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Admission Arrangements 2027-2028

St Mary's CE Infant School

Together we love to learn and learn to love.
'Do everything in love' 1 Corinthians 16:14

Adopted by school:	**St Mary's CE Infant School**
Date:	**03.11.2025**

St Mary's CE Infant School
19 Church Green, Witney, OX28 4AZ
https://www.st-marys-witney.oxon.sch.uk/

Admission Arrangements 2027-2028

Our vision & values: St Mary's Infant School is committed to inspiring every individual. We embed the Christian value of love across school life because we believe that a person who feels loved, secure and happy can flourish. We encourage everyone to achieve their potential, develop their talents, celebrate their uniqueness and rejoice in their relationships with others. **'Do everything in love' 1 Corinthians 16:14**

School Name ('the School'):	St Mary's CE Infant School	
Local Authority ('the LA'):	Oxfordshire County Council	
Voluntary arrangements with LA:	Admissions	Yes
	In-year Admissions	Yes
	Appeals	Yes
Published admission number (PAN)	15	
Last consultation date:	Last consulted on November 2023	
Admission to:	Reception	
Contact details:	Ms Lauren Murrey, Executive Headteacher St Mary's CE Infant School, 19 Church Green, Witney, OX28 4AZ Tel. 01993 7702387 Email. office@stmarysinfants.co.uk	

Over subscription criteria

Over-subscription criteria

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming St Mary's CE Infant 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 Mary's CE Infant 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 normal home address (See Note 4) in the catchment area (See Map) and with a sibling (see Note 5) on the roll of St Mary's infants or The Batt CE Primary at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at either school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.

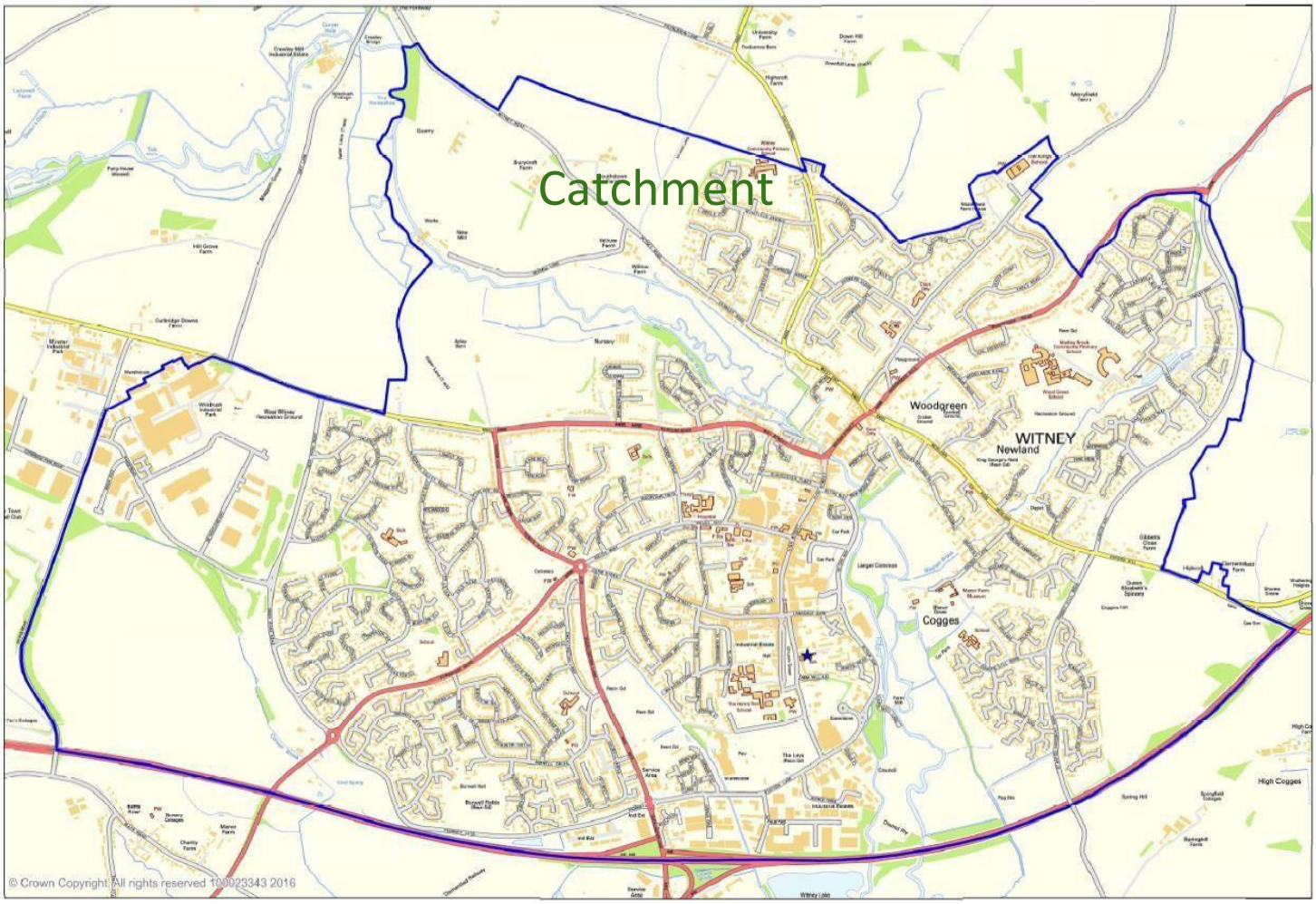
4.Children with a normal home address in in the catchment area (See Map)

5.Children with a normal home address outside the catchment area (See Map) and with a sibling 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.

6.Other children.

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight line distance (see Note 6) 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 6 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.

Catchment/Designated Area Map



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ODST and the Local Governing Body (LGB) have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all lawful requirements, including those set out in the Acts, Codes, policies and relevant case law listed in the Appendix.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the 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 oversubscription criteria set out previously will be applied.

Admission Arrangements to Reception Year in September 2027

Even if a child already attends the nursery class at the School, a new application must be made to start Reception year group for the first time.

Pupils are normally admitted at the beginning of the school year (1 September – 31 August) in which they reach their fifth birthday. Parents (see Note 1) whose child was born between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023 may apply for them to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2027.

Parents of a child born between 1 September 2022 and 31 March 2023 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 2027/28), although children may benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it.

For children born between 1 April 2022 and 31 August 2022 (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. Parents should refer to DfE Guidance on requesting a delayed school start for children born in the summer: Summer born children: advice for parents.

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 wishing to apply for the Reception (Foundation) Year in September 2027 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 2027. 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 2027.

Admission Arrangements to Year 3 in September 2027

Parents (see Note 1) wishing to apply for a Year 3 place in September 2027 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 2027. 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 given to parents on 16 April 2027.

Admission Arrangements to Year 5 in September 2027

Parents (see Note 1) wishing to apply for a Year 5 place in September 2027 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 2027.

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 given to parents on 16 April 2027.

All Other Admissions

Admission to the school during the school year depends on whether or not there are places available. Applications may be made at any time, contact the school for details of how to make an application.

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 1-6 above), a place will be offered.

In-year admissions or admissions at the beginning of school years other than Reception/Year 3/Year 7 may be made at any time. The LGB will only consider applications 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 previously educated abroad or those who have missed education due to ill health. A parent of a summer-born child who wishes their child to start in the autumn term following their fifth birthday (ie in the Reception Year rather than Year 1) should refer to: DfE Guidance: Making a request for admission out of the normal age group. Parents should use the LA process to complete their application.

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 at the earliest opportunity. The school 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.

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.

Children of Service Personnel

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.

Waiting Lists

The School maintains waiting lists for those children who are not offered a place. For those applying through the normal admissions round for entry, the Waiting List will be maintained from shortly following initial allocation in the year preceding the start of the academic year in September until 31 December following the start of the academic year in their Reception/Year 3/Year 7 year.

The list will be re-ranked in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria each time that a name is added to or removed from the list.

Fair Access

The School participates in the 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.

Random Allocation

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight line distance (see Note 6) between the home and the school with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in the oversubscription criteria 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.

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/designated area to inside it.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the School.

Notes

Note 1:

Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law)

Having parental responsibility means assuming all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent of a child has by law. People other than a child's natural parents can acquire parental responsibility through:

7. being granted a residence order;
8. being appointed a guardian;
9. being named in an emergency protection order (although parental responsibility in such a case is limited to taking reasonable steps to safeguard or promote the child's welfare);
10. adopting a child (in the case of stepparents) in agreement with the child's mother (and other parent if that person also has parental responsibility for the child) or as the result of a court order.

Where a child's parents are not married to each other, the child's father can gain parental responsibility by:

- registering the child's birth jointly with the mother;
- through a 'parental responsibility agreement' between him and the child's mother;
- as the result of a court order.

In addition, a Local Authority can acquire parental responsibility if it is named in the care order for a child.

Note 2:

Looked After Children

A 'looked after child' is a child who is either:

a) in the care of a local authority, or
b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of making an application to a school.

In Oxfordshire these children are also known as ‘Children We Care For” (CWCF).

Previously “Looked After” Children

The School Admissions Code 2012 introduced a requirement for all admission authorities to broaden the existing priority for 'looked after’ children or children in care (defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) to also include 'previously looked after' children. Children who were 'previously looked after' were defined for admissions purposes as those who, immediately after being in care, became subject to an adoption[14], residence, or special guardianship order[15].

A revised School Admissions Code came into force on 19 December 2014, and this stated that ‘previously looked after’ children include those who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976

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[14] An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) or an order under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders).
[15] Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a ‘special guardianship order’ as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian/s.
(see Section 12 - Adoption Orders) and not simply those children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 - Adoption Orders). In addition, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders. Those who previously received a residence order are now deemed to have a child arrangement order

If applying on behalf of a “previously looked after” child, who was previously in state care in England, the parent will need to provide the following evidence:

- an Adoption Order under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002; or
- an Adoption Order under the Adoption Act 1976; or
- a Child Arrangements Order; or
- a Residence Order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989; or
- a Special Guardianship Order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s), under section 14A of the Children Act 1989.

Children who appear to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care after being adopted (“internationally adopted previously looked after children”) (IAPLAC)

A further revised School Admissions Code was agreed in July 2021, and this came into force on 1 September 2021. The new Code further broadens the existing priority for 'looked after’ children and 'previously looked after' children to include those children who appear to an Admission Authority to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. In the School Admissions Code 2021 they are referred to as “internationally adopted previously looked after children” (IAPLAC).

The Code regards a child as having 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.

Responsibility for determining whether a child is eligible to be considered as an IAPLAC rests with the Admission Authority. If there is doubt about the acceptability of evidence provided by the parent, advice will be sought from the relevant Virtual School. This Admission Authority will take a pragmatic approach to the decision-making process where evidence is lacking.

Note 3:

Exceptional Medical or Social Needs

Applications under criterion 2 (exceptional medical or social needs for their child's admission) must provide written evidence. This should come from an independent professional aware of the case relating to the child, parent or other children living at the same address (eg doctor, hospital consultant or psychologist for medical grounds or registered social or care worker, housing officer, the police or probation officer for social needs).

This evidence must:

- be specific to the School in question
- show why the School is the most suitable
- demonstrate what facilities will benefit the child
- explain why no other school can offer the same support

It is not enough for the professional to report what the parent has told them.

To decide on admissions in this category ODST will convene a 3-member panel consisting of at least one LGB member with independent oversight.

Note 4:

Home Address

The home address is where the child lives at the time of application. This is the address at which the child spends the majority of term-time school nights.

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.

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.

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.

Multiple Addresses

Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where ethe 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 hat at which the child spends the majority of the school week as determined by the LA.

Fraudulent Applications

If a place has been obtained on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application (for example, a false claim to residence in a catchment area) and this results in the denial of a place to a child with a stronger claim, the local authority may withdraw the offer of the place. This follows the guidance in paragraphs 2.13 and 2.14 of the School Admissions Code (1 September 2021) published by the Department for Education.

Note 5:

Siblings

For admissions purposes, a brother or sister is defined as one of the following:

- A brother or sister (both parents the same) living at the same home address; or
- A half-brother or half-sister (one parent the same) living at the same home address; or
- A stepbrother or stepsister (sharing a parent who is married or in a civil partnership) living at the same home address; or
- An adopted child who, by reason of the adoption, now shares one or more parents with a child living at the same home address.

Note 6:

Measuring Distances from Home to School

The straight-line distance used to determine proximity of the home to the school will be measured by the LA's Geographical Information System.

Appendix

These arrangements and over-subscription criteria meet all lawful requirements including those set out in the following Acts, Codes, policies and relevant case law:

Adoption Act 1976
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1976/36/contents

Children Act 1989
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents

Education Act 1996
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents

School Standards & Framework Act 1998
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents

Adoption and Children Act 2002
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/38/contents

Education Act 2002
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents

Equality Act 2010
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

School Admissions Appeals Code 2012
www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code

Children and Families Act 2014
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents

School Admissions Code 2021
www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2