



ADMISSIONS POLICY

2024/2025

ST MARY'S LEWISHAM CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our Vision

To be a learning community that promotes the unique gifts, wellbeing and potential of every person. Our work is founded on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, building on His message of equality, peace and justice, guided by His words '*As I have loved you, so you must love one another*' (John 13:34).

The Governors of voluntary aided schools are responsible for the admission arrangements but are required to consult the Local Authority before any changes are made. The Governors of St Mary's School have agreed with the Local Authority to admit 30 pupils for each year group.

Parents applying for places do so knowing that St Mary's Lewisham CE Primary School provides an education based on Christian principles; that the pupils spend a significant amount of time in Christian worship and related activities, both in the school and local churches.

Starting School in Reception 2024-2025

St Mary's Lewisham CE Primary School participates in the Lewisham Co-ordinated Admission Scheme. Applications for the academic year 2024/2025 must be made on Lewisham's Common Application Form (CAF) (*Residents living in other boroughs should apply to their home LA*). Application should be made online at www.eadmissions/gov.uk (see Note 6).

A Supplementary Information Form must be completed and signed by the applicant's minister or church leader and returned to the school by 15 January 2024 if a Foundation place is sought. Parents will be advised of the outcome of their applications by their LA. Unsuccessful applicants will be given reasons related to the oversubscription criteria listed above and advised of their right of appeal to an independent appeal panel (see Note 4).

Once a place has been offered, proof of address and date of birth will need to be provided. (see Note 3).

The Governors have designated 15 places as '**Foundation**' to be made available to families who can provide evidence by way of the **Supplementary Information Form**. 15 places have been designated as '**Open**' and are available to children not qualifying for a Foundation place but whose parents have chosen the school for the type of education it provides.

Allocation of the 15 Foundation Places (Supplementary Information Form required)

Foundation places are offered to those parents who are faithful and regular worshippers in an Anglican or other Christian Church that is a full member of Churches Together in England (see *Note 7*); a completed Supplementary Information Form is required (see *Note 4*). The requirements of these (admissions) arrangements in relation to attendance at worship will only apply to periods when the churches or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

If there are more applicants than places available, places will be offered in the following order of priority:

1. Looked After Children or previously Looked After Children (see *Note 1*);
2. Children with an exceptional and professionally supported medical or social need for a place at this school (see *Note 5*);
3. Children with brothers or sisters (see *Note 2*) already attending the school; the applicant's brother or sister must be on the roll of the school on the intended day of admission;
4. Children of permanent staff in the school (see *Note 8*);
5. Faithful and regular worshippers at St Mary the Virgin Church, Lewisham High Street, Lewisham, London SE13 6LE (see *Note 4*);
6. Faithful and regular worshippers at any CE Church;
7. Faithful and regular worshippers at other churches that are full members of Churches Together in England (see *Note 7*).

If the Governing Body considers that the application does not fully meet the criteria for a Foundation Place they will transfer it and consider it for an open place.

Allocation of the 15 Open Places

The Governors have designated 15 places as '**Open**' for those families from other faiths, or no faith, that have chosen the school for the type of education and ethos it provides.

When there are more applicants than places available, places will be allocated according to the following priority order: -

- (a) Looked after children or previously looked after children (see *Note 1*);
- (b) Children with an exceptional and professionally supported medical or social need for a place at this school (see *Note 5*);
- (c) Children with brothers and sisters (see *Note 2*) already attending the school; the applicant's brother or sister must be on the roll of the school on the intended day of admission;
- (d) Children of permanent staff in the school (see *Note 8*);
- (e) Nearness of the home to school (see *Note 9*).

Oversubscription and tie-breaker

If any one category in either Foundation or Open places is oversubscribed, places will be offered to applicants living closest to the school (see *Note 9*). In the event of the last two applicants living equidistant from the school, governors' decision will be reached by the drawing of lots.

Late Applications

The School will consider late applications in accordance with the procedure in the Local Authority's co-ordinated scheme. In essence, this means that late applicants will be considered after the initial round of offers is made; where the school is oversubscribed this is likely to reduce considerably your chance of gaining a place.

Special Educational Needs

Parents/carers of pupils who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan are required to apply for school places separately through the Local Authority from whom advice is available. If a child with an EHC Plan is placed in the school by the Local Authority before the normal admission round, the number of places available to other applicants will be reduced. The Governors will admit all those pupils with an EHC Plan naming the school (if the child's needs can be met by the school).

N.B. Parents need to be aware that the school usually has more applicants than available places.

Appeals

Parents who are not offered a place for their child have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel. Parents wishing to appeal should obtain an appeal form from the school. The form should be sent to the Clerk to the Appeals Panel, c/o the school, within 20 school days from the notification of the decision. Should the appeal be unsuccessful, the Governing Body will not consider further applications from these parents within the same academic year, unless there have been significant and material changes in their circumstances (*see Note 10*).

In-Year Admissions

The school is responsible for its own In-Year Admissions. You can apply for a place for your child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHC plan names the school will be admitted (if the child's needs can be met by the school). Likewise, if there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for, your child will always be offered a place unless there is a waiting list.

If there are no spaces available at the time of your application, your child's name will be added to a waiting list for the relevant year group. When a space becomes available, they will be filled by one of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria in this policy. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest (*see Note 11*).

Applications for in-year admissions should be sent to the following address:
admin@st-marys.lewisham.sch.uk

GUIDANCE NOTES

Notes to assist you in completing your application forms for a place at St Mary's.

St Mary's Lewisham CE Primary School will operate one point of entry for reception class. Children born between 1st September and 31st August will be expected to accept a full-time reception place starting in September.

Deferred admission to primary school

The School admits children to the Reception class in the September of the school year in which a child attains the age of 5 years. (The school year runs from 1 September to the 31st August.) All parents/carers are entitled to a full-time place for their child in the reception class from September, but may defer entry until the beginning of the term after their child is five years old (i.e. when the child reaches compulsory school age) or until the beginning of the summer term, whichever is earlier. Children may attend part-time until their child reaches compulsory school age. Parents/carers who have been offered a place at the school and wish to defer entry for their child and/or attend part-time must put this in writing to the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity and before the start of the Autumn term.

Parents/carers who defer or delay their child's admission until later in the academic year or until the following year (i.e. summer born children) are eligible to retain their nursery school place if by doing so it does not disadvantage or displace another child who would be eligible for the nursery place.

Education out of normal (chronological) age group

Children are educated in school with others of their age group. However, in exceptional circumstances parents/carers may choose to seek places outside of their child's chronological year group. Decisions will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case. Parents/carers must state clearly why they feel admission to a different year group is in the child's best interest and may provide recent professional evidence to support this. Further details of how to make such a request are available from the school.

Fair Access

The school is committed to taking its share of pupils who are hard to place in accordance with the locally agreed Fair Access Protocol. Pupils admitted under the Protocol will take priority over any other children on the waiting lists and this may include, on occasion, admitting above the planned admissions number.

POLICY DEFINITION NOTES

1. **Looked after children**

Looked after children are children who are in the care of a Local Authority, or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions as defined by Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of making an application to the school.

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after immediately prior to being adopted, or who became subject to a residence order (now termed child arrangement order under the Children & Families Act 2014), or special guardianship order. The Governors will require written confirmation that the child is looked after, or previously looked after, and will be so at the time of making an application to the school.

2. **Sibling**

This is defined as a blood or adoptive sibling or half sibling, plus foster or step-sibling living at the same address as the child. Proof of the sibling relationship may be required.

3. **Proof of Address & Date of Birth**

On the offer of a place for admission, applicants will be required to provide proof of the child's date of birth and proof of address (usually a council tax statement).

4. **Supplementary Information Form**

Supplementary Information Forms by Priests/Ministers for **Foundation** places are used to ensure that a parent or legal guardian is a faithful and regular worshipper in an appropriate church community.

Faithful & Regular - a minimum of monthly attendance at services for 12 months or more before the closing date for application will need to be supported. Those who have recently moved to the area and who worshipped previously in a different church will be asked to supply a reference from that church so that the 12 month period is covered.

5. **Exceptional Circumstances**

In exceptional circumstances Governors may admit children on the grounds of their exceptional and professionally supported medical or social need. This must be supported by written evidence at the time of the application, e.g. from a specialist health professional, social worker or other care professional. The evidence must set out the reasons why this school is the most suitable school and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school. The support document must be provided with the Common Application Form to Lewisham Education or for those residents in other boroughs to their home LA, by the published date.

6. **Common Application Form (CAF)**

Lewisham Education issue Common Application Forms in respect of any waiting list applications for all schools within the Borough of Lewisham. On completion of this form Lewisham Education will advise the applicant of their child's position on the waiting lists for the schools they have selected.

7. **Churches Together in England**

Please follow the link below:

https://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/234690/Home/About/Membership_of_CTE/Member_Churches_of/Member_Churches_of.aspx

8. **Children of staff at the school**

Admission authorities may give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances:

- ☐ Where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made; and / or
- ☐ The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

9. **Nearness of the home to school**

Calculating home to school distance by measuring in a straight line to a central nodal point in the school premises (as set out by Lewisham). Applicants from the same block of flats will be treated equally regardless of the floor on which they live.

10. **Infant Class Appeals**

In order to comply with legislation designed to limit INFANT classes to 30 an appeal panel may only consider an appeal on the following grounds:

- ☐ That the school is not full and the admission of an additional child would not exceed the 30 per class limit
- ☐ That the decision not to admit was not one which a reasonable admission authority would make in the circumstance of the case
- ☐ That the child would have been offered a place if the admission arrangements had been properly and impartially applied and/or if the admission arrangements had complied with the law

In determining the reasonableness of a case, the appeal panel will need to review the decision made by the admission authority as to whether a reasonable case for asserting that 'class size' prejudice would arise by the admission of the 31st child. Factors to be taken into account include the school's admission policy, the internal operation of the school and its ability to accommodate pupils in compliance with the class size limit of 30. The governors' reasons for not admitting the child would have to be perverse or illogical in the light of the school's admission arrangements.

11. **Waiting List**

When a vacancy occurs in any year group it will be offered to the next child on the waiting list in the same category (i.e. 'Foundation Place' or 'Open Place'). When the waiting list is cleared in any one category, vacancies will be filled from the other category.

Unsuccessful candidates for places can be placed on the waiting list for the appropriate year group and for the current academic year only (September – July). Any family wishing to remain on the waiting list for the following academic year will need to inform the school in writing. The waiting lists will be priority ordered in accordance with the admission criteria and it is therefore possible for a child to move down as well as up the waiting list.