



## EYFS Brochure



**Head Teacher: Miss Heather Whitfield**

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We are proud of our school that has educated so many generations of children from the communities of Coundon, Leeholme and surrounding villages. A happy, welcoming and extremely inclusive school environment, Victoria Lane Academy has gone from strength to strength as part of the family of schools that constitute the highly successful multi-academy trust, Tudhoe Learning Trust.

At Victoria Lane Academy, we aim to provide a welcoming, inclusive school for all children and their families. We provide a stimulating and nurturing learning environment that will instill a love of learning in your child. Our school motto is:

**To be the best that you can be**

## Aims of the School

To make the children's time at Victoria Lane Academy a fruitful and happy experience we aim to:

- Provide equal opportunity and inclusion strategies to foster the all-round development of the child.
- Create a supportive life-long learning environment, which addresses the professional development of individual teachers by planning a wide range of staff development and training opportunities to enhance the school's development targets.
- Provide learning and teaching experiences based on the National Curriculum and tailored to our children's needs to allow them to become responsible citizens, effective contributors, successful learners and confident individuals.
- Foster self-discipline and resilience in pupils and raise their awareness of their role in the wider community, including promoting individual health, wellbeing, and a positive attitude to recreation and leisure.
- Provide a learning environment, which is adaptable and relevant to the changing needs of the 21st century learners.
- Encourage and enhance parent's involvement in a positive partnership between home and school, working together to stress the need for considerate behaviour and respect of both adults and peers

## Staffing and Organisation

Children in our Early Years Stage are 3 to 5 years of age and we have a wide range of well-qualified staff who work closely as a team to ensure your child's time with us is a happy one.

Head Teacher  
EYFS Lead:

Miss Heather Whitfield  
Mrs. Sara Deakin

Teachers:

Miss Laura Kilpatrick (Nursery)  
Mrs. Sara Deakin (Reception)

Teaching Assistants:

Miss Avneer Kaur  
Mrs. Kathryn Stones  
Miss Elizabeth Hillman (afternoons)



Mrs. Deakin



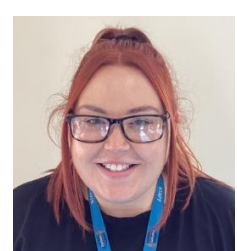
Miss Kilpatrick



Miss Kaur



Mrs. Stones



Miss Hillman

## Facilities

At Victoria Lane we are fortunate to have large, spacious classrooms and easy access to the outdoors. EYFS is housed within the school building, both the nursery and reception classrooms are attractively furnished and well equipped to meet the needs of your child. Each classroom has access to its own outdoor area where children can access a large sandpit, a mud kitchen, climbing equipment and water play. All children also have access to the large school field and our recently developed garden area.



## Classes

### Nursery

Our Nursery class welcomes children from their third birthday. We aim to provide a warm, nurturing environment that will allow your child to flourish and grow as they learn.

Nursery sessions run each morning from 8.30-11.30 and children attend every day to give them 15 hours of nursery provision. For families entitled to 30 hours of nursery provision there is an afternoon session running from 12.00-3.00. To ensure that your child benefits from their time at nursery we do advise daily attendance except for illness or extenuating circumstances.

### Starting Nursery

We recognise that starting nursery can be an emotional time for both you and your child. As a result, we will work closely with you to ensure that your child's transition into nursery is as smooth as possible. Parents of children, who are going to start nursery, are contacted in the term before their child's third birthday, when arrangements are made for nursery visits with their children and completion of the necessary paperwork. Before your child starts at Victoria Lane Academy, they will be invited to visit the nursery with you for an hour, followed by a full nursery session to build up their independence. During this time, they can explore the setting with you, play with some of the toys and meet other children in the nursery. At this time, we will ask you to share any background information or concerns you may have, including changes in family circumstances, medical matters, special needs and behaviour. In this way, we can work together to provide your child with the best possible start to their time in nursery. If you are worried about your child starting with us, please speak to a member of staff. We are used to any problems that might arise and we are only too happy to help. With your support, we can make starting nursery a happy and exciting experience for your child.

## The Nursery Day

Arrival - At the beginning of each session, we ask parents to drop their children off at the door where they will be welcomed by a member of the nursery staff. The start of class is an opportunity for parents to pass on any key information to staff, before saying goodbye to their child. We look to build positive relationships with all our families.

Carpet time – at the start of the session we invite the children to sit together on the carpet for a short activity. We welcome the children and enjoy a story or a group activity together. This helps the children to settle and develops their listening and attention skills. At the end of the session, we also come together on the carpet to share a story before going home.

Free Play – play is at the heart of the EYFS curriculum and children are provided with lots of opportunities to learn through play. After the morning carpet session, children are invited to explore the setting and are given free choice to play indoors or outdoors.

Collection - At the end of the session, parents/carers are asked to wait for their child to be handed over to them so that we can ensure that each child is collected safely. At this time Nursery staff will be able to inform you how your child's day went.

If for any reason you are late or unable to collect your child, please call to let us know and inform us of your arrangements.

## Reception

Children start Reception at the beginning of the school year in which they turn 5. Our Reception continues to provide a warm and nurturing environment for your child. We provide high quality play experiences while at the same time introducing more structured learning sessions to teach reading, writing and mathematics and gradually prepare your child for their entry into Key Stage 1.

### Starting Reception

Starting school is a hugely important step in a child's life and we will work with you and your child to try make this step as positive and exciting as possible. In the summer term before your child starts Reception, they are invited to spend 3 mornings with us to introduce them to the classroom setting, the staff and their future classmates. For those children not attending our nursery, staff arrange to visit them in their current setting before their 3 mornings in school. At the end of these 3 mornings, you will be invited to a meeting to explain procedures for starting Reception in September. You will be given the opportunity to ask any questions or share any concerns that you may have. Your child will be given a bag to take home with them over the summer that they can fill with things that are special to them. When they return to Reception in September, we ask them to tell us all about the things in their bag. This helps to develop their confidence in the setting, providing them with an opportunity to talk about their experiences and helping us to get to know them.

## The Reception Day

Arrival – Children are brought to the Reception entrance where they will be met by a member of staff. They will be supported to find their peg, hang up their coat and put their book bag in their tray. We encourage children to be as independent as possible and ask that you try to leave your child at the door. That said however, all children are different and if necessary you will be able to enter the cloakroom to support your child to enter the classroom.

Carpet time – At the beginning of the day and, at various points throughout the day, children come to the carpet to share story time, engage in learning time or to enjoy singing or movement activities. Carpet time is a special time in our day when we enjoy learning together as a class.

Small group session – During the day, we hold several small group sessions when your child is taught in a small group of approximately six children. This allows children to develop their confidence in sharing their ideas with others and gives us the opportunity to specifically tailor taught content and delivery to your child's needs.

Free Play – Child-led learning through play remains the cornerstone of effective learning in Reception and we provide children with daily opportunities to engage in high quality play experiences. Resources are carefully planned and presented to entertain your child while at the same time challenge them to use their own ideas and imaginations to solve problems.

Collection – Reception children are collected from the Reception entrance. To ensure that all children are handed safely to their parent/carer, we send children out one at a time. We ask that, if you wish to discuss an issue with your child's teacher, you wait until all children are safely with their parents, at which time staff will be able to give you their full attention.

## Breakfast and Snack

In both Nursery and Reception children are provided with toast or bagels for breakfast when they arrive at school. This provision is part of the Magic Breakfast programme, which subsidises a free breakfast for every child in the school. Children under 5 also receive free milk from the Cool Milk service.

In Reception and Nursery, your child will have access to healthy snacks during the day. Children come to the snack table and serve themselves from a choice of fruit, and other healthy options. We ask that you provide your child with a filled water bottle so that they can drink safely throughout the day. At VLA, we are committed to teaching children about healthy eating and lifestyle and would like to provide your child with a daily choice of healthy snacks. We also like to do cooking and baking activities with the children. We encourage them to learn about different types of healthy food and to try some more unusual fruits or vegetables that they may not have seen before.



## Curriculum

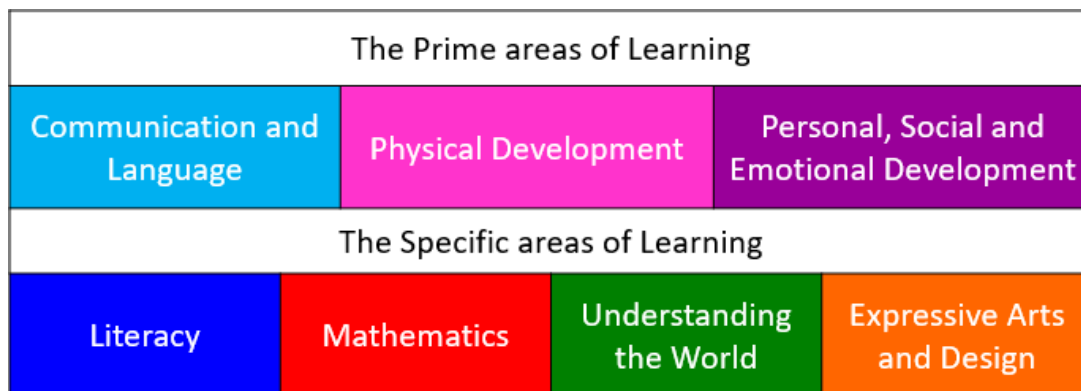
### The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.

There are four over-arching principles for the EYFS. These are:

- Every child is a unique child - Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children can learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents or carers.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. We cater for the education and care of all children in the early years including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Children in the nursery and reception classes follow the Foundation Stage Curriculum and work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. The national expectation is that most children will reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year. The aim is to ensure that children are confident, have a positive attitude to learning and can work co-operatively with other children and adults. There are three prime areas of learning and four specific areas of learning in which prime areas are strengthened and applied.



Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS. Young children learn most effectively through structured play. Our Foundation Stage staff work together as a team and plan for children's learning in seven areas of development to ensure that all these areas are covered within an interesting, stimulating and supportive framework. They also ensure that children progressively develop their skills and knowledge throughout this phase of their school life. The children are taught directly and also have a choice of planned activities so that they are able to develop independent learning habits. We actively encourage them to initiate their own activities. Wherever possible, learning is accompanied by trips or on-site visits to provide meaningful, memorable learning experiences for our youngest children.

### Prime Areas of Learning

The prime areas of learning are given a high priority throughout your child's time in Nursery and Reception. We recognise that if a child's skills are not nurtured and developed in the prime areas

they find it difficult to access the more specific areas of learning encountered throughout their school life. Prime areas are taught through carpet time sessions and play activities. Play activities specifically designed to develop your child's fine motor, gross motor and communication and language skills are planned carefully into each school day.

#### Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

The wellbeing of our children is our utmost priority and all children in EYFS and throughout the school receive regular PSED lessons. We use the SCARF program as a basis to ensure and support a comprehensive coverage of PSED topics that are adapted to the needs of our children. For more information on EYFS curriculum coverage see the PHSCE section of our website.



Wellbeing – To help our young children better understand and manage their emotions we use the story 'The Colour Monster' by Anna Llenas. In conjunction with 'Zones of Regulation' theory, this story helps children understand that it is OK to feel different emotions. It explains what is happening when they feel different emotions, leaving them better equipped to manage the range of feelings all children experience.



Communication and Language – Communication and language skills comprise Speaking, Listening and Attention and all are vital for a child's success in school and beyond. Communication and Language is a priority at VLA and every day is filled with opportunities for children to practice and improve their skills. Daily story sessions and regular class discussions give children the chance to develop their listening, talk about what they hear and enhance their vocabulary. Throughout our provision, there are a wealth of opportunities for children to develop their language skills through play. Small world, role-play, investigation, problem solving challenges and construction areas are all planned with communication and language at the forefront so that children cultivate their abilities during their play.



Physical Development – There are 2 facets to our physical development program, gross motor and fine motor skills.

Gross Motor – Gross motor skills include jumping, running, balancing, core strength and climbing and are vital for young children to maintain their physical fitness but also to prepare them for school life and beyond. Without well-developed gross motor skills, children find it difficult to sit for extended periods, hold a pencil for writing and maintain concentration during lesson time. To help children develop their gross motor skills we have a range of fun resources both inside and outside including climbing frames, tunnels, big paint brushes, sit on scooters, balance bikes, obstacle courses and balance beams. The children also take part in regular PE and movement sessions that help children to work on their core strength, balance and other skills in a more structured way.



**Fine Motor** – Children’s fine motor skills determine how well they are able to hold a pencil, write their letters, use a knife and fork and many other day to day activities. We provide daily fun opportunities throughout EYFS to help children strengthen their skills. These include playing with playdough, cutting with scissors, threading, weaving, digging, playing with jigsaws, painting and a whole host of other activities.

### Specific areas of learning

Literacy – Developing a life-long love of reading is a priority at Victoria Lane Academy. Books, stories and rhymes are at the centre of our EYFS curriculum. Topics are introduced through high quality, varied and colourful books and children have daily story sessions and phonics lessons as well as regular opportunities to practice their skills during play time. We teach children to read using the systematic, synthetic phonics program – Letters and Sounds.



In Nursery, we use Little Wandle Foundation for phonics which uses fun and engaging games to support children to learn to listen to and differentiate different sounds, recognize rhyme and begin to identify the sounds in words. This is the precursor to our Reception phonics program – Little Wandle for Letters and Sounds Revised. Children are also taught how to hold a pencil and given the opportunity to experiment with writing.

When they start in Reception, children use the foundation they have been given in Nursery to help them to learn to read. In Reception children are taught all the letters of the alphabet as well as combinations of letters that make a particular sound e.g. ch as in chicken or ai as in snail. We use Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised a comprehensive systematic synthetic phonics program that uses engaging resources and high-quality reading books to ensure all children are effectively supported to learn to read.



Mathematics – At VLA, we believe that the development of a firm foundation in the understanding number in the Early Years allows your child to enjoy and succeed in their maths learning as they progress through the school.



In Nursery children are introduced to the concept of number through counting songs, rhymes and stories. We use a wide range of resources to help enrich young children’s natural interest in mathematics and introduce them to concepts such as subitising (recognising a quantity without counting) and tens frames. Play opportunities are provided for child-initiated exploration of number as well as shape, space and measure.

In Reception, we continue to use a wide range of resources to support children’s understanding of number. There is a large focus on developing a deep understanding of numbers to 10, using resources such as tens frames, counting cubes and part whole models.

We use CBeebies Characters – the Numberblocks to develop children’s understanding of number. Through these characters, children are introduced to important mathematical concepts such as number composition, subitising (recognizing a quantity without the need for counting), place value, odds and evens and doubling and halving.

We aim to develop children’s confidence in maths through providing lots of opportunities in taught sessions and during play for children to explore number. Children are encouraged to use their knowledge of number to solve mathematical problems as well as to invent problems of their own to solve.



Understanding the World - At VLA, we believe that learning about the world begins at an early age. In the EYFS, we aim to foster and inspire the natural enthusiasm of young children for learning about the world around them in order to lay the foundations for a life-long interest in science, geography, history and RE. Throughout their time in EYFS, pupils are exposed to a range of meaningful, memorable experiences that allow them to explore and begin to ask questions about their world. These include visits from members of the community, outside visits to farms, gardens and museums, practical science experiments and structured play opportunities. Each topic is introduced with a colourful story or non-fiction book to help bring it to life.



Expressive Arts and Design – Throughout Nursery and Reception, children are given opportunities to express themselves through music, dance, creating, drawing, painting, role-play, junk modelling and construction. Many of these activities are child-led and children are encouraged to select their own resources and let their imaginations run wild. More structured activities are also planned into the curriculum to introduce children to new ways of expressing themselves as well as to help them develop skills such as cutting, tying, sticking, drawing, painting and building.



## Parents as Partners

As a school, we believe that partnership with parents and families is paramount. You are your child’s primary educator and their time in our school will be most productive if we work together in the best interests of your child. To develop this parental partnership, we provide the following opportunities for parents/carers:

### Key Person

Each child in EYFS is assigned a key person as soon as they enter our setting. Throughout their time in Nursery or Reception, a child’s key person is responsible for their wellbeing, learning development and assessment and will be your point of contact to share any concerns. Your child’s key person will keep you regularly updated on your child’s progress.

### Class Dojo

We use an online system called Class Dojo to keep parents informed of day to day life and special events throughout the school. Your child’s teacher will post regular photographs and information to keep you informed. It is also possible for you to send direct messages to the staff if you have any questions.

## Home Reading

One of the most valuable things you can do to help your child learn at home is to read with them. In Nursery, children have access to the 'Little Library' where they can choose a book to borrow each week for you to enjoy reading with them. Every Friday in Nursery, parents are invited into Nursery to help their child choose a book and enjoy some time reading with them.

Once your child starts Reception and begins to learn to read they will be given a Little Wandle reading book to take home and practice each week. You will be invited to a reading meeting at the beginning of the autumn term to explain to you how our phonics program works and how best to listen to and support your child to read at home. In addition to a reading book, children in Reception are given a 'story-time' book to take home. This is for you to enjoy reading to them. The books are changed each week to give your child access to a wide range of high-quality story books.



## Record of your child's time in EYFS

During your child's time in EYFS, they will have a wide variety of learning and play experiences. We know that it is valuable for you to have a record of these experiences to help your child share what they have learned with you. Photographs of children's learning experiences are recorded in floor books which are available in Nursery and Reception for you to look at.

## Monitoring your child's progress

Throughout your child's time in our Early Years Stage, their progress and learning achievements will be carefully monitored to ensure that their needs are being met and that they are fulfilling their potential. Staff keep an on-going record of each child's progress in learning in line with developmental matters as described in the EYFS curriculum. They are happy to briefly discuss children's work and progress on a daily basis. If you feel you would like to discuss your child's progress in more detail than the time allows during the session, or if you have particular concerns, staff are happy to arrange a mutually convenient time for a more in-depth discussion.

Once your child starts Reception, you will be invited to attend school parent's evenings when Mrs Deakin will talk to you about your child's progress and discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

## Behaviour

At Victoria Lane Academy, we believe that the most important part of behaviour management is developing positive relationships with pupils, parents and carers. We strive to work in partnership with parents and carers, and share success and praise. We believe in developing classroom environments to encourage positive behaviours by establishing manageable rules and routines and setting clear limits. We believe in rewarding positive behaviours to motivate children and when necessary, we use sanctions fairly and consistently. We will keep you informed of any behavioural issues concerning your child and if necessary, work with you to develop a plan of action to support your child both in school and at home.

## Special Needs

We believe that every child has an entitlement to develop his or her full potential and recognise a child's right to a broad, relevant and challenging curriculum appropriate to their ability and talents and qualities.

We aim:

- to help children develop their personalities, skills and abilities
- to identify barriers to learning and with early intervention provide appropriate support to meet a diversity of needs
- to ensure that all children reach their full potential
- to work in partnership with parent-carers in supporting their child's education
- to ensure that each child's progress is carefully monitored throughout the school and if it is felt necessary, allocate specific provision within available resources.

You will be kept fully informed of any concerns regarding your child's learning or behaviour and if it is thought appropriate, the school will seek co-operation in calling on further professional advice from outside support agencies whose advice may be reflected in an educational support plan.

## Visits and Visitors

Throughout the school year, we aim to arrange visits to local places of interest. These may include the church, the library and nature walks. We also take the children on trips to visit places further afield such as farms, castles or museums. For these visits to take place, we appreciate parent volunteers to help with the supervision of the children. We also encourage parents, members of the local community and organisations such as the police, the NHS and the RSPCA to come and talk about their work.

## Opportunities to visit the school

In addition to our Friday Little Library Nursery sessions, parents are invited to attend many events during the school year. These include 'booky breakfasts', sessions run by local authors, Christmas and summer fayres, the science fayre, Christmas performances and our annual Reception garden party.

## General Information

### Clothing

All children in our care are asked to wear a school uniform. This consists of a royal blue sweatshirt, white or blue polo shirt, grey or black trousers or skirt. Uniform is easily mixed up, especially when children remove their jumpers or get changed for PE. We would be very grateful if you could please ensure all footwear and clothing is named. Uniform can be ordered from Cre8ive Graphics (see school website for further details) or purchased from local supermarkets.

Children in Reception are asked to wear a PE kit to school on their PE days this consists of a white T-shirt, black or navy shorts and black plimsolls. They may also wear navy or black joggers and a sweatshirt for winter.

All children in EYFS are encouraged to use the outdoor areas all year round. In Reception children participate in a dedicated outdoor learning session in the school grounds every week. As children are outside in all weathers, they need adequate warm clothing and suitable footwear. Children

should be able to put on their own shoes – no laces please- and shoes must be safe for running around in. We ask that every child brings in a pair of wellies that can be left in their classroom and used to access outdoors when necessary.

We encourage all children to become independent with self-help skills by allowing time and opportunity to practice putting on and taking off coats and shoes and we encourage the children to be responsible for their own belongings. This can be challenging for some children and we give them lots of praise and encouragement for trying as well as succeeding. You can help us by encouraging your child to dress independently at home as well as at school.

### Collecting your child from Nursery and Reception

Under no circumstances are children allowed off the premises with anyone other than 'authorised collectors', i.e. those specified by parents/carers or legal guardians.

Enrolment forms will specify the names of authorised collectors. Parents must notify their child's teacher of any changes to the list of authorised collectors.

If a person is not known to the school, parents are asked to provide a photograph, or formally introduce him or her to staff. Parents must also notify the school if a child is being collected by another pupil's parents.

#### Adults Forbidden from Collecting Children

In certain situations, an individual might not be permitted to collect a child for legal reasons, often to do with child protection concerns or custody arrangements. Parents or carers must notify the school of any such exceptions and provide a copy of the legal documentation relating to these arrangements, if required.

### Medical Information

All staff are first aid trained, and, at present five members of staff are fully trained in paediatric first aid (exceeding Government recommendations).

We need accurate up-to-date information about how to contact parents and/or carers. In an emergency, or in the case that parents cannot be contacted, the school will ensure the child receives hospital attention.

Parents and carers are responsible for keeping the school informed about any medical/mental health condition or changes to their child/children's health. An Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) will then be developed in collaboration with the pupil, parents/carers, Headteacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and medical/mental health professionals to meet the needs of the child.

Should your child require medication (prescribed only) during the school day, the medication must be given in at the school office, clearly labelled, along with a completed medication administration form (available from the school office and on the website). No pupil should bring into school any medication that has not been prescribed, such as cough mixture or pain relief tablets. You may, by prior arrangement, come into school and administer such medication to your own child.

### Sun Care

In the summer, please apply sun-cream to your child before they arrive at school. They can also bring sun-cream and a sun hat to school. We will support children in Nursery and Reception to apply their sun-cream at regular intervals.

## Absences

If children are not able to attend Nursery or Reception, for whatever reason, we ask that parents let us know as soon as possible, so that we can authorise the absence.

If they are poorly, we insist they stay at home until they are fully recovered, to prevent the spread of infection. If your child becomes ill during the school day, we will contact you or the named emergency contact immediately, administering care in the meantime.

## Common Illnesses

Sickness and Diarrhoea - In the case of "tummy upsets" it is vital that children stay at home for at least 48 hours after the last incidence of sickness and diarrhoea to prevent it spreading to others.

Conjunctivitis – If your child presents with suspected conjunctivitis we ask you to take them to a doctor who will prescribe treatment if necessary and inform you about when your child will no longer be infectious and therefore able to return to school.

Head lice – Head lice pass from child to child very easily, particularly amongst young children. Despite myths to the contrary, the presence of head lice is not an indication of unclean hair. If you discover head lice on your child we ask that you treat them immediately before returning them to school in order to prevent transmission to other children. If we detect head lice, we will inform you straight away and ask you to treat your child.

## Child Protection

Safeguarding our children is paramount and Victoria Lane Academy employs a Safeguarding, Attendance and Welfare Officer, Mrs. Francesca Azzouzi, to support vulnerable families deal with social, emotional and financial issues. The designated child protection team that deals with child protection issues consists of Mrs. Francesca Azzouzi, Headteacher, Miss Whitfield, as well as Deputy Headteacher, Mrs. Jaime Alton. To discuss any child protection issues, please contact the school to make an appointment with Mrs Azzouzi or any member of the designated safeguarding team.

## Childcare Provision/School Clubs

In addition to the Breakfast Club and Teatime Club that school operates, Victoria Lane Academy also provides a range of free after-school clubs provided by teaching staff or school partners. Some of these are available to children in EYFS. The range of after school clubs available changes each half term – please view the school website or contact the school office for a list of the latest clubs on offer.

## Admissions

### Nursery

To apply for a place for your child to join Victoria Lane Academy Nursery, please visit or contact our school office where you will be put in touch with a member of our Nursery staff. If at all possible, we will take this opportunity to introduce both you and your child to the nursery, teachers and children and gather some basic information to register your interest. Your child's name and date of birth will then be registered on our school system and you can next expect a call from our Nursery Teacher, Miss Kilpatrick, to arrange a preliminary visit and transition visits in the term before your child turns three. At this time, we will arrange a visit or series of visits to Nursery to introduce your child into our daily routine. We will also provide the necessary school paperwork, which staff will be happy to help you complete, if required.

## Reception

Applications for admission to Reception must be done via the Local Education Authority. The school has an entry limit of 30 children per year. Parents are welcome to make an appointment to view the school at any time for a preliminary visit and the school office will issue application information for prospective parents to apply to the Local Authority. On being allocated a place, children and parents will be invited to the school for a visit in the term before they are due to start, when the enrolment process will begin. If there are any difficulties over admission, the school can supply full details of the LA appeals procedure.

All of the school staff are here to help you and your child so please feel free to ask us anything you may be unsure about. We love being a part of our school and hope that you and your child will too.

