

OUR KIDS

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PRIVATE SCHOOL REVIEWS

Bayview Glen

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Since 1998, families have trusted Our Kids to help navigate the private school landscape. Drawing on years working with education experts, parents, and school insiders, Our Kids provides families with insights into the top schools—and into choosing the right school for a child.

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Preface

Every private school is unique, with its own character, facilities, programming, culture, and reason for being. No private school is right for every learner, but for every learner there is a right school. Your task—and it isn't an easy one—is to find the right school for your child; the one that offers the right challenges and the necessary supports; the one where she feels comfortable and included; the one that allows him to grow into a sense of himself and his place in the world; the one where people laugh at their jokes, and ache in the same places. The one where they know, without question: those are my goals, these are my friends, this is my school.

About Our Kids

We know how hard it can be for you, as a parent, to research private schools. For more than two decades we've published Canada's most trusted annual private school guide, building on insights gained over years of work. The *Our Kids Private School Reviews* series of book-length reviews is aimed at information-seeking families, providing a detailed look at the offerings, the traditions, and the culture of each school. Titles published in this series to date include:

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| 3. Albert College | 29. Metropolitan Preparatory Academy |
| 4. Appleby College | 30. Miss Edgar's & Miss Cramp's School |
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| 8. Bond Academy | 34. Prestige School |
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| 19. Hillfield Strathallan College | 45. The Bishop Strachan School |
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| 21. Hudson College | 47. The Country Day School |
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| | 54. Woodland Christian High School |

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Details: Bayview Glen

Excellence. Balance. Diversity.

Location: Toronto, Ontario

Founded: 1962

Enrolment: 1,130 students

Grades: Age 2 years to Grade 12

Gender: Coed

Living Arrangements: Day school

Curriculum: Traditional

Curriculum Pace: Accelerated

Academic Culture: Supportive



Introduction

Bayview Glen's mission—'Whole Child, Whole Life, Whole World'—captures its commitment to fostering students' full potential inside and outside the classroom, beyond the school walls and past graduation. Academic excellence is a top priority at the school, but so is exploring the wide range of co-curricular offerings in everything from the arts and athletics to technology and social justice. That exploration begins in preschool (age 2) and continues right through to Grade 12.

"As a big school, we offer extensive opportunities for students to discover their passions and purpose," says Head of School James Lee, noting that balance is key in a Bayview Glen education. "We're founded on academic excellence, yet we still allow students the space and opportunity to learn in multiple ways. It could be through volunteering, sports, clubs, or global experiences—there are so many avenues they can follow."

Amid the various avenues for learning, Bayview Glen offers steadiness and consistency in the fact that students can start as preschoolers and stay in their familiar environment until Grade 12. This continuity draws many parents to the school. "It's a one-stop-shop, in a sense, for all the things that parents need for their children," says Jesse Denison, head of the Lower School and Preschool. "We provide the best academics across all the different disciplines, programs for all types of non-academic interests, summer camp, and before- and after-care."

Everyone we met in the Bayview Glen community emphasized that it's a place where all types of students can find a sense of belonging. "We're a big school with a small-school feel," says Troy Hammond, director of university counselling and student services, who has been on staff for more than 20 years. Director of Admissions Judy Maxwell, another long-time staff member and parent of two graduates, echoes this assertion. "Students can be themselves here and find their individual passions."

Enrichment and acceleration are central to Bayview Glen's academic programs. Even the two- and three-year-olds engage with inquiry-based learning. Students can stretch their academic boundaries by joining advanced reading groups in Lower School, for example, or earning Reach Ahead credits in Grade 8 and Advanced Placement courses in Upper School.

While there's a certain baseline academic expectation that tends to be on the high side, there's still academic support for those who need it.

Student well-being—academic, social, and emotional—is paramount at Bayview Glen. There are always multiple pairs of eyes on every student, ensuring they're doing all right and getting them the support they need if they aren't.

As one parent says, "Even if kids would like to fly under the radar here, they can't. Every student is known and recognized for their skills, strengths, and challenges. And that's one of the most important things to parents—that their children aren't lost in the shuffle."

Basics

Bayview Glen is a coeducational day school in North York offering a continuous educational experience from age two to Grade 12. It's a member of the Canadian Accredited Independent Schools, a community of independent schools that meets or exceeds rigorous national standards.

With a population of 1,130 students, class sizes range from about 15 in preschool to 20 or 22 in the rest of the school. "Our current projects to improve the school are designed to enhance the experiences of our students," says Maxwell.

There are two campuses located conveniently across the street from each other. The Moatfield Campus building, which opened in 2014, houses the Prep School (Grades 6 to 8) and Upper School (Grades 9 to 12). It has a modern look and feel, greeting visitors with a glass-walled exterior and a bright foyer off the circular drive. It's fresh, sun-filled, and welcoming, with features that include two full gyms, a 400-seat theatre, art studios, a rooftop garden, fitness centre, and recording studio. The dining hall is especially inviting, with chairs in bold colours and a soaring ceiling. As for the classrooms, they're spacious, with several purpose-built science labs and a new math lab.

The Moatfield property is adjacent to a 40-acre conservation area through which the Don River snakes, providing students with ample outdoor space for recreation and learning. "It's not just a big school inside, but outside too," says one parent. "They have a great amount of land with that beautiful ravine, river, and fields for sports and nature walks." Teachers take advantage of the "outdoor classroom" for their lessons, too. "We got to do a biodiversity project where we went to the river and examined macro-organisms," says one Prep School student.

Preschool and Lower School students have made their home at the Duncan Mill Campus since 1990. The building is currently undergoing renovations involving the construction of a

new athletic complex, complete with a state-of-the-art gym and indoor pool. There used to be an outdoor pool, which was popular among students, so they're eagerly awaiting the new facilities. We didn't speak to many students who failed to mention their excitement about it.

Before- and after-school programs are available starting at 7:30 a.m. and running until 6 p.m. There's no charge for the morning program, but after-school fees vary depending on students' involvement in fee-based offerings such as private music lessons, clubs, sports, or extended care. Students in Grades 1 to 8 who stay late go to Study Hall from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., where they're supervised by teachers in completing their homework. Upper School students are welcome to work in the Learning Commons until 6 p.m.

The accessibility and quality of Bayview Glen's food services was a popular subject in our conversations with students and parents alike. Preschool, Lower School, and Prep School students have no need to bring any food to school—tuition includes snacks and hot lunches. "The chef is pretty amazing, because the food is always great based on what I've tried and my kids' feedback," says one parent of two students. "I don't worry about food at all because they're well-fed and happy." Other parents and students commented on the intentional diversity in the dining options. "The food reflects the student body's diversity because they rotate the menu and have different cuisines," says one parent.

Background

On a Sunday in late September 2022, over 1,200 members of the Bayview Glen community gathered to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the school. It's hard to know if Doreen Hopkins could have imagined such an event back in 1962 when she founded the school in her home. What's certain is that her vision of providing "a nurturing environment in which each and every child is precious" lives on today.

Hopkins soon moved her nursery school and day camp to a barn on Lawrence Avenue East, then acquired an adjoining property a few years later to accommodate students up to Grade 1. The school continued to grow through the 1970s. According to students of the day, there were always farm animals around, and cooking from the gardens was part of the curriculum.

By 1985, it was abundantly clear that the school needed more space, so a foundation (formed after Hopkins' death) leased part of a building at the current Duncan Mill Campus from an engineering firm. The 1990s were a time of progress and further growth under Head of School Terry Guest. The school acquired the Moatfield Campus for a new Upper School, which officially opened in 2000.

During Guest's tenure, one of his faculty colleagues was Eileen Daunt, who started as a Lower School teacher and rose through the ranks to senior academic and administrative positions. She stepped into the Head's role in 2003. Under her guidance, Bayview Glen launched a separate Prep School for students in Grades 6 to 8, opened the new Moatfield Campus, established the Alumni Association, created the first robotics team, and integrated problem-based learning into the curriculum at all levels – among many other developments. Her commitment to offering students rich co-curricular options also resulted in a significant expansion of the school's athletics, music, drama, and visual arts programs.

Leadership

When James Lee became head of school in August 2022, he recognized that the school had been thriving under Daunt, but also knew that the pace of change in education has accelerated in recent years. In response, he's taking a measured, yet bold, approach to shepherding Bayview Glen into its next phase.

"Where do we go at this point, after coming through a pandemic that forced us to reinvent education?" says Lee, whose two sons attend Bayview Glen. "We really need to have a good understanding of the purpose of education in the 21st century. To me, that means being directly correlated and connected to the real world, which is ever-changing. We have to equip our students with the skills, knowledge, and sense of self to navigate an educational and career environment that's going to be different decade by decade, if not year by year."

Lee, who was born in South Korea but came to Toronto as an infant, first dreamed of a career in baseball, not education. He was a good player in high school, enough to earn a scholarship to an American college and play professionally in Korea for a while. "Unfortunately, I soon learned that you can't hit baseballs all your life," he jokes, noting that he transferred to the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management to complete a commerce degree.

Lee didn't follow his classmates into finance or accounting. Instead, remembering how much he loved coaching kids at baseball camps and clinics through his teens, he did a Bachelor of Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (later, he went a step further and completed a Master of Education at Queen's University). "I knew that if I could work with kids and help connect the dots between their curiosity, learning, and growth, I was going to be very happy in life."

He began his teaching career at Royal St. George's College, a boy's school in Toronto, where he rose to become dean of students. He held the same post at a Catholic high school in the

public system, then became head of school at The Rosedale Day School for eight years. "My plan was always to finish up my career on the West Coast," says Lee. "My family loves the ocean and the mountains, and my wife and I planned to retire there." When a suitable position came up at Collingwood School in Vancouver in 2021, he jumped at it.

A year and a half later, when Lee was happily settled in his new home and job, a search firm contacted him about the top job at Bayview Glen. "If it had been any other school, I wouldn't have even considered it," he says. "But I felt a personal and professional alignment with Bayview Glen's values and mission, and here I am today."

The school's deep commitment to educating the whole child in a values-based culture resonated with Lee. "My priority as a school leader is to maintain and foster a really strong ethical purpose within the community," he says. "This drives me just as much as my love of children and learning."

Lee has a warm yet professional demeanour, chatting comfortably about both "soft" subjects in education such as kindness and community and practical topics such as strategic planning and professional development. When we asked his colleagues about their relatively new boss, they described him as approachable and thoughtful, yet also visionary. And everyone commented on how Lee took the time to meet with all staff members during the first months of his tenure.

"Those meetings showed that he sees staff as important and wants to get to know us," says Preschool teacher Maryjane Widdis. "He doesn't answer straight away when we raise issues. He goes away and thinks about it, then comes back. I respect that a lot." Greg Ryerson, director of teaching and learning for the Prep School, echoes this assessment. "He's measured and doesn't just dive in and try to do everything at once. It's reassuring to know that anything we do will have a really solid base that we can build and grow on."

Stepping into a role previously filled by someone who was part



of the Bayview Glen community for 45 years would be daunting for most people, but Lee is taking it in stride—not trying to make his mark immediately with bold moves, but instead taking deliberate steps toward further progress at the school. “He has a growth mindset and embraces new and innovative directions in education while still respecting Bayview Glen’s history and traditions,” says Gillian Potts-Hemingway, director of the Preschool.

During Lee’s first year, many teachers, parents, and alumni asked him about his vision for Bayview Glen’s future. “My reply was always, I need to learn more about the school by listening and observing,” he says. “If I had a vision from day one, I’d be saying that I don’t really care about the last 60 years and it’s my way or the highway. That’s not my style.”

In working toward the school’s next five-year strategic plan, Lee is taking a thoroughly collaborative, consultative approach that includes staff, students, and families. In our conversation, he spoke broadly of the strategic objectives he envisions so far. Most of them involve building on Bayview Glen’s existing strengths, such as the racial and ethnic diversity of the student body. “This was an important element for me and my wife in choosing to uproot our family to come to this school,” he says. “Some schools use the words global and international, but you don’t feel it or see it when you walk the halls. Here you do.”

Enhancing the school’s experiential educational opportunities is another goal. “In my conversations with parents, this is one of the big reasons they choose Bayview Glen,” Lee says. “So we want to continue to offer plenty of programs that allow students to explore outside the classroom, the school, and the country.”

“I also want to be visible, to be present at school plays, music performances, and games,” he says. “I’ll continue walking the halls and popping into classrooms to see what’s up. Teachers and students need to know I’m there for them.”

Academics

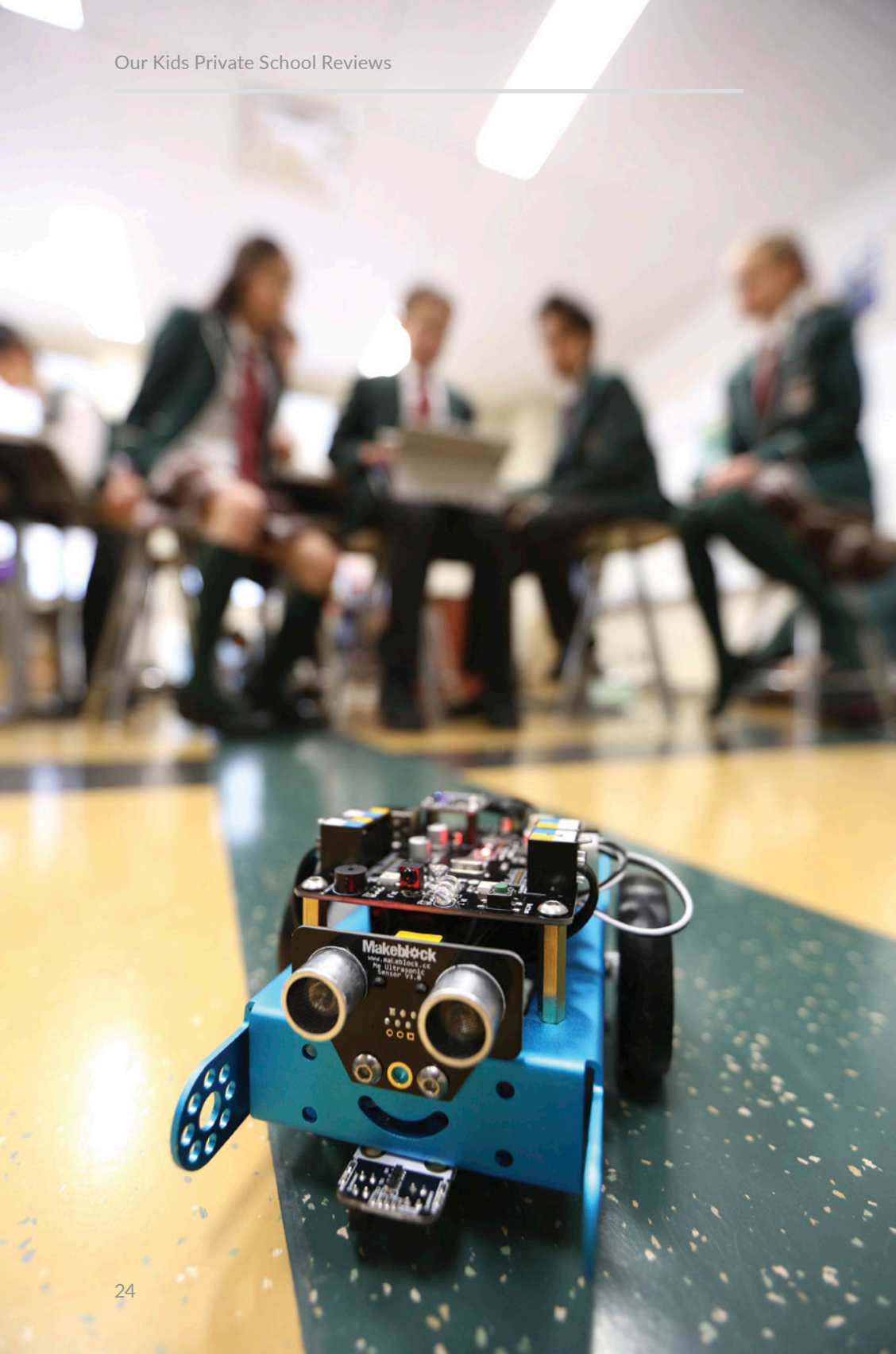
From Preschool to Upper School, it’s all about instilling a love of learning at Bayview Glen. The academic program is rigorous but balanced, ensuring students can dig deep into their core interests and stretch their abilities without getting caught up in unhealthy competition.

Academics have evolved alongside the rest of the school in recent decades, with options for augmenting the curriculum increasing in line with student demand. This is a school for curious, self-directed learners who want—and can manage—more than a baseline education. Our conversations with teachers, students and families alike made it clear that Bayview Glen sets a high standard, and students meet it.

Enrichment and acceleration opportunities are available at each stage of students’ education. In the Lower School, teachers group children with similar abilities in the core subjects into “Workshops,” or small math and reading groups. This allows the most advanced students to progress quickly. All children learn math and French a grade ahead. In the Prep School, Grade 8 students can take Reach Ahead credits, which are Grade 9 courses. This enables them to enter the Upper School with space and flexibility in their schedule to take advantage of the wide variety of Advanced Placement (university-level) courses available.

We spoke to several alumni who said that the accelerated pace at Bayview Glen allowed them to enter university with enough AP credits to fast-track their degrees. “I was able to skip a year and had no trouble doing second-year courses right away, which was really helpful and increased my confidence,” says one graduate.

Based on our discussions with faculty and administrators, it’s fair to say that Bayview Glen students tend to want that bit of extra challenge. “Our aim is to keep all of them in that zone where they’re a little past their comfort zones, but never overwhelmed or anxious,” says Head of Lower School Jesse Denison. The parents



we spoke to agreed that the school strikes this balance. “They push the kids so they’re performing at their highest capacity,” says one. “For example, they might get assignments that are technically past their grade level, but in subjects they love.”

Public speaking, STEM, and the arts are key features of the Bayview Glen academic experience. Starting in the early years of the Lower School, students speak at assemblies and perform in the Spring Festival. “Being able to speak clearly and confidently in front of a crowd is a crucial skill, and not all kids have it,” says one parent who coaches the robotics team. “When we go to robotics competitions, Bayview Glen has an advantage because of this early training.” Early and consistent instruction in computer skills, coding, and robotics also helps. On the other side of the academic spectrum, the school emphasizes music, drama, and the visual arts throughout the curriculum. Taken together, these facets of the academic program contribute to the school’s mission of developing the whole child.

“In a way, academics are a given here,” says Head of the Upper School Fiona Fenili. “We attract top students who go on to attend top universities. Our added value is that every student here can find their niche.” She adds that the school is very intentional about communicating the message that marks are important, but not the only measure of success. “We want students to see the bigger picture and the advantages of a well-rounded learning experience inside and outside the classroom. They’re all ambitious, so we focus on following your own path instead of comparing ourselves with others.”

The students we met agreed that they don’t feel overly competitive with their peers, but said there’s healthy competition. “It helps all of us achieve,” says one Senior School student. A Prep School student agreed, saying, “The school really discourages us from paying attention to other people’s marks.” According to Upper School teacher Melody Russell, the school has made some formal changes in this direction. “We don’t present academic

awards at assemblies anymore,” she says. “And we don’t include median marks on report cards. Some parents and students pushed back against that, but it was making some kids feel bad about themselves. That’s the last thing we want as a school.”

Lee describes Bayview Glen’s academic mission quite simply. “We value academic excellence, and so do our students. But we want them to learn in an environment that promotes exploration and well-being, so they leave with a lifelong love of learning.”

Preschool

Bayview Glen began as a preschool over 60 years ago, and its youngest students have always been an integral part of the community. The Preschool, known to insiders as BG2 (for the two-year-olds) and BG3 (for the three-year-olds) is the launching pad for many long careers at the school. Though it varies over the years, up to half of little ones who start there go on to graduate from Bayview Glen, earning the affectionate title “lifer.”

“This is a place where children can plant their roots,” says Director of Preschool Gillian Potts-Hemingway. “There are many wonderful daycares and preschool programs in Toronto, but the difference here is the community and connection. They get to grow together as students and friends, and their parents grow together too.”

The parents we met all spoke about seeking something more for their children than a typical day-care, and several talked about being attracted to the sense of safety and genuine care they felt at the Preschool. “The teachers treat my daughter like she’s one of their own,” says one, “so I feel like I’m co-parenting with the best possible parents.”

Partnership with parents and caregivers is a top priority at the Preschool. “We’re very connected with our families,” says Potts-Hemingway. Parents appreciate this inclusion, pointing to the frequent home-school communication and special events such as BG Breakfasts.

Cultivating a sense of belonging and confidence in young learners is at the heart of everything the Preschool teachers do. “Once the children feel like they belong here, they can begin to express themselves and get engaged in the learning,” says teacher Sarah Dillane. “It’s the foundation for our whole philosophy, which is child-led. The children’s interests guide their exploration, and we see ourselves as facilitators of that learning.” This is part of the Reggio Emilia approach, an evidence-based method that informs all the Preschool’s teaching and learning.

Several parents noted the positive changes they saw in their children after being in this environment. “It seems to foster my son’s desire to learn because he gets to focus on the things he’s really into,” says one. Another agreed, saying, “It’s created this independence in him, not just in attitude but in personality and thoughts.”

A couple of parents we spoke to described feeling apprehensive at first about enrolling their youngsters in a relatively big school with older children. But it was a short-lived concern, dissipating after they saw the Preschool classrooms and met the teachers. Our tour revealed ample indoor space purpose-built for preschoolers and impressive outside play areas surrounded by a lush valley.

“We get the children outside as much as possible, well beyond the childcare licensing requirements,” says Potts-Hemingway. When we visited, the preschoolers were excited about partnering with Grade 3 “Inquiry Buddies” to investigate the surrounding landscape. Interaction with the wider school—through reading buddies, assemblies, and other activities—is a regular part of the program.

Lower School

The Lower School at Bayview Glen offers students from Kindergarten to Grade 5 an enriched curriculum with built-in academic acceleration.

“Our Senior Kindergarten students do the Grade 1 math



curriculum, and our Grade 1s do the Grade 2 curriculum—and so on,” says Erika Gillespie, Director of Teaching and Learning for the Lower School. “So right from a very early age, they’re expanding their capabilities.”

French and music instruction begins right away in the Lower School. “They see music specialists every other day, and each spring they participate in our ‘Spring Festival,’” says Gillespie. “It’s a musical that varies in sophistication depending on the grade and is meant to foster student confidence in getting on a stage and public speaking.”

A Walk to Read program for Grade 1 students ensures that every child receives the differentiated reading instruction they need. In essence, during reading time students walk to join small groups of their peers with similar skills, where they’re led by a teacher that specializes in that particular skill grouping. “The kids get direct instruction at their level, regardless of what class they’re in,” says Gillespie. “We’ve seen huge positive results.”

A STEM teacher instructs students from Grade 1 onward, emphasizing coding and robotics and laying the groundwork for potential participation in the school’s successful robotics teams. Problem-based learning is embedded throughout the Lower School curriculum.

Another unique offering in Bayview Glen’s Lower School is a financial literacy program that goes beyond curriculum expectations. In addition to integrating concepts around money and budgeting into math classes, the Lower School holds Financial Literacy Week featuring guest speakers, games, and workshops. Grade 5 students went a step further, developing their own hot chocolate business and donating the proceeds to charity. “The kids developed a business plan and broke up into teams focused on areas such as sales and marketing,” says Grade 5 teacher Gareth Jones. “It was impressive to see what they accomplished and learned, all while having a lot of fun.” In the 2023–2024 academic year, Jones and some colleagues built a program that involves creating

a classroom economy in each Grade 5 class throughout the year.

All Lower School students take part in field trips designed to enhance their in-class learning, and by Grades 4 and 5 they make the leap to overnight adventures in Ottawa and Montreal. “Students learn best when they’re interacting with real-world issues, whether through classroom projects or trips where they get to experience things firsthand,” says Denison.

Prep School

The ‘Prep,’ as it’s known to the Bayview Glen community, is essentially a middle school that includes Grades 6 to 8. Like the schools on either side of it, the Prep encourages and supports students in going beyond standard curriculum expectations.

All Grade 8 students take Grade 9 Geography, and they can opt to take two other Reach Ahead credits—Grade 9 credits—in math and French. For those keen to learn Mandarin, there’s an after-school program where they can earn an additional Grade 9 credit. With all these credits under their belts, students have the competence, confidence, and scheduling flexibility to take Advanced Placement courses in Grades 11 and 12.

“We give students the support they need to manage these Grade 9 courses without feeling out of their depth,” says Greg Ryerson, director of teaching and learning for the Prep School. “And if they’ve benefited from all the enrichment through our Lower School, they’re generally very ready.” Prep School teacher Lisa Keyworth agrees, saying, “This is a nice, safe space for students to experience high school courses while they’re in Grade 8. In addition to covering the curriculum, we talk a lot about study strategies and approaches to learning, so the demands of Grade 9 aren’t such a shock.” The Prep School students we spoke to—all of whom took Reach Ahead credits—agreed. “The teachers kind of help you ease into it,” says one.

The problem-based approach increases in complexity and

intensity during these years, as students take the lead more and more in solving real-world dilemmas. “We look to the students to see what they’re interested in, what questions they ask, and then we take that as our lead to ask another question and get them thinking again,” says Keyworth. “But we’re not providing answers.”

All the classes in the Prep School are taught by specialist teachers, something that can be rare in the area of information and communications technology. “In Grades 6 and 7, we have an ICT specialist teach our students coding, 3D printing, design thinking, and more,” says Ryerson. “These foundational skills prepare students for the Grade 8 course in problem-based learning, where they apply the design thinking process to devising solutions for a major societal problem of their choosing.” Shortly before we visited, for example, Grade 7 science students designed launch vehicles meant to ensure the safe landing of playdoh pilots that were flung 10 metres. To assess the viability of their ideas, they shared them with an expert from the Canadian Space Agency and received feedback and suggestions for design improvements.

As a Round Square School, Bayview Glen helps maximize students’ capabilities to communicate in multiple languages. In the Prep School, all students take Spanish classes in addition to French.

Upper School

For students who have spent all or most of their academic careers at Bayview Glen, the Upper School is where they experience the payoffs of all the enrichment, acceleration, and problem-based learning of the previous years.

“We purposefully design the progression through the Lower and Prep Schools to build flexibility into students’ Upper School experience,” says Head of Upper School Fiona Fenili, noting that students who enrol after Grade 8 can catch up with their

peers by taking Reach Ahead credits in the Summer Academy. “Coming into Grade 9 with several high school credits allows for some breathing room. Many students have a certain post-secondary program in mind that requires them to take core courses in key areas, but with this flexibility they can also take courses in the arts, for example, or business or physical education. It comes back to our focus on balance and our Whole Child philosophy. We want students to keep exploring and growing right through Grade 12.”

In addition to supporting Bayview Glen’s mission, a well-rounded mix of courses in Upper School tends to prepare students well for the broad critical thinking needed in post-secondary programs, says Leen-Jan van ‘t Hof, director of teaching and learning for the Upper School. Still, Bayview Glen students are an ambitious group and the majority of them use at least some of the extra space in their schedules to take multiple Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

Students’ problem-based learning skills reach new heights in Upper School. In the Grade 10 careers course, for example, groups of students receive mentoring from executives at several companies as they work toward solutions to the companies’ real-world challenges. “In the end, they present to the executives, which really builds their capacity to speak publicly in front of people who might be perceived as intimidating,” says Fenili, who adds that the school has multiple partnerships with local businesses and organizations.

Opportunities for expanding problem-based learning skills exist throughout the Upper School. In science, students generate their own research questions, while in geography they tackle perennial difficulties facing Canadian society, such as homelessness, and generate creative solutions. “We act as shepherds more than teachers at the front of the room,” says Upper School teacher Tom Osborne. “Students choose their own adventure, as long as it’s something that doesn’t have a simple fix and it’s meaningful to the wider community.”



Maintaining a balanced academic portfolio is one of the requirements of the Bayview Glen Diploma, which asks students to fulfill various criteria beyond the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. “Getting the Bayview Glen Diploma isn’t mandatory, but it’s the norm for our long-time students,” says van ‘t Hof. Students must also complete more than the standard number of community service hours and take part in three Adventure and Leadership Trips, which push students beyond their comfort zones to develop leadership skills and resilience.

Students must also complete an interdisciplinary project in Grade 12 to receive the Bayview Glen Diploma. “It’s a culmination of the interdisciplinary learning they’ve been doing all through their time at the school,” says Fenili, “and it presents another chance for our students to advocate for themselves and their interests, then explore their passions.”

The alumni we met said this independence served them well. “There was always a lot of opportunity in my Upper School courses to choose your own projects, and if you wanted to go the extra mile in learning about a topic, the teachers were willing to go down that path with you,” says a 2012 graduate. “It set me up well for university.”

Pedagogical approach

Teachers implement Bayview Glen’s Whole Child mission through individualized, inquiry-based instruction that prioritizes a strong relationship with every student. “We call it teaching from connection,” says Denison. “It’s the foundation of all our pedagogy here, and we invest a lot of time in building those bonds with students and families. We know from the research that students need to feel connected to their teachers if they’re going to be successful academically, socially, and emotionally.”

A cohesive faculty and culture of collaboration helps teachers understand students’ strengths and areas for growth. “On any

given day I can walk into the staff room and there are Grade 11 and 12 teachers talking to Grade 6 teachers about students they’ve had,” says Ryerson. “It’s one of the many ways that we ensure we have all the available knowledge that could help us best reach our students.”

The parents we interviewed commented on how much the teachers “get” their children and adjust their teaching methods accordingly. “My daughter’s teacher knows she’s a kid that needs direct instruction and someone to guide her a little bit more at times,” says one. Another parent of two students commented on how their teachers adapt to their very different learning styles.

Bayview Glen has a remarkable number of teachers who have been there for 20 years or longer, a telling sign of a positive school culture. Chief Financial Officer Scott Moore, who is relatively new in comparison, says he was impressed by this fact when he started. “Long-term staff help to shape a strong community where the values of its members are in sync.”

Several students and graduates remarked on the longevity of the teachers’ careers as a sign of the educators’ commitment to the place and its people. Others pointed to how the long tenures boosted the wealth of expertise at Bayview Glen. “It was like they’d achieved mastery in what they teach,” says one graduate. “Because they’re so fluent in their subjects, they’re able to go way above and beyond the curriculum.”

Ryerson, who plays a role in teacher hiring, uses the same term to describe his colleagues. “They’re master educators,” he says, noting that all Bayview Glen teachers have Additional Qualification courses, which are accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers for upgrading skills and knowledge.

Academic leaders provide ongoing professional development opportunities, but also encourage teachers to seek out courses and training that will better prepare them to meet the unique needs of their students. In-house teacher learning is also ongoing, says Ryerson. “Our faculty engage in action research, where they take

a scientific approach to answering questions about best practices in teaching, then share their results.”

Global education

While many independent schools today talk about educating global citizens, Bayview Glen integrates an international dimension throughout its curricular and co-curricular programs. “The words global and international can be overused in education,” says Lee. “But here, it’s embedded in so many things we do. And we’re a truly diverse school, so learning about the wider world is part of our deep commitment to equity and inclusiveness.”

Most of Bayview Glen’s global education offerings spring from its affiliation with Round Square, a network of 230 schools in 50 countries that are committed to experiential learning and character education. Since the school became a member of Round Square in 2001, Bayview Glen students have had access to a growing number of international experiences at home and abroad. “There are weekly virtual programs where our students can join in dialogues with peers from all over the world to discuss issues such as mental health and climate action, or lighter topics like music and pop culture,” says Michelle Yarndley, director of global education.

We spoke to many students who had participated in Round Square exchanges, conferences, and service trips, and they had nothing but great things to say. For those whose families had the means, one trip tended to fuel their desire to do more. “I did an exchange in France, then a service project in Kenya, and recently a conference in India,” says one Upper School student.

The IDEALS Global Experiential Learning Program is a signature travel program available to Upper School students. (IDEALS represents Round Square’s core values of Internationalism, Democracy, Environmentalism, Adventure, Leadership, and Service.) “The students aren’t just going on overseas trips to see

and hear new things in new places,” says Yarndley. “They’re going to do active projects linked to the curriculum. There’s also often a component where students meet and interview local people to practice their language and cultural competency skills.” When we visited, there had recently been an IDEALS trips to Panama to study waterways and wetlands, with excursions this year to Italy to examine food systems and Iceland to investigate climate change.

Upper School students can also opt to earn a Global Studies Certificate, which is increasingly recognized by universities and employers. The requirements include taking certain courses with an international concentration, participating in global experiences at home or away, and joining a co-curricular activity with an international connection. In Grade 12, students must demonstrate their skills and knowledge through an “Action Project” that has an impact on the local and global community.

Another unique opportunity for Bayview Glen students is gaining global work experience during a gap year after graduation. As Round Square members, students can apply to work at boarding schools worldwide, and shortly before our visit one student accepted a job at an international school in Bangkok.

As part of its commitment to Round Square’s Environmentalism ideal, the school has earned Gold Level EcoSchools certification. Students from Preschool to Grade 12 participate in ongoing “EcoSchools Actions” ranging from community clean-ups and gardening to school-based composting and textile recycling.

For alumni, these global experiences are often their fondest and most formative memories. “The trips tend to shape their future paths,” says Yarndley, “whether it’s their career direction or the life-long friendships they develop overseas. And we hear from parents that the experiences bring evolution in their children’s maturity, responsibility, and perspective.”

University preparation

Bayview Glen is a university preparatory school, but the focus is just as much on exploration as preparation. “When people talk about the post-secondary planning process, it sounds very narrow, like it’s just a series of checklists,” says Troy Hammond, director of university counselling and student services. “That’s not real life. Yes, there are certain criteria and application deadlines that students have to meet, but we prefer to frame it as an experience rather than a process. It starts in Grade 9, and it’s about students exploring their interests, strengths, and options so they can make the best possible decisions.”

About eight years ago, Hammond and his team launched a second information fair to supplement the existing one, where all the most popular post-secondary institutions come to promote their programs. “We wanted to let our students know about some unique offerings that they otherwise might not encounter, including international universities, polytechnics that offer applied degrees, and research abroad programs,” he says. In the same vein, Hammond and his team host Career Breakfasts, where alumni from fields beyond the usual professions (medicine, law, finance, etc.) come in to speak about their jobs and answer questions. Recent Career Breakfasts have featured alumni working in artificial intelligence, fine arts, entrepreneurship, and journalism.

Despite students’ exposure to a broad spectrum of post-secondary options, Hammond readily acknowledges that most Bayview Glen graduates go on to attend the leading universities in Canada. The most popular destination programs—allowing for some variation each year—are arts and social sciences, business, and science and engineering, with 100 percent of students getting accepted into their top choices.

In the more than 20 years since Hammond started working at Bayview Glen, he’s shifted the focus in post-secondary counselling away from preparing students to simply get into their preferred

Education is the most powerful weapon which
 Learn from yesterday,
 art is no education at all. Aristotle Success is not final
 all people, but grovel to none. Tecumseh Tomorrow is always
 consists not in doing what we like, but in
 and whenever possible. It is always possible. Dalai Lama No one can
 The time is always right to do what is right
 t permanent, Marilyn Vos Savant Optimism means better than reality;
 Education breeds confidence. Confidence
 e many ripples. Mother Teresa We must believe that we are gifted
 William Shakespeare In spite of everything, I still believe
 were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you
 voice, not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can
 things in the world cannot be seen or even



program to ensuring they're ready for the larger demands of university. "We work hard to help students understand how to thrive once they make the transition," he says, noting that parents are always welcome to speak to him and his team about their children's future plans. "There are workshops on topics like university timetables, majors and minors, university student support services, and graduate and professional degrees."

Academic support and wellness

Bayview Glen is undoubtedly a school that nurtures and values high academic achievement, yet students can always access extra help, whether on an ongoing or time-limited basis. Sometimes a certain subject just doesn't click, or there may be an identified learning difference. Whatever the case, there's a team with the expertise to help students overcome the barriers to reaching their full potential.

"When a student is consistently showing signs of struggle in a given class or across their classes, it triggers a meeting that we call SPOT, or Student Progress on Track," says Hammond. "Their teachers come together to share teaching techniques and strategies that are most successful for that student."

Each of the Lower, Prep, and Upper Schools has dedicated learning strategists, and they often join these "SPOT" meetings to offer their expertise. If needed, the learning strategist meets individually with students to discuss their challenges and devise additional support. Any student can seek the assistance of a learning strategist or attend group workshops on topics such as study skills, time management, and decision-making. Peer tutors provide another source of academic support at Bayview Glen.

According to the students we met, it's not hard to find assistance when they need it. "I've never felt uncomfortable going to a teacher and asking them for help," says one Prep School student. A graduate who was an English Language Learner when she arrived at Bayview Glen told us that she felt fully supported. "My English teacher would often stay late with me to make sure I was caught up," she says.

Parents also praised the individualized academic support, noting that teachers offer the right amount of help, at the right time, in the right way. One parent whose child had a long medical absence that delayed her reading skills described how her teachers stepped up to ease her return to school.

Making sure students are thriving in all aspects of their

lives—academically, socially, and emotionally—is integral to Bayview Glen’s Whole Child approach. As one parent of a student in the Lower School puts it, “They care about every part of your child. For us, it was very important that it’s not just a 100 per cent focus on academics.”

Lee is well aware that parents’ and society’s awareness of children’s mental health has increased due to the pandemic. For him, however, there’s an even larger imperative to invest in students’ non-academic well-being. “There’s a greater calling to do that because we’re a school where we value students’ holistic development and learning,” he says, noting that every faculty member is certified in Mental Health First Aid. “We know from the research and our own experience that, if kids aren’t healthy and well overall, it negatively impacts their learning. We’ve been committed to students’ social and emotional health as a school for a long time, but we want to get even better at it. It’s one of our strategic priorities looking ahead.”

Bayview Glen already took one major step toward this goal by hiring Antoinette Morgan as the school’s first director of student well-being in 2022. Walking through the school with Morgan, it’s hard to believe that she hasn’t been in her position for years, given her strong rapport with everyone she met along the way. Her warmth toward students is palpable, and several students we met spoke about Morgan’s friendliness and accessibility. “We can go see her anytime, and it’s all confidential,” says one Upper School student. “She always makes herself available to students who need help.”

As an experienced social worker, Morgan takes an active approach in her role. “I don’t stay in my office and wait for students to come to me, because many who really need support never will,” she says. “I go out into the school and chat with the kids, and observe who their friends are or whether they’re often alone. Sometimes I’ll invite a group of kids to have lunch with me or hang out in my office when I’m really only concerned



about one of them, but it makes it more comfortable for the student in question.”

Since her arrival, Morgan has spearheaded awareness campaigns on mental health stigma, sleep hygiene, bullying, and more. “Apart from these fairly high-profile issues, the things that come up most when I’m supporting students are friendships, peer pressure, and the drive to belong.”

These concerns are well-known to anyone working with teens, and Bayview Glen takes a multifaceted approach to managing them. In addition to Morgan’s outreach and counselling, the Upper School has a longstanding mentorship program where every student is part of a group of 12 to 14 students from across the grades under the guidance of a faculty member. These groups are a constant from Grade 9 to 12 and meet three days per week to discuss mostly non-academic matters, offering remarkable continuity and connection for teens. “Mentors have a different relationship with students than their regular teachers,” says Head of Upper School Fiona Fenili. “They gain a really nuanced understanding of the students over the years.”

In the Lower and Prep Schools, students also enjoy a wide circle of care, including Morgan and a social-emotional learning program called Second Step. The program fosters knowledge and dialogue around positive mental health through weekly conversations and curriculum studies from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8.

Co-curriculars and extracurriculars

Bayview Glen’s Whole Child philosophy is plain to see in the school’s wide-reaching co-curricular opportunities. Even from the early grades, students have the chance to explore their interests and discover new ones through clubs, athletics, and summer camp.

The students and alumni we spoke to agreed that it’s easy to find outlets for even the most niche interests, or balance multiple commitments. “If there isn’t a club for something you like, you can create one with a teacher’s help,” says one Prep School student. An Upper School student keen on both music and sports commented on how the school supports students like him, saying, “They schedule activities so that they don’t conflict, and you don’t have to choose one over the other.”

Again, the rich offerings outside the classroom establish Bayview Glen as a one-stop-shop for parents. “I don’t have to worry about finding ballet or yoga or music classes and doing all the drop-offs and pick-ups,” says one parent of a Lower School student. “It’s all available at the school.” Some programs, such as the private music lessons and various clubs carry extra fees. The sheer number of clubs is impressive, running the gamut from the expected (chess, debate, drama, yearbook) to the more unique (architecture, aviation, outer space adventure, Scrabble, and more).

Involvement in the arts has always been a core part of the school’s philosophy, with co-curricular programs supplementing regular participation in the visual arts, drama, and music within the Lower and Prep School curriculum. In the Lower School, for example, every Grade 2 student is a member of the Primary Choir, and choir remains a popular option through the higher grades. There are the usual concert and jazz ensembles, but also newly formed student-led groups.

Students with a dramatic flair can hone their skills in the

Lower School's annual Spring Festival. In Upper School, the BVG Players bring together up to 60 cast and crew members for a professional-quality play each year. Shortly before our visit, the Players wrapped up a successful run of a 1920s whodunnit called *The Play That Goes Wrong*.

Bayview Glen's emphasis on integrating science and tech learning throughout students' in-class experiences is evident in the school's award-winning robotics clubs. Head of Lower School Jesse Denison, who co-founded the first club more than 10 years ago, says the success of robotics can be attributed in part to the problem-based learning approach. "From an early age, our students tackle the kinds of challenges that robotics competitions present, which gives them an advantage. We've also built up a culture that's really passionate about robotics, and the younger students see it in their older peers and want to be part of the excitement." Denison notes that girls make up nearly half of robotics club members.

In 2017, the school hired Mehernosh (Nosh) Pestonji to be the Upper School Robotics Co-ordinator. Along with Noeen Kashif, a FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) Specialist, Pestonji co-moderates the senior robotics team. This investment has certainly paid off, given that the team won the world FRC championship in 2017 and earned many top spots in multiple provincial and national competitions since.

In Bayview Glen's Gryphon Athletics program, the guiding principle is competitive participation, says Lower School Athletic Director Heather Woodard. "Especially in the Lower School, and even up until Grade 8, in most cases, there's a place for everyone in sports. Our aim is to keep kids involved for as long as possible, which means giving them meaningful opportunities for competition at their individual level and the experience of being part of a team."

From Grade 3 to Grade 5, every Bayview Glen student must join one team. "It's our way of getting them to try something in these formative years," says Woodard. "We receive great feedback

from parents who initially thought their children weren't sporty, but ended up loving the experience and joining more teams later on." In fact, more than 90 percent of Prep School students participate in at least one sport per year.

It gets slightly more competitive in Upper School, but the goal is still maximum participation, says Upper School Athletic Director Kevin Neville. "We strike a good balance by forming second teams when we have the coaches available, without sacrificing our competitiveness." Bayview Glen uses specialized coaches for all its teams, except when teachers have skills in particular sports. Students with demanding training schedules outside the school can be accommodated in the Elite Athlete Program, which offers academic flexibility and accommodations.

Bayview Glen has facilities for most traditional sports on campus, and this capacity will increase when the new pool and gym are complete. For specialized facilities, the school has partnerships with nearby rinks, indoor tracks, batting cages, and more.



Camp

The Bayview Glen Whole Child philosophy can extend to the whole year, thanks to the community day camp that runs on campus. It was established the same year as the school, back in 1962, and is known in Toronto as one of the city's most successful day camps, according to Camp Director Daniel Garfinkel.

"Our approach at camp has always been the same as the school's," he says. "We're huge proponents of allowing campers and participants to explore and try new things." The four- to seven-year-olds enjoy a traditional camp program where the kids dabble in a bit of everything. Starting in Grade 2, though, campers choose a specialty for the mornings, which could be anything from sports or visual arts to robotics or magic, then have a mix of activities in the afternoons. Third-party providers direct many of the specialized activities, something parents appreciate. "Families tell us that they really like the fact that we have professional facilitators," says Garfinkel.

At least half of campers are Bayview Glen students, and that number continues to increase. There are camps for kids up to age 13, when they can join the leaders in training program. At 16, they're eligible to work as counsellors. "For Bayview Glen students who've benefited from leadership opportunities their whole school career, it's a great place to apply their skills," says Garfinkel. We spoke to one parent whose son had attended camp since he was four and had just been hired as a camp counsellor. "It's amazing to see that progression," she says.



Student body, leadership, and diversity

With nearly half of students starting and ending their pre-university schooling at Bayview Glen, it's no surprise that there's a strong sense of cohesiveness within the student body. Several alumni spoke of forming friendships that have lasted well into their thirties and forties. "The continuity across the grades creates a really nice community feeling," says one graduate.

Having a constant friend group that moves from grade to grade can be reassuring for many students, but the school makes a point of mixing up the classes each year so the kids can learn the crucial skills of adapting to different groups and making new connections. "When I heard that my daughter would intentionally be placed in a different class from her two close friends the next year, I was worried," says one parent. "But the teachers were absolutely right. She needed to step out of her comfort zone." Other parents we spoke to agreed about the benefits of this approach.

Regular spirit days and assemblies forge strong ties within the grades as a whole, but Bayview Glen also promotes cross-grade ties. A House system with friendly competition helps, as does a robust variety of leadership opportunities that bring younger and older students together. Senior students act as tutors, reading buddies and scorekeepers in the Lower School, for example, in addition to serving on student council and helping to run co-curricular activities.

Lower School students also get ample opportunities to cultivate their leadership skills through a youth leadership initiative started by Denison about 15 years ago. "It overcomes one of our biggest challenges, grade silos, by getting students involved in designing games and activities for their younger peers," he says.

All the students we spoke to said Bayview Glen is a welcoming environment, pointing to how the school has a formal buddy

program for new students and—more generally—commenting on the school's emphasis on inclusiveness. The sense we got, overall, was of a student culture where it's cool to be kind and embrace diversity of all kinds. "You don't have to be the high flyer who runs clubs and wins the academic and athletic awards," says Prep School teacher Lisa Keyworth. "You can still feel like you belong here and we're really glad to have you. I'm most proud of that aspect of our school."

When it comes to racial and cultural diversity, Bayview Glen is exceptional among comparable schools. "As soon as you come through our doors, it's obvious that our students reflect the cosmopolitan city of Toronto," says Lee. In the future, he hopes the faculty will too. Recruiting a more diverse workforce is one of the school's strategic priorities.

Parents, current students, and alumni alike told us how much they appreciated the diversity of the student body and how Bayview Glen celebrates different cultural traditions at assemblies and other events. "I love it so much, because it's probably the only way my kids learn about different cultures on a regular basis," says one parent of two students. "It's also made my daughter very interested in learning about and sharing her own culture."

Though the depth and breadth of students' diversity has increased over the last decade, it's not a new phenomenon at the school. "We were diverse before diversity became a thing to strive for," says Fenili. We spoke to graduates from the 1990s and early 2000s who expressed gratitude for this unique aspect of their alma mater. "It wasn't until I went to university that I realized that not everybody had the same experience," says one. "It expanded my way of thinking." Another graduate, who works in global markets and is an avid traveller, says, "I think I'm more culturally fluent than some of my friends who went to other private schools."

Enrolment and admission

The attrition rate at Bayview Glen is very low, so there's a waiting pool of applicants. The formal entry years are Preschool (ages two or three) and Grade 5. Director of Admissions Judy Maxwell says there's no ideal student, but she and her team do look for two key qualities. "The student must be able to manage the rigour and pace of our academic program, with supports that are available, and they should be open to trying new activities outside the classroom."

Families tend to seek out Bayview Glen based on word of mouth and a desire for a well-rounded experience for their children. The school's diversity and the convenience of continuity from Preschool to Grade 12—along with summer camp and after-school activities—also hold strong appeal, says Maxwell.

The application and interview process are typical of most independent schools, with students in Grades 1 to 8 completing an in-house assessment to provide a snapshot of their skills. In Upper School, applicants may submit a new piece of writing along with past graded work.

The board of directors sets the tuition annually. In addition to tuition fees, Bayview Glen encourages parents to participate in philanthropic opportunities according to their ability. Students can apply to write scholarship exams in Grades 6 through 12, with the winners receiving \$2,000 toward the following year's tuition. Families may apply for needs-based bursaries through a third-party financial company.

Parents

Families are integral members of the larger Bayview Glen community. "For a fairly big school, there's very little red tape here," says one parent. "I feel like I have direct access to my children's teachers and to the administration." Another commented, "It's a very comfortable environment for us as parents to come to the school with any concerns, whether they're academic or otherwise."

In terms of keeping families in the loop on school issues and happenings, Bayview Glen scores top marks. "The amount of communication is impressive," says one parent of a Lower School student. Other parents jokingly said they had trouble keeping up with all the newsletters, emails, and alerts they received, though they agreed that it helps them stay organized and aware. The volume is especially large in the Preschool and the Lower School, where parents even receive frequent photos of their children.

The Parent Association offers a variety of outlets for family engagement, along with social events to bring families together. "You can have as much or as little involvement as you want," says one parent. There are longer-term commitments, such as serving as class parents, or one-off volunteer gigs at special events. All families can take advantage of the Parent Association Speaker Series, which covers topics such as online safety, health and well-being, and other parenting concerns.

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