



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Determination

Case reference: ADA4640

Objector: A member of the public

Admission Authority: Blessed Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust for St. John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Date of advice: 2 July 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 Blessed Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust for St. John Fisher Catholic Primary 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, unless an alternative timescale is specified by the schools adjudicator. In this case, revision must be made within two months of the publication 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 St. John Fisher Catholic Primary School (the School). The School is a primary school for children aged 4 to 11 years, located in Pinner. It has a Roman Catholic religious character and the School's religious body is the Diocese of Westminster (the Diocese).

2. The Local Authority (LA) for the area in which the School is located is the London Borough of Harrow.

3. The LA is a party to this objection. The other party to the objection is the Diocese.
4. The objection is to the reasonableness and fairness of the Arrangements for entry to the School in September 2027, and the conduct of the admission authority in updating arrangements after full consultation in accordance with the Code.

Jurisdiction

5. The terms of the academy agreement between the Blessed Holy Family Catholic Academy 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.
6. These arrangements were determined under section 88C of the Act by Blessed Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust (the Trust), which is the Admission Authority for the school.
7. A consultation period took place prior to the determination of the Arrangements between October 2025 and January 2026. The School consulted its own body of parents using its home / school communication system. Parents had six weeks to consider the materials provided before governors met to discuss arrangements on 15 December 2025. The proposed arrangements were formally adopted by the Trust on 5 February 2026.
8. The Objector submitted his objection to the determined arrangements on 13 May 2026.
9. I am satisfied the objection has been properly referred to me in accordance with section 88H of the Act, and that elements relating to the Arrangements for 2027/28 are within my jurisdiction.
10. As an adjudicator, my role is not to give advice. My jurisdiction is for the Arrangements determined and to decide whether they comply with all relevant legal requirements. It is not open to me to determine how the arrangements should be. If I uphold this objection, it is for the Admission Authority to address any non-compliance issues within the required timeframe.
11. My jurisdiction is solely for the determined arrangements for 2027/28 for the School. Therefore, I do not consider the following matters, referred to by the Objector in the objection, to be within my jurisdiction:
 - The arrangements at the School for admission of children to Reception in 2026/27

Procedure

12. In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation and the Code.
13. The information I have considered in reaching my decision includes:
- the objection dated 13 May 2026 and supporting documents;
 - a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Admission Authority on 15 December 2025 at which the governors considered the arrangements;
 - the determined arrangements for 2027/28 which include the Supplementary Information Form (SIF);
 - responses from the LA, the School and the Diocese to the objection and to my requests for further information;
 - the LA's composite prospectus for admissions to primary / secondary schools;
 - confirmation of when consultation on admission arrangements last took place, and details of the nature of the consultation and responses to it;
 - a copy of the guidance on admissions provided to the School by the Diocese;
 - maps, including Google Maps, and those showing the location of the School; and
 - information available on the websites of gov.uk (including the 'Get Information About Schools' (GIAS) and 'Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool' (FBIT) websites), the LA and the School.
14. I have been provided with a substantial amount of information / data by the Objector, LA, the School and the Diocese. I have referred only to that which has a bearing on my determination.

Background

15. According to GIAS, the School is a primary school for children aged 4 to 11 years. It has a Roman Catholic religious character and the School's religious body is the Diocese of Westminster (the Diocese). The School was last inspected by Ofsted on 5 December 2023. Ofsted judged the School as Outstanding.
16. The published admission number (PAN) of the School for 2027/28 is 90.
17. At my request, the Admission Authority provided me with data showing the expected number of children in each year group in Sept 2026. I have put that data into Table 1.

Table 1: The expected number on roll in each year group at St. John Fisher as of September 2026.

Year	Expected number on roll
Reception	90
Year 1	90
Year 2	90
Year 3	90
Year 4	91 (<i>One fair access student</i>)
Year 5	90
Year 6	90

18. The Arrangements set out that children with an education, health and care (EHC) plan naming the School will be admitted first. Then, in times when oversubscribed, children will be prioritised according to the oversubscription criteria. These can be summarised as follows:

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after children.
2. Baptised Catholic children who have a sibling at the School at the time of admission.
3. Baptised Catholic children resident in the parish of St. John Fisher (Harrow North).
4. Baptised Catholic children resident in the parish of St. Luke (Pinner).
5. Baptised Catholic children resident in any other parish.
6. Other looked after and previously looked after children.
7. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church.
8. Children of other Christian denominations whose application is supported either by a certificate of baptism or a letter from their minister confirming membership of that faith community.
9. Non-Catholic children who have a sibling at the School at the time of admission.
10. Any other child.

“Within each of the categories listed above, the following provisions will be applied in the following order.

- i. Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can most appropriately be met at this school, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made.
- ii. The attendance of a brother or sister at the school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within each category so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made after children in (i) above.
- iii. Children of members of staff who have been employed at the school for two or more years at the time of application and will continue to be employed at the school at the point of admission or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

The policy details a range of non-Catholic Christian denominations from whom endorsement of membership of the Christian faith could be procured.

The policy does not restrict admission to children of other faiths, or indeed no faith. Such children would be considered under points (9) or (10). There is no benefit or priority to being a member of another faith. Such children are considered alongside other non-Catholic siblings (point 9) or non-Christian children (point 10).”

Consideration of Case

19. 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.

20. When considering the matter raised by the Objector in respect of the consultation process, I have determined that I only have jurisdiction to consider whether the School followed the statutory process when making changes to its arrangements for 2027/28. I do not have jurisdiction to consider whether the statutory process itself should or should not be different. I also record here that if I were to find that the consultation process did not follow the statutory process in any way, it would not automatically follow that the changes made would not be concordant with the Code. It is also not in the adjudicator’s gift to direct an admission authority run a consultation process again if it has been found that it did not conform to the Code.

21. The Objector has complained that the determination of admission arrangements for 2027/28 has not been undertaken in compliance with the requirements of the School

Admissions Code 2021 in terms of “substantive changes” being made outside of the lawful process.

22. The Objector has also queried whether the Admission Authority failed to appropriately engage with responders to its consultation, considering all responses and explaining the reasoning for the changes made, including changes to the SIF for use for 2027/28 applications.

23. In the Objection dated 13 May 2026, the Objector has stated that the SIF which is now ready for applicants for 2027/28 is substantively different from that included in the consultation in autumn 2025 and is “riddled with errors”. He has pointed out that one typographic error “Demonination” has persisted in the SIF through recent revisions in May 2026. The wording of the SIF is potentially important. Not all schools provide an opportunity for parents to complete a SIF. It will capture additional information about an applicant which is required to determine how their application should be ranked, using the oversubscription criteria, in relation to applications of other candidates. Typically, this might include membership of a faith body whose members satisfy a listed admission criterion. The SIF is part of the admission arrangements for the School.

24. The terms of the Code which relate to SIFs are in Paragraph 2.4:

“In some cases, admission authorities will need to ask for supplementary information forms in order to process applications. If they do so, they **must** only use supplementary forms that request additional information when it has a direct bearing on decisions about oversubscription criteria or for the purpose of selection by aptitude or ability. Places **must** be allocated based on the oversubscription criteria only. An applicant **must not** be given additional priority solely based on having completed a supplementary form. Admission authorities **must not** ask, or use supplementary forms that ask, for any of the information prohibited by paragraph 1.9 above or for: any personal details about parents and families, such as maiden names, criminal convictions, marital, or financial status (including marriage certificates); the first language of parents or the child; details about parents’ or a child’s disabilities, special educational needs, or medical conditions; parents to agree to support the ethos of the school in a practical way; both parents to sign the form, or for the child to complete the form.”

24. Admission authorities are required to include the proposed SIF when they consult on arrangements, and the School did so.

25. The Objector has not claimed any breach of these requirements. Rather, having missed the opportunity to contribute to the consultation, he contacted the School, Diocese, and LA in early May 2026 stating that the Admission Authority and Diocese had made

unilateral revisions to the SIF. These were described as “substantial”, and that they led to more than one version being publicly available. The Objector stated that updates were not being renamed or archived, and the stakeholders involved were acting above their authority and with a lack of transparency.

26. The Objector states these flaws break Paragraph 14 of the Code, as well as Paragraph 1.45 and Paragraph 3.6. The Objector argues that responses to him from agencies involved was not timely or helpful.

27. Despite prompts to do so, the Objector has not made clear what the substantial changes are, or in what way they run against the determined arrangements for 2027/28. The Objector argues that the expectations manifest in the SIF of what an applicant may submit, or is required to submit, are unclear. I shall consider this view.

Requirements of the Code

28. Paragraph 14 of the Code states:

“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.”

29. I judge that there is no breach of the Code in this regard in the SIF or other arrangements for 2027/28. The policy and over-subscription criteria are clear. How children of no faith, or children of a non-Christian faith, would be categorised is clear. There were no responses to the original consultation regarding the SIF, but the School has now acted to improve clarity. This was appropriate because while the school policy made clear that governors welcome applications from families of non-Christian faith or no faith, the original draft SIF did not provide a “no faith” tick box. This inconsistency is unhelpful, but was not noticed during formal consultation.

30. The discrepancy was raised by the Objector after the consultation period, and the School followed the advice of the Diocese on its revision. As such it is complying with The School Admissions Regulations 2012 Regulation 15 concerning ‘Circumstances where consultation on admission arrangements is not required’ which states that:

‘Subject to paragraphs (3) and (4) an admission authority are not required to consult on their proposed admission arrangements for the academic year 2013-2014 and any subsequent admission year where they consulted on their proposed admission arrangements in accordance with section 88C (2) in any of the seven preceding determination years, and the proposed arrangements are the same as those determined following the last such consultation.

(3) The proposed arrangements are treated as the same for the purpose of paragraph (2) if the only change made to the proposed admission arrangements is one or more of the following changes:

(a) an increase to the admission number in accordance with regulation 14, or

(b) a change made to comply with any mandatory requirement in the School Admissions Code or these Regulations.'

31. The Diocese has stated:

"Having spoken to the Objector in early May 2026, I then contacted the school to discuss the fact that the SIF and the policy were not fully aligned in relation to children of 'other faiths. I advised the school that the discrepancy highlighted by the Objector between the policy and the SIF should be amended and that I believed the SIF could be amended at that point as it was not a change to the oversubscription criteria in the policy, rather a change required to the SIF only, to avoid any further confusion for applicants, and to ensure continued compliance of the arrangements, and that this could be done without the need for consultation. No changes were made to any criteria that would impact the ranking or admission of children, and the change I advised on the SIF was to remove confusion and ensure clarity."

32. The School has stated that the change to the SIF, which applies to all Roman Catholic Schools in the Diocese, improves the clarity of how places are allocated to non-Christians and of what evidence is required from parents of such applicants. Note this is not to say that the previous SIF was materially unclear, or that applications made on the previous version cannot be accurately assessed. Rather the 7 May 2026 version eliminates even an implied suggestion that applicants of other faiths may or must provide evidence of membership. Such a requirement would be irrelevant and contrary to the Code as the information is not used in ranking applicants.

33. Applicants who qualify for criteria 9 and 10 as their highest criterion met may still have a significant chance of admission. Data provided by the School shows the following:

Table 2: Basis of allocation of places in Reception at the School, showing the number of children offered a place and the distance from the School of the final place allocated under each criterion 1 to 10.

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Other	Total
2026/27	N/a	7 children 2.626 miles	6 children 1.431 miles	7 children 1.245 miles	8 children 1.993 miles	n/a	6 children 1.234 miles	8 children 1.760 miles	20 children 1.838 miles	26 children 0.554 miles	2 children repeating the year	90
2025/26	1 child 0.7 miles	9 children 3.59 miles	5 children 1.09 miles	5 children 0.91 miles	8 children 1.91 miles	n/a	1 child 0.31 miles	11 children 1.9 miles	10 children 1.8 miles	28 children 1.997 miles	3 children repeating the year	81
2024/25	N/a	11 children 2.489 miles	3 children 0.883 miles	1 child 0.303 miles	11 children 3.658 miles	n/a	3 children 1.284 miles	3 children 2.5 miles	11 children 1.726 miles	45 children 2.103 miles	2 children repeating the year	90

34 The table shows that in the last three years, the School has had a sufficient number of places in Reception to admit between 38 and 56 children whose highest criteria met was (9) or (10). Children with no Christian faith membership who live over 2 miles away have been offered places.

Table 3: The number of applicants who ranked the School first in their application preferences:

Year	Number of first preference applications received as advised to the School by the LA
2026/27	97
2025/26	80
2024/25	67

35 This table shows that only in the current admission year, 2026/27, have some parents who made the School their first preference not been able to secure admission.

36 The Objector has not specified any way that the determined arrangements for 2027/28 breach the Code, or any way that they materially differ from the arrangements for previous years. The Objector has not identified any disadvantage or unfairness from the revised arrangements for any group of individuals. His objection is to when the change was made to the SIF, by whom, and on what authority. He has been specifically asked on more than one

occasion what explicit breach he sees, but he has not provided a reply which makes a clear case.

37 I judge that the Objector has a sincere wish to see transparency and due process, but that he is mistaken in the view he takes of the opportunity and requirement for stakeholders to refine practice to maximise clarity. This was the focus of the School in following their faith body's instruction to consult on arrangements in autumn and winter of 2025. It is an inevitable part of the process for the Admission Authority to make changes on the basis of consultation. It is to the credit of the Objector, School, and Diocese that after the closure of the consultation, a need for further change was seen, and was speedily completed.

38 In the Code there is no obligation on the part of the School to version control subsequent changes completed to optimise clarity. That is especially true in this case, where the consultation and subsequent edits made no change to the order or basis by which places would be allocated. The Objector is clear that to him, changes appeared unwarranted or confused, but I do not see them in that way. The SIF as it now stands for 2027/28 is clear and compliant, and the process of changing it was within the remit of those involved.

39 I note that the consultation referred the correct stakeholders to the proposed arrangements. It did so by appropriate means, for the required timescale, and within the required time window. There were no responses to the consultation for the School to respond to. When the Objector raised a possible improvement to the SIF in May 2026, the School and Diocese rapidly took action.

Therefore, I do not uphold the objection.

Other matters

40 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 related to the management of applications from children seeking admission outside of their normal year of entry.

41 The School has shared with me details of how such applications are considered. I find the School practice to be entirely consistent with the aims and wording of the relevant paragraph of the Code. However, as determined, the written section of the Arrangements is at odds with the Code in terms of how frequently such places might be available at the School and how eligibility for them might be judged.

42 The Admission Authority has told me that it will address these matters in the Arrangements, as permitted by paragraph 3.6 of the Code. This is welcome. For transparency, no further consultation is needed on that issue. 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.

43 The Admission Authority must address these matters, as permitted by paragraph 3.6 of the Code, by two months from the date of issue of this determination.

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 Blessed Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust for St. John Fisher Catholic Primary 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, unless an alternative timescale is specified by the schools adjudicator. In this case, revision must be made within two months of the publication of this determination.

Dated: 2 July 2026

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Patrick Storrie