



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Determination

Case reference: VAR872

Admission authority: Hampshire County Council for Winklebury Infant School

Date of decision: 30 August 2019

Determination

In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed variation to the admission arrangements determined by Hampshire County Council for Winklebury Infant School for September 2019.

I determine that the published admission number be reduced from 60 to 30 for September 2019.

The referral

1. Hampshire County Council as the admissions authority for Winklebury Infant School (the school) has referred a proposal for a variation to the admission arrangements for the school, for September 2019 to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. The school is a community infant school for children aged 4 to 7 in Winklebury, Hampshire.
2. The proposed variation is to reduce the school's published admission number (PAN) from 60 to 30 from September 2019 to respond to a fall in demand for places at the school.

Jurisdiction

3. The referral was made to me in accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) which states that:

“where an admission authority (a) have in accordance with section 88C determined the admission arrangements which are to apply for a particular school year, but (b) at any time before the end of that year consider that the arrangements should be varied in view of a major change in circumstances occurring since they were so determined, the authority must [except in a case where the authority's proposed variations fall within any description of

variations prescribed for the purposes of this section] (a) refer their proposed variations to the adjudicator, and (b) notify the appropriate bodies of the proposed variations”.

4. I am satisfied that the proposed variation is within my jurisdiction.

Procedure

5. In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation, and the School Admissions Code (the Code).

6. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:

- the referral from the local authority (LA) dated 21 June 2019 and supporting documents;
- the determined arrangements for 2019 and the proposed variation to those arrangements;
- a copy of the LA’s booklet for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2019;
- the governing board’s comments on the proposal; and
- a copy of the letter notifying the appropriate bodies about the proposed variation.

The proposed variation

7. The LA is seeking a variation to reduce the PAN for the school from 60 down to 30 for September 2019. This request follows discussions with the school’s governing board and is made with the board’s support and reflects a fall in the number of children seeking places at the school. The proposed change will allow the school to manage with one teaching class of a maximum of 30 pupils in Reception (Year R). This will provide the school with some financial stability in that they will know that they do not need to prepare to employ a second teacher for the Year R cohort in the academic year 2019/20. There were 27 first preferences for the school in September 2019 and 29 places have been allocated. The LA confirms that the pupil numbers are not forecast to increase. The school currently admits more children than it has in its catchment area and the LA says that it does not foresee any difficulty in providing school places for any children that move into the area during the year because the surrounding infant schools and primary schools have spare places. The LA provided a list of the schools with spare capacity and I am satisfied that there are over 100 spare places in the Year R across the schools that are within three miles of this school.

8. The projected numbers for the school over the next few years are as follows:

	Numbers projected
2019/2020	30
2020/2021	30
2021/2022	29

9. I am satisfied that no child will find themselves without a school place if they move into the area during the course of the school year and I accept the financial planning argument that the school will not be able to afford to set up a second class with only a small number of children within it. I therefore agree to this proposed variation to reduce the school's PAN from 60 to 30 for the school year 2019/2020. I note that the PAN for Year R for September 2020 had to be set by 28 February 2019. My determination in relation to September 2019 does not affect the PAN set for 2020. If that has been set at 60 and the LA wishes it to be reduced to 30 a further request for a variation will be required.

Determination

10. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed variation to the admission arrangements determined by Hampshire County Council for Winklebury Infant School for September 2019.

11. I determine that the published admission number be reduced from 60 to 30 for September 2019.

Dated: 30 August 2019

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: David Lennard Jones