St John's Church of England Primary School

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025-26

St John's Church of England Primary School is an academy and part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST). ODST is legally responsible for admissions decisions which it has delegated to the Local Governing Body (LGB). ODST and St John's work closely with the Local Authority (LA) and uses it as their agent for processing of applications.

The principal aims of the Admission Policy are to maintain the characteristics of a church foundation school whilst meeting the needs of the wider community. We promote social inclusion by welcoming all members of the community regardless of their faith or none, gender, disability or ethnic origin. We value diversity and the contribution that each individual and every group make to the school and wider community. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, which is committed to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the child within the framework of the national curriculum.

Our vision is to be an aspirational and supportive church school community, working together to wonder, trust and achieve. Striving to recognise life's rich opportunities, while developing talented lifelong learners, through respect, empathy, hope, trust and wonder.

This school is a fully inclusive school with an 'open door' policy and is committed to equal opportunities, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

As a Church of England School, St John's aims to provide a happy, secure environment that reflects the principles of the Christian faith, thus helping to develop children's spiritual growth and moral understanding, within a sound educational framework.

By so doing we hope to:

- Develop children's self-esteem and self-worth.
- Develop each child's academic potential.
- Develop in each child curiosity and an enthusiasm to learn.

We believe in the strength of good home/school partnerships and are aware of the need to be sensitive to our community with its rich cultural diversity.

We provide a distinctively Christian, yet inclusive, environment in which each child is motivated to acquire skills for life and a love of learning. As a church school, we welcome applications from Christian families, and those of other faiths or none.

We ask all parents applying for a place at our school to respect this ethos and its importance to the whole school community.

ODST and the LGB have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation, including that on infant class sizes and equal opportunities.

There are 60 places (the published admission number or PAN) available.

Admission arrangements to the Reception Year in September 2025

Pupils are normally admitted at the beginning of the school year (1 September – 31 August) in which they reach their fifth birthday. Parents whose child was born between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021 may apply for them to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2025.

Parents of a child whose fifth birthday falls between 1 September 2025 and 31 March 2026 may defer entry until their child reaches compulsory school age (the term beginning in January or April after his or her fifth birthday). The school will hold the deferred place for the child (provided it is taken up during the school year 2025/26), although in the majority of cases we find that children benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it.

For children whose fifth birthday falls between 1 April 2026 and 31 August 2026 (summer born children) parents can defer the date that their child is admitted to school but not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year.

Until the child reaches compulsory school age, s/he may attend part-time. If parents wish to exercise this right, they should discuss detailed arrangements with the head teacher.

Parents (see Note 1) wishing to apply for the Reception [Foundation] Year in September 2025 must complete the common application form provided by their home local authority (the home LA). The home LA is the LA in whose area the parents live at the time of the application. The form must be returned to that LA no later than 15 January 2025. Applications received after this date will normally only be considered after all those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be given to parents on 16 April 2025.

Over-subscription criteria

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming St John's Church of England Primary School will always be offered places.

If there are fewer applications than places available, all children will be offered places. If there is greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

1 Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside England but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted. (See Note 2)

2 Families who have exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that their child attends St John's Church of England Primary School rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate professional person involved with the family. (See Note 3)

3 Children with a sibling (see Note 5) on the roll of the school at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school. (Attendance at St John's Primary School's Nursery class does not qualify an older sibling under this criteria).

4 Children living within 1 mile of the school. The straight line distance used to determine proximity of the home to the school will be measured by Brighter Futures for Children's (Reading Admissions) Geographical Information System.

5 Children, one of whose parents/carers regularly worships at St John's and St Stephen's Church, Reading or Wycliffe Baptist Church, Kings Road, Reading. (see Note 6 and Note 8)

6 Children, one of whose parents/carers, regularly worships at a Christian church other than St John's & St Stephen's or Wycliffe Baptist Church that is a member of 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland' or a member of the Evangelical Alliance. (See Note 7 and Note 8)

7 Other children.

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight line distance (see Note 9) between the home and the school with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria 1 to 7 should the need arise. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the school will use random allocation to decide which child should be offered the place. The process will be conducted in the presence of a person independent of the school.

NOTE: Attendance at St John's Nursery does not guarantee a place at St John's Church of England Primary School as the Nursery Admissions are subject to a separate Admissions Policy.

All Other Admissions (can also be called 'In Year' or 'non-routine' or 'Casual' admissions)

Admission to the school during the school year depends on whether or not there are places available. All year groups at the school have 60 places. Applications must be made directly to the school on a form available from the school.

If there is a vacancy, and there is no child on the relevant waiting list with a higher priority (according to the over-subscription criteria 1-7 above), a place will be offered.

Please note that the school does not have a normal point of entry to Year 3 – applications for entry at the beginning of Year 3 are treated as indicated in this section.

In-year admissions or admissions at the beginning of school years other than Reception will only be considered by the Governing Board up to half a term [using the three term year] in advance of the desired date for entry. For example, for entry in January, the application will not be considered until after the October half term break.

Admission outside normal age group

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully, eg for those who have missed education due to ill health. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances and

a decision made based on what is in the pupil's best interests. It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the head teacher in advance of applying for a place. The governing board may ask relevant professionals for their opinion. If a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no right of appeal.

Waiting Lists

The school maintains waiting lists for those children who are not offered a place and the parents ask for the child's name to be added to the waiting list. The order of priority on the waiting list is the same as the list of criteria for over-subscription and does not depend on the date on which an application is received.

Multiple births

In cases where there is one place available, and the next child on the list is a twin, triplet, etc., we would admit both twins (and all the children in the case of other multiple births) even if this meant exceeding the agreed admission number of 60 for Reception 2025-26 or the number of places 60 in other year groups.

Fair Access

The school participates in Brighter Futures for Children's (Reading LA)'s Fair Access Protocol. Children qualifying under the Fair Access Protocol may be offered a place even if there are no places available in the relevant year group and also take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

Appeals

Any parent not offered a place for their child at their preferred school has the right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. Details of appeals arrangements are available from the school, including the date by which an appeal should be submitted. In the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to the school, the school will not consider any further application for a child in the same school year (1 September – 31 August), unless there has been a material change in circumstances, for example a change of address which results in a move from outside the catchment area to inside it.

Further information

Parents who wish their children to attend the school are most welcome to visit. Arrangements can be made through the Admissions Secretary at the school.

Notes

Note 1:

'Parent' is defined in law (The Education Act 1996) as either:

a) any person who has 'parental responsibility' (defined in the Children Act 1989) for the child or young person; or
b) any person who has care of the child or young person.

Note 2:

A 'looked-after child' is one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its functions. Previously looked after children are children who have been adopted, subject to child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders. Adopted children are those for whom an adoption order is made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46). A 'child arrangements order' is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14). A 'special guardianship order' is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A).

Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (eg a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order). A 'looked-after child' includes any child who appears to have been in state care outside England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Note 3:

Applications under criterion 2 (exceptional medical or social needs), must be supported by evidence from an independent professional person which clearly demonstrates why the school is the most suitable and must illustrate the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school. The person supplying the evidence should be a doctor, heath visitor, social worker, etc. who is aware of the circumstances of the case. The school reserves the right to ask for further evidence or clarification where necessary and may seek the advice of appropriate professionals where necessary.

Note 4:

The home address is where the child normally lives. This will be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is shown that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of them. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child's parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, the home address will be assumed to be the address at which the child is registered with a GP.

Evidence of the normal home address may be requested in the form of a recent bill, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned.

If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (eg a false claim to living in the catchment area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

If parents are moving house, evidence of the move will be requested when considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts, or a rental agreement for at least a period of six months will be required.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, the home LA must be informed.

An address of a second home with the main home being elsewhere will not be accepted. If there are two or more homes, or where a family is returning from elsewhere, evidence will be required of the main home. An allocation of a place based on an address which might be considered only temporary or where the address given is a second home will not be made.

An address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement will not be accepted.

There are special arrangements for families of service personnel with a confirmed posting or crown servants returning from overseas. If the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares the relocation date, and if there is a place available, it will be offered even though there is not an intended address or the family is not yet living in the area.

Note 5:

'Sibling' means a natural brother or sister, half-brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step-brother or sister, or the child of the parent's/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. It is helpful if parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

Note 6:

This will need to be supported by a pre-printed form stating church attendance, obtainable from the school and which will need to be returned to the school, after signature by the Vicar or Pastor. Regular worship is defined as 'on average attending St John's Church or Wycliffe Baptist Church on at least one occasion in each of the calendar months in the previous year preceding the application date'.

Note 7:

This will need to be supported by a pre-printed form, obtainable from the school, from the appropriate Minister of Religion. (This form must be returned to the school with an official letterhead from the church concerned, clarifying both the church and the clergy who has signed the form). Regular Worship is defined as 'on average attending the named church on at least one occasion in each of the calendar months in the previous year preceding the application date'. Aggregate attendance from parents, for those families who have moved areas or churches, will be accepted, with dates clearly detailed from all churches that the applicant's parents have attended. All churches attended must be members of 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland' or a member of the Evangelical Alliance.

Aggregate attendance at St John's and St Stephen's Church or Wycliffe Baptist Church (if attendance at these churches is less than 12 months) will also be considered under this criterion.

Note 8:

In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these admissions arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

The Governors believe that the number(s) of children admitted under the church based criteria 5 and 6 is not detrimental to the local community in terms of gaining access to the school under other criteria. By maintaining these criteria, the governors wish to support the church-going community of families within the named parishes. This support will act as a proportionate safeguard for those families who wish to have a Christian emphasis in school ethos and teaching which is reflective of their own faith, whilst recognising that the school welcomes all faiths and none. These criteria will be reviewed each year, to ensure that the school does not disproportionately admit under these criteria to the detriment of the local (non-church going) community.

Note 9: The straight line distance used to determine proximity of the home to the school will be measured by Brighter Futures for Children (Reading Admissions)'s Geographical Information System.

ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL – 121-147 Orts Road, Reading, Berks RG1 3JN
CONFIRMATION OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Supplementary Information

This form is only required where a parent is seeking admission for a child on the ground that the parent is a regular worshipper. Regular worship being defined as on average attending St John's & St Stephen's Church or Wycliffe Baptist Church or another church that is a member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, on at least one occasion in each of the calendar months in the previous calendar year preceding the application date.

After completion by the priest or minister, it should be returned to the school, not the Local Authority. In cases where attendance at a previous church is to be considered, please ask the priest or minister at the previous church to verify attendance at that church, at least once per month on average and indicate the period of such attendance.

If aggregate attendance applies, please arrange for a 'Confirmation of Church Attendance' form to be completed for each church attended, with the dates attended clearly indicated.

For completion by the parent

Name of Child ..... Date of Birth .....

Name of parent or guardian ....

Address of parent/guardian: .....

Church attended.....

Address of church.....

I confirm that I have attended the above church on average at least once a month in each of the calendar months in the previous calendar year preceding the application date.

Signature of parent: ..... Date:.....

To the priest/minister/pastor

Please could you confirm that the information given above is correct to the best of your knowledge. Please arrange for this form to be returned to the school by the Parent or Carer making the application.

I confirm that the above parent attended my church at least once a month during the past year and that attendances were at set open Sunday, weekend or weekday services of worship and excluded weddings, funerals and christenings (except for the child's own christening).

☐ I confirm that my Church is a member of 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland' as can be found on the link: https://ctbi.org.uk
☐ I confirm that my Church is a member of the Evangelical Alliance as can be found on the link: https://www.eauk.org/

Signed ..... Title/Position .....

Date.....

It is essential that this form is completed and returned to the School Governors, c/o The School Office, St John's CE Primary School, Orts Road, Reading RG1 3JN, if the application for admission to St John's CE Primary School is to be considered under Church attendance. NB This form must be returned to the school with an official letterhead from the church concerned, clarifying both the church and the clergy who signed the form.

Consulted October 2023

Determined by the ODST Ethos and Governance Committee on 30th January 2024