

## **DETERMINATION**

**Case reference:** VAR000507

**Admission Authority:** The London Borough of Redbridge

**Date of decision:** 13 May 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 London Borough of Redbridge for Christchurch Primary School so that, for September 2011, the School's admission number for the Reception year will increase from 120 to 150.**

### **The referral**

1. In a letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> April 2011, the London Borough of Redbridge ("the Council") referred a variation to the Adjudicator about the admission arrangements ("the Arrangements") for Christchurch Primary School ("the School"), a community school, for September 2011. The Council are seeking to vary the published Arrangements by increasing the admission number for the Reception year from 90 to 120 for September 2011.

### **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, guidance and the School Admissions Code ("the Code").

5. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:

- the Council's variation request form and supplementary

information ;

- an email from the School's headteacher to the Council dated 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011; and
- a copy of a letter notifying local admission authorities about the proposed variation.

## **Background**

6. The Council is facing a shortage of primary school places in September 2011. At its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010, the Council's Cabinet made a capital provision of £30m to meet this demand, including the provision of 10.5 additional forms of entry into the Reception year.

7. The local pressure on Reception places for September 2011 has recently increased due to the following factors:

- A delay to the opening of a new, four form entry, primary school due to unforeseen difficulties encountered in securing the site. This school was scheduled to open in September 2011 but it is now unlikely this will occur until September 2012.
- The number of applications for Reception places has increased significantly from 2010 to 2011. The Council reports an 11% (411 children) year on year increase in on-time applications plus, by the time of this referral, a further 165 late applications.

8 In the Council's view, and I agree, these factors represent a major change in circumstances since the Council's admission arrangements for the School were determined on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010. As one element of the Council's response to these increased pressures it is seeking to vary the admission number for the Reception year at the School from 120 to 150 for September 2011. This increase will be accommodated within the School's existing buildings which have recently been enlarged by the transfer of accommodation at the adjacent teacher's centre to the School. The Council and the School's governing body are discussing a permanent expansion of the School and increase in its admission number from September 2012.

## **Consideration and Conclusion**

9 The Council has provided evidence of a shortfall between the demand for, and supply of, primary school places. It has taken a systematic approach to addressing this shortfall, has properly consulted on its plans, and has made the necessary capital resources available. Despite this, the factors referred to in paragraph 7 above have further increased pressure on Reception places for September 2011. During the consultation exercise associated with this proposal, no representations have been made by any other admission authority.

10 The proposal was discussed at a meeting of the School's governing body held on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Following this meeting the School's headteacher

emailed the Council on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011. This email states “*The Governing Body of Christchurch Primary School agreed on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011 that the School should expand by another form of entry to become a designated 5 form entry school from September 2012. The Governing Body also agreed that as a temporary measure the School should accept an additional class of reception pupils from September 2011.*”

11 Since the deadline for applying for school places has passed, I have considered whether the timing of this proposal could result in any possible prejudice being caused to parents. As the proposal will enable more places to be available I have concluded that such a possibility is highly unlikely. I believe that the proposed variation is reasonable and I therefore approve it.

### **Determination**

12 In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the variation to the admission arrangements determined by the London Borough of Redbridge for Christchurch Primary School so that, for September 2011, the School’s admission number for the Reception year will increase from 120 to 150.

Dated: 13 May 2011

Signed:

Adjudicator: John Simpson