

Dear Sir,

I do not feel that the people of Chellaston have been well served by the ruling of the Schools Adjudicator regarding its admissions criteria (your report, 20 June). The adjudicator has decided that preference will be given to children who would have to travel furthest to an alternative school. Since the school's catchment area includes not only Chellaston but also large areas of South Derbyshire, it is clear that those from Melbourne and surrounding villages will take priority over children in Chellaston itself because their alternative school is much further away than Chellaston. Melbourne is rapidly expanding and will require more and more school places - that means less for Chellaston and the further away they live from the school, the less likely they are to get in.

Chellaston is an excellent school and it will do it no favours if it has to accept more children than it has room for. There do need to be selection criteria, but the one which the governing body proposed, based on the period of residence, was objected to by the Education Department of Derby City Council. This led to an appeal to the schools adjudicator who is independent and does not have to take in to account local conditions, opinions or agreements. One of these agreements, for those with long memories, was made when the school was built and that was an assurance that Chellaston children within the catchment area would be able to attend the school. This appears to have been bulldozed away at a stroke by an unelected adjudicator and Chellaston parents should be rightfully concerned by this decision.

The Chellaston Residents' Association has published the full adjudication on its website, www.chellaston.org.uk and any concerned parents should make representations to us or local councillors so that we can get this decision changed.

John Bowden
Chairman
Chellaston Residents' Association