



Old Vicarage School

Early Years Children – Information for Parents

This document should be read in conjunction with the School's policies on:

Accessibility

Admissions

Child Protection & Safeguarding

Day & Residential Trips

Curriculum

English as an Additional Language

Equal Opportunities

First Aid, Medicines & Medical Conditions

Health & Safety

Individual Needs

Missing Child Policy & Procedures

Supervision

All of the above policies are available on our website along with others which are relevant to pupils in the EYFS. Printed copies of any of the School Policies may be provided to parents on request.

INTRODUCTION

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from 0-5 years of age. It is a distinct stage in children's learning, focussing on the developmental needs of young children and supporting their transition into school.

THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE AT OLD VICARAGE SCHOOL

Old Vicarage School is an independent day preparatory school for approximately 230 girls between the ages of 3 and 11 years.

The School is located on two sites on Richmond Hill. Children joining the Reception year will be based at the main Old Vicarage School site. Our youngest pupils attend 'Little Vic', our Pre-School, which is located on a separate site close to the main School.

We provide a warm, safe and secure environment in which every child can flourish and learn in their own individual way. We stimulate and nurture each girl's enjoyment of learning through structured and creative activities and play. We encourage the growth of social skills, confidence, respect and empathy. The relationships which the children develop with each other and with our staff are central to their happiness and lay the best possible foundation for their future.

We welcome girls from a diverse range of backgrounds. Their experiences are varied and they have a wide range of abilities, interests and understanding of the world around them. We pride ourselves on being an inclusive community where there is complete equality of opportunity and each child is valued for being herself.

Accessibility

Old Vicarage School strives to be accessible and is proud to welcome all girls into the school and embrace those with mild individual needs, learning and physical difficulties or disabilities which can be accommodated within the confines of our period buildings.

Early Education Funding (EEF) Scheme

Old Vicarage School offers the Universal 15 hours Early Education Funding for 3 and 4 year olds. We do not participate in the Extended 15 hours Funding scheme. The School applies for EEF on behalf of parents and a letter explaining the procedure will be provided to parents.

Our Staff

Head of Old Vicarage School

Mrs Gillian Linthwaite, Head, has overall responsibility for the whole school and its activities.

Head of Lower School

Mrs Wendy Liu, Head of Lower School, has overall responsibility for the teaching and learning activities of the Lower School classes: Little Vic, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.

Head of Pre-School

Miss Lizzy Grayson, Head of Pre-School, is the teacher with day to day management responsibility for the Pre-School department, Little Vic.

We employ exceptionally caring, suitably qualified and experienced teachers and teaching assistants to work with our Early Years children. All staff undertake ongoing professional development to maintain and develop their professional skills.

A full list of staff and their qualifications can be found on the School website. A printed copy may be provided to parents on request.

Key Person

Each child in the Early Years is allocated a Key Person who will be the point of contact for parents and is responsible for ensuring her care is tailored to meet her individual needs.

- In Reception, the child's designated Key Person is their Class Teacher.
- Pre-School (Little Vic) children will be assigned one of their two full-time teachers as their designated Key Person.

THE EARLY YEARS

The Pre-School (Little Vic)

Girls are accepted at the Little Vic at the age of three. They may attend on a weekly full day or half day basis for each of the first two terms. However, by the third term we will expect all the girls to be attending full days in order to best prepare them for school life.

Little Vic is located in the beautiful Vineyard Life Church, just moments away from Old Vicarage School. The children are housed in the spacious Church Hall which has been carefully designed and resourced to engage young minds, encourage independence and inspire curiosity. We have a dedicated garden area at the back of the Church which provides us with a safe and secure area for outside play and learning.

Little Vic is staffed by two full time teachers and one teaching assistant, all of whom make it their priority to ensure happy, considerate and confident little girls in their care. The girls will walk up to the Old Vicarage School to be taught PE and Music lessons and visit the School library.

The girls and their parents are invited to explore their new setting and meet their teachers prior to starting with us.

The Daily Routine

Girls should be dropped off at the Little Vic between 8.50am and 9.00am for a 9.00am start. If a girl has an older sibling at the Old Vicarage School, she may be dropped at the Old Vicarage School off with her sister at 8.00am, where she will be supervised by a member of staff until she is walked down to the Little Vic by an adult at 8.50am. Girls will have break at 10.30am for milk and a snack (provided by the school).

Girls who are attending morning sessions only should be picked up at 12.00pm. Those who are staying on for the full day will eat their packed lunch at 12.10pm. Afternoon sessions will resume at 1.00pm and the school day ends at 3.00pm.

Reception Classes

Girls transfer into the Reception year at the age of four. We have two Reception classes based on the main Old Vicarage School site, each consisting of 15 pupils, a full-time teacher and teaching assistant. Art, Music, Religious Studies, French, PE and Swimming are all taught by specialist teachers.

The well-planned and resourced Reception classrooms are bright, colourful and stimulating environments which encourage children to learn, explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves. We have a safe, soft surface playground on site which provides a secure outdoor area for play, PE and other activities.

All the new Reception girls are invited to come into the School to meet their teachers and experience their new classrooms prior to starting in September.

The Daily Routine

The School day starts with registration at 8.30am but girls may arrive at the School at any time after 8.00am. The children break at 10.15am for milk, a snack (fruit or biscuit, provided by the School) and play. In good weather, all the children must go outside to play at break-time except for those who are allowed to read quietly in the library or who need to stay inside for exceptional medical reasons. The children break for lunch and outdoor play at 11.45am and lessons resume with registration at 1.00pm. The School day for Reception children ends at 3.15pm.

OUR EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM

Children develop rapidly during their early years; physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. We provide a well-planned and resourced curriculum which supports and extends each girl's knowledge and accommodates different learning needs, styles and starting points.

Old Vicarage has opted out of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, but we still follow the National Curriculum for Early Years which includes the seven areas of learning:

1. Personal, social and emotional development – self-confidence, self-awareness, managing feelings and behaviour and making relationships.
2. Communication and language - listening, understanding and speaking.
3. Physical development – gross/fine motor skills and health and safety.
4. Literacy – reading and writing.
5. Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy – number, space, shapes and measures.
6. Knowledge and understanding of the world – the world, people, communities and technology (ICT).
7. Creative development – music, art and role-play.

The children learn through play as well as more formal lessons and through a mixture of child initiated and teacher led opportunities. This approach encourages self-expression while allowing them to develop the concentration and listening skills needed to learn. Different topics are explored through a variety of mediums, including books, drama, music, ICT, arts and crafts.

The girls develop their communication, language and thinking skills through classroom relationships and discussion, show and tell, role play and collaborative learning. The basics of literacy are taught through stories, rhyme, phonics and writing. Numeracy is developed through a range of activities, such as counting games, practical tasks and measuring. Physical development is closely monitored and developed, through PE and fine motor exercises.

Learning experiences are often repeated to help develop confidence and lead to a greater understanding. We build on previous knowledge by providing experiences that are appropriate to each child's development and stage of learning. Those girls who are ready, will have their learning extended as appropriate.

Our learning resources (eg. jigsaws, games, water toys, building blocks etc) are easily accessible and clearly labelled, enabling the girls to make their own choices of activities. These resources are reviewed annually and are replaced and supplemented as appropriate.

By the Summer Term the Early Years pupils are enthusiastic and confident learners who are working at levels usually well beyond the national expected level for their age group. This helps to prepare them for a smooth transition into their next year group.

Outdoor play, activities and excursions

All of our Early Years children get the opportunity to play daily in secure outdoor spaces during morning and afternoon breaks, except in the worst weather. We also use these spaces for supervised learning activities, which promote creativity, physical activity, exploration and critical thinking. We organise excursions (e.g. church, fire station, farm, local parks) to help the girls acquire a basic understanding of our traditions, of the natural world and of the importance of other cultures.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTS

The progress of each child is regularly assessed and recorded throughout the year to ensure future planning reflects the needs of individual girls.

- At Little Vic, the pre-school girls will be assessed using a teacher developed baseline assessment, alongside frequent observations.
- In Reception, the teacher assesses the girls using assessment records passed from any pre-school setting, the teacher's own baseline assessment tasks and formal assessment using GL Baseline Assessment. At the end of the Summer Term, GL Assessments are undertaken in Maths and English.

Teachers use daily observations and photographic evidence of work to set appropriate targets for the children. These also assist with the early identification of any individual or special educational needs.

Reports are completed at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. These will highlight each girl's strengths and development needs in each area of learning and detail general progress.

At the end of the academic year, the Pre-School, Reception and Year One teachers discuss the needs and progress of each girl to ensure a smooth transition into their next stage of learning.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

We recognise that parents have an important role to play in the education of their child and firmly believe in fostering a partnership approach. We do this by:

- Encouraging parents to contact their daughter's key person (Class Teacher/Assigned Teacher) by email or speak to them at pick up time if there are any anxieties or concerns. Otherwise, parents are welcome to make an appointment for a longer (or more private) conversation.
- Providing parents with general and individual guidance to help them support their daughter's learning at home.
- Inviting parents to assist with day trips or help the Lower School pupils with their reading.
- Arranging activities throughout the year which engage the School, the children and their parents. e.g. Sports Day, Nativity Play, Class Assemblies.
- Hosting an Open Evening for parents which celebrates work done by all girls in all the classes throughout the year.
- Publishing a weekly newsletter to provide information, celebrate good work and advertise future events.

Additionally, all parents of Pre-School and Reception children are invited to attend:

- Separate 'New Parents Information Evenings' which take place in the June before their child starts.
- A Curriculum Meeting in September to explain the year's curriculum, the topics that will be studied and the methods of delivery (play, structured activities, trips).
- Parent/Teacher meetings twice per year which provide parents with an opportunity to discuss their child's progress.
- Half-termly "Book Looks" in Reception and 'drop off open mornings' at Little Vic to see their child's work.

PASTORAL CARE

Activities, Events and Trips

The School's termly calendar of events details the dates of planned activities, events and trips. Further information for parents is provided in the weekly newsletter which is published every Friday.

After-School Care

After School Care is available for all pupils from Little Vicarage upwards and operates from 3.15 to 6.00pm each weekday on the Old Vicarage School premises. There is an additional fee for this service which is charged on a 'per-session' basis. Further details are available on the School website or from the school office. After School Care is not currently available for Little Vic pupils.

Assemblies

School Assemblies are simple services which are designed to be of value to all ages, sects and creeds. From Reception upwards, each class takes it in turn to hold an assembly for the rest of the school and parents of the children involved are invited.

Assemblies also provide an opportunity to commend children for special achievements, acts of kindness or helpfulness, and to reward them with stickers/special certificates/badges.

Behaviour

Even the youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They have to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect those of others. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity.

Food and Drink

The girls are offered a drink of milk or water and fruit or snack (provided by the School) at morning break. Drinking water is available throughout the day.

Reception children are provided with a healthy, balanced and nutritious two course lunch every day which they are expected to eat. They will be encouraged to demonstrate good manners and use their knife and fork correctly. The lunch menu is published to parents with the newsletter every week.

At Little Vic, the pre-School children who are attending for a full day will be required to bring a packed lunch to School.

We ask parents not to send food or drink to school with their child unless specifically requested or authorised to do so.

Allergies & Special diets

Both the Old Vicarage School and Little Vic are nut free zones and all cooking ingredients/packed lunches are checked to ensure that they comply with this policy.

Parents of girls who have allergies to any food product, or who have special dietary requirements are asked to make this clear in the School's medical questionnaire. Vegetarian and medical diets can be catered for with written permission.

Medical Matters

We ask parents to keep their daughter at home if she is ill or infectious. An ill child will not be happy in school and will only infect others. We will telephone you and ask you to collect your child if she becomes ill during the day. If your daughter has sickness or diarrhoea, she should remain at home for 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped.

We will always contact you if your daughter suffers anything more than a trivial injury, if she becomes unwell during the school day, or if we have any worries or concerns about her health.

The Early Years staff are all trained in Paediatric First Aid and minor injuries are referred to them. Serious injuries will be referred to the Head who is a fully qualified First Aider. Appropriate first aid supplies are kept on both sites and portable first aid bags and emergency medication will accompany the children whenever they participate in off-site activities or trips. All accidents are recorded in the accident book.

To ensure we can provide appropriate care, we ask parents to provide specific medical information on all our pupils.

Staff will not administer medicines to your child unless you have given written consent. A written record of all administered medication is kept and parents will be advised, on the same day, when medicines have been administered.

If your daughter has long-term medical needs, we will invite you to a meeting to discuss thoroughly the care and/or support that will be required.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Children learn best when they are safe, secure, happy and healthy. We adhere to all of the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (April 2017) and have clear procedures in place for assessing risk and keeping the girls safe, both on and off School premises. Our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy is enforced rigorously.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Old Vicarage School including the EYFS is the Head, Gillian Linthwaite.
- We have two Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Deputy Head, Daniel Robinson and the Head of Pre-School, Lizzy Grayson.

COMPLAINTS

We hope that you will not feel the need to complain and that any difficulty can be sensitively and efficiently handled before it reaches that stage. However, the School's Complaints Policy is available to view on our website or may be sent to parents on request.

Although our Early Years provision is inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, you are entitled to make a complaint directly to Ofsted. The Ofsted leaflet: 'Complaints to Ofsted about Schools: Guidance for Parents' may be downloaded from www.ofsted.gov.uk

Signed: **Gillian Linthwaite, Head**

Wendy Liu, Head of Lower School

Revised: June 2020

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