

**Councillor Rachel Fryer**

Brighton & Hove City Council  
King's House  
Grand Avenue  
Hove BN3 2LS

**Date:** 17 May 2010

**Our Ref:**

**Your Ref:**

Dear Councillor Mears

As you know, Portslade Community College is a National Challenge School. In order to improve the school, Stuart McLaughlin, with a proven track record at Falmer School, became the Head at Portslade Community College. Even under the most skillful head it takes a school at least two years to improve the and this is what has happened successfully at Patcham High School which is now in the top 100 improving schools in the country.

However I understand that the DCSF has demanded that the Local Authority immediately does more than give Portslade Community College a new Head and that it should become an Academy with Rod Aldridge as the sponsor.

As a result, parents and teachers at Portslade Community College feel very aggrieved that

- 1) They have not been given enough time to improve
- 2) The public consultation about this has only just begun and the decision will be made in 3 weeks time; this is not an acceptable length of time
- 3) They have no input as to who should be the sponsor
- 4) They have no input as to any alternative option.

It won't surprise you to hear that I feel we should pursue the alternative route being offered by the DCSF which is to become a National Challenge Trust School. Whatever your views on this I'm sure you'll agree with me and parents in Portslade that this is insufficient time to give Portslade Community College a chance to improve under its current head and insufficient time to hold a full consultation into what is a very important decision.

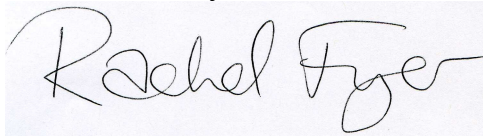
Therefore I would like to request that you immediately write a letter to the DCSF requesting a deferment on the decision of whether to become an Academy until September 2011, by which time the Head will have been given two years to improve the school and the DCSF can see the hopefully improved exam results. And that if it is felt that action is still necessary the DCSF should work together with the Local

Authority, the school and the community to see what further steps can be taken to improve the school.

This proposal does also pose serious questions regarding education provision across the city: to have two schools with the same sponsor and almost the same specialism will have a negative impact both on the diversity of education offered and also potentially on admissions as there are no guarantees that either school will stay in the Local Authority admissions system in the longer term. It also means that parents in either Falmer or Portslade catchment area not wishing to send their child to an Academy with this sponsor or specialism will have no choice other than to do so.

It is important that influential representatives from this council make it clear to the DCSF that it is important to the local community to work with them in a cooperative manner rather than imposing things on them without sufficient consultation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature reads "Rachel Fryer" in a cursive, flowing script.

Councillor Rachel Fryer