

Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee

14 January 2026



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 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	1) That the Committee determine the relevant admissions arrangements for 27/28

1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report invites the Committee to determine:

- 1.1.1. The admission arrangements for Community Primary Schools in Reading for the school year 2027/28.
- 1.1.2. The coordinated scheme for primary and junior schools for the school year 2027/28.
- 1.1.3. The coordinated scheme for secondary schools for the school year 2027/28.
- 1.1.4. The Relevant Area 2027.
- 1.1.5. The primary phase catchment areas for the school year 2027/28.

1.2. These admissions arrangements for 2027/28 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 had to consult this year.
- 2.4. The Consultation ran from the 17 October to the 30 November 2025.
- 2.5. The documents must be determined by the 28 February 2026 to ensure Reading is compliant with the school admissions code and published on the relevant Reading Borough Council website by 15 March 2026.

3. The Consultation

- 3.1. The consultation took place between 17 October and 28 November 2025 (a total of 6 weeks)
- 3.2. The consultation was promoted on social media. It was also sent out to the relevant area and community primary schools were asked to send it out to their parents. It was also regularly shared on all RBC staff through staff briefings.
- 3.3. There was a total of 17 responses, which is a reduction on previous consultation response rates. In 2018 94 responses were received.
- 3.4. Most respondents were in favour of the proposed changes.

4. The Proposal

4.1. Primary Co-ordinated scheme 2027-28 – Annexe A

- 4.1.1. 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

There were 17 responses to the survey with 82% in favour of this change

- 4.1.2. 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)

There were 17 responses to the survey with 88% in favour of this change

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments regarding the Primary Co-ordinated Scheme, there were none made.

- 4.1.3. The Primary Co-ordinated scheme has been amended to take into account the changes in the date and the proposals that were considered above.

4.2. Secondary School Co-ordinated scheme 2027-28 Annexe D

- 4.2.1. 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.

There were 17 responses to the survey with 88% in favour of this change

- 4.2.2. 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)

There were 17 responses to the survey with 94% in favour of this change

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments regarding the Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme. There were 2 responses around concern about the catchment area and admissions boundaries for grammar schools. However, it is not in the remit of the Local Authority to set the catchment areas for the Grammar Schools as they are their own admissions authorities.

- 4.2.3. The secondary school co-ordinated scheme has been amended to reflect the changes in the date and the proposals that were considered above.

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

- 4.3.1. Proposed change 1 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	Pre OSA PAN	Current PAN	Proposed PAN for 27/28
Micklands Primary School	60	30 (amended by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for 2025 & 2026)	30
Moorlands Primary	60	30 (amended by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for 2025 & 2026)	30
Whitley Park Primary School	90	60 (amended by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for 2025 & 2026)	60

There were 17 responses to the survey with 59% in favour of this change, 29.4% stated that they didn't know.

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments regarding the policy. No other specific issues, concerns, or suggestions were raised in the responses provided.

There is minimal concern expressed about the proposed primary admissions policy for community schools 2027.

4.3.2. 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.

4.3.3. 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.

4.3.4. 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.

4.3.5. The policy has been amended with the 3 new PAN's as above.

4.4. The Relevant Area - Annexe E

4.4.1. 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.

4.4.2. 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.

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments regarding the relevant area. Most respondents did not provide comments or left the feedback section blank, indicating either general acceptance or lack of strong opinions regarding the Relevant Area 2027 document.

4.4.3. The only change to the relevant area was an update to reflect the date for the school year 2027/28

4.5. Primary designated catchment areas - Annexe C

4.5.1. There were no changes to the designated catchment area, therefore we consulted on the areas as they were.

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments regarding the catchment areas, most respondents did not provide any comments or feedback on the Primary designations 2027 document, with several explicitly stating they had no comments

4.5.2. The primary designated catchment areas had been updated only to reflect the date for the school year 2027/28.

5. Contribution to Strategic Aims

5.1. The admission schemes contribute to the aims of ensuring that there are good education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading.

- 5.2. 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
- 5.3. 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
- 5.4. 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.
- 5.5. 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

6. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 6.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 6.2. 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.

7. Community Engagement

- 7.1. 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.

8. Equality Implications

- 8.1. 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.
- 8.2. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken. The EqIA is included in Annexe F. 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.

9. Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.1. None

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1. 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).

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1. None arising directly from this report. Reductions in Published Admission Numbers at identified schools are expected to help schools set balanced budgets.

12. Timetable for Implementation

- 12.1. 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.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1. 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 - Annexe G - Equality Impact Assessment**