

Our school

History:

The building we are in is a monument under the supervision of the authorities. It was built for the Paul's ladies' Institute in 1851 on a commission of the Russian Emperor Paul I it was named after him.

The building has always served educational purposes. After the revolution 1917 it placed the Institute of Speech («Living Word») During the World War II there was a hospital for 4 years (1941-45). After the war different educational institutions were located in this building. Our school has been located here since 1989.

Museum:

Our museum has been made to introduce the school's history, which goes back to the 18th century. After the war with Turkey in 1794 prince Paul ordered to establish an orphanage in Gatchina, a suburb of St. Petersburg. The orphanage was created for children of the soldiers who had been killed or badly injured during the campaign. It was a kind of a mercy, wasn't it?

After Paul had become the Emperor of Russia the orphanage moved to St. Petersburg, but at that time it had no exact building. At first it occupied some rooms in Osterman's House (The Italian Palace, Fontanka River Embankment). Then it moved to other places. Paul took great care of the orphanage. After his death it was looked after by Paul's wife, Maria Fedorovna, who divided it in two parts: for boys and for girls with different curriculum. Girls were taught Russian, German, Math, Geography, Drawing, History, Knitting, Embroidery and Dancing. Soon the orphanage turned into the Institute for girls from noble families, **Paul's Ladies' Institute**. It was Nikolas I, Paul's son, who bought this territory for the building we are in at present. It was designed by a famous architect Zhelyazevich. This architect designed many other famous buildings in our city, such as The Moscow Railway Station, the department store Passage at Nevskiy prospect and water supply Tower at Shpalernaya Street.

Nowadays the building looks different to the first one, as it was reconstructed several times during its existents. A lot of subjects were taught at Paul's Ladies Institute: Russian language, Maths, Geography, Scripture (закон Божий), German Language, French Language and others. We learned it from the diaries many girls kept and the memoirs (мемуары) written by Lidia Charskaya, one of the graduates of the Institute, who later became a writer.

All girls stayed at school all year round and were allowed to go home only for summer vacation. Classrooms were on the 1st and 2nd floors and a dormitory was on the 3rd floor. There was a ballroom (library nowadays) and a Chapel (the Conference Hall on the 3rd floor at present).

Museum – corridor:

It was believed that before this building was erected there used to be a cemetery and Women's monastery here and the ghosts are still wandering about the school. Certainly it's not true. But the corridors are really impressive, aren't they?

This is our canteen. It used to be 3 times larger, but some more classrooms were made instead.

This is the main staircase. It was used only for special occasions but nowadays it is used daily.

This is our school library, the ballroom at former time.

The Assembly hall is a special place for celebrating school holidays. It was used for celebrating state and religious holidays. The main of them was Christmas and the name-day of Maria Fyodorovna, a widowed empress who supervised the Institute. Full-length portrait of Paul I used to hang behind the stage. He was believed to leave the painting and walk at night.

On the wall above the door there is a fragment of the coat-of-arms of the Paul's ladies ' Institute. Oak is a symbol of the North of Russia and laurel is a symbol of the South of Russia. Two branches together meant that the girls all over Russian Empire studied at the Institute.

The portraits of Emperor Paul I and his wife Maria Fyodorovna you see here were painted by a talented Russian painter Elena Vladimirovna Pertusenko especially for the Assembly and Conference Hall of our school and were opened on January,30 2009.

The official ceremony was followed by the historic conference "Emperor Paul I and Empress Maria Fyodorovna. Actions blessing Russia" which took place here on February,2 2009. One of the results of it was the visit of Paul I great-great-grandson prince Dmitriy Romanovich Romanov.

During the World War II this hall was used as the biggest ward. It could accommodate 115 patients at once.

3rd floor:

This was the Apostle Paul's Church where services were held on regular basis. It is a Conference hall now. The ceiling was made of glass and let the light in. There used to be an Alter where the windows are at present. The places on the walls were originally made for icons.

All portraits you see here now are also made by Elena Pertusenko as presents for our school. They are designed as smart portraits and create here special atmosphere which reminds us our history and we hope is fruitful for the education of young generation.

In 1917 after the revolution the Paul's Ladies' Institute was turned into the institute of Speech. The main subjects studied here were the Theory of Poetry, the Theory of music and Acoustics, the Arguing Technique, the Evolution of Speech, the Melody of Speech and Poems etc. there were two departments: theatre and pedagogic. A lot of famous poets and writers were professors at the Institute. One of them was Nikolay Gumilev. The monument to his wife, famous Russian poet Anna Achmatova, you've seen outside, at the main entrance to our school.

Modern education. School nowadays:

In Russia free of charge compulsory secondary comprehensive education is available for all the children between the ages of 6 to 10. Children go to the Primary school at the age of 6 and stay there for four years, till the age of 10. Then they continue their education in the secondary school, although they actually stay in the same form and in the same school, as our school, for instance, covers all levels of secondary education. Besides secondary comprehensive schools there are a great number of schools with advanced learning of the exact subjects. Children or

their parents can choose what subject is the main priority for the student. Our school provides the advanced learning of the Humanitarian subjects, such as Literature, History, Social Studies and foreign languages. English is Compulsory for everyone since the 2nd form, and in the 5th form students make choice for the second foreign language – German or French. Certainly apart from these subjects we study Russian language and Literature, Algebra, Geometry, Physics, Geography, Biology, chemistry, Computer studies, PE, Arts and Music.

We attend school 6 days a week. The school day runs from 9 to 2 or 3 p.m. There are 5 or 6 lessons every day on a fixed weekly timetable. Each lesson lasts 45 minutes and is followed by a 10-20 minutes break. Students have a snack or lunch at the school canteen during the breaks. Students also have a lot of extracurricular activities which are optional.

There totally 800 students and 60 teachers in our school including our kindergarten.

Our school takes part in the exchange programmes with high schools in Germany, the USA, China and France. That provides students with a good chance to practice and improve their spoken language.

That is all for now.

Do not hesitate to ask questions if you have any.

Hope you will enjoy staying with us!