“Our son, Ben, is becoming more confident, mature, and inquisitive daily, it seems. Just as important, he is so happy. Ben jumps off the bus and bounces through the door, ready to regale his dad with stories of his day.” Stacy Stuart, Primary School parent

OUR DISTINCTIVE STRENGTHS

FAMILIES VISITING BROOKSIDE, MKA’S PRIMARY SCHOOL, IMMEDIATELY FEEL THE WARMTH AND ENERGY THAT PERVADE THE CAMPUS. THEY SENSE A SPIRIT OF DISCOVERY AND CREATIVITY, AND EVERYWHERE SEE TEACHERS AND CHILDREN ENGAGED IN THE SERIOUS AND JOYFUL WORK OF LEARNING. SEVERAL KEY STRENGTHS DEFINE THIS REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE:

SMALL CLASSES
A hallmark of the Primary School, small classes enable our teachers to know each child exceptionally well and to offer personal attention and a highly individualized experience.

RICHNESS AND RIGOR
Through experiments in the science lab, conversations in French and Spanish and encounters with the art of Paul Klee or the music of Tchaikovsky, children explore material that fully challenges their growing minds through the MKA Core Works program.

A SOPHISTICATED APPROACH
Brookside’s curriculum and teaching are informed by the latest and best educational research. The school’s master teachers build on this research to shape each child’s experience through a careful process of observation and assessment.

A CONCERN FOR THE WHOLE CHILD
Our teachers care deeply for their students and are committed to nurturing their social and emotional development as well as their academic progress. Children grow as independent individuals, as members of a close community, and as committed young citizens through a thriving program of community service.
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

THE HEART OF THE BROOKSIDE EXPERIENCE IS AN EXCELLENT EDUCATION IN THE CORE AREAS THAT PROVIDE THE FOUNDATION FOR ALL FUTURE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: READING, WRITING, AND MATHEMATICS.

A RESEARCH-BASED METHOD
Brookside’s reading and writing program has been shaped through a 30-year association with Columbia University’s Teachers College. Similarly, our math curriculum grows from the University of Chicago’s Everyday Math Program. In each case, MKA has adopted nationally recognized educational models, then continually enriched these approaches.

THE WORKSHOP MODEL
Students learn reading, writing, and mathematics through immersion and practice. They read and then write in genres ranging from fairy tales to poetry to how-to books. They solve mathematical problems in many ways and apply mathematical skills in many contexts—including through an array of games targeting specific abilities. Assessment and differentiation are key: Teachers constantly monitor students’ mastery of skills, planning lessons for individual students and groups within the class, reviewing material as needed and introducing new challenges at the optimal pace.

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES
In addition to their classroom teachers, students benefit from the expertise of full-time math and language coordinators dedicated to the Primary School. These specialists support teachers in bringing coherence to the educational program and in meeting the needs of students who may need extra help or added challenge.

IMPRESSIVE RESULTS
Children leave Brookside with a core of essential skills. They have developed conceptual abilities, mastered math facts and begun to learn the power of mathematical thinking. They have proven themselves avid, critical readers and capable users of technology, comfortable conducting research, constructing Web pages, creating PowerPoint presentations, and more. They are also emerging as skillful writers, practiced in the process of planning, drafting, and revising. In fact, as early as first grade, each student has had the experiencing of polishing a work into final form, then illustrating it and binding it as a published book.
CURRICULAR RICHNESS
A WIDE ARRAY OF CLASSES—EACH WITH FACULTY MEMBERS SPECIALIZING IN THE FIELD THEY TEACH—PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH A LEARNING EXPERIENCE OF EXCEPTIONAL BREADTH.

SCIENCE
Starting in pre-kindergarten, children are exposed to science, with special visits from our science teacher. From first grade on, they go to the science lab to take part in hands-on experiments (no text books are used). Units such as one on the migration of monarch butterflies through Mexico integrate with lessons in math, social studies, and foreign languages.

SOCIAL STUDIES
Explorations span geography, history, economics, civics, and ethics. Students build note-taking and study skills while delving into concepts as diverse as the interaction of humans with the environment and the building of local communities.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE
Beginning in pre-kindergarten, all students take either French or Spanish (depending on the year they enter). Age-appropriate lessons focus on both listening and speaking skills and build to an impressive level of fluency.

LIBRARY/TECHNOLOGY
Students visit the library each week to read, learn research skills, and choose books from an excellent collection of children’s literature. The library is a hub for technology, which is also integrated into class work through extensive use of classroom computers, mobile laptop labs, and digital cameras and projectors.

ART
Students encounter concepts of line, shape and color, experience the freedom of artistic expression, and study art ranging from African masks to the creations of Van Gogh and Frank Lloyd Wright.

MUSIC
Children study vocal and instrumental music following the Orff method. Handbells and choir chimes are introduced in first grade, recorders in third grade. Students may also elect to take part in the MKA Strings Program.

DANCE
Children visit the dance room each week for exercises in movement that help them develop body awareness, coordination, rhythm, and joy in self-expression. Class plays integrate dance with music and drama.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION
From catching scarves to playing parachute games, children engage in developmentally appropriate activities that hone fine and gross motor skills and stress teamwork and sportsmanship. Opportunity for organized sports in a non-competitive environment is also provided by the after-school Bitty Program in basketball and baseball.
"Beginning in kindergarten, each primary school child takes part in a class play each year. Along with our concerts, our annual art show, and many classroom presentations, these performances help students feel comfortable with themselves and with an audience.” Becky Markley, kindergarten teacher

“When you do a play, you learn about working with other people, and you learn how much practice you have to do to make it a really good play.” Alex Rivlin, third grade student

“So much of what we stand for comes together in these performances—responsibility in memorizing lines, creativity in problem-solving, confidence in public discourse. They are important, and wonderfully memorable, learning experiences.” Ginger Kriegel, Primary School Head of Campus

“I was kind of nervous when our play got started, but then I wished it was just the beginning.” Madisen Siegel, third grade student
EXPLORATIONS AND ADVENTURES

DAILY LIFE AT BROOKSIDE IS VIBRANT, VARIED, AND FULL OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISCOVERY—AS A SMALL SELECTION OF FAVORITE HIGHLIGHTS MAKES CLEAR.

COLONIAL TIMES
Third graders learn the power of the library and the latest technology through a research project focusing on Colonial America. Each child becomes an expert in one aspect of Colonial life, from ships or weapons, to schooling or games. Final presentations take the form of iMovies, podcasts, dioramas and more, as each class hosts its own museum website.

A GARDEN OF WONDERS
As they plan, plant, and tend their own garden, second graders learn lessons in math and hard work, botany and patience. Each fall, children see the results of others’ efforts from the year before. Each spring, they take their turn nurturing seedlings that will delight the next crop of second graders to immerse themselves in this living laboratory.

LION DANCERS AND MORE
An ever-changing succession of visitors brings fascinating new experiences to the Brookside campus—from Chinese lion dancers to Juilliard jazz ensembles, and from Franklin Institute science educators to outstanding children’s authors. In recent years these have included Kevin Henkes, Tomie dePaola and Jan Brett.

CLASSROOM CONSTITUTIONS
Through a process of guided discussion, children work together to formulate rules of behavior for their own classrooms. The result is a set of expectations, phrased in positive terms, that students find highly meaningful. The exercise is part of MKA’s focus on ethics and character education, one of the School’s signature programs, shaping students’ experience at every grade level.

JOURNEYS OF DISCOVERY
Classes frequently travel beyond campus to sites that bring classroom lessons to life. Destinations range from the pet shop where pre-k children take in the wonders of the tropical fish, to a working farm, to the bakery where students add eyewitness experience to their study of bread. In an adventure of another kind, children see new life emerge with the hatching of classroom chicks—an event they can follow from home via web cam.
“Upon leaving Brookside from our admissions visit, my daughter wanted to know if she could start the next day. When the time finally came, her transition was blissful. The school community could not have been more welcoming—to her or to us as parents.” Amy South, Primary and Middle School parent

“You will never be left out. If we see someone all alone on the playground, we ask them to play.” Alton Martin, third grade student

“Character education is embedded throughout our school day. It is in the books the kids read and the plays they perform. It is in the teachable moments we find all the time in the halls, at lunch, and during phys ed.” Ralph Pacifico, physical education teacher

“Through our community service program, children learn to think about other people’s needs. They ask ‘What should we put in a kindness box for hurricane victims or less fortunate kids?’ They also learn that helping takes hard work, an element of sacrifice.” Donna Carrara, Brookside Curriculum Coordinator

“When you see the poise and pride of our third graders at graduation, you know they have had a wonderful, nurturing experience. These are eight year-olds who shake hands and look you in the eye, who can describe their experiences eloquently, who can stand up and speak before an audience.” Margaret Gonzales, Brookside Math Coordinator
COMMUNICATIONS AND UPDATES
Teachers are in regular monthly contact with all parents via phone and e-mail, providing updates on children’s progress, answering questions, and sharing any concerns. The Brookside Bulletin, a weekly electronic newsletter, covers campus news with highlights from each grade level.

CONFERENCES AND REPORTS
Parents receive detailed feedback on their child’s progress through twice-yearly conferences and extensive narrative reports. Teachers’ understanding of students’ needs and strengths is deepened through the school’s Continuum program, which provides parents with a context for understanding their child’s growth in reading, writing and mathematics.

VISITS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
Parents are always welcome on campus, and a steady stream of events and informal opportunities for involvement awaits them. These range from class plays, writing celebration days, and Maypole festivities, to the chance to take part in the classroom experience by reading stories, sharing job experiences, or helping out with class projects and trips.

PAMKA PROGRAMS
PAMKA, the Parents’ Association of The Montclair Kimberley Academy, is an active organization with an enormous impact. Through it, parents help oversee service learning opportunities, serve as class parents, and plan the school’s annual book fair, a celebration of literature that has brought a remarkable succession of top authors and illustrators to MKA.

MKA VIEWS THE EDUCATION OF EACH CHILD AS A PARTNERSHIP, AND PARENTS ARE FULLY INCLUDED.
ADMISSIONS OFFICE

201 Valley Road
Montclair, New Jersey 07042
(973) 509 7930 PHONE
(973) 509 4526 FAX
admissions@mka.org EMAIL
www.mka.org WEB

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brookside Campus (Grades PreK-3)
224 Orange Road
Montclair, New Jersey 07042