Darrington Church of England Primary School

Headteacher: Mr C Lunn, BA (Hons) NPQH; NPQSENCO

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26th November 2026

To whom it may concern,

The governing body of Darrington CofE respectfully requests that Wakefield Council considers amending the oversubscription criteria applying to admissions to our school.

We propose the introduction of additional priority categories for children who attend Darrington CofE Nursery, to apply within the existing criterion.

1. Proposed change

We propose inserting the following criterion highlighted in red:

(a) (i) Looked after Children, all previously Looked after Children and Children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in care as a result of being adopted.

This refers to children who are:

- Subject to a care order made by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – for the courts to grant a care order they have to be satisfied that a child is suffering or would suffer 'significant harm' without one;
- Children who are accommodated by the Local Authority on a voluntary basis under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989;
- Children who have been adopted from Local Authority care, children who are subject to a Child Arrangements Order and those with special guardianship immediately following being Looked After will all be included within the higher priority for Looked after Children;
- A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society (see section 23ZZA (8) of the Children Act 1989 (inserted by section 4 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017) *(see explanatory note 16.2);*

(b) Children who live in the school's catchment area, who have brothers or sisters attending the school at the time of admission **and who attend the school's nursery** for at least one term prior to the application deadline date and for a minimum of 15 hours per week. *(see explanatory note 16.3);*

(c) Children who live in the school's catchment area, who have brothers or sisters attending the school at the time of admission *(see explanatory note 16.3);*

(d) Other children who live in the school's catchment area **and who attend the school's nursery** for at least one term prior to the application deadline date and for a minimum of 15 hours per week. *(see explanatory note 16.3);*

(e) Other children who live in the school's catchment area

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(f) Children who have brothers or sisters in attendance at the school **and who attend the school's nursery** for at least one term prior to the application deadline date and for a minimum of 15 hours per week. *(see explanatory note 16.3);*

(g) Children who have brothers or sisters in attendance at the school.

(h) Other children, with priority being given to those **and who attend the school's nursery** for at least one term prior to the application deadline date and for a minimum of 15 hours per week.

(i) Other children, with priority being given to those living nearest to the school *(see explanatory note 16.5).*

If more applicants fall within (b),(d),(f) or (h), than remaining available places the priority within that category should be determined by the time in attendance of Darrington CE Primary school nursery and then subsequently by distance in accordance with Wakefield Council's normal admissions requirements.

2. Definition of nursery attendance

For the proposed criterion to be clear and capable of consistent application, we suggest that "attend Darrington CofE Nursery" should mean:

A child who is registered at and regularly attends the nursery provision at Darrington CofE starting in September of the application year. (1 term before) and who will apply for a Reception place at the school for the relevant admission year. E.g. Children who are attending the school's nursery on 1st September in the academic year preceding admission and who apply for a Reception place at the school."

The governing body would welcome the Council's advice on the appropriate qualifying date and whether the criterion could apply to:

- children attending the school's maintained nursery;
- children attending the nursery through funded or paid sessions; and
- children attending part-time or full-time.

3. Rationale

The governing body believes that this amendment would support the following objectives.

Continuity for children

Children already attending the school's nursery would have a clearer route into Reception at the same school. This would provide continuity of education, relationships, routines and pastoral support at an important transition point.

Stability for families

Families using the school's nursery currently have no additional priority for a Reception place unless they also fall within another admissions category. The proposed criterion would make the relationship between the nursery and the main school more coherent and predictable.

Better transition planning

Nursery staff already know the children's needs, development and circumstances. Giving appropriate priority to nursery children where needed would support more effective transition planning between nursery and Reception, including communication with parents and relevant professionals.

Efficient use of school provision

The proposed change would strengthen the connection between the school's early-years provision and its Reception intake. It would help the school plan transition activity and make fuller use of the nursery as part of the school's overall early-years offer.

Limited effect on existing priorities

The proposed inserted criterion would sit below all existing priorities. It would therefore preserve the current priority given to looked-after and previously looked-after children. The order of existing criterion would remain the same with the exception that nursery attendance raises the priority.

4. Equality and fairness

The governing body recognises that admission arrangements must be fair, objective, transparent and compliant with the School Admissions Code and equality legislation.

The proposed criterion would apply equally to all children who meet the defined nursery-attendance requirement. The governing body would not seek to give priority based on:

- whether nursery sessions are funded or paid for;
- parental employment;
- a child's ability, attainment or behaviour; or
- any other subjective consideration.

5. Conclusion

The governing body considers that a carefully defined nursery-priority criterion would provide greater continuity for children and families while preserving the general existing higher-priority categories.

We would welcome the Council's initial view on the proposal and, if appropriate, the opportunity to develop wording suitable for formal consultation and determination.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Lunn
Headteacher
Darrington CE Primary School