



DETERMINATION

Case reference: VAR766

Admission Authority: Greenwich Borough Council for Boxgrove Primary School, Greenwich

Date of decision: 20 July 2018

Determination

In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed variation to the admission arrangements determined by the Greenwich Borough Council for Boxgrove Primary School, Greenwich for September 2019.

I determine that for admissions in September 2019 the published admission number shall be 60.

The referral

1. Greenwich Borough Council (the local authority) has referred a proposed variation to reduce the published admission number (PAN) for Boxgrove Primary School (the school), for September 2019 to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. The school is a community school for children aged 3 -11 in the London Borough of Greenwich. The proposed variation is to reduce the PAN for September 2019 from 90 to 60.

Jurisdiction

2. The referral was made 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, and the School Admissions Code (the Code).
5. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:
 - the local authority's referral dated 4 July 2018 and supporting documents;
 - the determined arrangements for 2019 and the proposed variation to those arrangements;
 - a copy of the local authority's booklet for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2018;
 - confirmation that the school governing board has been consulted and is in support of this proposal; and
 - a copy of the letter notifying the appropriate bodies about the proposed variation.

The proposed variation

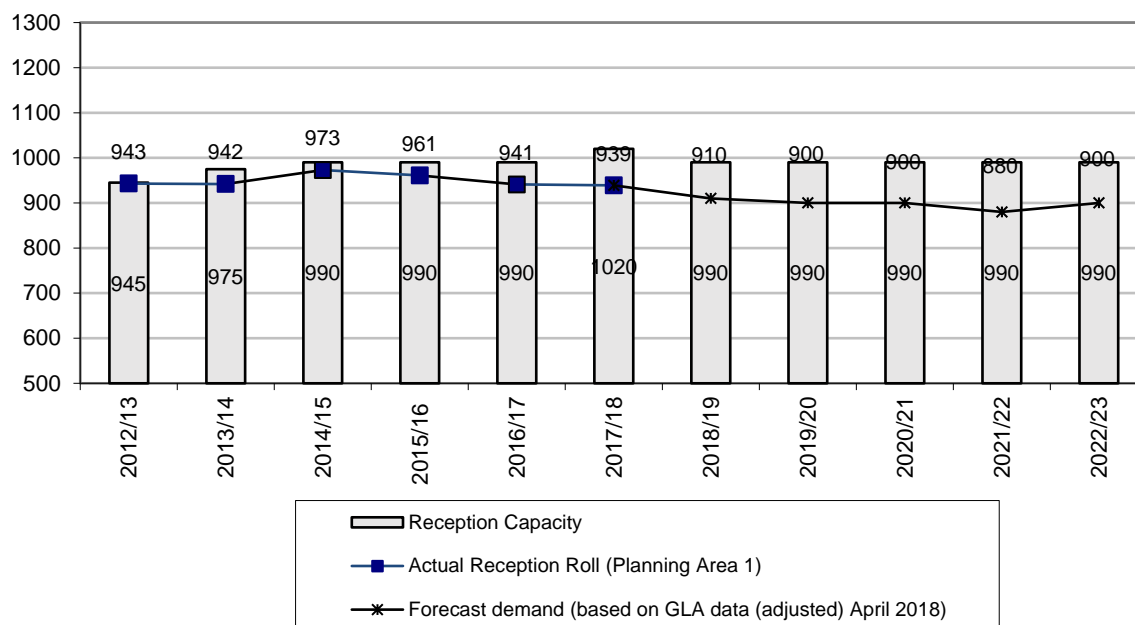
6. The proposed variation was received on 4 July 2018. The effect of the variation would be to reduce the PAN for September 2019 from 90 to 60.
7. The local authority agreed with the school governing board that the school's PAN of 60 should increase to 90 with effect from September 2017. This was on the basis that a one form of entry increase for one cohort could be accommodated in the existing school space for one academic year due to lower pupil numbers in upper year groups.
8. In order to deliver the accommodation required to support a PAN of 90 in September 2018 (and subsequent years) a building project to enlarge the school was scheduled. A PAN of 90 for September 2018 was determined on this basis. There has been an unexpected delay in the delivery of the new accommodation and following referral to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator a variation was agreed in VAR751 on 27 March 2018 to reduce the PAN for September 2018 from 90 to 60.
9. The local authority has now reviewed its pupil number projections for 2019 and has concluded that the pupil number bulge that it was projecting is not now as large as was projected. As a result it is requesting that the PAN for 2019 is also reduced from 90 to 60.

Consideration of the case

10. Boxgrove School was originally approved by the local authority for expansion from 60 to 90 places in December 2013, and this led to a statutory proposal to expand the school published in September 2016, and formally approved by the local authority in November 2016. Phase one of the expansion was completed and a PAN of 90 implemented for September 2017. The main building project was paused due to technical issues and the school reverted to a PAN of 60 places for September 2018.

11. The local authority said that it had always intended to re-start the programme of works and complete the project so that the school could accommodate 90 pupils in Y7 from September 2019. However, the local authority also says that since the expansion was first proposed, demand for primary places in the north-east of the borough (known as planning area one) has reduced, and is now expected to remain steady until 2022 (see table below):

**Greenwich Primary Planning Area 1 - North East
Reception Capacity, Actual Roll, and Projections**



12. The school is unable to operate at three forms of entry in its current accommodation. Because of this and because of the reduced level of demand for places the local authority is seeking a variation to reduce the PAN back to the previous PAN of 60 for September 2019. The appropriate bodies as specified in the Code have been notified and the two comments received from neighbouring London boroughs were supportive of the proposed variation.
13. The local authority has provided its analysis of pupil number projections and school capacity. In September 2018 Boxgrove School will admit 60 pupils. Two appeals were heard and these were unsuccessful. There are schools in the area with spare capacity so the local authority is confident that it can provide places for all children. The local authority confirms that there will be 990 reception year places in the north east of the borough with Boxgrove School operating with two, rather than three forms of entry for September 2019. The authority's pupil number forecasts currently show that there is likely to be a surplus of reception places of around nine per cent in the area for 2019 and subsequent years. Therefore, reducing Boxgrove Primary School's intake is not expected significantly to impact on the availability of suitable school places in the local area.
14. There is no anticipated impact on other local schools and there is sufficient capacity in other schools in the area to accommodate this reduction in the number of places. The school governing board itself has responded to say that it has no further comments to make about the proposed variation. It has been a party to the discussions with the local authority throughout this period when the building project

had been proposed. The school had a PAN of 60 until the proposal for expansion was made. Then for 2017 the PAN increased to 90. In that year 68 pupils were admitted. The PAN for 2018 was reduced in March 2018 and this was before places were allocated but after preferences had been made. For 2019 preferences have not yet been made and parents can make their decisions on the basis of a PAN of 60. As was the case when the variation for 2018 was considered, the school does not have the accommodation to admit more than 60 children into Reception.

Summary

15. The local authority with the agreement of the school governing board has requested this reduction in PAN from 90 to 60 from September 2019 because of a change in the projected pupil numbers in the area and as a result the cancellation of a building project which would have allowed the school to expand. The local authority has already determined the arrangements for this school including the PAN of 90. In order to ensure that the number of places offered matches the available accommodation this variation is required. The local authority has taken the necessary steps in requesting this variation and I approve it.

Determination

16. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed variation to the admission arrangements determined by Greenwich Borough Council for September 2019 for Boxgrove Primary School, Greenwich.
17. I determine that for admissions in September 2019 the published admission number shall be 60.

Dated: 20 July 2018

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: David Lennard Jones