

DETERMINATION

Case reference: VAR/000613

Admission Authority: Warwickshire County Council

Local Authority: Warwickshire County Council

Date of decision: 9 September 2013

Determination

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

I determine that for admissions in September 2014 the Published Admission Number for Water Orton Primary School, Warwickshire will be reduced from 55 to 45.

The referral

1. Warwickshire County Council (the local authority) which is the admissions authority for the school has referred a variation to the Office of the School Adjudicator about the admission arrangements for Water Orton Primary School, Warwickshire (the school), a community primary school, for September 2014. The variation is to reduce the published admission number (PAN) from 55 to 45. This change is sought as a result of reassessment of the capacity of the school.

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 in relation to the addition of two named feeder schools 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 letter of referral of 25 July 2013 and supporting documents;
 - b. the determined arrangements for 2014/2015 and the proposed variation to those arrangements;
 - c. a copy of the local authority's booklet for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2013;
 - d. a map of the schools in the local area; and
 - e. confirmation that the governing body of the school was consulted over these arrangements

Background and consideration of factors

6. The school is a rural primary school and the figures provided by the local authority show that in recent years the school has not admitted to its full capacity.

	Admission number	Number admitted	Number of applications	Number of appeals
2009/2010	55	47	65	0
2010/2011	55	46	70	0
2011/2012	55	42	72	0
2012/2013	55	52	72	0

7. Projections for the next three years show a continuing trend for lower numbers. All the projections are below the proposed PAN as can be seen from the table below provided by the local authority.

	Numbers projected
2013/2014	30
2014/2015	34
2015/2016	27

8. The forecast figures for the neighbouring schools within a five mile radius of the school show that while two of the four admitted to their

capacity, the other two schools did not.

Name of School	Admission number	Number admitted at the beginning of the current school year
Curdworth Primary School	17	14
High Meadow Infant School	30	30
Coleshill C of E Primary School	30	30
St Edward's Catholic Primary School	30	24

9. As a result of having spare capacity, the school and the local authority have agreed to allow a local pre-school group to use two of the school's classrooms on a lease arrangement. This utilises the spare capacity and should the space be required for use as classrooms if numbers increase in the future, the lease arrangements can be reviewed and the classrooms returned to school use.

10. The headteacher and governing body are fully in support of this proposal by the local authority which is also the admitting authority. There were no comments received from other bodies.

11. The school currently operates with mixed age classes because year groups have not been of consistent sizes and it has had a PAN of 55. The school has confirmed that a reduction to a PAN of 45 will mean that it will continue to run mixed age classes but it does not see this as a difficulty.

Conclusion

12. The local authority as the admission authority for this school is acting upon the reassessment of the capacity of the school and the forecast for pupil numbers that was undertaken after the arrangements had been determined for 2014. The numbers of pupils in the area have reduced. The school with the agreement of the local authority is letting two of its classrooms to a local play group. The local authority has shown that the forecast numbers can be met with the reduced capacity of the school, and the lease to the playgroup could be ended if the need for more school places arises in the future allowing the PAN to be increased. The school governing body has been consulted on this matter and has confirmed that it is in agreement with the reduction in the PAN. For these reasons I approve the request to reduce the PAN.

Determination

13. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the variation to the admission

arrangements determined Warwickshire County Council.

14. I determine that for admissions in September 2014 the Published Admission Number for Water Orton Primary School, Warwickshire will be reduced from 55 to 45.

Dated: 9 September 2013

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: David Lennard Jones