



DETERMINATION

Case reference: VAR714

Admission Authority: The Governing Body of Sion-Manning Catholic Girls' School Kensington, London

Date of decision: 29 June 2017

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 Sion-Manning Catholic Girls' School for September 2018.

I determine that for admissions in September 2018 the published admission arrangements will permit applications from both boys and girls as the school will be co-educational from September 2018. Accordingly, references to 'girl' shall become 'child'; references to 'girls' shall become 'children'; reference to sister shall become brother or sister, and references to sisters shall become 'brothers and sisters'. In addition, the wording under In Year admissions will be "The school will admit boys and girls into Year 7 from September 2018. This will continue until the school is fully co-educational by 2022. Current year groups will remain girls only for in year admissions".

The referral

- 1. The governing body of Sion-Manning Catholic Girls' School (the school), which is the admission authority for the school, has referred a variation to the Adjudicator. The variation concerns the admission arrangements for the school, a voluntary aided school - which until 31 August 2018 is a school for girls aged 11-16 years - for September 2018. The school is located in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea which is the local authority which maintains the school. The variation requested is to change the arrangements to permit applications from boys as well as girls as the school will be co-educational from September 2018.**

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 variation prescribed] (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 and the School Admissions Code (the Code).
4. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include
 - a. the governing body's form of referral of 15 May 2017 and supporting documents;
 - b. the determined arrangements for September 2018 and the proposed variation to those arrangements;
 - c. a copy of the local authority's composite prospectus for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2017;
 - d. correspondence from the faith body, the Diocese of Westminster (the diocese); and
 - e. documents relating to the statutory proposal to change the school from a single sex to a co-educational school.

Background and consideration of factors

5. The numbers on roll at the school have declined over recent years. The published admission number (PAN) is 120 and the current numbers in each year group are shown in the table below:

| Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 | Year 11 |
|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 70 | 92 | 82 | 85 | 95 |

6. The governing body considered options to secure the future of the school and decided, with the support of the local authority, to consult on a prescribed alteration to the school to become a co-educational school from 1 September 2018. The aim is to increase applications for the school and in the words of the school to: *"provide families with boys living locally and beyond, with another secondary school option"* The school add that: *"For the 2017 secondary transfer admissions round,*

35 of the 78 applicants not offered a school of choice were boys (37 in 2016). These applicants were offered a non-faith school in a neighboring authority. Many of these chose oversubscribed Catholic schools within the borough and beyond". The local authority has confirmed that the prescribed process for changing a single-sex school to a mixed school has been followed and that it has also advised the school on the need and process for requesting a variation to the admission arrangements. The school is likely to be renamed All Saints College but is awaiting confirmation of this from the diocese. The school will admit boys in 2018 into year 7 but not as in year admissions to other year groups which will remain single sex as they move through the school.

7. The governing body published in February 2017 the required statutory notice to make this alteration to the school. These proposals were in the form required by the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013. The local authority is the decision maker for such proposals. Having considered the proposal and consultation, the local authority duly approved the proposals on 4 May 2017.
8. The governing body determined the admission arrangements for September 2018 on 18 January 2017. Regulation 17 of the School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 and paragraph 1.46 of the Code require an admission authority to determine arrangements by 28 February. As can be seen from the date of the decision given above, the school was still a single-sex school in January and, indeed, February 2017. The governing body accordingly acted properly in determining arrangements which provided for girls alone to be admitted to the school. As the school will be a school for boys and girls from 1 September 2018, this variation has been sought.
9. The changes required to the admission arrangements are to change references to 'girl' to 'child'; references to 'girls' to 'children'; references to 'sister' to 'brother or sister', and references to 'sisters' to 'brothers and sisters'. In addition, the wording under the heading In Year Admission will be "The school will admit boys and girls into Year 7 from September 2018. This will continue until the school is fully co-educational by 2022. Current year groups will remain girls only for in year admissions".
10. I consider the change in gender references to be necessary as the school is becoming co-educational. I am satisfied that the proposed variation addresses the circumstances described.

Conclusion

11. The governing body set admission arrangements for the school, before the completion of the process to become co-educational. As that process has now been completed, I consider it necessary to change

the references in the admission arrangements that reflect the fact that the school has been a girls' school so that they reflect its new status. I accordingly agree the variation.

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 governing body of Sion-Manning Catholic Girls' School for September 2018.

13. I determine that for admissions in September 2018 the published admission arrangements will permit applications from both boys and girls as the school will be co-educational from September 2018. Accordingly, references to 'girl' shall become 'child'; references to 'girls' shall become 'children'; reference to sister shall become brother or sister, and references to sisters shall become 'brothers and sisters'. In addition, the wording under In Year admissions will be "The school will admit boys and girls into Year 7 from September 2018. This will continue until the school is fully co-educational by 2022. Current year groups will remain girls only for in year admissions".

Dated: 29 June 2017

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Miss Jill Pullen