

Information for prospective parents

Registrations

Our aim is to admit to the school a balance of boys and girls regardless of race, religious views or physical ability. We operate a selective entry procedure. Our entrance assessments seek to ensure that the pupils selected will enjoy and benefit from the broad curriculum on offer.

A child may be registered by completing a Registration Form and sending it to the school with payment of a fee of £100. Please visit the website at www.thomas-s.co.uk to print the Registration Form. A child may be registered at only one of the Thomas's Schools. Registrations are accepted from birth. Nicola Diggle, Director of Admissions, is responsible for all registrations and may be contacted on 020 7978 0621 and ndiggle@thomas-s.co.uk.

Tours of the school

Do visit our website at www.thomas-s.co.uk to learn more about Thomas's Battersea. We also run five or six tours of the school each term. At these parents have the opportunity to hear a talk from the Headmaster and from the Head of Lower School, to tour the school with pupils from the Upper School and to join senior staff, the Head and the Director of Admissions afterwards for questions. Tours last approximately one and a half hours and are generally on Wednesday mornings. To book places on a school tour please contact Davina Blair in the School Office (020 7978 0616 and dblair@thomas-s.co.uk).

Entry points

The majority of pupils are admitted into three Reception classes in the September following their fourth birthday. At the time of writing this year group comprises sixty pupils. Entry to other year groups (Year 1 – Year 6) at Thomas's Battersea is dependent on places becoming available during the course of the academic year. The other formal entry point is 11+ into Year 7 when there are generally up to twenty places available. Classes normally comprise twenty pupils and year groups sixty pupils.

The procedure for entry to Thomas's Battersea varies according to the year group for which the child is applying.

Procedure for admission to Reception (4+)

Parents are advised to register their child for Thomas's as soon as possible after birth. This will ensure that their child's name is placed on the Main Registration List for the appropriate year of entry. This then guarantees the offer of an entrance assessment when the appropriate time comes. The Main List is closed once there are two hundred names on it and a Reserve Registration List is opened. A place on the Reserve Registration List does not guarantee the offer of an assessment when the time comes. Applicants on the Reserve List may be offered an entrance assessment if some parents of applicants from the Main Registration List do not take up the opportunity of assessment when invited. Parents are encouraged to visit the school before registering.

Siblings of current pupils are given priority over other candidates and their names will always be placed on the Main Registration List. However, after careful consideration at assessment, if it was felt that Thomas's would not be a suitable educational environment for a sibling candidate then, following a discussion with the candidate's parents, a place would not be offered. Reassessment for entry to the school may be offered at a later stage.

When selecting pupils for Reception we also take into account the following considerations:

- The candidate's family is living locally in the Battersea SW11 area
- The candidate is the child of a former pupil at one of the Thomas's Schools
- The child has an elder sibling who is a former pupil at one of the Thomas's Schools
- The child has a sibling who is a pupil at another Thomas's School
- The child is the grandchild or great grandchild of an Old Sinjun. Old Sinjuns are former pupils of The Walter St John Grammar School was formerly on the site of the present Thomas's Battersea.

The Director of Admissions will contact parents of children on the Main Registration List in July of the year before they are due to join the school. She will ask parents to confirm their continued interest in a place and will gather information about the child. If the Director of Admissions is able to make offers of further entrance assessments to applicants on the Reserve Registration

List she will contact their parents in the September of the same year. The entrance assessments take place over a fortnight in November nine months before the children would join Thomas's.

The Head of Lower School and the Assistant Head of Lower School, conduct the entrance assessments together. Children are seen in small groups of up to six children, boys and girls together and within a two month age range of each other. Candidates are generally not grouped with other children from the same nursery. In assessing the children they take into account communication and language skills, confidence in undertaking tasks, interaction and social skills as well as their levels of concentration and co-operation. No specific preparation is required for the entrance assessment, either by parents or the child's Kindergarten teachers.

Following their child's assessment, parents are informed by letter of one of three outcomes. If a firm place is offered, the School will require a deposit to be paid by a date specified in the letter. If the child has been placed on a waiting list (The Reserve List) then that child may be offered a place after the deadline for receipt of deposits from the original offers has lapsed. The process of allocating places to children on the waiting list may continue until the Summer Term and even the end of the academic year. The number of children on the Reserve List for Reception may vary from year to year. Because of the large demand for places at Thomas's some children will not be offered a place, in which case parents will be notified by letter.

Return of deposits and the London Prep Heads Consortium

To assist parents, a number of schools have come together to form the London Prep Schools Consortium. Schools belonging to the Consortium agree that, up until the Final Acceptance Date (generally in February each year), deposits for 4+ entry are refundable to parents who wish to accept a place in another Consortium school.

The purpose of this agreement is to assist parents with the different timings of offers which they may experience from different schools and to allow them to accept a place offered at any one of the schools in the Consortium. Any deposit paid will be refunded by a Consortium school, provided

- i) that it receives notification in writing by noon on the Final Acceptance Date that the place is no longer required; and

- ii) that it receives confirmation from another Consortium school that a place has been accepted by the parents concerned.

In return, parents are asked not to hold more than one place at a time, as doing so prevents another child from being offered a place in their parents' school of choice. If it is possible to decline a place before the Final Acceptance Date, parents are asked to do so.

The following schools belong to the London Prep Schools Consortium:

Cameron House School
Falkner House School
Francis Holland School
Garden House School for Girls
Glendower Preparatory School
Kensington Preparatory School
Knightsbridge School
Thomas' Battersea
Thomas' Kensington
St Christopher's School

Procedure for entry to Years 1 (5+), 2 (6+) and 3 (7+)

Parents may register their child for entry at any time during the year preceding the September of admission. The Director of Admissions keeps waiting lists for each year group. These year groups are not formal entry points but the school is happy to assess children for admission as places arise. Most, but not all, entrance assessments take place in the Lent Term before the child is due to join the school. Candidates are invited for entrance assessments in order of date of registration. Registration does not guarantee the offer of an entrance assessment.

Children applying to join an established year group are assessed by the Head of Lower School against the level of attainment for that current year group. For these year groups the assessment consists of a thirty minute one-to-one session covering literacy and numeracy tasks broadly in line with topics from the National Curriculum.

A reference is also sought from a child's current school.

Following their child's assessment, parents are informed by letter of one of three outcomes. These are:

- that a firm place is offered
- that the child has been placed on a waiting list and there is no guarantee of a place
- that the school cannot offer a place.

Procedure for entry to Years 4 (8+)

We do not hold a formal examination day for 8+ entry in January as do other preparatory schools, because we do not add a class to the year group at this stage. The only formal entry points to Thomas's Battersea are at 4+ and 11+. However, the school is happy to assess children for admission as places arise. Parents may register their child for entry at any time during the year preceding the September of admission. Entrance assessments usually take place in the Lent Term before the child is due to join the school and very occasionally in the Summer Term as well, as vacancies arise. Once we are aware of a possible place in September's Year 4 becoming available, five candidates are invited for entrance assessments in order of date of registration. There are usually between four and six places available to join Year 4 each year. Please note that registration does not guarantee the offer of an entrance assessment.

Children applying to join an established year group are assessed against the level of attainment for that current year group and the Head of Middle School is responsible for ensuring assessments are appropriate. A reference is also sought from the child's current school.

Each candidate will be tested in English and Maths and will be interviewed by the Head of Middle School, who will also show them around the school. The English test comprises reading a short passage aloud and a creative writing task. Credit will be given for good spelling, punctuation and paragraphing as well as imaginative content and exciting use of vocabulary. The Maths paper consists of a broad range of questions which are based on the topics covered in the KS2 National Curriculum for Years 3, 4 and 5. Knowledge of the previous year's work is pre-supposed though allowance can be made for applicants from abroad or other educational settings. The paper for candidates for entry into Years 6 can include some calculator based questions. We do not publish specimen papers.

It is not necessary for any candidates to have started Latin, French or formal Science before admission.

Following their child's assessment, parents are informed by letter of one of three outcomes. These are:

- that a firm place is offered
- that the child has been placed on a waiting list and there is no guarantee of a place
- that the school cannot offer a place.

Procedure for entry to Years 5 (9+) and 6 (10+)

Parents may register their child for entry to Year 5 or Year 6 at any time during the year preceding the September of admission. The Director of Admissions keeps waiting lists for each year group. These year groups are not formal entry points but the school is happy to assess children for admission as places arise. Most, but not all, entrance assessments take place in the Lent Term before the child is due to join the school. Candidates are invited for entrance assessments in order of date of registration. Registration does not guarantee the offer of an entrance assessment but registration lists for Years 5 and 6 are usually short and we hope to be able to assess every applicant on each list.

Children applying to join an established year group are assessed against the level of attainment for that current year group and the Head of Middle School is responsible for ensuring assessments are appropriate. A reference is also sought from the child's current school.

Each candidate will be tested in English and Maths and will be interviewed by the Head of Middle School. The English test comprises reading a short passage aloud and a creative writing task. Credit will be given for good spelling, punctuation and paragraphing as well as imaginative content and exciting use of vocabulary. The Maths paper consists of a broad range of questions which are based on the topics covered in the KS2 National Curriculum for Years 3, 4 and 5. Knowledge of the previous year's work is pre-supposed. The paper for candidates for entry into Years 6 will include some calculator based questions. We do not publish specimen papers.

It is not necessary for any candidates to have started Latin, French or formal Science before admission.

Following their child's assessment, parents are informed by letter of one of three outcomes. These are:

- that a firm place is offered
- that the child has been placed on a waiting list and there is no guarantee of a place
- that the school cannot offer a place.

Procedure for entry to Year 7

At Thomas's Battersea we admit both boys and girls to Year 7 for a two year course leading to 13+ Common Entrance. This is now an established tradition at Thomas's and pupils have joined us from both maintained and independent schools very successfully. A small number of pupils also join us from Thomas's Kensington which finishes at the end of Year 6.

The Head of Upper School is responsible for admissions into Year 7. Applications are welcomed from the parents of any child currently in Year 6. The number of places available to join Year 7 varies from year to year and parents of prospective pupils should telephone the Director of Admissions for details.

Ideally parents should register their child for entry to Year 7 by 30th November in the year before the year in which their child will join the school. However, late applicants can usually be accommodated as long as not all the places in the year group have been filled for the forthcoming September. Entry is by assessment, interview and a satisfactory reference from the head teacher of the child's current school.

The assessment day takes place in January of the year in which the child would join the school.. Offers of places are made during February and, in line with other 11+ independent and maintained schools, the deadline for acceptance is in early March. Occasionally further assessment days are held for late applicants, usually early in the Summer Term. Interested parents should contact the Director of Admissions.

The entrance assessment each year comprises three parts. Firstly candidates will be asked to complete a creative writing task, taking about half an hour. Credit will be given for good spelling, punctuation and paragraphing as well as imaginative and exciting use of vocabulary. This is followed by three computerised tests designed to measure potential. These tests were developed

by cognitive testing experts at The University of Durham. No particular computer skills are required and candidates answer questions using a series of mouse clicks. Candidates will be shown round the school by our current Year 6 pupils and given lunch. All candidates are interviewed either by the Head of School or the Headmaster.

Following the interviews parents are informed by letter of one of three outcomes. These are:

- that a firm place is offered
- that the child has been placed on a waiting list
- that the school cannot offer a place.

We would hope to convert waiting list places into firm places by the end of the Lent (Easter) Term.

Pupils from Thomas's Kensington (which finishes at the end of Year 6) may transfer to Thomas's Battersea for Years 7 and 8 if their parents intend them to progress to a 13+ only school at the end of Year 8. Parents must make formal application to transfer to Thomas's Battersea. A transfer will only be allowed if there is sufficient space at Thomas's Battersea and if the Head of Thomas's Kensington has given her unreserved recommendation for the pupil.

Sibling entry into Years 1 to 7

A candidate who is the sibling of a current pupil will be guaranteed the offer of an entrance assessment if a place arises in the correct year group. Thus the sibling candidate will be assessed first before other candidates but the standard required for entry remains the same for all. Thomas's welcomes families and will do our best to keep a family together. However, after careful consideration at assessment, if it was felt that Thomas's would not be a suitable educational environment for a sibling candidate then, following a discussion with the candidate's parents, a place would not be offered.

Transfers

If parents move house during the course of their children's careers at Thomas's then the child may transfer to another Thomas's School if it will be more convenient for their new address. In the case of Thomas's Battersea we require that the family's new address is south of the river. Transfers will only be made if

there is a space at the receiving school and if the Head of the pupil's present school has given an unreserved recommendation.

Acceptance of places

If a parent chooses to accept a place offered to their child for Thomas's Battersea, a deposit and written acceptance of the School's Terms & Conditions (the Acceptance Form) by a set date is required. The deposit is refundable when the child leaves the school providing a full term's notice is given. Please see the school's Terms & Conditions for further details.

Cancelling Acceptance

The Acceptance Deposit should only be paid once a firm decision to join the school has been made. The cancellation of a place after acceptance can cause long-term loss to the school if it occurs after other families have taken their decisions about schooling for their children because the school relies on commitments given when accepting places to budget for income and expenditure requirements each year. A genuine pre-estimate of loss is fees for between one and five years. Nonetheless the school agrees to limit parents' liability to:

- A full term's fees, less the Acceptance Deposit, payable as a debt if less than a term's notice of cancellation has been given, or
- The full amount of the Acceptance Deposit if more than a term's notice has been given

If the offer of a place is made in the term immediately prior to the term of entry and the parents accept the place, the parents may cancel their acceptance in writing at any time up to four weeks from the date of the Acceptance Form. The acceptance will then be retained by the school. Parents who give notice of cancellation after this date or who give no notice of cancellation will incur a liability to pay one term's fees in lieu of notice less the acceptance deposit held. Please see the school's Terms & Conditions for further details.

Bursaries

Financial assistance at Thomas's Schools is available from Thomas's Schools Foundation. Please visit their website at www.tsfoundation.org.uk for further

details. It is not possible to apply formally to the Foundation until your child is holding an offer of a place at Thomas's.

English as an additional language

Around twenty-five languages are spoken by our pupils. 44% of our current pupils speak another language, or languages, other than English. Of those, 28% (12% of our current pupils) require some form of support in class. The remainder manage very well without support but are monitored by our English as a Foreign Language Coordinator.

Thomas's Kindergarten

Thomas's Kindergarten in Battersea admits children from the age of two and a half years. There are two entry points – September and January. Places are offered on a first come, first served basis so the sooner a child is registered, the better the chance of receiving an offer of a place. Offers are made about a year before the child would begin at the kindergarten. Should you wish to register your child, please complete the Kindergarten Registration Form available on our website and return it with the fee of £38 to Davina Blair, the Kindergarten Registrar, who is based at Thomas's Battersea. She may be contacted on 020 7978 0617 and dblair@thomas-s.co.uk. If you are registering for both a Kindergarten and a main Thomas's School then the combined registration fee for the two schools is £50.

If you would like to visit the kindergarten, please do contact them directly to arrange a viewing. The Headmistress at the Kindergarten is Miss Kathy Ballantine. (0207 738 0400)

There is no automatic entry from Thomas's Kindergarten to Reception at Thomas's Battersea. The registration of any pupil currently attending Thomas's Kindergarten will, however, be placed on the Main Registration List for entry to Reception in the appropriate year, thus guaranteeing the offer of an entrance assessment when the time comes. More information about the kindergarten may be found on the Thomas's website.