

DETERMINATION

Case reference: VAR/530

Admission Authority: The governing body of Cookham Dean CE Primary School

Date of decision: 20 September 2011

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 Cookham Dean CE Primary School

I determine that for admissions in September 2012 the admission number for the School shall be 26.

The referral

1. The Governing Body of Cookham Dean CE Primary School, Maidenhead (the School) has referred a variation to the Adjudicator about the admission arrangements for the School for September 2012. They have proposed that the admission number for the School be increased to 26.

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:

...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.... (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, guidance and the School Admissions Code.
5. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:
 - a. the governors' letter of referral and extensive supporting documents;

- b. the determined arrangements for 2012 and the proposed variation to those arrangements;
- c. a copy of the local council's booklet for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2011;
- d. confirmation that the appropriate bodies had been informed of the proposed variation; and
- e. the comments of the Local Authority and the Diocesan Education Authority.

Background

- 6. The governing body is the admissions authority for the School. It determined its arrangements for admission in 2012 within the normal timescales for primary schools earlier this year. Since then work has been started on the provision of additional accommodation at the School. The governors advise that the increased capacity which this work will provide will be available by the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year.
- 7. The governors consider that this is a significant change of circumstances, and have proposed a variation to the School's admission number, increasing it to reflect the enlarged capacity of the School.

The Proposal

- 8. The admission numbers determined for the School in 2012 were 20 in Key Stage 1 and 22 in Key Stage 2. These numbers had applied for some years and reflected the capacity of the School's buildings and the governors' obligations in respect of infant class sizes.
- 9. At the time the admission numbers were confirmed for 2012 the governors were unsure about the availability of funding for a proposed extension to the School. This has now been secured and the construction process is underway, so that a greater capacity will be available in time for the coming academic year.
- 10. The governors propose that a revised admission number of 26 be introduced for 2012.
- 11. The proposal has been the subject of thorough consultation. It is supported by the diocesan authorities and by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, the Local Authority for the School.
- 12. Some concerns have been expressed that the enlargement will have a detrimental effect on the ethos of this small school, and that there will be an increase in the amount of traffic to and from the school, but most of the comments on the proposals has been supportive. The governors have taken steps to minimise any negative effects, and are persuaded that the benefits in terms of the increased availability of places, enhanced parental choice and improvements in the efficient use of resources out-weigh the

perceived disadvantages.

Consideration of Factors and Conclusion

13. This proposed enlargement has been agreed following very thorough analysis and careful consultation, and is warmly supported by key parties. It will make a small but useful contribution to a shortfall of primary school places in the area and will provide the basis for a more cost-efficient organisation. It will enhance parental choice in the area.
14. The governors will be able to set the higher admission number for 2013 as part of the annual process of determining admission arrangements.
15. As it is now known that the accommodation will be available by September 2012, there is no reason not to allow these benefits to be reaped from that date by agreeing to this variation.
16. I have therefore concluded that the variation should be allowed.

Determination

17. 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 Cookham Dean CE Primary School
18. I determine that for admissions in September 2012 the admission number for the School shall be 26.

Dated: 20 September 2011

Signed:



Schools Adjudicator: Andrew Baxter