



St Mary's Cockerton CE Primary School

Admissions Policy

2024/25

Adopted by the Governing Body on 8th February 2023 following consultation from 21st November 2022 to 13th January 2023 to ensure compliance with the School Admissions Code 2021 and reflect that the admission authority is now the Melrose Learning Trust following the school's transfer into the Trust from the Dove Academy Trust on 1st May 2016.

St Mary's Cockerton CE Primary School has a distinctive Christian ethos which is at the centre of school life. We provide an inclusive, supportive and caring environment, shaped by Christian values in which children can learn and flourish. We welcome applications from all members of the community without reference to ability or aptitude, and irrespective of whether they are of the Christian faith, another faith or no faith, but we expect parents to respect the Christian ethos of our school.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Board of Directors of the Melrose Learning Trust is the Admissions Authority for St Mary's Cockerton Church of England Primary School. We intend to admit up to 30 pupils to the reception year group in September 2024. This arrangement follows consultation between the Board of Directors, the Local Authority, all other schools in the area and all other Admission Authorities in the area.

2. How to apply

- 2.1 Applicants should read Darlington Borough Council's Primary Admissions Brochure before applying. Applications received after the closing date will only be considered after all those received by the closing date.
- 2.2 Applications must be made on the Local Authority Primary Admission Form which must be returned to the Local Authority by the published closing date.

3. Deciding Who Gets a Place

- 3.1 Children who have an education, health and care plan which names our school will be admitted to the school.
- 3.2 If the total number of applications exceeds the number of places available, children will be admitted in the following order (please see Appendix 1 for definitions):
 1. Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because, immediately after being looked after, they became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order. (see Appendix 1, Note 2) including children previously in state care outside of England who have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted (See Appendix 1, Note 3)
 2. Medical Reasons (See Appendix 1, Note 4)
 3. Family Links (See Appendix 1, Note 5)
 4. Other (see 3.3)

Tie-breaker

- 3.3 Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight-line distance (See Appendix 1, Note 6) between the home (See Appendix 1, Note 7) and the school with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria 1 to 4 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.

Multiple births

- 3.4 For multiple births where only one place remains, infant classes will be allowed to exceed the statutory limit where the 31st child is a twin or from multiple births. The 'excepted pupil' will be allowed for the time in Key Stage 1 or until the class numbers fall back to current class size limit.
- 3.5 If a place is offered on the basis of false information or if parents do not respond within the stated timescale to the offer of a place the governing body reserves the right to withdraw their offer.

4. In Year Admissions and Waiting lists

- 4.1 After the decision regarding applications for admission has been made by the Board of Directors, unsuccessful applicants must make application to be included on our waiting list, which is maintained by the School Admissions Team at Darlington Borough Council until the end of July 2025 (the end of the first year of admission). Thereafter, normal transfers/in year admission arrangements will operate. Should a space become available, we will decide who gets the place using the order shown in part 3 above. It will be the responsibility of parents to update or provide information regarding any change of circumstance.
- 4.2 In-Year Fair Access Protocols exist to ensure that unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible and to ensure that all schools in a Local Authority area admit their fair share of children with challenging behaviour.
- 4.3 All primary schools within Darlington Authority have agreed to admit children through the protocol. Those children identified by the Local Authority will take precedence over children on a waiting list who are already attending another school.

5. Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry to school

- 5.1 The School Admissions Code (2014) requires school admission authorities to provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. However, a child is not required to start school until they have reached compulsory school age following their fifth birthday. For summer born children (those born after 1 April) this can sometimes be almost a full school year after the point at which they could first be admitted.
- 5.2 Some parents may feel that their child is not ready to start school in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents are entitled to request in writing that:
 - their child attends part-time until they reach compulsory school age, or
 - that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the same academic year or until the term in which the child 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, rather than part way through it.

The child must, however, start school full-time in the term after their fifth birthday. If parents of summer born children wish to defer entry as outlined above and wish them to be admitted to the Reception Year in the term following their fifth birthday, rather than year 1, then parents should apply at the usual time for a place in September of the current academic year together with a written request that the child is admitted outside of his or her normal age group to the Reception Year in

September the following year providing supporting reasons. This should be discussed with the Head Teacher as soon as possible. If their request is agreed, and this should be clear before the national offer day, their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before any place is offered and they should reapply in the normal way for a Reception place in the following year. If their request is refused, the parents must decide whether to wait for any offer of a place in the current academic year (NB it will still be subject to the over-subscription criteria in this policy) or to withdraw their application and apply for a year 1 place the following year. Parents should be aware that the Year 1 group may have no vacancies as it could be full with children transferring from the previous Reception Year group.

- 5.3 Further information and advice on the admission of summer born children is available from the Schools Admissions Team at Darlington Borough Council.

6. Admission outside normal age group

- 6.1 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. Parents should apply in the normal way together with a written request that the child is admitted outside of his or her normal age group to the requested year group in September the following year providing supporting reasons for seeking a place outside of the normal age group. The governors may ask relevant professionals 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.

7. Right of Appeal

- 7.1 If you are not successful in obtaining a place for your child at our school, you have a statutory right of appeal. Further details are available upon written request to the school office.
- 7.2 For requests from parents for places outside a normal age group, 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.

Appendix 1 Definitions

Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because, immediately after being looked after, they became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order. (see Note 2) including children previously in state care outside of England who have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted (See Note 3)

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. An adoption order is one 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).

Note 3 Children previously in state care outside of England means children who have been looked after outside of England by a public authority, a religious organisation or another provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. The care may have been provided in orphanages or other settings. In the case of children adopted from state care overseas, the admissions authority will require evidence that a child is eligible by asking the child’s parents or carers for appropriate evidence of their previously looked-after status.

Note 4 Medical Reasons Children with exceptional medical factors directly relating to school placement. Applications under this criterion should be supported by written evidence from a professional practitioner. The supporting evidence should set out the particular reasons why the school is the most suitable school and the difficulties it would cause if your child had to travel to another school. Permission from parents must be given to share this information.

Note 5 Family Links Children who have a brother or sister already attending the school and who are expected to be on the roll at the time of admission. Children have a family link if:

- They are half-brother or full brother or sister.
- They are adoptive brother or sister.
- They are children of the same household e.g. carers have special Guardianship
- The child for whom the school place is sought is permanently living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling

Note 6 Distance Children who live nearest the preferred school measured from the front door of the home address (including flats) to the main school gate, by the shortest walking route. This will be based on the home address of the child. To remain consistent the Authority uses a Geographical Information System to measure all distances. The Authority’s priority when measuring a route is to identify the shortest route judged to be safe (safe is lit at regular intervals, paved/tarmaced).

Note 7 Home Address The home address is used for applying the admissions criteria. This means that when you state your school preferences you must give the home address of the child at the time of application, where they mainly reside Monday to Friday. You must not give the address of childminders or other family members who may share in the care of your child. For parents who may have more than one property, reference should only be made to the property in which they and the child(ren) mainly reside. If the main address has changed temporarily, for example where a parent resides with extended family during a period of sickness or takes up temporary accommodation due to building works/renovation, then the home address remains that at which the parent was resident before the period of temporary residence began. However, if you have sold your property (exchanged contracts) and have moved into temporary accommodation, you will be required to provide evidence of your situation and a decision will be made based upon the evidence provided. Where there are shared care arrangements, the home address will be where the child lives for the majority of the week Monday to Friday or where a court has determined their home address should be.