

Graham James Primary Academy
The Sorrells
Stanford le Hope
Essex
SS17 7ES
(01375) 675889



Admission Arrangements 2026/27 – For School & Nursery

The school has an agreed admission number of 60 for entry to the reception year. The school will accordingly admit up to 60 pupils in the relevant year group if sufficient applications are received. All applicants will be admitted if 60 or fewer apply.

Applications for places in Reception should be made on the home Local Authority's Common Application Form. These are accessible on the Local Authority's (LA's) website and should be submitted in accordance with the LA's published deadlines for applications (normally early to mid-January before the academic year in which the child is eligible for entry) Please see further details below.

Please access the link below which shows the Thurrock admissions timetable:

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/primary-school-admissions/admissions-timetable>

If you are looking for a place in Graham James Primary Academy because you have recently moved into the area, or your child is at another primary school and you feel that a change of school would benefit their education and/or general well-being, you are entitled to apply for a school place.

Please contact Thurrock Council Admissions, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Thurrock, RM17 6SL. Tel: [01375652883](tel:01375652883) or via the admissions website at www.thurrock.gov.uk/admissions

In the event that parents of a child wish for their child to be admitted outside their normal age group, the school's Head Teacher will assist the governing body in deciding on which year group the child will enter. Once a decision has been reached, the child's parents will be informed in writing along with an explanation of how the decision has been reached, and any reasons why.

If the school is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) where the school is named in the Plan, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below in order.

Graham James Primary Academy is its own admissions authority. This means that decisions on admissions matters are made by the Academy Trust and not the Local Authority.

Oversubscription criteria

Where there are more applicants than places, the following oversubscription criteria (admission criteria) will be used for deciding which applications have priority. These criteria are set out below in the order in which they are applied.

1. Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children – Looked After Children and children previously looked after will automatically be given first priority over other categories where priority is claimed on the application form and validated by the local authority.

This includes those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

2. Siblings - Places will be offered under the sibling criterion in the following order;

I. Catchment area siblings – Children whose normal place of residence is in the catchment area of the school at the closing date for applications, and who will have a sibling at the school at the point of admission, in distance order with those living closer having higher priority.

II. Non-catchment area siblings – Children whose normal place of residence is outside the catchment area of the school at the closing date for applications and who will have a sibling at the school at the point of admission in distance order with those living closer having higher priority.

3. Children of staff – Admission of children who live with parents, carers or guardians employed by Graham James Primary Academy.

Pupils who live with parents, guardians or carers, who are employees (teaching and nonteaching, full and part time) in Graham James Primary Academy & Little J's Nursery, provided that the employee has been employed by the Academy for a minimum of one term at the date of application for admissions and/or recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage. For the purpose of allocating places, pupils mean, a child of the staff member or children of their partners. The child has to live at least 50% of the time with the staff member.

4. Catchment area children – Children whose normal place of residence is in the catchment area at the closing date for applications in distance order with those living closer having higher priority.

5. Non-catchment area children – Children whose normal place of residence is outside the catchment area at the closing date for applications in distance order with those living closer having higher priority.

Tie Breaker - Where it is necessary to distinguish between two or more addressed at the same distance from the school, random allocation will be used. The random allocation process will be independently verified.

Definitions for oversubscription criteria

Siblings

For the purpose of allocating places siblings will be defined as

- Full siblings living at the same address;
- Step siblings living at the same address;
- Half siblings living at the same address;
- Adopted brother or sister
- Long-term foster siblings living at the same address at the date of application and admission.

Distance

The distance measurement used is the shortest straight line distance from home to school. For our school the straight line distance measurement is taken from the front door of the home address to the main school gate. Addresses within the same apartment block will be regarded as a tie and resolved using the tie breaker.

Looked After Children

A 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 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.

Previously Looked After Children

Previously Looked After Children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order).

All references to previously looked after children in the School Admissions Code mean such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after and those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Application Procedure for Admission to Reception Year in September (including Late Applications)

Applications for admission to Reception Year in September are known as applications made 'in the normal admission round'.

Applications in the normal admission round are coordinated by the Local Authority for all schools in its area. This includes late applications (i.e. applications received before the first day of term September but not made in time to enable the Local Authority to offer a place on National Offer Day).

Applications in the normal admission round must be made directly to the child's home Local Authority by completing and submitting a Common Application Form (CAF), which is available to download/complete online via the child's home Local Authority's website, by the application deadline. Parents must state a preference for the Academy in the CAF.

Parents should carefully consider the oversubscription criteria stated above to determine whether other documentation must be submitted in support of the application. This documentation must be submitted to the child's home Local Authority, to arrive by the application deadline. If not, there will be a significant risk that the child will be placed in a lower oversubscription category because they were not identified as qualifying for a higher one.

The application deadline for admission to Reception year in the normal admission round is Thursday, 15th January 2026.

National Offer Day for admission to Reception Year in the normal admission round is Thursday, 16th April 2026.

Late applications (as defined above) will be processed by the Local Authority after all on-time applications have been processed, which will unfortunately reduce the chances of the child being offered a place. Parents are therefore strongly advised to submit their applications on time.

Waiting List

The Local Authority operates a waiting list for children who are unsuccessful in achieving a place in Reception Year to Year 6 for the whole of the academic year.

The waiting list is ranked strictly in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out in this policy, and not by reference to the date that the child's name was added to the list. This means that a child's name can go down as well as up the waiting list as more names are added.

6. Deferred Entry and Part-Time Attendance in Reception Year

All children are entitled to a full-time place in Reception Year in the September following their fourth birthday. Children do not, however, reach compulsory school age (CSA) until one of three prescribed dates following their fifth birthday as follows:

Born on or between: Prescribed date the child reaches CSA:

1 September and 31 December – 31st December

1 January - 31 March - 31 March

1 April and 31 August - 31 August (a whole school year later)

Parents have a right to decide that their child will not start school until they reach CSA, which is known as 'deferred entry' (or 'delayed entry' in the case of 'summer born children' - see below). The Academy has no discretion to refuse to allow this.

Where parents choose to defer entry until later in the school year, the Academy will hold their place in Reception Year for them, rather than giving it to another child, for a maximum of two terms (i.e. until the Easter end of term holiday). Places cannot be deferred or retained beyond this point.

Parents also have a right to decide that their child will attend school part-time until they reach CSA. In this case, the right can be exercised throughout the school year (i.e. all three terms), and it can also be combined with the right to defer. For example, a child born on 5 February could defer starting school until the first day of term after the Christmas and New Year break and then attend part-time until the Easter break.

Where parents want to defer their child's entry and/or choose for them to attend school part-time, they should apply for a place in the normal way and, once they have accepted the offer of a place, notify the Academy of their decision, preferably in writing. There is no need to give reasons

Delayed Entry for Summer Born Children

Children born between 1 April and 31 August (known as 'summer born children') do not reach CSA until 31 August and are therefore not legally required to start school until one school year after they became entitled to a full-time place in Reception Year.

Parents of summer born children can defer their child's place for one or two terms and/or choose for their child to attend part-time throughout the school year, as set out above. However, they cannot defer their child's place for a whole school year and still retain it. If they do not want their child to start school at all until the following year, they will need to refuse the offer of a place and apply for admission again the next year.

However, where a summer born child is admitted one school year later than usual, the default position is that this would be to Year 1 with their normal age group. This means a) they will have missed Reception Year entirely, and b) they will only achieve an offer of a place if there is one available in Year 1, which is uncommon.

Parents can, however, make a request for their child to be admitted one year later than usual, outside their normal age group, to Reception Year. The procedure for making these requests is set out below, however parents should note that, unlike with deferred/delayed entry and part-time attendance, there is no absolute right for a child to be admitted outside their normal age group - this is at the discretion of the admission authority for the school involved.

Parents are strongly encouraged to make their requests in a timely manner, preferably well ahead of any application deadlines, so that they can obtain a decision in principle which will enable them to make informed decisions when they subsequently apply for admission

The Admissions Authority will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned, taking into account the parents' views, information about the child's academic, social and emotional development, the child's medical history and the views of their medical professionals, whether they have previously been educated or attended nursery out of their normal age group, and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group, if it were not for being born prematurely. They will also take into account the views of the Headteacher of the Academy and, where provided, the Headteacher of any current or previous school. This is not an exhaustive list, and parents may put forward any matters for the Admissions Authority to consider.

The governing body recommends that parents considering delaying entry to Reception to the following September discuss this with the school before making a formal request. The school may wish to discuss how your child's needs could be met within their actual age group and the impact of being educated with children of a different age group.

If, following this discussion, parents wish to proceed with the request they should apply for a school place in your child's actual age group by the closing date of 15 January 2026 and include a written request with the application. We will then write to the parent to confirm the request has been received, and if the request is agreed by the governing body, Thurrock Council will write to the parent to confirm if they wish to proceed with the delayed admission.

If parent wishes to proceed, the application will be withdrawn, and it will be necessary to reapply for a reception place in the following year. There can be no guarantee that there will be a place available at the school as this will depend upon the number of applications and pattern of admissions in that year. If the Academy is oversubscribed, the application will be considered in accordance with the Academy's admission criteria. It is not possible to reserve a place for the following year.

Catchment Area

Our catchment area as defined by the school Trust can be found in appendix A.

Appeals

Unsuccessful applicants have a statutory right of appeal to an Independent Statutory Appeals Panel.

Legal Background

Statutory Maximum Infant Class Sizes

1. The statutory maximum infant class size for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 is 30 pupils per teacher.
 2. However, certain categories of children may still be admitted where this would result in a class size exceeding the statutory maximum. These categories are set out in regulations and summarised at Paragraph 2.15 of the Code. Where this happens, the additional pupils are 'excepted pupils' who do not count towards the class size until it falls back to 30, when they will no longer be regarded as 'excepted pupils'.
- The child would have been offered a place if the admissions arrangements had been properly implemented;
 - The child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had not been contrary to the mandatory provisions in the School Admissions Code & the School Standards & Framework Acts 1998; and/or

- The decision to refuse was not one, which a reasonable admission authority would make in the circumstance of the case.

Unless any of these circumstances apply, panels may not uphold an appeal