OUGHTON PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

Admissions Policy

Policy Approval Date: September 2026

Approved by the Full Governing Body then please see minutes dated September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

Introduction

Our governing body applies the regulations on admissions fairly and equally to all those who wish to attend this school.

This policy states that we follow Hertfordshire Local Authority's Admission guidelines for Reception to Year 6, which includes the DfE guidance regarding admission of Summer born children to Reception. Details can be found on the Hertfordshire County Council's website www.hertfordshire.gov.uk

We have our own Admission guidelines for Nursery see p.3.

Aims and objectives

We seek to be an inclusive school, welcoming children from all backgrounds and abilities.

All applications will be treated on merit, and in a sensitive manner.

The only restriction we place on entry is that of number. If the number of children applying for entry exceeds the places available, we adopt the procedure set out below to determine whether a child is to be accepted or not. It is our wish for Parents and Carers to find a place for their child at the school of their choice. However, this is not always possible, due to excess demand on the places available.

A child's level of ability is irrelevant to this school's admissions policy, as are any special needs the child may have.

Reception: How Parents and Carers can apply for their child to be admitted to our school

Our school is a community school, and it determines the admission arrangements in agreement with the Local Authority (LA, Hertfordshire County Council). Parents and Carers can receive a copy of these regulations directly from the LA.

The LA's annual admissions prospectus informs Parents and Carers how to apply for a place at the school of their choice. Parents and Carers have a right to express their preference, but this does not, in itself, guarantee a place at that particular school. Application should be made online and should be submitted by the date stipulated. Paper applications may be made by contacting the LA. The LA will notify Parents and Carers of the decision as soon as all the applications have been considered.

In this area, children enter school (Reception class) in the academic year in which they become five. There is one admission date per year in September. Therefore, Parents and Carers who would like their child to be admitted to this school must follow the LA admissions guidelines.

Age of admission and deferral of places

Hertfordshire County Council's policy is that children born on and between 1 September and 31 August would normally commence primary school in Reception in the academic year beginning in September.

All Hertfordshire infant, first and primary schools provide for the full-time admission of all children offered a place in the Reception year group from the September following their fourth birthday. If a Parent wants a full-time place for their child from September (at the school at which a place has been offered) then they are entitled to that full-time place.

Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the academic year or until **the term in which** the child reaches compulsory school age (the term after the child's 5th birthday). Parents can request that their child takes up the place part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Any Parents wishing to take up a part-time place or deferred entry should contact the individual school(s) to discuss their child's requirements.

Summer born children

Legally, a child does not have to start school until the start of the term following their fifth birthday.

Summer born children are those born between 1 April and 31 August. Currently summer born children are expected to start Reception at the age of 4.

If your child was born between 1 April and 31 August and you do not believe they will be ready to start Reception in the September, you may instead make an application for your child to start Reception the following September.

Children out of year group (except summer born children entering Reception)

Hertfordshire County Council's policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. This is in line with DfE guidance* which states that "in general, children should be educated in their normal age group".

If Parents/Carers believe their child(ren) should be educated in a different year group they should, at the time of application, submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort. DfE guidance makes clear that "it is reasonable for admission authorities to expect Parents to provide them with information in support of their request – since without it they are unlikely to be able to make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case".

The county council as the relevant admission authority, through a panel process, will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. The panel makes decisions based upon the circumstances of each case including the view of Parents, the Headteacher, the child's social, academic and emotional development and whether the child has been previously educated out of year group.

There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis. If the application is not accepted this does not constitute a refusal of a place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal. Similarly there is no right of appeal for a place in a specific year group at a school. The internal management and organisation of a school, including the placement of pupils in classes, is a matter for the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.

Casual Admissions

If a family moves to the area they must contact the LA for in year admission guidance. The admissions process is handled by the authority and they notify the school when a place is offered.

Admission appeals

If a place is not offered at this school, this will be because to do so, would prejudice the education of other children by allowing the number of children in the school to increase too much.

If Parents and Carers wish to appeal against a decision to refuse entry, they can do so by applying to the LA. An independent panel considers all such appeals, and its decision is binding for all parties concerned. If the appeals panel decides that we should admit a child to whom we had refused a place, then we will accept this decision and continue to do all we can to provide the best education for all the children at our school. (Further details of appeal arrangements are set out in the School Admissions Appeals guidance – Herts County Council.

The standard number

The 'standard number' is the number of children the LA considers the school can accommodate. The standard number for our school is 30 per class. We keep this number under review, and the governors will apply to change the number if circumstances change.

Nursery Admissions

For the September Nursery intake, the Governors will follow arrangements for entry into Oughton Primary & Nursery School Nursery that have been agreed by all the Hitchin Nurseries.

Oughton Primary & Nursery Schools Nursery will operate a one intake system in September. Places will not be held for pupils not wanting to start Nursery in September.

There will be an impact on Nursery places if Parents decide to defer admission to a Reception class. Parents will need to inform schools by the end of the spring term (last day of the school term) if they wish their child to remain in the Nursery instead of transferring to Reception (at Oughton or another school). If they express this wish they will keep their Nursery place for an additional year and they will not need to reapply for the place. If they have not informed the school by that date their Nursery place cannot be kept open for them.

If Parents do not notify the Nursery until after Nursery allocations have been released schools are under no obligation to offer a place above their normal intake number, but the child can of course join the normal continuing interest process.

<u>Admission Information for Maintained Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes in Hitchin</u>

The Nursery admission process changed from September 2017 for admissions for 2018 onwards. In place of a centrally controlled system which has previously been run by the local authority, Nursery settings will now be operating their own admission process.
In order to provide consistency and simplify the process for Parents, all Hitchin Nursery Schools/Classes have agreed a timeline for admissions and a set of over subscription criteria.

<u>Timeline for Maintained Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes</u>

By end of September	Hitchin maintained Nursery schools and Nursery classes to make Nursery admission information available on their websites

February	Applications open via school's websites for Hitchin maintained Nursery schools and Nursery classes (online applications preferred)
March	Applications close for Hitchin maintained Nursery schools and Nursery classes
April	Offers made to Parents (via the same method as application was made)
May	Deadline for Parents to accept/reject places

Regarding Reception places, see HCC Admissions for concise dates – the above is an approximate guide. For Nursery, please phone the School Office for more information regarding dates or check the school website.

Children will be offered a Nursery place to start in the autumn term of the academic year they turn 4 (falling between 1st September to 31st August). At Oughton we have 30 Nursery places, providing 15 hours of free Nursery education every morning.

We hold an information meeting for Parents in the summer term. Children are invited to visit and to attend a couple of sessions before they start and staff will arrange home visits prior to your child starting.

The morning Nursery session is from 8.45-11.45am.

The Nursery is an integral part of the school and we follow the SEN Code of Practice. A separate application is needed from Nursery to the main school.

Should there be more applications than places, an agreed over subscription criteria will be followed. If an application is unsuccessful, you may request to go onto the Nursery's continuing interest list and as a space arises, the criteria will be applied again.

<u>Over Subscription Criteria for Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes for the School Year</u>

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs which names the school will be allocated a place in accordance with section 324 of the Education Act 1996. Schools will also admit children with an EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plan that names the school.

Parents may state their preference as to which Nursery class, school or centre they would like their child to attend in the years leading up to the child's fourth birthday. However, if there are not enough places available, places will be allocated in the following order of priority:

a) Children looked after and children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order).

b) A child 'at risk' (or the sibling of a child 'at risk') who is the subject of an inter-agency child protection plan.

c) Other applicants where the following criteria are considered to determine priorities:

1) Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school.

2) Children who have a sibling at the school (including, if an infant school, a sibling at the link junior school) at the time of application, unless the sibling is in the last year of the normal age range of the school. Note: the ‘normal age range’ is the designated range for which the school provides.

3) Any other children.

Proof of documentation to support any of the criteria above will be required.

If more children qualify under a particular rule than there are places available, a tiebreak will be used by applying the next rule to those children. If more children qualify under criterion 2 than there are places available, priority will be given to those who live nearest to the Nursery as measured in a straight line, using Google maps. Where there is a need for a tie-breaker where two different addresses measure the same distance from a school, in the case of a block of flats for example, the lower door number will be deemed nearest as logically this will be on the ground floor and therefore closer. If there are two identical addresses of separate applicants, the tie break will be random.

Monitoring and review of Admission Policy

This policy will be monitored by the Governing Body, who will always take due note of the guidance provided by the Local Authority.