

Entry process

1 Visit the School

You are welcome to visit us at any time in the years preceding your daughter's application to St Helen's, however, we recommend that your first visit takes place at least one year before entry to SHSK Prep. Please see the Visit us section of our website www.shsk.org.uk.

SHSK Prep Open Doors Afternoon:

In June we welcome you and your daughter to this event where you can learn more about the ethos and structure of St Helen and St Katharine Prep and its integral place within the school community. You will have a tour of key parts of the school campus, an opportunity to hear from both the Head and the Joint Heads of Section – SHSK Prep, and we will have 'open doors' for you to observe current Year 5 and 6 students in typical classroom activities.

SHSK Prep Head's Breakfasts:

Held on various dates throughout the year, these are small, informal open events providing a further opportunity to come and learn about SHSK Prep. There will be a presentation followed by a Q&A session. You will also have a tour of the school campus.

Invitations to both events will be sent to all registered candidates and those on our enquiry list or you can book your place on the Visit us section of the website www.shsk.org.uk.

2 Registration

Candidates should ideally be registered no later than two weeks before the chosen assessment date, although late applications will be considered wherever possible. A registration form should be completed online and the appropriate registration fee paid. Once your daughter is registered you will automatically receive details about the admissions process at the appropriate time.

3 Assessments

We want to get to know each individual girl, understand her passions and strengths and see how she approaches learning. Candidates will take short tests in Mathematics and English alongside a practical task and interview with one of our SHSK Prep teachers. A reference will also be requested the child's current school. The results and observations from all of these will be considered by the Head and Joint Heads of Section – SHSK Prep, in order to determine a candidate's suitability for a place at St Helen's. Various assessment sessions dates are offered throughout the year preceding entry, and parents should select the one most suitable for their daughter.

4 Offers and accepting a place

Following the assessment session, places will be offered based on performance in the tests and interview and the reference from your daughter's current school. Parents will be notified of the outcome of the assessment within two weeks.

5 Welcome to SHSK Prep

After accepting a place, our new SHSK Prep joiners are invited into school on two occasions; the first in June when they come for an induction afternoon with team activities to start getting to know the other girls in the form group and their new form tutor; the second in September on 'intake afternoon' – a re-familiarisation session on the day before the beginning of term.



**Further information overleaf.
Scan the QR code to go to our website.**

Key dates for 2027 entry

Open events

- Whole School Open Day: 3 October 2026
- SHSK Prep Head's Breakfast: 15 October 2026
- SHSK Prep Head's Breakfast: 25 November 2026
- SHSK Prep Head's Breakfast: 2 February 2027
- SHSK Prep Head's Breakfast: 17 March 2027
- SHSK Prep Head's Breakfast: 4 May 2027

Assessments sessions

- Year 3 and 4 entry: 9 November 2026
- Year 3 and 4 entry: 12 January 2027
- Year 3 and 4 entry: 9 March 2027
- Year 3 and 4 entry: 21 April 2027
- Year 3 and 4 entry: 12 May 2027

(Candidates need only attend one assessment session from the above list; parents may choose the most appropriate one for their daughter.)

- Years 3 and 4 Induction afternoon: 16 June 2027
- Intake afternoon: 3 September 2027

Entry requirements

Assessment papers will be set as follows:

English: Candidates will sit short reading and writing papers with a break between them.

Reading: the reading section will ask candidates to answer questions about setting and characters, in response to a short text. We will assess comprehension and inference skills, and candidates will need to support their answers with evidence from the text. We value thoughtful and insightful responses to the extract.

7+ reading assessment: 25 minutes

8+ reading assessment: 30 minutes

Writing: the creative writing task will be linked to a picture prompt. Their writing will be assessed on the following points:

- Is it imaginative and interesting to read?
- Is the writing relevant to the prompt given?
- Is the writing well-organised?
- Is sentence structure varied?
- Has appropriate vocabulary been chosen?
- Is punctuation and spelling largely accurate, with evidence of proofreading?

7+ written task: 15 minutes

8+ written task: 20 minutes

The best preparation for both papers is reading aloud with your daughter and discussing a wide range of books, including non-fiction and poetry. Children at this age still enjoy being read to and this gives them access to a wider vocabulary than they may be able to access in their own individual reading.

Mathematics: The Mathematics paper consists of two parts: arithmetic (15 minutes) and problem-solving (25 minutes). The arithmetic paper comprises basic number and arithmetic questions. The problem-solving paper requires candidates to apply their knowledge of calculation, fractions, shape and measures to a range of problems. In this final section, some of the questions will give marks for methodical working where final answers are incorrect. It also includes some questions to identify students with particular aptitude for mathematics.

The areas of Mathematics covered in each of these sections are based on what a student would have learnt in Year 1 for the 7+ and in Year 2 for the 8+, with appropriate additional challenge in the application of these skills. These areas are:

- Understanding number and place value: comparing and ordering numbers, counting in multiples of 2/5/10 and understanding the value of each digit in a two-digit number
- Use of the four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) individually and combined to solve problems
- Understanding fractions including recognising and finding one half and one quarter of shapes and quantities
- Identifying 2D and 3D shapes through knowledge of their properties
- Comparing, describing and solving problems involving metric measures, including solving problems involving time (8+ also includes reading scales)
- Presenting and interpreting data in pictograms, tally charts and tables (8+ *only*)
- Applying all of the above to solve multi-step problems, including working with money

Practical task

The practical task will involve some discussion and a short activity, usually in a small group, led by a Prep teacher. In this, we will be observing the candidate's collaboration, social interaction and problem-solving.

Interview

In their interview, the children will be asked about their interests and hobbies before discussing a book that they have chosen to bring with them. They will also be asked to read aloud a short fiction extract before talking about its contents, and to work through some mental maths in order to better understand their knowledge and abilities. The interview is designed to put the girls at ease and give them an opportunity to show what they can do outside of the more formal testing which we know is a new experience for many of these young children.

Moving up to senior school

Students accepted into SHSK Prep are assured of a place in St Helen's Year 7 at the appropriate time. They will take the St Helen's assessment at 11+, not for the purpose of selection but for staff records and possible scholarships.

Scholarships

Scholarships and bursaries are not available for SHSK Prep but all students will be considered at the time of the assessment for 11+ scholarships.