

DETERMINATION

Case references: VAR/488, 489, 490, 491, 494

Admission Authority: London Borough of Hillingdon Council

Date of decision: 9 February 2011

Determination

In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the variations to the admission arrangements determined by the London Borough of Hillingdon

I determine that for admissions in September 2011 the admission numbers for the following schools shall be as shown.

- **Brookside Primary School: 90**
- **Cranford Primary School: 120**
- **Grange Park Infant School: 120**
- **Grange Park Junior School: 120**
- **William Byrd Primary School: 90**

The referral

1. In a communication submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) on 30 November 2010 a representative of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon referred a set of proposed variations to their admission arrangements for 2011 to the Schools Adjudicator. These variations related to the admission numbers of seven schools.
2. The Borough Council had previously agreed statutory proposals for the expansion of these schools, conditional on the Schools Adjudicator agreeing changes to their admission numbers for September 2011.
3. The governors of two of the schools concerned have appealed to the Schools Adjudicator about the statutory proposal that they be enlarged. The variation request associated with that proposal is dealt with separately, so that this determination relates to five of the seven schools. There has been no challenge to the statutory proposals linked to the variations considered in this determination.

Jurisdiction

4. 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 [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’.

5. In the Council’s view, which I share, the decision to increase the intake to these schools and the associated increase in projected pupil numbers represent a major change of circumstances. This has led the Council to refer this matter. I consider that the proposed variations are within my jurisdiction.

Procedure

6. Whilst these variations have been submitted separately, in the interests of efficiency and clarity I have dealt with them here together.
7. In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation, guidance and the School Admissions Code.
8. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include the following.
 - The referral documentation.
 - The determined arrangements for 2011 and the proposed variation to those arrangements.
 - Minutes of the Council’s Cabinet meetings at which the demographic matters and the organisational response were considered.
 - Records of the consultations conducted by the Council with the governing bodies and other interested parties.
9. I have had the benefit of additional background briefing on the demographic factors provided by Council officers at my request.

Consideration of Factors and Conclusion

10. The Council has been planning to make additional primary school provision to meet projected increase in pupil numbers occasioned by a rising birth rate. The statutory proposals, referred to above, to expand a number of primary schools, constitute a major component of its response.
11. The increase in pupil numbers has, however, accelerated and the total numbers grown, apparently as a result of other factors relating to the local economy, including a significant increase in net migration into the Borough. This increase was reflected in additional demand for primary

school places in 2009 and 2010, taking up much of the hitherto spare accommodation in the Borough's schools.

12. There is a clear duty on the Council to make provision for all school age children in the Borough, and the overall growth in pupils numbers appears to be clearly established. Failure to expand these schools is likely to lead to a position where a significant number of children would be required to undertake undesirably long journeys to school.
13. The Council has developed plans for the expansion of the schools' buildings as required to meet the additional demand, and has made the necessary financial provision for their construction.
14. I note that the schools concerned support the expansion which the Council has determined, and have no objection to the variations considered in this determination which have the effect of securing early implementation of this development. There have been no objections to the proposed changes considered here.
15. I am satisfied that the variation requested helpfully complements the statutory proposals agreed by the Council in that it allows the communities served by these schools to benefit from the expansions with effect from this year. This will help meet basic need, while also improving the extent to which parental preferences can be met, and reducing the need for young children to undertake undesirably long journeys to school across what is a densely populated and busy part of outer London.
16. I have concluded that the proposed variations should be approved.

Determination

17. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the variations to the admission arrangements determined by the London Borough of Hillingdon.
18. I determine that for admissions in September 2011 the admission numbers for the following schools shall be as shown.
 - Brookside Primary School: 90
 - Cranford Primary School: 120
 - Grange Park Infant School: 120
 - Grange Park Junior School: 120
 - William Byrd Primary School: 90

Signed:
Andrew Baxter
Schools Adjudicator

11 February 2011

