



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

DETERMINATION

Case reference: VAR688

Admission Authority: London Borough of Harrow for Roxbourne Primary School, Harrow, Middlesex.

Date of Decision: 27 July 2016

Determination

In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the variation to the admission arrangements determined by the London Borough of Harrow for Roxbourne Primary School for September 2016.

I determine that for admissions in September 2016 the published admission number for Reception shall be 60.

The referral

1. The London Borough of Harrow, the local authority (LA) and admission authority for the school has referred a variation to the Adjudicator concerning the admission arrangements for Roxbourne Primary School (the school) for September 2016. The school is a community primary school, for pupils who are 3 to 11 years old. The variation requested is that the published admission number (PAN) for admission to Year R should be reduced from 90 to 60.

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”.

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

Procedure

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

4. The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:

- the LA's form of referral of 29 June 2016 and supporting documents;
- the determined arrangements for admission to the school in 2016 and the proposed variation to those arrangements;
- a copy of the local authority's, composite prospectus for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2016;
- a copy of the letter notifying the appropriate bodies about the proposed variation; and
- documentation from the school in support of the request to reduce the PAN.

Background and consideration of case

5. The school is a three form entry primary school in the south west planning area of Harrow with a PAN of 90. The school admitted fewer pupils than expected last year when 58 places were taken of the 90 available and will admit fewer than 60 pupils again this year. The LA says that this is a significant change for the school which was oversubscribed in 2014.

6. The LA reports this change is due to a number of factors; there is increased mobility in this area and major regeneration schemes are moving families out of properties. Increases in the published admission numbers in schools in Hillingdon and elsewhere in Harrow are currently meeting the demand for places. The LA is of the view that the demand for places will increase again and that the extensive regeneration programme will result in more places being needed at Roxbourne in the future so intend this variation for 2016 only. The LA *"believe that there are sufficient places within other schools to meet the demand for in –year applications including (sic) with the temporary reduction at Roxbourne Primary School"*.

7. The governing body have provided evidence of the financial difficulties arising from fewer pupils, for example there are 58 pupils in three small classes *"the result of losing 32 pupils will have a huge financial effect on the school...Funding for each child brings about £4,000 to the school."* The governing body support the request for a variation as it considers that a PAN of 60 would enable it to restructure its staffing and make it better able to manage within its financial constraints.

8. The LA considers this a significant change of circumstance and, in order to enable the school to manage its resources so that it does not overspend its budget, it wishes to reduce the PAN to 60. The LA who are also responsible for planning sufficient school places, are of the view that the variation will not affect its ability to provide sufficient places for pupils in the south west area of

Harrow. The LA has provided evidence that it consulted those parties it is required to notify and received no responses.

9. I see from the data supplied for the last five years that the school, until last year, was oversubscribed and admitted 90 pupils each year. I acknowledge that this reduction in pupil numbers causes budget problems at the school and the LA says it has sufficient places. In these circumstances to reduce the PAN to 60 seems a sensible response.

Summary

10. The school faces financial constraints and wishes to be able to plan sensibly based on a PAN which reflects recent demand for places. Against this background, I approve this request for a variation.

Determination

11. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the variation to the admission arrangements determined by the London Borough of Harrow for Roxbourne Primary School for September 2016.

12. I determine that for admissions in September 2016 the published admission number for Reception shall be 60.

Dated: 27 July 2016

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Miss Jill Pullen