



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

DETERMINATION

Case reference: VAR705

Admission Authority: Hampshire County Council for Belle Vue Infant School, (to be renamed Alderwood School from 10 April 2017) Aldershot

Date of decision: 6 April 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 Hampshire County Council for Belle Vue Infant School (to be Alderwood School from 10 April 2017) for September 2017 and 2018.

I determine that for admissions in September 2017 and September 2018 there will be the addition of admission arrangements for Year 7 as follows: the catchment area will be that of Alderwood School, secondary phase: there will be four feeder schools, Park Primary School, Wellington Primary School, St Michael's Church Of England (Controlled) Junior School and Talavera Junior School; for the tie breaker, distance will be measured as home to Alderwood School secondary phase. For admission arrangements for year 7 in 2017 the published admission number will 170 and for admissions for year 7 in year 2018 the published admission number will be 80.

The referral

1. Hampshire County Council which is the local authority and the admission authority for Belle Vue Infant School (Belle Vue) has referred a variation to the Adjudicator about the admission arrangements for the school. Belle Vue is currently an infant school for pupils ages 4 -7 years. From 10 April 2017, its age range has been extended so that it will be a school for pupils ages 4-16 years. Two nearby schools, Newport Junior School (Newport) and a secondary school, The Connaught School (Connaught) will be closed from 9 April 2017. Belle Vue's name will change to Alderwood School on 10 April 2017. The variation requested is to add admission arrangements for year 7 for years 2017 and 2018.

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”.

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

Procedure

4. In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation and the School Admissions Code (the Code).
5. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:
 - a. the local authority’s form of referral of 3 March 2017 and supporting documents;
 - b. the determined arrangements for 2017 and 2018 and the proposed variation to those arrangements;
 - c. a copy of Hampshire County Council’s (the local authority) composite prospectus for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2017; and
 - d. a copy of the consultation document, public notice and final decision relating to the proposals to close Newport and Connaught and expand Belle Vue.
6. In 2016 the local authority considered the options for the future of Connaught. The school had been found to require improvement at the last two inspections by Ofsted and had a declining roll. It had a published admission number of 170 with the capacity for 850 pupils. In spring 2016 there were 542 pupils on roll. There was nearby a federation of two primary schools, Belle Vue and Newport which had secured significant improvement since the federation was formed and the appointment of the current head teacher in 2006. Both schools had been judged by Ofsted as good or better for over five years. The overall effectiveness of Belle Vue was judged by Ofsted to be outstanding in March 2016.
7. The local authority brought forward proposals during 2016 to close

Newport and Connaught and expand the age range of Belle Vue. These proposals were in the form required by the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2103. Following publication of and consultation on, the proposals, the Executive Member for Education took the decision on 18 January 2017 to:

“a) Discontinue The Connaught Secondary School and Newport Junior School with effect from 9 April 2017.

b) Establish a community all-through 4 – 16 school by enlarging Belle Vue Infant School through the utilisation of Newport Junior School and The Connaught Secondary School sites and buildings and, extension of Belle Vue Infant School age range from 4 – 7 to 4 – 16, with effect from 10 April 2017.”

8. The admission arrangements for the schools were determined within the required timescales, as follows: for September 2016 on 23 March 2015, for 2017 on 20 January 2016 and for 2018 on 18 January 2017. As part of the consultation into the closure and expansion respectively of Connaught and Newport on the one hand and Belle Vue on the other the local authority consulted on proposed admission arrangements.
9. The local authority has closed a secondary school and junior school and extended the age range of the infant school. The school will operate on all three sites, that is, the existing site used by the infant school and the sites of the junior and secondary schools. The local authority had determined admission arrangements for all three schools within the required timescales and prior to taking the decision on the proposal. The admission arrangements for Reception (YR) remain unchanged. Children currently on the roll of either the junior or secondary school will automatically transfer to Belle Vue's roll. There is no need for admission arrangements at year 3 for Newport for 2017 or 2018 as it will have closed. Children who would have joined Newport from Belle Vue will transfer automatically from year 2 to year 3. Similarly, year 6 (Y6) pupils will transfer automatically to year 7 (Y7) if they wish. Pupils will have already applied for year 2017. Any pupils who were offered places at Connaught on National Offer Day will be considered to have been offered places at Alderwood. For 2018, the PAN will be for external applicants for a place at Alderwood in Y7 will be 80. This will be relevant only to children who are joining the school from other primary schools. Up to 90 Y6 pupils will transfer from the primary phase (unless their parents seek and secure places for them at other secondary schools). The catchment area and distance measured arrangements link to the secondary site for Y7 and to the infant school site for YR admission.

Summary

10. Connaught has closed and the age range of Belle Vue has been extended to create an all through school, Alderwood School. The variation requested addresses this change in circumstance as it seeks to provide appropriate arrangements to admit Y7 pupils to the newly formed all through school. Against this background, I approve this request for a 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 Hampshire County Council for Belle Vue Infant School (to be Alderwood School from 10 April 2017) for September 2017 and 2018.

12. I determine that for admissions in September 2017 and September 2018 there will be the addition of admission arrangements for Year 7 as follows: the catchment area will be that of Alderwood School, secondary phase: there will be four feeder schools, Park Primary School, Wellington Primary School, St Michael's Church Of England (Controlled) Junior School and Talavera Junior School; for the tie breaker, distance will be measured as home to Alderwood School secondary phase. For admission arrangements for year 7 in 2017 the published admission number will 170 and for admissions for year 7 in year 2018 the published admission number will be 80.

Dated: 6 April 2017

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Miss Jill Pullen