

Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities - Information Report

Early Years Settings - Local Offer (Maintained settings)

All Early Years Settings are asked to give their responses to the following questions for publication in the Authority's Local Offer for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities. We hope this information will help parents and carers to understand how additional and/or special educational needs are managed at Victoria Park Nursery School.

Please give a very brief description of your setting, eg. size, location, ethos, any mission statements etc.

Victoria Park Nursery School operates from a purpose-built premises with a large garden on the edge of Victoria Park in central Newbury. We are maintained by West Berkshire Council and are a centre of Early Years Excellence.

Our Nursery School, which has a Headteacher, highly qualified Teachers, Early Years Educators and support staff, provides a happy, stable and stimulating first experience of school. We believe that children learn best when they are able to make their own choices and decisions and follow their own interests. Our staff are experts at extending children's learning by watching and listening to self-directed play and offering suggestions, encouragement and challenges to move them on.

We offer 30 and 15 hour funded places for 3-5 year olds and 15 hour part-time places for 2 year olds. From September 2025 we are also offering a small number of 30-hour spaces for 2 year olds.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) at Victoria Park Nursery School is Lara Pinnell. She has a Post Graduate Certificate in SEND and the National SENCo Award. You can contact her at the school on 01635 41296 or by emailing office@victoriapark.w-berks.sch.uk

Our website is <https://victoriapark.w-berks.sch.uk/westberks/primary/victoria-park>

1. Identification of additional or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

1.1 How does the setting identify children with additional needs or SEND?

As experts in early years education, we know that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We also think it's really important to identify SEND early so that children can be supported as soon as possible. We do this by:

- *Asking you to make sure your child has attended the "Two Year Review" offered by local Health Visitors. This means that any issues with your child's development can be addressed before they start Nursery School and that we are ready to support them straight away.*
- *Working closely with staff at the Family Hub, so families with children who may need additional help continue to be well supported.*
- *Offering you a home visit before your child starts at Nursery School. This gives you the opportunity to share any concerns and enables our staff to observe children in their home environment. Any concerns raised following a home visit are discussed with the senior leadership team and SENCo.*
- *Assessing children's well-being and involvement each term. This helps us to identify any children who need some extra support getting settled at Nursery School.*
- *Completing assessments during a child's first 6 weeks at Nursery school and at the end of every school term thereafter. These are informed through observation, playing alongside a child, discussion with colleagues and with you as parents or carers. Through ongoing monitoring and pupil progress meetings, we identify children who are not making the expected progress or who are working below age-related expectations.*
- *Monitoring the development of children's communication and language skills each term. This helps us to identify which children need support with speech, language or social communication.*

1.2 What should I do if I think my child has additional needs or SEND?

If you are concerned about your child, you should speak to your child's key person who may involve the Nursery School's SENCo for additional advice. You are able to make your own referrals to a variety of services via your GP or the Family Hub, and the Nursery School will be very happy to support you in this process.

2. Support for children with additional needs or SEND

2.1 If my child is identified as having an additional need, who will oversee and plan their education programme?

If your child has additional needs, please let us know as soon as possible, so that we can try to get resources in place before your child starts at Victoria Park Nursery School. Providing us with copies of any reports you have is a useful starting point and we will arrange for you to meet with your child's key person and the SENCo to ensure your child has a smooth transition to Nursery School.

We talk regularly with parents and carers to work out together how best to meet your child's needs. Our SENCo will oversee your child's education programme whilst their key person takes responsibility for planning the programme. Depending on your child's level of need, they may spend some time working with one of our experienced Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). We welcome and incorporate all specialist advice we receive from other professionals who are involved in your child's care.

2.2 How will I be informed / consulted about the ways in which my child is being supported?

Staff will be available to talk to you informally every day at drop-off and pick-up times. We have "stay & play" sessions each term where you will be able to discuss your child's progress with your child's key person. You will be provided with a settling in report shortly after your child has started at nursery or if they have moved to a new class and are welcome to discuss this in person or over the phone. We have a formal parent consultation once each school year and provide a written report once a year. If your child has a finalised EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan), you will meet each term with school staff and other professionals and be fully involved in reviewing your child's progress and making future plans.

2.3 How will the setting balance my child's need for support with developing their independence?

At Victoria Park Nursery School we think that children become independent when they have good relationships with the adults around them and have an environment that provides for their needs. It's really important to us that children with special needs or disabilities are fully involved with their group of peers and we will provide resources or LSA support to ensure that this can happen. Whilst engaged in free play, your child will be supported by adults who are skilled at ensuring needs are met whilst encouraging your child to make their own choices, explore for themselves and

meet any challenges they face. We use a range of resources such as visual timetables to encourage children to plan their own learning.

2.4 How will the setting match/differentiate the Early Years Foundation Stage for my child's needs?

Learning at Victoria Park Nursery school is based around play. We treat children as unique individuals and they all learn by following their own interests at their own pace. We will support your child's play through modelling, questioning and observation, using each interaction as a teaching opportunity to work on their individual next steps.

2.5 What teaching strategies does the setting use for children with additional needs or learning difficulties, including Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), hearing impairment, visual impairment, speech, language difficulties and physical difficulties?

We do our best to respond to the individual needs of your child. We use visual aids such as pictorial timetables and picture exchange (PECS). Staff also use Makaton (simple sign language) and gesture to communicate and we ensure that all children enjoy an active learning experience. Our staff have been trained to use specialist equipment for individual children e.g. walking frames, wheelchairs, support frames.

We have a number of quiet rooms where children can work either 1:1 or in a small group and a sensory room in each cohort to support children with additional sensory needs.

2.6 Does the setting provide any additional staffing from its own budget for children with additional needs or SEND?

We have a team of Learning Support Assistants who are employed specifically to work with children with additional needs. As a nursery setting, we are able to apply to the Local Authority for funding to support children with significant special needs. This is a lump sum provided on a year on year basis.

2.7 What specific intervention programmes are offered by the setting for children with additional needs or SEND and are these delivered on a one to one basis or in small groups?

We plan specific intervention groups of 3-4 children, such as;

- *Attention and Listening*
- *Self Esteem*
- *Speech and Language / Understanding*

- *Social Skills and Empathy*
- *Turn-Taking*

These groups change each term according to the needs of the children in Nursery School. If a child has very specific additional needs, they will be dealt with via 1:1 support within the main nursery school setting. We have 2 staff who are trained as early years ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) who can provide short programmes of work to help with things such as friendship-making skills, understanding feelings or dealing with change.

2.8 What resources and equipment does the setting provide for children with additional needs or SEND?

We have an extensive range of resources used at small group times or on a 1:1 basis: e.g.

- *Pommel chairs*
- *Seating mats*
- *Wobble mats*
- *Fiddle Toys*
- *Visual prompts*
- *Toys to encourage listening and attention e.g. prop boxes*
- *Story sacks*
- *Turn taking games*
- *Sound makers*
- *Speech sound bags*
- *Sound-Symbol pictures*
- *Lotto games*
- *Chew toys*

Specialist equipment is used on the advice on visiting professionals and we will always incorporate new resources based on advice. We have sensory areas in both our Chestnut and Willow Group rooms. These are designed to support children with a range of processing difficulties.

3. My child's progress

3.1 How will the setting monitor my child's progress and how will I be involved in this?

You will be able to chat informally to staff at drop-off and pick-up times. We offer each family a “settling in” report shortly after your child starts at Nursery School or moves to a new group. Each subsequent term, your child will either have a written report or you will be invited to a parent consultation. A child with additional needs will have a GAP (Graduated Approach Plan) written by their key person, which sets out how the Nursery School will be providing specific support. These plans are reviewed termly by the SENCo and staff. If your child’s needs are more complex and they have an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) in place, you will meet each term with other professionals who are involved to review your child’s progress and set new short term targets. You are encouraged to contribute towards online learning records with photographs and comments. Your child’s attainment will be assessed by their key person at the end of each term so that progress can be recorded.

3.2 When my child’s progress is being reviewed, how will new targets be set and how will I be involved?

You will be fully involved with Nursery staff and other professionals to set achievable next steps for your child or to break down an existing target if appropriate. We always encourage parents to suggest activities and share strategies which they use at home.

3.3 In addition to the setting’s normal reporting arrangements, what opportunities will there be for me to discuss my child’s progress with setting staff?

If your child has an EHCP, we will meet each term to review progress and decide on new areas to work on. Your child’s key person will invite you to discuss the outcomes of an observation or report from a visiting professional. Staff will contact you informally at the beginning or end of sessions if there is a ‘wow’ moment to be celebrated. You are always very welcome to arrange to meet with their child’s keyworker, the SENCo or Headteacher at any point should you wish to discuss your child’s progress.

3.4 What arrangements does the setting have for regular home to school contact?

You will be offered a home visit as part of our transition programme before your child starts at Nursery School. We use an online learning journal called Tapestry which updates you on your child’s progress as well as providing notes from the school office. You will receive a regular newsletter which is available via email and hard copy and we have a Facebook, Instagram and Twitter feeds to update you on activities at Nursery School. Our website is updated regularly and has diary dates and copies of all newsletters. A home-school diary will be used for your child if

appropriate. You will have access to your child's online learning diary and you will be able to add your own comments and upload photos and videos from home.

3.5 How can I support my child's learning?

Staff will share your child's next steps in their learning journal and suggest ways in which this can be supported at home. We place great emphasis on highlighting the importance of play-based learning opportunities and offer regular workshops to help you to support your child's play.

3.6 Does the setting offer any help for parents / carers to enable them to support their child's learning, eg. training or learning events?

During the school year you will be invited to regular workshops to help you support your child's learning. We also work closely with The Family Hub and we collaborate with the staff there to offer more specific parenting courses or family support. All workshops to support parents are advertised on our school website and in our regular newsletters to parents.

3.7 How will my child's views be sought about the help they are getting and the progress they are making?

During supported play, staff will comment upon your child's achievements and the learning that has taken place. We will encourage your child to reflect on the new skills they are developing and to think about what has helped them. We record children's comments in their online learning diaries.

3.8 How does the setting assess the overall effectiveness of its SEN provision and how can parents / carers take part in this evaluation?

All children who are having additional support from a visiting professional or in Nursery School have a Graduated Approach Plan (GAP). This is where keyworkers will document when and how the additional support will take place. These plans are reviewed every term with the SENCo and Headteacher so that the effectiveness of support can be tracked.

If your child has an EHCP, a more formal review will take place each term with input from all professionals involved in your child's care. At this meeting, you will be able to comment on provision and help to evaluate your child's progress.

Parent surveys are conducted regularly by Governors and West Berks LA and these allow you to comment on provision for children with SEND.

4. Support for my child's overall well being

4.1 How does the setting support children's social and emotional development?

Your child's wellbeing is very important to us as we know it is not possible for children to make progress with their learning if they are not happy and settled. We regularly track emotional well-being and involvement in play and this enables us to identify children who will benefit from additional support.

Personal, social and emotional development is one of the prime areas of the Early Years curriculum and is a major focus for all children in Nursery School.

4.2 How does the setting support children who find it difficult to conform to the setting's normal behavioural expectations?

At Victoria Park Nursery School we use the "Therapeutic Thinking" approach to managing behaviour which is supported by West Berkshire Council. Every adult in school is responsible for modelling sociable behaviour and sharing with children the ways in which are all kept safe and happy.

We believe that there is always a reason for anti-social behaviour. We will work with you to identify possible reasons and will work together to address them. We may refer you to the Health Visitors or the Family Hub who can provide support with sleep, diet and behaviour management. We can also refer you to the Early Response Hub, whose team can support your family with more complex issues connected with your child's behaviour.

4.3 What medical support is available in the setting for children with additional needs or SEND?

If your child has long term medical needs, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can get advice from appropriate professionals before they start at Nursery School. We have welcomed training from health care professionals such as physiotherapists and nurses who support conditions such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy. The majority of staff in Nursery School have had paediatric first aid training. We have a Long Term Medical Needs Policy on our website which provides additional information.

4.4 How does the setting manage the administration of medicines?

Our Medication and First Aid Policy covers the administration of medicines and can be found on our website. You are required to complete an authorisation form with each new prescription. Your child's medicine is kept with the authorisation form in a

secure named bag and staff record the administration of medicine in the class incident book.

4.5 How does the setting provide help with personal care where this is needed, for example, help with toileting, eating etc?

As an early years setting we are experienced in working with parents to establish a toilet training programme and will start working on this when your child is settled and show signs of being ready. We have child-sized toilets in Nursery School, or a range of potties if your child prefers. We have a changing area and nappy disposal bin in each class group.

Our breakfast, lunch and tea clubs are led by Nursery School staff, who sit with the children modelling skills such as drinking from a cup. An adult is also available at the snack table during free play should children need extra support.

5. Specialist services and expertise available at or accessed by the setting

5.1 Are there any specialist staff working at the setting and if so, what are their qualifications?

We have 2 staff who are qualified ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants), 3 staff who have L3 qualifications in supporting speech and language development and 3 staff who have L3 qualification in inclusive practice.

Other specialist staff such as Speech & Language therapists, our Educational Psychologist and the Sensory Consortium visit regularly from outside the setting.

We also work closely with The Family Hub and the team there work individually with families or provide courses and drop-ins to which all families are welcome.

5.2 Does the setting use any support services, for example, learning support teachers, educational psychologists, teachers for hearing impairment and visual impairment, ASD advisory teachers, behaviour support teachers etc?

We have links with many visiting professionals including:

- Educational Psychologists*
- Speech and Language Therapists*
- Early Development and Inclusion Team (EDIT)*
- Occupational Therapists*
- Physiotherapists*
- Paediatricians*
- Family Support Workers*

- *Health Visitors*
- *Sensory Consortium*

We always consult other professionals who are working with your child so that we can work together as effectively as possible.

5.3 What should I do if I think my child needs to be seen by one of these professionals?

You should talk to your child's key person in the first instance. If appropriate you would then meet with the SENCo to discuss a referral via your GP or through the Nursery School.

6. Training of setting staff in SEND

6.1 What SEND training is provided for practitioners within the Early Years setting?

Staff at Victoria Park Nursery School are very experienced and are able to provide good support to one another regarding working with children with a range of SEND. Our expertise in communication and language development is particularly strong, since our Assistant Headteacher runs the Every Child a Talker (ECaT) programme in West Berkshire. We also have access to training provided by the Local Authority and by other specialist organisations. Staff working with individual children have the opportunity to discuss appropriate strategies with visiting professionals and training will be provided as appropriate.

6.2 Do any practitioners have specific qualifications in additional needs or SEND?

Our SENCo has been awarded the post-graduate SENCo certificate (PGCert SENCo). We have Early Years Educators who have additional L3 qualifications in working with children with SEND and supporting early language development.

7. Activities outside the setting including trips

7.1 How do you ensure children with additional needs or SEND can be included in all activities and trips?

At Victoria Park Nursery School, children with SEND are included in all of our activities. We always complete a risk assessment to ensure the safety and accessibility of trips and activities for all children. We prime children using social stories and visual prompts to prepare them for changes in their routine to ensure that they feel safe and secure.

7.2 How do you involve parents/carers in planning the support required for their child to take part in activities and trips?

We would take your advice regarding the support and preparation you feel your child would need for a new and different activity, and if appropriate we may increase the level of support for your child.

8. How accessible is the setting environment?

8.1 How accessible is the building for children with mobility difficulties / wheelchair

The Nursery School is fully accessible for children with mobility difficulties and our Accessibility Plan is available on our website. We welcome children who use wheelchairs and other mobility equipment such as walking frames and our environment indoors and outdoors has been planned to reflect this.

8.2 Have there been improvements made to the auditory and visual environment?

We have spent a lot of time assessing our environment and over recent years have changed it to make it more neutral. We have created communication-friendly spaces that are quieter and have less distractions indoors and outdoors. Inside Nursery School, we have added carpets to cut down on background noise. We have taken advice from specialists at Castle School to provide for children with visual difficulties.

8.3 Are there accessible changing and toilet facilities?

We have 2 toilet areas and 2 changing stations. Each toilet area has an accessible toilet with handrails.

8.4 How does the setting communicate with parents / carers who have a disability?

We ask you to share with us that you have a disability so that we can adjust our communication appropriately.

8.5 How does the setting communicate with parents / carers or whose first language is not English?

We ask you to share with us if you do not understand English well so that we can adjust our communication appropriately. We provide written information which can be taken home and shared with more confident English speakers in the family and are happy to make phone calls or arrange meetings if you'd like support from a family member or friend to interpret for you. We have members of staff who speak several Indian and European languages and can arrange interpreters to attend meetings if

appropriate. Sometimes a translator app on a mobile phone might be used. We give information leaflets out in different languages where available.

9. Preparing my child to join the setting or to transfer to a new school

9.1 What preparation will there be for both the setting and my child before he or she starts?

We have an extensive transition programme so that your child settles in happily at Nursery School. We have regular open days when you can bring your child to have a look around, and you will be invited to a “new starters” play session once we know when your child will be joining us. We offer home visits to all children which is an opportunity for your child to see their key worker in a familiar setting and for the parent/carer to ask any questions. We invite children and parents/carers to stay and play sessions at the start of each new term and then your child will have an individual settling in programme supported by their keyworker or Learning Support Assistant. Our Nursery Transitions Procedure is published on our website and has more details.

9.2 How will my child be prepared to move on to the next stage?

All children are prepared for their move to Reception class through circle times, stories and everyday conversation. Staff from your child’s next school will be invited to visit them at Nursery School. We will also arrange for your child to visit their new settings with a member of Nursery staff. We will make up transition books for children who need extra support to move on. Our SENCo will contact your child’s primary school and forward copies of all documentation. Again, this is covered in our Nursery Transitions Procedure which is on our website.

9.3 How will you support a new setting or school to prepare for my child?

We are happy come with you to visit the schools are you considering for your child’s move to Reception. Once you have been allocated a school place, we invite settings to visit children at the nursery and your key person or the SENCo will discuss individual needs with them. We arrange transition meetings, which may also be supported by a member of the EDIT team if they have been working with your child. Children with EHCPs will have an extended transition plan and you will be invited to come to a review meeting with the SENCo from your child’s new school in the summer term.

9.4 What information will be provided to my child’s new setting or school?

Your child’s new setting will receive the child’s leavers’ learning story, final assessments and all paperwork relating to their additional needs. The new school’s

SENCo will be contacted so that they are aware of your child's history and current needs.

9.5 How will you support my child's transition to a new setting or school?

We work with the new setting to create social storybooks showing new people and the new places. We will encourage your child to ask questions they may have about their new setting. If appropriate for your child, their child's key person or one of our Learning Support Assistants will visit the new setting with your child.

10. Discussing concerns about my child

10.1 Who should I contact if I am considering registering for a place at the setting?

You should contact the office to arrange a visit to the setting and to receive a brochure and an admissions form. The Headteacher or SENCo will then arrange to meet with you to show you around the setting and to discuss your child's individual needs.

10.2 Who would be my first point of contact if I want to discuss something about my child?

Parents/carers should speak to their child's key person as a first point of contact.

10.3 Does the setting offer any specific support for parents / carers and families (such as Family Support Workers?)

We do not currently have a Family Support Worker at the Nursery School, but we endeavour to work closely with The Family Hub and will make a referral to them if appropriate.

10.4 What arrangements does the setting have for signposting parents / carers to external agencies which can offer support, such as voluntary agencies?

We work closely with The Family Hub and collaborate with them to signpost you to organisations who will be able to offer further support. We may also feature local volunteer agencies in our regular newsletter..

10.5 What arrangements does the setting have for feedback from parents / carers, including compliments and complaints?

It is very important that you share your feelings about Victoria Park Nursery School with us. We love to hear that we are doing a good job! We also want to deal with problems as quickly as we can - please talk to your child's key person at drop off or pick up time. We have regular parent surveys, parent one to one meetings, and

comment forms on reports and observations where you can share your feedback. If you have a complaint, you should contact your child's key person in the first instance.