

Frequently Asked Questions following 2024 Admissions Policies Consultation

How will the school ensure it maintains its academic excellence?

Selection to the school is still based on academic ability and the need to achieve the pass mark in all areas. Those who are selected for entry under the Sporting Aptitude criteria will still have had to achieve the pass mark in the entrance tests.

How will the school ensure that the sporting aptitude criteria will not undermine the school's ambition to be fully inclusive?

The admissions code clearly states that state schools must ensure that tests for aptitude in a particular subject e.g. sport, are designed to test only for aptitude and not for ability. As such, no other evidence of sporting background, participation or achievements will be taken into account. In addition, state schools are precluded from asking for reports from previous schools about children's past behaviour, attendance, attitude, or achievement, or that of any other children in the family;

By including sporting aptitude as one of the over-subscription criteria, we seek to increase opportunity for a wider group of students to access a grammar school education.

The sporting aptitude assessments are generic and measure aptitude across a range of core sports-related activities, as demonstrated on the day of the assessment. Therefore, no coaching or participation in any particular sport (individual or team) is required to pass the sporting aptitude assessment. The assessments will include an opportunity for children to demonstrate the character virtues associated with sporting aptitude. The school reserves the right to vary the assessments year on year.

Why has the school prioritised sporting aptitude over other admissions criteria?

Assessing sporting aptitude provides the best opportunity to identify students with the potential to benefit from and contribute to the school's 'Reading Way', in which students are empowered to 'Learn, Lead, Serve', as we equally value Academic Excellence and Character Excellence.

Sport is one of the most widely participated and accessible activities regardless of individual circumstances.

The admissions code clearly states that state schools are not allowed to interview students as part of its admissions process.

The Governors regularly review the catchment area of the school, and a full consultation will take place should a proposal be made to change the catchment area.

What does the pathway look like for candidates who gain admission via the sporting aptitude admission criteria?

This is not a scholarship, and funding is not available to students who are admitted via the sporting aptitude criteria.

It is expected that applicants wishing to apply under the criteria have a long-term interest in sport/physical education and are committed to participating in the sporting life of Reading School.

All students admitted via the sporting aptitude criteria will have a full teaching programme and are expected to commit to high standards in both academic studies and a wide range of sporting activities. An effective partnership between home and school is therefore essential.

By making an application, applicants and their parents/carers are making a commitment to full involvement in the sports curriculum, extra-curricular programme and opportunities to represent the school. The school will endeavour to support successful applicants in the sporting sphere throughout their school career, in the same way that we encourage all students to achieve their full potential.

My son has Special Education Needs. How can he access the sporting aptitude assessments?

Applicants with additional educational or medical needs, visual or learning problems will be given reasonable adjustments that the Reading School inclusion team consider to be reasonable and appropriate based on evidence of need provided in advance.

Can my son participate in the sporting aptitude assessment if we live out of catchment and have registered for a day place?

Only students who have registered for a boarding place, or for a day place and live within the catchment area, are eligible to participate in the sporting aptitude assessment. If you live outside of the catchment area and are applying for a day place, your son can still sit the entrance test.

What happens if a student admitted via the sporting aptitude criteria leaves?

The next applicant on the waiting list will be offered a place. Only up to 15 applicants will be offered a place under the sporting aptitude criteria. All other applicants will be ranked under criteria 4 or 5.

Why does entry via the boarding route have a lower pass mark than entry via the day route?

The pass mark for entry into both day and boarding are the same.

Why does the non-routine testing and oversubscription criteria differ from Year 7 entry?

We very rarely have spaces available in-year but have a large number of applications. We currently use the CEM non-routine test. CEM are a nationally recognised exam provider. The non-routine test gives us sufficiently rich information for us to rank against our current cohort in order to offer a place according to the oversubscription criteria, should a place become available. Apart from the sporting aptitude element of the test, the oversubscription criteria remain the same as Year 7. The sporting aptitude elements is available for Year 7 only.