

# St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

*'To Love and To Serve'*



## Admission Policy

2017/18

# ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ADMISSION POLICY FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/18



### **Mission Statement**

The mission of St Thomas' School is to provide a broad education based on the Gospel values which are central to the Catholic Faith. As part of our policy of inclusion pupils will be admitted without reference to ability, aptitude or ethnic origin.

### **Background Information**

St Thomas is a Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary School in the Archdiocese of Southwark. It serves in particular the children of practising Roman Catholic families who live or worship in local parishes.

The Roman Catholic community supports the school because it values the distinctive Catholic Education for their children. For the remainder of its policy, the word Catholic refers to the Roman Catholic faith and all references to parishes refers to Roman Catholic parishes.

Parents who choose to apply for a place at this school do so in order to ensure that the Catholic values and way of life are passed on to their children at home, in the parish and at school.

Governors have full regard for these factors in the framework of this policy.

Governors will consider the allocation of places in school either:

1. As part of the intake process for Nursery although children in the Nursery are not guaranteed a place in Main School.

OR

2. As part of the intake process for the Reception classes (**rising 5s**). This constitutes the '**Normal**' entry to Main School.

OR

3. As individual cases where **(a)** existing pupils move away and create spaces for others or **(b)** pupils move into the area and make a late application.

### **1. APPLICATION FOR PLACES AT THE SCHOOL**

Before Governors can consider the allocation of places the application process has to be complete.

#### NURSERY

An application form must be completed. These are available from the school office. This form will provide the school with the details which will be used for allocating places. PARENTS MUST NOTIFY THE SCHOOL OF ANY CHANGES IN DETAILS e.g. address or telephone number. Governors will not be held responsible for a child who fails to gain a place at the school because the parents had not notified changes of address or telephone numbers, and therefore rendered themselves non-contactable during the admissions selection process.

## RECEPTION

The Common Application Form (CAF) must be completed. This is available from Merton LEA School Admissions or from the school. It must be returned to the school or Merton LEA by the deadline for Reception Admissions.

Parents or those with parental responsibility should complete a supplementary application form regarding the religious commitment of the family. This is available from the school. Priority will be given to applicants with completed supplementary forms.

The child's baptismal certificate must be produced and will be copied for the school records.

## **2. DEADLINES FOR APPLICATIONS**

FOR THE NURSERY INTAKE: ***Please refer to our school website for admission dates for each intake. The deadline is usually 1 ½ terms before the child is due to start.*** <http://www.st-thomascanterbury.merton.sch.uk/prospective-parents/admissions/>

**N.B.** A PLACE IN THE NURSERY DOES NOT GUARANTEE A PLACE IN THE MAIN SCHOOL, but all nursery entrants will be considered as applicants for a place in the main school, subject to the admission criteria and completion of the CAF.

- b. FOR THE RECEPTION INTAKE: Closing date set by Merton LEA.
- c. FOR OTHER CLASSES: ***any time***
- d. IF PLACES ARE AVAILABLE, APPLICATIONS FOR ANY YEAR GROUP WILL BE CONSIDERED AT ANY TIME. *'Applications should be made to the London Borough of Merton on an In-Year Application Form'.*

## **3. OVERALL FACTORS TO BE OBSERVED BY GOVERNORS IN THE ALLOCATION OF PLACES**

- a. The maximum number of pupils in Years R, 1 and 2 classes will be 30 per class. 90 children will be admitted to Reception classes.
- b. The maximum number of pupils in the Nursery will be 104 divided into four 1/2 day classes with no more than 26 pupils in each.
- c. In order to maintain the distinctive Catholic Ethos, children from practising Catholic families will be given priority.

#### **4. OVER-SUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA**

Where there are more applications for places than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority.

1. Looked After Catholic children or Looked After children in the care of Catholic families and previously looked after Catholic children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order.
2. Baptised Catholic children from regular practising Catholic families.
3. Baptised Catholic children from occasional practising Catholic families.
4. Baptised Catholic children not accounted for in 2 or 3.
5. Other looked after children and other previously looked after children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order.
6. Children enrolled in the catechumenate and children who are members of Eastern Orthodox Churches.
7. Children of families who are members of other Christian denominations that are part of Churches Together in England. Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) provided by a priest or minister of a designated place of worship will be required.
8. Any other children.

#### **NOTES ON CRITERIA**

By 'regular practising Catholic family' we mean at least one parent/carer and the children attend mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation as a central part of their lives. Missing mass more than once a month would not be deemed as regular practice.

By 'occasional practice' we mean at least one parent and the children attend mass on some Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, but less than the regular criteria above. Attendance only at Christmas and/or Easter would not be deemed occasional under this criteria.

Saturday evening mass is included as "Sunday Mass".

#### **Tie Breakers**

Where it becomes necessary, Governors will decide on the allocation within one group of the main criteria by applying the following rules in the following order:

1. Those with a brother or sister on the school roll who will remain on the school roll at the entry date and who reside at the same address.
2. If a further tie breaker becomes necessary, Governors will consult with the LEA when advice is needed regarding measurement. Distance from home to school is measured as a straight line from the front gate of the home to the main gate of the school using the measurement supplied by the local authority derived from their computerised mapping system. Priority will be given to those living closest to the school.
3. Where the last remaining place is to be allocated and two or more children are deemed to live at the same distance from the school, the place will be decided by the drawing of lots.

i) Catholics include members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome. Reference to other Christian denominations refers to denominations that are full members of Churches Together in England.

ii) A “brother or sister” means children who live as brother and sister including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers or sisters. It would not include other relatives e.g. cousins.

iii) Looked after children are those in the care of a public authority and are in public care. Applications made under this criterion must be accompanied by details of circumstance and professionally supported evidence (eg from an appropriate social worker).

**iv) Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan**

The admission of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or with an EHC Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of statements and EHC plans by the pupil’s home local authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the SEND code of practice. Pupils with a statement or EHC plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the above criteria.

**v) Admission of children below compulsory school age**

The governors will provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year; parents may also request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

**vi) Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents who are seeking a place for their child outside of their normal age group, e.g. the child has experienced problems such as ill health or the parents of a summer born child preferring not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday, may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1.

Governors will make decisions on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parent’s views; information about the child’s academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group, and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. They will also take into account the views of the school’s head teacher. When informing a parent of the decision which year group the child should be admitted to, the governors will set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

Where the governors agree to a parent’s request for their child to be admitted out of their normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school the local authority will process the application as part of the main admissions round, (unless the parental request is made too late for this to be possible) and on the basis of the determined admission arrangements, including the application of oversubscription criteria where applicable. Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

#### vii) **Waiting List**

Parents of children who have not been offered a place at the school may ask for their child's name to be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list, which will be maintained until all children on the list are allocated or the school is notified to remove the child from the list by the parent will be operated using the same admissions criteria listed above. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place. It is possible that when a child is directed under the local authority's fair access protocol they will take precedence over those children already on the list.

#### viii) **Appeals**

Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with section 94 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be made in writing and must set out the reasons on which the appeal is made. **Appeals should be made to the Admissions Appeal Clerk at the school address. OR: To the Clerk of Governors, T Scott at the school address.** Parents/Carers have the right to make oral representations to the Appeal Panel.

Infant classes are restricted by the legislation to 30 children. Parents should be aware that an appeal against refusal of a place in an infant class may only succeed if it can be demonstrated that:-

- a) the admission of additional children would not breach the infant class size limit; or
- b) the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or had not been correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied; or
- c) the panel decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

Governors will automatically place the names of all unsuccessful candidates and late applications on to a waiting list in order of the criteria unless parents request in writing that the name should not be placed on the waiting list.