



# Admissions Policy 2025-26

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## Schools covered by this policy

- Ashby Hastings Primary School
  - Ashby Hill Top Primary School
  - Ashby Willesley Primary School
  - Donisthorpe Primary School
  - Fairfield Community Primary School
  - Glen Hills Primary School
  - The Meadow Community Primary School
  - Newcroft Primary Academy
  - Old Mill Primary School
  - Orchard Community Primary School
  - Thornton Primary School
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## The Symphony Learning Trust

**This policy covers the Symphony Learning Trust schools listed below**

855/2041	Ashby Hastings Primary School
855/2321	Ashby Hill Top Primary School
855/2167	Ashby Willesley Primary School
855/2082	Donisthorpe Primary School
855/2158	Fairfield Community Primary School
855/2322	Glen Hills Primary School
855/2190	The Meadow Community Primary School
855/2092	Newcroft Primary Academy
855/2330	Old Mill Primary School
855/2178	Orchard Community Primary School
855/2009	Thornton Primary School

### 1.1 Admissions Policy Overview

The Symphony Learning Trust is the admission authority for the schools within our Trust. The Symphony Learning Trust is its own admission authority and responsible for setting the criteria for admission, interpretation and for the administration of admissions to the schools within the Trust. The Department for Education (DfE) Admissions Code requires the admissions into the Early Years Foundation Stage year group, at the beginning of the academic year, be coordinated by the local authority; Leicestershire County Council is the coordinating authority for Symphony Learning Trust schools. Leicestershire County Council provides support to the Trust, the process for offering of school places and, through a service level agreement, for managing oversubscription where more applications are received than there are school places available.

As the admission authority for all schools in the Trust, we need to ensure that the Trust's practices and criteria used to decide the allocation of school places is fair, clear and objective. Our aim is that Parents are able to look at a set of admission arrangements and understand easily how places for an individual school are allocated. The schools within the Symphony Learning Trust welcome children from all backgrounds and abilities.

The Admission Code recognises that schools within an admission authority's care may each require different arrangements.

Admission arrangements for each school must be subject to public consultation at least once every seven years. When planning significant changes, such as altering catchment areas, introducing new criteria or anything that would affect admissions of children into our schools, we are obliged, (as prescribed in the Admissions Code) and would wish, to consult with our stakeholders and the local communities affected by any change.

### 1.2 Aims and Objectives

When considering admission of pupils into any of our schools, the following principles apply:

- All applications are treated equally;
- No Symphony Learning Trust school selects by ability;
- If a place exists it will be offered. However, if there are more applications than places, admissions will be dealt with as the individual school's admission criteria states;
- Subject to infant class size regulations, and planned admission numbers within schools, our schools will prioritise parental preference wherever possible;
- appeals against refusals to admit a pupil will be dealt with by an independent appeal panel, duly

constituted, as required by the School Appeal Admissions Code. The Symphony Learning Trust engages Leicestershire County Council ([www.leicestershire.gov.uk](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk)) to conduct appeals on our behalf;

- Symphony Learning Trust schools are inclusive and are committed to ensuring that the needs of every child on roll are met.

### **1.3 Local Authority Obligations**

In order to provide a quality service to parents and carers, the Department for Education (DfE) Admissions Code requires that admissions into the Early Years Foundation Group (i.e. children starting at primary school for the first time), at the beginning of an academic year, (also known as the 'normal round') be coordinated by the local authority (LA), for all schools, regardless of who is the admission authority. This co-ordination involves a common application form and a common timetable as described in the 'coordinated schemes'. Leicestershire, along with all other local authorities, must follow a specified timetable.

Every local authority must publish a composite booklet explaining the process for starting primary school each year.

For Symphony Learning Trust schools, these are found on the Local Authority website:

*<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-admissions>*

### **1.4 The Application Process (normal admission round)**

When a child is due to start primary school for the first time for entry in our Early Years Foundation Group (also known as Reception), if they are resident in Leicestershire, applications are made to Leicestershire County Council using the Leicestershire County Council Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. Any parent living outside of Leicestershire needs to apply to their own local authority. That local authority will then ensure that applications are provided to the relevant Local Authority for the coordinated response.

Overseas applicants, for application into our Early Years Foundation Group (Reception) for the first time, must contact Leicestershire County Council in the first instance.

### **1.5 School Transport**

Symphony Learning Trust is not responsible for any decisions relating to school transport, this is a matter for the local authority in which the child resides.

### **1.6 Starting School**

In Leicestershire, children begin school at the start of the academic year during which they become five. There is one admission at the beginning of the Autumn term. There may be individual children who begin earlier or later in the academic year (see section 1.17).

### **1.7 Changing School (in year admission)**

The Symphony Learning Trust, as admissions authority, appoints Leicestershire County Council Admissions department to manage and administer applications for school places outside of the Normal Admissions Round. These applications are known as 'in-year admissions' and refer to a child who is not starting primary school for the first time but is changing from one primary school to another.

In year admission applications will be considered and accepted in advance. The local authority aims to make a decision to applications within 10 school days of application (mandatory at 15 school days) (5 school days if the child is

indicated as in care or previously in care), although this could take longer at peak times or where there is an unexpected delay (for example seeking proof of address, fair access information for complex or out of authority applications etc.). School places will be offered with a start date up to 20 school days in advance of the offer date, except in the case of children of service personnel, where a school place may be allocated based on a notification of a relocation date and unit posting order address.

### 1.8 How does the process work?

By law, every school must have a mechanism to deal with a situation when there are more applications than places. This involves setting an oversubscription priority criteria.

Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan naming a school as part of that plan are automatically admitted. These children are not included in the priority criteria; the school offers them a place as this is required by law.

The number of places available in a school are indicated by the schools' published admission number (PAN). When there are more applications than places, the oversubscription priority criteria are applied in an objective and fair way.

### 1.9 What is the Published Admission Number (PAN)?

The Published Admission Number (PAN) is the number of children the school can accommodate. This is set by law and is the number that the school considers it can teach in an effective manner. Additionally, the Infant Class Size Regulations require that in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 no class shall have more than 30 pupils to each qualified teacher. This may mean that in some schools, combinations of year groups are also affected by Infant Class Size Regulations; where there are mixed year groups the combined size of the class must not exceed 30 pupils per qualified teacher.

The Published Admission Number (PAN) for first time admission to Reception in each Symphony Learning Trust school is:

Ashby Hastings Primary School	<b>30</b>
Ashby Hill Top Primary School	<b>45</b>
Ashby Willesley Primary School	<b>60</b>
Donisthorpe Primary School	<b>30</b>
Fairfield Community Primary School	<b>30</b>
Glen Hills Primary School	<b>74</b>
The Meadow Community Primary School	<b>60</b>
Newcroft Primary Academy	<b>60</b>
Old Mill Primary School	<b>60</b>
Orchard Community Primary School	<b>45</b>
Thornton Primary School	<b>20</b>

### 1.10 Fair Access Protocols

Every school is obliged to take part in local fair access protocols. Fair access protocols exist for children who have no school place and who are at risk from missing education due to several factors. Guidance setting out the principles by which children without a school place are found one as quickly as possible is published by the DFE and delivered by each local authority. The fair access protocol procedure takes precedence over any waiting list.

Hard to Place children who fall under the Leicestershire County Council Fair Access Protocol are:

- Children from the criminal justice system or Pupil Referral Units who need to be reintegrated into mainstream education;
- Children who have been out of education for two months or more;
- Children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers;
- Children who are homeless;
- Children with unsupportive family backgrounds for whom a place has not been sought;
- Children who are carers;
- Children with special educational needs, disabilities or medical conditions (but without an Education, Health and Care Plan).

### **1.11 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).**

Symphony Learning Trust will not refuse an application for admission to a Symphony Learning Trust school because it is believed that the school cannot cater for the child's special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities but no Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are dealt with through the normal admissions policy. Schools cannot refuse to admit a pupil because he/she does not have an EHCP or is being assessed for one.

*The Trust Board is required by section 324 of the Education Act 1996 and Children and Families Act 2014 s. 33 to admit to a school a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan which names the school. This is not an oversubscription criterion. Schools must admit children with EHCPs which name the school whether there are places available in the school or not, unless it would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources. Efficient education means providing for each child or young person a suitable, appropriate education in terms of their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. SEN Code of Practice 2015, para 9.79.*

### **1.12 Withdrawing Offers**

Symphony Learning Trust can withdraw offers of places in certain circumstances. An offer of a place will be withdrawn when a parent has not responded to an offer within a reasonable period of time, usually 10 school days from the date of that offer. The offer can also be withdrawn if the basis of the offer was either a fraudulent or misleading application. Symphony Learning Trust also reserves the right to withdraw an offer which has been accepted but which has not been taken up within 10 school days of the practical start date made in the offer.

### **1.13 Late Applications**

The national closing date for first-time admission applications is January 15<sup>th</sup> annually. Symphony Learning Trust, working with Leicestershire County Council, may accept late applications for first-time admission. All applications received by the closing date will be treated equally. However, any application submitted after the closing date will be processed as a late application and will have the lowest priority. This could result in an applicant not receiving an offer at their preferred school. There has to be particular reasons why an application is late, and this is not subject to any appeal at this point but an Independent Appeal Panel may take a different view at a later stage in the process.

Late applications for a named academy after the specified date will be processed after the offer day and will be considered against the oversubscription criteria.

### **1.14 Waiting Lists**

The Local Authority maintains a waiting list for first time admissions to Foundation Stage for each school until the

end of the Autumn term. The waiting list is ranked in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria. The list is made up of children whose parent/carers have applied for a place at the school and been unsuccessful. If a place becomes available the next child on the list will be offered the space. If that family does not require the space, it will pass to the next child and so on. The waiting list is 'dynamic' however; this means that late applications are treated equally according to the over-subscription criteria and can affect the ranking of an earlier application.

After the waiting list has been disbanded, places will be allocated on application and if a space is available, following the standard in-year admission procedures.

### **1.15 Multiple Births**

In the unusual event of there being one space available within the infant class size limit, children of multiple births are permitted exceptions to the class size limit in these circumstances.

### **1.16 Infant Class Size Limits and Permitted Exceptions**

In compliance with the relevant regulations, an infant child (i.e. up to and including Year 2) who moves into a school's area once initial allocation decisions have been made, will not necessarily be offered a place in the school if the relevant class will already contain 30 children *and* if an alternative school with space available in the relevant year group within 2 miles of the home address is identified. If there are no places available in nearby schools, the child will be an excepted pupil in the catchment school, allowing the class to exceed 30 pupils.

### **1.17 Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry**

Upon notification of a school place being offered, a child is entitled to a full-time place in the Autumn term following their fourth birthday.

Parents can request that the date the child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the original application was made. To defer a place at first time admission, parents are asked to inform the school where the child has been allocated the school place. If a child does not attend school by the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the original application was made, parents are required to make a new application.

### **1.18 Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

The admission authority in these instances is Symphony Learning Trust. The school to which the application is being made should be contacted by email.

For early entry, i.e. if a parent wishes to request that they be able to apply out of their child's normal age group for Reception a year early, parents should contact the school in question where they will need to put their request in writing.

Parents of a summer-born child, that is those children born from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> August, may choose not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group, for example, to Reception rather than Year 1.

To request a delayed entry parents are required to make an application for their child's admission to their normal age group at the usual time in accordance with this policy and at the same time to submit a request to the

admission authority for admission out of the normal age group. Further information about the process will be provided to parents upon their request for admission outside of normal age group or by contacting the Admissions Authority(*DfE Code of Conduct para.2 17*)

Decisions will be made by the admissions authority on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will take into account parents' views, information about the child's academic, social and emotional development, where relevant their medical history and any views of a medical professional, whether they have previously been educated outside of their normal age group and whether they may have fallen into a lower age group if the child was not born prematurely. The views of the Headteacher of the school concerned must be taken into account. Decisions made by the admissions authority will be clearly set out.

When informing a parent of the decision on which year group the child should be admitted to, the reason(s) will be given.

Where the admitting authority agrees to the parent's request for their child to be admitted to a year out of their normal age group, it will be necessary for the parent(s) to apply again for a place at the appropriate time, and as a consequence the child will be admitted to a relevant age group (the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school). The local authority (and admission authority) will process the application as part of the main admissions round. If the parental request is made too late for this to be then the usual process for late applications will be applied as set out in this policy.

One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another. Upon transfer, it will be a matter for that admission authority. Decisions will be made by the admission authority regarding the parental request for admission out of normal age group in time for parents to make an informed decision about whether their child will start school before compulsory school age. An application will not be given a lower priority on the basis that the child is being admitted out of their normal age group.

Parents' statutory right to appeal against or refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied does not apply if they are offered a place at the school, but it is not their preferred age group.

### **1.19 Children of UK Services Personnel and other Crown Servants**

Children of UK Services Personnel and other Crown Servants must be allocated a place in advance, dependent on an official government letter declaring a relocation date and intended address, if the applicant would meet the criteria on relocation.

A unit postal address must be accepted, or if appropriate a "quartering area" address in the absence of a new home postal address.

Once the application has been accepted, the usual admission process will be followed. Places will be offered using the priority criteria, and all applications will be dealt with using the mandatory timeframe for first time admissions. In year admissions will be based on the start date, but the posting address will be used as part of the priority criteria. A place may be allocated based on a notification of relocation and intended address. Contact will be made with the family/carer before the child is due to start at the school.

Places should be released as soon as possible if they are not required.

### **1.20 Children with Split Residence**

Where a child lives for part of the week with one parent and for part of the week with the other parent, the address recognised by the Trust for the purposes of an application for a school place is the one where the child

lives for the majority of the school week – Monday to Friday.

Where the weekly residence arrangement varies, and a child stays with both parents, on average, for the same amount of time during the school week over a four-week period, and each parent lives in a different school catchment, the parents will be required to choose one address for the purposes of completing a school application. Where parents cannot agree a single address, the Trust will require parents to seek a Court Order to determine which address is to be used.

Where any claimed residence arrangement is found to be false, and the child is yet to start at the allocated school, the place will be withdrawn as it will be considered obtaining the school place on fraudulent and / or misleading grounds. In such circumstances the application will be considered afresh and determined at that time based on the correct information.

### **1.21 Appeals**

For first time admissions, the local authority will confirm whether a place has been awarded each year on 16<sup>th</sup> April or the next working day prior to the start of the academic year in which the child will start at the school.

For in-year admissions the local authority admissions department will confirm, on behalf of Symphony Learning Trust schools, whether a place can be offered, usually within ten school days of receiving the application. If an application for a school place is unsuccessful, then parents have a right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel.

Where an application for a place at a school within the Symphony Learning Trust is unsuccessful, applicants may appeal the decision. Information about appealing the decision can be found on each School website.

### **1.22 Admissions Criteria**

The following criteria, in the order listed, will be used to allocate places if there are more applications than places available.

- 1.1. Application forms for school places allow parents to express up to three preferences for school places. Parents should rank their preferences, so that if more than one preference can be agreed the one which the parent wants most is offered. However, the Local Authority considers all preferences to have equal value (e.g. one parent's first preference and another parent's second or third preference are to be considered equally against the admissions criteria) and therefore they do NOT include preference details when forwarding application information to Symphony Learning Trust Schools.
- 1.2. Late applications receive the lowest priority and are only considered after all other applications which were received on time, unless it can be demonstrated with documentary evidence that the lateness of the form was beyond your control.
- 1.3. When there are more applications than there are places available, then the following criteria (in the order listed) will be used to allocate places (see note i.):
- 1.4.

1 <sup>st</sup>	Children who are in public care and those children who were previously looked after children. (See note ii.)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Pupils who will have an older brother or sister attending the same school at the same time. (See note iv)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Pupils who live in the catchment area. (See note iii.)

4 <sup>th</sup>	Pupils who have a serious medical condition or exceptional social or domestic needs that make it essential they attend the school requested. (Professional documentation confirming the situation must be submitted with the application.) (See note v.)
5 <sup>th</sup>	Children of staff, where the member of staff has been employed at the Symphony Learning Trust School they are applying to on a permanent contract of at least 15 hours per week for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission is made.
6 <sup>th</sup>	Children living nearest to the school, measured in a straight-line distance.  Distance is measured from a central geocoded point of home address to the school's main designated front gate, using electronic mapping. (See note vi.)

**Notes:**

*i. Combinations of the above criteria are used where appropriate, in priority order.*

*ii. A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.*

*Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a Child Arrangement Order Section 19 or special guardianship order); children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.*

*iii. The child's place of residence is taken to be the parental home. Living in the catchment area does not guarantee you a place at your catchment school. See paragraph 1.20 regarding split addresses.*

*iv. The term "brother or sister" includes half brother or sister or legally adopted child being regarded as the brother or sister.*

*v. If criterion 4 is used, professional supporting documentation from the Lead Professional must be supplied and must be submitted with the application. The following list are the areas that are considered exceptional: -*

- *Children subject to Child Protection Plans*
- *Hard to Place children – who fall under the Fair Access Protocol*
- *Parents suffering domestic violence (This is dependent on documentary evidence by a lead professional)*
- *A child for who transfer to the catchment area school would involve attending a different school until he/she is the right age for transfer. (This is dependent on the child having attended the present school for at least a year.)*

*Each case will be assessed on its individual merits.*

*vi. For criterion 6 above, measurement of distance is in a straight line from a central geocoded point of home address to the school's main designated front gate, using a computerised mapping system (Synergy geocoded mapping tool). Where there is equal distance then lots will be drawn, supervised by an independent officer.*

1.5. In the event of over-subscription, the named school may need to ask for proof of the following when applying the criteria for prioritising admissions:

- Child's date of birth;
- Copy of an adoption order, Child Arrangement Order or special guardianship order and a letter from the Local Authority that last looked after the child confirming that (s)he was looked after immediately prior to that order being made.

1.6. In the event that application of the above criteria results in a tie for a place at the school, the allocation of the place will be determined by the drawing of lots, supervised by an independent officer.

Children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) have a different admission process. If a child has an EHCP or parents are in the assessment process, it is important to have a discussion with the Headteacher about what to do next. There is more information in this policy at paragraph 1.11

In the event that there are more applications than places available, a School may need to ask for proof of the

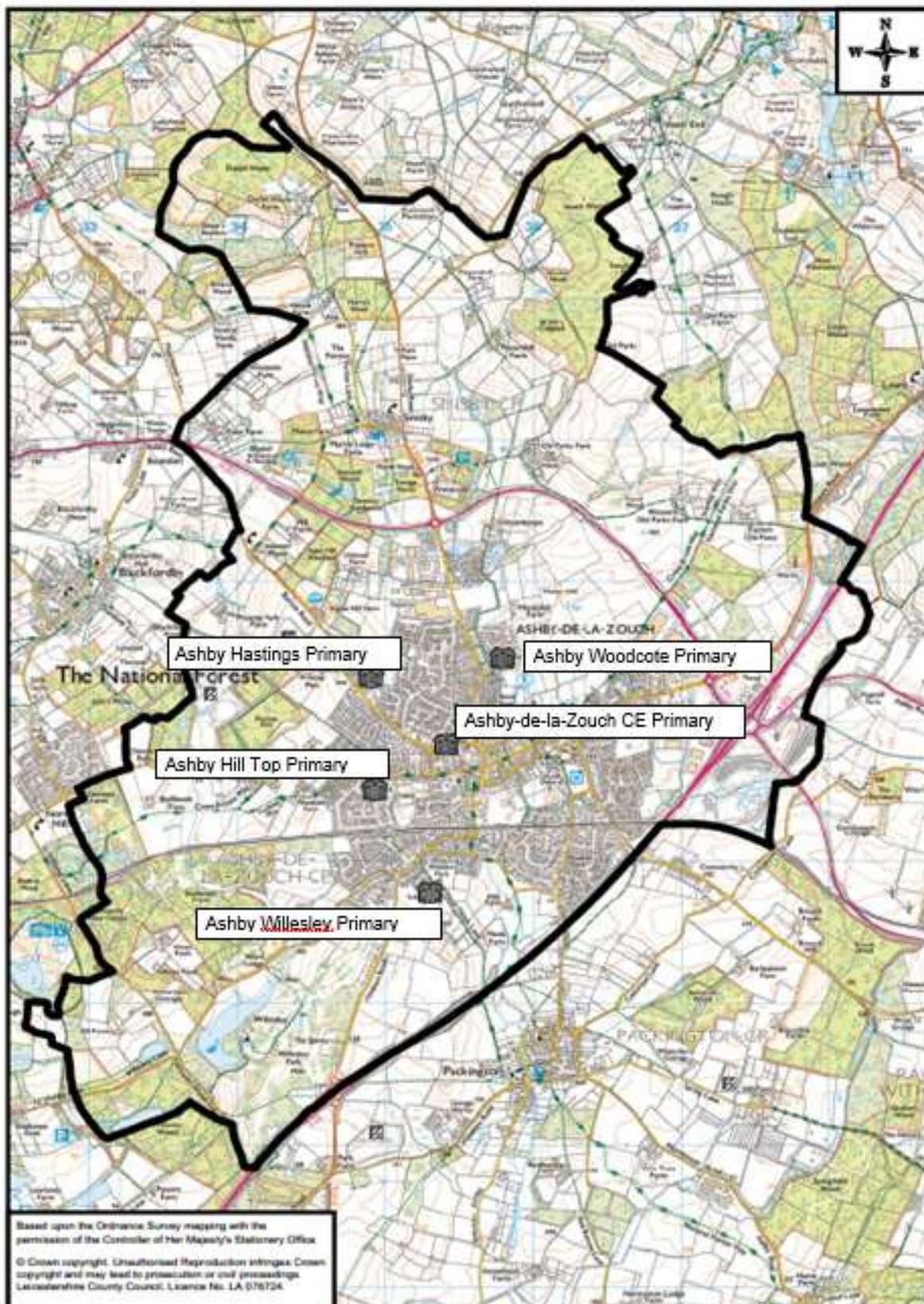
following when applying the criteria for prioritising admissions:

- Address;
- Child's date of birth;
- Copy of an adoption order, residence order or special guardianship order and a letter from the Local Authority that last looked after the child confirming that (s) he was looked after immediately prior to that order being made.

### 1.23 Catchment Areas

Catchment areas for schools within the Symphony Learning Trust are determined as follows: -

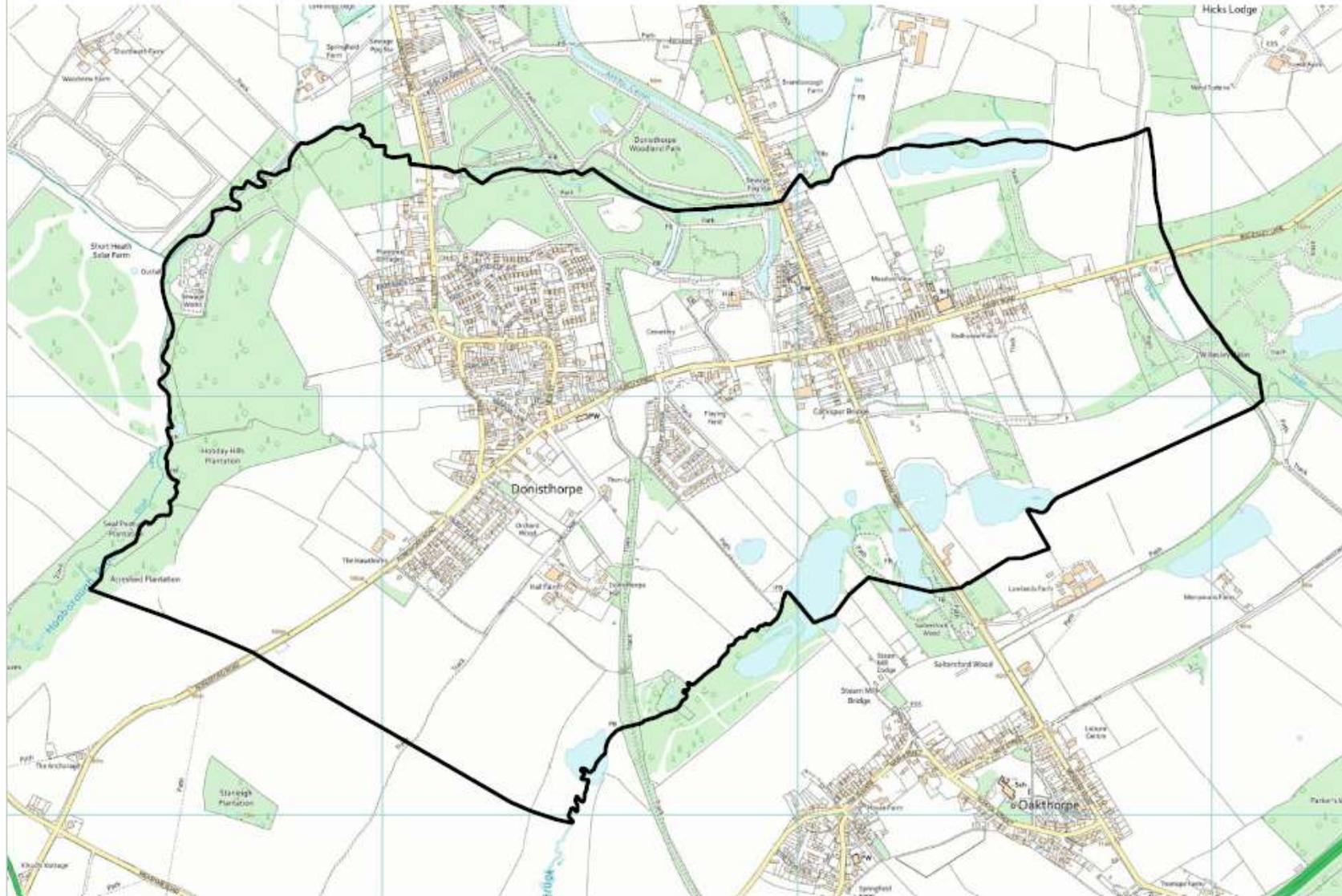
#### **Catchment Map for: - Ashby Hastings Primary School, Ashby Hill Top Primary School and Ashby Willesley Primary School**



# Catchment Map for Donisthorpe Primary School

## School Catchment Map: Donisthorpe Primary School

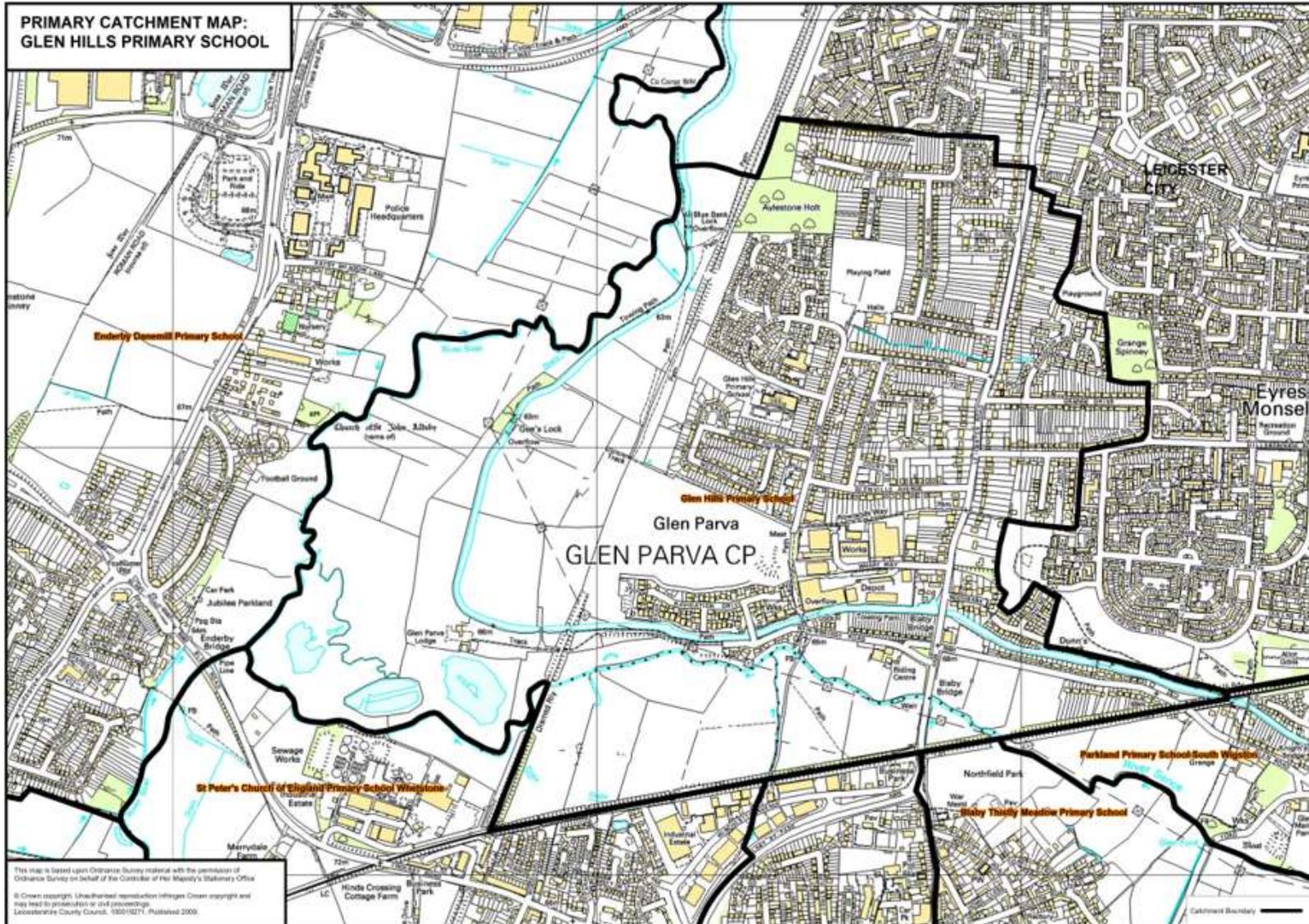
Map Created: 18/08/2021



**Catchment Map for Fairfield Community Primary School**



# Catchment Map for Glen Hills Primary School

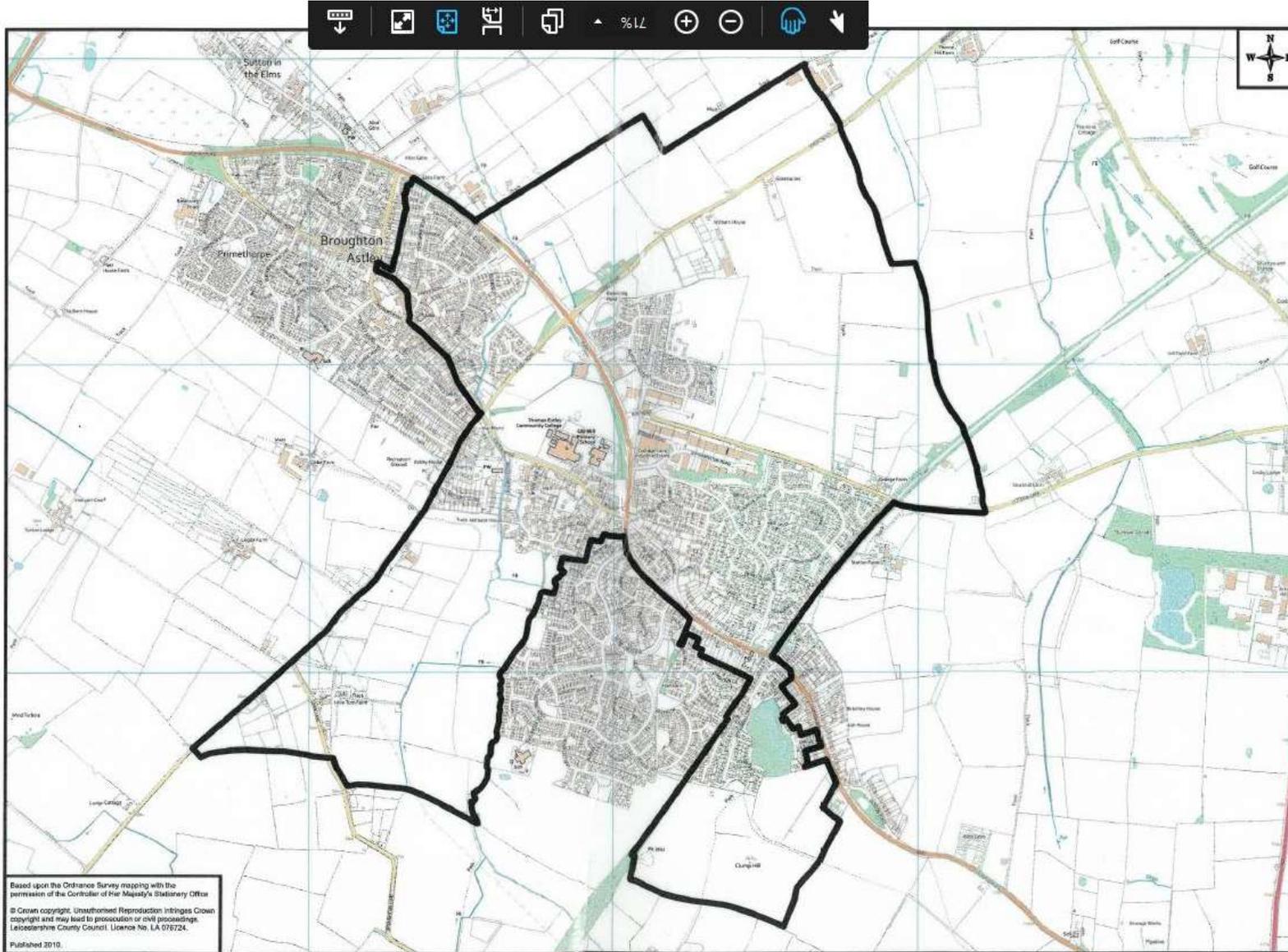




**Catchment Map for Newcroft Primary Academy**



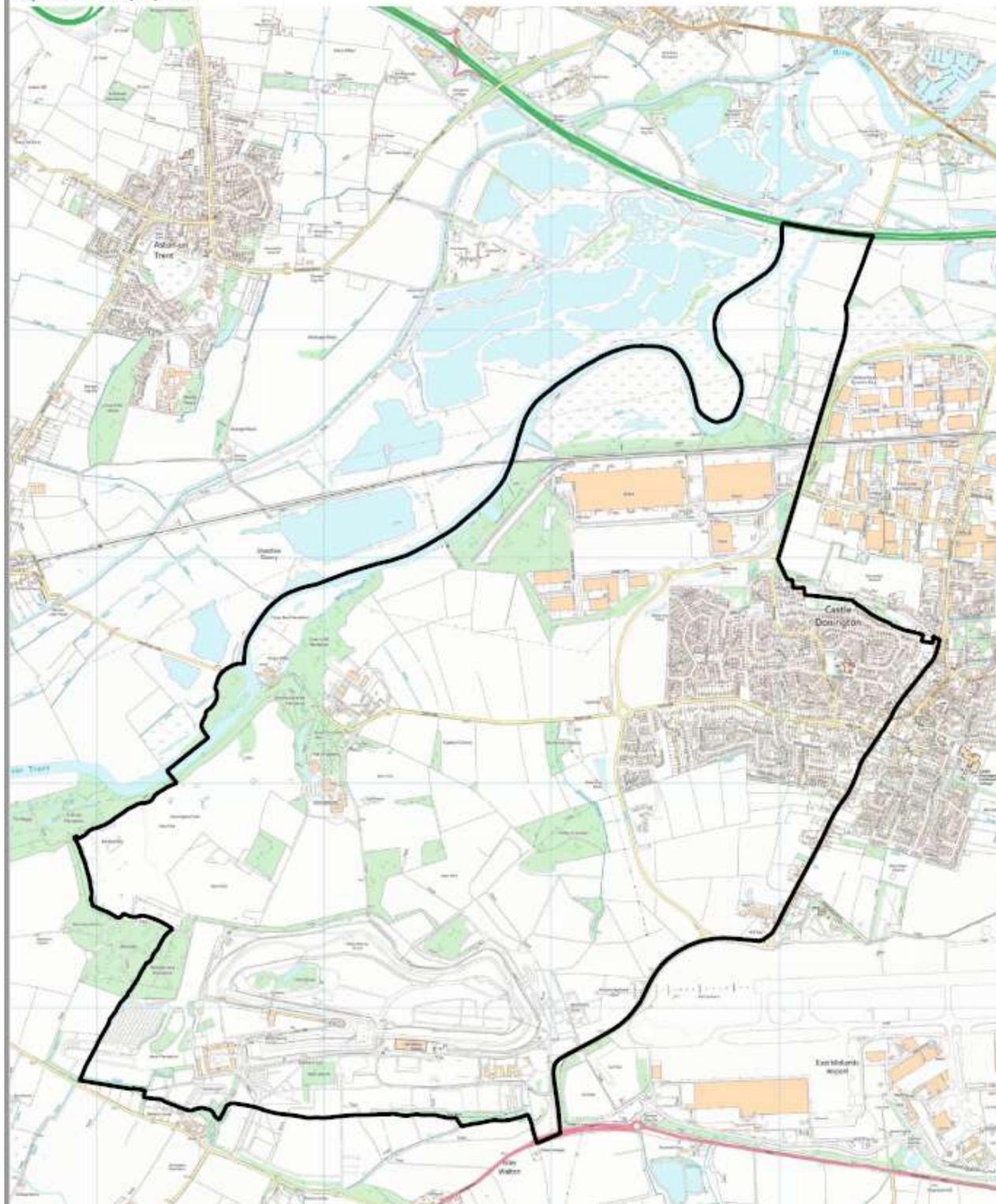
# Catchment Map for Old Mill Primary School



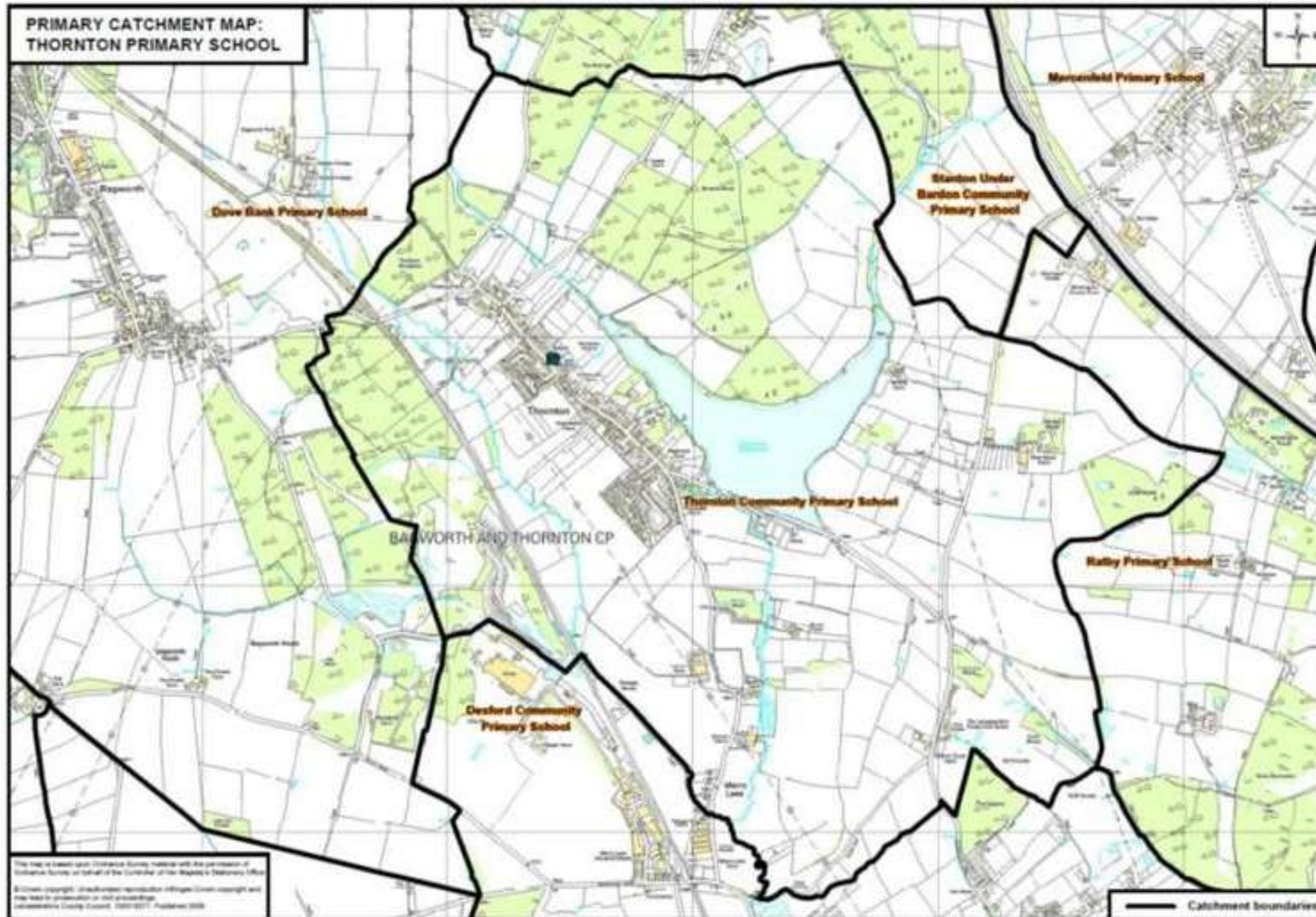
## Catchment Map for Orchard Community Primary School

### School Catchment Map: Orchard Community Primary School

Map Created: 19/08/2021



Catchment Map for Thornton Primary School



## **1.24 Significant Change of Circumstances**

If a change of circumstances takes place after the closing date for applications but before all places have been allocated, then the change of circumstances will be taken into account within the allocation process.

If a change of circumstances takes place after all places at the school have been allocated the application will be added to the waiting list in a position which reflects the published priority criteria.