



# BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL

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## Admissions Policy

Birkenhead School educates boys and girls from 3 to 18. It selects its pupils on the basis of their academic aptitude and their ability to benefit from the kind of education offered by the School. In order to attract the widest possible entry, the School advertises widely and promotes contact with local primary and prep schools. In order to remove financial barriers to admission, the School provides a limited number of bursaries through the Birkenhead School Foundation Trust, which typically supports between 60 and 70 pupils. The criteria for the award of bursaries are the pupil's academic aptitude and the parent's financial means.

### Prep

The Prep admits pupils at four main points of entry:

Nursery	From three months' old
Pre-Prep (Foundation 1)	Rising threes and fours – boys and girls who will have their third or fourth birthday in the academic year September to August.
Reception (Foundation 2)	Rising fives – boys and girls who will have their fifth birthday in the academic year September to August of the intake year.
Year 3	Seven plus – boys and girls who will have their eighth birthday within the academic year September to August of the intake year.

However, throughout the year, boys and girls may join the School at any point subject to places being available.

The Prep is academically selective: from Reception upwards children usually spend a day with us when they are assessed either formally or informally, as appropriate, by teachers and by the Head of Prep. The intention here is to check on development and future potential and to put children at their ease so that they are looking forward to joining us.

For older pupils, assessment may take the form of standardised tests in Reading, Spelling, English and Mathematics or Reasoning. Previous schools may be contacted for relevant information and this would certainly be the case for pupils indicating an interest in applying for scholarships.

Pupils are assessed without examination for transfer to Seniors (Year 7) using information from standardised NFER tests, internal examinations, day to day performance and discussion between the Headmaster, Prep teachers and the Head of Prep. This takes place towards the end of Year 5. Boys and girls seeking a scholarship sit the Scholarship Examination to Seniors in which they are tested in English, Mathematics and Verbal Reasoning. This takes place in the January of Year 6.

## **Seniors**

In selecting pupils at 11 for admission to the senior part of the School we are looking for academic potential to proceed to Higher Education. We also seek pupils with wide-ranging interests and talents, who are prepared to participate in the broader life of the School.

For pupils applying for entrance to Seniors in Year 7, assessments are conducted via taster and assessment days at the end of Year 5 or the beginning of Year 6. Early application is encouraged due to high demand and once full, pupils will be placed on a waiting list. Children are invited in small groups for a full day, which is intended to be an enjoyable experience, whilst at the same time, providing the School with an opportunity to assess candidates in both formal and informal situations. The formal assessments take the form of a Verbal Reasoning test and we will also assess their reading, writing and arithmetic in the context of various lessons. Subsequently references will be taken from their current schools.

For entry to other years, pupils are assessed for Academic aptitude through National Standardised tests, assessments in Maths and English and an interview with senior staff. This would usually be done on a taster day to the school. Pupils are accepted at any point of entry, including mid-year, dependent on availability. Should the applicable year group be full, successful applicants will be placed on a waiting list.

Academic suitability for entrance to the Sixth Form is via interview, school references and GCSE performance. Pupils already in the School are admitted to the Sixth Form on the basis of their performance to date and the minimum GCSE requirements set out in the Sixth Form prospectus (typically six grades C or above and A in the subjects chosen for further study).

In order to encourage a strong academic ethos for all its pupils the School offers a number of Scholarships at 7, 11 and 16, awarded solely on ability. Similarly, Music Scholarships may be awarded at age 11.

Access Scholarships at 16 are sponsored by businesses and individuals and provide substantial support for students who have not previously had the opportunity of an independent school education.

## **Principles of selection**

In applying criteria for selection, the School intends to maintain and, if possible, to improve the educational and general standards for all its pupils commensurate with the ethos to which the School aspires. The School must also feel reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and develop the prospective pupil to the best of his or her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers, so that there is every chance that the pupil will have a complete, happy and successful school career. These criteria must continue to be met throughout the pupil's time at the School.

The School's policy is to apply these criteria to all pupils and potential pupils regardless of any disability of which it is aware, subject to its obligation to make reasonable adjustments not to put any disabled pupil or potential pupil at a substantial disadvantage compared to any pupil who is not disadvantaged because of his or her disability.

Parents of prospective pupils are asked to inform the Headmaster or the Head of Prep as appropriate, when they apply for a place at the School, of any disabilities or long-term medical conditions and the implications thereof which the School should consider, either in the selection process or once a pupil has been accepted. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil and in considering any adjustments it might need to make, the School may take such advice and require such assessments as it regards to be appropriate. Subject to this, the School will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality.

Reasonable adjustments to the admissions procedure which the School will consider will depend on individual circumstances but might include, for example, provision of enlarged copies of examination papers, extra time allowance, use of personal computer, use of non-standard furniture, special arrangements to take medication during the assessment, or change of room to provide access to appropriate toilet facilities.

**Tom Whitworth 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017. To be reviewed September 2018**