

Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

December 2011

RE: Downhills Primary School & Academy Status

I visited you on 16 November, with representatives of Haringey Council, as well as teachers and governors from schools in Tottenham affected by your plans to force them to become academies. When we spoke, I explained that the plans have caused deep, deep disquiet among Governors, teachers, parents and, indeed, the whole community in the areas affected. I was not consulted prior to your officials' negotiations with Haringey Council, and you have decided to take this decision over the heads of the existing Governors.

It is true that academic performance has slipped in some schools, but there are measures in place to address this. I am writing to ask you to pause your plans until the results of the next round of Ofsted inspections are known, and to consult the Governors of affected schools. I am very concerned that you are seeking to make these fundamental changes without engaging the local community and seeking their consent. Without that engagement, I understand their anger entirely.

I hope that you will be able to confirm a pause in these plans, as well as new proposals to consult Governors, teachers, parents and the community. A government with a truly localist agenda would not take these decisions from Whitehall, over the heads of the very people affected by the plans.

Rt. Hon. DAVID LAMMY MP