

SPEEN CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOL **ADMISSIONS POLICY 2024-25**



***Our vision is to be a happy, vibrant and caring school with deep roots in the Christian faith,
so all grow and flourish (spiritually, academically, socially and emotionally).
May our roots go down deep into the soil of God's love and make us strong Ephesians 3 v 17***

Speen Church of England School has a distinctive Christian ethos which is at the centre of school life. It values its close links with local churches and the Diocese of Oxford. We provide a distinctively Christian, inclusive, supportive and caring environment, based on Christian values in which children can learn, flourish and be 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.

The school catchment area is comprised of the villages of Speen, North Dean and Great Hampden. *Applications from outside the catchment area are welcomed.* Parents can find out if they *live in the catchment area* by keying in their postcode on the county website <https://services.bucksc.gov.uk/school-admissions>

The governors 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.

Admission arrangements to the Reception Year in September 2024

At our school, pupils are normally admitted at the beginning of the school year (1 September – 31 August) in which they reach their fifth birthday. Parents whose children were born between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020 may apply for them to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2024. Our policy is not to offer admission in September 2024 to children who were born on or after 1 September 2020.

Children can attend Reception full time in September when they start school. Parents may request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age. In such cases, detailed arrangements should be discussed with the head teacher.

Parents of a child whose fifth birthday falls between 1 September 2024 and 31 March 2025 may request that their child is not admitted until later in the school year (no later than the term [using three term year] after the child's fifth birthday, when s/he reaches compulsory school age). The school will hold any deferred place for the child although, in the majority of cases, we find that children benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year with their peers, rather than part way through it.

For children whose fifth birthday falls between 1 April 2025 and 31 August 2025 (summer-born children), parents who do not wish them to start school in school year 2024-25, but to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2025, should proceed as follows: They should apply at the usual time for a place in September 2024 together with a written request that the child is admitted outside his or her normal age group to the Reception year in September 2025. NB parents would need to provide supporting reasons for seeking a place outside the normal age group and should discuss the position with the head teacher as early as possible. If their request is agreed, and this should be clear before the national offer day (17th April), their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before any place is offered and they should reapply in the normal way (no later than 15 January 2025) for a Reception place in September 2025. If their request is refused, the parents must decide whether to wait for any offer of a place in September 2024 (NB it will still be subject to the over-subscription criteria below) or to withdraw their application and apply in the second half of the summer term 2025 for a Year 1 place in September 2025. Parents should be aware that the Year 1 group may have no vacancies as it could be full, with children transferring from the 2024-25 Reception Year group. NB any agreement by the school in 2024 to defer, does not guarantee a place in September 2025 – the normal over-subscription criteria apply.

Parents (see Note 3) wishing to apply for the Reception 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 by 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 posted by the home LA on 17 April 2024.

The PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBER (PAN) for entry to the Reception Year in 2024 is 15 pupils.

Over-subscription criteria

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Need or with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming Speen CE 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 1)
2. Families who have **exceptional medical or social needs** that make it essential that their child attends Speen Church of England School rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate senior professional person involved with the family. (See Note 5)
3. Children with a normal home address (see note 2) within the defined catchment area (see map) and with a sibling (see note 4) 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 still expected to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.
4. Children, normally living (See Note 2) with a parent or guardian, (See Note 3) **within the defined catchment area (see map).**
5. Children with a normal home address **outside the catchment area and with a sibling** (See Note 4) on the roll of the school at the time of application.
6. Children **with a sibling on the roll of St. John's CE Combined School**, Lacey Green at the time of application and who is expected still to be in attendance at that school at the time of admission to Speen CE School (See Note 4)
7. A child who has a parent **expressing a preference for a Church of England School**, supported by evidence that they have **attended a Christian church** at least once a month for the year immediately preceding the date of application. Details to be provided on Speen C of E School's Supplementary Information Form, of the name of Church or Christian Group, name of the Minister/Leader and appropriate telephone number. A parent should sign the Supplementary Information form stating compliance with this criterion. They should then ask a priest/minister to verify this statement. (See Note 6) and return it to the school at the same time as applying to Bucks Council for a school place.
8. Other children

Where the school can accommodate some, but not all, of the children who qualify for one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children by having regard to the subsequent criteria.

Multiple births: In cases where there is only 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 15 for Reception 2024/25 or the 15 places in other year groups.

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight line distance (see Note 7) 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.

Parents seeking a place at Speen C of E School for admission in 2024-2025 under Criteria 3, 5, 6 or 7 should complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) found at the end of this policy in addition to that of Bucks Council or home LA. The SIF should be completed and returned to Speen CE School by 15th January 2024.

RECEPTION PLACES

Once a child has been allocated a reception place under the primary scheme they will be offered a full-time place from September 2024.

- Late applications (irrespective of admission criteria) are considered after applications submitted by the deadline referred to above.
- When all places have been filled, parents may make a request to be put on a waiting list. The list will be maintained in over-subscription order as above. Places will be allocated, as they arise, according to the admission criteria.
- Parents may appeal to the Governors should their application be unsuccessful. Appeals are referred to the Diocese of Oxford Board of Education who facilitates independent appeals tribunals (see paragraph below).

Other 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 15 places. Applications must be made **directly to the school** on an in-year application form available from the school. Admissions outside the normal age group will be dealt with as indicated below.
- 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 above), a place will be offered.
- 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, or a rental agreement for at least a period of six months will be required (Armed Forces personnel and crown servants are exempt). 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.
- The school participates in the LA's Fair Access Protocol: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-index/school-admissions/school-admissions-guides-policies-and-statistics/fair-access-protocol/aims-of-the-fair-access-protocol/> Children qualifying under this 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.
- 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. However, such admissions will not normally be agreed without a consensus that to do so would be in the pupil's interests. It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the head teacher in advance of applying for a place. The governors will ask relevant professionals (including the Head teacher) for their opinion on the case. It should be noted that 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. If the decision is made that a child could be placed out of year group, their application will be considered on an equal basis with other applications for that year group.

Appeals: There are established arrangements for appeals against non-admission. Details are available from the school, including the date by which an appeal should be submitted. It should be noted that, in the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to the school, the school does not consider any further application 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.

For the 2022/2023 Reception intake, 33 applicants expressed a preference for Speen CE School prior to closing date. 16 places were pursued: 7 in catchment children (criteria 4), 3 out of catchment with a sibling (criteria 5) and 6 out of catchment children (criteria 8) were offered places.

In July 2022, 8 children left Year 2: 5 pupils transferred to St John's School, Lacey Green.

Notes

Note 1. 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). Evidence that a child from outside England was previously in state care will be required to come within this criterion. A child is regarded 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.

Note 2 *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.*

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 his/her 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.

*We regard a child's home address to be where he or she sleeps for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday). We may ask to see official documentation, such as a child benefit book or medical card if there are reasons why a child does not live at his or her parent's address. For example, if he or she is resident with a grandparent, this needs to be made clear on the application form. If such arrangements are not declared or a relative's address is used on the application, we may consider that a false declaration has been made, and withdraw the offer of a place. Childcare arrangements are **not** sufficient reason for listing another address.*

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, before 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.

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 3. *Definition of parent*

This is as defined in law (the Education Act 1996) as either:

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

Note 4: *Definition of sibling*

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.

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Note 5: *When applying under Criterion 2 [exceptional medical or social needs], you must include supporting evidence from an independent professional person who is aware of the situation and supports your reasons for preferring Speen Church of England School. This supporting evidence must clearly demonstrate why the school is the most suitable and must illustrate the difficulties that would be caused if your child had to attend another school. The person supplying the evidence should be a doctor, health visitor, social worker, etc. who is aware of your child's or your own case. The school reserves the right to*

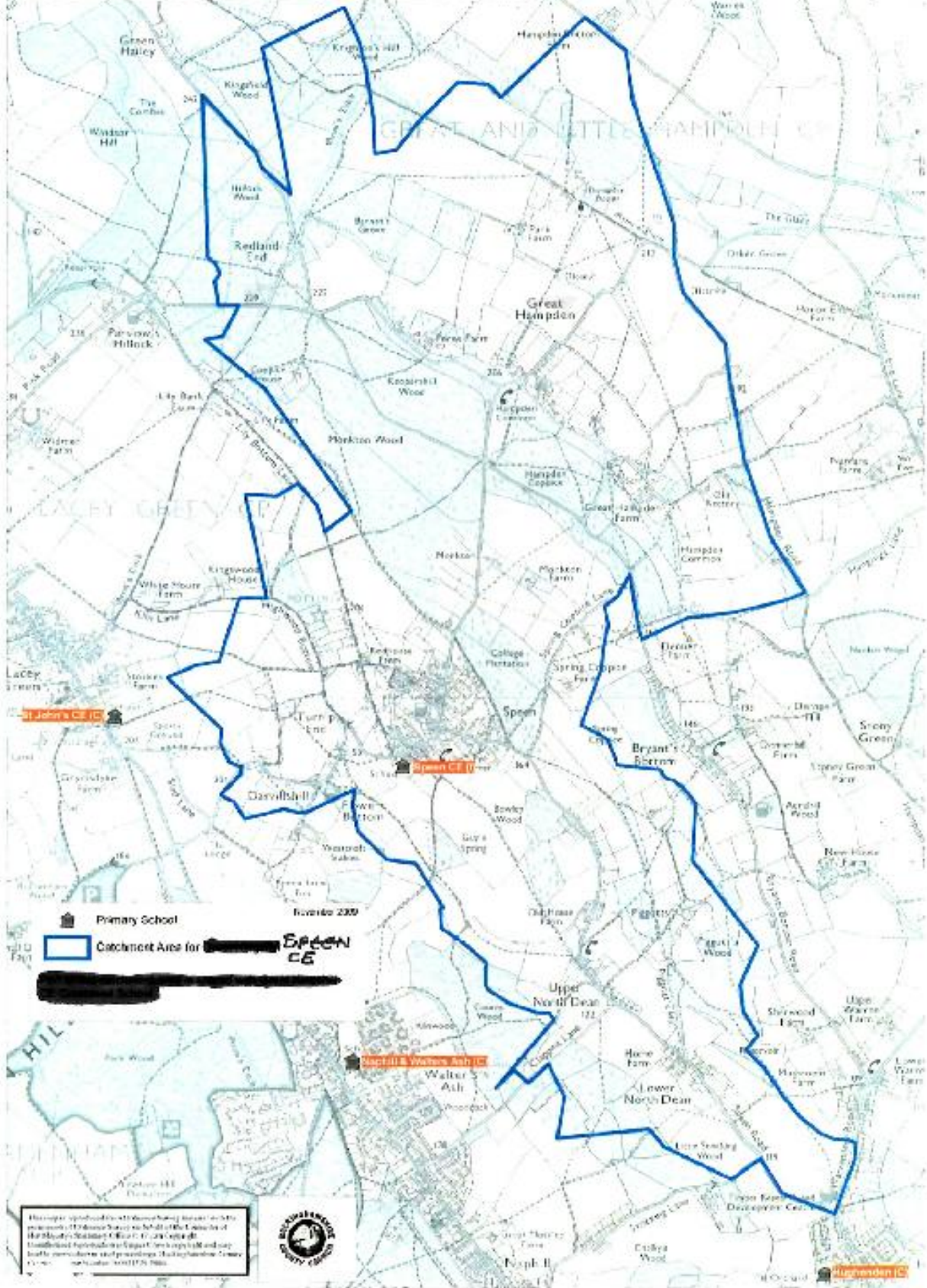
ask for further evidence or clarification where necessary and may seek the advice of appropriate educational professionals where necessary.

Note 6: *The Christian Church should be a member of Churches Together in England (CTIE) and/or the Evangelical Alliance. Where families have moved house then more than one supplementary information form may be used in order to confirm the requirement for this category. The attendance will be aggregated in order to decide if this criterion is met.*

Note 7: *The straight line distance used to determine proximity of the home to the school will be measured by Buckinghamshire LA's Geographical Information System as described in the Buckinghamshire LA admissions booklet. The straight line distance definition: is 'the distance from the address point of the pupil's normal home address, as set out by Ordnance Survey, to the nearest open school gate available for pupils to use'. As part of the computer system we use for school there is a program that measures the 'straight-line' distance from the nearest open school gates to the child's normal home address. The point we measure to at the child's normal address is determined by the Ordnance Survey ADDRESS-BASE which is an Ordnance Survey data product that provides a National Grid coordinate and a unique reference for each postal address in Great Britain that is on the Royal Mail's Post Office Address File (PAF®). The PAF contains postal address data and includes premises such as buildings or permanent mobile and park homes, plus other features such as temporary buildings and houseboats.*

Further information from: The School Secretary, Speen C of E School, Flowers Bottom Lane, Speen, BUCKS HP27 0SX Telephone: 01494 488321
Website: www.speenschool.com Email: office@speenschool.com

Catchment Area for Speen CE School





SPEEN CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

ADMISSION SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FORM

This supplementary form can be used if you are applying to seek admission for a child to Speen C of E School under Categories 2, 6 and 7. You should complete **all** relevant categories.

NAME OF CHILD:

NAMES OF PARENT/GUARDIAN:

Criterion 2: If you or your child have exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that they attend Speen Church of England School rather than any other, you confirm that you are attaching evidence from a professional person and their contact details.

Criterion 6: Children who will have a brother/sister at St John's CE Combined School, Lacey Green, at time of admission.

Name: **Date of Birth:**

Criterion 7: For a child whose **parent** has regularly attended Christian worship, at least once each month for the previous year, to the date of application. This supplementary information form must be signed by the Minister/Leader.

I (Name **parent**) has attended worship at least once each month in the past year(parent signature)

Name and Address of Church/Group:

Name of Minister/Leader:

Telephone Number:

To the Priest/ Minister named above. Please confirm the statements below.

Has the above parent attended Christian worship at least once each month for the past year? Indicate **YES / NO**

Signed: **Minister/Leader** **Date:**

Signed: **(Parent/Guardian)** **Date:**