

REAch2 Academy Trust consultation: 2018/19 admissions

Context

We are a primary-only Academy Trust responsible for 54 academies in 18 local authority areas (as at December 2016), and approved to open 22 brand new schools over the next few years¹. See annex A for details of our open academies. In developing this Trust-wide admissions policy, we are seeking to: provide a core of consistency across all our academies on aspects that will reflect our vision and values; while aligning with local arrangements so that parents/carers of potential pupils can more easily navigate their options.

Key points

The Trust proposes a Trust-wide approach to admissions, for September 2018, based on:

1. simple and fair oversubscription criteria (as below) that ensure our schools serve their local communities
2. full participation in the coordinated admissions scheme run by the relevant local authority in which the school is located²
3. alignment with the relevant local authority's approach on technical details such as how home-to-school distance is measured or how certain terms are defined, to keep things as simple and consistent as possible for parents/carers of potential pupils.

Over-subscription criteria. The Trust proposes the following four oversubscription criteria³:

- a. **Looked after children⁴ or previously⁵ looked after children** i.e. children in foster care, care homes or who were before being adopted
- b. **Children with siblings in the school⁶**
- c. **Children of school staff⁷ recruited to fill a skill shortage post** – this will be subject to confirmation by a REAch2 regional non-executive

¹ See <http://reach2.org/reach2-academy-trust-open-22-new-free-schools/>

² The Trust may choose to manage the first year or two of admissions to a brand new school in-house – however, this does not apply for any of our existing schools covered by Annex A, all of which will participate in their local authority coordinated schemes.

³ Note that any children with Education, Health & Care Plans that name the school must be allocated a place even before the over-subscription criteria are applied.

⁴ That is, children who are (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(1) of the Children Act 1989).

⁵ That is, children who were previously looked after (as per footnote 2) but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order.

⁶ As defined by the relevant local authority for community schools – see Annex A.

⁷ i.e. Trust employees based in the school – this does not apply to wider Trust employees who are part of our regional/central teams

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that, on the evidence available, the post does indeed relate to a skills shortage in the area

- d. **Home-to-school distance**⁸ – so that children living closest are allocated remaining places first.⁹

Appeals

Where applications are unsuccessful, there is a right to appeal as set out in the admissions code and this will be explained in the response to the parent/carers. Appeals will be carried out within the timescales set out in the code.

Equality Impact Assessment

There are no identified differential impacts on individuals with protected characteristics set out in the Equalities Act 2010: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex; or sexual orientation.

Questions and answers

1. *Why not include children eligible for Free School Meals or Pupil Premium in the over-subscription criteria?* We want to keep the criteria as simple as possible. Most of our schools serve local communities with higher than average rates of eligibility for FSM and Pupil Premium so many such children would qualify under the proposed criteria anyway. Also some parents/carers will not be familiar with the relevant eligibility criteria or application processes before their children start school.
2. *Why not include children with exceptional medical or social needs in the over-subscription criteria?* We want to keep the criteria as simple as possible. We would expect most such children to have Education, Health & Care Plans that would mean they got school places before any other places were allocated.
3. *Why the criterion on children of school staff filling a skill shortage post?* This should help us recruit the best possible candidates to key roles in schools in areas where recruitment is difficult. The Admissions Code would allow us also to prioritise children of any staff who had been at the school for 2+ years but we are not proposing to take up that wider option: by focusing on skills shortage posts, there is a benefit to the whole school which other potential parents/carers will be able to understand. We propose an independent non-executive 'check' on whether a particular

⁸ As defined by the relevant local authority in relation to community schools – see table at end of this document

⁹ Where in future the Trust considers it beneficial for clarity of communications with parents/carers of potential pupils in the local area (for example for brand new schools or schools close to a local authority boundary), this criterion could be replaced by (d) a defined geographical catchment area then (e) home-to-school distance for children outside that area. This is not currently proposed for any of our existing schools covered by Annex A.

role constitutes a skill shortage post to ensure we are using this criterion fairly and proportionately.

4. *Why not include a catchment area reference in the over-subscription criteria?* We want to keep the criteria as simple as possible. Demand for school places changes year-on-year. It may not be possible to meet demand from within a set catchment area over several years; and publishing a catchment area map for one year may be misleading - parents/carers tend to perceive it as a longer-term arrangement. We propose only to set catchment areas in circumstances where it would help parents/carers understand their position more clearly – e.g. a school close to a local authority border where it would help parents/carers living in the immediate local area (even if the other side of the border) to understand that an application for the school would be likely to be successful. We do not think this applies to any of our existing schools in Annex A.
5. *Where a REAch2 school has a nursery:*
 - i. *What approach will be taken to admissions to the nursery?* The school will manage admissions to the nursery based on the same criteria set out in a) to d) above.
 - ii. *Why not prioritise children already in the nursery in the over-subscription criteria for Reception places?* Legally there could be grounds for parents/carers whose children aren't in the nursery to contest such a criterion as an unfair pre-condition. We do not think that exposure to legal challenges – even if unsuccessful – would be in anyone's interest. There would be less risk of legal challenge if only nursery children from disadvantaged backgrounds were prioritised but this would create other risks, around the clarity/complexity of the criteria (see question/answer 1 above).
6. *How will admissions work for Junior schools¹⁰?* An extra over-subscription criterion will apply, before home-to-school distance, so that preference is given to pupils who are at the named feeder infant school at the time of the application – see annex A for details. Applications still have to be submitted¹¹ but generally the two schools work together to make the process as easy as possible.
7. *What approach will be taken for children whose parents/carers would like them to be admitted earlier or later than usual, such as those born in the summer term?* The Headteacher will decide how to respond to such requests, on a case-by-case basis and based on what they believe is in

¹⁰ The same approach will be taken for a non-junior primary school with a closely associated infant school – see Chigwell Primary Academy in annex A.

¹¹ The Admissions Code states that "Published admission arrangements **must** make clear to parents that a separate application **must** be made for any transfer [...] from infant to junior school" but by adding a criterion ahead of the home-to-school distance criterion, transfer from infant to junior will in effect be assured.

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the best interests of the child after liaising with the parents/carers and, where appropriate, the local authority.

How to respond to the consultation

The consultation runs until 31 January 2017. It would really help us in collating and considering responses if you could respond via our online survey:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RSQFQJ5

Alternatively, you can respond by writing to:

REAch2 admissions consultation – FAO Anna Thompson
[state name of academy/ies your response relates to, if relevant]
C/o Scientia Academy, Mona Road, Burton Upon Trent, DE13 0UF

or by emailing: info@reach2.org

Annex A: REAch2 open academies (as at December 2016): key information for 2018/19 admissions consultation

Academy name	Admission number for 2018/9	Over-subscription criteria: any variations or additions to the four criteria on p.1-2	Link to relevant local authority info – we will align with their approach for community schools on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• definitions of 'sibling' and 'home-to-school distance' in our over-subscription criteria• definitions of related terms such as 'parent', 'residence' etc• details of related processes such as tie-breaks, waiting lists
REAch2 East Anglia region: SUFFOLK local authority area			
Beccles Primary Academy	45	-	https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/children-families-and-learning/schools/Consultation-Admission-to-Schools-in-Suffolk-2018-2019.pdf
Gunton Primary Academy	45	-	
Martlesham Primary Academy	20	-	
Northfield St Nicholas Primary Academy	60	-	
Phoenix St Peter Academy (previously Meadow Primary Academy)	30		
Sprites Primary Academy	60	-	
St Margaret's Primary Academy	60	-	
REAch2 East Anglia & North Central regions: ESSEX local authority area			
Burrsville Infant Academy	60	-	https://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Admissions/Documents/Primary_Admissions_Booklet_2017_18.pdf
Camulos Primary Academy	60	-	
Chigwell Primary Academy	30	An additional criterion is added, ahead of d), to prioritise children at Chigwell Row Infant School	
Kirby Primary Academy	30	-	
Pemberley Academy	30	-	

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EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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REAch2 East Anglia & North Central regions: ESSEX local authority area (continued)			
Sir Martin Frobisher Primary Academy	45	-	https://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Admissions/Documents/Primary_Admissions_Booklet_2017_18.pdf
Unity Primary Academy	60	-	
Water Lane Primary Academy	30	-	
REAch2 North Central regions: BARKING & DAGENHAM local authority area			
Dorothy Barley Junior Academy	120	An additional criterion is added, ahead of d), to prioritise children at Dorothy Barley Infants' School	https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Starting-school-full-time-2017-booklet.pdf
REAch2 North Central regions: BEXLEY local authority area			
Brampton Primary Academy	60	-	http://www.bexley.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=5509&p=0
REAch2 North Central regions: HAVERING local authority area			
Concordia Academy	90	-	https://www3.havering.gov.uk/Documents/Education/Admissions/Starting-a-Havering-infant-or-primary-school-in-September-2017.pdf
Langtons Junior Academy	90	An additional criterion is added, ahead of d), to prioritise children at Langtons Infant School	
REAch2 North Central regions: HERTFORDSHIRE local authority area			
Garden City Academy	30	-	https://beta.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/schools-and-education/admissions/consultation-of-admission-arrangements-1819/7-definitions-2018-19.pdf and https://beta.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/schools-and-education/admissions/consultation-of-admission-arrangements-1819/3-primary-2018-19.pdf
Wilshire-Dacre Junior Academy	60	An additional criterion is added, ahead of d), to prioritise children at Strathmore Infant School	

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REAch2 North Central regions: READING local authority area			
Civitas Academy	60	-	http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/4647/InfantPrimary-School-Admissions-Guide-for-Parents-and-Carers/pdf/M1215_RBC_Primary_Guide_2017-18_v2.pdf
Ranikhet Academy	60	-	
The Palmer Primary Academy	60	-	
REAch2 North Central regions: THURROCK local authority area			
Purfleet Primary Academy	90	-	https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/document/s/admissions_primary_2017_v01.pdf
REAch2 North Central regions: WALTHAM FOREST local authority area			
Chapel End Junior Academy	90	An additional criterion is added, ahead of d), to prioritise children at Chapel End Infant School	https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Starting%20Primary%20School%202017.pdf
Woodside Primary Academy	180	-	
REAch2 North Central regions: WESTMINSTER local authority area			
Minerva Academy	60	-	http://transact.westminster.gov.uk/docstores/publications_store/schools/admissions/primary_school_admissions_brochure.pdf

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REAch2 South Central region: CROYDON local authority area			
Aerodrome Primary Academy	60	Separate arrangements for admission to the resource base for pupils with speech, language and communication needs, arranged via the local authority SEN team.	https://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/schools-new/statnotice-consult/consultation
Broadmead Primary Academy	90	-	
Castle Hill Academy	60	Separate arrangements for admission to the resource base for pupils with autism spectrum disorders, arranged via the local authority SEN team.	
The Robert Fitzroy Academy	90	-	
St Mark's C of E Academy	30	See separate consultation document on the REAch2 admissions webpage and on the St Mark's school website	
REAch2 South Central region: KENT local authority area			
Copperfield Primary Academy	90	-	https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/64324/pri-mary-admissions-booklet.pdf
Tymberwood Primary Academy	60	-	
Kemsley Primary Academy	30	-	
Milton Court Primary Academy	30	-	

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REAch2 South Central region: LEWISHAM local authority area			
Tidemill Academy	60	Separate arrangements for admission to the resource base for pupils with speech, language and communication needs, arranged via the local authority SEN team.	http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/education/schools/school-admission/Documents/ProposedAdmissionsPolicy201819.pdf
REAch2 South Central region: WEST SUSSEX local authority area			
Eastbrook Primary Academy	60	-	https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/8654/info_for_parents_starting_school_sept_2017.pdf
The Globe Primary Academy	90	-	
White Meadows Primary Academy	90	-	
REAch2 West Midlands region: BIRMINGHAM local authority area			
Manor Park Primary Academy	60	-	https://www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/people-1/copy-of-proposed-admission-arrangements-for-sep18
Moor Green Primary Academy	60	-	

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REAch2 West Midlands region: STAFFORD local authority area			
Five Spires Primary Academy	30	-	https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/schoolsandcolleges/admissions/admissioncriteria/Proposed-LA-Admission-Arrangements-2018-19.pdf
Heath Hayes Primary Academy	30	-	
Norton Canes Primary Academy	30	-	
Scientia Academy	60	-	
Silkmore Primary Academy	30	-	
Springhill Primary Academy	30	-	
Veritas Primary Academy	60	-	
REAch2 West Midlands region: TELFORD & WREKIN local authority area			
Lawley Village Academy	30	-	http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/349/determined_admission_arrangements_for_20172018
REAch2 West Midlands region: WARWICKSHIRE local authority area			
Oakfield Primary Academy	60	-	https://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-699-601
Racemeadow Primary Academy	60	-	
Riverside Academy	30	-	