

**THE CARDINAL VAUGHAN MEMORIAL SCHOOL
PARENTS' ACTION GROUP**



26 January 2011

Dear Parents and Friends of the Vaughan,

You probably already know that the School's five elected Parent Governors are about to take the Diocese of Westminster to the Appeal Court over the make-up of the School's Governing Body. They believe that the Diocese has broken the law by refusing to appoint current parents as Foundation Governors.

I am writing to you now to let you know that, even though the legal status of the Governing Body is still unresolved, the new Chairman of Governors, John O'Donnell, and the new Diocesan appointees have taken the extraordinary decision to rush through the appointment of a Head.

The appointment of a new Head is the most important task a Governing Body ever has to undertake: the success or failure of a school is largely dependent on the quality of its leadership. A new Head not sympathetic to the seemingly small details, that, taken together, make the Vaughan the great pan-London school it is, could well make changes that would turn it, almost overnight, into just another local school. It is not only future generations of pupils who would suffer the consequences, but those already in the School today.

The fight for the soul of the Vaughan must be a matter of urgent concern to us all.

Cardinal Vaughan has been blessed with some outstanding Headmasters. The leadership and vision of Michael Gormally, and of Anthony Pellegrini before him, have helped make the Vaughan a powerful community of faith, academic excellence, and outstanding musical and sporting achievement. Most importantly, the School has produced young men and women of substance who love their Catholic faith.

We cannot let this legacy be squandered. Only three times in the last sixty years has the Governing Body had to appoint a new Head. Parents have a right to expect that a committee of the Governing Body, set up to look for the right candidate for this crucial position, takes time and due diligence with its task. Instead, the process is being conducted with indecent haste. The post was advertised on 14 January. The closing date for applications is 27 January; shortlisting will close on 31 January, interviews will be held on 7 and 8 February and the appointment will be made on 8 February. This urgency is wholly unnecessary. The School is more than safe in the capable hands of its Acting Headmaster, Charles Eynaud, and there is

no reason why he should not remain in place for some time to come, certainly until the outcome of the Appeal is decided on March 9, after which the appointment process can begin with no legal threat hanging over it.

I urge you, before it is too late, to write to the Chairman of Governors, John O'Donnell, at chairman@cvms.co.uk to insist that the appointment process is stopped in its tracks and not resumed until we know that the Governing Body undertaking it is legally constituted. To do otherwise is unfair to everyone, perhaps most of all to the person who is appointed.

Thank you for all your letters and emails to Archbishop Nichols, to the Diocesan Director of Education, Paul Barber, and to John O'Donnell. We know they are a great source of encouragement to the elected Parent Governors, who are battling so hard on our behalf. They prove, if ever proof was required, that we are united as a community against the damaging changes to the governance of the Vaughan.

Lastly, please mark Wednesday 2nd February 2011, 6.15 p.m., as a date in your diary. We will gather at the School in our hundreds, as family, in a candlelit vigil. Parents, pupils, past pupils, prospective parents and children, grandparents and friends of the Vaughan, we will gather as one in dignified and respectful prayer for the future of our School. And, by our presence, we will show those who would have it otherwise, that we will not be disenfranchised or ignored.

With renewed thanks for the great support you have already shown, and every good wish,

Yours sincerely

Patti Fordyce
Vaughan Parents' Action Group