

Infant School overview

Dover Campus





Welcome to the Infant School on Dover Campus! Our school is an incredibly exciting place for 4–7 year-olds to learn and grow in an environment that is welcoming, safe and appropriately challenging for all our students. These early years are an important stage of schooling as our students develop a love of learning that will serve as a firm foundation throughout their education.

UWCSEA is different to other schools in that our learning programme reaches far beyond academics. Along with our stimulating inquiry-based academic programme, our activities, outdoor education, personal and social education and service programmes are central to each child’s education. These are delivered in a carefully structured, developmentally appropriate framework.

Our Infant School has distinct structures in place to support the specific needs of students in their first years of school. Classroom routines support students in developing the mindset and attitudes of a learner. Students love coming to school each day and through the programme build curiosity, develop resilience and embrace challenge.

At all levels of the school, we provides exceptional opportunities for our students to develop independence and leadership skills, and the Infant School is no exception. At the heart of our educational philosophy is the belief that we prepare students not just for university, but for life, and it is the skills and qualities students develop, as much as the knowledge and understanding they gain, that will define the quality of the life they live. For our youngest students, this involves growing in independence and taking responsibility for their activities, their friendships and their daily actions. “Mistakes” are viewed as opportunities for learning instead of as errors to correct.

School begins at 8am and finishes an hour earlier than the rest of the campus at 2pm, with optional after-school activities available 2–3pm.

Infant School enrolment

Grade	Age of students*	Number of students	Number of classes
K1	4–5 years	88	4
K2	5–6 years	88	4
1	6–7 years	110	5
Total		286	13

*Students must be born on or between 1 September and 31 August. Refer to our age-grade boundary chart for the planned year of entry for guidance, or contact Admissions.

Available places may be offered up to the start of Term 2 (January) of the academic year.

A note about K2: places only become available when a currently enrolled student withdraws from the College. This is usually less than five each year, and therefore we do not open K2 applications on Dover Campus as all available places are usually filled by children who have siblings already enrolled at the College. East Campus accepts applications for K2 students. Please contact Admissions for more information.

About the UWCSEA curriculum

Developed from our mission, the UWCSEA concept-based curriculum enables students to embrace challenge and take responsibility for shaping a better world. This is achieved through all five elements of our holistic learning programme—academics, activities, outdoor education, personal and social education and service.

Our curriculum organises learning around the development of transferable ideas (concepts), which may be disciplinary or interdisciplinary. Knowledge and skill acquisition is vital, but not the end goal in a concept-based learning environment. Instead, by using their knowledge and skill learning, students construct and express conceptual understandings, which transfer to new contexts. This allows our students to apply critical thought in any situation, now or in the future.

This curriculum model takes into account the reality of our international school community. Students who will spend only a few years of their overall schooling at the College are equipped for a smooth transition from one school system to another by our focus on transferable concepts rather than specific content.

Standards: These are the significant concepts from each learning area, articulated into 'conceptual statements' reflecting the broadest conceptual understandings of a discipline or learning area. Standards are informed by the UWCSEA mission, educational goal, values, the needs of our student body and research-based best practice. These apply to all grade-levels from K1–G12, ensuring these concepts are revisited in developmentally appropriate ways as students transition from grade to grade.

Because the standards are conceptual in nature, students who join us from different countries can access the curriculum regardless of their educational background.

Conceptual Understandings: Under each standard are conceptual understandings, which are conceptual statements written for specific developmental stages. These may be grade-specific. This allows students to access the broader concepts in the standard, while simultaneously developing an understanding of specific concepts appropriate to the grade-level.

Benchmarks: Attached to each conceptual understanding in each grade, they describe what a student should know or be able to do at each stage in their learning in order to develop understanding in each subject.

In the High School, the standards, conceptual understandings and benchmarks specifically take into account the requirements of the external examining bodies that set the (I)GCSE and IBDP examinations.

How the model works

Using English as an example, all students work towards a standard in writing for an audience. The conceptual understandings in each grade then outline what students should understand at each stage—in early Primary School this is a conceptual understanding around making deliberate word choices in their communication. By Middle School the complexity of the conceptual understanding has developed and students are asked to create pleasure and coherent meaning through their choice of words. This in turn is further refined in the High School as students in the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) are asked to influence the reader through selective word choice.

Below is an example of a standard in English, and the conceptual understandings for that standard in Grades 1 and 7 and the IBDP.

K1–Grade 12

Standard: Writing expresses selfhood, creativity and intellect in a medium shaped by audience and purpose.

Grade 1

Conceptual Understanding: We create real or imagined experiences when writing stories by using characters and setting.

Benchmark: Develop the story through character, focusing on specific actions.

Grade 7

Conceptual Understanding: All parts of a text work together to shape meaning.

Benchmark: Write narratives, using time and plot deliberately in order to influence mood and focus attention on the important moments in a story.

Grade 11 and 12 (IBDP)

Conceptual Understanding: Writers manipulate structure to convey meaning effectively.

Benchmark: Sequence and sustain structure to strengthen and develop the logic and persuasive impact of a claim.



Academics

The academic curriculum in our Infant School is structured around a holistic, inquiry-based approach to learning. Guided by the UWCSEA profile and learning principles, students study:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Art
- Humanities
- Science
- Music
- a Language other than English or EAL
- Physical Education (PE)

In developmentally appropriate ways, students explore concepts and develop their essential understandings in these subject areas through interdisciplinary units of study.

Each student is supported by a teaching team that includes their classroom teacher and teacher assistant. Specialist teachers deliver music, languages and PE. Coaches work with classroom teachers to support Literacy and Digital Literacy.

The learning activities of infant-aged children are interdisciplinary in nature, reflecting their experiences outside of school. While the Infant School learning is intentional and connects to our College curriculum, teachers adjust their plans on a regular basis to ensure students' backgrounds, interests and learning needs are taken into account.

Art

Recognising that the making and appreciation of art is important for young children's cognitive, motor and emotional development, our students have regular opportunities to express themselves through art in the classroom. Through learning centres and class projects, students paint, work with clay, create collages and build sculptures out of recycled materials.

Literacy

Students engage in a balanced literacy programme made up of the following components:

- Speaking and Listening
- Reading
- Writing
- Language/Word Study

Each of these components is made up of a number of strategies that support children in developing skills and understandings about language.

Starting in K2, students take part in Reading and Writing Workshop. This programme, created by Teachers College Reading and Writing Project at Columbia University, supports children in understanding the writing process and the importance of stamina in becoming a reader or writer. Classrooms are communities of readers and writers who share and celebrate their published work.

Our literacy programme replaces a traditional phonics approach and students learn about spelling by locating patterns and rules across a variety of words. This allows children to inquire into language instead of merely memorise discrete words or groups of words.

Languages other than English/ English as an Additional Language

All students have four lessons a week with a specialist teacher in the following languages:

- K1 – Chinese
- K2 – Chinese
- G1 – Chinese, Spanish or EAL

EAL learners in K1 and K2 are supported in the classroom environment; there is no specific EAL programme as students are developing transferable literacy skills. Some **home language (mother tongue)** classes are taught in small groups at additional cost. These classes are available subject to demand. See our EAL and Languages factsheets for more information, or contact Admissions.

Mathematics

Young children learn mathematical concepts by engaging in meaningful, practical activities that connect to their daily lives. Our students take part in a variety of activities that support them in moving from the concrete to symbolic level of understanding. In K1 for example, concepts such as addition and subtraction might be modelled and explored with use of concrete materials in practical situations. As children move into Grade 1, these concepts are recorded symbolically with numbers and the plus, minus and equals signs.

Manipulatives such as counters or interlocking cubes are used to introduce and reinforce mathematical concepts in number or pattern. Play and hands on experiences such as cooking are utilised on a regular basis to teach concepts in measurement such as capacity, mass or length.

The development of reasoning, communication and problem solving skills are integrated into our learning engagements and reflected on by students as part of mathematical inquiries.

Music

Through our music programme, students listen, sing and respond to music, exploring musical concepts such as rhythm, pitch and melody. Our students love music class; it is a time when they can express themselves in playful ways both with and without instruments.

There are two 40 minute periods of music per week. K1 and K2 also have fortnightly singing assemblies, where they rehearse their musical repertoire and hone their performance skills.

Science and Humanities

Infant School students learn about science and humanities through interdisciplinary units of study. These units allow them to explore a topic by applying their knowledge from a variety of subject areas. For example, in a unit on light and sound, students might use their knowledge of graphing skills to make sense of data collected during scientific investigations. The teaching of science and humanities also focuses on the core skills required in undertaking an inquiry. Both research skills and investigation skills are taught through "hands on" experiences and follow up discussion and analysis.

Technology

A large body of research that shows that technology, when used intentionally, improves learning. The College provides an appropriate device for all primary aged students to use in the classroom. This is a tablet for the youngest students, moving to a laptop in the older primary grades.

Teachers are supported by a digital literacy coach, whose role is to help integrate technology into the classroom to improve student learning.

Academics in K1

Our youngest students are given space and time to pursue their own interests within the curriculum framework. Centres for art, discovery, blocks, mathematics, reading, writing and dramatic play ensure that students can explore topics of interest as they emerge over the course of the year.

Dedicated 'Discovery Time' allows students to collaborate with students from other K1 classes on large-scale, long-term projects that they design together, with minimal guidance from the teacher. Students have access to the entire K1 pod area, as well as the classrooms of their peers. This also supports students in their social and emotional development as they broaden their social networks and learn to collaborate with their peers.

Physical Education and K1 Perceptual Motor Programme

Delivered by a specialist PE teacher, all students have weekly PE lessons. In K2 and Grade 1, there are two lessons each week. In K1 students have three sessions of Perceptual Motor Programme (PMP) per week, in addition to one PE lesson. Delivered by a specialist teacher, the Perceptual Motor Programme is designed to develop a solid foundation of fundamental movement skills.



Activities

When the Infant School finishes at 2pm, we have a small number of after school activities open to students in K2 and Grade 1. These activities, led by Infant School teachers, support students in broadening their interests, building their social skills and developing their resilience and perseverance. Some examples of teacher-led activities on offer this school year are yoga and mindfulness, Lego Technics, coding, service and music time. Additional sports-related activities are available on a fee-paying basis; these are gymnastics, tennis and swimming. Additionally we offer several weekend programmes, run by qualified outside providers using the campus facilities. Previously they have included activities such as gymnastics, swimming, tennis, football, karate and Chinese music and dance. Such activities introduce our Infant School students to the formal activities programme, enabling them to explore and develop their personal preferences.

The number of offerings expands in the Junior School in Grade 2 and is designed to provide students with further opportunities to follow their passions and develop new ones, alongside like-minded peers who share their interests.

Outdoor Education

Our outdoor education programme is designed to take students into the unfamiliar and present them with age-appropriate challenges.

In the Infant School we strive to make use of our College and local communities to extend classroom inquiries. In K1, students may take part in Forest Schools work in our Enchanted Garden or other green spaces, where they collect leaves, look for living things or make natural collages using twigs, rocks and other natural items. Our many off-campus field trips, for example to Chinatown, the zoo or local theatres, engage children in real life experiences that enable them to consolidate and deepen classroom learning. Parents are welcome assistants on these field trips.

All of these experiences pave the way for students to have the more independent experience in Grade 1 and later in Junior School, when they spend more nights away from home.

There are no overnight trips in K1 or K2, however in Grade 1 students take part in a sleepover in their classroom towards the end of the academic year. Students explore the campus as the sun goes down, 'camp out' in sleeping bags and wake up to new morning routines. Although some students find this more challenging than others, the invariable outcome is an increase in confidence and resilience for each student.

In Grade 2, students then build on this experience by spending a night at the Singapore Zoo.

Personal and Social Education

Students with well-developed social and emotional skills are better equipped to manage themselves, relate to others, develop resilience and a sense of self-worth, resolve conflict, engage in teamwork and feel positive about themselves and the world around them.

The ability to know themselves and to interact effectively with others, to collaborate, negotiate and identify what's important to them is at the heart of the Infant School experience. Our Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme is taught holistically, embedded into classroom routines and highlighted during learning activities. Programmes such as Fun Friends and Circle Solutions are used within classrooms to facilitate meaningful discussions about how to problem solve during conflict situations or how to communicate one's feelings or needs. Both approaches promote healthy relationships, mindfulness, resilience and wellbeing.

Student wellbeing is the main responsibility of the class teacher who closely follows the personal development of their students and maintains communication with parents about their progress and developmental needs. The Head of Grade assists teachers and parents and all are supported by the Infant School Principal who has an overarching responsibility for the pastoral care of our Infant School students.

While they spend the majority of their time with their classroom teacher and teacher assistant, students have plenty of opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with other adults as well. This ensures that there is a group of adults around each child who knows them well. The Principal, Head of Grade, counsellors and the specialist teachers all work together as a team to support each child. This team approach to education and wellbeing is a key part of our success.

A solid partnership with parents is a critical part of ensuring the wellbeing of our youngest students.

Professional guidance from the counsellors in our Counselling and Wellness Centre is also available for students and families.



Service

Service is at the heart of the UWC movement, and even our youngest students become involved in service activities at College, local and global level. At College level, where they offer a service to other members of the school community; in Singapore service they connect with members of the Singaporean community; and in global service, which incorporates Global Concerns (GC) projects. Infant School students identify local problems they can solve and reflect on their ability to be agents of change. College Service might involve recycling materials, caring for plants or helping the Operations and Facilities team to clean up rubbish and leaf litter. College Service gives students an opportunity to put the UWCSEA values and mission into practice on a daily basis.

The projects our students participate in include working with ACRES, an established Singapore-based animal welfare organisation and supporting Mumbai Mobile Creches, which provides a comprehensive daycare service for children of construction workers in Mumbai, India. In K1 our students build relationships by regularly connecting with children from Child @ Street 11, an organisation that educates young children from low-income and dysfunctional families and in K2 and Grade 1, our students work with local residential homes for the elderly.

We all have a responsibility to protect the environment and the College is committed to ensuring environmental stewardship becomes a major part of every child's education. Our children are involved in a variety of initiatives such as worm composting, watering gardens and collecting litter. Our Infant School students are embracing the College mission and doing their bit to take care of the environment; they are well on the way to creating a sustainable future.

For more information, please contact Admissions

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