

ADJUDICATOR PUBLISHES DECISION ON LINKED PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE ST GEORGE'S RC HIGH SCHOOL AND TO ENLARGE ST AMBROSE BARLOW RC HIGH SCHOOL, SALFORD, GREATER MANCHESTER

The Office of the Schools Adjudicator has published a decision on proposals by Salford City Council to create a 6th Form and enlarge St Ambrose Barlow Catholic High School and to discontinue St George's Catholic High School.

The adjudicator, Canon Richard Lindley, approved the proposal to create a 6th form at St Ambrose Barlow School but has modified the implementation date to 1 September 2012.

However, he has not approved either of the proposals to enlarge St Ambrose Barlow School from 1 September 2012 or to discontinue St George's High School from 31 August 2012.

Whilst he was mindful that his decision could impact on Salford's Building Schools for the Future programme, Canon Lindley said that his primary concern must be to ensure that the underlying school organisation planning is correct, fair and representative of parental wishes. He did not believe that the closure of St George's School, a successful and oversubscribed school, would meet this criterion. The retention of St George's School would contribute to surplus secondary school places in Salford and, therefore, the adjudicator has not approved the increase in capacity at St Ambrose Barlow School.

The adjudicator's view is that not all of the alternative options may have been fully considered, and he has suggested that the Council, the Salford Diocese and the Schools involved might explore what alternatives are open to them.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Schools adjudicators are independent of the Government. They decide on school organisation issues, disputes on land transfer and assets and admission arrangements which cannot be resolved locally. They were appointed under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Their role is to look afresh at all cases referred to them, considering each case on its merits and taking account of the reasons for disagreement at local level in the light of the legislation and the guidance in the School Admissions Code.

Copies of the determination reached by the adjudicator can be obtained from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. It can also be found on the Schools Adjudicator Website – www.schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk. Individual adjudicators are not in a position to comment on their decisions but, if clarification of those decisions is needed, enquiries can be addressed to: The Office of the Schools Adjudicator, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington DL3 9BG

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