



## Vita et Pax Preparatory School Curriculum Policy

Policy Originator	Allana Gay/Liam Donovan/ Kate Newton/Mark Shuker
Governor Responsible	Anna Westcott
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Ratified on	Pending
Review period	Annual

This policy is reviewed annually and ratified by the Governing Body.  
Families are encouraged to be familiar with this policy via the school website. Copies of this policy and its associated documents are available from the school office.

## School ethos

Vita et Pax Preparatory School is a co-educational environment for children from the age of three to the end of their primary education. Our school delivers a child centred and coordinated approach to nurturing character for the future. We aim for our children to be creative and caring learners who are happy to be in our dedicated learning environment. Our school works in strong partnership with our parents to ensure students are demonstrably safe, academically confident and well cared for physically, socially and emotionally. The school will always take actions that are in the best interest of the child and will provide positive outcomes for their development.

Vita et Pax Preparatory School is committed to creating and sustaining a learning environment that maintains respect and dignity for all. We value the diversity of our staff and students and work to provide a supportive environment in which the unique character of every individual is valued and celebrated. Our curriculum is focused to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all students irrespective of age, race, gender, special educational needs, disability, religion or socio-economic background.

The curriculum seeks to maximise the unique value and potential of each pupil, fostering personal growth and development in all areas, enabling children to become confident, responsible and considerate members of the community. The school actively identifies all opportunities for diversity and inclusion to be embedded as a normative part of the curriculum.

The school aims to make students:

- Independent learners, who feel safe to explore knowledge in their learning environment
- Enquiring learners, who are inquisitive about the world around them and can use various resources to improve their knowledge and understanding
- Adventurous learners, who are happy to engage with different experiences, activities and challenges in learning
- Conscientious learners, who recognise their personal responsibility beyond school and their immediate environment
- Accomplished learners, whose self-discipline and perseverance results in effort placed into all learning beyond where personal talents and gifts are nurtured
- Supportive learners, who recognise that true benefit lies in assisting the development of excellence as a collective rather than just an individual

The school aims to provide parents:

- Regular accurate updates on the academic progress of their child.
- Open and honest discussion on the social and emotional development of their child.
- Assurance that the education provided is appropriate to ensure their child's development is maximised.
- Opportunities to discuss concerns arising from the curriculum provision within the school.

The curriculum at Vita et Pax Preparatory School is delivered to ensure high levels of learning in each lesson. Teachers ensure there is sufficient support within the lessons to ensure students can build on a strong foundation of knowledge.

Vita et Pax Preparatory School provides specialist teachers in some subject areas. Teachers with qualifications in the given subject, or closely related, deliver the required content. The subjects are:

From Nursery to Class 6

Spanish

Music

Physical Education

From Class 3 to Class 6 (Juniors)

English

Mathematics

### **Curriculum Provision in Early Years – Nursery & Reception**

Vita et Pax Preparatory School Nursery prepares children from the age of 3 for entry to school. The provision is based on the interconnecting areas of the [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#) and the [Early Year Foundation Stage Profile : 2020 handbook](#).

The Nursery is led by a QTS (or equivalent) qualified person. Where support is required, then persons with a full and relevant L3 or L2 qualification are allocated.

In keeping with the statutory framework (Section 3.35), the school ensures that the following staff to student ratios apply:

Classroom and external supervision of areas:

One member of staff for every 13 students in the Nursery class

For provision with mixed groups of nursery and reception students:

One member of staff for every 13 students

For any provision prior to or after normal school hours:

One member of staff with a maximum of six children under the age of eight (8)

The Nursery operates in term time only and parents select up to 10 weekly sessions of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours each.

The Nursery Sessions are Mornings 8:30 am till 12 noon, snack and lunch provided. Afternoons are 12noon till 3:30 pm.

The main focus of the Nursery is to develop understanding of each child, such that they are developed personally. There is a blend of child initiated and teacher initiated activity that allows learning to happen at a pace that suits the child. The classroom and outside space are organised into learning areas with resources clearly labelled to help the children to become independent learners.

#### **Developing each unique child**

- From the moment a child enters, staff build upon each child's interests. This allows children to develop and share their understanding within a nurturing, yet challenging, environment. By observing the children daily, we create and capture a stimulating learning environment, using a variety of resources and materials to extend and develop new learning outcomes, creating unique episodes that can be built upon.

#### **Enabling environments**

- The Early Years environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be creative, messy and reflective, both indoors and outdoors. Children learn and develop well in our enabling environments which provides rich and stimulating activities for all children, while reinforcing a strong partnership between practitioners, peers, parents and carers.

### **Learning and Development in the Curriculum**

All areas of learning and development are interconnected. Within all their early years experiences, children are required to participate in adult led and child-initiated activities in order to develop effectively and to obtain the best level of development at the end of their Reception Year.

The three main prime areas that are fundamental and move through to support development in other areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development.
  - Making Relationships, building upon self- confidence and self- awareness.
- Communication and Language.
  - Developing listening and attention skills. Understanding and extending the breadth of what they see and speak about. Speaking clearly and confidently in a variety of different situations.
- Physical Development.

The Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society are:

- Literacy
  - The introduction of early phonics through, songs, stories and a variety of activities to develop and enhance new learning.
- Mathematics
  - Numicon is used to develop the meaning of a number and to support early addition and subtraction skills. It develops questioning and critical thinking.
- Understanding of the World.
  - Visiting and working with our local community. Experimenting with a variety of materials. Using appropriate computing programmes to develop ICT skills. Developing children's understanding of online safety.
- Expressive Arts and Design.
  - To develop children's imagination through role play areas, mark making media and school performances.

Each child's development is assessed in an age related manner using a tracking system provided by Early Excellence.

In the Early Years, there is Specialist teaching in Music, Spanish and Gymnastics. The Reception class can also join an after-School Club that is relevant to their age. The children go to the Library weekly and the ICT suite where they are developing their computing skills.

When demonstrating that they are ready, children are introduced to Oxford Reading Tree Scheme alongside The Ruth Miskin's Intensive Phonics.

## **Curriculum Provision in Main School – Infants & Juniors**

### **English**

The English curriculum is brought to life through our core text approach, which provides for the teaching and progression in speaking and listening, reading, writing, spelling and grammar. English lessons are creatively tailored by each teacher to meet the needs of each individual and to generate dynamic, purposeful lessons, which impart a zest for learning and a thirst for understanding. Regular assemblies, productions, public speaking and debating competitions, give pupils further opportunities to develop their oracy skills. Theatre trips, visiting drama groups and writing competitions provide additional stimulus. Reading and writing skills are practised and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. An English clinic is offered to pupils, optionally, after school to support children to make accelerated progress, while intervention groups are established in lessons to ensure that all of the children at Vita et Pax reach their full potential. We aim to deliver ‘challenge’ in every lesson, through high-end questioning and challenge activities that are informed by assessment and this results in an exceptionally high-level of attainment across all classes in our school.

### **INFANTS**

The English curriculum in Infants focuses on a core text, which is changed regularly to offer our pupils a range of high-quality literature, across a broad range of genres. Literacy skills, such as comprehension, grammar, punctuation and creative writing are then linked to the text to deliver a creative and engaging learning platform that is rich in literacy.

### **JUNIORS**

The pupils in Juniors benefit from subject specialist teaching with the curriculum being delivered by educational practitioners with a high-level of expertise in literacy, ensuring that children make the best possible progress. Following on from the solid foundation acquired in the lower years, the heart of our English curriculum in Juniors is centred in a core text approach. Each half term, our pupils’ skills, knowledge and understanding will be guided by high-quality contemporary and classical literature. The vast range of canonical texts explored, in class, ensure that all children, including reluctant readers, will leave our school with a varied breadth of literature that will support their understanding in all areas of the curriculum. Key literacy skills will be augmented with public speaking, debating and common entrance preparation, which equip our pupils with confidence and poise, allowing a smooth transition into the next chapter of their education.

## **Mathematics**

The Mathematics curriculum uses the core scheme 'Inspire Maths,' which is based on a Singapore Maths programme. The scheme promotes a concrete - pictorial - abstract approach, ensuring secure foundations and deep understanding of mathematical concepts. High-quality pupil textbooks introduce concepts in a highly scaffolded way, enabling all children to become assured mathematicians. It provides for practical activity, exploration and discussion. The scheme enables children to become confident and enthusiastic problem-solvers with strong arithmetic fluency and reasoning skills. The Oxford Inspire Maths Scheme is used throughout the school from the summer term of Reception to Year 6. Mathematical skills are also addressed, where appropriate, through the STEAM curriculum. The Numicon approach is introduced in Nursery and further developed in Reception, whereby children begin to embed early mathematical concepts. In the summer term of Year 6, pupils will be taught a range of advanced mathematical concepts to ensure a smooth secondary transition.

### **INFANTS**

Following a head-start in the Inspire maths scheme from Reception, pupils will further their mathematical knowledge throughout a range of fundamental topics. Students will begin to consolidate their ability to add and subtract whilst being introduced to the concept of multiplication and division. In addition, pupils will learn the core principles of geometry through exploring different shapes. Using manipulatives, students will develop the ability to tell the time and count money. Moreover, pupils will enhance their understanding of length, mass and volume. By the end of Infants, children will also be introduced to the concept of fractions and possess the ability to interpret basic graphs and tables.

### **JUNIORS**

The pupils in Juniors benefit from subject specialist teaching with the curriculum being delivered by educational practitioners with a high-level of expertise in mathematics, ensuring that children make the best possible progress. Following on from the solid foundation acquired in the lower years, pupils will begin to master the four fundamental operations in mathematics – addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. This is taken a stage further using decimals, percentages and ratios. Building on all the topics from Infants, pupils will also be introduced to angles, symmetry and tessellations. To ensure a smooth secondary transition, pupils will begin looking at algebra, speed, circles, nets and pie charts in Year 6.

## **STEAM**

STEAM is a cross-curricular approach to the teaching and learning of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths. Whole school topics are used as a stimulus to generate creative lessons that combine these areas of the curriculum to ensure that knowledge, understanding and skills in these subjects are taught in depth with an emphasis on high-end questioning. The pupils play a key role in guiding the learning in each unit of lessons and opportunities are given for children to take ownership of their learning and, as a result, Vita et Pax pupils pride themselves on becoming and being – independent learners. This has enabled a rich and broad approach to the subject, whereby there is a fluidity to what the children learn, as each class builds upon the previous class's knowledge.

## **Humanities**

Similar to STEAM, a whole-school topic-based approach is adopted in humanities, where pupils build upon their knowledge, understanding and skills progressively as they develop from year to year. This approach ensures that children maximise their personal progression. History and Geography make a major contribution to the pupils' knowledge and understanding of people and their environment and how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. They provide a means of exploring, appreciating and understanding the world in which we live and how it has evolved. Through exploration of the relationship between the Earth and its people, understanding the world, awareness of the past, secure chronological knowledge and understanding of local and world history, our curriculum stimulates curiosity. Developing our pupils' research enquiry skills are at the heart of our humanities curriculum as this supports them to become team-players and independent learners.

## **Computing**

At Vita et Pax, our aim is that every child will leave our school as a digitally literate and SMART user of technology. We use a variety of hardware and software to teach our computing curriculum to ensure that every child is confident and creative when demonstrating their computing abilities. It is our goal that Vita et Pax pupils will end their time with us being composed coders with the ability to program and control using a variety of different software. They will also be able to communicate their ideas effectively through a range of multimedia tools. The children will explore creating their own videos, pictures and animations using technology. At Vita et Pax, we think the safety of our children is paramount both offline and online. During computing sessions, the children are made aware of the dangers that face the online world. The children are taught to be safe by following the SMART online rules.

## **Music**

To harness the inner musician in every child, Vita et Pax offers subject specialist teaching for all year groups exclusively. Music plays a significant role throughout the lives of each and every student in a spectrum of extremely beneficial ways. At Vita Et Pax, students will learn and perform celebrations of termly Masses, Christmas, Easter and Summer Term Productions, Class Assemblies and Religious Festivals. We also have a school orchestra and choir that meet weekly and perform at selective events throughout the year. Pupils' musical skills are celebrated weekly in our celebration assemblies with live performances.

## **Spanish**

All children at Vita et Pax will receive subject specialist teaching from a fluent Spanish specialist. This is key to the progression of our pupils as their fluency is built, year upon year by one teacher, to ensure that the best possible progress is achieved. The specific awareness of pupils needs and achievements is paramount to our delivery of the Language curriculum at our school as it ensures that every lesson is taught with an acute knowledge and understanding of each child's individual targets, thus enabling progress to be directly measured and targeted appropriately.

## **PE**

Vita et Pax offers subject specialist teaching for all children, which is inclusive and covers a broad range of sports and physical activity across the curriculum and beyond. Our school aims to deliver a vast range of sporting opportunities to ensure that all our pupils are engaged in the PE curriculum and feel confident to not only participate, but to stretch themselves by setting personal targets to achieve. Not only do we offer subject specialist teaching to deliver the core of our curriculum, but also offer expertise in areas, such as dance and football. Two PE lessons per week are augmented with out of school competitions, including: football, netball, athletics and dance, where children learn the value of being competitive and also develop virtues of modesty, dignity and compassion. After school clubs further support the rich development of the PE curriculum.

## **Common Entrance Preparation**

The school seeks to ensure that students are well prepared for their futures in education and beyond. A key part of this is the ability to deal with the demands of testing and assessment for entry to schools. As such, students are provided with bespoke lessons aimed at familiarising them with decoding and responding to examination questions in reading comprehension, creative writing, vocabulary, verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning and mathematics.

The first aim is to make students comfortable with testing so that they are able to maintain their poise. Secondly, they are taught various systems that allow them to reason through questions in a logical and selective manner. Finally, it allows students to practise the application of content learnt in subjects.

## **Religious Education**

Stemming from our traditional origins of the Benedictine Olivetan Sisters, Catholic teaching forms the basis of the Religious Education [R.E.] curriculum. The foundation programme used is called "Come and See." From this basis, the curriculum is extended to incorporate the teaching of different faiths. The religious life of the School is further supported by daily prayer, the celebration of termly Mass, seasonal festivals and assemblies. Our close connection with our local Parish, Christ the King, allows us to celebrate Mass together and build relationships with our wider community. We have visits from our Parish Priests to spend time with the children and share opportunities to ask questions about our faith. Our Religious Education programme makes a significant contribution to children's human and social education and promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Through RE, our pupils will develop their knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually, think ethically and to reason theologically. We aim to provide children with the tools to apply their religious understanding to everyday life.

## Collective Worship

As a school, which has a strong dedication to spiritual life, Vita et Pax Preparatory School adheres to daily collective worship. Taking part builds community cohesion and understanding in our multicultural and multi-faith society. In accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and DfE guidance [Religious Education and Collective Worship \(1994\)](#), the daily collective worship shall be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”<sup>1</sup>, though not representative of a particular Christian denomination.

“**Take part**” in collective worship implies more than a passive attendance, such that it should have the ability to elicit responses from pupils.

Collective Worship takes place in school in the form of

- Liturgical Assembly – delivered by Headteacher to whole school
- Hymn Practice – delivered by Music teacher assisted by student leaders
- Phase Assembly – delivered by members of teaching staff and student leaders
- Celebration Assembly – delivered by Headteacher to whole school
- PSHE – delivered by form teachers

The school aims to promote meaningful experiences of collective worship that are appropriate to the age, needs and interests of pupils. Collective worship encourages active learning via reflection on thoughts, feelings and beliefs. It is taught in a varied manner that includes use of storytelling, silence, prayer, expressive arts and external presenters.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship and are not required to provide a reason for doing so. However, in order to maintain strong family- school partnership, the Head Teacher may seek to discuss requests for withdrawal with parents. Alternative provision, consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum, will be arranged for any student withdrawn from collective worship.

## Extra-Curricular Opportunities

Our school offers a range of extra-curricular activities to help children to explore new skills and develop fully as a learner and as a person. Weekly teacher led clubs offer our pupils the opportunity to extend themselves within and beyond the curriculum. These include maths and English Clinics, which supports children who need extra help, while challenging high-ability children to push themselves academically. Teacher led clubs are reviewed, adapted and changed termly, to reflect pupils’ interest and needs. Furthermore, we offer a range of other exciting clubs from external providers to engage young minds and develop new skills beyond the curriculum. The extensive range currently includes: Robotics, Young Film Makers, LAMDA, Theatre, Chess, football, gymnastics and dance. One to one music lessons in piano, guitar and cello are also offered to develop the inner musician in each child. Once again, all clubs and tuition are regularly reviewed to meet the needs and focus of our pupils. In reflection of the close relationship between staff and pupils, Vita et Pax regularly benefits from parent specialists sharing their expertise with our pupils, in the classroom and in afterschool clubs. Moreover, to engage children in economics and to impart a sense of economic well-being, children in JUNIORS explore entrepreneurial skills during Enterprise week, where they create a business plan, receive a small loan and invest their money in their own business. External competitions, such as debating, maths, English, sport and dance are also utilised to enable children to mature and progress.

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<sup>1</sup> DfE (1994) ‘Religious Education and Collective Worship’, pg.21, para.60

## **PSHE and fundamental British Values**

Pupils are led towards distinguishing right from wrong, to respect the law and towards acting consistently with their beliefs and with a view to the consequences of their own and others' actions. We actively promote fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Our school:

- leads pupils towards becoming confident and positive contributors to their community and effective users of its services and facilities according to their maturity
- enables pupils to gain insights into the origins and practices of their own cultures and into those of the wider community
- takes steps to ensure that the pupils appreciate racial and cultural diversity and avoid, resist and challenge racism
- ensures that pupils are able to understand and respond to risk. For example, risks associated with extremism, new technology, substance misuse and personal safety
- enables pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence

A variety of trips, assemblies, visiting speakers, circle time, charity days and an active School Council and Mini Vinnies enhance the above and other areas of the curriculum, raising pupils' awareness of the environment, religious practices, racism, bullying, e-safety, world poverty, healthy lifestyles and helping pupils achieve personal goals.

## **SEN Provision** (*read alongside SEND & EAL Policy*)

Vita et Pax aims to provide outstanding SEN provision, through systematic assessment, implementation of targeted support and review of progress and initiative. We work in an inclusive classroom environment, where teaching is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Through class and individual assessment, children that need support are identified and a rigorous support programme is established to ensure every pupil makes the progress they deserve.

Intervention groups are selected, then reviewed and extra provision enables gaps in progress and attainment to be bridged. Selected children will benefit from individual and group intervention from specialist teachers, class teachers and support staff.

Thereafter, tailored, targeted teaching supports children to flourish. This culminates in an upward trend in progress and attainment and, where progress and attainment are not sufficiently met, further support is established. This can include referrals to outside agencies and specialist provision.

Regular IEP meetings with our SEN lead, head teacher, class teacher, support staff, parents and, where appropriate, the pupil, help scaffold a plan of action to promote progress and well-being in a bespoke and targeted manner. This support is augmented by an open-door policy and ongoing dialogue between all staff, external professionals, parents and pupils. All staff take pride in our close relationship with parents and the support put in place to ensure that their children make the progress they deserve.

## Pastoral Care

Vita et Pax takes pride in nurturing the child in our care and believe that 'everybody can be somebody.' This ideology is rooted in knowing every child and family, collectively and individually. It is our aim to create a family atmosphere with a true sense of belonging. From support staff to head teacher, an open door policy encourages parents and pupils to share their celebrations and their concerns, so that together we can be successful with a simple, yet fundamental approach to ensuring the requisites of a successful pupil - They should be happy, safe and making the best possible progress. Furthermore, our environment fosters close communication between staff, ensuring that each member of staff knows and understands each child at our school, no matter which year group they belong to. If there are concerns about a pupil's well-being, then a support plan is put in place, which is closely communicated and agreed with parents/carers, to do everything possible to ensure that every child feels happy and safe, thus enabling them to make the best possible progress. As every child has individual needs, a clear understanding of our pupils enables our team to tailor pastoral provision appropriately and personally, and we offer a spectrum of support ranging from musical and art therapy to creating bespoke roles for our pupils within our school, such as 'student photographer' to maintain positive well-being across the board.

Our students' achievements, both in and outside of school are rightfully recognised and championed on a weekly basis in Celebration Assemblies and in our school newsletter, then annually, during academic evening. From the very beginning of each child's journey through our school, we foster a sense of self-worth, independence and team spirit. Pupils throughout the school are given significant roles and responsibilities to develop. Our pupils can be elected democratically by their peers to become school councillors and student ambassadors, so that they can learn to compromise and make important decisions for our school.

Vita et Pax aims to have strong links with the outside community and supports local and global charities. We have a close relationship with Christ the King church and regularly attend Mass, where our children support the Priest with the reading of scripture. The relationship between the Church and our school has helped to support local charitable projects. Children at Vita et Pax can apply to be Mini-Vinnies. These children are responsible for selecting and leading charitable projects to support our local community and to help other people across the world.

To support the transition for our Year 6 children, who are moving onto their new secondary school, a number of vital strategies are implemented, ensuring our children are confident and ready for the next chapter in education. All Year 6 children are given significant roles and responsibilities that harness composure, independence, self-belief and maturity. The Head Boy, Head Girl, Deputy Head Boy, Deputy Head Girl and prefects will have responsibilities that include, parent tours, delivering speeches and supporting children in the lower years. High expectations are set in place and Year 6 are considered role models by staff and other pupils. Public speaking, debating and interview practice support our oldest children to feel ready for the challenges ahead. Residential trips offered for Years 4, 5 and 6 further instil confidence in our pupils.