



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

## Determination

<b>Case reference:</b>	<b>VAR2710</b>
<b>Admission Authority:</b>	<b>The Governing Body for Compton All Saints Church of England Primary School in Compton, Winchester</b>
<b>Local Authority:</b>	<b>Hampshire County Council</b>
<b>Date of decision:</b>	<b>15 April 2026</b>

### Determination

In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed variation to the admission arrangements determined by the Governing Body for Compton All Saints Church of England Primary School for 2025/26.

I determine that for admission in 2025/26, the published admission number for entry to Reception Year will be 15.

### The referral

1. The Governing Body (the Admission Authority) for Compton All Saints Church of England Primary School (the School) has referred to the adjudicator a proposal for a variation to the admission arrangements for 2025/26 (the Arrangements).
2. The School is a voluntary-aided co-educational school for children aged four to eleven in Compton, Winchester. It is located in the local authority area of Hampshire County Council (the Local Authority).
3. The School has a Church of England religious character, and the religious authority for the school is the Diocese of Winchester (the Diocese).
4. The parties to the request are the Admission Authority, the Local Authority and the Diocese.

5. The proposed variation, which has the support of the Local Authority and the Diocese, is that the published admission number (the PAN) for 2025/26 is reduced from 17 to 15.

## Jurisdiction and procedure

6. Section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) makes provision for variations to determined arrangements. Paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 of the School Admissions Code (the Code) say (insofar as is relevant here):

“3.6 Once admission arrangements have been determined for a particular school year, they cannot be revised by the admission authority unless such revision is necessary to give effect to a mandatory requirement of this Code, admissions law, a determination of the Adjudicator or any misprint in the admission arrangements. Admission authorities may propose other variations where they consider such changes to be necessary in view of a major change in circumstances. Such proposals **must** be referred to the Schools Adjudicator for approval, and the appropriate bodies notified. Where the local authority is the admission authority for a community or voluntary controlled school, it **must** consult the governing body of the school before making any reference.

3.7 Admission authorities **must** notify the appropriate bodies of all variations”.

7. It is not clear to me that the Admission Authority has notified the appropriate bodies of the proposed variation in line with the Code, despite my request for such confirmation. I am, therefore, not satisfied that this aspect of the procedures was followed properly.

8. However, in this instance, given the limited scope and nature of the variation and the need for a timely decision, I consider that this shortcoming makes little material difference to my consideration of the case. I am satisfied that the proposed variation is within my jurisdiction.

9. In considering the variation request, I have had regard to all relevant legislation and the Code.

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

- the referral from the Admission Authority dated 12 March 2026 and supporting documents;
- the determined Arrangements for 2025/26 and the proposed variation to those Arrangements;
- maps, including Google Maps showing the location of the School and other schools; and
- information available on government websites, including ‘Get Information About Schools’ (GIAS).

11. There is no formal consultation required for a variation and so parents and others do not have the opportunity to express their views. Clearly it is desirable that changes to arrangements are made via the process of determination following consultation as the consultation process allows those with an interest to express their views. It also allows for objections to the adjudicator. None of this is afforded by the variation process.

12. I note here that the Arrangements for 2026/27 have already been determined with a PAN of 15. This means that if I agree to the Admission Authority's request to vary the Arrangements for 2025/26 by reducing the PAN from 17 to 15 as proposed, it will be for this year only and will not have a bearing on subsequent years.

13. In the interests of dealing speedily with this and other requests for variations, I have not considered other aspects of the admission arrangements. Therefore, nothing in this determination should be taken as indicating that other aspects of the arrangements do or do not conform with the requirements relating to admissions.

## Consideration of proposed variation

14. Paragraph 3.6 of the Code (as above) requires that admission arrangements, once determined, may only be revised, that is changed or varied, if there is a major change of circumstance or certain other limited and specified circumstances. I will consider below whether the proposed variation is justified by the change in circumstances.

15. The major change in circumstances relied upon by the Admission Authority in set out in the referral as follows:

“Since the admission arrangements were determined, a significant organisational change has arisen relating to class structure across Key Stage 1. Historically, the school operated with a Published Admission Number (PAN) of **17**, which enabled the school to run a **mixed Year R/1 class** and a **mixed Year 1/2 class** without exceeding the statutory **30-pupil class size limit** for Key Stage 1.

However, following a full strategic review—approved and minuted by the Governing Body—the school has determined that from **September 2026** it must transition to a **pure Year R class** alongside a **mixed Year 1/2 class**. This represents a fundamental change in class organisation and staffing structure. We are a school currently navigating a deficit budget.

To support this transition, the PAN for September 2026 has already been formally reduced from **17 to 15** (as reflected in the PAN data for 2026 in the attached evidence.) This ensures future stability, but a further immediate measure is required. Current in-year numbers show **15 pupils in Year 1** and **14 pupils in Year R**, and without a temporary in-year cap to our current Year R class, numbers *could* rise above 15 before September. This would prevent the school from implementing the new class model.

We are therefore submitting this request to reduce the current Year R cohort PAN from 17 to 15.

The need to implement the new structure to meet both educational and financial requirements therefore represents the major change of circumstance necessitating this variation.

16. The referral goes on to say that:

“The temporary variation directly enables the implementation of the planned structural change while avoiding class size breaches and unsustainable staffing pressures.

Specifically, it will:

Protect the future Year 1 cohort from exceeding 15 pupils, ensuring that the September 2026 mixed Year 1/2 class stays at or below 30 pupils, thereby preventing the need for an additional teacher.

Enable the school to run a pure Year R class, supported by the already approved PAN reduction to 15, keeping future cohorts at sustainable levels.

Maintain financial viability by avoiding both mandatory KS1 class size breaches and the staffing costs associated with exceeding them.

Ensure educational stability, by allowing the school to deliver a class structure that better meets the needs of pupils and supports long term curriculum planning.

Align admissions practice with the school’s strategic plan, mitigating the risk that in year fluctuations undermine the governor-approved reorganisation.”

17. I have given careful consideration to the latest available data in order to form a view about the sufficiency of school places in the local area if the PAN is reduced as proposed. I have also considered the demand for places at the School, the reasons given for the changes in demand, the potential effect on parental preference of the proposed PAN reduction and whether the proposed reduction is justified taking into account all relevant circumstances.

#### Overall demand for Reception Year places in the area and parental preference

18. The Local Authority has a duty to make sure that there are sufficient places for the children in its area. To fulfil this duty, it assesses the likely future number of places to be needed and plans to meet that need. The Local Authority uses planning areas, which are geographical areas each containing a number of schools, for this purpose.

19. The Local Authority has provided me with information that shows that for the school year 2025/26, there were 142 Reception Year places in the planning area to which the School belongs, but only 88 offers made. I am satisfied, therefore, that there is ample

surplus provision in the planning area for any children who may be seeking a place in Reception Year during the rest of 2025/26.

### Places at the School

20. In its referral, the Admission Authority has set out its case for the proposed variation. In short, the proposal will allow the School to operate its revised teaching model in 2026/27, with all Reception Year children in one single-aged class, with the certainty that it will only require two infant classes overall. This is because of the need to adhere to the provisions of the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Infant Class Sizes Regulations), which apply to the School and require that infant classes (those where the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven during the school year) must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single qualified school teacher, except in specific exceptional circumstances.

21. It is clear to me that this proposal is eminently sensible and the only way for which the revised model can be planned with certainty. If more than one child were to be admitted before September 2026 to the current Reception Year (which has 14 children at present), then the School would be unable to operate in 2026/27 with a single mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class, since there are currently 15 children in Year 1 who will be in Year 2 in 2026/27. This scenario would exert a severe financial impact on the School, since its revised model would then require the staffing of an unplanned extra class, the costs of which would be likely to significantly exceed any additional any per-pupil funding.

### Summary of findings

22. Having considered all the matters above, my reasoning can be summarised as follows:

- a. The proposed variation does not give rise to concerns about the sufficiency of Reception Year places in the planning area for the remainder of 2025/26.
- b. There is no indication of any degree of frustration of parental preference.
- c. By enabling the School to plan with certainty for a specific teaching model in 2026/27, the proposed variation removes the financial and organisational risk of having to plan for more than two infant classes. If funding has to be diverted to pay for the provision of an extra class for 2026/27, there will be a significantly negative financial and organisational impact on the School, with detriment to those children already at the School and to other necessary areas of expenditure.

23. After carefully weighing the above factors, I conclude that the proposed variation is justified by the change in circumstances, and I approve it.

## Determination

24. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed variation to the admission arrangements determined by the Governing Body for Compton All Saints Church of England Primary School for 2025/26.

25. I determine that for admission in 2025/26, the published admission number for entry to Reception Year will be 15.

Dated: 15 April 2026

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Clive Sentance