

School not a one-man protest

Sir – What else would you expect from a man who doles out Bibles at taxpayers' expense (wanted or not).

This has nothing to do with just process or procedure, but pure personal prejudice.

Any call to logic is seen as some insidious attack on “religious beliefs”.

With a right wing council it is part of the ideology, Pickles and True defending prayer time and encouraging faith schools, it would be impossible for them to think any other way.

The next time you hear them talk about equality, you know they might have a slightly different interpretation from you.

DAVID ROBERTS
Address supplied

Sir – It is interesting that Michael Gove has intervened in Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign's judicial review against the council, but his interpretation of the law does not trump anybody else's.

The Education Act was written, debated and amended by a large collective of people. The result is a dreadful ambiguity, which needs to be clarified by

an independent judge.

Gove has no authority to declare “this is what I intended it to mean” and expect the judge to simply accept that. If the legislation had been clearly worded as per Gove's interpretation then it would certainly have been challenged vigorously before it became law, and may well have been amended.

I do not envy the judge the task of unravelling such a tangled piece of legislation.

**NAME AND ADDRESS
SUPPLIED**

Sir – Regarding the Catholic schools debate. This long-running pantomime leaves me quite incredulous – on just which planet/remote part of the universe have the Conservative councillors been living?

There seems to be general agreement, surprise, surprise, that more secondary school places are needed in our borough. That being so:

It is ludicrous that entry is to be restricted to at most 10 per cent of the local population, while everyone pays.

It is perverse, given that Richmond has a poor ranking

in respect of choice of secondary schools (Letters, September 14) and this will inevitably worsen a pupil numbers increase while choice is deliberately restricted.

There has been a gross council failure to plan ahead in a transparent manner, as proposed by Brian Holder nearly a year ago (RTT, October 25, 2011).

There has been an equal failure to consult – so much for “putting people first” and “listening to people” – especially over the ceding of Clifden Road to the Catholic Church at a fraction of the market value.

Other aspects as identified by other thoughtful readers give rise to further concerns about “maladministration” by the council, which is now about to use taxpayers' money in legal defence of its indefensible decision-making.

Meanwhile, we are led to believe that the council is so short of funds that services to the deprived and vulnerable have to be cut.

I trust that if maladministration is proven, then the councillors responsible will be held fully liable for this waste of public resources.

I also confess that I find myself seriously disturbed by the partisan arguments in favour of Catholic control over the school and which seem to me to have little resonance with the example set by Our Lord during his life on Earth.

Applying the What would Jesus do question by reference to the gospels and the example of the early Christian church, it is unambiguously clear that Jesus's behaviour was to break down all manner of social and religious barriers and treat everyone on the basis of equality – in a word “inclusively”.

It is thus extremely ironic that this very Christian principle is being defended by, of all people, the British Humanist Association.

Well, extra good luck to them and the Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign over this matter – I am right behind them.

The future is in the hands of our children – and that means all of our children.

Dr AR GREENWAY
Teddington

Sir – Lord True makes a number of misleading statements, as reported in your

paper last week.

He wants to give the impression that the Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign is a one-man protest.

As he well knows that is certainly not the case.

It is a grassroots campaign with many hundreds of supporters who are concerned about the education of all the children in the borough.

More than 3,300 signed its petition to the council calling for all new borough schools to be inclusive.

About 1,400 people responded to the council's consultation opposing the Catholic secondary school and about 1,600 responded opposing the Catholic primary school.

He also knows that the supporters of the campaign come from a wide range of backgrounds, including Catholics and Anglicans as well as members of other faiths and none.

Lord True demeans the office of leader of the council by making misleading statements like those he made last week.

STEPHEN HYETT
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