



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

## Determination

**Case reference:** REF4218

**Admission authority:** Telford and Wrekin Council for community and voluntary controlled schools in its area

**Date of decision:** 4 October 2023

### Determination

I have considered the admission arrangements for September 2024 for community and voluntary controlled schools within Telford and Wrekin local authority in accordance with section 88I(5) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and find that there are matters in the arrangements that do not conform with the requirements for such arrangements. Those matters are set out in this determination.

By virtue of section 88K(2) the adjudicator's decision is binding on the admission authority. The School Admissions Code requires the admission authority to revise its admission arrangements within two months of the date of the determination.

### Referral and Jurisdiction

1. The arrangements were determined under section 88C of the School Standards and Framework Act 1988 (the Act) by Telford and Wrekin Council which is the local authority (LA) and admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools within the LA area, on 28 February 2023.
2. The arrangements were brought to my attention in the course of my consideration of two cases relating to primary schools within the area: Tibberton Church of England Primary School (case reference ADA4126) and St Lawrence Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School (case reference ADA4127).

3. Having had sight of the arrangements, it appeared to me that they did not conform with the requirements relating to admissions. I have accordingly considered the arrangements in accordance with my jurisdiction under section 88I(5) of the Act.
4. The only party to this case is the LA.

## 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:
  - a) evidence that the arrangements were determined;
  - b) a copy of the determined arrangements; and
  - c) comments from the LA on the matters raised.

## Consideration of Case

7. The matters I raised with the local authority in respect of its arrangements are as detailed in this section.
8. Paragraph 14 of the Code states that: “In drawing up their admission arrangements, admission authorities **must** ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear, and objective. Parents should be able to look at a set of arrangements and understand easily how places for that school will be allocated.” The arrangements do not comply with the Code as they are unclear regarding ‘linked schools’ (that is, those schools which are named feeder schools as permitted via paragraph 1.15 of the Code) in that the list of such schools which appears on page 3 of the arrangements differs from that on page 6.
9. Paragraph 15d of the Code states that: “Published admission arrangements **must** make clear to parents that a separate application **must** be made for any transfer from nursery to primary school, and from infant to junior school.” The arrangements fulfil this requirement regarding transfer from nursery to primary school but do not provide the same clarity regarding transfer from infant to junior school.
10. Paragraph 1.7 of the Code requires that: “All schools **must** have oversubscription criteria for each ‘relevant age group’ and the highest priority **must** be given, unless otherwise provided in this Code, to looked after children and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted”. The arrangements do not meet this requirement in that the “Admission to junior school” section on page 6 uses a form of words to the effect that children from a

'linked' infant school are afforded priority above all others on admission to the linked junior school.

11. Paragraph 2.6 of the Code requires that: "All children whose Education, Health and Care Plan [EHCP] names the school **must** be admitted". It is unclear that the arrangements meet this requirement as they state that: "For admission to junior schools, priority is given to children who have attended the linked infant school and the oversubscription criteria is then applied if necessary". This implies that children from a 'linked' school have priority above all others (and therefore those with EHCPs).
12. The section on admissions into Y7 refers to catchment areas for primary schools and is therefore unclear, which does not comply with paragraph 14 of the Code.
13. The LA has confirmed that it intends to address these matters for the 2025 arrangements. Whilst this is welcomed, the 2024 arrangements remain in use and therefore must be revised within two months of the date of this determination.

## Summary of Findings

14. I have detailed above the elements of the admission arrangements which are non-compliant with the Code and the law governing admissions. These require amendment.

## Determination

**I have considered the admission arrangements for September 2024 for community and voluntary controlled schools within Telford and Wrekin local authority in accordance with section 88I(5) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and find that there are matters in the arrangements that do not conform with the requirements for such arrangements. Those matters are set out in this determination.**

**By virtue of section 88K(2) the adjudicator's decision is binding on the admission authority. The School Admissions Code requires the admission authority to revise its admission arrangements within two months of the date of the determination.**

Dated: 4 October 2023

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Jennifer Gamble