



WESTMINSTER UNDER SCHOOL

Admissions Policy

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Approved by:	SMT
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Introduction

Westminster Under School was founded in 1943 to provide education for boys. It is also the main feeder 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. Since its inception in 1943 the Under School has gone from strength to strength and we are now one of the leading academic prep schools in the country with each year the vast majority of our pupils gaining their first choice of school, the majority of pupils to Westminster School, with a few each year to Eton College or Winchester College.

Aims of this policy

- To ensure compliance with the School’s charitable object as a Public School for Young Persons, Westminster Under School provides independent education for pupils aged between 7 and 13 (Year 3 to Year 8).
- To set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent with this charitable object and fair to all applicants.
- To identify applicants whose academic 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.

Responsibility for Admissions

The Master has overall responsibility for admissions and for the operation of this policy. Other members of staff significantly involved in the process of admissions include, but are not limited to, the Registrar, the Deputy Master, the Assistant Master (Academic), the Assistant Master (Teaching and Learning), the Heads of Mathematics and English and the Head of Juniors. The selection criteria and interview procedure are set and reviewed regularly and each year the School's Governing Body reviews the admission statistics.

At the 11+ entry point, senior members of staff from Westminster School, such as the Registrar and the Head Master, are also involved in the overall selection process.

Entry Points

The School accepts approximately 22 pupils at 7+ (Year 3), approximately 22 pupils at 8+ (Year 4) and approximately 30 pupils at 11+ (Year 7) though numbers naturally vary slightly from year to year - the overriding concern is that the school would be a good fit for any pupil coming here.

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 1st September and 31st August of their first academic year at the School.

Places may very occasionally be available at non-standard entry points, normally at the beginning of Year 5 and/or Year 6. The Registrar should be contacted with any queries.

Overseas applicants should take particular note of the final section in this policy.

Admissions Timetable and Process

7+ & 8+ Entry

Parents may register their children for admission to Westminster Under School at 7+ and 8+ 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, e.g. October 2020 for a September 2021 start. Dates are published on the Admissions' section of the School's website. A registration fee is payable which is currently £150. No late applications after the closing deadline has passed can be accepted.

However, **there is no advantage** in registering months or years earlier and parents are strongly advised to speak to their existing School's headteacher with regard to whether the Under School would likely be a suitable place for their child.

The 7+ and 8+ examinations currently fall in January prior to entry in September, e.g. January 2021 for a September 2021 entry. Parents who have registered their children will be informed by email the exact date, in good time. If there were to be any parents who have not received a letter inviting their son to take the tests by the second week of November they are requested to email or to telephone the Registrar. The School does not take responsibility for administrative errors, letters that go astray or emails that are not delivered.

The aim of the academic tests and interviews is to explore an applicant's current academic performance and future potential. There are tests in Mathematics, English, Verbal and Non-Verbal Reasoning. Following the academic tests, an applicant may be invited for a further morning or afternoon at the Under School if they have done well. About 60 applicants at both 7+ and 8+ entry points are invited back. This usually includes some whole-class teaching with other candidates, some further testing in English and Mathematics and an interview, usually in small groups. The style of the session is intended to be informal, natural and welcoming so as to allow the candidate to shine and for them to see what the school is like on a normal day. Various members of staff are involved in these days, both from the Junior department, who teach these year groups on a daily basis, to senior members of staff who conduct the interviews.

The aim of these days is to conduct them in such a way that applicants who are not offered a place will not feel that they have failed. Parents are strongly encouraged to make their children feel that the family is making its own decision about the most appropriate school for them.

11+ Entry

Parents may register their child for admission to the Under School at 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, e.g. October 2020 for a September 2021 start. Dates are published on the Admissions' section of the School's website. A registration fee of £150 is payable. This fee can be waived for candidates who are judged eligible for a bursary. No late applications after the closing deadline has passed can be accepted.

Please note that applying for both 11+ at Westminster Under School and at 13+ for Westminster School is not permitted. Pupils who enter Westminster Under School at the 11+ stage are deemed to have qualified for a place at Westminster School without further test or interview but subject to satisfactory work and behaviour. It is expected that all pupils accepted at 11+ will transfer to Westminster School.

The first stage of the 11+ process is for candidates to take the Independent Schools Examination Board (ISEB) Common Pre-Tests in English, Mathematics and Reasoning. This is used in many other independent schools and saves the candidates from having to do similar tests multiple times. In many cases this electronic test can be completed in the candidates's existing school but the candidate can also take it at the Under School should their existing school not provide this.

Following the tests, they may then be invited to the School for some further written testing in English and Mathematics only, which usually takes place on a Saturday morning in the middle of January followed by an interview with a senior member of staff, often later in January or early February. The head teacher of their present school will also be asked to send a report.

Parents who have not received a letter inviting their child to take the tests by the second week of November they are requested to email or to telephone the Registrar. The School does not take responsibility for administrative errors, letters that go astray or emails that are not delivered.

We reserve the right to make changes to the form of any of these assessments, for example where the school is required to close its physical premises or visitors are not permitted in school (as was the case during the January 2021 national lockdown). Where practicable, we will give appropriate notice of planned changes to assessment arrangements.

Selection at 7+, 8+ and 11+

Following the various tests and the interview, and the receipt of a report from the selected applicant's current head teacher, the candidates are considered and an offer letter is sent to parents of pupils who have been successful, usually quickly after the further testing for 7+ and 8+ entry points and before February half term for the 11+ entry point.

Applicants who are not offered an immediate place may be placed on a waiting list – the Registrar will get in contact with you should a place become available. The School is not obliged to state its reasons for rejection of an applicant. Documents supporting each applicant's application for admission, together with 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.

For those parents receiving an offer, a place must be accepted, and the appropriate fees 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. Deposits are held until the pupil leaves the school, or if transferring to Westminster School, the deposit is transferred to them. Should a parent subsequently decide not to take up the place offered, the Deposit may be withheld in whole or in part to offset the genuine estimate by the School of the loss it will suffer by the parents failing to honour the contract with the School.

The pre-conditions for admission are that:

- i. The applicant is of the appropriate age and sufficient maturity.
- ii. The applicant attends School following the published term dates and school hours.
- iii. 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.
- iv. The School accepts pupils whose first language is not English, and indeed many pupils speak two or three languages fluently, but lessons move at a fast pace and a pupil who

did not speak good English could struggle, so proficiency in English will be assessed to ensure an applicant has the minimum necessary skills.

- v. The present school states satisfactory attitudes and conduct on the part of the parents and the pupil.
- vi. Fees (if applicable) at the present school have been paid and the parents are able, if required, to satisfy the Bursar that they are in a position to pay the ongoing fees for Westminster Under School.

All admissions will be in accordance with the School's Policy on Special Educational Needs and Disability. The Governing Body of Westminster School is committed to 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.

Siblings Policy

Westminster Under School does not operate a siblings' policy and places are awarded solely on the basis of performance in the assessments described in this document.

Transfer from Westminster Under School to Westminster School

Pupils who join the Under School in Years 3 to 6 inclusive are assessed for 13+ entry by Westminster School during the course of Year 6. The assessment takes the same form as that for entry to the Under School at 11+:

- i. the ISEB Common Pre-Test is taken during the Play Term of Year 6;
- ii. all Under School pupils are then invited to take Westminster School's 13+ entry tests in English and Maths, normally in the Lent Term of Year 6;
- iii. all Under School pupils are also interviewed.

Most Under School pupils will then receive an unconditional offer for entry to Westminster School at 13+. As a result, there is no requirement to take a further examination in Year 8 (though very able pupils may choose to sit the Challenge scholarship exam), and transfer to Westminster School is automatic subject to continued academic progress and good conduct.

If a pupil's results in the 13+ assessments fall below the required standard for external candidates, then on the recommendation of the Master and Head Master the pupil will be put on review, in order to monitor progress. A final decision about whether or not a pupil on review may transfer to Westminster School is normally made in the Lent Term of Year 7, after a formal assessment of their progress. This assessment may include an updated reference, the sharing of internal exam results or further testing at the discretion of Westminster School. At this stage, another year of review may be advised, or the pupil could be offered an unconditional place.

Since pupils who join the Under School in Year 7 follow the same assessment process in order to gain their places at 11+, they will normally transfer automatically to Westminster School

without further formal assessment, subject only to continued academic progress and good conduct.

Fees

There are three current fees for admission to the school: a registration fee to register your child for the initial assessments, an entrance fee on acceptance and an acceptance deposit, refundable at request at the start of the academic year after leaving Westminster Under School (if not transferring to Westminster School) or after leaving Westminster School.

Registration fee	£150
Acceptance deposit for 7+ and 8+	£1,000
Acceptance deposit for 11+	£3,000

Fees for those families who are applying for a bursary place are different and can be discussed in detail with the Registrar or the Bursar.

Scholarships & Bursaries

The School does not offer academic scholarships.

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 10% of the day fee and will last for two years, i.e. until the pupil leaves the Under School.

Means-tested bursaries up to 100% of the fees, including a travelling and uniform allowance, are available for pupils entering Westminster Under School at 11+ according to financial need. Any parent applying for a place at 11+ with a bursary must indicate this at the time of the main application, with the first step being the satisfactory completion of 'Part A' documentation before the October deadline. 'Part B', a full financial overview of the family's finances, must be completed strictly before the published deadline. More information can be found from the Registrar or in the '*Bursary information for Parents Applying for an Academic Bursary*' document.

Means-tested bursaries are available for pupils entering the School where one parent falls into one of the following categories:

- British citizens in possession of a British passport (The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).
- Citizens of the EEA or Switzerland, as defined by the UKVI, in possession of an EEA or Swiss passport or ID. See website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration
- Has indefinite leave to remain in the UK

Parents should consult UKVI website for a detailed explanation of the criteria established by the United Kingdom. These criteria are used by the School. Parents who qualify under the above criteria must also live inside the M25 London orbital motorway. The expectation is that their child will commute from home to School each day.

Bursaries are not available to children of parents who:

- i. are in the UK on a visa (general, student, child, business, special or medical) or entering the UK under Tier 2 or Child Student Visa (Tier 4 UKVI Points Based System); or
- ii. live outside the M25 London orbital motorway.

Overseas Applicants

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 pupil is able to commute daily from his home to School.

Westminster Under School will at all times comply with the rules and procedures of the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration. We can no longer accept any applications at Westminster Under School on a Tier-4 Visa.