

Parents of 3 or 4 Year Old Children

Apply now for a Reception Year school place

For September 2026

Closing date for applications
15 January 2026



Contact details

Admissions Team, Council Offices, Market Street,
Newbury RG14 5LD

Office hours - 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday,
8.30am to 4.30pm Friday

Call 01635 551111 Email: admissions@westberks.gov.uk



WestBerkshire
C O U N C I L

This leaflet gives a quick summary of the process. For more information on school admissions, including information on each school in West Berkshire, go to **www.westberks.gov.uk/primary-school-admissions**

There is a detailed Admissions Guide for Parents on the website which you should read. The guide includes answers to frequently asked questions, such as what to do if you are moving house. A reference copy will also be available to read at the Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury, RG14 5LD

Making an application for a reception school place

If your child was born between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022 you should apply for a place at an Infant or Primary school.

Before you decide on the most appropriate school for your child, get as much information as possible. You should arrange to visit schools, including your catchment area school. Schools have pre-arranged days in the Autumn term for this purpose.



Consider:

- the school's aims and objectives
- standards and other achievements
- out of school activities and clubs
- information on policies such as behaviour and discipline

You might want to think about

- the importance the school places on working with parents
- whether staff have high expectations of pupils with an emphasis on each child's achievement
- how the school supports all children, particularly those with additional needs
- the range of activities available for all ages and abilities
- how the school hopes to develop over the next few years

You should think carefully about how likely it is that your child will be offered a place, bearing in mind the over-subscription rules and last year's allocation. If the schools you choose are not available, we would allocate the nearest school with spaces, but it could be some distance away. You can also look at Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) school reports on **www.ofsted.gov.uk**. You must however consider how recently the report was written.

Consider how your child would get to and from school each day, particularly if it is not your nearest school as you may not qualify for free transport. If you are a working parent you may wish to consider whether the school provides any pre-school or after school care.

What you need to do

A child's parent/carer must make the application.

If you live in West Berkshire you must fill in the West Berkshire form. **You can apply online at www.westberks.gov.uk/primary-school-admissions between 12 September 2025 and 15 January 2026.** If you live outside of West Berkshire (e.g. Reading), you must fill in the form from your local Council by their deadline.

You can name up to four schools that you would like your child to go to, and rank them in order of preference. The school that you name first should be the one you would most like your child to go to.

You can apply for any type of school, either in West Berkshire or elsewhere, except fee-paying schools. Do not apply for fee-paying schools in this way.

If you plan to list a Voluntary-Aided, Foundation, Free school or an Academy in your application, you should read the over-subscription rules for that school carefully. It is important to do this because schools of this type may use different rules to allocate their school places. They may want you to provide supplementary evidence.

A summary of the over-subscription rules for each school in West Berkshire can be found in the Primary school guide on our website at www.westberks.gov.uk/primary-school-admissions

Remember – Apply on Time

If you do not apply by the deadline you may disadvantage your child and this could affect your chances of getting a preferred school

How places are offered

- Each of your preferences will be considered with regard to the school's over-subscription criteria.
- Each admission authority, including other councils and boroughs will use their own over-subscription criteria to rank the applications. They will tell us the order of priority for admitting the children who have listed the school.
- By applying the criteria for each school to each application, a list is produced for each school that provides the order in which places will be offered. For example, if 90 applications are received for a school, applicants will be ranked from 1 – 90.
- All schools have an admission number. For example, if the admission number was 60 pupils and there were 90 applicants, the first 60 applicants from the ranked list can be offered a place.
- If more than one school place can be offered, we will look at the order of your preferences and offer your child a place at the school that you have listed highest.
- We will give each child only one offer of a place.
- We will let you know the school place we are offering by email if you apply using the online application (emailed forms are not considered to be an online application) and request to be notified by email on **16 April 2026**. We post a letter on the 16th (2nd class) if you request to be notified that way or use the alternative application form.

Special Educational Needs

Many children with special educational needs go to a local school and have some extra support to help them. If your child has (or you expect them to have) an EHC Plan, you should contact the Special Educational Needs Team by email: senassessmentteam@westberks.gov.uk

Home to School Transport

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children get to and from school at the appropriate times each day. Free school transport is only available when a child is compulsory school age which is the start of the term after their 5th birthday. Once of statutory school age your child may receive free transport to your closest school if there is no available walking route, or if it is 2 miles or more from home. You can check which school is closest using the school checker at:

www.westberks.gov.uk/school-catchment-areas

To receive free transport you must be eligible and apply once you have been offered a school place. Transport is only provided for the purpose of attending school at the beginning of the day and returning home at the end of each day. The full transport policy and application is available at: **www.westberks.gov.uk/school-transport**

Free Transport is not provided to your catchment school if it is not the closest available.

Where a child is not entitled to free home to school transport, but there are seats available on existing school buses, you may be able to pay for a seat.

Apply from 20 April to 19 June for a fare paying seat (currently £990 per year – subject to change):
www.westberks.gov.uk/farepaying-school-transport

Free School Meals To apply online go to
www.westberks.gov.uk/free-school-meals-apply