children
- Ability-appropriate activities (rather than age-determined) for each child
- Indoor play area
- On site school library
- Art and craft area
- Structured PE lessons in school hall
- Literacy, numeracy and free play stations in every class
- Differentiated teaching methods to suit individual learning styles
- Strong home/school links via a home/school communication book, email and monthly newsletters
- Active Parent/Teacher group
- Open door policy - parents are always welcome at OWLS
OWLS PHILOSOPHY

‘EVERY CHILD UNIQUE’

At OWLS, we believe all children have something special to offer. We understand that all children are different and learn in different ways. While a child may exhibit an exceptional gift in one area of the curriculum, they may need extra support to access another.

Our small class sizes allow us to offer support to all children, including those with individual needs. We are able to customize learning programmes for children who need learning support, and our multi age classes allow children to access revisit the basic core building blocks of reading, writing and numeracy, providing a solid foundation of learning.

Our gifted and talented specialist teacher also provides extension and enrichment activities, such as games to promote critical and creative thinking skills for our primary classes, allowing children’s gifts to ‘bubble’ to the surface, and not remain hidden from view.

‘SMALL CLASS SIZES MEAN HIGHER TEACHER/STUDENT CONTACT’

At Mui Wo OWLS School, we are committed to maintaining a high teacher to student ratio. We currently have 20 primary school students enrolled, with two fully certified teachers. In addition, we offer pull-outs for small-group or individual work in areas of specific abilities, need or interest.

Our high teacher-student ratio allows teachers to individualize the method of teaching to suit the abilities, interests and learning style of each student.

Our small class size permits teachers to spend a significant amount of time individually with students, assessing their learning and teaching them strategies that will develop their capability to learn independently.
Learning Areas

Our Primary Curriculum is developed in accordance with the learning areas specified in the UK National curriculum and Hong Kong Local curriculum, adapted to meet the needs of our unique bilingual school. We teach a broad, balanced curriculum, covering all areas of the curriculum in English, with a strong emphasis on the development of the two core subject areas: Literacy and Numeracy.

Mandarin

We consider it extremely important that our children learn to speak Chinese. Mandarin is taught every day as an additional language, through separate themes. Our Mandarin teacher is a fully qualified kindergarten and primary teacher, with specialist training in second language teaching.

Our Mandarin Curriculum is based upon Primary Mandarin, a new Mandarin programme specifically designed for teaching Mandarin to children who are non native speakers.

In order to engage our Primary students, Mandarin is taught through a whole range of learning activities, including play, investigation, craft and topics. Children begin to learn to recognise some simple characters in our K2 kindergarten class and this is built upon in our Primary section, when children begin learn to read and write Chinese characters.

Our school library is well equipped with engaging Chinese picture books, which children have the opportunity to read and look at during the school week.
Personal, Social and Emotional Education and Citizenship:

At OWLS, we consider personal, social and emotional education to be equally as important as academic education.

We believe our children should have opportunities to learn about themselves as developing individuals and as members of their communities, building on their own experiences and on the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional development. At OWLS, children learn the basic rules and skills for keeping themselves healthy and safe and for behaving well. They have opportunities to show they can take some responsibility for themselves and their environment. They also begin to learn about their own and other people's feelings and become aware of the views, needs and rights of other children and older people. As members of a class and our school community, they learn social skills such as how to share, take turns, play, help others, resolve simple arguments and resist bullying. We encourage children to take an active part our school life and neighbourhood, giving children opportunities to represent our school in community events, such as the 'Mui Wo Carnival.'

We provide the children with experiences and support which will help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others encouraging respect for others, social skills, and a positive disposition to learn. As teachers, we will provide support for the children’s well being to help them to know themselves and what they can do.

KEY Knowledge, skills and understanding

- Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities
- Preparing to play an active role as citizens
- Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle
- Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people

At OWLS, we teach and allow children to construct key knowledge, skills and understanding through opportunities to:

a. take and share responsibility [for example, for their own behaviour; by helping to make classroom rules and following them]
b. feel positive about themselves [for example, by having their achievements recognised and by being given positive feedback about themselves]c. take part in discussions [for example, talking about topics of school, local, national and global concern, such as 'where our food and raw materials for industry come from']
d. make real choices [for example, between healthy options in snacks, what games to play, how to spend and save money sensibly]
e. meet and talk with people [for example, with outside visitors such as members of the community eg. police officers]
f. develop relationships through work and play [for example, by sharing equipment with other students or their friends in a group task]
g. consider social and moral dilemmas that they come across in everyday life [for example, aggressive behaviour, questions of fairness, right and wrong, use of money, simple environmental issues]
h. ask for help [for example, from family and friends, teachers, peers].
Language and Literacy

Language and Literacy will be delivered in English. OWLS incorporates ‘the literacy hour’ into our Primary school day, with children exploring word level, sentence level and text level activities each day.

Through our balanced, structured programme, we aim to achieve the following:
• Reading: to provide pupils with skills to allow them to read thoughtfully and critically for information and pleasure, in order to form lasting reading habits.
• Speaking: to enable pupils to communicate thoughts and to express ideas clearly, confidently and accurately.
• Listening: to listen for pleasure, information and instruction and to enable pupils to participate in discussion.
• Writing: to be able to write accurately for a range of purposes and audiences.

Reading: At OWLS, pupils' interest and pleasure in reading is developed as they learn to read confidently and independently. They focus on words and sentences and how they fit into whole texts. They work out the meaning of straightforward texts and say why they like them or do not like them. Our Reading Programme is based upon the Oxford Reading Tree Reading Scheme, supplemented with material from a range of sources, such as Reading A-Z and Starfall.

The skills within our reading programme are divided into key areas:

Word recognition and graphic knowledge

Understanding text

Reading for information

Literature

Language structure and variation
**Speaking and listening:** At OWLS we help pupils learn to speak clearly, thinking about the needs of their listeners. They work in small groups and as a class, joining in discussions and making relevant points. They also learn how to listen carefully to what other people are saying, so that they can remember the main points. They learn to use language in imaginative ways and express their ideas and feelings when working in role and in drama activities.

**Speaking – Key Skills**

To speak clearly, fluently and confidently to different people, pupils should be taught to:

a. speak with clear diction and appropriate intonation
b. choose words with precision
c. organise what they say
d. focus on the main point(s)
e. include relevant detail
f. take into account the needs of their listeners.

**Listening – Key Skills**

To listen, understand and respond to others, pupils should be taught to:

a. sustain concentration
b. remember specific points that interest them
c. make relevant comments
d. listen to others' reactions
e. ask questions to clarify their understanding
f. identify and respond to sound patterns in language [for example, alliteration, rhyme, word play].

**Writing:**

Writing: At OWLS, we aim to ensure writing is meaningful and enjoyable for our students. They learn to communicate meaning in narrative and non-fiction texts and spell and punctuate correctly. Writing is taught explicitly during our Literacy Hour each day, with learning objectives for word level (vocabulary building), sentence level (grammatical structures) and text level activities, (structuring writing for a range of purposes and audiences, such as informative writing, report writing and story narratives.) Within the Writing Programme, we also develop the children’s use of phonics, spelling and handwriting. Phonics and Spelling is explicitly taught at OWLS. Our core Phonics scheme is Jolly phonics. Children are systematically introduced to all of the sounds in the English language that form the building blocks for learning to read. Jolly Phonics uses a range of activities, including big books, tactile letter tracing, songs and actions to motivate and engage children. Jolly Phonics is also used to introduce children to 'sounding out' and 'blending' sounds into words.
Numeracy
At OWLS, we follow the UK numeracy strategy, with a daily maths lesson of approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour for all pupils of primary age. In these lessons, we introduce the whole class to a mathematical concept for a proportion of the time, with a significant focus on oral and mental calculation.

The daily Numeracy (mathematics) lesson is divided up into three parts.

- **oral work and mental calculation** (about 5 to 10 minutes) whole-class work to rehearse, sharpen and develop mental and oral skills
- **the main teaching activity** (about 30 minutes) teaching input and pupil activities work as a whole class, in groups, in pairs or as individuals
- **a plenary to round off the lesson** (about 10 minutes) work with the whole class to sort out misconceptions and identify progress, to summarise key facts and ideas and what to remember, to make links to other work and discuss the next steps in learning.

Through the numeracy hour lesson, children will be supported in developing their understanding of the seven core numeracy strands:

- Using and applying mathematics,
- Counting and understanding number,
- Knowing and using number facts,
- Calculating,
- Understanding shape
- Measuring
- Handling data

Wherever possible, we provide children with 'hands on' activities in the above strands, encouraging children to explore, enjoy, learn, practice and talk about their developing understanding. We introduce children to the 'language of mathematics' at a young age and ensure we use and teach mathematical vocabulary during lessons. Mathematical concepts introduced are used by children to solve 'real life' problems whenever possible, using materials and equipment to support understanding, as well as 'pencil and paper' methods. Activities are differentiated to the 'right' level for your child, which helps children to develop a positive, enthusiastic, inquiring attitude and develops children's confidence in working mathematically. We strive to ensure OWLS children learn to enjoy the intellectual challenges of mathematics and numeracy.
Science

At OWLS, we believe our children will become the future problem solvers in our ever changing world. As such, we believe teaching our children to become scientific inquirers is vitally important. Science is taught through exploration and investigation, with high regard for correct scientific processes such as 'fair testing.' Children receive at least one Science lesson a week taught by a specialist Science teacher.

Our programme of study focuses on the key skills involved in:

SCIENTIFIC ENQUIRY and INVESTIGATION:

Planning - children are taught to:

- ask questions [for example, ‘How?’, ‘Why?’, ‘What will happen if … ?’] and decide how they might find answers to them
- use first-hand experience and simple information sources to answer questions
- think about what might happen before deciding what to do
- recognise when a test or comparison is unfair

Obtaining and presenting evidence - children are taught to:

- follow simple instructions to control the risks to themselves and to others
- explore, using the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste as appropriate, and make and record observations and measurements
- communicate what happened in a variety of ways, including using ICT

Considering evidence and evaluating - children are taught to:

- make simple comparisons [for example, hand span, shoe size] and identify simple patterns or associations
- compare what happened with what they expected would happen, and try to explain it, drawing on their knowledge and understanding
- review their work and explain what they did to others

The above skills are taught through the following three key areas:

Life processes and living things:
- Humans and other animals
- Green plants
- Variation and classification
- Living things in their environment

Materials and their properties
- Grouping materials
- Changing Materials

Physical Processes
- Electricity
- Forces and Motion
- Light and Sound
Knowledge of the World-

“Knowledge of the World” is taught through ‘inquiry’ based topics, (rather than stand alone subjects) with cross curricular links emphasized. Children are encouraged to research information and build knowledge for themselves, by asking their own questions and working together to find answers from different resources. Knowledge of the world incorporates the traditional curriculum areas of Geography and History, along with study of other cultures.

We will support the children in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding that will help them to make sense of the world. Their learning will be supported through offering opportunities for them to use a range of tools safely, and, whenever possible, to encounter people and objects in their natural environments and in real – life situations.

In Geography, students investigate our local South Lantau area and contrasting areas of Hong Kong, (eg. Central, Kowloon) finding out about the environment in both areas and the people who live there. They also learn about the wider world, through self selected inquiry topics. They carry out geographical enquiry inside and outside the classroom. In doing this they ask geographical questions about people, places and environments, and use geographical skills and resources such as maps and photographs.

At OWLS, we are also committed to teaching our children about 'environmental change and sustainable development'. We teach our children about responsible use of resources and encourage children to recycle materials.

In History, children also learn how the past is different from the present. They are given opportunities to learn about people's lives and lifestyles, using different sources of information, such as photographs, artifacts and, whenever possible, personal accounts from people. To make ‘History’ meaningful to our youngest students, our curriculum begins by encouraging children to explore the immediate history of their own families, introducing children to the concept of a simple time line. Students also find out about significant men, women, children and events from the recent and more distant past. They listen and respond to stories and use sources of information to help them inquire, asking and answering questions.

As a multicultural school, children at OWLS have a wonderful opportunity to develop understanding and appreciation of other cultures. We are a non denominational school, and as such, we give children the opportunity to explore and learn about many different festivals and events from different cultures and religions. We encourage our children to show empathy towards others, whatever their beliefs, and accepting of our differences. We hope our students will develop into caring, global citizens.
Physical Education, Movement and Dance

At OWLS, we believe physical education is extremely important and children participate in physical activity for a short period of time every day. This is supplemented by two longer PE sessions each week. Our PE programme is designed to enable young children to develop skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. At Owls, teacher encourage pupils to build on their natural enthusiasm for movement, using it to explore and learn about their world. They start to work and play with other pupils in pairs and small groups. By watching, listening and experimenting, they develop their skills in movement and coordination, and enjoy expressing and testing themselves in a variety of situations.

Competitive games are also introduced in Primary, with children learning such skills as bat and ball control. Most PE lessons are taught in our school hall, but we also use the Mui Wo Sports Centre facilities, when a very large space is needed for games such as football. The curriculum also develops an understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food.

KEY Knowledge, skills and understanding taught in Primary

Acquiring and developing skills

1. Pupils are be taught to:
   a. explore basic skills, actions and ideas with increasing understanding
   b. remember and repeat simple skills and actions with increasing control and coordination.

Selecting and applying skills, tactics and compositional ideas

2. Pupils should be taught to:
   a. explore how to choose and apply skills and actions in sequence and in combination
   b. vary the way they perform skills by using simple tactics and movement phrases
   c. apply rules and conventions for different activities.

Evaluating and improving performance

3. Pupils should be taught to:
   a. describe what they have done
   b. observe, describe and copy what others have done
   c. use what they have learnt to improve the quality and control of their work.

Knowledge and understanding of fitness and health

4. Pupils should be taught:
   a. how important it is to be active
   b. to recognise and describe how their bodies feel during different activities.
Expressive Arts – Art and Design, Design and Technology, Music and Drama

We aim to provide our pupils with opportunities not only to progressively develop their skills and knowledge within these areas but also to enjoy and appreciate all related activities. Pupils have opportunities within our whole school programme to use a variety of materials and develop a range of techniques and skills, encouraging self expression and creativity.

In Art and Design, pupils develop their creativity and imagination by exploring the visual, tactile and sensory qualities of materials and processes. They learn about the role of art, craft and design in their environment. They begin to understand colour, shape and space and pattern and texture and use them to represent their ideas and feelings. There are four key elements to our Art and Design Curriculum:

- Exploring and developing Ideas
- Investigating and making art, craft and design
- Evaluating and developing work
- Knowledge and understanding

In Design and Technology, pupils learn how to think imaginatively and talk about what they like and dislike when designing and making. They build on their early childhood experiences of investigating objects around them. They explore how familiar things work and talk about, draw and model their ideas. They learn how to design and make safely.

In Music, we encourage our pupils to take an active part in music making, experiencing the fun of music, whilst gaining a sense of achievement through the development of skills, knowledge and understanding of a range of music. Our music curriculum encourages children to listen carefully and respond physically to a wide range of music. They play musical instruments and sing a variety of songs from memory, adding accompaniments and creating short compositions, with increasing confidence, imagination and control. They explore and enjoy how sounds and silence can create different moods and effects.

In our Primary section, children receive music and movement taught by a specialist music teacher, in addition to lessons taught in class. Children in our Primary School also have the opportunity to receive individual piano, guitar or violin lessons, taught within the school day (this carries a small extra charge.) Extra curricular music lessons are also available.

We believe Drama to be very important in developing a young child’s self confidence. Our pupils have regular opportunities to develop their skills and explore a range of drama experiences. Children participate in a range of activities.

Pupils learn to:
a. use language and actions to explore and convey situations, characters and emotions
b. create and sustain roles individually and when working with others
c. comment constructively on drama they have watched or in which they have taken part.