
**Policy for Admission
To
Local Authority
Nursery Schools and Classes**

2010/11



Introduction

Since September 1997 there has been one countywide admissions policy for community nursery schools and classes. This policy was determined by the County Council and is administered by schools. This has ensured that admissions are based on common principles. **Voluntary Aided schools** are not legally obliged, but are strongly encouraged, to adopt and follow this policy.

When new children join the Nursery school or class **it is important that parents are made aware that the process of applying for place at a primary school for the reception (F1) year is separate to that of applying for a place in a nursery school or class** Parents whose children attend the nursery school or class, particularly from outside the designated area of the primary school, should be reminded that their child is **not guaranteed** a place at the school when he/she reaches the normal school starting age (i.e. the September of the academic year in which the child will be five). They must apply through the normal County Council school admissions procedures.

Oxfordshire community and voluntary controlled schools offer children a full time place for the whole of the reception year. Schools will need to consider this carefully in planning the organisation of the foundation stage, both for admissions to their nursery, and for children who defer entry to school.

Terminology

There are 3 years of funded early education entitlement in the Early Years Foundation Stage:

Reception The year children become 5 (F1)

Nursery (F2 – the year children become 4 and F3 the year children become 3)

'Year' – refers to the academic year (September to August)

Eligibility Terms

Note: Funding entitlement starts from the term after the child's 3rd birthday

Autumn Term: September 1st-December 31st

Spring Term: January 1st-March 31st

Summer Term: April 1st-August 31st

POLICY FOR NURSERY ADMISSIONS IN OXFORDSHIRE

1. The County Council has devolved rather than delegated the administration of admissions to nursery classes. Therefore, in the event of a complaint the final responsibility and decision for admissions to voluntary controlled and community schools rests with the County Council.
2. The designated catchment area of each nursery class or school should be set out clearly on a map and be available for parents to see on request. It should also be made available electronically. In a primary school the catchment area for the nursery class will usually be the same as for that primary school.
3. Schools must offer nursery class places at least up to the published capacity, and in so doing must take account of County Council guidance on curriculum quality and staffing ratios. Schools must not operate the nursery class with empty places in any term if they have eligible children on the continued interest list.
4. Nursery Schools and classes have a set number of planned places. Any changes to these should be discussed with the Strategic Lead for Early Years, and agreed by the Service Manager for Admissions and Transport. Requests will be considered in the context of the development of children's centres and extended services, including integrated childcare. Those offering childcare to younger children should develop their overall admissions policies with regard to the criteria in this policy to ensure maximum coherence and continuity for children attending this provision.
5. The minimum entitlement to funded nursery education is 15 hours per week, from the term after the child's third birthday (based on a 3-term year). Schools may offer the 15 hours in a number of ways and should explore and work towards a more flexible offer in consultation with parents.
6. Parents should be notified that a place is available for their child no later than a term in advance (3 term year). They should be reminded that acceptance of a place will represent the child's full early education entitlement and the free hours cannot be split with a private or voluntary sector provider. This will be reviewed in the next policy.
7. Copies of the school's prospectus should be available on request to parents and to outside agencies. The prospectus should state the opening times of the nursery and set out its educational aims and provision. The prospectus should also set out the County Council's criteria for allocating nursery places when more applications are received than there are places available, as set out in this document (paragraph 13)
8. When more applications are received than there are places available, the following County Council criteria must be applied. These closely follow the admissions criteria for entry to County primary schools. Headteachers should apply the criteria by considering all eligible children from each priority category in turn until all the available places have been allocated. **Other criteria (such as date of birth) cannot be used.**

- (i) Children with a statement of special educational need that names the school in part 4 of the statement
- (ii) Looked after children whom the Corporate Parent agrees should attend the school
- (iii) Disabled children who need to be admitted to a school on the grounds of physical accessibility. The definition of disability is that contained within the Disability Discrimination Act as amended
- (iv) Children who live in the designated catchment area. If there are more applicants than places in this category, priority will be given in the following descending order:
- a) Those children who have a brother or sister already at the nursery school, who will be attending the preferred school at the time of entry. In the case of a nursery class, this applies to a brother or sister attending the primary school to which the class is attached.
 - b) Those children who live closest to the school by the nearest designated public route as defined on the Directorate for Children, Young People and Families Geographic Information System.
 - c) Children living outside the designated area who have a brother or sister attending either the foundation stage or the main school at the time of the child's admission. If there are more applicants than places in this category, priority will be given within this group to children who live closest to the school by the nearest designated public route as defined on the Directorate for Children, Young People and Families Geographic Information System
 - d) Children who attend day care or a voluntary or private sector pre-school on site at the school. If there are more applicants than places in this category, priority will be given within this group to children who live closest to the school by the nearest designated public route as defined on the Directorate for Children, Young People and Families Geographic Information System.
- (v) Children outside the designated area who live closest to the school by the nearest designated public route as defined on the Directorate for Children, Young People and Families Geographic Information System

Headteachers can seek advice and assistance from the Service Manager for Admissions and Transport in applying these criteria.

9. If there are more children than places, any child who is not offered a place can only be reconsidered and admitted at a later point if the parents have put the child's name on the school's continued interest list.
10. Once a child is admitted to the nursery class the child is entitled to remain in a part time place in the nursery class or nursery school until the term after he/she becomes five* **However this may not be the most appropriate place for the**

child if all his/her peers have taken up their reception (F1) place in a separate class within the school or another primary school.

*N.B. In the case of a summer born child, parents must either take up the reception place by the April before the child's fifth birthday; or else need to re-apply through the next admission round for a place to start in the September as a year one child. See the Primary School admissions policy for more detail on deferring entry.

11. Complaints

Any complaint about the operation of this admissions policy, for example in the case of a particular child who has been refused admission, should be directed to the Head of the school in the first instance and then to the Strategic Lead for Early Years if for a Community or Controlled school. For Aided schools the complaint should be directed to the Head of the school and then to the School Governors, as they have the ultimate decision regarding admissions to these schools.

If parents/carers consider that the admissions policy, as set out in this document, is not being applied correctly in a Community or Voluntary Controlled school they should write to the Business Support Officer, Early Years, 1st Floor County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND. Or e-mail:earlyyears.education@oxfordshire.gov.uk

12. There is no statutory right of appeal.

Contact details

Service Manager for Admissions and Transport

Tel: 01865 815844 admissions.schools@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Strategic Lead for Early Years

Tel: 01865 815697 earlyyears.education@oxfordshire.gov.uk