

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you with an update on some changes that we are making to our 4+ Admissions Policy and Process with effect for entry into Reception in September 2024 onwards. Over the course of the last few months, we have undertaken a review of how we offer places into our Reception classes and welcome new families into the school. Given the temporary changes we were required to make to our admissions process during the pandemic – we ran a ballot for entry into Reception 2021 and Reception 2022 – we felt it was important to look carefully at the merits of our existing process and consider what best serves our school community moving forwards.

At the time we moved to the ballot process, our prediction was that we would be able to successfully meet the needs of a cohort selected without assessment, as a result of the faith we have in the expertise of our teachers and strengths of our approach to teaching and learning across the Junior School. As our two ballot cohorts have now moved through the early years of school and we have been able to measure their progress, we wanted to explore this in more detail and better understand the impact of the changes brought about by the pandemic.

The review we conducted considered several factors, including comparative studies of ballot entry cohorts against assessed entry cohorts, investigating the reliability of the 4+ assessment process as a predictor of academic performance throughout the Junior School and in the Senior School 11+ examinations, researching the changes in the admissions policies amongst local competitor schools and collecting feedback from prospective families.

The conclusions of the review can be summarised as follows:

Our research shows that, so far, there are no statistically significant differences in the average performance or the range of attainment in the pupils recruited into the school at 4+ as part of the ballot process compared with the assessment process. This is evidenced at the point of baseline assessment into Reception, assessment against the statutory Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception and the baseline assessments conducted at the beginning of Key Stage 1. Furthermore, when exploring the correlation between rank performance in the 4+ assessment process and academic performance at both the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) and Key Stage 2 (Year 6, 11+) over the past five years, our data does not indicate a reliable correlation between high performance in the 4+ and 11+ assessments. On this basis, it is now our firm belief that it is the quality of the educational experience across the Junior School that makes the real difference in the longer-term attainment and academic performance of our pupils at the end of Year 6 and as they move across into Senior School, rather than the efficacy of the 4+ assessment process which attempts to identify pupils with high potential aged 3.

Whilst not a determining factor in our policy making, our review also revealed a sea-change in the admissions processes amongst many of our local competitor schools and schools with comparable academic outcomes across the city. Our research shows that our current timeline for 4+ applications and offer-making is out of sync with other schools that often attract applications from prospective WHS families. This means that in an increasing number of cases, prospective WHS families are receiving offers for other schools many months in advance of our assessment process taking place.

The feedback we have collected from prospective parents who have visited the school or enquired about our admissions process over the past twelve months has also raised a number of questions about why WHS offers are not made until the end of January of the year in which a new pupil starts Reception. With the possibility of securing a 4+ place at a desired school at, in some cases up to eighteenth months ahead of starting school, we cannot ignore the appeal a confirmed school place offers families who are keen to plan ahead and know what to expect for their daughter. Whilst we continue to enjoy a strong level of oversubscription to the school at 4+, we are acutely aware of the ongoing need to ensure that we create an appealing, child-centred experience for future WHS families. The new timeline will allow us to invite families back in at least once a term, having accepted a place at WHJS, which will help with building familiarity and the settling-in process.

After sharing the findings of our review and following consultation with both our local Board of Governors and the GDST, I can now confirm that from Reception 2024, entry into the Junior School at 4+ will be by ballot rather than assessment and a sibling policy will automatically allocate places to the siblings of Junior and Senior School pupils. An outline of the timeline to which we will be working is provided overleaf, along with a link to our new Admissions Policy that outlines the arrangements in place for managing pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language and other extenuating matters. It should be noted that the award of occasional vacancy places for all other year groups will continue to be through academic assessment.

If you have any queries about the changes outlined above, please do not hesitate to contact to Claire van der Merwe, Junior School Admissions Officer, in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,

Claire Boyd

Head of Junior School

4+ Admissions Timeline – for entry into Reception 2024

Register your daughter

★ Parents are welcome to register their daughter from birth (although no priority is given to early registrants) up until the publicised deadline at the end of September.

Visit Wimbledon High School

★ Parents must have visited the school at least once for their daughter to be considered for entry into the Ballot Draw for her cohort – we hold regular open days throughout the Spring, Summer and Autumn terms.

September 2023

Confirm your daughter's Registration

★ Before the registration deadline at the end of September, we'll be in touch with you to ask you to confirm your daughter's registration for the ballot.

October 2023

Ballot Draw

- ★ Siblings of children already attending WHS will receive offers.
- ★ All other candidates are entered into the Ballot draw which will take place in early October. Offers are made for the remaining places and a waiting list is formed.
- ★ Those receiving offers have around two weeks to accept.

January 2024

Stay and Play Mornings

★ Girls who have accepted places are invited to the school for an informal play time in the classroom, which parents are welcome to stay for.

July 2024

Induction Morning

★ Girls are invited to join some fun activities in the Reception classroom with their new teacher and classmates. Parents will meet the Head of Juniors and other Key Leadership staff.

September 2024

The WHS Journey begins!

Please visit our website for full details of our [Admissions Policy](#).