



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

## Determination

**Case reference:** VAR2160

**Admission authority:** The governing board for Stretford Grammar School, Trafford.

**Date of decision:** 27 July 2021

## 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 for Stretford Grammar School, Trafford for September 2022.

I determine that the arrangements will be amended to include a statement concerning the admission of children eligible for the pupil premium in line with the proposals approved by the Department for Education as part of the Selective Schools Expansion Fund process and omitted from the arrangements due to an administrative error. The wording at point three of the oversubscription criteria will read: 'Pupil Premium – 32 children, eligible for the pupil premium, that achieve the test pass mark of 334 will be allocated places, in order of test scores. Pupil premium students with equal scores to the lowest candidate in this category will also be offered places. If there are fewer than 32 children in this category, then pupil premium children scoring more than 324 will be prioritised in order of test score until the 32 places are filled'.

## The referral

1. The governing board for Stretford Grammar School (the school) has referred a proposal for a variation to the admission arrangements for September 2022 (the arrangements) for Stretford Grammar School (the school) to the adjudicator. The school is a selective, foundation school for children aged 11 to 18 in Trafford.
2. The proposed variation is to amend the arrangements to bring them in line with the proposed arrangements as agreed by the DfE during the SSEF process. The paragraph

which is the subject of this variation was omitted from the published 2022 arrangements following an administrative error.

## **Jurisdiction and procedure**

3. The referral was made to me in accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act). Paragraph 3.6 of the Code states that 'Once admission arrangements have been determined for a particular school year, they cannot be revised by the admission authority unless such revision is necessary to give effect to a mandatory requirement of the Code, admissions law, a determination of the adjudicator or any misprint in the admission arrangements. Admission authorities may propose other variations where they consider such changes to be necessary in view of a major change in circumstances. Such proposals must be referred to the schools adjudicator for approval and the appropriate bodies notified.' This variation is proposed due to an omission in the published arrangements.

4. I note that the school is subject to an objection concerning its admission arrangements for entry in 2022. This objection is being dealt with by me separately from this variation under case number ADA3778. Nothing I say in this determination has any bearing on case ADA3778.

5. In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation, and the School Admissions Code (the Code).

6. The information I have considered in reaching my decision includes:

- a. the referral from governing board dated 29 June 2021 and supporting documents;
- b. the determined arrangements for 2022 and the proposed variation to those arrangements;
- c. a copy of the local authority's booklet for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2021; and
- d. information available on the websites of the local authority, the school and the Department for Education.

7. Paragraph 3.6 of the Code requires that the appropriate bodies in the relevant area be notified of a proposed variation. The governing board has provided me with confirmation that the appropriate bodies have been notified. I find that the appropriate procedures were followed, and I am also satisfied that the proposed variation is within my jurisdiction.

## **The proposed variation**

8. The proposal is to amend the arrangements to include a statement concerning the admission of children eligible for the pupil premium in line with the proposals approved by

the Department for Education (DfE) as part of the Selective Schools Expansion Fund (SSEF) process and omitted from the arrangements due to an administrative error. The wording at point three of the oversubscription criteria will read: 'Pupil Premium – 32 children, eligible for the pupil premium, that achieve the test pass mark of 334 will be allocated places, in order of test scores. Pupil premium students with equal scores to the lowest candidate in this category will also be offered places. If there are fewer than 32 children in this category, then pupil premium children scoring more than 324 will be prioritised in order of test score until the 32 places are filled'.

9. Paragraph 3.6 of the Code requires that admission arrangements, once determined, may only be revised, that is changed or varied, if there is a major change of circumstance or certain other limited and specified circumstances. I will consider below whether the variation requested is justified by the change in circumstances.

## **Consideration of proposed variation**

10. As part of the school's successful SSEF bid for expansion, the governing board committed to make a change to its admission criteria and this change was detailed in its Fair Access and Partnership Plan. Due to an administrative error the agreed amendment was not included in the document presented to the governing board for approval.

11. After the determined arrangements were published the omission was discovered. If the arrangements remain unchanged this would be at odds with the stated intention of the governing board and the school and would disadvantage those students that may have expected to be afforded a level of priority.

12. The published arrangements read 'Pupil premium – 32 places will be allocated to students on pupil premium, irrespective of distance. Candidates on pupil premium, with equal scores to the lowest candidate in this allocation will also be offered places.' This should read 'Pupil Premium – 32 children, eligible for the pupil premium, that achieve the test pass mark of 334 will be allocated places, in order of test scores. Pupil premium students with equal scores to the lowest candidate in this category will also be offered places. If there are fewer than 32 children in this category, then pupil premium children scoring more than 324 will be prioritised in order of test score until the 32 places are filled'.

13. The variation will ensure that those children eligible to receive the pupil premium will be afforded the intended level of priority agreed by the school and the governing board as part of the successful SSEF bid.

14. I am satisfied that this variation is necessary and that all due processes have been completed. I therefore agree this variation.

## Determination

15. 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 for Stretford Grammar School, Trafford for September 2022.

16. I determine that the arrangements will be amended to include a statement concerning the admission of children eligible for the pupil premium in line with the proposals approved by the Department for Education as part of the Selective Schools Expansion Fund process and omitted from the arrangements due to an administrative error. The wording at point three of the oversubscription criteria will read: 'Pupil Premium – 32 children, eligible for the pupil premium, that achieve the test pass mark of 334 will be allocated places, in order of test scores. Pupil premium students with equal scores to the lowest candidate in this category will also be offered places. If there are fewer than 32 children in this category, then pupil premium children scoring more than 324 will be prioritised in order of test score until the 32 places are filled'.

Dated: 27 July 2021

Signed:

Schools adjudicator: Ann Talboys