REAch2 Academy Trust consultation on 2018 admissions

St Mark’s CofE Primary Academy (admissions number – 30)

Context

REAch2 is a primary-only Academy Trust responsible for a significant number of academies including St Mark’s CofE Primary Academy in Croydon. REAch2 Trustees are consulting on a new Trust-wide admissions policy for September 2018, with the aim of providing 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.

This document sets out how that policy is proposed to work for St Mark’s, taking full account of faith-related elements agreed by the Diocese of Southwark and by St Mark’s Local Governing Body. The full draft admissions policy is in Annex A and the associated draft Supplementary Information form is in Annex B.

Key points

As the Admissions Authority for St Mark’s, the Trust proposes an approach to admissions, for September 2018 onwards, that is based on:

1. simple and fair oversubscription criteria reflecting how the school serves its local community
2. full participation in the coordinated admissions scheme run by Croydon local authority
3. alignment with Croydon 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 following over-subscription criteria¹ are proposed for St Mark’s, in order of priority:

a. Looked after children or previously looked after children i.e. children in foster care, care homes or who were before being adopted (see Note 1 in Annex A for full definition)

b. Children with siblings in the school (see ‘additional information’ in Annex A for definition)

c. Children whose parent/carer is a faithful and regular worshipper at St Mark’s Church (see Note 2 in Annex A for definition)

¹ 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.
d. **Children whose parent/carer is a faithful and regular worshipper at another Christian church** (see Notes 2 and 3 in Annex A for definitions)

e. **Children of school staff recruited to fill a skill shortage post** (see Note 4 in Annex A for details)

f. **Home-to-school distance** - so that children living closest are allocated remaining places first (see ‘additional information’ in Annex A for details).

**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) other than those permitted by the School Admissions Code in relation to religion and belief.

**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 be taken into account before any other places are allocated.

3. **Why the criterion on children of school staff filling a skill shortage post?** This could help us recruit the best possible candidates to the school at a time when staff recruitment is increasingly challenging. 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 role constitutes a skill shortage post to ensure we are using this criterion fairly and proportionately.

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

Pages 4-8  Annex A  Draft full admissions policy for St Mark’s
Pages 9-11  Annex B  Draft Supplementary Information Forum for St Mark’s
(based on Diocesan model form)

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:

REAsh2 admissions consultation (St Mark’s) – FAO Anna Thompson
C/o Scientia Academy, Mona Road, Burton Upon Trent DE13 0UF

or by emailing: info@reach2.org
ANNEX A

DRAFT ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR CONSULTATION

2018/19 School Year

INTRODUCTION

St Mark’s C of E Primary Academy is a REAch2 Academy in the Diocese of Southwark. Our Academy is a Christian learning community where individuals work together to achieve their best. It has a distinctive Christian ethos, which is at the heart of this school which provides an inclusive, caring and supportive environment where children learn and flourish in a setting shaped by Christian values.

We welcome applications from all members of the community. We ask that the school’s education is fully supported and that all parents and families respect the Christian ethos of our school and its importance to our community.

A maximum of 30 children born between 1 September 2013 and 31 August 2014 will be admitted in 2018 to the Reception class. Infant classes are legally required not to exceed this number per class.

Parents/carers who wish to apply for a place for their child under the faith-based criteria (c or d below) must complete the school’s Supplementary Information Form (SIF) (see Annex B) and return this to the School by the closing date for applications. Failure to return the SIF will mean that the school cannot consider the application under the faith-based criteria, and will consider the application under the next applicable criterion.
OVER-SUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA AND ALLOCATION OF PLACES

Where applications exceed the number of places available, the following over-subscription criteria for admission to St Mark’s C of E Primary Academy will be used in order of priority:

a. Looked after children or previously looked after children (see Note 1 below)
b. Children with siblings in the school (see ‘additional information’ section for definition)
c. Children whose parent/carer is a faithful and regular worshipper at St Mark’s Church (see Note 2 below)
d. Children whose parent/carer is a faithful and regular worshipper at another Christian church (see Notes 2 and 3 below)
e. Children of school staff recruited to fill a skill shortage post (see Note 4 below)
f. Home-to-school distance - so that children living closest are allocated remaining places first (see ‘additional information' for details).

NOTES

1. Looked after children are 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). Previously looked after children are children who were previously looked after (as per above) but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order.

2. Faithful and regular worshipper is defined as attendance of the parent/carer at worship at least fortnightly for at least two years prior to application. Clergy references will be sought through the Supplementary Information Form. In exceptional cases, a parent/carer for whom unavoidable circumstances has prevented their attending worship at least fortnightly for at least two years prior to application may be considered to be a faithful and regular worshipper; the relevant Minister will determine whether, or not, there were unavoidable circumstances. Those who have recently moved to the area and who worshipped previously in a different church will be asked to supply their previous church priest/minister’s name, so that the two year period is covered. The governors do not give a higher preference to families where both parents worship.

3. A Christian Church is one that is a full member of a local Churches Together Group, Churches Together in England, The Evangelical Alliance, Affinity Churches, or the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches.

4. This criterion applies only to employees based in the school – this does not apply to wider Trust employees who are part of REACh2 regional/central teams. Use of this criterion will be subject to confirmation by a REACh2 non-executive Regional Ambassador that, on the evidence available, the post does indeed relate to a skills shortage in the area.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This section covers technical details such as definitions where REAch2 aims to align as far as possible with arrangements made by Croydon local authority for its community schools.

Sibling

A sibling is defined as a brother or sister, half brother or sister, step brother or sister, foster-brother or sister or adopted brother or sister whose main residence is the same address as the child for whom the school place application is being made.

Home-to-school distance measurement

Distance from the school will be measured in a straight line from the centre of the child’s main home address to the designated main school entrance, using the Local Authority computerised measuring system. For shared properties (for example, children living in the same block of flats) the measurement will be taken from the designated centre of the building without reference to which unit in which the child lives.

Waiting list

A waiting list will be operated which is ordered in accordance with the over-subscription criteria. The waiting list is held until 31 December. Parents may request in writing to join the waiting list. Any late, or in-year, applications will be added to the waiting list in accordance with the admission criteria, it is therefore possible that these applicants will have a higher priority than those already on the list. If a vacancy arises, the child at the top of the waiting list will be offered a place.

Appeals

Parents/carers who are not offered a place for their child have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel. Parents/carers wishing to appeal should obtain an appeal form from the academy. The form should be sent to reach the Clerk to the Appeal panel, c/o St Mark’s C of E Academy, within 20 school days of the date of the letter confirming the decision not to offer a place. Should an appeal be unsuccessful, the governors will not consider a further application from those parents within the same academic year unless there have been significant and material changes in their circumstances.

Co-ordinated admission arrangements

The Academy is part of the locally agreed co-ordinated admission arrangements and the timescales for applications to be received and processed are those agreed with Croydon local authority. Parents must complete their home local authority’s Common Application Form and return the form to their Authority; if applying for a place at St Mark’s C of E Primary Academy, parents must name the academy as one of their preferences on the Common Application Form. On-line applications may be made via https://www.eadmissions.org.uk/eAdmissions; more information is available in your local authority’s admission booklet or on the local authority’s website.

Parents/carers who wish to apply under the religious criteria (c or d above), must also complete the Supplementary Information Form and return this to the academy by the close of the application period. Whilst not mandatory, failure to return the supplementary form will mean that the school cannot consider the application under the faith-based criteria. In this case the application will be considered under the next applicable criterion based on the information on the Common Application Form. Clergy references will be sought by the
school for applications under these criteria. Forms are available on the school website or from the school office.

**Late applications**

Late applications will be considered in accordance with the procedure in Croydon local authority’s co-ordinated scheme as published in the LA school admissions booklet.

**Special educational needs**

Parents/carers of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan are required to apply for school places separately through the local authority from whom advice is available. If a child with a statement, or EHC Plan, is placed in the school by the local authority before the normal admission round, the number of places available to other applicants will be reduced. All those pupils whose statement, or EHC Plan, names the academy will be admitted.

**Admission to other years and in-year admissions**

If parents/carers wish to apply for a place for their child at the school outside the normal admissions round (i.e. admission to other years and admission mid-year), they should complete Croydon’s in-year application form, naming the school, and submit it to the local authority together with any supporting documentary evidence, where relevant. Where applying under faith-based criteria (c or d), the school’s supplementary form should also be completed to enable governors to rank the application in the event of there being more than one application for a place.

**Education out of normal (chronological) age group**

Children are normally educated in school with others of their age group; however, in exceptional circumstances parents/carers may seek a place outside of their child’s normal age group. Decisions will be made by the Headteacher on the basis of the circumstances of each case. Parents/carers must state clearly why they feel admission to a different year group is in the child’s best interests and may provide recent professional evidence to support this. Further details of how to make such a request are available from the school.

**Deferred entry to reception class/part-time entry**

The Academy admits children to the Reception class in the September of the school year in which a child attains the age of 5 years. (The school year runs from 1 September to the 31 August.) All parents/carers are entitled to a full-time place for their child in the Reception class from September, but may defer entry until the beginning of the term after their child is five years old (i.e., when the child reaches compulsory school age) or until the beginning of the summer term whichever is earlier. Children may attend part-time until their child reaches compulsory school age. Parents/carers who have been offered a place at the school and wish to defer entry for their child and/or attend part-time must put this in writing to the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity and before the start of the autumn term. The Headteacher will decide, based on evidence about the best interests of the child, whether to accommodate the request.

**Child’s Home Address**

In the case of children who reside equally between parents, the permanent home address will be considered as the address where the child spends the majority of the time and, where relevant, with the parent who is in receipt of child benefit for the child.
Tie Break

In the event of two or more candidates being ranked equally, and living equidistant from the school, places will be allocated by drawing lots.

Notification

In accordance with their coordinated admissions policy, the local authority will write to parents in April to make a formal offer of a place at the Academy for their child. Instructions will be included within the offer letter explaining how places may be accepted.

Fair access

The School is committed to taking its fair share of pupils who are hard to place in accordance with the locally agreed fair access protocol. Pupils admitted under the protocol will take priority over any children on the waiting list and this may include, on occasion, admitting above the planned admission number.
## ANNEX B

### DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FORM FOR ADMISSION TO

ST. Mark’s C of E Primary Academy, Albert Road, South Norwood, London, SE25 4JD

**Completion instructions:** Parents should fill in this form **only** if they are applying for a place under the faith-based criteria at St. Mark’s CofE Primary Academy. The completed form should be returned direct to the Academy. Failure to return this form will result in any application being considered under the next applicable criterion.

You should ensure that you have a copy of the admission policy prior to completing the form and returning it to the Academy. You must also complete the Common Application Form available from your “home” Local Authority and name this school on that form. The Common Application Form should be returned direct to your “home” Local Authority.

Your “home” Local Authority is defined as the Local Authority where you live.

**NB:** Parents should only complete this form if they are applying for a place under the faith-based criteria.

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<th>Parent/Guardian Information</th>
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<td>Name of church which you attend:</td>
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<td>If this is not an Anglican Church please state the denomination to which your church belongs:</td>
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Do you attend church worship at least fortnightly?  Yes ☐  No ☐

Have you worshipped in this church for at least two years prior to application?  Yes ☐  No ☐

In exceptional cases, a parent/carer for whom unavoidable circumstances has prevented their attending worship at least fortnightly may be considered to be a faithful and regular worshipper; the relevant Minister will determine whether, or not, there were unavoidable circumstances. Please provide brief details below:

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If you have worshipped for less than two years at your current church please supply the name and address of your previous church and minister below, in addition to your current minister overleaf.

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4  Church Information

Name of Priest/Minister:

Address of Priest/Minister:

Post Code:

I confirm that the information given above is correct and that I have read the admission policy.

Signed:  Date:  
(Parent/guardian)
Please do not complete the Minister’s section below; your minister should complete the following section to verify the information given in paragraphs 3 and 4 above.

5 For Minister's reference only:

Can you confirm that the parent/carer is a faithful and regular worshipper of your church in the terms of our admission policy, ie, that the child or parent/carer has attended worship at least fortnightly over the previous two years prior to application? In answering the question above, you may take into account any unavoidable circumstances that have prevented the parent/carer from attending worship in your church. Yes/No

Is your church a member of either:

- a local Churches Together Group Yes/No
- Churches Together in England Yes/No
- The Evangelical Alliance Yes/No
- Affinity Churches Yes/No
- Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches Yes/No

Please supply Registration No:

NB: If a family is refused a place at the school and appeals against the governors’ decision, this form may be used as evidence at the appeal.

Signed: Date: (Minister)