Valour Multi Academy Trust
C/O Beech Hill Primary School, Linhope Road,
West Denton, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne,
Tyne and Wear, NE5 2LW

20 November 2026

Dear families, staff and wider stakeholders,

On behalf of Valour Multi Academy Trust and Walbottle Village Primary School in Newcastle upon Tyne, I am writing to inform you of a statutory consultation on a proposed reduction to the Published Admission Number at Walbottle Village Primary School for the 2028/29 academic year.

Background

The current Published Admission Number (PAN) at Walbottle Village Primary School is 30. This means that the number of children admitted to the school in Reception each year is a maximum of 30. As the demographics of the area around the school changes, we are seeing a marked decline in the number of primary school age children in the surrounding area. This has been reflected in a decline in the applications to Walbottle Village Primary School and means that we have not had full year groups coming into the school for eight years. This is part of a national trend. The latest data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) goes up to the end of 2022 and shows that the number of live births in the UK has fallen in six of the previous seven years, with the total number of live births in 2022 being the fewest since 2002. In consequence there has been a significant reduction in the number of Reception places required and many Newcastle schools, including Walbottle Village Primary School, are not full in Reception.

Of course, we are keen that as many children as possible benefit from the educational opportunities at Walbottle Village Primary School, but the current situation with around 15 pupils joining Reception but making provision for twice that number results in uncertainty for school planning and we would like to minimise this in the future. With no expectation of an increase in applications to Reception, it is a good time to allow our admissions policy and PAN to change to reflect this reality. The proposal is to become a 15-pupil entry primary school by lowering the PAN to 15 with effect from September 2028.

This change would not affect cohorts of children who are already at the school and will not affect those who are applying for admission in 2027. There are no changes proposed in relation to the oversubscription criteria being used at Walbottle Village Primary School, meaning that places in the school will be allocated in the same way as they are currently.

The consultation regarding the new admissions policy with a PAN of 15 at Walbottle Village Primary School will run from Friday 20 November 2026 until 3 p.m. on Friday 8 January 2027.

We are consulting with staff and parents in face-to-face meetings as well as garnering written and email responses. We have not scheduled any face-to-face meetings with other stakeholders, but if you feel that this would be of benefit, please contact Valour via our admissions consultation email

address (admissionsconsultation@smartacademies.net) and we will be in touch to arrange a phone call, Teams call or in-person meeting.

Consultation

As the admission authority for Walbottle Village Primary School, Valour Multi Academy Trust abides by the School Admissions Code. In line with the Code, Valour is seeking the views of key stakeholders, including the following

- parents/carers of current pupils and prospective parents of pupils
- the staff at the school
- admission authorities of other local primary schools, including Newcastle City Council
- Secondary schools that Walbottle Village pupils regularly move on to when leaving the school
- councillors and MPs
- Trade Unions

The reduction in PAN is the only proposed change to the school's admission arrangements. If the proposal is agreed, the maximum number of pupils admitted to Reception in 2028, and subsequent Reception cohorts, will be 15. For children who already have a place at the school in other year groups there will be no change.

Prior to consulting on this proposal, Valour Multi Academy Trust has considered the following:

- The total number of pupils from Reception to Year 6 in Walbottle Village Primary School, as recorded by the school at the most recent school census, was 130 which is below the current capacity of 240.
- A large portion of the funding received by schools is directly related to the number of pupils attending the school. Too many vacancies mean that schools do not receive the maximum possible revenue per class;
- The expectation of a continuing decline in future Reception intakes which would result in a significant likelihood of vacancies each year if the PAN remains at 30;
- A reduction to 15 is required to allow the school to continue to operate efficiently and cost-effectively in the interests of providing the best possible education to pupils;
- The proposed PAN reduction will leave sufficient Reception places for local children in the future.
- Valour Multi Academy Trust is committed to working with Newcastle City Council and all local school and multi-academy trusts to look creatively at solutions in the future, should there be an increase in the birthrate or an increase in the number of primary age children in the area as a result of new housing.

If you would like to submit your opinion on this proposal, please contact us using the consultation email address, admissionsconsultation@smartacademies.net, or write to the Clerk to the Trust, Stephen Davies, at Valour Multi Academy Trust, The Green, Walbottle, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 8JL.

This information will also be available on the Valour website.

We look forward to engaging with you regarding this proposed change.

Yours faithfully,

Kate Chisholm

Chief Executive Officer

Alison Oliver

Headteacher

Issued on behalf of Valour Multi Academy Trust by:

Stephen Davies
Governance Professional
Valour Multi Academy Trust

Governance Professional services are supplied to Valour Multi Academy Trust by Smart Multi Academy Trust: Stephen is the named Governance Professional serving Valour.
Contact details for Stephen Davies at Smart are:

Smart Multi Academy Trust
c/o Wyndham Primary School
Montagu Avenue
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 4SB
Telephone: 07561065853

Smart Multi Academy Trust is an exempt charity and company limited by guarantee registered in England with company number 10257723. The company's registered office is Wyndham Primary School, Montagu Avenue, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 4SB.

This transmission and any attachments may be legally privileged, are confidential and are intended solely for the named addressee(s). If you are not the intended addressee, please do not read, copy, use or disclose this transmission and notify us immediately by telephone on 0191 255 9351 or by emailed reply. Please then delete this transmission from your system. You should also be aware that all incoming emails are monitored for system security purposes.