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# Richmond Twickenham TIMES

## Academy programme to tackle educational needs

Sir - In last week's letters page you published a letter from Councillor Geoffrey Samuel concerning the council's academy programme.

This is part of his personal campaign against the academy programme and against the two preferred sponsors.

He claims to be a supporter of the academy programme, but he failed to use that option when he was cabinet member for education.

He uses inflammatory language which will scare concerned parents about their children's education during the transition process. This is clearly irresponsible.

He uses the same language when commenting on the bulge classes, which we are putting into primary schools to meet the demand for which he failed to prepare.

At all my meetings with parents and governors I have stressed that the education of children currently at the school and those there during the transition stage will not be put at risk or harmed.

It will be our top priority, just as it is during any school rebuilding programme. We will, if necessary, make more resources available.

We are taking co-sponsorship of any academy, and therefore will be able to monitor any building programme to ensure education is not put at risk.

Kunskapskolan will run English schools using the national curriculum, and the pupils will wear uniforms. It does not operate 1960s progressive style schools, but 21st century ones based on a personalised style, which will improve the methods of learning and raise standards for every child.

It is a system which shapes education to the needs of the individual student, so that everyone gets the help and opportunities they need. It is not a "turn-up-when-you-like philosophy" as suggested by Coun Samuel.

Students are challenged every week on their progress and changes made accordingly. Sweden has a more successful secondary school system than



**Improvements: Malcolm Eady**

the UK, and Kunskapskolan schools have a higher success rate than the average state schools in Sweden.

I have already met with parents and school governors in the Sheen area, at Hampton Community College and at Whitton School. Further meetings are being arranged.

We have embarked on a process of change, which will result in significant improvement in education out-

comes for the pupils of the three schools.

As you reported in last week's edition, parents are being asked for their views about the initial proposals that the sponsors have developed - this is not rubber stamping but a genuine attempt to involve parents in the process and at a much earlier stage than usual.

The proposals contain the sponsors' vision for the schools and how they will be organised, the governance and links with other educational establishments.

Parents' views will contribute to the revised versions of the Expressions of Interest which will be considered by the overview and scrutiny committee in September.

I hope that when they read the draft proposals they will be excited as I am about the prospect of being able to bring about a transformation of outcomes at the schools.

**MALCOLM EADY**  
Cabinet member for children's services and education