

# Questions for Archbishop Vincent Nichols

## Role of Paul Barber on the governing body

- Why is it Cardinal Vaughan that is in need of the Diocesan Director of Education, Paul Barber's help on the governing body rather than the schools in the diocese that are under-achieving?
- If, as everyone acknowledges, the Vaughan has a superb academic record and excellent "value added" factor (with the performance of pupils from disadvantaged background far exceeding that of those in other schools), then why has the diocese indicated that the governing body is in need of Mr Barber's help and expertise?
- What aspect of Mr Barber's specialist advice and guidance is specifically needed at the Vaughan?
- Do you feel there are no other schools throughout the diocese that would benefit more than the Vaughan from Mr Barber's specialist advice on Catholic ethos?

## Appointment of Parent Governors

- Why does the diocese interpret a parent foundation governor as, in one instance, someone whose children are grown up and, in another, as a parent whose children are at a different school, when several current\_Vaughan parents have put themselves forward to fulfil this role?
- In other schools the diocese has appointed parent foundation governors who are actually current parents of children at the school. Would the diocese ever consider a current Vaughan parent as a parent foundation governor ?
- Why did Bishop Stack say he would not want any current Vaughan parent as a foundation governor?
- Why does the diocese ignore the requirement that it should use a principle of cascading suitability to appoint parent governors?
- Since foundation governors are required by law to act in the best interest of the school rather than of the trustees (ie the diocese) why have foundation governors in the past been told they must follow diocesan directives?
- Is it true that those who did not follow diocesan guidance were rebuked?.
- Is it true that foundation governors were asked to sign a statement declaring that they would comply with diocesan directives?
- Why did we lose 7 foundation governors and 2 chairmen in two years when all were willing to be reappointed and there is a shortage of governors?

## Preserving Music Standards at the School

- If the diocese wishes to help musically gifted pupils to develop their potential to the full, why did it seek to deny such children the chance of going to the Vaughan by telling the adjudicator that the School's selection of 12 musically gifted pupils would disadvantage others schools?

## **Preserving Catholic Ethos**

- If the diocese wishes to preserve and develop the Catholic ethos in Catholic schools why is the Vaughan practice of daily Angelus, and weekly mass for ALL pupils so unusual among Catholic schools?
- Will the Cardinal Vaughan be encouraged to adopt the religious practices of the majority of Catholic Secondary Schools (ie no Angelus, voluntary masses that only 5 or 6 pupils attend a week, no sign of the cross before lessons etc)?
- If the diocese agrees that Catholic practice is exemplary at the Vaughan then why have we been graced with Paul Barber's presence? Some parents feel that this could be seen as favouritism and could disadvantage other more needy schools which are left without the benefit of his guidance.

## **Admissions Criteria**

- Why does the diocese feel it is fairer to the poor to promote catchment area as admissions criteria when this penalises those who cannot live in an expensive area such as Holland Park.?
- Why does the diocese feel that the disadvantaged and immigrants are less willing to volunteer to help in their Church communities? This was never the case in the past.
- How do the disadvantaged and immigrant communities benefit if the Vaughan admissions criteria prioritise those who live closest to the school rather than those who are fully active and committed in their practice of the faith?.
- The adjudicator's report in Jan 2010 stated that the diocesan policy is to encourage applications from non- practising Catholics in order that they might rediscover their faith through the child's school. Is this why the diocese does not like to give places to committed Catholics over non- practising parents if a school is oversubscribed? Has the diocese any evidence of the success of this approach?

## **Questions about the foundation governors' vision for the school**

- At the governors' meeting on December 8, during a debate about the qualities sought in a new Head, one of the Diocese's appointees called into question the preservation of the Vaughan's musical excellence. Please could you assure us that you will use all your influence to ensure that the school's wonderful musical tradition is upheld in the future?"
- Is it true that as Cardinal Hume's private secretary, Monsignor Curry was involved in an unsuccessful attempt to remove the sixth form from Cardinal Vaughan and the London Oratory? Are the changes to the governing body an attempt to ensure it will be impossible for a majority of governors to raise objections about similarly harmful changes?

- Do the foundation governors think it is preferable that the Vaughan's excellence should be dimmed so as to ensure a more uniform approach across Catholic schools in the diocese?