

## **ST. BERNARD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **ADMISSION POLICY FOR SEPTEMBER 2026 ADMISSION**

The number of places available for admission to the Reception Class each year is 30

The Governors welcome applications from Catholic and Non-Catholic parents who would like their children educated within the aims and ethos of Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi Academy Trust and **St. Bernard's** Catholic Primary School.

The **closing date** for applications for a place in the reception class in September 2026 is **15th January 2026**. The **offer date** is **16th April 2026**

#### **Online applications**

Applications for a place in reception at September 2026 must be made online at [School admissions - Lancashire County Council](#) with Lancashire County Council.

Parents who wish to seek priority for baptised Catholic children (or parents who are members of other faith communities) should also complete the school's **Supplementary Information Form (SIF)**. The Supplementary Information Form is to be returned to the school.

#### **Oversubscription in our Catholic school**

St. Bernard's Catholic Primary School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will be given to Catholic children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below. The school is conducted by its academy company as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its trust deed and articles of association, and seeks at all times to be a witness to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. At a Catholic school, Catholic doctrine and practice permeate every aspect of the school's activity. It is essential that the Catholic character of the school's education be fully supported by all families in the school. We therefore hope that all parents will give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school. This does not affect the right of an applicant who is not Catholic to apply for and be admitted to a place at the school in accordance with these admission arrangements.

The academy company is the admission authority and has responsibility for admissions to this school. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round<sup>1</sup>. The admission authority has set the school's Published Admissions Number ("PAN") at **30** pupils to be admitted to the reception year in the school year which begins in September, **2026**

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<sup>1</sup> This is for admission to the school at the start of the school year in September and not for applications made in-year.

The admission authority will, where logistically possible, admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last child ranked within the school's PAN.

### **Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (see note 1)**

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school must be admitted. Where this takes place before the allocation of places under these arrangements this will reduce the number of places available to other children.

### **Oversubscription Criteria**

*Where there are more applications for places than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority. **(Please note points (i) and (ii) underneath the criteria list below).***

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after children. (see notes 2&3)
2. Catholic children who are resident in the parish of St. John Paul II (see notes 3&11)
3. Other Catholic children. (see note 3)
4. Other looked after and previously looked after children. (see note 2)
5. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. (see notes 4&5)
6. Children of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion. (see note 6)
7. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a religious leader. (see note 7)
8. Any other children.

***Within each of the categories listed above, the following provisions will be applied in the following order.***

- (i) Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can most appropriately be met at this school, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made. (see note 10)
- (ii) The attendance of a brother or sister at the school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within each category so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made after children in (i) above (see note 8).

### **Tie Break**

Where there are more applicants for the available places within a category, then the distance between the Ordnance Survey address points for the school and the home measured in a straight line will be used as the final determining factor, nearer addresses having priority over more distant ones. This address

point is within the body of the property and usually located at its centre. Where two addresses have the same distance, or the cut-off point is for addresses within the same building, then the Local Authority's system of a random draw will determine which address(es) receive the offer(s).

### **Application Procedures and Timetable**

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round<sup>2</sup>, you must complete a Common Application Form available from the local authority in which you live ([School admissions - Lancashire County Council](#)). You are also requested to complete the Supplementary Information Form attached to this policy if you wish to apply under oversubscription criteria 1 to 4 or 6 to 8. The Supplementary Information Form should be returned to **St. Bernard's Catholic Primary School** by **15<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on 16<sup>th</sup> April or the next working day, by the local authority on our behalf. If you are unsuccessful (unless your child gained a place at a school you ranked higher) you will be informed of the reasons, related to the oversubscription criteria listed above, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

***If you do not provide the information required in the SIF and return it by the closing date, together with all supporting documentation, your child may not be placed in criteria 1 to 4 or 6 to 8, and this may affect your child's chance of being offered a place.***

**All applications which are submitted on time will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026.**

### **Late Applications**

Applications for school places which are received late will not necessarily be dealt with at the same time as those received by the set deadline. The reasons for a late application may be requested and where these are not exceptional the relevant admission criteria will be initially applied to all others received on time. The late application will be dealt with after this process.

Application forms received after the published closing date, will only be considered at that time if the following conditions apply:

- a) if the number of preferences received for the school is below the published admission number or:
- b) there are extenuating circumstances justifying a late application.

These may include:

- (a) parents moving into the County after the closing date;
- (b) parent/carer illness which required hospitalisation for the major part of the period between the publication of the composite prospectus and the closing date for applications.

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<sup>2</sup> This is for admission to the school at the start of the school year in September and not for applications made in-year.

## **Admission of Children Below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry**

A child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. A child's parents may defer the date at which their child, below compulsory school age, is admitted to the school, until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which an offer was made. A child may take up a part-time place until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school, as soon as possible, that they wish to either defer their child's entry to the school or take up a part-time place.

## **Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group**

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of a summer born child, i.e. a child born between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August, may request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to reception rather than year 1.

Any such request should be made in writing to **the Governing Body** at the same time as the admission application is made. The admission authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the head teacher, including the head teacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the admission authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate.

## **Waiting Lists**

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful children will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and **not** in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Waiting lists for admission will operate throughout the school year. The waiting list will be held open until 20<sup>th</sup> July 2027.

**Inclusion in the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.**

## **In-Year Applications**

In-year admission is the process of applying for a school place during the school year. Any applications for the intake made after the start of the autumn term will be treated as an in-year application.

The in-year admission process is managed by the school. Parents are required to complete the in-year application form, which is available from the school website <https://www.st-bernards.lancs.sch.uk>

Applications should be made to the school by contacting **the headteacher head@st-bernards.lancs.sch.uk**

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out above, will be applied. If there are no places available, the child will be added to the waiting list (see above). You will be advised of the outcome of your application in writing.

Where a place cannot be secured, parents will be offered a legal right of appeal to an independent appeal panel. Lancashire County Council administers the appeals process on behalf of the school. Parents can complete the school's [appeal form](#) on Lancashire County Council's website.

### **Fair Access Protocol**

The school is committed to taking its fair share of children who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admission round the admission authority is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol. The admission authority has this power, even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the PAN (subject to the infant class size exceptions).

### **Fraudulent Applications**

The admission authority reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, where a child is already attending the school itself, where it is satisfied that the offer or place was obtained by deception.

### **Nursery<sup>3</sup>**

For children attending the school's nursery, application to the reception class of the school must be made in the normal way, to the home local authority. **Attendance at the school's nursery does not automatically guarantee that a place will be offered at the school.**

### ***Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)***

1. An Education, Health and Care Plan is a plan made by the local authority under section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014, specifying the special educational provision required for a child.
2. A 'looked after child' has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any child who is (a) in the care of a local authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by them in the exercise of their social services functions (e.g. children with foster parents) at the time of making an application to the school.

A 'previously looked after child' is a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because he or she was adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. Included in this definition are those children who appear (to the admission authority) to

have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

3. 'Catholic' means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of baptism in a Catholic Church or a certificate of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church. For the purposes of this policy, it includes a looked after child living with a family where at least one of the parents is Catholic.

For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception into the Church will be required. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism should contact their Parish Priest who, after consulting with the Diocese, will decide how the question of baptism is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.

4. 'catechumen' means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of reception into the order of catechumens.
5. 'Eastern Christian Church' includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church.
6. "children of other Christian denominations" means children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledge God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and, in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves: to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is His body; and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. An ecclesial community which on principle has no credal statements in its tradition, is included if it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and is committed to working in the spirit of the above.

All members of Churches Together in England and CYTŪN are deemed to be included in the above definition, as are all other churches and ecclesial communities that are in membership of any local Churches Together Group (by whatever title) on the above basis.

7. "children of other faiths" means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' at 6 above and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:
  - A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and
  - A religion which does not involve belief in a God.

Case law has identified certain characteristics which describe the meaning of religion for the purposes of charity law, which are characterised by a belief in a supreme being and an expression of belief in that supreme being through worship.

8. 'brother or sister' includes:

- (i) all natural brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters, whether or not they are living at the same address; and
  - (ii) the child of a parent's partner where that child lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same home address as the child who is the subject of the application.
9. A 'parent' means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for a child, and any person who has care of a child.
10. To demonstrate an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the admission authority will require compelling written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest.
11. A child's "home address" refers to the address where the child usually lives with a parent or carer, and will be the address provided in the Common Application Form ("CAF"). Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives for part of the week with each parent, the home address will be the address given in the CAF, provided that the child resides at that address for any part of the school week. This will normally be the one where the child wakes up for the majority of school days (Monday to Friday). Proof of residence may be requested at any time throughout the admissions process.

## ADMISSION TO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS – LANCASTER DIOCESE

This completed Supplementary Information Form will assist our Governors rank your application in line with our Admission Policy.

CHILD'S SURNAME		CHILD'S FORENAME	
DATE OF BIRTH		HOME ADDRESS	
PARENT / CARER NAME			
CONTACT NUMBER			
PARENT / CARER EMAIL ADDRESS			

Name(s) of any sibling(s) who will be attending St Bernard's at time of the applicant's planned admission in September 2026 including brother / sister, half-brother /sister, Step brother/sister, foster & and/or adopted children living in the same family at the same address			
Is your child baptised Catholic? Please ensure a copy of Baptismal Certificate is sent into School if applicable			
Child's Church of Baptism		Date of Baptism	

**New Primary Reception Place.**

Please ensure you apply online too on Lancashire County Council's website [www.lancashire.gov.uk/schools](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/schools) & return this form to St. Bernard's Catholic Primary School, Victoria Park Avenue, Lea, Preston.  
PR2 1RP by 15 January 2026.