



### **Educating students. Changing lives.**

Cynthia Ann Parker Elementary School in Houston, Texas, is committed to building the academic foundation and personal growth needed by all students for future success. But Parker's contribution to your child's future doesn't stop with textbooks. As Houston's original music magnet school, Parker has the honor of being named a Grammy Signature Elementary School.

- **Our mission** is to educate & nurture the whole child through the integration of academics, music, and innovative meaningful learning experiences.
- **Our vision** is to be a diverse intellectual community where students, parents, and teachers work in harmony to develop integrity and a love for learning, music, and the arts.
- **Our Core Values:** High Expectations, Individuality, Progress and Achievement, Equity and Equality, Development of the Whole Child

Offering a variety of music instruction to students in kindergarten through fifth grade, Parker believes in the power of music to enlighten, enhance and educate.

Parker Elementary is proud of its accomplishments.

- American Choral Directors National Conference, Miami Florida - selected to perform
- Capitol Rotunda Performance, Austin Texas
- Concerts with the Houston Chamber Choir
- Chorus Performance with the Doctor's Orchestra, Rice University
- D.C. Festivals, San Antonio, Texas
- Odyssey of the Mind, Regional, state and World Competition
- Energy Magazine Opening Breakfast for the Off Shore Drilling National Conference
- HISD Winter Fest
- OAKE - Organization of American Kodaly Educations National Conference, Dallas, Texas - selected to perform
- Performances for Political Dignitaries
- Performances at Minute Maid Park for Houston Astros games
- Spring in the Park Festival, San Antonio, Texas -Outstanding Performance Award
- Suzuki Association National Conference, Chicago, Illinois
- Suzuki of the Americas National Conference, Minneapolis, MN
- Texas Music Educators Convention, San Antonio, Texas

Parker's success is largely attributable to the involvement and generosity of our teachers, parents, and surrounding community. We encourage you to learn more about our [volunteer opportunities](#) or to come visit us. Parker Elementary is a 501 c3 registered non-profit.

### **Dedicated faculty. Diverse students. Working together.**

Parker Elementary's strong academic performance and reputation is attributable to our experienced faculty and kind support of our parents and PTO. With more than 45% of our faculty having over ten years of experience (and 35% with between five and ten years), our staff is one of the most seasoned in the city of Houston.

For many years from 1997 through 2010, Parker achieved "Recognized" or "Exemplary" status by the TEA (Texas Education Agency).

Parker has been recognized by the state for its superior academic achievement consistently achieving the state education agency's top ratings of exemplary and recognized.

# **The Parker Music Magnet Program**

## **Rhythm Band (1<sup>st</sup> grade only)**

1<sup>st</sup> grade band students attend one lesson per week during school and learn the basics of music theory including steady beat, left to right note-reading skills and rhythmic patterns on the xylophone. Each student receives a music booklet to go along with in depth instruction on xylophone techniques and skills.

Rhythm Band is the first in our series of band classes. After completing Rhythm Band, students go to Pre-Band for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

## **Pre-Band (2<sup>nd</sup> grade only)**

2<sup>nd</sup> grade band students attend one lesson per week during school hours and learn the basics of music theory including steady beat, left to right note-reading skills, rhythmic patterns, notes on the treble clef, fingering system on the flutophone. Each student receives a music booklet to go along with in depth instruction on flutophone techniques, skills and note-reading.

Pre-Band is the second class in our series of band classes. After completing Pre-Band, students go to Beginner Band for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

## **Beginner Band (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>)**

Beginner Band students attend one lesson per week during school plus magnet class after school every day. Beginner Band students learn to read notes on treble clef or bass clef, rhythmic patterns, proper fingering techniques for their particular instrument, and appropriate performance and concert etiquette. With direction, students try-out the instruments and then choose from flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone and percussion. Each student receives in-depth training in a like-instrument class during the school day plus full band ensemble instruction at the end of the day.

Beginner Band has many performances during the school year on and off campus. Beginner Band is the third in our series of band classes. Beginner Band students have the option to perform at Solo & Ensemble contest. When a student successfully completes Beginner band, they move to Advanced Band.

## **Advanced Band (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>)**

Advanced band students attend one lesson per week during school plus magnet class after school every day. Advanced Band students build on their knowledge and skills from Beginner Band and add more advanced rhythmic patterns, expand the range of notes on their instrument, and develop a more mature tone quality. Each student receives in-depth training in a like-instrument class during the school day plus full band ensemble instruction at the end of the day.

Advanced Band has many performances during the year on and off campus. Advanced Band may travel out of town for performances. Advanced Band students have the option to perform at Solo & Ensemble contest and audition for Houston All-City Honor Band.

## **Chorus**

The current Chorus program at Parker was created in 2000 and has increased in size from 30 to approximately 270 children.

The purpose of the Chorus is educational, and its goal is to teach children to achieve high artistic standards through choral singing and performance.

An equally important aspect of the Chorus is the nurturing of personal growth, teamwork, responsibility, discipline, self-control, and confidence in our children. We create an environment that fosters the growth of qualities that will not only help these students to become successful in choral music, but in life.

The educational program is sequential and has developmental levels and is structured to accommodate children in each grade level who love to sing.

The structural blocks of the chorus program are:

- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Singers
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Beginning Chorus
- 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade Advanced Chorus

The curriculum is divided by grade level. Each grade is learning the following aspects:

1. Vocal technique (posture, respiration, phonation, resonant tone production)
2. Music theory (sight-reading)
3. Expression & musicianship
4. Choral literature
5. Composer's biographies and introduction to music history

### **1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Singers**

Students enrolled in this class (20-25 students in each class) attend a group lesson once a week during the school day. At the end of the school year, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Singers perform in the Parker Spring Chorus Concert along with the beginning and Advanced Chorus.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> grade Beginning Chorus**

Students enrolled in this class (45-55) attend a group lesson two times a week during the school day. Beginning Chorus has two performances a year in December and in May.

### **4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade Advanced Chorus**

This is Parker's top performing group. Advanced Chorus meets four times a week. Advanced Chorus students should possess extensive skills in vocal, ear, music theory and performance training, good work ethics and display a positive attitude. An audition is required for participation in this group.

Parker Advanced Chorus is the only chorus group performing outside of the city. Parker Advanced Chorus has performed many times for the community and National Conferences, including VA Hospital, City Hall, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Texas Music Educators Convention, American Choral Directors Association Convention, Organization of American Kodaly Educators and numerous performances for HISD.

### **Guitar**

Parker's Guitar program began in 2004 and now numbers more than 90 students each year, 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades. All students enrolled in the Guitar program have one small-group lesson each week (3 -5 students) during the regular school day. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Guitar students also have large group rehearsals on particular assigned days, 2:50 – 3:30 p.m. This class time at Parker is traditionally called "Magnet Time." *Attendance at Magnet Time classes is required for the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the program.* The school provides quality nylon string "classical" or "Spanish" guitars for the students to use which they may also take home for practicing. Three sizes of guitars are available so that each student may have an instrument suited to his or her physical size.

Students are instructed using a combination of teaching techniques and philosophies from several highly regarded methods, such as Parkening, Noad, Suzuki, and others.

Advanced 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Guitar students combine to function as a performing ensemble. They play a variety of types of music, from Bach and Beethoven to folk music, blues, pop, rock, and other styles. They also occasionally incorporate the electric bass guitar and one or two electric guitars to add even more fun and variety to the music they present.

## **Piano**

The Piano Program at Parker Elementary School consists of over 100 first through fifth grade students who receive personal instruction from Mr. Haff and the collaborative music faculty at Parker. Students meet for two piano instruction periods each week, the primary class for 45 minutes and the secondary class for 40 minutes.

The primary small group lessons vary in size from three to four students per teacher and are designed to provide a strong foundation of music knowledge and piano technique for all. The focus is to allow each student to move at their own maximum pace. Each young pianist's progress is individualized and assignments are given in relationship to each student's level of accomplishment.

The second instruction period is an adjunct music class to the primary one. These classes are large, group events, averaging 20 to 25 students in size. This class meets at the end of the school day, which we call "Magnet" and concentrates on developing the notational, rhythmic, and nomenclature aspects of a music education. This holds true particularly for younger pianists. Older students concentrate on piano ensemble playing and the skills needed for group performances.

Describing the piano schedule only gives a partial idea of what the Piano Program offers our students. Through the year we schedule and prepare for 12 on campus piano concerts plus numerous additional opportunities to showcase our performers both on and off the Parker Campus. Besides the individual performance possibilities, students work on strengthening piano ensemble skills by participating in the Johnston Piano Ensemble Festival held each year in November for our two most senior grade levels.

The high point of the school year for the pianists at Parker is the annual Piano Workshop in February. Students receive three days of concentrated piano instruction from invited local piano teachers and performers who come to Parker during the day. The Workshop is a three day affair culminating on Saturday with performances, workshops on jazz, music games, and a large student performance after a provided lunch.

The Piano Program is one of the largest music programs at Parker with a strong parent support group which provides logistical, financial, and organizational help for all of its activities. Through the years many of our pianists have continued their studies and continued on toward music careers.

## **Strings**

Parker's Suzuki Strings Program is led by three violin teachers and a cello teacher who are trained in the Suzuki Method. The Suzuki Method is musical instruction based on the philosophy that every child can successfully learn to play an instrument given the proper environment. Suzuki teachers believe that the development of the whole child is important, and that the study of music contributes greatly to that development. Suzuki students learn musical skills as well as valuable life skills during their study at Parker.

A very important aspect of the Suzuki Method is the "Suzuki Triangle" formed by the parent, teacher, and student working together. The parent has a crucial role in their child's success in Parker's Suzuki Strings program. Parents are required to attend the weekly lesson, take notes, and guide home practice every day with their child. Practice consists of working on new assignments, listening to the Suzuki CD, and reviewing past pieces. Suzuki violin and cello students progress through a series of books containing repertoire from the Baroque and Classical periods. The pieces are organized sequentially and students learn step by step just as they would learn a language; though listening, imitation, repetition, consistent practice and parent involvement.

Students have a weekly 15-20 minute private lesson during their academic teacher's planning time. Students will receive a weekly lesson grade based on their practice, progress, and preparation. Parker Suzuki students also participate in group classes several times a week during the Magnet period at the end of the school day. Magnet classes provide opportunities to build ensemble skills as well as develop social bonds with other music students. Students are expected to attend or participate in several performances throughout the year. Annual events include: Hauntcert, Holiday Concert, Workshop, Magnet Matinees, and Mini-Concerts. Parker can provide an instrument for your child, or you may rent your own.

## **Music Enrichment**

### The Purposes of Kindergarten Music Enrichment

1. To promote interest in the offered instrumental, vocal, and music technology programs at Parker.
2. To prepare each child to choose a magnet area.
3. To foster a love of music through exposure to music, music making, knowledge about music, and development of musical skills.
4. To nurture creativity and imagination through active participation in musical play.
5. To guide students in developing their intellect and refining their emotions as they make connections among music, other arts, technology, and other aspects of social life.

## **Elements of Music**

Elements of Music is a non-instrumental music choice in our program. In this course, students will begin in first grade learning the fundamentals of music; rhythm, pitch, steady beat, musical styles and vocal training. Each grade level will build on these skills and add additional skills in music theory, history, instrument families and cultural awareness. 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will begin to learn production skills which will include: video recording for concerts, sound and lights as needed for programs and concerts in our auditorium.