



Westminster Under School

POLICY ON ADMISSIONS

Westminster Under School was founded in 1943 to provide education for boys. It is also the Preparatory School to Westminster School, which has ancient origins tracing back to 1179 when the Benedictine monks of Westminster Abbey were required by Pope Alexander III to provide a small charity School. The Great School owes its survival during the dissolution of the monasteries to the intervention of Henry VIII by statute to preserve the school and also to the Royal patronage conferred by his daughter Elizabeth I when she granted the College its Royal Charter in 1560.

1. Aims of this policy

- a. To ensure compliance with the School's charitable object as a Public School for Young Persons, Westminster Under School provides independent education for boys aged between 7 and 13 (academic years 3 to 8).
- b. To set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent with this charitable object and fair to all applicants.
- c. To identify applicants whose academic and other abilities appear to match the ethos and standards of the School and whose personal qualities suggest they have the potential to contribute to the School community and benefit from the many opportunities that are offered.

2. Responsibility for Admissions

- a. The Master is responsible for admissions and for the operation of this policy. The selection criteria and interview procedure are determined and reviewed from time to time. Documents supporting each application for admission, together with selection and interview notes, are retained by the School for at least one year after the entry point, whether or not the applicant is offered a place. Each year the Governing Body reviews the admission statistics.

3. Entry Points

- a. Westminster Under School accepts about 22 boys at 7+ (Year 3), about 22 boys at 8+ (Year 4) and about 28 boys at 11+ (Year 7).
- b. The School takes the applicant's age on 1st September to determine qualification for entry at each point. For 7+ entrants their eighth birthday, for 8+ entrants their ninth birthday and for 11+ entrants their twelfth birthday should fall between 1 September and 31 August of their first academic year at the School. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Master, but the School's aim is to maintain the social cohesion of each year group. Places may occasionally be available at non-standard entry points.
- c. Overseas applicants should note paragraph 8.

4. Admissions Timetable

a. Registration

Parents may register their son for admission to Westminster Under School at 7+, 8+ and 11+ at any time but registration must have been completed by the published deadline which is generally in the October of the year preceding the point of entry. Dates are published on the School's website under Admissions:

<http://www.westminster.org.uk/the-under-school/admissions/>

5. Entrance tests and Interviews

- a. Applicants are selected for entry at each point following academic tests and interview. At 11+ all registered boys sit the ISEB Common Pre-Test in the Autumn Term prior to year of entry. This can be sat at Westminster Under School, their current school or at an alternative (approved) centre. 80 of these boys are invited back to sit written papers in English and Math. The 11+ Written Papers and 7+ and 8+ examinations fall in January and February prior to entry in September. Parents who have registered their sons will be informed by email and letter of the exact date in good time.
- b. Following the academic tests a candidate may be invited for interview if they have done well. About 45 boys at each entry point are invited back for interview.
- c. Parents who have not received a letter or email inviting their son to take the tests by the end of November in the year prior to entry should email or write to the Registrar, or telephone. The School does not take responsibility for administrative errors or letters that go astray.
- d. The aim of the academic tests and interviews is to explore a boy's current academic performance and future potential. There are tests in Mathematics, English, Verbal and Non-Verbal Reasoning. A candidate who performs strongly in these tests and who has received a satisfactory report from his present school will be invited for interview. The style of the interview, which includes further tests in reading and mathematics, is intended to be informal and natural so as to allow the boy to give of his best.
- e. Interviews will also be conducted in such a way that boys who are not offered a conditional place will not feel that they have failed. Parents are encouraged to make their sons feel that the family is making its own decision about the most appropriate school for them.
- f. Experienced and senior members of the academic staff conduct the interviews. The interviews do not include questions that imply racial or religious bias and they are conducted in an objective manner.

6. Selection

- a. Following the tests and interview, and the receipt of a report from the selected applicant's current head teacher, an offer letter is sent to parents. A place must be accepted and the deposit paid by the date specified in the offer letter which is generally in mid February for 7+ and 8+ and early March for 11+ in the year of entry. If payment has not been made by that time the School reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place.
- b. Offers of a place at every entry point are made in writing and separate letters are sent at the same time to the applicant's present school.
- c. The pre-conditions for admission are that:
 - 1) The applicant is of the appropriate age and sufficient maturity.
 - 2) The applicant is able to attend School on a regular basis
 - 3) The applicant's learning difficulties and other special needs (if any) can, in the opinion of the Master, be managed with the provision of reasonable adjustments under the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Act 2015.

- 4) Westminster Under School will accept pupils whose first language is not English, but lessons move at a fast pace and a pupil who did not speak good English would not cope, so proficiency in English will be assessed to ensure an applicant has the minimum necessary skills. All pupils experiencing difficulty with their work can receive help from the member of staff with responsibility for Learning Enrichment.
 - 5) The present school reports satisfactory attitudes and conduct on the part of the parents and applicant.
 - 6) Fees (if applicable) at the present school have been paid and the parents are able, if required, to satisfy the Master that they are in a position to pay the fees for Westminster Under School. Admissions will be in accordance with the School's Policy on Equal Opportunities (Pupils). The Governing Body of Westminster School recognises its responsibilities under the Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2015), which established the right for disabled students not to be discriminated against in education.
- d. Boys who are not offered an immediate place may be placed on the waiting list.
 - e. The School is not obliged to state its reasons for rejection of an applicant.

7. Scholarships & Bursaries

- a. The School does not offer academic scholarships.
- b. A small number of Music Scholarships are awarded each year at 11+ (Year 7) based on an applicant's musical ability determined by audition. The value of a Music Scholarship will be between 10% and 25% of the day fee and will last for two years.
- c. Means-tested bursaries up to 100% of the fees are available for boys entering Westminster Under School at 11+ from state primary schools and other schools according to financial need. Bursary forms will be issued during the 11+ entry process.
- d. Bursaries are not awarded to overseas applicants, nor to applicants whose parents are not citizens of the UK or EU, nor where the family home at the time of selection is not in London. The definition of an overseas applicant for the purposes of bursary awards is any applicant whose main family home is not in the UK. Where for example a father (or mother) lives and works abroad and is not a UK national but the mother (or father) has residence (whether temporary or indefinite) in the UK but is not a UK citizen, then a bursary will not be awarded. The family home must also be in London. Parents who elect to move to London in order to educate their son at the Under School will not qualify for a bursary. Where there is any doubt, the School Bursar should be consulted.

8. Overseas Applicants

- a. Westminster Under School is a day school which does not offer boarding. The School will not accept applications from overseas unless at least one parent is resident at all times in London and the boy is able to commute daily from his home to School.
- b. Overseas pupils whose parents are citizens of countries in the European Economic Area or of Switzerland do not require visas to study in the United Kingdom. Parents who are citizens of other countries will require a visa as will their son.
- c. Westminster School is licensed by the *United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI)* to sponsor pupils who require visas to study in the United Kingdom. Subject to the conditions at 8a above being met, the School will issue a 'confirmation of acceptance for studies' (CAS) reference number to a pupil requiring a visa if he has been offered and has accepted a place to study at Westminster Under School.
- d. It is the responsibility of the parents of the pupil requiring such a visa to apply to *United Kingdom Visas and Immigration* at the appropriate time and with the correct documentation, and to inform Westminster Under School that an application is being made. Parents should be aware that visas take up to 28 days to obtain so sufficient time should be allowed. Parents should also be aware that any error made on a visa application

will lead to its rejection by UKVI and the CAS being invalidated. This will necessitate the whole process being repeated. Great care should therefore be taken.

- e. Visas will be checked by UKVI at the UK port of entry and also by the School prior to entry with a copy held on file. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their son holds a valid visa for his entire time at School. If his visa runs out, or if the resident parent's visa expires, he will be required by UKVI to return to his country of origin.
- f. A new CAS will be issued in good time for a new visa application to be made covering a boy's time at the Great School (13+/Year 9). If the boy goes on to another school, they will issue a CAS.
- g. All enquiries about visa applications should be made to the Registrar. Only the Master of Westminster Under School is authorised to sign a letter supporting a pupil's, or prospective pupil's, application for a visa in the UK.
- h. Westminster Under School will at all times comply with the rules and procedures of the *United Kingdom Visas and Immigration*.