ST. AIDAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mrs. J. M. Farrimond, B.A. (Hons) N.P.Q.E.L. / H.

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09 November 2026

Consultation on a proposed reduction in the published admission number for St. Aidan's Catholic Primary School, Holmes House Avenue, Winstanley, Wigan, WN3 6EE, with effect from September 2028.

Background

The current Published Admission Number (PAN) for St. Aidan's is 45. This means that the number of children admitted into the school at Reception each year is 45. Reducing the PAN to 30 will assist the Governing Body in their long-term planning and continuing to provide an appropriate number of places for future Catholic pupils.

Although the Regulations and Code of Practice relating to school admissions no longer require an admissions authority to consult when maintaining or increasing a school's PAN, there remains a requirement to consult when the proposal is to reduce a PAN. The school's Governing Body, as the admissions authority, is seeking comments on the proposed change.

Specific proposal

The Governing Body propose to reduce the published admission number of the school from 45 to 30 with effect from September 2028.

This means that the number of places available for children in Reception in 2028 – and all subsequent cohorts – will be 30. For children who already have a place at the school in other year groups there will be no change; the admission number for all other years remain at the previous planned admission number.

Factors that have been considered by the Governing Body in deciding to consult on this proposal include:

1. **Local Demographic Trends:**

   The local area has experienced a sustained decline in the number of children requiring primary school places, resulting in reduced demand across the sector. Over the past three years, the number of families selecting our school as their first preference has fallen year on year. This trend is consistent with the wider demographic picture and is reflected in the fact that very few schools within the locality are currently oversubscribed. Consequently, there are limited opportunities for schools to attract additional pupils through the admissions process. In light of these factors, a reduction in our Published Admission Number (PAN) would more accurately reflect local demand, support the efficient use of resources, and contribute to a more sustainable pattern of school place planning across the area.

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2. Staffing Considerations:

A reduction in the Published Admission Number (PAN) would also support the school in addressing the financial pressures associated with declining pupil numbers. School funding is largely determined by pupil enrolment and, as intake numbers have reduced, the school has faced increasing challenges in maintaining a staffing structure that is both educationally effective and financially sustainable. A lower PAN would enable the school to align its organisational structure more closely with projected pupil numbers, reducing the requirement for staffing levels that exceed future demand. This would allow the school to manage staffing reductions in a planned and sustainable manner, safeguarding educational provision while supporting long-term budget stability. Without a reduction in PAN, the school risks maintaining capacity and staffing expectations that are no longer aligned with local demographic trends or funding levels.

3. Financial or Operational Efficiency:

Running a slightly lower Published Admission Number (PAN) would enable the school to align its capacity more closely with current and projected levels of demand across the local area. This approach would support more effective financial planning by ensuring that staffing, accommodation and operational costs are proportionate to pupil numbers. A reduced PAN would allow the school to make efficient use of its resources while maintaining high standards of education, safeguarding the quality of teaching and learning, and preserving the broad curriculum offer available to pupils. Ultimately, this would contribute to the long-term sustainability of the school, ensuring that resources are directed where they have the greatest impact on pupil outcomes.

How to Respond

This consultation will run from **09 November until 21 December 2026** (to comply with requirements within the Admissions Code 2021) and you are invited to submit comments in writing about the proposal above to the school.

Please mark all correspondence for the attention of Chair of Governors.
Alternatively, you may wish to e-mail: enquiries@admin.saintaidans.wigan.sch.uk

Please submit any comments no later than **21 December 2026**. Following the consultation period the Governing Body will consider any comments received and how to proceed. Admission arrangements for 2028/2029 will be determined by **28 February 2027** and published on the school website by 15 March 2027. Any subsequent objections will need to be made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May 2027.