



## 宮代町立笠原小学校 Kasahara Elementary School

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埼玉モダンたてもレポーター

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宮代町立笠原小学校は、「がっこう」ではありません。

小さな「まち」なのです。

このまちには、山も森も池もお家も、仲間と一緒に生活するには必要なものが全部あります。宮代小学校を訪ねたら、「学校はまち」というコンセプトがすぐわかります。そのような笠原小では、児童達が校門を通過して、藤の木の下を歩き、クラス専用の玄関で靴を脱ぎ、裸足のまま壁のない廊下にあがり、そしてお家、すなわち自分の教室に入っていきます。教室は天井が高く、木材が多く使われており、窓もたくさんあるので、アットホームな雰囲気があります。建物には特徴的なところがたくさんあり、学校全体はゆったりした空気に包まれています。宮代の町並みと同じような屋根瓦、赤い手すりやそろばんのような手すり、ことわざや詩がひらがなで書かれている柱、卒業記念作品である壁画やモザイク、トンボや蝶々から星座まで自然界に見られるものが描かれている廊下の天井、子ども達が自由に話し合える電車内や小さなコテージをイメージしたスペースなどたくさん見所があります。

**Kasahara Elementary School is not a school.**

**It's really a small town!**

In this town, there is everything you need to live together with your friends – mountains, woods, ponds, houses. When you visit Kasahara Elementary, a municipal (public) school in Miyahara, you can soon see how it runs like a town. Built with the “school = town” concept in mind, students at Kasahara pass through the school gate, walk along a path under wisteria trees, take off their shoes at one of the many entryways, step barefoot into corridors that have no wall separating them from the outside, and finally enter their “home” – in other words, their classroom. The classrooms have high ceilings and many windows and are mostly made of wood, creating a clear at-home atmosphere. The entire school has an easygoing air about it, with architectural features such as a traditional roof that mimics the typical Miyashiro home; some banisters and railings that are painted red and others that look like an abacus; pillars with famous sayings and poems written in simple *hiragana* letters; murals and mosaics created to celebrate students' graduations; corridor ceilings inscribed with natural phenomena and creatures like constellations, dragonflies, and butterflies; and plenty of spots, made in the images of the inside of train cars and small cottages, where children can gather and talk freely.



Through the path...



... to the entryway...



... through the corridors...



(note the red banisters and traditional roof)



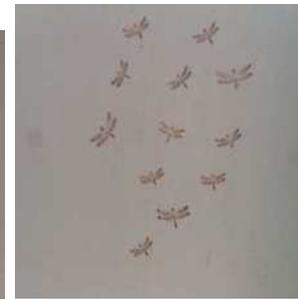
...pass by pillars (this one with a traditional lullaby inscribed)...to reach "home"!



A cottage-like area (abacus-inspired railings on either side) and a train car-like area



Mosaics and other art works commemorate classes of graduated students.



A selection of ceiling patterns: butterflies, dragonflies, and a constellation.

笠原小では、教室の中で勉強するだけでなく、大自然という巨大な教室でもいろいろ習います。児童達は校庭や校内の土地、そして近隣の畑で野菜やお花を育てたり、地域の方々が手伝ったりします。校内の自然教室では、大根、カボチャ、ミニトマト、きゅうり等の自分たちが食べたい野菜を栽培するプロジェクトもあるそうです。農作業をする時も、普通は裸足のままで、自然を身体全体で感じられます。（農具を使う先生達は安全のため靴を履いているそうですが。）6年生の卒業プロジェクトは、ケナフを収穫し、紙を作ることです。学校に池もあるので、夏には外で水遊びもできます。校庭に遊具が少ない理由は、子ども達が想像力を使いながら自分でゲームを考えたり、自然と触れ合ったりしなければならなくなるからです。雨が降ると滑りやすかったり、雪が降ると階段や廊下につもったりすることもあるそうですが、自然がいつもすぐそばにあり、自然の中で自然から学べるのがたまに不便に感じても、子ども達の人生には素晴らしいことに違いありません。

At Kasahara, students not only learn in more traditional classrooms, but also experience many types of learning in the giant classroom that surrounds them: nature. Students raise vegetables and flowers in the school garden, plots of land within the school building, and in nearby fields with the help of local farmers. They also have projects where they grow vegetables they would like to eat, such as radishes, pumpkins, mini tomatoes, and cucumbers, in the school's "nature classroom" (one of the plots of land). Even when farming, the students go barefoot and get the feel of the ground under them. (When using farming tools, the teachers wear shoes for safety purposes.) The sixth graders' graduation project is harvesting and making paper out of kenaf. The school also has outdoor ponds where students can wade and play in the summer months. The reason there is hardly any playground equipment in the schoolyard is so that children use their imaginations to create their own games and to interact with the nature surrounding them. Though there are occasional inconveniences that come with being so close to nature – rain making the corridors slippery or snow gathering on the staircases – learning within and through nature is a wonderful part of the children's lives.



Ponds and gardens are all around the school.



A "nature classroom" on the second floor.



A small pond on the first floor, currently home to turtles, and another view of part of the gardens.



通常の教室や自然教室に加えて、「まち」としてコミュニティの方々もいろいろ体験できる放課後の教室もあります。宮代町との連携が強く、子どもでも大人でも参加できるプログラム等があります。笠原小は美術工芸やものづくり体験教室にでもお店にでも変身し、小学生に限らず、宮代町民の皆さんの教室になります。コミュニティが笠原小に近い関係を持っているように、笠原小の児童たちも地域に強い連携を持っています。前にも書きましたが、地域の方々がお手伝いをしたり、笠原まつりの準備や当日のイベントにも力を入れています。自然もお家も地域も大事にしていることがさすがですね。私も、時計の針を戻して、入学式から卒業式まで裸足で遊んだり学んだりできる笠原小という小さなまちに住んでみたいと思います。

In addition to traditional and nature-based classrooms, the "town" maintains its strong ties to the community by offering extracurricular classrooms with various programs to both children and adults in the community. At any time of day, Kasahara can transform into arts and crafts classrooms and even a small store where everyone, not just elementary school students, can learn. Just as the community has strong ties to the school, Kasahara's students maintain strong ties to the community. As mentioned above, local farmers help the students with their work, and the students also put in great effort to prepare for and participate in the local Kasahara Festival. For a school that values nature, homes, and the community, this comes as no surprise. By the end of my visit, I began thinking that I'd like to turn back the clock and live in the little town where everyone goes barefoot from the day they arrive to the day they graduate, the little town known as Kasahara Elementary School.



Community arts and crafts classroom



One of the many foot-washing stations



A view of one part of the second floor – it's clear where each "home" is.