

Admissions Policy

St James CE Primary School, Hereford

Background

The Governors of the school are the admissions authority for the school and they determine their admissions policy after consultation with the Diocese and the Local Authority.

Policy

Each class and year group is restricted to a maximum of 30 pupils throughout the school. That number can only be exceeded, or admissions refused before that number is reached, by a unanimous vote of those governors attending a properly constituted and quorate meeting of the governing body.

This is a Church of England Aided School and the Admissions Committee may allocate up to two of the thirty places in any class on successful completion of the church place application process. (See below)

Admission of Pupils

The admissions limit for the 2011/2012 academic year has been established at 30. Children are admitted to the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they reach their 5th birthday.

Children whose 5th birthday falls between 1st September and the end of the following February will join the reception class full time at the start of the autumn term. Children whose birthday falls between 1st March and 31st August will have the choice of attending full or part time until half term.

Prospective parents are warmly invited to visit the school. Appointments can be made by contacting the school administrator or headteacher on 01432 273961. A school prospectus is available from the school office or from the school web site at www.sjps.org.uk.

Applications for a place at St James for admission in the school year September 2010 to August 2011 must be received by the Admissions Office, PO Box 185, Blackfriars Street, Hereford HR4 9ZR by January 15th 2010

All offers of places will be made by the Pupil Admissions Office by 15th April 2010.

We hope that all new entrants will be able to visit the school at least twice in the term before they are due to start. After a short preliminary visit accompanied by parents, the children spend a whole afternoon in the reception class where they are introduced to the routine of the school. Further visits can be made, accompanied by parents, on Friday afternoons after the initial visit.

There can be significant pressure for places at the school and in response to this the governors have decided upon the following criteria for admission to the school.

1. Looked after children at the request of the Local Authority.
2. All children living within the catchment area of the school have an automatic right to a place at the school up to the year group size of 30.
4. Children from outside the catchment area who have siblings in the school will receive favourable consideration in their application providing there are places available.
5. Two places will be reserved for children whose parents wish them to attend the school through a 'church' place providing that the number of in-catchment children permits.
6. Exceptional medical or social need. (Supporting evidence setting out the particular reasons why St James is the most suitable school and the difficulties that would arise if the child had to attend another school will be required. This could be in a letter from a registered health professional such as a doctor or social worker).
7. Any other applications received from parents who live outside the catchment area will be considered by the governors who will take into account the distance from home to school and ease of travel to and from school.

Parents who wish to apply for a 'church' place at the school should do so in writing to the Chairman of Governors. An application form can be obtained from the school office for this purpose. The applicant's own minister will be contacted with respect to the application.

When necessary a committee of the school Governors meets to consider all applications. Parents of those children to be admitted are offered the place by the Local Authority Pupil Admissions Office in writing in late March. Should parents move out of the catchment area or further away from the school after accepting a place their application may have to be reviewed.

Parents who disagree with a decision made by the Governors have the right to appeal. The Diocesan Director of Education is responsible for organising the appeals procedure. The address of the Diocesan Director of Education is:

The Diocesan Office, Units 8 & 9, The Business Quarter, Ludlow Eco Park, Sheet Road, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY88 1FD.

When a year group is deemed full, the governors may hold a register expressing an interest should a vacancy occur as a 'waiting list' for that year group.

Please note that

- 'Church' is taken as meaning an organised body subscribing to the doctrine of the Trinity, which is either a member of the local Christian Council / Council of Churches or affiliated to 'Christians together in England'.
- 'shortest available walking route to school' is determined by the LA using computer assisted OS maps and post codes to ensure accurate measurement. This measurement will simply be used to differentiate between candidates who fulfil these criteria in the event of oversubscription, rather than being a requirement under the criteria itself.
- 'Parents' include all those who have a parental responsibility for a child as set out in the Children Act 1989. Where responsibility is shared, the person receiving Child Benefit is deemed to be the parent responsible for completing application forms and whose address will be used for admission purposes.
- 'The Home Address' will be the address used for correspondence related to where 'Child Benefit' is paid. In cases where there is doubt of the home address, or where a child lives between two homes (split families) or other relevant circumstances, proof of the home address must be provided to the school to confirm the address on the application form. Home address will be the address that complies with the above at the closing date for applications set by the Local Authority.
- 'sibling' is defined as:
 - A full or half brother or sister
 - A step brother or step sister
 - An adoptive brother or sister
 - Children of parents who are married or cohabiting, where the parents and children live together in the same family household.

Christian Commitment – 'faith priority' places

1. Baptism is the basic criterion for the identification of the children of practising Christian families. Thanksgiving for the gift of a child could also be taken into account for those Christians who do not practise infant Baptism. However, that will not normally be enough on its own, if over-subscribed schools are going to be able to distinguish those most clearly admissible on faith grounds. There needs also to be some evidence on the basis that they are of the faith of the school.
2. We operate, therefore, a three tier stratification for faith based places:
 - Known to the church
 - Attached to the church and
 - At the heart of the church

3. Applicants for a faith priority place will be asked to identify themselves as being: known to the church; or attached to the church; or at the heart of the church. The period in question will normally be the past two years. Applicants new to the area would need to provide evidence from a previous church or churches.
4. An applicant 'known to the church' will not be a frequent but probably an occasional worshipper, someone who is perhaps known through a family connection, or one or more of whose family would be involved in some church activity, such as a uniformed or other church organisation.
5. An applicant 'attached to the church' will be a regular but not frequent worshipper, by which is meant (for example) one who usually attends a monthly family or church parade service or is regularly involved in a weekday church activity including an element of worship.
6. An applicant 'at the heart of the church' will be a regular worshipper. This might normally mean one who worships usually twice a month. To accommodate difficult patterns of work and family relationships account will be taken of week day worship. The worshipper could be the child for whom the application is made or one or both parents.

Application form and church reference

Applicants for faith priority places will need an application form (available from the Governors) to give evidence of their Christian (or other faith) commitment.

Christian applicants should give evidence that the child for whom a place is sought has been baptised or had a service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child. A copy of a certificate of Baptism or of a service of Thanksgiving should be included if possible with the application.

There needs to be a confirmation through a worship community reference of applicants' claims, where they are applying on a faith priority basis. This reference will simply confirm or reject the objective facts as proposed by the family: this family is known to the church; this family is attached to the church; this family is at the heart of the church.

Once the reference is available to the governing body of the school it becomes objective evidence for the admissions committee in forming their judgement on the application. The same will apply in the case of any subsequent appeal or adjudication.

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Reviewed December 2009 for year 2011/12