

DETERMINATION

Case references: VAR/000517

Admission Authority: Governors of St Walburga's RC Primary School, Bournemouth

Date of decision: 2 September 2011

Determination

In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the requested variation to the admission arrangements of St Walburga's RC Primary School, Bournemouth determined by the School's Governing Body. I determine that for admissions in September 2012 the published admissions arrangements for the school shall be as set out in the appendix to this determination.

The referral

1. St Walburga's RC Primary School, ("the School") has referred a variation to the Adjudicator about its admission arrangements ("the arrangements") for September 2012. The variation being to amend the text of the arrangements to remove an ambiguity which came to light, and which appears to the governing body to constitute a "major change in circumstances".

Jurisdiction

2. 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".
3. I am satisfied that the proposed variation is within my jurisdiction.

Procedure

4. In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation, guidance and the School Admissions Code. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:
 - the School's letter of referral of 19th July 2011 and supporting documents; and
 - the determined arrangements for 2011/2012 and the proposed variations to those arrangements;

Background

5. St. Walburga's Catholic Primary is a two form of entry school in Bournemouth Dorset. The Headteacher wrote to the OSA on behalf of the governing body to request permission an amendment to the school's admission policy for 2012/13 to bring greater clarity to the arrangements. The requested variation was to add additional wording, (highlighted in bold) to the church attendance requirements as follows: "*...at least fortnightly at Sunday Mass **during the last 12 months.***"
6. All local schools, the Diocese and the Local Authority were notified of the proposed change. The Diocese and LA were supportive but none of the schools chose to comment.
7. In reviewing the school's arrangements I noticed a number of other places where the drafting was ambiguous, or less clearly expressed than it might have been. I drew these to the attention of the school with some suggestions about improvements that could be made. The school responded positively to these points and suggested further changes to address them.

Consideration of Factors

8. The Code emphasises the importance of admissions arrangements being clear and easy for parents to understand. So, whilst it is perhaps debateable whether becoming aware of an ambiguity constitutes a "major change in circumstances", it is self evidently desirable to achieve improvements to the clarity of documentation without unnecessary delay, and the proposed variations to wording will address the identified need.
9. It is important to emphasis that there will be no material change to priorities within the oversubscription criteria; nor to the admissions decisions that will be taken by the governing body on individual applications. Whilst there are number of changes to the document, many of them involve rearranging existing text, rendering it in a simpler form or adding words of explanation to clarify how the arrangements

are applied. The key difference is that the document will be easier to use and parents will be better able to understand whether they are likely to be able to meet the criteria that will enable them to secure a place for their child at the school.

Conclusion

10. This request for a variation arises from awareness of a need to improve the clarity of the arrangements. It is supported by all key interested parties, Governors, the LA and the Diocese, and has not encountered opposition from any of those who have been informed. I have identified no compelling factors that would lead me to do anything other than approve it and I so determine.

Determination

11. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the requested variation to the admission arrangements of St Walburga's RC Primary School, Bournemouth determined by the School's Governing Body. I determine that for admissions in September 2012 the published admissions arrangements for the school shall be as set out in the appendix to this determination.

Dated: 2 September 2011

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Alan Parker

St. Walburga's Catholic Primary School Admission Policy



Our Mission Statement

**'This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you'
John 15.12**

We aim to be a welcoming, caring, and worshipping community, firmly rooted in the teachings of Christ; recognising and respecting each individual as a unique gift from God. Together we aim to forge a partnership, working for the good of all, to enable us to grow and develop spiritually, academically, socially and morally

The Governing Body is responsible for the admission policy for St. Walburga's Catholic Primary School.

In September 2012 the Governing Body will admit 60 children to the school for the 2012/2013 academic year, whose fifth birthday falls between 1st September 2012 and 31st August 2013.

In this admission policy "Catholic" is a person who is baptised into a church which is in communion with the See of Rome. A full list is available from the school office. It also includes children received into full communion with the Catholic Church after Baptism in another Christian tradition.

The ethos of this school is represented in our school mission statement. We ask all parents applying for a place here to respect this ethos and its importance to the school community. This does not affect the right of parents who are not of the faith of the school to apply for and be considered for a place here.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Need

Children with a statement of special educational need (SEN) which have the school named in the statement will be given a place at the school and will count towards the published admission number.

In the case of there being more applications than places available (after any children with a statement of SEN have been allocated places) applications will be considered by the Governing Body in the following order of priority:-

1. Catholic children (see note i) looked after by a local authority.
2. Catholic children with a sibling (see note ii) attending the school whose parents/guardians produce proof of commitment (see note v) from the Catholic priest at the church they attend (*must verify regular attendance, i.e. at least fortnightly at Sunday Mass during the last 12 months.*)
3. Catholic children living within the catchment area (see note iii) whose parents/guardians produce proof of commitment from the Catholic priest at the church they attend (*must verify regular attendance, i.e. at least fortnightly at Sunday Mass during the last 12 months.*)
4. Catholic children living outside the catchment area whose parents/guardians produce proof of commitment from the Catholic priest at the church they attend (*must verify regular attendance, i.e. at least fortnightly at Sunday Mass during the last 12 months.*)

5. Catholic children with a sibling attending the school.
6. Other Catholic children.
7. Non- Catholic children looked after by a local authority.
8. Children of parents/guardians committed to other Christian traditions (see note iv) with a sibling attending the school, whose parents/guardians produce proof of commitment from the appropriate minister of religion (*must verify regular attendance, i.e. weekly or fortnightly during the last 12 months.*)
9. Unbaptised Children of Catholic parents/guardians with a sibling in the school.
10. Other children with a sibling attending the school.
11. Children of parents/guardians committed to other Christian traditions whose parents/guardians produce proof of commitment from the appropriate minister of religion (*must verify regular attendance, i.e. weekly or fortnightly during the last 12 months.*)
9. Unbaptised Children of Catholic parents/guardians living in the catchment area.
10. Unbaptised Children of Catholic parents/guardians living outside the catchment area.
11. Children of parents/guardians who are members of the Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist faith groups, and whose parents/guardians produce proof of commitment from the appropriate minister of religion (*must verify regular attendance during the last 12 months, in accordance with the doctrines of their specified faith*).
12. Other applicants.

If within any of the above categories, the Governing Body is not able to offer places to all applicants, proximity to the school will be used to determine the order in which offers will be made as set out below.

Higher priority will be accorded to applicants living nearer to the school; with the distance being measured by the Authority's Geographical Information System (GIS) in use at the time of allocation (the system at the time of setting the policy takes the measurement between the address mapping points of the school and the applicant's home). If distances are equal, as calculated by the Council's GIS system, for example a flat in a block of dwellings with the same front entrance a random allocation system (supervised by an independent person) will be used to determine the allocation.

Notes

- i. The term "Catholic children" has the meaning set out at the head of this policy. All applications for baptised children must be supported by a Baptismal Certificate.
- ii. For the sake of this policy "sibling" refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. (See also notes vi and vii below)
- iii. The "catchment area" is defined as the area served by the following churches: Annunciation, St. Edmund Campion, Sacred Heart (north and west of the centre of Holdenhurst Road and Meyrick Road) and Our Lady Immaculate. A map showing this area is available from the school and can viewed on the school's website (www.stwalburgas.bournemouth.sch.uk)

- iv. The term "other Christian traditions" means churches belonging to Churches Together in England. A full list is available from the school office.
- v. Regular attendance is verified through the completion of a 'Proof of Commitment' form by the appropriate priest or minister of religion who are asked whether the applicants attend their church and fulfil the necessary attendance requirement. In the case of Christian applicants this is at least fortnightly attendance over the last 12 months, and for members of other faiths this needs to verify regular attendance during the last 12 months in accordance with the doctrines of their specified faith.

If parents have attended more than one church in the past twelve months then additional forms can be provided.
- vi. When considering twins, triplets or other multiple births for one remaining place every effort will be made in collaboration with the parents, other schools and the local authority to ensure that they can be educated together.
- vii. Pupils will only count as siblings at the school if they are still attending the school when the child applying for a place is due to commence.
- viii. Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility each part of the week, the child's home address will be the one shown on the child benefit book.
- ix. Applicants seeking admission of their child to one of our Reception classes in September 2012 can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year or seek part time until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year, that is the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday, without affecting the offer of the school place. Applicants cannot defer entry until September 2013 which is in a new school year. In that case a new application for entry into Year One for that school year would be necessary. Children will normally commence with a period of part-time attendance. Normally the period of part time attendance will not exceed half a term after the date of start.

Timetable for Reception admissions for September 2012

The Local Authority (LA) operates a timetabled coordinated admissions procedure for all Bournemouth Primary Schools in line with government legislation. The LA will manage the process on behalf of this school according to the scheme which they will publish in their booklet "Starting Primary School 2011-2012" but it is the Governing Body, as the Admission Authority for this school who will allocate the available places in line with this policy.

The closing date for admission application forms to be received by the LA will be as published in the booklet 'Starting Primary School 2011-2012'. Also contained in that booklet will be the dates for notification to parents of admissions decisions and the closing dates for accepting places or lodging appeals. In case of any doubt on these dates, please contact the LA or the school.

Applicants for Reception Classes

Applicants for Reception classes are required to complete the local authority Primary Preference Form which can be obtained from schools, nurseries and play groups or completed online at www.bournemouth.gov.uk. Completed preference forms should be returned to Bournemouth Local Authority. In addition to the Primary Preference Form parents/carers are asked to complete a separate supplementary information form. The supplementary information form can be obtained from the school or from the Local Authority. The additional information on this form assists governors in placing applications in the correct oversubscription criteria. If no supplementary information form is submitted governors can only rank the application on the basis of the information contained in the Primary Preference Form. The supplementary information form should be returned directly to school, together with baptismal certificates and (where applicable) supplemental information relating to faith.

Applicants for Other Year Groups

All applications to all Bournemouth schools are co-ordinated by the Local Authority. To apply for a place in other year groups please contact the Admission's Services Team, Children's Services, Bournemouth Borough Council, THE3 Town Hall, Bourne Avenue, Bournemouth, BH2 6DY (01202 456197).

Waiting Lists

Bournemouth Council operates a formal waiting list for those refused a place. The waiting list is ranked according to the over-subscription criteria. Any places that do become available, if not required for a child with a statement of special educational need or one who is required to be admitted through an In-year Fair Access Protocol, are allocated in accordance with these criteria. The waiting list does not give priority either to those that have been on the list longest or to those that applied after the closing date.

Waiting lists for Reception will cease on 31 December 2012. Previous applicants wishing to continue on a waiting list must re-apply to Bournemouth Council between 1 and 31 December 2012. Waiting lists for other year groups will cease at the end of the academic year 2012/13. Applicants will be required to re-apply (in August 2013) for admission if they wish to continue to be considered for a place. Please note Bournemouth Council may review waiting lists on a regular basis at the end of each term or when a place becomes available at the school.

Right to Appeal

In accordance with the school's Articles of Government, parents/guardians whose children are refused admission to the school have the right to appeal. Information on the Appeal Procedure together with an Appeal Form is available from the headteacher at the school.

The completed Appeal Form is to be sent to:-

Appeals Clerk
c/o St. Walburga's Catholic Primary School
Malvern Road
Moordown
BOURNEMOUTH
BH9 3BY

Prospective parents who wish to visit the school are most welcome and appointments should be made through the School Secretary.

ST. WALBURGA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Supplementary information form for admission from September 2012

This form should be completed and signed by the parents/legal guardians of the child for whom a place is required and be returned without delay to:-

The Clerk to the Governors,
St. Walburga's Catholic Primary School,
Malvern Road, Moordown,
BOURNEMOUTH, BH9 3BY.

Applicant: BOY () GIRL () please tick as appropriate

Applicant's full name (BLOCK LETTERS please)

Applicant's Date of Birth

.....

.....

Full names of parents/legal guardians (BLOCK LETTERS please)

.....
....

.....

To whom future correspondence should be addressed:

Applicant's home address (BLOCK LETTERS please)

.....Post Code

Contact telephone number:

Applicant's religion:

Date of Baptism (if applicable):

Name and address of church where baptised:
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.....
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Father's religion: Mother's religion:
.....

Name of church you regularly attend:
.....

Names and dates of birth of siblings already at St. Walburga's School.

Name DoB

Name DoB

Name DOB

PLEASE NOTE Copies of the child's Baptismal (if applicable) certificate should

accompany this form when returned. In the case of the child not being baptised a Catholic but either the mother and/or father being baptised Catholics, copies of the Baptismal Certificate/s of the mother and/or father should also accompany the application.

For signature by Parents/Legal Guardians

I/We have received, read and accepted the contents of St. Walburga's School Admission Policy and wish to apply for admission to the school for my/our child.

Signed: (Parents/Legal Guardians)

Date:

Baptismal (delete if applicable) certificates enclosed (please tick)

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For office use Category: Certs:
Date of Admission: Class: Ad. No: Parish:
Notes: