

Great Ouse Primary Academy admission arrangements for

September 2026

Introductory statement

Great Ouse Primary Academy is a 420 place Free School for 4 –11-year-olds which serves the local communities in and around King's Field, St Andrew's and St Mary's as well as from North Bedford and the wider area. As an Academy, education provision will be provided for pupils across the whole ability range. Great Ouse Primary Academy is a member of Meridian Trust and is a named feeder school for Lincroft Academy and Sharnbrook Academy.

Admission number(s)

The school has an admission number of 60 for entry in year Reception.

The school will accordingly admit this number of pupils if there are sufficient applications. Where fewer applicants than the published admission number(s) for the relevant year group are received, the Academy Trust will offer places at the school to all those who have applied.

Oversubscription criteria

The criteria in this section apply to entry at all phases of the school.

When the school is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the school, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in priority order:

1. All 'looked after' children and all previously 'looked after' children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority of the school) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted (see notes).
2. Children with siblings in the Academy.
3. Children of staff at Great Ouse Primary Academy.
4. Other children.

Tie Break

If in category 2 above a tie-break is necessary to determine which child is admitted, the child living closest to the school will be given priority for admission. Distance is measured from the child's home (front door) to the front gates of the school in a straight line.

Random allocation will not be applied to multiple birth siblings (twins and triplets etc.) from the same family tied for the final place. We will admit them all, as permitted by the infant class size rules and exceed our PAN.

Late applications

All applications received by the Local Authority after the deadline will be considered to be late applications. Late applications will be considered after those received on time. If, following consideration of all applicants the school is oversubscribed, parents may request that their child is placed on the school's waiting list.

Deferred entry for infants

Parents offered a place in reception for their child have a right to defer the date their child is admitted, or to take the place up part-time, until the child reaches compulsory school age. Places cannot be deferred beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Children reach compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents may request that their child is admitted outside their normal age group. To do so parents should include a request with their application, specifying why admission out of normal year group is being requested and the year group in which they wish their child to be allocated a place.

When such a request is made, the academy trust will make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned, taking into account the views of the headteacher and any supporting evidence provided by the parent.

Waiting lists

The school will operate a waiting list for each year group. Where the school receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate until the end of the academic year. This will be maintained by the Academy Trust and it will be open to any parent to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application.

Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list will be reordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever anyone is added to or leaves the waiting list.

Appeals

All applicants refused a place have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel constituted and operated in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code.

Appellants should contact the Office Manager at Great Ouse Primary Academy, Seaforth Gardens, Bedford, MK40 4TJ for information on how to appeal. Information on the timetable for the appeals process is on our website at www.greatouse.beds.sch.uk.

Notes:

Looked after children: A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions (see the definition in section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

A previously looked-after child is a child who was looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted immediately after being looked after.

A child 'subject to an adoption order' includes all children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976

(see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

Adopted children, for the purposes of admissions priority, also include children subject to the following orders immediately after being looked after:

A 'child arrangements order'; or

A 'special guardianship order'.

A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

Sibling

A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, stepbrother or sister or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.

Home Address

A pupil's home address will be regarded as the address of the parent/carer with parental responsibility with whom the child normally lives. This will not usually include grandparents, aunts or uncles. Where a child spends time with parents/carers at more than one address, the address used to allocate a school place will be the one at which the pupil is ordinarily resident and where the child spends the majority of the school week (Mondays to Fridays) including nights. If there is any query on the home address this will be checked against original official documentation e.g. council tax bill, a recent utility bill (gas, electricity or water), a rental agreement, child benefit annual statement or family tax credit information.

Admissions above the published admission number

The Bedford Borough Admissions Forum has agreed the following exceptions which have been adopted by the Governors and which may result in the admission number for the school being exceeded:

For the normal admissions round:

1. The admission of catchment area pupils, where the parent has expressed a preference (whether first, second or third), for the catchment school as part of the normal admissions round and in accordance with the published admissions arrangements. This is not, however, a guarantee of a place.

For in-year admissions:

2. The admission of pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs which names the school, when that pupil has either been assessed or moved into the area outside the normal admissions round.

3. The admission of pupils in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol.
4. The admission of pupils who have moved into the area, where there is no other suitable school within a reasonable travelling distance, or where the admission of an additional catchment area child would not prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources. Before admitting children under this exception, governing bodies that are their own admission authority should consult their Local Authority who will be able to advise whether the first of these conditions applies.
5. The admission of a looked after child or a previously looked after child (as defined in the School Admissions Code) outside of the normal admissions round.
6. The admission of a twin or child from multiple births.
7. The admission of a child in very exceptional circumstances in which the Local Authority and the headteacher are in agreement that not to agree to admit the child would be perverse.

In Year Admissions

Requests for admission into other year groups should be made on the 'In Year' Application Form and returned to the Local Authority. The form is available from the local authority or can be downloaded from their website.

Admission Outside Normal Age Group

In exceptional circumstances the Admissions Authority will consider agreeing to the admission of a child to a year group other than is applicable to their chronological age. This may be appropriate, for example, where premature birth has led to children falling into a year group other than would have been the case had they been carried to full term. Similarly, where decisions to allow out of age group education have been taken by previous schools it will normally be appropriate for children to remain with their established year group. Other circumstances will be considered on their merits and in all cases decisions will be taken in the best interests of the child.

All such requests should be made directly to the admissions authority at the time of application including any supporting evidence. If they are made as part of the coordinated admissions process the application form should also be completed and submitted to the local authority. If the request is approved the application will be processed in the normal way. Applications outside that process will be considered as casual admissions.

If a request is denied a place may be offered in the age-appropriate year group.

Appeals/Waiting Lists

Parents of pupils not offered a place at the school will have the right of appeal to an independent admissions appeal panel. Any child refused a place at the school will be placed on the waiting list which will be prioritised according to the admissions criteria. Waiting lists for the normal year of entry will be maintained until the end of the Autumn Term.