



Admissions Policy

Signed by headteacher: *A Hughes*

Signed by Chair of Governors: *David Bradley*

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Admissions Policy (Including Preschool)

Bitterne Manor Primary School is part of the REACH Cooperative Trust. The Governing Body of the school is the admission authority for the school, including the preschool. As required in the School Admissions Code, the governors will consider all on time preferences at the same time for September 2026 admissions.

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at Bitterne Manor Preschool and Primary School
- Set out our arrangements for allocating places to the children who apply
- Explain how to appeal against a decision not to offer your child a place

Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code 2021](#)
- [School Admission Appeals Code](#)

The school is required to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#).

Admissions into Pre School

Bitterne Manor Pre School caters for children aged 3-4 years. Applications for Bitterne Manor Pre School are made through the school directly and the governing body manages the admissions process.

How to Apply

Waiting List:

Parents and Carers can put their child's name on the Pre School waiting list at any time after their child's second birthday. Families are invited to visit the school and complete an application form. Eligibility will be verified by families providing proof (birth certificate) and confirmation of address. Families can apply to be on the waiting list at any time during the academic year.

Procedures

The Governing Body will agree the admission's policy annually. The Headteacher, Senior Early Years Lead, Class Teacher and Admin Assistant will review the waiting lists half termly to establish start dates for children. The Admin Assistant will contact Parents and Carers to arrange induction and necessary paperwork is completed. There is no right of appeal - the Headteacher's decision is final.

Children will be admitted into the Pre School no earlier than the term following their third birthday, subject to the availability of places. The Pre School has a maximum capacity of 24 spaces per morning session and 24 spaces per afternoon session.

Funding

From September 2025, most working parents in England will be able to access 30 hours of free childcare per week for children under 4 years. Bitterne Manor Pre School offers the full entitlement during term time, which is 38 weeks per year. To check if you are eligible for free childcare, please check here:

<https://www.gov.uk/check-eligible-free-childcare-if-youre-working>

Families entitled to claim the 30 hours free childcare will be provided with a unique code confirming their eligibility. This code must be provided to the Pre School every 3 months to maintain their place in the school. If parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria, they will receive a 'grace period' – i.e. they will continue to receive the 30 hours free childcare for a short period of time. If a parent falls into their grace period before their child has started a 30 hours place, they should not take up their 30 hours place.

Full Time:

Provided we receive your 30 hours code each term, your child can attend our Pre School from:

- 8.30-3:00 Monday to Thursday
- 8:30-11:30 Friday (NB families can pay to 'top up' for Friday afternoon)

Part Time:

Part-time children attend every morning from 8:30-11:30 or every afternoon from 12:00-3:00 for 15 hours per week. We strongly recommend that children do not attend less than this as it takes much longer for children to settle into the environment and routines. It can also better support children's progress as they are able to take part in a full range of activities and learning over the week.

Consistent attendance at regular hours helps them feel secure, adapt more easily to daily transitions, and build important skills like independence, emotional regulation, and social connection. Irregular schedules can cause confusion and make it harder for children to settle and fully engage. A stable routine strengthens their sense of belonging and supports both their learning and emotional development.

Reducing Hours:

There may be times when children's hours need to be reviewed. This may be for a number of reasons, including behavioural or emotional needs, reintegration after a long period of absence or other exceptional circumstances including a child struggling to adjust to the preschool environment or needing a more gradual transition. Reviewing of hours takes on a need-by-need basis and parents will be notified and given a week's notice where possible. The only circumstances where this notice will be less is if there is a significant safety or wellbeing concern.

Criteria and Prioritisation for Pre School

1. Children who are currently, or have previously been in care (Looked After and Previously Looked After Children) as defined by the Admissions Code 2021
2. Children subject to a Child Protection Plan or deemed to be vulnerable by a senior officer with responsibility for safeguarding in Southampton City Council
3. Children who have a sibling on the roll of the school that will continue to attend that school for the following year
4. Children whose parents have satisfied the Local Authority that their child has a significant medical or psychological condition which means they must attend the preferred school rather than any other
5. Children who qualify for the Service Premium, as the child of a member of the Armed Forces
6. Children who live within Bitterne Manor Primary School's designated catchment area
7. Children whose parents are employed at the school they are applying for, as defined below
8. Children who live closest to the school

Should the school be oversubscribed from within any of the criteria, then distance, as defined by this policy, will be used to prioritise applications within these categories. Should there be two or more identical distances requiring prioritisation, this will be done by casting lots. Lots will be drawn by the Divisional Head of Education and Learning at Southampton City Council.

Reserve List

In circumstances where more applications are received than places are available, and where the oversubscription priority criteria has been applied, children who are not offered places will be added to a reserve list in order of the criteria and not by date of application.

If a place becomes available, the Preschool will contact the parents of the child at the top of the list. The reserve list is not a waiting list – if a request is made by a parent whose child has higher priority according to the admissions criteria, other children are moved down the list.

Placing a child's name on the reserve list does not guarantee that a place will become available

Dated priority order

Where places remain unfilled by 1 December according to the above criteria, places will be offered to children on the waiting list who have had their third birthday between 1 September and 31 December. If there are still places by the end of the spring term, places for the summer term can then be offered to children who have had their 3rd birthday between 1 January and 31 March.

Refusal of admission

A child is only refused admission if one of the following criteria are met:

- The Preschool has reached its admissions limit
- The child is not of the appropriate age
- The child's needs cannot be met with reasonable adjustments (beyond an EHCP)

Parents do not have a statutory right to appeal against the admission authority's refusal to award a place to their child.

Parents may appeal to the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) tribunal against the provision named by the authority in the EHC plan.

Admissions into Reception

How to Apply

Applications for Reception are made through the Southampton City Council website in the Autumn term after children turn four. All four year olds can attend a reception class (Year R) in the September of the school year in which they become five. **Children in Bitterne Manor Pre School are NOT guaranteed a space in Reception and families MUST apply again for a place in the Primary School.**

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/find-apply-school/school-applications/apply-for-a-school-place/year-r/> .

Children born between:

- 1 September 2021 - 31 August 2022 need to start school in September 2026
- 1 September 2022 - 31 August 2023 need to start school in September 2027
- 1 September 2023 - 31 August 2024 need to start school in September 2028

Parents may express up to three (3) preferences, listing them in the order in which they would accept them. All preferences will be considered and where more than one school could be offered, the parents will be offered a place for their child at the highest ranked of the schools that could be offered.

Published Admission Number (PAN)

Bitterne Manor Primary School will admit up to 30 pupils to Year R in September 2026.

Children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) that name a school

Children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) that name a school must be admitted to that school under the Education Act 1996 and with regard to the SEND Code of Practice. These children will be admitted to the named school, even if it is full, and are therefore outside the normal admission arrangements. As required by the Admissions Code, these children will count as part of the Published Admission Number (PAN) for the school.

Oversubscription criteria

Applications submitted by the deadline of 15 January 2026 will be dealt with first. If the number of applications submitted by 15 January 2026 is greater than the PAN for the school, admissions to the school will be decided according to the following priorities:

1. Children who are currently, or have previously been in care (Looked After and Previously Looked After Children) as defined by the Admissions Code 2021
2. Children subject to a Child Protection Plan or deemed to be vulnerable by a senior officer with responsibility for safeguarding in Southampton City Council
3. Children who have a sibling on the roll of the school that will continue to attend that school for the following year
4. Children whose parents have satisfied the Local Authority that their child has a significant medical or psychological condition which means they must attend the preferred school rather than any other
5. Children who qualify for the Service Premium, as the child of a member of the Armed Forces
6. Children who live within the school's designated catchment area
7. Children whose parents are employed at the school they are applying for, as defined below
8. Children who live closest to the school

Should the school be oversubscribed from within any of the criteria, then distance, as defined by this policy, will be used to prioritise applications within these categories. Should there be two or more identical distances requiring prioritisation, this will be done by casting lots. Lots will be drawn by the Divisional Head of Education and Learning at Southampton City Council.

Late applications

The closing date for applications is 15 January 2026. Applications received after that date will be late applications and will be dealt with after all on time applicants have been offered a school place. If a school has places available after admitting all on-time applications, late applications will be considered in accordance with the priorities set out above.

Waiting lists

If a place cannot be offered at Bitterne Manor Primary School, all unsuccessful applicants will automatically be placed on the waiting list. If places become available, children on the waiting list will be offered them according to the priorities set out above and any previous offer of a school place will be withdrawn.

The length of time on the waiting list cannot be taken into account. Unsuccessful late applications will be treated in the same way as unsuccessful on time applications and placed on the waiting list according to the priorities set out above. This means that waiting lists will be re-ranked after every new expression of preference.

The waiting list will be held until 31 July 2026. Any parent wishing to remain on the waiting list after this date will need to make a new in-year application to the school.

Entry into Reception Class

The offer made to parents for reception class on the initial offer date is of a full time place from the start of term after 1 September 2026. Schools normally wish to stagger entry into school from that date and arrange for some initial part time attendance to ensure a smooth transition from pre-school / home into school. At Bitterne Manor, we try to minimise the length of this transition period as many of our children have either been in our preschool or in full-time nursery provision. We can, however, be flexible about this in discussion with parents.

Flexibilities exist for those parents who do not feel that their child is ready to start school in the September following their fourth birthday. It is possible for them to:

- Access part-time admission to the allocated school from the September following their child's fourth birthday. This should be discussed with the headteacher of the allocated school.
- Defer their child's entry 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. This should be discussed with the headteacher of the allocated school.

- Defer their child's entry until the September following their fifth birthday. Parents must make an in-year application and the pupil would start in Year 1.

Parents of summer-born children, that is children born between 1 April and 31 August, may, in addition, choose to send their child to school in the September following their 5th birthday and may request that their child is admitted out of their normal age group to reception year rather than Year 1. Any parent wishing to request for their summer-born child to start school outside their normal age group should submit this via the online form available on the Southampton City Council website.

For all requests it is vital to understand that at each transition (starting reception, moving from infant to junior, primary to secondary, secondary to college) the decision whether to maintain the placement in a younger or older year group must be made by the admission authority for the school. As such, there is no guarantee that it will continue throughout the child's education and a new parental request must be made before each transition. As a general rule, requests should only be made once per phase transfer, unless there has been a significant change in circumstances. (See below for Admissions Outside Normal Age Group).

In-Year Admissions

In-year applications are when you need to apply for a school place at any time in the year that it is not part of the 'normal admissions round'. There are three main reasons for making an in-year application. You might:

- Be moving house
- Be unhappy with your child's current school
- Want your Year 2 child enrolled at an infant school to start Year 3 in a primary school

Admissions mid-year for any year group will be dealt with in accordance with this policy.

If you want to make an in-year transfer, you will need to complete an in-year transfer application through the Citizens Portal (https://ems.southampton.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en). You can contact Bitterne Manor directly or Southampton City Council (<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/contact-us/?schools>) to find out if places are available.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, you will need to contact the special needs team: (<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/send-local-offer/send-services/send-specialist-advice-and-guidance/0-25-service/>)

The same oversubscription criteria listed above is used by SCC to allocate in-year transfers from our waiting list when places become available.

Admission Outside Normal Age Group

Decisions regarding which year group to place a child are very important. As a general rule, it is recommended that children are placed in the chronological year group which reflects their age and supported to engage with the learning within that placement. Before making a decision to educate a child out of normal age group, Southampton City Council's guidance should be referred to. <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/find-apply-school/school-applications/entry-reception-year/>

All decisions around deceleration are made with great care and with the understanding of all concerned parties of the possible impact of deceleration, which may differ in the UK from what happens in other countries.

Education outside of normal age groups can fall into two types:

Deceleration (holding back a year)

If your child is summer-born (born between 1 April and 31 August), you may choose not to send them to school until the September following their fifth birthday. You may request that your child is admitted out of their normal age group, to reception year, rather than year 1.

Acceleration (starting a year early)

You may wish your child to start in reception class a year earlier than their date of birth would indicate. Parents should bear in mind that there is much more to thriving in reception class than academic achievement.

For both deceleration and acceleration, you must complete an education outside normal age group request form through Southampton City Council. Each request will be decided on its merits by the Headteacher and Bitterne Manor Governing Body. There is no guarantee that the school will agree to deceleration or acceleration requests or continue previous agreements (at other schools or local authorities). You will be notified of the outcome of your request in writing.

APPENDIX: Definitions

Previously/Looked After Child: Looked After Children are Children who are in the care of local authorities as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. In relation to school admissions legislation a 'looked after child' is a child in public care at the time of application to a school. A Previously Looked After Child, as defined by the Admissions Code, is one who was: looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order), including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Sibling: This includes children living as siblings in the same family unit. In the case of applications for places at infant schools a sibling at the linked junior school will count as a sibling at the infant school. A sibling is defined as a brother or sister including half, step, foster or adoptive brother or sister, living within the same family unit at the same address.

Catchment Area: A "designated catchment area" for a school is the area set out in the definitive catchment area map for each school. This map is held by Southampton City Council, Civic Centre, Southampton SO14 7LY. A schedule of addresses, to be read in conjunction with the map, is also kept by the Council. Parents wishing to know if their address is in a particular catchment area can contact the Admissions Team, or log on to the council website www.southampton.gov.uk, click on "My Southampton", follow the links, and enter their postcode.

Service Premium: A child will qualify for the Service Premium if their circumstances satisfy any of the following:

- one of their parents is serving in the regular armed forces (including pupils with a parent who is on full commitment as part of the full time reserve)
- one of their parents died whilst serving in the armed forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme

Proof of this criteria may be provided in a letter from the service parent's commanding officer, confirming employment, or evidence of the receipt of a service pension.

Children of Parents Employed at the School:

In line with the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021, a child can be prioritised in the oversubscription criteria for a school if the parent:

- Has been employed at the school for two or more years from the time of application

- Has been employed to fill a position for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage

Distance: Distances are measured based on the shortest walking distance using public roads and footpaths. Distances are measured from home to school for all children. These are calculated using a computerised mapping system that uses data supplied by Ordnance Survey. Distances are measured from the point designated in the system as the home address to the point designated in the system as the mid-point of the nearest open pedestrian gate to the school, using public roads and footpaths considered safe for children to traverse.