

About our school

D'alexandro-Vocino School is a Secondary School with about 450 students, boys and girls, aged 11-14. It is the only Middle School of San Nicandro Garganico. The town stands on a series of hills between the lakes of Lesina and Varano in the north of the Gargano promontory, very close to the "Parco Nazionale del Gargano" and 15 kilometres from the sea. Here there are different landscapes with ravines, caves and springs which reveal the highly karst territory. We are also close to the "Via Francigena" which is a historical itinerary used in the past by thousands of pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land. Our school is not far from the centre of the town, but a lot of our students live on farms around the town and they come to school by bus or on foot. In each class we have some children of immigrant families from Morocco, Romania and Albania. Their parents are unemployed because, unfortunately, in San Nicandro there is shortage of work. A large number of our students come from families with unemployed parents and they suffer from social and cultural disadvantages. They are poor and we teachers help these children giving them clothes, books and other school material, anyway they are eager for new experiences. Together with this hard reality there is the situation of many students who are dropouts and they leave school before getting the "Diploma di Scuola Media", they come to a bad end.

We also have students with special needs like autistics and children with mental deficiency, students with dyslexia, anacalculation and anorthography, students with social and cultural disadvantage. All these students are supported by specialized teachers and they work in class together with their classmates. They have a simpler curriculum or a personalized curriculum.

As the local economy is mainly based on sheep and cattle breeding, most students use to help their parents with their work, so they are interested in nature, farming, animals. In building up their curriculum, we start from their interests and background to carry out projects related with nature such as "The path of milk" (La filiera sel latte), that is from the milk to the finished product through different steps. "Knowledge and flavours" (Saperi e sapori) that aims to inform students and families about healthy eating, food choices also include cultural meanings.

In our town there is "San Raffaele", a facility that hosts about 40 elderly people and most of them are afflicted with senile dementia or Alzheimer. On the 2nd October we celebrate the "Grandparents' festivity" and some teachers take students to visit them. Students take presents, talk to them, write some rhymes and keep them company.

A few kilometres from the town there is a beautiful and modern structure used as a Community Lodging for Minors, it is called "Fondazione Zaccagnino", it was established in 1944 by Doctor Vincenzo Zaccagnino who left all his property for the care of the orphans and poor children from San Nicandro Garganico. In our school there are some children who live there.

Our school has 42 teachers and the teachers involved in the project are experienced in Science, Geography, History, English, Art, Economy. They carry out different projects through didactic workshops, based on practice, which appeal particularly our most difficult students who get bored with a frontal lesson, within the narrow space of the classroom. The didactic workshop is used for a lot of subjects and, where it's possible, it uses the scientific-experimental method, so students become the protagonist of their own learning process and the normal classrooms turn into laboratories.

Key teachers have also been involved in etwinning projects and a Comenius project. The Comenius project was in 2013-2015 and it involved exchanges of groups of students, it was a great experience and students are still keeping in touch with their foreign friends.

Our feedback

We find the project really interesting and we like the themes. We also try to sensitize youth awareness of social issues and make them overcome discrimination towards weaker people. We think this project will enrich them, they will open their minds to new cultures and way of living and they will develop their self-confidence through working groups. Moreover we think the project will develop new skills in the students, especially through working in international groups during the student exchange activities.

We think the project is well structured and the steps are ok.