



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

## Determination

**Case reference:** ADA4446 Cawston Grange Primary School,  
Cawston, Rugby, Warwickshire

**Objector:** A Parent

**Admission authority:** The Cawston Grange Primary School Trust

**Date of decision:** 7 January 2026

## 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 Cawston Grange Primary School Trust, Warwickshire, which was its admission authority when the arrangements for the school were determined in November 2024.

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 school's new admission authority, the Triumph Learning Trust. The School Admissions Code requires the admission authority to revise its admission arrangements within two months of the date of the determination, unless an alternative timescale is specified by the adjudicator. In this case I determine that the arrangements must be revised by Friday 9 January 2026.

## 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 a parent (the objector), about the admission arrangements (the arrangements) for Cawston Grange Primary School (the school), an academy school for September 2026.
2. The objection is to the school's catchment area, which the objector says is unfair.

3. The local authority (LA) for the area in which the school is located is Warwickshire County Council. The LA is a party to this objection. Other parties to the objection are the school, the Triumph Learning Trust (the trust) and the objector. Although the trust is the admission authority for the school, all my correspondence has been with the school on its behalf.

## Jurisdiction

4. When the arrangements were determined, the school was a single academy trust. It has subsequently joined a multi-academy trust (on 1 September 2025). The multi-academy trust is the Triumph Learning Trust. The terms of the academy agreement between the academy trust (and also the 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 Cawston Grange Primary School Trust, which was the admission authority for the school, on that basis. For the 2026/27 academic year the school retains the arrangements which were determined by the single academy trust.

5. The objector submitted her objection to these determined arrangements on 6 May 2025. The objector has asked to have her identity kept from the other parties and has met the requirement of regulation 24 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 by providing details of her name and address to me. I am satisfied that 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

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

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

- a. a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the trust at which the arrangements were determined (on 28 November 2024);
- b. a copy of the determined arrangements;
- c. the objector's form of objection dated 6 May 2025;
- d. the school's response to the objection;
- e. information provided to me by the LA at my request;
- f. the local authority's online composite prospectus for admissions to primary schools, and
- g. a map of the area identifying relevant schools.

## The Objection

8. The objector says that the priority area which is used in the school's admission arrangements to give priority to applicants if there is oversubscription is unfair. She says that the school is the closest to the family home and that her daughter, who is due to start school in September 2026, is unlikely to be admitted even though she lives in the school's priority area. She considers that the arrangements are unfair because others living in the priority area will have higher priority for a place at the school as well a priority at other local schools.

## Other Matters

9. When I looked at the arrangements sent to me by the school, it appeared to me that the following matters do not, or may not, conform with the requirements concerning admission arrangements set out in the Code and elsewhere in legislation:

- (i) The statement which describes the admission of pupils which begins "Children will usually be admitted...." does not conform with the requirements set out in paragraph 2.17 of the Code, which confers a right to deferred entry and to part-time schooling as laid out there.
- (ii) The term "planned admission number" is used in the arrangements, which is not that employed in the Code, which is "published admission number". This is confusing for parents. Paragraph 14 of the Code requires that admission arrangements are clear.
- (iii) The statement that "the timetable for admission to reception is set by Warwickshire County Council" is factually incorrect since this is determined nationally as set out in the Code and the School Admissions Regulations 2012. This makes the arrangements unclear in breach of paragraph 14 of the Code.
- (iv) There is no requirement for parents to "register their interest" as stated in the arrangements. Parents are only required to complete the local authority Common Application Form (CAF), as set out in Section 2 of the Code. This makes the arrangements unclear, in breach of paragraph 14 of the Code.
- (v) The arrangements mention statements of special educational need. These have been replaced by Education, Health and Care Plans, as stated in paragraph 1.6 of the Code. The use of out-of-date terminology makes the arrangements unclear, in breach of paragraph 14 of the Code.

## Background

10. Cawston is a suburb of Rugby, to the southwest of its centre. There are a number of primary schools in this area and a "super priority area" has been defined as the joint catchment area for all of them. This priority area covers an area which by my estimation using Googlemaps is approximately one mile from north to south and about 2.3 miles from

east to west. The objector's home is located inside this area. I shall discuss this in more detail below.

11. Following correspondence from the objector and the school it was necessary for me to confirm to the parties that:

- (i) the body responsible for the determination of the school's catchment area is the school's admission authority, and not the LA (which the school had indicated to me it believed was the case);
- (ii) since the school's admission arrangements had been determined in accordance with the relevant requirements, and since an objection to them had been made within the time limit provided in the Code, the adjudicator is required to consider that objection, and
- (iii) if the adjudicator were to find that the arrangements fail to comply with the Code's requirements it would then be necessary for the school's current admission authority (the Triumph Learning Trust) to amend them.

12. Both the school and the LA have told me that there have been discussions between them concerning a possible change to the catchment area employed by the school, but that any such change would not have effect until admissions in September 2027 at the earliest. The school has told me that "the current priority area forms part of a wider super priority area established some time ago, likely prior to the school's conversion to academy status. It has not been formally reviewed since. Given the significant housing growth in and around Cawston in recent years, it is clear that this now needs reconsideration." I have been made aware of the general nature of that potential change, which the school says would be to "better reflect current settlement patterns and ensure more equitable access for families in the immediate vicinity of the school". However, this is of no consequence concerning my consideration of the objection, which is in respect of the arrangements for 2026.

13. The objector referred in correspondence to the fact that she lives in an area of new housing development and that she understood that developer contributions (known as "section 106 contributions", or more recently as "CIL money") had been made available to the school in order to increase the number of available school places there. As the school pointed out, any such moneys paid to it would not have been for this purpose, and it is the responsibility of the LA, not that of publicly funded schools, to ensure that there are sufficient school places within its area.

14. The school's admission arrangements, in summary, are as follows:

- (i) The published admission number (PAN), described in the arrangements as the "planned admission number", is 60.
- (ii) Oversubscription criteria are given as:
  - a. Looked after and previously looked after children (as defined)

- b. Children living in the school's priority area with a sibling at the school
- c. Other children living within the priority area
- d. Children living outside the priority area with a sibling at the school
- e. Other children living outside the priority area.

Priority within each criterion is given on the basis of the straight-line distance from the home to the school (as defined).

(iii) The arrangements also contain the following:

- a. A statement concerning the admission of pupils to Year R which says that "In exceptional circumstances, parents can request that the date their child is admitted is deferred until later in the academic year or that their child takes up a part-time place".
- b. A statement that the timetable for Year R admissions is set by the LA, which refers to parents "registering their interest" in a place.
- c. A reference to "a child with a statement of special educational needs" .

## Consideration of Case

### The objection

15. 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, some children are not admitted and will therefore need to go to a different school. That is, oversubscription criteria (including catchment areas) 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 (those advantaged and those disadvantaged by the provision which is the source of the complaint).

16. Each of the schools in the "super priority area" gives priority in their admission arrangements for September 2026 to children living anywhere inside the combined area (with highest priority for children with siblings at the school). If there is oversubscription from such children, the arrangements for each school give priority to those living closest to the school. Children living outside the combined area are prioritised on the same basis. I list below the schools and their approximate distance from the objector's home together with information to be found in the LA's composite prospectus concerning the allocation of places at each school in the 2025 admission round.

School	Approximate distance from objector's home	Category in which there was	Effect for children living in priority area

		<b>oversubscription in 2025</b>	
<b>Cawston Grange Primary School</b>	0.8 mile	Priority area, no sibling	All with siblings admitted, those without only nearest admitted
<b>Bilton Infant School</b>	1.1 mile	Outside priority, no sibling	All admitted
<b>Henry Hinde Infant School</b>	1.2 mile	Outside priority area, no sibling	All admitted
<b>Bawnmore Infant School</b>	1.5 mile	Outside priority, no sibling	All admitted

17. The objector's complaint is about the designation of the school's catchment area, which remains the "super priority area" employed for all the Cawston schools. I have explained the background above. The objector has not said so, but given that her objection was framed in the context of "the latest results from national offer day" concerning the school (that is, the admission figures given above), I assume that her concern is that the catchment area is such that a child who does not have an older sibling at the school may not be able to secure a place in 2026 if they do not live close enough to the school.

18. For the school's catchment area to be unfair to a child living in the catchment area who did not secure a place there, the disbenefit to such a child would need to outweigh the advantage to a child benefitting from the arrangements, that is to say, a child who did secure a place. So, I must consider two things: firstly, the nature of the group likely to benefit from the admission arrangements and secondly the disbenefit to the group not admitted.

19. The issue here is clearly the size of the catchment area, which gives priority for admission to children living in the whole of the super priority area, many of whom do (as the objector says) live near to the other schools within it. Because the area remains unchanged, children approaching Year R admission (in 2026) who have an older sibling at the school and who live anywhere within it are prioritised for admission, followed by those without a sibling, with priority given to those living closest to the school.

20. So, the group advantaged by the catchment area are the former group, and the group potentially disadvantaged are the latter (as referred to by the objector). Since children will have been admitted from the whole of the area in the past to the school, it is likely that some younger siblings who may now seek admissions to the school will live at its extremities. The 2025 data shows that all children living in the catchment area with an older sibling were admitted to the school (24 in total), and that distance therefore did not come

into play for them. 35 other children (without a sibling) were admitted from within the super priority area, but at this point the school was oversubscribed.

21. If the catchment area had prioritised instead all children living closer to the school (that is, if the catchment area were made smaller) then some children with a sibling at the school but living in the more distant parts of the current catchment area would be at risk of not being admitted. The effect on these children would be that the younger sibling would need to go to another school. Having children at more than one primary school, even if these are geographically not distant from each other, could cause disruption and expense that would otherwise be unnecessary, and is also likely to impact adversely on the lives of all concerned including the children themselves, especially for this age group. If that were to be brought about without there being good reason, that may in itself be considered an unfairness. The school has recognised the potential for this, telling me that it is aware of this issue in its consideration of how a future catchment area (and the associated oversubscription criteria in its admission arrangements) might need to be drawn up.

22. For the moment however, this is hypothetical. The current situation is that some children living in the super priority area who do not have a sibling at the school are, based on the 2025 admission data, unlikely to secure a place at the school, and these will be those living furthest away from the school. I estimate that the furthest extremities of the super priority area are about 1.6 miles distant (to the east) and about 1.3 miles distant (to the southeast). In order for there to be an unfair effect for such children (because the current, large, catchment area affords priority for those children with siblings who attend the school), the effect of not being able to secure a place at the school would have to be, for example, that they would have to travel an unreasonable distance to their alternative school. I have shown above the 2025 admissions data for the other schools in the super priority area, and it is clear that for these schools at least, given their admission arrangements for 2026, any child living in the super priority area would secure a place at one of the schools. There are also other nearby schools outside the super priority area.

23. I have asked the LA for information about the number of 2026 Year R children it expects to be living in the super priority area compared to the number that there were in 2025 but in spite of being reminded on more than one occasion of this request, I have received no reply from the LA on this point. However, I am satisfied that this information would be unlikely to show a major change to the circumstances which have prevailed in 2025, as described above.

24. Given all the above, it seems to me that that the objector may or may not be able to secure a place at the school in 2026, and this is something which the objector has obviously identified. However, whether or not that can be predicted accurately from the forecast data, it remains the case that any child living in the super priority area will be able to secure a place at one of the other schools there, and for all such children this would be within a reasonable distance of their home. In other words, I can see no actual unfairness suffered by such children because the school uses the super priority area as its catchment area in its 2026 arrangements and affords priority to applicants who have siblings attending the school. Although there is likely to be a relative disadvantage for some children (in terms

of not securing a place at the school), the effect on this group is outweighed in my judgment by that likely to befall some children with older siblings were the catchment area of the school simply to prioritise those living closer the school. I do not think that the catchment area is unfair, and I do not uphold the objection.

### Other matters

25. The school has responded positively concerning each of the matters which I have identified as possible breaches of the requirements of the Code, saying how it intends to revise its arrangements. However, each of these matters does breach the requirements of the Code which I have identified, as follows:

- (i) The arrangements fail to comply with paragraph 2.17 of the Code because they do not make it clear that where a child is offered a place at the school:
  - a) that child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday;
  - b) the child's parents can defer the date their child is admitted to the school 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 it was made, and
  - c) where the parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.
- (ii) The arrangements fail to comply with the requirement of clarity made in paragraph 14 of the Code, because they use the term "planned admission number", whereas the Code makes clear that the term PAN stands for a school's published admission number, making the arrangements unclear.
- (ii) The arrangements make an incorrect statement, saying that the timetable for the admission process is set by the LA. The Code contains the information that this matter is determined nationally and so the arrangements will be confusing to parents and are therefore unclear, in breach of paragraph 14.
- (iii) The arrangements cause a further breach the requirement of paragraph 14 of the Code that they be clear because they say that parents should "register their interest" for a school place, whereas the process set out in the Code is that parents need only complete the common application form (CAF) provided by the LA in the area in which they live.
- (iv) Statements of special educational need, which are mentioned in the arrangements, have been replaced by Education, Health and Care plans, and so this use of outdated terminology will be confusing to parents, making the arrangements unclear and again in breach of paragraph 14 of the Code.



26. As a result, the arrangements must now be amended by the trust accordingly. Since the national closing date for applications for places at primary schools for September 2026 is 15 January 2026, I require that the arrangements must be revised no later than Friday 9 January 2026.

## Summary of Findings

27. I have explained why I have concluded that the catchment area which forms part of the school's admission arrangements for 2026 is not unfair, and that I therefore do not uphold the objection.

28. I have also explained why there are other matters which do not comply with what the Code requires and which therefore require that the arrangements are amended by the school's admission authority.

## Determination

29. 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 Cawston Grange Primary School Trust, Warwickshire, which was its admission authority when the arrangements for the school were determined in November 2024.

30. 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.

31. By virtue of section 88K(2), the adjudicator's decision is binding on the school's new admission authority, the Triumph Learning Trust. The School Admissions Code requires the admission authority to revise its admission arrangements within two months of the date of the determination, unless an alternative timescale is specified by the adjudicator. In this case I determine that the arrangements must be revised by Friday 9 January 2026.

Dated: 7 January 2026

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Bryan Slater