



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Determination

Case reference: ADA4613

Objector: A parent

Admission Authority: The Royal Latin School Trust for Royal Latin School

Local Authority: Buckinghamshire Council

Date of advice: 08 June 2026

Determination

In accordance with section 88H(4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I uphold the objection to the admission arrangements determined by The Royal Latin School Trust for Royal Latin School, for 2027/28.

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 parent (the Objector), about the admission arrangements (the Arrangements) for September 2027 for Royal Latin School (the School). The School is a selective academy for children aged 11 to 18. It is located in Buckingham.
2. The Local Authority (LA) for the area in which the School is located is Buckinghamshire Council.
3. The LA is a party to this objection. The other parties to this objection are The Royal Latin School Trust (the Trust), the School and the Objector.

4. The objection is that the Arrangements do not meet the requirements set out in the School Admissions Code 2021 (the Code) in relation to the admission of children outside their normal age group.
5. As well as objecting to the Arrangements of the School, the Objector has objected to the arrangements of three other Buckinghamshire schools. As each of the schools involved has a different admission authority, I am considering each case independently and on its own merits. Each objection is, therefore, being dealt with as a separate determination case.
6. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the School and the LA for their timely responses to my requests for further information.

Jurisdiction

7. The School is a single-academy trust. The terms of the academy agreement between the Trust 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.
8. These Arrangements were determined under section 88C of the Act by the Trust, which is the Admission Authority for the School. The Arrangements were determined on 2 February 2026.
9. The Objector submitted their objection to the determined arrangements on 13 April 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 not considered the Arrangements as a whole under section 88I of the Act. This is because the School is currently subject to other objections to its Arrangements for 2027/2028. The Admission Authority should not take the fact that I have not raised any other matters about the Arrangements as an endorsement of their compliance with the Code.
12. Although the Trust is the Admission Authority, 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 13 April 2026;
 - a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Admission Authority at which the Arrangements were determined;
 - the determined Arrangements for 2027/28;
 - responses from the LA and the School to the objection and to my requests for further information;
 - Guidance on handling admission requests for summer-born children¹ (November 2024) (the DfE Guidance);
 - maps showing the location of the School; 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. I have referred only to that which has a bearing on my determination.

Background

16. According to GIAS, the school is a selective, co-educational academy converter. It has no designated religious character. While the School has a long history, it became an academy in September 2011. As of 13 May 2026, the School had 1322 pupils on roll. The School's website describes the School as a state grammar school.
17. The School was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2022. Ofsted judged behaviour and attitudes, personal development and sixth-form provision to be outstanding. It judged quality of education and leadership and management to be good.
18. The published admission number (PAN) of the School for 2027/28 is 180.

¹ The term summer born children relates to all children born from 1 April to 31 August. These children reach compulsory school age on 31 August following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on 31 August).

19. Children are eligible to be considered for admission to the School if they meet the required qualifying score of 121 in the Buckinghamshire Secondary Transfer Test or have been deemed qualified by a Selection Review Panel. The Arrangements set out that children who qualify and who have an Education, Health and Care Plan naming the school will be admitted prior to the application of the admission rules. Then, if the number of qualifying applications exceeds the number of places available, children will be prioritised according to the oversubscription criteria. These can be summarised as follows:

- a) Looked after and previously looked after children;
- b) Children living in the catchment area of the School who qualify for the Pupil Premium Grant;
- c) Up to 12 places for children whose standardised score in the Secondary Transfer Test is 115 to 120 inclusive. These children may be looked after or previously looked after children (living anywhere) or children living in the School's catchment area who are eligible for the Pupil Premium Grant;
- d) Children of staff where the member of staff has been employed at the School for two or more years and/or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage;
- e) Children living in the catchment area of the School;
- f) Siblings of children on the School roll;
- g) Children who have exceptional medical or social needs; and
- h) Other children, with places being offered in distance order, nearest first, measured using straight-line distances.

Consideration of Case

20. 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.

21. The Objector expressed concerns about the section in the Arrangements relating to the admission of children outside their normal age group, specifically that the Arrangements

do not comply with Paragraph 2.18 of the Code regarding the processing of requests for children to be admitted outside of their normal age group. The Objector wrote:

“Failure to Account for Previous Out-of-Year History: The policy does not state that the school will take into account whether the child has been educated out of year group for the duration of their primary education. Per the [DfE guidance], while a new admission authority is not bound by a previous decision, they should look for "continuity of education" as a primary factor in the child's best interests.

Opaque Decision-Making Process: Section 11 states decisions are made "taking into account the views of the Headteacher." The Code requires the admission authority (the Academy Trust) to make the decision based on the individual circumstances of the case. By prioritizing the Headteacher's view without listing other mandatory factors (e.g., the child's social and emotional development or medical history where relevant), the policy is not sufficiently transparent.

Vague Requirements for "Request": The policy does not specify when or how a parent should submit this request. For a secondary school, parents often need to know if the request must be made before the application deadline or if it can be made alongside it. This lack of clarity creates a procedural barrier for families.”

22. 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.

2.18 Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of a summer born child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1. Admission authorities **must** make clear in their admission arrangements the process for requesting admission out of the normal age group.

2.19 Admission authorities **must** make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parent's views; information about the child's academic, social, and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not

for being born prematurely. They **must** also take into account the views of the head teacher of the school concerned. When informing a parent of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to, the admission authority **must** set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

2.20 Where an admission authority agrees to a parent's request for their child to be admitted out of their normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to a relevant age group (i.e. the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school) the local authority and admission authority **must** process the application as part of the main admissions round, unless the parental request is made too late for this to be possible, and on the basis of their determined admission arrangements only, including the application of oversubscription criteria where applicable. They **must** not give the application lower priority on the basis that the child is being admitted out of their normal age group. Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school, but it is not in their preferred age group.

23. The Arrangements make the following reference to the admission of children outside their normal age group:

“Section 11: When a request is received for admission out of the normal age group, Royal Latin School will make decisions in the best interests of the child, taking into account the views of the Headteacher. Any decision letter will make the reason for the decision clear. If a child applies for an out of year place then their admission will be managed on the basis of the determined admissions arrangements only and the school will not give the applicant a lower priority because they are out of their normal year group.”

24. In its response to me, the School accepted that the Arrangements “could be expanded to make the process clearer and more explicit for parents”. Specifically, the School stated:

“The school’s intention is to follow fully the requirements set out in paragraphs 2.18–2.20 of the School Admissions Code. Requests for admission outside the normal age group are considered on a case-by-case basis, with decisions made in the best interests of the child.

We acknowledge that, while this intention is reflected in Section 11 of the arrangements, the procedural detail could be set out more explicitly. In practice, parents are expected to submit a written request to the school at the point of application, setting out the reasons for the request and providing any supporting evidence.

In all cases, the school considers the full range of factors required by paragraph 2.19 of the Code. This includes:

- the views of the parents;
- information relating to the child's academic, social and emotional development;
- where relevant, medical history and professional advice;
- whether the child has previously been educated outside their normal age group; and
- any other relevant circumstances, including premature birth where applicable.

The views of the Headteacher are also taken into account in each case.

We recognise that these factors are not currently itemised within the published arrangements and accept that including them explicitly would improve clarity.

Requests for admission outside the normal age group are expected to be made at the time of application for a school place, so that they can be considered prior to allocation where possible and in line with paragraph 2.20 of the Code.

Where requests are received later, they will still be considered, but this may affect whether they can be processed as part of the main admissions round.

In all cases, parents are informed of the outcome in writing, with the reasons for the decision clearly set out, in accordance with paragraph 2.19 of the Code.

Where a request is agreed, the application is processed in line with the determined admission arrangements, and no lower priority is given on the basis that the child is being educated outside their normal age group.

The school's approach is to ensure that each request is considered individually, fairly and in the best interests of the child, in line with the School Admissions Code."

25. While the Arrangements do contain a section about the admission of children outside their normal age group, this information is limited and does not meet the requirements set out in the Code. I accept that the School may, in actual fact, follow many of those requirements when a relevant application is made. However, the detail is not set out in the Arrangements and, as such, a parent could not know the procedures that the School will follow; the factors it will take into consideration; or how to make such an application. This is in breach of paragraphs 2.18 to 2.20 of the Code.

26. The Admission Authority has not ensured that parents can look at the Arrangements and understand easily how places for the School will be allocated. The Arrangements are, therefore, unclear and in breach of paragraph 14 of the Code.

27. Consequently, I uphold the objection that the Arrangements do not meet the requirements set out in the Code in relation to the admission of children outside their normal age group.

28. I am grateful to the School for acknowledging the current omissions in its Arrangements and for the willingness it has expressed to address these matters. This 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. Such amendments are permitted in line with paragraph 3.6 of the Code which states, in part: "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 Schools Adjudicator or any misprint in the admission arrangements."

Determination

29. In accordance with section 88H(4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I uphold the objection to the admission arrangements determined by The Royal Latin School Trust for Royal Latin School, for 2027/28.

30. 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: 08 June 2026

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Catherine Crooks