

## DETERMINATION

**Case reference:** VAR706

**Admission Authority:** The Governing Body of King's Norton Boys School, Birmingham

**Date of decision:** 10 May 2017

### **Determination**

**In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the variation to the admission arrangements determined by the Governing Body of King's Norton Boys School.**

**I determine that for admissions in September 2017 the published admission number for Year 12 shall be zero.**

### **The referral**

1. The governing body, which is the admission authority for King's Norton Boys School (the school), has referred a variation to the adjudicator concerning the admission arrangements for the school, a foundation secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 years, for September 2017. The variation requested is to reduce the published admission number (PAN) for year 12 (Y12) that is, the beginning of the sixth form, from 50 to 0. The reason for the requested variation is that the school will cease to have a sixth form from September 2018 and does not want to admit pupils who would have to transfer after one year.

### **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:

*“proposed variations fall within any description of variations prescribe “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 d 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 and the School Admissions Code (the Code).
4. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:
  - a. the governing body's form of referral of 8 March 2017 and supporting documents;
  - b. the determined arrangements for 2017 and the proposed variation to those arrangements;
  - c. a copy of the local authority's composite prospectus for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2017;
  - d. documents relating to the proposal reduce the age range of the school which included a copy of the notice informing the appropriate bodies about the proposed variation; and
  - e. a revision to the request received 13 April 2017.

### **Background and consideration of factors**

5. King's Norton Boys School is a foundation secondary school in Birmingham. The City of Birmingham Council is the local authority for the area.
6. The school was previously an 11 – 18 school. As such, it had a sixth form which comprised both boys transferring from Year 11 and boys joining the school at the beginning of Year 12. For the latter group, it had a PAN of 50. Over the past few years, the number of boys electing to study in the school's sixth form has fallen. The school explains that: *"there are over a dozen post -16 providers in close proximity. ...offering a range of courses and qualifications and offering students much more choice"*. This reduction in numbers and the reduction in funding for sixth form education have caused the school financial difficulties. It reports a potential deficit that would grow to £800,000 if a solution was not found.
7. Against this background, the governing body therefore decided to consult on a proposal to change the age range of the school, by removing the sixth form. Proposals to change the age range of the school, under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 were published on 5 January 2017 and a four week representation period finished on 2 February 2017. The local authority made the decision on 29 March 2017 to reduce the age range thus ending sixth form provision from

September 2018. The current year 13 pupils will take their examinations and leave in July 2017. The current year 12 pupils will complete their education at the school. The current year 11 pupils will be provided for elsewhere and the school reports that *“all of our current year 11s have offers of places in other sixth forms and colleges for September. We have funded additional careers support since Christmas and have also organised a number of events in collaboration with other providers.”*

8. The governing body determined the admission arrangements for September 2017 on 9 February 2016; regulation 17 of the School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 and paragraph 1.46 of the Code requires an admission authority to determine arrangements by 28 February. The determined arrangements for the school included a PAN of 50 for sixth form, as the decision about closure had not been taken at that point and would not indeed be taken until after the deadline for the determination of arrangements for 2017.
9. The school offers 50 external places a year to its sixth form with a capacity of 120. There will be no sixth form from September 2018. It would not be sensible to admit pupils into year 12 when there would be no year 13 into which to transfer. I consider that the reduction in the PAN from 50 to 0 is necessary in response to the decision reduce the age range of the school of the school. I find that the appropriate procedures were followed and that the relevant parties were notified. I am satisfied that the proposed variation addresses the circumstances described.

## **Conclusion**

10. The governing body set admission arrangements for the school, including a PAN for a sixth form, before the decision was taken to reduce the age range. As that decision has now been taken, I consider it necessary to reduce the PAN to zero and therefore approve the requested variation.

## **Determination**

11. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the variation to the admission arrangements determined by the Governing Body of King's Norton Boys School.
12. I determine that for admissions in September 2017 the published admission number for Year 12 shall be zero.

Dated: 10 May 2017

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Miss Jill Pullen