



Learning Assistant – Prep

Introduction

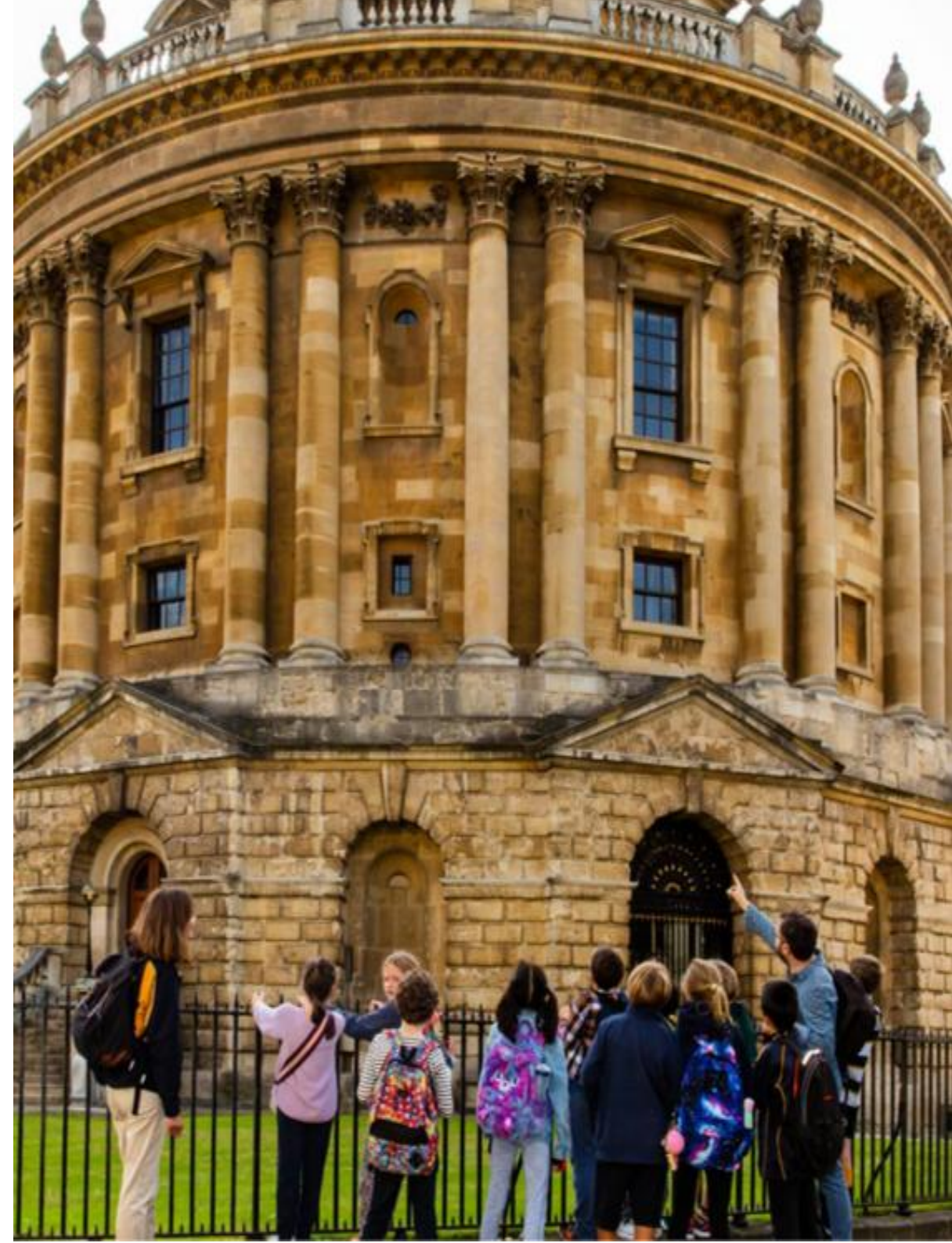
Dragon School is one of Britain's leading preparatory schools, offering a first-class day and boarding education for girls and boys aged 4-13 years. Located in the heart of the city of Oxford, the Dragon provides a distinctive educational experience that not only celebrates childhood and the joy of learning, but also prepares young people with the skills to thrive in a rapidly changing world and continue to 'Reach for the Sun' (Arduus ad Solem).

I believe this is an exciting time to be joining the Dragon, leading the School on the next phase of its development. We have a series of ambitious projects underway, from developing an endowment for bursaries, to the construction of a new music and performing arts centre. Our 150th Anniversary in 2027 is an important milestone for the School, providing a further opportunity to recognise the best of the Dragon and accelerate other academic initiatives.

Academic excellence for all sits at the heart of a Dragon education. As a School, we are constantly seeking to innovate, developing the curriculum both in and out of the classroom. Dragon *QUEST*, our new Saturday enrichment programme, is a unique opportunity to stretch our pupils further, giving children the freedom to learn new and unfamiliar skills, from beekeeping to exploring anthropology; we are only limited by our imaginations. Equally, 'giving back' is integral to being a grounded Dragon.

We are pleased that you are considering applying for this role and we hope this brochure gives you all the information you need. We look forward to receiving your application.

Emma Goldsmith
Head



The School



The School was founded in 1877 as the Oxford Preparatory School primarily to educate the sons of Oxford dons. The name was later changed to Dragon School and it was run for many years by the Lynam family. They were progressive educationalists who believed that children should both enjoy school and understand the world around them. This approach was unusual in the late 19th Century but it endured and, to this day, it lies at the core of the School's contemporary 21st Century approach.

Dragon School sits on two sites located in North Oxford: the Pre-Prep is in Summertown and the Prep School lies close by on the banks of the River Cherwell. The School combines traditional architecture with contemporary design providing first-class facilities that support its academic, co-curricular, cultural and sporting activities.

Today, the Dragon is the country's largest co-educational day and boarding preparatory school with some 800 pupils, including 212 at the Pre-Prep. Importantly, over a third of pupils at the Prep School are full or flexi boarders. Pupils attend from near and far and the School is committed to promoting active and sustainable travel to the School by walking and cycling whenever possible, with good on-site provision for cycle storage.

Following a highly successful recent ISI inspection in December 2022, where the School achieved the grading of 'excellent' across all categories, there is now a burgeoning ambition for further educational innovation and creativity shared throughout the school community.



Admissions

The main points of entry are Reception and Year 3 at the Pre-Prep. While Year 4 is the usual entry point to the Prep School, we accommodate entry to all year groups wherever possible. Although the School is non-selective, there is an assessment process whereby all children are interviewed to evaluate their potential and suitability. For children over five years old, their ability in Maths and English is checked to their comfort with the curriculum. In addition, a report from the pupil's current school is always requested.

Boarding options range from full and weekly boarding, to regular or flexi nights for day pupils and, as a 'taster', prospective boarding pupils are warmly encouraged to spend a night in a boarding house.

Prospective parents and their children are encouraged to attend an Open Morning to see the School 'in action' and individual family tours are possible both on weekdays and Saturdays. There are virtual Open Mornings for parents and children unable to travel to Oxford and these include a Q&A session with the Head and senior staff. In addition, a one-to-one video call can be arranged with the Registrar or a senior member of staff.

The School is committed to offering a number of means-tested bursaries as well as fee discounts for children of families in the Armed Forces or Diplomatic service in receipt of Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA). Current capacity exists for the award of five full bursaries per year in the Prep School, with an aspiration to build an endowment to enable an expansion of provision.

Ethos

Enduringly committed to the central aim that a child must enjoy school and be enabled to give of his or her best, the Dragon seeks to be both academically purposeful and also to provide a safe and inclusive environment, which leans towards relaxed engagement rather than over-strict or unnecessary rules. Understanding the meaning of community, developing an awareness of wider society and acquiring essential qualities of kindness, emotional intelligence, respect and responsibility are all central to the School's character. The approach to childhood learning and development continues to ensure that its pupils then go on to lead lives of consequence in the fullest sense. This strong personalised approach coupled with a spirit of inclusivity, openness and tolerance encourages day pupils and boarders to enrich each other's school experience.

Safeguarding and Pastoral

The School's full and committed approach to the safeguarding and pastoral care of each and every pupil is seen as a collective responsibility that involves the Head and Senior Leadership Team, the Heads of Middle and Upper School, Heads of Year, House parents, Teachers, Tutors and the School Counsellor. Day pupils and boarders alike benefit from a strong commitment to their social and emotional well-being. Children are allocated to a tutor group and the tutor supports their academic and pastoral needs.

The School's pastoral aims are to support a learning community where each child can realise their talents and strengths; where children can grow up to be responsible, active members of their community and to thrive with each other and independently in a community where tolerance and understanding is encouraged and through equal opportunities.

Dragon School aims to deliver excellent pastoral care for all its boarding and day pupils. By seeking to nurture and support each individual child, the School encourages them to learn from their peers, make and learn from mistakes and develop lasting friendships.



Academic

In line with the principles and ethos of the School set at its foundation, the curriculum is designed to ensure all pupils:

- enjoy a happy and secure learning environment where they are valued
- develop lively, enquiring minds where they question rather than merely accept
- acquire knowledge and understanding which will equip them for future challenges
- obtain skills that they can transfer to other subjects or situations

This starts with a creative and varied curriculum in the Pre-Prep and continues through the Prep School. In addition to the core subjects of English and Mathematics, the Dragon syllabus includes Modern and Classical Languages, Sciences, Humanities, Music, FPE (Faith, Philosophy and Ethics), ICT, Computer Programming, Art, Design & Technology, Drama and PE. The School also includes the principles and practice of philanthropy and social entrepreneurship; the annual Governors' challenge encourages pupils to invest and grow a small investment in either charitable work or creating products to sell at a school 'Market Day'.

Streaming and setting is widely used at the Prep and class sizes are small to maximise and personalise the process of teaching and learning around the needs of each pupil. The School believes that the pursuit of learning and emotional health are strongly linked and there is an emphasis on good PSHEE.

There is also strong learning enrichment with opportunities to go on overseas visits including a Japan exchange, a Classics trip to Rome, Pompeii and Herculaneum, overseas music tours and sports tours to countries such as South Africa and the Netherlands.

The Dragon has successfully launched an exciting, and optional, enrichment programme called Dragon *QUEST* which is taking the place of Saturday School. Children take part in a wide range of activities including film-making, first aid, debating, astronomy, farm visits, yoga, cultural visits – and even how to maintain your bicycle. Take up is very strong which is testament to the enthusiasm and imagination of teachers and the engagement and curiosity of our pupils.

Despite its non-selective approach, the girls and boys achieve high academic standards and go on to leading schools including Cheltenham Ladies College, St Mary's Ascot, Wycombe Abbey, Eton, Harrow, Abingdon, Oundle, St Edward's Oxford, Wellington, Winchester, Radley, Marlborough, Fettes, Headington, and Rugby, amongst others. In 2020, pupils were awarded a staggering 55 scholarships across academic, art, music, drama and sports and this is testament to the outstanding teaching and variety of opportunities available to pupils at the Dragon.

Preparation for entrance exams includes lessons in reasoning and interview practice.



Beyond the Classroom

The School offers a broad co-curricular programme in music, drama, sport, and community outreach both to enrich the learning experience and to help children enjoy school life while also broadening their horizons and teaching them valuable life-skills.

Music: A love of music is encouraged in every child and the school benefits from a Music School with studios and dedicated practice rooms. More than 800 individual music lessons take place every week on a wide range of instruments and there are music groups ranging from choirs and orchestras to rock, pop and jazz bands. This substantial demand has driven an operational need for a high specification Music and Performing Arts Facility. Planning permission has been secured and the commencement of construction is imminent for this ambitious £10million project.

The School's 'Ensembles Programme' enables every child learning an instrument to play in at least one of more than 60 ensembles that range from Concert and Big Band to choirs and orchestras; piano trios to string quartets; pop and rock bands. There are regular opportunities to perform in school concerts and an annual School Piano Festival.

The pursuit and appreciation of music and drama is supported by travelling to concerts at St John's Smith Square in London; Birmingham Symphony Hall; Cadogan Hall, London and overseas trips to Belgium, Venice and Paris. The Dragon School Choir regularly performs Choral Evensong at Merton College, while the Big Band and Concert Band have performed on the main stage at Disneyland Paris.

Drama and Performing Arts: With a dedicated drama studio as well as access to two other large spaces, the Drama department stages 14 performances per year and holds two examination weeks for its ever-growing LAMDA programme. Major school performances are held in the Lynam Hall over two nights, and are well attended by parents and the entire boarding community. Every year a number of Year 8 Dragons are put forward for Drama Scholarships. The Rink centre provides pupils with a bright mirrored indoor studio space for Dance and Drama and there is an extensive costume department. Close links exist with the Music department which trains the musicians and singers who also perform or even write material. The Art department design stage sets and children can also learn stage management skills such as sound and lighting.

Sport: The sporting ethos of the Dragon is based on the dual principles of maximum participation and a pursuit of excellence. The School aims for every child to leave the Dragon having enjoyed their sporting experience and with a genuine desire to continue playing in the future at whatever level. The School has wonderful facilities, including extensive sports fields; an Olympic-sized astro and one and a half further astro pitches; a boathouse on the banks of the River Cherwell and with nearly 300 metres of the Cherwell passing through the School's grounds, sculling is a popular sport with regular competitive school regattas and competitions taking place.

Overall, participation in sport is exceptional: in excess of 30 teams compete in over 900 fixtures across a huge variety of sports. This demonstrates the School's commitment to "Sport for All" and there is a comprehensive sports programme available at the Dragon including: hockey, cricket, tennis, table tennis, athletics, cross country, rugby, swimming, riding, golf, sculling, squash, fencing, judo, skiing, badminton, lacrosse and polo.



Boarding and Day Boarding

Boarding is at the heart of our thriving Dragon community and we offer a range of different boarding options to suit the needs of modern families – full, weekly, and flexi boarding are all available. The boarders live with a team of outstanding dedicated Houseparents in one of our 10 family-style boarding houses. There is a busy, varied and fun weekend programme for the boarders to participate in including activities such as laser tag, giant inflatables, silent disco and graffiti boards.

Boarding and day pupils work and play together, with day pupils encouraged to stay on after school to take part in a wide range of co-curricular activities alongside the boarders. The School's 'Day boarding' provision enables day pupils to stay overnight at school at least one night per week, helping integrate the School's community further.

Old Dragons and Community

One of the unique characteristics of the Dragon is its sense of community. The affection held by former pupils, parents and staff remains long after their final days at the School and their continued engagement is facilitated by the Development Office.

The School has an impressive list of Old Dragons, (known as ODs), stretching back through its more than 140 years. Some notable ODs include: Poppy Adams; Author, Sir John Betjeman, Poet Laureate; Christopher Booker, Journalist; Leonard Cheshire VC, RAF Pilot and Activist; Dame Cressida Dick, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police; Sir John Kendrew, Nobel Prize Winner for Chemistry; Hugh Laurie CBE, Actor; Naomi Mitchison OBE, Author; Rory Stewart OBE, Former Secretary of State for International Development; and Emma Watson, Actress.

The School also has a vibrant social impact programme, which encourages pupils to think about environmental and social issues in society today, and actively engage in solutions to these issues on a local, national and global level. The School aims to develop responsible young people who will contribute meaningfully to their communities and the future well-being of wider society.

Locally, the School was, until recently, the lead sponsor of The Blackbird Academy Trust that comprises three local primary schools. Nationally and internationally, the Dragon seeks to continue to enhance its partnerships while international projects have enabled staff and pupils to visit and support vulnerable children in South Africa, India and Brazil.

The Development Office is successfully developing its fundraising programme to realise the ambitious fundraising aims the School has in place. This includes the building of a new Music and Performing Arts Centre and to further enhance the School's Transformative Bursary Programme.



The Role



Introduction

The Dragon seeks to appoint a Learning Assistant for the Prep who will work in partnership with the class teachers to help each child to progress at a rate that allows him or her to achieve their full potential. This is a full-time role, however applicants who are able to work a minimum of 3.5 days per week will be considered.

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- To support pupils to learn effectively with increasing independence in a variety of settings.
- To liaise with the class teachers and Learning Support team on all aspects of pupils' needs.
- To liaise with external professionals to meet the pupils' individual needs.
- To liaise with parents about day-to-day activities.
- To lead planned group work and deliver small group intervention under the guidance of a teacher.
- To establish and maintain a supportive relationship with the child and respond appropriately to their individual needs.
- To take part in the school duties and activities.
- To support teachers with educational visits.

Assessment, Records and Reports

- To help the teachers assess and keep records of each child's academic progress both through personal records and those set out in the school policy, being proactive in informing the teacher of any particular concerns.
- To follow school policies in relation to communication with parents and children, both orally and in the school planners.
- To help keep records of any significant social and emotional developments.

Activities

- To support the Prep community by attending Assemblies.
- To contribute to all school occasions such as Harvest, Christmas, Open Days and Sports Days etc.
- To take an active part in making high quality displays throughout the school.
- To be part of the weekly school duty rota.
- To be willing to contribute fully to games/ PE and swimming at Prep.

Meetings and Further Professional Development

- To attend weekly staff meetings and be present at meetings at the beginning and end of term.
- To participate in INSET convened to review and improve teaching methods and programmes of work.
- To attend courses which are relevant to further professional development.
- To meet with colleagues to review professional development.

Discipline, Health and Safety

- At all times to have regard for the safety of everyone at Prep.
- To respond to fire regulations and health & safety policies as drawn up by the school.
- To maintain good order in the class and, along with all members of the Prep community, promote the school values of Kindness, Courage and Respect.
- To undertake a general course in First Aid and liaise with First Aid Officers when necessary.

Administration

- To supervise the playground, crossing and lunches according to an agreed rota.
- To cover for absent staff as necessary.
- To work closely with any other persons in the classroom.
- To be familiar with all Dragon policy documents.



Person Specification



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Key to assessment methods; (a) application form, (i) interview, (r) references, (t) ability tests (g) assessed group work, (p) presentation, (o) others e.g. case studies/visits; (c) certificates

Requirement	Essential	Desirable	Assessed by:
Education, training and qualifications	1. A good level of English and Maths required	Level Three Teaching Assistant qualification or above	(a); (c); (r);
Knowledge and understanding	1. Good knowledge of the way children learn 2. Confident use of information and communication technology (ICT)		(a); (i); (g); (r);
Experience	1. Evidence of working successfully as a member of a team	Experience of working with children of a similar age	(a); (i); (g); (r);
Skills	1. Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children 2. Creates a happy, challenging and effective learning environment 3. Commitment to the protection and safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people 4. Ability to establish productive partnerships with pupils, parents, carers and the wider community of the school 5. Ability to demonstrate honesty and integrity and uphold public trust and confidence in the teaching profession 6. Ability to be adaptable and solve problems 7. Strong interpersonal skills 8. Ability to communicate, both written and orally 9. Ability to influence and negotiate		(a); (i); (g); (r);
Personal qualities	1. Is resilient and demonstrates ability to work in a variety of settings 2. Ability to work independently and as part of a team 3. Sensitivity to the needs of others		(a); (i); (g); (r);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. <i>Openness and willingness to address and discuss relevant issues</i> 5. <i>Commitment to high quality teaching and fostering a positive learning environment for pupils.</i> 6. <i>Commitment to continuous professional development</i> 7. <i>Commitment to the Dragon School's policy of equal opportunity and the ability to work harmoniously with colleagues and pupils of all cultures and backgrounds</i> 		
Other requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Working under pressure and with competing priorities</i> 		<i>(i); (r);</i>

Terms of Appointment



This is a full-time role, however, applicants who are able to work a minimum of 3.5 days per week will be considered.

Salary: Dependent on experience

Start: 1st September 2025

Term time only requirement (i.e. all school holidays off except for 3 days Inset at start and end of each term)

Employer offers a minimum of 4% contribution to a Group Personal Pension

Life Insurance 3x gross salary

Access to swimming pool during lunch school term

Meals provided during working hours in school term time

As Dragon School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, the successful candidate will be willing to undergo an enhanced disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service.

At Dragon School, we know that diversity promotes creativity and innovation. We are committed to equity of opportunity and to being a fair and inclusive employer. We therefore particularly encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

Application Process



The process is as follows:

Applications for the role should be made through the Dragon School website.

Closing date : Monday 2nd June (midday)

