

DETERMINATION

Case reference: VAR000585

Admission Authority: Devon County Council

Date of decision: 10 August 2012

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 Devon County Council.

I determine that from 7 January 2013 the published admission number for Coplestone Primary School shall be 30.

The referral

1. Devon County Council (the Council) has referred a variation to the Adjudicator about the admission arrangements for Coplestone Primary School (the School), a community school. The variation seeks to increase the published admission number (PAN) from 28 to 30, effective from 7 January 2013.

Jurisdiction

2. 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”.

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

Procedure

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

The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:

- a. the request for the variation submitted by the Council as an in-year variation form on 2 July 2012;
- b. the net capacity assessment for the School as supplied by the Council;
- c. a map showing schools in the local area as supplied by the Council;
- d. information about the consultation process during 28 February to 30 March 2012 regarding the School's proposed enlargement and the responses, as detailed on the Council's website;
- e. the public notice dated 27 April 2012, downloaded from the Council's website;
- f. the minutes of the governing body meeting dated 25 January 2012;
- g. the School's email of 19 July 2012 in response to the variation request; and
- h. a copy of the Council's composite prospectus for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2012, as downloaded from the Council's website.

Background and consideration of factors

4. The School has seen an increase in pupil numbers over recent years from 146 in summer 2009 to 184 in autumn 2011, and by 2013/14, the number on roll is expected to be 195 or more. The Council reports that a higher percentage of children are now attending the School from within Coplestone's designated area, probably linked to the 2010 Ofsted inspection that judged the School to be outstanding. There has also been significant housing expansion in the village and a general increase in the number of births.

5. The Council has applied for a variation to increase the School's PAN from 28 to 30 in order to improve school organisation and to provide more places for local children. Following approval by the Council's Cabinet on 28 February 2012, the Council consulted on the proposed enlargement during the period 28 February to 30 March 2012.

6. The consultation attracted 3 responses: the local parish council responded in favour of the proposed variation and the remaining comments were from Council officers pointing out the need for early planning involvement and sustainable travel requirements. No objections were received.

7. The Council then issued a public notice for the period 27 April to 25 May 2012 that it intended to make the prescribed alteration to the School effective from 7 January 2013, to which there were no responses. The Council has also confirmed that all the primary schools within a three mile radius of

the School were notified of the proposed variation and none offered any comment.

8. Accordingly, a report to the Council's Cabinet on 13 June 2012 recommended that approval be given to enlarge Copplestone Primary School from 175 places to 210 places with effect from 7 January 2013, conditional upon receipt of an in-year variation to the 2012 admission number from 28 to 30 by 30 November 2012.

9. The net capacity assessment for the School is 175, with a maximum number of workspaces available of 180. Provision to accommodate the extra pupils will be achieved by the addition of a seventh permanent classroom on the school site for which Cabinet approved basic need funding on 14 March 2012. As this extension falls within permitted development, planning consent will not be necessary to make the proposed changes.

10. The governors of the School have confirmed in the minutes of their meeting of 25 January 2012 that they are in agreement with the expansion of the School.

Conclusion

11. I am satisfied that the increase in the PAN of the School is an appropriate and measured response by the Council to the predicted increase in pupil numbers. Increasing the capacity of the school should enable more of the children living in the designated area to attend the School.

Determination

12. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed variation to the admission arrangements determined by Devon County Council.

I determine that from 7 January 2013 the published admission number for Copplestone Primary School shall be 30.

Dated: 10 August 2012

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Cecilia Galloway