



# Admissions Policy 2024/25

## PURPOSE

This policy sets out the admission arrangements for Ark Dickens Primary Academy, in 2024/25. It applies to applications to start in Reception in September 2024 as well as 'In-year' applications; it also includes details of the oversubscription criteria, waiting lists and the appeals process.

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School:	Ark Dickens Primary Academy	Key Contact Name:	Admissions Officer
Key Contact Email:	<a href="mailto:info@arkdickensprimary.org">info@arkdickensprimary.org</a>	Key Contact Phone:	023 9282 6514

## **Contents**

1. Introduction
2. Statutory Guidance and Definitions
3. Application Process
  - 3.1 Normal Round - Primary (Reception)
4. Oversubscription Procedure and Criteria (All Applications)
5. Children Below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry to School
6. 'In-Year' Application Process
7. Waiting Lists
8. Unsuccessful Applications and the Appeals Process
9. Applications Out-of-Chronological Age Group
10. Further Information and Contact Details

## 1. Introduction

- i. Thank you for your interest in applying for a place at Ark Dickens Primary Academy, Turner Road, Portsmouth, PO1 4PN. The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance on the admission arrangements for a place at the school including information on timescales, deadlines and contact details for queries.
- ii. It also provides guidance on how applications are administered, the criteria used to prioritise applications (where necessary), waiting lists and the appeals process.
- iii. **Ark Dickens Primary Academy is a non-selective Primary school with a nursery. The school has an agreed Published Admission Number<sup>1</sup> (PAN) for the following year groups;**

**Primary (Reception): 60**

## 2. Statutory Guidance and Definitions

- i. All information in this policy meets the statutory requirements set out by the Department for Education (DfE) in the School Admissions Code 2021, (“the Code”) and the School Admissions Appeals Code 2022, (“the Appeals Code”).
- ii. Ark Schools is a Multi-Academy Trust and is the admissions authority for all schools in the Ark network, including Ark Dickens Primary Academy. Ark Schools, in accordance with its funding agreement, is responsible for the admissions policy of each school and co-ordinates with Local Authorities for the administration of admissions applications. For Ark Dickens Primary Academy, the relevant Local Authority is Portsmouth City Council.
- iii. According to the Code, there are two different routes for applications - ‘**normal round**’ and ‘**in-year**’; each route has a slightly different application process and timescales. Both application routes are detailed separately in this policy.

‘**Normal round**’ is relevant to all applications for a place in Reception starting at the beginning of the Autumn term in September.

‘**In-Year**’ is relevant to applications;

- a) for all year groups other than Reception starting at the beginning of the Autumn term in September.
- or
- b) for any year group after the start of the Autumn term.
- iv. The Nursery admissions process is separate from admissions to the rest of the school as it is not covered by the Code. Please refer to the Nursery Admissions Policy on the school website for information on this process, see link below.

<https://arkdickensprimary.org/>

- v. **PLEASE NOTE:** This policy is not relevant to the process for naming the school on a child’s Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). There is a **separate process** for

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<sup>1</sup> The maximum number of places available for admission in the year group

selecting or changing the school named on an EHCP which is outside of the admissions process. Please contact the child's home Local Authority for further details.

### 3. Application Process

#### 3.1 Normal Round – Primary (Reception)

- i. Applications for a place at the school are administered through the Portsmouth City Council application process. Parents resident in Portsmouth City can apply online at <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/schools-learning-and-childcare/schools/admissions/>; parents resident in other areas must apply through their home local authority.
- ii. The Local Authority's timetable will be used for all normal round applications each year (exact dates within the months may vary from year to year).
- iii. The school publishes information about the arrangements for admission, including oversubscription criteria, in February for the following September (e.g. in February 2023 for admissions in September 2024).
- iv. **Primary application timeframe:**

The school has an agreed PAN of 60 pupils in Reception.

**Autumn Term 2023:** The school provides opportunities for prospective pupils and their parents/carers to visit the school.

**15<sup>th</sup> January 2024:** National closing date for Primary applications. Deadline for the Common Application Form to be completed and submitted to the relevant Local Authority.

**January-March 2024:** The school and Local Authority coordinate to process all applications. If more applications are received than places available they will be ranked according to the oversubscription criteria published in this policy, see section 4 below.

**PLEASE NOTE:** schools are not able to provide any information regarding specific applications during this process.

**28 February 2024:** Deadline for the school to publish its appeals timetable on their website.

**17<sup>th</sup> April 2024:** Offers made to parents/carers by the Local Authority.

- v. **Allocation of places:**

- a) Where the school is named on a child's EHCP, that pupil will be admitted to the school.
- b) The school will consider all applications for places. Where fewer applications are received than places available, the school will offer places to all those who have applied.

- c) If the number of applications for admission is greater than the PAN (places available), all applications will be considered and places offered according to the oversubscription criteria in the order set out below (see section 4).
- d) Where an application has been unsuccessful due to a place not being available, applications will be put onto a waiting list which will be maintained until the end of the admission year. The waiting list will be ranked solely according to the oversubscription criteria detailed in this policy (not date of application) and updated each time an unsuccessful application is added. See section 7 below for more details on waiting lists.
- e) Where an application has been unsuccessful parents/carers have the right to appeal the decision to an Independent Appeal Panel. See section 8 below for detailed information on the appeals process.

#### **4. Oversubscription Procedure and Criteria (All applications)**

If the number of applications received for any phase or year group is greater than the number of spaces available, places will be allocated according to the oversubscription criteria and order below.

- i. ‘Looked After Children’<sup>2</sup> and children who have previously been a ‘Looked After Child’ but immediately following this became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, including those who appear (to Ark Schools) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted<sup>3</sup>.
- ii. Children who are eligible for the Service Pupil Premium.
- iii. Children of staff at the school who occupy, or have been recruited to, a post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage. Ark Schools must approve the Principal’s assessment process and designation of such posts to confirm the staff members’ eligibility under this criterion. Priority will be limited to one place for each form of entry in any year (i.e. 2 places in each 2-form year group).
- iv. Children who, at the time of admission, have a sibling who attends the school. For this purpose, “sibling” means a whole, half or step-sibling or an adopted child resident at the same address.
- v. Children of staff in the school who have been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the application is submitted. Ark Schools must approve the Principal’s decision to allocate places to staff under this criterion. Priority will be limited to one place for each form of entry in any year (i.e. 2 places in each 2-form year group).
- vi. Children living in the school’s designated catchment area. A map of the area is at appendix 1 of this policy and will be available at the academy.

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<sup>2</sup> 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 the full definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Under the Admissions Code, a child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

- vii. Children living outside the school's designated catchment area.

For categories vi) and vii), where it is necessary to prioritise applications within each category, the shortest distance from the child's home to school, measured in **straight line distance**, will be used.

The Local Authority measures distance on behalf of Ark Schools. Portsmouth City Council use their Geographical Information System and Ordinance Survey Data to calculate **straight line distance** between the child's home\* and the main entrance to the school.

**\*PLEASE NOTE:** A child's home will be the address at which the child normally resides and which has been notified to relevant agencies (e.g. the Local Authority) as being the child's normal place of residence. Where a child lives normally during the school week with more than one parent at different addresses, the permanent home address for the purposes of school admissions will be the one where the child spends the majority of school nights Monday–Friday.

- viii. **TIE BREAKER:** If Ark Schools is unable to distinguish between applicants using the published oversubscription criteria, places will be offered via a random draw which will be supervised by someone independent of the school.
- ix. In the case of multiple births or siblings in the same year group, where there is only one place available in the school, all will be considered together as one application.

## 5. Children Below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry to School

- i. All children are eligible for a full-time place at school in the September following their fourth birthday.
- ii. A child must be in full-time education<sup>4</sup> by the time they reach compulsory school age. A child reaches compulsory school age on the next prescribed day on or following their fifth birthday. The prescribed days are 31st December, 31st March and 31st August.
- iii. When a place has been offered to a child below compulsory school age, parents can choose to defer the date their child is admitted to the school until later in the year. This date cannot go beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age and cannot go beyond the beginning of the final term of that same academic year.
- iv. When a place has been offered to a child below compulsory school age, parents can also choose for the child to attend the school part-time up until the child reaches compulsory school age, after which they must attend full time.

## 6. 'In-Year' Application Process

- i. The 'In-Year' application process is relevant to applications for places in any year group that does not have a PAN (e.g. Years 1 - 6), starting at the beginning of the academic year or for any year group starting at any other point throughout the academic year.

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<sup>4</sup> For this purpose, 'full-time education' includes registered for home schooling and attendance at other educational institutions as detailed in section 8 of the Education Act 1996.

- ii. The Local Authority holds information on which schools in their area have spaces for each year group. Contact Portsmouth City Council via the link below for further information.

<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/schools-learning-and-childcare/schools/admissions/>

- iii. In-year applications to Ark Dickens Primary Academy can be submitted at any time and are made through the Local Authority. Parents will be notified of the outcome of any in-year application within 15 school days.

The In-Year application form can be accessed through the link below.

<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/schools-learning-and-childcare/schools/admissions/in-year-transfers/>

- iv. If an in-year application is refused the child will be added to the waiting list for that year group. A child's position on the waiting list will be determined solely according to the oversubscription criteria in this policy. See section 4 for the oversubscription criteria and section 7 for more information on waiting lists.
- v. If an In-Year application has been refused, the parent/carer has the right to appeal the decision to an Independent Appeals Panel. For detailed information about the appeals process see section 8 of this policy.
- vi. **Fair Access Protocol:** Local Authorities are required to have Fair Access Protocols in order to make sure that unplaced, vulnerable children are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. The school complies with Portsmouth city Council's Fair Access Protocol. Admissions under Fair Access Protocol are discussed between the school and Local Authority on a case-by-case basis. This may mean admitting children above the PAN.

## 7. Waiting Lists

- i. Any child refused a place at the school will automatically be put on a waiting list (unless a higher preference school has been offered.) A waiting list will be maintained until the end of the academic year after which it will be cleared.
- ii. The waiting list is maintained in the order of the oversubscription criteria only (not application date). This means that names can move down the list if, e.g. someone moves into the area and is higher placed under the oversubscription criteria.
- iii. Parents/carers have the right to request their child is removed from the waiting list at any time. Once removed, the child cannot be reinstated on the waiting list without submitting a new application.
- iv. If a place becomes available it will be allocated to the first child on the waiting list, in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. If that offer is declined the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list.

## 8. Unsuccessful Applications and the Appeals Process

- i. All applicants who have applied for a Primary place at the school and been refused have a right to appeal that decision to an Independent Appeal Panel.
- ii. Applicants will be informed in writing of the school's decision to refuse their application. This letter will include;
  - a) The reason a place was refused (e.g. no available places)
  - b) Information about the waiting list
  - c) Information about the right to appeal
  - d) The deadline for submitting an appeal
  - e) Contact details for making an appeal
- iii. Full details on the appeals process, timetable and an appeals booklet for parents is available on the school website, see link below.  
  
<https://arkdickensprimary.org/>
- iv. The deadline for submitting an appeal will be at least **20 school days<sup>5</sup> from the date of notification that an application was unsuccessful**. This deadline applies to 'normal round' and 'in-year' applications.
- v. Appeals are submitted to Ark Schools via an online<sup>6</sup> form which is available through the school website or from the school. See section 10 for contact details.
- vi. The decision of the Independent Appeal Panel is binding on all parties.

## 9. Applications Out-of-Chronological Age Group

- i. Parents/carers may choose to seek a place for their child outside of their chronological age group for a variety of reasons (e.g. the child is summer born, is considered gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health).
- ii. The decision to admit a child out-of-year group is uncommon and will always be made on the basis of the unique circumstances for each specific case and what is best for that individual child. The decision will be made by the Principal of the school and will take into account parents'/carers' views, expert advice from relevant social, educational and medical professionals, whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group, any evidence that the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely and the long-term impact of the decision on the child.
- iii. Applications for a child to be admitted to a year group outside of their chronological age group should be made through the same process set out in this policy for both 'normal round' and 'in-year' applications. However, in addition to the standard application form **further documentation should be provided to support the**

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<sup>5</sup> School days do not include weekends, national holidays or school holidays

<sup>6</sup> Hard copies are available on request from the school. These should be returned to the school for the attention of the Admissions Officer.



**request for a place out of chronological year group.** This applies regardless of whether it is for a higher or lower year group.

- iv. The Principal may request additional information after the submission of an application for an out-of-year group place, if necessary.
- v. Each application will be considered on the individual circumstances of each case. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decision, including the reasons for it.
- vi. Unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal if they are refused a place at the school. However, this right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

#### **10. Further Information and Contact Details**

- i. For queries regarding this policy, admissions arrangements for the school and the waiting lists and appeals process, please contact:

**Contact:** Admissions Officer  
**Email:** [info@arkdickensprimary.org](mailto:info@arkdickensprimary.org)  
**Phone:** 023 9282 6514

**Post:** Turner Road  
Portsmouth  
PO1 4PN

- ii. Further information and links to all relevant forms for admissions and appeals are available on the school and local authority website via the link below.

**Ark Dickens Primary Academy website – [click here](#)**

**Portsmouth City Council admissions website – [click here](#)**

- iii. The Department for Education website on school admissions – [click here](#)
- iv. The Department for Education School Admissions Code 2021 - [click here](#)
- v. The Department for Education School Admissions Appeals Code 2022 - [click here](#)

Appendix 1

