

## Caitlin Lindenberg

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**From:** FOI  
**Sent:** 22 August 2016 13:25  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FOI 137/16 - Schools used as polling stations

Dear [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

### Our Ref: FOI 137/16

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 dated 29 July 2016.

The Commission aims to respond to requests for information promptly and has done so within the statutory timeframe of twenty working days.

Your request is in bold below followed by our response.

Your request:

**Please provide me with the following information: the number of primary and secondary schools that are used as polling stations in England (and the rest of the UK) during the school year 2015/16.**

Our response is as follows:

The Commission does not hold data on the number of primary and secondary schools that are used as polling stations.

Local authorities are responsible for designating which buildings are used as polling places within their area. All local authorities must review their UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least once every four years. The Commission has produced guidance for local authorities on conducting polling district and polling place reviews:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/polling-place-reviews>.

At each election, the Returning Officer – the person who is responsible in law for administering the poll – is responsible for the provision of polling stations within each designated polling place and for allocating electors to each polling station. Schools that are publicly-funded, including academies and free schools, may be used as polling stations free of charge, and the legislation allows Returning Officers to require a room in such schools for use as a polling station.

The Commission provides guidance for Returning Officers on preparing for and delivering elections, which can be found on our website: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator>. We produce separate versions of the guidance for each election type, and in each case chapter 4 of Part B – Planning and organisation includes our guidance on venues for polling stations. Our guidance on venues for polling stations for UK Parliamentary elections, for example, can be found from page 16 of the following document:

[http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/175373/UKPE-Part-B-Planning-and-organisation.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/175373/UKPE-Part-B-Planning-and-organisation.pdf).

Returning Officers will hold information locally about which schools are used for electoral purposes in their area. The Returning Officer can be contacted via the elections office at each

local authority. Contact details are available on our About My Vote website:  
[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)

I trust that this information satisfies your request. The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority.

If you are not satisfied with this response, please note that the Commission operates a review procedure, details of which can be found on the Commission website at:  
<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information-requests/how-do-i-make-an-foi-request>

Please also note that if you have exhausted all internal Commission review procedures and you are still not satisfied you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner. Details of this procedure can be found on the ICO website: <http://www.ico.gov.uk>

Yours sincerely

**Vanessa Asante**  
**Information Officer**

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