

Sonning Church of England Primary School

Admissions Policy 2024-25 – Determined



Aim of Policy: This Policy details the Admissions arrangements for Sonning Church of England Primary School for September 2024 to August 2025. The policy has been prepared by the Governing Body in consultation with The Keys Academy Trust and the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education and agreed with the relevant Admissions Authority and parents.

Description: This Policy details the Admissions arrangements for Sonning Church of England School for entry into Reception from September 2024 to August 2025, as determined by The Keys Academy Trust. The school is a partner in the coordinated admission arrangements for primary admissions in the Wokingham LA and follows their admissions timetable.

The policy includes details of the Admissions Criteria, Waiting Lists, In-Year Admissions, Appeals and all other related issues. It also includes a Supplementary Information Form for applications made under the church criteria and a map of the catchment area.

Sonning Church of England School Author:	P Sherwood	Lead Governor:	R Argent
Approval by:	Admissions Team and Foundation Governors	Team Reviewing:	Admissions Team
Based on Model Policy?	Yes – ODBE	Date uploaded to website:	Feb 2023

Approved by:	Admissions Team and Foundation Governors	Date:	November 2022
		Next Review Date:	March 2025

Phil Sherwood (Headteacher)

Clare Borsberry-Lewis (Chair of Governors)

Please note:

The term ‘parents’ refers to parents, carers or legal guardians within this and all policy documentation.

Date of policy determination: 22.02.2023

End date of last full consultation: 19.01.2023

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Admissions Arrangements for September 2024 – August 2025

The Governing Body of the school and The Keys Academy Trust, not Wokingham Local Authority (the LA), are responsible for deciding on admissions to the school. The school is a partner in the coordinated admission arrangements for primary admissions in Wokingham LA and follows their admission timetable.

This policy has been prepared by the Governing Body in consultation with The Keys Academy Trust and the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, and agreed with the relevant Admissions authorities and parents. The Governing Body has made every effort to ensure this policy complies with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation, including that on infant class sizes and equal opportunities.

Sonning Church of England Primary School values highly its Christian ethos and its close links with St. Andrew's Church and the Diocese of Oxford (ODBE). We provide a distinctively Christian, yet inclusive, environment which gives each child the skills they need to build strong foundations for the years ahead and to make positive choices in everything they do. As a church school, we welcome applications from Christian families, as well as those of other faiths or none. We ask all parents applying for a place at our school to respect this inclusive ethos and its importance to the whole school community.

1.0 Admission arrangements to the Reception Year

Pupils are normally admitted at the beginning of the school year (01 September – 31 August) in which they reach their fifth birthday. Parents whose child was born between 01 September 2019 and 31 August 2020 may apply for them to be admitted to the Reception Year for the year starting in September 2024.

Parents of a child whose fifth birthday falls between 01 September 2024 and 31 March 2025 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 2024/25), although children are highly likely to benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it, and we strongly recommend all pupils to begin their Reception year in September at the start of the academic year.

It is not possible to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday nor beyond the year for which the original application was accepted.

For children whose fifth birthday falls between 01 April 2025 and 31 August 2025 (summer born children) parents can defer the date that their child is admitted to school, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, i.e. the term after they reach their fifth birthday. If they wish their child to defer until September 2025, they should apply for a Year 1 place in September 2025. Parents should be aware that the Year 1 group may have no vacancies and it could be full with children transferring from the 2024-25 Reception Year group.

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

Parents (see Note 1 in the ‘Supplementary Notes’ section) wishing to apply for the Reception [Foundation] Year in September 2024 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 2024. 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 sent by the home LA on 16 April 2024. There are 30 places (the published admissions number or PAN) available in each year group.

2.0 Over-Subscription Criteria

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming Sonning Church of England Primary School will always be offered a place. However, it is strongly recommended (both for Reception places and In-Year applications) that the parent/s contact the school to discuss the child’s needs and EHCP, and whether Sonning Church of England Primary School is the most suitable place to meet that child’s needs.

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 only Sonning 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 normal home address (See Note 4) in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Sonning **and** with a sibling (see Note 5) on the roll of the school at the time of application and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.
4. Children of staff at Sonning Church of England Primary School where the member of staff is the parent (see Note 1) of the child **and** has a) 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 b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post at the school for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
5. Children with a normal home address in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Sonning.
6. Children with a normal home address outside the Ecclesiastical Parish of Sonning **and** with a sibling on the roll of the school at the time of application and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.

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7. Children with a normal home address outside the Ecclesiastical Parish of Sonning where a parent has been a regular worshipper (at least twice per month) for a year prior to the date of application at St Andrew's Church Sonning, and whose name is on the Church's Electoral Roll (Church Membership List) (see Note 6)
8. All other children.

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight-line distance (using Wokingham Borough Council's GIS system) 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 8 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.

3.0 All Other Admissions

All other admission to the school depends on whether or not there are places available. Applications must be made online via the in-year admissions section of the Wokingham Borough Council website.

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 as defined above), a place will be offered.

All year groups at the school have 30 places. However, the school participates in Wokingham Local Authority's Fair Access protocol, which may mean children are admitted over the admission number in specific circumstances.

3.1 In-Year Admissions

In-Year admissions, or admissions at the beginning of school years other than Reception Year, will only be considered by the Governing Body 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. Complete the online in-year admissions form on the Wokingham Borough Council website.

3.2 Moving House

If parents are moving house, the school will ask for evidence of the move when considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts, a rental agreement for at least a period of six months will be required (Armed Forces personnel and crown servants returning from overseas are exempt) (see Note 4). If you are returning from elsewhere, to live in a home that you own, we will require evidence to show that you have returned. We will also ask for evidence that any previous house owned has been sold or is being sold. We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept 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. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

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3.3 Admissions Outside Normal Age Group

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully, e.g. 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 Headteacher in advance of applying for a place. The Governing Body 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.

4.0 Waiting Lists

The school maintains waiting lists for those children who are not offered a place. Parents should ask for the child's name to be added to the waiting list. For Reception Year, in the event of the school being over-subscribed, the waiting list will be maintained by Wokingham LA until 31st December 2024. The list will then be transferred to the school.

The order of priority on the waiting list is the same as the list of criteria for over subscription. No account is taken of length of time on a waiting list or when the child's name was added to the list. Children who may be allocated to the school in accordance with Wokingham Borough Council's Fair Access Protocol may take precedence over those children already on the waiting list.

5.0 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 30 for Reception 2024-2025 or the number of places (30) in other year groups.

6.0 Fair Access

The school participates in Wokingham Borough Council'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 may also take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

7.0 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 (01 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.

8.0 Further Information

For further information, contact the Admissions and Compliance Officer at Sonning Church of England Primary School:

- Tel: 0118 969 3399
- Email: compliance@sonning.wokingham.sch.uk

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9.0 Supplementary Notes

9.1 Note 1

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

- any person who has ‘parental responsibility’ (defined in the Children Act 1989) for the child or young person; or
- any person who has care of the child or young person.

If you are in any doubt, please contact the school for advice.

9.2 Note 2

By a “looked-after child” we mean one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services function. 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 (e.g. a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order). A “looked-after child” includes any child who appears (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of 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.

9.3 Note 3

When applying under criterion 2 (exceptional medical or social needs), you must include supporting evidence from an independent professional person (e.g. doctor, psychologist, health visitor or social worker) who is aware of the situation and supports your reasons for preferring Sonning Church of England Primary School.

This supporting evidence must clearly demonstrate why the school is the most suitable and must illustrate the difficulties that would be caused to the child if they had to attend another school. The person supplying the evidence should be aware of the child’s or the family’s case. The school reserves the right to ask for further evidence or clarification where necessary and may seek the advice of appropriate educational professionals where necessary.

9.4 Note 4

By normal home address, we mean the child’s home address. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. 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.

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To avoid doubt, 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 we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgment about which address to use for the purpose of determining whether or not to offer a place.

We will take into account, for example, the following:

- any legal documentation confirming residence
- the pattern of the residence
- the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- confirmation from any previous school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents
- where the child is registered with their GP
- any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill. This could be, 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. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school to discuss what evidence might be acceptable.

If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with the LA to ensure that places are not obtained at the school on the basis of false addresses, and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (e.g. 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 also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

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.

If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move, when considering any application for a place under the co-ordinated scheme.

We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept 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. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

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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.

9.5 Note 5

By sibling we mean a 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.

9.6 Note 6

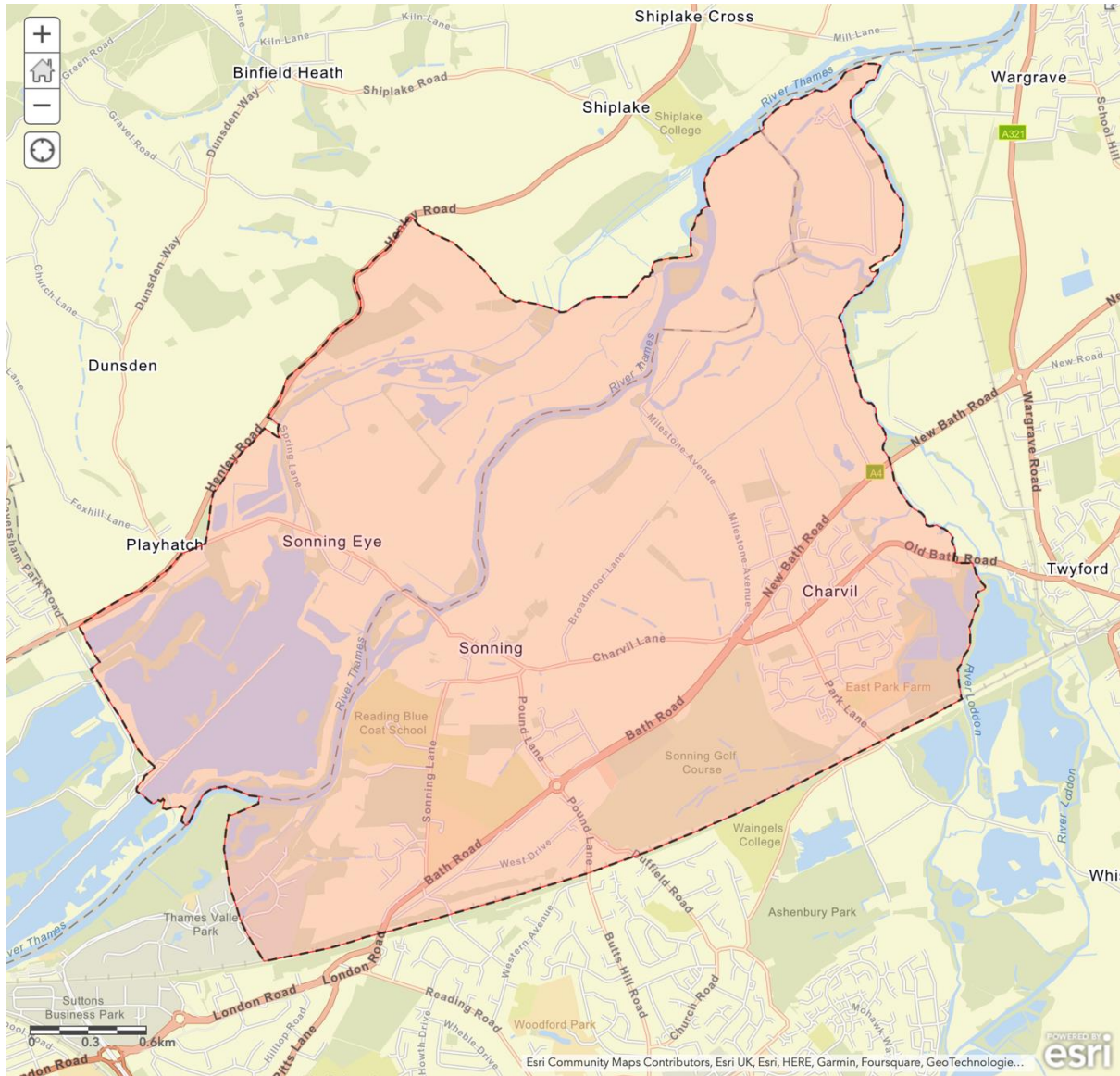
The Governing Body asks for the priest or minister to complete the Supplementary Information Form attached to this policy confirming church commitment. If a family has relocated within the last 12 months, the governors will look at previous church attendance and the form must be completed by both churches. The supplementary form must be returned directly to the school by 15th January 2024 for the main admission round or at the time of the in-year admission application.

The Governing Body has included a church affiliation criterion as the school has strong links with St Andrew's Church and a significant number of the people on the St Andrew's Electoral Roll live outside the Parish.

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10.0 Map of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Sonning



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11.0 Supplementary Information Form

Sonning Church of England Primary School

Ligugé Way, Sonning, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 6XF

Tel: 0118 969 3399

Website: www.sonning.wokingham.sch.uk



Headteacher: Mr Phil Sherwood

Local Authority: Wokingham Borough Council

This form is only required to be completed by applicants for over-subscription criterion 7

PART 1

Name of parent:			
Name of child:			
Date of birth of child (d/m/y):			
Normal home address of child (including post code):			
Home telephone number:		Parent mobile number:	

Refer to the Sonning Church of England Primary School Admissions Policy for definitions of ‘parent’ and ‘normal home address’.

PART 2

Over-subscription criteria for admission (See Admissions Policy), criterion 7 applicants:

Children with a normal home address outside the Ecclesiastical Parish of Sonning where a parent has been a regular worshipper (at least twice per month) for a year prior to the date of application at St Andrew’s Church Sonning, **and** whose name is on the Church’s Electoral Roll (Church Membership List).

Have you been a regular worshipper (at least twice per month) at St Andrew’s Church, Sonning, for 12 months prior to this application?

Yes/No:

Is your name on the Electoral Roll of St Andrew’s Church, Sonning?

Yes/No:

Signature of parent/carer:	
Date:	

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For completion by the priest or minister: I confirm that the above-named parent fulfils the requirements of regular attendance at St Andrew’s Church, Sonning **and** is on the Church Electoral Roll.

Signature of Vicar/Associate Vicar/Priest/Minister:	
Date:	
Name of Vicar/Associate Vicar/Priest/Minister (please print)	

For those who have been worshipping at St Andrew’s Church for less than a year:

Please provide details of your attendance at your previous Church.

Name of Church:	
------------------------	--

I attended the above Church at least twice a month from to
(insert dates)

Signature of Parent/Carer:	
Date:	

I confirm that the above-named parent attended my Church at least twice a month for the period indicated.

Signature of Vicar/Associate Vicar/Priest/Minister:	
Date:	
Name of Vicar/Associate Vicar/Priest/Minister (please print)	

Please note that Wokingham Borough Council is the Administering Authority for start of Reception Year Admissions.

The form should be completed and returned to Sonning Church of England School by 15th January 2024 for the main entry point or at the time of the in-year admission application.

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