



Determination

Case reference:	VAR855
Admission authority:	The Governing Board of St Peter-in-Chains RC Infant School, Haringey
Date of decision:	16 July 2019

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 Governing Board of St Peter-in-Chains RC Infant School for September 2019.

I determine that for admissions in September 2019 the published admission number shall be 30.

The referral

1. The board of governors of St Peter-in-Chains RC Infant School (the school) has referred a proposal for a variation to the admission arrangements for the school for September 2019 to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA). The school is a voluntary aided school for children aged 4 to 7 in the London Borough of Haringey and is designated as having a Catholic religious character. Haringey Council is the local authority for the area and is a party to the referral. The Diocese of Westminster (the diocese) is the religious authority for the school and a party to the referral.
2. The proposed variation is that the published admission number (PAN) is reduced from 60 to 30 for admissions in 2019/20 only.

Jurisdiction

3. 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”.

4. I am satisfied that the proposed variation is within my jurisdiction.

Procedure

5. In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation, and the School Admissions Code (the Code).
6. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:
 - the referral from the local authority, supporting documents and further information provided at my request;
 - 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 2019; and
 - a copy of the letter notifying the appropriate bodies about the proposed variation.

The proposed variation

7. The governing board determined the admission arrangements including the PAN, for September 2019 and the PAN for the school was set at 60.
8. The local authority, on behalf of the governors, wrote that there had been a reduction in demand for reception places and *“the change in PAN will assist budgetary planning at St Peter in Chains and more closely calibrate local demand with supply without affecting parental choice since a (smaller) surplus will persist.”*
9. Paragraph 3.7 of the Code requires that relevant parties be notified of a proposed variation. The local authority has provided me with a copy of the notification of the proposed variation and information on the schools and other bodies to which the notification was sent. In the notification, sent on 5 April 2019, the local authority wrote *“The Local Authority supports this proposal for a temporary reduction in the PAN because we expect to have sufficiency of places for 2019 based on this reduced number.”* The letter invited those notified to comment by 14 May 2019. I find that the appropriate procedures were followed and the relevant parties notified. The local authority reported no responses to the notification.

Background and consideration of the case

10. The school has admitted more than the proposed PAN of 30 in recent years but applications and, in particular, first preferences have fallen sharply. The local authority told me that, although there had been an increasing demand for reception places in Haringey between 2003 and 2015, the demand for reception places since 2015 has

fallen. Haringey Council produces the School Place Planning Report (SPPR), which uses data supplied by the Greater London Authority School Rolls projection service. The local authority told me “*The 2018 edition of the SPPR shows a reduction in the number of reception places required in Planning Area 2(PA2) compared to earlier years. In 2014/15 some 650 reception places in PA2 were taken. This shrunk to below 600 in 2016 and 2017 and is expected to fall further in the years ahead.*” The school is located in Planning Area 2.

11. The application to reduce the PAN was based on the fact that applications to the school resulted in 28 pupils being offered places for admission to reception at the school in September 2019. However, there has been some movement in the numbers and I shall say more about that later. The school was concerned that it might have been necessary to employ a second teacher for the reception year, which would have had a significant financial impact; admitting more than 30 pupils would have required the employment of an additional teacher in order to comply with the regulations relating to the size of infant classes.
12. The local authority sent me the following information about the number of pupils allocated to the school in the last few years.

September	Published Admission Number	Number of first preferences	Number of places allocated
2015	60	66	60
2016	60	42	49
2017	60	46	52
2018	60	26	34
2019	60	17	28

13. In accordance with the requirements relating to admissions, the school has already determined its PAN for September 2020 and has set this at 60. In consequence, the proposed variation and my determination of that proposal apply for September 2019 only.
14. The Assistant Director for Capital Planning and Pupil Placement Planning wrote to the OSA, on 15 April 2019, on behalf of Mr J P Morrison, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Westminster (DOW) “*The DOW Education Service has been working with Haringey Council to identify pragmatic solutions to the presenting primary school places planning issues in the Borough. We are aware of the significant impact at St Peter in Chains and are happy to support this initiative.*”
15. The local authority sent me detailed information about the applications and offers made at the school, which have helped me to have a good picture of the current position. I am aware of course that there continues to be movement in the numbers up until the term starts in September 2019. The information submitted told me:
 - In total, the school received 80 on-time preferences for reception places at the school to start in September 2019.

- Of these 80 preferences, 52 children were able to be offered higher preferences.
- The remaining 28 children whose parents had made the school one of their preferences were offered places at the school. The table below shows the breakdown of the preferences made to the school.

Preference rank for the school	Total children offered
1	17
2	6
3	2
4	1
5	2
Total	28

- A number of other children were also offered places at the school. These were children who could not be offered a place at any of the schools for which their parents had expressed a preference and who lived closer to the school than any other school which still had vacancies remaining. There were eight such children and they were allocated places at the school.
- A total of 36 children were offered or allocated places at the school on national offer day.
- Since then, nine children have refused the offer or allocation of a place at the school. The school has received two late applications and these two children have been offered places at the school.
- In total, this means that, as at 28 May 2019, when the local authority sent me this data, updated on 29 May 2019, 29 children are expected to start reception at the school in September 2019.

16. I shall consider whether the impact of the reduction of places at the school affects the local authority's duty to provide sufficient school places in the area. As can be seen in the table below, there is capacity in the area close to the school. If the PAN at the school is reduced to 30, the local authority would be able to offer alternative places at Rokesly Infant School and Stroud Green Primary School, and there would also be capacity in schools in the London Borough of Islington close to the border with Haringey (Duncombe Primary School and Christ the King RC Primary School). The table below shows capacity within 0.75 miles of the school but there are also vacancies in other schools within a reasonable travelling distance from the school.

Primary & Infant Schools	Local authority	Distance from the school in straight line (miles)	Vacancies as at 28 May 2019	Waiting List as at 28 May 2019
Ashmount	Islington	0.3	0	23
Coleridge	Haringey	0.36	0	74
St. Aidan's	Haringey	0.37	0	32
Weston Park	Haringey	0.37	0	8
Rokesly Infant	Haringey	0.45	2	0
St Mary's CE	Haringey	0.67	0	3
Duncombe	Islington	0.7	10	0
Whitehall Park	Islington	0.7	0	12
Christ the King RC	Islington	0.73	20	0
Stroud Green	Haringey	0.73	7	0

17. I am satisfied that the proposed variation will not adversely affect the supply of places or the satisfaction of parental preference in the area. I am accordingly content to approve the variation.

Summary

18. The governing board of the school has proposed a variation to the admission arrangements for the academic year commencing September 2019, which is that the PAN should be reduced from 60 to 30. This is supported by the local authority and the diocese. There have been no concerns raised by those notified. In the light of the number of places that have been offered, and the number of vacancies in other local schools, I am assured that the variation will address the major change in circumstances.

Determination

19. 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 Governing Board of St Peter-in Chains RC Infant School for September 2019.

20. I determine that for admissions in September 2019 the published admission number shall be 30.

Dated: 16 July 2019

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Lorraine Chapman