

Admissions Policy

School ethos

Creativity and excellence are at the heart of everything we do at Charles Dickens Primary School. Children are encouraged to work to the best of their abilities. However, we also want them to have lots of fun along the way. In order to enrich our exciting and diverse curriculum, we offer a continually expanding range of first hand learning experiences and extra-curricular activities, tailored to meet the needs of children at different stages of their school career. We believe that it is important that our classrooms look and feel vibrant and alive and that the creativity exudes from our displays and the presentations and performances of our children. All our children will be encouraged to always make or exceed national expectations of progress and all the staff will support their determination and ambition with outstanding teaching. Through every strand of school life, we aim to promote the spiritual, moral and cultural development of every child, alongside the academic, to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and challenges that life offers.

Nursery Admissions

You can apply directly to the school for entry into Nursery using a form, which is available on the school website or from the school office. This form along with your child's birth certificate and two proofs of address form your application. When the form is completed, an appointment can be made to attend one of the head teacher's regular 'open mornings' when he will talk to the parents and show them around the school answering any questions that should arise.

When considering admission of children to the school's Nursery, the following criteria are applied in order:-

- Children in public care (looked after Children) and children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or become subject to a residence order or special guardianship order.) A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see definition in Section 22 of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to the school. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders). Child arrangement orders are defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangement orders replace residence orders and any residence orders in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be

a child's special guardian (or special guardians). This includes internationally adopted previously looked after children at the time of making an application to a school.

- Children with siblings who are already on roll at the school and will still be on roll at their date of entry. Siblings includes full, half, step, foster and adopted brother or sister living in the same family unit and at the same home address as the child. The home address is where the parent/carer lives and the child permanently resides unless otherwise directed by a court order. This will also apply to informal care arrangements. Where a child spends time with both parents/carers in separate homes and both have parental responsibility, the school will need to establish where the majority of school nights (Sunday to Thursday) are spent. This will then be treated as the home address.
- Children with exceptional medical, psychological or social needs, which mean that Charles Dickens School is the most suitable school to best address their needs. Written evidence should come from at least two NHS registered health or social care professionals and should set out the particular reasons why Charles Dickens School is the most suitable provision. Any supporting evidence to substantiate that the child has an exceptional medical, psychological or social need must be provided at the time of application and must be less than 6 months old at the time of application. Additional supporting evidence submitted from other professionals who work for a government organisation (e.g. school SENCO, school Head Teacher etc) who are currently providing direct care/support/treatment to the child on an ongoing basis in their professional capacity, according to the stated medical, psychological or social need, will only be considered if the two mandatory pieces of evidence have been submitted with the original application. Families need to explain difficulties that would be caused if their child had to attend another school. All such applications will be dealt with on an individual basis by the Admissions Committee of the school. Applications under this criteria, does not guarantee a priority place and cannot be considered without the appropriate supporting evidence.
- Children of permanent staff members. Staff members must have at least 2 years' service with the school at the time. Alternatively, they may have less than 2 years' service but have been appointed because they have the skills/expertise required to fill a vacant post and there is a demonstrable shortage of individuals with the skills/expertise required by the school.
- Children living nearest to the school as measured by the shortest straight line in metres from the applicant's home address. An independent agency determines the distance using a computerised geographical information system. The system measures the distance from each applicant's home address to the geographical centre of the school site from East to West as calculated using the National grid reference. A centroid point derived by Ordnance Survey determines the start point of the home address. If a child lives in a block of flats where a communal

entrance is used, the centroid for the block and not the individual flat is used for calculation purposes. When dealing with multiple applications from a block of flats, lower door numbers will take priority. If the admission authority has reason to suspect that a family does not live at the address stated, it will carry out an investigation. Should it be discovered that a parent is making a fraudulent claim the offer of a place will be withdrawn. If applicants live equidistant from the school, the governing body will draw lots to decide between applicants. The drawing of lots will be supervised by someone independent of the school.

Primary School Admissions

Reception

Applications for Primary Schools in Southwark all have to be done online on the Southwark council website. To access an online application form please go to www.southwark.gov.uk/schooladmissions

The school has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 60 children per year group.

All offers of places are conditional upon receipt of the required documentary evidence before the place is taken up.

Documentary evidence is normally required at the time of registration of the child but may be requested earlier.

Oversubscription Criteria:

In the event of there being more applications than places available, either in normal admissions round or in-year vacancies, places will be allocated in the following order of priority:-

- Children in public care (looked after Children) and children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or become subject to a residence order or special guardianship order.) A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see definition in Section 22 of the Children Act 1989) including internationally adopted previously looked after children at the time of making an application to a school. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders). Child arrangement orders are defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence orders in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or

special guardians). This includes internationally adopted previously looked after children at the time of making an application to a school.

- Children with siblings who are already on roll at the school and will still be on roll at their date of entry. Siblings includes full, half, step, foster and adopted brother or sister living in the same family unit and at the same home address as the child. The home address is where the parent/carer lives and the child permanently resides unless otherwise directed by a court order. This will also apply to informal care arrangements. Where a child spends time with both parents/carers in separate homes and both have parental responsibility, the school will need to establish where the majority of school nights (Sunday to Thursday) are spent. This will then be treated as the home address.
- Children with exceptional medical, psychological or social needs, which mean that Charles Dickens School is the most suitable school to best address their needs. Written evidence should come from at least two NHS registered health or social care professionals and should set out the particular reasons why Charles Dickens School is the most suitable provision. Any supporting evidence to substantiate that the child has an exceptional medical, psychological or social need must be provided at the time of application and must be less than 6 months old at the time of application. Additional supporting evidence submitted from other professionals who work for a government organisation (e.g. school SENCO, school Head Teacher etc) who are currently providing direct care/support/treatment to the child on an ongoing basis in their professional capacity, according to the stated medical, psychological or social need, will only be considered if the two mandatory pieces of evidence have been submitted with the original application. Families need to explain difficulties that would be caused if their child had to attend another school. All such applications will be dealt with on an individual basis by the Admissions Committee of the school. Applications under this criteria, does not guarantee a priority place and cannot be considered without the appropriate supporting evidence.
- Children of permanent staff members. Staff members must have at least 2 years 'service with the school at the time. Alternatively, they may have less than 2 years 'service but have been appointed because they have the skills/expertise required to fill a vacant post and there is a demonstrable shortage of individuals with the skills/expertise required by the school.
- Children living nearest to the school as measured by the shortest straight line in metres from the applicant's home address. An independent agency determines the distance using a computerised geographical information system. The system measures the distance from each applicant's home address to the geographical centre of the school site from East to West as calculated using the National grid reference. A centroid point derived by Ordnance Survey determines the start point of the home address. If a child lives in a block of flats where a communal

entrance is used, the centroid for the block and not the individual flat is used for calculation purposes. When dealing with multiple applications from a block of flats, lower door numbers will take priority. If the admission authority has reason to suspect that a family does not live at the address stated, it will carry out an investigation. Should it be discovered that a parent is making a fraudulent claim the offer of a place will be withdrawn. If applicants live equidistant from the school, the governing body will draw lots to decide between applicants. The drawing of lots will be supervised by someone independent of the school.

Admission for Special Educational Need and Disabled Children

At Charles Dickens Primary School, we are committed to ensuring equal treatment of all our pupils who may have any form of disability. We will ensure that disabled young people and adults are not treated less favorably in any procedures, practices or service delivery. The school acknowledges the fact that reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils are essential to support children in achieving the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes.

All children whose statement of special educational needs (SEN) or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan states that they should be allocated a place at Charles Dickens Primary School will be considered for admission subject to availability of a place and no-one on the waiting list having higher priority.

Applications for SEND children are completed as above, but there is an additional step in the process once the application has been received which assesses the school's ability to provide for the specific special educational needs of each child applying. The assessment is done on a case-by-case basis.

Waiting List

A waiting list for starter reception places will be maintained by the local authority. The school also maintains throughout the year a waiting list for transfer places for all year groups, which is updated from time to time.

Children added to the waiting list will be ranked in line with the published oversubscription criteria.

Looked after Children, previously Looked After Children and those allocated a place at Charles Dickens Primary School in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on a waiting list.

Appeals and Information

All parents and carers who have applied for places in the normal admissions round in either nursery or reception will be informed of the outcome of their application. All parents and carers whose children have not been allocated places in any year group that is reception to Year 6 inclusive, whether during the normal admissions round or at another time have the right to appeal and will be informed of this right by the school.

There is no right of appeal against the schools decision on nursery places.

Parents and carers with children on the waiting list for in-year places will only be contacted if the school has a place available or for periodic updating of the waiting list.

Deferred Entry

The child's parents/carers can defer the date their child is admitted to the Charles Dickens Primary School until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made.

Where the parents/carers wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

Admission of Children Outside of Their Normal Age Group

Parents/carers may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of a summer born child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1.

Parents/carers must initially submit a primary application for the child's school place within the child's normal age group. This is so that a school place is made available for the child in his/her normal age group should the request to defer be refused. Please note, that it is not possible to make an application for an admission or reserve a school place for the following academic year. Parents/carers who wish for their child to be admitted in the Reception year outside his/her normal age group must complete and return the form "Request for admission outside of a child's normal age group" a sample of which is available online at www.southwark.gov.uk/schooladmissions.

We strongly advise that this is done prior to submitting the primary application.

In Year Applications

Applications for places outside the normal round of admissions (in year admissions) will be allocated in accordance with the school's published admission criteria and processed as per Southwark's agreed protocol.

Application Procedure

Applications for Primary Schools in Southwark must be done online and if parents/carers do not have access to the internet, or need assistance in completing an application, they can contact the school office to book a suitable appointment for help with the process. Closing date for applications can be found on the website www.southwark.gov.uk/schooladmissions.