

Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

15 October 2025

Title	SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS CONSULTATION 2027/28
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Lara Patel, Executive Director Children's Services
Report author	Brian Grady, Director of Education
Lead Councillor	Rachel Eden, Lead Councillor for Public Health and Education
Council priority	Promote more equal communities in Reading
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) That the Committee approve the proposed consultation on the relevant admission arrangements for 2027-28, including:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) The proposed reduction of Published Admission Number at Micklands Primary School.b) The proposed reduction of Published Admission Number at Moorlands Primary School.c) The proposed reduction of Published Admission Number at Whitley Park Primary School.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report invites the Committee to approve the proposed consultation on the relevant admission arrangements for 2027-28. Specifically the consultation will consider the following elements for the academic year 2027/28 (September 2027 to July 2028):
 - 1.1.1. The admission arrangements for Community Primary Schools in Reading.
 - 1.1.2. The coordinated scheme for primary and junior schools.
 - 1.1.3. The coordinated scheme for secondary schools.
 - 1.1.4. The Relevant Area.
 - 1.1.5. The primary phase catchment areas.
- 1.2. The consultation will include proposed Published Admission Number reductions for three schools and other administrative proposed amendments for 2027/28 to comply with the School Admissions Code 2021.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. School admissions are subject to statutory 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 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. The School Admissions code of 2021 section 1.45 says all admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least every 7 years. Reading Borough Council last consulted on the policy in 2018 and therefore we must consult this year.
- 2.4. At the time of writing Reading Borough Council deliver its School Admissions Service through Brighter Futures for Children Ltd (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. From the 1 October Children's Service's will move back to the council.
- 2.5. The Consultation must last for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. That the consultation takes place between 17 October and 28 November 2025 (a total of 6 weeks) and consults on the following proposals:

3.2. Primary Co-ordinated schemes 2027-28 – Annexe A

- 3.2.1. Proposed change 1 on page 5 – Clarify that any change of preference submitted by via online application must after the 15 January be done by emailing the Reading School Admissions Team
- 3.2.2. Proposed change 2 on page 7 – Parents/carers who submitted a paper application and provided an email address will also receive an email with a formal offer. Any paper applications without an email address will receive details of their offer by letter (posted 2nd Class)

3.3. Secondary School Co-ordinated schemes 2027-28 Annexe D

- 3.3.1. Proposed change 1 on page 5 – Clarify that any change of preference submitted via online application must after the 15 January be done by emailing the Reading School Admissions Team
- 3.3.2. Proposed change 2 on page 7 – Parents/carers who submitted a paper application and provided an email address will also receive an email with a formal offer. Any paper applications without an email address will receive details of their offer by letter (posted 2nd Class)

3.4. Admissions Policy for Infant, Junior and Primary Schools 2027/28 - Annexe B

- 3.4.1. Proposed change 1 page 14 – to clarify for in-year admissions Category 6 of the Oversubscription Criteria for Community Primary and Infant Schools does not apply
- 3.4.2. Proposed change 2 page 15 – It is proposed that there will be a reduction to the Published Admission Numbers (PAN) for the following community and voluntary controlled schools

School	Current PAN	Proposed PAN
Micklands Primary School	30 (amended by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for 2025 & 2026)	30
Moorlands Primary	60	30
Whitley Park Primary School	90	60

- 3.4.3. By reducing Published Admission Numbers, these proposals will allow the schools identified to organise in the most structurally viable way and enable them to achieve financial viability, which will in turn, directly support the quality of education at these schools.
- 3.4.4. Proposed reductions in Published Admission Numbers are not expected to impact on the availability of local school places for parents. Reading as a Local Authority with duties to ensure sufficiency of school places plan on an overall minimum 5% surplus of school places in order to accommodate in year admissions. We are reviewing planning for in-year admissions and consequently will be considering revising overall minimum planning surplus in future years, including benchmarking with other neighbour and statistical neighbour LAs.
- 3.4.5. School census and demography data evidence that Reading Borough Council has sufficient school places to meet the needs of children over the next five years, with a current projected 12.9% surplus of school places in the primary phase.

3.5. The Relevant Area - Annexe E

- 3.5.1. The School Standards & Framework Act 1998 requires Local Authorities to establish Relevant Area(s) for admission policy consultations. The Relevant Area is the area in which admission authorities must consult with schools regarding their proposed admission arrangements before finalising them.
- 3.5.2. Once the relevant area has been determined, any school or academy proposing to change arrangements will need to consult with all other interested parties within this area in line with the Schools Admission Code.
- 3.5.3. Reading's last consultation ran from 17 October until 9 December 2018 and was determined on the 14 February 2019 to ensure that schools and academies use

the defined relevant area to inform their statutory consultation process on admission arrangements.

3.5.4. Reading has reviewed the current Relevant Area and no change is proposed for school year 2027/28.

3.6. Primary designated catchment areas - Annex C

3.6.1. The proposal to consult with no changes to the designated catchment area.

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 Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:

- Promote more equal communities in Reading
- Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
- Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
- Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
- Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future

4.3. In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:

- Putting residents first
- Building on strong foundations
- Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
- Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
- Being proudly ambitious for Reading

4.4. Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

4.5. Providing sufficient school places and ensuring fair and equitable access to a good quality local school place helps the Council achieve its objectives to promote more equal communities in Reading and secure Reading's economic and cultural success

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. Effective school admission arrangements combined with sufficient school places ensure that where possible, children are placed as near as possible to their local school. This minimises transport related to school attendance and is a positive contributor to addressing environmental and climate implications of school travel.

6. Community Engagement

6.1. 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. Therefore we are required to consult this year. Consultation arrangements are set out in the documents appended to this report.

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 (EqIA) has been undertaken. The EqIA is included in Annex G. The results of the screening assessment evidence no negative impacts have been identified for persons with a protected characteristic. Compliance with the School Admissions Code (2021) will ensure that as a public authority Reading Borough Council will have determined school admission arrangements which work to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

8.1. None

9. Legal Implications

9.1. The admissions arrangements (Annexe A & C) and Primary Admissions Policy for Community Schools 2027 (Annexe B) 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. Reductions in Published Admission Numbers at identified schools are expected to help schools set balanced budgets.

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1. The School Admissions Code (2021) sets out the timeframes for consultations. In line with the requirements of the School Admissions Code timetable requirements it is proposed to consult between 17 October and 28 November 2025.

11.2. The outcome of the consultation and final documents will then be presented at the January 2026 ACE committee for final decision.

11.3. To ensure compliance with the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021, admission arrangements and accompanying documentation must be determined by Reading Borough Council as the Admissions Authority by the 28 February and published on the relevant RBC website by 15 March 2026.

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are none

Appendices – delete if there are none

1. Annexe A - Primary 2027 Coordinated Scheme

2. **Annexe B - Primary Admissions Policy for Community Schools 2027**
3. **Annexe C - Primary_Designations_2027**
4. **Annexe D -Secondary 2027 Coordinated Scheme**
5. **Annexe E -Relevant Area 2027**
6. **Annexe F -Consultation School Admissions 2026**
7. **Annexe G - Annexe G - Equality Impact Assessment**