

Oconee County Primary School Profile

Oconee County Primary School opened its doors in 1987 and is located near the intersection of Mars Hill Road and GA Highway 53. With approximately 430 students, OCPS houses Special Needs Pre-K, Kindergarten, First, and Second grade classrooms. The National Title I Distinguished Schools program recognizes schools that receive Title I funds. OCPS has been a Title I school for eleven years and has won this award nine times. This award honors schools for closing the achievement gap and exceeding the benchmark required to make AYP. The students' CRCT results in Reading, Language Arts, and Mathematics determine this distinction.

At OCPS, we believe our teachers are our greatest resource. We have forty-one certified teachers on staff, and most have advanced degrees or additional certifications. All teachers hold valid Georgia teaching certificates and are highly qualified. The school also employs two Special Education teachers, a Title I teacher, an ESOL teacher, a Media Specialist, a Speech and Language Pathologist, a part-time gifted teacher, a part-time counselor, a part-time social worker, and a school nurse. Oconee Primary also has twenty-two paraprofessionals who assist teachers with classroom instruction. Our front office is staffed by a full-time registrar and a bookkeeper, as well as a part-time receptionist.

Our curriculum is the Georgia Performance Standards. During the day, students in all grade levels work toward mastery of grade level standards. Teachers design differentiated lessons to meet the needs of all learners. For more information about the Georgia Performance Standards, visit www.georgiastandards.org.

Within the classroom, students are instructed at their level through differentiation and flexible small groups. OCPS believes in a balanced approach to literacy. Students get daily practice with phonics, sight words, guided reading, and writing. Math instruction is designed to engage students in hands-on lessons, which builds a strong foundation for math concepts. Teachers use manipulatives and technology to build students' understanding of number sense, place value, geometry, and problem solving skills.

Our school is also guided by Learning Focused Schools principles which are researched-based strategies that promote learning and student engagement. Students use essential questions, graphic organizers, and summarization strategies to guide their learning toward mastery of GPS.

Staffed by a full-time Media Specialist, the library is the hub of our school. Students can choose from over 11,000 books. Our students visit the media center at least once each week for lessons designed by our Media Specialist. Throughout the year, the Media Center hosts special events such as author visits, book fairs, Star Lab, and the Georgia Book Awards. Led by our Media Specialist, our morning news program, WOCPS, is anchored and run by our second grade students.

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Technology plays a large part in our school. We have two computer labs with twenty-two student stations, one teacher station, and a Smartboard in each. Classes visit the lab weekly and work on publishing stories, online educational games that relate to GPS, math drills, and research. Each classroom is outfitted with a minimum of three computers and a Smartboard. Other technology available to students includes digital cameras, scanners, flip video cameras, document cameras, and student response clickers. We are supported by a full-time Technology Support Technician and an Instructional Technology Specialist who visits our school weekly to work with teachers and students on technology integration.

Students spend fifty minutes each day in one of three activity classes—PE, Art, or Music. Our PE department is staffed by a full-time PE teacher and a paraprofessional. Students participate in individual and group activities that support the GPS for Physical Education and Health. In 2008, a climbing wall was added to our gym. Throughout the year, the PE program hosts special events such as The Little Chief Fun Run, Jump Rope for Heart, and Field Day.

The Art program at OCPS is led by a full-time art teacher. Students at all grade levels are encouraged to explore art through various media such as drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, fiber arts, and ceramics. Students develop critical-thinking and perceptual awareness through the study of art and design elements found in art from around the world. Special features of the art department include Square One Art, as well as the use of children's literature and other ties to the general curriculum.

Our music program is also led by a full-time teacher. At OCPS, we use an Orff-based music curriculum, which is based on the belief that the easiest method of teaching music is to draw out the students' natural interests in rhythm and melody and help them develop gradually. We help our students develop musicianship through singing, creative movement, and playing instruments, and we incorporate elements of other disciplines into every music lesson. Highlights of the music program include grade level performances, visiting musicians, and a 2nd grade chorus.

Each grade level gets thirty minutes of recess each day. We have two playgrounds with swings, slides, sandboxes, climbing equipment, and a blacktop area where students can play basketball, four-square, and jump rope.

Our school cafeteria serves hot lunches every day. Students can choose from three menu options—two hot lunches or a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. More information on the school nutrition program can be found on the Oconee County Schools website--
www.oconeeschools.org.