

Admissions Policy

BETHANY SCHOOL
CURTISDEN GREEN
GOUDHURST
KENT

Pupils' views on why Bethany needs an Admissions Policy.

Bethany has an admissions policy so that it only welcomes pupils into the School which it believes it can help and to ensure that the pupils already here are not adversely affected by new arrivals.

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1. Admissions Process

The assessment of prospective pupils for admission to Bethany School is very much undertaken on an individual basis. Every effort is made to get to know as much as possible about each individual pupil, their family and their educational background. Due regard is given to ensuring that the protected characteristics are upheld these are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Children may be considered for entry to the School provided they will have reached the age of 11 by the 1 September of the year of entry. Most students join the School in September, but entry in January and April is also possible should a place be available. Occasionally pupils may be able to start during the course of a term if there is a suitable place available.

Admission will normally be by one of the following:-

1. The School's own Entrance Assessments. These are appropriate for entries to Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 and are usually taken in November and January of the academic year prior to the year of intended admission.
2. The School is also happy to mark and report back on Common Entrance papers taken at 13+ by those children in Preparatory Schools, although Common Entrance is not a requirement for entry at 13+.
3. Entry at Sixth Form is usually on the basis of satisfactory reports, references and interview. Normally students entering into the Sixth Form at Bethany will have been predicted to achieve at least 4 'C' grades at GCSE level, although for some subjects a grade B is preferable. Therefore, flexibility is possible around the above requirements, depending on the subjects the candidate wishes to study and their performance prior to entry in the Sixth Form.
4. For pupils who live abroad and are unable to attend an entrance test and interview, the School can usually make arrangements for assessments to take place either at the pupil's current school, or at the offices of an Agent or other organisation close to the student's home and the Headmaster is able to carry out an interview via Skype.
5. EAL (English as an Additional Language) pupils for whom English is their second language will be required to sit the Bethany EAL assessments. School reports and references will also be required for such students. It is vital for Bethany School to ensure that with the EAL support provided at the School, they will be able to cope with a full UK curriculum on arrival.

The dates of Entrance Assessments and Scholarships are published on the school website and are available in paper version via the Marketing and Admissions Office.

The general process for pupils for entry into Years 7, 8 and 9.

- 1 Most prospective parents and pupils will have attended one or more Open Mornings at Bethany. As part of these Mornings, Entrance Assessments procedures are available and, if relevant, parents have the opportunity to meet with our specialist Learning Support staff.
- 2 Following the above, most parents will then have at least one individual visit with their son or daughter, during which the prospective pupil will be informally interviewed. Again, the Entrance Assessments procedure will be explained and any specific needs for the young person will be discussed, together with possible learning difficulties.
- 3 Where special educational needs are involved, parents are then asked for any available Educational Psychologist's report or similar specialist report prior to the entrance assessments.
- 4 Written feedback is given to the parents on how their child's ability level and needs relate to the Bethany ability profile and the provision available at the School. A decision is usually made by the School and parents as to whether or not the Entrance Assessments will be appropriate for that child.
- 5 If necessary at this stage, or immediately prior to the Entrance Assessments, the School will seek further guidance and information from Specialists and Head Teachers, etc.
- 6 The Entrance Assessments themselves are designed to look at the overall ability and skills of the individual. With the exception of the Mathematics Assessments, these are not based on any specific subject knowledge or curriculum base so as not to disadvantage pupils from certain educational backgrounds. They are also designed as screening assessments to give further information on learning difficulties, if relevant.
- 7 The Entrance Assessments for Year 7, 8 and 9 include the following five elements.
 - Non-verbal Reasoning
 - Mathematics
 - Reading Comprehension
 - Spelling
 - Free Writing (each child chooses a picture and uses it as a basis for a story)

From start to finish, the Entrance Assessment Days are supervised by members of our Dyslexia and Learning Support Department – all of whom have great experience in special needs and provision for them in a main stream school environment. Enquires received after our Main Entrance Tests, can result in individuals sitting the assessments with our empathetic admissions personnel.

The Assessments are designed to provide clarification as follows:

- a) To show whether a pupil fits within the ability range related to our curriculum. Broadly speaking, pupils entering Bethany should be of average ability or above and capable of coping, subject to special circumstances, with a curriculum which will lead to good passes at GCSE and be expected to get between 4-9 in the GCSE grading system or A*-C in equivalent examinations. In addition, if a pupil has any special needs, it is necessary to ascertain whether, with the kind of support available at Bethany, they will be able to cope with the full mainstream curriculum without adversely affecting the education of other pupils. Pupils must be able to cope in a mainstream class.

- b) On the day itself, all of the assessments are hand written. That having been said, special needs are taken into account when analysing the results.
- c) To provide evidence to support what may have been written in the Educational Psychologist's report about their needs in terms of laptop support, handwriting, spelling etc in the school environment.
- d) Exam concessions like Scribe, Reader, Laptop use or Extra Time are not accommodated on the Entrance Assessment day. This is because the Dyslexia and Learning Support Department need to see how your child works independently. Any normally used concession will be taken into consideration when the assessments are marked. For instance, if an assessment is not completed in the time and your child normally has Extra Time this will be highlighted in discussions regarding offering a place.
- e) The Learning Support Department at Bethany is geared to Dyslexia support and those with co-occurring difficulties, as well as English as a second language support. On occasions, pupils who are not specifically dyslexic may display very similar needs and these will be considered.
- f) Letters provide detailed feedback to the parents on how their child has performed in the tests. If a pupil lies outside the range for entry to Bethany, and it is not possible to offer a place, advice and guidance on alternative schools and help will be provided.
- g) Where there is oversubscription, a waiting list will be brought into operation and parents will be informed where their child is on that waiting list.
- h) In all aspects of the Admissions process, Bethany will endeavour to comply with the code of practice of the Independent Schools Council.

Details of the terms and conditions relating to acceptance of a place can be found in the Information Booklet contained in the School Prospectus.

2. Some Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Entrance Process

What do the Entrance Assessments consist of?

There are five elements to the Bethany Entrance Assessments:

- Non-verbal reasoning
- Mathematics
- Reading comprehension
- Spelling
- Free writing (each child chooses a picture and uses it as a basis for a story)

The Assessments are designed to look at the overall ability and skills of the individual. They are not based on any specific knowledge or curriculum base so as to encompass pupils from a range of educational backgrounds. Bethany does not provide sample papers.

What happens on the day of the Entrance Assessments?

The Entrance Tests take place in the Function Suite. You will be asked to bring your child by 9.15am and to collect them at 2.15pm. The day will include not only the five assessments but breaks, lunch,

and a tour of the School with senior students. We work to make the day as relaxed and informal as possible and children are invited to come in casual clothes rather than school uniform.

How do I register my child for the Entrance Assessments?

If you wish your child to take our Entrance Assessments, you will need to complete an Application Form for Bethany (available in the back of the Prospectus) and to return it to our Marketing and Admissions Department with the Registration Fee of £100. There is no separate examination fee but you will also need to complete an Entrance Test form which is available from the Marketing and Admissions department.

My child is very able – will they still need to take the Entrance Tests?

Yes. Our Entrance Assessments sometimes show up unexpected weaknesses and strengths and give us information that helps us to address each child's needs in the most effective way. Pupils who achieve very high scores may be offered an Academic Scholarship.

Why might Bethany not be able to offer my child a place?

We need to be confident that your child is within the ability range for our curriculum. Broadly speaking pupils at Bethany should be of average ability or above. Although we are able to offer special support outside class for dyslexic students and others with similar or co-occurring needs, all students at Bethany need to be able to cope independently with small class teaching across the curriculum. If our assessments reveal that a child is likely to need significant in-class support it will, unfortunately, not be possible to offer them a place. In this event we are happy to advise on a suitable alternative school where the candidate's needs may be met. If you have doubts about the Entrance Assessments and your child's ability we suggest that you consult us. We are more than happy to advise and to discuss your child's ability level and needs in relation to the Bethany ability profile and provision available. If we gained the impression that a child was unlikely to succeed in our Entrance Assessments we would discourage the parents from proceeding rather than risk damaging a child's confidence.

If you offer places on the basis of an Entrance Assessment does that mean you are looking to select the most academic students?

No! At Bethany we offer places on a first come, first served basis. We set an entrance assessment not to select the most academic students but to measure students' capabilities and to ensure that a Bethany education is right for each individual. From the results, and from references and information from current schools, we are able to build up an educational profile of each potential pupil, enabling us to place them in forms according to ability as well as in sets for English, Maths and Science. This assessment and careful placement of children means that we are able to cater equally well for the very able as for those who require more support.

Can my child use a laptop in the Entrance Assessments?

No. Although some children at Bethany will be eligible to use laptops in Public examinations, there will still be papers such as Maths and Science where they need to submit handwritten answers. For most students, work in Year 7 will also be handwritten or on an iPad. We need to be able to make an assessment of the ability of all students to produce answers manually and it is for this reason that our assessments take the form they do. In special circumstances it may be possible for a child

to submit a piece of work produced on a word processor in conjunction with the handwritten work they produce in the exam.

Can children with other learning difficulties be catered for at Bethany?

Some children who are not specifically Dyslexic may have very similar needs. Pupils with Dyspraxia/ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)/ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) respond particularly well to the support available at Bethany. The first step in assessing whether Bethany can respond to your child's needs will be a discussion with the Headmaster and the sharing of relevant reports for the Learning Support Department. All this will help us to advise you on the best course of action. We sometimes suggest a taster day where your child can spend a day in the life of a Bethany Pupil. During this time, they will be assigned a buddy and attend lessons. This gives your child and Bethany an opportunity to see if this is the right setting.

In the very rare circumstance where full disclosure has not been made of all of the needs of a potential pupil, the School reserves the right to subsequently rescind the offer of a place made on limited and insufficient information.