



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

## Determination

**Case reference: VAR2263**

**Admission authority: The London Borough of Haringey for Lordship Lane Primary School**

**Date of decision: 21 July 2022**

## Determination

**In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed reduction in the published admission number for September 2022 determined by the London Borough of Haringey for Lordship Lane Primary School.**

**I determine that for September 2022 the published admission number will be reduced from 90 to 60.**

## The referral

1. The London Borough of Haringey (the local authority) has referred a proposal for a variation to the admission arrangements for September 2022 (the arrangements) for Lordship Lane Primary School (the school) to the adjudicator. The school is a community school for children aged three to eleven in Wood Green.
2. The proposed variation is to reduce the published admission number (PAN) from 90 to 60.

## 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) which deals with variations to determined arrangements. Paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 of the School Admissions Code (the Code) say (in so far as relevant here):

“3.6 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 this 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. Where the local authority is the admission authority for a community or voluntary controlled school, it must consult the governing body of the school before making any reference.

3.7 Admission authorities **must** notify the appropriate bodies of all variations”.

4. The local authority has provided me with confirmation that the appropriate bodies have been notified. I have seen confirmation that the school’s governing board has been consulted on the proposed variation. I find that the appropriate procedures were followed, and I am also satisfied that the proposed variation is within my jurisdiction. In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation, and the Code.

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

- a. the referral from the local authority received on 9 June 2022, supporting documents and further information provided at my request;
- b. the determined arrangements for 2022 and the proposed variation to those arrangements;
- c. confirmation that the governing board has been consulted and supports the proposed variation;
- d. a map showing the location of the school and other relevant schools; and
- e. information available on the websites of the local authority and the Department for Education.

## The proposed variation

6. The proposed variation is to reduce the PAN of the school from 90 to 60 for September 2022. The arrangements for the school for 2022/23 were determined by the local authority on 9 February 2021. The local authority’s email, dated 13 May 2022, providing notification of the proposed PAN reduction commented “The reason for the proposal is the forecast admittance of pupils significantly below current PAN. This change seeks to assist the school governing bodies to plan for long-term stability, a consistent structure and a sustainable financial position, providing a secure foundation for high quality educational outcomes for all pupils.”

7. Paragraph 3.6 of the Code (as above) 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

8. Before I consider the proposed variation, I should note that the local authority determined the 2023/24 arrangements, including the PAN, for the school on 18 February 2022. The PAN will be 90. As the arrangements have already been determined, my decision on this application will not affect the PAN that has already been determined for 2023; my determination affects only admissions to the Reception Year (YR) for 2022.

9. The local authority set out the major change of circumstance at the school in the application to reduce the PAN:

“Between 2003 and 2015 there was an increasing demand for Reception (year of entry) places in schools across Haringey accommodated through a number of bulge classes and permanent expansions across the borough’s primary schools. Since 2015 demand for places in Reception has fallen.

Data on school place planning is in large part shaped by the production of the council’s School Place Planning Report (SPPR) and the data that underpins it, supplied through the GLA School Rolls projection service. The 2021 edition of the SPPR continue to show lower numbers of reception places required in Planning Area 5 (PA5) compared to existing provision.

Since March 2020 Covid-19 has led to a pronounced out-migration from Haringey and lowered demand for Reception places further. In Planning Area 5 Haringey has seen demand for first place preferences fall from 600 (2019) to 549 (2022).

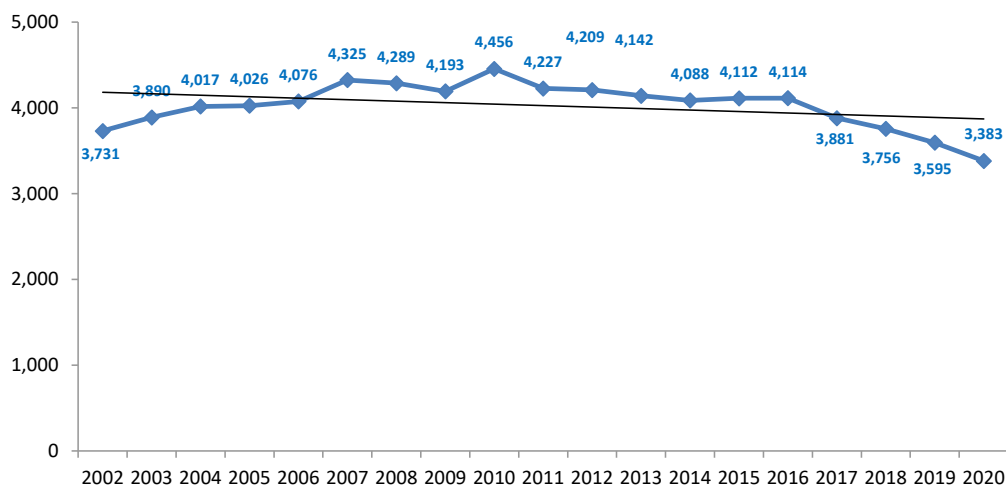
Lordship Lane has seen first place preferences fall from 67 (2019) to 38 (2022).

Haringey, in common with other London boroughs has seen a continued fall in birth rates since 2016 and this has been a key factor in the reduction in demand for primary school places at Lordship Lane as shown in the figure below from our 2021 SPPR on births in Haringey 2002 to 2020.

It should also be noted that further falls in projected demand were also reported in the 2021 SPPR when compared to the original data in the 2020 SPPR as also shown below – see the black line for Planning area 5. This is consistent with further falls in projected birth rates as observed across London.”

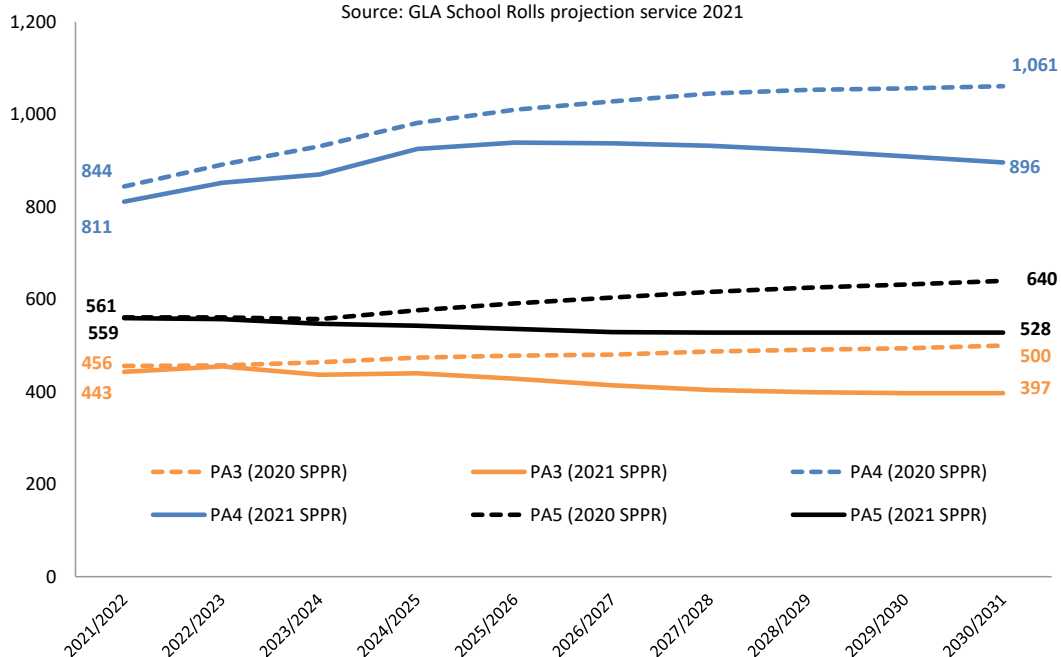
**Figure 16- Births in Haringey, 2002 to 2020**

Source: ONS Birth data (2002-2020)



**Figure 3 - Projected reception aged pupils by PAs 3,4 and 5  
2021/22 to 2030/31 (projected)**

Source: GLA School Rolls projection service 2021



10. The information provided by the local authority confirms the major change of circumstance.

11. There is no formal consultation required for a variation and so parents and others do not have the opportunity to express their views. Clearly it is desirable that PAN reductions are made via the process of determination following consultation as the consultation process allows those with an interest to express their views. It also allows for objections to the adjudicator. None of this is afforded by the variation process which makes it particularly important that proposed variations are properly scrutinised, and I have accordingly given

careful consideration to the data to try to ascertain if there will be sufficient school places in the local area if the PAN is reduced from 90 to 60 for September 2022. I have also considered the demand for places at the school, the reasons given for the change, the potential effect on parental preference and whether the change is justified in these circumstances.

12. If I determine that the PAN reduces to 60 for admission in 2022, I need to consider if there are sufficient places to meet demand across the planning area. The local authority has a duty to make sure that there are sufficient school places for the children in its area. In order to carry out this duty the local authority considers the availability of places and the need for places in planning areas which are geographical groups of schools. There are eleven schools in Planning Area 5 which admit to YR: one infant school and ten primary schools.

13. Table 1 below summarises the number of children admitted to the schools in the planning area in recent years.

	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Sum of PANs of schools in the planning area for YR</b>	686	656	596	656
<b>Number of children admitted or offered a place</b>	631	604	541	555 places offered
<b>Vacant places</b>	55	52	55	Potentially 101
<b>Number of vacant places as a percentage of the sum of the PANs</b>	8%	8%	9%	15%

14. The local authority has commented on the application to vary the PAN as follows:

“A sharper than expected fall in the demand for local primary school places has occurred. This has caused financial pressures for several schools in Planning area 5, in particular Lordship Lane which is resourced as a 3fe [forms of entry] (90) school but only received 38 first place preferences (15 January 2022) for entry to September 2022.”

15. The governing body of the school has written in support of the proposed variation as follows:

“On behalf of the governing body, I would like to officially confirm our request to temporarily reduce our Planned Admission Number (PAN) for 2022. The Governing Body supports this decision and understands the reasons the Local Authority are seeking a reduction in PAN for 2022 and beyond based on current projections.

Lordship Lane Primary School recognises the need for collaboration across the school system to mitigate the impact of the reduction in demand for school places. We also note that an admission authority can increase the PAN based on any future increase in demand and we will be working with the local authority to continue to monitor the situation.

The school would be in a vulnerable financial position if the PAN were to remain at 90. The school is not currently full and has vacancies of 126 places, this equates to approximately £697,536 in lost income. This will impact greatly on the school in terms of meeting staffing costs. The school has recently restructured our senior leadership team and has asked the local authority to assist us in undertaking a full review of staffing structures in order to be better equipped to operate within allocated budgets going forward.”

16. For more information about the change in applications over the last few years, the local authority has sent the information below in Table 2:

Table 2: the number of preferences made for the school (first, second, third and so on) for the last three years.

<b>Lordship Lane School preferences</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
First	60	55	38
Second	22	25	21
Third	36	29	22
Fourth	30	15	19
Fifth	15	8	9
Sixth	10	11	8
Total	173	143	117

Lordship Lane has seen first place preferences fall from 67 (2019) to 38 (2022).

17. The local authority has also commented on the number of children expected to be requiring a YR place at the school over the next two years:

“Based on the 2021 School Place Planning report and the latest data on declining birth rates and demand for Lordship Lane we anticipate demand for the next two years to be

between 30 and 60 places (1-2fe) and at least 1fe (30 places) lower than the indicative PAN of 90.”

18. The number of children admitted to the school has reduced from 79 in September 2019, 70 in September 2020, 60 in September 2021 and 47 offers made on National Offer Day in 2022. There are eight places vacant at the school as of 12 May 2022, assuming a reduction in PAN to 60.

19. I should note that last year the local authority applied for a reduction in PAN to 60 for admissions in 2021 and 2022. The adjudicator responsible for that determination approved the application to reduce the PAN to 60 for 2021 but did not approve the request for 2022 as “the evidence for demand for 2022 is not sufficient to justify a variation and I do not uphold the request to reduce the PAN for 2022 to 60.”

20. As I mentioned earlier, the local authority has already determined the PAN for September 2023 as 90 but it has commented:

“Lordship Lane Primary School will also be taking part in the borough wide consultation for reduction in PAN in schools across several planning areas from October/ November 2022. We will be seeking to consult on a reduction in PAN for several schools (including own admission authority schools that wish to delegate this responsibility to the LA) via the normal admissions process for determining the admission arrangements.”

A consultation later this year to reduce the PAN will inform the determination by the local authority by 28 February 2023 for admission arrangements for September 2024.

## Summary

21. The continued drop in pupil numbers has meant financial difficulties for the school but the reduction in PAN to 60 will enable them to plan their staffing with more certainty. I am also assured that there are sufficient vacant places in the planning area if there are further requests for places. I find that the variation is justified by the circumstances and approve the proposed variation.

## Determination

22. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed reduction in the published admission number for September 2022 determined by the London Borough of Hackney for Lordship Lane Primary School.

23. I determine that for September 2022 the published admission number will be reduced from 90 to 60.

Dated: 21 July 2022

Signed:

Schools adjudicator: Lorraine Chapman