



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

## Determination

**Case reference:** ADA4596

**Objector:** A member of the public

**Admission Authority:** The Governing Body for Reading School

**Date of advice:** 31 March 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 Governing Body for Reading School for 2027/28.**

**I have also considered the arrangements under section 88I(5) and find that they do not comply with 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 this 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 a member of the public (the Objector), about the admission arrangements (the Arrangements) for September 2027 for Reading School (the School). The School is a selective academy for boys aged 11-18 years. It is located in Reading, Berkshire. The School is part of Reading School, a single-academy trust (the Trust). According to the School's website, the Trust 'delegates all aspects of running and managing the school' to the School's Governing Body.

2. The Local Authority (LA) for the area in which the School is located is Reading Borough Council.

3. The objection is to the introduction of an oversubscription category which prioritises applicants attending one of 76<sup>1</sup> named state-funded primary schools located within 4.6 miles of the School. The objection raises concerns that this criterion unfairly disadvantages boys attending independent schools in the same area and is unfair to those living near to the school but not attending one of the named schools.

4. The parties to this objection are the Objector, the School, the Trust; and the Local Authority.

5. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all parties for their timely responses to my requests for further information.

## Jurisdiction

6. The terms of the academy agreement between Reading School and the Secretary of State for Education require that the admissions policy and Arrangements for the School are in accordance with admissions law as it applies to maintained schools.

7. The admission arrangements for 2027/28 were determined on 9 February 2026 under section 88C of the Act. The Arrangements were determined by the Trust, which is the Admission Authority for the school. The Board of Trustees is known as the Governing Body for the School.

8. A consultation period took place prior to the determination of the arrangements between 2 December 2025 and 28 January 2026.

9. The Objector submitted their objection to the determined arrangements on 16 February 2026. The Objector has asked to have their 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 their name and address to me.

10. 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.

11. I have also used my power under section 88I of the Act to consider the Arrangements as a whole and to determine whether or not they conform with the requirements relating to admissions and, if not, in what ways they do not so conform. I will refer to these as 'other matters' and they are covered in the section of the determination under the title of that name.

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<sup>1</sup> I note that 75 schools are named in the School's published Arrangements. The School is aware of this discrepancy and intends to amend the list after this determination is published as permitted by paragraph 3.6 of the Code.

12. Although the Trust is the Admission Authority, as a single-academy trust, it has been the School that has responded to my requests for further information. I will, therefore, refer to the School and not the Trust in this determination when dealing with those responses.

## Procedure

13. In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation and the Code.

14. The information I have considered in reaching my decision includes:

- the objection dated 16 February 2026;
- a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Admission Authority on 9 February 2026 at which the arrangements were determined;
- copies of minutes from another Governing Body meeting and from admissions committee (a sub-committee of the Governing Body) meetings;
- the determined Arrangements for 2027/28, specifically the arrangements for entry to Year 7 for day pupils;
- responses from the LA, the School and the Objector to the objection and to my requests for further information;
- confirmation of when consultation on the arrangements last took place, details of the nature of the consultation, responses to it and related reports to Governors;
- maps showing the location of the School, named feeder schools, and postcode areas in and around Reading; and
- information available on the websites of gov.uk (including the 'Get Information About Schools' (GIAS) and Ofsted websites), the LA and the School;

15. I have been provided with a substantial amount of information by the parties. I have referred only to that which has a bearing on my determination.

## Background

16. According to GIAS, the School is a selective, single-sex academy converter. It has no designated religious character. While the School has a long history, it became an academy in February 2011. As of 6 February 2026, the School had 1129 pupils on roll. The School's

website describes the School as a designated grammar school. The School offers a mix of day and boarding places.

17. The School was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2023. At that time, all areas of the school were judged to be 'outstanding'.

18. The published admission number (PAN) of the School for entry to Year 7 in 2027/28 is 150. This is made up of 138 places for day pupils and 12 boarding places. Boarding places are allocated in line with the school's separate Boarding Admissions Policy.

19. While specific numbers vary year on year, the School is routinely oversubscribed. For example, for entry in September 2025, 1074 boys registered for the entrance test (registrants), 439 achieved the eligible score for entry and 150 were admitted.

20. The arrangements set out that children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) will be admitted first. Children will then be prioritised according to the oversubscription criteria. These can be summarised as follows:

#### Category 1: Priority Places

Candidates who meet the following criteria, allocated in the following order, ranked by standardised test score:

- i. Looked-After, Previously Looked-After Children and Internationally Adopted Previously Looked After Children. The eligible score for these candidates is 5 marks below the usual eligible score.
- ii. Children who are entitled to the Pupil Premium or Service Premium grant and who live in the catchment area. The eligible score for these candidates is 5 marks below the usual eligible score.
- iii. Children who live in the catchment area and for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a significant social or welfare need to attend the School. The eligible score for these candidates is 5 marks below the usual eligible score.
- iv. Children of School Staff with an eligible score who live in the catchment area and whose parent is permanently employed by Reading School at the time of the test or recruited to a post with a recognised skill shortage.

#### Category 2: Sporting Aptitude (up to 15 places across Day and Boarding)

Candidates with an eligible score who live in the catchment area (or have registered for a Boarding place) and exceed the threshold in the Sporting Aptitude Assessment. These places will be ranked according to their standardised score in the sporting aptitude assessment.

### Category 3: Reading Feeder Schools (up to 50% of remaining places)

Candidates with an eligible score who are enrolled at one of the named feeder primary schools by date of the July 2026 entrance test day and continue to be so at National Offer Day 2027, and whose main home address is in the category 4 Priority Postcode area. Feeder schools are state funded primary schools located within a 4.6 mile radius of Reading School's Erleigh Road entrance gate.

### Category 4: Reading Priority Postcodes (up to 80% of remaining places)

Candidates with an eligible score and whose main home address (by the July 2026 entrance test day and continues to be so at National Offer Day 2027) is within the following postcodes: RG1, RG2, RG30, RG31, RG4, RG5, RG6, RG7, RG8, RG9, RG10, RG40, RG41.

These places will be ranked according to their standardised test score in the following order:

- i. Twins/Multiples
- ii. All other candidates including Home Schooled children.

### Category 5: Catchment Area (remaining places)

Candidates with an eligible score whose main home address is within the catchment area on the July 2026 entrance test day and whose main address continues to be in the catchment area at National Offer Day 2027: RG1, RG2, RG30, RG31, RG4, RG5, RG6, RG7, RG8, RG9, RG10, RG40, RG41 plus RG12, RG14, RG18, RG19, RG26, RG27, RG42, RG45, GU15, GU17, GU19, GU46, GU47, OX10, SL4, SL5.

These places will be ranked according to their standardised test score in the following order:

- i. Twins/Multiples
- ii. All other candidates including Home Schooled children.

### Category 6: All Other Eligible Candidates

Candidates with an eligible score who do not meet any of the above categories, including those whose address is NOT in the catchment area. These places will be ranked according to their standardised test score.

## **Consideration of Case**

21. I will now set out my consideration of the matters raised by the objector. I will conclude each section with a statement as to whether or not I uphold that particular aspect of the objection, preceded by my reasons for that conclusion. Where I state that I uphold an aspect of the objection, that does not necessarily imply that I fully endorse the reasoning expressed

by the Objector, nor that the Objector has necessarily correctly interpreted which Code provision applies. Rather, it means that I have found that the particular aspect of the Arrangements drawn to my attention by the Objector does not conform with a requirement of the Code identified by me and is in breach of the Code for the reasons I have given.

22. The objection relates specifically to the oversubscription criterion described as 'Category 3: Reading Feeder Schools'. The Objector expressed concerns about the introduction of this oversubscription category which prioritises applicants attending one of 76 named state-funded primary schools located within 4.6 miles of Reading School. The Objector believes that, because the criterion excludes children attending independent schools in the same area, this unfairly disadvantages that group of children. The Objector believes that the admission arrangements will lead to boys who attend independent primary schools having a 'noticeably lower chance' of being admitted to the school while state educated boys will have a 'higher chance of admission'.

23. The Objector states that the School has a desire to serve its local community but by prioritising applicants from named feeder schools this is unfair to children living in the local area who do not attend these schools.

24. I have determined that the following paragraphs of the Code are relevant to this objection:

14: In drawing up their admission arrangements, admission authorities must ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear, and objective. Parents should be able to look at a set of arrangements and understand easily how places for that school will be allocated.

1.8 (in part): Oversubscription criteria must be reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation. Admission authorities must ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational needs, and that other policies around school uniform or school trips do not discourage parents from applying for a place for their child.

1.15: Admission authorities may wish to name a primary or middle school as a feeder school. The selection of a feeder school or schools as an oversubscription criterion must be transparent and made on reasonable grounds.

25. The School is clear that it has made changes to its oversubscription criteria, specifically category 3, for 2027/28 to better address its stated mission which is:

“to ensure that Reading School serves its local community, broadly reflecting the diversity within the town, providing opportunity for the disadvantaged and achieving social impact through enabling admission to this school for those who most benefit from the education we provide.”

26. The School also refers to the requirement in its funding agreement and section 1A of the Academies Act 2010 to provide education for pupils who are ‘wholly or mainly drawn from the area in which they are situated’.

27. I will begin by considering whether the changes to the oversubscription criteria are reasonable. I will then consider whether, as a result of the changes, a group of boys living locally, but not attending a state-funded primary school, will be unfairly disadvantaged.

28. The Code uses the term ‘reasonable’ but does not define it. An everyday definition is of having sound judgement; being sensible and rational. It is the requirement of public bodies, including admission authorities, that they must act reasonably in adopting any policy or making any decision.

29. To determine whether category 3 is reasonable or not, I will apply what I will refer to as the ‘reasonableness test’. This is a two-stage objective test in which the first stage is the consideration of the rationale for adopting that which is the focus of the objection. The second is the effect of its practical operation.

30. The School has identified that despite its intention ‘to serve the local community and nurture academic excellence among all capable students ...the current admissions patterns reveal a growing imbalance that undermines this goal’. Specifically, the School stated:

“Although Reading’s population grew by 11.9% between 2011 and 2021, the number of in-catchment registrants for Reading School has remained static and has fallen significantly amongst some demographics and in some parts of the town. This means the proportion of local boys engaging with the admissions process is falling, even as the pool of potential candidates expands. If Reading School is to remain a truly local institution, this trend cannot continue unchecked.”

More recent data shows that this continues to be the case, with the proportion of out-of-catchment registrants continuing to rise. For example, in 2025, 35 per cent of registrants were from out of catchment. This was the highest proportion in the seven years’ worth of data provided to me.

31. More than three-quarters (78 per cent) of the School’s current Year 7-10 population live in one of the 13 ‘priority postcode’ areas identified by the School. These are the postcode areas closest to the School. There is considerable variation in the number of pupils coming from the different postcode areas, for example, five boys live in RG8 and 266 boys live in

RG6. The number of pupils does not directly correlate with the number of people living in the postcode area. This can be seen in Table 1 which is based on data provided to the School's Governing Body in December 2025.

**Table 1: Home Postcodes of Pupils in Years 7-10 at the School**

<b>Postcode area</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of pupils in Y7-10 at the School (percentage rounded to nearest 1)</b>	<b>Approximate population size of postcode area (rounded to nearest 1000)*</b>	<b>Approximate number of pupils attending the School (per 1000 people)</b>
<b>RG1</b>	Central Reading	91 (9%)	49,000	1.86
<b>RG2</b>	Whitely, Shinfield, Arborfield	140 (13%)	47,000	2.98
<b>RG4</b>	Caversham and North	105 (10%)	41,000	2.56
<b>RG5</b>	Woodley	53 (5%)	28,000	1.89
<b>RG6</b>	Earley and Palmer Park	266 (25%)	40,000	6.65
<b>RG7</b>	Burghfield Common Rural	36 (3%)	36,000	1.0
<b>RG8</b>	Goring	5 (0%)	19,000	0.26
<b>RG9</b>	Henley	6 (1%)	24,000	0.25
<b>RG10</b>	Outer	18 (2%)	19,000	0.95
<b>RG30</b>	Tilehurst E	63 (6%)	49,000	1.29
<b>RG31</b>	Tilehurst W	26 (2%)	28,000	0.93
<b>RG40</b>	Wokingham E	47 (4%)	32,000	1.49
<b>RG41</b>	Wokingham W / Winnersh	89 (8%)	32,000	2.78

\* Data from Office for National Statistics using 2021 Census data

32. The School is of the view that this evidence ‘strongly indicates that change is needed to ensure fair access for under-represented groups, particularly boys from local primary schools in Reading.’ The School stated:

“Current intake is highly clustered in RG6 ... while some of Reading’s largest and closest communities ... contribute very few students. This imbalance is stark given their proximity to the school. [There are some areas] where interest is minimal, despite these areas hosting excellent primary schools and significant populations. Proximity alone does not drive engagement; targeted prioritisation is needed.”

33. The make-up of the population within each of the postcode areas is likely to differ, with a lower proportion of secondary-age children living in some areas than others. While this may account for some of the disparity between areas, I find that it is unlikely to account for the differences in their entirety. I find it likely that some areas are underrepresented in the School’s population.

34. To address this perceived need, the School has chosen to prioritise admission for boys attending a state funded primary school located within a 4.6 mile radius of the School. They must also live within this area. This criterion applies for up to 50 per cent of remaining places after category 1 and 2 places have been allocated.<sup>2</sup>

35. The 76 schools selected are the state-funded primary schools located in the 13 priority postcode areas. The area covered by these postcodes is described by the School as follows:

“...there is a clear built-up area of Reading. We describe this to the community as ‘from Whitley (south) to Caversham (north), from Tilehurst (west) to Woodley (east)’. This cruciform shape is recognisable and well-known in the local area and is the area we wish the School to serve.

Creating a radius enables us to make this more definitive in its nature when helping families know if they are ‘in’ or ‘out’ and encompass those liminal places which are very close to the School but would miss out if the cruciform shape alone was adopted. This natural cluster provides a clear, fair and transparent geographic rationale.”

36. With regard to the possible impact on these schools, the School said:

“The relatively large number of primary schools encompassed poses little risk of a ‘rush’ for the named primary schools, and this is something we would wish to avoid, for fear of local bright children seeing their chances of admission to their local primary

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<sup>2</sup> The adjudicator notes that this criterion is different from the criterion originally consulted upon where 134 schools were to be considered as feeder schools and all remaining places were to be allocated to boys from these schools.

school diminish. The current low enrolment of multiple primary schools in these postcode districts should further negate any such risk.

To go any wider with the radius of the priority feeder school areas would risk impinging on the traditional catchment areas of other local secondary schools in rural settings...

Crucially, we think that this approach is highly inclusive. It includes those primary schools (e.g. School B below) for whom Reading School has a strong recent history of interest/admission, ... yet at the same time prioritising those primary schools in very close proximity to these schools (such as School A, which is 755m from School B as the crow flies, with similar intake size and similar outcomes), for whom Reading School is no longer considered an option (as seen by those registering to sit the test)."

	<b>Registered 2021</b>	<b>Registered 2022</b>	<b>Registered 2023</b>	<b>Registered 2024</b>
<b>School A</b>	6	5	1	2
<b>School B</b>	22	11	24	12

37. The School has also stated that it already works with a range of local primary schools and intends to develop this work further.

38. As part of the consultation, the School made all parties aware that Paragraph 1.9 j) of the Code does not allow a school to name fee-paying independent schools as feeder schools. With regard to the changes the School stated:

"The changes are intended to be pro-local underrepresented boys, rather than 'anti independent school'.

39. I was concerned that by listing all state funded primary schools that this may have the effect of excluding boys who attend local special schools. In its response, the School assured me that children with EHCPs or being educated in special schools could qualify for a priority place as a result of the School being named on an EHCP or as a result of having a significant social or welfare need. No pupils have joined the School at the start of Y7 from a special school in recent years.

40. In response to my request for further information, the School set out other options that it considered before opting for a feeder school model. These are:

"Cognisant of both the Greenwich judgment of 1989<sup>3</sup> which made it illegal for a council or school to give priority for school places based on residence in that local authority

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<sup>3</sup> Regina v Greenwich London Borough Council, Ex parte Governors of the John Ball Primary School [(1989) 88 LGR 589].

area, as well as the lived reality that local authorities do not coincide naturally with perceptions of place, we considered but rejected aligning the designated area and/or the feeder school area with the local authority boundary.

One option considered was to retain or revert to one simple wide catchment area; one that only prioritised admission for those unable to access a grammar school education elsewhere. This was the rationale for the previous admissions policy catchment area, well-meaning as it was. However, the evidence previously cited above [see Table 1] demonstrates that there was a geographic unevenness in admission that warranted proactive measures to be taken, and that too wide a catchment lessened the teeth of the admissions policy.

One other option considered was prioritising only those postcodes ... representing the most disadvantaged areas of the local area. While this married up with the School's intent, we rejected it for two reasons. Firstly, the dynamic nature of disadvantage and the precociousness of postcodes meaning that the inequality across a street may have unfairly (dis)advantaged one family over another. Secondly, this would have created a patchwork map that would have both been difficult to understand and would have felt inconsistent and unfair to include some local primary schools but not all. We therefore rejected it in favour of an approach that was inclusive.

One option considered was to tighten the postcode district catchment area of permanent home residences. However, every year, the Admissions Office has to investigate around 10 applications based on potential fraudulent addresses; each of which requires unannounced home visits, significant resource on an investigation and likely admissions appeal (none of which have ever been upheld). Any tightening of the catchment area is likely to exacerbate this trend, leading to increased resource opportunity cost and more importantly, greater chance of a fraudulent applicant gaining admission over a local bright child. Furthermore, an unintended consequence of tightening this catchment area may increase house prices (for example - [how-state-school-performance-affects-house-prices-england.pdf](#)) and have a 'squeezing out' effect on house prices that most disadvantages the very groups we want to encourage to take interest.

As shown in the original consultation policy, we also considered making enrolment at state-funded feeder schools a more significant criteria in our admissions policy. Having listened carefully to the responses from the community, we decided against this as it unintentionally highly disadvantages those from independent schools.”

41. I am satisfied that the School considered, and has provided reasons for rejecting, a range of other options.

42. From the evidence set out above, I find that the approach determined by the Governing Body as set out in Category 3 of the oversubscription criterion is reasonable in seeking to achieve its intention to better serve the community in which the School is located. I will now consider the potential effect of this change on admissions to the School.

43. The School's admissions committee was told (29 January 2026) that on average there are 120 places available after places have been allocated against categories 1 and 2 of the oversubscription criteria. Under category 3, up to 50 per cent of remaining places would be allocated to boys attending one of the named feeder schools and living in the area (therefore, up to 60 places based on 120 available places). Under category 4, up to 80 per cent of remaining places would be allocated to boys living in one of the priority postcode areas (therefore, up to 48 places), leaving a minimum of 12 places to be allocated under category 5 and then category 6.

44. Table 2 provides a summary of the types of school pupils admitted to Year 7 at the School attended in Year 6. In each case, the majority of pupils admitted previously attended a state funded primary school.

**Table 2: Prior education type for pupils admitted to Year 7 at the School**

	<b>Admitted September 2024</b>	<b>Admitted September 2025</b>	<b>Forecast to be admitted September 2026*</b>
<b>State funded primary school</b>	135	132	132
<b>Independent primary school</b>	15 (including 3 boarders)	18 (including 5 boarders)	17 (including 5 boarders)
<b>Other (special school; elective home education; overseas).</b>	0	0	1

\* Based on places offered on national offer day (2 March 2026)

45. Table 3 shows the impact of the 2027/28 oversubscription criteria if they were applied to the 2026 cohort of applicants. Based on this data, there is a small increase in the number of places allocated to boys from independent schools. This may, of course change over time as the School works to promote applications from local state schools. However, the Objector's concern that the 2027/28 admission arrangements will lead to boys who attend independent primary schools having a 'noticeably lower chance' of being admitted to the school while state educated boys will have a 'higher chance of admission' does not appear to be realised.

**Table 3: Illustration of likely impact of 2027/28 oversubscription criteria based on applicants for entry in September 2026**

	<b>2026/27 oversubscription criteria</b>	<b>2027/28 oversubscription criteria</b>
<b>State funded primary school</b>	132	128
<b>Independent primary school</b>	17 (including 5 boarders)	22 (including 2 boarders)
<b>Other (special school; elective home education; overseas).</b>	1	0

46. In effect, the arrangements appear to give greatest priority to boys living in one of the priority postcode areas: under criterion 3, by living and attending a state funded primary school in the area and, under criterion 4, by living in the area. In the example set out in paragraph 43 above, 108 places would be available for boys living locally to the School under these two criteria. This appears to me to be in line with the School’s stated mission to ‘serve its local community’. Consequently, I find that the forecast effect of the oversubscription criteria is reasonable. I do not, therefore, uphold this aspect of the objection.

47. In conclusion, I find that the oversubscription criteria are reasonable. I do not find the admission arrangements to be in breach of paragraph 18 of the Code. I also find that selection of feeder schools as an oversubscription criterion is transparent and made on reasonable grounds. I do not find the admission arrangements to be in breach of paragraph 1.15 of the Code.

48. I will now consider whether, as a result of the changes, a group of boys living locally, but not attending a state-funded primary school, will be unfairly disadvantaged.

49. As with ‘reasonable’, ‘fairness’ is a term used in the Code but not defined. Fairness cannot be defined in universal terms as its requirements depend on the circumstances. Fairness is focused on the effect of the arrangements on any relevant group. This must be considered in context. I also note that where the available evidence does not establish disadvantage, there cannot be any unfairness.

50. The Objector is concerned that because oversubscription criterion 3 prioritises children attending state funded primary schools, that children attending independent schools in the same area will be unfairly disadvantaged. The Objector believes that the admission arrangements will lead to boys who attend independent primary schools having less chance of being admitted than boys attending a state school. The Objector is also concerned that the Arrangements are unfair to children living in the local area who do not attend these schools.

51. The Objector stated that:

“The school has used a feeder network as a proxy for a smaller catchment - with the consequence that local children at private schools are excluded. There is no clear justification for this.”

52. I agree that oversubscription criteria 3 and 4 give greater priority to children living near to the School (within a radius of 4.6 miles) than may have been the case in the past. However, from the information set out above, specifically in Table 3 and paragraph 43, I am not convinced that the admission arrangements will disadvantage boys living in a priority postcode area and attending an independent school. The data suggest that there will be several places (up to 48) available to this group. The number of places likely to be available is higher than the number of boys admitted to the School from independent schools in the last three admission rounds.

53. I accept that the criteria may result in fewer boys who live outside the priority postcode areas being admitted to the School. However, this effect is likely to be similar for boys who attend one of the named feeder state schools as it is for boys attending an independent school in the area. As set out above, this approach is part of a deliberate decision to prioritise children who live locally. It is a reasonable decision and compliant with the Code. I do not, therefore, find any disadvantage to boys who live locally and attend an independent school.

54. With regard to the proposed arrangements that were consulted upon, the School acknowledges that the original oversubscription criteria ‘highly disadvantaged’ children attending independent schools. It must be stressed, however, that, following feedback as a result of the consultation process, those criteria were amended and are not the criteria determined by the Governing Body. I find that the amended criteria, as set out earlier in this determination, are reasonable and fair.

55. I note that the School has stated that it intends to monitor the impact of these changes over time and may review the proportions of places allocated under criteria 3 and 4 in future years.

56. In their response to me, the Objector was concerned that the Arrangements are “overly complicated and open to challenge, particularly when compared with the streamlined criteria of its ‘sister’ school Kendrick”<sup>4</sup>.

57. It is not appropriate for me to comment on the admission arrangements of an unrelated school. However, with regard to the oversubscription criteria for the School, I find them to be easily understandable, for example, criterion 3 applies to all state funded primary

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<sup>4</sup> Kendrick School is a selective school for girls in Reading. The School said that it has ‘no formal affiliation with [Kendrick School], from an admissions or organisational point of view’.

schools within a clearly defined set of postcodes. I do not, therefore, find them to be over complicated or unclear.

58. In conclusion, I do not find the Arrangements to be unfair. I do not, therefore, uphold this aspect of the objection. I do not find these aspects of the Arrangements to be in breach of paragraph 14 of the Code.

## Other matters

59. Having considered the Arrangements as a whole it appeared to me that there are other matters which do not conform with requirements of the Code and so I brought them to the attention of the Admission Authority. These matters are (paragraphs of the Code are indicated where relevant):

60. Category 3 of the oversubscription criteria does not state the order in which places will be allocated within that category. This is set out in other categories, for example, ‘...places will be ranked according to their standardised test score...’. This is in breach of paragraph 14 of the Code as a parent may not easily understand how places under that category will be allocated.

61. Category 1, sub-category iv) of the oversubscription criteria (children of school staff) states that priority places may be allocated for ‘candidates with an eligible score who live in the catchment area and whose parent is permanently employed by Reading School at the time of the test ...’. This is in breach of paragraph 1.39 a) of the Code which states:

“1.39 Admission authorities may give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances:

a) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made...”

62. The Admission Authority has told me that it will address these matters, as permitted by paragraph 3.6 of the Code, which is welcomed. As the Admission Authority has accepted that changes are required, I will not discuss them further other than to make clear that the Code requires that the Arrangements be amended to address the points set out here.

## Determination

63. 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 Governing Body for Reading School for 2027/28.

64. I have also considered the arrangements under section 88I(5) and find that they do not comply with requirements relating to admission arrangements in the ways set out in this determination.

65. 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 this determination.

Dated: 31 March 2026

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Catherine Crooks