

Alvarado is a K through 5th grade school with 521 students in 2 programs: **Spanish Immersion and General Education**. There are 2 classes in each grade in each program through 3rd grade. Each program has a 4th, 5th and 4/5 split class. About half the students are Latino, one-third are classified as “English Language Learners.” On average, half our K seats are taken by siblings each year. Both programs follow the same standards and offer the same curriculum. (We have one PTA, and we do cross-socialize between the two programs.)

We start at 7:50 a.m. and get out at 1:50 p.m. We have two after-school programs. The free district program, Excel, is only for students who qualify financially or academically. A private on-site program, GLO, fills its 120 spots quickly. Other children take the school bus to be dropped off at off-site locations. Please see the latest list on our website.

What distinguishes us? We prioritize literacy support, smaller class sizes and art as a thread through the entire school experience. Our children enjoy a well-rounded education that includes lab science, PE, theater, music and technology instruction. We celebrate our diverse cultures and come together as one active and enthusiastic parent community.

Kindergarten

Our kindergarteners are somewhat separated from the other students during the day so they can ease into our large school. There are bathrooms and drinking fountains inside each kindergarten classroom, and the kinders have their own recess.

Half our school is Spanish **Immersion**. SFUSD strives to balance each immersion class with 2/3 native Spanish speakers and 1/3 English speakers. Kindergarten is taught in Spanish 90% of the day, and that number is reduced by 10% each year, so by 5th grade, the kids are taught 50% in English and 50% in Spanish.)

In general, all kinders start the day working on the calendar and the weather. The class may work as a whole or may split into 4 groups that rotate through Listening, Reading/Phonics, and Writing and Art centers. Teachers work with small groups on reading skills when possible. Children rotate regularly through responsibilities like line leader.

Children take home a book each week and write a “review,” usually a picture and one sentence. We also have a program called Book Buddies, in which 5th graders come in to read to their Kindergarten partners once a week.

Our teachers follow the **curriculum** established by SFUSD. This curriculum is based on Houghton-Mifflin-Lectura for Language Arts, Harcourt Brace for Mathematics, Macmillan for Social Studies, and FOSS for Science. Teachers meet state guidelines for instructional minutes for each core subject area, which includes 30 minutes of instruction per day in English Language Development.

We have a separate **art** studio and kiln. All students have 8 weeks of 3D art (clay, paper mache) and 8 weeks of 2D (painting). Our art teacher works with the classroom teachers to determine the class projects, thereby reinforcing academic learning while the children enjoy creating art. There is also art in the classroom.

All SFUSD schools offer **music**. Younger children learn rhythms and play recorders following the Orff program. Fourth and fifth grade students can choose an instrument and get an hour a week of instruction.

We have a separate **science** lab. All students have 8 weeks of hand-on experimental learning with our science teacher (fourth and fifth graders come for 10 weeks). Our science committee hosts “science nights” during the school year. The PTA also funds science-specific field trips for each classroom. Science is integrated throughout the year in the classroom curriculum as well (FOSS curriculum). We also have two learning gardens, including a cistern, outdoor classroom space, a pond, reading nooks and plants. The garden areas are incorporated into classroom curriculum and classes have plots.

Each class visits the **library** once a week for an hour with our bilingual librarian. They can take out books each week. They can start bringing the library books home in 2nd grade. Before that, they bring home classroom-based book bags each week.

Literacy is a priority at our school. We have two literacy specialists who focus on first graders and coordinate the rest of the literacy program. Five tutors work with 30 students, mostly second graders. Thanks to a grant, we also

have an afterschool tutoring program called Reading Partners. We are implementing “Writing by Design,” a nationally recognized program that trains teachers to develop literacy through writing.

Kinder and 1st grade come to **Motor Skills (PE)** twice a week all year, second-graders come once a week. The focus is on gross motor skill to improve coordination and balance and get exercise. Grades three to five have PE once a week. On the play yard, we have a structured recess program called Playworks. The yard is divided into sections, and children can choose free play or participation in the “sport of the week,” which is facilitated by one of two coaches. Generally we have five to six staff on the yard per recess.

Each class works with a half-time bilingual computer teacher once every other week. Ks learn to use the keyboard and mouse. By 5th grade, they are learning Excel spreadsheets and a bit of web-site construction. The curriculum is developed in collaboration with the teachers, so the work done in computer lab is consistent with and integrated with what students learn in the classroom.