

## **DETERMINATION**

**Case reference:** VAR642

**Admission Authority:** The Governing Body of Christ Church, Church of England, Primary School, Purley

**Date of decision:** 27 August 2014

### **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 Christ Church, Church of England, Primary School, Purley**

**I determine that for admissions in September 2015, the parishes shown in Appendix 1 of the oversubscription criteria shall include the parishes of the churches of Emmanuel, South Croydon and All Saints Sanderstead.**

### **The referral**

1. The governing body of Christ Church, Church of England (C of E), Primary School, has referred a variation to the Adjudicator about the admission arrangements for Christ Church, C of E, Primary School (the school), a voluntary aided school for pupils age 4-11 years for September 2015. The request is to vary the oversubscription criteria by increasing the number of parishes in which church attendance is given a priority for admission to 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”.

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, guidance and the School Admissions Code.
4. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:
  - a) the head teacher's, on behalf of the chair of governors, email and form of referral of 26 July 2014 and supporting documents;
  - b) the determined arrangements for 2015/2016 and the proposed variation to those arrangements;
  - c) a draft copy of the London Borough of Croydon, the local authority's (the LA) composite prospectus for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2015 ;
  - d) a copy of the email notifying and consulting the relevant bodies about the proposed variation; and
  - e) a copy of the responses received.

## Background and consideration of factors

5. The LA reports that it has an unprecedented demand for places for children of primary age. It has seen an increase in the birth rate between 2001 and 2011 of 31 per cent and 95 per cent of those born in the LA remain there to begin school, an increase of 6 per cent.
6. As a consequence of this increase in demand for places, the LA asked the school to admit an additional reception class for September 2014, increasing the admission number from 30 to 60 pupils. The governing body has now agreed with the LA to expand permanently the school from one form of entry to two forms, that is to increase the published admission number (PAN) from 30 pupils to 60.
7. The oversubscription criteria in the admission arrangements are as follows
  1. *Looked after children or previously looked after children.*
  2. *Siblings of children on the roll of Christ Church School in September 2015, priority being given in the following order:*
    - 2.1 *Children whose parent/s or legal guardian/s have normally attended Christ Church, Purley on a weekly basis for at least the two years before the closing date of this application.*
    - 2.2 *Children whose parent/s or legal guardian/s have normally attended one of the churches within Appendix 1 on a weekly basis for at least the two years before the closing date of this application.*

- 2.3 *Children whose parent/s or legal guardian/s have normally attended a church within Appendix 2 on a weekly basis for at least the two years before the closing date of this application.*
- 2.4 *Children whose parent/s or legal guardian/s have normally attended one of the churches within Appendix 1 or a church within Appendix 2 on a monthly basis for at least the two years before the closing date of this application.*
- 2.5 *Children living nearest to the school.*
3. *Children who together with their parent/s or legal guardian/s live within one of the parishes listed in Appendix 1 and whose parent/s or legal guardian/s have normally attended Christ Church, Purley on a weekly basis for at least the two years before the closing date of this application.*
4. *Children who together with their parent/s or legal guardian/s live within one of the parishes listed in Appendix 1 and whose parent/s or legal guardian/s have normally attended one of the churches listed within Appendix 1 on a weekly basis for at least the two years before the closing date of this application.*
5. *Children who together with their parent/s or legal guardian/s live within one of the parishes listed in Appendix 1 and whose parent/s or legal guardian/s have normally attended a church within Appendix 2 on a weekly basis for at least the two years before the closing date of this application.*
6. *Children who together with their parent/s or legal guardian/s live within one of the parishes listed in Appendix 1 and whose parent/s or legal guardian/s have normally attended a church within Appendix 1 or Appendix 2 on a monthly basis for at least the two years before the closing date of this application.*
7. *Children, who together with their parent/s or legal guardian/s live within one of the parishes listed in Appendix 1 living nearest the school, including those who have not completed a Supplementary Information Form for this school.*
8. *Any other children in order of nearness of home to the school, including those who have not completed a Supplementary Information Form for this school.*

### **Appendix 1**

*The following are the C of E churches to whose parish boundaries categories 3 - 7 apply*

*Christ Church, Purley  
St Augustine, South Croydon  
St Barnabas, Purley  
St Edmund, Riddlesdown*

*St James, Riddlesdown  
St Mark, Purley  
St Mary, Sanderstead  
St Swithun, Purley*

8. The variation requested is to add the parishes of Emmanuel, South Croydon and All Saints Sanderstead to the list of churches shown in Appendix 1 above.

#### The major change in circumstances

9. In June 2014 the LA's Cabinet agreed to ask the school to increase in size from a one form entry school to a two form entry. This decision was taken after the admission arrangements were determined for September 2015. The governing body wished to maintain the balance of places for the local community and places for church families as a consequence of this significant change for the school. The minutes of governing body's meeting on 19 May 2014 show groups with church affiliation in classes at present "*vary from a quarter to a third.*"
10. I agree that this phased doubling of school size is a major change of circumstance and that increasing the number of parishes given priority should help to maintain the balance of places the governors seek to maintain. I note that the school, as part of the consultation, explained that it had reduced the number of parishes in the past in order to maintain the balance it sought.

#### Consultation

11. The school has consulted extensively on the proposal; the head teacher has consulted the faith schools, both Church of England and Roman Catholic in the immediate vicinity, the schools in the immediate area and the schools in the areas of Selsdon and Sanderstead which will be included in the extended list of parishes. All the responses show the parties in agreement with the proposal.

#### Access to the school

12. No issues have been raised in the evidence presented, that there will be difficulties of access in the proposal that result from the expansion of parish boundaries. There may well be children travelling from further way than previously, but this may anyway occur from the increase in the school size. I do not consider this a reason to refuse this request for variation.

#### Impact of proposed arrangements on other schools:

13. I have considered whether this proposal would have the effect of leaving other schools undersubscribed, however when I look at the draft of the LA's 2015 composite prospectus I see, for September 2104, all primary schools with the exception of one is oversubscribed and see also a number of new schools opening. The schools in those areas affected by the school's proposal all responded positively to the consultation so I consider there should be no detrimental impact on other schools in this proposal.

14. The deadline for applications for primary school is 15 January 2015 so there is time for these arrangements to be publicised.

### **Conclusion**

15. The school has been asked, and agreed, to expand in size. The school wishes to maintain a balance of families from the community and those who are members of the faith. The decision to expand came after the arrangements were determined. I consider this request for variation an appropriate response to the circumstances in which the school has been placed and conclude that I should agree to this request for variation for the reasons above.

### **Determination**

16. 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 Christ Church, Church of England, Primary School, Purley

17. I determine that for admissions in September 2015, the parishes shown in Appendix 1 of the oversubscription criteria shall include the parishes of the churches of Emmanuel, South Croydon and All Saints Sanderstead.

Dated: 27 August 2014

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Jill Pullen