



Determination

Case reference: VAR2691

Admission Authority: Hampshire County Council for Endeavour Primary School, Andover.

Date of decision: 17 April 2026

Determination

In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed variations to the admission arrangements determined by Hampshire County Council for Endeavour Primary School for 2025/26 and for 2026/27.

I determine that for admission in 2025/26 and for 2026/27 the school's catchment area shall be extended to include that of the former Smannell and Enham Church of England Aided School.

I determine that for admissions in 2026/27 the school's published admission number shall be 90.

The referral

1. Hampshire County Council (the Admission Authority) has referred to the adjudicator a proposal for a variation to the admission arrangements for Endeavour Primary School Andover (the school) for 2025/26 and for 2026/27. The request is that the school's catchment area be varied for both years, and that the published admission number (PAN) for 2026/27 be reduced from 120 to 90.
2. The school is a community school for children aged four to eleven in Andover, Hampshire. It is a co-educational, non-selective school. The Admission Authority for the school is the local authority (LA). As the LA is the Admission Authority, both terms are used throughout this determination.
3. Parties to the request are the school, its Governing Body and the LA. The proposed variation is twofold: the extension of the school's catchment area to include that of the

former Smannell and Enham Church of England Aided Primary School (Smannell CE School) and the reduction in the school's PAN from 120 to 90.

Jurisdiction and procedure

4. 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”.

5. The arrangements for 2026/27 were determined by the Admission Authority on 12 February 2025. This is before the deadline for determining arrangements which was 28 February 2025. Those for 2025/26 were determined on 20 February 2024, also before the relevant deadline in that year.

6. The Admission Authority has provided me with confirmation that the appropriate bodies have been notified of the proposed variation in line with the Code and with confirmation that the Governing Body of the school has been consulted on the proposed variation.

7. I find that the appropriate procedures were followed, and I am satisfied that the proposed variation is within my jurisdiction.

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

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

- the referral from the Admission Authority dated 26 February 2026 and supporting documents;
- the determined arrangements for 2026/27 and for 2025/26 and the proposed variation to those arrangements;
- responses from the LA, and the school to my requests for further information;

- maps, including Google Maps and those showing the location of the school; and
- information available on the websites of the parties and gov.uk, including ‘Get Information About Schools’ (GIAS).”

10. I would like to extend my thanks to the LA and the school for their responses to my requests for further information.

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 2027/28 were determined by the LA on 24 February 2026, which was two days before the request to vary the arrangements for 2025/26 and for 2026/27 was made. This means that if I agree to the Admission Authority’s request to vary the arrangements for 2026/27 by agreeing to the two variations as proposed, it will be for that year only and will not have a bearing on subsequent years. The arrangements for 2027/28 provide a PAN of 120 and retain the school’s former catchment area, as I have pointed out to the LA in correspondence. I will refer to this again below.

Consideration of proposed variations

13. 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.

14. The arrangements for both 2025/26 and for 2026/27 set out the following oversubscription criteria:

- a) The first three categories of child given priority are, in order, looked after and previously looked after children, children or families with an exceptional need to attend the school on medical or social grounds and children of staff.
- b) Priority is then given to children living in the school’s catchment area who have a sibling at the school, followed by other children living in the catchment area.
- c) Children who live outside the catchment area who have a sibling at the school are given priority over those who have no sibling link.

15. The LA informed me that Smannell and Enham C of E (Aided) Primary School, which is 0.83 miles from Endeavour Primary School, was closed on 27 March 2026 after the appropriate procedures (which were initiated by that school’s Governing Body) had been followed. The LA has proposed that the closed school’s catchment area be added to that of Endeavour Primary School “to minimise any impact on pupils and families”. A map provided

with the request shows that the two areas are contiguous. The request said that “Data analysis confirms that Endeavour Primary School has sufficient capacity to accommodate the pupils from that area”.

16. Since the closure date of that school was within the current school year, the request for the addition of its former catchment area to that of the school is a variation to the school’s existing arrangements for 2025/26. The same request was made in respect of the school’s admission arrangements for 2026/27.

17. Secondly, the LA has requested, in respect of the school’s admission arrangements for 2026/27, that the PAN be reduced from 120 to 90.

The catchment area

18. The LA helpfully gave me some background concerning Smannell CE School, partly at my request. The school had been popular prior to it receiving a judgement of “inadequate” in an Ofsted inspection in September 2024, with a high participation rate from families living in its catchment area. Prior to its closure in March of this year, all those remaining at the school had transferred to other schools by January, leaving no children on roll. None of these children transferred to Endeavour Primary School. There are seven or eight children who live in what was the closed school’s catchment area who would be eligible for admission to a school in Year R in each of the years running up to 2030.

19. It can be seen from the admission arrangements of Endeavour Primary School that residence in its catchment area would be an important determinant of whether a child would be admitted to it if the school were oversubscribed. Notwithstanding the apparent disinclination of the parents of children living in the former catchment area of Smannell CE Primary School to seek a place at Endeavour Primary School at the present time, this may not always be the case in the future. As the LA has said, were these addresses not reassigned to the catchment area of another school, this could negatively impact families living there. The LA has told me that Endeavour Primary School has been chosen “as it is within a reasonable distance of the villages of Smannell and Enham, and Endeavour has the forecast capacity to accommodate the local Smannell children.” The LA has provided me with some justification for this statement, based on current levels of “participation” from parents living in what will become the expanded catchment area for Endeavour Primary School.

20. I have no hesitation in agreeing to the proposed variation of the school’s catchment area as requested for admissions for the remainder of the current school year and for admissions in 2026/27. As I have explained above however, I do not have in front of me a request that this be the case also for admissions in 2027, and the LA has said to me that it could not have included a revised catchment area itself when it determined the school’s admission arrangements for 2027 “as the decision to close the school took place after the statutory admissions consultation”. By the same token, the procedures necessary to vary the catchment area for September 2027 admissions could not have been followed since the arrangements did not exist until two days before the current variation request was made. I am sure that the LA and the school will now wish to rectify this situation. The LA clearly has

the intention to determine a revised catchment area, as it has told me, “in February 2027 for September 2028”.

The reduction in PAN

21. When the LA explained its rationale for requesting that the PAN for admissions in September 2026 be reduced from 120 to 90, it said that this was based on the low level (74) of first preferences which have been received for Year R places. It assumed this number of admissions in its illustration of how classes at the school would be likely to be organised, if the variation were agreed. This showed three classes (25,25 and 24) in line with the accompanying argument that a PAN of 90 would enable the school to operate three Year R classes and 26 classes across the school. This, the LA said, would “protect the school from financial difficulties”.

22. I have been concerned that, in spite of the LA’s assurances to the contrary, a PAN of 90 might unnecessarily frustrate parental preference, noting that there was a total of 119 first, second and third preferences for Year R places in September 2026. Further, the information supplied by the LA on the request form also showed that actual Year R admissions at the school has exceeded the number of expressed first preferences in each of the last three years, as follows:

Table 1: Preference and admissions data for the school in last three years

-	2025	2024	2023
Number of first preferences	92	80	102
Actual Year R admissions	99	83	109
Difference	+7	+3	+7

23. I was also concerned that the LA’s own forecast of the need for Year R places at the school in September 2026 is 93. I expressed these concerns to the LA and asked how recently its forecast had been made and the factors which had been taken into account. I asked if the figure was still relevant and if not, what alternative figure should be used.

24. The LA did not answer these questions in detail, but simply said that “at this time we consider the first preference applications to be more current and indicative of what will happen”. It would have been helpful to me to understand how and when the forecast had been made, as I had requested, given this view. It is not common for an LA to choose to disregard its own pupil forecast data.

25. The LA said that the first preferences were “so low” for the school itself, and for the planning area as a whole, that “it is not expected that any preferences will be frustrated at

the school” but that were this to happen “then there is clearly capacity to accommodate children within the local school place planning area.”

26. The LA had given me comprehensive data concerning the nine other schools which will admit children to Year R in the Andover Town planning area in September 2026. There has been a total of 574 first preference expressions for these places and if the PAN reduction at the school is approved, there will be a total of 630 Year R places.

27. The data given to me shows that in one of the past three years (2024) there had been more Year R admissions than expressed first preferences (606 admissions, compared to 594 preferences) in the planning area.

28. The LA’s forecast of the need for Year R places in the planning area and at the school for the next three years is:

Table 2: Forecast of need for Year R places in the planning area and for the school

-	2026	2027	2028
Planning area	579	594	578
School	93	85	73

29. These figures tend to confirm the LA’s confidence in the overall sufficiency of Year R places across the planning region for 2026. Nevertheless, my concern is the school itself and not the planning area, and whether a PAN of 90 will result in unacceptable denial of parental preference at that time. I have been aware that the school sits at the edge of the planning area, adjacent to the rural area where the hamlets of Smannell and Enham are situated, and have considered whether this might have a bearing on my consideration of this matter. It seemed to me possible that those living furthest away from Andover itself, at the furthest points of the Smannell CE Primary School’s former catchment area, might not find it easy to access schools where there are available Year R places (in the town). I also noted that the school nearest to Endeavour Primary School towards the town of Andover (Roman Way Primary School) was oversubscribed with first preferences (36 preferences for 30 places) and that parents unsuccessful in gaining a place there in September might need places at the school.

30. With this in mind, I asked the LA for its assessment of where any places which would be needed above the figure of 90 which it proposed were likely to be found. I list below what the LA said to me, showing the distance of each of the schools from Endeavour Primary School.

School	PAN	First preferences	LA forecast of Year R need	Distance to Endeavour Primary School (miles)
Andover CE Primary	30	20	32	1.57
Anton Infant	60	31	47	2.13
Balksbury Infant	90	103	95	2.32
Knights Enham Infant	60	29	36	0.72
Pilgrim's Cross CE Aided Primary	60	37	42	1.8
Portway Infant	90	128	94	2.16
Roman Way Primary	30	36	31	0.54
St John the Baptist RC Primary	30	29	27	2.27
Vigo Primary	90	79	82	1.08

31. What I take from these figures is that there are schools which will have Year R vacancies if they are needed, and that at least one is less than a mile from the school. Nevertheless, it remains of principal importance whether or not it is likely that such places will be needed if the PAN is reduced to 90, and I shall return to this below.

32. I have considered both what the LA has said about the financial imperative for the school of a reduced PAN and the question of whether mixed age teaching would provide an alternative means of achieving the same financial end but without the need to reduce the school's PAN.

33. The LA has provided figures for the effect on the school's finances based on either a need for 27 classes or alternatively 26 classes (if the PAN of 90 is approved). The school currently has a healthy surplus brought forward from earlier years, and either 27 or 26 classes will lead to an in-year deficit starting in 2025/26, with the larger deficit resulting from 27 classes. Neither structure however leads to an overall deficit situation by 2027/28.

Clearly, it is to be preferred if the school is able to retain as much as possible of its reserves, but this picture does not speak to me of an absolute financial imperative which could be said to drive the need to offer no more than 90 Year R places in September 2026.

34. It also seemed to me, on paper at least, to be possible for the school to need only 26 classes were it to move to mixed-age teaching in Year R /Year 1 from September 2026. I therefore asked both the school and the LA for their comments on whether this had been considered and what their views concerning it were. Both the school and the LA referred in their replies to the fact that the school occupies two nearby campuses, and the LA said that mixed-age teaching would require pupils to be relocated between these sites, which is obviously not ideal. The school also said it would implement mixed-age teaching only unwillingly because of the effect for parents who have siblings at the school and whose related childcare arrangements would be disrupted. It believes that a PAN reduction would enable parents only to need to have children at one of the two sites. Again, my view of this is that it is relevant, but it is not a determining issue.

35. It seems to me that if it were likely that even a small number of parents would be frustrated in their choice of the school if I agree a PAN of 90 for 2026, then this would not be justified, taking all the above into account. I think however, that my concern about children living in the former catchment area of Smannell CE School seems unlikely to be realised, at least in the short term, in the light of the evidence of the choices which have been made concerning alternative schools by the parents whose children were on the roll when it closed.

36. When the LA provided its comments about the forecast of the need for 93 places at the school in September 2026 and the number of first and other preferences which had been expressed by parents for a place at the school, it added the following closing remarks:

“As an administrative exercise and as part of its preparations for national offer day on 16 April, the LA admissions team has run an internal offer process to understand what offers will look like [...] and this shows for Endeavour Primary School [that] the school will benefit from 6 second and 2 third preferences. Therefore, the proposed reduction will not prejudice parental preference for the school.”

37. I understand what the LA has said to me to mean that this “mock” offer process, which was obviously undertaken immediately before national offer day, show that in addition to the 74 first preferences, there are likely to be a total of eight other admissions to the school, making 82 in total. This is well short of 90, with some margin of comfort. In view of this, I think there is a very good prospect that no parental preference for a place at the school will be frustrated if I approve the requested variation.

38. I therefore agree that the school’s PAN for admissions in September 2026 shall be 90.

39. I note here that reducing the PAN does not reduce the overall capacity of the school unless accommodation is being removed from the premises. It is not being suggested that accommodation is being removed and so the physical capacity of the school remains the

same. Reducing the PAN will not change that. I note that the LA has decided not to reduce the school's PAN for admissions in 2027.

Determination

40. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed variation to the admission arrangements determined by Hampshire County Council for Endeavour Primary School, for 2025/26 and for 2026/27.

41. I determine that for admission in 2025/26 and for 2026/27 the school's catchment area shall be extended to include that of the former Smannell and Enham Church of England Aided School.

42. I determine that for admissions in 2026/27 the school's published admission number shall be 90.

Dated: 17 April 2026

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Dr Bryan Slater