



Applying for a primary school place November 2020





When?

The application process opens on the
12th November 2020

And closes on
15th January 2021



Applications

Who should apply?

Children can start full-time at school from the September following their fourth birthday. However, they are not **legally** required to start full-time until the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday (i.e. statutory school age).

You will have received a letter from the admissions team informing you how to make an application for a school place.

This is an on-line application and you can apply online at www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/school-admissions

Please read this useful guide:

<https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Primary-School-Admissions-Guide-2021-22-V1.0.pdf>

Timetable for applications

Reading parents/carers to receive application information (if they attend a Reading nursery/pre-school/ childminder)	By 12 November 2020
Online admissions site open	12 November 2020
Closing date for applications	15 January 2021
National Offer Day for on time Applications	16 April 2021
Deadline for parents to accept.	30 April 2021
Late applications processed.	From 1 May 2021
Closing date for receipt of appeals	17 May 2021
Appeals to be heard if submitted by the deadline	June – July 2021
Admissions round ends	31 August 2021



Which school?

- You are asked to make 4 preferences
- You might want to find out if you can visit the schools you are listing or they may have information on their websites and virtual tours for you to look at online.
- If you are not sure which is your **local catchment** school, this information can be found on <http://my.reading.gov.uk/>
- Please speak to staff at nursery if you are not sure



Things to think about

- Which school am I in catchment for?
This must be the house where you are currently living
- What is the journey to school going to be like?
Are you able to walk there? Is there a bus route or any parking restrictions/difficulties?
- Does this school offer before and after school childcare?
Breakfast and After school clubs do not always cater for Reception children. They can get full quickly
- Have I looked at the most recent OFSTED report and how recently was it written?
A lot can change in a school year to year so still go and visit. Don't dismiss a school on the OFSTED report alone.
- What does the school website look like?
An indication of a school which is doing well is one which has a vibrant community and extra curricular activities and events



What if I don't put down my catchment school?

- The local authority only have a duty to offer preferred school places where possible and use an **over subscription criteria** to determine this when schools are over subscribed. This means that if the school has more applications than there are places, the criteria will be used to determine who gets a place. It is advisable that you become familiar with this criteria.
- It is important to also consider that if you do not put your catchment school as first preferred school and then do not secure a place at your preferred school, your catchment school may be filled with applicants who put it as their first preference meaning you may not get that school even if it is your 2nd, 3rd or 4th preference.
- The Local Authority stick rigidly to this criteria and do not take other social aspects into consideration at appeal such as 'The school that is allocated is too far, I can't get to it' or 'my child has a sibling already at my preferred school and I can't be in two places at the same time'.
- If you are interested in an out of catchment school, take a look at the admissions to schools over subscription data in the starting school guide to see how many children were allocated a place in each category last year.



Lessons learnt from the past..

- Please do not assume that if you only name one or two preferred choices that the Local Authority will have to give you one of those choices. If both those schools are over subscribed and you are not high up in the criteria you will be offered another reasonable school place. This can be anywhere in the Local Authority. They do not have a duty to offer your child a place within a certain distance from your home, although you may have a justifiable reason to apply for support with transport if the distance is above their given criteria.
- If you did not get into your preferred school you can ask to be put on the waiting list but this does not mean you are guaranteed to get a place at the school in the near future. People can be added onto the list ahead of you if they apply and are further up the criteria list.
- It is strongly advised that you accept an allocated place at a school even if it is not your preferred school whilst you are put on the waiting list. Failure to do so means that that space is given to another child and your child will be left without a school place.



Applications

- If you **live in Reading**, use the same application form for all schools including those outside of the borough
- Those parents **living outside Reading** Borough should contact their home LA to make an application by checking their local LA's website
- Some faith schools may have additional forms to fill out alongside the RBC application. Please see your admissions letter or Starting school guide for more information



Deadline

- The closing date for applications is
 - **15th January 2021**
- If you do not apply by the deadline you may disadvantage your child and affect their chances of getting a school place. This could effect your child settling into school.
- If you feel you may have problems filling out the form and would like some support, please let us know and we can offer help or direct you to the choice advisor at Brighter Futures for children admissions.
- We have some paper copies if you do not have access to a computer or do not have an e-mail address or you can come into our office and we will help you to log onto a computer.



Deferment

- Your child must be in full time statutory education the term after they turn 5 years old. E.g. if your child turns 5 in October they must start school in January.
- This is called **deferring**. You may want to consider this if your child's circumstances are not optimal for starting school such as your child has a Special Educational Need.
- Deferring a place is perfectly acceptable but you must accept your offered school place and tell admissions you wish to defer the place. Turning down the school allocated will result in your child having no school to go to when they are ready or when they are of statutory age.
- Only in exceptional circumstances should a child be considered to defer a whole year and it is important to note that the child will move from nursery straight into year 1 and miss out on their Reception class experience. Where the request for a summer born child to start school in September 2022, reasons will be carefully considered on a case by case basis and in line with each schools over subscription criteria.
- Starting school alongside the rest of a child's cohort brings many positives for both the child and school and it is important to discuss this with your child's teacher if this is being considered.



After the application

- You will receive notification about your child's allocated school place by letter after the **16th April 2021** (second class post) or **online on 16th April** if you have applied online.
- You will then need to **accept** your offered place by **30th April 2021** and can be added to the waiting lists if you do not get the school you preferred.
- After this point we will start our 'transition' planning which includes contacting the allocated schools to come to visit the children here at nursery as well as talking to and supporting the children with their understanding and feelings of leaving nursery and starting school.
- We will hold a parents meeting at about this time to support parents with the transition process. We will be available to offer advice if the outcome was not what families had expected.



Things to think about:

- Talk to other parents who have children at the school; What do they like most/ least about the school?
- Read the most recent OFSTED report. This will give you a snapshot of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Look particularly at the targets set for the school. Do not rely entirely on the judgement (just because it is outstanding does not mean it is right for your child).

<https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk>



Things to think about:

- **Size of the school**-with regard to what might be best for your child.
- **Early years provision**- how many classes/children? How are the children supported to cope with full time/transition to school?
- **Security of the school site**- schools need to be secure and welcoming
- **Play areas**- is there space to play? Is the space well designed with safety features? Are there places for younger/quiet children? What is the supervision for play time?



Things to think about:

- **The condition of the school site-** What is the condition of the fabric of the buildings? litter?
- **Resources of the school-** Are there areas for assemblies/dinner hall/PE hall/computer suite?
- **Staffing-** How long has the head been in post? Stable staff team?
- **Behaviour in school-** Look at schools behaviour policy on website; What are the positive behaviour strategies/sanctions for inappropriate behaviour? What is the schools bullying policy?
- **Curriculum-** How is the day structured? How much support will your child receive? How will you be informed on progress?



Things to think about:

- **Uniform-** what is the uniform, costs and ordering arrangements?
- **Homework-** What homework is given in Reception class and how does this increase each year? Is lots of homework a good thing for Reception aged children?
- **Before and after school activities-** Is there an external provider for breakfast and after school clubs? Holiday clubs? Content and costs? How many children use it?



Things to think about:

- **Extra curricular activities and curriculum experiences-** What events regularly happen for children outside of the normal curriculum? Do the children experience day and residential trips?
- **School community-** Is there a Parent Association and what sort of events do they organise for the children? What has the money been spent on this year? Future plans/development
- **How does the school involve parents?** Are parents involved with settling visits? How do parents keep in contact with the class teacher? Who are the parent governors and how to make contact



We hope you have found the
information in these slides
helpful.

Please contact us if you have any
questions.