



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 Clare Strickland, 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 Jessica Adams and Ms Sara Fuller are joint Lead Teachers of the Little Vic and are the teachers 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, three full days and two half days 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 with effect from 1 September 2022 two full time teaching assistants and one part time 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 visit the School library, playground and the Reception classrooms.

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 9.10am for a 9.10am start. We offer pre-school supervision at Little Vic from 8am if needed. Girls should be registered in advance and there is a small charge payable. Girls will have break at 10.15am for milk and a snack (provided by the school).

Girls who are attending morning sessions only should be picked up at 12.15pm. Those who are staying on for the full day will eat their packed lunch at 12.15pm. Afternoon sessions will resume at 1.15pm and the school day ends at 2.50pm, parents have a 10 minute window to pick up from 2.50-3.00. After school care is available for Little Vic girls until 6.00pm at the main OVS site and girls who are attending this service will be walked up by a member of staff at the end of the day.

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, 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, (parents should register with CoolMilk), 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 a similar 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. Understanding 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 (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 throughout the day, 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' in Reception and 'New Parent Meetings' in Little Vic 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

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 the Little Vic 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.

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 (if registered with CoolMilk) 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 available to parents on the School's VLE (Firefly).

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.

Intimate Care

In situations in which a child needs to be cleaned and cared for after toilet accidents, children will always be asked if they want help before any physical contact is made. If the child is happy to be helped, adults will try to ensure that there is a second adult present. In situations where this is not practically possible, they will inform another adult and ensure that a second adult is in earshot should they need help.

Children will be encouraged to clean themselves where possible and given help where needed. Soiled clothes will be bagged and sent home and fresh clothes will be changed into. In some cases, in which underwear is very badly soiled, it may be thrown away. On school trips, the same procedure is followed, and adults will try to ensure as much privacy as possible for the child. Parents will be informed, verbally, about the incident at the end of the day.

In situations in which children refuse help from a member of staff, their parents will be contacted so that they can be cleaned up by someone they are more comfortable with. Staff have a duty to ensure that good hygiene is maintained throughout and that girls are clean and comfortable.

We wish to ensure the safety and welfare of children during intimate care routines and safeguard them against any potential harm as well as ensuring the staff member involved is fully supported and able to perform their duties safely and confidently. We ensure all staff undertaking intimate care routines have suitable enhanced DBS checks and are fully aware of all the required procedures. All staff are aware of their duty to protect children from harm including identifying signs and symptoms of abuse and will raise any concerns in accordance with the School's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. If parents or staff have concerns or questions about our intimate care procedures or individual routines, they should speak to the Head of Lower School or the Head of Little Vic.

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 (March 2021) 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 School's Designated Persons (DP) for all year groups including Reception (EYFS) are:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): **Clare Strickland, Head**
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), with specific responsibility for the Upper School and Mental Health: **Mandy Fawcett, Deputy Head**
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) with specific responsibility for the Lower school and Pre School: **Lizzy Grayson (currently on maternity leave),**
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), with specific responsibility for Looked after and Previously Looked After Children (and the Lower school and Pre School in the event of Ms Grayson's absence): **Franky Hendry**

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: **Clare Strickland, Head**

Wendy Liu, Head of Lower School

Revised: April 2023

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