



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

## **DETERMINATION**

**Case reference:** VAR 738

**Admission Authority:** Croydon Council for Norbury Manor Primary School, Croydon

**Date of decision:** 21 November 2017

### **Determination**

**In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve two variations to the admission arrangements determined by Croydon Council for Norbury Manor Primary School, Croydon.**

**I determine that for admissions in September 2017 the published admission number shall be 60 and in September 2018 the published admission number shall be 60.**

### **The referral**

1. Croydon Council, as the local authority, has referred two variations to the Adjudicator about the admission arrangements for Norbury Manor Primary School (the school), a community school for September 2017 and September 2018. The variations requested are a reduction in the school's published admission number (PAN) to reflect a fall in the projected pupil numbers in the area for September 2017 and September 2018.

### **Jurisdiction**

2. The referrals were 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 variations are 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 local authority's letter of referral of 6 October 2017 and supporting documents;
  - b) the determined arrangements for 2017 and 2018 and the proposed variations to those arrangements;
  - c) a copy of the council's booklet for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2018; and
  - d) a copy of the letter notifying the appropriate bodies about the proposed variations.

## **Background and consideration of factors**

5. In February 2017 Croydon Council determined its admission arrangements for the 2018/19 academic year, including the published admission number (PAN) for each community and voluntary controlled school across the borough. This included the PAN for Norbury Manor Primary School. This PAN was set at 90.
6. The local authority reports that it has become apparent, since the PAN was determined, that the demand for places at the school is significantly less than the PAN. As a result of this the school has a high number of vacancies for children in the current Reception year with 47 children starting school in September 2017. This leaves the school with 43 Year R places available in the school. The local authority says that if the number can be limited to 60 then this will help the school to be able to manage its budget more effectively and limit in-year admissions during 2017/18 in this year group. The school has established two classes for the children who have been admitted.
7. The local authority is also seeking approval to make a variation to the determined admission arrangements that have been published for 2018/19 that will reduce the PAN for the school from 90 to 60. The local authority is consulting to also make this change in the 2019/20 arrangements.
8. The school admissions pattern in recent years has shown a relatively high number of in year admissions across the school and this is largely balanced by children leaving the school in-year from all year groups. Projections show that the overall number on roll of 469 in July 2017 will reduce to 431 in September 2017. For September 2018 this is projected to be 444 and for 2019 the projection is 437. Across the wider school place planning area it is projected that there will be sufficient places for all applicants and the proposed reduction in places at this school will not lead to any shortage of places in the area.
9. The school governing body has been consulted about the variations requested and is fully in support of the proposals. There have been no comments from other schools that have been consulted. The headteacher at the school

comments that the reduction in numbers at first admission together with the high in-year turnover of pupils has created instability in both staffing and the management of the school budget. A reduction in the PAN from 90 to 60 as requested will help with these issues and allow the school to plan with more certainty about pupil numbers and ensure educational stability for the children across the whole of the school.

## **Conclusion**

10. In considering this request I note that there are sufficient places in other schools in the area and that the reduction in admissions is largely a result of fewer parents seeking places at the school. The impact of the proposed reductions for 2017 and 2018 will not affect other schools and will assist this school in planning its budget and organising stable classes for the children in the school. If families move into the area during the school year beginning in September 2017, there are sufficient places in the area to accommodate them. For these reasons I approve the variations requested.

## **Determination**

11. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the two variations to the admission arrangements determined by Croydon Council for Norbury Manor Primary School, Croydon.
12. I determine that for admissions in September 2017 the published admission number shall be 60 and in September 2018 the published admission number shall be 60.

Dated: 21 November 2017

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: David Lennard Jones