

5.6.85

# SCHOOL'S PLEA TO PM FAILS

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher cannot intervene to save the Forest of Needwood School from closure, school governors' chairman, Mr Ken Green, has been told.

Mr Green wrote to Mrs Thatcher, sending her details of the governors' campaign to fight Staffordshire County Council's plans to close down the Forest and create a new school on the Wulfric School site by amalgamating pupils from both establishments.

He also asked her to step in to reverse the decision by Education Minister, Sir Keith Joseph, to approve the county proposals.

But in a reply from Downing Street Mr Green has been told that the Education Act of 1980 states that once the Secretary of State has approved statutory proposals it is the duty of the education authority to implement them.

"Neither the Prime Minister nor the Secretary of State has the power to overturn decisions once they have been made," the letter said.

The Downing Street letter assured Mr Green "that the Secretary of State's decision was reached only after a full and careful consideration of all the relevant factors.

"There was no question of the Secretary of State having insufficient information before him on which to base his decision.

"He took full account of all the written representations made, including the comprehensive document submitted by the board of governors."

The Prime Minister, the letter said, appreciated the disappointment and concern about the decision to approve the closure of the school.

Mr Green has told his fellow governors the reply from Downing Street is generally along the lines expected.

Additionally, Mr Green is now in touch with an organisation called PACE . . . Parental Alliance for Choice in Education.

The organisation is the outcome of informal contacts between a number of existing groups fighting to maintain schools of their choice in different parts of the country.