



Vita et Pax
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Vita et Pax Preparatory School
Established 1936

Curriculum Policy (Including Early Years)

Policy Originator	Head Teacher
Approved by	Governing Body
Date Approved	1 March 2026
Status	Statutory
Review Period	Annually (next: March 2027)

1. Introduction and Legal Framework

Vita et Pax Preparatory School provides a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum for all pupils from Nursery (age 2) to Year 6 (age 11). Our curriculum is designed to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

This policy is informed by:

- Section 78 of the Education Act 2002.
- The Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSRs) 2014, Part 1.
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2024.
- The National Curriculum in England: framework for Key Stages 1 and 2 (used as a benchmark).
- DfE guidance: Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education (2024).
- The SEND Code of Practice (2015).
- The Equality Act 2010.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025.

As an independent school, Vita et Pax is not required to follow the National Curriculum but uses it as a benchmark to ensure breadth and rigour. The school meets and exceeds the ISSRs requirement for a full-time, supervised education covering linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education.

2. Curriculum Aims

- Provide a rich, stimulating and coherent curriculum that inspires a love of learning.

- Ensure all pupils, including those with SEND and the most able, are appropriately challenged and supported to make good progress.
- Develop confident, articulate, numerate and digitally literate pupils.
- Promote curiosity, creativity, critical thinking and independent learning.
- Foster strong moral values, spiritual awareness and cultural understanding, reflecting the school's Catholic ethos.
- Prepare pupils for the next stage of their education, including secondary school entrance.
- Actively promote fundamental British values and pupils' SMSC development.
- Embed safeguarding, including online safety, across the curriculum.

3. Meeting the Independent School Standards (Part 1)

The curriculum provides experience in the following areas of learning as required by ISSRs Part 1:

Area of Learning	Subjects
Linguistic	English, French, reading, writing, speaking and listening
Mathematical	Mathematics (number, measurement, geometry, statistics)
Scientific	Science (biology, chemistry, physics)
Technological	Computing, Design and Technology
Human and social	History, Geography, RE, PSHE, Citizenship
Physical	PE, games, swimming, outdoor learning
Aesthetic and creative	Art, Music, Drama, DT, creative writing

The curriculum also provides for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) which reflects the school's aims and ethos, encourages respect for others and specifically promotes fundamental British values.

4. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Children in Little Vitas (age 2-3), Nursery (age 3-4) and Reception (age 4-5) follow the Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2024. The curriculum is play-based and combines adult-led teaching with child-initiated exploration.

Prime Areas of Learning

- Communication and Language: listening, attention, understanding and speaking. Rich language environments, storytelling, singing, rhymes and conversation.
- Physical Development: gross and fine motor skills, spatial awareness, self-care and healthy eating. Daily outdoor play and structured PE.
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED): self-regulation, managing feelings, building relationships, confidence, turn-taking and independence.

Specific Areas of Learning

- Literacy: phonics (systematic synthetic phonics programme), reading, mark-making and early writing. Daily phonics sessions from Nursery.
- Mathematics: counting, number recognition, shape, space, measure and pattern. Concrete, pictorial and abstract approaches.
- Understanding the World: people and communities, the natural world, technology. Exploring the local environment, cultural celebrations, simple science.
- Expressive Arts and Design: painting, drawing, music, dance, role-play, construction. Developing imagination and creativity.

Assessment in EYFS uses ongoing observation, the school's tracking system and the EYFS Profile at the end of Reception. Each child's unique developmental needs are considered, and activities are differentiated accordingly. The school ensures appropriate adult:child ratios and a safe, stimulating learning environment.

5. Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Curriculum

Core subjects

- English: reading (systematic phonics continued in KS1, guided and independent reading, class novels, library), writing (composition, handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation), speaking and listening (debate, presentation, discussion).
- Mathematics: number and place value, four operations, fractions, decimals, percentages, measurement, geometry, statistics, ratio and proportion (Y6). Emphasis on fluency, reasoning and problem-solving.
- Science: biology (plants, animals, habitats, human body), chemistry (materials, changes of state, mixtures), physics (forces, electricity, light, sound, Earth and space). Practical investigation skills are developed throughout.

Foundation subjects

- Computing: computer science (algorithms, programming, logical reasoning), information technology (using software for learning) and digital literacy (online safety, responsible use, NeuralShield-supported internet filtering).
- History: chronological understanding from Ancient civilisations to modern Britain. Developing skills of enquiry, evidence analysis and empathy.
- Geography: locational and place knowledge, human and physical geography, geographical skills and fieldwork.
- Religious Education: Christianity and the major world religions. Exploration of beliefs, practices, festivals and moral questions. RE reflects the school's Catholic ethos while being inclusive and respectful of all faiths.
- Art and Design: drawing, painting, sculpture, printing, textiles and digital art. Study of significant artists and art movements.
- Design and Technology: designing, making and evaluating products. Food technology, mechanisms, structures and textiles.
- Music: singing, playing instruments (including recorder and percussion), composing, listening and appraising. Opportunities for ensemble performance.
- Physical Education: games, gymnastics, dance, athletics, swimming and outdoor adventure activities. Inter-school competitive sport.
- French: speaking, listening, reading and writing in French from Year 1. Developing cultural awareness and enthusiasm for language learning.

- PSHE / RSHE: as detailed in the RSE/PSHE Policy. Covers relationships, health, wellbeing, citizenship, financial literacy, safety (including online safety) and British values.

6. Cross-Curricular Themes

The following themes are embedded across the curriculum:

- SMSC development: Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is mapped across all subjects and enrichment activities.
- British values: Democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance are actively promoted (see British Values Statement).
- Online safety: Taught explicitly in Computing and PSHE, and reinforced across all subjects where technology is used.
- Literacy and numeracy: Reading, writing and mathematical skills are developed across all subjects, not only in English and Maths.
- Thinking skills: Critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving and metacognition are developed through enquiry-based and collaborative learning.

7. Inclusion and Special Educational Needs (SEND)

The curriculum is accessible to all pupils. The school follows the graduated approach of the SEND Code of Practice 2015 (Assess, Plan, Do, Review):

- Class teachers differentiate planning, teaching and resources to meet individual needs.
- Pupils with SEND receive targeted support through Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- The SENCo co-ordinates provision, liaises with parents and external specialists, and monitors progress.
- Gifted and talented pupils are identified and challenged through extension activities, enrichment and higher-order questioning.
- Reasonable adjustments are made in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- No pupil is disadvantaged or excluded from any area of the curriculum because of their SEND, disability, gender, ethnicity or any other protected characteristic.

8. Assessment and Reporting

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning. The school uses a combination of:

- Baseline assessment: on entry to Nursery, Reception and for mid-year joiners.
- Formative assessment: daily — observation, questioning, marking, feedback and self/peer assessment. Informs planning and next steps.
- Summative assessment: termly and end-of-year assessments in core subjects to track progress against age-related expectations.
- Standardised testing: including CATs (Cognitive Abilities Tests), reading age tests and spelling tests to benchmark and identify needs.

- EYFS Profile: completed at the end of Reception, assessing each child against the Early Learning Goals.
- Year 6 transition data: comprehensive reports and data shared with secondary schools.

Reporting to parents: parents receive a written report annually and attend parent consultation evenings twice per year (Autumn and Spring terms). EYFS parents receive regular observations via the school's learning journal system. Teachers are available to discuss progress informally at other times.

9. Enrichment and Extra-Curricular Activities

The school provides a rich programme of enrichment, including:

- Educational visits: linked to curriculum topics (e.g., museums, galleries, theatres, places of worship, outdoor centres).
- Residential experiences: outdoor adventure and team-building for Year 5/6.
- Extra-curricular clubs: sport, music, art, drama, chess, coding, languages and more, offered before school, at lunchtime and after school.
- Performances: nativity, class assemblies, school plays and music concerts.
- Competitive sport: inter-school fixtures, sports day and tournaments.
- Visiting speakers and workshops: authors, scientists, artists, community leaders and safety organisations (NSPCC, fire service).
- International Evening: celebrating the cultural diversity of the school community.
- Charity and community projects: fundraising, harvest collections and local community engagement.

10. Homework

Homework is set to reinforce learning, develop independent study skills and foster home-school partnership:

- EYFS: daily reading, phonics practice and occasional creative tasks.
- KS1 (Years 1-2): daily reading, weekly spellings, Maths practice and occasional topic-based tasks. Approximately 1 hour per week.
- KS2 (Years 3-6): daily reading, weekly spellings, regular Maths and English tasks, plus topic-based research. Increasing from approximately 1.5 hours (Y3/4) to 2.5 hours per week (Y5/6).

Homework is marked and feedback is provided. Parents are encouraged to support homework but should not complete it for their child.

11. Preparation for Secondary School

The curriculum in Years 5 and 6 includes specific preparation for the transition to secondary school:

- Entrance exam preparation (11+ and independent school exams) — verbal and non-verbal reasoning, extended writing, comprehension and interview technique.
- Comprehensive transition reports shared with receiving schools.
- Visits to and from secondary schools.

- Pastoral support for emotional readiness and managing change.
- Careers awareness and aspiration-building through PSHE.

12. Monitoring and Review

The quality and effectiveness of the curriculum is monitored through:

- Lesson observations by the Head Teacher and senior leaders.
- Learning walks to observe teaching and the learning environment.
- Book/work scrutiny to assess pupil progress and quality of feedback.
- Pupil progress meetings (termly) between class teachers and the Head Teacher.
- Analysis of assessment data to track attainment and progress.
- Subject leader reviews and action plans.
- Pupil voice — gathering pupils' views on their learning experiences.
- Parent surveys and consultation.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head Teacher and subject leaders, and approved by the Governing Body.

13. Related Policies

- RSE / PSHE Policy
- SEND Policy
- Assessment and Marking Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- British Values Statement
- Equality & Accessibility Plan

Approved by: Governing Body of Vita et Pax Preparatory School

Date: 1 March 2026