



2011/0061068POSoS

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 0012345 ministers@education.gov.uk

Rt Hon Dr Vincent Cable MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

15 October 2011

Dr Vincent

Thank you for your letter of 26 August, drawing my attention to the letter of 2 August from Jeremy Rodell of Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign, in which he raises concerns about the proposal to establish a new Catholic Voluntary Aided (VA) secondary school in Richmond.

I agree that Richmond, as with every other community, should have access to high quality education, and this is the cornerstone of our education reforms. Mr Rodell asks that I do not give consent for the publication of proposals for a Catholic VA school in Richmond. I can confirm that we have not received any application for a new VA school in the Department. Should there be such an application, I would in making my decision take account of each application on its own merit, including evidence of parental demand and the effects on other schools. If any interest has been shown by an Academy or Free School proposer, this will also be taken into account. I may reject an application and advise the local authority to go to competition. Where I consider that an application should be approved, this is, as Mr Rodell points out, only consent to publish proposals. The proposer, which in this case would most likely be the Diocese, must still follow the statutory process of consultation, publication, representation, decision and implementation.

Mr Rodell and his campaign group might also want to consider an important new school option available to local parents and communities – Free Schools. This is where parents or other groups can be supported to bring forward their own proposals to establish a school in their area. We have already seen, earlier this month, the first Free Schools open and we are now considering a number of further proposals for schools to open in 2012. Should Mr Rodell wish to explore

Department for
Education

this option he might like to contact the New Schools Network
(<http://newschoolsnetwork.org>) for further information.

V
1-050

MICHAEL GOVE