



Determination

Case reference: ADA4434 The Romsey School, Hampshire

Objector: Hampshire County Council

Admission authority: The Gateway Multi Academy Trust

Date of decision: 30 October 2025

Determination

In accordance with section 88H(4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I do not uphold the objection to the admission arrangements determined by The Gateway Multi Academy Trust for The Romsey School.

I have also considered the arrangements in accordance with section 88I(5) and find there are other matters which do not conform with the requirements relating to admission arrangements in the ways set out in this determination.

By virtue of section 88K(2), the adjudicator's decision is binding on the admission authority. The School Admissions Code requires the admission authority to revise its admission arrangements within two months of the date of the determination.

The referral

1. Under section 88H(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, (the Act), an objection has been referred to the adjudicator by Hampshire County Council (the LA, the objector), about the admission arrangements (the arrangements) for The Romsey School (the school), an academy school for children aged 11 to 16 for September 2026. The objection is to the addition of a new feeder school to the list of feeder schools which are used in the arrangements to give priority for admission to children who attend them.

2. The local authority for the area in which the school is located is Hampshire County Council. The LA is the objector and therefore a party to this objection. Other parties to the objection are the school and the Gateway Muti Academy Trust (the trust) which is the admission authority for the school. Most of my correspondence has however been with the school which has been acting on behalf of the trust and so I shall refer to it in what follows.

Jurisdiction

3. The terms of the academy agreement between the academy multi-academy trust and the Secretary of State for Education require that the admissions policy and arrangements for the academy school are in accordance with admissions law as it applies to maintained schools. These arrangements were determined by the academy local governing board, on behalf of the admission authority for the school, on that basis.

4. The objector submitted its objection to these determined arrangements on 9 April 2025. I am satisfied the objection has been properly referred to me in accordance with section 88H of the Act and it is within my jurisdiction. I have also used my power under section 88I of the Act to consider the arrangements as a whole.

Procedure

5. In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation and the School Admissions Code (the Code).

6. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:

- a. a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the local governing board on 13 March 2025 at which the arrangements were determined
- b. a copy of the determined arrangements
- c. the objector's form of objection dated 9 April 2025 and supporting documents and further correspondence
- d. the school's response to the objection and further correspondence
- e. the local authority's composite prospectus for admissions to secondary schools
- f. a map of the area identifying relevant schools, and
- g. confirmation of when consultation on the arrangements last took place and details of the nature of the consultation and responses to it.

The Objection

7. The LA says that the school's arrangements are:

- (i) unreasonable because of the addition of Foundry Lane Primary School as a feeder school (linked school) and that they therefore fail to meet the requirements of paragraphs 1.8 and 1.15 of the Code;
- (i) unfair to children attending primary schools which are nearer to The Romsey School than Foundry Lane Primary School because they may suffer unfair disadvantage by failing to secure a place at the school. The objector does not say this, but I understand this to be an objection that the arrangements fail to be fair in contravention of paragraph 14 of the Code.

8. Paragraph 1.8 of the Code says that “oversubscription criteria **must** be reasonable” and paragraph 1.15 that “The selection of a feeder school or schools as an oversubscription criterion **must** be transparent and made on reasonable grounds.”

9. Paragraph 14 of the Code says that “...admission authorities **must** ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair....”

Other Matters

10. Having considered the arrangements as a whole it would appear that the following matters also do not, or may not, conform with requirements:

- (i) that the arrangements fail to meet the requirement of paragraph 14 of the Code that they be clear and that parents should be able to look at them and understand easily how places at the school will be allocated because they contain no description of the school’s catchment area but refer parents to the local authority website, and
- (ii) that the arrangements do not comply with the requirement of paragraph 2.15 of the Code concerning waiting lists that they “**must**....(state) that each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria”.

11. I have accordingly decided to exercise my powers under section 88I of the Act to consider the arrangements as a whole and whether they conform with the requirements relating to admissions.

Background

12. The town of Romsey is in Hampshire to the northwest of Southampton, about three miles north of the M27 motorway. There are two secondary schools in Romsey: The Romsey School and The Mountbatten School. Both are academy schools and both employ catchment areas in their admission arrangements. The Mountbatten School’s catchment area is divided into two, with areas to the east and west of the catchment area of The Romsey School, which covers the central part of Romsey. The catchment areas for the two schools together encompass the town of Romsey (and some of the surrounding area).

13. The trust is made up of seven schools: The Romsey School and six primary schools, four of which are located in Hampshire and one in nearby Portsmouth. The sixth is Foundry Lane Primary School which is in the Shirley district of Southampton. This area is northwest of Southampton city centre and Foundry Lane Primary School is about 5.4 miles from The Romsey School (straight line measurement provided by the objector).

14. The school’s admission arrangements for 2026 state that the published admission number (PAN) is 232. Oversubscription criteria are listed as follows (given here in summarised form):

- (i) Looked after and previously looked after children (as defined)
- (ii) Medical, physical or psychological need
- (iii) Children living in the catchment area
 - a. With siblings (as defined) on roll at the school
 - b. Other children living in the catchment area
- (iv) Children living outside the catchment area
 - a. Children of staff (as defined)
 - b. With siblings on the roll of the school
 - c. Who are on the roll of a linked junior or primary school
 - d. Other children

Oversubscription within any category is resolved on the basis of the straight-line distance between the child's home and the school, with the child living nearest to the school having the highest priority. If necessary, random allocation is then used.

15. The arrangements state that a map of all school catchment areas is available on the LA's website. They also make a statement about waiting lists which says that these are ordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria above, but which does not explain the effect that adding a child to the list will have on that order.

16. The arrangements list seven linked primary schools. These are the five primary schools which are in the school's catchment area together with Foundry Lane Primary School and Oakfield Academy which is located in Totton (between Romsey and the centre of Southampton). Oakfield Academy is also part of the Gateway Academy Trust. The LA and the school use the term "linked" schools to refer to what the Code calls "feeder" schools, which is the more commonly used term generally.

17. The Year 7 PAN at The Mountbatten School for admissions in 2026 is 284. This makes the total number of Year 7 places available at the two schools 516. The Mountbatten School also uses linked primary schools in its admission arrangements and these are the five primary or junior schools in its catchment area. One primary school, Romsey Primary School, is named as a linked school by both secondary schools. The Mountbatten School's arrangements employ oversubscription criteria which mirror those of The Romsey School in that (all) children living within its catchment area have a higher priority than those living outside it. These latter children are given a higher priority if they attend one of the linked primary schools. The following table shows the primary (or junior) schools in Romsey, the secondary school catchment area in which they are located, and the schools which are linked schools for the two secondary schools in their admission arrangements for 2026.

Primary/Junior school	Catchment area in which primary school located R = Romsey M = Mountbatten	Linked school R = Romsey M = Mountbatten	PAN for admission year for 2026
Awbridge	R	R	23
Braishfield	R	R	14
Cupernham J	R	R	90
Foundry Lane	-	R	60
Halterworth	M	M	60
North Baddesly J	M	M	90
Nursling C of E	M	M	30
Oakfield	-	R	30
Romsey	R	R and M	60
Romsey Abbey	R	R	30
Rownham St John's C of E	M	M	45
Wellow	M	M	30

Split between the two secondary schools, the sum of the PANs of the relevant primary schools are:

Secondary School and Year 7 PAN	Sum of linked primary school PANs (Romsey Primary assumes a split of places 30/30)	Sum of PANs of primary schools located in catchment area
Romsey (232)	277	217
Mountbatten (284)	285	255

Secondary School and Year 7 PAN	Sum of linked primary school PANs (Romsey Primary assumes a split of places 30/30)	Sum of PANs of primary schools located in catchment area
Total (516)	562	472

I shall refer to the information in these tables below.

Consideration of Case

18. The LA has objected to the addition of Foundry Lane Primary School (Foundry Lane) as a feeder school (“linked school”) to The Romsey School in its admission arrangements for 2026, saying that this has been done “largely on the basis that it is part of the same MAT rather than on reasonable grounds.” It has also said that it considers that the addition of Foundry Lane School is unfair because children who attend primary schools which are closer to The Romsey School and whose parents seek a place there “could be disadvantaged” by not securing a place at the school.

19. There are therefore two strands to the objection: that of reasonableness and that of fairness. Although these are not unrelated (in that any unfair effect could be so manifest that might mean that the admission arrangements causing it were also unreasonable), I will consider them in turn.

Whether the addition of Foundry Lane as a feeder school is unreasonable

20. Paragraph 1.8 of the Code says that:

“Oversubscription criteria **must** be reasonable.....”

Paragraph 1.15 of the Code says:

“The selection of a feeder school or schools as an oversubscription criterion **must** be transparent and made on reasonable grounds.”

The LA has cited both paragraphs in making its objection about the reasonableness of the naming of Foundry Lane as additional feeder school.

21. I need at this point to discuss the question of reasonableness, since that is the wording of the Code’s requirement concerning feeder schools and the challenge made by the objector. The case which provides the bedrock of the legal understanding of unreasonableness is Associated Provincial Picture Houses Ltd v Wednesbury Corporation (1948) 1 KB 223. The test of “Wednesbury unreasonableness”, as it has become known, is whether a policy or decision is “so unreasonable that no reasonable authority acting

reasonably could ever have come to it.” It is only this sense of “reasonable/ reasonably” that adjudicators are concerned with. So, everyday uses of the term such as in “it was a reasonably priced car” are not involved. The import of this is that the question of whether a provision is or is not reasonable is a “high bar” to be reached if unreasonableness is to be found.

22. The school wrote to me on 23 June 2025 saying the following:

“There has always been a relationship between the schools due to the number of children joining The Romsey School from Foundry Lane in transition from Year 6 to Year 7.....(September 2023 – 5 pupils, September 2024 – 8 pupils.) When Foundry Lane formally joined the Gateway Trust in September 2024, this reinforced and strengthened the relationship further. There have been discussions between all schools within the trust about curriculum content across KS2-KS3 ensuring a smooth transition and greater continuity, consistency and understanding for primary school children within the trust allowing them to have the skills and understanding to be ‘secondary ready’ whilst also allowing colleagues to learn from the quality of the work that is underway across KS1 and KS2.”

23. It seems to me that what the school has said constitutes a sound rationale for the inclusion in its oversubscription criteria of a school which is part of the same trust such that children who attend it are given some priority for admission. These are not considerations so irrational that the trust was acting without good reason when it took them into account in determining the school’s admission arrangements. Contrary to the LA’s view, it seems to me that, expressed in these meaningful terms about children’s education, being part of the same MAT can be reasonable grounds for a school to be named as a feeder school. I do not consider the arrangements to be unreasonable and so do not uphold this aspect of the objection.

Whether the addition of Foundry Lane as a feeder school makes the arrangements unfair

24. Schools must employ oversubscription criteria in order to decide which children are admitted when the school is oversubscribed. As a result of the use of oversubscription criteria when a school is oversubscribed, some children are not admitted and will therefore need to go to a different school. That is, oversubscription criteria provide an advantage to some children and a disadvantage to others, as they are intended to do. In order to determine whether or not there is unfairness as a result of this disadvantage, it is necessary to consider the relative effect on the two groups of children concerned. In this case, these are the children in attendance at Foundry Lane who could gain a place at the expense of children identified by the LA as “children attending nearer schools” because of the school’s inclusion as a feeder school.

25. I therefore need to examine what is likely to happen with respect to these groups by considering both what has occurred in admissions to the school up to and including in 2025, and then what is likely to happen in 2026 in the light of all the available evidence (given the addition of Foundry Lane as a feeder school).

26. When it made its objection, the LA told me that “only small numbers of children from Foundry Lane Primary School actually ‘feed’ into The Romsey School. For admissions to Year 7 in September 2025, there were 19 on-time applications from children attending Foundry Lane Primary (which has a PAN of 60) of which only 7 required places (two were offered and five were refused. The remaining 10 were offered a place at a higher preference [school].” In 2024 nine were allocated [a place]. I assume from this that the LA wished me to conclude that there was little case for making Foundry Lane a feeder school but it does not seem to have appreciated that low numbers of admissions of children who had been attending Foundry Lane up to now is likely to support the counter argument. If few children are involved, then their effect can only be small. However, in the 2026 arrangements children attending Foundry Lane have been given a higher priority than was the case in either 2025 or 2024 and it is this fact, coupled with the numbers of children who are likely to be involved that is potentially significant, and I shall consider this below.

27. What the LA has said is that the sum of the PANs of the “existing linked schools is 247” and that with the addition of Foundry Lane “this increases to 307. If all the children attending the linked schools were to apply to The Romsey School, a significant number of children attending a linked school would have to be refused and there would be no places for other out-catchment children living close to the school, but [these children] are in catchment for other secondary schools.” This statement assumes that:

- (i) Foundry Lane is not already a linked school, which it is and
- (ii) although Romsey Primary School is a linked school for both secondary schools it is only relevant to admissions to The Romsey School, which is not the case.

In the table above I have included Foundry Lane and split the effect of Romsey Primary School. On this basis, the total PAN of the feeder schools in the 2026 arrangements for the school is not 307, but 277 as I have shown.

28. The approach of simply adding the PANs of the feeder schools might be relevant if it could be shown both that:

- (i) the PANs for admissions to the feeder school gave an accurate picture of the numbers of children about to transfer, which may not be the case (since PANs are relevant only to admissions to normal years of entry at a school), and
- (ii) children from the feeder schools have sought and obtained places at The Romsey School in numbers close to or equal to the number in the transferring year group.

29. In fact, the LA in its objection went on to say that: “Whilst we recognise that currently not all children in catchment or attending a linked school apply and the school already admits large numbers of children from the Southampton area, the addition of another linked school with up to 60 children potentially wanting to transfer will reduce the chances of more local children being able to gain place.” I can only observe that this comment (together with the comment about other local children being “in catchment” for other schools) by the LA

makes it plain that it makes its argument based on what could conceivably happen in the limit of the potential local circumstances, not on what can be shown to be happening or to be likely in the future. It makes this plain by concluding its objection by saying (having referred to the duty of academy schools to provide education for local children) that “There are more than 20 other non-linked primary schools closer to the Romsey Lane than Foundry Lane Primary School.” It says that the addition of Foundry Lane is “unfair on children attending nearer schools seeking places at The Romsey School who could be disadvantaged.” I have sought further information from both the LA and the trust in order to be clear about these present and likely future circumstances.

30. Data concerning the allocation of places (as at March, for each year) at the school show that it has recently become oversubscribed against its Year 7 PAN of 232.

Data	Admissions in 2024	Admissions in 2025
Total of all preferences	476	544
Total offers	231	249
EHCP	14	6
LAC/PLAC	3	0
Medical	0	0
Catchment with sibling	32	35
Other catchment	59	78
Children of staff	0	2
Out of catchment with sibling	25	42
Linked school	12	17
Other out of catchment	86	68
Refused	0	33
Distance of last child offered (miles)	13.6	4.9

31. I have taken particular note of the following information in this table (concerning admissions in both years):

- (i) oversubscription occurred under the “other out of catchment” criterion, meaning that all children living in the school’s catchment area and all children attending a linked school who had applied had by then been allocated a place;
- (ii) the number of children who did not live in the school’s catchment area but who were offered a place because they attended a linked school was comparatively small in each year;
- (iii) the furthest distance from the school from which a child who lived out of the catchment area but did not attend a linked primary school reduced significantly in 2025, and
- (iv) the school made 249 admissions in 2025, but I have not been provided with a reason for this. I assume the trust simply decided it could admit more children in this year, as it is permitted to do.

32. The school has also asked me to take into account its own description of current local circumstances. It says that both The Romsey School and Mountbatten School “admit a significant number of students from the wider Southampton area.” It says that this is made possible because of “strong transport links and dedicated school bus services, which make commuting to Romsey both feasible and attractive to families outside the immediate catchment.” This of course could mean that parents of children at Foundry Lane would find it attractive to seek a place at The Romsey School and that parents of children in previous years might have been deterred from doing so until now if they considered they were unlikely to be successful under the previous oversubscription criteria. What has changed in the 2026 arrangements is that the priority of a child at the school (unless they had priority under a higher oversubscription criterion) will have changed from “other out of catchment” to being equal to the priority given to other children attending a named feeder school who do not satisfy a higher oversubscription criterion. So, there is an increased prospect for such a child of being successful under the 2026 arrangements.

33. The primary point being made by the school however is that intake data up to and including that for 2025 shows that, far from being composed of whole year groups transferring from the school’s feeder schools (as the LA fears will be the case in 2026) “our feeder and linked primary schools have accounted for approximately 50% of The Romsey School’s published admission number (PAN)”. It gave me data showing that in 2024 actual admissions from children attending the (then) linked primary schools (with eight admissions from Foundry Lane added) accounted for 115 places (out of 231 admissions as shown above) which I calculate to be almost exactly 50%, and that for 2025 the equivalent figure was 139 which I calculate was 56% of the 249 places offered. One child had been admitted from Foundry Lane in 2025. These figures are consistent with those shown in the table above in which the total number of places offered to children living outside the school’s catchment, either with or without a sibling at the school, was 111 in 2024 and 110 in 2025.

34. I pause at this point to consider what the information which I have been given about admissions to the school up to the present time says about the local context as it relates to

the objection, before going on to look at what is the likely effect of the arrangements which have been determined for 2026.

35. It seems to me to be a fairly obvious point that the order of the oversubscription criteria which have been employed in the last two years means that all children who live in the school's catchment area have had a higher priority for admission than children who do not live there but who attend a feeder school. This has not changed for 2026. The feeder schools include all schools in the catchment area. So many children attending them are also likely to live in the catchment area and so gain admission under the higher oversubscription criterion. The remaining children who attend one of the feeder schools have the next level of priority in the arrangements and these numbered only 12 and 17 children in 2024 and 2025 respectively, leaving the numbers of places I have just given for children living outside the catchment area and not attending a feeder school.

36. I have explained above the material effect of the inclusion of Foundry Lane as a feeder school, and it is clear to me that even if 60 children in attendance there sought a place at The Romsey School in 2026 there would still be significant numbers of places available to children not attending other feeder school and not living in the catchment area (unless the pattern of preferences of parents whose children attend one of the other feeder schools also changes dramatically, which must be extremely unlikely).

37. I asked the LA to supply me with the actual numbers on roll at the feeder and catchment area primary schools in the age groups due to transfer to secondary school in the next three years, given its use of admission year PANs as part of its argument. Compared to the theoretical maximum number of 217 children coming from Romsey's linked primary schools in its catchment area there are currently 194 children in Year 6, 200 in Year 5 and 203 in Year 4. Taking all ten primary schools in Romsey together, the current Year 6 total is 457, that for Year 5 is also 457 and that for Year 4 is 458. As I have said, the combined Year 7 PAN for the two secondary schools is 516, and so, on the basis of these data, there are around 60 further places even assuming all the children at primary schools in Romsey were to take up places there (which as we have seen is far from the case). The combined Year R PANs of the two linked schools for The Romsey School which are not located in Romsey, Oakfield Primary and Foundry Lane Primary could provide a maximum of 90 further children but again the likelihood of this is very small based on recent admissions. In both 2024 and 2025, the number of children admitted to The Romsey School under the oversubscription criterion "children attending a feeder school but living out of the catchment area", which would have been children attending Oakfield Primary, was far fewer than the potential maximum of 30. The inclusion of Foundry Lane as a linked school was not part of the arrangements for either year, but in fact the number of children who were admitted to The Romsey School who were in attendance there was one in 2025 and there were eight in 2024 (as I have said).

38. The LA uses the cohort sizes in linked primary schools (or more correctly, these data for the linked primary schools in the catchment areas in the figures I have seen) to make its forecast of the future need for Year 7 places at the two secondary schools, applying a weighted "cohort survival" factor to these figures. These forecasts show that there is an

anticipated shortfall in Year 7 places for both secondary schools in each of the next few years. The school has criticised these forecasts, not least because each school's forecast includes all the children on roll at Romsey Primary School in each year, and while as the LA puts it, the potential exists for these children to join either school, this cannot be true for both simultaneously.

39. My own appreciation of these forecast figures is that if the Romsey Primary School issue is corrected, this methodology does show a net shortfall in Year 7 places in 2026 across the two schools of 15-20 places, and of course the two linked schools for The Romsey School which are not in Romsey have not been factored in as part of the LA's forecast. However, the unadjusted numbers in the primary schools give the effect which I have described above, and the LA forecasts produce something different not least because of the high weighted survival rates employed, which in the case of the Romsey School is 124%. It seems to me possible that while this methodology may be suitable in many circumstances, it is also possible that in a fluid situation in which parents have many schools to choose from (as here, given the proximity of Southampton) this may not be less so. The admission data from the school and its own appreciation of local circumstances (which seems to me to be entirely plausible) gives a picture of parents who send their children to primary schools in the locality having the option of choosing to go elsewhere for secondary education and appearing to do so. The places at the Romsey School which these parents might have taken up are then filled by children from elsewhere, giving a high apparent "survival factor". But since the feeder primary cohorts represent only about half of the children who are actually admitted, applying a high survival factor to the numbers in these schools may then become a poor predictor of future numbers, especially if it leads to a forecast of a shortfall in places because of the source of these children. It may simply be that the school will fill up.

40. Whether or not that is so, I am happy to accept that it may well be the case that there will be reducing capacity for children living outside the school's catchment area to secure a place in the near future, and that the potential exists for this situation to be aggravated by the addition of Foundry Lane as a feeder school, but no more than that. I do not consider it to be material whether or not these children attend a school which is nearer to The Romsey School than Foundry Lane, as the LA seems to do (although I am not sure why).

41. What the LA has said to me in its conclusion is that "the addition of this linked school does provide the conditions that if all the children at the linked schools did apply for the Romsey School, then other children who live in Romsey, but who are not in the school's catchment and not attending a linked school would not be able to be admitted and would be displaced to non-local schools."

42. The children for whom the LA is concerned are not all the children I have just spoken about (all children living outside the Romsey School catchment area), but children living outside it and within the catchment area of The Mountbatten School. Under the oversubscription criteria employed by The Mountbatten School as well as The Romsey School), these children have a higher priority than those attending linked schools, and I

have been given no evidence that any children living in the Mountbatten School catchment area are unlikely to find a place either there or at an alternative local secondary school.

43. As far as other children living outside both secondary school catchment areas is concerned, I asked the LA if it could tell me the numbers of children who it thought might be unable to secure a place at The Romsey School and the details of where they might have been attending a primary school and the alternative schools to The Romsey School that they might need to access and the distances to these alternative schools. The LA has told me that it is not possible to provide any of this information, since “it will depend on how parents choose to express their preferences.”

44. In order for the arrangements to be unfair, they would need to have an unfair effect and that unfair effect would need to outweigh the advantage to other children who gain a place at the school as a result of what the arrangements contain. An unfair effect could arise for those not admitted if some of these children could not secure a suitable school place at a reasonable distance from their home. I have been given no information about any children who could be “displaced to non- local schools” (as the LA has put it), and since I cannot discern any certainty that there will be this effect from the information which I have been supplied with, I am unable even to make such a comparison.

45. I am left with the view that that LA’s objection is that in the most extreme of circumstances, that is if all the children in The Romsey School’s linked schools sought places there, there is the potential for some other children to be unable to secure a place at the school. But such an effect would not be unfair if there are places available for the children so affected, whether at the Mountbatten School or at other schools within a reasonable travelling distance. I can see no such effect or even a reasonable prospect that that it will arise, certainly for 2026 admissions, given present admission patterns, which is all I can consider. As a result, I do not find that the inclusion of Foundry Lane as a feeder school in the admission arrangements for 2026 has an unfair effect, and I do not uphold this aspect of the objection.

46. I need to mention one further matter. The LA referred in correspondence to the view of Southampton City Council concerning the objection (since Foundry Lane is in Southampton), and the school has asked me to consider whether the LA had the “legal authority to ‘object’ or provide any supporting information for due consideration on behalf of Southampton City Council”. It would in fact have been open to me to make Southampton City Council a party to this case, but I have not done this because I did not consider that doing so would add anything to my consideration. All the information which I have used has been that supplied either by the LA or by the school or obtained from published information as explained above, and I have made my decisions for the reasons I have given.

Other Matters

47. The school has accepted that the arrangements contain no map or written description of its catchment area and has helpfully indicated its intention to include both in its policy in the future and therefore this information will be displayed on its website.

However, the arrangements as determined do not do this and so fail to enable parents to easily understand how places at the school are allocated, in contravention of paragraph 14 of the Code.

48. The school has also acknowledged that the arrangements do not contain the statement concerning the operation of waiting lists which is specified as a mandatory requirement by paragraph 2.15 of the Code, although confirming that its practices do conform with what is stated there. However, the failure to set out the required statement as part of the arrangement means that they do not comply with what the Code requires.

Summary of Findings

49. I have explained why the addition of Foundry Lane Primary School as a linked (feeder) school for admissions to the school in 2026:

- (i) is not unreasonable, since it is part of the same MAT as The Romsey School and there are reasons why this decision is rational in terms of children's education;
- (ii) is not unfair, since I have been given no information which leads me to believe that there will be an effect on children which is an unfair one.

Determination

50. In accordance with section 88H(4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I do not uphold the objection to the admission arrangements determined by The Gateway Multi Academy Trust for The Romsey School.

51. I have also considered the arrangements in accordance with section 88I(5) and find there are other matters which do not conform with the requirements relating to admission arrangements in the ways set out in this determination.

52. By virtue of section 88K(2), the adjudicator's decision is binding on the admission authority. The School Admissions Code requires the admission authority to revise its admission arrangements within two months of the date of the determination.

Dated: 30 October 2025

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Bryan Slater