

Admissions

What ages can children join the school?

The School admits pupils from age 2 to age 13.

What are the main entry points into the school?

The main entry points are Nursery, Year 3, Year 6 and Year 7.

Is there an entrance assessment for pupils?

All pupils are assessed upon application.

Can children join mid-year if places are available?

Yes, this is usually possible.

How far in advance should we apply?

At least one term in advance to be sure of securing a place.

Can my child spend a day at the school before applying?

We offer taster days and also taster boarding nights.

How selective is the admissions process?

Every child is assessed on their own merits in Maths, English, verbal and non-verbal reasoning.

What qualities are you looking for in pupils?

We look for pupils who are excited to learn, and want to be part of a very busy school.

Questions Parents Ask us



What happens after we receive an offer?

You will be guided by Admissions through all the stages of the joining process.

Academic Life

What curriculum does the school follow?

We follow our own curriculum, which is guided by the National Curriculum, but has a considerably wider range.

How are lessons structured across the school?

There are five main lessons a day, followed by sport and activities.

What subjects are taught in the school?

We teach the full range of expected subjects, plus art, music, design and technology, drama, life skills, critical thinking and ancient languages.

How large are the class sizes?

Typically 12-15 pupils.

How are pupils challenged academically?

We expect the highest standards of effort from all our pupils, and assessment is frequent.

What support is available if a pupil struggles academically?

Our Learning Enrichment department arranges assessment and 1:1 support where needed.

Do pupils receive homework?

There is a mixture of compulsory and voluntary prep every day.

Questions Parents Ask us



How is academic progress measured?

There are regular assessments across all ages, termly reports to parents, and exams for older pupils.

How often do parents receive school reports?

Interim reports are issued before each half term, and full reports at the end of each term.

Senior School Preparation

Which senior schools do pupils usually move on to?

Most pupils move on to a wide range of national boarding schools, with some choosing local day schools.

How does Orwell Park School support senior school applications?

The school works with parents through the whole application process.

Do pupils sit entrance exams?

Most pupils will sit assessments in Year 6, with further possible assessments and exams in Years 7 and 8.

Are scholarship opportunities available?

From time to time, pupils can apply for academic scholarships, and also awards in sport, music, drama, design and technology and art.

How are pupils prepared for interviews at senior schools?

All pupils have interview practice with the Head, and with the Deputy Heads.

Questions Parents Ask us



Do teachers recommend appropriate senior schools?

The Head will recommend the most suitable senior schools for the pupils.

Do pupils visit senior schools during their time at prep school?

We recommend parents visit, perhaps on their own initially, and then with their children.

Boarding

What boarding options are available?

We welcome full and weekly boarders, and also flexi boarders who may begin with just one night a week.

At what age can pupils start boarding?

Pupils can start boarding at age 7 (Year 3).

How many pupils board at the school?

Typically, 70% of the school boards at some point in the week.

What is a typical evening routine for boarders?

Pupils finish evening activities, have a snack and then head upstairs for showers, film or games time, and reading before bed.

What activities do boarders do after school?

Please see our Aspire programme to understand the full range of activities.

Questions Parents Ask us



What happens during weekends for boarders?

We combine fun activities such as archery or kayaking, with trips to some of the best parts of East Anglia, and some essential rest and relaxation.

Can boarders go home on weekends?

Weekly boarders will go home on Saturdays, and come back on Sunday evening or Monday morning.

How are boarders supported if they feel homesick?

Homesickness is really normal. Our very experienced house parents will keep children busy and enjoying all aspects of the boarding routine.

How often can boarders contact their parents?

Boarders can phone parents each evening, or at different times in the day depending on time zone differences.

International Families

Do you welcome international pupils?

Yes, we welcome pupils from all parts of the world.

What level of English is required?

Pupils can be accepted with little or no English.

What EAL support is available?

EAL is taught on a 1:1 basis from the very first week if appropriate.

Do international pupils need a guardian in the UK?

Yes, all international pupils do need a UK guardian.

Questions Parents Ask us



Can the school recommend guardianship organisations?

We cannot recommend guardians, but we can confirm some guardians who other parents have worked well with.

Are airport transfers available?

We can arrange individual airport transfers.

Wellbeing & Pastoral Care

How does the school support pupil wellbeing?

Pupils are supported on a day-to-day basis by their form tutor; we have a pastoral system which monitors all pupils weekly and arranges early help interventions and team responses across the teaching and support staff.

Who should parents contact with concerns about their child?

Parents should contact their class teacher or tutor in the first instance.

How does the school handle bullying?

We take all bullying concerns very seriously, and pupils are taught about bullying behaviour from a young age.

Are pupils encouraged to talk about their wellbeing?

Wellbeing is at the core of all that we do; it informs our daily discussions, and is taught across all subjects.

Is counselling or wellbeing support available?

Yes, we have counselling available in school, and also refer pupils to external counsellors where appropriate.

Questions Parents Ask us



How are older pupils encouraged to support younger pupils?

Older pupils are peer listeners and wellbeing ambassadors, and are there to listen to and support younger pupils all around the building and throughout the day.

Activities & Enrichment

What co-curricular activities are available?

Please refer to our very comprehensive Aspire programme, further information can be found on our website.

Are music lessons available?

Music lessons are available to all pupils, in all orchestral instruments, piano and singing.

Do pupils perform in concerts or productions?

There are performing opportunities for all pupils each term.

Is drama part of the curriculum?

Yes, for all pupils from Reception upwards.

Are there opportunities for outdoor learning?

We have a Forest School with outdoor education led by qualified staff.

Are pupils encouraged to develop leadership skills?

There are leadership opportunities created for all our older pupils, and positions of responsibility as they come to lead the school.

Do pupils take part in charity or community projects?

We support charities each year with fundraising events and assemblies.

Practical Questions

What time does the school day begin and end?

Our normal school day is 8.00am – 5.00pm, with longer days for boarders, and also for those who stay for Aspire activities in the evenings.

Is breakfast available at school?

Breakfast is available to non-boarders from 7.30am, for a small charge.

Can dietary requirements be accommodated?

We accommodate all dietary requirements and medical/allergen needs.

What uniform is required?

Please refer to the uniform list for all uniform and sports kit.

Is school transport available?

We run minibus routes from Colchester and Yoxford as the need arises.

Parent Communication & Community

How does the school communicate with parents?

Communication is daily, and often face to face conversation is best.

How often are parent meetings held?

Online and in person meetings are held once a term.

Are parents invited to school events?

Events for parents are indicated in **bold** in the Blue Book; all are welcome.

Questions Parents Ask us

Is there a parents' association?

The Orwell Park Parents' Association (OPPA) is a thriving community and welcomes your interest!

Why do families choose this school for their children?

We hope that every pupil leaves here with a sense of independence and resilience, confident in their own abilities and achievements, but with an understanding of community and the importance of serving others.