

Birch Hill Primary School

Admission arrangements for year 2025/26

Introductory Statement

Birch Hill is an inclusive and respectful school. In collaboration with parents, and the wider community, we work to enable all children to develop their aspirations.

We believe that teaching and learning should be inspiring. We create challenging opportunities, which encourage children to develop respectful attitudes towards learning and all members of our school community. All children are encouraged to take responsibility, think for themselves, and become independent.

The key to learning at Birch Hill is for everyone to learn, believe, achieve together.

Applications for Birch Hill Primary School will be processed according to the local authority of Bracknell Forest Council published co-ordinated scheme for 2025-2026. The scheme and the admissions arrangements will be published in the local authority composite prospectus. This is entitled 'Guide to primary education 2025 to 2026'. This guide will be available from 12 September 2024.

There is no automatic transfer from nursery to reception. Parents must still make an application to start school even if they currently attend the school nursery.

PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBER (PAN)

The school has a published admission number of 60.

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

OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

In circumstances where more applications than places are received for Birch Hill Primary School, the following criteria will be used.

Oversubscription Criteria for Birch Hill Primary School

Children with an Education Health & Care Plan that names Birch Hill Primary School must, by law, be admitted to that school. After this requirement has been satisfied, the following rules will apply:

- (1) Looked after children¹ and children who were previously looked after² but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order³,
- (2) The children of staff at Maiden Erlegh Trust whose main place of work is Birch Hill Primary School at the time of the closing date for applications, where that member of staff is the legal parent or guardian of that child, has a permanent contract to work at the school and where that member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more consecutive years at the time of the closing date for applications or the member of staff is recruited to fill a post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. The skills shortage area will be determined by the Maiden Erlegh Trust.
- (3) Children whose permanent home address is inside the designated area of the school and who have a sibling at the school at the time of application who is expected to be attending the school when the child will enter the school⁴.
- (4) Children whose permanent home address is inside the designated area of the school.
- (5) Children whose permanent home address is outside the designated area of the school and who have a sibling at the school, at the time of application who is expected to be attending the school when the child enters the school.²
- (6) Any other children.

Children must be living in the designated area at the closing date of 15 January 2025 to be considered under this criterion.

Tie Break

If there are still insufficient places, and no distinction can be made between the applicants within each of the criterion or if they do not fulfil any of the above criteria, applications will be ranked on the *radial distance* (straight line distance on a map) between the home and the school. Those living nearer to the school will be placed

¹A 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 definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

² This includes 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).

³ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

⁴ A sibling is a brother or sister (that is another child of the same parents, whether living at the same address or not), or a half brother or sister, step brother or step sister, or adopted or foster children living at the same address. It includes children who at the time of application have a sibling who the offer of a place at the school has been accepted, even if the sibling is not yet attending. Parents may indicate a sibling in Year 11 at the school provided it is the intention of the family that the child is due to continue their studies in the Sixth Form at the school.

higher than those living further away. Radial distance will be based on the co-ordinates for the property and the school as defined in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and based on the Ordnance Survey's national system. For new build properties these co-ordinates may not yet be finalised by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and therefore the co-ordinates available as of the closing date for applications will be used.

Distances are measured using direct distance calculations within a computer system. The measurement of each distance has been calculated using Pythagoras' Theorem. The way in which this is done is to calculate the distance in metres between the Easting and Northing co-ordinates for each location. The measurement in metres is then multiplied by 0.000621317 to convert this measurement to miles. The same method of calculation is used for each direct distance measured. This can be to three, four or five decimal places where necessary.

If in the event that two or more children live at the same distance from school and it cannot be separated, for example where families live in flats and there are fewer places available, then random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). The process will be drawn and scrutinised by people who are independent of the Maiden Erlegh Trust. Random allocation will not be used for multiple birth siblings (twins, triplets etc) from the same family tied for the final place.

Where demand exists, the school will admit up to their admission number and no places are reserved for pupils moving into their designated area.

APPEALS

If an application is refused, then with the refusal letter will be sent information on the right to appeal. The LA will also inform parents about the appeals process on behalf of the Maiden Erlegh Trust. All appeals must be submitted by 19 May 2025. We will then endeavour to hear all appeals submitted by this date within 40 school days.

WAITING LISTS

The local authority will maintain the school waiting list on behalf of the Maiden Erlegh Trust. Applicants not offered a place at Birch Hill Primary School will automatically be placed on a waiting list. Parents should be aware that their child's name can go up or down the waiting list according to the priority of new additions to the list; for example, someone moving into the area is placed on the appropriate place on the waiting list. Waiting lists must be maintained in criteria order at all time. The local authority will maintain the waiting list on behalf of the Maiden Erlegh Trust for the school year for which they have applied. At the end of the school year, the waiting list will end and parents will need to reapply for a place for the following year. No reminders will be sent.

LATE APPLICATIONS

Birch Hill Primary School will adopt the same process as published by the local authority in the co-ordinated scheme.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Deferred Entry**

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 5th birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on the prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March. For further information applicants should refer to the co-ordinated scheme.

- **Multiple Births**

Where the LA has received applications for twins or other multiple births and when one of the siblings is the last child to be admitted, the other sibling(s) may be admitted as an exception.

- **Home address**

The address where the child lives at the closing date of 15 January 2025 will be used to process the application. For those moving into or within the borough should refer to the Guide to Primary Education for further clarification. All addresses will be checked by Bracknell Forest using the appropriate department. If any discrepancies are found, it remains the applicant's responsibility to satisfy the Admissions Authority that they live at the address that they state. If fraud is suspected, then further proof may be requested. If fraud is established and a school place has been obtained as a result of a fraudulent application, then any offer of a school place will be withdrawn and the application considered afresh.

If a parent/carer owns a property within the Borough which they do not occupy and/or rent out and then move into another property within, or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school, then it is for the applicant to provide sufficient evidence to satisfy the Local Authority that the new address is that of the property in which they reside in, to allow that address to be used to determine any relevant criteria

If an applicant already owns and resides in a property within the borough which is in the process of being sold, Bracknell Forest is able to accept the address of the new property on submission of the appropriate evidence in support eg. a solicitor's letter showing exchange of contracts. It is for the applicant to provide sufficient evidence to satisfy the Local Authority that the new address is that of the property where the child resides.

The address used on an application must be a permanent address; temporary addresses can only be considered where evidence is provided of a genuine reason for the move. If applicants are in the process of moving house within Bracknell Forest they should contact the local authority for further advice.

- **Looked After and Previously Looked After Children**

Criteria (1) includes those children from whom a request for the allocation of a place for a child has been made and who are Looked After Children⁵ and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted⁶ (or became subject to a child arrangements order⁷ or special guardianship order⁸) immediately following having been looked after. This also includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted⁷

If a parent or LA (where relevant) wishes to apply under this criterion, it is their responsibility to ensure that all relevant paper work is submitted with the application; for example, a copy of the relevant order issued by the family court. Should a parent not submit any relevant documentation with their application, it will be assumed that the parent does not wish these circumstances to be taken in to account.

IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

Admission to other years at the school, or to the Reception class (once offers of places have been made), will depend on whether or not there are places available.

If an application is received after the academic year has started it will be treated as an 'In-Year' application. The local authority will administer all 'In-Year' applications on behalf of the Maiden Erlegh Trust.

Parents moving into the area and wishing to apply for a place at Birch Hill Primary School will need to complete the Bracknell Forest In-Year online form.

Parents wishing to transfer from a Bracknell Forest Primary school should complete the Primary School In-Year Application Form obtainable from the Headteacher of your child's current Bracknell Forest Primary school.

⁵ (1) '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 definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

⁶ This includes 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).

⁷ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

⁸ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

⁷ 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 whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

The local authority will pass on all applications to the Maiden Erlegh Trust so that it can make a decision about a place.

- **Fair Access Protocol**

The school participates in Bracknell Forest's Council's Fair Access Protocol. Children qualifying under the Fair Access Protocol may be offered a place, even if there are no places available in the relevant year group, and also take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

- **Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Where the parents of a summer born child does not wish to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday, they may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1.

The parent will be required to contact the local authority with a request (supported by evidence*) for their child to be admitted into a different year group than the relevant one according to their date of birth. This request must be made before the published closing date for their child's date of birth. It is for the parent to ensure that they have submitted all relevant documentation as no further request for information will be made to the parent.

The local authority will forward the request to Maiden Erlegh Trust for their decision regarding the request. The Maiden Erlegh Trust decision will be sent to the parent from the local authority and this decision is final.

Applications for places outside a normal age group (e.g. for gifted and talented children or those who have experienced problems or missed part of a year, for example, due to ill health) will be considered carefully. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances, taking into consideration professional advice supplied or sought. However, cases will not normally be agreed without a consensus that to do so would be in the pupil's best interest. In such cases, it is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the headteacher in advance of applying for a place. It should be noted that if a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no right of appeal.

***Evidence Required**

Consideration of these requests will include: taking account of the parents' views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional. The views of the headteacher of the school concerned and the child's current school will also be taken into account.

When informing a parent of the decision on the year group to which the child will be admitted, the parent will be notified of the reasons for the decision. The Maiden Erlegh Trust decision will be sent to the parent from the local authority and this decision is final.

The parent has a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

DEFINITIONS

- **Parent/Carer**

Parent is defined under S576 of the Education Act 1996 as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).

- **Sibling**

Refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling.

- **Designated areas/catchment areas**

A map showing the designated area of Birch Hill Primary School is available to view at the school, on the Bracknell Forest Council's website, or at a council office on request. A copy is also attached to this document.

Parents can also find out if they live in the designated area of Birch Hill Primary School on the Bracknell Forest Council's website via the 'findmynearest' link and entering their road name or postcode.