



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Consultation on admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools 2023-2024

**Period of consultation: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021 to 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

Wokingham borough Council invites you to give your views about the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools in the Wokingham Borough for 2023-2024.

### Admission authorities

There are different types of schools in Wokingham. The Council is the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools. This means that we are responsible for the admission arrangements for these schools.

Other types of schools known as academies, foundation, free, studio, trust, and voluntary aided schools are known as **own admission authorities**. These schools are responsible for their own admission arrangements and must carry out their own consultation. You would need to visit individual school websites for details.

### Admission arrangements including oversubscription criteria

All schools must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including information about what happens if there are more applications than places available (oversubscription criteria).

All admission authorities must include the oversubscription criteria in their arrangements. The criteria must be reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation.

It is for admission authorities to decide which criteria are most suitable for the school according to the local circumstances.

## What is included in the consultation?

Wokingham Council is consulting on the following changes to the **Co-ordinated Schemes for Admission to Primary and Secondary Schools** incorporating Wokingham Borough Council's Admission Arrangements for **2023/2024**.

*There are changes to the wording/phrasing of published school admission arrangements which were required to be written in line with guidance from the Department for Education. Changes were also made for clarification, defining key terminology and the changing dates for the admissions process.*

### ➤ **Proposal 1 – Amendment to the timeline of the co-ordinated admissions arrangement timetable**

The Local Authority is proposing to change the deadline for house moves and additional supporting evidence for **Secondary School Applications to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**. Currently the last date for providing evidence for house moves and other supporting evidence for secondary school applications is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

Applying for secondary school is a nationally coordinated process and we are proposing to amend the deadline to match that of our neighbouring authorities. This will allow families applying for out of borough schools to do so with the same deadlines in mind. It will also benefit families moving between local authorities to have one date instead of multiple to comply with, preventing confusion and allowing for a simpler process.

### ➤ **Proposal 2 – Reduction in Published Admission Numbers for the following schools;**

- **The Admission Number of the Colleton Primary School in Twyford to reduce from 60 to 45.**
- **The Admission Number of Radstock Primary School in Earley to reduce from 60 to 45.**
- **The Admission Number of Loddon Primary School in Earley to reduce from 90 to 60.**

### **The reasons for making these requests are:**

The number of applications for Reception places has reduced in the Earley and Twyford areas so that these school places are not required to meet current and forecast place requirements in these areas in either year.

The number of children admitted to these schools has reduced in recent years and all available evidence indicates that the number of places that would be occupied at these schools over the course of the 2021/22 and 2022/23 years would be significantly less than each school's Published Admission Number.

The consequence of this, combined with the necessity to comply with statutory Infant Class Size requirements, is that these schools' risk being required to maintain very small infant class sizes, if the number of children admitted exceeds the requested admission number but does not increase towards the current admission numbers. This would lead to an inefficient use of resources, to the detriment of teaching and learning at these schools.

**Any potential reduction would be undertaken on the basis that the school would agree to increase numbers if/when extra capacity was needed. This would be in anticipation that additional places will still be required in these planning areas in future.**

#### ➤ **Proposal 3 – Farley Hill**

That the Designated Area of the Farley Hill Primary School is increased to include two additional areas:

- Sherman Avenue, Fox Close and Archer Grove
- Poperinghe Way and Highfield Park

That the address for measurement purposes is confirmed as the Local Land and Property Gazetteer address point for the new Farley Hill Primary School site in Baston Road, Arborfield Green, RG2 9YW.

That the Planned Admission Number of the Farley Hill Primary School is increased to 60

#### ➤ **Proposal 4** - There are amendments to the wording of Returning Crown Servants and Armed Forces Personnel

#### ➤ **Proposal 5** - There are amendments to the definition of "*Looked after and previously looked after children in the oversubscription criteria*".

#### ➤ **Proposal 6** - There are amendments to the wording regarding admissions outside normal age groups and summer born children

### **Who do we consult with?**

We will be seeking the views of the following groups:

- Wokingham School Admissions Forum (or alternative body if adopted)
- All Wokingham Borough maintained community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools
- All own admission authority schools within the Wokingham Borough
- All neighbouring Local Education Authorities
- Diocesan Authorities
- Relevant parents
- Other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed arrangements

### What happens after the consultation closes?

All responses received by **17<sup>th</sup> January 2022** will be considered and presented to the Executive Member for Education who will decide whether to proceed with the proposed changes as well as determining the admission arrangements for all community and voluntary controlled schools. All admission authorities must agree the admission arrangements that are most suitable according to the local circumstances.

### Determining admission arrangements 2023-2024

Admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools must be agreed (determined) by Wokingham Borough Council by **28 February 2022** even if there have been no changes from previous years.

### Publication of determined arrangements 2023-2024

Once Wokingham Borough Council has determined their admission arrangements, they will be available on the public website for the whole offer year (the academic year in which offers for places are made). Local authorities must publish on their website **by 15 March 2022**.