



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Determination

Case reference: ADA4341

Objector: A parent

Admission authority: Mosaic Schools Learning Trust for River Mill Primary School, Dartford

Date of decision: 25 September 2024

Determination

In accordance with section 88H(4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I partially uphold the objection to the admission arrangements for September 2025 determined by Mosaic Schools Learning Trust for River Mill Primary School, Dartford, Kent.

I have also considered the arrangements in accordance with section 88I(5) and find there are other matters which do not conform with the requirements relating to admission arrangements in the ways 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 unless an alternative timescale is specified by the adjudicator. In this case I determine that the arrangements must be revised by 25 October.

The referral

1. Under section 88H(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, (the Act), an objection has been referred to the adjudicator by a parent of a child who will be the right age to join the school in September 2025 (the objector), about the admission arrangements (the arrangements) for River Mill Primary School (the school) for September 2025. The objection is in respect of what the objector alleges are "inconsistencies and omissions" in the arrangements.

2. The local authority for the area in which the school is located is Kent. The parties to the objection are the objector, the local authority and the multi-academy trust (the trust, the admission authority) which is the admission authority for the school.

Jurisdiction

3. The terms of the academy agreement between the multi-academy trust and the Secretary of State for Education require that the admissions policy and arrangements for the academy school are in accordance with admissions law as it applies to foundation and voluntary aided schools. These arrangements were determined by the board of trustees of the academy trust, which is the admission authority for the school, on that basis. The objector submitted his objection to these determined arrangements on 13 May 2024. I am satisfied the objection has been properly referred to me in accordance with section 88H of the Act and it is within my jurisdiction. I have also used my power under section 88I of the Act to consider the arrangements as a whole.

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:

- a. evidence that the arrangements were determined;
- b. a copy of the determined arrangements for 2025 and accompanying supplementary information forms;
- c. the objector's form of objection (undated but submitted 13 May 2024);
- d. the trust's response to the objection;
- e. further information provided by parties at my request or invitation; and
- f. information available on the websites of the school, the Department for Education (DfE) and the local authority, including the "Kent County Council Co-ordinated Scheme for Primary Admissions Academic Year 2025/26" (the coordinated scheme).

The Objection

6. The objection has four parts, all related to the objector's assertion that "Within the schools (sic) admission policy are several inconsistencies and omissions". Paragraph 14 of the Code is relevant to the objection and states:

"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.”

7. I have identified other relevant paragraphs of the Code when I come to my detailed consideration.

8. I note here that the arrangements include two supplementary information forms: one for a member of staff who is applying for a place for their child, and one to support an application for prioritisation due to social and medical needs. In this determination I have used the term “SIF” to refer to the form relating to social and medical needs.

9. Firstly, the objector asserts that the arrangements do not properly recognise the status of late applications, or applications made after 15 January. That is, it is not clear whether these applications are in the normal admissions round.

10. Secondly, the objector asserts that there is “no provision to review” SIFs that accompany late applications, which may result in a late applicant with agreed needs being displaced by an on-time applicant without such needs.

11. Thirdly, the objector asserts that the above lack of provision means that “there is no way to be sure that all oversubscription criteria are being applied correctly” regarding places offered after National Offer Day.

12. Fourthly, the objector asserts that it is not clear how or when a SIF which is received late will be processed, including when the application form itself is submitted on time.

Background

13. The school is situated in Dartford, a town in Kent, and is a co-educational free school for children aged three to eleven. The school opened in September 2019 and was inspected by Ofsted for the first time in December 2023, when it was judged to be Good; the school has not yet been reinspected.

14. The DfE website Get Information About Schools (GIAS) states that the academy trust to which the school belongs is Mosaic Schools Learning Trust, and the academy sponsor is Connect Schools Academy Trust. The website of Connect Schools Academy Trust states: “The MOSAIC Schools Learning Trust is going to be formed in September 2024 from the combination of Connect Schools Academy Trust and Compass Academy Trust to form a new dynamic Trust of ten strongly performing schools across Bromley and Kent.”

15. The normal year of admission at the school is the reception year (Year R). GIAS records that the area in which the school is located is an urban major conurbation and that there are eight other schools which admit children into Year R within one mile of the school. Within two miles of the school there are, according to GIAS, eighteen other schools which admit children to Year R.

16. The school has a published admission number (PAN) of 60 for 2025. After the admittance of all applicants with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which names the school, the criteria which are applied in the event of oversubscription, are, in summary:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children.
2. Children with an exceptional social or medical need, or who have a close family member with such a need, which means that the school is the only one suitable for those children.
3. Siblings of pupils attending the school at the time of application and admittance who live on the “Northern Gateway Development”.
4. Other children who live on the Northern Gateway Development.
5. Siblings of pupils attending the school at the time of application and admittance who do not live on the Northern Gateway Development.
6. Children of members of staff.
7. All other children.

17. Where there are more applications than places in any oversubscription criterion, applicants are prioritised by the proximity of their home address to the school, with those residing closest gaining greatest priority. In the case of a tie between two applicants whose home addresses are equidistant from the school, the drawing of lots will be used.

Consideration of Case

18. I will first consider the assertion that the arrangements do not properly recognise the status of late applications, or those made after 15 January. That is, it is not clear whether these applications are in the normal admissions round. On this matter the objector stated:

“The policy does not properly recognise the status of applications received between 15 January and the start of Reception in September, confusingly, having stated both that applications for admission to Reception Year in September are ‘in the normal admissions round’ and also that the application deadline for admission to Reception Year ‘in the normal admission round’ is 15 January. However, in particular. (sic) Late applications received after January 15th but before May 1st still come under the Kent Co-ordinated scheme and these are not discretionary arrangements.

19. The Code provides a definition of the normal admissions round in Footnote 8:

“The “normal admissions round” covers applications for admission in a relevant age group, which are made in time for the local authority to offer a school place on National Offer Day. The deadlines for submitting applications to be allocated on National Offer Day are 31 October for secondary school and 15 January for primary school.”

20. The Code requires admission authorities to observe the date of National Offer Day, as set out in paragraph 2.12c:

“for primary school applications, all offers **must** be made on the same primary National Offer Day i.e. **16 April or the next working day.**”

21. Footnote 58 of the Code defines late applications:

““Late applications” are applications for entry in a relevant age group which are submitted before the first day of the first term in the admission year but have not been made in time to enable the local authority to offer a place on National Offer Day.”

22. The arrangements state (my underlining for emphasis):

“10.1 Applications for admission to Reception Year in September are known as applications made 'in the normal admission round'. . .

10.4 The application deadline for admission to Reception year in the normal admission round is Monday (sic) 15 January 2025”. . .

10.6 Applications received after an application deadline will be treated as late applications, which means they will be processed after all on-time applications have been processed and places allocated thereby reducing the chances of the child being offered a place. . .”

23. The arrangements state the deadline for applications to be made, in line with the Code. They also offer a definition of late applications, notwithstanding the use of the phrase “an application deadline” (my emphasis) which is unclear and should be revised.

24. However, the use of the term “normal admission round” in the arrangements is inaccurate. In section 10.1, set out above, the arrangements imply that all applications for a child to be admitted to the school in September are in the normal admissions round, irrespective of the date of submission. As this would include any applications made too late for the local authority to offer a school place on national offer day, the arrangements fail to comply with the definition in Footnote 8 of the Code and with the clarity for parents required by paragraph 14 of the Code.

25. For the reasons given above I uphold this aspect of the objection.

26. On this point the trust stated:

“We accept that this information is incorrect and will ensure that the policy is varied to reflect the definition of "normal admission round" and "late application" in the revised School Admissions Code 2021 (Code). Unfortunately, the wording in the Admission Policy has not been updated to reflect the revisions made in the Code in 2021 in this respect.”

27. I make no comment as to whether the wording of the arrangements would or would not have been compliant with the previous version of the Code. Admission authorities must determine their arrangements every year and my jurisdiction is to consider whether the arrangements comply with the Code currently in use. Nevertheless, it is helpful that the trust has recognised the ambiguity that exists within the arrangements.

28. In respect of the objector's statement that "Late applications received after January 15th but before May 1st still come under the Kent Co-ordinated scheme", I have consulted that scheme which states that:

- the "National closing date for application forms" is 15 January;
- 30 April 2025 is the "Deadline for late applications and waiting list requests to be included in Kent County Council's reallocation stage"; and
- the local authority will oversee the allocation of school places up until 22 May 2025, after which "schools will take back ownership of their waiting lists."

29. The coordinated scheme provides for some leeway in respect of the closing date of 15 January as it states:

"The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round . . . is Wednesday 15 January 2025. As far as reasonably practicable, applications for places in the normal admissions round that are received late for a good reason will be accepted and considered in the same way as 'on time' applications, provided they are received by Kent County Council by Friday 7 February 2025."

30. In respect of this leeway, the objector commented that some applications received after 15 January "could still be processed along with on-time applications received before 15th January."

31. The objector is correct in his statement that applications received after 15 January and before 1 May are part of the coordinated scheme; the scheme deals with both on-time and late applications. The objector is also correct in saying that some applications received after 15 January may be dealt with in the normal admissions round. However, I make it clear that: the closing date for on-time applications of 15 January is the deadline which must be stated in the arrangements; only applications which are received in time for the local authority to offer a place on National Offer Day are in the normal admissions round; and the fact that the coordinated scheme also deals with late applications (as defined by the Code) has no bearing on what is defined as the normal admissions round.

32. The remaining aspects of the objection are in respect of the second oversubscription criterion. This criterion prioritises "Children with an exceptional social and/or medical need, or who have a close family member with an exceptional social and/or medical need" and states, in full:

“For inclusion in this category, either the child or a close family member living with the child at the child's home address, must have an exceptional social and/or medical need **which means that only River Mill Primary School is suitable for the child to attend, and no other local school is suitable**, supported by an appropriate professional.

For the purpose of this category, a 'close family member' is a parent (as defined by this policy), or a sibling (as defined by this policy) or grandparent who, in either case, lives with the family as a dependent of the applicant child's parent.

Applications in this category must be accompanied by a completed Exceptional Social and/or Medical Need Supplementary Information Form, to be received by the application deadline. Where the parent has the exceptional social and/or medical need, **that parent must complete this form and the application form giving only their own details only - no details of the other parent must be provided.**

Part A must be completed by the parent, and Part B must be completed, signed, dated and stamped by an appropriate professional (e.g. GP, hospital consultant, psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker or similar professional). This form is available to download on the School's website, or in hard copy format from the School's main office.

In exceptional circumstances there is discretion to admit children on the grounds of their or their family's acute medical or social need for that particular school and who would not otherwise qualify for admission. The application must be supported by a letter from a hospital consultant, the special support service, social worker or similar professional, setting out the reasons why the school is the only one to meet the child's needs, before an admission decision is made. The admission decision will be considered in consultation with teaching and medical professionals. Medical professionals provide advice on applications made under medical conditions and teaching professionals advise on applications made for social or special reasons. **Supporting evidence must be provided no later than the closing date for the applications.”**

33. Paragraph 1.16 of the Code provides for admission authorities to prioritise applicants on the basis of social and medical need:

“If admission authorities decide to use social and medical need as an oversubscription criterion, they **must** set out in their arrangements how they will define this need and give clear details about what supporting evidence will be required (e.g. a letter from a doctor or social worker) and then make consistent decisions based on the evidence provided.”

34. The objector has asserted that there is no provision to review SIFs which accompany late applications, which may result in a late applicant with agreed needs being displaced by an on-time applicant without such needs. The objector stated:

“In regards to SIFs for late applications in the normal admissions round there is no provision to review them to establish exceptional social and/or medical needs. This can result in a scenario where an application received prior to January 15th will get priority over a late application received after January 15th, if the late application has a SIF that results in an agreed exceptional social and/or medical need.”

35. I note that the term “late applications in the normal admissions round” does not appear in either the arrangements or the Code.

36. The arrangements state (my underlining for emphasis):

“Applications in this category must be accompanied by a completed Exceptional Social and/or Medical Need Supplementary Information Form, to be received by the application deadline”

And:

“Supporting evidence must be provided no later than the closing date for the applications.”

37. The arrangements appear to say that it is not possible for SIFs to be used to support an application made after the deadline of 15 January. In other words, only applications made by that date could be prioritised on the basis of social or medical needs. The Code makes no provision for applicants to be subject to different oversubscription criteria based on the date of application, and from what the trust has told me this is not what is intended.

38. The trust has described to me processes which are in place to ensure that SIFs which accompany applications made after 15 January are considered prior to the allocation of places, including: where applications made between 15 January and 7 February are dealt with in the normal admissions round; late applications as defined by the Code; and in respect of places allocated to children on the waiting list. The trust stated the following in respect of the school’s waiting list:

“Applicants are placed on the Waiting List according to the criterion under which the application falls. A SIF accompanying an application would be considered by the admissions committee as soon as possible after receipt, and the decision of that committee used to inform the criteria under which an application falls, and hence its position on the Waiting List. . . This list is ordered strictly in relation to those criteria; the date of application has no bearing on this. As a result, applicants might go up or down the waiting list as the list might change in the light of new applicants falling into a higher criterion”.

39. However, whatever approaches may be used in practice, I am concerned with what appears in the arrangements. The Code requires arrangements to be such that parents can understand easily how places at the school are allocated, and the arrangements do not allow for SIFs which accompany applications submitted after 15 January to be reviewed.

40. For the reasons given above I uphold the objection that there is no provision in the arrangements to review SIFs which accompany late applications.

41. I note that the trust has recognised the requirement for the arrangements to be revised in this respect, stating:

“We assume [this aspect of the objection] is in reference to the statement "Supporting evidence must be provided no later than the closing date for the applications" within that oversubscription category. We accept that this should be changed to say that supporting evidence should accompany the application wherever possible, so as not to exclude this when received late, and to include late applications and in-year applications.

The section within the Admission Policy on in-year applications will also need updating to reflect the revisions made to the Code in 2021, in particular to clarify that SIFs received after the application will still be processed, as well as deadlines for dealing with applications, etc.”

42. As part of this aspect of the objection, the objector asserted that a late applicant who is eligible for prioritisation under the second criterion may be displaced by an on-time applicant without such eligibility. This is true but is not in contravention of the Code.

43. Late applications are defined by the Code as applications made too late for a place to be offered on National Offer Day. It goes without saying that applicants in the normal admissions round will be prioritised above late applicants. That is, applicants in the normal admissions round must be offered a place on National Offer Day and admission authorities must offer places at least up to the level of the PAN if sufficient applications are received. This may result in no available places, or not enough places, for late applicants to the school. For this reason and the reasons set out above I do not uphold this aspect of the objection.

44. I now turn to the assertion that the lack of provision to review SIFs which accompany late applications means that oversubscription criteria may not be applied correctly for these applicants. The objector stated:

“There is no way to establish the social and/or medical need without reviewing the SIF. So there is no way to be sure that all oversubscription criteria are being applied correctly, without processing late received SIF before any places are offered after national offer day.”

45. From what the trust has told me I am satisfied that there is a process for reviewing SIFs which accompany late applications. However, as I have established above, the arrangements themselves do not allow for prioritisation under the second oversubscription criterion other than when applications and accompanying SIFs are submitted by 15 January. For this reason, I uphold this aspect of the objection.

46. The final part of the objection is that it is not clear how or when a SIF which is received late will be processed, including when the application form itself is submitted on time. The objector stated:

“While it is understandable that on National Offer day a late submitted application with a SIF, or an on time application with a late submitted SIF will be at a disadvantage, it is not clear why this disadvantage should continue for further rounds of allocations, which it does. There is no stated justification for this, yet this is accepted common practice. Other than stating that the SIF must be received by the application deadline there is no other comment on how or when a late received SIF would be processed. It is unclear.”

47. As I have dealt above with the matter of SIFs which accompany applications made after 15 January, it is left to me to consider the matter of a SIF which is submitted late, in support of an on-time application.

48. I make it clear that admission authorities cannot be expected to wait indefinitely for SIFs to be submitted. The allocation of school places is a complex matter; parents in Kent may specify three schools in their application, all of which could have different oversubscription criteria and different supplementary information forms. The local authority oversees the allocation of places in its area, which includes several hundred primary schools, and liaises with other authorities to consider applications for children who live outside the area but wish to attend Kent schools and vice versa. The national closing date of 15 January is in place to allow admission authorities and local authorities to prioritise applicants and coordinate the offer of school places ahead of National Offer Day.

49. In my view, the closing date for applications is clear in the Code and in the arrangements, and there is no requirement for late-submitted SIFs which accompany on-time applications to be considered in the normal admissions round. That is, it would not be contrary to the Code to state in admission arrangements that as the deadline for applications in the normal admissions round is 15 January, in order for SIFs to be considered in that round they must also be received by the deadline.

50. However, I note two points. First, the trust has told me that there is a process in place to consider late-submitted SIFs in the normal admissions round as far as is possible. Second, after National Offer Day some applicants may be placed on the waiting list for the school, including on-time applicants with a SIF that has been submitted late. As paragraph 2.15 of the Code requires that places are allocated from the waiting list according to the oversubscription criteria in the arrangements, SIFs for those children must be reviewed before any places are offered. Indeed, the trust has told me that this does take place in practice.

51. As I have discussed above, I am concerned with what is in the arrangements and with whether the arrangements are clear for parents. The arrangements state that all SIFs must be received by 15 January and in doing so make no provision for late-submitted SIFs which support on-time applications to be reviewed.

52. For the reasons given above I uphold this aspect of the objection.

Other Matters

53. As I considered the arrangements other matters came to my attention which may not comply with the Code. I have set out these matters below, stating the relevant paragraphs of the Code and where the arrangements do not conform to requirements. Paragraph 14 of the Code is relevant to these matters unless otherwise specified. When I raised these matters with the trust, it provided me with a helpful, comprehensive response. I have included the trust's response where it serves to better illustrate the revisions that are required. I make it clear that it is not within my jurisdiction to confirm whether any alternative wording proposed by the trust would comply with the Code; it is for the trust to revise its arrangements to address the matters I have set out.

54. The arrangements refer, in more than one place, to "home local authority" but do not define this which is likely to be unclear.

55. In section 10.2 the arrangements state "Applications in the normal admission round must be made directly to the child's home Local Authority (Kent County Council)". As Kent may not be the home authority for all applicants this lacks the clarity required by the Code.

56. Section 4.3 of the arrangements states:

"Where a Local Authority names the School in a child's EHC plan, the child must be admitted. Where this happens in the normal admission round (i.e. entry to Reception Year in September), these children will be allocated places within the published admission number (PAN) first, reducing the number available for other children. At all other times, children with an EHC plan naming the School will be admitted even where this means the PAN will be exceeded."

57. PAN applies only to the normal year of entry (as specified in paragraph 1.2 of the Code) which in the case of the school is Year R. As the arrangements appear to refer to PAN in other year groups they do not comply with the Code.

58. In the first oversubscription criterion, which prioritises looked after and previously looked after children, the arrangements state (my underlining for emphasis):

"Applications in this category must be accompanied by a signed letter from the child's social worker or former social worker confirming their status."

59. This requirement is likely to be neither reasonable nor fair and to be contrary to the Code, including paragraphs 1.8 and 2.5. It may be the case, for example, that an adopted child's parents are unable to contact a former social worker, including where that child was in state care outside of England. Similarly, parents are unlikely to be able to contact a social worker in England who has moved jobs, and it may be inappropriate to attempt to do so.

60. The second oversubscription criterion, set out in section 6.1.2 of the arrangements, states:

“In exceptional circumstances there is discretion to admit children on the grounds of their or their family’s acute medical or social need for that particular school and who would not otherwise qualify for admission.”

61. It is not clear what is meant by “who would not otherwise qualify for admission”, to what “that particular school” refers, or whether this provision is the same as, or in addition to, the priority afforded to applicants within the earlier paragraphs of this criterion. I accept that the trust has recognised the need to remove the above statement, which I find to be unclear. In respect of this the trust stated:

“We accept that the wording referred to should not have been included within the category and will therefore be removed.”

62. The arrangements include a catchment area, “the Northern Gateway Development” and state that this is “defined in Appendix A on page 12 of this policy”. Appendix A appears at page 13, which may be unclear. Further, the map on page 13 does not clearly show which addresses are included in the catchment area; this does not comply with paragraph 1.14 of the Code.

63. The trust stated, in respect of this matter:

“We accept that the Admission Policy should refer to Page 13.

The Northern Gateway Development is the development that the establishment of our Free School bid was set up to serve. It is an area that is well known to parents and residents. It was a condition of the Free School bid that the School had as its catchment area The Northern Gateway Development.

However, we accept that the boundary lines drawn on the map are not clear, and parents living on roads along the boundary may not know if their address is in or outside the catchment area. We will amend the map and/or include further wording in the Admission Policy to make this clear.”

64. I must be clear that whether or not a catchment area is well known to parents and residents is irrelevant. Paragraph 1.14 of the Code requires that catchment areas are clearly defined; the arrangements fail to do this.

65. The sixth oversubscription criterion, set out in section 6.1.6 of the arrangements, prioritises the children of members of staff, including those “Recruited to fill a vacant post for which there was a demonstrable skill shortage.” It is not clear what is meant by a demonstrable skill shortage or how a member of staff would be aware of whether that priority was afforded to them.

66. The Code provides for the prioritisation of the children of staff in the following paragraphs:

1.39: "Admission authorities may give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances:

a) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made; and/or

b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post at the school for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage."

1.40: "Admissions authorities **must** specify in their admission arrangements how this priority will be applied, for example, which groups of staff it will apply to."

67. The trust stated, in respect of this matter:

"This wording was taken directly from Paragraph 1.39 b) of the Code, which does not go on to define what is meant by "demonstrable skill shortage". It would be highly complex and not particularly accurate to try to set out exactly which roles would be covered by this in the Admission Policy, as roles for which there is a skill shortage change with time. Clearly, it will be situation (sic) at the time of recruitment of the staff member which will be key. The Admission Policy requires the employed parent to complete and submit a SIF, in which Part B must be completed, signed and dated by the parent's HR Manager. In our submission, this is how parents will be able to find out whether their own particular role was a shortage role at the time they were recruited to establish if they have this priority, because the HR Manager will not complete, sign and date the form if they are not eligible"

68. On this matter the local authority stated:

"In relation to "demonstrable skill shortage", the Admissions Code has no further explanation, which would suggest that the DfE were content its meaning was sufficiently self evident".

69. I must disagree with the local authority's view. The Code requires that parents can easily understand, from a school's arrangements, how places at that school are allocated. I find it unlikely that what is meant by a demonstrable skill shortage would be self-evident to all members of staff, and paragraph 1.40 of the Code requires admission authorities to specify how priority afforded to the children of staff will be applied. Neither do I agree with the trust that the process for staff to receive confirmation of their eligibility, as part of completing an application, fulfils the requirements of the Code.

70. I recognise that it may not be possible or desirable to include in the arrangements a list of all posts for which there is, or has been, a demonstrable skill shortage. The requirements of the Code could be met by, say, stating how staff can access such information. The arrangements do not fulfil the requirements of paragraph 1.40 of the Code and must be revised.

71. Section 6.3 of the arrangements refers to a drawing of lots but does not specify how this will be done, including whether the process will be verified by someone independent of the school or the trust. The arrangements do not therefore comply with paragraph 1.8 of the Code.

72. The arrangements refer, in section 6.4 to “KCC’s annual admission prospectus”. As this is not explained further and, for example, a weblink is not provided, this is likely to be unclear. The trust has confirmed that this paragraph should be removed.

73. Arrangements must, as stated in paragraph 1.13 of the Code, set out how home address will be determined, including in cases where parents have shared responsibility for a child. This should include cases where a child spends an equal amount of time with each parent. Section 7.1 of the arrangements states that:

“The child's home address is the ... address of their parent (as defined in this policy) at which they live and sleep for more than 50% of their time from Sunday to Thursday night during term time. It will usually be the address at which they are registered with their GP, hospital, dentist and/or optician, and/or where Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit (if eligible) is claimed, at the time of application”.

74. This does not address cases where two parents share the care of a child equally and as such does not comply with the Code.

75. Section 9 of the arrangements refers to entry to “Reception Year to Year 11”. As the school is a primary school this is likely to be confusing to parents. Further, this section appears to suggest that PAN applies to all year groups which is contrary to paragraph 1.2 of the Code.

76. Section 17.1 of the arrangements states:

“Parents of children who attend River Mill Nursery must apply for a Reception place in the main school through the Kent Co-ordinated Primary Admission process.”

77. As this appears to be the first time that the phrase “the Kent Co-ordinated Primary Admission process” is used this may be unclear. Further, this does not provide for cases where an applicant’s home local authority is other than Kent. The trust has confirmed that this should be revised to refer to the "home local authority".

Determination

78. In accordance with section 88H(4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I partially uphold the objection to the admission arrangements for September 2025 determined by Mosaic Schools Learning Trust for River Mill Primary School, Dartford, Kent.

79. I have also considered the arrangements in accordance with section 88I(5) and find there are other matters which do not conform with the requirements relating to admission arrangements in the ways set out in this determination.

80. 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 unless an alternative timescale is specified by the adjudicator. In this case I determine that the arrangements must be revised by 25 October.

Dated: 25 September 2024

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Jennifer Gamble