

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 SHSK Prep, and most importantly the Year 5 and Year 6 classrooms will have 'open doors' for you to observe current students in typical classroom activities.

SHSK Prep Head's Breakfasts:

Held on various dates throughout the year, these are small, informal open events providing an 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 be registered by the appropriate deadline, although late applications may be considered. A registration form should be completed online and the appropriate fee paid. Once your daughter is registered you will automatically receive details of the entry procedure at the appropriate time.

3 Taster day

After registration your daughter will be invited to spend a taster day at St Helen's in the autumn term of the year prior to entry. The day will take the form of a normal school day and will include lessons in known and new subjects. Your daughter will also have an opportunity to meet students already at St Helen's and members of the teaching staff.

4 Assessment day

In January prior to the year of entry, candidates take assessments in Mathematics and English. Through our assessments, we aim to get to know each individual girl, understand her passions and strengths, and see how she approaches learning. The English assessment consists of a reading comprehension exercise and a written task, and the Mathematics assessment comprises a mental arithmetic section as well as written questions. A reference will be required from the candidate's current school and each student will be interviewed by a member of the SHSK Prep team the week following the written assessment. Each of these will be taken into account by the Head and SHSK Prep staff in order to determine a candidate's suitability for a place at St Helen's. Candidates being assessed for diagnostic purposes take the assessment papers only. (See entry requirements for further details.)

5 Offers and accepting a place

Following interview, places are allocated based on performance in the assessment, the current Head's reference and the interview. If your daughter is offered a place parents are asked to accept the place as early as possible as there could be important implications for those on our waiting list.

6 Welcome to St Helen's

After accepting a place, our new SHSK Prep joiners are invited to the School on two occasions: the first in June when they attend an induction afternoon with team activities to get to know their form group and 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 Doors Afternoon: 9 June 2026
- Whole School Open Day: 3 October 2026
- SHSK Prep Head's Breakfast: 15 October 2026
- Closing date for registration: 13 November 2026 although late entries may be considered
- 10+ Taster Day (registered candidates): 17 November 2026
- 9+ Taster Day (registered candidates): 24 November 2026
- Assessment day: 16 January 2027
- Interviews by appointment: w/c 18 January 2027
- Outcome letters sent: 29 January 2027
- Closing date for acceptances: 1 March 2027
- Induction afternoon: 15 June 2027
- Intake afternoon: 3 September 2027

Entry requirements

Assessment papers will be set as follows:

English: Candidates will sit separate reading and writing papers. These are each 40 minutes long and are designed to assess their ability to interpret an unfamiliar text and express themselves through creative writing.

Reading: the reading section will require candidates to answer questions about setting and characters, in response to a short extract from a novel. We will assess comprehension and inference skills, as well as looking for an understanding of different literary techniques, such as alliteration and similes. Candidates will need to support their answers with evidence from the text and may need to make more than one point to pick up the maximum number of marks available per question. We value thoughtful and insightful responses to the extract.

Both the 9+ and 10+ papers — 40 minutes

Writing: the creative writing task will be linked to the extract that candidates have just read.

Their writing will be assessed on the following points:

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

Both the 9+ and 10+ papers — 40 minutes

The best preparation for both papers is reading and discussing a wide range of books, including non-fiction and poetry. They can also develop their imagination and vocabulary by keeping a writing journal of their thoughts and ideas.

Mathematics: The Mathematics paper consists of three parts: mental maths, arithmetic and problem-solving. In the mental maths section, candidates will hear 20 questions and be given 5-15 seconds in which to work out each answer and write it down. The remainder of the test is 40 minutes and comprises basic arithmetic questions in Part B, followed by questions requiring candidates to apply their knowledge to a range of problems in Part C. In this final section, many of the questions will give marks for correct and 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 3 for the 9+ and in Year 4 for the 10+, with appropriate additional challenge in the application of these skills. These areas are:

- Understanding number and place value (including decimals for 10+), identifying factors and multiples and using rounding
- Use of the four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) individually and combined to solve problems
- Understanding fractions including finding equivalents, adding and subtracting simple fractions and finding fractions of amounts
- Identifying 2D and 3D shapes through knowledge of their properties as well as working with area and perimeter of rectilinear shapes
- Recognising, estimating and comparing angles
- Converting between units of metric measures, including solving problems involving time
- Work with coordinates and with simple transformations (reflection and translation)
- Presenting and interpreting data in tables and bar/line graphs
- Applying all of the above to solve multi-step problems

Interview

In their interview, candidates 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 discussing its contents, and to work through some maths problems in order to better understand their knowledge and abilities. The interview is designed to put the students 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 people.

Diagnostic assessment

In certain situations candidates may take a 9+ or 10+ assessment for diagnostic purposes with a view to entering the School at a later point; candidates who have taken the 9+ diagnostic assessment may not take the 10+ diagnostic assessment. Such testing allows parents to ascertain their daughter's current level of ability and thus suitability for the School. They will then be required to sit appropriate papers at their intended time of entry. These diagnostic assessments will only be available to registered candidates on the published testing dates. Diagnostic candidates take assessments only. References and interviews will not be required until the point of entry. Please contact the Director of Admissions for further information and to notify your interest in a diagnostic assessment.

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.