

DETERMINATION

Case reference: STP/579

Referral body: Hillingdon Council

Proposal: To discontinue Guru Nanak Sikh Primary School with effect from 31 August 2012.

Date of decision: 18 July 2012

Determination

Under the powers conferred on me in Schedule 2 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006, I hereby approve the proposal to discontinue Guru Nanak Sikh Primary School with effect from 31 August 2012.

The referral

1. Hillingdon Council (the Council) wrote to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator on 15 June 2012 referring its statutory proposal to discontinue Guru Nanak Sikh Primary School (the School) with effect from 31 August 2012.

Jurisdiction

2. On 29 February 2012, the Council published notices to discontinue Guru Nanak Sikh Primary School. The notices were in the necessary form as required in Schedule 5 to the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations). The Council did not rule on the proposal within the statutory two month period after completion of the statutory notice period. Hence the Council referred the matter to the Schools Adjudicator, and provided supporting documentation.

3. I am satisfied that this proposal has been properly referred to me in accordance with Schedule 2 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the Act) and that, therefore, I have jurisdiction to determine this matter.

Procedures

4. In considering this matter, I have had regard to all relevant legislation and guidance.

5. I have considered all the papers put before me including:
- documents detailing the proposals;
 - the statutory notice;
 - the Ofsted inspection reports for the School and the Guru Nanak Sikh Academy (the Academy); and
 - the summary of the statutory consultation on the proposals.

The Proposal

6. The proposal is to discontinue Guru Nanak Sikh Primary School from 31 August 2012.

7. Guru Nanak Sikh Academy, currently a school for pupils aged 11-18 intends to become an all-through Academy catering for ages 3 -18 from 1 September 2012. The Secretary of State has approved proposals by the Guru Nanak Sikh Academy to expand its age range to include the nursery and primary phases from September 2012. In order for pupils at the School to transfer to the Academy, it is necessary to formally close the School.

8. The School offers 60 reception places and 60 part-time nursery places. Pupils currently at the School will transfer to the Guru Nanak Sikh Academy. The same number of nursery and primary places will be provided by the Guru Nanak Sikh Academy at the same site. Therefore no pupils will be displaced.

Consideration of Factors

Background and Standards of Education at the School

9. The School was last inspected by Ofsted on 5 Oct 2012 when it was judged to be outstanding. "Achievement is outstanding, from starting points that are well below the expectation, especially in English".

10. The Academy was last inspected in 2008, when it was also judged to be outstanding. This continued to be the case at its interim assessment of 7 January 2011.

11. The closure will enable the all age academy to strengthen the relationship between key stages across the primary secondary divide. The knowledge, skills and understanding of Key Stage 2 will be built upon to promote further pupils' progress in Key Stage 3.

12. The governing bodies of both schools, staff, parents and the community strongly support the development of a single all through Academy with an age range of 3 -18 years. The two schools already share a head teacher, chair of governors, vice chair of governors and the same finance team.

The School Roll and Pupil Projections

13. The Council is currently planning 20.5 additional forms of entry in primary schools to meet increased demand. Hence there is a continuing need for the places currently provided by the School.

14. The all-through Academy will offer the same number of nursery and primary places in the same location.

Consultation

15. The governing body of the School considered the proposal at its meeting on 23 March 2011. It was unanimously approved. The Council subsequently conducted a consultation which was launched on 19 September 2011.

16. The Council's consultation covered the School, all other Hillingdon schools/governing bodies, local academies and independent schools, neighbouring local authorities, families of pupils, trade unions, staff, MPs, local diocesan boards, the Nanaksar Trust, the Council of Sikh Gurdwaras, the early years development & childcare partnership and the Department for Education. Copies of the consultation letter were also sent to Hillingdon libraries. The consultation included letters, staff meetings, telephone calls to parents and information in school newsletters. No issues against the proposal were raised as a result of the consultation.

Buildings

17. The two existing schools are closely situated on one site in buildings of high quality. The School is housed in purpose built accommodation opened in 2006.

Finance

18. There are no site or premises costs associated with the proposal. Nor are there any capital costs.

School links and Community Cohesion

19. The closure of the School and the creation of an all age school will enable further community development beyond the boundaries of the School. Work with local schools to promote community cohesion will continue. The Academy will continue to host visits for pupils from other schools who wish to explore Sikhism and to be part of the Three Faith Forum that promotes religious understanding. Community learning opportunities will be extended.

Conclusion

20. The proposed closure will enable the existing arrangements to develop further. I agree that it has the potential to raise standards even higher through greater curriculum continuity. The Council, both governing bodies and all those who responded to the consultation supported the proposal. I am satisfied I should do likewise.

Determination

21. Under the powers conferred on me in Schedule 2 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006, I hereby approve the proposal to discontinue Guru Nanak Sikh Primary School with effect from 31 August 2012.

Dated: 18 July 2012

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Mrs Janet Mokades