



**15 January 2024**

<b>Title</b>	<b>SCHOOL ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS 2026/27</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	Brian Grady
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Ruth McEwan
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Thriving Communities
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. That the Committee agree the relevant admissions arrangements for 26-27

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. This report invites the Committee to determine;
  - 1.1.1. The admissions arrangements for Community Primary Schools in Reading for the school year 2026/27.
  - 1.1.2. The coordinated scheme for primary and junior schools for the 2026/27 school year.
  - 1.1.3. The coordinated scheme for secondary schools for the 2026/27 school year.
  - 1.1.4. The Relevant Area for 2026.
  - 1.1.5. Maps of the Primary catchment areas.
- 1.2. These arrangements for 2026/27 comply with the School Admissions Code 2021.

## **2. Policy Context**

- 2.1. School admissions are subject to requirements set out in law and particularly the School Admissions Code 2021, published by the Government and approved by Parliament. As part of those requirements, local authorities must draw up schemes for coordinating admissions to all maintained schools in their area. The purpose of coordinated schemes is to ensure that every parent/carer of a child living in Reading who has completed and submitted an on-time application receives one offer of a school place at the conclusion of the normal admissions round. The schemes set out a process and timescale to enable the offer of a single school place. They do not affect the right of individual admission authorities to set and operate their own admission arrangements, but they do include arrangements for resolving multiple offers, where a place can be offered at more than one school. Reading Borough Council is the admitting authority for community and voluntary controlled schools within the borough.
- 2.2. In addition, the Council is also required to determine the Admission Policy for Community Schools and admission arrangements which includes the number of places to be made available at each school and the oversubscription criteria to be applied

where there are more applicants than places available. Where the over-subscription criteria include catchment areas these must also be approved. The governing bodies of academies, free schools, voluntary aided and foundation schools are required to determine their own admission number and oversubscription criteria. Those schools also operate their own arrangements as part of the coordinated scheme – and where they are oversubscribed, continue to decide which applicants best meet their oversubscription criteria.

- 2.3. Reading Borough Council last consulted on its Admissions Policy and admission arrangements in 2018. As its Admissions Policy and admission arrangements have been consulted upon within the last seven years, there is no duty to consult this year.
- 2.4. Reading Borough Council deliver its school admissions service through Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC). BFfC is an independent, not-for-profit company, wholly owned by Reading Borough Council, set up in December 2018 to deliver children’s services, early help, education and SEND services in Reading.
- 2.5. The Council’s admission arrangements must be determined by the 28 February 2025 to ensure Reading is compliant with the School Admissions Code and be published on the BFfC website by 15 March 2025.

### **3. The Proposal**

#### **3.1. Primary and Secondary School Co-ordinated schemes 2026-27**

These schemes have been amended and updated to reflect appropriate dates for school admissions. The Admissions Policy and admission arrangements were approved on the previous consultation for 2018 entry and there are no significant changes proposed to the Admissions Policy.

#### **3.2. Admission Policy for Community Primary, Infant and Junior Schools 2026-2027**

The Policy and admission arrangements have no significant changes from the proposals for 2025/26.

#### **3.3. Relevant Area**

The Relevant Area outlines the organisations that must be consulted by all schools in Reading when consulting on admissions policies. No amendments have been made to this.

### **4. Contribution to Strategic Aims**

- 4.1. The admission schemes contribute to the aims of ensuring that there are good education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading.
- 4.2. The Council’s new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:
  - Healthy Environment
  - Thriving Communities
  - Inclusive Economy
- 4.3. These themes are underpinned by “Our Foundations” explaining the ways we work at the Council:
  - People first
  - Digital transformation
  - Building self-reliance
  - Getting the best value
  - Collaborating with others
- 4.4. Full details of the Council’s Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council’s website - [Corporate plan - Reading Borough](#)

[Council](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

## **5. Environmental and Climate Implications**

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2. Where possible children are placed as near as possible to their local school. Parental preference and the need to divert children to other schools that are not their preference, means that some children are placed in schools outside their local community. This can have an impact on travel by public transport and in cars.

## **6. Community Engagement**

- 6.1. Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out "any of its functions" by providing information, consulting or "involving in another way".
- 6.2. This duty has been met. We have a statutory duty to consult every 7 years on the coordinated scheme for school admissions. We last consulted between 17 October 2018 and 10 December 2018 as per the school admission code. The outcome from that was reported to ACE on the 14 February 2019.

## **7. Equality Implications**

- 7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -
  - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to this decision.

## **8. Other Relevant Considerations**

- 8.1. There are any number of other issues which can be relevant for a report and these might include (the list is not exhaustive):
  - Procedural requirements – be particularly careful to note departures from established procedures
  - Legitimate expectations of service users and the public to be consulted about changes to policy
  - Public Health implications
  - Risk management implications
  - Health and Safety risk assessments
  - Transparency of information and freedom of information implications
  - Effects on the Armed Forces Community (Armed Forces Act 2021) - for more information on this, see the EqIA template on the intranet at the link in paragraph 7 above
  - Privacy Impact Assessment
  - Impact on Human Rights Act duties
  - Corporate Parenting
  - Regulatory duties (though these may be covered also in legal implications)
  - Changes brought about by European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act
  - Community safety implications
  - Any other relevant issues

## **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1. The admissions arrangements and Admissions Policy attached to this report ensure that Reading Borough Council demonstrates compliance with the School Admissions Code (2021).

## **10. Financial Implications**

- 10.1. None arising directly from this report.

## **11. Timetable for Implementation**

- 11.1. As per the School Admissions Code, the Admissions Policy and admission arrangements must be determined by the 28 February 2025 to ensure Reading is compliant. The documents must be published on the BFfC website by 15 March 2025.

## **12. Background Papers**

- 12.1. [supporting regulations](#), the [Explanatory Memorandum](#)

## **Appendices**

1. **Annexe A - Primary 2026 Coordinated Scheme**
2. **Annexe B - Primary Admissions Policy for Community Schools 2026**
3. **Annexe C - Primary\_Designations\_2026**
4. **Annexe D -Secondary 2026 Coordinated Scheme**
5. **Annexe E -Relevant Area 2026**